



ADOLPHE MONOD'S  
FAREWELL TO HIS FRIENDS  
AND TO HIS CHURCH

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## PREFACE.

MR ADOLPHE MONOD was withdrawn from the Church the 6th of April 1856, after many months of great suffering. During the last two years of his life his ministry was interrupted more than once—sometimes for complete repose, sometimes only partially, notwithstanding the progress of disease and suffering.

It was towards the end of September 1855 that Mr. Monod and his family learned all the gravity of his complaint. Without altogether losing either the wish or even the hope of recovery and of seeing the Lord accomplish in his favour that which human science could no longer expect, he prepared in peace for his change, should such be the will of God, and felt an increasing desire to live nearer to Him. When a friend and colleague in the ministry mentioned to him the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as an efficacious means of grace, too often neglected, advising him to have frequent recourse to it, he willingly adopted the advice. He resolved to partake of the Lord's Supper every Sunday, and to admit a few friends to partake of it with him. But he earnestly desired to do still more, and, encouraged by a trial he had made of his strength in twice addressing a lengthened exhortation to his family some days before, he determined to take this opportunity of saying a few words to the friends who might assemble around him once a week. Such was the origin of these meetings, the first of which took place on the 14th October 1855, and they were continued without intermission till the 30th March 1856.

Mr Monod availed himself of these opportunities of continuing to preach the gospel, and to exhibit also the enlarged spirit of Christian liberality by which he was animated, and that characterised him, not only as belonging to his own Church, but as belonging to the great universal Church of the faithful. All those agreeing with him in faith, whatever might be their particular denomination, were considered his brethren; and pastors of the Reformed, of the Lutheran, of the Independent, and of the Wesleyan Church, alternately presided at this banquet of brotherly love, beside the bed of their sick and dying brother. Thus, to the satisfaction of still labouring for the gospel, he added, that of labouring for that Church of the future which all foresee, as he himself said, and after which he so ardently aspired.<sup>1</sup>

The service was performed in the invalid's chamber. Upon a table near the bed were placed the bread and the cup; the officiating pastor took his place beside the table, and the family, with a small number of friends, thirty or forty persons, occupied the rest of the room on these occasions. The space was too small to receive at once all who expressed a wish to be present,<sup>2</sup> but the audience was varied each time, so as to admit the greatest number possible. The service consisted in prayer,

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<sup>1</sup> It may not be uninteresting to the reader to find recorded here the names of the pastors who alternately presided at these services. They are Messieurs Frederic Monod, Guillaume Monod, Meyer, Grandpierre, Gauthey, Vaurigaud (de Nantes), Valletta, Armand Delille, Vermeil, Fisch, Jean Monod (de Nismes), Edmond de Pressense, Petit, Paumier, Zipperlin, Hocart, Louis Verna, Boissonnas, and Vullies.

<sup>2</sup> In the month of March Mr Monod's increasing weakness did not allow him to have so many people in his room during an hour or more; and at the last four meetings they were obliged to stand round his bed to hear his exhortation, and then withdraw into another room where the bread and wine were distributed, and carried to him by the officiating pastor.

the singing of a hymn, reading a chapter in the Bible, and the distribution of the bread and wine. Then Mr Monod spoke, and those only who heard him, especially in the latter days, can form any idea of the peaceful serenity of manner, the deep expression of Christian love for those he was exhorting, and often of the energetic and impressive eloquence characterising these addresses. But at the same time the spontaneousness of the service precluded all pretension to oratory, and it was no longer the eloquent preacher, but the suffering brother near his end, giving his brethren the counsels drawn from his own experience, with a simplicity and familiarity which the reader will find perfectly preserved. Sometimes, however, led away by the impulse of the moment, all his natural and fascinating eloquence returned. Prevented from exercising an active ministry, he loved this new one, though so limited by his weakness, and by the difficulty of the surrounding circumstances. Too weak to speak for a length of time, it may easily be supposed that he was incapable of the fatigue of a long preparation, and he was obliged to satisfy himself with meditating for a short time upon the subject which he intended to develop. These subjects were furnished by some personal experience, or some new reflections to which the events of the preceding week had given rise; his sufferings, too, often suggested him a subject, and he took pleasure in showing how the Christian ought to glorify God by the way in which he bears them.

Finding that his life was prolonged, and that God called him both to suffer and to testify from the bed of suffering longer than he had anticipated, he wished to maintain a certain order in his exhortations, classing some under the title of a dying man's regrets, in which he drew advice for his hearers from his own past experience; and others under that of results, showing how that experience had settled his faith. After having endeavoured for a time to prepare beforehand what he wished to say, finding it too fatiguing, he returned to his former plan.

It is wonderful that, suffering as he did, day and night, and often very intensely, Mr Monod could bear the fatigue of having a number of persons around his bed every Sunday, during a full hour, besides that of speaking even for a short time, after the exertion of preparing what he intended to say. We have already seen how he took advantage of the short intervals of pain for preparation.. But the fatigue of speaking was great, though the organs of speech had maintained a singular vigour; and though it was astonishing to find so strong a voice in so feeble a body, yet the effort it cost him could not fail to irritate him, and thus increase the pain. But God dispensed to him every Sunday, as on every other day, the measure of relief, or the measure of patience and energy that he needed. Sometimes the pain was suspended, or at least diminished, and sometimes he was enabled to surmount it, so as to be able to speak; but during the hours that followed, his sufferings were often aggravated, especially at the beginning; he knew this, but cheerfully resigned himself to it. "I suffer much," said he, one Sunday evening, "but I know that it must be so on Sunday night; it is a sacrifice I willingly offer to God." Another day in prayer he said—"If every week I must obtain by redoubled sufferings the privilege of announcing Thy Word, may Thy will and not mine be done." On the 25th November he said (we like to borrow his own words as they show more clearly in what light he considered his new ministry)—"I suffered much this morning, and it was to be feared that I should not be able to speak this afternoon; but God suspended

my sufferings, during an hour, to allow me to glorify Him; and He granted me the favour of exercising this little ministry, which is so great a consolation for me." And again the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, a month before his death, he said—"Another Sunday in which God has allowed me to address a few words to our little assembly, notwithstanding my increasing weakness, to which my feeble voice bore testimony. May He deign to support me to the end, and grant me the grace, if it be possible (for I wish not to dictate to Him), to cease to proclaim His name only when I cease to live."

God did support him to the end, and granted him the last grace he asked. From the Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October, the service was performed every Sunday without intermission during nearly six months. The 23<sup>rd</sup> March, Easter Sunday, he gave his last discourse upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ, after some hesitation it is true, and with so much difficulty that he seemed ready to faint in pronouncing the last words. The 30<sup>th</sup> of March, though his weakness had so rapidly increased during the preceding days that he was incapable of taking almost any food, and his difficulty in speaking was extreme, scarcely knowing whether he should be able to make himself heard, he collected the little strength he had to glorify the everlasting and infinite love of God, and terminated with a prayer of thanksgiving his ministry upon earth. From the 30<sup>th</sup> of March to the 6<sup>th</sup> of April his decline was much more rapid, and he had scarcely strength to speak even to his family; it was asked whether it would not be wise to countermand the meeting proposed for that day; but that day, before the usual hour, God had called His servant to Himself, thus answering the prayer he had so often expressed: "May my life terminate only with my ministry, and may my ministry end only with my life."

But it may be asked how the discourses contained in this volume could have been preserved, since, as already stated, not one was written beforehand by the author?

From the beginning, Mr Monod's children, either from notes taken down with care, or from memory, wrote them out so accurately that sometimes scarcely anything was wanting, and the correctness with which they produced them increased with habit. This was at first done without Mr Monod's knowledge, and always without his aid. The only discourse corrected by him is the twentieth, entitled "The Scriptures." He had it read over to him twice, and corrected it with care, making some changes in it; on this occasion he was surprised to find how exactly his words had been taken down.

Thus the compilation was little more than the copying of the notes taken by several persons, one person completing them with the assistance of the others, or by the help of memory. For the last discourses a degree of exactness was thus obtained, almost verbal. The first only was written entirely from memory, but those who heard it will find nothing that they will not recognise as exact; and we are well assured that in the whole volume, if Mr Monod's words are not always exactly reproduced, nothing will be found that he did not say. A few, very few, passages required slight changes to make the sense clear, but even these corrections of a text, which, after all, was not written by the Author's own hand, are very few in number.

The texts of Scripture placed at the head of each discourse were read by the officiating pastor, and the greater number, especially the latter part, were chosen by Mr Monod, and read at his request before he spoke.

We trust that this volume may contribute to the glory of God, and the advancement of His reign: and while we remember the man to whom we owe so lovely a testimony to the power of faith, let us look to Him from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. We must not forget, said Mr Monod, on Sunday evening 2nd March, to water with our prayers what we plant in the Lord's name, and let us ask Him not to allow idle curiosity nor even the kindest human feelings to take the place that the pure desire to glorify God ought to occupy, either in him who speaks, or in those who read. It is in this spirit that we wish to offer this volume to the people of God, and we trust it will be received in the same spirit, with a holy jealousy to give all glory to Him from whom comes all good. But we may be allowed, in offering it, to call upon those who read to admire the goodness of a faithful God. It is now nearly a year since the Church became alarmed for Mr Monod's life, and began to pray that God would prolong the existence of His faithful servant, on whom He seemed already to have set the seal of eternal life. After eight months of incessant prayers, and months of unspeakable suffering, Mr Monod was withdrawn; but these prayers were not in vain, for he felt, as he himself said, that he was borne upon the prayers of God's children. In taking away successively his health, his ministry, and his life, God determined to answer otherwise his prayers and those of his brethren for him. He intended him to be an example for His people, that, as it is said in the epistle to the Hebrews, "He being dead, yet speaketh to them."

Mr. Monod's ministry required the seal of this last and cruel disease. Those who heard him in the days of his vigour, and those who saw him in the clays of suffering and weakness, can judge whether the orator, in all the strength of body and liberty of mind, spoke more profitably to their souls than the suffering and dying Christian. In this sickness in which God so strikingly showed the power of faith, He allowed him to speak in His name every Sunday. This was granted to the last, and this little book is the fruit of it, a humble but eloquent testimony to the power of the Gospel, without a parallel perhaps in the annals of the Church, in which we find repeated Sunday after Sunday, and by a man who was expecting death, without daring to wish for it; and repeated, with increasing firmness, patience, peace, and joy, the same doctrine of the Gospel as he had known it, preached it, lived it, during the twenty-five years of his ministry! Glory be to God!

In a sermon preached on Christmas Day 1854, from the text, "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also," Mr Monod, who had been suffering from the beginning of the spring, uttered some words that we desire to repeat here, in order to show how God verified in his person the words which He put into his mouth.

After showing that a crucified life is the true life of the Christian, and of the minister of the Word of God in particular, he closed this part of his discourse by these words, "And if amongst the crosses that you are called to bear, there is one that seems, I do not say heavier than the others, but more compromising to your ministry, and likely to ruin for ever all the hopes of your holy mission—if outward temptations be added to those coming from within—if all seems assailed, body, mind, spirit—if all seems lost without remedy—well, accept this cross, shall I say, or this assemblage of crosses, in a peculiar feeling of submission, hope, and gratitude, as a trial in which the Lord will cause you to find a new mission. Hail it as the beginning of a ministry of weakness and bitterness, which the lord has

## ADOLPHE MONOD'S FAREWELL TO HIS FRIENDS

reserved for the last, because the best, and which He will cause to abound in more living fruit than your ministry of strength and joy in days gone by ever yielded.”

I.

Everything in the Scriptures is Perfect.

OCTOBER 14, 1855.

MY dear friends, dearly beloved brothers and sisters, with whom I am happy and thankful to partake of the body and blood of our Saviour—of that body which is meat indeed, and that blood which is drink indeed, to all those who receive them in faith by the Holy Spirit—there is in the Scriptures a feature which would alone suffice to make them known as the Word of God: all is perfect. Everything in the Scriptures is absolute and perfect. They never call us to a certain degree only of holiness, by a certain measure only of faith; for all measure is contrary to the spirit of the Bible, because it is unknown to God. The perfect ideal of the Scriptures is not like that of the poets, who unduly magnify the things of our earth by elevating them to the third heaven. The Bible, on the contrary, considers visible things as types only of the invisible, which alone are eternal. And so it is that God considers all things. This remark struck my attention this morning, when reflecting before the Lord on what I could say to you on the subject of the communion and the cross of Jesus Christ, by which cross alone we obtain the remission of our sins.

The Scriptures everywhere present to our view sin in its true deformity. Not one of us can have a just idea of the guilt and enormity of sin in the sight of God. We have been so accustomed to live in the polluted atmosphere of this world, which drinks in iniquity as water and eats it as bread, that we cannot discern the sin which everywhere so completely surrounds us. My experience is briefly this. We find in the Bible these words, “We were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.” For a long time I could not admit this declaration, it appeared to me so evidently an exaggeration; and even after God had by His grace turned my heart towards Him in the day He had marked from all eternity, it was long before I could completely accept it. And even now, I cannot comprehend it to the full, though convinced that it is perfectly true; and if I do not realise it in my experience, the fault is entirely mine. It was this that made me comprehend the necessity of a witness existing before us, without us, and above us. I accept this declaration as coming from God, because I find it in His Word, and I pray that He may reveal to me the full meaning of it by His Holy Spirit. I have, by the grace of God, attained (I do not say in a short space of time—these things do not advance so rapidly—but in an interval of several years) to a clearer view of this doctrine, and to a deeper feeling of its truth in my own heart; and I am sure that when I shall have laid down this mortal tabernacle, I shall acknowledge it to be the most faithful resemblance that has ever been traced of my heart—I mean of my natural, unregenerated heart. Let us pray that God would gradually more and more reveal to us our state of sin, though only by degrees; for He is well aware that if our knowledge of our own condition were to increase more rapidly than our knowledge of His mercy, we should fall into despair.

But pardon is also represented as complete and perfect in the Scriptures. If only a part of our sins were forgiven, if, out of a thousand, or a million of our sins (if they could be numbered), only one remained unforgiven, the pardon would be useless. But the pardon is complete. The passage quoted just now (2 Cor. v. 21) is one of my favourite texts. Jesus Christ not only atoned for some sins, but for sin. He was not treated as the sinner, He was made sin; and in this mystery of mysteries, all the wrath of God was poured out upon His innocent and holy head. And so we are not only made righteous in Him, but we are made the righteousness of God in Him; so that when God looks upon us in Jesus Christ, He beholds us as one with His well-beloved Son, upon whom He ever looks with complacency and love. We, who believe, have been given by God to Christ as the price of His sacrifice. His promise is as sure to us as to Jesus Christ himself, and all His perfections are so closely linked together, that this gift of His infinite mercy becomes the right of our perfect righteousness in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures, in making known to us what sin is in the sight of God, show at the same time how He has done away with it. "He has cast all our sins behind his back," as if He feared to see them again. "He has cast them into the depths of the sea; blotted out as a cloud our transgressions, and as a thick cloud our sins." We see by this what it is for God to forget sin. He is represented as endeavouring to forget; or rather it is not forgetfulness, but complete oblivion.

Again, the Scriptures are absolute in what they say of sanctification. We can have no adequate idea of what they require of us, nor of the degree of holiness to which we can and ought to attain. What fullness is there in these words, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!" And to prove that this was not a simple wish expressed by the apostle, he immediately adds, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." It is equally impossible for Him to refuse us this grace, as it is for Him to break His word. And how can we attain to this holiness? How did the holy men whom the Bible holds out as examples attain to their greatness? It was not by their science or by their natural gifts, but by their faith. See what St James says. To show us the power of the prayer of faith, he takes the most wonderful man perhaps of the Bible, and the most wonderful of his miracles; he speaks of the boldness of this prayer of Elias as quite natural, and holds it up as an example to the least and the humblest, to show us what the persevering prayer of the righteous man may obtain.

If every one of us could, from this day, feel in his own heart the enormity of sin, the fullness of its pardon, and the power of the holiness to which we ought to attain; what a change there would be in our life, and what a salutary influence this would have on the Church itself

### Prayer.

O God! Thou who knowest all the misery and sufferings that sin has brought into our poor world, and on our poor humanity; Thou who seest all who suffer at this moment, and of whom we could not bear even the sight; we commend to Thy care all the afflicted, that Thou mayest shed upon them the treasures of Thy grace and Thy consolations. We cannot name them all, but Thou wilt name them to Thyself. We commend to Thy care the victims of the war, and all the families plunged in



grief by it, and all those whom it causes to live in continual terror. We commend to Thy mercy all those who are oppressed for righteousness' sake. We commend to Thy care all those living in slavery: consider those thousands and millions of slaves oppressed by men who profess Thy name,—by servants of Christ who are not servants. We commend to Thy care the poor, ah, the poor! the sick, and especially the sick poor. We commend to Thy care those that know Thee, praying that Thou wouldst support them, and shed upon them Thy peace and Thy consolation. And we commend to Thy grace those who know Thee not, praying Thee to reveal Thyself to them, for they have no alternative but despair if they know Thee not. I suffer a little, and confess Christ and His peace. I thank Thee for the joy that Thou hast poured into my soul. Thou wilt call us perhaps to separate for a time, but what is that? We know that by Thy grace we shall soon be reunited around Thee.

II

Happy in Life and in Death

OCTOBER 21, 1855.

“For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.”—PHIL. i. 19-26.

I WISH, my dear friends, to draw your attention to the light in which the holy apostle here considers life and death. Observe in the first place this expression, which is, as it were, the starting-point and motto of his Christian life: “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” That is to say, my life, my natural life that I live today and may lose tomorrow, is only employed in following and serving Jesus Christ. “To die is gain;” this does not require explanation. Here the apostle asks himself whether it would be better for him to live or to die. This question has often presented itself to us, and perhaps we have answered as the apostle did; but, it is to be feared, in a very different feeling. When we have desired death, it rather meant, “I know not which is most fearful, the afflictions of life, from which death would deliver me, or the terrors of death, from which life preserves me;” that is to say, that life and death appear like two evils, between which we do not know which is the least. To the apostle they appeared as two immense blessings, of which he doubted which was the greatest. Personally, he would have preferred to die, in order to be with Christ; but for the Church and the world he preferred to live, that he might serve Jesus Christ, spread His kingdom, and win souls to Him. What an admirable view of life and death, admirable because governed and sanctified by love; and it is the view which Jesus Christ took of them himself. Let us endeavour to enter into this sentiment. Life is a blessing, death is a blessing. Death is a blessing because it delivers us from the miseries of this life, and especially because, even though life put us in possession of all the joys that earth can offer, death opens to us an enjoyment and a glory of which we can form no idea. We ought then to consider death as desirable in itself, and not seek to put aside all that reminds us of it. Let every disease, every sudden death, every passing event serve to remind us that to each of us it may come at any moment. Life also is a blessing, because in it we can serve Jesus Christ, glorify Jesus Christ, imitate Jesus Christ: it is not worth living for anything else. All our strength, our breath, our life, our faculties, ought to be consecrated, devoted, sanctified, crucified for the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. This crucified life is the happy life in which, even in the midst of the bitterest earthly sorrows, we can taste and spread around us the most precious blessings. Let us love

life and feel the value of it, that we may fill it with Jesus Christ. Such a principle can only be attained by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. But let us observe that it is not only that our own spirit must be supported, consoled, strengthened; it is that the Spirit of God must come and dwell in us. We often labour to improve ourselves and cultivate our minds; we do well; but that is not sufficient. We must have more. Jesus Christ himself must dwell in our hearts by His Holy Spirit.

O my friends! let us consider what are the promises of the gospel, and we shall see how far we are from being in the possession or the enjoyment of them. May God open the windows of heaven above and reveal them to us, fill us with all wisdom, and show us that even here below we can attain to a perfect joy, until we arrive at the full fruition of felicity and victory. And may He teach us thankfully to gather the blessings which He pours down upon the earth which opens to receive them, in order to show that if the world can sadden or trouble us, it is not able to extinguish the gracious gifts of heaven, nor to annihilate the promises of God, nor to throw a veil, nor even the slightest cloud, over the love with which God has loved us in Jesus Christ.

III.

Frequent Communion.

OCTOBER 28, 1855.

MY dear friends, I am anxious you should know that I find during my illness much comfort from the frequent reception of the communion, and I hope much profit also. It is a great evil that the communion is celebrated so seldom in our Church, and efforts are now being made in many places to remedy it. When our Reformers established the present order of things, they carefully explained that they intended it for a temporary arrangement only, to correct much disorder that had crept into the primitive Church. What they established for a time only has remained for ages in most of our Churches. But we are drawing to the period when more frequent communion will be restored. Calvin says somewhere that the communion ought to be celebrated at least every Sunday. Observe these words, "at least;" if every Sunday is the least, what, then, is the most? The most would be to receive it as the primitive Christians did, according to Calvin (and as appears clearly from the Acts), every day, from house to house, after the family meal. You must all have felt that these rare communions give to the ordinance itself something mysterious and extraordinary, from the preparation that must precede it, and from the emotions that accompany it. It is probably this which has given rise to most of the controversy on the subject. Frequent communion, on the contrary, makes us comprehend much more easily the true character of the sacrament; and it is impossible that daily communion should not make it still more easy. It would teach us to associate the idea of the communion with the most simple acts of the Christian life, as our meals are the most simple parts of our ordinary life. Be that as it may, it is by seeing in the communion the most simple expression of our faith that we shall derive the greatest advantage from it, and that it will really feed our souls with the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

There is in our "Confession of Faith" a passage upon the subject so beautiful that I will read it to you. It is the exact expression of my own sentiments:—"We confess that there is in the Lord's supper a testimony of our union with Jesus Christ, and the more so that He not only died and rose again for us, but that He really feeds and nourishes us with His body and blood, so that we are one with Him, and that His life is in us. Now, though He is in heaven till He shall come to judge the world, yet we believe that by the secret and incomprehensible virtue of His Spirit, He feeds and vivifies us by the substance of His own body and blood. We believe that this is done spiritually, not to substitute for truth either thought or imagination; but inasmuch as this mystery surpasses in height the measure of our senses, and the whole order of nature..... We believe that in the Lord's supper, as well as in baptism, God does really give us what is prefigured in it. And therefore we add to the signs the true possession and enjoyment of what is represented by them. And thus all those who bring to the Lord's holy table pure faith, as an empty vessel, really receive what the signs testify: that the body and blood of Jesus Christ are not less useful as

meat and drink to the soul, than bread and wine are to the body. The bread and wine being given to us in the Lord's supper are really our spiritual food, and the more so that they show us plainly that the body of Jesus Christ is our meat, and His blood our drink."

I will only add to this admirable citation, that the Lutheran pastor, Verny, having one day read it to some Lutheran friends who were reasoning with him on the communion, they replied, "That is the exact expression of our faith," to which Mr Verny answered that the citation was taken from the "Confession of Faith" of the Reformed Church; which proves that by keeping close to the Scriptures, as is here done, we rise by faith and charity above the field of controversy.

My friends, we bear testimony, by the communion we have just celebrated, that the Saviour's body and blood are really meat and drink, and that the highest Christian ambition of our souls is to feed night and day upon it, and to seek all our strength in a true, profound, and living communion with Jesus Christ alone. It is by prayer that we maintain that communion with Jesus Christ which will render us capable of doing what He did, and being what He was: but it is by the prayer of faith—persevering, ardent prayer, which takes no refusal, but will enjoy all that the Father has promised in his Word, and will not be silent—by prayer upon our knees, which wrestles on through blood and tears till it has obtained what it asked. Oh! what would not then be our strength and joy, unchanging and independent of all the sufferings of this miserable body, perhaps already torn and half destroyed, but which is the temple of the Holy Spirit now, and which tomorrow will be transformed into a glorious and spiritual body,—that is to say, will be filled with the Holy Spirit, like the body of Jesus Christ himself! What would not be our joy—I do not say if we had the means, for we have them—but if we so used the means that we have so as to enable us to rise ever above the trials and struggles of the flesh, and penetrate into the heart of our heavenly Father, realising the joy of our Saviour and the power of the Holy Spirit! Meditate, I entreat you, upon the Holy Spirit! Read and read over again the discourses of Jesus Christ in the last chapters of St John's Gospel; read also the seventh and following chapters of the Romans, and learn what strength and consolation we have in the Holy Spirit, who is not less than God himself. Yes, my God, Thou thyself coming to dwell in the body of Thy poor child, a miserable sinner, destroyed by suffering and sin, but saved by grace, and washed in the blood of the Lamb without blemish! Having such promises, why should we stop half way? why should we sigh over our hunger and thirst, when we are before a well-spread table, towards which we have only to stretch out the hand of faith to be fully satisfied, and to have life in abundance? Ah! if this handful of Christians now assembled here could make up their minds to be quite happy—to pray earnestly (literally, to pray in praying), like Elias; if they could resolve to overcome their natural apathy, their spiritual indolence, their incredulity,—of what should we not be capable, if we were to go throughout the world as the twelve apostles did? We might stir up all Paris; we might draw after us all our brothers and sisters, whose hearts would be touched by seeing the gospel realised in our life! O God, this is our profound misery, that having such promises, we should do so little! Vouchsafe us Thy help; grant that this communion of the upper chamber may be, for all those who have partaken of it, or who have been present, the beginning of a new Christian life,

whether we live or die; and make us so conformable to Jesus Christ that we may live as He lived, and that as He said, "He that hath seen me hath seen my Father," so we may be able to say, He that hath seen me hath seen my Master. Shed down this blessing upon these friends who are come to comfort me in my affliction—my happy affliction!

IV.

The Pastor Suffering for the Good of the Church.

NOVEMBER 4, 1855.

WHAT a blessing has God vouchsafed to us by giving us in the communion a representation so simple, and at the same time so comprehensive, of the invisible grace of the Lord! All the groundwork of the gospel is upon this table, if we knew how to draw from it the instructions that the Scriptures supply upon the subject: for we find there these two things—first, Jesus Christ dying for us, and His death, His blood, His atoning sacrifice, the only hope of our salvation, accomplishing all for God's elect; and then we find this same Jesus, having died, entering within us, and feeding us, and communicating life to us by His body and His blood, and thus making us partakers of His nature, as He himself partakes of that of His Father.

To die to ourselves and to live to Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, after Jesus Christ has died for us upon the cross, . . . this is the gospel, this is faith, this is Christian life.

I wish to add a few words, not as proceeding from any personal feeling, but under that which influenced St. Paul's declaration, "I desire that ye faint not at my tribulation." Far be it from me to compare afflictions so much greater, and endured in so direct a manner for the service of God, to those with which He has in His mercy visited me. But I wish that, by the spirit in which I accept them, they may prove an affliction endured for the gospel, and also, in my little measure, endured for you. I wish that no one should be cast down. Perhaps some of my good friends are troubled at the thought of the pain I suffer. Well, be not cast down; give me a mark of brotherly love in not being troubled, but by being awakened and excited in a salutary way. It is not that I do not suffer, or that I do not keenly feel my suffering. I am not a stoic: by the grace of God I am a Christian; and I am not ashamed to say that there are some moments, in which I pray less than I cry out with tears. I recollect that my Saviour cried with a loud voice and with tears. But though these things are painful to the flesh, they are accompanied with such great blessings, that a feeling of gratitude ought to predominate in my heart and in yours. What a favour is it for me, my dear friends, that God, choosing one of us to remind the others of the lessons which relate to life, of thoughts of death, of sin, of grace, of sanctification, should have deigned to choose me! What a privilege, that in choosing me He has spared my brethren, and what a privilege to be chosen to give you lessons of life eternal! Then think how much my sufferings will make me welcome a Christian death, whenever it may come to me. Let us all seek only to glorify God. If it should please Him to raise me up again, I pray that it may be for His glory; if He withdraw me, I shall be happy to be gathered into His bosom. I cannot know what would be best, either for me or for the Church; I give myself up entirely to Him. But what a blessing my being chosen to be thus ripened by suffering. You therefore have cause to rejoice for me; and as to yourselves, is it not true that my afflictions have contributed to draw your thoughts to death, to eternity, and to the truths of the gospel? Is it not true

that the brotherly love that unites us has stimulated you to prayer? I feel that the Lord's people bear me upon their hearts in prayer, and I am filled with joy and gratitude. And is it not good for you too? and do you not feel that what happens to me is well calculated to shed over my nearest friends, and especially over my family, a spirit of peace and meekness, and that our house is in a measure less imperfect than it has been till now—a house of prayer in which the Lord's name is more constantly invoked, especially on behalf of its members? Here again are blessings to be reaped. And consider how much comfort I find in the thought that I am afflicted for your good; for nothing can make my sufferings more like those of my Saviour. I say therefore, in the spirit of the same St. Paul whom I have already quoted, "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the Church." Oh, wonder of the grace of God! power of the gospel! Oh, bitterness of sin! Oh, immutable stability of grace! Let us strive against sin, my friends; that is the only evil,—yes, the only evil. And now that I am in presence of sin, called upon to retrace before God all the sins of my life and to seek His pardon for them, I feel how terrible the struggle is, how deep-rooted sin is, and what folly it would be in me to complain of the trials God sends us, since even these trials are not sufficient to destroy this terrible pride, this frightful selfishness, and above all this detestable unbelief! May the peace of God be upon us! Let us put aside personal feelings. Do not consider in me either the father or the friend, or see them only in a certain measure; but consider above all in me the minister of Jesus Christ, and pray that till my latest breath I may be kept faithful in this ministry. Do not consider in me the man, but the work which God will accomplish in me and in you. Let us take courage. Let us pray that God may fill us with His Spirit, and make us capable of overcoming the flesh by the Spirit, till we shall all be taken from the evil to come, and made to partake, by Jesus Christ, in a spiritual body and a sanctified soul, the joy, the happiness, and the glory that the blood of Jesus Christ alone has procured for us.



## V.

## A Few Words on the Reading of the Bible.

NOVEMBER 11, 1855.

I AM accustomed on these occasions to address a few words of Christian exhortation to the friends who have the kindness to meet around me. My state of suffering deprives me of this consolation today. I can only relate a fact of Christian experience, which may awaken in you salutary reflections upon the value of the Word of God, and I shall gather it in Christian simplicity from what has happened to me this week. During a night in which I suffered much and slept little, towards the end of the night, about half-past four o'clock, I had settled myself in my bed, with the hope of getting a little rest, when I proposed to my *veilleur*<sup>3</sup>—one of those good young men who have the kindness to devote to me a part of their time and strength—to read a chapter of the Word of God. He offered to read the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. I accepted the offer, only begging him, in order to be able to appreciate more fully the drift of the argument, to begin with the sixth, and even the fifth. We read successively these four chapters—fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth—and I no longer thought of sleeping, so completely were my attention, my interest, my admiration, excited by the heavenly language of St. Paul; I mean of the Holy Spirit speaking by St. Paul. Then we read the ninth and following chapters till the end of the Epistle with an equal and unabated interest; and then, to omit nothing, and have the whole Epistle, we read the four first chapters.

About two hours passed in this way, and I thought only of listening to the Word of God, and profiting by it. And the Lord, in His mercy, made up for the rest I had lacked. But I cannot tell you how much I was struck, on reading in this way the Epistle to the Romans from beginning to end, by that seal of divinity, of truth, of holiness, of love, and of power, which is stamped on every page and every word. Without having communicated our thoughts to each other, my young friend and I both felt that the voice came from heaven; and that, independently of all those proofs that attest the inspiration and divine authority of the Scriptures, they bear witness to themselves, as Jesus Christ, by His works, bore witness to himself in a way fully sufficient. We both felt also how useful it is to read the Scriptures as a whole, and how much we lose by taking only parts, fragments, or separate verses. We only understand a book by reading it now and then from beginning to end. This circumstance made us feel that the Word of God ought to be studied in two ways:—First, it should be read as a whole, to produce the blessed impression we had just received; and, secondly, in detail, to be able to enter into and understand every verse and every word. But the deepest impression we received was one of humiliation, and we said to each other, How is it possible that, having such a treasure near us, we should neglect diligently to search into it! We had spent two hours in heaven;

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<sup>3</sup> During nearly six months, a small number of young men, almost all medical students, had the kindness to pass the night in Mr Monod's room. Their affectionate and devoted attention alleviated his long nights of sleeplessness and suffering.

we had been transported not only into the midst of the best of men, the holy and inspired organs of the Holy Spirit, but of the elect angels, and the company of Jesus Christ; and we resolved, commending our resolution to the care of Him who alone can protect the resolutions of His children, to study the Scriptures with more ardour than we had yet studied them; to sacrifice, if needful, other reading—instructive and useful though it may appear, but not comparable to the Bible—and to live with this Word as we should wish to live with God himself, because the reading of this Word, inspired by the Spirit of God, is like holding intercourse with God himself. I recommend to you, my dear friends, the constant reading and profound meditation of the Word of God. This will raise us above everything; it will be the strength of our life, the joy of our heart, and our all-powerful consolation in life and in death, by Jesus Christ. This is my prayer for you and for myself. Amen!

VI.

God Glorified in Affliction.

NOVEMBER 18, 1865.

THE prayer that we have just heard was full of the idea that we ought to glorify God, every one according to his position. I will endeavour, in a few words, to make you feel, and to make myself feel more deeply than I do, what a privilege it is to be called to glorify God. Think what it is! God, the Sovereign Creator, the sole Author of all things, by whose will alone they subsist and were created; God, the only Saviour of lost and guilty men, and the sole comforter of suffering humanity; God, from whom proceeds everything that is good, and who has no need of us, calls upon us to add something to His glory, by bearing witness to Him amongst His creatures, and by thus contributing in our measure to the hallowing of His name. He will have this to be the supreme law of our life.

True piety, as well as true wisdom, and even true human philosophy, require that a single principle, to which all the rest may be referred, should govern our life; and this principle, which all men seek, some in the world, some in themselves, or in an imaginary deity, we find in the true and living God, the only holy, only wise, only eternal One—in Him upon whom alone depends our complete and eternal felicity, as well as the most trifling every day comfort that we can enjoy, whether in the feelings of our hearts or in the sensations of our poor bodies. And who are those upon whom He calls to contribute to His glory? The angels; and they rejoice at it, thinking how great a privilege it is for them. But it is not the angels only, it is we also, miserable sinners, worthy only of the wrath of God, fallen by our works under His malediction, whom He not only takes by the hand to draw out of this profound abyss, but to whom He says, as He draws us from it, Now glorify Me; as if we were able to render something to Him from whom we have received everything, beginning with the forgiveness of our sins. Ah! if we could only feel what a favour it is to be employed in doing something for the glory of God, we should not be taken up with anything else, and we should find in it, my dearly beloved, the sweetest and most profound consolation we can enjoy. For it is not only pardoned sinners who are thus called upon to glorify God, after they have been saved by Him, but it is sinners who are suffering, miserable, dragging painfully through life, beneath the sufferings of the mind as well as of the body. Such, it would seem, must be necessarily excluded from the privilege of glorifying God, absorbed as they appear to be by the troubles and pains of this life. But it is not so. It is they who are more especially called upon to glorify Him, and who find in their sufferings, as they did in their sins now forgiven, new reasons for ascribing glory to Him who has taught us to say, "When I am weak, then I am strong!" What a consolation for those who suffer to be able to say, I can, by bearing my sufferings patiently and peacefully, till it comes to be joyously and gloriously—I can, by these sufferings, give to God a glory that I could not give Him otherwise; and what ineffable consolation those that suffer find in this thought! It is this that makes suffering a privilege. Suffering is a

privilege to the Christian, and to suffer much is a special privilege. All those who suffer must fully enter into my idea, and "commit the keeping of their souls to God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

Alas! we cannot do it of ourselves: "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak;" and the moment after we have been raised up to heaven by the simple words of the gospel, our miserable flesh draws us, as it were, down again. Taking us by the feet, it pulls us towards the earth, binding us there by the weight of pain. My friends, this is the warfare of our whole life. It is the warfare of life, and the warfare of death.

But we have with us Jesus, the beginning and end of our faith, who was himself consecrated by suffering, and who is now able to succour those that are tempted. May our constant prayer be, "Lord, increase our faith;" "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Oh, my friends, who are come in brotherly love to join me in celebrating this sweet communion, which is a living image of our communion with God and with each other, may God bless each of you, and may He grant us all grace to live only for His glory, to suffer only for His glory, to speak only for His glory, till the time comes for us to die for His glory, in Jesus Christ crucified and risen again!

### Prayer.

O God, send down upon every one of us all the blessings Thou vouchsafest in Jesus Christ with infinite liberality. Grant that we may live in communion with Thee, and glorify Thee, that Thy will may be done on this poor earth as it is in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Look down in Thy tender compassion upon this poor world, for which Jesus Christ died, and which is still plunged in darkness, in calamities, in unrighteousness, and in crimes. Look down in Thy tender mercy upon Thy Church, which Thou hast set apart in the world, but which has turned away from Thy holy precepts, and has taken the resemblance of the world, while maintaining the name of the Church. Look down upon us and upon all thy children. Look upon all those who suffer. We place under Thy protection the numerous and interesting family of the afflicted, the sick, the prisoners, the slaves, the persecuted, especially those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, and all those who are oppressed. Teach them to turn towards Thee the eye of faith. Hasten the coming of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. May His kingdom come, and may all men then know what Thou hast done in sending Him into the world. Amen.

## VII.

## The Love of God Manifested in His Children.

NOVEMBER 25. 1855.

I MUCH feared, my dear friends, that overcome as I was by weariness and suffering, I should not have been able to address these few words to you today; but now the Lord again grants me that favour, by sending me a little relief. Think how grateful I must feel for being enabled, contrary to any human foresight, thus to exercise in some measure every Sunday that ministry which I would fain exercise till the last breath of my life; for my ministry is my life, and I feel that when I can no longer perform my ministry, I shall be withdrawn to exercise a better ministry elsewhere! Pray that God may not withdraw from me the consolation of thus receiving every Sunday the body and blood of my Saviour, to strengthen my body and my soul in Him, and also of being able to address a few words of edification and exhortation to my brethren. Last Sunday I briefly dwelt, with the friends who were present (these friends change every Sunday), upon the immense privilege of being able to glorify God, which is not only permitted, but commanded us. Today I will add that there is one way in which we are particularly obliged, and peculiarly happy to be able to glorify Him. If, among the perfections of God which we are called upon to manifest before men, there should be one perfection, the manifestation of which is the object of His peculiar satisfaction, must it not truly be in imitating it and in evidencing it in ourselves that we shall glorify Him the most? Well, what is the perfection in which God manifests His presence the most? Is it not in His goodness? Is it not written, "God is love"? God is just; yet it is not written, God is justice. God is powerful; yet it is not written, God is power. But there are two perfections to which this peculiar honour is given by the beloved disciple, leaning upon the bosom of his Saviour—holiness and love: "God is light;" "God is love;" and while he says once in his First Epistle, "God is light," he says twice in the space of a few verses, "God is love," as if to place this perfection still higher than the others. If this be the case, my dear friends, what we have to do in order to glorify God is to manifest the love that is in Him, so that in seeing us live and act, in hearing us speak, in seeing us suffer, live, and die, people may not admire us, but admire the love of God in us. And how can we manifest the love of God? Jesus Christ has shewn us. He did, above all, manifest this love; He did, above all, glorify God, and tenderly constrain all those who contemplated Him with faith to say in seeing Him, "What love there is in God, since He who said, 'He that hath seen me hath seen my Father,' is himself so full of love." And how did He show it? He showed it in all things. But He showed it more especially in suffering for His brethren—in suffering first for their temporal deliverance: "He went about doing good." But the healing of diseases was only the type and image of the true deliverance, which is spiritual. He showed this especially in suffering for their spiritual deliverance, and the highest point of the manifestation that we can make of the love of God is in suffering for our brethren, and particularly for the salvation of their souls. We can all do this, my dear friends, in a measure.

All cannot do it in a special and direct way like the apostle Paul, whose whole life was consecrated to the preaching of the gospel, and who said, "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church." We must not seek a very precise interpretation of these words. There is a fund of charity, a depth of love in the words of St. Paul, which exceed the limits of human definition. His whole life was ruled by the ardent desire of imitating his Saviour, who "has left us an example that we may follow his steps;" and as his Saviour suffered to save men, Paul would willingly suffer for his brethren, not to save them—no one has declared more clearly than he that no man, no creature can do this—but to labour for their salvation: "In doing these things, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." But though we do not all endure suffering as Paul did for the service of God and for the good of men, there is no suffering to which we cannot impart this character by the spirit in which we bear it. If, "suffering according to the will of God, we commit the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator," and if we endeavour to turn our sufferings, those of the soul, the mind, or the body, whichever it may please God to send us, to the good of men—to their temporal good, and more especially their spiritual welfare—we shall have attained the end for which God sent them to us. And, in general, my dearly beloved, the more we love each other, the more we walk in spiritual communion with each other and with God, the more we shall be like Him. Let us then go forth into the world, every one of us being a reflection of Divine love; and may all our words, our works, our inmost thoughts and most secret prayers, breathe the love God has revealed to us in Jesus Christ, and thus force all men to say. Ah! how truly God is love!

VIII.

Faith.

DECEMBER 2, 1855.

“BUT call to remembrance the former days, in which, after you were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, because ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”—HEB. x. 32-39.

THE faith which is the subject of the verses that have just been read, and of the admirable eleventh chapter of the Hebrews that immediately follows, that faith of which the sacrament of the Lord's supper is a representation at once simple and comprehensive,—that faith, my friends, is our only strength and our only peace; for faith is nothing less than the power of God placed at the disposal of man. In the eleventh chapter St Paul sums up in faith alone all the gifts, not only of sanctification, but of prophecy and miracles. How could Moses cross the Red Sea? He does not say, by having received supernatural power; but he says, Because he believed. How could Abraham do the great things that he did? He does not say, by a supernatural power; but he says, Because he believed. In this we should find cause of admiration, not only that the Holy Spirit explains all the greatest works of the saints by an internal and spiritual principle, but by a principle that is accessible to us all; for since nothing is mentioned, even when speaking of a Moses or an Abraham, but their faith, we learn that every one of us may be rendered capable, by this same faith, of accomplishing whatever work God places before us, as they were enabled to accomplish all that God gave them to do. These works are various, but the principle by which God accomplishes them in us is the same. It is one; it is Divine; it is all-powerful Let us not be surprised. It seems at first very surprising that the single fact that God hears and answers us can accomplish such wonders, and truly the will of God realised in the most humble Christian is not less marvellous than the crossing of the Red Sea and all the prodigies accomplished there. But we may, on a little reflection, understand the power of faith by the nature of it. What a marvellous thing that you and I, placed in the midst of a world plunged in sin, tempted by sight, by self-will, by example, and, in short, by the evidence of our senses—that we can triumph over all these, and, against hope, against experience, against sight, irresistible sight, can believe a word, a little word that God says! You re-member perhaps that saying of Luther, “*Ein Woertlein kann ihn fallen*” (a little word can make him fall); and if faith is that little word of God's penetrating into our

hearts, it is not surprising that faith is all-powerful, because it is not surprising that God should do what He will. But this faith, so great in its effects and so prodigious in its nature, can be nothing short of a creation of God in the soul (a man who believes is something more astonishing than a new world formed by the hand of God): how can we obtain it? By asking for it. God gives it to whosoever asks. But here, my dear friends, we must take care. It may be thought that this is a faith very easily obtained, and that it suffices, at the moment you may require faith, to put up a prayer to God to obtain it. No, no; the gifts of God are not so cheap. It sometimes pleases Him, doubtless, in order to show what He is, to create a new man immediately, in answer to a single prayer; but this is not the ordinary way of His providence. This faith, though given in answer to our prayers, is the result of a long and laborious conflict, and it is well worthy of it. God will have us labour to obtain it. Adam says in his "Private Thoughts" what is very true: "Nothing is more easy than to say the words of a prayer; but to pray, hungering and thirsting, is the hardest of all works." It is by being often upon our knees, by reiterating our prayers, by showing God that we feel the value of faith, and by adding to prayer the exercise of it, that we receive in answer to a first prayer a little faith, by which we are encouraged to more fervent prayer, which will again obtain a new measure of it, that we shall attain to the full measure of faith. To grow in faith, we have three things to do—to ask it, to exercise it, and to contemplate examples of it in the great saints by a deep study of the Scriptures. We must not hope to obtain anything from God, if we do not feel the value of it.

Now, this is the application I want briefly to make of what I have said. We must gather faith for the future. We must labour to-day to have the faith that we may require in five, ten, twenty years. We must gather day by day this spiritual provision, so that, surrounded by the most abundant gifts of God, we have only to open our eyes and stretch out our hands, when the time comes that the strength even to pray shall decline, and our enfeebled body and drooping spirit will be less capable of this terrible struggle, of which faith is the prize and the reward. Ah! do not wait till that solemn period to acquire faith. We can always find it; but let us endeavour to anticipate the evil day by continually increasing our provision and growing every day in faith. I am, my friends, in a condition in which nothing avails me but faith. As our brother said in his prayer (in commencing the service), we have by faith strength, peace, joy! Alas! it is easy to say and to preach at any time that faith should triumph over everything else! But when we are called to single combat with the enemy; when we have all to obtain; when we are called to follow Jesus Christ in the morning into the desert, in the evening to Gethsemane, and in the afternoon to Golgotha,—we feel that it is difficult. Blessed be God, eternally blessed! You would ill understand me if you thought from my speaking thus that God does not uphold me. He upholds me wondrously. But I would have you know beforehand that the conflict is hard, much more so than I thought before I was engaged in it that you may do what I did in my small measure, but which I now wish I had done much more diligently; that you may grow every day in faith; that you may live only to grow in faith; that you may be before God wholly men of faith and prayer, preparing, by the accomplishment of His will today, for the accomplishment of His will to-morrow. Oh! how my sufferings would be alleviated—how much they are



alleviated by the thought that they are useful to you, that the words I have addressed to you in my feebleness have penetrated into your hearts by the Holy Spirit! Oh, my friends, if, few as we are here, we were all men of faith, many eleventh chapters to the Hebrews might be written, without going beyond the limits of this chamber!

IX.

Jesus Christ our Example of Suffering.

DECEMBER 9, 1855.

IN the presence of Jesus Christ, who now feeds us with His body and blood, and who feeds us continually by faith, I have at heart to say a few words to those who suffer. I am sure, though my audience is small, my words will fall upon soil well prepared to receive them. We all suffer. Those who suffer the most are not always those who appear to suffer the most. There are sorrows known to God and unknown to men; but however that may be, all who feel—all who reflect—all who believe—we all know what suffering is.

There is something in pain very contrary to our nature, and to which it is most difficult to get accustomed, for it seems to us that we ought always to be happy. This sentiment is quite legitimate, and honours the goodness of our Creator. It is perfectly true that we ought to be perfectly free from sorrow and always full of joy; but sin has spoiled this order, and now what was contrary to our nature is become natural; and it enters into the plan of God, into our constant habits, and into our eternal interests, that we should suffer in divers manners. You know how Job collects and classes the principal sorrows of life: the loss of property, the loss of those dear to us, and the loss of health, which he has reserved for the last. This is rather the order of Satan, who understands well the art of temptation. If at this moment the hearts of us all here present were opened, what sorrows should we not have to recount to God!

Well, my dear friends, I should have nothing to say to console you, if I did not take it from the Word of God. There is no consolation in nature; it explains nothing, it comprehends nothing, it hopes nothing, it expects nothing, and even its hope and expectation are empty. But I have much to say to you in contemplating the cross of Jesus Christ, around which we are assembled to celebrate the memory of His sacrifice. We are purified from our sins by His blood—mark well my words—purified from our sins by His blood,—redeemed by His bitter sacrifice, our sins being atoned for by His cross, and that in the simplest sense of the word “atoned,” a sense the most popular and at the same time the most profound; for Jesus Christ, the victim of propitiation, has reconciled us to God by His death; this is the groundwork of the gospel, and the heart of it, and without this the gospel is valueless and impotent. But under the shadow of the cross the aspect of suffering changes altogether, and changes in proportion to our faith. Jesus Christ has appeared in the world, and how did He appear? as a joyful man? no, as a man of sorrows. That is a prodigy, a thing extraordinary and contrary to order—the Son of God appearing upon earth, and appearing not only in suffering, but suffering such as it is impossible for man to conceive. The cross of Jesus Christ is the centre of all suffering; it absorbs all suffering; there is not one form of suffering which does not naturally flow from it; there is not one which the cross of Jesus Christ does not explain. My dear friends, when we recollect that Jesus Christ suffered for us; when we consider that all we

suffer is a feature of resemblance with our Saviour, and that from the extent of His sufferings the more we suffer the more we resemble Him,—is it not true that this modifies our afflictions? The thought that Jesus Christ suffered affliction before we did; that it could not be spared Him,—is it not at the same time enlivening and sweet? And who can be so cast down that he cannot be comforted by the thought—This is like my Saviour; it is a feature of resemblance to Him? Now I know that I belong to Him—that He calls me, and that I begin to enter into the views of God and to understand His ways. I unite my cross to His cross, and my sufferings to His sufferings. It is for this reason that St. Paul says, “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” He would have us “conformed to the image of his Son,” and the context shows that it is especially in a conformity of sufferings. One idea which is powerful to support us under afflictions is, that suffering formed an essential part of the life of Jesus Christ, and necessarily implies therefore a resemblance to Him.

And here is another idea. Why did Jesus Christ suffer? To atone for sin: and so suffering appears the natural consequence of sin. We cannot endure the sorrows Jesus Christ endured; but we shall be happy, in a feeling of justice and chastisement, to bear our part. “Why should a living man complain of the punishment of his sins?” This passage of St Peter, “Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin,” shows us that to be enabled to renounce sin we must suffer. Sin and suffering must be confronted in us, and suffering must be employed to destroy sin, not to expiate it, that is done by the sufferings of Jesus Christ only—but that we may learn that sin and suffering are inseparable, as happiness and holiness are inseparable, from the deliverance from sin. Thus the conviction that sorrow is the fruit of sin is calculated to support us, because it makes us consider suffering as a plain and natural path, which ought not and could not be avoided.

And, in short, why did Jesus Christ suffer to atone for sin? To save us, and to make us partakers of eternal glory by His love. This is the sentiment that predominates in the Saviour's sufferings; and our sorrow must not be the sorrow of selfishness, which would draw our attention to ourselves only, but of love, which turns it first towards God to glorify Him, and then towards our fellow-creatures to do them good. There is a fund of love and of the power of love in Christian sorrow, derived from the example which a Christian under affliction can give of the patience with which God enables him to bear it. What a sweet and heavenly thought, that we can be useful to our fellow-creatures, and especially to our brethren, by our sufferings! And what can make our sufferings more like those of Jesus Christ? This is the idea that St. Paul expresses when he says in a passage that I like to quote: “I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church.” I do not enter into the explanation of this verse, which offers some difficulties. St. Paul was far from thinking of suffering as an atonement for sin, but he unites his sufferings to those of his Saviour, and because He has suffered to save us, Paul also suffers for the example of his fellow-men, as he writes to Timothy: “In doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.”

This is what supports the Christian in tribulation: Jesus Christ suffered; the more I suffer, the more I resemble Him. Suffering is a privilege. Jesus Christ suffered for sin. Sorrow is a necessary and a salutary consequence of sin. Jesus Christ suffered to save, and I ought to suffer to do good to men, and to lead souls captive to the obedience of the cross. Let all those who suffer endeavour to shake off self, to throw aside a selfish sorrow without faith, without love, and consequently without consolation, and to enter fully into the love of Christ, that their sorrow also may be like a cross planted in the earth, under the shadow of which all those that surround them may take shelter, not to receive eternal life, but to learn the way that leads to it, to the glory of God. To Him be glory for ever and ever! Let us rejoice in Him, and be well assured that by the power of faith and love there is no sorrow that ought not to be peacefully and joyfully supported, and made to subserve to the glory of God, to the good of mankind, and to our own eternal consolation; so that in heaven we shall consider it a great privilege to have suffered much under the cross of Jesus! Amen.

## X.

## Sin.

DECEMBER 16, 1855.

MY dear friends, this communion places before us the remembrance of the profoundest joy that was ever known. But we must not forget, that as Jesus Christ's path to glory and to the resurrection was by the cross, this joy can be experienced only by those who have begun by feeling the bitterness of sin, and is proportioned to the intensity with which we have felt this bitterness. Oh, my friends, what is sin? Who among us can understand all the guilt, all the bitterness of it, the terrible judgments that follow, and the absolute necessity of being completely washed and purified from it, to be able to enjoy a moment of repose? It seems to me that it belongs to those who live continually plunged in suffering, and who are thus constantly called upon to meditate upon the mystery of a God full of love, who sends His children affliction upon affliction—it seems to me that it belongs especially to them to meditate upon the depths of sin.

I never knew a man who, so far as man can judge, was more advanced in true and solid Christian piety—that which unites purity of faith with a spirit of humility and charity—than François Gonthier of Nyon. Well, this man, whom one might have expected to be the subject of all the consolations of God, was the object of the bitterest dispensations. He lost successively an only son, a wife tenderly beloved, and a daughter twelve years old, who alone recalled the memory of his lost treasures. Thus bereaved, the hand of God made his solitude still greater, by taking away a much-loved sister, and afterwards a niece twenty years old, in whom were concentrated all his affections. And I do not name all he had lost. Add to all this a state of health so debilitated, that he said to me one day, “Do you know how I compose my books? As the juice is drawn from an orange-peel, by repeated pressure, till at length it comes drop by drop.” His weakness was excessive, and he suffered almost continually. Both pain and debility went on increasing till the end of his life. When I reflect upon an existence like this, I cannot help saying, What is sin? I know it may be said that a man like Gonthier is chosen—and it is assuredly his greatest consolation, because it is his nearest resemblance to Jesus Christ—that his afflictions may edify the Church, by the patience and meekness with which they are borne. But yet God would not have sent a Gonthier all this suffering only for the good of others. We must not confound the creature and the Creator, for in that case God would make man a saviour. When Jesus Christ was smitten, it was for the sins of man; but when one of us is smitten, the measure of suffering is never greater than his own sins have deserved, because sin has deserved much more than we suffer, more even than we can conceive of suffering. This the Scriptures, and more especially the Psalms, teach us at every page. David cannot mention the subject of his afflictions without adverting, as it were, unawares, to that of his sins. This may be particularly remarked in perusing the thirty-eighth Psalm, in which his sufferings and his sins are so blended, that we can scarcely distinguish between them. What,

then, must sin be? How horrible in the sight of God! What is the punishment that it requires? What ransom can atone for it?

Then consider sin in an ordinary Christian, one who has never risen to the elevated Christian standard of a Gonthier; one who passes through life without dishonouring his profession, but who has never felt the bitterness of sin; one who has afflictions, because every one has them, but who has not known how to change his afflictions into crosses, and unite them to that of his Saviour. And see all there is in the heart of such a Christian, who may, however, be sincere; see all there is of latent sin, of hidden corruption, of secret infection, which, if the heart were suddenly laid open before us, would inspire us with dreadful horror, provided we were capable of feeling the horror of sin; that is to say, if we were capable of knowing all the holiness of the law of God, and all the holiness this awful law requires. And then consider sin in men of the world, who are plunged in sin; who, ever since they came into the world, have drunk it in like water; who breathe it like the air; who are inwardly composed of sin; whose minds are so completely enveloped in sin, that no ray of vivifying, salutary, sanctifying light has ever crossed them. What an abyss, what a sepulchre, what a sight for the eyes of God, are men, thousands, millions of men, spread over the whole world in whom nothing is to be found but this frightful sin, of which they have at most but a vague feeling, which now and then is sent to them by God, to beseech them to turn to Him, but who still remain in this dreadful and abominable state before Him! Sin in the best Christians, sin in the Church, sin in the world,—oh, my friends, what misery! What is sin?

This is what Jesus Christ saw when He came down from heaven to save us. We did not know it, but He knew it. We did not feel it, but He felt it for us, and this it was that gave Him strength to bear the anguish of the cross, the sufferings of Gethsemane, the combat in the desert, and all the humiliation which preceded it, and which, as it were, formed His whole life. And now, the sufferings that He endured for us must become our standard of the enormity of sin in His sight, and the depth of the abyss from which He drew us. Not one of us has any idea—no, my friends, not one of us has any idea—of what sin is. Not one of us knows what sin is, because not one of us fully knows the Saviour, or His sufferings, or His love. Oh, my friends, now that we have partaken of this blood shed for us, and this body broken for us, let us learn what sin is, and what is the peril of our souls, that we may take refuge in Jesus, and seek in Him what He alone can give. Let us be assured that we can learn this only in the Holy Scriptures. Our own personal meditations will never reveal to us what sin is; and, here I particularly feel the necessity and the reality of the inspiration and Divine authority of the Scriptures, because we should never have learned to know what sin is, unless we learned it from obedience to an outward authority superior to us, independent of our secret feelings, upon which we ought certainly to meditate with study and fervent prayers. But enlightened truth comes from above, is given by the Spirit of God, speaking with the authority of God himself; for we must begin by believing the horror that sin ought to inspire, before we are capable of feeling it.

Well, my friends, let us then cast ourselves into the Saviour's arms. Shall the sufferings and sorrows of this world keep us back? Can we find time to consider them, when the salvation of our souls is the question? Let us go to Jesus with a

feeling of pro-found humiliation, but with unlimited confidence in Him, who has suffered all and accomplished all for us. Oh, what ineffable sweetness to be able to repose in peace at the foot of the cross! I begin to understand the extent of my misery; but I embrace my Saviour's cross. All I want is His grace, His righteousness alone, without any mixture of my works. My works! they could only condemn me; but, ransomed by Him, washed in His blood, who has made atonement for my sins, I lay hold of His cross, and rest upon the sacrifice of my Saviour alone

And then let us speak of the Saviour to those who know Him not. With such a disease, which differs from all other diseases, in that it is the only real evil, and the root of all the others, and with such a remedy in our hands, which differs from those of the earth, in that it alone is sure and infallible, can we pass through life and the world, associating with our families, our neighbours, our friends, without speaking to them of sin and of Jesus Christ, who is their Saviour and ours? Let us lay hold of the cross, and proclaim the cross. Let us die in embracing it, let us die in proclaiming it, and our death will be the commencement of life, and God will be glorified in our body whether by life or by death, and especially by the blood and by the redemption of the Lamb of God. This is what I pray God for every one of you, as I do for myself, in the love of Christ, which I implore Him to increase in us! Amen.

XI.

The Cross Revealing to Us the Love of God.

DECEMBER, 23, 1855.

“O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee. Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry; for my soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength. Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: Lord, I have called daily upon thee; I have stretched out my hands unto thee. Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah. Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction? shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? But unto thee have I lied, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee. Lord, why cuttest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.—PSALM lxxxviii.

MY good friends, who give me such a touching proof of your affection and fraternal sympathy, in coming to partake with me of the Lord's Supper—which from week to week nourishes and strengthens both my body and soul—there is in the psalm which was read at the beginning of this service, the eighty-eighth, a feature which renders it quite unique: it is the only one which is written entirely under a feeling of depression, and which terminates without one word of consolation. It is sad and sorrowful from beginning to end, and we must look attentively to find a gleam of hope in the name given to God in one of the first verses: “God of my salvation.” And why this strange mystery? I find two explanations. The first is, that God will show us by the Psalms, that though it is in accordance with the habitual exercise of His mercy that we never cry to Him without being relieved, and we often find only the short space of a few verses separating the deepest anguish and the most abundant consolation—as, for instance, in the thirteenth Psalm; yet it may sometimes enter into the Lord's designs to let us cry to Him during a certain time without receiving any answer, without consolation, without the least ray coming to cheer our distress. It is then that we must feed by faith alone; and with Jeremiah, with David, and with all the saints tried in the same way, wait for Him, ask why He hides himself, and, in spite of the cloud that veils Him, never distrust, never doubt Him. There is, among a hundred and fifty psalms, one psalm which teaches us this lesson, as if it were hard for the Lord's love to give us such a warning. But there is a second explanation of this psalm, which is, however, derived from the first. You know that the Psalms are full of the Messiah; it is Christ who speaks, who expresses His sorrow; and we



find in the eighty-eighth the same Saviour as in that expression of the twenty-second Psalm, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" which is followed immediately by, "But thou art holy, . . . delivering them that trust in thee." This psalm shows us that the Saviour's distress was so excessive that it surpasses all that men, and even the most afflicted of His servants, can—I do not say feel—but even conceive. And why was this? Be-cause God is love. The answer is strange, but true. God is love: but for us, my dear friends, however surrounded we may be by the gifts of God, whether temporal or spiritual, or of whatever kind—though we have His Word, His promises, and all the rest—something is still wanting, if we may so speak, to enable the love of God to find its way to our heart—and that is suffering. We know that God does not suffer; that He is incapable of it; that He is raised above suffering, as above temptation and all the sorrows of the earth; and to make us understand the love of God in all its fulness and its reality, it was necessary that God should manifest himself to our view so as to prove His love by His sufferings, since man could never have been persuaded, or rather never could have been won, otherwise.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, himself God, became the son of man in order to be capable of suffering, and thus show us the love of God under a form capable of subduing the hardest hearts, even though they take little heed. Jesus came upon the earth to suffer, and how well He accomplished the task! He began by taking a body similar to our sinful body; and who amongst us can conceive all the self-denial, the humiliation, the sacrifice, that the Lord of glory, the Prince of life, underwent, in lowering himself to the misery of our poor nature, and taking upon Him all its degradation, even to that of the tomb? "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.... He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And here observe that what distinguishes the sorrows and sufferings of Jesus Christ from ours is, that He chose them voluntarily. Nothing obliged Him to do it; He chose them, and submitted to them one after another, to accomplish His Father's will, but to accomplish it freely. And why? For us; because He could not bear the thought of the eternal misery into which sin had betrayed us. What love, O God, what love! I pass rapidly over His life of sorrows and humiliations to arrive at Gethsemane. In the middle of the night you see in the Garden of Olives a man prostrate upon the earth, with his face to the ground, weeping, crying. You think, perhaps, that he has lost his reason. It is your Saviour! Observe His posture, His prayer, the tender reproaches He addresses to His disciples, and measure by them the immensity of His sufferings—sufferings that we are no more able to appreciate, or even to imagine, than we are to appreciate and to imagine what God and the infinite are; because it was not only physical and outward suffering, but a spiritual suffering, of which we can have no idea. Not only saints, but even men who knew not the Lord, have suffered patiently the most intense pain; but Jesus, with His infinite bodily sufferings, had one secret and hidden suffering, which we cannot penetrate—that of bearing alone, in presence of a holy God, the just for the unjust, the weight of our sins, and being by them, as it were, separated for a moment (I dare scarcely glance at this mystery)—separated for a moment from the love of the Father (if one may so speak, though He is one with Him), and of being constrained

to cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Why does He suffer thus? For thee, sinner, for thee, He so loved thee, that, hadst thou alone upon earth needed salvation, He would have entered for thee into His Gethsemane. What love, my God, what love! And at last, see Him upon the cross! I will not enlarge upon the subject; even though I had the strength to do it, how could I enter upon such a mystery? I place myself with you at the foot of the cross, and contemplate the sufferings of my Saviour. And here remark, it is at the very moment He is given up to such dreadful anguish, to that agony that no man can appreciate nor conceive, nor scarcely obtain a faint idea of, that He overcomes all pain to glorify God, and to save men to the uttermost; and it is from the depths of this agony that we hear words like these, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And again, "Woman, behold thy son; disciple, behold thy mother." What love, my God, what love!

Last Sunday we contemplated from the foot of the cross the view it presents of the horror, of the immensity, and of the terrors of sin. It is sweet to contemplate today, in the sufferings of our Saviour, the view they exhibit of the great, the incomprehensible depths of the mercy of God. Oh, my friends, let us always have this love present to our mind; it will explain everything, even the most cruel sufferings, since they are only the consequence of what He suffered for us. At the same time, it will make everything smooth and easy. Faith renders everything possible; love makes everything easy: "His commandments are not grievous." Full of this image of the Saviour's love, and of the love of God revealed in the Saviour, reading in His paternal heart the love of God for us, we shall give ourselves up entirely to the Lord, to do and to suffer all He shall see fit to send us. Pray that we may be deeply impressed with this sentiment, "God is love;" and to this end let us abide patiently at the foot of the Saviour's cross, and never lose sight of it, till after we have suffered a little, seeing that it is needful, He will take us by the hand, and leading us over the interval that separates Friday from Sunday morning, will raise us with Himself, and establish us with Himself, in the abode of glory where He is waiting for us and where we shall praise Him the more that we shall have suffered more, and especially if we have suffered for His name, Amen.

XII.

Of Things not Seen.

DECEMBER 30, 1855.

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”—REVELATION xxii.

THE chapter that we have just read would alone be sufficient to strengthen and rejoice our hearts if we could receive it with perfect simplicity of faith. If a man under the pressure of want were assured that tomorrow he would possess a fortune; if a man under the pressure of suffering were assured that to-morrow he would begin a life of ease; would they not find strength to wait a few hours, and would not hope shorten the time that intervened till the happy moment arrived? And if we, my friends, had that firm and simple faith, and a clear view of that eternal felicity

described in such lovely and touching terms in the last chapter of the Revelations, should not we also say, Come, Lord Jesus? And should we not say it with perfect peace? What more do we require than what God has given us? Nothing, but what God can give us; simple faith in the things which are not seen. We live in time; but our great concern should be to live in eternity. We are constantly drawn towards what is visible; our great concern should be to be in communion with what is invisible. I say, that alone is important; but it is a great thing, and requires an immense change. For that which constitutes sin is not only the ordinary forms of disobedience to the Divine law which prevail so commonly in the world; that which constitutes sin in a more subtle way, as its very root, is unbelief, and the seductive attraction of things visible. God being invisible, and the centre and soul of that which is invisible, the difficulty we find in fixing our thoughts upon what is not seen, arises from our being by nature at a distance from God. What characterises the Word of God is, that its life and action are centred in the things not seen; and this fact alone, for a man who reflects, is sufficient to prove its inspiration. It is not given to man, who by his fallen nature became a slave to things that are seen, to rise above them; that is to say, to shake off self-sufficiently to rise up to the unseen, and speak from the midst of the invisible world as the Word of God does; as not only Jesus Christ the Son of man does, who is in heaven and speaks from heaven, but as do all those agents who are commissioned to transmit to us the Word of God, which being full of Jesus Christ speaks from heaven even though upon the earth, by that miracle of the grace of God that we call inspiration, and which constitutes the authority of His Word. O blessed Word of God! pure, holy, elevated above us and above the world, thou speakest to us of another world and from another world! How shall we be put in communication with things not seen? We all feel upon this point our need and our infirmity; but do we feel what would be our strength, our happiness, our peace, our joy, if we could, like the Word of God, like Jesus Christ, live and move in the atmosphere of things unseen; if we could, by the power of faith, be transported by anticipation into the presence of God and of the things of God, and see things as God sees them, measure them by His measure, appreciate them by His appreciation, and judge them as He judges them? We have just been told in His name, that "if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged."

We learn from what we have just heard that the first means of entering into relation with things not seen, is to live with the Holy Scriptures, which are the Word of God, the testimony of God. By living with the Scriptures, I do not mean only reading them every day and accepting their testimony; I mean feeding upon them—seeking in them the bread of life come down from heaven—seeking in them the Lord Jesus Christ himself, that living bread which gives life to the world, whose body was broken for you, for me, for all of us, and receiving it by faith, especially in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which places Him as the object of our faith in such a lively way before us. We must feed upon the Word of God, my dear friends, we must live day and night with it. It must be for us what it was (to quote only one example) for the author of the 119th Psalm - of that psalm composed of 176 verses, in only two or three of which the Word of God is not mentioned by one of those innumerable names which the Psalmist gives it. Ah! let us live with the

Word of God! Constantly surrounded by the atmosphere of the Scriptures! for it is the atmosphere of heaven and of God himself.

To be in communication with things not seen, we must pray without ceasing. But how pray? O my God, pray as if seeing Thee, speaking to Thee, listening to Thee, answering Thee; as feeling Thy presence and delighting in Thy Word. And who can teach us to pray if it is not Thou, O God of prayer? O God! forgive the manner in which Thy Church prays, which alone in the world can pray; forgive the way in which we pray ourselves; forgive our languor, our hesitation, our unbelief, even in the least unfaithful, least unbelieving days of our Christian life—of our Christian ministry. O God! forgive the sins of our holy offerings! Ah! if we could at this moment overpass by prayer the distance that separates us from Thee; if we could pray as Jesus Christ prayed; as prayed a Moses—a Samuel—a David—a St. Paul—a St. John; if we could pray in a way that might be called prayer—that might be called prayer according to the expression of St. James speaking of Elias: “He prayed in praying!” Alas! how often we pray without praying. We have no idea of the unbelief of the deadness that often finds place in our prayers, because we do not live with invisible things; and we have no idea of the blessings of the graces of which we thus deprive ourselves. O my friends, let us constantly repeat this prayer, “Lord, teach us to pray!” When we know how to pray we shall know everything, and what is still better, we shall have everything. We shall not only know Jesus Christ, but what is still better, we shall possess Him; indeed, we can know Him only by possessing Him. It is in possessing Him that we can know Him, and in knowing Him that we can love Him, and that we can with Him triumph by faith over the things that are seen, and bruise Satan under our feet. May the God of Peace himself bruise Satan under our feet!

My dear friends, the things not seen—the things of the last chapter of the Revelations!—soon we shall all appear before God. This is true, not only of those who are expecting from day to day to be called away; who are more especially warned by the Lord to hold themselves in readiness, and who rejoice—oh! who long impatiently for the moment when Jesus shall say to them, Come; but it is equally true for all, since not one of us is sure of living till tonight. It is now, it is while you have the free use of all your faculties, that you must enter into communion with the things not seen, by the Word of God and by prayer. I speak of old things; but, alas! very new through our languor and unbelief! . . . Let us seek the things that are not seen. Seek God himself by Jesus Christ, who has opened the invisible world to us through the veil, that is to say, His body broken for us, and whose love and sorrows are the measure of the joy He has prepared for us! “Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

XIII.

The Man of Sorrows and Men of Sorrow.

JANUARY 6, 1856.

THE Christian under affliction is especially called to meditate upon the place that afflictions occupy in the plan of Divine redemption, in the development of the reign of God upon the earth, and in the revelations of the Holy Scriptures. It is then that he understands the meaning of that passage so simple and so profound, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." But it would be extraordinary if we could be ripened for eternal life, and more particularly if a servant of God should see his labours blessed, I do not say without afflictions, but without a large measure of affliction. "We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God." This doctrine is clearly revealed in Him whose sacrifice we now celebrate, since it is through His sorrows and sacrifice alone that we can obtain eternal life. The Saviour was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" not only a man of sorrows, but the man of sorrows, in whom all kinds of sufferings met, and who suffered what no man can either suffer or even conceive of suffering. But as was the Master, such must be the disciples; and such have been the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. I speak more especially of those inspired men in whom the Lord more particularly manifested Himself; they were, I say, a succession of men of sorrows, from Abel down to St. Paul and St. John. This does not strike us sufficiently upon a superficial reading of the Scriptures; but if we penetrate a little into the study of the Word of God, we are more and more struck by it. The apostles, the prophets, appear throughout the Scriptures as men of sorrows, and of sorrows greater than we know or can clearly see; for the Scriptures rather give us glimpses than a full view of things. To make us understand what these men of God suffered, the Word of God must have detailed all the circumstances of their life.

As to the apostles, the life of one only is related at any length, and it is he whose ministry God defined by his sufferings, since He said when He called him, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." If we follow St. Paul through the course of his life, we shall find it, from beginning to end, a life of suffering, both mental and bodily. Hear what he says himself, in the last verses of the eleventh chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more: in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides these things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is

weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" Examine every detail by itself. What a portrait! What activity both outward and inward! See the measure of his love in the measure of his sufferings.

As to the prophets, St. James says, "Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." And if we study with attention the life of the prophets, especially of those whose history we know the least imperfectly, we shall find this declaration exactly realised; as, for example, in the case of Jeremiah, one of the prophets of whose life we have some knowledge. But of all the prophets, he of whom we know the most is David, whose history is given us more at length than that of any other. Have you ever reflected upon the various afflictions of the life of David? If you take his life as it is related in the first and second books of Samuel, or in the books of the Kings and Chronicles, you will know it but very imperfectly. You will see in David a man who, in the beginning of his life, was pursued by Saul. He had many enemies, but, after all, he triumphed over Saul, which brought upon him much honour. You then see this same man much cast down and afflicted in his own family, as the just consequences of his sins; but you also see him consoled and abundantly supported by God, who, even in his most terrible chastisements, remembered His promises to David, and His mercy towards him. It is a life in which we find many trials and much affliction; but all that does not give us a just idea of David's sorrows. We must read the Psalms to understand his afflictions. The Psalms reveal his secret thoughts, and in some measure they reveal the secret thoughts of all God's prophets. They are full of expressions of unspeakable anguish. David constantly complains of his sufferings, of his diseases, of his innumerable enemies. We cannot easily understand what he means by those enemies of whom he so constantly speaks; but they seem to reveal inward sufferings of which, with the history of David only before us, we should never have been aware. This is one of the peculiar features of the Psalms. Read the thirty-eighth, and weigh every verse of it.

"O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath; neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink, and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease; and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee. My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off. They also that seek after my life lay snares for me; and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long. But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. For in thee, O Lord, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God. For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me. For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before

me. For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin. But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong; and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied. They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is. Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation." Innumerable enemies pursue him, the sense "of his sin overwhelms him," and then a complication of maladies. He is afflicted in his eyes, and he loses his sight; his loins are filled with a loathsome disease; his body is bowed down, so that he can scarcely walk; "his wounds stink and are corrupt." Such is David in this psalm. But if you read the sixth, if you read the sixty-ninth, and a number of psalms, you will find him in similar distress. He is, indeed, a man overwhelmed by suffering. We must not say, that as David was a type of Jesus Christ, those sufferings belong only to the Messiah. Undoubtedly David's sufferings were a type of those of Jesus Christ, but they could only be a type of the Messiah's sufferings, because they were intense sufferings; and it is precisely because David was a man of sorrow, that he was a type of the Man of Sorrows.

But, my dear friends, shall we stop here? After having seen that the apostles and the prophets were men of sorrow, shall we not go beyond this sad idea of suffering? They were not only men of sufferings, but they were men who overcame their sufferings and made them turn to the glory of God. Jesus Christ at the head of His followers triumphs over sufferings, and pursues His mission of love even in the midst of the most cruel anguish. In Gethsemane we hear Him exhorting His disciples, and maintaining all His presence of mind when He has to fulfil a message of love to them. It is the same upon the cross, where He does not miss an opportunity of giving to His disciples—to the crowd that followed—to John—to Mary—to all—exhortations concerning eternal life, even to the end of His dreadful agony. He is everywhere "the man of sorrow," triumphing over suffering, to accomplish in suffering and by suffering His mission. We see the same thing in His disciples and in the apostles. What use does St. Paul make of his sufferings? He makes them all turn to the glory of God. He is not overcome by sufferings so easily as we are. He triumphs over them by the love of Christ, and makes them all serve with wonderful fidelity to the advancement of the reign of God. And do you remark how David, of whom I have spoken more at length than of the others, triumphed over his afflictions to accomplish his work? The great object of the mission David received from God for all generations in the Church was the composition of the Psalms; and he composed them, or a considerable part of them, in the midst of the most cruel sufferings. Can you imagine yourself oppressed by physical, moral, and spiritual sufferings, called upon to compose a psalm? Can you imagine that at the very moment when your sufferings are such as are described in the thirty-eighth Psalm, you should burst forth in hymns to the glory of God, and for the instruction of the Church! How David triumphs over himself, and how humiliating is this example for us, who in our weakness are often obliged to wait till the poignancy of suffering is past, to be able to reap benefit from it ourselves, and make it profitable to others! But David writes his psalms under suffering. He writes the thirty-eighth while suffering persecution, inward torments, and the bitterness of sin. I know it may be said that David wrote the thirty-eighth Psalm when free from pain, and calmly reviewing the remembrance of sufferings gone by, as the poet describes in



imagination sufferings which he has never known; but this supposition is as repugnant to you as to me. It is in the furnace—in the furnace of affliction—that he writes these lines, which are to serve as an encouragement to the Church at all times. O power of the love of Christ! O renunciation of self-will! O grace in the true servant of God! O strength of the apostle and of the prophet! or rather, strength of Christ and of the Holy Spirit in them,—for never could men of themselves be capable of such strength of will, and such triumph over the flesh!

My dear friends, I leave it to each of you to make the application. It may be summed up in two questions. Are we men of sorrow, and what share have we in the afflictions of Christ? When we have our part in the afflictions of Christ, do we know how to triumph over them by the constraining power of love, and turn them to the good of our neighbour and our brother, at the same time that they conduce still more to sanctify and strengthen us, and to prepare for us a treasure of excellent glory?

XIV.

A Dying Man's Regrets.

1. THE SECRET OF A HOLY, ACTIVE, AND PEACEFUL LIFE.

JANUARY 13, 1856.

MY dearly beloved in the well-beloved of the Father, I thank God who again allows me to address you in His name, for your encouragement and for my own consolation; but I have great need that you have with me the patience of God, "with whom we are accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." My declining strength neither allows me to turn nor to raise myself, and it is only in this reclining position that I can speak to you. I hope to be able to do it so as to be heard by all.

A man is in a singular position who has been for a number of months, and may perhaps continue an in-definite time to come, constantly living under the impression that the bonds that held him to life are snapped—that God has struck him with an incurable and mortal disease, and he knows not how soon his Father's voice may call him home. He must, indeed, be insensible, and greatly wanting in reflection and Christian feeling, if he does not cast a retrospective look upon his past life; and at the same time, as thoughts of recovery ought and must rise in his mind—for, after all, he is in the hands of God, who can raise the dead, and who has raised many nearer death than he—he is disposed to ask himself, If I were restored to life, what use should I make of it? And while he recollects, that his whole life has proved the weakness and frailty of his resolutions, still he hopes that, by the goodness of God, such a visitation would not be lost for the second portion of his life and of his ministry. And then he says, I should like to do such or such a thing; and certainly there is nothing that I should not wish to do differently and better than I have done it. This is a cause of salutary humiliation for me; it may be a salutary instruction for you to reflect upon the regrets of a man who is dying, or who believes himself to be dying, and who seeks to represent to himself the different use he would make of life if it were restored to him.

It is more particularly towards such thoughts as these that I wish to draw your attention upon these occasions; and in order to choose immediately an example, there are points upon which, if I were to begin life anew, I would make considerable changes—I mean in my spiritual life. Of course, the private applications of the principle I have laid down belong to the Lord; but there are general applications of it that may be mentioned without inconvenience in a small meeting like this—for instance, prayer, the reading of the Bible, Christian liberty.

Now, here is a thing that strikes me. I regret having regulated my life too much upon my own plans—I mean upon my plans of faithfulness and Christian sanctification—and not more simply upon the plan that the Lord unfolds before each of us. I think I can easily make you understand my idea in a few words, and every child of God will be ready to apprehend it immediately. We are disposed to form

for ourselves a certain ideal of Christian life, of Christian activity, and of a Christian ministry, and to attach to our ideal certain plans and methods, and we are satisfied with ourselves only if we can attain to the realisation of them. It is, then, of importance to make the best plans, and to seek the best methods possible for their execution. All this is undoubtedly very good; but there is a great defect at the root of it: self—hidden self—which is so deeply rooted in the heart, and but too evidently appears in our best and purest works. What I should wish, would be to form the plan of my life, and of my daily conduct, not according to my own ideas, nor my own feelings, but according to the commandments of God, to His inward witness, to the guiding of His Spirit, and to the outward direction He gives to our life.

My ideas of the manner in which I would regulate my life will be easily understood by those who reflect upon the way in which Jesus regulated His. We do not find in Jesus those plans and methods that have so much occupied many good people, and have often perplexed them, and taken up a considerable part of their time which might have been better employed. But what do we find? We find a man (I consider Him here as the Son of man) who has no other wish than to accomplish the mission He has received from the Father, and who has no other plan than to enter into the plans of the Father; so that, with His eyes constantly fixed upon Him, He is only occupied in listening to His voice, that He may follow its directions, and to discern His will, in order to execute it. The works of Jesus Christ are prepared for Him one after another, and set by God before Him on His way, following each other so naturally, and arising so easily one out of another, that they never occasioned any confusion, even in the busiest days of His ministry. On a day, for instance, like that described in the ninth chapter of St Matthew, in which He calls one of His apostles, heals several sick, restores to life a dead child, and, as He was passing by, heals a woman who had been diseased several years, without mentioning the other good deeds which He spread all along upon His way, there is not an instant of hesitation or embarrassment, either for the arrangement of these works or for the time given to each, because Jesus Christ followed the plan of God, and God led Him by a straight path. Whenever there is on man's part this perfect accordance with the will of God, God on His part leads us in perfect light, And thus is realised an admirable and profound expression of the Holy Spirit : "We are created in Jesus Christ unto good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them." Here good works are presented, not as a path that we have to make out for ourselves, but as a path that God has traced, and in which we have only to walk. It is God's war, not our own; we have only to follow this path, and we shall perform every moment the will of God. If I have made you understand as well as I could, with so little development, what I wish I had done, and what I wish to do if restored to life, you will easily see the advantage that this conformity of our will with the will of God has over our personal plans, even the best of them. I must add, that I have no wish to discourage personal plans, which we should always endeavour to make as complete as possible. I think that our weakness requires this prop, provided our personal plans are always subordinate to the general rule of following only the will of God.

Now, to mention two or three principal ideas, the method of which Jesus Christ gives us an example, is, in the first place, a condition of holiness. What constitutes sin, taken in its primitive sense? It is the seeking of self—self-confidence—self-will—self-righteousness—self-glory—and of all that relates to us personally. So the wish to do what is right, and even to do the Lord's will, if it is only founded upon our own will and projects, inevitably participates in some measure of the root of sin; while, on the contrary, the very essence of holiness being the conformity of our will with the Divine will, it is when we have no other plan than that of God, and no other will than the will of God, that we shall have attained true holiness—holiness that will not appear outwardly only, but that will have an inward influence—a holiness like that of Jesus Christ. The holiness of Jesus Christ follows and results from the principle I have just mentioned; that is to say, a constant surrender to the will of God alone, manifested inwardly by the testimony of His Spirit, and outwardly by the declarations of His Word and by the indications of His providence. Jesus Christ is holy, because He wills only what God wills—because He seeks not His own glory, but that of the Father. This is the power of His holiness.

This conformity to the will of God is, then, a condition of holiness, and it is at the same time a condition of activity. Much time may be lost in seeking to please ourselves even in what is good. It is well to recollect how easily we may be mistaken, and how we may be absorbed in endless reflections and considerations. But how many men have acknowledged at the end of their career, that a considerable part of their life has been spent in forming plans, that might have been more usefully employed in accomplishing the work immediately at hand, and promoting thus the good of others! See what activity the plan followed by Jesus Christ, that I have just mentioned, allows Him. In the ninth chapter of St Matthew and elsewhere, we see good works thrown in His way, not one upon another, but one after another; and there is no limit to an activity founded upon this perfect harmony with the will of God, the action of man becoming a Divine action, and his life, as it were, becoming a Divine life, implanted in our human nature, in which something of the power of God is wrought. We have no idea of what we could do if self were completely swallowed up in this perfect harmony with God; if we sought no other will than His; if every word of our mouth, every throb of our heart, every thought of our mind, every movement of our spirit or body, were drawn towards Him, saying, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Some men have shown what man can do—Luther, Calvin, St Paul, Moses; these men showed what a man can do, when he seeks only the will of God. Jesus Christ did much more, because in Him alone the conformity with the Divine will was perfect. It is, then, a condition of activity—of almost unlimited activity; yet there is a limit, since God does not require of His creatures more than they are capable of doing.

Finally, and I here conclude, it is a condition of peace. There is no peace for a man who makes self his mainspring of action. There is always fear that he may be mistaken; he is troubled, and often commits errors, because human will and human interests are subject to much error; he can find no rest, he is agitated, tormented, and excites the profound compassion of him who, seeing the sincere desire he has to glorify God, sees at the same time how many obstacles his want of simplicity

accumulates around his way; while, on the contrary, when we look to God alone, we can cast our burden upon Him, and He will sustain us.

And again, if my plans are of my own imagining, they may not be practicable. I wish to embrace a profession, but a certain expenditure, that I cannot meet, would be requisite. I wish to be a painter, but my sight is not good; or an orator, but I have no voice; or a surgeon, but my hand trembles. All my hopes are disappointed, and I shall never be consoled. But there could be no such disappointment if my projects were chosen in accordance with God's appointed plan. If they were, the impossibility of doing what I had at first intended, would show me that what I wished was not what God called me to; and the obstacles that rise in my way are like so many lights, by which God reveals to me my true vocation.

If we act in this spirit (I say it with deep reverence), our vocation is God's affair rather than our own—it is His work, and not ours; and the activity, the individual exertion that God always requires of us, consists only in following where He leads, in a spirit of faithful and childlike obedience. In that we shall find perfect peace. God cannot mislead us. We are often tormented with the thought, that we do not do enough, or that we do amiss, or that we do not do the work which God appointed for us.

During the first weeks that followed the declaration of the doctors (that my disease was beyond their skill), I recollect how much I was troubled by the idea that my work was not done. By the grace of God I am now delivered from these thoughts, because I understand that is not my work, but God's; and I acknowledge that, by the sufferings and the afflictions He has sent me, and by the hope of eternal life that will follow, the Lord teaches me to exercise a new ministry, probably a more important one than what I had purposed, and at all events more sure, because it comes more directly from the hand of God, who mercifully constrains me to walk in this path for His service and glory. It is in such cases that we can say, like Jesus Christ before He suffered death, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." And why could he say that? Because He sought only to do the work of God, and God withdrew Him, as a ripe fruit is gathered, when His mission was accomplished. Well, and shall not we, too, seek to do the work that the Father has given us to do, committing ourselves to His care. And if we are faithful, we also shall only be withdrawn when our work is accomplished. To God alone it belongs to decide when the work He will do by us is accomplished. It may be imperfect, incomplete in the judgment of men; but if we are upright before Him, the Lord will not allow us to pass away without leaving any trace behind us upon the earth; He will not withdraw us before our work is accomplished in His sight; and we shall be enabled to say, in a spirit of humility, with the Lord, "I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do." Vinet said so, without being aware of it, when he gave his last theological lecture upon these words, "I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do." And what was accomplished in Vinet, was also in Rochat, and in all the true servants of God. There is much peace in seeking our plans only in God, and in following Him, denying ourselves; and it is only thus peace is to be found.

Let us, then, endeavour to seek our plans in God alone; that those who are summoned away may humble themselves, and those who have still to live may grow in grace. Let us in this spirit endeavour to follow Jesus Christ in His Gethsemane,

having our eyes constantly fixed upon the Father's will. It will be for us as it was for Jesus Christ, a condition of holiness, a condition of activity, and a condition of perfect peace. It is this peace that I ask of God for you, and I should be happy if I could think that these few reflections have excited in those who have still before them life and strength the wish to use them faithfully, and simply to glorify God according to their Saviour's example, so that they may be able to say, when their turn comes, "I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do," and may spend in perfect peace the time that intervenes till they are called from this world to the Father, by the grace of the Lord, and by the power and unction of the Holy Spirit.

XV.

A Dying Man's Regrets.

2. THE STUDY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

JANUARY 20, 1856.

MY dear friends, last Sunday I began to show you, under the title of the regrets of a dying man, the views he then takes of many things that he wishes he had done otherwise than he has, and of the way in which he would do them if he were recalled to life from his half opened tomb. Among the ideas suggested by this subject, one of the most important is the way in which he has studied the Word of God. Ah! he certainly then says, How differently I ought to have acted with regard to the Word of God! how much more I ought to have studied it! how much better I ought now to be acquainted with it, to be both better able at the same time to put in practice its precepts, and to communicate it to others. Let us pause a few moments upon this salutary subject, to humble those for whom the end of time approaches, and to enlighten those to whom time is yet given, but who know not for how long.

What are the Holy Scriptures? Men can never precisely explain the manner in which they were composed, nor, in particular, how the Spirit of God and the spirit of man are combined in them so as to make them at the same time Divine and human—a Divine word reaching to heaven, and at the same time human, and quite near to us. This is not less difficult to explain than the manner in which the Divine and human nature were united in Jesus Christ. This parallel is not mine, for Scripture calls itself the written Word, and it calls Jesus Christ the “Word made flesh.” But however the Holy Scriptures may have been composed, “they literally are heaven speaking upon earth;” they are the maxims of the kingdom of heaven communicated to men in human language, as if the invisible world were come down amongst them, and placed before their eyes. There is no other book, even amongst the best, which like this makes known to us the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. All are more or less tainted with human errors: this alone is exempt from them.

It is the book of God, full of the truth of God; in it we hear God speak by the Holy Spirit. We see God, man—the present, the future—time and eternity, described exactly as they are.

For any one who has thus understood what Scripture is, it will not be difficult to confess the use he ought to make of it. We ought to interrogate the Scriptures as we would an angel from heaven, sent by God at this very moment on purpose to instruct us; or, what is still better, as we would question the Lord Jesus Christ if we could speak to Him and hear Him. And, in fact, we do speak to Him and hear Him when we read the Holy Scriptures, for they reveal Him, and through Him they reveal all things by His Spirit.

Oh! how can we sufficiently love and venerate this book? It is true it is not the book that saves us, but it is the book that reveals the way of salvation, without which we could never have known it; and by which, the better we know it, the better we

shall know Jesus the Saviour of our souls. No Christian will contest the truth of this principle, and yet how few there are who really study the Scriptures! The greater number read them superficially, and are satisfied with knowing some great leading truths, without penetrating more deeply into them, and as far as possible really understanding them in all things, as it is written: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever." And why this strange contradiction with our own convictions? It arises from the difficulties that the study of the Bible presents. We must acknowledge that on beginning it there are many difficulties and much obscurity. Some labour is necessary to dissipate them; and as the mind of man is naturally slow and idle, and he easily loses courage, and is satisfied with reading over and over again without penetrating further than the surface, so he learns nothing new, and the constant perusal of the same things causes weariness, as if the Word of God were not interesting—as if we could not always find some new instruction in it—as if it were not inexhaustible as God himself! Let us, however, beware of thinking these difficulties insurmountable. No, my friends, but we must give ourselves trouble; for here, as in every part of the Christian life, God will have us to be labourers with himself. And the knowledge of the Bible, a relish for the Bible, are the fruit and recompense of this humble, sincere, and persevering labour.

Ah! then, let every one return to his Bible with renewed courage. Take book after book, seeking not only to gather from your study a general idea of outward piety, but a deep and growing knowledge of the kingdom of heaven. Study a book till you understand it as well as you can, and then take a second, and a third, and so on, and you will find on a second or third reading many difficulties that seemed insurmountable disappear, and even though some should remain, you will not profit the less by this labour, patiently undertaken before God. In this study, you must not except the most difficult books, such as the prophets—the minor prophets, that many Christians pass by as unintelligible; but if you take the trouble to study them, you will find much in them that is very interesting.

Besides, there are, through the goodness of God, many books that may be useful—commentaries upon certain portions of Scripture—that are as a key to other parts, and by the help of them we may penetrate more and more into the knowledge of the Word of God. Then we may give more attention to those parts of the book more especially addressed to Christians, but, I repeat it, without neglecting any part. The fruit and the recompense of those who are thus faithful and persevering in understanding the Word of God, will be to love it—to penetrate more and more deeply into it—and to find the time always too short for becoming well acquainted with it.

I know a man who spent seven hours every day in the study of the Bible, and he always found increasing charms in it. If any one in faith, making use of the resources that God gives him, and looking to God for guidance, should carry out these rules, which it is impossible for me to do more than indicate, he will find in the Word of God treasures of which he has no idea. It will be for him as firm a support as it was for Jesus when He was tempted in the desert. It will become for him what it was for all the saints of the New Testament, and for those of the Old Testament, as regards those portions of Scripture which existed before them—what it was for David—



what it was for Daniel—what it was for St. Paul—what it always has been for all the saints of God. May God grant us all this grace; and may He to whom it is not more difficult to bless in a short than in a longer time, nor with little strength than with much strength, so make the words that I address to you penetrate into your hearts, that they may cause a transformation in your plan of studying the Bible, for which you will bless God through all eternity! Amen.

XVI.  
A Dying Man's Regrets.

3. THE USE OF TIME.

JANUARY 27, 1856.

MY strength is exhausted, my dear friends, and it was a question with me whether I should not keep silence today: I shall, however, say to you what I intended, doing it as briefly as I can.

One of the things that trouble, or that would trouble, the Christian who thinks himself near his end, if he were not at the foot of the cross, is the manner in which he has employed his time. It is consequently one of the subjects of the exhortations that he addresses to his brethren who have life before them. It is written, "Redeem the opportunity;" this version is more correct than the received one, "Redeeming the time." To redeem does not here signify to buy a second time, but to seize eagerly the opportunities that God offers us, "because the days are evil," so that an opportunity missed can never return. The good use of time, taken in a general sense, is an idea so vast that it overawes; it will be more suitable here to take it in this more limited sense, and say, Lay hold eagerly of opportunities as God causes them to arise in your path. How much time, how many opportunities are lost by idleness or unbelief—by negligence or selfishness—by self-will or hesitation—by love of sin, or by a thousand other causes. It is not necessary to pause long here, for there is no Christian whose heart and conscience do not accuse him upon this point. The time that God gives us is precious and sufficient. God, who is just, measures the time to the work, and the work to the time; and never gives us a good action to perform for which the time is lacking, nor a moment of our existence in which we have not something good to do. But how can we attain to thus filling up all our time, and doing at least some part of the immense good that a man might do, if he put in practice the precept, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might," and if he were constantly occupied in serving the Lord? I wish to submit to you a few thoughts on the subject, leaving it to your conscience to develop them.

1st, We must be deeply impressed with the conviction that we are not our own—that our time is not our own, but, like all the rest we have, belongs to God, and it is consequently in God that we ought always to seek what we have to do in order to fill up the time He gives us, and take advantage of the opportunities that He offers us. I assure you that sickness gives precious lessons upon this point. I mean upon the fact that we do not belong to ourselves, but to God. Our heart is naturally disposed (and this is the very root of sin) to constitute itself the centre and aim of life. But in sickness and suffering how can we find consolation if we seek in self the aim of life? The aim of life is then completely lost. Sickness teaches us that we must seek it elsewhere; that we do not live in order to be happy upon the earth, but we live to glorify God, which we can do in sickness as well as in health, and often still better. Let us then learn from sickness, from all the sufferings of life, and from

the whole Word of God, that our time belongs to God, and that all we have to do is to employ it to His glory.

2d, Let us always be ready diligently to seize the opportunities that God offers us; they will not be wanting; and we shall find before us a life interwoven with good works prepared and ready, in which we shall only have to walk, and which will be so well and easily linked together, that our life will wholly be made up of good works and obedience, and consequently, as has just been said, of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For this we must have our eyes constantly opened and turned towards God, saying, Lord, here I am, what wilt thou have me to do? And when we have done one thing, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do now? and so on, without a single interval not filled up with the obedience due to God; and God will in this way furnish us with the means of doing an incalculable amount of good. No one can estimate the good that might enter into the life of a single man regulated by such a disposition—witness the man Jesus Christ. Even in the things of this world, the men that have done the most are those that have lived on this principle of seizing opportunities. If you study carefully the lives of the men who have accomplished the most considerable and numerous works, such as Calvin, Luther, Bossuet, you will see that they under-took things according as they presented themselves and came in their way, and that they were men called by circumstances gradually to do what they accomplished; as Bossuet, for instance, was led by the requirements of the Dauphin's education to compose his best works; as, likewise, Calvin and Luther wrote their best works when called to do so by particular circumstances: while, on the contrary, ordinary men who do little are those who do not know how to profit by passing opportunities. They might perhaps have done as much as others who have accomplished a great deal, but they had not the art of laying hold of the opportunity; and the true art of seizing the opportunity is the Christian art of having the eyes always turned towards the Lord, and thus being ready to undertake each work as He provides it, and when one work is done, to go on to another. It is prodigious what can be accomplished in the life of a man in simply following the path that the Lord opens before each of us.

3d, We must regulate our actions with order and method, and not abandon to chance the use of the time that God gives us. I said some days ago that we should not make plans for ourselves; but there is no contradiction in saying that we ought to act with method, provided our method is undertaken in the Lord. To do what God gives us to do, there must be method and order. It is desirable to have regular hours for rising in the morning and for our work; to be as exact as possible in the hours at which we take our meals, and in all our various occupations. Life then becomes much more simple and easy; it is like a well-adjusted framework, in which the Lord has only to act. The men who have done the most are those who know best how to regulate calmly and steadily their course of life, especially if they know how to add to their firmness an activity of mind and a warmth of heart that do not always accompany a spirit of order and method, but which, when combined, enable a man to do the most astonishing things. It is said that Kant, the philosopher, sometimes amused himself in calling his servant, and taking him to witness that for forty years he had risen every morning regularly at four o'clock. Think what a man may do who rises every morning at that hour, and then think of the beneficial results of

method, independently of the early hour of rising. From the fact of having a regular hour for rising, how much more time shall I not have to consecrate to the Lord, for the simple reason of my having fixed the hour in a spirit of prayer before God, taking into account the dictates of Christian prudence and wisdom; while, on the contrary, if I rise at any hour, the time will be regulated only by the impulse of the moment, that is to say, by various circumstances over which I might have triumphed—by my idleness, my desire of a little more sleep, “a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth,” and not only poverty of money, but of mind, of labour, and of the service of God. Thus, method, and a life peacefully regulated before the Lord, is a thing of the highest importance to enable us to do much for the service of God.

And finally, not unnecessarily to multiply reflections, let us keep our bodies and minds in such a disposition as will bring no hindrance to that good use of time, and of the gifts we have received, to be employed in a way agreeable to God. Sadness, unevenness of temper, the seduction of self-will, the desire of human glory, are so many obstacles that surround and harass us unceasingly, and over which we must triumph. Then we must not neglect the body. Delicate health or weakness of body are often a great obstacle in the accomplishment of our work for God. We must accept these infirmities when God sends them, but it is our duty to take all the necessary precautions to strengthen our bodies for His service and glory: this idea elevates and sanctifies everything. Many men might have accomplished much more than they did for the glory of God, if they had not given themselves up to an activity in which there was more of piety than reflection, and which wore them out while they were young; and those who die young should examine if they have not to reproach themselves with the neglect of certain simple and easy precautions, in which it is difficult always to persevere, but that would have allowed them to labour longer for the service of God. But above all let us be careful to strengthen the mind and soul, and to avoid all that may fetter the work that God will accomplish in us and by us.

My friends, none of us know how long God may still leave us here, but we know the time He has already given us, and the reproaches that we deserve for the use we have made of it. Let us lay hold upon the portion still remaining before us, whether strong or weak, sick or in health, living or dying. We have a Saviour, every moment of whose time was engaged in obedience to God: let us follow His footsteps to glory by the cross, and at the end we shall hear that loving voice saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.”

## XVII.

## A Dying Man's Regrets.

## 4. PRAYER.

FEBRUARY 3, 1856.

MY dear friends in Christ, amongst the subjects towards which the regrets of the Christian who thinks himself near his end turn, there is certainly not one in which he would make a greater change, if he were to return to life, than in his habits of prayer. What is prayer, in practice and in reality, for the greater number of Christians—I mean of those who believe and who pray? Some moments given to retirement for prayer in the morning, some moments in the evening, the time being longer or shorter according to circumstances, and sometimes very short; then the heart lifted up to God under extraordinary circumstances, in which special need of drawing near to Him is felt; it is to such narrow limits as these that the habits of many Christians, or men who call themselves by this name, are restricted. It is for this reason that the fruits of prayer so often promised in Scripture are so little known to the greater number! Where are to be found those powerful fruits of sanctification that enable the soul to triumph over all temptations, like Jesus in the desert, making us more than conquerors in Him who loved us? Where are those fruits of consolation that diffuse into the soul a sweet and profound joy, capable of rising above the afflictions of the earth, so that even in the greatest anguish and bitterness, whether of the spirit, soul, or body, we are still able to rejoice in that perfect joy that Jesus, dying, desired for His disciples who were to live a dying life? Where are those fruits of deliverance in which the soul obtains from God what it asks, whether it say with Jesus, “I know that thou hearest me always,” or, not being able to rise so high, it can say with David, “I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me”? Let us be sincere, and acknowledge that between the promises made in Scripture to prayer, and the fruits that we reap, the distance is so great that our feeble faith has more than once been troubled, and perhaps even shaken and we have been tempted to say, And is that all? No, it is not all that was promised—but we have not done all that was commanded. Ah! my friends, prayer such as I have shown you is very different from prayer such as the Scriptures show it, and to which all the promises are made.

What is not prayer in the scriptural sense? I said some days ago that the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God, is Heaven speaking: continuing the figure, I now say that prayer, as described in Scripture, is Heaven abiding in us by the Holy Spirit. Without the Word, prayer is nothing, having no food. Without prayer, the Word is insufficient, because it does not penetrate into the heart. But when the heavenly truths with which the Scriptures abound are received, and, assimilated with the very substance of our souls by prayer, penetrate into our inner man, we then know that prayer brings within us Heaven, and all its blessings—the Holy Spirit, and all His graces—God, and all His promises. Prayer is the key that God has put into our hands, to open a communication for us with the invisible world: by it, we have

everything; without it, nothing. I say, the key that God has put into our hands; for He has another key that He keeps in His own, and that He sometimes deigns to use for opening to us the invisible world, when we have neglected to open it for ourselves, that we might enter into communion with Him, and participate in His Divine proceedings, as it is written, "We are labourers together with God." Thus God, casting down Saul upon the way to Damascus, and raising him up a new man, opened heaven to him—when Saul, far from seeking Him, sought the disciples of Christ to torture them, and finally to put them to death. But these are extra-ordinary manifestations of the grace of God, upon which we ought not to reckon, and on which the more we reckon the less will they be granted. There can be no doubt that in all these extraordinary effects of the grace of God, we shall find, if we examine closely, sincerity in the soul that seeks. Saul of Tarsus, who went about persecuting the name of Jesus in His followers, was sincere in seeking God and His truth; and perhaps from the time that St. Stephen prayed for those that were putting him to death, a new life had begun to dawn in the soul of Saul. However that may be, we know that God's ordinary way of proceeding is to grant His favours in answer to prayer, and to wait for prayer before He grants them. Isaiah says, "And therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you." And what does He wait for? He waits till you have cried unto Him. And in Jeremiah: "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken, and ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." And so it is with us. It is by prayer that we can obtain everything; and it is to true prayer, such as the Scriptures describe, that all the promises are made.

Thus we see, my friends, that prayer is the distinctive mark of the Lord's mighty servants. With considerable differences, they all have this common feature—they are men who pray much and who pray fervently. Consider the prayers of Jacob: he wrestled with the Lord a whole night, till he had prevailed over the Lord himself, who allowed him thus to triumph in order to exercise the faith of His servant. Consider the prayers of Moses and Samuel: of Moses, the lawgiver of Israel; of Samuel, the reformer in Israel; of whom Jeremiah says in the beginning of his fifteenth chapter, to show that God had resolved not to grant a certain grace, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people." And now, let us try to substitute our own name for that of Moses or Samuel. Though such or such a one amongst us should have prayed, the petition would not be granted. . . . What a fall! What a humiliation! What a contradiction! Consider the prayers of David:—the Psalms—those prayers that were able to support, not only himself, but which are like the hundred and fifty pillars that have sustained generation after generation, and that will sustain all the generations of the people of God to the end of the world. Consider the prayers of King Jehoshaphat, who overthrew by prayer alone the combined armies of the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the inhabitants of Mount Seir; and of King Hezekiah, his great grandson and follower, who by prayer alone called down the exterminating vengeance of God upon an army of a hundred and eighty-five thousand men, who were only waiting for a good opportunity utterly to destroy Jerusalem. Consider the prayers of Nehemiah and Ezra, to raise and reform their people, like Moses and Samuel, the one reviving the spiritual state and restoring the observance of the law, the other

rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and re-establishing its civil constitution. Consider the prayers of Jesus, the “author and finisher of our faith,” who though He was Jesus, though He was the Son of God, nevertheless prayed,—spent whole nights in prayer, and did nothing but by prayer. By prayer He appoints the apostolic body; by prayer He supports His apostles; by prayer He triumphs over the devil in the desert, in Gethsemane, and at Golgotha; by prayer he accomplishes the whole work of our redemption, having been rendered capable of suffering inconceivable pain, of which our sufferings, even the most excruciating, are scarcely able to give us the faintest image. And after Jesus, consider a new succession of men of prayer. Paul—what a giant in prayer! Prayer is the soul and spring of all his labour. Paul is Paul above all by means of prayer. Consider the prayers of St Augustine; the prayers of Calvin; of Luther, who, when he appeared before the Diet of Worms, passed three hours, taken from the best part of the day, in crying aloud to God, not knowing that his faithful friend Dietrich was indiscreetly listening at his door, to gather for the good of the Church those burning prayers.<sup>4</sup> Consider the prayers of Pascal, who, though suffering when still young the most cruel and unremitting pains, is enabled to overcome them with a fortitude and a piety which we find deeply impressed in those beautiful and fervent prayers of his that have been handed down to us. Consider prayer in all the saints of every age; it is their faith, their life, the mainspring of all their actions, their work.

Oh! my friends, I know not if you will be as deeply humbled as I am by these reflections. For my part, I cannot express to what a degree I am humbled when I think what my prayers have been compared with what they ought to have been—with what they might have been. We should certainly be, in our humble sphere of action, what these men were in the history of Scripture and of the Church, if we knew how to pray as they prayed, and if instead of saying, God granted them special privileges, we knew how to say, “Lord, teach me to pray.” Ah! if I were to return to life, I would, with the help of God and in distrust of myself, give much more time to prayer than I have hitherto done, reckoning much more upon the effect of that than on my own labour; which, however, it is our duty never to neglect, but which has no strength but in as far as it is animated by prayer. I would especially strive to obtain in my prayers that unction—that fervour of the Holy Spirit which is not learned in a day, but is the fruit of a long, and often a painful apprenticeship. O my

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<sup>4</sup> Speaking of a residence at Cobourg, during the Diet of Augsburg, Dietrich thus writes to Melancthon:—“I cannot sufficiently admire his firmness, his joy, his faith, and his hope, in these times of desolation. Every day he becomes, by constant application to the Word of God, more firm in his convictions. He never passes a day without reserving at least three hours for prayer, taken in the part of the day the most favourable to his work. One day I had the privilege of hearing him pray. Great God! what force, what faith in his words! He prays with all the respect of a man who is in the presence of God, but with all the confidence of a child speaking to his father. ‘I know,’ said he, ‘that Thou art our good God and our Father, and therefore I am persuaded that Thou wilt exterminate those that persecute Thy children. If Thou do not, the danger is as great for Thee as for us. It is Thy cause; what we have done we could not have left undone. It is Thou, merciful Father, that must protect us.’ While I listened to him praying in a loud voice in these words, my heart burned with joy within me, for I heard him speak to God with as much fervour as liberty: he rested so firmly upon the promises of the Psalms, that he seemed assured that nothing he asked could fail of being accomplished.”

friends! you who are full of life—you whose career does not seem to be near its end—though of that we know nothing, and I may live longer than you—lay hold of the opportunity and redeem it—cultivate new habits of prayer. Bring into prayer, with a spirit of fervour, a spirit of order and method that will increase its power, as it increases the power of all human things, and co-operates with the Divine agency itself; that method and arrangement of which Jesus Christ has given us an example in the model he left us—the Lord's prayer.

And, finally, pray God to guide you, and leave this place full of that prayer, "Lord, teach me to pray." I will exercise myself in it with you, however short the time may be: God does not consider length of time, but uprightness of heart. Humbled by the lukewarmness of our prayers, let us all, with one heart and one mind, form a holy resolution to learn by experience what are the promises made to prayer, that we may reap a blessed inheritance in that invisible world with which prayer alone, by the Word of God, puts us into communication; in that invisible world, nearer to some of us—further from others than they think or hope, and which, however that may be, in ten years, in twenty, in fifty, in a hundred—which would be immense—that is to say, in the twinkling of an eye—will open before all those of us who have built their hopes on Jesus Christ crucified and risen again from the dead. This is my earnest prayer for you, and if the Lord call me to Him, it is the inheritance I would wish to leave to each of you, beginning with my own dearly beloved family. Amen.



## XVIII.

## A Dying Man's Regrets.

## 6. SOLICITUDE ABOUT TRIFLING INTERESTS.

FEBRUARY 10, 1856.

MY well beloved, who give me a proof of your fraternal affection in again coming to partake with me of the Lord's Supper, one of the things that would trouble the mind of a man who is contemplating death as at hand, if he were not encouraged in this, as in everything else, by the free grace of God in Jesus Christ, is the recollection of that part of his life that has been lost, if it has not been more than lost, in trifling matters, instead of being occupied by the great interests that alone ought to be constantly before the eyes of a Christian. For this reason I wish to call your attention for a few moments to the great evil of the Christian occupying himself too much with trifling interests. But here let me explain that we must not confound the undue preoccupation about trifling interests, with the necessary attention due to little things. We are required by God to busy ourselves about a multitude of little things, for it is especially of such that life is made up. The manner in which we fulfil our smaller duties is a measure of our piety, quite as true, and sometimes even more true, than the manner in which we fulfil the greater duties—because in little things we have only God, ourselves, and our family for witnesses; whereas in the accomplishment of the greater duties we are, as it were, upon a theatre where our pride may find but too much satisfaction in seeing itself flattered. Besides, nothing is either great or small in itself; it only becomes so by the spirit in which it is carried out. In the eyes of God, what we call little is often as great as what we call the greatest, and what we call great as little as what we call the least, since God is infinite and eternal. A faithful servant who, for the love of God, takes an affectionate care of the child confided to her by her master, performs an act which is very great in the sight of God, and will have its reward; and a statesman who, from self-love, aspires to the highest honours of wisdom and eloquence, does what seems very little in the sight of God, and may draw down upon him more shame in heaven than glory upon earth. What is really important is, to carry into all we do a great and elevated mind, always turned towards God, and disposed to do all in the view of eternity; so that, having God constantly present in our hearts, He may likewise always appear present in our words and actions—so that there may be nothing little, or terrestrial, or transitory in our whole life.

The example of God himself may serve to illustrate what I have just said. God makes no difference in the care He takes of great or little things. He forms a blade of grass or a flake of snow with as much care as He takes in ordering the proportions, the connexions, and the movements of the planets; and whether He makes a grain of sand or a Mont Blanc, He does it in a godlike manner—that is to say, perfectly. But this God, who sees nothing too small to deserve His attention, always has in view, even in His smallest works as well as in the greatest, eternity, His own

kingdom, and glory; as He said himself, "I have created them for my glory." And there is absolutely nothing in all God's works, whether moral or physical, in which He has not manifested the immense weight of His infinite care and eternal interest. It was the same with Jesus—God made visible. Not only did He not neglect the poor little children that were brought to Him, and whom the apostles considered it beneath Him to bless, but He did not neglect even the fragments of bread and fish that remained, and would not allow anything to be lost, although He had just shown that He could by a word, or even without a word, multiply the loaves and fishes at His will. And this is the same Jesus who accomplished the most prodigious works in His incarnation—in His redemption—in His passion—in His resurrection—and in His glorious ascension. But He does all in the same spirit; and whether He becomes incarnate, or ransoms us, or dies for us, or rises again, or ascends up to heaven—whether He stops to bless the little children, or to gather up the fragments of bread and fish, or to address the least word of consolation to the afflicted, or to offer a glass of cold water to one that is thirsty—He has always in view in each of His actions, God, eternity, and the glory of His Father; and it is in this light that Jesus Christ appears to us in all His works, as always having His head in heaven, although His feet were upon the earth, and saying of himself, "He who is in heaven." As all is great and noble in His soul, so also are all His works and thoughts.

Well, my dear friends, this is the example proposed for our imitation; it is thus that we should walk, always occupied, not with the little interests of the earth, still less with its lusts and sins, but with God, His glory, His love, and the work of Jesus Christ for the glory of God, and the salvation of men, as well as for our own. Made in the image and resemblance of God, we ought to be His followers; and in the least as well as in the greatest concerns of life, our predominant thought should always be God and eternity. Whatever the Christian may say or do, he should be always great before God, who weighs true grandeur. Painters represent the saints with a glory around them; there is nothing of the kind in Scripture, excepting for one saint in the Old Testament—this is the only exception. The saints carry their glory within them, and diffuse it wherever they pass. The Christian—wherever he is seen, in the street, in the drawing-room, at table, in prison, or at the height of greatness—should always inspire others with the opinion that he is a man seeking God, intent upon advancing the great interests of humanity, and who thinks it is not worth living for anything but to glorify God, and make all his successes and all his reverses contribute to that end; who is ready to leave this world as soon as his work in this respect is accomplished, and, like his Master, goes about doing good. Oh! how holy, how happy would such a Christian be, free from covetousness, from envy, from anxiety, and all that can disturb the soul! Walking always with God, how would he make the gospel honoured! how victoriously would he put to silence gainsayers! and how many more souls would he bring to his Saviour by the humble influence of a holy life, than by the most powerful language!

But where are such Christians to be found? my God, where are they? How much easier it would be to find sincere men—true Christians, I mean—who, if they were called out of this world, would resign their souls into the Lord's hands—who really wait upon Him, but who allow themselves to be led away and unduly occupied by trifling interests—by the love of money—by the thirst for human glory—by their

jealousy of a competitor—by the ardent desire for personal success—by an ambition that leads them beyond the path that God has marked out for them—by impatience under suffering—by their repugnance to submit to humiliations and crosses—by the great vexation that a word, perhaps even a word misunderstood, may cause them, or an insignificant accident, which at their death, perhaps even in an hour, will have left no trace! O my God, how few in number are consistent Christians! And this is the reason, my friends, that the gospel is so often compromised by those who profess it, and that it is so often said that, after all, the Christians pursue the same interests that others pursue, and that what disturbs others disturbs them too. And it is in this way, my friends, that the gospel is so often wounded by those who seek their peace and salvation in it, and who ought to employ all they have of life or strength to glorify God, going forward with their head elevated—their head in heaven like Jesus, while their feet are upon the earth—but breathing in heaven and finding there the spring of all their actions and the strength of all their life.

If you knew, my friends, how all these illusions disappear when death approaches—how very little all that is little appears—how that alone which is great before God appears great—how much we regret not having lived for God as Jesus lived, and how much we wish, if we had to begin life again, to live a more serious life, more full of Jesus Christ, of His Word, of His example, if you knew it, you would at this moment put your hand to the work, you would supplicate God to make your conduct consistent with your sentiments and your faith; you would succeed in your efforts, as so many have succeeded, because they cried to God, and formed sincere resolutions before Him: and this handful of God's children now assembled in this room, around this bed of suffering, and probably of death, these Christians, with all their miseries and all their languor, would do more for the advancement of God's kingdom, and for the good of humanity, than a compact crowd possessing all possible gifts; and they would do things so much the greater, that all thoughts of vainglory would be for ever banished from their heart. This is my ardent prayer for you, and it is the prayer that I entreat you to offer to God for me, that during the time that still remains for me, whether it be long or short, I may think only of living for the glory of God and for the good of my fellow-men, which will at the same time be living for my own eternal happiness. Amen.

XIX.

Jesus Christ

FEBRUARY 17, 1856.

WHEN we reflect upon what we have just done, and recollect what God has given us in His well-beloved Son, we would gladly remain silent, or only add to this solemn service words of thanksgiving and praise. But since the Lord calls upon us also to glorify His Word and bear testimony to the truth, and as in certain situations the opportunities for doing it are so scarce, I shall continue, trusting in the help of God, to explain to you the truth as it is in my heart, till the day comes when the Lord will close my mouth, saying to me, It is enough; thou hast spoken long enough; go now, rest from thy labours in the bosom of thy Saviour.

You know, I like to speak to you here, under the name of what I call a dying Christian's regrets, of the views a Christian who thinks himself near his end and of the use he has made of his life, or the use he would make of it if it were continued, and that he would wish his brethren who have life still before them to make of theirs. But I feel myself called upon in this peculiar position, and especially in the dark and agitated times in which we live, to bear testimony to the convictions to which my Christian experience and my pastoral life have led me; that when God shall call me hence it may be well known in what sentiments I shall fall asleep and rest; that there may be no sort of doubt in the hearts of my friends, of my brethren, or of the Church, as to what now constitutes, and what I hope, from the goodness of God, will become, more and more, the assurance of my soul.

There is one capital point upon which I will not pause now, because it has lately occupied our attention for a considerable time. I know that my little congregation is constantly changing, but I cannot do otherwise than follow a certain order in the ideas I expound to you. The first thing we considered was sin. It is necessary in the first place to have a clear and distinct view of our state of sin before God, not only by the conviction of having transgressed His holy law, but because we have begun to form an estimate of the enormity of sin, of the terrors of God's judgments, and of the depth of the abyss from which we had to be withdrawn. When we are once penetrated with a sense of the bitterness of sin, without any extenuation, without excuse, without any explanation, but saying simply, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned," the whole Gospel is summed up for us, my dear friends, and more particularly for me at this moment, in one word, or rather in one name—Jesus Christ—according to what St Paul says, "I determined not to know any-thing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Who is Jesus Christ? What is He? What idea have you of Him? What would you answer to His question, "Whom say ye that I am?" There is the groundwork and the beginning of our faith. (O my God, strengthen my heart and my mouth, to give glory to thee in my affliction. ... )

When we contemplate Jesus Christ, we at first consider Him as a man, but we soon perceive that He is not an ordinary man. We find in Him an infinite fund of

love, a benevolence always ready to come to our help, and strength always sufficient to deliver us—a Master and a Redeemer, healing the diseases of the body, to show that He can also heal those of the soul even in its most secret and intense misery. We find unspotted holiness, the holiness of God himself, brought down upon the earth; and finally, in a human body and in a human mind, a Divine essence of truth, of strength, and of love, such as no man ever possessed or even imagined, and which draws us towards Him whom we are instinctively assured can, and can alone, grant us every deliverance that we need. But soon, in listening to the Scriptures, and listening to himself, the mystery begins to be solved, but only to give place to another mystery, still greater. We learn that our Lord Jesus Christ—for such is the man that we have been contemplating—being born in a supernatural manner, is not only the Son of man, but at the same time the Son of God: Son of man, that is to say, man; Son of God, that is to say, God. If there is in Him a Divine grace, power, holiness, and goodness, it is that He is God; He is the image of His person, and the brightness of His glory, and “in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, bodily.” It is the mystery of godliness—God manifest in flesh—God saying to His disciples, as we have just read, “He that hath seen me hath seen my Father.” This is, my dear friends, according to my deep and increasing conviction, and that of all the faithful from first to last, —the prophets, inasmuch as it was given them to know, the patriarchs, the apostles, the witnesses, the martyrs, the fathers (the faithful fathers of the church), the reformers, the servants and handmaids of the Lord in all ages,—this is properly the key of the Gospel edifice and the basis of the whole Gospel. This is the centre from whence diverge all the acts of faith and obedience to which we may be called; and so entirely does the Christian life rest upon this foundation—Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh—that by the rejection of this truth Jesus Christ is not only dethroned, but also God himself. The living God is no longer living; we have instead the God of the Deists, the God of the Pantheists, the God of the Rationalists,—a God who is but a dead God, who has never either saved, or sanctified, or consoled any one, because the true God is He who reveals himself to us, and not only reveals, but who gives himself to us in Jesus Christ; for, as it has been so well said, in creation God shows us His hand, but in redemption He gives us His heart.

Jesus Christ God, and yet Jesus Christ man, really and truly man, really and truly God, seems to many a doctrine for speculation rather than a doctrine for practice; (My God, strengthen my feeble voice and my languishing soul!)—but this is not the case; and far from being a speculative doctrine, it is the basis of the practical Christian life. St. Paul, while he calls it a mystery, calls it a mystery of godliness: “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness.” There is no Christian life, no Christian consolation, no Christian strength, no Christian death, without this doctrine; it is the basis of all the rest, and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ shed abroad in our hearts is our only strength, as it is our only hope.

For this reason I wish you to know, and I confess that I see in Jesus Christ my God, before whom, with Thomas, I prostrate myself, saying, “My Lord and my God;” and to whom, with St. John, I bear witness that “this is the true God and eternal life;” or with St. Paul, “He is over all, God blessed for ever.” I honour Him as I honour the Father, and I know that the Father, so jealous of His glory, far from

being jealous of the glory I give to Jesus Christ, approves it as a glory given to himself, because He wills "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;" and I strive to live in the communion of Jesus Christ—in the peace of Jesus Christ—praying to Him, waiting for Him, speaking to Him, hearing Him, and, in a word, constantly bearing witness to Him day and night: all which would be idolatry if He were not God, and God in the highest sense of the word, the highest that the human mind is capable of giving to that sublime name. Jesus Christ is "He that is; I am; I am the way, the truth, and the life; I am that I am; Jehovah; the Lord God Almighty." This is what Jesus Christ is—this is what He is for me. And if in the last moments of my life I should be prevented by suffering from rendering Him this testimony, I wish it to be known that I bear this witness here, and in bearing it I have no thought of ever withdrawing it from Him! for the little faith, the little consolation, the little holiness, and the little love that I have, and that I pray God to increase, I have only acquired, since, having changed my first opinions, I have learned to adore Jesus Christ as my Saviour and my God.

After having given Him all honour as my God, I find at the same time in Jesus Christ my brother, my equal, my friend—one that is near me, with me, and, according to that beautiful expression of the eighty-fourth Psalm, "My sun and shield;" my sun, that is to say, my protection from afar; my shield, that is to say, my protection close at hand. Between this sun of the divinity and me there are so many things—a space so immense (of which I leave man to calculate the material distance, though he can never determine its spiritual length)—that I want the Lord to be near me, like a shield, covering me all over—whose heart presses my heart, whose arms are continually around me, and to whom I can say, when no mortal can hear me, "I am thine, and thou art mine; I know who thou art—my God and my brother; and thou knowest who I am—thy child and thy servant; who, notwithstanding all his infirmities, believes in thee, and who sighs only that his faith is so weak, and who aspires to believe till he can glorify thee in the bitterest trials." Jesus Christ is then my brother. Oh! what a blessing to have God for a brother, and to have a brother for God. I would never even try to explain the deep combination—the tender mystery in this union of God with man. This is what Jesus Christ is for me.

I cannot say more now, but you see what my thoughts are respecting the Lord, which I am ready to confess before His tribunal if He called me to it, knowing that he will not gainsay me, and that nothing is wanting to these sentiments but what is wanting in my adoration and my gratitude, and that I am infinitely behind in the debt of love and adoration that I owe Him.

My friends, this is what Jesus Christ has become to me, this is what God in His mercy has made Him for me, after having used in succession such various means as education, example, practice, books, preaching—employing these instruments under various degrees of light, and in divers manners, and thus building me up in His grace for eternity. I know that He was preparing me then in order to fit me to bear what He sends me today; and what He sends me today will be the crowning, if it is to be the crowning (which we cannot yet affirm), of all His dispensations towards me.

I conjure you to ask yourselves and surely ascertain whether Jesus Christ is for you what He is for the universal faithful church? what He is—I repeat it—for the patriarchs, the prophets—for the apostles, the martyrs, the fathers, the reformers, and for all the saints in all ages; what He is according to His Word, what He is according to His own declaration, what He is according to the testimony of the Father. You may rest then, but not till then; for no one ought to rest until he has learned to rest at the foot of the cross of his Saviour God, though he should be driven there by tempestuous winds, and fall down exhausted on that hallowed spot which he resolves never again to leave.

XX.

The Scriptures.

FEBRUARY 24, 1856.

THOSE of you who have been present at some of these meetings know that I especially desire, in the few words I address to you, my dear friends in Christ, who give me so great a proof of your love in coming to me, to take a retrospective view of the recollections of a Christian who thinks himself near to the time of his appearing before God, and to communicate to you the principal results of his study of the Word of God, and the convictions in which he desires to end his life. Having in this way already made known to you my firm belief concerning sin, and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, I shall today say something to you concerning His Word.

I declare, as before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, where I expect soon to appear, that all my researches and study, whether of the Scriptures, of the history of the Church, or of my own heart, that all the discussions that have arisen in these latter years about the inspiration and divine authority of the Word of God, during the triple period of my ministry (three periods of about ten years each, at Lyons, at Montauban, and at Paris), have, though in ways that the wisdom of God has varied, only served to confirm me in the conviction that when the Scriptures speak, it is God who speaks, and that when they proclaim His will, the way of salvation, the great doctrine of sin, of free grace, of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, what they say is not less certain than if the heavens opened at this moment above our heads and the voice of God were heard as formerly on Sinai, saying the same things.

There is no limit to the confidence and the submission that we owe to the Scriptures—no more limit than to the truth and the faithfulness of God; so that in a day of which God only knows the date, and to which I aspire as to a deliverance (without daring to hasten it)—when this day comes and I shall enter the invisible world, I do not expect to find things different from what the Word of God has represented them to me here, excepting, indeed, the immense difference in the condition and in the state of the soul before and after death—in time and in eternity. But, in fact, the voice I shall then hear, which shall be invested with all power to judge, and shall reign over all created beings—that voice will be the same I now hear upon the earth, and I shall say, “This is indeed what God said to me, and how thankful I am that I did not wait till I had seen in order to believe.” For Scripture is the Divine exposition of the truths and maxims which constitute the very groundwork of things that are unseen and eternal; it is a letter that God has written from the invisible world to His children, who are still detained in this world, in order that, upon the faith of God, they may learn even now what these things are, and may act upon them to the salvation of their souls. Those who believe in God will save their souls, but those who believe not in Him, how can they save them? Scripture is then the Word of God in the most elevated, and at the same time the most simple



and popular sense of the word. It is the only certain rule of faith and life—a rule before which all others must give way. All the meetings in the world for committees, for conferences, for prayer, for searching the Scriptures, are all without any value, except in as far as they are submitted and subordinated to the sovereign, infallible, immutable authority of the Word of God.

The witness that I bear to it is only the same that was borne—I do not only say by Moses, David, St. Paul, St. John, Augustine, Chrysostom, and by all the saints in all ages—but it is the witness borne by God himself, and by Jesus Christ, who gives to the Word of God the same glory that He receives from it. The experience and observation which we may be allowed to invoke, provided it be with humble diffidence, mercifully add their witness to the others; for it was never given to any man, nor to any set of men, to compose a book, however short, which can be compared to the Holy Scriptures, and which is able to produce the same fruits of consolation, of sanctification, of conversion; and never will it be given to any man, or any set of men, unless the Holy Spirit guide them in the same special manner in which He guided the apostles and the prophets. It is not a question of personal holiness, since the holiness that we recognise in the Scriptures is not less visible in the words of St. Paul than in those of Jesus Christ himself. It is a question of Divine direction. And this Divine direction appears still more clearly when we reflect that this book was written quite in an historical order; and yet, that though it comprises a space of nearly two thousand years, it has, upon every point, a settled and consistent doctrine. The Bible is a book by itself—a book which no other ever did, or ever can equal; and it reigns supreme over all the systems, all the uncertainties, and all the questions that absorb or agitate humanity.

But no sooner (here I enter into a new order of ideas) have I, for my part, sanctioned the title of the Word of God, which the Bible receives from God himself and from Jesus Christ, but in closer examination of it I find it full of man, so many are the proofs of humanity in it; though, at first, I might have felt a sort of fear, as if I had gone too far in the testimony I bear to it. I recognise, indeed, in the writers of this book so marked an individuality both of style and of character, that if (supposing an impossibility) we should now find some book that by error or oversight had not hitherto made part of the canon of Scripture, there is not a man, however little conversant with the Holy Scriptures, who would not be able immediately to say if it were written by Jeremiah or Isaiah, by Peter, by John, or by Paul, so great is the diversity of these writers, and so much has each of them stamped his own particular character on what he has written. I find many things that the writers of these books might have said without any special help from the Spirit of God (2 Tim. iv. 13), and as God never works useless miracles, we thus see the place that the spirit of man has in the composition of the Word of God. And besides, I find in it certain facts to remind us of human infirmity, as, for instance, when St. Paul seeks to call to his recollection, without venturing to trust it, the number of persons he had baptized at Corinth; but he is not careful concerning this, “not having been sent to baptize, but to preach Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. i. 14-17, &c.) It was evidently intended by God that, at every page of this book, which we call the Word of God, we should recognise at the same time the word of man. But if a man who has not reflected upon the subject feels a sort of fear at this discovery, it will not be

long before he takes courage, and sees in it, on the contrary, a pledge of blessing, of light, and of spirituality, in the share that humanity has had in the composition of the Scriptures. For how could it be avoided? It could have been avoided only if they had been dictated word by word, without the influence of personal character or historical events. Let us take an extraordinary example, which I quote with profound respect. When God places in the mouth of a stupid animal words of reproof to an unfaithful prophet, it is evident that His Word operates without any intermediate agent endowed with will, and that the inspiration (for such indeed it is) is in this case so much the more visible that the instrument is the more completely passive. Now, what is there in this inspiration of a being without reason which may be compared to the inspiration of an apostle, fully imbued with his own experience and with his personal sentiments? A similar remark, applied to all the degrees of the intermediate scale, in proportion to the activity or the passiveness of the instrument, would show that the interest of inspiration increases as it becomes more personal, without its losing any of its authority. And then how much more lovely, how much more touching, is Scripture as it was thus given us! given by God in the order of history, through the instrumentality of men whose spirit was led by the Spirit of God,—of men like unto ourselves, who could say, “I believed, therefore have I spoken,”—of men of whom it might be said, for instance, “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.” Thus the Word of God, having been given and handed down to us by men like ourselves, and not having been brought by higher and invisible beings, but by men, weak like ourselves, saved like ourselves—who were first to believe, and who could say, I have believed what I exhort you to believe has by that alone a life, a freshness, a power which penetrates much more deeply into the heart, and forms between the heart and this Word, as it were, a secret and familiar friendship, which makes this most solemn of all books at the same time the most loved. This shows a profound knowledge of the heart of man, and constitutes one of the greatest and most inherent beauties of the Word of God.

Thus the Bible—from having been composed by simple men, who, while they were writing it, had not ceased to combat against sin, and to depend personally upon the faith they proclaimed—not only is on this account no less truly the Word of God, but it is the more Divine as it is the more human; that is to say, that the power and the presence of the Spirit of God, and its influence upon our souls, are the more felt, because God used instruments to write it to whom His Spirit alone could impart that power and supernatural light which made of them “chosen vessels” to carry the truth to the ends of the world. It is for this reason, also, that the Scriptures penetrate the deepest recesses of our hearts, and while they instruct us in God’s name, they do it by the instrumentality of men; thus uniting at one and the same time all the conditions necessary to awaken, to enlighten, to convert to God, to draw us from the darkness of the present age, and to accomplish all things in all of us.

There is, my dear friends—and this is my last remark—there is a contrast, or rather a comparison, which serves at the same time to elucidate and to confirm what I have been saying; and that is the view we took last Sunday, and which the Scriptures constantly give us, of Jesus Christ uniting in himself the human and

Divine nature in so marvellous a manner that we cannot explain it, but which is, however, the ground and the consolation of our faith. Last Sunday we began by considering Jesus Christ in His human perfection, after which we contemplated Him in His Divinity. Now, suppose we had reversed this order, and that we had first spoken of the Divine nature of Jesus Christ, and the obligation under which we are to adore Him as God himself, and that we had afterwards, for the first time, made this reflection,—But Jesus Christ is a man, capable of suffering, of dying,—a certain fear might have entered our mind, as if we had attributed to Him too much of the Divine nature. But, as we saw last Sunday, Scripture always represents this perfect Divinity united in Him with perfect humanity, so that the one only enhances the value of the other, without in any way compromising its reality. It moreover reveals that the more He is God the more He is man, and that the more He is man the more He is God. For when does Jesus Christ most appear man? Is it not in the temptation in the desert, in the anguish of Gethsemane, and in the terrible agony of the cross? And is it not also at these same seasons that He is the most God, vanquishing as He did the tempter, rising above suffering, and triumphing over the cross by the power of the Spirit of God dwelling in Him, not with measure as in us, but without measure as in the only begotten Son of the Father? There is something similar about the Word of God. It is the Word of God, His true and eternal Word, and at the same time it is the Word of man, in which we see the movement of the spirit of man reflected, and feel the pulsation of the heart of man. And it is for this reason that it may be said that it is Divine the more it is human, because in St. Paul, in St John, for instance, it is precisely in the moments in which the fight of faith, the persevering struggle against sin, are the most visible, that we also see the most clearly how Divine is the light poured into their souls, to enable them first of all to struggle for themselves, and then to shed this light with a Divine power over the whole world.

How admirable does this analogy between Jesus Christ and the Holy Scriptures appear to me! It is an analogy which you may easily believe I did not invent, but which is furnished by the Word of God itself. For one who knows that the Word does not speak in vain, it is sufficient to remember one thing that is very astonishing: the Word sometimes gives the same name to Jesus Christ and to the Holy Scriptures; it calls both the Word of God. The one, Jesus Christ, is the living Word of God, the personal manifestation of His perfections, clothed with humanity; the other, the Scripture, is the written Word of God, or a verbal manifestation in language of these same invisible perfections. They are inseparable for us; for Jesus Christ is revealed to us only by the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are given to us in order only to reveal Jesus Christ. Thus Scripture is the written Word of God, as Jesus Christ is the living Word of God. Those who find in the human character of Scripture a pretext for denying its Divinity, reason like those who find in the human personality of Jesus Christ a pretext for refusing Him the title of God, because they do not understand that the Divine and human natures are united in the person of Jesus Christ, as the human and Divine Word are united in the Scriptures. It is not more surprising that Scripture, though the Word of God, should at the same time bear so many traces of humanity, than it is that Jesus Christ, though God, should be man. As to the manner in which the two natures in one case, and the two voices in the other, are blended—this is the very foundation on which faith rests concerning this subject; a profound

mystery, no doubt, but, as St. Paul says, a “mystery of godliness,” which fills our soul with joy and hope.

Yes, Scripture is the only way by which we can attain to a knowledge of Jesus Christ without danger of error, as Jesus Christ is the only way by which we can draw nigh to the Father. If we wish our souls to be saved, we must believe in the Word of God; we must submit to the Word of God; we must seek nothing in ourselves under any pretext whatever, whether it be under the name of reason, intelligence, sentiment, or conscience, which would predominate over, which would judge, which would control the Word of God; we have not to control, but to be controlled by it. The greatest of all God's servants are those who humble themselves the most before His Word; such as St. Paul, David, Luther, Calvin, who were jealously anxious to humble themselves to the very dust before it, and even lower if they could.

Let this Word of my God and Saviour then reign supreme—this Word to which I am so happy to be able to bear witness “before I go hence and am no more”—till this standard of eternal life, which we can only half unfold here below, shall be completely unfurled for us in the pure and peaceful light above!

XXI.

The Holy Spirit.

MARCH 2, 1856.

WHAT a blessing it is, my dearly beloved, if we understood it aright, to receive this bread and wine which the Lord himself gives us, present though absent, and more present, being absent, than if He were really present: "This is my body which was broken for you, this is my blood which was shed for you." Henceforth it is by a close union with the Lord, it is by the possession of His body and blood, that we are called to do His work. It is in His bruised body and in His shed blood that we are called to suffer all the anguish and all the pains of the flesh; and, renewed by the Holy Spirit in Him who calls us to His eternal fellowship by present and visible communion, we have for the work of Jesus the strength of Jesus, the grace of Jesus, and the Divine nature of which we have been made partakers in Jesus by the promises of faith. Alas! we are men of little faith! What a spectacle should we exhibit to the world if we were men of great faith—of faith capable of exciting, like that of the centurion, the admiration or astonishment of the Lord himself!—a faith which, in laying hold of Jesus Christ, would in Him lay hold of eternal life, and all the treasures of grace laid up in this merciful Saviour!

We were occupied some days ago, my dear friends, in considering the sentiments in which the Christian may rest when he arrives at that moment to which we were then alluding, and when, drawing towards the end of his career, he says to the Lord, in his feeble measure, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do" (he can say it if indeed he has been faithful in his feeble measure)—we were considering, I say, the power and the truth of this Word by which the Lord has revealed himself to us, and with which, day after day, He feeds our souls, so that it is like a perpetual communion, in which we live by the life of Jesus Christ and accomplish the work of Jesus Christ. But let us not forget, and let us learn from the declarations of the Word of God, as well as from the humbling experience of our own life, that this Word, though so powerful and so Divine that it made Job exclaim, "How forcible are right words," is powerful only when applied to our souls by that same Spirit who inscribed it in the pages of the book, who wrought in the heart of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, of St. Paul, and of St. John, and who, having chosen them for instruments, guided them to secure for all the generations of the human race, without fear of error, the everlasting truth. This Word must be written again in our hearts, and be, as it were, engraven in them by this same Spirit, without which it has neither life nor efficacy. We might read the Holy Scriptures for years without deriving any real blessing from them, and we should be astonished to see them have so little effect, and their power so little verified in our own experience, if the Holy Spirit did not explain and apply them, by coming to dwell in us. Now, this Spirit, which applies the Word of God to us and explains it, is the same Spirit that must perform in us all the rest. The work of the Father who has saved us freely, the work of the Son who has redeemed us by

His blood, are vain without the work of the Holy Spirit who opens our heart to believe in the Father and the Son, and to put in practice this Word of life.

Man—the heart of man—is represented in Scripture; where all is grand, infinite, eternal, as a theatre which attracts the attention of the holy angels, and of the Lord himself, and in which there is a continual struggle between the powers of hell and the powers of heaven; and this is only a repetition of the great struggle of these same powers in the whole life, both inward and outward, of our Lord Jesus Christ, out of which He came forth completely victorious, and has made us capable, in Him who has loved us, of being more than conquerors in our turn. Thus we are either the servants and depositaries of the spirit of darkness, or the servants, the blessed servants, and rich depositaries of the Spirit of light and life; and it is for us to choose the one by our unbelief, or the other by our faith; for it is written, “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.” But there is this difference, well worthy of the mercy of God, that while the spirit of Satan, however ingenious it may be in soliciting admittance into our hearts through all its avenues, is never able to unite itself so completely to our spirit as to be one with it, the Spirit of God deigns to penetrate into us, and to be so completely united with us, that we become the temples of the Holy Spirit, and that, being filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, we are made capable of doing the work that He did, and even greater, as He said himself when He gave the promise of the Holy Spirit, “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.” Thus Jesus declares to His disciples that, for the sake of the Spirit which they are to expect, it is better for them that He should go away: “It is expedient for you that I go away.” O my Saviour! how often have I wished to have Thee near me like Peter and John, and to be able to approach Thee, to commune with Thee, and to consult Thee! But Thou hast thyself declared that there is a gift so precious that, in order to secure it, it is better for me Thou shouldst go away; and this gift Thou hast granted me by the Holy Spirit.

But where are those who know and who appreciate the gift of the Holy Spirit? One thing we know, that God vouchsafes to the true Church, in our days, the grace to feel how little it has appreciated and possessed this life-giving spirit, which is none other than God himself coming to dwell in us; and to make all things new, this Spirit to whom nothing is impossible. Happy he who believes without doubt! If I have to overcome a strong temptation, it is not I who can overcome it—it is the Spirit of God that I invoke by prayer. If I have to bear excruciating pains unbearable for the flesh, it is not I that have to bear them—it is the Spirit of God that I invoke by prayer. If I put on that spirit of love, so contrary to our natural egotism, it is not to me that belongs this all-powerful love—it is the Spirit of God vouchsafed to me through prayer. And so it is with all the rest. Hence, in order to doubt that we can, by the Holy Spirit, accomplish the work to which we are called, we must begin by doubting, first, the faithfulness of God in His promises, and then His power to accomplish them. Oh, my friends, said a dying Christian, even in our best days our eyes are only half open; and I apply this especially to the Divine perfections and power of the Holy Spirit, for if our eyes were open to see and to appreciate them, would there be amongst us so much sighing, so much complaining? and should we not always be seen filled with the power of fellowship with Christ for the

accomplishment of our work? Consider, my friends, the place that the Holy Spirit occupies in the Scriptures, in the promises of the Old Testament, in the promises of Jesus Christ to His apostles; the way in which He leads us from the Gospels to the Acts, and the immense change He works in the apostles themselves, to show to all the disciples of all generations what He is capable of doing in all ages. The Holy Spirit is the great promise of the New Testament, and is, as it were, the crowning gift of the whole. Chosen and elect of the Father, redeemed by the Son, if we, being filled by the Holy Spirit, are living His life, then, and only then, are we put in possession of our inheritance, till we receive, in a better world, and under a more serene sky, the fulness of this inheritance, disencumbered of all the infirmities of the flesh and of earth, and become so completely the temples of the Holy Spirit, that our bodies themselves are called glorious and spiritual bodies.

And now may this body of dust and sin soon fall away, to give place to that glorious and spiritual body in which we shall accomplish the will of God as perfectly as Jesus Christ himself, and shall know, by the light of the Holy Spirit, what are the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit ! We shall know them by the enjoyment of them, and especially because we shall have learned to love, as we have been loved from all eternity !

XXII.

All in Jesus Christ.

MARCH 9, 1856.

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God: for I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”—I Cor. ii. 1-10.

IN communicating to you last Sunday, my dear friends, the results of my experience of the Christian life and ministry, and of the study of the Word of God, I concluded with the statement, “All by the Holy Spirit.” Today I say, “All in Jesus Christ.” We are sometimes disposed to represent Jesus Christ as having only opened the door of heaven for us, and then in some sort having abandoned us to go on by ourselves; but this is a very narrow view of what the Lord has done, and of what the Lord is, for us. St. Paul had certainly more elevated thoughts when he wrote, “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” According to St. Paul, God, in His triune nature and attributes, is summed up in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ, in His nature and offices, is as fully summed up in His cross. And elsewhere he says, “Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,” by which we see that Jesus Christ was not only given to blot out our sins by His blood once shed, but that, when reconciled to God by this precious blood, He was also given to guide us, to sanctify us, to fill us with all wisdom, and to accomplish all in all. And again, “In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” It is in the flesh, under a visible form, that God dwelleth in Christ; but He dwells there entirely, with all His glory and all His everlasting perfections. And again, in another deep passage of the same apostle, “All things are yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s:” in which we see God, through the medium of an admirable and marvellous hierarchy, at the head of the whole system of the everlasting truths, sending and leading the Son, and the Son, in His turn, calling and adopting us to himself, that in the name of the Son we should reign over all things, and possess the whole universe in our right, as members of Him to whom the whole universe is subject. “All things are yours,” is the first degree; “and ye are Christ’s,” is the second degree; “and Christ is God’s.” First or last is the supreme



degree, to which all the rest belongs, and upon which all the rest depends. How far are we now from the idea of those who imagine to themselves Jesus Christ as having accomplished only one act, the most important in our salvation! Jesus Christ is the God of man, as Pascal says, in some beautiful pages in which he develops, in a truly Christian manner, the place that Jesus Christ occupies between God and us. He is the God of man; He is God who gave himself to us; and as He gave himself up without reserve, when we possess Jesus Christ by true faith, we possess nothing less than God himself, and in Him everlasting life. "He that hath the Son hath life." "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son;" so that whatever we may stand in need of, for our souls or our whole existence, whether temporal or spiritual, we find all in Jesus Christ.

Are we desirous, above all things, that our sins should be blotted out? He has blotted them out with His blood. There is but one thing that can efface sin; it is not our penances; it is not our repentance; it is not our alms nor our good works, nor even our prayers; it is the blood of Jesus Christ, for "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Every sin that the blood of Jesus Christ covers is for ever annihilated before God. God himself sees it no more. I could employ still stronger expressions without deviating from Scripture. "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, saith the Lord." "Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back, that they may be no more seen." "He has cast them to the bottom of the sea," and, contemplating us in Christ, He sees us without sin, like Christ himself, "who was made sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him." Do we require consolation in our trials? We go to Jesus Christ; He has suffered as we have—more than we have—ininitely more than we can conceive it possible to suffer. All our sufferings are, as it were, a little stream running from the river of His infinite suffering, as it is from His cross all consolation and all mercy flow. It is to the Man of Sorrows we go to seek for consolation and peace, knowing that He is "acquainted with grief;" that in drawing nigh to Him we shall not only find relief from our sufferings, but we shall see in them real blessings, and that our bitterest afflictions will be found in the end to have been His most signal graces. Do we require light, and wisdom, and strength, to resist sin? Are we occupied with the interests of this world or the next?—all is in Christ. With Him we have all things, but without Him we have absolutely nothing. For this reason St. Paul says, in that wonderful passage I quoted just now, "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." All things are yours if ye are Christ's, for He is God. No one will contest the affinity between God and Christ; nor will any one contest the affinity between Christ and us, if we are true Christians. From this it results that all things are ours. Am I poor? All the riches of this world are mine, for they are Christ's, who is God's, and who could give me with Him all the riches of the earth, if they were for my good. If, then, instead of riches He sends me poverty, it is because that is what is best for me, and what God has chosen. The whole world, with all its glory and power, belong to me, for they belong to my Father, who will give them to me tomorrow, who would give them to me today, if that were good for me, since He disposes of all as He will. Am I sick? Health and strength are mine; comfort, and the enjoyment of all the blessings of life, are mine, for all belongs to Christ, who is God's, and who disposes of all as He will. For whom are they if they are not for me,

His child? If, then, He refuses them to me today—for a moment that passes as swiftly as a weaver's shuttle—He has good reasons for it; it is because there are, in these bitter pains, hidden blessings that are better for me than precious health and sweet comforts. He never deprives me of any good thing, but to give me something better. This is all my consolation—all is in His love. Do I desire wisdom and understanding? Well, though I should be ignorant all my life, though I may have had no opportunities of cultivating my faculties in this world, I am learned in Christ. Knowing Christ, I am more enlightened—more learned in the things of God than the man of the world who has spent his whole life over his books; for I know that uncreated, eternal light that he knows not—that light which God himself enjoys, and which leads me by an unerring hand through all the obscurities of life. I defy you to find anything of which I cannot say—That is my Father's, consequently it is mine; if He refuses it to me today, He will give it to me tomorrow. I trust in His love. All is mine if I am Christ's. Observe that in the chapter we have just read St. Paul says: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." O my friends, let us not be so ungrateful as to forget that it is under the cross and by the cross that Jesus Christ merited and obtained for us the unspeakable felicity that I would fain describe, but which I cannot succeed in getting a glimpse of, or even in imagining. It is by His blood shed—it is by His inconceivable sufferings—that He accomplished all for us. His love is the mainspring of our deliverance and of our complete redemption: such is the Saviour. It was with this idea that we begun, and it is with this we must finish. We come to His cross, we sit down under His cross, and no earthly thing shall tear us from this spot; here we will live and here will we die.

Dear friends, very soon all the scenes of this world will have passed away. In the world we have tribulation, but let us be of good courage: Jesus Christ has overcome the world; the strong man has been bound by one stronger than he; and now here we are in the presence of Christ who has redeemed us by His blood, and who is waiting to crown us with glory and felicity. Will you not share His glory? Will you not taste His love? Learn to know Him as he is. Embrace Him wholly with a sincere faith, that you may be able to realise the admirable words of the apostle on which we have been meditating—that you may be happy in life and happier in death, and that this life, so sad for those who live for this world only, may be for you an existence of which the light and peace shall always continue to increase till the day of Christ, to whom be ascribed all the praise and honour and glory, and especially the homage of our hearts and of a love answering if possible to His!

XXIII.

The Trinity

MARCH 16, 1856.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”—Rom. viii. 12-17.

HOLY WRIT is prudent even in its silence—you would in vain seek in it for the word Trinity to express the doctrine upon which I desire to say a few words, if God grants me sufficient strength. Why this omission? because the word Trinity gives us the idea of something speculative, while, on the contrary, this doctrine, which was later, and very appropriately called in human theology by the name of Trinity, is most practical and most tender, because it is the exact expression of the love of God, whether we view it in the relation in which He stands towards humanity, or in the reciprocal relations between the persons of the Godhead. The mainspring of our salvation is in the love of God; “We love him because He first loved us”; “God is love.” This love was manifested towards us in the work of our salvation; and it is not only in the work of our salvation that it is made known to us, but as existing from all eternity in the bosom of God, and constituting his everlasting felicity before it became ours, and that of all his faithful creatures. If we wish to understand the manner in which the love of God acts towards his poor lost creatures, to give them that everlasting life they have forfeited by their works, we have only to observe the simple historical order in which God communicated his revelations and inspired the writings of His apostles, after having inspired those of the prophets. Thus we find, first, the God of the Old Testament, then the God of the Gospels, and the God of the Epistles and of the gospel prophecies.

In the Old Testament we learn what ought to be sufficient to fill our hearts with joy. O my God! manifest Thy strength in my weakness. We learn that though quite unworthy of His love, yet God has loved us. We deserved that He should have condemned us a thousand thousand times; and if any one were not convinced of this, he has only to read again the books of the prophets, and particularly of Ezekiel; they are full of this terrible doctrine of the judgments of God which the Israelites had drawn down upon themselves by their evil doings, but which they did not deserve more than the rest of the human race, whose history we see in theirs as in a mirror. But instead of declaring himself hostile to us, God declares himself in our favour, and we learn, that where we had to expect only the weight of His wrath, we find the riches of His grace. The Almighty God who created the heavens and the earth, the builder of the visible and invisible world, is altogether for us; all His will

is to save us; and whosoever will enter into His designs, confess his sins, and submit to His grace, will obtain everlasting life as if he had never sinned; or rather, he will possess it having sinned, but having been reconciled, and with a new perception of the mercy that is in God. It is thus that God reveals himself to us in the Old Testament; so that, removing the heavy weight of Divine wrath, Divine love every where appears. The same prophets who denounce the most terrible judgments cannot long sustain this language, and always conclude with words of mercy. This is seen, in a very remarkable way, in the prophet Micah, who, in his few short pages, develops, with an admirable fulness, the plan of condemnation, of prophecy, and of salvation, in the assurance of which he finally rests.

Then come the evangelists, foretold by the prophets. Here God draws a step nearer to us; and not content with having declared, as from a distance, that He is favourable to us, draws close to us, to live with us—as one of us; Son of man, taken from among men, though Son of God; and after having been for us, He is with us, close to us, like a friend and a brother, with whom, according to the 55th Psalm, we can “take sweet counsel.” Then God appears under a still more tender and encouraging aspect than we had seen Him as represented in the Old Testament, especially when this Friend, this Brother, completely reveals to us the doctrines of Divine justice and Divine mercy, by dying upon the cross for us, and thus blotting out our sins. But, at the same time that this tender connexion between God and us unfolds itself, another connexion appears in the bosom of God himself; and we learn that He who redeems us is the Son of Him who will save us, and that there is between God, as He reveals himself in the Old Testament, and God as He appears in the gospels, the touching connection of Father and Son—connection that we cannot fathom, but in which we discern something at the same time ineffably tender and mysterious. And observe, that these two connections cannot be separated, and that we shall never understand what God is for us in Jesus Christ, if we have not a perception of what Jesus Christ is for God. There is, moreover, something here that must not escape our attention. We can only understand the spirit of love in its plenitude if we consider it as a spirit of sacrifice. Now, in God it does not seem possible that sacrifice could exist; for how could we take a single moment from His everlasting felicity? But, in the person of His Son, the Lord of Lords gives us an example of sacrifice. Here we see that the only begotten Son of the Father is at the same time the “man of sorrows;” and that there, where “the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily,” the unspeakable immensity of the suffering of which humanity is capable, but of which it is capable only if united in the Divinity, manifests itself to our astonished and grateful gaze. And here we see clearly, that this truly affecting doctrine must completely disappear, if the Son is not one with the Father, and that the awakening of our lively gratitude towards the Lord Jesus Christ wholly depends upon His being truly the Son of God—that is to say, God, as He truly is the Son of man—that is to say, man.

Then follow the epistles and the gospel prophecy; and how does that open? By the descent of the Holy Spirit, who lays the foundation of the Church, shedding His influence over it. This is the third and last step, for we cannot imagine any beyond this, that God takes toward His poor fallen creatures. He was with His creatures, and now He comes to dwell in His creatures, and thus becomes so completely one

with us, that He converts these poor bodies, born of the dust and become the slaves of sin, into the temples of His Spirit, the dwellings of God, wherein He delights to rest. The Holy Spirit—that is to say, God—after having been for us in the Old Testament, and with us in the gospels, comes to dwell in us; and this is the highest manifestation of Divine love, which cannot be satisfied until He has made himself one with us, and has come to dwell in us, “He in us, and we in Him.” And here again remark, my dear friends, that all the power and value of this doctrine of life disappear, if the Holy Spirit, instead of being God himself, were but an emanation of God, an agency of God, a gift of God. This would be only reminding us of what we already well knew by the Old Testament and by the gospels, of the power and grace that God can and will impart to us; while the Holy Spirit, such as He reveals himself in the epistles and in the latter part of the New Testament, and in the promises of Jesus Christ to His disciples, being God himself—is the power of God which strengthens us—is the peace of God which comforts us—is the holiness by which God delivers us from evil—is the life of God throbbing in our hearts. Oh! who can measure and comprehend the immensity of the progress made between the last chapter of the gospel and the first chapter of the Acts, and fully understand the admirable order followed in the plan of revelation, and of the heavenly gifts in the three parts of the Holy Scriptures of which we have just taken such a hasty survey—hasty, alas! as regards the subject, though too long for the feebleness of the speaker! I can only just point out this admirable view. The relations of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to man correspond with the relations of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in God, and the love manifesting itself to save us, is the expression of the love that has dwelt eternally in God. Ah! how touching and profound does this doctrine then become! It is the groundwork of the gospel, and those who reject it as a doctrine purely speculative and theological, have never understood anything about it. It is the strength of our heart—it is the joy of our soul—it is the life of our life—it is the very foundation of revealed truth.

I am obliged to stop here, and leave to your own meditations the things that I would have added. I will only recall to your minds, in concluding, what I have often said in the pulpit, but which some of you may not have heard, and which admirably sums up all this doctrine. One of the Fathers says—“We have in the Old Testament God for us, in the gospels God with us, and in the Acts and the epistles, God in us.” It is this, God for you, with you, and in you; it is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit that I desire for you, as well as for myself, for life and for death, with a heart devoted to you in Jesus Christ.

XXIV.

The Resurrection.

MARCH 22, 1856—EASTER SUNDAY.

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness to-ward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” —Ephesians ii. 1-10.

IT is written, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;” that is to say, it possesses the double virtue of making the future appear present, and what is unseen visible. Now, if there were a fact in which this double virtue of faith were realised, and as it were incorporated, this fact, by adding to the power of faith the clear evidence of reality, would it not be the very foundation of all our light, and the most solid ground of our hopes? This fact is the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures begin by showing us the Christian so closely united to his Saviour by faith, that what happens to Him happens to us, and that His history is reproduced internally, but essentially, in every one of His children. If He dies, we die; if He rises again, we rise; if He ascends to heaven, we ascend; and it is thus that we are saved, because by faith we are made one with Christ, who is nowhere to be sought for but in everlasting life and glory, where we also must necessarily seek to be found—we who are made one with Him by faith. But now Jesus Christ, after having lived and died in the sight of men, rises again from the dead in their sight, and shows Himself to them after His resurrection; so that the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which, like the rest of His life, we appropriate to ourselves, becomes a visible event, bringing to light our own resurrection, though it were before invisible. You recollect the heretics of whom St. Paul speaks, who said that the resurrection was already past, considering it as a thing purely spiritual. They are in flagrant opposition to the doctrine of the gospel, which demonstrates the resurrection of our Saviour, and that which we shall enjoy after Him and with Him, as a real, material, corporeal fact—and, in the resurrection of our Saviour, exhibits—as already visible to the eye—our own resurrection. What an immense blessing and privilege for the Christian to be able to contemplate in Jesus Christ, visibly risen, his own resurrection, which seems in-visible, and which in one sense is so, but which becomes visible in his Saviour. It is thus raised above, I do not say

the doubts, but even the difficulties of faith itself, and becomes a tangible fact, which we find in Jesus Christ, and apply to ourselves.

And at the same time—in my state of weakness I can only suggest the ideas—the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ changes a future event into an event present, and even past. If He were not risen from the dead, we should always contemplate the resurrection as something future, and consequently obscure and imaginary, however certain are the promises of God in themselves. But here God adds to the promise an historical fact. Jesus Christ rose, and was seen after his resurrection; and so our resurrection, closely united to that of the Lord, and depending upon it, becomes an historical fact—an event present—and event past. For this reason, St. Paul says—“We are already risen;” so that, by the resurrection of our Saviour, our salvation, though unseen, becomes visible—though future, it becomes present. What could we desire besides? It is only the Christian who can thus have a firm assurance of his reconciliation with God, and of his everlasting felicity, because the things not seen have passed into the domain of the things that are seen and present, and which he can enjoy by contemplating them, as it were, with his eyes, and laying hold upon them even now. You may also observe, my dear friends, that wherever the resurrection of our Saviour is thrown into the shade, the assurance of salvation is thrown into the shade also. Thus, in the Romish Church, where the attention is constantly drawn towards the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not to His resurrection—where the principal and most important ceremony of the Church, the mass, is the celebration of the death of Jesus Christ, there is no assurance of salvation. It is even considered a sort of pride to be sure of one's salvation; and certain passages of Scripture are turned from their natural sense, and made to say that no one ever ought to be assured of his salvation—which amounts to saying that the Christian can never have any sure hope or solid peace. Unfortunately, there are many Protestants who cannot rejoice in the hope of their salvation; and this arises from their not contemplating Jesus Christ risen from the dead, and now living and interceding between God and us, and the inter-course between God and their soul as living—present—historical facts. But the Christian, enlightened upon the resurrection of our Saviour, enjoys the assurance of his salvation. It is as sure for him as it is that Jesus Christ rose again; and to make him doubtful of his hopes for eternity, he must begin by doubting that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It is for this reason that the day we now celebrate is the greatest day in the Christian year; and the event which we recall to mind is not only AN event of the kingdom of heaven, but THE event of the kingdom of heaven. It was the resurrection of our Saviour that the apostles especially applied themselves to teach.

And for us, my friends, let us lay hold upon this resurrection: let us live with Jesus Christ risen from the dead, and we shall enjoy this precious privilege. But, at the same time, let us not forget at what a price this resurrection was bought, nor the path trodden by Jesus Christ, in order that our hearts may only savour the delight of this assurance, with feelings of profound gratitude and love for Him to whom we owe it. Receive these few words in the love of Christ, as I address them to you. It is all I am capable of saying; but let us all endeavour to develop them before Him in the silence of prayer, and in the study of the Word of God, at the feet of Jesus Christ risen, and in the love of Jesus Christ crucified! Amen.

XXV.

## God is Love.

MARCH 80, 1858.

“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”—PSALM c.

IT was I, my dear friends, who requested our friend to read this Psalm. I have only strength to think of the love of God. God has loved us: this is the whole doctrine of the gospel. Let us love God: this is all its moral. Scarcely knowing whether I shall be able to make myself heard, I collect the little strength I have to invoke with you the everlasting and infinite love of God.

O Thou God! whose name is love, who never hast nor ever wilt do anything but in love, how can I be thankful enough, when I see these friends whose love for me has assembled them around my bed of sickness, of suffering, and of what besides Thou only knowest! I rejoice in their love. To whom has more love ever been shown than to me? Should I not be the most ungrateful of men if I were not the most grateful? Therefore I return Thee thanks, O my God! and I thank Thee still more, if possible, for Thy love which has so sorely afflicted me, but which has at the same time supported me; and I confess before these friends that Thou hast never suffered me to want for anything, though I have been so often wanting in faith and patience, and though I am so far from having attained that perfect patience to which I so ardently aspire. But Thou hast been all goodness, and so long as I have a breath of life and strength I will declare it before them. Thy goodness, Thy goodness, O my God! I thank Thee for the freeness with which Thou hast manifested this goodness towards me in freely forgiving all my sins—mine, the greatest of sinners, the least of Thy children, the poorest of Thy servants; but Thou hast loaded me with loving-kindnesses, and hast made use of me to advance Thy kingdom, even in the extreme weakness and pain in which I am plunged today. I bless Thee that Thou hast given me a Saviour. Without Him, I confess, O my God! I should have been irrecoverably lost, and now in the deepest despair. But I have a Saviour, who has freely saved me by His shed blood; and I wish it to be known that I rest entirely upon His blood shed for me. I confess that all my righteousness, all my works which have been admired, all my preaching which has been valued and praised—that all is in my sight but as “filthy rags,” and that there is nothing in me capable of subsisting a single moment before the light of Thy countenance and the brightness of Thy holiness. But now it is not I that shall be judged; it is Christ in me. And I know—I know that He will enter, and I with Him, and that we are so closely united that He could never enter and leave me without. O God! I thank Thee with these friends, to whom Thou hast



granted the same privilege and the same consolation, and to whom Thou hast deigned also to grant Thy Holy Spirit to apply to their souls the free gift of everlasting life by the blood of Jesus Christ. I return Thee thanks first of all for my dear family. I return Thee thanks for my brethren, my sisters, my friends, who have all been for me brothers and sisters indeed, and who now testify by their love and their tears their tender sympathy, which I have in nowise deserved, and of which I know that I am entirely unworthy, but which Thou hast awakened in them, and which is now so great a consolation to me. I thank Thee for all things. I thank Thee for the consolations Thou has shed over this week; for the nomination of the professor at Montauban, for which we have so earnestly prayed; for the treaty of peace signed this day, for which we have so often prayed, because we believe that peace upon earth is useful in increasing, as it has already done, that peace which comes down from above. It is true, Lord, for I will be sincere in Thy presence, that I suffer greatly, and that my joy and my thanksgivings are clouded by my continual suffering and weakness. But Thou hast sustained me hitherto, and I have this confidence, that my prayers, and those of my family and my friends, will obtain for me perfect patience. And now, O Lord! I take all these friends and place them all in Thy paternal bosom, in the name of Jesus, by the Holy Spirit. And may there not be one now in this room missing in the everlasting tabernacles; and, seated at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, may we recollect with unmingled joy the day which has assembled us here. O God! sanctify us wholly, and may all the rest of our lives be employed entirely in Thy service. May Thy Spirit dwell in us, and be the soul, the life, the joy of all—of our families, and of those amongst us who are afflicted. O Lord! several of us have sick friends, and very dear ones—we commend them all to Thee; I bear them all upon my heart before Thee. I will not attempt to name them, lest in my weakness I should forget any, and thus grieve some amongst those here present; but I take them all, and lay them at the foot of the cross of Jesus, that Thou mayest console and sanctify them. May grace and grace be with us all, now and for ever. Amen.

THE END.