

quite collected to the last, and humbly resigned to the Divine will.

To those of the family whom he was leaving behind, and to his friends who came to be witness to his departure, it was a most affecting season. Imagination retraced the enjoyments which his society had afforded in former years; and the continual attention which his debilitated state had long required, served to endear him still more to his immediate attendants. As long as he could speak, his expressions to them were full of kindness and tender regard, which, though intended to console, made them feel still more sensibly that they were about to sustain an irreparable loss.

His countenance to the last was remarkably florid, without any of those wrinkles which are generally produced by disease and advancing years.

On the day of the interment, and when the funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Steadman, an immense concourse of different denominations of Christians assembled to pay their last tribute to the memory of the deceased, and the solemnity of their deportment showed how deeply their minds were affected on the occasion. The sermon has since been printed; the text, being part of the dying words of Jacob to his son Joseph, 'Behold I die, but God shall be with you,' was selected for the solemn service by him who wished to adopt them as his farewell blessing to his family, his flock, and his friends in general.

It is an affecting consideration that his decease was the prelude to that of two other ministers present at his funeral, who had been, for a succession of years, eminently useful in their respective spheres, and with whom he had enjoyed the most cordial friendship. The per-

sons here referred to were the Rev. Dr. Coulthurst, vicar of the parish of Halifax, and the Rev. Mr. Littlewood of Rochdale. It has often been the wish of good men that their lives and labours might terminate together. In both these instances, this was realized, as scarcely a warning was given. They were to the very last day of their mortal existence actively employed in the discharge of the duties of their station, in promoting the welfare of society. 'Blessed are those servants whom their Lord shall find so doing when he cometh, whether it be in the evening, at the cock crowing, or in the morning.'

After the account which has been given at large of the life, ministry, and writings, of the subject of this narrative, it may be deemed almost superfluous to attempt to take, by way of conclusion, a summary view of his character; but as the writer has been favoured with communications from several of his esteemed friends, he cannot forbear availing himself of them, by laying some extracts before the public.

At the annual meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society held at Leeds, August 28, 1817, the Rev. Thomas Langdon expressed himself as follows:

"The subjects which have hitherto engaged our attention, are highly calculated to afford us pleasure and encouragement. But I am now about to advert to an event which cannot fail to awaken deep and painful regret. I scarcely need inform you that I refer to the loss which this society has lately sustained by the

decease of our venerable friend and father, the Rev. Dr. Fawcett.

“It may truly be said of him, that he was ‘a burning and shining light.’ He was an eminent Christian, and strikingly exemplified in his own conduct the purifying tendency of that religion, which he recommended to others. Let a minister possess the finest natural abilities, the most extensive learning, and all the powers of the most commanding eloquence, unless they are accompanied with a good example, his labours are not likely to be useful. But Dr. Fawcett enforced all his religious instructions, by the powerful influence of a holy life. He was an affectionate husband, the best of fathers, a kind master, and a good neighbour, administering advice and consolation as the case required. His character was adorned with every Christian grace and virtue; but his unaffected humility and meekness, his fervent piety and his ardent and habitual devotion, were its most prominent features. He entered on a profession of religion when young, and he uniformly adorned the profession, by a pious and holy conduct to the end of his days.

“As an instructor of youth, he was eminently qualified, and his labours in this capacity were extensively useful. He had the happiness of seeing many of his pupils filling highly reputable stations in society with honour and usefulness. I see some present who were once his pupils, and I am persuaded that to them his memory will always be dear. Our highly esteemed missionary the Rev. Wm. Ward was among those who went through a course of preparatory study under his direction.

“I am not afraid of giving offence to any of my bre-

thren, when I say that as a minister, he stood, for many years, the first in our denomination in this part of the kingdom. His natural abilities were extensive, and these he had greatly improved by a long course of reading and study. His religious opinions were thoroughly evangelical, and equally free from any tendency to foster Pharisaic pride, and to encourage antinomian licentiousness. He inculcated the great doctrines of Christianity with a seriousness suited to their vast importance, and with a plainness almost puritanical. His manner was perhaps somewhat peculiar, but exceedingly solemn and deeply impressive. For considerably more than half a century, he continued with great fidelity, and zeal, and with increasing popularity and success, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

“As an author, though dead, he yet speaketh to us; and I hope will continue to speak to our children and children’s children when we are numbered with the dead. In his poetic writings he discovers no small degree of taste and elegance of thought. But they are principally distinguished by the strain of ardent benevolence, tender affection, and fervent devotion, by which they are pervaded. Of his prose works, perhaps his excellent ‘Essay on Anger’ will generally be allowed the precedence. With the merits of his ‘Devotional Bible’ you are well acquainted; and I doubt not but generations yet unborn will bless his memory, while they offer up the pious desires of their souls in the devout language with which he has furnished them in his ‘Aspirations.’ Of the support and consolation which many have derived from his ‘Sick Man’s Employ,’ I have often been a witness, when visiting the abodes of affliction, and standing by the bed of death. The ‘Advice to Youth’ has

had an extensive circulation, and has, I doubt not, been made very useful. But if I mistake not, a much humbler publication will not be the least useful of his writings, I mean the entertaining and instructive 'History of John Wise,'* a little book, which is daily read with peculiar interest by our children and servants.

"Of the Baptist Missionary Society, he has been from its first establishment a steady and zealous friend. But he is gone! His labours are finished, and the places that once knew him in the family, at our annual public assemblies, in the pulpit, at the baptismal font, and at the table of the Lord, where his manner was peculiarly interesting and affecting, will know him no more for ever! The death of his saints is precious in the sight of the Lord, and it ought to be precious in the sight of his servants too. Yes, we will often think of their excellences, we will embalm their memories, and endeavour, according to our respective situations and abilities, 'to be followers of them who do now, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.'"

The following passages occur in letters which have been addressed to the writer by persons who were intimately acquainted with the character and conduct of the deceased.

"My venerable and highly esteemed friend, whose

* The Rev. Edward Parsons, who seconded the motion made by Mr. Langdon, in an excellent and impressive speech, which he delivered on the occasion, told the meeting that there was a young person there present, now entering on a course of studies preparatory to the Christian ministry, who received his first abiding religious impressions from reading "John Wise."

loss we now lament, was a person of no common worth, his reputation has for a long series of years stood high among the churches of Christ in this part. We admit, that, like other great and good men, he had his infirmities, which he would readily acknowledge and lament; but they were counterbalanced by excellences which are rarely seen to meet in the same person. He was a true patriot, and well understood the principles of civil and religious liberty; but it was his uniform study to practise himself, and to inculcate upon others, the rule laid down by his Divine Master: 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' The feelings of his heart and the dictates of his judgment led him to cherish the most ardent love for his native country, praying for 'kings and all that are in authority, that we may live a peaceable and quiet life in all godliness and honesty.'

As a minister of the Gospel, notwithstanding his eminent talents, he was singularly modest; always speaking of himself with self-abasement. I have seldom heard him say he had *preached*, but only that he had *attempted* to do it. His mind on all occasions, and through all the changing scenes of life, appeared to be deeply impressed under a sense of the importance and responsibility of the ministerial office. Though he had been so long in the habit of public speaking, to the very last he evidenced the same diffidence of his abilities as at the commencement of his labours. Instead of fancying that he had acquired an habitual readiness and aptitude for the work to which he was called, his standing motto was, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' In some this might appear like affectation, but in him it was the genuine feeling of the soul. However painful it may be to the individual,

it is much to be preferred to those forward, self-important airs which sometimes disgrace the pulpit, and which are strong indications of an empty mind. This diffidence of his own powers was one principal reason of his making use of notes in the pulpit, not only at public meetings, but in addressing his own congregation. It was also a strong incentive to that diligent and persevering application to study, by which he was distinguished through life. He was always dissatisfied with his attainments, panting after more enlarged views of Divine truth, both for his own advantage as a Christian and for the benefit of others. On the return of any of the usual seasons of relaxation in the seminary over which he had long presided, he evidenced by his prayers in the family, as well as by his conversation, an earnest desire that they might be improved to some valuable purpose in an intellectual point of view, as well as for the renovation of health and spirits.

“ His sentiments on Divine truth were derived, not from human interpretation, but from the oracles of God. He preached the doctrines of the gospel in a practical manner, showing their genuine tendency to promote holiness in heart and life, at the same time exhibiting their influence by the purity and integrity of his own spirit and conversation. While, on the one hand, he steadily maintained and proved from Scripture that salvation is by grace; on the other he strenuously enforced the practice of piety and the duties of religion, as the only proper evidence of an interest in the blessings of redemption. In treating doctrinal subjects he was careful to avoid those rash expressions, which, however pleasing to some, are dangerous to the licentious and the unwary. The remark which an excellent writer

has made in this respect, was the rule of his conduct : ' It is not enough that what we preach or write should be true in some possible sense which the words will bear ; it is highly needful to guard against expressions which easily admit of being perverted ; and that we should bring in Scriptural doctrines in their proper place and connexion, and use them for a Scriptural end.'

" No one of the sacred writers insisted so largely on the doctrines of grace as the Apostle Paul : but his belief of them did not discourage him in the use of means, but rather incited him to greater exertions. He brought forward these doctrines always in their own place, not to blunt the edge of his own exhortations, and to excuse sinners in their rejection of the Gospel, not to encourage pride, but to promote humility in those who embraced it. As performing an embassy for Christ, as though God did beseech men by him, he prayed them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. ' We preach,' says he, ' Christ unto you, the hope of glory, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.' The Apostle evidently considered God's decree, as *his* rule and not *ours*. That this, and ought to be, the case, is evident from the language of the Almighty to the prophet Ezekiel ; for though he had told him that the children of Israel would not hearken to his voice, he still gave the direction to him, Ezek. iii. 4, 11 : ' Speak with my words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.' Such is the Divine precept to ministers in every age, and such was the humble aim of him who has recently

finished his course. He warned sinners of their danger, and held forth the Gospel in the freeness of its promises and fulness of its grace, with its tender invitations, as encouragement to apply to Jesus for mercy and pardon. When pleading the cause of God, he made no formal attack upon those who differed from him in their opinions, knowing that Divine truth will work its own way. He formed his conduct as a man and as a minister on that Divine maxim: 'Follow peace with all men.' It was not his practice to dwell on subtle speculations and perverse disputations, which engender envy and strife, much less did he introduce trifling subjects which are at best calculated only to please the fancy; those who heard him statedly must have seen that his aim was to reach the heart, to touch the consciences of sinners, to bring them to Christ, and to edify the church.

"According to the poet's description he was

" 'Simple, grave, sincere, in doctrine uncorrupt,
In language plain, and plain in manner,
Decent, solemn, chaste, and natural in gesture,
Much impressed himself, as conscious
Of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the charge he fed
Might feel it too.' "

It is an observation which has been made with great propriety and judgment: "That we ought not to think our views of Divine truths are sound and correct, unless our principles will allow and naturally lead us to make use of *every part of the word of God*. Reference is not here had to obscure historical passages, nor

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to prophecies yet unfulfilled, but to whatever relates either to privilege or duty. If the tendency of the system adopted be to make a person dwell upon Scripture doctrines, to the neglect of Scriptural exhortations, it will produce an unedifying sameness which must ultimately show that the Word of God has not been rightly and profitably divided. There is a harmony in Divine revelation which renders *every part* of the Bible beautiful in its season. It is not necessary to show how deeply the mind of the deceased was influenced by these considerations. The more he studied the volume of revelation, the more he saw of that rich variety of truth which it contains, and which, during the long period of his public ministrations, he endeavoured to exhibit, bringing forth out of the sacred treasury things new and old; but his work is now ended; he has finished his course, and received the crown which God has promised to his faithful servants. O that we may live and die like him!" *

* The following lines were written by the justly lamented Dr. Thomson, in memory of the subject of these memoirs. At the time when he penned them, his own career (alas! for his friends too short), which had been strongly marked by traces of high attainments and benevolent designs, was drawing to a close. Having removed from Halifax to Leeds, he was chosen Physician to the House of Recovery, and soon after, while attending that excellent institution, in the assiduous discharge of his professional duties, he caught a fever which quickly put a period to his mortal existence in the prime of life, *ut flos succissus aratro*.

"Servant of God well done! thy lengthen'd days,
Spent to promote his glory in his praise,
Have gently closed, in the grave's stillness blest,
E'en as the cradled infant sinks to rest.
Let those who in thy page have read his word,
And felt it raise their souls to praise the Lord;

With these remarks, for which he is chiefly indebted to various communications from his friends, the writer closes this narrative of the life of his deceased parent, connected with that of numbers of his contemporaries and associates, now no more:

Qui sacerdotes casti, dum vita manebat,
 Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo.

His own feelings have been deeply interested, but he is well aware that this is not a criterion by which to judge of the impression likely to be made upon the minds of others, nor will it be a sufficient excuse for the improprieties which their cool judgment may discover. So far as he knows his own heart, it has been his aim to give a true delineation of the life of the deceased, and

They whose young minds first open'd learning's page
 Under thy roof, and loved thee, saint and sage;
 Let thy dear flock, who as their shepherd led
 By living streams, in the green pastures fed;
 Let the lost sheep who learn'd of thee the way
 To join the few who never went astray;
 O let thy children, children's children, say
 How kind, how heavenward was thine earthly way;
 And as their silent tears uncheck'd flow on,
 Their hearts shall speak, 'Servant of God, well done!'

Let them, with eye of faith, the time behold
 When there shall be one shepherd and one fold.
 When the lost pastor, teacher, father, friend,
 Shall at the feet of Jesus lowly bend;
 With humble joy his sacred charge resign:
 'Take back the sheep thou gavest, they are thine!'
 Departed saint, O hear his glad commands,
 See where thy risen, glorious Saviour stands—
 Stands at the right hand of his Father's throne,
 'Come thou up hither—Servant of God, well done!''

of those events in which he was directly or indirectly concerned. In order to do this he has spared no pains in his researches; and he has endeavoured also to aid his own recollection by that of others. If, in any instance, the force of affection should have led him to enlarge too minutely on past events, or to expatiate too diffusively on departed excellence, he trusts to the candour and sensibility of those who know what it is to have lost the best of parents—the guide of youth, the friend and companion of advancing years. Should he have erred in this respect, he most readily acknowledges that he has so far done injustice to the memory of the deceased, in whom modesty and a humble sense of many imperfections were prominent features. To have attempted to throw light on the shades of his character (for such there are in the best of men) would have been utterly inconsistent with that *filial regard* which would lead even the most insensible, when death makes a separation, to cover them with the mantle of love:—but he is under no apprehension that any thing will be suggested by others, even by way of insinuation, to invalidate the general testimony which has here been given.

By the *grace of God* he was what he was; that grace qualified him for the work to which he was called, and through that grace his path shone ‘more and more to the perfect day.’

It is not without sentiments of regret, mingled with other emotions, that the writer now lays down his pen. After having spent many of his evening and midnight hours, as it were, in converse with the deceased, by endeavouring to draw aside the curtain from days that are gone for ever, and by musing over his manuscript papers, the conclusion of his labours is like

another separation, without the prospect of meeting again on this side the grave. He now commits the result of his researches to the public, with a sincere wish that a Divine blessing may accompany them, so that they may be in some measure instrumental in promoting and perpetuating those principles and that true spirit of Christianity which are honourable to God and conducive to the best interests of mankind. Amen,

*Ewood Hall,
July 25, 1818.*

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SUBSTANCE
OF THE
LAST SERMON
PREACHED BY THE
LATE REV. JOHN FAWCETT, D.D.
Feb. 26, 1816.
PRINTED FROM HIS OWN NOTES.

SUBSTANCE

OF THE

LATE REV. DR. FAWCETT'S

LAST SERMON.

NAHUM, I. 7:

The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

THE name of the penman of this prophecy signifies *consolation*: and though many parts of it chiefly relate to the overthrow of the Assyrian empire and the destruction of Nineveh, its capital; yet these events, however calamitous in themselves, were encouraging to the Jews; because assurances were at the same time given them of their deliverance from the yoke of the Assyrians, their powerful and inveterate enemies.

It is very probable that Nahum was contemporary with King Hezekiah; and that he delivered this prophecy after the ten tribes were carried away captive by the King of Assyria. Josephus relates that he foretold the destruction of Nineveh more than 115 years before it took place. In the beginning of the chapter, the prophet sets forth the majesty of a jealous and sin-avenging God; dwells upon the displays of his power, which is irresistible, in that he hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storms, where, to an eye of sense, all is con-

fusion—he describes the methods of his providence, which to our view are awfully grand and unaccountable; and then, as in the words of the text, he exhibits the milder aspect which he wears, and the gentle, condescending attention which he shows to his people. ‘The Lord is good,’ &c. “The same almighty power which is exerted in the destruction of the wicked is employed for the protection and defence of those who trust in him.” This is the doctrine contained in the text, which naturally divides itself into three parts: I. The Lord is good. II. A strong hold in the day of trouble. III. He knoweth them that trust in him.

I. The Lord is good—

Goodness is inseparable from the conceptions we have of God. Sometimes it intends, or is intimately connected with his glory. Thus when Moses desired to see the glory of the Lord, the Almighty tells him, ‘I will make all my goodness pass before thee.’ God is sovereignly and infinitely good. His goodness comprehends all his *relative* perfections—all the acts of his grace and mercy. These are the expressions of his goodness, and they are distinguished by different names, according to the objects toward whom the goodness is exercised. When it supplies the indigent, it is *bounty*—when it relieves the miserable, it is *mercy*—when it bestows blessings on the unworthy, it is *grace*; and as the term in this acceptance is often applied to spiritual blessings, it is that grace which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. When goodness imparts blessings according to what is promised, it may be denominated *truth* or *faithfulness*.

Whatever comfort the glorious attributes of Deity afford to us, we are indebted for it to his goodness.

When his *wisdom* contrives that which is for our *advantage*, it is his goodness—when his *power* is employed in our protection, it is his goodness. In short, his goodness renders all his other attributes subservient to our advantage. We admire and adore the Almighty for his *other* perfections; but his goodness allures and draws our hearts to him. For this we love him. As the Apostle says, ‘God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.’ By this we are encouraged to make our addresses to him, and to ask help at his hand. His goodness emboldens us to come to him for all that we need: Heb. iv. 16.

That Divine Being who is the object of our adoration, and whom we, as Christians, delight to worship, is a good and gracious God—he is *essentially* good. In this sense there is none good but one, that is God. There is none good in comparison with him.

We might enlarge on his goodness as it is shown in *providence*, and then a large field would open to our view. In this sense the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. Ten thousand times ten thousand instances of his goodness are daily seen in his dealings with his creatures. But let it be observed, that his goodness is most gloriously manifested through Christ. *Good-will* towards men was proclaimed at the Saviour’s birth: Luke ii. 14. O what astonishing goodness it was in the Father to give his only-begotten Son to sorrows, agonies, and death for us. This was no other than his goodness, under the appellation of love: ‘God so *loved* the world,’ &c. Herein the love or goodness of God was commended: Rom. v. 8. It was infinite and unbounded goodness imparted through Christ alone, as the Mediator between an offended God

and offending sinners. Does not this goodness shine most conspicuously in pardoning all our crimes? 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.' Is it not displayed in raising us from a death in sin, to a life of righteousness; in accepting us as righteous through the obedience of Christ; in answering our poor, imperfect prayers; in directing and guiding us with his counsel; supplying our temporal and spiritual wants; and in keeping us by his power, through faith unto eternal salvation?

We might here remark, in the first place, that this goodness is *greatly diversified*; its blessings are of various kinds. It is described as sparing, pitying, supporting, relieving, restoring, and consoling goodness. We may say of the blessings of God's goodness that *they cannot be reckoned up in order*. The language of the Psalmist, Ps. cxxxix. is applicable to them; 'If I would declare and speak of them, they are more in number than the sand. How precious are thy thoughts of love unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them—they cannot be numbered.' Eternity itself will be too short to utter all thy praise.

2. This goodness is, in its nature, *satisfying* to the soul.

It is so abundant in measure, that it replenishes and satisfies him who has an interest in it. Divine goodness gives the invitation to us: 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' 'Eat, O friends! drink abundantly, O beloved!' It is adequate to fill the most enlarged desires of the longing soul; he who is parched with thirst, and fainting with hunger, when enabled to have recourse to these supplies, with joy draws water out of the wells of salvation, drinks of those refreshing streams which

make glad the city of our God, and eats of that bread which cometh down from heaven; and thus it is that the Divine Being even makes our cup to run over with his goodness. The Lord's people have often found this to be the case, in attending to the ordinances of Divine appointment and have been filled with holy confidence in this goodness. Hence we find them using the following exulting language: 'We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.'

3. It is *great* goodness; and in this respect it is like himself—correspondent with the dignity of his character. It is great beyond all expression, beyond all comparison, beyond all comprehension: Ps. xxxi. 19: 'O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee,' &c. The apostle Paul seems unable to find out words sufficiently strong to set forth its greatness: 'God who is rich in mercy, for the *great love wherewith he hath loved us*,' &c. It is goodness which passeth knowledge. It bestows the greatest and best of blessings on the greatest of sinners.

4. It is *free, undeserved* goodness; hence the Almighty declares, 'I will love them **FREELY**.'

5. It is goodness which *exactly answers our needs*. It removes all our sins and all our miseries, supplies all our necessities, lightens our burdens, and makes the path of duty our delight; so supereminently excellent is it, that it is life, nay better than life. Hence the Psalmist uses this enraptured language: 'O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed are all they that put their trust in him.' God grant that the experience of those who now hear my voice may correspond with these animated views of Divine goodness!

6. It is *continued* goodness : Ps. lii. 1. The goodness of God endureth continually : in health, in sickness, in life, and in death itself, it is still the same ; his mercy endureth for ever.

“ Good when he gives, supremely good,
Nor less when he denies ;
E'en crosses from his sov'reign hand
Are blessings in disguise.”

This goodness heals our backslidings, and saves us with an everlasting salvation. It is laid up here for them that fear God, and shall be enjoyed through eternity itself.

“ O Goodness infinite, Goodness immense !
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good ; more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness.”

II. ‘ The Lord is a strong hold in the day of trouble.’

It is evident, from this clause of the text, that though God’s people are partakers of his goodness as before described, and interested in his favour, yet they have often here *a day*, or rather days of *trouble*. For instance :

1. There is sometimes a day of *public* national trouble, which they, in some respects, share with their fellow creatures. When the judgments of God are abroad in the earth, laying all waste before them ; when wars, pestilence, famine, earthquakes, and other desolating calamities prevail—then indeed is a *day of trouble*. But in these circumstances ‘ the Lord is a strong hold.’ He says, ‘ Come, my people, enter into thy chambers,

and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself for a little moment, till the indignation be overpast: Is. xxvi. 20. In that day of trouble, when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire and brimstone, angels were commissioned to lead Lot to a place of safety. God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.

2. There is a day of *family* trouble, when those near and dear to us afflict us by their ungodly ways, as was the case with Jacob, Eli, and David; or when they are visited with heavy afflictions, their years cut off in the midst; when we see them in the agonies of death, and are ready to exclaim, 'O Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!'—Or when the desire of our eyes is taken away with a stroke—this is a *day of trouble* indeed; but 'the Lord is a strong hold' in such a time of domestic trouble. This the Psalmist David found by happy experience, 2 Samuel, xxiii. 5: 'Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure; it contains all my salvation, and all my desire.'

3. There is likewise a day of *soul* trouble—when we are under conviction of our sins—oppressed with the weight of them, as a burden too heavy for us to bear—when our hearts are sore pained within us—when we are feeble and sore broken. Is there any relief in such a case? O yes. 'The Lord is a strong hold.' The conscious sinner is directed to fly for refuge to the hope set before him. In Jesus Christ there is protection, relief, and deliverance. 'Whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins.' Are any of you,

my fellow sinners, experimentally acquainted with this day of trouble? Let me direct you to a sure, a substantial place of refuge. 'Turn to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope.' Hear the invitation of him who in prophetic language is styled 'a refuge from the storm, a covert from the tempest, when the blast of the terrible ones is like a storm against the wall : ' ' Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth ; I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.' ' Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.' O that you may have faith to believe the *Divine Word*. Through every age it stands recorded in this Word, for the encouragement of those who are exercised with soul trouble : ' Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.'

4. A time of *severe temptation* is a day of trouble. This the Apostle feelingly describes when he complains of a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. There are seasons when the enemy comes in as a flood ; but in these overwhelming circumstances, ' the Lord is still a strong hold ' to his people : ' The spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.' That Jesus, in whom is all our salvation, was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin ; for this very end, that he might know how to succour them that are tempted.

5. The time of *inward darkness* and *desertion* is a time of trouble—when we walk in darkness, and have comparatively no light—when our souls are full of trouble, so that we are ready to say, ' While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.' Such a day of trouble has

often been known; but in this time of need, 'the Lord is a strong hold.' Destitute of relief and comfort elsewhere, the soul, in the exercise of trembling hope, exclaims, 'I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob; and I will look for him. When I walk in the darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.'

O what encouragement have we both from the promise of God and the experience of the pious, in every age, to fly to him as our strong hold. They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him from all his fears. 'Why then art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God.' The prophet Jonah was once in a very low state of mind, but he fled to this strong hold: 'I said I am cast out of thy sight, nevertheless I will look again towards thy holy temple.'

6. The season of inward conflicts with the power of sin, is a day of trouble. Of this the Psalmist David often complains: 'Iniquities prevail against me; my loins are filled with a loathsome disease.' The apostle Paul was so oppressed with a sense of it, that he bursts forth as in an agony: 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' But he found the Lord to be a strong hold in this day of trouble, for he immediately subjoins: 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' He will subdue our iniquities; he will bruise Satan under our feet: 'Lift up your heads; the time of deliverance, the time of redemption draweth nigh.'

7. The period of *persecution* is a day of trouble. Such days there have been in past ages, both under the former and present dispensation, as is evident from Heb. xi: 'They wandered about in sheep skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.' Our blessed Saviour endured the contradiction of sinners against himself; he was treated with insult, exposed to cruel mockings, scourges, and at length nailed to the accursed tree; and 'the servant is not greater than his master, nor he that is sent greater than he that sent him.' He plainly told his disciples, that they must be exposed to persecution for his sake. 'The time will come when he that killeth you will think that he doth God service.' This was soon after verified in their experience: and in how many instances have the faithful witnesses to the truth been exposed, not only to bonds and imprisonment, but have been brought to the gibbet or the stake, and sealed their testimony with their blood. But 'the Lord is a strong hold in the day of trouble:' 'Blessed are ye,' says the compassionate Saviour, 'when men shall revile you,' &c. 'Rejoice ye, and be exceeding glad in that day.' Saints amidst the heaviest sufferings have experienced extraordinary support; never known so much inward comfort, so much peace and joy, as when persecuted by men; never so happy as when in prison, in chains, or brought to a stake: 'We glory in tribulation also; for when tribulation abounds, consolation much more abounds.' Thus it was with primitive Christians. They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame and reproach for the sake of Christ.

8. A season of *sickness*, and *approaching death*, may justly be denominated a day of trouble.

This is a day which we must all know; and it surely

approaches to every one of us. But O how dreadful to have no shelter then! He that has lived without God, without Christ, without hope in the world, will be in a situation more deplorable than language can express, in that day of trouble and consternation. What will you, O thoughtless sinner, do in the day of visitation? where will you flee? where will you leave your glory? But the Lord to his people is a strong hold, even in this extremity of nature. An Old Testament saint could say, 'My heart and my strength faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' Need we then to wonder at the holy composure and confidence with which a Christian is enabled to contemplate the same scenes, in the believing views of that Jesus who is the resurrection and the life, and who, having abolished death, hath brought life and immortality by the Gospel:

"Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life be past;
Safe into the haven guide—
O receive my soul at last."

The triumphant language of an Apostle expressive of his own sentiments, and those of his fellow-Christians, is the best comment and illustration of this part of our text: 'The Lord is a strong hold in the day of trouble.' He says, with holy confidence, 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God—an house not made with hands.' 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'—'Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Finally, The *day of judgment* will be a day of