

VOLUME 9

THE HISTORY OF LITTLE
FAITH.

IN TWENTY DIALOGUES
BETWEEN
SHEPHERD AND STEWARD.

THE CRY OF LITTLE FAITH HEARD
AND ANSWERED
IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND

WILLIAM HUNTINGTON

Volume 9

William Huntington (1745-1813)

The History of Little Faith

PREFACE.

To the Weakly, Psalm, vi. 2. - Sickly, 1 Cor. xi. 30. - Halting, Psalm, xxxviii. 17. - Mourning, Isa. lxi. 3. - Faint, Prov. xxiv. 10. - Feeble, Psalm, xxxviii. 8. - and Fearful, Isa. xxxv. 4. - Fraternity of Zion; whether distinguished by the appellation of Lambs, John, xxi. 15. - Kids, Cant. i. 8. Children, 1 John, ii. 12. - Babes, 1 Pet. ii. 2. - Doves, Isa. lx. 8 - Conies, Prov. xxx. 26. - Or Ants, Prov. xxx. 25. - or whatever real or figurative name they may bear in the divine and endless genealogy - Their Friend and humble Servant sendeth, greeting - With perfect peace, and at such a time.

FEEBLE FOLKS,

I HAVE long had a strong desire to publish some little Treatise that might (under the blessing of God) be of use to you. A sense of my own weakness, and the abounding accounts of the weak in faith that stand on record in Holy Writ, have prompted me to undertake a work of this sort. And, what added some fervour to my desires was, that I have read several productions, both ancient and modern, intended for this purpose, which are not pregnant with sound doctrine: the authors have wandered from the doctrines of Christ, and followed the weaklings into the corrupt principles of free-agency; and appear as far (in doctrine) from the basis of truth, as the weaklings from the Munition of Rocks; which, instead of bringing them off the old bottom, fixes them on it.

To keep back, or hide the truth from them, or to endeavour to confirm them on any basis short of Christ, is fixing them where there is no standing. Such founding and daubing must be plucked up, and pulled down, before ever the heart can be established. Job detected his friends and comforters at this, saying, then, comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers remaineth falsehood?" Job, xxi. 34. This is building up in instead of truth; and if either the foundation or the superstructure cannot stand the test of God's word, how will they stand rebukes with flames of fire! Some choose, not only to keep back, to speak lightly of, the doctrines of God's Election and nation, lest these things should frighten, terrify, or drive back; which is encouraging their rebellion against their Maker, instead of building them up on their most holy faith, by the faith of God's elect The Saviour told Little Faith, as well as the rest, to "rejoice because their names were written in Heaven;" and rejoiced in spirit before them, "because his heavenly Father had hid those things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes:" and, as he calls them babes, it seems they were most, if not all, of

little faith at that time. And Peter tells the new born babes, as well as others, to "make their calling and election sure; for if they did these things, should never fall." As the Saviour revealed these things as a matter of joy, and Peter as their security; what are those gentlemen at, who make them nothing but stumbling-blocks, or of offence? If this foundation of God standeth sure, having seal of God upon it, what assurance can such men administer and what divine impression can those expect, who are taught to ridicule these things, and are built upon a sandy foundation, where the ruin is sure to be great?

For my own part (and I speak from experience), I should not wonder if a professor thus misled, and thus hardened, should end his days in a mad-house, or perish by suicide. I know this been the case with many, who have waged war with the decrees and purposes of God, till they have been, in just judgment, given up to the devil, as Alexander the coppersmith, and Hymeneus, who withstood the truth till they were both delivered unto that they might learn not to blaspheme, 1 Tim. i. 20. As far as I am enlightened to see, I have endeavoured to keep close to the truth; for it is a pleasure to me, as well as it was to John, who rejoiced when he found that not only the elect lady, but "her children also, walked in the truth," 2 John, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

I was puzzled awhile what method to adopt in sending my thoughts among you, and various schemes were formed; till, at last, I fixed upon sending them out by way of dialogue, as the most intelligible mode; and to which I was encouraged by the Song of Solomon. The characters fixed upon to carry it on are - A Steward. of the Royal Household, and a Shepherd of the King's Flock; both which are Scriptural characters, and well known to the just.

I have been rather profuse with the word of God; knowing that weak souls, after their first awakening, proceed with great caution, and dare not venture without a divine warrant; being commanded to stand in awe, and to cleanse their way, by taking heed thereto according to God's word.

It is not expected that a work of this sort should be of any use to believers who are grown up and established in the present truth - "they that are men put away childish things" - unless they should be desirous of seeing a map of their travels, or of perusing a journal of their infant days, when they went in a go-cart.

There ever hath been, and will be, even to the end of time, some of the children of God who will be staggering at the promises, and going bowed down, through fear of miscarrying, coming short of the saints' rest, or failing of the grace of God. To such therefore it is dedicated, and for such it is intended; hoping that, as God hath commanded us "to strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees," it may please him to cast it in the way of many of them, and to bless the reading of it to their souls growth, comfort, and establishment.

Many are found in the simplicity and power of the Gospel who have very little light into the great things of it; and many have been enlightened to discover great things in the letter of it, who never knew the simplicity, nor felt the power thereof.

My intention, in this work, is not to humour LITTLE FAITH, nor to indulge him in his whims and fancies, nor to encourage his infidelity, nor to build him up in falsehood, much less to establish him in unbelief. What I aim at is, to shew him what is faith, and what is not; wherein he is right, and wherein he is wrong; what is justifiable in him, and what is reprehensible what he says of himself, and what God says of him; what God has done in him, and what may be expected to be done for

him, according to the promise: and the difference between a babe in grace, and a fawning wolf; Little Faith, and a little fox; the sincerity of the one, and the infernal cunning of the other. One loves the truth, the other hates it; one trembles at the word, the other is hardened against it; one comes to the light, the other cleaves to darkness; one honours them that fear the Lord, and contemns the vile; the other hates the just, and speaks well of the false prophets - and in this is manifested the children of God and the children of the Devil.

There is some milk, Reader, and some strong meat; some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel, which is faith; and some bad things, such as unbelief, and cleaving to the flesh, which is a departing from him. In short, thou wilt find some of thy best frames pointed out, and some of thy worst feelings; thy best and thy worst hours; noble acts, and wretched failings; courageous feats, and fainting flights; the truth of grace, and fleshy foibles. That the Lord may give his blessing to it, and minister consolation by it, is the prayer and desire of,

LITTLE FOLKS,

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

In CHRIST JESUS,

WM. HUNTINGTON.

Winchester Row, Paddington

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the First.

As a certain Steward. of his Majesty's household was one morning walking abroad for the benefit of the air, he promiscuously met with a rustic shepherd, whom he accosted in the following manner:-

Steward. Good morning to you, shepherd. Shepherd I call you; for such you appear to be by the crook in your hand.

Shepherd. Sir, a good morning to you. You have called me right; for a shepherd I am by profession, such an one as I am.

Steward. Yours is an occupation that exposes people to all sorts of weather - wet and dry, cold and heat; and it requires both wisdom and watchfulness, especially if a man be careful, to "give a portion to seven, and also to eight," Eccles. xi. 2.

Shepherd. True; and, the more a man looks to his flocks and to his herds, the less he is esteemed in the world; for it is in our days, as it was in the days of Joseph, "Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians," Gen. xlvi. 34.

Steward. Better be an abomination to the Egyptians, than an abomination to Him that employs him. They that take the oversight of the flock, must receive their wages from the Chief Shepherd, when he shall appear. "The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field," Prov. xxvii. 26; or, "a ransom for the lambs," Prov. xxi. 18. The former shall one day come for thine hire; "so shall thy righteousness answer for thee in time to come," Gen. xxx. 33.

Shepherd. It is this, and being allowed at times to draw a little Pocket-money, that encourages me in the work, or else the treatment that I have met with has been enough to drive any man from the business who took it upon himself of his own accord. Though I have heard much talk of dumb dogs, in the days of old, I have found but very few of them; for, if they could not bark at the wolf, they could give tongue at the sheep, and at me also.

Steward. Pray, how many head may you have in your flock?

Shepherd. I cannot say justly; the Chief Shepherd keeps the book of name and number; but I believe there is somewhat above a thousand.

Steward. And have you all these to feed and to fold yourself?

Shepherd. Yes; and am obliged to draught them, and change them too, every two or three days; for sheep never do well long together upon one walk: the more they are shifted, the better they thrive.

Steward. You have got some lambs, I perceive, among them; and some ewes great with young - they do not bring forth together regularly, nor kindly, do they?

Shepherd. This sort of sheep are like orange-trees; they go to blossom, or are in bearing, all the year round: and some of the weakest of the lambs are more trouble to me than all the rest; they are always creeping through the hurdles; and I am afraid that my master will send the dog Smut after them; and that voracious creature makes such havock with these weaklings, that he leaves nothing "but two legs, or a piece of an ear," Amos. iii. 12, and sometimes I fret so at the sight of it, that I could wish that I had been any thing rather than a shepherd. It is like a sword to me; and I am obliged to cry out, "Deliver my

soul from the sword: my darling from the power of the dog,"
Psalm, xxii. 20.

Steward. To be contented in one's station is best. There is no place of servitude without its difficulties and disagreeable circumstances. Wherein a man is called, therein let him abide - a rolling stone gathers no moss. I am not a little tried, where the bounds of my habitation are fixed.

Shepherd. If I may be so bold, pray, Sir, what may your trade or calling be? Neither your hands nor your appearance look as if you worked very hard.

Steward. There is a labour of the mind, and a labour of the body. I have been exercised with both; and, I think, the former is hardest.

Shepherd. Care and anxiety certainly wear a man away, or else Jethro would never have counselled Moses to look out such a number of men to bear a part with him.

Steward. I have my share of that; for it hath fallen to my lot to be one of the Steward.s of his Majesty's household, or what is commonly called a clerk of the kitchen, so that the care of many lies on me: and, you know, it is "required in Steward.s that a man be found faithful," 1 Cor. iv. 2.

Shepherd. Yes, you must give an account of your master's goods, as well as I of my flock; and, if we are fully persuaded that we can do it with cheerfulness, and not with grief, it affords comfort and satisfaction to the mind. But the office of a Steward. in the Royal Family must be a much easier place, and a more honourable station in life, than that of a shepherd.

Steward. He is the best judge where the shoe pinches that wears it. A Steward. is much envied: many of the servants are obliged to come to him for necessaries, advice, and direction;

and, if he deals faithfully with all, every one, in his turn, will have a pick at him.

Shepherd. Very true, Sir. I was quite mistaken in my judgement of you. I should not have taken you to have been a servant: I thought, by your genteel appearance, that you was a reputable tradesman, a man in business for yourself.

Steward. God forbid! for none of my family ever set up for themselves but what came to beggary. Therefore, I never desire to be out of his Majesty's service, independent of him, or one hour upon my own hands, notwithstanding the many disagreeable things that attend the service.

Shepherd. Pray, Sir, what may your business chiefly be?

Steward. I provide for one part of the household such things as his Majesty orders me to get for them; I buy the meat, the wine, oil, milk, honey, butter, and fruit; I examine the cellar and the wardrobe, see to the family's table and apparel, and look to the doors and gates: I receive orders; and carry grievances, complaints, addresses, and grateful acknowledgments, to the King, &c.

Shepherd. Indeed! you have much upon your hands, and head too; as you must have a deal of accounts to cast up, many books to keep and settle, and many reckonings to make: "For to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more," Luke, xii. 48.

Steward. True: and where much is given, much is required. It a man be not punctual, he will not magnify his office; and, if once he loses his character, it is ten to one if he is of any more use in the household, even though he should succeed in getting a pension for himself. And, if his Majesty seems in the least to honour or favour him, there are many watching for his

halting. "Report! report!" say they," and we will report it!" Jer. xx. 10.

Shepherd. I wonder his Majesty permits such to approach the royal apartments; for he is not one that favours an eye-servant, or "helps an evil doer," Job, viii. 20.

Steward. Many draw near to him, and approach his presence, that never found favour in his sight. In a great house, there are not only vessels of gold, and silver, and wood, and earth, but the best and worst of servants also. We have an Old Fellow, that is permitted to skulk about the palace-yard, and has been for a number of years; who is interfering with every body, every thing, and every word.

Shepherd. Perhaps he is kept for his former good services. If he was not in favour, he would hardly be allowed to dwell among the household.

Steward. As for good services, it has never been in his power to perform any; nor is he any friend to the King, or the King to him. I believe he is kept in existence chiefly for the trial of faithful servants during his Majesty's pleasure. Many have wished and petitioned for his final dismissal, or utter destruction; but them he is still, and there he is like to be.

Shepherd. Well, Sir, "what cannot be cured, must be endured." Pray, has his Majesty many children?

Steward. O yes! - we increase and multiply: the Queen is always pregnant, in child-bed, or breeding, the whole year round.

Shepherd. And, pray, who has the care of the children? I suppose every one has a distinct nurse and rocker, have they not?

Steward. Any of the family may "suckle," Isaiah, lxvi. 12 - "swaddle," Lam. ii. 22 - "dandle," Isaiah, lxvii. 12 - bear upon their sides, or rock them, that will; and those of the family, even the young princes and princesses, that can hardly walk without a back-string or a go-cart, are fond of lugging them about I have sometimes seen one, that has itself staggered through weakness, endeavouring to keep another from falling into the ditch; and some, who are so tender-eyed as to be incapable of looking at a candle, much less at the sun, are often endeavouring to bring others from, or cautioning them against, the black hole, or horrible pit.

Shepherd. That is a good thing. It is with them as it is with lambs; the more they sport about and play, the stronger they grow, and the better they thrive: and so it is with children; the more they are tossed and tumbled about, the better; it keeps them from the rickets, and strengthens their limbs, if they do not humour them too much, nor handle them too roughly.

Steward. "Too many fingers often spoil the pie;" and too many nurses often hurt the child. All have not got sincere milk that draw out the breast: some suckle with the "poison of asps," Job, xx. 16, and stunt them in their infancy; and it is a rare thing to see such with proportionable heads. Others, again, both "nourish and cherish them like real nurses," 1 Thess. ii. 7. And, as for children, their taste is not very quick at discerning "perverse things," Job, vi. 30. "Stolen waters are sweet," Prov. ix. 17, as well as honey; and, if they taste but the candy, it is enough for them, they take all down.

Shepherd. But pray, sir, have you the care of them? This work is more fit for women than men.

Steward. The mother and her daughters are commanded to suckle them, and bear them upon their sides, as we have before observed; but, as soon as they are off the knee, I have the care of some of them. As a Steward. of the Household, "I

am to give them a portion of meat in due season," Luke, xii. 42; to look to their ways, manners, and education; and likewise to their clothing: for there is "a punishment to the princes and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel," Zeph. i. 8. And when there are any that are stunted, sickly, weakly, or rickety, I have more trouble with such a child than I have with all the family beside. I have had three of these under my care at once; and I used to doubt whether they ever would be able to go alone and feed themselves or not; but two of them are now gone from my care.

Shepherd. Pray what are their names? Are they down in the Court Calendar?

Steward. Yes: the name of one is "Weak Heart," Ezek. xvi. 30; the other, "Silly Dove," Hos. vii. 11; and the last, "Little Faith," Matt. vi. 30. Which shews that the first has a heart, though weak; that the second is a dove though silly; and that the third has faith, though but little.

Shepherd. I perceive, sir, that you and I both serve one master, though you are in the household, and I in the field; therefore, tell me the reasons why so many of his Majesty's children are so often rickety and feeble. One would think that the King would tend at no expense; and, therefore, the Queen must have the best help, and her offspring the best of care.

Steward. The fault lies not in the King, who stands at no expense, nor in the Queen, "who is a tender and delicate woman," Jer. vi. 2; but it lies chiefly in placemen, and in the rulers of the house, who are often biassed, not faithful to their trust, nor watchful to keep intruders out; but often recommend unwise and unskilful persons to the young of the family; till, at times, it is more like Ahab's court than David's palace. Besides, groaning-times are times that old ladies are all in motion: they are always very busy and active at those

seasons; and, while the Queen is in labour, she has enough to do to bear up under her own sorrows; and, therefore, cannot tell who are about her person, whether friends or foes. If the latter, the fault lies in them who called the Gossips, or those who recommended them. You know, that every person is not loyal that tastes the Queen's candle: various Persons getting about the child-bed, where every lady speaks her mind freely, and in the general fluently, after the "groaning-ale is broached;" till, in process of time, the hubbub is like the confused assembly at Ephesus: "some say one thing, and some another, till the greater part know not wherefore, nor for what they are come together." At these times, disaffected learn a cant, and get a wild gibberish, which introduces them as familiars to the household; and, if one is faithful to his trust, tries to get them out, another acts against his conscience in venting to keep them in; and there were too many of this about the Queen's person while she was in labour with Silly Dove, and Weak Heart.

Shepherd. Well, sir, but let the gossips be what they doubtless her Majesty had her proper maidens, or worn waiting, about her; and her proper midwife, doubtless; and the care of the Queen's person must rest chiefly in the hands of these.

Steward. In our days, every mole-catcher pretends to skill in mid-wifery; and every old barren woman will give directions at a groaning, who never knew what conception means, much less the bitter throes of child-birth. These generally hurry the birth, knowing nothing from experience; but, having imbibed some notions by observation, they will therefore neither let nature struggle with her own weakness, nor leave Providence to work his will.

Shepherd. Such are like some shepherds that I have known, who, by their over-carefulness, do more hurt than good in

lambing time. If an ewe seems long in yeaning, they are always forward at drawing the lambs, for fear of losing the ewe; by which means many a lamb hath had its shoulder dislodged, or pulled out of place, which has rendered it either weakly or a cripple all its days; whereas the best way is to turn their heads toward the Hill of Zion, or to the rising ground; and see that they lie to an advantage, attend upon them, and watch over them; keep wild beasts off, and "foolish shepherds that cannot understand, from intermeddling," Isa. lvi. 11, and leave them in the invisible hand of Him "who carries the lambs in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young," Isa. xl. 11.

Steward. You talk like a shepherd that has some knowledge of his business. Nature should not be forced; nor will Providence be hurried. Blind, unskilful, or ignorant persons, and mere pretenders, do as much mischief in the King's household as such foolish shepherds do in the field: for, if any in the house be touched either with the green-sickness, or with the hip, are griped or qualmish - whether it be the Queen, or any of the concubines, servants, or princesses - it is all put down, and taken for granted to be Zion's labour. Whereas some groan under a false conception; "They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity; and their belly prepareth deceit," Job, xv. 35. Others have been with child, and have laboured, and brought forth wind: they wrought no deliverance; nor were they delivered themselves, till the promise came - "Thy dead men shall live," Isa. xxvi. 18, 19. Some, who assume the name of Queen, and lay claim to his Majesty's person, find all their glory and lustre vanish as soon as they put their hands upon their loins: "Their glory flies away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception," Hosea, ix. 11. Others, after a deal of counterfeit labour, just to attract pity from the gossips, produce "a snail that melteth away: it is an untimely birth, which never sees the sun," Psa. lviii. 8. All these, in the eyes of some, pass for

child-bearing women: preparations are made; kerchiefs and pillows are prepared, Ezek. xiii. 18, the garden of spices is robbed, Song, vi. 2, cordial and consolation are flying about even for the dead, for such are not the bride, Jer. xvi. 7, 8, and every granny is condoling the hypocrite, till the abortive birth discovers the hypocrisy of the bond-woman: then "she that was full hires herself out for bread," 1 Sam. ii. 5; and, after that, becomes a pest, and a plague (if she can) to every royal lodge in his Majesty's dominions. Ancient palaces, as well as modern, from the royal family of Abraham down to Solomon, and from Solomon to the latest regal reign of the Prince of peace, the household hath been (and will be) pestered, more or less, with these strange women.

Shepherd. But you don't think, sir, that Weak Heart, Silly Dove, and Little Faith, are either children of whoredom, or a seed of falsehood. They are not born of fornication, are they? If they were the children of the concubines, or of the desolate which hath no husband, you would not have the charge and care of them, I should think; for the bread of his Majesty's household is not to be cast to dogs, nor to the "bastards of Ashdod," Neh. xiii. 24.

Steward. True; these three children of the wood are not legitimate; "they are the offspring and issue of Zion," Isa. xxii. 24, and are called the Feeble Ones of the "house of David," Zech. xii. 8, and their feebleness is chiefly owing to the grannies and gossips that attended her Majesty in labour; who have neither patience to let the birth take its course, nor wisdom to watch and wait the events of Providence, who asks this important question, "Shall I cause to travail, and not cause to bring forth? and shall I bring to the birth, and shut the womb, saith thy God? Isa. lxvi. 9. The work should be left to him whose work it is; and his aid be implored, and his time submitted to, who has fixed a every purpose, "a time to be born, and a time to die:" instead of this, the birth is hastened;

threatenings are used; warnings are given; different counsels are taken; all sorts of tenders are called in; endless advice, some right, and some wrong, is attended to; and violence is often used: and, what with their different slops, wherretting tongues, and violent measures, they are Forced" before the decree brings forth," Zeph. ii. 2. I think it is better "to tarry too long (like Ephraim) in the place of the breaking forth of children," Hos. xiii. 13, than (like Ishmael) to make an appearance fourteen years before the time of the promise; "for this breach is sure to be upon him that breaks forth, and his name must be called Pharez," Gen. xxxviii. 29.

Shepherd. We have got just such novices among cattle as you have in the household. Some are running with food as soon as cattle "bow themselves to bring forth their young, and to cast out their sorrows," Job, xxix. 3; others with hot drinks, and some drenching them with a horn: which is only troubling them; for, when they are in pain, they cannot eat, only at intervals, when there is a little intermission. To get them into the barn in time, if the weather be cold, attend upon them, and pray, as the Psalmist did, "that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets," Psal. cxliv. 13, is the best way of proceeding, in my judgment. And as it is with cattle, so it is, in this respect, with the human species. If the woman goes not her proper time, her offspring must of course be weakly.

Steward. It is the case with these. Weak Heart, Silly Dove, and Little Faith, are but seven months children.

Shepherd. I have heard, that all the honourable matrons, ladies in waiting, women of the childbed-chamber, grannies, gossips, and nurses, in short, all who engage, either in the talkative or the active part, on those occasions (who use proverbs), and whose veracity must not be questioned without incurring displeasure - do affirm this proverb to be true, with

one voice; namely, that "A seven months child generally lives, but an eight months child seldom does." If these are allowed to give a portion to seven, and also to eight, the proverb deals life to the former, and death to the latter.

Steward. I doubt not of these little ones living for ever: yet such are to be pitied, because they were neglected. Poor Little Faith was entangled in his navel-string at his birth; which requires a sharp knife, but sharpness was not used, Tit. i. 13; 2 Cor. xiii. 10. You know, "There are that speaketh like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise is health," Prov. xii. 18. This cuts a child off from the wisdom of the flesh, and begets a "fear in the heart, which (as wisdom saith) is health to his navel, and marrow to his bones," Prov. xxxvii. 8. The ties of nature are strong; and the child that is entangled with them is sure to savour of the old cask, and to be put behind. "Get thee behind me," said the King to Little Faith: "thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men," Matt xvi. 23. Hence the heavy complaint in the ancient Records "And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born, thy navel was not cut," Ezek. xvi. 4. Poor children thus entangled in the ties of nature must unavoidably draw nutriment from flesh and blood: and, where this is the case, the birth cannot be clear; "for we are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD;" John, i. 13. Yea, and it is no uncommon thing, in our days, to see a bond-child assume the highest office in his Majesty's household; giving orders and directions to the whole family, with his navel-string round his neck, instead of a ravishing chain, Cant. iv. 9, sticking to Hagar's knees, instead of Zion's lap; and cleaving to the first Adam, in preference to the second. Nor were the poor infants managed properly when they came: they should have been taken to the "fountain opened for the house of David," with earnest importunities to be "washed and supplied;" and they should have been "seasoned with salt," by the ministry of grace; and

have been swaddled with the girdle of truth, which "girds up the loins of the mind," and keeps them from staggering. But, poor babes! they fell into the hands of grannies that had no skill, and physicians of no value, and nurses of neither truth nor pity. And of such God complains: "Thy navel was not cut; neither wast thou washed in water, to supple thee. Thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these things unto thee, to have compassion upon thee," Ezek. xvi. 4, 5.

Shepherd. But pray, sir, who was appointed to nurse them? or, into whose hands were they committed? For certainly, if they are any part of the Seed Royal, proper care is taken, and proper persons appointed for the business.

Steward. That they are of the Seed Royal, I have no doubt, because the Queen "received strength to conceive seed," Heb. xi. 11; and would have "received strength to bring forth also," Isa. lxvi. 9; if they had let her alone. And that proper persons are appointed by the King to nurse and take care of the children, is true also. But some who are called rulers falsely, and some that are really so, appoint many whom his Majesty never appointed. Such, in former days, set up kings, but not by him; and heaped to themselves tutors, but not by his orders; and nurses too; or else why stands the above complaint upon record respecting their not being salted, supplied, and swaddled? And some are palmed upon the King, and nursed with all tenderness, when they are not his offspring; and others, that are really so, are often put into improper hands, who are friends neither to the King nor the country, and that for the sake of their dozens and the salary. And too many of our rulers give heed to, and take all to be true, that these old honourable ladies say at the labour and the birth; if any ladies of candour do but cry out, "This is one of the promised seed, it is the very picture of his Majesty;" - when we know that some complimentary ladies would pass the

same encomium upon a monkey, if it lay in the cradle; whose word is not to be taken, nor their judgment trusted to. Every one should be persuaded in his own mind, and have the testimony of his own conscience, if he acts uprightly, as one that must give an account: for many will cry out, "Such an one is a proper child! This is a precious seed!" And, "The other is the very portrait of the Father! Take it into the King's Household." Whereas, when you bring it to the light, and compare it with the King's image, 2 Cor. iii. 18; or with the King's children, Judg. viii. 18; we may say of it, as a gentleman once said, who was in company with me in the church-yard belonging to the famous corporation of Queenborough, in Kent, where we were reading some pompous descriptions and epitaphs upon the grave-stones of some of the jurats and other great men who had formerly belonged to that corporation ^{bd4}. Among other curiosities, a singular piece of sculpture presented itself to view, the meaning of which puzzled us all; but, after long examination, we construed the aim of the artist to be this - "Time with his glass; the Judge in the clouds; and the Earth giving up her dead." The gentleman concluded that the artist had not transgressed the second commandment, for "he had not made the likeness of any thing, either in heaven above, or in the earth beneath." And so we may say of some who would fain appear to be new creatures; the feigned mask defaces the image of the earthly Adam, and there is no impression to be found of the image of the heavenly Adam. But, alas! some who have been so long accustomed to the cant of Jacobite courtiers, and so often biased in favour of their friends, will let many pass for new creatures, and for wet nurses too, who never were pregnant with any thing but mischief; but have learned to mimic and talk by observation, and the art of nursing in a systematical way; who are branded with "a miscarrying womb and dry breasts," Hos. ix. 14. And, if even Hagar comes in, she may give them a drop, if she will; and

her bond-children are sent to play with them, any how, so as they can but be kept from crying.

Shepherd. Then some of the rulers of the household act as Moses did when he kept Jethro's flock: though it is not much to be wondered at; for a man brought up in a palace cuts but an awkward figure at first with a crook. But, what I was going to observe was, that he led his flock to the back side of Horeb; which, according to report, stands in a barren wilderness, and in a dry land. I will be bold to affirm, that David never led his flocks there when he followed the ewes great with young: for, though he kept sheep in the wilderness, yet he generally sought for the valleys, as fat pastures, green pastures, streams and rivers, are so often mentioned in his writings. But Moses, and some of your rulers, seem to agree pretty well: he led the flock to the back side of the mount; and, if the children are allowed to go to Hagar, they are taken to the front of it. What musical sound is that which echoes from the hills? Hark!

Steward. O dear! the sound is made by his Majesty's seven trumpeters. To-day, being court-day, we have a feast on the holy mountain: and I must run, for I am obliged to attend the table; but should be glad of another interview, if a leisure hour should offer.

Shepherd. I shall have pitched my fold, watered the flock, and can leave them safely in the inclosures, by to-morrow at half-past twelve; and will, if God permit, meet you under the fig-tree at the corner of the wall, precisely at one o'clock.

Steward. My time is not my own; but, if the King should not send me elsewhere, I will be sure to be there. The Lord be with thee.

Shepherd. And with thy spirit.

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Second.

Shepherd. Why, you run, Sir, till you are quite out of breath.

Steward. Yes, I am half an hour past the time appointed, but I could not help it; for, just as I was coming away, Little Faith got hold of me, as he often does: for if there is not any thing upon the table that he can eat, he is sure to follow me into the larder, cellar, or pantry, to see if I have got any secret morsel, or drop of comfort, in reserve for him; and, if I have, I generally give it him.

Shepherd. I was thinking last night, that if any body had heard our yesterday's conversation, it would have caused a deal of laughter among fools: yea, and some who are called shepherds and Stewards, if they had heard our discourse concerning travail, birth, and naval-strings, would have traduced us as indecent and indelicate, if not reproached us with using filthy conversation.

Steward. He that is too pure in his mouth to use the consecrated words of the King's oracles, is too debauched and filthy in his mind to be employed in the in the King's service. The sacred records of his Majesty, and the words by which they are expressed, were indicted by the purest Spirit that ever existed, and penned by the holiest men that ever lived: therefore those who traduce the wholesome words of the Divine records, as improper or impure, cast their slurs upon the Author of the style, and upon the sanctified family which are the heirs of promise; and must be influenced by a different Spirit from them, which can be no other than what is called a foul, or an unclean spirit.

Shepherd. If Peter was not allowed to call the Gentiles, whom the King had sanctified, either common or unclean, what liberties must they take who use such language against the words of the King's mouth - "Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?" Job, iv. 17. "The words of the King are pure words," Psal. xii. 6; "yea, very pure," Psal. cxix. 140. "Every word is pure," Prov. xxx. 5; "and they are pleasant words," Prov. xv. 26.

Steward. Those that say, "Stand by thyself, Come not near to me, for I am holier than thou; are a smoke in the King's nose, and a fire that burneth all the day," Isa. lxxv. 5. Which fire can be no other than the fire of sin; and the smoke is the flame and stench of pride and ignorance, which these holiest mortals are filled with. However we have a nation that are pure in their own eyes; but the worst of it is, that they "never were washed from their filthiness," Prov. xxx. 12. But we will go on with our good conversation in the King, and make use of the "words which his Holy Spirit teacheth;" and leave these pure ones to the mercy or vengeance of him who hath said, "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed," Prov. xiii. 13. And in the great day, when the mystery of iniquity shall be revealed, their purity will be brought to light; and then we shall be perfect in knowledge, and have the satisfaction of seeing what it really is, and of judging accordingly.

Shepherd. When we parted yesterday, you was speaking of the bad nursing that Little Faith has had; and of his being permitted, at times, to go to Hagar, and to be carried about by the bond-children. If this is the case, I do not wonder at Little Faith's weakness. I think the free woman, the seed-royal, and the established and warranted servants of the Household, ought to have the sole and whole management of the King's children.

Steward. If Sarah, or the heirs of promise, or any of Sarah's daughters that do well, had the whole management of them, it would not be as it is. As soon as Isaac was born, Sarah turned Hagar out, and her son too. She would never let the bond-woman put the heir of promise to her breasts, lest the dregs of the servant's body should injure the favoured heir; nor permit her to stay in the house, lest the child should learn her ill manners; nor her bond-child neither. Isaac must pass through his whole state of childhood without a playmate, rather than whip tops with, or learn the archer's dexterity of that mocking child of the flesh.

Shepherd. Hagar must undoubtedly have an eternal hatred to Sarah, and the Ishmaelites to the Israelites. The house of Saul were never one with the house of David, nor the bond-woman with the married wife. Sinai and Zion can never agree; nor can the desolate approve of Hephzi-bah: and those who attempt to make reconciliation here stand in a gap that can never be closed; and are proclaiming friendship where the King hath put enmity, and making peace where he hath sent both a sword and a fire. If any of the bond-children come to the court of Zion, they come as spies, to count the towers, mark the bulwarks, or dive into the management of the household, into the rules of it, the ways of it, and to get a smattering of the pure language of the court; only that they may be capable of ensnaring some of the sons or daughters of Zion. Egyptians will be Egyptians.

Steward. True; and we know that Egypt was the most abandoned to idolatry and witchcraft of any place under heaven: and the apostle declared, in his day, that all the children of Grace in Galatia who went to allegorical Hagar were bewitched - "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" But we have some in the court who speak highly of Hagar, and weep over her family; yea, and are so full of fleshly savour, as to throw out their invectives against those

who are faithful in the King's Household; and to judge some to be of the seed-royal who have died by suicide, when the laws of Zion declare that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him; and self-murder is the worst of murder.

Shepherd. If this be the case, it must undoubtedly go hard with these three poor children. Pardon my digression, Sir, as I ask for information, Who is her Majesty's midwife? or, rather, who are her midwives? for I suppose she has more than one.

Steward. There are two, and no more. The most famous is one Mrs. Love. Her town-house is in Jerusalem; but her country-house is at En-rogel, 1 Kings, i. 9, which is the King's gardens, and lies between Bethlehem and the Valley of Hinnom. The other is Lady Truth: she is safe, but the other is the most famous. Both these have persons that act under them, but themselves have always the superintendance.

Shepherd. And was the Queen delivered of Weak Heart, Silly Dove, and Little Faith, by Mrs. Love, or by the other?

Steward. Mrs. Love was at her country-house, and gave orders, and had a hand in it, in a secret way, but did not appear in person: if she had, matters would have been better managed; which was needful, for the Queen bred these three children very badly. She was much troubled with sickness, and seldom eat at quiet during the whole time of her pregnancy; and, after she quickened, she had several frights and sudden surprises, which brought a heavy gloom upon her mind, and subjected her much to bondage and fear; and whatever affects the mother, affects the infant also, for that is nourished at her fountain. When these three children were born, various symptoms of the mother's disorders and frights appeared visible on them; which Mrs. Love generally purges oil and expels by a little of the "oil of joy," Isa. lxi. 3, mingled with "hidden manna," Rev. ii. 17. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment: he

that feareth is not made perfect in love," 1 John, iv. 18. Children made perfect in love are wise indeed; for they know their Father! "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God," 1 John, iv. 7. And he is "a wise child indeed that knows his own father!" say they who speak in proverbs - and I believe he is. However, family likeness is more to be depended upon; and is more satisfactory to some husbands than the positive assertions or the mother, because it has been known that deathbed confessions have given all such preceding assertions the lie.

Shepherd. Then I suppose it was Lady Truth that laid the Queen of these three; and you say she is a safe midwife, though the other be the most famous: therefore these children may be perfect or complete in the truth, though not perfect in love.

Steward. Lady Truth laid the Queen of all these, and impressions of her hands are visible upon them; and the King owns them: for he said, "Surely they are my people, children that will not lie; so he was their Saviour," Isa. lxiii. 8. And certain it is, "that truth makes free," John, viii. 32; free from death, though not always from the fear of it; for some shall be delivered - from eternal death - "who, through the fear of it, were ALL THEIR LIFE-TIME subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 13. Thus truth makes free but perfect love casteth out fear: the child of truth is safe; but the child made perfect by love is the most happy.

Shepherd. Then it appears that the King may own some for his who never could as yet lay a claim upon him?

Steward. Doubtless he knows his own, whether all that are his know him or not; and certain it is, that all his seed shall know him, from the least to the greatest, ere they go hence. He that loves the truth, and loves the saints, loves indeed and in TRUTH: "and thereby may know that he is of the TRUTH,

and may assure his heart before him," 1 John, iii. 18, 19. But, though the King knows and owns him, yet he knows not the King in the highest sense, nor can he boldly claim him as his Father; and, therefore, has not the comfort of it, because, though he loves the truth and the saints, he is not made perfect in love: and he "that loves not, knoweth not God," 1 John, iv. 8, though God knows him.

Shepherd. I thank you for your satisfactory resolve. But pray Sir, were all these three children nursed in the palace that you are at, or in any other? for I know the King has several palaces or lodges in the nation.

Steward. They were not all brought up at the Royal Palace in the great Metropolis, though they were there for a little time. Weak Heart through the counsels of some rulers, was sent into the North, to what is called the High-priest's Palace; where he wore iron-bows for his neck, to make him carry his head upright; and irons upon his legs and ankles, to bring his limbs in form, in order to set off his gait, and enable him to make a decent appearance; and to submit to the endless human rules, forms, and orders, of the house: but, for the want of a good breast and proper nursing in his youth, he remained unsightly, disproportion-able, and rickety, till within a few days of his death; but, at his departure, he appeared a perfect man.

Shepherd. And, pray, what became of silly Dove? Was he sent to the same place? If he was, I dare say that he fared as bad as the other.

Steward. No, he did not go with his brother; he was sent to the lodge at Bethel, which is in the south country, near the famous city that was once the residence of Melchisedec; where the air is fine, and the country open; plenty of sun and heat, and yet noted at certain seasons for cool breezes. Here he was under the tuition of one Fidelity, an excellent tutor and

governor, who so brought him on, under God, that his behaviour, pleasant countenance, and the King's tender affection for him, stand upon record in the Eternal Annals - "As his Majesty's dear Son, and his pleasant Child, for whom his bowels were troubled, and upon whom his infinite compassion was shewed," Jer. xxxi. 20. So that the old name, Silly Dove died away in every body's mouth, and in time became totally extinct.

Shepherd. Just so it fares with some flocks which fall into the hands of careful shepherds; who, under superior direction, suffer them not to want, but make them lie "down in green pastures, and feed them beside the still waters," Psalm, xxiii, 1, 2; while others are suffered to be scattered by the wolf, and drove into numberless corners and thickets "in the cloudy and dark days," Ezek. xxxiv. 12. "The lost are not sought after, the strayed are not gathered, the broken are not bound up, and the sick are not strengthened," Ezek. xxxiv. 16. A man of no spiritual understanding is a foolish shepherd; and, if he is one that has no regard for the flock, they had better be without him than with him; for, when they are scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd, the Owner himself will seek after them; as it is written, "Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out." Others spend half their time in what is called trimming them; which is done by driving a large crutch-stake into the ground, in the shape of a capital Y, while the poor creature stands hanging back with its neck in the crutch - a pin running through the two crutches at the top - and the Shepherd clips off the loose, dangling, and torn wool, just to make the creature look plump and round to the eye; when, if you were to handle the carcass of it, it is as light as an owl, and its ribs are like a paper of pins: and, if it could but speak, it would cry, "My leanness! my leanness! all the day long," Isa, xxiv. 16. "Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; but ye feed not the flock," Ezek. xxxiv. 3. And again, "Neither did my shepherds search for my flock; but the shepherds fed

themselves, and fed not the flock," Ezek. xxxiv. 8. But pray, Sir, where is Little Faith?

Steward. Little Faith is at the town-palace.

Shepherd. Does he grow at all? Is there any likelihood of his name being buried in oblivion, like that of his brother, Silly Dove? or is he Little Faith, and of little stature still?

Steward. He is Little Faith still; and that name, by the bye, is applicable to some who talk of very great faith, who have no more trophies to shew of their preveiling strength and heroic deeds than he has.

Shepherd. If a man has faith, he must have it to the King; and, if he has enough to live by, fight by, work by, and walk by, it is enough: it is seldom given to boast of; his Majesty does nothing in vain. But my reason for asking is, because sometimes children that are stunted for want of good nursing, and others that are not very proper or sightly in their infancy or childhood, do in their riper years out-grow it, as Silly Dove did.

Steward. If once a weakly infant falls into the hands of Hagar, and in time gets doatingly fond of her, and sucks her breast till it be esteemed preferable to all others, and becomes both a play-fellow and a school-fellow with her children, the effects are not easily got rid of: some have felt the dregs of it even after a pining sickness, and a wasting comparable to salivation, which has been so deep, that "their flesh has consumed away, that it could not be seen; and their bones that were not seen, stuck out," Job, xxxiii. 21. And Little Faith himself, who is not a babe in understanding, though little in faith, sees the hypocrisy of the Old Woman, and the dangerous state of her family, and often groans under the bondage that he contracted among them to this day: but he cannot get rid of it; nor will he, until he is permitted to have a conspicuous view of the King's face. And, though many of the

servants were greatly to blame for encouraging the bond-children about the palace, and permitting those to nurse him who were so regardless as not to care whose arms embraced him, so as they did but get their salary; yet Little Faith himself was greatly to blame, also, in former times: for he has had much wholesome counsel and caution since he has been capable of receiving it; and yet he would be hankering after Hagar's habitation, and every now and then he would steal away to have a game with the Hagarenes round the mount; and sometimes he would get disputing with them, or sporting rather, about the proclamations of Zion, which is "taking a dog by the ears; Prov. xxvi. 17; for they had too much of the wisdom of the serpent for Little Faith, who was only equipped with the harmlessness of the dove; so that they poisoned him in the head, and sent him home broken in judgment. And how could it be otherwise, when a bird fought with a viper, and his head has been formerly much confused? Their sophistry, and Zion's proclamations, maintained a long pro and con in his mind; so that he was long "tossed to and fro with every wind," Ephes. iv. 14; neither strengthened, established, nor settled, any how.

Shepherd. Well, Sir, but Little Faith is not without the King's promise: Those that "erred in spirit shall come to understanding;" and, if he has been poisoned, it is said, "that if they eat any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them;" for, you know, there is balm in Gilead, and a great Physician there.

Steward. Very true: but if a heedless child provokes the King to send a fiery Serpent, you may depend upon it that he will let him feel the bite, and venom too, before he orders a brazen one to be exhibited, or issues out a command to live by looking thereon.

Shepherd. Pray, Sir, what are the complaints of Little Faith?

Steward. His complaints are numerous: for he is always complaining. But the chief are, he is weak in the knees, and loose in the loins, and has something of a palsy in his hands, which makes them always hang down; and he is timorous in his mind, fearful in his heart, and weak in his ankles, so that he cannot get his shoes up at the heels: it is a rare thing to see "his feet shod," Ephes. vi. 15. And, having been perpetually at play with Hagar's boys, he had learnt their base, low, and mean ways and manners, for which he has been long kept out of the drawing-room.

Shepherd. But he is not without his promises, nor without the fixed love and affection of his Royal Father; who orders his servants to "strengthen the weak hands, to confirm the feeble knees, to lift up the hands that hang down, and to say to the fearful-hearted - "Be strong; fear not!"

Steward. True: but, while his knees are so weak, "he staggers at the promise, through unbelief;" and while the palsy is in his hands, he cannot maintain a comfortable hold: for, you know, it requires some strength "to lay hold on eternal life;" and it requires abiding strength to "hold fast the faithful, as he hath been taught," For the wicked one often steals away the good seed sown in the heart; and if any of the Royal Family get into perils among robbers, Little Faith is sure never to escape; for he has been plundered ere now at the palace gate, and even robbed in the very courts of the King. His timorous mind impairs his memory, which is like a spider's web: it can hold a fly; but, if any weighty or important matter of use to him falls upon it, it is lost and gone in a minute.

Shepherd. If Little Faith cannot hold the King, the King will hold him; nor shall any pluck him out of his hands, for it is not the will of the great and all-wise Disposer of events that one of these little ones should perish - and, you know, Little Faith is a little one. He will strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the

feeble knees too, though he may not permit his Stewards to do it. If he say to the sick of the palsy, "Stretch forth thine hand," it shall be restored whole; and if he say to Unbelief, as he did of Lazarus's grave-clothes, "Loose him, and let him go," the feeblest of the house shall be as David. The King himself calls him "Little Faith," implying that he has faith, though not much; and faith is a seed of God, and a fruit of his Spirit: whoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. And, if he does not permit a Steward. to gird up the loins of his mind, it is to try the faith and patience of the Steward., as well as to exercise the weakling; and he is well-pleased with the servant's endeavours, if prayer and importunity be added, though he may not succeed. It is rehearsed, as an encomium upon one, "That he had instructed many, and strengthened the weak hands; and that his words had upholden him that was falling, and that he had strengthened the feeble knees," Job, iv. 3, 4. But he was blamed "for fainting when the same fits came upon him, and for being troubled when he was touched with the same afflictions," Job, iv. 5. Nevertheless, the Lord approves of the tender care, special regard, and earnest endeavours of his servants, knowing that the success depends wholly upon himself. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but none but the King can give the increase; yet it is accepted, if there be a willing mind: his work is with the King; and, if his Majesty does not prosper him, he is nevertheless glorious in his eyes. I have sometimes had a twin lamb which has baffled all my skill and experience: the dam has been tender, milk plenty, the weather fine, the pastures good; and I have endeavoured to let it have the first bite of the fold, and have pitched it upon an eminence, where it was both dry and warm; according to divine direction," I will feed them in good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains," Ezek. xxxiv. 14. But all would not do. You read of "sheep coming up from the washing, each

one bearing twins, and not one barren among them," Song, vi. 6. But, though the ewes were not barren, it does not say that the lambs were not feeble, which is often the case with twin-lambs; and some of these I have been obliged to carry up the hill: they have ventured upon my feet when they could not trust their own; like Elisha's suppliant widow, who might as well have gone to the Fountain-head as have come to the Prophet; but, when she took shelter behind a human petitioner, she thought she was safe.

Steward. As it is with your flock, so it is with the household that I am servant to. It is a rare thing to furnish a table so as for Little Faith to come in for his part: if there is an "apple," Song, ii. 5, a "cluster of grapes," Isa. lxxv. 8, a little "moonshine," Cant. vi. 10, or any legal scrap belonging to the new-moon feasts; a trifle, which is "but a light thing in the sight of the King," 2 Kings, iii. 18, a "little honey," Prov. xxiv. 13, or "milk," 1 Cor. iii. 2, he may then, perhaps, eat a morsel; but, if it consists of "strong meat, fit for persons of full age," Heb. v. 14, he trembles at it, sees others eat it, and longs for a part, but cannot feed himself for the want of strength in his hands. And, therefore, when we have only these dishes at table, there is nothing for him; and he cries out, "Woe is me! there is no cluster to eat? Micah, vii. 1; and by living upon such weak things, and chiefly upon milk, he gets pot-bellied and heavy, which keeps him back: "for every one that useth milk is unskilful" in the rules and privileges of his Majesty's house; "for he is a babe," Heb. v. 13. For the time, Little Faith ought to have had his hands on the reins of government, and to have reigned as a King; but, instead of that, this heir, as long as he is a child, "differs nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all; but is under tutors and governors:" and there he must remain, "until the time appointed by the Father," Gal. iv. 1, 2.

Shepherd. Do you think that he was properly begotten with the Word of Truth? James, i. 18; and that the incorruptible Seed properly gendered? 1 Peter, i. 23; and that the engrafted Word was received in meekness? James, i. 21. If so, he is of the Seed Royal, and is a Tree of Righteousness, however wild by nature the barren stock; and shall be a fruitful Field, however dry and parched the fallow-ground may have been in times past: for that "Seed never can rot under the clods," Joel, i. 17. Nor shall he always remain a dwarf; but shall arrive to the King's stature, in his appointed time.

Steward. That he is the Offspring of the Universal Sovereign, none of the Royal Family doubt, as his name stands upon record in the Court Calendar, and in the genealogy of the Seed Royal: for they are all the offspring of the Ancient of Days, by faith in the Heir Apparent; and he is expressly styled "Little Faith," and that by his Majesty himself. Nor was he ever disowned by his venerable mother, nor by any of the sons and daughters of Zion, nor by any friends of the family, or by any established or domestic servant of the household; they all have, from age to age, paid a particular attention, and shewed the utmost regard to, "Little Faith;" and have often received that little one in the king's name, and have received the king by so doing. For, though Little Faith be weak in himself, yet his word has often been weighty and powerful to others; and, when his timorous fits have been upon him, and he has been in fear where no fear was, add has fled when none pursued, as is often the case, whole heathen nations have received a command and a particular charge concerning such feeble ones of the tribe - "Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noon-day: hide the outcasts, bewray not him that wandereth. Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert 19a7 to them from the face of the spoiler." Isa. xvi. 3, 4. That his Majesty, of his own will, begat him by the word of truth, nobody doubts; and that he was born again of incorruptible seed, that lives and abides

for ever, can never be disproved. But still his name is Little Faith: and yet, in one sense of the word, his faith is not little; for, if his Majesty should erect his standard, none are at it sooner than he, rather than be included among the rebels. If the king frowns, none stand in more awe, nor at a greater distance: if he issues out a thundering mandate, he is the first that trembles at his word - and, you know, the King looks at, and dwells with, those that tremble at his word; and, if a royal warrant be issued out to apprehend and take an enemy, he is the first that cries out, "Lord! is it I?" and trembles at the thought. So that he is no enemy to the king, nor to any domestic servant, nor to any other, so much as he is to himself. He believes every word that comes out of the king's mouth to be true, and that with unfeigned faith: he stands in awe of the laws of the realm; often expects, for the least offence, to fall under the hottest displeasure of the divine legislator; and is frequently filled with astonishment, mingled with compunction and gratitude, at the superabounding clemency of his dread sovereign, In delaying the just execution of the sentence which he knows is due to him - in one sense of the word - and to all the family, none excepted.

Shepherd. If this be the case, it is surprising to me that Little Faith is so weak; for nothing strengthens weaklings more than credence, for it is by that we are to live. If Little Faith credits the report, the joyful sound of the report, and the glad tidings reported, must be brought home by the hand of Credence; and, if brought home and applied, it becomes nutriment, by which the attentive hearer and obedient receiver is to live, thrive, and grow.

Steward. All this is true: but it is not the case here; for, in one sense, Little Faith has too much faith, and in another sense he has too little. If any person, whether friend or foe to the King, comes with any message in the King's name, whether sent by him or not; if it contains heavy tidings, that there is a rod in

brine for Little Faith, or that the King is angry with him; if it amounts either to confiscation of goods, pillory, banishment, imprisonment, or even death itself; it is all credited, and he lives in perpetual expectation of the fullest execution: Thus "the simple one believeth every word," Prov. xiv. 15, and in this he has too much faith. But, if you bring any good tidings from the King concerning his clemency; his tender care of the little ones of the household; the impartiality of his love; that the weak are as precious to him as the strong: that he will strengthen them in due time; that they shall all come into the drawing-room, sooner or later; that all shall see his face with joy, &c. &c. this he cannot believe: and in this sense his name is Little Faith, but not in the other. And, by these acts of incredulity, Little Faith reflects no small dishonour on his Royal Father. Bond, or bastard children, vainly imagine that the King is all clemency, and in their thoughts divest him of all terrible majesty. Little Faith believes his majesty to be terrible, and his clemency to be great where it is shewn; but he cannot steadfastly believe that the King will be propitious to him, which is both his folly and his loss. The former is a bastard and a fool, and debases his Master: the latter is a son, and, by nursing his folly, he dishonours his Father. Besides, there is in our realm a notorious enemy to the King, who for a former act of rebellion was banished the King's presence, favour, and protection, for ever. This enemy, by his devices, dresses up the King in nothing but clemency to the base-born race; and suggests him arrayed in nothing but terrible majesty to the young princes; and Little Faith, in a private way, listens, attends to, and credits, one-half that this enemy suggests, so that he often entertains hard thoughts of the King himself; insomuch that, as a propitious Father, he can hardly, at times, find a fixed dwelling either in the thoughts, heart, affections, or even in the credence, of Little Faith. His Majesty often stands at the door and knocks: "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him," Rev. iii. 20, But, whenever he comes to the apartment of Little Faith, he generally finds him

all attention to this rebel; which provokes him to jealousy, and is called the "provoking of his sons and of his daughters," Deut. xxxii, 19. Therefore it is but just that Little Faith should be left to have his belly-full of such counsel, and to see what his adherence to his Father's enemy will do for him, and that, at some future period, the liar may be discovered in his true colours, and Little Faith be brought under some future propitious visit of the King, to see, confess, and lament, his unbelief, which is the greatest sin that ever Little Faith was guilty of since he has been in existence, and the greatest that he ever will be guilty of, if he lives a thousand years: For "he that believes not, has made the Universal Sovereign a liar," 1 John, v. 10, and to make him a liar by infidelity, is to debase him to a level with the devil himself, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning.

Shepherd. Excuse me, my dear Sir: it is six o'clock, and it is high time for the flock to be watered. If I am not there, the poor sheep will be scattered an hundred ways; for the well is always pestered with false shepherds; and, if one of the King's shepherds be not there, "they are sure to come and drive them away," Exod. ii. 17. For it is in our days, as it was in the days of old, if the Son and Heir of Abraham dig a well, "the herdmen of Gerar are sure to strive for the water," Gen. xxvi. 20, or to stop up the well.

Steward. How long shall you be gone?

Shepherd. About two hours.

Steward. I will meet you again at this spot at half-past eight, if it be agreeable, as this is a leisure evening with me.

Shepherd. If nothing unforeseen prevent, I will surely be here. The presence of the King be with thee.

Steward. The Lord go with thee.

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Third.

Steward. Why, you return sooner than you expected; it is barely two hours since you went from hence.

Shepherd. "When the stone is rolled away from the well's mouth," Gen. xxix. 3, I endeavour to fill all the troughs, if I can; and, when I have got plenty of water ready drawn, the watering-work is soon done, both with ease and pleasure. The hardest work is to roll away the stone: and sometimes it is hard work to draw the water, for the well is deep, and most profoundly so when the springs are low. Pray, have you staid here ever since?

Steward. Ever since; and I am almost surprised that Little Faith has not found me out, for he sticks closer to my skirts than any of the family.

Shepherd. I was thinking, as I ran along, about what you said of the wretched sin of infidelity, and the heinous nature of it; and I think this is the TAP-ROOT of the corrupt tree that got hold of the human mind when the Adversary laid the axe to the heart of our first parents; for the human mind is never without natural faith; for if the king of the bottomless pit, or any of his children, bring a thousand impossibilities, self-contradictions, arrant and glaring falsehoods; if gilded or varnished over, they will gain credence. If one advance that Satan can cast out Satan, it is believed. If the common soldiers tell Herod that the disciples of the Saviour stole him away while they slept, Herod is persuaded, and credits the testimony of an eye-witness fast asleep. Simon Magus gains the confidence and affections of a whole city, and passes for the great Power of God; but, when the King comes, he is

called Beelzebub. Thus the Lord came in his Father's name, and was not received: another comes in his own name, and him they all receive. Hence it appears that Infidelity has only the God of Truth for its object; it disdains to give the lie to any but God: for hypocrites, villains, witches, and devils, can find faith upon earth to receive all that can be hatched in hell; but a divine message hath no place in us till a divine power give it entrance and residence.

Steward. This is what I told you before - that unbelief makes God a liar: and it really is the first sin that ever pierced the mind, either of men or fallen angels. Devils believe in wrath to come, and tremble; but cannot exercise credence on divine clemency, for want of a divine warrant, or an offer made, or a promise published. But the children of men have a voice directed to them, but cannot receive it, "for they are all concluded in unbelief;" yet the heirs of promise shall surely believe; for the promise brings, not only the blessing, but credence also - and this poor Little Faith finds and feels at times, notwithstanding the bad hands and cruel management that he has met with.

Shepherd. I see the case of Little Faith more clearly, now than ever: but I think those servants who brought the canting gossips from Sinai, at the Queen's labour, were the most to blame; I mean those who hurried the birth of Little Faith; those who encouraged them, and nurtured them, about the palace; and those who procured the nurse; and the nurse herself, who let Hagar suckle the child - for any sensible person ought to know that, whatever infection a woman hath, infects her milk, and must unavoidably infect the child that subsists on it: and, I think, it would have been better for Little Faith to have lived upon the milk of "the wild ass that is used to the wilderness - in her month they might have found her," Jer. ii. 24 - than upon the milk of that bond-woman; who, according to ancient records, was never either purified or cleansed.

Steward. Those servants are, doubtless, to blame: nor will their conduct pass unresented, nor themselves go without rebuke; for whatsoever is done for his Majesty's little ones, or to the injury of them, is all taken as done to him: and were it possible (as it is not) for Little Faith even to die, his blood would be required at the servants' hands; they would be arraigned, as murderers, for permitting his people to perish for lack of knowledge; and would be punished as such, either in this world or in the next.

Shepherd. So it was, in the days of old, with a famous one of my occupation, whose honest confession stands on the ancient records: "These twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee, I bare the loss of it: of my hands didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night," Gen. xxxi. 38, 39. And so it is also with the servants of his Majesty's household who are employed in building up the fraternity of Zion: "Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward: if any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss," 1 Cor. iii. 13, 14, 15. Few are aware of this, who thrust themselves, or are by others thrust, into the King's service; who are the chief causes of the sufferings of such as Little Faith.

Steward. They are; yet, as was before observed, Little Faith himself is greatly to blame for stealing away from the rest of the King's children, when he knew better; and getting perpetually to play with Hagar's boys, where he learnt so much of their base language; and filled his head with old wives' fables; and heard their fabulous stories of ghosts, phantoms, apparitions, and spirits; of Jack the giant-killer, of

raising the devil, of Jack-O'lanterns, fairies, hags, and nightmares; together with stories of witches, wizards, dreamers, necromancers, fortune-tellers, conjurers, enchanters, stargazers, sorcerers, soothsayers, diviners, magicians, and astrologers; who pretend to calculate nativities, and, by the aspects of the planets, to fix the state or doom of mortals; which has driven many into careless, loose, and desperate living. Three such characters I have known, and God requited them for adhering to such things - which are wickedness, devilism, vanities, and lies. These things begirt Little Faith with legions of imaginary fears, and terrors; so that he is often afraid to look behind him or even to put his hand out of the bed: and, being haunted with these ideal vanities, he is often a terror to himself. We are commanded by the King" not to hearken to such prophets, nor diviners, nor dreamers, nor enchanters, nor sorcerers, which speak to us, for they prophesy lies," Jer. xxvii. 9, 10. And again," Thus saith Jehovah, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them; for the customs of the people are vain," Jer. x. 2, 8. He took also to reading some novels published by the Hagarenes, till he was more like an Athenian than a prince; and would often get into disputes with them; and loved secretly to hear and to tell some new thing.

Shepherd. If once a child is habituated to these things, they will stick by him, more or less, as long as he lives. Besides, they debase the mind, and keep it low and mean; and there is, for a time, a secret regard to the bastard race, which is commonly called a charitable opinion or judgment of them. So that Little Faith did not keep them at their proper distance, when he saw through them; nor consider his own dignity, nor live up to it; which is dishonourable to the King: and therefore, though an heir, he is justly kept under tutors and governors, that he may, for a season, differ nothing from a servant;

because he debased his sonship to the mean level of servitude.

Steward. Yea, and since he has known better, and felt the displeasure of the King for his former folly, he has not long since gone, when there hath been a report spread of any herald, bellman, town-corporal, or common crier being sent with a proclamation from Sinai: so that he gets out of the reach of the promise, which runs thus - "Blessed is the man that heareth ME; watching DAILY at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." Prov. viii. 34. But he was not daily at the King's gates; for he was sometimes at the gates of fools, if not at the gates of hell; and often at Hagar's castle, instead of waiting at the posts of Wisdom's doors.

Shepherd. If he affects Hagar and her boys, it is a strong tie. Such "zealously affect children, but not well: yea, they would exclude them from the King's favour, that they might affect them," Gal. iv. 17. Which is no better than the practice of those beggars who steal children in London, and put out their eyes, in order to furnish themselves with a lamentable cry in begging for a blind child, that they might get their bread, and live in idleness. However, Little Faith suffers for this now; and, I dare say, he often reads the long scroll of his folly under the rod that lies on him; for, as you before observed, he can credit the report of the King's displeasure, if not the report of his mercy.

Steward. Certain it is, that the whole lineage of Hagar, who often swarm and skulk about the walls of Zion, come for no other purpose than to spy out the liberty of the King's children, that they may deceive, delude, seduce, and "bring them into bondage," Gal. ii. 4. And certain it is also, that Little Faith labours under the bondage he contracted among them, and that to this day: but they will not easily deceive him again; for, as was before observed, he has a strong faith in the justice,

the truth, the holiness, the immutability, and the terrible majesty, of the King; he never staggers at these: but at his love, mercy, compassion, slowness to anger, the abundance of his goodness, and the plenteousness of his redemption, he often staggers. "He trembles at the word of truth," Isa. lxvi. 5, and "staggers at the promise [of mercy] through unbelief," Rom. iv. 20.

Shepherd. Pray, does Little Faith privately indulge a rebellious spirit? Does he oppose the sovereignty, the decrees, the counsel and purposes, of his Sovereign Father? Does he ever dispute obstinately against the discriminating acts of the King, which daily appear in reducing some rebels to obedience, and in the administration of strict justice to others.

Steward. He that does so, is not Little Faith, but a "little fox," Cant. ii. 15. He is not a child of truth, but a seed of falsehood; not a saint, but a sophist; not a child of God, but a child of the Devil, 1 John, iii. 10. "Whoso transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God," 2 John, 9. And, if God be not his father, the Devil is; and so it will appear, sooner or later. The characteristic of the King's seed is, that they shall be both teachable and tractable, whatever they might have been in times past: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the lion, and the fatling, together; and a little child shall lead them;" Isa. xi. 6.

Shepherd. Pray, have you the care of Little Faith's education? or, who is his tutor?

Steward. His Majesty himself superintends the tuition of them all; they are all taught of him: but he keeps several under-teachers, whom he calls, qualifies, and commissions to teach; and these receive their lessons daily from the King, who bids them go and speak thus. And they who carry his messages,

and teach according to his lessons, are his established teachers, and no other.

Shepherd. But, is it not surprising that his Majesty should suffer his servants, or those who feign themselves to be so, to permit such nurses and teachers to injure his children, especially such as poor Little Faith?

Steward. It is suffered so to be, that they may gather together those who are rebels to his government, that they may ripen for the day of vengeance; and that themselves also, by their presumption and hypocrisy, may fulfil his purposes, who calls them "ungodly men, before of old ordained to this condemnation," Jude, 4. But, as to his select seed, they shall never be deceived, finally, nor be finally led astray. Little Faith is a living witness of this, that "not one little one can perish." It is a rare thing now to find him at the castle of the Hagarenes; and, if one of them come to the palace, he is ready to stop his ears if he opens his mouth. Little Faith is very tender, and takes his learning pretty well, and has tolerable discernment; and his judgment is sounder than could be expected, but his knees and hands are very weak.

Shepherd. Did you never try to bathe him in the river of life? - "The prophet went in up to his ankles, knees, and loins: and might have swam if he had pleased," Ezek. xlvii. 4, 5. And I have sometimes thought that the prophet, at that time, might have some staggerings in his mind concerning the future state of the Israelitish church, and their re-establishment after the accomplishment of their long captivity; which if he had, as I conjecture: he must have been wonderfully strengthened and braced up by spiritual might in the inner man, after being brought three times through the river. You know the King doth nothing in vain.

Steward. Little Faith is so timorous, that he is afraid to venture all his weight upon it, or commit himself wholly to the

strength of it, doubting whether it will bear him up or not: though I have often seen him upon the bank of it, tasting of it, and venture to paddle a little in it, far enough to wet his feet; and very happy he has seemed to be, and has often thought, for a few minutes, that he could swim across the profoundest depths of it. His countenance hath been so brightened up, that he has not envied those who were up to the neck in it.

Shepherd. And suppose Little Faith had sunk in it, and been drowned, he would not have been lost; for that river is neither destruction nor perdition: "There the glorious Jehovah will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams," Isa. xxxiii. 21. And he who ventures there, if he sinks, and lies in it to all eternity, will never wish to come up nor come out.

Steward. True: but Little Faith proceeds with caution; he looks before he leaps. He is like Thomas; he has a great opinion of the testimony of his eyes. Besides, when Little Faith has made an excursion on the banks of the river, and has taken a pleasing survey of it, tasted it, and paddled a little in it, he has often found, as soon as he has lost sight of the river, and the sun has withdrawn his rays, that the clouds have gathered thick upon his head, the fog has gathered fast upon his heels, and he hath seemed to be farther from the river than ever: and the enemy always visits Little Faith when the clouds and fog are about him; at which times he is sure to gain his attention; and then generally suggests - "That it was rashness and presumption in him to venture so near as he did; and a wonder that he was not destroyed for daringly presuming to take but a drop of the river of pleasure to himself; neither the invitation of the King, his favour, promise, nor promised felicity, being by any means, or in any sense, intended for him." And, after Little Faith has been thus begloomed with the clouds and fog, and buffeted by the enemy, he proceeds with more caution than ever; begs pardon for his presumption; and promises never to be guilty of applying any favour, bounty, or

royal indulgence, to himself again, by any means, on any terms, or by any entreatment or invitation whatsoever; but that he would "say, in his haste, that all men (Stewards as well as others) are liars," rather than believe there can be any favour, pity, or compassion, shewn to him, who is by no means worthy to be called the King's son, nor to be ranked among his hired servants, nor even to be "set with the [dumb] dogs of his flock," Job, xxx. 1. Notwithstanding all these secret vows and promises, after such sharp temptations, Little Faith, at times, has forgot all; and, before he hath been aware, while his mind has been engaged in the sanctuary, "the waters have issued out from under the threshold of the house a second time," Ezek. xlvi. 1; and he being off his guard, before he was aware, he has found himself upon the very banks of the river again, and has been as charmed and delighted as ever; insomuch, that he has forgot his former adversity, being answered by the King in the joy of his heart; but, as soon as a thought hath come across his mind respecting a future cloudy and dark day, he has begun to tremble at the distant adversity; and, by pondering on and meeting his troubles half way, the Adversary meets him, who is half invited by Little Faith himself; and then robs him, and again chains down all his thoughts to the "meditation of terror," Isa. xxxiii. 18.

Shepherd. He is Little Faith, indeed! for he calls his highest acts of obedience his presumption; and that he will find, in the end: for, however he may put these things far from him in times of temptation, he must court them, and gather them all about him too, in times of sickness. It is such presumptuous acts as these, as he falsely calls them, that must bring him into the joyful presence of his Sovereign, and nothing else, let him go whenever he may. But, I see, it is in the King's household as it is with a shepherd's flock; there are divers sizes, ages, and sorts. I have got "rams," Gen. xxxi. 10; "sheep," John, x. 4; "ewes great with young," Isa. xl. 11; and "lambs to feed and attend too," John, xxi. 15; and you have

got old and young, strong and weak, to wait upon and watch over.

Steward. The family consists of "fathers," 1 John, ii. 13; "young men," 1 John, ii. 14; "little children," 1 John, v. 21; and "newborn babes," 1 Peter, ii. 2. But, as for Little Faith, I know not which to call him: he is old enough to be a father, and ought by this time to have been a tutor; for, in understanding and discernment, he is a man; in simplicity, a little child; but, in the exercise of faith, he is a babe. He has something about him of each degree; but is complete in neither. In the King's forest there are not only "oaks, whose seed is in them," Isa. vi. 13; and "cedars, firs, pines, palm-trees," Cant. vii. 8; and "olives; but also box-trees," Isa. lxi. 19; and myrtles, which may be put into pots, and placed on a lady's toilet; and it is to the comfort of Little Faith, and other weaklings, that the King was seen "upon a red horse, and stood among the myrtle-trees that were in the bottom," Zech. i. 8. So that these are not without his powerful, though often without his comfortable, presence.

Shepherd. And, pray, where does Little Faith creep to when he gets his head in the clouds?

Steward. He is not without his holes, nor yet without "his prison-houses," Isa. lxii. 22; for when he used to play with Hagar's boys they often amused themselves, as foolish children will do, with building little "houses on the sand," Matt. vii. 26; and to that sand-bank he cleaves to this day. Let any storm gather over Little Faith; any shadow of a cloud approach him; any suggestion or fiery dart be hurled at him; any reproof be given him; any frown be felt from the King; any imaginary trouble be expected by him; or even a sharp word, a look of displeasure, or the least slight, from any of the household; he makes no more ado, but he gathers all about him, packs up, and embraces all his real and imaginary

troubles together, and into his hole in the sand-bank he goes; and you may TOLE him out again, if you can. That is his haunt, that is his refuge, and that is his last retreat: the fox has its hole, and Little Faith has his burrow also: he is not without his starting-holes in the world. The King has not only got an "abundance of the seas, but he has got treasure that is hid in the sand," Deut. xxxiii. 19; and Little Faith is a part of it.

Shepherd. Little Faith is not the only one that cleaves to the sandbank: more build there than on the Rock. But, pray, how long may he continue in his dusty residence before he makes his appearance abroad again?

Steward. Nothing brings him out again but the warm rays of the Sun, when "he arises with healing in his beams: then he goes forth, and seems to grow up as a calf of the stall," Mal. iv. 9. But, the very moment the rays are withdrawn, "he is gone again, like the shadow when it declineth; and then he is tossed up and down like the locust," Psal. cix. 23.

Shepherd. I wonder he never makes a mistake in his hasty flights: and takes shelter in the cleft of the Rock, instead of the sandbank. But, I suppose, he thinks of the Rock, as Lot did of the mountain, that it is too far off; he cannot fly there, "lest some evil take him, and he die;" but the sand-bank, like "Zoar, is near to flee into," Gen. xix. 20.

Steward. In his own apprehensions, he is often far from the Rock, though the Rock is never far from him: nor is there any likelihood of his mistaking the Rock for the sand; for none will embrace the Rock, for want of a shelter, till they are led by the invisible hand of him who is stronger than they. But all this is owing to his having been suffered to play with the bond-children. Hagar's boys and he used to be perpetually at hide and seek, in the dark cells of the Hagarene Castle, which debases the mind below the common level of mortals; insomuch that he becomes more like a subterranean

inhabitant of the gloomy recesses of fiends than a child of light. When Little Faith first came to the Palace Royal, he could hardly bear the rays of a candle: he peeped out of obscurity, and out of darkness, like one abashed and confounded; and muttered a wild gibberish, neither Hebrew nor Ashdod, so that we could hardly understand the child.

Shepherd. I know that all the Hagarenes wear veils from their infancy; and their very residence is in "blackness and darkness," Heb. xii. 18; so that poor Little Faith, when he came home to his Father's house, must have appeared as if he had been in a new world.

Steward. He did: and, when he came to see the appearance that the other children made, to hear the language of the Court, and perceived the wisdom and the felicity of the family, he seemed dejected, appeared like an alien among them, and could not believe that he was one of the Seed Royal.

Shepherd. How poor children may be injured by bad nurses, rude play-fellows, and ill-designing tutors, even fill not only their principles and manners are corrupted, but their very faculties are bemeaned and beggared, and the brilliant likeness of the family apparently eclipsed and defaced! - And, pray sir, how does he live now?

Steward. His life is truly exemplary: he walks with watchfulness tenderness, and fear, and makes conscience of every thing. His fear is roach compounded of a servile or slavish spirit: at times, however, those bonds seem to burst; but, soon after, they regender again; which is often the case, till a child sees its own way, feels the use of its own limbs, enjoys the smiles of its Royal Father, and wholly depends on his love, his wisdom, and his power. Besides, Little Faith has got a whole code of laws and rules of his own making; and others, which he has imbibed by perusing numberless volumes of human commandments; neither of which have any

footing or foundation in the Records of Zion. Some of these are weighty points with him; and those who see and know him, let him eat his herbs unmolested, and take care not to stagger him by eating meat in an idol's temple; knowing that, when he becomes a man, he will put away childish things. As for touch not, taste not, handle not, we know that they are all to "perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men," Col. ii. 21.

Shepherd. It is surprising that he should remain so weak, after so much wholesome counsel and instruction, having been an eye and an ear-witness so long of the long-forbearance and unparalleled clemency of the King; and after so many groundless expectations of wrath, imprisonment, and banishment, being repeatedly cut off and brought to nothing; by which his enemy has been perpetually proved a liar, and his unbelief as often confounded.

Steward. It is not to be wondered at, when all things are properly considered. His own mother, when she was pregnant with him, was very little better; for, as soon as she heard a voice from the throne, saying, "Sing, O Heavens! and be joyful, O Earth! and break forth into singing, O Mountains! for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted," Isa. xlix. 13. But infidelity returned this answer by her mouth-"Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me," ver. 14. Her faith gave her unbelief, and her mouth too, the lie, when she uttered it. She calls him, "my Lord;" whereas, if he had forsaken her, and forgotten her, it could not be thought that he was any Lord of hers but old dotish women, when they get into a peevish fit, will say any thing but the truth; and, if she could mutter such a self-contradictory speech against the best of husbands, who hates putting away, it is no wonder if the children do the same by the best of fathers: "Every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against her, saying, As is the mother, so is the

daughter," Ezek. xvi. 44. That she did tell lies, is clear from the answer given her by the King; and, if she lies, she ought to be told of it - "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee," saith the King, Isa. xlix. 15. Let the King be true, but every woman a liar.

Shepherd. I suppose that, if all the Stewards and faithful servants of his Majesty's household were to combine together, in order to set Little Faith upon his feet, and make him stand by the confidence of his father's immutable love, that they would not be able to get him entirely clear of the sand-bank, or to lay his infidelity in the dust.

Steward. And if the same combination were to use their united efforts in order to prove that Little Faith is illegitimate, base born or only a pretender, and that lie is not of the Seed Royal; consequently, no heir of his Majesty's favour, property, throne, or glory - you might bring the staggers upon him, and extort a deep sigh, or a heavy groan, from his heart; but he would stand just where he does. Little Faith is not to be hurried; nor can he be greatly, much less finally, moved. "They that trust (whether weak or strong) are like Mount Zion, that cannot be moved." Little Faith's confession is already gone out of the mouth of the King; and, when the King bids him speak it, it will soon be known what strength this little one has got: "Let the weak say, 'I am strong,'" Joel, iii. 10. "The King strengtheneth the spoiled against the mighty," Amos, v. 9. And he will not be slack concerning his promise, though Little Faith "be slow of heart to believe it."

Shepherd. Little Faith is a singular mystery; for, according to your account, he is seldom, if ever, upon the mount; and yet stands as the everlasting hills. One of old said, when he gained the summit of a certain hill, "I shall never be moved; thou, Lord, of thy goodness, hast made my hill so strong!" But,

for one to stand so fast that seldom, if ever, ascends the mount, is to me a mystery.

Steward. It is not what Little Faith says, in his fits of infidelity that shall sink him for ever; nor what a rapturous child may in a day of prosperity, that shall immutably fix him. It is word of the King, and not their own, that establishes them Jehovah says, "They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them. The feeble, in that day, shall be as David. And he shall give a reward to his servants the prophets, and to all that fear his name, small and great." It is this that leads one to the rock, and keeps the other from the gulf. And, when Jehovah can be perjured in his oath, cease to be true, fail in his faithfulness, forget to be gracious, change in his purpose, and appear mutable in his will; then may this little one perish, but not till then. Therefore Little Faith not only stands as the everlasting hills, but he stands as firm in his Royal Head as the throne of God in heaven!

Shepherd. You speak with some degree of warmth, my brother.

Steward. Because you seemed to question me in an oblique manner.

Shepherd. I own there is great propriety in what you have advanced: The safety of the whole family, doubtless, lies in the immutability of Jehovah's counsel; his promise; the covenant made; and in the Covenant Head, with whom the bargain was struck, and in whom it must unavoidably stand, as the days of heaven. But, what surprised me most was, that Little Faith, who staggers at every promise, should be enabled to stand, with his weak faith, against the united efforts of all the King's servants, could such a combination be entered into.

Steward. One of old, in his fits of infidelity, declared - "If I had called [that is, in prayer], and He had answered me [that is, if

God had answered him], I would not believe that he had hearkened to my voice," Job, ix. 16. "I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. I shall go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order," Job, x. 21, 22. But, as soon as his three friends joined in the same verdict," one telling him that his wickedness was great, and his iniquities infinite," Job, xxii. 5; - another declaring, "That, if he, were pure and upright, God would awake for him, and make the habitation of his righteousness prosperous," Job, viii. 6 - another telling him, "He had fulfilled the judgment of the wicked, therefore judgment and justice took hold on him," Job, xxxvi. 17; - another said," Thou hast taken a pledge of thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing," Job, xxii. 6. Yet all this doth not move him. "I am not inferior to you," saith he. "What know you that I know not? I know I shall be justified: who will condemn me? When I am tried, I shall come forth as gold. My witness is in heaven, my record is on high. I know that my Redeemer liveth. I shall see God for myself, and not for another." Thus it appears, that they could neither raise him up nor knock him down; he is proof against all their consolation, and against all their invectives; and, whatever such may say in their fits of unbelief, they do not believe the same in their hearts, and if you was to say as the infidelity of Little Faith does, and attempt to confirm his incredulous confession, he would resist your arguments in his heart; nor could you fix one of them upon his conscience. "Him that is WEAK IN FAITH receive you, for God hath RECEIVED him." "Who are they, then, that can thus judge another man's servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth: yea, he SHALL be holden up; God is able to make him stand,; Rom. xiv. 1-4. And stand he does, in spite of himself, in spite of the devil, in spite of infidelity, and in spite of all the world. Yea, if he were to "play on the hole of the asp, or put his hand on the cockatrice den, he could neither be hurt nor destroyed," Isa.

xi. 8, 9. "For this child shall come to his grave in peace, and shall die an hundred years old," Isa. lxxv. 20, - "because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel," 1 Kings, xiv. 13.

Shepherd. And, pray, does Little Faith cleave close to the King's courts, through all these discouragements, and many denials of seeing the King's face?

Steward. Time hath been when he did not, as was before observed; but now, none are more loyal, nor more steadfast in their visits, than Little Faith. Court-days, feast-days, levee-days, fast days, drawing-room days, birth-days, marriage-days or mourning-days, rout-days, ball-days or concert-days, days of prosperity and days of prosperity - when either war is declared or peace proclaimed - Little Faith is sure to be there. It is a rare thing for any to say of him, as Saul did of the son of Jesse, that "his seat is empty." - He has his mental changes like the moon; yet, in his regular motions (excepting indisposition of body) he is as constant as the luminaries of heaven; for Jehovah himself leads him, though it is in a way that he knows not; "and will, one day or other, make darkness light before him, and crooked things straight."

Shepherd. That shews the bent of his heart: and it must be with some degree of toil that Little Faith pays his constant visits at the courts of Zion; for he does "not ride in the chariot paved with love, like the daughters of Jerusalem," Cant. iii. 10; nor does he mount his horse," and ride like Ephraim," Hos. x. 12.

Steward. It matters not how he goes; there he constantly is, and there he will be, for he is determined to know both the worst and the best of it: and certain it is, that they shall not be ashamed that wait on, nor that wait for, the King; for he never said to any of the seed, "Seek ye me in vain;" he always declares things that are right.

Shepherd. Then Little Faith has a good character at court?

Steward. None more so. Any who know him will give credit to his word; or entrust him, or credit him, with any thing. No one doubts of his loyalty or punctuality; for he exceeds others in fear, diligence, and conscientiousness, as much, or more, than some excel him in confidence, fortitude, and wisdom. His weakness, infirmity, failing, and besetting sin, is unbelief; on which account his Majesty hath said, more than once, "O thou of little faith!" Were he once master of this sin, he would be a man with a witness!

Shepherd. Some of the Seed Royal have had their "horns iron, and their hoofs brass," Mic. iv. 13. Others are called "lions," Prov. xxviii.; or, Jehovah's "goodly horse in the battle," Zech. x. 3. Others, the "rod of his inheritance," Jer. li. 19. Others, his battle-axe, and his weapons of war; with which "he breaks in pieces nations and kingdoms;" with which he breaks in pieces the horse and his rider, the chariot and the driver; and with which "he breaks in pieces both men and women, old and young; the young man and the maid; the false shepherd and his flock; the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; the captain and the rulers." Jer. li. 19, 20, 21, 22, 28. But Little Faith is not mentioned among all these. He appears to bear a very faint resemblance of a Lion, a Troop Horse, a Battle Axe, a War Chariot, a Smiting Rod, a Burdensome Stone, a Brazen Pillar, or an Iron Wall; and therefore must cut a very poor figure in the day of battle: for, as you have acknowledged, he is often in fear where no fear is, and often flies when none pursues him; and, if so, what would he do if pursued in reality! "For, if he hath run with footmen and they have wearied him, how would he do if called to contend with horses! And if he is wearied in a land of peace, what would he do in the swellings of Jordan!"

Steward. You don't talk much like a shepherd now. You read of a shepherd that "gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom:" and, if so, they are as nigh to the heart of the shepherd, and as safe in his arms, as the rams with their iron horns and brazen hoofs, which are often pushed into the hottest of the battle. Such as Little Faith are compared to "a few hairs hid in the skirt of the Son of Man," Ezek. v. 3; and are called the Lord's "hair, which is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead," Cant vi. 5. They all appear to have a testimony borne in their behalf by the whole heap, or whole cloud, of witnesses, which the word GILEAD signifies. And you must know that hairs grow nearer the head than any other members whatsoever: and if "the hairs of a saint's head are all numbered," so that not one of them shall perish, or fall to the ground; what must these be that grow on the Covenant head, and are "hid in the skirts of the Son of Man!" It is true Little Faith says, "I watch, and am as a sparrow, alone upon the housetop," Psalm, cii. 7. Yet we know that, though "two sparrows are sold for one farthing," Matt. x. 29; "yet not one of them shall fall to the ground without our heavenly Father's leave."

Shepherd. I perceive you are a staunch advocate for Little Faith, and the Records of Zion furnish you with many and weighty arguments in favour of him: therefore I shall not in future lie at the catch, as I can judge of your care and sensations from what I have felt when the dog Smut has been sent to fetch a strolling lamb back that has strayed from the fold. I have been ready to cry, with the Psalmist, "Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog," Psalm, xxii. 20.

Steward. I hope I shall never be left to "speak wickedly for God," or, "to talk deceitfully for him," Job, xiii. 7; nor be allowed to "condemn the just," or, "to justify the wicked; for both these are an abomination to God," Prov. xvii. 15. But as I

find Little Faith's name, character, and conduct, upon record in the Eternal Register, I am determined to defend his birth, parentage, &c. to the uttermost; knowing that, though Little Faith is often, in appearance, like a fatherless child, yet the promise is, "I will not leave you orphans," John, xiv. 18. For "A Judge of the widows, and a Father of the fatherless, is God, in his holy habitation," Psal. lxxviii. 5. I will say no more in the Little Faith than what I see a scriptural warrant for. If God give me grace, and the lip of truth, (as I hope he will) I am determined that "my heart shall not reproach me [for this] so long as I live," Job, xxvii. 6; "nor shall my tongue utter deceit," Job, xxvii. 4 "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make (Little Faith) obedient by word and deed," Rom. xv. 18.

Shepherd. To warp from the truth, to build weaklings up in flesh and blood, or to attempt to strengthen them by speaking falsely, is leading them to Satan instead of Christ "He is sure to comfort in vain, in whose answers there remaineth falsehood," Job, xxi. 34. Pray is Little Faith a favourer of the Steward.s of the House, and of the Seed Royal?

Steward. A great favourer of those who are true and faithful to the King; though none tremble or stand in awe, more than he does, when any message is delivered from his Majesty to the family. "In his eyes a vile person is condemned, but he honoureth them that fear the King." This is a true characteristic of a son of Zion Psalm, xv. 4. And, as for the Seed Royal, he views them as perfections of beauty; and before them appears, in his own eyes, nothing but deformity: and it is the Holy Seed, and they only, that "esteem others better than themselves," Phil. ii. 3. He is troubled, at times, with jealousy; and often secretly envies the abounding happiness of some; and in private frequently sighs, and says, "O that I could but see the King's face! O that I had but a tenth part of their felicity! Surely I would put my mouth in the dust, if

so be there might be hope of this!" Lam. iii. 29. "But my soul is far from peace; I forget prosperity: my strength and my hope are perished from the King? Lam. iii. 17, 18. Thus he often mourns in silence.

Shepherd. Has Little Faith considered that ancient, but most excellent and most gracious speech, published by the Evangelical Herald in the Jewish Aera: "Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the King, and speak, saying 'Jehovah hath utterly separated me from his people.' Neither let the eunuch say, 'Behold, I am a dry tree!' Also, the sons of the stranger that join themselves to Jehovah, to serve him, and to love the name of him; to be his servants; every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my Covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain," Isa. lvi. 3.

Steward. There is scarcely a statute, edict, judgment or testimony, gracious speech, proclamation, declaration, invitation, or directions but what Little Faith has perused, and pondered dyer in his heart. He is very studious, and perpetually poring on the ancient Records; and is so versed in them, that if an herald errs in proclaiming any part thereof, it is ten to one but Little Faith finds him out, for he brings all to his own sensations; and, if the King's speech be so handled as to contradict the power, it is sure to be suspected by him, whether he speaks about it or not. For if the herald seems to be bordering on the mount, or directing in the least towards Hagarene castle, Little Faith feels him, and sits as if he was all eye, all ear, and all attention: and, as soon as he begins to knit his brows, it is all over; he sets off, and leaves the court dejected and dismayed; for he has compassed that mount long enough. Thus you may perceive that he grows in knowledge.

Shepherd. It is surprising that such a teachable, tractable, diligent, well-affected child, should be so often, and so long, kept from the presence of the King, who is the best and most indulgent parent existing; for it is but seldom that Little Faith is favoured with a glimpse of his Majesty's face.

Steward. Little Faith has such a humbling sight of himself, and stands, in his own apprehension, at such an infinite distance from the King, and is so over-modest, that he often refuses even what he sorely needs. "I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice, and he gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not; my soul refused to be comforted," Psal. lxxvii, 1, 2. Here he confesses that he prayed, and that God gave ear to his prayer, even while his sore ran, and the balm of Gilead was so much needed; yet he refused to be comforted, although he is obliged to own that he prevailed in prayer. These little ones are such a strange composition as is not easily accounted for: for, although they often go mourning all the day long, saying, "O that I could but see the King's face!" yet if he draws near to them, they will either run away, or put him away. One of this stamp, who was struck with the displays of Omnipotence, fell down at the King's knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord? Luke, v. 8. If he was a sinful man, or a man full of sin, he must have been a very proper object of the King's clemency; and, He visited this world to call sinners to repentance, and to save sinners, why should Little Faith bid him depart from him?"

Shepherd. According to your account of Little Faith, the King's word of truth has got a place in his thoughts, heart, and affections; and it is strange to me that the consolation of Israel should be kept out by unbelief.

Steward. With respect to the word of truth, and with respect to every report touching the King's name, nature, offices,

majesty, and glory, Little Faith has no less than a full assurance. "Then said the King unto the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" And Little Faith answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Messiah, the Son of the living God," John, vi. 67, 68, 69. Here is faith, and assurance; and yet this noble confessor is expressly styled Little Faith, and that by the King himself, Matt. xiv. 31.

Shepherd. He is a mystery, indeed! A man with weak hands! and feeble knees! and of little faith! And yet, you say, he has got an assurance!

Steward. It is no more mysterious than true. He did believe, and was sure: there was both truth and reality in his faith; and then it was in exercise. Little Faith seldom, if ever, doubts of the reality of the things credited; though he often doubts of his interest in the things which he is sure do exist, and are to be enjoyed. Touching his part or lot in the King's love, and in the kingdom to come, he often doubts; and, with respect to the appropriating acts of faith, his hands are weak; a fear of failing, or coming short, is the foundation of his doubts; and with respect to laying hold, maintaining his hold, or making application to himself, he is one of little faith.

Shepherd. And do you find these little ones existing in the purpose, covenant, and promise, of the Ancient of Days?

Steward. Yes; they are called small, least, and little ones, in all these: "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, saving 'know the Lord;' for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer. xxxi. 34. "He will bless them that fear the Lord, small and great," Psalm, cxv. 13. "He gives a reward to his servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear his name, small and great." Rev. xi. 18. "He that is least

among you all, the same shall be great." Luke, ix. 48. Thus it appears that Little Faith stands in miniature, even in the purpose, promise, and covenant; and among the citizens of Mount Zion also. He is the offspring of the Ancient of Days, and one of the Seed Royal, and of "the precious sons of Zion," Lam. iv. 2; and the incorruptible seed is in him. The King hears his prayer, as hath been shewn; and that is more than some can say who talk and boast of great faith. "Lord save, or I perish!" said Little Faith, and he was heard and answered in a minute. "The King giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." A babe in grace stands his ground, "when young men utterly fall," Isa. xl. 29, 30. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget Zion, nor the children of her womb." Thus the pedigree of Little Faith is traced; his birth and parentage are sufficiently proved; and, with respect to his education, he comes on greatly in that. His life is exemplary; his character is bright; and his visits to Court, with his behaviour there, are such as bespeak him sincere, attentive, watchful, devout, diligent, loyal, and obedient to his Majesty; affectionate to every loyal courtier and established servant; and, in short, to all the Seed Royal, from the least to the greatest; as he is dotingly fond of the faithful; ready and willing to assist any of the family; and touched with mental grief at the least misconduct, either in any of the servants, or in the King's seed. All which are characteristics of the truly noble Seed, of high, holy, and heavenly birth. Pray, Shepherd, do you know what o'clock it is?

Shepherd. No, Sir: nor do I care; for it is sleeping time, and I call that my own; and, when I spend half the night in devotion, in good company, in good conversation, or in minuting down any favour, deliverance, or mercy, of the day, I call it redeeming the time; and, I think, in one sense, it is.

Steward. I must withdraw, for we have an evening to offer; and I am appointed to bless it, and to implore the benediction and protection of Heaven upon the family before they go to rest.

Shepherd. As the King hath made every thing beautiful in its season, so our interviews must be at seasonable opportunities But to-morrow will be a busy day with me: I must minutely examine the whole flock. The weather is very hot, and the flies are very busy I have got my crook, my shears, my shab-water, my tar, and turpentine, all ready.

Steward. What do you do with these?

Shepherd. We use a great deal of the juice of the fir, especially, when "flies are busy," Eccles. x. 1; and I find it no easy matter to cure a whimsical, capricious, fanciful head, of maggots: if the shears were not used, we should have half the flock crawling alive with them; and, when once this is the case, they are always creeping into the hedges, and you can hardly find them

Steward. Well, as to-morrow will be a busy day with you, shall you be at leisure the day following, because that will be also a leisure day with me?

Shepherd. I can spend the forenoon with you, if you can make it convenient to come to my booth, which is at the foot of the hill. just above the tents of Kedar.

Steward. If Heaven permit, I will be there. Adieu!

Shepherd. Till then, farewell; and be sure, at the offering up of the evening sacrifice, to remember me.

Dialogue the Fourth.

Steward. Good morning to you, Shepherd!

Shepherd. Good morning to you, Sir! Did you find your way pretty easy?

Steward. I should have come over the summit of the hill, I perceive; but, instead of that, I turned to the left; and, coming round the declivity, I came about: nor could I see your booth, or hut, until I came quite upon it.

Shepherd. You should have gone over the hill. Many have gone round about, and lost their way too, rather than venture up, and come over the summit. Pray, how is the family? And how does Little Faith come on? Have you seen him?

Steward. The family (blessed be God!) are well; and Little Faith seemed last night in tolerable spirits: for one of the servants, rather noted for credence; one that Little Faith has a very high opinion of, and whose happiness he hath often observed with a wishful and longing eye, has been sick lately: and in his affliction his faith was sorely tried; and he, too, staggered greatly, and said, "My heart and my flesh both fail." Little Faith heard of this, and rather wondered at it, and seemed to take a little encouragement from it. The servant is now up, but very weak and feeble. Last night Little Faith and he were together on the lobby; and, I believe, they were comparing notes together, for I thought Little Faith seemed to have the brightest countenance of the two.

Shepherd. Times of sickness, and times of trial, prove what is genuine Credence, and what is Self-confidence. He is a staunch believer who (by faith) can perform in days of adversity, all that he has spoken in the days of prosperity.

Steward. True; but this is not always the case: a servant, who is for a time exempt from trials, finds Little Faith sounds but a discordant string to his merry heart. However, the King" will not break the bruised reed." This servant has now and then given Little Faith a sharp lash with the scourge of the tongue; but, now, he can condescend to one of low degree. But none use Little Faith with so much violence as those who have either no faith at all, or a faith that never was tried. These use the word faith only to banter others with; for, if you ask them to describe the nature, workings, or preveiling feats of it, they talk nonsense.

Shepherd. Faith is better found out by what it does, than by what it is. It is given for a man to live by, not to boast of, much less to plague others with. "Hast thou faith?" said an ancient herald: "Have it to thyself before God." And if poor Little Faith's mother had been in better hands, and he properly taken care of at first, he might now, perhaps, have been as staunch a believer as any in the Household.

Steward. It is true: for, as ladies who use proverbs observe, "An after-relapse is worse than a lying-in." Or, sometimes it is worded thus: "A second lying-in is worse than the first." Which is true in this case. Faithful dealings, fervent prayers, and sound words of truth, from an unctuous heart, are what Heaven has ordained to be used at Zion's groanings. This appears in the ancient Records: "The children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. Wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left," 2 Kings, xix. 3, 4. They sent to the evangelical prophet for a message of truth, and expected it to be delivered in faithfulness; and that his prayers should be lifted up, and that for this feeble remnant that was then come to the birth. But these means were not used at the birth of Little Faith, which was the cause of his" tarrying so long in the place of the breaking forth of children," Has. xiii. 13.

Shepherd. The more the pity! A proper use of the means is the only way to obtain the blessing. The faithful midwives in Egypt declared to the king, that the Hebrew women were much stronger than the Egyptian women; for they were lively, and were delivered before the midwives came in unto them, Exod. i. 19. If the Hebrew women were thus lively, what must Zion be, if properly attended, and due nourishment administered! It is said of her, as never was said of any Hebrew matron, "As soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children. Yea, before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pains came on, she was delivered of a man child!" "Who hath heard such things? Shall a nation be born at once? Or, shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day?"

Steward. Neglect of the proper means, and unfaithful dealing, is the cause of the mother's lingering labour, and of Little Faith's feebleness and unsightliness; for the King's image consists of knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness: and if ignorant, unjustified, and unsanctified persons, are allowed to mingle themselves among the King's servants and children at such times, it cannot be expected that her deliverance should be quick, or clear; or that the image of the King should be express on the offspring; or that the child's language, in his childhood, should be either pure or genuine; seeing he was put into such hands to be nursed, and permitted to herd with all the bond-children in the town. However, "those feeble members are necessary," 1 Cor. xii. 22. And, though some think them "less honourable, upon such we ought to shew more abundant honour." For the King has pronounced a woe to the world because of offences; and charges all to take heed that they offend not one of those little ones that believe in him - yea; and that whosoever receives such a little one in his name, receives him. Therefore it appears, that upon these we should put the more abundant honour.

Shepherd. Pray, what sort of a man is Little Faith in person now! Is he robust, or slim? tall in stature, or a dwarf? comely, or unsightly? proportionable in his features, or irregular? well, or ill-favoured?

Steward. With respect to his stature, he is a dwarf. It is a rare thing to see his head above the clouds, above the fog, or above the smoke; much less above the moon. They must be clothed with the Sun who get the new-moon feasts, and all Jewish and Popish ceremonies, with their fulls and changes, waxings and wanings, "under their feet," Rev. xii. 1. With respect to his status he has given an account of it himself: "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly," Psalm, cxxxviii. 6. His gait is somewhat declining; or, rather he is inclining to stoop in the shoulders: which is easily accounted for - for two reasons. First, His being so habituated to the low cloisters and cells of the Hagarene Castle; and of his habituating himself to his perpetual retreats in the sand-bank, which never exalts any man. Secondly, His accustoming himself to his old legal yoke, which has a natural tendency to bow the head: nor can any man walk upright till this be taken off; as it is written, "I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bond-men; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright," Levit. xxvi. 13. This yoke, and another equally bad, always make the wearers of them go stooping. You have a complaint of this in the following speech: "The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand; they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck," Lam. i. 14. These things make a man, whether young or old, stoop in the shoulders. Thus you see his stature is short, or low; and his gait very much declining.

Shepherd. What sort of a limbed man is Little Faith? Is he well limbed?

Steward. His hands, as was before observed, generally hang down; his loins are loose and weak; and his knees feeble; which makes him appear halting, or hobbing, in his walk. Hence his complaint, "For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me," Psalm, xxxviii. 17. "But the King undoes all that afflict him, and sayeth him that halteth," Zeph. iii. 19.

Shepherd. Poor man! his soul must often be discouraged because of the way - for the way to the kingdom is through great tribulation; through darkness and light, rough places and plain; over hills and rallies; and through various windings, turnings, crooks and corners. So that a man had need both of strength and limbs.

Steward. The King leads the blind, as was before observed, by a way that they know not, and bears them as upon eagles' wings. He cuts the worst figure on the paths of Zion who can go alone. Woe be to him that is alone when he falleth! - which he is sure to do if he be alone when he walks.

Shepherd. True, Sir: to lean to one's own understanding to guide one, or to trust in one's own heart to bear one up, is acting the part of a fool. I hope the ancient petition will never be out of my heart, or out of my mouth - "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." Excuse me breaking in upon the chain of your discourse, Sir. Go on with your description of Little Faith, for I have some suspicion that I have seen him.

Steward. There are few real shepherds, I believe, who have not seen him some time or other; for he is always to be found within, if he cannot be seen without. The countenance of Little Faith is rather inclining to be gloomy, especially in the winter; but, when the spring arrives, "when the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone; when the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land," Cant. ii. 11, 12, it sometimes brightens up a little. Besides, he used,

when at Hagar's castle, to wear a veil, and the marks of it remain on his forehead to this day. All Hagar's family, as well as popish nuns, take the veil, and wear it too, 2 Cor. iii. 14. Nor can it be taken away, or the wrinkles of it defaced, otherwise than by seeing the King's face: "When it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away," 2 Cor. iii. 16. "For he is the health of our countenance," Psalm, xlii. 11. There is one thing makes very much against Little Faith; and that is, he is near-sighted, or what is vulgarly called [purblind]. "He cannot see afar-off," 2 Pet. i. 9. It requires a strong focus, an eminent standing, a long sight, and a clear day: yea, he must dwell on high who sees the King in his beauty, and beholds the land which is very far off," Isa. xxxiii. 17.

Shepherd. But it is allowed in the general, I believe, that nearsighted people have the strongest eyes, when anything comes within the reach of their sight; and, when the light of day is withdrawn, I am informed that they can see in the dark better than a long-sighted person.

Steward. It is true, if either a matter or a person come close to Little Faith, he will see through the matter, or penetrate through the person, as soon as most; for he has been led astray by many false matters, and been imposed upon by many false persons, which has made him very watchful and observant. And it is equally true that he can see in the dark (being so accustomed to it) better than a long-sighted person. The works and workings of Satan, of the old man of sin, and the state of fools - all of whom, as well as their works, "are in the dark," or in darkness itself - and few see these things clearer than Little Faith: and we are in hope that, when the sun rises upon his horizon, that "he will discover deep things out of darkness, and bring out to light the shadow of death," Job, xii. 22. But, with respect to seeing through a glass, seeing his Witness in heaven, his record on high, his name in

the book of life, and the face of Him who is invisible, Little Faith is very near-sighted.

Shepherd. Is he a constant petitioner? If he be above begging, he is not likely to be exalted; for the King "raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes," 1 Sam. ii. 8, which shews that there is no such thing as sitting among the princes till we feel our poverty in the dust, and are humbled to beg on the dunghill.

Steward. It is true; and your observation is beautiful. And it is as true that Little Faith is a constant petitioner, but too formal in his addresses: and he is a man of a singularly narrow or small mouth, which is much against him; for, though he be so often under the vine, and under the fig-tree - and the King tells him, saying, "Open thy mouth wide; and I will fill it," Psalm, lxxxi. 10, - yet, if you shake the tree over his head," the fruit doth not fall into the mouth of such an eater," Nab. iii. 12, in that he is "straitened in his bowels," 2 Cor. vi. 12, and straitened in his mouth too.

Shepherd. Are his teeth good? However, that is but of little account: for, if the appetite be small, and the constitution weakly and delicate, it matters not much whether the grinders be many or few; for they fail in Little Faith because they grind little, Eccl. xii. 3.

Steward. His teeth are as good as can be expected. "Stolen waters used to be sweet to him," Prov. ix. 17, and nothing is worse for teeth than such sweet things. Nevertheless, he can eat grapes, Deut. xxiii. 24, and apples, Cant. ii. 5. And, when he has gone" down into the garden of nuts," Cant. vi. 11, I have seen him crack them, and give them to others; but it is a rare thing to see him eat one himself. "This," saith he, "belongs to you, and that belongs to such an one; but, far be it from me to presume to take the best fruits in the land. 'Balm

and honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds,' Gen. xliii. 11, are for Joseph, not for me; and I would dish them up for the king of Egypt rather than presume to take them myself."

Shepherd. Don't you think the gloom of his countenance is contracted by looking perpetually at the mount and the sand-bank? I think it is; else, why are we commanded to look to the hills, from whence cometh our help? and even to look to the King from the ends of the earth? Yea; and the King himself says, "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely," Cant. ii. 14. And one of his Majesty's ancient Steward.s declares, that while we "look as through a glass darkly, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory," 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Steward. This is true; but Little Faith has too much confidence in doing, and too little in looking. Though he knows that he cannot work himself into the King's favour, yet there is an habitual bent that way; and so there is in others as well as in Little Faith.

Shepherd. Then it is both his folly and his loss, for he bereaves his soul of good.

Steward. He does: nevertheless, the King will not let Little Faith be disappointed of his hope, nor let his expectation be cut off, concerning seeing the King's face. Yet he will leave him to struggle in his own strength, till he is made sensible what this working hand of his can do for him; and, when he sees that his power is all gone, and there is none shut up or left, and he fails and faints, it will be otherwise - for "he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might left; and then his power is to be given, and strength is to be increased. Isa. xl. 29. According to which account, his strength must be quite exhausted; he must faint under his vain help, and have no might left; and then power is to be given, and strength is to

be increased. This is the King's most gracious speech, and shall surely be fulfilled.

Shepherd. Is the hearing of Little Faith pretty good?

Steward. Better than could be expected, considering how long he staid at the mount; where he saw nothing but fire, blackness and darkness; and heard nothing but "the thunder in the tempest, the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words," Heb. xii. 18, 19. The drum of his ear had been so strained and shaken with perpetual peals of thunder, that it was a long time before he could either hear or brook "the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely," Psalm, lviii. 5. The sound of the silver trumpet, the jubilee trump, and the melody of Zion's harp, hardly gained his attention at first; but now his ear tries the word as the mouth tastes the meat. But he cannot make much melody in his heart, though he hears and "knows the joyful sound," Psalm, lxxxix. 15, and is charmed with the "good news from a far country," Prov. xxv. 25; for his mind is frequently tossed with the old tempest, even to this day. Thus, Shepherd, I have given you a little description of Little Faith's person. His stature is snort, his gait is stooping, his limbs are lank, his loins are loose, his knees are weak, and he has a hobbling or halting step in his walk. His countenance is such as bespeaks him sincere and devout, but rather gloomy; his eyes are full; he is near-sighted, and squints a little; his mouth is very small, and his teeth are but indifferent His nose is far from flat: this appears by his being suffered to wait at the altar, which a person with "a flat nose must not do," Lev. xxi. 18. His nose is well set," and life has been breathed into his nostrils" - which makes the "smell of his nose like apples," Cant. vii. 8. The skin of his face is fair, but rather too pale; and it is but very seldom that "his face shines," Exod. xxxiv. 29. His cheeks are very thin; as he him- self complains," Thou hast filled me with wrinkles,

which are a witness against me; and my leanness, rising up in me, beareth witness to my face," Job, xvi. 8.

Shepherd. Excuse my breaking in so abruptly. What I was going to remark was, that the poor man must be sadly put to his shifts to get a witness against the blessed state of his soul, if he was obliged to fly to his leanness, and to the wrinkles of his face, for witnesses.

Steward. What could he do? God had borne his testimony that Job "was a perfect and an upright man;" and the Spirit, in Job, had borne witness in his conscience that "his witness was in heaven, and his record on high." So that Infidelity was driven to her wit's end to find a witness: and, at last, two are produced, the one is Job's leanness rising up, the other the wrinkles of his face - dumb witnesses both. But so it is, when once unbelief prevails, she will have some plea against God. Job, to measure the shortness of his days, flies to the "swift pace of a post," and to the throw of a "weaver's shuttle:" and so here, rather than appear without a witness, he flies to the wrinkles of his face; and I should not have wondered if he had fled to the colour of his eye-brows.

Shepherd. Go on with your description of his face, for I really believe that I know him.

Steward. I don't believe there is a man in the world that knows himself, but what knows him. As to his face, there are some "bright spots" on it, which have been mistaken for relics of the leprosy; but they are called "freckled spots which grow in the skin of persons that are clean," Levit. xiii. 39. And certain it is that Little Faith" is clean through the word that the King hath spoken unto him," John, xv. 3, though he seldom enjoys it.

Shepherd. You have given me a very particular and satisfactory account of his person; and I think I have often

seen him, and felt him too. Pray, is he not fond of retirement and loneliness

Steward. Very; for he seldom goes into any company, pious or Impious, but what he gets a wound, or private damage, some way or other; some rent is made in his peace; or some of his thoughts are scattered, his doubts encouraged, his terrors awakened, or his knees relaxed. There is always something dislodged, or out of joint, with poor Little Faith: for, if souls are talking cheerfully about the King's love-tokens, his favours, or the felicity enjoyed in his presence, it often provokes him to jealousy, or he views it as lightness and levity. He gets but little comfort in company who can "eat and be merry," Luke xv. 23; because he is so seldom favoured with a kid. Yea, if he does but forget himself, and even smile at lively and cheerful conversation, his old adversary checks him for it, and accuses him of sinning against light and knowledge; telling him, that he should be "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, all his days," as the King himself formerly was: and that for persons to be "joyful in a house of prayer; to put off sackcloth, and be girded with gladness; to have their captivity turned, their mouth filled with laughter, and their tongue with singing; to drink so as to forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more;" is little better than wantoning with royal things: it is appearing cheerful; or else trifling, where the countenance ought to be veiled with gloom, and the heart ballasted with solidity, comparable to a "talent of lead," Zech. v. 7.

Shepherd. Then Little Faith has no notion of "eating before the King, in the place that he shall chuse, with his sons, his daughters, his men-servants and maid-servants, and the Levites; and of rejoicing before the King in all that he puts his hands unto?" Deut. xiii. 18. And again, "Because the King shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice," Deut. xvi. 15.

The King loves a "bird of song," as well as a "mourning dove:" the "singing of birds," and the "voice of the turtle," Cant. ii. 12, should both be heard in their turn.

Steward. Little Faith must go on his own way. As he is "afflicted, let him pray: when he is merry, he will sing psalms. A merry heart is a continual feast; and, on the other hand, by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. Days of adversity, and days of prosperity, are set one against the other: let him consider in the former, and be joyful in the latter." I believe he has had more nursing than a thousand that are now in the realms of bliss: but, notwithstanding that he still thinks, and often says, that he is the last that shall ever behold the brilliant mansions of the celestial palace, yet we know that "there are last that shall be first, and the first last;" "for many be called, but few chosen."

Shepherd. He is one of our spiritual Jacob's tender ones, and must not be over-driven, but be followed gently, as he be able to endure. We were saying, on a former visit, that proverbial ladies avouched that a "second lying-in," or an after-relapse, "is worse than the first." I know there are no voices without signification; and I take it for granted that the above proverb hath its meaning, if I were acquainted with any of those honourable matrons who could give me the sense thereof But, whatever interpretation it may bear in the dialect and judgment of women, or however true in the travail of nature, is it any way applicable to the labours of Zion?

Steward. Doubtless; for the proverbs of women are so pregnant with truth, sense, and meaning, "that it is but to ask counsel at Abel, and the matter is ended," 2 Sam. xx. 18. As to labours, they are various. Some are very quick: "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth children: yea, before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child." Isa. lxvi. 7. Others, again, are long

and lingering, intermingled with respites of carnal ease; at which times prayer is without fervour, and the afflicted appear as if they were without the sense of an opposite principle to oppose the motions of corruption, till fresh trouble send them with another importunity to the King: "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O Lord. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind, we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth. **THY DEAD MEN SHALL Live.**" Isa. xxvi. 16, &C. Others, again, are entangled in the birth, like Little Faith: "The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid. The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him. He is an unwise son, for he should not **STAY LONG** in the place of the **BREAKING FORTH** of children. I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death." Hos. xiii. 12, 13, 14. If you take notice here, both the lingering travail of Zion, and the entangling birth of Ephraim, are backed with an absolute and unconditional promise. To lingering Zion it is said, "Thy dead men shall live;" and to Ephraim, who was entangled in the birth, "I will redeem them from death, and ransom them from the power of the grave." The promise, therefore, being set so close to the labour, is to show that the travail and toil of the mind is to secure the gift of life, the redemption of the soul, and the ransom of the body from the grave; which being secured, the sonship appears clear; and, having obtained the promised blessings, they are expressly styled the "heirs of promise." Zion is never without her promise. It is allowed by all that have severely felt it, and by most who have been eye and ear witnesses of it, that spiritual labour is the most perilous of all labour. "Notwithstanding, Zion shall be saved in child-bearing; because she is sure to continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety," 1 Tim. ii. 15.

Shepherd. These things appear clear to me. Your account of the quick,, and of the lingering, labour of Zion, and of the entanglement of Ephraim, have, doubtless, a footing on Divine veracity. But neither of these things are an interpretation sufficient to prove the authenticity, or settle the validity, of the gossiping ladies proverb; namely, that "a second lying-in is worse than the first." All come into the world by the throes of Nature's sorrow, and into the spiritual world by a birth that is purely spiritual; but, is there such a thing as re-labour, or a re-birth in the latter? Not that I doubt the veracity of these honourable ladies, in the sense that they mean it; for I am informed that their proverbs at groaning assemblies are generally delivered with an emphasis peculiar to themselves; and mostly dropped with a singular weight, and enforced with an eye and an air of consequence, when they intend to besiege the ears of a quiet, harmless, inoffensive husband.

Steward. Something of this hath been observed in the birth of some of the sons of Zion. Zion herself hath often re-laboured with one and the same child. Individuals have a second time fallen into spiritual travail; and even Zion's watchmen have felt the pangs, and borne their part of the throes: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth AGAIN, until Christ be formed in you," Gal. iv. 19. That great man in the land of Uz was early begotten by the word of truth, and quickened in his early days by the Spirit Divine impressions were felt, and labour succeeded; and he came so far forth at times, as for the features of the new creature to be perceptible: yea, he came far enough into the new world to have a glimpse of Him who is invisible; but it was a view of terrible majesty; at which he drew back, saying, "Destruction from God was a terror to me; and, by reason of his highness, I could not endure," Job, xxxi. 23. The most perilous part of the labour he hoped to have escaped, but it overtook him a second time: "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I

rest, neither was I quiet, yet trouble came," Job, iii. 25, 26. Hence it appears, that his early begetting, quickening, and labour, were sufficient to leave visible traces and features of Divinity upon his mind - which is confirmed by the testimony of Heaven that he was perfect in the EVERLASTING FATHER, and upright by virtue of union with him, and divine aid from him; and one that feared his Sovereign, and hated evil. Nevertheless, it pleased the Most High, who is a free agent, to bring him the second time to put "his hands on his loins;" and his friends, for seven days at least, bore a part of the labour. But, after that, they acted as some did at the birth of Little Faith: some cried one thing, and some another, and the greater part used violent means, and some despaired of deliverance: but, at the appointed time, the new creature came forth with all its beauty and comeliness; "God turned the captivity of Job;" perfect love cast out fear, and set him free; and "he that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." Now, he compared the produce of the first labour to only "the hearing of the ear;" but the latter as productive of the seeing eye - "But now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," Job, xlii. 5, 6. Now "his eyes saw, his ears heard, and his hands handled, the word of life." Thus some, who have felt a little spiritual labour, greatly fear the bearing pains; which, as Job acknowledged, came upon him; while others go lingering on in expectation of terrible things, and at last come forth before they know where they are; their "deliverance seems like a dream;" and their long imaginary terrors, under the buffeting of Satan, are ten times worse than the real.

Shepherd. This brings to my mind what is recorded of a pious king of the Hebrews - "That he wrought that which was good and right, and truth, before the Lord his God; and in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered," 2 Chron. xxxi. 20, 21. And

the Lord was with him as he acknowledged even to the Hebrews - "Be strong and courageous; be not dismayed nor afraid for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to help us," 2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8. Nevertheless, in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, "God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart," 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

Steward. And if God leaves a man, to try him, and to make him know all that is in his heart, he will have soul travail enough; for it is a sight of internal corruption, and a sense of the plague of the heart - when enlightened to see it, and quickened to feel it - that brings the labour on. And this was the case with Hezekiah for, whatever legal labour he might have had before, I am bold to affirm, that the "second lying-in was worse than the first;" especially when the evangelical Prophet, who was his bosom friend, came with a - "Thus saith Jehovah, Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live," Isa. xxxviii, 1. He owned, when brought forth into liberty, that for peace he had great bitterness; but this last labour produced pardon, and brought life and immortality to light: "Thou hast, in love to my soul, DELIVERED it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my SINS behind thy back. By these things men LIVE, and in all these things is the LIFE of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to LIVE," Isa. xxxviii. 16, 17.

Shepherd. Pray, what may be the cause of so many sticking in the birth, and of others going through second soul travail before the birth be made clear to them?

Steward. The first causes must be resolved into the will of the King, as it is. according as he is pleased to bestow a greater or a lesser measure of the Spirit. All do not gather this hidden

manne alike: "Some gather more, some less; but they that gather much have nothing over, and they that gather little have no lack." Divine impressions, on some, are shallow; on others, deep: in the heart of one, "the Day-dawn and Day-star arises;" on others, "the light shines round about them," and quite through them. Where the ray is faint, and the impression shallow, fear and trembling are produced; consciousness succeeds; and a power is felt, under which sin is shunned, and the Lord is sought with diligence. Thus a visible reformation takes place; while a lingering labour exercises the mind, till unbelief be discovered, doubts and slavish fears are brought on, and bondage holds them fast. Such believe the truth of the word; the justice, holiness, and immutability, of their Maker, and the record that he has given of his Son; but are overpowered with misgivings of heart, so that they cannot lay a comfortable hold of the Saviour: yet they are kept out of the world, and in a waiting posture; are very inquisitive; and are willing to learn, and perpetually seeking knowledge. And oftentimes such souls fall into the hands of ten "blind guides," before they find out one that is "a burning and a shining light:" and, as they have not grace sufficient to counterbalance the legal mind, a mere impostor, or a legal tutor, under the influence of Lucifer, and by the sufferance of Jehovah, generally gets hold of them; with whom they are mightily taken, being zealously affected by him. The empty and noisy harangue of such a Boanerges suiting the legal mind, it entangles them in the birth, in the ties or navel-string of nature, or natural affections; for this navel, in the worst sense, "is a round goblet which wanteth not liquor," Cant vii. 2; consequently, a legal spirit, and a confused mind, are sure of nutriment from that quarter. Thus such an one goes on till a deeper impression be felt under divine operation, and a brighter ray be communicated to the dark recesses and various haunts of the legal spirit. In this light, and under such sensations, the seducer, deceiver, and impostor, is generally discovered; every word of his mouth is traced to his heart,

from whence it proceeds; while the state of his mind, and the basis on which he stands, are exhibited to view; and his fair and false pretences laid open, with all his base motives, destructive aims, and cruel ends. From that time the weakling is undeceived; the King has made manifest the hypocrite, and enabled his offspring to "judge all things; yet he himself is judged of no man," I Cor. ii. 15.

Shepherd. It is surprising that men should be so stiffened with pride, so daring in rebellion, so bent on "deceiving and being deceived," as to persist, in open defiance of majesty, verity, and conscience: and expose themselves to every "arrow of Jehovah's quiver," Acts, xiii. 10; Deut. xxxii. 23. All this must undoubtedly spring from a horrible war between the rebel's mind and his Maker; which, without the interposition of never-failing mediation, must end in infinite ruin. Little Faith can never be finally deceived, for he exists in the compassionate bowels of immortal love: nor will the "Father of mercies," and Fountain of comfort, leave his feeble fraternity as orphans; or permit his chosen race to be seduced, spoiled, and left as a Prey to the objects of his just hatred. He has pronounced "a woe to the world because of offences," Matt xviii. 7; and has given a charge to every governor, ruler, and servitor, in his realm," to take heed that they do not despise one of those little ones," Matt. xviii. 10; who by divine credence rely on his arm: and has declared, "that in the celestial regions their angels do always behold the face of his Father," Matt. xviii. 10. It stands upon record, that the adjacent mountains that encompassed the "city of Dothan," were covered with the "flaming equipages of immortal Majesty," in order to protect a single "ambassador," 2 Kings, vi. 17; and he, for his stability in faith, is styled "The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof," 2 Kings, xiii. 14. If a champion, comparable to a war-chariot and a troop-horse, be thus attended and protected, what attendance and protection must Little Faith have, who is always in danger; and, when his fits of infidelity are upon him,

can neither fight nor fly? "Amalek had his name blotted out from under heaven," Deut. xxv. 19; "and perished for ever," Numb. xxiv. 20; "for casting off all fear, and for cutting off the faint and feeble of the Israelitish tribes," Deut. xxv. 18; who were the King's children by national adoption; then what displeasure must they incur, who labour to seduce, beguile, and deceive, those who are his offspring by regeneration! And, if they cannot deceive them, they despise, hate, ridicule, and even curse them! as it is written, "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife, and a man of contention to the whole earth! for every one of them doth curse me!" Jer. xv. 10. If the guardian "angels of these little ones behold Jehovah's face," they certainly know how his countenance stands toward them: and sure I am that those "birds of the air shall carry the sinner's curse, and those [messengers] that have wings shall tell the matter," Eccles. x. 20. And if those birds of Paradise do not, Little Faith will; for he is a "bird," he is a "dove," Cant. ii. 14; though not a "singing-bird," Cant. ii. 12; and by and by he will get his wings: for "although he has lain among the pots, yet shall he be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold," Psalm, lxxviii. 13. These shall tell the matter; for if they curse Little Faith, they curse the King himself.

Steward. Undoubtedly they will. And the means that they use in order to ensnare the weaklings are despicable also. They know that children are generally pleased with music and melody; therefore they endeavour to charm and allure, or (if restless) to quiet their minds by instrumental and vocal sounds. Organs, bagpipes, humstrums, and violins, are introduced, under a specious pretext of adoring, honouring, and charming the ears of his Majesty; whereas it is intended to answer the same end for which the "king's band" was employed in the "plains of Dura," just to amuse and ravish the mind till devotions were paid to Satan, to the king's honour, and to "the golden image that he had set up." Mimics are

employed to chant, and pipers to charm, in order to "allure them from the Guide of their youth, and drive from their thoughts the covenant of their Sovereign." His Majesty takes no pleasure in them "that CHANT to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music," Amos, vi. 5; but, on the contrary, says, "Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, for I WILL not HEAR the melody of thy viols [or fiddles]," Amos, v. 22. Yea, and even strolling vagrants and monkish mimics from the stage, are often invited, or hired, to sing feigned anthems to his Majesty's dis-praise; for it is more detestable to him than either the bellowing of a bull, or the howling of a dog. The King approves of no music like mental melody. "Singing with grace, and making melody in the heart," meet with divine applause and proclaimed approbation: "Let me see thy face, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely," Cant. ii. 14. Poor Little Faith has felt the effects of fatherly displeasure for giving way to the above allurements; and others have exchanged their songs for" weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth," Matt. xiii. 42. The "musicians," and the "minstrels" must" give place," and be "turned out," too," before the King raise the dead," Matt. ix. 24, 25.

Shepherd. Doth his Majesty use severity with his children? and is he particularly observant of their conduct?

Steward. He uses fatherly severity to those who are naughty, and is very observant of their conduct; and nothing displeases him more than to see them wander out of his way: "He has cast up, and prepared a road for them, and has had all the stumbling-blocks removed out of it," Isa. lvii. 14; that they might amuse themselves therein, and walk safely; and the way is so plain, and so belined with heaps of witnesses, hand-posts, and landmarks, that even an idiot shall not err, if he walks therein. But, as sure as ever Little Faith gets out of that way, which has been often the case, the King observes him,

follows after him, "marks his paths" - and "sets a print upon his heels," Job xiii. 27; and, before Little Faith is aware, he is laid by the feet in the stocks," Job, xxxiii. 11.

Shepherd. Poor little fellow! that must be a terrible punishment to him; enough, one would think, to break his heart!

Steward. It is done for that purpose; for "a broken and a contrite heart is a thing that the King will never despise," Psalm, li. 17. But, what mortifies Little Faith most is, that the young princes and princesses are ordered to go and look at him, for the stocks are placed close by the way-side for that end.

Shepherd. I suppose they are ordered to go and see the terrible punishment inflicted, in order to deter them, by bringing "great fear upon as many as see and hear these things." And it must greatly mortify Little Faith, and provoke him to jealousy, to see the rest of the Seed Royal walking at large, while he is exposed as a spectacle laid by the heels. Pray, how does he look and behave while in confinement? Does he speak to his brethren and sisters?<P.

Steward. "He looks as a thief generally does when he is found," Jer. ii. 26, for "the shew of his countenance witnesseth against him," Isa. iii. 9. But he says but little - only, "that they see his casting down, and are afraid," Job, vi. 21.

Shepherd. I suppose Little Faith has been often in the stocks in former days?

Steward. Not very often. The King has various methods of punishment; and the chief punishment that has been inflicted on Little Faith is what is called "pressing at the gate."

Shepherd. "Pressing at the gate!" Pray, what is that?

Steward. There is at the front of the palace what is called the "strait [or narrow] gate," Matt. vii. 13. On the left-hand side is "a dark hole," or "tabernacle," Job, xviii. 6, and on the right-hand is a "large room," Psalm, xxxi. 8, which is the presence-chamber, the place of audience, where persons and petitions are received, and where the King shews his face. At this gate Little Faith has been punished for months together, looking with a longing eye toward the presence-chamber, and with fear and trembling at the "dark hole." Unbelief and slavish fear press on him on the one side, and "hope deferred maketh his heart sick" of holy longing, on the other; so that he is "in a strait betwixt two;" and yet he dares not complain nor murmur, for fear of the black hole. But that which wounds him the deepest is, that he has open heard this lamentable cry from the left-hand, "I am shut up, and I cannot come forth," Psa. lxxxviii. 8. And, on the other hand, he sees many go smiling in and out of the presence-chamber; which greatly aggravates his sensations.

Shepherd. And, pray, what may his Majesty be displeased with, that he has kept him so long at the strait gate?

Steward. The King will have all his children dependent on him for every thing: and likewise humble before him; for that child who is the most humble "is the greatest [in declarative favour] in all his realm," Matt. xviii. 4. But Little Faith, by playing formerly with Hagar's boys, drank deeply into the spirit, and strongly imbibed the corrupt principles, of what is falsely called free-agent; which in very deed was the crime and utter overthrow of Absalom, the son of David - for it is an unwarrantable contention for sovereignty; which, in the highest sense of the word, is granted to none but One; and, in the lowest sense, to none - but by delegated right and might; which must ever be held by the King's grant, under his inspection, by his authority, executed in his name, with a dependence on his sceptre, wisdom and arm, and to the

honour, of his person; as those who are accountable to him for all that is amiss in celestial affairs. And it was this crime that had like to have been the ruin of him that is called "the prodigal son;" who demanded "the portion that fell to him, and went into a far country;" that is, far from the King, that he might, as an independent, trade for himself; which in the end debased him to a level with the swine, exposed him to the arrows of famine, and ministered a foretaste of perishing by everlasting destruction.

Shepherd. Your observation is truly just, that "the principles of free-agency are falsely so called;" for it is nothing but stubbornness: they are headstrong rebels, not free agents. It is a brutal resistance of their Maker's will, and may be seen in beasts. I have brought up lambs by hand, that have, when they were come to be sheep, used their horns against me, and presumed even to butt me; and have resisted to the uttermost if I attempted to catch and hold them by the crook - which has been a display to me of every man's being brutish who dares to resist the good Shepherd as these did me. But I have soon after seen that the dog Smut has been, by the King's order, sent among them; which has laid hold of them by the ears, and led them round every field, meadow, close, coppice, and yard; and over every hedge, ditch, slough, and lane, in all the farm.

Steward. True; and nothing looks more detestable, nor is more damnable, than for creatures to "resist the will" of their Maker and Owner, Rom. ix. 19; while they. "are taken captive by the devil at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26. But so it is; they wage war with the former, but are obliged to submit to the latter.

Shepherd. But pray, sir, is not the punishment of "pressing at the gate," something very severe?

Steward. Very. The feelings under it are somewhat like those produced by a strait waistcoat: he struggles hard; and, the

more he struggles, the more he is "straitened." He is like one of old who could not get at the "King for the press."

Shepherd. And to see the other children pay their court-visits, and smiling in and out, must be a terrible mortification. Besides, say that there is good cheer in the large room; and to be and hunger-bitten too, must undoubtedly add to the affliction.

Steward. There is good cheer there, and that Little Faith knows; he must be mentally poor that goes in there, as Little Faith been told, and that by the King himself: "He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression. Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad where there is no straightness, and that which should be set on table should be full of fatness," Job, xxxvi. 15, 16. This is absolute and unalterable declaration.

Shepherd. I must run. I have many overlookers, who take more pains in minding me than they do in minding their own business; and if they should see me absent at the stated hours of attendance, would say to me, as Pharaoh did to the Hebrews, "Ye are idle, ye are idle; and therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice.

Steward. Where shall you be to-morrow evening, after you have feeding and folding?

Shepherd. After feeding and folding, you may be sure to find me, two or three hours, at the sign of the "Harp, by the brooks of willows," Isa. xv. 7; Psa. cxxxii. 2.

Steward. I understand you. Weariness and emptiness must succeed that sort of labour - but the King gives food to the feeder; declares, that they who water shall be watered themselves. The well of life will spring again. I will call upon

you there. The best of blessings attend both the Shepherd and the flock!

Shepherd. And may the same eternally rest on the Steward. and the Household! Tender my love to Little Faith.

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Fifth.

Steward. So I have found you at the old spot?.

Shepherd. No fear of that: I always creep here when the cruse is empty; for, after folding-times, I can compare myself to none but that Nazarite who was shorn of his strength by the Philistines, for I hate to look any body in the face.

Steward. As iron sharpeneth iron, so the face of a friend sharpens a dejected brother by hearty counsel.

Shepherd. I have been thinking, at times, ever since I parted with you last, about those Asiatic mountaineers: their character and conduct are singular.

Steward. They are: they ever have been a plague and a pest to every royal seed and loyal servant that has appeared in his Majesty's dominions for near, if not quite, three thousand years.

Shepherd. And, pray, what good can either the mother or the children get by skulking about the palace? As there is an irreconcilable enmity between them, they must, at times, have all their prejudices stirred up, and be rendered miserable in themselves to the last degree. And the disagreeable sensations produced by the repeated rebukes and rebuffs that

they get, would be enough, one would imagine, to deter them from even approaching the palace-yard.

Steward. It is a turbulent race, that cannot rest: and, as they have neither rest nor peace themselves, they cannot endure to see it enjoyed by others; and, being sworn enemies to government, their own bosoms are oft becalmed if they can but vex or perplex one of the King's children, or even a servant that is truly and heartily loyal to his Majesty.

Shepherd. Pray, were any of their predecessors ever of, or ever employed in, the Royal Family, that they are such a pest at court? If not, I should think that they must be total strangers to the Household, and to the order of the family; and therefore keep their distance through ignorance, and take no notice of them, as thousands do, who, like Gallio, care for none of these things.

Steward. A certain prince and princess, of ancient date, who were of the Blood Royal, as they were on their travels, passing through the country of Mizraim, of the land of Ham, promiscuously met with Hagar the great, great, great, great-grandmother of these Hagarenes, and hired her as a "servant of all work:" in which low station she behaved herself for some time, in appearance, with great fidelity; till, in process of time, she so ingratiates herself into the affections of the princess, that she took her to be her own maid, to attend chiefly on her person as a "maid o honour."

Shepherd. Prosperity is sure to try the integrity of persons, and to discover the principles which actuate them. If a wise child, like the little Hebrew that was sold by his brethren, prosper in Egypt, his gratitude to his benefactor is excited; he is laid under such filial ties of obligation, that he would endure false imprisonment rather than injure him. But, if fools prosper, their prosperity terminates in their ruin: "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them," Prov. i. 32.

Steward. The proverb is verified by the matter now in hand. Hagar having been in the family upwards of twelve years, been exalted to the high station of a "maid of honour," and being in great favour with the princess, she became almost her equal. It appears that the dominions of this royal pair were very large by Divine donation, and they both knew that their names and family were never to be extinct: and the princess herself being barren - an heir-apparent being greatly wanted - and she despairing of issue, quits the "dry bed," in hopes of making it "green," Cant. i. 16, by her "maid of honour;" and persuades her prince to compliance, as it was done in hopes of an heir, which she was determined to adopt, Gen. xvi. 2.

Shepherd. This was going a singular length, indeed! surpassing the bounds of women; and must try the loyalty of the "maid of honour," with a witness!

Steward. It did, for she conceived; and, when she perceived she had, she despised her benefactress, and even tried to supplant her on her own pavilion. This treatment reaching the ears of the prince, he disdains to appear in the chair; but orders his princes, to mount it herself, and to proceed against her maid by the statutes and laws of her own house, which she immediately consented to; and proceeds against her without either clerk of the peace, witness, jury, bailiff, crier, or executioner. The princess was both the plaintiff and defendant: she bore the witness, brought in her own verdict, passed her own sentence and executed it; but whether it terminated in caning, or cudgelling with the crutch, we cannot ascertain: however, hard measures, rough dealings, and banishment, are left upon record.

Shepherd. I thought how it would end; for, as Wisdom says, "For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear: for a servant when he reigneth, and a fool when he is filled with meat; for an odious woman when she is

married, and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress." Prov. xxx. 21, 22, 23. Pray, where was she banished to? Where was her place et exile fixed by the despotic sentence of the princess?

Steward. As the princess was the only executioner, she drove her from the pavilion into the wilderness; and sent her prohibitions, and a few thundering sentences, after her; but could not follow her far, through infirmity and age.

Shepherd. And did she ever presume to return from transportation?

Steward. No: she never forgot the fiery trial; for it is granted that she had been proceeded against to the utmost rigour of female severity. In such hands the culprit, especially in such cases where a right to the chair is disputed by a rival to the bed - in such hands, and in such cases, I say, it is impossible that any lenity can be shewn, mediation or mitigation be expected.

Shepherd. And so she never returned again?

Steward. Not of her own accord; but the Higher-Powers interfered, and called her by the appellation of "Sarah's Maid," in order to debase her; and, to cut off all hopes of her offspring being heir to the kingdom, told her that she should bear a son who should be a "wild man; his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him;" and then bade her go home, and submit herself to her mistress.

Shepherd. This must try the princess to the quick; for it is, in effect, revoking the despotic sentence.

Steward. The counsel of the Higher Powers must stand. This was done to humble the princess for her incredulity, that she might meet with perplexity from her own inventions; and to

shew her that the Higher Powers should have been consulted before the culprit had been proceeded against, and their approbation or disapprobation called for before the sentence had been so rigorously executed. And, furthermore, to mortify her for undervaluing her dignity conferred from above, by raising her slave to an equal footing with herself in the commanding chair; and more still, by giving up her right to the bed and embraces of the prince.

Shepherd. And, pray, how long did she continue in the royal pavilion after her return from banishment?

Steward. Upwards of fourteen years, but in the capacity of a servant of all work. But the son coming forth, attracted the affections of the prince, which was an additional mortification to the princess: but, after the term of two apprenticeships, the princess brought forth a son herself.

Shepherd. The wonderful works of the Higher Powers who "make the barren woman to keep house, and be a joyful mother of children."

Steward. She was; for, at her delivery, she said, "The Most High hath made me so to laugh, that all who hear will laugh with me." But, as soon as the servant saw the heir-apparent, and the affections of the prince go daily over to the heir of promise, at the great feast, on the day of weaning, before all the company - gossips, midwife, friends, and neighbours - she burst forth with open contempt; and her son drew out the wide mouth, and mocked at the heir-apparent. This contempt and raillery fell on the Higher Powers, who had given the princess supernatural strength, and by virtue of whose promise and promised power the heir was brought forth; and they who "thus mock are sure to have their bands made strong," Isa. xxviii. 22.

Shepherd. And was she continued in the royal pavilion after this? I should have thought, that at this great feast, when all the matrons who attended the groaning were present, that they would have empanelled and appointed both a female council and jury, and have insisted on a repetition and re-execution of the sentence of banishment.

Steward. Whether the princess received counsel from any of the ladies at court, on the weaning day, or not, is not certain: however, the sentence was repeated and ratified by the Higher Powers; and both the mother and the son were banished the royal pavilion for ever. Since that time, she has borne no other name than "the bond-woman" - a bond slave, who had been used as a concubine, and was banished for her insolence: and the child is called "a child of the flesh;" a son of the bond-woman; a servant, because his mother was not free; and an illegitimate child, or a bastard.

Shepherd. And has neither Hagar, nor any of her posterity, ever been allowed by the Higher Powers to enter the royal pavilion since?

Steward. No: the sentence has never been revoked; but has been explained and re-enforced since; by which they are prohibited, not only entering the royal pavilion, but even the chapel-royal also, and that by an eternal statute: "A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord: even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord," Deut. xxiii. 2. Thus the prohibition reaches to the tenth generation, and allows no grant or toleration then.

Shepherd. This easily accounts for the conduct of the Hagarenes. No doubt but some scraps of the language of the court, and of the orders of the palace, government of the household, and external privileges - such as circumcision, sacrificing, hypocritical petitioning, formal devotion, and sham festivity - were handed down by tradition from age to age;

which must render them capable of deceiving even the Seed Royal while in a state of nonage or minority.

Steward. Their great grandmother deceived the princess herself: for, when she came home from banishment by order of the Higher Powers, and had rehearsed their orders in the ears of the princess, she staggered her for years; and her bond-children have staggered the heirs of promise to this day, as much as ever their great-grandmother staggered the free woman.

Shepherd. But, as he was to be a wild man, "and his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him," Gen. xvi. 12, it is as impossible to reconcile, or bring about an union between those two parties, as it is to make the sheep and the goats one fold; and it must be a presumptuous undertaking to attempt to effect it.

Steward. A "wild man" he is, and wild he will be, for sovereign clemency will never tame either him or his. A child of the flesh he is called; and "the children of the flesh, these are not the children of the King; but the children of the promise [in opposition to them] are counted for the seed," Rom. ix. 8. Hence the Divine proclamation, "I am the Jehovah of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations," Exod. iii. 15. From which name and memorial the Hagarenes and Ishmaelites are excluded for ever.

Shepherd. And yet, when the King of kings visited the Lowland Palace, he found many of these in the house; yea, I believe the palace was filled with them.

Steward. He did so; but he told them that the "servant should not abide in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever," John, viii. 35. And he was as good as his word: for he left Jerusalem "in bondage with her children;" and at last left their

house desolate unto them, in the same case with Hagar, who was a figure of it, until provoked to the utmost; and then he burnt the palace over their head, and numbers of them in it; and went into another country, and built another: and, at last, visited this our island, and spread his royal pavilion over us, in this our "glorious holy mountain between the seas," where Antichrist has long wished to "plant the tabernacles of his palaces:" which spot his children are contending for now, and which will be gained over in time to their father; "and then he shall come to his end, and none shall help him," Dan. xi. 45. And, after that, the King will build up a city, and a mansion, that shall for ever secure the Seed Royal from the Hagarenes.

Shepherd. Pray, why was the mocker called a "wild man?"

Steward. Chiefly, because the Hagarenes were never to be tamed by grace. Their original was wild: they were to be wood-rangers in the wilderness, in a wild and uncultivated soil; live at a wild rate, by robbery and rapine, which is a wild, and extravagant manner. They are wild in their manners, practices, and customs; wild in their religious sentiments and notions; wild in their language; and wild in their spirits, which will never be tamed, humbled, or reconciled to the Seed Royal-and yet they use every artifice and stratagem to ensnare them; to palm bastards upon the King, and to fill the palace with them.

Shepherd. And yet they must know that they cannot finally deceive nor destroy the King's children, much less the King himself. And if they know this - as I think they must, by the King's undeceiving all that have been deceived by them, and by discovering the hypocrisy and bringing to a fearful end such numbers of bastards as have been palmed upon him - to persist, in defiance of all demonstrations, and all convictions raised by them, and that for such a number of years together, shews they are as indefatigable and unwearied in mischief as

the dog smut; who, when he gets a sheep or a lamb by the ear, never lets go his hold till his teeth meet, and his hold be torn out, unless he be called off, or choked off; and he barks and growls while he holds them, till he is ready to split the drum of the ear. I have seen a poor lamb, after the dog has been called off, stand and pant for breath; reel and stagger like a drunkard; and be in such a fright and confusion. as not to know where it is, nor to be able to feed at quiet for months together.

Steward. If he tears their ears at that rate, his teeth should be cropped. Most shepherds crop the teeth of their dogs.

Shepherd. We have two dogs. My Master has "broken the teeth of LION," Psa. lviii. 6, but not the teeth of SMUT; which, I suppose, is omitted, that he may give them a pretty good shaking who are tossed as a Prey to his teeth. - But to return to our subject about the Hagarenes. It appears to me, by what you have said, sir, that Hagar's first crime was aspiring to government and sovereignty.

Steward. As soon as she had conceived - which was but a carnal and an unlawful conception at best - the first crime she committed was, that she despised the blessed Mother of many nations, whom the King had blessed, and made so. The desolate, who had no divine husband, despised the married wife; and this desolation is applied to all who hate the free-born daughters of Sarah to this day: "They that hate the just shall be desolate," Psalm, xxxiv. 21.

Shepherd. It appears to me, that the next thing she had in view was superiority: she aimed at the commanding chair; for she scorned her superior, and her government also.

Steward. She did; and, by so doing, turned the seat of command into a scorner's chair, and was dealt with accordingly. In short, self-will was her law: at equality with the

Prince himself she aspired; at the princess of the household she was disgusted; and at the absolute government of the royal pavilion she aimed; and for exalting herself she was abased.

Shepherd. And it appears to me that her son acted the same part. He laid a claim upon the prince, as his sire; and expected to become his heir - heir of his dignity, of his blessings, promises, covenants, royalty, dominions, and personal property - and that by unlawful and carnal descent; for he was but an illegitimate child of the flesh, or a bastard, at best. A pretty heir, truly, to inherit the treasures of sovereign grace, and the Bounties of divine Providence! The wild man would have cut a noble figure in the heavenly country; and in the city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God!

Steward. Free-will was his law; pride and covetousness were his motives; at sovereignty he aimed; and, when the heir of promise, the heir-apparent, the type of the great King, appeared, he forbore not to mock at the infant; and, by despising that little one, he despised the King that sent him, and was banished for ever.

Shepherd. I see the reason why Hagar is called desolate: it is because she was without God, as Sinai is, of which she is the figure-and Ishmael is called the bond-son, because he is in bondage to the law; and, if so, he must be under the curse of it. Self-will, and despising sovereignty, were the bane and destruction of both the mother and the son.

Steward. They were; and you have touched upon their characteristics, which are left upon record for a caution to all generations. They are called the children of the flesh; and are said to "walk after the flesh," instead of walking in the Spirit; to despise government, and refuse to submit to the sovereignty of the King of kings. Presumptuous are they: they presume

without divine leave; and venture to build their hopes, and to advance, and affirm (to others), without a divine warrant. self-willed, they ridicule and oppose, contemn and blaspheme, the sovereign will of their Maker, the decrees and counsels of it; exalt themselves to sovereignty, and make self-will their law. "They are not afraid to speak evil of dignities," 2 Pet. ii. 10. They are not afraid to speak evil of the uncontrollable power and sovereign sway of the King of saints; and the delegated power of the elect, who are made kings and priests: yea, both are spoken evil of without fear; yea, and ascribed to Abaddon himself!

Shepherd. He is a wild man indeed! and the wild man seems to live in all the children: and I am sure the prophecy will be fulfilling to the end of time; for he can neither forsake his principles nor his practices till God withdraws his prophecy - and therefore his hand will be against every loyalist, and every loyalist will have his hand against him, as long as the world stands.

Steward. And longer too; for they will hate the seed-royal even in the gloomy regions: nor will the children of Zion find any love to them, though filled with immortal love, in the realms of bliss.

Shepherd. This accounts for their skulking about the palace-royal: is to make the children self-willed; set them to despise the sovereignty - and government of their royal Father; to ridicule the laws of Zion; and to slight the royal apparel of Mordecai, by whom the welfare of Israel is sought, and by which he speaks peace to all his seed.

Steward. In short, that is their whole work, except digging down the walls of Zion, and debasing the royal family to an equal footing with themselves. These points are enforced by all the magicians, sorcerers, astrologers, and prognosticators, that ever have appeared, or ever will appear, in the

synagogues of the Hagarenes. And I know that there is neither prince nor princess in all the King's household but would find, if they would observe carefully, the same things suggested to them in secret, even by Abaddon himself; which is a manifest proof of his being the author of these rebellious and destructive tenets, and the chief tutor of those academicians.

Shepherd. I believe you are right: though sometimes Abaddon comes as an angel of light, and suggests these things; while he operates in the blood, tickles the fleshly feelings, softens the passions, stirs up the "corrupt affections," Rom. i. 26, of nature, and drowns the cheeks with tears. Yet rebellion, self-will, and despising government, boil at the bottom: and often, when he is not likely to succeed with candour, he will bring the same things with rage and violence; and, if he cannot fix them in the heart, he will buffet the mind with them till he renders it incapable of attending to any thing else.

Steward. He will. But the most usual way is by a preparatory dose, which gives motion to the fleshly passions, attended with tickling the sympathetic feelings of nature; and then the pill, this bread of deceit, gilded with candour, is swallowed down, but "afterwards the mouth is filled with gravel," Prov. xx. 17. And I know, by sound experience, that such must "be purged with hyssop," before ever they can find QUIETNESS IN THEIR BELLY," Job, xx.20.

Shepherd. Whether Smut growl's, or whether he fawns, I know he aims at nothing but biting, destroying, and devouring, both the sheep and lambs.

Steward. And I know that the Hagagarenes and Athaliah are both agreed In conspiracy; for nothing less is intended than "cutting off all the seed-royal," 2 Kings, xi. 1. For my own part, I am as much hurt if I see any of the King's children with

Hagar's boys, as you are at seeing a lamb in the jaws of smut. I have formerly observed Little Faith, after stealing away to get among them, when he has come home, even when he was a little thing, not much higher than a twopenny loaf, he would hustle up against me, and mutter enough to convince me where he had been, and to discover the wretched rebellion that they had instilled into the mind of the child.

Shepherd. Why, what could such a little pismire say?

Steward. Say! He would prim up his mouth, blink with his eyes, look this way and that way, and then begin - "I wonder the King has not more children. Why don't he adopt some of the other sort of boys? Why don't he adopt all? I find a love to them; and, if I love them, how much more must He love them whose name and nature is love! as you yourself sometimes have owned, Mr. Steward.!"

Shepherd. Then Little Faith "thinks the King is just such an one as himself," Psa, 1. 21. And, pray, what answer did you give the little pigganani?

Steward. I told him that why and wherefore were not proper words for infants; and that neither the Queen, the children, nor the servants, were allowed the use of them, especially in a rebellious way, when finding fault with the proceedings of his Majesty, "who works all things alter the counsel of his own will." And I farther told him to bridle his tongue, and take heed that he did not affect a company of rebels, nurse a spirit of conspiracy, despise the government of his Father, and aim at sovereignty himself, till he hung in an oak, and perished in his rebellion, like Absalom.

Shepherd. And how did he take it? Would his countenance stand?

Steward. He could easily perceive that I knew where he had been, and that I gave an answer to what was in his heart, as well as to what came out of his mouth. As to his looks, he appeared like a dog that had burnt his tail in the cook's kitchen, and was skulking away to his kennel with a whip and bell at his heels.

Shepherd. This shews that their own conscience is point-blank against their rebellion, as well as the King and the records of Zion; for the countenance, even of a child, cannot stand before an appeal to either.

Steward. There never was a Hagarene in the world, nor even one of the seed-royal, when seduced by them, that could ever stand one minute justified before the bar of his own conscience; though he may expect to stand before the throne of divine judgment, thinking there will be less discernment, or more lenity, from terrible Majesty, than is to be found or obtained in a court of equity "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if he sin against the King, who shall entreat for him?" 1 Sam. ii. 25.

Shepherd. Pray, did they never send Little Faith home muttering against the apparel of the court? for they are most desperately enraged against that.

Steward. This is easily accounted for, for they are expressly called "the children of the flesh, the offspring of the earthy father;" and, "as is the earthy head, such are they also that are earthy." While their great grandfather stood in the flesh, he wore no apparel but that of his own manufacturing; but, when he was brought to judgment, stripped of his aprons, and the shame of his nakedness exposed to view, he very cordially received one ready made, freely bestowed, and kindly put on, by another; nor did he ever find peace till then.

Shepherd. I say, did Little Faith never mutter nothing against the royal robes when he used to come home from the Hagarene castle?

Steward. Often. I remember, he once told me that he thought the Hagarenes were as well dressed as the King's children. And as for Jack, and Charles, and Tom, he had heard them say that they never fell down, nor bedaubed their clothes, in all their lives; nor is there a speck upon them to this day.

Shepherd. A likely matter, that children should be more clean and pure - who roll all the year round in a sand bank - than those who are kept in the King's palace!

Steward. "And as to the royal robes," says Little Faith," they laugh at them; and I think they are full as well dressed as any of my and sisters. Besides," says he, "if we all wear robes alike, we shall not know one from another. Hagar's boys wear every one his own clothes, and they always appear well dressed; and for my own part, I should like it best, if I might wear my own apparel" Isa. iv. 1.

Shepherd. And what could you say to the little, pert, corrupted thing?

Steward. I always gave it him when I got him alone. I told him that his belly would ache by and by; and then he would cry out, "O that I could see the King's face! He never kisses me as he does the other boys." I told him that, while he affected the dress of the Hagarenes, he should never know what the kiss of his Father, nor even what a gracious smile from him, means: for the King never embraced nor kissed any child in all the palace till he was humbled for his pride, brought to contrition, stripped of his old clothes, and submitted to have the best robe put on him, a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet, Luke, xv. 22. The best robe, the smiles, and the kiss, always go together. Yea, and he had the impertinence once to

tell me, that the Hagarenes are never punished, whipped, nor flogged, as the children at the palace are: they never knew what it was to be troubled or plagued, horsed or whipped, or to have a weal in their back, in all their lives.

Shepherd. I am surprised at the insolence of Little Faith. What answer could you give him? Surely it is a just observation of Wisdom, that "foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, and the rod of correction shall drive it out," Prov. xxii. 1.5. "Yea, thou shalt beat him," saith Wisdom, "with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell," Prov. xxiii. 14. And surely Little Faith groaned for Mrs. Birch!

Steward. Yes, and he had her too: for, according to the power given me for edification, "I went to him with the rod," 1 Cor. iv. 21, and told him that "the things which he feared were like to come upon him." He was afraid of being called a bastard: but, "if he was without chastisement, of which all the King's children were partakers, that he was a bastard, and not a son," Heb. xii. 8. And that what he had said proved that all the Hagarenes were bastards: they had no changes, and therefore feared not the King. I have threatened him, rebuked him, and whipped him, till he hath bellowed again; and run behind the pillars of the hall, under the staircase, behind the door, under the seats, or any where, so as he could but get out of my sight. But I knew he dared not carry any complaint to the King, nor even run away; nor could he ever get out of the reach of my tongue, nor out of the sight of my eye, nor from the stripes that I had given him, nor from the charges which I had brought in against him.

Shepherd. I dare say he hated you in his heart. And doubtless others of the household have often healed his hurt slightly, and cried Peace to him, before the King had spoken peace, Jer. vi. 14; and represented you as taking (like Moses)

too much upon you, and using too great severity. But this never cures the bellyache!

Steward. I knew the King's pleasure concerning him; used his rules with respect to my dealings with him; secretly put up my petitions in the behalf of him; and expected the fulfilment of the King's promise, namely, "that he who reproveth him shall find more favour in his eyes than he that flattereth with his lips," Prov. xxviii. 23, - and so I always found it. And I told him, moreover, that the Hagarenes boasted of their whole backs: but they never told him how many stripes bastards were beaten with in the black hole, when they were cast into outer darkness.

Shepherd. This is levelling the walls of Zion with a witness; leading the children through the breaches; and disfiguring the royal family, till they are scarcely known from the natives of Meshech, which are loitering about the tents of Kedar. One of the royal family, in ancient times, groaned in spirit only at a sight of these rude boys: "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar," Psalm, cxx. 5. Yea, he declared that he would "rather be a door-keeper at the King's house than dwell in the tents of wickedness." How dreadfully, therefore, must the manners of Little Faith be corrupted, when he approved, and even admired, the conversation and apparel of the Hagarenes!

Steward. He really was awfully corrupted, and that is what they aim at. When any of the young princes, or princesses, have invited any of the more accomplished or more refined among Hagar's family to come to any of the King's feasts; and have spoken respectfully of the clerk or Steward's fidelity, telling them, that he is sure to furnish the table with whatever the King allows; that he keeps nothing back, nor sets any thing aside for himself. -

Shepherd. Excuse my breaking in so abruptly - but what I was going to say is, that those very things which they mention as inducements to bring them, are the very things which their soul hateth: they can never banquet on such things as these, nor enjoy their stolen morsel, while such dishes are before them. "Fools can only feed upon foolishness," Prov. xv. 14. Strong meat never sits well upon those who "fill their belly with the east wind," Job, xv. 2.

Steward. Not that, indeed - for I have observed when I have seen the young princes and princesses leading them through the dressing apartments into the dining-room, that, as soon as they have cast their eyes on the royal robes, they have given such a secret, sly, contemptuous, inveterate leer, or glance, that I could compare their faces to nothing but the image of the devil that I once saw, who is represented as peeping out under the battlements of LINCOLN MINSTER. And, even at table, they could eat nothing of the King's meat. They acted as their Gibeonitish relations did when they came to Joshua - they came not to take hold of the King's covenant already made, but "to make a league with him," Josh. x. 6, and therefore they brought their own old shoes, old garments, and their mouldy bread, with them, Josh. ix. 5. To have their feet shod, their souls fed, and themselves enrobed, at the King's expense, they cannot away with. Just so do these Hagarene ladies act: they carry their own crust in their satchels, and sit and mumble it like a squirrel; while their hearts, like a pouting pigeon, swell with indignation at every dish that stands before them, and even at the poor servant also who attends the table. In short, they want nothing of the King but his name; nor any favour of him, but to nurse their pride, and honour them before the elders of the people. The universal language of every Hagarene stands upon record thus, "In that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." Isa. iv. 1.

Shepherd. It is surprising to me that the young princes and princesses do not see through such persons themselves, for some of the King's children are very discerning; and I am sure they must be all so, if they take after either their father or their mother.

Steward. When any of the Hagarenes come to the palace, they never come without a mask, or a veil, The penitent Jewess at the feet of the Messiah never appeared with more simplicity, sincerity, contrition, and devotion, than they do. They are swift to hear, and slow to speak. Of loyalty, and love to the King, they talk; of their unworthiness, they complain; for super-abounding service, they contend; and, to all you can say they give their apparent consent, if they perceive any at the table who have the "gift of discerning of spirits," 1 Cor. xii. 10. With this mask, this veil, this garb, this feigned conversation, and this apparent assent and consent, they deceive legions, by ingratiating themselves into their affections, and obtaining a charitable opinion of them; insomuch that the watchmen's alarms and warnings, the King's proclamations and declarations, together with all the counsel and advice of his Majesty's domestics, shall hardly gain credence, if they should sound an alarm, and testify against those arch deceivers.

Shepherd. This is the only way to set the King's seed on a level with the bastard race, indeed; for, when they have stripped the King's children of their ornaments, led them into a rebellious spirit, and dressed themselves up in their masquerade dress - in external appearance, the latter must cut the best figure. One would think it impossible, under the penetrating eye of the King, to counterfeit the garb, language, countenance, and ornaments of the Seed-royal, to such a degree as that.

Steward. It is done to the highest pitch of deception; and serves to shew us that there is an uncommon beauty in real religion, our enemies themselves being judges - or else the worst of men would never be at such pains, and run such perilous risks, only to appear in a counterfeit garb of it. Shepherds in rural life are strangers to the arts and artifices which are used in metropolitan cities. It is not impossible to meet, in the public streets, an engaging figure of a woman, that to all appearance should not exceed forty years of age - when, were you to be smitten with love, and espouse the object, you might be as much deceived in the morning as Jacob was, who espoused Rachel, and was beguiled with Leah. Her teeth might be manufactured by the dentist; her ornamental hair, taken from the crest of a horse, put on, and coloured, by the hair-dresser; her ruddy, or blooming face, be the art of the perfumer; her hips purchased at the milliner's; and her feet set off by the craft of Saint Crispin - insomuch that you might throw all that stuck you, and one half of the bulk that you espoused, into the rag bag; and what little remained might be found, upon proof, to be old enough to be your mother. Eyes, eyebrows, teeth, hair, arms, and hand, legs and feet, have been made in Fleet Street, as well as in Paradise.

Shepherd. If this be the case, it looks as if most people would wish to be their own makers-menders at least. And if all that you say be true, were I ever to be in any of these great cities, I should suspect every engaging person to be an automaton figure, instead of the work of Jehovah's hands.

Steward. Wiser men than you or I have been deceived; and you are a singular shepherd in success if you never had a wolf in sheep's clothing in your flock. All that I have said about external deception is not more artfully carried on than internal disguise is by the Hagarene ladies. I have often observed, when any of the young princesses have invited any of the

more refined of them to the royal banquets, if any of the tutors have been mentioning any thing respecting his Majesty's sovereignty, his eternal and discriminating love, the royal law of liberty, his Majesty's will being his children's rule, the immutability of the King's counsel and clemency, the royal robes of the family, the certainty of all who are of the blood-royal coming to inherit the kingdom and the throne of glory, &c. it has been enough; off went the mask; the demure countenance hath visibly faded; the palpitations of the heart have beat uncommonly high; the sheep's clothing has given way; the ornaments, cauls, bracelets, and mufflers, have all fallen off together; and, "instead of well-set hair, there has been baldness; instead of a girdle, a rent; instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth; and burning with rage instead of Zion's beauty." Isa. chap. iii.

Shepherd. Then such is the best conversation that can be brought forth in order to discover them and purge them out.

Steward. It is, for it either mends them or makes them worse. The King hates a feigned loyalist, or a lukewarm profession of his name and cause; and says, he would they were either cold or hot.

Shepherd. I know they must either be loyal to him or Mammon; they must hate one of the two, and hold to the other. Pray, did you ever see any of them there when the servants have been bringing forth the best robe for any of the children?

Steward. Yes: and have watched their countenances narrowly, and observed the contemptuous glances they have given at it; while their hearts have heaved with indignation, as bad as the heart of Haman, the Jews' enemy; who, notwithstanding all his prosperity, his increase in riches, in children, and in favour with the King, was not satisfied while Mordecai the Jew sat at the gate. It is the hammer of truth that

breaks the egg, draws forth the viper, and sends them home, like Haman," mourning, and having their head covered," Esth. vi. 12.

Shepherd. It must; especially when they hear of the King's decree, and that "evil is determined against them by the King," Esth. vii. 7.

Steward. They will all act as Haman did at last - "stand up to make request for their life to the queen:" and beg oil of the Seed Royal too, when the King appears in person; for their lamps will go out as soon as the archangel's trump alarms their consciences, and proclaims the King at hand.

Shepherd. If the "righteousness of the King be the children's only brightness, and his salvation their only lamp that burneth," Isaiah, lxii. 1; no sparks of human kindling can blaze before divine radiance, or maintain their flame before divine salvation, which is an eternal lamp. Sun, moon, and stars, shall all withdraw when the Sun of Righteousness appears. And, can we expect strange fire to stand the conflagration of divine wrath, when the work of Jehovah's hands, the luminaries of heaven, fail! Nay, Behold (saith the King) "all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled: this shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow," Isa. 1. 11.

Steward. That is the fearful end predicted, and the awful doom appointed, into which they want to plunge even the heirs of promise; by raising rebellion in their minds which they can never quell; and in which they have so far succeeded, as to make them disaffected for a time; which has exposed them to various punishments; but never to banishment or disinheritorship: confiscation of daily necessities, and being prohibited the court, have been the sorest punishments that have ever been inflicted on the seed-royal. Israel hath never

been forsaken of his Sovereign, nor have the heirs of promise ever lost their right.

Shepherd. It is well for such as poor Little Faith, that the King is infinitely wise, and therefore knows his own children; and that he is of one mind, therefore none can turn him.

Steward. Little Faith dwells in the bosom of Everlasting Love. They may strip him of his ornaments, peace, and happiness; and seduce him from the presence-chamber, and from the gates of the palace: but never from the King's favour, for that is eternal; nor from the promised inheritance, for that is sure to all the seed.

Shepherd. And they must be aware of this as well as you, for their fruitless toil must have apprised them of it: besides, if they can enshrine themselves in the heart and affections of them for a while, it is only like the unsettled affections of a nurse child, that calls all daddy and mammy who feed it; but, when brought home to its own parents, it is all forgot.

Steward. So it is with the King's seed: all who affect them are admired by them, and he that strives for their heart and affections is sure to gain them; but, as soon as the King smiles, the heart, soul, and all, go weeping back again to the King, saying - "O Lord, our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee ONLY will we make mention of thy name." Isa. xxvi. 13.

Shepherd. And it is but robbing the King himself of their love at best; for the very law that these Hagarenes contend for tells them that they shall love their King and Maker with "all their heart, and soul, and mind, and strength:" so that they are violators of the legal rule," and robbers of the King himself, all the while they contend for it.

Steward. They are thieves and robbers - and the King gives them no better names.

Shepherd. Nor do they deserve better: for I see clearly that the whole intent of these Hagarenes, in all their proceedings, is to deceive; and they seem to be as desperate, and as unwearied in it, as he that set them on, and keeps them at it.

Steward. It is so. And to move the bounds that sovereign Majesty has fixed, so as to lay all open, and set the families of heaven and hell on a level, is the end aimed at; else why are so many bastards disguised, and pushed into the family? and why are so many snares placed to entangle the Seed-royal, and draw them away to the castle?

Shepherd. And, when they get any of the weaklings of the King's seed away, what do they with them?

Steward. The first thing they attempt is to blind their eyes. The Hagarenes can do nothing with them, unless they can blind them. He that has got the seeing eye will look well to his own way. The blind are suffered to lead none but the blind. They often use astronomical lectures, which lead them to admire the wandering stars. And this shews who sends the lecturers - for "it is the god of this world that blinds the minds of them that believe not," whoever may have the honour of being the instruments.

Shepherd. And then, I suppose, they serve them as some shepherds have served a strolling sheep that has strayed from my flock and fold. They were sure to disfigure them: they have fleeced them, and clothed themselves with their wool; but they never fed them,; nor could they, for they were starving themselves.

Steward. I have seen Little Faith come home in the same shattered condition; pale and wan, with a fallen countenance

and a hungry belly; his robe of humility half off and half on; his shoes slipped, and with sore heels, like a boy that has been after birds' nests, with large holes in his stockings: yea, they have "made bare his legs, and uncovered his thighs," Isa. xlvii.; insomuch that" he walked naked, and they saw his shame," Rev. xvi. 15.

Shepherd. And what did you do with him? Did you let him come into the palace in such a trim as that, with all his "filthiness in his skirts?" Lam. i. 9. What a figure must he cut among the rest of the children! They would get about him like a "shoal of birds; and he must appear like a speckled bird in the midst of them," Jer. xii. 9. Hence the King's complaint in the following verse: "Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, and trodden my portion under foot," Jer. xii. 10.

Steward. Indeed he would not come publicly into the company of the King's children: for he would creep up upon the stairs, and bob about upon the lobbies, or any where, to get out of sight; and, if he could but borrow or steal a needle, he would endeavour to draw the holes up, or stop them, "by putting a piece of new cloth to the old garment, which only made the rent worse," Matt. ix. 16. I have catched him cross-legged ere now. "What, said I, "are you turned tailor? You are got at your old grandfather and grandmother's employ, are you? You are sewing your fig-leaves together, Gen. iii. 7. Woe to him that cover's with such a covering, Isa. xxx. 1. The King will strip you, he will. Dost thou think to stand in the King's presence like a great girl in an apron? Gen. iii. 7. Robes! robes! Isa. lxi. 10; you shall never see the King's face without the best robes," Luke, xv, 22.

Shepherd. Why, you seem to be up to all his tricks. In his conscience he must justify you, but in his pride he must hate you: and yet, as a faithful servant, he must both fear and tremble before you; for there is majesty and power in

faithfulness and honesty; for Wisdom declares that "a faithful ambassador is health," Prov. xiii. 17; and where there is health there must be power and efficacy.

Steward. I knew where he had been, and what he was then about as well as he himself did: for I had formerly been at the same fruitless toil and unprofitable labour myself. And, when I have detected him, he would colour up at me, and look like those who accused the adulteress before the King when he bid the innocent throw the first stone: yea, and when he has gone among the rest of the children, he would insist that some of them had told tales out of school, and that the Steward. could not have known it without information.

Shepherd. Poor Little Faith! He does not consider that, if the "watchmen do not find him," Cant. iii. 3; nor the Steward. discover him, that "sin is sure to find him out," Numb. xxxii. 23. And, when once the belly-ache seizes him, "the shew of his countenance will witness against him, Isa. iii. 9.

Steward. Yea; and the countenance of Little Faith is as sure a messenger as ever Noah's dove was, whether the tidings be peace or war, sickness or health, hope or despondency: for we know that he never gets such a countenance, nor appears naked, while he is looking to, and waiting on the King, "for gold tried in the fire, that he may be rich; and for white raiment, that he may be clothed; and that the shame of his nakedness should not appear," Rev. iii. 18.

Shepherd. My time is pretty well expired: the sheep will be looking about them, for they are all out upon the wild common today.

Steward. What! do you ever let the sheep run upon the common?

Shepherd. O yes, two or three days in a week; where they get little or nothing, unless they creep into some inclosure whose gate hath been left open, and so get a bite or two among any other of the King's flocks. This does them good: it gives them an appetite, and teaches them to bite close; and the closer they bite, the sweeter the herbage, and the better they fat.

Steward. Well, I thought they were never out of the meadows except at the time of the King's mowings, Amos, vii. 1; though they are often out of the fold. Besides, what does the lord of the manor say when he sees them there? for, you know, he is "the god of this world."

Shepherd. "The sheep of the King go in and out, and find pasture." Out as well as in. And they are not only turned out upon the common, but they run at times, "among the stubble also; and will, until it be all burnt up," Mal. iv. 1. If the sheep were always to lie in fat pastures, they would be apt to act as bad shepherds do, namely, "tread it with their feet," Ezek. xxxiv. 19. To prevent which, they are turned out upon the commons among the "briars and thorns," Heb. vi. 8; and into the corn stubble, among the thistles, Hos. x. 8. This produces such a hunger among them, that they are ready to gnaw the "bark of the fig-tree," Joel, i. 7. When their appetite is thus sharpened, you may see them, about folding-time, flocking together like doves to their windows. When they are turned into the fat pastures for about two hours, they fill themselves, and lie down to rest quietly; and, when thus fed with a good bite, "they always make a good fold," Ezek. xxxiv. 14; which enables them to "manure the King's husbandry," 1 Cor. iii. 9; and to enrich "the fallow ground," Jer. iv. 3.

Steward. I should think that you would hardly know them again.

Shepherd. If I don't know them, the King does, and so does the dog Smut: and, if they come not back to the fold, the King generally fetches them, or sends Smut after them; and, when he gets hold of them, they are sure to come back, though the dog never intends to bring them there. His terrible bark in their ears alarms them, a sense of their danger makes them look out for the fold, the King directs their way, and Smut makes them mend their pace.

Steward. But, I say, what does the lord paramount, the lord of this lower manor, say about the sheep being on the commons? I suppose he would wish that the goats should come in for all the common pastures, the spontaneous herbage at least.

Shepherd. He certainly would; but it is not to be so. Most graziers allow, that it is healthy for other cattle to have a few goats among them; and the King thinks so too, or else he would not suffer it. And certain it is that the sheep keep together, though on one and the same common, and often eat what the goats leave; and, having the stink of the herd all day long in their nostrils, it makes them hate the thought of herding together for nothing alive stinks worse in the nostrils of a sheep than an old ram-goat, Dan. viii. 21.

Steward. Notwithstanding the stink of the goats, you acknowledge that some do stray from the fold; and, consequently, from the good Shepherd and owner of the sheep. And where can they get to, but among the goats? which must provoke the owner to withdraw from them: and, I think, this is confirmed by the dog being sent among them.

Shepherd. True: and the proverb is verified, "When they leave the good master, they seldom find a better." But the sheep generally come faster back to the fold than they do when they stray from it. Smut is sure to make them run for it.

Steward. When he "possessed the poor Gadarene among the tombs, who was bound with chains and fetters, he brake them, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness," Luke, viii. 29. And, when he "entered into the swine, the whole herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake," Luke, viii. 33. Whether it be a man, a sleep, or a pig, "he must needs go when the devil drives."

Shepherd. Yea; and he will one day make the goats run with as much fury into the ante-typical lake Asphaltites, Rev. xix. 20; as ever he made the swine run into the "lake of Genesareth."

Steward. It is said that the swine which the devil drove "all perished in the waters," Matt. viii. 32. And, if all the goats and swine that Satan drives should perish in the Lake of fire, and be drowned in destruction and perdition, the old proverb will have an awful accomplishment, and may be remembered without laughter, namely, that "The devil has brought his hogs to a fine market!"

Shepherd. I must be gone.

Steward. How often do you fold in the week?

Shepherd. Five, and frequently six times, in a week.

Steward. Will Friday be a leisure day?

Shepherd. As much so as any day in the week: for the sheep are sure to be on the common both Friday and Saturday; but the latter is a busy day with me, because of drawing the water to fill the troughs, and looking over the pastures.

Steward. Will you call at the palace on the Friday afternoon, if nothing unforeseen prevent? Ask any body for the clerk of the kitchen; and, whether friend or foe, he will direct you to the

Steward's room, either with a sneer of contempt or a smile of approbation.

Shepherd. I will be sure to be there, if kind Providence direct my way. Till then may the Lord send his Angel before the Steward., and give him good speed in the business of his master Abraham!

Steward. And may the Fountain of all peace, who brought again from the dead the "great Shepherd of the sheep," through the blood of the everlasting covenant, be with you; and make you perfect in every branch of your pastoral work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight!

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Sixth.

Steward. "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord! Why standest thou without?" Thou art welcome to the Steward's room, and to any repast or refreshment in it.

Shepherd. I believe it, otherwise I should not have come. Wisdom relates of the hypocrite, "that he says, 'Eat and drink,' but his heart is not with thee." Therefore, when I am invited by an acquaintance, I generally try his heart by my own; for if my heart be not with him, I cannot expect his to be with me.

Steward. True: "As, in water, face answers to face, so doth the heart of man to man." Pray, how did you get in?

Shepherd. I came in by the porter's lodge.

Steward. Did the porter speak to you?

Shepherd. Yes, he looked at the crook in my hand, and asked me if I was a shepherd. When I told him I was, he asked me if I knew sheep from goats. I replied, I hoped he did. He said, there were many that called themselves shepherds who did not. I told him I believed there were; but I had been so much occupied among cattle, that I thought, if my hands were cut off, and I were blind in both eyes, that I could distinguish a goat from a sheep by my nose.

Steward. What reply did he make?

Shepherd. He told me, he wondered at that, as I took so much snuff. I answered, I have more noses than one, otherwise I should never have known (as I now do) that "all the garments [of his Royal Master] smelled of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces," Psalm, xlv. 8.

Steward. What said he to that?

Shepherd. He asked me, with a smile, who I wanted? I answered, the clerk of the kitchen. He replied, he thought so! and directed me to your door; but, as I came along, I perceived two doors pretty close together, and knew not which to knock at. So I went up to an old man who was weeding the gravel-walk, and asked him which of those two doors led to the Steward's room? he told me, he did not know that there was any particular room for the Steward., any more than for any body else. The lower apartments were free for any who chose to make use of them. "But if your heart," said he, "is set upon a single room, you may go to the right-hand door, and there you will find a Steward., and a room too, just as narrow as yourself."

Steward. The porter is a loyalist, every inch of him: but that old man is highly influenced by the Hagarenes, and a wonderful advocate for universal charity; though, I believe, he would get as much comfort to his heart, if I was dead, as ever

Esau got by his determination to kill his brother. However, I never say any thing to him: he goes on in his own way. He has been seven years, to my certain knowledge, at weeding that walk, and it is just as much over-run with weeds now as it was when he first began, and, I think, more so.

Shepherd. There is no ploughing to purpose upon a rock; and His who never erred hath told us that all labour is spent in vain that is spent upon stony ground.

Steward. And so that poor old soul will find it at last, for it is but eye service at best. He always gets in sight of the windows; and now and then looks up, to see if any of the family observe his industry: not considering that the King looks at the goodness of the work, and the bent of the heart, not at the motion of the body. However, he vainly dreams of meriting the King's favour by that fruitless toil; whereas the King takes no pleasure but in the work of his own hands, in the hearts of his children, and in the loyalty and affections of his domestic servants. I was thinking, last night, that I never remembered to have seen a dog with you. It is a rare thing to see a shepherd without his dog.

Shepherd. It is a plain proof that your eyes were not much about you: for I think that I am seldom without him long together, though full sore against my will; for I hate him with a perfect hatred; and, I believe, he hates me as much as I do him.

Steward. Cannot you shut him up, then?

Shepherd. No, nor you neither. I have threatened him, rebuked him, stoned him, tried to starve him, and often driven him, but he still skulks at my heels; and skulk he will in spite of me, as long as I have a sheep to feed, or strength to carry the crook.

Steward. I suppose he now and then comes in for a dead morsel, in wet seasons, when the rot gets among the flock; otherwise one would think he would hardly follow you so closely, if he got nothing but such usage for his pains.

Shepherd. He does not follow for nought. If a sheep strays away, he is sure to suck some of its blood before it comes back: and if any of the ewes gender with any other kind, the monstrous produce falls to Smut; the "wolf in sheep's clothing" is sure to fall a Prey to his teeth; all the mule, mongrel, or monstrous productions, are Smut's dainty meat; and he is sure to break all their bones ere they come to the bottom of his kennel. It is a true saying - "Dogs will eat dogs." Many a dog which has barked at the shepherd, left the sheep, and returned to his vomit, has been devoured by Smut.

Steward. It is a pity that such a voracious creature should be permitted to range at large; "for, if he riseth up, no man is sure of his life," Job, xxiv. 22.

Shepherd. He is chained; but the chain is so long, that he can range all over the farm: yea, sheep in the King's pastures, near to the utmost bounds of the King's husbandry (but not beyond their limits), have perceived him come within a few feet of them, and that with such violence, that when he had run out the last link of his chain, he has bounded back the full distance of a bow-shot, only by the cheek of his chain; and has left the poor sheep affrighted, bewildered, and trembling, so that they could neither eat nor drink at quiet for many days together.

Steward. Why don't you petition the King to confine him?

Shepherd. Many have wished it, and longed for it; and the King says he will "shut him up," by and by, confine him for "a thousand years, and set a seal upon him," Rev. xx. 2, 3; but not yet.

Steward. It is, doubtless, to answer some wise purpose, that he is permitted to range as he does; for certain it is the King doth nothing in vain.

Shepherd. I have sometimes thought that, if it were not for Smut, the sheep would prowl and stray away more than they do. But, when they have heard his terrible roaring bark, and felt the force of his teeth, they are sure to "remember the battle," Job, xli. 8.

Steward. I suppose there is no fear of him, or of danger from him, while the sheep keep upon the King's walks; but, if they creep through the hedge, the serpent will bite them, Eccles. x. 8; if Smut don't. A hedge-creeper cannot stand before Smut, much less before the CHIEF SHEPHERD. "None is so fierce that dare stir him up: Who, then, is able to stand before Me?" Job, xli. 10.

Shepherd. They are sure to prize the King's clemency who have had a conspicuous deliverance from Smut, and who have escaped with the "skin of their teeth," Job, xix. 20. Some have been so twisted in their bowels, cramped in their muscles, strangled in their throat, and confused in their brain, that their heads have appeared for a while to spin like a top. Smut can gripe them, Luke, ix. 42; cramp them, Luke, xiii. 16; throttle them, Job, vii. 19; and distract them, Psalm, lxxxviii. 15. Such, when properly "clothed, and in their right mind," are sure to cleave close to the Chief Shepherd's feet. Pray, how does Little Faith do? Is he like the pig? Is he still hung in the gate?

Steward. No; Little Faith hath been permitted lately to have an interview, and a comfortable sight of the King's face. The last time that he was pressed at the gate, he was so bad with the belly-ache and the heart-burning, that he could not perform his usual tasks; and so confused and confounded, that his highly-favoured ceremonies became both loathsome

and useless to him; insomuch, that he threw the whole of them to the moles and to the bats; and ventured to petition without his papers, and to walk without his crutches, crying out - "My hope is perished from the King! I am cut off for my part! O that I could but see the King's face."

Shepherd. That is the best step that ever Little Faith took yet. They never hang long in the gate who go that way to work. The King "lifts up the beggar from the dunghill, and sets him among princes," I Sam. ii. 8; and none beg with fervour but those who are pierced with the evil arrow of famine; nor do any plead with more eloquence than those who are driven to it by the heart-burn. In this sense, "the heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips," Prov. xvi. 23. In desperate cases, Little Faith's human rules and legal rolls, stated modes and carnal compositions, ancient court-forms and threadbare ceremonies, get out of favour, out of use, and out of fashion.

Steward. True; there is no getting into the King's presence till these spiders' webs are brushed off. And so Little Faith found it; for, as soon as his petition was heard, his straight-waistcoat dropped off, and the gate that led from the place of confinement "opened to him of his own accord," Acts, xii. 10.

Shepherd. He must have cut a strange figure in the levee-room, supposing he could have got in with his fig-leaved apron, and his head covered with dust (like the head of a dusty miller), by tossing and tumbling about so long in the sand-bank!

Steward. A strange figure, indeed! - but such figures shall never appear in the King's presence. They who appear there must awake, awake, out of their pleasing dreams, "put on their beautiful garments, shake themselves from the DUST, loose the BANDS of their neck, and come forth from captivity," Isa. lii. 2, 3; before they can see the King's face with joy.

Shepherd. And did Little Faith find admittance to the levee-room? Did the usher of the black rod conduct him so as to find nearness of access to the King's presence?

Steward. Yes; and never was one of the seed-royal favoured with a more delightful interview; nor with a more cordial reception by his Majesty; nor with more endearing embraces of affection, tenderness, and love; than poor halting, hobbling, wavering, doubting and fearing, Little Faith - Saying, "Is Little Faith my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? Is he the son of my love, and the son of my vows? Give not thy STRENGTH unto women, [my son] nor thy ways to THAT which destroyeth KINGS," Prov. xxi. 3. Which was a gentle reproof for his adherence to Hagar, and to the demure intrigues of the Hagarene ladies: and a plain intimation of his delegated right to the throne of celestial Majesty; which may be easily gathered from the latter part of the King's most gracious speech - "Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to THAT which destroyeth KINGS." It is plain that the way of the Hagarenes is sure to destroy: but, if Little Faith had not been an heir-apparent, though it might have destroyed him as a man, yet it could not have destroyed him as a king.

Shepherd. True. But, are there no statutes, or ancient records of the realm, read at such levee-times, to convince an ignorant subject a disaffected child, or a misled loyalist, of his errors, in order to caution, undeceive, or direct him in his future conduct?

Steward. There are. An ancient record was proclaimed aloud at the interview of Little Faith, and that by one of the kings at arms, sufficient to convince him of his error: as it is written, "They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and have consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance: for they have consulted

together with one consent; they are confederate against thee: the tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the HAGARENES: Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre. Assur also is joined with them; they have holpen the children of Lot. Do unto them as unto the Midianites, as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison, which perished at En-dor. They became as dung for the earth. Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes like Zebah, and as Zalmunna; who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of the King in possession. O my King! make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm," Psalm, lxxxiii.

Shepherd. This must be a cutting recital to Little Faith: it must plough deep into his former folly, and lay open the border of "his two furrows," Hos. x. 10.

Steward. It did: but the King's countenance was so conspicuous in his favour, and his pathetic language so affecting and endearing to Little Faith, that it was impossible to sully or cast down the brilliant lustre of his face, which so visibly appeared at this court-visit.

Shepherd. The propitious looks of his celestial Majesty are wonderfully endearing, transporting, enlivening, and renewing; this I know by blessed and happy experience; but reflections upon past acts of disloyalty often counterbalance them.

Steward. They do so. But this was not the ease with Little Faith: the wrinkles and deep entrenchments of Sinai, which had ploughed deep on his visage, were effaced; his cheeks became plump and round; his countenance raised; a liveliness, quickness, and sprightliness, appeared visible on his face; his hobbling, or limping step, became imperceptible; activity appeared in his arms, and in all his limbs; his gait was wholly altered; his speech changed; his deportment became

pleasing, his conversation savoury, and his company admirably engaging. In short, we hardly knew whether to call him "Little Faith in the sand-bank," or the "beauty of Israel upon his high places."

Shepherd. The ancient prediction was verified in poor Little Faith, "His flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth. He shall pray unto the King, and he will be favourable unto him; and he shall see his face with joy." Job, xxxiii. 25, 26.

Steward. He did; and a more joyful interview, a more kind reception, few ever met with, than poor Little Faith did.

Shepherd. What says Little Faith now about the clothes of Jack, Tom, and Charles? Does he think his prison-garments fit for such court-visits? or to stand in, as a court-robe, before his celestial Majesty?

Steward. He has got his robes on him now, however; and highly delighted he seems to be with them. The first night he slept in the state-bed with the King and Queen; and had threescore valiant men about it. The next day he went into the banqueting-house, and was seated under the King's banner. The day following he was handed into the royal gardens, and placed under the apple-tree.

Shepherd. These are halcyon days indeed, with Little Faith; and, if any thing beneath the sun would put the sand-bank and the Hagarene castle out of his heart and head, one would think these things would do it.

Steward. False haunts and refuges of lies generally appear in their true colour, and get out of favour, when realities come to be discovered and enjoyed. I shall hear what he says by and by: but, at this time he is deeply engaged; for the King ordered one of his servants, Mr. Illumination by name, to take one of

the King's telescopes in his hand, and ascend the height of Zion with Little Faith, and give him a prospect from the eminence thereof, in order to shew him his Majesty's empire in the Lowlands, his own principality also, and the nethermost frontiers of the celestial realm.

Shepherd. This will cure his squinting. It is ten to one if ever he looks two ways at once after this; for his eyes must be anointed with the King's eye-salve before he can see invisible things, Rev. iii. 18.

Steward. Squinting eyes, and purblind eyes, have both been cured this way; but they never were, nor ever will be cured any other way. And I believe Little Faith feels something of it already; for I saw him clambering up the mount as nimble as a bird, with his diadem upon his head, and robed down to his feet. The servant had got him by the hand; and numbers of the royal family were looking after him, and rejoicing in his present prosperity.

Shepherd. What is the servant to shew Little Faith?

Steward. I cannot justly tell. The seed-royal generally have a view of Sinai, and Hagar's Castle: for these things never can be seen in their true light but on the mount. They are shewn Mount Zion on all the four sides; the beauty of her situation; her foundations, munitions, forts, towers, bulwarks, and pavilions; the King's palace, and the ivory throne; the valley of Baca, and the river of life; Jacob's ladder, and Israel's travels; the brazen Serpent, and that which was signified by it. They have also a view of the dark mountains, and a glimpse of the upper regions.

Shepherd. Do you think that he will have a perspective view of Paradise?

Steward. All the King' s children are not favoured alike in this particular. Some have perceived the higher canopy to open, and the second veil to divide; while, in a divine blaze of immortal light, unutterable things have been seen and felt. This has been granted to some, in order to fortify and embolden them in future fight or trial, that they might see and feel beforehand the mansion they fought for, and for the enjoyment of which they were to be made meet by fiery trials.

Shepherd. True, Sir; and such, generally, are tried sharply afterwards, in order to poise their minds; otherwise their rapturous souls would pine with such intense desire after the celestial empire, that it would render them incapable of militant affairs. My time is expired, and I must be gone; for I would not give an enemy just cause to speak evil of me, if I could help it.

Steward. Shall you be busy all the remaining part of the week?

Shepherd. Rather so, as clipping-time is coming on, and I must have the shears ground, and get the pens ready.

Steward. How often do you clip them in a year?

Shepherd. Our stated times of clipping are four times in the year.

Steward. I thought shepherds had observed the same rule with their sheep that gardeners do with their clothes-hedges - clip them but once a year.

Shepherd. Short wool is best for this sort of sheep. Besides, I am obliged to clip them, in order to clothe myself. If I was to use the shears but once a year, they would be burdened with wool, and I should be without covering.

Steward. Pray, does all the wool fall to your share?

Steward. O no; only the clippings, which is a sort of offerings. The first fleece of the flock, at shearing, belonged to the Levite, Deut. xviii. 4. "He that feedeth the flock shall eat of the milk of the flock," 1 Cor. ix. 7; and he that keeps the flock has a right to some of the wool. The complaint brought in against the false shepherds is, that" they eat the fat, clothed themselves with the wool, killed those that [others] fed, but fed not the flock," Ezek. xxxiv. 3.

Steward. I suppose the Chief Shepherd sets great store by the wool; for it is said of Meshah, the great sheep-master, that he rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool, 2 Kings, iii. 4.

Shepherd. My great Sheepmaster sets least store by the wool of any thing belonging to the flock: for it has been often known that, in hot weather, when the flies are busy, and any one of the sheep has got maggoty and whimsical, that he hath taken the shears, and stripped it of its whole fleece, and in the following winter it hath had little or "no covering in the cold," Job, xxiv. 7. Besides, no farmer who keeps a middling flock thinks himself badly off, if the wool of the sheep defray the expenses of the shepherd: for the manure that he obtains by folding sends forth plentiful crops; so that he finds his account in the crops of the ground, and in the lambs of the flock.

Steward. I understand you. The Sheep, the lambs, and the manure which is for the King's husbandry, all belong to the great Sheep-master: and the wool also, which he gives and takes away at his pleasure: but the offerings, and the clippings of the wool, they belong to you. But then, why does Wisdom, after she has enjoined the shepherd to be "diligent to know the state of his flock, and to look well to his herds," tell him

that" the lambs are for his clothing?" Prov. xxvii. 2.3, 26. I suppose she means the wool of the lambs.

Shepherd. She does. Wisdom knows that the lambs are the most forward with their offerings, and the most willing to be clipped, of any: for the Chief Shepherd "carries the lambs in his bosom." Isa. xl. 11; so that they are sure to be warm; consequently, they neither trust in, nor cleave to, the wool. But, when once they quit the bosom, they fly to the wool; and then the Shepherd may go all the year round, and stand all sorts of weather, hail, rain, blow, or snow, without a fear-nothing (or what is commonly called a twilly) coat to his back. You read of one of the best Shepherds that ever carried a crook suffering hunger, cold, and nakedness, 2 Cor. xi. 27.

Steward. Most people who have sheep mark them at shearing times. Do you mark them when you clip them?

Shepherd. Some yield no wool at all, and others profitable clippings. We set our private marks upon both these, so as to know them again; and the great SHEEPMASTER sets his mark upon them also.

Steward. What is the right Owner's mark? Tell me, I pray thee, that I may be enabled to know it, if I should see a creature that bears it.

Shepherd. The Chief Shepherd's mark is mental leanness, or what is called starving at heart. Such never fat inwardly. The great Shepherd is as sparing of his herbage as they are of their wool, and gives them no more at feeding times than they give him at clipping times. No wool, no grass. "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; naked, and ye clothed me not." And his declaration to such is, "I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off," Zech. xi. 9. But he says, "he will feed the flock of slaughter, even the poor of the flock," Zech. xi. 7.

Steward. I know it is written, "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." 2 Cor. ix. 6. Wisdom's words are verified (the liberal, are blessed, and the miser is starved). "There is that scattereth: and yet increaseth; and there is that with-holdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty," Prov. xi. 24. However, don't cut too close; nor act at your clipping-feast like churlish Nabal, who kept a feast like a king, and yet refused (on that good day) to relieve David, who was the king's son-in-law.

Shepherd. The disinterestedness of the shepherd, as well as the faithfulness of the Steward, shall surely be brought to light.<P{

Steward. Shall you be at leisure on Friday next?

Shepherd. I always endeavour to settle accounts, and pay my debts, after clipping-time is over; so that I shall not be able to go far from the tent, but should be very glad to see you there.

Steward. I shall have plenty of time upon my hands while Little Faith's banqueting lasts, for all the young princes and princesses will invite him while his joys abound. Some will entertain him till their own cupboards are empty, and he will feast others till he has not one penny left, and then my work will come on again - so that you may be sure of my giving you a meeting at the tent. Till then, farewell. The Chief Shepherd of Israel be your guide and guard!

Shepherd. The Lord of the Household be with the Steward! and then he will act with discretion, give to each a portion of meat in due season, and rule in righteousness.

Dialogue the Seventh.

Steward. So I have found you in the tent! Clipping-time is now over, I suppose?

Shepherd. Yes; the shears are done with for this quarter.

Steward. Did you find your account in the wool? I suppose a good fleece is worth five shillings? Is it not?

Shepherd. I believe a House-Steward. is a better judge of a quarter of lamb than he is of a fleece of wool. If a farmer gets half-a-crown, or three shilling, a fleece, take one with another, he has not much cause to complain, though he shear his flock but once a-year. And, if an industrious shepherd gets food and raiment for himself and his household out of the clippings, it is enough for him; and he will be contented with it, and grateful for it.

Steward. And such shepherds are the most useful in their day, and the happiest men in all the field.

Shepherd. Through the sovereign clemency of the great Sheep-master, I know that to be true by blessed experience. Pray, how goes Little Faith on? Is he come down from the mount yet?

Steward. Yes; he staid there but a very little while: he was troubled with a swimming in his head, and at last fainted. I was informed that he could not tell how he came down: but, when he awoke the next morning, he found himself at the foot of the mount; and his old adversary told him that the whole vision was nothing but a dream, or an imaginary scene; for that Little Faith was in a frenzy, and there was nothing real in it. This threw poor Little Faith into the heart-burning again.

Shepherd. Pray, was Little Faith always subject to that disorder?

Steward. Yes: and it is no wonder; for the queen was much subject to it while she bred him, which by proverbial ladies is deemed an omen of a profuse ornament.

Shepherd. What is the proverb?

Steward. Why, if the pregnant mother be troubled with the heart-burning, "It is a sure sign," they say, "that the offspring will be born with a deal of hair upon its head."

Shepherd. And is that true?

Steward. They declare it with one voice. And they have another proverb which confirms it; and that is -" What every body says must be true." You may believe it or not, but it is best to be silent if you doubt it; for, if you begin to criticise, you will get yourself into a hobble.

Shepherd. I have read in ancient records, that hair is given for ornament, and for a covering. And it is said of Zion, that the "King espoused her when her breasts were fashioned, and her hair grown," Ezek. xvi. 7, 8.

Steward. Well; and gossiping ladies tell you, that the great heat of the pregnant mother's heart is to inform us beforehand of a plentiful crop of that sort of covering. Let it rest there; nor let us presume to be wiser than they, nor pretend to know more than what they are pleased to tell us of these matters. It is enough for us to know, that those who pass through the hottest fiery trials, come forth the brightest. When filthy rags are all consumed, the finest ornaments succeed. When the day of adversity discovers nothing but deformity and baldness, in the days of prosperity there shall be well-set hair and comeliness.

Shepherd. Pray, where is Little Faith now? Is he come to the palace-royal yet?

Steward. No; he is now at the Queen's lodge, which is at the foot of the mount. When any of the young princes or princesses are taken up the mount for the benefit of the nursery at the Queen's lodge, where there are proper nurses to cherish any of the King's children (1 Thess. ii. 7.), who are troubled with fainting fits after they descend from the mount.

Shepherd. I thought the best feast had been kept on the hill; because it is said, "In this mountain the King shall make unto all people a feast of fat things; a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations," Psa. xxv. 6, 7.

Steward. The veil, with the face of the covering, are destroyed upon that mountain; otherwise Little Faith could never have discerned any of those mysterious things presented to view And it is true, also, that a wonderfully sumptuous feast is prepared for those who surmount all difficulties, and gain the summit of the hill. But few ever come down without fainting: "If Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days. Afterward I rose up, and did the king's business," Dan. viii. 27. Another, after his decent, found himself at "Tel-abib, by the river Chebar, where he sat astonished seven days," Ezek. iii. 15. The Queen's nursery, therefore, is to receive those who faint, where they are cherished and nourished until they are able to go abroad.

Shepherd. Pray, was Little Faith's illness, after his descent, severe? or likely, in any sense of the word, to be fatal?

Steward. He was very ill; and I am credibly informed that "he was pressed out of measure, above strength; insomuch, that

he despaired even of life," 2 Cor. i. 8. For the expanded canopy was suddenly closed, the ravishing scene withdrew, and the old veil overshadowed the understanding of Little Faith; so that, "as soon as his eyes were opened, and the King was known, he vanished out of his sight," Luke, xxiv. 31.

Shepherd. Poor little fellow! Surely, nothing can be more cutting, more mortifying, more aggravating, than such sudden changes as those! All aspiring hopes, earnest expectations, and desired crops, are nipped in their bud, cut down in their bloom, and withered in an hour!

Steward. So it appeared to Little Faith: for the Enemy set in with his incredulity, declaring that the vision which he supposed to be exhibited for his welfare, was nothing but a trap, and a prelude to death; which drew this dying speech from his lips - "I shall SURELY DIE, because I have seen the King," Judges, xiii. 22.

Shepherd. Those that are weak, timorous, and tender, among the King's seed, are like the young lambs that are under my care. I have, at times, seen a lady's lap-dog cast two or three hundred into a panic at once, and put them to flight, only by giving tongue which has been very little louder than the sound of a penny whistle: and, after they have run themselves out of breath, they have turned round with a sort of military wheel, and faced the monster; as if surprised, either at their own cowardice, the enormous size of the enemy that pursued, or determined, with recollected might and united force, to give him battle.

Steward. Neither sheep or lambs can do any thing with these dogs, whether small or great, without the Chief Shepherd's aid: nor can the Seed Royal do any heroic deed without reliance on the King's arm, and dependence on him for promised support; for the King himself declares - "Without Me ye can do nothing." And this appeared plain by the conclusion

which Little Faith drew from the vision on the mount, namely, that he should surely "die, because he had seen the King;" whereas the King declares, that "every one which seeth him, and believeth on the King, shall have everlasting life," John, vi. 40. But, alas! his adversary soon gained an ascendancy over him! and so he doth over some who are thought to be strong in the habit and exercise of faith.

Shepherd. It is not reasonable to think that divine visions on Mount Zion can be foretastes or earnest of eternal banishment. "For if the King were pleased to kill Little Faith, he would not have received any confession, prayer, or tribute of praise, at his hands, neither would he have shewed him such things [as he saw on the mount]; nor would he, at that time, have told him such things as these," Judges, xiii. 23.

Steward. All this is true: but, when fits of infidelity, and the hour of temptation, meet upon a weakling, hastiness succeeds; which, for a time, renders the reasoning faculty useless. Besides, faith must reason, if any good be done by reasoning.

Shepherd. True, Sir; without the exercise of faith, infidelity cannot be subdued, nor the adversary routed; for this fight is emphatically called The good fight of faith. Pray, how long did Little Faith continue under his affliction?

Steward. But a little while; for the nurses cherished him, and fed him with warm milk from the cow, Isa. vii. 21, 22. Others gave him love-apples, Cant. ii 5. The young princesses brought him new wine, and bade him "drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more," Prov. xxxi. 6, 7. Others petitioned the King. In short, all the young princes and princesses that were at the lodge got round him, and lent their friendly aid to him. But the infidelity of Little Faith had like to have been an overmatch for them all. However, he is come to, and gone forth again in company with the rest of the King's

children; and I suppose they will keep on feasting from house to house till every mite be spent; and then they will all come home, some half starved, others with their coats put off, and some with great rents and slits in their clothes. And then I shall have work enough - and, perhaps, this is the ease already: therefore I must be off.

Shepherd. When shall you have another leisure opportunity?

Steward. I know not, for I have generally the most work on 56d my hands when days of festivity are over; for, at such times, I have not only their food and apparel to look to, but physic is wanted also, and more skill is required in using of it than I ever was master of. Therefore, as I cannot with certainty fix any particular day, I will, when opportunity offers, call on you at the tent: and, if you are at home, I shall be glad; and, if not, I have my walk for my pains. But I cannot tell when it will be, whether next week, or a month hence.

Shepherd. Whenever you come, let it be on a Thursday evening, if possible. But, if you cannot call on me next week, I shall not be at leisure for several weeks after; for, as the dog-days are coming on, it is likely to be very hot. And it is required of shepherds to be watchful at those seasons, for nothing can be more dangerous among a flock of sheep than a mad dog.

Steward. "Dumb dogs," Isa. lvi. 10, are bad enough; "greedy dogs," Isa. lvi. 11, are worse; but "mad dogs," 2 Pet. ii. 16, are the worst of all. Farewell: I leave both the shepherd and the flock to the Chief Shepherd's care.

Shepherd. Sir, I thank you: I heartily wish you the same fare; and hope that Wisdom will direct and support you when this working and purging time comes on.

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Eighth.

Steward. Well, Shepherd, how do you do? I am glad to see you.

Shepherd. I am as glad to see you; for, in very deed, I suspected that you were either ill, or dead; and began to doubt whether I should ever see you again in these lower regions, for it is above three months since we had the last interview.

Steward. I know it is a good while; but I did not know that it was quite so long, for I have neither observed days nor months. I have had plenty of employ, and many ups and downs since I saw you last.

Shepherd. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." Pray, how comes Little Faith on? Is he on the mount, in the nursery, or is he feasting and making merry still?

Steward. Little Faith came home the next day after I parted with you last. I just saved my distance, for he and a number of the children were to dine and sup at the palace the next day: therefore you may easily guess how I was hurried in the morning!

Shepherd. Did he come into the Steward's room, to ask how you did?

Steward. No; but, when dinner went up, I saw where he was, and how he did. All sat mute: it was a silent meeting, not a cheerful countenance upon any of them; and as for Little Faith, he appeared the worst of all. When the dinner was served up, they sat and looked at one another, but could not

fall to. Nothing of the first or second course seemed to suit: however, when the dessert came, some of them partook of that; but, as for Little Faith, he did very little more than taste of it.

Shepherd. Pray, what was the matter with Little Faith? How came he so dejected and bowed down?

Steward. Pride, pride, you may be sure: Pride always goes before the destruction [of a sinner] and a haughty spirit before the fall of a saint.

Shepherd. One would have thought that Little Faith had been exercised with troubles sufficient to have humbled him.

Steward. Pride often steals in by a way, and in a manner, by which it is least suspected. Every one of the Seed-royal is fond of nursing, cherishing, and dandling a young heir: for you must know that, in our family, every real child is an heir, and a joint-heir; an heir apparent to the throne, (Psalm, cxxxii. 12, 13, compare with Isa. lix. 21.) and in one sense a joint-heir with his Majesty, and that by propitious grant; as it is written, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne," Rev. iii. 21.

Shepherd. This is enough to lay a child under the strongest ties of filial affection, and to excite gratitude in the superlative degree; which the depraved powers of the human soul (though immortal) are incapable of, unless influenced by the sensible operations of Eternal Divinity

Steward. It is true: but, when once a young heir appears in the image of his Majesty, and begins to lisp out his warm expressions of love and tender affection to his Royal Father, and to appear in the garb of true royalty, all the young ones of the King's seed begin to admire and caress him; and, if any one is under the black rod, he is sure to be applied to as a

mediator or intercessor: his garments are admired, his simplicity is extolled, his company is courted, and his conversation highly approved. And this was the case with Little Faith: his wisdom was deemed wonderful, his penetration singular, his discernment profound, his conversation savoury, and his brilliant appearance to exceed all that was ever born in the Palace-royal

Shepherd. I wonder that Little Faith had not concealed himself in a corner equally as secure as he formerly had thought himself when in the sand-bank: for he that is so dotingly fond of retirement in trouble, generally inclines that way when out of it. "The heart, knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy."

Steward. If this was a little more attended to, it would be better with many of the King's children than it really is. But, instead of watching the King's countenance, attending to his powerful arm made bare, and to the promises of his mouth, Little Faith fell to admiring every thing that others said of him. He was to lead the conversation in every meeting, to resolve all doubts, and settle all matters in debate. Hard questions were put to him, and infallible answers were expected from him. Nor was one petition put up to the King, during all those days of festivity, except by Little Faith, who was sure to be his mouth for all. So that, instead of "his drinking so as to forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more," every one helped to empty his cruse, and drain him of every thing that he had. Poor Little Faith was not aware of this.

Shepherd. Then I think, Sir, that you ought to have taught him better; especially, as you are in some degree acquainted with these things.

Steward. No advice is accepted from a domestic servant at such times as these. A young prince in his first love, though in a go-cart or a back-string, "is wiser in his own eyes than

seven men that can render a reason." Therefore you are obliged to keep your mouth as it were with a bridle, lest you should strip them of their felicity, damp their joys, or give them an unkind touch, or an unintentional wound. To deal with these exactly agreeable to the rules of Divine direction, is one of the hardest and most difficult branches of domestic servitude: but, what makes it still worse is, that there is not a child, Steward, butler, chariot-driver, cup-bearer, porter, baker, herdsman, bailiff, ploughman, or errand-boy, that ever appears about the palace, but what thinks himself capable of, and sufficiently accomplished for, this part of the work. Hence every one who sounds his own trumpet is attended to. At such seasons, nothing must be said by a faithful servant to the prejudice of those who zealously affect them. All that can be done is to pray, wait, and watch the event; and, if they are really heirs of promise, these generally strip them, and then send them home naked and wounded. And, when they themselves perceive that their favourites can strip and wound them, but neither clothe nor heal them, then they are apt to run to the contrary extreme, and to conclude that there are neither legitimate children, nor faithful domestic servants, in all the King's palace, except themselves-and those who thus judge, are sure to judged.

Shepherd. This must be difficult indeed! for a servant that is faithful, and knows something of his business, is not fond of being instructed by those who do not. Nor does it sit easy with one of long experience to be guided by every one that is capable of feeding swine.

Steward. This is often the ease with those who act in the capacity of Stewards; and this I found at the exaltation of Little Faith. He was suddenly taken from my care; nor was I allowed to have one single sight of him until he was shattered and torn: then I might have the pleasure of seeing him; and, if I

could do any thing for him, I might then use my interest, but not till then.

Shepherd. I should think that, if Little Faith was used as a mouth for all the rest, and as an intercessor between the King and any of the princes or princesses who had offended his Majesty, that it must have a natural tendency to lift him up.

Steward. It has, and it did lift him up. Such should be swift to hear, and slow to speak. But they made Little Faith the keeper the vineyards, but his own vineyard was not kept. He took his eyes from the King's countenance, and fixed them on the countenances of the guests in company, to see if a look of approbation appeared upon them: and when any applauded, or lavished great encomiums on his prayers or conversation, it became food for spiritual pride; until the private meditations of Little Faith were not upon the King's clemency, but to furnish his head with notions, and his mouth with words, to gain applause.

Shepherd. When this is the case, the power, sweetness, simplicity, yea, all the fragrant perfumes of the royal garments, wear away, till nothing odoriferous is left.

Steward. You are right-and this was the true case with Little Faith: and, when once he found himself dry, lean, unsavoury, and unctionless, he began to counterfeit the joys and power of grace, by a feigned or affected speech, with a low, hollow voice; by which art he at times moved the passions of the others in company; but this never warms the heart. But, what struck Little Faith most was, that one night two or three of the Hagarenes were at their meeting; and, after Little Faith had put up one of these hypocritical petitions, (for I can call them no better) the Hagarenes were ready to fall to kissing of him; while some of the more discerning of the Seed-royal seemed abashed and confounded at his unsavoury, unsound, bad-worded, and lifeless address.

Shepherd. It is a bad sign when the Hagarenes approve; it is a plain proof that there must be a fleshly savour, otherwise they would not relish it. And I should think that the approbation of the bond children must have recoiled with a wound to the heart of Little Faith; for he must be effectually convinced that it was neither the spirit, the tenets, nor the false confidence of the Hagarenes, that procured his enlargement when he got through the strait gate.

Steward. It both wounded him and staggered him: his brilliant lustre vanished, he gradually sunk in the esteem of all the Seed-royal, his heart grew narrow, his spirit got into bondage, his mouth was stopped, his simplicity destroyed, and his nakedness appeared; so that his feigned garb could hide his shame no longer. Thus his pride was cut, and his countenance fell: so true are the words of Wisdom, that pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Shepherd. Nor does it rest there: for, when once the spiritual appetite is gone, pride is indulged, and applause is sought to feed it, the King's displeasure soon follows, he resisteth the proud. And, as they seek not his honour, he tramples theirs in the dust: "They that honour me, will I honour; but those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." This raises rebellion in the heart even against the King himself: The foolishness of a man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the King.

Steward. You have described the case exactly. Rebel he did and the King left him in the hand of his old adversary, who came to him as an angel of light, and set Little Faith to cavilling at the sovereign acts of his Majesty: yea, he disputed, and resisted, his will in his heart, and fell to vindicating himself; went over, in heart and affections, to the Hagarenes; wholly lost sight of the mount, and the wonders exhibited thereon: and crept into the sand-bank again.

Shepherd. Into the sand-bank again?

Steward. Yes: infidelity prevailed; from the King's face he wandered, and into the flesh he crept. For, going over in heart to the Hagarenes, bondage laid hold of him; and the old veil so gathered over his mind, that he lost sight of the Rock; and such are sure to go to building upon the sand again, for they are said to build again that which they destroyed.

Shepherd. Pray, how long did he continue in his old retreat?

Steward. Upwards of two months.

Shepherd. And what drove him out at last?

Steward. I can hardly tell you for laughing! But, one day, as I was walking past his old haunt, I took no notice of him as I passed: for I think it is best for such to bear the yoke in their youth; and likewise to let them alone, that they may try what hopes and expectations may be raised on the sand; and therefore I kept Little Faith at a distance and took little or no notice of him. But, as soon as I passed by he saw me; and out he ran, steaming with dust, like a fowl that shakes its feathers after it has rolled in an ash-heap, crying out "hornets, hornets!" and looked like a wild or distracted man.

Shepherd. What did he mean by-"Hornets! hornets!"

Steward. I know what he meant, and I was glad to hear his outcry; for, when once the hornet's nest is stirred up, it is sufficient, under the management of Divine Wisdom, to make a child sick of seeking rest in the sand-bank for ever.

Shepherd. The King promised in ancient records, saying, "And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee, Exod. xxiii. 28.

Steward. It is said also, "that the hornet should come among them, until they that were left, and those that had hid themselves from Israel, were destroyed," Deut. vii. 20. And I think that the old inhabitants of Canaan never fled with more precipitate haste before the hornets than Little Faith did from his old habitation; yea, Smut never made a sheep of your flock run with more violence than the hornets made Little Faith run.

Shepherd. But pray, Sir, what are these hornets? Are they of the same nature of the locusts? Have they stings in their tails? Rev. ix. 10. I readily suppose that Little Faith was stung, otherwise he would never have left his highly favoured retreat, Do inform me concerning this mystery.

Steward. Little Faith would tell you, if you were to ask him, that every hornet had his sting; and that there was not one of those insects in all the bank but what stung him, and that was enough to make him fly. A nest of hornets would put a troop of horse to flight sooner than any other army whatsoever. The best riders in the world would never be able to keep rank and file, if engaged by these; for they are armed by Jehovah, and pay no regard to the rattling of a spear nor the mouth of a cannon.

Shepherd. True, Sir. But, pray, what were those hornets that put Little Faith to flight?

Steward. It is common for the King's children, When they lose sight of his Majesty's face, to creep into Self. If they feel not his arm, they lean on their own; if the Rock be hid, the sandbank is sure to be in view; if the former appear far off, the latter is always at hand; and, if they are not building on the Rock, they are sure to build on the sand. And, when any of them have been admitted to the King's presence, and favoured with the glorious visions of the mount, they have then expected nothing less than perfection within, and jubilee

days without. Therefore, if the King withdraws, into the old bank they go, suspecting no danger from that quarter; for they conclude that the visions of the mount and the King's face have dispersed and dispelled every adversary; never once dreaming of a nest of hornets in ambush. The King, seeing this, sends his flying roll into the bank, Zech, v.1. This occasions a surprising stir, Rom. vii. 8. Swarms of rebellious, unclean, lascivious, and desperately vile thoughts, rise within; and such legions of corruptions appear in motion, that no Canaanite ever had a greater swarm of hornets about his head, or could be more crawling alive with them, than Little Faith's old man of sin was with these corruptions and evil thoughts. And he, poor little fellow! not knowing what they were, never feeling the like before, and expecting nothing in future but purity of heart, cried out in his fright, "Hornets! hornets!" for he whist not what to call them.

Shepherd. Then the hornets are more terrible to the King's children than the flies are to the sheep. The former makes the heart appear nothing but corruption, and the latter makes the flock alive with maggots.

Steward. They are both bad enough; but poor Little Faith, running out into the palace-yard in the dead of the night, and uttering that lamentable cry, the dog Lion (1 Pet. i. 8,) seized him, and tore him sadly: which made him utter this earnest petition, "Deliver me from the power of the dog, save me from the lion's mouth," Psalm, xxii. 20, 21.

Shepherd. And, pray, did the King hear his prayer?

Steward. The King is always sure to hear prayer, if it goes from the heart: but he doth not always answer prayer immediately; nor did Little Faith obtain an immediate answer to his.

Shepherd. It is a terrible thing to have such a dog loose about the yard.

Steward. He is not loose, but bound; but Little Faith, as well as many more, goes within reach of his chain. Had he fled to the Rock, or made the Most High his habitation, no evil had befallen him, Psalm, xci. 9, 10. But he made the sand-bank his retreat; and, when driven out of that, he fled within reach of Lion's chain. He that believes is not to make haste; but infidelity is always in a hurry.

Shepherd. I think Lion is as savage and as voracious as Smut, if possible.

Steward. They were both bred by one and the same bitch. Folly was the mother of them both, Job, iv. 18; and of legions more as well as they.

Shepherd. Did Little Faith go into one of his fits?

Steward. For a while he despaired of ever seeing the King's face with joy; and concluded that it was impossible for any of the Seed-royal to be beset with such evils; and uttered another dying speech-"As a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me," Isa. xxxviii. 13.

Shepherd. And, pray, where is the poor little fellow now? I suppose he hangs about the Steward's room, or the pantry; doe 16a6 s he not? And no doubt but you have sympathized with him in his afflictions, as you seem to have a great regard for him: and, indeed, "the strong are expressly commanded to bear the infirmities of the weak."

Steward. I was glad at my heart when I heard the outcry, and that the hornets were upon him, because he is so fond of cleaving to self: this will cure him of that epidemical disease;

he will never be able to build his nest, nor take ease in the bank again. These things will drive the word candour from his mouth; will cure him of his fleshly savour; and, under the influence of the King's clemency, will lead him to loathe depraved and rebellious nature, to vindicate the records of Zion, to see the feigned perfection of the Hagarenes, and to justify all the proceedings of his royal Father.

Shepherd. Then these things are of use to Little Faith; and, indeed, it is said that all things work together for good to them that love the King. Pray, where is little Faith now?

Steward. They do, and these among the rest. Little Faith is now in the pantry, very meek and low: and much afraid that these terrible evils, and his sensations under them, cannot consist with royal sonship! for he says that he feels unutterable rebellion, at times, even against the King himself, and such thoughts of him as none ever had; insomuch, that he cannot look up, much less look at the King; and, therefore, he must never expect to see the King's face again. "A loyalist," saith he, "with a rebellious heart! a dear son, Jer. xxxi. 20; with nothing but hard thoughts against his own Father; a holy seed, Isa. vi. 13; filled with blasphemy! Can I be said to be pure, I Tim. v. 22; while every sin takes occasion to work in me all manner of concupiscence! Rom. vii. 8; an Israelite indeed, John, i. 47; swarming alive with HORNETS! NO! NO! the hornets were sent to drive the Canaanites, not the Israelites; and I am a Canaanite, otherwise they would never drive me. O the hornets! the hornets! Cursed be Canaan! a servant of servants shall he be, Gen. ix. 25. And the hornets were sent as an effect of that curse, and in just judgment for sin: I sent the hornet before you, (O Israel! said the King) which drove them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites-but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow, Josh. xxiv. 12. Not with thy sword, nor with thy bow, didst thou get the land. Nor shall I ever get into the better country while

one hornet remains upon me: it is a land prepared for a perfect seed, not for Canaanites swarming with insects!"

Shepherd. Little Faith reasons like a nervous logician. And, indeed, it must be a very puzzling mystery for one of the Holy Seed to be perplexed with such unholy thoughts and workings, and, what makes it still worse, Belial suggests them so foul, that it is almost impossible to open the mouth about them, either to the King or to any of the servants; insomuch, that there is no speaking so as to be eased; and, I think, one main branch of the Serpent's wisdom lies in this. Such a poor buffeted child creeps about in solitude, pondering upon that which he cannot either mention or reveal; and considers himself as a companion for none but fiends.

Steward. True: and sometimes they are shaking their heads, and making motions with their hands, fearing lest one or other of these thoughts should creep through their lips, and amount to words; which, they expect, would at once deluge them in black despair, if not in irrecoverable ruin. And, as you justly observe, such are always creeping alone, as if, like the king of Babylon, a brute's heart was given to them, and they were destined to dwell with the beasts of the field till they imagine themselves as brutal in their appearance as they feel themselves brutish in their nature.

Shepherd. I have often observed among my flock, especially in hot weather, when the flies are very busy, that, as soon as the maggots begin to work upon them, they are in perpetual motion, shaking and biting themselves; but, as soon as ever they come to be very bad, they always leave the flock, shun the heat of the sun, and creep into any hedge, ditch, or thicket, that they can get into; and there they lie till the shepherd finds them out, shears the sore parts, and applies the juice of the fir tree to their wounds, and that cures them. I

suppose Little Faith hardly ever casts a longing eye at the sand-bank now-a-days; does he?

Steward. No: if he does but even look that way, the old nest is stirred up, and every hornet seems to be armed with a fresh sting. Our passover feast is at hand, and both lamb and bitter herbs are always provided for those banquets. I am but an unskilful proficient in serving them up, and therefore require the more time for pre-consideration. My dear friend, I must be gone.

Shepherd. You are the best judge, Sir, of your own time. "Servants that are bound must obey." Nor would I ever wish to detain you one moment longer than while you are disengaged from the King's business. I shall be rather busy, at this season, for a few weeks, as we are going to draft off a few of the lambs, for they are too old to live upon milk, Heb. v. 13; and too old to ride in the bosom, Isa. xl. II. At weaning times we generally look out for a tender bite for them, in order to prepare them for the rich and strong pastures.

Steward. Then be so kind as to call upon me at the palace when a fit opportunity offers, for I shall be glad at my heart to see you there. The Lord be with thee!

Shepherd. And with thy spirit.

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Ninth.

Steward. "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." This is now fulfilled in the literal sense, for I saw you coming, and was at the door when you knocked; and I hope the King will find both thee and me ready when he shall make the last visit to

the Lowland Palace; "that, when he cometh and knocketh, we may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching," Luke, xii. 36.

Shepherd. True, Sir; and there is a daily blessedness in being ready, and in being prepared for his coming, as well as an everlasting blessing of immortal glory to be revealed, and received at the last time of his appearance.

Steward. True: that is a daily blessing, indeed! but it is understood and enjoyed but by few.

Shepherd. It is not; but we are living witnesses of the truth of the prophecy, namely, that servants, yea, base men and fools, are in the secret. Pray where is Little Faith now?

Steward. Poor Little Faith has had a terrible time of it, indeed! worse than he ever knew before. Having been, for many years, a child of a sorrowful spirit, he was habituated to distress and heaviness of heart; but having been favoured with a comfortable view of the King's face, and with an open declaration of his being his dear son, and a pleasant child-to be left in a nest of hornets, and without even daring (as he thought) to lay any claim upon the King, or even so much as to call him Father, seems to go very hard with him. The poor little fellow was so cut up, that there was scarcely a prince, princess, or servant in the palace-royal, but was in travail for him.

Shepherd. And, pray, where is the poor soul now?

Steward. He is out again, and is gone abroad among the rest of the young princes.

Shepherd. Pray, how was he brought out? Was it by the proclamation of one of the King's speeches, in answer to any

of his own petitions? Or, was it by the intercession of any of the Seed-royal?

Steward. I believe all these means were used and attended to; and, no doubt, the King approved of the use of these, as they are the means of his own appointment. But he was brought out of the hornets' nest by a dream. He one night dreamt that he saw a man in a shining garment, the most brilliant he had ever seen; and he saw the form of a hand let down, that took that shining man, and carried him up to the ethereal regions, which opened as he passed, and left a visible cavity behind. The eyes of Little Faith pursued the man, and the hand that held him; and he soon perceived the starry heavens divide, through which he passed also. After this a most radiant canopy appeared, which unfolding itself both eastward and westward, he went through that; and, in short, "into the third heaven: but, whether the man was in the body or out of the body, he could not tell," 2 Cor. xii. 3. But, while he stood gazing up into heaven with a longing eye, he saw the same man let down again, just by a large cavern in the earth, very much like the mouth of a sand-bank to which Little Faith used to resort, and from which he was lately driven by the hornets.

Shepherd. This is a singular dream, and must inspire the soul of Little Faith with the most intense holy longings; I mean, after the shining man, to see what became of him; especially, as he had once been on the mount himself, and seen something of these realities. Excuse my breaking in upon your relation, Mr. Steward. Pray, go on.

Steward. Little Faith, in his dream, saw the shining man let down again, and placed at the mouth of a great cavern in the earth, as before related; and, no sooner was he seated there, in silent solitude, according to Little Faith's view of him, but he presently saw the jaws of the earth open; a cloud of smoke

belched out, and several despicably deformed, but intelligent beings, with wings, appeared all in wonderful motion, 1 Sam. xxviii. 13. But one of this mysterious company appeared taller in stature, bigger in size, superior in rank, more terrible in aspect, more stately in gait, more forbidding in his looks, and more forward to command than all the rest. To him the others all seemed to look, before him they all kept their distance, and to obey his commands each stood ready. When, lo! this commander in chief stretched forth his hand, and took a rod: it seemed to be a branch of the tree called the cockspur thorn; out of the side of which rod grew a remarkable long thorn. He went to the shining man, struck him violently on the breast, and left the thorn in the man, which, to appearance, went through his clothes, skin, and flesh, 2 Cor. xii. 7: at the reception of which, the man swooned, and dropped. After this, the chief commander called one by the name of Messenger; gave him a strap, somewhat resembling a military belt made of buff; and sent him to the shining man, who fell to smiting him, first on the one side of his head, and then on the other, 2 Cor. xii. 7; as if determined to deprive him of his senses. The poor man then put up the three following petitions-"Deliver me from the hand of him that is stronger than I-Let the prey be taken from the mighty.-Let the lawful captive be delivered." Little Faith was wholly intent upon the vision; and, as soon as the man had put up his three petitions, he heard a voice from the third heaven, saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. xii. 9. At which the man leaped up, and cried out-"Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of the King might rest upon me," 2 Cor. xii. 9. Upon this Little Faith awoke, and felt for the hornets, but there was not one to be found.

Steward. Wonderful is the condescension of his Majesty, in teaching his poor children, even in their sleep: "Sons and daughters shall prophesy. Old men shall dream dreams, and

young men shall see visions," Joel, ii 28. "Who teacheth like him? The King speaks once, yea, twice," saith Elihu," but man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep faileth upon men, in slumbering upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealetH their instruction, that he may draw man from his purpose; and hide pride from man," Job, xxxiii. 14, And, surely, Little Faith had a glorious night of it, blessed with beloved sleep, and wonderful instruction was sealed in him.

Steward. Wonderfully applicable to his case, and that Little Faith knows right well; for he came into the Steward's room in the morning, with such a heavenly countenance, that it did my heart good to see him. "The hornets are all gone, Mr. Steward.," said he: "they are fled, like the locusts, into the Red Sea, and there is not one left; and, I hope, they will never come back again." Then he told me his dream.

Shepherd. Little Faith will find himself deceived. The hornets will beset him again: it is the light of the King's countenance, and his presence, that puts them to flight; and, while HE is enjoyed, the hornets will be hid; but when the King departs, they will return, though, perhaps, not in so violent a manner.

Steward. I leave Little Faith to find that out. To talk at that rate before him, while in his first love, would break his heart. Besides, while his joys are strong, he would not believe you, if you were to tell him so. These young ones expect to spend all their days in open vision, and to enjoy the burning of divine love in their hearts all the way to Paradise; that their mountain shall never be moved, nor their comforts ever abate; so they speak, and so they believe. And, for my own part, I don't love to contradict them; for I believe that all the King's children would enjoy much more of his Majesty's presence than they do, were they more constant in their court-visits, more

dependant on the King's clemency, better read in the ancient records, and more frequent and fervent at the ivory throne.

Shepherd. It is true: sheep are never safe but under the Chief Shepherd's care; nor can the Seed-royal be safe but under the protection of his Majesty.

Steward. The above is the counsel that I gave Little Faith. I advised him to study his Father's records, to be constantly at the chapel-royal, to attend closely on his Majesty's person, to prize his countenance, and always to acknowledge his favours with thankfulness. And he seems to adhere to my counsel: he meditates on his present felicity; is very studious; and bids fair to cut a figure, should he be appointed in future to govern any part of his Majesty's dominions. Nevertheless, all the King's children do experience, not only a spiritual birth, and their jubilee days, but a weaning time also.

Shepherd. Weaning times must come. We have our times for weaning the lambs: and it is common to see of them, when they are first taken from the ewes, fall away, and get thin and lean; but, after they become accustomed to the rich pastures, they thrive better than when they lived and depended so much upon the ewes.

Steward. It stands to reason that it should be so, and that the children of the King want weaning as well as lambs. "The new-born babe desires the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby." But, while this is the case, nothing but their comforts are attended to. This is spending the royal bounty, but not engaging the King's enemies. Here are the joys and comforts of grace, but little growth in knowledge. Praise is going forth, but prayer is almost out of season; for, while the cup overflows, that which is wanting is easily numbered.

Shepherd. Pray, do you send them out to be weaned? or, do you wean them at home?

Steward. Some are sent out to be weaned; as Joseph was sent into Egypt, Lot into Sodom, David into Gath, and the disciples were scattered from Jerusalem into all the four winds, Acts, viii. 4. They were weaned, and then scattered abroad, that they might become nurses to nourish and cherish others. Those who have been used to milk themselves, know how to draw out the breasts to those that are babes, Heb. v. 12, 13. And, when such are weaned, and brought to live upon strong meat, having their own senses exercised to discern both good and evil, Heb. v. 14; then they strengthen others with the same food. When the breast is put up, the records are searched, and knowledge is sought. Hence the question, and the answer to it-"Whom shall the King teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine?" "Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts," Isa. xxviii. 9.

Shepherd. Children that suck the breast are never out of harm's way. They are timorous also, terrified, and frightened, at every thing, if their comforts are gone: and this appears plain in Little Faith, for the sound of the hornets' wings drove him into the very mouth of the dog.

Steward. What you say is true: they are timorous; and weakly too, for he that useth milk is a babe. The sucking child is happiest while at the breast, but the weaned child walks best when forced to his feet. The former, when the breast is withdrawn, trembles at a hornet; the latter is not daunted at a viper. "The weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den, They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." But why? "Because the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," Isa. v. 8, 9. When weaned from the milk, they grow in experimental knowledge;

and the King calls those ministers "pastors according to his own heart, that feed his family with knowledge and understanding," Jer. iii. 15.

Shepherd. Little Faith would make a wry face, if he were to hear this conversation of ours: he would differ widely from us in these things.

Steward. Indeed he would. He has got the highly-favoured bottle in his mouth, and I will be bound for him that he make the most of it; nor will he part with it easily. "He sucks, and is satisfied with the breast of consolations: he milks out, and is delighted with the abundance of Zion's glory," Isa. lxvi. 11.

Shepherd. "Truly the light is sweet," saith Wisdom, "and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. But, if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many," Eccles. xi. 7, 8. Pray, is Little Faith to be weaned in the palace? or is he to be sent out?

Steward. I do not know yet: at home, however, I am inclined to think: and then I shall have work enough, and need often times more patience than I was ever possessed of; for these children are most intolerably cross at weaning times; and so peevish, pettish, and fretful, that they are a burden to themselves, and to all about them; and, the more they strive against it, the worse they get. And they don't know from whence their fretful spirit comes: they know by woeful experience, that their comforts are fled; but from what quarter their peevishness comes they know not, nor do they believe you if you tell them. So it is best to let them find it out themselves: some few do; but many do not, even to the last.

Shepherd. I suppose the Law has a hand in weaning: has it not?

Steward. It has: but they cannot conceive how a good law can stir up their evil nature; a holy law discover unholy corruptions; and a law that commands love, works wrath in man's heart. But so it is; and so the wisest men have seen it; and so the simplest babes have felt it; whether they believe it or not.

Shepherd. It is said in ancient records-"And the child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned," Gen. xxi. 8. The company had a feast, but poor little Isaac had a fast: they banqueted, but he was weaned.

Steward. It was the custom, in these eastern countries, to make a feast at such times; and it is observed in the Palace-royal to this day. But I do not suppose that Isaac fasted; nor do the heirs of promise fast on the day of the weaning feast. Isaac had other food prepared, and so have the King's seed. The milk is taken away on the feast-day; but other provisions are provided-"a feast of fat things; a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things, full of marrow; of wines on the lees, well refined," Isa. xxv. 6. And, at the same time, is the veil, the face of the covering, destroyed, ver. 7. Great things are then seen; and strong meat, fit for men of full age, is dished up; and a glorious feast they have; and they find this food more substantial than milk, which sometimes abides with them but a few hours; but a good meal of marrow and fatness is like the cake baked by the angel, "in the strength of which Elijah went forty days and forty nights," 1 Kings, xix. 6, 8. They find their minds braced up, their feet seem to stand on even ground, the stability of the covenant of grace is considered and admired, their calling and election is made sure unto them, and they continue in an even frame for some time, and expect to continue so to the end. But, by and by? these comforts abate; and then it is ten to one but ease and insensibility beset them; which they never suspect; under which they meet with the

King's frowns and resentments; and out of which lethargy they are generally awakened by spiritual jealousy, to which they are provoked by young converts.

Shepherd. Then, I suppose, they pine after the breast again; for it is the young princes and princesses, who are satisfied and delighted with the breast, that provoke them to jealousy.

Steward. True; but it is the ease and insensibility into which they fall that exposes them to the rage of jealousy. The heir of promise at full age, whose house is established, looks often with an eye of pity on a joyful babe, because he knows what weaning times mean.

Shepherd. But, I suppose, after being sorely tried, they meet with some little indulgence again with the breast: do they not? I have often seen a tender mother, after she has weaned her offspring, if it pines intensely for the breast, take it up, and suckle it again. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?"- "She may; [saith the King] yet will I never forget Zion, nor her offspring."

Steward. And when a child thus pines, the mother often rubs some bitter aloes upon the breast; till, in process of time, the child refuses to touch it. And, indeed, the Seed-royal are often served so: their comforts are succeeded by bitterness. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with his joy." "I forgot prosperity," said one, because of the bitterness that succeeded, "remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall; my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled within me," Lam. iii. 17, 19, 20.

Shepherd. The soul that is born of the Spirit is filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Under the prolific operations of the Holy Comforter, every grace is implanted; the new

creature, which is the principle of grace, is formed; and in the saint's first love every lineament and feature of the second Adam's image is as express as the image of the Divine Fabricator was on the first Adam when he was formed. The 18d2 clay was passive in the Divine Potter's hand while Adam's frame was on the wheel; and the strong man armed is cast out of the sinner's heart, and every corruption lies motionless in it, when Jehovah moulds the vessel of wrath into a "vessel of mercy," Rom. ix. 23: and "FORMS him for himself, to show forth his praise," Isa. xliii. 21. A wonderful calm in the soul is felt, and nothing but true holiness perceived (at certain seasons) while this regenerating, renewing, fresh-forming or transforming work is secretly carrying on. Yea, every divine touch given to this new work lays the believer under such glorious sensations as he can neither describe or relate. But, though a divine nature be received, 2 Pet. i. 4; a carnal nature remains; a new creature is formed, but the old creature is not extinct; Israel is in the land, "but the Canaanites will dwell among them: these were left to prove Israel." Astonishing mystery! "partakers of Jehovah's holiness," Heb. xii. 10; and yet burdened with fallen Adam's corrupt nature! Rom. vii. 24. This old inhabitant will prove every real Israelite; and grace must be tried.

Steward. What you have said is true; and the safety of the saint's state is made out to him by the powerful sensations that he feels, and by the change that is wrought. It is a Divine power: this is evident to the weakest believer, by its being superior to the stubbornness of the human will, the workings of Satan, and the motions of sin; and is no less than the empire, dominion, or reign of grace, or the kingdom of God, which stands not in word, nor in external pomp, but in a power which, without controversy, is all divine. But, as you have justly observed, grace must be tried, yea, every grace; and nothing tries the grace of a newborn heir more than weaning him from the breast. Unbelief within, oppositions without, and

the withdrawals of the King's presence, try faith. Deep poverty tries patience, and abounding plenty tries temperance. Cruel mockings, reproaches, and insults, try meekness: abounding errors and damnable heresies will try the root of the matter; wealth will try charity; pleasure, beautiful snares, and creature comforts, will try the sincerity of love; feigned hypocrites, half-hearted professors, human applause, and clouds of self-seeking and men-pleasing preachers, will try faithfulness; while every besetting sin that strives for mastery. will try the loyalty of the heart, though at the same time they often help the saint to discover the predominant principle of grace. The word of the Lord tried Joseph, and the same INCARNATE WORD will try every heir of promise. But, when the King tries them in the fire, he sits as a refiner by it; and, if he brings them in, he will also bring them through.

Shepherd. I must withdraw. How time slides away in good conversation! It is high time to feed the sheep.

Steward. When shall you be at leisure again?

Shepherd. Almost any day from twelve o'clock to four: but not of an evening for some time; for the days are drawing in, and the "shadows of the evening are stretching out," Jer. vi. 4; and at those times we are very much pestered with wild beasts; "evening wolves," Zeph. iii. 3, and subtle foxes, Ezek. xii. 4, are perpetually creeping forth. Lambs in the midst of wolves are always in danger; and great care and watchfulness are required in shepherds at all times, but more especially at such times as these.

Steward. I believe there is not a creature living that has more enemies than a sheep; nor is there a wild savage, or voracious beast, that ranges the forest, but what is fond of preying upon it.

Shepherd. It is true; yet there is not any species of dumb creatures upon earth that are so useful as they, nor any that have so much attention paid to them. Herds of no kind are attended like flocks of sheep. Were all his Majesty's dominions to be surveyed where agriculture is known, we should find ten shepherds, false or true, to one park-keeper; and twenty shepherds to one ranger of the forest. Most men who have read the Celestial Records form some idea of the King's attachment to the sheep. They see that the name has been assumed in heaven, even by the great King. Cherubs and seraphs also have visited and attended the King's flocks; and the greatest characters that ever appeared in the Lowlands have been of the same occupation. Hence thousands have assumed the name and office of a Shepherd, who never saw a sheep till, like the rich man in hell, they saw it in Abraham's bosom; and thousands more, who have seen both sheep and goats, but were never able to distinguish the one from the other.

Steward. I believe it. However, the King will separate the false shepherds from the true, and the sheep from the goats, when he comes to make it manifest that there is one fold and one shepherd. But how comes it to pass that you are more troubled with these wild beasts in the winter than in the summer season?

Shepherd. They are called evening wolves, because they are fond of the twilight. A brutal night-ranger hates the sun as bad as a bat or an owl. All the while the sun is in the equator, these creatures can do but little mischief, either by day or night, they have such an intolerable aversion to the light; but, as soon as the sun withdraws from our horizon, the winter season approaches, and the evening grow long, then all the beasts of the forest begin to move, they only lie in their dens till evening. If opportunity should offer, I should be glad to see

you in the plain of Shechem, as I never care to be far from Jacob's Well when the beasts of the forest creep forth.

Steward. If time permit, and Providence direct, I will wait upon you there. Till then, may the Shield of Help, and the Sword of Excellency, be with you! and then you will never know the want of an offensive or defensive weapon.

Shepherd. I thank you for your blessing; and, by the assistance of Him that guides us into all truth, and brings all divine things to our remembrance, my petitions shall be in your calamity.

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Tenth.

Steward. O Shepherd! how have I been wearied in body, and buffeted in mind by the Adversary, in my searches and researches after you! I had almost despaired of finding you; and, in my heart, was turning back to the palace. You have served me as Jacob served his highly-favoured son: you told me that you should be feeding the flock in Shechem, when I have found you in the suburbs of Dothan.

Shepherd. I believe Joseph's brethren and I had different motives: they left all their flocks in Shechem, and came to Dothan; whereas I came to seek a strayed sheep in Dothan, that I might take it back to the flock in Shechem. There was but one parcel of ground in all the land of Canaan that Jacob gave (by special will) to his son Joseph, John, iv. 5: and it certainly is the most fertile spot, for herbage, in all the Holy Land; and yet, from this highly-favoured spot the flocks, one and all, are prone to stray, and at this season of the year

especially: so that a shepherd seldom knows where to find them.

Steward. Servitude is often found to be grievous, and the yoke of it is seldom easy long together: but it will not be long, at most, before we shall hear the soul-satisfying invitation of-" Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of the Lord!"

Shepherd. That sweetens all; and the frequent foretastes of it keep Hope and Expectation on their watch-tower. Pray, how comes Little Faith on? Has he taken his final leave of the sand-bank? And, are the hornets all dead, or all fled yet? Or is he like one of the old inhabitants of Canaan, still flying before them?

Steward. Little Faith is unstable, still, in all the ways, works, fights, acts and actings, of credence: for his felicity, after his last deliverance by a dream, lasted for some few weeks; at which time he went on cheerfully and comfortably, and therefore suspected that he never should experience in future, even a single frown from the King; and thought that there was hardly a labyrinth, maze, wilderness, ride, path, or walk, in all the royal territories, but he had travelled through, and was perfectly acquainted with-yea; and that he was so well read in all the laws and records of the realm, that it would be impossible for the most subtle Hagarene ever to beguile, seduce; or deceive him, again.

Shepherd. That is a bad sign. Little Faith has not properly considered the counsel and caution of wisdom: "Trust in the King with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding."

Steward. Excellent advice: but many of our young princes permit their zeal to carry them where credence will not keep

them company; and, as they do not tread their ground in faith, they are sure to have all that ground to go over again; for it is treading in the steps of the faith of the ancients that is to bring the Seed-royal to the promised throne and dignity. But, alas! poor Little Faith had heard of a certain orator being appointed to deliver an oration at Hagar's castle; and that he was a singular man; one that enforced all the laws of Zion; spoke the language, and defended the doctrines, of the Chapel-royal: that all his orations were delivered with well-tempered zeal, unaffected language was used, and undissembled loyalty appeared in every harangue.

Shepherd. That strumpet "hath cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Prov. vii. 26.

Steward. It is true: but caution is not sufficient; they must be made to feel it. Little Faith set off to make full proof of his wisdom and understanding. And, by what I can learn, the report that Little Faith had heard was in a great measure true: he heard the laws of Zion enforced, the language of the court spoken, and the doctrines of the Chapel-royal advanced: but, at the close, a secret DASH was given to the whole; but suddenly backed with such a stern look and zealous warning to all who were disloyal, that Little Faith was zealously affected; confusion began to operate on his mind; his consistent views of the mystery of faith, and the sweet harmony of Zion's laws in his soul, vanished; universal charity grasped his heart, and fleshly passions put him in motion to his fingers ends; till his deluded soul began to shake the wing, and hover over every reprobate in the tents of Kedar.

Shepherd. Universal Charity is a false name; it extends itself to all the Hagarenes, it is true, but not to the Seed-royal; much less to the King, and those who are in Paradise. Love to the

Hagarenes is always attended with rebellion against the King. Well may Wisdom counsel her children to keep their heart with all diligence; for, if the affections of the heart stray, every thought goes after them. It is with the affections as it is with a flock of sheep: drive one over the hedge, or through the ditch, and if there be a thousand behind every one will follow.

Steward. Little Faith found it so: his comforts, meditations, pleasing thoughts, and soul-satisfying promises, withdrew, and he began to look shy and cold upon all his brothers and sisters; and often shunned me, if he met me, as if he did not see me, or was too deep in thought to notice any one that passed him. But he did not deceive me so: for I knew where he was as well as he did, and therefore I was determined to try him. So, one day, as he was coming through the palace-gate, looking another way, as if he was determined not to notice me, I stopped him, and said unto him-" Shouldest thou help the disloyal, and love them that hate the King? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the King. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee; in that thou hast prepared thine heart to seek the King." 2 Chron. ix. 2, 3. He replied-" Hast thou found me?" I answered-" I have found thee, and, I suppose, I am become thine enemy, because I tell thee the truth? They zealously affect thee, but not well." I then turned on my heel, and left him with disdain.

Shepherd. Reproof is grievous to him that forsaketh the way.

Steward. Yet it is an excellent oil, that shall not break the head. Hence Wisdom's counsel, "Let thy garments be always white, and let thine head lack no ointment." And Little Faith found it an unction to him; for he went with his petitions to the King, but there was neither voice nor hearing; and, after he had gone sulky, and pouted about a week, he came creeping into the Steward's room again, "What!" said I, "have you got the heart-burn?" He said he had not. "What, then?-the belly-

ache?" He answered, "No." But, he said, there was another man, or something that could talk, that followed him perpetually, go wherever he would. If he said any thing of the King, that contradicted him; if he spoke good, that spoke evil; if he thought of the King, that put other thoughts into his mind; if he attempted to pray, that resisted him; if to read, that set him to gaping, or sleeping, or thinking of other things. If he ran, that ran. In short, it pulled against every thing he did, and contradicted all he said. He looked on the right hand, and on the left hand, behind him, and all around him, but he could see nothing, and yet he knew it was always there: he could hear him inwardly, and feel him, but could never see him. "And this," said he, "drives me almost to despair." And he breathed out another dying speech-" I shall go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death." Job, x. 21.

Shepherd. This is always the case, if the children of Zion go over to the old mount; it genders to bondage, and invigorates the old man; and, when fleshly passions are stirred up, "the motions of sins, which are by the law, do work in the members, to bring forth fruit unto death." Rom. vii. 5. The old man gets both his food and his fuel there. The flesh lusteth against the spirit; and the flesh finds no resistance by the spirit from that quarter, but rather encouragement, for sin takes occasion by the commandment: but the grace of God gives it no such occasion, but subdues it. Grace shall reign, and sin shall not have dominion over the subjects of grace.

Steward. It is either pride, ignorance, or a seducing spirit, that always leads them there. The liberties, privileges, and blessings of loyalty, were never known by any of the Hagarenes; nor shall an heir of promise ever enjoy these things while he affects them. These are the blessed effects of a warm attachment to the King and of a firm reliance upon his clemency. The old dispensation secures not these things; nor

does he that advances them know what he says, or whereof he affirms. It is the new dispensation that secures the Throne to the King's seed, and that for evermore.

Shepherd. It is true; and he that advances and maintains those things, may know assuredly what he says, and whereof he affirms. And it is clear that the old dispensation sets no such hope before us: that promises no throne, but the better covenant does. "The Lord has sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it: of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." That promise secures the eternal reign of the King. And the next verse reaches to all the King's seed: "If thy children will keep my Covenant and my Testimony, that I shall teach them, their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore," Psalm, cxxxii. 12.

Steward. It is clear that the inheritance is not of the law, for that had been in being long before the above promise was revealed. The throne is to be obtained by a covenant and a testimony that was to be taught in future: "If thy children will keep my COVENANT, and my TESTIMONY, that I SHALL teach them, they shall sit upon thy throne." The promise reaches both to the King and HIS SEED, Isa. lix. 21, and is handed down to us by the King himself: "And to him that overcometh [in the fight of credence] will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne," Rev. iii. 21.

Shepherd. He that fights the good fight, and keeps the faith, shall inherit the crown, and throne too, let the Hagarenes say what they will. Pray, how is Little Faith now? Does the strange man follow him? Does he pull him back still? And contradict all that he says still, according to his former complaint?

Steward. No; he seems to have got rid of him for the present; and he, poor little fellow! vainly supposes that he is gone for ever: he says, "he hopes that he is dead."

Shepherd. Little Faith is right enough. He hath been arraigned, condemned, crucified, and buried: nevertheless, he exists still; yea, he lives, and will pursue, hinder, gainsay, and resist Little Faith at times, as long as he remains in the lowland palace, let him continue in it as long as he may. Pray, how did he get rid of the strange man?

Steward. It was by a dream, as he told me. He one night dreamed that he saw a narrow road lead right through the terraqueous globe; and the end of it reached to the eastern part of the world, at the extremity of which stood a ghastly phantom, with a barbed dart in his hand; and on the other side of the spectre appeared a brilliant crown suspended from under the portals of Paradise. Some parts of this road seemed to be very rough, others very crooked. On some parts there were insurmountable hills; on others, valleys altogether as deep. Some parts, again, were very stony; and others were covered with blocks of wood. On this road, too, he perceived numbers of men employed: some were endeavouring to make the crooked parts straight, others the rough places plain; some were casting up the road, in order to make the middle thereof lie round; others were taking up the stumbling-blocks out of the way; some were making high heaps of stones, others were fixing landmarks, and others were lifting up standards. Some were endeavouring to lower the hills, others to raise the valleys. And here and there one was fixing hand-posts; and upon every hand-post there was a different inscription written. One read-" Refuge! refuge!" Another-" So run, that you may obtain." Another after this manner-" Set thine heart to the highway." Another bore this inscription-" Ponder the path of thy feet, and let thine eyes look right before thee." Another-"Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left." And the last that he read was this-"Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, neither tarry in all the plain."

Shepherd. A singular dream, full of wholesome instruction. Wisdom says-"A dream cometh through a multitude of business, as a fool's voice is known by a multitude of words." But such dreams as these come from another quarter.

Steward. They do, and so Little Faith found it. But, to proceed. He told me that he saw a beam of light run through the whole path; and it seemed to shine more and more as it drew towards the eastern point. This ray, he said, appeared to him to cast a light right on the middle or crown of the road. And he saw several people walking thereon: here and there, one was right under this shining light, and they seemed, at times, to go on cheerfully; others were foundering among the stumbling blocks, while others were endeavouring to take them out of their way. Some were clambering up the hills, others, with the greatest difficulty, were descending into the valleys; while some were perplexed in the crooked parts of the road, and the souls of others were much discouraged because of [the roughness of] the way. Among the numbers on this path Little Faith saw one travel very slowly on; and to him he appeared to have fetters about his feet, which he dragged at his heels; and presently he perceived him to stumble; but a hand, hardly perceptible, caught hold of him, and helped him up; at which he cried out-"When my feet slipped, thy mercy, O Lord! helped me up." But, what surprised Little Faith most, was, that his fetters were not taken off; and yet the man went on, and in a holy triumph said-"Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?" Psalm, xlix. 5.

Shepherd. And pray, was this dream attended with a comforting power, so as to deliver Little Faith from the strange man? Or, how did he get rid of him?

Steward. I will tell you what it was that was made a blessing to Little Faith, if you will hear me patiently. Among all the

travellers that he saw on this road, he perceived one who seemed to outrun all the rest, and he kept right under the light in the middle of the way. He had not looked long on that man, before he perceived him descend into a deep valley, so that he lost sight of him. Little Faith fixed his eyes on the next rising hill, expecting him every minute to ascend that, as he seemed to be so swift of foot: but it was a long time before he began to ascend the hill; and, when he did, he appeared to be so burdened, that he could scarcely move. He looked to see what the load was that he carried; and, to the best of his discernment, it was the body of a dead man that he had got, which appeared to be made fast to his neck, to his shoulders and to his waist. He could just move under his load, and that was all; and yet seemed very eager to get on; but, when he found that he could not get forward, he rested upon his staff, and fetched a bitter sigh, as if he would have broke his heart, and cried out-"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii. 24.

Shepherd. One would have thought that that man had been a Roman malefactor, who had been guilty of murder, and so was condemned to carry the body that fell a victim to his cruelty till he perished with it; for I have been informed that such a law was once (if not now) in force among the Romans.

Steward. I know nothing of Romish laws; but this was the case with the poor man whom Little Faith saw in his dream, as he told me. But that which puzzled Little Faith most was, that he saw the man whom he thought to be dead move, and at times struggle, as the other man carried him along.

Shepherd. If he moved and struggled, there must be life; for if he was, in the strictest sense, dead, there could be no motion in him.

Steward. Very true. However he did struggle hard, as Little Faith told me: and all his struggling was, as he thought, to get

back again from whence he came; for the face of the dead man was towards the west, while the face of him that carried him was towards the east. And, notwithstanding the heavy load, and the struggling and kicking of the dead man, the other still kept his face to the eastern point, without ever looking behind him, or even to the right hand or to the left, as he went. And sometimes he seemed so earnest to get on, that Little Faith told me he could compare him to nothing but a bird, with a stone tied to its foot, spreading the wing, and fluttering for flight, earnest for its own element while the stone confined it to the earth. That which seemed for a while to perplex Little Faith was, how a corpse should move: but he was presently relieved from that perplexity, by discerning a most ghastly figure, all over black, with wings on his back, a dart in his hand, and a barbed tail behind; who fled up to the dead man, breathed into him, and animated him with fresh strength and vigour; which made him struggle with so much strength and violence, that it was difficult to tell which gained ground, the living man or the dead one. From hence Little Faith perceived that the motion and vigour of the dead man were communicated by that ghastly monster, but he wist not what to call him.

Shepherd. This is a singular dream; and, I suppose that the dead man would soon have ceased to struggle, had not the other animated him.

Steward. So Little Faith said; for, when he first breathed on him, he kicked and hung till the other gained no ground, but seemed weary, and quite out of breath; therefore he rested upon his staff, and repeated his former cry-"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He had no sooner uttered his lamentable complaint, than Little Faith saw a most glorious form descend from the upper regions by the way of the east, and come to the living man that carried the dead one, and breathe upon him; which so

animated him, that he cried out, in a heavenly rapture, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." Phil. iv. 13. "I am strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness." Coloss. i. 11. And, as soon as he had uttered these expressions, he put his staff under his arm, off he set, and up the hill he went; and all the time he was going up the hill, the dead man hardly moved either hand or foot.

Shepherd. The life of the one seems to be the death of the other: for when the black, ugly figure, animated the dead man, the living one halted; but, when the shining form breathed on the living man, the other seemed motionless.

Steward. So it seemed to Little Faith. But, just as the living man gained the summit of the hill, he saw the ugly beast with wings and tail come again to the dead man, open his bosom, and write in dark, gloomy characters, or revive a kind of law, which was not legible enough for Little Faith to make it all out; but what little he could discern seemed to be of a rebellious and destructive nature; worse, if possible, than either the laws of Mahomet, or of the Brahmins. He then closed his bosom, breathed on him afresh, and departed; and then (if possible) the dead man plunged and kicked worse than ever he had done before, insomuch that Little Faith could not tell which would be master. Sometimes one seemed to have the advantage, and sometimes the other. At last, the living man took his staff from under his arm, fixed it before him, and leaned all his weight upon it; and so stood his ground, but could not get one step forward. And presently he poured out this complaint-"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." Rom. vii. 23. As soon as he had uttered that complaint, he fixed his eyes on a large rock that projected from the side of the road, and laboured hard to get at it, the dead man kicking and struggling with all his might to hinder

him. Nevertheless, he got hold of the rock, and there he hung, trembling at every joint, saying "I was pressed above measure, and despaired even of life. Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Shepherd. I suppose the dead man ceased to struggle while he held fast by the rock; for that rock is a rock of offence to the dead, and what is an offence is often shunned.

Steward. Little Faith said that, if it were possible, the dead man struggled harder than ever he had done before; that, if possible, he seemed determined to pull him from the rock. But presently he saw the same shining form come again to the living man; and, at his approach, he opened his bosom; while the shining form put forth his finger, and wrote, or revived, something on his breast, in brilliant characters, which he could not read for the glory that appeared on them. After this, he breathed on the living man again, which animated him afresh; so that he set off with more alacrity than ever, fixing his eyes on the crown that hung under the portals of Paradise, and saying-"I thank God, through Christ Jesus our Lord. So, then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin," Rom. vii. 25. But, he had not gone far, before the black beast came again to the dead man, breathed on him afresh, and wrote on his forehead the name of Blasphemy, Rev. xiii. 1. After this, he seemed still more desperate and rebellious than ever: however, the other still lugged him on; he could neither throw him down nor pull him back; and presently the shining form appeared again, and wrote the word ADOPTION on the forehead of the living man, saying, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar; and I will write upon him my NEW NAME," Rev. iii. 12; and then departed. At which the living man, in an holy triumph, said-"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, distress, peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors,

through him that hath loved us. For I am persuaded that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor thing to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. viii. 37, 38, 39.

Shepherd. O the superabounding clemency of the King! who succours the tempted, and shields and defends the immortal principle that himself hath implanted, that the living, the living may praise him! How sweetly must the living man go on after this!

Steward. He did, as it was exhibited to Little Faith: for he saw him ascend the following hill as if he had nothing to carry; but, as soon as he came upon a long plain, which seemed to be even ground for a very great distance, he appeared to slacken his pace; and, to the best of Little Faith's view of things, the road was very rough, and the man was so perplexed with entanglements, that he did not seem to gain any ground at all, but kept going cross and cross the road, in order to shun some evils, as if that place was beset with snares, gins, and traps. In short, he seemed to be in worse perils than ever he had been before: the dead man began to plunge again; and the ugly figure that appeared before came a fourth time, and shot three fiery darts at the living man; but every one missed him, and hit the dead one, which enflamed him with a desperate rage, insomuch that the living man could not get on, but rested on his staff, as before, saying, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! and it setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell," James, iii. 5, 6, 7. All the motion, at this time, seemed to be in the dead man: the living one had nothing but difficulties before him; he eyed the crown at the end of his race; and put forth his hand, as if he caught at it; nevertheless, he could not get on, but cried out-"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God

in Christ Jesus-forgetting those things which are behind, and REACHING forth unto those things which are before." Phil. iii. 13, 14.

Shepherd. It appears a little fire, indeed; but, when set on fire of hell, it blazes with a witness! At such a time he might reach out his hand, and press forward, but could gain very little ground; yea, it is good work if a man can keep, and not lose ground.

Steward. It is so. However, the shining form appeared to the living man again, as he was striving to move on by the help of his staff; and he opened his bosom, and breathed sparks of fire into his breast; and then he whispered in his ear, bid him go forward, and departed. The man leaped like a roe, and cried out, "My soul melteth, Psalm, cxix. 28; yea, my heart burned within me while be communed with me by the way." Upon this Little Faith awoke, and his sleep was sweet unto him.

Shepherd. And it was this dream that frightened Little Faith's strange man away: was it?

Steward. Yes: this, he said, had driven him away; for, when he awoke, he was filled with joy; nor could he either hear him speak or feel him work, and he hoped that he never should again.

Shepherd. If he never does, it is plain that he will have better success than the living man had whom he saw on the King's highway; for he seemed to be joyful if the dead man ceased to struggle only for a little time. Little Faith never saw the dead man taken from the other's back; so that he could not draw such a conclusion from any thing exhibited to him in the dream: his inference, therefore, is groundless; and so Little Faith will find it.

Steward. I shall leave Little Faith to find these things out by his feelings, as he goes on. I do not love to set a number of difficulties before him, to damp his joys. What surprised me most was, that Little Faith did not see a cross upon the back of the dead man; for the old man was crucified, and he is nailed to the cross to this day; so that he cannot ascend the throne, to reign over the living man; and, the more he struggles for mastery, the more the nails gall him.

Shepherd. But why is he called a dead man?

Steward. He goes by various names; such as Corruption, that cannot inherit incorruption; he is called Flesh, because the poor body is called upon to gratify his brutal desires: he is called Sin, that dwelleth in us; the Old Man, that is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: the travelling, or Wayfaring Man, that eat the poor man's ewe-lamb that lay in his bosom, 2 Sam. xii. 4; the Body of Sin, Rom. vi. 6; being a law, a mystery of evil, a body of iniquity: so that he is neither the body nor the soul of the living man, but the body of sin, that cleaves to both. This old man, or this body of sin, was imputed to our great Surety, who undertook our cause, and engaged to discharge our debts; and was condemned when the sentence was passed upon him. Jehovah sent his own Son in the "likeness of sinful flesh; and for sin, [that we had committed] condemned sin in the flesh" of him, Rom. viii. 3. First, here is the Surety in our nature, in the likeness of sinful flesh, with our burden on him, which he bore in his own body. Next is the sentence, Condemned sin in the flesh. Thirdly, here is his execution. The "old man is crucified," Rom. vi. 6. And, fourthly, his destruction, That the body of sin might be destroyed. On account of the above cited imputation, sentence, execution, and destruction, in the Surety's flesh, he is emphatically called, by the living man, "a body of death." "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii. 24.

Shepherd. I thank you, Sir, for your instruction, I perceive clearly that this dead man is neither the body nor the soul of the living man, but sin that dwells in both; consequently, he must be an enemy to the King, to his clemency, to his seed; yea, an enemy to the King, and to the bodies and souls of all the Royal Family. Nor has that old man any real friend in all the lowland palace, nor in the celestial realms; but only in the usurped empire of that ugly monster who appeared with wings in the dream of Little Faith, who is called "the Prince of the power of the air," because he flies about in the air.

Steward. What you have said is true: and certain it is that that dead man, under the animating power of that black monster, has done, and is justly charged with, all the evils that have ever been done in the Palace-royal; for the Royal Seed would never offend his Majesty in thought, word, or deed, if that villain, and the other that helps him, would let them alone. This the King knows, and therefore he hath blessed them; and unto them He will not impute SIN, Rom. iv. 8; for "it is not they that do evil, but SIN that dwelleth in them," Rom. vii. 17. "The Royal Seed would do good; to will [good] is present with them; they delight in the law after the inner man, and with the mind they serve the law, but not in the oldness of the letter. The body is the King's temple; the soul his resting-place, his delight, and his chief treasure; and both are consecrated to his service: therefore they neither obey the dead man, nor the ugly monster. It is captivity, not obedience, Rom. vii. 23; for they all long, struggle, cry, and pray, to be exactly like the King, in feature, purity, and holiness; and it is that dead man pulling against them that is the sole cause of all their trouble and misery."

Shepherd. This appeared plain in the dream exhibited to Little Faith: for, when the dead man lay still, the living man was like one upon the wing; but, whenever the dead man got fresh vigour, and began to struggle and pull against him, then the

other groaned, and cried for help. Therefore it is plain that, when he resisted the dead man, and him that helped him, he shewed his valour for the King; and by his unutterable triumphs, whenever the King appeared to strengthen him, he shewed his unfeigned loyalty; and proved by ocular demonstration whose son, servant, and subject, he was.

Steward. The Royal Seed are wholly at the King's service, and devoted thereunto. All and every thing belonging to them is engaged in seeking his glory, except that dead man: for, when the understanding is enlightened to see the King, the will, under a divine power, bows to him, and makes choice of him. The understanding works into the King's mind, will, and pleasure; and commits all his discoveries to the judgment, to be considered and examined, and so to be approved or rejected according to the judgment of right and wrong; while a jury of thoughts attend the court of conscience, to know his mind, whose sentence fixes it, that he may receive no damage. The mind labours to get above and out of the noise of the world, and that life and peace may be enjoyed by minding heavenly things. What the understanding discovers to be suitable, if upon judgment made it be found to be so, then, if conscience acquiesce, the will chooses, or makes his choice; and what the will chooses, the affections love. Thus, under the influence of the Spirit of clemency, the whole soul becomes loyal. The body, also, becomes a temple of the King, in which he dwells; and it bears his name, and his treasure. The feet willingly move in his ways; the hands work for the support of the tabernacle; the eyes pore on the records; the ear attends to the joyful sound made by his heralds; while the mouth speaks forth his praises, his mighty acts, and wonderful works. In short, every member becomes a servant to righteousness, Rom. vi. 9, There is nothing that stands out against the King but that dead or old man, and that wicked king that helps him, who will never be gained over to the King's party; nor will either of them ever become loyal, for the

old man has neither fear nor feeling, and the other is quite desperate.

Shepherd. And it appears by Little Faith's dream, that the old man has got a law contrary to all laws, for it "wars against the law of the mind."

Steward. It does. That ugly figure stirs up and works in the old man, to blind the understanding, to influence the will with stubbornness, the mind with infidelity and vanity, the judgment with confusion, the conscience with insensibility, and to make the affections inordinate. He labours to make the feet go the wrong way, to defile the hands, to charm the ears with instrumental and false sounds, to make the eyes look on vain objects, and the mouth to utter perverse things. And thus is the old man stirred up by that ugly figure, who infuses his old leaven in him, in order, if possible, to leaven the whole lump; and is therefore justly styled MAN, because he works in every part of man, yea, in every faculty of the soul; and labours to employ every member of the body in the service of sin, which is himself, he being expressly called a body of sin. He is called the old man also, because of his antiquity: he is the oldest man upon earth, and almost as old as the world. He is corrupt, his law is a system of villainy, his deeds are evil, and he is pregnant with nothing but deceit and mischief. He will never be changed, mended, nor made better. He has been arraigned, tried, condemned, crucified, dead, and buried, and yet exists; and is to be denied, resisted, mortified, and put off daily, and every day. And this is Little Faith's strange man; and the body of death that follows, and plagues every living man in the lowland palace, whether he be soldier, servant, or son.

Shepherd. This old man bears the worst character of any that I ever heard of. Loyalists and rebels both fear and tremble. The dog smut trembles before the Chief Shepherd: but this

man neither feels, fears, nor trembles; neither King nor Judge ever put him into a panic.

Steward. He is void of all fear and feeling, indeed; and is a most desperate enemy to every one that favours the King. But I must withdraw, otherwise I shall bring myself into trouble. My interviews with you are somewhat like Jacob's apprenticeship, when he served seven years for a wife; which, according to the ancient Records, seemed but a day, for the love that he had unto her.

Shepherd. I did not think that it was so late as it really is. I do not like to over-stay my time; for, when I am obliged to hurry back to my business, and can hardly get there in time, it is apt to make me fretful and peevish; and, when that is the case, I am sure to be stripped of all comfort, and unfitted for meditation.

Steward. Very true. Well, the first opportunity I have, I will call on you at your little hut.

Shepherd. At which place I shall be glad to see you. You know my leisure hours.

Steward. O yes. Till then, peace and prosperity be with you.

Shepherd. The same be with you.

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Eleventh.

Steward. So, I have found you in your little rural hut. You have been perusing the MOTHER of all good books, I perceive.

Shepherd. I have: and a blessed mother she is! for she hath afforded me many a choice dish of meat, many a sweet morsel of bread, many a drop of honey, many a flagon of wine, and many a draught of milk. Indeed, I have often got entertainment there, when I could get it no where else.

Steward. But that choice mother has got a mysterious way of concealing her rich dainties at times.

Shepherd. True. The Master keeps the seal of all her secrets, and the key of all her stores. Nor are any admitted to her cellar, breasts, springs, or stores, but real friends: "Eat, O friends! drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved" Cant. v. 1.

Steward. No: "The servant knows not what his Lord doth. But I have called you friends, [saith the King] for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you," John, xv. 15. Hence it appears, that none but friends are in the secret, and they that are in the secret are sure to be friends.

Shepherd. I have sometimes thought, that a nation must be truly blessed, if it were governed by no other laws than those of that blessed book. It is so complete a system, that nothing can be added to it or taken from it. It contains every thing needful to be known and done. It affords a copy for a king, Deut. xvii. 18, and a rule for a subject. It gives instruction and counsel to a senate, authority and direction for a magistrate. It cautions a witness, requires an impartial verdict of a jury, and furnishes the judge with his sentence. It sets the husband as lord of the household, and the wife as mistress of the table: tells him how to rule, and her how to manage. It entails honour to parents, and enjoins obedience to children. It prescribes and limits the sway of the sovereign, the rule of the ruler, and the authority of the master, commands the subject to honour, and the servant to obey; and promises the blessing and protection of its Author to all who walk by its rules. It gives directions for weddings, and for burials; regulates feasts and

fasts, mournings and rejoicings; and orders labour for the day, and rest for the night. It promises food and raiment, and limits the use of both. It points out a faithful and an eternal Guardian to the departing husband and father; tells him with whom to leave his fatherless children, and in whom his widow is to trust, Jer. xlix. ii; and promises a father to the former, and a husband to the latter. It teaches a man how to set his house in order, and how to make his will. It appoints a dowry for the wife, entails the right of the first-born, and shews how the younger branches shall be left: it defends the rights of all; and reveals vengeance to every defrauder, over-reacher, or oppressor. It is the first book, the best book, and the oldest book in all the world. It contains the choicest matter, gives the best instruction, and affords the greatest pleasure and satisfaction, that ever was revealed. It contains the best laws and profoundest mysteries that ever were penned. It brings the best of tidings, and affords the best of comfort, to the inquiring and disconsolate. It exhibits life and immortality from everlasting, and shews the way to eternal glory. It is a brief recital of all that is passed, and a certain prediction of all that is to come. It settles all matters in debate, resolves all doubts, and eases the mind and conscience of all their scruples. It reveals the only living and true God, and shews the way to him: it sets aside all other gods, and describes the vanity of them, and of all that trust in them. In short, it is a book of law, to shew right and wrong; a book of wisdom, that condemns all folly, and makes the foolish wise: a book of truth, that detects all lies, and confutes all errors; and a book of life, that gives life, and shews the way from everlasting death. It is the most compendious book in all the world; the most ancient, authentic, and the most entertaining history, that ever was published. It contains the most ancient antiquities, strange events, wonderful occurrences, heroic deeds, and unparalleled wars. It describes the celestial, terrestrial, and infernal worlds; and the origin of the angelic myriads, human tribes, and devilish legions. It will instruct the most

accomplished mechanic, and the profoundest artist; it will teach the best rhetorician, and exercise every power of the most skilful arithmetician, Rev. xiii. 18; puzzle the wisest anatomist, and exercise the nicest critic. It corrects the vain philosopher, and confutes the wise astronomer; it exposes the subtle sophist, and makes diviners mad. It is a complete code of laws, a perfect body of divinity, an unequalled narrative, a book of lives, a book of travels, and a book of voyages. It is the best covenant that ever was agreed on, the best deed that ever was sealed, the best evidence that ever was produced, the best will that ever was made, and the best testament that ever was signed to understand it, is to be wise indeed; to be ignorant of it, is to be destitute of wisdom. It is the King's best copy, the magistrate's best rule, the housewife's best guide, the servant's best directory, and the young man's best companion. It is the schoolboy's spelling-book, and the learned man's masterpiece. It contains a choice grammar for a novice, and a profound mystery for a sage. It is the ignorant man's dictionary, and the wise man's directory. It affords knowledge of witty inventions for the humorous, and dark sayings for the grave; and is its own interpreter. It encourages the wise, the warrior the swift, and the overcomer; and promises an eternal reward to the excellent, the conqueror, the winner, and the prevalent. And that which crowns all is, that the Author is without partiality, and without hypocrisy; in whom is no variableness, or shadow of turning.

Steward. It is plain that you have got choice entertainment from it, otherwise you would never have dived so deeply into the mysteries of it as you have; and, consequently, would not have been able to give so good a description of it. I have, at times, perused it till I have thought myself in company with all the inhabitants of Paradise. It is Little Faith's choice breast, and the strong man's substantial dish. It is the lady's best looking-glass, 2 Cor. iii. 18, in which she may see both her heart and her face, and the face and heart of every body else.

It is an exact balance, in which a man may weigh both his spirit and his actions; and tell the exact weight of himself, and of all mankind, Psalm, lxii. 9 It is the astronomer's best telescope, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; in which he may see the sun, Mal. iv. 2; moon, Cant. vi. 10; and seven stars, Rev. ii. 1; and an awful eclipse to the damned; and it reveals a world of which no geographer could ever give a map; and a way to it which no lion hath ever trod, and which the vulture's eye hath never seen.

Shepherd. True: and the best of all is, that it promises freedom indeed to all who embrace the truths of it; freedom from the reign of Sin, of Satan, and of Death: and, except a man receive the truth, the real truth, and that in the love of it, he never shall be able to govern himself, or to bridle his temper, his passions, his tongue, or his sin! Pray, how comes poor Little Faith on now? Is his old man dead and motionless still? or, is he come to life again?

Steward. Little Faith is now in a worse predicament (according to his own account) than ever he has been in since he was pressed in the gate.

Shepherd. Worse and worse! Pray, what dreadful disaster hath befallen poor Little Faith now? Is he free among the dead, or bound among the damned?

Steward. Neither; nor is he under any legal sentence, either of death or banishment, but what comes from himself. If he has one hornet about him (he says) he believes he has a thousand: and, as for the King he turns a deaf ear to all his petitions; nor does he deign, in Little Faith's worst perils, even to shew his face. His strange man is more violent than ever: he resists him in every good work, contradicts every good word, and mingles his baseness with every good thought. He labours to make him proud, light, and vain, in his days of prosperity; and to make him despair, or despond, in days of

adversity. In short, he breaks his purposes, mars his counsels, and shakes his best resolutions: he interferes with all his motives, tries to pervert his best aims, and to make him fail of the best of ends; and, in brief, he doth really believe, that the same ugly figure that animated the corpse that the good man carried on the King's highway (as exhibited to him in the dream), has now left that man, and brought the same dead man, together with all his infernal assistants to him. This is his present state: and he declared to me, that he only wished that this might be the worst; but he believed that the worst was yet to come, and that his state would never be better.

Shepherd. Then the destiny of Little Faith is to be as dreadful as the fate of Cain, and his conflicts more durable than the siege of Troy!

Steward. He will tell you so, if you can believe all that he says upon this head. For my own part, I do not believe a word of it; nor does he believe it himself, either in heart or in conscience, for they both give him the lie to his face: yea, they give the lie to every outcry of his infidelity; insomuch, that Little Faith cannot mutter his dreadful complaint before any of the Seed-royal without the assistance of him who is hardened from all fear, and desperate in every enterprise.

Shepherd. Little Faith, among the King's seed, is like a sheep that has got the foot-rot. You may pare the hoof, poultice it, supple it, bind it, or do what you will to it; the disease will puzzle your best skill; and, at times, the poor creature will limp in its walk after you have done your utmost.

Steward. That may be; but Little Faith has got one circumstance that renders his case desperate beyond description (according to his own account) which is this. There is one of the King's seed whose name is Doubtful: and indeed he is rightly named; for, at times, he doubts of every thing-

Even whether there be a King or no? Whether he has a Father or not? Whether himself be a creature of a day, or one that had a being from eternity? Whether the records of Zion be true or false? Whether it be the word of God or the fables of men? Whether his feelings be real or delusive? And, whether the Seed-royal will end in eternal bliss, or in annihilation? This feeble one Little Faith took upon himself to nurse, instruct, and establish; and he hath been so assiduous in the work, that he has brought his brother on so far, that he is in the same dilemma as the hedge-sparrow, which being deprived of its own eggs by the cuckoo, and left to hatch one of hers instead of its own, which it brought forth and fostered, till becoming too ravenous for the step-dame to provide for it, dragged its foster-mother into the nest, and made its last meal of its benefactor.

Shepherd. It is common for a mechanic to instruct an apprentice till he becomes the best workman, and sinks his master's credit, if not his name.

Steward. True: but that which added to the trouble of Little Faith was, that poor Doubtful had been rather delirious for several days together; during which time Little Faith had paid all possible attention to him, and indeed began to despair of his brother's recovery. And at this time Little Faith himself was sadly pestered with his strange man: the hornets also were very busy with him; which was no small grief of mind to him, as he could not attend upon his brother without a sad countenance. However, Little Faith opened his mind freely to Doubtful, in order, if possible, to keep him from sinking. The last night that he attended him, he laboured hard to comfort him, and wrestled mightily with the King for him: and the next morning, when Little Faith went to see him, he found him setting up in the bed, with the high praises of God in his mouth, making such melody as Little Faith never had heard, and he appeared in such raptures as he had never seen. He

declared that he had been with the King all night; that he had seen things which he could never describe, and heard such things as he could not relate.

Shepherd. Then, I suppose, Little Faith warmed his heart by his brother's fire, and partook of his banquet; for, whenever the King restores, or raises up, a sick child, he generally requites those who have nursed and sympathized with him in his illness: "I will restore comforts unto HIM, and to his MOURNERS," Isa. lvii. 18.

Steward. Whether it was for the trial of Little Faith, or for some other purpose, I cannot tell: however, it was not so here, but quite the reverse; for, as soon as Little Faith saw the heavenly countenance of his brother, and heard his holy triumph, his heart sunk within him, his countenance appeared ghastly, and he became as a dumb man in whose mouth were no triumphs, his brother called upon him to rejoice with him, and bless the King in his behalf; but, the more he urged him, the more he confounded him; till he was obliged to withdraw in the bitterness of his soul. His sensation he said, at that time, were such as influenced Haman, when he covered his head, and hastened to his house, mourning, after the honour done to Mordecai; or such as influenced Saul, when he pursued David to Ramah. To be short, he told me that he did believe he was possessed.

Shepherd. The operations of a spirit of jealousy, and the sensations produced by it, are not much unlike those that will be felt by the damned at the day of doom, when they will see the Lamb's Wife (the object of their eternal hate) in all their glory; and themselves in all their guilt and filth, exposed to "everlasting shame and contempt," Dan. xii. 12. Jealousy is a spirit that swallows up all peace and comfort, and the flame of it is as fierce as coals of juniper. "Jealousy is cruel as the

grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." Cant. viii. 6.

Steward. The wise man was well acquainted with the great heat of that strange fire; for, when he provoked the MOST HIGH to jealousy, by building a temple for Chemosh and Molech, and went after Ashtoreth and Milcom, 1 Kings, xi. 5, 7, JEHOVAH sent Ahijah to Jeroboam, saying-"I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee," verse 31. "Because they have forsaken me, and worshipped Ashtoroth, Chemosh, and Milcom," verse 33. And I will take thee, [Jeroboam] and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel," verse 37, "And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that which is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David; and will give Israel unto thee. And I will for this afflict the seed of David, BUT NOT FOR EVER," ver. 38, 89. "Solomon sought therefore to KILL Jeroboam; and Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak, King of Egypt; and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon," ver. 40. Jealousy burned with a vehement flame, indeed, in the wise man!-and no marvel; for he had provoked the Lord to jealousy by that which was not God, and the Lord provoked him to jealousy by one that was no king. However, the seed of David shall not be afflicted for ever.

Shepherd. It is a terrible thing to provoke the King to jealousy with strange gods, or with any thing else. He cannot endure the provoking of his sons and daughters, Deut. xxxii. 16, 19; nor will he pass by such carriage without resenting it.

Steward. Little Faith had provoked the King by his warm attachment to the Hagarenes; and he is now provoked to jealousy by the King's tender affection to his brother Doubtful,

who is allowed on all hands to be the weakest and most ricketty of all the King's seed. And to be overtopped and outstripped by such an one is very mortifying to Little Faith; and to be kept straitened and bound in the spirit to such a degree, as to look and tremble like a criminal before his rapturous brother, hath given his mind such a wound, that he doubts whether it will ever be healed. Yea, he declared, that he wished he had never nursed him at all; but said, that he thought he was got far enough before him, and wished to follow him along after him; but never once thought that he would have been delivered in such a wonderful manner as that; and that himself should have been struck with horror at the sight thereof.

Shepherd. It is a fiery trial, and one of the strange things that happen to the King's seed. The children of the King take after their royal Father, one of whose names is Jealous, Exod. xxxiv. 14. And, for my own part, I should not have wondered if Little Faith had gone sick to bed. His mother once got a company of young damsels about her; before whom she set off the incomparable beauty and excellency of her Husband to such a degree, Cant. v. ver. 10, and downward, that they sought him, and found him. And, when he wooed and espoused them, she fainted, and went love-sick to bed: "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem! that, if ye find my Beloved, ye tell him I am sick of love!" 1957 Cant. v. 8. When the Lord smote Uzzah for staying the ark with an arm of flesh, David was displeased; and would not remove the ark into his own city, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom: but, when tidings came to David that God had blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that appertained unto him, for the ark's sake, David fetched it away, and carried it into his own city, 2 Sam. vi. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. The young princes and princesses are tender over their little brethren and sisters, and very fond of nursing them, and helping them in the King's presence; but, when their nurslings appear to be more

indulged than themselves; if these are permitted to dwell in the presence-chamber, while themselves are shut out, then it is terrible!

Steward. So Little Faith finds it. He said, he could have found in his heart to have scolded with his brother, till he had offended him, put him out of temper, and stripped him of all his comforts: yea, he thought that he found a hatred to him, and was secretly displeased at his happiness; yea, and entertained mean thoughts even of the King's faithfulness and truth, because himself was deserted, while Doubtful was thus indulged. "And is not this," said he, "the unpardonable sin? Is it not sinning against knowledge, conviction, light, and love? Is it not doing despite to the Spirit of grace, and resisting the King's will? I have nursed others, and I myself shall become a castaway!"

Shepherd. A sincere lover, captured, and lying at the mercy of the captor, cannot endure a forbidding frown from him. Little Faith loves the King, and therefore cannot bear to hear the triumphs of Doubtful while himself is dumb: and no wonder; for, according to your account, the King's name is Jealous; the Queen is noted for jealousy; and, therefore, the children take after them both.

Steward. That is true enough: there is not only a family likeness on children with respect to features, but the children inherit a good deal of the parents' spirit, temper, and disposition. And sure I am that Little Faith has his share, at present, of raging jealousy; for he declared to me that Cain never envied his brother Abel more than he envied the happiness of his brother Doubtful.-"And where this will end," says he, "I know not."

Shepherd. There is a deal of difference between the envy of Cain and that of Little Faith. Little Faith has enjoyed the King's presence, and a sense of his love; which Cain never did. Cain

expected the approbation of the King, and acceptance with him, on the footing of merit; while Little Faith loathes himself in his own sight for his misdemeanours. Cain was an infidel, Little Faith is a believer. Cain was a servant, Little Faith is a son. Cain's envy sprang from pride, self-will, and perverseness; Little Faith's envy springs from love-sickness, having lost the enjoyment of the King's face, and left his first love. Cain was enraged because he could not find acceptance by his supposed worth, Little Faith's raging jealousy springs from loss of what he never deserved. Cain hated the King, Little Faith loves him. Cain wanted to bow the King to his humour; Little Faith to lie passive, and to enjoy his Sovereign. Cain's rage is common to an irreconcilable enemy; Little Faith's is common to an unfeigned lover.

Steward. The loyalty and affection of Little Faith are obvious enough to every person of discernment, though they may not appear so to himself; for a person confused and bewildered in a fiery trial cannot make a proper judgment of any thing. And never was Little Faith more puzzled and perplexed than he is at present: he declares that his feelings have been more distressing, under this envying his brother's happiness, than ever they were in the sand-bank, or when pursued by the hornets, or even in the jaws of Lion.

Shepherd. I must withdraw. I am going to fold a fresh piece of land, which lies in ridges, Psalm, lxx. 10, and therefore the harrow must be run over it before I can pitch the fold there. otherwise I shall have many of the sheep in the furrows before morning.

Steward. In the furrows! What do you mean by that?

Shepherd. When we fold a piece that is ploughed in ridges, we run the harrow over it, in order to till the furrows, and level it a little: and, when the sheep be in a piece of stubble that lies in ridges, I am obliged to attend closely; for if a sheep lies

down near to a furrow, and happens to roll on its back into it, it cannot get up again, but would lie and perish if the shepherd did not lift it up: "Woe be to him that is alone when he falleth, for there is not another to lift him up."

Steward. And, pray, did you ever find any fallen in that manner?

Shepherd. O yes, often. It is very common for sheep to get in the furrows. But, it is worse for the ewes great with young: they frequently get into them; and, if they get furrow-laid, they are the most helpless of any, for they have little power to struggle; and, if they do, they only hurt themselves, for they are sure never to get up unless they are lifted up; nor can they go, when up, without the hand of him who "gently leads those that are with young." On which accounts I never care to be absent from the flock long together, unless they are upon plain ground.

Steward. You are the best judge of your own business. Let not my regard for your company and conversation bring your mind into bondage. When opportunity offers, be so kind as to call on me at the Palace-royal, and let it be when it is most convenient to you. Farewell: and I hope you will find the flock under the tender care of the Chief Shepherd, who hath promised that they shall feed in green pastures, and lie down in safety.

Shepherd. I thank you for your good wishes: and hope you will find the royal fraternity in prosperity also; and Little Faith recovered from his flaming jealousy, according to the ancient promise-"I will bring the third part through the fire; and I will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried. They shall call upon my name, and I will hear them: and I will say, 'It is my people;' and they shall say, 'The Lord is my God.'" Zech xiii. 9.

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Twelfth

Steward. Good morning to you, Shepherd! You are welcome to the Palace-royal.

Shepherd. I believe so, otherwise you would not have invited me; nor should I have found my heart inclined to come. A subject who is truly loyal may approach the palace without shame, fear, or a fallen countenance; which a hypocrite cannot do.

Steward. True. I have been almost impatient for your coming, Shepherd. It is now six weeks since I left you at the hut. I was looking out at one of the upper windows when you came over the hill Mizar: I knew it was you by your garb, your step, and your crook; and I thought of the ancient saying of Zion, "How beautiful, upon the mountains, are the feet of him that publisheth peace!"-and so are the feet of them that know peace.

Shepherd. If there is any thing beautiful, comely, or amiable, about me, it is all derived from the Perfection of Beauty; for, by nature, I was altogether unsightly, deformed, and loathsome: therefore, by sovereign clemency, I am what I am.

Steward. I am glad to find you so tender of the Chief Shepherd's honour: he has promised to turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon his name, and serve him with one consent; and that language is very perceptible in you. Pray, which way did you come in?

Shepherd. I came in, as usual, by the porter's lodge. Every one employed by the Chief Shepherd has a right to come in

by the door: hirelings, thieves, and robbers, climb up another way. But all those presumptuous tracks are "the paths of the destroyer," Psalm, xvii. 4; and "whoso breaketh an hedge [the old] Serpent shall bite him," Eccles. x. 8.

Steward. I fancy you have been perusing the mother of all good books again, for you seem to be very ready with her proverbs and dark sayings. Pray, did the porter speak to you when he let you in?

Shepherd. Yes: he looked through the window, to see who was coming; and, when I knocked, he opened the door, gave me a smile, and said, "Who is there?" I replied, "A shepherd." He answered, "What, the Chief Shepherd?" I replied, "No; but, if you let me in, you will let him in, for we are one." And he said, "To him the porter openeth," John, x. 3.

Steward. And what reply did you make him?

Shepherd. When he said, "To him the porter openeth," I answered. "And the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." He replied, "Have you such command over your flock?" I said, "Yes; and I shall have such command over them as long as the Chief Shepherd speaks or calls by me but no longer." Then said he, "You are nothing but an echo at most." I replied, "The less I am, the better; for I am always most when I am nothing at all." He then asked me what constructions the foolish shepherds put upon me, and upon my conversation. I answered, "Just such as they put upon the King's forerunner, when he told them that he was 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness.'"

Steward. And what answer did he give you?

Shepherd. He told me that there were none really wise but fools, 1 Cor. iii. 18, and that none were well known but those

who were unknown, 2 Cor. vi. 9. And added, "You will find your old companion in the Steward's room." Pray, where is Little Faith? Is he sick of love still?

Steward. No: Little Faith has been out of that some time; but he says all is not right with him yet.

Shepherd. Poor Little Faith has always something out of joint, or off the hooks. Pray, what is the matter with him now?

Steward. Why, he says he is delivered, but he doth not like the way of his deliverance: for his poor brother Doubtful has had a private fall, on which account he has been shut out of the presence-chamber for upwards of a fortnight. Which dreadful case he committed to Little Faith, and to none else; and begged that, as he was the instrument of his first enlargement, that he would now use his interest with the King for his restoration to his Majesty's favour; which Little Faith readily consented to, and the King turned his captivity while he prayed for his brother, Job, xlii. 10.

Shepherd. Then, I think, he ought to be grateful to the King; and with thankfulness acknowledge his happy deliverance, to the glory of him.

Steward. But what puzzles Little Faith is, that he should find his own heart leap for joy as soon as his brother began to bewail the King's absence, and to unbosom the grief of his soul "It appears to me," said he, "as if my comfort springs from my brother's misery: and is like the consolation that arose in the heart of Saul, when, at the new moon feast, the seat of the son of Jesse was empty; who said, he is not clean; surely he is not clean! I Sam. xx. 24, 25, 26. I am like those who eat up the sin of the King's children. He that is glad at calamities shall not go unpunished, and those that watch for iniquity shall be cut off."

Shepherd. Saul hated David without a cause: Little Faith loved his brother in his heart, not only in word, but in deed and in truth: which he shewed when he nursed him. Saul hated David because he obtained more human applause than himself; Little Faith is afraid that his brother stands highest in the favour of the great King. Saul wanted honour from the people; Little Faith wants the honour that cometh from God only. Saul wanted to be established as an earthly prince; Little Faith wants the King of Grace to reign in and over him. Saul warred after the flesh, Little Faith after the Spirit. Saul wanted the love of the people, Little Faith wants the love of his Father. Saul wanted a temporal state, Little Faith an heavenly inheritance.

Steward. Their motives widely differ; for Little Faith is a partaker of the sure mercies of David, which the other never had; and is of the house and lineage of David, which Saul never was. And these things I have in a measure transferred to Little Faith, which, under the testimony of the King, have rather established him: so that he walks pretty steady; his understanding opens; and his thoughts seem to extend themselves, so as to bring things that seem to clash together; and, by tracing them up to the King, and resolving them into his mercy and judgment, he is enabled to see the son and the servant, the promises and privileges of the one, and the commands and tasks of the other. However, Little Faith will not enjoy his present frame of mind long; for there is a deep-laid scheme for him; there is a snare set for him in the ground, and a trap in the way.

Shepherd. What is it? Is there any new rebellious tenet advanced against the laws of the realm, or any new scheme of perverting the records of Zion?

Steward. I trust Little Faith has seen and felt enough of these things to cure his itching ears. The trap that is now set for him

is of a different nature from these; and one that, I think, is sure to take him, and will be worse than all the calamities that ever befell him; and it may with great propriety be called the devil's master-piece.

Shepherd. What, is there any private combination to take away his life?

Steward. No, it is worse than that: sudden death is sudden glory to the King's seed; but this trap will bring a lingering death upon all his peace and comfort, the heavy frowns of the best of Fathers upon his soul, and a daily plague and trouble to all his flesh.

Shepherd. Pray, have any mischievous persons enticed him to the sin of excess? Because the Wise Man says, "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine." Prov. xiii. 29, 30.

Steward. No, it is not excess; but, if this snare takes Little Faith-as I think it will-it will be worse than the sin of Noah.

Shepherd. Well, I am quite impatient to know what this dreadful bait is.

Steward. Well, if you must know, it is this-Little Faith IS IN LOVE!

Shepherd. Well, Sir, but that is not such a desperate crime. Jacob was in love with Rachel. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled." Besides, the King himself says, "It is not good that man should be alone."

Steward. All this is true: but Little Faith's sin is like the sin of Solomon; which brought the wrath of God upon his

inheritance; a revolution in the state; beggary upon the nation; a civil war among the tribes; and paved the way for abominable idolatry, both in Bethel and Dan; which ended in a final dispersion of the ten tribes, and in a seventy years captivity of Judah and Benjamin. The sin of Solomon was, that he loved many STRANGE WIVES; and Little Faith's sin will be like unto it, for he is in love with a HAGARENE. Solomon's example was followed by Judah: "Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he [ought to love;] and hath MARRIED THE DAUGHTER OF A STRANGE GOD. The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this; the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob." Mal. ii. 11, 12.

Shepherd. This is worse than the excess of Noah, indeed! for Noah was saved in the ark, and died in faith, (Heb. xi. 13:) but the [professing] sons of God, who took them wives of the daughters of [Cain] so provoked the Lord, that he said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man." And, when once the Spirit ceased to strive by the ministry of Noah, "God saw that their wickedness was great in the earth," Gen. vi. 9, 3, 4, 5, 6; and therefore he either cut them off by death, or drowned them all together; and saved none but the preacher of righteousness (and his family), who had long strove with them in opposing their unlawful connexions. Thus God saved the reprove; "and those who were hardened by repeated reproofs were destroyed, and that without remedy."

Steward. And no wonder; for, if a child of God marries a child of the Devil, he aims at an affinity between God and Satan. "Judah hath married the daughter of a strange god. This strange God is the God of this world: as it is written, "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God, to gods whom they KNEW NOT (to strange gods), to new gods, that came newly up," Deut. xxxii. 17.

Shepherd. Marriage is an ordinance of God, who himself joined the first couple together in Paradise: but, to use this ordinance in coupling the temple of God with the palace of the strong man armed, and make them one flesh, must be a most God-provoking sin; as bad as the sin of Israel, of which God speaks thus-"And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone A WHORING," Lev. xvii. 7. God has forbidden fellowship with devils, and by the same word hath he forbidden matrimonial union with believers and infidels. Pray, what is the name of Little Faith's intended? and how came he acquainted with her at first?

Steward. Her name is Mara Duplicity. Little Faith saw her the last time that he went to Hagar's Castle, to hear that pompous herald's harangue that drew him from his first love, as was mentioned to you soon after. She came then, and sat down by him; and, when they sung, she held her hymn-book before him. When prayers were made, she fell on her face, sighed and sobbed, as if like Hannah, she was one of a sorrowful spirit; and, at every sentence of the inconsistent harangue, she groaned till her hands sprang from the seat, and dropped again with their own weight. Tears flowed down her cheeks, and her very eye-balls floated in devotion. The zealous Papist, when he pommels his ribs, never discovered more energy than she did. Little Faith eyed her, and left a fourth part of his heart with her that night.

Shepherd. Did Little Faith speak to her after the human service was performed at the Castle?

Steward. When the service was performed, she shook him by the hand, spoke to him, asked him how he liked the discourse, and if it had not been a word in due season, and a precious opportunity to his soul. "For my own part," said she, "it has been a time of love to me. The whole discourse suited my case, and was powerfully applied, for I could see eye to eye

with the preacher, and my experience tallied exactly with all that he delivered." And, upon his telling her that he generally attended the Chapel-royal, she replied, she thought that she had seen him there, for she also often attended the Chapel-royal herself; and extolled the King's chaplains to the very skies. This quite charmed Little Faith; and she has come constantly to the Chapel-royal ever since.

Shepherd. Well, perhaps, she has seen her errors, and such have a promise-"Those that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and those that murmured shall learn doctrine."

Steward. True: but I believe that she is a hypocrite in grain, in warp, and in woof, and as deep as nine times dyed flannel; a double refined and treble distilled Hagarene. She is as keen as the mistress of witchcrafts, and as profound in the depths of artifice and deception as Cleopatra. However, Little Faith came home delighted with her company; and told one of the young princesses that he had found an excellent young woman, a most precious soul! "In knowledge and experience," said he, "she is a mother in Israel; in simplicity, like Jephtha's daughter: in contrition, like Mary; in devotion, like Hannah; in modesty, like Tamar; in beauty, like Rachel; and for plainness of dress, like Sarah, the mother of the faithful."

Shepherd. Then Miss Duplicity has acted like the whore in the Proverbs: she has charmed Little Faith with her religion, as she did the young man, when "she caught him and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have PEACE-OFFERINGS with me: this day have I PAID MY VOWS." Who brought him at last like "an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks," Prov. vii. 13, 14, 22. Pray, did Little Faith ever speak to you about her?

Steward. Once he did, but never but once; and then he asked me if I had seen the young lady who had lately come to the Chapel-royal? "She is," said he, "a second Ruth: she has left

her own people, her gods, and her mother's house; and is come to put her trust under the shadow of the King's wings." I told him, that I believed the King's wings were quite out of her thoughts; and that she would never imitate Ruth but in one thing, namely, in getting under the skirt of Boaz. "She wants," said I, "the lappet of Little Faith's coat, not the King's wings. For my own part, I believe Orpah, who took her leave of Naomi, was ten times more honest than Miss Duplicity; for she went back to her own people, and to her own gods: she neither compassed her Maker about with lies, nor mocked him, to get a husband by deceit." At this he knit his brows, turned upon his heel, and off he went; nor has he ever mentioned the matter to me since.

Shepherd. You told me, at a former interview, that Little Faith, though near-sighted, was very discerning and penetrating into persons and things, if they came near to him.

Steward. So he is: but Love, as well as Justice, ought to be pictured blind; for sure I am it has awfully blinded the eyes of Little Faith; for he is as much deceived in that woman as ever David was in Ahithophel, or Jehonadab in Jehu; both of whom were masked with religion, but possessed by Satan. She is constantly at our chapel now; and I am informed that she never goes to hear any of Hagar's heralds, nor will not so much as put her foot over the threshold of the workhouse; and that she suffers a deal of persecution from her friends on the account; and, the more they oppose her, the more earnest she is. This Little Faith admires. She tells him all her sufferings, and he sympathizes with her; she opens her heart to him, and he pours all his affections into it; she steals his love from God, and he wants to marry the thief. Little Faith begs her as a present from the King, but never asks Him to discover to him what she really is; for he is sure of her covenant interest, and rejoices in hopes of espousing his own convert.

Shepherd. If she has forsaken the castle, and turned her back upon their errors, it looks well; and the Work may be of the King, who can tell? There is nothing impossible with him. Besides, it is his prerogative, and his alone, to search the heart, and try the reins.

Steward. All this is true: but this is not the case here; I wish it was. I have watched her narrowly when at the Chapel, and she sits as if she heard with attention, but every minute or two gives Little Faith a glance; and, if his eye catches hers, they are immediately turned up to heaven; and, if the King's herald is in a rapturous frame, every now and then a smile is sent to Little Faith. So that it is the magnetism of his charms that gives life and spring to all Mara's devotion.

Steward. Holy ground is not a proper place for the daughters of Belial to shoot their amorous glances on. Haughtiness, stretched-forth necks, and wanton eyes, shall not go unpunished in the daughters of Zion, much less in the daughters of Hagar. And as for Little Faith, by his inordinate affection for a strange woman he is making a rod for himself: Conscience and he will have bloody work of it another day, when the King comes to visit his sin with a rod, and his iniquity with scourges. Inordinate affection is a member of Little Faith's strange man; but, as there is an intoxicating pleasure in it, he will not complain of it till the frowns and rebukes of the King bring him to his senses: then he may go out (like Sampson) and shake himself, and bewail both the loss of his God, and his folly that procured it.

Steward. This will be the end, and I wish he would consider it in time: but he is too completely entangled to escape the snare of the fowler, Little Faith never knew what it was to be in love with the creature till now: he is in his first love.

Shepherd. And do you think that Mara has any love for him?

Steward. Yes; I believe she loves him with that sort of love that is made violent by opposition, damped by gratification, and freezed by the constancy of an affectionate husband. I dare say Mara has been smitten with love by a hundred objects, and the last is always the winner. Mara is not the magnet, but the needle, soon drawn; but, if not held fast, is sure to fall off, like Michal or Delilah: and no wonder, when the Nazarite, and the Psalmist, became the willing captives of such, without consulting the Giver of every good and every perfect gift.

Shepherd. A prudent wife is from the Lord, but this sort are none of his gifts. Little Faith has forgot the proverb that speaketh to him as to a son-"And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings," Prov. v. 20, 21.

Steward. Little Faith doth not believe her to be a strange woman, for he is as much taken with her mask of religion as he is with her person. The kings of the earth were never more drunk with Jezebel's fornication, than Little Faith is with Mara's deception.

Shepherd. Pray, what sort of woman is she in person?

Steward. She is beautiful, has a pretty face, a good complexion, is well-shaped, genteel, and of good address; affects to appear very modest and devout; is remarkably plain in her apparel, and as neat as wax-work; is a complete mistress of herself, and of all the artifice she is possessed of; and one who can soon find out the company she is in, and can shape her conversation to suit it. In short, there is every thing in her person that makes a woman desirable or admirable; and every thing in her feigned mask of religion that is attracting to a young Israelite who walks in his simplicity, and who is unacquainted with these depths of Satan.

Notwithstanding, she is a Hagarene, a strange woman; unhumbled, unrenewed, dead in sin, enveloped in delusion, and hardened in hypocrisy; destitute of the truth, and destitute of the grace of God, and of the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit, in which, and in only which, real beauty consists. "A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised; but Miss Duplicity is not one of them.

Shepherd. Then the Wise Man's experience will go nigh to fit Little Faith in his future calamity: "I applied my heart," saith he, "to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom; and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness; and I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands, Eccles. vii. 19, 20.

Steward. The Wise Man was right in endeavouring to know, to search, and to seek out wisdom: and, had he left off there, he might have escaped those snares, bands, and nets, that brought all his bitterness upon him; but "he loved many strange wives," and therefore God gave him not one good one in all the thousand. "One man among a thousand have I found, but a woman, among all those [that I kept] have I not found. Lo! this only have I found, that God made man upright;" [but the woman pulled him aside] and, since that, "they have sought out many inventions," Eccl vii. 28, 29; as the Wise Man himself did, whose "strange wives turned away his heart," 1 Kings, xi. 3; and led him to comply with the inventions of the heathens.

Shepherd. And, pray, how goes Little Faith on in the best things? Is he effectually cured of the heart-burn and the belly-ache? Have the hornets all forsook him? Is the strange man dead? And has Miss Duplicity healed all his infirmities, and cured all his diseases?

Steward. So it seems; for I hear of no complaints; nor does he so much as come near the Steward's room, nor even look

at me, or speak to me if he meets me, for he knows that Mara is no favourite of mine: therefore, in the matter of his courtship, he views me as his enemy; and he will take care to ask counsel of none but of those who either hate me, or that differ from me in judgment touching Mara's religion. Nor do I expect to be acquainted with any of Little Faith's affairs till the wedding is over; then, perhaps, my service may come into fashion again.

Shepherd. If the King frowns upon this conduct of Little Faith, he will be so crossed, that he will not be able to perform his enterprise, notwithstanding his intentions.

Steward. I do not believe that the King will hinder him, because I have reprov'd him for it: but he hardens his neck against reproof, and still revolts; therefore" the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own way." When Rehoboam rejected the good counsel of the aged, and took that of his flatterers, he lost the presence of the God of his fathers, and ten parts of his kingdom: and I know that Little Faith is going on now without the King's presence, and without his approbation. The King is returned to his place; and Little Faith must seek him early, and earnestly too, before he finds him again.

Shepherd. Then I should think that he would be miserable in his mind, and a burden to himself; for a glimpse of the King's face used to raise him to heaven; but, if the King frowned, he was like a dead man.

Steward. And I wish it was with Little Faith now as it was in months past, but it is not. He is as lively and as cheerful as a bird in appearance, but it comes not from above: it is lightness and levity; his sweetness and simplicity are greatly vanished; and some of the children tell me, that his conversation is dry and empty. Nevertheless, he is not comfortless: the lusts of the flesh afford him most pleasing sensations. His thoughts

and affections are hovering about Mara, not God; his delight is in her person, not in the Divine favour; and his comforts lie in his interviews with her, instead of communion with his Royal Father his present hopes of a wife overtop his hopes of heaven; and his mind is more employed about his intended (though unlawful) marriage than about the future "marriage of the Lamb." These things "turned away the heart" of Solomon, and brought that magnificent and highly-favoured prince to renounce the royal name, which appears by his telling us what he was before he was a preacher-"I, the preacher, was king over Israel, in Jerusalem"

Shepherd. But, pray, who encourages Little Faith in paying his addresses to Mara? I dare say that he is not without his backers, nor without his helpers-on.

Steward. Indeed he is not: for there is not a court-flatterer, a feigned loyalist, a pensioner, a placeman, an unfaithful servant, or an hypocrite, in all the court, or that hangs about the palace, but what approves of Little Faith's choice. Old Uzzah, the man that you saw weeding the gravel-walk the first time you came to the palace, who told you that the "Steward's room were just as narrow as yourself," is very forward for the match, and praises Miss Duplicity up to the skies; and I am informed, that she has lately been admitted as a member of the Royal Society by some of the partial rulers of the Household. But notwithstanding all their art and artifice, the religion of Mara Duplicity, and that of Little Faith, shall no more cleave together than iron can mix with miry clay.

Shepherd. Well, you have put in your caveat: you have reproved him, and shewed your disapprobation; and, by so doing, you have forbid the banns. But all hath hitherto been ineffectual; and, therefore, Little Faith must take the consequences. It is watering time, and I must be gone; and when I shall be able to spend another hour with you, I know

not: for the sheep are going upon the common fields, some part of which is ploughed, some sown, and some is left for perpetual sheep-walks. When the sheep are there, constant attendance is required to keep them within bounds.

Steward. The commons lie at too great a distance for me; nor, shall I care to go upon them, if they lay nearer home. But, whenever you come into the inclosures again, let me know by a line, and I will call at your little hut.

Shepherd. If health be spared, and business permit, you shall receive a line from me at my return. Till then, be faithful, be constant, be vigilant; and, as far as truth requires it in this degenerate age, be singular. Say not, "A confederacy," to them that say, "A confederacy;" nor fear ye their fear, nor be afraid; but sanctify the King himself in your heart, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread; and he shall be for a sanctuary to you, when they shall find him to be a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence. Farewell.

Steward. Fare you well: and I thank you for your counsel; and have only to crave that, when it is well with the Shepherd, he would remember the Steward.

TO MR. FIDELITY, Steward. OF HIS MAJESTY'S
HOUSEHOLD

True Yoke-Fellow, Lowland Palace, Salem.

NEGLECTING all compliments of the season, and wishing grace, mercy, and peace, this comes to acquaint you that I am once more returned with the little flock to the fat valleys; where the cooling streams are refreshing, the rural shades delightful, and where the flocks can rest at noon.

During my stay on the upland commons, I was exercised with perpetual labours: the wells were unfathomably deep, the springs low, the weather violently hot, and the herbage very scarce; insomuch that I had hard work to keep the sheep from straying. Nevertheless, some of the flocks, especially the weaklings, flourished; while I wasted several ounces a day, till I began to cry-"My leanness! my leanness! Woe unto me!"

Jacob's well is deep indeed! A thirsty flock, and a low spring, will try the patience of the meekest Shepherd. I have at times thought that the Gibeonites' yoke of bond-service in the plains of Jericho, or under the springs of Pisgah, was not more galling than mine: but this part of the burden and heat of the day are borne; and we are safely arrived in the highly-favoured plains, and by the still waters, where all past toil is out of sight, and almost out of mind. The flock is well in the general, and at present feeds sweetly. The sheep-bells are ringing all the day long: and, while the sheep feed and rest quiet, we shall continue here but, as soon as they begin to trample the pasture, and break the fences, we shall be ordered upon the commons again.

I need not inform you that a visit is desirable, or that your company and conversation are acceptable: this you are assured of; which I now confirm, by subscribing myself, inviolably and eternally,

Yours,

In the uniting Bonds of the Brotherly Covenant.

Dated from the Hut, THE SHEPHERD.

Aug. 10, 1789.

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Thirteenth.

Steward. Shepherd, you are welcome home, I am glad to see you once more in your little hut.

Shepherd. I thank you, my dear friend: and I am as glad to see you; for, as iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Steward. I came twice to see your little hut during your absence; and I perceived that some mischievous persons had been tearing off the ornaments and covering, and pulling down a part of the materials, soon after you were gone; which convinced me that you were not much in favour among the generality of Shepherds, especially those of the tents of Kedar, who, most likely, are the culprits.

Shepherd. It is, doubtless, the handicraft of some of the Kedar gentlemen: they often spoil or plunder my hut, to furnish or ornament their own; and would long since have burnt it, and have triumphed over it, if they had not been afraid of hanging by their own necks.

Steward. By your letter, you have had a laborious time of it upon the uplands.

Shepherd. Indeed, I had. I never was more put to it for water and herbage in all my life than I have been this summer: and a great part of the flock began to be very restless; some prowled away to the fallow ground, some strayed to the backside of the desert, and got to Horeb; and others got into the fields of strangers, who sow their land with divers seeds; and most of them, except the weaklings, were tired out with the old walks. Because the bottles of heaven were stayed, and the clouds distilled no water, "the ridges must be watered,

and the springing thereof must be blessed," Psalm lxx. 10, if there be any new pastures. This was the cause of their straying. However, to remedy this, I procured about twenty bell-sheep among them; so that, if I did not see them stray, I could hear which way they went by the bells, for the sound made by the bell-sheep always reported the matter. And, indeed, I was more wearied than the flock itself, and therefore glad enough to get into the fat valleys again. Pray does the courtship of Little Faith go on still? or, is it broke off?

Steward. Little Faith was married about four months ago, in less than a fortnight after you were at the Palace.

Shepherd. MARRIED!

Steward. Yes, married!

Shepherd. Pray were you invited to the wedding?

Steward. O no; nor was the King there, and but two of the King's children: nor would the wedding-guests have got them, if they had not been suffered (for wise ends) to be prejudiced against me, by those who traduced me as taking too much upon me, being too bitter, using too much severity, and being too strict in my office. These things, you know, are pleasing to children, until the pride that their flatterers nurse in them brings them low, and then they begin to know better. So far from my being invited, I became the topic of their conversation, and the subject of their ridicule. "At their sitting down, and rising up, I was their music."

Shepherd. And did the bridegroom countenance this?

Steward. As the bride, the bride-maids, and the greatest part of the company, kept it up, Little Faith did not shew his disapprobation of it: but I was informed that his seat did not appear to be quite easy, nor was his countenance very open

or cheerful; which the company perceiving they left off making sport of me, and turned their jests upon the bridegroom; which he sustained with all the fortitude that he could muster together; and which, in the end, sent the bride to bed highly entertained; and the bridegroom went after, with a wounded spirit, and a guilty conscience; which the bridal bed, no, nor all the charms of Miss Duplicity, shall never be able to cure.

Shepherd. Pray, who were the chief guests?

Steward. Old Uzzah was one of the chief. Coniah, the broken idol, was there, Jer. xxii. 28. Shebna, which is over the house, was among them, Isa. xxii. 15, 16, 17. Jannes and Jambres, and other old courtiers with them, were invited. Phygellus and Hermogenes, Hymeneus and Alexander the coppersmith, with others of the like occupation; Demetrius the silversmith, Saint Crispin, and several more of the craftsmen; together with Sceva the Jew, Sanballat, Tobiah the Ammonite, Geshem the Arabian, Doeg the Edomite, Tatnai the governor, Shethar-bozai and his companions, Rab-shakeh, Nergal-sharezer, Samgar-nebo, Rabsaris, and Rab-mag, Jer. xxxix. 3, all men of note and character, of family and fortune. Delilah; Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim; Herodias's daughter, and the wise ladies of Sisera's mother, Judges, v. 29, were the bridesmaids: all precious souls, class-leaders of the perfect band, and, in the judgment of Charity, noted for candour. After Little Faith had wrought the conversion of Miss Duplicity, Miss herself converted all these.

Steward. A noble company, truly! dwellers of Mesopotamia, Jews and proselytes, Elamites, Cretes, and Arabians. Pray, where was Little Faith married?

At Cripple Gate Church, you may be sure; and I believe that he has been a cripple ever since he led his bride through that gate; and it is well if he doth not go halting to his grave.

Shepherd. I should like to have seen Little Faith the next day morning, to see how his countenance stood.

Steward. I was informed of the whole of their proceedings, just as much as if I had been present. The wedding-guests flocked in and out all the next day. The bride's mouth seemed to be here crammed with religious gibberish, fables, and cant, than ever; her tongue went like a watchman's rattle. But the bridegroom looked more like the father of mankind when he began to make his fig-leafed apron: pensiveness, watchfulness, and suspicion, seemed to sit upon his brow; the desire of his eyes was with him, and the rebukes of Heaven within him; a beautiful devil upon his knees, and barrenness in his soul. However, he bore up as well as he could, and seemed to wish to be rid of his wedding-guests. Two of the Royal Family that were at the wedding withdrew privately (being hurt at their company and conversation) even without taking leave either of the bride or of the bridegroom; nor have any of the Seed-royal been near their brother since. And what mortified Little Faith most of all was, they reported that the bride had discovered herself to be, what the Steward declared she was, namely, a profound hypocrite; and that the guests did nothing but burlesque the King's servants; that his Majesty's name was not once mentioned with reverence; that their conversation was rude and indelicate; yea, that vulgarities were both received and returned, and that by the bride herself, as well as the rest: and that old Uzzah, the governor of the feast, was the worst among them; that no blessing was implored on the new-married couple; that no petitions were put up on the behalf of them; and that it was more like Belshazzar's feast than the marriage in Cana of Galilee; for neither the King, his presence, nor his disciples, were there.

Shepherd. It is not likely that the King should countenance with his presence what his righteous soul abhorreth, and what

he has strictly forbidden. We have no need to "marry the daughters of a strange god," Mal. ii. 11. "The Lord God Almighty hath got daughters," 2 Cor. vi. 18, as well as the god of this world; and it was nothing but infernal intoxication that led Little Faith to make such a choice. We have got venerable mothers, honourable women, and amiable daughters in Israel; women of grace, sensibility, modesty, chastity, beauty, cleanliness, and industry; helps meet who have got the fear and blessing of God, and therefore fit persons for any man of Israel, let him be as particular as he may: so that Little Faith had no call to go to the uncircumcised; but, if he must have a wife from TIMNATH, let him grind in the prison, and make sport for the lords of the Philistines, till he is humbled for his folly.

Steward. My desire is that Little Faith may be tried: and tried he will be with a witness; for there was one man at the wedding, Doeg by name, of whom the bride took more notice than of all the rest of the guests, or even of the bridegroom himself; which was observed and reported in the Palace by those who were there. Little Faith heard of this, and it stirred up suspicion in him, which was rather confirmed by the constant visits of Doeg. Little Faith being rather uneasy about this matter, inquired into Doeg's private character; and found, upon inquiry, that he was one of "that sort who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women; such as are laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, who are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7.

Shepherd. O poor Little Faith! It is a sure omen of perilous day when young princes despise the counsels of the aged. "In the multitude of counsellors is safety, but a child left to himself will fall." When Samson refused to hearken to the counsel of his parents, they complied with his own request, and a sea of afflictions followed.

Steward. And so they did here: for, before Little Faith had been married a week, "the spirit of jealousy came upon him, and he was jealous of his wife," Numb. v. 14. What to do he knew not: he was dotingly fond of her; yea, his very soul was wrapt up in her. The character of Doeg strengthened his suspicions, and the daily visits that he paid to the bride added fresh fuel to Little Faith's fire; and that which completed the scene of his misery was, that he knew that she was not a virgin when he married her, Deut. xxii. 14, 21. This was told me by one of the young princes to whom he unburdened his mind; and declared, that nothing but the pains of hell, or bitter throes of the damned, could equal his present sufferings. He loved her to excess, and was plagued by the constant visits of a suspected rival of vile character. While his soul was scorching in the flames of jealousy, his wife was entertaining Doeg with smiles and amorous stories. "And that," saith he, "which makes my case deplorable beyond conception is, that the King's face is hid; my mind is in bondage; my life hangs in doubt; and, with respect to my eternal state, I stand in jeopardy. But the charms of my wife, and the thoughts of a rival, swallow up all: so that, at times, I am regardless of what becomes of my soul. Pray I cannot; I dare not face his Majesty, nor even send a thought toward him: if I do, it recoils with the disapprobation of Heaven." He added, "Had I hearkened to the Steward., I had escaped this snare of the fowler. He cautioned me, and warned me; but others prejudiced my mind against him, accusing him of rancour, and of taking too much upon him. However, his words stuck to my heart, and my own conscience seconded his counsel; and, as soon as I turned my back upon him, the King turned his back upon me. I despised his reproof, and hardened my neck by it. "I am a backslider in heart, and shall be filled with my own ways; for it is written, 'He that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.'"

Shepherd. Married people shall have trouble in the flesh; but, if believers match with infidels, they shall have trouble on all hands. Samson's match with the Philistine damsel; David's with Michal, Abigail's with Nabal; Solomon's with the Heathens; the Jews with the daughters of Ashdod; Ammon, and Moab, and the Antediluvian professors, with the daughters of Cain; with all their dreadful consequences; are left upon record to caution the child of God. Many are married before their adoption, and one may be taken by the King, and the other left; and the King's choice may set a household at variance: but, both being infidels when married, here is plenty of room for wishes, but none for such reflections as those of Little Faith, who sinned with his eyes open. Pray, had Little Faith any money with her?

Steward. I believe he had a little: but that was not an object with him; it was love to her person, not to her money, that entangled him in this snare.

Shepherd. Pray, how came Little Faith acquainted with those gentlemen that were at the wedding?

Steward. I never knew till a few days ago. One of the princes, to whom Little Faith opened his mind, told me, that he owned to him that he had privately frequented the love-feasts of the Hagarenes during the whole time of his courtship, in order to gain the consent, and get into the good graces, of Mara's parents and friends; and by those means he gained their consent, and passed among them for a man of candour and liberal sentiments. Here Little Faith acted with a double face, to gain a wife with a double heart.

Shepherd. Those love-feasts are rightly named, for young lovers are very fond of them. I am informed that many young wantons have begun to love at a love-feast who have never fasted from strife and debate all their days after. I suppose

they are like the Moabitish festivals, to which the men of Israel were invited through the counsel of Balaam.

Steward. Some of them are-for all sorts are admitted-members of the Royal Society, and even members of the Hell-fire Club may get in. Babes in grace, and Bucks of the first head, are mixed together; mothers in Israel, and even mothers procurists. Some go to seek a word of exhortation; and, if report be true some have gone to seek provision for the brothel. All huddle together, all break a bun, and give the right-hand of fellowship. Mara and Doeg were remarkably fond of this branch of human religion: "These were Spots in their Feasts of Charity, feeding themselves without fear; clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, twice dead, plucked up by the roots," Jude, 12.

Shepherd. Well, as Little Faith went to their love-feasts, it is right that he should be left to long for a love-fast. He banqueted with them, and he must expect to pay the reckoning.

Steward. He now pays as he goes, poor soul! For I was informed that his flesh is wasted upon his bones: he is a mere shadow, and almost frightful to behold; while his soul is like a vessel in a storm, and the daily provocations that he meets with drive him to his wit's end.

Shepherd. Pray, did he ever open his mind to his wife about it?

Steward. About six weeks after the wedding, he did, as I was informed.

Shepherd. And what effect had it?

Steward. He told one of the young princes that, for about a month, he did nothing but weep over her; and that he could

not endure her out of his sight, nor even that a person should look at her. She perceiving this, got more and more cold and indifferent to him; and grief of mind rendering him such a ghastly figure, she began to ridicule and despise his person and unsightliness: and he declared to his brother, that he could see the work of the devil on both sides; for he operated upon his inordinate affections, to chain his soul to her; and at the same time worked in her to despise both his affections and person. Being unable to hold in any longer, he opened his mind to his wife; told her the cause of all his grief; and begged that, as he could not get over it, notwithstanding all his efforts, she would feel a little for him, shew her disapprobation of Doeg's constant visits, and give him some information and satisfaction touching her chastity. At his request concerning Doeg she laughed; and for his asking information about her chastity, &c. &c. Mara shewed herself in her true colours, and abused him in such language as he did not think she had been mistress of: and, after breakfast, she put a cockade, made of yellow ribbon, in his hat.

Shepherd. It is well for Little Faith that it goes on so violently as it does; it will be the sooner over. Marriage is a Divine ordinance: the ordainer of it will vindicate it, and the rights of it; and execute vengeance on such abusers of it, by avenging the injured and the defrauded. When Little Faith's strength is all gone, the King will appear. Pray, what said Little Faith to his cockade?

Steward. He said that her cruel treatment gave his violent passions such a check as he never felt before; and his earnest expectation and hope is, that her cruelty will, some time or other, procure her the entire loss of his affections; which she, with all her artifice, will never be able to regain. However, Little Faith took courage, and warned Doeg the Edomite from his house, and threatened him with the sanction of the law in case he refused his warning; and, ever since,

Mara has left the Chapel-royal, and goes constantly to the workhouse at Hagar's Castle; while poet Little Faith is obliged to trudge after, in order to see whether his wife and Doeg look at one another. Little Faith goes out at one door, and his wife goes out at another; and among the crowd steals away (as he thinks to meet Doeg), while he goes mourning home alone, under a double wound-the jealousy and just suspicions of an injured husband; and wounded in his conscience for absenting himself from the sanctuary service, where he knows help and comfort are to be had.

Shepherd. This will go nigh to give poor Little Faith his bellyful of the sentiments and devotions of the Hagarites. He has not only heard, but he has seen and felt, the effects of Candour and Universal Charity. He knows, now, what Liberal Sentiments, and the Moderation of hypocrites, mean. He has seen the dress of Jack and Tom, his old favourites; and he has felt the heart of Mara Duplicity. Pray, has he never come with any of his complaints to you?

Steward. Not yet; but he has sent his love to me by one of his brothers, and begged that I would remember him: which he had no call to have done; for, ever since I heard of his cockade, I have wrestled hard for him; and I know that he will be delivered, "for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all;" and woe be to Mara whenever Little Faith is enlarged!

Shepherd. If I was you, I would call upon him.

Steward. When the King intends to chasten a child for his folly, he will make friends and acquaintances stand aloof, that they may not ward off the blows. He took umbrage at me for telling him the truth, and fled from faithful reproof; and the King says, "Let them return unto thee, but return thou not unto them," Jer. xv. 19. I love him dearly, but I will not nurse his pride, nor humour him in his folly. I hope the King will sanctify

the affliction; and if he does, when he is tried, he shall come forth as gold.

Shepherd. A spirit of jealousy is dreadful in its operations, and poor Little Faith has been exercised with both kinds.

Steward. It is a dreadful disease, and Heaven has provided a singular remedy for it in the fifth chapter of Numbers. Whatever a spirit of jealousy be, it is God that sends it: and the ends for the which it is sent are four.

The First is, To bring iniquity forth that lies hid: "For it procures an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance," Numb. v. 15.

Secondly, It is to clear the character of a virtuous wife, belied, or wrongly suspected; and to remove from a suspicious husband all his groundless suspicions, that he may be satisfied with her chastity, and that his affections may not be alienated from her without cause: "And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean, then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed," Numb. v. 28.

Thirdly, The spirit of jealousy is sometimes sent to prevent evil. It comes upon a man as soon as the heart of his wife begins to wander. Iniquity is conceived; but this spirit stirs up the restless court of inquisition, till a confession be obtained, and the birth be stopped.

Fourthly, The spirit of jealousy is sometimes sent by way of retaliation. If one man has provoked another to jealousy, the Lord will requite; he shall be provoked to jealousy himself, that he may feel for his neighbour. If David takes Bathsheba, Absalom takes all David's concubines. As he metes, so it shall be measured to him again.

Shepherd. But the oath of the Lord, the bitter water, and the dust of the floor, are all out of date, and out of use, now: we have no priests to offer this sort of offerings.

Steward. Every husband, and every wife, upon whom the spirit of jealousy comes, will act the part of a priest in these matters. Ashes and bitter waters will be in use night and day; promises, and oaths too, will be demanded, before they will be satisfied. Jealousy is the rage of a man, and so it is of a woman; and, if they cannot settle the matter to their own satisfaction, they will not rest contented though thou give them many gifts, And, as for the curse that was to attend the culprit when these offerings had brought her in guilty, THAT is in the hand of the great HIGH PRIEST, who is the Judge of all the earth; and will, doubtless, be executed. "The whoremongers and the adulterers God shall judge."

Shepherd. I have had various trials of one sort or other, and they are all grievous to flesh and blood; but that which makes them completely so is, when the heart is at a distance from the King. He that walks humbly with Him has got an ALMIGHTY ARM to lean on, and on which he may cast his burdens and his cares, and find fresh strength communicated in every time of need. Such happy souls feel after him, and find him a present help, yea, a very present help, in time of trouble. But, if sin be committed, and guilt contracted, the King hides his face, and communion is not held, then every crises, yea, the least affliction, becomes an intolerable burden. Little Faith, in his profession, differs much from me. It is not a great while ago that he got through the strait gate, and was admitted into the presence-chamber. When I was there, I was so delighted, and my heart so ravished, with the King's person and clemency, that I had neither thought nor affection left for the creature. Little Faith must have got at a great distance from the King, otherwise Mara could never have taken him prisoner to her charms, let her religious garb be never so

complete. My time is expired. We have got a few more sheep added to the flock, and it will be expected that I should be there.

Shepherd. What, has the Master lately bought in a new stock?

Shepherd. O no; they were all bought, and paid for, long ago; but he sends them in, a few at a time, as the old ones are drafted off, just to keep the stock and number up; and we generally examine them as well as we can, to see if they bear the Master's mark, that we may not admit wolves in sheep skins into the flock.

Steward. When shall you be at leisure again?

Shepherd. Almost any day while we tarry in the fat valleys; for herbage and water are so plenty, that the work of a shepherd becomes delightful recreation, instead of labour: yea, I would rather be employed in it than have the whole of my time on my own hands; for, at such seasons, you may draw water enough to refresh the whole flock, only by sending the vessel once to the WELL; and the herbage springs so fast, that it grows upon the sheep-the flock cannot eat fast enough to keep it under.

Steward. I, as a Steward., find it just the same at our entertainments. If his Majesty be at the feast, there is never any want of wine; and, if he tells us to draw out, and bear unto the governor, or to any body else, we may draw away, either from the flagon, the new bottle, or from the water-pots of stone: it is sure to give satisfaction; they will all praise the liquor, and declare that the best wine is kept till now. I have never much running up and down stairs; nor is it a difficult matter to please the company when his Majesty's presence is at the feast; nor am I obliged to fetch the wine out of the cellar, for it is banded forth to me as fast as called for. At such times I am as highly delighted at attending the table, as you

are in attending the flock: the new bottle and the waiter are handled with as much dexterity as either the shears or the crook. I envy the happiness of no shepherd under heaven, nor do I envy the flock their fat pastures, at such banquets as these, when Wisdom takes the head of the table: "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens, and given her invitations on the high places of the city. Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled," Prov. ix. 1, 2, 3, 5. When Wisdom furnishes the table, the sideboard is easily set off, and attendance becomes delightful. Her propitious looks, and the light of her countenance, are sufficient to satisfy and delight all the company, if it consists of five thousand in number. And, at these entertainments, we are never troubled with making orgeat, lemonade, nor cold tankard.

Shepherd. Well, Sir, let the Steward. of the Household rule well, and be counted worthy of double honour; and, as the King hath made him a ruler, let him give to each a portion of meat in due season. I wish thee the presence of Wisdom at her own table: and pray thou for me, that the Chief Shepherd may ever attend his own flock; and then the Shepherd will never envy the Steward., nor the Steward. vex the Shepherd. When an opportunity offers, come again to the hut: the country air, in all probability, will do you good.

Steward. I will. Till then, may the presence of Him who dwell with Moses in the tent, and spoke to Jonah in the booth, commune with the Shepherd in the hut!

Shepherd. Thank you. Farewell! Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces!

Dialogue the Fourteenth.

Shepherd. Here comes the Steward. of his Majesty's Household! a Steward. of the mysteries, and of the manifold grace of the King! Walk in your honour.

Steward. The Shepherd is very polite and complimentary today. Pray, what makes him so humorous? Are the upland commons quite out of sight, and out of mind with him?

Shepherd. "In the day of prosperity, be joyful; in the day of adversity, consider." Pray, how come Little Faith and his wife on? Does the matrimonial yoke gall his neck as bad as ever? or, does it sit more easy than usual?

Steward. Worse and worse! I believe I told you, at our last interview, that Mara had left the Chapel-royal, and she has never been near it since. She hath shewn herself in her true colours, indeed! She ridicules the doctrines of the Palace, and all the service of the Sanctuary; and, as for the King's Seed, she hates them with perfect hatred.

Shepherd. And does Little Faith follow her to the workhouse still?

Steward. No; he has been constantly at the chapel for these three weeks. The first time that he came, I was delivering to the family one of the King's most gracious speeches; in which was this clause-Return, ye backsliding children, for I am married unto you. While I was delivering the speech, I perceived a strange bustle, looking, and whispering, among the young princes and princesses; and I was obliged to call them to order, not knowing what was the matter: but, as soon as I had done, I saw them ga 1867 thering all together in a huddle again; and presently I perceived Little Faith among

them, but so altered, that I hardly knew him. I went into the Palace; and soon after, he followed me, and came into the Steward's room.

Shepherd. And what did you say to him?

Steward. Nothing harsh, for I perceived that his heart was ready to burst. I took him by the hand; told him I was glad to see him; led him into the pantry, and bade him sit down: and there I left him till he had given a little vent to his grief by weeping; and, after that, I went in, and communed with him: and such an account did he give me of Mara, as I never heard.

Shepherd. Pray, did the King give testimony to his gracious speech, because it seemed so very applicable to Little Faith's case?

Steward. He did: and Little Faith told me, that it was the more cordially received by him, as coming immediately from the King, and that on purpose for him; for not a soul knew of his coming to the Chapel-royal, nor did he enter the door till part of the speech was delivered.

Shepherd. The King's speeches are mighty; and, if they mightily grow and prevail, the bands of Little Faith's inordinate affection will snap like Samson's cords.

Steward. This, he says, is what he longs for: for such a woman he never saw; nor could he have ever thought that there had been such a one in existence, if he had not been married to Mara. He declared that, at times, he could not persuade himself that she really was one of the children of men, or one of the human species; but rather a machine, in which the Devil lived, reigned, and ruled; and in which he displayed all the art, craft, subtlety, mischief, deceit, hypocrisy, cruelty, and malice, that could be hatched in hell.

He told me that she never would consent to bow her knees with him since he mentioned to her his suspicions of Doeg; nor did he believe that she ever bowed them in private from year's end to year's end; and yet was as confident of her portion in the celestial regions as Mount Zion herself, that can never be moved: yea, he says she will lie, cheat, peep, mutter, curse and swear, like a Lapland witch; and then go the workhouse to hear Hagar's heralds; and there sit, and sigh, and sob, hear, and weep, and put on such a garb of sanctity, that he would defy all the fiends in the gloomy regions, let them all transform themselves into the likeness of the angels of light, ever to equal her deception.

Shepherd. Pray, did Little Faith never mention the conduct of Mara, and his troubles, to old Uzzah, to the pensioners, placements, and other tools of the court, who were so forward for the match?

Steward. He told me he had; and that they counselled him to cast a mantle of love over her infirmities, and to consider that she was not as yet, a member of the select, nor of the perfect band: and, upon Little Faith's telling them, that he thought she was-"For if there be," said he, "any mortals on the terraqueous globe that are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, Mara is, most certainly, complete and perfect in that bond:"-they rebuked him; enforced candour and moderation; and told him to judge charitably, lest, for judging others, himself should be judged.

Shepherd. Such candour and moderation have sent legions, blind, benumbed, seared, and swaddled in carnal security, to lift up their eyes in hell. To judge charitably of persons manifestly wicked and hypocritical, is acting a most base, uncharitable, unmerciful, and cruel part, with their souls; and those blind watchmen entail the blood of such sinners upon their own head. I have sometimes thought that the rich man in

hell had been dealt with in this candid way; of which he appeared to be conscious, when he said, "Father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they come also into this place of torment." Luke, xvi. 28. Pray, are Little Faith's affections as violent as ever?

Steward. He says that, now and then, he has felt such a flood of godly sorrow flow into his heart, as he never felt before. At such times, he says, he is as light as a bird; and his affections are so weaned from the creature, that neither Doeg nor Mara can move him. "But these," said he, "are but of short duration; and then that cruel spirit of jealousy comes on me again; the very thought of which makes me tremble, for it drives me, for a while, lure out of my mind; but I trust that, as soon as this godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, that I shall be saved and delivered out of this dreadful, this unutterable labyrinth of woe!" And I believe he will: and therefore told him to come to the Steward's room three times a week, and that we would spread the case before the King together. And I advised him to do the same three times a day constantly, and mentioned the particular hours; at which times, I told him, though I could not join him yet I would meet him at the throne at those times; and I bid him watch, and told him that he should soon see what united faith and prayer can do.

Shepherd. That is the only way to prevail. "If two on earth shall agree touching any thing that shall be asked, it shall be done of our Father which is in heaven."

Steward. It shall; and Little Faith seems as sure of it as if it was already accomplished; and you know that" faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen"

Shepherd. The new sheep are coming: I must be off. Tender my kind love to Little Faith; and tell him, that my poor petitions shall be mingled with his in his present calamity.

Steward. I thank you, my dear friend, for your offer; for, indeed, your assistance is much needed. I know that two shall withstand an enemy, but a threefold cord is stronger still. Mercy and peace be with thee!

Shepherd. Grace and truth go with thee!

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Fifteenth.

Shepherd. "Long looked for is come at last!" I have been expecting you every day for these six weeks. Pray, where have you hid yourself all this time?

Steward. Poor Little Faith is sick: he has a violent cough, and a fever; and it is thought that he is going into a decline. The Physician gave orders for a lodging to be procured for him in the valley of Esdralen, at the foot of Mount Tabor, for the benefit of the air. Little Faith sent for me, and begged it as a peculiar favour that I would ride in the chariot with him. And, as I was going to the house, I met Doeg the Edomite on the road. He knew me, and I was determined to have full look at him. He hung down his head, then tried to look up, looked this way and that way, then coloured up, then waxed pale, and seemed quite agitated. At last he gave a kind of an awkward wave with his hand, made a feeling for his hat, and darted by me, mumbling something of the compliments of the day, which I neither noticed nor returned.

Shepherd. Pray, did you see Mara when you was at the house?

Steward. Yes. As the two servants were bringing Little Faith down stairs, she came out of the parlour, and stood at the stair-foot, weeping, ready to take her leave of him. When he saw her, he bid the servants stop, seemed much flurried, ordered her into the parlour, and bid his servant lock the door. When the Physician saw how he was agitated, he ordered that she might not be admitted into his presence on any account, unless by his own desire.

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Shepherd. And what conversation had you in the way with him?

Steward. He told me that his spirit was very unsettled. Sometimes he felt the sweetness of godly sorrow, and anon a kind of stupor seized him; frequently a joyful beam darted through his soul, and, soon after, a heavy gloom would overhang his mind; that he was full of tossing and changes. To be short, he told me that he repented of his folly in dust and ashes; that from his heart he justified his Majesty, and owned him just in all the heavy afflictions that he has laboured under-"for I procured them to myself" He added, "I have, through undeserved clemency, something in my heart, which tells me that I shall be delivered out of my present distress of soul, and be restored to the King's favour; and from the dreadful entanglement of that wretched woman." And, moreover, he said, he was greatly deceived if the King did not leave him to himself, as a just requital for his folly, to take that strictly forbidden, that rebellious step: that the report of her singular hypocrisy, and of my unparalleled sufferings through it, might deter others, lest they also come into union with such a tormentor; for there are four, if not five, of my dear brothers and sisters, that have had, if not now, a sneaking kindness for

the Hagarenes, unless this disaster of mine has had the desired effect, which I shall pray for with my dying breath.

Shepherd. If this sickness ends in the death of Little Faith, or, if you survive him, you will not do justice to his memory, nor to the King's Seed, if you let the life of Little Faith be buried in oblivion. I would publish the whole narrative.

Steward. To tell you the truth, I have minuted down the greatest part of the circumstances, and of the conversation that has passed between us on the subject, and thought I would leave the manuscript for others to do as they pleased with after my decease.

Shepherd. I am not fond of that, lest, in revising or correcting, they alter the circumstances. You are a living witness of the whole matter and are able to defend the narrative, in case any of the Hagarenes should take up the pen, and attempt to disprove it.

Steward. But then there are several circumstances-such as, her now being a virgin when Little Faith took her, &c. &c.-that may give an offence, if made public.

Shepherd. Those very things are mentioned in the records of Zion, and Mara is condemned by the same for her deception. "Secret things belong to the King; but what is revealed belongs to us, and to our children." The whole counsel of the King is to be declared: if it gives offence to any, it will give it to them whom it may concern. Hypocrites, fortune-hunters, wanton professors, harlots, whoremongers, and all who are really guilty, will doubtless find fault with it, and call it the produce of a bad spirit; just as the pharisaical tribe derided the King, when he protested against covetousness, Luke, xvi. 14. But Israelites indeed, and the real daughters of Sara, will receive no damage by it, nor take offence at it. Pray, have you attended Little Faith constantly since his illness?

Steward. The night before I heard of his illness, I had the following dream. I saw a man on a sick-bed, who seemed to labour under much distress of soul; and, while I stood pitying the sick man, I heard a voice say to him, "My servant Job shall pray for you." Job, xlii. 8. Upon the hearing of which, I awoke; and, behold! it was a dream! But, while I was considering the matter, these words occurred to my mind with some degree of warmth-" Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Acts, xvi. 9. I immediately rose from my bed, dressed myself, and went down into the Steward's room; and, while I was pondering in my mind what the vision and the text should mean, behold! a man knocked at the door! I went and opened it; and said to him-"Pray, what wantest thou? or, whom seekest thou?" He replied with tears in his eyes-"I am servant to one of the Royal Family, namely, to Little Faith, who is now extremely ill, having kept his bed for many days. His recovery is doubtful; and the Physician has ordered him to a lodging at the foot of Tabor, for the benefit of the air; thinking that spot to be the most likely to be conducive to his health, as the air is as much the reverse of the air of Sinai, the place of my master's nativity, as can be. As for his native country, he has been too partial to that also; for it has never contributed either to his health, peace, or happiness. His Highness strictly charged me, by verbal message, to come to the Palace, and to inform the Steward. of his Majesty's Household of his illness, and intended removal." I then said to him-"I am the Steward." He then replied, that his Highness desired his unfeigned love and duty to his ROYAL FATHER; and begged as a favour, that the Steward. might accompany him in his present journey, and attend him during his illness.

Shepherd. I should have looked upon every circumstance, thus concurring, to be of Divine appointment, in the behalf of Little Faith: for, when we see the leadings or footsteps of Providence before us, we may gather assuredly that the King is gone forth, and therefore we may boldly venture to go after

him. When the good Shepherd goes before, the sheep must follow after.

Steward. I informed his Majesty of the matter; and immediately went, and accompanied Little Faith in his journey; gathering assuredly that the King had called me to that work.

Shepherd. Pray, what sort of a lodging has Little Faith got?

Steward. A sweet place, and in a most delightful air: far enough from the desert, his old highly favoured spot; and therefore I am in hope that he will recover of this disease.

Shepherd. Have you visited him constantly during his illness?

Steward. Constantly; and I find great freedom of speech with him. My mouth is open to Little Faith, my heart is enlarged, and I have a comfortable persuasion that he will be delivered some way or other. Sometimes he appears to be very happy for a whole day together. The King seems to engross the whole of his affections; and then there seems to be such a bar between his heart and Mara, as he thinks will end in a gulf fixed, which will keep them apart to all eternity. But, when a sight and sense of his folly recoils on his mind, it sinks him again. And thus, he says, he shall rise and fall in the balance of the sanctuary, till the Atonement operate powerfully, and then he shall come to a settled state.

Shepherd. Sins against knowledge, light, and love, are attended with the most aggravating circumstances. The reflections of such souls return with the keenest sensations. Base ingratitude to the best of Benefactors covers the face with shame and confusion, and strikes the ungrateful child dumb.

Steward. Little Faith acknowledges this; and says that, if the King forgives him, he never shall forgive himself, his crimes

are so complicated. Absenting himself from the Chapel-royal, and going to countenance the Hagarites, was in effect bidding them God speed, when he knew the damnable errors that they held had procured him so many stripes before. "Scraping acquaintance with such a set of desperate characters, and making my body," said he, "which is a member of Christ, the member of an harlot-for sure I am that I am joined to an harlot-and such," says the King, "are one flesh," 1 Cor. vi. 15, 16.

Shepherd. My time is expired. The new sheep lately added to the flock will be looking about them for water

Steward. I thought, when the sheep were in the fat vallies, that they might go to the still waters, and drink when they would.

Shepherd. When they are first brought to the fold, they are very thirsty, and at those times the rivers and streams are generally accessible; but, in process of time, the keenness of th 2d8 eir hunger and thirst abates, and then I am obliged to draw water for them. What little they can get for themselves, over and above what the Shepherd draws, will not suffice.

Steward. Our interviews, now, must be short; for I have purposed to visit Little Faith every day, or every other day, during his stay at Tabor, unless I should see a conspicuous change for the better, either in his bodily health or present state of mind. When you water the flock, remember Little Faith; and, as soon as convenient, I will call at the hut.

Shepherd. It is not in my power to forget him; and tell him that the Shepherd saluteth him.

Dialogue the Sixteenth.

Steward. So, I have found you again in the hut! You put me in mind of Job, who said he should die in his nest; for I have often thought that you will die in your hut.

Shepherd. The Chief Shepherd is a little sanctuary in all places where he deigns to come. It is his presence that consecrates a place, and makes it holy ground: his presence has often been enjoyed here; which makes me love the spot, for he is our dwelling-place in all generations. Pray, how did you find poor Little Faith?

Steward. Little Faith is better, both in body and soul. His need is not exercised with such sudden changes as formerly; a sense of divine love, and godly sorrow arising therefrom, sometimes abide with him a whole day and a night together; and, when these abate, he says his soul doth not sink into such horrid glooms as heretofore: and I told him, he would soon find that the gates of destruction would be so closed against him, that he would never more be able to send one thought within them; nor would his infidelity itself ever be able to fetch any matter for terrible meditation from those gloomy regions again.

Shepherd. Good news, indeed! But so it is, of a truth: for when once Little Faith is perfectly restored to the joys of the King's salvation, and upheld by his free Spirit, his lively hope will be so vigorous, and the Well-spring of life and comfort will swell his joys so high, that the abyss of destruction and perdition will sink and vanish from his mind for ever. Looking into the perfect law of liberty will effect this. My very heart glows with love to the King for his superabounding clemency to poor Little Faith, who has been an unstable man all his

days: but the King changes not, therefore he shall never be consumed.

Steward. He never shall. The King has visited his sin with the rod, and his iniquity with scourges, but his love is sure; and these heavy chastisements, when followed with renewing grace, will make his sonship appear as clear as the sun at noon-day.

Shepherd. Pray, who is his nurse?

Steward. She is one of my own procuring. Her name is Deborah: a godly young woman, one that knows the plague of her own heart, and the balm of the Physician, well. And, indeed, none are so proper to nurse others, as those who have been inured to afflictions. Wounded spirits are capable of melting and mingling together.

Shepherd. Little Faith's nurse is of the same name with her who nursed Rebekah: and, I believe, was a very great favourite in Jacob's family; for, when she died, they buried her beneath Bethel, under an oak; and the name of it was called "Allon- bachuth, or the oak of weeping," from that day, Gen. xxxv. 8. Which gives me reason to hope that she was a good woman. Besides, her death happened just after Jacob had built the altar, offered his sacrifice, and called the name of the place El-beth-el.

Steward. If she had not been a favourite of Jacob's mother, he would hardly have taken her into his family; and, if she had not been a favourer of the religion of the family, it is not likely that there would have been so much weeping at her death

Shepherd. True. I suppose Little Faith is very well pleased with his nurse?

Steward. Very; and she is as much delighted as he is. She told me that he sometimes lay, and blessed and praised the King all night long; and, even in his sleep, he would talk about the things of the celestial realm with such sensibility, wisdom, eloquence, and power, as she never heard nor felt from the lips of any in all her life. She declared that she had lately enjoyed a heaven upon earth. And Little Faith seems as happy with her: for she has been greatly exercised in soul trouble; and was once, in her carnal state, crossed in love herself, so that she is capable of sympathy; and, when Little Faith is in one of his low fits, they compare notes together.

Shepherd. That is a singular blessing. Nothing can be more disagreeable to an affectionate prince, when sick, than to have an alien from the commonwealth, and a rebel to the throne about him.

Steward. It is disagreeable. But this is not the case here: Deborah is an honourable young woman, sound in the faith, a woman of wisdom and prudence: and it may with propriety be said of her, as was of Ruth, that she "followeth not young men, whether poor or rich; and that all the city of our people do know that she is a virtuous woman," Ruth, iii. 10, 11.

Shepherd. I suppose Mara is glad enough that Little Faith is out of the way. Doeg and she can attend all the love-feasts in the neighbourhood: "They may take their fill of love until the morning; yea, they may solace themselves with loves-for the GOOD MAN is not at home, nor is there any day appointed for his return," Prov. vii. 18, 19. So that the bad woman has not got the good man to watch over her.

Steward. Yes, she has. The King watches over her, and has turned the heart of Doeg to hate her. His affections are gone over to Joan Clamorous: and Mara follows and watches Doeg as much as ever Little Faith watched Mara; yea, she follows him till she has exposed herself to every body; insomuch, that

Doeg is become the jest of the town, and is ashamed to shew his head; and his conscience is so honest, that he cannot stand before the scorn. Therefore he hates her with perfect hatred.

Shepherd. Those that despise the King shall be lightly esteemed. Lovers and friends shall despise them when the King begins to requite them.

Steward. Little Faith was never more crossed, provoked, and despised, by Mara, than Mara is now by Doeg. She shall know what jealousy is as well as Little Faith. But their motives widely differ: she is provoked, because she cannot pursue sin. Little Faith was provoked at sin.

Shepherd. Pray, has Mara never been to see her husband?

Steward. Yes, she has been three times. The first time she went, she asked Deborah how her husband did. Deborah replied, "Which of them, Madam?" She bid her go and tell her patient, that his wife is come. Deborah told her, that there was no call to disturb him; for she had received strict orders from her patient, and the physician also, not to admit her on any account. When she heard this, she withdrew, and went home.

Shepherd. Deborah was very smart upon her.

Steward. She is a very sensible woman; a personable woman; and, which exceeds all, she is a woman of grace, and of good understanding. When she came the second time, she brought Deborah a small present in her hand; but she refused it, saying, "I am of my father Abraham's mind; I will never take any part of the portion of the children of this world, even from a thread to a shoe-latchet." She asked how Little Faith did? She told her, "Never better in soul, though very weak in body." She then asked if her husband ever inquired after her? Deborah replied, "No." She added, "Did you tell him that I

called to see him? "Deborah answered," I did not; nor shall I, except he asks me." I must withdraw: I am going to market, to buy those things that we have need of against the feast. The feast of tabernacles is coming on, and then I shall be busy enough.

Shepherd. I expect every day to be ordered upon the upland commons. The sheep seem to be too full fed; too great a plenty of the good old pastures makes them dainty; they are every now and then prowling away, to get a bite of something new.

Steward. It is just the same with the King's Household. I have known some of the children go three miles from the Palace, to get a little wine mixed with water, Isa. i. 22; when they have left wine on the lees well refined at home, Isa. xxv. 6; which they have been welcome to without money and without price. But when these curious jaunts procure sensible barrenness to them, which is often attended with a long fast, it brings them both to their palate and their appetite; and, when they come to know the real value of the old wine, they do not straightway desire new, for they say, "The old is better," Luke, v. 39.

Shepherd. Clipping-time is coming on, and I hope that will be over, before we go upon the upland commons; for, when once the sheep get among the heath and thorns, the clippings amount to but little. Mr. Steward., adieu. The Lord entertain thee with the fatness of his house, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob.

Steward. If you should be gone before I come again, leave a few lines, wrapped up, and buried in the ground close to this root of the sycamore tree, and lay a stone upon it.

Shepherd. I will.

Steward. Peace be with thee, whether in the uplands or lowlands. You may open your mouth wide to the great Shepherd, and he will give you a blessing: "The south land shall go with the springs of water; yea, the upper and the nether springs, Josh. xv. 19. And what would you have more, but the kingdom?"

Shepherd. The kingdom and all.

Steward. BELIEVE! and all shall be thine!

For Mr. Fidelity, Steward. Of His Majesty's Household.

Lowland Palace, Salem .

ALAS! my brother! My highly-favoured hut you now behold and the adjacent valleys, my soul's delight; where footsteps divine have oft been traced; and where immortal Majesty mortals has deigned to visit, and with worms conversed! The Shepherd's gone; the flocks and bells, are gone; the verdant vales are left! while I, reluctantly, must range the dreary, desert waste!

When love divine shall burn, and Heaven shall smile; and thou the Throne besiege, with supplications armed; equipped; remember me-while mine with thine shall mix.

So prays thy Brother, and thy faithful Friend.

THE SHEPHERD.

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Seventeenth.

Shepherd. Here comes the faithful Steward., one of the excellent of the earth, in whom is all my delight!

Steward. You have a much better opinion of me than I have of myself. If you knew as much of the Steward. as I do, you would change your voice, and often stand in doubt of him. I have been five times to visit the hut in your absence. Pray, what sort of a time have you had upon the commons? By the note that you left me, you went off with a heavy heart.

Shepherd. Indeed, I did. But these words came sweetly to my mind, and sent me off in good spirits-" Feed the flock which is among you, taking the oversight of them, not by constraint, but willingly," 1 Pet. v. 2. And I found the good Shepherd better to me than all my fears; for I expected nothing but labour and toil, and that the commons would have been so barren, that the sheep would have been scattered all over the country, whereas I never saw the sheep-walks better stored. The herbage is always very scarce there; but then, if the good Shepherd blesses it with dew, Hos. xiv. 5, and showers, the sheep are always satisfied, whether the pasture be much or little; and this they convince me of by their abiding on the walks, without shewing the least inclination to stray.

Steward. When servants can give satisfaction, it makes the yoke of servitude sit easy, whether it be on the Shepherd or on the Steward.

Shepherd. It does: and I have been convinced that the good Shepherd is not confined either to this hut, fcd or to any other place; but he has confined himself to his flock, and his faithful servants. Pray, have you paid your constant visits to Little Faith!

Steward. Yes, I have visited him every day, or every other day, as opportunity offered, ever since you left the hut.

Shepherd. Pray, how does he do? Is he in "the injured lover's hell," yet?

Steward. No; nor do I believe that he will ever be put into that furnace again: he may go into another fire, but never more into that; for, when once a child has been burnt, he will ever after dread the fire; and he will be sure to defend himself from that quarter by all the force of prayer; and you know, all things are possible to them that believe, and Little Faith is a believer.

Shepherd. Nobody doubts that; and glad am I at my heart that the poor soul is delivered from those bands and nets. But, pray how goes the renewing work of grace on? Is his soul restored to the joys of divine salvation? And is he blessed with a free Spirit? for that will effectually cure creature-love, and all love sickness, at once.

Steward. He continued in the same state as he was when you left the hut, for about a month, in much meekness, contrition, and godly sorrow; and, at intervals, his past folly returned, with some degree of weight, on his mind: at which seasons self-loathing, self-abhorrence, and humble confessions, employed both his mind and his tongue. But, when these clouds were dispersed, unfeigned gratitude, grateful acknowledgments, thanksgivings, expressions of the warmest love, applauding the works and ways, admiring the conduct, and celebrating the high praises of the King, were his momentary employ throughout the noisy hours of the day and the silent watches of the night. Deborah told me, that she never saw such evident tokens of divine contrition, nor ever heard such pathetic language drop from the lips of mortals. She had privately listened to him, till she could not persuade herself but she was on the frontiers of the celestial regions; and transported, either with the mental eloquence of the disembodied spirits, or with the assembled myriads of cherubic worshippers.

Shepherd. It is often seen that; where the King uses much fatherly severity, there he exercises superabounding pity; and, where his displeasure waxes the hottest, there it abates the soonest. "His anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," Psalm, xxx. 5. Pray, does he ever mention any desire to see his wife?

Steward. Never; nor can he endure her name to be mentioned The stripes which he has felt for his folly will leave a lasting impression upon him; and, when he is effectually humbled by evangelical repentance, and renewed in the spirit of his mind, his whole soul will cleave to the first Cause and last End: nor could Little Faith ever have been so easily ensnared as he was, if he had kept up communion, and walked humbly, with the higher Powers.

Shepherd. Pray, how is his bodily health?

Steward. He appears to be in a very weak and low way.

Shepherd. Pray, does his wife visit him?

Steward. Perpetually; and has been as much overwhelmed with a spirit of jealousy, and as much provoked by Deborah, Little Faith's nurse, as ever he was by Doeg, the Edomite. Excuse me, my dear brother, for I promised to be, this afternoon, at the foot of Tabor. The Heavens protect thee! In a few days I will call on thee again.

Shepherd. You know, now, where to find me any day.

Steward. Yea, and I am thankful that I do; for heart-felt union and communion are not known by every one that bears the name of Shepherd and Steward. in the world. May the perfect bond of them ever subsist between us! Farewell.

Shepherd. Amen. Fare you well.

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Eighteenth.

Shepherd. Good morning to you, my friend! You look a little like a person in high trust now: you have got your keys in your hand, I see.

Steward. They are not always perceptible, either to me or to you; though I believe I am never without them: but the virtue and power lie with HIM who entrusted me with them. I ran away in a great hurry, for I have good news to tell thee; therefore I hardly took notice of what was in my hand.

Shepherd. Pray, how does Little Faith do? Is he delivered?

Steward. Indeed he is; and such a deliverance I never saw before: he has been led into a strange wilderness of woe and sorrow, and is now returned in the power of the Spirit.

Shepherd. Pray, how was his deliverance wrought?

Steward. He told me, that the King had manifested himself to him as a propitious Father; that he was pacified toward him, and reconciled to him; and, to assure him of it, he had given him such a sense of his everlasting love as he could scarcely sustain: yea, he made a visible appearance to his renewed mind; the eye of his faith really saw him, and the glory of him, and he told Little Faith, that he never more would be wroth with him, nor rebuke him.

Shepherd. What encouragement is this for the weakest in credence to trust in the unparalleled clemency of the best of sovereigns! Pray, has Mara been to see him?

Steward. Yes, continually; and she came while I was there; and Deborah told me, that she had frequently insisted upon going into Little Faith's room, but that she had kept the stair-foot door constantly locked, and would not admit her; for which Mara had given her some very abusive language. And, as she happened to come while I was there, I told Little Faith of it, of her frequent visits, and of her abusing Deborah for refusing her admittance; and that I would advise him to see her, if he thought the sight of her would not flurry him. He replied, "I have no objection to seeing her; for I am sure that neither her presence, nor death itself, will either flurry or move me; the King, in his great goodness, hath made my hill so strong."

Shepherd. And did you introduce her to him while you was there?

Steward. Yes: and when she came to the door, she bade me withdraw; which Little Faith heard, and desired me not to leave the room. She ran up to him, fell upon his neck, and kissed him. He looked up at her with a smile, and said, "Friend, wherefore art thou come? Betrayest thou Little Faith with a kiss?" O how she did look! She trembled, and would have dropped, if I had not put a chair under her! The most rebellious Israelite never was more abashed at the rays of Moses's face, nor the unrighteous council at the face of St. Stephen, than she was at the heavenly countenance of Little Faith.

Shepherd. "The wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." If the work of a gracious God upon a fellow-worm be so terrible to a guilty sinner, what must the wrath of an angry Judge be?

Steward. A perfect knowledge of that is not attainable in this life; it must be learnt beyond the grave.

Shepherd. Pray, what conversation had Little Faith with his wife?

Steward. Such a meeting I never saw! After she had recovered herself a little, she begged forgiveness of all that she had done amiss. He told her, that he was not in the least offended with her; nor had he, now, any cause so to be: she had been a terrible weapon in the hand of a just GOD to mortify and humble him, who will be gracious to his own elect; but he will take vengeance of their inventions: and then "arise, disappoint the ungodly, and cast them down; and deliver the souls of his saints from the wicked, which are God's sword," Psalm, xvii. 13. He added, "It was inordinate affection, and nothing else, that induced me to marry you: but it was your religious mask of profound deception, which I mistook for the King's image, that first entangled my affections; which, in time, rendered me blind to all your hypocrisy, and deaf to all wholesome counsel and caution. My folly being compounded with the sin of ignorance, I have obtained mercy through the great propitiatory Sacrifice; but where shall such deceivers, such presumptuous sinners as you, find a sacrifice for sin?"

Shepherd. "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites." Well may they cry-" Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Isa. xxxiii. 14, for an obstinate sinner, or an arch hypocrite in ZION, is the blackest character drawn or recorded in the eternal annals.

Steward. The case of such deceivers is singularly desperate, and their state perilous; for they are used by the devil as machines, in and by whom he beguiles and deceives the weak and simple of the King's Seed. And so Little Faith told his wife; and that, from the first, she could intend nothing but

evil against him, though God meant it unto good, Gen. 1. 20. And, though he had repented in dust and ashes for his folly, yet he was raised up to admire the wisdom and goodness of God in his happy deliverance; a blessing unmerited by him. She then begged it as a favour, that he would go to prayer with her. He replied, "I cannot, you have so quenched the Spirit of prayer in me, that I could not up a petition in faith for you, might I gain heaven by so doing: for, 'There is,' says God, 'a sin unto death; I do not say he shall pray for it.' Nor will the Almighty ever permit me to indulge one affection, even of nature, or of grace, for you again, either in this world or in the next. Discriminating love hath made such a breach in time, as will end in an everlasting separation between you and me." At this she fell into fits, and continued in them for three hours. She was afterwards carried home, and watched with all night. The next day she appeared raving mad: and the third day died, with such oaths and imprecations in her mouth, as could be dictated by none but him who desired to have Peter, that he might sift him as wheat.

Shepherd. "Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?" Job, xxxi. 3. I suppose Little Faith knows nothing of her awful departure; and, I think, it is better not to inform him of it, lest the surprise should hurt him, as he is so very weak.

Steward. He knows it all; the report came to Tabor while I was there. Deborah came up into the room, and beckoned with her hand for me to come out into the passage; and, while we were whispering together, whether we should tell him of it or not, he cried out, "You need not whisper about it; I knew the whole of the matter before either of you heard of it." I said, "Do you know that Mara is dead?" He replied, "Yes." I asked if he knew how she died? He told me, "Yes; she died mad: she departed on Wednesday morning," said he, " at nine o'clock."

Shepherd. And did he seem at all concerned at it?

Steward. Not in the least: he was as becalmed and composed in mind as if nothing had happened: he enjoys uninterrupted peace and quietude; nothing seems to move him.

Shepherd. Did you ask him how he knew of her departure?

Steward. I did; and he told me, first it was revealed to him in a dream. He saw her lying on a bed, raving mad, and belching out perpetual blasphemies against God. "There were three men (who were a part of our wedding-guests) holding her down on the bed: but she seemed to be too strong for them all, and was likely to get out of their hands; and would have done, had not the nurse got up behind her, pulled her head back, and held it fast in her lap. The nurse had no sooner clasped both her hands under her chin, and fixed her head beneath her knees, than I saw her soul breathed forth from between her teeth. And what surprised me was, that the officer, Matt. v. 25, did not stand at her right hand, Psalm, cxl. 6, expecting the prey, Isa. xlix. 24, as soon as the impulsive sentence came. Nor did the devouring lion, 1 Peter, v. 8, like a constant watch, appear, in order to make a violent seizure of the soul as soon as it should pass through the door of her lips, Psalm, cxli. 3, as is generally the case: but he came forth with the soul; the ghost was in his arms, for Providence was fled, Hos. ix. 12, and the officer had obtained a full possession of body and soul three days before." I then asked him, whether he saw them afterward? He said he did. He saw the officer fly as quick as thought, with the ghost in his arms, through the airy regions, even to the gates of Paradise. "The spirit returned unto God who gave it," Eccl. xii. 7, but found no admittance there. "I looked till a gloomy canopy divided, and instantly all was light: and, behold! an awful scene was exhibited; for the Judge appeared on a throne like a fiery

flame, Dan. vii. 9. Over his head was a crown suspended under the portals, just as I had seen it in a dream before. On each side of the Judge stood a cherubim. Millions of the bright inhabitants attended behind the throne, but came not without the gates. In the hand of the Judge was a flaming sword, with two edges; and I heard a voice more terrible, more loud, than thunder, saying, 'DEPART!' and a flame, as quick as lightning, shot forth, and attended the awful denunciation; which e75 , like a stream of brimstone, kindled, Isa. xxx. 33, in the affrighted ghost. The flaming scene vanished, and all was closed; when, lo! a thick darkness succeeded, and a pillar of smoke belched forth from the dismal gloom. Away went the ghost, all on fire, like a flaming torch, and shot down through the dimensionless, boundless, bottomless regions: while the flame burnt in it, and fury smoked after it, to the lowest hell, Deut. xxxii. 22; when, behold! all on a sudden, a tremendous gulf opened; millions appeared within the expanded vault, and horrid shrieks issued and resounded from the dismal cavern. In went the ghost, the gulf was closed, and all was silent; and I heard a voice saying, These are the spirits in prison, 1 Pet. i. 19. And immediately this text occurred to my mind, And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison; and, after many days, shall they be visited, Isa. xxiv. 22. And an awful visit it will be, when they are brought forth to the day of wrath" Job. xxi. 30.

Shepherd. O dreadful state. "All darkness is hid in their secret places; 'a fire not blown consumes them,' Job. xx. 26; while 'brimstone shall be scattered upon their habitation,' Job, xviii. 15. 'Surely such are the DWELLINGS of the wicked, and this is the PLACE of HIM that KNOWETH NOT GOD,'" Job, xviii. 21. Pray, was not Little Faith terrified at the sight?

Steward. He told me that he was not. He said, he beheld it with astonishment; but was so filled with unutterable gratitude to God for his grace to him, that his admiration of mercy

counterbalanced his astonishment at wrath; so that his mind was kept composed, and in a sweet frame, throughout the whole scene: and, when he awoke, he said, that he found his pillow wet with tears.

Shepherd. Pray, how is Little Faith in bodily health? Does he appear to mend at all?

Steward. He is very weak, indeed. He says, he never expects. nor does he in the least desire, to be restored, but had much rather depart: however, he is afraid to indulge, much less mention a wish, either one way or the other, for fear of offending; for his Royal Father has made his heart so soft, and brought his spirit into such tender love with himself, that even a thought counter to the sovereign will of his King is no less to him than a breach in the spirit, Prov. xv. 4.

Shepherd. A tender conscience, armed with filial fear and unfeigned faith, and furnished with a divine testimony is a blessing peculiar to the King's Seed. "The brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this," Psalm, xcii. 6; for heart-work always was enthusiasm to a bond-child. "I will work a work in your days," saith the King, "a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you," Acts, xiii. 41. They cannot believe the testimony of heart-work, for want of a divine work on their own heart.

Steward. I must take my leave of my dear friend, in order to get in provisions for the Household, as I intend to be at Tabor again to-morrow, if possible.

Shepherd. I wish thee a pleasant journey; and blessed with the Well-spring of life in thy heart, and the law of kindness in thy tongue, that thou mayest strengthen Little Faith upon the bed of languishing. Tender my kind love to him.

Steward. I will; and let us both have an interest in your prayers, the prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Adieu.

Shepherd. Farewell.

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Nineteenth.

Shepherd. I am glad to see you. Come in, for thou art a good man, and bringest good tidings.

Steward. I bring good tidings, and bad tidings. Good tidings, for Little Faith is as happy as ever: bad tidings, for he gets worse and worse in body; nor do I think that he will be long on this side Jordan.

Shepherd. Poor man!

Steward. Don't call him poor, for I think he is immensely rich in faith, rich toward God, and one that is entrusted with true riches: he hath got bags that wax not old; a treasure in the heavens, where no moth corrupteth, nor thief approacheth. He says, he now knows what true humility is; and, I think, his present humility is a prelude to his future honour, for "before honour is humility."

Shepherd. Nothing humbles the soul like the enjoyment of pardoning mercy, and an abiding sense of everlasting love. Where this self-abhorrence and self-abasement take place, they make room for a double portion of the Spirit. It is with him that is of an humble and a contrite heart, and that trembles at the word, that the King loves to dwell.

Steward. True: Little Faith says, that he never saw himself, and his past life, in so desperate a point of view as he now sees them. "The darkness is now past, and the true light shineth. The King discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death indeed, Job, xii. 22. For I can now see," saith he, "through the whole of my former profession, and discover a deal of pride and hypocrisy under every part of it: for I used to be perpetually complaining to the Royal Family about my state, and telling them how I longed after real convictions of sin by the Holy Ghost, a deep sense of my lost estate, a broken heart, a contrite spirit, godly sorrow, and evangelical repentance; whereas if any of the penetrating Servants of the Household handled the King's speeches faithfully, so that I felt the sword of the Spirit cut me to the heart, or the hammer of the word smiting my conscience, I directly left him, secretly offended at him in my mind, though I knew in my conscience that what he delivered was the truth; and I went to one that would prophesy smooth things, or prophesy deceits, so as I could but get the wound healed, though but slightly, by one who would cry-'Peace! peace!' though, at the, same time, God and Conscience both knew that no peace had been either spoken or applied to me. And this," said he, "is base hypocrisy, both before the King and his Seed."

Shepherd. It is no better than vile hypocrisy, to pray and complain for a broken heart, and at the same time run from the hammer; mourn for a wounded spirit, and fly from the sword that gives it. It shews a deal of rottenness at the bottom; for if truth be within, and the heart sound, such a one will come to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God; but he that doth evil hateth the light, and that is his condemnation. The Psalmist says, "Search me and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Sincere souls are always suspicious and jealous over their own hearts; and they

know that it is by sharp rebuke they must be made sound in the faith, and not by one that can play on an instrument, nor by a very lovely song of one that a pleasant voice, Ezek. xxxiii. 32. "All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light," Eph. v. 13, and God is light. To fly from the light, is flying from God; and to hate the light, is hating God; and he that hardens his neck against the reproofs of light, shall be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Steward. He told me likewise, that he had discovered a deal of pride which lay at the bottom of all his past profession, and that was the main spring of it. "For, having obtained a name of being very diligent, attentive, sober, honest, and much in retirement and devotion, I secretly fed upon it," said he; "and was most intolerably proud in spirit at gaining the name of a man singularly devout, though at the same time I knew that it was not one time in fifty that I came from retirement with the testimony or approbation either of God or my own conscience. It was my base hypocrisy, and my legal pride, and nothing else, that kept me so long pressed at the strait gate; for I could not endure the truth faithfully handled; I fed on human applause, and sought glory of man, and not the glory that cometh from God only; and I secretly loved, and felt a closer union in heart with, a refined Hagarite, than I did with a tried, tempted loyalist. A vile person, who trusted in his own heart, was not contemned in my eyes; nor did I take all my delight with the excellent of the earth, nor with such who excelled in that virtue which is coupled with faith, 2 Pet. i. 5. I frequently complained to others, that I was afraid that I was nothing but a hypocrite, when my complaint itself was nothing but hypocrisy, for I secretly indulg'd a very high opinion of myself. I was more taken with a person of gifts, and an external reformation, if he seem'd to be of a smooth, even temper and disposition, though legally dead, carnally secure, and settled in sinful ease, sloth, and a false peace, than I was with a good soldier

of Jesus Christ; though God says, 'Woe to them that are at ease;' and, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.' In short, 'I savoured not the things of God, but those that be of men.'"

Shepherd. Little Faith, being brought through the deep waters, and coming out into such glorious light and liberty, must unavoidably make deep discoveries of the leaven of legal pride; and of the various evils, temptations, and entanglements, that have befallen him in the way.

Steward. Indeed he has. And he sees it to be a most abominable crime to make the Chapel-royal a place of carnal courtship. "Eyes full of adultery in the house of God," he says, "is shocking to think of. I neither kept my foot, mine eyes, nor mine heart, when I went into that sacred place. I did not obey the voice of my teachers, nor incline mine ear to them that instructed me; for my wicked heart has been in all evil, in the midst of the congregation and assembly, Prov. v. 13, 14. However," said he, "the backslider in heart has been filled with his own ways. I was above consulting any of my real friends in the matter of my marriage, and therefore the KING, in just anger, let me go on with the workers of iniquity; and sure I am that, if HE had not supported me by his undeserved power, I had at this time been like him who lodged among the tombs." Excuse me my dear brother, as I promised to be at Tabor this afternoon.

Shepherd. The King hath made thee free; and free thou shalt remain for me, for I will neither press thee, nor detain thee a moment beyond thy time. Farewell

Steward. Fare you well

The History of Little Faith

Dialogue the Twentieth.

Shepherd. Good morning to you, my friend.

Steward. Good morning to you, my brother.

Shepherd. "Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?' Are you not well? or, have you over-walked yourself?

Steward. I am not ill, but rather weary, for I have been up all night I have seen the end, and taken my final leave of, poor Little Faith! He is no more!

Shepherd. Pray, when did he go off?

Steward. This morning, at four o'clock.

Shepherd. Was he sensible?

Steward. To the last moment. When I came to him, he seemed remarkably glad to see me; and said-" Surely there never was a poor, unstable, unbelieving, doubting, fearing soul, in the world, that was ever kept in so sweet, so composed a frame of mind, for so many weeks together, as I am! I have been dying, and in bondage through the fear of death, all my days; and now dying seems to be nothing, and death less than nothing. The King came to 'deliver them who, through the fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.' Surely I can set my seal to this truth. O how have I laboured in fruitless toil to obtain his notice, his favour and approbation; and to render myself acceptable in his sight by a little eye-service, partial obedience, and dead works, the wretched effects of pride, blindness, ignorance, and unbelief! While now my soul lies passive in the hands of my only Lord: while his sovereign pleasure is worked in me, his Spirit carries on his perfecting wor 1880 k; and Grace, without

copartnership or mortal aid, unmolested and unresisted, reigns! While the King of kings admires the work of his own hands, accepts the fruits of his own Spirit, and pronounces my worthless soul all fair, and without spot, as embraced in the arms of unbounded love, and enwrapped in his own eternal robe! O what a time of love, when the King enters into covenant with a soul, and brings it into the bonds of it, wrapped up in his own skirt! Ezek. xvi. 8. I aimed at obtaining grace by legal works: but now I perceive that the hardest work is to cease from working; the highest act of obedience is submission to the DIVINE will revealed: and true humility lies in loathing self, instead of trusting in it; and in receiving freely, to the honour of the Giver, what we vainly hope to merit; which is our pride, our loss, and the King's dishonour. I formerly looked to myself, instead of the King; to the commandment, instead of the promise; and to my own resolutions and endeavours, instead of the King's fullness and all-sufficiency; and vainly thought to bring an obedient life to the commandment, and both to the promise; and so to expect the promised blessing, as a reward of my obedience to the command whereas I now see that wrath is revealed in the law, to make me fly to the Refuge; that the strictness of the command is to make me look out for a promise; and the unconditional promise is to lead me to the Saviour's fullness; and grace for grace received from thence, is the Divine accomplishment of the promise; and the sweet operations of promised grace by the Spirit, are an evangelical fulfilment of the law in us; which excludes all boasting from the sinner, lays him under eternal obligations to free grace, and secures the whole glory to the first Cause and last End, who allows of no co-efficient cause in his decrees; no co-worker in the business of salvation; no co-operator in the work of sanctification; no copartner in the throne; consequently, no co-sharers in his praise. 'My glory I will not give to another, nor my praise to graven images.' Thus 'the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them who walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit.' How

wide are man's thoughts to God's thoughts! how far his ways from man's ways! The other is right to man, this to God: the former is the way of death, but the latter is the path of life."

Shepherd. What sublime, what evangelical, what a pure language did he speak! How pure from the dregs of corruption! how free from fleshly savour! how unadulterated with infernal pride and ignorance! and, when breathed from dying lips, how sweet, how encouraging, and how weighty the testimony!

Steward. True. And, indeed, I found it so: for he said-"How nigh is a work of grace to a state of glory! The one is the first-fruits, the other the harvest; the former the earnest, the latter the whole lump; the former a pledge, the latter the full possession. I feel myself," said he, "come to Mount Zion, indeed, and to the heavenly Jerusalem; for there is only a bridge, a river, and a single breath, between me and the celestial inhabitants. O the manifold wisdom of God! Life given us in Christ, before death entered by Adam; confirmed in the second Head, before fallen in the first; mercy and peace triumph, while righteousness and truth approve; God appears just, and yet justifies the ungodly; sins are freely pardoned, and vengeance is taken on man's inventions; God doth not at all acquit the guilty, yet, who shall lay any thing to the charge of his elect? A price is paid, yet man is saved by grace; mercy and grace are glorified, yet holiness and justice are honoured; Satan is outdone by infinite wisdom, and the lawful captive is delivered; by grace, through faith, a man is saved, and faith is the work of God; by works a man is justified, yet none are just before God but such as cease from working; saints are nothing, and yet the least of them are great when God is all in all. Surely I should understand the King's most gracious speeches, were! ever to be admitted to tread the courts of the Chapel-royal again; but I shall shortly join in the worship performed by the more perfect Family. Steward., my most

faithful, affectionate, and invaluable friend, I love you for your plain, honest, and undissembled dealings; and admire your unfeigned faithfulness and loyalty to the great King. Accept my most hearty thanks for all favours. I am going! I am going! The field is fought, the battle is ended, the day is won, and the crown, the crown, is eternally mine. Adieu! adieu!

Shepherd. A glorious end! O that I may die the death of the righteous, and that my last end may be like his!

Steward. That you will die the death of the righteous, I have not a single doubt: but there are but few that make so triumphant and glorious an end as Little Faith: and no wonder, when he had waded through so many trials; and was so effectually crucified to the world, and so free from "the love of money, which is the root of all evil." When the root of all evil is cut, the root of the matter takes hold: and, when a man withers to the things of this world, he flourishes in those of the next.

Shepherd. Pray, when and where do you deposit his remains?

Steward. He is to be interred on the Lord's-day next. The burying-spot that he fixed on is in the Fuller's Field: it was purchased at a great price, to be a burying-ground for strangers; and, as Little Faith was both a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth, he desired to lie there. About a week ago, he wrote a letter, and gave it to Deborah, which she was to deliver to me after his departure: in which he has desired me to see his funeral rites performed; a stone erected; and an epitaph, of his own composing, inscribed thereon. As I shall now be exceedingly busy, and not able to call again at the hut, I invite you to the funeral, where I hope to see you without fail

Shepherd. If God permit, I will attend. Till then, Heaven protect us both!

Steward. AMEN!

The Cry of Little Faith Heard and Answered, and His Innocent Cause Undertaken and Pleaded, in a Letter to a Friend.

And, beginning to sink, he cried, saying; Lord, save me! And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Matt. xiv. 30, 31.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones. Matt, xviii. 10.

LETTER TO A FRIEND, IN DEFENSE OF LITTLE FAITH.

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED your kind letter, and am glad, but somewhat surprised, at the rapid advances which you have made in so short a time. We are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; which is what you do apace, it seems. I hope you do not make more haste than good speed. For my own part, I was long stumbling upon the dark mountains, before I got to your stature in faith. God tried mine as fast as it grew; but you have grown up like the palm tree, and you will know your strength when the Saviour comes to "take hold of the boughs thereof," Cant. vii. 8.

I should like to hear some account of your trials, as well as of your confidence; for, though faith be called "gold tried," Rev. iii. 18; yet the trial of faith exceeds it, for that is "more precious than gold," 1 Pet. I. 7.

The full assurance of gospel faith is a most comforting, soul-establishing, and God-glorifying grace; yet it must be acknowledged that faith is the gift of God, and all the household of faith are not at the height of this stature. I have known something of this grace for the last seventeen years, and it is well known that it has been sorely tried many ways; and, for my part, I believe it is the faith of God's elect that I am favoured with, for it hath prevailed with God times without number; and, agreeable to scripture, I find that "in quietness and in confidence is my strength," Isa. xxx. 15. But I cannot find that it is in my power to exercise this grace when I would, though I could wish it were always in exercise. Faith is a fruit of the Spirit; hence the Spirit is called, the Spirit of Faith; and if faith be a fruit of the Spirit, then the Spirit must be the life, power, and root of, faith; and this wind bloweth when and where it listeth. I cannot command the north wind to awake when I please; nor is the south in my power that it should blow on my garden at my pleasure, and cause the spices to flow at my command, Cant. iv. 16. This power rests entirely with God, who "hath dealt to every [believing] man the measure of faith," Rom. xii. 3: who alone has "the residue of the Spirit," Mal. ii. 15; and gives to his people, as need requires, a supply of the same, Phil. i. 19, which influences faith, and every other grace, as it pleaseth God, who is the sovereign disposer of every good and every perfect gift. I find, by daily experience, that the life, power, courage, activity, or exercise of faith, are far from being at my command; I can neither will or do any thing truly good, but as God works inclination and motion in me of his own good pleasure. I am therefore compelled to acknowledge, that from the Lord is my "fruit found," Hos. xlv. 8; and without a sensible union with Christ I can do nothing;

though God, who knows my heart, knows that I would willingly spend and be spent in his service, and in the service of his people.

However, I find this is not the experience of every professor; some are perfect in the flesh, while I am obliged to confess that in my flesh dwells nothing good: and you, Sir, are arrived at the full assurance of faith, insomuch that you are purged from all doubts and fears; while I, at certain times, cannot trust God for a text to preach from, nor believe that he will own or bless my labours when I have got one: and I declare to you, to my shame, that I have known the time, even since I could call the Saviour my Father and my God, when I could not so much as trust to him for food and raiment; and, to be plain, I have been acquainted with some, who have boasted of as much assurance of faith as yourself, who have been as much straitened in the pulpit for matter, and as much puzzled for the necessaries of life as I have been; which has given me reason to suspect there have been some doubts at the bottom, though they might have been overlooked; for I read that all things are possible to him that believeth; and, if all things are, matter for the pulpit, and the necessaries of life, must be included among them, for our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of these things. But enough of this: I would not pull you down from your excellency, nor wish you to exclude them that do not excel in faith. Jacob says, "Reuben is unstable as water, he shall not excel," Gen. xlix. 4; yet the Israelitish mediator does not exclude him, but says, "Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few," Deut. xxxiii. 6, though they were but unstable men at best; for he sometimes stayed among the sheep-folds to hear the bleatings of the flocks, when he should have been at war; yet the Lord's host did not exclude him, but were cut at his instability. "For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart," Judges, v. 16. But, notwithstanding his

instability, "of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand," Rev. vii. 5.

According to your letter, nothing is faith that is short of full assurance. Now, though I should have no objection to compare notes with you, with regard to the life, power, prevalency, trial, victory, and triumphs of faith (which I believe I enjoyed in a measure before you had any faith at all), yet I cannot be brought to believe that any man can be naturally born or brought forth into this world six feet high in stature: and I think it is as strange to expect the new creature just formed to appear in the full assurance of faith. Faith comes by hearing the word of God and is produced by the Spirit, who applies the incorruptible seed to the heart: and, as faith is a grace of the Spirit, it is a part of the new creature, and is God's workmanship, and a creature of his own forming; for he hath created us anew in Christ Jesus; and declares us a people that he has formed for himself, Isa. xliii. 21. We know that all God's works are perfect; yet I am of opinion that this new creature, though perfect in its parts at the first formation, is yet not so in degrees. If you object, then I ask, where is room for growing in grace? The full assurance of faith is the highest stature or the new creature. I know God can give this grace the first moment that the Spirit operates, if assurance be essential to salvation, and cut down a child in faith," an hundred years old," Isa. lxxv. 20: yet the Almighty does not always so. It is God that deals to every believer "the measure of faith," Rom. xii. 3; and an equal measure is not to be found in every one that believeth in Jesus. And although you cannot allow this to be true, yet I take it for granted that in the course of your ministry, notwithstanding all your endeavours to enforce the full assurance of faith, and your opinion that all short of this stature are in unbelief, yet you find some of the royal family as Jesus Christ did, I mean without any faith in exercise or in appearance: and perhaps this might be the case with you, if your cross was proportionable to your

confidence: and very likely you would act with little better courage than the disciples did, who cried, saying, "Master, master, we perish I He said unto them, Where is your faith?" Luke, viii. 24, 25. If your faith, Sir, was tossed on the same storm, it would manage the helm very little better than theirs did, unless the Lord appeared; for faith is but a single member of the new creature; and we know that the new creature, with all its parts, is but weak, unless the Father and Creator of it appears to support it. These, we find, had so lost their faith that the Saviour asked where it was.

There were others the Saviour owned had faith, though it was but little: "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Matt. vi. 30. The last account we had was, that their faith was out of sight, and yet Christ says, "Where is your faith?" There was faith, and it was theirs, otherwise there had been no inquiry about it: the Lord would have spoken as Moses did, and called them "children in whom is no faith," Deut. xxxii. 20. But, in the last account that we considered, their faith did appear, though it did not appear great, "O ye of little faith!" But I shall not hang upon this point; for I find you do not countenance the day of small things.

We read of the woman of Canaan, who was immoveable in her confidence, whose faith had stood a threefold rebuff: to whom the Lord said, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt," Matt. xv. 28. Yet even this woman's faith does not rise to your stature; yours is of the tidiest assurance. The Saviour found one in his days who was a match for you, and but one, and that was centurion; who, in behalf of his sick servant, solicited the mercy of Jesus to heal him; who required no sign, nor the Saviour's personal presence, to perform the cure: "But say in a word, and my servant shall be healed," Luke, vii. 7. "When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him; and turned him about, and

said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel," Luke, vii. 9. This man, Sir, according to your doctrine was the Saviour's only faithful servant; for you assert, in this letter of yours, that nothing is faith short of the full assurance: then what is to become of them whose faith the Saviour inquired after, and those of little faith? to say nothing about that Faith that made whole, and many which could lay hold of the power of Christ, but not of his willingness, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole." Yet even this faith prevailed: "I will; be thou clean," saith the ever-loving and ever-blessed Saviour. But these weak ones are to go to the wall, according to your doctrine. You can take no notice, nor make any account, of these; and it is a comfort to such poor babes in Christ that you are not the author and finisher of faith: for he declares of his whole household, that "he that is least among you all, the same shall be great," Luke, ix. 48. Nor shall they ever be damned: "even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish," Matt. xviii. 14.

Believe me, Sir, I am not contending for the world; for I trust I can say, as Paul did, I endure all things for the elect's sake. Nor am I contending for unbelievers-I have ever asserted that he who believes not shall be damned. Nor am I contending for unbelief; for I declare that, if you will undertake, with your full assurance, to preach all unbelief out of my heart, I will take you to be my chaplain upon the conditions of "No cure, no pay:" and, if you can cure me of all my unbelief, I can pay you a thousand per annum; for the earth is the Lord's, and it is but to ask, without doubting, and all things are possible to us. You are sure of your salary, if you can but cure me of unbelief; and I assure you I have the greatest reason to believe that I am not destitute of the grace of faith, therefore you will not have a soil altogether barren to work upon.

It is plain to me, that there were no less than four degrees of faith among the Lord's followers, in the days of his flesh; and, if I am not mistaken, the scriptures divide the household of faith into four degrees, with respect to age, growth, strength, or stature. We read of new-born babes, of little children-of young men-and of fathers; but you, it seems, will have nothing to do with any but the fathers. However, our Saviour gently leads those that are with young; carries the lambs in his bosom; calls his sheep by name, and leads them out, and makes others follow him. Isaiah, xl, 11.

Isaiah speaks of some that waited on the Lord; or others that fled on eagles' wings; of some that ran, and were not weary; and of others that walked, and were not faint. A gospel minister is called a father to beget, a nurse to cherish, a shepherd to feed and lead, and a builder to establish; and I am bold to aver that, if you was to declare, in the next sermon you preach, that all who doubted would be damned, the weak believer under you would muster a hundred pleas against you; Little Faith would go to Christ and cry for help; and, though he often staggers at the promise through unbelief, yet he would call to arms, and rank a whole troop of marks, tokens, and promises against you, and dispute every inch of ground with you; and carry the day too, with respect to feeling, though not in point of logic.

Little Faith is a very formidable man when he takes the weapon of all-prayer, and cries to Christ. For my part, I should never care to engage him. The child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den, and play on the hole of the asp, which I should not chuse to do. Christ carries the lambs in his bosom, while such strong sheep as you are obliged to trudge after on foot. You know what the Lord says with respect to these, Take heed that ye offend not "one of these little ones which believe in me," Matt. xviii. 6.

At the Saviour's birth the wise men worshipped him, and the angels proclaimed him. At twelve years old the Saviour grew in wisdom, in stature, and in favour both with God and man, and disputed with the doctors. At thirty years of age he overcame Satan in the wilderness; and at thirty-three he endured the cross, and despised the shame. And I suppose you love the Saviour in every stage of his life, as well as in every covenant character; and, if you love the everlasting Father from his childhood, what makes you so severe against his rickety children? It is a rare thing to find so numerous a family all strong and lively: their faith, though it be but little, will bring them to the salvation of their souls at last, if you will but let them go their own pace. Faith cannot be hurried: "He that believeth shall not make haste." You may drive them to presume; you cannot drive them to believe. Ministers have no dominion over their faith, but are fellow-helpers of their joy. Faith will be attended on, not commanded nor over-driven. Paul was offered up on the service of faith, not to demolish it. Faith is God's work; and they are branded for rebels who said, "Let him make speed and hasten his work, that we may see it," Isa. v. 19. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent," John, vi. 29. And surely God never sent his servants to destroy the work of his own hands. For my part, I would ever wish to nurse faith, whether it be in the conception, in the formation, in labour, or when able to shift for itself, or strong enough to defy angels, principalities, and powers, as Paul's faith was.

It seems that my friend has nothing to offer in behalf of Zion in labour, nor in behalf of her fondlings, that are to be borne on her sides, and dandled on her knees: he has nothing to encourage children who cry, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe; guide me, lead me, or draw me; stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love." He cannot condescend to men of low degree; he minds only high things. I believe that I have, at this time, three hundred in the church

to whom I minister, that are short of your stature in faith according to this letter; and, instead of disputing them out of their faith, or driving them out of the church on account of their weakness, I wish God would send me three hundred more such; for, through grace, I can see the difference between embryo and old age; and I am persuaded that the strongest column in faith was first formed, and then brought to his stature, by the operations of God's good Spirit; for the hearts of all men are like a withered and barren womb till the Spirit applies the incorruptible seed, and quickens the soul. But my dear brother is like Elkanah; if he cannot make Hannah bear, he will not stay till she has tried her faith, but will take Peninnah: but, in the end, the slighted spouse, who was rejected for want of the fruit of the full assurance, will tell him that "by strength shall no man prevail," 1 Sam. ii. 9.

I take it for granted that you will call me a minister of unbelief, and an encourager of doubts and fears. To which I reply, neither unbelief nor doubting have ever been friends to me, therefore I am not pleading their cause: my plea is on the behalf of faith, whether it appears in the ewe great "with young," Isa. ii. 11; in the lamb that rides in the bosom; in the sheep that lie down in green pastures, Psa. xxiii. 2; or in the old ram, whose horns are iron, and whose hoofs are brass, Micah, iv. 13. We do not condemn Isaac because he was lodged in a womb ninety tears of age, nor yet on the account of his mother's laughing at the promise. He was a child of promise in the womb, and was in the promise conceived there; and he was no more than an heir of promise when he died.

We sometimes see old sinners in soul-travail; and, though a troop of doubts and fears are mustered up by the devil and the old man to hinder the birth, yet Little Faith will break forth as soon as her little sister Charity comes to help her; and the

elder shall serve the younger. Faith worketh by love, and love will ever attend and assist faith.

"Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us; whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith," Rom. xii. 6. The apostles, and even Jesus Christ himself, prophesied to four degrees of faith; but you can allow of no faith below that of the superlative. Between their prophecies and yours there is a very great disproportion, and I dare say there is as great a disproportion between your faith and the faith of some of your hearers. There is a great disproportion between babes and men, and between milk and strong meat; between little faith and great faith. And little faith should be preached to, from a consideration of our former weakness and deficiency in faith; and strong men are to be spoken to from the degree of assurance that God has given us: and then our proportion of faith will agree with those of the household.

If you cannot submit to this, you must keep three curates: one to attend spiritual groanings, or such as are in pain to bring forth: another to nurse and cherish children, and feed them with the sincere milk of the word; another to strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees: and then you may attend them only that are of full age, and "speak the wisdom of God in a mystery to those that are perfect," 1 Cor. ii. 7.

If this my counsel should be approved, and you should think proper to adopt the method, then you need not study one part in ten of the Bible: you have nothing to do with the groanings, strugglings, conflicts, nor the petitions of faith, but only to cull out the triumphs of it. You tell me, that "nothing but assurance is faith, and that faith and doubts cannot be in a believer at one and the same time." I can prove, Sir, to you, that I have got faith, and you own it; and I wish you would come and dispute me out of all my unbelief and doubts, for I have many

in me. Though I do not, blessed be God, doubt of the eternal salvation of my soul, yet I doubt many things; therefore you must dispute me out of these, or rank me with the infidels.

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations," Rom. xiv. 1. Hence it appears that there are some who are weak in faith; and, if weak, faith cannot be either great or strong in them. Yet they are to be received into our affections, and into church-fellowship, as partakers of the grace Of God, though weak in faith. Some stagger at the promise, and others lay hold of Christ with a trembling hand; believing in his ability, as the poor leper did, ye stagger at his willingness; their hearts fail and misgive them; they are children tossed to and fro; they are children in understanding; they speak as children, think as children, and understand as children: but these are to be received, though not to doubtful disputations: not to hear vain disputes, that leave every thing doubtful, but settle nothing: nor are they to be disputed out of their faith because they are weak, and harassed with many doubts, such as, whether they are right or wrong; whether this is lawful, or that; whether they shall hold out, or fall short; whether their faith be genuine, or feigned; whether their sensations are of God, or whether all is not a delusion. These things do at times attend the weak believer, more or less; yet he is to be received, "for God hath received him," Rom. xiv. 3.

I think it may be proved, that faith and doubts have been found in a child of God at one and the same time. Peter discovered it when he walked on the sea: "And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But, when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me! And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matt. xiv. 29-31. Jesus Christ, who is a better judge of the heart than we are, allowed Peter to have faith,

though at the same time he was one of little, faith and did doubt. Yet we see that Little Faith can cry for help, though he cannot weather a storm; if he cannot help himself from sinking, he will pray to him that can, and prevail too; for Jesus stretched forth his hand immediately, and caught him, as soon as the voice of Little Faith was heard.

There is as great a disproportion between great and little faith, as there is between an infant in its go-cart and a giant in armour; and, if we bend our ministry against the feeble of the household, we shall act like Amalek when he pursued the children of Israel; who, not being able to overtake the van, cut off all the rear: "he smote all that were feeble, faint and weary; and he feared not God," Deut. xxv. 18. Christ will not break the bruised reed, nor will he allow us to bruise the heel of his mystical body without resenting it. The Lord pays peculiar attention to the little ones: "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward," Matt. x. 42. "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea," Matt. xviii. 6. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish," Matt. xviii. 10, 14.

And pray why were these young disciples called little ones? I suppose, because they were young in grace, children in understanding, and some of them were men of little faith. Sometimes they thought they should not be either fed or clothed, unless they were burdened with cares for the morrow. To which inward workings of their mind the Saviour replies, "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore I say unto you, take no

thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on; neither be ye of doubtful mind." Matt. vi. 25, 30; Luke, xii. 29.

It appears to me that there is a difference, and a proper distinction should be made, between faith and the full assurance of faith. For, although full assurance and doubts do not stand together with respect to a believer's interest in Christ, yet is it clear that faith and doubts have often appeared together; as it is written, "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And, when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted," Matt. xxviii. 16, 17. These eleven were all disciples, and they were all believers in Jesus, and they worshipped him; but some doubted!

Peter was not void of doubt about the vision that appeared to him; the voice that came to him, saying, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord." And, while he doubted in himself what this vision should mean, the "Spirit said unto him, Behold three men seek thee. Arise, therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them," Acts, x. 13, 14-17-19, 20. Manoah was not void of doubt when he said unto his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." But the faith of his wife put his doubts to flight, saying, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands; neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these," Judges, xiii. 22, 23. When the Saviour testified to the twelve that one of them should betray him, they, knowing the hypocrisy of the human heart, "looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake," John, xiii. 22.

In short, if believers were clear from the sin of infidelity, we should not find so many reproofs and rebukes left upon record

as re do, all which have been given to the faithful for that sin of unbelief; nor would they have been chastened for it, as many of them have been; especially Zacharias, who, upon hearing that his prayer was answered, that his wife should bear a son and that he should be a prophet, and the Lord's forerunner, required a sign, and was struck dumb nine months for his unbelief, and doubting the truth of the angel's message, which was fulfilled in its season. If our favourite apostle had found no unbelief nor doubts among the saints in his days, he would not have cautioned them against it: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting," 1 Tim. ii. 8.

Where there is unbelief, there is doubting; they always go together; and who can say, I have made my heart clean, with respect to unbelief; I am pure from the sin of doubting? And, if they are not free from unbelief, they are not free from doubts for, although they may have the fullest assurance of their eternal salvation, yet they doubt about many things. The father of the faithful was hardly free from doubts when he denied his wife in Egypt, and said, "They will kill me" for thy sake. "Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee," Gen. xii. 12, 13.

Though the gospel came to the Thessalonians "in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," yet it does not go to every chosen vessel with that degree of power, nor with so much assurance. Paul speaks of some whose faith grew exceedingly, and of others, who for the time ought to have been teachers, but who needed teaching again. We are to feed the lambs as well as the sheep, John xxi. 15, 16; to strengthen weak hands, to confirm feeble knees, and to say to fearful hearts, "Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come and save you," Isa. xxxv. 3, 4. Though such souls can scarcely say, the Lord our God.

I think, if I was with thee a little while, I should find something like doubting about thee, notwithstanding all thy assurance. You own that you meet with much opposition, both from professors and profane; these, like Sanballat and Tobiah, are mountains in the way of Zerubbabel, Zech. iv. 7. How is it, then, that thou dost not remove them? "Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done," Matt. xxi. 21.

Your usefulness is not singularly great, nor are your people in the sweetest union; far from it; yet I doubt not but you pray for these things. I would advise you to put forth a little more faith with your prayers: for if a man do "not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith," Mark, xi. 23.

You have a carnal wife, whose besetting sin is covetousness. I wish you would make a trial of your faith upon her. We know that a sinner is a corrupt tree, and the love of money is the root of all evil. If your faith is void of all doubts, you might say to that corrupt tree, Be thou plucked up by the roots, and be thou planted in the sea of glass mingled with fire, Rev. xv. 2, which is the gospel dispensation, and it would be done. All things are possible to him that believes. A less degree of faith than that which you talk of, would do this. "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you," Luke, xvii. 6. I have been praying for faith these fifteen or sixteen years; and I must confess that I find it hard work, when the Lord is pleased to try me, either to stand the fiery trial, or bear the cross; and seldom do without much wretched rebellion and murmuring, which are both my grief and my shame.

If I was to attend your ministry, instead of strengthening my faith, you would beget a thousand doubts in my mind; for, every time I heard you enforce a faith that could purify the heart from that cursed sin of unbelief, and from all doubts that attend it, I should act the part of the adulterous generation; I should require a sign; I should say, "What sign shewest thou?" And, if upon observation I found thy labours and usefulness not to exceed those of others; if thy heart appeared no more pure than my own; if thy victory over the world was no greater than mine; if thy faith wrought by no more love than my own does; if thy prevalency with God did not appear to excel; if no conspicuous answers to prayer were granted; if I perceived no superior degree of knowledge; no experience which excels that of others; no trophies of faith's victories, like those of Paul; no visions nor miraculous revelations; no rapturous triumphs, nor any pressures beyond measure, to make you despair even of life; I should judge of you as some did of Samson when they cut off his hair; I should think you were no more than another man. And, for my part, I should give you the old challenge, "Shew me thy faith without thy works," which is what no man ever did, "and I will shew thee my faith by my works," James, ii. 18; which every real believer can do.

I read that faith is doubled with repentance. The apostles preached repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith is a coming to God by repentance. It views God, in Christ, a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. It is an apprehending of the Saviour with all his saving benefits. It applies the atonement, and purifies the heart by an application of it. It puts on an imputed righteousness. It gives Christ a residence in the heart; he dwells in the heart by faith. It worketh by love to Christ, and to all that love him in sincerity and truth. It is a penetrating eye; it sees him who is invisible, Heb. xi. 27. It is a mighty hand; "I held him says the spouse, Cant. iii. 4. It attends prayer; we ask in faith. It brings distant

things near; "they saw the promises afar off, and embraced them," Heb. xi. 13. It receives life and strength from the Lord; we live by faith. It is the substance of things hoped for. It is an earnest-penny of the great reward. It is a realizing evidence of things not seen; the believer is entitled to glory; heirship and sonship are promised to it. Faith is a spark from the Saviour's fullness; wrought and produced in us by the Spirit, who makes it act and shine as he pleases. It is the eye of the heaven-born soul; "He that believeth in me shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life" that he may walk by faith, and not by sight.

Now, if thou canst give me no account of repentance toward God, as well as faith; no account of receiving the atonement, and of the purifying efficacy thereof; no account of putting on an imputed righteousness, and of that peace which attends it; no account of Christ's taking possession of thy heart; no account of the beauties of him who is invisible; no account of the love that faith works by; no account of prevailing with God in prayer; no account of laying hold of Christ, nor of bringing him into the chamber of her that conceived thee-I should not fear thee as a prophet of the Lord; nor should I pay any respect to thy faith, because thou hast none of the above works to show. If thou art destitute of these things, thou mayest well boast of the word, faith, for thou hast got nothing else: "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" James, ii. 20.

It may be observed, that the Scriptures are not so profuse about what faith is, as they are about what faith does. By faith Noah was moved with fear, and built an ark. By it Moses forsook Egypt; by it he endured affliction; and the love that his faith worked by influenced his heart to have respect to the recompense of reward. But you are silent about these things; you have only to do with full assurance; you are not for the feats of faith, only for the size. "My desire is, that Job may be

tried unto the end," Job, xxxiv. 36. If I could see thee tried, in a measure, as Job was, and hear thee say, when in the furnace, as he did, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," I should then think thy faith had got a divine hold indeed; but at present we differ; thou seemest to be filled with assurance, while I doubt whether thou hast any real faith at all.

I know you will rank me with unbelievers; and "I desire to be present with you, [to dispute the point,] and to change my voice, for I stand in doubt of you," Gal. iv. 20. For my part, I would not exchange my weak faith for yours; I know what it has done, though I know not what it has yet to do; but this I know, that faith is not the strength of my heart, though I would wish to be strong in faith. God is the strength of his people's heart; and as their day is, so shall their strength be. God gives them faith to stand in, and faith to fight by, though he seldom gives them a stock in hand to boast of.

I once knew a woman, who was a poor, weak, illiterate person, an inferior servant in a family, who pretended that she has been converted to the faith at a place called Staines, in Middlesex who, some time after her pretended conversion, came to London, and shortly threw herself out of servitude. She pretended to a very great degree of faith and knowledge; and with this trading stock she got acquainted with many professing people; and by frequenting places of public worship, and prayer-meetings, she began to be well known and very highly esteemed at our end of the town; and in process of time she was able, by means of her faith and knowledge, to mump a livelihood, and so lived in habitual idleness. She had wisdom enough not to pay her visits to those of experience and discernment, but chiefly to the simple ones, who were running here and there, crying out, "Who will shew us any good?" Amongst these she constantly prophesied; and where she carried her tattle, there she got

her provision; and so lived like a hawking pedlar, or a beggar's dog, and went from house to house.

Among the various families that she pilfered, that of Mr. Baker, grocer, of Oxford Street, was one; who, in process of time, attended my ministry: and, after I became acquainted with them, I often heard, in the course of conversation, the name of Nanny brought up. I desired to know something of the pedigree, character, religion, life, and behaviour of this Nanny; and, by their account, I found that she did not approve of working, and eating her own bread; nor did she obtain it altogether by the use of candour; for she shewed her authority, used sharpness, found fault with their family affairs, housekeeping, and whatever fell under her observation. If she saw the master of the family receiving fresh goods into his shop, she observed, "Ah! you are filling your barns: what if your soul was to be required this night!" And, when they presented her with a guinea, she replied, "I don't thank you for it." The utmost they ever could get of her, on the reception of such a sum, was to turn up her eyes to God, and inform them, that she was not beholden to them. She did not cringe as Paul did, calling an alms a sweet-smelling savour, well-pleasing and acceptable to God; she left the hospitable instrument quite out of the question.

Nanny was not destitute of eyesight; she knew an eagle from an owl; and perceived who could see through her, and who could not. The inquiring and the simple she stuck close to; and, with a few scraps of scripture, she became the formidable object of their fear, and exercised her authority with a very high hand, and that for three or four years together; which God has made of great use to them since, as it has given them a just idea of a mumping hypocrite. I gave them to understand, that the scriptures warranted no such behaviour as this in women professing godliness. They intimated, that she was certainly a good woman, though she

was rather haughty and strange in her way. I asked whose ministry Nanny attended; and I found those were her greatest favourites who dealt the most in hell and damnation, yet knew nothing savingly of Christ; which gave me a strong suspicion that Nanny was no prophetess.

However, it once fell out that I happened to call on them when she was present: and the good man and his wife were sitting by, or at her feet, while she was exercising her authority, and enforcing her rebukes. I took a chair, and sat down by her, though she seemed rather in a bad temper. I inquired a little into her conversion, and the manner of it; how she came at first by her profession; what troubles she had been in, and how delivered; whether she had felt the burden of her sins, and how it was removed; what she knew of the operations of grace, and of the liberty of the Spirit: and Nanny gave me just as confused an account as one of the Lapland witches would have done. The good man and his wife sat biting their lips, and seemed not a little displeased with my scrutinizing of her; they did not like to see their governess and tutoress arraigned at the bar. However, I knew it was my duty to "judge them that are within, but them that are without, God judgeth," 1 Cor. v. 12, 13, and to be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; for I perceived that the people were sincere seekers after truth.

Some time after this Nanny called on them again, and inveighed against them for idolatry, declaring that they idolized Mr. Huntington. They asked her how it was that she never had been afraid of their idolizing her? She replied, "I come to you with the word of the Lord." They answered, "So does Mr. Huntington." She soon perceived that they entangled her in her speech, and foiled her by an application of her own conduct. From that time her mask began to fall off, and poor Nanny appeared bald-headed and bare-heeled before them: and from that time she forsook them as unreclaimable.

The next tidings we heard of Nanny were, that she had borrowed three pounds of a young professing man; and, when he demanded payment, she rebuked him for expecting it from a child of God; which sufficiently shewed to what class she belonged. It is "the wicked [that] borroweth, and payeth not again."

The next news was, that a person of note had sent for her from report. When she came, the gentlewoman had company, and desired her to stay below till they were gone. On obtaining admission, she exclaimed against being kept in waiting, as a child of God; and told the family, they ought not to respect "fine clothing and the gold ring," James, ii. 2. The person gave her some refreshment, and dismissed her.

The last account respecting her was, that a poor woman, who got her bread by chafing, came to Mr. Baker's, and said that Nanny was with her, but complained that she could not live in the house with her; for that she could do nothing to her pleasure (at that time she was supported by an upper servant in a family,) and yet was afraid to turn her out, for fear of offending God. However, soon after the Lord smote her with convulsions and horror of mind; and at the same time being struck dumb, she was not permitted to tell what she felt, or what she feared. Some, people offered to pray for her, but she refused it; and no wonder; for they that say, "Pray for us," should "have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly;" or else she rejected their prayers through pride; for she had often affirmed, that none could teach her more than she knew; though with respect to power, or even of the letter, she knew nothing; and so she died.

I do not say that your faith is of this kind; but this I will say, that your enforcing perpetually the full assurance of faith, will drive many hardened sinners and hypocrites to presume, and their presumption will be taken for full assurance. You may

furnish their heads, though you cannot manure their hearts; and you may drive them to presume, but you cannot drive them to believe. It is such presumptuous, idle, canting, whining persons, as the above described, that bring a slur on the cause of God, and occasion that religion, that is pure and undefiled in itself, to be evil spoken of. The grace of God never makes a man a bad husband, a bad father or a bad servant It not only teaches, but powerfully influences, a man to do the husband's and the father's part; a woman to know her place, act the part of a wife, and of a mother; the child to be obedient, and the father to govern under God; the servant to be industrious, diligent, and submissive; and the master and mistress to respect servants that are faithful.

It is true, God gives no husband, wife, child, master or mistress, which are destitute of grace, any power over a good conscience towards him, either to force it, or to lead it from him. God is to be obeyed rather than man; yet he commands and enforces behaviour becoming godliness on those that fear him. Nothing will ever mend the heart of sinners, or promote holiness, either in heart or life, but enforcing the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and the necessity of a spiritual birth, which alone can produce it. This we ought to do, and then leave it to God; the excellency and the power are of him, not of us. It is our duty to sow the seed in the morning, and in the evening not to withhold our hand; but we cannot tell which "shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good," Eccl. xi. 6.

God has concluded all men in unbelief; and, if the Spirit convinces a man of the sin of unbelief, that same Spirit will work faith in his own good time. The mind of an awakened sinner generally flies first to the law, where he learns, by a strong hand, the holiness, justice, and immutability, of the lawgiver; and he will apply every sentence or threatening to himself. Such believe in Moses; and faith will lead them in

time to believe in Jesus. They that believe Moses' writings, will in due time believe the Saviour's words. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom. x. 17. When God applies the word with power to the heart, the sinner is begotten: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth," James, i. 18. The incorruptible seed is received, 1 Peter, i. 23; and by the promises he is made a partaker of the Divine nature, 2 Peter, i. 4. But it is common with God to chasten such souls sharply, that they may be purged from dross, and emptied of self, and be made partakers of his holiness, Heb. xii. 10. And under these divine operations there is much soul-travail; and unbelief will shew itself, unless you allow of perfection in the flesh: and it is the workings of unbelief against faith that cause so many conflicts in the awakened mind, until faith overcomes, and perfect love casteth out fear then life and immortality are brought to light: but the believer is then no more than a new-born babe. It is true, you will hear such often say in their prosperity, "I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour, thou hast made my mountain to stand strong," Psalm, xxx. 6, 7. Yet, if God hides his face, they are soon troubled; and they will ask, "Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" Yet these very persons were not destitute of faith; "And I said, This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High," Psalm, lxxvii. 7-10.

And has my friend got rid of all these infirmities? If you have, you may well triumph; for you have got rid of the main sinew of the old man, which no bible-saint could ever boast of; for I cannot find one in the bible that ever declared he was free from the sin of unbelief, though many of them were more mighty in faith than you are. For my own part, I view unbelief as the life and strength of all sin; and he that is free from this sin is a perfect man; he is able to govern the whole body.

Patience must, of course, have had her perfect work in him, and he be entire, wanting nothing.

I am of opinion that, when you have done your best, you will find new-born babes, little children, and young men, as well as fathers, in the church; and I am ready to conclude, that if God should try thee in the furnace of affliction, as I hope he will, for your soul's good, and the good of others, that thou wilt find thyself as helpless as some of those little ones who appear so weak. God keeps the confession of Little Faith in his own mouth! and, when he bids them speak, he will use it. "Let the weak say, I am strong," Joel, iii. 10. And how can it be otherwise, when God is their strength?

Wherever the least feature of the Saviour's image appears, it is to be regarded. "Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." Those that are strong are to bear the infirmities of the weak, and to sympathize with them, considering themselves also in the flesh. And I believe the strongest saint upon earth would find himself but a bruised reed, if God was to leave him but one moment to feel the plague of his own heart. He would be like Hezekiah: "I said, in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave, I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent; I have cut off, like a weaver, my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day, even to night, wilt thou make an end of me. I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me," Isaiah, xxxviii. 10-14. This man was not destitute of faith in God. God had wonderfully blessed him, as appears by the 30th, 31st, and 32d chapters

of the second book of Chronicles: "Howbeit, in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart," 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. And, if the Lord was to serve thee so, thou wouldest find something in thy heart besides the full assurance of faith, as well as he who required a sign to dash his unbelief out of countenance, and put his doubts to flight; which was granted. "Then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee, and this city, out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city. And this shall be a sign unto thee from the Lord, that the Lord will do this that he hath spoken: Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun-dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down," Isaiah, xxxviii. 4-8. God does nothing in vain. If the king had been plagued with no unbelief; if he had no doubts to scatter, no wavering in his mind, there had been no call for a sign. He might have said, as the centurion did concerning his sick servant, "Speak in a word, and my servant shall be healed;" speak in a word, and I shall be restored. But all the family of God have not got the full assurance of faith; and those Who have the strongest assurance cannot exercise it when they please. David had this grace in the highest exercise when he said to the Philistine, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord

saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands," 1 Sam. xvii. 45 47. Here is assurance under arms at the front of the battle; but his assurance did not appear to be in such wonderful exercise at the time of Absalom's conspiracy, which many of his people took notice of: "And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines, and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom," 2 Sam. xix. 9.

These observations are sufficient to prove that all the household of faith are not blessed with full assurance; and it is as evident that the life, power, spirit, and exercise of faith, are not at the command, nor at the disposal of man; and it is as plain that the old man and the new one, grace and corruption, Faith with her fruit Unbelief with her doubts, do dwell in a child of God at one and the same time. There is, in the best of men, a law in the members warring against the law of the mind. And it is clear that assurance belongs to the law of faith and love in the mind; and it is as plain that unbelief is part of the law in the members; and so you will find it when you come to be tried, unless you are one of those who are perfect in the flesh; if so, you have no battle to fight, not any thing to pray for; and it is well with you that your faith is grown so exceedingly. But there are some who are so weak in this grace, that they are obliged to pray, as the apostles did, "Lord, increase our faith!" Luke, xvii. 5: and with him that said, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief," Mark, ix. 24: and these petitions prevailed with the Saviour as well as yours. Therefore preach the faith, encourage weak faith, and impart that which is lacking in their faith, and let them go on their own pace. "He that believeth shall not make haste," Isaiah, xxviii. 16. "He that hasteth with his feet sinneth," Prov. xix. 2. The Lord's family is like Jacob's drove, when he said to Esau, "My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are

with me; and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant; and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir," Gen. xxxiii. 13, 14.

I have often observed that some of the most renowned saints in the Bible, I mean those that were strong men in grace, and mighty in faith, have appeared like little children when God has withdrawn the light of his blessed countenance from them, and put them into the furnace of affliction: and we have some in our days who would willingly be thought to excel in this most excellent grace of faith, who, I am persuaded, would discover as many doubts upon the deep Waters of affliction as Peter did when the boisterous sea hid the face of Jesus from his eyes.

Therefore I must entreat thee, in behalf of my brother Little Faith (he is a good man, though, like Zaccheus, of little stature,) not to drive him, with your strong assurance, into the sycamore tree: if you do, when Jesus comes, he will make him come down again. You may observe, in this epistle, that I sometimes call Little Faith by the masculine, and sometimes by the feminine gender; because there are godly men, as well as women, who often appear to have but little faith, or to be slow of heart to believe. However, you will know Little Faith by his cries, and by the title God has given him: but, wherever he be, if he calls for thine assistance and sympathy, let him find grace in thy sight.

Thou wilt sometimes find him struggling between the strait till he is out of breath, and then he will lie down, and plunge no more, as if he was hung in the birth. Hence he is threatened with more hard labour: "The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children," Hosea,

xiii. 13. Yet he was a son, and the seed of faith was in him: "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? I remember him still; my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord," Jer. xxxi. 20.

Sometimes thou wilt find him to be all faith, all praise, and all religion, mounting up as upon eagles' wings, Isaiah, xl. 31, till some contrary wind blows him too far towards the north: then he loses the rays of the sun, and down he comes, and you will see him move no more till God moves him. He will mourn, but not strive; cast away his confidence, but not resist; write bitter things against himself, but nothing against Satan. He has a heart to fret, a heart to murmur, a heart to complain, a heart to rebel; but no heart to strive, fight, or plead; and he is slow of heart to believe; hence he is called "a silly dove without heart," Hosea, vii. 11.

He is sometimes to be found with a yoke about his neck: then it may be concluded that he has either been running away from his work, as others have done, saying, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name," Jer. xx. 9; or else he has been breaking through his bounds, and God has caught him upon the old common, feeding upon the old fare, for which he is yoked. He makes the yoke himself, and God ties it on, and makes him wear it: "The yoke of my transgression is bound by his hand; they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck," Lam. i. 14.

Sometimes pride carries him away; he is so lifted up in his comfortable frames, that he concludes that no person has any faith but himself; he can admit of no doubts, fears, or misgivings; he has got a little of the good wine of the kingdom; he drinks, and forgets his poverty, and thinks he shall remember his misery no more, Prov. xxxi. 7. Prosperity has made him forget the wormwood and the gall, Lam. iii. 19; therefore it is beneath him to come down from his excellency

to sympathize with them who are putting their "mouth in the dust, if so be there might be hope," Lam. iii. 29. This tincture of haughtiness procures him a little degradation; the humble soul, that he thought little of, is exalted to honour; while he, to his great mortification, is obliged for a while to take the lowest room.

Sometimes Little Faith abuses his liberty; his light joys carry him too high; filial fear is not strong enough to make him think soberly; joys and triumphs are all in all; prayer gets out of season with him; whereas we never need be more fervent in prayer than in times of prosperity. For these things he is often shut up in the black hole; then prayer becomes seasonable: "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," Ps. lxxxviii. 9, 10.

Sometimes he is too heedless in his race; he runs here and there, to try various winds of doctrine. Judging himself capable of discerning good and evil, he will dispute doctrinal points with any old sorcerer, like John's young disciples, who began to dispute with the Jews about purifying, John, iii. 25. He can play on the hole of the asp, and put his hand upon the cockatrice den, or even take a dog by the ears, Prov. xxvi. 17. He thinks his joys are sufficient to carry him through. However, in order to keep him in the company of wise men, the Lord sometimes permits the harlot, or false church, to cast such an one down wounded, until he finds himself I 1ba3 aid by the heels, to teach him to run more carefully when he has the use of his limbs. Then he complains, "Thou putttest my feet in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou setttest a print upon the heels of my feet," Job, xiii. 27.

Sometimes he discovers much rebellion and stubbornness under the rod, and would sooner run away from God than humble himself under his mighty hand. He will flee from the

rod, rather than confess and supplicate; and be froward, rather than submissive: "I smote him: I hid me, and was wroth; and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart," Isaiah, lvii. 17. It is common with some children, when threatened, or when whipped, to take to their heels; for which defiance this message is often sent after them: I shall have you at night, I will give it you when you come to bed. We all know there is a night coming, in which no man can work, John, ix. 4. If we wait, the grave is our house; yet we should not like to make our bed in the darkness, Job, xvii. 13. As none would like to be put to bed in the dark, nor under the rod, let Little Faith kiss the rod, know who hath appointed it, and fly to the hand that holds it; lest at bed time he cry out, as others have done, "O spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence, and be no more!" Psalm, xxxix. 13. the rod is useful; iniquity is bound in the heart of a child, and it is the rod of correction that shall drive it out. God does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of his love without cause: he visits sins with the rod, and we procure the stripes to ourselves.

The fatherly severity of God is intended to humble our pride, imbitter sin, and keep us in reverential awe and filial fear of him. A hiding God, a spiritual fast, and the chastening rod, are terrible things to the Lord's little ones: sleeping or waking, they can find no rest, till matters are made up, and peace be restored. Some children, when they have had a whipping over night, will often dream about it; and cry out in their sleep, as if they really felt the strokes; and this is sometimes the case with Little Faith: "When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions; so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life," Job, vii. 13-15. If he was terrified with dreams, it is plain he dreamt of the rod. Had his dreams been heavenly, like those of Jeremiah, they would have left the same sweetness upon his

soul: Upon this I awaked, and beheld, and my sleep was sweet unto me," Jer. xxxi. 26.

To be short: the strongest man in faith was once a babe in grace. Those that are weak are to be received, but not to doubtful disputations. Faith and her evidences, Unbelief and her doubts, do inhabit a believer at one and the same time. There is little faith, growing faith, and the fullest assurance of faith, mentioned in scripture. Neither the apostles, prophets, nor even God our Saviour himself, ever refused to suckle the babe, lead and feed the child, strengthen the weak, or encourage the ewe great with young. No bible pastor ever found the whole family of God in the full assurance of faith; much less did they confine their ministry to those only who are called fathers in Christ. Lambs stand in more need of the shepherd's aid than grown sheep or old rams; and children are more craving after food than aged fathers, who can feed themselves. If you choose to reply to this, I will, God willing, urge a second plea, and shew thee that I have yet to speak in behalf of Little Faith. Meanwhile I would caution thee, as David did Joab, to deal gently with the young man, even Little Faith.

I do believe that you are injuring the weaklings of the flock. I have therefore printed this little plea, that Little Faith may have something to defend himself against your straitened ministry, in which I firmly believe you err, and by which you do offend many of the little ones that believe in Jesus, and make the hearts of those sad whom the Lord would not have made sad: and this you will find when you come to be soundly tried. "To the weak (says Paul) became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some," I Cor. ix. 22. Go we, and do likewise.

We are to separate the vile from the precious, and the chaff from the wheat, as the Lord discovers them; to purge out the

old leaven, to draw proper lines, to shew the sincere from the hypocritical, and to purge ourselves from disorderly and false professors. But the command to Simon is applicable to every minister of Christ: "Lovest thou me? Feed my lambs; feed my sheep." The weaklings of the flock are to be fed as well as the sheep. The passage you refer to, "He that doubteth, is damned if he eat." Rom. xiv. 23, is perverted. The damnation of hell is not intended by that text: for, although truth has declared that "meat commendeth us not to God; for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse," 1 Cor. viii. 8. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink," Rom. xiv. 17-yet God has not fixed the sentence of damnation upon meat, nor upon him that eateth it, any more than he has promised heaven to them that fast in Lent, or live upon fish and eggs. He that commandeth abstinence from meat under the gospel, contradicts the Saviour, who declares, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the man." Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, are doctrines of devils, and are enforced by those only who "give heed to seducing spirits," 1 Tim. iv. 1-3. "I know," says Paul, "and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean," Rom. xiv. 14. Such an one goes not by the word of God; he is awed, governed, and kept in bondage, by a blind, misled, or uninformed conscience; having not light to see his liberty.

God damns no man for eating meat: the sentence in the text is from the man himself: "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth," Rom. xiv. 22. But man is not lord of life and death; the sentence of eternal damnation is not lodged in his power; that prerogative belongs to the Judge of quick and dead, and none else. Nor is the sentence of God intended by the word damnation, but the sentence of a man's own conscience, which follows upon his commission of that which he believes to be sin: "And he that doubteth is

damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin;" Rom. xiv. 23.

Dear Sir, adieu. While I subscribe myself,

Yours to command,

In the gospel of Christ,

W. H.

Winchester
Paddington.

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Row