

# Mercies of a Covenant God



The Life of John Warburton

# ***Mercies of a Covenant God***

being  
An Account

of

the Lord's Dealings in Providence and Grace

with

***John Warburton***

*Minister of the Gospel, Trowbridge*

Together with an Account of the  
Author's Last Days

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## Preface

Whenever we think of John Warburton, we are amazed that a poor, destitute handloom weaver, with barely any education, should be raised by God to hold a congregation of up to a thousand for over forty years. We admire the amazing grace of God in this.

There is really nothing in Christian literature just like Warburton's Mercies. It has been described as the most honest autobiography ever written—the sinkings and risings, the wonderful deliverances, the answers to prayer, the wonderful way in which the Lord supplied his needs and abundantly blessed him, personally and in preaching. But what low views he had of himself! Truly a remarkable book!

So we are glad that once again another edition is called for as there is no really good edition at present available.

We believe John Warburton's Mercies of a Covenant God still has a voice for 2008. May it once more be made a blessing to the people of God.

B. A. Ramsbottom

This edition of *Mercies of a Covenant God* has been divided up into chapters with subheadings where appropriate – the original edition was in two parts, but with no divisions at all. It is hoped that this will make the book easier to refer to. Apart from changes to punctuation and layout, and occasional correction of quotations, there has been no other editing of the text. As John Warburton's own writings end in 1839, about eighteen years before his death, readers may be interested in another publication by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, *John Warburton, Servant of a Covenant God*, by J. R. Broome (1996).

## **Preface to Former Editions**

I have been asked to write a Preface to a new edition of the "Mercies of a Covenant God." In complying with this request, it is not because I think either that the book itself requires a Preface, or that I am qualified to write one; but my respect and affection for the late Mr. Warburton, and my desire for the edification of the church of God, both combine to induce me to lend a helping hand, however feeble, to advance the spread of a book which will embalm his name and memory to future generations. The generation that heard the truth from his lips with that unction, sweetness and savour which so specially attended it will soon pass away. A few scattered sermons may remain, which were taken down as they fell from his lips, but these will indeed furnish a most inadequate idea of the peculiar power which attended their delivery. Mr. Warburton's ministry was so peculiarly his own that the sermons reported in the *Penny Pulpit*, etc., no more resemble his preaching than a dead corpse resembles a living man. The shorthand writer could take down the exact words, and the printer could stamp them in enduring characters, but they could not breathe into them the breath of life as the Lord did when He spake by and through him to the hearts of the people. Nor, indeed, can any written words portray his venerable appearance, in the latter years of his life, as he stood in the pulpit; his expressive countenance; his voice so full and clear, yet possessing a peculiar pathos and feeling which went straight to the heart as I never heard any other; his simple, childlike prayers, so full of honest confessions, and yet breathing such a spirit of filial confidence; his solemnity of manner, and the command which almost every accent of his tongue exercised over the congregation, especially when his own soul was under the sweet bedewings and melting influences of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. These are things never to be forgotten by those who saw and heard him, but of which the very remembrance will in time pass away.

No word of God can ever fall to the ground, or return to Him void of the designed blessing. But the preached word, however it may be

blessed at the time to the living family, has not, and necessarily cannot have, the permanency of the written Word. In a few years our dear friend and esteemed servant of Christ, the late Mr. Warburton, will only be known by the “Mercies of a Covenant God.”

But this will prove his enduring and undying memorial, and live when every ear that heard him and blessed him, and every eye that saw him and gave witness to him, will have mouldered into dust. The Lord will always have a poor and afflicted people upon earth whom He loves and who love Him. Severe trials in providence, heavy family afflictions, and heartrending griefs are the appointed lot of some; deep exercises of soul, much inward distress of mind under the law and the pangs and fears of a guilty conscience, and an almost unceasing conflict with sin, death and Satan are laid in the path of others. Now for such as these the “Mercies of a Covenant God,” when owned and blessed, is the very book to suit their case. It is a living experience of the trials and afflictions of forty years, written in the most simple, feeling and savoury way—not with wisdom of words, but in the very language of the heart itself. And not only is it a simple record of troubles and sorrows, trials and temptations, but it contains most marked and striking deliverances in the very hour of darkness and distress, when hope seemed well-nigh gone, and faith at its last gasp. Again and again it records the appearing of the Lord in answer to prayer both in providence and grace; and what a faithful, merciful, promise-making and promise-keeping God He was at all times and under all circumstances. How simply and yet how sweetly does he record the leadings, teachings, guidings, comfortings, chastisings, reprovings, supportings and blessings received from the hands of his gracious Father and Friend. As we read the ups and downs, ins and outs, sinkings and risings, sighs and songs, groans and shouts, fleerings and pursuings, slippings and standings, fightings and conquerings of the dear man of God, we follow him from the first moment that the Lord the Spirit quickened his soul all through his tried and exercised life until, in a good old age, he at last left this vale of tears with the love of God in his heart, the smile of peace on his face, and the revelation of opening glory to his departing spirit.

Well was it named the “Mercies of a Covenant God.” No one whom we have known more felt, first and last, his need of mercy. His first cry, when the arrow of God was shot into his conscience, was, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” and

“Begging mercy every hour”

was more or less his experience to the very end of his course. He was, indeed, blessed with a sweet assurance of the everlasting love of God to his soul, and a firm confidence of his salvation. But few men knew or felt more of the dreadful evils of his heart, and what he was as a vile, polluted sinner before the eyes of an infinitely pure and holy God; and it was this abiding sense of his deep and desperate sinfulness that made him such a daily, hourly debtor to mercy. Mercies attended his path; nor were they viewed by him merely as mercies given every day. He looked higher, and saw their eternal spring, that they came from a covenant God, and were “the sure mercies of David,” founded on “an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” The covenant of grace was a sweet and darling theme with him, because he found all his salvation in it, and all his desire. In this well-ordered covenant he knew that the number and measure of all his trials were appointed, the length of his days fixed, all needful grace promised, and an eternal weight of glory secured. His book is, therefore, a record of the “mercies of a covenant God” – of God the Father who chose him, of God the Son who redeemed him, and of God the Holy Ghost who taught, led, blessed and comforted him.

And now may this new edition of the “Mercies of a Covenant God” be owned and blessed as when the heart which indited and the hand which penned them were still in our midst. By it, he being dead, yet speaketh; and may we who loved him for his work’s sake, as having spoken unto us the word of God, follow his faith, “considering the end of his conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”

J. C. Philpot  
Stamford, May, 1859

## **Preface to Mr. Warburton's Last Days**

The following testimony to the loving-kindness and faithfulness of the Lord in supporting and comforting on the bed of languishing, and blessing with so glorious and triumphant a death, his son and servant, the late Mr. Warburton, has been put into my hands that I might arrange it for the press, and prefix to it a short preface.

My great esteem and affection for my departed friend, as well as my deep respect for him as so eminent a servant of God, made me at once accept the labour of love; and when I learnt that the little work would be published for the benefit of his bereaved widow and family, I felt a more than additional willingness to render any aid that lay in my power, had it even demanded ten times as much of my time and attention. Indeed, I consider it a very high honour put upon me to be allowed to aid in presenting the church of Christ with such a testimony, and to be but as a servant to place on the table what I hope may be to many dear saints of God, "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." Light indeed has been my labour, for I have scarcely altered a word from beginning to end, and have made neither omission nor addition to these simple records. To have made the slightest alteration in the words which dropped from the dear man's lips would have been, in my eyes, and I think in those of most of the readers, little short of sacrilege; and the connecting links are so brief, so unassuming, and so much to the purpose, that any recasting of them would have but marred their original strength and simplicity.

As I have undertaken the task of presenting the following pages to the church of God, I trust I shall be excused if I advert for a few moments to the circumstances under which I first came to know and love Mr. Warburton, that I may offer some valid reason for showing this my last friendly mark of respect and affection to his memory.

I shall never forget my first interview with him, which was some time in the year 1833 or 1834. I was at that time a minister in the

Church of England, and fellow of a college at Oxford, but was living in a little village in Oxfordshire, named Stadhampton, which was one of the parishes then under my care. When I first went to Stadhampton, in the year 1828, it was with the intention of riding backwards and forwards to Oxford, and thus maintaining my connection with the University, where I took pupils, and where I was looking for the highest offices in my College. But I soon found that there was no mixing together the things of God and man. Persecution from the heads of the College fell upon me, which much severed the tie, and broke to pieces the pleasing prospects I was indulging of worldly advancement. A great gulf seemed placed also in my feelings between my former friends and myself; and one day in particular, in the year 1829, as I was sitting on my horse, near the College gates, it was so impressed on my mind that Oxford was no place for me, that I gladly turned my back upon it and went to reside permanently at Stadhampton. A long and trying illness in the year 1830, from which indeed I have never fully recovered, was also made a means of deepening a sense of my own sinfulness and opening up the truth more clearly and fully to my soul; and the solitude of a country village, with an entire seclusion from all worldly society, much favoured prayer, meditation, and reading the Scriptures. Powerful temptations also assailed my soul, and trials and sorrows of various kinds were spread in my path. I mention these things, not from any desire to dwell on personal matters, but to show how far my mind was prepared to break through those barriers of pride and prejudice which separate the Churchman, and more especially the Clergyman, from the Dissenter, and make me desirous of seeing and hearing a man of God, out of my own narrow pale.

It was then some time in the year 1833 or 1834 that Mr. Warburton came to Abingdon to preach at the chapel of my dear friend, Mr. Tiptaft, whom I had intimately known for some years previously as a brother clergyman, and whose secession a year or two before from the Establishment had not broken or impaired our union in mind and heart in the great things of God. I went over, therefore, to Abingdon, about eight miles distant, to see and hear Mr. Warburton. I was then, and had been for some time, a good deal

exercised in my mind about eternal things, and went with many fears and under much bondage, both on account of my position in the Church of England, which I was then beginning to feel, and the state of my own soul, which was, as I have hinted, then passing through various trials. Though reared in the lap of learning, and instructed almost from childhood to consider mental attainments as the grand means of winning a position in the world, I had, some six or seven years before, been taught by the weight of eternal realities laid on my conscience, to value grace as the one thing needful; and the trials and temptations I was passing through in a lonely village, separated from all society but that of a few people who feared God, had deepened the feelings in my breast. Under these circumstances I went to Abingdon, feeling my own want of grace, and therefore with more fears than hopes, as about to see and hear a servant of God so eminently possessed of it, and anticipating rather a frown than a smile both in the pulpit and the parlour.

I afterwards learned that the poor dear man, having heard I was a man of great learning, was almost as much afraid of meeting the Oxford scholar as the Oxford scholar was of meeting him. But how much better grounded were my fears than his! and how much his grace outshone my learning!

He received me, however, with much kindness, and talked pleasantly and profitably on the weighty matters of the kingdom of God. I heard him very comfortably in the evening, and next morning after breakfast he would have me engage in prayer, which I did with a trembling heart, but seemed helped to express simply what I knew and felt. We afterwards went inside the coach together to Dorchester, about seven miles off, conversing the chief part of the way, and there we parted very affectionately. I do not wish to speak of myself, but I afterwards heard that my feeble lispings had given me an abiding place in the dear man's heart, and laid a foundation for that friendship and union which have subsisted unbroken ever since between us.

In March, 1835, I was compelled, from the pressure upon my conscience, to secede from the Church of England, and was led by a singular providence, and in marked answer to a prayer by a friend on

my behalf, to pitch my tent for a while at Allington, near Devizes, Wiltshire, where, in the following September, Mr. Warburton baptised me; and I shall never forget the power with which he preached that morning. Soon afterwards I went down to Trowbridge to supply his pulpit, and found there a gracious people, most of whom were his spiritual children. He several times supplied for me at Stamford and Oakham, after my lot was cast in those places; and there are those still there who can bear testimony to the power and savour with which he spoke. We have for many years generally met annually at the Calne anniversary, a well-known and remarkable gathering of the saints of God in that district of North Wilts, where we have been in the habit of preaching together, and I hope ever met and parted with renewed affection.

I have heard Mr. Gadsby preach as great, perhaps greater, sermons; but I never met with a minister whose prayer in the pulpit, or whose conversation out of it, was so weighty and savoury. Indeed, I never heard a man ever ask a blessing at the breakfast or dinner table like him. There was such a simplicity, such a reverence, and yet childlike approach unto God; such a savour in his few words, that it seemed to sanctify the meal in a peculiar way. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, have borne witness to the power and savour which rested on his ministry; but the blessing he has been made to the church of God will never be fully known until that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.

The crowning testimony is given in the following pages, wherein we see the aged servant of God supported amidst all the languishing of disease, blessed with what he had always contended for – *a feeling religion*, enjoying the presence and power of his dear Lord, and favoured with a glorious and triumphant departure.

In life he stuck by a feeling religion, and in death a feeling religion stuck by him. His desire was, as a Christian, to experience the sweet inflowings of the love of God to his soul; and, as a minister, to debase the sinner, exalt the Saviour, and trace out the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart, from a feeling, living and daily experience of it in his own conscience.

As he lived, so he died, never wavering from the truth, never carried about with divers and strange doctrines, never venturing beyond his depth, never speculating or reasoning beyond what he knew and felt for himself; ever seeing more and more in himself to loathe and abhor, and ever more and more in the Lord Jesus to admire and love.

He has run his race, has fought a good fight, and finished his course with joy, and left us still to sigh and groan in the wilderness, but looking to the same Lord, and hoping in the same rich, sovereign and super-abounding grace.

But I am writing a preface, and will therefore no longer detain my readers from what is far more worthy of the perusal than anything which can drop from my pen.

May the God of all grace, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, bless with the unction of the Holy Ghost, the testimony contained in these pages to the souls of His dear people and the manifestation of His own glory.

J. C. Philpot  
Stamford, May 5th, 1857

The following interesting description of Mr. Warburton appeared in the *Gospel Standard*, June, 1857, in a review, by Mr. Philpot, of the first edition of the "Account of Mr. Warburton's Last Days":

"God designed him for a great work in the church of Christ, and therefore abundantly and eminently qualified him for it. However at the time hidden from his eyes; his heavy trials in providence; his deep and long poverty; the sinkings of his own desponding mind; the continual embarrassments into which he was plunged; his dismal and gloomy forebodings of a still worse future; his fears of bringing a reproach on the cause of God; the temptations of Satan with which he was assailed; the hidings of the Lord's face; his quakings and tremblings lest he had run unsest; and the whole series of anxiety and distress through which he was called upon to pass; all, connected as they were with the manifestations of God's love and mercy to his soul, were mysteriously tending to make him what he eventually was, a minister to the suffering church of Christ, a feeder

of the flock of slaughter, a feeling experimental man of God to the mourners in Zion, the broken in heart, and the contrite in spirit. . . .

“What Mr. Warburton might have been had his naturally strong and vigorous intellect been cultivated by a sound education in early boyhood and youth cannot now be said. But most probably, we might rather say most certainly, it would have spoiled him. We might have had Warburton the acute lawyer, or Warburton the learned divine; but we should not have had Warburton the preacher, Warburton the feeling and experimental minister, the tried and exercised man of God. That he might not be thus spoiled, God Himself took charge of his education by placing him in early youth, not in an academy for young gentlemen, nor in a classical and commercial establishment, but in the school of Christ. Moses was made his schoolmaster, and first caught hold of him in Bolton Church, where, instead of charming his ears with the tones of the new organ, he sounded in them such a terrible peal of death, hell, and judgment to come, that his pupil dropped down half dead at his feet. Here he learnt his A B C in experimental religion; here Moses shook over him for the first time the rod; here the first lesson set him, amidst many sighs and tears, was to learn to spell the first letter of that dreadful sentence, ‘Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.’ What school or college could have experimentally taught him what he first learned in Bolton church—that he was a sinner under the curse of God’s righteous law? What laboured course of lectures, free library, or mechanics’ institute could have made him cry out, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner,’ all the way home, till his breastbone was sore?

“Education is admirable in its way, excellent for a time state; but no education, classical, theological, moral, or religious, could have made, though it might have marred, a John Warburton, either as a Christian or a minister, or brought him with sighs and groans to the Redeemer’s feet. And when peace and pardon first reached his heart, when rich, free, sovereign and superabounding grace poured salvation into his soul as he sat in Mr. Roby’s chapel, he learned more in one moment what the love of God was, whence it came, and whither it led, what it could do, and what bliss and blessedness it

could create, than all the doctors and proctors, pastors and masters, schoolmasters or scholars, lecturers or libraries, teachers or tutors, could have taught him in half a century. When fierce temptations assailed his soul, when hell rose up in arms, and Satan, enraged to see so apt a tool lost to his service and enlisted in God's, hurled his fiery darts thick and fast against him, he was still at school, still learning better and wiser lessons than the academy or the university could have taught him.

“When dark clouds rested upon him in providence, when poverty and want knocked hard at his door, when little work and scanty wages, hard times and an increasing family plunged him into a sea of embarrassment and distress, he was still learning deep and blessed lessons, never taught at Cheshunt or learnt at Bradford.

When the clouds of darkness broke in showers on his head, when the Sun of Righteousness gleamed upon his path in providence and grace, when he could set up an Ebenezer here and a hill Mizar there; when he could ‘look from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lion’s dens, from the mountains of the leopards,’ and see the valley beneath all flowing with milk and wine, what books or authors could have taught him there was such a God in Israel, or have raised up in his heart such faith, hope, and love towards Him? So with all his long experience of the ups and downs, ins and outs, joys and sorrows, risings and sinkings, feasting and fastings, smiles and tears, songs and sighs, mercies and miseries, heavens and hells of a living experience, what substitute could be found in human genius, or human learning, for this course of heavenly instruction? . . .

“He was naturally gifted with much sound good sense, knew the weakness and wickedness of the human heart, and seeing how soon divisions arise in a church, and what havoc they make of its prosperity and peace. he at once, with his broad, weighty foot trampled upon the rising flame which other ministers of weaker and less determined minds, would let smoulder on, lest, in putting it out, they should burn their own fingers. Want of order and discipline is a prevailing evil in our churches; and when a pastor uses the authority which the Lord has given him to rule as well as feed the church, a cry is soon raised by those who are opposed to all order and discipline

that he is tyrannical and arbitrary. He might sometimes, when thwarted and opposed, speak sharply, and look angry; and there was something in his fine, portly person, commanding look and loud voice that struck terror into the timid and silenced the talkative, but a tenderer heart never beat before the throne of grace and at the footstool of mercy. There indeed he was a little child, a babe, a humble, broken-hearted sinner.”

# MERCIES OF A COVENANT GOD

## PART ONE

### **1. Early Life and Call by Grace (1776 - 1797)**

#### **Early Life**

I was born at Stand, about five miles from Manchester, in October 1776. My parents being poor, I had but little opportunity of acquiring human learning, though, by the tender mercy of God, I obtained a little reading and writing, a blessing for which I have often felt thankful.



**Figure 1. Warburton's Birthplace at Stand**

My dear mother was, I believe, a vessel prepared unto glory before the mountains were brought forth. This God made manifest when I was about eight years of age, in a manner that has often filled me with surprise. I had frequently been astonished to see my dear

## *Mercies of a Covenant God*

mother sighing, groaning and weeping when reading her Bible, but, upon one occasion, I distinctly recollect that a neighbouring woman called in and, observing my mother in tears, asked what was the matter with her that she was in so much trouble.

My mother, as soon as she was able to speak, cried out that her poor soul was lost for ever and ever; at which the woman was astonished, and so was I. The woman endeavoured to comfort her by telling her that she had been a good wife, mother and neighbour, and, consequently, could have nothing to fear; for if such good people as she were lost, woe to thousands besides! “Moreover,” she continued, “you ought not to indulge in such thoughts as these, for who can tell in what they will end?” My poor mother, however, could not drink in such doctrine as this, but exclaimed, “Oh! I am the greatest sinner that ever was upon the earth, and lost I must be for ever! There is no salvation for me! O that I had never been born!” The woman bade her remember that there is mercy with God for every one that repenteth. “Yes,” said my mother, “there is to His own people, but I am not one of them. I am a castaway, lost for ever and ever!” How astonishing did all this appear to my mind! How did I desire to know who God was, and who were His people.

I remember that I cried and, retiring to a private place, said my prayers twice very devoutly, and was as firmly resolved as any Arminian in the world to be good; “for God,” thought I, “will love me if I continue good, and I shall become one of His people; and what a happy people must they be who are God’s, and how holy, too; for if my poor mother, who is so good, is not one of them, how very good they must be.” I then vowed and promised how good I would be. I found upon examination that I had done many wrong things, such as frequently telling untruths, using bad words, and occasionally stealing a toy from the children with whom I was in the habit of playing. Then I prayed the Lord to forgive me, and vowed never to commit the like again.

### **Call by Grace**

From this period I went on with many natural convictions, until I arrived at the age of fifteen or sixteen years, when, getting

acquainted with many loose companions, I was given up to all manner of wickedness, and so continued until my arrival at that time and place which God had purposed – not to offer, but to call by grace:

“To change the heart, renew the will,  
And turn the feet to Zion’s hill.”

*John Kent*

I was at that time married, and hearing that a new church, containing a fine organ, was to be opened at Bolton (distant about six miles), I made up my mind to go, and to enjoy myself by spending a few shillings that I had at the various public houses on my way home. These houses had been my delight for years; but, blessed be the dear Lord, He had designed other things. When the day came I went, and was greatly pleased with the appearance of the church. But when the minister entered the reading desk, I was struck with astonishment at observing that he was the very man whom I had heard preach one sermon in our parish church many years before; a sermon which had alarmed me to that degree that I had made many vows to live a new life, and for several weeks afterwards durst scarcely look or speak for fear of sinning. I had soon, however, broken my vows, and become worse than ever in open wickedness, until God now laid hold of me.

When the minister began to read the prayers I thought I had never heard them read in like manner before. But when he got into the pulpit and read his text, it came from his mouth into my heart like a two-edged sword. His text was, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” I verily believed that he pointed directly at me; for his eyes appeared to look right through me, and I thought I should have dropped into hell. All my sins and iniquities from a child stared me in the face, and I trembled like a leaf. He began to show what man was by nature, and how far natural men might go in vowing and breaking their vows, in sinning and repenting, until, if grace prevented not, hell proved their awful abode. He showed that for men to vow was merely to mock God and deceive their own souls.

## *Mercies of a Covenant God*

My very hair stood on end with the violence of my feelings, and I verily believed that he meant me and none else in the church. Nay, he so particularly described my ungodly life, my vowing and vow-breaking, and so entered into every transaction of it, as if he had been an eye-witness to everything I had done or said, that I looked up to him, wondering whether he were a man or an angel. I thought that he fastened his eyes directly upon me, and pointed personally at me with his finger; and when he had thus cut me up, root and branch, he repeated his text again like thunder in my ears: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

O the power with which it entered my soul, like a dagger that cut me through and through. I now saw and felt (what I had never seen or felt before) that I had been mocking God and deceiving my soul all my life long. O how my poor soul heaved up with grief and sorrow, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." "Oh!" thought I, "He can never show mercy to such a wretch as I, for I have mocked God all these years; and what a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And again the dear man repeated, "God is not mocked." As soon as he had concluded, I crept out of the church as if I had stolen something. Ashamed to look anybody in the face, I hastened through the town, and with difficulty refrained from roaring aloud, like a bear, as I passed through it. I thought that everybody gazed and pointed at me.

On my way home, the moment I got into the fields, where no human eye could see and no human ear could hear me, I fell upon my knees, and with all my power of body and soul cried, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." How often I repeated the publican's prayer I know not; but when I arose from my knees I went on wringing my hands, sobbing and exclaiming, "O fool that I have been! How often would God have saved me, but I would not! Now it is all over for ever and ever! O the dreadfulfulness of appearing before that God that will not be mocked is past describing!"

When I passed a public house I durst not even turn my eyes to look at it, much less enter it to enjoy the pleasure I had anticipated upon leaving home. All the dreadful things I had been guilty of in these wretched houses arose before my poor soul like an army in

battle. "O," cried I, "cursed places, cursed places; ye have ruined my soul for ever! O that I had but kept my vows! O what shall I do? whither can I flee? How can I stand to hear the awful sentence, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?"

Upon reaching home, my wife was surprised to see me returned so early. She wondered at my being so quiet, and asked what was the matter. I told her I was very unwell, and did all I could to hide the grief of my soul. But concealment for any length of time was impossible. So great was my misery, and such fast hold had it of me, that at every opportunity I could get by myself I was upon my knees, crying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" sometimes repeating the cry until my very breath failed me. She soon, therefore, perceived that something had happened, and charged me with having turned Methodist. I told her that I knew not what I had turned; but this I did know, that I was one of the vilest sinners upon earth, and that if I did not mend my ways, repent, and find mercy, I was as sure of going to hell as that I had been born; and that I would turn anything if I could but thereby save my poor soul; for as yet I could think of no other way of my soul being saved but by mending my life, doing my duty and pleasing God.

On the next Lord's Day morning I set off for Bolton, to hear the same minister, whom I afterwards understood to be a Mr. Jones. O with what earnestness did I pray and beg all the way that he might tell me what to do that I might be saved! But instead of this, he cut me up to all intents and purposes, and declared that all those who were working for life were under the law, and therefore under its curse. Thus during the whole day I could hear of no encouragement save to God's own people, and I returned as miserable as ever. O what a journey I had home, sometimes wringing my hands and crying with bitter lamentations, "O that I had never been born! O my poor soul, thou art lost for ever! O my place will be with devils and damned souls for ever and ever!"

How I reached home the Lord only knows, but when I did my wife asked me how I was. "Oh," cried I, "worse than ever! it is all over with me! there is no hope but for God's people!" She told me I should

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go no more to hear that man, for he would be sure to drive me mad, and I should be taken to the mad-house, which I, indeed, began to fear would really be the case. I therefore thought I would try to put away the thoughts I had of death and eternity, and tried to compose my mind as well as I could, consoling myself with the resolution to do the best in my power, and perhaps things would be better than my fears.

I went, therefore, to bed rather more comfortable; but I had not been there long before that text thundered in my heart and in my ears, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." "O," cried my soul, "that is I, that is I. I am the wicked wretch who has forgotten God, mocked God, abused God, despised God. O my poor, ruined, lost soul, thou wilt be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God!" O the dreadful feelings I experienced! I actually thought that the devil was then coming to fetch me, body and soul together. O how my inmost soul did cry to God that He would spare me but for that night. How often did I promise that I would do all that ever I could to please Him, and entreated with tears that He would not let the devil fetch me that night. And I thought the Lord heard me, for I felt more composed, and shortly dropped asleep.

Upon awaking in the morning, what thankfulness I felt to God that He had spared me and that I was not in hell. And who can tell, thought I, but God may yet have mercy on so vile a wretch, who has gone to such lengths in sin against Him and yet been spared to the present moment? I did indeed pray with all my soul and strength that He would forgive all my past sins, and I promised that I would, for the future, live a holy life and do everything in my power to please Him, and honour Him all my days. Indeed, for several days after this I went on pretty comfortable. O the fear I had of sinning! for I thought that, if I could but keep from sin, God would, perhaps, pardon me what was past in His own time. And so determined was I to dishonour God no more, that I went into a secret place, where no eye but God's could see me, and vowed with all my might to leave all the world and turn to the Lord and be His, and called upon Him to be witness of my sincerity.

But alas, alas! what is all our fleshly sincerity? The first blast from the devil blows it like chaff before the wind. I had been in the habit for many years of card playing. What shall I do, thought I, when Saturday night comes? I am engaged to play a few games at the card-table, but I will not go, and they will not come for me. On Saturday night, however, my partner at the card-table called for me and, saying it was near the appointed time, asked me if I was ready? What shall I do? thought I. If I refuse they will call me a Methodist, and spread that report all over the parish. I will go just this once, and then tell them I intend to go no more. With this determination I went off. But oh, the misery that came upon me, as if I had been going to the gallows! But the fear of being called *religious* and a *Methodist* so overcame me that I entered the house and sat down with the rest at the table.

When we each had our cards dealt out, and I had just taken mine, O how my guilt stared me in the face! How did conscience thunder in my ears that I had broken the vows which I had called upon God to witness! and the old text, too, came like a thunder-clap that shook both body and soul: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." I was so confused and confounded that I knew not what I was doing, and could no more tell which card to throw down than if I had never seen one in my life. In short, I entirely lost the game, which so enraged my partner that he called me the greatest fool he had ever seen, and the others heartily laughed at me.

Poor things! they little knew what I had to grapple with within. I made the best I could of the matter; and, to prevent their knowing the real cause, I said that I was very poorly and must go home. Thus speaking, I took my hat without ceremony, and it being dark, went into the fields, where no human eye could see me. It was a very dark night, and Oh, the awful feelings of my heart! I thought of my vows and my breaking of them; of the dreadful majesty of that God whom I had mocked a thousand times; and of the horrible certainty of fast-approaching death. And then those dreadful words came to my mind, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and

would none of My reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh” (Prov. 1. 24-26).

They made my very hair to stand on my head, and my poor soul so to tremble that I feared I was dropping into hell every moment. My very joints were loosened, and what to do, or whither to go, I could not tell. I fell upon my knees and attempted to pray, but that text stopped my mouth in an instant: “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord” (Prov. 15. 8). “Then” cried I, “it is all over for ever; for I am the vilest wretch either in hell or out of hell; and if God will not hear the prayers of a poor, wicked sinner, it is all over for ever and ever.” And now all my sins from a child came upon me like an army, with such weight that they actually pressed both body and soul to the very earth, and there I lay for a time with no more strength to stir than a new-born infant, and I believed in my very soul that I was soon to be where hope never comes.

### **Encouragement to pray**

But, O the amazing goodness of an abused God! He gave me a little drop of encouragement: “Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matt. 7. 7). “What can that mean?” exclaimed I; “it can never mean that I am to seek and to find.” I arose and looked around to see if anybody was near who might have spoken these words; but I could neither see nor hear anybody; yet the words were again repeated in my soul with more power, “Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened.” This so encouraged my poor soul that I cried again to God to have mercy upon me, and told Him that if He would but forgive my sins, I would tell all the world what He had done for me. I then went home, resolved that I would seek night and day for mercy and forgiveness of my sins until I found it.

I went to bed much encouraged, and rose very early in the morning, blessing the Lord with all my heart that He had spared me another night. After breakfast I set off for Bolton to hear Mr. Jones, beseeching the Lord with cries and tears that I might hear something to comfort my soul. Surely, I thought, this is the time that I shall find Him. As I had sought Him so earnestly, I quite expected to have had

my sins forgiven, and to return home with joy. But oh! how was I disappointed! I thought that Mr. Jones preached to none but the elect, and such as had been born again! Then I again sank into despair and exclaimed with bitterness of soul, "O that I were one of the elect! O that I were one of those who have been born again! What shall I do? Whither shall I flee? I have prayed and I have begged, I have sought and I have knocked; but I am not born again, I am not one of the elect. O poor soul, poor soul! thou art lost for ever! it is all over. O eternity, eternity! How can I dwell with everlasting burnings!"

O the miserable journey I had home; nothing but wretchedness and misery; and what added to it was, that my eyes were now open to see a little of the evil of my own heart. I saw that evil *thoughts* were sins against God, as well as evil *actions*, and God sent home that text to my soul with so much power that I thought I was dropping into hell at once: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3. 10). Such light shone upon these words that I saw, and felt too, that I was damned completely, without the possibility of escape; and these words, to finish and seal up my certain damnation to my own views, came to my mind with no less power than the former: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2. 10).

I then saw, as clearly as the sun at mid-day, the holiness and justice of God in my damnation, and that it was utterly impossible for either God or man to save me. Now I felt that it was all over, and that there could be no hope for ever and ever. Now I saw that though I might repent and weep tears of blood, *all that* would not do "*all things written in the book of the law.*" I was now led to see that this holy law required holy thoughts as well as holy actions, and it came immediately into my soul, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." Then again, like terrible thunder, sounded, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

Oh! the “*to do them*” dashed me to pieces like a potter’s vessel, and struck me dead upon the spot from a glimpse of hope that God could save me consistently with justice. I now saw, as clearly as at noonday, His holiness and His justice in my damnation; and I told Him that when I came into hell, I would tell all the devils there that no injustice had been done me, that I could take all the blame upon myself and clear God of all wrong in executing His wrath, upon one so vile, who had gone to such lengths in iniquity, who, having made so many vows, had broken them all, and plunged deeper and deeper into sin, and been so great a mocker of God. Now, however, I clearly saw that my doom was sealed, for these words came upon the back of the other, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Thus I saw that God is immutably fixed in His holiness and justice, and that He can in no wise acquit the guilty.

In this miserable state I continued for some months. Sometimes I fell into a fit of desperation and thought, Oh, if I could but have a little comfort here, even if I had hell hereafter!” for of having hell hereafter I felt confident, for “Cursed is every one,” etc.; and that I was one who had “not continued in all things written in the book of the law”, I knew. Well, thought I, let me but have a little enjoyment here to drown the misery of my present feelings; as to hereafter, I can be but lost. The best method of fulfilling this resolution appeared to be by going a hay-making, it being now the hay harvest. I accordingly went to a neighbouring farmer, and inquired if he had need of a hand. He said “Yes,” and bade me go into the fields. Upon joining the men, who all knew me and had heard that I had turned Methodist, some jeered me, others called out, “Warburton is turned Methodist,” and all joined in laughing at me.

I tried to put it off with a laugh, too, but it was with a heavy heart. Yes, thought I, these are going to hell as well as I, and see how comfortable they are! And again, I resolved to be as comfortable as they; for if I do go to hell, said I, they will go too, and I shall not be alone. In the afternoon of the same day there was what we call a wake, held at a place about four miles distant, and my fellow-workmen asked me to accompany them. To this I consented, and

seven of us accordingly set out. But oh! what feelings I had at times upon the road! When we arrived there, the first thing was, of course, the public house, and I felt determined to get drunk and drown my misery, and to enjoy myself as well as others. I had not, however, been many minutes in the house before that text of Scripture sounded like thunder in my poor soul: "Because He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man, Jesus Christ, whom He hath ordained." And that other text followed upon it like flames of lightning: "It is appointed for men once to die, but after this the judgment."

My poor knees smote together, my very hair began to move upon my head, and I got up and went out with all the horrors of damnation in my soul. I hastened as soon as possible from the place, sometimes fearing the devil would seize me before I could reach home; at others, falling upon my knees and crying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" But my mouth was stopped by "the prayers of the wicked are an abomination unto the Lord." I was confident that a wretch so wicked as myself never before lived upon the earth; and O the torments, the wrath, the bondage, the misery which I passed through! What dreadful and rebellious thoughts arose in my mind against God for having made me a human being, that had a never-dying soul that must endure all the torments of His wrath in hell, where not a drop of water is allowed to cool the scorching tongues of the damned, who are continually crying to all eternity. "The wrath to come, the wrath to come!" How I envied the very beasts of the field. "These poor creatures," said I, "have no souls to be judged;" and O the anger and wrath that boiled up in my heart against God, because He had not made me a dog, or anything without a soul to be judged at His righteous bar.

I had frequently before this time had many powerful temptations to put an end to my miserable life, but now I was fully determined to do it; for a thought struck my mind that the longer I lived in the world, the more sin I should commit; and the more sin I committed, the greater would be my damnation. So that I concluded that the sooner I did the deed, the less sin I should have to answer for. Several times I went into my bedroom with my razor, being fully

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determined to cut my throat; but instead of so doing, was always obliged to fall upon my knees and implore the Lord that, if it were possible, He would show mercy to one so vile as I. And then again, a fresh sight of the justice of God in a righteous law brought me to believe it was as impossible for God to have mercy upon me as for Him to cease to exist.

I think I shall never forget the night before God delivered my poor soul. Fully resolved to destroy myself, I went on Saturday about midnight to a pool of water, making, as I proceeded thither, a solemn vow that nothing should prevent my fulfilling my purpose. When I got to the pool, O the dreadful view I had of the majesty, justice, and holiness of God in a righteous law! I saw, as clearly as the sun at noon-day, that the law was holy, just and good; that God had done me no injustice, and that the whole cause of my damnation was in myself. I had such a sight of God's grand perfections of holiness, that I knelt down before Him and told Him I could justify Him before men and devils. I said a solemn Amen to my own damnation; and, indeed, I did not want a salvation that was dishonouring to so holy and so just a God. After having been a short time exercised with these thoughts, I rose up to take a leap into the pool, when these words sounded in my ears, as loud, to my thinking, as if a man had called them out to me, "Who can tell?"

I made a dead stand and said, "What can that be?" "Who can tell?" The words sounded again and again in my very soul, and something seemed to spring up in my heart and thus interpret them: "Who can tell but God may yet have mercy upon my poor soul? Manasseh, the thief upon the cross, Saul of Tarsus, Mary Magdalene, and many others have experienced His pardoning mercy; and who can tell but that that poor wretch, John Warburton, may find mercy yet?" This put a stop to drowning myself. I felt my heart a little softer, and if ever my soul went out to prayer, I believe it was then. I began to feel a little hope shine into me. Who can tell, thought I, but that God will at length hear my cry?

I made up my mind that, as the next day was Sunday, I would go in the morning to Manchester and try once more to obtain a little consolation. I had been many times to Manchester and other places,

far and near, in search of a little comfort for my soul, but all of no use. This was the last day I meant to try. After breakfast I set out for Manchester, and O the exercises of my mind upon the road! I stood still and thought I would turn back, for I thought that it was impossible for God to show mercy upon me and be just. I determined to turn back again. Then the words, "Who can tell?" came again into my mind, and hope seemed to rise up within me with a "Maybe the Lord will be merciful to me, a poor lost sinner." That text was, for a few moments, very sweet to me: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 1. 15).

O how my very soul cried unto God that He would save *me*, the very chief, the very vilest of the vile! and then with what exceeding sweetness and preciousness did the words come into my mind, "For the vision is *yet* for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. 2. 3). O how strengthened and encouraged was my poor soul! and I went on, hoping and praying that the Lord would meet me in mercy.

In the morning I went to Mosley Street Chapel, and soon after I was seated a solemn old man ascended the pulpit; and O how my soul trembled for fear lest he should bear a message from God to me of wrath and condemnation. What distress and horror I felt when, in reading the chapter, he came to these words, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." I can never express the thousandth part of all the misery and sense of guilt that I endured. I saw that my soul was doomed to certain destruction for ever and ever. What the old man preached about I could not tell; but this I knew, that damned I was, and sometimes thought that I should have dropped into hell whilst in the chapel.

The service being concluded, I wandered up and down from street to street, until I verily believed that my senses were entirely gone. I looked behind me and saw two men following me, who, I was afraid, were coming to take me to the mad-house. The first place where I could sit clown and vent my grief was St. George's Church; and

seeing no person near, I sat down on the steps and wept until I had no more power to weep. After some time I got up, and thought I would go home and put an end to my miserable life. "Yes," said I, "I will come to an end and know the worst at once." On my way home, as I thought, I got into Cannon Street, and observing a chapel there, into which people were crowding, I remembered that it was the chapel of Mr. Roby, to which I had once or twice been in company with my mother. I stopped and said, "Shall I go in?" "No," thought I, "I will not. The minister will take that text, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.'" I proceeded a short distance down the street and stopped again.

### **Spiritual Deliverance**

"*Who can tell?*" came once more into my mind. "Well," said I, "I can but be damned;" and so I came to the resolution of going into the chapel, and "if I perish," said I, "I perish." If ever I entered a place of worship with the feeling cry that God would, if it were possible, show mercy to one in so desperate a case, I believe I did then. When seated in the chapel all the horrors of hell seemed to come upon me. I trembled from head to foot, and wished that I had never come in. At the conclusion of the first hymn, Mr. Roby went to prayer, and towards the end of it he dropped a few words which I believed were for nobody but me. He begged God that, if there was any one present who had come to make a last trial of His mercy, He would show Himself to such a one as *his* God.

It was with hard work that I could keep from calling out, "Yes, here is poor lost John Warburton. Here I am, come to make the last trial." O how my soul went out to God in prayer that He would appear for me. The prayer being finished, another hymn was sung previous to the sermon. All my little hope seemed dashed to pieces when I saw the minister take his Bible from the cushion to find his text. "O," thought I, "he is certainly seeking for that awful text which has so torn my heart asunder all these months. What shall I do if he takes that text, 'Cursed is every one,' etc.? O what will become of me? I must drop into hell if he take that." O the feelings I

experienced! I could not imagine why he delayed so long to put the Bible upon the cushion. At last he did so, and I saw that it was opened about the middle. Blessed be God, my soul whispered, the text is not, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." O the expectation that sprang up within me! "Do, Lord, pardon my sins; do, Lord, have mercy upon my poor lost soul," burst from my heart; and when Mr. Roby read his text, O the wonder and the glory that shone into my soul! The precious text was, "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them" (Psa. 68. 18).

O the love, peace and joy that broke into my heart as the words came out of his mouth! They were truly sweeter to my soul than ten thousands of gold and silver. I wondered again with astonishment, and said in my soul, "What can this mean? Where are my sins? What can be the meaning of all this? Where is my burden and the wrath and terror I have had so many months?" And again the text flowed into my soul, "Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the *rebellious*, that the Lord God might dwell among them." O I knew not where to hide my poor face! My soul kept whispering, "Surely it cannot mean me; is it a dream? is it a dream?" I looked for my sins, for my burden, for the wrath and misery I had so long carried in my poor distracted soul, and could find neither guilt nor sins, wrath nor bondage; for the Saviour of my soul had taken them all away. Such a sight of His sufferings and death shined into my soul as broke my heart to pieces. O how I looked on Him and mourned! "What have I done?" cried I; "I have crucified the Lord. O my cursed sins, that drove the nails into His hands and feet and thrust the spear into His heart. O wretch, wretch that I am! And canst Thou, wilt Thou save and pardon me, notwithstanding all my cursed sins?"

How wonderfully was my soul led to see that the dear Saviour had fulfilled and obeyed that holy law which I had broken in ten thousand instances, that all my cursed sins had been laid upon Him, and that He had suffered in my room and stead. I had so blessed a

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sight, by faith, of His feet and hands nailed to the cross, of the crown of thorns upon His head, and of the spear entering His heart; and His redeeming blood flowed with such peace, and love, and joy, and liberty into my soul, that I hardly knew what or where I was. The poor things who sat in the same seat kept jogging me with their elbows to sit still; but it was impossible for me to sit still or to lie still. O the love I felt to my dear Saviour for such unmerited kindness to one so vile, to the vilest wretch that ever was on the earth! I can never express a thousandth part of the hatred I felt against my cursed sins, which pierced the Lord of life and glory.

When the service was over, I went down the street blessing, thanking, wondering, praising and adoring the God of my salvation; for text upon text flowed in upon my soul, one after another, with so much power, that sometimes I was obliged to hold my hand upon my mouth to prevent myself from shouting aloud in the street. On my way home I got into the fields as soon as I could, and when out of the sight and hearing of every human being, I shouted, I leaped, I danced, I thanked and praised my dear Jesus with all my might, until my bodily strength was so gone that I fell upon the ground, and there lay, firmly believing that I was upon the point of going to heaven, to be with my dear Lord and Saviour.

O what cause of holy wonder I saw in God as being a just God, and yet a Saviour. That holy law that had been my terror for months, which had cursed me for every thought, word and deed, I now saw completely honoured and righteously fulfilled in Christ. And how precious were these words, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10. 4). Whilst another text came upon the back of it with so much power, sweetness, majesty and glory, that it overwhelmed me with adoration, praise and thanksgiving: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3. 13).

I saw, and believed, and felt that Christ had stood in my law-place and stead; and that all the wrath and damnation which I had deserved at the hands of a just God had been laid upon Jesus. I saw that He had stood as my Surety and Bondsman, had atoned for all

my sins, and magnified the law, and made it honourable in so holy a way, that there could be no condemnation either from heaven, earth, or hell. My poor soul was so carried away with the transports of joy, that if anybody had seen me, they would have supposed that I had just escaped from Bedlam; for I shouted, danced and clapped my hands with sweet delight. It was, indeed, a heaven upon earth. Those precious words of David were the very feelings of my heart at that time: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies" (Psa. 103. 1-4). I was blessing and praising God all my way home. My poor wife had been very uneasy on my account, for it was a very late hour when I reached home. But no wonder, for every tree of the field, every bird of the air, every beast and insect, even to the crawling worm, furnished me with matter of songs, wonder and praise. They were all new to me. In all of them I could see the hand of my Father and my God.

I could not help telling my wife the comfort which I had received. God, I told her, had pardoned all my sins. I was sure of going to heaven, for Christ had suffered and died for me upon the cross. Poor thing! at that time she could not endure anything like religion, yet I could not conceal from her the blessing I had received. I told her of the dreadful state she was in, and how awful a thing it would be for her to die in it. I then told her how the Lord had appeared for me, and what He had suffered for my poor soul, and how He had pardoned all my sins. The poor thing thought I was out of my mind; but I told her I was saying nothing but the truth, that all my sins had been actually pardoned and taken away by my Saviour Jesus Christ, and that I desired henceforth to live and die praising and adoring Him for His wonderful goodness to one so vile.

In this happy state of liberty, peace and praise I lived for months. In every chapter of the Bible that I read I could see something new, and exceedingly sweet and precious to my soul: "His words were found and I did eat them, and they were unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Nothing could I see in the heavens above, or

upon the earth beneath, but His love, power, mercy, grace and lovingkindness. I was preaching Jesus Christ and His preciousness to every one with whom I could get to talk; and ignorantly thought that all who went to chapel would be ready to rejoice with me.

But, alas! I was wonderfully deceived; for when, at the first prayer meeting which I went to, I told them what great things the Lord had done for my soul, how He had delivered me from the curse of the law, and been made a curse for me, having died in my room and stead; how He had finished my transgressions, and made a complete end of all my sins; when I told them these things, and how God had made them known to my soul, convincing me that there was now no condemnation for me, and that I was as sure of going to heaven as that Christ was there; poor things! they could not tell what to make of me. Some laughed, some pitied, some called it nothing but wild-fire, whilst others warned me not to be too secure. I kept them as long as I could persuade any of them to stay and listen, relating to them every particular, how I was, and where I was, and how it came to my soul, and how happy I was. I could have stayed all night, for it was my meat and drink to tell what great things the Lord had done for my soul.

### **Confirmation of the Blessing**

Having left the chapel and got into the fields, I began to think over what they had said, and to question myself whether they might not be in the right, and all they said very true. There are some of them, thought I, old Christians, and have been many years in the ways of God. "They must certainly," said I, "know better than such a young fool as I. Yet surely it cannot be all deception. Can I be deceived in losing my burden and feeling the pardon of all my sins? Lord, I am not deceived, am I?" I fell upon my knees under the hedge and cried out to the Lord, "Am I deceived, Lord? Am I too secure? Is it wild-fire, Lord?"

And the dear Lord broke in upon my soul with such divine glory, and such a succession of promises, that the Bible appeared to me to be nothing but promises from beginning to end, and all mine, all appearing to be made especially to me, and to none else. I had such a

view, too, of the faithfulness and glory of God in His fulfilment of them from first to last to my poor soul, that I was completely overwhelmed with transports of heavenly joy, and, for a time, scarcely knew whether I was in the body or out of the body. Upon arising from the ground, it struck me that it was the very place in which the devil had often tempted me to put an end to my life; and O how I did dance and sing, and banter the lying devil, and dare him to come out of his den! I challenged him to his face, and told him if he did not come out he durst not. I called him everything but a gentleman. I was so happy and comfortable that I felt as if I could walk through troops of devils, shouting, "In the Name of the Lord I will destroy them."

O how I wondered at the goodness of the Lord to one so unworthy of the least of His mercies! "If this," cried I, "be wild-fire, let me have more of it. If this is being too secure, let me live and die in it. My God and my Saviour, Thou art my Portion, my Rock, my Hiding-place, my Friend, my dear Redeemer. O my dear, dear, dear Jesus, Thou art the chief of ten thousand, the Altogether Lovely." How I got home I know not, for what with shouting, praising, thanking and blessing the Lord, it was morning before I arrived there.

The next time I met the same people, I began, after the prayer meeting, to tell them of my journey home the last meeting night, and how I had knelt down in the field and asked the Lord whether I was too secure, whether I was deceived, and whether it was all wild-fire. I told them how the Lord had answered my prayers, and had come into my soul with such glory, that He had showed me that all the promises of the Bible were mine, and that I was as sure and as confident of being a child of God, and of having had all my sins forgiven me, and that I should go to heaven, as I was that there was a God. For I insisted on it that He Himself had told me so; and with tears of joy in my eyes, I assured them that even at the moment I was speaking, I felt the pardoning blood of my dear Jesus in my soul, and was confident that I had been delivered from the curse of the law, that the law had nothing to do with me now, for Christ had obeyed all its demands for me. I told them that I felt in my very soul that the law which had cursed me in my coming in and in my going out, in

my lying down and my rising up, which had been so great a terror to my poor soul that I dreaded God as my worst enemy, was now removed from over me; for I could now love God, love His law, delight in it, and delight to see it honoured in my dear Jesus. I said that I had asked the law if it had aught against me, and it had answered, with such a smile, "Deliver him from going down into the pit; for I have found a ransom" (Job 33. 24); and these were things, I said, to which I was a living witness.

### **Misunderstood by Friends and called an Antinomian**

One of them, who professed to be my friend, told me that he was afraid I was turning Antinomian. "Antinomian," said I, "what sort of people are they? I never heard the name before." "They are those," replied he, "who deny the moral law to be the believer's rule of life, which is a most awful doctrine, and leads to all manner of sin." "Moral law!" said I, "what is that?" "It is that just and holy law of God," replied he, "in which He commands us to love and obey Him." "What," asked I, "do you mean that law which Paul meant when he said, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them'? Do you take that law to be your rule of life?" asked I. "Surely I do," said he, "and all those who do not are Antinomians."

"Then," said I, "I am one of those Antinomians. Blessed be God! He has delivered me from that law. Christ has obeyed it for me, and has been made a curse for me, and has gone to the end of it for my poor soul. I asked him how he felt that law, what it did for him whilst he was under it, and how he had been delivered from it. Upon this subject he could say nothing; but he maintained that believers were required to be obedient to the law, as well as to believe in Christ; but I insisted on it that there was obedience, and blessed obedience too, in Christ, obedience which did my soul good, which pleased God, honoured the law, pardoned all my sins, confounded the devil, and made my soul dance for joy. I told him I would not commit a single sin for a thousand worlds if I could help it; for it was my meat and drink to do the will of my God and Saviour who had done so great things for me.

“When I was under the law,” said I, “I had no obedience, but I was full of anger, rebellion and wretchedness, and sometimes felt such wrath that I could have pulled the Almighty from His throne for not having made me a beast that had no soul to appear before so holy a God, who cannot acquit the guilty. But now, having been delivered from the law, and having the love of the Lord Jesus Christ shed abroad in my heart, I can believe in Him, obey Him, praise Him, thank Him, and adore Him night and day.” And I insisted on it that I never knew what it was to hate sin, to love God, and to delight in His ways until His pardoning love and blood were enjoyed in my heart, and that I was confident this was not the law, but Christ Jesus, my God and my Saviour, in my heart, obeying the law in my room and stead. But of these things he knew nothing; nor, indeed, could I meet with any who knew much about the path in which I had been led, and the glorious liberty which I enjoyed, And, indeed, how can any man enter into it until it first enter into him? “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” I wondered that they who had been Christians so long did not see as I saw, and feel as I felt; yet whatever I could say to them of the way in which God had led me, the bondage from which He delivered me, and the love and delight I experienced in His ways, had no effect upon them, except that of making them rage and rave against me, and warn the people to have nothing to do with me.

I wondered how it was that they kept at such a distance from me, but I could not keep at a distance from them. At all their prayer meetings and preachings I was sure to be present, being quite impatient for the time to arrive to meet the children of God, and tell them again what great things God had done for my soul. But some of them could not bear to see me there, and one of them told me one night that he wished I would never come amongst them more, as I made nothing but confusion, and was a disturber of their peace; he therefore hoped I would come no more. I answered him that I did not come amongst them intending to trouble them, or to throw them into confusion, but that my desire was to praise Jesus, and to tell what great things He had done for my soul by suffering in my stead, and obeying the law for me; and how precious to me was His blood,