

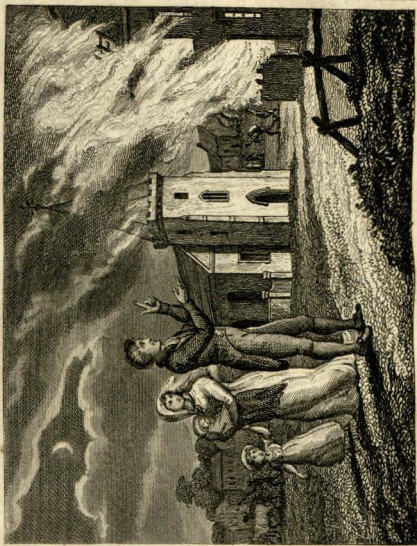
THE
PASTOR OF BLAMONT,
AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE.



EDINBURGH:
PRINTED FOR H. S. BAYNES AND CO.
AND
WILLIAM BAYNES & SON, LONDON.

1824.

THE
PASTOR OF BLAMONT.



Drawn & Engraved by C. Thomas & Co. D. Ellet.

THE PASTOR'S HOUSE ON FIRE.

Published by H. S. Baynes & Co. Edinburgh.

See page 40.

James Currie

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Jesus said unto him, feed my lambs.—John xxi. 15.

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Edinburgh, 1824.

TO THE

REV. JEAN MARC DE JOUX,

MINISTER OF

St. Mary's

EPISCOPAL CHAPEL,

ISLAND OF SARK.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE venerable La Flecheré, your pious countryman, whom you have often represented to me as “your Father, your Teacher, and your Guide,” deservedly shines amongst the highest ranks of such who have with propriety merited the appellation of *ambassadors for Christ*.

AFTER him, I have heard you mention in the strongest terms of approba-

tion, the Pastor of BLAMONT ; it was this that induced me to endeavour the present delineation of his character, and it is the esteem in which I hold yourself, added to your having directed me to the subject, which induces me to dedicate to you the feeble attempt now made to put it into an English garb.

ALLOW me then, my Dear Sir, thus publicly to shew this little token of my friendship,—a friendship which I do not hesitate to claim, and a friendship which I am proud to acknowledge.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Yours with the utmost sincerity,

THE EDITOR.

EDINBURGH, 1st April, 1824.

PROEM.

THE little Volume now presented to the public, is not a *narrative of fictions* ; it does not speak of a man who never existed but in the imagination of an author, nor is it a relation of actions and exploits of which no man was ever the performer, and virtues of which no man was ever the possessor. No, it is strictly and literally what it terms itself in the title page, “ AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE.”

The reverend individual whose history it pretends briefly, and but imperfectly to describe, was truly one of *the excellent of the earth*.

It was his lot to live in troublesome times, and in a country where the traits of character, which he discovered, are generally accounted nothing worth. France appears long to have been a kingdom famed for infidelity and superstition, and so it will continue to be as long as it remains under the influence of the deadly bane of Papacy.

Those, who in that country have dared to stand forward as the Advocates for pure and undefiled religion, have ever been assailed by the invectives of the idolatrous Monks, and the clamours of the ignorant and priest-ridden populace.

Blamont, the town in which the Pastor exercised the sacred functions of the ministry, is situated in Franche-Comté, a neighbouring Province to Switzerland, and borders on the towering mountains which separate the two countries; amongst the caves and valleys of which, many a persecuted saint has been obliged to take shelter from

the anathemas of a persecutor. It stands memorialized in the Annals of the Reformation, as a place in which the famous BEZA occasionally inculcated the doctrines of the reformed, with considerable success.

Nor is it known to have been destitute of a remnant who have held to those doctrines, in more or less of their purity, from that period down to the present.

May the Lord who has thus preserved them, grant that their number may experience a speedy and mighty augmentation. May many, possessed of the piety and zeal of the Pastor of Blamont, be raised up and sent forth to scatter the darkness which, at this day, broods over that unhappy nation.—And may the kingdom of the Messiah come with celestial power, to the total overthrow of superstition, the confusion of infidelity, and the salvation of the people. Amen.

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CHAP. I.

SAINT CHRYSOSTOM'S advice to a Christian Mother is worthy of being transcribed in letters of gold, and introduced to the perusal of every matron in the universe.—“If you truly love your children, take them to Jesus for instruction, get them introduced into the family of God, and insure to them a rich inheritance, by leaving them co-heirs with Christ.”

The learned and pious Charles Duvernoy was a follower of this maxim : dedicating his volume of *Christian Meditations*, in the year 1674, to Duke Leopold of Wirtemberg, he says, " Accept, my Lord, my pious farewell ; and, when having finished my course, I shall have obtained the prize, remember those of mine whom I may leave behind on earth. You will find them at the foot of the cross, where, by repeated vows, I have placed them from their birth. As I have taught them to serve their crucified Lord, I trust they will be able to serve your Lordship, in the temporal or spiritual services in which you may please to employ them."

One of the grand-children of this servant of God, and one of the precious charges whom his faith and love had thus devoted to his Redeemer, was JEAN FREDERIC NARDIN, the subject of the following memoir. He was the twelfth child of the Rev. DANIEL NARDIN, who was successively pastor of several churches, and lastly of that of Montbeliard ; his mother's name was Mary, eldest daughter of the above mentioned Charles Duvernoy.

He was born on the 29th of August 1687, in the town of Montbeliard, where his father then officiated as the minister of the Protestant congregation.

From the time that he left the cradle, and his infant tongue began to lisp, his father successfully laboured to plant the first germs of piety in his heart; and as he advanced in years, he endeavoured to inspire him with a taste for the sciences.

As he was naturally endowed with talents, and susceptible of application, he engaged him to devote himself to study; and for this purpose, he procured him all the means of instruction, public and private, which he judged most proper to render him an useful member of society. His parents designed him for the law, but a latent inclination induced him to aspire to the study of theology, and to the sacred ministry. It was this which prompted him to pay such attention to the Greek language, that, at a very early age, he had cultivated such an acquaintance with it, as to know the whole of the Greek Testament

by heart. Although but sixteen years of age, he had made such advances in school-learning, that his parents thought proper to translate him from thence to the University; still they designed him for the law. Submitting, therefore, to their wishes, he bade adieu to his friends and his home, decided to study for that profession. A little circumstance, however, which occurred on his journey, served fully to disclose the secret desire of his heart. By some means he lost his sword by the way,* and he immediately interpreted it into an intimation of the course he ought to pursue.

Without any delay, therefore, and before he had finished his journey, he seized the opportunity of endeavouring to make it an occasion to prevail with his parents, and engage them to change their intentions, by allowing him to follow the bent of his inclinations. In his letter, he observed, "that Providence having permitted

* It was customary in those days, and in the country of which Mr Nardin was a native, constantly to wear a sword.

that he should lose his sword, he could not but regard the loss as an advertisement by which God wished to make him understand that he was not called to wield an earthly weapon, but the sword of the spirit; and consequently, he hoped that they would not be displeased when he informed them, that he had vowed himself to the service of the church."

Arriving in the town of Tubingul, where he was to pursue his studies, a second, and yet more decisive incident occurred which served yet more to strengthen him in his determination,—an incident which obliged his parents, although, it appears, rather unwillingly, to comply with his desires. Not finding a vacancy for a lawyer in the College, he was obliged, in order to be received at all, to take the habit of an Ecclesiastic, and to declare himself student of Theology. Delighted to see his interior vocation to the ministry confirmed in so marked a manner, and finally agreed to by his friends, he diligently applied himself to the preparatory studies of the Belles Lettres and Philosophy, from which he passed to his favourite study of Theology.

Thus far we have followed this interesting youth, but we come now to a yet more important era of his life. We have observed the pious care of his father, and the tender solicitude of his mother, and now behold the peaceful fruits. He ever entertained a decided aversion to that which appeared unquestionably evil, and a marked inclination to that which is good; and thus the pains of his parents were owned of the Lord, by his being so kindly preserved by the restraining grace of God, the which, he had not wickedly withstood.

The favourable circumstances in which he found himself at the University, much facilitated his growth in grace. Besides the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and such theological books which he necessarily studied, he had the happiness of having two very learned, but not less pious Doctors for his preceptors, who did not fail to encourage the work of God in the heart of their young pupil. It was during his residence here, that the Lord made such discoveries of the depths of his infidelity, corruption, ingra-

titude, and rebellion against God, as greatly affected his soul, and humbled him in his own esteem. His repentance was sincere, and he who promises that *they who mourn shall be comforted*, manifested himself to the contrite heart of Nardin, as the Friend of sinners, the loving and powerful Saviour, who, after having given his life for the reconciliation of the world, made known by his word a source of salvation from the power of Satan, and the servitude of sin, that they may become his peculiar people, and serve none other than the living God.

As soon as these two points, the extreme sinfulness of man by nature and practice, and the saving grace of God in Christ, are made clearly sensible to the heart, a sincerely humbled soul sees no other course to adopt, but to renounce the devil, the world, and all self-confidence, and lay hold of that great salvation so freely offered, and only obtained by those who firmly believe on the Son of God. Mr Nardin had the happiness early to make choice of this good part, and his constant prayer was, that he might be pre-

served in the same. But not satisfied with the enjoyment of religion himself, and to eat his morsel alone, it is a fact, that by his exemplary conduct and example, more than by his words, he engaged many of his colleagues to enter on the same heavenly career.

It may easily be imagined, especially by those who have trode in a similar path, what it cost a young man, situated as he was, to make the sacrifices which the gospel requires; to renounce every sinful gratification and pleasure,—to deny the unruly desires of youth,—to shun all appearance of evil, and to live solely to the glory of God. Nor do we hesitate to suppose, that he must have been possessed of no little degree of courage and constancy, or rather divine assistance, to continue firm and unmoveable, notwithstanding the raileries, insults, calumnies and persecutions to which he was exposed by the ungodly students.

But in the midst of all this, the Christian remembers the promise of the Redeemer, *Lo, I am with you alway!* These trials are sweet-

ened by the delightful assurance of God's favour and love, and by the edifying intercourse which the children of God enjoy with their fellow Christians. Mr Nardin was not without the latter advantage ; he enjoyed this happiness in a high degree, and all who were accustomed to hold Christian communion with him during the period of his residence at Tubingul, long remembered the delight and edification they experienced therein.

Scarcely had he finished his studies at the University, when he was invited to fill the office of tutor in a nobleman's family, the which, after mature deliberation, he accepted. Every thing in this new situation tended to allure him to worldly mindedness and forgetfulness of God ; but the powerful influences of divine grace, of which he was the subject, rendered impotent all the new temptations to which he was here exposed. His zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, far from abating, appeared to shine with more peculiar lustre. The nobleman, into whose family he was admitted, the servants,

and above all, his juvenile charge, were constrained to own that *God was with him of a truth* ; and if all were not persuaded to choose the path of piety, yet his prayers and example proved a blessing to many.

PASTOR OF

THE

PASTOR OF BLAMONT.

CHAPTER II.

It would be well for the church of Christ, if every candidate for the Christian ministry was influenced by the motives that led to Mr Nardin's devoting himself to the sacred calling.

The year 1714 was the period of his vocation. His first destination was to the office of Pastor of Blamont; but his mother and other friends, (for his father died in 1707), influenced by human motives, and particularly of enjoying the pleasure of having him in their neighbourhood, obtained a situation for him at Hericourt. It

was with much reluctance that he was constrained to decline Blamont, and accept of the church at Hericourt. However, on the 12th of June, in the same year, he departed, in order to his being introduced to the ministry in that town.

The opposition and persecution to which he was here exposed, caused him frequently to represent to his mother and friends, how wrong they had acted in crossing the course of Providence in the order of his vocation.

His ministry in that place, however, was not without its effects. Like a John the Baptist, by his pressing exhortations to conversion, he awakened many souls from the profound lethargy, into which the greatest number even of those called Christians were plunged. Those who, like the repentant Israelites, desired to enter into the covenant of evangelical grace, he exhorted to go to the *Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.*

Thus faithfully and fearlessly announcing the Law and the Gospel, seconded by the powerful

example of Christian conduct, and accompanying his ministrations with ardent prayers for success, he could not fail to reap some fruit of his labours. Frequently did he witness the efficacy of divine grace in creating the soul a-new in Christ Jesus, and if all the seed which he scattered did not come to maturity, it was very discoverable that it produced a happy effect amongst many of his hearers. Some of them evidently *felt the powers of the world to come*, and openly embraced the profession of piety. Others, on whom it had a less powerful effect, ceased to scandalize the church by their irregularities and profanations. Oaths and profane songs were no longer heard, but from the mouths of a few determined libertines. The mechanic and labourer forgot their frivolous and obscene songs, (those abominable relics of the praises which the Heathen paid to immodest Venus, Ceres, and Bacchus) instead of which, both town and country were frequently heard to resound with the praises of God, and even the illiterate shepherds united in the same, by means of the Hymns and Spiriti-

tual Songs which their zealous Pastor composed to sanctify their mirth.

Such breaches made in the kingdom of darkness, could not but rouse its Prince to act with his usual malignity, as the enemy to God and the salvation of souls.

Neither the impious nor the hypocrite could bear to be observed by the watchful eye of a man, who put to confusion the one, and discovered the frauds of the other. It very frequently happens, that a pastor who consecrates himself entirely and conscientiously to the service of his Master and the good of souls, excites the jealousy of those who ought, as the Psalmist expresses it, *to be eaten up with zeal for the interests of God*. This is what Mr Nardin experienced from the commencement, and during the whole course of his ministry.

An ordinary stratagem of the enemies to piety, is to attack the doctrines of pious men. As the conduct of the true servants of Jesus Christ, who endeavour faithfully to acquit the duties of their callings, give too little for their

enemies to make a sufficient handle of, they frequently find that they have no better method of reeking their enmity, but by making their assaults with darts, the feebleness of which may soon be discovered. No unusual method of attack is that of misrepresenting their doctrines; and thus mangled and defamed by their impious hands, they hold them up to public view as the errors and false teachings of these *ambassadors for Christ*; and as the opinion of the bulk of the clergy is generally received and held in esteem by the generality of people, they obtain the power according as they please, of pronouncing what is orthodox and what is not; and thus it becomes an easy matter for them to make that pass for false doctrine, which they take upon themselves to pronounce such.

Mr Nardin's faithfulness and diligence naturally became matter of confusion to idle and lukewarm pastors; whilst he was regarded by others as a man troublesome to the world, whose wickedness he assailed to its utmost refuges; so that he soon stood accused of singularity

and enthusiasm,—terms which are arbitrarily given in every country, to those who do not follow the stream of custom.

In general, there are but two ways of thinking about religion.—The one makes it to consist in a superficial knowledge of the truths revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and in an exterior worship of God, joined with a certain degree of regularity of conduct: according to this creed, to be acquainted with the catechism, to observe the general laws of morality, and strictly to conform to the rites of the church,—is all that is necessary to make an orthodox Christian, and to warrant a person to hope for salvation. The other class, which is far less numerous, do not consider religion to be a mere speculative science. They do not regard it so much as what God has made for man, as they do that which God accomplishes in man. They affirm that man, in his natural state, is spiritually dead, and that of himself, and by himself, he cannot work out his salvation. According to them, conversion is not only a change of language and exterior con-

duct, but a thorough change of the heart and all its affections, accomplished by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who alone can *create anew in Christ Jesus unto good works*. They only esteem those as children of God who have received an unction from above ; *who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity ; have the same mind which was in him ; are led by his Spirit ; follow his footsteps ; and walk as he also walked*.

Those who make this profession, and recommend these maxims to others, are those whom lukewarm and merely nominal Christians stigmatize with the epithets of Methodists and enthusiasts.

Mr Nardin strongly declared himself the partisan of the truth as it is in Jesus ; so that it is not to be wondered at, that he should meet with those who should endeavour to involve in trouble the man whom they deemed an enthusiast and fanatic.

Some of his neighbours who detested these doctrines, and who were more malicious than others, gave out that Mr Nardin broached opi-

nions contrary both to the Protestant and Catholic faith.*

They produced a number of articles which they had gathered from his discourses, and which, they pretended were contrary to the faith : they pronounced the private meetings which he was accustomed to hold, as suspicious and prohibited conventicles : and with these and the like accusations, they brought him before the civil and ecclesiastical court, and as the majority of voices rarely unite in favour of the people of God, they judged him duly charged with heresy ; in consequence of which, he was suspended from his charge, and deprived of his benefice. But not contented with this, they proceeded yet further ; they declared that he was a person unworthy of the tolerance of the country, and once more brought him before the tribunal, accused of being a sectary. By a mandate of the 29th

* At this time the Protestants were tolerated by the French Government.

January 1717, he was cited before the Lord Lieutenant.

His judge, an enlightened and equitable man, acquainted him that he was charged with teaching different doctrines to those of the Protestants, and of holding forbidden meetings; and that if the accusations should prove true, he could no longer enjoy that toleration which the king granted to his Protestant subjects. Mr Nardin, surprised to find himself charged with imputations for which he had no idea that he was again summoned, replied, that the accusations were certainly ill-founded, and that to shew their falsity, he begged to be allowed to obtain the deposition of persons living in his neighbourhood, who were the most competent to render testimonies of his orthodoxy and conduct. "You are mistaken," replied the judge; "these same people whose testimony you rely upon, are your very accusers." Struck with fresh astonishment, Mr Nardin replied, that if he had given reason for any accusations, it could only be for having so constantly and conscientiously preached

against the reigning vices of his parish, and for having announced, in the person of the Son of God, a Saviour too little known and loved by those for whom he had given his blood and life. "These and these alone," he continued, "have been the subjects of my discourses, and if it can be proved that there is any crime in so doing, I consent to become a willing victim to my perseverance in preaching those doctrines." The Lieutenant, touched with this declaration, conceived an immediate esteem for Mr Nardin; and assured of the wicked motives of his accusers, he replied, "If this be all that you are culpable of, Sir, I pronounce you innocent; your doctrines appear to me to be even better than those taught by our most pious and zealous Catholic Doctors. I perceive that you are surrounded with enemies whom your doctrine frightens, and whom your example puts to shame. In the mean time, I would have you be upon your guard, and you may rely upon my protection as long as you broach nothing against the religion established by law, and the interests of the

king." His friend, the Lieutenant, did not delay to render justice to the purity of his doctrines and conduct, by obtaining an absolvatory declaration of his orthodoxy and innocence, in consequence of which, he was immediately restored to the free exercise of the ministerial office.

Writing soon after this event to a neighbouring minister whom Mr Nardin considered as a brother in the Lord, he observes, "Thank God, in the midst of all, my conscience is at ease. I see in these circumstances the accomplishment of my Lord's prediction; such has been the experience of all his servants, and our first confessors all assure us that it is impossible to preach the gospel in its purity, without its causing rumours and alarms. I am willing to suffer persecution, and to lose my life, if I may be allowed to be—I will not say one of the disciples of Jesus—but one of the meanest of his servants. May the Lord but have mercy on the people. O! my dear brother, let us shake ourselves from

apathy and fear, and venture all to save our souls and a few others with us. We hazard all, but we must certainly do so to gain all.

Yours in the bonds of Christian love,

JEAN FREDERIC NARDIN."

THE

PASTOR OF BLAMONT.

CHAPTER III.

IT is with pleasure that we now bid adieu to the scenes of persecution, into which, with mournful interest, we have followed the subject of our Narrative. It would appear, that upon his restoration to the ministry, he did not return to the field of his former labour, for we find that on the 22d of June 1718, he was chosen pastor of the church of Blamont.

Here he entered upon his duties with redoubled zeal and diligence, affected more deeply than ever with the awful responsibilities of his

charge. In the first discourse which he delivered upon his arrival amongst that people, with anxious feelings and with eyes suffused in tears, he gave them an outline of the doctrines which, he assured them, in God's name, he intended to inculcate.

"I propose," said he, in concluding his sermon, "to warn and to admonish you in season and out of season, not only in the church, and during the hours of public worship, but more particularly in all my conversations with you, and on every occasion I shall have of seeing you and speaking to you. May the Lord bless our acquaintance; may it prove to the promotion of his glory—to the advancement of his cause—and for the happiness and salvation of those who hear, and of him who ministers; that both you and I, after having sown the seed of the word of life, may eventually return from the harvest with songs of triumph, and obtain, by the grace and mercy of God, the end of our faith, viz. the eternal salvation of our souls. Amen!"

We have now arrived at that period of our

Narrative, in which it will be proper to introduce a few features of the personal character, and of the public and private manners of the Pastor of Blamont. He was a man of no ordinary natural endowments, and he had acquired much by education and study. But the object which, after his conversion, he paid the greatest application to, was how he might be a consistent Christian; and after his ordination, how he might best win souls to Christ.

Piety, of which he sincerely and constantly made profession, had not in him that dismal and forbidding air which is affected by some. His inclination to solitude, and his great application to study, did not hinder his temper from being easy and pleasant. His gravity was accompanied with humility and sweetness. He was engaging, affable, obliging, and liberal to the extent that his fortune would allow. His manners, complaisant and friendly; did not proceed from weakness or timidity; for when he met with those who despised religion, or with temporizers, who, in affecting to be religious, would have Christ

and Belial at amity, as if they could be holy without dying to sin ;—it was then that the zealous spirit of Phineas seized him, and gave him sufficient courage to address them to the face, “how long will you plead the cause of the devil against the interests of God and your own soul? Know that those who do or encourage such and such things, shall not inherit eternal life.”

Except in cases where zeal for the glory of God and the preservation of religion obliged him thus boldly to expostulate, he always evinced the greatest moderation, especially when he was engaged for his own honour or particular interest. He seemed almost insensible to the unjust proceedings and outrages to which he had been exposed ; so much so, as to maintain no resentment against any individual, and soon to lose all remembrance of them. Had a spirit of retaliation been at all cherished by him, we should not have met with the following incident in his life :—Sometime after he had been reinstated into the ministry, the Lieutenant visited Blamont, and immediately upon his arrival, in-

quired for Mr Nardin. Upon his waiting on the Lieutenant, he said, amongst other obliging conversations, " Well, Mr Nardin, you see you are now avenged ; it must be matter of satisfaction to you to know, that two of your enemies who endeavoured to obtain your confinement in the dungeon of Fort Grifon, have been shut up there themselves since your acquittal." Mr Nardin felt himself a little flattered by the compliment, but answered in a modest and respectful manner, " My Lord, my religion does not permit me to rejoice at the misfortunes of my enemies. I pity them, and hope that better conduct may place them out of the reach of the like punishment."

After this, the same Lieutenant visited his parish, and as he was about to dispense of a public situation, there were many candidates who put up for the same. Mr Nardin, whose advice the Lieutenant thought proper to ask on this occasion, recommended the son of one of his greatest persecutors. " What !" exclaimed the Lieutenant, " do you not remember the injury which his father did you."

"My Lord," replied the peaceable pastor, "I learn from the maxims of my religion, to render good for evil, and to pray for those who persecute me. Besides, however blameable the father may have been, the son did not share in his sin." "Well," added the Lieutenant, "I yield to your recommendation; but if the viper bite you, remember that you desired to have it in your breast." The successful candidate having been raised to the office, went to thank the Lieutenant, and to offer him a present; but refusing to accept it, he said to him in an audible tone, "It is not to me, it is to Mr Nardin that the present is due; go and carry it to him, for it is to him that you owe all the obligation."

If such actions as these were not capable of winning the hearts of his enemies; to disarm their malice; and to cover them with confusion, they were sufficient to prove the nobleness of his sentiments, and above all, his Christian moderation.

In the year 1726, the town of Blamont was

destroyed by a fire, which reduced the church and most of the houses to ashes.—That of Mr Nardin suffered with the rest. Constrained precipitately to leave it in the middle of the night, he had sufficient resolution to view, with a tranquil eye, a part of his furniture dispersed, a part stolen, and the rest consumed by the fire. But turning from this scene, and looking toward the houses of many of his parishioners, when he beheld the habitations of many whom he tenderly loved, all in flames, he could no longer retain his tears.

So greatly was he affected at the sight of the general disaster, added to the coldness of the night, that he was seized with violent shiverings, which obliged his friends to place him on a bed which they had spread on an elevated spot, from whence he could see the dreadful spectacle. One of the principle officers of the garrison passing by, perceived Mr Nardin thus situated, and asked him, What he did there? “Indeed, Sir,” replied he, “I am praying to God to abate the fire.” The officer, astonished at the presence of

mind, and the tranquillity with which the minister bore his sufferings, exclaimed to those who accompanied him, "If I did not believe that I was in the true church, I would be of that of Mr Nardin!"*

But his patience and resignation may be ad-
duced from his conduct under bodily afflictions.
He was naturally of a weak constitution, and his
great application to study, and to the laborious
work of the ministry, so engrossed his attention,
that he gave too little heed to the management
of his health; besides which, he was subject to
frequent and painful attacks of the cholic. How-
ever, in the midst of all his weakness, and some-
times the acutest pain, none was made acquainted
with his illness, till it was discovered by his be-
ing obliged to suspend his ordinary occupations.

His secret, under all his sufferings, was to live
nearer his Saviour,—to devote himself to him
more entirely than ever in thought and affection,
—to spread all his case before God, and thus he

* The officer was a Roman Catholic.

found his heart enlarged, even when his body was most afflicted; and far from manifesting impatience under the cross, he found it sweet and delightful. He has been frequently heard to say, "Lovely cross! how profitable art thou to my soul! Precious cross! when no other will welcome thee, come and abide with me!" Such were the effects of Divine grace on the heart of the pious Pastor.

He was far from contributing to the debility of his health by any excess. It is true, that his means did not allow him many superfluities; but still he might have lived in a much more easy manner than he did. But he would not make use of his own property, or that of his parents, for any such purpose. He was as frugal in his meals, as he was plain in his furniture and dress, and never departed from the rules of the most rigid temperance. It was often the case, that when his dinner had been served up, he has sent the whole of it to some of his sick poor, and fasted till night. If, through necessity or complacency, he was obliged to assist at public fes-

tivals, he did not fail to amuse and edify the company by suitable and useful conversation,— manifesting that politeness of which he possessed a considerable share, and setting an example of sobriety, the strictest rules of which he never broke.

With respect to the disinterestedness of Mr Nardin, it was altogether exemplary. He would rather have been covered with the leprosy of Gehazi, than stand charged with covetousness and the love of money ; and instead of being dressed in the wool of his flock, and feast on their blood as a mercenary hireling ; he would rather, if it had been in his power, have provided for the wants of their bodies as well as their souls. Nor was it seldom that he broke his morsel to the needy amongst them, with the same feelings which made him so ardently desire that they should partake with him of the bread of life.

He was exposed to the same calumnies which many of the children of God have sustained before and after him. The enemies of piety ever

endeavour to render them despicable and odious. The devil has been deceived a thousand times, and his emissaries, less cunning than himself, have often been dupes to their own machinations. Mr Nardin attached to a party, antipodes to the ungodly world, would naturally have to bear his part in their reproaches ; but he triumphed over their slanders and calumnies, and often put his enemies to shame.

He always lived in a manner removed from every thing that could create suspicion. His conversation with the female sex shewed not only the purity of his heart, (for he manifested such scrupulous reserve, that nothing could be observed at all equivocal either in his air or expressions,) whilst his countenance had something in it that was capable of throwing trouble and shame into the very souls of those who harboured any criminal thoughts.

From the period of his conversion, he never appeared to lose sight of his God. He always manifested the utmost reverence and gratitude to the Author of his being, for the great gift of

his Son. The heart of the happy Pastor was led captive by the Friend of sinners. He acknowledged the superiority of being beholden to a Saviour, than uselessly endeavour to render himself virtuous, just, and holy, by his own strength. Thus he did not seek salvation, but in the infinite merits of the Son of God. The perfect obedience of Jesus made all his righteousness;—the blood of Jesus alone effected the purification of his heart;—the wounds of Jesus were the only refuge of his soul;—the sufferings, the cross, the death, and the burial of Jesus, were, in his esteem, the only means by which man can die to sin, rise to holiness, and obtain eternal felicity. From this it was that he made the person of Jesus Christ the dearest object of his affections. He did not approach God,—he did not adore him,—he did not render him thanks,—but by him and in him. He had acquired a holy habit of constantly walking as in the presence of God, and ceaselessly looking to him *who is the author and finisher of faith*. His application to prayer was indefatigable; he

watched thereunto continually. It was too little for him to consecrate a few moments, morning and evening, to this important duty; he frequently employed nearly whole nights in it. When he did not sleep, he was frequently heard conversing with God, mourning over his misery, and panting after the grace of his Saviour. It was thus that, as an evangelical Pastor, he continually carried about with him the sacred fire, which the Great Shepherd of our souls brought from heaven, and which he so much desires to see burn on the altar of every bosom on earth.

Added to all this, Mr Nardin possessed other talents suited to his situation. It is true, like St Paul, he did not make much account of human knowledge or eloquence; nevertheless, he was well versed in theological science. He understood Latin, Greek, Hebrew, the German and English languages. He had gone through a course of Philosophy, according to the custom of the Protestant Universities in Germany, and had attained a solid acquaintance with all the branches of theology, as well as the Fathers of

the Church. However, the spirit which directed his studies did not permit him to draw any other advantage from them, than the power of clearly teaching the way of salvation.

Thus, although he was a man of superior acquirements, he did not make use of them but when subservient to that. His knowledge, exempt from presumption, suited better to conciliate the esteem of others, than to call forth their jealousy. He always preferred *the tree of life* to that of *knowledge*, knowing, that though knowledge is a wholesome plant when found growing under the shade of humility, it becomes noxious as soon as it rises above it. There needs a great degree of piety, to pluck up the thorns of pride, which are apt to spring up in the pursuit of mental attainments. These thorns were not allowed to vegetate in the heart of Mr Nardin, whose soul was animated by such a spirit of humility and love,—whose meat and drink it was to endeavour constantly to seek the glory of God, and the edification of his neighbour.

THE
PASTOR OF BLAMONT.

CHAPTER IV.

TO a person possessed of an ordinary share of mental endowments, and animated with zeal for the Lord of Hosts, and the salvation of souls, the work of the ministry presents the most delightful employment under heaven.

Mr Nardin was a laborious minister of the New Testament, and his life and happiness consisted in being engaged in the work. And whilst he endeavoured to do justice to his profession, by a constant application to such studies as were connected with a proper dis-

charge of the same, he drew less in the composition of his sermons from learned lore, than the sentiments of his heart.—He studied more upon his knees than from his books. In the choice of his texts, he generally consulted the state of his flock, and the actual dispositions of his own heart.

He was so much master of himself in the delivery of his discourses, public or private, that he was never seen agitated, even when censuring the grossest vices. After having given a brief explication of his text, and a simple exposition of the subject, he was accustomed, in a sweet and affectionate manner, to request his hearers to examine themselves upon what he was about to explain to them; and closed, by making a powerful application of the whole to the heart and conscience. Discourses thus pronounced, and accompanied with divine unction, could not fail of proving a blessing, and of producing some effects.—These effects would be different in different individuals. To some, a *savour of life*; and to others, a *savour of death*.

All were instructed, and more or less edified. Several were led to a knowledge of their hearts, and from that to repentance, and saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Many persons were accustomed to come and hear him from the neighbouring villages, and some, occasionally, from a considerable distance, who expressed themselves happy in collecting the crumbs which fell from the gospel table. But if, like St Peter, Mr Nardin had the satisfaction of winning many souls to Christ, he had also more than once, hearers of the same stamp as had St Stephen; he met with but too many of those *uncircumcised in heart and ear*, who *always resist the Holy Ghost*, and make derision of those who stand forward as champions for the truth.

How often is the hatred of men incurred by telling them the truth; and of all truths, that which tends to discover the infidelity and corruption of the human heart, is most likely to irritate the obstinate sinner and the hypocrite. So long as a minister merely insists on the simple

exteriors of religion, few will find fault, and, should he be a man possessed of superior talents, he may even be allowed to venture so far as to inculcate the strictest morality. But when the zealous Pastor stands up to enforce, with simplicity and energy, a change of heart, and a renewal of the corrupt nature,—when he speaks of the love of God,—of faith in Christ, and consistency of conduct, there will not be wanting messengers of Satan to harass and disturb him in the performance of his duty. They narrowly watch his every step, and his most innocent expressions, and often endeavour to give them a false interpretation.—They will ever be placing stumbling-blocks in his way. They endeavour to render him suspected of heresy, or they accuse him of being influenced by motives of interest or pride, or that he makes innovations which tend to the overthrow of religion and society; indeed, the stratagems of the enemy are endless,—his powers of invention are inexhaustible,—he is always forging fresh machinations, to maintain his kingdom, and to hinder the pro-

gress of that of God. Not content to employ, for this purpose, all the subtleties that cunning can invent, he comes to violence, he openly attacks the honour, the virtue, sometimes the life of those whose only aim is, to shew unto men the way of salvation. A remarkable instance of this occurred to Mr Nardin.

As he was accustomed to depict the extreme corruption of man by nature in the strongest colours,—to make the necessity of a total change, and of real conversion apparent as the Scriptures declare, it happened one Sabbath-day, that one of his parishioners hearing him thus anatomize the human heart, imagined that it was himself in particular who was addressed, and that the minister, having been informed of his conduct by some of his neighbours, was applying his discourse to him alone. Upon this, the hearer, transported with rage, formed the awful resolution of murdering his Pastor. With this intention he went, armed with a club, to wait in a road through which he knew he must pass to return home. Arriving at the intended spot,

and finding that he could not muster sufficient courage to execute his cruel design, he took it into his head to return to hear the sermon, which was to be preached in the afternoon,—supposing that the discourse would still more excite his anger, and thus inspire him with all the firmness which he needed to perpetrate his intention. He entered the church at the hour of service, calculating upon its being the last the Pastor would ever be engaged in. The sermon finished, he retired before the rest of the congregation, in order to fetch his club, and wait for the minister in the place he had chosen. Whilst he was standing posted behind some trees, Mr Nardin passed, and perceiving the man through the branches, he instantly saluted him in his naturally affable manner, by saying, “ Well, friend, what good do you do there?” These words, so insignificant in themselves, went like a clap of thunder to the heart of the evil-minded man. He no sooner heard them, than his club fell from his hands; and thus disarmed, he threw himself at the feet of the Pastor,—confessed his

wicked intention, and asked his pardon. Mr Nardin, less affrighted, than touched with pity at the sight of a soul so awfully led captive by him *who is a murderer from the beginning*, assured him of his friendship ; and after being informed of what led to the design, he so explained the matter to the man, as caused him to be fully persuaded of his error.

As much as he was pressing in his exhortations, so much was he circumspect and scrupulous in the administration of the sacrament. At the approach of these solemnities, he felt himself charged with fresh obligations, and powerfully excited to redouble his zeal. Nothing was so mortifying to him, as the too general profanation of what is most sacred in religion. He was bitterly grieved to see the symbols of the body and blood of the Son of God received with an impenitent heart. Thus, when he perceived that any known to be profane person intended to go to the table of the Lord, he endeavoured to hinder him ; and as his circumstances did not allow him openly to observe a discipline at all

severe, he made use of many innocent schemes in order to oblige unworthy communicants to absent themselves.

In catechizing, he followed the same method, and maintained the same spirit as he did in his sermons. He did not merely limit himself to a dry exposition of the dogmas of religion, but after having given a clear and solid explication, suitable to the persons he had to instruct, he taught how they should examine themselves on each article, so as to learn how to conduct themselves accordingly.

Besides these public instructions, he was wont to follow them up with private ones at their own houses; and in order that he might have all the young people of the family together, he generally left the hour to their own convenience. Besides, he was exceedingly careful frequently to visit the schools,—as much to gain the respect of the masters and scholars, as to put them in remembrance of their duties the one to the other. In fine, he was at once minister, preceptor, and father of his flock,—not disdaining to

give private lessons to servants, and to teach those to read and write who were desirous of learning, but had not the means.

Above all, he felt great concern for the sick. Not content to address them a few words of consolation, he exhorted them to make a serious self-examination, and to seek peace and acceptance with God in the blood of the New Covenant. He shewed them how dreadful it is for a soul to carry all its sins into eternity, without being washed in the blood of the Lamb. On the other hand, he represented the grace and love of Christ to poor sinners; his desire to pardon their sins and to save the truly penitent; and of the happiness there is in reserve for those who put their whole trust in him as their Redeemer. He was accustomed to recommend particular cases of such as were sick and dying, to such persons whom he knew to possess the gift of prayer, and to whom the quality of children of God gave a more free access to the throne of grace.

The poor,—the widow,—the orphan,—the

tempted and the persecuted, found in Mr Nardin a sharer of their trouble,—a comforter and a counsellor. In a word, convinced that his parishioners had a right to exact all that it was possible for him to do for their bodies and souls, he followed the example of St Paul, in making himself *all things to all men, that he might win some.*

He made it his duty to visit all his hearers without exception. This rule he followed for some time; but having remarked that many feared the presence of a man who brought their conduct to the light, and sometimes absented themselves when he made his usual calls, the houses of such, he thought it adviseable to discontinue frequenting. Amongst those who received him with more cordiality, he ever wished to be considered as a friend, and to maintain that religious familiarity which becomes a Christian father in his own family; whilst his own door, as well as his heart, was open to all.

Once in the week, the most serious of the flock were invited to meet at his house, not for

the purpose of spending an hour in frivolous conversation, and to con over the faults of their neighbours ; but to follow the example of the saints in all ages, who *spake often one with another* on subjects connected with their individual salvation. The Pastor began by reading a chapter of the Bible, accompanied with a short application ; after which, each individual recounted the recent dealings of God with himself : and thus being comforted and profited by the recital of the experience of each other, they concluded by singing a Hymn, and by recommending one another to the grace of their common Lord, and to the sympathy of each other's prayers. Mr Nardin frequently expressed himself as peculiarly happy in thus sharing with the children of God, the blessing promised to those who, in little bands, meet together in the name of the Lord Jesus.

To the ignorant, and those who considered it one of the greatest of sins to be *righteous over much*, these meetings appeared altogether a mysterious affair, and were accounted a down-

right innovation in religion. The biggoted zealot who would have it, that God should not be worshipped, save on the mount of Jerusalem, supposed that it derogated from the homage due to the Creator, to worship him in a private house; as though the word of God was altogether powerless, except when read and expounded from the pulpit by a man in robes, and as if the means of salvation were confined between the four walls of a church, and that out of its inclosure, it was scandalous to speak of the concerns of the soul.

But Mr Nardin was too faithful to his master, and too determined to follow the suggestions of his conscience, to prove false either to the one or the other.

He considered the custom deducible from the Bible, and authorized by God; and unless he was greatly mistaken, expressly recommended; and he had often proved, that it carries with it its own blessing. And what was thus sanctioned, and what the most zealous and successful servants of God had practised and recommended from time immemorial, he considered himself at liberty to

follow ;—what do we say ? why, he would have belied his character and sentiments, had he ever refused.

In thus filling the duties of a faithful Pastor, he did not affect to distinguish himself from others, or to render those ministers dis-esteemed who did not follow his maxims. He respected the character of a pastor, where the individual, who sustained that character, manifested the spirit of his profession. He respected those worthy of double honour, who zealously fulfilled the duties of their calling. But he did not recognize a greater monster in Christendom, than a minister void of piety. He was astonished to see a man aspire to the pastoral office, without having those qualifications which essentially characterize the flock of Christ. With respect to those who made it their business to edify their flock by their discourses and example, he desired nothing so much as to live with them in the most perfect harmony of heart and sentiment. He invited them to unite their prayers and their efforts, that acting in concert, they

might labour with more success to establish the Messiah's kingdom.

In conclusion, after all that we have said in honour of this pious and excellent divine, we have not recited any thing to be compared with what we might have done, had we better resources. Had he left any written account of his life and experience, we should have met with much more incident ; but how different would have been his own language to ours ! Indeed it would almost appear like a contradiction to all that we have here stated concerning him. He has often been heard to say, “ that in the character of a miserable creature, and unfaithful servant, he had no other ground of hope than the infinite merits of Christ, and through him alone, of the grace and favour of God.” It was here that he drew all his consolation and assurance against the accusations of Satan,—the calumnies of the world,—as well as the reproaches of his own conscience.

If he desired to *die the death of the righteous*, it was not with those who hope to be saved by

good works, and to merit heaven through their own righteousness; but with those who believe in him who justifies the ungodly, who seek not to recommend themselves for their own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God, by faith in Christ Jesus.

The true Christian does not fear the approach of death, because he in whom he trusts is Almighty and faithful: he will assuredly deliver him, and transport his happy spirit to his endless kingdom.

Mr Nardin founded all his hopes on the gracious promises of his Saviour, and on the witness of the Holy Spirit, with his own spirit, of his being a child of God, and an heir of heaven. In his last illness, which lasted about six weeks, it was visible, from the expression of his countenance, that he enjoyed a constant peace and calm, *like those who wait the coming of their Lord*, and to whom it is given to contemplate in spirit, *the heavens opened*,—so he foresaw, with resignation mingled with joy, the time in which he should quit this “vale of sin.” Faith,

the demonstration of things hoped for, elevated his soul, as his bodily faculties grew weaker.

A few days before his dissolution, he desired to receive the Lord's Supper, as a fresh pledge of the love of his Saviour ; that being encouraged thereby, he might approach with more confidence the gates of eternity.

This last repast he took in communion with many of his beloved flock, and he begged the minister who administered it, to take for the subject of his exhortation, Psalm xxiii. The celebration of the sacrament being finished, they gave thanks to God in a hymn of praise, in which he united his feeble and dying voice. The happiest day of Mr Nardin's life, was the day of his death ;—on the morning of which, he asked his physician if the hour of his deliverance was not at hand ? And being informed that human help was now hopeless, he affectionately thanked him for his attention : then, turning to his friends who surrounded his bed, he bade them farewell ;—wishing them every happiness, and recommending them to that God who alone

is the source of safety and bliss. This ended, he calmly waited like Jacob, his expected death. Soon after, continuing to enjoy his external senses, all present being engaged in prayer, he surrendered his soul into the hands of his God, and thus finished his career of tribulation. He died in the Lord, and rested from his labours on the 7th of December, 1728, aged 41 years. His mortal remains were interred with becoming tokens of respect. The minister who accompanied the funeral, took for his text those words of the Prophet :—*The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart ; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.* Isaiah lvii. 1.

As we have before observed, Mr Nardin left no written memorial of his life ; nevertheless, his name will be transmitted to posterity by the Sermons which were published from his manuscripts, by his surviving relatives. To satisfy the natural curiosity of our readers, as well as to

add to their edification, we present them, in addition to the Narrative, a Translation of one of his Discourses, and one which appears particularly applicable to the general tenor of the Pastor's life and experience.

He and thus touched the center of tribulation. His mind was in the Lord, and rested from his labours on the 11th of December, 1728, aged 47 years. His mortal remains were interred with becoming tokens of respect. The minister who accompanied the funeral, took for his text those words of the Prophet:—*The righteous perished, and no man heeds it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.* Isaiah 57:1.

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CONSOLATION UNDER AFFLICTION:

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SERMON,

BY THE REV. JEAN FREDERIC NARDIN.

MATTHEW viii. 23—27.

And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

MANKIND, by falling into sin, have plunged into a state of suffering,—the natural consequence of the same. And although he may sometimes imagine himself to be in circumstances appa-

rently happy, he is no less exposed to afflictions and distress ; because, in fact, they are inseparable to his corrupt nature. The patient Job well describes his state of misery, when he calls it *a warfare*.* In effect, mortal man is exposed to a state of continual hostility during the whole period of his life. From the moment of his birth, he commences war with death, against which, he is obliged to defend himself every day. Even those creatures which are intended to contribute to his preservation, lend him their assistance, as if with reluctance, and often become his dangerous enemies. But what is yet more deplorable and dishonourable to humanity, is, that man is almost continually at enmity with his neighbour ;—finally, to fill up his misery, he is at incessant war with himself.

Discontented with his condition, he is agitated with all kinds of thoughts, desires, and passions which divert his attention to a thousand diffe-

* Job vii. 1. *hireling*, but rendered *warfare* in the French translation of the Bible ; the latter is also preferred by Cruden and others.

rent objects, all equally incapable of rendering him satisfaction, and of making him happy. But of all these warfares, the most criminal and the most fatal is, that which he wages against his God ; and, as by so doing, he declares himself the enemy of him who is the Author of all good,—the source of perfect felicity,—nothing can result from his opposition, but a deluge of evils. Job, then, had good reason for calling life *a state of warfare*.

The children of God are not exempt from the miseries incident to human nature. If, by the grace of God, they are delivered from the greatest of miseries, from *the sting of death which is sin*, still they find themselves exposed to many afflictions. The character of children of God, of Christians, and of disciples of Christ, does not exempt them. The examples which the Holy Scriptures furnish us with, as evidences of this truth, are as many in number as are the children of God, of which it makes mention. It appears particularly evident from that part of sacred history which forms our text to-day. We there see,

on one hand, the disciples of Jesus, as well as the other passengers, exposed to a violent tempest; and on the other, the signal assistance which the Saviour accorded them. This circumstance furnishes us with matter to speak of the affliction of the children of God. And, we shall see,

I. What are their afflictions.

II. In what manner they bear them. And,

III. The happy issue which they obtain.

The Evangelist, who, under the direction of the Spirit of God, gives us the recital of what happened to the disciples of the Saviour when upon the sea, begins his narrative with a circumstance which he appears desirous that we should particularly observe, by saying, that *Jesus entered into a ship, and his disciples followed him*. It was not then at their own suggestion, nor from mere caprice, much less from an unwarrantable motive, that the disciples exposed themselves upon the sea. They were not found

beyond the bounds of their duty and their calling when the tempest overtook them. It was in following the commands of their divine Master, and in walking in his train, that they beheld themselves, all on a sudden, in danger of perishing.

I. These observations now lead us to an acquaintance with the distinguishing features of the sufferings and afflictions of the children of God.

1st, The afflictions of the children of God are those which they experience in the train of Jesus. To suffer in following Jesus, in consequence of obeying his commandments, and of the attachment we have for him; to suffer with him, in his sight and for his glory,—these are the distinctive marks of the sufferings of God's people: it is this which sanctifies them, and makes them salutary and delightful,—these are they which, according to St Paul, are followed with *an eternal weight of glory*. But what is it to suffer in the train of Jesus? It is not merely to be ill

treated and persecuted for the cause of God—for the testimony of Jesus—for the interests of his church; but it includes every species of suffering which the children of God can experience in the world, even such which appear to be the most inconsiderable, and have the least connection with religion and piety.

All the afflictions of the children of God, even those which happen to mankind in general, and which apparently should be attributed but to the course of nature, are suffered by Christians,—the members of, and the disciples of Christ; but they are sanctified by the cross and sufferings of the Saviour, because when they are exposed to them, they support them with patience, with resignation, and for the love of Jesus. The disciples were not affrighted by the storm, and by being threatened with an approaching wreck, purely and precisely because they had followed their master; for the same thing happened to those of the company who were not of the number of the disciples. The same misfortune threatened all the other vessels which were upon

the sea ; and in every other case, the good and the bad were equally exposed to the same dangers, and suffered in the same manner. However, the Spirit of God informs us in the beginning of our text, that Jesus *was followed by his disciples* ; and this, for the purpose of marking a difference between the troubles of the disciples, and those of the rest, namely, that they occurred in following Jesus.

Thus, as soon as we become his disciples, we have cause to believe that all the calamities and crosses which we may experience, will be rendered beneficial to us. As soon as the Saviour can regard them as crosses which we bear in following him, he sanctifies them,—he sweetens them,—and he converts them into gladness and glory.

That which characterizes the sufferings of the children of God, and which renders them supportable, consolant, and salutary, is, that they occur in following Jesus. When men in general suffer, they attach the fine term *cross* to all their sufferings indiscriminately, and endeavour to con-

sole themselves by saying, that every Christian must have his cross—that the lot of the children of God in this world is to suffer—and that God thus visits and chastises those whom he loves. But, notwithstanding all this would be true from the mouth of a Christian, it is not so when the worldling and ungodly make the application to themselves. The hypocrite makes use of this language, on account of the good opinion which he entertains of himself and of his state, or because every other means of comfort fails ; but at heart, he is neither true nor sincere. It is not true that they are chastened as children.—It is not true that they bear the cross of Christ ; for they are neither the children of God, nor the disciples of Jesus. Do you wish to know whether you suffer as children of God, or as evil-doers ? Examine yourselves whether you are the disciples of Jesus,—do you walk in his train,—do you follow the suggestions of his Spirit, and the maxims of his gospel ? When you discover these characters in you, you will find, in all your afflictions, a source of divine consolation, because

you will be able to regard your sufferings as proofs of the paternal goodness of your God,—as fresh evidences of your adoption,—as so many traits of resemblance to your suffering and crucified Lord.

But if, as St Peter expresses it, you *suffer as evil-doers*, as the slaves of sin; if it is in the train of the prince of this world, in following the maxims of the world, and the desires of the flesh that your sufferings have come upon you; assuredly you cannot, without lying, declare, that you bear the cross, and that you suffer in the character of children of God; consequently, you cannot regard your afflictions as the consoling marks of the love and of the paternal correction of God. You cannot consider them in any other light than the floods of his justice, or as obvious strokes of his benevolent hand, by which he endeavours to affect you,—to awaken you,—and to melt your hearts into sincere repentance. If you only consider them in this point of view, and turn to him who smites you, with humble

and contrite hearts ; these sufferings will conduct you into the paths of grace and salvation.

2dly, A *second* characteristic of the sufferings and afflictions of the children of God, is, that they do not happen by chance, or through their own fault, nor by the natural consequence of their own conduct ; but by a wise dispensation of Divine Providence. It is in the discharge of their duties ; it is in the service and in the company of their Master, that the disciples are threatened by the winds and waves. It is not in abandoning their Master, or in fleeing, like Jonah or Adam, from before the face of God ; consequently, they have not given occasion for the event ; they were conducted by the wise and powerful hand of the Lord of the elements. It often occurs that men, after having plunged themselves into difficult and embarrassing circumstances, through their own imprudence, or the simple impulse of some passion, endeavour to excuse their conduct, by saying, that they did it for the best. The heart of man is so deceitful, that these kind of people easily imagine,

that the evils which result from their false steps, should be placed amongst the number of the crosses which they endure for the sake of Christ, and in consequence of which, that he is in some sort obliged to interest himself in their behalf. But if they judged rightly, they would humbly acknowledge that they themselves are the cause of their own misfortunes; and in imploring pardon of God for their faults, they would beg the assistance of his grace, that they might, in time to come, have their eye ever fixed upon Jesus, and that they might follow him step by step. However, it cannot be doubted but the Saviour, good and faithful as he is, exercises great compassion towards his own people, when they fall into like digressions. He takes pity on their weakness,—he pardons their imprudence,—he calls them from their wanderings,—leads them into the right path, and gives them a favourable issue.

3dly, A *third* circumstance which often accompanies the sufferings to which the children of God are exposed in the company of Jesus, is,

that they are extremely painful and afflicting. Scarcely were the disciples embarked with their divine Master, when, all on a sudden, there arose a great tempest, so that the ship was covered with the waves ; and Jesus slept. Events of this kind are of such a nature, that neither prudence nor art, nor the power of man, can hinder them. All that they can do on such occasions, is to use certain precautions, and abandon themselves to the mercy of the winds. The disciples, therefore, were likely to be in a state of great perplexity. Every thing seemed to announce approaching dissolution.—Not a creature was capable of extricating them from the impending ruin. To increase their embarrassment, Jesus slept ;—he appeared ignorant and insensible of their danger.

This picture presents us with a striking description of what the children of God suffer in following Jesus. Engaged to follow him over the dangerous sea of the world, there frequently arises violent tempests which shake their bark, and endangers their perishing ; or, as the apostle

Paul has it, *of making shipwreck of faith*. These storms are the temptations and the persecutions which the devil and the world raises against them, and which often throw them into the deepest disquiet, and the profoundest anguish. Sometimes the efforts of the enemy are so violent, and the weakness of the disciples so great, that if an invisible hand did not sustain them, they would fall into unbelief, distrust, and despair. This is what Satan aims to lead them to, when he employs his agents to persecute the children of God, by calumnies, or by acts of injustice and violence exercised upon their goods, their bodies, and their life. By so doing, he endeavours to render them weary of piety, to estrange them from Jesus, and to make them enter, with the ungodly and the hypocrite, into the broad road of perdition. By these external commotions, he often brings on interior troubles. The noisy billows blown by the impetuous winds against a vessel, when they find entrance, inundate and sink it to the bottom. So it was that Satan, that determined enemy to the

children of God, acted with regard to Job : he desired that, through the sufferings of his body, his heart might be led to blaspheme against God. *Put forth*, said he to the Lord, *thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.* Job ii. 5.

And we see that he but too well succeeded to create confusion in the soul of that servant of God. David, in the midst of the agitation into which his persecutions plunged him, sometimes found himself on the point of falling into discouragement and distrust, which caused him to say, *But as for me, my feet were almost gone.*

Jeremiah, seeing himself assailed on every side by Satan, and exposed, without intermission, to the persecutions of the world, almost fell in like manner. With the greatest humility he acknowledges his weakness, when he says, *Because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was*

weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. Jer. xx. 8, 9. Such were the melancholy effects of the assaults of Satan against the children of God—resembling so many furious tides excited to disturb the peace of God's chosen, and, if possible, to overthrow their faith.

May these truths prove a seasonable caution, since all that is recorded in the word of God was written for our instruction. Let us ever be upon our guard against the devices and attacks of Satan and of his agents. Humility, faith, watchfulness and prayer, are the arms the most sure and the most powerful wherewith to oppose their assaults. Learn of David constantly to remain attached to the Almighty Redeemer. *My soul, says he, is continually in my hand : yet do I not forget thy law. The wicked have laid a snare for me : yet I erred not from thy precepts.* Psalm cxix. 109, 110. It is thus that the Christian glorifies God, and secures himself against his enemies.

4thly, A *fourth* circumstance which often accompanies the sufferings of God's people, and

which augments their alarms, is, that Jesus appears to sleep or be insensible to their afflictions. *Jesus slept*, says the Evangelist, whilst the disciples were in perpetual fear of death. This is what very commonly arrives to afflicted Christians ; it appears to the eyes of nature that they are abandoned to their fate, and that God even favours the wicked more than they. So long as a soul enjoys not only the intimate presence of Jesus, but striking proofs of his protection and assistance, it is no difficult matter to rejoice in the midst of adversity. *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* Psalm xxiii. 4.

Such feelings of exultation are expressed by a soul enjoying the Saviour's presence ; but when the heart is deprived of a sense of that gracious presence, and of those evident marks of his protection, then it is that man betrays his weakness ; falls into fear and discouragement : he mourns ; he endeavours to interest God in his behalf ; and it is then that the disciples know,

by sad experience, what it is for the Saviour to remain as though asleep and indifferent to their necessities. This suspension of the delightful succours of the grace of God in Christ, is expressed by Scripture in different terms.—*That he turns and hides his face.*—*That he sleeps.* *That he keeps silent.* Although these expressions, which are figurative, cannot be supposed to be understood literally, for the Lord deprives those only of his presence who estrange themselves from him by levity or infidelity; nevertheless, it is true, that he often permits his own children to fall into various trials and afflictions, in order to exercise their faith; but eventually he puts his enemies to confusion. In a word, if he allows a storm to be raised against them, he knows how to create light out of darkness, and to make all things work together to the accomplishment of one purpose, *viz.* the manifestation of his glory, and the salvation of his people.

When it comes to our turn to pass through the furnace of affliction, we find it difficult, by

means of the same, to melt into a state of conformity to Jesus,—to his disciples,—to all the children of God, who have sustained these trials before us. Let us take up the language of David, and say, *O Lord, why sleepest thou? why dost thou turn away thy face from thy servant?* Perhaps it may appear to us, that the children of God have never been reduced to a state of abandonment and suffering equal to ours; but when, with an eye of faith, we look upon Jesus, the *man of sorrows*, who suffered so many contradictions and cruelties from men and devils, we are ashamed that we have dared to complain, and to have suspected him indifferent to our case: and when, after having looked up to Jesus, the chief of Martyrs, for consolation and deliverance, we cast our eyes upon his suffering members,—upon that *cloud of witnesses* who have borne his reproach and his cross,—we are equally ashamed to discover that their trials have been far more severe than ours. But it is not enough that their example encourages and consoles, we must, like them, learn how the children of God

should conduct themselves in their suffering condition. The disciples, tossed by the tempest, teach us this lesson in the gospel of to-day; and this is what we intend to consider in the *second* part of our meditation.

II. How do the children of God conduct themselves in the midst of their afflictions? In the distressing circumstances in which the disciples found themselves, as mentioned in our text, their first and principle resource was, that *they had Jesus with them in the ship*. They had with them, and quite near to them, he in whose company it is impossible to perish. It was impossible for Jesus to be swallowed up by the waters; another kind of death awaited him; and if the disciples had better known him who was to be lifted up and expire on the cross for the salvation of the world, they would not have feared suffering shipwreck with him. This good and powerful Saviour, in whose presence consisted their safety, is also the first and principal resource of the children of God in all their cala-

mities. The only foundation for their consolation, and assured hope of their deliverance is, that Jesus is in the vessel,—he is with his own,—he dwells in their hearts,—he is the pilot of the church, and the conductor of every faithful soul. What a happy resort, and what a source of consolation is this. It is impossible for a man to perish who carries this treasure in his heart; when he is in the company of Jesus, he lives by faith in intimate communion with him. Although, humanly speaking, and according to external circumstances, it appears that Jesus sleeps,—that he is silent,—that he hides himself, and that he leaves his people in their difficulties; it is not less true, that he is still near them, and although he does not give external and striking marks of his power in their favour, they are not less sure that he is a Saviour,—the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth,—the victor of Satan and the world. “It is true,” a trembling saint may say, “that Jesus is a Saviour, and that one cannot perish in his company; but, alas! it appears to me that I do not enjoy that gracious

presence. I plainly see the whirlwinds which encompass me,—I see my weakness,—I see the impending danger and ruin with which I am menaced; but I do not apprehend him. It would appear, that instead of coming to my aid, he has abandoned me to my unhappy fate.” In such a case as this, it suffices that *we know in whom we have believed*, and that he is in our bark;—that is to say, in our hearts. The repeated language of Jesus to the trembling Christian is, “*my grace is sufficient for thee.*—It is sufficient for thee to know that thou art amongst the number of the redeemed,—that thou hast given me thine heart,—and that thou art mine. But do not content thyself to bear me in thine heart; my name must shine upon thy forehead; a resemblance to me must appear in thy person, and in all thy outward conduct, so that thou mayest glorify me, and that the world may take knowledge of thee that thou art my disciple. As to the rest, it is my business, I charge myself with that.”

But on the other hand, a believer, a child of

God, takes up the like language. “O God of endless compassion! Thou knowest that I belong to thee, and that I love thee. Thou art my powerful and faithful Saviour.—To whom else shall I go? I cannot but betake myself to that tender and benevolent heart, which was pierced to serve as a refuge to poor sinners. But in granting my soul a safe retreat in thine open side, may I also remain under the protection of thine Almighty arm. Defend me against the assaults of those who seek my ruin; and grant, that sheltered under thine arms, I may there find repose, strength, safety, and deliverance.”

By these ardent sighs, excited by the fear of danger, and by faith in the power and goodness of the Saviour, the fearful soul awakens him as did the disciples. At the approach of the imminent danger which threatened them, they ran to him, *and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.* The conduct of the disciples on this occasion proves, that they were fully convinced that their preservation depended on him alone:

they knew, that in the character of the Son of God, he was Lord of the elements; and it is under this persuasion that they now solicit his help.

We here learn what is the *second* recourse of the tempted and afflicted children of God :—it is prayer. When a child of God is disquieted by the cunning and malice of his external enemies, and by the interior troubles of his soul; the only path which he has to take is to turn his eyes towards the hills from whence cometh his help,—to place himself at the feet of Jesus,—to make known to him his distresses, and to beg the assistance of which he stands in need. It is true that the dangers which surround him, and the anguish which rends his heart, appears to estrange him from God, and to smother his groans; this is indeed what happens to those who know not the Saviour; but his disciples, far from being repulsed, apply to him with more confidence and ardour. Their prayer is not long; it is not composed of fine expressions and arranged with nice propriety; but, notwithstanding its brevity, it in-

cludes all : it is short, sincere and urgent. *Lord, say they, save us : we perish.*

Such, also, is the conduct of all the children of God when in distress. Their grief lies hidden, as it were, at the bottom of their souls. Above all, when they are remote from the society of their brethren, to whom they might recount their troubles, the solitary heart gives vent to its feelings, and pours out its complaints at the feet of Jesus. The mouth does not utter many words, because the tongue knows not how to follow the impulse of the heart, nor how to express the greatness of its emotion : The prayer consists but in ejaculations, in sighs and in tears,—“ Oh Saviour, save me or I perish. Burdened with the weight of my misery, and, besides that, driven from without by the assaults of my enemies,—covered with slanders and injuries, I am ready to sink under the weight,—I am on the point of destruction ; thus, O Jesus, I implore thine assistance, thou art my Saviour, save me, or I shall certainly perish.” Nearly such, is the language which the suffering children of God

echo into the ears of their Saviour; it is thus they awake him,—that they move the bowels of his compassion, and by which they engage him to lend them the aid of his powerful arm. The children of Israel, sighing under the bondage of the Egyptian yoke, had not much time to employ in long exercises of prayer—they could only weep; however, the mighty *Angel of the Covenant*, touched with their complaint, accorded them a miraculous deliverance, *Exod. ii. 23, 24.* On one occasion, Moses, in the bitterness of the grief which the murmurs and infidelities of the people caused his righteous soul, placed himself in the presence of God without uttering a word, and the Lord said unto him, *Wherefore is it that thou criest unto me thus?* This silent language, this sorrow of heart which expresses itself in nothing but sighs, often constitutes the prayer of the tempted Christian; *Lord, save me!* This, also, was all the prayer of the penitent Publican: *O God be merciful to me, to me a sinner!* And from uttering this

prayer, the poor *Publican* went down to his house justified.

It is thus that men under affliction should learn to pray, especially when their sufferings are great, and their agitated hearts find themselves in a state of spiritual barrenness: their sure and only resource is to pray unweariedly to Jesus. There is no other, my dear friends, who can give you real relief,—who can appease the storm, and who can deliver you from the waves which toss your poor bark; so that you cannot do better than apply to him, as well and as soon as you can, with the prayer and supplication of a penitent heart. It is true, the flesh which has not patience to wait for the succour of Jesus, will drive you to seek comfort and consolation from the creature, but you will find no real satisfaction there. Perhaps the dissipations to which you may fly,—the carnal enjoyments to which you may betake yourselves, and the other earthly means which the world recommends to calm your distress,—all these may perhaps weaken the sense of your misery—they

may cause you to forget it, but they will not cure it: they will only prove a palliative remedy, which, in lessening your grief, may make the wound less felt, but in the meantime renders it more and more incurable. If, then, you wish for a real deliverance from all your evils, go to Jesus; pray to him *without ceasing*, nor allow yourselves to be disheartened, till he awakes and rises to save you; and for your encouragement in this exercise, consider the example of all God's people in former times. See Jacob, when he is dejected on account of his fear for his brother Esau; he enters into combat with God himself,—he prays to him who thus manifested himself to him, and who had made him so many promises, and puts him in mind of them, and on the strength of those promises he prays for a blessing, *O God of my father Abraham, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant.—And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea,*

*which cannot be numbered for multitude.** In these intercessions for the help of God, he goes so far as to wrestle with him, and in so doing, he obtains the blessing, *viz.* the assurance of deliverance from the anger of his brother, whom he feared. What is the resource of David in his afflictions? It is to call upon his God, as his Psalms bear testimony. It is in him particularly that we have a striking example of a soul under temptation, seeking all its consolation in God and in his promises. In effect, this is the surest and only means to see the day of God's salvation,—a perfect salvation, worthy of an immortal soul, and capable of rendering it eternally happy; and the neglect of these means will cause us never to obtain the accomplishment of God's promises; to seek the transient consolations that are to be found amongst men, which only lull the soul to sleep, instead of extracting the sting; this the reason why the prompt and happy deliverance is not realized which Jesus

* Genesis xxxii. 10. 12.

accorded to his disciples, and which we are about to consider in the *third* part of our discourse.

III. When the disciples, driven by danger, had approached their Master, had awakened, and had represented to him their fears; the first thing which Jesus did, after raising himself up and looking about to behold the cause of their fear, was to upbraid their unbelief, *O ye of little faith*, said he, *wherefore do ye fear?* As if he had said to them, “the danger is not so great as you suppose; if you had faith and confidence in me, as you ought to have, you would never fear the fury of the winds, and the rolling of the waves, you would be assured that the things the most to be dreaded have no power to harm you, so long as I am with you, and you remain in my company.” By which language, Jesus already gives his disciples a tacit assurance of the deliverance which he was about to afford them. It is thus that he rises to effect the salvation of his people. He commences by reproaching them with their

want of faith; he makes known to them the weakness of the enemies which they dread; he dissipates the mistaken notions which magnify the objects; he removes the bondage of unbelief, and places before their eyes, on the one hand his power and glory, and on the other the imbecillity of all that oppose them; this creates in the soul a becoming shame for its weakness and want of faith.—It blushes for having made so little account of the power of Jesus. Those words, *O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt*, embraces a conviction which Jesus gives to the soul—of the feebleness of all its temptations, and of the power of him who is in the vessel. These reproaches are evidences of his being awake, and that he is arisen to save them; this is what tempted souls will prove when Jesus shall arise, and when their salvation shall draw near. They shall feel these censures in their hearts,—they shall be inwardly convinced of their weakness, and astonished to have admitted this cloud of unbelief and blindness, to have

hidden from them the presence of their powerful protector.

After these reproaches, Jesus discovers that he not merely makes use of fine expressions, but he follows them with demonstrative effects ; for when he had commanded the winds and the sea, there was immediately a great calm. He makes his disciples see that they have no just cause for fear, for that he has only to speak a word to calm the violence of the agitated elements. He rebuked the winds and the sea. He casts a kind of censure upon them for thus rising against their Creator and Lord,—for thus agitating the vessel in which he was, and for committing a sort of attempt against him whom they ought to adore, and for the glory of whom they ought to employ themselves. Perhaps, on this occasion, the enemy was permitted to employ them for the diabolical purpose of endeavouring the death of Jesus and his disciples. But now the winds and the sea no sooner hear the voice of their Master, than they obey :—the tempest ceases, and there is a great calm.

Here we see again what Jesus does in favour of his own. As soon as he was awake, as he heard their cries, and he stood upon his feet, he makes them see that it is an easy matter for him to dissipate all their temptations and troubles. He commands the tempest to cease,—he delivers them from the cause of their agitation,—he speaks a calm,—he tranquillizes their heart, and he makes the tossings of the ship to cease. Such is the experience of the children of God in all ages: he sooner or later grants them the needed assistance; for he knows how to deliver them that call upon his name. If it is not obtained at the time, and in the manner which flesh and reason imagine most proper; it is, nevertheless, bestowed when the wisdom of God thinks best and most conducive to his glory, and the good of souls. If it does not so appear to us now, the day will come when we shall be persuaded that God afforded help to his children in a manner equally benevolent and wise, and sometimes at a time in which they believed themselves lost. It is this which shall add energy

to the songs of praise and triumph of the redeemed, when, from heaven, they look back and reflect upon their deliverance from so many tempests which threatened sinking them to hell.

Sometimes these deliverances are evident and striking, as when he delivered Joseph from prison. In the same way he delivered Job, and restored him to his former state of prosperity. And so on various occasions he appeared in behalf of David his servant, of which he often speaks and sings in his Psalms. However, it does not always appear so evident to the eyes of men; for God sometimes delivers his people in such a manner as is not only unobservable to the eyes of flesh, but which appears all together strange. The world could not imagine how it could be a deliverance, to Jesus Christ to be put to an ignominious and cruel death,—to finish his sufferings with a martyr's end,—to observe no other deliverance from them than in leaving the world. Nevertheless, this is sometimes the most happy and the most perfect deliverance. In other cases, if God does not remove his

children from below, and if he does not give them an apparent deliverance, he calms the internal storm of their hearts ; so that when the world supposes them miserable on account of their persecutions, and the state of obscurity in which they live, they are no less happy,—filled with peace, with joy, and with every blessing capable of contenting the immortal soul ; so that it has always been, and ever will be true, that God delivers those out of all their temptations who call upon him in the time of trouble.

Thus, my dear friends, who groan under the weight of your sufferings and temptations, be assured that deliverance shall not fail to succeed your light afflictions, and that you shall infallibly have cause for praising and blessing your God, provided you take care to remain in the company of Jesus,—that you persevere in imploring his assistance,—and that you wait the appointed hour in watching and prayer. For that which he has done for his people in time that is past, he is willing to do in our day. He is always the same Almighty God : it is a small thing for

him, my dear friend, to rebuke the raging winds,—to calm the sea of thy heart; he has only to speak a word, and thou shalt be so convinced of it, that the rudest temptations will not be able to render thee fearful. So that thou wouldst soon give glory to Jesus, and believe that he is the controller of all things, and that he will deliver thee in due time. It always remains true, whether thou believest or believest not, that although the righteous have many temptations, *the Lord delivereth him out of them all. The Lord redeems the soul of his servants, and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.* * Take care, then, never to give way to a cowardly fear. Consider that great *cloud of witnesses* which God places before your eyes; all those dear children of God, the disciples of Jesus who have gone before you, they have had to pass through numberless grievous temptations and tempests from the devil, the world, and the flesh; and behold, also, the happy issue

* Psalm xxxiv. 22.

of all their sorrows, and how much preferable it is for them to have continued to persevere in following their divine Conductor.

Look to Jesus, the glorious beginner and finisher of our faith, how many tempests he has passed through,—how he has endured the contradiction of sinners,—and how, instead of the glory which was his due, he suffered the death of the cross,—despising the shame, and through this world has travelled to glory, *and is set down at the right hand of God his heavenly Father. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* James i. 12.

Suffer, then, my dear friends, for a short time with Jesus and his members; but let it be with Jesus, and in happy fellowship with him that you suffer. Have this precious friend in your vessel. Let your heart be his dwelling-place. Have recourse, without ceasing, to your Saviour; and do not allow yourselves to be captivated by the vain consolations and false deliverances

which the world may promise you. May God give you the grace ; and may you and I prove what the Holy Spirit says to the Philippians : *Unto you it is given in behalf of the gospel, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* To this powerful and glorious Jesus be praise and glory, for ever. Amen !

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