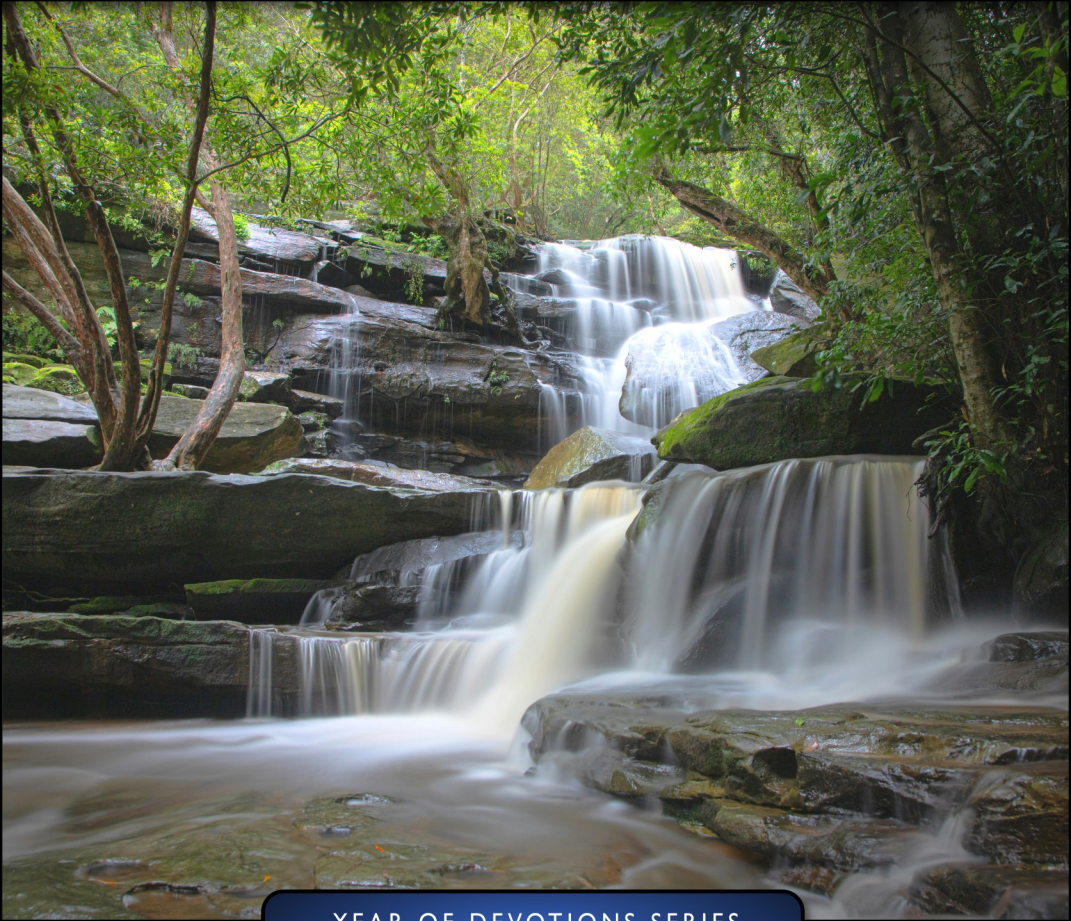


DAILY BIBLE READINGS

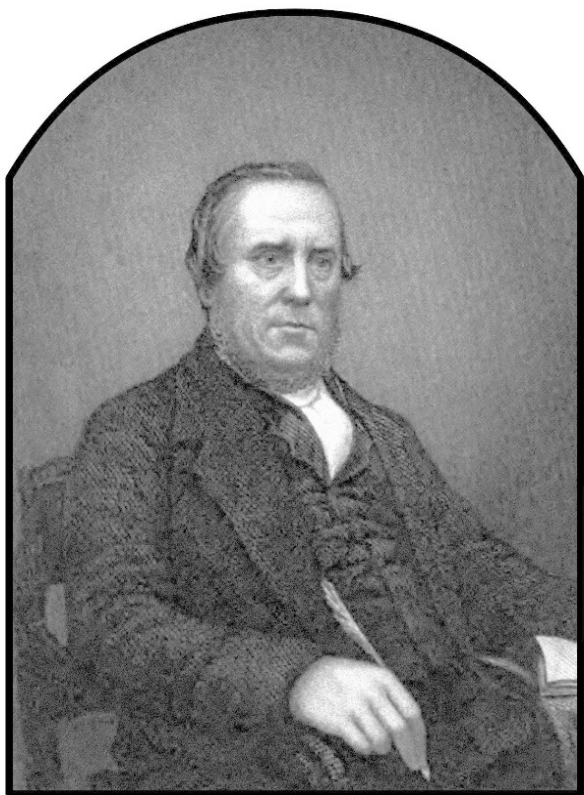


YEAR OF DEVOTIONS SERIES

3

James Smith

DAILY BIBLE READINGS



James Smith,

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

by
James Smith

NEW EDITION



2025
Cadarga Press

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Daily Bible Readings

Smith, James (1802-1862)

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All Scriptures quotations are from the Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible.

Book #3: *Year of Devotions Series*

ISBN: 978-1-7638196-4-1 (Paperback)

978-1-7638196-5-8 (Hardback)

Cover: *Waterfall on the Central Coast of New South Wales, Australia*. Sourced from unsplash.com and used with permission.

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

The *Year of Devotions* series is a collection of classic Christian books containing a short devotion for every day of the year. Each devotion is usually based upon a single (or partial) verse of Scripture and has been written in an easy-to-understand style by pastors from previous generations. Many Christians have long cherished these works, and we trust that they will be of tremendous spiritual value for you also.

Devotional books of this nature can be a wonderful help for all of God's people, regardless of how long a person has been a Christian. First and foremost, such devotions are highly *experiential*. In other words, they are focused upon Christian experience – on the practical, day-to-day, *spiritual* concerns of the child of God as he lives in this fallen world. Therefore, with the help of God's Spirit, the authors seek to do more than just fill your *head* with Biblical knowledge and theory. Instead, they strive to apply those truths to your very *soul*. Their purpose is to use God's word to convict your *conscience*, comfort your *heart*, stir-up your *desires*, inflame your *affections*, as well as inform your *mind*.

Secondly, the devotions are *short and simple*. Originally written for the ordinary believer, each portion can be read in just a few minutes. At times, the language and expressions of these older authors may seem strange to modern readers. But through regular reading, these expressions will quickly become familiar.

Thirdly, these devotional books often make the truths of Scripture very *memorable*. The portion of God's word upon which they are based often 'sticks' easily in the reader's memory, providing him with an ever-growing storehouse of Biblical promises, commands, exhortations and encouragements. Furthermore, because these devotions usually have only one, main point of application, their cen-

tral lesson is not quickly forgotten, providing the reader with further opportunity for meditation upon the devotion throughout the day.

Finally, these devotions are especially helpful for Christians who are experiencing a season of *spiritual barrenness or decay*. Inevitably, all believers pass through such times in their Christian walk – whether it be a period of backsliding, a sense of disappointment with God, a feeling of hopelessness, or the belief that He has deserted us. Whatever it may be, we know that during these times our desire to read the Scriptures and spend time with God in prayer is not what it ought to be. The direct, pointed application of spiritual truths which these devotions provide can often be the spark we need to kindle afresh our love and affection for the Lord Jesus Christ.

But while there are many benefits, there can also be hidden dangers for God's people if these writings are used unwisely. One of the main temptations, especially in this busy age in which we live, is simply to read each day's devotion without ever opening our own Bible. We open the book to today's date, quickly read what the author has to say about the Scriptures, and close the book again – all without ever reading the Scriptures for ourselves. While this might be convenient, the practice can be harmful to our own spiritual health. We persuade ourselves that we are dutifully reading God's word each day, when in reality, we are cultivating the habit of ignoring Him. Even worse, we start to prefer the uninspired words of men, over the inspired Word of God Himself.

Therefore, prior to reading each devotion, it is recommended that the main verse be read within its Biblical context. This could be just a handful of surrounding verses, or it might be a paragraph, an entire parable, or even a whole chapter. Use the divisions in your Bible as a guide. In this way, not only will you avoid the dangers mentioned earlier, but you will also have a better understanding of the verse's original context.

Of course, no amount of Biblical or devotional reading can ever benefit our souls apart from the gracious work of God Himself. The fact that these devotions are short and simple doesn't mean that we need less of God's help. We are forever dependent upon Him to teach us. Indeed, without His help, even the simplest of Scriptural

truths, explained in the simplest of ways, will profit us nothing. Therefore, take a moment to implore His assistance prior to every reading, knowing that He delights to open your eyes, in order that you might behold wondrous things from His law.

Finally, it must be mentioned that the preparation of these volumes proved to be much more challenging than first anticipated. Many of the copies that were consulted for this series contained typographical errors, spelling mistakes, inconsistencies, and incorrect Scripture references. In some editions, previous publishers even shortened some of the devotions in order to fit them on to a single page. Furthermore, some of the writers tended to write in a sermonic style, resulting in devotions that contain many short, sharp phrases in quick succession, rather than grammatically complete sentences.

In preparing these new editions, our goal has been to edit the original texts only as lightly as was absolutely necessary. We have used the most complete editions in our possession, corrected any spelling or reference errors that were found in them, and adjusted the punctuation where necessary to improve readability. Words which are now uncommon or archaic have largely been retained, except on those rare occasions where their current definition would fundamentally alter the author's meaning. In such cases, the older word has been replaced with a modern synonym.

Nevertheless, while we hope that the republication of these works is an improvement upon previous editions, there are bound to be some errors remaining. We trust that our readers will forgive any faults that they may find, and that they will receive rich spiritual blessings from the Lord as they meditate upon these pages.

THE PUBLISHER
December 2024

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

When I wrote the first part of *The Believer's Daily Remembrancer*,¹ I simply had in view the spiritual improvement of the poor of my own flock. My desire was to compose a small volume which might be carried in the workman's pocket, or be kept constantly at hand for the refreshment of those who had but little time to spare. But it has circulated far beyond my highest expectation, and is found in quarters which I had not the most distant idea it would ever reach. At the particular request of friends I added a second part, for the evening of the day; which is also obtaining a wide circulation. These volumes have been used in a way which I never anticipated, many have introduced the reading of them into their family worship; so that now, in many families, they form a regular part of the family devotions. As for this they were never intended, so in many cases they are found not to be exactly suitable. They were written exclusively for the use of decided Christians, but in most families there are individuals who cannot be placed among that number. In consequence of this, I have frequently been requested to write another and distinct work for this purpose, to which request I have, after much consideration and prayer, acceded.

Yet thinking, that many who may have long used "The Remembrancer," may like, by way of change and for the sake of variety, occasionally to use this, I have endeavoured so to write as to render it suitable both for the family circle, and also for the closet. The doctrines taught in this volume are the same as those in the preceding, and the aim of the writer is similar, only he has kept in view the use that may be made of it in family worship, and has endeavoured to throw more variety into it than is to be found in the former work. The uncon-

1. This book has been republished by Cadarga Press under the new title, *Morning Reminders*. The companion volume has also been reissued as *Evening Reminders*. Together, these two books form volumes 1 and 2 of the *Year of Devotions* series.

verted are not lost sight of, while the edification of believers is kept in view. It is the opinion of many, that books of this character cannot be too numerous, or be too widely circulated, as the taste, even of good men, is so very different. Besides which, every writer has his own circle, and every publisher his own connection, so that, where one will not circulate, another may. If the object is to lead sinners to the Saviour, and to bring believers into closer communion with him, we may expect the Lord's blessing; and if the writer knows his own heart, this is his object in these pages. He has endeavoured also to stir up the minds of the Lord's people, to caution them against sin, to guard them against Satan, and to stimulate them in the path of holy obedience. This appeared to be very necessary in the present day, for the world is full of bustle, Satan is diligently employed in beguiling unstable souls, and errors upon every important subject abound. We cannot be too careful, too vigilant, or too well armed, for our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. The blessing which has rested upon my former efforts, encourages me to hope that the Lord will use this: and as in the morning of life, I sowed the good seed of the kingdom, so in the evening I would not withhold my hand, not knowing whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good. May the Lord who has so eminently blessed the former volumes, bless this even more abundantly both to sinners and saints; and may the Holy Spirit accompany the reading and hearing of it with his effectual blessing. To God, only wise, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed the glory of all the good we are enabled to do. Amen.

JAMES SMITH
London, August 1849

JANUARY 1

The LORD giveth wisdom.

Proverbs 2:6

IN ENTERING UPON a new year, all the events of which are unknown to us, we cannot but feel our need of wisdom. Many things will doubtless occur, which will perplex and trouble us, and we may be brought into circumstances in which we shall not know what to do. Wisdom will be *necessary*. We may need it to manage wealth, or improve poverty – to endure trials, or employ our talents – to guide our general affairs, or overcome temptations – to conquer our foes, or make a right use of God’s holy word – as also to win souls for God and glory. And for such purposes the Lord giveth wisdom. But to *whom* will he give it? To such as feel their need of it – who ardently desire it – who earnestly seek it – and who perseveringly expect it, because he hath promised it. But *how* will he give it? Freely, without price; cheerfully, without upbraiding; in the active performance of the duties of our station. Beloved, all wisdom comes from God, both natural and spiritual. It comes *from* God, to be used *for* God. We may *procure* it from another, though we cannot *produce* it ourselves. It should be sought and expected in every duty and in every trial.

*Lord, make us wise to do thy will,
And live as those who trust in thee;
To labour, wait, and suffer still,
Till we thy great salvation see.*



JANUARY 2

That we should be holy.

Ephesians 1:4

HOLINESS IS THE BEAUTY of the divine nature, and the object that delights Jehovah's heart. The holiness of a creature stands in his conformity to the image of God, and is wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the great end which he has in view in all that he does for his people. This is the will of God even our sanctification. Are we chosen in Christ? It is that we might be holy. Are we redeemed by the precious blood of Christ? It is that we should be a holy people unto the Lord. Are we called by the power of the Holy Ghost? It is to holiness on earth, as introductory to happiness in heaven. Every ordinance we observe, every doctrine we believe, every promise we trust, every precept we perform, and every trial we endure, is intended to promote our sanctification. Beloved, let us make this our one object, and so acquiesce in the will of God. Let us ask in reference to every undertaking, "Will it promote my holiness?" And if it will not, let us determine in the Lord's strength to renounce it. Lord, sanctify us wholly, and grant that our whole body, soul, and spirit, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus.

*O may my every work and word,
Express the temper of my Lord,
And may the Spirit to my heart,
The power of holiness impart.*



JANUARY 3

The needy shall not always be forgotten.

Psalm 9:18

THE LORD'S PEOPLE are all needy, and the longer they live the more needy they feel. They need a pardon for all their sins, righteousness to justify their persons, grace to sanctify their natures, strength to perform their duties, courage to face their foes, patience to bear their trials, and fortitude to persevere unto the end. If supplied today, they will be as needy as ever tomorrow. But all they need is provided for them, and is stored up in Jesus. His fulness is open to them, and out of that fulness they may receive grace to help them in every time of need. This at times they perceive, and then they make use of it to their joy and the Lord's glory. But at other times their eye is taken off it, they forget what Jesus is made to them, they go mourning, they complain and fret, and they fancy they are forgotten. The Lord does not answer their prayers, the word does not feed their souls, the ordinances do not profit them, and the enemy triumphs over them. But the Lord will turn again and have mercy upon them, "*for the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.*" Jesus says, "*Blessed are ye poor,*" (Luke 6:20).

*He'll not forget your suppliant pray'r,
Ye needy souls, awhile oppressed!
The poor his plenteous grace shall share,
Nor hope deceive the afflicted breast.*



JANUARY 4

He gave his only begotten Son.

John 3:16

FOR WHOM DID GOD give his Son? For sinners, for sinners as such. For those who had violated his law, despised his mercy, abused his creatures, enthroned his enemy, and worshipped the works of their own hands. For those who did not like to retain the knowledge of God and who had done evil things as they could. What amazing love is this! Love to determined enemies! For *what* did God give his Son? To *live* as the sinner's representative, and to *die* as the sinner's substitute. In his life he obeyed the law for us, in his death he endured its curse. By living and dying he accomplished all that was necessary for our salvation, and now, whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. God cannot now do anything greater than he hath done, nor can he give anything greater than he hath given. He who gave his Son, will surely give us anything we need. He who delivered up his only begotten Son to die for us, will surely do anything that we ask consistent with his will. Hence the apostle reasons, "*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things,*" (Rom. 8:32).

To him who bore the sinner's shame.

Be endless glory given,

Immortal honours crown his name,

The Lord of earth and heaven!



JANUARY 5

Teach me to do thy will.

Psalm 143:10

THE WILL OF GOD is the rule of rectitude. His will is revealed in his precepts. Those precepts are to be the rule of our life. We should study them, esteem them, store them up in our memories, and daily endeavour to square our conduct by them. But as they run directly contrary to our selfish principles, corrupt affections, and fleshly lusts, it is difficult to walk exactly by them. Hence the conflict, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things that we would. What then is to be done? Are we willing to do the will of God? Do we heartily desire to walk by his holy precepts? Then let us adopt the Psalmist's prayer, "*Teach me to do thy will.*" In answer to this, the Lord will give us wisdom, so that we shall see our way through difficulties, and he will give us strength so that we shall be able to do what he requires, and do it with pleasure too. We can only do the Lord's will in the Lord's strength, as we can only discover the Lord's meaning in his own light. We must therefore go to him, to know *what* he would have us do; and then go to him again, that he may teach us *how* to do it.

*Teach me to do thy holy will,
And lead me to thy heavenly hill;
Let the good Spirit of thy love
Conduct me to thy courts above.*



JANUARY 6

Before they call I will answer.

Isaiah 65:24

ALL TRUE PRAYER begins with God. He convinces us of the need of blessings, awakens a desire in our souls to enjoy them, and then stirs us up to seek them. Before the Lord bestows his favours upon us, he generally disposes us to seek them at his hands. He is ever ready to bless us, and is more ready to hear than we are to pray. Therefore he says, “*Before they call I will answer.*” Prayer shall be anticipated, and the answer shall be on the road sometimes before the petition ascends from our hearts. How great must be the Lord’s love to his people! How much he must delight in our prayers! Greater encouragement he *could not* give us, and less he *would not*. Let us therefore make our requests known unto him. Let us this day open our whole hearts to him, and seek from him those things that we need. Let us not doubt his readiness to hear us for one moment, for if before we call he promises to answer, surely when we call he will hear and bless us. He is the prayer-hearing God, and he is always “*nigh unto all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry and will save them,*” (Ps. 145:18-19).

*Wrestling prayer can wonders do,
Bring relief in deepest straits;
Prayer can force a passage through
Iron bars and brazen gates.*



JANUARY 7

Behold, God himself is with us.

2 Chronicles 13:12

SO SAID THE CHILDREN of Judah when they went out to war with Jeroboam, and in the strength of this they conquered. Believer, the Lord not only gives his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways, but he is himself with thee. Never lose sight of this precious truth, for it is at once most holy and most comforting. If God himself is with thee, then every sin is committed in his presence, and under his eye. How this aggravates the guilt of our sins. We think, we speak, we act, as if God was at an infinite distance from us, and paid little or no regard to what we say or do. Instead of this, no one is so near to us as God. No one is so attentive to us as he. If God himself is with thee, how unwise, how inconsistent are thy fears! If God himself is with us, will he allow us to want, or permit us to be injured? Can any enemy be too subtle, or too powerful for him? Impossible! Behold, then, God himself is with thee! He will be with thee this day. In every place, every moment. He will hear every word you speak, witness every sin you commit, and listen to every prayer you put up.

The beams of noon, the midnight hour,

Are both alike to thee;

O may I ne'er provoke that Power

From which I cannot flee!



JANUARY 8

In many things we offend all.

James 3:2

THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, no not one. We were all guilty of death, and though we have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and are sanctified by the good Spirit of God, yet still we often offend God. There is much in our tempers, habits, motives, and pursuits, which must be offensive to him. He wishes us to be holy. He commands us to be holy. We really desire to be holy. But there is so much corruption in our hearts, and the power of corruption is so great, that we are often betrayed into that which is wrong. What a mercy for us that the blood of Jesus is still efficacious, that the fountain is still open, that we can repair to it whenever we feel guilt on our own consciences, and that it cleanses from all sin. But for the precious blood of Jesus, we must often sink into despair. Let us prize that invaluable remedy for human guilt. But if we all offend, we all ought to be humble, for we all need pardon. If we all offend, we ought not to be severe in our censures, for in judging others we may condemn ourselves.

*Slain in the guilty sinner's stead,
Jesus, thy righteousness I plead,
And thy atoning blood;
Thy perfect work my robe shall be,
Thy merit shall atone for me.
And bring me near to God.*



JANUARY 9

I will water it every moment.

Isaiah 27:3

THE LORD COMPARES his church to a vineyard, to a vineyard of the choicest vines. He promises to watch over, protect, and preserve it – to guard it night and day. But as it will need not only protection, but supply, he says, “*I will water it every moment.*” Precious promise this! It belongs to every one of the Lord’s people. It warrants us to expect constant communications from our God. He is never weary of giving. His resources are inexhaustible. He will therefore supply all our needs, however great, or however numerous they may be. Everything good in us comes from him. Every holy desire, every fervent prayer, every grateful emotion, is the effect of his watering, for so barren and unfruitful are our hearts by nature, there is not in them one good thing. Beloved, let us expect divine communications, let us expect our God to impart his sanctifying and preserving grace. He assures us that he will do so regularly, gently, silently, imperceptibly, softly, and gradually, as the dew descends on the vineyards in the east. He says, “*I will be as the dew unto Israel,*” (Hos. 14:5). We do not expect enough from God, we do not ask enough of God.

*Upon my leaf when parch'd with heat,
Refreshing dew shall drop:
The plant which God's right hand hath set,
Shall ne'er be rooted up.*



JANUARY 10

Take heed unto thyself.

1 Timothy 4:16

THIS IS A VERY necessary admonition. We all need it. Each one of us should attend to it. Take heed unto the *body*. Do not pamper it. Do not neglect it. Do not allow it to take that place in your thoughts, plans, purposes, and provision, which should be assigned to the *soul*. It is the inferior part, treat it as such. But it is an important part, therefore use it prudently. Take heed unto the *soul*. See to it, that it is regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit. Be sure that it is in Christ. Feed it with the bread of God which came down from heaven. Wash it in the fountain that is opened for sin and uncleanness. Clothe it in the robe of righteousness, and the garments of salvation. Store it with the doctrines, promises, and precepts of holy Scripture. Guard it against the influence of error, the spirit of this evil world, and the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Exercise it, in meditating upon the character of God, the work of Jesus, the operations of the Holy Spirit, and the prospects of glory.

*Renewing grace for Jesus' sake,
O God to me impart;
Power continually to wake,
And watch my sinful heart:
That I may constantly take heed.
And prove myself a saint indeed.*



JANUARY 11

The Lord shall guide thee continually.
Isaiah 58:11

THE LORD'S PEOPLE are singular in their practices, and they have singular privileges. The ruling desire of their souls is *to be right*. To think right. To do right. To go right. They feel they are sinners, and therefore daily plead for sanctification. They know they are in danger, and therefore daily pray to be kept. They are liable to go wrong, and therefore they desire a constant guide. Here the promise of God meets them, the Lord stoops to their needs and gratifies their desires, he says, "*I will guide thee.*" Beloved, our journey is through a trackless desert. We know not a foot of the road – all before us is untrodden path. The road is lined with snares and dangers, and there are many bypaths. Let us therefore lay hold on this precious promise, "*The Lord shall guide thee continually.*" He knows the path. He knows our frame. He knows every foe. He knows *what* we need, *when* we need, and *how much* we shall need. Let us therefore put the hand of our faith into the hand of his special providence, and say, —

*Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
Hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of Heaven,
Feed me till I want no more.*



JANUARY 12

Their strength is to sit still.

Isaiah 30:7

TO WHOM WILL these words apply? Not to the sinner, who is still in his sins. Nor to the seeker, who is seeking the Lord. Nor yet to the backslider, who has wandered from God. But to the Lord's people, who are in perplexity, and yet trusting in God; who are intimidated by foes, and yet look to the Saviour; who are filled with fear, and yet desire to walk worthy of their profession. What can they do? Flee! But whither? Shall they agitate and distress their souls? What will that do? Let them sit still. But where shall they sit? At the feet of Jesus, where Mary did; on the rock of God's faithfulness, where David did. When the people spake of stoning him, "*David encouraged himself in the Lord his God,*" (1 Sam. 30:6). They shall sit in the tower of God's name, to which the righteous run and are safe (Prov. 18:10). Here let them rest, that is, believe God's word – watch his hand – wait his time – expect deliverance according to the promise – look to Jesus and refuse to give way to fear or foreboding. Here is their strength. For when they do so, God is engaged for them.

*Jesus, on me the power bestow
To work, or rest, stand still or go.*

*As thy design I see:
Redeem'd from nature's hurrying strife.
I would not take one step in life
Without a beck from thee.*



JANUARY 13

The saints shall judge the world.

1 Corinthians 6:2

GOD'S SANCTIFIED ONES – the true disciples of Jesus – are now hated, persecuted, judged and condemned by the world. But the day is coming when the tables will be turned. The dead in Christ will rise first. Judgment will begin at the house of God. The saints will be judged, acquitted, and rewarded. Then the wicked, called the world, will be raised. The throne of judgment will be filled by Jesus, the man the Father hath appointed to administer judgment. His saints will surround his throne. His enemies must face them and be judged. Awful period! With what dread, consternation, confusion, and despair, will that vast multitude be filled! How different will things appear then to what they do now! The upright will have dominion on that morning. Then Lazarus will sit in judgment on the rich man who refused him the crumbs which fell from his table. Paul will sit in judgment on Nero who ordered him to be beheaded. The poor slave who died in the faith of Christ will judge his cruel oppressor who made his life bitter with hard bondage.

*Saviour divine! and can it be
That I at last shall sit with thee,
In judgment on thy foes?
Then help me patiently to bear
Their scorn and persecution here,
When they my course oppose.*



JANUARY 14

Draw nigh unto my soul.

Psalm 69:18

THE LORD'S PRESENCE is the Christian's joy, and distance from God is always a cause of grief. But it is in seasons of trouble and sorrow that the Lord's presence is most earnestly sought. If the Lord is sensibly nigh unto us, we can pour our griefs into his bosom, and tell out our fears before his face. Nearness to God gives us confidence in danger, courage in conflict, peace in adversity, and joy in sorrow. If the Lord draw nigh unto us he will commune with us, and communicate spiritual blessings to us. If the Lord draw nigh unto us, Satan will retire into the distance, and our corruptions will be easily subdued. If the Lord draw nigh unto us, life will be pleasant, and death will have no terrors. O to live near to God! O to find the Lord drawing nigh unto the soul, when providence frowns, when foes increase, and when every thing appears to be against us! My dear friends, do you ever plead with God thus? Do you ever cry, Lord "draw nigh unto my soul!" Jesus did, for it was his language. David did, for he wrote the words.

*Ah me, I'm never well, but when
I on my best beloved lean,
And then I'm never ill;
Crosses and trials all are right,
And pain is sweet, and troubles light,
When Christ my soul doth till.*



JANUARY 15

Haters of God.
Romans 1:30

WHAT AN AWFUL charge to be brought against any of God's creatures! And yet it was brought against the Jews by our Lord, of whom he said, "*He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father,*" (John 15:23-24). It is here also brought against the Gentiles. Indeed every unconverted man is a hater of God, for "*the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God,*" (Rom. 8:7-8). This is self-evident, for if a man hate God, everything he does must be offensive to God. But every man by nature hates God, and therefore everything he does is displeasing to God. The *feeling* of hatred may not be discovered, because there may be ignorance of God, or forgetfulness of him. But in proportion as he is known and thought of, while the heart remains carnal, he is hated. This shows the need of regeneration, the absolute necessity of being born again. For until we are renewed in the spirit of our minds, we shall never be reconciled to God.

*Let me love thee more and more,
If I love at all, I pray!
If I have not loved before,
Help me to begin today.*



JANUARY 16

He will save us.

Isaiah 33:22

WHOM WILL HE save? All who believe in Jesus. All who put their trust in him. All who call upon him in truth. All who exercise confidence in his word. All who make conscience of observing his commands, with a view to glorifying his name. From *what* will he save? From the guilt of sin, which condemns us. From the filth of sin, which defiles us. From the power of sin, which enslaves us. From the love of sin, which degrades us. From the consequences of sin, which are terrible to us. From our foes, which would injure us. From our burdens, which would crush us. From our desert, which would ruin us. *How* will he save? Freely, by his grace. Honourably, through the perfect work of Jesus. Perfectly, without the possibility of a failure. *Why* will he save? Because his nature is love – his promise is given – our Saviour has died – and his glory will be advanced by doing so. *When* will he save? The moment we believe. When we call upon his name. When we cast our burdens upon him. When he sees that our power is gone, and there is none shut up or left. Beloved, Jehovah is our Saviour, and he is ever present with us.

*He cheers his people by his smile,
And guards them by his power;
He keeps them safe from force and guile,
In every trying hour.*



JANUARY 17

It was impossible for God to lie.

Hebrews 6:18

JEHOVAH IS THE “God of truth.” Lying lips are an abomination unto the Lord. What he hates in others can never be found in himself. He cannot deceive, therefore his word may be relied on. He cannot go from his word, therefore it may be confidently trusted. He has threatened sinners, and his word *must* be fulfilled, for it is “*impossible for God to lie.*” “*The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God,*” (Ps. 9:17). Of the man that loves sin, that lives in sin, it is said, “*The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man,*” (Deut. 29:20). This is awful! It is tremendous. It must be realised, for it is “*impossible for God to lie.*” He has given many, exceeding great and precious promises to his people, and they must all be made good. He will perform them, and not one jot or tittle of them shall fail. He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly, for he hath promised it, and it is impossible for God to lie. This truth is like the pillar of fire and cloud of old – it gives light to God’s Israel, but it is darkness to the Egyptians.

*What Christ hath said, must be fulfilled,
On this firm rock believers build;
His word must stand, his truth prevail,
And not one jot, one tittle fail.*



JANUARY 18

Make thy way straight before my face.

Psalm 5:8

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN desires to be ruled by God's word, and to be guided by God's providence. He wishes to *be* what God requires, to *do* what God commands, and to *go* where God directs. But he is often in great difficulty. He cannot see the way. He is uncertain what course he should take, and his cry is, "*Make thy way straight before my face.*" Let me see the way thou hast marked out, and walk in the path which will be pleasing in thy sight. The Lord will sometimes have us wait at his door, plead at his throne, and learn that the way of man is not in himself, that "*it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,*" (Jer. 10:23). To wait the Lord's time requires patience, and to walk in the Lord's way requires submission. The Lord's way generally crosses the desires of flesh and blood, mortifies our pride and independence, exercises all the graces of the Holy Spirit, and makes us feel our absolute dependence on Divine grace. Still, the Christian, when in his right mind prefers it, and would rather walk in it than any other. God's way leads us to glory, honour, and immortality.

*How rough soe'er the way,
Dear Saviour, still lead on;
Nor leave us till we say,
"Father, thy will be done."
At most we do but taste the cup.
For thou alone hast drank it up.*



JANUARY 19

What hast thou that thou didst not receive?

1 Corinthians 4:7

BELIEVER, PONDER THIS question. It is intended to destroy the pride of thy heart, and to produce genuine humility. What hast thou? Look around thee – how many mercies! Look within thee – what gifts and graces! Look before thee – what glorious prospects! Compare thyself with many of thine acquaintances. Contrast thy circumstances with theirs – how different! How preferable! But who made thee to differ? Who conferred these benefits? Did you inherit them? Who ordained the relationship? Did you procure them? Who gave you the means? Did you receive them from God? Then gratefully acknowledge it. Then be humble before God. Then beware of boasting before men, or of despising others. Trace up all thy mercies to their source, and you will find it to be free and sovereign grace. We have nothing that is good, nothing that is valuable, nothing that is useful, nothing that is ornamental – but we have received it from our good and gracious God. Therefore let him that glorieth glory in the Lord. But, if we have received all *from* the Lord, ought we not to use all *for* the Lord.

*Lord, let thy mercy crown
Our yet remaining days;
And, when thy will on earth is done,
In heaven we'll sing thy praise.*



JANUARY 20

Doubtless thou art our father.

Isaiah 63:16

AFATHERLESS CHILD is generally an object of pity. But a believer is never fatherless. His faith may be weak, his fears may be many, his trials may be great, his foes may be fierce, and his prospects may be dark. But God is his father. “*We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,*” (Gal. 3:26), and nothing can dissolve the relationship. We may lose the enjoyment of it but the privilege remains the same. Once a child, a child forever. Nor should we easily give up our confidence, but rather, like the saints of old, though sensible of many sins, though enduring painful privations, though mourning over the hiding of the Lord’s face, we should hold fast the fact – “*Doubtless thou art our father.*” Beloved, if God is our father he will chasten us, he will put our love and confidence to the proof, he will teach us some hard and difficult lessons; but he will still pity us, spare us, listen to us, and send us all that is absolutely necessary. If God is our father, he will notice the least good thing that may be in us. He will take the meaning of our hearts, and he will accept the smallest offering at our hands.

Then let us, while we dwell below,

Obey our Father’s voice;

To all his dispensations bow,

And in his name rejoice.



JANUARY 21

*The Spirit of God dwelleth in you.
Colossians 3:16*

DWELLETH IN WHOM? In every Christian. For “*if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*,” (Rom. 8:9). Wherever the Spirit dwells, he works, and his work is the efficient cause of our sanctification, comfort, and usefulness. He dwells in us as a Spirit of *life*, quickening and reviving us. He dwells as a Spirit of *light*, instructing and illuminating us. He dwells as a Spirit of *liberty*, delivering from bondage, dread, and terror. He dwells as a Spirit of *love*, shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, and leading us to love him and all his dear people. He dwells as a Spirit of *power*, enabling us to conquer the world, overcome Satan, and crucify the old man with his deeds. He dwells as a Spirit of *prayer*, teaching us how to pray, and making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. He dwells as a Spirit of *peace*, applying the atonement, giving us peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and producing in us a peaceable disposition. And He dwells as the Spirit of *Christ*, exalting him in our minds, enthroning him in our breasts, and glorifying him in us and by us. Reader, have you received the Holy Ghost? Do you make it manifest by your zeal for Christ?

*Come, sacred Spirit! from above
And fill my poor, cold heart with love:
Soften to flesh the flinty stone.
And let thy godly power be known.*



JANUARY 22

They shall obtain joy and gladness.

Isaiah 35:10

THEY WHO MOURN on earth, on account of sin; shall rejoice in heaven, possessed of holiness. Many of the Lord's people enjoy but little here, but joy is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. We may have a dull dripping seed time, but we shall have a joyous sunny harvest. A sickly body, a trying family, a distracted church, a troublesome business, may hinder our enjoying much now. But all these things will soon come to an end. Sickness shall give place to health, trials to triumphs, the church shall be united and happy, and our employments will be our enjoyments. Sighs will give place to songs, sadness will be exchanged for gladness, and everlasting joy will crown us. We have the worst at the present, the best is all before us. Joy and gladness is our inheritance. Our Saviour procured it by his death, he secures it by his intercession and he is waiting to introduce us to it. The time will soon come, when "*God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes; and there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain,*" (Rev. 21:4).

Yes, though the universe shall burn.

And God his works destroy.

With songs his ransom'd shall return.

And everlasting joy.



JANUARY 23

He will not call back his words.

Isaiah 31:2

AS THE LORD NEVER speaks rashly, there can be no cause for it. As he knew the end from the beginning, it would be inconsistent to do it. His word is like himself – immutable. It must have its accomplishment. Hence the Saviour said, “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*” This will apply to all the promises. They are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. They are sure to all the seed. They can never be broken. Therefore we should place implicit confidence in them, and endeavour to chase away our fears with them. They are exceeding great, very plain, and most precious. They are not to be compared with gold, or with much fine gold. Christian, here is thy comfort, Thy God “*will not call back his words.*” What he hath said, he will do. Here is thy security: the word of the Lord endureth forever. Sinner, this subject should make thee tremble. God will be as true to his threatenings, as he will be to his promises. If so, hell shall receive every person who dies in an unconverted state.

*The word of God shall ever stand,
Firm, and immutable and sure;
Wise is his heart and strong his hand,
His people's welfare to secure,
But sinners who reject his word,
Shall fall beneath his glittering sword.*



JANUARY 24

Him hath God exalted to give repentance.

Acts 5:31

EVERY SINNER OUGHT to repent, for God commands him. But no one will repent unless Christ bestows the grace of repentance upon him. God commands us to repent, and thus maintains his authority. Christ gives us grace to repent, and thus displays his grace. We often try to repent, and cannot. Our hearts are so hard, they will not relent. Our eyes are so dry, they will not weep. This is a source of grief, and sometimes furnishes Satan with matter for temptation, with which he distresses us. We must see that repentance is necessary, we must *feel* the desire to repent, and then we must *look* to Jesus for grace to enable us to repent. Jesus is exalted to the highest possible honour. He has universal authority. All the treasures of grace and glory are committed to him. His Father who exalted him, did so, that he might give all necessary grace to his people, and out of his fulness we must receive grace for grace. What God requires of us as creatures, Jesus gives us grace to perform as Christians. Everything, therefore, should lead us to Christ, and to make use of his fulness.

*The Lamb is exalted repentance to give,
That sin may be hated, while sinners believe:
Contrition is granted and God justified.
The sinner is humbled, and self is denied.*



JANUARY 25

The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

James 5:8

IF WE REALLY LOVE the Saviour we shall long for his appearing. And in proportion to the strength of our love will be our desire for his speedy return. He will come, for he has promised to do so. He will soon come, so his word declares, and passing events seem to give an emphasis to that word. Until he come, the world will be in bondage, the church will be low in a low place, and his people will be groaning under sorrows and trials. His coming is the hope of his church, and it should find a place in our meditations, desires, and prayers. He comes to roll away the curse from creation. He comes to subdue all things unto himself. He comes to bring complete and everlasting deliverance to his saints. He comes to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. He comes to reign on the mount Zion, and before his ancients gloriously. O to have a part in the first resurrection! O to be among the invited guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb!

*We know the solemn hour draws nigh,
When Jesus shall appear again,
Hasten, O Lord, and bow the sky,
And here begin thy glorious reign,
The number of thy saints complete,
And tread thy foes beneath thy feet.*



JANUARY 26

You are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 2:13

DISTANCE FROM GOD is the consequence of sin, and to the believer it is the cause of trouble and distress. We were all banished far from God once. Nor could we ever have been brought nigh unto him, if Jesus had not become our Substitute, and satisfied the law on our behalf. The blood of Jesus removes every obstacle out of the way of our approaching to God, and it secures us an honourable reception by God. We never could have known the blessedness of nearness to God, if Jesus had not left his Father's bosom, obeyed the law in our nature, and died in our stead. He is the only way to God. By him both Jews and Gentiles have access by one Spirit unto the Father. He stands between God and the sinner, and lays his hand upon both. He brings God down to us, and he leads us up to God. There is nothing between us and God now, but Jesus. He made peace, and he keeps peace. We are reconciled to God, and God is at peace with us. He is nigh unto us, and loves us to be nigh unto him. O to realise that God hath accepted us in Jesus, and that he is near to us in every place!

*Jesus, the Saviour, shed his blood
To bring the guilty nigh to God,
'Tis here I find relief from sin,
A balm to make my conscience clean.*



JANUARY 27

*Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth.
Proverbs 3:12*

THERE ARE MANY THINGS in us that need correction. Our follies call for stripes. Our Father knoweth our frame – he reads our hearts, he observes our conduct and he has purposed to conform us to his own beloved Son. This will account for most of our trials, afflictions, and sufferings. He loves us too well, to even seem to sanction us in anything that is wrong. If he did not love us, he would not correct us. If one trial would answer, he never would send us two. His mercy is too great. His heart is too kind. It is his children that he corrects, and by correcting instructs. Let us not then, for one moment, suppose that our trials are indications of his wrath. He may be displeased with us, and therefore afflict us. But he has sworn that he will not be wroth with us. He will visit our transgressions with the rod and our iniquities with stripes, but he will not withdraw his loving-kindness, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. Precious assurance this! Sweet views of troubles and trials! Let us get a Scriptural assurance of an interest in our heavenly Father's love, and then rejoice even in tribulation.

*Let him tenderly chastise,
Let him graciously reprove,
Father, all within me cries,
All thy ways are truth and love.*



JANUARY 28

I press toward the mark.

Philippians 3:14

THE BELIEVER'S MARK is perfection, or exact conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ. His first aim is to possess Christ, and then to be like Christ. When we are like Jesus, every foe is overcome, every difficulty is mastered, and the crown is about to be put on our heads. The prize is won, and the honour will be worn forever. Exact likeness to Jesus we shall not attain to here, but we may be very much more like him than we are. Our tempers may be made more heavenly, our natures more spiritual and our conversation more Scriptural. We may be weaned from the present world, our motives may be purified and holiness may become our element and delight. He who hath begun in us a good work can carry it on, and as we are now very unlike what we were, we may yet become very unlike what we are at present. But if we would, it must be the mark at which we aim. We must ever keep it in our eye, as the racer did the mark which was to decide the race. This we too often forget, and are too well satisfied with present things.

*Jesus, that perfect good unknown,
Restless, resigned, I wait to gain:
But give me strength to follow on,
And strive, and labour, and sustain,
Nor ever from thine own depart,
'Till thee I love with all my heart.*



JANUARY 29

Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.

Proverbs 16:20

THE LORD IS THE only legitimate object of trust for a sinner. He cannot trust in himself, for his heart is deceitful above all things. He cannot trust in his fellow-men, for they are no better. If he does trust in any one but the Lord, vexation, disappointment, and sorrow must be the result. In God he *may* trust for the promise warrants him. In God he *should* trust, for the precept commands him. In God he *must* trust, for every other refuge will fail him. The word of God is true, and cannot deceive us. It is unchangeable, and cannot fail us. It is most gracious, and just suits us. In his word, God has promised everything we can possibly need. He has invited us to ask for all he has promised, and he has assured us that we shall not be disappointed. If therefore we rest on his word, rely on his faithfulness and expect him to appear for us, we shall prove him to be true to his word. And doing so, we shall be happy, for it will dissipate our doubts, conquer our fears, prevent disappointment, and secure to us innumerable mercies. “*He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about,*” (Ps. 32:10).

*O, make but trial of his love!
Experience will decide
How blest are they, and only they
Who in his truth confide.*



JANUARY 30

I would thou wert cold or hot.

Revelation 3:15

THE LORD JESUS HATES lukewarmness. He would rather we made no profession of religion at all, than to profess and not practise his precepts. He loves to see his people zealous. He has done enough for us to make us so, and it is a shame to us when we are dull and lifeless in his ways. But it is to be feared, that many professors do not realise indifference to be a sin. They think that having professed Christ, if they just attend to a few duties, and creep along a certain course, it is enough. They are never hot and they do not like to see others so, but generally prophesy evil of them when they do. Professor of religion, Jesus says, "Be hot, or cold!" Be altogether a Christian, or throw off the profession, lay aside the name. Do not wear the name to dishonour it. Your Saviour was always zealous, his zeal surprised both his friends and foes, and he said to his Father, "*The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up,*" (Ps. 69:9). Is he not our example in this, as well as in other things? Should we not endeavour to regulate our pace by his? He hastened to suffer, and longed for his bitter agonies. Well, how shall we be today? Hot, or cold, or lukewarm?

*Jesus, I fain would find
Thy zeal for God in me,
Thy yearning pity for mankind,
Thy burning charity.*



JANUARY 31

Come and let us return unto the Lord.

Hosea 6:1

WE HAVE WANDERED from him – in our thoughts, in our desires and in our pursuits. We have been running after other lovers and set up idols in our hearts. Our conduct has been sinful, and the effect most injurious to ourselves. Come then, and let us return unto the Lord. He is willing to receive us. He will readily pardon us. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,”* (1 John 1:9). Let us fall at his feet, and frankly confess our folly. Let us endeavour to turn our thoughts, desires, and affections back to him again. Especially, let us seek from him the Spirit of grace and supplication, for without his holy operations, there will be no godly sorrow, no hatred of sin, no self-abhorrence, no faith in the promises, or restoration of the joys of salvation. We must return, or our sin will be aggravated. We must return, or our misery will be deep. Let us then at once, without any delay, take with us words, and approach his throne. We may plead his past mercies, we may plead his glorious name, we may plead a Saviour’s blood, nor can we plead in vain. Hear him call:

*Return, O wanderer, return!
And seek thine injured Father’s face!
Those new desires that in thee burn,
Were kindled by reclaiming grace.*



FEBRUARY 1

I AM THAT I AM.

Exodus 3:14

IMMUTABILITY IS THE peculiar prerogative of Jehovah. Every thing out of the Divine nature is changeable. Angels in heaven changed, and became devils. Man, who was created in the image of his Maker, changed, and now bears the image of Satan. Saints renewed by grace often change – they backslide, and are restored. Now they are happy, then dejected. Now they are active, and then dull and lifeless. But Jehovah is the same. He *is* what he was, and what he is, *he ever will be*. There can be no addition to his wisdom, for it is perfect; to his power, for it is omnipotent; or to his love, for it is infinite. There can be no diminution of his justice, his holiness, or his veracity; for he would cease to be God if he were less just, holy, or true. He never did injure one of his creatures by any purpose he formed, or by any work he ever wrought, and he never will. He is holy in all his ways, and his word is true from the beginning. This should comfort his people. He is now what he was when he entered into covenant, when he made his promises, and when he gave his only begotten Son. Friends may change, but God is the same.

Jehovah, Great I AM!

By earth and heaven confessed:

I bow and bless the sacred name,

Forever bless'd.



FEBRUARY 2

He led them forth by the right way.

Psalm 107:7

IT WAS NOT THE smoothest, or the shortest, or the one most frequented, but it was the best. It was the only right way. He intended to prove them, and to display his wonders, and the way afforded an opportunity for both. Thus it is with all his people. He has marked out the way in his unerring wisdom. He guides them into it, he tries them by it, he leads them along it, and glorifies himself by doing so. God's way is always contrary to that which flesh and blood would choose. We want ease, plenty, pleasure, and honour. But the Lord intends that we shall have faith, humility, patience, fortitude, and confidence in himself alone. His design is to empty us, and strip us, and humble us and break us down before his throne, in order to endear the Saviour, sweeten the promises, and make the good land more desirable. And this he effects by sanctifying the trials, the losses, the disappointments, and the troubles we meet with in the way. Beloved, is yours a rough way, a trying path, a perplexing road? It is the *right* way. The Lord leads you, and he never leads wrong. He brings into the wilderness before he brings into Canaan.

*The way was right their hearts to prove,
To make God's glory known,
And show his wisdom, power, and love,
Engaged to save his own.*



FEBRUARY 3

*That the power of Christ may rest upon me.
2 Corinthians 12:9*

THE CHRISTIAN'S INFIRMITIES are many and very painful, they often discourage, deject, and cast him down. They hinder him in every duty, mar his best performances, and give Satan an occasion against him. Few have learnt the happy art of glorying in their infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon them. And yet it is our infirmities which render the Saviour so necessary for us, and which endear the Saviour so much to our hearts. His power is put forth in our weakness, and it is in his strength that we must overcome. We can do nothing good without him, but through him we can do all things. The power of Jesus resting upon us will shelter us amidst all the storms of life, protect us from all real danger during our journey home, refresh us amidst all the toils of this weary land, give us rest in our most weary hours, and keep us safe until we are beyond the reach of foes. The power of Christ overshadows his people in their seasons of trial as a tent the traveller in the eastern deserts.

*Must I be tried and tortur'd still?
I yield to thy mysterious will;
But give me, Lord, to prove,
In nature's utter helplessness,
The strength of all-sufficient grace,
Th' omnipotence of love.*



FEBRUARY 4

They soon forgot his works.

Psalms 106:13

THAT IS A BAD memory which buries God's mercies and forgets his works. And who has not to complain of such a memory! That is remembered longest which impresses most. How long we remember a slight injury or a small offence, but how soon we forget the mercies of our God. Thus did Israel, and thus do we also who now inherit their forfeited mercies. The works of God in the wilderness were so striking and so wonderful, that one would have thought that the people never could have forgotten them. But they soon ceased to awake attention, or excite gratitude, and were treated as common things. Lord, what is man! That we may not forget, let us endeavour to improve by the Lord's works. Let us study them. Let us see his wisdom, kindness and care in them. Let us record them and often read the record. Let us often dwell upon our own unworthiness, and admire the grace displayed in the least of them. Let his works in nature be read. Let his work of providence be noticed. Especially let his work of redemption engage our thoughts, our affections and our gratitude. Never let us forget or slight his wonderful works.

*O! may I ne'er forget
The mercy of my God,
Nor ever want a tongue to spread
His loudest praise abroad.*



FEBRUARY 5

Preserve me, O God.

Psalm 16:1

SELF-CONFIDENT PERSONS are always in danger. When Peter felt secure, he fell, and so have thousands beside. Let us always fear a fall when we feel self-confidence working in our hearts. The wisest saints walk closest with the Lord and fear to be left to themselves for one moment. The man who trusts in himself, or in his circumstances, is a stranger to his own heart and the many foes by which he is surrounded. Let this be our daily prayer, “*Preserve me, O God.*” No one but God can preserve us, for it requires an omniscient eye, an omnipotent arm, and an ever-present friend to do so. We need to be preserved every moment and to be under Divine keeping night and day. The holiest are liable to fall into sin, the strongest to be overcome by temptation, and the most confident to yield to unbelief. May the Lord preserve us this day from the wiles of Satan, the snares of the world, the deceitfulness of our own hearts, the influence of carnal professors, and from falling from our own steadfastness. May he preserve us *in Christ, by Christ, in fellowship with Christ*, and to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

Lord, keep me in thy heavenly way.

And bid the tempter flee;

And let me never, never stray,

From happiness and thee.



FEBRUARY 6

His name shall be called Wonderful.

Isaiah 9:6

AND HE WILL ANSWER to his name, for he is wonderful. Consider the constitution of his person: He is God; he is also man. He possesses the entire nature of God and the entire nature of man, and yet the two natures united constitute but one person. He is therefore human and divine, infinite and finite – the eternal God, and yet really man. He unites in himself heaven and earth, time and eternity, the Creator and the creature. He is the mighty God, and the feeble child born. Truly this is wonderful. We can believe it, but we cannot comprehend it. We perceive *that* it is, but we cannot perceive *how* it is. His love also is wonderful, for he loves those who are unlovely, and who never had any love to him. There is no reason why he should love them, but plenty of reasons why he should not. And yet he loves them with all the strength of his nature, and has manifested that love in the most wonderful manner. For them he resigned the throne of glory, and gave up all he possessed in heaven. For them he became poor, was hated, persecuted, punished and executed as a guilty slave. Well may he be called Wonderful.

*Wonderful art thou in power,
But most wonderful in love:
Be thou all our theme below.
Be thou all our heaven above.*



FEBRUARY 7

Thou hast left thy first love.

Revelation 2:4

THIS IS A VERY solemn charge. Let us ask: Is it brought against us? Our first love was Jesus. When we felt our lost condition, when we saw the danger to which we were exposed, we were directed to him. He received us graciously, he pardoned our sins, he introduced us to his Father and we enjoyed peace. This filled us with love. We admired his dealings, we adored his person, we espoused his cause, we united with his people, we fearlessly professed his name and consecrated ourselves to his service. Our love to Jesus at first was warm and strong. We thought nothing too hard to undertake for him. We considered nothing too valuable to surrender to him. We felt we could suffer in his cause and die for his name, if required. But we have declined since then, and if Jesus is still the object of our love, we do not love him as we did. He deserves our love more than ever. He asks our love, for he prizes it. But, alas! the world has such power over us, temporal things so powerfully affect us, that we sometimes question whether we love him at all. O Saviour –

*Give me thy pardoning love to feel.
And freely my backslidings heal,
Repair my faith's decay;
Restore the sweetness of thy grace,
Reveal the glories of thy face,
And take my sins away.*



FEBRUARY 8

Remember me, O my God, for good.

Nehemiah 13:31

IT IS NO UNCOMMON thing for our earthly friends to forget us, especially in seasons of trouble, or in circumstances of poverty. But if they remembered us, they could do but little for us. When creatures forget or slight us, let us turn from them to the Lord. He says, "*Thou shalt not be forgotten of me,*" (Isa. 44:21). Let us pray with the man of God, "*Remember me, O my God.*" Remember my *needs* and supply them, for they are many and pressing. Remember my *fears* and disperse them, for they are numerous and distressing. Remember my *foes* and subdue them, for they are fierce and united. Remember my *difficulties* and deliver me out of them, for they fill me with shame and dismay. Remember my *weakness* and strengthen me, for I desire to do thy will. Remember my *doubts* and remove them, and give me a steady faith in thy word and a sweet assurance of thy love. Remember me, O my God, as a *child*, that incessantly needs a parent's care; as a *pilgrim*, that needs a guide; and as a *soldier*, that requires courage and supplies. Remember me, to fill me with the power of the Holy Ghost.

O then, from whom all goodness flows,

I lift my soul to thee;

In all my sorrows, conflicts, woes.

Dear Lord, remember me.



FEBRUARY 9

He shall come to be glorified in his saints.

2 Thessalonians 1:10

JESUS IS GONE INTO heaven, to appear as the great High Priest before his Father for us. He is interceding for all that come unto God by him. He will soon come again. His coming will be sudden, glorious, and unexpected. He will come to be glorified in his saints. They will then be all collected together, and it will be a glory to him to have saved so vast a number – a multitude which no man can number – and to have saved such a variety of persons. There will be some of all ages and classes, of all climes and colours, and of all times, from the days of righteous Abel to the hour of his glorious appearing. He will be glorified in the completeness of their salvation, for all will be saved perfectly, and saved for ever. He will be glorified in their exact resemblance of himself, for they will be just like him in body and in soul. He will see his own image in every one of his beloved people. He will be glorified in the beauty and glory of the residence he has provided for them, and to which he will introduce them.

*Lord, we long to see the day!
Come, and in thy saints display
All the wonders of thy love,
All our life concealed above.
Our celestial Head divine,
JESUS, in thy members shine.*



FEBRUARY 10

And they were afraid to ask him.

Mark 9:32

JESUS HAD BEEN SPEAKING of his death. The disciples did not understand him. They wanted information, but they were afraid to ask him. Their fear was groundless – it was injurious. So is ours very frequently, for we often copy them in what was wrong. Jesus is with us. He is ever present as our Saviour and Friend. He is willing to hear our requests, and bids us ask for favours. He regards our petitions, and always answers us in wisdom and love. He is ever pleased to hear us, and encourages us to draw nigh unto him. But we often act as if we were afraid to ask him, especially to explain to us the mysteries in his word; to show us the design of his dark and perplexing providences; to reveal to us our interest in his love, and make our election sure; to give us the blessings we feel we need, the favours we desire, or the mercies which others enjoy. But why do we fear to ask him? Lest it should be presumption, because we are so mean and unworthy; because our unbelief is so strong, and we do not believe the love which he hath to us, in consequence of the temptations of Satan, who fears our confidence and hates our souls.

*Come, my soul, thy suit prepare;
Jesus loves to answer prayer:
He himself has bid thee pray,
Therefore will not say thee nay.*



FEBRUARY 11

The Lord was my stay.

Psalm 18:18

THE PSALMIST HAD BEEN greatly tried. His friends forsook him and his enemies were mad against him. His heart often misgave him, and painful fears oppressed him. But driven from every earthly stay, he looked to the Lord. The word of God was his pilgrim staff – with this he pressed forward, notwithstanding his difficulties. He leaned on the Lord and the Lord supported him. He always found God nearest when most needed, and proved him faithful to his word. Beloved, let us look back. We have been in trials too. Earthly friends have forsaken us, our hearts for awhile sunk within us, and why did we not fall a prey to our foes? The Lord was our stay. He always secretly sustained us. He sometimes sweetly comforted us. He occasionally appeared to deliver us, so that even foes could not but exclaim, “*This is the finger of God.*” The Lord is still our stay. Let us lean upon him today – let us bear our whole weight upon his faithful word. It will not, it cannot fail us. The Lord will be our stay through all the future stages of our journey.

*Lord, preserve from Satan's wiles,
Save from dangers, free from fears;
May I live upon thy smiles,
'Till the promised hour appears,
When the sons of God shall prove
All their Father's boundless love.*



FEBRUARY 12

The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.

Romans 2:4

THIS IS THE DESIGN of every mercy which God confers. The sinner has wrong thoughts of God, and the goodness of God is intended to change those thoughts. He has wrong feelings toward God, and it is intended to change those feelings. He walks contrary to God, and the design is to change his course. Unless the goodness of God change our thoughts, feelings, and conduct, toward God; unless it produce sorrow for sin, hatred to sin, and departure from sin, it does not produce a proper effect upon us. Friends, look at the goodness of God to you in providence. How many mercies crown your lot. How many favours are heaped upon you. Consider his goodness toward you as the God of grace. He has given you his written word. He has appointed ministers to preach that word to you. He has instituted ordinances to instruct and impress you. He has sent you his holy gospel, in which he informs you of the gift of his Son for sinners, and of the promise of the Holy Spirit to sinners. All this is intended to *lead* you to repentance.

*Let me, Lord, the true repentance,
Self-condemned, from thee receive:
Then reverse the fearful sentence –
Bid thy pardoned rebel live.*



FEBRUARY 13

You who are troubled rest with us.

2 Thessalonians 1:7

THE THESSALONIANS WERE persecuted for the sake of Christ. They were deeply tried, their tribulations were very painful, but they exercised patience and were supported by faith in God's word. The apostles were also greatly tried. But in their greatest trials, they looked up to their sympathizing Lord for help, and looked forward to his glorious appearing for redress. They knew that when Jesus came the crooked would be made straight, and his persecuted people would be exalted to honour. They were willing to leave their cause in his hands. They cast all their cares upon him, and they enjoyed rest *in* trouble when they were not delivered *from* trouble. Paul exhorts his persecuted brethren to enjoy the same privilege. He says, "*Rest with us.*" Rest in God's faithful word – he will make it good. Rest in the Saviour's grace – he will perfect his strength in your weakness. Rest on the promise of his coming, when he will subdue all things unto himself. Look not at trouble, but look for the coming of Jesus.

*Then we whose flesh is troubled here,
Shall glorious with our Head appear,
And find our place prepared above;
And spend on our Redeemer's breast
A whole eternity of rest,
A whole eternity of love.*



FEBRUARY 14

Pardon mine iniquity for it is great.

Psalm 25:11

NO ONE CAN PARDON sin but God. It is his sole prerogative. In order that God may be just, and yet pardon sinners, Jesus suffered, bled, and died. No one can be pardoned but for the sake of Christ. Every pardon is written with his blood. God for Christ's sake forgives us our trespasses. He is ready to pardon. But we must be convinced of sin, and if the Holy Spirit convince us, our sins will appear numerous, aggravated, and great – so great at times that we shall fear whether God will pardon such great sinners. But the very greatness of our sin should urge us to apply for pardon. Our God is a great God, his mercy is great, the merit of a Saviour's blood is great, and he has pardoned great sinners in every age. Let us therefore look at our sins fairly, at their nature, number, aggravation, desert. Then let us look at the merit of the Saviour's blood, at the gracious promises of the word, at the invitations of the gospel, and let us confess our sins, remembering the assurance given us by the apostle, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,"* (1 John 1:9). Take courage, look to Jesus, and say, —

*Were the black list before my sight,
While I remember thou hast died,
T'would only urge my speedier flight
To seek salvation at thy side.*



FEBRUARY 15

He that believeth hath everlasting life.

John 5:24

EVERLASTING LIFE IS the highest privilege to which we can aspire. It is not mere existence, but it is existence suited to our nature in its most perfect state, and reaching to the height of our most exalted desires. It is life in the presence, favour and enjoyment of God. It is life with Christ, a life like the life of Christ. It is life without disease. It is life without trouble. It is life without fear. It is life without death. It is life in the possession and enjoyment of all God has promised, Christ has purchased, or the Holy Spirit has revealed in the gospel. It is life that goes beyond the highest expectation of men, or the powers of an angel to describe. And this life is promised to every believer – yea, not only promised, but the pledge, the earnest, the principle of it is possessed. Every believer is entitled to everlasting life. Every believer has the commencement of eternal life in his heart. The sentence of condemnation is repealed, he is quickened from a death in trespasses and sins, and he is united to Jesus who is the resurrection and the life.

*Blest with the faith that works by love,
Blest with eternal life thou art,
Thou hast the life of those above,
The seed of glory in thy heart:
Jesus in thee will ever live,
And thou shalt all his life receive.*



FEBRUARY 16

They despised the pleasant land.

Psalms 106:24

WHAT CANAAN WAS to the Jews, that heaven is to us. It is the land of promise – the land that floweth with milk and honey. It is *the pleasant land*. It is the abode of peace, plenty, and variety. There all is harmony, and all is love. Holiness is the atmosphere, and joy the light of that blessed place. There God unveils his glory – the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne, leads, feeds, and delights his people – angels serve – the church is at rest – and every saint is filled with joy. Everything that can please, satisfy, or enhance our happiness is there, and there in perfection. All is pleasant, and always pleasant. No storms ever rise, no clouds obscure the sky. The sun ever shines, the fruits are always ripe, the songs are ever new, the employment always pleasing, and God is the glory of the place. It is set before us. It is promised to every believer – to every overcomer. The way is marked out. The forerunner has gone before. The invitation to follow him is given, with the assurance that every seeker shall obtain, and yet we despise the pleasant land. Beloved, let us beware of Israel's sin, lest we suffer Israel's punishment.

*Lord, feed and clothe me day by day,
And guide my footsteps lest I stray;
O guard me with a powerful hand,
And bring me to the pleasant land.*



FEBRUARY 17

We are the children of God.

Romans 8:16

GOD HAS A FAMILY upon earth. Every believer is a child of God. He knows God, who is his Father. He loves Jesus, who is his elder Brother. He cleaves to the saints, who form the household of God. But many of the Lord's children question their adoption, and fear that they are not born again. Let all such ask themselves, Am I of the world? Am I what I was once? Can I love sin? Can I live in sin? Do I despise the Saviour? Do I prefer the things of time to the things of eternity? Thousands do, and if you do not, why is it? Must there not be a difference, and who made that difference? Do you think Satan would? Could you have made it yourself? Certainly not. The soul that hates sin, forsakes the world, trusts in Jesus, loves the saints, and cannot live without prayer, *is a child of God*. But still, it would be well to seek the direct witness of the Holy Spirit. If we are the children of God, Satan will harass us, sin will distress us, doubts will perplex us, the world will hate us, some professors will frown on us, and our heavenly Father will at times correct us.

*Send forth the Spirit of thy Son.
O God into my panting heart,
That govern'd by thy love alone,
From thee I never may depart,
But following my celestial Guide,
Be number'd with the glorified.*



FEBRUARY 18

The Lord is great.

Psalm 135:5

WE SHALL NEVER rightly estimate the Lord's goodness, except we realise something of his greatness. His greatness is unsearchable. And after our most extensive and laborious investigations, we must exclaim with the patriarch, "*How little a portion is heard of him!*" (Job 26:14). Of the greatness of his nature, or the grandeur of his perfections, we can have no adequate conception. Heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footstool. "*Behold, the nations are as the drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity,*" (Isa. 40:15). His thoughts, his purposes, and his plans are great. His promises are great and precious. Greatness is impressed upon everything he does. Does he pardon sin? He does it like himself – perfectly and forever. Does he provide supplies? They are vast as his resources, eternal as his existence, and varied as our needs. Does he save his people? It is with a great salvation – from great sins, from great suffering, at a great price, by a great Saviour, to great happiness and glory.

*And will this glorious Lord descend
To be my Father and my Friend?
Then let my songs with angels join;
Heaven is secure if God be mine.*



FEBRUARY 19

Being justified by his grace.

Titus 3:7

THE JUSTIFICATION OF a sinner is a surprising display of the wisdom and grace of God. He is acknowledged to be guilty, and yet proclaimed just. How can this be? He is guilty before God as a creature, because he has broken the law. He is just before God as a Christian, because he is united to Christ who obeyed the law for him. One moment he is ungodly, and has nothing to urge why judgment should not be executed upon him. The next moment, by the exercise of faith in Christ, he is justified, and has a righteousness which meets all the requirements of the law, to plead before God's bar. But if a sinner is justified, if the ungodly is made righteous, it must be by grace. It is impossible that it should be by works. And it is of grace from first to last. It was grace that devised the plan, in the eternal councils. It was grace that brought the Son of God into our world, to work out the righteousness which justifies. It is grace which sends the gospel to reveal this righteousness unto us, and the Holy Spirit to work faith in our hearts to embrace it.

*Not for our works of righteousness,
Did God our souls from sin release,
Its guilt and power remove:
He saved us by his grace alone,
The cause, the only cause we own,
His free spontaneous love.*



FEBRUARY 20

To whom will ye flee for help?
Isaiah 10:3

THIS IS ADDRESSED to those who know not God. To those who love not our Lord Jesus Christ. What multitudes there are of such. Let us ask, Am I one of them? Have I fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before me in the gospel? Is Christ formed in my heart the hope of glory? Is God my friend, my father, and my joy? If not, when troubles overwhelm you – when Satan harasses you – when conscience accuses you – when the world frowns upon you – when sickness seizes you – when death stares you in the face, to whom will ye flee for help? Who can support you in trouble? Who can deliver you from Satan? Who can calm and pacify a guilty conscience? Who can comfort when the world frowns? Who can give patience when suffering from disease? Who can raise you above the fears of death, or entitle you to a glorious immortality? He that cannot do these things for you, will not be sufficient for you then. To whom then will ye flee? Creatures are vain, they cannot help you. God alone can, and if you flee to him now, it will be well, for he invites you, and promises to receive you. But if you delay it may soon be too late.

*Haste, sinner, haste, to Jesus flee,
For pardon, life, and grace!
Approach his throne without delay
This moment seek his face.*



FEBRUARY 21

Godliness with contentment is great gain.

1 Timothy 6:6

TRUE GODLINESS IS a good fortune, for every godly man hath not only the promise of eternal life, but of all things which are necessary for life and godliness. Now if God is able to supply all his needs, if he hath promised that he will withhold no good thing, and if he is faithful to his word, ought not a godly man to be contented? But this is exactly the case. God has provided for the body as well as for the soul; for sickness as well as health; for age as well as youth; for the whole of time as well as eternity; and he will supply us as we need, so as to secure our best interests and his glory. All he requires of us is to *trust* him, to *ask* for the blessings as we feel we need them, to *employ* our talents in his service, and to *wait* his time with patience. Is this unreasonable? Is it not wise and kind, seeing he knows what foolish and wasteful creatures we are? Let us therefore seek to be satisfied with God's arrangements, and to live as we are required in his holy word. The best fortune is a contented mind.

*How shall the Christian's noble mind –
By grace renewed, by heaven refined –
Indulge a murmuring thought?
Shall he who claims Jehovah's strength,
Who shall be brought to heaven at length
Bemoan his present lot?*



FEBRUARY 22

Ye are the temple of God.
1 Corinthians 3:16

ATEMPLE IS THE residence of Deity. The church of Christ is the dwelling-place of Jehovah. Here he resides, is worshipped and displays his glory. But every believer is a temple too. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. In regeneration God takes possession of us. He enthrones himself in the affections and requires the homage and adoration of all the powers of the soul. Having once taken possession he never resigns it. The Christian is always God's consecrated dwelling-place, his living temple. Here he is known, loved and worshipped. The heart is his altar, and prayer and praise the sacrifices he requires and accepts. But we are not sufficiently impressed with this fact. We do not live, move, work, and speak under the influence of the idea, "*I am the temple of God.*" If we did, it would have a very sanctifying effect upon us. We could not go where some Christians go, nor do what some Christians do. We should often ask ourselves, "Is this becoming in one who is the residence of God? Ought the temple of God to be found here?" Christian, what an honour is put upon thee! How could thy God honour thee more?

*No idol god shall hold a place
Within this temple of thy grace:
Dagon before the ark shall fall.
And God in Christ be all in all.*



FEBRUARY 23

The Lord is my strength and my shield.
Psalm 28:7

THE TRUTH AND VALUE of God's word is to be learned out in the school of experience. It is easy to read the word, assent to it and admire it. But when we are called to trust it in the hour of temptation and trial, we find it very difficult. The grace which gave us the book must enable us to make use of it. The Lord is to his people just what they require, and all that they require. They are weak, and feel as if they daily grew weaker. Their foes are many and strong, and appear to increase in numbers and courage. But the Lord is their strength. His omnipotence is pledged to them, and will be exerted for them. Faith lays hold on God's arm, and until that arm fails the believer who holds by it is safe. The Lord is not only our strength but our shield. We are in the field of battle, our enemies are numerous and mighty, and they hate us with bitter hatred. But the Lord ever comes between us and danger, and thus we escape the fiery darts of the devil. The Lord is our defence, who saveth the upright in heart.

*O that my faith could firmly hold
This heavenly shield with ardour bold,
I then could every foe repel,
Invincible to earth and hell:
Lord, be my strength as well as shield,
And help my soul to keep the field.*



FEBRUARY 24

That he may exalt you in due time.

1 Peter 5:6

THE APOSTLE IS exhorting to humility. Nothing is so necessary for us, or more acceptable to God. The humble man is sure to be respected. Saints will love him, and God will do anything for him. Pride is offensive to our fellows, and it is detestable in the sight of God. He will hold no fellowship with a proud man. He knoweth the proud afar off, and he keeps them at a distance. The Lord's people may be oppressed, and Providence may seem to take part with their oppressors. They may lie long in the dust, and be brought very low. But if they humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, he will exalt them in *due time*. When the trial has accomplished its work, it shall be removed. When the proud spirit is humbled, when the complaining spirit is resigned, when the conceited creature is reduced to its proper level, then the Lord will appear to exalt it. He exalteth by his power, by his grace, and by his providence. He exalteth sometimes in temporals, more frequently in spirituals. He raises the spirit above the circumstances, and this is true exaltation.

*When, my Saviour, shall I be
Totally resign'd to thee?
Poor and vile in mine own eyes,
Only in thy wisdom wise,
Only guided by thy light,
Only mighty in thy might!*



FEBRUARY 25

Who can understand his errors?

Psalm 19:12

SIN IS AN error. It is a wandering from the right ways of the Lord. It is an error which we are constantly falling into. The best regulated minds, the most consistent walkers, daily err. Our errors are so numerous, that we cannot understand or enumerate them. Every day, every hour, we do, speak, or think wrong. Every part of our lives is stained with sin. This ought to humble us, and make us walk softly before the Lord. It ought to endear to us the precious blood of Christ, which alone can remove from us the guilt of sin. If we were denied the use of that blood for one hour, we should be eternally undone, for every hour we do that which would ruin us forever. It ought to lead us to admire the patience and long-suffering of God. How wonderful that a holy God should bear with us – and not only bear with us, but love us notwithstanding all! What errors are committed in youth, from thoughtlessness and inexperience. What errors are committed in manhood, from yielding to the cares of the world. What errors are committed in old age, from habits contracted in younger years, and from cleaving too much to the present world.

*I want so circumspect to live,
So free from every sin,
That e'en the careless may perceive
That I with Christ have been.*



FEBRUARY 26

The renewing of the Holy Ghost.
Titus 3:5

ALL REAL RELIGION flows from the indwelling, power, and operation of the Holy Spirit. He quickens us when we are dead in sins, enlightens us when we are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, instructs us when we are alienated from God through the ignorance that is in us, leads us to Jesus when we are far from him by wicked works, subdues the enmity of our hearts and reconciles us to God when enemies, and enmity against him. He regenerates but once, but he renews us often. If once born of the Spirit we die no more. But we often need to be revived, and quickened, and refreshed. He sometimes works upon the soul immediately, but most generally it is through the word. The word of itself has no power to revive or renew us, it is only mighty through God. It is the sword of the Spirit by which he slays the sinner, and the healing balm by which he heals the saint. If the word comes home, if a spirit of prayer is awakened, if a thirst for God is experienced, if the comforts of the gospel are enjoyed, if we overcome sin, it is the effect of the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

*Eternal Spirit! Lord of light!
Throned in the heaven of heavens above,
Descend in thy renewing might,
Come in the glory of thy love:
Revive my soul, renew my heart,
Thy own undying life impart.*



FEBRUARY 27

*I have loved thee with an everlasting love.
Jeremiah 31:3*

GOD'S LOVE TO HIS people, in every view of it, is wonderful. They are so mean and insignificant, so sinful and depraved, that one can but wonder that he should at all regard them. But his ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts. He loves his people, just because he will love them, not looking for anything in them to induce him to do so. We cannot trace his love to its beginning, for it is eternal. Nor can we trace it to its close, for it is everlasting. He ever did love us, he does love us now, and he ever will love us. His love is sovereign, or freely exercised. His love is immutable, or never varies. His love is fruitful, or the source of innumerable blessings. And his love is everlasting, or will endure for ever. Beloved, if God loves us, it does not matter who hates us. If God loves us, he will not allow anything to harm us. If God loves us, he will certainly supply us. But if God loves us, he will expect us to love him in return. And if his love to us is so great, he will expect us to love him above everything beside.

*Since thy love had no beginning,
And shall never, never cease;
Keep, O keep me, Lord from sinning!
Guide me in the way of peace!
Make me walk in
All the paths of holiness.*



FEBRUARY 28

Take heed and be quiet.

Isaiah 7:4

BUT THEY WERE threatened with an invasion, and appeared to be in imminent danger. Can it be wise, or prudent, to be still? Whatever God commands is right. We ought to obey God. We are not in the power of any creature. The danger is rather apparent than real. Let us take heed to our tongues, that we do not speak unadvisedly, and so dishonour God. Let us take heed to our tempers, that we do not give way to passion, and so distress ourselves. Let us take heed to our way, that we do not go out of the right path, and so give our enemies an advantage over us. God says, “*Be quiet.*” Let not fears agitate thee. Let not appearances appal thee. Let not doubts discourage thee. Be calm as the child in its parent’s arms. Thy God rules. His hand is in every event, though you may not see it. Thy God is with thee, he was never nearer to thee than just now. Thy God is for thee, pledged by promise and by oath. He will guard thee with his invisible presence. He will keep thee by his power. He will interpose on thy behalf when it is necessary.

*When I can trust my all with God,
In trial’s fearful hour,
Bow, all resign’d, beneath the rod,
And bless his sparing power;
A joy springs up amid distress,
A fountain in the wilderness.*



FEBRUARY 29

Babes in Christ.
1 Corinthians 3:1

ALL BELIEVERS ARE in Christ, and have the same privileges. But all believers are not of the same stature. Some are fathers, some are young men, and some are only babes in Christ. The babe is born of God and has spiritual life, but it has little knowledge and less strength. Every babe breathes forth its desires in prayer at God's throne, but many of them cannot call God father, or enjoy boldness at his throne. The eye is opened to see something of its sinful state, in consequence of which it seeks an interest in Jesus. But the sight is not strong enough to see its title to Christ, or the smiling face of its loving father. A babe is soon alarmed, and when alarmed, clings closer to its parent's breast. And a babe in Christ is very timid, but it cleaves closer to Jesus the more it is terrified or alarmed. Some babes are very fretful and uneasy, and some young Christians have little patience or solid comfort, on account of the workings of unbelief and unfounded fears. The babe cannot digest strong meat, but must be fed with milk. And many believers are unable to feed upon the glorious doctrines of the gospel, but must always have lighter food, as invitations and promises.

*Jesus in whom the Godhead's rays
Beam forth in mildest majesty.
I see thee full of truth and grace
And come for all I want to thee.*



MARCH 1

The Saviour of the world.

John 4:42

JESUS IS THE SAVIOUR of sinners, of sinners of every nation under heaven. The Jews fancied that salvation was to be confined to them, but it is sent unto the Gentiles. There is now no difference between the Jew and the Greek – all have sinned, all need salvation. Jesus is able to save all, and all are welcome to seek and find salvation in him. The gospel excludes no one. There is no sinner but what Christ can save. There is no sinner but he is willing to save, if that sinner is *willing* to be saved by him. But *how* does he save? He fulfilled the precepts of the law in his life, and he paid its penalty in his death. His one sacrifice made an infinite atonement for sin. It met and satisfied all the claims of divine justice. In his life and death he did all that was necessary to procure the pardon, justification, and eternal life of poor sinners. His resurrection and ascension to heaven prove this. And now he places to the account of every sinner that believes on him, the merit of what he did and suffered. Thus, “*as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous,*” (Rom. 5:19).

Come to Christ, your sins confessing;

Grace and glory he can give:

Pardon, peace, with every blessing –

All are yours if you believe.



MARCH 2

Of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 27:1

IF YOU ARE IN Christ – if you are following that which is good – if you are living and walking by faith – if you are aiming at God’s glory in all you do – you need not be afraid of anyone. For in Christ, you are safe from danger. While you follow that which is good, nothing can harm you. Living and walking by faith, you will overcome every difficulty and conquer every foe, and while aiming at God’s glory, he will support, supply, and defend you. David could say, “*The Lord is my light and my salvation; the Lord is the strength of my life,*” and therefore he fearlessly asks, “*of whom shall I be afraid?*” The guilty may fear, but you are pardoned. The friendless may fear, but God is your friend. The defenceless may fear, but the Lord is your defence, and the Holy One of Israel is your King. The idle may fear, but you are employed in the Lord’s service to his praise. Whom should you fear? Satan? He is a conquered foe. The world? Jesus has overcome the world. Death? It is abolished. It is destroyed.

*O love divine! to thee I owe,
Ten thousand praises here below,
And everlasting songs:
Take thou my body, spirit, soul,
Claim, and possess, and use the whole
To thee the whole belongs.*



MARCH 3

His secret is with the righteous.

Proverbs 3:32

SECRETS ARE KEPT for friends. A wise man will not open his mind to a stranger. So there are secrets in God's word, and secrets in God's ways, which are only made known unto his people. This is a proof of his love to them, as Jesus said to his disciples, "*I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you,*" (John 15:15). There is secret communion carried on between God and the Christian, to which mere professors are strangers. There are secret communications made, which none know but he that receiveth them. A secret blessing attends the reading of the word, and the ordinances of divine appointment. The love of God is secretly shed abroad in the heart, producing peace, joy, and assurance of interest in his favour. A secret power is exerted, by which duties are performed, privileges are enjoyed, trials are borne, enemies subdued and all things made to work together for good. Many professors of religion perform duties, talk of divine things, and pass for Christians. But they are not in the secret. All is formal. There is no secret union to Christ, or intercourse with Christ.

*Though affliction's dreary train,
Flutter round my trembling soul,
Sorrow, anguish, grief, and pain,
A secret something sweetens all.*



MARCH 4

*Neither give place to the devil.
Ephesians 4:27*

SATAN IS PLEASED to see us angry, and endeavours to render us implacable. But when betrayed into a passion, we should realise its sinfulness, confess it before God and be ready to forgive those who have provoked us. To indulge in a passionate or a sulky temper, is to give place to the devil. He is sure to tempt us to do so, but he should be firmly and constantly resisted. If we give place to Satan, we shall become revengeful, unforgiving, and hardened. And if we yield to him in one point, he will soon try us upon another, and will never cease until he leads us to apostasy or backsliding. He is always watching us, plotting against us and seeking to draw us into sin. We should therefore be very concerned to maintain a tender conscience, to be humble before God and to walk in close and intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus, who overcame him for us, and will overcome him by us. Satan will often try to harden and mislead us, by suggesting that we should maintain our dignity, and refuse to humble ourselves.

*Give me, Lord, a humble mind,
Make me courteous, meek, and kind
Cure my temper, keep my heart,
Let me ne'er from thee depart;
Help me to o'ercome my foe,
And in me thy mercy show.*



MARCH 5

Glory ye in his holy name.

Psalm 105:3

THE LORD'S NAME reveals his nature. It is written out partly on the works of nature, but its full revelation is in the person and work of Jesus. Here we learn what God is, what are his thoughts respecting us, and what he is willing to do for us, or confer upon us. God is in Christ. "*No man hath seen God at any time; but the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,*" (John 1:18). If we would know God's name, we must study Christ. Our minds must dwell upon what he wrought, what he taught, and the graces which shone forth in his conduct. Except we know the Lord's name, we shall never trust in him. Except we trust in him, we shall never love him. And except we love him, we shall never glory in his holy name. But if we do know his name, we shall reverence it and glory in it. We shall *commend* it to others, and exhort them to learn it, love it, and enjoy it. We shall *praise* it, celebrating its excellencies in our songs of thanksgiving. Beloved, let us not glory in our health, or wealth, or attainments, or standing in society, or anything that pertains to this world. But let us glory in the Lord.

*Nature and time, and earth and skies,
Thy heavenly skill proclaim:
What shall we do to make us wise,
But learn to read thy name.*



MARCH 6

I am he which searcheth the reins and the hearts.

Revelation 2:23

JESUS MUST BE THE Omniscient God, or he *could not* do so; and he must desire truth in the inward parts, or he *would not* do so. His eye is always upon us – not only on our path and our outward actions, but upon our hearts. He is perfectly acquainted with every motive, with every purpose and with every plan. All is known unto him. This should make us serious, for it is a solemn thing for the eye of Jesus to be penetrating through all the folds of our hearts. It should make us honest, for he must hate all mere pretence or outward show, with which the heart does not correspond. It should make us watchful over our hearts, for if we neglect to examine or keep them, he does not withdraw his eye from them. Let us then endeavour to pass through this day, realising the fact, that Jesus is searching our reins and our hearts. And let us learn to abhor all hypocrisy, or mere outside show, as he abhors it. Beloved, he sees all the good that his Spirit produces in our hearts, as well as all the evil which is naturally there.

*Jesus, thou Omniscient Saviour,
Known to thee is all I do:
All my thoughts, and words, and actions,
Lie before thy piercing view:
Let thy blood for me avail.
Let thy grace o'er sin prevail.*



MARCH 7

He giveth grace unto the lowly.
Proverbs 3:34

SIN DESTROYED HUMILITY and made us proud, but grace restores it and makes us lowly. Whatever a man may be, if he is not humble, he is not a Christian. Humility is always lovely, and is highly esteemed of God. Nothing will make us so happy or fit us for usefulness, like humility. The humble may have anything he desires, for God will withhold nothing from him. But his humility will preserve him from desiring what would be injurious to himself or unbecoming in God to bestow. Beloved, let us seek grace to make us humble. Let us cultivate a lowly disposition. And if we have right views of ourselves, right feelings toward God, and a correct estimate of the things of time, we shall be humble. Then the Lord will visit us, dwell with us and revive us. When the Lord comes to visit us, he brings abundance of grace with him. If he dwell with us, he will give grace plentifully unto us. And if he give grace thus plentifully unto us, we shall be graceful, happy, and useful. The humble man is God's temple. The humble heart is God's throne. The humble saint is God's delight. May we be clothed with humility, and walk in love.

*Lord, for ever at thy side
May my place, my portion be;
Strip me of the robe of pride;
Clothe me with humility.*



MARCH 8

*I have prayed for thee.
Luke 22:32*

JESUS PRAYED FOR Peter in the prospect of his fall. He knew the designs of Satan, he knew that enemy had desired to have him that he might sift him as wheat, but as the great Intercessor he pleaded with his Father for him. And what he did for Peter, he does for us. Sweet thought this: Jesus knows all Satan's designs and movements, and he prays for us that our faith may not fail! He watches that foe, and he watches over us. Whenever he pleads he prevails, for the Father always hears him. This is our comfort when our hearts are cold, straitened, and prayerless. We have one in heaven who pleads for us. We may lose the prayers of a godly father or a fondly attached mother, but the prayers of Jesus can never be lost. There are prayers filed in heaven for us this morning, which are to be answered this day. Nor shall we get beyond the prayers of Jesus until we are with him where he is to behold his glory. Let us comfort ourselves with this, under all our sorrows, in all our trials, in the midst of all our bereavements – Jesus has prayed for me.

*Jesus my Advocate hath been
And by the fiery darts assail'd
Of Satan, and the world, and sin,
My faith hath never wholly fail'd:
Jesus, on whom I still depend
Shall keep me faithful to the end.*



MARCH 9

Honour the Lord with thy substance.

Proverbs 3:9

WE RECEIVED IT from him, and we should consecrate it to him. Upon everything that we possess, we may write: This is from God. He gave it to us. He intended it for our good, to make us happy and to make us holy. As every mercy comes from him, it should lead us back to him. We cannot honour God by hoarding or by wasting. Neither the miser nor the prodigal honour the Lord. But we may do so by enjoying and employing what he has given us. Let us honour the Lord by acknowledging him as the author of all we have, and by praising him for all we receive. Let us also honour him by employing our property in his service, for the comfort of his poor and the spread of his truth. Let a portion be separated from the rest, a just and becoming portion, and let us write upon it: This is for God. If some professors did so, would they not feel ashamed of the quantity, or of the season when it is set apart? No niggard, if a professor of religion, can succeed. God hates niggardliness in those who profess his name, but he “*loveth a cheerful giver*,” (2 Cor. 9:7). If we give, let us honour God in doing so. Let us see to it that our motive is good, that our object is good, and that the proportion is good.

*With my substance I will honour
My Redeemer and my Lord;
Were ten thousand worlds my manor,
All were nothing to his word.*



MARCH 10

Christ hath once suffered for sins.

1 Peter 3:18

SIN IS THE CAUSE of all suffering. God punishes nothing but sin. If therefore we suffer, it is a proof that we have sinned. But Jesus suffered. Had he sinned? No! "*He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth,*" (1 Pet. 2:22). Why then did he suffer? Because he was the substitute of sinners. He engaged to bear our sins, to suffer in our stead, to make atonement for our transgressions, and therefore, when he appeared on earth, he was treated as if he had been guilty of our sins. "*He bare our sins in his own body on the tree,*" (1 Pet. 2:24). He died as our Surety to pay our debt, and to obtain our honourable release. And now, when we believe on his dear name, we are treated as if we had done what he performed. Our sins were all imputed to him, and his whole righteousness is imputed to us. This is the mystery of the gospel. This is God's method of justification. If Jesus suffered for my sins, I shall never suffer for them. But if I believe in him, he did suffer for them. Therefore, as a believer, God will never punish me for my iniquities. O to realise and enjoy this!

*He offered up himself entire,
And never need the death repeat;
Justice can nothing more require,
The sacrifice is all complete;
And, seated at his Father's side,
He rests, forever glorified.*



MARCH 11

Teach me thy way, O Lord.

Psalm 86:11

WE ALL NEED divine teaching, for our ignorance is great, and there are many evil influences operating upon us. If we have discovered our ignorance, we desire to be taught of God. If we desire to be taught of God, he has promised to teach us. He has said, *"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye,"* (Ps. 32:8). This is a very suitable and a very precious promise – a promise which we should plead until it is fulfilled. The Lord's way is that course which we should pursue – that path which he has marked out for us in his word. It leads to acceptance with him, and enables us to glorify him. There is the way of salvation, by faith in Jesus, in which way we obtain freedom, peace, and holiness. There is the way of obedience, which is a practical conformity to his precepts. In this way the Lord meets with us, cheers us, gives us more grace and makes us honourable and useful. In this way we find many difficulties, there are many things to perplex, confuse, and try us. It is a way that requires constant self-denial, and the surrender of our wills to the will of God.

*Divine Instructor, lest I stray,
O teach my erring feet thy way:
Thy truth, with ever fresh delight,
Shall guide my doubtful steps aright.*



MARCH 12

Being born again.

1 Peter 1:23

A NEW BIRTH IS absolutely necessary. No one can possibly be saved without it. Therefore Jesus told Nicodemus twice, that he must be born again. As our first birth was necessary to bring us into this world, and fit us for its employments and enjoyments, so a second birth is necessary to bring us into the Church of Christ, and fit us for its duties and privileges. No new birth, no true happiness here. No new birth, no heaven at death. But how shall I know that I am born again? If prayer to God becomes natural and is enjoyed; if we overcome the world instead of being led away by its follies and its fashions; if we hate sin as sin and strive and pray for deliverance from it; if we love our enemies because Christ commanded it, and love the saints because they are holy; if we trust in the finished work of Christ and glory in his cross; if we feel a deep concern for the salvation of others, and are zealous in spreading abroad the truth, that Jesus may be honoured; then, beyond a doubt, we are born of God. Beloved, have you these evidences? Have you any of them? Let nothing satisfy you but the knowledge that you are born again.

*Saints produce the fruits of grace
In the works of righteousness!
Born of God, they hate all sin:
God's pure word abides within.*



MARCH 13

Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.

Psalm 94:18

WE ARE AT BEST poor tottering creatures, never fit to be left alone for one moment. And then the road we have to travel is dangerous, and the path often slippery. One incautious step involves us in many long and severe troubles. Nor are we ever sure, but that our feet may next be placed on ice. Circumspection, therefore, is absolutely necessary. But circumspection alone is not sufficient to preserve us. The prayer of David is always suitable – “*Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually,*” (Ps. 119:117). The moment we take our eye off the Lord, Satan redoubles his efforts to trip us up. The Psalmist felt himself going. He cried, “*My foot slippeth!*” and mercy stepped forward, and caught him before he was down. That mercy can uphold us. It is our friend. It is pledged to us in the promise. But it must be sought. It must be honoured with a place in our minds. It must also be trusted. We must daily feel that we need to be upheld, that we have no claim upon God, that we can look to mercy alone to uphold. And living under these convictions, we shall trust in the mercy of the Lord forever.

*Who loves me so well, my Helper has been,
And saved me from hell, and saved me from sin
His gracious protection I joyfully prove:
His strength of affection, his feelings of love.*



MARCH 14

All things that the Father hath are mine.

John 16:15

HERE IS AN INDIRECT proof of the Divinity of Jesus, for if he claims and possesses all that the Father hath, he must be God. But all things that the Father hath, belong to Jesus – that Jesus in whom we trust, to whom we are united, and with whom we shall live forever. Jesus possesses the Divine nature equally with the Father, and is God over all, blessed for evermore. He claims all the Divine attributes and perfections, and they are all ascribed to him in the Holy Scriptures. He wears all the Divine names, and shares in the honour of all the Divine works. His are all the boundless resources of the universe. As all things were created by him, so also they were created for him. All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth. Therefore we may look to him for all we need, flee to him from all we fear, and trust him with all we value. Let us this day exercise our minds on this glorious fact. Precious Lord Jesus, help me to rejoice in thee, expect from thee, and labour by all means to glorify thee!

Jesus, is there not in thee.

Grace, sufficient grace for me?

Let me now, with thee, receive

All thou dost to sinners give:

All thou hast, and all thou art,

Dwell forever in my heart!



MARCH 15

In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.

Isaiah 45:24

EVERY BELIEVER PROVES that he has neither in himself. The longer he lives, the more deeply he feels that he must look out of himself for the righteousness that is to justify him before God, and daily go to the Saviour for strength to conquer sin, overcome the world, perform duty, resist Satan and glorify God. What an unspeakable mercy it is, that this morning the Lord whom we worship is our righteousness – that the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus is unto all and upon all that believe without any difference. Every one of us who believe in Jesus, have a perfect righteousness, and in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory. In the Lord also we have strength. Strength is provided for us, and promised to us. Let us therefore go boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in every time of need. Our righteousness and strength being in the Lord, they are always the same. They can never be forfeited. They will never be lost. Let us then look up and say, “*He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me?*” (Isa. 50:8).

*Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress:
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.*



MARCH 16

Whose I am.

Acts 27:23

WE ARE ALL THE Lord's by creation: "*It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves,*" (Ps. 100:3). He produced us by his power, and intended us for his glory. But the generality withhold from God his right. They do not own him, worship him or obey him. He is not in all their thoughts. But this was not the case with Paul. He had made a surrender of himself to God. He had consecrated all his powers to his service. He sought by all means to promote his cause and advance his glory. He was the Lord's child by adoption and grace. He was the Lord's servant by solemn engagement. He had given himself to God, and he recognized God as his owner, sovereign and master. He consulted God's will. He was employed in God's work. He expected God's protection. He was now in danger, but his God sent an angel to assure him of his safety, and to comfort him in his sorrow. The Lord always cares for his own. He never did neglect a faithful servant, or fail to bless an obedient child. Beloved, are you the Lord's? Do you recognize his right to you? Have you entered into engagements with him? If so, you are in a happy state.

*If I am thine, Lord, let me be
Entirely set apart for thee:
If I am not, thy right assert,
This moment claim and win my heart.*



MARCH 17

Fear not: for I have redeemed thee.

Isaiah 43:1

ISRAEL NEEDED REDEMPTION both from Egypt and Babylon, and the Lord redeemed them. We needed to be redeemed from sin, Satan and the present evil world, and Jesus has become our Redeemer. The price of our redemption was his precious blood. The power that effects our deliverance is the power of his Holy Spirit. The legal difficulties were all removed when he died in our stead, but we were as really enthralled and held in bondage as if no price had been paid for our release. Therefore it was necessary that power should be exerted, and this has been done, and we are now the redeemed of the Lord. He redeemed us because he loved us, because he had set his heart upon us, because he intended to glorify himself in us, before angels, devils, and men. Having redeemed us he bids us not fear. For having purchased us so dearly, he will not easily part with us. Having delivered us when we were his foes, he will certainly take care of us now we are his friends. Still it seems natural to fear. But he who redeemed us says, "*Fear not, for I am with thee, I will keep thee.*"

Why shouldst thou fear, when I am thine,

When all I am, I am for thee?

If thou art weak, my strength divine

Is perfect in infirmity.



MARCH 18

They have not all obeyed the gospel.

Romans 10:16

AND DOES THE GOSPEL require obedience? Yes! It commands us to repent of sin, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, to pray always and not to faint, to confess Christ before men, to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are God's, and to consecrate ourselves and all we have to the Lord's glory. But comparatively few obey the gospel. Reader, do you? Are you daily sorrowing for sin? Are you placing your entire confidence in Jesus, and resting on his finished work alone for acceptance with God? Do you pray as naturally as you breathe, and pray for all you need or desire? Have you confessed Jesus before your fellow-men, and taken up the apostle's determination to glory only in his cross? Do you aim at God's glory in every purpose you form, in every plan you draw, in every work you execute? Have you consecrated your person, property, and talent, to the Lord, and do the ministering angels see written upon all you have, "*This is the Lord's*"? Solemn inquiries these! Let them sink down into your heart. Take them, and search your heart with them.

*Turn and claim me as thine own,
Be my portion, Lord, alone;
In me all thy grace display,
And thy gospel I'll obey.*



MARCH 19

*He will swallow up death in victory.
Isaiah 25:8*

DEATH IS THE fruit of sin. It is God's standing testimony against it. It is man's enemy. It is the object of the sinner's dread. It has filled many saints with fear and alarm. Some are all their life time subject to bondage through the fear of death. It is a solemn event. The consequences are momentous. We *must* die. No one *can* escape it. No one *will*, except those who are alive when Jesus comes. But though it is a foe, and a terrible one too, it cannot really hurt a Christian. It is not now a curse, but often a blessing. As a penal evil it is abolished. It will be swallowed up in victory. The monster has lost its sting, and it will lose its existence. The victory of Jesus over it will be complete, manifest, and eternal. "*There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away,*" (Rev. 21:4). It will be as perfectly done away, as completely lost sight of, as the stone that is cast and swallowed up in the depths of the sea.

*Ah, grant me, Lord, in death to find,
That death is swallowed up in thee,
While on thy loving breast reclin'd
I gasp for immortality!
Purchas'd by thine expiring groan.
And feel it in my heart made known.*



MARCH 20

Ye are sanctified.
1 Corinthians 6:11

THE CORINTHIANS WERE by nature dreadfully depraved, but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. They were created anew in Christ Jesus, they were sanctified by the power of the Holy Ghost. To be sanctified is to be separated from sinners, to be delivered from the power of sin and to be set apart for God. Sanctification begins in regeneration. There is no holiness in any one of God's fallen creatures, until regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We may separate ourselves from others, but we shall not be truly sanctified to God, unless we are renewed in the spirit of our minds. Every truly sanctified person loves holiness, prays for holiness, and strives for holiness. In vain do we boast of a sound creed, rejoice in church privileges, or expect heaven at death, except we really desire and seek to be holy. But, if we mourn over sin, fly to the fountain of a Saviour's blood, and strive for conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ, unquestionably we are sanctified, as the Corinthians were, "*in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*" Beloved, are you sanctified? Your God says, "*Be ye holy, for I am holy,*" (1 Pet. 1:16).

*Lord, let thy grace with sweet control,
Bind all the feelings of my soul;
Bid all its vanities depart,
And ever sway my wayward heart.*



MARCH 21

On whom dost thou trust?

Isaiah 36:5

THIS IS A VERY important question. Much depends on it. Let us therefore apply it to ourselves, and to each other. On whom dost *thou* trust? On thyself? Then hear God's testimony, "*He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool,*" (Prov. 28:26). He knows not its weakness, its depravity or its deceitfulness, or he would never trust it. On whom dost *thou* trust? On thy fellow-men? Then hear God's threatening, "*Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord: for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited,*" (Jer. 17:5-6). Do you say, "But they are wise men, great men, exalted in station, excellent in character"? "*Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish,*" (Ps. 146:3-4). But on whom dost *thou* trust? On Jehovah? Jehovah as revealed in Jesus? Then take the comfort of God's promise, "*Blessed is the man that trusteth in Jehovah, and whose hope the Lord is,*" (Jer. 17:7).

*Happy the man, securely blest,
Who finds in Jacob's God his rest
Whose hope, when threatening changes rise.
Firm on Jehovah's power relies.*



MARCH 22

Let us hold fast our profession.

Hebrews 4:14

WE HAVE A GREAT, a glorious High Priest. He has made a full atonement for our sins, he is gone to present his blood before his Father in the holiest of all, he has a tender heart, and he ever liveth to make intercession for us. We have professed to be the true circumcision, to trust in his finished work alone for acceptance with God, and to devote ourselves entirely to his service. But there are many temptations to draw us aside, to lead us to trust in something of our own, to doubt either his power or his pity, and to withdraw ourselves from his service. But let us be steadfast. Let us be steady. Let us hold fast our profession, and prove that we do so by coming boldly to the throne of grace in his name, by looking only to him and his perfect work for our justification and complete salvation, and by devoting our time, talents, and influence, to the promotion of his glory, and the extension of his kingdom. Many have given way to temptation, many have made shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience. Let us therefore watch and be sober. Let us be jealous of ourselves.

*Jesus ever lives to plead
His suffering people's cause,
Let us then pursue our Head,
And bear his daily cross.
Faithful unto death remain,
And the crown of life obtain.*



MARCH 23

I will look for him.

Isaiah 8:17

THE LORD OFTEN conceals himself from his people. He leaves them, that they may learn the value of his presence, their dependence upon him, and their impotence without him. When he withdraws, their comfort declines, their prospects are beclouded, their enemies are lively, and their fears are often strong. They feel desolate, depressed and alone. And except Satan beguile them, or the things of time entangle them, they begin at once to go in search of him. They look for him in the works of his hands, in the dispensations of providence, in the ordinances of his house, in the pages of his word, and especially in the closet, where they pour out their hearts. They go forward but he is not there, and backward but they cannot perceive him. They look on the left hand where he doth work, but they cannot behold him. He hideth himself on the right hand, that they cannot see him. Then they passionately cry, "*Oh that I knew where I might find him!*" (Job 23:3). Disappointed, and dispirited, they fear, fret, and perhaps complain. But they cannot give up, still they cry, "*I will look for him.*"

Disconsolate, forsook.

Jesus, for thee I look:

Only thou my heart canst cheer,

Comfort with thyself restore;

Show thyself the Comforter,

Come, and never leave me more.



MARCH 24

God spared not the angels that sinned.

2 Peter 3:4

THEN, IS IT NOT wonderful that he should spare us? They were more noble in their nature, and more exalted in their station. Yet when they sinned God did not spare them, but cast them down to hell. Nor would he have spared us, but for the method of his grace, by which his Son became our substitute, took our responsibility, came into our world and acted as our surety. And when he appeared in this character, he was dealt with accordingly, he was not spared, therefore we read, “*He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,*” (Rom. 8:32). Was not this wonderful? God would not spare his Son, that he might spare us – us who were his enemies, and who would have remained so forever if he had not changed our hearts by his grace? Let us this day reflect upon the facts, “*God spared not the angels that sinned,*” “*He spared not his own Son,*” but he says of us, “*I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him,*” (Mal. 3:17). O mystery of mercy! What depths of love, what heights of grace are here! My soul, adore the sovereignty, and eternally praise the distinguishing grace displayed!

*Amazing work of sovereign grace
That could distinguish rebels so!
Our guilty treasons call'd aloud
For everlasting fetters too.*



MARCH 25

O God, my heart is fixed.

Psalm 108:1

IF SO, AND IF it is fixed on the right object, it is an unspeakable mercy. The sinner's heart can find no rest. It roves from object to object, and fixes first on one thing, and then upon another, but there is no repose. No one can fix the heart but God, and if he fix it, it is upon himself. Before the heart can be fixed, we must be thoroughly convinced of the emptiness and vanity of all earthly things. We must be weaned from everything on earth. We must perceive the excellency and glory of God, in the person of Jesus Christ. We must be reconciled to him, and be assured that he is at peace with us. We must believe his precious promise, and rely for acceptance on the finished work of Jesus alone. We must learn by experience the sweetness of communion with him. We must either be driven by trials, troubles, and disappointments from all our broken cisterns to him as the fountain of living waters, or be drawn by the powerful influences of the Holy Spirit to build our all upon him as the Rock of ages. The soul first fixes on the work of Christ, then on his glorious person, and ultimately on God as revealed in Christ.

My God, now fix my wandering heart.

And let it centre in thy love;

Thy sanctifying grace impart.

Nor let me after idols rove.



MARCH 26

He is the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 2:2

SIN IS AN INSULT offered to God. It awakens his displeasure, calls for punishment and deserves hell. We have sinned. We daily sin. But God has devised a way by which sinners may approach him, obtain pardon, be reconciled to him, and stand high in his favour. Under the law, the mercy-seat was the propitiatory. Here the blood was sprinkled, here Jehovah was enthroned, here the priest pleaded, here blessings were dispensed and here God held communion with his people. Under the gospel Jesus is our propitiation. He has satisfied the claims of justice, appeased the wrath of God, and his glorious righteousness covers and hides all our sins. His atonement is our plea, the ground of our confidence, and the cause of our reconciliation. He advocates our cause, he intercedes for our persons, he renders our services acceptable. Precious Saviour, we need no merit but thine, no priesthood but thine, no sacrifice but thine! Thou shalt be all our salvation and all our desire! In thy name will we rejoice, and in thy righteousness shall we be exalted.

*Thou sinner's advocate with God,
My only trust is in thy blood,
Thou all-atoning Lamb;
The virtue of thy death impart,
Speak comfort to my drooping heart.
And tell me all thy name.*



MARCH 27

Will ye weary my God also?
Isaiah 7:13

GOD SPEAKS TO US in the language of men. He clothes himself with our passions, and speaks to us as if affected in the same way with ourselves. Whatever we do in some way affects our God. Every action either pleases or displeases him. The only thing that is ever said to weary God is sin, the sins of his own people. They are so provoking, so insulting, so daring. He bade Ahaz ask a sign, and so try him. But he said, "*I will not ask, neither will I tempt [or prove] the Lord.*" This was highly offensive. It was most ungrateful. It deeply affected the Prophet, and he indignantly asked, "*Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?*" Such conduct as ours would weary and wear out our best earthly friends, and it is enough to weary our God. He bids us trust him, but we give way to doubt. He makes the most gracious promises, but we do not believe him. He has interposed by an oath, and yet we encourage our fears. He bids us prove him, but we refuse to do so. Can such conduct be right? Can it be excused?

*How strange the sin, the guilt how great,
The word of God to disbelieve!
His promise meets our lost estate
With aids we scruple to receive;
Distrust the proffered help and die,
Rather than on its truth rely.*



MARCH 28

I will rejoice.

Psalm 60:6

WHEN WE CANNOT rejoice in possession, we may rejoice in hope. If the present be gloomy, the prospect is bright and sunny. God had spoken, and the Psalmist would rejoice, because if God gives us his word, he will never dishonour it. There are some things in which we may always rejoice, therefore the Apostle says, "*Rejoice evermore,*" (1 Thess. 5:16). We may rejoice in Christ Jesus as a Saviour to the uttermost, so that no case can be desperate. We may rejoice in God as our Father, who will care and provide for us in time, and be our portion for evermore. We may rejoice that our names are written in heaven, and being written there, no one can blot them out. We may rejoice that, let whatever changes may take place in the world or the church, we can lack no good thing while we walk uprightly. We may rejoice, even in the worst of times, that all things shall work together for our good. We may rejoice, that however full our cup of sorrow may be now, in the next world our cup of joy will be full. Beloved, read God's promises, study God's character, look forward to Christ's second coming, and say even in the darkest day, "*I will rejoice.*"

*Rejoice evermore in the truth, and the power,
And the grace of your heavenly Friend,
'Till to us who believe he his glory doth give,
And a kingdom that never shall end.*



MARCH 29

Then believed they his words.

Psalms 106:12

NOTHING IS SO unreasonable as unbelief, and yet nothing is so common. We need no stronger proof of the depravity of our nature than this, that God is the last being that we believe. We give credit to what is told us by our fellow men. We should receive the report of an angel. We constantly believe the falsehoods of Satan. But who believes the Lord's word? We say by our conduct, "I can believe any one but God, anything but his word." Is not this awful? But it is strictly true. Thus Israel acted in the desert, and thus we act in our present circumstances. But *when* did they believe? Just for a short time when they saw his wonderful works. But they soon forgot his works, and waited not for his counsel. We often think that if we saw miracles, or heard a voice from heaven, we should believe. But we are mistaken. This has been tried, and it has been found true, that if we believe not Moses and the prophets, neither should we be persuaded though one rose from the dead. If God is to be believed he must give us faith. For we never really believe him, but as he works faith in our hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost.

*Let me not doubt thy holy word
It fills my heart with grief:
I would believe thy promise, Lord;
O help my unbelief!*



MARCH 30

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

1 Corinthians 5:7

ISRAEL WERE IN danger, and God was about to deliver them. The destroying angel was going throughout the land of Egypt to slay all the first-born. He had commanded his people to take a lamb, to kill it, and to sprinkle its blood on the lintel and two side-posts of the door of every house, and promised, “*When I see the blood, I will pass over you,*” (Exod. 12:13). They did so, and they were safe. We are by nature in great danger. The ministers of justice are in constant motion. But Jesus, as the Lamb of God, has been sacrificed for us, and if his blood is sprinkled upon us we are safe. There was no safety for Israel without blood. If the blood had not been on the door, they would have been slain, and there is no safety for us without blood. Nor is it enough that the blood of Christ has been shed. It must be applied. It is blood on us, that makes us safe. Beloved, has the blood of Jesus ever been applied to your conscience? Are you trusting in it? Nothing else can secure you from the wrath of God. The blood must be applied to you, or you perish. Examine, how is it with you?

*Lord, thy Spirit now impart,
To bring me near to God:
Sprinkle my conscience and my heart
With Christ's atoning blood.*



MARCH 31

Behold, I come as a thief.

Revelation 16:15

JESUS WILL COME suddenly when he is little expected. His coming will fill many with alarm and surprise. His coming in the flesh was the hope of the Old Testament church. His coming with power and great glory, to reign before his ancients, is the hope of the New Testament church. Until then, the Church will be like the betrothed bride, waiting for the marriage-day. Until then, believers will groan, being burdened. Until then, the old serpent will deceive the whole world. Until then, the souls of the martyrs under the altar will cry, "*How long, O Lord, wilt thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth,*" (Rev. 6:10). Until then, the gospel must be preached among all nations for a witness. But when Jesus comes, he will take his bride to himself. He will silence the groans of his saints, the old serpent will be bound and shut up, the blood of the martyrs will be avenged, and the gospel will have accomplished its object. Beloved, let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch. Daily let us act as if we expected him to come before evening, and let us lie down at night with the thought, "Jesus may come before morning."

*Let all who Jesus know
To meet their God prepare.
And pass their every hour below
In watching unto prayer.*



APRIL 1

A Saviour and a great one.

Isaiah 19:20

SUCH WAS THE PROMISE of God to the ancients, and it has been fulfilled to us. Many saviours were raised up at different times and great deliverances were wrought. But there is no comparison between Jesus and other deliverers. They delivered from outward foes. He delivers us from our sins. They delivered a few. He delivers a multitude which no man can number. They delivered for a time. He delivers forever. They delivered from a few evils. He delivers from all. Their deliverances principally affected the body. His embraces the whole man. Jesus is a great Saviour, for he saves great sinners from great sins, by a great sacrifice, and raises them to the enjoyment of great glory. He displayed great love, performed a great work, exerts great power, and deserves great honour. His greatness is unsearchable. He is so great, that God can provide no greater. His name is Jesus. His office is to save. His joy is to save all that come unto him. He never saw one yet that he could not save. He was never sought by one that he would not save. He saves freely, without price; cheerfully, without reluctance; eternally, without failure.

Jesus is a mighty Saviour.

Only source of all that's good;

Every grace and every favour

Flow through his most precious blood.



APRIL 2

Thine anger is turned away.
Isaiah 12:1

THE ANGER OF GOD is his displeasure against sin. It is not a passion like ours, which agitates and troubles us. But it is the calm, dignified, holy manifestation of his opposition to what is wrong. He must hate evil. He will always be displeased with sin. But he will not always be angry with the sinner. When his heart is broken, when his spirit is humbled, when he submits to God's righteousness, when he frankly confesses his fault, when he is willing to part with all sin, when he looks to Jesus and pleads his sacrifice alone for acceptance, then God is pleased and his anger is turned away. He now smiles and forgives. He invites the prodigal to come near unto him. He sheds abroad his love in the heart, applies the precious promise to the soul, sprinkles the blood of atonement on the conscience, and peace and joy are experienced. Then the sinner can say with the prophet, "*O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away and thou comfortedst me.*" Now, God appears as a Father, the believer is a reconciled, happy child, whatever happens to him is overruled for his welfare, and every trial flows from love.

*For ever gracious is the Lord,
For ever faithful to his word;
By sweet experience now. I prove
His mercy, his unchanging love.*



APRIL 3

Follow me.
John 21:19

THAT IS, COPY MY example, imitate my conduct, walk as I walked. Jesus is God's living law – the precepts of the gospel walking before us and speaking to us. But if I follow Christ, where will he lead me? He will lead you to Jordan to confess him, to the wilderness to be tempted with him and to the house of prayer to worship with his people. He will lead you to the sick, the poor, and the sorrowful, to labour for him, and to secret retirement to hold fellowship with him. He will lead you to the world to be persecuted for his sake, and to the cross to crucify the old man with his deeds. And, finally, he will lead you to glory, to be forever with him. If you follow Jesus, carnal professors will not enjoy your company. The world will not admire your course, nor will Satan allow you to go on quietly. If you would follow Jesus, your heart must be renewed, your corruptions must be subdued, your motives must be purified, and you must become a new creature. If Jesus lead you, you will be safe. If you catch his spirit, copy his life, and keep him in sight, you will be peaceful, useful, and happy. O! to imitate Jesus to-day, in his lovely spirit, holy life, and useful death!

Lord, I would thy servant be.
Give me power to follow thee,
Power to die the death divine,
Power to live forever thine.



APRIL 4

I wait for the Lord.

Psalm 130:5

THIS IS A BLESSED posture, but it is often a trying one. Every Christian has to wait, and waiting is for his good. “*It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord,*” (Lam. 3:26). We are kept waiting to try us: Are we sincere? Are we in earnest? Do we value the blessing? We are kept waiting to stir us up: We are apt to become formal, to settle on our lees, and to sink into lukewarmness. Then comes a trial, and this sends us to the Lord. He does not appear. We go again. We get no answer. We must wait. This rouses our energies, reproves our folly, and makes us more decided and determined. It is to teach us our dependence. We are apt to forget, or lose sight of this. We sink into self. We get conceited or vain. Then comes something which shows us that we cannot do without the Lord. We go to him. He seems to turn a deaf ear to us. We go again. We must wait. This humbles us, and brings us into our proper place. Beloved, is there any particular blessing which you need? Have you asked it of God? Does he delay to give it? Visit for him. He will appear. His time is the best. Wait patiently.

For God, I look; with strong desires.

To God my ardent soul aspires;

And hope, still waiting for the Lord.

Rests on the promise of his word.



APRIL 5

They shall look on him whom they pierced.

John 19:37

BLESSED OBJECT! Transforming sight! Jesus was pierced by his foes. He was pierced *for* us. He was pierced *by* us. His persecutors were our representatives. We pierced him by them. Our sins were the procuring cause of all his sufferings. As he died to atone for our sins, so it is only by a faith's view of him, as the "*pierced one*," that we can be delivered from guilt, freed from condemnation, enjoy peace, or walk comfortably with God. Reader, did you ever look on Jesus as pierced by *your* sins? Did you ever mourn for him, and grieve that *you* had caused him such pain? If so, you felt a hatred to sin, a desire to be entirely freed from it, and to be entirely devoted to him, who died for you, and rose again. O to look to Jesus today! O to see him by faith hanging on the accursed tree! O to be melted down in love and grief before him, and to be filled with self loathing, self abhorrence and deep humility. Fellowship with Christ in his sufferings will embitter sin, and wean from the world.

*My sins have done the deed.
I have torn his sacred flesh,
And made him often bleed,
And crucified afresh;
The man I pierced, 'tis he, 'tis he,
I look, I feel him die – for me.*



APRIL 6

Whom I serve.

Acts 27:23

EVERY SAINT IS the Lord's servant. He who does not serve Christ is not saved by him, for he saves his people that they may serve him without fear. Every one who serves God aright, worships and adores him. And every one who worships God aright serves him. Paul served God with all humility of mind, with courage and fortitude, with submission and perseverance, and with delight and love. In serving God he was happy, he was safe, he was sure of a supply, and he was useful. Are you serving God? Have you believed his gospel, embraced the Saviour and trusted his promise? This lies at the root of all acceptable service. If you serve God, you may expect great things from him. He will protect you in danger. He will direct you in difficulty. He will supply you in trying times. He will meet with you in the field of labour, and hold sweet and hallowed fellowship with you. Jesus says, "*If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him shall my Father honour,*" (John 12:26).

*My gracious Lord, I own thy right
To every service I can pay;
And call it my supreme delight
To hear thy dictates and obey:
I love to aid thy noble cause,
And yield obedience to thy laws.*



APRIL 7

They which are of faith.
Galatians 3:7

SOME ARE OF works, and are labouring at the law to procure salvation, and render themselves acceptable to God. But all such labour is in vain. Some are of faith, or are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Such are the children of Abraham, and are blessed with him. They which are of faith, look to Jesus for salvation, fly to him for refuge from the wrath to come, submit to God's righteousness, take hold of God's covenant, receive Christ as God's gift, open the heart and admit him to fellowship and communion, affectionately embrace the promises, feed upon Christ daily as the bread of life, trust in the Lord with all the heart, and wait patiently for God in all trials and troubles. Beloved, are you of faith? If so you have discovered your own poverty and emptiness, and the Saviour's adaptation and glorious fulness. You acquiesce in God's method of salvation, and consent to every part of his gracious covenant. Is it so? If not, consider your absolute need of Christ, and that his arms and heart are open to receive you at this moment.

*Thee, Jesus full of truth and grace,
My God, my Saviour, I embrace,
To all believers given,
My Prophet, Priest, and King receive,
And in thy name alone believe
For pardon, grace, and heaven.*



APRIL 8

Keep me, O Lord.

Psalm 140:4

THE LORD'S PEOPLE are taught by the Holy Spirit to pray for what they need. And they find, in perusing God's word, that he has promised just what they pray for. Every believer prays to be kept. This is one of his daily prayers. He feels that he needs keeping. He is weak. His foes are strong. He is inexperienced, and his dangers are numerous and great. He cannot proceed safely, or comfortably, or honourably, but as he is kept. He desires to be kept from *sin* that he may not dishonour God; from *self* that he may not injure those about him; from *Satan* that he may not be overcome by him; and from the *world* that he may not be ensnared and entangled by it. None can keep him but the Lord. No one else has the power, the patience, the wisdom, or the love, that is necessary. To God therefore he cries. Before the throne of grace he often appears. Fervently he prays to be kept near to God in holy fellowship, active for God in his day and generation, and aiming at the glory of God as the grand end of his existence. Beloved, we shall need keeping today, Satan is now studying us. Our own hearts are false and fickle.

*Keep me, O Lord, from every sin,
From every dangerous foe;
Preserve my course and conscience clean,
While I remain below.*



APRIL 9

The Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Matthew 8:20

WHAT AN AMAZING fact! Here is the Creator of all things without a home. The preserver of the universe without a habitation. The King eternal, immortal, more destitute than the birds of the air, or the beasts of the wood. “*Every man went unto his own home, Jesus went into the mount of Olives,*” (John 7:53-8:1). Everyone had a home but him. What brought him into these circumstances? Love! Love of whom? Sinners, the vilest, the basest of mankind! Why did he stoop so low? To raise and fix us high. He became poor, that we might become rich. He was without a cottage on earth, that we might possess a mansion in heaven. He was destitute in time, that we might possess a glorious portion in eternity. O my soul, admire, adore, and praise, the wondrous condescension of thy beloved Lord! Never complain of want, or be alarmed at poverty, for Jesus has sanctified poverty and will be a sufficient portion in every time of need. However low we may be brought by providence, we never can be brought lower than Jesus has been before us. O Jesus, how wondrous thy love!

*Away this soft luxurious pride!
A pilgrim rather let me rove;
Poor with the Son of man abide,
And have no comfort, but his love!*



APRIL 10

The hope set before us.

Hebrews 6:18

AS SINNERS WE have no good hope, we can have none without the gospel. But in the gospel, eternal life is set before us as God's free gift to sinners, through Jesus Christ our Lord. This is the hope set before us. This hope is founded on Christ – no life but through him, no enjoyment of life but by union to him. “*God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; but he that hath not the Son of God hath not life,*” (1 John 5:11-12) “*but the wrath of God abideth on him,*” (John 3:36). The gospel sets eternal life before us as sinners, and says, “*lay hold on eternal life,*” (1 Tim. 6:12). It lifts up a crucified Saviour, and says, “*Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life,*” (John 3:16). When first convinced of sin, we feel that we must perish. When directed to Jesus, hope springs up. And this hope is to the soul what the anchor is to the vessel: it keeps it from foundering or being wrecked in the storm. This hope sweetens our trials, cheers us in the gloomy and dark day, and attracts us onward when a thousand things combine to perplex and distress us.

*Thrice happy he whose hopes depend
On Jesus and his blood alone:
The soul that trusts in such a Friend,
Shall ne'er by foes be overthrown:
Eternal life to him is given,
The glories and the joys of heaven.*



APRIL 11

Blessed are the poor in spirit.
Matthew 5:3

WE ARE ALL spiritually poor, but all are not poor in spirit. To be poor in spirit is to be stripped of pride, to be humbled before God, to see and feel our numerous needs, and to yield without objection or hesitation to God's plan of saving and relieving the poor. Man's heart by nature is full of pride. It strives with its Maker, refuses to yield to God's method, and rejects the invitations of redeeming love. The poor in spirit visit God's throne, hope in God's mercy, gladly embrace God's unspeakable gift, yield to God's requirements, and bow with submission to the dispensations of God's providence. The poor in spirit are blessed with faith in Christ, acceptance with God, a title to the promises, the teachings of the Holy Spirit, and a prospect of everlasting glory. The poor in spirit are often poor in circumstances too, but they look to the Lord, trust in his word, expect his interference, and taste his love in temporals as well as in spirituals. The poor in spirit gladly receive Christ, and live upon him as their everlasting portion. O to be poor in spirit!

*Jesus, on me the want bestow,
Which all who feel shall surely know
Their sins on earth forgiven;
Give me to prove the kingdom mine,
And taste in holiness divine,
The happiness of heaven.*



APRIL 12

Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

Isaiah 38:17

SATAN BRINGS OUR sins before God's face, and accuses us with them. But when we confess them, and plead the blood of Jesus for the pardon of them, the Lord casts them behind his back. He will not look upon them to charge us with them, or to punish us for them. He throws them completely out of sight, and blots them out forever. Sweet view of pardon this! Our sins are numerous, aggravated and great. They come up before God as swift witnesses against us. He sends his Holy Spirit to convince us of them, and humble us on account of them. We acknowledge and deplore them, and then the whole of our sins which lay immediately under his eye are cast behind his back where no foe can find them. But when God has cast our sins behind his back, we place them before our face, and so repent of them, and set our hearts against them. When Nathan said unto David, "*The Lord hath put away thy sin*" (2 Sam. 12:13), David said, "*My sin is ever before me,*" (Ps. 51:3). When God will not condemn us, we condemn ourselves. And when he has fully forgiven us, we cannot forgive ourselves.

*Pardon, Lord, each foul transgression,
Through my Saviour's dying blood;
Hear my frank and full confession,
Let me feel the peace of God.*



APRIL 13

Your life is hid with Christ in God.

Colossians 3:3

UR GOD IS our refuge. Christ is in the Father, and the Father is in Christ. Our life is in Christ, and Christ is our life. He represented us. He died for us. He sent his Holy Spirit into our hearts, as the Spirit of life. He lives for us in heaven. We are identified with him, and our interests are identified with his. The union between Christ and us is the closest possible. We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. We who are joined to the Lord are one spirit with him. As the husband and wife are no more twain but one flesh, so Christ and his people are no more two but one. He is the Head. We are his members. He thinks for us, cares for us, provides for us, listens to us, watches over us and glories in us. He has eternally secured us, by hiding our life with himself in the Father. O glorious, soul supporting truth! May I ever look upon myself *as one with Christ*, and endeavour to live and walk just as Jesus did. My life is a treasure, and Jesus, to preserve it, hides it with himself in God, as in a treasure house.

*Our real life with Christ conceal'd
Deep in the Father's bosom lies,
And glorious as our Head reveal'd,
We soon shall meet him in the skies:
He comes to bring the crowning grace,
And near himself his people place.*



APRIL 14

The Lord helped me.
Psalm 118:13

IF HE HAD NOT, what would have become of me? Can we not bear this testimony this morning, "*The Lord helped me.*" Yes, before I knew his name, before I sought his face, before I ventured my soul on the finished work of his beloved Son, he helped me. But since that happy period, in how many instances, in how many ways, by what a variety of instruments, has he helped me. If he had not, conviction would have driven me to despair. Satan would have led me captive at his will. Inbred lusts would have gained the ascendancy. My circumstances would have overbalanced me. And I would this day have been a disgrace to religion, or have been shut up in hell. But he said, "*I will help thee.*" And I have ever found him "*a very present help in trouble,*" (Ps 46:1). Here I lift up my Ebenezer, and, to the honour of his faithful love, say, "*Hitherto the Lord hath helped me,*" (1 Sam. 7:12). Surely then I may with confidence conclude, that he will help me in time to come, and exclaim as David did, "*Behold, God is mine helper: The Lord is with them that uphold my soul,*" (Ps. 54:4). Or rejoice and say, "*Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice,*" (Ps. 63:7).

*My help is in the Lord;
In danger he is near:
He wears an all-victorious sword,
And will for me appear.*



APRIL 15

I love the Lord.

Psalm 116:1

FRIEND, CAN YOU use this language? Do you really love the Lord? If so, *why* do you love him? The Psalmist says, “*Because he hath heard my voice, and my supplications,*” (Ps. 116:1). The apostle says, “*We love him, because he first loved us,*” (1 John 4:19). If we really love God, it is because we know him. It is because we have applied to him, and have proved him gracious. It is because he has shed abroad his love in our hearts, and we know that he has loved us. If you cannot say positively that you love him, then do you *desire* to love him? If so, it is a proof that the Spirit has been working in your heart, for there was a time when you had no love to God, nor even a desire to love him. No one desires to love God, until the enmity of the heart is subdued, the beauty of the divine character is perceived, and the Holy Spirit has renewed the mind. Enmity cannot love, nor desire to love; but “*the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can be,*” (Rom. 8:7). If you cannot say, “I love the Lord,” can you not say:

*I long to love my bleeding Lord,
And listening for the gracious word,
Still at thy cross I bow;
Thyself as crucified display,
And thus constrain my soul to say,
Thou know’st I love thee now.*



APRIL 16

He preserveth the souls of his saints.

Psalm 97:10

EVERY CREATURE NEEDS the preserving care of its Creator, no power short of omnipotence is sufficient to preserve us. Our weakness is so great, our corruptions are so strong, our foes are so crafty, and our dangers are so numerous, that we are never safe except the Lord keeps us. We are never in such great danger, as when we fancy ourselves quite safe. “*Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall,*” (1 Cor. 10:12). But the Lord has promised to preserve his saints. They are separated from the world, set apart for his glory, and inhabited by the Holy Spirit. They feel that they need preservation, they exercise faith in God’s promise, and plead earnestly for it at the throne of divine grace. And the Lord will preserve them from the designs of their foes, from the natural tendency of inward sin, and from apostatizing from his own cause. He preserveth them by the means which are naturally likely to injure them. By painful afflictions, by losses and crosses, by trials and temptations, by reproaches and persecutions, by the conflict within, and by opposition without, “*he preserveth the souls of his saints.*”

His grace shall on his saints descend,

And keep their souls secure;

From earth and hell his arm defend,

And make their victory sure.



APRIL 17

They are not of the world.

John 17:16

THE WORLD AND the church are essentially distinct, and must remain so. Believers and unbelievers can have no real fellowship. They differ in *nature* – the one is spiritual, the other carnal. They differ in the *motives* which rule their conduct – the one is influenced by the love of Christ, the other by self. They differ in the *grand object of pursuit* – the one seeks God’s glory, the other the gratification of his lusts. Christians are chosen out of the world. They are redeemed from among men. They are translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. They are consecrated to be the temples of the Holy Ghost, and are brought into vital union with the Lord Jesus Christ. They are not of the world, and therefore must not expect to be loved by the world. But they must come out and be separate. And when they do so, God promises to receive them and to be a Father to them, treating them as his sons and daughters. Beloved, are you of the world? Do you love the world? If so, the love of the Father is not in you. If we are of the world, we must share the world’s doom. If separate from it, we shall be raised above it.

*Lord, from this world call off my love,
Set my affections right;
Bid me aspire to joys above.
And walk no more by sight.*



APRIL 18

*The Lord is good.
Jeremiah 33:11*

CREATURES ARE comparatively good, but God is absolutely good. In this sense, “*There is none good but one, that is God,*” (Matt. 19:17). He is *naturally* good, for his nature is the fountain of all goodness. He is *infinitely* good, for there is no limit to his goodness. He is *eternally* good, for his goodness will never terminate. He is so good, that he cannot be better. His goodness is immutable, and therefore he will never be less good than he is at this moment. He is good to all his creatures, and his mercy is over all his works. But he is especially good to some. His goodness appears in his works, shines forth in his providence, but reigns in all its glory in the salvation of sinners. Here all the rays of his goodness meet and centre. In the gift of his dear Son, in the promise of his Holy Spirit, in sending his glorious gospel, we see that the Lord is good. But in the conversion of our souls, in the pardon of our sins, in the justification of our persons, in sending the Spirit of adoption into our hearts, and in giving us eternal life, we *feel* his goodness and rejoice in it. Yes, the Lord is good or he would not have borne with us, nor would he have pardoned us until now.

*Thy goodness, Lord, our souls confess,
Thy goodness we adore;
A spring whose blessings cannot fail,
A sea without a shore.*



APRIL 19

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 16:31

CHRIST IS THE immediate object of faith, and believing on him brings salvation to the soul. He is the Son of God, the sent of God, the servant of God, and as such he became the Saviour of lost and ruined sinners. He did all that law and justice could require in order that they may be pardoned, justified, sanctified, accepted of God, and glorified. And now every one that receives God's testimony concerning him, looks by faith to him, and places confidence in him, is saved. Neither is there salvation in any other, or in any other way. Nothing can cleanse from sin but his blood. Nothing can justify before God but his righteousness. Nothing can sanctify us but his Spirit. And nothing can bring these things into our possession but faith. He that believeth hath everlasting life. By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Reader, do you desire to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou shalt be saved.*

*Author of our sure salvation,
Author of our faith thou art,
Call me out of condemnation.
Sprinkle with thy blood my heart:
Give the faith that moves the mountain;
Pardon'd, sav'd, by faith alone,
Lead me through the open fountain
To thine everlasting throne.*



APRIL 20

*O Lord, thou art my God.
Isaiah 25:6*

THIS IS THE GREATEST thing any one can say. If the Lord is our God, we ought to be happy. We must be safe. If he is our God *now*, he was not *once*. There was a time when we did not know him, or love him, or believe him, or obey him, or hold any fellowship with him. We said to God, “*Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.*” (Job 21:14). If Jehovah is our God, it is entirely of grace. He engaged in covenant to be so. He promised to bring us into this glorious relationship. He sent his Holy Spirit into our hearts, in fulfilment of his promise. That blessed Spirit convinced us of sin, led us to Jesus, unfolded the promises, applied the atonement, and taught us to say: ‘Abba, my Father and my God.’ If Jehovah is our God, we know his character, believe his word, love his perfections, walk in his fear, espouse his cause, do his will and look for glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. If Jehovah is our God, his will is our law, his resources are our fortune, his wisdom is our guide, his power is our guard, his promises are our comfort, his Son is our advocate, his Spirit is our monitor, his providence is our protection, and his heaven is our home.

*O Lord my God, in thee I trust,
And on thy arm alone rely,
For thou art faithful, wise, and just,
And wilt my every need supply.*



APRIL 21

They shall all be taught of God.
John 6:45

GOD, AS A FATHER, engages for the education of all his children. Yea, he engages to teach them himself. This being the case they shall become scholars. The Lord does not teach us everything we are capable of learning, but all that is necessary to fit us for our stations and employments. He teaches us to know and loathe ourselves, to know and love the Saviour, to know and seek deliverance from the law, to know and embrace the gospel, to know and overcome the world, to know and resist Satan steadfast in the faith. Unless we know ourselves, we shall never know Christ. Unless we know Christ, we shall never be delivered from the law. Unless we are delivered from the law we shall not cordially embrace the gospel. Unless we embrace the gospel, we shall never successfully resist Satan, or overcome the world. It is an unspeakable mercy to be taught of God, for what God teaches us we know, we are at a point about, so that no one can dispute us out of it. Beloved, are you taught of God? All the children are, and if you are not taught of God, where is your proof that you are a child of God? Be this our daily prayer, "Lord teach me."

*My God, be my teacher, and give me to know,
Thy glorious salvation while dwelling below,
Unfold to my view the sweet truths of thy word,
As they meet and unite in Christ Jesus my Lord.*



APRIL 22

*The Lord is thy keeper.
Psalm 121:5*

THE LORD'S PEOPLE are the objects of his constant care. They feel that they cannot keep themselves. They realise that they are exposed to many foes and dangers. They frequently put themselves into his hands for protection. They daily call upon him to be their keeper and guide. And they busily employ themselves in obeying his commands, and doing his will. The Lord is engaged to keep all such, and he is an omnipotent keeper. He will keep them at all times, and in all places. But he will especially keep them in times of peculiar danger, in seasons of heavy trouble, and in the midst of many fears. He will not keep them from trouble, but he will keep them from sinking under it. He will not keep them from being exercised with inward corruption, but he will keep them from being overcome by it. He will not keep them from temptations to apostasy and other sins, but he will keep them from going back into the world. In keeping them, he will employ his mighty angels, his special providence, his sacred word, and the operation of his Holy Spirit. He will keep them because he loves them, and because he can glorify himself by doing so.

*Jesus is my sure defence,
I all his care shall prove,
Kept by his watchful providence,
And ever-waking love.*



APRIL 23

None of us liveth to himself.

Romans 14:8

IS THIS TRUE OF professors in general? Is it true of you? Are you living to amass a fortune, to enjoy pleasure, or to acquire a worldly reputation? Or, are you living as a child of God, as a servant of Christ, as a traveller to eternity? If we live unto ourselves we are not Christians, whatever profession we may make. For if we are Christians we shall live to promote the cause of Christ, to advance the kingdom of God, and to glorify God both in our bodies and spirits which are God's. If we are Christians, we shall live in some degree as Christ lived, and he lived not unto himself. What shall we live *for* today? What object have we in view? What is our rule? Is it God's word? Who is our guide? Is it the Holy Spirit? What is our end? Is it the increase of our sanctification, the entire consecration of our powers, and the advancement of the Redeemer's cause? Many, too many, make self the end in all they do. Their religious actions as well as their civil, are directed to the justification of self. Lord, search us, and try us, see if we are living to ourselves.

*Long as I live beneath,
To thee, O, let me live!
To thee my every breath,
In thanks and blessings give;
Me to thine image now restore,
And I shall praise thee evermore.*



APRIL 24

The Lord is righteous.

Psalm 129:4

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ONE of the essential perfections of God. He cannot possibly do wrong. He never injured one of his creatures yet, and he never will, yea, he never can. “*The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works,*” (Ps. 145:17). Righteousness reigns in heaven – every creature there is righteous, and every one is there on the principle of righteousness. Righteousness reigns in hell – there is no injustice there. No one is there who ought not to be. No one suffers more than he justly should. Not one can say, “I have not deserved this.” Justice alone punishes, and punishes justly. Righteousness reigns in salvation – every sinner who believes in Jesus is justly saved. No one is injured by his salvation. Every perfection of God has its claim. Every principle of government is honoured. Every demand of the law is met. God is just, while he justifies the ungodly who believe in Jesus. Yea, he is never more just than then, for he does not justify without a righteousness. The perfect work of Jesus is placed to his account, and it becomes his by gift. For him it was wrought, to him it is imputed, as his it is reckoned by a righteous God.

*Right are the dealings of the Lord,
And all his saints shall prove,
Whether he smiles, or frowns, or hide;
All is in perfect love.*



APRIL 25

*The love of the truth.
2 Thessalonians 2:10*

THE TRUTH OF GOD is peculiarly lovely, as it reflects the image of God, and makes known his mind. It is possible to receive the truth, and not receive the truth in love. It may be forced upon us by the power of argument or conviction, and not be cordially embraced as an object delightful and lovely. Here the apostasy began. This lies at the root of all the errors and superstitions of the papacy: *“They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.”* The gospel of Christ contains all saving truth, and if we see that gospel in the light of the Holy Spirit, we shall see that it is lovely truth. But no man really loves God’s truth, until he is *“born of the Spirit”* (John 3:6), for *“the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,”* (1 Cor. 2:14). Beloved, have you received *the truth*? Have you received the truth *lovingly*? Do you really *love the truth, the whole truth*? Or, are you prejudiced against any part of it, or are you afraid of it? If so, pray fervently unto God to give you to see truth in all its beauty and glory, and then you will love it.

*O that we might the Spirit find.
By Jesus’ grace bestow’d,
Which leads us into all the mind,
And all the things of God.*



APRIL 26

*We trust in the Lord our God.
Isaiah 36:7*

HAPPY IS THE MAN that can honestly say this. He is taught by the Holy Spirit. He has learnt to know God. He puts his knowledge to a practical account. He is safe from fear of evil. The Lord has revealed himself as the sole object of trust. He has given us *such* a revelation as is calculated to awaken confidence. His promises are the warrant of our trust. We may safely trust him to do all he has said he will do, and to give all he has promised to bestow. But it is not easy to trust an invisible object, especially in deep trials and under sore temptations. Satan will do all he can to prevent our trusting him, and to shake our confidence in him. He will throw doubts upon our evidences, question our title to the promises, and suggest that it is presumption to trust a naked promise, or rely on the Lord in the absence of warm and comfortable feelings. Providence will be sure to put our trust to the test, and we generally find, in the hour of trial, that our confidence is much more feeble, and more easily shaken, than we had supposed. If we would trust in the Lord with all our heart, we must get a thorough knowledge of his covenant and character.

*Sufficient ground the promise yields,
On which a worm may rest his hope;
And he who on the promise builds,
May give his confidence full scope.*



APRIL 27

All mine are thine.

John 17:10

JESUS CLAIMS ALL that the Father possesses, hence he says, “*All things that the Father hath, are mine.*” Sweet view of Jesus this! If he possesses all things, then he possesses the very blessings which we need this morning. If he possesses them, he is willing to bestow them. And if he is willing to bestow them, we may confidently ask and expect them. But here he may refer more particularly to his people, and if so, he says, “All who are mine by redemption are thine by eternal election. All my disciples are thy friends. All my sheep are thy property.” Beloved, the Father’s children are the Son’s church. The Father’s beloved ones are the Son’s bride. The Father’s property is the Son’s portion. The Creator gave them to the Redeemer, the Redeemer passes them to the Sanctifier, and the Sanctifier passes them back through the Redeemer to the Creator. The whole of the persons in the Godhead have an equal interest in the saints, and this being the case, they are safe, and should be happy. The Son will not part with those whom the Father gave him, nor will the Father allow any one to pluck out of his hands those who are redeemed by his own Son.

*Aspire my soul to glorious deeds,
The Captain of salvation leads;
March on, nor fear to win the day,
Though death and hell obstruct the way.*



APRIL 28

The days of thy mourning shall be ended.

Isaiah 60:20

HERE WE HAVE MUCH to cause us to mourn – the state of the world and of the church; many things in the domestic circle; the deep depravity of our own hearts; our evil tempers and passions; the temptations and fiery darts of Satan; the losses, crosses, and privations which we are called upon to endure; the hiding of the Lord's face; the want of brighter evidences; weakness and pain of body. All these things conspire to make us sorrowful, so that with David we sometimes say, "*I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long,*" (Ps. 38:6). But there is a bright prospect before us – our mourning season will soon be over. If we now sow in tears, we shall reap in joy. The days of our mourning will soon be ended. Then we shall have light without darkness, holiness without sin, joy without sorrow, service without toil, the eternal sunshine of our Father's love without one intervening cloud. We shall soon shed the last tear, heave the last sigh, utter the last groan, express the last wish, and feel the last pain, and then all beyond will be holiness, happiness, and perfect blessedness.

A few more days; or months, or years,

In this dark desert to complain;

A few more sighs, a few more tears,

And we shall bid adieu to pain.



APRIL 29

I am the vine, ye are the branches.

John 15:5

JESUS OFTEN USES nature to illustrate grace. Here he compares himself to the vine and his people to the branches, thus setting forth the union that exists between them. The whole tree depends on one root, and the whole church depends on the Lord Jesus. All saving benefits flow to every saint from him. He possesses and communicates all that is necessary to quicken, support, enlighten, and strengthen us. From him we receive all our wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, by which we are distinguished from the world. The root constantly supplies the branches, and so does the Lord Jesus constantly supply his saints. Beloved, if we are true believers we are one with Christ, as the branch is one with the tree. We receive from Christ as the branch receives from the root, and we are like Christ as the branch is like the tree. United to Christ, we partake of his nature, receive from his fulness, depend on his faithfulness, and bring forth fruit to his praise. Without union to Christ, there is no good fruit. And without good fruit, there is no union to Christ. Let us therefore examine this morning: Are we one with Christ?

*Is he a vine? His heavenly root
Supplies the boughs with life and fruit;
O let a lasting union join
My soul to Christ the living vine!*



APRIL 30

We are saved by hope.
Romans 8:24

GRACE SAVES US, as it provides a Saviour. Faith saves us, as it receives that Saviour. And hope saves us, as it preserves us from despondency or desperation. Hope is holy expectation. It springs from grace. It is produced by the Holy Spirit. It rests on God's veracity. It fixes on distant and invisible blessings. We hope in God, for he is gracious. We hope in God's word, for it is true. We hope for the greatest blessings, for they are promised. We hope when all around us is gloomy, and all within us is discouraging. And we do so because God remains faithful – he cannot deny himself. Whoever possesses a good hope through grace will find it bearing him up above the billows, and urging him forward through all difficulties and oppositions. Who of us, in looking back, has not reason to say, "*I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of God in the land of the living?*" (Ps. 27:3). We were saved by hope, and the hope which saved us in times past will save us in all the future. Let us therefore encourage hope, reprove slavish fear, and say, "*I will hope continually, and yet praise thee more and more,*" (Ps. 71:14).

*Billows of disappointment roll,
Along the restless tide of time;
But gospel hope bears up the soul.
Till an eternal calm shall shine.*



MAY 1

Thou art a gracious and merciful God.

Nehemiah 9:31

SWEET VIEW OF the character of our God, and that view which is kept constantly before us in his blessed word. We are so sinful, that if God were not gracious, we could have no hope. And we are so miserable, that if God were not merciful, we could never be happy. But our God is infinitely gracious, he is always gracious, and he delights to glorify his grace in the experience of his poor sinful creatures. Grace reigns. It reigns through the righteousness of Jesus. And as a sovereign it dispenses the richest blessings, and dispenses them freely. If God is gracious, we need not look for anything in ourselves to recommend us. We may go to him just as we are, and he will receive us. If God is merciful we ought not to doubt or give way to gloomy fears, for he will display his mercy most in the miserable and undeserving. In going to the throne today, let us keep this before our minds, our God is a gracious God, he looks for nothing in the sinner, but freely bestows the choicest blessings. Our God is merciful, and he will take advantage of our misery to glorify himself.

*Jehovah is gracious, and merciful too,
He pardons our sins, and he pities our woe
His Son to redeem us, he graciously gave;
And sends us his Spirit, determined to save.*



MAY 2

Beside me there is no Saviour.

Isaiah 43:11

THUS JEHOVAH SPEAKS. It requires a God to save a sinner, and it is the greatest work that God has ever done. If the Saviour was not divine, he would not meet our case. Our sins demanded an infinite atonement. Our situation required an omnipotent Deliverer. Others may help, but only God can save. We are therefore shut up to the Lord Jesus, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, by which we can be saved. It is in vain that we look for another. The case of those who reject him is desperate. Let us therefore look to him alone. Let us seek salvation from him who can deliver us. He can not only deliver us from the guilt of sin, but from the power of it. He will not only save us from condemnation, but from the cause of it. He will not only save us from spiritual evils, but from temporal ones too. No one can deliver us at all times, in all places, and from all evils. But the Lord – he can. The Lord therefore must be our trust and our shield. To him we must repair in trouble, and to him we must cry in danger.

*Jesus alone has power to save,
A sinner vile and lost like me,
His blood he for my ransom gave,
His power divine has set me free:
To him I look, in him I trust,
His word and cross are all my boast.*



MAY 3

This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.

1 John 5:3

ALL ACCEPTABLE OBEDIENCE flows from love, and true love always leads to obedience. If we really love God, we shall seek to glorify him, and herein is Jehovah glorified that we bring forth much fruit. It is not the loudest talkers, but the holiest walkers, that brings most glory to God. The precepts are given us to be obeyed, as the promises are to be trusted. And no one can rightly trust in the promises, who does not labour to obey the precepts. Jesus said to some of old, “*Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say unto you?*” (Luke 6:46). And pointing out who were to be viewed as his nearest and dearest relations, he said, “*Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother,*” (Matt. 12:50). Precious Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with thy love, conform our lives to thy example, and let us prove the sincerity of our love by the uniformity of our obedience! Let us not rest in impressions, or be satisfied with enjoyments, without obedience to thy commandments. Spirit of God, make us thoroughly holy, in body, soul, and spirit!

*Th’ effect must from the cause proceed,
And thy dear genuine children prove;
In truth, reality, and deed,
Obedience is but actual love.*



MAY 4

He shall come unto us as the rain.

Hosea 6:3

THE LORD'S CARE of his people is incessant. No parent was ever so careful of an only child. No gardener was ever so attentive to a delicate and favourite plant. He visits, he watches, he supplies. He studies our wants, provides for them, and imparts what he provides. He says, "*I will water it every moment,*" (Isa. 27:3). Then the supply will be constant, in summer and winter it shall be. It will be suitable, like refreshing moisture to a thirsty plant. It will be in small portions, as the gently falling rain. It will be imperceptible, like the morning dews. It is by these supplies that our graces are kept alive, that our spiritual desires are sustained, that apostasy is prevented, and that the good work is carried on in our hearts. If the Lord should cease to water, we should soon wither and die. Our dependence on him is absolute. Our obligations to his love are infinite. Let us not fancy that we are not watered, because we do not sensibly feel it. The constancy of the communication prevents anything like novelty. The gentle gradual manner in which we are supplied, prevents our feeling any powerful impression.

*Each moment water'd by thy care,
And fenc'd with power divine,
Fruit to eternal life shall bear,
The feeblest branch of thine.*



MAY 5

I pray for them.
John 17:9

THE SAVIOUR'S INTEREST in his people is special and peculiar. They were given him by his Father to be his care, charge and reward. He benefits others, but he rejoices over them to do them good with his whole heart, and with his whole soul. He was now pleading with his Father as the great Intercessor, and he points to them and distinguishes them from the world, and says, "I pray *for them*, I pray not for the world." He was their great High Priest, and their names were on his breast-plate. He was their Substitute, and their salvation was intrusted to his hands. He was their Surety, and he was pledged to bring them home, and set them before his Father's face forever. He was their Shepherd, and they were the sheep of his pasture. Beloved, Jesus has prayed for us, he has begged his Father to keep us from the evil of the world, to sanctify us through the truth, and to bring us into the closest possible union with each other and with himself. His prayers are prevalent, they are on record, they wait for us, and they will be answered in our blessed experience. Whoever forgets us, Jesus still loves and pleads for us.

*The Father in his love will hear,
And grant our Lord's request:
The souls for whom he pray'd, shall be
With full salvation blest.*



MAY 6

The Lord is my defence.

Psalm 94:22

SIN HAS STRIPPED us of our righteousness, reduced us to a state of weakness, and left us exposed to innumerable dangers. We are never safe for one moment if left to ourselves. All the hosts of hell are opposed to us and in league against us. They influence evil men, and sometimes make use of even good men to injure us. Afflictions crowd our path, and every pore of the body, and every power of the mind, may prove the inlet to something injurious. Our dangers are numerous and great. Our folly and weakness are even greater. We need constant guidance and protection. Where shall we find one able and willing to befriend us? To whom shall we look for succour and safety? Happy is the man who can say, "*The Lord is my defence.*" But this is the privilege of every Christian. God is engaged for him. God is ever with him. God will never leave him. If God is our defence we need not fear, for he is omnipotent. We should not yield to doubt, for he is omnipresent. We should rejoice and be glad, for protection is certain. If in trouble, he will keep us from sinking. If exposed to the fiercest temptation, he will preserve us from ruin.

*On God alone will I depend,
His promises are true and sure:
He will my feeble soul defend,
And make me to the end endure.*



MAY 7

Ye are not under the law.

Galatians 5:18

IF YE WERE, it would not only require perfect obedience, but it would pronounce a sentence of condemnation for the least sin. If we were under the law, we must use David's prayer, "*Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified,*" (Ps. 143:2). But if we believe in Jesus, if we are led by the Spirit of God, we are not under the law. We are under grace. God is our Father. The gospel proclaims us just. Jesus died in our stead, and now pleads for us before his Father's throne. All our sins are expiated and forgiven. Our persons and services are accepted, though imperfect and polluted, in the perfume of our Redeemer's merits, and the law has no claim upon us. Jesus, for us, gave it all that it required. Jesus endured for us, all that it threatened. We now love it and observe it, but are under no alarm from it. It is a simple rule of conduct, just telling us what God loves, and what he hates; what God requires, and what he prohibits. Blessed be God for delivering us from the law, giving us peace with himself, and enabling us to rejoice in hope of his glory.

*My soul! no more attempt to draw
Thy life and comfort from the law:
Fly to the hope the Gospel gives;
The man that trusts the promise lives!*



MAY 8

They forgot his works.

Psalm 78:11

EVERY WORK OF God is expressive of his wisdom, holiness, or love. He works for his people. He wrought for Israel of old, he wrought wondrously. They were affected, delighted, and filled with joy. But when they came out of trouble they were ungrateful. They soon forgot his works. That is a bad memory which will retain the sense of any little offence received from men, or privation permitted by God, and yet forget his great and gracious promises, his wise and wonderful works. God's works should be observed, studied and remembered. They are all worthy of a God. His perfections are stamped upon them. He makes himself known by them. It is ungrateful to forget, and it is as injurious as it is ungrateful. Let us remember what God has done for us in providence – how he has led us, fed us, preserved us, and brought us thus far on our journey. Let us remember what he has done for us in grace, how he gave his Son to be our ransom, his Spirit to be our sanctifier, and his grace to change our hearts. Let us remember the past, to strengthen our confidence in the future, and to consecrate us entirely to his service.

*O Lord, I'll treasure in my soul
The memory of thy love,
And thy dear name shall still to me
A grateful odour prove.*



MAY 9

A thorn in the flesh.

2 Corinthians 12:6

WE ARE NOT informed what was Paul's peculiar trial at this time, and no doubt there is mercy in the concealment. Most Christians have some thorn, which they cannot extract, which is a daily trial, and which wounds deeply and painfully. If God sends us a thorn, no one but God can remove it. But if God sends it, it is sent in love. It is to prevent some evil, or to prepare us for some good. If it makes us pray, if it drives us to the Lord's throne, if it humbles us in the dust, if it endears the promises, if it makes us long for heaven, if it teaches us deeply our need of Christ, it is a blessing. Better be wounded by the sharpest thorn, than be allowed in ease, health and prosperity, to wander from the Lord. Beloved have you some painful thorn in the flesh, carry it to the Lord. It may be a sickly body, a trying family, a cross providence, or some peculiar temptation. But whatever it may be, take it to Jesus, and you will find his grace sufficient for you, and his strength made perfect in your weakness. He only pains us for our good.

*Lord, if consistent with thy will.
Oh take this thorn away,
But if for me 'tis needful still
That it should longer stay,
Then patience give, the thorn to bear,
And faith to trust thy love and care.*



MAY 10

*The Lord of glory.
1 Corinthians 2:7*

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT Jehovah is called, “*The glorious Lord*” (Isa. 33:21), and here Jesus is said to be “*The Lord of glory*,” which is the same. Jesus is therefore Jehovah. He is “*The King of glory*,” whose ascension to heaven is so beautifully set forth in Psalm 24. All the glorious perfections of deity are his, and he is entitled to the highest honour. When in human form, he was tabernacling with us, he said, “*The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him,*” (John 5:22-23). Jesus is infinitely glorious, and he should be glorified by us. Do we believe in the Father, we should believe also in Jesus. Do we trust in the Father, we should trust also in Jesus. Do we worship the Father we should worship Jesus also. He should be the object of our love, adoration, and confidence equally with the Father. He is our glorious Lord – glorious in his person, glorious in his work, glorious in his government, glorious in his conquests, glorious in his character, and glorious in the salvation of his people.

*Behold your King, your Saviour, crowned.
With glories all divine;
And tell the wondering nations round
How bright these glories shine.*



MAY 11

God is our refuge and strength.

Psalms 46:1

THE PRESENT WORLD is a wilderness. Here we are exposed to storms and tempests, to dangers and foes. If left to provide for ourselves, we must perish, and our enemies would triumph over us. But the Lord has condescended to become the refuge of his people, to him we may repair and find safety, receive supplies, and enjoy repose. If he defend us, no one can injure us. If he is our refuge, nothing can overcome us. But every Christian can say, "*The Lord is my refuge.*" Beloved, let us keep this in view today, whatever trials we may meet with, whatever tempests we may have to pass through, whatever foes may assail us, the Lord will protect and defend us. From the wrath of man, from the rage of hell, and from the storms of time, he will shelter and screen us. And he will not only receive and protect us, but he will strengthen us with strength in our souls. If God is our refuge, we must be safe. If God is our strength, we shall certainly overcome. Let us therefore fly to him, and trust in his word.

*Jehovah, our refuge and rock,
In trouble his help will supply;
Though earth be remov'd with a shock,
Still God, our Redeemer, is nigh:
Then trust in his promise and be not afraid,
In all thy distresses he'll come to thy aid.*



MAY 12

*The Lord is our God.
2 Chronicles 13:10*

SO SPAKE THE men of Judah to the people of Israel, who had adopted the worship of the golden calves which Jeroboam had made and set up. And so may the Christian say to many, who make a god of their wealth, their character, their station in society, or their connections. The Lord is *our* God, for we have received the revelation he has made of himself. We believe in the name of his only begotten Son. We daily worship at the throne of his grace. We place implicit trust in his precious promises, and we fear to offend him by word or deed. We know his name, and love it. We embrace his gospel, and rejoice in it. We approach him as a Father, and seek all we need at his hands. As Jehovah is our God, we have an unfailing source of comfort, a reason for sweet repose of spirit, and are certain that our wants shall be supplied. For as he is our God, he will be a God unto us. His power will protect us, his wisdom will guide us, his mercy will sympathize with us, his justice will avenge our wrongs, and his providence will make all things work together for our good. He will never leave us. He will never take his eye off us. He will not allow anything to harm us.

*Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
In thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail;
Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend!*



MAY 13

*We have redemption through his blood.
Ephesians 1:7*

UR STATE BY nature was so fearful, that no one but Jesus *could* redeem us, for an infinite ransom was required. And  it was not only necessary that a ransom price should be paid to satisfy divine justice, but Omnipotent power must be exerted to rescue us from the dominion of Satan and sin. The blood of Jesus is the price of our redemption, and the Spirit of Jesus is the agent by whom our deliverance is practically effected. We are redeemed *unto* God and *from* all iniquity, so that we shall, by and by, be entirely devoted to God, and be freed from all sin. The redemption that is in Christ Jesus is effectual, and all his redeemed ones shall celebrate the wonders of his redeeming love forever. This many of them are doing now, as we read, “*And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth,*” (Rev. 5:9-10).

*Behold him for transgressors given!
Behold th’ incarnate King of heaven!
For us, his foes, expire!
Amaz’d, O earth! the tidings hear:
He bore, that we might never bear;
His Father’s righteous ire.*



MAY 14

Look unto the rock whence you are hewn.

Isaiah 51:1

THIS WILL HUMBLE you, for your forefathers were rock. They were hard, cold, and lifeless in reference to spiritual things, and you partook of their nature. Your heart was stone, until Jehovah renewed it and gave you a heart of flesh. You were hewn or separated from this rock – here was divine power exerted for you. You were rock when hewn – here divine grace triumphed in you. Look back upon what you were, and lay low before God. Look back and take encouragement. For if the Lord wrought for you when a piece of rock, will he not now when you seek his face? If he began with you without anything to induce him, will he not carry on his work and complete it? Look back, and exercise hope for others. The power by which you were hewn, is sufficient to break the hardest heart, subdue the most stubborn spirit, and control the most unruly will. Look back, and see how much of the rock is still left. Pity it, pray for it, and seek grace for it. Beloved, whenever pride rises, or discouragement seizes us, or we begin to despair of others, let us look unto the rock whence we were hewn.

*Freely Jesus brings to heaven
All his chosen ransom'd race,
Who to him their Head were given,
In the covenant of grace.*



MAY 15

Your bodies are the members of Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:15

SOMETIMES WE THINK too much of the body; and sometimes we despise it. We do not often realise the value that God sets upon it. It is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and it is a member of Christ. Christ and his people are one body. Every Christian is a member of that body. Our bodies are one with Christ, and as such he values them, provides for them, and will by and by raise them from the dead exactly like his own glorious body. Let us carry this thought with us today wherever we go, "My body is a member of Christ." He claims it, for he purchased it with his blood. He watches over it, for it is a part of his care and charge. He will take care of it, for it is in close union with himself. If my body is the member of Christ, I must not neglect it. I ought not to pamper it. I should not in any sense abuse it, but keep it pure and holy, that it may be a vessel unto honour, meet and prepared for the master's use. Lord Jesus, fill my body with thy Spirit, and use it to thy glory and honour.

*Soon the delightful day will come.
When Christ shall bring my body home,
And I shall see his face;
Then with my Saviour, Brother, Friend.
A blest eternity I'll spend,
Triumphant in his grace.*



MAY 16

I am troubled.

Psalms 38:6

THIS IS VERY often the case with the believer – he is seldom long without something to trouble him. He has so much sin within him, so many foes without him, and such strange unexpected things in his path, that he is often agitated and depressed. Where he looked for comfort, he finds sorrow. Where he expected help, he finds hindrance. Where he promised himself pleasure, he experiences pain. He is wearied – weary of himself, weary of sin, weary of the world, and weary of the carnal state of the church of God. He is weary, and it prevents his enjoyment. He is troubled, and it shakes his faith. But what a mercy it is for the troubled Christian, that his Lord has experienced trouble as well as himself, so that he can sympathize with him. Jesus once said, “*Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?*” (John 12:27). He has a fellow-feeling with us in all our troubles, and will first sanctify them, and then safely bring us out of them. Beloved, are you troubled this morning? Carry your troubled heart to Jesus, and pour it out before him. He can calm it, soothe it, and give it cheering repose. Take it to Jesus to sanctify it for thee.

*And still as oft as troubles come,
Jesus will send some cheering ray,
And that strong arm shall guard us home.
Which thus protects us by the way.*



MAY 17

God that comforteth those that are cast down.

2 Corinthians 7:6

MANY THINGS CAST us down, but only our God can efficiently comfort us. He is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. He delights to comfort his people, when comfort will do them good. He secures their welfare first, and makes comfort a secondary object. But he never sees his child in sorrow without sympathy, nor long withholds the necessary cordial. He comforts the cast down, especially those who are employing their talents in his service, and consecrating their energies to his praise. Sometimes he brings home a sweet passage of his word. Sometimes he sends a Christian friend to speak with us. Sometimes he cheers us through the preaching of the gospel. Sometimes a sweet, soothing, comforting light beams upon the soul, and we feel relieved, refreshed and encouraged, but scarcely know how or by what. The Lord sends the comfort, whoever brings it. He is the Comforter of the cast down, and to him alone let us look for comfort in the cloudy and dark day.

*Jesus I know, hath died for me;
Here is my joy, my hope, my rest,
Hither, when hell assails, I flee,
I look unto my Saviour's breast;
Away sad doubt, and anxious fear.
Mercy and love are written there.*



MAY 18

Mighty to save.
Isaiah 63:1

THESE ARE THE words of the Lord Jesus. They are spoken in reply to a question proposed by his church. She was startled by his appearance, but she is soothed and comforted by his reply. He speaks in righteousness, he assures her he is mighty to save. To save her from her foes, from her fears, from her deserts. This view of Jesus should be kept daily before us. Jesus is omnipotent, and he will employ his omnipotence on our behalf. Therefore we should rest with confidence on his word, let the day be ever so dark, or the trial ever so heavy. Jesus *can* save, for he is mighty *to* save. Therefore no case is desperate, no sinner need despair. He has saved the chief of sinners, and having saved *the chief*, he has proved to demonstration that he can save any of his accomplices. Reader, *are you saved?* Have you received the forgiveness of sins? Are you consecrated to God? If not, Jesus can save you. He can save you at this moment. There is nothing can hinder your salvation, *but unbelief*. Only believe, and the merit of Christ is yours.

Jesus, transporting sound!
The joy of earth and heaven;
No other help is found,
No other name is given,
By which we may salvation have;
But Jesus came the world to save.



MAY 19

Called to be saints.

Romans 1:7

NONE ARE SAINTS by nature, nor does saintship originate with man's free will, but with God's free grace. Saintship is the effect of calling, and calling flows from love. The call of the gospel is general – it is addressed to all. The call of the Spirit is particular and is only addressed to some. When the Spirit calls, he quickens, and the dead live. He enlightens, and the blind see. He strengthens, and the weak say, "I am strong." He sanctifies, and the sanctified become a holy people unto the Lord our God. They are separated from others, become united to Jesus, and then unite with his people. Their separation from the world is from principle, which principle grace implanted. And it is from choice, which choice grace influenced. Beloved, if God has called you, you are a saint. That is, you hate sin, you follow after holiness, you forsake the course you were pursuing, you walk by the precepts of the gospe,; and you desire to be exactly conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are a saint, God made you one. And it is the greatest thing which God could do for you.

*Let me among thy saints be found,
Whene'er the archangel's trump shall sound,
To see thy smiling face;
Then loudest of the crowd I'll sing,
While heaven's resounding mansions ring,
With shouts of sovereign grace.*



MAY 20

On his head were many crowns.

Revelation 19:12

JESUS PASSED THROUGH many trials, and engaged in many conflicts. Therefore he gained many triumphs, and now wears many crowns. He wears the crown of victory, for every foe is, or will be, overthrown. He wears the crown of sovereignty, for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords. He wears the crown of creation, for all things were made by him, and for him. He wears the crown of providence, for he sustains, supplies, and rules all that he has made. He wears the crown of grace, for he redeemed his people by his blood. He conquers them by his Spirit, moulds them by his truth, and will bring them all to his kingdom. He wears the crown of glory, for every one of his glorified people owe their honour, happiness and blessedness, to him. He is crowned by his Father with a splendid diadem, and every knee must bow to him. Every one of his people crown him, and cast their crowns at his feet as unworthy to wear them in his presence. His crown is the brightest that ever wisdom devised, mercy jewelled, or power brightened. O to gaze upon his glory, and to see on his once thorn-pierced brow, the many crowns!

*O that the months would roll away,
And bring that coronation day!
The king of grace shall till the throne,
With all his Father's glories on.*



MAY 21

*Thou Lord wilt bless the righteous.
Psalm 5:12*

HOW IMPORTANT THEN to be numbered among them! But are we? Have we embraced the righteousness of God by faith, for our justification? Are we daily pleading with God for deeper sanctification? Do we really hate sin, and forsake it? Do we prize the honour of Jesus, and strive to promote it? If so, no doubt but we are among the righteous. May it be our aim like Zacharias and Elisabeth to walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless. The Lord will bless the righteous, and the blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. The blessing of the Lord is like a bright light on a dark night, or like manna from heaven, and water from the rock in the desert. The blessing of the Lord will prevent many evils, and secure for us all necessary good. It will sweeten our comforts, and sanctify our trials. It will *bring* us near to God, and *keep* us near him. God's blessing was the brightest part of Adam's inheritance before he fell, as his curse was the bitterest ingredient in his cup afterwards.

*They are blest, and none beside them,
They who hope, O Lord, in thee:
They are blest, though all deride them,
They who grace and truth make free:
Joy awaits them:
Where thou art they hope to be.*



MAY 22

The things that are freely given to us of God.

1 Corinthians 2:12

THE LORD LOVES to give good things to his children. He has given his only begotten Son to redeem us. He has given his Holy Spirit to sanctify us. He has given his sacred Scriptures to instruct us. He has given us all things necessary to a godly life. He gave us grace in Christ, before the world began. He sent us his gracious promises by Christ, and he has promised to give us every good and perfect gift through Christ. We may look around on creation, and we may look into the world of grace, and say, “*All things are ours. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are ours, and we are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s,*” (1 Cor. 3:21-23). We had no claim upon God for one single good thing, but in the infinite riches of his sovereign grace, he has freely given us all things. All things to use, nothing to abuse. All things that we can turn to a good account now, and everything that he has promised or provided, we shall possess in fulness by and by.

*Holy Spirit, thee we pray,
Finger of the living God,
Point us out the living way,
Shed the Saviour’s love abroad,
Make us know what God has given.
Lead us safe from earth to heaven.*



MAY 23

The Lord hath taken away.

Job 1:21

THE NATURAL MAN cannot see God anywhere. He sees what he calls nature, he talks of the laws of nature, and he constantly calls instruments agents. But the spiritual man sees God everywhere. Creatures with him are but instruments. Jehovah is the infinite mind presiding and directing all. In Job's losses, Satan, fire, and men were employed, but he looked above them all and saw the hand of God. Therefore he endeavoured quietly to acquiesce, and said, "*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*" Beloved, let us endeavour to see God in every event, for our times are in his hands. If the city is safe, it is because God keeps it. If our household is built up, it is because God builds it. And if our comforts are removed from us, it is because the Lord taketh them away. Is Jonah's gourd smitten? The Lord prepared the worm that did it. And if our gourds wither, whatever may have been the procuring cause, it is God that sends the instrument that destroys them. But this is our comfort: Whatever the Lord may take away, he never refuses to fill its place himself. We have himself for our portion still.

*I cannot lose what is not mine,
I may to God restore his loan;
And cheerfully I would resign,
When justly he revokes his own.*



MAY 24

It is good for me to draw near to God.

Psalms 73:28

REAL PRAYER IS drawing near to God. Unbelief leads us from God, faith brings us back. And when faith brings us back to God, we have always something to communicate. We have sins to confess, and pardon to crave; backslidings to deplore, and restoration to seek; needs to present, and supplies to entreat. It is good to ask of God, because he has what we need, he has promised to give, and he loves to bestow. But the very act of drawing near to God is good, for it soothes the mind in sorrow, cheers the soul under depression, relieves the heart in distress, draws away the affections from the world, and prepares us to resist temptation, bear trouble, and boldly oppose our foes. Beloved, do you know what it is to draw near to God? Is it your daily practice? Do you sometimes feel the Lord evidently drawing near to you, and filling you with his light, comfort, and love? If so, be more frequent at his throne. It will prevent your heart being hardened, your graces from withering, your fears from strengthening, and your foes from prevailing against you.

*How sweet, how cheering is the thought,
That God will hear his people's cries;
And whether he bestows or not
'Tis love that grants, or love denies.*



MAY 25

Behold Jesus met them.

Matthew 28:3

THE WOMEN HAD been early at the sepulchre. An angel had informed them that Jesus was risen, and directed them to go and tell his disciples of the fact. They were going to do so, but as they were on the road, "*Behold, Jesus met them.*" Must they not have been filled with surprise, admiration and delight! They fell down before him, held him by the feet, and worshipped him. They were in the way of the command, and they were rewarded before their obedience was completed. But does Jesus ever meet his people now? Yes, often. But are they sensible of his presence? Yes, quite as much so as these good women were. He meets us really, though not visibly. The heart is affected though the senses are not. He that goes where and when God bids him, will often find that Jesus will meet him in the way. He that would meet with Jesus, must go where Jesus has promised to be. And he who expects the presence of Christ in his ordinances, will not have it to complain that he has never enjoyed his presence. "*Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways,*" (Isa. 64:5).

*Thy Bethel visits, Lord, repeat;
O Jacob's God, draw near:
When I approach thy mercy-seat,
In mercy bow thine ear.*



MAY 26

The Lord will have mercy on his afflicted.

Isaiah 49:13

MANY ARE THE afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. Afflictions are as necessary for us as the winter frosts are for the earth. In affliction we often feel desolate. We are tempted to think that the Lord deals hardly with us, and that he has turned against us. But nothing can be more incorrect. His hand which smites us is ruled by his heart which loves us. Our present winter of affliction is intended to usher in a spring-time of joy and prosperity. Afflicted Christian, thy God will have mercy upon thee. He will support thee in thy trial, he will cause it to work thy good, and he will bring thee out of it as soon as it has answered the gracious design with which it was sent. While thou art in the furnace he sits by as the Refiner, and he will see to it that thou shalt lose nothing but dross. Try to believe that God has sent thy present trial in love, that he does not afflict thee willingly, but that there is a needs-be for it, though you cannot perceive what it is at present.

*Jesus shall still his people save,
Mercy on his afflicted have,
And fill their hearts with peace.
Speak to this troubled heart of mine.
Cheer me, dear Lord, with love divine,
And perfect righteousness.*



MAY 27

Let him come unto me and drink.

John 7:37

THE HOLY SPIRIT is compared to living water, and Jesus has this living water to bestow. But had we been left to ourselves, we might have thought that the blessing being so great and we being so unworthy, it never could be enjoyed by us. Whereas Jesus stood and cried, *"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."* My friend, have you received the Holy Ghost? Do you desire to receive him? If so, Jesus says to you, *"Come unto me and drink."* Come, without money. Come, without any previous preparation. Come, without doubt or gainsaying. Come, if you never felt until this moment your need of it, or the least desire to possess it. Come, however vile you may have been. Come, for you cannot be more unprepared than the woman of Samaria was, to whom Jesus said, referring to the same blessing, *"If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water,"* (John 4:10). Let us then come to Jesus, because he bids us. And let us ask and expect to receive the Holy Spirit, because he has promised to give it.

*To me at thy feet the Comforter give,
Who thirst to admit thy Spirit and live:
The weakest believer acknowledge for thine,
And fill me with rivers of water divine.*



MAY 28

*I know thy patience.
Revelation 2:19*

GOD OFTEN COMMANDS us to be patient by his word, and he tries our patience by his providence. Patience is necessary in health, but more so in sickness. We shall need patience in prosperity, but much more so in adversity. We require patience to *do* the will of God, but more to *suffer* it. Providence will not be hurried, we must wait. The promise is true, but the time appointed for its fulfilment is often long. We can gain nothing by impatience, for it only brings guilt on the conscience, and fever into the heart. But patience honours God, calms the spirit, prevents complaining, and secures many and great advantages. The church at Thyatira was patient, and Jesus notices, commends and records it. Let us endeavour to imitate these saints. If the Lord delay to answer our prayers, let us wait patiently for him. If the Lord strip us, let us in silence patiently bow to his will. If he send sickness and disease to correct us, let us patiently say, “*It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good,*” (1 Sam. 3:18). Lord, give us patience, and enable us in all seasons of trouble, disappointment and trial, in our patience to possess our souls!

*By patience we serenely bear
The troubles of our mortal state,
And wait contented our discharge,
Nor think our glory comes too late.*



MAY 29

Who were in Christ before me.

Romans 16:7

BY NATURE, WE are *without* Christ. By grace, we are *in* Christ. And when glorified, we shall be *with* Christ. Every natural man is without Christ. Every true believer is in Christ. To be in Christ, is more than to follow Christ. It is to be united to his person, interested in his work, possessed of his Spirit, and conformed to his likeness. For if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. In Christ, full justification is enjoyed, for “*there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,*” (Rom. 8:1). In Christ, all distinctions are levelled, for “*there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all,*” (Col. 3:11). In Christ, ceremonies are of less consequences than graces, “*for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love,*” (Gal. 5:6). In Christ, all necessary blessings are possessed and enjoyed, for of God “*are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,*” (1 Cor. 1:30).

*Once in Christ, in Christ forever,
This the gospel scheme declares;
Satan, death, nor hell shall sever
Jesus from his chosen heirs:
Blest in Jesus,
Life, eternal life, is theirs.*



MAY 30

The Lord forsaketh not his saints.

Psalm 37:28

THEY OFTEN FEAR that he will, but all such fears are groundless. He loves his people too well to forsake them. They sometimes forsake him, and this goes to his heart. He speaks of it as one in agony, as one filled with wonder at the greatness of the crime. “*Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord: for my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water,*” (Jer. 2:12-13). But if they forsake him he will bring them back, break their hearts with a sense of his love, and make them deeply repent of their folly. The saints are separated for God, and he will claim and keep his own. They are consecrated to God, and he will not allow them finally to desert from his service. The principle of divine life within them, the engagements of the great Surety in the covenant for them, the promises of the gospel made to them, and the watchful care of God over them, will prevent this. He forsaketh not his saints, however deeply he may try them.

*A saint! O, would that I could claim
The privileg'd, the honoured name,
And confidently take my stand.
Though lowest in the saintly band!*



MAY 31

Thy will be done in earth.

Matthew 6:10

THE EARTH IS the Lord's and the fulness thereof. He formed it by his power, arranged all its parts in his wisdom, and sustains it in being by his providence. Every creature is his production, and as he created, sustains, and claims all, ought not his will to be the rule of all? His will is like himself, infinitely wise, holy, and benevolent. And if we desire anything contrary to God's will, we desire what is unwise, unholy, and opposed to our real welfare. We are foolish, impure, and selfish, and it would be very wrong for things to be according to our will or way. And yet we constantly wish they were. Well may the same question be proposed to us which was put to Job, "*Should it be according to thy mind?*" (Job 34:33). My dear friend, let us bring our wills to God, and beseech him to regulate them by his own. He only wills what is for our welfare, and if the whole case lay before us as it lies before him, we should do just as he does. We shall see by and by that all was right, until then let us daily pray that God's will may be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven. And let us look forward, anticipating the time when this prayer shall be answered. O Lord –

*Hasten that happy gospel-day
When all on earth forgiven,
As fully shall thy will obey,
As angels do in heaven.*



JUNE 1

*The God of peace.
Romans 16:20*

PEACE IS AN invaluable blessing, and our peace with God was procured at a great price. Yet God is peaceful. There are no angry passions in his nature. He cannot take pleasure in the vassalage, or suffering of any of his creatures. He loves to see us holy and happy. We were once his friends. We became his enemies. He desired reconciliation, therefore he provided the means. As the God of peace, he devised the way by which reconciliation could be effected, sent his own Son to effect it by his obedience unto death, commissions his servants to go and proclaim it to every creature, and gives his Holy Spirit to speak peace to the troubled heart. Holy tranquility rules in the divine nature, and God in Christ stretches out his hand, calls us to his throne, and (O wondrous condescension!) beseeches us to be reconciled unto him. He assures us that he will not place one of our past sins to our account, but will pardon the whole, and treat us as if we had never offended him. Beloved, let us begin this month by looking to God as the God of peace.

*Once, in vain, this peace we sought,
From the law and found it not:
Fill'd with sorrow, guilt, and shame,
We at length to Calvary come:
Here we found true peace with heaven.
Felt the sweets of sin forgiven.*



JUNE 2

I will hedge up thy way with thorns.

Hosea 2:6

THESE WORDS ARE spoken to the backslider, they flow from God's love, and indicate painful opposition in the path of declension. It is a fearful thing to be allowed to choose, and pursue our own way without obstruction. But if God love us, he will oppose us, when we are found in forbidden paths. He will lay the thorns in our way. He will wound us in order to restore us. The wounded child will go home for healing, for the sense of pain and danger will humble its proud and haughty spirit. Beloved, when you find thorns in your path, just stop and ask, "Am I in the right road? Is this the true pilgrim's path? Does this way lead to my Father's house?" For the thorns are intended to awaken inquiry, produce reflection, and bring to repentance. We often see and feel the thorns, but we do not see the hand that laid them in our path. Perhaps we do not dream that it is our heavenly Father, but are ready to say, "*An enemy hath done this.*" These thorns are sometimes bodily afflictions, sometimes losses and crosses, and sometimes opposition from worldly men. But whatever may be the nature of the thorns, our Father laid them in our path.

*Return, O wanderer, return,
Thy Saviour bids thy spirit live;
Go to his bleeding feet and learn
How freely Jesus can forgive.*



JUNE 3

*To know the love of Christ.
Ephesians 3:19*

THIS IS THE SWEETEST subject in heaven or earth, and the subject which of all others we should desire to be acquainted with. But we can only know the love of Christ, as we know the person of Christ. For as Christ is, so is his love. Is his nature divine? His love is divine. Is his nature human? His love is human. Are the two natures united in his person? Then his love is human and divine united. If his nature is infinite, his love is infinite. If his nature is eternal, his love is eternal. And if his nature is immutable, his love is immutable. His love is so vast, so glorious, so spiritual, that it passeth knowledge. We may know much of it, but we cannot know it fully. Like the sun in the heavens, though we derive ten thousand blessings from it – though we know something of its greatness and grandeur – yet it is so high that we must be comparatively ignorant of it. Let us study the love of Christ in the light of his word, in the light of his cross, and in the light of his constant intercession for us. And let us pray the Holy Spirit to unfold the love of Jesus to us.

*He left his Father's throne above,
(So free, so infinite his grace.)
Emptied himself of all but love,
To die for our apostate race:
'Tis mercy all, immense, and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!*



JUNE 4

I will be sorry for my sin.

Psalm 38:18

THIS IS THE LEAST we can do, and if when sorry for it we forsake it, it is the most we can do. But if we are truly sorry for sin, we must be thoroughly convinced of it by the Holy Spirit. We must see it grieving the heart of God, and crucifying his beloved Son. No true sorrow for sin is felt, until we see that it is sin against a God of love, and that it cost the life of the Son of God to atone for it. Beloved, what is our sin – our easily besetting sin? For it is for that we should be especially sorry. Is it passion, or pride, or covetousness, or complaining, or unbelief, or want of sympathy with God's poor saints? Whatever it is, let us know it. Let us drag it to the cross. Let us daily confess it. Let us be very sorry for it. Let us get it pardoned, and let us strive against it until we overcome it. For every sin we should grieve, of every sin we should repent, and against every sin our hearts should be set. Have we been sorry for sin lately? When did we last weep over sin before God? Let us beware lest our hearts become hardened.

*By thy Spirit, Lord, reprove,
All mine inmost sins reveal;
Sins against thy light and love,
Let me see, and let me feel;
Sins that sacrificed my God,
Spilt his precious, precious blood.*



JUNE 5

We shall see him as he is.

1 John 3:2

WE NEVER SAW “the man of sorrows” in his humiliation, but we shall see him in his glorified state. He will soon re-visit our world. He will come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him. Then we shall see him. We shall see him, and be made like him. Every spot or trace of imperfection will be forever done away. We shall see him, and then our love will be perfect, our admiration abiding, and our joy complete. We shall be with him, sharing his joys, gracing his triumphs, and inheriting his fulness. We shall never lose sight of him again, for he will dwell with us, and we shall always be delighted with his love. Now we see him by faith, and it is truly sweet and precious. But we often mourn at a distance from him, and long and cry, “O to see his face!” But when he comes to receive us to himself, all sighing, crying, and desiring will end; and all will be satisfaction, joy, and peace. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and we shall be like him. O to see him, and –

*Forever to behold him shine.
Forevermore to call him mine,
And see him still before me!
Forever on his face to gaze,
And meet his full assembled rays,
While all the Father he displays,
To all the saints in glory.*



JUNE 6

Look unto me and be ye saved.

Isaiah 45:22

WE ARE ALMOST always in some difficulty or other, and need the Lord's delivering hand. But every day he addresses us in the same language, and says, "*Look unto me, and be ye saved.*" From what do we need deliverance this morning? Is it from guilt on the conscience, or from some powerful and unruly lust, or from some distressing temptation, or from some bodily disorder, or from some family trial, or from some perplexity in our worldly circumstances? Whatever it may be, Jesus can deliver us from it, and he bids us look unto him for deliverance. Let us lift up our eyes with our hands unto God in the heavens, and let us seek from him present salvation. He saves all who look unto him, and he saves all freely. Anyone is at liberty to look, for the invitation reaches unto the ends of the earth. It is for all people, through all time. Let us not then look too much at our trials, or our foes, or into our own hearts, but let us look away from all to Jesus, and expect to receive peace, strength, and salvation from him. He can deliver us, for he is God, and there is no God beside him.

*Jesus our Prophet, Priest, and King,
Thou friend of sinners come:
Descend kind Comforter and bring
Thy great salvation down.*



JUNE 7

I am a stranger and sojourner.

Psalm 39:12

WE COME INTO the world strangers to its origin, nature, character, customs, duties, and doom. And we scarcely become acquainted with them before we are called away. This is not our rest. Here we have no continuing city. We are intended for another state. Our journey lies through the world, but our home is beyond it. We are here for a time to do good, and to prepare for another and a better state. Let us not then attempt to settle down as children at home, or say as Job did, "*I shall die in my nest,*" (Job 29:18). But let us daily move on, keeping the eye steadily fixed on the things which are eternal. Nor let us wonder if we are annoyed, opposed, and tried. What can strangers expect? What should travellers look for? Certainly, they should not expect to have everything smooth and easy. Let us keep at a proper distance from the customs, pleasures, and practices of the world; and beware lest its politics, speculations, and schemes, swallow us up. We are not placed here to amass a fortune or gain a name, but to glorify our Father which is in heaven.

*Nothing on earth I call my own:
A stranger to the world unknown,
I all their goods despise:
I trample on their whole delight,
And seek a country out of sight,
A country in the skies.*



JUNE 8

*It is God which worketh in you.
Philippians 2:13*

THIS IS FOR our encouragement, and on the ground of it we are exhorted to work with fear and trembling. That God dwells in his people, is a glorious fact. But it is a great mystery. And he dwells in us for our good as well as his own glory. He helpeth our infirmities. He subdues our corruptions. He quickens our graces. He enables us to keep his precepts and observe his laws. We must work by the precept, which is our rule; and expect him to put forth his power and enable us, which is our privilege. Beloved, what an unspeakable blessing is this, to have God working in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure! Well may he require us to suffer great things, and to do great things. And well may we say, "*I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me,*" (Php. 4:13). Let us realise this fact today, and let us beseech the Lord to put forth his power in us more manifestly, and so bring every thought into subjection to Jesus Christ. What cannot the man do, who has omnipotence working in him? What can we do without the putting forth of divine power in us? Jesus said, "*Without me ye can do nothing,*" (John 15:5).

*'Tis he that works to will;
'Tis he that works to do;
His is the power by which we act,
His be the glory too!*



JUNE 9

O that I were as in months past!
Job 29:2

THE MOST PLEASANT is not always the most profitable. The past is not perhaps really the best. Then we had more sensible comfort, but now we have more faith. Then we had a smoother path, but now we experience more of the power of God. Bright and joyous seasons are not the most fruitful. Besides, conflicts are necessary. We must be tried. Every grace must be called into exercise. We must learn the value of the promises, by our deep and pressing need of them. God is more glorified by sustaining us in weakness, keeping us in danger, preserving us in the conflict, and guiding us along the dark and difficult way, than by filling us with joy and peace. Let us not think too much of the past, or fancy that the former days were better than these. But let us ask, "How can I glorify God in my present circumstances? How can I turn my present darkness, temptations, and trials to some good account?" The present may be preparatory to something peculiarly blessed. At least it is necessary to our soul's welfare and prosperity.

*O may I still from sin depart;
A wise and understanding heart,
Jesus, to me be given,
And let me through thy Spirit know
To glorify my God below,
And find my way to heaven.*



JUNE 10

The meekness and gentleness of Christ.
2 Corinthians 10:1

THE LORD JESUS was the meek and lowly lamb. He said, “*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls,*” (Matt. 11:29). He is our great example. He requires us to imitate him. He was never angry with anything but sin. He was never severe but with hypocrites and hardened offenders. He desires us to be meek and gentle toward all his people. Do they err? We are meekly to instruct them. Do they fall? We are to restore them in the spirit of meekness. He pronounces the meek blessed. “*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,*” (Matt. 5:5). He directs us to be “*gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men,*” (Tit. 3:2). He commands us to put on meekness, because “*the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price,*” (1 Pet. 3:2). He tells us to walk in “*all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love,*” (Eph. 4:2). To make it the object of our daily and ardent pursuit, “*follow after meekness,*” (1 Tim 6:11). Beloved, do we not often fail here? Are we representing “*the meekness and gentleness of Christ?*” Do we set a proper estimate on these things, and seek them as we should?

*Lord I fain would learn of thee
Meekness and humility;
Fill me, Spirit from above.
Full of gentleness and love.*



JUNE 11

We are all as an unclean thing.
Isaiah 64:6

THIS IS OUR state by nature, whatever we may be made by grace. We were born filthy, hence the ancient inquiry and reply, “*Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one,*” (Job 14:4). The uncleanness of our hearts soon appeared in our lives, we loved the filthy, and pursued the forbidden object. Uncleanness separates from God, and disqualifies for heaven. There shall in no wise enter there, anything that defileth, or that worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie. We must be cleansed, or perish. Our sacrificial cleansing, or the removal of our guilt, can only be by the sacrifice of Jesus. His blood must be sprinkled upon us, or guilt will not be removed from us. Our inward cleansing, or sanctification, is by the Holy Spirit using the glorious gospel. The truth must be applied to us, become a powerful principle within us, and the rule that regulates and guides us. The more we feel its power, the more we shall discover and deplore our uncleanness, and the more we shall long, pray, and strive for true holiness, or conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ. Every truly sanctified soul mourns daily over inward defilement, and cleaves to the Lord Jesus.

*O could I find some peaceful bower,
Where sin has neither place nor power!
This traitor vile I fain would shun,
But cannot from his presence run.*



JUNE 12

An evil heart of unbelief.

Hebrews 3:12

UNBELIEF IS A disease of the heart. It is a want of confidence in God. An evil heart of unbelief, is an evil unbelieving heart, or a heart destitute of confidence in God. It was the lack of confidence in God that kept Israel out of Canaan. It is the lack of confidence that keeps sinners from Christ. And it is this lack of confidence that is the root of our fears, doubts, perplexities, barrenness, and backsliding from God. The confidence of the heart is what God requires. The confidence of the heart God loves, approves, and rewards. The confidence of the heart is the ground of all true comfort. For as in the world there could be no comfort in the social, or domestic circle, without confidence, so in spiritual things, there can be no comfort without confidence. Take heed therefore, brethren, lest there be in any of you, an evil unbelieving heart which departs from the living God. But exercise confidence in the work of Jesus, for your acceptance with God. And exercise confidence in the promises of God, for all you can possibly need. Faith is the confident expectation of promised blessings, therefore be strong in faith, giving glory to God.

*O let me then at length be taught
(What I am still so slow to learn)
That God is love and changes not,
Nor knows the shadow of a turn.*



JUNE 13

*The head over all things to the church.
Ephesians 1:22*

THE LORD JESUS became the responsible Substitute of his people, and he is now exalted to be head over all things for their benefit. All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth, all things are put under his feet – the material and the spiritual. He rules matter and mind – the physical, intellectual, and spiritual – the good and the bad – and he rules all for the good of his people. This is the point upon which his eye is steadily and constantly fixed. Therefore all things must work together for our good. The church comprises all who were chosen by the Father, all who were redeemed by the Son, all who are sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Those whom the Father chose, the Son died to redeem. And those whom the Son redeemed, the Holy Spirit quickens, calls, and sanctifies. These constitute the *one church*, of which Christ is the head, and for the welfare of which all things are put under his feet. Do we belong to that church? Do we know Christ, and trust our souls in his hands? Do we obey Christ, and seek in all things to glorify him? If so –

*Why should his people now be sad;
None have such reason to be glad,
As those redeemed to God;
Jesus the mighty Saviour lives,
To them eternal life he gives,
The purchase of his blood.*



JUNE 14

Thy backslidings shall reprove thee.
Jeremiah 2:29

GOD SOMETIMES PUNISHES one sin by allowing us to fall into another. Every sin brings its own punishment, and we can sometimes read the sin in the punishment. Our backslidings reprove us, they become our preachers, and they solemnly address us. They point backward to the past, to the days of our first love, when our evidences were bright, our joys strong, our hopes lively, our faith vigorous, and our prospects bright. These are placed in contrast with our gloomy doubts, harassing fears, worldly frames, painful suspicions, and dreary forebodings. And a soul-piercing voice cries, “*know and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God,*” (Jer. 2:19). Beloved, what is our experience this morning? Is it that of the child who walks and converses with his beloved Father in peace? Or, is it that of the ungrateful, disobedient prodigal, who has slighted a Father’s love, shunned a Father’s presence, and who is fearing a Father’s frown? If we have wandered, let us return.

*The pains I have so long endured,
I have unto myself procured,
I left my Guide to happiness,
I lost the true internal peace,
Nor can my soul retrieve its rest,
'Till lodg'd again in Jesus' breast.*



JUNE 15

I have set the Lord always before me.

Psalms 16:8

HE THAT LIVES under an habitual sense of the Lord's presence, will live a life of comfort, holiness, and love. He that sets God before him as an example which he is to imitate, and keeps his glory in view in all that he does, will be a consistent Christian. But it is to be feared that such characters are very rare. The Lord Jesus did so constantly, the whole time he sojourned on earth. David purposed to do so, but he failed. He did not keep his eye fixed on God's holiness, or his heart in the enjoyment of God's love, or he never would have fallen as he did. But no doubt the purpose was a preservative, so long as he paid attention to it, and discovered that his heart was in a good state when he formed it. Beloved, let us set the Lord before us this day. Let his law be our rule, his love our solace, his glory our aim, and communion with him our chief delight. Let us copy his mercy, imitate his holiness, and resemble him in the exercise of justice. In a word, let us do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. He that sets God before him in life, will have nothing to fear in death, or beyond the grave.

*Before my eyes my Lord I'll place.
Ne'er shall my soul forget his grace:
Near my right-hand, my guard confess'd,
My God on whom unmov'd I rest.*



JUNE 16

By the grace of God I am what I am.

1 Corinthians 15:10

PAUL TRACES UP all good to the favour of God. What he was, he was by grace. What he did, he did by grace. What he expected, he expected from grace. His conversion was a remarkable display of grace in its freeness, sovereignty, and power. His gifts, graces, and usefulness, all flowed spontaneously from grace; therefore he felt deep humility, and ascribed the glory of all he did to the Lord alone. He could speak of his sufferings, he could enumerate the great things he had done, but lest any one should ascribe ought to him, or at all glory in him, he said, "*Not I, but the grace of God that was with me.*" Beloved, let us copy this excellent example, and let us ascribe everything that is really good, either in ourselves or others, to the distinguishing grace of God. He that honours the grace of God will be sure to be honoured by the God of grace. Grace always humbles its possessor, and therefore they who have the most grace are the most humble. Proud, conceited, selfish professors, know very little, if anything, of the true grace of God experimentally.

*Then give all the glory to his holy name,
To him all the glory belongs;
Be yours the high joy still to sound forth his fame,
And crown him in each of your songs.*



JUNE 17

Is there no balm in Gilead?

Jeremiah 8:22

GILEAD OF OLD was famous for its balm, and what Gilead was, the gospel is – yea more. The balm of Gilead would heal some wounds. The gospel will heal all. Is thine heart wounded? It may be by the guilt of sin, the unkindness of friends, the opposition of the world, or the false representations of Satan. There is balm in our Gilead, and there is a Physician there. Take thy wounded heart to the gospel – take it to the Saviour. Pray the Holy Spirit to apply one of the leaves of the tree of life, or the precious blood of the dear Redeemer. Either of these would heal thee. Jesus bindeth up the broken in heart, and healeth all their wounds. Let not thy spirit droop, yield not to dreary despondency, but “*Go up to Gilead and take balm,*” (Jer. 46:11). Lay hold on the promises and invitations of the gospel by faith, they will soothe, soften, cheer, and heal thy wounded soul. The remedy is infallible – it never failed yet. It is a universal medicine, and will suit all ages, cases, climates, and characters. Pore not then on thy wounds, dwell not on thy sorrows, look not at thy griefs, but apply at once to Jesus, he will bring you health and cure, he will heal you.

*By his sufferings, death, and merits,
By his Godhead, blood, and pain,
Broken hearts, or wounded spirits,
Are at once made whole again.*



JUNE 18

So shall thy God rejoice over thee.

Isaiah 62:5

THAT GOD SHOULD save a sinner at all, is a surprising display of unmerited grace. But that he should bring that sinner into the closest possible relation to himself, and rejoice over him, is indeed most wonderful. And yet it is most true. For our Maker becomes our Husband, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so will our God rejoice over us. He set his heart upon us. He encircled us with his infinite love. He determined to raise us to his glorious throne. He purposed to make us one with himself. He sent his only begotten Son to redeem us. He sent his Holy Spirit to regenerate us. He intends to raise us from the dead, perfect in holiness, and robed with immortality. He will present us before his glorious presence with exceeding joy. He will joy over us with singing. What exquisite joy will this impart? Jehovah singing with joy over his ransomed and restored creatures, as though their salvation could increase or perfect his happiness. Let us meditate on this glorious fact, and prepare for the stupendous event.

*Thy God well pleased and satisfied.
Shall view his image in thy breast,
Shall glory o'er his spotless bride,
And in his love for ever rest:
The hosts of heav'n for thee employ,
And condescend to sing for joy.*



JUNE 19

Learn of me.
Matthew 11:29

JESUS IS OUR great pattern and example, and every disciple should learn of him. He goes before us through all the duties and trials of life, and shows us how they should be performed and borne. He teaches us how to bear poverty without complaining, and popularity without pride. How to endure contradiction without resentment, and to bestow favours on the unthankful and unworthy. Go, learn of Jesus to live by faith on thy Father's word. to cultivate fellowship with thy Father in private. to do thy Father's will in public, to suffer all thy Father has appointed thee, and to prefer his will before thy own. Go, learn of him how to sympathize with the poor, to labour for the sick, and to pour benefits and blessings on all. Go, learn of him, to be meek and lowly, patient and forgiving, industrious and devout, and to glorify God in thy body and spirit which are God's. Learn not of heathens, however virtuous. Learn not of professors, however amiable. But learn of Jesus, for his motives were pure, and his conduct was perfect.

*Lord, I fain would learn of thee
Meekness and humility;
In thy gentleness of mind,
In thy lowliness of heart,
Rest mine inmost soul shall find;
Rest that never can depart.*



JUNE 20

They shall rejoice in their portion.
Isaiah 61:7

THE LORD'S PEOPLE often appear to have very little to rejoice in on earth, the ground of their joy is invisible. The Lord is their portion now, and in possessing him they really possess all things. They are a kingdom of priests, and the Lord is their inheritance. But they shall possess the glorious land also, as their portion by and by – a land where storms never rise, diseases never come, sorrow is never known, and pain is never felt. It is a land where the Lamb shall be their light, and a present God their glory. But they may and do rejoice on their way to it, though not so much as they should. They should rejoice that they have infallible direction, so that they can never miss their road. They should rejoice that they have omnipotent protection, so that they shall safely arrive at the end. They have unfailing supplies, so that they shall never be left to want. And they ought to rejoice in the glorious fact, that God overrules everything for their good. They shall rejoice in their portion – in its greatness, for it is vast as infinity – in its goodness, for it is the best in existence – in its permanence, for it shall never pass into other hands – in its purity, for it is perfect holiness – and in its certainty, for it can never be forfeited or lost.

*Happy Christian, fear not thou!
Triumph when thy Lord appears;
He who is thy portion now,
Will be thine through endless years.*



JUNE 21

The last enemy.
1 Corinthians 15:26

THE CHRISTIAN HAS many enemies, which shall all be subdued. But there is one enemy that comes last, which is death. This the Christian often dreads. Sometimes he fears the pains of dying, and at other times the consequences of death. He is haunted with so many temptations on the subject, and plied with such crafty suggestions. "If you should be wrong! If you have been deceiving yourself! If you should find all your expectations fancy!" These, and many such like things, are thrown into the mind, and they harass, perplex, and trouble it. The best way is, when such things exercise us, to look directly to Jesus, to call upon his dear name, to seek a smile from him, and this will drive away a thousand such thoughts as these. Death is the last enemy that shall be destroyed. It will outlive all the rest. But it must be destroyed, for Jesus will swallow up death in victory. We shall see it chased from God's creation, and life in purity and perfection reigning. We shall die but once, and then all will be happiness, and honour. But will this be mine?

*Yes, for my God has said the word,
The servant shall be with his Lord,
And see him face to face;
There shall I know as I am known,
Shine in the robe, and wear the crown,
Of Jesus' righteousness.*



JUNE 22

The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:6

JESUS WAS THE sin-bearer of his people. All their sins were imputed to him – they met upon him, they were punished in him, and they were put away by him. Let us view Jesus as our substitute, standing in our place, meeting our demands, bearing our desert, and securing our everlasting deliverance from sin and all its penal consequences. The Father laid our sins upon Jesus. He took them from us and charged them on him. This was according to the agreement in the everlasting covenant. What a mystery is this! The innocent is reputed guilty. The Holy One is punished as a sinner. The Just One is put to death for the unjust. Jesus died because we had sinned, and rose again that we might be justified. This truth ought to be kept constantly before the mind. It will preserve our peace, prevent our fears, strengthen our faith, enlarge our expectations, give fervour to our prayers, and zeal to our praises. Behold the Lamb of God, who hath taken away the sin of the world. We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins.

*See all your sins on Jesus laid,
The Lamb of God was slain;
His soul was once an offering made
For fallen, sinful man.*



JUNE 23

That your joy might be full.

1 John 1:4

THE LORD LOVES to see his people happy, and therefore he has made full provision for them in his holy word. He bids them cast all their cares upon him, to expect every necessary good thing from him, and to rejoice always in him. John wrote to the brethren in his day. He told them that God was love, that Christ was their propitiation and advocate, that they were the sons of God, that God had given unto them eternal life, and had admitted them into union with himself, and all this that their joy might be full. Beloved, all our sorrows spring from our sins, but our joys are the gifts of free grace. There is enough in ourselves to make us miserable, but there is enough in Jesus to fill us with joy under the most miserable circumstances. Let us endeavour to live out of self upon Christ, to make use of him for our present happiness, as well as our everlasting salvation. Let us bear in mind today, that God's word is to make us happy, and that every doctrine, promise, and precept, rightly understood, is calculated to do so. O Lord, thy saints are a happy people, may I share in their happiness, and so glorify thy name!

*Their daily delight shall be in thy name,
They shall, as their right, thy righteousness claim:
Thy righteousness wearing, and cleans'd by thy blood,
Bold shall they appear in the presence of God.*



JUNE 24

Good news from a far country.

Proverbs 25:25

WE ARE ALL FOND of hearing news, and especially news from a distance. But if we have friends in the distant land, that causes us to feel a special interest in it. The gospel is good news from heaven. It comes to tell us that God is love, that peace is made, that Jesus has all power in heaven and in earth, and that we are invited to receive and enjoy all the blessings of life and salvation freely. He tells us of acceptance with God, of access with confidence to God, and of an interest in all the promises of God. These tidings were sent direct from God. And that we might the more readily and confidently believe them, they were sent by the Son of God. Heaven is our country. It is far off. But we have tidings respecting it, and a well-executed map of the way to it. There our brethren rest and rejoice. There a mansion is being fitted up for our reception. There we shall be received when death has executed its commission upon us. Blessed be God for news from heaven, and especially for such good news!

*O when shall we at once go up,
Nor this side Jordan longer stop,
But the good land possess?
When shall we end our lingering years,
Our sorrows, sins, and doubts, and fears,
A howling wilderness.*



JUNE 25

I will come to you.

John 14:18

THE PRESENCE OF Jesus is the delight of his people. When he told his disciples that he must leave them, it filled their hearts with sorrow. But he assured them that he would not leave them as orphans, without the comfort of a Father's presence, care, and protection, but that he would come unto them. When he arose from the dead, he visited them in person. And when he ascended into heaven, he visited them by his Spirit. Jesus still visits his people. He comes to us in the closet, in the sanctuary, in the business, and in the solitary walk. He loves to meet us, manifest himself unto us, and make our hearts burn within us. He meets us in trouble, to cheer us; in sickness, to comfort us; and in death, to give us victory over the last foe. But he loves to be invited by his people. Let us invite him to meet us today. The place is not particular, for he looks at the person not the place. He looks at the state of the heart, not the circumstances in which we are placed. If he come to us, he will bring a blessing with him, for he never comes empty handed.

*Saviour, I languish at thy stay!
I pine for thee with longing smart!
Weary and faint through long delay:
When wilt thou come into my heart?
From sin and sorrow set me free,
And swallow up my soul in thee!*



JUNE 26

Turn thou to thy God.
Hosea 12:6.

ISRAEL HAD WANDERED from the Lord. They had turned to him the back and not the face. This was most ungrateful and insulting. But have not we done the same? Can we not read our own conduct in that of God's ancient people? Surely we may. Let us then listen to the word which the Lord addressed to them. It is a word full of love. It is the Father, calling the prodigal child back to his home and to his bosom. He says, "*Turn*," you are in the wrong path. You are pursuing an improper course. You are following a false guide. "*Turn thou to thy God.*" He longs to receive thee back. He longs to bless thee with a sense of his pardoning love. He waits to be gracious unto thee. Turn to him as thy father Jacob did. Plead with him as he did on the plains of Peniel. Wrestle until thou shalt prevail, and carry away his blessing in thy bosom. Beloved, let us turn to our God this morning. Let us confess our sins, crave his pardon, acknowledge his forbearance and mercy, and seek deep repentance and his Holy Spirit.

*Fountain of unexhausted love,
Of infinite compassion, hear:
My Saviour and my Prince above,
Once more in my behalf appear!
Repentance, faith, and pardon give,
O let me turn again, and live!*



JUNE 27

Pure religion.
James 1:27

RELIGION IS DEVOTEDNESS to God, and supposes reconciliation to God, fellowship with God, coming under the yoke of God, and being of one mind and spirit with God. Many profess religion who do not understand its nature, possess its principles, or practise its precepts. They are not enlightened. They are not sincere. They are not devout. Pure religion flows from pure principles, runs in a pure channel, and aims at pure ends. Pure religion is humble, laborious, self-denying. The truly religious man not only embraces the doctrines of the gospel, but practises its precepts. He not only worships God, but benefits his fellow men. He is not only devout, but devoted. He pities the fatherless, sympathizes with the widow, and keeps himself unspotted from the world. If he can dry an orphan's tears, if he can minister to a widow's wants, if he can bring a soul to God, or in any way promote the holiness and happiness of his fellow man, he is happy. Is this the nature of our religion? If not, it must be spurious. Let us examine ourselves by this test.

*Father, on me the grace bestow,
Unblameable before thy sight,
Whence all the streams of mercy flow;
Mercy, thine own supreme delight,
To me, for Jesus' sake impart,
And plant thy nature in my heart.*



JUNE 28

Will God indeed dwell on the earth?

1 Kings 8:27

WHEN WE THINK of his greatness, and our insignificance; of his holiness, and our impurity; of his righteousness, and our perverseness; we may well ask this question. Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, and yet he says, *“I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones,”* (Isa. 57:15). O Lord, produce in us that humility which attracts thee to its professor, and give us true contrition of soul! But God dwelt on the earth as one of the creatures. He took our nature, and dwelt in that nature as in a tabernacle. He dwelt on earth for more than thirty years, and did so that we might dwell with him in heaven forever. Our God became a servant, that we might become his sons. Our God obeyed the law, that we might be justified at his bar. Our God purchased us with his own blood, and now dwells in us by his own Spirit. O wonder of wonders!

*He did: the King invisible,
Jehovah once on earth did dwell,
And laid his majesty aside:
Whom all his heavens cannot contain,
For us he liv'd, a mournful man,
For us a painful death he died!*



JUNE 29

The Lord of hosts is with us.

Psalm 46:7

IF THE GOD OF armies, who has all creatures at his command, and under his control, be with us, what should we fear? But the Lord of hosts is *with* us, and he is *for* us. He is with us to defend us from every foe, to give us courage in every conflict, to keep us in the hour of temptation, and to preserve us unto his kingdom and glory. But his presence is not intended to be a substitute for our efforts, or to excuse our negligence. He will be honoured by our confidence, obedience, and daring in his cause. He will not defend the coward, or protect the idle. He says, “*Fight the good fight of faith.*” Face your foes, use your weapons, watch your opportunities, obey your Captain’s orders, be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Beloved, let us ever remember, that the Lord’s presence is to give us courage, and to stimulate us to war a good warfare. Here we must fight. We must not put off our armour until we put on our shroud. We must not quit the field, until our Captain, to promote us shall say, “Come up higher.” He says also, “*Work while it is called today, for the night cometh wherein no man can work,*” (John 9:4).

*Our Lord is for us, sin, devils, and men,
With malice oppose, with violence vain;
Howe’r they alarm us who evil intend,
They never can harm us, while God is our Friend.*



JUNE 30

The good that I would I do not.
Romans 7:19

THE HEART OF THE unconverted sinner is never set upon doing good. He may have some faint desires and feeble wishes, but his will is not renewed. The believer *would* do good, he desires it, his heart is set upon it. He would love God with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength. He would believe in Jesus without wavering, and obey him without ceasing. He would *be* just what God requires him to be, and he would *do* all that the Saviour commands him to do. But he is weak, he has a body of sinful principles within him, and he finds that they often frustrate his purposes, and spoil his best formed plans. He *cannot* do the things that he would, and he *will not* do the things that he could. The sin that dwells in him prevents the one, and the Spirit that dwells in him forbids the other. The conflict in his bosom is constant, and often sharp. It is for life, for until death there is no discharge in that war. The flesh will lust against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things that we would. O for more grace to resist evil, to do good, to honour God, to exalt Christ, and to prepare for his kingdom!

*But if indeed I would,
Though I can nothing do;
Yet the desire is something good,
For which my praise is due.*



JULY 1

Lord, who is like unto thee?

Psalms 35:10

THE WAYS OF GOD are wonderful. They strike us with surprise. His condescension is so great, his mercy is so free, his power is so vast, and his righteousness so glorious, that when we see them displayed in his dealings with us, or with those about us, we are led to exclaim, “*Lord, who is like unto thee?*” Jehovah has no equal. He is infinitely superior to all other. His ways are as much above our ways, as the heavens are above the earth. He doeth wondrous things. Let us then look to him through the whole of this month. Let us expect him to work wondrously. He says, “*Call unto me, and I will shew thee great and mighty things that thou knowest not,*” (Jer. 33:3). When we can expect from no other, we may expect from our God. When no one else can help us, he can deliver us with ease. His word is given, his mind is unchangeable, his ways are at times mysterious, but mercy and truth always go before his face. Our God is incomparable! And this is true of his mercy, pity, power, compassion, forbearance, holiness, and love.

*His arm is might, and strong his hand,
Justice and judgment waiting stand
Around his throne exalted high;
But midst the glories of his face,
His mercy and his truth we trace,
Sweet mingled rays which call us nigh.*



JULY 2

God be merciful to me a sinner.

Luke 18:13

A SINNER CAN HAVE no claim on a just and holy God. He has nothing to plead, for he has lived in a state of rebellion against God. He has nothing to appeal to but God's mercy, to mercy as displayed through a mediator. God is propitious in Jesus. But he can show no mercy, except through him. We must therefore fix the eye on the cross, when we go to him for pardon, peace, or everlasting life. The publican felt his need of mercy. He felt that he was totally unworthy of mercy. He would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but he smote on his breast, the seat of his sin and his suffering, and cried, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" Friend, have you ever felt, as this publican felt? Have you ever prayed, as this publican prayed? If you have, you *often* pray so, for we shall never get beyond this prayer while we live below. It will always be suitable. If you have never thus felt and prayed, you are dead in sin, and your state is very dangerous. No one ever prized the Saviour, until he felt himself a lost sinner. And no one was ever saved by Jesus, who did not prize him. Lost sinners cry for mercy, and all who seek shall find.

*A guilty helpless sinner I,
Must without his mercy die;
But when this is all my plea.
God in Christ is love to me.*



JULY 3

I beseech thee shew me thy glory.

Exodus 33:18

THE ESSENTIAL GLORY of God's nature cannot be seen by us. Our powers and faculties are not able to bear it. But the glory of his perfections, as they shine forth in his works, and especially in our salvation, may be seen. Jesus is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. He is the image of the invisible God. He is the mirror in which the glory of God is seen. If therefore God answer this prayer in our experience, he will shine into our hearts, and give us the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ. All the glory of God is in Christ. If therefore the eyes of our mind are opened, if the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus to us, we shall see the Lord's glory. And this sight will humble us in the dust before him, overwhelm us with shame on account of our sins, inspire us with confidence to trust in his word, and draw out our warmest love and most solemn reverence toward him. The more we see of God's glory, the more we shall hate sin, be weaned from the world, pant after holiness, delight in worship, and practise his precepts. Lord manifest thyself to me in Jesus today!

*Father, shew to me thy glory,
Prostrate at thy gracious throne,
Make thy goodness pass before me.
All thy goodness in thy Son.*



JULY 4

He shall save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21

THE SAVIOUR'S PEOPLE were given him by His Father. They were involved in all the consequences of Adam's sin. They had made their case worse by actual transgression. They could not contribute the least toward their own salvation. They had neither will nor power to do so. If they were saved it must be wholly by another. Jesus loved them, as the gift of his Father, with all the strength of his nature. He was determined to save them. He undertook in covenant to do so. He came into the world for this purpose. Not to help them to save themselves, but to save them himself, to the glory of God the Father. He therefore assumed their nature, took their place, represented their persons, obeyed and suffered in their stead, and offered a sacrifice to God, which forever put away their sins. He then ascended to glory, received the Holy Spirit, and sent him into our world to call, sanctify, teach, comfort, and guide them to glory. He therefore is called Jesus, for he saves all his people from their sins.

*Jesus is our great salvation,
Worthy of our best esteem!
He has saved his favourite nation;
Join to sing aloud to him:
He has saved us.
Christ alone could us redeem.*



JULY 5

Where art thou?

Genesis 3:9

THIS QUESTION WAS proposed to fallen Adam, and may well be proposed to us. All by nature try to hide from the Lord, they cannot bear the glance of his eye; they tremble at his justice, hate his holiness, and are too proud to appeal to his mercy. Reader, “*Where art thou?*” Are you in your natural state? Then you are enmity against God, you are exposed to the wrath of God, and may at any hour be banished from the land of hope, into dark and hopeless despair. Are you wrapped up in the garments of self-righteousness? Then you are in imminent danger, and yet do not see it. You are rejecting Christ, refusing to build on the foundation which God has laid, and you will be required to fulfil every command of God’s holy law. Are you in Christ? If so, you are truly blessed, for every sin is pardoned, every promise of grace and glory is yours, to you there is no condemnation, and from Christ you shall never be separated. Beloved, God asks, “*Where art thou?*” No matter where you are, if you are not in Christ: there is no place of safety, no source of supply, no title to glory, but in Christ. O to be found in him living, dying, and forever!

*Jesus, Saviour, spring of hope,
Help a fallen sinner up;
O thou blessed woman’s seed,
Bruise in me the serpent’s head.*



JULY 6

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.

Galatians 3:13

THE SOUL THAT sinneth it shall die. This is the sentence of God's law. To die is to be separated from God, who is the source of life, holiness, and joy, and to be punished with pain, remorse, and God's frown forever. Man is so constituted that he cannot be happy without God. He must *know*, possess an interest *in*, and enjoy fellowship *with* God, or be restless, dissatisfied, and unhappy. The law dooms him to this, but Jesus came to deliver us from the curse of the law, by doing what we failed to perform, and by suffering what we deserved. He was forsaken of God. He languished in dreadful pain. He was overwhelmed with grief and sorrow. He was in an agony. He felt the withering curse, he drank the bitter cup, he exhausted the dreadful sentence, he satisfied divine justice, and now by faith in him we are delivered. He is accepted as our Substitute, his righteousness is placed to our account, and the blessing of Abraham comes upon us. We are blessed *with* and blessed as Abraham was. We were cursed –

*But Jesus hath our sentence borne,
He did in our afflictions mourn,
A man of sorrows made,
A servant and a curse for me;
He bears the utmost penalty.
He suffers in my stead.*



JULY 7

Enoch walked with God.
Genesis 5:22

SINNERS WALK FROM God – they go in a contrary direction, they are opposed to his requirements, and they refuse to listen to his call. But believers walk *with* God – in conversion, they turn to God – in justification, they are accepted before God – in sanctification, they are conformed to the will of God – and then they walk with God. His precepts are their rule, his ways are their delight, his glory is their aim, and fellowship with himself is their source of satisfaction. They communicate with God, place their confidence in God, expect every blessing from God, and strive to imitate the character of God. They walk with him in filial love, as their Father; in holy intercourse, as their Friend; and in grateful obedience, as their covenant God. They walk with God in faith, believing his promises. They walk with God in hope, expecting his communications. They walk with God in love, enjoying his gracious presence and blessing. To walk with God is their honour, the proof of their reconciliation, and the evidence of their adaption. Walking with God on earth, they will rest with God in heaven.

*With God sweet converse I maintain,
Great as he is, I dare be free:
I tell him all my grief and pain,
And he reveals his love to me.*



JULY 8

Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Matthew 4:7

WE MAY TRUST him, but we must not tempt him. To tempt God is to run into dangers unbidden, and then appeal to God for protection. It is to yield to sinful solicitations, because God has promised to keep and preserve his people. If God bring us into danger, he will preserve us in it, and bring us out of it. But if we needlessly run into it, he may leave us to rue our folly. God has never promised to keep his people if they yield to temptation, give place to the devil, or indulge in any sin. Such conduct ill-suits his holiness, provokes his displeasure, and calls for the rod. We must believe his promises, and expect that he will make them good in the way of filial obedience. He that presumptuously ventures into the path of temptation, because God has promised to keep his people, tempts God, and will be sure to smart for his folly. Satan often misapplies Scripture, but his design is always to lead us into sin, to grieve the Spirit of God, and dishonour our heavenly Father.

*O may I tempt my God no more,
By needless trials of his power,
But humbly in thy ways attend,
And through the means expect the end;
No wonders seek, thy truth to prove,
Nor ask a sign that "God is love."*



JULY 9

This same shall comfort us.

Genesis 5:29

SO SAID THE FATHER of Noah concerning his son, and so have many said since and found out their mistake. We are always fancying that we want something which we have not, to make us happy. Whereas true happiness consists in our minds being brought to our circumstances, for our circumstances will never be brought to our minds, because our desires enlarge with our possessions, and we are constantly craving more. But what Lamech said of Noah, we may with truth say of Jesus, for he is the consolation of Israel, and he gives the true rest to the soul. If we receive him, if we realise our interest in him, if we live upon him, he will comfort us. For he will sweeten all our trials, sanctify all our sorrows, sustain us under all our crosses, and bring us safely to the promised land. He is the true NOAH, the rest of his beloved people, and he is saying to us this morning, "Come unto me, ye weary, burdened, labouring ones, and I will give you rest. I will comfort you in all your tribulations, and give you a happy issue out of all your afflictions."

*Then I will no more complain,
Never at my lot repine:
Welcome toil, and grief, and pain!
All is well if Christ be mine:
He will calm my troubled breast,
Give my weary spirit rest.*



JULY 10

Ask and it shall be given you.

Matthew 7:7

COULD GOD PRESCRIBE easier terms? It is simply, "Ask and have." But then, what we ask must be *lawful*, it must be *necessary* for us, and it must be *promised* in God's word. Our desires must be good, or corresponding with God's law. The thing sought, must be becoming our station and circumstances. And God's will must be consulted, as it is made known by his promises. We may have whatever is really necessary, whatever will promote our sanctification, or whatever will advance God's glory. But if lust influence us, God will deny us, as we read, "*Ye have not, because ye ask not; ye ask and receive not, because you ask amiss, that ye may consume it on your lusts,*" (James 4:2-3). The most general promise has its limit. God will do nothing, God will give nothing, that is inconsistent with his character or that would injure his people. If we really need, if our motive in seeking is pure, if the use to which we intend to put the blessing is good, if the end we aim at is God's glory, then we may ask what we will, and it shall be given us. Let us ask in the name of Christ, for the honour of Christ, and we cannot ask wrong.

*If God the power of asking give,
The blessings ask'd shall all be given;
I ask, expecting to receive,
Thy grace, thine image, and thy heaven.*



JULY 11

Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

Genesis 27:36

THUS CRIED PROFANE Esau to his father Isaac, when Jacob had supplanted him and taken away his blessing. And thus have many of the Lord's people cried to their heavenly Father. Beloved, is this our inquiry this morning? If so, it is easily answered: Our God has reserved blessings for us. He has been bestowing blessings on his people through all past ages. But like the sun, which has poured light and heat upon our world thousands of years, and yet is as full of light and heat as ever, so it is with our God. He is full of blessings. He has it in his heart to bless his children. He loves to see them gather round his throne morning by morning to ask his blessing. Well, what do we need this morning? Whatever it may be, our God has it, and has it for us. Let us ask him for more grace. Grace to soften our hearts, to sanctify our tempers, to rule our tongues, to direct all our energies, to devote us entirely to his praise, and to make us both holy and happy. Yes, poor, depressed, sorrowful sinner, thy Father has reserved a blessing for thee – and the very blessing which you most need.

*My Saviour, my God, I trust in thy blood.
To bring me the blessing on many bestow'd:
For us it is free though purchas'd by thee,
And I know it is mine when my Lord is in me.*



JULY 12

He that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Matthew 10:22

MANY PROFESS CHRIST, who do not possess Christ. They appear to begin well, but in time of temptation fall away. Therefore the Saviour said, “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven,*” (Matt. 7:21). Every man’s profession will be tried, and all who have not the root of the matter in them, will fall away. None but the regenerate will persevere, but all that are really born again will. The new creation cannot be destroyed – true faith will prove victorious. How important then to ascertain, “Are we created anew in Christ Jesus?” How did our religion begin? In conviction of sin? How did it proceed? In venturing entirely on Jesus and his finished work for salvation? In panting ardently for thorough sanctification? How is it with us now? Is Christ precious? Is holiness lovely? Is the throne of grace our daily resort? Are we *pressing on toward the mark*? If so, we may hope to endure, but let us still *press on*.

*Welcome my Saviour’s word to me.
The cross and crown annexed I see,
And suffer on, till pain is past,
With life, and I am sav’d at last.
I wait in death to hear him say,
Arise, my love, and come away.*



JULY 13

Is any thing too hard for the Lord?

Genesis 18:14

HIS POWER IS omnipotent, his wisdom is infinite, and his resources are boundless, what can be too hard for him? Look from creatures to thy God. Take up his promise and plead it. Think of his faithfulness and trust in it. He could give Abraham a son in his old age. He could bring Israel out of Egyptian bondage. He could preserve Daniel in the lions den, and his three brethren in the burning fiery furnace. He could bring down the pride of Babylon, and bury Nineveh in ruins. Well may we say with one, "*I know that thou canst do all things,*" (Job 42:2). Let us then take our difficulties to God. And when our way is hedged up, and everything seems to conspire against us, let us take courage and keep our path, remembering that our God can make a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters, and that he hath promised to make all his mountains a way, and that his highways shall be exalted. Let us meet our unbelief and fears with this question, whenever they come in like a flood, and let us look to God's power, promises, and grace in all difficult cases.

*Is any thing too hard for God?
Through Jesus we can all things do;
Who Satan and his works destroy'd,
Shall make us more than conquerors too.*



JULY 14

O woman, great is thy faith!

Matthew 15:28

SHE BELIEVED THAT Jesus would heal her daughter, though he seemed to say that he would not. She had confidence in his kindness though he answered her roughly. She persevered in her suit, though more than once repulsed. She was as humble as she was determined, and this is always the case with strong faith. She had no promise, yet she would not give up. She was not of the favoured nation, yet she would persevere in seeking the blessing. Beloved, what an example for us! What a reproof for us! We are invited by Jesus, we have his plain word of promise, we have innumerable instances of his kindness upon record, and yet we doubt his love, and give way to gloomy fears and forebodings. Let us seek for strong faith – faith that will give Jesus credit for being kind, in whatever circumstances we may be placed – faith that will trust his word, though he delays to make it good – faith that humbly perseveres notwithstanding delays, and that says with holy determination, “*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me,*” (Gen. 32:26) – faith that will take no denial, but pleads, argues, supplicates, weeps, and holds on until it prevails.

*That mighty faith on me bestow
Which cannot ask in vain,
Which holds, and will not let thee go,
'Till I my suit obtain.*



JULY 15

How long will this people provoke me?
Numbers 14:11

NOTHING IS SO provoking to God as unbelief, and yet there is nothing to which we are more prone. He has spoken to us in his word. He has spoken plainly, he has repeated his promises again and again, he has confirmed them all by the blood of his own dear Son, and yet we do not believe him. Is not this provoking? What would provoke a master like a servant refusing to believe him? Or, what would provoke a father like a child refusing to believe him? The man of honour feels himself insulted if his professed friend refuses to believe his solemn protestation, and yet this is the way in which we daily treat our God. He says, "Confess, and I will pardon you." But we doubt it. He says, "Call upon me, and I will deliver you." But we doubt it. He says, "I will supply all your needs." But we doubt it. He says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." But who has not questioned it? Let us seriously think of his own words, "*He that believeth not God hath made him a liar*" (1 John 5:10), and his question, "*How long will this people provoke me?*" Lord forgive, and preserve us from it in future.

*Ah! Lord, with thee we ask, how long
Shall men thy patient Spirit grieve,
Thy power mistrust, thy goodness wrong,
Thy faithful promise disbelieve?*



JULY 16

God hath shined in our hearts.

2 Corinthians 4:6

YE WERE ONCE darkness, and if you are not so now, it is because God hath enlightened you. We were all once ignorant of God, ignorant of ourselves, and ignorant of the Lord Jesus. In reference to our state, all was dark. In reference to our destiny, all dark. Dark ignorance sat enthroned in our understandings, therefore we were careless, cruel, hardened, and presumptuous. But when God shone into our hearts, we discovered our state, caught a glimpse of his true character, became alarmed at our condition, and began to look out and inquire for deliverance. When he shone again, we saw the Lord Jesus as the Saviour of sinners. He appeared just suited to us, and we began to long, pray, and seek for an interest in his glorious person and finished work. Another ray enabled us to see that we were welcome to him. And we embraced him as God's salvation, found peace, enjoyed liberty, had access into God's favour, and rejoiced in hope of his glory. Lord, shine into our hearts again, shine often, that in thy light, we may see light, and glorify thy name!

*Expand thy wings, celestial Dove,
And brooding o'er my nature's night,
Call forth the ray of heavenly love,
Let there in my dark soul be light,
And fill the illustrated abyss
With glorious beams of heavenly bliss.*



JULY 17

*His work is perfect.
Deuteronomy 32:4*

AN INFINITELY PERFECT mind will produce a perfect work. Every work of God is wrought by a perfect plan, by a perfect agency with the most suitable instruments, and with infallible success. Failure belongs to man, not to God. The work of creation is complete. The work of providence is perfect as far as it is finished, and so is the work of grace. Jesus has perfectly fulfilled the law, answered all the claims of divine justice, frustrated the designs of his foes, and provided for the certain salvation of all his people. When the work of salvation is finished, it will be the most magnificent work which even God ever wrought. It will be a mirror to reflect and reveal all the glorious attributes, perfections, purposes, and thoughts of the Most High. Blessed be the Lord Jesus for his perfect work! In this we are justified, in this we can approach the throne of God with boldness, in this we may meet death without fear, and in this we shall be acquitted before the great white throne. It is our bridal robe, our title to the heavenly mansions, and the ground of our hope.

*Jesus, Son of God, thou art
Omnipotence divine,
Now assure my fearful heart
That all thou art is mine;
On me thy perfect work bestow.
And make me live like thee below.*



JULY 18

Ye know not what ye ask.

Matthew 20:22

MANY THINGS APPEAR to be good which are not really so; and many things are good in themselves which are not good for us. The Saviour's disciples often ask amiss, and they ask for what would not really do them good. And when they do so, he mercifully denies them. It may often be said to us, "*Ye know not what ye ask.*" We ask perhaps for deeper sanctification, and in so doing we ask for trials, losses, crosses, and temptations. We ask to be weaned from the world, and in so doing we ask for troubles, difficulties, and perhaps bodily afflictions. We ask for stronger faith, hope, and patience, and in so doing we ask for clearer and more painful discoveries of the corruption of the heart, and more violent assaults from Satan than we have ever experienced. It is very probable that we shall see by and by, that our severest trials and our bitterest sorrows, were just answers to our prayers. We fix upon some object, we set our heart upon it, we pray earnestly that we may possess it, but do not think of the painful process through which we must pass to arrive at it.

*Blindly we ask for pain and loss,
A deeper cap, a heavier cross,
And still we all thy grace implore:
But humbly waiting to receive,
Manner and time to thee we leave,
Thy will be done, we ask no more.*



JULY 19

*Underneath are the everlasting arms.
Deuteronomy 33:27*

THAT IS UNDERNEATH every believer. They are there to bear him up, to bear him on, and to preserve from all real danger. The arms of God are invisible, no one sees them. They are spiritual, no one feels them. They are careful, no one falls out of them. They are omnipotent, no one overcomes them. If the everlasting arms of my God are underneath me, I may quietly yield myself unto him. I may confidently expect protection. I may be certain he will lift me above my foes, and I may feel assured that he will safely convey me home. Aged saints may rejoice in this, for to them the Lord says, *“Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs I will carry you; I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you,”* (Isa. 46:4). And weak believers may rejoice in this, for *“He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom,”* (Isa. 40:11). O to realise this sweet and encouraging truth, and to rejoice in the Saviour’s assurance, *“My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand!”* (John 10:29).

*Through strength like this my soul shall walk
The gloomy desert through;
Those everlasting arms shall grant
Support and victory too.*



JULY 20

Why stand ye here all the day idle?

Matthew 20:6

MAN WAS FORMED for employment, and he cannot be happy except he is employed. Idleness always breeds misery and unhappiness. But believers especially should be industrious. They should be diligent in their worldly callings, and every one should be working for God. Why stand ye *idle*? You cannot say that you have nothing to do. There is the truth, circulate it. There are the ignorant, instruct them. There are the sick, visit them. There are the poor, relieve them. Why stand ye *here* idle? There is so much to be done, and so much wants doing immediately. Look in what direction you will – you will find plenty of work. Why stand *all the day* idle? If you rested for awhile, you should work the remainder of your time. Work all day, for the night cometh, and it will soon be here. Why are ye idle? Satan is busy. Erroneous men are busy. Angels are busy. Other believers are busy. Why are ye idle? Why *stand* idle? As if you were willing to work, or going to work, when you know you do not intend? Reader, God calls the slothful wicked, and all idlers, especially idlers in the church, will be visited with correction.

*Shall I stand idle still,
'Till life's short day is past,
Or now begin to do thy will,
And work for God at last?*



JULY 21

I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.

Joshua 1:5

HARTHLY FRIENDS MAY fail us, and if we trust them, they will fail us, and fail us when we most need them. But he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe. God promised Joshua that he would not fail him, and he never did. He tried him. He allowed others to try him. He made him pray. He allowed him to fear. But he never failed him in any struggle, but gave him occasion and grace to appeal to Israel and say, “Ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof,” (Josh 23:4). Well, what God said to Joshua, he now says to us. He will not fail us, therefore let us implicitly trust in him. He will not forsake us, therefore let us boldly say, “I will not fear what man can do unto me,” (Ps. 56:11). If God will not fail, it does not matter who does. If God will not forsake us, we can do without the presence or help of any of his creatures. But God will not fail us, therefore let us rejoice in his name.

*The promise to myself I take.
Me, me thou never wilt forsake,
Who on thy Son depend:
Thy faith is plighted to my Lord.
And safe I hang upon the word
Of mine eternal Friend.*



JULY 22

Come, ye blessed of my Father.

Matthew 25:34

IF WE ARE BLESSED in Christ, we shall be conformed to Christ. If we receive grace from Christ, we shall imitate the life of Christ. Grace first leads us to Jesus for life, and then leads us to work for Christ, as the effect of the life received. If we accept the invitation of Christ now he is on the throne of grace, and obey the commands of Christ while we dwell upon earth, we shall be invited by him, from the throne of his glory, to share in all the joys and glories of his celestial kingdom. All the Saviour's disciples have been blessed by his Father. For them the kingdom was prepared before the foundation of the world. By them his cause was sustained and extended upon earth. And they shall all be pronounced blessed when Jesus comes the second time without sin unto salvation. O to be like Jesus now, to labour for Jesus below, that I may be invited by Jesus to enter his kingdom, and enjoy his triumphs when he comes to reign before his ancients gloriously. Only those who believe his word, confess his name, and work for his honour, will be blessed by him then.

*Here on earth he bids us come
Weary to himself for rest,
Then receives his brethren home,
Makes, whom he pronounces, blest,
Crowns with immortality,
Gives the joy prepared for me.*



JULY 23

The Lord bringeth low, and lifteth up.

1 Samuel 2:7

HE DOES THIS IN temporals when it is for our good. He strips us and lays us bare, or he prospers us in all we do. But in a spiritual point of view, he does so in the experience of all his children. He strips them of pride, lays them in the dust, and brings them to self-despair. While he is doing so, they often doubt, fear and despond. They are ready to give up all hope, and conclude that the hand of the Lord is gone out against them. But we must feel that we are lost, before we shall seek to a Saviour. We must be stripped, before we shall gratefully receive and thankfully wear the robe of the Redeemer's righteousness. When he has brought us low, he will lift us up. When he has stripped us, he will clothe us. He will send us the Spirit of adoption, robe us in the garments of salvation, assure us of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The lower we sink in self-despair, the higher we rise in the enjoyment of God's free grace. Lay low if you would rise high.

*Great God, who dost the proud abase,
And giv'st to humble souls thy grace,
Bring down my nature's virtuous boast,
And lay mine honour in the dust;
Then from the gates of hell bring back.
And save me for my Saviour's sake.*



JULY 24

Ye belong to Christ.

Mark 9:41

ALL BELONG TO Christ as the Creator, for all things were made by him and for him. And the Father has given him power over all flesh. But some belong to him in a peculiar manner. They were the gift of his Father's love, the purchase of his precious blood, and the fruit of his Spirit's power. They present themselves before him, yield themselves to him, and publicly profess to be his disciples and friends. They own him before men, and he owns them before his Father. They claim him for their Saviour, and he claims them for his portion. They are united to him, and their interests are identified with his. Whatever is done to them, he takes as done to himself – whether it be kind or cruel. Beloved, do we belong to Christ? Has he called us, claimed us, and taken possession of our hearts? Has he met us in his house, owned us at his throne, and given us his Holy Spirit? O to belong to Christ in life, at death, and forever! This is our highest honour, the only source of true happiness, and the great cause of real safety.

Jesus, I belong to thee.

*Challenge thine own property,
Made, and bought, by love divine,
Thine I am, and doubly thine:
O secure me as thine own.
Fix me on thy glorious throne.*



JULY 25

It is the Lord.
1 Samuel 3:18

SO SAID ELI OF one of the sorest trials which ever befell his house. And so may we say of all our afflictions, losses and crosses. It is not a chance that happens to us, but a rod sent to correct us, or a lesson sent to be learned by us. Some cannot see the hand of God in anything, but a believer should see the hand of God in everything. Are we afflicted in body, tried in our circumstances, or persecuted by the world? It is the Lord, and he can sanctify every sorrow to us, and make what appears to be the greatest affliction, the greatest blessing. He will sustain us with one hand, while he corrects us with the other. And he often gives the choicest spiritual blessings, and the sweetest comforts, in the sorest trials. Let not Satan hide the hand of God from thine eyes. Let not man's wisdom persuade thee that thy troubles come as a matter of course. But see God in the visitation, humble thyself under his mighty hand, and he will lift thee up out of the horrible pit, and deliver thee from the miry clay. He is now waiting for thy prayer, listening to hear thy voice, and is ready to bless thee with the choicest blessings of his love.

*It is the Lord – should I distrust,
Or contradict his will,
Who cannot do but what is just,
And must be righteous still!*



JULY 26

What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?

Mark 10:51

THIS QUESTION WAS proposed to a poor blind man, by our condescending and beneficent Saviour. There is no favour, but he can grant it – no cure, but he can effect it – no privilege, but he can confer it – no work, but he can perform it. We know that he can do all things. Let us then hear Jesus speaking to us this morning, as he did to this poor man, he asks each one of us, “*What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?*” Are you blind? He will give you sight. Are you weak? He will give you strength. Are you guilty? He will give you pardon. Are you in difficulty? He will grant your deliverance. Whatever may be your need, he can supply it – or your desire, he can grant it. He is waiting to receive your reply. Are you not prepared with your petition? Ah, if you felt in reference to spiritual things, as this poor beggar felt in reference to the loss of his sight, and the value of his eyes, you would soon arise and go to him, and he would as readily and cheerfully bestow them, as he restored this blind beggar to sight. Try him. Go to him and prove it true.

*Lord, I would my sight receive,
Would thy faithful follower live,
Till I lay my body down,
Drop the cross, and take the crown.*



JULY 27

I will bless thee.

Exodus 20:24

THE LORD DELIGHTS to bless his people. No one can deserve his blessing; it is always free and spontaneous. He blesses because he will. If he threaten, if he punish, if he curse, it is because justice requires it, for he takes no pleasure in doing so. But if he bless, it is of grace – freest grace. He blesses his people in a variety of ways, with a variety of blessings. He blesses them often in private, but the passage is a promise of blessing in public ordinances. God requires us to meet together to honour him, and for our own benefit, and he condescends to promise to meet with us, on purpose to bless us. How often have we enjoyed his blessing in the assembly of his saints! Let us go up to his house for a blessing, let us always ask for a blessing, and expect one. He will bless us with clearer light, stronger faith, warmer zeal, holier love, deeper spirituality, and more complete victory over our invisible foes. He says, “*I will bless thee.*” He means what he says. He will make good his word. He will thus glorify his grace. Let us say:

*O that thou would'st thy servant bless
With all the blessings of thy love,
My heart enlarge, my faith increase,
Evil and pain far off remove;
Keep by the presence of thy power,
That sin may never grieve me more.*



JULY 28

My words shall not pass away.

Mark 13:31

IT WAS SAID of Samuel, “*All that he saith cometh surely to pass:*” (1 Sam. 9:6), and here our beloved Saviour assures us, that “*heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not; pass away.*” Every word of Christ is more durable than the pillars of heaven, or the strong foundations of the earth. He has promised his people that he will visit them, strengthen them, send the Comforter to them and take care of them. He has promised to come again and receive them to himself, and cause them to shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of his Father. His words shall not pass away – all must be fulfilled. He has threatened unbelievers with everlasting destruction, to punish them according to their works, to cast them into outer darkness – and his words shall not pass away. The sheep will be separated from the goats. The chaff will be severed from the wheat. The children of the kingdom will be distinguished from the children of the “*wicked one.*” Sinner, think of God’s word, tremble at God’s wrath, flee to God’s Son, and seek pardon, peace, and justification through his blood! He says, “*Come unto me.*” He assures you that he will in no wise cast out.

*Pass away this earth and heaven,
Truth can never be o’erthrown;
Stands the word by Jesus given
Firm as his eternal throne.*



JULY 29

Now bless the Lord your God.

1 Chronicles 29:20

NOTHING IS MORE reasonable, yet few things are more neglected by us. Our God daily loadeth us with his benefits, but how seldom do we honestly, heartily, and gratefully, bless his name. Our lives should be vocal with his praise. Even self-interest ought to lead us to praise God, for he has said, “*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God,*” (Ps. 50:23). The grateful shall see God’s plan, understand the Saviour’s work, and enjoy the Lord’s delivering mercy in every time of need. A grateful man may have anything from God. Now, then, let us bless the Lord our God. For his mercies are so numerous, his favours are so great, our privileges are so valuable, our prospects are so bright, and our obligations are so numerous. Every sin pardoned, every blessing promised, every real evil prevented, and heaven at the end of our course! O let us bless the Lord. If we fail to praise him, we may expect the very stones to cry out.

*O Lord our God we bless thee now,
To thee our souls and bodies bow,
With humblest awe fall down before
Thy throne, and joyfully adore
Our glorious God in persons Three,
Our God through all eternity.*



JULY 30

Good will toward men.

Luke 2:14

THIS WAS PART of the angels' song at the Saviour's birth, and it should fill our souls with wonder, love, and praise. What were men? God's enemies, whose hearts were enmity against him, and whose whole lives were spent in direct opposition to his holy law. They had trifled with his mercy, dared his vengeance, and defied his power. Their hearts were stone, like the adamant, and harder than the flint. And yet God pitied them, loved them, and his bosom glowed with good will to them. To prove this he promised to send his Son, and behold he comes. He comes to bear our sins, atone for our transgressions, and make peace by the blood of his cross. He comes and expounds God's law, delivers the glorious good news that salvation is provided, expostulates with, and weeps over sinners, dies in their stead, and rises to secure complete justification to every one who believes on his name. The gospel is one clear, full, and glorious expression of God's will to us. He tells us plainly that he has no pleasure in our death, and opens to us the gate of everlasting love. O to believe the love which God hath to us, and to walk accordingly!

*Sing all in heaven at Jesu's birth:
"Glory to God, and peace on earth,
The heart of God through Christ is seen
In mercy and good will to man."*



JULY 31

Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God?
Nehemiah 5:9

THE FEAR OF GOD is our great preservative, therefore the Lord says, “*I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me,*” (Jer. 32:40). To fear God is an imperative duty, it is at the same time a favour conferred upon us, and the proof of true wisdom. We should fear to offend God in any place, by any action, at any time. Our one ruling desire should be to please him. If his wrath is so dreadful, if the effects of his displeasure are so painful, if his love is so sweet, if his presence is so delightful, as his word and experience declare them to be, “*Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God?*” Surely we should! But, alas, we lose sight of what should ever be uppermost in our minds, and therefore we become light, careless, trifling, worldly, lukewarm, ill-tempered, and anything but what Christians should be! May the Lord deeply convince us of our sin, humble us before his throne, break us down in true repentance, and produce in us a permanent reformation!

*That wisdom, Lord, on us bestow,
From every evil to depart,
To stop the mouth of every foe,
While upright both in life and heart.
The proofs of godly fear we give,
And show them how true Christians live.*



AUGUST 1

Lord, teach us to pray.

Luke 11:1

REAL PRAYER IS always powerful. Energetic prayer availeth much. But we often seem to pray when we do not. There is no clear knowledge of need, no fervent desire, no earnest pleading, no strong confidence in God, no steady expectation, no wishful watchings, no patient waiting. And yet all these are included in prevailing prayer. Beloved, we must acknowledge with the Apostle, “*We know not what we should pray for as we ought,*” (Rom. 8:26). Let us therefore plead with the disciples, “*Lord, teach us to pray.*” But if we are answered, perhaps needs will press us, trials will surround us, foes will beset us, afflictions will come upon us, and Satan will worry and distress us, for it is by such things that the Lord teaches his people to pray. If he teach us, he will certainly give his Holy Spirit unto us, for there is no real prayer without the indwelling, illumination, and direct operation of the Holy Spirit. He awakens us to feel our need, quickens desire, leads to the throne, helps our infirmities, and causes us to groan in spirit before God.

*Teach me, Jesus, how to pray
Take the hind’ring thing away;
Into this weak heart inspire
Power, and hunger, and desire;
Then the pleading Spirit impart,
Fix my Teacher in my heart.*



AUGUST 2

In my flesh I shall see God.

Job 19:26

GOD HAS APPEARED in our flesh to put away our sin and to restore us to the enjoyment of his favour and love. He is now gone into heaven to appear before the Father for us. There he represents us, sympathizes with us, and intercedes for us. He will come again. He will come in glory. He will come to be seen, enjoyed, and admired by his saints. In our flesh we shall see God, for our bodies will be raised incorruptible, and our whole persons be made like the human nature of Jesus. “Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him,” (Rev. 1:7). Beloved, are we looking forward in expectation of seeing God? Do we long for the day of Christ, when he shall be revealed in his own glory, and in his Father’s glory, having all the holy angels with him? It will be a glorious sight. O to have part in the first resurrection, to obtain a seat at the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and to sit down with Jesus on his throne! May this be our grand object.

*I call the great Redeemer mine:
He lives who died for me, I know,
Who bought my soul with blood divine,
Jesus shall re-appear below,
Stand in that dreadful day unknown,
And fix on earth his heavenly throne.*



AUGUST 3

Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased.

Luke 14:11

IF WE WOULD rise high, we must lie low, for before honour is humility. We are all prone to exalt ourselves and to justify ourselves in doing so. There is very much pride remaining in our hearts, and it often lies concealed under our most humiliating expressions. We need to be daily stripped, and to be emptied from vessel to vessel. For if we are not, self-will will soon puff us up. Every Christian should aim to exalt his God, to honour the Lord Jesus, and leave his own reputation in his Saviour's hands. Honour follows the truly humble even like his shadow, but it flies away from the proud like a bird. Pride must be abased. The proud professor must be laid low. Every doctrine of the gospel, and every precept of God's law, is opposed to our pride. If therefore we swell with self-conceit, if we make much of ourselves, if we set ourselves up before, or above our fellow men, God will bring us down, for whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased. May we be daily clothed with humility.

*Why have I, Lord, so often been
Baffled, debased by every sin?
With humble shame and grief
One sin I own the cause of all;
Pride always went before my fall,
The pride of unbelief.*



AUGUST 4

*The Almighty troubleth me.
Job 23:16*

BUT IF HE DOES, it is to benefit me. And if he trouble me with one hand, he will support and comfort me with the other. If providence tries us, grace sustains us. Troubles are as necessary for our souls, as the frosts and snows of winter are for the earth. They stir us up, keep us alive, make us pray, and put power into our religion. If God trouble us, it is in mercy, and he troubles us now, that he may comfort us by and by. Crosses are not curses. If the all-sufficient One trouble us, it is evident he does not forget us. He has not cast us off. And it is equally evident that he has blessings in store for us, which our present troubles are to qualify us to enjoy. Beloved, do not think hardly of God because of your troubles, but remember that he is all-sufficient in the midst of them, and that he will bring you safe out of them. Sinner, if God does not trouble you with conviction of sin, and heart-felt sorrow for sin, he will trouble you with his fierce wrath and indignation forever. May you be so troubled as to say:

*Troubled by the Almighty I,
From the fiery furnace cry,
Jesus, now thy grace impart,
Come and sanctify my heart:
Let me in my sufferings prove
All thy tender, constant love.*



AUGUST 5

In his right mind.

Luke 8:35

THEN HE WAS in a humble mind, for we are never in our right mind except we are humble. Then he was exercising confidence in Jesus, for it is only as we trust in his merits, rely on his word, and depend on his intercession, that we are in our right mind. Then he was loving Jesus, with a warm and grateful love, for it is only as we love Jesus for what he has done for us, promised to us, and is in himself, that our minds are right. Then he was consecrating himself and all his powers to the honour and service of Jesus, for no one who knows Jesus can be considered a reasonable being, who does not consecrate himself, and all that he possesses, to the Saviour's glory. Beloved, how is it with us this morning? What is the state of our mind? Are we truly humble? Are we exercising warm-hearted confidence in Jesus? Do our bosoms glow with love to his glorious person and dear name? Are we consecrating ourselves afresh to his service and praise? Are we presenting ourselves before him, and asking, "*Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?*" (Acts 9:6). Are we longing to be filled with holiness and love? Are we saying:

*All that I have and all I am,
Shall be forever thine:
Whate'er my duty bids me give,
My cheerful hands resign?*



AUGUST 6

Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.

Job 28:28

SOME FANCY WISDOM consists in amassing wealth, others in gaining a name among men, others in self-indulgence. But the Scripture informs us that it consists in pleasing God. For he who fears to offend God, will be sure to please him. Those who fear God, receive his word, believe his gospel, trust in his Son, worship at his throne, observe his ordinances, copy his example, seek his holy Spirit, withdraw from his enemies, unite with his friends, resist Satan, and strive against sin. This is true wisdom. For thus they avoid all penal evils, and secure all real good. The Omnipotent is their friend, the wealth of the universe is their portion, and the mansions of glory their home. If the man who escapes the greatest dangers, secures the greatest good, enjoys the greatest pleasure, and obtains the greatest honour is wise, then every real Christian is wise; for such is the happiness of every one that truly fears God. O fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want unto them that fear him.

*Be it my only wisdom here
To serve the Lord with filial fear,
With loving gratitude;
Superior sense may I display
By shunning every evil way,
And walking in the good.*



AUGUST 7

Men ought always to pray.

Luke 18:1

AS WE ALWAYS sin, we ought always to pray for pardon. And as we are always in need, we ought always to pray for a supply. If God is always willing to hear us, we ought always to pray to him for what we need, and he has promised to bestow. But some men never pray. Others only pray when in danger, or in some trouble. They pray from fear, not from love – as slaves performing a duty to a master they do not esteem, not as children asking of a tenderly beloved parent. He who never prays, is unquestionably dead in sin. He who only prays in trouble, is a stranger to the sweet influences and teachings of the Holy Spirit. Reader, how is it with you? Do you often pray? Do you really *love prayer*? Is it your pleasant privilege, your solace and relief? If you do not pray on earth, you will never praise in heaven. Prayer is the *seed* of praise. He who prays rightly now will praise God cheerfully by and by. Friend, God says you *ought* to pray, and that you *ought always* to pray. What do you say? What does your *conduct* say? Are you in a praying frame this morning? Do you desire to be? Ask of God the spirit of prayer.

*We perish if we cease from prayer;
Lord, grant us power to pray!
And while to meet thee we prepare.
Oh, meet us in the way.*



AUGUST 8

To depart from evil is understanding.

Job 28:28

HOW DIFFERENT IS God's estimate to man's. We think that the man who has great intellect, great learning, and who has stored up great knowledge, is the man of understanding: but God says, "The holy man is the wise man." If we really understand God's nature, and our own duty; God's requirements, and our own privileges; God's grace, and what makes for our own happiness; we shall study, pray, and strive to depart from all moral evil. Nothing is hurtful but sin, and nothing should be hateful to us but sin. Every sinner is in Scripture called a fool, and only the saint is designated a wise man. The man must be a fool who provokes infinite wrath, insults omnipotent power, dares immutable justice, rejects the richest gifts, despises the highest honours, and exposes himself to the greatest possible amount of suffering. But this every impenitent sinner does. Friend, how is it with you? What are you doing? Are you departing from evil, by closing with and imitating the Lord Jesus?

*O may I still from sin depart:
A wise and understanding heart,
Jesus, to me be given;
And let me through thy Spirit know
To glorify my God below,
And find my way to heaven.*



AUGUST 9

I find no fault in this man.

Luke 23:4

THIS WAS PILATE'S testimony of Jesus. He had examined him. He had examined the witnesses brought against him, and the conclusion that he was obliged to come to was, "That he was faultless." Had there been one fault, there could have been no atonement. The sacrifice must be without blemish. Had there been one fault, we should have had no perfect example. The whole scheme of redemption would have been ruined, the predictions of Scripture would have failed, and the hopes of his people must have been disappointed. But he was without fault before God, and his unprincipled judge was compelled to say, "*I find no fault in this man.*" Sinner, can you find any fault in him? If not, why do you not believe in him? Why do you not trust in his glorious sacrifice? Why do you not seek for glory, honour, and immortality in his dear name. If you can find no fault in him, and yet reject him, God will find nothing but faults in you, and all the intelligent inhabitants of heaven, earth and hell, will find fault with you forever.

*Harmless in act, and word, and thought.
The judge declares him free from blame,
Without a blemish or a spot.
A sinless saint, a perfect lamb;
And such is a fit sacrifice,
And such for sinful man he dies.*



AUGUST 10

He shall see his face with joy.
Job 33:26

THIS IS WHAT NO sinner can do without a change of nature. There is nothing in God to make a man happy while he loves and lives in sin. But when convinced of transgression, when laid low in contrition, when reconciled through the precious blood of Jesus, when the Spirit of adoption within cries, “*Abba, Father,*” then we see his face with joy. It is a father’s face – a father’s face beaming with love. The face of a father who presses his guilty but returned prodigal to his heart. O what joy to see that God is reconciled to us, that he is at peace with us, that he loves us, that he delights in us, that he rejoices to do us good! This makes the heart dance for joy. This makes us rejoice with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. Sinner, if you are convinced of sin, if you seek God through Jesus, if you pray earnestly unto him, he will deliver you from going down into the pit, and you shall see his face with joy. O seek the Lord this day, nor cease until you are filled with his love! Let nothing tempt you to delay, but strive to enter in at the straight gate while it is yet open.

*Comforter of all that mourn,
Into joy my sorrow turn;
Joy to taste thy saving grace,
Joy to see thy smiling face,
Joy to know my sins forgiven.
Joy to gain a glimpse of heaven.*



AUGUST 11

I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

John 17:4

THE WORK OF Jesus is perfect. He completed all that he had to do on earth, before he returned to heaven. He did not forget one thing, nor fail in one point. Every demand made upon him, he met. Every engagement he had entered into, he fulfilled. Every foe that attempted to obstruct his progress, he defeated. Every member of his church, he purchased. And the certain salvation of every one committed unto him, he secured. He wrought on earth – he rests in heaven. His finished work is his glory, and it is the ground of our hope, confidence, and triumph. As Jesus has finished his work, may we seek to finish ours, that as he is set down with his Father upon his throne, we may sit down with him upon his throne. By the finished work of Jesus, justice is forever satisfied, the holy law is magnified, sin is eternally put away, and the gates of heaven are thrown wide open to every simple-minded believer. O to look to, trust in, and boast of the finished work of Christ alone! Nothing else will do for us in death, may we not attempt to do with anything else in life.

*Sin, death, and hell, are now subdued,
All grace is now to sinners given;
And, lo! I plead the atoning blood,
For pardon, holiness, and heaven.*



AUGUST 12

When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?

Job 34:29

UR TIMES ARE in God's hands, and our experience is absolutely under his control. No matter where we are, or in what circumstances, if God give us peace, shed abroad his love in our hearts, and shine upon our souls, then we shall enjoy quietness. So on the other hand, if placed in the most favourable circumstances, if surrounded by the kindest friends, if loaded with the beauties of a beneficent Providence, but without the presence, blessing and love of God, then we cannot be happy. Nothing under heaven will make us so. Let us view all our concerns as in God's hands, and expect our comfort from his word, presence, and smile. If he give us quietness, we shall enjoy repose, though the world be up in arms around us, though the strong foundations of the earth give way, and though the heavens be clothed in sackcloth. Lord, give us the quietness which flows from the pardon of sin, the enjoyment of adoption, the sense of thy love, and the hope of everlasting glory. O for quiet confidence in an ever present God!

*Jesus, thou seest my troubled breast;
Weary and faint, for lasting rest,
For thee alone, I pray:
O might I with my Lord receive
Peace which the world can never give,
Can never take away.*



AUGUST 13

Of his fulness have we received.

John 1:16

IT PLEASED THE Father that in Jesus should all fulness dwell. The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him. The fulness of grace and glory are in him. He has, in order to communicate, and he gives freely to all comers. The grace that justifies, and the grace that sanctifies, are alike from him. Of his fulness we received grace at first, and from his fulness we must receive at the last. We need go nowhere else, for he has everything we do or can possibly need. It is of no use to go anywhere else, for no one else can supply us. We may therefore say with Peter, “Lord, unto whom can we go, thou hast the words of eternal life,” (John 6:68). Let us go to his fulness this morning. Let us ask largely. Let us expect to receive grace to help us in every duty, in every trial, and in every temptation this day. He is full of grace and truth. O keep the eye fixed on his fulness, the heart happy in his love, and the hand diligently employed in his service! He giveth liberally and upbraideth not.

*Thou slaughter'd Lamb of God,
From the world's foundation slain,
By thy sacrificial blood
Wash out all my guilty stain.
Clothe my spirit's nakedness
With a covering from above.
Put on me thy spotless dress.
Wrap me up in heavenly love.*



AUGUST 14

I will look up.

Psalm 5:3

THIS WAS THE Psalmist's determination in the morning, and it should be ours. Preserved and protected through the night, we should look up with gratitude, and praise God for his goodness. Aware of our dependence and needs, we should look up and desire mercies of the God of heaven for the newborn day. Sensible of our foes and dangers, we should look up and pray to be kept, guided, and sanctified by an everpresent God. If we look within, it will dispirit us. If we look around, it may distract us. If we look back, it may awaken fears. If we look forward, it may arouse foreboding. But if we look up, it will preserve the head from swimming, the heart from sinking, the feet from slipping, and the hands from hanging down. Beloved, let us look up. There is our loving Father, there is our interceding Saviour, there are our elder brethren, there are all our supplies, and there is our everlasting home. Let others look where they will, "*I will look up.*" If we look up to God in faith, he will look down upon us in mercy, and looking supply all our needs.

*Rock of my security,
Thankful I look up to thee:
Blest with yet another day
Let me live my God t' obey,
Live thine utmost will to prove,
Live to pray, repent, and love.*



AUGUST 15

We would see Jesus.

John 12:21

CURIOSITY PANTS TO see great men, remarkable places, and uncommon things. But grace in the heart pants to see Jesus. The first object we wish to see when regenerated is Jesus, and the last we shall wish to see when quitting the world is Jesus. We want to see him in sorrow, to cheer us – in darkness, to illumine us – in trouble, to deliver us – in prosperity, to keep us – in sickness, to comfort us – and in death to enable us to triumph. We would see Jesus in the manger, Jesus at the Jordan, Jesus in the temple, Jesus in the busy crowd, Jesus in the house of affliction, Jesus by the grave of Lazarus, Jesus in Gethsemane's garden, Jesus at Pilate's bar, Jesus hanging on Golgotha, Jesus ascending from Olivet, Jesus interceding for us before his Father, and Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven to claim the world which was erected by him and for him. Friend, have you ever seen Jesus? Do you want to see him this morning? Can you say:

*Fain would I my Redeemer see
As when extended on the tree,
He groan'd beneath my heavy load.
He pour'd out all his precious blood;
Above, I want this only sight,
To view the Lamb by his own light
T'admire the lustre of those scars.
Which brightens all the morning stars!*



AUGUST 16

Behold I am vile.

Job 40:4

JOB DID NOT always think so. He did not always feel thus. While at a distance from God, he could boast, argue, and contend with God. But when brought into the presence of God's holiness, the contrast was so striking that he sunk down in astonishment, clothed with shame, and filled with self-loathing. The manifestation of God's glory to a sinner always produces the same effect. Isaiah felt as Job did, and exclaimed, "*I am undone, for mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of hosts,*" (Isa. 6:5). Pride and self-righteousness can never live in God's presence. The nearer to God, the more we discover our depravity, the more we loathe ourselves, and the more precious does the person and work of Jesus become. Proud sinners have never been brought into God's presence. Conceited professors, if they follow God at all, do so at a great distance. O for clear, correct and humbling views of self, that God may be glorified in us, and Jesus be precious to us! It is only as we see our own vileness, that we shall value a Saviour's righteousness, and only as we feel our own weakness, that we shall prize and pray for the Spirit's power.

*Jehovah to the creature shown,
Confounds his boast and virtuous pride.
And now he knows that God alone
Is just, and vile are all beside.*



AUGUST 17

Yet will I not forget thee.

Isaiah 49:15

WE OFTEN FORGET the Lord. This is both our sin and our folly, for as we can never be happy but as we live in the enjoyment of his love, so every sin brings its own punishment with it. We sometimes suspect that the Lord has forgotten us, but he assures us that this is impossible. He admits that the mother may forget her sucking child and treat it with neglect, but he denies that he can ever forget his people. They are too deeply engraved on his hands, his love to them is too strong and active, to allow him to forget them. Jesus thinks of us this morning. He is thinking of the trials we shall have to endure, of the duties we have to discharge, of the foes we shall have to face, and of the grace that will be necessary for us. Friends may forget us and relations may forget us, but Jesus never will; nor will he forget, or overlook anything that concerns us. O may I never forget him! May he live in my memory, reign in my affections, and dwell in my heart by faith. O to think of him, trust in him, and render constant and cheerful obedience to him. He says, "*I will not forget thee.*" May we say:

I know it: by thy hands and feet

Thou must remember me:

Thou could'st as easily forget

What pass'd on Calvary!



AUGUST 18

What I do thou knowest not now.

John 13:7

WE WALK BY faith, not by sight. We are to believe when we cannot see, and to believe when we cannot understand. The Lord is now working in nature, providence and grace, and he does many things which we do not understand at present. But when his work is complete, and it lies stretched out before us in the light of eternity, then we shall comprehend the design, admire the wisdom, and adore the divine agent. In the mean time, we must give the Lord credit for wisdom, kindness and veracity. His work must correspond with his word, the one is but the counterpart of the other. Beloved, is God cleansing you by fiery trials, or causing you to pass through the waters? Are you at a loss to know what is his design, or where the present dispensation will end? Be still. Wait his time. There is a working time which is the present, and there is a revealing time which is to come. The wisest are often in the dark now, but the simplest will see all things clearly by and by. A little more patience, a little more faith, and all will be well.

*Do what thou wilt; it should be so:
Thy works I shall hereafter know,
(When death the veil remove.)
Unwind the providential maze,
And gladly own that all thy ways
Are wisdom, truth, and love.*



AUGUST 19

Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.

Psalm 35:3

EVERY BELIEVER LONGS for assurance, and no one should rest satisfied without it. For though it is not necessary to our safety, it is to our comfort and usefulness. The Lord does assure his people that he is theirs, and that they are his. This is done sometimes by applying the word, sometimes by shining on the soul, and sometimes by the direct witness of the Holy Spirit. *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God,”* (Rom. 8:16). Beloved, do you feel your need of salvation? Are you seeking salvation? Do you lack the assurance of salvation? If so, make the Psalmist’s prayer your own, and cry unto God with him, *“Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.”* If God is your salvation, he will deliver you from all evil, and preserve you unto his kingdom and glory. He will give you power against Satan, victory over the world, and deliverance from the dominion, guilt, and consequences of sin. If God is your salvation, you may rejoice and not be afraid, for all things shall work for your good and God’s glory.

Who can soothe the soul’s distresses?

Jesus, Lord, thy kind word

All my sorrows eases:

By the virtue of thy passion

Make me whole, tell my soul,

I am thy salvation!



AUGUST 20

He shall teach you all things.

John 14:26

THE HOLY SPIRIT is the teacher of the church. To him the promise refers, “*All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children,*” (Isa. 54:13). He taught the apostles all things necessary for their office and work. He teaches the true ministers of Christ, leading them into the truth as it is in Jesus. And he teaches every believer all that is really necessary for him to know. The Bible is the lesson-book, the believer is the scholar, the blessed Spirit is the teacher, and experimental religion is the education. No one teaches like him. He teaches us gradually, silently and always effectually, for what the Spirit teaches us *we know*. He teaches us what God requires in the law, and what he has provided in the gospel; what Christ is to his people, and what his people are to him. His teaching makes practical Christians, for he always teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world. O to be taught of God!

*O that we might the Spirit find
By Jesus' grace bestow'd,
Which leads us into all the mind,
And all the things of God.
Come, Holy Ghost, thy power display,
And teach us all in one,
Teach us in Christ, the living Way,
To God's eternal throne.*



AUGUST 21

*Deliver me from all my transgressions.
Psalm 39:8*

NOTHING IS SO difficult to get rid of as sin. None but God can remove it. Committed in one moment, its effects may remain through all eternity. It affects God and man, and therefore deliverance from it is the greatest blessing. But before deliverance, there must be conviction, contrition, prayer, and faith. We must feel that it is an evil and bitter thing. We must be truly sorry for our sin. We must cry unto God in earnest prayer. We must believe God's word, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. If God deliver us, he will do it gratuitously, for he saves by grace. He will do it effectually, for "*as far as the east is from the west, so far will he remove our transgressions from us,*" (Ps. 103:12). He will do it eternally, for "*Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation,*" (Isa. 45:17). My friend, is this your morning prayer? Is sin a burden? Are you weary of it? Do you long to get rid of it? Carry it to God's throne, confess it there, plead the blood of Jesus to have it removed and you shall be saved.

*Jesus, my Saviour, and my Prince,
Answer on me thy saving name;
Deliver me from all my sins,
The guilt, the sorrow, and the shame;
And from mine inmost soul remove
The power, the nature, and the love.*



AUGUST 22

He shall take of mine, and show it unto you.

John 16:15

THIS IS A SPECIAL part of the work of the Holy Spirit. All things are delivered unto Jesus by the Father, and all that he has is for the use and benefit of his people. The Spirit unfolds to us the glory of his person, the riches of his grace, the glory of his righteousness, the efficacy of his blood, the power of his intercession, the preciousness of his word, and the adaptation of his offices to our state and case. He takes his doctrines, and teaches us to understand them. He takes his promises, and helps us to believe them. He takes his institutions, and inclines us to observe them. He takes his precepts, and enables us to keep them. The things of Christ are all great, glorious, and valuable. They are calculated to strengthen our faith, increase our hope, influence our love, quicken our zeal, and consecrate all our powers to his service. O that the Holy Spirit would take of the things of Christ and show them unto us today! May we see his glory, enjoy his presence, and promote his cause.

*Holy Ghost, by him bestow'd
Who suffer'd on the tree,
Take of my Redeemer's blood,
And show it unto me:
Witness with the blood thou art,
Apply it to this soul of mine;
Now assure my sprinkled heart
It is the blood divine.*



AUGUST 23

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Psalm 51:17

NOTHING WILL EFFECTUALLY break a sinner's heart but the love of Christ. No one can produce true contrition in us but the Holy Spirit. When our hearts are broken with a sense of sin, and we are truly sorry for sin, the work of the Holy Spirit is unquestionably experienced by us. We have repentance unto life. The foundation of experimental religion is laid. But if our religion does not begin with a broken heart and sorrow for sin, it is, to say the least, questionable, and ought to be thoroughly examined and compared with God's word. The broken-hearted sinner has very low views of himself, and exalted views of God, so that he fears at times that God must despise him. But no, the opposite is true. God looks upon the broken-hearted with love. He sent his Son to bind up such, and he will send the Holy Spirit to heal the heart that he has broken. God will visit, revive, and honour the contrite in spirit. O for a broken and contrite heart!

*Jesus, Giver of contrition,
Giver thou of pardon art:
Wound me, O my kind Physician,
Break, and then bind up my heart:
Who a broken-hearted sinner
Never, never wilt despise:
Cast me down, my faith's beginner,
Lift me up to Paradise.*



AUGUST 24

Whose heart the Lord opened.

Acts 16:14

EVERY HEART BY nature is closed against God, and nothing can open a sinner's heart but invincible power. It takes the same power to open a sinner's heart as it did to create the world, or to raise the dead body of Jesus from the grave. Until the heart is opened, the word will not enter, sound conviction will not be felt, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ will not be received. The preacher may preach, judgments may thunder, mercy may call, but until God open the heart all is in vain. The Lord works by means, the means generally are his word and ordinances. Sometimes he throws the heart wide open at once, and the change is striking, startling, and apparent to all. Sometimes he opens it by degrees, and then the change is gradual and almost imperceptible. But if the heart be at all opened, God has done it, and being once opened, it is never quite closed again. He openeth and no man shutteth. May the Lord open our hearts, and open them wide, that we may receive Christ, and with him the whole body of gospel truth! Lord, not only open our hearts, but enter and fill them with thy glory.

*Of every heart thou hast the key,
Command that mine may yield to thee
May hear thy whisper in thy word.
And opening new admit the Lord.*



AUGUST 25

I have laid help upon one that is mighty.

Psalm 89:19

AND WHO IS THIS mighty one, but Jesus? The anointed and appointed Saviour, who, possessing all power and infinite love, calls to us, saying, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else." He can save us, and he saves all who look to him in faith and cast their souls upon him. Help is laid upon him for us. Help, in all our struggles with sin, in all our conflicts with Satan, in all our trials in the world, in all our troubles in the church, and in encountering the last enemy. Jesus is our almighty helper. We must look to him, expect from him, and conquer by the help received from him. His grace is sufficient for us, and his strength is made perfect in our weakness. Every trouble cries, "Go to Jesus for help." Every preacher exhorts, "Look to Jesus for help." Without his help we must fail; with it we never can. Our heavenly Father having laid help on Jesus for us, let us go and seek it, pleading his word, and using it to his glory.

*Jesus, omnipotent to save,
Righteousness and strength I have,
And help laid up in thee:
Fulness of gospel-grace is thine,
And all the plenitude divine
That all may dwell in me.*



AUGUST 26

We are made partakers of Christ.
Hebrews 3:14

THIS IS THE privilege of every true believer. He is interested in Christ, he is united to Christ, and he partakes of Christ. He partakes of his Spirit, and it sanctifies him. He partakes of his righteousness, and it justifies him. He partakes of his word, and it instructs him. He partakes of his cross, and it humbles him. He partakes of his sufferings and they wean him from the world. He will partake of his glory, and that will fill him with unspeakable joy and love. Christ is the life that quickens us, the bread that feeds us, the garment that clothes us, the truth that informs us, the strength that sustains us, and the glory that will crown us. He partakes with the Father in all the glories of the divine nature, in all the honours of the eternal throne, and in all the riches of grace and glory. We partake with him in all that the Father gave him, that is suitable to our nature and circumstances. Christ is ours, and all he has is ours. Without Christ, we have nothing. With Christ, we have all things. God hath called us to participate with his Son Jesus Christ, in his love, favour, and fulness. Wondrous grace! Astonishing display of mercy!

*Jesus, on whom I dare depend,
Will fill me with the life divine,
Love me still when time shall end.
Through endless ages mine.*



AUGUST 27

*The Lord taketh pleasure in his people.
Psalm 149:4*

EVERY INTELLIGENT BEING hath some object in which he takes pleasure, except lost souls. Some take pleasure in their form, some in their wealth, some in their connections, some in their station, some in their office, some in their work, and some in their families. But the Lord taketh pleasure in his people. They may be poor, illiterate, despised, oppressed, sick, or sorrowful. But let their circumstances be what they may, the Lord takes pleasure in them. He is pleased with their persons, as he views them in Christ. He is pleased with their services, as they come before him through Christ. He is pleased with their graces, as they centre in Christ. He is pleased with them as his chosen ones, as the purchase of his Son's blood, as the temples of the Holy Spirit, and as those who are to dwell in his presence forever. Whoever may be displeased with the saints, God takes pleasure in them. Beloved, are we among his people? Do we love them, meet with them, and prefer them to all others? Are we united to Christ, living upon Christ, devoted to Christ? O to take pleasure in Jesus today!

*The Father in his saints delights,
Delighted in his Son,
For whom true love to Christ unites
They all with Christ are one.*



AUGUST 28

He was in all points tempted like as we are.
Hebrews 4:15

SWEET VIEW OF Jesus this! Here is our great High Priest, our elder Brother, tempted – and in all points tempted like as we are. He was most powerfully tempted by Satan, and the temptation lasted long. He was tempted by all classes of men. He was tried by his heavenly Father. He knows by experience what the nature and the power of temptation is. He can therefore sympathize with us, and he will pity and support us. Let us in every hour of temptation repair to our once tempted Saviour, that we may enjoy the sweetness of his sympathy, and find grace to help us in time of need. He is never a mere spectator of our temptations. He feels intensely interested in us. He bids us cast the burden on him, and he promises to sustain us. O Saviour, enable us in all times of temptation and distress, to come and prove thy sympathy, seek thy grace, and receive thy help. Friend, are you tempted? Lift up your eyes, Jesus is before the Father for you, and he was tempted in all points like as you are.

*Tempted like us our Saviour was,
Divinely to the desert led;
Like us he languish'd on the cross
Deserted at his greatest need,
Left to sustain our utmost load,
Abandon'd by his angry God.*



AUGUST 29

*Glorify ye the Lord in the fires.
Isaiah 24:15*

THE FIRES ARE afflictions. These are intended to try us, to purify us, and to endear the Lord Jesus to us. Every saint must pass through the fire, and our only concern should be to pass through honourably and usefully. Beloved, are you in the fire? Is the fire in the family, or the business, or the church, or the soul? Wherever it is, let it be your one desire to glorify God in it. You may do so by patiently enduring, by trusting the Lord's word, by speaking of his character and love, by expecting his support and supplies, and by holding fast your integrity. Beware that you lose not the benefit of an affliction, but cry mightily to God that it may be sanctified. Have you never been in the fire? If you belong to Christ you will be. He is the Refiner, and he purifies all the sons of Levi. They who are not purified in the furnace of affliction on earth will be cast as reprobate silver into the fire of hell forever. O my friend, pray the Lord to search your heart, to sanctify your nature, and to make you meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light!

*Jesus' majesty we sing.
Jesus is our glorious King,
Jesus' love our song inspires,
Praise him, praise him in the fires:
Soon he'll bring us forth as gold!
All his glories to behold.*



AUGUST 30

Ye have need of patience.

Hebrews 10:36

AND THE PATIENCE which you need you may have. Our God is the God of patience – not only the God who exercises it towards us, but the God who works it in us, and who tries it when he has wrought it. We shall need patience to suffer God’s will, which is often very trying to flesh and blood. We shall need patience to do God’s work, which is often very arduous and exhausting. We shall need patience quietly to carry our cross after Jesus, which is often very rugged and very heavy. We shall need patience to wait God’s time for deliverance, and for answers to our prayers, which are often delayed for a long season. We shall need patience diligently to watch and look for the coming of our beloved Lord, for while the bridegroom tarries the virgins are apt to slumber and sleep. Beloved, your God says, “*Let patience have her perfect work,*” (James 1:4). Jesus says, “*In your patience possess ye your souls,*” (Luke 21:19). The Apostle says, “*Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.*” God of patience give us this grace!

*Urged, surrounded by temptations,
Toiling on a stormy sea,
Saviour, we have need of patience,
Saviour, we have need of thee:
Now the needful gift impart.
Now with patience fill each heart.*



AUGUST 31

He that believeth shall not make haste.

Isaiah 28:16

FAITH IS SATISFIED with God's time, and content to walk God's pace. Sense is always in a hurry, and must be gratified at once, or it will fret, murmur, complain, doubt, and despond. Haste often throws us into confusion, and hinders instead of helps. The Lord's time is always the best, and if we are building on God's foundation, trusting in God's promise, walking in God's way, and working in God's vineyard, there can be no cause for hurry or confusion. Faith will keep us steady in the storm, quiet in the furnace, and patient under the cross. O for more faith! O for more confidence in the presence, promise, and faithfulness of God! Then we shall wait upon him in every duty, wait for him in every difficulty, and waiting upon him we shall be honoured by him. Friend, do you believe in Jesus? Do you embrace his promises? Do you depend on his veracity and faithfulness? If so, you may calmly wait his will, watch his hand, and expect his intervention without fear of disappointment.

*O that I thus on Christ reclin'd,
His quiet, meek and even mind
Might with himself possess:
I want the faith which works by hope,
Which calmly to its Lord looks up,
And waits for perfect peace.*



SEPTEMBER 1

*He pleased God.
Hebrews 11:4*

THIS WAS THE best thing he could do. Nothing could be more honourable to him, or more consistent with his profession. This should be the one business of our lives, the object of our daily pursuit, and our aim in everything we do. But if we would please God, we must study his character, receive his Son, be reconciled unto him, exercise filial confidence in him, be humble before him, keep the eye fixed upon him, and strive in all we do to glorify him. Enoch pleased God more than anyone in his day, and yet he had the cares of a family, the business of life, and an evil heart to contend with, just as we have. God is easily pleased if our hearts are influenced by filial fear and holy love. He is pleased with the desire to please him, and with the feeblest attempt to glorify his name. Beloved, if we do not seek to please God, we cannot be happy. If we make pleasing God our end in all we do, we need not fear offending anyone. And when our ways please the Lord, he will make even our enemies to be at peace with us. O to please God in all we do this day!

*Be it my only business here,
My high pursuit, my ardent care.
To please my gracious Lord;
To honour him in all I do,
Keeping the last great day in view.
And walking by his word.*



SEPTEMBER 2

He will come and save you.

Isaiah 35:4

WE OFTEN NEED deliverance, and though the Lord hath delivered us so many times, we nevertheless often doubt whether he will deliver us again. But such doubts, if encouraged, are sinful. The salvations of God are numberless. He will deliver us in six troubles, and in seven he will not forsake us. The last deliverance was but introductory to the next. The Lord will deliver us from all evil, and will preserve us unto his kingdom and glory. Beloved, are you in trouble? Does Satan harass you? Does sin distress you? Does the world persecute you? Does an evil heart of unbelief try you? Yield not to doubt. Struggle against thy fears. Your God will come and save you. He *will* come, for he has promised. He will come at the most suitable time. He will deliver you to his own glory, the confusion of your foes, and the joy of your heart. Think of this text today – especially if fears beset you, if doubts arise within you, or if you look forward and gloomy forebodings deject you. The Lord will perfect that which concerneth you. He will not forsake you.

I nothing else require.

If thou my Saviour be;

Salvation I desire.

Because it comes with thee:

Jesus, I on thy word rely,

In trouble let me find thee nigh.



SEPTEMBER 3

He that doeth good is of God.

3 John 11

IF WE DO GOOD to our fellow-men, with a view to glorify God, and out of love to the Lord Jesus Christ, it is the effect of the indwelling and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Everything is as the principle from which it proceeds. If therefore our works proceed from selfishness, or pride, or vain glory, they are not good, however excellent they may appear to men. Everything partakes of the nature of the motive by which it is influenced. Now if our motive is not pure, whatever we do is not good. That which is really good springs from a good motive, flows from a good principle, runs in a good channel, is directed by a good rule, and aims at a good end. Now if we thus do good, we are of God. We are his new creation. We are partakers of a divine nature. The Holy Ghost dwells in us. But if we are not doing good, whatever profession we may make, we are not of God. He will not own us now, nor will he acknowledge us at the last. "*He that doeth righteousness, is righteous; even as he is righteous,*" (1 John 3:7). Lord, teach us to do good to thy glory!

*By wilful sin the man who wrongs
Himself, his neighbour, or his God,
To Satan, not to Christ belongs;
He knows not the atoning blood,
Nor sees the great Invisible,
But sleeps within the mouth of hell.*



SEPTEMBER 4

A bruised reed he shall not break.

Isaiah 42:3

JESUS IS EMPHATICALLY “*The gentle One*,” the Lamb of God, the meek and lowly One. As such he invites the weary and heavy laden to come unto him, and promises to give them rest. And the poor, dejected, dispirited, doubting soul is assured that the bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench. But if he will not break it, he will nourish it, he will strengthen it, yea, he will make it a pillar in the temple of his God. Beloved, do you feel weak as the bruised reed? Jesus will not break thee. Do you see yourself to be worthless as the bruised reed? Jesus will not reject thee. Though bruised by Satan, by God’s law, by a cruel and unfeeling world, and by some high-minded professors of religion, fear not, Jesus will not allow them to break thee. He will bind up the broken-hearted. He will comfort all that mourn. He will strengthen the weak and feeble. He will establish the wavering. He will pronounce the sentence of acquittal, and will give thee the victory over all thy foes. You may with confidence approach him and say,

*Thou wilt not crush the poor and weak,
Thy tender heart can never bear
A reed already bruised to break,
To plunge the fearful in despair,
Or aggravate a sinner’s load,
Or quench the faintest spark of good.*



SEPTEMBER 5

*Having a form of godliness.
2 Timothy 3:5*

TRUE GODLINESS is the life of God in the soul, in consequence of which the life is devoted to God's service and praise. A godly man is a holy man. A godly life is a useful life. When the form of godliness clothes the power, it is both beautiful and useful. But the form without the power is a mere shadow, a deception, a snare. But it is to be feared that many are satisfied with the form. They perform certain duties, avoid outward sins, associate with professors of religion, regularly attend the means of grace, and in so doing, they fancy all is right. But this is a fearful delusion. We must be born again. Christ must be formed in us the hope of glory. We must crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. We must know God, feel the power of God, and walk in fellowship with God, or our religion is but a dream, a vain show. Beloved, have you the power of godliness? Or are you resting satisfied with the form? Many, through this mistake, fancy they are going to heaven, while they are in the direct road to hell. O search thy heart and pray:

*May truth direct my tongue,
May grace my heart control,
And Jesus be my song,
While endless ages roll;
To please him well my single aim.
And all my trust in his dear name.*



SEPTEMBER 6

What have I to do anymore with idols?

Hosea 14:8

WHAT INDEED! What did idols ever do for you? What can they do, but disappoint, vex, bewilder, and bring us under God's chastening rod? And yet our hearts are naturally set upon idolatry. If God give us a special mercy, we are apt to place it on his throne, and in order to save us, it is often necessary to bereave us. Whatever has the heart, is the idol. This God claims. This God will have. If therefore we bestow it on any other, we shall surely smart for it. One clause in the covenant is, "*From all your idols will I cleanse you,*" (Ezek. 36:25). This promise shall be sacredly kept. God will sicken us of idolatry, and like Ephraim we shall turn our back upon it, and turning to God with all the heart say, "*What have I to do any more with idols?*" Our God is a jealous God, and he will not give his glory to another, nor allow us to do it. O that the Lord would wean us from all our idols, and cleanse the temple of our hearts of every image of jealousy, and consecrate it entirely to himself for his worship and praise.

*Dear Saviour, thou art true.
Though false from thee I slide;
And wilt thou not subdue
And bind me to thy side?
I would give all my wanderings o'er:
Speak Lord, and bid me stray no more.*



SEPTEMBER 7

*Thou art my portion, O Lord.
Psalm 119:57*

CAN WE HONESTLY say this? Could we be satisfied with the Lord in the absence of everything else? Do we *think* of the Lord as our portion? Do we *look* to the Lord as our portion? Do we *live* upon the Lord as our portion? If God is our portion we shall be thinking frequently and with interest of what he is, what he has, what he has promised, and what we may expect to receive from him. Every man is naturally desirous of knowing the nature, extent, and value of his portion, and so also is the Christian man. If God is our portion, we see at once that it is spiritual, not carnal; eternal, not temporal; permanent not evanescent; infinite, not limited; invaluable, not to be estimated. If God is our portion, it is very probable that we shall have little besides God, for where God gives himself he does not usually give wealth, earthly honours, or temporal greatness. Those who have God for their portion, are generally a poor and afflicted people, emptied from vessel to vessel, lightly esteemed by the world, but who trust in the name of the Lord. O Jesus:

*Whate'er I wish or want,
Shall come from thee alone,
Thou canst my heart content,
And let thy grace be shown:
I choose thee for my portion, Lord.
Supply me well from mercy's board.*



SEPTEMBER 8

The fruit of the Spirit is love.

Galatians 5:22

ENMITY IS THE effect of sin, and the proof of depravity. Every sinner is by nature enmity against God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can he be. Where sin reigns without control, men are said to be, "*Hateful, and hating one another,*" (Titus 3:3). Hell is full of enmity – enmity against God, and against each other. Heaven is full of love – all love God, and all love each other. The Spirit, wherever he dwells in the heart, subdues our enmity, humbles our pride, breaks down our unbelief, and produces love. We love God supremely, love the saints with complacency, and love the whole world with the love of pity and compassion. We hate nothing but sin, and while we hate sin in the sinner, we pity and pray for his person. O if we were full of the Spirit, we should be full of love! There would be no strife, no envyings, no hatred or malice, but all would be love and peace. If we have no love to God as revealed in Jesus, if we have no love to saints because they are like Jesus, and if we have no love for sinners for the sake of Jesus, then we are destitute of the Spirit.

*Oh, that most precious love,
Which saints and angels know
It makes their heaven above,
And makes our heaven below!
It sparkles in the Saviour's face.
And clasps his heart with keen embrace.*



SEPTEMBER 9

We cry, Abba Father.

Romans 8:15

THIS NO ONE can do from the heart, and with confidence, but a real Christian. Nor can he do so always. Doubts will creep in. Fears will spring up. Unbelief will work. Satan will tempt. It is only as the blessed Spirit works, as we walk closely with God, as we perceive the freeness of his grace, and as we embrace and rest upon the finished work of Jesus, that we can do so. But it is the privilege of the believer, whenever anything alarms him, whenever any foe assails him, when any circumstance perplexes him, to cry, "Father, Father." The Lord loves to hear us call him Father, therefore when Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he said, "When ye pray, say, *Our Father.*" God is the Father of every believer in Jesus, and as a Father he cares for us, provides for us, sympathizes with us, and loves to be addressed by us. Beloved, is God your Father? Do you call him so? Have you ever felt the Holy Spirit in your heart, prompting you to do so? Paul said to the Galatians, "*Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father,*" (Gal. 4:6). Holy Spirit, witness to our adoption, and help us to cry, "*My Father!*"

*Adopted sons perceive,
Their kindred to the sky;
The Father's pard'ning love receive,
And, 'Abba, Father,' cry.*



SEPTEMBER 10

Thou shalt see greater abominations than these.

Ezekiel 8:15

THE PROPHET HAD no idea of the extent of Israel's wickedness, nor have we any adequate idea of the depravity of our hearts. We may have discovered much, but there is more concealed than has been discovered yet. The work of the Holy Spirit is to discover to us these abominations, to humble us on account of them, to lead us to the blood of Jesus to be cleansed from them, and to set our hearts against them. To see all the evils that are in our nature at once, would plunge us into black despair, and therefore it is only by little and little that the great deep of depravity is opened up to us. Herein we see God's mercy, and hereby we should be kept humble, watchful, prayerful and daily exercising faith in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus. No one knows the depths of depravity, or the variety of abominations that are in our hearts, but God. If any creature did, he must hate us on account of it. But God knows all, and yet loves us. This is Godlike. This is being full of compassion, abundant in goodness, and plenteous in mercy. May we be humble before God, hoping in his mercy.

*May Jesus Christ disclose
The plagues within my heart,
And as my soul more humbled grows,
A brighter faith impart.*



SEPTEMBER 11

I will dwell in them.

2 Corinthians 6:16

EVERY SAINT IS God's temple. He is set apart and consecrated to God's worship and praise. In him God dwells. The affections are his throne. The heart is his altar. The whole man is sacred to him. If God does not dwell in us, our religion is not genuine. If God does dwell in us, we shall be sure to discover it. There will be a dignity about us, a concern for God's honour, and a tenderness of conscience which others do not possess. If God dwells in us as his temple, assuredly he will take care of his own. He will cleanse us. He will adorn us. He will defend us. He will expect constant worship from us. The fire on the altar should never go out. The sacrifices should be regularly offered. Our prayers should be set before him as incense, and the lifting up of our hands as the evening sacrifice. Beloved, let us carefully examine whether God dwells in us. Let us daily seek to enjoy his presence, the light of his countenance, and the proofs of his acceptance. God in us is our honourable distinction, special privilege, and everlasting security. This thought should make us careful, watchful, and desirous to realise that God is in us.

*There he reveals his secrets deep,
And sheds his love abroad,
And there he teaches us to keep
Sweet fellowship with God.*



SEPTEMBER 12

Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.

Psalms 30:7

THE BELIEVER CAN find no substitute for the presence of his God, and having once enjoyed it, he cannot be happy or satisfied without it. The presence of God weans him from the world, gives him victory over his foes, sweetens all his sorrows, sanctifies all his afflictions, brightens all his evidences, and strips death and the grave of all their terrors. When he has the presence of his God, he can work in God's vineyard, walk in God's ways, and fight the good fight of faith. Nothing daunts him. Nothing is too hard for him. But when the Lord hides his face, then he is troubled. Satan renews his attacks. Corruptions within revive and gather strength. Ordinances become unsavoury. Closet duties are dull and lifeless. His prospects are dreary and discouraging. Nothing is right, for he frets, finds fault, sighs, groans, and cries out from the depths of his soul, "*O when wilt thou come unto me!*" (Ps. 101:2). "*Wilt thou not revive me again, that my soul may give thanks unto thee,*" (Ps. 85:6). Reader, have you ever enjoyed the light of God's countenance? Have you ever mourned under the hiding of his face? Can your heart say:

*Thou art the life of all my joys,
Thy presence makes my heav'n;
Whatever else my Lord denies,
Thy presence, Lord, be given?*



SEPTEMBER 13

Behold me, behold me.

Isaiah 65:1

THESE ARE THE words of Jesus. His words to Gentile sinners. He calls for our attention. He says, “*Behold me.*” Let us direct our attention to him. He is worthy of it. He is the author of creation, the preserver of men, the Saviour of sinners. Let us behold him in his true character as revealed in his word, and in his absolute dominion over all flesh. Let us behold him as having made provision for our deliverance from sin, Satan, death and hell, and as ready to receive, pardon and bless us. Let us behold him cradled in the manger, baptized in the Jordan, transfigured on the mount, working in the streets of Judea, agonizing in Gethsemane, standing before Pilate and Caiphas, but especially let us behold him dying on the cross. Here justice appears satisfied. Here his mercy is exalted. Here his wisdom is displayed. Here his love is glorified. Let us behold him in his word. He points to it and says, “Behold my power engaged for you, my promise pledged to you, my arms open to receive you, my witnesses testifying to encourage you.” Let us behold him and exercise faith in him, address our prayers to him, and pour out our gratitude before him.

Behold the man! his wounds, his smart!

See how he lov'd and died!

The sight will melt thy stony heart,

And crucify thy pride.



SEPTEMBER 14

*Buy and eat without money.
Isaiah 55:1*

JESUS HAS EVERYTHING we do or can need, and he has it to dispose of. He invites us to come and buy, but he bids us come without money, for his blessings have no price. They are all invaluable. They are all free. But we must come with the spirit of a buyer, of one who goes to market determined to purchase, let the price be what it may. We are to procure necessities, yea, luxuries – not only bread, but wine and milk. All the fruits of the celestial Canaan are presented to us by Jesus, and we are invited to receive them. We are exhorted to possess them. Beloved, have you any taste for spiritual provisions? Have you any desire for the blessings of grace and glory? If so, Jesus calls you to him. He wishes to confer them upon you. He is willing, yea, desirous that you should be happy. Stand no longer at a distance. Delay not, but this morning go to Jesus – go and tell him that you are come to obtain pardon, peace, righteousness, holiness, and eternal life. Take your sins, your guilt, your trials, your rags, and exchange them for pardon, righteousness, peace, holiness, and a title to endless glory. Go and say:

*Take my burdens for thy rest.
Take my death for thy life given.
Take my rags for thy rich vest.
Take my hell for thy sweet heaven.*



SEPTEMBER 15

There shall be a fountain opened.
Zechariah 13:1

AND BLESSED BE God there has been: a fountain to cleanse from all sin – a fountain opened to all sinners – a fountain to which we can repair at all times. Grace opened it, and grace keeps it open. The precious blood of Jesus is that fountain. It was shed for sinners. It was shed for sin. Its efficacy is infinite and eternal. It has cleansed the vilest, and it cleanses such still. Its virtue may be proved a thousand times. It not only suits the sinner, but the saint. It is just what the backslider wants. Beloved, it is open this morning. It is open for us. Let us repair to it. Let us step into it. Its virtues far exceed the famed Bethesda. It will heal more perfectly than did Siloam once. O what a mercy that God should keep this fountain open! What should we do without it? We could have no peace, we could never obtain pardon, our case would be desperate. But now there is ground for the strongest confidence. We may exercise the liveliest hope. This fountain not only cleanses, but it supplies us. It opens heaven, and it brings down into our possession all the riches of grace, and promises all the blessings of glory.

*Come hither soul, defiled with sin,
And wash thy heart, and make it clean;
Oh! do not, do not pass it by.
For you must wash, or you must die.*



SEPTEMBER 16

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd.
Zechariah 13:7

JESUS IS JEHOVAH's shepherd. He is entrusted with all the Lord's sheep. They were committed to him, and he became responsible for them. They sinned, and he was held accountable. Their guilt was transferred to him. He stood before God charged with their transgressions. Therefore, though he was God's fellow, the sword of justice is called upon to awake and smite him. And it did, for God "*spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,*" (Rom. 8:32). And when the servants of justice were sent to apprehend him, he presented himself and said. "*Whom seek ye?*" They said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Then said he, "I am he." But pointing to his disciples who represented his flock, he said, "If ye seek me, let these go their way." And they were permitted to depart. Beloved, if Jesus is our shepherd, he will preserve us from the sword of justice, the desert of sin, and will present us without fault before his Father in heaven. O to see Jesus as wounded for our transgressions, as bruised for our iniquities!

O Lord of Hosts, and God of love!
We bless thee for this act of grace:
Amazing mercy sure we prove
Towards a lost rebellious race,
Which bid the sword awake and smite
Thine only Son, thy heart's delight!



SEPTEMBER 17

Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:1

WE WANT TO BE strong in ourselves, or if we may not have confidence in ourselves, to have some fellow creature on whom we can rely. But God will have us confide only in Jesus. God would trust no one but Jesus, and we should not even wish to do so. There is grace in Jesus. All grace is in Jesus. He says, "*All things are delivered unto me of my Father,*" (Matt. 11:27). And the apostle says, "*It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell,*" (Col. 1:19). He is the fountain of grace, and we are to look to him at all times, and for all the grace we need. He giveth liberally and upbraideth not. Let us not fancy ourselves strong because of any grace we have received, or on account of the grace possessed by any one we love. But let us exercise confidence in Jesus alone, who giveth more grace. We are as our faith is. If therefore our faith is fixed on Jesus, if we exercise steady confidence on his veracity, word and love, we are strong. But it is only as we feel weak in ourselves that we shall do so.

*O may my soul on Jesus rest.
And with his comforts be supplied
And while his love constrains my breast,
Lean on the man that lov'd and died;
Not resting on a creature-prop.
But on the Lord my strength and hope.*



SEPTEMBER 18

*Found wanting.
Daniel 5:27*

THE LAW DEMANDS a holy nature and a righteous life. It requires that we be full weight, and it threatens us with separation from God, and the dreadful wrath of God if we are not. And yet if weighed in the balance, who of us would not be “*found wanting?*” Beloved, what is our state this morning? Are we full weight? Have we done everything which God requires of us? If not, we are wanting. But if we are found wanting, what shall we do? Let us at once repair to Jesus, his perfect work will turn the scale. He receiveth sinners. He makes over his perfect obedience to every one that believes on his name. Our deficiencies may now be made up. Our sins may all be pardoned, and our persons may now be justified. But if we should be found wanting on a bed of sickness, when racked with pain, or seized with delirium – if we should be found wanting at death – at the judgment – how awful this would be! Let us therefore examine in time. If we are wanting, then nothing that we can do, or suffer, will make us full weight.

*But if no merit I can claim,
The blood of Jesus will prevail,
Alone prevail to save from blame.
And in my favour turn the scale
Through faith in him I stand complete,
Who undertook and paid my debt.*



SEPTEMBER 19

Fear ye not therefore.

Matthew 10:31

JESUS HAD BEEN teaching his disciples that the providence of God is special and particular, and that it extends to the minutest matters, even to the numbering of the hairs of the head. If there be a providence that takes care of sparrows, numbers our very hairs, and that providence is just our heavenly Father presiding over his own works for the benefit of his people, then we ought not to fear or be anxious. But we too often lose sight of this. We look at second causes, we see the creature acting, but do not see God presiding and disposing. We do not live under the feeling that all things are working together for our good, or that God is working all things after the counsel of his own will. If we did, we should know little of anxiety or slavish fear. We should pass our days in calm confidence and holy resignation, persuaded that however things may appear now, they must issue in God's glory and the advancement of our best interests. O Holy Spirit, give us faith to believe in a special providence, which extends to our minutest concerns, and help us to banish fear!

How watchful is the loving Lord,

How sweet his providential word,

To children that believe!

Your very hairs are numbered all.

Not one by force or chance can fall

Without your Father's leave.



SEPTEMBER 20

By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Romans 5:17

ADAM SINNED AND we are guilty, for he represented us. And we are suffering the effects of his sin every day. Jesus obeyed the law and we are justified, for he also represented us. And we are enjoying the blessed results of his obedience every day. Our first federal head involved us in guilt, disgrace, and ruin. Our second federal head bestows on us righteousness, honour, and salvation. Whatever we are, either as sinners or saints, flows from connection. God never justifies without a righteousness, but as we have not one, and cannot produce one, in order that he may justify us, he sent his own Son into the world, who did all the law commanded, and suffered all the law threatened, as a public person, and his perfect obedience is placed to the account of everyone that believes on his name. By his one obedience many have been made righteous, and by his one obedience many will yet obtain justification, peace, and everlasting life. My soul, look to Jesus as thy Substitute, and Representative!

*Then let my Lord impute to me
His own obedience full and free,
As title to his bliss:
And let his Spirit too implant
All Christian graces which I want,
As pledge of happiness.*



SEPTEMBER 21

He that is not with me is against me.

Matthew 12:30

THERE IS SOMETHING very awful in the thought of being against Christ, and yet every one that is not decidedly for him is against him. There can be no neutrality. We must be friends or foes. If we are not his disciples, we are his enemies. If we are not fighting for him, we are fighting against him. If we are not working for him, we are working against him. If we are not trusting in him, we are rejecting him. How is it with us, are we *for* Christ, or *against* him? No question can be more solemn or important. No matter ought to be so thoroughly examined, and satisfactorily settled. What says conscience? What says our conduct? Are we trusting in Christ for life and salvation? Are we walking with Christ in holy fellowship? Are we obeying Christ out of sincere love? Are we copying the example of Christ in all the walks of life? How important this matter will appear by and by. What consequences will depend on the decision of it. Let us not leave it to the future, but let us decide it at once.

*May faith in Jesus fill my mind,
Such love to Jesus may I find,
Such worth in Jesus see
That I may hold his truth and name.
More dear than wealth, or ease, or fame,
More dear than life to me.*



SEPTEMBER 22

Thou art the king of Israel.

John 1:49

ALL TRUE BELIEVERS are God's Israel. The one church, which comprises all Christians is Christ's kingdom. He is anointed and appointed to be the king, by Jehovah the Father, and he will rule over the house of Israel for evermore. As a king, he is meek and lowly, just and holy, dignified and majestic, wise and prudent, always consulting the happiness and welfare of his subjects. His government is perfect, his laws are all righteous, and his subjects will be all happy. As their king he loves them, confers great and glorious privileges upon them, and will ever fight for and defend them. It is only necessary to know him, and we must love him. If we once understood the nature of his government, we must approve of and admire it. He now sits in heaven, and his reign on earth is invisible. But the time is coming when God will give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign upon the mount Zion, and then his reign will be visible. O Jesus set up thy throne in my heart, rule over every power of my soul, and make me a truly loyal subject of thy kingdom! Lord, rule in and over me this day, and every day, for thy glory.

*Thy kingdom of grace set up in my breast,
Affording me peace and sanctified rest;
Bid all my affection cry out for the Lord.
And bring in subjection my will to thy word.*



SEPTEMBER 23

Behold, God is my salvation.

Isaiah 12:2

THIS IS A FACT so glorious, so stupendous, that we may well be called upon to behold and admire it. God was angry with us, and justly. He threatened us, and righteously. We deserved nothing at his hands but punishment, and on the principles of the law we could expect nothing but wrath. But, behold, God is our salvation! This flows purely from his love. It is the effect of his free, sovereign, and distinguishing grace. To save us, he entered into covenant. To save us, he sent his Son to make an atonement. To save us, he sent his Holy Spirit into our hearts. To save us he was determined, and in saving us he rejoices. Our salvation is a gift conferred, a work wrought, a change effected. No one could accomplish our salvation but God, and he has done it. Our God is our Saviour. “*He will save, he will rest in his love,*” (Zeph. 3:17). Do we know God in this glorious character? Have we felt our need of an almighty Saviour? Have we thrown ourselves into the open arms of Jesus? Has he spoken peace to our hearts by his blood? Has he shed abroad his love within us? Let nothing satisfy us, but the inward witness of the Holy Spirit, that God is our salvation.

*Now may we find access to God,
Through the Redeemer’s precious blood,
And, while we hear thy voice of peace.
Our souls from guilt and fear release.*



SEPTEMBER 24

The Lord Jesus Christ is our hope.
1 Timothy 1:1

THE APOSTLE SUMS up the misery of the worldling in these words, “*Having no hope*” (Eph. 2:12), that is, no well grounded hope. For there is no hope for a sinner but in Christ. Yea, Christ himself is said to be our hope. He laid the foundation of it in his meritorious obedience and death. He gave the warrant for it, by sending us his everlasting gospel. He produced it, by giving us the Holy Spirit. We can have no hope of access to God, of acceptance with God, or of any spiritual blessing from God, but as we receive Christ, look to his cross, and believe his glorious gospel. Take away Jesus, and the most virtuous can have no hope. Give us Jesus and the vilest transgressor may hope for the greatest blessings. Let us build on Jesus and on Jesus alone, and we shall find him to be a foundation which will never give way. Let us live hoping for all necessary good things now, and for everlasting glory at the end of our course, for the sake of what Jesus did and suffered, and we shall never be disappointed. Beloved, is Jesus your hope? Are you hoping for mercy in his name, and heaven through his blood? If so, look up to God and say:

*Behold, his merit is our plea
On him alone our souls depend;
He is our Advocate with thee,
The helpless sinner’s powerful friend.*



SEPTEMBER 25

The consolation of Israel.

Luke 2:25

SIN HAS FILLED our world, and our natures, with all the elements of misery and unhappiness. And we never can be made truly happy, except God send down happiness from his own bosom. This he has done. Jesus came not only to save, but to console us, or to make us happy, as well as make us holy. The grace which Jesus gives is the seed of happiness, and as it springs up and flourishes in our souls, it conquers and triumphs over our misery. Beloved, if we would be happy, we must seek to be interested in, conformed to, and walk in fellowship with, Jesus. He was once the man of sorrows for us, but even then he opened a fountain of happiness to us. He called sinners who were weary and heavy laden to him, and promised to give them rest. He is now the happy One, and the happy-making One. There is a fulness of consolation in him, he comforts all that mourn, giving them the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Holy Spirit, in all seasons of trouble, in all times of depression and sorrow, lead us to Jesus as the consolation of Israel, and make us happy in his love.

*Though oft I am mourning below,
And find little permanent rest,
Yet this I assuredly know,
There is strong consolation in Christ.*



SEPTEMBER 26

I change not.
Malachi 3:6

NO ONE CAN use this language but God, for all other persons, and all things, change. We are constantly changing, either for the better or the worse, but Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. His nature is unchangeable. His office is permanent. His love is immutable. He is the Rock of ages, the unchanging Sun of righteousness. This is our comfort, we have one who always thinks of us, loves us, and cares for us, without any variation. This is the ground of our confidence, Jesus is always the same. We may expect him to sympathize with us, confer blessings upon us, and appear to supply and deliver us, for he is in one mind, and he has promised to do so. Could Jesus change, our confidence would be destroyed, our hope would dwindle, and our comfort must decay. But he is the same, and his years fail not. Let us this day, amidst all the changes we may witness, amidst all the trials we may endure, rejoice that we have an unchangeable friend in the person of our beloved Redeemer. And let us endeavour to exercise faith in his word.

What a changing world is this!
Void of all substantial bliss!
All we see beneath the sun,
In successive changes run;
But our Jesus proves the same
Endless blessings on his name.



SEPTEMBER 27

No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Psalm 84:11

EVERY GOOD GIFT, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Every good thing is in God's hand, and it is in God's heart to give all good things to upright walkers. Let us rely steadily on Jesus and his perfect work for our acceptance with God, and then let us walk uprightly in all our dealings with our fellow men, so shall we secure all things that are really necessary to life and godliness. Whatever God withholds from the upright, is not necessary. It would not be good for them, and therefore it is withheld. God has it, there is no unwillingness on his part to bestow it, there is no difficulty in the way of his imparting it, but he sees it best that we should be without it. We may ask every good thing of God, and if we walk uprightly, we may expect every good thing from God. Let us look well to our motives, our spirit, and our conduct. And let us preserve a tender conscience, so shall we ensure all that is good for us, both temporal and spiritual. God will not fail or neglect an upright man.

*Lord be my safety and defence.
My light, my joy, my bliss;
My portion in the world to come,
My confidence in this.*



SEPTEMBER 28

The Father of glory.
Ephesians 1:17

ALL GLORY DWELLS in God, and flows from God. He is the source and centre of all honour, even as the sun is the source and centre of light and heat. Jehovah is the glorious Father. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is called “*his own Son;*” “*the Son of his love;*” and “*his only begotten Son.*” He is the Father of all creation, as all things were conceived in his mind, produced by his power, and arranged by his wisdom. He is the glorious Father of his people. He predestinated them to the adoption of children. He sent the Spirit of his Son into their hearts. He deals with them as sons. He acknowledges them at his throne. He secures their eternal salvation, and he will be glorified in them when time shall be no more. Beloved, let us this day fix our minds upon our “glorious Father.” Let us think of his glorious nature and perfections, of his glorious promises, and provision for our wants, of his glorious throne and kingdom, of his glorious Son our Saviour, of his glorious heaven, and the mansions there prepared for us, and under all our sufferings direct our minds to the glory which shall be revealed. The Father of glory is:

*In part displayed to worlds above,
Not quite on earth concealed,
By wond’rous unexhausted love,
To mortal man revealed.*



SEPTEMBER 29

Daily shall he be praised.

Psalm 72:15

AND HE WELL deserves it. If all the inhabitants of heaven and earth praised him without ceasing, it would not be more than his due. He ought to be praised, and we ought to praise him. We should sing to the honour of his name, and speak of all his wondrous works. We should praise him for his infinite love, for his amazing condescension, for undertaking our cause, for dying in our stead, and for interceding for us at God's right hand. We should praise him for life and health, for civil and religious freedom, for a precious Bible, a throne of grace, a house of prayer, and all our domestic comforts. His mercies are innumerable, and they are new every morning. Great is his faithfulness. He *shall* be praised. Angels praise him for creation and preservation. Saints in heaven praise him for grace and glory. Believers on earth praise him for innumerable benefits. But the day is coming, when *all on earth* and *all in heaven* will unite to praise him, and will praise him for evermore. O to form a part of that happy band! O to be employed in praising Jesus throughout eternity! Hasten, Lord, the time when all shall praise thee.

*Praise him who loved you on the cross,
Praise him who loves you on his throne.
Praise him who turns to gain your loss.
And makes your crosses prove your crown.*



SEPTEMBER 30

My soul is exceeding sorrowful.

Matthew 26:38

THE SORROWS OF Jesus exceeded the powers of description or conception. No one can fully enter into them. No one can describe them. He had suffered much before, but he never suffered as now. His agony proceeded from an unseen cause. No creature touched him, and “yet his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground,” (Luke 22:44). He had undertaken to be our surety, and he was smarting for it. He had an adequate conception of what that load of sin was, which he was to bear and remove. He knew what the wrath and curse of God was, which he was to sustain. He understood what it was for Jehovah to bruise him, to put him to grief, and to make his soul an offering for sin. He was overwhelmed with sorrow, he was pressed to the ground with grief, his very soul was torn with agony, the load appeared insupportable, and he felt constrained to cry, “*Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,*” (Matt. 26:39). But it was not possible. If we were to be saved, he must suffer – and he did suffer.

*O what wonders love has done!
But how little understood!
God well knows, and God alone.
What produced that sweat of blood;
Who can thy deep wonders see,
Wonderful Gethsemane.*



OCTOBER 1

He is the head of the body, the church.

Colossians 1:18

THE CHURCH HERE comprises all the chosen of the Father, all who are redeemed by the Son, all who are sanctified by the Holy Ghost – or, in other words, all who shall be eternally saved. To the whole church, Christ stands in the relation of a head. Every member is united to him, dependent upon him, and receives life, strength, and wisdom from him. He is the beauty of the church, and in him dwells all the fulness of the church. As the head, he thinks for us, sympathizes with us, and rules over us. He exercises all the senses for us. He sees our fears, dangers, and wants. He hears all that is said against us in all places. He feels the deepest interest in us. And he will see to it, that all things shall work together for our good. He takes care of the whole body, even the feeblest member. He clothes all. He feeds all. He adorns all. He preserves all. He represents all. Our heavenly Father looks upon us, as the members of his Son. He loves us as he loves his Son, and he will place us in his heavenly kingdom with his Son. Beloved, let us honour Jesus as our head, and let us bless our heavenly Father for him.

*Christ the whole body will present
Before his Father's face;
Nor shall a wrinkle or a spot
Its beauteous form disgrace.*



OCTOBER 2

Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord.

Exodus 28:12

AARON WAS A type of Christ as the Great High Priest of our profession. What Aaron was to Israel, Jesus is to us. What Aaron did *for* Israel, Jesus does *for* us. The names of the twelve tribes were engraven and placed on Aaron's breast, and whenever he appeared before God in the holiest of all, the light of the Shekinah rested upon them, and God read them in his own light. Nothing was allowed to come between the names and the mercy-seat, but the blood, as he sprinkled it; or the smoke of the incense, as he waved it before the Lord. O beloved, Jesus has our names on his breast! The light of the Father's countenance rests upon them. There is nothing between them and God, but the blood that atoned for our sins, and the smoke of the incense which perfumes our prayers. Jesus constantly presents us to God, for he has entered into heaven "*now to appear in the presence of God for us,*" (Heb. 9:24). Sweet thought, my name is on the Saviour's heart, my cause is in the Saviour's hands, and he ever takes the deepest interest in my welfare! O that I could love him more!

*He hears the names of all his saints
Deep in his heart engraved;
Attentive to the state and wants
Of all his love has saved.*



OCTOBER 3

In the midst of the throne a Lamb.

Revelation 5:6

JESUS IS THE Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. To him we look as the one sacrifice for sin. Through him we expect pardon and peace. By him we have access to and acceptance with the Father. In all our trials and troubles, in all our seasons of fear and depression, whenever Satan assails us, or guilt casts us down, we look to the Lamb; and looking to him find relief and deliverance. And there is something very sweet in the thought, that when we enter heaven, we shall find the Lamb in the midst of the throne. There he is as our Saviour and sacrifice. There he is possessed of omnipotent power, infinite wisdom, and unlimited authority. There he is to receive us, and to present us to his Father as the purchase of his blood, the objects of his love, and the obedient subjects of his kingdom. O to keep this fact in mind, when going to God for blessings, when going to confess sin, when going to enjoy fellowship and communion, that the Lamb is in the midst of the throne. Our plea is there before us. Our advocate is in high favour. Our sacrifice is accepted. Our dear, dearest Lord and Saviour, is in the midst of the throne.

*O what must it be on his glories to gaze,
When his chosen are gathered in one,
Where seraphs and saints shall eternally praise,
The Lamb in the midst of the throne.*



OCTOBER 4

The joy that was set before him.

Hebrews 12:2

JESUS COULD ONLY rejoice in what would gratify his benevolent nature. The object of his joy therefore must be benevolent, and that object was the complete salvation and eternal happiness of his people. To raise millions of fallen souls to the enjoyment of holiness and happiness forever, he was willing to sink in the deep waters, and to suffer inconceivable agonies for a time. He kept his eye on the conversion, sanctification, and glorification of his people, by which his Father would be glorified, and this sustained him. He is now reaping the fruit of his pains, and waits expecting the time when all for whom he suffered, bled, and died, will be made like him, stand complete before him, and enjoy the kingdom with him forevermore. O how his benevolent heart will be delighted, how his loving heart will overflow with joy, when he sees all his people safe in his Father's kingdom! Beloved, if such was the joy of Jesus, what ought to be our joy? Ought it not to be to see him glorified, and to assist in glorifying him, first on earth and then in heaven?

*This is the heaven I long to know;
For this with patience I would wait,
Till wean'd from earth and all below,
I mount to my celestial seat.
And, wave my palm, and wear my crown.
And with the elders cast them down.*



OCTOBER 5

A strong hold in the day of trouble.

Nahum 1:7

AMAN IS BORN to trouble, and his second birth exposes him to trouble as well as the first. There is a furnace for every one to pass through – a dreary wilderness between Egypt and Canaan. Many are the stormy days that we shall see. Troubles will come, but every trouble may be turned to account. If rightly used, it will endear the Saviour, wean us from the world, make the Bible more precious, and strengthen our desires after the better land. Jesus is a strong hold in the day of trouble. To him we may repair and find safety. If we enter into him we shall enjoy supply. He will protect us from every foe, and secure us amidst all the wars, convulsions, and tempests of the present world. The door of this hold is always opened to every sinner that repairs to it, its walls are impregnable and cannot be stormed, and its resources are boundless and cannot be exhausted. *“The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe,”* (Prov. 18:10). Beloved, in every trial and trouble, let us repair to Jesus. He will receive us, he will soothe our sorrows, and he will effectually prevent our being injured.

*Then dry up your tears, ye children of grief,
For Jesus appears to give you relief.
If you are returning to Jesus your Friend,
Your sighing and mourning in singing shall end.*



OCTOBER 6

Humbleness of mind.
Colossians 3:12

THIS IS ONE OF the Christian ornaments which the elect of God are exhorted to put on and wear. How much we have to make us humble, and yet how little effect it has upon us. If we reflect upon our origin, and look unto the rock whence we were hewn – if we consider the course we pursued before conversion, even the course of this world – or if we remember what we have been and done since the Lord called us by his grace, one would think we should see enough to make and keep us humble. But we have the example of our Lord. He never encouraged one high thought, he never put on one proud look, and he never spake one contemptuous word. But meekness, humility, and love, characterized all he thought, did, or said. And he has left us an example that we should follow in his steps. If we think rightly of ourselves, we shall think humbly. Let us therefore endeavour to think soberly, of our talents, stations, acquirements and rights, that humbleness of mind may characterize us. We can only be happy as we are humble. We can only recommend religion, adorn our profession, or attain to extensive usefulness, as we put on humbleness of mind. Let us then be clothed with humility.

*Jesus to my soul impart
Thy good Spirit from above
To enrich my barren heart,
With humility and love.*



OCTOBER 7

Christ died for our sins.

1 Corinthians 15:3

SIN IS GOD'S chief enemy. God never had an enemy until sin was conceived and brought forth. It is inconceivably aggravating, loathsome, and abominable in his sight. It is a dreadful evil, a fearful foe, an unmerciful tyrant, and a tremendous pestilence. We are the subjects of it, we are infected by it, and we were in love with it. In the plan of salvation we were viewed as sinners. As sinners we were chosen to salvation. As sinners we were redeemed from the curse. As sinners God sent the good news of the gospel to us. As sinners the Holy Spirit took possession of us, and began his good work in our hearts. As sinners we are saved, and saved by grace from first to last. Jesus Christ is our great Friend. He became our Substitute and Surety, and as such he died for our sins, that he may blot them out as a charge against us, justify us from them, cleanse us completely from their guilt and filth, and make a full and sufficient atonement for them. He died for the sins of all who believe on his name, confide in his merits, and walk by the rule of his holy word.

*Here's my claim, and here alone,
None a Saviour more can need;
Deeds of righteousness I've none:
No, not one good work to plead:
Not a glimpse of hope for me,
Only in Gethsemane!*



OCTOBER 8

That ye may be sincere.

Philippians 1:10

SINCERITY IS A great ornament, and it is one of the essentials of the Christian character. A man must be sincere, or he cannot be a Christian. To be sincere is to be simple, open, free from fraud or duplicity. A double minded man, or a double faced man, or a double tongued man, is no Christian, let him be what else he may. God's Israelites have no allowed guile. They hate hypocrisy and pretence. To be sincere is to be pure, bearing examination as to principles, possessions, and practices. Any man who does not frequently examine himself, and who is afraid of being examined by others, has reason to question his sincerity. O may we be sincere! Sincerely believing God's truth, sincerely seeking God's glory, sincerely doing God's will, and sincerely seeking to promote God's cause! Without sincerity, our profession is a lie, our pretensions are an insult to God, and our end will be according to our deeds. Reader, are you what you profess to be? Is there no pretence, no putting on, no deception in your profession or conduct? O "*That you may be sincere.*"

*May we be kept sincere,
And after Jesus breathe.
Still walk in godly fear,
And close to Jesus cleave
In all sincerity rejoice,
And hear thy kind approving voice.*



OCTOBER 9

A brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 17:17

THIS MAY BE TRUE of others, but it is emphatically true of Jesus. We brought ourselves into adversity, and Jesus became our brother to bring us out. The children being partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise himself took part of the same. He who was our God, became our brother. He who created us, became like us. And he did so that he might show his love to us, sympathize with us, and deliver us. As our brother, he became responsible for our debts, and he paid them. He engaged to restore us to our Father's image and to set us before his face forever, and he will do so. In all our seasons of adversity in this world, he shows a brother's love. He visits us. He counsels us. He comforts us. He supplies us. He stands by us when all else forsake us. He makes up all our losses, sanctifies all our crosses, bears all our burdens, and carries all our cares. He has always a brother's heart. He performs a brother's part. He is our nearest of kin, and he performs the part of a kinsman well. O wondrous love of Jesus, which brought him into the closest relationship to us, and influenced him to do every thing he could for us! O Saviour:

*Thy wounded hands and feet proclaim
That love and mercy meet in thee;
That Jesus is the sweetest name,
The Brother in adversity!*



OCTOBER 10

He hath chosen us in him.

Ephesians 1:4

THAT IS, IN Christ Jesus. This was the first display of Jehovah's grace towards us. All the creatures lay spread out before his omniscient eye. He saw the whole of them, and what every one would do and be. Nothing was concealed from his eye, everything appeared as it afterward existed. And with the thorough knowledge of all that his people would be and do, he chose them unto eternal life. He chose them to be a special people unto himself, above all people that dwell upon the face of the earth. He chose them in Christ, who was appointed to be their Head, their Substitute, their Surety, their Representative, and infallible Saviour. He chose them to make them holy, to raise them to the highest honour, and to exalt them to perfect happiness. He chose them in eternity. His choosing them was an act of gracious sovereignty. His choice of them secures to them an interest in the work of Christ, union to the person of Christ, and a share in the glory of Christ. O wondrous display of infinite grace! Lord, help me to make my calling and election sure.

*Nothing but grace appears,
In this eternal choice,
It charms the humble saint.
And makes the soul rejoice;
Its endless glory shines so bright,
It makes obedience all delight.*



OCTOBER 11

Purchased with his own blood.

Acts 20:28

PAUL IS SPEAKING of the church. He was in the habit of viewing it as a purchased possession. The price paid for it was the blood of Christ, whom the apostle calls “God.” The whole church therefore is bought and paid for. The price paid was satisfactory, and the property will all be given into the Saviour’s hand. The Father, who received the price, will draw the purchased ones to the Son, and all who come to him will be cheerfully received by him. The church of Christ belongs therefore to no one but Christ. Hence the apostle says, “*ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s,*” (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Beloved, let us view ourselves as the property of Jesus, as property purchased and paid for, as property purchased at a price which no created mind can calculate, and which defies all the powers of arithmetic to set forth. The blood of Jesus! The blood of God’s own Son! The blood of God manifested in flesh! Who can conceive its value? Who can question its efficacy? Who dare trifle with it? Precious blood of Jesus, may my eye be steadily fixed on thee, at all times, and in all places!

*’Tis through his blood my prayers ascend
And reach Jehovah’s throne;
Through it my God accepts and smiles,
And pours his blessings down.*



OCTOBER 12

My Father.
Jeremiah 3:4

THIS IS A child's cry – a word which no slave was allowed to use. It is full of meaning. It is full of love. It is full of comfort. It is a title which the Lord loves to hear us use, therefore he says, "Wilt thou not call me, My Father." Lord, give us the Spirit of adoption this morning, and let us see and feel that we are thy children! Believer, to whom will you repair in trouble? To whom will you look in difficulty? To whom will you cry in danger? From whom will you expect in need? Surely I hear you say, "My Father." And who speaks to you in the Bible? Who tries you by his providence? Who chastens you with his rod? Who strips and cleanses you? Who humbles and reproves you? Again you will say, "My Father." Who supports the world? Who controls the nations? Who chains up Satan? Who blesses the church? Who comforts the believer? Who pardons the backslider? Who receives the sinner? Again you reply, "My Father." Then I exhort you to trust your Father's word, abide in your Father's house, expect from your Father's hand, and say in every trial, "I will arise and go to my Father," (Luke 15:18).

*God is my Father, then I see,
He will all good bestow
In everlasting love to me,
His mercies daily flow.*



OCTOBER 13

*Through sanctification of the Spirit.
2 Thessalonians 2:3*

GOD HAS CHOSEN us to salvation – this is the end. But it is through sanctification of the Spirit – this is the means. The sanctification of the Spirit commences in regeneration, it is carried on through life, and will be completed in the day of Christ. It consists in making us holy, or inwardly and outwardly conforming us to the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ. It separates us from the world, sets our hearts against sin, consecrates us to the Lord's service, makes us zealous for his glory, and creates us anew in Christ Jesus. Physically we are the same as before, but morally and spiritually we differ. The more we experience of the sanctifying work of the Spirit, the more clearly we shall discover our own sinfulness, the more we shall be tried with our inward corruptions, the more we shall see the need of the Saviour's blood, the more we shall bless God for the Redeemer's finished work, and the more carefully and cautiously we shall walk in our intercourse with an ungodly world. Nothing will prove our election by the Father, or our redemption by the Son, but the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

*Lord, while below, may I enjoy
More sanctifying grace;
Then shall my spirit soar on high,
And feel more solid peace.*



OCTOBER 14

He that hath the Son hath life.

1 John 4:12

JESUS IS PRESENTED to us in the everlasting gospel as God's free gift. He contains in himself all we do, or can possibly need. His wealth is unparalleled. His riches are unsearchable. Christ must either be received or rejected by us. If we feel our need of him, if we desire to possess him, we are heartily welcome to him. God gives him to sinners. He presents himself to sinners. He says, "*He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me,*" (Matt 10:40). He that hath Christ hath life – he is quickened by the Holy Spirit, he is delivered from all condemnation, and he is entitled to everlasting glory. He that hath the Son, hath in reality all things, for all things go with Christ. He hath a righteousness that justifies him from all things, a peace that passeth all understanding, strength that will enable him to overcome all foes, and wisdom that will preserve him from falling into any fatal snares. He that hath Christ *now*, will have Christ *forever*. If we have Christ in life, we shall have Christ in death. If we have Christ on earth, we shall have Christ in heaven. He that hath Christ is fully, freely, and eternally blest. Reader, have you received Christ? Life or death hangs on this.

*He that hath Christ is always blest,
From him we cannot fall;
Christ is our life, our joy, our rest,
Our God, our strength, our all.*



OCTOBER 15

My delights were with the sons of men.

Proverbs 8:31

THESE ARE THE words of Jesus, who is the personal wisdom of God, and in whom is hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In eternity he looked forward and anticipated the occurrences of time. His heart was set upon his people. His love was flowing forth towards them. He rejoiced over them. He delighted in them. They were precious to his soul. He seemed to long for the time when he should come and prove his love to them, by suffering and dying for them. He delivered them because he delighted in them. How truly wonderful that Jesus should delight in creatures so mean and insignificant, so depraved and sinful. In creatures who would treat him with contempt, and break his loving heart. But there is no accounting for love, especially the love of Jesus. It is infinite, immutable, transcendent. But is it possible that Jesus had his eye on me, that his heart glowed with love to me, that he delighted in the thought of making me his own, even before the foundation of the world? Yes, if you are a believer, it is more than possible, for it is a solemn, a delightful fact.

*No claim had we who now enjoy
The smiles of our redeeming God:
He only knows who chose us, why
Our hearts are his divine abode.*



OCTOBER 16

My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

Psalm 13:5

WE MAY REJOICE in this when we can rejoice in nothing else. It always suits us, and it is calculated to raise us above all that is gloomy, depressing, and sorrowful. God's salvation is his glory, and it is our best portion. It is a deliverance from all that is injurious, degrading, and dreadful. It is a restoration to all that is beneficial, elevating, and delightful. And it is a title to joys more pure, treasures more vast, and honour more glorious than unfallen Adam ever experienced. God's salvation is himself saving sinners in the most free, complete, and glorious manner. Each of the Divine persons in Jehovah are engaged and employed in saving us, therefore we may well say, "*My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation,*" (Ps. 13:5). To be saved at all should fill us with gratitude and joy, but to be saved by the Lord, should cause our hearts to leap for joy, and fill our mouths with constant songs. This should make us happy in the dreariest season, and cheer as in the most wintry day. O my soul, when thou canst not rejoice in thy frames, thy friends, thy possessions, or immediate prospects, then rejoice in God's salvation.

*Rejoice, my soul, and prize thy lot,
Though trials should abound:
Thy Father's purpose changes not,
And he will have thee crowned.*



OCTOBER 17

*Thou wast precious in my sight.
Isaiah 43:4*

ALL THE LORD's people are precious in the Lord's sight. Never was child so precious in the estimation of a fond mother, as the poorest, weakest believer, is to the Lord Jesus. They are precious to him as creatures, as sinful creatures, but especially as regenerated creatures. They are precious to him, therefore he laid down his life for them, and will never, never part with one of them. Their persons are precious, their graces are precious, their prayers and praises are precious, and their life is precious. "*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints,*" (Ps. 116:15). Everything he has done for them, said to them, or set before them, proves that they are precious to him. His invitations, his expostulations, his promises, his exhortations, and his warnings, prove this. They are precious to the Father, as his choice – precious to the Son, as his bride – precious to the Holy Spirit, as his temple. They are redeemed by precious blood, blessed with precious faith, interested in precious promises, entitled to precious things, and are comforted with God's precious thoughts. If we are precious to Jesus, he will certainly be precious to us.

*Hear, O my soul, what Jesus saith.
Nor tremble to depart;
For all his saints in life and death,
Are precious to his heart.*



OCTOBER 18

A great fight of afflictions.

Hebrews 10:32

PRIMITIVE BELIEVERS WERE exposed to fiery trials, and the most unmerciful persecutions. In them see what true faith will bear, and what grace will enable us to overcome. They had not only patience, but joy. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. They felt it an honour to be persecuted for the sake of Jesus. They rejoiced to suffer for him, who had suffered so much for them. They had the inward witness that Christ was theirs, that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Nothing will enable us to suffer for Christ, like the assurance of an interest in Christ. We may not have to battle with afflictions, just in the same way as the first Christians did. But we too must suffer. Through much tribulation, inward or outward, we must enter into the kingdom of God. Let us therefore prepare for it. Let us get our evidences brightened, our sword sharpened, our courage increased, our confidence strengthened, that so we may withstand in the evil day, and having done all, stand. Jesus our Captain will lead us into the field, and if we look to him, trust in him and copy his example, he will bring us off more than conquerors.

*Trials may press of every sort,
They may be sore, they must be short;
We now believe, but soon shall view
The greatest glories God can show.*



OCTOBER 19

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Romans 8:35

CANY ANYTHING OCCUR which Jesus did not know? Can any enemy arise for whom Jesus is not prepared? Did he know the end from the beginning? Was he acquainted with all that is in us, with all that would be done by us, and with all that would happen to us, when he set his love upon us? If he did not, can he be God? If he did, is it likely that he will allow anything which he foresaw from eternity, to separate us from his love? Beloved, there is nothing new to Jesus, and there *can* be nothing new. Therefore as he fixed his love upon us, knowing the very worst of us, he will not allow anything to turn away his love from us. Once united to Christ, we remain united forever. Having loved his own, he loveth them unto the end. We may therefore look around upon all that threatens us, upon all that discourages us, upon all that is calculated to fill us with alarm, and ask, "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? I am persuaded, that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" Sweet truth this. Lord help me to take the comfort of it.

*No separation! cheers my heart,
And bids my fears subside;
My soul and Jesus cannot part,
For me he lived and died.*



OCTOBER 20

I will not contend for ever.

Isaiah 57:16

AFFLICTIONS ARE SOMETIMES divine contentions. If we will not obey the word, we shall feel the rod. Our heavenly Father never makes us smart without a need be for it. But sometimes our afflictions are long continued, and we fancy they will never be removed. Here therefore the Lord informs us, that he will not contend forever. Nor will he contend one moment longer than it is necessary. But the child must yield, the proud spirit must bow, and the haughty look must be brought down. If we were to mortify the flesh, God would not mortify our spirits. If we were to crucify the old man, God would not so try the new man. We must be weaned from the world. We must be made partakers of the afflictions of the gospel. We must pass through the wilderness to Canaan. The cross always comes before the crown, and the bitter before the sweet. But the wilderness will soon be crossed, death will soon lift the cross from our galled shoulder, and the spirit of heaviness will be exchanged for the garment of praise. The Lord will not contend for ever. He will turn again. He will lift us from the dust, and cause us to inherit the throne of glory.

*Light are the sufferings we endure,
Contrasted with eternal bliss;
Strength as the day, he does ensure,
Until we see him as he is.*



OCTOBER 21

Yet will he have compassion.

Lamentations 3:22

ARE YOU SORELY tried? Are you writing bitter things against yourself? Is the hand of God gone out against you? Does he hold back the face of his throne, and hang a cloud upon it? Does he break you with breach upon breach? Are you ready to say, “*All these things are against me?*” (Gen. 42:36). Cheer up, the storm will soon cease, the dark clouds are floating into the distance, the sun will soon burst forth, even now faith may see the bow in the cloud, for “*though he cause grief, yet he will have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies,*” (Lam. 3:32). Even now he pities you with a father’s pity. He waits but the fittest time to manifest himself to you again. Infinite compassion reigns in his heart, even while frowns seem to cover his face, and the rod is seen in his hand. Keep fast hold of his precious promise. Wait in hourly expectation at his gracious throne. Come to the determination of afflicted Job, “*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,*” (Job 13:15). But he will not slay you. He will try you, purify you, fit you for service, and prepare you for heaven. And he will have compassion upon you, for his compassions fail not.

*His love is constant as the sun,
Though clouds oft come between,
And could our faith but pierce those clouds,
It might be always seen.*



OCTOBER 22

All men should honour the Son.

John 5:23

THIS IS THE Father's will, is it yours? The Father wills that the Son should be honoured equally with himself, and if our minds are spiritual we shall rejoice that he does so. Every soul that is taught by the Holy Spirit wishes to exalt, honour, and glorify Jesus. We can never exalt him high enough to satisfy us. We wish to praise him with warmer hearts and sweeter voices than the angels do. He deserves to be honoured. He is God equally with the Father. He possesses all divine attributes and perfections. But he humbled himself, he made himself of no reputation, he wore the servant's form, he died the death of a slave, and for what? To deliver us from the curse of the law, to save us from going down into the pit, to raise us to glory, honour, and immortal life. Blessed be his dear name for his wonderful love! Let heaven and earth praise him for his amazing grace. Throughout eternity he will be honoured by all his saints for what he did for them, bestowed upon them, and secured to them. O that we could now praise him as he deserves, and render again according to that which he has done for us!

*Whate'er his Father hath, he claims;
His honours, attributes, and names:
He spread the starry skies abroad,
And heaven, and earth proclaim him God.*



OCTOBER 23

*He will abundantly pardon.
Isaiah 55:7*

JEHOVAH DOES EVERYTHING like himself – like a God. There is nothing of the creatures' littleness or niggardliness about him. If he bless, he blesses indeed. If he make free, he makes free indeed. If he pardon, he does it readily, cheerfully, completely. He will multiply his pardons, until they go beyond the transgression of the returning sinner, or mourning backslider. We are apt to think that God is backward to pardon, and that we must do something to induce him. But the opposite of this is the truth. He is ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon him. All he requires is that we be convinced of sin, desire to be delivered from it, and make a frank confession of it, pleading the sacrifice of his dear Son. And then he pardons instantly, according to his word: "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,*" (1 John 1:9). Beloved, are you in a pardoned state? Or are you desiring to obtain the forgiveness of your sins? If so, arise and go to the Lord's throne, confess your transgressions, plead the precious blood of Jesus, and he will abundantly pardon.

*My sins are many like the stars,
Or sands upon the shore:
But yet the mercies of my God
Are infinitely more.*



OCTOBER 24

According to his mercy he saved us.

Titus 3:5

GOD'S MERCY IS the fountain of every blessing. We may trace every good thing that we receive or enjoy to this. But the greatest thing that mercy ever did, was to save sinners. Salvation is of the Lord. It is a work of such magnitude, that no creature could ever have conceived it, nor could all the creatures combined have executed it. Jehovah, to display his wisdom, mercy, and power, determined to save – and to save according to mercy, which always pities the poor, sympathizes with the miserable, and confers its blessings on the unworthy. If salvation was by desert, or on the ground of some excellency possessed, or for the sake of something the saved ones were to do, we must sit down in despair. For what do we deserve, but hell? What do we possess, but sin? What can we do, that is not polluted and worthless. But now salvation is according to mercy. The vilest may hope, and the most unworthy may enjoy the blessing. Mercy can give what we never could expect or deserve. Let us therefore expect to be saved by the mercy of God, through regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. By grace are ye saved.

*'Tis not by works of righteousness
Which our own hands have done;
But we are sav'd by sovereign grace
Abounding through his Son.*



OCTOBER 25

*Uphold me with thy free Spirit.
Psalm 51:12*

THE HOLY SPIRIT always works freely, and leads the soul into freedom. As Jesus did all without us, the Holy Spirit does all within us. We need his constant presence, power, and grace. Except he uphold us, we shall certainly fall. David had fallen, he now deeply felt his weakness, and therefore he prays to be upheld by God's free Spirit. Let this be our daily prayer. It will never be unsuitable. We should have fallen before this if God had not kept us, and we may fall any day, except we are upheld by an invisible arm. This day Satan may lay some snare for us. This day our evil hearts may deceive us. This day the world may lay some unexpected bait for us. And if so, unless the Holy Spirit open our eyes, give us fresh supplies of grace, or hold us back by an invisible power, we shall disgrace our profession, dishonour God and wound our own consciences. Remember, Christian, you are deeply indebted to the Holy Spirit for your preservation. Realise your obligation and dependence. And while you do so, seek the constant teaching, guidance, and keeping of the blessed Comforter.

*May we daily grow in grace,
And pursue the heavenly race.
Train'd in wisdom, led by love.
Till we reach our rest above.*



OCTOBER 26

He hath followed me fully.

Numbers 14:24

THIS WAS GOD’S testimony to the consistency of Caleb. May we obtain an equally good report. To follow the Lord fully is to follow him with all the heart, to follow him at all hazards, and to follow him all our days. Except our hearts are engaged in obeying God’s will and imitating Christ’s example – except we are willing to risk everything in God’s service and for Christ’s honour – except we persevere in following the Lord below until he calls us up above, we cannot be said to follow him fully. There must be no reserve, no half-heartedness, no cowardice, no seeking to please men at God’s expense, or we do not follow the Lord fully. Beloved, this is the only truly happy life. This is the only truly useful life. This is the only way to secure a blessed death, and a glorious reward at the resurrection of the just. If we follow the Lord fully, some will reflect upon us, some will condemn us, but conscience will approve, saints will admire and the Lord Jesus will commend. Let us therefore make it our business to imitate the conduct of Caleb, so shall we inherit Caleb’s blessing, even a glorious portion in the promised land.

I cannot serve the Lord and sin:

I must decided be;

Though shame, reproach, and loss attend.

By grace I will serve thee.



OCTOBER 27

I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.

Psalms 18:1

REAL RELIGION FLOWS from God's love to us, and consists in our love to God. Our love is excited and drawn forth by the displays of God's love to us. When he pardons our sins, speaks peace to our consciences, conquers our fears, relieves our distresses, supplies our wants, gives us victory over our foes, and enables us to call him our Father, then we love him. Our love is sincere and hearty, supreme and abiding. Not but it is interrupted in its exercise, and sometimes appears buried under the rubbish of our corruptions. But it will revive again, and it will break forth anew. Though damped, it never dies. It is like its author, immortal. O to love God more! O to enjoy his love shed abroad in our hearts more! The Lord was David's strength, deliverer, and defence. He had proved the Lord's power, faithfulness, and love. Therefore he said, "*I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.*" Our God *has* been our strength, and he *is* now our strength. Let us therefore devoutly and earnestly pray the Holy Spirit to enable us to love, that so we may say:

*Thee will I love, my strength, my tower,
Thee will I love, my joy, my crown,
Thee will I love with all my power,
In all thy works, and thee alone;
Thee will I love till the pure fire
Fill my whole soul with strong desire.*



OCTOBER 28

Now is Christ risen from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:20

THE RESURRECTION OF Jesus should fill us with joy. It is the proof that his sacrifice was accepted, that his foes were conquered, and that his Father was well pleased. He was seized as our Surety, he was punished as our Substitute, he died as our Representative, and he arose as our glorious Deliverer. The resurrection of Jesus says, "Sin is put away, righteousness is brought in, Satan is defeated, death is unstung, justice is satisfied, the law is magnified, Scripture is fulfilled, the gates of heaven are thrown open, God is at peace with us, eternal redemption is obtained, and the salvation of all God's people is absolutely certain." Beloved, Jesus is risen, therefore let us rise from earth, sin and sadness, and let us set our affections on things above, put off the old man with his deeds, and rejoice in God our Saviour. Jesus is risen, let us therefore trust in his merits, confide in his power, and rest on his word. He is now gone into heaven for us, he is there as our Advocate, and he ever pleads our cause before his Father, and against every foe.

*Christ hath the ransom paid;
The glorious work is done;
On him our help is laid;
By him our vict'ry won.
Captivity is captive led
For Jesus liveth, that was dead.*



OCTOBER 29

*A man shall be as a hiding place.
Isaiah 32:2*

GOD ONLY PROVIDES what is necessary for us, but he provides all that is necessary. The present world is like a bleak and cheerless desert, the climate is very changeable, and we are exposed to piercing, cutting winds. Sometimes dangerous errors, sometimes deep afflictions, sometimes searching and soul-distressing trials, like violent winds, blow upon us and fill us with alarm and dread. At such times a hiding place is necessary. Jesus, the man who is God's fellow – Jesus, who is one near to us and can sympathize with us – Jesus, who has himself been exposed to all the bitter blasts of the wilderness – Jesus, who can give rest and safety, is appointed to be our hiding place. He will hide us from the wrath of God, the rage of hell, and the injurious effects of trials and troubles. He is presented to us, and God commands us to enter into him. He is near to us, and contains all we need. Beloved, do you see and feel your need of this hiding place? Do you fear to enter it – to trust in it? Fear not, it has received, sheltered, and preserved thousands such as you. Are you in it? If so, abide in it. Nowhere else will you find such safety, or enjoy such repose.

*A few more rolling suns at most,
Will land me on fair Canaan's coast.
There I shall sing the song of grace,
And see my glorious hiding place.*



OCTOBER 30

A friend of publicans and sinners.

Matthew 11:19

THIS WAS SAID of Jesus by way of reproach, but it is his true glory. He is the friend of sinners. We needed a friend, but no one but Jesus could possibly perform the friendly part. Our state must have been desperate without him, and to restore us cost him all he had. Never did creatures so much need a friend, never were there creatures who so little deserved a friend, and never was there such a friend as Jesus. He gave his person for ours – his life for ours. He opened the treasures of his grace to meet all demands that could be made upon us, and to supply all the needs experienced by us. He was our friend on earth, and he is our friend in heaven. He is the perfect model of friendship. We may go to him in all our troubles, ask of him a supply of all our needs, consult him in all our difficulties, trust him in all our times of trial, and expect him to send us all that is really necessary. He engaged for us in covenant, he died for us on Calvary, he pleads for us in heaven, and he will soon come and fetch us that we may dwell with him forever. O for grace to love him, trust him, and obey him as we ought! O for more familiarity with him!

*The title that was meant in scorn.
He takes and binds upon his brow;
And thus the guilty and forlorn,
Are taught his character to know.*



OCTOBER 31

O Lord, revive thy work!

Habakkuk 3:2

CHRISTIANITY IS THE work of God. He begins it, he carries it on, and he completes it in the day of Christ. It is the work of his own hands which he never forsakes, the work which is to reflect the glory of all his divine perfections. But this work often needs reviving. Our graces become weak, our evidences decline, our spirituality decays, and we grow cold, careless, and worldly minded. Then we have no sweet visits, no tokens for good, no heart-affecting fellowship, no longings for glory. Our affections fix on some earthly object, our conscience becomes benumbed or accuses us, our understanding is bedimmed, and we sink into an unhealthy state. Our souls cleave to the dust, and all we can do is to cry, “*Quicken me according to thy word,*” (Ps. 119:25). When the Lord comes to revive his work, he often sends some painful cross, brings us down into the dust by some affliction, and makes us see our sin and smart for our folly. He convinces us, humbles us, empties us, and makes us feel thoroughly ashamed of our conduct. Then he leads us to confession, produces contrition, speaks pardon, and smiles upon us again. O Lord, revive thy work in me!

*Lord, from this hour, exert thy power,
To melt my stubborn heart;
O make it bleed, let peace succeed,
And holy joys impart.*



NOVEMBER 1

*The God of hope.
Romans 15:13*

HOPE IS ONE OF the greatest comforts we enjoy, and a good hope through grace is one of the greatest blessings which God confers. We were by nature hopeless. There is nothing in nature that can generate hope in the bosom that is really convinced of sin. Hope comes *from* God, centres *in* God, and is sustained *by* the word of God. Our God is the God of hope. He has laid a firm foundation for hope in his covenant, promises, and the sacrifice of his dear Son. He produces hope in our hearts by the power and work of his Holy Spirit. He tries our hope by the dispensations of his providence, and the various trials through which he causes us to pass. We may hope in God, for he is good. We should hope in God, for he has promised. We must hope in God, or our foes will conquer us, our sins will have dominion over us, and our fears will be too strong for us. Beloved, do you view God as the God of hope? Are you exercising hope in him? Is your hope founded on his word? Does it lead you to purify yourself? Does it stimulate you to duty, devote you to God, and make you concerned for the welfare of your fellow-men? A good hope will.

*Our Jesus is the God of hope,
He works it by his power;
It holds the weak believer up,
In the distressing hour.*



NOVEMBER 2

What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Hebrews 12:7

EVERY BELIEVER IS a son of God, and every one of God's sons frequently require the rod. God as a father is wise, prudent, and holy. Therefore he will correct all the follies of his children, and make them wise unto salvation. God never had a child in his family who did not need the rod, save his only begotten Son. And there never was a child of God who did not feel it. If we were not children, he might allow us to go on and punish us with the world, but because we are sons, he chastens us betimes. Let us therefore bear our chastisement with patience, for we deserve it. Let us humble ourselves under it, that our Father may remove it. Let us be more anxious for its sanctification than for its removal. Let us look upon all our afflictions as proofs of our Father's love, as intended to lead us to repentance, and as calling for a reformation of life and manners. Better it is to be chastened than disowned. Better to be chastened now, than be condemned with the world at last.

*Lord, thy gracious work begin.
Now for some good token give;
Give me now to feel my sin.
Give me now my sin to leave.
Bid me look on thee and mourn.
Bid me to thine arms return.*



NOVEMBER 3

Is thy God able to deliver thee?

Daniel 6:20

THIS WAS THE question of an heathen monarch, put to a servant of the most High God. He did not seem to question but he would deliver him if he could. But he both could and did. Beloved, this question may be very often put to us, not only to encourage, but to reprove us. Let our trouble, trial, or difficulty, be what it may, the question meets us, "*Is thy God able to deliver thee?*" If so, why do you droop, doubt, or despond? But has he promised to deliver thee? He has. Then your fears must be sinful, as they indicate unbelief and distrust. Until we come into some trial, from which God cannot deliver, or into some state to which the promise does not reach, we ought not to fear, but rather encourage a cheerful hope. Let us then endeavour, under our sorest trials, to remember this great truth: Our God is able to deliver us. He has given us his word that he will deliver us. It is impossible for him to lie or to change his mind. He has delivered thousands out of similar difficulties before, therefore we should trust and not be afraid. Sinner, God can deliver thee, but no one but God can. If you seek him now, he will be found of you.

*O that we could more faithful be
To thee, our bleeding Lord!
Lead us to learn at Calvary
Obedience to thy word!*



NOVEMBER 4

A servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

James 1:1

BETTER BE GOD'S servant than a king's son. The apostles gloried in this character. They all style themselves God's servants, and rejoice to add that they are the servants of Jesus too. If God is our father, he is also our master. If we are saved by Jesus, we shall rejoice to serve Jesus. If we are God's servants, we shall love our master, prefer his work, consult his will, be jealous of his honour, and seek to enjoy his approbation. If God is our master, he will appoint us our work, find us supplies, correct our mistakes, and always keep us employed, and at last will reward our labour. As servants we should be honest, and not waste our master's time or property. We should be industrious, always at work or waiting for orders. We should be attentive, listening to the master's voice and treasuring up his words. We should be kind, courteous, and obliging to our fellow servants. If Jesus is our master, we have the best in the universe. And if we saw things rightly, we should conclude that no one had a better place.

*A single eye, a faithful heart,
My Jesus to thy child impart,
In every trying hour.
Faithless, tormenting thoughts prevent,
Still keep my eye on thee intent,
Till sight my faith o'erpower.*



NOVEMBER 5

We ought to love one another.

1 John 4:11

THIS IS A self-evident truth. If we are children of the same family, subjects of the same government, travellers in the same road, partakers of the same hope, and are destined to live forever in the same home, we *ought* to love one another. But God's great love to us is assigned as the principal reason why we should do so. God loves all his children alike. He gave his Son to die for every one of them. He sends his Spirit into all their hearts. He has given his exceeding great and precious promises to the whole of them. He has prepared heaven as the family mansion, where they are all to dwell forever. He has laid his command upon them to love one another. Beloved, our love should be as extensive as the love of God. It should embrace all that he embraces. We never can be justified in excluding from our love one whom God has included in his. We ought to love every Christian, and to love all believers constantly, tenderly, and as brethren – or even as Christ has loved us. Let us ask conscience this morning: Do we really and heartily love all that we have reason to believe love the Lord Jesus Christ?

*Heirs of the same immortal bliss,
Our hopes and fears the same,
In bonds of peace our hearts unite,
With mutual love inflame.*



NOVEMBER 6

Be of good comfort.
2 Corinthians 13:11

THE GOSPEL IS intended to make us happy, and the apostles of Jesus wished the saints to be happy, even when surrounded by persecutions and troubles. Beloved, our heavenly Father says to all his poor, sorrowful children, “*Be of good comfort.*” The promises secure all good to you. The presence of God will keep all real evil from you. The Saviour is always willing to listen to you. The fulness of grace is ever open to supply you. A special providence watches over you. All the privileges of the gospel are intended for you. And heaven with all its glories will soon be conferred upon you. Therefore, be of good comfort. You may be troubled, but you shall not be distressed. You may be perplexed, but you shall not sink into despair. You may be persecuted, but you shall never be forsaken. You may be cast down, but you shall not be destroyed. Therefore be of good comfort. The covenant is ordered in all things and sure. The work and sacrifice of Jesus have met all the demands of law and justice. God is at peace with you and loves you, the Holy Spirit will help your infirmities, and Jesus will daily intercede for you.

*How happy is the Christian's state!
His sins are all forgiven;
A cheering ray confirms the grace,
And lifts his hope to heaven.*



NOVEMBER 7

The promise of the Holy Ghost.
Acts 2:33

NOTHING IS SO necessary for us as the Holy Spirit. If dead, he will quicken us. If dull, he will enliven us. If dark, he will enlighten us. If cold, he will warm us. If ignorant, he will instruct us. If wavering, he will settle us. If in doubt, he will satisfy us. If in perplexity, he will direct us. If we have guilt in the conscience, he will purge it. If burdens on the mind, he will remove them. If questions, he will solve them. He will do all that is necessary *within* us, as Jesus did all that was required *without* us. This blessed Spirit is promised by the Father, to all who ask him. He was given to Jesus for us, and he is imparted by Jesus to us. The promise of the Holy Ghost is plain. We cannot well misunderstand it. It is positive, and therefore we may plead it with all confidence. It is to all who ask, or who go to Jesus that they may drink. Lord, fulfil this promise to us! Give us the Spirit this morning – the fulness of the Spirit – that we may walk in his light, act under his influence, and be sealed to the day of redemption.

*Oh! that the Comforter would come!
Nor visit as a transient guest;
But fix in me his constant home,
And keep possession of my breast;
And make my soul his lov'd abode,
The temple of indwelling God.*



NOVEMBER 8

I will talk of thy doings.

Psalm 77:12

PROFITABLE CONVERSATION IS not common. Professors appear prepared to talk of anything, rather than of what they ought. How many talk of preachers, absent persons, and great societies, who seldom talk of God. This shows a barren state of soul, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. If in the heart there be an abundance of worldly subjects, or carnal projects, our conversation will be worldly and carnal. But, if in the heart there be an abundance of truth and grace, then our conversation will savour of the truth, and be seasoned with grace. Beloved, let us talk of God's doings. Look at what he has done in nature, and talk of everything that meets the eye as the production of your heavenly Father. Look at what he has done and is doing in providence, and talk of past, and passing events, as if you saw God in them, working, directing, and controlling them. Look at the mighty work of redemption, and talk of all its wonders. It occupies the minds and tongues of angels, and surely it ought to employ ours. Look at the work of grace in the world around, in the church, or in your heart, and talk of his doings.

*Talk of free and full salvation;
Spread the Saviour's fame abroad,
Till 'tis known in every nation.
Great is your reward with God.*



NOVEMBER 9

Who went about doing good.

Acts 10:38

SUCH WAS THE conduct of the Lord Jesus Christ when he was in our world. His heart was full of compassion for suffering humanity. He felt a deep concern for the welfare of men. He sought thus to honour the Father who had sent him, and thus he confirmed his doctrine and mission. He did good, only good. He preached the gospel. He instructed the ignorant. He visited the sick. He fed the hungry. He relieved the poor. He healed all manner of diseases. He wrought out a righteousness for his people. He *went about* doing good. His diligence was remarkable. He delighted to confer favours, impart blessings, and make all about him happy. He did not stay for an application. He went without being requested. He was not above visiting the meanest person, or the poorest dwelling. He went about the cities, towns, and villages, but it was always doing good. Thus he showed the tendency of his gospel. He set forth the design of his incarnation. He brought sinners to repentance. He set us an example. Beloved, do you admire the conduct of Jesus? Are you prepared to imitate it? Do you mourn that you have not?

*O gracious Saviour, let us be
In temper more conformed to thee;
And with benignity divine,
Let our whole lives resemble thine!*



NOVEMBER 10

How short my time is!

Psalm 89:47

THEN IT SHOULD be well improved. Not an hour should be lost. The brevity of time shows its value. The view of time as introductory to eternity, makes it all-important. If our time is short, we ought to secure an interest in Christ at *once*, not delaying one moment. If our time is short, we ought to profess Christ immediately, if we have not. If our time is so short, we ought to work for God, and the good of the world we inhabit, while we can, for our opportunity of doing so will have soon passed away. Lord, remember how short my time is, and give me special grace, heavenly wisdom, and real prudence, that I may buy up the opportunity, because the days are evil. My soul, remember how short thy time is, and trifle no more, loiter no more, and procrastinate no longer. But put thy hand to the plough, keep thy hand on the plough, and work while the day lasts. The night cometh. Working time will soon be over. O to make the most of a short day! O to turn the little time that is left to the best account! Beloved, what are you doing? How are you living? Are you affected with a sense of the shortness of time and the uncertainty of life?

*This sole occasion then is ours.
This day we ne'er again shall see.
O God, awaken all our powers
To spend it for eternity!*



NOVEMBER 11

God is the strength of my heart.
Psalm 73:26

GOD IN COVENANT – God in Christ – is the believer's rock. God is the rock on which he builds his hopes, where he secures his treasures, where he finds safety, and on which he stands unmoved and firm, amidst storms and tempests. God is the strength, or strengthener of his heart, and this he does by the promises he has given, the prospects which he unfolds, the foretastes of glory which he imparts, and by the exercise of the graces which he produces. Apart from God, the Christian is weakness itself. In union with God, he is stronger than all his foes. If God is the strength of our hearts, we exercise confidence in him, renounce all dependence on any besides him, and go in all our weaknesses to him. If God is our strength, we can have no ground for fear, no occasion to doubt, no reason to look into the future with foreboding. If God is our strength, he will never fail us, Satan will never overcome us, the world will never conquer us, nor will any of the billows of affliction overwhelm us. O to realise that God is our strength, the rock and refuge of our souls!

*Then let me on his care rely,
He is a God forever nigh,
To guard me by his power.
Though heart, and flesh, and friends should fail.
While strong in God we must prevail,
In the most trying hour.*



NOVEMBER 12

God is love.

1 John 4:8

THIS IS A MOST beautiful representation of the Most High. And what is best of all, it is his own representation. God is sometimes angry, but he is always love. The opposite of love is not in him, nor could it ever be displayed by him. His love is a perfection. It appears in all he does, and in all he says. It is the leading feature of his character. If God is love, surely we shall not tremble and fear before him. Can love harm us? Can love spurn us from his throne? Can love refuse us any really good thing? It is impossible. If God is love, let us expect all good things from him. He will give them. He will give them readily. He will give them as often as we need them. God is love, or else he had never entered into covenant to secure our salvation. God is love, or else he had not given us his exceeding great and precious promises. God is love, or else he had not sent his own dear Son to suffer and die for us. God is love, or else he would not have given us his Holy Spirit. God is love to every penitent sinner, to every returning backslider, to every tried and tempted believer. Better than this he cannot be. Worse than this, he will not be.

*Ye doubting souls, who full of fears,
The ways of God approve;
Dismiss your guilty fears and come,
Believe that God is love.*



NOVEMBER 13

He shall preserve thy soul.

Psalm 121:7

NO BEING IN creation needs such close and constant keeping as a saint. If God was not our keeper, we could never arrive safe in heaven. Our foes are so powerful, our moral maladies so numerous, our danger so great, and our depravity so deep. O to keep this fact daily before the mind, that we may evermore cry unto the Lord to keep us! He has promised to do so, but he will have us plead with him, and daily cry unto him. We are never out of danger, while we are out of heaven. If we are healthy this morning, we may be diseased before night. If we are sound in the faith today, we may be led away by some pernicious error tomorrow. If we are walking at liberty now, we may be entangled again with the yoke of bondage before long. How kind, how gracious then, for our Lord to undertake to keep, and to promise to preserve our souls. He *can*, as he has promised, and if we call upon him, he *will*. Let us therefore, this day, feel that we are in danger, that we need an omnipotent preserver, that the Lord preserves through fellowship with himself, and then let us endeavour to walk closely with God. This will deepen our spirituality.

*The word of God continues sure,
On which my hope is cast.
Thou shalt my tempted soul secure
Till every storm is past.*



NOVEMBER 14

The desire of all nations shall come.

Haggai 2:7

THERE IS A DESIRE in every human bosom for something which it has not got, and that something is only to be found in Christ. It is a universal craving after an unknown good. Perhaps there have always been some in all the nations, who have been really desiring the Lord Jesus. However, wherever he is known he is desired. All nations have desired him, or will desire him. He possesses all they need. He only can make them happy. They need all that he has, for less would not meet their case. He came once and laid a solid foundation for hope, and he will come again and satisfy the desire of all who love his appearing. He will then be manifestly the desire of all nations, for “*all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him,*” (Ps. 72:11). “*All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name,*” (Ps. 66:4). He will come and fill the earth with his knowledge, and perform the ancient prediction, “*The whole earth shall be filled with my glory,*” (Num. 14:21). May our desires centre in Jesus now. May his truth be our treasure, his love our delight, his salvation our theme, his glory our aim, and his presence our heaven.

*Let carnal minds for pleasure strive
And after wealth aspire;
Our choice is made, our hearts are fix'd,
For Christ is our desire.*



NOVEMBER 15

He led them on safely.

Psalm 78:53

AND YET PEOPLE were never in greater danger. Egypt was enraged at them, Pharoah was determined to bring them back, the sea rolled in majesty before them, and rocks and mountains seemed to enclose and shut them in. But when God leads, difficulties vanish and dangers are all overcome. The sea retreats, Israel passes over, and the Egyptians pursue. The one company is landed safe on the opposite side, and the other drowned in the deep. He led them on safely out of Egypt, and they were equally safe in the wilderness. Nothing could harm them but sin, if they had been willing simply to follow the Lord's guidance, to believe the Lord's word, and to trust in the Lord's providence – every one of them must have arrived safely in Canaan. Beloved, we have the same leader. Jesus who was with the church in the wilderness, is given to be a Leader to us, and he will lead us on safely. He knows the way, he remembers our frames, he has provided for our needs, he has promised us all we need, and he only wishes us to believe his word, trust his power, and follow him in obedience and love.

*Lead us on, Almighty victor,
Scatter every hostile band;
Be our guide and our protector
Till on Canaan's shores we stand.*



NOVEMBER 16

*Thy name is an ointment poured forth.
Song of Solomon 1:3.*

THE NAME OF Jesus is incomparably sweet and precious. There is no name in heaven like his – it is above every name. It perfumes heaven above, and the church below. Its fragrance is unequalled. We are never weary of it, and we never shall be. It comprises all we need, and it contains all we desire. Having Christ we have all things. He is Christ, or God's anointed One. He is consecrated to be a Priest perpetually, sanctified to be God's prophet and apostle, and qualified to be God's king – to reign on his holy hill of Zion. He is Jesus, God's Saviour, by whom God saves sinners – millions of sinners, the vilest sinners. He is Lord. All power in heaven and on earth is given to him. He is supreme, or head over all. He is the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is all God can give us. Here is all we can require or enjoy. When the Holy Spirit opens up the meaning of his precious name, and gives us to realise our interest in it, it does appear divinely sweet and glorious. Precious name! May I know it more fully, enjoy it more powerfully, publish it more effectually, and praise it more frequently. Name of Jesus, be thou my solace, my subject, and my song.

*I'll speak the honours of thy name,
With my last labouring breath;
And dying, clasp thee in my arms,
The antidote of death.*



NOVEMBER 17

Not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Matthew 26:39

SO SAID JESUS, when in his agony in the garden. His sufferings were tremendous, he appears to have apprehended immediate death, he was overwhelmed, and he cried, "*If it be possible, let this cup pass from me,*" (Matt. 26:39). But his resignation, his unqualified acquiescence in his Father's will, immediately appears, for he adds, "*Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" O for such meekness! O for such entire resignation to God's will! No one ever suffered like Jesus. He suffered immediately from the hand of God. The stroke bruised and mangled him, yet he kisses the hand that strikes. He feels himself sinking in deep waters, pressed down by the wrath of God, yet he acquiesces. His pains were agonizing, yet he was willing to endure them for us. Blessed Redeemer, what love was thine! What infinite, unparalleled mercy! Beloved, if troubles burden us, if sorrows press us, if pain tortures us, if friends forsake us, if our hearts feel ready to fail us, let us repair to Gethsemane. Let us take a place by the side of the suffering Son of God, let us compare our sorrows with his, and let us endeavour to say, "*Not as I will, but as thou wilt.*"

Come, ye saints, behold and wonder.

Come, behold what love could do.

Gaze upon the victim yonder.

Jesus suffered thus for you.



NOVEMBER 18

In me is thine help.
Hosea 13:9

DESTRUTION IS OF men, but salvation is wholly of God. We have destroyed ourselves, but God has become our Saviour. As sinners, he saves us absolutely. As believers, he helps us in all our duties, and out of all troubles. If God is our help, it will be sufficient. It will be prudently afforded. It will be suitably conveyed, and we shall always feel our need of it, before we enjoy it. Our help is in God – in God alone – therefore let us not look to creatures. Let us not trust in ourselves, but let us repair to the Lord in every difficulty, trial, and trouble. The Lord has helped us in time past, he never was more disposed to help us than he is now, and he will help us to the end of our journey. His help sustains us, when it does not deliver us. It enables us to hold on, when it does not bring us out of our troubles. O thou help of Israel, help us this day! Help us to resist Satan, to overcome the world, to crucify the old man, to put on the new man, to do thy blessed will, to glorify thy holy name, and to walk with thee in peace. Beloved, let us not droop or despond, but let us cry unto God for help, and expect him to make his strength perfect in our weakness.

*In me, O Lord, exert thy power,
Make old things pass away;
Transform and draw my soul to thee
Still nearer every day.*



NOVEMBER 19

Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.

Hebrews 12:24

THE MEDIATOR OF the old covenant was Moses. He could officiate, but he could not answer or be responsible for the people. The mediator of the new covenant is Jesus. He appears before God for us, and before us for God. He undertakes for us with God, and he deals with God for us. He is able to do so, for he is divine. He is suited to do so, for he is human. Another mediator we need not, and another mediator there is none, for “*there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,*” (1 Tim. 2:5). And it would be quite as consistent to speak of two gods, as of two mediators. If another was necessary, Jesus could not be sufficient. And if Jesus were not sufficient, no other could possibly be. But Jesus is enough. He has to present to God for us all that he can possibly require. And he has to present to us from God, all that we can consistently desire. He is always before the throne. He is always interceding for us. Therefore we need not fear, but should go boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in every time of need.

Touch'd with a feeling of our woes,

Our Mediator stands.

All our infirmities he knows,

Our souls are in his hands.



NOVEMBER 20

I am merciful, saith the Lord.

Jeremiah 3:12

THIS IS THE encouragement given to backsliders to return. They are invited and exhorted to come back, and lest guilt should discourage them, Satan tempt them, or their hearts misgive them, and they conclude, "It is of no use," God says, "*Return, for I am merciful.*" Our merciful God will glorify his mercy in our experience. He will pardon our sins, break our hearts with a sense of his love, humble us in the dust before his throne, make us loathe ourselves on account of our iniquities, restore unto us the joy of his salvation, and give us peace. Backslider, thy God calls thee to come back. Do not hesitate or be afraid, for he is merciful. He will lovingly receive you. He will readily pardon you. He will rejoice over you, as the shepherd over the sheep he had lost, or the parent over the prodigal, who has returned to his forsaken home. Take with you words and return unto the Lord without delay. And let us all take encouragement from this fact, and come to the Lord this day for all we need. He is merciful, and therefore he will receive us, listen to us, and confer blessings upon us. He ever delighteth in mercy.

Return, ye wandering souls, return:

The Lord your misery knows.

His mercy ever is the same

A balm for all your woes.



NOVEMBER 21

Thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

John 17:23

THUS PLEADED JESUS with his Father, when praying for the perfect union of his church. How truly wonderful! The Father loves Jesus. He ever loved him. He ever will love him. Because he loved him he gave all things into his hands, showed him all things which himself did, and glorified him with himself. God loves us because he loved Jesus, who is our Head and Representative. He loves us as he loves Jesus – not equally, but similarly. His love to us was eternal, tender, and unchangeable – as his love to Jesus was. He loves us as his children, as being his image. He loves us, and therefore he bestows grace, gifts, and glory upon us. He loves us, and therefore he assists us, accepts us, and will reward us by and by. Beloved, if God thus love us, it calls upon us to be patient under all his dealings, even as Jesus was patient. The very thought should impart comfort under all our trials, toils and sorrows, and we ought to exercise confidence in God at all seasons. For what can he deny us, if he love us as he does his only begotten Son? He ever did love us freely, and nothing shall ever alienate his love from us.

*Although the Lord of earth and sky
Knew what we all should prove,
He on the Saviour kept his eye.
And rested in his love.*



NOVEMBER 22

Ye cannot do the things that ye would.
Galatians 5:17

HUMBLING CONSIDERATION this! But depravity has weakened, as well as perverted all our powers. Once we had no will to do good. Now we have the will, but often lack the power. The flesh lusts, and strives against the spirit. Satan assists the flesh in the conflict, and therefore we are often foiled, and fail to accomplish our object. We would abstain from all sin, but we cannot. We would bring every sinner we know to Jesus, but we cannot. We would daily repent, always believe, and invariably love, but we cannot. This is our infirmity, but, as it was produced by sin, it ought to be our grief. It is a mercy to have the will, for, if we have the will now, we shall have the power by and by. Our weakness ought not to discourage us, nor ought we ever to plead our feebleness as an excuse for the neglect of, or failure in, duty. But we ought to cleave the more closely to Jesus, pray the more earnestly for the power of the Holy Spirit, mourn over our shortcomings before God, and long for the time when we shall be able and willing to do everything which God requires of us.

*O Lord, assist me through the fight,
My drooping spirit raise;
Make me triumphant in thy might,
And thine shall be the praise.*



NOVEMBER 23

Thou hast wrought all thy works in us.

Isaiah 26:12

ALL THAT IS REALLY good comes from God. If we have a good desire, God produced it. If we have a good hope, God gave it. If we have a good work, God wrought it. It is God that worketh in us to *will* and to *do* of his own good pleasure. What then have we to be proud of? What ground have we to boast? Surely of all creatures, believers ought to be the most humble. They are clothed with another's robe. They live upon another's bread. They dwell in another's house. They are guided by another's hand. They work in another's strength. And if they would obtain any good thing from God, they must go in another's name. Real religion is altogether divine. God is its author, and the glory of God is its end. This should not make us despond, but it should make us dependent. It should not cast us down, but it should fill us with gratitude. We as much need the constant work of the Holy Spirit within us, as we need the constant intercession of Jesus for us. Let us therefore ascribe all the good that is within us, or that is done by us, to God as its proper author. Good and gracious God:

Thou all our works in us hast wrought;

Our good is all divine;

The praise of every holy thought

And righteous work is thine.



NOVEMBER 24

I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.
Genesis 32:26

IMMINENT DANGER MADE Jacob importunate, he wrestled, or wept and made supplication, until he prevailed. He wanted a blessing. He sought the blessing. He could not be satisfied without the blessing. He obtained the blessing. Here is our example. God is never backward to give, but he will try our sincerity. He will prove if we are really in earnest. He will have us persevere in prayer, and then he will grant our request. Jacob's name was changed, he was no longer to be called Jacob, or a supplanter, but Israel, a mighty prince. This was his memorial. It was a token of approbation. It was a mark of honour. Beloved, is there not some blessing that we need, for ourselves, our families, or others? Is the blessing promised, or is God in the habit of bestowing it? If so, let us seek it. Let us go to God first as Jacob did, let us wrestle as he did, and we shall prevail as he did, for our God is the same, and we have greater encouragement than Jacob had. True prayer will perform wonders. The fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Hence one has said:

*I found to my experience glad,
That in the wrestling way,
The God of Jacob never said
The seed of Israel nay.*



NOVEMBER 25

Redeeming the time.
Ephesians 5:16

TIME IS SHORT, and our continuance here is very uncertain. We have a work to perform, and we should attend to it at once. We have blessings to secure, and we should never rest until we possess them. But the apostle has his eye on usefulness. He refers to opportunities for doing good, which in persecuting times and under heathen governors, were comparatively few. He says therefore, "Buy up the opportunity." It may cost much, but buy it. Purchase it for God's work, then consecrate it to God's service. Use it to God's glory. There will be many temptations to let it slip, or to waste it, but improve it for important purposes. Use time, so that you can reflect upon it with pleasure. Use it, as an introduction to, and preparation for, eternity. Use it as you will wish you had, when you come upon your dying pillow. Brethren, the time is short. Our opportunities for doing good are fast passing away. The grave will soon close upon us, and eternity reveal all its wonders. Unless we work now, we never can, for the night cometh. Let us therefore redeem the time, and let us approach our God, saying:

*Thanks for mercies past receive,
Pardon of our sins renew;
Teach us henceforth how to live
With eternity in view.*



NOVEMBER 26

I will restore comforts unto him.

Isaiah 57:18

THIS PRECIOUS PROMISE refers to backsliders – to those who have gone on frowardly in the way of their hearts. We sin away our comforts, and then none but God can restore them. Grace makes us happy when it pardons our sins, renews our natures, reveals the Saviour, removes our guilt, and unfolds the gracious character of God. Then we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we receive the atonement. Sin makes us miserable, as it leads us from God, blots out our evidences, blinds our minds, pollutes our consciences, brings us into bondage, and obscures our prospects. Often when sin has been indulged, our hearts become hard, our consciences benumbed, our tempers irritable, and our conduct perverse. Then we become miserable. Everything goes wrong. No one acts right. We rise up in rebellion against God. Prayer is irksome, and obtains no blessing from God. Praise is a task. Ordinances are unsavoury. The Bible is uninteresting. Our course becomes folly. But God will arrest us, convict us, make us smart, thoroughly humble us, and then he will restore comforts unto us, and to them that mourn for us.

*Jesus, for his own mercy's sake,
My wandering soul restores;
He bids my mourning heart partake
The pardon it implores.*



NOVEMBER 27

I will go unto God my exceeding joy.

Psalm 43:4

THE PRESENCE OF God is terrible to the sinner, but it is the joy and delight of the saint. When our minds are renewed, when our hearts are regenerated, when we behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, he becomes our exceeding joy. Then we see the beauty of his perfections, the excellency of his character, and the glory of his salvation. We perceive that he is at peace with us, that his heart glows with love to us, that he rejoices to confer favours upon us, and that he will withhold no good thing from us. The pardon he imparts, the righteousness he bestows, the peace he confers, and the prospects he unfolds, unite to fill our hearts with love to him, and cause our hearts to overflow with joy. He is seen to be the source of all real good, the centre of all that is amiable and excellent, and we rejoice in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Beloved, is God your joy, your exceeding joy? Can you go to him as such, and ask him to make you happy in his love? In all times of gloom, in all seasons of sorrow, in all circumstances of trial, let us bear in mind that our God is our exceeding joy.

He shines, and I am all delight,

He hides, and all is pain;

When will he fix me in his sight

And ne'er depart again.



NOVEMBER 28

To be with Christ is far better.

Philippians 1:23

THE PRESENCE OF Christ here is our chief joy, but we only enjoy it occasionally and for a short season. Something soon interferes and disturbs our enjoyment, but in heaven we shall enjoy his face continually. We all acknowledge that to be with Christ in glory is far better than to be toiling, sorrowing, and conflicting here below. But when we think of departing, the doubt creeps over the mind, and the suggestion is thrown in, "What if you should find yourself mistaken? What if you should have been deceived? What if instead of ascending to heaven, you should be thrust down to hell?" This is painful because there is generally a disposition to encourage fear, yield to gloom and indulge suspicion. But can the word of God fail? Can the God of truth lie? It is impossible! And is it not said, "*He that believeth shall be saved?*" (Mark 16:16). Do we not believe? Have we not renounced everything within us, and without us, to trust to the Lord Jesus Christ alone? How then can we be deceived? Let us resist Satan. Let us reject such insinuations. Let us encourage hope, and look forward to death as simply a departing to be with Christ, which is far better.

*Where Jesus dwells my soul would be,
I long my much-lov'd Lord to see;
Earth twine no more about my heart!
For 'tis far better to depart.*



NOVEMBER 29

Remember how he spake unto you.

Luke 24:6

SO SAID THE ANGELS to the women at the sepulchre, on the resurrection morning. And the words are applicable to us, for we are apt to forget his words. The words of Jesus ought to have the best place in our memories, on account of their intrinsic value. There are no words like the words of Jesus, which exhibit the nature, will, and promises of God. On account of their veracity, they are truth – *the* truth itself. On account of their suitability, there are none like Jesus' words to check sin, control fears, produce confidence, inspire with gratitude, and fill us with love. Also on account of the use they will be to us in our daily trials, on the bed of sickness, and at the hour of death – there are no words like his! Let us treasure up the words of Jesus carefully, diligently and with much prayer. The word of Jesus should be remembered – to direct our way, to rule our expectations, to comfort our hearts, to answer our enemies, to regulate our zeal, to feed and support our faith, and to inflame our love. Are our memories stored with Christ's words? Do we meditate upon them? Do we walk by them? Remember how he spake *against* sin, *to* the sinner, and *on behalf* of holiness.

*O may these heavenly pages be
My ever dear delight;
And still new beauties may I see
And still increasing light!*



NOVEMBER 30

Who can tell?

Jonah 3:9

SOMETIMES WE HAVE only a possibility to encourage us, but should we then persevere, if the object is important? Sometimes we have a probability, and this should stimulate us more. But in many instances we have a certainty, as when God has given us his word. We may apply the question to many subjects for our profit, such as: Who can tell the extent of the Saviour's merit? Who can tell the beginning of the Spirit's work? Who can tell what will be the issue of any providence? Who can tell the depth of God's mercy – the limit of God's patience – the designs of God's grace – or the means which God will honour? No one should despair, for God is love, his wisdom is infinite and his power is omnipotent. God has said, "*Come unto me*", "*Receive from me*," "*Rest in me*." God has wrought strangely, wondrously, wisely, and sovereignly. Everyone should work for who can tell what instrument God will employ? Every worker should expect, for who can tell what a God of love will crown? All should persevere and hope to the end, for even Nineveh was spared.

*Then let us not despond,
Inquiring, "Who can tell?"
For in the sacred word,
The question's answered well:
That all who come to Christ shall be
Saved now, and through eternity.*



DECEMBER 1

Thou art my hope in the day of evil.
Jeremiah 17:17

EVIL DAYS WILL come, and they always try the basis of our hope. If we are hoping in anything within us, in anything done by us, or in any creature connected with us, our hope will give way in the evil day. We may have to pass through days of affliction, temptation, poverty, bereavement, persecution, comparative uselessness, old age and death, and all these are called evil days. Remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. But every believer has God for his hope. He can say: I will hope because of the promises made, exactly suited to evil days. I will hope because of the character in which God is revealed, calculated to inspire with courage and comfort. I will hope because of the perfections which God possesses – even mercy, patience, and power. And I will hope because of the medium he has opened for the conveyance of his blessings – even Jesus his beloved Son. I will hope for patience to quiet me, for strength to support me, for blessings to supply me, for success to crown me, and for deliverance to fill me with joy. Nothing out of God is sufficient to produce, sustain or answer a Christian's hope.

*We trust upon the sacred word.
The oath and promise of the Lord.
And safely through each tempest sail,
The Christian's hope can never fail.*



DECEMBER 2

A remnant shall be saved.

Romans 9:27

THIS APPEARS TO have been God's purpose in all past times. There always has been a remnant, and never more than a remnant – a few out of many, a comparatively small number. They were not separated or saved because they were the best, but many of them were taken from among the worst. They are distinguished by the choice of God, who purchased them by the blood of his Son. There is now a remnant according to the election of grace, and the whole remnant shall be saved from Satan, sin and wrath. They shall be saved, for the purpose is passed, the provision is made, the promise is given, the Saviour has appeared, the Spirit is sent, and the good news of salvation is proclaimed. Do we belong to this remnant? If so, Christ is precious to us. We are but strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. We often think of and speak for God. We are a praying people. We mourn over sin, and from sympathy with God. We are a holy people, and would rather suffer than sin. We cannot live without fellowship with God, or rest in any present attainments. These are some of the characteristics of God's remnant. Do we possess them?

*Jesus, to thee we now would fly,
And on thy precious blood rely;
Find, through the conduct of thy grace,
That we're among the chosen race.*



DECEMBER 3

The revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:13

THE LORD JESUS IS revealed in the word. He once appeared in our world, he is made known in the believer's heart, and he will soon be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and glorifying himself in his own people on this earth. When he comes he will bring grace with him for his beloved ones. At his first coming he brought grace to sanctify us. At his second coming he will bring grace to glorify us. Then he will raise and restore our bodies, making them like unto his own glorious body. He will publicly absolve our persons from all charges, and justify us forever in his own righteousness. He will commend his people who have laboured in his cause, and say, "*Well done, good and faithful servant,*" (Matt. 25:21). He will invite his whole church to take possession of their eternal inheritance, saying, "*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,*" (Matt. 25:34). He will place us in circumstances of the highest honour and happiness forever. This is called grace, as it excludes all ideas of merit, and to show the identity of grace and glory.

*O glorious hope! If Jesus be
Our Saviour and our friend,
For we shall then be with our Lord,
In joys that never end.*



DECEMBER 4

Will ye also be his disciples?

John 9:27

JESUS HAS ALWAYS had some disciples. He has some now. Are you among them? Will *you* be his disciple? His resources are boundless, his beneficence is unparalleled, his wisdom is infinite, his disposition is loving and gentle, and his honours are high and eternal. What say you? Will you be his disciple? If so, you must surrender all to him. You must be ready to suffer for him. You must be willing to embrace the doctrines he taught, to submit to the precepts he inculcated, to imitate the example he set, and to observe the institutions which he has appointed. Will you be his disciple? Consider, his disciples are in general poor, despised of men, and often deeply afflicted. And if you join them, you must forsake your follies, your sinful companions, and your carnal pleasures. You must publicly profess faith in Christ, and unite with his people. You must attend on his ordinances and support his cause. Will ye be his disciples? They are happy, holy, and safe. The profession is honourable and will end gloriously. If you will not profess him, can you expect to be saved by him?

*Jesus, grant me thy salvation,
Let me now thy glories see.
In thy church appoint my station,
I would thy disciple be.
Send thy Spirit,
To conform my soul to thee.*



DECEMBER 5

To every man his work.

Mark 13:34

THE LORD JESUS IS gone home to his Father for a time. He has assigned every believer his place in the world, and in the church. He has appointed to each one his work, for he never intended that a saint should be idle, or live and labour for himself. Jesus is our master, and as such he is present with us, has power over us, is generous to us, but is nevertheless jealous of us. We are his servants, he engaged us to serve him, he supports us while employed by him, he directs us in all our efforts to serve him, and he holds us accountable for our time and our talents. There is work for everyone of us – for some in the school with the young, for some in the world with the unconverted, and for some in the church with the saints. He expects that every one of us will be employed. This will prevent many evils which result from idleness, to ourselves and others. This will secure much good, as it will exercise our graces, spread the truth, bring souls to the Saviour, and prevent backsliding. Beloved, that we may work we have talents given to us, opportunities afforded us, and motives presented to us. Pleasure is associated with employment, and a reward is promised us.

*Not words alone it cost the Lord,
To purchase pardon for his own.
Nor will a soul by grace restored,
Return the Saviour words alone.*



DECEMBER 6

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 13:14

TO PUT ON CHRIST there must be faith in Christ, submission to Christ, the profession of Christ, conformity to Christ, a practical imitation of Christ, and an appropriating of Christ in all his offices and characters. What clothing is to the body, that Christ is to be to the soul – its covering, comfort, and protection. To put on Christ we must put off everything that is opposed to Christ, even the old man with his deeds. Christ ought to be seen in his people, as the clothing is seen on the person. A consistent Christian is Christ made visible. Christ should be so put on as never to be put off. He forms a clothing garment which will never wear out or go out of fashion with the truly wise. Beloved, men must see our religion as well as God. Those only who put on Christ are truly happy. They wear white robes, the evidence of their acquittal at the bar of justice, of their acceptance with God, and of their enjoying the approbation of God. Christ is not only our clothing but our defence. Putting on Jesus, we put on the whole armour of God. O for wisdom to wear Christ so, that God may accept us, angels admire us, devils flee from us, and the world be compelled to commend us!

*Make not provision for the flesh,
But mortify its powers.
Put on the Saviour with his grace,
And victory shall be yours.*



DECEMBER 7

The true worshippers.
John 4:23

MANY PROFESS TO worship God who never in reality do so. They attend to a variety of forms, they perform many ceremonies, but they do not worship God. They have no correct views of his spirituality, covenant character, or extensive requirements. They fancy that he is pleased with show, parades, and outward forms. Whereas “*God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth,*” (John 4:24). The true worshipper is quickened by the Holy Spirit, and taught to see the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ. He is sincere in his service, simple in his language, and hearty in his petitions and adorations. He only approaches God through Christ, he pleads the atonement for his acceptance, he throws his heart open before God, and means just what he says. The greatness of God awes him. The goodness of God draws him. The mercy of God humbles him. The grace of God emboldens him. And he worships in faith, fear, and love. He believes God’s word, fears God’s displeasure, and loves God’s character. There is no pretence about him, for he hates hypocrisy, and worships in sincerity and truth.

In spirit and truth alone
We must present our prayer.
The formal and the false are known
Through the disguise they wear.



DECEMBER 8

A man of God.

Jeremiah 35:4

A MAN OF GOD is a godly man – one who is reconciled to God, acquainted with the mind of God, who walks in fellowship with God, obeys the commands of God, is zealous in the cause of God, jealous of the honour of God, and conformed to the image of God. A godly man is set apart for God, for “*the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself,*” (Ps. 4:3). He obtains pardon from God, and “*for this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found,*” (Ps. 32:6). He is entitled to all the promises of God, for “*godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,*” (1 Tim. 4:8). He will be delivered by God, for “*the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation,*” (2 Pet. 2:9). Every blessing is secured to him by God, for God “*hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,*” (2 Pet. 1:3). His employment is always profitable, for “*godliness with contentment is great gain,*” (1 Tim. 6:6). He will dwell eternally with God, for he is “*made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light,*” (Col. 1:12). There are men of the world, and men of God – to which class do you belong? A godly man is:

*The noblest creature seen below,
Ordained to fill a throne above,
God gives him all he can bestow,
His kingdom of eternal love!*



DECEMBER 9

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity.
Psalm 51:2

SIN IS SPIRITUAL filthiness. It defiles the conscience, corrupts the imagination, depraves the heart, perverts the will, pollutes the breath, sets the tongue on fire of hell, stains the life, and renders the man totally and eternally unfit for heaven. It is God's work to cleanse a sinner. No one else can. The sinner cannot cleanse himself. He is without the means, the will, or the power. But God in mercy does and he does it by his Son atoning, by his Spirit renewing, by his providence working, and by his truth purifying. He saves us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. The passage contains the believer's prayer. "Wash me." "Wash me thoroughly." It is "mine iniquity, my sin." Wash me, for I have discovered my filthiness. I loathe myself on account of it, and I long to be delivered from it. Wash me thoroughly, take out every stain, erase every impression, and make me whiter than snow. Sin always pollutes us. A believer cannot rest in pollution. A backslider must be cleansed before he is restored. God will have us smart for sin, before he cleanses us from sin.

*O wash my soul from every stain
And make my guilty conscience clean.
Here on my heart the burden lies,
And past offences pain my eyes.*



DECEMBER 10

Be not conformed to this world.

Romans 12:2

THE WORLD IS God's foe. It is under the rule of the prince of the power of the air. Its habits, style of living and practices are contrary to God's will. The believer should not put on the form or fashion of the world, but should put on Christ. He should not be ruled by the maxims of the world, but by the word of God. Be not conformed to this world, for its ruling principle is pride, its practice is rebellion against God, its profession of religion is hypocrisy, its spirit is enmity against God, its end is selfishness, and its doom is destruction. The more we conform to the world, the more we become unlike Christ, and the more we are exposed to its snares and temptations. Yet we should not aim at outward singularity, but keeping in close fellowship with God we should avoid all extremes in dress, living, and the customs of the generation in which we live. If we would obey this precept, we must be much in private with God, we must drink into the spirit of Christ, and keep the end of the present dispensation in view, and meditate much on eternity.

*Tell me no more of earthly toys,
Of sinful mirth and carnal joys,
(The things I loved before).
Let me but view my Saviour's face,
And feel his animating grace,
And I desire no more.*



DECEMBER 11

I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.

Psalm 77:10

THE PSALMIST HAD read God's word, and he had stored his memory with an account of God's wonderful works. He had these things at hand in trouble, and he proposes to cause them to pass in review before his mind for his comfort and profit. He will remember the years when God's hand was stretched out, made bare or remarkably displayed for Israel – to crush their foes, to control the elements, to deliver them from imminent danger, and raise them to peculiar honour. He will recall what he had wrought *in* his church, *for* his church, and *by* his church. Let us remember what God has done for others and for ourselves in times past. Let us do so to check our fears, to silence our unbelief, to strengthen our faith, to excite to prayer, to prevent murmuring, to produce hope, to increase patience, and to comfort us in sorrow. Let us take up the purpose of the Psalmist and say: I will not pore over my misery. I will not envy my foes. I will not mistake the design of my trials. I will remember that God's hand is the same, whatever changes I may experience. And he who wrought for me before, will do so again.

*Now I'll oppose each gloomy thought,
Each dark despairing frame,
Remembering what thy hand hath wrought.
Thy hand is still the same.*



DECEMBER 12

*The glorious gospel of Christ.
2 Corinthians 4:4*

THAT IS THE glorious good news of Christ. Never were there such tidings sent to our world before. They are intended to fill us with joy and peace. And the moment we truly believe them, we are happy. The gospel assures us that Christ is God's only begotten Son – that he was anointed, appointed and sent by the Father to atone for, and put away our sins. The gospel assures us that he really came, opened a way of salvation, secured the present and everlasting welfare of everyone that believes on his name, and that now everyone that believeth in him is justified from all things. That one single act of faith secures the pardon of all sin, the justification of our persons, and puts us in possession of all the promises – some of which it will take eternity to fulfil. It is the good news that God is at peace with us, that he is waiting to be gracious unto us, that he rejoices over us, and delights to bless us. It is the good news that Jesus is a perfect Saviour, that he can and will save to the very uttermost, and that he is now in heaven, pleading for all that come unto God by him. Glorious gospel! Blessed news! May we receive it, believe it, treasure it up, and rejoice in it from day to day.

*O the grandeur of the gospel,
How it sounds the cleansing blood,
Shows the bowels of a Saviour,
Shows the tender heart of God.*



DECEMBER 13

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house.

Psalm 84:4

GOD'S HOUSE IS his church. Wherever his people meet, there he finds a home. This was typified of old by the tabernacle and the temple. Those who dwell in God's church and are at home there, know and love the Master, believe the promises made to all such, feel themselves to be part of the family, enjoy the subjects presented from time to time, and are at home in the various employments of the house. Such are blessed. They are blessed with David's blessing, who sung, "*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered,*" (Ps. 32:1). They are blessed with Peter's blessing, "*Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven,*" (Matt. 16:17). They are blessed with John's blessing, "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,*" (1 John 3:2). They are blessed with Paul's blessing, "A thorn in the flesh, and grace sufficient for them." They are all blessed as, and *with*, faithful Abraham.

*Bless'd are the souls that find a place
Within the temple of thy grace;
There they behold thy gentler rays,
And seek thy face, and learn thy praise.*



DECEMBER 14

The sinners in Zion are afraid.

Isaiah 33:14

AND WELL THEY may be, for sinners in Zion are sinners in the very worst place, in the most dangerous position. Their sins are of a peculiarly aggravated character, being committed in the clearest light, and amidst the displays of the most wonderful love. They ought to be saints, or they ought not to be in Zion, or the church of God. Sinners in Zion, if allowed to partake of gospel privileges, generally become hardened. Their consciences become benumbed, they nourish presumptuous confidence, and the gospel passes through their minds without making any salutary impression. Nothing but some signal judgment, or some special display of the power of the Spirit will arouse them. It is to be feared that when the day of the Lord arrives, there will be many such found in the church, and that his glorious appearing will arouse them, and fill them with dreadful alarm. Friend, *where* are you? Are you in Zion? *What* are you? Are you a sinner in Zion? If so, ask conscience, “*Can you dwell with devouring fire? Can you dwell with everlasting burnings?*” (Isa. 33:14). The wrath of God is most dreadful! And wrath shall come upon sinners in Zion unto the uttermost.

*This Sodom felt, and feels it still,
And groans beneath the dreadful load:
“With endless burnings who can dwell?
Or bear the fury of a God?”*



DECEMBER 15

Making himself equal with God.
John 5:18

THIS CHARGE WAS brought against our Lord by the Jews, and he did not deny it. He spake, he wrought, and he commanded as one equal with God – and he was so. Jesus, the son of Mary, was the Son of God. And though in his human nature he was infinitely inferior to God, yet in his divine nature, which was united to his humanity, he was equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is truly, properly, and naturally God. He is the object of worship, trust and love. We cannot think too highly of him. We cannot speak too highly of him. As God, he is the Rock on which we build, the Saviour in whom we trust, the Sovereign whom we obey, and the Source of all good, from which we expect our supplies. Beware of low thoughts of Christ. Honour him, even as you honour the Father. Walk before him and be sincere. Walk with him, and be confident and happy. Walk after him and be consistent. Jesus created all things. Jesus upholds all things. Jesus directs all things. Jesus will be honoured by all things. Jesus should be especially honoured by his disciples.

*On him we'll venture all we have,
Our bodies, souls, and spirits too.
He to the uttermost will save,
And he alone for us will do.
His Godhead and his death shall be
Our theme to all eternity.*



DECEMBER 16

Children that will not lie.

Isaiah 63:8

THUS GOD DESCRIBES his own, those whom he saves, and with whom he sympathizes. The God of truth must hate a liar. The true God must hate falsehood and pretence. Lying is especially condemned in God's word, and all liars are excluded from the new Jerusalem. It is impossible for God to lie, and it is equally impossible for God to sanction, tolerate, or allow of lying in any of his own children. To lie is to deceive, or to attempt to deceive, by word or deed. The practice springs from the depravity of the heart, and where persevered in, or excused, is a proof that the heart has never been renewed by divine grace. "*Lying lips are an abomination unto the Lord,*" (Prov. 12:22). "*All liars shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with brimstone and with fire; which is the second death,*" (Rev. 21:8). "*He that speaketh lies shall not escape,*" (Prov. 19:5). "*He that speaketh lies shall perish,*" (Prov. 19:9). These are very fearful passages. They are the true sayings of God. Let us carefully examine ourselves. Are we in the habit of practising deception in word or deed? Memory, retain the fact: "NO LIAR CAN ENTER HEAVEN! NO LIAR CAN ESCAPE HELL!"

*In vain we talk of Jesus' blood,
And boast his name in vain,
If we can slight the laws of God,
And prove unjust to men.*



DECEMBER 17

I am with thee to deliver thee.

Jeremiah 1:8

THUS SPAKE JEHOVAH to Jeremiah, and the privilege of the prophet is our privilege too. The Lord is with us, even as he was with him. But if you read his book, you will find that God's presence did not preserve him from troubles, sorrows or foes. For few men suffered more than he did. Nor did he always *realise* God's presence with him, and yet the Lord never withdrew for one moment. Beloved, though God be with us, we shall suffer from many sources, we shall be tried in many ways, we shall be troubled with many things, and we may conclude that even our God is turned against us. And yet he will be true to his word, and will ultimately deliver us. If God is with us, we should go wherever he pleases to send us. We should do whatever he bids us. We should expect whatever he has promised us. Men may hate us. Providence may try us. Our hearts may sink and misgive us. All things may seem to conspire against us. Yet the Lord who is with us, is pledged to deliver us, and he will redeem his pledge to our joy and his own glory. The Lord will be with us this day to deliver us. Here is our safety and comfort.

*I can look forward now with joy,
Though in myself a feeble worm.
For Jesus will his power employ,
And save my soul in every storm.*



DECEMBER 18

I sought the Lord, and he heard me.

Psalm 34:4

THE LORD WILL teach us our dependence on himself. He will show us that we cannot possibly do without him. We too often try to manage our trials ourselves, instead of taking them to the Lord at once. This accounts for our little troubles paining and perplexing us at times, more than our great ones. The Psalmist was deeply tried. His trouble had been brought on by his sin. But he sought the Lord and he heard him, and delivered him from all his fears. Let us endeavour to learn to take everything to the Lord. Let us seek to the Lord for wisdom to guide us, for strength to sustain us, for grace to sanctify us, for comfort to cheer us, and for deliverance from every fear and foe. David's God is our God, and he has covenanted to give us "*the sure mercies of David,*" (Isa. 55:3). O for a spirit of faith in God! O for a spirit of prayer to God! O for a spirit of dependence on God! He loves to be trusted. He loves to be sought. He loves to be believed. Friend, have you ever sought the Lord? If not, seek him at once, and he will be found of you. He will hear you, and deliver you from all your fears.

Then trust him, and fear not; thy life is secure;

His wisdom is perfect, supreme is his power;

In love he corrects thee, thy soul to refine,

To make thee at length in his likeness to shine.



DECEMBER 19

O Lord, remember me, and visit me.

Jeremiah 15:5

SO SIGHED THE prophet in his troubles, and so have we often sighed. Does not this prayer just suit us this morning? O that the Lord would remember our weakness, our fears, our temptations, our many infirmities, our easily besetting sins, our peculiar circumstances, and our many foes! O that he would remember our prayers, our desires, our wants, our earnest longings for his presence, Spirit, and special grace! O that he would visit us, for a visit from him would soften our hearts, sanctify our tempers, cheer our spirits, confound our foes, revive our graces, brighten our evidences, scatter our fears, inspire us with confidence, and fill us with courage! “*Lord, remember us with the favour which thou bearest unto thy people, and visit us with thy salvation; that we may see the good of thy chosen, rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, and glory with thine inheritance,*” (Ps. 106:4-5). Remember where we are going, what we have to do, what we shall be called to suffer, what we shall especially need, and visit us to bless us with all the grace we shall require. If we remember the Lord, he remembers us. If we visit him, he will visit us.

Remember, Lord, thy word of grace,

Remember Calvary’s tree;

Remember Jesus’ dying groans,

And then remember me.



DECEMBER 20

We shall be saved by his life.

Romans 5:10

THE APOSTLE IS speaking of Jesus, who reconciled us to God by his death, and he refers to the life he is now living in heaven. It is a glorious life – a life in his Father’s presence, and in the enjoyment of his Father’s love – and yet he lives for his people. He lives to plead for them. He lives to bestow on them what he procured for them. He lives to watch over them. He deeply, most deeply, sympathizes with them. His eye is never off them. They are never out of his thoughts for one moment. His love to them is intense – a fire that is ever burning. He obtained for us eternal redemption, and he will see that we are redeemed from all evil, and put into the possession of all good. Blessed Saviour! May I not only glory in thy cross, but often have my thoughts directed to thy life. Thou *didst* die for me. Thou *dost* live for me. Being reconciled by thy death on earth, I shall certainly be saved by thy life in heaven. O to enter upon this day, believing that thou art living in heaven for me, and that all the influence of thy relationship, character, blood, and offices is employed for me! A living, pleading Saviour will certainly save me.

*He lives! he lives! and sits above,
For ever interceding there;
Who shall divide us from his love?
Or what should tempt us to despair?*



DECEMBER 21

Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes.

Psalm 26:3

GOD'S LOVING-KINDNESS has been variously and wondrously displayed, in nature, providence and grace. It appears in a thousand forms, and it should be constantly before our eyes. Nothing is so likely to humble us, to consecrate us, and to fill us with joy and peace, as God's wondrous loving-kindness. We are too apt to place some trouble, or some vexation, or some object of envy before our eyes, and the effects are sad – very sad. Let us this day place God's loving-kindness before our eyes, as it appears in his precious gifts, sweet assurances, magnificent promises, and the glorious prospects set before us. It is his loving-kindness which pardons our sins, revives our souls, renews us in the spirit of our minds, and gives us fresh and delightful views of the Lord Jesus, of his finished salvation, and of his blissful heaven. God's lovingkindness is free, therefore we may enjoy it. It is great, therefore we may be satisfied with it. It is immutable, therefore we may rejoice in it. Let us fix the eye this day on God as a God of love, and on the displays of his kindness to us before time, in time, and when time shall be no more.

*Often I feel my sinful heart,
Prone from my Jesus to depart.
But though I have him oft forgot,
His loving-kindness changes not.*



DECEMBER 22

O Lord, be not far from me.

Psalm 35:22

THE CHRISTIAN IS like a timid child – he cannot bear to be left alone. He wants to have his Father always with him. He knows so much of his weakness and the depravity of his heart, of the number and power of his enemies, of the many and great dangers to which he is exposed, that he does not feel comfortable to stir a step alone. The Lord has promised to be always with him, and never to leave him nor forsake him. This he believes, but he wants to realise the presence of his God. If he feels that God is with him, smiling upon him, and imparting strength unto him, he can cheerfully go anywhere or do anything. But without this he is often afraid and dispirited. Beloved, do you know anything of the presence of the Lord? Have you ever enjoyed it? Have you been left to go to duty, to trial, or to conflict, without it? If so, you know the value of it, and most earnestly will you pray, “*O Lord, be not far from me.*” Well, the Lord will not be far away, nor long away, from those who long for his presence, and who cannot be happy in his absence. If we seek him, he will be found of us. If we call upon him, he will hear.

*Life, like a fountain rich and free,
Springs from the presence of the Lord;
And in his light our souls shall see
The glories promised in his word.*



DECEMBER 23

I will arise and go to my father.
Luke 15:18

WHAT A MERCY TO have a father. A father to whom we can go. A father who will receive us, bless us, and make us happy. Like the prodigal we have been wandering from him, we have grieved his loving heart, we have dishonoured his glorious name, and we have reduced ourselves to want and wretchedness. Let us now arise and go to our heavenly Father. He will pardon our crimes, restore us to his favour, supply all our wants, and raise us to dignity and honour. Have we been reconciled to him, and are we living at peace with him? Then, whenever Satan assaults us, or fears beset us, or troubles oppress us, or our hearts are cast down within us, let us arise and go to our Father. Let us go to him *for* all we need, *with* all that troubles us, *notwithstanding* all that opposes us. He bids us come often. He wishes us to be free. He has promised to sympathize with us. He is always ready to help us. He will bless us this day. O Lord, draw as to thy feet, keep us near thy throne, indulge us with thy smile, fill us with joy and peace, and cause us to live to thy glory and praise! O for living, lively faith! Lord, increase our faith.

*Faith lends its realising light,
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly,
Th' Invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye.*



DECEMBER 24

Preaching peace by Jesus Christ.
Acts 10:36

BY NATURE WE ARE at war with God, and are enemies to God. When seen through the medium of his law, all his attributes appear against us, and nothing but wrath and curse can be expected by us. But in the gospel we see God making a covenant of peace, laying a foundation for peace, and then proclaiming peace to us by his beloved Son. He has received satisfaction for our sins. He is willing to receive and pardon us. He desires to see us reconciled and happy. He sends to us by Jesus. He beseeches us to be reconciled. He informs us that he has made a feast to commemorate our reconciliation, and assures us that all things are ready, and that he wishes us to come. In the gospel there is peace for sinners, for the greatest offenders, and for the vilest transgressors. And the moment we believe the testimony, look to the peace-making blood of Jesus, and cry heartily unto God, peace flows into our souls, reconciliation is effected, and we are happy. But are we at peace with God? Peace is proclaimed, but do we believe it? Do we enjoy it?

*Take me, my Saviour, as thine own,
And with thy Father plead my cause;
Be thou my portion, Lord, alone,
And bend me to obey thy laws;
And with thy gracious presence blest,
Give me to find thy promis'd rest.*



DECEMBER 25

Unto us a child is born.

Isaiah 9:6

BUT IS IT ANYTHING remarkable that a child should be born? Not sometimes, but here everything is remarkable. The mother is a virgin. The Father is God. The child is the Holy One of Israel. The place was a stable. The design is our salvation, and the earth's restoration. Never was there such a birth before, and there never can be such another. The child is to be called, "*Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*" And what he is called, he is. He is wonderful in his person, being God and man in one Christ. He is wonderful in his work, by which myriads of sinners shall be saved. And he is wonderful in his grace, by which he stoops to bless the vilest of our race. He is the recognized and authorized Counsellor in heaven and in earth. He is the mighty God, being equal to the Father in nature, majesty, and glory. He is Father of the everlasting age, which is for his glory and his people's perfect blessedness. He is the peaceful Prince, who made, reveals, imparts, and maintains peace between God and man.

*Veil'd in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleas'd as man, with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.
Glory to his blessed name,
Let us all his love proclaim!*



DECEMBER 26

Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

1 Thessalonians 1:4

GOD'S LOVE TO HIS people first manifested itself in the choice of their persons, and in the appointment of the chosen ones to union with the Lord Jesus Christ. The knowledge of our personal interest in this grace will fill us with joy, give us confidence in God, and place our feet upon a rock. Paul knew that the Thessalonians were chosen of God to salvation, because the gospel was applied by the power of the Holy Spirit to their souls. If the gospel works effectually in us, and consecrates us to God and his service, then our election is unquestionable, for the effect of election is holiness. Ancient purposes are revealed and made known by the dispensations of providence and the operations of the Spirit in time. The Spirit's work within us is the proof of the Father's love to us. If God has chosen us to salvation, we shall choose the Lord Jesus to be our Saviour, Friend, Advocate, Sovereign, Example, and Judge. And if we thus choose Jesus, there can be no doubt but God hath chosen us. Beloved, is Jesus your elect? He is God's. Do you love him, prefer him, and obey him?

*How happy are we our election who see,
And venture, O Lord, for salvation on thee!
In Jesus approv'd, from eternity loved,
Upheld by thy power we cannot be moved.*



DECEMBER 27

It is in truth the word of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

THIS IS PAUL'S testimony to the gospel. It is God's truth. It originated in his mind. It was made known by his inspiration. It is published at his command. It is pure like his nature. It is stable as his throne. It is the rule by which he works. It is the standard by which he judges. It is God's message to you, to me, to all. It is the word respecting God, setting before us his express image, that we may know him. It is the word concerning his exceeding great love, that we may believe him. It is the way of access to his throne, that we may approach him. As the word of God, it demands our attention, reverence, faith and obedience. It is solemnly connected with his glory and our destiny. It is to be received into the understanding, the affections and the heart. As God's word, we should receive it meekly, believe it heartily, obey it promptly, and trust it implicitly. The gospel is the truth of God, therefore beware how you trifle with it, neglect it, or disbelieve it. It is the word that will judge you at the last day. Have you received the gospel? Did you receive it as the very truth of God? Has it wrought effectually in you, producing a radical change?

*Lord, write thy gospel on my heart,
And in its blessings give me part;
Until I see my Saviour's face,
And sing, "I'm saved by gospel grace."*



DECEMBER 28

In thy name shall they rejoice all the day.

Psalm 89:16

WE CANNOT REJOICE in health for it is often lost, in wealth for we have it not, in wisdom for we daily discover our folly, in our strength for we are perfect weakness, in our worldly prospects for they are often very gloomy, or in our experience for it is often very dreary. If therefore we rejoice, it must be in something without us, in something above us. We may rejoice in God's name, especially as it is written out in the word of his grace, and illustrated in the life of his Son. Here his nature is revealed, his purposes are made known, and provision for our guilt, fears, and needs is presented to us. Here we have a warrant for faith, a foundation for hope, and an object for love. Here is that in which we may rejoice all the day long, for it includes all we need. It is calculated to prevent all we fear, and can never know a change. Let us then fix our eye and our hearts upon God's mercy and rejoice in it – in private, and in public – in prosperity, and adversity – at home, and abroad. Believers really have cause to be happy. The cause of their happiness is always the same.

*Salvation in that name is found,
Balm of my grief and care;
A medicine for my every wound,
All, all I want is there.*



DECEMBER 29

The law of faith.
Romans 3:27

THIS IS JUST THE opposite of the law of works. *That* was intended for perfect persons, but *this* is for sinners. *That* required obedience in order to life, but *this* presents life in order to obedience. *That* says, “Do;” but *this* says, “Believe.” *That* says, “Work;” but *this* says, “Trust.” This is a law of love. It flows from the love of God, breathes love to men, requires love of men, and produces love in man. It is the law of peace, by which peace and reconciliation with God is published and enjoyed. It is a law of grace, proclaiming that every sinner shall be pardoned on confession, shall be justified freely on believing; shall be saved perfectly by trusting, and be dignified eternally by receiving, (John 1:12). It is a law of holiness. It contains precepts requiring us, cautions warning us, exhortations urging us, and threatenings alarming us. It is intended to exhibit God’s mercy, and to prevent man’s ruin, the sinner’s boasting, and Satan’s designs. It lays us under everlasting obligations. Every Christian should carefully observe the law of faith, and learn to distinguish it from the law of works. True faith always takes Christ’s law, and obeys it.

*By the works of the law, we can never obtain
Salvation and peace, or God’s favour regain;
But believing in Jesus, each blessing is given
To fit us for duty, and meeten for heaven.*



DECEMBER 30

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief.

Romans 4:20

IF ABRAHAM DID not, we often have. Yet we have far less reason than he had. The promises are given to us of free grace. They are supported by the holiness and immutability of God. They demand our credit and confidence. But through unbelief, we often object or dispute: They are too great, or too good for us. They are for eminent persons, not for such poor, sinful, unworthy creatures as we are. It is not probable that they will ever be fulfilled in our experience. This is unbelief. This is staggering. Now we are unsteady, and this affects our hope, our prayers and our obedience. For steady faith is the root of lively hope, fervent prayer, and evangelical obedience. Unbelief draws all its arguments from sense, reason, appearances, circumstances or delays. But faith should take God's promise as the gift of God's grace and hold it fast, because God is faithful. It should expect its fulfilment, because God is true. Let us watch against unbelief, which dishonours God and distresses us. Let us seek faith from God, that we may exercise faith in God. And let us set Abraham before us as our example.

*Faith has for its foundation broad
A stable rock, on which I stand,
The truth and faithfulness of God;
All other ground is sinking sand.*



DECEMBER 31

There hath not failed one word of all his good promise.

1 Kings 8:56

THIS IS THE DAY for review. Let us look back. This is the day to compare God's conduct with God's promise. He has kept his promise in his eye every day of this year, though we have often lost sight of it. We have been unbelieving, but he has been faithful. We have backslidden, but he has kept covenant with us. We have ten thousand times deserved his wrath, but here we are, the monuments of his mercy. What forbearance he has shown, what patience he has exercised, and what sympathy he has manifested. How true to his character, how faithful to his word, and how tender to our souls he has been. We have failed in almost every point, but he has not failed in one. We have broken our word a thousand times, but he has never broken his once. Not one thing hath failed of all that he has promised. In temporals, our bread has been given us and our water has been sure. In spirituals, he has pardoned our sins, revived our graces, corrected our follies, restored our souls, borne with our manners and manifested a Father's love. Beloved, is not God true? Has he not been faithful? Ought we not to trust him?

*Let suns or stars forget to rise,
Or quit their stations in the skies;
Let heaven and earth both pass away,
Eternal truth shall ne'er decay.*



A GOOD STATE

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:3

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Psalms 51:17

To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word.

Isaiah 66:2

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Psalms 34:18

Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Proverbs 16:19

This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

Psalms 34:6

Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him.

James 2:5

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Job 42:5-6

AN IMPORTANT DUTY

In your patience possess ye your souls.

Luke 21:19

Be patient toward all men.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord: Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

James 5:7-8

Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Romans 15:4

O man of God, follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

1 Timothy 6:11

Add to temperance patience; and to patience godliness.

2 Peter 1:6

THE MOST EXCELLENT GRACE

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

John 13:34-35

Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

Ephesians 5:2

Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

1 John 4:7

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

1 John 4:10,12

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

1 John 3:14

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, (or love,) these three; but the greatest of these is charity, (or love).

1 Corinthians 13:13

GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

2 Corinthians 8:9

God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8

My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

My God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:19

His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2 Peter 1:3-4

The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

1 John 1:7

THE RIGHT POSTURE

Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world; looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Titus 2:12-13

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:20

And unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Hebrews 9:28

Seeing then that all these things are to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

2 Peter 3:11,13

To wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 1:10

As the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:6,8

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Smith (1802-1862) was a 19th century English Baptist pastor who became a prolific and much-loved devotional author. Called to the ministry in his mid-20s, he served as pastor of two churches in Cheltenham over a period of 12 years. In 1841 he accepted a call to the New Park Street chapel in London – the church which Charles Spurgeon would later pastor for almost 40 years. Health issues eventually forced him to leave London in 1850, and he eventually returned to Cheltenham to pastor a third church in the area from 1852 until his death. In total, he authored more than 50 books, along with numerous tracts and articles for various Christian periodicals and magazines.

Smith's writings were full of Christ, and he sought to magnify and exalt his precious Saviour in every book. He aimed to not only cultivate a genuine love for the Lord Jesus in the hearts of his readers, but to see such love for Christ manifested in their everyday lives. In the preface to his popular *The Believer's Daily Remembrancer*, he wrote:

In this little work, I aim to speak in the closet, in the cottage, in the kitchen, and even in the field, to the different classes of the Lord's family; endeavouring to draw them nearer to their God and gracious Father. My desire is to promote the power of godliness; and these little pieces are written to convince, comfort, and correct; to fan the flame of devotion, and to produce holiness of heart and life...Habitual dependence upon God for all we need, acknowledging the hand of God in all we receive, and walking with God, notwithstanding all that may happen to us below, enter into the very vitals of genuine Christianity; and it is only while we are thus acting that we enjoy peace with God, and walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.

Most Christian authors would naturally have similar desires. But whereas many are able to speak about the Christian life in theory,

Smith had first-hand experience of the truths that he wrote about. In God's providence, he learnt them by passing through his own fiery trials. Smith's father died while he was still an infant, and as a young child he was pressed into the workforce to help his mother support the family. As an apprentice and employee, he battled with the opposition that he received from ungodly co-workers. As a father of at least seven children, he saw three of them die at an early age. As a pastor, he experienced the hatred, slander and nastiness that sometimes comes from professing Christians, and he went through more than one bitter church split. Nor was he exempt from health and financial worries either. In addition to all this, Smith endured the normal internal battles against sin that plague every believer, while also bearing the heavy burden for the souls of others that accompanies a faithful ministry.

Not surprisingly, Smith's writings began to resonate with other readers who were enduring similar trials. Through his pen, they were being comforted with the same comfort that he himself had received from God (2 Cor. 1:4). Before long, Smith's books began to spread throughout England and eventually around the world. Many wrote to him, expressing gratitude for the tremendous help they had received, or explaining how God had used his writings to awaken unbelieving friends and relatives. Hungry souls were being fed, and for a while, his writings were even more popular than those of Charles Spurgeon. Sadly, his works are now largely unknown by most 21st century Christians, but it is hoped that as more of them are reprinted, the Lord will again use them to exalt Christ and bless the souls of His beloved saints.

Further information about Pastor James Smith can be found in his autobiography, *Marvellous Mercy, as Displayed in the Life and Experience of the Author, James Smith of Cheltenham*. The first edition contains a record of his life up until August 1861, and was published prior to his death in December of the following year. In a subsequent printing in 1864, his son Joseph provided some additional details about Pastor Smith's final months.

Brief Timeline

- 1802 Born in Old Brentford, Middlesex (19th November).
- c.1812 Taken from school to work in a soap factory to help his widowed mother earn an income for the family.
- c.1816 Commenced work as an apprentice fell-monger (tanner and dealer of sheepskins).
- 1820 Conversion (28th February). Publicly baptised and accepted into membership (31st March)
- 1824 Marriage to Ann Cook (29th August).
- 1825 Moves to Chertsey for work purposes as his employer's fell-monger business begins to expand (April).
- 1826 Preaches publicly for the first time at Alton from Ps. 9:18 (19th November). It was his 24th birthday. Preaches twice more that same day from Zech. 9:10 and Zech. 13:1.
- 1827 Brentford church sets him apart for the ministry of the Word (March), and he begins preaching in various places as needed.
- 1828 Accepts an invitation to preach for a 12 month trial period at Cheltenham, with the possibility of becoming the church's pastor. During this time he faced severe opposition from some in the church, and a number of members decided to leave.
- 1829 Ordained as pastor of Bethel Chapel in Cheltenham (26th May) and the church continues to grow, despite ongoing controversies. Members with hyper-calvinistic and antinomian views become increasingly critical of his ministry and message. In order to divert his mind from these trials, Smith begins to write, print and circulate gospel tracts.
- c.1830 Death of daughter Mercy.
- 1831 Death of 19-month-old daughter Anne after a three day illness (13th Jan.)
- 1833 Death of son Charles.

Comes to believe in the universal offer of the gospel to all lost sinners, and determines to start calling them to repent and believe in the gospel, and offer them the Lord Jesus as Saviour. Previously, he held the view that gospel invitations should only be made to sinners who had been made to feel their need of Christ. He anticipates further opposition from the church as a result.

- 1835 The church situation deteriorates further and he resigns as pastor of Bethel Chapel. A number of members also leave, and he begins preaching among them at a local gallery for the next three months.
- 1836 Becomes pastor of the newly-formed Salem Baptist Chapel in Cheltenham (1st January). Though the original premises could seat 600 people, the congregation numbered more than 1200 within just 2 years and the building had to be enlarged.
- 1841 Resigns as pastor of Salem Chapel (9th Nov.) and accepts a call to New Park Street Chapel, London. He describes the London church as 'in a very low state, and the congregation very small,' but between 400 and 500 new members would be added to the church during his pastorate.
- 1850 Resigns as pastor of New Park Street Chapel (February) due to ongoing lung and asthma problems. Commences a two year trial at Byrom Street Chapel in Liverpool (August) which only lasts until the end of the year.
- 1851 Invited to oversee the church at Shrewsbury for 12 months (February).
- 1852 Returns to Cheltenham to pastor a church which was meeting in Ebenezer Chapel (February). This church, which had formed in 1843 from previous members of Salem Chapel, was now itself in danger of disbanding. It recovered under Smith's ministry and would soon become Cambray Baptist Church.
- 1861 Suffers a sudden stroke and paralysis (September), which prevents any further work as a preacher or writer.
- 1862 Death at the age of 60 years (15th Dec.)

List of Published Works

- 1836 Parental Solitude
- 1838 Jehovah Revealed as the Object of Faith and Hope
- 1839 Messenger of Mercy, A
- c.1840 Minister's Pocket Companion, The
- 1845 Believer's Daily Remembrancer, The (Pastor's Morning Visit)
Book That Will Suit You, The*
Church As It Ought to Be, The
Love of Christ [Set Forth], The*
- 1846 Believer's Daily Remembrancer, The (Pastor's Evening Visit)
Christian's Railway and Steamboat Companion
Way of Salvation Set Forth, The
- 1847 Voice of Mercy in the House of Affliction, The
- 1848 Green Pastures for the Lord's Household
- 1849 Manna in the Wilderness
Sinner's Guide to God and Glory, The
Streams in the Desert
- 1850 Daily Bible Readings for the Lord's Household
Rainbow of the Covenant, The*
Refreshing Dew-Drops
Selection of Spiritual Poetry, A
- 1852 Book That You Want, The
Still Waters*
- 1854 Precious Things From the Everlasting Hills
- 1855 Better Land, The
Sabbath Readings
Welcome to Jesus
- 1856 Early and Latter Rain, The
Good Seed for the Lord's Field
Our Heavenly Father
Sacramental Meditations

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- 1857 Bread From Heaven
Christ Alone
- 1858 Great Comforter, The
Light for Dark Days
Sunny Subjects for All Seasons
- 1859 Book You Will Like, A
Evening Sacrifice, The
Important Questions
Morning Sacrifice, The
Pearls from the Ocean
Words of Comfort
- 1860 Fruit From the Tree of Life
Gleams of Grace
Good News for All
Rills from the Rock of Ages
- 1861 Glad Tidings of Good Things
Pleading Saviour, The
- 1862 Marvellous Mercy
- 1863 Believer's Triumph, The
- 1865 Bright Rays and Reviving Showers
- 1867 Food for the Soul

**Exact year of publication unknown.* Given dates indicate the year in which the book was first published, and are not necessarily the same year in which they were written.

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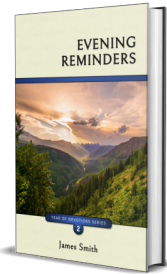
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ISBN 978-1-7638196-4-1

