

EVENING REMINDERS

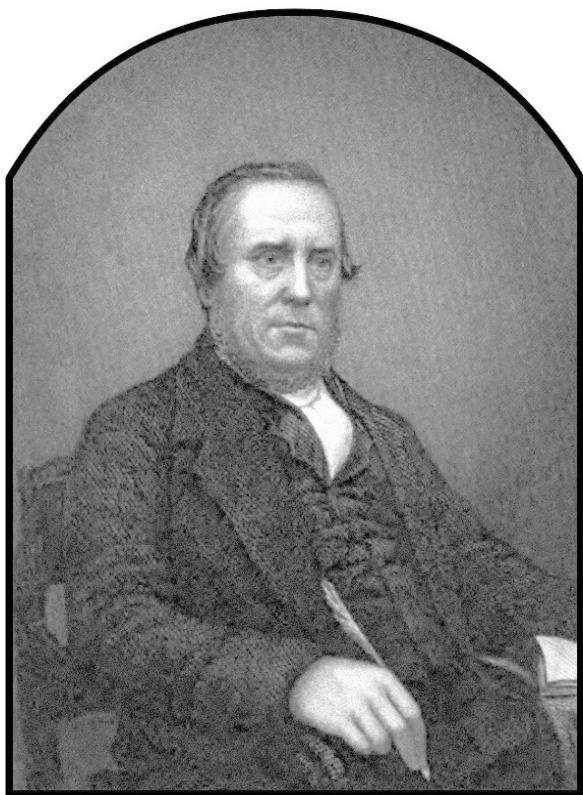


YEAR OF DEVOTIONS SERIES

2

James Smith

EVENING REMINDERS



James Smith,

EVENING REMINDERS

by
James Smith

NEW EDITION



2024
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Evening Reminders

Smith, James (1802-1862)

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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 central 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 and 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

The first part of this little work, was written expressly for the members of my own flock. Nor did I once anticipate, that it would find such favour in the eyes of the Lord's people generally, or obtain so large a circulation as it has. Many and most gratifying, are the testimonies I have received of its usefulness; and often have I been requested to write a second part, for the evening of the day. But having a natural dislike to writing, and much work of another kind on my hands, I have for a long time, refused to gratify my friends in this particular. But at length, finding that the work continues to grow in the estimation of the public, there being now (1846) about THIRTY THOUSAND copies in circulation, while the demand for it increases, rather than diminishes, I have consented to write a second volume to correspond with the first.

The plan is the same, and so is the design. The same views of truth also, which are found in the first part, will be found in this; for the Author has seen no reason to change his mind, in reference to any of the great and glorious doctrines of the gospel, since writing that. We want nothing new in divinity, the old is better. We only want the power and unction of the Holy Spirit, to bring home the truth with energy and savour to our souls. We want more of Christ, and less of self. May the Lord, who has so graciously made use of the former volume for the good of His people, and the glory of His name, make use of this also. May it endear the Saviour, promote confidence in God, lead to entire consecration of soul to Him, and be the means of comforting many a weary pilgrim. May we all be led from the fleeting vanities of time, to the substantial realities of eternity. Reader, give the Author an interest in your prayers. He desires two things principally, to be more holy, and to be more useful. As a member of the ONE CHURCH of Jesus, he desires to promote the love, peace, and unity of the whole body; ever remembering, that however we may differ in some things, we are all ONE IN HIM. Most heartily and earnestly therefore does he pray,

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

that grace, mercy, and peace, may be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

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JANUARY 1

*To this man will I look
Isaiah 66:2*

TO WHAT MAN? The poor in spirit. The humble. The man who trembles at His word — who lies low in self-abasement at His throne — who mourns over his follies and his faults — who fears to offend a God so good, so holy, so great. The man who looks to Jesus for life, peace, and everlasting salvation — to such the Lord will look. He will observe them. He will admire them. He will manifest His approbation of them. He will look and love. Look and listen to their prayers. Look and accept their persons and services. Look and honour them, visiting them as His friends, dwelling with them as His children, owning them as His jewels, and using them as instruments for His glory. He will look upon them and strengthen them as He did Gideon. Look, and restore them as He did Peter. Look, and so lift up the light of His countenance upon them, and give them peace. My soul, hast thou been looking to the Lord today? Hast then looked unto Him as thy Father? If so, doubtless He has been looking upon thee with a Father's love. He is now looking upon thee with approbation. Sweet thought! The look of God is more than wealth, more than honour. Retire to rest this night with the thought, Jehovah is looking upon me with love.

*He proves His love, displays His grace,
Through the redemption of His Son;
He turns my feet from sinful ways,
And pardons what my hands have done.*



JANUARY 2

*Now will I praise the LORD.
Genesis 29:35*

INGRATITUDE IS A great sin, and yet it is very common. Mercies come unnoticed, they are enjoyed without gratitude, and depart without praise. How many favours have we enjoyed which we have never acknowledged? Yet the Lord has said, “He that offereth praise glorifieth Me.” Let us reflect upon our mercies, repent of our ingratitude, and say with Leah, “Now WILL I PRAISE THE LORD.” Who can have more reason? When shall we have a more favourable opportunity? Let us begin at once, and praise Him for temporal favours, but especially for spiritual blessings. Let us bless Him for what He has done, and for what He has promised — for what was given us in Adam, but more for what was given us in Christ — that He has generously provided all we can need, and has presented all He has provided to be received by us without money or without price. All He sends us is in love, all He does to us is in mercy, whether it be pleasant or painful. Therefore let us attend to the apostle’s exhortation and “in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us.” “Giving thanks always for all things unto God even the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Praise is comely for the upright.”

*Bless, O my soul, the living God;
Call home thy thoughts that rove abroad:
Why should the wonders He hath wrought,
Be lost in silence and forgot?*



JANUARY 3

One mediator between God and men.

1 Timothy 2:5

There is but one Mediator. Man has invented more, but God has appointed, revealed, and accepted but one. One is sufficient. Jesus alone is the Mediator of reconciliation. His atonement is infinite in its value and efficacy. It honoured the law, satisfied justice, and glorified all the perfections of God. It perfected forever them that are sanctified. It is a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God. On the ground of the one sacrifice of Jesus, sinners are received, pardoned, and accepted of God. Let nothing else engage your attention when seeking acceptance with God — go through Jesus, through Jesus only. However vile, however sinful you may be, there is reconciliation to God through the death of His Son. There is but one Mediator of intercession. One is sufficient. Jesus ever lives to make intercession. The Father always hears Him. We need no one to dispose His mind to pity, listen to, or plead for us. His nature is love. It is His office and work to save, and He delights in His work. Therefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost, who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Go to God then, by Jesus, and acceptance is certain; a blessing is sure.

*He ever lives to intercede
Before His Father's face:
Give Him, my soul, thy cause to plead,
Nor doubt the Father's grace.*



JANUARY 4

All things are yours.

1 Corinthians 3:21

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? What a paradox is this, poor yet rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things! All things are ours — for our use and benefit — to enjoy even when we do not actually possess — made over to us in covenant — presented to us in the promises — to be realized and enjoyed by faith — to claim and possess by-and-by. We shall have all that is really needful in time, and the whole when Jesus shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation. We are heirs of God, and joint heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ; and whether we reflect on things temporal or spiritual, things present or future, things painful or pleasant, things on earth or in heaven, we may justly say, “All things are ours.” God is ours — our portion. Jesus is ours — our Bridegroom. The Holy Spirit is ours — our Comforter. Earth is ours — our school-room. Heaven is ours — our eternal home. But do we believe this? Do we live realizing this glorious truth? Can we lay down tonight on our pillows and say with confidence: All things are mine? If so, it may be well said to us, “I know your poverty, but *you are rich.*”

*God is our joy and portion still,
When earthly good retires;
He will our hearts sustain and fill,
When earth itself expires.*



JANUARY 5

*To die is gain.
Philippians 1:21*

IF WE LOOK at death as creatures, we shall fear it. But if we look at it as Christians, we shall not. It was once a curse, it is now a blessing. It was a loss, it is now a gain. Dying we gain our freedom from every foe, trial, and trouble; and obtain possession of innumerable blessings. We are freed from sin, and made perfect in holiness. We are delivered from sickness and sin, and enjoy perfect health and happiness. We shall gain knowledge, for then shall we know even as we are known. We shall gain holiness, for then we shall be with Christ and be like Him. We shall gain honour, for then white robes shall be given us, and we shall be acknowledged as victorious over Satan, the world, and sin. We shall sit down with Jesus on His throne. Death to every believer is gain. It is immediate gain. It is great gain. It is everlasting gain. It may be painful to pass through, but its results will be glorious. And shall we fear death? Why should we? Jesus says, "He that keepeth My sayings, shall never taste of death." He may sleep, he may depart to be with his Lord, he may go home to rest after the toils and conflicts of life, but he shall never die. Death hath no dominion over him. Look through Jesus at death, and look through death to Jesus.

*Soon will the Lord, my life appear;
Soon shall I end my trials here, —
Leave sin, and sorrow, death and pain;
To live is Christ — to die is gain.*



JANUARY 6

Martha, Martha, thou art careful.

Luke 10:41

JESUS LOVED MARTHA, and Martha loved Jesus. But Martha was too anxious about temporal things, and therefore Jesus lovingly reproved her. She was entangled and hurried, and His aim was to set her free. Her care was intense, and while it irritated her temper, it hindered her enjoying His society, or receiving with meekness His word. This is a common fault among our Lord's disciples. How many Marthas have we in the church; how very few Marys. Let us take our seat at the feet of Jesus by Mary's side. Let us listen to His word, let us realize His care for us, and let us try and cast all our care on Him. All our concerns are in His hands, all circumstances are under His control, all events are managed by His wisdom. He exhorts us to seek first His kingdom, to aim always at His glory, to be satisfied with His arrangements, and to live in peace. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. Whatever happens will be overruled for your good. You will soon leave the present scene, and leave behind you all the objects about which you have been anxious. Be prayerful, but not anxious. Attend to Martha's duties in Mary's spirit. Receive thy Lord's reproof this evening as spoken to thee, and try to bury thy cares where He has buried thy sins.

*How oft we are like Martha vexed,
Encumbered, hurried, and perplexed?
While trifles so engross our thought,
The one thing needful is forgot.*



JANUARY 7

I will honour him.

Psalm 91:15

THEM THAT HONOUR Me I will honour. Self-exaltation dishonours the Lord, and will bring us into discredit and disgrace; but self-denial is the road to advancement and honour. If the Christian deny himself, and keep his eye and his heart steadily fixed on the Lord's glory, the Lord will honour him. He shall be brought through all difficulties with credit, be cleared of all slanders and scandals that may be thrown upon him, and enjoy his Father's smile in the darkest day. The Lord will visit him, hold sweet communion with him, and raise his mind above all the circumstances that surround him. In sickness He will soothe and comfort him; in health guide and direct him. In poverty He will bless him with contentment, and in plenty with a liberal spirit. Through life He will sustain and supply him, and in death animate and receive him. While he lives he shall be a blessing, and after death have a station near the throne. Beloved, deny self, mortify the flesh, rise above the world, live by faith, walk with God, honour the Lord, and He will honour you. Leave your concerns in His hands, while you seek to promote His kingdom and glory; and you will find that He will bless your provision, and satisfy you with the bread of heaven.

*He that denies himself for Me,
My kingdom to extend;
Shall taste My love, My glory see,
And I will be his friend.*



JANUARY 8

Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

1 Samuel 7:12

GOD IS FAITHFUL, and He hath written out His faithfulness in our experience in very legible characters. He promised to help us, and though we have passed through fire and through water, though our journey has been long, our road rough, our foes many, our sins great, and our faith feeble, He has ever been to us a very present help in trouble. He has helped us in darkness and light, in summer and winter, in soul and in body. Let us tonight record His mercies, let us lift up the Ebenezer, let us bear witness to His faithfulness; and from the past let us draw encouragement for the future. He who hath helped us in time past, will help us now, will help us in all time to come. He says, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Let us rejoice and be glad, singing with the psalmist, "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." And as He hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Let us boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me." Remember, whatever may change, whoever may change, thy God is in one mind, and none can turn Him. Therefore trust in Him, and He will help you out of every trial.

*Thus far His arm hath led us on:
Thus far we make His mercy known:
And while we tread this desert land,
New mercies shall new songs demand.*



JANUARY 9

The place which is called Calvary.

Luke 23:33

WE VISITED GETHSEMANE this morning, let us visit Calvary tonight. There Jesus suffered immediately from the hand of a holy God, here He suffers by the hands of wicked men. He is led as a lamb to the slaughter. See Him passing through the gates of Jerusalem, weary, weak, and faint — His cross laid on His shoulders. He ascends the eminence, the common place of execution — the cross is laid on the ground — He is stretched upon it — His arms and legs are strained — and the nails are driven through His hands and feet. It is raised up and thrust into its socket with a violent jerk — all His bones are out of joint — and He hangs a spectacle of misery and woe. See His attenuated frame, His pale cheeks, His sunken eye, His thorn-crowned brow, His death-stricken countenance, and hear Him cry, “My God, My God; why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Was ever sorrow like unto His sorrow? He is accursed, He is made sin for us. He suffers, the innocent for the guilty — He dies, the just for the unjust. It is the Shepherd, dying for His sheep; the Bridegroom redeeming His bride; and the Head ransoming His body. He died for us, in our stead, that we might never die. Often let us visit Calvary, and muse upon its tragic scene — the scene of suffering love.

*When the dread scene of death, the last
Important hour draws nigh,
Then, with my dying eyes, I'll cast
A look on Calvary.*



JANUARY 10

*God also hath highly exalted him.
Philippians 2:9*

NO ONE EVER sunk so low as Jesus. No one is, or ever will be raised so high. He was considered as unfit to live. He was treated as a despicable worm. He was put to death in the flesh; but God hath highly exalted Him. He is gone into heaven. He is seated at the right hand of God. He wears a name which is above every name. He possesses all authority in heaven and on earth, thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers are made subject unto Him. His crown glitters with sparkling gems brighter than the morning sun. His sceptre extends over all creation. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion endureth throughout all generations. He is the object of angelic admiration and adoration, the subject of every song. His exaltation is the reward of His humiliation, sufferings, and death. But it is a sweet thought that He is exalted for His people's good, for His people's glory. Exalted to give them repentance and remission of sins, to sanctify their sorrows, supply their wants, secure their safe arrival around His throne, and glorify them with Himself forever. Immortal Saviour! May I know the power of Thy resurrection, glorify Thy grace, be raised up, and be made to sit together with Thee in Thy glory!

*To Him whom men despise and slight,
To Him be glory given;
The crown is His, and His by right,
The highest place in heaven.*



JANUARY 11

Draw me.
Song of Solomon 1:4

SWEET AND PRECIOUS is the invitation of Jesus, which we considered this morning; but we feel that something more than the invitation is necessary. There is often a want of inclination. The soul is sluggish, the heart is heavy, a host of things interpose to keep us from His fullness. His invitation is a full and sufficient warrant. We may go to Him; we *may* go with confidence; we may go when we will, and for all we need. His heart is kind, His resources are thrown open, His word is true; but we need the drawings of the Holy Spirit. Our weakness, our reluctance, the difficulties we meet with, make us cry, "DRAW ME." He has drawn us, else we had never approached Him; for He has said, "No man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." This drawing is the effect and proof of eternal love, hence we read, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, *therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.*" The Lord's drawings are so sweet that we yield before we are aware, "I drew them with cords of love." They are so natural, that they always prevail: "I drew them as with the bands of a man." May Jesus draw us from the world, from sin, and from self tonight. May He draw us to His footstool, and to His throne.

*O lead me to Thy mercy-seat,
Attract me nearer still;
Draw me, like Mary to Thy feet,
To sit and learn Thy will.*



JANUARY 12

*Good tidings of great joy.
Luke 2:10*

THERE IS EVERYTHING in our hearts to cast us down, and fill us with dejection; and we daily meet with things in the world, or the family, or the church, to make us sorrowful. But the gospel brings us glad tidings of great joy. It sets before us a Saviour, and such a Saviour! — One who is God and *can* deliver us, one who is man and *will* sympathize with us. One who knows by experience what our trials mean, and who brings all the resources of God to meet our case, so that we may well ask, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” In His blood, there is a full, a certain pardon for all sin — in His obedience, a righteousness, to justify us freely and forever before God — in His fullness, an endless variety of blessings, to supply our needs — and in His promises, comfort to cheer us in our most gloomy hours. He is a Saviour for sinners. All He did, He did for sinners; just such sinners as we daily feel ourselves to be. For such He obeyed the law, for such He made atonement, for such He now pleads before His Father. It is just such sinners that He invites to His bosom, and for such He is preparing mansions in heaven. Whatever is necessary to constitute any tidings good, is in the gospel; and all that is requisite to fill us with great joy, is there too.

*This love exceeds our highest thought;
Its length and breadth in vain are sought:
No tongue can tell its depth and height,
The love of God is infinite.*



JANUARY 13

Help thou mine unbelief.

Mark 9:24

UR FAITH IS often weak, and our unbelief very strong. It is so natural for a sinner to disbelieve God, and it is often difficult for a Christian to give full credit to God's promises. Sometimes His word appears to be too good to be true. At other times we have such a vivid sense of our sinfulness, that we cannot admit that such great and glorious blessings are for us. Indeed, it is very difficult to believe that God is as good as His word declares; that His promises belong to *such sinners*; and that we may — *should* — believe, appropriate, and plead them as made to us. We fear presumption, and so yield to unbelief. We listen to Satan, and so doubt and fear. But Jesus asks, "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" Is then the promise true? Is the promise plain? Is it made to sinners? Does it flow from grace? Is it given us that God may be glorified in His mercy, love, and kindness? Then let us endeavour to believe, to rest on the word, to expect that God will do as He has said. Let us take our unbelief where we take our other sins — to Jesus. Let us confess it, deplore it, and cry with His disciples of old, "Lord, increase our faith;" or with the poor man in the text, "Help Thou mine unbelief." Help me to conquer it, and to triumph over it.

*Lord, Thou hast said, Thou wilt forgive,
Now help me to believe and live:
A living, vigorous faith impart,
And seal my pardon on my heart.*



JANUARY 14

*Hold up my goings in thy paths.
Psalm 17:5*

FAILURES, FOLLIES, AND mistakes should lead us to our forgiving God, and teach us the necessity of close walking with God. We need to be constantly upheld by divine power, and to be guided by divine wisdom. We are prone to start aside as a broken bow. Many have fallen into sin; many do fall. We are as much exposed to temptation as they were, and are as liable to be overcome. Satan is watchful, temptations are powerful, and our hearts are weak. Let us therefore cry to the strong One for strength, and let it be our daily prayer, "Hold up my goings in Thy paths." In every duty, as well as in every trial; in the calm, as well as in the storm; we need to be upheld. For unless the Lord uphold us, we shall fall into presumption, or despair; into self-righteousness, or licentiousness; into open sin, or secret backsliding. We are never safe, but as the Lord keeps us; and He keeps by teaching us our weakness, our proneness to wander, and by leading us to walk softly before Him, in faith, and humility of mind. We are never so liable to wander, as when we fancy there is no fear of it; nor so likely to fall as when we think it impossible. Beloved, if you are not daily seeking divine protection, you are in danger of being overcome. Examine. Watch. Pray.

*Now, Holy Spirit, to my heart,
Wisdom and holiness impart;
Uphold me by Thy mighty power,
In every dark or dangerous hour.*



JANUARY 15

*We all do fade as a leaf.
Isaiah 64:4*

WHAT A CONTRAST between an unchangeable God, and a sinner fading like a leaf! Yet, this is a true picture of us, and of all temporal things. We began to look green and happy not long since, and in a little time we shall wither, fade, and die. “Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down.” Humbling consideration this. But it may be rendered very useful. Let us endeavour to turn it to account. Shall we soon fade and die, then let us not be much affected by anything that occurs below. Let us set our affections on things above, and lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Let us live by faith on Jesus, walk with God, and aim principally to please Him in all we do. Let us also watch against a worldly spirit, and pass the time of our sojourning here in fear. We shall soon find health give place to sickness; strength to weakness; youth to age. The dying bed, the coffin, the grave, are just before us. Let us therefore make our calling and our election sure. Let us cultivate close and filial fellowship with God. Let us dig deep and lay our foundation upon the rock. Brethren, the time is short. Eternity with all its glories is just before us. We all do fade as a leaf.

*On the tree of life eternal,
O let all our hopes be staid!
This alone, forever vernal,
Bears a leaf that shall not fade.*



JANUARY 16

It is well.
2 Kings 4:26

WHAT A MERCY to be able to say so! Still if we are in Christ, if clothed with His righteousness, if living upon Him as the bread of life, "IT IS WELL." For all our sins are blotted out, the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts, and God looks down upon us and loves us with an infinite love. It is well, for our names are in the book of life, our cause is in the Saviour's hands, and our peace with God is made. It may be a day of darkness with us, but the Lord is our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning will soon be ended. Providence may frown upon us, but temporal trials are only intended to endear spiritual blessings. We may feel weak, very weak, but the strength of Jesus shall be made perfect in our weakness. Satan may sorely harass and hunt us like the partridge upon the mountains, but God will bruise Satan under our feet shortly. Our hearts may appear barren and all within may wear a wintry aspect. But this is only permitted to drive us out of self, to prevent spiritual pride, and to render Jesus and His finished work more precious. It is well with them that fear the Lord. Let outward things be as they may; for He watches over them to do them good, rejoices to bless and make them holy, and turns everything to their account.

*Though you may trials sharp endure,
From sin, or death, or hell;
Your heavenly Father's love is sure,
And therefore, "It is well."*



JANUARY 17

Thy people shall be willing.

Psalm 110:3

NO MAN BY NATURE is willing to come to Christ for salvation, or to be saved by free and sovereign grace alone. Human nature is too blind, obstinate, and proud. If we are willing, God has made us so. Nor is any one desirous, or even willing, to be made truly holy, except he is taught of God. If therefore we would do good, if we are heartily desiring and earnestly seeking to be made holy in heart and life, it is because we are under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. What a mercy to know this! How often do we give human nature credit for being better than it is, and fancy that what we feel, desire, and do, is merely from an enlightened mind, and not from a sanctified heart. The Lord's people are made willing by the Lord's power; but that power works so secretly, so silently, in such strict accordance with our nature and faculties, that we do not perceive it. Are you in doubt, whether God hath really called you by grace or no? Enquire: Am I willing to be saved by Jesus as a poor lost sinner? Am I concerned to be made holy, as well as to be made happy? Do I pray to be made useful, as well as to be safe? If so, you are one of the Lord's people, and He has made you willing in the day of His power.

*Willing to be saved by grace,
Let me see Thy glorious face;
Willing to be holy too,
Work in me to will and do.*



JANUARY 18

Ye that love the LORD, hate evil.

Psalm 97:10

EXHORTATIONS TO the plainest duties are necessary, for sometimes we forget, but more often sink into a lukewarm, indifferent frame of soul. Do we love the Lord? If so, we love His people, His ordinances, His gospel, and His law. We love His prohibitions as well as His promises, knowing that He only prohibits what would do us an injury. Can we tonight join with David, and say, "O how I love Thy law, it is my meditation all the day!" The law prohibits all evil. Let us therefore drink into the mind of God, and look at sin as "that abominable thing" which He hates. Let us hate evil thoughts, and strive against them. Let us hate evil words, and keep the mouth as with a bridle. Let us hate evil works, and abstain from all appearance of evil. The evils of the heart are the worst, as all other evils flow from them. Especially let us beware of an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Would you hate evil? Then walk close with God. Be much in fellowship with Him, and so will holiness become your element, and every species of evil your abhorrence. Lovers of God, set your hearts, set your fears against evil. "Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."

*Lord, whom I love, to Thee I give
My soul, my life, my all:
To Thee would I devoted live,
And ne'er the gift recall.*



JANUARY 19

*Joint-heirs with Christ.
Romans 8:17*

RELATED TO JESUS now, we shall inherit with Him by-and-by; not only as brethren of the same family, but as the bride inherits with her bridegroom. Jesus is constituted heir of all things. We are one with Him, and as such, are “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.” What dignity! What an unspeakable privilege is this! We are heirs of salvation. The heirs of promise. Connection with Adam involved us in guilt, ruin, and misery. Connection with Jesus, brings us righteousness, peace, and everlasting salvation. Now we suffer with Him, but we shall soon be glorified together. Now we taste the cup of His sorrow, but we shall soon drink of the cup of His joys. But are we indeed joint-heirs? Are we children of God by faith in Jesus Christ? Do we love our heavenly Father? Are we jealous for His honour and glory? Do we delight in His presence, and suffer grief and sorrow in His absence? Have we sympathy with His beloved family? Is sin the object of our hatred, and holiness our desire and delight? If so, Jesus calls us brethren, Jehovah calls us children, and in Jesus, “we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.”

*Children of God, through Jesus' love
We rise undoubted heirs;
His rich inheritance above,
He with His brethren shares.*



JANUARY 20

*The LORD giveth wisdom.
Proverbs 2:6*

IN ORDER TO THIS He gives us to feel that we need it, ardently to long for it, and earnestly to seek it at His throne. We need wisdom to walk circumspectly, to overcome temptations, to work consistently in the Lord's vineyard, and to glorify God in our bodies, souls, and spirits which are His. The wisdom we need we may have — not by labour, but by prayer. We cannot produce it, but God has promised to bestow it. Hear His own word, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; *and it shall be given him.* But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." God is willing to bestow it. He promises to impart it. We ought therefore to believe His word, ask Him for it, as though He really meant what He has said in His promise; and expect it, because He is faithful and cannot lie. The wisdom He bestows is most excellent and useful. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." Would you be wise unto salvation? Wise to win souls? Wise to avoid evil, and secure all possible good? Then seek wisdom of God, seek it instantly, seek it earnestly, seek it in faith, and "*it shall be given you.*"

*That wisdom, Lord, on me bestow,
Gentle, and peaceable, and pure;
That I may walk with Thee below,
And make my own salvation sure.*



JANUARY 21

O LORD, truly I am thy servant.

Psalms 116:16

YES, WE ARE the Lord's servants, created for His glory, redeemed to show forth His praise, regenerated to exhibit His virtues. We are His by the strongest ties. Jesus is our Master, His will is our law, and His pleasure should be our delight. Our Master is also our example. As the servant of the Father, He appeared in our world, consulted the Father's will in all that He did, and suffered without complaining all the Father saw fit to inflict. He humbled Himself and became obedient, and now He is exalted, and extolled, and is very high; and to us He says, "If any man serve Me, let him imitate Me: and where I am there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour." Obedience to Christ may sink us in the eyes of men, but it exalts us in the sight of God. It may expose us to suffering and contempt before the world, but God will honour us with His presence and smiles, and will afterward receive us to glory. Well, whose servants have we been today? Whom have we been seeking to please? Whose cause have we been endeavouring to promote? Can we retire to rest as the servants of Christ, willing to go to Him whenever He calls us, or to stay and labour below so long as He sees proper to continue us?

*Jesus, how great Thy servants are!
What dignity on man bestowed!
We, who rejoice Thy yoke to bear,
Are honoured with th' esteem of God,*



JANUARY 22

Keep me as the apple of the eye.

Psalm 17:8

THROUGH ANOTHER day the Lord has shielded us, and we should tonight record His faithful love. But while we record His past kindness, we should pray for protection for the future. What a beautiful, expressive, striking prayer is this! Keep me, for Thou art omnipotent, omniscient, and all-wise. Keep me, for I am exposed to enemies and storms. I am in danger from various quarters. I am weak and inexperienced as the newly fledged bird. I fear I shall fall. I have no one on whom I can repose but Thee. Keep me as the apple of the eye — carefully — constantly — tenderly — graciously. Keep me so, that I may be useful and ornamental as the apple of the eye. Keep me in Christ my Head, watching, expecting, and enjoying Thy presence and Thy blessing. Keep me, for I see many fall into sin, and I feel I am as liable as they. Keep me, for such numbers decline, grow lukewarm, and leave the world under a cloud. Keep me by night and by day; and may I realize Thy preserving goodness, that I may with confidence say, “The Lord is my keeper; the Lord is my shade upon my right hand. The Lord will preserve my going out and my coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.”

*Jehovah, by His ceaseless care,
Whose eye can never sleep,
From earthly foes, from Satan's snare,
My soul shall safely keep.*



JANUARY 23

*Fear not, thou worm Jacob.
Isaiah 41:14*

HOWEVER MEAN AND despicable we may appear in the eyes of others, however weak and feeble we may feel in ourselves, still our God says, “FEAR NOT.” Though but a worm, yet if a praying Jacob, we *need not* fear; we *should not* fear. Our God forbids it because it injures our souls, encourages our enemies, dispirits our friends, and dishonours His glorious name. How precious, unspeakably precious these “*Fear not*”s are! How thickly they are strewed through the divine word! But why should we fear? The Lord expressly tells us that “the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.” Are we believers in Jesus? Then we should not fear, for our God is our friend, and His care extends over all time — embraces every event — supplies every want — anticipates every emergency — comprehends every believer from the beginning to the end of time — and shall everlastingly secure the safety and happiness of every worm that trusts in Him. His strength is almighty — His wisdom is omniscient — His love is unequalled — and His resources are unbounded. Therefore, “FEAR NOT, THOU WORM JACOB.”

*On God thy constant Helper trust,
Thou abject worm despised by all;
No one shall crush thee in the dust
Since He has raised thee from the fall.*



JANUARY 24

*Christ died for us.
Romans 5:8*

WHAT AN UNSPEAKABLE blessing is this! Let us very seriously consider it tonight. Christ died, Jehovah's only begotten Son, the fountain of being and blessedness, the centre and source of all excellence and glory. Jesus, who united the divine and human natures in Himself, He died: died as our great friend, who stood up for us in covenant, who stooped for us from heaven to earth, whose love was stronger than death. He died for us as the objects of His love and His Father's choice; died for us though we were base and ungodly — weak, without strength — rebellious, His enemies. He died for us as the Head, for His body — as the Surety, for the debtors He had undertaken to set free — as the Redeemer, for captives He was pledged to deliver — as the Husband, for His beloved but fallen bride — as the Shepherd, for the flock entrusted to His care — as the Servant of the Father, who came to do His will and maintain His honour. He died for us to redeem us from death, to raise us to eternal life, to restore us to friendship with God, to fit us for His holy service, and that we might be crowned with glory at last. Let us therefore live looking to Jesus.

*Christ bore our sins upon the tree,
To seek and save the lost He came;
There was He doomed to set us free
From death and everlasting shame;
The captive flock from hell was freed
And ransomed when their Shepherd bled.*



JANUARY 25

*Is this thy kindness to thy friend?
2 Samuel 16:17*

THE CONDUCT OF Jesus towards us is the perfection of kindness; but our conduct toward Him, is often just the reverse. How often we treat Him with neglect, and instead of prayer being a delightful privilege, it is an irksome task. How often we violate His positive precepts, or omit to perform known and acknowledged duties. How often we doubt His love, distrust His word, and complain of His dealings. How often we encourage the flesh, which He has directed us to mortify; prefer the world, which He has commanded us to forsake; and yield to Satan, whom He has exhorted us to resist. And have we not sometimes been afraid or ashamed to confess Him before the world; or at least to bear a plain, honest, decided testimony for Him? Well may our cheeks burn with shame and our bosoms fill with confusion, if the question be put to us, in reference to much of our conduct toward our kind and gracious Redeemer, “Is this thy kindness to thy friend?” His kindness towards us is marvellous, and our unkindness toward Him is equally so. Let us seek afresh the tokens of His forgiving love, and in future when about to yield to temptation, or give way to any sin, put the question to our consciences, “Is this thy kindness to thy friend?”

*Sure, were I not most vile and base,
I could not thus my friend requite!
And were not He the God of grace,
He'd frown and spurn me from His sight.*



JANUARY 26

*I have learned by experience.
Genesis 30:27*

SO SAID LABAN IN reference to the benefit he derived from Jacob's services, and so may the Christian say in reference to the effects of divine teaching. Experience is knowledge derived from trial, and thus we learn the truth and value of real religion — the importance and dignity of the holy Scriptures — the true state and condition of human nature — the character and suitableness of the Saviour — the need and nature of the operations of the Holy Spirit — the malice and cunning of Satan — the power and efficacy of believing prayer — the beneficial tendency of afflictive dispensations — the emptiness and vanity of the present world — and the love and faithfulness of a covenant God. No knowledge is like that which is gained by experience. It is far preferable to what we gain from report, or reading, or mere opinion. It is above every other kind of knowledge in point of certainty — in its tendency to usefulness — and in its power to establish the mind. Young people should be modest; they can know but little from experience yet. Established Christians should communicate the results of their experience to others; nothing is more likely to be useful. We should all be careful, that our statements of experience and our practices agree.

*Teacher divine! Instruct me still
To know, to love, to do Thy will;
And let me by experience prove
Thy sanctifying power and love.*



JANUARY 27

*He will not fail thee.
Deuteronomy 31:6*

THE EXPECTATIONS raised by His word shall never be disappointed; the promises He has made shall never be broken; the trust reposed on His faithfulness shall never be dishonoured. He will not forget His word, or neglect our interests. He never did fail His people. He never will. Your faith may be weak, your fears may be strong, your doubts may be painful, your weakness may be great, your temptations may be very distressing, and your wants may be numerous and alarming, but thy God will not fail thee. Why should He? He foresaw all thy wants, thy woes, and thy unworthiness before He called thee by His grace. Thy present circumstances are not new to Him. He had them in His eye when He made His promises, and He will get honour to Himself by bringing thee through them. Fail not to trust Him. Fail not to apply to Him by prayer. Fail not to cast thy every care upon Him. Fail not to believe His faithful word. He will not fail to support thee under thy burdens, to listen to thy requests, to provide for thy necessities, or to honour thy faith. However singular your experience, or strange the path may appear to you, His word is true. *“He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.”*

*Why should'st thou fear when God is thine,
When all He is, He is for thee?
If thou art weak, His strength divine
To perfect in infirmity.*



JANUARY 28

He ever liveth to make intercession.

Hebrews 7:25

HE DIED FOR our sins once, but He lives to plead for us daily, hourly, moment by moment. He possesses an endless life, an unchangeable priesthood. He appears in heaven as the great High Priest of our profession — our names are on His breastplate, He is intimately acquainted with all our affairs, and He lives above on purpose to intercede for us. He presents His precious blood, His perfect righteousness, and He pleads them for our pardon, preservation, and glorification. He has the Father's ear, the Father's heart, and He improves all He has for our welfare. How wonderful His love! He first left heaven for us, and on earth He laboured, suffered and died, in our stead. He then returned to heaven for us, and there He lives, pleads, and secures our best interests. He witnesses all our changes, but He changes not. He is often grieved by our inconsistencies, but still pleads in our behalf. He undertook our cause, when there was nothing in us to move or induce Him to do so, and He still feels the deepest interest in us, pleads for us, and rejoices to do us good. What a source of comfort, what a ground of confidence is this? "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

*There, as our great High Priest, He stands,
And pleads before the mercy-seat;
Our cause is in His faithful hands,
Our enemies beneath His feet.*



JANUARY 29

*Thy word have I hid in mine heart.
Psalm 119:11*

THE TABLES OF the old covenant were laid up in the ark, and hidden in the holy place; the contents of the new covenant should be laid up in the believer's heart. By close, daily, prayerful meditation, we should seek to understand, enjoy, and lay up God's holy word. It is the manna we are to gather for our daily food, the light in which we are to walk, and the rule by which we are to work. Let us lay up the gracious doctrines, which are the ground of our confidence; the exceeding great and precious promises, which are inexhaustible sources of comfort; and the kind and holy precepts, which are unerring guides. If hidden in the heart, no one can deprive us of this precious treasure; nor shall we have it to seek, when we want it to enjoy. But in order to this, we must know its value, prize its contents, search its pages, ponder it in our minds, and feed upon it as our daily food. Except we hide it in our hearts, we shall not be sanctified by it, nor will it be written out in our lives. From the heart it flows into the life. May it be our daily prayer, that God would put His laws into our minds, and write them upon our hearts, that we may be the epistles of Christ, known and read of all men.

*Its promises rejoice the heart,
Its doctrines are divinely true;
Knowledge and pleasure it imparts:
It comforts and instructs us too.*



JANUARY 30

We know that we are of God.

1 John 5:19

WHAT AN HONOUR! What a comfort is this! Yes, we are of God, created anew in Christ Jesus, by the power and agency of the Holy Spirit — consecrated to His service and glory, by the death of our great High Priest, and the sprinkling of His blood upon us — set apart in His eternal purpose for His praise, and now brought into holy and profitable relation to Him. We were rebels against Him; we are now His willing servants. We were His avowed enemies; we are now His attached friends. We were the children of wrath, but we are now the children of His love. We *know* that we are of God, by faith in His word — by love to His saints — by sympathy with Himself — by the grief we feel when we sin — by our pleasure in obeying His will — by the contrast there is between us and the world, in our principles, pleasures, and pursuits. What we are as distinguished from others is of God, being thus distinguished we are peculiarly the Lord's — His property, His treasure, His portion, His delight. What an astounding fact! We are the Lord's. The grace that made us so must be free and infinite. To know that we are His is an invaluable blessing. But no one should rest satisfied without it.

*O Lord, be daily near my heart,
And let my spirit feel Thee near;
Then willingly with all I'd part,
Nor count it worthy of a tear.*



JANUARY 31

*The joy of the LORD is your strength.
Nehemiah 8:10*

FEAR AND SORROW naturally weaken us, but faith and joy give us strength. Joy is the cordial of the soul. It quickens, enlivens, emboldens, and makes us strong. Our heavenly Father is called, “The blessed, or *the happy God*.” He is also the happy-making God. He loves to see His people happy. Therefore as the God of all comfort, He has made great provision for our happiness. There are wells of salvation, and we should draw from them with joy. There is an inexhaustible fullness in Jesus, and from that fullness we should receive — for every want, for every duty, for every trial. We cannot apply to it too often; we cannot go to it for too much. Hear our beloved Lord, “Ask and receive *that your joy may be full*.” It is only as we live out of self, upon Jesus; above the world, in the region of God’s free grace, that we can be happy. The happy Christian is the strong Christian, and it is the strong Christian that brings much glory to God, much credit to His cause, and does much good in the world. It is as much our duty to be happy, as to be holy, both are recommended, and provision is as much made for the one as the other.

*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.*



FEBRUARY 1

A people near unto him.

Psalm 148:14

JESUS TOOK our nature, and became one with us. Thus, He is near unto us — He gives us His Holy Spirit, brings us into union with Himself, and we are near to Him. This is our highest honour; an unfailing source of happiness and peace. We are near to Him in point of *relation*, being His children; near to Him in point of *affection*, being loved with an everlasting love. We are near to Him in point of *union*, being members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. We are near to Him in point of *fellowship*, walking with Him as a man walketh with His friend. We are near to Him in point of *attention*, being the objects of His daily, hourly, tender care. We shall soon be near to Him in point of *locality*, when our mansion is prepared, for we shall depart to be with Christ, which is far better. We are near to Him though poor, when deeply tried, and if ever nearer at one time than another, we shall be nearest to Him in death. If we are near unto Him, He will sympathize with us in all our sorrows, assist us in all our trials, protect us in all our dangers, hold intercourse with us in all our lonely hours, provide for us in all seasons of necessity, and honourably introduce us to glory. Let us realize this fact daily: we are near and dear to our God.

*And am I near to God,
His friend, His child, His care?
O may I walk with Him in love,
By faith and fervent prayer!*



FEBRUARY 2

*The Spirit of adoption.
Romans 8:15*

THE SAME SPIRIT that leads us to seek for mercy as poor sinners, afterwards leads us to claim relationship with God as His beloved children. He unfolds Jehovah's gracious character, draws out and fixes the desires of the soul upon Him, sheds abroad His love in the heart, and then we cry, "My Father. My Father." To the privilege of adoption we were predestinated before the world began. But we can only know our interest in it, or claim and enjoy that interest, as we are taught by the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit of adoption, He enlarges the heart, elevates the desires, sanctifies the spirit, ennobles the aims, guides into the truth, and leads out the soul in free and familiar fellowship with God. He imparts holy peace, deepens penitence, and fills with glowing gratitude. Under His influences, prayer becomes delightful, meditation profitable, and the ordinances of the gospel yield us pleasure. Have *you* the Spirit of adoption? Do *you* feel led to approach God as a child does its father? Do *you* look upon the word as a volume sent from a Father to His child, to instruct, reprove, and comfort him; and do you read it as such? Do you long, pray, and desire above all things to enjoy this sweet relationship?

*Send forth the Spirit of Thy Son,
O God, into my panting heart,
That governed by Thy love alone,
From Thee I never may depart.*



FEBRUARY 3

*I press toward the mark.
Philippians 3:14*

THE BELIEVER IS a racer. He has a prize set before him, even the perfection of knowledge, holiness, and happiness. His course is marked out by God's holy word. It lays through difficulties, foes, and trials. He has a mark on which to fix his eye, at which to aim, to arrive at which he should daily strive. His mark is Jesus in His holy, exemplary life. We aim to be like Him. To oppose sin, overcome Satan, conquer the world, bear troubles, endure trials, and do good as He did. He ran His race, keeping "the joy set before Him" in view. He arrived at His mark, won His crown, and is now seated as a conquerer at God's right hand. He is our pattern and example. "The grand leader and perfecter of the faith." On Him the eye and the heart should be set, after conformity to Him we should press. Laying aside every weight and the easily besetting sin, we should run the race set before us, looking unto Jesus. We should like the apostle pursue our object, keep to the point, press toward the mark. This will ensure the prize, for Jesus says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with My Father in His throne."

*The moment we begin our race,
We must the Saviour's cause embrace,
Press t'ward the mark, the prize obtain,
And then with Christ in glory reign.*



FEBRUARY 4

See that ye be not troubled.

Matthew 24:6

THAT IS AGITATED – anxious – dejected – confused – or alarmed. See, that you meet troubles with courage, endure them with patience and fortitude, and yield entire submission to God. The world may be troubled, but *you* should not. You are one of the sheep of My fold, one of the servants of My house, one of the children of My love. You should not be troubled, for all things that concern you are appointed by infinite wisdom and love. You are safe in My hand. I shall always be with you, to keep you from evil. Your trials will be moderated, so that you will be able to bear them. Every event will be directed to work your good, and if you are troubled, you will dishonour Me. Therefore watch, pray, and guard against anxiety and dejection. But, how can we prevent being troubled? Believe My word of promise – walk close by My side – whisper all your fears into My ear – cast all your cares and burdens at My feet – look often to the end of your trials – expect the support necessary to bear them from a faithful, a present God – and remember, *you are one with Me*. Beloved, we are always safe if we are with Jesus. You should endeavour to be composed, for He bids you, and bids you in love.

*O let my trembling soul be still,
And wait Thy wise, Thy holy will.
I cannot, Lord, Thy purpose see,
Yet all is well – since ruled by Thee.*



FEBRUARY 5

*The God of peace.
Hebrews 13:20*

THROUGH THE precious blood of Jesus, God is fully pacified towards us, and perfectly reconciled to us. He is the peaceful God. We have nothing to fear from Him, but may expect every blessing which we plead for in the name of Jesus. He was angry with us, but His anger is turned away and He comforts us. He is at peace with us, and we are at peace with Him. He seeks our welfare, and we seek to promote His glory. What a sweet view of Jehovah is this! "THE GOD OF PEACE." As such, let us approach Him, pour out our hearts before Him, exercise confidence in Him, and anew commit ourselves unreservedly into His hands. He has accepted the finished work of Jesus for us, He brought Him again from the dead, He placed Him at His own right hand in the heavens, and He delights to bless our souls for His sake. He will never be more at peace with us than He is at this moment; though we may more confidently believe it, and more sweetly enjoy it. The resurrection of Jesus our substitute proves that He is fully satisfied; and the gift of the Holy Spirit shows that He delights to do us good. Beware therefore of mistaken views or hard thoughts of God. He is "THE GOD OF PEACE."

*O God of peace! To me impart
The quiet, peaceful frame.
Sprinkle the blood upon my heart,
And there engrave Thy name.*



FEBRUARY 6

*The precious sons of Zion.
Lamentations 4:2*

AS THE LORD JESUS is precious to His people, so are they precious to Him. He calls them His jewels, His peculiar treasure, His portion. His love to them is wonderful. He values them at an infinite price, therefore He redeemed them with the precious blood of His dear Son. And having purchased them at so great a cost, He will never part with them. That Jesus should be precious to His people is not surprising. He has done so much for them, He bestows so many blessings upon them, He stands in such a sweet relation to them, and He is so perfectly lovely in Himself. But that we should be precious to Him is astonishing. We are so poor, so vile, so degraded, so deformed, and daily treat Him with such neglect. But His ways are not our ways, nor are His thoughts our thoughts. We are His precious children, His beloved bride. He loves us tonight with all the strength and tenderness of His nature. Glorious truth! May we receive it into our hearts, meditate upon it, and retire to rest this night, rejoicing that whatever men may think of us, or however they may feel toward us, we are precious in the sight of the Lord. Precious in the sight of the Lord are the persons and the death of His saints.

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



FEBRUARY 7

Therefore trust thou in him.

Job 35:14

FORGET NOT THAT thy times are in His hands, that thy name is in His book of life, that He has promised to be thy God, and that He is faithful to His word. Every blessing we can need is promised; every promise is firm and sure. Therefore trust thou Him. Thy heart may misgive thee, thy way may perplex thee, thy fears may overcome thee, thy foes may insult over thee; but thy way is not hid from the Lord, therefore trust thou in Him. His word is true from the beginning. His people in every age have proved it so. Its verity is its crown. Therefore you may trust it firmly, fearlessly, constantly; and His faithful word should calm thy fears, strengthen thy hopes, sweeten thy comforts, and lead thee to cheerful, filial obedience. His hand may seem to go out against thee, but His heart beats with unutterable love to thee. He may appear, to thy mistaken fancy, to be armed with a sword to destroy thee. But even then you should say with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him:" and you will find, that instead of destroying, He will honour your confidence, and bring you out into a wealthy place.

*Thy ways, O Lord, with wise design,
Are framed upon Thy throne above,
And every dark and bending line
Meets in the centre of Thy love.
Therefore I trust in Thee alone,
And humbly pray, "Thy will be done."*



FEBRUARY 8

Thou knowest that I love thee.

John 21:15

NOTWITHSTANDING all my imperfections, though I often grieve Thee, wrong Thy love, and fear to trust Thy word; though I am too much influenced by the things of time; though dark and direful corruption work within me; though Satan sometimes overcomes me; Thou searchest the heart, Thou readest the inmost workings of the soul, and Thou knowest that I love Thee. Thou knowest that there is imbedded in the depths of my nature, a principle that cannot, will not be satisfied without Thee. Therefore I sigh for Thy presence, long for Thy love to be shed abroad in my heart, pray for Thy glory to be revealed to my soul, and desire above all things to claim and enjoy Thee as mine. I love Thee, therefore I am jealous of my heart. I love Thee, therefore I am dissatisfied with the world. I love Thee, therefore I desire to please Thee. I love Thee, therefore nothing wounds me so deeply as the thought of being separated from Thee. O that I loved Thee more! I want to feel my heart glow whenever I think of Thy name. I want to do always those things that please Thee, and to stand ready and willing at any moment, in any way, to depart and be forever with Thee. Lord, increase my love to Thee!

*Lord it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love Thee, and adore,
O for grace to love Thee more!*



FEBRUARY 9

*I give myself unto prayer.
Psalm 109:4*

WATCHFULNESS AND prayer should be always united. The praying Christian should watch, and the watching Christian should pray. The one exercise helps us in the other. We should be given to prayer as to our business, our daily occupation. It will preserve us from innumerable evils, and bring invaluable blessings into our possession. God loves to hear us pray. The prayer of the upright is His delight. May we be impressed with this idea whenever we go upon our knees. God loves to see me approach Him, He delights to hear me plead with Him. He looks upon me with a Father's eye. He listens to me with a Father's ear. He rejoices over me with a Father's heart. He is grieved when I neglect His throne, and cannot approve of my hurrying over my devotions, as I sometimes do. He says, "Come. Come boldly." If we disregard His word or slight His invitation He will send some trial, raise some storm, or let loose some enemy, to drive us to His throne. If we could hear the voice of our troubles distinctly, or understand their language, we should hear them shout, "To your knees! To your knees! To your closets! Arise and call upon thy God!"

*Father into my heart convey
The power incessantly to pray,
And plead a Saviour's blood.
In love Thy Holy Spirit give,
In me to work, and breathe, and live,
That I may walk with God.*



FEBRUARY 10

My soul thirsteth for God.

Psalm 42:2

IT IS NOT ENOUGH for the true Christian to know that God is for him. He wants to realize His presence, to hold sweet fellowship with Him, and to enjoy His love. Being created anew in Christ Jesus, he has an appetite to feed upon, and enjoy divine communications; nor can he be satisfied without them. He longs and prays for the gracious presence of his God, and finds it his joy, his strength, and his delight. But if denied this favour, he is depressed, dissatisfied, and cast down. Ordinances without God, are to him dry breasts. The Scriptures without God, are a light without heat. The choicest privileges without God, are like provisions presented to one parched up with fever. God is his life, the presence of God is his element, the joy of the Lord is his strength, and without God he is lifeless, sickly, and sorrowful. My friend is this your experience? Are you in any degree acquainted with it? Can you be satisfied with cold knowledge, empty forms, or what is called religion without the enjoyment of God? If you can, your state is very suspicious. Beware of a religion without God — without personal dealings with God — without daily intercourse with God.

*Lord of heaven and earth, my trust
Seeks in Thee its only rest.
For Thy love I thirst, I sigh,
To my longing soul draw nigh.
Now Thy glorious face unveil,
Let my faith and prayer prevail.*



FEBRUARY 11

He spared not his own Son.

Romans 8:32

HE WOULD NOT spare His Son, that He might spare His people. He punished Him that He might comfort them. He spared not the angels that sinned. He spared not the old world. But He promises to spare us. How wonderful is this! He *hath* spared us, He *doth* spare us, and He *will* spare us. But Jesus was not spared. Let us reflect on this. For us He engaged in covenant, for us He came into the world, for us He fulfilled all righteousness, for us He offered an atoning sacrifice, for us He lay in the grave, for us He rose from the dead, for us He ascended into heaven, and for us He ever liveth to make intercession. He was our substitute, the Surety of the better covenant, therefore He was not spared. But if God did not spare Him, He may *justly* spare us, and He will. And not only so, but with His beloved Son, and for His sake, He will freely give us all things which pertain to life and godliness. Precious Saviour, Thy Father did not spare Thee; Satan did not spare Thee; guilty man did not spare Thee. May it therefore be my concern to spare Thee. May I avoid and abstain from everything which would grieve Thy heart or dishonour Thy dear name! May I never wound Thee, my best, my changeless Friend!

*Thy cruel thorns, Thy shameful cross,
Procure us heavenly crowns;
Our brightest gain springs from Thy loss;
Our healing from Thy wounds.*



FEBRUARY 12

I will hope continually.

Psalm 71:14

I AM WARRANTED to do so, for the foundation of my hope remains immutably the same. The character of my gracious God, the faithful promises of His word, the recorded history of His saints, and my own past experience, all conspire to say, “HOPE CONTINUALLY.” I will hope, that God will be merciful to my unrighteousness; that He will support me under all my trials; that He will send me seasonable relief, and timely deliverance; that good will flow from all my troubles; that grace will be brought unto me at the appearing of Jesus; and that eternal life will be my final portion. “I *will* hope,” for I shall be injured if I do not. Anxiety will torment my bosom — despondency will brood over my soul — and I shall be filled with fearful forebodings. “I will hope *continually*,” for hope honours God — it brightens the prospects — it stimulates to prayer and exertion — and is the sweetener of human life. But I would also remember, that my hope will be sorely tried. Satan will try it — the God of hope will try it — a thousand things will try it. But a good hope will live, strengthen, and work until it gives place to possession. I will not despond. Why should I? I will not fear. What will it profit me?

*Let the winds blow, and billows roll
Hope is the anchor of my soul.
It fastens on a land unknown,
And moors me to my Father's throne!*



FEBRUARY 13

Thou hast tried me.

Psalms 17:3

THEN PRAYER HAS been answered, graces have been exercised, and discipline has been used. The Lord trieth the righteous, and His trials discover, prove, and brighten his character. His fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem; and there He tries His people. Every trial is necessary for our good, is ordained by eternal love, and is continued just as long as requisite; but not one moment longer. Every saint needs trials, and every saint is tried. If the Lord intends to make us holy, He will put us into the fire. Every time we pray for holiness, we pray for trials. But trials enhance the value of the promises, endear the throne of grace, render the ordinances profitable, and make the Saviour exceedingly precious. In trials we learn to read our own hearts, see the insufficiency of the world, look more closely to our evidences, humble ourselves before our God, and look with a longing eye to the end of our course. The tried Christian is likely to be a stable Christian. Very few who walk in a smooth path, are either remarkably spiritual, extensively useful, or very happy. Trials, like the frosts of winter, prepare our hearts to receive the good seed of the word, and then we bring forth fruit with patience.

*Brought into the fire, Thy wonderful power,
Unburnt we admire, unhurt we adore.
Brought through our temptation, we shortly shall prove
Thine utmost salvation, Thy perfecting love.*



FEBRUARY 14

Delight thyself also in the LORD.

Psalms 37:4

AS THE LORD DELIGHTS in us, we ought to delight ourselves in Him. In order to this, we must receive correct views of His loveliness into our minds. We must meditate on His glorious perfections, as they are revealed to us in Jesus. We must realize our interest in His love and perfect salvation, and turn from every other object to contemplate His beauty, His benevolence, and constant love to us. We should *look* to Him, as the fountain of all good; *hope* in Him, as the promise-performing God; *wait* on Him, as our bountiful benefactor; *trust* in Him, as our Father and Friend; and *delight* in Him as our portion and everlasting all. Let us endeavour, to take off our affections more and more from things below and fix them upon the Lord. How few delight in God! How seldom do we! If we read of Him, think of Him, call on Him, believe in Him, hope in Him, and feel a little love to Him, we think it enough. But it is not. We should delight ourselves in the Lord. We may delight in His love, which is set upon us — in His vast resources, which are open to supply us — in His truth, which secures us — in His holiness, which is His beauty — and in His grace, which rejoices to do us good.

*O Lord, I would delight in Thee,
And on Thy care depend;
To Thee in every trouble flee,
My best, my only Friend.*



FEBRUARY 15

*That Holy Spirit of promise.
Ephesians 1:13*

THE GREAT BLESSING promised in the Old Testament is the Son of God. But the great promise of the New Testament is the Holy Spirit. He was promised to Jesus as the reward of His work; and He has promised Him to us, to all who ask Him. Jesus gives this living water, and all who receive it, find it to be a spring of water, welling up into everlasting life. The Spirit is promised to us, to teach us, lead us, comfort us, and assist us in every duty; and we are as dependent upon Him for light, life, joy, peace, and power, as we are upon Jesus for atonement, righteousness, and acceptance with God. He is the Spirit of promise also, as it is part of His work to unfold, apply, and prompt us to plead the promises before God. Without Him we read the promises but do not perceive their fullness, realize their glory, or appropriate them to ourselves. But under His teaching, the promises appear new — exactly suited to us, exceeding great, and very precious. Every Christian is learning, out in the school of painful experience, his dependence upon and daily need of the Holy Spirit of promise. Beloved, let us guard against grieving Him. With double diligence let us cherish His influence, consult His will, obey His intimations, and seek His operations.

*Father, the sealing Spirit give,
In me to live and reign!
Let me the promise now receive,
And never thirst again.*



FEBRUARY 16

By grace ye are saved.

Ephesians 2:5

WHAT A MERCY to be saved — to be saved by mere favour! But our salvation from first to last is of grace. It originated in the mind of God, before time began. And it will be completed before the throne of God, when time shall be no more. We are chosen to salvation — chosen in Christ; and this choice of our persons was eternal — sovereign — immutable. Election gave us a name in God's book, an interest in the Saviour's undertaking and a part in the saints' inheritance. We are redeemed from among men, and this is a favour. In redemption, a price is paid for us, power is exerted to rescue us, and a plea is put into our mouths. We are called to God's kingdom and glory, and this is a favour. It is personal, powerful, effectual. Calling gives us a new life, a spiritual taste, and an evidence of interest in all covenant blessings. We are kept by the power of God, and this is a favour; prevented from being overcome by foes, crushed by dangers, and from apostatizing from the faith; and this proves that we are appointed to salvation. We shall soon be glorified, and heaven will be conferred on us as a favour. If salvation is a favour, then the vilest may receive it. And all the glory of it from first to last must be the Lord's.

*Salvation is a favour God bestows,
Through Jesus' blood on aliens and foes;
By sovereign grace, to make His glory known,
He raises sinners to surround His throne.*



FEBRUARY 17

My soul cleaveth unto the dust.

Psalm 119:25

HOW COMMON IS the complaint and how discreditable! What is the world? *Dust*. Its pleasures, profits, employments, honours — all dust; that is, comparatively worthless, beneath an immortal mind, unsuitable to a child of God. Yet our thoughts are filled with them, our affections are entangled by them, and our graces are weakened through them. Worldlings are at home in the dust. They appear to be satisfied with it. But the Christian when he cleaves to it most, is not at home — cannot be satisfied with it. This is a mercy. O to look on high! To rise and plume the wing! To treat the things of time as they deserve! My soul, rouse thyself from thy lethargy. Arise and shake thyself from the dust, and put on thy beautiful garments! It is the day of salvation. Thy God calls thee. He waits to hold fellowship with thee. He hath blessings of immense value to bestow upon thee. It is beneath thy dignity to lie here. It is contrary to thy profession. It is opposed to thy best interests. Heaven is thy home. Holiness is thy element. The King of kings is thy husband. Glory is thy eternal portion. Earth is but a wilderness through which thou hast to pass; a lodging place for a few days. It is not thy rest. It is polluted.

*Strange, that my soul should cleave to dust,
With death and heaven so nigh;
Begone, vain world! My spirit must
Ascend to dwell on high.*



FEBRUARY 18

To wait for his Son from heaven.

1 Thessalonians 1:10

JESUS CAME IN THE flesh to redeem us. He sent His Holy Spirit to sanctify us. He will soon come again and receive us to Himself, that where He is we may be also. This is a most glorious event. It is constantly kept before the minds of the Lord's people in the New Testament. It is our blessed hope. We are deeply interested in it, should frequently meditate upon it, daily prepare for it, and be found in a waiting posture. We are servants, and our Master is coming to call us to account. We are sons, and our Father is coming to fetch us home. We are the espoused bride of the Son of God, and He is coming to marry us, and introduce us to His glorious kingdom. He will come very suddenly. He will come when very few expect Him. The virgins will all slumber and sleep, but "let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober." Jesus *may* come before morning, He *will* certainly come soon. Are we ready for His coming? Should we be glad to hear the trumpet sound, see the heavens pass away, and behold Him come in like manner as His disciples saw Him go into heaven. If He should not come to us very soon, we shall go to be with Him. Let us therefore prepare at once.

*The Saviour comes! He comes to reign,
To banish sorrow, sin, and pain.
Prepare my soul and patient wait,
So shall thy peace and joy be great.*



FEBRUARY 19

Take no thought for the morrow.

Matthew 6:34

THAT IS, NO ANXIOUS, perplexing, distressing thought. You know not that you shall live until tomorrow — the Lord may take you home tonight. But if you do, the Lord will be as thoughtful of you, as kind to you, and as watchful over you, as He has been today. There is daily grace as well as daily bread. You cannot be fatherless. You will not be neglected. Whatever your circumstances may be, your Father knows them, He has provided for them, He will bring you through them, and get glory to Himself by them. Let the peace of God rule in your heart. Stay yourself upon the word of the Lord. Your loving Saviour wishes you to be free from anxiety, to wait upon Him without distraction, to honour His Father's love by living in the exercise of calm, patient, waiting faith. Go to rest this night, obeying your Redeemer's word: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all temporal things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." When you awake in the morning your God will be with you, and having delivered you in six troubles, in seven He will not forsake you.

*By day, by night, at home, abroad,
Still I am guarded by my God.
By His incessant bounty fed,
By His unerring counsel led.*



FEBRUARY 20

My counsel shall stand.

Isaiah 46:10

THE COUNSELS OF man are often weak and unwise, His knowledge being imperfect, and His mind disordered. But the counsel of the Lord is the effect of infinite wisdom, and is sustained by omnipotent power. Men's purposes are often formed under evil influences, or when the mind is confused and perplexed. But the purposes of God were formed in the calm and quiet of the eternal mind, under the influence of justice, grace, holiness, truth, and love. Men's counsels are often frustrated, but God's purposes never can be. Men's purposes are frequently defeated, but our God worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. His counsel includes all that is essential to our eternal welfare. His purposes embrace all the events of this transitory life. Therefore we ought not to be much affected by anything which takes place around us. There may be confusion, conflict, injustice, oppression, cruelty, but our God who has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm says, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." Remember beloved, our God is at work always and everywhere. He doeth according to His will in heaven, earth, and hell; and He says to us, "Be still and know that I am God."

*God will for all my wants provide,
And save me for His mercy's sake.
Me by His counsel He will guide,
And afterwards to glory take.*



FEBRUARY 21

Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.

Hebrews 12:6

EVERY BELIEVER IS beloved of his God. Yet every believer is chastened – and chastisement is a proof of love. We are but children and need it; we are children and therefore receive it. Some are chastened by losses, some by sickness, some by the failure of their favourite schemes, some by domestic trials, some by the conduct of relatives or Christian friends. We are not all chastened with the same rod, but we are all chastened by the same hand. We are not all corrected in the same way, but we are all corrected by the same wise, holy, and loving Father. Some suffer most in mind, others in body. Some are tried most in their own persons, others more in their relatives. But let us never forget: every correction flows from love; every stroke is in kindness. If it goes to our hearts, it touches our heavenly Father's heart. He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve us in sovereignty. Our follies call for strokes, and our sins for rebukes. Let us therefore humble ourselves under our Father's hand. Let us not question our relationship, or His love to us, because we are so tried; neither let us think the discipline unnecessary, and so despise His chastening.

*Afflicted by a gracious God,
The stroke I patiently sustain,
Grievous to feeble flesh and blood,
Unable to rejoice in pain.
Beneath a Father's hand I bow.
And groan to feel the chastening now.*



FEBRUARY 22

He will have compassion on us.

Micah 7:19

HIS ANGER HAS been provoked by our sins, the effects of His displeasure have been felt, but He retaineth not His anger forever. And though sin may have made us miserable, mercy shall make us happy. He will have compassion upon us, because of the benevolence of His nature, in accordance with His word, to our comfort and salvation. He is *full* of compassion, *plenteous* in mercy, *ready* to forgive. These are His own words, and they contain enough, if we did but believe them, to banish our fears, conquer our doubts, and fill us with joy and peace. We have wandered, but He will have compassion, and the wandering sheep shall be restored. The prodigal shall be received with music and dancing. He *will* have compassion, let Satan suggest what he will. He *will* have compassion, let thy fears and sins be never so numerous. He *will* have compassion, for He has promised. His nature prompts Him to it, He has done so in innumerable instances, and His heart overflows with it. As soon as ever He sees you feel your sinfulness, hears you confess your follies, finds you broken down in contrition at His throne, He will have compassion, subdue your iniquities, and cast all your sins into the depths of the sea.

*Moved with tenderest compassion.
Jesus heals each wounded heart;
And the richest consolation
To His mourners doth impart.*



FEBRUARY 23

*She loved much.
Luke 7:47*

SHE HAD BEEN A great sinner. Convinced of her sin, she sought the Saviour — she applied for pardon, and she found mercy. Deeply affected with the love of Christ and the manner in which He displayed it, her soul glowed with love to Him in return. She not only loved Him, but she loved Him much. And therefore she could endure scorn, contempt, and persecution, in order to enjoy His presence and listen to His word. Her love would not be confined in her bosom. It sought to show itself. She therefore brought the alabaster box of precious ointment, washed His feet with her tears, wiped them with the hair of her head, and anointed them with the ointment. Here is an example for us. We also are great sinners. Jesus has kindly received us and pardoned our sins. His love to us is as great as it was to this woman. But is our love to Him equal to hers? I fear not. But why? Because our conviction of sin is not as clear, our views of our unworthiness are not as vivid, our apprehensions of danger are not as painful, or our sense of pardoning mercy is not as deep. We cannot force ourselves to love. But we can direct our thoughts to Jesus, and seek for the Holy Spirit to shed abroad His love in our hearts.

*For love like Thine, O God of heaven
What grateful honours shall we show?
Where much transgression is forgiven,
Let love in equal ardours glow.*



FEBRUARY 24

*Therefore glorify God.
1 Corinthians 6:20*

WHATEVER GOD does is for the glorification of Himself. This is the great end of all things. We are created for His glory, but we sinned and came short of it. We came short of the glory of His law, in not obeying it. We came short of the glory of His image, not resembling it. We came short of the glory of His favour, not desiring it. And we came short of the glory of His presence, not seeking it. But Jesus died for us, paying the price of our ransom, wrought out a perfect righteousness, and saves us with an everlasting salvation. Therefore we are not our own, but are bought with a price, and should now glorify God in our bodies, and in our spirits which are God's. To glorify God therefore is the only legitimate business of life. We can do this by believing His doctrine, trusting His promises, and obeying His precepts. By endeavouring to benefit His creatures *for His sake*; especially by visiting, relieving, and comforting His poor saints; also by spreading His gospel, by governing our tempers, training up our families in His fear, and seeking the honour of His name in all we do. To glorify God is our duty, our reasonable service. O may it be our pleasure and delight!

*O Thou who didst my person buy,
And paid the price in blood,
Assist me now to glorify,
And only live to God!*



FEBRUARY 25

My meditation of him shall be sweet.

Psalm 104:34

TO MEDITATE IS to think closely, seriously, and for some time upon one subject. If the *subject* is spiritual, the exercise is peculiarly profitable. If the *mind* is spiritual, meditation of Jesus will be sweet. Let us think of Him frequently, intently, and seriously. Let us meditate on the glory of His person — the riches of His grace — the strength of His love — the tenderness of His sympathy — the power of His arm — the merit of His blood — the magnificence of His righteousness — the completeness of His conquest — the splendour of His ascension — the prevalence of His intercession — the exalted station He fills in heaven — His constant care of His people on earth — what He gives to them — what He requires of them — and the glory to which He will raise them, when He comes again the second time, without sin unto salvation. Let us meditate, and let Jesus be our subject. Let us go over in meditation all that regards His person, His offices, His work, His kingdom, His humiliation, His exaltation, and His character. Such meditations will be sweet. Let us see Him in nature, in providence, and in grace. Such views of Him will cheer, strengthen, and spiritualize us. Let us meditate on Him *tonight*, and let our last thoughts be of Jesus.

*Sweet are the thoughts which fill my breast,
When on His various works they rest;
God, my Creator lifts my voice!
In God my Saviour I rejoice!*



FEBRUARY 26

Repent and do the first works.

Revelation 2:5

REPENTANCE IMPLIES *thought* — serious thought in reference to the conduct and state of the heart. It proceeds from *conviction* — deep and solemn conviction of our sin and sinfulness in the sight of God. It proves *concern* — a concern to escape danger, obtain pardon, and enjoy peace. It includes *sorrow* — enlightened, hearty, and abiding sorrow, that we have grieved the Lord, dishonoured His cause, and slighted His mercy. It always leads to *reformation*. There may be some degree of reformation without repentance, but there can be no repentance without reformation. Let us think upon our ways, reflect on the dishonour we have done the Saviour, be concerned to enjoy anew the tokens of His forgiving love, mourn over our follies and faults, and begin again to do our first works. Look to Jesus, wait upon God, search His holy word, diligently attend His ordinances, speak of Jesus and for Jesus, and abstain from the very appearance of evil, as we did at first. What love, what zeal, what caution, what carefulness, what entire consecration to God, we manifested then! Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Jesus charges us with dishonouring Him, but He also says, “Repent, and do thy first works.”

*Recall to mind the happy days,
When thou wast filled with joy and praise,
Repent, thy former works renew,
Then I'll restore thy comforts too.*



FEBRUARY 27

*Rest in the LORD.
Psalm 37:7*

THE SINNER IS naturally restless. He is removed from his natural basis, and the wandering of the desire keeps him in constant agitation. To him Jesus says, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." The believer has accepted this invitation, and has found rest. But he is often led away by temptations, worldly cares, and unbelief; and then he becomes restless again. Beloved, you are directed to rest, not in your circumstances, attainments or enjoyments, but *rest in the Lord*. Rest in the *will* of God, for whatever He wills is for your good, your highest good: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." Rest in the *love* of God, and often meditate on the words of Jesus on this point, "Thou hast loved them, *as Thou hast loved Me*." Rest in the *mercy* of God from which flows endless streams of blessings for your supply. Rest in the *word* of God, for it is true, immutable, and pledges Him to do you good. Rest in the *relation* thy God fills to thee. He is thy Father — kind, careful, wise, and ever-present. Rest in the Lord as He is manifested in Jesus, thy God in covenant; working all things after the counsel of His own will; directing all things for thy good and His glory. Rest in the Lord and be happy.

*Safe in the Lord His saint may rest,
And calmly wait His will;
Though poor and tried, they yet are blest,
Their God is gracious still.*



FEBRUARY 28

Because I live, ye shall live also.

John 14:19

HRIST AND HIS people are one. He is the head, and they are the members of His body. From Him they receive life, wisdom, power, holiness, and every grace. He has a fullness on purpose to supply them, and out of that fullness He daily gives them grace, as their circumstances may require. We have hitherto been supplied with grace by Jesus, and He who hath supplied us until now, will continue to do so. He lives, necessarily, as God; officially, as God-man. He lives in high authority, possessing unbounded influence. He lives to use what He possesses, to fulfil His word, complete His work, and lead His people on to the enjoyment of eternal life. They shall live, that is exist as Christians, persevere in their journey, and be happy in His love forever. They shall live, because Jesus who ever lives is their Life, their Representative, and their Surety. He lives *for* them, ruling, overruling, securing, and loving. He lives *in* them, and their life is hid with Him in God. Beloved, see the ground of your safety, the source of your joy, the wisdom of your God. Your life and happiness are identified with the life and happiness of Jesus. Christ who is your life will soon appear and then you will live like Him, and be in Him forever.

*If my immortal Saviour lives,
Then my immortal life is sure;
His word a firm foundation gives,
Here let me build, and rest secure.*



FEBRUARY 29

*The Lord is at hand.
Philippians 4:5*

JESUS IS COMING. When He will come is uncertain, therefore we should always be ready. If we realized the certainty and nearness of the Lord's coming, we should not be ensnared by the world as we too often are. Our love would be withdrawn from present things, and we should be daily laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Jesus will come to close the present dispensation, to judge the people, to be glorified in His saints, and reward everyone according to His works. The Lord is at hand. We should think of this; we should realize it. It would preserve us from temptation. It would prevent our backsliding. And it would deepen our seriousness and spirituality. He *will* come, therefore we should expect Him, prepare for Him, invite Him, and be found waiting, looking, and longing for His appearing. When He comes, He will bring us grace, destroy all our foes, conform us to His own lovely image, and then introduce us to glory. When Jesus comes, His people will be made completely happy; sighs, and cries, will be exchanged for pleasures, songs, and triumphant hallelujahs.

*Saviour, hasten thine appearing,
Bring, O bring the glorious day,
When the awful summons hearing,
Heaven and earth shall pass away.
Then with golden harps we'll sing:
Glory, glory to our King.*



MARCH 1

Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness.

Psalm 17:7

HE HAS ALREADY shown it, by taking us into the nearest, sweetest, and most profitable relation to Himself. What love — to call a worm His child; a sinful and polluted worm His bride — to pledge Himself to us, in order to banish our fears, encourage our confidence, and raise our expectations. Loving-kindness is love in the most attractive form; love acting in the kindest manner; or, love robed in tenderness, benevolence, and condescension. To show marvellous loving-kindness is to bestow distinguished favours, such as reason or custom could not warrant us to expect; favours which only faith would look for, or a God of love bestow. Yet such favours we may ask, and having asked in faith, expect. Beloved, never forget, our God rejoices to do us good. He takes pleasure in the prosperity of His servants, and He delights to give us good things. If we were but humble, simple-minded, living in the daily exercise of faith, He would deny us nothing. We have not, but it is because we ask not, or because we ask in an improper spirit.

*O Thou, all gracious Lord, most high,
On Thee alone I now rely;
To me — Thy gracious ear incline,
And aid me with a power divine.
To me — while sojourning below,
Thy wondrous loving-kindness show.*



MARCH 2

*They overcame him.
Revelation 12:11*

WHAT A FORMIDABLE representation of Satan the context gives us. He is called “the great dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the world.” His power is great; his cruelty is greater. His cunning is deep, and his designs are dreadful. He hates the Saviour, and he hates all who love Him. He attempts to destroy, but he will distress those whom he cannot devour. He has tried all means to injure the Church of God, and he still tries to injure every believer. He is dreadful as a roaring lion; but he is more likely to harm us when he comes slyly and quietly, as a serpent. He is always most dangerous when he assumes the garb of an angel of light, for then we are apt to mistake him. But the saints overcame him, yet they were as weak and as liable to be overcome, as we are. They overcame him, but not by reason, or argument, or eloquence. They conquered by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony. To that blood they looked, when he tempted them to despair. By that word they walked, when he tried to draw them aside. The blood was their plea, the ground of their hope, and the subject of their rejoicing. The word was their shield, their solace, and their rule.

*By the blood of the Lamb the saints overcame,
And its virtue continues forever the same,
The world and its good shall again be subdued
By the virtue divine of our Advocate's blood.*



MARCH 3

As obedient children.

1 Peter 1:14

THE BELIEVER SHOULD daily realize the pleasing fact that God is his Father; and this being the case he is treated as a child. His heavenly Father has made ample provision for all his wants. In Jesus he will find all he needs as a sinner, and all he requires as a saint. Whatever is in Jesus is for him, and it is his duty, as well as his privilege, to receive out of the fullness of Jesus grace for grace. As a child, he should listen to his Father's voice, learn his Father's will, and do his Father's commands. He has only to *obey*; his Father will *provide*. He has to do with duty, not with consequences. Only let him ascertain his Father's will upon any point, and it becomes at once his duty, his honour, and his happiness to do it. Believer, you have a Father — a Father that loves you more than tongue can tell — a Father who has blessed you in Jesus with all spiritual blessings — a Father who is *now* waiting for you to approach Him in prayer and praise — a Father who wishes you to cast every care upon Him, to leave every burden at His feet, to trust Him to do you good. As an obedient child, resign all your will to His, leave all your concerns in His hands; and your safety, comfort and supplies are certain.

*Lord, my heart is bare before Thee,
Let me now Thy mercy prove;
Help me, for my wants implore Thee,
Love me with a Father's love.*



MARCH 4

*The Strength of Israel will not lie.
1 Samuel 15:29*

THEN HE OUGHT to be believed. It is impossible for God to lie, then He ought to be trusted. His promises are the fruits of His love. They are changeless as His nature, and must be made good. He is the *Omnipotent*, and can fulfil His word. He is the *unchangeable*, and certainly will. His strength is pledged to His people, to sustain them — His resources, to supply them — and His faithfulness, to comfort them. He speaks to us in His word. He speaks to us as sinners. He speaks to us as fearful, as tried, as suffering, just as we are tonight. He speaks to quell our fears, to cheer us under our trials, and to soothe our minds while suffering. Do we believe His word? Do we treat Him as a truth-speaking God? Has He our confidence? Do we stay ourselves upon His word? Are we looking at His promise, and while we look at it do we say, “This is the faithful word of the heavenly Father. This is certainly true. This must be fulfilled. This is more durable than heaven or earth; for Jesus has said, ‘Heaven and earth may pass away, but My word shall not pass away.’” Fix your eye on His word, and while you do, say:

*Yes; since God Himself has said it,
On the promise I rely;
His good word demands my credit,
What can unbelief reply!
He is strong, and can fulfil,
He is truth, and therefore will.*



MARCH 5

*Wait on thy God continually.
Hosea 12:6*

A WAITING FRAME is a holy frame. It is a calm quiet mind, living before the Lord's throne, exercising faith in His word, hoping in His mercy, endeavouring to do His will, and patiently submitting to His pleasure. The waiting soul sees God in all things, realizes God as present everywhere, and acknowledges His hand in every event. Wait on thy God continually, so will you be safe in every season of danger, happy under all your numerous trials, and find the Lord putting honour upon you in His ordinances. Wait on the Lord as the industrious servant on His kind and careful master — as the consistent maiden on her thoughtful and benevolent mistress — as the affectionate child, on His loving and beloved parent. Wait on Him, for He approves of the exercise. Wait on Him, for He requires it at your hand. Wait on Him, for He rewards it with a blessing. Wait His time for mercies. Wait at His throne for deliverance, for they shall not be ashamed that wait for Him. "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." Have you been waiting on your God today? Are you in a quiet waiting frame tonight? Can you say, "I wait for the Lord, and in His word do I hope?" Beware of impatience.

*Wait, believing on the Lord,
Still let courage cheer thy heart;
Wait — for faithful is His word,
He will grace and strength impart.*



MARCH 6

There is now no condemnation.

Romans 8:1

EVERY BELIEVER IS in Christ — united to His person, interested in His offices, clothed with His righteousness, and sanctified by His Spirit. “There is therefore *now* no condemnation.” Doubts there may be. Fears may harass. Sin there is in us, but no sin is imputed to us. The believer is under no charge. By virtue of oneness with Christ, he has been acquitted from every charge. He stands justified from all things. He is accepted of God as a beloved child, and is entitled to all the provisions of grace and glory. If he sins, he is chastened — being chastened, he confesses his sins with contrition — confessing his sins, God in faithfulness and justice forgives. He is led afresh to claim and plead the finished work of Jesus, and finds that he is not condemned, but acquitted. No one can lay anything to his charge, for God justifies him. He does so, because Christ died for him; yea rather, because as his Surety He is risen again, and is now at His own right hand as his Advocate, ever living to make intercession for him. Blessed state! Unspeakable privilege! I would lay down on my pillow tonight, impressed with the great fact, “I am not a condemned sinner, but a justified and beloved child of God.” Astonishing grace!

*No condemnation, O my soul,
'Tis God that speaks the word;
Perfect in comeliness art thou
In Christ, thy glorious Lord.*



MARCH 7

The Father which seeth in secret.

Matthew 6:6

 CAN ANY ONE HIDE himself in secret places from the Lord? Can a Christian under any circumstances escape His notice? Impossible! The eye of God has been fixed upon me every moment of this day. It is now at this moment fixed full upon me. But it is a Father's eye. My Father seeth us in secret. He seeth the secret workings of my foes, and will save me from them. He sees every secret influence which is likely to injure me, and will prevent it. He sees the secret workings of my heart — my hidden thoughts — my unuttered desires — my soul conflicts — my private temptations. He sees me withdraw for prayer, or sees me cast up my imploring eye to Him when I cannot. He sees my wants and woes. But He sees also my secret sins — every evil thought, every improper action, every unbecoming word, passes under His eye. Solemn consideration this! May it make me cautious. May it preserve me from yielding to temptation, from encouraging improper suggestions, and from acting inconsistent with my profession. My heavenly Father seeth me, seeth me at this moment, seeth me every moment, seeth my most secret motives, thoughts, and purposes. And He who thus seeth me, hateth with an infinite hatred every sin.

*O may these thoughts possess my breast,
Where'er I rove, where'er I rest!
Nor let my weaker passions dare
Consent to sin, for God is there.*



MARCH 8

Will ye also go away?

John 6:67

MANY LEFT THE Saviour in the days of His flesh, and many decline from His ways now. How many like Lot's wife look back; like the man of God who came from Bethel, yield to temptation; or like Demas, forsake the Saviour, having loved the present world. "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it." Go away? What from Jesus? This would be going from light to darkness, from plenty to poverty, from happiness to misery, from life to death. Go from Jesus? To whom can we go? We profess to have discovered the emptiness of the world, the insufficiency of temporal things to satisfy an immortal soul, and the pre-eminent excellency of the things of God. Still many go back and walk no more with Him. This should lead us to serious consideration. It should make us walk softly and cautiously. It cries to us with a loud voice and in clear accents, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." There can be no cause to leave Jesus for one moment. It is folly to stir from His side. It is dangerous to neglect His ordinances. It is madness to turn the back on His ways. My soul, He asks thee tonight, "WILL YOU ALSO GO AWAY?"

*Dear Lord, one bliss impart,
('Tis not from heaven I pray,
But let me not from Thee depart,
No, never go away.*



MARCH 9

Ye shall know the truth.

John 8:32

IF JESUS IS our Teacher, if we are of a childlike disposition, if we are willing to *do* as well as learn, we shall know the truth. All Zion's children shall be taught of the Lord. Everyone who is divinely taught comes to Jesus. He that comes to Jesus is made wise unto salvation. He that is wise unto salvation, knows the truth. The truth is in Christ. He is its centre. To know Him — so as to trust His word, rely on His sacrifice, and do His will — is to know the truth. The knowledge of the truth makes us free. It frees us from ignorance, prejudice, and folly. It frees us from the slavery of Satan, the bondage of the law, and the terrors of God. It frees us from the guilt of sin, the accusations of conscience, and the cruel fetters of carnal custom. It makes us free, by imparting a true knowledge of God, by discovering the way of salvation, and by proclaiming pardon, peace, and reconciliation. If we know the truth as it is in Jesus, we shall conquer the world, enter the Redeemer's kingdom, enjoy peace with God, and render hearty and cheerful obedience to the will of God. Godliness will be our calling, our profession, and our delight.

*Saviour! to me the truth reveal,
Thy teaching, Lord, I need;
Its power and unction may I feel,
To make me free indeed.
Each fetter break that binds my heart,
And sanctifying grace impart.*



MARCH 10

*Neither be ye of doubtful mind.
Luke 12:29*

WE ARE ALL prone to doubt, and to doubt that most, which there is no reason at all to doubt. But some seem to nurse their doubts, as though doubting was a part of religion. This is wrong. It is sinful. Our Lord often bids us believe, but He never encourages doubts. Doubting dishonours Him, distresses us, and gives Satan an advantage over us. Let us not doubt His providence, for it is kind; nor His word, for it is true. Let us not judge by appearances, which often mislead; but let us rest on divine promises, which can never change or deceive. Let us not look too much at ourselves, our abilities, or our circumstances; but let us look to the Lord, to His wisdom, power, and love. Let us not tremble at poverty, because God can make us happier in poverty, than we ever have been in plenty. Let us not be affected by the changeableness of men, for our God is in one mind and none can turn Him. If we yield to a doubtful mind, it will spoil our present comforts, hinder us in holy duties, dim the eye of our hope, and feed and nourish our fears. But what is worse than all, it will reflect upon the kindness, care, and providence of our gracious God.

*Cast thy burdens on the Lord,
Leave them with Thy Saviour;
He (whose hands for thee were bled)
Can and will deliver.
He is true and faithful still,
Yield thyself unto His will.*



MARCH 11

We love him, because he first loved us.

1 John 4:19

UR LOVE TO GOD is but a feeble reflection of His love to us. He loved us in eternity, that we might love Him in time. He loved us without any cause in us. But being infinitely lovely, He should be loved for His own sake. But it is the display of His love which awakens love in our bosoms towards Him; and His love being shed abroad in our hearts we love Him in return. No one loves God by nature. No man in his natural state *can* love God, for “the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can be*.” If therefore we love Him, or even heartily desire to love Him, it is a proof that our hearts have undergone a change; and that change is the effect and proof of His love to us. Every spiritual blessing flows naturally from His love, and whatever comes to us from Him is a covenant blessing, and leads us back to Him in return. Our faith in His word, our hope in His mercy, our love to His people, our zeal for His cause, our sorrow for sin, and our desires after holiness, are all so many proofs of His love to us. But our sonship crowns the whole. This is unparalleled love, that such sinners as we are should be called, “*The sons of God*.”

*The God who reigns above, we call
Our Father and our Friend;
And, blessed thought! His children all
Shall see Him in the end.*



MARCH 12

So shall we ever be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:17

NOW THE LORD visits His people, and manifests Himself unto them, as He does not unto the world. And such visits are very sweet — such manifestations cheer and confirm our faith. But in a little time He will come to fetch us home. He may send death first, to introduce our souls into His presence. We may be called upon to depart and be with Christ, which is far better than our present circumstances. But He will come Himself soon. He will raise our bodies from the grave, and conform both soul and body to His own likeness. We shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and, “so shall we ever be with the Lord.” This will be our heaven. This will be our portion. We shall be forever like Him, and forever with Him. How different to our present lot. What a glorious object for faith to fix upon. What a cheering subject for the mind to be engaged with. Forever with the Lord: what will it not include that is glorious! Forever with the Lord: what will it not exclude that is unpleasant or disagreeable! Let me close this day reflecting upon this glorious prospect, anticipating this delightful change. And under all my future trials and exercises, let me look forward and say, “Well, I shall soon be forever with the Lord!”

Forever with the Lord!

Amen, so let it be:

Life from the dead is in that word,

'Tis immortality.



MARCH 13

Draw nigh to God.

James 4:8

SIN THRUSTS US to an infinite distance from God, and unbelief keeps us there. Grace brings us back, and brings us nigh by the blood of the cross. When we sin, we still wander from God, but real prayer is drawing nigh to God. He is on the throne of grace, Jesus our intercessor is before the throne, and we are invited to draw nigh. We are to come up to the throne, to realize God as present, to exercise confidence in Him, through Jesus, and to pour out our hearts before Him. To tell him all — all we fear, all we desire, all we want. To praise Him for all we possess, or have received in time past, or expect in time to come. We are to be frank — there is to be no reserve. We are to be serious — there must be no lightness. We are to be fully assured that our God is love — there is to be no dread or alarm. Draw nigh to God — to ascertain His will, to enjoy His love, to unburden your mind, to engage Him afresh on your side, and that you may rise above the present cheerless world. “He will draw nigh to you.” What an inducement is this! Draw nigh and unveil His glories. Draw nigh and dissipate your fears. Draw nigh and confirm your faith.

*Let us now approach Thy throne
Through the living way made known.
Way of faith which Jesus made,
Through the veil of flesh displayed;
Through His rent humanity,
God our Friend in heav’n, we see.*



MARCH 14

He laid down his life for us.

1 John 3:16

This is a most stupendous fact, an amazing mystery, that God should take our nature, in order to labour, suffer, and die in our stead. Jesus was God. He became man. He was God and man in one person. As such He laid down His life for us. He laid it down willingly — no one took it from Him, He laid it down of Himself. He laid it down with a perfect knowledge of what we should be, and do, and deserve. He was not moved to do so by anything in us. It was His own pure, infinite, and sovereign love alone, which led Him to do so. “Herein is love.” And there is no such love anywhere else. Nor has His love been so gloriously displayed in anything else. Beloved, let us dwell on the love of Jesus. We can never think of Him enough. We can never praise Him for it enough. Let us think of our state before God, our sins against God, and our desert at the hands of God. And then let us dwell upon this great fact, that instead of dealing with us according to our sins, or rewarding us according to our iniquities, “HE LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR US.” Laid it down as the price of our ransom. Stupendous, astonishing love!

*How hath He loved us? How?
Can man or angel tell?
Before His cross we bow,
The power of love to feel;
To see Him love, and bleed, and die,
That we may live and reign on high.*



MARCH 15

In hope of eternal life.

Titus 1:2

THUS THE CONSISTENT Christian lives. His heart is not set upon anything below, but he is looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. This is the object of his hope — and hope is the balm, the cordial of his soul. He hopes for life in perfection, in the highest state of existence in another and better world — perpetual existence in health, in peace, in plenty, and in pleasure. This life is *certain*. It is promised — promised by God who cannot lie — promised before the world began to Jesus as the Head of His church — to all believers. This is the gospel testimony, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath received Christ by faith, hath life. We have the first-fruits; we shall have the glorious harvest. We live in the daily exercise of hope, and this hope cheers us in trouble, strengthens us under persecution, animates us in our daily warfare, and defends us in the hour of danger. It is the helmet of salvation. Believer, you should not be looking *at* death, but *for* life, eternal life. Faith is a firm persuasion of the existence of this blessing, and a confident expectation of enjoying it.

*Billows of disappointment roll
Along the restless tide of time;
But gospel-hope bears up my soul,
'Till an eternal calm shall shine;
In hope of life eternal given,
I live, anticipating heaven.*



MARCH 16

O that thou wouldest bless me indeed.

1 Chronicles 4:10

THUS PRAYED JABEZ, and so prays every Christian. He knows that the blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it. There is a reality in the Lord's blessing. Well, He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. All is treasured up in Jesus for us, and by faith and prayer we receive out of His fullness and grace for grace. The Lord still blesses us. He says, "I will bless thy bread and thy water," and our temporal mercies are peculiarly sweet, when seasoned with His love. He blesses us with renewing grace, reviving grace, restoring grace, sanctifying grace, and preventing grace. He blesses, like a God, with blessings costly beyond calculation, vast as our miseries, numerous as our sins, and lasting as our existence. He delights to bless. He gave His Son to die for us, that He might bless us honourably, suitably, and eternally. He has promised to bless us, and to make us blessings. It is a blessing to feel our need of His blessing, and everyone who does so, ardently desires and earnestly seeks it, is taught of God and blessed by God. Let us then read His word, believe His love, plead for His blessing, and receive the answer as Jabez did.

*All is finished — do not doubt it,
But believe your dying Lord;
Never reason more about it,
Only take Him at His word.*



MARCH 17

*Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name.
1 Chronicles 16:29*

THE LORD HAS written out His name, in its greatness and graciousness, on the works of His power, and on all the gifts of His love. He that would learn God's name must study creation and providence; but must more earnestly study the gospel. Here He will see God writing out His name or displaying His glorious character and perfections, in the conversion, justification, sanctification, preservation, and glorification of multitudes of sinners. God has revealed His name in His word, and it is to be read in its proclamations, doctrines, promises, precepts, and prospects. If we read and study Jehovah's name aright, we shall be filled with admiring views and adoring gratitude; and as the effect we shall glorify Him in our prayers, praises, and general conversation. To give Him the glory due unto His name will require all our talents, all our time, and even eternity itself. But to attempt to do so is a plain duty, and if the heart be right it will be a real pleasure. Still it is a duty much neglected, and while we neglect it we rob God of His right, and our own souls of much comfort. Let us therefore learn to read God's name, to exalt His grace, and to give Him the glory due unto His name.

*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 18

Fear not, neither be discouraged.

Deuteronomy 1:21

THOUGH THE LORD tries us, He also encourages us. More than fifty times, He says to us in His word, “FEAR NOT.” Yet we are often fearing. He knew this would be the case, therefore He provided so much to cheer and encourage us. Let us not be discouraged. The Lord hath set the good land before us. He hath promised it to us. He bids us go up and take possession of it. Our enemies may be mighty, but our God who goes with us and fights for us, is Almighty. Our foes may be crafty, but on our side is “the only wise God.” If providence should frown, if the Lord does delay to answer our prayers, if our case should appear to be almost desperate, it is only to exercise our graces, try our sincerity, to stir us up to importunate prayer. Let us therefore press on in hope, let us persevere in faith. The Lord will appear for us. His faithful word shall be made good in our experience; and though now He may not answer us a word, He will soon give us the desire of our hearts. Yield not then to discouragement — it dishonours God, it weakens faith, it cheers on your foes. Fear not, for God is with you. God is for you.

*Armed with the presence of my Lord
I would be of good cheer,
Confiding in His faithful word,
Why should I faint or fear?
Though fierce the foe, though rough the road,
I can do all things through my God.*



MARCH 19

He restoreth my soul.

Psalms 23:3

IHAVE GONE ASTRAY like a lost sheep. We are prone to wander, and having wandered we never return till the good Shepherd seeks us. But His eye is upon the wanderer. His heart yearns over it. He waits a fitting time to be gracious unto it. He follows it with reproofs, rebukes, and expostulations; and at length He restores it. He convinces of the folly of wandering from the fold. The soul becomes unhappy in its wandering state, a spirit of prayer is awakened, concern to return deepens, the sheep creeps to the Shepherd's feet, acknowledges its sin and folly, implores mercy, and cries, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." It is taken up by the Shepherd's power, and carried back with gentle reproofs to the fold. Every restoration is of grace. In every instance it is the Shepherd's care that restores the wandering soul. The restored wanderer always feels deeply humbled, flies to the precious blood of atonement, admires restoring mercy, becomes more cautious, careful, and circumspect. His conscience is more tender, his hatred of sin is deeper, and his jealousy of his own heart is more lively. He abhors himself and repents in dust and ashes. He pants for the presence of God, prizes the ordinances of religion, and watches unto prayer.

*Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love —
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it,
Seal it from Thy courts above.*



MARCH 20

*Risen with Christ.
Colossians 3:1*

HRIST AS OUR substitute died in our stead. He died as a public person, representing His people; and as such He rose from the dead. All His people are said to have died in Him when He died, and rose with Him when He arose. By virtue of this we are quickened by the Spirit of life from Christ, and we arise and ascend to Him in our hopes, desires, and affections. His life is put forth in us, and we are to make manifest the resurrection life of Christ in our bodies. We are to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but *alive unto God* through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is also stated of all believers that He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together with Christ in the heavenlies. Christ and His people are one. They were represented by Him when He fulfilled the law, when He made the atonement, when He arose from the dead, and when He entered into the holiest of all with His own blood. They live through His death. They live in union to His person. They live for His honour and glory. Being risen with Christ, they should not grovel on earth, or be very much affected by anything that occurs below. But as their Head, their portion and their life is in heaven. There their thoughts, desires, and affections should be.

*Believing souls, whom Jesus know,
If risen indeed, with Him ye are,
Superior to the joys below,
His resurrection power declare.*



MARCH 21

They desire a better country.
Hebrews 11:16

NOT ONLY A BETTER state, or a better frame, but a better country. This was the experience of the patriarchs; the apostles felt the same; so have all true Christians. Do we desire a better country? Do we desire a *heavenly* country? There is a better — it is set before us in the gospel, it is promised to all who believe in Jesus, and continue faithful unto death. Heaven is a country where all enjoy rest. There is no pain, no vexation, no toil, no trials there. All are active, yet all enjoy perfect repose. Heaven is the home of love — there are no foes, no envious professors, no jealous brethren. All is love, pure, perfect, perpetual love. All love God, and God loves all. Each loves his fellow, and loves his fellow as he loves himself. It is the residence of holiness. There are no sinners, for all are righteous. There is no sin, for each exactly resembles Jesus. Holiness is the element, the joy, the characteristic of the place. It is the abode of perfect satisfaction, unbroken joy, and undisturbed tranquillity. There Jesus is seen face to face. There God unfolds His glories. There every desire is gratified, every heart is full, every countenance beams with benevolence and joy. Truly it is a better country. It is the rest which remaineth for the people of God.

*Then let the hope of joys to come
Dispel our cares, and chase our fears;
If God be ours, we're travelling home,
Though passing through a vale of tears.*



MARCH 22

*The heirs of promise.
Hebrews 6:17*

WE WERE BY nature children of wrath, even as others. In character we were unrighteous; in circumstances, destitute; in state, lost. We had no claim upon God for one good thing, for we were traitors against His throne and government. But by an ancient and gracious appointment, He constituted us as believers in Jesus, "HEIRS OF PROMISE." We were promised to Jesus as a seed, to reward the travail of His soul; and are entitled to all the promises, which in Him are 'Yea,' and in Him 'Amen,' to the glory of God by us. By virtue of our relation to Christ, by our interest in the testament of Christ, as well as to the appointment of God, we are entitled to all promised blessings. To us is promised life, eternal life — righteousness, everlasting righteousness — supplies, both temporal and spiritual — a kingdom of grace and glory — salvation, eternal salvation. We are heirs, and all these things are included in our estate. Heirship flows from grace. It stands in Christ. It leads us to heaven. It calls for gratitude. Ought we not to ask, Am I an heir? Can I prove my title? Do I view the promises as my title-deeds? Do I live as a person entitled to such possessions? Let a man examine himself.

*As heirs of promise, let us live
By faith in Jesus' word;
Expect His fullness to receive,
And glorify the Lord.*



MARCH 23

Ready to forgive.

Psalm 86:5

JEHOVAH IS REVEALED as a God who delights in showing mercy, who is slow to anger, as “a God ready to pardon.” This is always a fact, and it should always be believed by us. It should also be daily kept before our minds, that we may seek, expect, and enjoy a daily pardon. The Lord is never indisposed, or backward to pardon a believing, penitent, confessing sinner. But He is faithful to His word, and just to the merit of His Son, in pardoning everyone who applies in the Saviour’s name. “READY TO FORGIVE!” Then our fears have been groundless, our distress without cause, and our suspicions have been sinful. The goodness of His nature is such that He devised a way in which He could honourably pardon the vilest transgressor. And though this cost Him the life of His only begotten and well-beloved Son, He freely gave Him up, to show that He was “a God ready to pardon.” Without an atonement, pardon would have been impossible. But through the atonement of Jesus, God can easily, completely, and daily pardon the greatest sinners. What He *can* do, He *will* do — He *does* do. And tonight, He is “ready to forgive” the sins of this day, and of every previous day — to forgive us, and to do it at this moment. Blessed truth!

*Believing let us raise our eye,
To Him who liveth and hath died;
That look will lift our souls on high,
And God pronounce us justified.*



MARCH 24

*Go in peace.
Luke 7:50*

TRUE PEACE FLOWS from the pardon of sin. If we believe that God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us all trespasses, our souls will enjoy peace. For being justified by faith, we have peace with God. We have nothing to fear from God, for having pardoned us, He has no charge against us. But we may expect every good thing from God, for having given us His Son, will He not with Him also *freely* give us all things? If therefore we have no evil to fear, but every good to expect, may we not, ought we not, to be at peace? When Jesus pardoned the woman He said to her, "Go in peace." So He says to us. Mind not what Satan says. Fear not what man can do. Go in the path of duty. Go, and face trials and persecutions. Go, and enjoy your temporal mercies. Go, and enjoy your religious privileges. Go, though dangers surround you. Go, though you feel weak and feeble. Go in peace, for God accepts you. Go, for your reconciliation to God is honourable and perfect. Go, and spread a Saviour's fame. Go, and tell of Jehovah's pardoning love. Go, and bear your personal testimony to the truth of His word. Go, and conquer all your foes. Go, this night to rest in peace, and comfort your soul with this, "God is at peace with me."

*O Lamb of God, in tender love,
Now bid my sorrows cease;
Kindly my doubts and fears remove,
And bid me, "Go in peace."*



MARCH 25

That I may know him.

Philippians 3:10

PAUL APPEARS TO have had seven principal wishes, and they are all expressed in this brief epistle. They all have reference to Christ. Indeed Christ was Paul's centre, to which he constantly tended, and the circle within which all the desires of his soul were included. He especially desired to know Christ; to win Christ; to magnify Christ both in his body and soul; to be found in Christ; to be conformed to Christ; to rejoice in the day of Christ; and to be with Christ. But the first lies at the root of all the rest. The knowledge of Christ is more excellent than *any* other, than *all* other knowledge. But how little do we know of Christ. Therefore it is that we enjoy so little of Christ. But is it the desire of our souls tonight, that we may know Him? — that we may know Him clearly and correctly? — that our knowledge of Christ should be powerful and influential, regulating our thoughts, desires, hopes, fears, confidence, and our conduct toward God and man, especially toward the saints — and that we should grow in the knowledge of Christ. If we do really and sincerely desire to know Christ, we shall search His word, frequent His ordinances, meditate on His truth, be often at His throne, and speak of Him to His people.

*'Tis life to know the dying Lamb,
Eternal life is in His name;
O may I in this knowledge grow,
And daily more of Jesus know.*



MARCH 26

*The Father of mercies.
2 Corinthians 1:3*

JEHOVAH IS A FATHER, a merciful Father, a tenderly merciful Father — a Father of mercies, with whom all mercies originate, from whom all mercies proceed. Our chief mercy is a Saviour — that Saviour, His only begotten Son — that Son, freely delivered up for us all. He was the author of the mercy which quickened us, comforted us, and still keeps us. All our merciful afflictions, deliverances, shuttings up, and relief, flow from His sovereign will. He is the fountain and source of mercy, and from Him all our mercies flow. This should correct the views we sometimes take of Him, as if He were difficult to please, or soon angry with us. It should also encourage our faith, hope, prayers, and love. What a comfort to a seeking soul, to know that the God he is seeking is the Father of mercies. What a shield this is to ward off the fiery darts of Satan. What an inducement to love our God more than all the gifts we receive from Him. Beloved, what do you need this evening? If it is a mercy, your God has it; and if it will really do you good, He is willing to bestow it. Look up to heaven tonight, and call upon the Father of mercies in confidence. He will produce and present the very mercy you need, be it what it may.

*My soul, thou hast (let what will ail)
A never changing Friend;
When brethren, friends, and helpers fail,
On Him alone depend.*



MARCH 27

Ye ask, and receive not.

James 4:3

IS GOD THEN unwilling to bestow? Will He forfeit His word? No! But He never promised to sanction sin, or encourage folly; and this He must do if He answered *all* our prayers. In prayer God looks at our motives. He reads our hearts while He listens to our words. If we pray for temporal things to pamper our appetites, or gratify our lust, we have no reason to expect that God will give them. If we ask for spiritual things with a carnal end, God is just in withholding them. We may ask for good things that we may become eminent in the estimation of men, be respected by our fellows, or applauded by the multitude. Even grace and holiness may be prayed for in order to get a name. Our object should be simply to honour God, to exalt Jesus, and to promote His cause. Or, we may ask in an unbecoming manner. We may be too anxious for temporals. We may be indifferent about spirituals. Lust may set us praying, and keep us praying; as pride, covetousness, or envy. See then, the cause why our prayers are not always answered — the motive, or the end in view, or the spirit displayed is not good. The prayer is as the design is. Let us ask then: *Why* do we pray? *How* do we pray? For *what* do we pray?

*I fear I often ask amiss,
Lord, search my heart and see;
My motives purify, nor cease
To draw my soul to Thee.*



MARCH 28

I will fear no evil.

Psalm 23:4

WHY SHOULD I, if I am the Lord's? Let this matter be settled, and then farewell to the fear of evil; for the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. Not from all *trials*, for they are not all evils, but only benefits. Only two things can be said to be evils: The one is sin, but to the believer, sin is pardoned. In the believer, sin is crucified; and over the believer, it shall not have dominion. The other evil is separation from God. But nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Our life should not be characterized by fear, but by love; not by alarm, but by confidence. The Lord is our keeper, He will preserve our souls. We may be tried by losses and crosses, by Satan and by men, by poverty and pain, but all these will work together for our good. And even death is not an evil; therefore we should not fear it. Let us live upon Christ; let us live for Christ; let us live like Christ; and then to die, will only be to depart and be with Christ, which is far better than remaining here. To die will be gain, or best of all. Let us then grasp the promise with a firm faith, walk close to the bleeding side of Jesus, aim to glorify God in our day and generation, and go through life saying, "I WILL FEAR NO EVIL."

*Fear not, believe His word,
You are to Jesus given;
'Tis the good pleasure of the Lord
To bring you safe to heaven.*



MARCH 29

I am with you always.

Matthew 28:20

THEN JESUS IS with us tonight. He is, and He will be with us as He has promised in all future time. He is with us to afford protection, to impart consolation, to subdue our fears, to inspire us with hope. He identifies us with Himself. He makes our cause His own. His presence is pledged to us, and it is the shield of our protection, the strength of our hearts, and the source of our joy. He will not leave us to go a step alone. He will not take His eye off us, or close His ear to us for one moment. He tells us that we are more endeared to Him than the loveliest infant is to the fondest mother. The ties of nature are not so strong, or so tender, or so lasting as the ties of grace. Let us endeavour to keep this fact in view. Jesus is with us — ever *will* be with us. He will be the last to comfort us in time, and the first to welcome us in eternity. He will go through the whole journey with us, and then place us before His face forever. We are therefore sure of one thing, and that is, the presence of Jesus. And His presence is the joy of angels, the bliss of heaven, and the glory of immortality. Turn then from every creature to Him. Lay down this night, resting upon the words of Jesus, “LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS.”

*Lord, I commend to Thee
The remnant of my days;
Oh that my chief concern may be
To spend them to Thy praise.*



MARCH 30

*I fear God.
Genesis 42:18*

SO SAID JOSEPH to his brethren, when he sent them home with provisions to their needy father. So may we say whenever tempted to act unbecoming our Christian character. The true fear of God springs from love, and is deepened and strengthened by filial fellowship with God. It is not a dread of His majesty, but a fear to offend or grieve His heart. It is produced by the Holy Spirit, and is a great preventive to sin. If I fear to offend God, I shall certainly strive to please Him. If I love Him, I shall fear to offend Him. This fear makes us cautious, careful, and watchful. It will often lead us to prayer. It will prompt us to self-examination. It will lead us to compare our conduct with God's word. It will preserve us from presumption, levity, and dishonesty. He that fears God will not go in the way of sinners, stand in the counsel of the ungodly, or sit in the seat of the scornful; but his delight will be in the word of God, and in His book will he meditate day and night. Has the fear of God influenced us this day? Have we said by our conduct, in our dealings with our fellow men, "I FEAR GOD?" Reflecting upon the inconsistency of others, can we say, "So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord?"

*It gives religion life,
To warm as well as light;
Makes mercy sweet, salvation great,
And all God's judgments right.*



MARCH 31

The LORD will give that which is good.

Psalms 85:12

WHATEVER IS GOOD for His people the Lord will certainly bestow. Grace to sanctify, provision to sustain, and glory to crown them at last. But He will only give that which is good, therefore He will refuse them many things which they may desire. But *all* that is good for them they shall have, and He will give every good thing in its proper season. He will so give them good now, as to secure the greatest good at last; and every good thing shall come to them through the hands of Jesus. That He will give that which is good is certain — from the relation in which He stands to them: He is their Father — from His infinite wisdom which is engaged for them, and His tender love which is set upon them — from the plan of His grace and the word of His promise — from the testimony of His people and His conduct towards His very enemies, for He will not feed His foes and starve His friends. Let His assurance then check your impatience. Wait for the Lord. Let it rouse you to prayer — ask good things of the Lord. Let it feed your faith — believe the word of the Lord. Let it produce contentment — be satisfied with the provision of the Lord. Let it encourage hope — expect every good thing from the Lord.

*The Lord will grace and glory grant,
And every good supply;
No blessing which His people want,
His bounty can deny.*



APRIL 1

*The God of all grace.
1 Peter 5:10*

HOW SWEET AND refreshing are the views which Jehovah gives us of Himself! Too often we allow our minds to be led away from the spiritual representation of our God, and view Him through some improper and injurious medium. He is the God of all grace, but still He is the just God. He is gracious naturally, sovereignly, infinitely, and eternally. He has riches of grace — grace to quicken the dead, to pardon the guilty, to comfort the disconsolate, to strengthen the weak, to restore the wandering, and to save the lost. In His dealings with His people, His grace is displayed — how *free*, in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus — how *seasonable*, in the salvation of the dying robber on the cross — how *unexpected* by Zaccheus, when called down from the sycamore. But these are but samples or patterns, intended to show us what the God of all grace can and will do. Let us look to our God as infinitely gracious. The extent, the greatness, the riches, the freedom of His grace, is displayed in the undeserving, in the ill-deserving. Let this check our fears. Let it spur us on to diligence. It calls for confidence, gratitude, and consecration from us. Let us lay the head on the pillow tonight cheered with the thought that our God is “THE GOD OF ALL GRACE.”

*Great God, to us Thy grace afford,
That far from Thee we ne’er may rove,
Our guard — the presence of the Lord,
Our joy — the sense of pardoning love.*



APRIL 2

Occupy till I come.
Luke 19:13

UR LORD HAS provided for all our wants. He forbids our fears. He has given us talents, or entrusted us with His money. He is gone home to His Father for a time, He will soon return again, and He bids us “occupy until He comes.” We are to be busy for God, to be active for the Lord Jesus Christ. He will soon come to take an account of *what* we have done, *how* we have done it, and *why* we have done it. When He comes, He will praise or blame as the case may require. He will reward every one according to His works. Do we believe this? Are we living under the impression of this fact? Do we often say to ourselves, “I must stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” “I must give an account.” Beloved, our time, our talents, as well as our persons are the Lord’s. To Him they should be consecrated. For Him they should be all employed. Have we been living for Christ today? Have we been transacting our business, or doing our work, in the prospect of appearing before the Lord Jesus to give an account of it? Let us not sleep as do others. Let us not stand idle in the market place. Let us not live to ourselves. Let us live upon Christ, and live for Him alone.

*O may I live on Jesus still,
And use the talents given;
Daily consult and do His will,
And thus prepare for heaven.*



APRIL 3

The obedience of faith. Romans 16:26

THE OBEDIENCE required of faith is the entire submission of the intellect, the heart and the life to God. The law of faith is the gospel. This requires us to believe that “*God is love*,” and that Christ died for sin instead of sinners. It requires us to embrace mercy as freely presented — to receive forgiveness as the gift of God — to accept of the righteousness of Jesus — to trust in it alone for acceptance before God — and to plead it at the throne of grace for all we need. It requires us to come daily to Jesus for all we want, and to expect to receive at His hands all He has promised. It requires us to live for God — to live to God — to live like God. It requires us, in one word, so to live that God may be *all* and man *nothing*. God requires the obedience of a believing heart. We must believe what He says, expect what He has promised, and do what He bids. This is the life of faith. Satan will oppose it. The carnal mind will throw a thousand obstacles in the way. Everything that is of a worldly character will hinder us. But we must wrestle, strive, break through, and say, “I will believe my God. I will obey my Lord. I will imitate my Saviour. I will be a follower of them who through faith and patience now inherit the promises.”

*Spirit of faith, unfold Thy law,
Thy quick'ning power impart;
My soul to sweet obedience draw,
Fill and control my heart.*



APRIL 4

*I know whom I have believed.
2 Timothy 1:12*

IT IS UNSPEAKABLE mercy to know Christ. It lays at the root of our happiness. It is essential to our confidence. But unto us it is given to know Him. We know Him from His word. We know Him from the testimony of His saints. But what is still better, we know Him by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. But we only know in part. We know His *person*, so as to love Him — His *character*, so as to trust in Him — His *perfect work*, so as to rely upon it alone for our acceptance with God — His infinite *fullness*, so as to repair to it for all we need — His tender *compassion*, so as to go to Him for sympathy in suffering and sorrow — His *willingness* to receive sinners, so as to recommend poor sinners to go to Him for life and peace. We know He is able to save. We know He is trustworthy. We know He will never leave or forsake one poor soul who trusts in Him. We know Him, and therefore trust our all in His hands. We know Him and therefore are not ashamed to avow that He is our Lord and our God. We know *who* He is: the Son of God — *what* He is: the Saviour — *where* He is: at the right hand of God — what He has *done*: He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification — what He *will do*: come again and receive us unto Himself.

*I know in whom I have believed,
His Spirit doth my heart assure,
That what He hath from me received,
His constant love will keep secure.*



APRIL 5

Peace, peace.
Isaiah 57:19

SUCH ARE THE SOFT, soothing sounds which the gospel whispers in the believer's ear. In all times of tribulation, in all times of temptation, in all times of bodily disease and suffering, it softly cries, "*Peace, peace.*" Peace — for Jesus died to put away your sins. Peace — for Jesus lives to intercede for you in heaven. Peace — for Jesus reigns, and your concerns are in His hands. Peace — for Jesus loves, and His love is immutably fixed on you. Peace — for God is love. Peace — for you are reconciled to Him by the death of His Son. Let not your heart be troubled. Every thought of God respecting you is peaceful. Every purpose of God toward you which providence has to work out is peaceful. Heaven is at peace with you. You are also at peace with heaven. Your peace was made when Jesus died in your stead; when He put away your sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Look to Him as your *Peacemaker*. Live in the atmosphere of Gethsemane and Golgotha. View God as your peaceful Father, and heaven as your peaceful home. Often meditate upon that precious verse, "Thou wilt keep him in *perfect peace*, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee." Let your mind *rest* in the Lord.

*Jesus, my feeble faith increase,
And sweetly multiply my peace,
And when I always trust Thy power,
My sin shall trouble me no more.*



APRIL 6

The resurrection of the just.

Luke 14:14

THE DEAD IN CHRIST shall rise first. They shall rise incorruptible, powerful, spiritual, and glorious — in exact conformity to the glorious body of Christ. His voice will rouse them, His power will raise them, and His glory will surround and adorn them. They shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is. What a glorious morning will the resurrection morning be! How deeply we are interested in it, and yet, how little it exercises our thoughts, or draws out our anticipations. It may be the very next morning we shall see, for we may die in our sleep; or for aught we can tell, Jesus may come tomorrow. Are we ready? Are we justified before God through faith in Jesus? Are we just with men, rendering to all their due? The resurrection of the just will be most glorious. They will come forth perfect in holiness and beauty. They will rise to be openly united to Jesus, to share His glory, and be with Him where He is. We ought often to think of that day. To prepare for it daily. To live and act as if it was just at hand. To do as Paul did, who laboured, suffered and prayed, “If by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.”

*Sing with glad anticipation,
Mortals and immortals sing,
Jesus comes with full salvation,
Jesus doth His glory bring.*



APRIL 7

*One thing I do.
Philippians 3:13*

THE CONCENTRATION and fixation of the thoughts, desires, and aims upon the great object and end of life, is an invaluable blessing. David desired “one thing,” even to dwell in the house of the Lord. Mary, chose the good part. Paul, kept his eye and his heart upon “one thing,” even the prize of his high calling. He forgot the past, and was constantly pressing on after higher attainments, sweeter enjoyments, and more extensive usefulness. Nothing past or present could satisfy his soul. His desires were large. His hopes were exalted. His heart was set upon doing all he could for God, obtaining all he could from God and becoming as much as possible like God. Beloved, how does this reprove us? Are not our minds often distracted, our hearts divided, and our attention diverted from the object, which we should keep in view? Jesus kept His eye upon the joy that was set before Him. Moses had respect unto the recompense of the reward. Paul did not aim at any of the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal. O to have the heart set, and the eye fixed, upon “one thing;” and that one thing, the prize which Jesus holds out to stimulate His people, and which He will give them at that day!

*Lord, help me this one thing to do;
To keep the glorious prize in view;
Fain would I leave the things behind,
And heaven on earth in Jesus find.*



APRIL 8

*Who hath saved us.
2 Timothy 1:9*

SALVATION IS A present blessing. If we are in Christ we are saved. Our God hath pardoned our sins, He hath justified our persons, He hath changed our natures and He hath given to us eternal life. We now receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls. We are not perfectly delivered from all evils, foes, and fears yet; but then deliverance is certain. We are not in the exact likeness of our Lord now, but we shall be, for we shall see Him as He is. Every believer is in a justified state, and as such we should *walk* with God, *work* for God, and *suffer* all the will of God. Christ is ours, and all He has is ours. The promises are ours, and all they contain is ours. God is ours, and all He can do with us consistently with His perfections and government, He will do. In the assurance of this we should live; the Apostle did so. It is this that will strengthen us to labour, give us courage in the conflict, cast out all slavish fear, and consecrate us entirely to the Lord. Let this then be the subject of meditation tonight, until we fall into the arms of sleep. God hath saved me. He may not have given me health, or wealth, or kind relatives, or a happy home; but He hath saved me, and saved me with an everlasting salvation.

*Sav'd in Christ from hell and death,
O may I seek the things above,
And evermore the spirit breathe
Of praise, sobriety, and love.*



APRIL 9

*Your faith groweth exceedingly.
2 Thessalonians 1:3*

SUCH WAS THE happiness of the believing Thessalonians. Their faith grew. It grew exceedingly. The seed became the plant; the plant soon became the tree. The blade grew into ear; the ear ripened into the full corn. The babe became a young man; the young man became a father in Christ. Faith roots itself in the truth. It firmly grasps the rock. It stands against, and defies the storm. It reposes on the covenant, and immutable faithfulness of God. It grows by exercise. It grows in the way of upright walking. It grows by the proper use of gospel ordinances. If our faith grows, Christ will become more precious. We shall earnestly long for more conformity to Him. We shall learn better to distinguish between faith and feeling. We shall be able to trust a naked promise. Our love to the saints will strengthen and become strong. Our zeal for God and His glory will increase. Our attention to the precepts will become close and influential. Our confidence in God's word will be steady and vigorous. Our liberality and benevolence will grow in proportion to our faith. See then how important it is that our faith should grow. Look to it, that your faith be a growing faith.

*How blest it is to live by faith,
And cast our burden on the Lord:
To credit what the Saviour saith,
And rest, confiding in His word.*



APRIL 10

*Thou shalt glorify me.
Psalm 50:15*

WHEN TROUBLE drives us to the Lord in prayer, He kindly listens to us, and graciously answers us. But when prayer is answered and deliverance is enjoyed, then He expects to be acknowledged and adored. We glorify God when our hearts are grateful for His mercies; when we praise Him for His undeserved favours; and when we commend Him to others, as faithful to His word, merciful to His enemies, and gracious to all who apply at His throne. But we glorify Him also when we exercise filial confidence in His promises; when we expect all He has promised, because He is true; when we call upon Him first, in every trial and trouble; and when we carry all our cares to His feet, and leave them at His throne. By silent submission under bereavements, by calm resignation in trials, by the daily offering up of the heart as a sacrifice, by tender concern for His honour, by steady attachment to His cause, by fraternal affection to His people, by preferring His will to our own, we glorify Him. Let us make *this* the one business of our lives. Let us charge ourselves every morning, saying, "My soul, see to it that thou glorify God today." And let us examine ourselves every evening, whether the Lord's glory has been kept in view through the day.

*He who offers grateful praises,
Best exalts Jehovah's name:
He whose mind His law embraces,
Will aright his conduct frame.*



APRIL 11

*I will not be enquired of by you.
Ezekiel 20:3*

THESE PERSONS WERE living in sin under a profession of religion. Such characters are peculiarly loathsome in the sight of God. He will not allow them to have any fellowship with Himself. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer." "He that turneth away his ear from the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination." Are our hearts sincere? Are our lives consistent? If we love sin, if we live in sin, if we can make excuses for sin, God will hold no communion with us. He says, "Wash you, make you clean." Sin is the pollution of the soul. Holiness is cleanliness of soul. Sinners are filthy. They are offensive to God. But none are so offensive as they who, while professing to be holy, live in sin. Sin spoils our services. One sin fostered and encouraged, will cause our services to be rejected, our prayers to be refused, and our persons to be loathed by a holy and righteous God. Christ will not be the minister of sin, or allow His work to be used as an excuse or cloak for transgression. If we are justified by grace, we are sanctified by the truth. If God accepts our prayers, our hearts are set against sin. Beloved, if tempted to indulge in sin, remember God says, "I WILL NOT BE ENQUIRED OF BY YOU."

*Lord, wash my soul from sin,
Cleanse every secret part;
And put Thy Spirit's grace within,
To purify my heart.*



APRIL 12

*The will of the Lord be done.
Acts 21:14*

IF GOD IS LOVE, if His promises are true, if He is faithful to His word, if His will is influenced by justice and mercy, holiness and love, if He only wills what is for our good and for His own glory, ought we not daily to use this language? Should not wishing give way to acquiescence? His wisdom is infinite, and He wills wisely. His heart is set upon our welfare, and He works with this object in view. Still we want our own way. We fancy that something else would be better than that which is. We cast dishonour upon the skill, the kindness, and the truth of our God. What folly is this! But it arises in part from want of reflection; more from want of faith; and most of all from the sinful selfishness of our natures. Most of our anguish springs from our wilfulness. Our distresses are generated by our opposition to God. We daily pray, "Thy will be done." We often talk of the excellency and perfection of the will of God, and yet — if our wills are crossed, if our fortitude is tried, if our professions are put to the test, we either fret and complain, or sink in fears and gloom. Believer, God wills thy holiness — thy true happiness — thy everlasting welfare. Give up then at once, and strive to say at all seasons, "THE WILL OF THE LORD BE DONE."

*Thy favour all my journey through,
Thou art engaged to grant;
What else I want, or think I do,
'Tis better still to want.*



APRIL 13

Your names are written in heaven.

Luke 10:20

WHAT AN UNSPEAKABLE blessing is this. To be registered among the family of God. To have a name in the Lamb's book of life. To be written among the living in Jerusalem. Election is the earliest effect of grace. We were chosen in Christ. Chosen to holiness. Chosen to eternal life. Our persons were given to Jesus. Our salvation was entrusted to His hands. Our interests were made His care. Our names were recorded in the register of His members, and we are called upon by Him to rejoice in the fact. God has thought of us. He has thought of us in love. He has ordained us to eternal life. He has made a full provision for all our wants in the covenant. He has given us exceeding great and precious promises. He has proved His exceeding kindness towards us in a thousand ways. Let us daily write His name upon our memories. Let us so record His mercies as they shall never be forgotten. Let us make holiness the business of our life. For no one can know His election but by its results, of which holiness is the principal. If we are not holy, we have no proof whatever that our names are in the book of life. If our hearts, our hopes, and our desires are not in heaven, it is a great question if our names are written there.

*Thus did eternal love begin
To raise us up from death and sin,
Our characters were then decreed,
Blameless in love, a holy seed.*



APRIL 14

That ye be not slothful.

Hebrews 6:12

THAT WERE TO pervert truth, abuse mercy, dishonour God, and gratify the prince of darkness. Slothfulness is a disgrace both in reference to temporals and spirituals. Not slothful in business; but, active, diligent, and industrious. Carrying on business from a pure motive, in a proper spirit, with becoming zeal. So should every Christian do. But in reference to spiritual things the apostle speaks. That ye be not slothful in seeking blessings, in employing your talents, in exercising your graces, in copying your examples; even them who through faith and patience now inherit the promises. Let hope inspire you. Let the conduct of the ancient saints stimulate you. Let the love of Christ constrain you. Let the holy precepts of the gospel direct you. Let the glorious promises of grace animate and strengthen you. Be not slothful, for all around you are active. The world is active to ensnare you. Satan is active to deceive you. Angels are active in administering to you. Jesus is active in carrying on your cause before the throne. Time swiftly flies. Eternity is fast approaching. The day of account is at hand. The last opportunity will soon present itself.

*Happy we live, when God doth fill
Our hands with work, our hearts with zeal;
For every toil, if He enjoin,
Becomes a sacrifice divine,
And like the holy ones above,
The more we serve, the more we love.*



APRIL 15

*He humbled himself.
Philippians 2:8*

WHO DID? He who was the brightness of glory, the express image of the Father's person; He who was with God, and was God; He who was the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace. How did He humble Himself? By taking our nature. By becoming a servant. By stooping to obey, even unto death. Look at the manger. Look at the carpenter's shop. Look at the cottage of Nazareth. Look at the Jordan. Look at the homeless wanderer. Look at Gethsemane. Look at Golgotha. Look at Joseph's tomb. Now you need not ask, "How did He humble himself?" The scene is before you. But *why* did He humble himself? Because He *loved us*. It was the stoop of majesty, under the influence of infinite love. He humbled himself that He might mingle with mankind — enter experimentally into our infirmities and wants — know our feelings — die in our stead — and having suffered being tempted, know how to succour those that are tempted. He humbled himself to exalt us. He stooped low, to raise us high. Suffered, that we may rejoice. Died, that we may live. Was set at nought, that we might be raised to the throne of glory. Amazing humiliation! Wondrous love!

*Did pity ever stoop so low,
Dressed in divinity and blood?
Was ever rebel courted so,
In groans of an expiring God?*



APRIL 16

*I know that my redeemer liveth.
Job 19:25*

WE LIVE IN A dying world. Friends and relatives are constantly being removed by death. But one relative ever lives. Jesus is our Kinsman. To Him the right of redemption belongs. He has paid the ransom demanded, and He lives to effect our complete deliverance. He lives in our nature at the right hand of God. He lives for us in the holiest of all. His existence is eternal. His office is untransferable. He will plead our cause. He will conquer our foes. He will perfect our graces. He will redeem us from death. He will be glorified in us, when He comes again the second time without sin unto salvation. I *know Him* from the revelation of His word, and by the teaching of His Holy Spirit. I know Him as the object of my trust, confidence, and desire. I know Him as my Redeemer. He has already rescued me from Satan, old habits, and this present evil world. Into His hands I have committed my spirit, and I know that as He liveth in the character of my Kinsman Redeemer, I shall live also. Dear friends, it is sweet, peculiarly sweet, to have one ever-living, ever-loving Friend. One to whom our interests are dear, and in whose hands our interests are safe. O Jesus, may I know and love Thee more!

*I know that my Redeemer lives,
And ever pleads for me;
Salvation to my soul He gives,
And life and liberty.*



APRIL 17

*The love of Christ constraineth us.
2 Corinthians 5:14*

LOVE IS ACCORDING to the nature and character of the lover. Jesus possesses a perfect character, and unites in Himself the most excellent natures. His love, therefore, is peculiar — peculiarly glorious. It includes pity for sinners, sympathy for, and delight in, His saints. He loves us as the Father loves Him: except therefore we could tell the strength of His Father's love to Him, we cannot tell the strength of His love to us, (John 15:9). Love dwells in His heart, looks through His eye, works with His hand, speaks with His tongue, and procures for us by His influence. He considered no condition too low to stoop to, no action too mean to perform, no failing too foul to pass by, no gift too great to bestow, no sufferings too painful to endure, nothing too mean in His people to prize, no distance too far to travel to do them good. The love of Christ is above expression or conception. It was this which influenced the apostles to labour, to suffer, and to die. And if we believe the love of Christ to us, it will constrain us to surrender ourselves to Him; to part with all for Him; to *do*, to *suffer*, or to *give* anything in His cause; to proclaim His excellencies, and publish His fame. Does the love of Christ constrain you to be active — zealous — liberal?

*The love of Christ constrain, to what?
With all our sins to part,
To yield Him what His blood hath bought
Our dearly-purchased heart.*



APRIL 18

Where is mine honour?

Malachi 1:6

THE LORD EXPECTS to be honoured by His people. But how often do we lose sight of this important duty. We should honour Him by prompt obedience, as Matthew did — by active faith, as Abraham did — by patient suffering, as Job did — by an honest testimony, as Peter did — by glowing love, as John did — by fervent zeal, as Paul and the holy martyrs did. Beloved, would you honour God? Then trust His providence. Always act as under His eye. Prefer His children to all others. Assist to promote the extension of His cause. Diligently attend to His ordinances. Seek above all things to advance His declarative glory. If you do not, He may well ask, “WHERE IS MINE HONOUR?” But if you would honour God as He requires, you must know His character. You must be reconciled to Him through Jesus. You must daily realize His presence. You must acknowledge His authority. You must believe His love to you. You must consult His revealed will. You must make it your aim and study to please Him. If you honour Him, He will honour you, by giving you solid peace — suitable and certain supplies — good success in His cause — help in every time of trouble — the frequent visits of His love — and final victory over every foe.

Is God my Father? — Will He claim

So mean a sinner for His son?

Then let His honour be my aim,

In me, by me, His will be done.



APRIL 19

*Lord help me.
Matthew 15:25*

THIS PRAYER CAME from the heart of a poor woman, and it went to the heart of Jesus. It is brief, but comprehensive. It is always suitable, but at times especially so. It is a mercy to know and feel our weakness, for it is only then that we heartily cry to the Lord for strength. In every duty we have to perform, in every trial we have to meet, in every trouble through which we pass, under all the pains and sorrows we have to endure, we may consistently cry, "LORD, HELP ME." We need the help of God. He has freely promised it. Let us therefore seek and receive it. Let this be our daily prayer — Help me to cleave to Jesus with full purpose of heart. Help me to do Thy will, cheerfully and constantly. Help me to persevere through all difficulties, and press towards the mark for the prize of my high calling. Help me gratefully to acknowledge Thy hand in prosperity, and meekly to submit to Thy will in adversity. Help me to conquer my foes, master the corruptions of my own heart, resist all the temptations presented to me. Help me quietly to wait all the days of my appointed time until my change come. If such petitions are presented in faith, if they are the language of the soul, we may daily say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me."

*Lord, assist me with Thy grace,
Helpless at Thy feet to lie,
Well to close my various race,
Well to suffer, and to die.*



APRIL 20

*The LORD searcheth all hearts.
1 Chronicles 28:9*

SOLEMN THOUGHT! Does He search my heart? What does He find there? Evil thoughts, foul corruptions, fearful depravity. But is this all? I trust not. There is some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel. All my thoughts are not evil, and those which are, I hate. It is not all corruption; there is a little correcting truth. It is not all depravity, for there are good desires, hopes, fears, and a little faith. But if God search my heart, how necessary it is that I do so myself, especially when the Lord says, "Take heed to yourselves that your heart be not deceived." Satan will deceive us if he can. He will try to conceal our defects, that he may lead us to presumption; and he will obscure our evidences, that he may drive us to despair. If the Lord searches all hearts, hypocrisy must be the height of folly. It is impossible to deceive Him. We may provoke His wrath, but we cannot impose upon His mercy. Let us then lay open our hearts before God. Let us daily seek the renewings of the Holy Spirit. Let us fly to the open fountain of a Saviour's blood, and daily wash in the laver of God's holy word. Often let us cry with the psalmist, "Examine me, O Lord." And let us be sincere in all we profess, in all we say, and in all we do.

*In all my vast concerns with Thee,
In vain my soul would try
To shun Thy presence, Lord, or flee
The notice of Thine eye.*



APRIL 21

That he might bring us to God.

1 Peter 3:18

SUCH WAS THE design of Jesus in all His engagements, labours, and sufferings for our sakes. By nature we are afar from God, opposed to God, afraid of God; consequently far from happiness and peace. Jesus knew the blessedness of being with God, and being like God. His love to His people led Him to desire for them the same blessedness. His desire was so strong, that He was willing to do or to suffer anything in order to put them in possession of it. He therefore voluntarily suffered for our sins, and put them away by the sacrifice of Himself. His aim was to bring us to God honourably, and to keep us with God eternally. He brings us to God on *the throne of grace*. Here we receive pardon, obtain peace, and enjoy paternal love. At this throne we obtain a supply for all our wants, the fulfilment of great and precious promises, and sweet manifestations of acceptance and favour. He will bring us to God on *the throne of glory*. Then we shall be perfectly holy, and eternally happy. Then *He* will be satisfied, and we shall be satisfied too. What satisfies Him, will satisfy us; and in our satisfaction and happiness, He will rejoice. Our coming to God *now*, is the effect of His death. Our being with God *forever*, will be the reward of His pains.

*Yes, Jesus left the realms of day,
Suffered and shed His blood;
The awful ransom price to pay,
And bring our souls to God!*



APRIL 22

*What shall I render unto the LORD?
Psalm 116:12*

A VERY SUITABLE inquiry after a day's mercies. But though we attempt to render praise tonight, we ought not to confine our views to the day. Rather let us ask: What has the Lord conferred upon us? *Benefits.* Blessings without which we could neither be happy, useful, or holy. He has given grace, scattered fears, wrought deliverances, sent supplies, confirmed our faith, and promised glory. Everything we receive is a benefit. It springs from free grace, flows to the undeserving, suits our case, and lays us under deep obligations. The Father has given us His Son. The Son has given us His perfect work. The Holy Spirit has given us life and taken up His residence in our hearts. Then what shall we render? What *can* we? What are we *willing* to render? Have we gifts? Let us devote them to His service. Have we time? Let us employ it to His praise. Let us work in His vineyard, war against His foes, suffer in His cause, and give of our substance to His poor. What will be acceptable to God? That you walk closely with Him. Spread His gospel. Visit His sick ones. Relieve His poor people. Show your gratitude to Him as opportunity offers. In a word, live the life of a consecrated disciple.

*What shall I render? Render praise,
Walk close with God in love;
Observe His precepts, keep His ways,
And all His will approve.*



APRIL 23

Let us draw near with a true heart.
Hebrews 10:22

DISTANCE FROM GOD is the effect of unbelief. It is the cause of coldness and discomfort. God is in the holiest. He is enthroned on the mercy seat. He has accepted the atoning sacrifice. Sin is forever put away. Jesus has rent the veil. The way is open and free. Our High Priest is there with the blood, and the incense is burning in the golden censer. The heart of God towards us is true. It was no make-believe love that gave His beloved Son. Jesus also is true-hearted towards us, or He had never died for our sins, or entered heaven to plead in our behalf. Let us therefore be true-hearted towards God, and with deep sincerity and childlike simplicity draw near to God. We have liberty to tell out all our minds. We should not stand silent in the distance as awe-stricken servants, but we should draw near as the child which runs into its father's arms, and lays its head on its father's bosom. Let us not then stand trembling as before an angry God. But let us draw near, exercising unhesitating, unwavering trust in God. He is not glorified by the fear of slaves, but by the peaceful confidence of children.

*Trusting in our Redeemer's blood,
Now let our souls draw near to God,
Upon the mercy-seat;
Boldly into the holiest come,
And feel ourselves with God at home,
Where truth and mercy meet.*



APRIL 24

*A God at hand.
Jeremiah 23:23*

THE CHRISTIAN has never far to run for a friend. The Lord is always near unto him. He is a God at hand — present to observe — ready to help. This fact we should endeavour to realize. It would cheer us in gloom — preserve us in temptation — support us in trouble — raise us above our fears — keep us back from sin — encourage us in duty — prove a stimulus to exertion when ready to decline. Friends may be removed to a distance, so may my nearest relatives, but my God is at hand. He is present with heaven and earth at command. He is present to pity, to reprove, to counsel, and to sustain. But while He is near us, He is equally in every place. He is with our friends in distant places, and He is with our enemies in their most secret hiding-places. Therefore He will frustrate their designs, and overrule their opposition for our good. Let us retire tonight impressed with the thought, “GOD IS AT HAND.” He will watch over me while I sleep. He will guard me. Nothing can happen but what He permits. He is never taken by surprise, He sees everything at the greatest distance, and He stands pledged to make all things work together for my good. My soul, I charge thee never to forget that thy God is nigh at hand!

*Lord, to my spirit's gaze reveal
Thy perfect majesty and grace,
And let my heart Thine influence feel,
Unworthy to behold Thy face.*



APRIL 25

Looking for that blessed hope.

Titus 2:13

THE POSTURE OF the Christian should be that of expectation. His best things are before him. The promises refer to the glory which is to be revealed. The Old Testament saints lived expecting Jesus to come. He came, He wrought, He suffered, He made the atonement, He prepared to depart, He promised to come again in glory, He went into the holiest, He is now making intercession, He will soon come out to impart the blessing. Then, the dead in Christ will rise, the living saints will be changed, the adoption will be obtained, we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. This is the object of our hope. In expectation of this glory we should live. Looking for this blessed hope we should labour. Death is nowhere represented as the object of our hope. We are not to live looking for death, but for the coming of Jesus. Thus Enoch lived, walked with God, and so pleased Him that he was translated. Thus the apostles and primitive Christians lived, and therefore they were not so much affected as we are with *present things*.

*Filled with the blessedness of hope,
And love which casts out fear,
Divinely taught my soul looks up,
To see my Lord appear;
Jesus, the one great God supreme,
My Saviour shall come down,
And find me gazing after Him,
And with His glory crown.*



APRIL 26

*His heart was lifted up.
2 Chronicles 32:25*

IT SWELLED WITH pride, and was lifted up with vanity. Yet he was a good man, and had just received a remarkable proof of God's distinguishing love. We are by nature so *proud*, that we are always in danger of being unduly elevated if God favours us; or of taking offence at God's dealings if He please to try us. The strongest temptations often succeed the sweetest manifestations. Therefore we ought to be on our guard. There is nothing that God hates more than pride. He cannot tolerate it, and yet it is the very thing to which we are most prone. A proud heart is sure to be unfruitful. Only the humble bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Pride generates fretfulness, discontent, envy, ill-will, hardness of heart, and a thousand other evils. Let us beware lest our hearts be lifted up, for if they are, God will be sure to pull them down. And the means, as in Hezekiah's case, may be very severe. If Satan can make us proud, he will soon make us prayerless. If we become prayerless, we shall soon be careless. And if careless, we put ourselves into his power. Let us therefore consider what we were before we received grace, what we might have been but for grace, and what we certainly should be forever, if God did not save us by grace — and so be humble.

*Jesus, to us the grace impart
Which shone so bright in Thee;
The humble, meek, and lowly heart,
From pride and envy free.*



APRIL 27

*Accepted in the beloved.
Ephesians 1:6*

JESUS IS THE Beloved One. His Father loved Him infinitely and eternally. All His people who know Him, love Him. All that is lovable is found in Him, and "He is altogether lovely." His person, His character, and His conduct, are most lovely. All His people approach God through Him, placing their entire dependence upon Him. They are united to His person, and are viewed as one with Him. Viewed in Him they are pleasant, acceptable, and lovely in the sight of God. He calls them "all fair," and pronounces them to be without "spot." My dear friends, in ourselves we are deformed, loathsome, and most offensive to infinite purity. But in Jesus we are clean, righteous and comely. As clothed with His righteousness, God pronounces us just; as filled with His Spirit, God calls us lovely. Never let us expect acceptance with God, but through Jesus; nor let us doubt our acceptance if we come unto God by Him, for Jehovah glorifies and commends His grace to universal admiration, by accepting us in "*The Beloved*." As believers, we are *now* accepted, nor shall we ever be more accepted. We may perceive our acceptance more clearly, and enjoy it more sweetly, but we shall never be more accepted than we are.

*Accepted in Jesus, and perfectly too,
I fain would in all things my gratitude show;
I'd live to His honour, and walk in His light,
Till perfectly holy I stand in His sight.*



APRIL 28

Kept by the power of God.

1 Peter 1:5

ALL THE LORD's people feel that they need keeping, and therefore they pray to be kept. But it is not enough that we pray for keeping. We must believe the promises, expect their fulfilment, and seek for divine keeping in faith. The power of God is exerted on our behalf through faith. Believing, we grasp the promise, keep near the throne, walk with God, and are kept in dangers and death. Unbelief departs from God, questions His promise, wanders from the throne, and we fall into folly and sin. "Take heed, therefore, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." God will not keep you as brutes, but as rational beings. He will not hold you in with bit and bridle, as the driver does the horse or mule, but He will lead you as beloved children, and keep you as intelligent disciples. His power is necessary. His power is pledged to you. But it is only pledged to believers. It is only pledged to believers as exercising faith, hope, and prayer.

*See the power of God to save!
Jesus' grace in me admire,
Kept, like Peter, on the wave,
Kept, like Shadrach, in the fire.
Rescued from the lion's teeth,
Safe within the jaws of death.*



APRIL 29

Thou sayest I am rich.

Revelation 3:17

IT IS ONE THING for the Lord to assure His poor people that they are rich, on account of the provision He has made for them; and another for the conceited, lukewarm professor to say, "*I am rich.*" Spiritual persons are always sensible of their poverty, and they are taught to live out of self upon the fullness of Christ for all they need. It is always a bad sign when we begin to admire our graces, actions, or usefulness; for it is evident that we have taken our eye off the Lord Jesus Christ, and Satan will soon gain advantage over us. We are never so safe, or so happy, as when we lie at the Saviour's feet, sensible of our poverty, and seek from His fullness grace to perform every action, and to enjoy every privilege. Those who fancy that they are rich, are declared by the Saviour to be poor, wretched, miserable, blind and naked. But He counsels them to buy of Him gold tried in the fire, white raiment, and eye-salve that they may see. Let us then beware of boasting of any attainments we fancy we have made. "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven. Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation."

*Saviour! my misery I confess,
I deeply feel my want of grace,
A needy sinner I!
Wretched, and blind, and stripped of all.
O save me, at Thy feet I call,
Or else I pine and die.*



APRIL 30

Blessed are the meek.

Matthew 5:5

MEELINESS IS VERY different to weakness, and yet the one is sometimes mistaken for the other. The strongest minds are sometimes adorned with the grace of meekness. The meek quietly submit to the will of God, they reverence His word, and tremble at His rod. Instead of the spirit rising against God, and murmuring at His dispensations, it bows like the yielding plant to the breeze, and says, "The will of the Lord be done." The meek silently receive God's commands, patiently copy the Saviour's example, and wisely cherish the influences of the Holy Spirit. They walk softly with God, and prudently with men; not seeking their own glory, but the honour of their God and Saviour. They are quiet lambs, not roaring lions; gentle doves, not destroying vultures. They benefit all around them as the sheep, not bite and devour as the wolf. Such are *like* Christ, and they are blessed *with* Christ. They can claim but little now, but they shall inherit the earth by-and-by. Their very state of mind is a blessing; they live above the storms that agitate others, or bow while others break. They are cool, while others are hot; resigned, while others resist; at rest, while others are anxious; and are a blessing, where others are a curse.

*Jesus, to my poor sinful heart
The grace of meekness now impart!
Fain would I, Lord, though poor and weak,
Be like Thyself, in all things meek.*



MAY 1

*Ye ought to please God.
1 Thessalonians 4:1*

NOTHING CAN BE more reasonable. Nothing can be more profitable. He is our Father. He continually consults our welfare. He has made provision for all our wants. He seeks to profit us, and we ought to seek to please Him. My friend, do you realize the importance of pleasing God? Do you desire to please Him, to please Him well in all things? Then rest alone for acceptance on the finished work of Christ. Believe the love that He hath to you. Receive His promises as worthy of the strongest confidence. Approach His throne often, but always expecting to be heard and answered for the sake of Jesus. Consult His word to ascertain His will, and whenever you discover anything to be the will of God, *do it* — do it promptly; do it cheerfully; do it just because He requires it; do it without asking why it is required; do it with a view to please Him. Bow with submission to all the dispensations of His providence, and endeavour to centre all your desires, plans, and aims in this one object, *to glorify Him*. This *will* please Him. This *must* please Him. This always *has* pleased Him. You *ought* to please Him, you *owe* Him so much, you *expect* so much from Him, and you have *professed* so much.

*My soul, this point pursue,
Make this thy business here,
Thy God to please, His will to do,
In faith, with love and fear.*



MAY 2

Ye are no more strangers.

Ephesians 2:19

GRACE HAS WROUGHT a wonderful change in us, as well as wrought a wonderful work for us. We were once strangers to God, far off from peace, and unacquainted with the privileges of true religion. We were made nigh by the blood of Christ. Reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Led into the knowledge of His will by the Holy Spirit. Created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. Once everything in real religion was strange to us, and we were strangers to it. We did not understand its doctrines, we knew nothing of its experience, and we thoroughly disliked its practices. But now we *know* God. We are *one* with Jesus. We enjoy the *communion* of the Holy Spirit. We are *united* to the saints. We are become *citizens* of Zion. We feel *at home* in its ordinances. We *enjoy* its privileges. We are become *familiar* with the word of God, the throne of grace, the open fountain, the way of peace, the wedding garment, and the peculiar conflict of the sons of God. We are a part of God's sanctified family, of the Saviour's folded flock. Divine things are become natural to us, and we love them, live upon them, and enjoy them. Brethren, ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord. Whhhalk as children of the light.

*No more a stranger to the Lord,
His family or throne;
I trust His grace, believe His word,
And live to Him alone.*



MAY 3

The sin which doth so easily beset us.

Hebrews 12:1

EVERY CHRISTIAN hath his easily besetting sins. Often do those prove so to which he has been the slave in his unconverted state. But there is one sin to which we are all peculiarly liable. It is called, "*The sin which doth so easily beset us.*" This is *distrust of God* — the great hindrance in our heavenly race — the weight that obstructs our progress — the disease which weakens our powers — the cloud which fills us with gloom. God has revealed His character, He has pledged that character. He has raised up a great cloud of witnesses, all of whom attest His faithfulness. He has made promise upon promise, and all to encourage our confidence. Still we doubt Him. Continually do we mistrust Him. Yet nothing injures us more, nothing dishonours Him more. Therefore the apostle exhorts us "to lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us." Leave off distrusting God. Exercise unhesitating confidence in God's word and faithfulness. In this imitate Abraham among the patriarchs, Moses under the law, and Jesus the great example of faith under the gospel. You never will be strong, or patient, or vigorous in the Lord's ways, except you leave off distrusting God.

*O Lord, with sorrow I confess,
I have distrusted Thee;
Yet, now bestow the needful grace,
That I may faithful be.*



MAY 4

A very present help in trouble.

Psalm 46:1

RELIGION IS NEVER so valuable as in seasons of trouble, sickness, or death. Then we want something which nature cannot supply; and this something true religion presents. Our God is our help in trouble. He helps us to bear it. He helps us to improve it. He helps us through it. His choicest communications and sweetest manifestations are afforded in times of trial and distress. Believer, thy God is thy refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. He is never nearer than when you fancy that He stands afar off. He is never kinder than when you think He hath shut up His loving-kindness in displeasure. Do not doubt His love. Do not mistake His dealings. Do not listen to His foe. Do not forget His word. But remember, if trouble comes, grace comes with it; and your God *is present* to help you to rise above it, and to derive solid advantage from it. Believe, when you cannot see. Trust, when you do not feel. Wait, when you do not receive a message from God. Your good is consulted in every trouble, and your God will be glorified by every trial. The Lord of hosts is with you, the God of Jacob is your refuge. Therefore fear not, neither be dismayed.

*Jehovah, thy refuge and rock,
In trouble, His help shall supply;
Though earth be removed with a shock,
Still God, thy Redeemer, is nigh.*



MAY 5

Reconciled to God by the death of his Son.

Romans 5:10

BY NATURE OUR hearts were enmity against God, and in our lives we were enemies to Him by wicked works. Whatever He required, we avoided doing; and whatever He prohibited, we practised. Nothing could be more opposite to God than we were before called by His grace. And yet, while we were altogether sinners, Christ died for us. In dying for us, or in our stead, He did all that was requisite to reconcile us to God; so that when we see our state, feel our condition, and desire to be at peace with God, we have only to believe in Him, plead His death with the Father, and we are honourably reconciled. All our sins are forgiven us for His sake. We are accepted of God, solely on the ground of what He did and suffered. We are treated as if we had done what He did, because He did it for us, and it is imputed to us as soon as ever we build upon it, place confidence in it, and plead it before God for our acceptance. We *are* reconciled to God. We *are* His friends. He *is* our loving father. He *has* accepted what Jesus did for us. He delights in us. He rejoices over us. He is preparing us to dwell with Him.

*The glorious work is done,
The firm foundation laid:
Our God hath sent His Son,
The Son His life hath paid;
Justice and mercy framed the plan
That reconcileth sinful man.*



MAY 6

*The God of all comfort.
2 Corinthians 1:3*

WE ARE POOR comfortless creatures in ourselves. We often seek comfort in the things of time, and meet with painful disappointment. Sin has banished all true comfort and solid happiness from our world. While God is excluded, comfort is excluded. Distance from God is distance from comfort. Our God is the happy one. He is also the happy-making one. His comforts are pure, spiritual, and lasting. His comforts delight the soul. One ray of light from His countenance, one word of peace from His lips, will give more solid comfort than all earthly things. We must learn to live out of self upon our God for comfort, or we shall never know permanent happiness. He is willing to comfort us. He says of His Zion, "I will comfort all her *waste places*." He promises His disconsolate people, "as one whom His mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." He commands His servants, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem." He sent His beloved Son into our world "to comfort all that mourn;" and it is of His favour that we enjoy "the comforts of the Holy Ghost." Let us ever bear in mind, that it is our God "who comforteth those that are cast down," and that He will comfort us.

*My God to me the grace impart,
Which all that mourn receive:
The only Comforter Thou art,
Who only can'st forgive.*



MAY 7

*Beware lest thou forget the LORD.
Deuteronomy 6:12*

WE ARE PRONE to commit this sin, especially in temporal prosperity. We forget our infinite obligation to Him — our absolute dependence upon Him — our accountableness to Him. To make use of the knowledge we possess, we should daily remember to acknowledge Him in all things — to apply to Him for all we need, under all we suffer — to commit ourselves and our cause unto Him — to endeavour in all things and by all means to please Him — to expect His promised intervention in trials, and supplies in need. Let us henceforth beware lest we forget the Lord, for it dishonours Him. It deeply grieves Him. It is injurious to us, for it generates timidity or hardness; insincerity or worldliness; foreboding and prayerlessness; ingratitude and self-righteousness. To prevent this crying sin, let us open each day with solemn prayer and devout meditation on some portion of God's word. Let us cultivate the habit of ejaculatory prayer. Let us always endeavour to have some suited subject ready at hand for meditation, some portion of Scripture, or some attribute of God, or some office of Christ, or some merciful providence, or some merciless foe, or some possible danger. "BEWARE LEST THOU FORGET THE LORD."

*Forget the Lord! and can it be
That I should so ungrateful prove;
Alas! I have forgotten Thee
Too long, too oft, Thou God of love.*



MAY 8

Having food and raiment let us therewith be content.

1 Timothy 6:8

WE CANNOT REALLY want more, and if God see fit to withhold, we ought not even to wish for more. But our food may be coarse, and our raiment very common. What then! If we have God's blessing, if we enjoy His presence, we are better off than if we possessed a kingdom without them. If God gave us no more, we ought to believe that more would be injurious to us. God either loves us, or He does not. He cares for us. He provides for us, or He leaves things to chance. If we are believers in Jesus, God certainly does love us, He does care for us, he does provide for us. If He has numbered the very hairs of our head, fixed the bounds of our habitation, promised to supply all our needs, He cannot have left anything to chance. And such is the case. Let us then be content with such things as we have. Let us learn *in every state* therewith to be content. Let us bear in mind that godliness with contentment is great gain, or a good future. Remember that it is written, that "*all things* that pertain to life and godliness," are given to us through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that knowing Jesus we may expect all that is necessary to "a godly life," and ought therewith to be content.

*Great things are not what I desire,
Nor rich repast, nor gay attire;
Content with little would I be;
That little, Lord, must come from Thee.*



MAY 9

*God deals with you as with sons.
Hebrews 12:7*

IN WHAT HE bestows, and in what He withholds; in what you suffer, and in what you enjoy. Your God has made you His children by adopting you into His family, and new-creating you by His Holy Spirit. He ever looks upon you as children, loves you as children, treats you as children. He will not trust you with what will harm you, or where you will be in danger. He corrects you as a child, not in wrath, but in mercy. He never trusts the rod out of His own hand. Whatever is the means, your Father is the agent. He works *all things* after the counsel of His own will. You are at present under training — you are being educated for eternity. The lessons you have to learn *now*, are for your benefit and honour in the *future*. Every loss, every cross, every disappointment, every pain is necessary. Do you believe this? Do you recognize the hand of God in what befalls you? Can you say with Job, “The Lord gave health, wealth, children, friends, prospects,” and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!” Or with Eli, “It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good.” Your circumstances cannot be more trying, but your privileges are much greater.

*Whoe’er their heavenly Father fears,
His loving chastisements sustain,
Not one of all His children here
Is privileged from grief and pain.
Not one but feels in deep distress
This token of paternal grace.*



MAY 10

Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

John 16:20

THE SORROW OF the disciples was occasioned by the sufferings and death of their beloved Lord, and their sorrow was turned into joy when He arose from the dead, and manifested unto them His love. The sorrow of the Christian must be transient. It is like the passing cloud on the summer's day, or the chill of winter which must give place to the genial warmth of spring. Beloved, if you now have sorrow, your sorrow also shall soon be turned into joy; for joy is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Heaviness may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning. Thy risen Saviour will appear to thee, and pronounce the words of peace. Thy God who may now hide Himself from thee, will appear to thy joy, and thou shalt not be ashamed. The sin that causes thy sorrow shall be pardoned and subdued. The foes that disturb thy peace shall be converted or destroyed. The clouds that obscure thy sun, shall soon dissolve in showers of blessing on thy favoured head. The distance between thee and thy home will soon be passed. The days of thy mourning will be ended, and thou who now goest forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall soon return with songs of everlasting joy.

*On Jesus' plighted love,
In every state rely;
The very hidings of His face
Shall train thee up for joy.*



MAY 11

*Him that loved us.
Romans 8:37*

THERE IS SOMETHING peculiarly sweet and pleasant in being the object of another's love. No condition can possibly be more dreary than to feel that no one loves or cares for us. Even the love of a child is sweet. But to be loved by one who is wealthy, exalted in station, and honourable in character, must be peculiarly delightful. How, then, should we rejoice! How happy should we be who are the loved ones of the Lord Jesus — when we consider, on the one hand, how mean, how poor, how worthless, and how unlovely we are; and on the other, how glorious, how wealthy, how worthy, how lovely He is. To be loved of Jesus, is to be preferred before the possession of a world. Think of the glory of His person, the vastness of His possessions, the number of His attendants, the unlimited sovereignty which He exercises, and the excellent character He bears. Bear in mind, that He knew what loving us would cost Him, how He would be treated by us and by others for our sakes. Yet He fixed His love upon us. He loved just because He would. There were others more dignified in nature, more exalted in station, but *He chose us*. He did not, could not need us; for He was infinitely happy and glorious without us. Yet He loved us. He still loves us.

*Resting on Christ, secure we stand,
His love shall order all things well;
We soon shall gain the promised land,
Triumphant o'er the powers of hell.*



MAY 12

Fear not, little flock.

Luke 12:32

THE SAVIOUR'S FLOCK is small. It is in the desert. Enemies surround it. His lambs, especially, are timid. But He says, "Fear not." You are your shepherd's care — you are His property — you are His delight. He is always present. He is omnipotent to defend you. Every perfection of His nature is employed for you. He never lost one of His charge yet — He never will. It was said of Him by the prophet, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." He gathers His sheep to His fold. He feeds them in good pasture. He restores them when they wander. He makes them pass under the rod, and marks them as His own. His care of them is incessant. His love to them passes knowledge. The provision He has made for them is suitable and abundant. Beloved, let us know our shepherd. Let us listen to His voice. Let us keep close to His side. Let us feed and rest among His sheep. Let us exercise confidence in His kindness and care. Let us banish our fears. For why should we be alarmed? Let us cast all our care upon Him.

Fear not; believe His word.

You are to Jesus given;

'Tis the good pleasure of the Lord

To bring you safe to heaven.

Then listen to your Shepherd's voice,

And in His constant care rejoice.



MAY 13

Love the brotherhood.

1 Peter 2:17

ALL CHRISTIANS are brethren. If we are born of God, He is our Father, Jesus is our elder Brother, and all believers are our brethren. They may differ from us in creed, in outward ceremonies and in many other things, but if they possess the same nature, they should be objects of our love. We cannot refuse to love them, to acknowledge them, to assist them, without sin; for our God says, "Love them: love them with a brother's love." Let us then look upon all Christians as in Christ, as the beloved children of God, as our brothers and sisters. And let us endeavour to feel for them, and exercise toward them a brother's love. Such love is natural, strong, tender, constant, complacent. Let us love them so as to pity them in distress, relieve them if in want, help them in difficulties, and prefer them to carnal persons, however excellent such may in many respects be. Let us love them for the sake of their elder Brother, for their Father's sake, and because they are so nearly related to us. Remember, every Christian is a brother. God loves every one of your brothers as He loves Jesus. Jesus commands *you* to love every Christian, as He *has loved you*.

*Myself begotten from above,
I must my Father's children love.
Born of the Spirit and the word,
Are we not brethren in the Lord,
Flesh of His flesh, bone of His bone,
His body mystical, and one?*



MAY 14

*Ye are the light of the world.
Matthew 5:14*

WE ARE SITUATED in a dark world. We have received light, the light of truth and holiness, and we are to let our light shine. Jesus is the sun, from whom we receive our light; and like the moon we do not receive light only for ourselves, but to reflect it on others. Let us then inquire: *How* does the light shine? Is it bright and cheerful? — attractive and steady? — mild and free? *Where* does our light shine? In the school-room? — in the chamber of affliction? — in the abodes of poverty and misery? — in the lurking-places of ignorance and vice? In what *form* does our light shine? In kind words? — in occasional visits? — in religious tracts? — in well-timed donations? What has our light done? Has it dried the widow's tears? — supplied the orphans wants? — conducted sinners to the house of prayer? — induced some to repair to the cross? — comforted others on the banks of the Jordan? If we are the lights of the world we should shine, or darkness will reign. As we are but lamps, we should be careful to get plenty of oil. Often go to be trimmed. Beware of the bed of sloth, the bushel of worldly conformity, and the dark lantern of sinful timidity.

*Not for ourselves the light of grace
Didst Thou on us bestow,
But for the world's benighted race,
Thy darkened house below:
Thy candlesticks Thy churches are,
Thy truth and goodness to declare.*



MAY 15

*We have peace with God.
Romans 5:1*

THE LIFE OF JESUS is our righteousness, His death is our atonement; believing in Him we are fully justified; being justified we are at peace. We know that our God does not impute our trespasses unto us; but viewing us in Jesus, loves us with an infinite, unvarying love. All our present blessings, and all our future prospects flow from His love. He never hated us, though He was angry with us. He loved us before the foundation of the world, therefore He drew the plan of our salvation. And it is such a plan as secures the honour of all His perfections, provides for our guilt and all our necessities, and lays a foundation for permanent and perfect peace. If we therefore believe His word, exercise confidence in the perfect work of Jesus, and approach Him as a Father in the Saviour's name, we have peace. If we have not peace, it is because we do not see the perfection of the Saviour's work, or we do not exercise confidence in the faithful promise, or we do not believe the love which God hath to us, or we are looking into self, instead of looking simply to Jesus. Believing in Jesus, we are justified. Being justified, we ought to enjoy peace.

*Justified by faith in Jesus,
We have peace and joy in God;
Faith from dread and terror frees us,
While we trust His precious blood:
Casting on Him all our care,
He preserves from slavish fear.*



MAY 16

He shall choose our inheritance for us.

Psalm 47:4

 CAN YOU HONESTLY and heartily say this? Are you so fully persuaded of the Lord's wisdom, have you such steady faith in the Lord's love, are you so resigned to the Lord's will, do you sufficiently desire that the Lord's glory should be advanced, as to say cheerfully, "He shall choose my inheritance for me?" Do you approve of His general conduct in choosing for you? Are you jealous of your own judgment? If not, you cannot adopt this language tonight. It includes an entire surrender to the Lord. A desire to be wholly at His disposal. Acquiescence in all His appointments, as to trials, comforts, gifts, place of residence, time and circumstances of death. You may be sure of this, that if the Lord choose for you, He will do for you as Joseph did for His father and brethren, He will choose *the best*. It is therefore your wisdom to commit all to the Lord, and leave Him to manage your affairs. It is a great privilege to have a God to choose for us, one who knows all persons, things, and events; and knows all perfectly. It is your duty to be content with the choice God has made for you. You *would* not have chosen better, you *would* not have chosen so well. May our hearts now say, "HE SHALL CHOOSE OUR INHERITANCE."

*Now as on rising ground I stand,
Reviewing what is past,
I see that love and wisdom planned
My path from first to last.*



MAY 17

*He knoweth our frame.
Psalm 103:14*

THIS IS A SWEET and encouraging thought. Others may fancy us strong when we are weak, healthy when we are diseased, out of temper when we are suffering; but He knoweth our frame. But it is not bare knowledge, but knowledge united with love. Knowledge that awakens sympathy — knowledge that takes the will for the deed. He knows the weakness of our constitutions, the exact nature of our temperament, the shattered state of the nerves, the secret disease which causes irritability, or depression. He can distinguish between what proceeds from physical causes, and what flows from the depravity of our hearts. He knows every avenue by which temptation can enter, and the effects which external objects, or mental images have upon us. He knows and often pities when others blame. He knows and sympathizes when others judge hardly of us. He knows and makes allowance, saying, “The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Beloved, you may not know the cause of your depression, or irritability, or excitability, but your heavenly Father knows, — and “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.”

*He knows the frailty of our frame,
Weakness and vanity our claim.
But as the parent's bosom moves,
In pity, o'er the child he loves,
So will the Lord His servants view,
He loves His pity to renew.*



MAY 18

*My beloved brethren, be ye stedfast.
1 Corinthians 15:58*

HOW AFFECTIONATELY the apostle writes, even to those who had grieved him, and dishonoured his Master's cause. He not only calls them brethren, but "*beloved brethren*." In this he is our example. But it is to the exhortation he delivers, to which we wish to call your attention. Many of us are unstable, as were many in the apostle's day. Instability is a great evil. It is injurious to our own souls. It is a stumbling-block or a grief to others, and it gives Satan an advantage over us. He is never unstable, his purpose is fixed, his aim is steady, his efforts are persevering. Destroy if possible — distress if not — is his motto. Brethren, let us be steadfast in our profession of Christ, and let us be steadfast in our efforts to promote the glory of Christ. But if we are to be steadfast, let us be sure that we are building on the right foundation — that we hold the truth of Christ — that we are vitally united to Him, and are entirely consecrated to His praise. Let us take nothing for granted here, but let us prove all things. To the law and to the testimony. Compare everything with God's word. Seek earnestly the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Be much in prayer. That which thou hast already, *hold fast*.

*Then steadfast let us still remain,
Though dangers rise around,
And in the work prescribed by God
Yet more and more abound.*



MAY 19

*The meek will he teach his way.
Psalm 25:9*

THE MEEK ARE conscious of their ignorance. They feel the need of teaching. They are desirous of being taught. They especially desire to be taught of God. They feel unworthy of the least mercy at God's hand; and yet, because He has promised, they seek and expect the greatest. Meekness is especially pleasing to God, and the meek may have any favour at His hands. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." The Lord will teach them "His way," — the way in which He pardons, justifies, and saves sinners — the way in which He would have them walk through this world — the way of escape which He opens in seasons of danger and temptation — the way in which He confounds the crafty, overturns the devices of His foes, and crushes the oppressors of His people. He will teach them the way of peace, and they shall enjoy it — the way of holiness, and they shall walk in it — the way of salvation, and they shall persevere in it. He will unfold to them His word, confer on them His blessing, walk with them in fellowship, and make them to possess durable riches and righteousness. The meek are heaven's favourites, the churches' ornaments, and the world's truest friends. They are peaceful, and desire to spread peace in every direction.

*Make me, Saviour, as Thou art,
Poor in spirit, meek in heart:
Then Thou wilt my teacher be,
And my soul shall cleave to Thee.*



MAY 20

She hath done what she could.

Mark 14:8

MARY WAS A BELIEVER. Her faith wrought by love. Love brought her where Jesus was, and she did what she could to honour Him and express her gratitude — an excellent example for us to copy. It cannot be said that we have done all we could. We dare not say this. Let us try and *feel* it. Have we loved Jesus as much as we could? Have we been as much in prayer and in praise as we could? Have we done as much as we could to spread the truth? To save souls? To commend the Saviour? To oppose Satan? Have we done all we could for the spiritual good of our families? Have we done all we could for the comfort and prosperity of the church? Have we done all we could for the Lord's poor? Have we done all we could for the neighbourhood where we reside? Have we done what we could for the world? Satan does all the mischief he can. Many wicked men do all they can to destroy souls. The times call upon us to do all we can. The Saviour loves to see us do all we can. Let us therefore feel reproof, encourage the conviction, seek more grace, daily remember this woman, and begin afresh. "It is high time to awake out of sleep." Let us not only work, but *abound* in the work of the Lord, for our labour is not in vain.

*My God, inspire my soul with zeal,
With glowing love to men;
Make me my obligation feel
To do what good I can.*



MAY 21

When wilt thou comfort me?
Psalm 119:82

THE LORD'S PEOPLE often get into a very uncomfortable state, and sometimes they continue in that state for a long season. But there is always some cause for it, and we should seek to know what that cause is, that it may be removed. It is not easy to give an answer to the inquiry, for it must depend on the character of the inquirer. To one the Lord may say, "When you humble yourself before Me, cordially approve of My method of salvation, and submit to My righteousness." To another, "When you frankly confess your sin, seek pardon through the blood of Christ, and engage to walk according to My word." To another, "When you break off that unscriptural connection, come out from the world, and separate yourself unto Me." To another, "When you leave off seeking comfort from selfish motives, and aim at and endeavour to promote My glory." To another, "When you leave the bed of sloth, stir up yourself to take hold on Me, and seek to make others happy." To another, "When you enter upon that self-denying duty, mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts, or put off the old man with his deeds." In a word, God will comfort you as soon as that comfort will secure His glory and your good.

*May holiness be my pursuit,
Thy promises my plea;
So shall I bring forth precious fruit,
And Thou wilt comfort me.*



MAY 22

My tongue shall speak of thy word.

Psalm 119:172

IF ALL CHRISTIANS had done so, how much less ignorance would there be now in the world. The tongue rightly used is our glory, but it is the disgrace of some, and of some professors too. If anything is worth speaking of, it is God's word. We have it, that we may learn it, believe it, love it, practice it, enjoy it, and publish it. It is the means of conversion, therefore speak of it to sinners. It tends to edification, therefore speak of it to saints. It is the instrument of restoration, therefore talk of it to backsliders. It brings comfort to our own souls, let us therefore meditate upon it and then publish it for our own sake. It honours God and exalts the Saviour. Let us therefore out of love to God speak of His word. If we speak of it at proper seasons, in a kind spirit, from a good motive, and with a right aim, it must do good, for it is incorruptible seed which never rots under the clods. It restrains the impetuous, soothes the sorrowful, directs the perplexed, restores the wanderer, and brings peace to the troubled. It is bread to the hungry, light to the benighted, a staff to the pilgrim, a sword to the warrior, and a downy pillow to the way-worn and weary. Then let us resolve in the Lord's strength that our tongues shall speak of His word.

*My lips in thankful strains shall flow,
When taught by Thee Thy truth to know;
My tongue shall spread that truth abroad,
The glorious gospel of my God.*



MAY 23

The Lord knoweth them that are his.
2 Timothy 2:19

DOES A FATHER know his child, or a husband his beloved bride? So the Lord knoweth them that are His. He knows them as the objects of His love, as the purchase of His Son's blood, as the temples of the Holy Ghost. He knows them as strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, as suffering for righteousness' sake. He knows them, though He may not seem to acknowledge them — though He cause men to ride over their heads, and lead them through fire and through water. He knows that they love Him, and grieve that they do not love Him more. He knows that they believe Him, and daily struggle with unbelief, mourning that their faith is so weak. He knows that they trust in Him, though doubts and fears will harass and perplex them. He knows that they obey Him, and often sigh — "O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes always!" Beloved, the Lord knows you are His, He loves you as His own child, cares for you as His chosen bride, leads you as the sheep of His pasture, keeps you as the apple of His eye, tries you as His gold and silver, keeps you safely as His jewels, and will soon lift you up as the stones in His crown. The Lord's knowledge of you is perfect.

*Dear by a thousand tender bonds,
Thy saints to Thee are known.
And conscious what a name they bear,
Iniquity they shun.*



MAY 24

The just shall live by faith.
Galatians 3:11

IT IS BY FAITH they become just. Being convinced of sin, sensible of their weakness, and understanding the gospel, they embrace the finished work of Christ. His righteousness becomes theirs, and they are justified from all things. Being justified they live. That is, they are freed from condemnation, they are entitled to all spiritual blessings, and they walk at liberty. They live by faith. By faith they overcome their foes. By faith they obtain supplies. By faith they perform the will of God. By faith they walk with God. The life which they live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God. They believe His word, rest alone on His work, have confidence in His faithfulness, and derive their supplies from His fullness. They work from principle, not for wages. They live as children in their Father's house, not as servants on a weekly allowance. They trust when they cannot trace, expect when they do not receive, wait when the promise delays, go forward though all appear dark, gloomy, and forbidding. At times they appear to have nothing but the bare promise. All within is cold, hard, and dead. All without seems to go against them. Then it is that they more particularly trust in the Lord, and stay themselves upon their God.

By faith accounted just,
By faith to God we live,
With patience wait His time, and trust
His fullness to receive.



MAY 25

*Ye are all one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:28*

THAT IS, ALL Christians are one in Christ. He is the centre of Christian union. We were all chosen in Him. We are all represented by Him. We are all vitally united to Him. We are clothed with Him, for we have put on the Lord Jesus Christ. There is now no distinction or difference on account of nation, age, sex, or condition; but all are one in Christ, being entitled to the same privileges, pleasures, and prospects. The whole form one *family*, though of different ages — one *flock*, though in different fields or folds — one *building*, though composed of many stones, of different sizes — one *body*, though there be different members and offices — one *church*, though its parts are scattered abroad — one beloved *spouse* of Jesus, which He purchased with His own blood. If it be indeed so, that we are all one in Christ, then we ought to love as brethren; occasionally at least to feed together; to cleave to each other in sincere affection; to act for each other, as the members in the natural body do; to refuse to divide in heart though separated by place, or other circumstances; and we should mutually rejoice in our dignity and destiny. Beloved, let us look at every Christian as in Christ, as a part of His mystical body, and treat him accordingly.

*May the Lord our hearts impress,
Make them like His own above,
Filled with all the tenderness,
And all the strength of love.*



MAY 26

*Love is strong as death.
Song of Solomon 8:6*

DEATH HAS CONQUERED all. The wisest, the strongest, the bravest, the kindest, the holiest, all have been conquered by death. It has triumphed over myriads, and turned our world into a vast grave yard. But love is equally strong. It conquers all. The love of Jesus is stronger, for it conquered death itself. And we are the objects of that love. He says, "I have loved you." He proves it — "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." He has proved the strength of His love by the gifts He has conferred upon us — by the visits He has paid us — by the tears He shed for us — by the labour He undertook to perform for us — by the sufferings He engaged to endure for us — by the death He died — by the desire He cherishes — and by His constant intercession on our behalf. His love overcame all difficulties, triumphed over all opposition, conquered all foes, and now reigns in His bosom as a ruling passion of His manhood, and as a glorious perfection of His Godhead. His love passeth knowledge. It is beyond our conception. Let us retire tonight impressed with the thought, however wonderful the love of Jesus may be, however strong or glorious, it is unalterably fixed on us as believers in His name.

*My blessed Saviour, is Thy love
So great, so full, so free?
Behold I give my love, my heart,
My life, my all, to Thee.*



MAY 27

Trust in him at all times.

Psalm 62:8

HE ALWAYS WARRANTS us to trust in Him, and He is at all times worthy of our trust. We are constantly exhorted to it, but almost as constantly neglect it. It is the exercise of necessity, for a creature *must* trust in another. It is an evidence of dependence, therefore we *should* cultivate it. It is the exercise of a servant on his master; of a friend on his friend; of a child on his parent; of a believer on his God. Let us trust His word, for it is true. Let us trust the Saviour's work, for it is perfect. Let us trust a special providence, for it is worthy. Nothing should be allowed to disturb our confidence in God, for His nature is always love — His solemn pledge is given — His resources are inexhaustible, and His mercy everlasting. Let us trust Him then in joy and sorrow — in darkness and in the light; when increased or bereaved — when tempted or in repose. Let us trust Him and we shall conquer our fears; patiently endure our trials; successfully pursue our work; rise above our cares, and overcome our foes. That we may trust Him, He has revealed His character, pledged His word, sworn that He will not be wroth with us, and assured us that He is unchangeable. Trust then in the Lord forever.

*O may we with a steady faith
Believe whate'er Jehovah saith!
At all times trust our heavenly Friend,
And on His faithful word depend.*



MAY 28

Thou God seest me.
Genesis 16:13

THE EYE OF THE Lord is upon the righteous, and His ear is open unto their cry. He sees everything, but He observes His people with special attention. His eye has been upon us this day, He has seen every movement of the mind, and every action of the body. His eye is upon us now, and will be through the dark watches of the night. But it is a comfortable thought, that He who sees us always, loves us most — loves us notwithstanding all He sees amiss in us. Let us ever cherish the thought: My Father sees me. I am under His eye. He sees all I do, all I suffer, all my desires. Nothing can conceal the least circumstance from Him. He sees me when I see not Him. He sees me in the furnace, and is with me. He sees me in the field of battle, and gives me the shield of His salvation. He sees me when my foot is slipping, and often has the hand of His mercy caught me and held me up. When tempted to sin, when giving way to fear, or when yielding to the world, let me call to mind this solemn fact — My God sees me. If I sin, it must be immediately under His eye. If I yield to temptation, it must be in His presence. If I encourage His foe, it must be against the clearest light and tenderest love. Keep this daily before the mind.

*Lord, put within my heart Thy fear,
Grant me from sin to fly,
At all times to behold Thee near,
And on Thy grace rely.*



MAY 29

The trying of your faith worketh patience.

James 1:3

WHOEVER PROFESSES to believe in God will have his faith put to the trial. Every believer is tried. By Satan, by the world, or by false professors, we shall be tried; but our God superintends the trial. He tries our faith in His word, if it be sincere — our faith in His love, if we really credit it — our faith in His Son, if we trust in Him for complete salvation — our faith in His veracity, if we expect Him to make good His word. He will try the nature of our faith, if it is divine — the strength of our faith, if it is rooted. He will try the constancy of our profession, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence. This trial is for His own glory, or the good of others who observe us, and for our own advantage. It worketh patience. It gives us occasion to exercise what we have. It perfects the habit and strengthens the exercise of it. It is often a call to exchange ease for patience, wealth for contentment, and our own supposed strength for the power of Christ. Let us therefore remember that faith must be tried, that afflictions are to try our faith, that sanctified trials make us patient, and that when patience is complete, our trials will cease. Be ye therefore patient.

*Lord, whene'er my faith is tried,
Keep me near Thy bleeding side.
Make me patient, meek, and kind,
To Thy sovereign will resigned.*



MAY 30

A sure foundation.

Isaiah 28:16

THE LORD JESUS in the glory of His person, and in the perfection of His work, is the alone foundation of a sinner's hope. If we build on anything else, we must perish. If we mix anything with Christ as the basis of our hope, He will profit us nothing. It must be Christ, and Christ alone. His meritorious obedience, His atoning sacrifice, His prevalent intercession — on these we must build for eternity. They form the one foundation, and building on these we are safe, for it is a sure foundation. The dignity of His person, the perfection of His character, the merit of His work, and the veracity of His word, make it so. It has stood firm in all times past, it is unshaken at present, and it will ever be the same. No sinner ever built on it and found it fail him. Storms cannot shake it, floods cannot loosen it, earthquakes do not affect it. It is firm as the perfections of God can make it, and lasting as eternity itself. Let us build upon it, upon it alone; and doing so, let us rejoice in our safety. Errors may spread, evil men and seducers may wax worse and worse, Satan may try all his arts, but "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: the Lord knoweth them that are His." Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

*When all foundations else will fail,
These built on Jesus shall prevail;
And lift their heads with joyful praise,
To Him who this foundation lays.*



MAY 31

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.

Psalm 51:12

THE PSALMIST HAD sustained a loss. Sin was the cause of it. He seeks a restoration. Salvation is not losable — the joy of salvation is. The joy of salvation flows from the gospel, which is good news and glad tidings. When it is received by faith, it fills us with joy and peace. It is intended to impart an immediate assurance of eternal life to every sinner that believes it. And when it is received as coming directly from God, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, it does so. When we realize our interest in Jesus, feel the burden of our guilt removed, and read our title to all the promises, we are filled with joy. This had been realized, but it was lost. There may be a sense of want, clear views of the gospel, but no appropriating faith, and then there is no joy. But what we cannot take, we may ask for. What we cannot apply ourselves, we may plead with God to impart. This prayer for a restoration of joy shows our weakness — we cannot produce it. It proves our folly — in that we sinned it away. It exhibits our dependence upon God, who alone can make us happy; and it warns us against backsliding from the Lord. Let us mourn over our sins. Let us watch against temptations. Let us not despair.

*Those joys, my God, which once I knew,
Those saving joys restore.
Thy Spirit's free! His grace renew,
Nor let me wander more.*



JUNE 1

*Shew ye the proof of your love.
2 Corinthians 8:24*

WE PROFESS TO love God. We cannot be Christians without love. Christian love professes to prefer Christ and His cause to all besides — to submit to His authority and acquiesce in His will — to obey all His commands without partiality or insincerity — to delight in His saints as the excellent of the earth — to sympathize with sufferers, especially with those who suffer in His cause and for His sake — to be ready to every good work. Such is our profession if we are sincere and diligent Christians. The law of God requires this at our hands. Jehovah as a sovereign promises to produce it. By the Holy Sprit it is brought forth within us. He convinces us that by nature we have it not. He leads us to admire it, desire it, and seek for it. By unfolding the gospel and shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, He produces it. By daily and filial fellowship with God it is sustained. Beloved, do we profess to love God and His people? Then let us prove the sincerity of our love, by uniting with them, by assisting them in every good word and work, and by preferring them to all beside. Let us visit them in sickness, relieve them in poverty, defend them when oppressed, and show them all possible kindness for Jesus' sake.

*Mercy through Jesus we have found,
Free mercy from above;
May mercy move us to fulfil
The perfect law of love.*



JUNE 2

The household of God. Ephesians 2:19

THE LORD HAS A family which is peculiarly His own. It is a spiritual family; for every member of it is born of God, is taught by the Spirit, is inhabited by the Spirit, is led by the Spirit, and is baptized by the Spirit into the *one body*. It is wholly and entirely of God. It originated in His purpose. It expresses His sovereign pleasure. It is produced by His power. It is called His own. It is designated the household of God — His in opposition to Satan — His in distinction from the world — His as differing from man's. It is the family where He dwells — the home of God; the flock over which He presides. Here He manifests His paternal love in supplying every want, protecting every member, employing every child, loving and delighting in each and every one. All the members of this household are brethren, and all are blessed. It is designed to glorify His grace, to honour His Son, to maintain His cause, to execute His will. Here in His family He is known, trusted, praised, obeyed, loved, and enjoyed. Are you of this household? Do you attend the family feasts? Do you enjoy the family services? Do you sincerely love the Head and the members of this household? This honour have all His saints.

*Lord, come and dwell with me,
Now make my heart Thy home;
Unite me to Thy family,
Unite me to Thy Son.*



JUNE 3

*That God may be all in all.
1 Corinthians 15:28*

THE DESIGN OF Jehovah, in all His ways and works, is the glorification of Himself. He will be all in all. He is all in the great scheme of salvation. The plan was drawn by infinite wisdom in eternity, and is carried out by divine power in time. Are we chosen to salvation? It is *of God in Christ*. Are we given to Jesus? It is by Jehovah. Are we ordained to eternal life? It is the act of the Most High. Are we blessed with all spiritual blessings? It is by the Father of mercies. Are we redeemed by the precious blood of Christ? He was foreordained to this work by the Father. He is all in the dispensation of grace. Are we quickened? It is by God. Are we taught? It is by God. Have we faith and repentance? They are the gift of God. Do we overcome Satan? It is because the God of peace bruises him under our feet. Are we laborious? It is the effect of His power which worketh in us mightily. Are we holy? By the grace of God we are what we are. Do we overcome all our foes? It is through Him that loved us. He will be all in the world of glory, in the arrival of every child at home. As the love of God, and the God of love He will constitute our perfect bliss forever. In our complete and everlasting salvation, God will be all.

*Here the whole Deity is known;
Nor dares a creature guess,
Which of the glories brightest shone,
The justice or the grace.*



JUNE 4

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Acts 20:35

THESE ARE VERY remarkable words. They are the words of the Lord Jesus. They were acted upon by Himself. They contain the very principle which influenced Him in eternity, which induced Him to leave heaven for earth, and which actuates Him still. He urged this saying upon His disciples, so that it is probable that it became a kind of proverbial saying among them. He has preserved it for our instruction and admonition. It is evidently correct, though not generally allowed to influence men's conduct. Receiving implies want and unfulfilled desires. Giving supposes a possession, an honourable trust. Giving manifests a generous disposition, and a concern for the comfort of others. It is acting like God, who created that He might give, redeemed that He might give, glorifies that He may give. It is a source of pure pleasure. Let us remember these words of the Lord Jesus when we go to His throne, and draw encouragement from them to ask for great blessings, to ask often, to ask with confidence. And let us encourage others to go to Him, assuring them that He considers it more blessed to give than to receive. Let us walk by this rule, prudently, plainly, notwithstanding discouragement.

*The man who marks from day to day,
In generous acts his radiant way,
Treads the same path the Saviour trod,
The path to glory and to God.*



JUNE 5

*The promises of God.
2 Corinthians 1:20*

THE PROMISES OF God are the assurances He has given His people, that He will bless them and bestow favours upon them. They all originate in His divine sovereignty, and flow spontaneously from His will. They are but the effects and tokens of His love, the kind expressions and manifestations of His grace. They are acts of divine condescension which bring the promiser under a bond, and prove His fatherly care of us and concern for our welfare. They all rest on the same immutable basis, even His veracity and faithfulness, and are stored up in Jesus as the present property of His people. They are so comprehensive that they embrace time and eternity, and provide what is suitable for both. They open the heart of Jehovah, challenge the faith of the Christian, and animate the hopes of the penitent sinner. They are connected with the mediatorial office of Christ; for as Prophet He publishes them, as Priest He confirms them, and as King He fulfils them. They all belong to the same persons: believers — have the same design: our benefit — and aim at the same end: the praise of Jehovah's grace. They all lead us to the same fountain: the fullness of Christ, and produce the same effects, even admonition, gratitude, and praise.

*The promises surpass my thought,
But faithful is my Lord;
In unbelief I stagger not,
For God hath spoke the word.*



JUNE 6

The offence of the cross. Galatians 5:11

THE DOCTRINE OF salvation by a crucified Jew was in Paul's day peculiarly offensive — many stumbled at it and perished. And the doctrine of complete salvation by faith in Christ alone, is still offensive to many. Man naturally desires *to be* something, *to do* something, and *to be thought* something. But in the doctrine of salvation by grace, man is nothing — Christ is all. It presents the crucified One as the object of faith, the alone ground of hope, and the medium through which every blessing flows. It places the cross in the centre, directs every eye to it, and makes it the constant object of attention and attraction. It places all upon a level — the harlot and the modest maiden — the thief and the honest man — the poor and the wealthy — the illiterate and the learned; and presents salvation to each on the same terms, requiring all alike to rest upon the finished work of Jesus, and allows no flesh to glory in God's presence. This is very offensive to the pride of man. In a word, the gospel knows no man after the flesh, but points all to Jesus, directs each to the strait gate and narrow way, inculcates self-denial and self-renunciation as necessary to salvation, and shuts up every soul to this alternative, *it must believe in Christ, or perish*. This is the offence of the cross.

*Jesus is a perfect Saviour,
Only source of all that's good;
Every grace and every favour
Come to us through Jesus' blood.*



JUNE 7

*The breastplate of faith and love.
1 Thessalonians 5:8*

WE ARE SURROUNDED by foes, and are in a state of perpetual conflict. Armour is provided for us by the great Captain of our salvation, and we are directed to take the whole of it and use it for our defence. The breastplate which is to guard the heart, is composed of faith and love — the two principal graces of the Spirit. Faith is confidence in God. Love is affection for God. They are distinct, yet united. They differ in nature, yet agree. Faith always begets love, and love strengthens faith. Together they make the Christian a match for his foes. Faith always embraces the Lord Jesus as the Saviour, Friend, and Lord of poor sinners; and love delights in Him as the visible Jehovah, the fountain of grace, and the brightness of glory. Faith receives the promises and trusts them; love calls forth admiration and renders praise for the same. Faith appropriates the righteousness of Christ for justification; love delights in the person of Christ as supremely glorious. Faith daily leads to the open fountain for cleansing; love conducts to the throne for intercourse and communion. Faith looks to Christ for support; love goes forth to labour or suffer in His cause. Faith points to heaven as our home; love urges us to hasten there.

*Let faith and love, most holy God!
Possess this soul of mine;
So shall I conquer all my foes,
And reach the joys divine.*



JUNE 8

*Brethren, we are debtors.
Romans 8:12*

FAVOURS BESTOWED on the undeserving always increase their obligations. We are debtors as creatures, but more so as new creatures. We are indebted to sovereign grace for a name in God's book of purpose and promise — for an interest in the Saviour's person, office, and work — for the benefits resulting from His obedience, death, and intercession. We are debtors to atoning blood — for by it justice is satisfied, we are delivered from the wrath of God, and are rescued from the power of Satan. We are debtors to divine influence — for by it we were quickened when dead in trespasses and sins, are taught the will of God, and are introduced into liberty and safety. We are indebted to a special providence — for daily, hourly, and invaluable favours. Beloved, let us endeavour to feel our obligations. We owe a debt of love and gratitude. Let us therefore revere our heavenly Father's commands, observe and do our loving Saviour's precepts, attend to all the Holy Spirit's intimations, and bow with cheerful submission to all the dispensations of divine providence. As debtors, let us be humble. Let us be honest, and acknowledge that we are not our own, our time is not our own, our talents are not our own, but all are the Lord's.

*The love I owe for sin forgiven,
Through satisfaction made;
For present peace and promised heav'n,
Can never be repaid.*



JUNE 9

*Beloved of God.
Romans 1:7*

WHAT A PRIVILEGE is this! It is the source of all real good. How are the Lord's beloved ones known? By their faith in Jesus, and obedience to His word. By their love to God, and their zeal for His glory. By their hope in God, and patient endurance of His will. What are the honours they possess? They are the sons of God. They are the acknowledged brethren of Jesus. They are the companions of God, with whom He daily walks. They are the residence of the Holy Ghost. They are watched over, befriended, and supplied by providence. They are attended by angels. They are heirs of all things. What are their prospects? Victory and triumph over all their foes. Freedom from all bondage and pain. The enjoyment of holiness, happiness, and God. Likeness to Jesus in body and soul. The possession of a throne of glory, a diadem of beauty, and a harp of celestial sweetness. What are their duties? To be very decided for God and His cause. To renounce self and earthly things. To be entirely consecrated to God and His service. To love His ordinances, practise His precepts, prefer His will, and walk with His people in all His ways. Reader, are you beloved of God? Do you love Him? Do you walk with Him?

*Now let me rise in Jesus' name,
His arm my stay, His praise my aim:
Let unreserved obedience prove,
The truth and ardour of my love.*



JUNE 10

He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

Hebrews 2:11

THIS IS TRULY wonderful, especially if we consider the amazing contrast between us. This is very great as it respects His purity, and our pollution — His wealth, and our poverty — His strength, and our weakness — His happiness, and our misery — His knowledge, and our ignorance — His dignity, and our degradation — His society, and our company. But though the contrast is so great He acknowledges us, and there is a degree of likeness. We have the same Father, even God. We possess His nature, Spirit, and image in a degree. Our work and His are the same: to glorify God. Our cause and interest are identified with His. Our aim and end are one with His, and His heaven is to be our eternal home. We are often ashamed of ourselves, and ashamed of one another. The world is ashamed of us, but Jesus never is. He owns us in heaven before His Father and His holy angels *now*, and He will call us brethren, blessed of His Father, on the throne of judgment *by-and-by*. If Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren, never let us be ashamed to own each other, though in some things we differ. Jesus owns us all. Let us own all as our brethren, whom we have reason to believe are owned by Him.

*Lord, what is man's distinguished race,
Whom Thou dost for Thy brethren own,
Crowned with a dignity and grace
To brightest seraphim unknown!*



JUNE 11

*Thy comforts delight my soul.
Psalm 94:19*

OUR CIRCUMSTANCES are often trying, and our thoughts very perplexing and depressing, but our God has provided comfort for us — a fullness of comfort — a supply of comfort for all times. What comfort is wrapped up in the precious promises, in the perfect work of Jesus, in the everlasting covenant, in the prospect of a complete and everlasting deliverance from all sin, suffering, and sorrow. We have everything in ourselves calculated to make us uncomfortable, but in our God we have everything that can make us happy. Our own thoughts are often a source of grief, but the thoughts of our God are full of love, peace, and holy joy. O what a comfort it is to us, to have a friend that loveth at all times. A brother born for adversity! An advocate with the Father, ever making intercession for us! To know that we are in union with Jesus, that the union is so close that He knows every thought, sympathizes with us in every pain, and will bring us where He is, in exact likeness to Himself. He is our head, we are His body. Precious truth this, that Christ and His church are one! How full of holy comfort! What an antidote it is against despondency and despair! May I live on the Lord's comforts, when all within and around me is wintry, desolate, and depressing!

*When mournful thoughts within me roll,
And rush upon my labouring breast,
Thy comforts shall my heart console,
While on Thy promises I rest.*



JUNE 12

God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:32

THE PARDON OF all our sins is one of God's greatest blessings, and to know and enjoy it is one of our greatest privileges. Our God is a pardoning God. He pardons freely. He pardons frequently. He pardons willingly. He pardons heartily. He pardons justly. He pardons forever, so that sin forgiven is forgotten. But He only pardons for Christ's sake. It is not for the sake of repentance, or faith, or good works, but for the sake of Christ alone. Jesus hath once suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. He hath made a full, complete, and everlasting atonement for our sins. He put them away by the sacrifice of Himself, so that when we believe in Jesus, receive the record God hath given of His Son, approach the throne of grace and plead for pardon in His name, the Father does honour to His Son by pardoning us. Every believer is pardoned. He is forgiven all transgressions. His sins are all blotted out. He is justified from every charge. Who is He that condemneth? God hath justified us. Jesus died for our sins according to His will. He obtained for us eternal redemption. For His sake we stand before God this night — pardoned and accepted.

*Oh! may I practically show,
My interest in this grace;
Be all I am, and have, and do,
Devoted to Thy praise!*



JUNE 13

*Thou standest by faith.
Romans 11:20*

FAITH IN JESUS is of the greatest importance. We cannot overvalue it, unless we put it in the place of Christ. Are we justified? It is by faith. Are we sanctified? Our hearts are purified by faith. Do we fight? It is the fight of faith. Do we overcome? This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith. By faith we look to Jesus. By faith we receive Christ. By faith we walk with God. By faith we stand, for we are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. It is by believing what Christ is to us, what Christ has for us, what Christ will confer upon us, that we stand. It is by faith that we receive from Christ light to guide us in every difficult path; strength to act, to fight, and persevere in our Christian course; in a word, grace to help us in every time of need. Let us therefore take heed, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Let us strive against doubts, and encourage confidence in God. We cannot believe in God's word too confidently. We cannot trust in the Saviour's finished work too steadily. We cannot confide in God's veracity too firmly. Let us endeavour to imitate Abraham, who was strong in faith, giving glory to God.

*Christ is my Rock, and though my foes,
Display their utmost wrath,
Yet in the power which He bestows,
I stand by precious faith.*



JUNE 14

*They crucified him.
Matthew 27:35*

THE FATHER DELIVERED Him up, Judas betrayed Him, and then they crucified Him. Let us consider the design of God in His death. It was to satisfy the claims of justice, to clear His holiness in the salvation of the people, to display His wisdom, to manifest His mercy, to put away our sins, and to disclose the wonders of His love. Let us notice what Jesus displayed when He was crucified. Here we see his filial obedience to His Father, His implicit trust in God, His surprising patience under suffering, His meek, forgiving spirit; His astonishing love to His people, and His entire submission to the divine will. Let us observe what man discovered in this transaction. What base ingratitude! What inexcusable cruelty! What insulting pride! What profound ignorance! What fickle instability! Judas shows the power and tendency of covetousness — the Pharisees, the envy and cruelty which lurks under self-righteousness — Pilate, the effect of the fear of man — His disciples, the weakness which may be found in honest hearts. Here, Jehovah is most clearly revealed. The nature of sin is set forth. The true condition of man is unfolded. The cross unveils heaven, earth, and hell. Go to the cross to study, to repent, to believe, to pray, to select an example. It is —

*The balm of life, the cure of woe,
The measure and the pledge of love;
The sinner's refuge here below,
The angel's theme in heaven above.*



JUNE 15

*They are the sons of God.
Romans 8:14*

WHO ARE THE sons of God? As many as are led by the Spirit of God. To what does the Spirit lead the sons of God? To know their need of a Saviour, to perceive the exact suitability of the Lord Jesus, to fly to Him for refuge, to rest alone on His perfect work, to receive from Him life, light, and holy peace. In brief, He leads them to loathe themselves, repent of sin, separate from the world, cleave to Jesus, walk with God, follow after holiness, and devote themselves to the Lord's service and praise. Those who are thus led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. They were predestinated to the adoption of children before time. They are now declared to be the children of the Most High. They are born of God. They are taught of God. They are the beloved of God. They are treated as children. They are heirs of God. They are associated with the Lord Jesus. They are appointed to share in the highest honours; to enjoy the purest bliss. Beloved, are we led by the Spirit? Has He led us this day to Jesus? Has He humbled us? Is Christ precious to us? If we are the sons of God we are safe. We shall be supplied.

*Send forth the Spirit of Thy Son,
O God, into my panting heart,
That governed by Thy love alone,
From Thee I never may depart,
But following my celestial guide,
Be numbered with the glorified.*



JUNE 16

It knew him not.

1 John 3:1

THE WORLD KNEW not Jesus when He sojourned below. The generality of men do not know Him now. They do not know the love which glows in His bosom, which brought Him to tabernacle in the flesh, and made Him a man of sorrows, and the familiar of grief. They knew not the sweetness of His disposition, or the kindness of His intention toward fallen, polluted man. They know not His willingness to receive, His determination to bless, and His engagement to save all who flee for refuge to His arms. They know not the glory of His person, the extent of His authority, or the value of His atoning blood. They have no just idea of the condescension He displays, the extent of the sufferings He endured, or the invaluable blessings which He freely bestows on the lost and undone. No one knows the Saviour who does not love Him. Everyone who believes in Him, knows Him. And everyone that knows Him will believe His word, rest on His glorious atonement, and rejoice in His veracity. Jesus, to be known, must be revealed. The Holy Spirit must enlighten our minds, unfold His character, and apply the word or we shall not know Him. May we daily behold His glory, and be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord.

*Come, Holy Spirit, now reveal
The Son of God to me;
Thy powerful influence let me feel,
And all His glories see.*



JUNE 17

The kingdom of God is within you.

Luke 17:21

JEHOVAH ERECTS HIS throne in the hearts of His people. He reigns *over* the world, but He reigns *in* them. The Christian is at once the habitation, the temple, and the kingdom of God. In us He dwells and reigns. He takes possession in regeneration, and is enthroned when we consecrate ourselves entirely to His service and praise. This kingdom includes reconciliation to God, friendship with God, and entire submission to the will of God, brought about by the application of the atonement, the manifestation of divine favour, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost. Where Jehovah reigns, the soul is justified through the righteousness of Christ, enjoys holy peace and fellowship with God, and is happy in a sense of the paternal love of God. The enmity of the heart is slain, the darkness of the mind is dispersed, the carnality of the affections is removed, and the person is brought into subjection to the obedience of Christ. The will of God becomes law, the person and work of Christ precious, and the glory of God the object sought. The enemy is a friend, the rebel a loyal subject, the alien a beloved child. If the kingdom of God is within us, we ought to be in the church of God by a Scriptural profession, and should so walk as to please God.

*Reign in me, Jehovah, reign,
Let my rebel lusts be slain;
Righteousness and peace impart,
Fill with holy joy my heart.*



JUNE 18

*Thou restrainest prayer before God.
Job 15:4*

THIS CHARGE, brought against Job, may often be justly brought against us. For though prayer is one of the most delightful privileges, and is enjoyed as such when under the influence of the Spirit of adoption, yet when a spirit of bondage prevails, or we get worldly minded, it is rather a task than a pleasure. Often are we tempted to keep away from the Lord, because we are so lukewarm, or cold, or dead; whereas these are the very things which should drive us to Him. Never let us wait for a better frame, or more convenient season, but let us go as we are, and whenever an opportunity offers, to a throne of grace. For if we restrain prayer before God, we shall soon get cold, careless, and lifeless, if we are not so. Sin will gather strength, all our graces will be weakened, and the gift of prayer will wither. Our tempers will become carnalized, our peace will be disturbed, and the enjoyment of religion will fade. The things of time will be preferred, gospel ordinances will become barren, and Satan will gain advantage over us. Restraining prayer is directly opposed to God's word. It is yielding to Satan, grieving the Holy Spirit, and must end in mischief.

*Father, to my heart appear,
Pleased and smiling in Thy Son;
Conscious of Thy presence near,
Bowed and humble at Thy throne.
Then I in Thy sight shall stay,
Always fear, and always pray.*



JUNE 19

*I obtained mercy.
1 Timothy 1:13*

PAUL WAS A BLASPHEMER, a persecutor, and very injurious to the cause of Christ; but the Lord showed him mercy as a pattern to them which should hereafter believe. Here we see that mercy is free for the vilest; that the Lord has mercy upon sinners, just because He will have mercy. Paul obtained it without seeking; anyone may by seeking it. The mercy which the Lord shows and which Paul obtained, always brings a complete pardon for all past sins, however numerous or flagrant they may have been. It brings peace to the conscience, however troubled or distressed. It produces holiness in the heart which will appear in the life. It leads the soul to desire and seek the knowledge of Christ above all other things, and to count everything but dross and dung in comparison with it. It fortifies the mind to meet, endure, and pass through trials and tribulation for Christ's sake. It leads to friendship with God, concern for the salvation of souls, and binds us to the church of Jesus by strong and various ties. Reader, have you obtained mercy? Has it had the same effect on you as it did on Paul? Whenever mercy is obtained, the fruits and effects of its reception will appear. Precious must be that mercy which brings so many blessings in its train.

*Mercy I cannot claim,
But since Thy mercy's free,
And I so poor and helpless am,
Have mercy, Lord, on me.*



JUNE 20

*The LORD's portion is his people.
Deuteronomy 32:9*

WE ARE FILLED with gratitude and joy, when we say, "The Lord is my portion;" but it is enough to fill us with wonder and astonishment to read, "The Lord's portion is His people." He is so great, and they are so insignificant. He is so holy, and they are so polluted. He is so glorious, and they are so mean. But He chose them in preference to others, when all lay before His eye. He redeemed them, when enslaved and alienated from Him. He claimed them, when held fast by their tyrannizing foe. He possesses and enjoys them as the objects of His love. He inhabits them as His temple. He protects them as His children, and He will dignify them in heaven forever. They are the Lord's lot, His inheritance, His vineyard, His garden, His spouse. Think, believer, of the honour conferred upon you in calling you the Lord's portion! Once a wandering sheep, but now returned unto the Shepherd and bishop of your soul. Angels are never called His portion, His jewels — but you are. Walk as the Lord's chosen bride who is going home to be openly united to her beloved bridegroom. Give to grace its righteous due, for it is by favour that you are distinguished. Let me lie down on my pillow tonight impressed with this thought: "*I am the Lord's portion.*"

*His portion is His care,
He keeps it day and night,
No other can with this compare,
'Tis Jesus' chief delight.*



JUNE 21

*For with the LORD there is mercy.
Psalm 130:7*

MERCY HAS BEEN shown to us, but it dwells in God. It is one of His perfections. The exercise of it is His delight. There is mercy with the Lord in all His *fullness*, He never was more merciful than now, nor will He ever be. There is mercy with the Lord in all its *tenderness*. He is full of compassion, His bowels are troubled for us, His tender mercies are over us. There is mercy with Him in all its *variety*. It suits every case. Here is mercy that receives sinners, mercy that restores backsliders, mercy that keeps believers. Here is the mercy that pardons sin, that introduces to the enjoyment of all gospel privileges, and that blesses the praying soul far beyond its expectations. With the Lord there is mercy and He loves to display it. He is ready to impart it. He has determined to exalt and glorify it. There is mercy with the Lord. This should encourage the miserable to approach Him. This informs the fearful. They need bring nothing to induce Him to bless them. This calls upon backsliders to return to Him, and this is calculated to cheer the tried Christian under all His troubles and distresses. Remember, mercy is like God: it is infinite and eternal. Mercy is always on the throne. Mercy may be obtained by any sinner.

*Believer, on the Lord recline.
His mercy's boundless and divine!
See from the cross how wide it flows,
Beyond th' extent of all thy woes!*



JUNE 22

*Holding forth the word of life.
Philippians 2:16*

THAT IS THE GOSPEL. It reveals life in the promise, and in the person and work of Christ. It presents life as God's free gift to the condemned and guilty. It is employed to produce life through the power of the Holy Ghost. The life which it reveals, presents, and produces, stands in the favour of God — in union to the person of Christ — in the possession of the Spirit — in fellowship with the fountain of life — in freedom from all condemnation, and in a title to eternal glory. This gospel is entrusted to us. It is entrusted to us for others, and we are to hold it forth as a light in a dark place — as food provided for hungry sinners — as a pardon for condemned criminals — and as a rule for quickened souls. It is to be held forth in the public ministry, by a holy conversation, and by every possible means. Beloved, let us view the gospel as "the word of life." Let us remember the obligation that is laid upon us to hold it forth. Let us ask ourselves, are we holding it forth as we should? Let us hold forth this word of life by speaking, by writing, by purchasing and distributing little works which have been printed for the purpose, and by assisting those who have consecrated their time and talents to the work.

*Come, let us with a grateful heart,
In the bless'd labour share a part;
Our prayers and offerings gladly bring,
To aid the triumph of our King.*



JUNE 23

*The righteous shall flourish as a branch.
Proverbs 11:28*

SUCH ARE JUSTIFIED by the faith of Christ. To them the Lord hath brought forth His righteousness; in them the Lord hath put His Holy Spirit. They are just before God in Jesus, and they are consistent before men, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness to the praise of His glory. They are compared to a branch, which is united to, and forms part of, the parent tree. So are they united to Jesus and one with Him. All their support is from Him, and they derive all their supplies from His fullness. He is the source of their life, beauty, strength, and fruitfulness. Apart from Him they are barren, withered, and dead. He supplies them secretly, as the tree does the branch with sap. But He sheds on them also the dew of His grace, and the showers of His blessing. In consequence of this they grow, flourish, and bear fruit. He prunes them by afflictions, but it is only that they may bring forth more fruit. Autumnal winds may strip them, and wintry frosts may lay them bare, but their life is in the root — hid with Christ in God. See beloved, the effect of union to Christ — we flourish. See the doubtful state of some professors. See the proof of a righteous state, even a consistent course.

*The trees of righteousness shall rise,
Watered each moment from above,
And bear the fruit of paradise,
The glorious fruits of faith and love.*



JUNE 24

Lead me to the rock.

Psalm 61:2

THAT ROCK WAS Christ. He was first promised, then prefigured, and then manifested. He is the smitten rock, which supplies His thirsty ones — the rock of ages, which sustains His feeble ones — the great rock, which revives His weary ones — the high rock, which protects His hunted ones — and the cleft rock, which hides His timid and fearful ones. In this rock we are safe. From this rock, we can see the land which is very far off. By this rock, we are sheltered from the storm and screened from the scorching sun. We often wander from it. At a distance we learn its value and sigh for the privilege it confers. But wherever we may be, it is accessible to us. Yet we need a guide to conduct us, and a friend to assist us. Then let us determine with the Psalmist, however far off we may be: “From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee; when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” Jesus is all we need. He has all we can possibly want. Prayer is always allowed, approved, encouraged, rewarded. Led to Him, we shall be raised above our fears, above our foes, and above our expectations. He is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.

*When sore afflicted, and ready to faint,
Before my Redeemer, I'll spread my complaint.*

*In every new trial to Him will I cry,
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*



JUNE 25

Ye are Christ's.
1 Corinthians 3:23

WHO ARE CHRIST'S? The saints whom He hath set apart for Himself. Those who worship Him as their God and Saviour; or Christians who believe on His name, surrender at His call, and submit to His will. All Christians, though of low stature, though compassed about with infirmities, though often cast down through doubts and fears, they are Christ's, and in consequence His Father is theirs — His Spirit is theirs — His righteousness is theirs — His atonement is theirs — His peace is theirs — His wealth is theirs — Himself and all He has is theirs. If they are Christ's, He will defend them as His property, support them as His children, and cherish them as His bride. If we are Christ's, then we should entirely listen to Him when He speaks — cheerfully obey Him when He commands — refuse to believe anything that may be suggested against Him by Satan or men — always own Him as our Lord and Master — frequently visit Him on the throne of grace, at His table, and in His house — live upon Him now, in hope of living with Him forever and ever. Reader, have you good evidence that you are Christ's? Are you daily looking to Him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?

*All things I want, but One is nigh,
My want of all things to supply;
Pardon, and peace, and liberty,
Jesus, I all things have in Thee.*



JUNE 26

*I am the way.
John 14:6*

THIS IS A BEAUTIFUL figure selected by Jesus to set forth His adaptation to us. We are at a distance from God. As sinners, there is by nature no way in which we can approach God with acceptance. But Jesus, by becoming the Mediator, became the way to the Father. He is the way from a state of sin to a state of holiness — from the dread of wrath, to the enjoyment of eternal love. He is the way to acquaintance with God, reconciliation to God, acceptance with God, relationship to God, enjoyment of God, conformity to God, and to the presence and glory of God. As a way He is suitable to all sinners, open to all who are willing to make use of Him, safe for all who venture upon Him, and the only way from the wrath to come. Observe, we are all out of the way by nature. We are convinced of this fact by the Holy Spirit. We discover our need of just such a way as Jesus is. We enter upon it by faith. We often moisten the way with our tears. We have to travel along the way with patience. And everyone that really enters upon it, arrives at the end of it in safety. Beloved, the ground on which we stand is good, the way in which we walk is direct, and the end of the journey we have commenced — is everlasting life.

*Thou art the way — to Thee alone,
From sin and death we flee;
And he who would the Father seek,
Must seek Him, Lord, in Thee.*



JUNE 27

*My beloved is mine and I am his.
Song of Solomon 2:16*

THIS IS THE LANGUAGE of holy assurance. Christ is given by the Father to sinners. He is God's unspeakable gift. He is presented in the gospel to everyone who hears or reads it, without money and without price. He is accepted and received by faith. The reception of Christ is ratified by solemn engagements, the party engages to be His, and His alone. It is confirmed by holy fellowship. He that claims Christ, lives in communion with Him. "My beloved is to me," the Saviour in whom I believe and trust — the husband whom I reverence and love — the Lord whom I adore and obey — the portion on which I live — and the beloved One upon whom my heart and affections are set. "I am my beloved's." He chose me, or I had never chosen Him. He redeemed me, or I had still been a slave. He called me, or I had still been wandering from God. He sanctified me, or I had still been vile and polluted. He manifested Himself to me, or I had never seen His glory. "I am to my beloved" His sister-spouse — His portion — His delight — His choice out of all worlds — His glorious crown, out of the spoils He has won. Beloved, seek assurance, nor ever be satisfied but as you say, "He is mine, and I am His."

*Jesus my love, my life, my peace,
Jesus is mine, and I am His;
His bride, His dear bought property,
Who loved and gave Himself for me.*



JUNE 28

Knowing the time.
Romans 13:11

WE CANNOT KNOW the future, but we may know the present time. Indeed, we ought to know it. What is its character? It is the time of Satan's power — he is active, energetic, and determined. It is the time of the world's danger — it is asleep, or deluded, or enraged against the cause of God. It is the time of God's forbearance — justice now waits, grace sits enthroned, mercy kindly warns, and it is called the accepted time, the day of salvation. It is the time of the Church's duty — for it is working time, it is evening time, and therefore precious time. It is a singular time — we have such facilities for doing good, so many calls to action, so many encouragements to persevere, and our responsibility is so deep and solemn. Let us therefore know the time. We may learn its character, partly from God's word, and partly from observation. Let us improve our knowledge and turn it to account by stirring up others who are drowsy, and embracing every opportunity of doing good ourselves. Let us employ every talent, and improve every opportunity to the utmost. Remember, the time to do good and to get good, must be short. The end of the present period will be solemn, deeply solemn. We should be wakeful, watchful, laborious, liberal.

*Divine Instructor! Grace bestow,
Teach me the present time to know;
Help me each talent to improve,
And serve my God in faith and love.*



JUNE 29

*Christ in you the hope of glory.
Colossians 1:27*

THE OBJECT OF A Christian's hope is glory, but the exact nature of that glory is unknown. Its greatness is at present inconceivable. It is said to comprise an inheritance, a kingdom, a crown, gladness, exceeding joy. It is a crown of glory, a weight of glory, eternal glory — the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is glory clothing us — glory in us. It will robe the body. It will fill the soul. It includes purity and power, wisdom and knowledge. It is waiting to be revealed. We expect this. This hope or expectation originates in grace — is produced by the Holy Spirit — springs from faith — rests on the promise and oath of God — waits God's time — and purifies its possessor. The evidence or proof of this hope is, *Christ in us*. He dwells in His people by His word, by His grace, and by His Spirit. He dwells in us as a King in His kingdom: ruling — as a Master in His family: providing — as an Owner in His habitation: claiming — as the sap in the tree: supplying — as God in His temple: to be adored. If Christ dwells in you, He dwells in your thoughts, desires, affections, enjoyments and aims. Is Christ in you? Are you hoping for glory? Is the glory you hope for, the fruition of God?

*Jesus, in me forever dwell,
Thyself, the gift unspeakable;
The hope of heavenly bliss impart,
The glorious earnest in my heart.*



JUNE 30

*Partakers of the benefit.
1 Timothy 6:2*

THE GOSPEL IS a benefit — one of God's greatest and best gifts. It benefits every person who receives it. It benefits His intellect, informing it. It benefits His heart, sanctifying it. It benefits His conscience, giving it repose. It benefits His temper, controlling and sweetening it. It benefits His life, preventing many evils, and directing to the attainment and possession of many blessings. It benefits the family where it rules. It makes the master kind, the mistress considerate, the servants attentive and industrious, the parents exemplary, and the children obedient. It benefits the commonwealth in which it works. It suggests good laws, requires good government, and makes good subjects. Have we partaken of this benefit? What is intended by this? It is to perceive its divinity, to approve its doctrines, to receive its blessings, to submit to its precepts, to observe its ordinances, to test its joys, and to employ it for every useful purpose. Some hear of it, others listen to it, others taste and disapprove of it. Some partake and are benefitted by it. In their state, they are justified — in their character, sanctified — and in their circumstances, happy; for all things work together for their good. Have you benefitted by the gospel?

*Lord, grant this benefit to me,
And let me feel, and taste, and see,
What glories in that gospel dwell.
Which saves believing souls from hell!*



JULY 1

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.

Psalms 103:3

WE DAILY NEED TO be pardoned, for we daily sin. Our sins are of an aggravated character. They are the sins of a ransomed captive against Him who redeemed him at the price of His blood. They are the sins of a peculiarly favoured servant, who lives in his master's house, sits at his master's table, and owes his all to his master's liberality, against the master who thus favours him. They are the sins of a beloved child, against the wisest, kindest, and best of fathers. Our faults are many, various, frequently repeated, and inexcusable. Yet the Lord forgiveth all our iniquities. He pardons like a God — fully, freely, consistently. Every pardon is the price of the blood of Jesus. When He pardons, He secures hatred to sin, sorrow for sin, and a departure from sin. He pardons like a father — He does so tenderly, frequently. David, who bore this testimony to God's pardoning mercy, was no common sinner. He had been guilty of adultery, deception, murder. He led others into sin, charged it upon providence, and slept under the guilt of it for months. He made the record with a smarting conscience, and with a grateful heart. Reader, are you pardoned? Are you guilty? God is ready to forgive. Confess, pray, plead Jesus, and be forgiven.

*Saviour, I long to testify,
The fullness of Thy gracious power!
Pardon my sins, Thy blood apply,
That I may sovereign grace adore!*



JULY 2

The night cometh.

John 9:4

NIGHT IS THE emblem of death. There is generally something dreary and gloomy in the night, and so there is in death. When death comes, all our opportunities of doing good in this world are over. Let us therefore improve the present. When death comes, our work should be done. If it is not, we must leave it unfinished. Let us therefore work while it is called day. When death comes, we must bid our friends farewell. Let us therefore treat them, as those that must soon leave them. When death comes, we shall go home to rest. Our bodies will find a home in the grave, and sleep quietly and soundly there. And our souls will find a home in the presence of Jesus, and enjoy the sweetest repose and satisfaction there. "THE NIGHT COMETH." It is not far off. It draws very nigh to some of us. It may overtake us suddenly. We are therefore warned that we may be ready. Let us endeavour as believers in Jesus to realize the fact — let us redeem the time — let us work through the whole day — let us be ready for the night, having our work done, our limbs weary, our appetite for heavenly things sharp, and feeling glad to go home. The night of death is preparatory to the morning of the resurrection. Then we shall arise refreshed, strong, glorious, immortal.

*O glorious hour! O bless'd abode!
I shall be near and like my God;
And flesh and sin no more control
The sacred pleasures of my soul.*



JULY 3

He retaineth not his anger for ever.

Micah 7:18

THE WRATH OF GOD is dreadful, but this is only directed against His obstinate and determined enemies. The anger of the Lord is distressing. This is directed against His people for a time. Each one may say, “Thou wast angry with me.” Let us look at this solemn fact: God had been angry. The cause of His anger is sin. The object with which He is angry is His child. The nature of His anger is paternal. The design of His anger is correction. The effects of His anger are various. Sometimes it affects our temporal things. It always does our spiritual comfort and joy. The continuance of His anger is transient. His anger endureth but for a moment, in His favour is life. But when God is angry with us, every hour appears a day, and every month a year. But it is cheering to know that He retaineth not His anger forever. He is not naturally angry. He is never sovereignly angry. He is not always, or long angry. He looks to the atonement — He listens to the cry of the corrected one — love works in His heart — He remembers His covenant — and He proves that He delighteth in mercy. Wrath will burn forever against impenitent sinners, being fed with the fuel of sin. Anger against a child soon burns out, or is quenched by the water of love.

*He passes all our follies by,
And all our sins forgives,
His wrath doth in a moment die,
His love forever lives.*



JULY 4

Thy loving-kindness is better than life.

Psalm 63:3

LIFE IS EXISTENCE. Here it means existence under the most favourable circumstances: as life in ease, honour, plenty. The life of a social being in the enjoyment of gratification, as a merchant in his business, a student at his books, a monarch on his throne. Life surrounded by all that is desirable. But what then is God's loving-kindness? It is His love displaying itself in kind words — kind acts — kind discoveries of His divine excellencies — feasting the soul with spiritual delights. This is better than life, for it bestows greater blessings, it confers higher honours, it imparts sweeter pleasures, it raises higher expectations, and it throws around us greater security. It is better, for it is more lasting. It is more suited to the nature of the soul. It is truly glorious. It is unmixed good, unfading pleasure, inexhaustible wealth. Well, then, may the psalmist prefer it to life, and well may he say, "My lips shall praise Thee." I will commend Thee in conversation. I will give Thee thanks in my devotions. I will praise Thee for its discovery, for my present enjoyment of it, and for the prospect of eternally enjoying it. Do you value life? Do you prefer God's loving-kindness to it?

*Thy favour and love I prefer
To life in its happiest hours;
Possessed of a Paradise here,
When mercy my spirit o'erpowers.*



JULY 5

*Faint, yet pursuing.
Judges 8:4*

GIDEON'S SOLDIERS were in a painful situation — they were faint. Yet they were the Lord's selected host, and they were steadily following their captain. But from their exertions, their conquests, and the want of food, they were faint. They were faint near the Jordan, where God had done such great things for their forefathers, and just as their victory was being completed. All this is true of the Lord's people now. Though the Lord's beloved ones, though the soldiers of the cross, from the burdens they have to bear, from the trials they have to endure, from the conflicts they are engaged in, and from the want of sufficiently feeding on spiritual provisions, they often feel very faint, dejected, and dispirited. Still these men were pursuing. They did not give up, nor give way to the carnal reason, which may have suggested — "If God were with us, He would supply us, or not allow us to feel thus faint." They pursued their vanquished foes, in obedience to God's commands, and as encouraged by the promise. They were pursuing in faith — in hope — with certainty. Brethren, let us imitate these worthy men. Do you feel faint? Does it appear in prayer — in labour? Still pursue. Pursue though very weak. Pursue, because God is with you.

*Wrestle on in prayer unceasing,
'Till you see the foe destroyed,
Bless'd with all the victor's blessing,
Crowned with all the life of God.*



JULY 6

*Who healeth all our diseases.
Psalm 103:3*

THE LORD IS THE Physician. He heals both the body and the soul. He is especially the healer of the soul. The patient is a believer. The cause of all disease and suffering is sin. The seat of the malady is in the heart. The nature of it is most loathsome and afflictive. It affects the memory, the affections, the conscience, the will — yea the whole man. We are all the subjects of this disease. We all suffer from it. No one can heal us but the Lord Jesus. He is the great Physician. To Him we may repair and be restored to health. To encourage you to do so, look at His qualifications. He is infinitely wise, tender, and skilful. His experience is without a parallel, and so is His success. The remedies He employs are His precious blood, His holy word, and His blessed Spirit. The mode of application is by afflictions, bereavements, convictions, and secret energy. He never failed in any case of effecting a cure. David's was a bad case, but he could say, "He healeth all my diseases." This testimony is personal, credible, undoubted. Sinner, thou art sick — mortally sick. Go to Jesus. Backslider, thou art sick. Go to Jesus. Believer, art thou not desiring perfect health? Then go to Jesus this night. Go and say, "Lord if Thou wilt Thou canst make me whole."

*Forgive, and make my nature whole,
My sinful maladies remove,
To perfect health restore my soul;
To perfect holiness and love.*



JULY 7

*Let us not sleep as do others.
1 Thessalonians 5:6*

SLEEP IS HERE used in a figurative sense. The apostle does not refer to the repose of the body, but to the state of the mind. He refers to a suspension of the energies in faith, prayer, and holy affection — an improper withdrawal from the scenes of action — a state which is next door to death. Others are asleep. Many others are asleep. Professors are asleep. “But let us not sleep as do others.” If we sleep, it is like sleeping *where*? On the plains of Waterloo, after that dreadful battle, among the wounded, the dying, and the dead. In a city infected with the plague, while we possess the remedy, which if applied, would heal the infected. In an island of slaves, while we have the act of emancipation in our pockets. In a town of madmen, while we have the means of restoration. In a starving country, when we know where there is plenty of food. If we sleep, it is like sleeping *when*? In the day, on a harvest day, the great day of opportunity. If we sleep, it is like *what*? Like the labourer sleeping in the harvest field when the storm is coming, and his master’s crops are all exposed. Like the soldier sleeping on duty, when the foe is in the field. Like the foolish virgins, when the bridegroom was coming. Let us therefore not sleep, as do others.

*See professors round thee sleeping,
Rouse my soul, awake, arise!
Carefully the precepts keeping,
Labour for the glorious prize.*



JULY 8

He will turn again.

Micah 7:19

HERE IS A melancholy fact intimated. The Lord had turned away His face from His people. He was displeased. There were now no sweet visits — no love-tokens — no intimate communion. But He threatens. He frowns. He smites. He shows His displeasure. He is angry, but not wrathful. He has sworn that He will not be wroth with us. “HE WILL TURN AGAIN.” Here confidence is expressed. He smites but to correct. He frowns but to bring us to repentance. He will turn again and *look* upon us, as He did on Peter when He broke his heart, and brought him back with weeping and supplication. He will *speak* to us as He did to Mary, when He said, “Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace.” He will *smile* away our fears, take us to His bosom, and again assure us of His love. He *will*, for He has promised to do so. He *will*, for He has always done so. He *will*, for the love of His heart prompts Him to do so. He *will*, for He delighteth in mercy. Then let us mourn over our follies, but not despair of pardon. Let us weep, that we have grieved our kind and gracious God, but not yield to gloom. Let us confess our backslidings, and expect Him to return. Let us wait upon the Lord, who hideth Himself from the house of Israel, and let us *look for Him*.

*Saviour, while after Thee we mourn,
Thou wilt compassion shew,
In mercy to our souls return,
And all our sins subdue.*



JULY 9

*I will be their God.
Jeremiah 32:38*

THIS WAS SPOKEN of the literal Israel, but it applies also to the spiritual Israel. It refers to all who are gathered to the Lord Jesus. To every penitent sinner, who is returning to God with weeping and with supplication. To everyone to whom the Lord gives a heart to know Him, and who trusts in His gracious word. To all true believers. What does this promise include? “I will be *their God*.” They shall own My authority — receive My word — bow at My throne — engage in My service — do My will — prefer Me to all besides — make Me the object of their trust, worship, and love — “their God.” “I will be their God.” They shall have My wisdom to guide them — My power to protect them — My love to assure them — My mercy to save them — My holiness to sanctify them — and my Spirit to comfort them. As their God I will be *with* them. I will be *for* them. I will be a God *to* them. I will never fail them, nor forsake them, but will do for them all I have promised in My word; and confer upon them all I have provided in My covenant. Believer, see in this promise God’s greatest mercy. He gives you Himself to be your God. Man’s highest honour is to have God so nigh unto him, and engaged for him. Jehovah is his God forever.

*On this support my soul would lean,
And banish every care;
The darkest path is cheered with smiles,
If God is with me there.*



JULY 10

*Examine me, O LORD.
Psalm 26:2*

THE LORD SAYS, "Let a man examine himself." The Christian does so, but not satisfied with his own searching, he turns to the Lord and says, "Examine me, O Lord." He is afraid of being deceived, and he knows that his heart is deceitful. He is really sincere. He desires to know the worst of his case, let it be ever so painful. He would have his heart right with God, therefore he comes to the light. This is a proof, that there is grace in the soul. For only those who are taught of God cry, "Examine me, O Lord." Beloved, is this your prayer tonight? Are you willing to be examined? Are you desirous that God should examine you? Are you crying, "Lord, examine my *heart*. Am I a subject of Thy grace? Examine my *motives* — are they pure and scriptural? Examine my *actions* — are they according to Thy word? Examine my *objects* — do I aim at Thy glory and the promotion of Thy cause?" You see the prayer is for *personal* examination. "Examine *me*." It is for *immediate* examination, *now* examine me. It is for *thorough* examination, therefore he prays God to do it. None but an honest man will court a thorough investigation into his affairs, and none but right-minded Christians will court the searching eye of God, or heartily pray:

*Search me, O God, and cleanse my heart,
Thy Spirit and thy grace impart;
Save from deceit, from guile set free,
And let my soul Thy temple be.*



JULY 11

Look thou upon me.

Psalm 119:132

HERE IS A CHILD seeking a father's notice. Whatever God does, He does with ease. A look is enough to relieve us in our deepest distresses, to rescue us from our greatest difficulties, and to fill us with peace and joy. The Lord's look will discover and detect us, if we are wrong. It will confirm and establish us, if we are right. His look humbled Job, strengthened Gideon, brought Peter to repentance, and filled dying Stephen with joy and peace. To look upon us, is to show us favour. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." If we would have God look down upon us, we must look up unto Him. If we would have Him look upon us, and be gracious unto us, we must look unto Him in prayer and with faith. Beloved, are you desiring that the eye of God should rest upon you? That you may realize this fact? If He looks upon you in mercy, His look will dissipate your fears, disperse your darkness, and fill you with light and holy confidence. Is it too much to ask? It is not much for God to give, but it is much for us to receive. It betokens reconciliation. It evidences interest in us. It imparts blessings unto us. Let this then be our closing prayer tonight, "LOOK THOU UPON ME."

*O look upon Thy servant, Lord,
And pardon, peace, and joy afford;
May I with Thy sweet presence blest,
This night enjoy refreshing rest!*



JULY 12

*He shall be for a sanctuary.
Isaiah 8:14*

THAT IS, THE Lord Jesus shall, for of Him the prophet speaks. He is the sanctuary in which we are safe from the wrath of God, the curse of a broken law, and the evil designs of Satan. This is our refuge to which we must repair from enemies, storms, and troubles. Here we can worship God, on a throne of grace, with confidence, faith, and acceptance. And by Him God will manifest Himself, and impart instruction on all matters of importance. In this sanctuary we may expect a supply of all our wants — deliverance from all our fears — defence from all our foes — help in all our troubles — the sanctification of all our sorrows — and safety while we continue below. Reader, you should fly to Jesus in every trouble. You should expect from Him whatever you really need. He shows you how gracious God is to you, and sets forth the blessedness of all true believers. Is He your sanctuary? Have you ever *met* God in Christ? Do you *worship* God in Christ? Do you look for all you *want* in Christ? If He is your sanctuary, seek to glorify Him. Expect to find every blessing in Him. In every difficulty and danger repair to Him, and praise the Lord for such a glorious dwelling. Here you are safe. Here you will enjoy peace. Here you will obtain grace.

*In Christ I every glory view,
Of safety, strength, and beauty too;
Beloved Saviour! ever be
A sanctuary unto me.*



JULY 13

*God who is rich in mercy.
Ephesians 2:4*

IN CONSEQUENCE of sin our misery is great, but it cannot be so great as God's mercy. Our sufferings are many, but God's mercy is an antidote for all. Mercy is the wealth of God, which He lays out upon His people. It is the sympathy of God, which He displays towards His afflicted children. It is that by which He is affected with a sense of all our sufferings — as it is written of His people of old, "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them: and He bore them, and carried them all the days of old." The mercy of God is infinite. It flows through Jesus. It is glorified in soothing our sorrows, supplying our wants, pardoning our sins, relieving our distresses, and restoring us from all our wanderings. Beloved, God is rich in mercy tonight. He has mercy for thee; just that mercy which is necessary. He says, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Believe His promise. Plead for mercy at His throne. Expect Him to glorify His mercy in thee. You need no recommendation, but your misery; no greater encouragement than this, "He is rich in mercy, rich unto all that call upon Him." Honour Him then tonight by placing confidence in His word.

*High as the heav'n o'er earth extends,
His mercy all our sins transcends;
Far as the east from western climes,
He casts the guilt of all our crimes.*



JULY 14

*The LORD reigneth.
Psalm 97:1*

THAT LORD IS thy Saviour. He wears thy nature. He knows thee well. He loves thee more than a mother does her firstborn, her only son. He keeps thy welfare in view in all He does, and in all He permits. He reigns universally — over all worlds. He reigns supreme — thrones and dominions, and principalities, and powers, are made subject to Him. In His government He equally displays His wisdom and power, His justice and mercy, His sovereignty and grace. He reigns to advance the interests of holiness, the happiness, and endless welfare of His people. He reigns over His enemies, and secretly frustrates their designs, using their energies for the accomplishment of His purposes. He rules *in*, as well as *over*, His friends. Thus He preserves them from evils, manages their affairs, and fulfils His word. “THE LORD REIGNETH.” Think of this when Satan besets and harasses you — when sin rises within you, perplexing and distressing you — when providence frowns on you, crossing your plans, blasting your gourds, and trying your faith — when you have fightings without, and fears within — when enemies oppose you — when sickness lays you low — and when death stares you in the face. Rejoice in this, that your Saviour reigns supreme, and therefore you are safe.

*The Lord is King, rejoice and sing,
My Lord and King Thou art,
Thy Spirit reigns, Thy love maintains
Its sway within my heart.*



JULY 15

*Let us keep the feast.
1 Corinthians 5:8*

PAUL IS REFERRING TO the Passover, when the lamb was slain, the door-posts sprinkled, the first-born of the Egyptians destroyed, and the deliverance of Israel secured. Christ is our Passover Lamb. His blood was shed for us, and is sprinkled upon us. Our foes are destroyed, and our salvation secured. The Israelites were to feed on the lamb, whose blood secured them. And we are to feed on Christ, by whose blood we are redeemed. "Therefore let us keep the feast." It is a feast upon a sacrifice, upon Christ as crucified for us. He is not only our ransom, but our food. Our souls are fed, by taking in believing views of His glorious Person, finished work, complete conquest, and eternal honours. The eye should be daily directed to Christ. The mind should be engaged with Christ. The heart should feed upon Christ. He is the life-giving bread. He says, "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." We are invited to a feast, the substance of that feast is Christ. Let us then *daily* keep the feast. Let us keep it with much prayer, with hearty praise, in faith and hope, with humility and seriousness, with godly sorrow, and lively joy. Let us keep it, for God has bidden us. Let us keep it, for we honour Jesus by doing so.

*On Jesus let us daily feed,
And keep the gospel feast;
In Him is all our souls can need,
Life, health, and food, and rest.*



JULY 16

*Be no more children.
Ephesians 4:14*

THIS REFERS NOT TO state, but to stature. We are always in the relation of children, but in understanding we should be men. The Lord has made provision for the growth of his people and He exhorts them to grow. We should advance in knowledge. Children are satisfied with trifles. We should not be. We should increase in strength, and become strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. We should also become more courageous against our foes, bold in the Lord's cause, and steadfast in our attachment to divine things. Our faith, our hope, our love, and our zeal should grow. We should not be stationary; but from babes, grow up to young men; and from young men, to fathers in Christ. In order to our growth we must make use of food, exercise, and devotion. We must feed upon Christ, exercise all our graces, and live in fellowship with God. That we may grow, the Lord has given us His book, His ordinances, and His Son. To perfect our character, He uses His ministers, His providence, and even His foes. He has promised that we shall "grow as the vine," and "go forth and grow up as calves of the stall." Let us set our heart upon growing, and attend to this salutary caution, "That ye be no more children."

*Then, Lord, forbid, forbid that we
Should always little children be;
But may our path shine more, we pray,
And more until the perfect day.*



JULY 17

*Iniquities prevail against me.
Psalm 65:3*

THE BELIEVER IS in a state of warfare. Sin lives in him, works in him, and sometimes overcomes him. He is never free from sin, and has daily need to watch and strive against sin. Iniquities prevail against us at times, and then they break our peace — strengthen unbelief — lead away our affections from God — close the mouth in prayer — silence the voice of praise — weaken and pollute the soul — and raise a cloud between God and us, so that we cannot see His face or enjoy His love. When we yield to sin and it prevails against us, we must expect to feel the rebukes and reproofs of the Holy Spirit within. The rod of affliction may also be laid on without. Confusion and perplexity will be felt before the throne, and our state calls for humiliation, confession, and repentance toward God. If the Lord sanctify this experience to us, it will lead us to hate sin more, and loathe ourselves before God. We shall become more watchful and prayerful. We shall be more jealous of ourselves, and careful to avoid all appearance of evil. And when again set at liberty, we shall bless, praise, and adore the long-suffering mercy and forgiving love of God. We shall be clothed with humility, and walk humbly with our God.

*Lord, my iniquities prevail,
My courage droops, my spirits fail;
Do Thou my rebel lusts subdue,
And all my inward powers renew.*



JULY 18

I am glorified in them.

John 17:10

THE WORK OF JESUS was to glorify the Father, and the Father is glorified in Him. Our work should be to glorify Jesus, and He is glorified in us. His blood is glorified in our pardon, peace, and cleansing from all sin — His righteousness, in our complete, perpetual, and eternal justification — His power, in our separation from the world, and preservation unto eternal life — His mercy, in our quickening, and numerous comforts — His word in our liberty, and holy joy — His condescension, in our fellowship and communion — His faithfulness, in the answers we receive to our prayers and petitions — His love, in our boldness and access with confidence at His throne — His goodness, in our supplies and supports under trouble — His sympathy, in our afflictions and sorrows — His patience, in bearing with our perverseness and many infirmities — His grace, in our whole lives, in death, and in our eternal salvation. Jesus is glorified in us, for all we *are*, we owe to Him; all we *have*, we receive from Him; and all we *hope for*, we expect from Him. His church is His glory, and He will make her glorious. He will present her unto Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Sweet thought, Jesus is glorified in me!

*Now glorify Thyself in me,
Saviour, Redeemer, Friend!
Fain would I live and die for Thee,
On whom I now depend.*



JULY 19

I know that thou favourest me.

Psalm 41:11

WHAT BELIEVER does not know this! And yet who is sufficiently affected by the fact? If God had not favoured us, we had been still dead in sin. Or we had been smarting under the lashes of a guilty conscience. Or we had been shut up in despair. Or our enemy had triumphed over us. Satan is superior to us in wisdom, power, experience, and perseverance. He has had great advantage given him by our weakness, timidity, and cowardice; by our powerful corruptions, and ignorance of his devices. He has endeavoured to lead us into sin, draw us into apostasy, or drive us to despair; but he has not prevailed. He certainly would if the Lord had not favoured us. But Jesus has interceded for us. The Holy Spirit has helped our infirmities. Our heavenly Father has faithfully fulfilled His word, and has restrained, curbed, and kept him back. He has shielded us in the day of conflict, and protected us in the heat of the battle. He has given us strength equal to our day, and we have found His grace to be sufficient for us. Surely the Lord has favoured us, for we have stood when many have fallen; have persevered while many have gone back. We live tonight as the monuments of His mercy. Each of us may say: I am God's favoured child.

*Then will I trust His power and grace,
Deliverance to command,
Till with His saints, before His face
In endless bliss, I stand.*



JULY 20

Him that overcometh.

Revelation 2:17

EVERY CHRISTIAN is a soldier, and he is exhorted to conduct himself as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Every Christian soldier must go to war. His enemies are numerous and powerful. They must be conquered, for they will never yield. He must never propose, or accept of any terms with them. He must fight until they are entirely subdued. He must overcome the world. He must conquer Satan. He must rule over his own spirit. Heaven is the home of conquerors. Honours unspeakably glorious are reserved for them. Jesus, the Captain of their salvation, will give them to eat of the tree of life, and of the hidden manna — to possess the white stone with the new name written — the morning star — the white raiment — to be a pillar in the temple of God — to wear a crown of life — and to sit with Him on His throne. All these are promised to Him that overcometh. There is therefore something to animate, to stimulate, to encourage us. Every indulgence that can be granted, every honour that can be conferred, will be the portion of the conqueror. Let us therefore, wrestle, strive, and fight — using the whole armour of God, strong in the grace of Jesus, keeping the eye upon the prize, and stimulating each other in the conflict. By faith we conquer.

*Then let me meet my three-fold foe,
And conquering on to conquer go.
Armed with His sword, and mind, and name,
Who hell, the world, and sin o'ercame.*



JULY 21

*Ye are come to the blood of sprinkling.
Hebrews 12:24*

THE BLOOD THAT was shed for sin, was sprinkled on the sinner. The former action made atonement, the latter declared the sinner clean. The blood of Jesus is the blood of sprinkling. It has made peace for sinners. It speaks peace to sinners. It cleanses from all sin, and it does this meritoriously — efficaciously — infallibly. It heals the wounded conscience, perfumes our services, and confirms the covenant. It secures us, as the blood of the Passover did the Israelites, and it satisfies the claims of infinite justice. It procured pardon for the guilty — life for the dead — redemption for the captive — and all grace for graceless sinners. As believers we come to this blood of sprinkling. We come to *hear* it, for it speaks better things than the blood of Abel. We come to *trust* in it, for it alone procures us acceptance with God. We come to *prove* it, and enjoy the blessedness that results from it. We come to *plead* it, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. We come to *rejoice* in it, for it is a source of comfort, consolation, and joy. We come by faith. We come whenever annoyed by guilt, disturbed by fears, beset by Satan, pinched by want, and when death is near.

*Upon the cross my Saviour hung,
And shed His vital blood;
And every wound is now a tongue
To plead my cause with God.*



JULY 22

Blessed are they who keep my ways.

Proverbs 8:32

THE LORD'S WAYS are various, but they all lead to glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. There is the way of salvation — or the way to be delivered from the guilt, power, and consequences of sin. The way of peace — or the way to obtain, enjoy, and maintain peace of conscience. The way of holiness — in which we acquire and increase it. The way of truth — or the way to learn, experience, and practise it. The more excellent way of charity — by which we recommend our religion, and benefit our fellow men. There is no entering upon, or walking in either of these ways but by faith. We are saved by grace through faith. By faith we have peace with God. Purifying their hearts by faith. The truth of God must be believed, or it will never be practically known. Faith worketh by love. Here is the commendation, "that KEEP MY WAYS." They keep the eye on them, the heart toward them, and the feet in them. They keep them with care, with fear, with constancy. Such are *blessed*. For they perceive correctly, they choose rightly, they walk safely, they live happily, they progress gradually, they proceed honourably, and they end gloriously. Reader, are you *in* the Lord's ways? Do you *love* and *prefer* His ways to all other?

*Prone to stray and start aside,
Saviour! keep me near Thy side
Make me walk in all Thy ways,
Teach me to show forth Thy praise.*



JULY 23

*All the promises of God in him.
2 Corinthians 1:20*

AS ALL LIGHT is in the sun, so all grace is in Christ. The promises which are scattered over the Bible all centre in Jesus. The promises of Scripture are divine. They make known the nature and disposition of God. They all originated in grace. They are proofs of unbounded benevolence. They display infinite condescension. And they are intended to strengthen our faith and hope. They are in Christ — in His mouth as the true witness — in His hand as the Surety of the better covenant — in His heart as the Bridegroom of His church — in His will as the gracious Testator — in His inheritance, as the Heir of all things — and are all comprehended in Himself, as the mercy promised to our forefathers. He publishes them as a Prophet, confirms them as a Priest, and fulfils them as a King. Some of them relate to the world, and some of them exclusively to the church. Some of them regard the body, others the soul. They embrace all time, and run forward into eternity. In Christ, every promise is *yea* to the Greek, and *amen* to the Jew; that is, they are confirmed to all believers whether Jews or Greeks. Beloved, let us believe them, plead them, and rest our souls upon them. They were made for us, and shall be fulfilled to us, for God is faithful.

*Here I repose my trust,
On these my hopes recline;
Eternal truth and righteousness,
Appear in every line,*



JULY 24

*Fury is not in me.
Isaiah 27:4*

IT IS EASY TO mistake the character of God. This is very often done. We think Him wrathful. We are afraid of Him. But in Jesus, God meets us, blesses us, and assures us that there is no fury in Him. Here is a *basis* for hope. If there is no fury in God, there is love, and I may hope. He will not refuse my application, despise my prayer, or drive me from His throne. There is a *source* of comfort. If there is no fury in God, the wrath of man is vain. The rage of hell is harmless. Here is an *antidote* for my doubts and fears. If there is no fury in God, my dread of death is unfounded, my fear of rejection is childish, my alarm at the approach of judgment is causeless. Here is a *call* for gratitude and praise. If there is no fury in God, I may draw near, I may confide in Him, I may expect good things from Him. I ought to praise Him. If there is no fury in God, whom shall I fear, of what shall I be afraid? He is a refuge in trouble — a well of living water in the desert — a vineyard in the wilderness — a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God. God is not wrath, but love. God is not darkness, but light. Christian, be careful what views you entertain of your God. Be sure that they are Scriptural — that they are derived from the new covenant.

*Fury is not in me, but love,
Behold the proof, My Son I gave!
And still My tender mercies move,
From sin, and death, and hell to save.*



JULY 25

Jesus only.
Matthew 17:8

MOSES AND ELIAS had been with them on the mount, but they were gone. Jesus only remained. How many things change or pass away, as health — wealth — trade — comforts — ministers — relatives — youth — vigour — prosperity. But whatever changes, Jesus is the same. He is the same in His nature, which is love. In His purpose towards us, which is grace. In His promises, which are faithful. In His offices, as Priest — Intercessor — King. In His blood, which is always efficacious. In His relations, for He is the Father — Brother — Husband — Friend. The same yesterday, today, and forever. The passage forms a suitable motto for us. JESUS ONLY, as my plea at the throne of grace — as the object of my faith, desire, and confidence — as my hope and ground of acceptance with God — as my pattern and example — as my joy and song — as my King and Lawgiver — as my all in all. Let us endeavour to keep the eye and the heart always on Jesus. Let us rejoice that when Moses and Elias departs, Jesus remains. Let us remember, that the dark cloud or the bright vision, makes no change in Him. Let us expect Jesus to sweeten and sanctify all bereavements, and to preserve us from the snares which accompany prosperity.

*He's all that's good and great,
All that I can admire;
All that Jehovah can bestow,
And all my soul's desire.*



JULY 26

*Rejoice evermore.
1 Thessalonians 5:16*

THE CHRISTIAN is described as happy, “rejoicing in Christ Jesus.” He is *required* to be happy, “Rejoice evermore.” This joy is a fruit of the Spirit. It is the effect of faith. It is associated with hope. “Rejoicing in hope.” It is the soldier, rejoicing in his courageous and conquering captain — the mariner, rejoicing in his wise and experienced pilot — the penitent, rejoicing in his pardoning and gracious God — the prodigal, rejoicing in his kind and loving father — the lover from home, rejoicing in his beloved one at a distance. This joy is sometimes unspeakable and full of glory. It is always holy joy, and is easily damped and weakened by sin. Christian, thy God bids thee rejoice. The Lord’s people of old were exceeding joyful in all their tribulations. A solid foundation is laid for thy joy in God’s holy word — in His gracious covenant — in the fullness of Jesus — and in the glorious perfections of God. Our joy is very often injured by our uncertainty about our calling and election; these should be made sure — by our unbelief, which insults God while it injures us — by low views of Christ — by a hasty spirit — by worldly entanglements — by an uneven walk with God — by selfishness in our religion. Believer, you ought to be happy.

*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.*



JULY 27

This man receiveth sinners.

Luke 15:2

THIS WAS A CHARGE brought against our Lord, but it is full of consolation to us. He did receive sinners, and He received them *as sinners*. He does receive sinners still, and receives them notwithstanding their sins — yea, because of them. He receives the very worst of sinners — however worthless, despised by others, or peculiar their circumstances may be. He receives sinners of every clime, at any age, without making a distinction. Every sinner that comes to Him is received by Him. He receives them with all their sins upon them, however polluted, or however base. He receives them without anything to recommend them — without any reluctance — most graciously. He receives them to pardon all their sins — to cleanse them from all their defilement — to justify them from all charges — to heal all their wounds — to make them new creatures — to use them to His glory — to make them a peculiar people, zealous of good works on earth — and to glorify them with Himself in heaven forever. Beloved, if you feel that you cannot go to God as a saint, go to Jesus as a sinner. Are you doubting the character of your past experience? Go to Him as you did at first, or as though you never had gone. Go, for He will receive you. Go, for He is at this very moment waiting to bless you.

*His blood can cleanse the blackest soul,
And wash your guilt away;
He will present you sound and whole
In that tremendous day.*



JULY 28

I know whom I have chosen.

John 13:18

SOME HAVE BEEN chosen to office, who were not chosen to salvation. This was the case with Judas. But all believers are chosen to everlasting life. He chose them as an act of sovereignty; as presented to Him by the Father. He chose His people to be His bride — His servants — His witnesses — His glory. His choosing them was the cause of their choosing Him. He knows His chosen ones. His knowledge of them is perfect. He knows them by name and where they live — He knows their hearts — their faith — their hope — their love — their fears — their sorrows — their works — their wants. His knowledge of them is a source of comfort to them. He approves of them. He will put a difference between them and others. If Jesus knows all His people thus, He must be God; for who could distinctly know the number, names, residences, hearts, and entire circumstances of a number which no man can number, but God. Beloved, Jesus knows us so as to humble our pride — honour our faith — supply all our needs — guide our steps — and reward our good works. Ever remember: Jesus knows my ways in the family — in the business — in the church — in all places. He knows His chosen ones, as the Father does His beloved child; as the husband does His tenderly attached bride. Thus He knows me.

*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.*



JULY 29

*Let us draw near hither to God.
1 Samuel 14:36*

BY NATURE WE are far from God. By grace we are reconciled and brought nigh. But still we live at a great distance from Him. In prayer we meet with God on a throne of grace. We sometimes enjoy nearness, but we are near to Him whether we enjoy it or no. Let us keep this view of prayer before our minds: it is *drawing near to God*. Let us often pray and so draw nigh to Him. In order to this we must believe that He is. We must embrace the atonement. We must credit His word, especially the promises. We must desire what we ask. We must expect what we ask, if we really need it, and He has promised it. We must plead as though argument and earnestness could prevail. We must place our entire confidence in the name of Jesus. We must importune until we succeed. *How* should we draw near? With confidence, as children — with reverence, as sinners — with frequency, as dependents — with a pure conscience — without wrath or doubting — being careful that we do not indulge iniquity in our hearts. Let us draw near in the closet — in the family — in the church — in the street. Let us draw near for we are invited. We are exhorted. We are commanded. Therefore we *must* or *sin*; we *must* or *suffer*.

*O look with pity on me, Lord,
Thy precious influence afford!
From sin and Satan set me free,
And help me to draw near to Thee.*



JULY 30

To obey is better than sacrifice.
1 Samuel 15:22

WE ARE PRONE to attach too much importance to ceremonies. Israel did so. Thousands do so now to a very fearful extent. But obedience to moral precepts, out of love to God, while depending for life and peace on the finished work of Christ alone, is what pleases God. To obey is better than to sacrifice. The obedience intended requires the surrender of the judgment — the acquiescence of the conscience — the concurrence of the will — and the submission of the whole man to the authority of God. Such obedience pleases God better than any sacrifice which we can offer, because it is an acknowledgment of His wisdom and goodness in requiring, and it is a hearty compliance with His will. But in order to our obedience being thus acceptable, it must be Scriptural — sincere — humble — uniform — and constant. Then it is better than any gifts which we can present, than any sufferings we can endure. We must obey God as a sovereign, while we love Him as a Father. We must reverence His authority, while we trust in His promises. Our obedience must be that of children — of children living under the smile of a father's love. Our obedience is not to be considered a price paid for blessings, but as the proof of love, and the effect of union to Christ.

*My God, with heavenly wisdom bless,
And teach me how thyself to please.
Work in me both to will and do,
That I Thy glory may pursue.*



JULY 31

The Father himself loveth you.

John 16:27

LOVETH WHO? All who love Jesus. And who are they? Such as believe His word — rely on His merits — trust in His name — observe His ordinances — keep His precepts — and find Him to be precious to their souls. All such are beloved of the Father. This love includes His infinite good will toward them, and His delight in them. It is an infinite willingness to do them good, and to bestow blessings upon them. This appeared first in a purpose, then in a promise, and at length in the glorious work of His beloved Son. His love is eternal, immutable, and free. The proofs of it are the covenant — the gift of His Son — the bestowment of the Holy Spirit — the Bible — all gospel privileges and spiritual blessings — with the kingdom of glory at last. Does the Father Himself love us? Then let us believe the fact, especially when we go to prayer. Let us love Him in return, and be willing to do and suffer all His will. Let us live above the world, and testify unto it, that the works thereof are evil. Let us seek the welfare of all He loves. Let us pity, plead for, and plead with sinners. Let us encourage all who are seeking the Lord, assuring them of His love. Let us aim at the increase, union, and spirituality of the church. Because God loves us:

*Let every tongue the Father own,
Who when we all were lost,
To seek and save us sent the Son,
And gives the Holy Ghost.*



AUGUST 1

*The LORD hath put away thy sin.
2 Samuel 12:13*

THE SIN OF DAVID was flagrant and fearful. He first committed adultery, then made Uriah drunk, then planned his murder, then ascribed it to divine providence, and lay comparatively careless under the whole for several months. At length he is aroused from his lethargy, and then he humbly confesses his transgressions unto the Lord. His confession was preceded by conviction, it was attended with compunction, it was confirmed by supplication, and it was crowned with forgiveness. "The Lord hath put away thy sin." Sin appears before God pleading against the sinner. The Advocate appears also, opposing it. He prevails, and God pardons the grievous offender. His sin is so forgiven, as to be forgotten. This is pardoning like a God. Observe, the man that frankly and honestly confesses his sins will find that God fully and freely pardons. If God puts away our sin, our enemies shall search for it in vain. It shall not be found. If God casts your sins behind His back, you will often place them before your face, in order to humble you, to preserve you from turning again to folly, and to inspire you with gratitude and love. So did David. He says, "My sin is ever before me." Pardoned sinners are always sorry *for* sin, afraid *of* sin, and watchful *against* sin.

*Jesus, giver of contrition,
Giver Thou of pardon art;
Wound me, O my kind Physician,
Break, and then bind up my heart.*



AUGUST 2

The last enemy.
1 Corinthians 15:26

THE CHRISTIAN HAS many enemies, but through grace he shall overcome them all. “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Death is an enemy to kingdoms, cutting down the wise, the patriotic, and the philanthropic. It is an enemy to congregations, removing the active, the benevolent, and the unprofitable hearer. It is an enemy to churches, robbing them of their officers, their teachers, the youthful, the devoted, and the most zealous members. It is an enemy to families, taking away the parent, the husband, the wife, the offspring. It is an enemy to individuals, to saints, but especially to sinners. It was an enemy to our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the last enemy — the last in its introduction. Satan comes first, then sin, then death. It is the last in its attack. We have disease, often age, and then death. It is the last that will be destroyed, for God has decreed it, Christ has promised it, saints pray for it, the church anticipates it, and Jesus is coming to execute the judgment written. Yes, it shall be destroyed certainly, perfectly, forever. But even now the saint may defy its power, be reconciled to its attack, long for its stroke, rejoice in its arms, and spring from its grasp to the enjoyment of unspeakable glory.

*O Lord! that I may thus depart,
Thy joys to share, Thy face to see,
Impress Thine image on my heart,
And teach me now to walk with Thee.*



AUGUST 3

O when wilt thou come unto me?

Psalm 101:2

THE PRESENCE OF the Lord is the heaven of His people. They cannot be satisfied or happy without it. He is the object of their love — the source of their enjoyment — the centre of their desires — and the life of their souls. If He is present, all is well. But if He is absent nothing can yield them satisfaction — they are restless. Their souls can find no repose; their desires no rest. The reasons are many. In His favour is their life. In His fellowship is wealth and peace. In His presence is fullness of joy, safety, rest, refreshment, and victory. His presence promotes their sanctification, enlarges their hearts, and ripens the fruits of grace. It proves the excellency of their religion. The Lord now visits His people. They sometimes lose the sense of His presence. Having once enjoyed it, they cannot but long for it again. The pleading, desiring, importunate soul shall be satisfied. Reader, have you enjoyed the presence of God? Do you enjoy it now? Can you find any substitute for it? Are you crying with David, “My soul followeth hard after Thee?” Or, “O when wilt Thou come unto me?” Or, “Let Thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live; for Thy law is my delight?” If you are careless about God’s presence, you are a stranger to it.

*My thirsty soul with strong desires,
To God, the living God, aspires;
Come, gracious Lord, and let me know,
The joys which from Thy presence flow.*



AUGUST 4

Oh that God would speak!
Job 11:5

JOB'S FRIENDS mistook his case. They failed to convince him by their reasonings. They were desirous to do so, therefore one of them at length exclaims, "Oh that God would speak!" Thus the believer often exclaims. It supposes a desire to accomplish a certain end, a persuasion of the insufficiency of all but God, a kind and benevolent feeling. To whom may we desire God to speak? To *ourselves*, to assure us of our interest in His love, to relieve us under our distresses, and to establish us in the truth. To *sinner*s, to quicken them, to convert them, to bring them forth on the Lord's side. To *mourners*, to comfort them, to strengthen them, and to set them at liberty. To *backsliders*, to reprove and restore them to holiness, to happiness, and to usefulness. What does the exclamation teach us? Confidence in God — to apply to God in all difficult cases. Tried believer, God will speak *for* thee. Devoted Christian, God will speak with *thee*. How does He speak? By His word. By His providence. By His Spirit. Then let us listen to hear His voice. Let us look for the effects of His word. Let us plead with Him often to speak to us — by His preachers, by His ordinances, by His word and by every dispensation.

*Sweet is the voice of heavenly peace,
Which spreads His gospel o'er.
Then let His servants trust His grace,
Nor turn to folly more.*



AUGUST 5

Doing the will of God from the heart.

Ephesians 6:6

HERE IS A POINT to be ascertained: What is the will of God? The will of God concerning a sinner is that he should believe Him — love Him — obey Him. His will concerning a believer is that he should reverence His authority, receive His word, and observe His precepts. God's preceptive will revealed in the New Testament is plain, and that is to be the rule of our conduct. Here is a duty to be performed: to *do* the will of God — to do it, though it excite the opposition of our fellow men — though it cross our natural inclinations. We are to *do* a Father's will — to *perform* a Master's command — to *keep* a sovereign's laws — to *obey* a Saviour's precepts. The manner in which that will is to be done is also pointed out — *from the heart*. As every evil proceeds from the heart as depraved by sin, so every good thing proceeds from the heart as renewed by grace. "Doing the will of God from the heart," that is, not by constraint, but willingly. From the heart, that is, from conviction — from love. Doing it heartily, throwing the energies into it. Beloved, are you seeking to *know* the will of God? Are you willing to *do* it? Do you *act* up to the light you now have? Is your obedience hearty?

Be Christ my pattern and my guide.

His image may I bear,

O may I tread His sacred steps,

And His bright glories share!



AUGUST 6

*Wait thou only upon God.
Psalm 62:5*

WHAT DOES waiting upon God suppose? — *Dependence*. It is the posture of a subject — a servant — a child. *Promise*. Many things are promised us. Indeed all good things. But we must believe — feel our need — seek for the blessings — wait God's time. *Hope*. It is expectation that brings us to God, keeps us waiting upon God, and is the spring of all spiritual action. *Desire*. Unless I desire to receive from God, I shall not look to God, nor shall I wait upon God. *Obedience*. We are commanded to wait upon the Lord, and the neglect of this duty is sin. What does waiting upon God include? It includes faith in His word — supplication at His throne — attendance upon His ordinances — habitual looking out for answers to prayer, and the intervention of God on our behalf — eyeing God in all places, and in all things — acknowledging Him as the source and giver of all good things. Let us glance at the injunction: "Wait thou only upon God." Then and only then are you safe — holy — wealthy — content — thriving — happy. Wait on the Lord for all you need, in all you do, and especially when perplexed and troubled. The waiting soul is sure of the blessing, for He has promised, "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me."

*With humble faith I wait,
To see Thy face again;
Of Israel it shall ne'er be said,
He sought the Lord in vain.*



AUGUST 7

Those that hope in his mercy.

Psalm 147:11

MERCY SYMPATHIZES with misery, and the miserable are the objects of mercy. God has revealed His mercy to us in Jesus, in whom it appears in its tenderness, plentitude, constancy, and power. We can expect nothing from justice, for we have sinned. But we may expect everything from mercy, for God delighteth in it. The first thing the sinner seeks for is mercy, and the last thing the saint appeals to is mercy. There are many who have not the assurance of faith. They cannot say, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." They feel as if they dared not call God, "Father." It appears presumption in them to claim the promises, appropriate the doctrines or to say, "The Lord is my God." But they do hope in God's mercy. Mercy cheers them, encourages them, and at times gives them joy. Because God shows mercy to sinners through Jesus, they hope He will show mercy to them. They do not feel that they are pardoned, but they hope that they shall be. They are not sure that they shall be saved, but they are looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. How precious to them then is the fact, that "the Lord *taketh pleasure in them* that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy." He is pleased to hear them call, and will answer.

*Ye souls who fear His name, 'tis you
The glorious Lord delights to view.
And they who on His mercy rest,
Shall with His richest love be blest.*



AUGUST 8

*It pleased God.
Galatians 1:15*

PAUL IS SPEAKING of being separated from his mother's womb, of being called by grace, of Christ being revealed in him, and of his being made a preacher, and an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he traces up the whole to the pleasure of God. It pleased God to convert, consecrate, and crown the apostle with such eminent success. There was nothing in him to deserve it, nothing to move God to do it. He did it, just because He would, because it pleased Him to do it. So in our case. Do we differ from others? From our former selves? Who made us to differ? Have we spiritual gifts and graces? Why were they conferred upon us, and not on others whom we know? We can trace it to no cause but the sovereign good pleasure of God. He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and hath compassion because He will have compassion. When all have more than they deserve, none have cause to complain. But where some are peculiarly favoured, it becomes them to trace their favours to their proper source, and be grateful. "The Lord taketh pleasure in His people, He will beautify the meek with salvation." "The Lord will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it pleased the Lord to make them His people."

*God's glorious arm the work hath wrought,
My soul abhors a boasting thought;
Before His feet I humbly own,
The praise is due to grace alone.*



AUGUST 9

What do ye more than others?

Matthew 5:47

WHAT DO YOU possess more than others? Look around at the asylum — at the union house — at the prison — at the hospital — at the sick room — at the hovel. Look at the blind — the deaf — the lame — the dumb — the insane — the idiot. Look back at what saints once were called to endure. See the wanderer covered only with a sheep skin — the confessor in his dungeon — the martyr at the stake — the praying slave under the lash of his cruel owner. Look at thy heart — at the Bible — at the sanctuary. Look up into heaven. Look down into hell. Can you count your mercies? Have you not received much? What do you *profess* more than others? That your principles are far better than those of the worldling — the pagan — the papist — and many professed Protestants. You profess to give the Lord the heart, the head, the hand, the life, the property, the all. What *do ye* more than others — for the poor — the church — the world? For the young? For the spread of the gospel, and the honour of Christ? Do you do more than some heathens, or papists, or worldlings? You *know* more than others. You *talk* more than others. More is *expected* from you than others. See therefore that you *do* more than others, or your profession will be justly suspected.

*Where is the holy walk that suits
The name and character we bear?
And where are seen those heavenly fruits,
That show we're not what once we were!*



AUGUST 10

*Is not the LORD your God with you?
1 Chronicles 22:18*

BELIEVER, IT IS your privilege to have the Lord always with you. He is pledged to you by promise. He has said, "I am with you always." "I will never leave you nor forsake you." He is with you as a Father to care for you; as the omnipotent God to defend you. He is with you to counsel you in difficulty — to guide you in perplexity — to strengthen you in weakness — to deliver you in danger — and to comfort you in all your tribulations. Your God has always proved Himself to be true to His word. *Is not* the Lord your God with you? Poor Christian! Tempted soul! Tried believer! Sick saint! Is not God with you? Who sustains you? Who supplies you? Who preserves you from desperation? He is with you. But if so, why fear? Why complain? Look up to Him. Call upon Him. Trust in Him. If the Lord be with you, you are a match for Satan — for the world — for every trouble — yea, for death itself. Endeavour to realize the fact: God is with me. Say, "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge; therefore will we not fear." "I will trust and not be afraid — for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation."

*With us is Jehovah of Hosts,
Our God, as in Jacob of old;
Our soul of His faithfulness boasts,
And in God we our refuge behold!*



AUGUST 11

I have loved you.
John 13:34

THE LOVE OF Christ is an inexhaustable subject. It is full of sweetness. He loved us before we knew Him, and He manifested His love by preferring our nature to angels, by making a full and sufficient atonement for our sins, by conquering all our spiritual foes, by going to heaven as our forerunner, by sending down the Holy Spirit, by acting as our advocate and intercessor, and by sympathizing with us. He has displayed His love in His dealings with us. He found us enemies to God, and He reconciled us. He bore with us when under conviction of sin. He keeps us, for we cannot be trusted alone for one moment. He only chastens, when He might justly punish us. He restores us from all our wanderings. He carries on His work, and supplies all our needs. He rejoices to save us, though great sinners. He does everything that is necessary for us, and does all cheerfully. His love is displayed in what He intends to do. He will come and fetch us as our Bridegroom. He will separate us from all sinners. He will clothe us with glory. He will publicly marry us. He will exalt us to His throne. He will bring us to reign where we served, to rejoice where we suffered, and to shine where we were put to shame. Glorious Saviour! Thy love indeed passeth knowledge.

*Lord, in Thy love I yet behold
An undiminished store,
A depth unmeasured and untold,
A sea without a shore.*



AUGUST 12

Give an account of thy stewardship.

Luke 16:3

WE ARE IN office. We were put into office by another. Our office is one of trust and responsibility. It requires the exercise of the head — the heart — the hand — the foot. A steward should be active — faithful — diligent — and keep the reckoning day in view. We must give an account. We may be called upon to do so soon — suddenly. Our Master is coming, and we must give an account of our *time*, how it has been occupied — for or against Him. Of our *talents*, how engaged — as money, voice, influence. Of our *souls*, and all their powers — as understanding, will, affections, and memory. Of our *conduct* toward others, and the cause of God. Of the *sentiments* we entertain and propagate. Of our *opportunities* for usefulness. Beloved, you are a steward. Do you realize this? Your Bible is the master's rule and your directory. Do you search it as such? Your master's eye is always upon you. Do you constantly bear this in mind? Opportunities of usefulness are tests and trials which prove your spirit and disposition. Do you view them as such? The day of the Lord is at hand. Then, all our accounts will be settled, and then however treated now, every faithful steward will "have praise of God." O to realize our responsibility and act accordingly!

*All-righteous and eternal Judge,
When summoned at Thy bar to stand,
May I acquitted and approved
Be crowned with bliss at Thy right hand.*



AUGUST 13

Ye are the children of the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 14:1

IMPORTANT AND interesting relation this — children of God. Who are so? Those who are born again, in whom a new nature produces new desires — new tastes — new sorrows — new joys — new pursuits. Those who are taught of God, and who have received the Spirit of adoption. Such are under obligation. Children should believe what their Father says — do what their Father bids — go where their Father sends — trust in a Father's care — expect what a Father promises — and look for a Father's supplies. What comfort such a relationship affords! You are not, you cannot be friendless. You are not orphans. You have a Father, and an incomparable Father. You should not despond, but remember: in all your trials, a Father's love — in poverty, your Father's wealth — under reproaches, your honourable relation — in sickness, your happy home — in death, your endless life. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. 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."

*Oh! let a sense of this Thy grace
My best affections move,
That, while my lips Thy praise proclaim,
My heart may feel Thy love.*



AUGUST 14

Give, and it shall be given unto you.

Luke 6:38

THE TEACHER OF this precept has set us the example. "For 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." In Him also we see an illustration of the promise. "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. *Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." The *precept* is "GIVE." Be liberal. Give to every good cause if you have the means. Give from a good motive. Give with a good end in view, as to discharge a necessary duty, or to promote the welfare of mankind, or to honour God. Give by a good rule, according as God hath given to you. The *promise* is, "IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU." Who is it that makes the promise? He who *can* fulfil it, for He is rich. He who *will* fulfil it, for He is good. He who *must* fulfil it, for He is faithful. The promise is made to every liberal soul. The promise extends to body and soul, to time and eternity. Its extent is "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over." We sow a few grains, and reap a harvest. Are you liberal? Does your liberality flow from faith in Christ, and love to His name?

*If profit be thy scope,
Diffuse thine alms about.
The worldling prospers laying up,
The Christian, laying out.*



AUGUST 15

He will keep the feet of his saints.

1 Samuel 2:9

THE SAINTS ARE the sanctified ones — those who were set apart by the Father for His praise — who were separated by the precious blood-shedding of our Lord Jesus Christ — who are regenerated, purified, and brought out of the world, by the agency and operation of the Holy Spirit. They are not of the world, even as Jesus was not of the world. But though thus privileged they are entirely dependent. They need keeping — constant keeping — the keeping of a God; for no one else is sufficient to preserve them. Their weakness is very great. Their road is rough, thorny, and dangerous. Their foes are many, and they are vigilant, experienced, and determined. Their fears are great, and their courage very small. Still they are safe, for the Lord is their keeper. He keeps them from pride — presumption — security — and final falling. He keeps them by His word — by His Spirit — by trials — by disappointments — by bereavements — by His angels — and by His ordinances. They are safe whom God keeps, but only they. He keeps all His saints, without one exception. But He keeps none but saints, therefore many professors fall. Believers are kept through faith, by His power, unto salvation. “Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe.”

*Saviour! I trust Thy faithful grace,
To uphold my goings in Thy ways,
Till walking with my God I see
The glorious place prepared for me.*



AUGUST 16

In thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

Psalm 89:16

IN WHOSE righteousness? In the righteousness of God, for we have none of our own. He has provided a righteousness for us. He freely gives it to us. We receive it by faith. Our religion is peculiar, for we are wise in the wisdom of another, even our Head. We are rich in the wealth of another, even our elder Brother. And we are righteous in the righteousness of another, even the righteousness of our Saviour. This magnifies the law, fills the soul with joy, and endures forever. In this righteousness we are exalted above the condemning power of the law — above the wicked designs of Satan — above the present evil world — and above the sting and power of death. It exalts us to peace and friendship with God — to the adoption of children — to boldness and access with confidence into the presence of God — to sit in the heavenlies with Christ — and to endless glory. It exalts our views of God's character and perfections, and of Jesus in His person, work, and love. Let us prize this righteousness, daily wear it, and plead it always for acceptance with God. It is our wedding dress, our impenetrable shield, and our title to the heavenly mansions. It secures, it comforts, it strengthens, and it elevates us.

*Let others in the gaudy dress
Of fancied merit shine;
The Lord shall be my righteousness,
The Lord forever mine.*



AUGUST 17

*Continue in prayer.
Colossians 4:2*

P RAYER IS ALWAYS necessary, and it is always profitable. But we often restrain prayer before God. This is sinful. It dishonours God, and it injures us. In prayer we do homage to the perfections of God. We exercise faith on His omnipresence. We express our dependence on Him for our supplies. We evince the sincerity of our profession. We acknowledge our poverty and weakness. We unburden the mind of our secret trials. We give vent to our feelings of joy and sorrow, of gratitude and grief. We confess our sins, acknowledge our backslidings, and obtain pardon and restoring grace. We give utterance to our desires, and spread our case before the Lord. Prayer is the medium of communication between God and our souls. We communicate our thoughts, feelings, fears, and desires. And He communicates light, strength, comfort, and grace to us. Prayer is a very important duty. It is a great privilege. Many things will conspire to lead us to neglect it. But in prayer we should be constant — fervent — believing — hopeful — incessant. God loves it, Satan hates it, and every true Christian values it. We should be always in a praying frame, though we cannot be always in a praying posture. It is always necessary, profitable, and acceptable to God.

*We perish if we cease from prayer,
Lord, grant us power to pray!
And when to meet Thee we prepare,
Oh! meet us by the way.*



AUGUST 18

*The upright love thee.
Song of Solomon 1:4*

NONE ARE UPRIGHT by nature, for none seek to render to God the things which are God's, and to men the things which are men's. But this is uprightness. It flows from grace. It is the effect and proof of a new creation. The truly upright regard the eye of God, as fixed upon them — the word of God, as binding upon them — the approbation of God, as the chief thing to be sought by them — and the judgment of God, as most important to them. The upright love Jesus. They all know Him and highly esteem Him. They love Him uprightly, and as the proof of it, they rejoice in His presence. They are grieved at His absence. They desire the closest union with Him. They aim to please Him in all things. They will give up everything for Him. They love to speak of Him, and they always speak well of Him. They will do anything for Him — perform any duty, avoid any sin. They will choose to suffer for Him rather than deny or dishonour Him. Reader, are you upright? Do you love Jesus? Sincerely? Supremely? Every upright soul loves Him. You are not upright if you do not. Terrible is the denunciation of the inspired apostle, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed when the Lord cometh."

*Jesus, my balm for every ill,
My life in death Thou art;
Thy lips as lilies pale, distill
The myrrh that heals my heart.*



AUGUST 19

My soul refused to be comforted.

Psalms 77:2

GOD HAS PROVIDED suitable and sufficient comfort for His people. He sends them comforters just as their circumstances require. But they at times refuse to hear the voice of the charmer. The Lord has perhaps taken away an idol — or He withholds His sensible presence, that they may learn to live by faith — or He has blighted their worldly prospects — or He has written vanity and emptiness upon all their gourds, cisterns, and delights. They give way to passion, as did Jonah — or they sink into sullen gloom — or allow unhumbled pride to rule the spirit — or yield to extreme sorrow, as Rachel did — or fall under the power of temptation — or imbibe the notion, that they have no right to comfort. This is wrong, all wrong, decidedly wrong. Look at what is left you — at what the gospel presents to you — at what heaven will be to you. But the psalmist was recovered from this state. He was convinced that it was wrong. He was sorry for his sin. He was reformed in his spirit and conduct. He wrote this psalm to instruct, caution, and warn us. Observe: they who are entitled to all comfort, often through their own folly, enjoy the least. The Lord's people are often their own tormentors. They put away the cup of comfort from them, and say they are unworthy of it.

*O thou Source of every blessing
Chase my sorrows, cheer my heart,
Till in heav'n, Thy smiles possessing,
Life, and joy, and peace impart.*



AUGUST 20

*He is faithful that promised.
Hebrews 10:23*

THE PROMISES OF God were freely made. But being made, they must be fulfilled, for God is faithful. He has promised us as believers eternal life — the pardon of all sin — purity of heart — peace of conscience — growth in grace — perseverance in His ways — support under all our trials — supplies for all our wants — and that all things shall work together for our good. These promises we should believe, and expect the Lord to make them good. He is faithful to His promises. This is clear from the infinite perfection of His nature — the stability of His well-ordered covenant — His solemn oath — the testimony of all His saints — the gift of His beloved Son — the history of the church in all ages — and the design with which the promises were made. Let us therefore remember, that, “Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.” Believe that, “The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil,” or, “the evil one.” And let us commit the keeping of our souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. We cannot place too much confidence in His word, nor too steadily expect its fulfillment. Heaven and earth may pass away, but His word can undergo no change. It is changeless as His nature, and immutable as His throne. Nothing is so stable as God’s word.

*True to His word, God gave His Son
To die for crimes which men had done.
Blest pledge! He never will revoke
A single promise He has spoke.*



AUGUST 21

*Perfect in Christ Jesus.
Colossians 1:28*

THE BELIEVER painfully proves that he is imperfect in himself. Imperfection appears to be stamped upon all he *feels*, upon his desires — his joys — and sorrows; and upon all he *does*, on his prayers — his praises — and all his performances. What says the sigh, which escapes from his full heart? Imperfect. What says the groan, which ascends from his troubled bosom? Imperfect. What says the tear, which glistens in his eye, or rolls down his cheek? Imperfect. But there is perfection in Christ. In Him there is a perfect atonement, to reconcile us — a perfect righteousness, to justify us — perfect holiness, to sanctify us — perfect wisdom, to direct and instruct us. We become perfect by union to Him, for as His bride we have fellowship with Him in all that He has. We become perfect by receiving from Him, for of His fullness we receive and grace for grace. We become perfect by being with Him, for we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Our full perfection is decreed, promised, provided for, and will be realized. Christ now represents us as perfect, He will make us perfect, and then present us in full perfection. Delightful thought! We shall be perfectly holy and perfectly happy.

*With Him His members on the tree,
Fulfilled the laws demands;
'Tis, "I in them, and they in me,"
For thus the union stands.*



AUGUST 22

*Thou hast a little strength.
Revelation 3:8*

SINNERS ARE strengthless. Saints are very weak but they have a little strength. Strength is provided for us in Jesus. He is the strength of the poor. Strength is promised us in the word. God says, “I will strengthen thee.” Strength is presented to us by the gospel, which says, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” Strength is to be received by faith, in answer to prayer — in the diligent employment of what we have — by virtue of our union to Jesus. We have a little strength. Let us pray for more. Let us hold fast and hold on. We should be grateful for the provision made, the promise given, and the welcome we receive at the throne of grace. We should use what we have against Satan, sin, and the world; and for God and the promotion of His cause. We ought to seek for more. God will not refuse us. He cannot deny His word. We need more, and we may soon need more than we do at present. What a mercy that we have a little, for we were once without strength. We have a little now, we are promised enough, and we shall be strong by-and-by. It is sweetly testified of our God that He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Believer, wait on Him, and He will strengthen thee with strength in thy soul.

*Stand in the Saviour’s might
With all His strength endued;
And take to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God.*



AUGUST 23

Acquainted with grief.
Isaiah 53:3

★ **S**TRANGE ACQUAINTANCE for the Son of God — the brightness of glory, and the express image of the Father's person! But He came into our world on purpose, that He might know by experience all that His people had suffered; yea, all that His people deserved. He had heard of sorrow. He had seen it in others. But He had never felt it Himself. He took our nature. He came into our place. He began to suffer as soon as He was born, and He pursued a course of suffering until He died. In the sweat of His brow He ate His bread. The reproaches of them that reproached His Father, fell on Him. He became intimate with grief. He knew it in all its varieties. In all its depth. No one ever suffered so much, or from so many causes, or so constantly as He. He visited joy occasionally, but He dwelt with grief. It was His companion. Christian, thy Lord suffered for thee. He suffered like thee. He suffered far, far more than thee. And now He can sympathize with thee. He knows by experience what human nature feels. He knows the effect of grief upon the nerves, and the spirits, and the temper. He suffered from all quarters, from heaven, earth, and hell. And therefore He is able, He is moved, to succour thee in all thy sorrows, griefs, and woes.

As man, He pities my complaints;
His power and truth are all divine;
He will not fail, He cannot faint;
Lord, make Thy full salvation mine!



AUGUST 24

*The whole family.
Ephesians 3:15*

THE CHURCH OF Christ is a family. Part of it is in heaven, part on earth, and part is not yet brought into existence. God is the Father of the whole. Every child is alike the object of His love, care, and compassion. Each one lives in His sight, and is dear to His heart. He will not part with one. Jesus, who is *surety* for the whole, will never have to say with the troubled patriarch, “one is not.” Those in heaven differ from us in place, in purity, in happiness, and employment; but they are not more loved than we are. The whole family is alike beloved, redeemed, adopted, and destined to perfect holiness and happiness. Every name is recorded in the book of life, and engraved on the Saviour’s hands. Heaven is the family mansion — our Father’s house. The kingdom is our Father’s gift. For us He prepared it before the foundation of the world, and with pleasure He bestows it upon us. We are all one in Christ. Let us therefore love the brotherhood. Let us endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Let us treat every Christian kindly, seeing the Saviour says of what is done to them, “*ye did it unto Me.*” You cannot hurt a saint, but you injure the Saviour. The head suffers in the members; the father in his family.

*Lord, may my spirit form a part
Of that thrice happy whole,
Derive its pulse from Thee the heart.
Its life from Thee the soul!*



AUGUST 25

*On mine arm shall they trust.
Isaiah 51:5*

AND WELL THEY may, for it is nerved with omnipotence, it is directed by infinite wisdom, and it is employed by tenderest love. It is stretched out for us to lean upon for support — to work for us, and to secure a supply — to fight for us, and defend us from our foes — and to carry us when we are unable to go, that we may make progress in weakness, and when sick. It is a Father's arm, yet the arm of God. It is a Saviour's arm, and yet the arm that sustains heaven and earth. It is our Brother's arm, and yet the arm that bars the gates of hell, and holds every fallen spirit in check. On *this* arm we must trust, not on our own. We must be weaned from trusting on all other. We must be brought to trust wholly and always on the Lord's. This is warranted by the word. It is approved and commanded by our God. It is rewarded in our present experience. They shall trust in darkness and difficulty — for all that My promises contain — because they feel the necessity of it — and when all beside fails and deceives them. God hath said, and He will surely bring to pass. He will have us trust in the arm of His power, follow the leadings of His providence, aim at the advancement of His cause, and live dependent on His bounty, or we shall not know happiness.

*Arm of the Lord, whose wond'rous power
The world and all things made,
Thou art our strength, defence and tower,
Our ever present aid.*



AUGUST 26

We count them happy which endure.

James 5:11

UR AFFLICTIONS are trials. Every professor shall be tried. Many faint in the day of adversity. Some go back and walk no more with the Saviour. The effect of the stroke is according to the nature of that on which it falls. The softened, yields; the hardened, flies. Some under this discipline fall at His feet, but others fly in His face. Happy is the man who meets his trials like a Christian, with humility, faith, fortitude, and patience — who endures them without repining, complaining, and rebelling against God. He looks not so much at the rod, as at the hand that uses it — nor only at the hand, but at the heart that guides the hand. He says, “It is discipline. It is chastisement. It is my Father who strikes, and He never corrects for His own pleasure but my profit, to make me a partaker of His holiness. I have prayed for deeper sanctification. He is answering my prayer. I have desired brighter evidences for heaven, and He is granting them. Shall I then complain? The cup which my heavenly Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?” Such a man *endures* affliction. He meets it, he hears it, he improves it as a Christian. He is blessed. His trials must do him good, nor will they continue long.

*Wisdom and mercy guide my way;
Shall I resist them both?
A poor blind creature of a day,
And crushed before the moth.*



AUGUST 27

*He preserveth the way of his saints.
Proverbs 2:8*

THE BELIEVER'S journey lies through an enemy's land. His course is lined with tribulation. His pilgrimage is exhausting and wearying. It is rendered more trying by his own weakness, and the inward conflict. But it is the only way to the city of habitation. It leads to the rest and the inheritance promised. And the Lord always accompanies His saints, His holy ones. He suits His mercies to their condition, and adapts His communications to their wants. He preserves them from being overcome, so that at the worst, it may be said to them, "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to men: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." He preserves them from being driven back when *buffeted* by Satan, making His strength perfect in their weakness, and proving that His grace is sufficient for them. He preserves them with a watchful eye — a powerful arm — and a loving heart. Beloved, look back and see how He has preserved you. Look forward and trust Him to preserve you in all time to come. It is His practice to preserve His saints in their course.

*The saints at all times are secure
In Jesus' everlasting love;
Through Him they shall all storms endure,
And with Him reign enthroned above.*



AUGUST 28

*A great high priest.
Hebrews 4:14*

THE LORD JESUS is in office for us. He is our Priest. He was appointed, anointed, and sent to do the priest's office on our behalf. He had to make an atonement for our sins, and He has made it — an atonement which is radiant with all the glories of deity — infinite in its value — and eternal in its efficacy. It has expiated our guilt, and made a perfect satisfaction for our offences. Now He is employed in interceding for us. For this He lives. In this work He is always engaged. He also presents our prayers, our various services, and our poor gifts to the Father, having perfumed them with the incense of His own merits. He averts every evil from us, procures every good for us, and pours down innumerable favours upon us. He is now in the holiest, officiating before the throne. He has sprinkled the blood, He offers the incense, and He will soon come out to bless us. He is not only a priest, but "the high priest." Not only the high priest, but "a great High Priest." Superior to all other, in the dignity of His person, in the completeness of His qualifications, and in the efficacy of His services. He is *our* great high priest, and also the Son of God. He is gone to appear in the presence of God for us. He is there presenting the blood for us tonight.

*He ever lives to intercede
Before His Father's face.
Give Him, my soul, thy cause to plead;
Nor doubt the Father's grace.*



AUGUST 29

*The LORD hath comforted his people.
Isaiah 49:13*

THE LORD HATH a people in the world which are peculiarly His own. This truth is constantly kept before us in His holy word. He has always loved them. He chose them to salvation. He redeemed them by the precious blood of Christ. They are united to, and viewed as one with, His beloved Son. They are dear to Him as the apple of His eye. Still they are deeply tried. They often sigh and groan. They are still sinners, and sin festers within them, when it does not break out into an open wound. It pains them when it does not openly disgrace them. They have more cause for gratitude than Gabriel has, yet they have much to distress and cast them down. But their God comforts them. He hath comforted His people by giving them His holy word — by erecting for them the throne of grace — by freely and forever pardoning all their sins — by bestowing His peace on them — by assuring them that He is their Father — by giving them Jesus as their portion, and with Him all things — and by unfolding before them the bright prospect of endless blessedness. What condescension is this, that the eternal God should stoop to comfort a worm! What grace, that He should comfort one who was but recently a rebel!

*This joy to strangers is unknown,
Nor can it be expressed;
It is revealed to those alone,
Who on the Saviour rest.*



AUGUST 30

Remember me, O LORD.

Psalms 106:4

THIS IS AN important prayer. There is very much wrapped up in it. It is poverty appealing to wealth, misery to mercy, the necessitous to a friend. If the Lord remember us, He will preserve us from evils, deliver us from dangers, direct us in difficulty, supply us in want, comfort us in sorrow, and lay everything under tribute for our welfare. If the Lord remember us, then it is not of much consequence who forgets us. He is more than all creatures, and enough in the absence of all. But He does remember us. He remembers that we are dust, that we are weak, exposed, dependent, and often deeply tried. He remembers for us His covenant, His promises, the sufferings of His dear Son, and the relation in which we stand to Him. Still we may plead to be remembered, that we may share in the gifts of His providence, in the bestowment of His grace, and in the proofs of His love. We should pray that He will remember to pardon our sins, to visit our souls, to revive our graces, to crown our labours, and to fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost. Remember me, O Lord, and preserve me from all danger this night, and raise me on the morrow full of faith, fired with zeal, glowing with love, and clothed with humility.

*Thou wond'rous Advocate with God,
I yield my soul to Thee;
While Thou art pleading at Thy throne,
Dear Lord, remember me.*



AUGUST 31

*I would seek unto God.
Job 5:8*

THIS IS SOUND advice. It is the counsel of a real friend. It is much better than seeking unto men, or poring over troubles, or indulging the fancy, or giving way to fears. Troubles generally look worst in the distance. They are seldom found to be so bad as they appeared to be. My friend, I know not what may be your case, but if I was in perplexity, I would seek unto God for wisdom. If I was in sorrow, I would seek unto God for comfort. If I was in weakness, I would seek unto God for strength. If I was under guilt, I would seek unto God for pardon. If I was in a severe conflict, I would seek unto God for victory. If I was in doubt and fear, I would seek unto God for confidence and a sense of His favour. If I was under the power of unbelief, I would seek unto God for faith. If I was harassed by Satan, I would seek unto God to lift up a standard against him. If I was afraid of falling, I would seek unto God to uphold me with the right hand of His righteousness. If I was alarmed at death, I would seek unto God to turn the shadow of death into the morning. Whatever you want, seek it of God. Whatever you fear, carry it to God. Whatever troubles you, lay it before God. You cannot seek unto Him in vain, or without profit.

*Seek unto God, He loves to give,
Ask but in faith, it shall be given;
Go pray, expecting to receive
His grace, His image, and His heaven.*



SEPTEMBER 1

Songs in the night.

Job 35:10

THE PRESENCE OF God and the light of His countenance, make the Christian's day. His absence makes our night. But this figure is often employed to represent afflictions. Losses, crosses, sickness, poverty, old age, death — these constitute a very gloomy night. They are dark, cold and tedious. But in the gloomiest night the Lord can make us happy. His presence will make us sing. "He giveth songs in the night." He tunes the heart by the light of joy and awe. He furnishes us with matter for praise. He enables us to sing to the wonder and surprise of many. So did Paul and Silas at Philippi — the prophet Habakkuk, in prospect of a famine — and so did many of the martyrs in their dungeons. How many have sung for joy in the vale of poverty, on the bed of sickness, and in the Jordan of death. Christian, thy God can make thee joyful in the gloomiest circumstances, and give thee a song in the dreariest night. Cleave to Him. Walk closely with Him. His gracious presence will disperse all gloom, and give thee joy, peace, and thankfulness. His love will make thee rejoice in His salvation. He loves to see His people happy. He is pleased to hear them sing. And those who walk closely with Him will joy and rejoice in Him.

*Thou giver of songs in the night,
Of joy in the darkest distress,
I sigh to be filled with Thy light,
I long for a glimpse of Thy face.*



SEPTEMBER 2

Doest thou well to be angry?

Jonah 4:4

JONAH QUARRELLED with his God. And who has not? We may not speak out as plainly as he did, but we have been in the same temper, and have manifested the same spirit. Very few are *quite satisfied* with the Lord's plans. Fewer still are *always pleased* with the Lord's works. How many quarrel with His sovereignty? What hard things have been spoken against it? How many complain of His providence, and think it partial, unkind, and almost unjust! Beloved, we are often angry with God! This temper shows itself in fretfulness, complaining, and sullen gloom. Some are so angry that they will scarcely speak to Him, and they restrain prayer before God. Others will not acknowledge their obligations, therefore, they do not praise Him. But do we well to be angry? Angry with our Father, whose wisdom is infinite, whose love is as constant as the day, and who constantly showers His blessings upon us! Angry with God, who has pardoned our sins, justified our persons, provided for our wants, united us to His Son, and blessed us with all spiritual blessings! Surely it is a sin — a grievous sin — not to be pleased with all He does, with all He has provided, and with all He requires. Doest thou well to complain, to repine, or be angry?

*Lord, I confess my sin to Thee.
Pardon and peace impart;
From evil passions set me free,
And sanctify my heart.*



SEPTEMBER 3

*In all their afflictions he was afflicted.
Isaiah 63:9*

THE UNION BETWEEN the Lord and His people is real — it is close — it is vital. Whatever affects them, affects Him. He has a fellow feeling with them. If they are punished, He is persecuted. They never suffer alone. He is always present, and as the parent suffers with the child by sympathy, so the Lord is said to suffer with His people. Their afflictions are many. They are often deep. They are frequently very painful. But in *all* their afflictions He is afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saves them. Believer, art thou suffering — in thy mind — in thy body? Jesus at the right hand of the Father knows it. He sympathizes with thee. Sweet thought! Jesus, at this moment is sympathizing with me! He is touched with the feeling of my infirmities. He knows my weakness, my fears, my many trials. He presents them all to the Father, and pleads for me that I may obtain mercy, and find grace to help me in time of need. Precious Lord Jesus! May I ever cherish the thought that Thou takest part with me in all my trials and afflictions, and wilt honourably bring me through them all.

*We have not an High Priest above
Unmoved at what we suffer here.
In tenderest sympathy of love
He shares our pain, our grief, and fear
Wounded with every wounded soul,
He bleeds the balm that makes us whole.*



SEPTEMBER 4

*Let me hear thy voice.
Song of Solomon 2:14*

THIS IS THE language of Jesus to His Church, to us. He loves to see us come to His throne — to hear us pour out our hearts before Him. The prayer of the upright is His delight. It may be as mournful as the cooing of the dove, and there may be as much sameness in it too, but He loves to hear it. We are wearied with telling the oft repeated tale. We fancy that He will be so too. But no! He says, “Let Me hear thy voice.” Shall we refuse Him? Rather, let us go to Him more frequently. Let us confess our sins, mourn over our follies, lament our proneness to backslide, plead His precious promises, seek the enjoyment of His presence, beseech Him to pardon our sins, and crave every blessing which He has to bestow. We cannot go to Him too often. We cannot ask for too much at His hands. We cannot be too frank with Him. He asks us to pray. He exhorts us to come often to His throne. He expostulates with us because we stay away. He sends troubles, trials, and afflictions to bring us near to Him. In every comfort, He says, “LET ME HEAR THY VOICE.” In every trial, He says, “Call upon Me, I will deliver thee.” Beloved, go this night to Jesus. Tell Him thou art come in obedience to His call. And let Him hear thy voice, acknowledging His goodness, pleading His promises, and seeking His grace.

*’Tis sweet to steal awhile away
From ev’ry cumbering care;
And spend the closing hours of day
In humble, grateful prayer.*



SEPTEMBER 5

*Yet I will rejoice in the LORD.
Habakkuk 3:18*

THIS WAS A WISE determination. Everything around us, and everything within us may change, but the Lord changes not. He is the same. Light may give place to darkness, peace to war, health to sickness, plenty to poverty, ease to suffering, and society to loneliness. Still we may be happy. We may rise above circumstances. We may rejoice that though much is lost, we have more that we can ever lose. But if we would imitate the prophet, we must make sure of our interest in the Lord and of our title to all the promises of His word. We must take clear and Scriptural views of His character into our minds. We must know that our sins are pardoned, that we are at peace with Him, that He is our fast and faithful friend. Then we may rejoice in Him at all times — for His fullness is our fortune, His power is our defence, His love is our solace, His promises are our security, His throne is our place of safety, and His presence is our heaven. Everything in God has a tendency to make us happy, and everything that is done by God, will promote our everlasting welfare. We may well say, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the flock shall be cast off from the fold, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

*God is the treasure of my soul,
The source of lasting joy,
A joy which want shall not impair,
Nor death itself destroy.*



SEPTEMBER 6

*Wherefore didst thou doubt?
Matthew 14:31*

THIS IS THE language of reproof. It was addressed to Peter, but to whom is it not applicable? Who of us have not doubted? Who does not often doubt? Who considers doubting as sinful? But it is so. Are not our doubts the offspring of unbelief? Do they not reflect on the love, care, constancy, and faithfulness of our Redeemer? Could He speak *plainer* than He has in His word? Could He do more to lay a firm foundation for our confidence, peace, and joy? Has He not promised to receive, pardon, and bless every coming sinner? Has He not promised to provide for, protect, and guide every saint? Has He not given us instances of the manner in which He proves His care, fulfils His word, and answers the prayers of His people, in the historical portions of His word? Has He spoken? Is He worthy of credit? Did He ever deceive? Can He trifle with an immortal soul? Is He not unchangeable? Then, “WHEREFORE DIDST THOU DOUBT?” Make no excuse for thy doubts, but at once acknowledge that they are sinful, and seek grace, that you may trust in the Lord with all your heart, and trust Him at all times. Doubts weaken the soul, exhaust the spirits, and hinder cheerful obedience. Therefore, strive against them.

*Within are fears, without a storm,
And foes are round about;
But Jesus will His word perform,
Then wherefore dost thou doubt?*



SEPTEMBER 7

They say unto God, Depart from us.

Job 21:14

THAT IS THE ungodly do so. His presence is offensive to them. They wish there was no God. But as there is one, they wish Him to keep at a distance from them. This is not your case. It was once. It would have been this evening but for grace. You desire the presence of God — this is the effect of His love. You have seen something of His glory, in the person of Jesus Christ. You have tasted that He is gracious. You are reconciled to Him and are at peace with Him. You have nothing to fear from Him. Therefore you desire that He would come unto you, and manifest Himself to your soul as He does not unto the world. You do not say, “Depart from me;” but, “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God.” Those who now say unto God, “Depart from us,” will one day hear Him say, “Depart from Me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and His angels.” But you who now invite Him into your hearts and your homes will hear Him invite you, saying, “Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

*My God, I cannot say “Depart,”
But, “Come and dwell with me.
Take full possession of my heart,
And keep me close to Thee.”*



SEPTEMBER 8

Testify against me.

Micah 6:3

BY OUR CONDUCT we often reflect upon the Lord. We treat Him with neglect and disrespect, preferring creatures or worldly things before Him. He speaks of this conduct as if it went to His heart. He says, "O My people, what have I done unto thee? And wherein have I wearied thee? *Testify against Me.*" Have you neglected the closet? Have you slighted the means of grace? Have you laid your Bible on one side and left it unopened? Have you withdrawn your thoughts and your affections from God, and given them to the world? Why is this? What reason have you for doing so? The Lord asks you why? He says, "Have you any charges against Me? Bring them forward. Have I treated you unkindly? Have I been false to My word? Have I acted in any way unbecoming My character? Tell Me. Why do you treat Me with neglect? Why do you prefer My enemy, the world, to Me? Tell out your reasons, let Me know all — anything but this shyness, this distance, this indifference." O believer, are you not guilty? Have you not wounded your God? Have you not grieved His Holy Spirit? Return, to thy injured Lord. Go, fall at His feet, confess your sins, crave His pardon, be reconciled, and embosomed in His love.

*Behold again I turn to Thee,
Oh! cast me not away, though vile.
No peace I have, no joy I see,
O Lord my God, but in Thy smile.*



SEPTEMBER 9

Thou hast known my soul in adversities.

Psalms 31:7

PROSPERITY MAKES friends, but adversity tries them. How many will visit and smile upon us when the sun shines. But who will venture out to do us good in the wintry, or stormy day? David had been in adversity. He had been forsaken and neglected by his friends, but not by his God. His God knew him, and visited him, and cared for him, and sympathized with him, and supplied him, and at length delivered him. This honour have all his saints. He knew Israel in the wilderness, in the land of great drought; and He will know us, that is, He will acknowledge us, and care for us, and approve of us. He hath done so. We have been in adversity. We have passed through a wilderness, but our God led us, and fed us, and preserved us, and brought us out into a wealthy place. We can witness for Him in reference to the past, and we ought calmly, quietly, and confidently to trust Him for the future. He hath passed His word that He will deliver us in six troubles, and that in seven no evil shall touch us — and He is faithful who hath promised. He is emphatically the friend of His people in distress, and in our greatest trials He will glorify His richest grace.

*Thy presence to my soul display,
And shine my gloomy fears away.
Let mercy to my thankful heart,
Its saving health and joys impart.*



SEPTEMBER 10

Unite my heart to fear thy name.

Psalm 86:11

TO FEAR GOD includes faith in His word, love to His character, zeal for His glory, concern to please Him, and the fear of offending Him. It sometimes signifies to worship Him. This embraces reverence, adoration, thanksgiving and prayer. Worship without the heart is worthless. But how often in worship do we feel our hearts distracted and wandering, and at a distance from God! Well may we pray, "Unite my heart to fear Thy name," — that is, calm it, compose it, attract it, fix it, inflame it — that it may throw all its energies into Thy service. Such a prayer proves that we love the service, desire to honour God in it, feel our own weakness, and seek to obtain grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. But do all saints feel their hearts thus prone to wander, and find it difficult to engage them in the Lord's service? They do at times, though some suffer from this much more than others. Yet all occasionally feel some reluctance to duty, or distractions in it. They are the subjects of dullness, deadness, and conflict. Therefore they all pray as David did here, or sigh as he did elsewhere, "O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes alway."

*How oft my heart's affections yield,
Scattered all o'er the world's wide field?
My vagrant passions, Lord, reclaim,
Unite them all to fear Thy name.*



SEPTEMBER 11

He will be our guide even unto death.

Psalms 48:14

WHAT A PRECIOUS assurance is this! Our God is our guide. He led us out of the world at first, directed us to the cross, and conducted us into the path of peace. He has led us through all our past difficulties and trials, He leads us by the hand at present, and He will never give up His charge, for He will be our guide even unto death. He will choose our way, lead us in the paths of righteousness, kindly converse with us on the road, point out the snares and dangers in our path, and keep us by His power through faith unto salvation. He undertook to guide us at first without our knowledge. He kindly appeared as our *Conductor* in answer to our prayers, and He will patiently bear with us unto the end. He may hide His face, refuse communion, withhold comforts, smite us for our follies, and teach us by painful experience our dependence on Himself, but He will never forsake us or give us up. He will guide us to the end of the journey, and will go with us *through* the last dark valley. He will not only lead us *to* the kingdom, but put us in possession *of it*. This He has promised, and He will faithfully perform it. Beloved, it is our Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom. He will guide us now, and by-and-by receive us to glory.

*For God, whom Zion boasts her friend,
Our God unchangeably is known;
Our Guide — who will our steps attend,
Till death advance us to His throne.*



SEPTEMBER 12

*Noah walked with God.
Genesis 6:9*

HE WAS RECONCILED to God. He was intimate with God. He listened to the voice of God. He chose the way of God. He drank into the spirit, and approved of the designs of God. His God was his *Friend* — with Him he could converse, to Him he could look for counsel, from Him he often received favours. His God was his *Companion* — he walked with Him, realizing that He was near, loving His presence, and improving by His society. He did not *sit* with the Lord on His throne, nor *stand* with Him in His sanctuary, but he *walked* with Him in His way. He was employed. He made progress. He was diligent, as well as devout. The presence of God was his happiness, his security, and his honour. This privilege may be ours. It is, if we are really believers in the Lord Jesus. Our God is with us. He is with us as our Father, our Friend, our Companion. We walk with Him. We converse with Him. We receive from Him. We imbibe His spirit. Beloved, do you *walk with God*? Have you been walking with God *today*? Does the thought of God's presence with you give you joy? Does it soothe, and animate, and sanctify your spirit? Retire to rest rejoicing in the fact: God is with me, as my Father and my Guard.

*I walk with God — though Lord of all,
My nearest friend He is,
On Him I lean, and cast my cares;
Oh what a friendship this!*



SEPTEMBER 13

*Increasing in the knowledge of God.
Colossians 1:10*

OUR KNOWLEDGE at present is very imperfect. We know but in part. The means of knowledge are in our hands, but we have not always the heart to turn them to account. God must be known or He cannot be loved, or He will not be trusted. We shall neither adore His perfections, nor reverence His majesty, nor seek His favour, nor fear His frown, nor do His commandments, except we know Him. Paul knew this, therefore he prayed for the Colossians that they may increase in the knowledge of God. If we would know Him, we must read His works, observe His providence, and study His word. But it is in Jesus that He reveals Himself most clearly and most fully. Therefore He says, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Do you know God at all? You did not once, therefore be thankful. But your knowledge is small and very imperfect, therefore seek an increase of it. Remember Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." He that knows God in Jesus at all, hath eternal life; but he that hath an extensive knowledge of Him, hath a never-failing source of happiness. Beloved, make it your daily aim to increase in the knowledge of God.

*Shine, mighty God, with vigour shine,
On this benighted heart of mine;
And let Thy glories stand revealed,
As in the Saviour's face beheld.*



SEPTEMBER 14

Peter followed him afar off.

Matthew 26:58

AND HAVE NOT we done so too? Once we thought that nothing could cool our love, damp our ardour, or turn our feet aside. But we have long since discovered our mistake. Still, it is better to follow at a distance, than turn our backs upon Him. For Peter there was some excuse, in the circumstances in which his Master was placed. For us there is none. Faith brings us near to Jesus, and love keeps us near. Unbelief is the cause of our slow pace, and declining in His ways. Let us carefully guard against unbelief. It poisons our comforts, falsifies our profession, damps our zeal, hinders our communion, thrusts us to a distance from Jesus, and alienates our souls from His ways. Let us encourage and feed our faith. It will strengthen our hearts, quicken our pace, endear our Saviour, fortify our minds, and keep us near to our beloved Lord. Reader, are you following the Lord fully? Closely? Or, are you like Peter, afar off? If you are, beware. You know to what this conduct led in him. It is not possible to say where it may lead you. Get close to Jesus, and keep close. Let your thoughts gather round Him, your affections fix upon Him, and your hope centre in Him. Cleave to the Saviour as the child to its parent, and as the limpet to the rock.

*The souls that would to Jesus cleave,
And hear His secret call,
Must their own strength and wisdom leave,
And let the Lord be all.*



SEPTEMBER 15

*None can stay his hand.
Daniel 4:35*

THE HAND OF GOD is His providence, or His wisdom and power in operation for the accomplishment of His will. No one can possibly frustrate His designs. Nothing can throw confusion into His plans. He steadily pursues His object — easily accomplishes His purpose — performs all His pleasure. All His saints are in His hand, therefore they are safe. His hand is at work for them, therefore they shall not be injured. He always works in accordance with His word. His predictions must come to pass. His promises must be fulfilled. His charge must be safe. Beloved, the hand of God is lifted up to defend you, therefore you are safe. His hand is opened to supply you, therefore you shall not want. His hand is beneath you, therefore you shall not fall. Trust in Jesus, in His wisdom and power. Exercise faith in His providence. It is at work for your welfare. His hand will crush or convert your foes, protect you and supply your wants, guide you through the desert, and lift you up forever. Look from circumstances to the hand that guides and overrules them. It is your Father's hand, and His hand is moved by His heart, which heart glows with unutterable love to you. He is at work for you, and "NONE CAN STAY HIS HAND."

*Jehovah's arm shall be my strength,
And His almighty power
Will well fulfil His promises,
And victory ensure.*



SEPTEMBER 16

*Will a man rob God?
Malachi 3:8*

THIS IS A VERY solemn question, for to attempt it must be very daring. But who can plead not guilty? If we cannot take what He has, we have withheld what He claims. He charges us with the crime. He says, “*Ye have robbed Me.*” We have robbed Him of His *time* — His own day, and other time which He claims, and which should be devoted to Him. We have robbed Him of *property* — what He lent us, we have claimed as our own. What was given us for others, we have squandered or hoarded for self. We have withheld from His *cause* what He entrusted to our care for its benefit. We have robbed Him of the *heart*. This we have given to others, to idols. They have been loved, trusted, adored, and feared before Him. We have robbed Him of our *talents*, spending them in the service of others, and using them for the gratification, or aggrandizement of ourselves. What can we say to such conduct? Is it not ungrateful? For He is our Father! Is it not daring? For He could crush us with a look. Let us reflect upon our characters: robbers of God. Let us confess our crimes, obtain a pardon, change our course, and render unto God the things that are God’s. O for honesty of heart, and consistency of life as Christians!

*Guilty I plead before Thy throne,
My God, my crimes forgive;
I plead the Saviour’s blood alone,
Pardon, and bid me live.*



SEPTEMBER 17

*Their Redeemer is strong.
Jeremiah 50:34*

THE REDEEMER is the nearest of kin. No one is so nearly related to us, or by so many and various ties, as the Lord Jesus, and He is our Redeemer. He gave His life a ransom for us. He sent His Holy Spirit to rescue us from the hands of our spiritual enemies. He will exert His almighty power to raise us from the dead, and so complete our redemption. What He undertook He *can* accomplish, for He is strong. What He hath promised He *will* perform, for He is faithful. We shall therefore be completely delivered from *Satan*, who held us captive; from *sin*, which tyrannized over us; from the *world*, which has often injured us; from *death*, which is an enemy to us; and from *hell*, which we justly deserved. Our Redeemer is strong, therefore let us place confidence in Him. Let us look to Him alone for deliverance from foes and fears. Let us never dishonour Him by supposing that He will allow our enemies to triumph over us. He cheerfully laboured for us. He willingly shed His blood for us. He graciously quickened us when dead in trespasses and sins, and He will perfect that which concerneth us, for He will not forsake the work of His own hands. Our Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is His name, and He will thoroughly plead our cause.

*Jesus our Lord, in Thee
We a Redeemer have,
Strong to set Thy people free,
Omnipotent to save.*



SEPTEMBER 18

*By love serve one another.
Galatians 5:13*

THE ROOT OF ALL acceptable obedience is love. Love springs from faith, and produces all good works. Nothing that we do is good, except it flow from love. Love is the chief thing in religion. We may have gifts, honours, and benevolence; but without love, we are only as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Nature desires to *rule* over others, but grace is willing to *serve* them. Look around you — are there not many whom you can serve, and serve effectually, without neglecting your other important duties? Are you willing to do so? If not, where is your love? If you have not love, where is your religion? Love is the fulfilling of the law, and it is the chief production of the gospel. Love is Godlike. It is Christlike. Love is heaven. Love will visit the sick — cheer the sorrowful — clothe the naked — feed the hungry — and become all things to all men, if by any means it may save some. Love will make our wilderness world, a garden; and our divided church, a paradise. What we do from love we do easily — cheerfully — heartily — constantly — and acceptably. See then that ye love one another with a pure heart, fervently. Serve Christ in His people, and imitate His conduct toward His foes. As you have therefore opportunity, do good to all men.

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



SEPTEMBER 19

Therefore have they forgotten me.

Hosea 13:6

WHY? He had brought them into the good land. They were placed in circumstances of prosperity. They gave way to self-indulgence. They were lifted up with pride. Therefore they forgot God their Saviour, who had done such great things for them. We often fancy that we could bear prosperity better than adversity, but those who have been tried have proved the reverse. The heart is secretly, and at first, imperceptibly led away from God. The affections are set on things below. Indulging the flesh unfits for spiritual duties and exercises. Divine things lose their savour and power. The means of grace convey no grace to the soul. We relax in duty. Satan employs his influence to harden our hearts, to alienate our affections, to blind our minds, and to stupify our consciences. The warnings of God's word are disregarded, the throne of grace is neglected, worldly company is preferred, and then God is forgotten. We forget His deliverances, His favours, His claims, His threatenings, until aroused by some painful visitation. Brethren, let us be cautious — circumspect — aware of our danger — and carefully examine into our present state. Are we just in that state in which we should wish death to find us? Why not?

*I left my guide to happiness,
I lost the true internal peace,
Nor can my soul retrieve its rest,
Till lodged again in Jesus' breast.*



SEPTEMBER 20

*I will walk in thy truth.
Psalm 86:11*

GOD'S TRUTH IS opposed to many of our customs, prejudices, and inclinations. It requires what our depraved nature thinks hard, and prohibits what we naturally love. The resolution therefore is noble. It reflects honour upon Him who formed it. Let us follow His example. To walk in the truth is to believe it — to receive it into the mind, as a communication from God — to place confidence in it. But faith without works is dead, therefore it includes the practice of it. The true Christian prays, "Teach me *to do thy will*." He purposes, "I will run in the way of Thy commandments." But there is the enjoyment of the truth. It brings us glad tidings. It furnishes us with a feast as well as a rule. It charms while it corrects. It consoles while it requires. It makes us happy as well as holy; or rather, it makes us happy by making us holy. If we believe the truth, and do the truth, and enjoy the truth, let us profess the truth. And let our profession be open, sincere, and Scriptural. If we have made a profession of the truth, let it be our daily study to adorn it — to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called in all godliness and honesty. Let us hold fast the professions of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful that hath promised.

*Thou Great Instructor, lest I stray,
Oh teach my erring feet the way.
Thy truth with ever fresh delight,
Shall guide my doubtful footsteps right.*



SEPTEMBER 21

My God will hear me.

Micah 7:7

HE HAS PROMISED it, and He is faithful to His word. He has done so in times past, and what He has done is the pledge of what He will do. Besides, He is my Father as well as my God, He knows my nature. He appointed my lot. He has given me the Spirit of grace and supplication. He bids me call upon Him. He has assured me that He “is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth.” And that “He will fulfil *the desire* of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry and will save them.” Beloved, let us then call upon God. Let us pour out our complaints before Him, Let us present our petitions to Him. Let us seek His help, His presence, and His blessing. He will hear us. Men may become alienated from us; our God never will. Friends may turn a deaf ear to us; our God never can. Let us then come to the same determination as Micah did, and say, “Therefore will I look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.” Though He delay, He will not deny, for “no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

*Praying on, and never ceasing,
Saviour! I Thy word shall prove,
Blest with all the gospel blessing,
Filled with holy, heavenly love.*



SEPTEMBER 22

Thy blessing is upon thy people.

Psalms 3:8

THEY WERE BLESSED in Christ, with all spiritual blessings, before the world was. They are blessed *through* Christ, with every good thing, while here below. And they will be blessed *with* Christ, with more than heart can conceive, in the world to come. The Lord's blessing is upon their *persons* — and they are set apart for His praise; upon their *comforts* — and they promote their holiness; upon their *trials* — and they work their real good; upon their *labours* — and they advance His kingdom and glory; upon their *families* — as the house of Obed-edom was blessed for the ark's sake. Behold, thus is the man blessed that feareth the Lord. Beloved, this is your privilege — the blessing of God is upon you. Do you realize it? Do you manifest it? Remember, it flows from grace. It comes to you through Jesus. It is enjoyed in the exercise of faith, and in the way of obedience. It is insured, by the oath and promise of God. It includes all you can need, or consistently desire. Retire to rest tonight impressed with the thought, "The blessing of God is upon me." Or, if afraid to claim it, with the prayer, "Bless me, even me, O my Father." "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

*Lord, make it plain that I am Thine,
In Jesus bless'd, with Jesus one;
That all the promises are mine,
As Thy belov'd, adopted Son.*



SEPTEMBER 23

Wherein hast thou loved us?
Malachi 1:2

THIS IS A STRANGE question, especially as proceeding from the Lord's people. But it is only speaking out what many feel within. Do you ask, wherein has the Lord loved you? Look at the gifts He has conferred upon you — His *Son* to die for you — His *Spirit* to quicken, teach, and sanctify you — His *word* and ministers to instruct you — His *ordinances* to revive and refresh you — His *angels* to minister unto you — His *covenant and oath* to secure you — His glorious *kingdom* to be eternally possessed and enjoyed by you. Look at the account He makes of you: He calls you His love, the dearly beloved of His soul, His jewels, His crown, His dear son. If He compares you with the world: you are gold, that dross — you are wheat, that chaff — you are sheep, that swine — or goats, or serpents. Look at the relations He sustains to you, a Father — a Husband — a Brother — a Friend. The offices He fills for you, an Advocate — a Captain — a Head — a King. Look at what He has already done for you — provided a righteousness, conferred a pardon, given His peace, appointed the Mediator, blessed you with all spiritual blessings. Surely you will exclaim, "His love is wonderful, beyond comparison, beyond expression."

*Lord, give me with a grateful heart.
Thy mercy to improve;
And Ebenezers daily rear
To praise the God of love.*



SEPTEMBER 24

Rejoice the soul of thy servant.

Psalms 86:4

IT IS A GREATER honour to be the Lord's servant, than to be the son of the greatest monarch upon earth. But all God's true servants are also His sons. He loves them as His children, while He employs them to accomplish His designs. They are all willing servants. They are convinced that they ought to be employed for Him, they have engaged themselves to serve Him, and they love their Master, their work, their fellow-servants, and their wages. But though employed for God, they are not always happy in God. They lose sight of their true state, high relation, glorious prospects, and present privileges. Or their evidences are clouded, or Satan harasses them, or providence appears to frown upon them, or the law in their members prevails against them, and they are cast down. Or it may be that the Lord is rebuking them for some sin, or is displeased, because some idol is set up, or some Agag is spared. They cannot claim comfort, or take joy, but they can pray for it. David did so, "Restore unto me the joys of Thy salvation." "REJOICE THE SOUL OF THY SERVANT." Do you do so? One ray of light, one word of grace, one whisper of His love, will fill you with joy and peace. He comforteth those that are cast down.

*Oh bid my heart rejoice,
And every fear control;
Since at Thy throne, with suppliant voice,
To Thee I lift my soul.*



SEPTEMBER 25

Submit yourselves to God.

James 4:7

HUMAN NATURE DOES not like submission, and yet there is no happiness without it. It is only as our wills accord with the will of God, as we cheerfully submit to all His dispensations that we can be peaceful or joyful. Without submission there can be no holiness, for its opposite is rebellion. If I refuse to submit to God, I oppose His authority, question His wisdom, doubt His love, and despise His word. In proportion as I am sanctified, I shall cheerfully bow to whatever I discover to be the will of God, receive with gratitude whatever comes from the hand of God, and endeavour to do whatever bears the stamp of the authority of God. Without submission there is no salvation. We must acknowledge His justice — confess our sins — bow at His throne — seek for pardon on the ground of mercy — and acquiesce in His plan of salvation by grace, or we shall never be delivered from the wrath to come. Submit yourselves therefore to God, to be saved by His grace, to be ruled by His word, to be disposed of by His providence, and to be employed for His glory as He will. Only submit, and you are happy. Seek for deep and thorough sanctification, and you will submit; and submitting to God you are safe in life, in death, and forever.

*The Sov'reign Father, good and kind,
Wants but to have His child resigned;
Wants but thy yielded heart, no more,
Thee with His richest grace to store.*



SEPTEMBER 26

*Prove me now.
Malachi 3:10*

THAT IS, PUT my faithfulness and veracity to the test. God hath spoken, will He not make it good? He hath promised, will He not fulfil His word? Who can doubt it? But if you do, He says, "PROVE ME." *How* is this to be done? Search His word and see what He has said. Take His word to His throne and plead it in prayer. Watch, wait, and work as He has directed, and see if He will not do as He has said. *When* should we prove Him? Under conviction, and see if He will not pardon sin. In affliction, and see if His grace is not sufficient for us. In perplexity, and see if He will not make darkness light before us, and crooked things straight. In difficulties and peculiar trials, and see if He will not appear for us, and make a way for our escape. When engaged in His service, and see if godliness is not profitable to all things, having a promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come. Thousands have proved Him, and all have found Him true and faithful. Let us prove Him for ourselves, so shall we become strong in faith, and be ready to bear witness whenever we are required, that His word is true from the beginning. "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."

*He will not His great self deny;
A God all truth can never lie;
As well might He His being quit,
As break His oath, or word forget.*



SEPTEMBER 27

I am married unto you.

Jeremiah 3:14

THIS IS THE closest connection that can be formed between intelligent creatures. Two become one flesh. And this is the relation which the Lord selects to represent His connection with His people. He is engaged to them, and they are engaged to Him. His love is fixed upon them, and their love is set upon Him. He has chosen them, and they have chosen Him. He finds pleasure in them, and they find all their happiness in Him. He communicates to them, and they have fellowship with Him. He treats them with confidence, and they make Him the sole object of their trust. He provides all they need, and they are to live in constant dependence upon Him. Christian, do you realize the fact, that the Lord is married unto you? That He is all that to you, that the kindest, wisest, and wealthiest husband can be? Are you walking with God, as His bride? Are you living with God, as one that is married to Him? Do you leave all for Him — expect all from Him — aim in all things to please Him? Rejoice in this, that though every earthly relative and friend may be torn from you, your husband ever liveth, and will never leave you. Cleave to Him, let nothing draw you from Him, for He is “MARRIED UNTO YOU.”

*Lord, make in me this union shine,
That heaven and earth may see,
In heart and life, I'm truly Thine,
And married unto Thee!*



SEPTEMBER 28

*The LORD was with Joseph.
Genesis 39:21*

HE HAD BEEN TORN from his father, deprived of his home, sold for a slave, falsely accused, and cast into prison. But the Lord was with him. Many have found the time of greatest trial, the season of peculiar manifestation. When persecuted for righteousness' sake, a special blessing rests upon us. The Lord's presence made up for all the losses he sustained, for that will turn a prison into a palace, a dungeon into a paradise. The Lord was with him to sustain him — to cheer him — to hold communion with him — to give him favour with the keeper — to teach him lessons of the greatest importance — to prepare him to rule over the land of Egypt — to make him an example to all who should suffer for His name — to bring him forth with honour, and crown him with peculiar dignity. Before being exalted, he must be humbled. The prison was the direct road to the palace. The way of the cross leads to the crown. If we reign with Christ in heaven, we must suffer with Christ on earth. Beloved, wherever duty leads you, or persecution drives you, the Lord will be with you. His presence is more frequently enjoyed when a cloud hangs over our outward circumstances, than when the sun of prosperity shines upon our tabernacle. Precious truth!

*Thy gracious presence, O my God,
My every wish contains;
With this beneath affliction's load,
My heart no more complains.*



SEPTEMBER 29

*And Aaron held his peace.
Leviticus 10:3*

HE WAS IN deep trouble. His trial was peculiarly great. It was death. The death of two sons at once. It was instantaneous death in an act of presumptuous sin. It was by the immediate hand of God. It was in the presence of the people, as an example of Jehovah's jealousy and wrath. It was without time for repentance, or any knowledge of their eternal state. But God said, "I will be glorified, and Aaron held his peace." This was opposed to murmuring, to fretting, to questioning the right or justice of God, or refusing to be comforted. It was submission to the Lord's will, springing from a knowledge of His righteousness — from supreme love to God — from carnal reason being brought into subjection — from a sense of desert. My friend, this subject speaks to us. It says, "In your most painful trials, imitate the saint of the Lord." It reproves all our complainings, and questioning the Lord's love and mercy. It comforts us, by showing us that the greatest saints have sometimes had the greatest trials. It speaks caution, and says, "Beware, how you trifle, or presume, for Jehovah is a jealous God." "Be still, and know that I am God." "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." Just and true are His ways.

*In all Thy dealings, Lord, with me,
O stop the murmuring groan;
Or let my only answer be,
"Father, Thy will be done!"*



SEPTEMBER 30

*The faithful God.
Deuteronomy 7:9*

A FAITHFUL MAN who can find? But suppose we cannot. We have found a faithful God — One who may be believed, without enquiry — who may be trusted, without fear — to whom we may open our hearts, without reserve. He is faithful, and therefore He corrects our follies — reproves us for our faults — teaches us His will — supports us in our trials — brings us through our troubles — holds our enemies in check — makes darkness light before us, and crooked things straight. Upon every mercy we receive, upon every danger we escape, upon every disappointment we meet, upon every history we read, and upon every cross we carry, we may see written, “The faithful God.” He is faithful to maintain the rights of His own throne, to execute the threatenings of His word, to fulfil the promises of His grace, to supply the wants of His dependents, to answer the prayers of His people, and to make all things work together for good, to those that love Him, and are called according to His purpose. His faithfulness is seen in expelling Adam from paradise, in destroying the world with the flood, in sending His Son to redeem us, and in giving His Holy Spirit unto us. He is “THE FAITHFUL GOD.” This is our rock, our refuge, and our rest.

*Cast thy burden on the Lord;
Plead His promise, trust His word;
So shalt thou have cause to bless
His eternal faithfulness.*



OCTOBER 1

We have now received the atonement.

Romans 5:11

THE LORD JESUS has made satisfaction to divine justice for our sins. He has done and suffered all that is necessary for our pardon and justification. His sacrifice is our expiation. What He did is presented to us in the gospel. By faith we receive it, rely on it, plead it before God for our acceptance, are accepted on account of it, and enjoy peace. The atonement was made on Calvary. It contains all that God requires. He is satisfied; but it must be received by the sinner, or he cannot enjoy peace. We must daily exercise confidence in it, or we cannot walk happily with God. We have *now* received the atonement, we had not once. We did not feel our need of it. We did not see its value. We did not understand its nature. What a mercy that we do now! The death of Jesus is our life, “He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” “He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” “He is our peace.” Let us never lose sight of His atoning sacrifice, or of His justifying righteousness. For if we do, Satan will prevail against us, guilt will soon fill us with gloom, duties will become irksome, and the prospect of death terrible. Nothing can make us bold and happy, but lively faith in the atonement.

Saviour! May Thy atonement

Be ever new to us,

Grant we may every moment

In spirit view the cross.



OCTOBER 2

*We are more than conquerors.
Romans 8:37*

THIS IS MARVELLOUS, for the believer has to conflict with all that is depraved in his nature — with all that is opposed to God in the world — with all that is unholy in his family — with many painful and trying dispensations of providence — with Satan his grand adversary — and also with sickness and death. But he overcomes. He triumphs. But it is through Him that loves him, that is, through Jesus. The love of Jesus is his solace, his delight, and his encouragement. The loving Jesus supplies him with grace, strength, and wisdom; and by these he overcomes. He conquers by faith in Christ. He overcomes all by patience, fortitude, and confidence in his Saviour. He overcomes all and appears on the field uninjured. He overcomes and is benefitted by the contest. He obtains a great, a signal, a complete victory; and will at length appear possessed of the spoils, and crowned as the conqueror. No one can overcome but by Jesus. But if united to Him, if living by faith upon Him, if copying His example, we shall not only overcome, but be more than conquerors. Believer, expect opposition. Christian, see your dependence: it is on the wisdom, power, care, and intervention of Jesus. Look to Him as your example, and conquer through His love.

*Conformed to our Head in outward distress,
In sorrow and need, in pain and disgrace,
All happy and glorious we inwardly prove,
And more than victorious through Jesus' love.*



OCTOBER 3

Weak in the faith.

Romans 14:1

THIS SOMETIMES arises from a defect in our knowledge. Many of the Lord's people have a very imperfect acquaintance with the gospel. They know but little of God's real character — or of the nature and design of the Saviour's work — or of what really constitutes Christian experience. In consequence of this they are full of fears, and are often harassed with doubts, when if well informed, they would be rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. They think they must *do* something, besides believing in Christ, in order to acceptance with God; or they must *feel* something more than they have done before they are entitled to joy in God. Such do not perceive that they are putting what they *do* or what they *feel* in the place of Christ; or are at least connecting these things with Christ, as if He alone was not sufficient. They are just doing what the Galatians did, who made circumcision necessary to salvation; and to whom Paul said, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace." Beloved, it must either be grace alone, or works alone, which must form the ground of our acceptance with God. Let us therefore fix the eye, and place the dependence of our souls upon Christ, and upon Christ alone.

*Blest soul that can say, "Christ only I seek!"
Wait for Him always, be constant though weak;
The Lord whom thou seekest, will not tarry long,
And to Him the weakest is dear as the strong.*



OCTOBER 4

*Ye are the salt of the earth.
Matthew 5:13*

SIN HAS RENDERED it unsavoury, and exposed it to destruction. Only grace and truth can restore it to purity and order. These come by Jesus Christ, and they are retained and diffused by His people. He compares His saints to salt. They season and preserve others. Every Christian is a grain of salt. He should affect and impress all around Him. His principles are to be diffused, and His character is to attract and instruct. The earth without the saints, would be given up to putrefaction and destruction. Beloved, are you seasoning those around you? Is your conversation always with grace, seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace unto the hearers? Do you diffuse what you possess? Do you possess what you profess? Who is the better for you? Does your influence spread silently and penetrate deeply, like that of salt in nature? Or, have you only the form of godliness without the power? If a Christian, you will benefit all with whom you may be brought into contact. You will not live unto yourself, but unto Him that died for you and rose again. If salt is present, it will discover itself; and so will grace. The world needs gracious persons. Its present state calls for much salt. May the Lord season us all with the salt of His grace.

*Now to my Saviour I would live,
To Him who for my ransom died;
Nor would untainted Eden give.
Such bliss as blossoms at His side.*



OCTOBER 5

*Approve things that are excellent.
Philippians 1:10*

TAKE NOTHING upon trust, but bring everything to the word of God, and try it there. Learn to distinguish between the ornamental and the useful — the fundamental, and the circumstantial — the beneficial, and the hurtful. Try things that differ, and approve the things that are excellent. There are excellent institutions, assist them — excellent gifts, seek for them — excellent doctrines, embrace and hold them fast — excellent duties, perform them — excellent attainments, aspire to them — excellent ordinances, attend to them — excellent Scriptures, search them — excellent enjoyments, pray for them. Prove that your eye is clear to discover, and that your heart is sanctified to approve. Endeavour to distinguish between the law and the gospel — between nature and grace — between conviction and conversion — between profession and possession — between graces and their counterfeits — between Scriptural doctrines and the opposite errors — and approve the things that are excellent. Procure things that are excellent. Hold fast what you procure. Publish to others what you know and enjoy yourself. If you lack wisdom for this, ask it of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given you. But ask in faith, nothing wavering.

*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.*



OCTOBER 6

*Abide with us.
Luke 24:29*

THE SAVIOUR had accompanied His disciples to Emmaus. He had unfolded the Scriptures. He had endeared Himself to them. He made as if He would leave them, but they entreated Him to remain with them. They said, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening." Whoever enjoyed the presence of Christ, and did not wish for its continuance? But who among the Lord's people has not had to mourn His absence? He is always present as our Keeper, but we do not always enjoy His presence. Let us seek it, if we have it not at present; and let us beseech Him to abide with us, if we have. Let us ask Him to dwell with us, and open His word to us; and kindle the flame of love in our souls; and fill us with admiring gratitude and joy. He desires us to abide with Him, more than we can desire Him to abide with us. And it is still true which was spoken of old, "The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; if ye seek Him He will be found of you." Beloved, have you enjoyed the Saviour's presence today? Can you be happy without doing so? His presence is the sweetness and glory of heaven; and His presence is the balm for all our sorrows, and the antidote for all our miseries on earth. The presence of Jesus will make it a delightful evening.

*Jesus, Thy presence I implore,
This blessing now bestow;
With me abide, nor leave me more,
While I remain below.*



OCTOBER 7

I shall come forth as gold.

Job 23:10

JOB WAS IN the furnace. It was heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be. But he was conscious of his integrity. He knew that though he was imperfect, he was sincere. He knew that he had a living Redeemer. That his God knew his heart — his motives — his desires — and his course. Therefore he felt confident that he should not be consumed, but only refined. This is the design of all our trials. They are to make us meet for the Master's use. To make us reflect the Saviour's image. To fit us for eternal glory. However fierce the fire, we shall lose nothing but our dross. Our eternal interests are safe. Our God is immutably the same. This is our security. He says, "I am Jehovah, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." He sits by the furnace as the Refiner, He superintends the whole process of purification, and He removes the fire the moment the design is accomplished. Tried Christian, thy God is refining thee. His design is most loving. He will take care of thee. Let not thy faith flag, or thy courage droop; but say with Job, "He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Tried faith is more precious than gold. If God try your faith, it is to improve it and increase it.

*In fiery trials and distress,
I will Thy promise hold;
Thou wilt my soul in trouble bless,
I shall come forth as gold.*



OCTOBER 8

*They have spoken lies against me.
Hosea 7:13*

WHO HAS? The people whom He has redeemed. Awful as the sin is, it is so common, that we may rather ask, “Who has not?” Spoken lies against God? Yes: When you said that He was unwilling to receive you, because you were such a wretched sinner — When you said, that you should perish, though you were clinging to the cross, trusting in His grace, and seeking His mercy — When you exclaimed, “the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me,” — When you said, that He would allow you to want, leave you in distress, or turn a deaf ear to your prayer in the time of trouble — When you spoke of Him as the author and cause of your darkness, coldness, and deadness. But time would fail to enumerate the instances in which you have spoken lies against God. Sometimes plainly, and at other times more obscurely, you have said: He does not mean what He says — He will not perform His promise — He will not make good His word, at least, He will not to me. My friend, beware, your unbelief gives God the lie. Your doubts reflect upon His veracity. He speaks the truth, and only the truth. “Why then do you not believe Him?” “He that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar; because He believeth not the record which God gave of His Son.”

*I too have lied against my God,
With shame and sorrow I confess;
Pardon my sin through Jesus' blood,
And give me sanctifying grace.*



OCTOBER 9

*The hope of Israel.
Jeremiah 14:8*

THE AUTHOR OF Israel's hope. It is begotten by the Spirit, through the promises of His word. They hope because He has promised, because He is faithful, because His word is true from the beginning. He is the *object* of Israel's hope. "Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption." They cannot hope in man for he is poor, or weak, or fickle, or unwilling to help. But they do hope in God, for He is strong to deliver — wealthy to supply — present to help — pledged to befriend — ready to pardon — wise to direct — waiting to be gracious — and He delighteth in mercy. His compassion is a spring that never fails. His love is a sun that never sets. His word is a paradise that cannot be forfeited. His grace is sufficient for us, and His strength is made perfect in our weakness. The hope of Israel is a rock — let us build upon it. The hope of Israel is a refuge — let us repair to it. The hope of Israel is a fountain — let us seek our supplies from it. The hope of Israel is a Saviour — let us put our trust in Him. The hope of Israel is God — let us therefore worship, adore, and believe Him. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God."

*Hope of Israel, hear my cry,
To Thee from self I flee;
Be Thou in every trial nigh,
And I will hope in Thee.*



OCTOBER 10

*Call to remembrance the former days.
Hebrews 10:32*

IT IS SOMETIMES very profitable to look back. Reflection upon the past may do us good tonight. Our *land* was once immersed in pagan darkness, superstition and barbarity. Since then it has been under the dominion of papal ignorance, priest-craft, and cruelty. How different its state then to the present! Our *souls* were once the slaves of Satan, under the dominion of sin, and exposed to the curse of God. We were thoughtless, careless, and hardened. We loved our idols, and after them we would go. But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, quickened us together with Christ, and saved us by His grace. How delightful were the days of our first love! How precious the Saviour! How sweet the gospel! How delightful the Lord's day! How amiable the tabernacles of God! But our zeal declined, our joys faded, our prospects were overcast, because we wandered from God. We became like the heath in the desert, and we mourned in our complaint and made a noise. But the good Shepherd sought us out, reproved us for our follies, and restored us again. He hath led us, and fed us; taught us, and sanctified us. And now He bids us call to remembrance the former days.

*I muse on the years that are past,
Wherein my defence Thou hast proved,
Nor wilt Thou relinquish at last
A sinner so signally loved!*



OCTOBER 11

*He feedeth among the lilies.
Song of Solomon 6:3*

BELIEVERS ARE compared to this lovely flower. Not as it is in the field, but in the garden. They are all in the Saviour's garden, and He loves and prizes them greatly. He visits and walks among them. He finds pleasure and satisfaction in them. He is pleased with their persons — their graces — their prayers — their praises — their testimony — and their obedience. He manifests Himself to them, which they ardently desire — highly prize — and are much benefitted by. See what a Christian should be. Not a thorn, which wounds everyone it comes in contact with it. Not a nettle, which stings all who touch it. Not a useless weed, which cumbers the ground, or poisons all who taste it. But a lily — one who has a sweet spirit, whose life and conversation is fragrant and inviting — of an ornamental character, who looks well in any situation — a good and useful neighbour, who benefits many, but injures none — of whom Jesus may not be ashamed, but in whom He can find satisfaction and pleasure. He feeds among lilies, or in His church. There you may find Him. True worship is exceedingly pleasant to Him. Invite Him to your heart, your house. Expect Him to accept your invitation. Aim to entertain Him suitably. He feedeth among lilies.

*Saviour! Mould me by Thy power,
Fill me with Thy grace divine,
Make me like the lily flower,
To Thy praise and glory shine.*



OCTOBER 12

*I am the light of the world.
John 8:12*

THE WORLD WITHOUT Christ is in a state of darkness. In the darkness of ignorance — crime — cruelty — and degradation. The Jews had a candlestick with its seven lamps, but it was confined to their tabernacle or temple. But Jesus is come a luminary into the world — a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel. He is the source of knowledge — comfort — beauty, or holiness — and safety. In Him there is a fullness of light. Like the light of the sun it is free, and it abideth forever. He shines on the world by His word. He shines into the heart by His Spirit. His light attracts sinners to His feet, and in His light they see light. They are by Him delivered from moral darkness, or guilt — from mental darkness, or ignorance — from legal darkness, or the yoke of the law — from spiritual darkness, or the hiding of the Lord's countenance — and from eternal darkness, or banishment from God forever. Following Him they have the living light by which they discover their path — escape the snares of the fowler — enjoy the scenery — discern the object — and rejoice in their privileges. Reader, are you enlightened by Jesus? Do you walk in His light? Are you directing others to it? If you are dark, go to Him for light. Seek and obtain it.

*Light of my soul! Thyself reveal;
Thy power and presence let me feel;
And know, and see the wondrous things
Concealed from prophets, priests, and kings.*



OCTOBER 13

*O LORD, revive thy work.
Habakkuk 3:2*

NO ONE CAN revive the Lord's work but Himself. He began it. He must carry it on. He will complete it. But He does so by means. And one of the means He employs is prayer. He convinces us that we need a revival. He stirs us up to seek it. He makes us sensible of our insufficiency. He may perhaps keep us waiting at His throne for a time. The delay may cause us pain, and perplexity. If sanctified, it will make us more earnest for the blessing, and then we shall cry out with one of old, "*Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?*" When the Lord revives His work, He strengthens our faith, invigorates our hope, inflames our love, deepens our humility, animates our zeal, and stirs us up to seek the promotion of His cause. Then, prayer becomes pleasant, praise sweet, ordinances profitable, the Sabbath a delight, and the sanctuary amiable. The church resembles a lovely garden, in which we walk with peculiar satisfaction, The gospel is a feast, most suitable and costly. And we look forward to heaven as to our country and our hope. The Lord revives His work in us by His Spirit, by His providence, and by His holy ordinances. His power is unlimited. His grace is omnipotent. His mercy is free. Let nothing satisfy us but a revival.

*Oh! for His all-reviving grace,
The quickening power divine,
The deadness from my soul to chase;
That I may rise and shine.*



OCTOBER 14

It is finished.

John 19:30

WHAT WAS FINISHED? The prophecies and predictions, which referred to His humiliation, sufferings, and death. The object and design of the ceremonial law. The sufferings of Christ were finished. His work below was finished. The debts of His people were paid. The price of their redemption was found. The righteousness by which they are to be justified was wrought out. All the demands of the law were met. The rights of justice were acknowledged and rendered. Satan was defeated and spoiled. Sin was forever put away. The curse had been endured and was now removed. The flock was purchased by the Shepherd's blood. The foundation of peace, joy, and everlasting salvation was laid. The fountain to cleanse from all sin was opened. The grand plea of our interceding High Priest was provided. Death was abolished, and everlasting life was about to burst upon our world in all its glory. In a word, the Saviour had finished the work which the Father gave Him to do: He had redeemed His pledge, which He gave in the covenant of peace — He had ransomed His beloved bride — He had harmonized all the divine perfections in man's salvation, He had glorified the Father on earth, and manifested His name unto His chosen followers.

*'Tis finished — the Messiah dies
For sins, but not His own;
The great redemption is complete,
And Satan's power o'erthrown.*



OCTOBER 15

Let not your hearts faint.

Deuteronomy 20:3

REMEMBER THE promise, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Prove the Saviour’s testimony, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” Accept the divine invitation, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” Attend to the inspired direction, “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee, He will never suffer the righteous to be moved.” Imitate the deeply tried psalmist, “I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” Rest thy troubled spirit on the conduct of thy God, “He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength.” Endeavour to carry out the apostolic exhortation, “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” Let not your heart faint, for your sins are pardoned, your foes are all doomed, your mansion is being prepared, supplies will certainly be sent, your Saviour deeply sympathizes with you, your heavenly Father cares for you, and all things must work together for your good. Fear not, only believe. Wait on the Lord, and He shall save thee. Call upon God, and He will show thee great and mighty things that thou knowest not. “LET NOT YOUR HEART FAINT.”

*Every day the truth I prove,
Of Jesus my almighty Friend,
Kept by Him, whose constant love,
Shall keep me to the end.*



OCTOBER 16

*Zealous of good works.
Titus 2:14*

BEING SAVED BY free grace, we should lay ourselves out for God's glory. We are created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. We should be active in God's cause for His creatures' good — not only doing good works, but being zealous for them — zealously doing them ourselves, and zealously encouraging them in others. We cannot do too much for Him, who has done so much for us. Our works should proceed from love to God, be regulated by the command of God, and be done for the glory of God. We cannot be too zealous in performing them, but we ought to be equally zealous in renouncing them as a ground of acceptance with God. Good works are the works of a child, who aims to please his Father. They are performed from a sense of what God has done for us, not in order to induce Him to confer blessings upon us. In working from a right motive we are happy, for working we shall be by-and-by rewarded. But though like Moses, we may have respect unto the recompense of the reward, yet like Paul, when we do more than others, we shall heartily exclaim, "Not I, but the grace of God that was with me." Free grace enjoyed in the soul will make all who enjoy it zealous of good works. Love is sure to be active.

*What is my being but for Thee;
Its sure support, its noblest end, —
Thy ever-smiling face to see,
And serve the cause of such a Friend.*



OCTOBER 17

*The chastening of the Almighty.
Job 5:17*

ROSSES ARE NOT curses. Frowns are sometimes favours. Every child is chastened — chastened by the Almighty. His chastisements are always wise. He never corrects but for faults, though His dispensations are sometimes intended to draw out our graces and improve our principles. If the Lord chasten us, it is because He loves us. Let us not then mistake the character of our afflictions. They are really mercies. They are to do us good. They are indispensable, unless our wise and gracious Father would allow us to be injured. Let us therefore ask, “Why am I corrected?” Let us prostrate ourselves before our Father’s throne, and while we acknowledge His wisdom in the discipline, beseech Him to make His chastisement a blessing. The Lord’s rod often blossoms and bears fruit. Better be a chastened child than a pampered menial. Our present discipline is to prepare us for future duties, enjoyments, and glories. It is all right. It is really kind. It is for our good. The rod is not in a stranger’s hand, we are not suffering from the stroke of a cruel one, but from the chastening of the Almighty. “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

*O Father of mercies on me,
In deepest affliction bestow,
A power of applying to Thee,
A sanctified use of my woe.*



OCTOBER 18

LORD, be thou my helper.

Psalms 30:10

SWEET AND APPROPRIATE prayer this! We daily need help. The Lord *can* help us. He has said, “Fear not, I *will* help thee.” But promises should be turned into prayers: and we never pray so spiritually as when we can say, “Lord do as Thou hast said.” “Be it unto me according to Thy word.” Let us then earnestly cry unto our God this night, “LORD, BE THOU MY HELPER.” I see many fall. I shall fall too except Thou hold me up. I am weak. I am exposed to temptation. My heart is deceitful. My enemies are strong. I cannot trust in man. I dare not trust in myself. The grace I have received will not keep me without Thee. “Lord, be Thou my helper,” — in every duty — in every conflict — in every trial — in every effort to promote the Lord’s cause — in every season of prosperity. Every hour we live, this short and inspired prayer is suitable. May it flow from our hearts, be often on our lips, and be answered in our experience. For if the Lord help us, there is no duty which we cannot perform; there is no foe which we cannot overcome; there is no difficulty which we cannot surmount. All things are possible — difficult things are easy, and painful things will be pleasant. “The Lord is my helper, therefore I will not fear.”

*Weak and inconstant Lord, I am,
On Thee alone can I depend;
O let me not be put to shame,
But be my helper and my friend.*



OCTOBER 19

*His compassions fail not.
Lamentations 3:22*

THIS IS AN unspeakable mercy. The sympathy of friends may fail. The affection of relations may fail. The tender mother's love to her babe may fail. But the compassion of our God is unfailing. It is an ocean which we can never exhaust; a sun which will never set. It may be obscured. We may not enjoy its communications. But it is as full of light and glory as ever. Believer, thy God never was more compassionate than He is this night. His love was never more tender. His grace was never more free. His promise was never more true in reference even to His most favoured ones, than it is in reference to thee at this time. Turn from thy broken cisterns, from thy withered gourds, from thy dried brooks. Turn from thy gloomy feelings, from thy painful circumstances; and turn to thy God impressed with this fact, "HIS COMPASSIONS FAIL NOT." Did Jesus have compassion on the multitudes which followed Him, because they had nothing to eat? He will also have compassion on thee. He will bear with thy infirmities, He will pardon thy sins, He will sanctify thy sorrows, He will soothe thy griefs, He will restore thy soul, He will guide thee with His counsel and afterwards receive thee to glory, for His compassions fail not.

*Though annoyed by doubts and fears,
Though distressed by various cares.
Though determined foes assail,
Thy compassions never fail.*



OCTOBER 20

Is there any thing to hard for me?
Jeremiah 32:27

DIFFICULTIES ARE for creatures. There can be nothing difficult to God. His wisdom is infinite. His power is omnipotent. His resources are boundless. His instruments are innumerable. His plan is formed, and He is working it out. "He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." We are sometimes placed in very trying circumstances. Creatures cannot help us, our faith falters, our minds are agitated, our spirits droop, we give way to fear, but the Lord reproves us and asks, "Is anything too hard for Me?" Bring the matter to Me, exercise faith in My word, place yourself in My hand, wait upon Me in My way, "I will work, and who shall let it?" Beloved, your inward evils and outward trials may be too hard for you; but they cannot be too hard for your God. He can subdue the one, and deliver you from the other, with the greatest ease; and His strength is made perfect in weakness. Let this demand then, silence our fears, strengthen our faith, revive our hope, increase our courage, animate our prayers; and let us go forward saying, "*Nothing is too hard for the Lord.*" Look from your own weakness to His strength; from your trials, to His delivering mercy.

*Nothing too hard can be
For my Almighty Lord.
Sufficient is Thy grace for me,
Who hangs upon Thy word.*



OCTOBER 21

*We are the Lord's.
Romans 14:8*

THE LORD HATH a people peculiarly His own. They are distinct from all others. They are preferred to all others, being the objects of His choice — the purchase of His blood — the temple of His Holy Spirit, He loves them with an everlasting love. He calls them His portion. He treats them as children. He prizes them as His peculiar treasure. He is united to them, loves them, and cares for them as His bride. He keeps them as the apple of His eye. This privilege, Paul claimed for himself and his fellow believers; and if we are Christians we can claim it too. “WE ARE THE LORD’S,” and we *know* it, for we have been quickened by the Holy Spirit, we have been received and acknowledged at the Lord’s throne, and we are consecrated to His service and praise. “We are the Lord’s,” and we *prove* it, for we are united to His family, we are walking by His word, we are living to His glory, and we can only be satisfied with His presence and His love. Beloved, let us rejoice in our privilege — it is great and glorious. Let us cleave to His saints — they are the excellent of the earth. Let us carefully observe His word, believing its doctrines, trusting its promises, and keeping its commands. Let us realize in difficulty and danger the glorious fact, “*I am the Lord’s.*”

*Lord, I am Thine, entirely Thine;
Purchased and saved by blood divine.
My person claim, my soul possess,
And sanctify me by Thy grace.*



OCTOBER 22

I abhor myself.
Job 42:6

THE MORE CLEARLY the Lord manifests Himself to us, and the more He works in us by His Spirit, the deeper will be our humility and self-aborrence. Self-admirers are strangers to close and holy fellowship with God. Nothing discovers to us the true state of human nature like nearness to God. Men may speculate and reason and boast of what man can do, so long as they are at a distance from God. But no sooner do they come into His presence, than their comeliness is turned into corruption. They not only see that they are vile, but they feel it. Job had boasted and contended with God, but as soon as ever God came near to him, his views and feelings underwent an entire change, and he cried out, "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." We cannot think too meanly of ourselves as sinners, or feel too deeply on account of the baseness of our nature; except we allow our feelings to lead us to doubt either the ability or willingness of Jesus to save us, or to question our interest in our Father's love. Never does grace appear so glorious, or Christ so precious as when we sink before God in self-loathing and self-aborrence.

*Appear, great God, appear to me,
That by myself abhorred,
Ashamed I may forever be
Before my glorious Lord.*



OCTOBER 23

*The power of the Holy Ghost.
Romans 15:13*

THE HOLY SPIRIT is a divine person, equal with the Father and the Son, in power, majesty, and glory. Without His agency, salvation is impossible. He quickens us when dead in trespasses and sins. He teaches us when ignorant and bewildered. He sanctifies us when polluted and depraved. He comforts us when depressed and cast down. He helps us in prayer, against temptation, and out of many difficulties. His power produces our graces, quickens them when dull, and keeps them alive. He witnesses to our adoption, and seals us unto the day of redemption. We are His workmanship and His temple. He is our teacher, comforter, and inward intercessor. His power alone can make the gospel effectual, subdue the corruptions of our hearts, and conform us to the likeness of the Lord Jesus. Our obligation to Him is great, our dependence upon Him constant, and our love to Him should be fervent. He convinces us of sin, unfolds to us the glories of Jesus, works faith in our hearts, leads us to the fountain of His blood, clothes us in His perfect righteousness, unites us to His person, and teaches us to live upon Him. The great thing we want in the church, and in our hearts is to experience *the power of the Spirit of God*.

*Come, Holy Ghost, Thy power display,
Thy working let me prove;
Chase darkness, doubt, and fear away,
And fill my soul with love.*



OCTOBER 24

What is good for a man in this life?
Ecclesiastes 6:12

THIS IS A VERY difficult question if we refer it to temporal things; and providence alone can furnish the answer. Sometimes prosperity is good, and sometimes adversity — sometimes sickness, and sometimes health — sometimes pain, and sometimes ease — sometimes success, and sometimes disappointment — sometimes plenty, and sometimes poverty. If we set our hearts strongly upon anything below, that is the thing that is not likely to be good for us. If God deny us, or take anything from us, we may be sure at once that that is not good for us. What we have is good for us, if we rightly use it, and improve it for the Lord's glory. Beloved, have you been looking a few steps above you, and thinking what a good thing it would be for me if I could obtain that situation? If so, you are wrong. Resignation to God's will and acquiescence in God's plan, are far better than wishing for this, or longing for that. It is good for a man, daily to live by faith on Jesus, to walk with God, to lay up for himself treasure in heaven, and to endeavour to benefit all around him. But what is good for man in a temporal point of view is not for us to say. Prosperity is often dangerous, and adversity safe.

*'Tis God appoints my earthly lot,
And He does all things well;
I soon shall leave this trying spot
And rise with Him to dwell.*



OCTOBER 25

*He is altogether lovely.
Song of Solomon 5:16*

THIS IS THE OPINION formed of Jesus by all who really know Him. There is nothing lovely but it is in Jesus, and it is in Him in full perfection. He is the object of admiration and animation to all who are taught by the Holy Spirit. His person as God-man, is altogether lovely, for He possesses every grace that can adorn humanity, and all the glories of uncreated deity. His character is altogether lovely, for He is infinitely wise, dignified, condescending, and kind. Indeed there is nothing in Christ, but what is lovely, and there is nothing lovely, but it may be found in Him. The testimony borne by the spouse will apply to His offices, as prophet, priest, and king — to His government, universal and particular — to His work for us on earth and in heaven — to His design in all His dealings with us even to purify, elevate, and honour us. Reader, do you *know* Him? Do you *admire* Him? Do you *love* Him? Do you *recommend* Him? Will you *try* Him? If so, be reconciled to Him, cordially embrace Him, and meekly learn of Him. The more you know Him, the more you will love Him. And the more you love Him, the more happy you will be. Let us ask: What are our views of Jesus tonight? If our minds are spiritual, “HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY.”

*All over glorious is my Lord;
Must be beloved, and yet adored;
His worth if all the nations knew,
Sure the whole earth would love Him too.*



OCTOBER 26

*Who hath abolished death.
2 Timothy 1:10*

DEATH IS OUR foe. It is an implacable enemy. It has slain millions. It has robbed kingdoms of their deliverers, churches of their ornaments, families of their supports, and individuals of their beloved connections. It is powerful — irresistible — cruel — insatiable — the king of terrors. It is a foe that might fill us with fear, and keep us in constant alarm. But we have a *Friend*. A Friend who is infinitely great, and incomparably good. He knew us thoroughly — loved us infinitely — pitied us tenderly — engaged for us heartily — came to deliver us cheerfully — suffered for us indescribably — and conquered our foe completely. He abolished death, that is, He changed its nature — it is now a quiet sleep. He changed its office — it is not an executioner, but a waiting servant. He changed its work — it is now only to take down the prison, and let the prisoner escape. He changed its end — it was truly fearful, it is now divinely glorious. He deprived it of its authority and sting. This He did by fulfilling the law, satisfying the claims of justice, spoiling principalities and powers, wresting the keys from the destroyer's hand, and sending us the good news of complete salvation. Are you *prepared* for this foe? Do you *know* this Friend? Do you *believe* this fact?

*Did we but trust our heavenly Friend,
And on His faithful word depend,
Then should we fearless view the grave,
And death itself no sting would have.*



OCTOBER 27

Who remembered us in our low estate.

Psalms 136:23

UR STATE BY nature was truly a low estate. We had no liberty, being the slaves of Satan — no ability, being dead in trespasses and sins — no honour, being allied only to traitors and rebels — no real pleasure, being tossed about by desires and disappointments — no prospects, except eternal woe — no profitable employment, for the fruit of our toil was death. Our nature was fearfully depraved — our condition, truly deplorable — and our destiny, most alarming. But in this state the Lord remembered us; and it was with reference to it that He made His covenant, sent His Son, promised His Holy Spirit, prepared and gave us His gospel, employed His wise and holy providence, exerted His divine power on our behalf, opened the storehouse of heaven for us, and raised us up to know, love, and realize union to Jesus. And He did this of mere mercy, and because His mercy endureth forever. Mercy fixes on her objects, cleaves to those on whom she fixes, and continues to regard them with peculiar concern. Mercy wrote our names in the book of life, gave us the promises of the everlasting gospel, pleads for us before the throne above, and visits us often to cheer, rescue, and bless.

*All-gracious God, Thy pitying eye
Viewed the estate in which we lie;
And as an act of sovereign grace,
Sent Thy salvation to our race.*



OCTOBER 28

*Sitting at the feet of Jesus.
Luke 8:35*

THIS POOR MAN had just been rescued from Satan. He felt under the deepest obligation. He was filled with wonder at his deliverer's power. He was charmed with His preaching, and he took his seat at His feet. This was the posture of a learner; the place occupied by a disciple. We may still enjoy this privilege. Jesus speaks to us now. Let us sit down at His feet, and hear His word with attention, receive His doctrine with affection, and own Him as our Lord and Master. It is the posture of humility. The feet of Jesus is our proper place. There we are safe. There we shall receive blessings. There we shall learn the most important lessons. It is the evidence of attachment. How much we have to attach us to the Lord Jesus. How much we have already received. How much we want, which He only can supply. How much we shall need, as we prosecute our journey, which it is vain to look for from any other quarter. Let us therefore sit down at His feet and meekly receive His word. Let us keep our place, not suffering anything to draw us away. Satan will if he can, for he well knows that he can not injure us here. Sinners will if they can, for while we are in this posture our conduct will reprove them, and exalt the grace of God.

*O that I may attentive sit,
In humble faith at Jesus' feet;
Imbibe His spirit, prove His care,
Preserved from guilt and slavish fear.*



OCTOBER 29

A bruised reed shall he not break.

Matthew 12:20

SO TENDER IS the heart of Jesus, so gentle His disposition, that the feeblest need not fear, the most timid may take courage. He notices the first risings of desire, the secret inclination, the buddings of faith, and He admires and approves of them. He knows the strength of our corruptions, what terrible conflicts we have, what poor creatures we are, and for our comfort assures us, that though weak and worthless as a bruised reed, He will not reject us, or crush us by His power. He will bind up the bruised part. He will encourage the desire. He will foster the little faith. He will receive the imperfect prayer. He will accept and bless the discouraged soul. He is represented as a Lamb, to inspire us with confidence — as a Shepherd, to preserve us from alarm — and as a Saviour, to attract us to His throne. He will not break the bruised reed Himself, nor will He allow others to do it. Beloved, are you bruised by Satan, by unbelief, and by an evil world? Do you feel weak and worthless? Are you discouraged and filled with fear? Fear not, Jesus is gentle, kind, and gracious. He despiseth not any. He rejects no applicants. He binds up the broken in heart, and healeth all their wounds. He says, “*I will in no wise cast out.*”

*No, I find He never will,
(Jesus is a Saviour still,)
He who kindled my desire,
Will not let the spark expire.*



OCTOBER 30

He shall be great.

Luke 1:32

SO SPAKE THE ANGEL, announcing the birth of the Lord Jesus, and the prediction is fulfilled. He is great, and His greatness is unsearchable. Great, in the dignity of His nature — in the depth of His humiliation — in the glory of His righteousness — in the merit of His blood — in the provisions of His gospel — in the number of His converts — in the extent of His kingdom — in the tenderness of His sympathy — in the variety of His offices — in the grandeur of His works — in the estimation of His people — in the conquest of His foes — and in the punishment of His determined enemies. His greatness is stamped upon every promise He has made — every pardon He grants — every blessing He gives — and every victory He gains. Believer, thy Saviour is great. Therefore He saves great sinners, confers great grace, bears with great offenders, treats with great kindness, and will confer on us great glory. But His greatness will more clearly appear when all His people are collected, when the curse is removed from our world, when the glowing predictions of the Old Testament are fulfilled, and He reigns before His ancients gloriously. His greatness shall fill His people with everlasting joy, and His foes with never-ending woe. He shall be great on earth, in heaven, and in hell.

*Now, Saviour, in my soul be great,
Thence bid all guilt and fears retreat;
My pow'rs into subjection bring,
And reign supreme as God and King.*



OCTOBER 31

He healeth the broken in heart.

Psalm 147:3

SIN HAS SO HARDENED the heart that nothing can effectually impress it but grace. No one feels and mourns over the hardness of the heart, but he whose heart has been softened by the Holy Spirit. Nothing will thoroughly break the heart, but a sense of God's forgiving love. When the soul is quickened by the Holy Spirit, sin is discovered, guilt is felt, fear is experienced, and the heart begins to relent. A conflict commences, and very often much distress is felt before pardon is enjoyed. Satan is busy, unbelief is strong, our knowledge of the gospel is imperfect, repentance is difficult, the heart is oppressed, and the spirit is wounded. When the man is really broken down before God, is willing to submit to God's righteousness, and to embrace a salvation all of grace, deliverance is near. The Lord sends His word to heal, applies the balm of a Saviour's blood, speaks peace to the conscience, and lets the oppressed go free. The wounded, broken heart is healed, salvation is come to the soul, and Jesus is most precious. Reader, if thy heart is broken for sin, thy God will heal it. Look to the Lord, and hope in His word.

*Nor shall the sinner's hope be vain,
Behold, with all His glorious train,
The King of glory enters
The mourning sinner's broken heart;
Guilt, fear, and bondage all depart,
When once on Christ he ventures.*



NOVEMBER 1

*A Prince and a Saviour.
Acts 5:31*

THE MAN OF SORROWS is now raised to princely dignity. He is seated at the Father's right hand. He has all power in heaven and in earth. Every knee must bow to Him. He is Lord of all — the Prince of peace — the Prince of life — the Prince of the kings of the earth. He has a princely heart. He possesses all the wealth of the universe. He gives in a princely manner. But He is also a Saviour — a princely Saviour. He saves by His own merit — by His own power. He saves for His own glory. He saves freely. He never barter with sinners, but bestows salvation upon the lost as a princely gift. There is nothing in which He so much delights as in saving sinners. He *can* save to the uttermost. He *will* save every applicant. He came into our world to save sinners. He agonized in Gethsemane and died on Calvary to save sinners. He is now exalted at God's right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to *give* repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. Go to Jesus, as to a mild, beneficent, peaceful Prince. Go to Him as a powerful, kind, and willing Saviour, whose work and delight it is to save sinners, even the chief. Honour Him by trusting His word, relying on His blood, and expect salvation as a free gift at His hands.

*In Thy state of exaltation,
Answer, Lord, its end in me;
Give me free and full salvation
Now my Prince and Saviour be.*



NOVEMBER 2

Why is thy heart grieved?

1 Samuel 1:8

THIS WAS THE enquiry of a kind husband to an afflicted wife. Let us suppose that the question is proposed to ourselves, and try and turn it to some good account. “Why is thy heart grieved?” Is it from conviction of sin? If so, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Is it from desertion, or the loss of the Lord’s presence? He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us. His covenant is sure, His promise is true, though He may hide His face from us. Is it from unfruitfulness? He will be as the dew unto Israel, and they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine. He will prune the branch by affliction, and cause it to bring forth more fruit. Is it from poverty? The silver and the gold are the Lord’s, entirely at His disposal; and He will supply all our needs in His own time and way. Is it from bereavement? He will not leave us orphans. He will come unto us. The Lord will take us up, and will be better to us than ten such relatives. Is it from hardness of heart? He will melt us and try us. He will turn His hand upon us, and purely purge away our dross and take away all our tin. His love will both soften and sanctify us. Therefore, grieve not.

*Then let not griefs o’erwhelm thy breast,
To Jesus fly, He’ll give thee rest!
Hope thou in God, His smiles shall raise,
And fill thy soul with songs of praise.*



NOVEMBER 3

*Thou hast done right.
Nehemiah 9:33*

THE LORD CANNOT but do right. This is generally acknowledged. But to be persuaded of this, to realize it, and be influenced by it, under severe and heavy trials is exceedingly difficult. But the Lord never acts but according to the plan which He has drawn, which plan is the perfection of wisdom, and proceeds from His infinite love. What He does, He purposed to do; and He purposed to do it because it was the very best thing that could be done. We are poor, hasty, selfish, dissatisfied creatures, ready to sit in judgment upon what God does, and to complain of His dealings without the least cause. But there are times when looking back upon our losses, crosses, sufferings, and trials, we can say, and say it heartily, "Thou hast done right." Doubtless Jacob felt this, when he embraced his Joseph in Egypt — and Job also, when God had blessed his latter end more than the beginning — and Daniel also, when he was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found on him, because he believed in his God. But it is to feel it in the trial, to confess it *under* the affliction, that is most desirable. Let us then when the Lord tries our graces, or buffets us for our faults, endeavour to say, "THOU HAST DONE RIGHT."

*With peaceful steps thy race of duty run,
God nothing does, nor suffers to be done,
But thou would'st do thyself; could'st thou but see
The end of all events as well as He.*



NOVEMBER 4

*My God shall be my strength.
Isaiah 49:5*

THIS WAS THE language of Jesus, our living head and bright example. He lived by faith on His Father's word. He was deeply tried by His Father's enemies. But He lived by the Father, and we should live by Him. We are loved with the same love, interested in the same covenant, and entitled to the same promises. Let us therefore, in the prospect of great and sore trials, severe conflicts, distressing changes, and the approach of the last enemy, say, "My God shall be my strength;" for He has said, "I will strengthen thee." And when we feel weakest, let faith be strongest, for He says, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." God has been our strength, and it is having obtained help of Him, that we continue unto this day. Let us therefore trust Him for the future, and say in reference to every duty, and when about to engage with any foe, "I will go in the strength of the Lord, I will make mention of His righteousness, even of His only." If God is my strength, then I shall overcome — I shall persevere — I shall arrive safe at home — I shall praise His sovereign grace forevermore. Let us lie down tonight rejoicing in our privilege and exercising our thoughts upon this glorious fact, "*My God is my strength.*"

*What if the springs of life were broke,
And flesh and heart should faint?
God is my soul's eternal rock
The strength of every saint.*



NOVEMBER 5

*What hath God wrought?
Numbers 23:23*

FOR OUR NATION in delivering it from Paganism and Popery, and in conferring so many, and such great blessings upon it so that it may well be the wonder and envy of the world. For His *church* — in redeeming it by the sufferings and death of His beloved Son — in quickening, converting, and sanctifying its members — in gathering them together from the ends of the earth — in providing for all their wants, watching over their persons, and keeping them by His power through faith unto salvation. For our *souls* — delivering us from the power of darkness, and translating us into the kingdom of His dear Son — pardoning all our sins through His blood, and justifying our persons in His righteousness — working faith in our hearts — giving us a good hope through grace — making us the temples of His Holy Spirit — conquering for us all our foes — and subduing within us our iniquities. What hath God wrought? Wonders! For whom hath God wrought? Sinners! Why hath God wrought? That He might be glorified. Beloved, the past should encourage us in prospect of the future. What He hath done is a pledge that He will do all that He has promised.

*What sweeter pledge could God bestow,
Of help in future scenes of woe,
Than grace already given;
But unbelief, that hateful thing,
Oft makes me sigh when I should sing
Of confidence in heaven.*



NOVEMBER 6

Be thou faithful unto death.

Revelation 2:10

GOD IS FAITHFUL to His people. He always keeps His word. He never disappoints their hope. He exhorts and encourages them to be faithful too. This was spoken to the angel, or pastor of the church. Such should be faithful in preaching the word, in watching for souls, in suffering for Christ, and in seeking by all means to promote the prosperity, peace, and holiness of the flock. It includes the people. Believers should be faithful — to the *truth*, holding it fast, striving for it, spreading it in every direction — to *conscience*, listening to its dictates, observing its warnings, and obeying its demands — to their *profession*, maintaining it, adorning it, and endeavouring to make it answer the end designed in it — to *God*, believing His word, doing His will, and suffering in His cause — to *sinner*s, warning them of danger, telling them the tale of mercy, and leading them to Jesus — to *saint*s, reproving their sins, soothing their sorrows, and supplying their needs. “BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.” If it expose you to death, be faithful. The crown of life is the reward. Be faithful until removed by death. Persevere calmly, patiently, courageously, industriously, until the Master calls, “*Come up higher.*”

*Saviour, help me by Thy power,
In temptation's dangerous hour;
Give me fortitude and faith,
Make me faithful unto death.*



NOVEMBER 7

He thanked God and took courage.

Acts 28:15

THE KINDNESS OF friends cheered the apostle. For this he gave God thanks and then went forward courageously. Every mercy should be thankfully acknowledged. Whatever does us good comes from God. He is the only source of all good, and to Him our praises should daily ascend. The Lord has brought us through many dangers. He has delivered us out of many difficulties. He has bestowed on us many favours. Let us therefore tonight thank God, and take courage. He has provided for all our future wants. He has given us many, exceeding great, and precious promises. He has assured us that all things shall work together for our good. And we have His word, that He will never leave us nor forsake us. Let us then, thank God, and take courage. Our journey may be rough, our foes may be strong, our troubles may be great; but our strength is equal, our supplies are certain, and the end will crown the whole. Listen not to Satan. Yield not of unbelief. Fear not the future. He that hath delivered, doth deliver, and in Him let us trust that He will yet deliver us. Look at what He has done, review your mercies, think of His promises, and then thank God and take courage.

*Jesus, on Thee our hope depends,
To lead us on to Thine abode;
Assured our home will make amends
For all our toil while on the road.*



NOVEMBER 8

Serve the LORD with gladness.

Psalms 100:2

OUR GOD is infinitely happy, and He loves to see His creatures happy. He provided everything necessary to make them happy at first, but sin disturbed and destroyed much of God's fair creation. He would have us happy now — happy in His service. Therefore He has provided for our happiness in the everlasting gospel. He says, "Believe, and I will give you a free pardon — I will confer on you a perfect righteousness — I will purify your hearts — I will supply all your wants — I will admit you into My presence for holy fellowship — I will keep you by My power — I will give you grace while you live, and glory when you die." Is not this enough to make you happy? To induce us to "serve the Lord with gladness?" Brethren, in God's service we should be cheerful. But if so, we must realize our adoption, and serve Him as dear children who are fully persuaded of a Father's love. Let us engage heartily in God's service. Let us serve Him out of love. Let us serve Him on earth, under the impression that we shall reign with Him in heaven. Let us serve Him in the world, in our families, and in the church. And let it be legibly written out on our conduct, so that all may read it, "*I serve God, I serve Him cheerfully. I would not be otherwise employed.*"

*Lord, disperse my sin and sadness,
Speak salvation to my heart;
Then I'll serve with joy and gladness,
And Thy noblest powers exert.*



NOVEMBER 9

*Your redemption draweth nigh.
Luke 21:28*

THAT IS, YOUR complete deliverance. Your Redeemer hath appeared once, and paid the price necessary for your honourable release. He is now waiting at His Father's right hand, having all power in heaven and in earth, and He will soon come and claim the purchased possession. You may fall asleep in Jesus, you may slumber peacefully in the grave for a little time, but Jesus will soon come, and then He will raise you from the dead as His brethren. You will arise and shake off the dust of death, and put on the beautiful garments of immortality. You will be publicly acknowledged as the sons of God. You will be put in possession of purity, power, and perfection. You will be introduced to your heavenly Father, to the whole of the redeemed family, and to your everlasting home. Then your redemption will be complete. Well, it draweth nigh. Every day, every hour brings it nearer. Are we longing for it? Can we use the language of the apostle and say, "Ourselves also which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." If so, rejoice for your redemption draweth nigh; for now is your salvation nearer than when ye believed.

*Then shall I see, and hear, and know,
All I desired or wished below;
And every power find sweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy.*



NOVEMBER 10

Take away all iniquity.

Hosea 14:2

NOTHING TROUBLES a real Christian like sin, and there is nothing for which he prays more frequently, or more heartily, than for complete deliverance from it. He is delivered from its guilt, being justified from all things. But he longs to be delivered from its working. It annoys, irritates, and distresses him. It darkens his evidences, disturbs his peace, and troubles his conscience. Therefore he prays, "Take away all iniquity." But this prayer is put into the mouth of a backslider by the Lord Himself, and it is the first thing he should seek. By iniquity he fell, and by sanctification only can he arise. He fell by his own folly, but he can only rise by the Lord's mercy. And will the Lord take away all iniquity? He will. The guilt of it He will remove by applying the atonement, the power of it by bringing home His word, and the very being of it at death. Let this then be our daily prayer, "Lord, sanctify me wholly, and preserve my whole spirit, soul, and body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And if this flows from our hearts, it proves our regeneration, and will be answered in our complete sanctification. For "faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." He will take His own time, and work in His own way, but He will do it.

More than for ease in mortal pain,

For purity I pray;

Whatever trial may remain,

O take my sins away!



NOVEMBER 11

*He shall sit as a refiner.
Malachi 3:3*

HIS PEOPLE ARE His precious metals. Afflictions are His furnace. Purification is His design. He therefore puts them into the furnace, and He keeps them there until His end is accomplished. But He superintends the whole process of refining Himself. He regulates the heat, watches the operation of it, and sits waiting for the fulfilment of his design. He will not be disappointed, for if one affliction does not produce the desired end, another shall. Beloved, perhaps you have wondered why one trial has succeeded another in your experience. But the reason is this: the dross was not removed. Thy sorest trials are among thy choicest mercies, because they are intended to make you meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints of light. Think not that you are left alone in your sorrows. Your Lord sits by. He intently watches the purification, and as soon as thy pride, obstinacy, worldliness, and opposition to His will is gone, the fire is drawn; your troubles will end. There shall not be one furnace more than is necessary, nor shall you continue in suffering one moment more than is needful. Your Saviour, who died for your sins, is your Refiner; and He sits by the furnace during the whole process of refining. He is preparing you for glory.

*With me in the fire remain
Till like burnished gold I shine;
Meet through consecrated pain,
To see the face divine.*



NOVEMBER 12

*What have I done?
Jeremiah 8:6*

A VERY NECESSARY enquiry with which to close this day. We too seldom examine our hearts or compare our conduct with God's word. Let us then tonight seriously ask ourselves a few questions. What have I done *against* the Lord? Have I not broken His law, and disbelieved His gospel? Have I not grieved His Spirit, and slighted His beloved Son? Have I not murmured at His providence and opposed His will? Have I not neglected His ordinances and felt my heart rise against His sovereignty? Have I not doubted His love and questioned His faithfulness? Have I not forsaken Him, the fountain of living waters, and preferred His creatures to Himself? What have I done *for* the Lord? Have I visited His sick and relieved His poor? Have I instructed His ignorant ones and encouraged the desponding? Have I assisted His ministers and filled up my place in His church? Have I pleaded with sinners and endeavoured to restore backsliders to His fold? Have I kept His glory in view and sought to advance His kingdom in the world? What have I done, compared with my means, my opportunities, my professions, and with what others have done? Alas! alas! wise to do evil, to do good I appear to have no knowledge.

*Lord, with this guilty heart of mine
To Thy dear cross I flee;
And to Thy grace my soul resign
To be renewed by Thee.*



NOVEMBER 13

*The Just One.
Acts 7:52*

THIS IS ONE OF the titles of Jesus. He was holy in His nature, and perfectly righteous in His conduct. He rendered to all their due. As a Son, He honoured His Father by filial obedience to His will. As a Servant, He always did those things which pleased Him. And as the Substitute of His people, He did what was demanded of them, and suffered in their stead what they deserved. He magnified the law and made it honourable. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. By one offering He perfected forever them that are sanctified. He is still THE JUST ONE. Just to every character He sustains, to every name He wears, to every office He fills. He will justly punish His foes, and with equal justice save all who believe on His name. His word He will never falsify. His character shall never be sullied. He will not cast out one coming sinner. He will not neglect one of the lambs of His fold. He will not turn a deaf ear to one who calls upon His name. He will not deny salvation to any self-condemned soul who seeks it at His feet. He will justly reward His servants, not over looking even a cup of cold water given in His name. He will appear “THE JUST ONE,” in the doom of the wicked, and in the everlasting happiness of His saints.

*O Thou Gracious, Wise, and Just,
In Thy hands my soul I trust,
Make me holy, be my Guide,
And for all my wants provide.*



NOVEMBER 14

Behold, he prayeth.

Acts 9:11

SAUL THE PHARISEE had long used the form of prayer, but never until now had he really prayed. He was now created anew in Christ Jesus. He had spiritual life, he was under divine teaching, he felt his need of salvation, and therefore he prayed. None really pray but those who are born again, but all quickened souls do pour out their hearts before God. They feel that they must pray or perish. They must pray or sink under the burden they have to carry. The heart is too full to hold — it must have vent. The desires are too strong to be suppressed — they will escape. Words may be wanting — but prayer will ascend, for prayer is rather the language of the heart than of the lip. Reader, there was a time when you did not pray. You were then dead in trespasses and sins. There was a period when you began to pray. That was the time when you were quickened by the Holy Spirit. You cannot live without prayer now, though you feel dull, dead, dark, cold, and stupid. This is the evidence that you are alive unto God. God admires the prayers of His people, and calls us to behold the pleasing fact: a persecutor prays. He always attends to praying souls; therefore *continue in prayer*. Pray for grace to pray, when you feel that you cannot pray.

*O Thou, by whom we come to God,
The life, the truth, the way!
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.*



NOVEMBER 15

God imputeth righteousness without works.

Romans 4:6

THIS IS ONE of the great and gracious mysteries of revelation. Man has no righteousness of his own. God cannot justify without one. The Lord Jesus comes into our world and produces one. The righteousness of Jesus is infinitely meritorious. He wrought it out in our nature, as our Substitute. It was accepted for us and is placed to our account. Before we have done one good work, altogether irrespective of good works, the moment we believe God places the righteousness of Jesus to our account. It is ours — ours by free gift — as much ours as if we had wrought it ourselves. It is in this that we are justified. In this we are truly righteous, therefore we are accepted of God, and no charge lies against us in the book of God. All is met. All is answered. The just God acquits us from all charges, pronounces us righteous, declares us to be free from all condemnation. Thus, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Beloved, when Satan tempts you, when fears distress you, when your past conduct generates despondency, when the claims of the law disturbs you, endeavour to exercise faith in this glorious fact — that God imputes righteousness without works.

*Jesus, how glorious is Thy grace!
When in Thy name we trust;
Our faith receives a righteousness,
Which makes the sinner just.*



NOVEMBER 16

Jesus Christ the same.

Hebrews 13:8

IMMUTABILITY IS ONE of the essential perfections of Jehovah. He claims it as His right. He presents it as a source of comfort to His people when He says, “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” But the Lord Jesus is immutable, because He is divine. He changes not. He is the same in all the glories of His person — in all the purposes of His heart — in all the doctrines of His gospel — in the greatness of His love — in the omnipotence of His power — in the tenderness of His sympathy — in the merit of His blood — and in His hatred to sin. Is Jesus immutable? Then let us adore Him as divine. Let us trust Him with implicit confidence. Let us hold fast the precious truths of His holy gospel. Let us seek comfort in Him, when our earthly gourds wither, and all our cisterns are broken. He is the same in darkness as in the light — when we are cast down, as when we are filled with joy — when providence frowns, as when all things around smile and rejoice. He is always Jesus, the Saviour — the kind, the condescending, the faithful, the tender Saviour. He is the same tonight as when we first tasted His love, and as when our hearts danced at the sound of His name.

*His purpose and love are the same,
Whatever the changes I find,
A trifle may alter my frame,
But nothing unsettles His mind.*



NOVEMBER 17

I shall die in my nest.

Job 29:18

JOB'S NEST WAS very comfortable, and appeared to be very secure. It was on high and not to be easily reached. He knew that death could reach it, but he thought that nothing else would disturb it. His conduct was consistent, and his conscience was quiet. God was his Father, and providence, his friend. "Then I said I shall die in my nest." But, alas! suddenly a storm arose, the nest was destroyed, and the poor bird lay bleeding and exposed. No earthly nest is out of danger. Temporal comforts are only lent. The higher the tree in which we build, the more exposed to the whirlwind and the storm. The inhabitant of the low place enjoys the shelter. Here we have no continuing city. In one day we may be brought down. Let us therefore endeavour to leave our matters more with the Lord, and learn to be content with His appointments. We must die. But *when*, and *where*, and *how*, should be left with the Lord. Five minutes after death, it will matter very little, whether we died on a bed of down, in a spacious chamber, surrounded by friends; or at some rich man's gate neglected and alone. Present comforts may all leave us, our soft nest may be scattered to the winds, but our union to Jesus nothing can disturb.

*I would not contend with Thy will,
Whatever that will may decree;
But O, may each trial I feel
Unite me more firmly to Thee.*



NOVEMBER 18

*Leaning upon her beloved.
Song of Solomon 8:5*

JESUS IS THE object of a believer's love. To him the world is a wilderness. Heaven is his Father's house and his home. He is passing through the wilderness in company with Jesus. He is represented as the bride leaning on her beloved. This is indicative of weakness in herself, and confidence in her beloved. He is her strength as well as her guide; her support as well as the object of her affection. She leans on Him as well as converses with Him. He supports as well as comforts her. Believer, keep close to thy Saviour's side. Never leave Him while in this waste, this howling wilderness. Lean on Him, and when you feel weak, *lean hard*. His strong arm is put forth to support thy weak frame. He will bear thee up. He will lead thee on. The more you lean on Him, the more you will love Him; and the more you love Him, the closer you will cleave to Him. Yield to His guidance, trust in His love, lean on His power, walk by His side, and commend Him to others around you. In His company you are safe. In communion with Him you will be happy. Like the two disciples of old, your heart will be warmed, and you will be at the end of your journey before you are aware of it. He is always at your side, believe and prove Him near.

*On thy Saviour's love and power,
On His righteousness and blood,
Lean in every trying hour,
Lean till you sit down with God.*



NOVEMBER 19

Ebenezer.
1 Samuel 7:12

WE HAVE REQUIRED help, for as creatures we are exposed, weak, and foolish. And as Christians we are surrounded by snares, opposed by enemies, are timid and fearful, and easily turned aside. We have *received* help, and help in every time of need. It was through divine assistance that we were able to overcome unbelief and evil habits — to break away from our old connections — to take up our cross and bear it after Jesus — to stand our ground amidst storms of temptation, and powerful opposition — to persevere in the good old way. Having obtained help of God, we continue to this day. Let us then set up our Ebenezer, and acknowledge the help we have received. Its source was divine — it came from above. The supply has been sufficient — well timed — exactly suited to the circumstances in which we are placed. The manner of communication was at times direct. We can say, “The Lord helped me.” At other times it was indirect — the Lord helped us by others. What should be the result? Praise — hearty, grateful, constant praise. Prayer — fervent, faithful, frequent prayer for help in future. Patience — giving the Lord time, and waiting in quiet expectation for the fulfilment of His word. Testimony — God is faithful.

*Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by Thy help I come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.*



NOVEMBER 20

The word of his grace.

Acts 14:3

THIS IS ONE of the titles of the blessed gospel. It is God's gracious word — His gracious word to graceless sinners. It originated in grace, and was once a mighty thought hid in the depths of the mind of God. It was introduced into our world by grace, and by grace alone it has been continued until now. It publishes grace, or a free pardon to all sinners who believe in Jesus — a hearty welcome to the Lord's throne — a fullness opened in the Redeemer's person to supply all our wants — and a legal title to heaven by faith in Christ Jesus. It is made effectual by grace, and is the instrument by which the Lord produces the work of grace in our hearts. It is essentially different from law or legal requirement, for it speaks of favour shown. It presents blessings of inestimable value, and proclaims everlasting liberty as an act of sovereign grace. Beloved, beware lest you legalize the gospel, or turn it into a law requiring, rather than what it is — the joyful sound of the Jubilee, proclaiming pardon, peace, liberty, and restoration to an everlasting inheritance. It is the good news of God's favour, the glad tidings of a full salvation for the poor, lost, and degraded children of men; of every blessing man can need, without money and without price.

*O Lord! the treasures of Thy love
Are everlasting mines;
Deep as our helpless miseries are,
And boundless as our sins!*



NOVEMBER 21

*Is thine heart right?
2 Kings 10:15*

THIS IS AN important enquiry. With some the head is right — it has clear views of doctrine, and can make correct statements respecting Christian experience — but the heart is not right. Reader, is thine? Is it broken *for* sin? Is it set *against* sin? Is it *fixed* on the Lord Jesus? Do you embrace the Lord's word, rest for acceptance on Jesus' finished work, and endeavour so to walk as to please God? Is your heart glowing with love to the saints, pity for the world, and zeal for the glory of God? Can you live comfortably without living upon Christ? Can you be satisfied without fellowship with God? How is your heart affected towards the Bible, the Lord's day, and the means of grace? Are you humbled under a sense of your sinfulness, and filled with wonder at the exceeding grace of God towards you? If so, your heart is right. But it will not be long right unless it is kept near to Jesus. You must often visit Gethsemane and Calvary; you must have fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, or you cannot keep the heart right. If it is not right, are you mourning on account of it? Do you take it to Jesus? Perhaps you are saying —

*If mine were right, it could not be,
Good God, so contrary to Thee,
So prone to every sin;
It must remain an evil heart,
Till Thou Thine hallowing grace impart,
And Christ is formed within.*



NOVEMBER 22

*He shall direct thy paths.
Proverbs 3:6*

ARE YOU IN PERPLEXITY — at a loss which way to take, or what to do? Does providence baffle all your schemes, and leave you in confusion and trouble? The Lord is teaching you the the lesson which He taught his prophet Jeremiah, who said, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” You must go to the Lord for wisdom, as well as for grace; and look to Him for direction, as well as salvation. He has marked out your path, but you cannot see the lines. Go to Him in child-like simplicity and ask Him to throw light upon it, and then it will be all plain. Seek His direction before every movement. Beseech Him to go with you in every enterprise. “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and HE SHALL DIRECT THY PATHS.” His eye is upon thee for good. His ear is open to thy prayer. He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry. When He shall hear He will answer thee. Consult His word, seek His blessing, honour His love, keep His company, aim at His glory, and He shall direct thy paths. He only can direct you aright, and He has promised that He will.

*Commit to Him thy doubtful way,
Rest on His care, and trust His hand.
His goodness shall thy path display,
And soon a prosp'rous end command!*



NOVEMBER 23

*Mourning every one for his iniquity.
Ezekiel 7:16*

SUCH IS THE effect of real conversion to God. The sinner under alarm may weep. He dreads the punishment of his sin. But the assured believer will mourn because he has sinned against a God of love, and broken a law that is holy, just, and good. He will mourn over the sin that dwells in him, which no one knows but himself; as well as for the iniquity that is discovered by his fellow men. He daily mourns, because he daily sins. Yet he is not unhappy. He knows that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth him from all sin. He knows that to him the Lord will not impute sin. He knows that he is accepted in the Beloved. These things make him mourn. The greater his confidence in God — the sweeter his enjoyment of a Saviour's love — the closer he walks with God — the more he mourns for his iniquity. His is repentance unto life — godly sorrow which needeth not to be repented of. Beloved, do you mourn for your iniquity? Has there been any sorrow for sin working in your heart today? You daily sin. You must daily repair to the fountain opened for sin, and you should daily mourn for your iniquity. Mourn, but do not despond. Mourn, but hold fast your confidence.

*Dear Lord, may I a mourner be,
Over my sins and after Thee;
And when my mourning days are o'er,
Enjoy Thy comforts evermore.*



NOVEMBER 24

Christ died for the ungodly.

Romans 5:6

NOT FOR THE weak merely, but for the wicked — for those who were totally depraved, and entirely unworthy of His notice — who had lost the image of God, were alienated from the life of God, and were enemies to God. What wondrous grace is this! Had He died only for the moral, or the amiable, or those who had something to recommend them to His notice, we might have given way to despair, and have concluded that He could not have died for us. But it was for the ungodly — just such as we are — actually for us if we believe in Him — in our stead — as our Substitute — that we might never die. He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Let us then draw comfort from this fact: that Jesus died in order that ungodly sinners might live forever. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins might live unto righteousness. We therefore, as believers in Jesus, shall never die. Our sins are atoned for. For us, expiation is made. We are entitled to life. We have it. For Jesus said, “Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.” O Thou glorious Redeemer, how shall we sufficiently praise Thee for Thy wondrous love!

*Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity! Grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!*



NOVEMBER 25

*I would not live always.
Job 7:16*

YET WE SHOULD be willing to live as long as God pleases. He will keep us in this world no longer than He can in some way get glory by us. Still, pain and suffering make life appear long, and death desirable. It is generally the sufferer who says, "I loathe it, I would not live away." But the language is suited to us, for if we were to live always, we should sin always, we should mourn always, we should be always passing through tribulation. Who would live always at a distance from home, in a state of exile? But such is our state now. Well, we shall not live always, nor shall we live long. Our remaining days may be very few. Let us not therefore be much concerned about how long we shall live, but let us aim to live to some good purpose. Let us live while we live. Let us live for God — for the good of souls — for the spread of the gospel — for the improvement of the church — for the honour of Christ — and for the destruction of sin. Let us endeavour so to live, as neither to fear death nor life; being prepared for the one, and useful in the other. Let us live expecting everlasting life, where the satisfaction will be perfect, and the appetite for enjoyment will be always fresh. Let us live *upon* Christ, *for* Christ, and as much *like* Christ as possible.

*No; I would not always live,
Always sin, repent, and grieve,
Always in my dungeon groan,
Always serve a God unknown.*



NOVEMBER 26

He hath settled on his lees.

Jeremiah 48:11

THIS WAS THE effect of prosperity. He was now wise in his own wisdom, and strong in his own strength. All was calm and tranquil, and he was settled down in self-satisfaction. This would soon be the case with us, if it were not for trials and temptations. We would, like Israel, forget God our Saviour, and lightly esteem the Rock of our salvation. To a certain extent, this is sometimes the case. We settle down, and then prayer becomes formal, spiritual good tasteless, the things of God mere commonplace matters. There is no wrestling with God, no direct communion with God, no savoury spiritual conversation. The form is maintained, but the power is gone. When this happens, if we are really Christians, we may look out for troubles, for they will surely come. Our God will stir us up, as the eagle stirreth up her nest. He will send one trial upon another, one message after another, until He brings us back to Himself with weeping and supplication. Moab *may* settle on his lees, but Israel *shall not*; therefore beware of sinking into such an unbecoming state. “Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion.” Now is the time for diligence, for activity in God’s cause, for carrying out the Saviour’s precepts. Let us work, not sleep; be active, not settled on our lees.

*Be wise to run thy race,
And cast off every load;
Strive to be rich in works of grace,
Be rich towards thy God.*



NOVEMBER 27

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Psalms 51:7

DAVID WAS NO common sinner. His crimes were of a crimson colour. His views of his sin were vivid and powerful. But so exalted were his views of the efficacy of the atonement, that he felt persuaded that if it were applied, it would entirely remove the stain. He believed that if the Lord washed him, He would do it thoroughly, that every spot and trace of sin would be taken away, and that he should be pure as an angel of light. He has realized this. He is enjoying it at this moment. Beloved, however black thy crimes, however deep the stains of sin may be on thy soul, the precious blood of Jesus can remove the whole. If thy God wash thee, He will purge out every stain. He will make thee perfectly clean. It is said of those above, who were once sinners like thee below, *"They are without fault before the throne of God."* And it is said of Jesus, to His eternal honour, that He is able *"to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."* You never can estimate the value of a Saviour's blood. You never can have too exalted views of its efficacy, for it *cleanseth from all sin*. Precious blood! The blood of incarnate deity, may it cleanse my soul completely and forever!

*See, see the fountain flows,
To purge thy guilty stains,
Till whiter than the purest snows,
Descending o'er the plains.*



NOVEMBER 28

Yet will I trust in him.

Job 13:15

NOR CAN YOU do better. Nay, you cannot do so well. It is the very best thing you can do. But suppose He strip me of my property, bereave me of my children, deprive me of my health, sever me from my friends, and hide His face from me. Still trust in Him. Not only so, but if He appears to stand over you as an executioner, with the axe uplifted, ready to strike the fatal blow, still trust in Him. You have His word, and He cannot deny it. He will not falsify it. He *must* be faithful. He *will* be kind. He never can turn away from the imploring eye of His afflicted child. He never will refuse to honour His word of promise when it is pleaded at His throne. Trust in Him, for He is only trying thy faith, deepening thy experience, and laying a foundation for thy future happiness. Trust in Him, and you will some day bless Him for this very trial. Trust in Him, and when He hath tried you, you shall come forth as gold. Though Satan tempt you, though corruption rage within you, though the world may frown upon you, though Christian friends are unkind to you, though all things appear to be against you, still say, “YET WILL I TRUST IN HIM.” Let nothing shake your confidence in God.

*Why should I dread Jehovah's hand,
Though it might crush to dust?
'Tis love that gives His arm command,
And in that love I trust.*



NOVEMBER 29

*The day of small things.
Zechariah 4:10*

THE WORK OF grace in some persons is scarcely discernable. Their faith is so weak. Their knowledge is so small. Their love is so feeble. Their reserve is so great. They cannot open their minds to anyone. They are held in perpetual bondage. Yet they are the Lord's. They have light enough to see the emptiness of the world, the vileness of sin, and the value of Christ. They long for the enjoyment of His love, and desire above all things an interest in Him. They cannot say they love Him, but they heartily desire to do so. They have many fears and few joys. They say they do not pray, and yet they could not live without going to the throne of grace. In their esteem, nothing is to be compared with union to Christ, no people are so happy as the Lord's people, and they feel that they would give a world to be like them. It is with such the day of small things, but there are the things which accompany salvation. There is the acorn from which the oak will grow. There is the dawn which will introduce the perfect day. Beloved, do not despise the day of small things. God does not. Jesus does not. You should not.

*The first faint spark of good desire
Which feebly would to heaven aspire,
Its kindler God will not despise;
The spark into a flame shall spread;
And bless'd by Him the smallest seed
Of faith into a tree shall rise.*



NOVEMBER 30

*Before honour is humility.
Proverbs 18:12*

THE LORD ALWAYS humbles before He exalts. He strips us, before He clothes us with the best robe. He empties us, before He fills us with His grace. We must take our seat on the dunghill, before we are raised to sit with the princes of His people. It is the weak that He strengthens — the poor that He supplies — the condemned that He justifies — the homeless that He receives — the totally unworthy that He crowns with glory. We must lie low, if we would rise high. We must be nothing, if we would inherit all things. We must be quite empty, if we would be filled with all the fullness of God. He giveth grace unto the humble. Joseph must lie in the dungeon, before he is seated in the second chariot of Egypt. David must be hunted like the partridge upon the mountains, before he is raised to fill the throne of Israel. Paul must be a poor blind sinner, before he becomes the great apostle. This is God's plan. The righteous who are now accounted the off-scouring of all things, are destined to shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Beloved, fear not to go down. The lower you descend in humility, the higher you will rise in glory — the deeper your penitence, the sweeter your joys. God resisteth the proud, but He giveth grace to the humble.

*He draws from human littleness,
His grandeur and renown;
And humble hearts with joy confess,
The triumph all His own.*



DECEMBER 1

Grace to help in time of need.
Hebrews 4:16

THE TERM GRACE includes the wisdom and strength, which may be necessary to enable us to act aright, under all circumstances. We daily need grace. But there are seasons in which we need grace especially — as in prosperity, to keep us from getting proud and presumptuous — in adversity, to keep us from complaining or desponding — in temptation, to preserve us from its snares — and in death, that we may die to the Lord's glory. Grace is to be had. There is a throne erected on purpose to dispense it. It is given to the most unworthy. It is to be had in answer to prayer. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Let us not attempt anything in our own strength, or fancy that we can accomplish anything by our own wisdom. But let us live under a deep sense of our need of grace, of God's willingness to bestow it, and of the incalculable benefits to be derived from it. Thus let us approach the throne, pleading the name of Jesus, that so we may be supplied. O for grace to keep me in health, to cheer me in sickness, but especially to make me victorious in death!

*The grace I every moment want,
The fresh supplies of faith and love,
God of exhaustless mercy, grant,
In answer to my Friend above.
Increase my faith, confirm my hope,
Until I yield my spirit up.*



DECEMBER 2

*I believe God.
Acts 27:25*

THE MOST REASONABLE thing in the world, and yet at some times the most difficult. He has spoken to us in the plainest terms. He has confirmed His promises with the blood of His dear Son. He has made every one of His saints a witness to His faithfulness — and yet we do not half believe Him. We do not absolutely doubt the truth of His promises, or His faithfulness to them, but we question their application to us. Yet He has described our characters, presented us with examples as much like ourselves as possible. But unbelief is so strong, Satan is so active, and present things have such influence, that we do not believe God. May He deeply convince us of the sin of unbelief, humble us for it before His throne, and send His Holy Spirit to work faith in our hearts. Beloved, do you, as you read or hear His precious promises, say, “That is true. God will perform it. He will make it good in my experience. Therefore, I cannot want. I will not fear. I will only trust in His word, rely on His power, plead at His throne, and wait for the fulfilment of the promises in His own time and way.” Such should be the language of all our hearts. But, alas — how few of us use it! Our Lord corrects and encourages us tonight by saying, “*Be not faithless but believing.*”

*Now learn in every state,
To make His will your own;
And when the joys of sense depart,
To walk by faith alone.*



DECEMBER 3

*Thou, O God, hast proved us.
Psalm 66:10*

EVERY MAN'S profession shall be tried, and everyone's principles shall be proved. It is easy to talk of faith, but it is not so easy to exercise it. It is easy to boast of what we will do under certain circumstances, but it is the circumstances which tries us. Boasters always fail. A haughty spirit goes before a fall. We are never safe, but as we renounce our own strength, and rely on God's faithful word. The dark night, the fierce foe, the fire and water, the much tribulation, will prove us. Many appear to start well, but when they come to be proved, they have not the root of the matter in them. In the time of trial they fall away. Many young Christians, in the warmth of their first love, sadly reflect on more advanced believers. But when they come to be tried they are not more eminent. We do not know what we are, but as God shows us; for the heart is deceitful above all things, and grievously infirm. By the teachings of the Holy Spirit, by the temptations of Satan, and by the mysterious dispensations of His providence, He proves us and shows us what our profession is worth. He says, "I will melt them and try them. I will bring the third part through the fire." May we stand the proof, shine brighter, and be more useful for being tried.

*O Lord! how wondrous are Thy ways,
To try our faith, our souls refine;
So, passing through the furnace blaze,
The silver flows more pure to shine.*



DECEMBER 4

*His fruit was sweet to my taste.
Song of Solomon 2:3*

THE LORD JESUS is incomparably lovely. His personal excellencies baffle the powers of description. Every beautiful figure which nature can furnish is employed to set Him forth. But a spiritual perception is necessary to discern and delight in Him. Everyone who perceives His glory, applies to His fullness. And everyone who applies to His fullness, receives and enjoys His communications. Here He is compared to the apple tree amidst the trees of the wood, as affording refreshing shade and delicious food. "His fruit was sweet to my taste." His fruit includes the promises He has made, the pardons He bestows, the reconciliation He has effected, the peace He imparts, the fellowship He has with His people, the assurances of His love, the joys of the Holy Ghost, the hope of eternal life, access into God's presence, and the precious foretastes of glory which He sends. These are sweet, incomparably sweet to every spiritual mind. Sheltered from storms, protected from foes, preserved from the sultry sun, and fed with the fruits of salvation, the believer is happy, and his Saviour is precious to his soul. And while the fruits of Jesus are sweet to him, sin is bitter. He has no relish for the follies, vain amusements, and sinful pleasures of the world.

*Oh! sweet repast of heavenly love,
How rich these royal dainties prove;
In Thine embrace 'tis life to be,
So sweet Thy fruit and shade to me.*



DECEMBER 5

*God now accepteth thy works.
Ecclesiastes 9:7*

WHEN? When He has accepted thy person, and is reconciled to thee. For God never accepts our works while we are His avowed enemies. This would be to accept the works of a rebel — of a traitor — of one who is at enmity against Him. God accepts our persons when we accept His Son. Jesus is presented to us in the gospel as God's free gift, as a Saviour suited to our case, as a blessing which includes all we do, or can need. This gift is rejected by men in general. They put it from them, and treat it with contempt. We did this once. But when the Holy Spirit quickened our souls, enlightened our minds, and wrought faith in our hearts, then we gladly embraced Him. Having received Christ from God, we are received by God from Christ. We are accepted in Him and entitled to all spiritual blessings through Him. God now accepteth our works — poor, imperfect, and worthless as they are — because they are the works of a beloved child, the efforts of a feeble friend, the productions of a loyal subject. The cup of cold water, the will to do, or give, when we have not the power, is accepted and placed to our account. Sweet thought: our God has pardoned our sins, accepted our persons, and now He accepteth our works.

*Accepted in Jesus and living on Him,
His promise I trust and His precepts esteem;
I strive to be holy, I labour for God,
And my works are approved through His merit and blood.*



DECEMBER 6

*I am Alpha and Omega.
Revelation 1:8*

THIS IS THE Saviour's testimony to His own dignity and glory. He takes the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which enclose and include all the rest, and says, "I am Alpha and Omega." These letters form the words which reveal and make known facts. Jesus is the great manifester of God. By Him the divine nature and perfections are brought to light. These letters include all that is necessary for communication, among all who use the tongue. Jesus is the All-sufficient One. He possesses in Himself all that is necessary for our preservation, salvation, consolation, and glorification. He comprehends in Himself all wisdom and knowledge, all worth and wealth, all time and eternity. He is the source and end of salvation. From Him it flows, and He is the centre round which it revolves. To be all this He must be God. He is naturally, essentially, and eternally divine. He includes in Himself all that is great, good, and glorious. Therefore believers are never weary of hearing of Him, or speaking in His praise. In Him sinners will find all they need. Sweet view of Jesus this! *Four times* in this book does He take this title. Therefore we should often dwell upon it and derive benefit from it. It is full of precious food and sterling worth.

*When o'er the word my eye is cast,
There Jesus is the first and last,
And all the blessings there made known,
Their Alpha and Omega own.*



DECEMBER 7

*All these things are against me.
Genesis 42:36*

WHAT THINGS? These losses, crosses, bereavements, persecutions, sorrows, and sicknesses. Against you? Never! They are not against you unless they lead you into sin — bind you faster to this world — alienate your mind from God — and prevent your being useful in your day and generation. They cannot be against you if they wean you from earth — lead you to God — endear the Saviour — render the Bible more valuable — and make you long for home. They are not against you but for you. You forget that they come according to the arrangements of a gracious providence, and that your heavenly Father sends them for your good. Leave off complaining, for it springs from ignorance of God's word, or forgetfulness of your many mercies and sins, or from unbelief and a bad temper; and it reflects upon the love, care, and kindness of your God. These things are painful, trying, and perplexing; but they are intended to do you good, and while you are complaining, they are working together under divine direction for your present and everlasting welfare. Beloved, how apt we are to mistake the design of our trials, and to lose sight of God's promises.

*Let saints their gloomy fears restrain;
No reason have they to complain,
Whatever ills befall:
No troubles from the dust can rise,
For God is holy, good and wise,
And overrules them all.*



DECEMBER 8

My God, we know thee.

Hosea 8:2

IT IS A GREAT mercy to know God. No one does except he is taught of God. We did not once, if we do now. We can only rightly know God, by knowing Jesus, for He hath revealed Him. To know Him as revealed in the broken law only fills us with terror and alarm, for there we only learn His justice — requirements — wrath — terror — power — majesty — and jealousy. But to know Him as revealed in the gospel, as made known in Jesus, fills us with joy and peace, for there we see His pity and compassion — His love and grace — His power and mercy — His kindness and attention — His friendship and benevolence, united and agreed to do us good. If we know God, we shall trust in His word. We shall love His perfections. We shall perform His precepts. We shall cleave to His people. We shall be often at His throne, and we shall delight to do His will. To know God is to be truly wise, and to possess everlasting life; for “This,” said Jesus, “is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” The knowledge of God comes from reading His word, watching His providence, studying His works, and the teaching of His Holy Spirit. Can we say tonight, “*My God, I know Thee? My God, I love Thee?*”

*Come, Holy Ghost, unfold the word,
Reveal the Saviour's name;
Fill with the knowledge of the Lord,
The infinite I AM.*



DECEMBER 9

The gift of God is eternal life.

Romans 6:23

UR DESERT IS eternal death. With this the law threatens us. But God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Jesus is the true God, and eternal life. We have the promise of eternal existence — of eternal existence free from sin, pain, sorrow, grief, and disappointment — of eternal existence in the enjoyment of ease, holiness, honour, wealth, peace, pleasure, and satisfaction — eternal employment and enjoyment. This is given us — given us freely. It is the expression of Jehovah's love to us — a display of His sovereign and distinguishing grace. Angels sinned, and are thrust down to hell. We sinned, and our God against whom we have sinned, has given to us eternal life. Every believer has the principle now. He is quickened together with Christ. He is alive unto God. Beloved, let us live in hope of this eternal life. Let us press onward to the enjoyment of it. Jesus has promised it to all His sheep. He says, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand."

*Answer then Thy blest design,
Bring to me the life of grace,
Bring me larger life divine,
Fill my soul with holiness,
Fit me for the life above,
All the life of heavenly love.*



DECEMBER 10

He is Lord of all.

Acts 10:36

JESUS HAS SUPREME authority. He rules over all. He has all power in heaven and in earth. He doth according to His will. All creatures are under His control, and must subserve His purpose. He claims all as Creator. He reigns over all as Mediator. He uses all to fulfil His pleasure. He is worthy of our highest praise. All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. We can go to no place, and justly say, Jesus does not reign here. We cannot lay our hand on anything, and say, Jesus has no claim to this. We can refer to no event, and say, Jesus will not overrule this. He knows all existencies. He claims all He knows. He presides over all He claims. He uses for His glory all over whom He presides. Everything is at His beck — the fish of the sea — the fowls of the air — the beasts of the field — the angels of God — the devil and His host — the lost souls in hell — the glorified in heaven — sinners and saints on earth. He is Lord of all. He sits at God's right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named — not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. As the supreme Lord, He is to be loved, feared, and obeyed.

*Worthy the Lamb of boundless sway,
In earth and heav'n the Lord of all;
Him all the hosts on high obey;
Let men before His footstool fall.*



DECEMBER 11

The true light now shineth.

1 John 2:8

UR LAND WAS once shrouded in the darkness of Paganism. This was dispelled by the introduction of the gospel. Then it became enveloped in the darkness of Popery. This was partly dissipated at the Reformation. Clouds of superstition still hang over some parts of it, but the true light nevertheless shines. It shines from the written word, and it shines from hundreds of pulpits. It has shone upon us. It has shone into our hearts. We have by it discovered our real state by nature — Jehovah's true character — the way of life and salvation — the source of true pleasure — the principle of acceptable obedience. It shines around us now — mildly, clearly, and constantly. It shines to display God's free grace — to enable us to *walk* in comfort — to *work* with pleasure — to *fight* with confidence — to *fly* with certainty — and to *go home* with satisfaction. Does the true light now shine? Then let us be thankful, for multitudes are still sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Let us improve our opportunity, walking in the light as our God is in the light, and living in fellowship with Him. Let us diffuse the light in every direction to the utmost of our ability. Let us beware of every false light, cleaving to the pure and inspired word of God.

*O! to rescue men from ruin,
Let the light within us shine;
Sinners to the Saviour guiding,
By an energy divine.*



DECEMBER 12

*Have I no power to deliver?
Isaiah 50:2*

THIS IS A QUESTION for unbelief — for *your* unbelief. If God can deliver — if He has promised to deliver — why then these fears, this gloom, and this perplexity? Look your difficulty full in the face, walk round it and examine it on every side, and when you have done so, answer your Lord's question, "HAVE I NO POWER TO DELIVER?" You may apply it to sin — its guilt, its power, its consequences. You may apply it to Satan — his malice, his craft, his determined opposition to you. You may apply it to the world — its snares, its persecution, its spirit. You may apply it to any and all the circumstances in which you can be placed by an adverse providence. Cannot your God deliver you? Is His arm shortened that it cannot save, or is His ear heavy that He cannot hear? If not, why then doubt? Why cast down? Hope then in God, for thou shalt yet praise Him. He hath delivered, He doth deliver, and He will yet deliver you. Grieve Him not by your unbelief, but trust in His word, call upon His name, look to His arm, and He will show you that He has power to deliver, and that He will exert it on your behalf. He says, "Call upon Me, and I will deliver thee."

*Jesus, the wonders of Thy name
Today as yesterday the same
We all are called to prove;
No end is of Thy mercies found,
We cannot stop Thine arm, or bound
The omnipotence of love.*



DECEMBER 13

Mine anger is turned away from him.

Hosea 14:4

GOD HAD BEEN angry. He is angry with the wicked every day. His anger against them is *judicial*, roused by their sin. It is fearful. Its consequences are dangerous — dreadful. It was displayed in the flood, but more clearly in Gethsemane and Calvary. Hell is the eternal manifestation of God's just anger against sin. He is sometimes angry with His people. His anger against them is *paternal*, roused by the conduct of His child. He is angry because He loves. His love to the person rouses His displeasure against the conduct. He shows His displeasure by afflictions — privations — and distresses. But His paternal anger is momentary. He chastens His child, and is angry because it is obstinate. But as soon as it relents, mourns at His feet, confesses its sin, appeals to His mercy, and pleads the atonement, the frown gives place to a smile, and He kindly says, "Mine anger is turned away from him. I will receive the prodigal. I will still love the child. I will restore the wanderer to his former place, privileges, and honours. I will love him as though nothing had happened. His sin shall only be remembered by himself." Sweet thought to lie down with tonight: "The anger of God is turned away and He loves me."

*Though His righteous anger rises,
Anger in a moment dies;
Mercy still His heart devises,
Life within His favour lies.*



DECEMBER 14

He doeth according to his will.

Daniel 4:35

THE WILL OF GOD is infinitely perfect. It rules all events. What God wills, He works. What He requires of us, shows what He approves. What He accomplishes by His power and providence, shows what is necessary to be done. His eye is in every place. His hand is in every event. The glorification of Himself is the object He keeps constantly in view. He has so connected His people with Himself, that what glorifies Him, benefits them; and what does them good, brings glory to His holy name. He is carrying out His plan, performing His work, accomplishing His purposes, quietly, constantly, and certainly — amidst all the bustle, confusion, and opposition of men. His will is law. It is the highest rule of right. To attempt to oppose His will is treason. If it could be effectually resisted, disorder, misery, and wretchedness must be the result. But the will of God is united to omnipotence. Whatever He wills, His power accomplishes with ease and certainty. By Him all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" Believer, God wills and effectually works thy sanctification.

*In heaven, and earth, and air, and seas,
He executes His firm decrees;
And by His saints it stands confessed
That what He does is ever best.*



DECEMBER 15

*Thou shalt call me, My father.
Jeremiah 3:19*

UR GOD LOVES us to realize His paternal relation to us, and to acknowledge the same in our approaches to Him. A father can do what no one else can. He can forgive the basest conduct. He can love the most deformed child. He can receive the most ungrateful prodigal. He can bestow the most costly favour. He can exercise the greatest patience. So our God, because He is a Father, pities us, pardons us, provides for us, loves us, blesses us, acknowledges us, and rejoices over us to do us good. Let us dwell upon this sweet view of the Almighty. Let us pray as to a Father. Let us work as for a Father. Let us expect as from a Father. Let us trust as in a Father. Let us love God as a Father. Let us speak of Him as of a Father. Let us place confidence in him as in a Father. Let us seek the Spirit of adoption, if we have it not — to bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God — to cry, Abba, Father, in our hearts — and to enable us, without fear or wavering, to call Him our Father. O how much gloom and sadness it would prevent, how much comfort and peace would it bring to our souls, if we lived under the impression that our God is our Father! Beloved, endeavour to keep this view of thy God ever before thine eyes.

*“Abba, Father,” Lord we call Thee,
(Hallowed name!) from day to day:
’Tis Thy children’s right to know Thee,
None but children, “Abba!” say.*



DECEMBER 16

*Man also knoweth not his time.
Ecclesiastes 9:12*

ALL THE FUTURE is unknown. A dark cloud hangs between us and it. We know not what shall be. We know not the time of trial — when our graces, our strength, and resolution shall be tried. We know not the time of temptation — when Satan will be allowed more particularly to assault us, and try his strength upon us. We know not the time of danger — when there is but a step between us and a grievous fall, when our foes stand ready to triumph over us. We know not the time of our death — it is fixed, it may be very near, but we are ignorant of it. This should teach us humility. Let us not presume, but humbly wait upon our God. It should produce caution. Let us not be high-minded but fear. It should stimulate to duty. Let us work while it is day. The night cometh, and it may very soon be here. It should lead to watchfulness. Let us watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. It should stir us up to prayer. Let us pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. It should prevent carelessness, self-confidence, and lukewarmness. Our foes are on the alert, the snares are laid for our feet, the master is coming, and the hour of death may be just at hand. Let us therefore be sober, and watch unto prayer.

*Amidst a thousand snares I stand,
Upheld and guarded by Thy hand;
Still let Thy presence be my stay,
And guard me in this dangerous way.*



DECEMBER 17

Call his name, Jesus.

Matthew 1:21

THAT IS, a Saviour. He deserves the name, for He undertook to save. He came into the world to save. He fulfilled the law, was made a curse, and atoned for sin that He might save. He lives and pleads in heaven to save. He *can* save any character. He *will* save all His people. He *does* save all who come to God by Him. He *has* saved myriads already. He saves *freely*, as an act of grace. He saves *fully*, or *from* all evils *to* all good. He saves *eternally*, placing His people beyond the possibility of perishing. He saves consistently with all the perfections of God's nature. He saves without infringing any of the principles of the divine government. He saves millions without injury to one. He saves for His own glory, in obedience to His Father's will, out of pure love to His degraded people. My soul, call Him Jesus, for He has saved thee. Tell all around that He is Jesus, and can save them. His work is to save. His office is to save. His delight is to save. He is the *only*, the *all-sufficient*, the *omnipotent* Saviour. He saves though all hell opposes. He saves though sinners are ungrateful. And He saves though those He saves doubt and distrust Him. He is now exalted at God's right hand, as a Sovereign, to give repentance unto Israel, and the forgiveness of sins.

*Trust in His name, and you shall know,
Shall feel your sins forgiven;
Anticipate your heav'n below,
And own His love is heaven.*



DECEMBER 18

*The holy people.
Isaiah 62:12*

SUCH ARE ALL the Lord's people. He convinces them of sin, sets their hearts against sin, and they give up the practice of sin. They were chosen to be holy. Jesus gave Himself for them that they may be sanctified. The Holy Spirit takes possession of them, in order to make them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Holiness becomes their element and delight. They sigh for it, seek it, and endeavour to practise it. They were once very impure, but they are washed, they are sanctified, they are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of their God. Justification lies at the root of sanctification. If the man is justified, he will be sanctified; and it is only by sanctification, that he proves his justification. In vain we talk of sin being pardoned, if it is not subdued. The man who can live in sin is neither just nor holy. He gives no evidence of interest in Jesus, or that he is a partaker of the Holy Ghost. All holy persons discover their unholiness, mourn over it, pray to be delivered from it, strive against it, and long to be perfectly free from all that defiles. Such are the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord. Are you one of them? Is this your present experience?

*Jehovah is a holy God;
Christ will alone the pure confess;
Angels are holy, and the road
To heaven, is that of holiness.*



DECEMBER 19

Christ's servant.
1 Corinthians 7:22

EVERY CHRISTIAN is a servant. Jesus is his master. The precepts of the gospel are his rule. He is bound to obey. He has pledged himself to do the will of God from the heart. He that is not willing to serve Christ has no evidence whatever that he is interested in Him. The Christian was purchased to be a servant. He is converted that he may devote his powers to the Lord. Let us then enquire tonight: Is Jesus our Master? Do we view Him as such? Do we consult His will in all we do? Do we act as under His care? Do we often ask ourselves the question: Will this please my Master? Do we look to Him for our supplies, for our orders, and for our reward as servants should? O may the Holy Spirit daily impress these thoughts upon our minds — I am Christ's servant. He is my wise, holy, and generous Master. My own business is to please Him. My one object should be to secure His approbation. The world can have no claim upon me. Satan has no right to me. The flesh ought not to rule in me. Beloved, have you been serving Jesus today? Have you consulted His word? Have you sought His grace? Are you upright before Him?

*While with my lips I call Thee, Lord,
O let my heart its Lord confess,
My life be governed by Thy word;
In all the paths of righteousness
I'll labour to perform Thy will,
And rest upon Thy holy hill.*



DECEMBER 20

*All things are become new.
2 Corinthians 5:17*

SUCH IS THE feeling of the young Christian, and such is the fact in reference to every Christian. He has a new life, which is spiritual. He feeds upon new provision: the bread which came down from heaven. He is engaged in new employments, which are holy. He acts from a new motive: the love of Christ constrains him. He aims at a new end: even God's glory. He joins a new society: the church of God. All things become new. He has a new federal head: the second Adam. He is introduced into a new paradise: peace and reconciliation to God. He is under a new covenant: the covenant of grace, not of works. He enters into new relations: God is his Father — angels, his servants — Christ is his Brother — the Holy Spirit, his Comforter. He stands in new relations: to God, he is a child — to angels, a charge — to the world, a witness — to Christ, a servant — to the Holy Spirit, a temple. He experiences new desires, new hopes, new fears, and new joys. He looks for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. He is not as he was — cursed. He is not *what* he was — carnal. He is not *where* he was — in Adam. He is in Christ. "He is a new creature, old things are passed away, and behold, ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW."

*Now, Lord, I would be Thine alone,
And wholly live to Thee;
'Tis grace indeed that Thou should'st own
A worthless worm like me.*



DECEMBER 21

*Hast thou faith?
Romans 14:22*

IF YOU HAVE, God gave it you, for it is the gift of God. If you have now, you had not once, for all are destitute of faith by nature. If you have faith, you feel the power of unbelief, struggle with it, and pray to be delivered from it. Hast thou faith in Christ? Do you believe that His claims are valid — that His word is true — that His sacrifice is sufficient to atone for thy sin — that He is the proper object of trust, love, and worship — that as a believer, He will save thee with an everlasting salvation? Have you faith to trust His word — to rely with confidence on His finished work — to profess your dependence on Him alone — to commit your soul into His hands to be saved by His grace? Have you faith to venture in His cause, and boldly to avow yourself to be on the Lord's side? Have you faith in God as your Father? Can you believe that He cares for you, that He will supply your needs, that He will guide you by His counsel and afterwards receive you to glory? Can you trust His faithfulness, rest on His promises, and leave your concerns in His hands? Have you faith to believe that you are delivered from the law, that you are in friendship with God, and may walk at liberty? Daily feed your faith with God's promises, and watch against unbelief.

*True faith refines the heart,
And purifies with blood;
Takes the whole gospel, not a part,
And holds the fear of God.*



DECEMBER 22

I have given you an example.

John 13:15

ARE YOU PREPARED to copy His example? Do you study it? Do you admire it? Do you heartily desire exactly to resemble it? In vain do you hope to be saved by His sacrifice, if you do not imitate His example. He left us an example that we should follow in His steps. Look at His faith in His Father's word — His love to His Father's name — His zeal for His Father's glory — His submission to His Father's will — His diligence in His Father's work. Look at His love to His people — at His patience, His forbearance, His long-suffering, His pity, His tenderness, His self-denial, His faithfulness, His humility, His meekness, His sympathy, His readiness to help them. Look at His pity for sinners. Hear Him pray for them. See Him weep over them. Observe how He seeks to benefit them — how He stoops to them — how patiently He endures their contradiction against Himself. He is your example. You are daily to imitate Him. You should every evening compare your conduct through the day with His. It would do you good often to ask: How would Jesus act in this case? What would He do under these circumstances? O, to be like Him — to copy His example daily — exactly! Holy Spirit descend and give the power!

Be Christ our pattern and our guide!

His image may we bear!

O may we tread His sacred steps,

And His bright glories share.



DECEMBER 23

*The Sun of righteousness.
Malachi 4:2*

THAT IS JESUS. There is but *one* sun, and our Jesus is the only Saviour. This figure may set forth His greatness, His exalted station, His sufficiency, His beauty and glory, His immutability, His usefulness, and that He is a common benefit. He is the sun of *righteousness*. This implies the perfection and excellency of His person — the rectitude of His government — the relation in which He stands to His people. He is their righteousness. All light is from the sun, so all our righteousness is from Jesus. He is the source of holiness, and He wrought out that obedience in which we are justified. As there is light enough in the sun for us all, so there is righteousness enough in Jesus for us all. As the light of the sun flows to us freely, so Jesus gives this righteousness freely. As it would be folly to look to any other quarter for light while the sun is shining, so it is folly to look anywhere for righteousness but to Jesus only. As the sun decks creation with beauty and glory, so the righteousness of Jesus makes us beautiful and glorious. Sun of righteousness, may we walk in Thy light, receive Thy communications, and point sinners to Thee for life and peace!

*Christ whose glory fills the skies,
Christ the true and only light,
Sun of righteousness, arise,
Triumph o'er the shades of night.
Day-spring from on high be near;
Day-star in my heart appear.*



DECEMBER 24

*Buy the truth and sell it not.
Proverbs 23:23*

YOU NEED THE TRUTH. It is necessary to enlighten the mind, sanctify the heart, cheer the soul, and regulate the life. All goodness flows from truth, and all evil from error. Therefore *buy* the truth. It is to be had, but it must be bought. It will cost you something if you obtain it. But you cannot buy it too dear. It *has* fetched a very high price — some have given their liberty, all their comforts, and their lives for it. It is in God's book, as in a mine. It is in Christ's person, as its centre and home. Labour in the mine. Study Christ. Be diligent, laborious, and determined to have the truth if possible. Pray. Strive. Honour the Holy Spirit, who alone can put you in possession of it. It is His office to *teach* the truth. He *leads* into it — by degrees, by exercise, by a variety of means. Having bought the truth, never *sell* it. No one can bid you a sufficient price for it. You can find no substitute for it. You will be sure to need it — to direct you in perplexity — to comfort you in sickness — to cheer you in sorrow — and to support you in death. Pleasure may bid for it. Honour may bid for it. Wealth may bid for it. But *sell it not*. Study it — profess it — enjoy it — and practise it. Make it your companion — your food — and your solace.

*O Thou the living way,
The truth, the life, bestow
That holy light whose vital ray
Shall lead, all truth to know.*



DECEMBER 25

*Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
Matthew 2:1*

WHEN JESUS was born, we do not exactly know. God hath concealed it; but *that* He was born is most plainly revealed. We know *where* He was born, and *why* He was born. He had eternally existed as God. He was one *with*, and equal *to*, the Father. But He became man. He was conceived in Mary's womb. He was born in Bethlehem. He was a weak and helpless infant, and yet at the same time the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. Deity and humanity united in His person. He took our nature to take away our sins. He became a man in order to be a Saviour. He came on purpose to save sinners. This was His object. This was His work. For this He lived, and laboured, and suffered, and died. He came to be our substitute. He was born once, that we might be born again. He died once, that we might not experience the second death, but live forever. His love passeth knowledge. His birth was the greatest display of condescension, which heaven or earth ever witnessed. It was introductory to His obedient life, meritorious death, victorious resurrection, triumphant ascension, and glorious second advent. He *was* born in Bethlehem, in weakness and poverty. He *will* soon come to earth again, with power and great glory.

*God is in our flesh revealed,
Heaven and earth in Jesus join,
Mortal with immortal filled,
And human with divine.*



DECEMBER 26

Should it be according to thy mind?

Job 34:33

MANY APPEAR TO think so. If we may judge by their conduct they think that the Most High should have consulted their case, their fancy, and their aggrandizement. The gospel is not just what they would like it to be. Providence does not work as they desire. Few things are exactly as they should be. Complaining mortal! Should it be according to thy mind? Is not thy mind carnal? Is it not selfish? Is it not prejudiced? If it were according to thy mind, would not God's glory be obscured? Would not others suffer? Would not thy lusts be fed? Would not thy temptations be stronger? Would not thy danger be greater? Is not thy God wiser, kinder, and holier than thou art? Does He not love justice? Are not His mercies over all His works? True, you may be afflicted, you may be poor, you may be sickly — what then? You are wishing for health, for a competency, for freedom from trials, but, "should it be according to thy mind?" Beloved, let us guard against such a spirit — it is common, but it is unreasonable. It is criminal. It is dangerous. The thing is impracticable. Your God must govern. He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. His ways are just, His plans are wise, His designs are merciful, and when the work is complete, every part will reflect His glory.

*Let saints proclaim Jehovah's praise,
And acquiesce in all His ways,
He keeps eternity in sight,
And what His hand performs is right.*



DECEMBER 27

With thee is the fountain of life.

Psalms 36:9

ALL LIFE IS from God. All creatures are sustained by God. He giveth life and breath, and all things. Our existence here is dependent on His will, so also is the comfort of our life. But from Him proceeds spiritual life — the energy that quickens us — the divine principle which exists within us. We are born of God. He holdeth our souls in life. He also revives us and makes us lively. Beloved, do you feel dull, lifeless, and inactive tonight? Are you sighing for a deeper sense of the Lord's love, and for more enjoyment of the Saviour's presence? Fix your mind upon this precious truth: With your God "is the fountain of life." He can easily direct one of its streams into your soul. He can revive you in one moment. If He lifts up the light of His countenance — if He whispers pardon and peace — if the Holy Spirit but gently breathes upon you, you will be happy. All will be well. Go then direct to the throne of grace. Lay your whole case before your God. Tell Him how dull and lifeless you feel. Appeal to Him as the fountain of life. Plead the powerful name and precious blood of Jesus. Expect God to honour this plea. Persevere in your application though you meet with discouragements. And He will revive you again, and your soul shall give thanks to His name.

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



DECEMBER 28

*Therefore are they before the throne of God.
Revelation 7:15*

WHY? They were in great tribulation for Jesus' sake. They endured persecution, temptation, the inward conflict, sickness, sorrow, and a variety of afflictions, looking unto Jesus and seeking to please and glorify Him. They were in great tribulation, but they were not overwhelmed by it. They passed through it with courage, being divinely supported. They frequently contracted defilement in this filthy world, but they hated sin and often loathed themselves on account of it, and they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They knew — they prized — they used — and they enjoyed the open fountain. *Therefore* are they before the throne. They are now safe — accepted — approved — happy. They serve God day and night in His temple. They serve without weakness — weariness — or drowsiness. They serve Him cheerfully — perfectly — and uninterruptedly. They are freed from all want and pain. They hunger no more. They thirst no more. God dwells among them. They know nothing of lassitude — opposition — or sorrow. The Lamb feeds them in person, rules them in love, and leads them to the ever-flowing fountain of life. And God has wiped away every tear from their eyes. They are blessed far beyond their expectations.

*With wondering joy they recollect
Their fears and dangers past;
And bless the wisdom, power, and love,
Which brought them safe at last.*



DECEMBER 29

Their heart is far from me.

Matthew 15:8

AND YET THEY appeared devout. They passed among men for very religious characters. Their devotions were formal. There was no life in their services. They were without sincerity, fervency, or desire. They were satisfied with the form, without the power. They had a name to live, but they were dead. This is the case with too many now. They pass for saints, but are not sanctified. They are considered worshippers, but their hearts are far from God. Now the man is, as his heart is. God looketh at the heart. Beloved, is your heart near to God tonight? It is when our desires go out after Him — when our love is fixed upon Him — when the soul bows in reverence before Him — when the expectation is from Him — when our lively and interested thoughts are employed about Him — when all our powers are prostrated before Him, or presented to Him. God is *now* looking at your heart. Do you sigh and desire to get near Him? Do you mourn and grieve over your distance from Him? If so, He looks upon you with pity, and accepts the willing mind. They who live near to God here, will live with God forever. But they who are satisfied with formal worship and distance, will be kept at a distance throughout eternity.

*Why should my foolish passions rove?
Where can such sweetness be
As I have tasted in Thy love,
As I have found in Thee?*



DECEMBER 30

Cleanse thou me from secret faults.

Psalms 19:12

NO ONE BUT a Christian will heartily use this prayer. It intimates such an acquaintance with the human heart, and such a desire for true holiness, as none can experience except taught of God. Some never confess known, open, evident faults; nor do they desire to be cleansed from them. But here is one, who supposes that there are faults which he has not detected, follies which have escaped his notice, and he prays to be cleansed from them. He would not only have them pardoned, but the stain of them erased. He desires to be kept from them in future. Our secret faults are numerous. They often spring from inattention, from giving way to our natural inclination, and from the unspiritual state of our souls. But the fountain of a Saviour's blood will cleanse from them all, and the power of the Holy Spirit can preserve us from a similar course in future. We need to be filled with the Spirit — if we are to keep our hearts with all diligence — if we are to preserve a watch over our souls in private as well as in public. Let us seek this blessing. Christians once enjoyed it, and we are exhorted to possess it, for the apostle says, "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, *but be filled with the Spirit.*" Seek it as a gift, and expect it as a favour.

*Lord, who can all his wanderings know
Or watch where guilt begins?
Then let Thy grace my heart renew,
And cleanse from secret sins.*



DECEMBER 31

*God hath dealt graciously with me.
Genesis 33:11*

Is not this our language tonight — brought through another year — a year of trials, temptations, and storms — and yet a year crowned with innumerable mercies. Every want has been supplied — every promise fulfilled — ten thousand evils prevented — unnumbered blessings bestowed. What sins we have committed! What duties we have neglected! What privileges we have slighted! How faithless we have been, and yet how faithful our God. Not one thing has failed of all that He promised. All is come to pass. Our obligations are infinite. Our praises should be constant. Our lives should be entirely devoted. Our persons wholly consecrated to God. Yes, He hath dealt graciously with me, in pardoning my sins, in hearing my prayers, in subduing my foes, in protecting my person, in guiding my feet, and enabling me to hold on in His good ways. O my soul, trust thou in the Lord. He is thy help and thy shield! Call upon Him in every future trouble. Surrender to Him all that is dear and valuable in thy esteem. Live upon His word. Look to His fullness. Act for His glory. Cleave to His saints. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him, and trust Him more heartily than ever.

*Then in the history of my age,
When men review my days,
They'll read His love in every page,
In every line His praise.*



INVITATIONS

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. — **Isaiah 1:18**

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. — **Matthew 11:28-30**

Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. — **John 7:37**

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. — **Isaiah 45:22**

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and ye that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. — **Isaiah 55:1**

Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever. — **Jeremiah 3:12**

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. — **Revelation 22:17**

And they would not come. — **Matthew 22:3**

COMMANDS

God now commandeth all men every where to repent. — **Acts 17:30**

Repent ye, and believe the gospel. — **Mark 1:15**

And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. — **1 John 3:23**

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. — **John 13:34**

This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. — **2 Thessalonians 3:10**

I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. — **Matthew 5:44**

Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not....Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. — **Romans 12:14, 17-18**

Let all your things be done with charity. — **1 Corinthians 16:14**

Let all things be done unto edifying. — **1 Corinthians 14:26**

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. — **1 Corinthians 10:31**

EVIDENCES

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. — **2 Corinthians 5:17**

Behold, he prayeth. — **Acts 9:11**

Every man that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me. — **John 6:45**

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. — **John 3:36**

Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. — **Acts 10:43**

Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. — **Luke 15:7**

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious. — **1 Peter 2:7**

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. — **1 John 3:14**

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. — **Romans 8:14**

If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. — **John 8:31**

Whom the LORD loveth he correcteth. — **Proverbs 3:12**

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. — **Romans 10:9**

PROMISES

Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. — **Psalms 50:15**

He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. — **Job 5:19**

Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. — **Isaiah 41:10**

The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. — **Romans 16:20**

My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. — **2 Corinthians 12:9**

He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. — **Isaiah 40:29**

I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. — **2 Corinthians 6:17-18**

God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. — **Philippians 4:19**

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD. — **Isaiah 54:17**

EXHORTATIONS

Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. — 2
Peter 1:10

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. — **Romans 12:1-2**

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. — **Ephesians 4:1-2**

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. — **1 Peter 2:11-12**

And exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. — **Acts 11:23**

Exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. — **Acts 14:22**

WARNINGS

Be not high-minded, but fear. — **Romans 11:20**

Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. — **1 Corinthians 10:12**

Brethren, be not weary in well doing. — **2 Thessalonians 3:13**

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. — **Hebrews 3:12**

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. — **Mark 13:33**

Take heed, and beware of covetousness. — **Luke 12:15**

Take heed that ye be not deceived. — **Luke 21:8**

If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. — **Romans 11:21**

Take heed, regard not iniquity. — **Job 36:21**

Take heed to your spirit. — **Malachi 2:15**

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones. — **Matthew 18:10**

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. — **Colossians 2:8**

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness — **2 Peter 3:17**

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 Smith, 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).
 - 1819 Conversion (28th February).
 - 1820 Publicly baptized (31st March) and received into church membership (2nd April).
 - 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 November) 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
- 1840 Minister's Pocket Companion, The
- 1842 Believer's Daily Remembrancer, The (Pastor's Morning Visit)*
- 1845 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
- 1857 Bread From Heaven
Christ Alone

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- 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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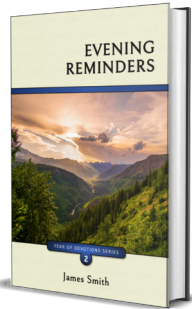
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