

POCKET DEVOTIONS SERIES

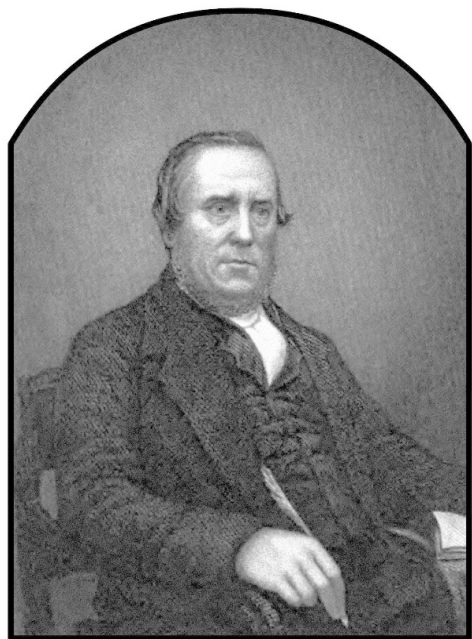
THE EVENING SACRIFICE



6 POCKET
DEVOTIONS
SERIES

James Smith

THE EVENING SACRIFICE



James Smith,

THE EVENING SACRIFICE

or

A HELP TO DEVOTION

by
James Smith

NEW EDITION



2024
Cadarga Press

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The Evening Sacrifice, or A Help to Devotion
Smith, James (1802-1862)

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

The Lord gives His beloved sleep (Ps. 127:2). But before they go to sleep, His children often love to reflect upon their good and gracious Father, and the mercies that He has bestowed upon them throughout the day. Such meditations provide fuel for their 'Evening Sacrifice' – the prayerful offering of thanksgiving for God's many blessings to them throughout the day.

These short devotions by Pastor James Smith are designed to help the Lord's people cultivate this daily habit. In them, he seeks to turn the reader's thoughts towards God's kindness, and the many reasons that exist for expressing sincere, heartfelt gratitude to God at the close of each day.

In this new edition, only a few minor alterations were made to Pastor Smith's original work. Bible references have been added to the text in those places where quotes and allusions to the Scriptures occur. Some punctuation has also been updated and a small number of very long sentences have been broken up into smaller ones. On rare occasions, words with archaic meanings have been replaced with a modern equivalent, and British spelling has been preferred throughout.

THE EVENING SACRIFICE

Extra material has also been included in this new edition which may be of interest to the reader. This includes a short biography of Pastor Smith, a timeline of his life and a list of his major works. Most of this information has been gleaned from his autobiography *Marvellous Mercy*. Above the title of each devotion is also an additional Bible passage. This serves as a suggested Scripture reading which may be read prior to the devotion itself.

Dear reader, none of us deserve even a single blessing from the hand of Almighty God. Our daily sins are many and our iniquities are more numerous than the hairs on our head (Ps. 40:12). Nevertheless, the Lord still faithfully provides our daily needs, even though we rarely pause to thank Him for them.

Do not continue then, to end each day without a passing thought upon the Lord's goodness to you! Instead, cultivate a habit of thoughtful thankfulness. Ponder the many blessings that God bestows upon you each and every day of your life, and endeavour to thank Him for them before you go to sleep each night. Thus, may your 'Evening Sacrifice' find acceptance with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ.

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December 2024

THE REQUEST

*Abide with us, for it is toward evening,
and the day is far spent.*

Luke 24:29

THE PRESENCE OF Jesus is the life and the joy of the saints. When we enjoy it, we dread the thought of losing it. And when we have lost it, we cannot rest until we have regained it. That is a gloomy day in which the presence of Jesus is not enjoyed, and that is a dreary night when Jesus is absent from us. He had accompanied the two disciples to Emmaus. He now made as if He would leave them, and go farther. But they constrained Him, saying, “Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.”

Reader, have you enjoyed the presence of Jesus today? Has He communed with your spirit, thereby strengthening your faith, exciting your hope, and deepening your comfort? If so, I know that your prayer tonight will be, “Abide with me.” Yes, precious Lord Jesus, we do beseech Thee to visit us, converse with us, open up the Scriptures to us, and abide with us. Let us feast our eyes on Thy glory, and our hearts on Thy grace. With Thee we can feel at home, we can be happy anywhere. Without Thee we cannot rest, we cannot feel satisfied, we cannot enjoy repose, let us have what we may. No, Thou hast won our heart’s love. Thou hast made Thyself the centre and source

of our comfort. Come, then, and abide with us this evening, and then a blessed evening it will be. Thy presence will free us from all our cares, and raise us above all our troubles. Thy presence will feast us, refresh and make us satisfied with our lot, be it what it may.

*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall
ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

John 15:7



EVENING PRAYER

As for me, I will call upon God, and the LORD shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.

Psalm 55:16-17

THE WELL TAUGHT Christian carries everything to God, and in so doing, obtains relief, enjoys peace, and grows in grace. For all we need we should call upon God, and from all we fear we should flee unto God. At the close of every day, it is our mercy to call upon the Lord, and making confession of sin, obtain a pardon — carrying to Him our burdens, obtain relief — and telling out before Him our wants, obtain a supply.

Oh, how precious it is to go to the Lord at the close of each day, and tell Him all that has vexed us, grieved us, cast us down, or disquieted our spirits! And how blessed to go to Him each morning, and seek grace to carry us honourably and happily through the day! Nor is it less blessed to have a few minutes with God at noon, breaking, as it were, the day in two, and keeping short accounts with God. O for a spirit of habitual prayer, that at evening, and at morning, and at noon, we may pray, and cry aloud to God! If we were more with the Lord in prayer, we should have more strength to carry our crosses, more patience to bear our troubles, and more comfort amidst life's sorrows.

Holy Spirit, take up thy residence in my heart as a Spirit of prayer, and lead me daily, hourly, yea, very often, to the mercy-seat. Let me find the hours of prayer precious seasons, and especially at eventide, when worn and exhausted with the toils and troubles of the day, let me find sweet solace and refreshment in pouring out my soul unto God. Precious Lord Jesus, draw our souls to Thee evening by evening, and lead us into the presence of Thy Father, that we may have sweet and hallowed intercourse with God! Let our devotions ascend as sweet incense to God (Ps. 141:2).

*At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee,
because of thy righteous judgments.*

Psalms 119:62



THE CHARGE

*Into thine hand I commit my spirit.
Thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.
Psalm 31:5*

IF THE LORD has gone to the expense of redeeming us, we may well trust Him to take care of us. If the blood of His Son was shed as our ransom-price, and if His almighty arm was made bare for our rescue, we may well commit our souls, our all, into His keeping. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32). What good can He withhold from us who would not withhold His only begotten and well-beloved Son?

Let us, therefore, morning by morning, and evening by evening, commit our souls, ourselves, into His hands, that we may be preserved from all evil, and be kept by His power unto eternal salvation. As our redeeming God, He will accept the deposit. And as the God of truth, He will be faithful to His charge.

O Thou who hast redeemed me from the curse, and brought me under Thy blessing, I surrender myself into Thy hands for this night. Preserve me from evil spirits and evil men – from destructive elements and extreme pains – from all moral evil and from all temporal danger. If wakeful, may I commune with Thee, and meditate on Thy truth. And if I sleep,

may I be kept from distracting and distressing dreams. Take me and make me Thy charge. Take me and preserve me unto Thy kingdom and glory. Take me and use me for Thine honour and praise. Take body, soul, and spirit. Sanctify me and preserve me blameless unto the coming of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. O Lord, I cannot trust myself, I can trust no one but Thee. Therefore, I commit myself and my all into Thy hands, and leave myself with Thee for life or for death, just as Thou pleasest.

*I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that
he is able to keep that which I have committed
unto him against that day.*

2 Timothy 1:12



PEACEFUL SLEEP

*I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep,
For thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.*

Psalm 4:8

DAVID LOOKED ABOVE circumstances, to his God. He may have to lie in the open field, or in the cleft of the rock, exposed to ravenous beasts, or to more ravenous men. But he would lie down in peace, and sleep, for he knew that safety is of the Lord. "He giveth his beloved sleep," (Ps. 127:2). How many this night will be kept awake, by pain, or by nervous fears, or watching by the bed-side of the sick or dying, or waiting for the return of absent relatives or friends! How much anxiety, and fear, and pain, will be experienced this night, by thousands of the Lord's people! But as for me, favoured by a gracious providence, comforted with the sense of the presence of my God, and persuaded of my interest in His precious promises, I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, persuaded that my heavenly Father will watch beside my pillow, and keep me safe.

Omnipresent God, my soul confides in Thee! I lay me down tonight as in Thy presence, to sleep as beneath Thine eye. May my sleep be peaceful, and my repose refreshing and sweet. Let my exhausted energies be renewed. Let my person and property be kept safely. And in the morning let me awake realizing Thy presence, assured of Thy love, and

enjoying Thy paternal smile. How many nights hast Thou kept me safely! With how many mercies hast Thou crowned my lot! For these favours I bless Thee, and praise Thy glorious Name. And now, relying on the atoning blood of Thy Son Jesus, as invested with His glorious righteousness, and as accepted in Thy presence through Him, I enjoy peace. And with peace in my conscience, at peace with Thee and all Thy creatures, I lay me down and sleep.

*When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid,
Yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.*

Proverbs 3:24



THE VISIT

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

John 20:19

JESUS MADE OUR peace by the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20), and now He speaks peace to us by His Word and by His Spirit. He made a full atonement for our sins, and as believers in Him, there is now no reason why God should punish us. Therefore our God is called the God of peace (Rom. 15:33; Php. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20), the gospel is called the good news of peace (Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15), and Jesus is called the Prince of peace (Isa. 9:6). Having made our peace, He wishes us to be peaceful and happy. He met His disciples on the Lord's day evening, and standing in the midst, He said, "Peace be unto you!" As He visited His people then, so He visits His people now. In the public means of grace, in the domestic circle, when gathered for devotional purposes, and in the closet, Jesus meets His people.

My soul, has Jesus visited thee today? Hast thou felt Him near to thee? Has He breathed on thee, and imparted His holy peace to thee? If so, bless His dear Name. If not, lift up thy heart now, and entreat this blessing.

O Jesus, Thou didst visit Thy disciples after Thy resurrection, and Thou dost visit Thy people still.

Visit my poor soul this evening! Come, and whisper peace to my heart. Come, and soothe my troubled spirit. Come, and strengthen me with strength in my soul (Ps. 138:3). O Jesus, I can find no substitute for Thee, or for Thy presence. But Thyself and Thy presence will serve as a substitute for anything - for everything! Come near to me in mercy tonight. Manifest Thy love to me anew tonight, and let me joy and rejoice in Thee tonight! Sun of my soul, shine upon me! Joy of my heart, be present with me, for Thy mercy's sake!

*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he
it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me shall be
loved of my Father, and I will love him,
and will manifest myself to him.
John 14:21*



PLEASANT PRAYERS

*Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and
the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*

Psalms 141:2

THE INCENSE WAS burnt and offered by the priest alone, in solemn silence, in the holy place, while the people were praying without (Ex. 30:6-9). It represented the merit of Jesus rendering the prayers and praises of His people fragrant, pleasant, and acceptable to God. The evening sacrifice was a lamb, to make atonement and procure pardon for the daily sins of the people (Num. 28:1-8). Thus peace was preserved, and the sinful people were secure.

Blessed Lord, evening by evening would I come to Thee, and confess my guilt, disobedience, unbelief, and fears. Every evening would I come, and plead the slain Lamb, that my sins may be pardoned, my conscience cleansed, and my peace with Thee maintained. Help me to set forth my prayers before Thee as regularly, as punctually, and with solemn reverence, as the priest of old presented the incense. And give me grace that I may exercise faith in Jesus, and have such confidence in Thee as to be assured of my pardon and acceptance with Thee, that I may enjoy liberty before Thee. O that my poor prayers and praises may be associated with the blood of the Lamb, and be perfumed with the much incense of His mer-

its! Oh that I may so believe, so worship, and so walk with Thee, as to lie down on my pillow at night at peace with God, and at peace with all mankind, and prepared either to awake in this world or another, just as it shall seem good to Thee! May my prayers be acceptable and prevalent, through the sacrifice and intercession of my Lord and Saviour.

Precious Saviour, I put my person and my prayers into Thy hand. Perfume them with Thy merits, and so present them to Thy Father!

And there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Revelation 8:3



GRATITUDE

*I will praise thee, O LORD my God, with all my heart,
and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great
is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered
my soul from the lowest hell.*

Psalm 86:12-13

HOW MUCH I HAVE to be grateful for! I ought to be always praising and blessing the Lord. His mercy to me has been infinitely great, and His salvation is wonderful. By my own sin, by my own fault, my soul was ruined. I deserved, and was by the law doomed to the lowest hell. And to the lowest hell I must have sunk, but for the free grace and sovereign mercy of my God. At the expense of the blood of His Son, and by the out-stretched arm of His Spirit, He undertook to save me. And, blessed be His name, I am saved, and saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. Instead of the lowest hell, I shall spend an eternity in the highest heaven. Instead of being the companion and scorn of devils, and a fellow-sufferer with the vilest portion of God's creation, I shall dwell with God, and enjoy the society of saints and angels forever and ever.

Ever blessed Lord, I will praise Thee with my whole heart, and I will glorify Thy name for evermore. For Thy mercy towards me is infinitely great, and Thy delivering of me from the lowest hell demands my deepest gratitude. O that I could praise

Thee with every breath! O that every thought, word, and deed, were baptized in gratitude! O that by night and by day, at home and abroad, I could praise, bless, and adore Thy glorious name!

Holy Spirit, work powerfully in my heart. Give me a vivid sense of God's great love to me, and of the great salvation He has wrought for me! O that I could praise and bless my God on earth, as the ransomed and glorified hosts do above! O glorious thought! In a little time such will be my privilege, and my privilege forever!

*Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes
from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk
before the LORD in the land of the living.*

Psalms 116:8-9



GOD'S GLORY

*I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.**Exodus 33:18*

WE SHOULD DESIRE to know as much of God as possible. His essential glory cannot be seen by us without inflicting injury upon us (Ex. 33:20; 1 Tim. 6:16). Therefore it is withheld from us. But His glory as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ may be seen, and we are benefited by the sight (2 Cor. 4:6). Jesus revealed Jehovah, and in that revelation we see that grace, mercy, and holiness, constitute His glory (John 1:14). It is His glory to show mercy to the miserable, to shower down the richest blessings on the unworthy, and to sanctify polluted creatures, making them like Himself, that they may be happy as Himself.

But nowhere is God's glory seen in so solemn and yet in so amiable a light as in the cross of Jesus. There He appears inflexibly just, in that He punishes His beloved Son with the utmost rigour of the law, because the sins of His people were placed to His account (Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21). And there He appears sovereignly gracious, in that He pardons, justifies, and places in His bosom the vilest and unworthiest of mankind, for whom Jesus died.

O Lord, we beseech Thee, show us Thy glory! Send the Holy Spirit to unfold the great mystery of redemption to us! Let us see mercy and truth meet

together, righteousness and peace embrace each other, in the wondrous transactions of Calvary! (Ps. 85:10) May we behold Thee as just, and yet the justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus! (Rom. 3:26) May we so see Thy glory in the gospel, that all earthly glory may fade and die before our minds, and that we may be prepared to see and enjoy Thy glory in a brighter and better world! May Thy glory be our glory, in order to which, fill us with a love to justice and holiness, and enable us to exercise mercy and loving-kindness to all around us! O Saviour, glorify Thyself in me!

No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.
John 1:18



ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual
blessings in heavenly places in Christ.
Ephesians 1:3*

GOD'S LOVE TO us is infinite. He considers nothing too good or too great to confer upon us (Rom. 8:32). Having chosen us in His Son, that we may be holy and blameless before Him in love (Eph. 1:4), He blessed us with all spiritual blessings. He gave us grace in Jesus, before the foundation of the world — grace for all time — grace for all trials — grace to be given to us as our circumstances may require. In going to the throne of grace, therefore, we just go to receive what our heavenly Father has stored up in Jesus for us. What sweet encouragement is this! Well may the apostle say, "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need," (Heb. 4:16).

Blessed Lord, we thank Thee, we praise Thee, we bless Thy glorious name, that Thou hast put us into Christ, made provision for us in Christ, and wilt make us perfectly holy through Christ. Teach us to come with boldness and confidence to Thy throne, that we may obtain for our use what Thou hast treasured up for us in Jesus. O give us more faith in Christ — more love to Thee and Thy people — more humility when at Thy throne — more zeal for Thy glory when in the

world, and teach us to eat, drink, dress, and do everything to Thy glory! (1 Cor. 10:31). O to be thoroughly Christ-like! O to reflect the glory of God on all around us! O to live and act as on the confines of eternity, as if always impressed with this fact, "I shall soon be in heaven!"

Gracious Saviour, raise me above this world, fix my affections on Thyself, fill me with Thy Spirit, and enable me to lie down tonight with the assurance that all spiritual blessings are mine!

His name shall endure forever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

Psalm 72:17



OPEN MINE EYES

*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold
wondrous things out of thy law.*

Psalms 119:18

GOD'S BOOK IS a book of wonders. It is a wonderful record of God's power in creation, of His wisdom in providence, and of His grace in redemption. It has the stamp of infinity upon it. We cannot penetrate its heights, fathom its depths, or traverse its lengths and breadths, but as we are taught of God. The Holy Spirit, who indited it and inspired holy men to write it, must unfold and reveal it, or we shall never see its glory, be impressed with its majesty, or rejoice in its divine communications (1 Cor. 2:13-14). Never let us read any portion of God's Word without looking up for divine teaching, or fancy that we know all that is contained in any one chapter, or any one verse of God's blessed book. For there is a fullness in the Holy Scriptures not to be found anywhere else.

Oh, Thou ever blessed Spirit of God, who hast given us Thy holy word to instruct our intellects, sanctify our hearts, and regulate our lives, we beseech Thee to enlighten our minds to understand it, open our hearts to receive it, give us faith to believe it, and enable us to reduce it to practice in our everyday life! O to understand the sublime doctrines, to believe the precious promises, and to practise the holy precepts

of God's blessed Word! Lord, unveil to us the types, unfold to us the prophecies, and apply to our hearts the consolatory portions of the sacred Scriptures. May we hide the word in our hearts, that we may not sin against our God (Ps. 119:11). And may we speak of the word with our lips, that we may edify and bless our friends. O to catch the meaning, taste the sweetness, and feel the power of God's holy truth!

O Lord, open our eyes, and unfold the truth to us this night! O Lord, soften our hearts, and bring home Thy word with power!

*Then opened he their understanding, that they
might understand the scriptures.*

Luke 24:45



TO BE TAUGHT TO PRAY

*Lord, teach us to pray.**Luke 11:1*

IT IS A HUMBLING fact, that of ourselves we neither know how to pray nor what to pray for. And it is a special mercy that the Holy Spirit is provided to help our infirmities, and to make intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:26). Sometimes we have no proper sense of our wants. Sometimes we have no devotional feelings, and sometimes we have no words with which to express ourselves before God. Some of our severest conflicts are upon our knees — when we want to pray, but cannot — when we are sighing for communion with God, but cannot enjoy it — and when we want to pour out our whole souls to the Lord, but have not a word to say. Never did the disciples more need the teaching of their Master, than we need the teaching and assistance of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, teach us to know ourselves, our wants, our transgressions, and our relationship to Thee. And then teach us to present ourselves to Thee, confess our sins before Thee, ask for a supply of our wants from Thee, obtain the pardon of all we have done amiss, and call Thee, “Abba, Father,” (Gal. 4:6). O teach us to pray this evening — to come before Thee, even to Thy seat — to draw near to Thee by the blood

of Jesus, and find liberty in opening the heart to Thee! O to pray in faith, with fervour, according to Thy will, and as shall be acceptable in thy sight! (1 John 5:14). Suffer us not to be satisfied with a form, or merely to utter words before Thee, but let our whole hearts be engaged in the service. Let us worship Thee in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Let us pray in the Spirit, and with the understanding also (1 Cor. 14:15).

Precious Lord Jesus, Thou art touched with a feeling of our infirmities (Heb. 4:15). Thou knowest the hindrances we meet with. Therefore teach us to pray.

*The Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not
what we should pray for as we ought. But the
Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us
according to the will of God.*

Romans 8:26



FREE PARDON

*I have sinned greatly in that I have done. And now I
beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of
thy servant, for I have done very foolishly.
2 Samuel 24:10*

SIN IS FOLLY, therefore God calls the sinner a fool (Ps. 53:1). It is the greatest folly to give way to temptation and yield to sin, for it may injure others and it must injure ourselves. That which brings darkness on our minds, guilt on consciences, and distress into our souls, must be injurious, but sin always does this. But not only so, it dishonours God, grieves the Holy Spirit, and gives Satan an occasion against us.

Most holy and most merciful Father, give us a deep and growing hatred to all sin. Embitter sin to us, and thoroughly set our hearts against it. May we see that it was our sins that crucified Thy Son. And may we look on Him whom we have pierced, and mourn that we have wounded our loving Lord (Zech. 12:10; John 19:37). O deliver us from the guilt of all our past sins, and blot them from the book of Thy remembrance, for we have done very foolishly. Our sins are very great, our iniquity is altogether inexcusable. We condemn ourselves, but O Lord, do not Thou condemn us! Let the precious blood of Thy beloved Son be heard for us in heaven, and let that precious blood be heard by us speaking in our consciences (Heb. 10:22). Thus give

us peace, comfort, and holiness. We admire Thy patience, forbearance, and long-suffering. We adore Thy holiness, justice, and forgiving love. Let us feel Thy pity, sympathy, and pardoning mercy, for Thy great name's sake. If any are suffering through our fault, on account of our folly, Lord comfort them, relieve them, and soon, very soon, set them free from their sufferings. And let it please Thee to set our hearts against sin, and make us wise to discover and avoid temptations to sin. O to be cleansed from all sin, and to be filled with holiness and love!

*Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously,
so will we render the calves of our lips.*

Hosea 14:2



QUICKENING

*My soul cleaveth unto the dust:
quicken thou me according to thy word.*

Psalms 119:25

WHAT POWERFUL attractions the present world has! How prone we are to sink down to its level, to become attached to its customs, and to cleave to its vanities! Yet, at the best, it is but dust. There is nothing in the world to satisfy or suit an immortal mind. Jesus died for us, to deliver us from it. The Holy Spirit urges us to rise above it, and offers us His divine and all-sufficient aid. He will not force, but only attract or draw. Alas, that we should slight His intimations, disregard His exhortations, and grieve His loving heart. We are not of the world, and yet how worldly! (John 15:19). We are born from above, but yet how earthly we remain! Our souls go out after things that are carnal, drossy, dusty, contemptible, to the neglect of things that are spiritual, pure, holy, and invaluable.

Heavenly Father, we confess our folly, we deplore our ingratitude, we condemn our conduct. But we feel weak and feeble when we attempt to burst our bonds, and mount upwards to Thy throne. O quicken, quicken us! By the power of Thy Holy Spirit, by putting life into Thine ordinances, and by bringing home Thy inspired word, quicken our poor, cold, lifeless souls. Hast Thou not promised to be as the

dew unto Thine Israel, coming down graciously, gradually, and gently upon them, in order to revive their graces, quicken their devotions, and cause them to grow up into Christ? (Hos. 14:5). O come down upon our dry and thirsty souls as the dew, or as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass! (Deut. 32:2). Quicken us, and so will we mount up to Thy throne, wait upon Thee in Thy ways, and do Thy righteous will. Quicken us, and so Jesus will be precious to us, and the work of the Lord will be pleasant to us.

*I have longed after thy precepts:
quicken me in thy righteousness.
Psalm 119:40*



CHASTENING

*Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and
teachest him out of thy law, that thou mayest give
him rest from the days of adversity, until
the pit be digged for the wicked.*

Psalm 94:12-13

AFFLICTIONS ARE always painful, and days of affliction are often gloomy. But as we are training for eternity, as we are maturing for heaven, and as afflictions are necessary discipline, we must be afflicted. If chastisement was not necessary, our loving Father would never use the rod. But as every one of us needs correction, He chastens every son whom He receives (Heb. 12:5-6). God's chastisements are intended for our instruction — they are designed to teach us the evil of sin, our need of grace, the holiness of God, the preciousness of Jesus, the emptiness of the world, and the blessedness of heaven (Heb. 12:10). These are lessons of the deepest importance to us — lessons that we are slow to learn, and therefore we must have line upon line, and stroke upon stroke.

Heavenly Father, help us to bow to Thy sovereign will, to bear with patience every stroke of Thy rod, and to learn the holy and important lessons Thou dost intend to teach us. May we not only submit to discipline, but seeing the love that ordains it, and the need there is for it, even acquiesce in it. Keep us from

fretting at pain, repining at losses, or giving way to too much grief at bereavements, knowing that all these things come from Thee, and are designed for our good. Let us see that every trial and every trouble is a blessing, and will end in everlasting rest.

Sweet thought! When the world is called to endure the days of adversity, and the wicked sink into the pit of woe, Thy poor, tried, and afflicted people will be enjoying the rest that remaineth for the people of God (Heb. 4:9). O for grace to yield ourselves to Thee, and to acquiesce in all Thy paternal dealings!

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.

Job 5:17



DEPENDENCE

*The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them
their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand,
and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*

Psalm 145:15-16

ALL OUR SUPPLIES come from God, therefore our dependence should be on Him, and our expectations from Him. Creatures act towards us in kindness and sympathy according to His direction. He can make us friends if we need them, and keep them friends while we need them. The eyes of all creation are upon the Lord, and all the tribes of His creatures are fed by His hand.

How much more, then, should His children look to Him, seek from Him, and expect to be supplied by Him! Whatever God does, He does seasonably, and whatever He gives, is in season. Our wants are not always anticipated by our supplies, but when our wants are felt, and our cry is heard, then our supply is certain. It is but for God to open His hand, and all we need drops from His palm. When God's hand opens, our desires will soon be satisfied. Every temporal mercy, every spiritual gift, and all the supplies needed by our souls, are ready, and lie in the hand of God for us (James 1:17). He loves us to fix our eyes on Him, to lift up our voice to Him, and seek every blessing from Him.

Merciful Lord, Thou hast fed us this day. Thy open hand and loving heart have supplied all our needs (Php. 4:19). We gratefully acknowledge Thy great goodness, and bless Thee for Thy suitable supplies. And now, O Lord, close up the day with us in mercy. Give us a sense of Thy forgiving love, faith in Thy protecting care, and an assurance of our part in Thy covenant. Help us to cast every care on Thee, and to fall asleep tonight as on a parent's bosom (1 Pet. 5:6-7). Let Thy peace pervade us, and inspire us with strong confidence in Thy protection.

*Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of
their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the
hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the
LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.*
Psalm 123:2



THE DIVINE PRESENCE

*Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might
come even to his seat! I would order my cause
before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.*

Job 23:3-4

THAT THE LORD sometimes hides Himself from His children, both in providence and grace, cannot be denied. He is sometimes present to sanction and bless their efforts in temporal matters, and sometimes He leaves them to labour as in the very fire. He is sometimes present to quicken, enliven, and comfort them in grace, and sometimes there is no enjoyment of His presence, and then all is dull, cold, and dead. The earth does not more miss the shining of the sun, than the Lord's people miss the presence of their Heavenly Father. They go to His word, to His throne, to His house, to His ordinances, but they cannot find Him. And then they can only sigh out their desires before Him.

Reader, have you enjoyed the presence of the Lord today? If you have not, and yet have the life of God in your soul, except you are in a backsliding state, you are crying out tonight, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!"

Gracious Lord, let us find Thee in Jesus tonight. Let us find Thee in Thy blessed word. Let us find Thee on Thy throne of grace. Come, O come, and manifest Thyself unto us! Let us realize Thy pres-

ence, feel Thy love, feed on Thy word, and rejoice in Thy great salvation. O come near unto us, lay Thine hand upon us, and pronounce Thy blessing over us! Let us feel that we are near to Thee. And enable us, we beseech Thee, to lay our case before Thee, plead with Thee, and prevail. O for nearness to God! O for the sensible presence of our Father! O to lie down to rest tonight so satisfied of our interest in Thy love, and of our title to the heavenly mansions, that we may feel indifferent whether we awake in this world or in another!

*Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself,
O God of Israel, the Saviour.
Isaiah 45:15*



FAITHFULNESS

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.

Psalm 92:1-2

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD is the sheet anchor of the believer's soul. But for this he may founder in the storm, or be wrecked by the tempest. But since God is faithful to His character, faithful to His word, and faithful to His Son, the poor, weak, and tried Christian is safe. Let us, therefore, give thanks unto the Lord, and sing praises to the Most High, and let us proclaim His lovingkindness in the morning, and rejoice in His faithfulness every night. Hitherto the Lord has borne with us. He has kept His word, and He has been faithful to us, though we have been faithless to Him (2 Tim. 2:13). We are witnesses that God's word is true, and that God never fails those who put their trust in Him.

Tonight, O Lord, we give Thee thanks, and praise Thy glorious name, for Thy lovingkindness has been ever great towards us, and Thy faithfulness has been great unto the heavens (Ps. 108:4). In faithfulness Thou hast afflicted us, that we may be made partakers of Thy holiness (Heb. 12:10). In faithfulness Thou hast supplied us, and not one good thing has failed of all Thou hast promised (Josh. 21:45). In faithfulness

Thou hast stood by us in our conflicts, and hast given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:5). In faithfulness Thou hast answered our prayers, and in a thousand instances hast given us the request of our lips. And now, O our faithful, covenant-keeping God and Father, give us a stronger faith, that we may believe what Thou hast said, expect what Thou hast promised, and lovingly follow Thee wherever in Thy providence Thou shalt lead us. O for grace to make us faithful unto death, that afterwards we may receive a crown of life!

O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?

Psalm 89:8



A BOTTLE IN THE SMOKE

*For I am become like a bottle in the smoke;
yet do I not forget thy statutes.*

Psalm 119:83

WHAT POOR, SHRIVELLED, discoloured, and useless things we sometimes appear! As the bottle of skin that has been exposed to the smoke and action of the fire, is unsightly and useless, just so do we appear sometimes. What with the temptations of Satan, the influence of the present evil world, and the horrid corruptions of our hearts, we appear to ourselves to be viler than the earth, worthless and useless as the rent and shrivelled bottle. But at our worst, we cannot give up, we cannot forget God's word. There is still some portion to excite hope, to check fear, and to keep us back from despondency and despair. Blessed word, but for thee we had long since given all up, and had gone back, to walk no more with Jesus.

Most blessed Lord, Thou by Thy word hast kept us, and by Thy Spirit hast prevented our apostasy, and it is by having obtained help of Thee that we continue unto this day. Look upon us, then, in mercy now, worthless as we are, unsightly and polluted as we are. Look upon us, and be gracious unto us, as Thou usest to do unto those that love Thy name (Ps. 119:132). O cleanse us from our pollutions, make us capable of receiving and retaining Thy grace, and fill

us with Thy holy and ever blessed Spirit! We wish to be holy. We desire to be useful. We long to do something that will bring honour to Thy name. O that Thou wouldst work in us by Thy Spirit, both to will and to do of Thy own good pleasure! (Php. 2:13)

O Lord, we put ourselves into Thy gracious hands. We lay ourselves at Thy feet. We give up ourselves to be entirely at Thy disposal. O be, be to us a God, and let us be to Thee a people – a people to show forth Thy praise! (Ps. 79:13)

*It is good that a man should both hope and
quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.*

Lamentations 3:26



HIDE NOT THY FACE

*Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant
away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me
not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.*

Psalm 27:9

THERE ARE SWEET seasons, when the Lord lifts up the light of His countenance upon us, and there are dreary days, when the Lord hides His face from us. A sense of sin, especially of ingratitude, awakens fear, and often fills us with alarm — not lest we should be cast into hell, but lest our Heavenly Father should frown upon us, put us out of His presence, and refuse us the sweet enjoyment of His love.

Have we seen our Father's face today? Have we been near the Lord, enjoying sweet communion with the Lord? Have we received help from the Lord, and been enabled to rejoice in His salvation? If not, are we happy? Can we be satisfied tonight? Is filial fear working in our bosoms, and is this our evening prayer:

“Hide not Thy face from me, for I cannot be happy unless I enjoy Thy presence and Thy smile? Put not Thy poor unworthy servant out of Thy presence, or out of Thy service, but let me be near Thee, and be employed by Thee. Thou hast been my help in all my past troubles, trials, distresses. Leave me not, nor let me leave Thee, but be present with me, imparting

strength to me, and whispering loving words to my heart. Forsake me not, O God of my salvation. Thou hast said that Thou wilt not forsake Thine own people (Ps. 94:19). Am I not one of them? Hast Thou not called me out of the world, acknowledged me at Thy throne, and given me Thy good Spirit to instruct me? (Neh. 9:20) Yes, I am, I must be Thine. Therefore Thou art my God, my Saviour, without whom I can do nothing. Draw me near, and keep me near to Thy blessed self. And as Thou hast been my help in the past, help me, and help me till I arrive safe at home.”

*And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye
shall search for me with all your heart.*

Jeremiah 29:13



SEEK THY SERVANT

*I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant;
for I do not forget thy commandments.*

Psalm 119:176

HOWEVER FAR THE Lord's people may wander from Him, they cannot forget His word or His gracious dealings with them. They remember the years of the right hand of the Most High (Ps. 77:10). Like sheep, we have every one of us a propensity to wander. We need keeping every moment. If it were possible for the Lord to take His eye off us but for one moment, that moment we should fall into mischief and misery, if not into hell. But the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry (Ps. 34:15).

My soul, hast thou wandered from the Lord? Hast thou wandered from the green pastures of His word? Hast thou wandered from the church, which is His fold? Hast thou wandered from His throne, from His side? If so, thy graces will wither, thy comforts will die, and thy profession will become a mere form. Cry to the great Shepherd, cry mightily to Jesus, "Seek Thy servant." Blessed be His holy name, He will go out into the wilderness in search of even one lost sheep, nor will He return until He find it.

Jesus, Shepherd of my soul, seek me, and bring me back from all my wanderings. Let me feed and be folded with Thy flock. Let me hear Thy sweet voice

calling me by my name, and leading me out. May I never enjoy rest but at Thy side, nor feel at home but with Thy flock and family. Tonight, O Saviour, draw me near to Thyself. Soothe my perturbed spirit with the communications of Thy grace and truth, and let me lie down conscious of my interest in Thee, of Thy love to me, and of my safety through Thee. Nearer to Thee, O Jesus, draw me still nearer to Thee!

*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they
follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and
they shall never perish, neither shall any
man pluck them out of my hand.*
John 10:27-28



HELP AND SALVATION

*Help me, O LORD my God:
O save me according to thy mercy.
Psalm 109:26*

WE NOT ONLY NEED help every day, but every moment. Our weakness is extreme. Our foes are numerous and mighty. Our duties are difficult and arduous. Our dangers are great and imminent. How, then, shall we be able to stand, to conquer, to overcome? Our God has said, “I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” (Isa. 41:10)

Blessed be His holy name, He is as good as His word! He has helped us in every need. He has helped us out of every difficulty. He has helped us all through our journey until this day. And tonight He is as ready to help us as He ever was. His ear is open. His heart throbs with infinite love to us. His throne is accessible. His mercy is rich and free. With such thoughts as these in our minds:

“O Lord, we approach Thee tonight, confessing to Thine honour that Thou ever hast helped us, and now beseeching Thee to help us quite through the rough journey of life. Help us, O our God, to conquer our inbred lusts — to overcome and crucify the old man with his deeds — to mortify the flesh with its vile affections — to overcome this present evil world —

and to tread Satan under our feet. Help us, “as the elect of God, to put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; and, above all, charity, which is the bond of perfectness,” (Col. 3:12-14). Save, O save us, from all pride, self-sufficiency, high-mindedness, and worldly wisdom. Make us humble, meek, and deeply spiritual. Fill us with the Spirit of Jesus. Produce in us the temper of Jesus, and enable us exactly to copy the example of Jesus. O to be Christ-like, to be holy!”

*Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness is good:
turn unto me according to the multitude
of thy tender mercies.
Psalm 69:16*



LIGHT AND TRUTH

O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me.

Psalm 43:3

WE NEED THE light of God's truth in our hand, and the light of God's Spirit in our hearts. We have the one in the inspired word, and we must seek the other at the Lord's throne. Let us pray that God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, would shine into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6). By nature we are in the dark. Education brings us into the twilight, but only the word and Spirit of God can bring us into the clear light. God's Spirit and truth will lead us to the law, and convince us of our sin, and then to the gospel and show us the Saviour. Thus enlightened, we shall discover the pollution and corruption of our hearts, and apply to the open fountain, where we shall wash and be clean.

Blessed Lord, send Thy word and Spirit into my heart, that I may clearly see my danger and my remedy, that I may behold the beauty of Jesus, and see Thy glory shining in His Person. O for light into God's word! O for light to read God's heart! O that the Holy Spirit would lead me to Jesus daily, and teach me to make use of Jesus, against sin, against Satan, and against the world! O that He would lead me into close, intimate, and heart-affecting comm-

union with God! And, Lord, let it please Thee to send out Thy light and Thy truth into the world, especially into the dark, benighted, and heathen parts of the world. O Lord, remember the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are still the habitations of cruelty! (Ps. 74:20). O send out Thy light and Thy truth to lead papists and pagans to Jesus, and may Thy own word be soon verified, that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14).

*God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.
Psalm 57:3*



OUR EXAMPLE

He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

Matthew 14:23

THE LORD JESUS was much with God in private. He loved to be alone with God. Therefore, after the toils of the day, spent in travelling and preaching, He sought out some solitary place, and there prayed.

Blessed Jesus, what an example Thou hast set us! O give us grace to follow it! May we be often found alone with God! Let not a neglected closet witness against us. Let not private prayer be a task and a burden, but let it be our delight. Meet us when alone. Speak to our hearts when alone. Open Thy loving heart to us when alone. Let us have much communion with the Father, and with Thy most blessed self.

May we never fear solitude, or feel lonely when left by ourselves, but may we seize every opportunity for pouring out our hearts before the Lord. We lament that we have neglected private prayer so much — that we have attended to it so often as a mere duty — that it has at times been irksome to us. O revive, revive Thy work within us! Give us deep spirituality, that we may worship God, who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Like Enoch, may we walk with God (Gen. 5:22-24), and feel such peace, plea-

sure, and holy joy in His company, that we may value it above everything beside.

O Jesus, breathe Thine own loving spirit into us. Make us like-minded with Thy blessed self, and then regularly as the evening comes we shall seek the place of prayer, and be found there alone! Gracious Saviour, if we desire one thing more than another, it is to be made just like Thee, and especially in reference to communion with God. Holy Spirit, make us prayerful — keep us in close fellowship with our God!

When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

John 6:15



REJOICING

*Thou makest the outgoings of the
morning and evening to rejoice.*

Psalms 65:8

GOD DOES THIS in nature, and it is not always easy to say which is more welcome — the morning light, or the evening shade — the one calling us to activity, the other inviting us to repose. Of old, both morning and evening afforded cause for joy, because the lamb offered in sacrifice spoke of pardon, proclaimed peace, and called for praise. So now, the precious blood of the Lamb of God, ever fresh and ever fragrant, calls for renewed exercises of faith, publishes anew God's infinite love, proclaims pardon and peace, and bids us rejoice.

Beloved, let us, morning by morning, and evening by evening, direct our minds anew to the precious blood of Jesus, and endeavour by simple faith to see all our sins put away, and our perfect and everlasting reconciliation effected. This will not only afford us cause for joy and rejoicing, but will fill our hearts with gladness and our mouths with praise.

Precious Saviour, we bless Thee this evening, and rejoice in Thy dear name, that Thou hast exempted us from so many evils, and supplied us with so many blessings. We rejoice in what Thou art to us, in what Thou hast done for us, and in what Thou art doing for us now. For no doubt but at this moment Thou art

representing us before Thy Father's throne, and art making intercession for us (Heb. 7:25). We can rejoice in Thee when we can rejoice in nothing beside, and it is Thy glorious Person, precious blood, and everlasting righteousness, that make the outgoings of our mornings and evenings to rejoice. O what dreary mornings and what gloomy evenings we should have but for Thee! No cheering light of hope, no repose or hallowed peace, could we enjoy but for Thee. Now, as interested in Thee, we can rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

*The day is thine, the night also is thine:
thou hast prepared the light and the sun.
Psalm 74:16*



THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

*Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD,
according unto thy word.*

Psalms 119:65

BETTER BE THE Lord's servant than one of the world's princes. For all the Lord's servants are His sons, His heirs, and the objects of His highest love. Therefore He has said, "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him," (Isa. 3:10). However it may be with the world, it shall be well with him. In whatever circumstances he may be placed, it shall be well with him. His best interests are secured, his needs are all provided for, and all things work together for his good (Rom. 8:28). We have been sorely tried. Our troubles have been great and numerous. Our foes have been many and cruel. Our sufferings have sometimes been great and various. And yet, upon a calm review of the whole, and comparing what the Lord has done with what He has said in His word, we can honestly and heartily say, "Thou hast dealt well with Thy servant, O Lord, according unto Thy word."

Yes, blessed Lord, to Thy honour we make this acknowledgment, and pray that Thy dealings in the past may give us confidence and courage in reference to the future. For what Thou hast been, Thou wilt be. And as Thou hast done, Thou wilt do. Our prayer, therefore, is, "Deal well with Thy servants, O Lord,

that we may live, and keep Thy word.” In all our afflictions, in all our bereavements, in all our sadness, and in all our sorrows, deal well with us. Give us strength to bear, patience to endure, wisdom to manage, and grace to turn all our troubles to account. And when we come into our last conflict with our last foe, then, then, deal well with us, by shining upon our souls, brightening our evidences, supporting our minds, and enabling us to bear a last, loving, and useful testimony for Thee.

*Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation:
and thy right hand hath holden me up, and
thy gentleness hath made me great.*

Psalm 18:35



FOR EMANCIPATION

O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

Psalms 116:4

DAVID WAS IN deep distress, in sore trouble, and his spirit was overwhelmed. No one could deliver him but God, and it was his mercy to have access to God through His beloved Son. Such is our mercy too. In all times of trial, in all seasons of distress, in all our days of darkness, we may go to the Lord, and seek deliverance from Him. He is the great “Deliverer,” and He takes pleasure in delivering His people, who put their trust in Him (Ps. 37:40). He delivers in six troubles, and in seven He will not forsake us (Job 5:19). His mercy, like His nature, is infinite, and He delights to display it in the experience of His poor, tried, and troubled people.

Beloved, are you in any difficulty, or perplexity, or trouble this evening? If so, do as the Psalmist did — carry it to the Lord. Make his prayer your own, and if it is presented with faith and fervour, his deliverance will be yours too.

Heavenly Father, let it please Thee to deliver us this night from all slavish fear, from all hard thoughts of Thee, and from all the power of unbelief. Deliver us from the craft, subtlety, and power of Satan, and from all the evil that is in the present world. Deliver us from our own evil hearts, and from all the dangers and difficulties by which we are surrounded. Deliver

us from the plague of the heart, the powerful corruptions that work within, and the snares and traps that are set for us without. Deliver us from all evil, invest us with all good, and prepare us for eternal glory. May we this night realize that we are delivered from the guilt, power, and consequences of sin, and lie down persuaded that Thou wilt deliver us from every evil work, and preserve us unto Thy heavenly kingdom (2 Tim. 4:18). O deliver us, until deliverance is no longer needed!

*The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me
out of my distresses. Look upon mine affliction
and my pain; and forgive all my sins.*

Psalms 25:17-18



DIVINE TEACHING

*So teach us to number our days, that we
may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

Psalm 90:12

ARE NOT OUR days few? Are not these few days introductory to eternity? Must we not be saved or lost forever now? Then true wisdom consists in seeking first, and securing beyond the possibility of a failure, our eternal salvation. To be saved is to be created anew in Christ Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, to be united to the Person of Christ, and to be reconciled to God. Then all our sins are pardoned, our persons are justified, and we are under the special protection of the Almighty. Not one day should we let pass, not one moment should we rest, until we are saved. Our one object should be, to make our calling and our election sure (2 Pet. 1:10). Then, though our “days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle” (Job 7:6), though they be “few and evil” (Gen. 47:9), we need not be distressed, for an eternity of joy awaits us.

Gracious Lord, teach us by Thy good Spirit to improve our few fleeting days. And as they glide past us with great rapidity, may we improve them to Thy glory and our own spiritual advantage. Every day may we do something that shall tell on eternity. May we spread Thy truth, believe Thy promises, observe Thy precepts, and labour to bring sinners to Jesus. O

make us wise to win souls — to win many souls! I regret that I have spoken so little of Jesus today, that I have brought so little honour to Thy holy name, that I have done so little good to my fellow-men. O for more of that wisdom which cometh from above, and which leads its possessors to act in all things as for eternity! (James 3:17).

Lord, I come to Thee for wisdom tonight. Dost Thou not give it to all who ask, liberally, and without upbraiding? (James 1:5). O give it me, that I may wisely number my days, and employ my time and talents for Thee!

*Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom;
and to depart from evil is understanding.
Job 28:28*



A SWEET VIEW

*Thou, LORD, art good, and ready to forgive; and
plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*

Psalm 86:5

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL representation of God is this! How comforting, at the close of another day's cares and troubles, sorrows and sins, to be reminded that our "God is good," and especially that He is "ready to forgive," ready to pardon all the faults and follies of this day, ready to pass them by, and still treat me as a beloved child! He only requires me to be convinced, to confess and be sorry for my sins, and in a moment all is forgiven, all is forgotten, and forgotten forever!

Then He is "plenteous in mercy." The fountain of His mercy has not yet run dry. Run dry? It is not in the least diminished! His mercy is a boundless, fathomless, endless ocean. God has plenty of mercy for miserable sinners — mercy to pardon them, mercy to purify them, mercy to comfort them, mercy to save them, mercy for all them that call upon Him.

O my soul, take home tonight this lovely representation of thy God, and believing that He is good, ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy, go to Him, call upon Him, and plead with Him. Then thou mayest obtain mercy, and find grace to help thee in every time of need (Heb. 4:16).

Good and gracious God, I adore Thee for Thy goodness. I bless Thee that Thou art ready to forgive. I rejoice that Thou art plenteous in mercy. And now, O Lord, glorify Thy mercy in me. Show Thy readiness to forgive in me! Let my heart be eased of every sorrow. Let my conscience be cleansed from every sin. And let me lie down to rest tonight guiltless, rejoicing in the glorious fact, that Thou hast blotted out my sins as a cloud, and my transgressions as a thick cloud (Isa. 44:22), and art now at peace with me.

*Thou, O LORD, art a God full of compassion,
and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous
in mercy and truth.*

Psalm 86:15



CONFIDENCE

*The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy
mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake
not the works of thine own hands.*

Psalm 138:8

MY COUNSEL SHALL stand, and I will do all My pleasure (Isa. 46:10). Thus the Lord speaks, and thus the Lord acts, for “He is the Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgment. A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He,” (Deut. 32:4). He works in time but what He purposed in eternity. Then the plan was drawn, and then the provision was made, so that God’s purposes cannot fail, nor shall His work ever be left unfinished. What He has promised to us, He will give, and the work He has commenced in us, He will complete. Whatever concerns our salvation, He will perfect, according as it is written, “Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified,” (Rom. 8:29-30). This is God’s plan, commenced, carried on, and completed by Himself, to the praise of the glory of His grace (Eph. 1:6).

O Lord, hast Thou not begun a work of grace in my heart? I believe Thou hast. Wilt Thou not carry

on that work until it is crowned with glory? I believe Thou wilt. Is not Thy mercy unchangeable, from everlasting to everlasting? It is. And is not that mercy fixed on me? I trust it is.

Gracious, gracious God, carry on Thy work in my soul, I pray Thee. Deepen my sanctification. Subdue my corruptions, and bring every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). I have confidence in Thy love, in Thy mercy, and in Thy truth. Strengthen and increase that confidence, I pray Thee.

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:6



MYSTERIOUS DEALINGS

Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

Psalm 77:19

THE PROVIDENCES OF God are often dark and mysterious. It is not easy to ascertain why the Lord acteth as He does, or to find out the precise object He has in view. He carries on His work according to His preordained plan, and He accomplishes His purposes often by the most unlikely means. He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11), and He works leisurely, having no cause to hurry. We are naturally hasty, and want to know what God means at once, but He says, "Be still. Wait. Watch. Let patience have her perfect work," (James 1:4). We may not be able to account our trials, troubles, losses, and crosses, but all will be made plain by-and-by. We now know in part, but we shall soon know even as also we are known (1 Cor. 13:12). And until then, we may well be patient, assured that God is acting wisely, lovingly, and is consulting our good in all He does (Rom. 8:28).

O Thou wonder-working God, Thy dealings with us are often dark, and difficult to be understood! Give us faith to believe Thy promises when we cannot understand Thy providences. Let us be assured of Thy love to us when we cannot ascertain the design of Thy dealings with us. Preserve us from a repining,

complaining, and unbelieving spirit, and grant us grace that we may rest satisfied that Thou art acting rightly. And may we learn, in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content (Php. 4:11). With patience may we do and suffer Thy will at present, being fully assured that all will be explained and opened up to us at length. O to be enabled to rest on Thy covenant love, to trust Thy faithful promises, and to commit our way unto Thee!

*All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto
such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.*

Psalm 25:10



A PRIVILEGE

*For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour
wilt thou compass him as with a shield.*

Psalm 5:12

AND WHO ARE the righteous? Not the perfect, but they who, believing in Jesus, have His obedience placed to their account, and are justified in His name (Php. 3:9). For every believer, Jesus lived and obeyed the law. For every believer, Jesus died and paid the penalty of the law. For every believer, Jesus is gone into heaven to plead His perfect work and precious blood. As one with Christ — as interested in all that was done by Christ — as pleaded for by Christ, we are righteous before God. God treats us as righteous, and His grace or favour is like a shield, to ward off the arrows of the enemy, to protect and keep us safe.

My soul, art thou in Christ? Is the glorious righteousness of Jesus thine? Art thou relying on the life and death of Jesus alone for acceptance and eternal life? If so, thou art safe. Thy God has given thee the shield of His salvation, and His grace will be thy constant guard.

Precious Lord Jesus, I bless Thee for Thy life and death. I praise Thee for Thy glorious righteousness, without which I must appear naked before God, to my everlasting confusion and condemnation.

Holy Father, I bless Thee, I praise Thee for Thy grace — that grace which has distinguished me in times past, which is my comfort tonight, and which will preserve me to Thy kingdom and glory. Compassed with Thy favour! Oh, what a privilege! Compassed with Thy favour as with a shield! Oh, what security! Bless me, O my heavenly Father, bless me with a grateful heart, with a confiding spirit, with a soul set upon Thy glory, and the extension of Thy blessed, Thy beloved cause! O that I could praise and adore Thee as I would!

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

Romans 14:7-8



GUIDE AND GUARD

I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

Psalm 73:23-24

ONTINUALLY WITH the Lord! What a privilege! Held fast by my right hand! What a blessing! Yet, this privilege and this blessing have all the saints. Tonight, while I sleep — tonight, while all is dark about me — tonight, while dangers may fly thick around me, my God will be with me, and I shall be with my God. Never did tender mother watch beside the couch of her sick and dying child with such love, solicitude, and tenderness as my God will watch by my bedside tonight. Never did a kind father hold the right hand of his timid or feeble son with such care and sympathy as my God holds me by my right hand. Well, therefore, may I give myself up to His guidance, feel safe in His keeping, and anticipate an introduction into His glory.

Blessed Lord, I love Thee, I adore Thee tonight for Thy constant presence with me, and watchful care over me. Thou dost hold my right hand at this moment. O help me to realize it, and teach me by Thy persuasive influence to yield myself constantly to Thee. Here, Lord, I put myself into Thy hand anew. I no longer wish to choose my own way, but with all

my heart say, “Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.”

O my Father, guide me through all the trials and temptations that lie in my path. Guide me through all the snares and dangers found in my way. Guide me into truth and holiness, and fill me with joy and peace. Guide, O guide me every step of my journey, and safely across the Jordan of death. And then receive me into Thy glorious presence, where I shall see Jesus, and enjoy Thy love, and rejoice in Thy favour forever.

*I have set the LORD always before me: because he
is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

Psalm 16:8



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Smith (1802-1862) was a 19th century English Baptist pastor who became a prolific and much-loved devotional author. Called to the ministry in his mid-20s, he served as pastor of two churches in Cheltenham over a period of 12 years. In 1841 he accepted a call to the New Park Street chapel in London - the church which Charles Spurgeon would later pastor for almost 40 years. Health issues eventually forced him to leave London in 1850, and he eventually returned to Cheltenham to pastor a third church in the area from 1852 until his death. In total, he authored more than 50 books, along with numerous tracts and articles for various Christian periodicals and magazines.

Smith's writings were full of Christ, and he sought to magnify and exalt His precious Saviour in every book. He aimed to not only cultivate a genuine love for the Lord Jesus in the hearts of his readers, but to see such love for Christ manifested in their everyday lives. In the preface to his popular *The Believer's Daily Remembrancer*, he wrote:

"In this little work, I aim to speak in the closet, in the cottage, in the kitchen, and even in the field, to the different classes of the Lord's family; endeavouring to draw them nearer to their God and gracious Father. My desire is to

promote the power of godliness; and these little pieces are written to convince, comfort, and correct; to fan the flame of devotion, and to produce holiness of heart and life...Habitual dependence upon God for all we need, acknowledging the hand of God in all we receive, and walking with God, notwithstanding all that may happen to us below, enter into the very vitals of genuine Christianity; and it is only while we are thus acting that we enjoy peace with God, and walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.”

Most Christian authors would naturally have similar desires. But whereas many are able to speak about the Christian life in theory, Smith had first-hand experience of the truths that he wrote about. In God’s providence, he learnt them by passing through his own fiery trials. Smith’s father died while he was still an infant, and as a young child he was pressed into the workforce to help his mother support the family. As an apprentice and employee, he battled with the opposition that he received from ungodly co-workers. As a father of at least seven children, he saw three of them die at an early age. As a pastor, he experienced the hatred, slander and nastiness that sometimes comes from professing Christians, and he went through more than one bitter church split. Nor was he exempt from health and financial worries either. In addition to all this, Smith endured the normal internal battles against sin that plague every

believer, while also bearing the heavy burden for the souls of others that accompanies a faithful ministry.

Not surprisingly, Smith's writings began to resonate with other readers who were enduring similar trials. Through his pen, they were being comforted with the same comfort that he himself had received from God (2 Cor. 1:4). Before long, Smith's books began to spread throughout England and eventually around the world. Many wrote to him, expressing gratitude for the tremendous help they had received, or explaining how God had used his writings to awaken unbelieving friends and relatives. Hungry souls were being fed, and for a while, his writings were even more popular than those of Charles Spurgeon. Sadly, his works are now largely unknown by most 21st century Christians, but it is hoped that as more of them are reprinted, the Lord will again use them to exalt Christ and bless the souls of His beloved saints.

Further information about Pastor James Smith can be found in his autobiography, *Marvellous Mercy, as Displayed in the Life and Experience of the Author, James Smith of Cheltenham*. The first edition contains a record of his life up until August 1861, and was published prior to his death in December of the following year. In a subsequent printing in 1864, his son Joseph 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.

THE EVENING SACRIFICE

- 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 December)

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

THE EVENING SACRIFICE

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

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

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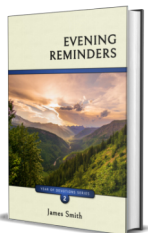


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