

CHRIST EXALTED

by James Smith

Smith's collection of 47 meditations aiming to exalt Jesus Christ and comfort believers, exploring Christ's essential nature, His sufficiency for salvation, His work on behalf of sinners, and His attributes of grace and love.

47 Chapters

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00 Christ Exalted

The Rainbow of the Covenant; Or,

Christ Exalted, Saints Comforted, and Sinners Directed James Smith, New Park Street Chapel,
London, 1855

00p PREFACE

PREFACE

To exalt the Lord Jesus,
to comfort his beloved people,
and to benefit our fellow-men —
should be the great object of our lives. For this purpose we were . . .
chosen by the Father,
redeemed by the blood of the Son,
and are sanctified by the Holy Spirit. To accomplish this end . . .
grace is given us,
gifts are conferred upon us,
and life is continued to us.

We only live consistently — as we live for the benefit of others. No Christian should make SELF his end in anything that he does; therefore the Apostle says, "No one should seek his own good, but the good of others."

If we are influenced by the grace of God,
if we study to commend ourselves to God,
if we are ruled by the Word of God —
our principal object will be, to "do good unto all men, especially unto the household of faith."
Upon this, we shall keep the eye steadily fixed,
toward this we shall bend all our energies, and
upon this we shall habitually set our hearts.

If the author knows his own heart, such is the end he has in view in writing for the press; and if any one prayer ascends more naturally and frequently from his heart than another, it is that he may be made useful while he lives, and that his usefulness may be continued when he is removed by death.

Reader, what is the state of your heart?

What are your ruling desires?

What is the foundation of your hope?

How does the Lord Jesus appear to you? Have you seen his glory in the looking-glass of the gospel? Have you committed your soul into his hands, to be saved by his merit and mercy? Is he precious to your soul?

Or, are you treating him with neglect? Are you living Christless in the world?

If so, you are not happy — and you cannot enjoy solid satisfaction. The inward craving of your soul has never been satisfied yet. Nor will anything satisfy it — but receiving Christ and feeding upon him. He is . . .

the food of the soul,

the light of the understanding,

the solace of the conscience,

the joy of the affections,

and the portion of the heart.

Christ alone is not enough to make you holy, happy, and honorable; but all creation without Christ, would not be a sufficient portion.

O seek his face and favor! Seek him without delay! Reader, are you happy in Jesus? Is his love — your Heaven,

his Word — your guide, and

his work — your immovable foundation?

If so, come "magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." Pray for a blessing upon this little work, and upon the author, who seeks your good.

O Holy Spirit, accompany the reading of this volume by your light, grace, and quickening energy — so that . . .

Jesus may be exalted,

sinners converted, and

your saints made happy!

James Smith, New Park Street Chapel, London

01 Christ, All in All!

Christ, All in All! When the Holy Spirit works in our hearts as the glorifier of Jesus — he always lays us in the dust and endears the Savior to our souls. We are then sure to get some fresh views of him, and he is in our estimation divinely sweet and glorious. Then we desire, above all things, to exalt and glorify him, and to be useful to his cause and people. We long for others to see him just as we do, feeling persuaded that if they did — they must love, delight in, and adore him. He appears so suitable, and is in every view we take of him so precious.

If we look at his PERSON, we see our nature exalted and united to the Divine; and as the God-man, he is altogether lovely and glorious. We behold in Him, all the solemn and amiable attributes of Godhead, united with all the sinless passions and affections of humanity! And, while we view the Divine perfections and human passions united in his blessed person — we feel glowing love, and realize inseparable union — and the joy is sweeter than human tongue can express. His very nature is love, he possesses a fullness of grace, and his heart overflows with mercy. Hence, his every action, dispensation, and word . . .

is mixed with love,

exhibits grace, and

displays mercy.

He is most compassionate, full of pity, and tenderly sympathetic; and he has displayed and proved it in the most remarkable manner! This was compassion like a God,

That when the Savior knew

The price of pardon was his blood,

His pity ne'er withdrew!

If we look at his precious NAMES, every one of which is calculated to endear him to our hearts — he appears altogether suitable and glorious.

He is called JESUS, because he came into our world on purpose to save sinners, and raise them to glory and immortal life.

He is called CHRIST, because he was anointed, appointed, and commissioned to save. He engaged in the everlasting covenant, he was promised to the Old Testament saints, and he appeared in the fullness of time. He was anointed . . .

to teach the ignorant,

to atone for the guilty, and

to rule over all who are saved by his grace.

He is called IMMANUEL, God with us — to show that he is able to save all who come unto God by him, and to manifest the depth of his condescension and the strength of his love. His names are numerous, everyone of them is full of meaning, and the whole united, prove him to be superlatively excellent, and glorious beyond our powers of description! Not softest strains can charm my ears,

Like his beloved name;

Nor anything beneath the skies inspire

My heart with equal flame!

If we look at his OFFICES — it endears him to our hearts.

He appears as a PROPHET, to . . .

instruct the ignorant,

lead the blind, and

make the foolish wise.

He . . .

unfolds the Father's mind,

opens the everlasting covenant,

and teaches all his people to profit.

He is a PRIEST, to . . .

atone for the guilty,

reconcile those who are enemies, and

intercede on behalf of transgressors.

He . . .

satisfies justice,

magnifies mercy, and

brings a holy God and polluted sinners into an honorable union.

He is a KING, and as such he . . .

receives the discontented,

rules over innumerable penitent criminals,

and defends all his subjects from danger. His power is omnipotent,

his resources are boundless,

his government is peaceful, and

all the statutes of his kingdom are wise, merciful, and just. Not health, nor wealth, nor sounding fame,

Nor earth's deceitful empty name,

With all its pomp and all its glare,

Can with a precious Christ compare!

If we look at the RELATIONSHIPS of Christ to his people — he rises in our estimation.

He is our FATHER — to pity the poor returning prodigal, to care for all who depend on his Word.

He is our HUSBAND — to love, cherish, and honor his beloved blood-bought bride. He loves her as he loves himself, treats her with unutterable kindness, and will allow nothing to separate her from his love.

He is our elder BROTHER, who possesses our nature — and feels deeply interested in the welfare of every brother and sister. For all he has made provision, to everyone has given promises, and the whole shall ultimately enjoy the best part of God's universe through his grace. He identifies his interests with ours, pleads the cause of his brethren in disgrace, and will raise the low-fallen family — to honor and renown. This causes us to sing —

Jesus my shepherd, husband, friend,

My prophet, priest, and king,

My Lord, my life, my way, my end,

Accept the praise I bring!

If we look at the COMPARISONS which are made use of by the Holy Spirit to set Christ forth — we behold something more of His loveliness.

He is compared to a MOTHER, and is said to have more than a mother's tenderness, kindness, and care. His concern for His people is constant,

He never loses sight of them for a moment, and

He pledges His Word that He will never forget them!

He is the CITY of REFUGE, with . . .

the broad and clear road,

the gates wide open, and

the hearty welcome awaiting every sinner who approaches to escape the threatened vengeance!

He is the STRONGHOLD, which emboldens, supplies, and secures all the prisoners of hope.

He is the ROCK, which shades, shelters, and refreshes the weary traveler.

He is the DAY-STAR, which betokens brighter scenes, and guides the vessel of mercy across the boisterous deep — to the haven of perfect redemption and safety.

He is the SUN of RIGHTEOUSNESS, whose rising . . .
cheers the benighted pilgrim,
makes glad the weary citizen of Heaven, and
produces moral beauty and fruitfulness in our world.

He is the APPLE-TREE among the trees of the forest . . .
whose blossoms are beautiful,
whose shade is refreshing, and
whose fruit is sweet to the taste.

He is the BREAD of LIFE, which came down from Heaven . . .
satisfying the hungry,
strengthening the weak, and
giving life unto the world.

He is the WATER of SALVATION, which . . .
cleanses the filthy,
refreshes the weary, and
makes glad the city of God.

He is the WAY, which alone leads from sin, condemnation, and wrath — to life, holiness, and Heaven!

He is the HEAD, which thinks, plans, and contrives for the welfare of the whole of His mystical body.

He is the DOOR, which admits to . . .
the pastures of Divine truth,
the privileges of His Church below,
and His Father's glorious presence!

He is the FOUNDATION on which all must build for eternity, and which alone is able to support our hopes and sustain our souls — amidst the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds!

He is the CORNER-STONE, which unites, beautifies, and strengthens the whole building of divine mercy.

He is the TEMPLE, where God . . .
meets with us,

accepts us, and

imparts His blessing to us.

He is the ALTAR, which sanctifies both the gift and the giver.

He is the VINE, which communicates life, nourishment, and fruitfulness to all its branches.

He is the ROSE of SHARON and the LILY of the VALLEY — fragrant, lovely, attractive, perfuming, and unequalled in beauty and grace!

He is the BRAZEN SERPENT, which heals easily, instantly, and perfectly — all who look to Him by faith.

He is the FORERUNNER, who is gone before His flock . . .

removing the obstacles,

marking out the road, and

ready to receive them as they finish their course.

He is the FRIEND . . .

who loves at all times,

whose mind never changes,

whose love never cools, and

who never neglects a friend in distress.

He is the greatest, best, and most glorious GIFT of GOD — including, securing, and conferring every good thing upon those who sincerely receive Him.

He is the KINSMAN . . .

who redeems the forfeited inheritance,

who ransoms all His poor relatives from slavery,

and whose name is held in renown.

He is the LAMB of GOD, who took up, expiated, and forever put away — the sins of all who trust in His blood.

He is the MESSENGER of the COVENANT, who . . .

brings good news from God,

carries all our requests to God, and

ever stands as a Mediator between us and God.

He is the PEARL of GREAT PRICE, or the priceless pearl, which . . .

all who sincerely seek, find,
all who find, may claim, and
all who possess, are enriched forever!
He is the PHYSICIAN, who . . .
heals all disorders,
restores every patient to perfect health,
and bestows medicine and care, gratis.
He is the RANSOM, which . . .
procured our release,
ensures our liberty, and
preserves us from going down into the pit!
He is the RIGHTEOUSNESS, which . . .
justifies us from all charges,
entitles us to eternal life, and
enables us to lift up our heads with boldness in God's presence.
He is the TRUTH, which . . .
enlightens the mind,
purifies the heart, and
regulates the life.
He is the FIRE, which . . .
purges our dross,
brightens our graces, and
cleanses our consciences from works which deserve death.
He is the SHEPHERD, who . . .
knows every sheep,
watches over the whole flock, and
never loses a lamb, by disease, accident, or beast of prey.
He is the BISHOP, who . . .
dwells among His people,

consults their welfare, and

imparts His benediction freely.

He is the CAPTAIN of SALVATION, who . . .

collects His soldiers,

disciplines His troops, and

leads them forth to certain victory over sin, the world, and the devil.

He is the LADDER, by which we . . .

rise from this earth,

lose sight of carnal things, and

ascend to the presence of God!

He is the SURETY . . .

who engaged for us in the everlasting covenant,

who is held responsible for our salvation,

who has pledged to set us before His father's throne forever.

He is the WALL of FIRE, which surrounds, enlightens and infallibly protects — all His redeemed people!

He is the chief among ten thousand, and the ALTOGETHER LOVELY ONE!

Precious Lord Jesus, allow me . . .

to know You more fully,

to trust You more heartily,

to serve You more diligently,

to enjoy You more frequently,

to imitate You more closely,

to exalt You more highly, and

to show forth Your salvation from day to day! Your love — is my Heaven,

Your presence — is my delight, and

Your service — is the joy of my heart!

Let me daily . . .

walk with You,

work for You,
and bring glory to You!
Oh, send Your Spirit to my poor heart . . .
to exalt You,
to honor You,
to endear You to my soul!
Use me to bring . . .
lost sinners to Your cross,
believers to Your throne of grace,
backsliders to the path of obedience. Be my . . .
strength in life,
solace in death, and
eternal portion beyond the grave!

02 The LAW of God

The LAW of God The law of God is that code of moral precepts which was given to men to be obeyed — in token of God's authority and man's subordination. It was the rule of justification to father Adam: obeying it — he was promised life; disobeying it — he was threatened with death. The law of God contains, then, precepts, promises, and threatenings:

precepts to be obeyed,

promises to be enjoyed if obedient, and

threatenings to be endured if disobedient. The law of God requires holiness of nature, righteousness of life — and these uninterruptedly the same. The law of God . . .

flows from the will of God,

expresses the purity of the Divine nature, and

was necessary to maintain the Creator's right and social order. The effect of perfect conformity to the law — would be . . .

uninterrupted happiness,

delight in God, and

social felicity.

Harmony, peace, and purity, would have reigned universally!

Pain, disease, or disappointment, would not have been known!

Paradise would have been our place,

love our ruling passion,

peace our happy portion,

God our righteous friend,

joy our constant companion,

pleasure the result of all our employments,

and all creation would be in a state of subordination to us! This law was originally written on Adam's heart, reflecting its excellency in his life, and regulating both his conscience and his actions. The understanding knew it,

the judgment approved of it,

the will chose it,

the affections loved it,

the memory retained it, and

the thoughts were regulated by it. The law now stands in God's book, and broken fragments of it only are found in our nature. Sin blotted, blurred, and obscured it; man hates it, cannot perform it — and yet cleaves to it in seeking for life! The law is holy, just, and good; it requires nothing but what is strictly just, truly good, and calculated to benefit us. It is . . .

holy in its nature,

good in its promises, and

just in its threatenings. The law cannot connive at sin, or bestow good upon sinners — but justly condemns all offenders. All that it can now do, is . . .

to arraign us at God's bar,

try us for our offences, and

deliver us over to wrath. The law shows us what SIN is — God's hatred to it, and the wrath of God against it. It knows nothing of grace, mercy, or forbearance; its language to the sinner is, "Pay me that you owe me!" And, in case of failure, "Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil!" The GOSPEL differs from the LAW in several ways:

The law treats men as creatures who were once holy, and are always bound to be so;

the gospel treats men as sinners, and reveals mercy to them as such.

The law demands — the gospel gives;

the law threatens — the gospel promises;

the law condemns — the gospel justifies;

the law curses — the gospel blesses;

the law reveals man's sin — the gospel exhibits Christ's righteousness;

the law declares God's preceptive will — the gospel God's gracious purpose;

the law speaks of duty — the gospel tells of love;

the law ministers death — the gospel brings life;

the law shows authority — the gospel discloses grace;

the law works wrath — the gospel begets love;

the law drives — the gospel draws;

the law sends the sinner to Hell — the gospel conducts him to Heaven;

the law calls to doing — the gospel calls to believing;

the law is all for receiving — the gospel is for giving.

Thus law and gospel differ — and yet . . .

they have but one author, Jehovah;

they are delivered to one and the same people;

they have one object in view, even God's glory;

they have one end to accomplish — to humble the sinner and glorify Jehovah;

and they are both found in one book, the Bible. The law is compared:

to a fire — because it enlightens and consumes;

to a light — because it directs and undeceives;

to a balance — because it tries and weighs;

to a husband — because it commands and threatens;

to a schoolmaster — because it instructs and corrects;

and to the avenger of blood — because it pursues the sinner until he takes refuge in Jesus, who is the end of the law. The law is called . . .

the law of God,

the law of sin and death,

the ministration of death,

and the yoke of bondage. The apostle assures us, that the law is good, holy, spiritual, and just. Our Lord informs us, that he came not to destroy — but to fulfill it; and the gospel is said to establish it. It is still good if a man uses it lawfully, and the true Christian delights in it after the inward man. Yes, we often look forward and long for the time, when we shall be all conformed to it, and evermore love the Lord our God with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. We now lament that this is not the case. We must love the precept, and desire to act according to so holy, so just, so good a rule. It is a principal part of our grief that we do not, and our complaint is, "I find another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. When I would do good — evil is present with me, so that I cannot do the things that I would! O wretched man that I am!" Gracious God! give me a greater love to your holy law, conform my life to its precepts, and finally conform my whole person to its requirements, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Cursed be the man, forever cursed,

That does one willful sin commit:

Death and damnation for the first,

Without relief, and infinite!

Thus Sinai roars, and round the earth,

Thunder and fire, and vengeance flings;
But, Jesus, your dear gasping breath,
And Calvary, say gentler things!
Pardon, and grace, and boundless love,
Streaming along a Savior's blood:
And life, and joys, and crowns above,
Obtained by a dear bleeding God!
Hark how he prays! (the charming sound
Dwells on his dying lips), "Forgive!"
And every groan and gasping wound
Cries, "Father, let the rebels live!"

03 The GOSPEL

The GOSPEL The Gospel is good news, or glad tidings. It is . . .

sent from Heaven,

proclaimed on earth,

heard by sinners, and

gladly embraced by those who are ordained to eternal life. The Gospel is the glorious glad tidings of the Blessed God! It informs us that God is love, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, that he has blessed his people with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and has given us the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. The Gospel is the glorious good news of Christ! It informs us: that he is appointed and anointed to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance and the remission of sins; that he has borne our sins, suffered in our stead, and removed our transgressions by his death; that he has conquered Satan, blotted out the handwriting that was against us, and made our peace by the blood of his cross; that he now fully and eternally justifies all who believe on his name, is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, and has pledged his Word that he will cast out none that come unto him; that he has finished the transgression, made an end of sin, brought in everlasting righteousness, made reconciliation for iniquity, abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light. The Gospel is the glad tidings of the undeserved favor of God toward poor sinners. It sets forth grace as reigning — to conquer, pardon, and justify sinners without works. It tells us how grace abounds over sin, brings us salvation, and conforms us to the precepts of Heaven. It is the good news of salvation. The Gospel informs us that . . .

eternal redemption is obtained,

a way into the holiest opened, and

all condemnation removed from those who believe in Jesus. The Gospel is the glad tidings of a hope laid up for us in Heaven — a rest, a portion, an incorruptible inheritance . . .

given by the Father,

secured to us by the Son, and

revealed by the Holy Spirit, who becomes the pledge of it in our hearts. The gospel comprises . . .

doctrines to be believed, and precepts to be obeyed;

promises to encourage, and rules to direct;

invitations to embolden, and warnings to guard;

ordinances to be observed, and relations to fill. The gospel reveals . . .

a Savior, in whom we must trust;
a Sovereign, whom we must obey;
a Priest, on whose atonement we must rest;
a Mediator, through whom we must apply for every blessing which we need;
a Prophet, from whom we must learn;
a friend, in whose love we must confide;
a brother, from whom we may expect;
a father, whose authority we must revere;
an apostle, whose mission we must study; and
an advocate, to whom we must commit our cause. The gospel . . .
flows from the free love, rich grace, and abundant mercy of our God;
is founded in the Savior's person, mediation, and death;
becomes efficacious through the revelation, operation, and application of the Holy Spirit. By it, he
begets faith, imparts love, and excites hope; and when accompanied by his blessing — it is
received in demonstration and power. The gospel . . .
produces penitence — and godly sorrow for sin;
begets hatred to sin — and love to holiness;
weans from the world — and wafts the affections to Heaven;
makes us zealous for God — and the good of immortal souls;
delivers us from the power of darkness — and translates us into the kingdom of God's dear Son;
crucifies the flesh — and liberates the spirit;
unites Christians in love — and raises them above the fear of death;
fortifies us against persecution — and makes us rejoice in suffering shame for Immanuel's name;
humbles the spirit — and dignifies the man;
destroys covetousness — and makes us benevolent;
roots out pride — and implants meekness;
transforms us from the world — and conforms us to God;
begets hatred to uncleanness — and makes us chaste;
throws down idolatry — and leads us to worship God;
conquers SELF — and exalts Christ;

softens the hard heart — and produces kindness;

delivers from sin, Satan, and the world — and devotes body, soul, and spirit to the Lord. The gospel is proclaimed below — to sinners of every name; and it is enjoyed above — by all who have felt its power. It belongs to Messiah's reign at present — but shall never be driven from Immanuel's dominions in future.

It is called the GLORIOUS gospel. It is . . .

glorious in its Author,

glorious in its nature,

glorious in its effects, and

glorious in its design.

It is said to be an EVERLASTING gospel. It is unchangeable in its nature and eternal in its existence.

It is called the TRUE gospel, or the gospel of truth, because it contains the truth of God and is opposed to all false religions.

It is the gospel of PEACE. It proclaims, imparts, and leads all who receive it into the enjoyment of peace:

peace with God,

peace with conscience,

peace with the church, and

peace with all mankind.

It is opposed to all human systems, and triumphs over all opposition. It is founded in the highest inflames, attended by the power of the Spirit, and designed to glorify God in the salvation of his people!

It must stand,

it will spread,

it shall ultimately prevail.

It differs from the law — but is not strictly speaking, opposed to it: both are useful in the church, for both have a work to perform. The law wounds — the gospel heals. The law discovers the disease — the gospel presents the remedy. The law sounds the alarm — the gospel provides the refuge. The law inflames the house — the gospel supplies the water that quenches it. The law awakens fear — the gospel begets hope. The law demands payment — the gospel finds a surety. The law shoots the arrow that wounds and rankles — the gospel applies the balm that soothes and heals. The law wrecks the vessel — the gospel brings the life-boat to save the lost. The law stirs up sin — the gospel purges away guilt. The law binds with fetters — the gospel proclaims freedom. The law strips us naked — the gospel clothes us in the best robe. The law condemns the sinner — the

gospel acquits him of all charge. The law says, "I must die!" The gospel says, "Christ died for me!" The law says, "God is angry!" The gospel says, "God is reconciled, his anger is turned away!" The law stirs up sin, and ministers wrath and death; the gospel saves from sin, and ministers love and life. The gospel is compared . . .

to the great jubilee trumpet — which proclaimed liberty, restoration, and wealth;

to honey — which is sweet, strengthening, and medicinal;

to a net — which, cast into the sea, catches, collects, and draws the fish to shore;

to leaven — which works, assimilates, and makes light;

to seed — which grows buds, and blossoms;

to treasure hid in a field — which is valuable, useful, and prized by the finder;

to light — which discovers, detects, and cheers;

to gold — which is tried, pure, and costly.

It is called . . .

"the gospel of God,"

"the gospel of Christ,"

"the gospel of the grace of God,"

"the glorious gospel,"

"the everlasting gospel." The Scriptures speak of the gospel in the highest terms. They call it "the joyful sound." The Apostle said that he was not ashamed of it, "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes." It turned the Thessalonians from dumb idols "to serve the living and true God." It made Paul the object of the world's hatred, Satan's envy, and the Church's love. It turns . . .

lions into lambs,

leopards into kids, and

vultures into doves.

It turns swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks.

It turns a wilderness into Eden, and the desert into the garden of the Lord.

Wherever it is received by faith, a new creation appears; instead of the thorn — comes up the fir-tree; instead of the brier — comes up the myrtle-tree. The gospel is an everlasting monument of God's wisdom, grace, and love. O may I feel more of the power, receive more of the light, and manifest more of the spirit of the gospel! O may I find it as sweet as honey, yes sweeter than the honeycomb to my taste! May I be taught to despise everything in compare with it, and say —

Should all the forms that men devise,

Assault my faith with treacherous art;
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the gospel to my heart!

04 Blessings to Be Daily Sought

Blessings to Be Daily Sought

We daily need many and great blessings — and the throne of grace is accessible that we may plead for and receive them. All that we need is in Jesus, and all that is stored up in Jesus — is for us. But we must learn the value of spiritual favors before we shall seek them as we ought; and we must seek them in the way which the Lord has appointed, before we can expect to obtain them. His Word is, "Seek — and you shall find." Let us then approach his throne, expect him to be gracious, and seek from his hand seven good things:

First, FAITH. This is a great blessing, as it is the forerunner of all other blessings. He who has faith, may expect to receive all that is necessary for life and godliness.

True faith . . .

overcomes the world,

works by love, and

purifies the heart.

Faith is . . .

the evidence of regeneration,

the beginning of eternal life, and

the source of all good works.

Faith . . .

credits, embraces, and pleads God's promises;

perceives, receives, and holds fast the Lord Jesus;

puts on the whole armor of God,

takes the field in the name and strength of the Lord, and conquers every foe!

Faith . . .

waits upon the Lord,

pleads the promises, and

brings down every necessary blessing into the soul.

Faith will . . .

subdue fear,

crush doubt, and
fill the soul with joy and peace.

Faith . . .

walks in the dark,
trusts in the gloom, and
always forms a good opinion of the Lord and his dealings.

Lord, grant me much of this faith!

Second, A good HOPE. This . . .

springs from grace,
is produced by the Holy Spirit,
preserves its possessor from shame,
fixes on holy things,
keeps its eye on the future, and
saves us from despondency and despair.

Good hope, is a sure and steadfast anchor to the soul; it keeps the vessel of mercy from foundering in the boisterous ocean, among shoals, quicksands, and sunken rocks. Hope fastens on that which is within the veil — and moors its possessor to the eternal throne. It . . .

centers in Christ,
rests on the promise, and
expects glory, honor, and immortality.

Lord, give me a good hope through grace, and cause me to abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit!

"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." 2 Thessalonians 2:16

Third, LOVE, which never fails. The love of God shed abroad in the heart, leads us to love him, and to love all whom he loves. Love . . .

comes from God,
centers in God,
leads to God, and
makes its possessor like God.

There is nothing which gives . . .

such desire to holiness,
such zeal for the Lord's glory, or
so devotes us to the Lord's cause —
as this holy, Heavenly love.

It . . .

arises in the Divine nature,
flows through the heart of the Mediator,
is directed by the Holy Spirit into our hearts,
and is the leading feature of the Divine character. This divine love can never fail to . . .
please God,
profit men, or
make its possessor happy.

It is . . .

immortal in its nature,
powerful in its operation,
and glorious in its results.

Lord, fill my heart with holy, Heavenly love!

Fourth, HUMILITY is a most precious grace — it is filled with beauty, loveliness, and glory. This is the garment which the Savior always wore. This is the grace which gave such a charm to all that He did and said. It is one of our best garments, and without it the soul is generally naked. "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another." 1 Peter 5:5. For lack of humility — the Church is rent and torn with divisions. For lack of humility — believers bring many trials and crosses on themselves, and sow the bitter seeds of trouble and remorse.

If I were truly humble, I must be happy, for it is with such Jehovah dwells: "For this is what the high and lofty One says — He who lives forever, whose name is holy: I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and humble in spirit." Isaiah 57:15. To such He looks with love, delight, and esteem: "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at My Word." Isaiah 66:2.

"I hate pride and arrogance!" Proverbs 8:13. Pride is . . .

most loathsome to God,
injurious to men, and
a stronghold of Satan within us.

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble!" James 4:6. He keeps the proud at a distance, and will not allow them to approach him: "Though the Lord is great, He cares for the humble — but He keeps His distance from the proud!" Psalms 138:6. He threatens them with everlasting destruction. "The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished." Proverbs 16:5 Lord, give me true humility, and let me be clothed with it from day to day!

Fifth, SUBMISSION to the will of God. It is a great thing to be habitually submissive to the will of God — for his will, on all subjects, and in all things — to be our will. We must be happy if this was the case, for it would be impossible for anything to distress us much, or distress us long. But we are so often seeking our own will, and wanting our own way — without considering whether it is agreeable with God's will.

His will must be wise — for he is the only wise God;

it must be good — for he is love;

it must be righteous — for he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

He only wills what will . . .

glorify his name,

benefit his people, and

humble his haughty foes.

O for more submission to the will of God! May my carnal mind be mortified, and my whole soul be brought into a state of absolute and sweet resignation to the will of God!

Sixth, the SPIRIT of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation — so that you may know him better." Ephesians 1:17. This we deeply need, and this we should daily seek. We know very little of Christ yet. We need the blessed Comforter to reveal to us more of . . .

the glory of his person,

the beauty of his character,

the suitability of his work,

the love of his heart,

the merit of his blood,

the freeness of his grace,

the depth of his pity,

the tenderness of his sympathy,

the dignity of his obedience,

the perfection of his offices, and

the inexhaustible nature of His divine fullness.

O to know him and the power of his resurrection, and to be made conformable unto his death! Holy Spirit, it is your work to reveal Jesus, to glorify Him, to make Him known unto us. Be the spirit of wisdom and revelation within us — that we may . . .

know Christ more fully,

love Him more heartily, and

glorify Him in our lives!

O, to know Him more,

to trust Him more,

to imitate Him more,

to love Him more!

Seventh, USEFULNESS. What must be the state of that heart — which would be willing to live a useless life, or that can be satisfied with any low degree of usefulness attained? O to be useful to sinners, to saints, to the young, and to the aged! A useful life is the ornament of Christianity. The gospel always teaches us to do good, and to share. Let us seek a suitable sphere of usefulness, and ask the Lord to grant us the ability that is necessary to occupy it, and the grace that will render our labor successful in our attempts to cultivate it.

Grace, while it leads to glory as its end, always makes us useful along the way; if we have much grace, we shall never be satisfied — but as we are glorifying God, either by doing or suffering his will. The more grace we have — the more we thirst to glorify God, and be useful to all around us. It always proves a man to be in a low state as to spirituality, if he can be willing to live a useless day, or is unconcerned as to the state of his fellow-men.

Beloved, let us daily seek faith from God — that we may have faith in God, and be strong in faith, glorifying God.

Let us seek to possess a lively, vigorous hope in God's mercy, amidst all the tossings and trials of life.

Let us seek holy love, from the God of love, for whatever we may possess, whatever we may do, or whatever we may suffer. If we have not love — the greatest sacrifice profits us nothing.

Let us seek deep humility, that we may lay low before God, rise high in the enjoyment of God, and be highly exalted by God. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

Let us seek submission to, and acquiescence in, all the will of God, whether revealed in the Bible, or discovered by providence.

Let us seek the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that we may know Christ correctly, experimentally, and increasingly — so shall we believe on his name, trust in his Word, rely on his sacrifice, and rejoice in his grace.

Let us seek to be made useful, increasingly useful, in the world, and in the Church. God often uses the basest creatures, the most unlikely instruments — to accomplish his purposes and perform his work. No one can set his heart upon being useful from a good motive — and not be honored of God to do something which is worth living for. Only eternity will discover the good, which the simple, spiritual, and devoted believer has accomplished in this world. Let us, therefore, work, and pray for grace to work more, leaving the result with God, inasmuch as we "know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord."

05 A Curious Meditation

A Curious Meditation As I was walking out for exercise in the fields one morning, having been pleading with God to give me some profitable subject for meditation — I suddenly fell into this train of thought, which I afterwards wrote down; and, as it may interest and profit some, it is here inserted.

There are three things which I especially desire:

more communion with God,
more likeness to the Lord Jesus, and
more usefulness to his Church.

There are three things which I deprecate:

the withering of my gifts,
the decay of my graces, and
to become useless in the Lord's vineyard.

There are three things which I dread:

that I should become a proud professor,
that I should become a lukewarm Christian, and
that I should fall into the hands of man.

There are three things which I sometimes wish for (but which God will never grant me on earth):

to be totally free from sin,
to be delivered from a daily cross,
and to be always happy.

There are three things which I feel sure of:

hatred by the world,
opposition by hypocrites, and
love by spiritual believers.

There are three foes which always oppose me:

the world,
the flesh, and

the devil.

There are three friends which will always stand by me:

a peaceful conscience,

the bride of Jesus, and

the Lamb of God.

There are three deaths which have been experienced by me:

a death in sin,

a death to sin,

a death to the law of God.

There are three lives which shall be lived by me:

a temporal life,

a spiritual life, and

an eternal life.

There are three things which burden me:

a body of sin and death,

the opposition I meet with, and

my own ingratitude.

There are three things which support me:

the Father's love,

the Son's redemption, and

the Spirit's work.

There are three things which are a sore trial to me:

an irritable temper,

a flippant tongue, and

self-love.

There are three things which bring strong consolation to me:

the open fountain of Christ blood,

the promises of God, and

the Savior's free invitation.

There are three things which are especially dear to me:

the Word of God,

the throne of grace, and

the ordinances of the Lord's house.

There are three things lacking in me:

perfect penitence,

entire resignation, and

fervent love.

There are three books which are very useful to me:

the book of nature,

the book of Holy Scriptures, and

the book of my own experience.

There are three teachers which are employed to instruct me:

the Holy Spirit,

a special providence, and

the rod of God.

There are three things which are manifested in me:

the nature of sin,

the power of grace, and

the faithfulness of God.

There are three things which would be greatly useful to me:

more humility,

spiritual wisdom, and

enlightened zeal.

There are three things which characterize me:

weakness,

poverty, and

sinfulness.

Yet, there are three things which may be seen in me:

Christ's strength,
God's grace, and
the Spirit's holiness.

There are three things which are feared by me:

a stiff neck,
a hard heart, and
a presumptuous spirit.

There are three things which are matter of joy to me:

the conversion of sinners,
that my name is written in Heaven, and
the glory to be given me at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

There are three things which must be renounced by me:

preconceived opinions,
worldly wisdom, and
natural religion.

There are three things which must be held fast by me:

the Word of truth,
my confidence in God, and
my profession of the gospel.

There are three things which are especially required of me:

to do justly,
to love mercy, and
to walk humbly with my God.

There are three things which are promised to me:

tribulation in the world,
sufficient strength in Jesus, and
eternal life at the end of my course.

There are three things which the Lord observes and approves in me:

the work of faith,

the labor of love, and

the patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a threefold deliverance which is effected for me:

from the dominion of sin,

from the present evil world, and

from my deserved doom.

There are three things which I would trample under foot:

unfounded prejudice,

vain distinctions, and

self-righteousness.

There are three things which I would aim at daily:

to exalt Christ,

to glorify God, and

to bring sinners to repentance.

There are three things which are still sure to me:

a rough road,

changing experiences, and

safety at last.

There are three things which are behind me:

a wicked life,

a broken law, and

the pit of destruction.

There are three things which are before me:

death,

perfect conformity to Jesus, and

eternal glory.

There are three things which are on my right hand:

Satan to resist me,

the Lord Jesus to save me, and

my own heart set on things above.

There are three things which are on my left hand:

the lust of the flesh,

the lust of the eye, and

the pride of life.

There are three things which I greatly admire:

the Savior's person,

the promises of God, and

the instruments he employs in carrying on his work.

There are three things which much please me:

the doctrines of the gospel,

the witness of the Spirit, and

the light of God's countenance.

There are three things which I delight in:

that Jehovah is my God,

the comfort he imparts to me, and

the riches of glory which are set before me.

There are three things which I hate:

the cant of hypocrites,

the flattery of friends, and

the pride of professors.

There are three things which are good for me:

to draw near to God,

to be afflicted, and

to sing praises unto the Lord.

There are three things which often disgust me:

Satan's temptations,

the powerful working of unbelief, and

the conduct of religious professors.

There are three things which are prescribed to me:

to believe in God,

to love the saints, and

to observe the Lord's ordinances.

There are three things which are too often neglected by me:

self-examination,

diligent reading of the Bible, and

secret prayer.

There are three things which are too deep for me to fully know:

the depravity of my heart,

the devices of Satan, and

the manner of the Spirit's working.

There are three things which I wish to leave with the Lord:

to choose my lot in life,

to fight my battles, and

to supply all my needs.

There are three things which I do not consider worth having:

a form of godliness, without the power,

a name to live, while dead, and

the commendation of the enemies of Christ.

There are three things in which I glory:

the cross of Christ,

my saving knowledge of God, and

the everlasting gospel.

There are three things which have been taken from me:

proud free will,

vain boasting, and

enmity to God.

There are three things which abide with me:

faith,
hope, and
charity.

I am made up of three men:
corruption — the old man,
grace — the new man, and
the body — the outward man.

I fill a threefold office:
a prophet in the Church of Christ,
a priest before the altar, and
a king anointed to reign with Christ.

I wear a threefold garment:
the righteousness of the Lord Jesus,
the graces of the Holy Spirit, and
the garment of humility.

I have been condemned in three courts — and yet justified in them all:
the court of conscience,
the Church of God, and
the court of God's justice.

I have been justified three times:
at the resurrection of Christ my substitute,
when faith received his righteousness, and
when good works justified my faith before the world.

I am the subject of a threefold sanctification:
by the purpose of the Father,
by the blood of the Son, and
by the cleansing operations of the Holy Spirit.

I am a free man of three cities:
the present world,

the church below, and
the Jerusalem which is above.

I have been an eye-sore to three parties:

the devil,
the world, and
envious professors.

I shall have occupied three peculiar seats:

a dunghill by nature,
among the princes in the Church by grace, and
the throne of glory by special privilege.

I shall have three grand holidays:

one when the Holy Spirit sets my soul at liberty,
another when death sets me free from this mortal clay, and
and another when Jesus comes to be glorified in his saints.

I shall then have appeared in three different characters:

a vile rebel against God,
a supplicating sinner at mercy's footstool, and
a justified son of God before his throne.

I shall have had three fathers:

a human father,
the devil, and
Jehovah himself.

I shall have received three laws:

the law of nature,
the moral law of God, and
the law of the Spirit of life.

I shall have passed through three gates:

the gate of hope,
the gate into Christ's sheepfold, and

the gate of death.

I shall have walked in three ways:

the broad road of destruction,

the highway of holiness, and

Jesus Christ the only way to the Father.

I shall have conversed with three distinct classes of beings:

carnal men,

spiritual Christians, and

the Lord himself.

I shall have made three appearances:

once all black — like the devil,

then speckled — with nature and grace, and

then all pure — whiter than the driven snow!

I shall have undergone three momentous changes:

one at regeneration — when I passed from death unto life,

one at death — when my soul shall be admitted into Heaven, and

one at the resurrection — when my body shall be raised powerful, glorious, and immortal.

I view three things as pre-eminently excellent:

the fear of the Lord,

a sound judgment, and

Christ formed in the heart, as the hope of glory.

There are three things which I may covet:

the best gifts,

a contrite and humble spirit, and

to be filled with all the fullness of God.

There are three things which are removed from me:

the burden of sin,

the wrath of God, and

all condemnation.

There are three things which I do not know:

what is before me,

how God will provide for me, and

what I shall be.

There are three things which I do know:

that in my flesh dwells no good,

that though I was once blind, now I see, and

that I must needs die.

There are three things which are prepared for me:

a fountain to cleanse me,

a robe to adorn me, and

a mansion to receive me.

There are three things which await me:

a crown of righteousness,

a palm of victory, and

a throne of glory.

There are three things which shall be done for me:

God shall wipe away all tears from my eyes,

God shall remove all cause of pain and sorrow from my nature, and

the Lamb in the midst of the throne shall eternally satisfy me.

There are three things which shall never be known by me:

the frown of divine justice,

the curse of holy Jehovah, and

the power of God's anger.

There are three things which are hurtful to me:

carnal ease,

the flattery of professors, and

fullness of bread.

There are three things which benefit me:

temptation,
affliction, and
opposition.

There are three things which are pursued by me:

to know more of the Lord,
to live in peace with all men, and
thorough sanctification.

Satan tries to thwart me in three things:

by spoiling my comforts,
hindering my usefulness, and
seeking to devour my soul.

Satan has three things to expect:

to be disappointed of his prey,
to be judged by the saints, and
to be eternally punished for his wickedness.

There are three things which I would never trust:

my own heart,
an arm of flesh, and
my treacherous memory.

There are three subjects which I should never meddle with:

the fall of the angels,
the origin of moral evil, and
how God will justify himself.

There are three things which I cannot understand:

the nature of God,
the cause of my election, and
how divinity and humanity constitute one person.

There are three things which I should often think of:

what I have been,

what I now am, and

what I shall be.

A threefold freedom is granted me:

from the law of God,

from the reign of sin, and

to make use of, and enjoy the Lord Jesus.

I am an heir of three worlds:

the natural,

the spiritual, and

the eternal.

There are three things which will never grieve me:

that I have been poor in this world,

that I have preached the gospel fully, and

that I am related to Jesus Christ.

There are three things which comprise all I wish:

to know God, and glorify him,

to see Jesus, and be like him; and

to be united to the saints, and be eternally happy.

There are three things which shall never be heard by me:

Christ reproaching me,

God disowning me, and

the devils triumphing in my everlasting destruction.

There are three things which shall be eternally enjoyed by me:

the love of God,

the presence of Jesus, and

the company of the saints.

There are three things which will eternally delight me:

to be filled with holiness,

to be employed in praising Jehovah, and

to have gained a complete victory over all my foes.

There are three things which must come down:

the pride of men,

the devil's kingdom, and

the cause of error.

There are three things which will stand:

the house built on the Rock,

the purpose of God, and

the Messiah's kingdom.

There are three things which cannot be removed:

the church of God,

the covenant of grace, and

the kingdom we receive.

There are three things which will stand the fiery trial:

genuine faith,

the Word of God, and

a real Christian.

Lost sinners are like Satan in three things:

their nature,

their employment, and

their end.

Three things make Hell:

the wrath of God,

the stings of a guilty conscience, and

black despair.

Three things prove a man a Christian:

worshiping God in the spirit,

rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and

having no confidence in the flesh.

Three things are never satisfied:

a doubting Christian,

a worldly miser, and

the man of pleasure.

Christ fills three offices:

a prophet — for the ignorant,

a priest — for the guilty, and

a king — for the depraved.

Christ has been in three states:

ancient glory,

deep humiliation, and

merited dignity.

What more shall I say!

If you, reader, are a sincere Christian — do three things daily:

search God's Word,

be much at God's throne, and

be diligent in God's work.

If you are an unconverted sinner — do three things immediately:

believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,

repent of every sin you have committed,

seek the witness and pledge of the Holy Spirit in your heart, so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

06 The Kindness of God

The Kindness of God When the Word of God is opened up and brought home to the soul by the Spirit — it is incomparably sweet and precious. It presents such sweet views of Jesus — and gives such delightful tastes of his love. It displays the amazing condescension and wonderful love of God.

I have been looking at Isaiah 43:4, "Since you were precious in my sight — you have been honorable, and I have loved you."

What marvelous grace is here!

What a delightful and astonishing thought it is: That such poor, vile, rebellious creatures — should be precious to the infinite, holy, and eternal Jehovah! That He should delight in us! (Isaiah 62:4) That He should shed His precious blood for us! (1 Peter 1:19) That He should work precious faith in us! (2 Peter 1:1) That He should make precious promises — to support, supply, and comfort us! (2 Peter 1:4) That He should render Christ precious unto us! (1 Peter 2:7) That He should indulge us with a knowledge of His thoughts, and make them precious to us! (Psalms 139:17) That He should call us His precious children!

Well may we exclaim with David, "What am I — that You should be mindful of me?"

But, though our privileges are so great, and our comforts are so many — yet we are often distressed, troubled, and perplexed. This is needful. It is purifying. "Therefore this is what the Lord Almighty says: See, I will refine and test them — for what else can I do because of the sin of my people?" (Jeremiah 9:7.) Why should we expect to be free from that . . .

which all the Lord's family have passed through,

which Jesus has promised, and

which will work for our good? (Revelation 7:14; John 16:33; Romans 5:3, Romans 5:5.) But sometimes we do not desire to be free from trials — we only wish to be . . .

truly spiritual,

really devoted to God, and

resigned to Jehovah's will.

Then our prayer is, "Lord, make us . . .

an honor to the Christian religion,

useful in the world,

an example to your flock, and

indulge us with much communion with yourself." This is often followed with . . .

deep humiliation,

evangelical repentance,

and self-loathing.

Then the language of our hearts is, I wish to mourn before God on account of . . .

my carnality,

my looseness,

my lukewarmness, and

my lack of spirituality.

I have been carnal, sold under sin (Romans 7:14) — notwithstanding all my Lord's goodness to me. I have felt unchristian tempers working, vile lusts contending, and my besetting sins distressing me. I feel truly ashamed of myself; I mourn before God, pray for more grace, and yet am often overtaken again. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"

I compare myself with others — and am distressed.

I look forward — and feel cast down.

I turn my eyes to Jesus — and obtain relief.

I can look nowhere else for comfort, nor to anything else with satisfaction. I feel . . .

ashamed of my prayers,

ashamed of my efforts to do good,

ashamed of my daily life.

I dare not think much, or long, upon these things, or I would be cast down with overmuch sorrow. It is Jesus in his precious blood — Jesus in his glorious righteousness — and Jesus as the prevailing intercessor — which cheers my heart. His precious promises, glorious person, and accepted sacrifice — strengthens my faith, raises my expectations, draws forth my affections, and imparts comfort to my mind. Could I once lose sight of Jesus, I would soon know what Hell means.

"All my hope on him is stayed,

All my help from him I bring."

Woe is me, that I feel such . . .

backwardness to prayer,

such coldness in prayer, and

so little heartfelt, satisfying communion with God, while at PRAYER. And what is prayer without personal fellowship with God? A mere shadow — an empty form — a dry exercise. I see the need

of prayer, feel something of the importance of it, determine in my mind respecting it — but make no real advances. I feel sorry, cry to God, hope to amend — but remain where I was! How perplexing! How grievous! What a strong proof of the power of depravity within! My BIBLE, how often neglected — how seldom read — how little prayed over — compared to what it should be! Lord, pardon, quicken, and give me more grace, that I may act more for your glory, desire to be useful, feel heartily willing to work — and yet seem unable to accomplish anything of importance.

I feel . . .

pride — and dread it;

self-importance — and fear it;

my own will opposing God's will — and pray against it.

I struggle, I long to be free.

Yet, I am often snared and taken in Satan's net (Ecclesiastes 9:12).

What a sinner I am!

What a depraved creature I feel myself to be!

I would be afraid for my dearest friend to know the worst of me, and yet the Lord, who does know the worst — still loves me, and says that I am precious in his sight.

Yes, God knew the worst of me — and yet chose me unto eternal life.

Jesus knew the worst of me — and yet died to redeem me. The Holy Spirit knew the worst of me — and yet quickened, called, and cleansed me; and still carries on his work within me. My ruling desire is to be wholly given up to the Lord and to his work, and to show forth his praises from day to day. But when I aim at this most, and think to realize it — I am baffled, opposed, and always hindered.

I see what is wrong — but cannot avoid it.

I see what is right — but cannot attain unto it.

I know what I wish — but I cannot enjoy it.

I read what God commands — but I cannot perform it. In the midst of all, I bless God . . .

for Jesus Christ,

for free grace,

for a full salvation,

for a little comfort,

for a good hope,

for some sweet views,

for a glorious inheritance,

for an assurance of victory,
and for the promise of eternal triumph.
Nothing can . . .
separate from Jesus,
turn the current of his love, or
change the purposes of his grace. His love is astonishing. His ways are marvelous.
I change — he remains the same.
I sin — he pardons.
I cry — he hears and answers.
I ask for favors — and he kindly bestows them.
I fear — and he promises.
I wander — and he says, "Return."
I lament my folly — he whispers peace.
I feel poor and impoverished — he says, "All things are yours."
I imagine that I am alone — he says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
I expect that he will abandon me — he asks, "How can I give you up?"
I cry, "Unworthy, unworthy!" He says, "Ephraim is a dear son, a pleasant child."
I sigh, "The Lord has forsaken and forgotten me!" He says, "I cannot, I will not forget you."
I fear I shall be overcome. He says, "No weapon formed against you shall prosper."
I fear I shall lie down in darkness. He says, "The Lord shall be a light unto you."
I fear I have nothing. He says, "I have all things for you."
I say, "I can do nothing!" He says, "I will work all your works in you."
I say, "I am barren!" He says, "From me is your fruit found."
I cry, "I am thirsty!" He says, "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys, to give drink to my people, my chosen ones."
I complain, "I am weary!" He says, "Come unto me, I will give you rest."
I feel dry and parched. He says, "I will be as the dew unto Israel."
I say, "I need food!" He says, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."
I fear I shall die. He says, "He who eats me, even he shall live by me."

I say at times, "All these things are against me!" He says "All things shall work together for your good."

I say, "I shall surely be overcome!" He says, "Nothing shall by any means hurt you."

I say, I am often left alone!" He says, "Lo, I am with you always."

I fear lest he should utterly consume me. He says, "I will spare you as a man spares his own son that serves him."

I fear I shall bring a disgrace on his cause. He says, "I will make you an eternal excellency."

I say, "I am all deformity!" He says, "You are all beautiful, my love, there is no spot in you."

I say, "I shall see him no more!" He says, "I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice."

I say, "Surely the Lord cannot love such a wretch!" he says, I have loved you with an everlasting love."

I say, he cannot have chosen one so vile and base. He says, "I have chosen you, and will not cast you away."

I say, "I am a vessel in which there is no pleasure!" He says, "My delight is in her."

I say, "I am desolate and forsaken!" He says, "Your Maker is your husband, the Lord Almighty is his name, and your Redeemer the Holy One of Israel."

I say, "I shall be left to myself at last!" He says, "I am a friend that sticks closer than a brother."

I say, "Set me as a seal upon your arm, as a seal upon your heart!" He says, "I will make you like a signet ring on my finger — for I have chosen you."

I cry, "Remember me, O Lord my God, for good!" He says, "You shall be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God."

I cry, "Do not be terribly angry with us, O Lord!" He says, "I swear that I will never again be angry and punish you."

I say, "I beseech you, show me your glory!" He says, "Behold, I come quickly."

I cry, "Remember me with the favor which you bear unto your people!" He says, "As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted."

I cry, "Tell me where you graze your flock." And he says, "Follow the footsteps of the flock."

I cry, "O that it was with me as in days that are past!" He says, "Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come with me."

I cry, "My soul is among lions!" He says, "Come down with Me — from where the lions have their dens and leopards live among the hills."

I say, "O that I was sure that Jesus loved me!" He says, "You have ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse."

I say, "I moaned like a mourning dove!" He says, "Your lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb, honey and milk are under your tongue."

I say, "I am exposed, and lie open to the attacks of enemies on every side!" He says, "You are my private garden, my treasure, my bride, a secluded spring, a hidden fountain."

I say, "Do not look upon me, because I am black!" He says, "You are beautiful, O my love!"

I say, "I am totally unfit to be the bride of Jesus!" He says, "Oh, how beautiful you are! How pleasing, my love, how full of delights!"

I say, "How miserable I am! Not a cluster of grapes or a single early fig can be found to satisfy my hunger." He says, "At our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for you, O my beloved."

I say, "I fear that my numerous sins and powerful corruptions, will cool the love of Jesus!" He says, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it."

I sigh, "I am feeble and sorely broken!" He says, "I will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax."

I say, at times, "He afflicts, and counts me for his enemy!" He says, "As many as I love — I rebuke and chasten! God deals with you as a son."

I inquire, "Where will all these things end?" he says, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also."

Lord, what is man that you are thus mindful of him, or the son of man, that you should set your heart upon him?

Thus the Lord . . .

answers all my objections,

banishes all my fears, and

shows my doubts to be sinful. His grace is wonderful,

his love is unparalleled, and

his mercy endures from generation to generation.

O why did Jesus show to me

The beauties of his face?

Why to my soul did he convey

The riches of his grace?

O how could he so sweetly smile

On such a wretch as I,

I who his name did once revile,

And his dear truth deny! But 'twas because he loved my soul.

Because he died for me,

Because that nothing could control

His great, his firm decree!

07 The Weak Heart

The Weak Heart "How weak is your heart! says the Sovereign Lord, to do such things as these!"Ezekiel 16:30 Let us try and turn this portion of God's Word to profit. The weakness of the heart displays itself in a variety of ways:

sometimes in yielding to temptations,

sometimes by indulging in sin, and

sometimes by giving way to doubts and fears.

Believer, your heart is weak! Look, therefore, to the strong for strength!

How weak is your heart — to want to escape the path of tribulation in which all the saints have walked!

How weak is your heart — to seek, or expect to find, rest in this sinful polluted world — when your Lord calls to you, and says, "Arise and depart — for this is not your rest, it is polluted."

How weak is your heart — to fear man, or the world — and forget God your Maker, who has said, "I, even I, am he who comforts you. Who are you that you fear mortal men, who are but grass, that you forget the Lord your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth — that you live in constant terror every day because of the wrath of the oppressor, who is bent on destruction?" (Isaiah 51:12-13).

How weak is your heart — to love, or allow your affections to be set on anything in this world, when God forbids it, and says, "Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). And, "Do not love the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

How weak is your heart — to attempt, or even wish to alter God's plan of dealing with you, or to desire to walk in another path than that which he has marked out for you, especially if you consider:

1. That the plan was drawn, and the path appointed by the highest wisdom, in the foreview of all your concerns.
2. That it is the effect of infinite love to you, and concern for your prosperity.
3. That it is the best plan which God himself could devise, all things being taken into consideration, for "all things work together for the best, to those who love God, and are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).
4. That all things that concern you were appointed with reference to the Lord's most gracious promises, especially such as these:

"Your shoes shall be iron and brass. As your days — so shall your strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:25).

"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will hold on to you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

5. That all was ordained as a part of that plan which embraced the substitution, merit, and death of Christ for you, and in your stead.

6. That all was arranged in connection with the purpose which raised you to the high relation of a son of God, an heir of God, and a joint heir with the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:17).

How weak, then, are you to attempt to dictate to God, or imagine that you could alter anything for the better — as though you were capable of being the Lord's counselor, to instruct Him!

How weak is your heart — to think that God is angry with you, because things appear to go cross, and appearances are dark, when he has sworn that he will not be angry with you, nor in anger rebuke you (Isaiah 54:9); but has, through the sacrifice of Jesus, taken away all his wrath, and turned from the fierceness of his displeasure (Psalms 75:3).

How weak is your heart — to think that God will hurt you, when he declares that he loves you, and that you are the dearly beloved of his soul; yes, moreover, that he who touches you to hurt you — touches the apple of his eye; and has added, "Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good" (Jeremiah 32:41).

How weak is your heart — to judge by appearances, when they are opposite to God's promises; and he himself has forbidden it, saying, "Judge not according to appearance — but judge righteous judgment."

How weak is your heart — to listen to Satan, when you know him to be your enemy, the enemy of your Lord, and an enemy to all that is good!

How weak is your heart — to attend to unbelief, or yield to carnal reasonings — when you know that they always contradict God's Word, give the God of Truth the lie, and join with Satan in distressing the souls of the Lord's beloved people.

How weak is your heart — to question the fulfillment of the promises, while God remains faithful, while his honor is pledged, and he cannot deny himself.

How weak is your heart — to restrain prayer, because answers do not come immediately, not considering that the fruit of the promise must not be gathered before it is ripe — and that the Christian's supply can never be kept back too long.

How weak is your heart — to think that prayer is in vain, because you are made to wait, or do not get an answer just in your own way.

How weak is your heart — to neglect the consoling truths of the everlasting gospel, which are intended to comfort, instruct, and draw forth your patience into exercise.

How weak is your heart — to conclude rashly, and say, "All these things are against me!" because you cannot see how they can work for your good.

How weak is your heart — to give up to despondency of mind, after what God has done for you, promised to give you, and spoken in his Word to comfort you.

How weak is your heart — to murmur at God's dealings, when your desert is Hell, and you have the promise of all good things, and the prospect of endless glory with Jesus in the heavenly world!

Believer! Your heart is weak! Look, therefore, to the strong for strength! Endeavor to realize your weakness as a fault; confess it before God, and beseech Him to strengthen you by His Spirit in the inner man — that so you may "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."

08 STEADFASTNESS

STEADFASTNESS

"It is a good thing that the heart he established with grace" — that we have such clear views of Gospel doctrines, and such steady confidence in the grace displayed in them — as will keep the soul steady amidst all the changes we experience within and without.

Unless the plant is firmly rooted — it will not stand the blast. Just so, unless we are firmly rooted in Christ — we shall not be steadfast in trials.

Unless the materials are cemented together, and united to the foundation — they will not resist the storm. Just so, unless we are united to Christ by the Holy Spirit, and to the saints by holy love — we shall not be steadfast amidst the trials and temptations that will come upon us.

Let us look well to the root of our profession — what is it? Is it the work of the Holy Spirit? Let us examine if we are really united to the Lord Jesus, for there is no safety, but in union to him. Let us call upon the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal kingdom and sought to establish, strengthen, and settle us — that we may be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

It was said of Israel of old, that their "spirit was not steadfast with God" (Psalms 78:8). This is the case with too many now. They are unstable. They are blown about with every wind of doctrine, and tossed hither and thither by the power of temptation.

Steadfastness is . . .

founded in grace,

realized only by living faith, and

maintained by communion and fellowship with God.

It is true of too many of us, that we do not steadfastly believe that GOD, our God, is gracious, loving, and merciful; along with jealous, holy, and true. Were we steadfast in our belief of this, how different would we be!

Holy fear would prevent us from running into evil.

Holy love would sweetly draw us to obedience.

We are not steadfast in believing the love that God has to us — or we would be more lively, devoted, and courageous in his cause.

We are not steadfast in expecting . . .

all that God graciously promises to us,

all of the Savior's sweet relations to us,
and all the Spirit's loving invitations to us!

What should a child expect from his Father — who is God over all, and infinitely gracious? What should not the bride expect from her Bridegroom — whose riches are unsearchable, and his love to her unparalleled?

We are not steadfast in resigning all to, and for, Jesus. This is the effect of the former deficiency — for if we expected as we ought, we would be prepared, with Paul, "to count all things but loss," and esteem them but dung, that we may win Christ, and be found in him. But, alas! how we cleave to earth, how temporal things seem to entwine themselves around our hearts, and how large a portion of the mind do they appear to occupy!

We are not steadfast in working for the Lord; in laying ourselves out to promote his glory, advance his cause, and honor his dear name.

We ought to hold fast the confidence we had at the beginning, steadfast unto the end — to resist Satan, steadfast in the faith — to have good hope for our anchor, which is sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil. But instead of this, we are often tossed about with carnal fears; we cannot leave the Lord's work in his own hands, his Church to his own care, and our concerns to his prudent arrangement. O that we could! O that we did! How happy we would be!

We often feel very perplexed, because, though we see how exactly suited the Lord Jesus is to us, in all circumstances, and at all times, yet we cannot live upon him, or make use of him as it is our privilege to do. What poor, frail, weak, erring mortals we are! How often we have to say —

I would but cannot rest,

In God's most holy will;

I know what he appoints is best.

Yet murmur at it still. In what striking colors, does this set forth our depravity. How it manifests the power and tendency of those evil principles which inhabit our nature, and which we daily carry about with us. We sometimes think, in consequence of this, that our faith is weaker, our confidence in God less, and our dependence on God more feeble, than it was formerly. But this is a mistake; our principles are more tried, our path is more difficult, and therefore such thoughts arise. This is our comfort — Christ is just suited to us, the promises of grace belong to us, and the Holy Spirit condescends to teach and instruct us. But we ought to seek grace to be steadfast, we ought to hold fast that we have, that no man takes our crown.

Oh, to love Jesus more! Oh, to be like him! Oh, to live near him! Oh, to glorify him! Oh, to be honored to lead thousands of sinners to him!

09 Jesus All-sufficient

Jesus All-sufficient

It is a very beautiful and glowing account which the Apostle gives of the resurrection, ascension, and glorification of our beloved Lord — in the close of his first chapter to the Ephesians. He shows that he is exalted above all created beings, that all things are put under his feet, and that, as thus dignified, he is given "to be the head over all things . . . the fullness of him who fills all in all." Let us look at this last expression, "Him who fills all in all." He is not only supreme — but omnipresent. His agency is universal — extending to all worlds, and to all creatures. What a proof that our Lord is divine, that he is the eternal God. How could a mere creature fill all things, in all places, at all times? But Jesus "fills all in all."

He fills Heaven and earth with his presence, as the omnipresent God; his nature being infinite, his agency is unconfined (Jeremiah 23:24). He fills all his creatures with good, as their bountiful preserver and benefactor (Psalms 104:28). He fills the throne of Deity — and the mansions of glory (Psalms 110:1; Revelation 5:6). He fills the hearts of angels — who eternally admire, adore, and praise him. And he fills the redeemed around the throne with joy unspeakable and glorious (Revelation 5:11-12). He filled the hearts, the sermons, and ministrations of the Apostles, who were determined to know nothing among men — but Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2). He now fills the hearts and discourses of all his sent servants, who love to exalt him and extol him, and set him on high.

He fills the hungry with good things — but sends the rich empty from his presence (Luke 1:25). He fills the treasures of those who love him with substance, making over to them his unsearchable riches, which fills their mouths with blessings and praises on his name (Proverbs 8:21; Psalms 81:10). He can fill us with the knowledge of his will (Colossians 1:9); with the fruits of righteousness, and keep us sincere and blameless unto his own glorious day (Php 1:8, Php 1:11) He fills his people with all joy and peace in believing, and reveals to them his truth and love that their joy may be full (Romans 15:13; 1 John 1:4). He can fill us with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19). And he will fill the cup of wrath and Divine vengeance for his foes (Psalms 11:6; Psalms 75:8). He is determined to fill the earth with his kingdom (Daniel 2:35); and the whole world with his glory and praise (Psalms 72:19; Hebrews 2:14). He fills backsliders with their own ways, making them drink of wormwood and gall, filling them with bitterness (Proverbs 14:14).

He fills . . .

all the purposes of God,

all the predictions of the Bible,

all the promises of Jehovah, and

all the desires of his people.

He fills . . .

all useful relations,

all necessary offices, and

all the petitions of poor sinners.

He fills all space, all spiritual expectations, and he will fill up all the deficiencies of his chosen people.

He is the All-filling One. But to be this . . .

he must be Divine,

his essence must be infinite,

his resources must be boundless,

his grace must be inexhaustible,

his power must be omnipotent, and

his glory must be inconceivable!

What a glorious person is the Lord Jesus!

O Savior, fill . . .

my heart with your love,

my intellect with your truth,

my conscience with your peace, and

my whole person with your glory!

Beloved let us look to Jesus frequently as thus presented. He has all we can possibly need or desire, and he gives all that is really good, to his dear people. There is . . .

no desire which he cannot fill,

no work which he cannot perform,

no foe which he cannot subdue. Our views of him have been too low — and our expectations from him have been too contracted.

Oh, for larger minds to conceive of his greatness and glory more adequately!

Oh, for warmer hearts to love him more fervently!

Oh, for holier lives to adorn his doctrine in all things! He is . . .

the brightness of glory,

the center of excellence,

the fountain of life,

the ocean of blessedness,

the fullness that fills all in all.

Oh, to be filled by Jesus! Oh, to be filled with Jesus! Oh, to be filled with zeal for Jesus! Oh, to be filled with grace, and thus be made, in one sense, like Jesus! Lord, fill . . .

the earth with your truth,

your Church with your glory,

and your saints with your praise.

I would forever speak his name,

In sounds to mortal ears unknown;

With angels join to praise the Lamb,

And worship at his Father's throne!

10 The Lord's Goodness

The Lord's Goodness

It is natural for sinners to be dissatisfied — and we find that they generally are so. The saints have a remedy for this disorder — but we seldom find them manifesting it. Perfect satisfaction can only be found in God's presence and likeness — we must be like him and with him, before we can say, "I am perfectly satisfied!"

Still, there is a degree of holy satisfaction experienced by the believer now. When his evidences are bright, his Savior is near, and he can claim the promises as his own — he feels satisfied for the time. God's communications are of a satisfying nature, and he has said, "My people shall be satisfied with my goodness" (Jeremiah 31:14). Our gracious God is the fountain of all goodness; it dwells in him in fullness and perfection, and it flows from him in ten thousand streams. "The Lord is good, ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy, unto all them that call upon him" (Psalms 86:5). His goodness, love, grace, and mercy — are in exercise and operation for his people's welfare. His goodness finds a channel for its communications — in the person, work, and offices of Christ. It finds suitable objects in the elect of God; in such poor, empty, unhappy sinners as we are. Our emptiness, poverty, and wants exactly fit us to be the objects of Divine goodness. It can and will glorify itself in such. It finds opportunities enough in the lives of such miserable, sinful, and changeable creatures as we are. Our God takes advantage of our distressing circumstances — to manifest and magnify the riches of his goodness.

God's goodness finds means in abundance to employ for its purposes:

ravens will minister to Elijah,

a whale will house Jonah,

angels will deliver Hezekiah, and

a lad will carry the news that saves Paul (Acts 23:16).

God's goodness has its ends in view and will certainly accomplish them:

it devotes us to God,

makes us happy as poor pensioners upon his bounty, and

brings a revenue of praise to Jehovah, the holy Three In One. When led to view things in the looking-glass of the holy Scriptures, we are satisfied with what God's goodness has designed; because we discover that design to be . . .

our present good,

complete salvation, and

our glorious Redeemer's honor and exaltation.

We are satisfied with what his goodness works — even our deliverance from . . .

the spirit, maxims, and friendship of the world;

and the power, craft, and doom of Satan.

We are satisfied with what his goodness bestows — even all temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings — or "all things that pertain to life and godliness."

We rejoice in what his goodness exhibits — even his love, care, and concern for our welfare.

We glory in what his goodness secures — our freedom from the law's curse, its righteous condemnation, and every real evil.

We triumph in what his goodness introduces us to — friendship with God, trust in God, and love to God; for in these consist the very essence of real religion. We then view our God as our friend, and hold fellowship with him as such. We realize that he is most gracious and good, and in him place our confidence. We feel and enjoy his love, and go forth in love to him again. In this subject we find spiritual pleasure, while we consider that we are savingly interested in divine goodness. We feel comfort, being persuaded that all our needs shall be supplied. We rest assured that we shall never be wretched, while God is good.

We here find a center, to which at all times and in all places we can turn. With this we feel satisfied, especially . . .

when led to see our desert as transgressors of God's law — and think over the favors he has conferred;

when we feel our unworthiness — and compare it with the goodness of God;

when we look at others, as naturally better than ourselves, more exalted in station, more amiable in disposition, more correct in their outward conduct — and yet strangers to God's grace, and destitute of the vital power of godliness; yes, and suffering as much or more than we are — without hope, without Christ, and without God in the world. Did I say we feel satisfied when we reflect on this? It is not enough; we are filled with astonishment, and are constrained to say, "O the riches of grace!" When we look forward to . . .

the throne of glory,

the crown of righteousness,

the palm of victory,

the regions of felicity —

and trace all up to Divine goodness — we are fully, and shall be eternally, satisfied. When Jesus endears himself to our hearts, by the communications of his love, the whispers of his grace; and by the Holy Spirit speaks peace to our souls — then we are satisfied with the Lord's goodness, and the promise is fulfilled!

11 The Sinless Sin-bearer

The Sinless Sin-bearer

Sin is the greatest evil in God's universe. It does evil — and nothing but evil to all people, at all times, under all circumstances. It is so evil that nothing can be worse! It is impossible to exaggerate, in giving a description of it. God hates it, man suffers from it, the whole world is affected by it. The great question is, How can we get rid of it? Can we be delivered from its guilt? Can we be freed from its power? Can we be rescued from its consequences? We can, for of the Lord Jesus it is said, "He was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5).

Here observe the manifestation of the Son of God. His nature was divine. He ever existed. He had lain in the bosom of the Father from everlasting. His heart was set upon his people. His thoughts were full of them. He had entered into covenant engagements for them. He lasted in his love to them. He appeared so long to be with them, to open his heart to them. At length the set time came, and he assumed the body prepared for him. He was made of a woman, of the same nature as his people. "He who sanctifies, and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11). He is now manifested in flesh. He is flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. The gospel is the revelation of Jesus Christ. He appears not in a typical or figurative way — but in a substantial form. But (wonder, O Heavens!) it is in the form of a servant; in the likeness of men, in all points like unto his brethren. Now, by faith we view him, and viewing him exclaim, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God is manifest in the flesh; and seen of angels." They, all glorious as they are, love to gaze on Jesus. In him is enough to over-fill their capacious powers. They are melted in love, adoration, and joy. Hark, how they chant his praise! "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and goodwill toward men." They recognize him as the Prince of peace, they call to mind his appearance in the bush at Horeb, and the glorious announcement of his coming by the prophet (Isaiah 9:6). O blessed spirits, continue to feast your eyes and your hearts in viewing our adorable Redeemer, and help us to praise him for his love, condescension, and grace. But is he really godhead shrouded in human clay? Yes, he is, therefore the angel said, "You shall call his name Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God With Us" (Matthew 1:23). This is the language of the Holy Spirit, the great glorifier of Jesus. O my soul, wonder, admire, and adore this amazing mystery! Be not curiously inquisitive — but devoutly believe. Ask not, How can these things be? But rather bless God that so it is. Let the subject . . .

fill your meditations,

quicken you in prayer, and

engage you in frequent thanksgivings.

Dispute not — but devoutly adore.

Here mark the sinlessness of the Savior's nature. "In him is no sin." How awful, how unscriptural, how blasphemous that dogma, that the nature of Jesus was sinful! And yet there are those men of

talent, men of learning, and men who profess great love to him — who believe it, publish it, and strive to defend it. It almost makes one shudder. The Holy Spirit calls the humanity of Jesus "that holy thing" (Luke 1:35). He tells us that Jesus "knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21). But that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." He also said himself, "The prince of this world comes — and has nothing in me." No corruption, no seeds of sin, no principles of iniquity to work upon. There was no tinder of corruption on which he could strike his sparks of temptation, as there is in us. No! His godhead was "glorious in holiness," and his humanity was spotless and pure. He was made a little lower than the angels in state — but was always equal to, yes, above them in purity. They delighted to throng around his unsightly bed, when "his birthplace was a stable, and his softest bed was hay." They rejoiced to minister to him in a retired wilderness, after Satan had tried by the most powerful temptations to seduce him. They were pleased to minister to his relief when in his tremendous agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. They delighted to grace his victorious resurrection from the dead, and to attend him in his triumphal ascension from this base earth to realms of unsullied glory. Jesus was always sinless in his nature, words, and deeds.

Here notice the end of his manifestation, "To take away our sins." Our sins were committed against himself. They deserved his everlasting displeasure. They called aloud for his vengeance to awake and punish us. He foresaw the whole of them, in all their variety, enormity, and aggravation. He knew that they would be sins against his law, his love, and his tenderest mercy. Sins against light, out of bitter enmity, and perpetrated over and over again. Sins for which we would never be sorry, unless he sent his Holy Spirit to work in us repentance unto life. Jesus knew the whole amount of our vileness, the accurate number of all our transgressions — far more than we know at present, and yet (Oh, the greatness of his love!) "he was manifested, to take away our sins."

Sin hindered our communion with Jesus — but could not prevent our having a saving interest in Jesus, or being represented by Jesus. We were given to him, identified with him, and interested in him, though totally unacquainted with him. This was at the foundation of his coming. No union to Christ — no salvation by Christ. Sin lay in the way of our present and everlasting happiness; Jesus was determined to make us happy, and therefore he came "to take away our sins." Sin had . . .

incensed Divine justice against us,
exposed us to Jehovah's wrath, and
brought us under the awful curse of his violated law.

Therefore Jesus came and took away our sins, and at the same time . . .

satisfied the claims of justice,
appeased the Father's wrath,
and bore our curse himself!

O wondrous love!

O marvelous grace!

O astonishing mercy! But more wondrous, more marvelous, more astonishing Jesus — who did this for us, and did it freely, without solicitation, or anything in us to induce him to do it! But how

could Jesus take away our sins? By ancient agreement, in the eternal councils, they were imputed to him, placed to his account, reckoned his as the representative of his Church, and he became responsible, or was pledged to effect their expiation, to the honor of God and the glory of his own grace. At the time appointed, he appeared to meet his responsibility, to redeem his pledge, and perform his work. He surrendered himself to the officers sent to apprehend him, all our sins were then laid upon him, and by justice charged to his account. "God made him to be sin for us."

He bore the weight of them,
he endured the merited punishment,
and he suffered the shame they procured.

He was . . .
separated from men,
tormented by devils,
smitten with the sword of divine justice,
forsaken by his Father,
mocked of his creatures,
overwhelmed with grief,
torn with anguish, and
his heart was broken with reproach and agony.

Sin lay upon him,
the wrath of God was endured by him,
and the most fearful terrors surrounded him!

Heaven, earth, and Hell, appeared as though leagued against him:

men grossly insulted him,
devils tried all in their power to destroy him,
and God was pleased to bruise him, and then leave him to languish in heart-breaking sorrow.

O sad spectacle of misery, grief, and woe! Was there ever sorrow like unto your sorrow? Was there ever love like unto your love?

You might have sat upon your throne, enjoying your own glory, happiness, and felicity forever — and have justly left us to perish in our sins, and suffer for our own transgressions! But no, you would be Jesus — you would save your people from their sins! You would come to take away our sins, though in so doing — justice took away your honor, happiness, and life. You would not leave us to perish — but you would put away our sins by the sacrifice of yourself. You have . . .

turned away Jehovah's wrath,

cast all our sin into the depths of the sea, and

bore our punishment in your own body on the tree! And has Jesus taken away our sins! Yes! Then "there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Who shall lay anything to our charge? Who shall condemn us? Jesus has taken away our sins! Jehovah has turned himself from the fierceness of his anger (Psalms 85:3). His anger is turned away and he comforts us, now that we believe in Jesus. "Behold, God is my salvation! I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song. He also has become my salvation" (Isaiah 12:1-2).

O Savior, how shall we sufficiently praise you for taking away our sins! No one but yourself could have done it. No one had the power, the merit, or the love! You have taken away our sins in a way which has glorified Deity, brought eternal honor to your own dear name, and perfectly satisfied every one who receives the atonement. May we live believing that our sin is taken away. That you removed it, and that all that is expected from us is to believe, obey, praise your name, and be happy. Oh, forbid that we should live looking at sin as though it was not removed, instead of looking to you as our great sin-bearer, and sin-remover! Oh, to live assured that our sins are gone, and gone forever; that the eye of justice will rest upon them no more, that the record in the Divine debt-book is perfectly erased, and that when sought for — they shall not be found!

He was manifested to take away our sins — and he has actually done it: and now he reigns to bestow blessings on the objects of his love. He has not done manifesting his kindness yet, for the apostle who wrote the words we are considering tells us, "If any man sins — we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:2). Blessed Jesus, and are you now pleading the cause of my soul, as deeply interested in, and as concerned for my welfare — as when you were "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," for my sake? Cannot the songs of angels, the hymns of just men made perfect, or the joys and honors of Heaven, divert your attention for one moment, from a poor, sinning, sorrowing, Hell-deserving creature like me? Indeed your love is astonishing, inconceivable, and almost too great for my weak faith to believe! And will you continue to live, plead for, and keep me while I live? Yes! for your apostle has said, "Herein is his love to us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17).

Dear Lord Jesus, you are exactly what I need, and you are all I want. Your love will be . . .

a sufficient portion in life,

a divine cordial in death, and

an ocean of felicity in which to bathe forever!

Holy Spirit, bear your witness with my spirit daily, that I am interested in it; cause it to have its clear and proper influence upon my mind; and let me, through your Divine operations, bring forth in my life the fruits which are required in one interested in such wondrous love! Oh, shed abroad the precious love of Jesus in my heart, that I may love him in return, and show forth his praises in body, soul, and spirit. May I exercise confidence in him, rejoicing both in life and death, that he has put away my sins by the sacrifice of himself.

12 The Spirit's Work

The Spirit's Work

I find more and more the necessity and blessedness of living by simple faith in Christ, as he is set before us in the everlasting gospel; to aim to have the mind, thoughts, and affections engaged, and taken up with him. I feel nothing in myself but what is calculated to distress, disgust, and lend me to despondency! But in Jesus I find all that I need. I am altogether a sinner — he is a complete Savior. Every now and then I think I see some fresh and undiscovered beauty in him. I feel him to be unspeakably precious. I call him my Lord and my God, and go forth with a determination to exalt him higher than ever. Oh, it is the delight of my soul to lift him up on high! I hope to live and die preaching and honoring Jesus. I often long for opportunities to speak of him, and yet I feel totally unfit and unworthy to mention his dear name. To believe in him, commune with him, and receive from him — is the privilege of every Christian. To see him, love him, and bless him — is the Heaven of every saint. To speak of him, glorify him, and lead poor sinners to him — is the delight of every gospel minister. To embrace him, feel interested in him, and be certain of being glorified with him — is the essence of the prayers of every regenerated soul.

He is . . .

sweeter than honey,

more pleasant than the light, and

more precious than life itself! To know him — is to be truly wise. To live upon him — is to be happy. To walk with him — is to be holy. To look to him, expect from him, and cast all our cares upon him — is to honor him.

We shall never ascend to the height, nor fathom the depth of our glorious privileges; nor taste, tell, or enjoy all that is in Jesus throughout eternity! And the great mystery is, every believer has a whole Christ. Christ for every day, and Christ to satisfy all the cravings of his soul. I feel satisfied that God can give me nothing more worthy of himself, more suited to me, or that would please me so well — as Jesus! I am perfectly satisfied with him, when dissatisfied with all beside. But I am often dissatisfied with my knowledge of him, my love to him, and my efforts to glorify him. He is a wonderful lover — a precious Savior — a glorious portion! There is nothing in or under Heaven — which could be set in competition with him. Of this I am persuaded, that all my trials, disappointments, losses, and crosses, are sent on purpose — to lead me to make Jesus my all; and to compel me to make up my happiness only in him. He will allow of no rivals, nor allow us to have, or hold — our household gods. If we knew Jesus better — we would love him, trust him, and depend on him more. His glories are inconceivable,

his love is eternal, and

his excellencies are unspeakable. The more I know, love, and enjoy the Savior — the more I wish, long, desire, and pray, that others may see, feel, and enjoy what I do. There is enough in Christ for

me, for all my friends, for all who will ever know him. The Holy Spirit always leads us to Jesus — he unveils his glories, and opens his loving heart. He loves to glorify Jesus, to exalt and honor our beloved Lord. It is his office. It is his work. In answer to prayer, he endears him to the soul, enthrones him in the affections, and witnesses for him in the conscience. This . . .

feasts the understanding,

leads captive the will,

stores the memory,

wings the soul,

sanctifies the heart,

purifies the conscience, and

dedicates the whole man as a consecrated vessel to God. This leads us to admire, prize, and speak of everlasting love, precious blood, and spiritual operation. It leads us into all the paths of practical godliness. The heart expands, the soul aspires, and the feet run in the way of God's commandments. Christ is now the object, salvation the subject, and to glorify God the aim. The sinner is free, the believer is happy, and he wants to be doing good. He realizes his union with Christ, proves his relationship to Christ, and offers up his body and soul as a living sacrifice to God: according to Romans 12:1-2. He now . . .

loves his Heavenly Father,

cleaves to his adorable Savior, and

views himself as a temple of the Holy Spirit.

He hates, fears, and flies from sin.

He painfully feels, daily groans over, and prays for grace to keep down the corruptions of his heart.

He loves, pants for, and follows after holiness.

He . . .

depends on God,

flies to Jesus, and

makes use of all appointed means, knowing that they are for the perfecting of the saints, and for the edifying of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12).

He pleads the promises, depends on God's oath, and accepts of the invitations of the Most High.

He . . .

lives above legality,

breathes the pure air of free grace,

and washes in the fountain of atoning blood.

He . . .

worships a sovereign Jehovah,
obeys a reigning Redeemer, and
ascribes all his privileges to sovereign grace.

He . . .

renounces self,
abhors his own righteousness,
and glories in the cross of Christ (Galatians 6:14).

He leaves the world in spirit, is transformed by the renewing of his mind, and finds suitable associates in sanctified believers. He speaks the language of Canaan, passes through the valley of Achor, and dies daily (1 Corinthians 15:31).

He . . .

flies from the wrath to come,
embraces the rock for the want of a shelter,
and lays hold on eternal life (1 Timothy 6:12).

He . . .

forgets the things which are behind,
enjoys Jesus at present, and
presses forwards towards the mark for the prize (Php 3:13-14).

He . . .

is in a state of constant warfare,
determines that he will never yield to his foes,
and yet loves and longs for peace.

He is . . .

a mystery to himself,
a wonder to others, and
a constant eyesore to Satan. His life is hidden,
his way is on high, and
his end is glory, honor, and immortality.

Such is the character which the Holy Spirit forms, and such the effect of his work in the heart.

If we have received the Holy Spirit, we . . .

hate sin,

love the Savior,

renounce self,

labor for God,

imitate Christ, and

long to be holy in body, soul, and spirit.

We . . .

can trust nothing but God's Word,

rest for acceptance only on the finished work of Christ,

and expect our prayers to be heard only for his sake.

Self-righteousness is dethroned.

Self-seeking is destroyed.

Self-glorying is loathed. The motto is, "Jesus Only!" The aim is, God's Glory. The rule is, God's Word. The desire is, to do good to the greatest possible extent.

If we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we shall be able honestly to say, "For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. (Romans 14:7-8)

13 The Desires and Privilege of the Humble

The Desires and Privilege of the Humble

Humility is a most excellent Christian grace, and he who has a good degree of it will . . .

adorn the gospel,

benefit the Church, and

be a happy example of true Christianity.

Nothing is more necessary for the believer — because without it he cannot expect to be either useful, holy, or happy. The Lord has always had a special regard to the humble, and has paid particular attention to them; as it is written, "Lord, you have heard the desire of the humble: you will prepare their heart, you will cause your ear to hear." (Psalms 10:17). The humble man is willing, heartily willing — to be saved in the Lord's own way, on his own terms:

To be saved from first to last as a sinner, and nothing but a sinner.

To be saved as a beggar, a pauper.

To be saved alone of grace, through another's work, by another's operation.

To be saved — and in being saved, to be nothing, to merit nothing, to deserve nothing. The man that understands this, and is willing to be saved thus, must be a humble man. His humility is not produced by law terrors — but springs from a living principle of grace in his heart. It is drawn forth by a discovery of the Lord Jesus, and thrives most when we have fellowship with him in his sufferings. It is not blind — but the possessor sees and knows himself, sees and knows something of Christ Jesus, and has an acquaintance with the plan of salvation, as laid down in God's holy Word. His DESIRES are many — but the principal ones are these:

1. To be kept from sin, that it may not grieve him, that it may not break out and cause him to disgrace his profession. He fears it, he feels its power, he has proved his own weakness, he knows its nature, and therefore, from a hearty hatred to it, and godly fear respecting it — he prays to be kept from it.

2. He desires to be enabled to believe God's Word, and on Jesus Christ whom he has sent. He feels his inability. He sees the excellency of believing. He knows that it glorifies God, honors Jesus, and brings comfort to the soul; therefore he desires heartily and confidently to believe, and for this his prayers ascend.

3. He desires to live upon Christ simply, only, and always; but he finds himself beguiled and led away often to live upon frames and feelings, upon duties — or upon anything rather than Christ Jesus. He grieves that it should be so. He strives against it. But he finds that the Lord alone can enable him to do so. He desires it for its own sake, for his own comfort's sake, and for the credit of

religion.

4. He desires to honor God. He is made willing to do good in secret, to act for God's glory, not his own honor. He is satisfied to do without what he most desires, if it is likely to make him proud, conceited, and dishonor God. Self is not his object — but God in Christ. None but a truly humble man experiences this.

5. He desires to be preserved from Satan, and this present evil world. He knows the design, malice, and wickedness of both. He knows the proneness of his heart to be led astray. He fears such potent foes. He hates their works and designs. He desires, therefore, to be kept from them.

6. He desires to be made fit for Heaven, let the discipline be ever so painful. He is willing, yes, desirous, that the flesh should be mortified, denied, and crucified. He loves the image of Jesus. He admires and longs for true sanctity; and therefore his prayers are often put up, that he may be made fit to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

God will PREPARE the humble man's heart. His humility proceeds from God's work and operation, and the possession of it secures a continuance of his favors.

He prepares him to receive God's favors suitably. All that we receive from God is a gift, the effect of his free favor, and should therefore be received with humility, under a sense of our utter unworthiness, with true gratitude of soul. When our hearts are prepared by the Lord, we do so receive.

He prepares him to enjoy God's mercies consistently. We are, and shall be, sinners; of this we are made and kept daily sensible. All God's mercies are given to us in this character, and should be enjoyed with an eye to his glory.

He prepares him to hold fast truth continually. The truths and doctrines of the Word are precious and valuable. They are for the comfort, solace, and support of our minds. Satan and erroneous men are endeavoring constantly to wrest them from us, or at least to keep us from enjoying them. But the Lord prepares the heart of the humble by his daily teaching, and they find that gospel truths are the stay and support of their souls, that they must sink without them, and therefore they hold them fast.

He prepares him to live upon Christ daily. The humble soul is taught to live upon Christ and his Word; such an one cannot feed upon husks. He will not be satisfied without Jesus — nothing else can make him happy. He pines, sighs, and cries for his presence, and the joys of his salvation. This is the effect of God's preparing the heart.

He prepares him to possess all spiritual blessings eternally. He has now a right to them, the promise of them, and he frequently tastes the sweetness of them; but God is preparing his heart fully to know, perfectly to realize, and eternally possess them.

He shall ESTABLISH the humble man's heart.

God will establish his heart with grace, or in a gracious, experimental, and practical knowledge of the doctrines of grace (Hebrews 13:9).

He will establish him in every good work, or give him grace to appreciate, enjoy, and perform good works from evangelical motives (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).

He will establish, strengthen, and settle him on the one foundation laid in Zion, making him strong in faith, and keeping him from evil (1 Peter 5:10). The Lord will CAUSE HIS EAR TO HEAR. He will not turn away from, shut out, or refuse to listen to his prayers — but he will regard, attend to, and answer his petitions. This he will do because he loves him, and can get honor to himself by granting his requests:

to prove his faithfulness to his promises;

to honor Jesus, whose name he pleads;

to glorify the Spirit, who dictates his petitions; and

to ensure his prosperity, in which he takes pleasure (Psalms 35:27).

Thus, we can say, "Lord, you have heard the desire of the humble; you will prepare their heart, you will cause your ear to hear."

Reader, are you humble? If so, you will often feel the workings of pride, and you detest and deplore the haughtiness of your heart. You will justify the ways of God, both in providence and grace. You admire free and sovereign grace. You will loathe yourself in your own sight, for all your iniquities. You will lie low before God, and cry, "Behold, I am vile!" You are not often found throwing stones at others — but frequently pray, "Keep back your servant from presumptuous sins, so shall I be innocent, and I shall be free from the great transgression." The humble sinner is a true saint — but the proud professor is a very great sinner.

Lord, make us humble by the operations of your Holy Spirit; and keep us humble, by showing us our own hearts, and leading us into fellowship with Christ in his sufferings!

Gentle Jesus, lovely Lamb,

Yours, and only yours I am;

Take my body, spirit, soul,

Only you possess the whole.

You my one thing needful be,

Let me ever cleave to thee:

Let me choose the better part,

Let me give you all my heart.

Fairer than the sons of men,

Do not let me turn again —

Leave the fountain-head of bliss,

Stoop to creature happiness.

Whom have I on earth below,
You, and only you I know:
Whom have I in Heaven but thee?
You are all in all to me!
All my treasure is above,
All my riches is your love;
Who the worth of love can tell,
Infinite, unsearchable!
You, O love, my portion art.
Lord, you know my simple heart;
Other comforts I despise,
Love be all my paradise!
Nothing else can I require,
Love fulfill my whole desire;
Should your other gifts remove —
Still you give me all in love!

14 Gracious Teaching

Gracious Teaching "Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows!" John 16:33 The lot of the Lord's people in this world is to be tried, afflicted, and sorrowful. If we belong to the chosen family — we must suffer persecution, temptation, and tribulation. The path to Heaven is not strewn with roses — to regale and delight us; but with crosses — to try and prove us.

Faith, if genuine, will be tried more than gold;

love, if of Divine origin, will be thoroughly proved; and

hope, as an anchor, will be found to be useful (Romans 8:24-25).

There is nothing under Heaven that is unchangeable — but Jesus, his gospel, and glorious salvation. There is nothing on earth which is under the curse — but it is an enemy to, or an obstacle in the way of, the spiritual pilgrim. Everything earthly is empty, fleeting, and perplexing; and it must be so — that Jesus may be our all in all. Here on earth, we must have no continuing city — that we may seek one to come. Our trials, if sanctified, will lead us . . . to live out of SELF — upon Jesus:

to renounce self — and depend only on Immanuel;

to abhor self — and fix our affections only on the Lamb who was slain.

They will lead us . . .

to weary of everything which is carnal,

to abhor all that is sinful, and

to seek durable riches and righteousness.

Nature does not, cannot love trials. But trials, attended with sanctifying grace — are the greatest blessings which God can bestow on us! "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word. It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn Your statutes. I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me." (Psalms 119:67, Psalms 119:71, Psalms 119:75) The pride of nature — and the glory of Jesus, are opposed to each other. The lower the sinner is brought — the more glorious the Savior appears! The more the Pharisee is stripped — the more precious Jesus will become! The poorer the beggar is — the sweeter is the grace which relieves.

Self must come down — in order that Jesus may be enthroned!

Therefore, we must expect to be . . .

crossed in our purposes,

opposed in our wishes, and

frustrated in our plans.

It must be so, if we belong to Jesus. But, though this is the case, yet trials are for our good — strength to persevere is promised, and in looking to Jesus, victory is certain. Jesus says to us, as God said to Moses, "Certainly I will be with you!" (Exodus 3:12). The weaker we feel in ourselves — the safer we are in reality. The more we fear a fall — the more likely we are to stand! But when we are strong and secure in ourselves — we may expect to be cast down from our pinnacle. What need there is to dread, watch, and pray against carnal security! The more we look to Jesus — the more we discover our own weakness, vileness, and Hell-deserving; and the more we prize his strength, righteousness, and love.

We had need to fear nothing but sin, for Paul tells us to "Take heed" (Hebrews 3:12-13).

Sin is hardening, stupefying, and damning;

but grace is softening, quickening, and saving!

Sin brings sorrow, pain, and death;

but grace brings peace, comfort, and life!

Sin proceeds from Satan or our own hearts;

but grace proceeds from Jesus alone.

We should, therefore . . .

"seek grace" (Psalms 32:6);

"obtain grace" (Hebrews 4:16);

"have grace" (Hebrews 12:28).

God can only be served acceptably . . .

with his own grace,

in his own strength,

according to his own Word. The Lord . . .

"shows grace" (Ezekiel 9:8);

"gives grace" (Psalms 84:11);

"gives more grace" (James 4:6).

Christ is full of grace (John 1:14, John 1:17);

the Spirit is "the Spirit of grace" (Zechariah 12:10);

the Gospel is "the Word of grace" (Acts 14:3);

believing is "through grace" (Acts 18:27).

Justification is "by grace" (Romans 3:24).

Saints receive abundance of grace (Romans 5:17).

Christians are not under the law — but under grace (Romans 6:14).

God is able to make all grace abound toward us (2 Corinthians 9:8), because he is "the God of all grace" (1 Peter 5:10). He can do more for us than we are able to ask or think (Ephesians 3:20).

Let us need whatever we do — his "grace is sufficient" (2 Corinthians 12:9) . . .

to pardon (Ephesians 1:7),

to work hope,

to impart everlasting consolation (1 Thessalonians 2:10),

to make us strong (2 Timothy 2:1),

to establish us (Hebrews 13:9),

to make us grow (2 Peter 3:18),

and to save us fully, freely, and eternally (Ephesians 2:5, Ephesians 2:7).

The grace of God may be . . .

seen (Acts 11:23),

heard (2 Corinthians 1:12),

tasted (1 Peter 2:3),

known (Colossians 1:6; 2 Corinthians 8:9),

and wondered at (Luke 4:22; Zechariah 3:8).

We are received by grace (Hosea 14:3);

we stand in grace (1 Peter 5:12);

and are saved alone by grace (Acts 15:11).

Grace . . .

begins salvation (Galatians 1:15; 2 Timothy 1:9),

carries on salvation, making the saint what he is (1 Corinthians 15:10),

and completes the work of salvation (Php 1:6).

Grace . . .

gives life (Psalms 30:5; Job 10:12),

preserves the life given (Psalms 5:12),

bestows all suited mercies (Psalms 9:10),

exalts its possessor (Psalm 81:17),
satisfies (Deuteronomy 33:23),
refreshes (Proverbs 16:15; Proverbs 19:12),
preserves us from being finally overcome (Psalms 40:2),
and stands directly opposed to works (Romans 11:5, Romans 11:7).

Therefore grace should be admired, prized, and praised, by the whole Church — in life, death, and forever. All that God . . .

does for us,

works in us, or

gives to us —

is for the praise of his glorious grace (Ephesians 1:6).

Reader, what do you think of grace? Have you felt its power? Have you seen its beauty? Have you tasted its sweetness? Have you heard its music?

There is no salvation — but by grace; and there is no salvation by grace — except we hear the truth, see the Savior, feel the power of God, and taste that the Lord is gracious.

Rest not in a religious form. Be not satisfied with a religious creed. But seek, search, and pray — until you know the grace of God in truth, and the God of grace as your Father, Savior, and Friend. The gospel comes with welcome news

To sinners lost like me;

Their various schemes let others choose,

Savior! I come to thee.

'Twas grace my wayward heart first won;

'Tis grace that holds me fast;

Grace will complete the work begun,

And save me to the last.

Then shall my soul, with rapture, trace

What God has done for me;

And celebrate redeeming grace

Throughout eternity!

15 Rejoicing in Messiah's Name

Rejoicing in Messiah's Name The religion of Jesus makes us happy — while it makes us holy. Yes, it makes us happy — by making us holy. It gives . . .

life to the dead,

sight to the blind,

light to those who sit in darkness,

liberty to the slave, and

opens a source of joy to the distressed and sorrowful.

"Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of your countenance." They . . .

are free from bondage,

have a possession in the promised land,

and live beneath Jehovah's paternal smile.

O Savior, you have done great things for them, you have conferred good things on them, and "They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness!" (Psalm 89:10.)

We must deplore our propensity to rejoice in something else — and yet admire the Lord's dealings in bringing us to rejoice in his dear name. We are sometimes left to rejoice in our gifts — and then the Lord causes them comparatively to wither, and this corrects our folly and brings us back.

Sometimes we are ready to rejoice in our knowledge — and then the Lord gives us a sight of our ignorance, and this corrects us.

Sometimes we rejoice in the actings of faith, instead of Christ — and then we are left to prove that we cannot act faith at all without Divine assistance, and this reproves us.

Sometimes we rejoice in our comforts — and lo! the cup of comfort is dashed from our lips, and one of wormwood and gall is given in its stead; this shows us our folly.

Sometimes we rejoice in Divine manifestations — and then we are left in the dark to grope like the blind for the wall; and this fills us with confusion.

Sometimes we rejoice in our prospects — and then suddenly they are all blasted, and our spring is turned into winter.

Sometimes we rejoice in our friends — and then they become our enemies, or are removed from us by death or distance.

Thus the Lord is pleased to wean us from all our false dependences, strip us of all our false joys, and lead us to rejoice in the name of Jesus alone. And indeed there is such sweetness, excellency, and suitability in the name or names of Jesus — that a believer may find cause to rejoice therein in all states, under all his varying feelings, and in all situations. Are we poor, necessitous, and surrounded with needs — which we know not how to get supplied? He is Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord who provides, and according to this sweet name — he will supply all our needs according to his glorious riches. Are we sick, and disordered in soul or body — and need a physician to heal us? He is Jehovah Rophi, the Lord who heals us. And he gives medicine, attendance, and all that is needed — gratuitously, without fee or reward. Do we find the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and is our bosoms the seat of war? He is Jehovah Shalom, the Lord who sends peace. He has made peace for us by the blood of his cross, he proclaims peace to us in the everlasting Gospel, and he communicates holy tranquility to our souls by the power of his Holy Spirit. Do our enemies — the world, the flesh, and the devil — muster their forces, and call us out to an unequal war? Are we alarmed, and filled with cowardly and traitorous feelings? Then Jehovah Nissi appears as the Lord our banner — and unfurls, reveals, and waves the conquering banner of his love over us, goes before us as the Captain of our salvation, and says, "Fear not, I have overcome the world!" "I have spoiled the principalities and powers." "I will purge out the rebels." Thus he imparts courage, boldness, and loyalty, leading us on from conquering to conquer. Are we cast down under a sense of our shortcomings, the imperfection of our obedience, and the daily breaking out of sin in our conduct and life? Then Jesus shows himself as Jehovah Tsidkenu — the Lord our righteousness, and enables us to say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Do we look at our sin, curse, and condemnation, and begin to droop and despond? Then he is Jesus — who saves his people from all condemnation, curse, and sin. Are we called away from friends and relatives, sent into a land of strangers, or even into the midst of enemies? Then he is Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there; and he is there a friend to commune with us, deliver, cheer, or bless us. Are our lusts imperious, our passions turbulent, and is a civil war commenced in the soul? Then he is our Lord, and he graciously puts forth his power, and brings all into order, consistency, and peace. Thus, let our feelings be what they may, or our state what it will; let us be placed in ever so uncomfortable a situation, and when we cannot rejoice in our comforts, in the actings of our faith, in our gifts, friends, prospects, or Divine manifestations — then, even then, we may rejoice in the name of Jesus! Yes, and rejoice in his name all the day long, because it is so suitable, indescribably sweet, and unutterably precious.

Gracious Savior! your name is as ointment poured forth. In your person, character, grace, sympathy, offices, and perfect work — there is enough . . .

to cheer us in the gloomiest day,

to comfort us under the most painful dispensations, and

to fill us with all joy and peace as we pass through the valley of Achor to your blessed abode. May I never rejoice in my name — but yours; or fail to rejoice in that, at any time, or under any circumstances. You are all my hope, in you alone is my trust, and from you I expect grace here, and glory in a better world. Your name shall endure forever; your name shall be continued as long as the sun; men shall be blessed in you; all nations shall call you blessed.

16 God's Ways with Moses

God's Ways with Moses

"All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth — to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies." Psalms 25:10. His paths are often trying, and sometimes mysterious — but they are always instructive and profitable. They were devised by the highest wisdom, and are sanctioned by infinite love. The record of his dealings with his people of old, is intended to comfort, instruct, and admonish us. He is the same God still. What he was to his ancient people — he is to us still. Our dispensation may be more spiritual — but the Lord is the same. Let us therefore read his blessed Word . . .

as marking out the pilgrim's path,

as showing what God can do, and

what he will do when his people's circumstances require it.

"He made known his ways unto Moses" (Psalms 103:7). Whatever things were written aforetime — were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.

He made known his ways in PROVIDENCE. God's providence is a great fact. It is God providing for, disposing of, and managing the whole of his creatures. God's special providence is his . . .

special attention to,

special care for, and

special directing of,

his beloved people. In the life of Moses, God made known the ways of his special providence. How wonderfully providence wrought in preserving him for three months in his mother's house in such times, on the banks of the Nile, in the ark of bulrushes, among devouring crocodiles; and then again, when Pharaoh sought to slay him. Surely, the child of providence is safe until the God of providence calls him hence.

How wonderfully providence wrought in preparing him for his office and work. He was instructed in all the wisdom of Egypt — at Pharaoh's expense; sent into the land of Midian, to Jethro, to study there; and then led to the bush at Horeb, to gain a more intimate and blessed knowledge of the Lord.

Egypt was his grammar-school,

Midian was his university,

he took up his degrees at the burning-bush, where he was ordained a prophet of the Lord, consecrated as the bishop of the Hebrews, and appointed as the chaplain to Pharaoh.

How wonderfully providence wrought in supplying all his needs.

He was fed for forty years by Pharaoh's daughter;

for forty more years, he was sustained by the prince of Midian;

and for the last forty years, he was fed with bread from Heaven.

How wonderfully providence wrought in delivering him from all his foes. He was delivered . . .

at his birth — from destruction;

at the Red Sea — from perishing in the waters; and

from the rage of the people again and again.

How wonderfully providence wrought in leading his obedient ones safely into the promised land:

first, by the pillar of cloud and fire,

then, by direct communications from the mercy-seat,

and then, by the ark going before Joshua and his host through the Jordan into Canaan.

He made known his ways in GRACE. For though there is much grace displayed in God's providential dealings — there is a way which is emphatically the way of grace; and this was made known unto Moses. The way of salvation — which was set forth by the Passover, the daily sacrifices, and on the great day of atonement. Salvation by substitution, sacrifice, and grace. The way in which he manifests himself to his own, as . . .

at the bush in Horeb,

on the Mount Sinai,

and in the tabernacle.

Here he enjoyed the ordinary and extraordinary manifestations of Jehovah's condescension kindness, and love. The way in which he would dwell with men. By . . .

his Shekinah glory among them,

his Spirit in them, and

their finding him a refuge and a dwelling-place, according to Psalms 90:1; Psalms 91:1. The way in which he leads his own people aside to teach them, prepare them for duties, and bless them. He led them into the wilderness, and there taught them the most important lessons, prepared them to possess and enjoy the land promised to their fathers, and conferred upon them numerous, great, and singular blessings. The way in which he communes with them as the Lord their God. He met them in his tabernacle, and conversed with them from off and above the mercy-seat, frequently, familiarly, profitably. The way in which he corrects his children for their negligence, rebellions, and folly (Exodus 4:14). He was never at a loss for means, he never failed to use the rod when

necessary, and he never used it with undue severity. He corrected them but in measure, and would not leave them wholly unpunished. The way in which he can exalt his servants to honor. How honorable was Moses made before Pharaoh, the inhabitants of the countries bordering on the wilderness, and among all the tribes of Israel? (Exodus 11:3.) The way in which he works for his own glory and his people's good in . . .

the plagues of Egypt,

the destruction of various hostile nations,

and in the constant supplies he sent them. The way in which he may be overcome. Even by urgent, affectionate, importunate prayer (Exodus 17:4). More than once did he yield to the entreaties of Moses — and proved that faith, prayer, and penitence are invincible at his throne. The way in which he tries his children . . .

in Pharaoh's doubling the tally of bricks — and refusing to give them straw,

in allowing them to be beaten by their task-masters;

in the miracles wrought by the magicians;

in the unbelief, fretfulness, and frequent murmuring of the people;

in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram;

in the weakness of Aaron, and the envy of Miriam;

and in the craft of Moab, and the designs of Amalek (Exodus 15:24; Exodus 17:3; Exodus 32:14; Numbers 12:2). The way of entering into the land of promise — by faith. Moses ascended Nebo, saw the land, and was fully satisfied with what God had done. This is just the same way in which true believers die . . .

in peace with God,

satisfied with all his dealings, and

on the very borders of the celestial Canaan.

All these things are full of instruction to us! Let us therefore . . .

meditate upon them,

pray over them, and

endeavor to derive advantage from them.

God's ways are clearly not our ways, nor are his thoughts our thoughts; but as the Heavens are high above the earth — so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts!

God's ways and his works . . .

manifest his nature,

exhibit his character, and

unfold his secret purposes!

He, therefore, who would know God — must study the ways of God. "Whoever is wise, and will observe these things — and he shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." Psalms 107:43

17 Evidences of Grace

Evidences of Grace

We sometimes look at our evidences — instead of looking to the Lord Jesus. This is sure to be injurious. We sometimes begin to look for our evidences in a season of darkness, or when laboring under violent temptations — this is as useless as it would be to attempt to use an hour-glass in the dark and dreary night.

Evidences are very useful in their place, and he who despises them, or never examines to see if he has any — is almost sure to be destitute of them. Signs of life — prove its existence; and evidences of grace — prove that we have grace. What believer does not ask:

Am I really born again?

Am I in Christ?

Am I a partaker of the grace of God? The writer has proposed these questions a thousand times; and sometimes has obtained a very satisfactory answer — but at others has been left in doubt, and, not being able to go to God as a saint, but as been obliged to go as a sinner. And the best thing we can do, when our evidences are beclouded, or rendered questionable — is not to yield to doubt, or pore over the past — but to go to Jesus as warranted by his Word, and cast ourselves as guilty sinners into his gracious arms. On one occasion, when deeply tried and dejected in spirit — I began to look for my evidences; examined them, and to my surprise found, and wrote as follows — This morning, I felt low and depressed in spirit. My path was gloomy; my trials were painful. I endeavored to place myself in the presence of a heart-searching God; and, as under his piercing, penetrating eye — I have been looking for the evidences I have at this time (now, while I feel so low, and am so tried), of my being a child of God. And, as in his sight who tries the thoughts and the heart, and will judge me in the last day by Jesus Christ, I believe that I possess the following:

1. A feeling sense of sin. Yes, I do really feel myself a sinner — lost, ruined, and wretched in myself. I can find nothing in myself to trust to, to boast of, or bring before the Lord as a plea. I am indeed a wretched, polluted, and depraved creature. This I clearly see, deeply feel, and satisfactorily know.
2. I find a hatred to sin. I loathe myself on account of sin, I deeply deplore that I have been guilty of sin, and go mourning before God because I am the subject of sin. Yes, I feel, I know, I am certain — that I hate sin; and cannot but cry out in consequence of it, "O wretched man that I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death!"
3. I feel willing to confess my sins to God, with grief on account of them, and cry for the pardon of them. Yes, nothing can satisfy me but the knowledge that my sins are forgiven me for Jesus Christ's sake.

4. I feel willing and desirous that God should search me and try me, chasten me for my folly, and purge away my iniquity from me. While I write, my very soul cries out, "Oh, that I were thus freed from sin!"

5. I find a love to, and a longing for, true holiness. Yes, I do indeed long to be like the holy Jesus. Oh, for every power and faculty of my soul to be conformed to him! Sin is my burden, inward corruption my plague! Holiness is the desire of my heart! Conformity to Christ the blessing for which I earnestly pray.

6. I find a fear lest I should dishonor God, disgrace his cause, and, by my misconduct, make the souls of the righteous sad. I would not for the world give the enemies of God an occasion to blaspheme. My inmost soul cries, "Lord, keep me, preserve me, and by your grace prevent my doing so."

7. I do feel a love to the Lord's people. However some of them have tried me, wronged me, and distressed me, I feel that I could heartily forgive every one of them — if I could only see Christian meekness, sorrow for sin, concern for pure holiness, and the prosperity of God's cause.

8. I feel an intense longing for submission, resignation, and acquiescence to the will of God. Oh, to be entirely resigned to the will of my good God and gracious Redeemer, and to say, from the bottom of my heart, "Not my will — but may yours be done!"

9. I find a spirit of prayer. I cannot live without prayer. Wherever I am, in whatever company, or however engaged — every now and then my soul is ascending to God. No set form, no stated times, no one kind of prayer will do. I must vent my feelings — and call to God every time I feel oppressed — and petition, silently or vocally, with All-Prayer. Prayer is now natural, and though I feel frequently lifeless, I never feel quite prayerless.

10. I find a turning from all, to God. I love the company of the Lord's people, especially godly ministers. I love my books. I love preaching, reading, and speaking of Christ; but none of them, nor would all of them — yield me satisfaction. I must at times turn from them all to God, for he alone is a sufficient portion for the soul — he must be our ALL.

11. I feel a dissatisfaction with everything without the presence of Christ. Nothing, no nothing, can be substituted for this. Jesus is the object of my love. His presence is the delight of my soul, and his presence alone can make me truly happy.

12. I find a love to the gospel. As God's good news to poor sinners — it just suits me. I feel grateful for it. I delight to preach it. I rejoice in any opportunity to spread it, and desire to diffuse it to the utmost of my power — by my tongue and pen.

13. I am the subject of the fear of God. I do fear to offend him, I love to please him, and I earnestly pray to be kept from dishonoring him.

14. I am panting for more spirituality. I am so carnal — this grieves me. I am so much like the world — this perplexes me. I am so unlike Jesus — this distresses me. I want to be spiritually-minded. I desire to be spiritual in my conversation, and to walk under the influence, direction, and guidance of spiritual principles.

15. I find I am the subject of spiritual warfare. The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. Yes, I do daily feel the two distinct and opposite principles working and warring in my soul. I cannot do the things that I would. I would love God supremely, obey his precepts perfectly, and walk with him in holy fellowship daily. But I am hindered, confused, and often cast down by the principles of depravity within me. Yet I rejoice to know that the elder shall serve the younger. Grace shall reign — and corruption become subordinate.

16. I am very jealous at times lest I should be wrong. This argues sincerity, and a desire to be right before God. Oh, how painful are the sensations which I feel, when the suspicious doubt is nourished. The Lord knows I would rather undergo any difficulty now — than be deceived and be found wrong forever.

17. I find in my heart a great desire to glorify God. I am willing that God should use me in any way to show forth his praise, exalt his dear Son, and spread abroad his glorious truth.

18. I have a love to poor sinners, especially for such, as I cherish the hope, that Christ died for. I would willingly lay myself out to be useful to them in any way — so that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

19. I feel a cleaving to Christ. My soul follows after Jesus, and I am determined to sink or swim with him. Can fallen human nature produce this? I think not.

20. I hate, detest, and abhor hypocrisy. Few things are to me more hateful. I desire to be sincere. I am, I must be sincere; therefore I often pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." Psalms 139:23-24

21. I do heartily and constantly believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. I love him, I confess him, I adore him as such. Now, John says, "He who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." I do believe and trust my soul's salvation in his hands.

22. I have been enabled, hitherto, to endure temptation. My trials have not been few; the solicitations to evil which I have experienced, have not been weak. James says, "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love him."

23. I have been, and am often chastened of the Lord, which Paul brings forward as a proof of sonship; and of our being judged by the Lord, that we would not be condemned with the world.

24. I have sometimes a desire to depart and be with Christ, which I am sure is far better than being here. I very often long for the second coming of Jesus, and especially, because I believe that he will then be glorified in his saints, and be admired in all those who believe. Oh, may I share in the first resurrection, and be favored with a place at the marriage-supper of the Lamb!

25. I cannot love, follow, or be at home with the ungodly world. They are not my company. I do heartily pray, "Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with men of blood."

26. I cannot approve of folly even when I detect it in myself — but desire to be truly wise, and thoroughly imbued with the wise and holy Spirit of Christ.

27. I do believe I have been, and am, at least at times — led by the Spirit. I find a secret, sacred, and powerful drawing out of my soul after Jesus, in prayer, praise, and confession. If I am not deceived, he at times bears his witness with my spirit, that I am born of God, and enables me to cry, "Abba, Father!"

28. I do know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, in a different and distinct manner to what I did once: and Jesus says, that "this is life eternal."

29. I have received, do hold fast, and in a measure obey, Christ's Word; and I long to obey it perfectly, universally, and perpetually.

30. I do disclaim all trust, confidence, or dependence in any one, or on anything of my own, and rely alone on Christ Jesus. He is my only foundation. His atonement is the ground of my hope. He is my ALL.

All these things I find within me — and yet I am low, discouraged, distressed, perplexed, and cast down. Satan could not produce them, nor would he if he could. I myself could not, for if I could, I might, and would banish every fear, conquer every doubt, and fill my soul with strong confidence in God. God himself must have wrought them. But I must have tribulation. Trouble is my lot below. Still I incessantly cry, "Not trials from this quarter, not in this way, not in this part!" Lord, I am foolish. I confess it. I deplore it. My conduct seems to say that I have more wisdom than my God. But I renounce the idea. I reject the suggestion. My soul, just ask: Has my Heavenly Father ceased to love me? Has Jesus left off to be concerned for me? Has the Holy Spirit turned against me?

Oh no, my God is without variableness, and does not change like shifting shadows.

"Quiet, Lord, my froward heart." These thoughts are sweet, they have some influence upon my mind. I feel softened, soothed, and a little refreshed. O Lord, keep up a sense of your presence, your love, and my covenant interest in you, in my mind. Fill me with light, love, and spirituality; that I may run the race set before me, looking to, and rejoicing in, Christ Jesus.

Dear Lord, I cast on you my care,

For you have been my guide;

My sure resource in time of fear,

When all has failed beside. Your promise often yields me joy,

And I your presence know;

But still there's something will annoy,

And tarnish all below!

Yet every cross a mercy is,

A blessing every thorn —

That tells me, here is not my rest,

I am for nobler born. Your mercy sweetens my distress,

And, while I feel the rod,
Gives me abundant cause to bless
An all-sufficient God.
Soon, very soon you will appear,
With all your blood-bought sheep,
To wipe from every face the tear,
And I no more shall weep!

18 Hope in Heaven

Hope in Heaven

Many Christians have but little in hand — but they have much in hope. They have little on earth — but they have unsearchable wealth in Heaven. The present, is the worst state they will ever be in. All beyond death — is bright, beamy, and glorious. God has amply provided for them, and what he has provided is laid up securely in Heaven. Hence, Paul speaks of "the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, whereof you heard before in the Word of the truth of the gospel" (Colossians 1:5). The Christian's hope is a confident expectation of future good — but here hope is put for the object hoped for: the believer's hope is . . .

produced by grace,

quickenened by the promise, and

centers in invisible blessedness!

Let us notice —

First, The Christian's hope. This consists in both freedom and possession. In freedom from . . .

all the pains which we now experience, both in mind and body;

all the hindrances which are so thickly strewed in our way in this present world;

all the fears which now beset, agitate, and harass us, day by day;

all the forebodings which often make our lives bitter and gloomy;

all sin which is now our plague, disease, and torment;

all our needs, and all possibility of needing — for God will fully supply all our needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Oh, what a mercy it will be to enjoy such freedom, and to possess the inward consciousness that it will be enjoyed forever! The Christian will not only be free from all that is painful and distressing — but he will also possess . . .

perfect, settled, and everlasting peace;

sinless faculties and immortal powers with which to serve and enjoy God forever;

permanent, perpetual, and uninterrupted joy;

the presence and enjoyment of Jesus — we shall see Him, be with Him, and be like Him;

ALL that we can consistently wish, desire, or pray for!

O glorious hope! O blessed prospect! It leaves us nothing to long for, nothing to desire!

Second, The Christian's hope is laid up for him in Heaven.

It is laid up — that is, the substance of it is ready. It is laid up for us, therefore God appointed it for us. Jesus says it is a kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world. If it is laid up for us, there our hearts and our affections should be.

It is laid up for us in Heaven. This betokens . . .

its excellency, being kept in so excellent a place;

its certainty and security, no thieves can break through to steal;

its nature, it is spiritual, holy, Heavenly.

It is laid up in Heaven for you. This shows . . .

that Jehovah knew all for whom he provided;

that a man may know whether he has a hope laid up in Heaven or not;

that well-instructed Christians do know and enjoy the fact.

What rich grace has God displayed, in providing an inheritance in Heaven for us, and preparing us for that inheritance.

Thirdly, The means by which he becomes acquainted with it, is the gospel. God's gospel is the good news that he has given unto us eternal life. It contains the promise that all who believe in Jesus shall possess that life. It assures us, that all who sincerely desire it and earnestly seek for it — shall find it. It is called the Word of truth because it is the true Word, or every Word of it is truth; because Christ, who is the truth, is its author, object, and end. Have we received the gospel? Did we understand it as informing us that God had made glorious provision for us in Heaven? Did it beget hope in our hearts that we would possess the kingdom promised to believers? Do we feel satisfied that the gospel is the true Word, and that every jot and tittle of it must be accomplished?

What a mercy it is . . .

when comforts run short,

when trials press sore,

when a dreary winter of affliction sets in

— to remember that we have a priceless inheritance — an inheritance that is kept in heaven for us — pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay!

How this blessed hope should . . .

quicken our zeal,

animate our spirits, and

raise us above fear and despondency.

It is not what we have now — but what we shall have in Heaven — which should affect us. The poor in this world, if rich in faith — are heirs of the kingdom which God has promised to those who love him. Oh, for clear views, bright evidences, and a steady hope of everlasting joys! Now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be — but when Jesus shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Our glorious inheritance is vast beyond calculation, it is safe beyond the possibility of failure — but we must pass over Jordan to possess it. It is on the other side of the river, in the promised land. Let us, therefore, gird up the loins of our minds, be sober, and hope steadily for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, The wilderness will soon be passed, the storms of life will soon subside — and then eternal calm and unclouded sunshine, will soon be our happy, endless portion. All glory to free grace!

19 Wanderers Invited to Rest

Wanderers Invited to Rest The soul can find no rest while it is under the dominion of sin — it is like the unclean spirit that went out of the man, seeking rest but finding none. All are restless. All pant for rest — only the believer finds it. Jesus calls poor restless sinners to him, and says, "Come, I will give you rest." In believing we find rest, for a time we enjoy rest — but when we backslide — we again become restless; like Israel of old, of whom it was said, "My people have wandered, and have forgotten their resting place." (Jeremiah 50:6) When thoroughly wearied out, they think of home, of former enjoyments, and, sighing for repose, they say, "Return unto your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you" (Psalms 116:7).

There is a rest for Christians now, for we who have believed do enter into rest; and there is a perfect rest which remains for the people of God.

NOW, we find rest in God's covenant; which is ordered in all things and sure, and contains all our salvation, and all that we can consistently desire.

Here we realize relationship to God, as a good, kind, and wealthy Father — who knows every child, provides for every want, and rests in his love to all who trust in his name.

Here is provision for all our needs, both spiritual and temporal.

Here are promises which are exceeding great and very precious, which cannot fail or be broken.

Here is certainty in reference to help, support, and safety, for God has pledged, the Savior has engaged, and the covenant cannot be broken.

Now we find rest in Jesus. His work gives us rest from legal labor, presenting us with all that law or justice can demand at our hands. His offices give us rest from our principal doubts, for as Mediator he makes our peace with God, and maintains the peace he makes. As prophet he teaches us,

as priest he atones for us, and

as king he reigns in us and for us. His Word gives us rest from our cares, for here God condescends to us, engages to supply us, and promises that he will never leave us. But we are prone to WANDER from our rest. Who has not wandered? Who dares to say, I shall not wander? Every sinner is a wanderer, and while sin dwells within us — we shall always feel a disposition to wander. It is against our better judgment, our solemn profession, and our new nature; yet still there is the disposition to wander, and it is called into exercise by a variety of things: A love of novelty — a desire to see, possess, or enjoy something new, will sometimes set us wandering. The weakness of our graces, as faith, hope, and love, is at other times the occasion of it. The power of corruption within us, which at times works with peculiar force and power, makes us restless. The temptations of Satan, which beguile, bewilder, and captivate us, lead us from our resting-place also. And so do the errors that abound and spread all around us.

False views, Satanic temptations, powerful corruptions, and the weakness of grace — are the principal things which lie at the root of our backslidings. Have we wandered? We are invited to return. God says, "Return unto me, for I am married unto you." Let each one of us say, "Return unto your rest, O my soul." Once it was better with us than now. How much better was it to rest on a Savior's love, to rejoice in a Father's care, and to enjoy the Comforter's consoling communications — than to feel in this unsettled condition. It would now be better if we were resting on Jesus — for then our anxieties, cares, and fears would vanish.

Well, we may return — for the way is open. We might to return — for God invites us to do so. Let us return — for gratitude should induce us. "He has dealt bountifully with us." If he had been simply just — we would have been cut off. If he had dealt with us after our sins, or rewarded us according to our iniquities — miserable would have been our doom. Yes, if he had done as we sometimes expected he would — our punishment must have been great. But according to his gracious nature, the rich provision he has made, the kind words he has spoken, and the holy determination he has taken to do us good — he has spared us, and now invites us to his arms and his heart.

O Savior, bring us back from all our wanderings by your invincible grace, let us enjoy rest in your precious love, and keep us near your loving heart and bleeding side forever!

Reader, did you ever find rest in Jesus? Are you at peace with God through him now? Does God's peace rule and reign in your heart? Or, are you a restless wanderer? If so, let me invite you to Jesus. Let me entreat you to repair to him. You will find rest in Jesus — but nowhere else.

Backslider, you were peaceful and happy once. You enjoyed religion once. Return, return unto your first husband, for it was better with you once, when living in holy fellowship with him, than it is now. Go to him and confess your sins. Go to him and entreat his pardon. Go to him and prove the kindness of his heart. Go to him, and be happy once more in his grace and love.

Lord, in a wilderness I rove,

With foes and fears oppressed;

Grant me the presence of your love,

For that will give me rest.

Protect my soul from Satan's wiles,

And ease my troubled breast;

Refresh me with your cheering smiles,

For you can give me rest.

Cheerful I walk the desert through,

If with your presence blessed;

Nor fear what earth or Hell can do,

For you will give me rest. When snares and dangers fill the way,

And I am sore distressed,
I'll fly to you, my strength and stay,
For you will give me rest. The happy day is drawing near,
When I shall be released,
And rise to dwell with you on high,
In everlasting rest.

20 Light for Dark Days

Light for Dark Days "Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows!" John 16:33

Every Christian should expect a daily cross —

something to try his graces,

something to render the promises necessary,

something to make the throne of grace desirable. This he is promised in God's Word,

this all the saints have found,

this will be our portion to the end of our days.

Here on earth, we have no abiding city. Here we are but travelers and pilgrims, and must, therefore, expect that every day will furnish something new to make us hasten home. This was David's experience. He had days of trouble — but he had also troubles at other times. He would never have prayed as he did, written as he did, or been useful as he has been — but for his trials. He found . . .

the Lord to be faithful,

grace to be sufficient, and

deliverance in the most suitable season.

Hence he says, "In the day of my trouble, I will call upon you; for you will answer me" (Psalms 86:7). In this Psalm, he displays . . .

strong assurance and deep humility,

clear knowledge of the Divine character, and

earnest prayer for the Lord's intervention.

God's favor manifested — leads us to pray for preservation. Trust in the Lord — is connected with ardent longings for mercy from the Lord. The prayers of the Psalmist were perpetual. "I cry unto you all the day." He sought to be happy, and therefore, he went to the Lord with, "Rejoice the soul of your servant."

He pleads, "For you, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all who call upon you." What sweet encouragement is here! In going to prayer, we go to a good God, a God of goodness: one who is "ready to forgive." I would wish to remember these three words whenever I go to prayer, or whenever tempted to despond. He has plenty of mercy, and therefore we need not fear going too often, or for too much. He has plenty of mercy, he is ready to forgive — but whom? It is not said the elect, the favorites of Heaven, or the saints, though this is true: but, for our

encouragement, and to overcome our fears, it is said, "Unto all who call upon him." I may be sure that I call upon God — when I doubt my election, or question my saintship. Blessed be the Lord for considering our weakness, and thus providing for our comfort and satisfaction!

"In the day of my trouble, I will call upon you; for you will answer me."

Here is gloomy anticipation — a "day of trouble." The believer and trouble are seldom far apart, or long apart. We are born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. Whichever way to look — we see a source of trouble!

If we look into the heart — its depravity, deceitfulness, and wickedness is a fruitful source of trouble. If we look to the different faculties of the soul — all combine to trouble us. Our memories — how ready to receive, retain, and produce evil, even profanity — how backward to receive, keep, or produce what is spiritual and good. A text is soon forgotten, while anything which we would gladly forget, seems to be imprinted on the mind, and is produced in order to distress us. How often is this the case in prayer, under the means of grace, or when searching God's blessed Word. The will — how perverse and untoward, how often does it run out after that which is carnal, forbidden of God, and injurious to us. The affections—how easily affected with earthly things, and set upon what is vain and worldly. The conscience — how weak, how hard, how often polluted.

If we turn from ourselves to our families — children dead in sin, and carnal, earthly minded relations — are causes of trouble.

If we look at the world, whether it smiles or frowns — it is an enemy to our God, and us, and a prolific source of trouble.

If we look at the church — what a source of trouble is this!

Instead of love — there is jealousy.

Instead of peace — there is conflict.

Instead of union — there is division.

Instead of brotherly kindness — there is envy.

Instead of charity — there is an unforgiving spirit.

If we look at the Lord Jesus, there is cause of trouble there — when we reflect upon . . .

his amazing love,

his infinite compassion,

his tender mercy,

his sweet promises,

his kind invitations,

his glorious righteousness,

his precious blood,

his atoning death,
his all-prevalent intercession,
and his holy gospel;
and CONTRAST these with . . .
our unbelief,
our ingratitude,
our hardness of heart,
our coldness of affection,
our neglect of communion,
our lack of zeal for his glory,
and numberless other evil things besides — it must fill a sincere mind with heartfelt trouble!

Here is a good purpose: "I will call upon you." The Lord kindly invites us to call upon him in trouble — and promises that he will deliver us. Every trouble, rightly understood, is an invitation from the Lord to call upon him. We are apt to get cold and indifferent — and then the Lord puts us into the furnace, which warms and quickens our devotions. Our best prayers have generally been offered up in times of trouble. In trouble, we feel that we must pray or sink. Oh, what a mercy to have a God to go to, in every trouble! A God who invites, promises, and will bless us! The day of our trouble should be a day of special prayer.

Trouble burdens the heart — prayer eases it.

Trouble disturbs the heart — prayer quiets it.

Trouble perplexes the heart — prayer directs it. May we always pray — but especially in troublous times. Yes, we will call upon God, and he will answer us.

Here is sweet encouragement: "You will answer me." It is sweetly encouraging to know that God will listen to us, sympathize with us, and answer us, before we begin to pray. But this every believer may be persuaded of, for God is pledged to give him what he asks in the name of Jesus, or else what is far better for him. But we may argue the certainty of the Lord's answering us:

First, from his mercy. The mercy of the Lord is ever great towards his children — and it is tender mercy. Divine mercy has . . .

a quick ear,
a piercing eye,
a tender heart,
a full hand, and

a swift foot! When mercy hears a poor sinner crying — she always attends, sympathizes with him, and answers. While God is merciful, plenteous in mercy, and delights in mercy — we need not fear an answer to our prayers. Mercy set him on promising, and mercy will see to the fulfillment of every promise he has made.

Secondly, from the relationship in which the Lord stands to us. Doubtless he is our FATHER. He does not wear the name — without possessing the nature; or employ the title — without filling the relationship. Oh, no, he feels for his Ephraims even in their backsliding state — and cannot turn from them when they come pleading before him! His language, when he sees a poor prodigal praying before him, is, "Is not Ephraim still my son, my darling child? I often have to punish him, but I still love him. That's why I long for him and surely will have mercy on him." Jeremiah 31:20

He refers us to ourselves in our corrupted and depraved state, and says, "If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" Matthew 7:11

Thirdly, from his promises. He assures us positively that he will answer. His own words are, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I WILL deliver you, and you shall glorify me." He is . . .

faithful to his Word,

unchangeable in his nature,

unalterable in his purpose,

the same yesterday, today, and forever.

What he spoke — he intended. What he has promised — he will do. Nothing can occur to cause him to alter his mind; for all that will occur was known to him before he gave his Word. He cannot falsify his Word, for he is the God of truth.

Jesus assures us, that whatever we ask the Father in his name — he will give it to us. Then, in the day of our trouble, let us ask in the name of Jesus, and God will answer us.

Fourthly, his invitation is a security that we shall have an answer. Jesus bids the weary and heavy laden — to come to him and find rest; if thirsting for the Spirit of holiness and happiness — to come unto him and drink; and he never could thus invite, if he intended to disappoint us. He is trustworthy, and waits to be gracious. If we plead his invitation he will acknowledge it as his, and deal with us according to the tenor of the same.

Fifthly, the numberless examples left on record in the Word, bear witness to the truth that God will answer us. They called upon him in trouble, they fled to him for support and relief — and not one of them was disappointed or ashamed. They all stand forth and say, "He is faithful to perform his gracious Word." If but one could be found that sought, cried, and looked unto him in vain — we might doubt; but all who sought the Lord were heard by him, and delivered from all their fears.

Sixthly, our own past experience corroborates the fact that "the Lord will hear me." We have often called and cried unto him — but never yet in vain. He always lent a ready ear to our complaints, and granted us our requests, or something better than was asked. Yes, we can witness for our God, that he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

Penitent publicans are always heard — but proud pharisees are denied. Which are we? If believers in Jesus, we shall never find the Lord worse than his Word, or the future worse than the past. If tried — we shall be supported. Even if the furnace should be heated seven times hotter — still as our day so shall our strength be. We shall ever find the grace of Jesus sufficient, and his strength made perfect in our weakness. Look unto the generations of old, did ever any seek the Lord and were confounded? Or, did ever any call upon him in trouble, for grace to bear it, and to be sanctified by it, and were refused? Never one. Neither shall we be.

Why should my soul indulge complaints,

And yield to dark despair?

The lowest of my Father's saints

Are safe beneath his care!

Why should I thus desponding bow,

Or why with anguish bleed?

Though darkness veil my passage now,

Yet glory shall succeed. A thousand promises are wrote

In characters of blood;

And those emphatic lines denote

The ever-faithful God.

Through those dear promises I range,

And, blessed be his name,

Though I, a feeble creature, change,

His love is still the same.

Why, then, should fears so far prevail,

When they my hopes accost?

My faith, though weak, can never fail,

Nor shall my hopes be lost!

21 A Good Plan

A Good Plan

Most people are more or less like the models they set before them to imitate; it is of great consequence, therefore, that we endeavor to write after a good copy. Each saint has his peculiar excellency — but no saint is perfect; it is not wise, therefore, to fix upon any saint as our pattern. Our pattern should, if possible, be perfect. Jesus is perfect, let us therefore take him for our example — he is intended to be so. Those who rely on his merit — should tread in his steps.

"I have set the Lord always before me." Psalms 16:8. David set Jehovah always before him, and thought, spoke, and acted, as in his sight. Let us do the same. Let us set the Lord always before us for several important purposes. To imitate him in his holiness, benevolence, and love: "Be merciful, even as your Father in Heaven is merciful." To fear to offend him by indulging in any known sin: "Walk in the fear of the Lord all the day long." To please him by acting in accordance with his holy Word. "You ought to walk and to please God." To consult him in all difficult matters and trying times: "I will counsel you, my eye shall be upon you." To praise him for the innumerable favors we receive: "O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endures forever." To strengthen us for duty and for trials: "I will strengthen you, yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness." To encourage us by his presence and promises: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." To embolden us by delivering us from the fear of man: "The fear of man brings a snare — but he who trusts in the Lord shall be safe." To supply us with all that we need, while passing through this wilderness: "My God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

If we set the Lord always before us:

We shall be steady, steadfast, and immovable. We shall not be moved from the glorious foundation which God has laid in Zion, and on which all our hopes must rest — but we shall be like the Mount Zion, which cannot be removed — but abides forever.

We shall not be moved out of the hands of the Mediator — but shall be preserved by his power unto eternal salvation. He says, "I know my sheep, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand."

We shall not be moved out of the heart of God, in which we dwell and enjoy safety and repose. "God is love, and he who dwells in love, dwells in God; and God dwells in him." With the Lord always before us . . .

our faith will be strong,

our hope will be vigorous,

our humility will be deep,

our penitence will be abiding,

our evidences will be satisfactory,
and our example will be bright!

We shall be . . .

happy ourselves,
a credit to religion, and
an honor to God.

Let us, therefore, set the Lord always before us . . .

to meditate upon his love, grace, and goodness;
to admire his holiness, condescension, and long-suffering; and
to commune with him, as our Friend and righteous Father, from day to day.

Then we shall not . . .

fear men,
dread death, or
be alarmed at the convulsions that take place in our world. Our confidence will be strong,
our peace will flow like a river, and
our righteousness like the waves of the sea.

It is when we take the eye off the Lord, and look into SELF — that . . .

our doubts, fears and unbelief, arise and work,
Satan gains an advantage over us,
and the world fascinates or frightens us.

Let us, therefore, look . . .

out of self,
away from the world,
above our trials —
and look simply to Jesus! This is the way to . . .
enjoy peace,
grow in grace, and
abound in every good work.

Let us look away . . .

from sin — to Jesus making atonement for it;
from guilt on the conscience — to Jesus as bearing the iniquity of our holy things before the Lord;
from imperfect duties deserving punishment — to his magnificent righteousness;
from our cold hearts and lifeless prayers — to his constant and prevalent intercession.

We shall never maintain . . .

peace in our consciences,

evenness in our walk, or

consistency in our lives —

but as we keep the Lord before us!

If, therefore, we wish to be happy,

if we desire to be holy,

if we would die in peace —

let us look only, always, and in everything to Jesus.

O Savior, may I set you before me as . . .

my fountain of supply,

my source of comfort,

my rock of strength,

my way of salvation,

and my bright example

— so that I may walk worthy the calling with which I am called, in all godliness and honesty! In every difficulty — I will look unto the Lord; and in every trial — I will wait for the God of my salvation!

22 The Way to Be Happy

The Way to Be Happy

One of the greatest privileges a believer can enjoy, is to see that God, in all the glory of his nature and perfections — is on his side. And this is the privilege of every Christian — whether he enjoys it or not. God, in Christ, is united to every saint; and every saint, in Christ, is united to God. The Divine nature, through the human, sympathizes with us in every conflict, trial, and trouble. God is engaged to us, and engaged for us, in the everlasting covenant, therefore the Psalmist could sing, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Of whom, indeed! For, as the Apostle reasons, "If God is for us," and with us, then "who can be against us?" Who can prevail against us? Who can really injure us? Let us, then, rejoice in the fact, that "the Lord Almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge!"

Let us daily think of God's glorious perfections, and view them as engaged for us at all times. His power is engaged to support, defend, and strengthen us. His omniscient eye is constantly upon us, watching over us for good. His omnipresence is our safeguard from all our foes — for no one can come and find our God absent from us. His justice and righteousness shine in all his dealings with us — and are like lofty mountains round about us. His holiness shines in all his purposes and plans — and forbids the thought that he will act unsuitably towards us. His mercy is ever great towards us — and by it he sympathizes with us in all our sorrows, griefs, and woes. His goodness will constantly supply us, and is sufficient to fill us with admiration and astonishment. His truth renders certain — every promise he has given and recorded in his Word. His immutability bears us up and bears us on, confirming our faith and hope in his Word. His wisdom frustrates the designs of our foes, and arranges and manages all for our welfare. His eternity is the date of our happiness, and the duration of our unspeakable blessedness!

Here is enough to . . .

engage our thoughts,

overflow our minds, and

forever fill us with adoration and praise!

What a God is Jehovah! And Jehovah, in Jesus — is ours!

How cheering this fact, and what sweet support it yields to the mind — to meditate on his perfections and glorious attributes — seeing them all in Jesus — and in him engaged for our present and everlasting welfare!

What could shake our minds — if we did but firmly believe that God's omnipotence is engaged to defend us to the uttermost?

What could tempt us to commit any known sin — if we were realizing that God's omniscient eye is upon us; yes, that God is present with us, and that he is our sin-hating father?

What could lead us into murmuring and rebellion — if we were fully persuaded that God's holiness and justice are for us, and will shine resplendent in all his dealings with us?

What could lead us to think that our prayers would not be answered, nor our petitions be regarded — if we were fully assured, and our minds were influenced by the assurance, that God is truth?

How could we believe that he would ever turn against us — if we rightly viewed his immutability?

Or, how could we think that our affairs would be disordered — if we felt satisfied that his wisdom was working for us at all times!

We do believe all of these things — but we need to make them bear more upon our experience and practice. Our religion is too much in the head — and too little in the heart. Truth rather floats in the understanding — than sinks down into the soul. Our memory lets it slip, and nothing but frequent meditation on these things, will cause us to profit by them. They are calculated and intended to benefit the Lord's people — but unless we exercise our minds upon them — we shall not be benefitted by them.

One truth, brought home to the soul by the Holy Spirit, and digested by meditation, does us more good than volumes which just pass through the mind! We ought, therefore, to pray more over what we read, and look to the Holy Spirit, beseeching him to unfold and apply the truth to us. We are often starving in the midst of plenty — and full of fears, when we have every reason to be confident and happy. Our religion will never make us happy — until we look more out of self — until we are more taken up with what God is to us, and less with our own miserable feelings.

Jehovah says, "I will be your God." "I am married unto you." "Look unto me." What is this but saying,

"I am for you.

I am united to you.

I tenderly love you.

I will never neglect you.

I will allow nothing to harm you.

I will supply you.

I will guide you.

I will do everything that is necessary for you.

Look to me for everything.

Come to me with all your troubles.

Trust me with all your affairs.

Put all your concerns into my hand.

Expect me to perform the part of a wise, wealthy, kind-hearted husband.

Only seek my glory, and I will secure your everlasting welfare.

I shall rejoice to do you good.

I shall consider it an honor, a happiness — to benefit and bless you.

Only believe my Word.

Only give me credit for veracity.

Only place confidence in me, and I pledge myself that all shall be well."

Lord, give us faith to believe this! Holy Spirit, write out a fair copy of it on our hearts, and help us to retain and use it in our everyday walk and work! Truth would make us happy — but unbelief keeps from it.

23 Death at Hand!

Death at Hand!

"There is but a step between me and death!" 1 Samuel 11:8 So said David of old — and so may each one of us say. Death is a very solemn event, for . . .

it is the consequence of sin,

it is the end of our course on earth,

it terminates our probation, and

it introduces us into an unchangeable state.

After death, there is LIFE for the godly:

a life of certainty — no doubts or fears;

a life of peace — no foes or conflicts;

a life of holiness — no sin or impurity;

a life of service — no idleness or illness;

a life of happiness — perfect and perpetual happiness.

After death, there is the SECOND DEATH for the ungodly — a separation . . .

from all friends and comforts;

from all hope and cheerful prospects;

from all enjoyment either of body or mind; and

from God, who is the fountain of health, holiness, and happiness.

Physical death happens but once, "It is appointed unto all men once to die — and after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). A mistake made here, can never be rectified. If we die in sin — we must forever suffer. If we die without Christ — we must remain separate from Christ forever. This is a solemn thought, and should have our most serious consideration.

Death is very NEAR to us — there is but a step between us and it. Nothing is more uncertain than life — for we are not sure of one day, one hour, yes, one minute! Sudden death is by no means uncommon; and if others have died suddenly — why may not we? We may be corpses before night — for death is near at hand! Men place it at a distance; but this is folly, the distance exists perhaps only in the man's imagination. Men endeavor to forget it; but this is equally foolish, for death will come whether we think of it or not!

Most do not prepare for death — one would think they must be insane. Who would propose a journey to some foreign shore — and make no preparation for that journey, or for comfort at its end? Yet men know that they must cross the ocean of death, and land on the shores of the eternal and invisible world, and make no preparation for it. Surely, as the wise man said, "Madness is in their hearts while they live!" (Ecclesiastes 9:3).

Men are often surprised by death — and yet no one should be. The Savior has said to every one of us, "Be ready!" Others have been taken away to their eternal destiny — and your turn will soon come! Your days are numbered. The hour of your death is fixed. The messenger stands ready to execute the sentence of justice. The axe is laid at the root of the tree, at any moment it may be taken up, and then, with one stroke perhaps, the tree falls! My dear friends, we should become familiar with death. We should think of it, prepare for it, and daily stand ready. We should make sure that we are in Christ, that our faith is genuine, our repentance sincere, and our lives regulated by God's holy Word.

Thoughts of death as so very near should make us . . .

very serious,

active in God's cause,

devout in our spirit and temper,

attentive to all the means intended for our salvation,

hold all earthly things very loosely.

We ought not to live one moment undecided, or in a state of uncertainty. But though death is so near, and so uncertain — yet many thoughtless people feel secure. No alarm agitates their hearts. No concern regulates their minds. They see others die, they hear of the number that are daily carried off — but they are not in the least affected. Truly they are dead in trespasses and sins!

Others think occasionally of death, and at times the importance of a preparation for death; but they put the matter off, thinking that a more convenient season will arrive. My dear reader, the present is the only convenient season. Now, the way of salvation is just before you — the gate of life stands wide open — the Son of God is willing to receive you — and all Heaven will rejoice in your repentance and conversion to God.

If there is but a step between us and death — there ought not to be a step between us and Christ. He alone can deliver us from the power of death. He alone can save us from sin, and introduce us to eternal life. Let us, therefore, make sure of a saving interest in Christ, of union to Christ, and possession of the Spirit of Christ — so shall we have nothing to fear even if there be not a step between us and death — but shall perhaps rather say with the apostle, "I have a desire to depart and be with Christ — which is far better!"

24 The Sinner's Doom!

The Sinner's Doom!

"These shall go away into everlasting punishment!" Matthew 25:46 WHO shall go away into everlasting punishment? Every unbeliever. Every soul that leaves this world without a new birth. Every one who does not sincerely love Christ. All who do not experimentally know God, and practically obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. Every prayerless person. Every liar. Every swearer. Every drunkard. Every immoral person. Every fornicator. Every one who lives and dies an enemy to God.

Reader, what is your character? Are you included among any of the foregoing? If so, Jesus says that at the judgment of the great day, that you will be sentenced to everlasting punishment! Is not this fearful? Ought we not very seriously to think of it? Can we be excused if we trifle with it? But to what shall we be sentenced if we do?

"These shall go away into everlasting punishment!" To be driven away from God forever. To be associated with devils and damned souls. To be shut up in the prison of Divine justice. To suffer directly from the wrath of God. To endure the lashings of an enlightened conscience. To be scourged with the most bitter reflections. To be tormented by Satan, who now deceives and misleads us. To be filled with black despair. To be plunged into a lake of fire and brimstone. To be punished in every faculty of the soul, in every sense and in every member of the body. To be punished in exact proportion to . . .

the sins we have committed,

the light we have been favored with,

the privileges we have slighted, and

the convictions we have stifled. To be punished under circumstances which will convince us that our punishment is just and equitable, and that God would not be just if he punished us less. This will . . .

shut the mouth,

embitter the pain,

arm conscience with the most powerful weapon,

and sink us into the most fearful agony. But how long will this punishment continue? Forever!! For it is —

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT! It must be so, for SIN, which is the cause of punishment — will continue. Punishment never converted a soul to God yet — and never will. The punished will go on sinning, and sin will require the continuance of punishment. Where punishment is inflicted, no

mercy is shown, no gospel is proclaimed, no hope can be excited — therefore, no repentance can be produced.

It must be eternal, for GOD who punishes is eternal. He is the eternal God. He will ever live, and while he lives — he will hate sin; and while he hates sin — he will punish the condemned sinner.

It must be eternal, for the WORM that inflicts the most exquisite part of the punishment is so. "Their worm never dies, and the fire never goes out!" Conscience will ever live — and the fire will forever burn.

It must be eternal, for . . .

the CHAINS that bind them are everlasting (Jude 6);

the PRISON is blackness of darkness forever (Jude 13); and

the PUNISHMENT is the vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 7).

It must be eternal, for the SENTENCE is. It cannot be repealed — for it is just. It dooms every impenitent sinner to go away from God, from hope, from ease, from happiness, from Heaven — and to go "into everlasting fire!"

Dear reader, think of these things! Knowing the terrors of the Lord, I would persuade you. O think of eternal fire! O think of hopeless despair! And think that you may now escape these, for Jesus is able to save you; he invites you to look to him and be saved; and he promises that if you come unto him he will never cast you out. Look, look then to Jesus! Fly, fly this moment to his arms! Fall, fall at his feet, and seek and obtain everlasting life! But if you will not, I assure you that you shall surely perish — and perish justly, too!

25 CONVERSION

CONVERSION "Now repent of your sins and be converted — so that your sins may be wiped away!" Acts 3:19 Every man by nature needs conversion.

He has turned away from God. His heart is set upon sin. His eye is attracted by folly.

He lives for himself. His nature is depraved. His life is rebellion against God. His end will be according to his deeds.

"Except you are converted, and become as little children — you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." Every unconverted man, therefore, is shut out of Heaven, and will be shut up in Hell. His sentence is just. His doom is fixed. His destiny is dreadful.

Reader, are you unconverted? Are you still in your sins? Do you love the world? Do you neglect the Savior? Do you despise the Bible?

If so, you are unconverted; and to you God says, "Repent of your sins, and be converted!"

WHAT is conversion?

It is the turning of the soul . . .

from error to truth;

from sin to holiness;

from the world to the church;

from Satan to God.

It begins in conviction of sin. Yet many have been convinced of sin, who have never been converted to God.

Conviction must be followed by contrition. The converted man is sorry for his sins. He grieves over the depravity of his heart, he groans on account of the inconsistency of his life, and he loathes himself before God for all his iniquities.

Sin becomes his burden.

Guilt fills him with alarm.

Eternity makes him serious.

He looks back, and his past life distresses him.

He looks forward, and he fears that Hell will be his portion. His spirit sinks within him.

Fears harass and distress him.

Satan tempts and torments him.

He knows not what to do. The Lord Jesus is then set before him.

He perceives that he is just the Savior he needs.

He approaches him with fear.

He confesses his sin before him.

He lays hold on his gracious Word.

He casts his guilty soul upon him.

He places his entire confidence on his blood and obedience.

He finds peace with God. His guilt is gone. His fears are dispersed.

Everything appears in a new light.

He loves the Savior.

He worships God.

He joins himself to the saints with delight.

He hates sin.

He gives up the company of the ungodly.

He has lost his relish for the carnal pleasures of the world.

He is a new creature — old things are passed away, and, behold, all things are become new!

Reader, do you know anything of this experimentally? You must, or perish. Unless you see your true state as a sinner before God; unless you flee to Jesus to save you from the wrath to come; unless you venture your soul on his perfect work — you are undone forever! In life you will be a stranger to peace, and in death you will have no good hope. In health you will enjoy no solid comfort, and in sickness you will be miserable.

True religion is the balm that heals the soul. It is the antidote of all our woes. It is just what you need, and what God invites you to receive. Oh, think, and think seriously! Pray for the Holy Spirit to enlighten, soften, and sanctify your heart. Repent of your sins, confessing them before God's mercy-seat. "Now repent of your sins and be converted — so that your sins may be wiped away!"

26 Food for Faith

Food for Faith "I will be with him in trouble." Psalms 91:15 With WHOM will God be in times of trouble? There are four characteristic marks in the context by which the heirs of this promise may be known.

First, They know the Lord's name. The Spirit has taught it to them. They have learned it from the Bible. They have so learned it as to trust in it. It is their strong tower. Their powerful plea. The object of their faith, and the subject of their meditation.

Second, They have set their love upon God. He has been revealed to them as lovely. They have seen him in Jesus. His love has been shed abroad in their hearts. They love him . . .

for what he has done for them;

for what he has conferred upon them;

for what he has promised them;

and because he is altogether lovely.

Third, They have made the Lord their refuge and their habitation. He is to them what the place of safety is to the trembling dove; what the commodious, comfortable, and well-stored dwelling is to the happy inhabitant. They dwell in God by faith. They dwell with God in holy fellowship.

Fourth, They dwell in the secret — or in secret with the Most High. He is with them. They . . .

walk with him;

pour out their hearts before him;

and enjoy free communion with him.

He will be with them. WHEN will God be with His people? In trouble. He will not keep them from trouble; but he will meet with them and bless them in it. The favorites of Heaven are exposed to many troubles — social, physical, domestic, relative, personal. The promise refers . . .

to sickness,

to losses and crosses,

to persecutions and bereavements,

to every storm and tempest,

to the common and the uncommon,

to the temporal and the spiritual.

Christian, you must not expect to escape trouble — you were born to it. It was appointed for you. It is part of your heritage. Troubles are covenant blessings. They may be bitter — but they are beneficial. They may wound the flesh — but they heal the spirit. The worldling may repine at them — but the Christian should only seek to be benefitted by them. Are you in trouble? All the saints have been tried — why, then, should you expect to escape? The way to the kingdom is not carpeted with velvet — but it is lined with tribulation. Our God has consulted our welfare — not our whims. His object is declared, to make us partakers of his holiness. The end is worthy of himself, and may well lead us to bow before him, saying, "The cup which my Heavenly Father gives me — shall I not drink it?" In the prospect of trouble he speaks to us, and says — "I will be with him in trouble." Can we desire more?

If the Lord be with us, however boisterous the ocean, or terrible the storm — we can never sink. He will uphold us with his hand.

If he is with us, we should not fret or give way to fear, or spend our time in complaining. Such conduct is highly inconsistent; for if God is with us, our troubles will be sanctified, and will only do us good, producing "the peaceable fruits of righteousness."

If he is with us in our troubles — he will embitter sin to us, which is the direct or indirect cause of all our griefs. Sin being embittered — the Savior will be endeared, and become more precious to us than before. The world will lose the false glare by which it is surrounded, and appear vile and worthless — in comparison with spiritual and eternal things. Grace will become more desirable, and we shall seek it with more earnestness and importunity. We shall be more careful to please God, and more fearful of offending him.

We shall look well to our evidences, perceiving that what may satisfy in the sunshine — will not be sufficient in the storm; what may do for health and strength, will not do for sickness and death. The troubles of time, if sanctified — will strip eternity of its gloomy covering, and make thoughts of Heaven truly delightful.

If God promises to be with us in trouble, it is to produce such effects as these — and such results are worthy of God.

Beloved, if troubles come — God sends them. Their nature, number, weight, and duration — are all arranged by his infinite wisdom, and appointed by his eternal love. If your God sends trouble — he himself will accompany it. Expect him to be with you. Look to find him near. He sits by the furnace as the Refiner; or walks with his people in the midst of it as their Friend. In every trouble — he will sustain and comfort you. His faithful Word assures you, that "he will be with you in six troubles, and in seven he will not forsake you." Through trouble he will fit you for his kingdom, and lead you to his glorious rest. Are you in sore troubles at this moment? God is with you. He strengthens you, if he does not comfort you. He superintends the whole process of your purification. He will do you good — only good. Cleave to him. Rest upon his Word. Plead the finished work of Jesus. Fear nothing but sin. Seek personal sanctification before everything else, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Seize the promise. Hold it fast. With it resist Satan. In the confidence of its fulfillment meet every trial, and say: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

27 Christ Is All!

Christ Is All!

What the sun is to the world — that Christ is to the Church. What the soul is to the body — that Christ is to the soul. It has pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell — and emptiness is written upon everything out of Christ. The Apostles testified that Jesus was all in all, and primitive believers lived upon him as such. Let us look at this testimony.

First, In reference to the SINNER. Christ is all he needs, or can need. Does he need pardon? Jesus is exalted to give the remission of sins. Does he need righteousness? Christ is made of God unto us righteousness. He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believes. Does he need acceptance with God? We are made accepted in the Beloved. Does he need wisdom? In Jesus dwells all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and he is made unto us wisdom. Does he need holiness? Jesus is the root of all true sanctification; and he is made of God sanctification unto us. Does he need redemption? We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace; he is of God made unto us redemption.

There is no one thing that is necessary to make him holy or happy — but it is in Jesus; and whatever is in Jesus — is free for all who come unto him by faith.

Therefore it is that we direct every sinner to Christ. To Christ alone. To go to Jesus immediately. To go for all that he needs. To go expecting to receive. To go just as he is — for a full and free salvation, and thus glorify the riches of his grace.

Secondly, Let us view the testimony in reference to the SAINT. Christ is not only all that he needs — but all that he can consistently desire. Is he in darkness? Christ is the Sun of righteousness, with healing in his beams. Is he in danger? Jesus is his shield. Is he diseased? Christ is the great Physician. Is he hungry and thirsty? Jesus is the true bread that came down from Heaven; and the water that he gives, becomes a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. Does he feel dead and lifeless? Christ is his life, and will quicken him again. Is he imperfect? In Jesus is completeness, and we are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Christ is all, therefore we say to the believer: Look to Jesus for all you need. Live upon Christ. Make him what God has made him to you — a full and complete Savior. Go to no one else. Expect from no other quarter.

Remember, the two principal lessons you have to learn are, first, to receive Christ; and then, daily to make use of Christ. Cleave to him with full purpose of heart. Follow on to know him. Seek great things from him, and use all you receive from him for the advancement of his kingdom and glory. Having Christ, all things are yours; for all things are in Christ, or under his direction and control.

Thirdly, Let us view the testimony in reference to the PREACHER. The truly enlightened and spiritual preacher, exhibits Christ as all in all . . .

in every doctrine he proclaims,
in every promise he unfolds,
in every precept he enforces, and
in every experience he sets forth.

Doctrines apart from Christ, are dry and unsavory.

Promises apart from Christ, are lifeless words.

Precepts apart from Christ, are irksome and grievous.

Experience without Christ, is enthusiasm or delusion.

Every gospel doctrine centers in the Cross of Christ.

Every new covenant promise is in the hand of Christ.

Every scriptural precept leads us to Christ.

Every experience which is produced by the Holy Spirit, is an experience of the grace, power, presence, or faithfulness of Christ.

Christ is all in our ministry. Take away Christ, and we lay down our commission, give up our work, and retire from our post.

We preach Christ in every place — Christ in every sermon — Christ for every purpose. Do we aim to convert the sinner? We preach Christ, who is the wisdom of God, and the power of God. Do we wish to relieve the distressed? We preach Christ, whose blood cleanses us from all sin — whose righteousness justifies from all charges — and whose grace is sufficient for every case. Do we endeavor to comfort the mourner? We preach Christ who is the consolation of Israel, and who has said, "As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you; and you shall be comforted." It is by . . .

unfolding his fullness,

exhibiting his grace,

setting forth his perfect work, and

showing the tenderness of his heart —

that we comfort those who are cast down. Do we try to strengthen the weak? It is by preaching Christ, who is the strength of the poor, and the strength of the needy in his distress.

Jesus meets every case, suits every person, and is our one grand subject.

We preach Christ Jesus the Lord, and we preach him as all and in all. All that the sinner needs — all that the saint desires — and all that the preacher requires. By faith in him — the sinner is saved; living upon him — the believer is happy; and preaching him fully, freely, and constantly — the preacher is successful. This subject is a touchstone to try us — Is Christ our all? Our All in the closet, before God? our All in the Church, before the saints? our All in the world, before his foes? If

Christ is not our all — we differ from apostolic Christians, and our state is suspicious. This subject is like a friendly sign-post: it directs all to Christ — and it directs us to Christ always, and for everything. He is . . .

the Fountain which supplies us,

the strong Refuge which protects us,

the Friend who sympathizes with us,

the Prophet who teaches us,

the Priest who atones for us,

the King who rules over us, and

the Savior who delivers from all evil, and introduces us to all good! May we live upon Christ as our all! May we labor to set forth Christ as all! May we die bearing testimony that Christ is all!

28 He Ever Lives!

He Ever Lives!

"Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he ever lives to intercede for them!" Hebrews 7:25

He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. He ascended to Heaven to plead our cause with his Father, and he ever lives at the right hand of the Majesty on high. This is a most delightful fact. It is full of comfort. It should often engage our minds. It should fill us with peace and joy.

"He ever lives," and while he lives — he LOVES his redeemed people. He cannot but love his people. They are part of himself. They are dearer to his heart than all other created objects. He lives to love them, and he loves to live for them. He loves them every moment. He loves them with a love . . .

as vast as infinity,

stronger than death,

as changeless as his nature,

and as lasting as eternity.

"He ever lives." And while he lives — he CARES for us. His thoughts are filled with his people's concerns. He cares for them all — and for all that concerns them. His care is incessant. It is . . .

a father's care, for his beloved family;

a husband's care, for his chosen bride;

a shepherd's care, for his valued flock.

He cares for their bodies. He cares for their souls. He lives to care for them, and will care for them while he lives.

"He ever lives," and while he lives — he WATCHES over us. His eye is ever upon us. Nothing can divert it from us. He never loses sight of one of his people for a moment. No refiner ever watched his gold, during the process of purification, with such interest. No mother ever watched over a sick child with such tender affection. No husband ever watched over the desire of his eyes, in the article of death, with half such affection or concern, as Jesus watches over his people. His eyes are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cries. He watches over them for good, to preserve, sanctify, and bless them.

"He ever lives," and while he lives — he PROVIDES for us. He knows our needs. He is well acquainted with all our circumstances. He is intensely interested in our welfare. He has the

resources of time and eternity at his command. He is pledged to supply us. He never forgets his promises. He will not forfeit his Word. Our supplies are certain, for he lives to provide them, to impart them, and to bless them. Blessed thought! Jesus lives as Jehovah Jireh, as our constant, kind, and careful provider!

"He ever lives" and while he lives — he LISTENS to us. His ear and his heart are always open.

He hears . . .

the softest sigh,

the most suppressed groan, and

the silent breathings of the soul.

He catches every desire.

He knows every wish.

He bows to hear every prayer.

He loves to hear us call upon his name, and tell out our trials, troubles, and temptations unto him. Nothing delights him more, than to hear us pour out our hearts before him, plead his precious promises, and ask him in faith for the blessings we need.

"He ever lives" and while he lives — he INTERCEDES for us. This is his present employment. He uses all his influence for us. He pleads his precious blood — his perfect righteousness — his relationship to his Father — and the promises made to him in the everlasting covenant. What a mercy is this, that when our hearts are hard, our affections cold, and our spirits straitened — Jesus pleads for us. Yes, at this very moment, while the eye is passing over these lines — Jesus is presenting his nail-pierced hands, his opened side, and his thorn-crowned brow — for us! In life,

and all its trials;

in death, and its unknown sufferings;

in health, and its pleasures;

in sickness, with its weakness and pains;

in prosperity, with its allurements; and

in adversity, with its temptations —

Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us!

Precious pleader! I would put my entire cause into your hand, and leave all my affairs with you. "He ever lives," and therefore we shall LIVE. His own words are, "Because I live — you shall live also" (John 14:19). He has united us with himself. We are really one with him. He is our life. He lives in us, and we live by him. Nothing can ever separate us from him. He is the vine — and we the branches. He is the head — and we are the members of his body. He has identified himself with us — and our concerns with his.

"He ever lives," and therefore we shall be JUSTIFIED. "Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, yes rather, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:34).

Dying — he put away our sins.

Rising — he secured our release. As Advocate — he carries our cause. The sin he atoned for, is pardoned. The righteousness he wrought, is imputed. The people he represents, are justified.

Those justified by his obedience, are safe.

"He ever lives," and therefore we shall be SAVED. "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! (Romans 5:10). His death procured our release. His resurrection, procured our justification. His admission to Heaven, procured our acceptance with the Father. His life of intercession secures our endless salvation.

He says of us, "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand!" His heart is set upon their salvation, and nothing short of this will ever satisfy him. He travailed in death for us — he rejoiced in our new creation — he is pledged to be ever with us — and he will keep us unto his eternal kingdom and glory. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." He will present us to his Father at last, and say, "Here am I, Father, and the children which you have given me, not one of them is lost!" Does Jesus ever live?

Then let your faith be strong.

Believe his Word.

Confide in his faithfulness.

Expect his blessing.

Look for his glorious appearing.

Wait patiently his time. Does Jesus ever live? Then let your HOPE be lively. His Word is true. His heart is kind. His mercy is everlasting. His promises shall be fulfilled. Expect him . . .

to do as he has promised;

to give as you need;

to answer your prayers;

to guide you by his counsel, and

afterward receive you to glory. Does Jesus ever live? Then let your COURAGE live. Hear him speak to his servant John, "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hell!" (Revelation 1:17-18).

"He ever lives;" think of this truth! In seasons of sorrow, it will console you;

under bereavements, it will support you;

in the prospect of death, it will animate you.

29 The Believer and the Unbeliever

The Believer and the Unbeliever

"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." (John 3:17-19). The law was given that the offence might abound, that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God. The law shows us what sinners we are, condemns us for sin, and binds us over to answer for it before God. But God sent his Son to save those whom the law condemned; and to open their mouths in prayer and praise at his throne. Jesus came on purpose to save; he was sent by the Father to do so; and to save sinners of every age, nation, and color. He came . . .

to deliver us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us (Galatians 3:13);

to be a sin-offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Corinthians 5:21);

to reconcile us to God by his death (Romans 5:10);

to redeem us from all iniquity (Titus 2:14);

to put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself (Hebrews 9:26);

to bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18);

that we might live together with him (1 Thessalonians 5:10). The Savior had high authority, the kindest heart, and the greatest store of blessings — and he came to employ all for the everlasting salvation of poor sinners!

He who believes on Jesus is not condemned. The believer was condemned by the law; but he is now justified by the gospel. He has embraced the Savior as God's remedy for sin and guilt; he has had personal dealings with Jesus about the salvation of his soul; and he has given up himself to the Lord, not only to be delivered from punishment — but to be used to his glory. Now . . .

the sentence recorded against him is repealed,

a title to eternal life is given, and

a saving interest in all covenant blessings is secured.

He shall not be condemned, for . . .

Jesus is his powerful Advocate;

the Holy Spirit is his Teacher and Guide; and

Jehovah looks upon him, and treats him as a beloved child.

He is reconciled to God — and at peace with God. He has hidden in the Rock of Ages, and found safety. To him there is no condemnation, for he is in Christ Jesus; and he walks not after the flesh — but after the Spirit. But he who does NOT believe — is condemned already. He may assent to the truth of the Word; but if he has not yielded up his heart to God, he is an unbeliever still; and will be found in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. He loves the darkness, and prefers it to the light. He is willing to remain ignorant of the true character of God, his righteous law, and glorious gospel; he feels no great interest in the good news of Christ, as coming to save sinners; he slights the gospel, which is the best and kindest message God has ever sent to fallen, ruined man.

He loves the darkness of error — and prefers it to the light of Divine truth.

He loves the darkness of sin — and prefers it to the light of holiness.

He loves the darkness of unbelief — and prefers it to the light of faith.

He prefers the work and ways of the prince of darkness — to the work and ways of the Lord of glory.

Oh, how awful is this! and yet how common!

Sinner, how have you been acting while in health? Did you seek the Lord? Did you take the light of his Word to examine your own heart, your own way, and what was likely to be your everlasting end? Or did you prefer labor, profit, ease, pleasure, and sin, to the concerns of the soul and eternity? If so, you are condemned already! You have not to ask, "Shall I be condemned?" You are condemned! WHO condemns such a sinner?

God, the God of love. The God who is good, ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy. The great and dreadful God. The God who keeps mercy for thousands — but who will by no means clear the guilty. The God who, rather than condemn — would give his own Son to suffer, bleed, and die!

Yes, sinner, God condemns you — not only by his law — but by his gospel also. What does God condemn such a sinner for? For slighting, rejecting, and crucifying his Son. If Jesus Christ is the Son of God, he ought to be believed, loved, and adored: if he is not, the Jews were right in putting him to death as a blasphemer, for saying he was so. Every sinner, therefore, who refuses to admit the claims, bow at the throne, and receive the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, becomes a party to the crime committed by the Jews in crucifying the Son of God. They virtually say, "Away with him! Crucify him!" They trample his blood under their feet, and acquiesce with the Jews in the justice of putting him to death.

O sinner, how can you appear before God, charged, as you are, with the death of his only begotten and beloved Son? If you prefer darkness to light — you prefer the conduct of Judas to that of John; and Barabbas to the Lord Jesus. This is the crowning charge — the greatest crime that can possibly be charged against a sinner! WHEN is such a sinner condemned? Now . . .

under the reign of mercy,

in the land of hope,

before the judgment of the great day!

He has rejected God's remedy,

he has despised the Savior's blood,

he has resisted the Holy Spirit,

he has chosen death in preference to life.

WHAT is such a sinner condemned to? He is condemned to be punished with sorer punishment than the heathen — than those who died under the law!

He is condemned to punishment, in comparison with which the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah is tolerable.

He is condemned to everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. With WHOM is such a sinner condemned to suffer? He is to suffer with hypocrites, apostates, liars, swearers, harlots, whoremongers — and with the devil and his demons! Oh, what fearful, disgraceful, and miserable company! The gospel slighted and rejected . . .

becomes the savor of death unto death,

increases the sinners condemnation,

and leaves him without hope or help,

renders his condemnation most just, fearful, and eternal. Who can object to the condemnation of a man who has refused a pardon, and joined in degrading the Son of God, who out of mere love died to obtain it?

There are many who hear of Christ, and talk of Christ, to whom we may say, as Paul to the Galatians, "Christ shall profit you nothing." For as bread does not profit — unless it be received; so Christ, who is called the bread of life, must be received by faith, or we are none the better for hearing of him! Yes, we are the worse; for it is better not to know the way of righteousness, than knowing, to refuse to walk in it. You may feel at ease; but God says, "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion!" (Amos 6:1.) And he will reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished (2 Peter 2:9). God may delay to execute the sentence — but he will not falsify his Word; the wrath is only postponed — it is increasing, it will be most dreadful! But yet there is hope — and hope for you. The Lord, considering all your sins, says, "Yet now return unto me!" He will receive you graciously, he will yet pardon, and accept, and glorify his rich and free grace in you. Therefore do not despair, do not despond; but say, "I will look unto the Lord!" David tells us of some who did so, and the effect: "I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles!" (Psalms 34:4-6).

30 A Motto

A Motto

"To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some." 1 Corinthians 9:22

Thus wrote the Apostle Paul, when accounting for his conduct to the Church at Corinth, and such should be the object constantly kept in view by us.

It is a motto for the Preacher. In preparing his sermons, in preaching the gospel, in visiting his flock, in all that he does — this should be his object — to "save some."

It is a motto for the Sunday-school teacher. In preparing for his class, in teaching his pupils, in seeking for the absentees — this should be his object — to "save some."

It is a motto for the city or town missionary. In his daily visits to the sick, in his calls upon the poor, in his witnessing to opposers, in every part of his employment — this is his business, if possible — to "save some."

It is a motto for every Christian. In writing to relatives, in distributing tracts, in inviting to the house of prayer, in speaking to the sick, in conversing with neighbors, in noticing and speaking kindly to strangers in the congregation — here is his object — to "save some." Let us notice,

First — The OBJECT to be kept constantly in view — to "save some." Sinners are lost. All men are sinners. My children, my dear relations, my neighbors, my acquaintances — are all by nature, lost. Almost every house I enter has in it "the lost." Every person I meet, except the person is in Christ, is "lost." What a solemn, what an affecting thought! But, then, Jesus died. He died, the just for the unjust. He died, that sinners might live. His death made an infinite atonement, on the ground of which any sinner may be saved. There are no bounds to his merit — there is no limit to his mercy. The gospel is sent. It is sent to every creature. It is a message of mercy. It is the tale of a Savior's love. It is the story of peace, how it was made, and may now be enjoyed. The Church is entrusted with the gospel. She is to preserve it pure. To spread it in every direction. Every one of her members is under solemn obligation to share the good news, to spread the glorious tidings. The Holy Spirit is promised. He is promised to all who desire him, seek him, and plead for him in Jesus' name. He is an almighty agent. Through him we can do all things. He can make the simplest gospel message — the means of the conversion of the soul. He can make the plainest Scripture — the germ of everlasting life.

Every minister and every Christian should habitually aim at the salvation of sinners. This is our business. This should constantly be kept in view. For this we should live, and labor, and pray, and die. Let us now consider,

Secondly — The SPIRIT displayed in our motto. It is the spirit of deep devotion, of entire devotedness to God. Here is earnestness — deep, heartfelt, abiding earnestness. Everyone can

see that the man is in earnest — who breathes this spirit. His whole soul is set upon his work. He would do anything, no matter what, if by all means he might "save some." He would write, print, circulate, preach, teach, visit, converse — if he may but "save some."

He would SUFFER anything. Paul suffered the loss of all things, he endured stripes, imprisonment, stoning, shipwreck, all kinds of perils — and yet he passed through, forgot, and despised the whole — that he "might by all means save some."

He would BE anything. "To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some." Noble man! Admirable example! May I catch your spirit, copy your example, and be crowned with success as you were!

He would GO anywhere. It matters not what the climate, or what the character of the people — he is willing to go and preach the gospel unto all, that he "might by all means save some."

Beloved, we should imitate this example.

We should begin to do so at once. The state of the world demands it. The condition of our Churches requires it. The love of Jesus calls for it at our hands. But there are some special considerations which urge us immediately to adopt and act upon this motto:

1. So many are perishing! Hundreds in our neighborhoods. Thousands in our country. Millions in our world. Our streets are thronged with perishing souls, who are going down to the pit, as fast as time can carry them!

2. To perish is so dreadful!

Think of an immortal spirit eternally withering under the curse of a just and holy God!

Think of an intelligent being, becoming fuel for the curling flames of the bottomless pit!

Think of myriads, suffering eternally in body and in soul — that which produces weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Think of the never-dying worm!

Think of ceaseless lashes of a guilty conscience!

Think of dark prison of hopeless despair!

Think of what is contained in the wrath and curse of God!

Oh, it is unspeakably dreadful to perish — and yet sinners are perishing before your eyes, perhaps in your very house, and you feel but little concern about it! What have you done for them? What are you doing? What are you willing to do, that you might "save some?"

3. It is not absolutely necessary that sinners should perish. There is a way of escape. There is a Savior, who is both able and willing to save — a Savior who casts out none. The invitations of the gospel are free. The provision of the gospel is accessible. The path of life is a broad highway. If any perish around you, it is because you and others neglect to set the gospel before them — or because they reject the provisions of that gospel. The Savior complains of some, and says, "You will not come unto me, that you might have life." And Jehovah swears, "As I live, says the Lord

God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his evil ways. Turn! Turn from your evil ways; for why will you die?"

4. Salvation can only be by hearing and receiving the gospel. "Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How, then, shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" It is our duty to take the gospel home to their houses. To set it before them. To endeavor to impress it upon their minds, and to introduce it to their hearts.

5. The honor is so great, and the pleasure so sweet, which flows from "saving some." Oh, that our people did but realize the former — then they would enjoy the latter! What honor can be compared with that of saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins? (James 5:20.) What pleasure as sweet as that of leading sinners to the cross, to the throne of grace, and to the realms of glory!

6. It is one grand end of our conversion — and should be the principal business of our life. For this we were created anew in Christ Jesus. For this we were blessed with the enjoyment of experimental religion. For this we should live.

Beloved, let us from henceforth try all means in our power; and while we do so, let us honor the Holy Spirit, as the Lord and Giver of life, by depending upon him, pleading for his gracious influences and operations, and by ascribing all the good that is done to him. Let us keep this one object constantly in view: In writing to friends. In conversing with neighbors. In walking with acquaintances. In distributing tracts. In circulating the Bible. In pleading with God in prayer. In preaching the gospel. In visiting the sick.

Let all be done with this before the eye, "That I might by all means save some!" For this, let us live. For this, let us labor. For this, let us practice self-denial. And let us endeavor to keep this in view on the bed of death. In a word, whether we are poor or rich — sick or healthy — youthful or aged — at home or abroad — happy or cast down — illiterate or learned — public or private characters — let us endeavor by all means to "save some!" And let us expect to do so: for God will bless the honest, hearty, scriptural, prayerful efforts of his children! "Your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord."

We shall soon come to our last day on earth,

many opportunities are now lost forever,

we may not have many more afforded us;

let us therefore work while it is called today, and try "by all means to save some!"

31 A NEW YEAR

A NEW YEAR The commencement of a new year calls for reflection, repentance, and reformation. We should . . .

reflect upon the past,

repent at present, and

aim at reformation in future.

If we reflect rightly, we shall repent sincerely; and

if we repent sincerely, we shall reform immediately.

"Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord."

Flying time cries, reflect;

approaching eternity cries, repent;

and the God of time and eternity cries, reform. But who can bear close and serious reflection upon the past? It demands . . .

honesty of heart,

determination of spirit, and

zeal for the divine glory.

It is no trifling business to reflect upon . . .

sins committed,

mercies received,

duties neglected,

favors bestowed,

opportunities lost,

and kindness displayed. But if we do not reflect — we shall not repent;

if we do not repent — we shall not walk humbly with God;

if we do not walk humbly with God — we shall not be happy;

and if we are not happy — we shall not honor our profession.

Reader, are you a Christian? If so, take the first quarter of an hour you have to spare, and go aside quietly to reflect upon the past year. Think of its twelve months, its fifty-two Sundays, its three

hundred and sixty-five days. Turn over the book of remembrance, and see if you can reckon up . . .
the mercies you have received;
the evils from which you have been preserved;
the temptations you have escaped;
the sins you have committed;
the opportunities for doing or getting good;
and the privileges by which you have been distinguished.

Inquire . . .

what use you have made of your talents,
what motives have influenced your conduct,
what use you have been in the Church,
what good you have done to the world, and
what honor you have brought to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Alas! who of us can go over the ground we have trodden during the last year — without being covered with shame and confusion of face. Brethren,

let us seriously consider the past,
let us, then, heartily confess our transgressions unto the Lord,
let us repair to the ever open fountain,

nor let us rest until the Holy Spirit bears his inward witness that our sins are all forgiven. Are you a minister of Christ — the pastor of one of his Churches? If so, give me your hand, and let us together seriously examine our souls before God. Things in the Churches are not as they ought to be, or as they have been. What part of the blame belongs to us? Let us not avoid the question, or try to cast all the blame on the people. We may be wrong in the very thing in which we imagine ourselves most right. Have we looked seriously into the low state of things in our Churches? Are we properly affected with it? Have we examined our own hearts respecting it? Is our spirit and temper lovely? Is our preaching plain, affectionate, and scriptural? Are our motives pure? Do we aim at the salvation of sinners, the edification of saints, and the glory of God alone in our sermons? Do we feel our solemn responsibility? Do we realize our dependence upon the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit? Are we clothed with humility before God? Do we deal faithfully with souls? Is our affection as apparent as our fidelity, in our public work? Do we so preach as to leave the impression upon the minds of our hearers — that we heartily desire to do them good? Do we love our people as we ought? Do we visit them as we ought? Do we watch over them as those who must give an account? Do we feel for sinners as we ought, and travail in birth for them until Christ is formed in them? Have we boasted too much, or put confidence in our abilities — rather than in God? Are we afflicted because the cause of God is struggling?

These are serious questions. Many more may be proposed. A serious consideration of them, with personal application, can do us no harm. Let us mourn over the past, seek closer communion with God, and greater communications from God; for it is only what comes from God which really does good, after all. It is his own Word which God blesses. If our preaching were more apostolic, there is reason to conclude that our success would be. Oh, to preach just what they did, and just as they did! Are you an undecided hearer of the gospel?

How long have you sat under its sound?

How many sermons have you heard?

How many convictions have you felt?

How many purposes have you formed?

How many times have you declined, when just coming to a decision?

Study these questions.

Undecided! What, and enter upon a new year in such a state, and that perhaps your last year! For, concerning you, the decree may have gone forth, "This very year you are going to die!" And suppose you do die — what will be the consequence? Jesus has said, "He who is not for me is against me." If you are not his friend — then you are his foe. If you are not a child of God — then you are an enemy to God. "How long will you halt between two opinions?" What can you gain by delay? The longer you live undecided . . .

the more sin will harden your heart,

the more power the world will have over you,

the more effectually Satan will ensnare you —

until perhaps you may become a living illustration of what is spoken by the prophet, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil."

Why not submit at once? Why not make it your first business, this new year, to yield yourself to God? Are you not a sinner — and do you not feel it? Is not Jesus a Savior — and do you not need him? Has he not invited such as you are to come unto him, and promised that he will never cast out? Go, then, and cast yourself at his feet, appeal to his mercy, plead his promise, venture on his perfect work — and you will find peace with God. Having done so, go and be baptized in his name, unite with his people, labor for his glory, walk with him in fellowship — and Heaven will crown your course. But should a careless, thoughtless sinner read these lines — what can I say to you? My poor thoughtless brother, think! Think . . .

of the value of your soul,

of the desert of sin,

of the shortness of time,

of the uncertainty of life,

of your need of a Savior,
of the exact adaptation of Jesus to meet your case,
of his readiness to receive you,
of the folly of trifling with his Word, and
of the dreadful consequence of dying in your sin!

Care for your soul, if you care for nothing else. Remember, once lost — and you are lost forever! If your soul is lost — your own sin and folly will be the cause of it. No one can lose it for you. The blame will eternally rest upon yourself. Begin this year by seeking the Lord. He speaks to you when he says by his servant, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon."

Perhaps the eye of a backslider may pass over this page. If so, let me affectionately beseech you, my poor fallen brother — to begin this year by returning to your God. Go and return to your first husband, for it was better with you then, than now. You have fallen by your iniquity — but God bids you take with you words and return unto him. He says, "Only acknowledge your iniquity." All he asks of you is to confess — and be pardoned, to acknowledge — and be blessed by him. He waits to be gracious unto you. You never can be happy, you never will have peace — until you return. Doubt not his love. Fear not rejection.

Throw yourself at his feet,
plead what Jesus suffered,
mourn over your past follies,
seek restoring grace, and
this will be one of the happiest years of your life.

Let us all give up ourselves more unreservedly to the Lord. Let us make his glory the main business of our lives. Let us not live unto ourselves — but unto Him who died for us and rose again. Living, may it be our aim to exhibit and exalt Christ — and then dying will be to us everlasting gain. Let us seek the salvation of sinners more ardently, perseveringly, and prayerfully than we have ever done. Let us strive, in every possible way, to rouse up the Churches from their present sleepy state; nor rest, nor let others rest, until our chapels are crowded, our converts multiplied, our additions great, and our members holy. Let us realize the fact, that "the Lord Almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge — "that his arm is not shortened that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy that it cannot hear; that he is saying to us, "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it!" and, "You have not because you ask not, or because you ask amiss. Ask and receive, that your joy may be full."

Beloved, the writer wishes you all a holy, happy, and successful New Year!

32 The Lord Is My Strength

The Lord Is My Strength "The Lord is my strength" Exodus 15:2 The Israelites were now delivered from the bondage of Egypt, they had passed the Red Sea; and, standing on the shore after their deliverance, they sang this song. They had the wilderness immediately before them, and the promised land in the distance; they needed encouragement, and here it is presented to them. Our position as Christians, is somewhat similar to theirs. We are passing through a waste howling wilderness — to our Father's house. We have already been delivered from many foes, fear, and dangers; but many more lie before us. Here, then, is our comfort: our strength is in God, or rather our God is our strength. The Spirit is teaching us this great and beneficial truth — by all our disappointments, foes, fears, trials, and difficulties; and we must learn it if ever we are to enjoy permanent peace, overcome our foes, or successfully travel on our journey. Let us notice,

1. The PRIVILEGE. "The Lord is my strength." It is to be put in possession of strength which is infinite — not the strength of a creature — but the strength of God. Surely this will inspire us with courage, and give us boldness. Our foes at best are but mighty — but the Lord, who is our strength, is almighty.

Fears may assail us,
doubts may try us,
our hearts may misgive us,
and our foes beset us —
but Jehovah is our strength!

Think of this, Christian, for it will not only give you courage — but it will assist you in the conflict. Your God will secretly, silently, and seasonably communicate strength unto you. He will . . .

revive you when you faint,
cheer you when you droop, and
strengthen you with power in your soul.

If God is your strength — then it will be sufficient for the most trying times. Who can tell what is before us — we may have . . .

heavy losses,
painful crosses,
distresses,

bereavements, or may even be called to die! But what if this should be the case! If God is our strength — we shall find his grace sufficient for us, and his strength made perfect in our weakness.

Let us not think too much of the trials of the way — but rather let us rejoice that the Omnipotent God is our strength!

If God is our strength — it is certain at all seasons, and in all places. Uncertainty belongs to man, not to our God. If we trust the creature, all is uncertain — but not if we trust Jehovah. He is in one mind. His promise is sure to be fulfilled. As sure as we need strength, looking to the Lord — we shall have it.

If Jehovah is our strength, then it is unfailing though all else change. The Lord never fails the soul that confides in him. Trust, therefore, in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

Let us consider, 2. The PROOF that Jehovah is our strength.

Reader, if the Lord is your strength — then he has taught you to know your weakness. The Lord is not the strength of that man who feels himself strong, and who can boast of his might. God's strength is made perfect in our weakness; and all His people, as they grow in grace, grow weaker and weaker, until at last they feel compelled to look to the strength of God alone — to enable them to do, to suffer, and to overcome.

It is a very great part of the work of the Holy Spirit — to strip us and empty us, and bring us down in the dust before God, as bruised reeds or smoking flax. The man who has no strength of his own — will find God to be the strength of his heart, and his portion forever. The weakest generally succeed the best.

If God is your strength — then you will painfully feel your poverty. He is the strength of the poor. Those who have nothing in themselves, will be bountifully supplied with all that they need by a kind and gracious God. There is no way to spiritual wealth — but through the valley of poverty; no entering Heaven — but as poor sinners.

If God is your strength — then you have faith in his Word. It is faith alone — which appeals to, embraces, and receives Divine strength. If we are kept by the power of God, it is through faith. Faith is the medium through which the strength of God is communicated to us. As our faith is — so is our strength.

If God is your strength — then you are of those who pray and wait at his throne of grace. What faith believes — prayer seeks; and what is sought in prayer, the man whose strength is in God, waits for and expects.

If God is your strength — then you will be tried. The Lord never gives us strength — that we may lie down and sleep or loiter away our time — but that we may . . .

work in his vineyard,

war with his foes, and

hasten to his kingdom.

He will try all the strength he gives. The strongest Christian has no strength to spare, or to trifle with. We often think that we have not sufficient strength to . . .

perform their duties,
master their difficulties, and
conquer their foes —

but we are mistaken. Past experience proves this to be wrong, and so will the future. But let us glance,

3. At the result. If Jehovah is our strength — then perseverance is certain. The righteous shall hold on his way, and he who has clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger. At first we set out with a run, then we come to a walk, and by and bye, to a stand-still; but as our day is — so is our strength. The weaker we feel — the more we discover the need of Divine strength. And when all our own strength is exhausted — we come up out of the wilderness leaning on our Beloved.

If God is our strength — then conquest is sure. Who is a match for omnipotence? What shall overcome the strength of God Almighty? If any object and say, "But I do not overcome, my foes are too strong for me, my besetting sins prevail against me;" remember, you are still in the battlefield, the victory is not yet won; but if God is your strength it is certain, for

"A feeble saint shall win the day,
Though death and Hell obstruct the way!"

Beware of giving way to fear, or of yielding to unbelief; for the Lord will never crown a coward. Courage, Christian. Look to your God. Expect strength from him.

"True you are weak — but he is strong,
And will his strength impart;
He'll teach your feeble hands to war,
And cheer your fainting heart."

If God is your strength — then you will safely arrive at home. The kingdom is given to you. The mansion is being prepared for you. The vessel in which you sail, is unsinkable. The whole of the crew will arrive safe in port. You are left for Heaven. You are sailing to Heaven. You will soon arrive in Heaven — for Jehovah is your strength.

Christian, if the Lord is your strength — then you need not fear — for omnipotence goes before you. What would you fear if omnipotence is with you, and for you? Would you fear impotence? Would you fear weakness?

If your strength is in your God — then you must not presume. The Lord will not exert his strength to save you from presumption.

If the Lord is your strength — then you may attempt great things and expect great things. Take off your eyes from your own folly and weakness — and fix them upon infinite wisdom and omnipotence! What may you not expect then, what may you not attempt then?

If the Lord is your strength — then there is no excuse for idleness. If you are doing nothing for God, where is your excuse? Up, slothful Christian, enter into the vineyard, and work while it is called today.

If God is your strength — then you may rejoice even in the prospect of the greatest trials, as the prophet did, "Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty — yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights!" Habakkuk 3:17-19

If the Lord is your strength — then you ought to be grateful, for very few realize and enjoy this privilege. You may have before you trials, difficulties, and foes — yet with God for your strength, you shall find all work together for your good. Praise God with your heart, with your voice, and with your life: for, as Matthew Henry says, "While thanks-giving is good, thanks-living is better."

33 The End of Man

The End of Man "But a man dies and fades away; he breathes his last—and where is he?" Job 14:10

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

"It is appointed unto men once to die — but after this, the judgment."

Reader, you must die — you cannot avoid it.

Three things secure death:

sin,

disease, and

God's righteous sentence. Our days are but as an hand-breath — a shadow when it declines. "What is your life? It is even a vapor which appears for a little while, and then vanishes away."

Disease is in our system; it spoils us of our beauty, strength, and mental abilities — rendering us the objects of pity, if not of disgust! We are cut off from society, temporal comforts, and our favorite pursuits, and at length we waste away by corruption in the grave. How humiliating the consideration — that . . .

the grave will soon receive us,

the worms will feed sweetly on us, and

the eye that now lingers over us in love will see us no more!

Man delivers up his spirit, for God requires it. "You turn people back to dust, saying: Return to dust, you mortals!" The soul cannot cease to exist, for it is immortal; it is capable of existing apart from the body, and it does so. It is given up either into the hands of angels — to convey it to paradise; or into the hands of devils — to plunge it into Hell. How solemn, then, is the inquiry, "Where is he?"

Reader, where will you be when called to depart hence?

There are but two classes of character in the world — the saints and sinners. And there are but two states beyond the grave — Heaven and Hell. When Lazarus died, he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom — the place of repose, rest, and quiet. Our Lord promised the penitent thief a place with him in paradise — the seat of plenty, pleasure, and peace. Paul desired to depart and be with Christ, which is far better than remaining below. Heaven is the abode of happiness, holiness, and glory; and to Heaven the soul of the saint is conveyed when it leaves the body. Therefore, if a saint dies, and the question is asked "Where is he?" we reply, without

hesitation, "In Heaven!" But there is also a dreadful Hell — a prison for the punishment of all impenitent sinners. "The rich man died and was buried, and in Hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments!" He was in torments as soon as he left the body — and in torments he remains. Hell is called a "lake of fire." Hell is the abode of devils and the damned. It is the place where Jehovah's tremendous curse is executed, and his wrath is felt forever. It is the bottomless pit, from which there is no redemption. The sinner is scorched in a devouring flame, and denied a drop of water! He is reminded of his past life, and agonized with bitter reflections on his folly.

"And Abraham said" to the rich man in Hell, "Son, Remember." Oh, how tormenting to be directed to look back over the page of his past history, and to be reminded of the good things he once enjoyed — but which were now lost, and lost forever!

Reader, if you should go to that place, you also will be reminded of the present; you will be called upon to remember the good things now given you to lead you to repentance — and your abuse of them. You will remember particularly the warnings which are now given you, and the messages of mercy sent to you. Oh, how wounding to the feelings — to be reminded of warnings slighted and messages of mercy rejected! You will remember the earnestness of the Lord's ministers when speaking to you of the concerns of the soul and eternity, and the carelessness and indifference manifested by you. You will think of the unbelief you indulged, and the false hopes you encouraged. You will be reminded how readily you complied with temptations, and the presumption you nourished in your bosom — for every impenitent sinner under the gospel is a presumptuous sinner. He presumes on mercy, while he lives insulting God.

You will then call to mind the patience of God towards you, and the convictions you stifled and destroyed. Oh, the bitter reflections in which you will indulge on . . .

the purposes you formed and violated, the opportunities you once had of escaping from Hell — but which are lost, and lost forever;

the character of the gospel you rejected, and which increases your condemnation;

and the numerous and aggravated sins you have committed.

What wretched employment must this be! But you will remember, for memory will be strengthened, and will set before you in the most tormenting form — all that has been committed to it in time. The remembrance will convince you of the justice of your doom, and forever shut your mouth from replying against God. It will deeply impress your mind with a distressing sense of the greatness of your folly and wickedness, and aggravate your misery throughout eternity. O sinner! remember now, now that you are in the land of hope — now that there is a way of escape!

You are under no necessity of going to Hell; if you go there — it must be your own fault. There is no decree that sentences you to damnation, except you live and die an enemy of God, resisting the Holy Spirit, and trampling under foot the Son of God. Hell and damnation are simply the natural effects of sin — but salvation is the display of free and sovereign grace.

Remember, Jesus does not take pleasure in condemning — but he does in saving sinners. He did not come to condemn the world — but to procure a pardon for the vilest offenders. He would rather suffer, bleed, and die upon the cross — than condemn sinners. His heart is tender; for he says, "I have no pleasure at all in the death of him who dies — but rather that he should turn from his

wickedness and live; therefore turn and live." His blood shows him to be reluctant to condemn, for he shed it to cleanse from all sin — and his practice proves the point. He forgave Mary the sinner, the Samaritan adulteress, the robber on the cross, Saul of Tarsus, and his own murderers on the day of Pentecost. Yes, he has forgiven every applicant who has appeared at his throne — pleading his Word, trusting his blood, and seeking salvation by his grace.

Reader, your life is wasting away — you will soon die. But where will you be? Let me ask, "What are you now?" Are you a true believer on the Son of God? Are you a saint? Have you been washed from sin, justified from transgression, and sanctified to the service of God, by the Spirit of our God? If so, when you depart — you will be with Christ. You will be forever with the Lord. But if you are a careless sinner, or as the generality of men are — you will be lost forever; "for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leads unto life, and few there be who find it."

What solemn, what alarming words are these! Are there only few who find the way? Then there can only be few saved; that is, few in comparison with the world of sinners who perish in their sins. Let me beseech you not to presume — for what if you should not be one of that few! What if you should be cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth — how awful it would be! Repent, therefore, of your sins, and beseech God to save you by Jesus Christ; for "whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21)

Almighty Maker of my frame,

Teach me the measure of my days;

Teach me to know how frail I am,

And spend the remnant to your praise. My days are shorter than a span;

A little point my life appears;

How frail at best is dying man!

How vain are all his hopes and fears!

Vain his ambition, noise, and show!

Vain are the cares which rack his mind!

He heaps up treasures mixed with woe,

And dies, and leaves them all behind!

Oh, be a nobler portion mine!

My God, I bow before your throne;

Earth's fleeting treasures I resign,

And fix my hope on you alone!

34 A Proposal

A Proposal "I was glad when they said to me: Let us go into the house of the Lord."Psalms 122:1
The Church is the house of God. Believers are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. Strictly speaking, God acknowledges no other house under the gospel. But as the words were employed in reference to the place where his worship was conducted, we may still use them in the same sense. There is no sanctity in a building — but there is in the saints which meet in it, and in the presence of God which fills it. Let us go where saints go — where the Lord's family meet. Let us go where God goes. Let us go frequently. Let us go regularly. Let us go expecting to meet with God, and to enjoy his blessing. Let us go praying — and then most likely we shall return praising. Let its go, whatever others may do. Let us go, for God says, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the habit of some is."

Let us go, for there the Lord meets with his people. They realize his presence. They feel his power. They enjoy his love. They perceive his beauty. He manifests himself unto them — as he does not unto the world. "They have seen your goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary." He . . .

shines upon their minds,
unfolds his glorious perfections,
proclaims his gracious name, and
fills them with all joy and peace in believing.

He . . .

accepts their persons,
hears their prayers,
receives their praises,
removes their burdens,
dissipates their fears,
dispels the gloom from their minds,
and they are enabled to "rejoice in God."

He bestows his blessings upon them. They receive pardon, enjoy justification, hold communion, obtain strength, discover the mind of God, and consecrate themselves entirely to his service.

Heaven at times begins below, and they have nothing left to wish for — but the continuance of present enjoyment. Nothing is more like Heaven — than the house of God at such seasons. Let us go, then, that we may . . .

receive grace,
obtain mercy,
enjoy fellowship with God,
hear him speak to us in his Word,
unite with his people in worshiping him,
and magnify the riches of his grace.

Let us endeavor to induce others to go, for there miracles of mercy are wrought — the dead are raised, the blind receive their sight, the deaf hear, the lame man is made to leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb to sing. There . . .

enemies are reconciled,
the ignorant are instructed,
the sorrowful are comforted,
the dark are enlightened,
the distant are brought near, and
the glory of the Lord is revealed.

There . . .

the Holy Spirit works by the Word,
Christ is formed in the heart, and
the Father draws sinners to his Son.

There . . .

the trumpet of the Jubilee is blown,
the prison-doors are opened,
the fetters of the captive are broken off,
salvation is freely conferred, and
the fruits of the celestial Canaan are tasted and enjoyed.

"Let us go into the house of the Lord!" Reader, make this proposal to all whom you know. Some need inviting. They are shy, or they are not accustomed to attend — or they are slothful, or worldly, or lukewarm. But try what you can do. Try to induce one to attend. Tell him what you have enjoyed, what a gracious God bestows, what good he may get, and how the day may come when he will wish that he had attended.

Some love to be invited. David did. He says, "I was glad when they said unto me: Let us go into the house of the Lord." Such love company, they enjoy fellowship along the road; many would

come regularly, who now come but seldom, if lively Christians would call upon them and kindly say, "Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Believers should invite others. Here is an example for such. It was done under the Old Dispensation — much more should it be done under the New. God approves of our doing so, therefore this instance was recorded, and he will manifest his approbation by blessing our efforts. Besides which, it displays a spirit glowing with love to God, zeal for the good of souls, and concern for the prosperity of the Church. The results, also, would be found to be most encouraging.

Beloved, have you been slighting the means of grace? Have you allowed trifling matters to keep you at home? Allow me to call you to repentance, and to invite you to return to the days of your youth.

"Let us go into the house of the Lord," for he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. There we shall . . .

obtain help in grief,

get instruction in difficulty,

find strength for our journey,

enjoy the communion of saints, and

feel at home in the presence of God. The house of God below is the porch to the house of God above. The enjoyments we are indulged with there, are foretastes of the everlasting feast.

Reader, can you say, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of your house, and the place where your honor dwells?" Are you glad when one says to you, "Let us go into the house of the Lord!" Are you determined, in the Lord's strength, that you will not forsake the house of the Lord your God? Can you be comfortable when the house is but thinly attended? Are you doing all you can to fill it? You can do something towards it. Perhaps you can do much. You cannot tell how much you can do — until you try.

If all our members would set their hearts upon filling the house of prayer — few ministers who are fired with love to souls, would have to preach to thin congregations. It is the Church's duty to fill the place, and the preacher's duty to endeavor to keep it full. If Church members felt as they ought to do upon the subject, they would think, feel, pray, and act with this object in view; and if their motives were pure, and their object scriptural — God would bless their efforts, our places would be crowded, and a revival of religion would soon take place among us. But when members are satisfied with attending themselves once on the Lord's day, and then often coming late — their conduct acts like a blight, or a piercing east wind, which injures all by whom they are surrounded.

Reader, are you a member of a Church of Christ? Is the place where you worship thinly attended? Go upon your knees before God, spread the case before him, seek for wisdom, courage, and zeal — and then determine that you will leave no means untried to fill it with hearers. Communicate your purpose to others, press them into the service, meet for special prayer on the subject, and go to work under God's blessing, expecting success. Nor rest satisfied with a full place — but seek the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, that hearers may become believers, that believers may

be full of faith, joy, and the Holy Spirit, and the pastor be eminently holy, successful, and happy. Let your daily prayer be, "And may the Lord our God show us his approval and make our efforts successful. Yes, make our efforts successful!"

35 An Encouraging Question

An Encouraging Question "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Genesis 18:14

We must meet with difficulties in our walk and in our work; they are intended to try us — but they often discourage us. Sometimes they appear so great, at other times we come upon them so suddenly — that before we are aware, we are dejected and cast down. We look at them, and then at our own strength — instead of looking immediately to the Lord.

God's promises are intended to support us in trials, and to strengthen our hearts in the day of adversity. It is not for us to ask, "How can this thing be?" but to look up and ask, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Believer, there is nothing too hard for your God to accomplish — no change in providence, however it may appear improbable or impossible to you. He can give water in the wilderness, and bread in the desert. All creatures are his servants, and he can as easily feed us by ravens — as by his intelligent creatures. In the midst of the greatest scarcity, he can send an unexpected plenty — as he did to Samaria in the days of old. He can supply all your needs — and if living upon his Word, and walking in his way, he will. No work of grace is too hard for the Lord. He can break the hardest heart — the heart that has withstood the preacher's pleading, the father's entreaties, and the mother's tears. By the sweet and gentle influences of his Spirit — he can soften, sanctify, and entirely subdue it. Do not, therefore, give up any case as desperate. Say not, that your child has withstood so much and so long, that the case is hopeless. Continue to take the case to the Lord, plead with him as if pleading for your life, and rest your faith on this — nothing is too hard for the Lord. The stubbornest will — he can bow. It may withstand all human efforts, it may appear to grow more determined in the service of Satan and sin, you may be tempted to exclaim, "There is no hope!" But there is hope. Yield not to temptation. Listen not to the great deceiver — but ply the means, call upon God, and urge the fact, "Nothing is too hard for the Lord."

He can enlighten the darkest intellect. Though it is almost as feeble the intellect of the idiot, and is wrapped in the thickest gloom of ignorance and prejudice; He who commanded light to shine out of darkness at first — can shine into it, and give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the person of Jesus Christ. Let no discouraging circumstance daunt you — but set your heart upon the salvation of the benighted — for there is nothing too hard for the Lord.

He can warm the coldest professor. Oh, how cold and inanimate some professors are! One might almost imagine that they were reared in Greenland, or educated in an ice-house. There is no sparkling eye, no encouraging voice, no outstretched hand — but, like a well-dressed corpse, they occupy their place in the Church. But shall we despair of doing them good, or of seeing them raised to a better state? Oh no, they may yet become loving, communicative, and active, for there is nothing too hard for the Lord.

He can fructify the most unfruitful Church. In what a cold, lifeless, and barren state many of our Churches are. Preaching to them, is like ploughing on a rock, or sowing on sea-sand. Nothing

appears to make any beneficial impression, they "swallow up loads of wholesome instructions," and yet are none the better. What shall we do? Pronounce the case hopeless! No, it may be hopeless as far as man is concerned — but there is nothing too hard for the Lord. He can make the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field a forest.

He can cultivate the most barren neighborhood. Some places are like the sandy desert, and it appears but lost labor to plough and sow and expect a crop. There is no spirit of hearing, no concern about eternal things — but every one turns to his course, as the horse rushes into the battle. To labor on such a spot is very trying, and no wonder if we are tempted to give up, or if we yield to the temptation. But this is wrong. What was Jerusalem before the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, though it had been favored with the ministry of John, of Jesus, of the seventy disciples, and the twelve apostles? Was it not a barren spot?

Care and prayer, industry and faith, can perform wonders! The hand of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear; and he speaks to, and asks the question of you, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is anything too hard for me?" (Jeremiah 32:27.) He can use the weakest instrument successfully. His servants have done so in his strength. Think of Moses with the rod of God — of Shamgar with the ox-goad — of Samson with the jawbone of an ass — of the fishermen of Galilee, with that gospel which was called foolishness by men.

Reader, God can use you — even if you have but one talent. He often uses the most unlikely instruments, that the excellency of the power may be evidently of God and not of man. If it is God's instrument, if it is used for God's glory in God's strength — it will accomplish that which he pleases, and prosper in the thing whereunto he sends it, for there is nothing too hard for the Lord.

See, then,

1. To whom we must look. Not to creatures, for many things are too hard for them — but to the Lord, who can accomplish all his pleasure, and accomplish it with perfect ease.
2. The unchangeable source of encouragement which is opened to us. The Lord, who sends us to work, who goes with us — knows nothing of impossibilities — and when we doubt, or start back through unbelief, he asks, "Is anything too hard for me?"
3. To what we must appeal. The power of God. The power of God, which is made perfect in our weakness. The power of God, to which all things must bow.
4. Of what we should beware. Limiting the Holy One of Israel. This was Israel's sin. Let us see to it that it is not ours.
5. On what we should fix our faith. The Word of the all-powerful God.
6. With what we should feed our hope. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. Beloved, we cannot ask God to do greater things than he has done — and we cannot expect more from him than he is able to bestow; let us, therefore . . .

study his Word,

walk in his fear,

work in his cause,

trust in his promise,

expect to realize success, and

silence all our fears, by the assurance that there is nothing too hard for the Lord.

36 AFFLICTIONS

AFFLICTIONS "For he does not afflict willingly — nor grieve the children of men." Lamentations 3:33 Afflictions are the consequences of sin.

If there was no sin — there would be no sorrow.

If you were not a sinner — you would not be a sufferer.

Every pain teaches you that you are a fallen creature.

Afflictions are God's testimony against sin. Hereby he declares sin to be a fearful thing — a horrible thing, which he hates. Every affliction is necessary: God does not afflict willingly. Every trial is called for. Your present affliction is needful. It is sent to call you to consideration. It bids you look back upon your past life — How has it been spent? It points you to eternity, and asks: What provision have you made for it? It directs you to examine the state of your heart: Is it right with God? Are you devoted to God? Are you aiming to please God in all things? Have you been born again? Or are you dead in trespasses and sins — an enemy to God, declared to be so by wicked works — living to yourself, and seeking your happiness in the things of time?

Consider, inquire, examine! Your present trial calls upon you to do so. By affliction, God not only testifies against your sins — but he calls you to repentance. Every sin is an insult offered to him; every sin calls for the execution of his threatenings — but he is long-suffering, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy! He therefore sends you troubles — to call you to repentance. He is reluctant to execute his vengeance, he has no pleasure at all in your death — therefore he calls you to repentance.

Mercy speaks to you by this afflictive dispensation, and says, "You have sinned; God hates sin; God is bound by his Word to punish the impenitent sinner. You have lived carelessly; now search and try your ways, and turn unto the Lord."

There is hope for you in Jesus; he came to save sinners — just such sinners as you are. He will save you. He calls you to him, he invites you to approach him. He says, "Will you be made whole? I will pardon your sins. I will subdue your iniquities. I will justify your person. I will give you peace. I will introduce you to my Father, who will accept you, bless you, and call you a son of God."

O sinner, your present affliction, if improved — will prove the greatest blessing ever conferred upon you. It is designed to do you good, lasting good, everlasting good. If improved . . .

it will soften your heart,

it will humble your spirit,

it will lead you to Jesus. But if not . . .

it will harden you,

it will stupefy you, and

your case will be more deplorable than before!

Beseech God to make this trial a real blessing to you. Seek not merely deliverance from it — but that it may be sanctified to you; yes, seek its sanctification more, much more than its removal. Our God is a gracious God; a prayer-hearing God. He is waiting for your prayer. He is noticing . . .

every movement of your mind,

every purpose of your soul,

every thought of your heart,

every word that proceeds from your mouth.

You cannot deceive him. He will not be mocked. He aims at your welfare. He calls you, by this affliction — to come to him that you may obtain mercy, and find grace to help you in time of need. If you trifle with his mercy, if you despise his chastening, if you turn a deaf ear to his voice — he may say to you, as he did to Israel of old, "Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted." (Isaiah 1:5).

You have now every encouragement, for "whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). Salvation is the very blessing you need. It is the greatest blessing God can bestow. It comprehends all other blessings. God has promised it to all who call upon him. You cannot seek in vain. God will hear you; he will answer your prayers. He has pledged himself to save all who call upon him: he will save you. "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near" (Isaiah 55:6). His name and his nature are love. The Lord is good, ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all those who call upon him (Psalms 86:5). He says, "Seek my face." May your heart respond, "Your face, Lord, will I seek" (Psalms 27:8).

37 The Judgment Day

The Judgment Day

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men." 2 Corinthians 5:10-11

Sinner! What a fearful day will that be! You must then be exposed before God, angels, and men. The awesome majesty of God will be displayed. He will set your iniquities before him — your secret sins in the light of his countenance. There will be no concealment; the omniscient eye of God will search out every crime — he knows all things — the book of God's remembrance will contain every fault. "The day of the Lord is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?" (Joel 2:11.) The memory will recollect all your sins, with all their aggravations. A guilty conscience, which now expostulates in vain, will condemn you with the most bitter reflections. The terrors of God will take hold of you, and hurry you away to the burning lake of fire and brimstone. They will be terrors within (Deuteronomy 32:25) — within your bosom, in the deep recesses of your heart. Your heart will be filled with terror, and only terror, for evermore. While you suffer these terrors, a wild distraction will seize you (Psalms 88:15), and consume as devouring fire, not your person — but all your false hopes, comforts, and foolish ideas (Psalms 78:19). This will be the case with all sinners, according to the light they possessed, and the privileges within their reach. This will be their portion — even forever and ever!

"Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Corinthians 5:11). We know them from God's Word, in which he threatens them, in which he gives us instances of his dreadful displeasure.

Look at the destruction of the old world by the flood — see rich and poor, young and old, moral and immoral — alike swept away with the broom of destruction! Ah, sinner! where was then the mercy on which you now presume? how did God show mercy then?

Look at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah — what a fearful overthrow! And yet the destruction of those cities was more tolerable than will be the terrors of the Lord on the last great day.

See Korah and all his company swallowed up by an earthquake! See Pharaoh and his host cast into the Red Sea! See Nadab and Abihu consumed with fire in the tabernacle — and remember this is the God with whom you have to do! Oh! it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31). Knowing the terrors of the Lord — we persuade men.

We would persuade you to believe the truth of these things, and to reflect seriously upon them. You are exposed to the wrath of God; your duties and your good works cannot possibly shelter you from it. Jesus, and Jesus only — is the refuge from the wrath to come. But you must be found in him, or you will not be benefitted by him. He receives sinners; he will receive you. Do you feel

your need of him? Do you desire to be pardoned, justified, and saved from the terrors of the Lord? Oh! go to Jesus; go to him at once. He can hear the softest whisper; he will never cast out any who sincerely come to him. Call upon him, plead with him; nothing is of half so much importance as this.

Oh! determine, as David did in another case, neither to give sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids — until you have sought the Lord, and sought him with your whole heart. Every one who seeks — finds (Matthew 7:8). You have, therefore, every encouragement; but if you live and die in your sins — then where Jesus is, you cannot go; neither will you have any excuse. Oh! consider . .

the value of your never-dying soul,
the danger to which you are exposed, and
the happiness which is set before you in the gospel.

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near; for you must soon stand before the judgment seat of Christ!

How great, how dreadful that God,

Who shakes creation with his nod!

He frowns — earth, sea, all nature's frame,

Sink in one universal flame! Where now, oh where shall sinners seek.

For shelter in the general wreck?

Shall falling rocks be o'er them thrown?

See rocks, like snow, dissolving down. In vain for mercy now they cry;

In lakes of liquid fire they lie!

There on the flaming billows tossed,

Forever, oh! forever lost!

38 True Wisdom

True Wisdom "He who wins souls is wise." Proverbs 11:30 Who is a wise man? This question was proposed in ancient times, and various are the answers it has received. In the estimation of some, it is the man who amasses wealth;

of others, it is the man of science;

of others, the man that gains popularity and rises to high honor among his fellow men;

but the answer of God is, "He who wins souls is wise." To win souls is difficult. It must be so — for Satan enslaves them; he has possession of them, and leads them captive at his will. Error deceives them, they are all naturally under the influence of deception; therefore they call darkness light, and light darkness; they put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. The world misleads them, they follow the multitude, are led away by custom, and are bewildered and confused by the general consent of mankind. Madness is in the heart. Every sinner is insane. No one naturally has right views of any important subject. In conversion, the man comes to himself. Then he thinks aright, feels aright, and acts aright; but not before. If the soul is . . .

enslaved by Satan,

blinded by error,

deceived by the world,

chained down by carnal customs,

and is in a state of insanity —

it must be a difficult work to win souls.

They are to be won from Satan — who will not easily part with them. They are to be won to God — from whom they are alienated, and against whom they indulge the bitterest enmity. They are to be won by the truth of the beauties — of which they have no conception, and to enjoy which they have no taste. They are to be won that they may be useful to others — but selfishness reigns in them supreme and without a rival. To win them, therefore, will require study — we must think, and think, and think again.

It will require labor — we must toil and strive to the utmost of our powers.

It will require skill — we must therefore seek wisdom, and turn it to some practical account when we have it.

It will require perseverance — it is well-doing, and we must not be weary in well-doing. As the fowler patiently waits and watches until the birds are snared; as the angler patiently perseveres until the fish is caught; as the racer urges forward until the prize is gained — so does the wise man persevere, until the soul is won. He fixes his eyes upon it, he makes up his mind to gain it; he

pushes forward with his heart set upon it; he uses all likely means until it yields to the power of truth.

If we would win souls — we must beware lest we prejudice them against our holy religion; lest we alienate them from us — by anything in our spirit, conduct, or conversation; lest we awaken the suspicion in their minds that we are not sincere, or in earnest, or that religion is not really what we have said it is.

If we would win souls — we must be winning. Kindness, courtesy, earnestness, and sympathy affect the heart. A drop of honey will attract more flies than a pint of vinegar; and the sweet spirit of love will win a soul, when the sour spirit of controversy would drive it far from us. Affectionate preachers are generally successful preachers; so also are affectionate teachers, and affectionate Christians.

If we would win souls — we must be self-denying; a selfish man will not be a successful soul-winner; if self is our end, our efforts will end in failure.

If we would win souls — we must be prayerful; means are inefficient, human efforts alone are powerless. If we win souls, it must be "by the power of the Spirit of God," and the truly wise man knows this, he realizes it, therefore he seeks it by prayer, and expects it to crown his efforts to the Lord's glory.

If we would win souls — we must also vary the means; if one effort fails, we must try another; a wise man will become all things to all men, that he may gain the more. The inducement is powerful. We must be either wise men — or fools. Our pursuits display our principles. The wise man makes the winning of souls his object — and his wisdom appears in his choice. He selects from a number of objects one that is worthy of him. He is concerned for the welfare of the body — but he fixes principally on the salvation of the soul. Nothing is as valuable as the soul, nothing as important as its salvation. No employment so honorable, or so calculated to glorify God as this. His wisdom appears in his success — he accomplishes what is so difficult. His wisdom will appear in the prize he gains. His reward will be a crown, the souls he wins will form his crown: hence the apostle calls the Philippians his "joy and crown" (Php 4:1). They will be his glory and joy. Therefore the same apostle says, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For you are our glory and joy" (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20). He will be clothed with peculiar splendor, for "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." (Daniel 12:3). My dear young friends, choose this employment. Having made your own calling and election sure, may this be your business — to win souls to God. In so doing, you fall in with God's plan of grace; you engage in the same work as the Son of God; you co-operate with the Holy Spirit; you will be associated with the holiest and most honorable of your fellow-men. Attempt this work . . .

by teaching the young,

by conversing on the gospel with sinners,

by having this object always in view,

by writing to your relatives, friends, and acquaintances who reside at a distance from you,

by distributing God's Word, religious tracts, and handbills.

Keep this object constantly before your mind, make it the business of your life — so will you live usefully, escape a thousand snares into which idle professors fall, and die happy in the Lord. To win a soul, is to do that which will count for eternity, and will reflect honor upon you forever. Let us all, then, engage in this work anew. Let us make everything subservient to this. Let us encourage each other in this glorious enterprise, and do all we possibly can, which at best is but little. The time is coming when the mere money-getter, the man of science, the worldly philosopher, and the man whose object is worldly greatness and carnal honors — will be proved to be fools indeed; and those who have devoted their time, property, and various talents to win souls to God — will be pronounced as the only wise and consistent men. For this, then, let us study,

for this let us pray,

for this let us toil,

for this let us be willing to suffer,

for this let us live and die.

Let us keep this object daily before the mind's eye, and at this let us constantly aim; so that if asked by any, "For what do you teach? or for what do you pray? or for what do you live? or what do you most earnestly desire?" We may be able honestly and instantly to answer, "that I may win souls for God!"

39 What Will You Do?

What Will You Do?

You have a body — and a soul. The body will soon return to its earth, and the spirit unto God who gave it. Both require attention — but the soul should have the chief concern.

What will you do as to the BODY? Will you pamper it? Will you feed and inflame its lusts — feast and gratify its depraved inclinations? Shall it have your first and best thoughts? Will you live for it, labor for it, and make the soul its drudge? This is what many do. But how will such conduct appear — when God requires the soul? How can it be justified? How can it be excused? The body ought to be valued as God's workmanship, and to be taken care of as the soul's temporary abode — but it ought not to engage our principal attention. It will soon be smitten with disease, it will give us pain and trouble, and then will become useless, until renovated and purified at the resurrection. It is a beautiful casket for the soul — but it is not to be compared to the jewel it contains. It is made of very fragile material, and will soon be broken by the crude hand of death. Let us estimate its relative value, and treat it accordingly.

What will you do as to the SOUL? It is a precious jewel. It is immortal. It is capable of the highest enjoyments — or the deepest sorrows. It is sinful. It needs pardon and purification. Both may be obtained — but they must be sought. You cannot be really happy for one moment without them. God alone can bestow them. It cost the Lord Jesus his blood to procure them. You must perish eternally without them. You ought to set your heart upon them. You ought not to rest satisfied one hour without them. If you do, in that hour death may deprive you of the opportunity of obtaining them.

What will you do? Will you delay? Will you trifle? Will you neglect to secure the great salvation? Will you despise everlasting happiness? Will you dare Divine justice? Will you defy omnipotent power? Will you make up your mind to brave the tremendous wrath of the Omnipotent God? This would be worse than anything the devil ever did!

What will you do? Do think of your state, look at your danger, determine to seek salvation, and delay not one hour. Seek pardon in the name of Jesus. Seek sanctification by the Holy Spirit. Make up your mind never to rest until you obtain the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of your sins. Go at once to God, plead the name of Jesus, stay yourself upon his promise, and wrestle in earnest prayer until he say to you, "Your sins are forgiven — go in peace." The door of mercy is open, and any sinner may enter. The throne of grace is near, and any sinner may approach it. The blood of Jesus is effectual, and any sinner may prove it. The name of Jesus is a powerful plea, and any sinner may use it. Can there be any reason, then, to ask, "What will you do?" Surely you will seek and obtain salvation by the Lamb of God.

40 What Will You Be?

What Will You Be?

We cannot but look forward to the future sometimes. In youth, we look forward to manhood, and wonder what we shall be then. In manhood, we look forward to old age, and ask, what shall we be then? But we seldom look forward far enough. Let us for a few moments carry our thoughts into the future. It must come; let us therefore think of it before it arrives.

What will you be at DEATH? Disease is hurrying thousands into eternity. Death is not far from any one of us. Many have been healthy — and dead, in the course of a few hours! If death comes to arrest us, what will it find us? Shall we be found enemies to God, dead in sin, and careless about our everlasting welfare? Will death find us out of Christ? If so — we shall be most miserable! The sins of our past lives will stare us in the face. A burden of guilt will crush our spirits. The dread of meeting God in judgment will fill us with alarm. The thoughts of eternity will crowd upon us and make us truly wretched. Our reflections will be most gloomy, and all our false hopes will perish. How many have died in this state lately! What a mercy that we have been spared! Let us improve the respite that is given us. Oh, what would thousands of lost souls give to be in our circumstances for one week, for one hour. But no, they have passed the barrier which separates time from eternity, and the gulf forbids their return. Shall we ever be in their state?

What will you be at the JUDGMENT? We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Not one will be allowed to escape. The small and great will all stand before God. Every one must give account of himself to God. What account can the swearer give — or how will he excuse his swearing? What account can the liar give, or how will he justify his lying? What account can the immoral person give, or what reason will he assign for his conduct? What account can you, reader, give? If you have neglected your soul — if you have disregarded the warnings given you — if you have lived in any known sin — if you have refused to listen to the gospel message — if you have rejected the Savior — what can you say for yourself? What will you be at the judgement?

Surely you will be judged by all, as deserving damnation. Surely you will stand condemned in your own conscience, before the Judge addresses one word to you. Oh, to be a criminal, a self-convicted criminal, then! Oh, to be doomed to everlasting punishment, by the Savior who died for sinners — but who is now the Judge of all!

What will you be in ETERNITY? This depends upon what you are in time. In time we sow — in eternity we reap.

If you live in sin — you will die in sin.

If you die in sin — you will be eternally punished for sin.

If you now reject Christ — you will be forever banished from Christ.

If you live as an enemy of God in this world — you will be treated as an enemy of God in the world to come.

What will you be in eternity? No question can be more solemn, or more important.

What are you NOW? Are you a holy saint — or an unrepentant sinner? Are you a believer — or an unbeliever? Are you an obedient child of God — or a disobedient rebel in his kingdom?

Whatever a man sows — that shall he also reap.

Eternity will confirm — what we are in time.

Here on earth, the vessel is formed and figured — eternity is but the kiln furnace which hardens and renders the figures indelible. What you are now — you will be forever. But if you are a sinner now, if you are unhappy now, you need not be always so. The blood of Jesus will cleanse you from all sin, and the grace of Jesus will make you truly happy. No one will force you to Hell. If you go there, it will be because you choose to go there. God says, "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Jesus says, "Whoever will — let him come unto me. But you will not come unto me that you might have life."

Reader, life and death, Heaven and Hell, salvation and damnation — are set before you, and you must make your choice. If you seek death, if you prefer Hell, if you choose damnation — you will have an eternity to suffer for it, and repent of your folly. Upon your present course — depends what you will be at death, at judgment, and in eternity. May you repent of sin, believe in Jesus, be reconciled to God — and so will you be . . .

happy at death,

justified at the judgment, and

glorified throughout eternity!

41 What You May Be!

What You May Be!

We have inquired what you will do for the body and the soul; and what you will be at death — at judgment — and in eternity. Let us now point out what you may be — for you are capable of a mighty transformation, of a glorious elevation.

You may be wretched, miserable, and undone forever — but it is not necessary; for you may become holy, happy, and honorable throughout eternity. But you will be according to your character, and according to the course which you pursue. As intelligent creatures — as accountable beings — as living under the reign of mercy and in the land of hope — we address you.

You may be **SAVED** now. We know of nothing to hinder it. There is mercy with God, that he may be feared. There is merit in the sacrifice of Jesus, that it may be trusted. There is sincerity in the gospel invitation, that it may be accepted. There is veracity in the promise of God, that you may rely on it. The Lord Jesus is in office; he calls you to his feet; he promises to receive you. He has saved many such as you; he is saving some now; he will not refuse you, for he never refuses anyone who applies.

You, may be made **HAPPY** now. Happiness flows from grace, and grace comes from God. You cannot be made happy without becoming acquainted with God. He must pardon your sins, give you his peace, apply his Word to you, send his Holy Spirit into your heart — and then you will be happy. These blessings will satisfy the craving of your nature, and make you cheerful under all circumstances.

There is . . .

no happiness without pardon,

no pardon without the knowledge of God, and

no true knowledge of God without faith in Christ.

There is no necessity for you to be unhappy. God can make you happy, and he is willing to do so.

You may be safe and peaceful in **DEATH**. You may have a pure conscience, a sound judgment, a sanctified heart, and a sure prospect of eternal glory. If you seek the Lord now — if you set your affections on things above — if you make God's glory the end of your life — and if you daily seek grace for a dying hour — then you will find that at death you will have nothing to fear; and in eternity you will have nothing to dread. The Holy Spirit will comfort you, the promises will support you, and the thought of being forever with the Lord will sweetly delight your soul. You may have a happy death-bed; for God has said, "those who honor me, I will honor."

You may be glorious in ETERNITY. Yes, you who are now so poor, so illiterate, so tried; for it does not require wealth, learning, or prosperity, to make you so. If you have only faith in Jesus — if you walk in fellowship with God — if you aim to do good to your fellow-creatures — then you will shine like the sun in the kingdom of your Father!

Many a poor mechanic is there already. Many such as you are, are now on the road. Many more will follow; for God has chosen the poor of this world, who are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. You may obtain a place in Heaven. You may acquire a fitness for the inheritance of the saints in light; for everyone who asks — receives, and he who seeks — finds.

Well, what will you be? You see what you may be; but if you neglect your salvation — if you despise your own soul — if you slight the gospel — if you prefer living in sin — you will be . . .

unhappy in life,

miserable in death, and

unutterably wretched throughout eternity!

You may be saved; but if you yield to Satan — you will be lost.

You may be happy; but if you prefer sin to holiness — you never will.

You may be peaceful in death; but if you walk according to the course of this world — you cannot be.

You may be glorious in eternity; but if you walk with the multitude in the broad road — you will be clothed with shame and everlasting contempt. My dear fellow-immortal, think of these things, pray over these things, and set your heart upon being saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

42 The Sinner's Obstinacy

The Sinner's Obstinacy "You will not come to me, that you might have life." John 5:40 So spoke Jesus to the Jews of old — and the words are applicable to multitudes now. The Lord Jesus Christ alone has power and authority to give life to sinners. He says, "I, even I, am Jehovah; and beside me there is no Savior" (Isaiah 43:11).

Man is condemned for sin, and miserable through sin; he is wicked and weak, having neither will nor power to deliver himself; and without a Savior — his eternal destiny will be fearful. But divine mercy has provided, employed, and sent the Lord Jesus into the world, that we may have life through him. He alone has power, authority, or love sufficient for the work; as being the self-existent, omnipotent, and omnipresent God. He can reverse the sentence of death which is passed; he has power to forgive sins; and authority to bestow a title to everlasting life. And he invites sinners to come to him that they may live. There is no receiving everlasting life but by coming to Jesus, because all power is in his hands; he has power over all flesh to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him (John 17:2).

He has made promises to the coming sinner, and "this is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life" (1 John 2:25). He is so willing to bestow this blessing, that when talking with the woman at Jacob's well he said, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, Give me to drink; you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water" (John 4:10). The same kind invitation he constantly held out to the Jews — but they would not ask: the same invitation is now held out to us, and whoever will may come, and take of the fountain of the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17). Those who hear the Word and come not, are accounted enemies — enemies to God, and enemies to their own souls. Coming to Jesus does him honor, and ensures the salvation of the soul.

Man is . . .

so depraved,

so blind to his own best interests,

so buried in sin —

that he would rather die at a distance from Jesus, than come to him and live. His darkened understanding sees no beauty in Him though he is "the chief among ten thousand," and "altogether lovely." The slumbering conscience apprehends no danger, and therefore allows the man to go on without disturbance. The carnal affections loathe spiritual things, and are fixed upon forbidden objects. The depraved will chooses . . .

sin rather than holiness;

death rather than life;

Satan rather than Jesus;

the world rather than God;

and Hell rather than Heaven! The whole man is such a mass of inconsistency, that he calls evil good, and good evil; puts darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter (Isaiah 5:20).

Such being the state of man, though we threaten with all solemnity, exhort with all earnestness, and invite with all affection — it is in vain, unless God puts forth his power, and creates the sinner anew in Christ Jesus! But does this form an excuse for him? Oh, no! Wickedness, deliberate wickedness never can be an excuse. He will not have Jesus to reign over him. He will not have life; he prefers death in the error of his ways. It aggravates his sin. If it was merely weakness, we might pity him, and say he cannot; but it is wickedness, and therefore he must be blamed, for he will not come.

He hears of his danger — but he disregards it; he hears the invitation to come to Jesus for life — but he treats it with contempt. Hereby his condemnation is increased and confirmed; and God is more than justified in his eternal punishment. O sinner, how will you face the Judge at last! To hear him say, "I offered you life — but you refused it; I sent you my Word — but you rejected it; you despised my sufferings, trampled upon my blood, closed your ears to my servants, and now reap the due desert of your deeds."

You cannot be admitted to Heaven under such circumstances, for "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9). This is your character; you were born in sin; you went astray from the birth; you slighted the Savior; and you have no righteousness to justify you before God. Oh, may the Lord convince you of your need of righteousness; lead you to see the beauty and perfection of the righteousness of Jesus, and give you the possession of it by believing! Without this you cannot enter into the kingdom of God, where peace, holiness, and pleasure reign. It is impossible — for the justice of God is opposed to it; the holiness of God forbids it; the law of God is against it; the gospel of Christ will not allow of it; the nature of Heaven and its employments prevent it; and the decree of God is, that none shall enter there but those who are washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11). "There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatever works abomination, or makes a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27).

God now comes near to you in providence, in his Word, in his ordinances, in convictions, in the loss of friends and relatives, and by personal afflictions; but you say unto him, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of your ways" (Job 21:14).

God's presence on earth you have felt to be disagreeable; you have manifested your dislike to it; you have rebelled against the light; you have hated . . .

his holiness, which is the glory of his nature;

his justice, which is the perfection of his government;

his love, which is the Heaven of his saints; and

his requirements, which are the delight of his angels. His presence has filled your guilty conscience with dread; the idea of his holiness has perplexed and made you unhappy; and you would not come to Jesus, his "express image," that you might have life. You preferred distance from God, and ignorance of God — to his presence and the knowledge of him: though you have often heard that "This is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17. 3).

Instead of loving God, you were in love with sin, carnal delights, and the present evil world. Instead of seeking fellowship with God, you loathed it, and would gladly have fled from his hand. You had no fear of God before your eyes; no esteem of the love of God; no gratitude for the mercies of God; no relish for the company of the saints of God; but you said unto God, "Depart!" by your neglect, indifference, and carelessness.

How awful the sinner's state; he has said to God, "Depart;" and Jesus will soon say to him, "Depart — you have lived and died in sin; you slighted and rejected the gospel; you despised me and my people; you loved and served your lusts; you were enemies to true godliness; you would not come unto me, that you might have life; therefore, Depart! Depart . . .

from me, whom you rejected;

from Heaven, which you despised;

from rest, which you fondly expected;

from peace, which you once refused; and

from the saints, whom you have contemned.

Depart from me into . . .

fire,

consuming fire,

devouring fire,

everlasting fire,

the tormenting worm will never dies;

the pit where you are to be confined is bottomless;

the fuel can never be consumed;

the pain will never end;

the smoke of the torment will ascend up forever and ever.

Go with the devil, who tempted and deceived you; whom you believed before God and his ministers; whom you served in preference to me; with whom you trifled and sinned; who now shall forever torment you.

Depart, you are CURSED. You are cursed of God, cursed by me, cursed by angels, cursed by saints — depart and curse yourselves. The law curses you, and the gospel joins with the law in cursing you. You are cursed in body, cursed in soul, and cursed forever. You are cursed with a comprehensive curse, a dreadful curse, an irreversible curse! Oh, how unspeakably dreadful must this be! Reader, does it not make your ears tingle, and your heart quake?

Oh, come, then, to Jesus, that you may have life: so shall you escape this dreadful doom! He is still waiting to be gracious; he is still exalted to show mercy. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely!" (Revelation 22:17).

43 The Commendation

The Commendation "My helpers in Christ Jesus." Romans 16:3 The reference is to Priscilla and Aquila. Paul became acquainted with them at Ephesus. He lodged in their house, and labored in their employment, as a tentmaker. They drank into his spirit, imitated his conduct, and assisted him in his work. He esteemed them very highly in love for their work-sake, and thus publicly commends them. But may not most Christian pastors adopt the language in reference to some — are there not in every church and congregation some, to whom we can point and say, "They are my helpers in Christ Jesus."

Brethren, as the ministers of Christ, we need help. This is clear, for our work is great. We are to carry the message of mercy to every soul. To endeavor to master prejudice, conquer ignorance, and lead sinners to Jesus. Or, in the language of inspiration, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith that is in Jesus" (Acts 26:18). Our time is short. We shall soon see the shadows of evening stretch over us. The Master's voice will soon be heard calling us from the field. All are dying around us — and we must soon lie down in the dust. We may have but few more opportunities. The longest day is but short, and we are none of us sure of a long day. Our hindrances are many. There are so many things within our own hearts that hinder us:

our unbelief,

our carnal fears,

our selfishness,

our love of ease,

our undue attachment to earthly things,

our sinful lukewarmness. Nor are there less hindrances outside of us.

Evil principalities, and powers, and wicked spirits. The ignorance, prejudices, and errors, which everywhere abound. The false teachers, which are so numerous and active. The carnal systems invented by Satan, and adopted and established by man. In every direction hindrances of a most formidable character meet and dispirit us. Our foes are so crafty. They have . . .

the cunning of the serpent,

the courage of the lion, and

the cruelty of the wolf!

They seek every day, and in every direction, for those whom they may devour. They labor to destroy souls. They study to obstruct the progress of the gospel, to hinder the zealous laborer,

and, if possible, to spoil his work. Our helpers are but few. Many of them are fitful and capricious. They begin — but do not persevere. They are perhaps zealous — but they are not prudent. They have feeling — but not knowledge. They must choose their own post, work by their own rule, and study their own convenience. These things spoil many who would otherwise be useful, and make those sources of trouble, who would otherwise be our joy and rejoicing. Our discouragements are various. Who has not cried out, "I have labored in vain!" Who has not been tempted and inclined to say, "I will speak no more in his name!" The apparent lack of success,

the state of the church of God,

the conduct of the generality of professors, and

our own lack of more of the power of religion —

are painful sources of discouragement! Brethren, we need help. We are willing to be assisted. We desire help. You can help us. But will you?

Let us glance at the commendation, "My HELPERS in Christ Jesus." My fellow-workers in the cause of Christ. On whom can we bestow this commendation now? On our kind, spiritual, patient, persevering Sunday-school teachers. They are our fellow-workers. They labor to impart instruction, to produce beneficial impressions, to lead the young and rising race to Jesus. They are worthy of all honor. They are crowned with the Lord's blessing. They will be owned and rewarded another day. On the visitors of our Christian Instruction Societies also. They carry the messengers of mercy from house to house. They are upon the look-out for opportunities to speak a word for Jesus. They carry the gospel to those who will not move out of their own houses to hear it. They are like lights shining in a dark place. Many have by them been induced to flee from the wrath to come. Many have by them been led to a Savior's feet. They are the blessed of the Lord, our helpers in Christ Jesus. Of every active and devoted member of the church. Such strive to fill the house of prayer, to induce all whom they can, by any means of influence — to read the Bible, to think of Divine things, and attend upon the means of grace. They are the lights of the Church, and the glory of Christ. On our holy, devoted, and energetic town and city missionaries, also, this commendation must be pronounced. They are our fellow-workers for the kingdom of God. Their talents are consecrated, their time is devoted, their energies are spent — in going into the streets and lanes of the city to compel sinners to come in, that the Lord's house may be filled. They are our helpers in Christ Jesus. For what are such commended? For helping the Lord's servants. This they do by the exhibition of Christian virtues: showing forth "the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light." This they do by the earnest, fervent, importunate prayers they offer. Prayer is a mighty weapon. Its power is unknown. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" — but even the inspired apostle does not attempt to say how much. Prayer has power with God; it brings Divine influence to bear upon man, and prevails. This they do by the consecration of their talents to the Lord's service. Every one has a talent. Some have two. Some five. If what we have we industriously employed, there will be an increase; for whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. This they do by encouragement given, in the way of financial help, of communicating the pleasing results of efforts employed, or by a word in season when the spirits are depressed. Even Paul was encouraged, when the brethren came from Rome to meet him, and he "thanked God and took courage."

Those who are really helpers, are such as serve the same Master, walk by the same rule, and aim at the same object.

Beloved, Priscilla and Aquila set you an example. They say to you, help to spread the gospel; help to extend the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do so in trying times. Do so in dangerous times. Do so with constancy and perseverance. Of them Paul could say, "They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them."

Servants of God, never be backward to acknowledge your helpers in Christ Jesus. Ever encourage them in their good and blessed work.

Reader, do you help the Lord's servants — or do you hinder them? You certainly do one or the other. You encourage them, or you discourage them. Do you persevere in the Lord's way and work, or do you recede? Many who were active once — are inactive now. Satan has cooled their zeal. They are become worldly prudent. The gold has become dim, and the wine is mixed with water. Repent and do your first works. Will you begin now to help us, if you have not? or will you try to do more, if you have? A great and effectual door is opened to us, and there are many adversaries. There is work enough for us all. We ought not to lose a day, an hour. "Men of Israel, Help!"

Help us against Satan.

Help us against error.

Help us against worldly systems of religion.

Help us to spread God's truth.

Help us to break down prejudice against the gospel.

Help us to crowd our places of worship.

Help us to bring sinners to the Savior.

Help by teaching the young.

Help by visiting the sick.

Help by warning the careless.

Help by inviting the thoughtless to God's house.

Help us by circulating tracts.

Help us by earnest, fervent prayer.

Help us by diligent, early, and regular attendance upon the means of grace.

Help us by exhibiting to the world a correct representation of what real religion is — by your spirit, temper, disposition, and general conduct.

Lost sinner, encourage us. You can do so by considering your state, believing our testimony, repenting of sin, forsaking your follies, and fleeing to Jesus for life and peace. This, even this we

seek — your immediate and thorough conversion to God. May God, the Holy Spirit, lead you to Jesus this moment, and may you enjoy everlasting salvation! Amen.

44 The Close of the Year

The Close of the Year "The end of all things is at hand." 1 Peter 4:7

Eleven months have rolled away; the last month has now arrived. They have told their tale before the throne of God; this month comes to admonish and exhort us. The long-suffering of God continues. He is still plenteous in mercy. Our day is lengthened out; but the shadows of evening are stretching out. Time flies with the utmost rapidity. Eternity approaches with rapid strides. "The end of all things is at hand." Let us therefore be sober, and watch unto prayer. The end of the present year is at hand. It will soon close upon us forever. It will make its report to our Judge. It will record a testimony for or against us. It found us — what? It will leave us — what? Did it find us enemies to God? If so, will it leave us friends? Did it find us impenitent? If so, has it witnessed to our sorrowing to repentance? Did it find us out of Christ? If so, will it leave us in vital union to his person? Did it find us undecided? If so, will it leave us the active, devoted professors of the religion of Christ?

What were we at the beginning of the year? What are we now? What were we doing then? What have we done since? What are we doing now? These inquiries are solemn, and, if used aright, they will be beneficial. Twelve months of our short life will soon be gone. Fifty-two weeks will have fled forever. Three hundred and sixty-five days will have passed away. If we have only sinned once in every twenty-four hours, three hundred and sixty five sins have been committed. If we have sinned twelve times in the day (and who has not?), then we shall have been found guilty of crime against God, four thousand three hundred and eighty times! Who can understand the number or the desert of his errors? May the Lord cleanse us from secret and unobserved faults! Oh, the patience of God which has borne with us! The end of life will soon be here. We may not finish this year, which is now so near its close. Perhaps the eye that is now passing over this page, will on the 31st of December be sightless, and the hand that now holds this volume, may be cold in death. But if so, where will the soul be? If so, what will be the eternal state of the reader?

Life is hurrying past — it is hastening away. Oh, that we were wise, that we understood this; that we were rightly affected by it, and did consider our latter end! Soon we shall take the last look at our friends and relatives. Soon we shall heave the last sigh in the land of hope. Soon we shall leave the body, and leave it a prey to worms. The end is at hand. It is near. It may be very near. Be therefore ready. The end of our opportunities is at hand. The last sermon we are to hear, will soon be preached. The last prayer-meeting we may attend, will soon be held. The last opportunity to visit the sick, to speak a word for God, to save a soul from death, or to circulate the Christian tract — will soon present itself. Let us work while it is day, for the night comes when no man can work. The day is far spent; the night is at hand. The voice of the Master will soon be heard, saying, "Give an account of your stewardship; for you may be no longer steward!"

Oh, to be found ready! Now is the time for improvement. We may inform the mind, correct the conduct, increase the zeal, enlarge the efforts. The present is the season of usefulness. It is spring time — sowing time. Let us plough up the fallow ground. Let us cast in the good seed. Let us

watch against the foe. Let us get the vessels filled with oil. Trim the lamp. Gird up the loins. Look out for the Master's appearing; and rejoice at every intimation of his coming.

If the end of all things is at hand, we should be sober. We should think soberly, speak soberly, act soberly. Let us not be drunk with wine, wherein is excess — but be filled with the Spirit.

If the end of all things is at hand, we should be thoughtful. Many professors are very thoughtless. Others spends their thoughts principally on temporal things. Let us think . . .

of time, and its responsibilities;

of eternity, and its solemnities;

of sin, and its consequences;

of Jesus, and his glories;

of God, and his rights over us;

of death, and the awful realities connected with it.

If the end of all things is at hand, we should be watchful. Satan is watchful. The world is watchful. Let us watch against levity, indifference, lukewarmness, worldly conformity, evil-speaking — and our besetting sins. Let us watch . . .

the workings of our own evil hearts,

the movements of the world,

the progress of error,

the devices of Satan, and

the snares by which we are surrounded.

Let us watch . . .

the hand of Divine Providence,

the operations of the Holy Spirit in our souls,

the opportunities that offer for usefulness,

and the constant attempts that are being made to entrap and mislead us.

If the end of all things is at hand, we should be active. The present is no time for sleep. Everything around is awake. A thousand voices call upon us to be diligent, devoted, and determined for God. Let us, then, consecrate afresh our energies, devote our talents, set about our work, and co-operate, as far as we consistently can, with our fellow-servants in the Lord's cause. The end is near. The Judge stands before the door. The laborers will soon be called to receive their wages, and loiterers will be punished with many stripes.

Lost sinner! you will soon hear the last solemn warning. You will soon receive the last gracious invitation. The accepted time is flying. The day of salvation is hastening away. This is "your day."

You are even now treading on the margin of time. Only open your eyes, and you will see eternity just before you. Today God speaks to you. Today he speaks to you in mercy. Today he calls you to repentance. Today he invites you to his throne, to his bosom. Today he waits to be gracious. Tomorrow he may rise up and "shut to the door." Tomorrow he may say, "He is joined to idols, let him alone!" Tomorrow he may declare, "Therefore, this is what the Lord God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Listen! I am going to bring on them every disaster I pronounced against them. I spoke to them, but they did not listen; I called to them, but they did not answer." (Jeremiah 35:17). May the last month find us reconciled to God — justified before God — walking in close and holy fellowship with God — conformed to the moral image of God — and diligently employing all our talents for the promotion of the cause and glory of God.

Brethren, farewell. May the new year open upon us in mercy; may it find us in peace with God, bring us special blessings from God, and may we spend it as those who must give an account!

45 The Experience Of Zion's Pilgrims

The Experience Of Zion's Pilgrims The way that leads to glory's bright abode
Is rough and rugged, lined with thorns and snares;
It is a tiresome, tedious, heavy road,
And often fills the traveler with fears.
Here friends forsake, and he is left alone,
Yet not alone — for God supports his soul;
But all his earthly comforts are withdrawn,
And Satan seems to roam without control.
His faith is weak, his burdens daily grow,
He often thinks he ne'er shall reach the goal;
His bosom heaves, and heavy is the woe
That presses down his poor desponding soul.
He feels he must give up, yet perseveres;
At times he thinks that everything is wrong;
His soul is haunted by ten thousand fears,
While pacing Baca's gloomy valley along.
"When will my God appear and set me free?
When will he come and comfort me?" he cries;
When, when shall I his great salvation see,
And on his glories feast my ravished eyes?
He onward pushes through this valley of woe,
He sighs, he groans, at times breaks out and sings;
The Sun of Righteousness, e'en while below,
Bursts forth and shines with healing in his wings.
The mere professor finds he has not strength;
Some strong temptation blows — he's overcome —

He falls away; and it is proved at length
That only saints can reach the Heavenly home!
Oh! happy they who lean upon the Lord,
And draw supplies of strength from day to day;
Who live by faith upon his holy Word,
In them Jehovah does his power display.
They stand, the storms and tempests beat around;
They persevere, though dangers line the road;
They find their consolations more abound
As they are called to suffer for their God.
None but an arm divine could lead them on,
None but a God could keep their souls secure;
In every conquering saint, free grace has shone,
And only by free grace can we endure.
Shall we, then, fear the rod, since grace is free?
Shall we be daunted by the rugged path?
Nay, let us onward press, and we shall see
God will appear, and honor prayer and faith.
We shall arrive where endless pleasure flows
In silver streams from 'neath the throne of light;
Where life's fair tree in unseen glory grows,
And saints are clad in robes of shining white!
What is the way compared with that blessed state
Where perfect peace and glory ever reign?
Ten thousand saints and angels for us wait,
And soon shall we their brightest joys attain.
Then shall we stand before the glorious throne,
And wave our palms in honor of his name;
Adore and bless the sacred Three In One,

Through whom alone we all our foes o'ercame.
Unfading glory shall our portion be,
Eternal honors crown each victor's brow;
The Lamb in spotless splendor we shall see,
And all the mysteries of redemption know!
O glorious day! when we shall all employ
Our ransomed powers to celebrate his praise;
Our souls o'erflow with perfect love and joy,
While all his matchless glories, he displays!

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