

THE BELIEVERS COMPANION

by James Smith

Smith's devotional for afflicted believers providing instruction, reproof, and consolation, explaining the nature and design of suffering and leading the troubled mind back to God through varied passages offering comfort during distress.

77 Chapters

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-00.1-The Believer's Companion in Seasons of Affliction and Trouble

The Believer's Companion in

Seasons of Affliction and Trouble James Smith, 1842

-00.2-PREFACE

PREFACE

The following pages were drawn up expressly for the use of the afflicted of the Lord's people; and are designed to administer instruction, reproof, and consolation to the heirs of salvation. When sickness throws the believer on his bed, weakens his powers of memory and meditation, and unfits him for the pleasures of conversation — he needs a friend to refresh his mind with suitable portions of God's most holy word, and to offer suitable reflections upon the same. Such a friend, this little volume is designed to be. I have endeavored . . .

to set forth Jehovah in His true character,

to point out the nature and design of afflictive dispensations, and

to lead back the mind to the Lord, from whom it is continually straying. The pieces are short and varied; and, as poetry has a peculiar tendency to soothe and comfort the minds of many in trouble, I have collected from various sources, what appeared to me to be adapted for the purpose. But let no one expect to derive advantage merely by reading this or any other book: "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights." Look then, my poor afflicted brother and sister, to Him; and crave the unction and operation of the Holy Spirit, that so you may read to profit and spiritual edification. To the Lord I commend this feeble effort to administer comfort to His people, and pray that many may be edified and built up upon their most holy faith thereby. And if any good should, in any instance, result therefrom, let Jehovah — Father, Son, and Spirit — have all the praise. Amen.

James Smith, Cheltenham

-00.3-PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The Lord having greatly blessed the First Edition of this little work, to many of His people in affliction, and three thousand copies being now in circulation — I have been requested to revise and enlarge it, in hope that its usefulness may be still far more extensive. A number of fresh pieces are therefore added, and some of the former pieces are enlarged. And now, committing it to the direction and blessing of that gracious God, who has so signally crowned it with His favor, I have only to request the reader to pray for a blessing on the author and His work — that God may be greatly glorified, and many souls profited by its perusal.

James Smith, Cheltenham, 1842

-00.4-AUTHOR NOTE

AUTHOR NOTE

James Smith (1802—1862) was a predecessor of Charles Spurgeon at New Park Street Chapel in London from 1841 until 1850. Early on, Smith's readings were even more popular than Spurgeon's! My object is to lead the mind . . . from SELF — to Jesus; from sin — to salvation; from the troubles of life — to the comforts of the gospel. My aim is . . . to humble the sinner — and exalt the Savior; to strip the creature — and place the crown on the head of God's free grace!

I cannot ascribe too much to Jesus — or too little to man!

-00.5-SOURCE NOTE AND SPECIAL THANKS

SOURCE NOTE AND SPECIAL THANKS

God's servants at <http://www.gracegems.org/> updated, revised, and adapted this beautiful material to modern English. They adopted a 'flowing poetic form' for most of the quotes as an aid to reflection and comprehension. <http://www.gracegems.org/19/literature.htm> Grace Gems Copyright Policy: We frequently get requests asking for permission to use literature from Grace Gems. Since everything on our website is public domain, there is no need to ask permission. We encourage others to use our literature in any way they desire. Forward it to others — add it to your website — put it in your church bulletins — make it into books or booklets for distribution. Also, feel free to add a "link" to <http://www.gracegems.org/> on your website — there is no need to ask for permission. (Formatted for e-Sword by Tom Rightmer using e-Sword ToolTip v3.45)

-01-Delighting in God!

Delighting in God!

James Smith, 1842

"Delight yourself in the Lord — and He shall give you the desires of your heart!"Psalms 37:4

Delighting in worldly things — effectually prevents our delighting in God. Therefore it is often the case, the Lord strips us of these things, or incapacitates us to enjoy them — in order to bring us back to delight in Himself.

He delights in His people — and He desires His people to delight in Him. In order to accomplish this, He has revealed Himself in the most amiable characters, as . . .

a Husband;

a Friend;

a Brother;

a Savior;

a Shepherd, and so forth —

on purpose to endear Himself to us!

Surely if our hearts were right — we would delight in Him on account of . . .

His glorious perfections;

His unalterable love;

the perfect atonement made for our sins;

the promises made for our comfort and encouragement on earth;

the gift of the Holy Spirit;

the communion we are urged to hold with Himself;

and the glorious paradise of blessedness set before us — where we shall forever . . .

view the unfolding of His glories,

enjoy the riches of His grace, and

drink of the river of His pleasures!

My sick friend, Jesus bids you to delight yourself in Him!

Delight in Him as your Savior, Friend, and Brother!

Delight in His person and glories!

Delight in His perfect work!

Delight in His glorious fullness!

Delight in your salvation in Him, union to Him, and claim upon Him.

Oh, delight in Jesus!

You will have no permanent peace or solid satisfaction — but as you are led to delight in Him, and to rejoice in Him, saying, "You are my portion, O Lord!"

He who delights in God has the desires of His heart — because they are in accordance with the purpose, promise, and pleasure of God.

The mind is thrown into the mold of God's mind, and the soul cries from its inmost recesses, "Not my will — but may Your will be done!" Its pleasures are spiritual, permanent, and satisfactory. The desire for earthly things becomes very contracted — a little of the things of this poor world will satisfy a soul that is delighting in Jehovah.

Delighting in God always produces resignation and holy contentment. Whatever they have — they enjoy it as the undeserved gift of God; and they feel obligated and thankful for all. They would rather be conformed to God's will — than have their own will. They know that His appointments are best — because they are infinitely wise, holy, and gracious. They can say, "I trust in You, O Lord, for You are my God! My times are in Your hand!" They find godliness with contentment to be great gain; and say with one of old, "The little that a righteous man has — is better than the riches of many wicked!" "Better a little with the fear of the Lord — than great treasure with turmoil."

The presence, the promise, and the smile of God — are to them inestimably valuable; but other things are not so important. They seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness — and all other necessary things are added unto them. They live at the fountain — when all the streams are dried up! They delight in God — when creatures fade and wither!

O Lord! I would delight in Thee,

And on Your care depend;

To You in every trouble flee,

My best, my only Friend!

No good in creatures can be found,

But may be found in Thee;

I must have all things and abound,

While God is God to me!

-02-Troubles, troubles, troubles!

Troubles, troubles, troubles!

James Smith, 1842

"Call upon Me in the day of trouble! I will deliver you — and you shall glorify Me!" Psalms 50:15

Believer, in this portion of the divine word, you will discover:

1. your present portion — trouble,
2. your constant privilege — prayer,
3. your future prospect — deliverance.

1. Your present portion is TROUBLE. You must expect trouble, and will certainly be deceived if you expect to escape it. Sin is the parent of trouble — and our sin-cursed earth its fruitful soil. Trouble springs up all around us, and appears in an almost infinite variety of forms.

Every connection we form,
every character we bear,
every office we fill, and
every relation we sustain —
is a fruitful source of trouble!

We shall have . . .

trouble in mind,

trouble in circumstances,

trouble in body;

trouble from almost every quarter! This poor world is not our rest — for it is polluted! This poor world is not our home — for we are poor pilgrims! This poor world is not our country — for we are strangers and aliens!

Every day has its peculiar troubles. Often when we look for a certain comfort — we only find peculiar distress and vexation! Everything declares, "Happiness is not in me!" You may look on the right hand — but you will find no permanent peace; on the left — and disappointment awaits you. Only in Jesus is . . .

solid peace,

holy satisfaction, and

permanent comfort to be found.

If we could rightly interpret the various voices around us, we would find them all saying, "Go to Jesus! Abide in Jesus! Derive all from Jesus — or be wretched, miserable, and disappointed!" In youth, manhood, and old age — trouble and tribulation is the Christian's lot. Our God feeds us with the heritage of Jacob our father; but if we carefully read his history, we shall find some very bitter herbs grew on it:

Joseph is lost,

Rachel dies,

Simeon is imprisoned,

Benjamin must go,

Simeon and Levi slay the Shechemites —

and all these things appear against him!

Just so with us, troubles and trials follow each other, at times, almost like Job's messengers, treading on each other's heels, and we are almost overwhelmed! But,

2. Your constant privilege is PRAYER — to visit the throne of grace, and wait upon our God. He says, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble!" Troubles . . .

furnish us with messages to our Father's throne,

quicken us in our supplications, and

oblige us to entreat His favor! His throne of grace is always accessible, and His ear is always open; but in times of trouble, He especially invites us to draw near. He says:

Call upon Me in trouble, call for whatever you need!

Are you perplexed — then call for wisdom;

are you weak — then call for strength;

are you guilty — then call for pardon;

are you miserable — then call for comfort;

are you in darkness — then call for light;

are you in bondage — then call for freedom and relief.

Call upon Me, for I am always on the throne of grace!

Call upon Me, for I am glad to see you!

Call upon Me, for I am ready to help you!

Call upon Me, for I wait to be gracious unto you!

Call upon Me — upon Me first, before you run to others!

Call upon Me — and you will have no occasion to go anywhere else, for I have all that you possibly can need.

Call upon Me freely — without reserve.

Call upon Me boldly — without fear.

Call upon Me importunately — without doubt! The promise encourages us,
the invitation allures us — but

trouble impels us to call upon our God! Our troubles are frequently the instruments the Holy Spirit employs to carry on His sacred work in our hearts. By troubles, He . . .

empties us of self,

weans us from the world, and

endears Jesus and His salvation to us!

Oh, believer, make use of your privilege in every time of trouble — and fully expect what Your God has promised!

3. Yourfuture prospectis DELIVERANCE. The prospect is opened up, "I will deliver you — and you shall glorify Me!" Here God comes under engagement to deliver His calling child. Can we, then, be too confident, or expect deliverance with too much assurance? Surely not! Only let us beware lest we dictate to God as to time, means, or manner of deliverance — and then we cannot be too certain. He will deliver, and in such a way as to . . .

put honor on your faith,

pour confusion on your unbelief, and

secure the glory to His blessed self!

God's delivering mercies are all brought forth on jubilee days — for the deliverances which He affords, proclaim a jubilee in the soul.

"I WILL!" — this promise is . . .

more durable than earth,

more stable as the pillars of Heaven,

and as changeless as the nature of Jehovah.

"I will DELIVER!" — this is at once . . .

the food, warrant, and plea of faith;

the lattice through which hope directs the eye, and

the prime argument which the soul uses before God.

"I will deliver YOU!" This is the laying of God's hand on His needy child. My poor brother — are you in trouble? Are you calling upon God? The Lord says, "I will deliver YOU!" You are the person God had in His eye and in His heart — when he caused this precious portion to be penned. Take up the language, and say, "He will deliver ME!" And you, being delivered, proving God to be faithful, realizing the power of prayer, and enjoying delivering mercy — shall, though Satan will try to hinder, and unbelief would gladly shut your mouth — you shall glorify Me!

How truly blessed, how pleasant, how satisfactory is this! Every believer must say: "It is just as I would have it! I get all the mercy — and God gets all the glory!"

Brethren in Jesus . . .

expect your portion — troubles,

prize your privilege — prayer, and

look forward to your prospect — deliverance!

You children of God and the Lamb,

Remember, when sorrows press sore,

Your Jesus did once feel the same,

When conflicts and trials He bore!

And still His redeemed should know,

He's Jesus the same in His love;

The foot can't be crushed below,

And the head be unconscious above!

And what a sweet thought for to bear,

By all where His grace He has given,

His poorest on earth is as dear,

To Him, as His greatest in Heaven!

The merits and worth of His blood

Are equal below and above;

As soon might He cease to be God,

As Jesus might cease in His love!

-03-The True Grace of God

The True Grace of God James Smith, 1842

"This is the true grace of God, wherein you stand."1 Peter 5:12 The grace of God is a subject which, of all others, demands our most serious attention. God's grace is nothing less than the free, sovereign, and eternal favor of God toward poor sinners in Christ. Upon this is bottomed, and from this ALONE, springs our eternal salvation; for "we are saved, and called with a holy calling, not according to our works — but according to God's purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began!" 2 Timothy 1:9.

God's grace is manifested in the wonderful love, kindness, and condescension of our Lord and Savior: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich — yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich." 2 Corinthians 8:9. God's grace shines in all the doctrines of the everlasting gospel — they contain the revelation of grace, in the full, complete, and glorious salvation of the church of God. The Father's grace appears in the CHOICE of a people to show forth His praise. The Son's grace is revealed in the REDEMPTION of that chosen people from sin, the world, Satan, death, and Hell. The Spirit's grace is manifest in the NEW BIRTH, sanctification, sealing, and teaching of that chosen and redeemed people.

Thus . . .

the Father chooses a people by His grace,

the Son ransoms these chosen people by His grace, and

the Spirit makes these chosen people fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, by His grace. The Father marks the objects,

the Son delivers from wrath,

the Spirit leads to glory —

and all in richest grace! The grace of God is manifest in His dealings with His people, in delivering them from their nature state. Wonderful to declare — and yet most certainly true, "Where sin abounded — grace did MUCH MORE abound; that, as sin has reigned unto death, even so might GRACE REIGN through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 5:20-21. In a Word, grace is divine favor, which . . .

arises in God as its fountain;

centers in Christ as its depository;

appears in the doctrines of the gospel as in a mirror;

flows to sinners as its objects; and

peoples Heaven with sanctified believers as its design.

Grace is . . .

the glory of Jehovah;

the charm of the gospel;

the delight of Jesus; and

the fountain of consolation to the church.

Grace is . . .

eternal in its existence;

holy in its nature;

free in its acts;

sanctifying in its tendency;

and glorious in its design! But if we attend to what the Bible says of grace, we shall discover that the True Grace of God is different from what man conceives. Instead of its being an enemy to holiness — grace is . . .

the root on which holiness grows,

the fountain from which holiness springs, and

the principle that produces holiness in the heart.

True grace brings home the Word with power, conviction, and demonstration to the soul! Acts 14:3
True grace works faith in the hearts of poor sinners, who are said "to believe through grace!" Acts 18:27

True grace calls its objects out of a state of nature, sin, and rebellion against God — and teaches them to pray, and mourn before the Lord! Galatians 1:15; Zechariah 12:10

True grace makes obedient to the faith, and leads the soul to receive "grace upon grace" out of the fullness of Jesus! Romans 1:5; John 1:16 True grace destroys the love and dominion of sin, and leads us from the law to the gospel! Romans 6:14

True grace brings home a sense of pardon to the soul, and imparts everlasting consolation! Ephesians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 2:16 True grace removes condemnation, and justifies us freely, fully, and eternally! Romans 3:24; Titus 3:7

True grace strengthens, supports, and carries the Christian through all his conflicts, tribulations, and trials! 2 Corinthians 12:9 True grace builds up and establishes its possessor in truth, in faith, and in love! Acts 20:32; Hebrews 13:9 True grace leads to holy, scriptural, and consistent practice! Titus 2:11-15 True grace will make a man labor for God and the good of immortal souls! 1 Corinthians 15:10 True grace will regulate his lifestyle according to gospel precepts! 2 Corinthians 1:12

True grace will make him generous and liberal in the Lord's cause, and to the poor! 2 Corinthians 8:1-7; 2 Corinthians 9:6-14 True grace flows in abundance, saves all its objects, and raises them to reign in life! Romans 5:17; Ephesians 2:6-8 True grace is always a gift, and is invariably free! Romans 11:6; Ephesians 4:7 True grace communicates more and more to its possessor, until the victory and conquest is complete! James 4:6 The man that possesses the True Grace of God, and is living under its sacred influence . . .

mourns over his state as a sinner,
longs for perfection as a believer, and
cannot be perfectly happy until purged from all pollution.

He . . .

loves God as His Father,
cleaves to Jesus as His Friend,
views himself as a temple of the Holy Spirit,
hates, fears, flies from sin,
loves, pants for, and follows after holiness,
worships a sovereign Jehovah,
obeys a reigning Redeemer, and
ascribes all His salvation to free grace!

He . . .

depends on the Lord in his troubles,
flies to Jesus from his foes, and
pleads the free promises of his God.

Christ is his object,
salvation his subject, and
to glorify God is his aim!

He realizes union to Christ, proves His relationship to Christ, and offers up His body and soul as a living sacrifice to God; Romans 12:1

He feels, mourns over, and prays for grace to keep down his corruptions. He rests on the oath of Jehovah, accepts the invitations of Heaven, and washes in atoning blood. He renounces self, abhors His own righteousness, and glories in the cross of Christ. He comes out of the world, is transformed in his mind, and finds suitable associates in sanctified believers. He lives in communion with his God, feeds on the bread of life, and dies daily; 1 Corinthians 15:31. He lives believing, dies rejoicing, and will return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon His

head; he shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away; Isaiah 35:10.

Reader, have you been made a partaker of the true grace of God? Opinions in the head, and grace in the heart, are very different things! Notions of grace — are not operations of grace. Are you seeking grace? If so, Jehovah is set before you as the God of ALL grace; 1 Peter 5:10. He waits to bestow grace; Isaiah 30:18. He is able to make all grace abound toward you; 2 Corinthians 9:8. He will give grace and glory; Psalms 84:11. He will give more grace; James 4:6. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think, according to His power that works in us; Ephesians 3:20.

Come, then, boldly to the throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need; Hebrews 4:16. Let nothing satisfy you but the possession of grace, and an evidence of an interest in grace.

You may know the true grace of God by this — it brings salvation, and teaches to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. My fellow-sinner, have You received salvation? Have you experienced a change of heart, and a change of life? Nothing but the grace of God can bring you to Heaven, and it only brings those there who possess it. To be in a graceless state, is to be in a hopeless state; and to be in a hopeless state, is to be in a most dreadful state.

You have now read of the true grace of God; you have been shown from God's word what it does; you have been pointed to the throne where it is to be obtained. Oh, may the God of all grace call you to His eternal glory, by Christ Jesus; and after you have suffered awhile, make you perfect, strengthen, establish and settle you. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

-04-Strangers and Pilgrims!

Strangers and Pilgrims!

James Smith, 1842

"All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth!" Hebrews 11:13

Every believer is a pilgrim. He is traveling back to God, from whom Adam revolted. He is going to His Father's house, to meet His brethren and sisters in the Lord. He is presently a stranger in a strange land, surrounded by temptations, trials, and foes. His journey lies through a great and terrible wilderness — therefore he must not expect a very smooth path, or many comfortable accommodations. He will have much to grieve and distress him, and perhaps most from quarters where he least expected it. His heart will be often burdened with grief, and filled with sorrow — tears are common to the Christian. He feels the unsuitableness of the things of time, to his spirit, profession, and aim. And therefore he confesses, "I am a stranger and a pilgrim — as all my fathers were!" Psalms 39:12

Weariness and painfulness are his portion now — but a rest remains for him. It is a glorious rest. It embraces and includes all the believer has prayed for — or can desire!

It waits for him at the end of his journey,

it was prepared for him from the foundation of the world,

it is now promised to him in the faithful word, and

it will be bestowed upon him when he has fought the good fight, and finished his course.

Everything at present may appear gloomy and distressing; but before you, believer, everything is glorious, magnificent, and blessed! Press on then, toward the mark, for the prize of your high calling. Fight the good fight of faith. Travel on in the strength of Jesus. You are going home — and you have a glorious home to go to! Angels will hail you to rest, Jesus will invite you to glory, and your fellow-pilgrims will rejoice to see you come!

All Heaven will be in harmony to see you safely reach your home; and the minute after you have entered your rest — you will forget all the fatigue, all the dangers, and all the difficulties of the way! You will perhaps be filled with wonder, that you should ever have allowed such trifles to vex you, or such little trials to discourage you — with such a glorious end before you.

Fellow-pilgrim, expect trouble — but expect also mercy to help you in time of need! Expect to feel your circumstances to be trying — but expect also your Savior's strength to be perfected in your weakness! You will soon join the illustrious company of Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, in the kingdom of God! You will soon end your tedious, tiresome journey — and enter into

the joy of your Lord.

Never forget you are a pilgrim — a stranger — only a sojourner here in this poor world. Here you have no continuing city — but you seek one to come.

Nothing can make this poor world, your rest; if you had all you think you want — you would find it a wilderness still. Be content then, to wait until you get home! There you shall enjoy — and always enjoy all your desires! There will not be one want, one wish, or one unfulfilled desire there! All will be satisfied — all will be full. Yet a little while, and you will see the portal of your Father's house, and hear Him say, "Come in, blessed of the Lord, tarry no longer outside! Come, dwell forever with Me!" Not all things else are half so dear,

As His delightful presence here;

What must it be in Heaven!

'Tis Heaven on earth to hear Him say,

As now I journey day by day,

'Poor sinner, cast your fears away,

Your sins are all forgiven!' But how must His celestial voice

Make my enraptured heart rejoice,

When I, in glory, hear Him!

While I before His heavenly gate,

For everlasting entrance wait,

And Jesus on His throne of state,

Invites me to come near Him!

Come in, you blessed, sit by Me;

With my own life I ransomed thee;

Come, taste my perfect favor;

Come in, you happy, spirit, come;

You now shall dwell with Me at home;

You blissful mansions, make him room,

For he must stay forever!

-05-God is Love!

God is Love!

James Smith, 1842

"God is love!" 1 John 4:8

Believer, the author of your present affliction, is Jehovah (Amos 3:6); it comes at the command of the Lord Almighty, who is excellent in counsel and wonderful in working. But though He afflicts you, His heart is not, and cannot be turned against you — for He has revealed himself in His word, as LOVE. He does not merely tell you that He loves you, but that He is LOVE ITSELF — infinite, eternal, unchangeable love. Fury has no place in Him; His anger is turned away from you, by the sacrifice of Jesus; and He has sworn by himself, because He could swear by no greater — that He will not be angry with you; but in blessing, He will bless you. His love is immutably fixed upon every sinner who . . .

looks to Jesus for salvation;

relies upon His precious promises;

and trusts in His glorious propitiation.

You have . . .

loved His name;

adored His perfections;

aimed at His glory; and

endeavored to do good to His people.

These are evidences of your love to Him. You have loved Him — because He first loved you. Your present affliction flows from His love; though occasioned by your sin — or called for by the circumstances in which you are placed. For He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve His redeemed children without cause. But while He puts you to pain, while He lays His rod upon you — He loves you with an inconceivable love! There is nothing but love in His heart toward you! Every affliction is absolutely necessary, and could not be dispensed with. He must afflict you — or neglect you. He will never fail you nor forsake you, and therefore he lays His rod upon you. The discipline may be sharp — but the design is truly gracious. He seeks your good — the good of your immortal soul; and designs only your welfare — even your sanctification. Do not think that He has turned against you, or that He never loved you — these are unworthy thoughts. He intends to . . .

remind you of your follies,

bring you to reflection, and

lead you back to himself from whom you have probably wandered. Or else He intends to prevent your falling into some real evils, to which you were fast hastening. He intends, in a word . . .

to conform you to Jesus;

to answer your prayers; and

to show you, your absolute need of His presence, power, and love.

It was Divine love which chose the trial. It was Divine love which sent it. And the God of love is waiting to hear your confessions, your prayers, and your complaints.

Believe that He is love; believe that your sickness flows from love; and go to Him with this assurance, and entreat Him to sanctify it — and then remove it. But seek its sanctification before its removal.

Sanctified afflictions are among our choicest blessings! They . . .

wean our hearts from earth,

direct our affections above, and

give energy and fervor to our prayers.

Many have had to say, "It is good for me, that I have been afflicted! Before I was afflicted I went astray — but now I keep your precepts." The Lord watches over you in love, while you are in this furnace — He is about your bed. Do not forget the God of love is present with you — present to . . .

hear your groanings,

number your pains,

mark your tears,

listen to your prayers,

and bless you indeed.

You may not have the comfort of His presence — but you have the benefit of it. Endeavor to realize that God is with you — with you as a kind and gracious Father, watching over you to do you good. By this affliction, He calls you . . .

to self-examination;

to surrender yourself afresh to Him;

to seek your happiness alone in Him;

to cast all your cares upon Him;

to make known your request to Him!

He says, "I will be very gracious unto you at the voice of your cry. When I hear you — I will answer you." His eye is fixed upon you for good! He is full of compassion, and plenteous in mercy unto all who call upon Him in truth. Call then upon the Lord, in this day of trouble; He will deliver you —

and you shall glorify Him.

Beware of indulging hard thoughts of Him, or of conceiving of Him otherwise than He has revealed Himself to you in His word. He says to you, "I AM LOVE!" Dare not then, to indulge any thought of Him which would contradict Him; but believe His word, and expect Him to illustrate and confirm this truth in His dealings with you.

-06-Jehovah Incomparable!

Jehovah Incomparable!

James Smith, 1842

"O Lord, there is none like You!" 1 Chronicles 17:20

Truly, our God is without a parallel! We have read of many gods and of many lords — but who is like unto the Lord our God? When we consider His revealed character, made known for our comfort, benefit, and blessedness — we must say "O Lord, there is none like You!"

We have . . .

broken His law,

dishonored His name,

despised His authority,

scorned His warnings, and

rejected His invitations —

yet, (wonder, O heavens! be astonished, O earth!) He . . .

comes down to us in Christ,

imputes our sins to Him,

makes over His righteousness to us, and

sends the Gospel to assure us that He is LOVE!

He satisfies His justice in the life, sufferings, and death of the dear atoning Savior; and He determines to display the full extent of His love, in dealing with poor worthless sinners. The Son of His love is treated as the object of His hatred — that we might be dealt with as children of His grace. He stoops to the lowest — to raise us to the highest! He invites us kindly, promises faithfully; swears solemnly, and carries Himself lovingly — to make us happy and blessed. He bears with our sins, relieves our distresses, and draws us to Himself by every tender and alluring means!

"O Lord, there is none like You!" Your love is astonishing,

your condescension is boundless,

your grace surpasses thought,

your patience is exceeding great,

your compassion is everlasting, and

your faithfulness is immutable!

"Oh tell me, Lord, that you are mine,

What can I wish beside

My soul shall at the fountain live

When all the streams are dried!" But if we consider the dealings of the Lord, we shall see that there is none like Him. He could dash His enemies to Hell with one word, and drive them to despair. But instead of this, He constantly provides for them — and many of them are fed by Him with the richest blessings of His providence. He . . .

spreads their tables,

supplies their needs, and

pours in His favors upon them abundantly — though they . . .

blaspheme His name,

despise the mention of His grace, and

bid Him to depart from them, in disdain.

He preserves them from a variety of dangers, which would otherwise hurry them out of time into eternity. He warns them of their dangerous condition, by . . .

the word of His grace,

the ministers of the gospel, and

the dispensations of His providence.

He bears with them from day to day, and does not allow their wickedness to arouse His ire, to their immediate destruction. Who, besides Jehovah, would thus feed, preserve, warn, and bear with such obstinate, careless, provoking wretches? Surely none!

"What base rebellious wretches they;

And God as strangely kind!"

When, in His own time, any of His enemies are brought to discover their wickedness, feel their danger, desire to escape their deserved doom, and apply to Him — He freely pardons them, and forgets all their past unkindness! When that monster of a man hung by the side of Jesus on the cross, mocking His dying agonies, reviling His dear name, and endeavoring to add to His tremendous sorrows — Jesus was as silent as one who heard not, as patient as one who felt not, and as kind as one who had been treated with all possible respect! For, no sooner does the bold blasphemer cry, "Lord remember me!" than Jesus answers, "Today shall you be with me in paradise!" And can you, O my Savior, freely and fully pardon such a wretch as that? Can you take him in Your arms, to paradise? Can you forget his scarlet crimes, the insults he offered, and the

daring wickedness manifested by him but a few minutes before? O Lord, who is like unto you? The vile thief enters Heaven, to . . .

the astonishment of angels,

the confusion of devils,

the wonder of glorified saints, and

the honor of the dear, dear Redeemer! Nor was this a solitary instance — but it was an example of what He could do, and what He intended to do. It exhibits His pardoning grace in its real nature and true colors. It shows us what Jesus is, and how He will carry Himself toward all who seek pardon and salvation at His throne. He not only fully pardons the penitent — but He cordially accepts him! He receives him as one of the dear objects of His love, and says to each and every one such, "I have blotted out your sins as a cloud, and your iniquities as a thick cloud! Return unto me, for I have redeemed you; and I will be merciful to your unrighteousness, and your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more!"

He kindly visits them, as though they had never carried themselves unkindly toward Him; and constantly blesses them with spiritual, holy, and eternal blessings. He . . .

clothes them with the garments of His righteousness,

beautifies them with the graces of His Spirit,

comforts them with the promises of His love,

acknowledges them at His throne of grace when they call upon His name,

defends them against their cruel and malicious foes,

tenderly expostulates with them when they wander from Him,

mercifully warns them of their dangers and foes,

kindly exhorts them to cleave close to Himself,

wisely corrects them when they wickedly stray,

and will crown them with glory at the end of their race! And what returns does He frequently get for His kindness and love? Alas! alas! Too often, ingratitude, rebellion, hardness of heart, alienation of affection, forgetfulness of His mercies, and following after other lovers rather than Himself!

"O Lord, there is none like You!"

Lord, one thing I want — more holiness grant,

For more of your mind and your image I pant;

While onward I move, to Canaan above,

Come fill me with holiness, fill me with love.

Oh give me to know more of You below;

Thus fit me for Heaven, and glory bestow;
My harp shall be tuned, the Lamb shall be crowned
Salvation to Jesus! through Heaven shall resound.

-07-The Correction of Love

The Correction of Love James Smith, 1842

"The Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes every one He accepts as a son." Hebrews 12:6

Afflicted Christian, you are perhaps tempted to think that God cannot love you — or He would not so deeply try you. But the reverse is the case — if He did not love you, He might perhaps refuse to try you. But because He loves you, and is a Father to you — therefore He corrects you. All of the Lord's children need correction. Many of them will not grow without very severe discipline — consequently your heavenly Father says, "I will melt them, and try them." "I will turn my hand upon you, and will purge away your dross; and take away all your tin."

Look to the generations of old, and see if the Lord's people in every age have not been an afflicted people. Look at Job, at the prophets, at Lazarus; God tenderly loved them — and yet how severely He tried them. He has commanded an earthly parent to chasten His son while there is hope, and not to let his soul spare for his crying — and by this rule He proceeds. He chastens us — that he may not destroy us. There is infinite mercy in your present trial — as dreadful as it may appear to you. There was an absolute necessity for it, for He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve His redeemed children.

He takes pleasure in the spiritual prosperity of His people — and therefore He uses means to promote it. He has received you as a son, and He is now . . .

using His paternal authority;

manifesting His infinite wisdom;

fulfilling His gracious covenant;

making good His precious promises;

and displaying His unutterable love! Do not listen to Satan, who would suggest hard thoughts of God. Do not question His love, or doubt His word — but plead with Him at His throne, and He will give you an answer of peace. He is now waiting to be gracious to you. He says to you, "Let me hear your voice!" Arise therefore, and call upon your God. Every one who is . . .

adopted into His family;

quickened by His grace;

and united to Jesus —

is made to pass under the rod, and prove the truth of the Scripture which says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous — but the Lord delivers him out of them all."

He chastens you, not for His own pleasure or gratification — but for your profit — that you might be a partaker of His holiness. What a gracious design is this — every way worthy of God. It affords full proof of His infinite wisdom, care, and love!

Think within yourself:

I could not do without this affliction;

it is sent in love;

it is intended to do me good;

it is a proof that I am a child of God

— and you will then think rightly. Do not despise the chastening of the Lord, by thinking that you could have done as well without it; or that there was no necessity for it. Depend upon it, you must either be . . .

pained — or ruined;

tried — or injured;

corrected — or lost. Do not faint when the Lord rebukes you. He has promised you, that as your day is — so shall your strength be. He says to you, "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 uphold you with My righteous right hand!" Isaiah 41:10. Precious promise of a faithful God! He made it in love. He has not forgotten it — no, He intends to make it good. Yes, He is now making it good to you — as tried and afflicted as you are. The rod which afflicts you, is in the hand of Jesus! In that hand which was once bored and nailed to the cross for your redemption! In the hand of the Friend who loves at all times; and who is a Brother born for adversity. Will Jesus who suffered, bled, and died to redeem you — ever hurt you? Surely not! His heart is too tender! His love is too great! "He will not break the bruised reed — and He will not quench the smoking flax!" He will bind up the broken heart, and comfort the sorrowful spirit.

You say, "He is sorely trying me!" True — but He is only making you fit to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. They are . . .

loving strokes,

valuable trials,

blessed afflictions! As sharp they may be — short they must be. And after you have suffered a little while, He will make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight.

Humble yourself then under the mighty hand of God;

mourn before Him;

surrender all to Him;

plead with Him;

justify Him —

and the rod will soon fall from His hand, the scourging will soon be over, and peaceable fruits of righteousness will make their appearance.

Look up to your God, and say:

Submissive to your will, my God,

I all to you resign;

I bow before your chastening rod,

And mourn, but not repine.

Why should my foolish heart complain,

When wisdom, truth, and love,

Direct the stroke, inflict the pain,

And point to joys above?

How short are all my sufferings here!

How needful every cross!

Away then, my unbelieving fear,

Nor call my gain, my loss.

-08-God Glorified by Sickness

God Glorified by Sickness James Smith, 1842

"This sickness is for the glory of God!" John 11:4

Believer, you have often prayed that God may be glorified in you and by you? He is now taking you at your word. His glory and your well-being are united together by His sovereign purpose; and in aiming at the one — He produces the other. He glorifies . . .

his bounty in giving to you;

his grace in justifying you; and

his strength in supporting you. His strength is made perfect in weakness. He is glorified . . .

when you calmly submit to His sovereign will;

when you surrender cheerfully what you value at His call;

when you place yourself at His disposal, and heartily say,

"Here am I, Lord, do with me as seems you good." A patient sufferer, glorifies a gracious God. He who is willing to suffer — that God may be glorified. The glory of God is the great end of our . . .

creation,

regeneration,

justification,

sanctification,

and glorification. The glory of God is the end proposed in all our trials, troubles, and distresses!

He intends but to crucify the old man, and conform you to the image of His Son — do you not wish to be like Jesus? Are you not praying for this? Well, this is the very object which your heavenly Father has in view. And if you suffer with Christ, and are conformed to His image here — you will be glorified with Him in a brighter, better world. Can God get glory by this sickness of yours — and are you unwilling to be sick? Did the Lord Jesus come down from Heaven, and suffer, bleed, and die, that God may be glorified in your eternal salvation; and are you not willing to suffer, a few days or weeks, a few trials from which Jesus has extracted the curse, and in which He has deposited a blessing — that your Father may be glorified? But perhaps you are ready to ask, "Can God be glorified by my sickness?" Yes, in many ways, perhaps, of which we have no conception at present. He is glorified . . .

by your resignation;

by your patience;

by your prayerfulness;

by your jealousy of self, and

by your fear lest you should dishonor Him.

He is glorified also . . .

by the testimony you bear to His truth, love, and faithfulness;

by your trust in His promises;

by your reliance on His providential care;

by your surrender of all things into His hands;

by your aiming in all things to please Him, and adorn your profession of His holy gospel.

Let this then be the object of your prayers — that the Lord may be glorified in your body, whether it be by life or by death. Seek grace that you may serve Him in your present affliction. Benefit those with whom you are immediately connected; and in some way promote His cause. Be not too much taken up with yourself, or your worldly concerns; but remember the Lord has said, "Those who honor me, I will honor; and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Let your constant aim be to please God, to glorify Him, and to magnify the riches of His grace. Then if you live — you will live unto the Lord; or if you die — you will die unto the Lord; living or dying you will be the Lord's.

Happy Christian, who aims at the honor of God in all things, and at all times! He may safely leave all things in the hands of God, and say with the Apostle in every trial, "This also shall turn to my salvation!" All things must work together for His good, and end in His eternal happiness! While he sojourns on earth, His conversation is in Heaven; and while laboring or suffering he sings: "Whatever I say or do — Your glory be my aim!"

-09-Abounding Grace!

Abounding Grace!

James Smith, 1842

"And God is able to make all grace abound to you — so that in all things at all times, having all that you need — you will abound in every good work!" 2 Corinthians 9:8

Jehovah is emphatically called . . .

the God of all grace,

the Father of mercies,

the God of all comfort,

the God of peace,

the God of hope,

the God of salvation.

All of these titles are full of comfort, and are calculated to inspire our souls with love, gratitude, and pleasure.

All grace dwells in God — and flows freely from Him. He is glorified in communications of His grace to the most unworthy. You have received a little — He is able to make all of His grace abound toward you. The aboundings of His grace will produce . . .

strong faith,

great patience,

deep humility,

holy contentment,

ardent love,

joyful hope,

warm zeal,

scriptural courage

and spiritual fortitude. In reference to all these things — you feel miserably deficient; you cannot produce them. But God can make His grace abound to you. He can give you a sufficiency of grace . . .

to support you under every trial,

to strengthen you under every burden,

to qualify you for every duty, and

to fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

You have perhaps set about doing good works — and have found yourself unable to perform them. You feel ashamed of what you have done; you have condemned yourself, and perhaps have given way to fear and despondency. This was wrong. Good works can only be performed through grace received from the Lord. Without grace — the wisest miscarry; with God's grace — the most simple succeed! We can only serve God rightly — when we serve Him with His own grace. Therefore the Apostle says, "Since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear."

You are not sufficient of yourself so much as to think a good thought! Without supplies of grace from Christ — you can do nothing to please Him. It is grace which . . .

first quickened us to feel our lost state;

led us to Jesus;

gives us a good hope;

conquers our corruptions;

enables us to act for the Lord's glory;

and grace will crown the whole!

There is no good work but you may perform it — if you receive God's grace!

There is no sin but you may fall into — if you trust to yourself, and neglect the supplies of grace.

Beware how you draw arguments from your own inability — to encourage negligence, unbelief, or sloth. God invites you to His throne of grace. He promises you a supply. He is able to make all grace to abound toward you. He is the God of all grace — and until He changes in His nature, forfeits His word, or refuses to give — you have no ground of complaint or despondency.

Amazing grace — how sweet the sound,

That saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost — but now am found —

Was blind — but now I see!

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,

And grace my fears relieved;

How precious did that grace appear,

When first my soul believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home!

-10-A Serious Charge!

A Serious Charge!

James Smith, 1842

"You have become weary of Me!" Isaiah 43:22

What a solemn charge is here! And yet who can plead, 'Not guilty?' To be wearied of man — weak, vain, fickle, changing man — is no wonder; but to be weary of God is truly astonishing! How does this charge set forth the deep and awful depravity of human nature. Yet you yourself have known times when you have felt, and manifested this weariness!

See your too frequent neglect of public worship; or your deadness, indifference, or wanderings therein!

See your backwardness to draw near to God in private; or the short time which satisfies you to be found upon your knees before Him!

See your seldom opened Bible, or the lack of interest in its contents; the reluctance with which you sometimes take it up, and the readiness with which you lay it down!

Surely these things, rightly interpreted, say, "You have become weary of Me!"

If weariness arises from physical weakness — it is infirmity. But if weariness arises from disinclination — it is a shameful sin. And can it be, that we have been weary of our God . . .

whom angels always delight to obey;

whose service is perfect freedom,

whose smile is Heaven — and whose frown is Hell?

Oh yes, we have too frequently been weary of God! Let us confess it with shame, contrition, and remorse! Let us not attempt to excuse so fearful a crime — but let us come afresh to that precious blood which cleanses from all sin. Is it any wonder the Lord has at times hid His face from us — and appeared displeased with us? Is it not rather a wonder He has dealt so gently, so kindly, and so mercifully with us? Oh the patience and forbearance of our God! What a blessing to know that the Lord is not weary of us. "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom!" Isaiah 40:28. He may have spoken against us in some portions of His word, and by some of the dispensations of His providence; but He earnestly remembers us still, and His heart is stirred for us, therefore He will surely have mercy upon us.

We ought to be ashamed, and never more open our mouths by way of boasting, or in self-righteous exultation, or to palliate our crimes; but to be silent under all His dispensations, seeing He is pacified towards us. He is still love — and bears us no ill-will; He is still light — and in

Him is no darkness at all. We may well cry out, "How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings!" and pray, "Cause me to hear your loving-kindness in the morning; for in You do I trust. Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto You." Then may we say, "The Lord will command His loving-kindness in the day time, and in the night, His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life!"

Though I have grieved your Spirit, Lord,
His help and comfort still afford;
Let me, though vile, approach your throne,
To plead the merits of your Son.
One hope remains — yes, there I'll cling;
I'll crouch beneath my Savior's wing!
I'll clasp His cross; and kneeling there,
Even me, redeeming love may spare!

-11-Surprising Mercy!

Surprising Mercy!

James Smith, 1842

"Only acknowledge your iniquity!" Jeremiah 3:13

Conviction of sin is an inward consciousness that we have done wrong — very wrong — that we have done the very worst thing we could do! We have . . .

insulted the holiness of God,

grieved His love,

trifled with His mercy,

despised His grace,

dared His power,

and defied His justice! Is not such conduct dreadful? And yet such conduct has been ours. If the Holy Spirit is pleased to bring home the law to the conscience, and fix the eye of the mind upon its requirements; and then lead us to compare the temper we have indulged, and the line of conduct we have pursued with it — we shall clearly see that it has been the case. And we shall not only clearly see it — but painfully feel it! An alarm will spring up in the soul, and a thousand doubts will immediately hover over the spirit. We shall begin to fear that our sins are so numerous, or so aggravated, or of such a peculiar cast — that there is no hope of pardon for us; no promise of mercy will appear large enough, or free enough to reach the case — and we shall begin to be in dread. This will especially be the case if we have backslidden from God, and fallen into open sin since we made a profession of His name.

Sin will seem to be set in array before us,

the eye of God will appear to be fixed upon our crimes,

the profession we have made will aggravate every sin,

and justice will appear ready to cut us down!

Then there is a proneness to aggravate the case, to indulge despairing thoughts, to judge ourselves severely, and pass sentence upon ourselves without mercy. It appears to be presumption to hope, and the soul concludes all is over: "I am cast out of the sight of God — I am justly condemned to perish — I have no hope — there is no help for me in God — my case is desperate" — is the language used at such times. But all this is wrong! Yes, we ought to feel — and to feel acutely; but it is sinful to despond, and more sinful to despair. There is no stain which the blood of Christ cannot remove, "All manner of sin and blasphemy is forgiven unto men." Our

gracious God says, "Only acknowledge your iniquity." The Lord will have confession, and "if we confess our sins — He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Confession always goes before a sense of pardon.

Job must be stripped, humbled, and confess His sin — before he is restored and finds peace. "Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold, I am vile! What shall I answer you? My ears had heard of you — but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes!" "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends."

Just so with David; he tried other means — but all failed, he must confess or continue to suffer. Hence he says, "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD' — and you forgave the guilt of my sin!" Psalms 32:3-5.

He roared from pain — but found no relief; he was exhausted by suffering — and obtained no comfort; until he confessed sin — and then he enjoyed pardon, and found peace. Then he knew the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Then he could say, "You are my hiding-place; you shall preserve me from trouble; you shall compass me about with songs of deliverance!"

Just so with Israel, having backslidden, and being brought low — the Lord says, "Return, O backsliding Israel, and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, says Jehovah, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity!" And you, my dear reader, must not only be convinced of sin — but you must confess it before the Lord! You have every encouragement to do so — your God bids you, and His gracious character holds out the strongest inducement to do so. Then consider the benefits which flow from confession; it clears the guilty conscience — for the atoning blood is brought home when we acknowledge our transgressions unto the Lord. It introduces afresh to communion with our God; as the prodigal first confessed, "I have sinned against Heaven and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son!" and was then introduced into fellowship with his father at the feast. Frank confession also produces self-denial, and leads to holy obedience. But when confessing sin, be sure you conceive of God as a kind and gracious being — as a Father who pities you, and has promised to forgive! Do not go to Him as to a Judge — or confession will only lead to bondage and distress. Remember . . .

He is ready to forgive;

His heart is tender;

His terms are easy;

He wills our happiness;

He waits to be gracious.

If you neglect confession — then gloom will continue; if you refuse confession — then sin is aggravated. While the spirit is stubborn — sin is unpardoned; and unpardoned sin demands condemnation, and closes the mouth forever! No sin is too great to be forgiven — if confessed with sincere sorrow before God! No sinner has any cause to despair — if willing to confess and seek

pardon in the name of Jesus. No doubt can be scripturally encouraged — if the soul is willing to submit to God's terms.

Thus you see, dear friend, that you have sinned — but God is gracious! You deserve punishment — but He says, Confess and be pardoned! You doubted and feared — but the gospel scattered every doubt. Fear not, for grace is free. Doubt not, for "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin." Be not discouraged, for "GOD is LOVE." Your trials have done you great good, if they have brought you to the Lord's feet to confess sin, and obtain the tokens of His forgiving love. Never forget, that there are no difficulties, where the wisdom and love of God, and the power and blood of Jesus, are engaged. Hence you may truly say, Had I a heart as large as earth,

And that a frozen ball,

The Sun of Righteousness breaks forth,

And soon dissolves it all! Had I a heart as dark as night,

Without one cheering ray,

My Lord, by His transcendent light;

Can turn my night to day! Had I a heart as hard as stone,

A heart which none can move,

When Jesus makes His presence known,

It melts the stone to love! Had I a heart as full of fears,

As drops that swell the sea,

When Jesus' pardoning love appears,

He makes them quickly flee!

Howe'er perplexed my case may seem,

'Tis easy to my Lord;

All things are possible to Him,

For powerful is His Word!

Then let me rest upon His power,

And run my heavenly race;

He will, in the most trying, hour,

Impart preserving grace!

-12-Idols Removed

Idols Removed James Smith, 1842

"I will cleanse you from all your idols!"Ezekiel 36:25

Idolatry is a sin to which we are all prone. Everyone has idols of some kind. Here the Lord expresses His determination to cleanse us from them. This cleansing work is very painful work — but it is absolutely necessary. Idolatry defiles us, and unfits us for the service, presence, and glory of God. Idolatry is an insult offered to the Divine Majesty. All have their idols — some idolize their trade, some their children, some their bodies, some their appetites, some their books, some their property, some their peculiarities, some their office, some their gifts, some their partners, some their connections, and some their comforts. But all are wrong, and we must expect that God will use means to cleanse them — for our God is a jealous God, and will not allow of a rival. The furnace of affliction, and the floods of trouble are generally employed for this purpose. Now you are in affliction, inquire:

What idol have you been putting in the place of Christ? Where have your affections been?

What have been the principal objects of your pursuit and pleasure? Has not some sin been indulged; some creature been inordinately loved; some object been unscripturally followed? Has Jesus had all the heart? If not, it is no wonder He has put you into the furnace, or called you to pass through this affliction. Now let your prayer be, Cleanse me from all my idols; cleanse me thoroughly, and make me clean.

Perhaps this very affliction is an answer to your prayers. You have prayed to be conformed to Jesus; to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit; and to have the promises fulfilled in your experience. Now the Lord comes to answer your prayer, and to fulfill His promise. He comes with the rod in His hand, and says, "I will cleanse you from all your idols!" Your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, says the Apostle. If you have been setting up your idols in the Lord's temple, is it any wonder that He is displeased, or that He visits you thus? His promises are stable — and must be fulfilled; your hearts are idolatrous — and must be purged; and the Lord will purge away the idols out of your hearts. Do not think then that the Lord deals unkindly. He is . . .

granting you your desire,

fulfilling His word,

and manifesting His love.

It is for your spiritual welfare that He tries you thus, He has said, "Behold, I will allure her; and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart, or comfortably to her." The furnace shall not be heated more than is necessary, "He stays His rough wind in the day of the east wind: by this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away His sin." Isaiah 27:8-9. The more idols — the more purging; no idols — no purging. Have you not procured this

unto yourself? Remember your way when in health and prosperity; look back and see the folly you have indulged; the idolatry you have committed. Is not Jehovah just, faithful, yes, gracious, in thus dealing with you? He might have said, "Let him alone!" or have cast you out of His sight, and driven you to darkness, desperation, and despair. Better by far be cleansed from idols, however painful the process, in order to be glorified; than be left by the Lord to perish in your sin. Then let your language be, The dearest idol I have known,

Whatever that idol be,

Help me to tear it from your throne,

And worship only Thee!

-13-The Lord Present to Save

The Lord Present to Save James Smith, 1842

"For I am with you, and will save you, says the Lord."Jeremiah 30:11 The presence of a friend in trouble is cheering and consoling. But it is too often the case, that our friends, like the friends of Job, prove miserable comforters. They do not enter into our troubles — or they cannot help us. The advice they give at times — only aggravates our woe and adds to our distress.

But, believer, your God says, "I am with you!" What a thought is this! God, the great, the glorious, the omnipotent Jehovah — is with me!

With me to help me,
with me to comfort me,
with me to sanctify me,
with me to save me,
with me as a kind benignant Father,
with me in every place, in every trouble, in every conflict,
with me through all my journey and for evermore,
with me on the bed of sickness,
with me to hold communion with me,
with me to listen to my sighs,
with me to number my tears, and
with me to secure me from all injury!

Yes, Jehovah is with you, and you may say as Jesus did, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me." He is with you to save you; not only from sin — but from immoderate sorrow, from being pressed beyond strength. He will save you . . .

from your gloomy fears — by sending comfort from His Word;

from your malicious enemy Satan — by lifting up a standard against him;

from every real evil — for He has said, "There shall no evil happen to the just." "He shall not be visited with evil."

Appearances may be very dark, the night may seem very long, and your pains, weakness, and fears may be many and great. Still, if the Lord is with you, you may sing, "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!" Habakkuk 3:17-18. "The Lord is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me walk upon my high places."

"The Lord with me!" says some tried soul; "if the Lord is with me — how is it that all this trouble has come upon me? Surely if the Lord were with me — things would go different with me?" So Gideon argued — but he was wrong. (Judges 6) "The Lord tries the righteous. He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

Left to our own wills, we would be earthly, sensual, and devilish; but the Lord loves us too well, and is too near to us, to allow it. The furnace and the flood are means of preservation; by these He purges us from worldly-mindedness, and leads us to set our affections on things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. As the eagle stirs up her nest, renders it uncomfortable, and obliges the young to learn to fly — so the Lord stirs up the nests we make, and constrains us to look upward and long to be at home!

How sovereign, wonderful, and free,

Jesus, your love to sinful me!

In saving, though I still rebel;

Jesus, my Lord, does all things well.

Whenever my Savior and my God,

Has on me laid His chastening rod,

I know in all that has befall,

My Jesus has done all things well.

Sometimes He's pleased His face to hide,

To make me pray, and kill my pride;

Yet am I helped on this to dwell,

My Savior still does all things well.

"Do not be afraid, for I am with you!" Isaiah 43:5

-14-The Comprehensive Promise!

The Comprehensive Promise!

James Smith, 1842 "I will be their God — and they will be My people!"Hebrews 8:10

I will be their God! So has Jehovah purposed in reference to all the chosen of His love! In this gracious and holy purpose, is wrapped up all present and future blessedness. If Jehovah is your God — then all His glorious perfections are engaged and employed for your welfare:

His mercy will supply all your needs;

His power will conquer all your foes;

His wisdom will direct your way;

His faithfulness will answer your prayers;

His justice will maintain your cause; and

His infinite love and grace will be displayed in all His dealings with you!

If God is your God, then . . .

His promises — are your heritage,

His precepts — are your rule,

His doctrines — are your present paradise,

His Son — is your Savior and King,

His Spirit — is your Sanctifier and Tutor,

and He Himself — is your everlasting portion!

If God is your God, then He will freely confer on you all good things at present — and crown you at last with everlasting glory. He will . . .

guide you continually,

chasten you occasionally,

receive you graciously,

and bless you indeed!

If God is your God, then all things are yours; things present, things to come; life, death, the world — all are yours!

If God is your God, then He will consider . . .

nothing too good to give you,

nothing too great to do for you,

nothing too glorious to make over to you.

If God is your God, then all the resources of eternity and all the treasures of time — will, if necessary, be employed in your spiritual and eternal benefit. This is the highest point of blessedness and honor — and this honor have all His saints.

He who has God to be his God — cannot lack any good thing; but he who has not God for his God — lacks everything really and truly good.

They shall be My people — that is, a people peculiarly My own. In order to accomplish this gracious and glorious design, He sends His gospel to our ears — and His Spirit into our hearts. We then are deeply convinced of sin, actual and original, open and secret. The streams are first discovered — but at length the fountain is disclosed. The feeling sense of sin, danger, and condemnation, with which we are favored — urges and impels us to flee to Jesus for mercy, pardon, peace, and endless life. We knock at the door of His mercy, and wait for tokens of His love. We ask of Him the blessings we need, and look for the favors we entreat. We seek for a saving interest in His blood, and are anxious until we find it applied. In due time, when God will get great glory, and we the most benefit — we find Jesus to be made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; made so to us of God, revealed as such in His precious word, and realized as the whole by a living faith. The Son makes us free — and we are free indeed. The Spirit of adoption teaches us to claim relation to Jehovah, and to call Him with confidence and pleasure — our Father and Friend.

Delighted with His love, rejoicing in His grace, and adoring His glorious perfections — we desire to glorify His name. We are ready to undertake anything for His honor, and to do whatever He commands. Divine love shed abroad in the heart, produces the most delightful liberty, and constrains us to willing obedience. The language of the happy soul is, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits? What shall I do to glorify my God?" His commandments are no longer grievous; but, washed in atoning blood, clothed in justifying righteousness, and sanctified by the indwelling and operation of the Holy Comforter — they esteem all His precepts concerning all things, to be right, and hate every false way. Obedience is now the element of the soul, and it runs in the way of God's commandments — grace having enlarged the heart.

Happy, happy soul! It enjoys a peace which passes all understanding, lives by faith above bondage and death, and finds God Himself to be its exceeding joy. It is no more a stranger and a foreigner in the family of God — but a beloved brother, and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. It becomes a stranger and a pilgrim in the world, and declares plainly, by its practices — that it seeks a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Christ is now the blessed object of faith,

the precious Bible is now the daily Counselor, and

perfect holiness is now the object of ardent and inextinguishable desire.

Nothing can now satisfy the soul, but holy fellowship with God — and few things grieve more than sensible distance from Him. The saved soul now delights . . .

to lie at the feet of Jesus,

to meditate on Gethsemane,

to look at His bleeding cross,

to feed on Him as the bread of life, and

to enjoy Him as the fountain of salvation.

Such are God's people, when favored with the Lord's grace, and the workings of His Holy Spirit in their hearts. True, they feel much distress from inbred corruptions, a great conflict with indwelling sin, and much hindrance from the law of sin in the members; but God gives them the victory, and they triumph in Christ. Holiness is their element — and sin is disagreeable. Darkness they hate — and the light they love. And if they could have their way, they would be always employed for the Redeemer's praise, blessed with His sweet presence, dead to the present world, and have their heart and treasure in Heaven. Are you one of the Lord's people? Is God your covenant God? Are you sighing for this blessing, and seeking this favor? Do you leave the world, and in secret prayer, close searching the Bible, and attendance at holy ordinances — seek the Lord and His favor? If so, you shall find Him; for Jesus declares, "Every one who seeks, finds." Happy is the soul that is in such a case; yes, blessed is the man who has Jehovah for His God!

-15-May Your Will be Done!

May Your Will be Done!

James Smith, 1842

"May Your will be done!" Luke 11:2 The will of God is the great first cause of all things, and the highest rule of rectitude. Jehovah being Himself infinitely holy, just, and good — His will, however made known, must be the same. When He willed the universe into existence — it was holy and very good; and everything that comes immediately from that fountain must be so. The will of God is the great source of existence; all things flow from it, and from it all things receive their nature, form, and place. "Our God is in the heavens, He has done whatever He has pleased." "He does according to His will, in Heaven, earth, and Hell! His counsel must stand, and He will do ALL His good pleasure!" "He works all things after the counsel of His own will." So speaks the Holy Spirit for our instruction, edification, and comfort. The will of God, as it regards His beloved family — is just the will of everlasting love. He wills only their present benefit and endless welfare, in all His purposes respecting them, or dealings with them. However His dispensations may vary, His design is one and the same; and the whole of that design may be expressed in four words, "I will bless you!" Yes, this is the fixed determination of our God and Father, to bless His people consistently with His . . .

glorious perfections,

exalted character,

and solemn name.

He ever proceeds with this blessed purpose in view, so that the heaven-born family may ever sing, "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies." The same end is designed when He visits us with sore afflictions, heavy crosses, and distressing losses — as when He showers down His temporal favors in abundance, and the rock pours us out rivers of oil.

If we consider that the very nature of our God in Christ, is love; that His purposes are purposes of grace; that His dispensations are arranged and brought about by infinite wisdom, under the guidance of that love and grace; that He constantly breathes good will towards us — then how can we doubt but that He is aiming at our good, and seeking our profit in all that He accomplishes or permits? And if we believe that He is seeking, in all things, our present and everlasting benefit — then surely it befits us to submit with readiness to all His dispensations; to receive with confidence all He sends; and to believe assuredly, however things may appear — that all is working for our good, and shall issue in His eternal praise. This is the will of God, even our sanctification, that we should be separate from the world, and dedicated as vessels of mercy unto Himself. This He has commanded us to be, and this He is determined to effect. And in order to accomplish so high and holy a purpose, He sends . . .

His gospel to our ears,

His Spirit into our hearts, and

His bitter drugs into our cup. His language in the gospel, and in the dispensations of His providence, is, "I will that those whom are given to Me, be with Me." And it is only as we are with Him in holy fellowship, by constant reference, and devout meditation — that we fulfill His precepts, or walk worthy the calling with which we are called.

Believers often pray, "Let Your will be done!" They are justified in so doing, if they consult their own welfare, or Jehovah's honor; but they little think at times, exactly what they are praying for. If this petition ascends from our hearts at certain times, we pray that our God would . . .

cross our wills,

frustrate our purposes,

hedge up our ways,

blight the blossoms of our hope,

give us wormwood instead of honey,

and gall instead of milk! For it is very frequently the case, that our wills, being under a carnal bias — are directly opposed to the will of God. And we cannot in any measure be opposed to the will of our heavenly Father; but in that measure we are opposed to our own best interests. Let us seek to be conformed to the will of God; but let us expect, if our God condescends to answer our prayers — that He will try us, purge us, and empty us again and again; but He will never leave the furnace, or for one moment take off His eye from the poor sufferer within! He sympathizes with us in all He brings upon us, and is determined to deliver us the moment His end is answered in us. "I will bring the third part through the fire." He will not leave us in it; but, though the bush is enveloped in flame, not one branch shall be consumed.

We should constantly submit to the will of God:

1. His revealed will in His Word — calls for our faith and obedience.
2. His secret will, as developed by His providence and Spirit — calls for our submission and cheerful acquiescence.

We should form no plan, undertake no enterprise — but with reference to the will of God, "If the Lord wills — we shall live and do this or that." This would preserve us from perplexity and disappointment, and be a means of leading us more frequently to the throne of our beloved Lord. A God of love cannot will anything that can hurt His redeemed children. His promises given, His purposes passed, His thoughts, as made known in His word — assure us that all His will respecting us is gracious, kind, and merciful.

Nothing that happens to us, can possibly run counter to His word of grace, or frustrate the promises of His love. However His providence and promises may appear to oppose each other — they are in perfect agreement. And though we at present cannot see it, the period will arrive, when we shall admire the wisdom, and adore the grace — which we behold in the harmony that existed

between the darkest providences and the brightest promises. Yes, we look forward to a period, when we shall cast an eye, cleansed from all film, and free from all detects — back on the way in which the Lord our God has led us; and shall see, however circuitous our route appeared, and however providences and promises once seemed to clash; that our road was right and straight, and that providences and promises were in union.

Lover of Jesus, the will of your God is the source of all your blessedness, and the fountain from whence flows all your mercies. You are not left in darkness, to inquire, "I wonder what is God's will respecting me? No, this is the will of God respecting you — that every good thing should be given you now, and everlasting felicity at your journey's end. You may be called to pass through fire and through water; your way may be hedged with thorns, and paved with flints; your enemies may be many, and your friends but few; your trials may be successive, and of long continuance; but all these are so many mercies — the very best things, if all be taken into the account, that your God could will, or send to you!

Poor doubting, fearing, disconsolate sinner — lift up your head while I tell you, or rather while Jesus tells you — the will of God concerning you. "This is the will of Him who sent me, that every one that discerns the Son, and believes on Him — may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day!" John 6:40. You have discerned that Jesus is the Son of God, "the altogether lovely one." He has become the object of your ardent desire and constant solicitation; you believe Him to be the Messiah, and that He is able to save to the uttermost; you are found often in secret by Him, calling upon Him, and pleading with Him. He has found you — though you have not yet to your satisfaction found Him. His will, and the will of His Father is, that you should have eternal life; and therefore, eternal life is yours!

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 promise 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 bliss —

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!

-16-An Ever-Present Help!

An Ever-Present Help!

James Smith, 1842

"God is our refuge and strength — an ever-present help in trouble!" Psalms 46:1

There never was yet a friendless Christian. Whoever believes in Jesus is in covenant with God; and Jehovah is engaged to be His friend in every trouble, to comfort him in all his tribulations, and to be a God at hand, and not afar off.

Believers in every age have proved Jehovah to be a refuge; as such, He shelters us . . .

from the curses of a broken law,

from the threatening of divine justice,

and from the wrath of God.

He shelters the spirit — if the body appears to be exposed. He prevents harm — if He does not preserve from pain. "Nothing shall by any means hurt you!" Luke 10:19. It is one thing to be pained — this falls to the lot of the most favored saints; it is another thing to be injured — from this we are all preserved. Nothing shall by any means really hurt you —

no affliction, however painful;

no burden, however heavy;

no trial, however severe.

Nothing can really hurt us — but sin. And afflictions are sent to preserve us from sin — or correct us for it. In every trouble — the Lord is our refuge; in every conflict — the Lord is our strength. Who need fear — that has Omnipotence on His side? "When I cry unto you, then shall my enemies turn back; this I know, for God is for me!" The Lord is an ever-present help. We need not go out to find a friend — He is always near. He is in the chamber of affliction — about the bed of sickness. He is present to help. He says, "I am your God. Look to me. Expect from me. I will be a God to you.

My wisdom shall guide you,

my power shall protect you,

my love shall assure you,

my mercy shall save you,

my holiness shall sanctify you,

and my Spirit shall comfort you!

I will be a God to you, therefore I will be always with you, and always for you!"

Call in His aid then. He is present to strengthen — apply to Him to do so.

He helped . . .

Joseph in the prison;

David in the cave;

Hezekiah on his sick bed;

the three Israelites in the furnace;

Paul and Silas in the jail at Philippi;

and He will help you!

"In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord, He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of great waters. The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. The Lord is near unto all that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God; and he heard my voice, and my cry entered into His ears." "The afflicted people you will save; but your eyes are upon the haughty, that you may bring them down."

Afflicted believer, God is your refuge!

His arms are open to receive you;

His heart glows with love unto you;

His fatherly affections yearn over you;

He loves to see you approach Him.

He is your strength; He will strengthen that which He has wrought in you; and make you more than a match for your troubles and foes. He is your help — a present help — an ever-present help — in every time of trouble. "The Lord will help you and deliver you, He will set you on high, because you have known His name. Trust in Him at all times, pour out your heart before Him, He is a refuge for you."

He who on earth as man was known,

And bore our sins and pains;

Now seated on the eternal throne,

The God of glory reigns. This land, through which His pilgrims go,

Is desolate and dry;

But streams of grace from Him overflow,

Their thirst to satisfy. When troubles, like a burning sun,

Beat heavy on their head;
To this Almighty Rock they run,
And find refreshing shade!

-17-The Saint's Portion!

The Saint's Portion!

James Smith, 1842

"You are my portion, O Lord!" Psalms 119:57 This is the language of every Christian's heart and life! The generality of the Lord's family are poor in this world — they have no portion of an earthly kind. But they know the Lord — He has revealed Himself to them in His gracious character; He has given them a saving interest in Himself; and they say, "You are my portion, O Lord!"

He who has God for His portion — must not expect much besides. The Lord is enough, and He makes many of His people prove this, in a way they little expected. They must make a portion of Him. He possesses all they can possibly want. He communicates in wisdom and grace. He has enough to make them happy in the absence of all things besides; but nothing can make the spiritual mind happy in His absence.

He is the sun which enlightens, enlivens, and quickens them!

He is the shield which guards, protects, and preserves them!

He is the bread which sustains, strengthens, and revives them!

He is all they want — and without Him they have nothing.

They are often surprised when Providence strips them, and they are left as Job was — naked, friendless, poor, and destitute. But this is just the Lord bringing them to the test. They had said, "You are my portion, O Lord!" Whereas it is now evident that they reckoned those things of which God has stripped them — as a part of their portion. They considered them as necessary; whereas, however much they may add to our outward comfort, they are not absolutely essential to our well-being. The Lord is an all-sufficient portion; he who possesses the Lord, may say as Jacob to Esau, "Take the present, my brother — seeing I have all things." The Lord is an all-comprehending portion; all things are in Him, from Him, by Him, and for Him.

While He is rich — how can we be poor?

While He is able — how can we be left to want?

While He is love — how can we be miserable? "Happy is the man who dwells in secret with the Almighty, and abides under the shadow of His wings!" Is God your portion? If so, your light afflictions are but for a moment; and they will work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. All your trials — are mercies! Every cross — is a real blessing! God is dealing with you as with a child which He loves tenderly. He is now, in this affliction, doing you good with His whole heart, and with His whole soul. Oh, believe that God, your God, is love! He declares it in His word, proves it in all His dealings, and will fully reveal it to your soul's eternal satisfaction in Heaven!

Let not Satan persuade you that there is wrath in your trials; or that you are not dear to your God. He says, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down His life for His friends! God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Died for us, to bring us honorably to God; died for us, to deliver us from the present evil world; died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, live or die — we may live together with Him.

Take up your home then in your God; make Him the subject of your meditation, the center of your joy, the object of your love, your soul-satisfying portion; so shall you sing at the last, "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever!" Psalms 73:26 From pole to pole let others roam,

And search in vain for bliss;

My soul is satisfied at home —

The Lord my portion is. His grace and mercy fix my love,

His blood removes my fear;

And, while he pleads for me above,

His arm preserves me here. His word of promise is my food,

His Spirit is my guide;

Thus daily is my strength renewed,

And all my needs supplied! For him I count as gain each loss;

Him, though despised, I own;

Well may I glory in His cross,

While He prepares my crown!

-18-Misery Forgotten

Misery Forgotten James Smith, 1842

"You shall forget your misery!" Job 11:16

Misery is both the child of sin — and that which calls into exercise divine mercy. All our miseries flow from one source — all have one and the same origin — sin! We ought to hate sin, if it was only on account of the innumerable miseries which it has introduced into our world. The Christian has his share among the rest, because he is a sinner like the rest — but his miseries will have an end. The miseries of the impenitent are endless! Sin and misery are the two principal things in Hell. They cannot be separated. Where sin is — misery will be, in a greater or less degree. There will be no misery in Heaven — because there will be no sin there. There will be nothing but misery in Hell — because there is no holiness there — all is sin. The effects of misery on earth, are in a great measure counteracted by covenant mercy. Misery will one day be banished from our hearts and our thoughts. We shall remember our misery no more. Your misery at present may be very great, it may flow in upon you from many quarters; but beware of rash conclusions, and inconsiderate steps.

Jacob once cried, "All these things are against me!" But he was wrong, all was working for His good; and he at length cried out, "It is enough!" and died an old man and satisfied.

David exclaimed, "I shall one day perish by the hand of this Saul!" But he was mistaken. Both have long since forgotten their misery — and so shall you.

Look from your misery — to the Lord's great and gracious promises; they contain all that you can need; and God will manifest His faithful love in fulfilling them in your experience. Look to the Lord Jesus, your merciful and faithful High Priest; He suffered being tried, and therefore He is able to sympathize with, and deliver you.

Deliverance will soon come; and then the cup of misery shall never more be tasted. The Lord will soon show you the path of life, and at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore. He will raise you to the enjoyment of His presence and glory — and in His presence is fullness of joy. You will one day stand without fault before His throne, free from every principle of depravity, and afar from the most distant shadow of misery! Your day and generation work will soon be done, the summit of Mount Zion will soon be gained, the plains of Paradise will soon open to your view; and the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and shall lead you unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes! Then shall you sing with rapture and inconceivable bliss, "Unto Him who loved me, and washed me from my sins in His own blood, and has made me a King and a Priest unto God and His Father — to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever! Amen."

"Courage, my soul! behold the prize

Your Savior's love provides;

Eternal life beyond the skies,
For all whom here He guides. The wicked cease from troubling, there,
The weary are at rest;
Sorrow, and sin, and pain, and care,
No more approach the blessed! A wicked world, and wicked heart,
With Satan now are joined;
Each acts a too successful part
In harassing the mind. But fighting in my Savior's strength,
Though mighty are my foes,
I shall a conqueror be at length,
O'er all that can oppose.
Then why, my soul, complain or fear;
The crown of glory see!
The more I toil and suffer here,
The sweeter rest will be!

-19-Direction for the Afflicted!

Direction for the Afflicted!

James Smith, 1842

"I will leave in the midst of you an afflicted and poor people — and they shall trust in the name of the Lord!" Zephaniah 3:12 Of all people, the Lord's people are frequently the most severely tried — so much so, that they may well be called a poor and afflicted people. They are tried as men — and more especially so as Christians. They often find that they have no arm to lean upon — but the arm of God. Every prop is removed; and they are ready to cry out, "Call me Marah (bitter) — for the Lord has dealt bitterly with me."

Severe temptations of various kinds beset them.

Powerful inward corruptions greatly distress them.

Great bodily affliction is sometimes added to soul-exercise, and they cry out, "I am oppressed — undertake for me!" For a time everything seems to go wrong! They have no bosom into which they can pour all their troubles, except the bosom of their God; and He holds back the face of His throne, and hangs a cloud upon it. They go mourning without the sun — but in such circumstances, the Lord directs them; "Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light — trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God!" They may still trust to the divine faithfulness, though they do not enjoy the light of divine love. The promise remains sure, even when everything else appears changed. We may venture our souls upon the faithful word of God; He cannot deny Himself, He will not deceive the soul that hopes in Him. We may trust Him with all we value — He will preserve and keep it; we may trust Him for all we need — and we shall not be disappointed. With the Apostle we may say, "I know whom I have trusted, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day!" The poor must trust in the Lord, for often they have no one else to whom they can look, or in whom they can confide! The afflictions they pass through, are often of that nature, that none can help them but the Lord. What a mercy, to be privileged to come up out of the wilderness — leaning on our Beloved! The poor shall trust in the Lord —

necessity drives them to Him,

the Holy Spirit reveals Him,

faith centers in Him, and

the troubled soul reposes on Him.

"I trusted in you, O Lord; I said, You are my God! Those who know your name, will put their trust in you; for you, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him. O Israel, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield. The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it, and are safe!"

Trusting in Jehovah's name will . . .
cheer the mind,
compose the spirits,
stay the agitation of the soul, and
bring us into a state of acquiescence with His will.

Trusting in Jehovah enables us to endure patiently, and to press on cheerfully in the midst of trials, troubles, and afflictions. It weakens the power of temptation, and bears the soul up — let the affliction be ever so heavy. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and do not lean to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your path." The poor and afflicted, Lord, are Thine;

Among the great they seldom shine;
Yet, though the world may think it strange,
They would not with the world exchange!
Poor and afflicted, yes, they are;
They're not exempt from grief and care;
But He, who saved them by His blood,
Makes every sorrow yield them good.
Poor and afflicted; 'tis their lot;
They know it, and they murmur not!
Would ill become them to refuse
The state their Master deigned to choose!

-20-Glorious Liberty

Glorious Liberty James Smith, 1842

"The glorious liberty of the children of God!" Romans 8:21 The spiritual mind is like a bird shut up in a cage — while enclosed in a diseased corruptible body; like a bird with a clog on the wing — while burdened with a body of sin and death. We cannot do the things that we would. We can do nothing as we would. We long, pant, and pray for liberty. The valley of death leads us to the plains of freedom. A sick bed is the ante-room of the hall of glory!

Liberty, glorious liberty is before us!

Perfect and entire freedom from all sin — and temptation to sin!

Every corruption will be slain, and completely rooted out of body and soul!

Holiness will enter into the very nature of body and soul! No dark clouds of ignorance will any more hover over the understanding. No sinful or selfish principles will any more influence the will. No corroding guilt will again obtain a place in the conscience. No unworthy objects will be presented, or have power to captivate any of the affections. No profane or forbidden subjects will any more be found in the memory.

Reason will be almost divine, and our judgments correctly informed. "Now we know in part, and prophesy in part — but then shall we know even as also we are known."

We shall be separated completely and forever, from everything that is painful, defiling, or injurious — and united closely and forever to all that is holy, happy, and beneficial.

We shall be one with Christ, one in God; associated, and united in the most glorious and beneficial manner; according to the prayer of our Lord, "I pray for them also who shall believe on me; that they all may be ONE; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that you have sent me. And the glory which you gave me — I have given them; that they may be ONE, even as WE are ONE; I in them, and you in me, that they may be made perfect in ONE; and that the world may know that you have sent me, and have loved them, as you have loved me. Father, I will that they also whom you have given me — be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which you have given me; for you loved me before the foundation of the world!"

Tried believer! What an ocean of glory is here! Adam's paradise was nothing compared to this! All things are yours! God is yours! Heaven is yours! The glory of Jesus is yours! "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him!" 1 Corinthians 2:9

This, all this is before you, freely given to you of God; secured to you by the blood of Jesus, the oath of God, and the pledge of the Spirit. "Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his

glory!" Romans 8:17. Your title is good — though your passage is rough! Your end will be glorious — though your situation at present is painful and distressing. You will soon be delivered from every fear, from every foe, from every impediment, and from evil in every shape and form! Do not think that your lot is hard; but imagine, if you can, the pangs that must rend the heart, when those who know no such trials or changes, shall hear it said, "Son, remember, that you in your lifetime received your good things; and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted — and you are tormented!" On wings of faith, mount up, my soul, and rise;

View your inheritance beyond the skies:

No heart can think, nor mortal tongue can tell,

What endless pleasures in those mansions dwell!

Here our Redeemer lives, all bright and glorious,

O'er sin, and death, and Hell — he reigns victorious.

One distant glimpse my eager passion fires!

Jesus! to you my longing soul aspires! When shall I at your heavenly home arrive?

When leave this earth — and when begin to live?

For here my Savior is all bright and glorious,

O'er sin, and death, and Hell — he reigns victorious!

-21-Strength Promised

Strength Promised James Smith, 1842

"The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing. You will make all His bed in His sickness." Psalms 41:3 The Lord has nowhere promised that His people shall be preserved from sickness, pain, and languishing; but He has very graciously promised to be with them, to strengthen them, and to administer consolation to them. This promise is more especially made to the liberal, to those who are kind to the poor, especially the Lord's poor. Jesus takes what is done to His poor saints, as done to Himself, and says, "You did it unto me." Matthew 25:40. But at the same time it is the common property of believers, for all the promises are in Christ Jesus; and become ours by believing in Him. Your weakness may be great — but the Lord here promises to strengthen you on your bed. Instead then of complaining to creatures — turn to your God, and plead the precious promise He has made. He made it, on purpose that you may . . .

believe it;

draw comfort from it;

plead it at His throne;

and expect its fulfillment.

Call upon Him to . . .

strengthen your faith,

increase your patience,

and make your bed.

Sickness is the breaking out of one of the effects of sin. It reminds you of your true character, and points you to the Lord Jesus — who alone can deliver you from its consequences. Every pain reminds you that you are a sinner — and should endear to your heart the person, blood-shedding, intercession, and promises of Jesus! He can enable you to bear with fortitude the greatest pain, and make you passive under the heaviest trial. Do you now feel exceedingly weak? Is the bed hard and tiresome? Think upon your mercies! You have . . .

a kind Savior,

a place of abode,

friends to attend upon you, and

a prospect of everlasting happiness before you!

God is now with you, and will not lay upon you more than you are able to bear; but will prove to you before He is done — that He is gracious and merciful, full of compassion, and plenteous in

goodness and truth. Whoever may forsake you, or prove unkind to you — He never will. But He will make all His goodness pass before you; and perhaps this very sickness is a prelude to some peculiar blessing. The valley of Achor, or trouble, is often the door of hope; and the Lord gives us our vineyards from thence, and causes us to sing there. Hosea 2:14-16. Do not listen to the insinuations of Satan; pay no attention to the objections of unbelief, drawn from your sufferings or difficulties; but remember God is faithful, and He has said, "I will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; I will make all His bed in His sickness; nevertheless for these things I will be inquired of, to do it for them."

Turn then to His throne, again plead with Him as a man pleads with His friend, and you shall have to say, "In the day when I cried, you answered me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul." Look not too much at what you are — but at what Jesus is. Do not dwell on your miseries — but on God's mercies. Do not be discouraged because you are weak, for your God shall be your strength. "He gives power to the faint, and to those who have no might He increases strength." Be of good courage, therefore, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the Lord.

How gracious and how wise,

Is our chastising God!

And oh! how rich the blessings are

Which blossom from His rod.

He lifts it up on high

With pity in His heart,

That every stroke His children feel,

May grace and peace impart.

Dear Father! we consent,

To discipline divine;

And bless the pain that makes our souls

Still more completely Thine.

-22-Salvation by Grace!

Salvation by Grace!

James Smith, 1842

"By grace you are saved!" Ephesians 2:8

Salvation is confessedly a matter of the greatest importance — a matter in which we are all interested; but yet it is a subject which is much neglected. Not but there is much said and written about it; but now few are there who seriously and heartily inquire: How are sinners saved? From what does salvation arise? In what channel does it flow? To what end is it directed?

If we come to the inspired volume for instruction upon this momentous subject, if we come as little children to learn what God the Holy Spirit says upon the point, we shall meet with all necessary information. These sacred pages reveal all that is necessary to be known for our comfort, satisfaction, and direction. The Apostle Paul, who received his divinity from Heaven, and was taught it by the immediate revelation of Jesus Christ, twice in one chapter informs us, that it is by favor we are saved; for what is grace — but simply the favor of God — the favor of God manifested without regard to human desert or deservings? And it is as clear from the word of God, as the shining of the sun at noon, that unless we are saved as an act of free grace — we can never be saved at all. What have we to recommend us to the notice of a holy God, or what can we do to entitle us to so great a blessing? If the least good quality were demanded — we have it not; if any good work were prescribed — we could not perform it; but it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done — but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

Salvation is by free grace alone. The Lord fixed upon the objects whom He intended to deliver from sin, Satan, and the curse — and whom He designed to raise to holiness, happiness, and honor. There was nothing to incite Him, but His own infinite love; and He assigns no reason, but His sovereign good pleasure. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion!" He chose His people out of the vast mass of people; He named them, and recorded their names in the book of life. He gave them to our dear and adorable Immanuel, to be His care, charge, and bride. He appointed them to life, sonship, and conformity to Jesus — and all of free grace. Desert, or creature excellence, was left out of the question — when Grace sat upon the throne and exerted her sovereign rights. The favor that benefitted the one, neither directly nor indirectly injured the other. Grace scatters blessings upon millions — but never utters a curse against any. She provides salvation for her objects — but is in no sense the cause of the damnation of the rest. Her language is SAVE; but never DESTROY. She has filled thousands of hearts with life, holiness, and love, and as many tongues with praises; but never gave occasion to any to reflect upon her right, or to accuse her of unkindness.

Sovereign grace, rightly viewed — embodies everything that is sweet, pleasant, charming, and delightful. It is like . . .

music to the ear,
honey to the palate,
beautiful prospects to the eye,
and fragrance to the smell.

Grace is . . .

as free as the summer breeze,
as pure as the sun's bright ray,
and as pleasant as the morning light!

All who know it — love it,
all who have seen it — admire it,
and all who enjoy it — adore it!

Grace finds . . .

a depth for our sins,
a fountain for our needs,
a covering for our persons, and
a Heaven for our eternal habitation.

Oh that Heaven would coin language sufficiently grand, and furnish ideas sufficiently noble — to speak of the glories of grace, or to show forth half its praise!

Salvation is by free grace wisely displayed. Our gracious God has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence. Grace has wisely contrived a plan which . . .

secures all the glories of Deity,
frustrates the designs of devils and opposing men,
highly exalts its divine and glorious agent,

and exactly suits the poor sinner's case! This plan calculated to fill the minds of cherubim and seraphim with wonder and admiration, and redeemed sinners with never-ending praise! This plan reveals more of the divine perfections, and displays more of the divine glories, than was ever known or seen before, or than we have any reason to conclude ever could have been through any other means:

divine justice receives its due,
divine mercy is prodigal of her favors,
divine majesty is honored in the highest, and

divine love is shown to be of immeasurable extent.

Heaven resigns its chief attraction — that earth might be visited, and man redeemed. Jesus descends to save, to suffer, and to die! He . . .

honors the requiring precept,

pays the dreadful penalty, and

ascends a glorious conqueror to the skies!

He is invested with the government of the universe, clothed with all power in Heaven and in earth, furnished with the archives of eternity — that He may sanctify, discipline, and glorify His people. The Spirit assumes office, the storehouse of eternity is thrown open, a throne of grace is erected, and the glorious glad tidings are published — that the objects of grace may be accomplished. No sin is sanctioned, no divine right forfeited, no divine attribute tarnished — but a revenue of glory to Jehovah is secured, in the execution of this glorious plan. Well may the Psalmist pray, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favor you bear unto your people; oh visit me with your salvation, that I may see the good of your chosen, rejoice in the gladness of your nation, and glory with your inheritance!"

Salvation is by free grace exerting divine power. All the attributes of Deity are in concert with grace, and join in the glorious work of saving poor sinners. The omnipotence of Jehovah is ever ready to second the designs of grace, or accomplish the purposes of grace; and salvation is wrought in the soul by the power of God, which . . .

subdues the the stubborn will,

breaks the hard heart,

elevates the earth-bound affections,

and turns the current of the soul. In vain had Jesus shed the blood of His heart, unless He exerted the power of His arm! For such is the stupid, hardened, and deathlike condition of man, that he will not regard the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely. All would have remained obdurate, and perished in their sin — if Jesus had in every sense finished His work upon the cross; but the atonement accepted, secures the presence and energy of the Holy Spirit — to quicken, convert, and sanctify all the blood-bought people! The Father looks to the cross for satisfaction — and the Spirit leads the sinner there for sanctification. Peace with God was made by the blood of His cross, and peace is realized and enjoyed when faith conducts us there. But powerful must be that agency, and strong those principles — which lead . . .

from self to Jesus,

from sin to holiness,

from the world to the cross of Christ! That agency is the Spirit Jehovah, acting in honor of the Redeemer's ransom; those principles are from above, and are styled a new creation. Both the one and the other are necessary to accomplish the design of grace; and both are secured through the infinite merit of Immanuel's death.

Oh, admirable plan! how perfect, how glorious, and complete! Satan would have still held His captives, and the world would have claimed her vassals — but for the exertion of the power of God! But how the strong man is conquered, all that is in the world is overcome — and grace sets her children free, yes, and makes them free indeed.

Salvation is by free grace conferring blessings. Salvation is one vast blessing, which, like the rod of Moses, swallows up all other blessings in itself! It is not the payment of a debt — but the conferring of a favor. "He has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works — but according to His own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." All we are, and all we shall be — flows from divine grace: conviction of sin, a sense of danger, the cry of need, the longing for freedom, the appetite for righteousness, the confession of guilt, wrestling at the throne, the good tidings of pardon, the enjoyment of liberty, the witness of the Spirit, the unutterable groan, and the delightful cry of Abba, my Father and my God — all flow from divine favor, and are but effects produced by rich and sovereign grace.

Every blessing necessary for time or eternity, is included in the word "salvation." Grace has provided, promised, and proclaimed all blessings to all who believe in Jesus; faith evidences our right to all the blessings of the covenant, all the merit of the Son of God, and all the privileges of the everlasting gospel.

Salvation is by free grace commanding obedience. Grace is the expression of the favor of an infinitely holy God, and therefore cannot in any sense sanction sin. It requires obedience, not as a term of life, or to procure a title to Heaven — but to evince our gratitude to God, out of love to the Lord Jesus — to prove the power and purity of our principles, and to benefit society.

Grace removes sin meritoriously by the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross — and efficaciously by the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart.

Grace hates sin above all things. Sin is abhorrent to the very nature of grace, and therefore it is strictly prohibited, and invariably corrected. The doctrines of the gospel exhibit . . .

grace — in its supremacy, majesty, and glory;

the promises — in its liberality, forethought, and bounty; and

the precepts — in its hatred to sin, its holiness, and righteousness. That which tolerates or sanctions sin — is not the grace of God. Divine grace breaks the heart for sin, leads us to hate and forsake it, and to sigh and cry for perfect freedom from it. The commands of grace are imperative, necessary, and beneficial; they are intended for our good, as much as the promises, and should be loved equally with them. He who trifles with the commands — knows but little of the power of the promises, or the energy of the doctrines; for these rightly known and experimentally enjoyed — produce love to holiness, and concern to glorify God, by observing all His statutes.

Grace on the throne — produces sanctification of heart; and grace in the heart — produces holiness of life.

We look . . .

to the doctrines for instruction;

to the promises for support; and

to the precepts for direction;

and honor grace in each!

Salvation, then, . . .

originates in the free grace of God,

flows in the channel of the Redeemer's blood, and

aims at the glorification of Jehovah in all His perfections.

Salvation was . . .

planned in eternity,

executed in time, and

shall be realized and enjoyed until eternity can end!

Salvation is . . .

divine in its contrivance, execution, and application;

holy in its character, tendency, and design;

and free in its bestowment and operations.

Salvation is of God, by faith, to holiness — forever! Are you saved? Has the grace of God brought salvation to you? Is . . .

your heart changed,

your will renewed, and

your conscience purified and made tender? Do you . . .

love holiness,

hate sin,

walk uprightly,

fear God, and

aim at the honor of Jesus in all you do? Do you . . .

groan, being burdened with inward corruption,

live by faith in the Son of God,

watch against temptation,

resist Satan,

conquer the world, and

look for glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life? Is . . .

Jesus precious,

grace delightful,

mercy sweet, and

your heart in Heaven? The opposite of salvation is damnation. As salvation is entirely of grace — damnation is entirely of works! God alone is the author of the former — man alone is the author of the latter. Justice punishes for sin — and only for sin.

Every man . . .

digs his own Hell,

fixes the amount of his own punishment;

and goes to perdition with a fixed determination!

He . . .

closes his ear and heart against the gospel,

turns his back upon the way of life,

chooses and pursues the way of death.

He manifests a decided opposition to God, in every thought of his heart and action of his life; and says, "Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of Your ways!"

Oh, sinner, God notices your contempt, regards your infidelity, and will surely bring you into judgment! Think of your imminent danger, stop in your dangerous course, call upon God for pardon, flee unto Jesus for life, and strive to enter in at the strait gate! The door of salvation is open, the way of escape is at hand, and salvation with all its blessings may be enjoyed; for "whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Oh taste and see, that the Lord is good! Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out; for our God will abundantly pardon. The Lord give you to know, enjoy, and confess this to be the case, to the glory of His grace!

Salvation! oh the joyful sound!

'Tis pleasure to our ears;

A sovereign balm for every wound,

A cordial for our fears.

Buried in sorrow and in sin,

At Hell's dark door we lay;

But we arise by grace divine,

To see a heavenly day!

-23-Jehovah-Rophi!

Jehovah-Rophi!

James Smith, 1842

"I am the Lord who heals you!" Exodus 15:26 In the seasons of sickness, we are too prone to look too much to the means, and place too great a dependence upon them. But the believer should view the Lord not only as the physician of the soul — but also of the body. Means should be used — but the Lord only should be looked up to as the Healer. When King Asa was diseased, he did not seek the Lord — but the physicians; and the Lord took it as an insult offered to His divine majesty. 2 Chronicles 16:12.

All medicines have their healing qualities from our God, and it befits us to look up to Him for His blessing upon all that we take. We never can trust God for too much, unless we despise the means which He usually blesses. When we look to Him, call upon Him, and place confidence in Him — we honor Him. His direction is, "Trust in Him at all times; pour out your heart before Him! God is a refuge for us." He loves to be acknowledged, consulted, and trusted.

He is your Healer, believer; He knows perfectly the nature of your illness, the remedies that are necessary — and waits to be called in to your relief. Call on Him first; look to Him principally; and give Him praise for intervals of ease, and all favorable symptoms. Look upon the physician and surgeon as His servants, and beseech Him to direct them. They are at best but feeble instruments, broken cisterns, or dry wells — without Him. If He blesses — their prescriptions are effectual; if He withholds — their endeavors are vain. How many are trusting to a great name, a skillful man, rather than trusting to the Lord; but He has said, "See now that I Myself am He! There is no god besides Me. I put to death — and I bring to life, I have wounded — and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand!" Deuteronomy 32:39. "I will heal you, and I will bring you health and cure."

Bodily sickness is often intended to be medicine for the soul. The Lord designs by it . . .

to cleanse us from some idols,

to purge away our inordinate attachment to temporal things,

and bring us nearer to Himself. The cares of the world have too much of our hearts, and occupy too much of our time; self-examination is neglected; secret prayer is shortened; and we can find but little time for any spiritual exercises. What base ingratitude — and yet how common! What folly — and yet how general! How loudly it calls for God's rod! How deeply it grieves a Father's love! Then the Lord comes and throws us on a bed of sickness, or confines us from our worldly employments — that we may find time for those things which involve His glory, and our best interests. Have you, Christian, ever complained that you had not time to attend to things of a spiritual character? If so, look upon your present sickness as a visitation from the Lord to give you a little time for these employments. Make the most of these precious hours — now sow to the Spirit. Then, if spared to go back again into your worldly employments — you will be better

prepared to engage in them. Or if called to an eternal world, you will receive life everlasting. Seek pardon — as well as healing; you deeply need it, and it is far more important than the return of health. But both shall be given if consistent with the Lord's glory — which above all things you should seek and desire. And if pardon is enjoyed, and health once more returns — you should cheerfully sing:

O bless the Lord, my soul;

Nor let His mercies lie

Forgotten in unthankfulness,

Or without praises die.

'Tis He forgives your sins,

'Tis He relieves your pain,

'Tis He who heals your sicknesses,

And makes you young again!

-24-It is Finished!

It is Finished!

James Smith, 1842

"It is finished!" John 19:30 So shouted our victorious Savior, when He had put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; vanquished Satan; satisfied justice; honored the eternal law; and was about to descend into the grave, that He might abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light by the gospel. And thus shall every believer shout at length; when we have served our generation by the will of God; suffered all His pleasure; and done all His commands; then shall we shout, "It is finished!"

Suffering is finished, and finished forever. The conflict within is finished, and finished forever. The wrestling with principalities and powers, and with the rulers of the darkness of this world, is finished, and finished forever.

Let us meekly resign ourselves into our heavenly Father's hands, and leave ourselves entirely at His disposal. Let us do His will in the strength He imparts, and follow in the path He has marked out for us to tread. The route may be circuitous — but the end will be blessed. Our souls may be grieved because of the difficulty of the way — but they will be eternally delighted because of the end. We shall "enter into peace." The work of sanctification will be finished — and eternal glorification will begin. Let us aim to finish our course with joy, pray that we may depart under the light of the divine countenance, and close our eyes with serenity and satisfaction.

Everything on earth is fleeting, fading, and unsatisfactory! Everything beyond is stable, unfading, and satisfying —

rivers of pleasure,

fountains of delight, and

an ocean of happiness —

remain to be possessed and enjoyed by us forever! The present is scarcely worthy of a thought, in comparison with the future. What are trials — but short-lived interruptions of our tranquility? What are pains — but beneficial potions appointed by infinite wisdom, and love, for our present and future welfare! Holy Savior, conform our wills to Yours; bring us into subjection — that we may possess our inheritance, and enjoy the fulfillment of all divine promises and predictions. But at present we are called to work, to suffer, and to fight; let us endeavor obedient to your will. Fill us with holiness, gratitude, patience, fortitude, hope, and peace — that we may glorify you on earth, finish the work you have given us to do, and at length exclaim, as you did on the cross, "It is finished!"

Finished! — the last struggle is over, the last pain is endured, the conflict is forever ended! The ties of flesh and blood are snapped asunder, and all the encumbrances of time are forever left

behind.

Finished! — the gates of glory appear before me; cherubim and seraphim smile upon me, and all the redeemed welcome me to everlasting light and eternal joy. Soon, very soon, will this be the case, poor afflicted Christian! Therefore cheer up, press forward, and in a few short hours you will say, "It is finished!" and all will be forever well!

-25-All Things Possible with God

All Things Possible with God James Smith, 1842

"With God all things are possible!" Matthew 19:26 The omnipotence of Jehovah is ruled by His wisdom and holiness, His justice and love. He can do everything consistent with those attributes — but nothing contrary to them. God's omnipotence is altogether on the believer's side. All that God consistently can do — He will do for His people. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. He can make us contented in the most trying circumstances — and happy in the deepest affliction. He can so bring down our minds to our condition — that we shall glory in tribulation; and in the midst of fiery persecution, triumph in Christ. He can turn darkness into light, and bitter into sweet; and bring the richest joy out of the deepest sorrow. The omnipotent God is your God! His omnipotence is engaged for you! And in consequence, all things are possible to you, through believing. Do not dwell on your own weakness — but on the Lord's strength. Do not think of difficulties — call nothing impossible. "Is anything too hard for me? Do not I fill Heaven and earth, says the Lord?" David sings, "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? Though a host should encamp against me — my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me — in this will I be confident." Do not look at your difficulties — but at the omnipotent God as engaged for you! Do not dwell on what you are called to suffer — but on what God can enable you to suffer, and that with patience, resignation, and gratitude. He can make you a most patient and grateful sufferer — and so mold your spirit to His will, as to cause you to prefer sickness to health, pain to ease, poverty to plenty, and disgrace to honor — if He can but be glorified thereby. Yes, He can so fill you with His grace and Spirit, as you shall have no will but His; and no desire but that He may be glorified in you, by life or by death. Do not look too much at what you are — but at what your God can make you! Look at the Apostles and martyrs — they endured as seeing Him who is invisible, and in the strength of God were more than a match for the rage of men, or the greatest tortures.

"Is it possible," you may say, "that I could be a child of God — and yet be so tried, and feel so weak, and not feel the presence of God with me, though I am in trouble?" Oh yes, more than possible. You shall be held up, for God is able to make you stand. You are safe — though not comfortable. The Lord is with you, though He does not shine upon you. He cannot leave you — because of His faithfulness. He may conceal Himself from you — because of His wisdom and love. His ways are in the sea, His paths in the mighty waters, and His footsteps are not known! It is possible for God to hold you fast in the most slippery path, when surrounded by the most determined foes, and feeling the greatest weakness — and He will do so! None shall be able to pluck you out of His hand. It is possible for God to supply all your needs, in the most trying times; as He did Elijah by the ravens, and the poor widow by the increase of the oil and meal. And He will do so; only seek the Lord, trust in the Lord, leave difficulties with the Lord — and you shall not lack any good thing. He will display His wisdom, sovereignty, pity, and power in dealing with you; and perhaps fill you with wonder, surprise, and love, at His ways.

All that God is — He is to you!

All He has — He has for you!

All He has promised — He will fulfill in you!

Ever, ever remember that all things are possible to . . .

your God,

your Father,

your Savior,

and your Friend!

"I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength!" Php 4:13

Jesus, my Savior and my Lord!

'Tis good to trust your name;

Your power, your faithfulness, and love,

Will ever be the same!

What, though my griefs are not removed

— yet why should I despair?

While everlasting arms support,

I can the burden bear!

Weak as I am — yet through your grace,

I all things can perform;

And triumph in your saving name,

Amid the raging storm!

-26-We Groan, Being Burdened

We Groan, Being Burdened James Smith, 1842

"We who are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." 2 Corinthians 5:4 A groan is the effect of pressure, the pressure is caused by sin. All creation groans in consequence of sin. "We know," says the Apostle, "that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." Romans 8:22-23

Paul had been filled with the Spirit, was most extraordinarily endowed, and peculiarly favored; yet he groaned under a burden, which made him cry out, "Oh wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Our present habitation is a tabernacle — a frail, unsuitable dwelling. We are exposed on every side to the storm and to the tempest; but we look for a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We are burdened at present — the concerns of the family, the business, the church — burden us. Or if free from such burdens — the corruptions of the heart, and a sick disordered body are a burden to us. The burden makes us groan, longing for the day of redemption — when we shall be exactly like Jesus — for we shall see Him as He is. The groans of the Apostle were not the groans of impatience; fretfulness was no feature in his character. Jesus groaned — but they were sinless groans, Paul groaned — but they were the groans of a holy mind, longing for freedom from sin, ability to serve God without imperfection, and to enjoy Him without interruption.

Pain occasions groaning — but all our groans should be directed Godward; they should all be turned into prayers, and then they would be to our advantage. The Lord listens to the groans of His people. It is said of Israel, when oppressed by Pharaoh and His task-masters: "The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them. The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey."

David cries out, "I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears; I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease; and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. Lord, all my desire is before you; and my groaning is not hid from you. My heart pants, my strength fails me; as for the light of my eyes, it also is gone from me. By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin." And was it thus with the man after God's own heart? Yes, the most favored saints have always been found groaning sinners. The present wilderness is lined with thorns and briars

— their present state is one of suffering and trial. But they are "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God our Savior; who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body!" Groan then . . .

over sin,

after holiness,

for Heaven —

and all will be well.

-27-The Glories of Christ!

The Glories of Christ!

James Smith, 1842

"The glorious Lord!" Isaiah 33:21 "Glorious and majestic are His deeds!" Psalms 111:3

There is but one object that can be presented to a sinner's mind, that contains all that is needful for him, or delightful to him; and that is Jesus. In Jesus, he finds an infinite variety, which is always pleasing and profitable; and the more he knows of the person and perfections of Immanuel — the more happy, holy, and useful will he be. To know Christ — is true wisdom;

to love Him — is the evidence of grace; and

to walk with Him — the highest honor that can be put upon a sinful creature.

It is the office of the Holy Spirit, to open the understanding to behold His glories, and to communicate to the soul the enjoyment of His love. And it is the delight of a truly spiritual mind — to think of Him, feed on Him, and rejoice in Him. There is nothing in Christ — but what is precious to him; there is nothing out of Christ, or that does not conduce to His glory — that is highly esteemed by him. Christ is . . .

the object of His faith, love, and desire;

the subject of His meditation; and

his song in the house of His pilgrimage. To a Christian, Christ is all. By a worldling, Christ is despised and rejected. The Christian sympathizes with Jehovah the Father, who delights in Him; the worldling sympathizes with the prince of darkness, who hates and belies Him. The believer is knit to Him, walks in fellowship with Him, and desires above all things to exalt and glorify Him; he wishes he could bring the whole world to know, love, and adore Him. Jesus is just suited to the believer, and he reflects on Him with delight and satisfaction. The PERSON of Immanuel is to him peculiarly glorious; here manhood and divinity are united — God and man is one Christ. Here he beholds all the solemn and amiable perfections of God, united to the sinless passions and affections of man; the glory of the former is softened by the latter, and the latter becomes dignified and glorious by the former. He demands our adoration. He invites our love. He may be . . .

trusted without fear,

worshiped without idolatry,

served without dread, and

approached without alarm. To love Him is the natural effect of knowing Him; and adoration is always connected with this love. His very nature is love, He possesses a fullness of grace, and His heart overflows with mercy. His every act, word, and work, as the Savior — is mixed with love,

exhibits grace, and displays mercy. His compassion is unbounded, He is full of pity, and is long-suffering to us, not willing that any should perish — but that all should come to repentance. Love always reigned in His heart, and is the peculiar glory of His character; out of love to us He came into our world to bless us.

Jesus is glorious in the love He displays in the salvation of His people. He freely fixed His heart upon them — and took an eternal delight in the idea of saving, honoring, and glorifying them. His love to them was the great cause of all He . . .

did for them,

promised to them,

and bestows upon them. His love, like Himself, remains immutably the same. It is not that He did love, or He will love only — but He LOVES; He always did, does, and always will. All the perfections of His nature, and all the resources He has provided — are at the command of His love; and all will be manifested, and, if necessary, expended to do His people good.

Love brought Him from Heaven to earth, that He might fill our place; love took Him back to Heaven that He might plead our cause, and prepare for us a mansion; and love will bring Him to earth again, that He may . . .

raise our dust,

glorify our persons,

and receive us to Himself.

Love never thinks it stoops too low, does too much, or conceives too highly of the beloved object. And the love of Jesus is glorified by the depth of His humiliation, the extent of His work, and the expression of His estimation contained in His word. When we look at the objects of His love, in their poverty, rebellion, and wretchedness; at the price paid for them, the blessings bestowed on them, and the glory prepared for them — we may well exclaim, "What manner of love is this!" "Behold how He loved them!" His love is the spring from whence flows salvation, comfort, protection, holiness, and Heaven. Could His love be removed, our souls would be undone, our hopes would be blighted, and all our bright prospects would perish. But here is its glory — His love is always the same — just as vigorous, as active, and as settled.

"His love no end or measure knows,

No change can turn its course;

Immutably the same it flows

From one eternal source." The WORK of Jesus is glorious! He undertook to reconcile Heaven and earth; to render Jehovah glorious in the eyes of His creatures, and the church glorious in the eyes of Jehovah. In our nature He performed all the conditions of the better covenant, and obtained all power and authority in Heaven and in earth. He . . .

put away sin,

conquered Satan,
brought in everlasting righteousness,
abolished death, and
passed sentence on the world lying in wickedness.

He conquered every foe, satisfied every claim, and ascended triumphant to Heaven. His work the Father accepted — and accepts every sinner who embraces and depends upon it. His name was sounded as the object of angelic adoration through the heavenly world, and is published as the ordinance of salvation through our miserable earth. Angels admire and wonder at His work — they love and adore His person. Sinners who know their danger, fly to His arms for refuge, rely upon what He has done, and glory in His adorable name. But too many, alas! close their eyes to His beauties, stop their ears against the proclamation of His grace, and perish in their sin!

"His work is honorable and glorious, and His righteousness endures forever." It is an eternal honor to Himself, an honor to His Father's throne, and an honor to His people, too. All who know it — trust it; all who trust it — find peace and joy in believing it. It is . . .

our song in the house of our pilgrimage,
our comfort in the time of death,
our title to mansions in the skies,

and will be our boast and glory forever. His DISPOSITION, as manifested in His conduct when on earth, and since seated at the right hand of power — is truly glorious unbounded kindness. Unparalleled meekness, and exquisite tenderness, shine in all His dealings with His people. Toward poor sensible sinners He manifests incomparable gentleness, long-suffering, and the patience of a God! He . . .

receives them graciously,
loves them freely,
and forgives them heartily.

He has never left room for one to doubt . . .

the kindness of His heart,
the power of His arm, or

the faithfulness of His word. And if He had never invited us to Him, or promised to receive us — yet if we knew the kindness of His disposition we could not despair.

He forgets past injuries when the sinner confesses at His throne; and receives to His bosom, even those who had spurned at His grace. He receives sinners, and rejoices at the return of the lost sheep to the fold. His NAMES are precious — they sparkle in the believer's eye, and fall like sweetest music on the ear; there is a glory and excellence in them not to be found in others.

He is called Jesus, because He came into the world to save sinners! He loved, labored, suffered, bled, died, rose, ascended, and intercedes — to save His people from their sins. His merit is the price He paid,

His gospel the instrument He uses,

His Spirit the agent He sends,

His power the attribute He employs —

to accomplish the purpose so near to His heart. He will save, He will rest in His love, and will rejoice over His people with singing.

He is called Christ, because anointed by the Father to be the Mediator between God and man; He stands between earth and Heaven, between justice and mercy, between the sinner and his Maker's wrath. He presents satisfaction to God — He presents salvation to man. He gives God His demands — and the sinner a supply for all His needs. The sinner looks to Jesus for acceptance — and God looks to Jesus to maintain the honor of His throne. The sinner is received — and Jehovah is glorified.

He is called Immanuel, God with us — to show us that God can dwell with us, and manifest Himself unto us. He is God in human nature — in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Thus He brings all the attributes and perfections of God to the great work of salvation. How then can we fear, when He is able and willing to save to the very uttermost? Able, because God. Willing, or why was He made flesh to dwell among us? His arm is omnipotent,

His merit is infinite, and

His mercy inconceivably great!

He is near of kin unto us as man, our Brother; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; His heart is set upon us as God, for He loves us with an everlasting love: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us."

Christ's OFFICES render Him glorious in the believer's eye, and dear to the believer's deer. He is in office for us, for our salvation, peace, and satisfaction.

He is a Prophet, who, possessing all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, condescends to instruct the ignorant sons of men. He opens to our view, the mysteries of redeeming mercy, and reveals the glorious designs of sovereign grace. He teaches man his true condition, and discovers to him how God can be just, and the justifier of such a sinner as he feels himself to be.

He is a Priest, who has made an atonement for the guilty, by offering one sacrifice to God, and has entered to the holy place, ever living to make intercession for us. He reconciled us to God, by His expiating death, and saves us by His life of intercession. He presents our prayers, persons, and sacrifices to God; making them acceptable by the incense of His merits.

He is a King, who receives the returning rebel, and grants a pardon. He rules over His people by His love and His laws; and defends all who trust Him, from danger and death. He rules over

mankind, and in the believer; and is King of kings, and Lord of lords. As a Prophet — He saves from ignorance and error;

as a Priest — He saves from guilt and condemnation; and

as a King — He saves from dangers and foes. In these offices, the sinner finds all that he needs, and the believer loves His Savior in each; he would be a scholar as well as a dependant; a subject as well as a son; he cannot dispense with the lesson, the sacrifice, or the scepter; but learns of His Master, trusts in His Savior, and obeys His King.

Christ's RELATIONS endear Him to the Christian's heart, and add to the glories He wears.

He is the Father, who receives the poor returning prodigal, and pities His spendthrift children, when reduced to destitution. "Like as a father pities his children — so Jesus pities them that fear Him; He knows their frame, He remembers that they are dust."

He is a Brother born for adversity — to relieve, acknowledge, and raise the degraded family of God. He raises the poor from the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill. He deals out His bread to the hungry, provides a garment for the naked, and receives the outcast home. He not only wears our nature — but has our interests at heart.

He is the Husband, who . . .

brings us into marriage-union with Himself,

provides for all our necessities,

supplies all our needs, and

assures us of His unalterable love!

He gives us . . .

His arm to support us,

His fullness to supply us,

His name to entitle us,

His robes to cover us,

His angels to guard us,

His Word to assure us, and

His Heaven to be our habitation at last!

"He is my Shepherd, Husband,

Friend, My Prophet, Priest, and King;

My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,

To whom my praise I bring." His glories appear in the numerous and appropriate COMPARISONS employed to set Him forth.

He is the City of refuge, that receives the poor sinner who flies from the avenger of blood; the gates are always open, the way is made plain, and the gracious assurance is given, "Him that comes unto me, I will never cast out; but he shall dwell in safety, and be free from fear of evil." Threatened vengeance may terrify while at a distance from Jesus; but at His feet there is safety, and peace at His cross. As the Tower of strength, He protects from the army that invades, and supplies the necessitous and distressed with provision. No officer can arrest us, no foe can overcome us, no danger can harm us — if sheltered in Jesus, the sinner's stronghold. His name is a strong tower, into which the righteous run and are safe; for they then dwell on high, and the place of their defense is the munition of rocks.

He is compared to the choicest food,
and represented as the kindest friend;
as affording a grateful shade,
and bestowing an invaluable portion;
as imparting the sweetest light,
and bearing precious fruit;
as communicating the richest perfumes,
and preventing all evil and harm.

There is nothing that delights the senses, dignifies the mind, or ennobles the character — but Jesus is compared to it, and represented by it!

"The whole creation can afford

But some faint shadow of our Lord;

Nature, to make His glories known

Must mingle colors not her own." The Lord Jesus is all God can make Him — and all man can wish Him to be! He is glorious in holiness, grace, and truth! Eternity is set apart for the unfolding of His glories — to our everlasting satisfaction and unceasing delight. To see Him here, in the looking-glass of the gospel, by the eye of faith — fills us with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Yet we then look forward to eternity, and delighted, sing,

"There, where my blessed Jesus reigns

In heaven's unmeasured space,

I'll spend a long eternity,

In pleasure and in praise!

Millions of years my wondering eyes

Shall o'er your beauties rove;

And endless ages I'll adore

The glories of your love!"

Reader, do you know this Jesus? Have you committed your soul to Him? is He precious to you? If you are . . .

believing his word,

relying on His work, and

looking for His mercy —

you are blessed indeed! But if you have not fled to Him for refuge, if you are living at a distance from Him, a stranger to Him — your case is sad, your state is highly dangerous! "He puts away all the wicked of the earth as dross! He hates all workers of iniquity!" He will be glorified in your eternal punishment, as one who has . . .

rejected His word,

despised His grace,

and trifled with His mercy!

Oh, think of your danger! Reflect on your dreadful condition! Unless you repent — you must perish! If you do not repent — He will whet His sword, and make His ready arrows upon the string. Flee, oh flee from the wrath to come! Jesus is ready to receive, save, and bless you!

-28-Self-Examination

Self-Examination James Smith, 1842

"Let us search and try our ways — and turn again to the Lord." Lamentations 3:40 Affliction calls us to reflection, self-examination, and prayer. It is . . . a solemn pause in the discourse of human life; a short stop in the pilgrim's journey. The Lord calls us aside, and says to us, as Jesus to His disciples, "Let us go aside into a desert place and rest awhile."

Look back, believer, upon the ways in which your God has led you; review His dealings with you; look at your conduct in reference to Him. Search your ways. What course have you been pursuing prior to this afflictive dispensation? What spirit have you manifested? What have you been habitually aiming at? Try your ways. Try them by the precepts of God's holy word. Try them by your professions; by the examples of holy men; try them by the character you have to sustain. Have you been doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with your God? Has your conduct declared plainly, that you seek a country, a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God? Have you been walking after the Lord — or contrary to Him? Have you been setting your affections on things above — or minding earthly things? Have you been laying up for yourself treasures in Heaven — or laboring more especially for the food that perishes? Do not put away the questions — but search and try your ways. Has the Lord reason to say to you, "O my people, what have I done unto you? How have I wearied you? Testify against me. Have I been a wilderness unto you? a land of darkness? Why have you so backslidden from me? "

Turn again to the Lord — He invites you back! He acknowledges that you have done evil things as you could — but He says, "Yet now return unto me." Turn to Him with confession of sin, mourn over your follies and transgressions, and bemoan yourself before Him. Turn to Him with all the heart, not insincerely.

He says to you, "My son, give me your heart! This sickness is sent to demand it, surrender it without hesitation, surrender it without reserve. As a Father — I ask your love! As a Savior — I ask your confidence! As a Friend — I, ask your company! As a God — I ask your entire dedication to my service and praise.

You have deserved wrath — but you shall find mercy!

You have merited condemnation — but you shall obtain remission!

You may expect banishment — but you shall be accepted in the Beloved, to the praise of the glory of my grace."

He says to you, "I have blotted out your sins as a cloud, and your iniquities as a thick cloud! Return unto me, for I have redeemed you. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God — and he who confesses and forsakes His sin, shall find mercy. Will you not from this time cry unto me, My Father, you are the guide of my youth? Return, O backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings."

What can be more precious? How can mercy be more free? He imposes no hard conditions, He requires no costly sacrifice, He says, "Confess — and be pardoned; ask — and be blessed; receive — and be holy; obey — and be happy." Oh say unto Him, Behold, Lord, I come unto you; for you are the Lord my God. Then you may sing:

Instructed now I bow,

And own your sovereign sway;

I turn my erring footsteps back

To your forsaken way!

-29-The Invitation

The Invitation James Smith, 1842

"Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet — they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson — they shall be as wool!" Isaiah 1:18.

Perhaps you have been reflecting upon your past life, you have been thinking over your ingratitude for innumerable favors; your lack of spirituality, and conformity to the image of Christ; your backwardness to attend to spiritual duties; your neglect of privileges; your conformity to the world; your unfruitfulness in the church; and what appears to you the entire uselessness of your life. You have neglected to mortify sin; you have occasionally indulged evil tempers; you have dishonored your God in innumerable ways; and now you are tempted to despond, and are ready to conclude that such a fruitless fig-tree — can only be fit fuel for everlasting burnings! The remembrance pains your heart, and you are ready to exclaim, "I have been expecting Heaven, and thinking that when I die that I would inherit the promises. But alas! if I should have deceived myself, if the Lord should say to me, Depart, I know you not! How dreadful! how fearful would this be!"

Satan perhaps is endeavoring to nurse your despondency, by keeping your sins before you, and by leading away your mind from the Lord Jesus Christ. But in these very circumstances the Lord addresses you, and says, "COME NOW, and let us reason together." He admits that your sins are scarlet; yes — red like crimson; that from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot — there is no soundness in you. But He says, "Come now, and let us reason together."

Come then, and talk the matter over with your gracious and forgiving Lord. He might banish you to Tophet — but He invites you to His throne! Take the name of Jesus with you! Draw your arguments from His infinite atonement, faithful promises, and prevalent intercession; come and prove Him faithful, come and find Him true. He will say to you, when you are humbled at His feet, as He did to one of old, "Son, Daughter, be of good cheer — your sins are forgiven; go in peace." He will, in love to your soul, cast all your sins behind His back; prove Himself ready to save you; and give you joy and peace in believing.

Doubt not, for He is Jehovah, He changes not — and therefore it is that we are not consumed. He rests in His love; and as far as the east is from the west — so far will He remove your transgressions from you. He can pardon your sins with ease — for Jesus died. He will pardon them with pleasure — for He has promised. The word is gone out of His mouth in righteousness — and shall not return void. He cannot deny Himself, therefore He will have mercy, and abundantly pardon.

Shame may well cover you — but let not despondency brood over you; you but grieve Him more — by harboring hard thoughts of Him; you do but dishonor His free grace — by wishing you had something in self to recommend you. You question His veracity, while you think

He will reject you. He says, "I will never cast out;" He means what He says, He always acts according to His word. He never did cast out one yet, nor will He cast out you. Arise then, and go to your Father — and as the prodigal was gladly received, kindly treated, freely forgiven, lovingly accepted, and greatly honored — so shall you be. Remember this, believe this — for Not all the sins that you have wrought;

So much His tender affections grieve,

As this unkind injurious thought,

That He's unwilling to forgive.

What though your sins are black as night,

Or glowing like the crimson morn

Immanuel's blood will make them white

As snow through the pure ether borne.

Angels and men resign their claim

To pity, mercy, love, and grace;

These glories crown Jehovah's name

With an incomparable blaze.

-30-The Prospect!

The Prospect!

James Smith, 1842

"Surely there is an end; and your expectation shall not be cut off." Proverbs 23:18

There is an end to all your troubles, trials, and temptations — you will survive them all, and rise superior to them.

There is an end to all your enemies, and their designs to injure you. They will either be converted to friends, or be everlastingly destroyed from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power.

There is an end to all your disappointments and vexations — you will soon be disappointed for the last time, and shall know vexation no more.

There is an end to your sickness — it is not eternal. But there is no end . . .

to God's curse,

to the sinner's misery,

or Satan's torments!

Oh, think of this and be grateful! Your expectation of being forever . . .

freed from sin,

delivered from Satan,

raised above the world,

placed beyond the reach of pain,

and of being forever with the Lord

— shall not be cut off!

Founded upon God's promises, secured by the Redeemer's blood, and confirmed by the pledge of the Spirit in your heart — your expectations shall be realized and eternally enjoyed. "For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever." Hope then for what at present you have not, and patiently wait for all that your God has promised. Your pains are of short duration — but your pleasures shall forever flow! Your troubles are confined to this howling wilderness — but can never enter the paradise into which you will shortly dwell. There will be an end of all you complain of, mourn over, or seek deliverance from. There will be a beginning — but no end, to what you ardently desire, long, and pray for! Jesus will soon complete His redemption, by eradicating sin, disease, and pain from the world — and by raising His saints incorruptible, and perfectly conformed to Himself. The Lord will soon rejoice in His works, and joy

over His people with joy! Hell will soon close upon the tempter and all His accursed adherents; and a scene of inconceivable glory and blessedness shall open before our delighted eyes. We shall sing, "The end, the end is come; and the upright shall have dominion in the morning."

Look beyond your present sick chamber, or place of momentary confinement — and anticipate the glory that is to be revealed. Look, look for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God your Savior. You will soon . . .

see Him without a veil,

enjoy Him in fullness and perfection, and

stand before Him without fault forever.

Time will soon fade away before the unfading glories of eternity; and grace be swallowed up in glory forever! Time bounds your trials — but only eternity bounds your possessions, pleasures, and glories! Can you grieve as without hope, or indulge despondency and fear? Arise, shake yourself from the dust; look upward, for your redemption draws near. The chariot wheels of your Redeemer will soon be heard, and you will be invited to enter into the joy of your Lord; comfort yourself therefore with these words. Live above the present; live anticipating the future; live believing God's promises, and expecting the fulfillment of His gracious words; live by faith in the Son of God; and hasten toward the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

-31-The Happy Debtor

The Happy Debtor James Smith, 1842

"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back — so he freely forgave the debts of both." Luke 7:41-42 The mind of man is naturally opposed to God's method of salvation, and is continually influenced by the idea, that something must be done before pardon can be realized, or salvation enjoyed. It cannot trust simply to the perfect work of Jesus, or rely on the plain and faithful promise of a gracious God. It is constantly striving to produce something on which it can look with satisfaction, and present before God as a ground of hope. But it is the design of God to humble, strip, and lay the sinner low; and therefore he finds all his efforts prove abortive, and his endeavors vain. The more he strives — the viler he appears, and the more he labors — the farther he is off. In prayer he is all confusion, his heart is hard and unfeeling, and he is tempted to think his case singular and fearful. He fears there is no hope for him in God.

He has nothing to pay! In his nature, he can find no good qualities:

his heart is depraved,

his understanding is bewildered,

his affections are earthly,

his memory is treacherous,

and his will is perverse.

He feels that he is a wretched man. In his life, he can discover no good deed; reflecting upon the past, innumerable sins stare him in the face; all his late attempts have been frustrated; and he exclaims, "Behold, I am vile!" He has no power; he feels as weak as helpless infancy, unable to do anything, he cannot think a good thought, or perform one good action; and experiencing his inability, he cries, "Oh that my ways were directed to keep your statutes always." He dares not make promises, or bind himself by resolutions; he has done so — but all His promises have been broken, and vows were too weak to hold his depraved heart. He has no bright prospects before him; but imagines that God will not be gracious, that mercy is not for such as he is; and he droops, desponds, and sighs.

He feels he has no claim upon God — for he is entirely depraved; every faculty and power is corrupted and defiled. He is entirely worthless — only fit fuel for everlasting burnings; and he believes God would be just in his eternal condemnation and punishment. He is in himself truly miserable — having no help, no hope, no comfort, nor anything that can yield the least satisfaction. If ever he is saved, he knows it must be by grace, and by sovereign grace alone. He has nothing to pay. He lies at the throne of grace as a miserable sinner, and mourns over his state in the deepest distress; exclaiming, "How shall I escape from eternal death?"

He is convicted and self condemned; he owns the justice of his sentence, and trembles at his doom; but the Lord does not abandon him to ruin, or drive him to despair; but when we have nothing to pay — He freely forgives us all. "He raises up the poor from the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill." An act of insolvency is passed in the high court of Heaven, for the benefit of all who are made willing to ascent to it on earth. This act is published in the everlasting gospel; and every poor, miserable debtor is at liberty to take the benefit of it. He must confess his debts, testify his inability to pay, and his willingness to be liberated by the hand of a surety; and then the act proclaims a full and irrevocable pardon. Every bond is cancelled, every debt discharged; while the justice of Jehovah, and the laws of Immanuel's empire, combine to guard his person and prevent an arrest.

All such are freely, openly forgiven; of pure, unmerited, undeserved kindness; without upbraiding, or without a frown. Angels witness to it in Heaven, the gospel on earth, and the Holy Spirit in the sinner's heart. For he who believes has the witness, or testimony in himself. The pardon being proclaimed, the man is at liberty; he is at peace with God his creditor, and is entitled to freedom on the most honorable terms. He is justified from all things. To him there is no condemnation. He is invited to hold daily fellowship with God, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and to rejoice in the Lord always. He renounces his own name, and takes the name of the gracious deliverer; and finds the sweetest comfort in sitting at the feet of Jesus, or walking in His ways.

He is nothing in self, his all is in Christ. He stands not alone — but in union with Jesus. He walks by faith in His word, relies upon His unchanging faithfulness, looks for eternal life as the free gift of God, and is a happy man. If he reflects upon the past — sorrow rises in his heart; if he considers his privileges at present — gratitude fires his soul; and when he looks forward to an eternal weight of glory he exclaims, "Oh, the riches of grace!" My dear reader, we must all be reduced to one common level; the moralist that owes but fifty pence, and the profligate who owes five hundred; we must be brought to see that we have nothing to pay; that if one good thought could save our souls — we have it not; that we must be entirely indebted to free and sovereign grace for present peace, and eternal salvation! A debt of fifty pence would damn us — as well as one of five hundred. We can have no well-founded hope, but in free grace. It is the grace of God that brings salvation; and if ever we are saved, it must be by grace, through faith; and that not of ourselves — but the free gift of God. The greatness of our sin is no barrier to God's mercy; but self-righteousness is; unless this is destroyed, we cannot be saved. So long as we think we have done, or can do anything to recommend us to the favor or notice of God — so long are we . . .

out of the way of mercy;

under a covenant of works;

and Christ will profit us nothing. But when we are convinced that all our righteousness is as filthy rags; that our iniquities, like the wind, carry us away to judgment, despair, and wrath; that our sins are more in number than the hairs of our head; and alarmed, distressed, and terrified, cry out, "O Lord, pardon my iniquity — for it is great!" — there is hope concerning us. But perfect liberty there will not be, until self is entirely renounced, God's justice in our condemnation acknowledged, and life sought only on the ground of the work of Christ, and the absolute promise of God. The number or heinousness of our sins should not discourage us; for the mercy of God is infinite, and the blood of Christ can remove the deepest stain! As the sun scatters the black cloud, clears the sky, and

spreads a robe of glory over all creation — so free grace blots out our sins, though as innumerable as the particles that composed the cloud, or as threatening as the appearance of the heavens on the stormy day. It clothes us in a robe of immortal glory and unsullied purity; whiter than the drifted snow, beautiful as the tints of nature's fairest flowers, and glorious as the sun when shining in his strength — a robe that is dignified with the highest title, the righteousness of God; and intended to be our dress in the realms of glory, before the throne of infinite majesty — a robe that now covers all our deformity, gives the sweetest comfort, and entitles us to life, immortality, and honor.

It is not the greatness of our sins — but the self-righteousness of our minds — which keeps us in darkness, despondency, and doubt; if we could but renounce self altogether, and take shelter in the gracious proclamation of free grace — we would find peace, joy, and salvation in believing. The Lord will be exalted in the salvation of His people — and the sinner must be abased in the dust before God. When man has nothing — Jehovah produces all; the debt is paid, the bond is cancelled, and the suppliant is freed. Every claim is discharged, every cause of despondency removed, and the prison door is set open forever. Salvation is wholly of God — it is entirely of sovereign grace, it is a free gift. The Lord delights to pardon those, who, rejecting all false confidences, rely simply and alone upon His grace. In them, He glorifies Himself; by them, He spreads his fame, and from them, He will receive a never-ending song of praise. They feel themselves laid under the deepest obligations, and wish to be entirely devoted to His cause; they make His word their daily meditation, and His honor the end of their existence below. For them to live is Christ, and to die is gain. They see that all the unsearchable riches of grace are presented to them in the gospel, and the illimitable fullness of Jesus is now open to supply their needs. They are removed . . .

from poverty — to plenty;

from beggary — to honor;

from wretchedness and woe — to happiness and peace.

Whatever they need is promised them, and they are invited to plead for it, and expect it without money or without price. They see that on God's gracious provision and faithful word, they may . . .

rest and defy disappointment;

hope with unshaken confidence; and

triumph when surrounded by misery and woe.

They may sing, "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

Happy debtors! They are made forever! The period will soon arrive when that shall be fulfilled, which is written of them; "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Surely such will be ready to cry out: "What shall I render unto the Lord, for all His benefits toward me? Lord, what will you have me to do? What does the Lord require of me?" That you acknowledge His authority, and allow His will to be law. He will be honored by your obedience, while you live upon His favors; and He will accept your endeavors to further His cause.

Unless you are willing to be ruled by Him — you have never yet been truly humbled before Him, or received forgiveness from Him. All who are freely forgiven by Him — are devotedly attached to His government and service. He bestows the blessing to secure your obedience, and displays His grace to extend the empire of holiness. He will never sanction sin — though He freely forgives the sinner. He embitters it to him, and makes him glad to forsake it. Sin is the his constant hatred and abhorrence. He may be reconciled to a sinner — but to sin He never can be. He prohibits it under the most dreadful penalties, and calls us from it, by promising the greatest blessings.

Dear friends, nothing grieves the Lord like sin in His own people; and therefore in strains of melting tenderness He expostulates with them, "Oh, do not do that abominable thing that I hate!" And can it be possible that any can live in sin — who . . .

rely on Jesus for pardon,

profess to be ruled by His word,

and wait at His throne for a blessing?

Sin is . . .

treason against His government,

insult offered to His name, and

contempt poured upon His love.

Oh, let us flee from it, watch against it, and avoid its very appearance. Has the Lord freely forgiven us all our debts, which deserved His eternal indignation, curse, and frown; and does He require us to . . .

forsake sin,

be dead to the world,

keep close to His throne,

identify ourselves with His cause, and

be wholly dedicated to His service?

He does, and surely if influenced by just principles — we would esteem it our reasonable service. Oh, my friends, if gratitude has any power, if love has any influence, if mercy has any attractions — let us cast away the works of darkness, let us walk honestly as in the day; let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. Let us walk worthy of that holy name by which we are called, in all godliness and honesty. The Lord has manifested not only the infinite benevolence of His disposition — but the exuberance of His liberality toward us — us, who had been His determined enemies; and who had continued to be so

— but for the riches of His grace and the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Oh amazing mercy! Surprising grace! He not only gives us temporal favors in common with the rest of mankind; but He assures us of pardon, peace, plenty, and happiness for evermore! Surely if anything can excite gratitude, produce humility, or make us zealous for holiness — it must be the exceeding grace of God in Christ!

-32-Patient Waiting

Patient Waiting James Smith, 1842

"But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."Romans 8:25 The objects of our hope are all future, all good, and all promised. We expect them because God has promised them; on His word do we hope.

There is not an evil — but we hope to be one day rid of!

There is not a blessing — but we hope one day to enjoy it! This present world is a land of hope.

Heaven is a land of fruition. The highest object of our hope is perfect holiness, exact conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ — to be brought to such a state, that we shall glorify our God in every desire, thought, feeling, and action.

We hope for the period when we shall say:

farewell sickness — welcome perpetual health;

farewell sorrow — welcome everlasting joy;

farewell sin — welcome perfect purity;

farewell ignorance — welcome perfect knowledge;

farewell desertion — welcome the eternal, presence of my God;

farewell death — welcome everlasting life! Do we hope for these things? Then let us patiently wait for them. Patience supposes trials, difficulties, and burdens — it is a grace of which we have much need on earth. "You have need of patience, that after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He who shall come will come, and will not tarry." While the bridegroom tarries — the servants are tried; but those who are consistent will watch, expect, and wait. The blessings we expect are worth waiting for, they are laid up for us in Heaven, as we have heard in the word of the truth of the gospel.

Faith believes the message respecting them,

hope longs to be put in possession,

love incites to grateful acknowledgments and holy walking,

ardent desire wants immediate enjoyment —

but patience is willing to wait. Her language is, "All the days of my appointed time I will wait, until my change comes."

Seasons of trouble seem long; but what are the longest seasons compared with eternity, an eternity of perfect blessedness? Let your lamps be trimmed, your lights burning, your loins girded,

and you yourselves like unto men that wait for the bridegroom. Often ask, What am I waiting for? And think of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away. How am I waiting? Patiently, prayerfully, usefully, gratefully? If you rightly hope, you will patiently wait. Be content to finish your education before you are removed home. Believe that your Father is wiser than you are. You have never had an unnecessary trouble. As bad as things may seem, they would have been worse — but for the discipline used before they came.

"Tribulation works patience." Patient waiting insures an enlarged experience of Jehovah's love and goodness. Your present journey will lead you to a place of repose, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Your troubles will end well, everlastingly well. Look therefore unto the Lord, wait for the God of your salvation; your God will hear you. "Let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing." James 1:4. Your God is the God of patience, who exercises, bestows, and approves of patience.

Father! Whatever of earthly bliss

Your sovereign will denies;

Accepted at the throne of grace,

Let this petition rise;

Give me a calm and thankful heart,

From every murmur free;

The blessings of your grace impart,

And make me live to Thee.

Let the sweet hope — that You are mine

My life and death attend;

Your presence through my journey shine,

And crown my journey's end!

-33-The Love of Christ

The Love of Christ James Smith, 1842 "This man receives sinners!" Luke 15:2 When the Lord Jesus was upon earth, He manifested the kindness of His heart, and the design of His incarnation — by . . .

visiting the wretched,

relieving the miserable,

and pardoning the guilty.

He used His authority and exerted His power — to do poor sinners good; and made it manifest that He delighted in mercy. Yet His design was mistaken, and His conduct condemned. The Scribes and the Pharisees were greatly displeased; and they brought against Him a charge, which reflects honor on His name, and fills the heart of the sinner with consolation and hope: "This man receives sinners — and eats with them!" Condescending Immanuel! this was but a proof of your love to the vilest of our race, and an intimation of the course you intended to pursue!

"This man receives sinners!" — harlots, adulterers, thieves, and the profane — were received by Him. The openly profligate, and the secret transgressor — alike found a welcome reception, when appealing to His mercy, and applying for His help. He rejected none. He was very gracious at the voice of every cry, and sympathized with distress under every form. The tenderness of His heart appeared in the tears that flowed from His eyes — and by the miracles of mercy performed by His words. To a Magdalene He said, "Your sins are forgiven — go in peace." To the adulteress in the temple, "Has no one condemned you?" She replied, "No one, Lord." He added, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more." He never sanctioned the sin — nor did He ever condemn the seeking sinner. He pardoned freely — when mercy was sought heartily. No crimes, however aggravated, no sins, however numerous — could shut up the affections of His compassion, or steel His heart against the penitent.

"This man receives sinners!" — sinners of the deepest dye; sinners of the lowest class; sinners of the basest character. The dying robber, the blaspheming Saul of Tarsus, and His own murderers on the day of Pentecost — proved the charge correct.

He is the same now, though exalted high at God's right hand. There is no change in His nature, or alteration in His disposition. He is JESUS still. The tenderest compassion finds a home in His heart, and the vilest transgressor finds a welcome at His throne.

"This man receives sinners!" — with all their sins upon them — as filthy and polluted as they are. He never directs them to attempt the removal of sin by any effort of their own — but invites them to approach Him just as they are; and pledges Himself to cleanse them from all their filthiness, and to make them holy. They need no pure character to recommend them to His notice, nor worthiness to attract His attention. If sensible of their true sinful condition — if alarmed at their danger — if desirous of relief and deliverance, He says, "Come, now, and let us reason together; though your

sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; and though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

"This man receives sinners!" — without the least reluctance. They . . .

fear His majesty,

dread His holiness,

and doubt His love. But He proves that all their fears are groundless — and their doubts but folly. The excellency of His nature, the veracity of His Word, and the perfection of His sacrifice — assure them of a welcome reception, when they flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel. He must . . .

deny His name,

falsify His word,

dishonor His sacrifice, and

change His very nature —

before He can refuse to receive the convinced sinner, who applies for mercy and everlasting life. It is His delight to see them come, and His Heaven to bless their souls. To this end, He . . .

framed His gospel,

sent His servants,

erected His throne of grace,

and bestows His Spirit. Our convictions of sin,

our sense of unworthiness,

our knowledge of danger —

are all intended to lead us to His throne, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

"This man receives sinners!" — most lovingly. He pronounces no harsh sentence, nor utters one solitary curse. He despises none. Though worthless and weak as the bruised reed — though useless and unsavory as the smell of the snuff of the expiring lamp — yet He will never cast out; but He will give power to the faint, and will multiply His pardons. He will heap up mercies to the very heavens — rather than crush a trembling sinner, or drive him from His throne. He will cast their sins into the depth of the sea — lest they should interpose between the soul and His love; and blot them out like a cloud — that they may not oblige Him to condemn.

He may allow the soul to be kept waiting for the enjoyment of the blessing; but there is mercy and love in this — it is . . .

to deepen conviction,

to strip of self,

to teach the value of the blessing, and

to show that it is entirely of grace!

Doubt not, poor soul, because you have been waiting long. You shall know His love, feel His grace, and prove that He receives sinners. If you follow on to know the Lord, He will come unto you, as the former and the latter rain upon the earth. He will . . .

disperse your doubts,

remove your fears,

melt your heart, and

make you fruitful in every good word and work.

"This man receives sinners!" — to the glory of God. He intends to glorify all the perfections of His divine nature, in receiving, blessing, and saving your souls. His grace will be glorified in your unworthiness,

His mercy will be glorified in your misery,

His justice will be glorified in your confessions,

His holiness will be glorified in your defilement,

His wisdom will be glorified in your perplexity, and

His love will be glorified in your complete salvation.

He glorifies His Father, who draws you to His seat, by fulfilling His glorious design. It is of the Lord that you feel your sinfulness, pant for salvation, and cry for pardon. No man comes unto Jesus, nor has any desire to come — except the Father draws him. And will Jesus refuse those whom the Father has drawn? — can He reject those whom His Father has taught? Oh no! He will . . .

receive graciously,

love freely,

supply bountifully,

and save eternally —

every coming soul. The Father is glorified when the sinner is received, and Jesus is honored when he seeks for acceptance; thus your reception at the throne of grace involves the honor both of the Father and the Son. Not only so — but every desire after Jesus, every prayer to Jesus, and every discovery of the glory of Jesus — is but the effect of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. And would the Savior invite, the Spirit teach, and the Father draw — if it were possible for the coming soul, under any circumstances, to be rejected? Oh no!

"This man receives sinners!" — still! He receives them with joy. As the shepherd rejoices when he finds his lost sheep — so Jesus rejoices when the poor wandering sinner returns. The praying sinner fills Heaven with harmony; and the conduct of Jesus makes angels and saints rejoice. For

there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety-and-nine righteous people who need no repentance. As the father of the prodigal rejoiced over his long-lost son, and would not allow his joy to be interrupted by the baseness, misery, or poverty of his child — so Jesus rejoices when His children return! He rejoices over them, to do them good, with His whole heart and with His whole soul. It is the fruit of the travail of His soul, the answer to His earnest prayers, and the fulfillment of the promise made to Him by His Father. Yes, poor, trembling, fearful soul; your coming to Jesus is the result of His death, and a part of the reward promised to His labors. Your tears glisten in His eyes,

your groans are music in His ears, and

your ardent desires are grateful to His holy soul! As the bridegroom rejoices over his chosen, beloved, newly-married bride — so does your God rejoice over you.

"This man receives sinners!" — to pardon all their sins. They deserve death — the sentence is recorded in His book. But when they plead for mercy — He blots out the long black list, so that not a figure can be deciphered. If all the rays of the sun were to shine on the page that contained the catalogue of their crimes — nothing could be found against them! When their sins and their iniquities shall be sought for — they shall not be found, for there shall be none. None of their iniquities shall ever be mentioned unto them. Their iniquities are forgiven, their sins are covered.

Blessed Jesus! we rejoice that you are exalted as a Prince and a Savior — to give repentance and the remission of sins; and that God, for your sake, forgives sinners all their trespasses. Sinner! flee to Jesus; He will receive you, and pronounce the sentence, "Your sins are forgiven — go in peace." He justifies from all things, those whom He receives. He not only pardons their sins — but He gives them His righteousness! Pardon delivers them from Hell; His righteousness entitles them to Heaven! It is freely given to every one that believes.

There can be no condemnation, when the righteousness of Jesus is embraced and applied —

it covers the person as a robe,

it emboldens the petitioner as a plea,

it gives confidence to the Christian as His warrant,

and it makes him the righteousness of God.

Oh wondrous display of . . .

unsearchable wisdom,

boundless benevolence,

and richest grace! The righteousness of God imputed to a sinful creature;

the guilty justified before a heart-searching God;

the Hell-deserving entitled to everlasting life!

"This man receives sinners!" —

to sanctify their natures,

to heal all the wounds which sin has made,

and to restore to sound soul-health.

He cleanses — as well as pardons!

He sets us against sin — as well as justifies us from sin.

He never receives souls — that they may live in transgression, violate His laws, and dare His vengeance. He says, "A new heart also I will give you, and a right spirit I will put within you; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you an heart of flesh."

He embitters sin — and endears holiness.

He makes the nature holy — that the conduct may be moral.

They espouse His cause — who redeemed their souls;

they choose His ways — who died as their ransom;

they seek His glory — who sought and obtained their salvation.

They use His fullness — for the supply of their needs; and He uses their persons, talents, and property — for the promotion of His cause. He is their God — and they are His people! He receives them as they are — poor, lost, wretched souls; and they receive Him as He is — a rich, glorious, gracious Savior! He is the object of their faith, hope, and love; and they are the objects of His care, concern, and intercession.

He receives sinners — to supply all their needs, according to His riches in glory. He has opened His fullness, on purpose to supply them. He promises temporals, spirituals, eternals! He bids them . . .

ask — and receive;

trust — and not be afraid;

wait — and confidently expect;

and pledges Himself to withhold no good thing from those who walk uprightly.

Having obtained saving mercy, they . . .

keep good company,

walk in clean paths,

pursue right objects,

act from pure motives, and

live in fellowship with God!

They cannot lack any good thing. He will give freely, frequently, cheerfully, plentifully! Nor shall they have reason to complain. He will . . .

subdue their iniquities,

conquer their foes,

direct their steps,

guard their persons, and

afterwards receive them to glory! Whom He receives now at the throne of grace as sinners — He will receive at last at the throne of glory as saints. He will give unto them eternal life; they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand.

They shall have life, and have it more abundantly — above all they can ask or think. He never forgets whom He forgives — nor forsakes whom He receives. He is a Father unto them — and they are His sons and daughters. He will make His strength perfect in their weakness, and prove His grace to be sufficient for them. But Jesus will receive none but sinners — only such as are convinced that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

If they have no money — He invites them to come;

if they thirst — He bids them drink;

if they have nothing to pay — He frankly forgives them all.

They cannot be too sick — for His skill to cure.

They cannot be too filthy — for His blood to cleanse.

They cannot be too base — for His grace to receive. Where sin abounded — grace will much more abound.

Poor soul, you may feel confused, bewildered, stupid, lifeless, guilty, condemned; and, as you conceive, unable to pray. Satan may persuade you there is no hope for you in God, nor help for you in Jesus. Your heart may misgive you, and ten thousand fears alarm you. Hell may appear open to receive you, and Heaven closed against you. But do not be afraid — Jesus receives just such sinners as you are. He has received and saved thousands exactly like you! He says to you, drooping, desponding, and weary as you are, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." The threatenings of the Word terrify you; but they are not intended for you. They are the portion of the careless, hardened, God-defying sinner. But every gospel invitation, every sweet promise of mercy, and every encouraging parable — is designed to comfort your heart, raise hope in your soul, and lead you to Jesus, the sinner's friend.

There never was an ardent, habitual, influential desire after a saving interest in Jesus, to enjoy the blessings of the gospel, and to be numbered with the Lord's people — found in any man's bosom in a state of nature. It is the effect of the new birth — a proof that you are loved with an everlasting love, and that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life. Such desires must be granted; for God has promised, "I will give unto him that is thirsty, of the fountain of the water of life freely." "He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them." My poor

drooping and desponding fellow-sinner — look unto Jesus! He is full of grace and truth. Hope in God, for you shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. It is to you He speaks, for your encouragement He promises, and upon you He will bestow all the blessings of His grace. Cast yourself at His feet, venture on His holy word, renounce all other helpers. His word is true from the beginning,

His faithfulness is like the great mountains,

and His blood cleanses from all sin.

Why do you doubt? Are you a singular character? — He will get singular honor in saving you. Are you persuaded there is no hope, no help, no mercy for you? This persuasion comes not from Him who calls you. His word must be your guide; the testimony of His ministers and people should silence your fears.

None ever sought the Lord in vain; and it is impossible that you should. Seek, and you shall find, and your joy shall be full. Cast yourself upon Jesus — that is faith. Commit your all into His hands — that is gospel-believing; trust only in His work, word, blood, and righteousness — and you cannot be deceived, rejected, or lost. None ever perished at His feet, or were lost seeking mercy at His throne. Will the Redeemer lose His character for grace, tenderness, and truth? Shall Satan gain His object, and have occasion eternally to blaspheme the Savior, for you? No, no! He will . . .

receive you kindly,

pardon you freely,

justify you completely,

and save you eternally!

He will show forth in you . . .

the depth of His mercy,

the height of His grace,

the extent of His merit,

the freeness of His love,

the fullness of His salvation,

and the glory of His name!

He is faithful, though you are fearful; His word must stand, and He will do all His pleasure. But what more can I say? Jesus is all God could make Him to us, and all we could possibly wish Him to be! And it is unscriptural, unkind, and very sinful — to doubt His love and grace. His sorrows in the garden, His death upon the tree, His precious flowing blood, the gift of the Spirit, and the appointing of ministers — all combine to prove that He is rich in mercy unto all who call upon Him.

Careless, thoughtless sinner, is what you have been reading true? And have you never made application to this Savior? There were many sinners in Judea whom Jesus did not receive. He cast

out none that came; but many never attempted to come — but perished in their own deceivings. May not this be your case? He receives sinners Now; but the time is limited. It is the day of salvation — the day will soon wear away, the evening will soon set in; and then He will not receive sinners any longer — but drive them from Him, with "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and His angels!"

Death closes the door of mercy upon the sinner forever. An accident, a fever, a fit — often cuts off the sinner suddenly; and oh how awful is His end! Who shall attempt to describe it? What language can set it forth? Trifle not with time — it is daring eternity. Trifle not with mercy — it is daring justice. Because there is wrath, beware, lest He take you away with a stroke; then nothing can deliver you!

-34-The Desponding Encouraged

The Desponding Encouraged James Smith, 1842

"You said, There is no hope!" Jeremiah 2:25 My dear reader, are you not convinced of sin? Do you not desire salvation? Are you not crying to the Lord? And yet perhaps you are cast down, distressed in mind, and filled with desponding fears. You think your case is singular, your state dangerous, and your situation fearful. You conclude that God will not be gracious, Jesus will not save you, and Heaven will never receive you. You think you are, of all, the most miserable; that there is no hope, nor any deliverance for you. You try to pray — and cannot, you read the Bible — and find no comfort, you think over the Lord's promises — but get very little good. Your thoughts are confused, your judgment is baffled — and you know not what to do. Your soul is burdened, your spirits sink, and you feel as though you had no strength. Satan tempts you, you see yourself more sinful, and you are ready to give up all for lost. Is not this your case? Do you not feel thus? Are you not thus terrified? Then, inquire: Whose work is all this?

Man could not thus teach you your state and danger, nor lead you to desire salvation by Jesus Christ. Satan could not thus instruct you, neither would he if he could. Then the work must be the work of God. All that you feel and fear, is the effect of the Holy Spirit's bringing home the law to your conscience! It is preparatory to your receiving Christ; it is to strip you of self; to bring down pride; and lay you low in the dust before God — that you may receive salvation as the free gift of free grace, bestowed upon a sinful, unworthy, ill-deserving creature!

True, it is Satan, taking occasion by the discovery that is made to you, who tempts you to despair, and to indulge hard thoughts of God. But even this is in your favor; he tempts you because he hates you; he hates you because Jesus loves you; and because he knows that the Holy Spirit is at work within you. Once he left you to sin on in quietness, because he then thought he was sure of you. But now he alarms, terrifies, and distresses you — because he is afraid he shall lose you!

You cannot do as you once did, you cannot love and follow the evil things you once took delight in — but why is this? What made this alteration in you? From what does this change spring? Not from nature, not from Satan, not from the wrath of God — but from the work of the Spirit, which is the effect of the love of God to your soul.

Fear not then, poor desponding soul; Jesus Christ is most exactly suited to you. He is, He has, He will bestow — all that you need or desire. He has given you His word, that He will never cast out a coming sinner. John 6:37. He receives sinners. Luke 15:2. He is able also to save them to the uttermost — all who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:25. He is as willing to save — as He is able; and to you He says, "Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!"

Never was one poor soul rejected by Him, never yet did He refuse to hear, show mercy to, and deliver one — who, from a sense of need, cried to Him for forgiveness. His very nature is love, and His love is fixed upon poor sinners. His love to them is so great, that it passes knowledge! His love

is so wonderful, that all other love dies before it. "He has loved us, and given Himself for us!" His thoughts respecting you are "thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." His name is Jesus, because He came to save poor desponding souls from their sins. "You shall call His name Jesus — for He shall save His people from their sins." His throne is grace — because there He dispenses favors to the vile and unworthy. His promises are free — because He intended them to comfort and support the undeserving. His invitations are general, because designed to encourage the thirsty, the heavy-laden, and the weary, who would otherwise exclude themselves. His disposition is kindness, pity, and compassion; calculated to dissipate fear, doubt, and despondency from those who approach Him. His intention in coming into the world, was most merciful: "to save sinners, even the chief!" His gospel is an antidote against all the miseries, woes, and distresses of poor sinful worms! His word contains a complete answer to all our complaints. Are you complaining that you cannot pray? Do you desire? "He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and save them." Do you have longings to be saved? "He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness." Do you hunger and thirst? "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Are you looking to the Lord? "Look unto Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else!" Are you crying to the Lord? "Then shall you call, and the Lord shall answer; you shall cry, and He shall say — Here I am!" "He will be very gracious unto you at the voice of your cry; when He shall hear it, He will answer you." "This poor man cried — and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all His troubles." "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me." Are you kept waiting; and does the Lord delay to answer? "Therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you; and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you." "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord!" Are you oppressed with sin, guilt, and a sense of danger — and do these things make you sigh? "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, says the Lord; I will set him in safety." Are you seeking for blessings — but still fear that Jesus will not bestow? "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Are you tempted? "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 them that love Him." Are you sorely afflicted? "I will leave in the midst of you an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." "I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction." Are you deeply tried? "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people! And they shall say, The Lord is my God!" "We went through fire and through water; but you brought us out into a wealthy place." Are you confessing your sins before God? "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Are you defiled by sin? "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." "I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against Me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth." Are you blind? "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake

them." Are your sins many? If they were ten thousand times more — Jesus would freely pardon, fully justify, and everlastingly save you. Jesus has promised that He will never cast out any who come unto Him!

Why then despond? Why listen to Satan? Why endeavor to prove the Redeemer guilty of falsehood? If the promises are made to such as you; if personal desert is put of the question, and all is a matter of grace — why then should YOU be excluded?

Sin, guilt, and temptation should lead you to Jesus — not keep you from Him! There are thousands now in Heaven, who were once exactly like you; but they were saved by free grace, through the blood of Jesus. Fear not then, my poor doubting brother or sister; but continue to seek, cry to, and wait upon the Lord. And you shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!

Fly, poor sinner, to yon mountain,
Where the healing streams do flow;
Where you'll find an open fountain,
That will wash you white as snow!
Richly flowed the crimson river,
Down Immanuel's lovely side;
And that blood will you deliver,
Whensoever 'tis applied!
Never ponder o'er your baseness,
But to Calvary quick repair;
There's the fountain for uncleanness,
And the worst are welcome there!
Christ is ready to receive you;
See His bloody cross appear;
From your sins, he will relieve you,
And dissolve your every fear!

-35-The Fullness of Christ

The Fullness of Christ James Smith, 1842

"It has pleased the Father, that in Him all fullness should dwell!" Colossians 1:19 The concerns of the soul are matters of everlasting importance — and yet they are generally neglected. The language of the conduct of people in general is, 'Let us take care for the body; but as to the soul, its concerns are of small consequence.' My dear reader, has this been the language of your conduct? Are you still indifferent about your soul? or, are you seeking for life, pardon, salvation, and immortality? If you are indeed convinced of sin; if you are fleeing from the wrath to come; if you are searching for wisdom, and seeking for understanding — then our present subject is suited to you. The fullness of Christ contains all that you can want, desire, or enjoy — and all that God in mercy can give! It is provided for your supply! It is open for your resort — and may be enjoyed by believing. Do you feel your insufficiency, and inability to think, speak, or act spiritually? In Jesus, there is a fullness of the Spirit; which, when received, works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure; and the Scriptures assure us, "that if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children — much more shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit into those who ask Him." The Spirit, when received, acts as a Spirit of light, of life, and of love; quickening the soul, illuminating the understanding, and elevating the affections. He . . .

enables us to cry, Abba Father!

endears Jesus unto us; and

seals us unto the day of redemption. Do you find yourself guilty, and condemned by the holy law of God? In Jesus, there is a fullness of pardon — pardon for infinite, aggravated, and innumerable offences; pardon procured by His blood, bestowed in richest grace, and granted to the most unworthy; and concerning the communication of it, we are assured "that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Are you sensible of your unrighteousness, and do you mourn on account of the defects discoverable in your obedience? in Jesus, there is a fullness of righteousness. He has a righteousness to bestow upon sinners, which He wrought out by the labors of His life, and the sufferings of His death; a righteousness which . . .

justifies from all things,

raises above condemnation,

and gives a right to eternal life.

Concerning this glorious righteousness, the Apostle affirms, "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Jesus was made sin for us — that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Are you daily discovering more and more of the pollution of your nature — and proving that in you, that is, in your flesh, dwells no good thing? Then in Jesus, there is fullness of holiness. He is made sanctification unto

His people. All true holiness dwells in Him, flows from Him, and dedicates the receiver to Him. In vain do we attempt to produce it in ourselves — Christ is the root, fountain, and ocean of all sanctity; and by union to Him, and through communion with Him — we must receive it, if ever we are sanctified to God. "He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Are you experiencing great spiritual weakness — and have you strong corruptions to cope with, many trials to bear, and merciless foes to face? Then in Jesus, there is a fullness of strength! "He gives power to the faint; and to them that have no might — He increases strength." He is the strength of the poor, and the strength of the needy in his distress. He strengthens with all might in the inner man, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. His grace is sufficient, and to those who trust in Him — strength is given them according to their day. Are you lamenting your ignorance, and incapacity to understand the things of God? Then in Jesus, there is a fullness of wisdom, which is sufficient to make you wise unto salvation, through faith in His dear name. He possesses, and gives liberally the wisdom from above; which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. If, then, you lack wisdom — ask it of Him, for He gives liberally and upbraids not. Are you fearful, doubting, and desponding? In Jesus, there is a fullness of love, compassion, and mercy. He can, and does have compassion on the ignorant, and those who are out of the way. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. He will not reject the vilest sinner, despise the weakest seeker, or cast out the most unworthy wretch that is brought to bow before Him! Like as a father pities his children — so Jesus pities all who come to Him. Are you miserable, cast down, and wretched? Then come to Jesus — there is a fullness of consolation in Him! He gives comfort to the comfortless; raises the downcast; and makes the most wretched joyful. He is the consolation of Israel, and the joy of the broken-hearted! He gives . . .

rest from trouble,

comfort under trials, and

peace in the most perplexing circumstances. Are you dark, bewildered, and confused? Come to Jesus — He has a fullness of light. He will guide you right, and make you full of joy with His countenance. Those who follow Him, shall not walk in darkness — but shall have the light of life. Are you hungering and thirsting for satisfaction and permanent peace? Come to Jesus — He will satisfy you early with His mercy, that you may be glad and rejoice all your days. He will abundantly satisfy you with the fatness of His house, and make you drink of the river of His pleasures. He will extend peace to you like a river, and give you peace always, by all means; for He satisfies the longing soul, and replenishes every sorrowful soul. Are you lost, ruined, and undone? Come to Jesus — in Him there is fullness of salvation. He came to seek, and to save the lost. He saves to the very uttermost — all who come unto God by Him — with an everlasting salvation! In a word, in Jesus there is a fullness of . . .

grace,

truth,

tenderness,

kindness,

love,
merit,
light,
comfort,
patience,
wisdom,
peace,
joy, and
endless salvation!

All that He IS, and HAS — is for sinners! For sinners whose crimes are like scarlet, and their transgressions of a crimson hue. To Him all sensible sinners are invited,
by Him all such are welcomed, and
from Him they are supplied!

He possesses all they can need to make them wise, happy, and glorious for evermore. To this fullness, the gospel calls them; there ministers direct them; and "the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that is thirsty, come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Of all such, Jesus says, "If you knew the gift (or bounty) of God; you would ask of me, and I would give you living water."

Come then, you poor, needy, and grace-wanting souls! Come, for all things are ready! Yet there is room! Jesus is exalted as a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins. There is salvation in no other; there is a plentitude of salvation in Him; and salvation in Him for you — if you really feel you need it. Give not way, then, to despondency; no longer indulge unbelief; rise and approach Him; for He kindly calls you.

Reader, are you looking to Jesus? There is life, salvation, and happiness nowhere else; He says, "Look unto me and be saved!" Look wherever else you will — and you are lost. Duties without Christ will damn!

Nothing but an experimental knowledge of Christ, living by faith upon Christ, and looking wholly to Christ — can make you safe, holy, and blessed. May you be led to this fullness, and out of it receive all you need, for Jesus Christ's sake.

-36-Comfort for the Cast Down

Comfort for the Cast Down James Smith, 1842

"O my God, my soul is cast down within me — therefore will I remember You!" Psalms 42:6 The Christian's course, like the Pilgrim's journey — lies through barren deserts, over rocky maintains, and dangerous passes. His prospects are often obscured, his comforts wither and die — and he feels himself lonely and deserted. His soul is often cast down within him.

Sometimes his inbred corruption, working, and opposing everything that is good, useful, or holy — distresses him beyond description; he would do good — but evil is present with him, to hinder and deter him. Frustrated in his endeavors, disappointed in his expectations, and weakened until he feels powerless and distressed — he exclaims, in mental agony, "Oh, what a wretched person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?" He is indeed cast down. At other times, the frowning aspects of divine providence, give occasion to the cast down one — to lead him to question his interest in Jehovah's love, and paternal relation. He views things with the eye of sense, and looks at them through the lens of reason — rather than faith. He forgets the promised supports of his God, falls to reasoning, and comparing himself and his circumstances with others, until, perhaps, he is ready, with mistaken Jacob, to cry out, "All these things are against me!" The heat of the furnace increases, or the waters rise and the billows roar; he feels his foothold fail him, and he thinks he is standing on very slippery ground — a little more, and religion will be disgraced, the gospel dishonored, and the glory of Jesus tarnished by him; this makes him mournfully cry out, "My soul is cast down within me!"

Perhaps the Christian has a family; he desires to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; he endeavors to set an example before them worthy of imitation; but he is hindered and foiled, his constitutional imperfections, or perhaps his own wife, seem effectually to prevent it, and he cannot do the thing that he would.

He looks for help — but behold hindrance;

he looks for comfort — but lo! distress;

he looks for sympathy — but he meets harshness;

he looks for support — but he finds the opposition —

until his full bosom heaves, and his burdened heart groans out before the Lord, "My soul is cast down within me!"

Many a godly husband, and many a holy wife, has found this to be the case; prayer has been hindered, disorder introduced into the family, and the soul-distressing burden laid upon the mind. But we must imitate the Psalmist when cast down — he says, "Therefore will I remember You." It is sometimes very encouraging to the Christian to think of the Lord. Amidst all these changes and trials — He remains immutably the same! He is still our loving Father, gracious Master, present

Friend, and glorious Lord!

He may allow us to be opposed — but we shall not be overcome.

We may be crossed — but we shall not be lost.

We may be cast down — but not forsaken.

We may be sunk very low — but not quite overwhelmed.

He chose us, owns us, stands engaged to support us, and will ultimately crown us! Oh to believe this, so as to draw comfort, joy, and peace therefrom! But it is cheering often, to remember the Lord's past appearances for us, and to us, in times of trial, trouble, and distress. He has been our help, therefore under the shadow of His wings should we trust and rejoice. Often has He so timed His mercies, as to fill us with wonder, gratitude and love. He has wonderfully manifested His wisdom, prudence, and care, in the time and manner of His intervention on our behalf.

Remember, the Lord has promised to help, direct, and overrule all things for the good of His people. He is faithful to His word, and always acts in character. He will never fail us or forsake us. He is ever near, His eye notices every movement of either friend or foe, however minute, or from creatures concealed. His ear is open to the softest whisper, and nothing can escape His all-knowing mind. He cares for us, seeks our welfare, and will surely do us good.

Let us then cease from man; yes, turn away from all creatures — to the Lord. What a mercy, to have a God to turn to, in all trials and under all our distresses — a God of love, mercy, grace, and goodness! What a mercy, to have a Savior who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. You are still Jesus — the tender-hearted, compassionate, and never failing Friend of all who love You, and seek Your glory! O Jesus, manifest your sympathy with your poor, tried, and cast-down brethren below! When our souls are cast down within us, help us to remember you; your sorrows, your sufferings, your agonies, and bloody sweat. The weight of woe under which your spirit groaned, the load of sin which made your soul to be troubled, the dreadful pain which made your body faint, and at length sink into the arms of death.

Brethren and sisters in the path of tribulation — expect trials, troubles, and soul-piercing distresses; they are part of our portion, ordained for our present good and future welfare. We cannot avoid them — though imprudence sometimes increases their weight. Look unto the Lord; I know you will find it difficult to do so, especially after you have looked, and looked, and find that you are not lightened. I feel it at this moment; yet still we must endeavor to look again; Jesus is the same, we are one with Him, and cannot be forgotten by Him.

-37-David's Testimony

David's Testimony James Smith, 1842

"Before I was afflicted I went astray — but now I keep Your Word!" Psalms 119:67

Ease and prosperity breed a number of temptations, and it is but seldom that we escape being taken in some of them. Hezekiah could pray, wrestle, and prevail with God in affliction — but when ease and prosperity were his lot, he soon turned aside! In ease and prosperity — the heart gets hardened; and the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. Even the Lord Himself gets no attention; hence He complains, "I spoke unto you in your prosperity; but you said, I will not hear. This has been your manner from your youth, that you obeyed not my voice." Jeremiah 22:21.

David could maintain his character in afflictions, much better than in prosperity — it was from the mount of prosperity that he fell, in the case of Uriah the Hittite. The prosperity of fools destroys them, and the Lord's family would be very much injured, if it were not for trials and troubles.

Look at the afflictions of David — how many, how various! Saul hunts him for a long period, like a partridge upon the mountains; Keilah, the city he lived in, is burnt — his wives and property are gone into captivity, and the people talk of stoning him. His beloved child, by Bathsheba, is taken away in judgment. Amnon ravishes his sister Tamar. Absalom raises a rebellion, defiles his concubines, drives him into exile, and is at length cut off in his sins. The three days' pestilence came upon the land in consequence of his sin, and seventy thousand people are cut off. These and other afflictions, are recorded in his history; and he looks upon them as the consequences of his going astray.

Affliction is to call him back to his closet, his Bible, and his God. Afflictions are corrections for sin, and intended to teach us. "Your own wickedness shall correct you, and your backsliding shall reprove you; know therefore and see, that it is an evil and bitter thing, that you have forsaken the Lord your God, and that my fear is not in you, says the Lord Almighty!"

Rightly viewed, our afflictions humble us before God, give us a greater hatred to sin; and urge us to cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart. They are designed to reveal to us the nature of sin, the effects of transgression, the necessity for watchfulness, and the need of being daily upheld by the right hand of Jehovah's righteousness. When they lead us to search, plead, apply, and obey God's word — they accomplish a most desirable end; and it is evident they are blessings in disguise, and have done us real good.

Believer, prize your Bible; study the Lord's will; aim in all things, and at all times, to be ruled by its wholesome and holy precepts.

I know your judgments, Lord, are right,

Though they may seem severe;

The sharpest sufferings I endure
Flow from your faithful care.
Yes, I have found it good for me
To bear my Father's rod;
Afflictions make me learn your law,
And live upon my God!
Before I knew your chastening rod
My feet were apt to stray;
But now I learn to keep your word,
Nor wander from your way!

-38-He Who Seeks, Finds

He Who Seeks, Finds James Smith, 1842

"He who seeks, finds." Matthew 7:8 My dear reader, you have perhaps lately discovered that you are a sinner; that your heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; that your nature is a sink of sin; that in you dwells no good thing. And you have endeavored to amend, and change your ways — but find that sin rises, reigns, and hinders you. You have tried to exercise confidence in Jesus — but are unable. And now you fear your case is desperate, and your state hopeless. But to you is the word of God's salvation sent! For such as you — the consolations of the gospel are intended; and Jesus Christ, with all that His fullness contains, is designed for you! There is no real reason why you should be cast down — Jesus loves you, and all who feel and desire as you do. You feel that you are unworthy to receive or expect any blessing from the Lord. You desire to enjoy mercy — but fear that you shall never have a crumb! Fear not, Jesus is love; and He will, in His own time and way, manifest His love to you.

Every seeking sinner is an object of His love! He delights to see them . . .

mourning over sin,

loathing self,

sighing for pardon,

humbling themselves in the dust, and

longing to share in the blessings of His grace.

He loves such a sinner, more than He loves an angel, more than He loves the whole world beside! He turns from all other objects — to look with delight and pleasure upon such a soul. Jesus loves sinners — all sensible sinners, who desire to be . . .

delivered from the power of sin,

cleansed from the filth of sin, and

saved from the desert of sin!

He loves all such with the highest possible love — such as the love which Father has loved Him. John 15:9. His love will not allow, that any such shall be driven from His throne, be denied their petition, or allowed to perish. He may delay — but He will never deny; He delights to show mercy to such, and what He delights in — He will do. I know it is hard to believe this, when corruption rises; the heart seems to get harder, no answers to prayer are given, and everything appears to be against the soul; but it is true notwithstanding. All this humbling, is to . . .

empty you of self,

show the fruitlessness of your own efforts, and

convince you that if ever you are saved — it must be by sheer sovereign grace. The greatness, number, or peculiarity of your sins — afford no argument against you; for His precious, most precious blood — cleanses from all sin. It is the easiest thing in the world for God . . .

to pardon you now, for the sake of Jesus;

to cleanse you from all your pollutions, by atoning blood;

to justify you now, in the righteousness of Immanuel! And not only is it easy — but God has pledged Himself to do it, and to do it for every one who confesses his sins, and seeks for salvation.

There are no exceptions made; every sinner, in every place, who feels his wretched, ruined, lost, and dreadful condition through sin, and applies to Jesus with humble confession, earnest prayer, and heartfelt desire — MUST be saved. 1 John 1:7-9. Isaiah 1:18. There can be no doubts upon this subject:

the faithfulness of God,

the love of Jesus,

the veracity of the Bible

— are all at stake here. Our very doubts about it are sins, heinous sins in the sight of God! He has . . .

pledged His word,

sacrificed His Son,

sent His gospel, and

proved the truth of what He has said —

in thousands of instances; and though we believe not, yet He abides faithful, He cannot deny Himself. Our doubts spring from the depravity, wickedness, and deceitfulness of our own hearts — and from thinking that Jehovah is altogether such a one as ourselves; they are the offspring of unbelief, and are fostered by Satan, that enemy of God and man. Does not Jesus invite . . .

all who are thirsty — to come and drink?

all who are weary — to come for rest?

all who are poor — to come for riches?

all who are blind — to come for eye-salve?

all who are naked — to come for clothing?

all who are lost — to come for salvation? Has He not promised that He will never cast out any who sincerely come — but that He will give His blessings freely? Have we not the promise and the oath of God in His word — and both designed to administer strong consolation to those "who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel? And are you not you thirsty,

weary, poor, blind, naked, and lost? Are not you coming to Jesus, in the desires, prayers, and earnest longings of your soul? How then, can Jesus reject you — if He is faithful, and His word be true? It is impossible! But look at the examples left on record in the word, and living in the church; thousands of sinners just like you! Yes, let Satan and your evil heart say what they will — they were just like you: just as vile, just as undeserving, just as likely to be rejected. But was one of them ever refused? No! Jesus has been found faithful in every case; and Mary Magdalene, the dying thief, Saul of Tarsus, and I, with thousands more — can witness that we have found Jesus exactly what the scriptures represent Him to be; though once we thought, feared, and wickedly doubted, as you do now.

Consider what is Jehovah's design in giving you the scriptures, the ministry of the gospel, in the death and exaltation of Jesus; and in giving you a longing desire to enjoy the blessings of His grace. His design is to glorify His own grace in your present and eternal salvation — and that you might see that it is all of grace, and glorify the God of grace accordingly. You are left to feel what you are in yourself, what you can do of yourself, and what you must everlastingly be — but for the grace of God! And thus boasting is excluded, mercy reigns triumphant, "so that no one can boast in His presence!" 1 Corinthians 1:29 The great contest is:

whether Christ is to be all in salvation — or only part;

whether it is to be Christ alone — or Christ and the creature;

whether grace alone is to reign — or whether grace and human endeavor are to sit united on the same throne.

God will have it . . .

all grace — or all works;

all Christ — or all creature!

And therefore we must be . . .

emptied from vessel to vessel,

tossed from side to side,

stripped from all our fig-leaf coverings —

and made to fly naked and wounded, out of self — to Jesus; to be saved wholly, solely, and entirely by Him, of His own free grace and undeserved mercy!

We must be led to see that there is . . .

not a good desire,

not an acceptable prayer,

not a holy feeling,

not a sigh for sin,

not a groan for deliverance

— but what flows from the grace of God, and the Holy Spirit's work in the heart! But it takes . . .
much exercise,
many trials,
sore temptations,
deep dejections,
painful disappointments,
and soul-distressing discipline —

to bring us to this! Therefore it is, that we suffer so much. When the pride of our nature is brought down, the haughty spirit is humbled, and the sinner feels Himself to be a Hell-deserving, condemned, and ruined creature — then deliverance, sweet deliverance is near at hand! Jesus will soon be revealed in . . .

the glory of His person,
the fullness of grace, and

His perfect salvation! The efficacy of His blood will be felt; His love will be shed abroad in the heart; and the joys of salvation be realized.

Therefore, consider, my poor brother, or sister, who are seeking the Lord sorrowing — that all your disappointments, griefs, and sorrows — are intended to produce the most beneficial effects. You will be led to see by and by, that it was all necessary, that it was all in love; and, though a rough way — that it led you to Jesus and the realms of eternal bliss!

Consider also, the opposition that is made to you by Satan, unbelief, and perhaps by your carnal friends. Why is it that they oppose you — but because Jesus loves you, and is drawing you to Himself. The cords of His loving-kindness draw you so, that you cannot help praying — though it appears to you to be dull, lifeless, faithless, and anything but prayer. You cannot help desiring, hearing, reading, and longing to enjoy what the Lord's people do — though you think it is all in vain; and though Satan tempts you to give all up, and your own unbelieving heart would lead you to conclude that it is useless to seek. And yet you must go on, you cannot give up; you are insensibly led, and the work is carried on — yet you scarcely know how, or why, or by whom. All this is from the Holy Spirit's work in your heart — and proceeds from Jehovah's love to your soul; and illustrates John 3:8 : "The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound — but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

You are not allowed to fall in love with and admire your prayers, nor to look to your fine frames and feelings, and such like things, as many do. And why is this? Because Jehovah is determined that you shall look to Jesus, and to Jesus only — and find all that you need in Him, and in Him alone. This is exceedingly merciful of the Lord, though very painful to you. It is very profitable, and absolutely necessary. It is for your good — and your loving Redeemer's glory. But you may be ready to ask, while feeling all this, and passing through ten times worse than you have stated, "May I conclude that there is salvation for me?" Yes! You are now saved in the Lord with an

everlasting salvation; and you shall enjoy the sweets, blessings, and joys of that salvation by and by. You have many evidences in you, even in this state:

you cannot be happy without Christ,

you desire to be delivered from sin,

you groan, being burdened,

you long for fellowship with God,

you love and wish to be like and among the saints of God,

you cannot rest on a form, a duty, or anything short of Christ,

you admire and long for holiness,

you would give up all to win Christ,

you are daily coming to Jesus, and crying after him,

you cannot delight in the present evil world,

you feel a conflict at times in your soul — between good and evil, light and darkness, hope and fear,

you are willing that God should search you, purge you, or do anything with you — so that He will but save you and give you Christ.

Now all these are evidences . . .

of a work of grace,

of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and

of a saving interest in the love of God and death of Christ. And though there remains much to distress you, and the work is but small at present — yet He who has begun, will carry it on, and make it perfect in the day of Jesus Christ.

Look then away from self — to Jesus only! Wait upon the Lord continually; and cast yourself at His throne, as a poor, lost, undone, ruined creature; and, as sure as God has spoken, is faithful, and can save — so sure shall you be saved, receive Christ, be united to His dear person, rejoice in His complete salvation, and glory in His precious name! Amen.

All you, who feel distressed for sin,

And fear eternal woe;

You, Christ invites to enter in —

This hour to Jesus go!

He, by His own almighty word,

Will all your fears remove;

For every wound, His precious blood
A sovereign balm shall prove. His conquering grace shall set you free
From sin's oppressive chains,
From Satan's hateful tyranny,
And everlasting pains!
Come, then, you heavy-laden, come!
His instant help implore:
Millions have found a peaceful home;
There's room for millions more!

-39-A Token for Good

A Token for Good James Smith, 1842

"Show me a token for good!" Psalms 86:17

How condescending is our God to such poor vile creatures as we are! He . . .

stoops to notice us,

promises to hear our cries, and

is faithful to bestow blessings in answer to prayer.

How ignorant is man by nature, of where and in what true blessedness is to be found. "How shall I be happy?" This is man's question — but is never propounded to Him who can answer it, until God the Holy Spirit . . .

quickens the soul,

enlightens the eyes,

and humbles the heart.

Then we come to ask, seek, and look for the things which make for peace; then we cry, with the Psalmist, "Show me a token for good!" But will Jehovah, the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, He against whom we have sinned — condescend to grant us such a request? Yes! To the glorious gospel the Spirit leads us, and there we see God's token for good. There, in Bethlehem's manger, in Gethsemane's garden, and on Calvary's hill — we see Jesus suffering and dying! And in seeing Jesus, we see . . .

love embodied,

mercy visible,

and Heaven opened. In Jesus, all good centers; from Jesus, all good proceeds. Do I wish to know whether Jehovah will receive, pardon, and bless so vile a sinner as I? In Jesus, God stands pledged to receive all who come, and to cast out none. Do I wish to know whether He will accept my prayers and grant me blessings? In Jesus, God is engaged to give grace and glory; and His sweet, encouraging, Jesus-like language is, "If any man thirsts — let him come unto me and drink." Here then, in the glorious glad tidings, Jehovah shows me a token for good — He shows me Jesus . . .

full of grace and truth,

full of merit and mercy,

full of power and love,

full of kindness and pity! And showing me Jesus, He says, "I spared not my own Son — but delivered him up for your salvation, and with Him also I will freely give you all things. I gave Him for you when you were sinners, enemies, and hardened transgressors! I gave Him that you might live, be made holy, and happy!" Can I desire a greater token? A greater cannot be given; but others are superadded! He gives His Holy Spirit to them who ask; He gives a good hope and everlasting consolation; He gives faith of divine origin; He gives sweet comfort, by — the light of His countenance, the application of His promises, the discoveries of Jesus to the soul, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the heart. These are tokens for good. They say that God is gracious, full of loving-kindness and tender mercies. They enable me to rejoice, glory, and triumph in His holy name. They endear Jesus, humble my soul, loosen my tongue, fix my affections, and cause me to cry out, "Truly the Lord is good to those who fear Him, to the souls that seek Him." Are you then desirous of obtaining a token for good? a token that will assure your soul of Jehovah's favor, a saving interest in Jesus, and a right to all gospel blessings? Then seek earnestly, seek it in prayer at His throne of grace. He waits to be gracious — he loves to bestow — he is ready to forgive. And His words — his sweet, winning, heart-delighting, hope-begetting, doubt-scattering words — are, "Ask — and it shall be given you; seek — and you shall find; knock — and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him that knocks, it shall be opened." What can be more positive, definite, or sweet, than such an assurance, backed with such a powerful, overcoming, satisfying argument? Surely, surely, Jesus here says all He can say, to encourage, embolden, and animate us at His throne of grace.

O my soul, bless, bless and adore the dear, gracious, and condescending Jesus, for such sweet encouragement; and ever seek, with importunity, at His mercy-seat, a token for good in all your trials, troubles, and distresses. And you who are doubting, desponding, and fearing, take courage, rise, He calls you; He says to you, "If you shall ask anything in my name — I will do it." He is faithful, He cannot deny Himself. Heaven and earth may pass away — but His words shall never pass away. Ask of Him then a token for good — and you shall receive.

Come, and He'll cleanse your spotted soul,

And wash away your stains,

In the dear fountain that His Son

Poured from His dying veins!

Great God! the treasures of your love

Are everlasting mines;

Deep as our helpless miseries are,

And boundless as our sins!

-40-No Trial Strange

No Trial Strange James Smith, 1842

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you." 1 Peter 4:12 The trials of God's people are often fiery — they penetrate to the very soul. They are exceedingly severe, and appear enough to overwhelm them. But they are still Beloved. God loves them — and therefore he tries them. Ministers love them — and endeavor to comfort them. All saints love them — and therefore pray for them. To be thus beloved by God — is enough to make one sing, even in the furnace.

We often think that none are tried exactly as we — or so severely as we are; but this is a mistake. We have but little idea of the numbers which are suffering, or the extent of their sufferings. The same afflictions are fulfilled in our brethren who are in the world. Beloved sufferer, your God forbids you from thinking that your sufferings are unusual. They all flow from your divine Father's love and tender mercy. They are to try you — but not to destroy you. They are to make you better — to fit you for your glorious inheritance.

Only be concerned to suffer as befits a Christian — and you will lose nothing worth keeping, but only your dross. God continues to try you, because . . .

a degree of self-righteousness, pride, and vanity may be left behind,

your graces may be brightened,

and your Christianity deepened —

but nothing worse can happen. The fire may refine you — but it shall not consume you. It may put you to pain — but you shall not be put to shame. You may pass through fire and through water — but you will land in a wealthy place. Eternal happiness is your portion — though not at present in your possession. You are safe in the arms of Christ — though not pressed to the bosom of His love. Affliction is the family lot of all the Lord's children. Your fears are unnecessary, your doubts are groundless. God wills your trials with a view to your sanctification, and He says, "Let those who suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." Your trials have come to you — just as God has purposed, and must produce the effect which God intends. If you rebel, repine, and murmur — God will increase the trial, and add to the fire. If you submit, pray, and are patient — deliverance will soon be granted.

"It is the Lord — let him do what seems good to Him!" If this sentiment proceeds from your heart — deliverance always follows it. When you are quite willing to bear troubles, if it be God's will — then you are very near the door through which you will escape. But if imitating Ephraim, and acting as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke — then expect your troubles to increase, until you rise, look up to God, and heartily say, "Father, may Your will be done!" To this end, the Lord designs to bring us — and to this end, we must be brought.

Believer, let nothing persuade you that your trouble is singular or unusual. "Cast your burden on the Lord — and He will sustain you." Look unto Him and be saved. All the love in God's heart is set upon you! Everything is at work for you! "All things are for your sake, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgivings of many, redound to the glory of God." "Fear not; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!" "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness — and all other things shall be added unto you." The Lord is kind in all His ways,

When most He seems severe;

He frowns, and scourges, and rebukes,

That we may learn His fear! With thorns He fences up the path,

And builds a wall around;

To guard us from the death that lurks

In sin's forbidden ground!

Return, O wandering souls, return;

The Lord your misery knows;

His mercy ever is the same —

A balm for all your woes!

-41-The Lord's Mercies

The Lord's Mercies James Smith, 1842

"Because of the Lord's mercies, we are not consumed — for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness!" Lamentations 3:22-23

You are sometimes tempted to think that your lot is hard, and that your trials are greater than others — but do not think thus. Rather think, "But for the mercy of God — I would have been in Hell this moment — lifting up my eyes in torments; and in the agony of despair, cursing my God and King! It is all of mercy, that I am not now in the flames of Tophet, surrounded by infuriated devils, and assailed on every hand by the groans of the damned, and the dreadful cursings of the lost!"

"Consumed!" Not your person, existence, or powers; but every comfort, every ground of hope, everything that could in any way alleviate your woe, or lessen your dreadful pain.

HELL! Who shall attempt to describe what is wrapped up in that fearful word? Yet all that it contains was your righteous desert, and but for sovereign mercy, must have been your portion! What a mercy — to be out of Hell! Yes, even though you are in the sorest trials, in the greatest pains!

New mercies flow in upon you every morning — yes, every moment! Every friend is a mercy. Every morsel of provision. Every hour's sleep. Every kind word. Every moment's freedom from racking pain. Medicine is a mercy. A house is a mercy. You are therefore surrounded by mercies. But look at spiritual things — to know God, to have the revelation of His mind, will, and purpose, to have a throne of grace, an advocate in Heaven, a good hope beyond the grave, the prospect of a glorious resurrection! Here are mercies heaped upon mercies, and favors heaped upon favors. Mercies that would fill us with wonder, admiration, and gratitude, if our hearts were not like adamant, harder than a flint!

Great is the Lord's faithfulness! He has heard prayer; you are not cut down as a cumberer of the ground; yet there is hope; there is help in Jesus, for every poor helpless sinner.

Look to His blood — it is infinitely meritorious.

Look to His righteousness — it reflects honor on every perfection of the divine nature, and every precept of the divine law.

Look to His grace — it is a boundless immeasurable fullness.

Look to His Word — it is more durable than Heaven and earth.

Look to His name — there is paradise embodied in it.

Look to His nature — He is the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person.

Look to Him — and lose your guilt.

Look to Him — and forget your fears.

Look to Him — and rise above your corruptions.

Look to Him — and conquer Satan, sin and death.

Look to Him — and everlasting life is yours! The Father is faithful to His word. Jesus still receives sinners. And mercy shines, triumphs, and is exalted in their everlasting glorification.

-42-Christ is Our Peace

Christ is Our Peace James Smith, 1842

"He is our peace."Ephesians 2:14

It is a matter of infinite consequence . . .

to be at peace with God, and to walk with Him in a state of reconciliation;

to know that there is nothing in the divine mind against us — but that all condemnation is removed from us;

to see God in Christ smiling upon us, and to know that He orders all His dispensations in reference to us for our good.

Nothing on earth can exceed the blessedness of such a happy believer; he . . .

is at peace with God,

has peace in His own conscience,

and shall enjoy peace forever.

He sees that His peace was planned in the everlasting covenant, between the Glorious Three; in consequence of which it is now called "A covenant of peace." Isaiah 54:10. He knows that peace was predicted and promised, because the God-man stood engaged to make it; and that, at the incarnation of Immanuel, the angels sang, "Peace on earth, good will toward men." He believes that the labors of the Redeemer's life, and the agonies of His death — were to make peace on honorable terms, and to base it on an immutable foundation. He hears the gospel as the good news of peace and reconciliation, and rejoices that Jesus now, by His gospel, preaches peace to them who were afar off, and to those who were near. He experiences the operations of the Holy Spirit in His heart, leading him to . . .

the blood of atonement,

the testimony of God, and

the throne of grace for peace.

He realizes the blessedness of receiving peace from Jesus as a gift, and finding it surround his soul as a sacred guard to keep him, Php 4:7. He looks for peace in Jesus and from Jesus; not from his duties, experience, or labors; and triumphs in this, "He is our peace." And now, children of my God, let me exhort you, at all times — to look to Jesus as your peace. He has made peace by the blood of His cross; and every poor believer, however tried, tempted, troubled, or perplexed — is at peace with God, through Him; though all do not enjoy it. Should sickness seize your frame, and lay you on a bed of languishing — then look to Jesus as your peace. Should Satan beset you

with his soul-distressing temptations and fiery darts — still view Jesus as your peace. Should you be left to pace the barren wilderness of desertion, where only briars and thorns appear to grow — still hold this fast, Jesus is my peace. Should persecution light its fires or brandish its weapons of war — still Jesus is your peace. Should trials in the family, the business, or the church of God, press you down — yet remember Jesus is your peace.

Oh, never forget this soul-supporting, heart-cheering truth, "This man shall be the peace!" Micah 5:5. And when death shall come to visit you at the command of Jesus, (and remember it is at the command of your loving, tender, compassionate Jesus, that he does come,) still look to this, "He is my peace;" not my attainments, not my comfort, not my duties — but Jesus is my peace. He made it, secured it, revealed it, bestowed it, confirms it, and gives it — and He shall be glorified for it. Nothing can possibly destroy it, unless it can . . .

undo His work,

revoke His promise,

and change His changeless mind.

Consider, believer, if you are at peace with God — you have no real cause to fear; nothing shall by any means hurt you. God being at peace with you, angels attend upon you, and all the dispensations of Divine providence, and the designs of Satan — are made to subserve this glorious purpose of our God. "All things work together for your good!" Rejoice then in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice! Rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh. You shall enter into peace, you shall rest in your beds, each one walking in His uprightness. Isaiah 57:2. Look, look then, for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, our Savior Jesus Christ.

Jesus, whose blood so freely streamed,

To satisfy the law's demand;

By You from guilt and wrath redeemed,

Before the Father's face I stand. No drop remains of all the curse,

For wretches who deserved the whole;

No arrows dipped in wrath, to pierce

The guilty — but returning soul.

Peace by such means so dearly bought,

What rebel could have hoped to see

Peace by His injured Sovereign wrought,

His Sovereign fastened to the tree!

Let foes in horrid league agree!

They may assault, they may distress;

But cannot quench Your love to me,
Nor rob me of the Lord, My Peace.

-43-The Believer's Inheritance

The Believer's Inheritance James Smith, 1842

"I am their inheritance!" Ezekiel 45:28

He who possesses his inheritance now, if that inheritance is bounded by time — is a poor, miserable, wretched creature. For the language of Abraham to the rich man in perdition, may by-and-by be addressed to him: "Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things." But the Christian, though he possesses His inheritance now, is a blessed character, because His inheritance runs forward into eternity, and knows no termination! No wonder that the Lord's people are poor in this world, when the Lord has given the earth to the children of men. But blessed, forever blessed are they — for the Lord has given them Himself! "I am their inheritance." If the Lord is our inheritance — then we have a satisfying, suitable, inalienable inheritance.

If a fullness of blessings and blessedness can satisfy — then the Lord is a satisfying inheritance! Here we have all blessings concentrated and united, and all possessed in possessing one. If the Lord is my inheritance — then there is no earthly blessing that can do me good, no eternal blessing that can delight and dignify — but what will be freely given me — but what is even now made over to me.

If extent of possession can satisfy — then here is enough. The Christian's inheritance is . . .

as high as Heaven,

as deep as Hell,

wider than the earth,

and broader than the sea!

It is unlimited! The possessions of the mightiest monarch that ever swayed a scepter — are but a trifle in comparison with the boundless inheritance of the believer!

If beautiful variety can satisfy — then here it is. All the varied glories of the creatures, meet in their fullness, variety, and highest perfection here. There is not a wearying sameness — but a refreshing variety in our inheritance! Time is not sufficient for us to glance at the wondrous number — eternity will be employed in discovering and enjoying what is made ours.

If sweetness can satisfy — then with our inheritance we shall be satisfied. Oh! there is unparalleled, unbounded, inconceivable sweetness in our inheritance; sweetness without a mixture of bitter, sweetness that can never cloy. The Lord is a suitable inheritance, just adapted to our circumstances and needs, and suitable at all times. No other inheritance has this peculiarity; on the bed of sickness, or the pillow of death — earthly inheritances are useless; they can afford no comfort, bring no relief, nor yield the least satisfaction. But then, our inheritance is most suitable; then it yields fruit which cheers the drooping spirit, animates the fainting soul, and

emboldens the fearful mind. It strengthens the enfeebled heart, and encourages with incomparable cordials.

It is an inalienable inheritance — it can never be mortgaged, forfeited, or lost — it is ours forever! Freely given to us of God; equitably secured to us by the blood of the Lamb; and the Holy Spirit having become the pledge — it is infallibly sure to us. Never, amidst all the losses that I am called to suffer, can I lose my inheritance, and be left in need and beggary. What a mercy is this! What an unspeakable blessing! But how many of the Lord's people are there found doubting and fearing, in reference to their inheritance, where no ground for doubting or cause for fearing is. Some doubt because they cannot see their inheritance; the Lord seems to have withdrawn from them, or rather they are withdrawn from the Lord. But what would we think of a person who doubted whether his inheritance was his, because the night was dark, or he was many miles away and could not see it? Would we think he had any just ground for fear? Surely not.

'But I cannot see my evidence.' Is a natural person then to doubt every time his title-deeds are out of his sight? This can never be thought reasonable. And yet there are many of the Lord's people who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, felt the power of His love, enjoyed the light of His countenance, realized His presence in their souls, and felt liberty to call Him their own — who now doubt whether the Lord is their inheritance, though He has thus blessed them, and pledged Himself never to forsake the work of His own hands — because they cannot now see their evidences; when, perhaps, it is night in their souls, or the eyes of their minds are weakened by some sinful disease.

Others doubt, because they cannot enjoy the fruits of their inheritance; but does the natural man doubt whether the inheritance is his, because he is sick, and cannot enjoy or feed upon the produce of it? Certainly not; neither should the Lord's family. Rather seek healing of soul, call on the Lord to restore His former loving-kindnesses — than doubt whether you are entitled to Him. He has given Himself to us in Jesus; He has called us to enjoy Himself in the everlasting gospel; and He says, "Him that overcomes, shall inherit all things, and I will be His God, and he shall be my son!"

Others doubt, because they do not feel that they have present possession; but must a man never claim his fields except when he is walking in them; or his house — but when he is at home? Surely he may; and so may the Lord's people. Have we a right, a title to the Lord? To whom has He given Himself for an inheritance? to all who believe — to all who come to Jesus — to all who seek His face — to whoever will embrace and receive Him. Am I then made willing to receive God as my portion, at the expense of everything else? Do I seek Him — to know Him, possess Him, and enjoy Him? Do I come to Jesus by prayer, in confession, with an ardent desire to be saved by Him? Do I believe on His adorable name, and trust to the merit of His blood? If so, then the Lord assures me in His word, that He is my inheritance! On this I should lay hold and keep hold, while I seek, and until I obtain the witness, assurance, and sealing of the Holy Spirit in my heart. The witness of the Spirit is not to set aside the testimony of God in His word; nor the testimony in the word — the witness of the Holy Spirit; but the one is to confirm and corroborate the other. But how shall I ascertain that the Lord is my inheritance? some may still be inquiring. What would a natural person do, if he heard that an inheritance was left, and there was some reason to think that he was entitled to it? Would he not use every means to prove his title? Certainly he would. Lawyers would

be employed, inquiries started, and money spent, while there was any hope. Go you and do likewise.

Look to Jesus, the Advocate and Counselor of poor sinners. Put your cause into His hand, plead with Him at His throne, and give Him no rest, until you can claim the Lord as your inheritance, and rejoice and glory in the same. Do not be afraid that He will reject you, despise your petition, or refuse you His help. But you who know the Lord to be your inheritance — see to it, that you live upon Him, abide with Him, boast and glory of Him. Where should a man live — but upon His inheritance? In what should a man delight — but in His inheritance? Of what should a man glory — but of His possessions? Live then, not on self, not on creatures, not on duties, not on anything, except the Lord your God. Delight then, not in gifts, not in offices, not in honors — but delight yourself only in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

Glory then, not in what you are, nor in what you do — but in what you have. Glory in this, that you understand and know Jehovah, and know Him to be your inheritance.

Gracious Lord, give me a strong faith in you, an ardent love to you, and a spirit of glorying in you as my inheritance. May I renounce, despise, and despise all others in comparison with you. And whether I live — may I live unto you; or whether I die — may I die unto you; living or dying — may I be yours!

While blessed with a sense of your love,

A palace, a toy would appear;

And prisons would palaces prove,

If Jesus would dwell with me there!

-44-No Cause for Sadness

No Cause for Sadness James Smith, 1842

"Why do you look so sad today?"Genesis 40:7

Thus Joseph addressed the officers of Pharaoh — and thus I would address you, my poor downcast brother. Are you dwelling upon your afflictions, privations, and troubles? Oh look from them — to Jesus! They all bid you to direct your attention to Him. Dwelling upon yourself, or your bad circumstances — will only make you look sadly; but looking to Jesus — will enlighten, enliven, and comfort you! He is the health of your countenance and your God. Look unto Him and be lightened, and you shall not be ashamed. "Oh taste and see, how good the Lord is! He is very gracious and of great mercy!" He only designs to wean you from all others — that you may be satisfied and filled with Himself! He wishes to be your portion, your comfort, and your all. He desires that you should make a God of Him. He is ready to save you, able to deliver you, willing to bless you.

All your ways are before Him; He marks every step you take; and knows every foe that assails you. He will keep you as the apple of His eye. If you did but believe how much He loves you, even while He afflicts you — you could not look sadly; you would sing, "Sweet affliction!" The Holy Spirit is your Comforter; pray him to take of the things of Jesus — and show them unto you; to lead you into truth — and unfold the glorious promises and perfections of Jehovah to your view. He is . . .

the revealer of the things of God,

the manifester of Jesus, and

the sanctifier and instructor of the soul.

You must realize your dependence upon Him, confess your obligations to Him, and render the glory that is due unto His name.

Beware how you slight the personality, office, or operations of the Holy Spirit! Else perhaps you will have to exclaim with the church of old, "The Comforter that should relieve my soul, is far from me!" "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed unto the day of redemption." "Sow unto the Spirit, and you shall from the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Joy and peace are the fruits of believing. He is the Spirit of faith; He produces, strengthens, and directs the faith of the Lord's people. They are indebted to Him, for all the comforts and consolations they enjoy. Talk not then, of your lack of faith — but pray for more of that blessed grace, as the poor man in the gospel, "Lord, I believe — help my unbelief!" Call upon God, until the Spirit is poured out from on high.

Come, Holy Spirit, come;

Let your bright beams rise;

Dispel the darkness from my mind,

And open my blind eyes.

Cheer my desponding heart,

O heavenly Paraclete;

Give me to lie with humble hope,

At my Redeemer's feet.

Revive my drooping faith;

My doubts and fears remove;

And kindle in my breast, the flames

Of never-dying love!

Convince me of my sin,

Lead me to Jesus' blood;

And to my wondering view reveal

The secret love of God!

-45-The Throne of Grace

The Throne of Grace James Smith, 1842

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace — that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16 The throne of judgment sometimes appears truly formidable and dreadful — but the sick sinner is not cited to the bar of justice — but invited to the throne of grace. There the Lord waits to be gracious, and is exalted to show mercy. He does not impose hard conditions — but dispenses favors with all the goodness and majesty of a God. He says, "Ho, everyone who thirsts — come! And he who has no money — come, buy wine and milk without money and without price!" The Lord loves to trade with those that have nothing to pay; He says to all such, "Ask what I shall give you."

He addresses you, reader; He asks of you, what He shall bestow upon you. Unworthiness is no bar — poverty is the best recommendation. He does not sell blessings — but gives of the fountain of the water of life freely. Jesus said to the poor adulteress at Jacob's well, "If you knew the bounty of God, and who it is that says to you, Give me a drink; you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." It is for lack of knowing . . .

the bountifulness of God,

our own dire necessities, and

the value of spiritual blessings —

that we do not ask of God.

He loves to see us . . .

coming to His throne,

and to hear us pleading His word,

and to see us waiting and expecting the blessings we have been entreating of Him.

He bids us to come boldly, not as if we were afraid of His wrath, alarmed at His justice, or in danger from His holiness; but to come . . .

trusting His word,

believing His willingness, and

expecting the favors we plead for. His throne is before you, there is no need of rising from your sick-bed in order to approach it; the eyes of the Lord are upon you, and His ears are open to your cry. Remember, there is One there who loves you — even Jesus! He is there as an Advocate — to plead for you; as the Mediator between God and man. God looks first upon Him — and then upon the praying soul. And all the merit of His blood, the virtue of His infinite sacrifice — is placed to the

account of the sinner who . . .

comes in His name,

pleads his promise, and

relies on His perfect work.

What sweet encouragement is this! Look not at your unworthiness, pore not over your sin; but remember that Jesus is before the throne, and He is there as your Friend, Savior, and prevalent Intercessor. This will . . .

inspire you with confidence,

fire your soul with fervor, and

encourage you to plead for faith.

Come then, boldly to the throne of grace, for God bids you, and Jesus is there to plead for you. Come for mercy — not for justice; the mercy of God, the mercy that flows in the channel of redeeming blood! Come to obtain — the blessings you need are to be obtained; are to be obtained by you! There is nothing to discourage you, if you look simply to Jesus! Come because He bids you, and your need urges you.

Beware of tiring in prayer, pray always; that is, let your prayers be continuous. Go again and again — as the poor widow went to the unjust judge; as the friend that needed bread at midnight. Be importunate — and you must prevail. Beware of asking for the blessings you conceive you need — and then neglecting to expect them; but watch for the blessings you ask of your God. Say, "I will wait for the Lord, though He hides himself from me; and I will look for Him. I will get upon my watch-tower. I will wait to hear what the Lord shall say unto me." "The vision awaits an appointed time. Though it lingers — wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. Habakkuk 2:3 Behold the throne of grace!

The promise calls me near;

There Jesus shows a smiling face,

And waits to answer prayer. That rich atoning blood,

Which sprinkled round I see,

Provides for those who come to God,

An all-prevailing plea! My soul, ask what you will,

You can not be too bold;

Since His own blood for you He spilt,

What else can He withhold?

-46-A Great Savior!

A Great Savior!

James Smith, 1842

"He shall send them a Savior, and a great one, and He shall deliver them!" Isaiah 19:20

SIN is a dreadful evil! It is in our nature — we are all the subjects of it. It has brought us into a wretched, ruined, lost condition. Sin is the procuring cause of all the afflictions, miseries, and woes, that people are called to pass through. Sin . . .

brings us under the curse of God,

exposes us to His fierce wrath,

and fits us for everlasting pains! The Lord prohibits, threatens, and will punish sin. He is just, and will vindicate His right, condemn the guilty, and punish the condemned sinner. The law requires obedience, justice condemns us for the lack of it, and death will usher us into the solemn presence of a sin-avenging God. My dear reader, have you ever seriously considered that you are a sinner? The consequences of living and dying in such a state? The end of the race you are running? It leads to darkness, horror, and endless despair!

What are you taken up with? What are you pursuing? What are you aiming at? Is it pleasure? The worldling is a stranger to it. Is it satisfaction? In your present state, you will never find it. Is it riches? Oh, remember the language of Jesus, "What shall it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, and loses His own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for His soul? Do you answer, "But I intend to repent, reform, and make my peace with God." Be assured that reformation will not recommend you to Him, repentance is His gift. Acts 5:31. Salvation is of God, it is Christ, it is by grace alone. Ephesians 2:8.

You must be savingly interested in Christ, united to Christ, and possess the Spirit of Christ — or you cannot be saved. All other foundations are false, all other refuges are vain — and all who live and die trusting in them, will be everlastingly undone. He is the Savior, He came to save, and He does save to the very uttermost — all who come unto God by Him — but only those. Do you feel your need of Him? Have you a desire to know Him? Are you seeking a saving interest in Him? If so, I rejoice to point you to Him as a Savior — and a great one.

He is great in His PERSON, being God-man — essentially divine and truly human. He took up our nature into Godhead and filled it with divinity, that He might be an able and suitable Savior. He is the omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God — and yet flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. His person is truly wonderful, and is the foundation of His great salvation.

He is great in His LOVE, which surpasses knowledge, and is most gloriously displayed in the reception of all sorts of sinners, who fly for salvation to Him. Never, never was it known that He rejected one, or refused to save any who sought salvation by Him. All that the Father gives Him,

come to Him; and whoever comes, whether young or old, moral or immoral, doubting or confident — He never casts out. Are you willing to come to Jesus, now, as a sinner, with "Lord, save me — or I perish?"

He is great in His CONDESCENSION. He stoops to the beggar, to the unworthy, yes, to His very enemies! He despises none who cry to Him, fall before Him, or wait upon Him.

He is great in His FORBEARANCE. He bears with our infirmities, our rebellion, and our sins. In this, His conduct is wonderful, and calls for endless praise.

He is great in His POWER, which is put forth for the relief, help, and deliverance of the vilest of the vile.

He is great in His SALVATION, which is full, free, and complete. So full, that none need despond, though their sins be as innumerable as the stars of Heaven, as the drops in the ocean, or the sands on the sea-shore. So full, that there is no real ground for doubting, though your sins be like scarlet, or even of a crimson hue. So free, that poverty can be no obstacle, unworthiness no bar; and though evil and Hell-deserving, there is no reason to keep back. So free, that the basest are welcome, the vilest may come, and the most fearful shall surely receive. So complete, that the weakest may rejoice, the foolish triumph, and the unholy be glad. These cannot work for life — and no working for life is needed; these cannot bring anything to recommend them — and nothing to recommend them is required. The salvation of Jesus, my fellow-sinner, is just, exactly suited to you, it meets you in your present state, it provides for all you need, and secures all you can consistently wish. It is set before you in the Bible, preached to you in the everlasting gospel, and is to be received by faith. It saves from sin's dominion, Jehovah's curse, and everlasting woe! It saves NOW from gloomy fears, miserable forebodings, and ten thousand evils! It saves at DEATH from the love of the world, the terrors of the grave, and the worm that never dies! It saves forever, from sin, from Satan, and from Hell.

Jesus is great in His MERCY, by which He takes our misery to heart, pities our souls, and answers our heartfelt prayers. His mercy extends to all who, under a sense of misery, seek Him; who, to be delivered from misery, cry to Him; and who look for a remedy for their miseries in Him. His mercy is great unto the heavens, and His truth unto the clouds.

Think, if you are really coming to Jesus, that He is touched with the feelings of your infirmities. He knows . . .

your weakness — and will strengthen you;

your vileness — and will pardon you;

your fears and sorrows — and will comfort you.

Oh, do not be afraid, if you are seeking Jesus; for He will withhold no good thing from you — but will give you grace and glory: grace suitable and sufficient for the present — and glory to crown you when you die. He has everything you need — and will freely bestow it. Jesus is all this, and ten thousand times more. He is all this to all and every one who sighs and cries for an interest in His love and blood. He was given by the Father, He laid down His life on the cross, and He is preached in the everlasting gospel, that whoever believes in Him might not perish — but have

everlasting life. For this is the Father's will, that every one who sees the Son, and believes on Him, might have everlasting life. And the language of the Savior to the fearful, doubting, seeking sinner, is, "Look unto me and be saved, for I am God, and there is none else!" "Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters! And he who has no money, come — buy, and eat! Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price! Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfies not? Hearken diligently unto me, hearken and your soul shall live.

God the Father has sent His Son to be a great Savior of great sinners — and God the Holy Spirit causes Him to be proclaimed in a variety of ways for the encouragement of seeking souls. Oh, seek Him while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near; let nothing satisfy you but an interest in, and union to, this great, this precious Savior! Are you, my fearful brother, or sister — one of the vilest, weakest, and most unworthy, that ever Jesus saved? Do not be afraid, His blood is inconceivably efficacious, His righteousness justifies from all things, and His promises shall all be fulfilled, and all be fulfilled to you and in you. He says to you, "I will be very gracious unto you, at the voice of your cry. When I hear — I will answer."

Here sinners black as Hell, obtain relief;

A filthy Mary, and a dying thief;

And guilty I, though vile as they could be,

Have found His mercy — sovereign, rich, and free! But the time is coming, when this great Savior will be great in His vengeance, in dealing with Christ-rejecting, grace-despising, and judgment-provoking sinners! The great day of His wrath will come, and who shall be able to stand? He will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not His holy gospel.

-47-Care Disposed Of

Care Disposed Of James Smith, 1842

"Casting all your cares upon Him — for He cares for you!" 1 Peter 5:7

What a glorious privilege — to have one to take all our cares from us! One who is infinite in wisdom, of omnipotent power, and who is deeply interested in our concerns! "Be anxious," says the Apostle, "for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving — let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Many a sick saint is as anxious and cumbered, as was Martha — her complaint was not buried in her coffin. What a difficult duty! To be surrounded by cares, to have them pressing upon us from every quarter, and be required to throw them off as fast as they come — to cast them upon the Lord. This is a truly Christian state. "I would have you be free from concern" — if in health, much more so in sickness. The Lord cares for you! He is your Father; your Husband; your Master! You are His child, His bride, His servant — and as such He cares for you. If you ask a wise child, Who will provide for you tomorrow? His answer would be, "I leave that to my father; he will not leave me to lack; he knows I shall need provision, clothing, etc., and he has provided for me, promised to me, and will certainly feed and clothe me."

Christian, does not this condemn you? Shall a child cast his cares upon an earthly father — and will not you trust your heavenly Father? "If they, being evil, know how to give good things unto their children — how much more will your heavenly Father give good things unto those who ask Him?" "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." "His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue."

You can never act upon this word, except there is in your heart a firm persuasion of the truth of the promise; an assurance of the faithfulness of God; and a taking up the promise as made to you in Christ, given you of free grace, and a pleading the same before the Lord's throne. Then you may say, whenever cares come in upon you, "These do not belong to me, they belong to my Father!" And you may cast them upon Him, confident that He will hear prayer, send relief, and honor your faith.

He will care for you, because He is your Father; because He has promised; and because He gets glory by the same. But beware of idle indifference. You are not to be burdened with cares — but you should be . . .

earnest at His throne,

diligent in His ways,

frugal in your expenditure, and

concerned to act as befits a Christian in the station you are called to move in.

There is a deal of difference between distrustful anxiousness and careless indifference. You have a character to sustain, an example to set before others, and a God to glorify. Therefore "be not unwise — but understanding what the will of the Lord is." "Set your affections on things above," and trust the Lord to provide for you, while He keeps you below. "Your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure."

-48-The Horn of Salvation

The Horn of Salvation James Smith, 1842

"The horn of my salvation!" Psalms 18:2 Salvation is a comprehensive, important, and sweet word.

Salvation is comprehensive — for it refers to the past, present, and future. It is deliverance already experienced — and deliverance to be yet realized. It has reference to our lost and ruined estate, as the children of guilty Adam. It embraces . . .

pardon of sin, through atoning blood;

deliverance from a state of nature, by almighty power;

access into the presence of God, through the Spirit's teaching;

preservation throughout the journey of life, by the watchful care of Jehovah;

and an introduction to eternal blessedness, by the grace of Jesus.

Salvation secures all spiritual blessings, and insures all temporal supplies.

Salvation includes . . .

the prevention of evil,

the working of good,

protection from harm,

and safe guidance to glory.

It says, "The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." Psalms 84:11.

Salvation is an important word; it has reference to eternity, and in the light of eternity we should read it. How vastly important does salvation appear on the bed of death, when the soul is about to be ejected from its clay cottage, when it hangs quivering about the portals, and fears to launch into an invisible world. Oh to know salvation then! to be assured of salvation then! What would thousands give, at such a season, to know the blessedness of being "saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!" But could we look into the gloomy prison of despair, could we hear the groans and cries of tormented souls suffering "the vengeance of eternal fire," could we for a moment feel the torments of the damned — how would the importance of salvation appear to us then! Oh! methinks, while the flesh was trembling, the eyes starting, the hair rising, the heart quaking, the teeth chattering, the joints loosing, the bosom heaving, the spirits sinking, and the soul despairing — we should be ready to exclaim, "Oh the importance, the infinite importance of salvation!" Could we look into paradise, and there see Jesus smiling, saints reigning, angels serving, glory shining, and bliss eternal flowing from the presence of the great THREE-ONE —

how important would salvation appear! To be entitled to that glory,
to share in that felicity,
to appear in that company,
to be exalted to that dignity,
to drink from that overflowing fountain —
oh how important, how infinitely important this!
Salvation is a sweet word. So sweet, that we are never weary of . . .
meditating on the delightful subject;
feeling its sacred power as exerted in our hearts;
looking forward to the delightful prospects which it opens to our view.

We are never weary of . . .
its author, Jehovah — Father, Son, and Spirit;
its center — Jesus the glorious Mediator;
the presence of its applier — the Holy Comforter;
its attendants — peace, liberty, and fellowship with God.

Salvation is . . .
light that never confounds,
honey that never cloy, and
a treasure without the worm of care.

Salvation is . . .
the creature's honor,
the saint's delight, and
the church's present Heaven.

Jesus is set forth, in the portion of holy Scripture we are considering, as the horn of salvation. The horn is the emblem of AUTHORITY. Jesus has authority by right as Jehovah; He has authority . . .
by appointment as Mediator;
for the glorification of Himself and His Father;

for the salvation of His people. His authority to govern is universal — over "all flesh." His authority to save is restricted — hence, addressing His Father, he says, "You have given him authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given Him." John 17:2. Our

salvation is founded in, springs from, and is secured by — the authority of Jesus. The horn is the emblem of POWER. There may be authority with little power — or there may be great power without authority; but in Jesus we see omnipotent power with high authority. The Father's statute book alone restricts Immanuel's authority — and His power executes whatever is in accordance with its contents. Therefore we hear Him say, "I delight to do your will, O my God; yes, your law is within my heart!" Psalms 40:8. By His blood, He delivered His people meritoriously.

By His power, He delivers them experimentally.

He shed His blood to save them honorably, and

He stretches out His arm to save them certainly. His blood was shed for the satisfaction of injured justice,

His arm is exerted for the glory of sovereign mercy. His shed blood, gave Him right to claim, and

by His power, he uses that right to His people's endless satisfaction. Our salvation is founded in Immanuel's high authority —

and is certainly effected by His saving arm. Were He short of power — we might doubt whether He would claim all whom He redeemed; but now we dare not hesitate to believe that He will save all for whom He died on the tree.

Gracious God, never let us embrace sentiments which reflect dishonor on our Savior's character, name, or work; never let us think that He would shed His blood to ransom, which was hard; and fail to put forth His power to convert, which is easy. The horn was an emblem of PLENTY. In Jesus there is plenteous redemption, Psalms 130:7. A fullness of salvation, and spiritual blessings, He . .

purchased by His death,

received of the Father at His ascension, (Acts 2:33) and

is exalted in princely dignity to bestow, Acts 5:31.

He has purchased repentance and pardon for us —

and He will bestow repentance and pardon upon us.

He is a merciful and faithful High-priest: merciful to our unrighteousness — and faithful to supply our needs. Precious Lord Jesus! never let us doubt your faithfulness, or distrust your mercy. Holy Spirit! preserve our minds from conceiving, and our lips from uttering sentiments which would justly lead any to infer, that Jesus will fail to accomplish all He undertook to perform; or allow any that were given to him to be saved — to perish in impenitence and unbelief! And now let us inquire: Is Jesus the horn of my salvation? Do I view His authority and power as procuring and effecting my certain salvation? Do I see a fullness of salvation in Him? Is He my boast, my glory, and my joy? Reader, is it thus with you? Are you saved? Do you view your salvation in Jesus alone, by Jesus alone, and from Jesus alone?

Upon the cross my Savior hung,

And shed His vital blood;
And every wound is now a tongue
To plead my cause with God! For guilty me He intercedes,
That sin might be forgiven,
That God would give the grace which leads
My wayward feet to Heaven! The powerful plea is heard above,
And straight the grace descends;
I now enjoy forgiving love,
And God and I are friends!

-49-How Long Have I to Live?

How Long Have I to Live?

James Smith, 1842

"How long have I to live?" 2 Samuel 19:34 The living know that they must die; but how seldom do even the Lord's people ask, "How long have I to live?" or pray, "Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom!" Yet the question is of solemn importance.

We must die;

we may die soon;

it is possible we may die suddenly.

None ever regretted that they made too great preparation for death; many have grieved that it so little occupied their minds. New Testament saints were very conversant with death, its nature, and end.

It is a very profitable question, "How long have I to live?" At most, not long; then let me live well, the little time I have to spend on earth.

Death is calculated to check our pride; shall we be proud within a step of our dying pillow, our shroud, our grave? Surely the grim visage of death will lead us, if rightly viewed, to be low in our own eyes, and to lie low before the Lord.

Death will check our worldliness and carefulness about the things of time; shall we be over-anxious to get — what we know we cannot keep; or fear that we shall be left to need — within a few steps of the door of our Father's house?

Death will have a tendency to quicken us, in seeking for that grace which will enable us to die well. What is of most importance to a dying man? To be assured that he is saved from sin, savingly interested in Jesus, and appointed to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; to have the witness, seal, and pledge of the Spirit in His heart; to enjoy the love of Jehovah the Father, and a sense of relation to Him. And surely, if we see these to be the most important things, and life so fast hastening to a close — we shall seek them with renewed vigor, earnestness, and fervor.

It is desirable to have our friends about us at the closing scenes of life; and in this, the Christian who dies daily, is particularly favored; he will have his best friend about him. Let us have what friends we will about us at death, there is no one who stands round our dying pillow who knows what it is to die by experience! No human friends have passed through it, none are acquainted with its immediate precursor, or what follows it. But the consistent Christian may make sure of the presence of a friend, who "was dead and is alive again, and has the keys of Hell and of death; one who knows what it is to meet death in its most frightful forms, and in the most fearful circumstances; one who has experienced the cold death-sweat, the breaking of the heart-strings,

and the separation of the soul and body; one who knows the weakness of human nature, the extremity of pain, and the strength of death; one who suffered and is able to support; who is touched at the heart with all his pains and woes; and who has said, "My strength shall be made perfect in weakness."

Yes, the humble believer has Jesus to . . .

smooth his dying pillow,

comfort his failing heart,

and wipe his falling tears! In death and dying, He answers the many prayers put up in health and strength, and proves Himself the faithful friend, who loves at all times, and sticks closer than a brother.

It is the wish of every truly scriptural believer, not only to die comfortably — but to die usefully, that others may be benefitted; that if unconverted relatives are present, they may be convinced of the blessedness of a saving interest in Jesus, and be led to seek mercy before they are brought into such a state; that if fearful and doubting Christians be present, they may see how Jesus supports according to His word, and gives living comforts in dying moments; that they may see that death to the Christian is but a shadow without a substance, a falling asleep rather than a dying; that, like the setting sun, they may shed some rays of comfort, hope, and peace, on those around them, before they retire behind the cloud of death.

Reader! are you in the habit of asking, "How long have I to live?" Let me exhort you so to do. When the world tempts you, and would draw you aside from the path of duty, put the question, "How long have I to live? I may be on the border of eternity, I cannot consent!" When tempted to neglect the Bible, private prayer, or the services of the Lord's house, especially on week-day evenings, then ask, "How long have I to live? I may have but few more opportunities! the things of time are of small consequence, if compared with eternity; therefore, though I would not neglect any known duty — yet I will not admit of any excuse; nothing shall prevent me from filling up my place — but sound reasons, such as will stand a scrutiny of which I shall not repent on the bed of death, or be ashamed of at the throne of judgment." The time is short! The temptations to loiter are many! The designs of our enemies are cruel! The call of Jesus is kind!

"Be ready, for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man comes!" The exhortation of the Apostle is necessary, "Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." The caution is merciful, "Beloved, beware, lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." The question is seasonable; "How long have I to live?"

-50-The Incarnate Word

The Incarnate Word James Smith, 1842

"The WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth!" John 1:14 The Lord Jesus Christ assumed our nature, that He might . . .

sympathize with us in our sorrows;

obtain our everlasting deliverance from sin, Satan, and Hell;

and supply all our needs according to His glorious riches.

He was rich — yet for our sakes He became poor — that we, through His poverty, might be rich. Unparalleled benevolence! Unexampled love! Savior Jesus! fill us with wonder, gratitude, and love! He was made flesh; He wrapped His Godhead in a human form; He became one with us, and one of us — that we might be one with Him, and one with the Father and the Holy Spirit through Him. He dwelt among His disciples, full of grace and truth. Full of truth to inform their judgments; full of grace to sanctify their hearts. He had truth to delight them, and grace to supply them.

He is still full of grace and truth. He has . . .

grace to pardon all sin;

grace to sanctify your polluted heart;

grace to conquer your powerful corruptions;

grace to subdue your rebellious will, and to bring every thought into subjection to His own blessed will.

He gives freely — without money and without price;

He gives cheerfully — without upbraiding;

He gives frequently — without complaining. Have you been thinking that your attainments are but small, that your evidences are but weak, that your spirituality is questionable? Jesus is full of grace! He is a fountain ever flowing — a fountain to which you are welcome, for He says, "If any man thirsts — let him come, and take of the fountain of life freely." The promises He has made are truth, they flowed from his heart; they express His mind at present; and He will make them good to every seeking soul. The supplies He sends us, the answers He gives us — are confirmations of the truth of His word; they are the overflowings of the grace that is in Him. He delights to bestow; He rejoices to impart; He cannot deny what He has promised. He will consult your welfare, and perhaps make you wait; but He will not falsify His word, and leave you to want.

Look at Jesus then, as full of grace, full of truth. You never read of His being full of wrath, full of vengeance, full of indignation; but you do read that He is . . .

full of grace,

rich in mercy,

plenteous in compassion,

and waiting to be gracious!

He wears your nature in Heaven. He is still as kind, as tender, as loving — as when He . . .

had compassion on the widow of Nain,

wept at the grave of Lazarus, or

prayed for His cruel murderers.

He is Jesus still — the same yesterday, today, and forever. He changes not, and therefore we are not consumed. He still says, "Look unto me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so is the Son of man lifted up; that whoever believes on Him should not perish — but have everlasting life. All things are delivered unto Him by His Father — and He will use all to . . .

protect your person,

supply your needs, and

carry you safely to the realms of peace.

Lord we adore your boundless grace,

The heights and depths unknown,

Of pardon, life, and joy, and peace,

In your beloved Son!

Oh wondrous gift of love divine,

Oh source of every good!

Jesus, in You what glories shine,

How rich your flowing blood!

Come, all you pining, hungry poor,

The Savior's bounty taste;

Behold a never-failing store

For every willing guest.

Here shall our every need receive

A free and full supply;
He has unmeasured bliss to give,
And joys that never die!

-51-The Promise to Prayer

The Promise to Prayer James Smith, 1842

"Ask, and it shall be given unto you." Luke 11:9 When we reflect upon our poverty, necessity, and misery — and then read of the fullness there is in the Lord Jesus Christ; a fullness that contains every variety of blessing, and a fullness of every one — we are led to ask, what is necessary in order to obtain Christ's blessings? And the reply to this inquiry is given us by Himself, "Ask, and it shall be given unto you." Ask, and the richest blessings of grace; ask, and the greatest blessings in glory — shall be given!

He gives His own blessings, and He has a right to fix upon His own terms. He has done so, and we should be exceedingly grateful for the mercy. His words imply:

"Bring your needs — I will supply them;

bring your grievances — I will redress them;

bring your distresses — I will attend to them.

I have all that you can need;

I am willing to impart them all." But are these blessings intended for me? Yes, Jesus addresses you, and says to you, "Ask, and it shall be given unto you."

'But I am a sinner.' He came into the world to save sinners; He lives in Heaven to intercede for sinners; and He bestows the choicest of His blessings upon sinners!

'But I have dishonored His name, slighted His counsel, and loved lying vanities.' Enough to make you mourn — but not sufficient to make you despond. Add not to your other sins this — making Jesus a liar; He says to you, though you have acted so unworthy, though you deserve His wrath, and to be banished from His presence, "Ask, and it shall be given You." He cannot deny His word, He will not act contrary to His promise. You have committed sins enough to damn thousands — but Jesus still says, "I will never cast out! Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." His word, is your warrant; the love He has ever manifested to sinners, is your encouragement. He will get more glory by pardoning your sins, and glorifying you with Himself — than by banishing you to the confines of despair; and His determination in all His proceedings is, "I WILL BE GLORIFIED."

Hence He says of some such as you are, "I will purify them from all the wrongs they have committed against Me, and I will forgive all the wrongs they have committed against Me, rebelling against Me. And it shall be to me for a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth." Jeremiah 33:8-9.

There is a fountain for all sin and for uncleanness — and it is an OPEN fountain. Open for you, for any, for all who desire to be cleansed from their sins; and to be made fit to be partakers of the

inheritance of the saints in light. Question anything rather than this, that Jesus is ready to forgive, willing to distribute the blessings of His grace, and to make good His own word, in the experience of the guilty and undone. You have nothing to encourage you but His name, His nature, His practice, and His word — but these are everything. Draw near to Him with a true heart, in full assurance of faith; that is, firmly believing what He has said, and assured that He will not, cannot deny Himself. He says, "As many as you find, bid to the marriage feast!" In His name, I bid you, to His fullness, to His throne, to His bosom — for all that you need.

See, from the rock a fountain rise!

For you in healing streams it rolls;

Money you need not bring, nor price,

You laboring, burdened, sin-sick souls.

Nothing you in exchange shall give,

Leave all you have and are, behind;

Freely the gift of God receive,

Pardon and peace in Jesus find!

-52-More Grace Given

More Grace Given James Smith, 1842

"He gives more grace!" James 4:6

If you have been receiving from Jesus for years — you are as welcome to come again, as you were to come at first! "He gives more grace." He is never wearied of giving — though we are often wearied of asking. Those who have received most — may still have more. How inconceivably gracious! He gives grace upon grace! We have grace to raise us superior to every danger and difficulty that is to be found in our way. More grace, even though we have mis-employed what we have already received; He bids us to look again to the throne of grace; to "ask and receive — that our joy may be full."

You have been reflecting, perhaps, upon the former days, when you received from Jesus plentifully; and enjoyed His presence in almost every ordinance; you are thinking, perhaps, of some who are now in the same happy state; and are led to deplore your condition, and to cry out with Job, "But it is not so with me!" My brother, or sister, Jesus has plenty of grace, He remembers you, the kindness of your youth; the love of your espousals, when you went after Him in a wilderness, in a land that was not sown; and He says, "Hearken to me, even to your old age I am He; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you; I have made and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." Precious promise of a faithful God! "He knows our frame — He considers that we are dust." "Like as a father pities His children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him." "He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." "He gives power to the faint; and to those who have no might, He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint!"

Thus the Lord promises. And in answer to prayer, all His people realize the fulfillment of the same. They go from strength to strength, until every one of them appears before God Heaven. His fullness is as great, His grace is as free, His promise is as firm, and His nature is as gracious as ever! He is without variableness. He says to you, as weak and pained as you are, as vile and unworthy as you are, "I give more grace! Hitherto you have asked nothing, in comparison with what I have to give; ask and receive, that your joy may be full." "Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." "In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God!" O what a testimony is this!

"The Father Himself loves you!" If God loves us, we are welcome to all He has provided, to all He has promised, to all our circumstances need. Nothing is too good, or too great for us. "He who spared not His own Son — but delivered Him up for us all — how shall He not with Him also freely

give us all things?" Never lose sight of this, "The Father Himself loves you!" He loves you in Jesus, and because you love Jesus. Approach the Father in Jesus, assured that He is love; that He loves you, as Jesus has assured you; and ask for grace to help you; grace to comfort you; grace to enable you to glorify God in your body and spirit, whether it be by life or by death. In me, dear Lord, exert your power;

Make old things pass away;

Transform, and draw my soul to you

Still nearer every day.

Lord, let your voice of mercy speak,

And give me ears to hear;

Still love, forgive, and pity me,

And hear a sinner's prayer!

-53-Prayer Neglected

Prayer Neglected James Smith, 1842

"You have not, because you ask not." James 4:2 The charge which was brought against Job, may consistently be brought against many. "You restrain prayer before God." Instead of viewing prayer as a privilege, and constantly going to Jehovah as a Father, to get our needs supplied, our souls renewed, and our miseries remedied — the soul is allowed to sink into a cold, careless, lukewarm state; darkness spreads over the mind, distance from God is indulged, and barrenness characterizes us. Then doubts creep in and are nourished; our interest in the promises is questioned; and prayer proves a task and a burden. The soul then has just enough religion to unfit it for the world, and make it miserable; but not enough to lead it to joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. But when things do not go on exactly to such a length, it is frequently the case that we rest satisfied in a very low state of spirituality; instead of forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before; and pressing toward the mark, for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

How is it that religion with so many professors is so very low? Among many reasons which may be assigned, James gives us one, "You have not — because you ask not." Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? are these His doings? does not the Lord's word do good to him who walks uprightly? Is the Lord's hand shortened, that it cannot save? or is His ear heavy, that it cannot hear? No! The power of the Spirit is the same;

the word of promise is the same;

the omnipotent hand of God is the same;

the ever attentive ear of God is the same —

but your sins have separated between you and your God; and your iniquities have hid His face from you.

There is still consolation in Christ; there is plenteous grace in Him; and plenty in Him for you. But you may object, and say — 'but I have asked, and the Lord has not granted.' Perhaps you asked amiss: what was your principal aim in desiring the blessings you asked? was it His glory? did you desire grace that you might honor Him, adorn your profession, and do good to others? or was it simply for your own gratification and comfort? Did you ask on the ground of His promise — and your needs? Did you believe what He said, and give Him credit for being faithful to His word? Or did you question, doubt, and fear; tossed to and fro like a wave of the sea, double-minded? James says, "Let no such man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord." Have you endeavored to employ to His glory, what you have received before — or have you consumed it on your lusts? Have you asked, sensible that you were begging a favor; with the humility that befits you as a sinner; with the confidence of one who believes God's promises? Have you followed up your prayers, being importunate; and watched for answers of peace as promised? If not, then do not be

surprised if your prayers seem to be neglected. But you are now poor, empty, and worthless — and you desire to be filled with the blessings promised in the word. Then plead with the Lord again, you have — His own word, which cannot fail; the blood of His own Son as a plea, which cannot be rejected; and a whole host of witnesses, who have proved Him to be faithful before you; therefore "wait on the Lord, be of good courage — and He shall strengthen your heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord."

Prayer was appointed to convey

The blessings God designs to give;

Long as they live, should Christians pray,

For only while they pray, they live. And will you in dead silence lie,

When Christ stands waiting for your prayer?

Poor soul, you have a Friend on high

Arise, and try your interest there.

If pain afflicts, or wrongs oppress;

If cares distract, or fears dismay;

If guilt dejects, if sin distress;

The remedy's before you — PRAY!

Depend on Him, you can not fail;

Make all your needs and wishes known

Fear not, His merits must prevail;

Ask what you will — it shall be done!

-54-The One Thing Needful

The One Thing Needful James Smith, 1842

"Only one thing is needful." Luke 10:42 And what is this one thing needful? It is . . .

to know Christ,

to be united to Immanuel, and

to live in communion with Jesus. The knowledge of Jesus, as communicated to the mind by the Holy Spirit — is an unspeakable blessing; all the Lord's people are the subjects of it; all who are saved, receive it. The Holy Spirit leads them to see Christ as set forth in the Word, as . . .

full of grace and truth,

the sole and all-sufficient Savior of sinners,

the altogether lovely One.

They view Him as . . .

the only desirable object,

the one great blessing, and

the soul's sufficient portion.

They embrace Him in . . .

the glory of His wondrous person,

the riches of His boundless grace, and

the merit of His righteousness and blood.

They receive Him as . . .

their life,

their food,

their wisdom,

their righteousness,

their sanctification,

their and redemption.

They rely upon Him . . .

for support,

for peace, and

for everlasting salvation. In a word, they so know Christ as to love, esteem, and prefer Him above all things besides! This knowledge of Christ is spiritual — it spiritualizes the mind, and leads out the soul to Jesus, and fixes it upon Jesus. This knowledge of Christ is influential — the possessor of it finds, that it is utterly impossible to be, to live, and to do as he formerly did. This knowledge of Christ is overcoming — it overcomes nature, prejudice, and custom; the person must be singular for Jesus, and devoted to Jesus, "He counts all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus His Lord." This knowledge of Christ is altogether divine — the Lord must give us the "heart to know," Jeremiah 24:7; "the understanding to perceive," 1 John 5:20; and bring us to he taught, John 6:44-45. In the looking-glass of the gospel, we see, 2 Corinthians 3:18; by light communicated to the mind, we discover, 2 Corinthians 4:6; and Jesus Himself must reveal, Matthew 11:27.

Jehovah has promised that His children shall be taught, Hebrews 8:11; Jesus betroths them to Himself that they may know, Hosea 2:19-20; and life eternal is the result, John 17:3. The man that is taught of God to know a little of Christ, is most desirous to know more, and goes onwards to Heaven praying, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death!" Php 3:10. The one thing needful includes union to Christ. Without union to Jesus — there can be no spiritual comfort, satisfaction, or salvation. In order to our being united to Him, we must first know Him; having received some spiritual knowledge of Him, the Holy Spirit leads the soul to Him, the sinner cries, calls, and waits before Him; and being led to see that Jesus is most exactly suited to him, and possesses all that can be desired by him, or that can make him safe, holy, and happy — he cannot be satisfied with anything short of Him. There is . . .

a secret outgoing of heart to Him,

an earnest desire for Him, and

a fixing of the affections upon Him. And when this is the case — nothing but Christ will do. The soul must have Christ, or be wretched here, and miserable forever.

Now there must be a union to His person, an interest in His salvation, and some pledge of His unutterable love. Now the sinner becomes divorced from the law, from the world, and from self. Christ is the one object, subject, and all in all; nor can there be any rest until Holy Spirit gives the soul to feel union to Christ, oneness with Christ, and persuades it of its salvation by Christ. And when this is brought to pass, then the man exclaims, "Whom have I in Heaven but you? and there is none upon earth I desire beside you!" Now the world is left, fellowship with the saints is sought, and God's precepts are kept. The cry is, "I will run in the way of your commandments, for you have enlarged my heart." And the soul sings,

"Compared with Christ, in all beside

No loveliness I see;

The one thing needful, dearest Lord,

Is to be one with Thee!" The one thing needful then, is communion with Christ — springing from a knowledge of, and union to Christ. This was Mary's happy portion; she sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His words; and this is the blessed privilege of all who are truly born of God. They live in fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. They communicate their troubles, afflictions, temptations, desires, and requests to Him — and He imparts His love, grace, strength, promises, and consolations to them! They carry all to Him in prayer — and He supports them under all by His Spirit! They spread their needs before Him at His throne — and He supplies them out of His fullness in His ways. Blessed are the people that are in such a case; yes, happy are the people who have the Lord for their God.

True, they are often cast down, tried, and troubled — but Jesus is ever gracious, pitiful, and kind; and He attends to their cries, relieves them in their distresses, and grants their requests. He invites them to Him, manifests Himself to them, and often fills them with joy unspeakable and full of glory. He opens His loving heart, discloses His kind intentions, and gives them the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Happy, yes, unspeakably happy, is he who has the God of Jacob for His help, whose hope is in the Lord His God. He lives above the vanities of this vain world, lives by faith in the Son of God, and lives to the glory of the God of all grace.

Christ is the object of His faith,
the throne of grace is His delight,
communion with Jesus is His privilege,
trials and troubles are for His benefit,
death is to him a real blessing,
and Heaven is His final home.

He has the one thing needful indeed, all that is really needful in life, necessary at death, or valuable at the judgment day.

Reader, is this your happiness? Is it given to you to know Jesus spiritually, scripturally, and experimentally? Are you truly united to Christ? Are you as one with him — as the branch is one with the vine, the members of the body with the head, or, the foundation with the building? This is how the scriptures represent, and set forth the one thing needful.

Remember, a mere name, a form, a profession — is nothing without vital union to Christ. You must receive Him, you must be one with Him, you must live upon Him, or perish everlastingly. Only those who know Christ now, are united to Christ here, and who live in communion with Christ below — will be welcomed by Him, accepted by Him, and glorified with Him in another world. Of what infinite importance then it is, to possess the one thing needful.

Reader, do you know what Jesus will say to you if you are destitute of this one thing at last? He has told us that His language will be, "I know you not; depart from me, you workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves cast out!" Luke 13:26-27 My dear fellow-sinner,

the time is not far distant, when you will be called out of the present world; and, oh how dreadful it will be, if, on a sick and dying bed, conscience should echo to your soul the words of Jesus, "One thing you lack! "May the Holy Spirit lead you to seek the Lord while He may be found — and oh may you find mercy of the Lord in that day.

Remember now there is mercy with Him, He is ready to pardon, and is engaged to save all who fly for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel. May you win Christ, and be found in Him, not having on your own righteousness, which is of the law — but that which is through the faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. May you know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death.

-55-The Pardoning God

The Pardoning God James Smith, 1842

"A God ready to pardon!"Nehemiah 9:17

Discoveries of sin upon a bed of affliction, are exceedingly painful. And a burden of guilt on the conscience is very distressing. But to be informed from the mouth of God Himself, under such circumstances, that He is ready to pardon — is as cold water to a thirsty soul, or good news from a far country. This message, the Lord sends to you. He asserts it as a truth, and has proved it in a variety of ways. He is ready to pardon the sinner — who has just discovered his fearful state and alarming condition; and as ready to pardon the backslider — who, conscious of His base ingratitude and deep-dyed transgressions, trembles at His throne. Have you backslidden? Does a discovery of your backslidings fill you with concern and alarm? Are you desirous to return unto the Lord, from whom you have so deeply revolted? He bids you take words, and return unto Him. He welcomes the guilty transgressor, who deserves His wrath! He pardons like a God! It is His delight to forgive the confessing, sin-forsaking soul. Doubt Him not. He invites you to come. He pledges himself to receive you graciously. He will heal your backslidings. He will blot out your sins as cloud, and your iniquities as a thick cloud. He will be merciful to your unrighteousness, and your sins and your iniquities will He remember against you no more.

It is only your unbelief that makes it difficult to approach Him; Jesus has opened a new and living way; His name and blood are pleas that cannot be objected to, that never will be dishonored. If you need a pardon — come to a pardoning God. Come without hesitation; come without a doubt respecting your acceptance; come just as you are, and prove that now is the accepted time, and that now is the day of salvation. He will pardon you freely, pardon you fully, pardon you eternally — for Christ's sake. Let nothing deter you from approaching to His throne. If you cannot pray as you will — then pray as you can. If you cannot pray — groan. If you can do no more — sigh out your desires before Him.

Keep your eye on His promise, and endeavor to keep your heart stayed on His faithfulness. He is a Father. He sympathizes with you through His Son, who wears your nature. He will rejoice over you to do you good, with His whole heart and with His whole soul. The atonement is made; the promise is given; the invitation is sent; and if we confess our sins — He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Great God of wonders! all your ways

Are matchless, godlike, and divine

But the fair glories of your grace

More godlike and unrivaled shine. Who is a pardoning God like Thee?

Or who has grace so rich and free?

Crimes of such a horror to forgive,
Such guilty daring worms to spare! This is your grand prerogative,
And none shall in the honor share.
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

-56-Life Through Believing

Life Through Believing James Smith, 1842

"He who believes on the Son has everlasting life!" John 3:36 A believer on the Lord Jesus Christ is one who has been convinced of his totally ruined, wretched, and lost estate. He has heard the everlasting gospel, or the glad tidings of a Savior, who is able and willing to save — and, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, has been led to embrace the same. The Lord Jesus being exalted before him, as the brazen serpent before Israel of old — he looks to Him as God's only way of salvation. Immanuel being set forth as the hiding-place from the wrath to come — he flies to Him for refuge and defense. Christ being revealed as precious, loving, and powerful — he ventures to rely upon Him, encouraged by the promises of the gospel. He is fully persuaded that Christ is what the gospel declares him to be — and acts according to that persuasion. Being weary — he goes to Jesus for rest. Being thirsty — he goes to Jesus for drink. Being weak — he goes to Jesus for strength. Being a sinner — he goes to Jesus for righteousness. Being foolish — he goes to Jesus for wisdom. Being unholy — he goes to Jesus to be sanctified. Being hungry — he goes to Jesus to be fed. Being exposed — he goes to Jesus to be sheltered. Being troubled — he goes to Jesus for support. Being at war — he goes to Jesus for defense. Being lost, ruined, and undone — he goes to Jesus for a full, free, and eternal salvation. His faith is a simple, constantly . . .

going to Jesus,

asking of Jesus, and

relying on Jesus —

for all that he needs, for present comfort and everlasting salvation.

It is the faith of the hungry man, who, believing his bountiful friend's promise — immediately goes for food. Or the poor man, who, having a promise of being made rich — goes for the promised riches. Or the sick man — who goes for healing where he believes it is to be had. And thus the Apostle Peter describes the faith and practice of primitive believers, "to whom COMING as unto a living stone." 1 Peter 2:4. But the true believer is not satisfied with coming — for he must receive the blessings he seeks. And he comes, pleads, waits, expects, and rests on the faithfulness of God — until he obtains to his joy and satisfaction. The word of God is the warrant of His faith; to the throne of grace he comes to receive freely, what God has promised faithfully, to all who seek; and at the Lord's gates he waits, until he receives what the free promise of God warrants him to expect. Thus his life is a life of transaction with God, of fellowship with his Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. He is constantly going out of himself — to seek all that he needs in Jesus. And what he receives from God — he employs for God, and serves the Lord with His own, to the praise of the glory of divine grace.

Thus, you see, the believer is an active, diligent, God-glorifying character; engaged in the best pursuits, enjoying the best company, and fortified in the best way against all his foes. The true

believer is a blessed, a most blessed character. All of God's purposes, promises, and providences — are ordained to work his good, and to issue in his glory.

He is now risen with Christ, from the death of sin, from the condemnation of the law, to sit in heavenly places. Colossians 2:12. Ephesians 2:6. He lives a new, spiritual, and holy life, by faith in the Son of God, who loved him, and gave Himself for him. And Christ lives in him, Galatians 2:20; dwells in him, Ephesians 3:17; walks in him, 2 Corinthians 6:16; and is to him the hope of glory, Colossians 1:27. He is now justified before God from all things, and nothing can be laid to His charge. Acts 13:39, Romans 8:33-34. He shall never come into condemnation, John 5:24; but has eternal life, John 6:47:54.

Abiding in Jesus, 1 John 3:14-15 — he has peace with God, Romans 5:1; boldness before God, Hebrews 10:19; and access with confidence into the presence of God. Ephesians 3:12. His heart is purged from prejudice, slavish fear, and the love of sin, Acts 15:9. And through the Spirit, the heart being purified, he sincerely loves the brethren. 1 Peter 1:22. He hears the gospel to profit, he is united to it by faith. Hebrews 4:2. He is proved, acknowledged, and walks as a child of the Most High God. Galatians 3:26. The blessing of Abraham comes upon him, through Jesus Christ; and he receives the promise of the Spirit through faith. Galatians 3:14. He asks mercies of God in faith, James 1:6-7; mixes faith with God's word; Hebrews 4:2; and is kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. 1 Peter 1:5.

He resists Satan, steadfast in the faith. 1 Peter 5:9; stands fast in His profession of the truth by faith, 2 Corinthians 1:24; and the victory that overcomes the world is His faith. 1 John 5:4. He walks comfortably, consistently, and usefully, by faith and not by sight, 2 Corinthians 5:7; and performs acceptable obedience by faith. Romans 16:26, 1 Thessalonians 1:3. He receives salvation as a favor from God, through faith. Ephesians 2:8; and is daily sensible of the greatness of His obligations to Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, as His Covenant Father, and the God of His salvation. He can never perish, John 15, 16; but has the witness of salvation in Himself. 1 John 5:10.

Thus he lives, believing what God has said in His word, resting upon the divine testimony and the faithfulness of his God, and walking before the Lord as a son in the presence of His loving father. He sees that all His spiritual privileges, relations, and prospects — springing from free and undeserved favor — flow to him through Immanuel's precious blood, and are to be realized by simple faith; that all things are his in Christ, that he is Christ's, not his own, and that all his present and future blessedness is sealed by the oath of the unchangeable God. He sees that God is his God, present with him wherever he may be; ready to help him, however perplexed; waiting to be gracious to him, in every time of his need. It is his privilege to know that he is a child of God, a joint-heir with Christ, and a temple of the Holy Spirit; that God . . .

delights in him,

rejoices over him,

walks with him,

will supply him,

and will never, never forsake him!

He believes that the eye of God is upon him for good, that the arms of God surrounds him as His defense, and that the affections of Jehovah yearn over him in love. He see that there is . . .

nothing too great for God to do for him;

nothing too good for the Lord to bestow upon him;

nothing too costly for Jehovah freely to give him;

for He who spared not His own Son — but delivered Him up for him, how shall He not with Him also, freely give him all things? Romans 8:32. And is this the blessedness, are these the privileges of ALL who believe on Jesus? Yes, of ALL who believe in His dear name. But it is not every believer who enjoys all this; but few seek to live up to their privileges. They have plenty in Jesus — but they do not live upon and enjoy it. He says, "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full." Oh, believer, seek, earnestly, constantly, importunately seek — to receive, live upon, and enjoy all that is in Jesus for you! Look not at your poverty, deserts, or unworthiness — but look at the love, promises, and provision made for such as you in Jesus. Go to Him, plead with Him, wait before Him; and go, plead, and wait until you receive. Let no temptation hinder; no sense of sin prevent you. Arise! go, your Jesus calls you! Plead . . .

your poverty — and His promises;

your condition — and His loving invitation;

your needs — and His fullness;

your desire to glorify Him — and His own precious name. Nor shall you plead in vain. Seek to live as . . .

in His presence,

beneath His eye,

under His protection, and

as an object of His love.

Seek to have the Lord God Almighty living in you, walking in you, and glorifying Himself by you — so shall you be happy. But there are some, yes many, who believe not; who have no faith, or no such faith as that described above. My dear fellow-sinner, "he who believes not, shall be damned." This is God's word; without faith it is impossible to please God, obey God, or be accepted of God; for "whatever is not of faith is sin." Jesus is the author, the giver of faith; if you feel your unbelief, and desire to be delivered from your present condition — then look to Jesus, call on Jesus, beg faith of Jesus! It may be had for begging, though it never can be bought, or produced by human effort. May the Lord give you the Spirit of faith — so shall you believe, obey, rejoice, and be saved forever.

-57-Sick Saints, One with Jesus

Sick Saints, One with Jesus James Smith, 1842

"I was sick and you took care of Me" Matthew 25:36

How glorious to be one with Christ! How Jesus represents His sick saints as so closely and tenderly united to Himself, that what is done to them — He takes as done to Himself. Union to Jesus will not prevent sickness — but it turns the curse into a blessing. Jesus said of one, in the days of His flesh, "Our friend Lazarus!" yet he was sick, and afterwards slept. Jesus views His sick people as so many parts of himself — members of His body. To touch them, to hurt them, is to touch the apple of His eye.

How wonderful the idea — if covered with sores, as was Job, or Lazarus at the rich man's door; if burnt up with a fever, as was Peter's mother-in-law; or if suffering under any disease to which the human frame is liable — you may still look upon yourself as one with Jesus. He sympathizes with you, and "In every pang that rends the heart,

The Man of sorrows has His part."

You were . . .

chosen in Him before the foundation of the world;

given to Him to be redeemed from sin and Hell;

united to Him by the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart; and are as really one with Him, as the branch is one with the tree; the member with the head; the building with the foundation; or the bride with her husband. United to His person; interested in His work; entitled to His fullness; devoted to His praise; destined to enjoy His likeness, presence, and, glory forever — yours is a happy lot. Do you realize this, that Christ and you are one — one spirit, one body, one family? Who shall attempt to set forth your happiness, or the blessedness of your condition? A poor sufferer — and yet an heir of glory! Tempted to think his lot hard — and yet one with God's dear Son — an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ! Consider, the Father blessed you with all spiritual blessings in Christ; made you accepted in Christ; predestined you to sonship in Christ; gave you an inheritance in Christ; views you in Christ with joy and delight; and you are complete in Him, who of God is made unto you, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Being in Christ — you are free from condemnation; all things work together for your good; and Jesus ever lives to make intercession for you. He says to you, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you; you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done for you." Never forget this, if you are believing in Christ — then you are one with Christ; if you are one with Christ — then nothing can separate you from Christ; and if nothing can separate you from Christ, you will still bring forth fruit to His glory, even in old age, to show that the Lord is upright.

Jesus loves you as His own, as part of Himself; He only allows you to be pained for your profit, and He sympathizes with you in all you suffer. Aim to be like Jesus — like Him in patience, meekness, gentleness, faith, and humility. Imitating Jesus is the way to be happy, holy, and honorable. Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts. If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

-58-Wearisome Nights Appointed

Wearisome Nights Appointed James Smith, 1842

"Wearisome nights are appointed to me." Job 7:3

Whatever the Lord appoints for His people while below, bears the mark of infinite wisdom upon it. All His appointments are gracious — they flow from His infinite love. Wearisome nights are painful — but they are often beneficial. They remind us of mercies we have forgotten to be thankful for; of favors we have seldom if ever acknowledged. They conform to Jesus — he had wearisome nights when here below. What a night was that preceding His death! See Him on the cold ground in Gethsemane's garden — He agonizes with His God; He expostulates with His wearied disciples; He sweats great drops of blood. Oh what a dreadful night! Who shall attempt to estimate the weight of woe, under which the Redeemer groaned! The wrath of God for your sins, was upon Him; the curse of God for your transgressions, was entering as oil into His bones; the strokes of divine justice were bringing Him into the dust of death. How dreadful! How bitter must that cup have been, which made Him groan out from His inmost soul, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from me!" No friend was near to soothe His sorrow, or to attempt to alleviate His woe; He trod the winepress alone. Think then of Jesus, as you are tossed to and fro unto the dawning of the day; and think that He suffered for your sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring you to God. His was a wearisome night indeed!

Consider Job — how many, and what wearisome nights had he! His body literally covered with sore boils, from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet. His mind racked and tormented in an unexampled manner. His children, all His children removed, by sudden death; all His property stolen or destroyed; His servants disobedient and disorderly; His friends cruel and unkind, laying to his charge things which he knew not; and His wife estranged from him, crying "Curse God and die!" Add to all this, the light of the Lord's countenance was concealed from him, and Satan let loose, tempting, harassing, and distressing him.

What are your wearisome nights, compared with his? He had not one or two — but many such nights; until His soul chose strangling and death, rather than life.

Look at David, the man after God's own heart — how many wearisome nights had he! Sometimes we find him in a palace on a princely bed; at other times in a wilderness, a desert, or a cave. We read of his sore running in the night, and ceasing not; his soul refusing to be comforted; of his being so troubled that he could not speak. He exclaims, "My soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near unto the grave. You have put away my acquaintance far from me, you have made me an abomination unto them. My heart is smitten and withered like grass; by reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin: for I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping."

Thousands of God's people before you, have been thus exercised and tried; therefore do not think that your lot is hard, or that Jehovah is lacking in love to you. He says, "As many as I love — I

rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore and repent." Think of your mercies — consider your deserts. Call upon God for patience and resignation to His will. Be more concerned to do and suffer the will of God, than to have your own desires granted. Wearisome nights will soon end, the last wearisome night will soon have passed away; and then you will "enter into peace." Rejoice always in the Lord, and drink of the river of His pleasure.

-59-Apostolic Reckoning

Apostolic Reckoning James Smith, 1842

"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Romans 8:18 The trials of the Lord's people are various and great. They often suffer much from the weakness of the mind — which fills them with a thousand fears, and surrounds them with imaginary evils. A feeble constitution renders the body a clog to the soul; and the spirit groans being daily burdened. Disease rooted in the frame occasions severe suffering, and the life is little more than a lingering death.

Others of the Lord's family are tried by unfaithful friends, whose unkindness makes them weep; and in anguish of spirit exclaim, "It was not an enemy that reproached me — then I could have borne it; neither was it he who hated me, who set himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him. But it was you — my equal, my guide, and my acquaintance!" A frowning world often unites with false professors, or unkind saints — to harass and distress; and sometimes ungrateful and selfish relatives join with them, so that the believer feels for a time depressed beyond measure; and his sufferings appear greater than he can bear.

But, however great or various our sufferings may be, they "are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." The poor sickly feeble body — will be raised a spiritual, glorified body: free from all defects, disease, and pain — full of health, clothed with beauty, and robed in glory — exactly like the glorified body of our dear Redeemer! The soul, perfect in purity and knowledge, will enjoy sweet repose. No more racked with tormenting fears, or harassed with perplexing cares — it will forever drink of the river of pleasure which is at God's right hand. "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him."

Therefore the Apostle concluded that there was no comparison between present suffering — and future glory. And the Apostle knew what it was to suffer: hence, speaking of His own personal sufferings, he says, "I have been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked!" 2 Corinthians 11:23-27

Reader, what are your trials compared to these? And yet Paul thought these sufferings not worthy to be compared with the glory which is to be revealed in us. And he knew what glory was — hence he says, "I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, caught up into the third Heaven," etc. He had seen the glory and the glorified; he had weighed the present with the future; he compared

them, and decided that they were not to be placed the one against the other. Our present trials are short — but the glory to be revealed is eternal. Our present trials are bounded on every side — but glory is unbounded. Our trials, however painful — are mixed with the sweetest mercies; our deepest sufferings — are mixed with the choicest comforts. We are supported by a sense of pardon, by fellowship with our heavenly Father, and by the hope of glory. Our glory will be unmixed — no gloomy doubts there — no distressing fears there — no sharp pains there.

Beloved, this world is our only suffering time — and our sufferings are only those of children, on their road home; of heirs who are going to take possession of an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fades not away, reserved in Heaven for us. The glory prepared awaits our arrival, and we shall soon taste of the joys which are unspeakable and glorious, which flow from God's right hand for evermore.

Oh the contrast between the present and the future!

Now we are poor — then rich!

Now suffering — then forever rejoicing!

Now vile and sinful — then perfectly holy and glorious forever!

Now racked with pain — then full and perfect health forever.

Let us not, then, look at the things which are seen — but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal — but the things which are not seen are eternal.

-60-Be Patient

Be Patient James Smith, 1842

"Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." James 5:7

Sick people have great need of patience, both on their own account, and theirs who attend upon them. The Christian, of all people, has most reason to be patient, yes, to let patience have its perfect work. Think, believer, you might at this moment have been suffering the hopeless torments of the damned; you have deserved them, the law doomed you to them, and only grace has preserved you from them. You might, with your present affliction, have been driven out by persecution, to hide yourself in rocks and caves of the earth, in hunger, cold, and nakedness. You might have been in some of the miserable hovels in our land, with no one to read a Bible to you, and unable to read it yourself; with scarcely a friend to do anything for you, and none to speak comfortably to you, or point you to Jesus. Think of these things, and check every uprising of impatience.

Look also at the sufferings of Jesus for you — He suffered in every part, in body and soul; His sufferings had the dreadful curse of God in them. His sufferings were to atone for your sins, to satisfy justice on your behalf, and to procure you a title to eternal life.

Remember, all your sufferings are necessary, they are merciful, and they are bounded by time. When you have put off this tabernacle, you will have done with sufferings and sorrows, and all before you will be peace, joy, and endless pleasure.

There are thousands besides you, suffering at this moment, thousands of the Lord's family; for the like afflictions are fulfilled in your brethren who are in the world.

Think of the glory that awaits you, and if you at all realize that, you must exclaim, even if your sufferings were much greater than they are: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us!" Your present light affliction is but for a moment, and it works out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while you look not at the things which are seen — but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal — but the things which are not seen are eternal. Look forward then beyond your present sufferings, and in patience possess your soul. "Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." He can not only enable you to bear it — but to rejoice in it; and in the very midst of it, fill you with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Impatience is wicked, highly offensive to God, injurious to the sufferer, and a torment to all about him. Therefore be patient until the Lord comes, either to restore you, or remove you to himself.

-61-Peace with God

Peace with God James Smith, 1842

"Peace, peace to him who is afar off, and to him that is near, says the Lord." Isaiah 47:19 When God created our first parents, they were holy, upright, and happy. They were in fellowship with God, held communion with Him, and felt indescribable joy in His presence. He gave them His law to obey, His precept was their rule to walk by, and they possessed ability to perform what He required. For their obedience — they were to have life, comfort, and every blessing suited to their natures. In case of disobedience — they were threatened with death, misery, and the curse of God. They sinned, and we sinned in them; and death passed upon all men, for all have sinned. War commenced between God and man — and man has been at enmity with God ever since. My fellow-sinner, YOU were . . .

born in sin,

a child of wrath,

dead in transgression,

an enemy to God,

lying under His curse, and

threatened with judgment and everlasting destruction. This is OUR state! Sin is committed by us, the law condemns us, judgment is before us, and Hell is our deserved doom. Do not think to make exceptions, for God's word declares, "ALL HAVE SINNED, and come short of the glory of God. The whole world has become guilty before God." Talk not of your obedience, for he who offends in ONE POINT, is guilty of breaking the WHOLE LAW. — James 2:10. The curse is upon him who continues not in ALL THINGS written in the book of the law.

Attempt not to make your peace with God by any works of your own; for if you do, you will have God for your enemy, the law must be your rule, and Christ will profit you nothing. Awful! truly awful, is the state of that person, who is talking of making peace with God; for while in such a state he will never know peace! But if you ask, "May we not be at peace with God?" The answer is, YES. If you inquire, "How can we attain to peace with God?" The answer also is ready — peace is made, and may now be realized and enjoyed. The Lord Jesus Christ has assumed our nature into union with His divine nature. He came into the world in the character of a SURETY, to make peace between man and God. He came to take our sins upon Himself; to have them charged to His account, to suffer the punishment they merited, and to put them away by the sacrifice of Himself. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; for He made Jesus, who knew no sin — to be sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Our sins being laid upon Christ, justice dealt with Him as those sins deserved; and God spared not His own Son — but delivered Him up for us all; it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He put him to grief; He made His soul an offering for sin. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree;

He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; for the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Herein is love, not that we loved God — but that he loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Hereby we perceive the love of Christ, because He laid down His life for us. He made a full, perfect, and complete atonement for the sins of His people. He finished the transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. He established, exalted, and magnified the holy law. He satisfied, pleased, and honored divine justice. In Him, mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace embraced each other; and sinners, who were once afar off, are made near by the blood of Christ. For HE is our peace, who has made both Jews and Gentiles one, and reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross. And having thus made peace by the blood of His cross, He sends forth the gospel of peace, in preaching which His ministers proclaim peace to those who are afar off, and to those who are near. They point out the way of peace; direct to Jesus, who gives peace; and the Holy Spirit leads poor sensible sinners into the enjoyment of peace. This peace can only be enjoyed by believing; hence we read of "joy and peace in believing." This blessing is one branch of the kingdom of God, which stands in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." When the sinner is convinced of His state, mourns over sin, and desires peace with God — the gospel meets His case, it directs him to Jesus the great Peacemaker; the peace which He has made arrests his attention, and to the throne of grace he directs his prayers; the Holy Spirit leads him to receive into His heart the testimony of God, "That it has pleased the Father that in Christ should all fullness dwell; and that He has made peace by the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation." This revelation being received into the mind by the power of the Holy Spirit — imparts peace, satisfaction, and joy; and the soul knows what Paul meant, when he said, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and not only so — but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have Now received the atonement." The believer NOW looks up . . .

to the Father as the God of peace,

to Jesus as the Prince of peace,

to the Holy Spirit as the Revealer of peace,

at the gospel as the message of peace,

on Christians as the sons of peace,

on his way as the path of peace,

on Heaven as the abode of permanent uninterrupted peace;

and prays that he may be anxious for nothing, but that in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, he may let His requests be made known unto God; that the Peace of God, which passes all understanding, may keep his heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

He views . . .

sin as the disturber of His peace,
Satan as the enemy of His peace, and
communion with God as the means of maintaining peace.

He beholds His peace settled in covenant, procured by the blood of the Lamb, and learns that it is to be enjoyed in the path of holy obedience to the precepts of his God. It is true that he may often be agitated, perplexed, and distressed, in consequence of temptations, persecution, or the working of sin within him. But amidst all, he says, with the Psalmist, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints; but let them not turn again to folly." He lays aside every weight, and the sin that so easily besets him, and runs with patience the race set before him, looking unto Jesus; and while so engaged, he finds the way pleasantness, and the path peace.

Reader, are YOU at peace with God? Do you know Christ as your peace? Do you love the gospel as the good news of peace? Do you walk with God in peace and holiness?

These are important questions; because if you are not at peace with God — then you are at peace with Satan. If you have not peace through the gospel — then you are at peace with sin. And if you die in peace with sin — then you will have . . .

God for your enemy;
Christ for your angry Judge;
Hell for your abode;
devils and damned souls for your miserable companions;
and unutterable torments for your portion forever!

"Oh that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end!"

-62-Saints Never Forgotten

Saints Never Forgotten James Smith, 1842

"O Israel, you shall not be forgotten by Me!" Isaiah 44:21 In seasons of affliction it is a very common temptation, that our friends forget us, or at least in a measure neglect us; but it is a delightful source of consolation to the Christian mind, that let whoever will forget us — the Lord never will. Zion of old said, "The Lord has forsaken me — and my Lord has forgotten me!" But what says the answer of God unto her? "Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for the child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you!" Isaiah 49:15. And in the portion above, Jehovah speaks in terms of inexpressible tenderness and love, as though the kindest mother was addressing the best beloved child, "O Israel, you shall not be forgotten by me."

Engraved on His priestly breastplate, and by the piercing nails on the palms of His hands, and by almighty love on the tablet of His heart — you are ever with Him. You cannot be out of His thoughts — or out of His heart one moment. All the business of the world, yes, of all the worlds He has created, will not cause Him to forget you. Love strengthens the memory in creatures; and the love of Jesus renders it utterly impossible that you should be forgotten. He . . .

pleads for you as your Intercessor,

represents you as your Surety, and

acts for you as the Mediator between God and man.

He has taken up your name into His mouth, and your person into His care. He has taken you to Himself as His own, and says, "I am married unto you." Can the husband forget the bride of His bosom; the father the child of His affection and cares? No more will your God forget you. He neither forgets that you are, nor what you are, nor where you are, nor how you are. He remembers He has such a child, an object of His highest love and constant care; that you are in the place you inhabit; and that you are weak, sick, and needing His constant attention. He says to you, "Fear not, I am with you."

You may not be sensible of His presence — but His eye lingers over you with delight, and His ear is open to catch the feeble accent of prayer or praise. Jesus forget His people! Utterly impossible. Jesus forget you! It cannot be. He says, "You have forgotten me, days without number." Yes, gracious Lord, we plead guilty to the charge, we have forgotten you; and we indeed deserve to be forgotten by you. But Israel has never been a widow, nor Judah forsaken of her God, the Lord Almighty.

Jehovah the Father remembers you as the object of His eternal love, and ancient choice. Jesus remembers you as the gift of His Father to Him, and the purchase of His precious blood. The Holy Spirit remembers you as His temple and His workmanship. The whole Deity remembers you as ordained to show forth Jehovah's praise, and glorify His divine perfections through endless ages.

You are remembered with pleasure in Heaven, and remembered with pity on earth. Do not think hardly of friends, grieve not for lack of more visitors; but rejoice that your God is ever with you; and sing with the Psalmist, "The Lord has been mindful of us, He will bless us; His merciful kindness is ever great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever." "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinks upon me. You are my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God."

-63-God Is Faithful

God Is Faithful James Smith, 1842 "He who promised is faithful." Hebrews 10:23 The promises of God flow from His love, and are intended to support the faith and hope of His people in seasons of trouble and trial. In them, He pledges Himself to give what we need, and to bestow what we ask in fervent believing prayer. Nor is there one blessing we can need for soul or body, in sickness or health, living or dying — but He has graciously promised it! "The Lord will give that which is good;" and all that is good, according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. "The Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly!" Psalms 84:11

Let us briefly consider what He has promised us in His word, and remember, every promise shall be made good. The first blessing we need, is the pardon of sin, and this He has repeatedly promised, saying, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Hebrews 8:12. Read also Jeremiah 30:8.

We need power against sin, and "He gives power to the faint; and to those who have no might, He increases strength." And "those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." Isaiah 40:29-31. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law — but under grace." Romans 6:14.

We need to be cleansed from sin, and He says, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you — and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." Ezekiel 36:25. "He will subdue our iniquities; and will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea!" Micah 7:19.

Peace of conscience is an invaluable blessing, and "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you: because he trusts in you?" Isaiah 26:3.

Supporting grace is also promised, "My grace is sufficient for you; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:9. So is supplying grace, "My God shall supply all your needs, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Php 4:19. So is growth in grace, "I will be to Israel like a refreshing dew from Heaven. Israel will blossom like the lily; it will send roots deep into the soil like the cedars in Lebanon. Its branches will spread out like beautiful olive trees, as fragrant as the cedars of Lebanon. My people will flourish like grain and blossom like grapevines. They will be as fragrant as the wines of Lebanon." Hosea 14:5-7 So is persevering grace, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and He delights in His way. Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholds him with His hand." Psalms 37:20-21. "The righteous shall hold on His way, and he who has clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger." Job 17:9. So is guidance, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them and not forsake them." Isaiah 42:16. So is the Lord's presence, "Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters, I will be with you! When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk

through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior!" Isaiah 43:1-3 So also that all things work together for our good. "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them!" Romans 8:28.

He has promised us eternal life with all its glories. "And this is what he promised us — even eternal life!" 1 John 2:25. "In the hope of eternal life that God, who cannot lie, promised before time began!" Titus 1:2.

Thus all is promised, which we do or can need! And God is faithful to His word, and will assuredly make it good. This is clear from . . .

the perfection of His nature, James 1:17;

the stability of His covenant, Isaiah 54:9-10;

the sacredness of His oath, Hebrews 6:16-19;

the testimony of His saints, 1 Corinthians 1:10;

the gift of His Son, Romans 8:32;

the history of the church, and

the design of the promises.

Let us therefore firmly believe them; for "the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil." 2 Thessalonians 3:3.

Let us trust them with implicit confidence, for "faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it." 1 Thessalonians 5:24.

Let us plead them in faith, though we are weak and fearful; for, "though we believe not — yet He abides faithful; He cannot deny Himself." 2 Timothy 2:13. And while we "suffer according to the will of God, let us commit the keeping of our souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." 1 Peter 4:19.

He says, "I am Jehovah, I change not Malachi 3:6. "I am in the same mind now, as when I made the promises. I intend all I said. I purpose to make them good. I never did deceive — I never will. Those who trust me shall not be ashamed. Wait upon me, and expect me to do as I have said. Not one jot or tittle of my word shall fail — but all shall be fulfilled to the very letter!"

Beloved, let us stay ourselves upon the Lord's word; let us turn from creatures, from our own gloomy feelings, from the changing scenes around us — to the unchangeable word of our gracious God. He bids us trust Him always, "Trust in the LORD always, for the LORD GOD is the eternal Rock!" Isaiah 26:4. Trust Him especially in the dark, "Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God!" Isaiah 50:10. He assures us that we shall be immovable as Mount Zion. "Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people both now and forevermore!" Psalms 125:1-2.

We may trust Him — for He warrants us.

We ought to trust Him — for He commands us.

We must trust Him — or we shall be wretched!

"But he who trusts in the Lord — mercy shall compass him about." Psalms 32:10. Let us therefore "trust in the mercy of the Lord forever!" Psalms 52:8. "For His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, upon those who fear Him." Psalms 103:17

-64-Looking for Jesus

Looking for Jesus James Smith, 1842

"We look for the Savior — the Lord Jesus Christ." Php 3:20 The first Christians kept the second coming of Christ continually in view; they constantly expected it, and are spoken of as "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Savior Jesus Christ," Titus 2:13; Php 3:20; as waiting "for God's Son from Heaven, even Jesus, who has delivered us from the wrath to come." 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 1:7. The scriptures always represent the second coming of Christ as sudden and unexpected; "The day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them." 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments." Revelation 16:15. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." 2 Peter 3:10. "Watch, therefore, for you know not what hour your Lord is coming." Matthew 24:42. The Lord informs us He will come quickly — "Behold, I come quickly!" Revelation 22:7; Revelation 22:12; Revelation 22:20. "The Lord is at hand." Php 4:5.

He will come gloriously — "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day." 2 Thessalonians 1:7-11; Daniel 7:9-11. "Behold, the Judge stands before the door." James 5:9; Acts 17:31.

He will come in wrath — hence, the day of His coming is called "the day of wrath," Romans 2:5; "the great day of His wrath." Revelation 6:17.

He will come for salvation — "To those who look for Him, shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28. "It is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Romans 13:11. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith until salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1:5-8.

We are warned that in the last days there shall come scoffers, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" 2 Peter 3:4. These give heed "to seducing spirits," 1 Timothy 4:1; "being lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness — but denying the power thereof." 2 Timothy 3:4-5. But of the coming of Jesus — Enoch prophesied, Jude 1:14; Christ Himself preached it, Matthew 16:27; and the church expected it! 1 Thessalonians 3:13.

Believer, are you looking, waiting, and preparing for the coming of Christ? You profess to expect Him — to believe that He will come, both to punish the wicked and reward His servants? "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat!" 2 Peter

3:11-12 The scriptures, which you profess to reverence, exhort you to watch, because you know not the day nor hour wherein the Son of Man comes, Matthew 25:13-30; to be sober, lest that day overtake you as a thief, 1 Thessalonians 5:4-9; to be patient, waiting for Christ, 2 Thessalonians 3:5; to strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draws near, James 5:7-11; to be diligent, that you may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless, 2 Peter 3:14; to "abide in him, that when He shall appear you may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." 1 John 2:28. Do you believe that you must then stand before His judgment-seat? 2 Corinthians 5:10-11; that judgment must first begin at the house of God? 1 Peter 4:17; that you must give an account of yourself? Romans 14:10-13; that you must be judged and rewarded according to your works? Matthew 16:27; Matthew 10:41-42, Romans 2:6; 1 Corinthians 3:8; Ephesians 6:8; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 2:23; Revelation 22:12-15. Consider these scriptures, and may the Lord give you understanding. And you who are careless and indifferent in reference to the second coming of Jesus, I have a word for you. You must witness it — you are deeply interested in it; for, "Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him," Revelation 1:7, and shall cry, "Hide us from the face of Him who sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!" Revelation 6:16. All the tribes of the earth shall mourn when "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory. Matthew 24:30.

O sinner! what a state, what a situation will you be in! And yet you are secure, though you have nothing to assure you that you shall not be brought into this situation this day, or this night. Christ will come — He will come as a thief, in a day you think not, and in an hour you are not aware of; for of that day and of that hour knows no man. Matthew 24:36:51; and if that day should find you without Christ, under the law, and living in pleasure — it will fix your doom forever; for then it shall be said, "He who is unjust — let him be unjust still; and he who is filthy — let him be filthy still." Revelation 22:11. But you who believe your Savior's word, long for His coming, wait His approach, and are preparing to meet your God — happy are you; rejoice, and be exceeding glad. "Now you are the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what you shall be; but we know, that when He shall appear, you shall be like Him; for you shall see Him as He is!" 1 John 3:2. "When Christ, who is your life, shall appear — then shall you also appear with Him in glory." Colossians 3:4.

Now, you are called to suffer with Him; "then, you shall be glorified together." His glory shall be revealed in you, at the manifestation of the sons of God; then shall you be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God; then shall you enjoy the adoption, even the redemption of the body. If, then, you hope for such things, see that with patience you wait for them; for "He who shall come will come, and will not tarry." Romans 8:17-26; Hebrews 10:35-38. "Watch you therefore, and pray always, that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:36 To conclude — Are you living as a part of the Bride of Christ? As not your own — but His? Are you aiming to glorify Him in all things? Are you joining the Church in her cry, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly"? Revelation 22:20. If so, "at that day you shall say, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isaiah 25:9. Then shall you take your place "before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He who sits on the throne shall dwell among you. You shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on you, nor any heat. For the

Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and shall lead you unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes." Revelation 7:15-17. "He who overcomes shall sit down with Jesus on his throne." Revelation 3:21. "They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads, and they shall reign forever and ever!" Revelation 22:4-5.

-65-Kindness Shown in Adversity

Kindness Shown in Adversity James Smith, 1842

"You have seen my affliction, and knew the anguish of my soul." Psalms 31:7 Our troubles may escape the notice of men — but they cannot escape the notice of our God. No earthly parent ever watched over a child with that tenderness, concern, and attention — which Jehovah manifests in watching over us. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous; and His ears are open to our cries. He has considered our troubles. He knows their nature, number, and pressure.

He considered them when the covenant of grace was made, which is ordered in all things, and sure. Then provision was made for every fiery trial, for every troublesome billow, for every distressing event. There is something in God's covenant, suited to meet every trouble that can come upon us. "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies."

He considered our trouble, when He made His exceeding great and precious promises. They are so framed as to suit us in the winter of adversity — to administer consolation in seasons of peculiar distress. All of the promises have reference to sin and trouble; they were made to comfort poor sinners in trial and distress. They are exactly suited to us, being made on purpose for us; and every promise that is suited to me, I am at liberty to take up and claim as my own. All the promises are in Jesus. They are all ours, because He is ours, and we are his. The Lord considers our trouble, and even now sympathizes with us. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin." Hebrews 4:15

Some people do not know an old friend in trouble — but the Lord especially knows His people in adversities. He never walked with the three children — but when they were in the furnace. He is more especially present — when most needed. He knows us, and loves us; let who will neglect or turn against us. He knew and appeared for David, nor ever left him until He had done that which He had spoken to him of. Just so, He will make good His word to us, fulfill His word in us, and honor His word by us.

He has known us in all past adversities, He will know us in the present, and in all that are future. Believer, one friend will be sure to know you in trouble, will be sure to visit you in sickness, and to help you in your distress — and that is your God. And if God is for you, who can to any purpose be against you? If the Lord does not help you — then who can? And if He will befriend you — then there is no real ground of fear, though earth and Hell are banded together against you. Are you peculiarly tried? cry out with David, "Turn unto me, and have mercy upon me — for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged! Oh, bring you me out of my distresses. Look upon my affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sin."

-66-Do Not Be Afraid!

Do Not Be Afraid!

James Smith, 1842

"So do not be afraid, for I am with you;

do not be dismayed, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you and help you;

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand!"

Isaiah 41:10

Whenever Mercy speaks to us, it is in a way worthy of herself. All of the addresses of Divine Mercy, are characterized by tenderness and truth. Mercy tenderly compassionates us under all the miseries we are called to suffer, and addresses us with words of truth, suited to our circumstances, at every turn. When believers are troubled in mind, and cast down in soul, by reason of difficulties, dangers, or foes — Mercy speaks in accents the most encouraging and sweet, and says, do not be afraid!

There is nothing to which we are more prone, than to fear. The weakness of our faith, and the vileness of our natures, are continually leading us astray into despondency and fear; and yet we have no real cause to fear, either in reference to things temporal or spiritual. Our covenant God and Father forbids it, and Jesus has many times prohibited it. Every promise in His word, and sweet feature in His revealed character, are leveled against our doubts and false reasoning. And yet there is frequently occasion for him to say to us, as to His disciples of old, "Why are you distrustful?"

If guilt has been contracted, and a sense of sin lies heavy on the soul, He says to us, "Do not be afraid; come and let us reason together; though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." What can be more sweetly encouraging, or what more plain or positive than these gracious words of our faithful God? Let us then, whenever beset with fears, arising from a guilty conscience, or a sense of sin resting upon the soul; let us hasten to the throne of divine grace, and there reason with our God on the ground of His promise, and the infinitely meritorious blood of our dear Redeemer.

Let us not harbor hard thoughts, as though God was unwilling to forgive, or was backward to fulfill His word — but let us draw near, and talk the matter over, expecting Jehovah to be as good as His word, and to act according to His revealed character. If troubles increase, and trials abound, He says to us, "Do not be afraid, I will be with you in trouble; I will deliver you and honor you; I will set you on high, because you have known my name."

What then should we do, when troubles increase and abound — but accept the free invitation of Heaven, and expect our God to make good His word; he says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." If then we have any concern for our Lord's glory, or if we would secure deliverance in a safe and honorable way, we must turn from all creatures to the Lord, we must call upon Him in faith — simply giving credit to His word, with importunate supplications, until He raises up Himself and send us deliverance and joy. Oh safe, easy, and gracious way out of trouble! May I ever prefer this to all the schemes of my carnal heart, or the advices of professed friends.

If enemies, great in power, or numerous, should arise, and set themselves in array against me, with a design to injure me or impede my course, my God says, "Do not be afraid, no weapon formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment, you shall condemn; this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, says the Lord." Not a dog can move his tongue, or any creature perform an action, without the assistance and permission of the God who bids you "Do not be afraid." Would He bid you banish fear, and rely entirely upon him — and then allow your enemies to triumph in your overthrow? Surely not. He is faithful to His word of promise, and ever acts in accordance with the character given Him in His word. Rather then, let me say, "I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, He also is become my salvation!"

If beset with temptations of a painful nature and distressing character, He says, "Do not be afraid, no temptation has taken you — but such as is common to man; and I am faithful; and will make a way for your escape, that you may be able to bear it." Your trials and temptations are all necessary, not one is superfluous, not one can be dispensed with consistent with your best interests.

Satan is a chained foe, and your Savior's servant; he can only go by permission, and his bounds are always set him; his roaring may frighten you — but his teeth shall never fasten upon you; he may worry you — but shall never devour you. Let your circumstances be what they may, still your God says, "Do not be afraid, for all things work together for good to those who love God, and are called according to His purpose." "All things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God." Keep the glory of God in view, and all things are yours, whether they be spiritual, temporal, or eternal.

We shall always have enough to make us pray; but, if believers, nothing should make us fear; because God says, "do not be afraid." God is with us; God is for us; and God will help us — and that right early.

God has arranged all our concerns with consummate wisdom, in the very best possible manner; if we only keep things in the places which has appointed for them, all must be well, and well forever.

He overrules all events by His omnipotent power, and if we only believe this, we may rest contented and happy.

He directs all things by his paternal love; and if so, why then should we fear, be anxious, or distressed? If infinite wisdom, omnipotent power, and paternal love, are engaged for our present and eternal welfare — then our fears must be groundless, and our anxiety folly. It is only to believe His precious promises, to trust His immutable faithfulness, plead a Savior's prevalent name — and

accept all that a good and gracious God can give! In a word, to be humble, active, and happy. But never let us doubt His love, question His kindness, or neglect fellowship with Him; for this would be to sow the seeds of distress, and insure to ourselves many sorrows. Our life is safe, it is hid with Christ in God; and because He lives, we shall live also. Our cause must prosper, for He ever lives to make intercession for us. Our end will be blessed, for He is gone to prepare mansions for us, and will come again and receive us to Himself.

Surely then, we need not fear or be discouraged; if God is our God, Jesus our Savior, the promises our property, the Holy Spirit our present Comforter, and Heaven our final home — what can we have worthy of our cares, or sufficient to fill us with fear?

If, then, Mercy says to us who believe on Jesus, that we should not fear; if it holds out such encouragement to confidence, contentment, and peace — then let us come boldly to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in every time of need; grace to serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. And let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily besets us, or which hangs so fast on; and let us run, with patience, the race set before us, looking unto Jesus. Fears only dishonor God, distress the mind, please Satan, and grieve the godly; let us then watch, pray, and strive against them; remembering it is God, the faithful, just, and true, who says to us, "do not be afraid."

He calls a worm His friend;

He calls Himself my God!

And He will save me to the end,

Through Jesus' precious blood!

He, by Himself, has sworn;

I on His oath depend;

I shall, on eagle's wings upborne,

To Heaven ascend.

I shall behold His face,

I shall His power adore;

And sing the wonders of His grace

For evermore!

-67-The Mercy of God

The Mercy of God James Smith, 1842

"Your mercy, O Lord, endured forever!" Psalms 138:8

Few things that relate to religion are more talked of, and but few less understood — than the mercy of God. It is indeed . . .

a fountain of consolation,

a spring of happiness, and

a source of comfort —

to all who rightly enter into it. But we can derive correct information in reference to the subject, only from the Word of God; that is, God's revelation concerning Himself; and from it alone we can learn the true nature of His mercy.

It is common to say, "God is merciful" — and it is a glorious truth; but how am I to know that He is, or will be merciful to me? This is the great question. God is JUST — as well as merciful. And He is AS just — as He is merciful. Both justice and mercy are in Him alike infinite.

Whenever God designs to be merciful — He discovers, reveals, and makes manifest His mercy by His acts. When He was determined to manifest His mercy in the loftiest manner to His people — then He gave His only-begotten Son; hence we read that it was, "through the tender mercy of our God; that the day-spring from on high has visited us." Luke 1:78. And when He shows mercy to a sinner, He regenerates that sinner's soul, quickens him to a life divine, and begets him to a living hope; therefore the Apostle says, "According to His mercy, He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Titus 3:5. And again, "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins — has quickened us together with Christ — by grace are you saved!" Ephesians 2:4-5. So also the Apostle Peter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Peter 1:3.

Divine mercy reveals to the soul, through the teachings of the Holy Spirit — the willingness of God to pardon. Divine mercy leads the conscious sinner to seek pardon through the blood of the cross — and God graciously bestows it according to His word. "The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression!" And Moses said, "Pardon, I beseech you, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your mercy!" Where God shows mercy, He inspires prayer in the heart, enables the soul to petition, and sends down a merciful answer. Mercy received, makes a man faithful to his God, to his conscience, and to the truth. Paul obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. 1 Corinthians 7:25. Mercy received, makes its possessors merciful, pitiful, and kind; "Blessed are the merciful. for they shall obtain mercy." Matthew 5:7

Mercy received, leads the soul that trusts in it, to rejoice in Christ's salvation; I have trusted in your mercy; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation." Psalms 13:5. It begets thankfulness, and leads out the soul in praise; I will sing aloud of your mercy in the morning." Psalms 59:16. It brings satisfaction; "Oh, satisfy us early with your mercy." Psalms 90:14. It preserves the tried, distressed, and perplexed Christian, from fainting under the trials, temptations, and distresses that he meets with; "As we have received mercy, we faint not." 2 Corinthians 4:1.

Mercy received, plants a desire in the mind to glorify God in heart, lip, and life; "That the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy." Romans 15:9. It engages the Lord to lead, befriend, and guide them; "He who has mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them." Isaiah 49:10. It prevents us from falling into snares, despair, and Hell; "The God of my mercy shall prevent me." Psalms 59:10. It compasses the soul about, to protect, secure, and supply it with all necessary good; "He who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." Psalms 32:10. And the man that tastes its sweetness, feels its power, and sees the provision it makes, with his own interest in it, can say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalms 23:6.

Mercy is an attribute of God, which is exercised towards the miserable; it flows to us in our miserable estate, through the person, work, and sacrifice of Christ; it is revealed in the blessed Bible; and God the Holy Spirit gives us to seek it and find it.

Mercy appears in all the Lord's conduct towards us — and all our blessings flow from this sweet ocean! Pardon, peace, provision, fellowship, comfort now, and glory by and by — are founded in, and are the effects of, the covenant mercy of God. The man that is interested in the mercy of God, is a happy man; all that God appoints, permits, and allows to take place, is mercifully designed to benefit and advantage him. God is for him, Christ pleads his cause, and he need not fear what man can do unto him. The mercy of God is free, inviting, and sufficient; the word of God says, "He who follows after righteousness and mercy, finds righteousness, and honor." Proverbs 21:21. Reader, have you obtained mercy? I do not ask, Have you heard, read, or talked about mercy; but, Have you obtained it? The Apostle speaks of some, "who had not obtained mercy — but now have obtained mercy;" 1 Peter 2:10. Has mercy brought . . .

life to your soul,

peace to your conscience,

and spiritual joy to your heart? Have you sought mercy? Are you living to the praise of mercy? Are you looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life?" Jude 1:21. Have you reason, from the word of God, to believe that you shall find mercy of the Lord in that day? Do you feel your need of mercy? if so, the door of God's mercy stands open all day, to the poor and the needy, who knock by the way. No sinner was ever yet empty sent back, who came seeking mercy for Jesus' sake."

You have nothing to discourage you — but everything on your side; true, you may feel unworthy; so did Jacob, Genesis 32:10. You may think that God's mercy is clean gone forever; so did Asaph, Psalm 8. You may be grown old in sin before you have thought of seeking; so was the thief on the cross; but yet he found. God has revealed Himself as "The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." 2 Corinthians 1:3. Jesus is very merciful, and slow to anger. He is a merciful High priest.

Hebrews 2:17. Jehovah — Father, Son, and Spirit delights in mercy; and will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Micah 7:8, Matthew 9:11 And in reference to those who seek Him, it is said, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Hebrews 8:12. But if you are living careless, indifferent, and impenitent — remember, God is only merciful on earth. In judgment, in Heaven, and in Hell — he is JUST, but not MERCIFUL. If you live and die unacquainted with the power, sweetness, and glory of divine mercy — you will find . . .

judgment without mercy;

wrath without favor; and

torment without cessation! Your doom is to be cast into a lake of fire; which is the second death. Revelation 20:14. The gnawing worm of a guilty conscience shall not die, neither shall the fire be quenched, Isaiah 66:24; but you will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of your torment will ascend up forever and ever! Revelation 14:10-11.

-68-The Unspeakable Gift!

The Unspeakable Gift!

James Smith, 1842

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!" 2 Corinthians 9:15 When our Lord Jesus Christ was upon earth, and was conversing with Nicodemus respecting divine things, He said, "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 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!" John 3:14-18

We are sinners — and we deeply need salvation; a salvation which will . . .

reach our case,

suit our dreadful condition, and

raise us above sin, Satan, and the wrath of God.

Just such a salvation is provided, for God has sent His Son into the world. He has fulfilled the law which we had broken. He has satisfied divine justice which was our foe. He has made peace by the blood of His cross. He is able, He is willing, He is appointed to save all who believe in Him. He saves . . .

from sin,

from the world,

and from Hell. As a Savior, He is set before you in the portion of scripture you have just read — and salvation is received, realized, and enjoyed, only by believing in Him. No works of yours can merit it, no feelings can entitle you to it, no good dispositions can warrant you to claim it. It is God's gift, flowing from His grace, revealing His mercy and His nature, which is LOVE. God has given His Son; Christ has loved, suffered, and died. Christian! All that Christ is, all that He has, and all that He has done — is yours! And you are warranted to claim the whole upon believing.

"He died the just, for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." True faith receives Christ and His complete salvation as God's gift; and the soul finds joy and peace in believing on His name. True faith brings the sinner . . .

under the wing of Christ's cross for forgiveness;

to His throne for supplies of grace;

and under His authority for government.

Thus we are saved by grace through faith; and that, not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. True faith in Christ produces confidence in God, reliance on Jesus, and devotedness to Christ. True faith banishes slavish fear, removes tormenting doubt, and introduces peace and joy. True faith works by love, to Jehovah for His gift, to Jesus for His salvation, and to the saints as His disciples. Hence the Scripture says, "Whom, having not seen, you love; in whom, though you see Him not — yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

"Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well." "We know that we have passed from death unto life — because we love the brethren." Thus, believing on the Lord Jesus, or having faith which works by love — is the great evidence . . .

of our being delivered from condemnation,

of our being interested in Christ, and

that we shall be everlastingly saved. As the scriptures say, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead — you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, 'Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.' For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!" Romans 10:9-13 May I now put the question to you, reader — "Do YOU believe in the Son of God?" The subject is all important, for "he who believes, shall be saved — but he who believes not, shall be damned." There is no escaping divine wrath, or enjoying everlasting blessedness — but by believing in Jesus. No matter what you possess, what you perform, or upon what you trust — without faith in Christ, you are under God's curse, a child of wrath, and in the direct road to perdition! But if you really believe on the Son of God — then, though you may be deeply tried, sorely tempted, and often cast down — yet all is well; things present are for your welfare, things future shall work your good, and God shall be the strength of your heart, and your portion forever! You are NOW a child of God, an heir of God, and, a joint-heir with Christ. To you there is no condemnation, God justifies you, and Christ is interceding for you. You have a right to all the promises, you are entitled to all the blessings, and you are invited to enjoy all the rich provisions of the gospel. God for you spared not His own Son — but delivered Him up in your stead; and how shall He not with Him also freely give you all things! This He has done; all things are yours, and you are Christ's. All things are for your sake; and all things are working together for your good. Happy are you, O Christian! Who is like unto you — beloved and saved by the Lord? Nothing shall by any means hurt you, while you are following that which is good.

God is now your God, He rests in His love to you, He rejoices over you to do you good, with His whole heart, and with His whole soul; and His language to you is, "Ask and receive — that your joy may be full." All this is comprised in God's unspeakable gift — which He gives to sinners freely, absolutely, and eternally. This is the portion, right, and property of all who believe in Jesus. But what is the portion of the unbeliever? The unsaved sinner is reserved to the day of destruction; he shall be brought forth to the day of wrath. Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and His

remembrance shall perish from the earth. He shall be brought into desolation as in a moment, he shall be utterly consumed with terrors. The heavens shall reveal His iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him. God shall cast the fury of His wrath upon him, and shall turn him into Hell, with all that forget God. This is the portion of a Wicked man, from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.

"Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks: Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" Revelation 6:15-17

Sinner, the coming of the Lord draws near, the Judge stands before the door; and who may abide the day of His coming? Who shall stand when He appears? Are YOU prepared to stand? Only those who have received God's unspeakable gift, can stand in that day.

-69-The Sufficiency of Grace

The Sufficiency of Grace James Smith, 1842

"My grace is sufficient for you; for my strength is made perfect in weakness!" 2 Corinthians 12:9
The grace of Jesus fixed on a sinner — is the cause of all His communications to that sinner. He gives grace to us, because we have found favor in His eyes. He who has once realized the power, sweetness, and glory of divine grace, is always desirous of enjoying more of it. Grace has supplied all the needs of the Lord's family in every age.

"What shall I do?" cries the distressed and bewildered soul. Do? Look to Jesus. He has a fullness of grace, and His grace is sufficient for you — sufficient to enable you to bear your afflictions with patience; to rejoice in the midst of the furnace; and to cry out, "In all these things I am more than a conqueror, through Him that loved me."

Remember His marvelous works that He has done; His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth. He has ever been the strength of the poor, and the strength of the needy in his distress. His grace will . . .

pardon your sins;

rectify your mistakes;

control your enemies;

justify your person;

sanctify your soul, and

supply all your needs.

He is gracious. He has abundance of grace. He will give grace. Fear not, you may feel weak, unworthy, and question your right to the grace of Jesus; but remember, grace is always free. "Not for your sakes, do I this, O house of Israel — but for my holy name's sake. I will not give my glory to another." Jesus gets glory by . . .

relieving the poor,

befriending the unworthy,

filling the empty,

strengthening the weak, and

leading the lame to take the prey.

He asserts His right, "May I not do as I will with my own?" He displays His authority, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." He manifests His benevolence, "Go out quickly into the

streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." He gets glory, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us — but unto your name give glory, for your mercy, and for your truth's sake. Our God is in the heavens; he has done whatever He has pleased." The grace of Jesus is for whoever will; if you have a willing mind — then you are the very person for whom grace was treasured up in Jesus; and upon you it will be bestowed. This one scripture is enough to carry you safely through time, and to land you in eternal glory. It is for your consolation and salvation; claim it as God's free gift; plead it as your warrant to expect a supply of every good thing; and trust it, with all possible confidence — for you cannot be deceived. You have a thorn in your flesh as Paul had — and you have the same promise from the same faithful God. The thorn and the promise go together in God's dispensations; do not attempt to separate them; but go to the Lord as the Psalmist, "Remember the word unto your servant; upon which you have caused me to hope."

I hear my Lord, my Savior say,
Strength shall be equal to your day;
Now I rejoice in deep distress,
Leaning on all sufficient grace.
I glory in infirmity,
That Christ's own power may rest on me;
When I am weak, then I am strong,
Grace is my shield, and Christ my song.
I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings, if my Lord be there;
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,
While His strong arm, my heart sustains.

-70-You Will Revive Me

You Will Revive Me James Smith, 1842

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble — You will revive me!" Psalms 138:7 The Christian's path is often lined with tribulation. He walks surrounded by troubles; and whichever way he looks, there is something to grieve him. He grieves over the sins of His own heart and life. He mourns over the ungodly practices of many in the church. He sighs and cries for all the abominations that are done in the land. His God is dishonored, and his heart cannot be unaffected.

Through much tribulation, he must enter into the kingdom of God. If in this life only he had hope, he would be of all men most miserable. But in the midst of trouble, the Lord revives Him. Sometimes He meets him at the throne of grace, softens His heart, draws out His soul in gratitude, or fires him with holy love. This is a little reviving in his bondage. Or, He opens up some sweet portion of His word, and the believer discovers something of the grace, love, and glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. This animates, attracts, and inspires him with fresh courage to run the race set before him. Sometimes His appearance as a God of providence, in an unexpected way, bringing relief or deliverance, is the means of reviving. This strengthens faith, encourages hope, and leads forth in praise.

We may seem to lie long without a reviving ray under some afflictive circumstances — but the Lord will revive us, for, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Let us therefore cry out under a sense of the need of a reviving, "Quicken me according to your Word." Never give way to despondency, even though surrounded by trouble — but wait on the Lord, and He shall save you. When none can deliver you but God, as is sometimes the case; then He will be sure to appear and make a way for your escape, that you may be able to bear it. The confidence of the Psalmist was strong, "You will revive me." He had tried the Lord before — and proved Him true; he had trusted in Him — and found Him faithful. His faithfulness is like the great mountains. "The counsel of the Lord shall stand forever, and the thoughts of His heart unto all generations. He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? He knows the way we take, and when he has tried us — we shall come forth as gold. He will be as the dew unto Israel. He will come down as rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth." His coming down thus — revives, quickens, and cheers us.

Trouble, sanctified trouble, prepares the heart, emptying it of self and other evils. And then the Lord graciously condescends to come and fill it with His presence, blessing, and love.

Tried believer, be upon the lookout, for the reviving presence and blessing of your God. He has said, "I will be with him in trouble." Expect to find Him with you, for He is sure to be as good as His word. He will not fail you nor forsake you. He will come unto you and bless you. Doubt not, Fear not. Wait upon the Lord, for "unto the upright there arises a light in the darkness."

He will not always chide, neither keep His anger forever; He will turn and cause His face to shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

-71-The Blessed of the Lord

The Blessed of the Lord James Smith, 1842 "You are the blessed of the Lord, who made Heaven and earth!" Psalms 115:15 The Word of God solemnly pronounces a curse upon all who violate the righteous commands of God, who live transgressing His precepts, and come short of absolute perfection. And as this is the case, the whole race of man, in a state of nature, are under the curse of God. And what does the curse of God entail upon those who are under it? Misery and disappointment at present — and everlasting burnings at death. But is there no deliverance from this dreadful curse? Yes, Jesus Christ came into the world, and took the curse upon Himself, was hanged on a tree, laid in a sepulcher, expiated sin, endured divine wrath, and has become the able, suitable, and willing Savior of all who, under a sense of sin, seeking mercy, and desiring salvation — flee unto Him. But are not all mankind delivered from the curse, and brought under the blessing? No! All who are under the law, all who are seeking Heaven by works, all who are depending on their own performances — are cursed still. Galatians 3:10. All are under the law by nature, all remain under the law while unconverted, and none are brought from under the law — but by the gracious operation, divine communications, and sacred teachings of God the Holy Spirit. At regeneration, a spiritual principle is implanted; in conversion this spiritual principle is drawn forth into act and exercise. In consequence of which, the sinner flies to Jesus, looks to Calvary, and pleads atoning blood. The Spirit applies the atonement, Jesus whispers peace, and God the Father appears a reconciled Friend. The curse is now removed, the blessing is realized by faith, and joy and peace follow. The soul can now read its title clear to mansions in the skies, claim its relationship to Jesus, and find in itself the evidences which are laid down in God's most holy word. The man is now truly poor in spirit; he feels poverty, inability, and natural wretchedness. He mourns on account of . . .

his indwelling sin,

the hardness of heart which he experiences,

and the wandering of His mind from God.

He meekly submits to God's method of salvation, and embraces, receives, and enjoys it, as the gift of free grace, without desert or deserving. He hungers and thirsts after conformity to Jesus, the possession of His righteousness, and consistency of life, walk, and conversation. He is merciful, pitiful, and kind, in his dealings with mankind; he can pity, feel for, and assist others in their distresses, especially the household of faith. His heart and conscience are purged by precious blood. His desires go out after holiness, and he aims to walk uprightly. He is a son of peace, being called to it, he is in love with it, and strives for it. He enjoys peace with God, peace in his conscience, and seeks to make peace in his family, the world, and the church of God.

He will be persecuted for righteousness sake; the world will hate, oppose, and strive to injure him; but grace teaches him to bless the Lord, that unto him it is given, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe — but to suffer for His sake. He looks beyond present scenes, pities and prays for his

enemies, and rejoices that great is his reward in Heaven. Matthew 5:3; Matthew 5:12. The man that is blessed of God approaches to Jehovah as His Father, with freedom, boldness, and delight; to worship, adore, and praise. Psalms 44:4. He endures temptations from Satan, the world, and carnal professors of religion. James 1:12. He fears God with a child-like, affectionate, spiritual fear. Psalms 128:1. He knows the joyful sound of liberty, love, and salvation, proclaimed in the everlasting gospel.

He has an heartfelt, saving knowledge of Christ, in His person, work, and complete salvation. Matthew 16:17. He looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein; is not a forgetful hearer — but a doer of the work, and is blessed in his deeds. James 1:25. He knows and daily proves that His strength is in the Lord, and that His heart is set upon the portion, pleasures, and pursuits of those who are born of God. Psalms 84:5. He waits upon the Lord at His throne, at His gates, and in His ways; for answers to prayer, the light of His countenance, and His Father's promised blessing. Isaiah 30:18.

He trusts simply in Jesus as the only Savior, the King of Zion, and the Son of God. Psalms 2:12. He does His Lord's commandments with a single eye to His glory, under the teaching of the Spirit, in a child-like frame. Revelation 22:14. He is looking, desiring, and watching, for the second coming of His Lord; with holy longing, sweet anticipation, and joyful expectation. He is often . . .

harassed by temptation,

cast down on account of inward corruption,

distressed by cross providences,

and tried in a variety of ways. But still he feels the promises of God as his support, communion with God as a source of consolation, and the grace of Jesus as sufficient for him. In prayer he commits His way to the Lord, by faith he overcomes the world, and in the promised strength of the Lord, he surmounts his troubles; and finally becomes more than a conqueror through Him who loved him. He is a chosen, redeemed, called, sanctified, son of God; separate from the world, though living in the world; chosen out of the world, and in consequence thereof, differing from the world. He has an inheritance beyond the world; and is, therefore only traveling through the world to His Father's house above.

All such are blessed by the Lord, who made Heaven and earth. They are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. They have the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is come. They are . . .

secured from wrath,

entitled to Heaven,

and made fit for glory.

They dwell on high; their place of defense is the munition of rocks; their bread is given them, and their water is sure. They shall see the King in His beauty, and behold the land that is very far off. Their warfare is accomplished, their iniquity is pardoned, and Jehovah loves them with an everlasting love. They are formed for the Lord, and appointed to show forth His praise. They are

saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; they shall not be ashamed not confounded, world without end.

All things work together for their good; all things are theirs; they are Christ's; and nothing shall by any means hurt them. No weapon that is formed against them shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against them in judgment — they shall condemn. This is the heritage of the blessed of the Lord.

Reader, have YOU those evidences of being a blessed character? Remember, they are drawn from the word of God, which is the only infallible rule, and by which you will shortly be judged. And bear this in mind: You are either under the blessing — or under the curse; and according to your state in this world — will be your everlasting doom. My fellow-sinner, something like the above must be your experience, if ever you hear the Savior's voice, saying, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" But if you are not made fit for, and privileged to hear that joyful welcome; then you must, (oh how dreadful!) you must hear Him say, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and His angels!" The Lord forbid that this should be your case. Amen.

-72-Ask and Receive

Ask and Receive James Smith, 1842

"Ask, and you shall receive!" John 16:24 The Lord has provided and stored up in Christ, all blessings for His people, and has made it both their duty and privilege, to seek those blessings from Him by prayer. He has given them every encouragement . . .

to pray fervently,

to ask freely, and

to petition boldly —

for all they want!

He has said, "Enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret shall reward you openly." Matthew 6:6.

"ASK — and it shall be given you;

SEEK — and you shall find;

KNOCK — and it shall be opened unto you.

For everyone that asks, receives;

and he who seeks, finds; and

to him that knocks, it shall be opened.

If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how MUCH MORE shall your Father who is in Heaven, give good things unto them that ask Him!" Matthew 7 "You have not — because you ask not." James 4:2.

"Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. Whatever you shall ask the Father in my name — He will give it to you." John 16:23. 24.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16.

"Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." Hebrews 12:28.

"God is able to make ALL GRACE abound toward you; that you always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:8.

Let us then attend to the Apostolic exhortation, "Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Php 4:6. And to

this, Jesus encourages us, by assuring us, that, "whatever we shall ask the Father in His name, that He will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If we ask anything in His name He will do it." John 14:13-14.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness (or liberty) to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new living way; which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a High-priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Hebrews 10:19-22. But many of the Lord's people speak as though they were at a loss to know what to pray for; and many by their prayers make it manifest that they do not know their privileges, and what they are warranted to expect from the Lord; but as Jesus is the same as He ever was, as the promises of God remain unaltered — if we pray for the same blessings as the Apostle sought, we cannot err. Now we find the Apostle praying thus for the church, "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. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come!" Ephesians 1:17-21

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us!" Ephesians 3:16-20

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God!" Php 1:9-11

"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves!" Colossians 1:9-13

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13

"With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ!" 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and your whole spirit and soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Such were the prayers of the Apostle for His brethren, and those for himself were similar. Nor did those prayers remain unanswered; NO, God was faithful, and made good His word; and what believers in old times enjoyed — we in our time should pray for. "Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." Joh 16:-24

Surely the Lord's hand not shortened, His love exhausted, or His nature changed! No — but our iniquities have separated between us and our God, Isaiah 59:2; we have departed out of the way; we have stumbled at the law, and have been partial in it. Malachi 2:8-9. We "have not, because we ask not. We ask and receive not, because we ask amiss, that we may consume it upon our lusts." James 4:2-3.

We should regulate our prayers by our needs, and our needs by God's precepts; if God commands us to do a thing — He has promised wisdom, strength, and direction; but His promises are made to believing and to prayer. The language of our God is, "I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." Ezekiel 36:37.

Reader, are you praying for the same great, suitable, and glorious favors which the Apostle prayed for? Remember, if you are a believer, they are as much promised to You, as to the church in old time. You have . . .

the same warrant to pray for them,
the same covenant God to address,
the same Advocate before the throne,
the same name to plead, and
the same faithfulness to rest upon.

Compare your prayers then . . .

with those of the Apostles,
with what the saints once enjoyed,
with what God has promised, and
with the precepts that are to regulate your life

— and let the time past of your life suffice you, to have been satisfied with small things. Now open your mouth wide, and God will fill it!

Psalms 89:10. Ask of Him largely, beg of Him earnestly, and you shall receive abundantly. "Call upon Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you know not." Jeremiah 33:3. "In the day when I cried — you answered me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul." Psalms 138:3. Go you and receive likewise, ever remembering, that "God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all you can ask or imagine!" Ephesians 3:20

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