

THE PASTOR'S EVENING VISIT

by James Smith

Smith's extensive evening pastoral work addressing believers at day's end, offering reflections that comfort, correct, and draw people nearer to God through themes of divine watchfulness, care, and Christian hope.

136 Chapters

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00 Pastor's Evening Visit

The Pastor's Evening Visit by James Smith My Father's eye!

"Your Father—who sees in secret." Matthew 6:6

Can anyone hide himself from the Lord in secret places?

Can I, under any circumstances, escape His notice?

Impossible!

The eye of God has been fixed upon me every second of this day; it is now at this moment fixed fully upon me. But it is my Father's eye! My Father sees in secret!

He sees my needs—and my woes.

He sees every secret working of my foes—and will save me from them.

He sees every secret influence which is likely to injure me—and will prevent it.

He sees . . .

the secret workings of my heart,

my hidden thoughts,

my unuttered desires,

my soul conflicts,

my private temptations.

But He sees also my secret sins!

Every evil thought,

every improper action,

every unfitting word—

passes under His eye!

Solemn consideration this!

May it make me cautious. May it preserve me. . .

from yielding to temptation,

from nourishing sinful thoughts, and

from acting inconsistent with my profession.

My heavenly Father sees me!

He sees me at this moment!

He sees me every moment!

He sees my most secret motives, thoughts, and purposes!

He who thus sees me—hates every sin with an infinite hatred!

~ ~ ~ ~ He was infinitely happy and glorious without us!

"Christ, who loved us!"Romans 8:37

No condition can possibly be more dreary—than to feel that no one loves or cares for us!

There is something peculiarly sweet and pleasant—in being the object of another's love. Even the love of a poor child is sweet. But to be loved by one who is most wealthy, most exalted in station, and most honorable in character—must be peculiarly delightful!

How, then, should we rejoice; how happy should we be—who are loved by the Lord Jesus!
Especially when we consider:

on the one hand:

how despicable,

how poor,

how worthless, and

how unlovely WE are!

And, on the other hand:

how glorious,

how wealthy,

how worthy,

how lovely JESUS is!

To be loved by Jesus—is to be preferred before the possession of a world!

Think of . . .

the glory of His person,

the vastness of His possessions,

the number of His angelic attendants,

the unlimited sovereignty which He exercises,

and the excellent character He bears!

Also bear in mind—that He knew what loving us would cost Him—how He would be treated by us and by others—for our sakes!

Yet He fixed His love upon US!

He loved US—just because He would!

He passed by others more dignified in nature, more exalted in station—but He chose US!

He did not, could not, NEED us—for He was infinitely happy and glorious without us!

Yet He loved us!

He still loves us!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We shall wither, fade and die!

"Like autumn leaves—we wither and fall!" Isaiah 64:6

What a contrast between an unchangeable God—and a sinner withering like a leaf! Yet, this is a true picture of us—and of all temporal things.

We began to look green and bright not long ago—and in a little time we shall wither, fade and die!

"How short is life—and how full of trouble! Like a flower—we blossom for a moment—and then wither!" Job 14:1-2. Humbling consideration! But it may be rendered very useful. Let us endeavor to profit by it.

Shall we soon wither and die? Then let us not be overly concerned by anything that occurs here below. Let us set our affections on things above, and lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Let us live by faith on Jesus, walk with God, and aim principally to please Him in all that we do. Let us also watch against a worldly spirit, and pass the time of our sojourning here on earth, in fear.

We shall soon find that . . .

health gives place to sickness;

strength gives place to weakness;

youth gives place to old age!

The dying bed, the coffin, and the grave—are just before us!

Let us therefore make our calling and our election sure.

Let us cultivate close and filial fellowship with God.

Let us dig deep and lay our foundation upon the Rock.

Brethren, the time is short! Eternity with all its glories is just before us!

"Like autumn leaves—we wither and fall!" Isaiah 64:6

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He never trusts 'the rod' out of His own hand!

"The Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons! For what son is not disciplined by his father?"
Hebrews 12:6-7

Christian! God is treating you as His own dear children . . .

in what He bestows—and in what He withholds;

in what you enjoy—and in what you suffer!

Our God has made you His children by adopting you into His family, and new-creating you by His Holy Spirit. He always . . .

looks upon you as His children,

loves you as His children,

treats you as His children!

He will not GIVE you—what will harm you!

He will not PUT you—where you will be in danger!

He corrects you as His child, not in wrath—but in mercy.

He never trusts 'the rod' out of His own hand! Whatever is the MEANS of discipline—your Father is the AGENT! He works all things after the counsel of His own will.

You are at present 'under training'; you are being educated for eternity. The 'lessons' you have to learn—are for your benefit.

Every loss,

every cross,

every disappointment,

every pain—

is necessary!

Do you really believe this?

Do you recognize the hand of God in everything that befalls you?

Can you say with Job, "The Lord GAVE"—health, wealth, children, friends;

"and the Lord has TAKEN AWAY—blessed be the name of the Lord!"

Can you say with Eli, "It is the Lord—let Him do what He thinks best!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He will carry the lambs in His arms, holding them close to his heart!

"Fear not, little flock!" Luke 12:32

The Savior's flock is small.

It exists in the harsh desert.

Enemies surround it.

His lambs, especially, are timid.

But He says, "Fear not, little flock!"

You are your Shepherd's care!

You are His property!

You are His delight!

He is always present with you!

He is omnipotent to defend you!

Every perfection of His divine nature is employed for you!

He has never lost one of His charge yet—and He never will!

It was said of Him by the prophet, "He will feed His flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in His arms, holding them close to His heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young!"
Isaiah 40:11

He gathers His sheep to His fold.

He feeds them in good pasture.

He restores them when they wander.

His CARE of them is incessant!

His LOVE to them passes knowledge!

The PROVISION He has made for them is suitable and abundant.

Beloved, let us know our Shepherd.

Let us listen to His voice.

Let us keep close to His side.

Let us feed and rest among His sheep.

Let us exercise confidence in His kindness and care.

Let us banish our fears, for why should we be alarmed?

Let us cast all our concerns and cares—upon the good Shepherd!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Thenestwas destroyed, and thepoor birdlay bleeding and exposed!

"I thought: Surely I shall die in my nest!" Job 29:18

Job's nest was very comfortable—and appeared to be very secure. It was on high—and not to be easily reached. He knew that death could reach it—but he thought that nothing else would disturb it.

His conduct was consistent,

his conscience was quiet;

God was his Father, and

providence was his friend.

"I thought: Surely I shall die in my nest!"

But, alas! Suddenly a 'storm' arose—thenestwas destroyed, and thepoor birdlay bleeding and exposed!

No earthly nest is out of danger. Temporal comforts are only lent to us. The higher the tree in which we build—the more exposed to the whirlwind and the storm!

Here on earth—we have no continuing city. In one moment—our fine nest may be devastated! Let us therefore endeavor to leave our matters fully with the Lord—and learn to be content with His appointments.

We must die. But when, and where, and how—should be left with the Lord.

Five minutes after death—it will matter very little whether we died on a bed of down, in a luxurious mansion, surrounded by kind friends—OR as a poor diseased beggar, dying alone in squalor!

Present comforts may all leave us, and our soft nest may be scattered to the winds—but nothing can disturb our salvation and future glory!

"These all died in faith—and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth!" Hebrews 11:13

"They were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a heavenly city for them!" Hebrews 11:16

~ ~ ~ ~ His fruit was sweet to my taste!

"Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my Beloved. I delight to sit in His shade, and His fruit was sweet to my taste!" Song of Solomon 2:3

The Lord Jesus is incomparably lovely!

His personal excellencies baffle the powers of description!

Every beautiful figure which nature can furnish—is employed to set Him forth; but a spiritual perception is necessary to discern and delight in Him.

Here He is compared to the apple tree amidst the trees of the forest, as affording refreshing shade and delicious food.

"His fruit was sweet to my taste!"

His fruit includes . . .

the promises He has made,

the pardons He bestows,

the reconciliation He has effected,

the peace He imparts,

the fellowship He has with His people,

the assurances of His love,

the joys of the Holy Spirit,

the hope of eternal life,

access into God's presence, and

the precious foretastes of glory which He gives.

These are sweet, incomparably sweet, to every spiritual mind!

Sheltered from storms,

protected from foes,

preserved from the sultry sun,

and fed with fruits of salvation,

the believer is happy—and his Savior is precious to his soul.

And while the fruits of Jesus are sweet to him—sin is bitter! He has no relish for . . .

the follies,

the vain amusements, and

the sinful pleasures of the world!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Before honor—is humility!" Proverbs 18:12

The Lord always humbles—before He exalts.

He strips us—before He clothes us with the best robe.

He empties us—before He fills us with His grace.

We must be clothed in sack cloth—before we are raised to sit with the princes of His people.

It is the weak—whom He strengthens.

It is the poor—whom He supplies.

It is the condemned—whom He justifies.

It is the homeless—whom He receives.

It is the totally unworthy—whom He crowns with glory!

We must lie low—if we would rise high.

We must be nothing—if we would inherit all things.

We must be quite empty—if we would be filled with all the fullness of God.

He "gives grace unto the humble."

Joseph must lie in the dungeon—before he is seated in the royal palace.

David must be hunted like the partridge upon the mountains—before he is raised to fill the throne of Israel.

Paul must be a poor blind sinner—before he becomes the great apostle.

This is God's plan.

The godly, who are now accounted the "the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world"—are destined to shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father! 1 Corinthians 4:13

Beloved, the lower you descend in humility—the higher you will rise in glory!

The deeper your penitence—the sweeter your joys!

"God resists the proud—but gives grace unto the humble."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"They will moan like doves—weeping for their sins!" Ezekiel 7:16

Such is the effect of real conversion to God.

The unconverted man may weep when his iniquity is found out—for he dreads the shame and punishment of his sin.

But only the sincere believer will mourn—because he has sinned against a God of love, and broken a law that is holy, just and good. He will mourn over the sin that dwells in him—which no one knows but himself; as well as for the iniquity that is discovered by his fellow men. He daily mourns—because he daily sins.

Yet he is not unhappy. He knows that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses him from all sin. He knows that he is accepted in Christ, his Beloved. Yet these things make him mourn. "They will look on Me, the One they have pierced—and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child,

and grieve bitterly for Him as one grieves for a firstborn son!" Zechariah 12:10

The greater his confidence in God;
the sweeter his enjoyment of a Savior's love;
the closer he walks with God—
the more he mourns for his iniquity.

Beloved, do you mourn for your iniquity?

Has there been any sorrow for sin working in your heart today?

You daily sin;

you should daily mourn for your iniquity;

you must daily flee to the fountain opened to cleanse you from sin and impurity.

"They will moan like doves—weeping for their sins!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"In all your ways acknowledge Him—and He shall direct your paths!" Proverbs 3:6

Are you in perplexity?

Are you at a loss which way to take—or what to do?

Does providence baffle all your schemes, and leave you in confusion and trouble?

The Lord is teaching you the lesson which He taught his prophet Jeremiah, who said, "I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps!"

You must go to the Lord for wisdom—as well as for grace.

You must look to Him for direction—as well as salvation.

He has marked out your path—but you cannot see His lines. Go to Him in childlike simplicity and ask Him to throw light upon it—and then it will be all plain.

Seek His direction—before every movement.

Beseech Him to go with you—in every enterprise.

"In all your ways acknowledge Him—and He shall direct your paths!"

His eye is upon you for good.

His ear is open to your prayer. He will be very gracious unto you—at the voice of your cry. When He hears you—He will answer you.

Consult His Word,

seek His blessing,

honor His love,
keep His company,
aim at His glory—
and He shall direct your paths.

He will always direct you aright!

"In all your ways acknowledge Him—and He shall direct your paths!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Our 'Ebenezer'

"Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it 'Ebenezer', saying, Thus far has the LORD helped us!" 1 Samuel 7:12

As creatures—we are exposed, weak and foolish—and thus require help.

As Christians—we are . . .

surrounded by snares,

opposed by enemies,

timid and fearful, and

easily turned aside

—and thus require help.

We have received help—divine help in every time of need!

It was through divine assistance, that we were able . . .

to overcome unbelief and evil habits;

to break away from our old friends;

to take up our cross and bear it after Jesus;

to stand our ground amidst storms of temptation;

to persevere in the straight and narrow way.

Having obtained help from God—we continue to this day.

Let us then set up our 'Ebenezer', and acknowledge the help we have received.

Its source was divine—it came from above.

The supply has been . . .

sufficient,

well-timed, and

exactly suited to the circumstances.

What should be the result?

Praise—hearty, grateful, constant praise.

Prayer—fervent, faithful, frequent prayer for help in future.

Patience—waiting in quiet expectation for divine assistance.

Testimony—God is faithful.

Here I raise my Ebenezer,

Hither by Your help I've come;

And I hope, by Your good pleasure,

Safely to arrive at home!

~ ~ ~ ~ And when you feel weak—lean hard!

"Who is this coming up from the wilderness—leaning upon her Beloved?" Song of Solomon 8:5

Jesus is the object of a believer's love.

To him—the world is a wilderness.

Heaven is his Father's house—and his home.

He is passing through the wilderness in company with Jesus.

He is represented as the bride leaning on her Beloved.

This is indicative of weakness in herself—and confidence in her Beloved.

He is her strength—as well as her guide.

He is her support—as well as the object of her affection.

She leans on Him—as well as converses with Him.

He supports her—as well as comforts her.

Believer, keep close to your Savior's side! Never leave Him while in this waste howling wilderness.

Lean on Him! And when you feel weak—lean hard!

His strong arm is put forth to support your weak frame.

He will bear you up. He will lead you on.

The more you lean on Him—the more you will love Him!

The more you love Him—the closer you will cleave to Him!

Yield to His guidance,

trust in His love,
lean on His power,
walk by His side.

In His company—you are safe!

In communion with Him—you will be happy! Like the two disciples of old, your heart will be warmed, and you will be at the end of your journey before you are aware of it!

He is always at your side—so lean hard!

"Who is this coming up from the wilderness—leaning upon her Beloved?" Song of Solomon 8:5

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ As soon as your pride, obstinacy, and worldliness are gone!

"He will sit like a refiner of silver, watching closely as the dross is burned away. He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold or silver." Malachi 3:3

God's people are His precious metal.

Afflictions are His furnace.

Purification is His design.

He therefore puts them into the furnace—and He keeps them there until His end is accomplished.

But He Himself superintends the whole refining process! He . . .

regulates the heat,

watches the operation of it,

and sits waiting for the fulfillment of His design.

He will not be disappointed, for if one affliction does not produce the desired end—another shall!

Beloved, perhaps you have wondered why one trial has followed another in your experience. The reason is this—the dross was not yet removed!

Your sorest trials—are among your choicest mercies, because they are intended to purify you!

Do not think that you are left alone in your sorrows—your Lord sits closely by, as your refiner! He intently watches the purification process—and as soon as your pride, obstinacy, and worldliness are gone—the fire is withdrawn—and your troubles will end!

There shall not be one furnace more than is necessary, nor shall you continue in suffering one moment more than is needful. Your Savior, who died for your sins—is your Refiner! He sits by the furnace during the whole process of refining! He is preparing you for glory!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"He shall be great!" Luke 1:32

So spoke the angel, announcing the birth of the Lord Jesus; and the prediction is fulfilled. He is great, and His greatness is unsearchable! He is great:

in the dignity of His nature,
in the depth of His humiliation,
in the glory of His righteousness,
in the merit of His blood,
in the provisions of His gospel,
in the salvation of His converts,
in the extent of His kingdom,
in the tenderness of His sympathy,
in the variety of His offices,
in the grandeur of His works,
in the estimation of His people,
in the conquest of His foes, and
in the punishment of His inveterate enemies!

His greatness is stamped upon . . .

every promise He has made,
every pardon He grants,
every blessing He gives,
and every victory He gains!

Believer, your Savior is great. Therefore He . . .

saves great sinners,
confers great grace,
bears with great offenders,
treats with great kindness, and
will confer on us great glory!

His greatness shall fill . . .

His people with everlasting joy, and
His foes with never ending woe!

He shall be great on earth, in heaven, and in hell!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"He remembered us in our low estate—and freed us from our enemies!" Psalm 136:23

Our state by nature—was truly a low estate. We had . . .

no liberty—being the slaves of Satan;

no ability—being dead in trespasses and sins;

no honor—being allied only to traitors and rebels;

no real pleasure—being tossed about by desires and disappointments;

no prospects—except eternal woe;

no profitable employment—for the fruit of our toil was death.

Our nature was fearfully depraved;

our condition was truly deplorable;

our destiny was most alarming!

"BUT because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in transgressions; it is by grace you have been saved!" Ephesians 2:4-5

"He remembered us in our low estate—and freed us from our enemies!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

It is powerful, irresistible, cruel, insatiable!

"He has abolished death!" 2 Timothy 1:10

DEATH is our foe!

It is an implacable enemy!

It has slain millions!

It has robbed . . .

kingdoms of their deliverers,

churches of their ornaments,

families of their supports, and

individuals of their heart's beloved.

It is powerful, irresistible, cruel, insatiable!

"The king of terrors!"

It is a foe that might fill us with fear, and keep us in constant alarm. But we have a Friend—a Friend who is infinitely great, and incomparably good. He . . .

knew us thoroughly,
loved us infinitely,
pitied us tenderly,
engaged for us heartily,
came to deliver us cheerfully,
suffered for us indescribably,
and conquered our foe completely!

He has abolished death! That is:

He changed its nature: it is now quiet sleep!

He changed its office: it is not an executioner—but a waiting servant!

He changed its work: it is now only to take down the prison, and let the prisoner escape!

He changed its end: it was truly fearful; it is now divinely glorious!

Reader, are you prepared for this foe?

Reader, do you know this Friend?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Yes! He is altogether lovely!" Song of Solomon 5:16

This is the opinion formed of Jesus—by all who really know Him. There is nothing lovely—but it is in Jesus, and it is in Him in full perfection. He is the object of admiration and adoration, to all who are taught by the Holy Spirit.

His person as God-man is altogether lovely—for He possesses every grace that can adorn humanity, and all the glories of infinite deity.

His character is altogether lovely—for He is infinitely wise, dignified, condescending, and kind.

Indeed there is nothing in Christ but what is lovely—and there is nothing lovely but it may be found in Him.

The testimony borne by the spouse will apply . . .

to His offices, as Prophet, Priest and King;

to His government, universal and particular;

to His design in all His dealings with us—even to purify, elevate, and honor us.

Reader, do you know Him?

Reader, do you admire Him?

Reader, do you love Him?

The more you know Him—the more you will love Him!

The more you love Him—the more happy you will be!

"Yes! He is altogether lovely! This is my Beloved, this my Friend!" Song of Solomon 5:16

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"The power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13

The Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with the Father and the Son—in power, majesty, and glory.

Without His agency—salvation is impossible.

He quickens us—when dead in trespasses and sins.

He teaches us—when ignorant and bewildered.

He sanctifies us—when polluted and depraved.

He comforts us—when depressed and cast down.

He helps us in prayer, against temptation, and out of many difficulties.

His power produces our graces, quickens them when dull, and keeps them alive.

He witnesses to our adoption, and seals us unto the day of redemption.

We are His workmanship—and His temple.

He is our teacher, comforter, and inward intercessor.

His power alone can . . .

make the gospel effectual,

subdue the corruptions of our hearts, and

conform us to the likeness of the Lord Jesus.

Our obligation to Him is great,

our dependence upon Him is constant,

and our love to Him should be fervent.

The Holy Spirit . . .

convinces us of sin,

unfolds the glories of Jesus to us,

works faith in our hearts,
leads us to the fountain of His blood,
clothes us in His perfect righteousness,
unites us to His person, and
teaches us to live upon Him.

The great thing we need in the church, and in our hearts—is to experience the power of the Spirit of God!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I abhor myself!" Job 42:6

The more clearly the Lord manifests Himself to us, and the more He works in us by His Spirit—the deeper will be our humility and self-aborrence. Self-admirers are utter strangers to close and holy fellowship with God.

Nothing reveals to us the true state of human nature, like nearness to God. Men may speculate, and reason, and boast of their pretended goodness—so long as they are at a distance from God. But no sooner do they come into His presence, than their supposed loveliness is turned into corruption! They not only SEE that they are vile—but they FEEL it!

Job had boasted, and contended with God; but as soon as God came near to him—his views and feelings underwent an entire change, and he cried out, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes!"

Never does grace appear so glorious, or Christ so precious—as when we sink before God in self-loathing and self-aborrence!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

You have robbed Me!

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

This is a very solemn question, for to attempt it must be very daring! But who can plead not guilty?

He charges us with the crime: He says, "You have robbed Me!"

We have robbed Him of His time: time which He claims, and which should be devoted to Him.

We have robbed Him of property: what He has entrusted and lent to us—we have claimed as our own. What was given us for others—we have squandered or hoarded for self.

We have robbed Him of the heart: this we have given to others, to idols! They have been loved, trusted, adored, and feared—before Him.

We have robbed Him of our talents: using them for the gratification and aggrandizement of ourselves.

What can we say to such conduct?

Is it not ungrateful—for He is our Father?

Is it not daring audacity—for He could crush us with a look?

Let us reflect upon our characters: "Robbers of God!"

Let us . . .

confess our crimes,

obtain a pardon,

change our course, and

render unto God the things that are God's.

O for honesty of heart and consistency of life!

"Will a man rob God?"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

His hand is moved by His heart

"All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His HAND!" Daniel 4:35

The 'hand of God' is His providence.

God's providence is His wisdom and power in operation for the accomplishment of His will.

No one can possibly frustrate His designs.

Nothing can throw confusion into His plans.

He steadily pursues His object,

easily accomplishes His purpose,

and performs all His good pleasure.

All His saints are in His hand—therefore they are safe.

His hand is at work for them—therefore they shall not be injured.

He always works in accordance with His Word.

His predictions must all come to pass.

His promises must all be fulfilled.

His people must all be safe.

Beloved, the hand of God is lifted up to defend you; therefore you are safe.

His hand is opened to supply you; therefore you shall not lack.

His hand is beneath you; therefore you shall not fall.

Trust in Jesus, in His wisdom and power. Exercise faith in His providence; it is at work for your welfare.

His hand will . . .

crush or convert your foes,

protect you and supply your needs,

guide you through the desert,

and lift you up forever in glory!

Look from circumstances—to the hand that guides and overrules them! It is your Father's hand—and His hand is moved by His heart, which heart glows with unutterable love to you!

He is at work for you, and "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

It is not possible to say where it may lead you!

"Peter followed Him afar off." Matthew 26:58

And have not we done so too? Once we thought that nothing could cool our love, dampen our ardor, or turn our feet aside; but we have long since discovered our weakness!

For Peter there was some excuse—in the circumstances in which his Master was placed; for us there is none.

Faith brings us near to Jesus—and love keeps us near.

Unbelief is the cause of our slow pace, and declining in His ways. Let us carefully guard against UNBELIEF. It . . .

poisons our comforts,

falsifies our profession,

dampens our zeal,

hinders our communion,

thrusts us to a distance from Jesus,

and alienates our souls from His ways.

Let us encourage and feed our FAITH. It will . . .

strengthen our hearts,

quicken our pace,
endear our Savior,
fortify our minds, and
keep us near to our beloved Lord.

Reader, are you following the Lord fully, closely?

Or, are you like Peter—afar off?

If you are, beware! You know to what evil, this conduct led to in him! It is not possible to say where it may lead you!

"The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter!

Then Peter went outside and wept bitterly!" Luke 22:61-62

Get close to Jesus—and keep close. Let . . .

your thoughts gather round Him,

your affections fix upon Him,

and your hope center in Him.

Cleave to the Savior—as the child to its parent!

Cleave to Jesus—as the limpet to the rock!

~ ~ ~ ~ Have you been walking with God today?

"Noah walked with God!" Genesis 6:9

Noah was reconciled to God.

He was intimate with God.

He listened to the voice of God.

He chose the way of God.

He approved of the designs of God.

Noah's God—was his Friend:

with Him, he could converse,

to Him, he could look for counsel,

from Him, he often received favors.

Noah's God—was his Companion: he walked with Him, realizing that He was near, loving His presence, and improving by His society.

He did not sit with the Lord on His throne,

nor stand with Him in His sanctuary—but

he WALKED with Him in His way.

He made progress. He was diligent—as well as devout.

The presence of God was . . .

his happiness,

his security, and

his honor.

This privilege may be ours. It is, if we are really believers in the Lord Jesus. Our God is with us! He is with us as . . .

our Father,

our Friend, and

our Companion.

We walk with Him.

We converse with Him.

We receive from Him.

Beloved, do you walk with God?

Have you been walking with God today?

Does the thought of God's presence with you, give you joy? Does it soothe, and animate, and sanctify your heart?

Retire to rest rejoicing in the fact, "God is with me, as my Father and my omnipotent Friend!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He will guide us to the end of the journey!

"He will be our guide—even unto death!" Psalm 48:14

What a precious assurance is this!

Our God is our guide!

He led us out of the world at first,

directed us to the cross, and

conducted us into the path of holiness.

He has led us through all our past difficulties and trials; He leads us by the hand at present, and He will never give up His charge, for He will be our guide even unto death. He will . . .

choose our way;
lead us in the paths of righteousness;
kindly converse with us along the road;
point out the snares and dangers in our path;
keep us by His power through faith unto salvation,
and will patiently bear with us unto the end!

He may . . .

hide His face,
refuse communion,
withhold comforts,
smite us for our follies, and
teach us our dependence on Himself by painful experience;
but He will never forsake us—or give us up!

He will guide us to the end of the journey, and will go with us through the last dark valley!

He will not only lead us to the heavenly kingdom—but put us in possession of it! This He has promised—and He will faithfully perform it.

Beloved, it is our Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom! He will guide us now—and by and by receive us to glory!

~ ~ ~ ~ The Friend of His people in distress!

"You have known my soul in adversities!" Psalm 31:7

Prosperity makes friends—but adversity tries them.

Many will visit and smile upon us—when the sun shines.

Few will venture out to do us good—in the wintry or stormy day!

David had been in adversity; he had been forsaken and neglected by his friends—but not by his God! His God . . .

knew him,

and visited him,

and cared for him,

and sympathized with him,

and supplied him,

and at length delivered him.

This honor have all His saints! We have been in adversity, we have passed through a wilderness; but our God has . . .

led us,

and fed us,

and preserved us,

and brought us out into a wealthy place.

We can witness for Him in reference to the past; and we ought calmly, quietly, and confidently to trust Him for the future. He has pledged His Word that He will deliver us in six troubles, and that in seven no evil shall touch us; and He who has promised is faithful.

He is emphatically, the Friend of His people in distress!

In our greatest trials—He will manifest His richest grace!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Testify against Me!" Micah 6:3

By our conduct—we often reflect badly upon the Lord; treating Him with neglect and disrespect, preferring creatures or worldly things before Him! He speaks of this conduct—as if it went to His heart! He says to us, "O My people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me!"

Have you neglected the prayer closet?

Have you slighted the means of grace?

Have you laid your Bible aside and left it unopened?

Have you withdrawn your thoughts and your affections from God—and given them to the world?

Why is this?

What reason have you for doing so?

The Lord asks you WHY? Testify against Me!

He says, "Have you any charges against Me? Bring them forward! Have I treated you unkindly? Have I been false to My Word? Have I acted in any way unfitting My character? Tell Me—why do you treat Me with neglect? Why do you prefer My enemy, the world, to Me? Tell out your reasons, let Me know all; anything but this shyness, this distance, this indifference!"

O believer! Are you not guilty? Have you not wounded your God? Have you not grieved His Holy Spirit? Return to your injured Lord. Go, fall at His feet, confess your sins, beg His pardon, be reconciled, and embosomed in His love!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

God's presence is offensive to them!

"They say to God: Depart from us—for we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways!" Job 21:14

The ungodly say so.

God's presence is offensive to them!

They wish there was no God!

But as there is a God—they wish Him to keep at a distance from them.

This is not your case beloved. It was once. It would have been your dreadful condition right now—but for sovereign grace! You now desire the presence of God—this is the effect of His love. You have seen something of His glory, in the person of Jesus Christ. You have tasted that He is gracious. You are reconciled to Him, and are at peace with Him. You have nothing to fear from Him, therefore you desire that He would come unto you, and manifest Himself to your soul.

You do not say, "Depart from me," but, "my soul thirsts for God, for the living God! When shall I come and appear before God?"

Those who now say unto God, "Depart from us!" will one day hear Him say, "Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his demons!"

But you who now desire His presence, will hear Him invite you, saying, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father—inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Still we may be happy!

"Yet I will rejoice in the LORD!" Habakkuk 3:18

This was a wise determination.

Everything around us, and everything within us may change—but the Lord changes not.

Our light may give place to darkness,
our peace may give place to hostility,
our health may give place to sickness,
our plenty may give place to poverty,
our ease may give place to suffering, and
our friendships may give place to loneliness,
but still we may be happy!

We may rise above circumstances!

For God is immutably the same!

We may rejoice that though much is lost, we have more that we can never lose.

But if we would emulate the prophet Habakkuk—we be sure of our title to all the promises of God's Word. We must know . . .

that our sins are pardoned,

that we are at peace with God,

that He is our best and faithful Friend.

Then we may rejoice in Him at all times, for . . .

His fullness—is our fortune,

His power—is our defense,

His love—is our solace,

His promises—are our security,

His throne—is our place of safety,

and His presence—is our heaven!

Everything in God has a tendency to make us happy; and everything that is done by God will promote our everlasting welfare. We may well say,

"Even though the fig trees have no blossoms,

and there are no grapes on the vine;

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!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Is it right for you to be angry?" Jonah 4:4

Jonah quarreled with his God. And who has not? We may not speak as plainly as he did—but we have been in the same temper, and manifested the same morose spirit.

Very few are well satisfied with the Lord's plans.

Fewer still are always pleased with the Lord's works.

How many quarrel with His sovereignty! What hard things have been spoken against it!

How many complain of His providence, and think it unwise, unkind, and almost unjust!

Beloved, we are often angry with God!

This temper shows itself . . .

in fretfulness,

in complaining,

in sullen gloom.

"Is it right for you to be angry?"

Angry with your Father . . .

whose wisdom is infinite,

whose love is as constant as the day, and

who constantly showers His blessings upon you!

Angry with your God, who has . . .

pardoned all your heinous sins,

provided for your innumerable needs,

blessed you with countless spiritual blessings!

Surely it is a sin, a grievous sin, not to be pleased . . .

with all He does,

with all He has provided,

and with all He requires.

"Is it right for you to be angry?"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ My friend, I know not what your trouble may be

"I would seek unto God!" Job 5:8

This is sound advice. It is much better than . . .

seeking unto men, or

poring over troubles, or

indulging a gloomy imagination, or

giving way to fears.

My friend, I know not what your trouble may be—but "I would seek unto God!"

If I was in perplexity—I would seek unto God for wisdom.

If I was in sorrow—I would seek unto God for comfort.

If I was in weakness—I would seek unto God for strength.

If I was under guilt—I would seek unto God for pardon.

If I was in a severe conflict—I would seek unto God for victory.

If I was in doubt and fear—I would seek unto God for confidence and a sense of His favor.

If I was harassed by Satan—I would seek unto almighty God for protection.

If I was afraid of falling—I would seek unto God to uphold me with His omnipotent arm.

If I was alarmed at death—I would seek for His presence to comfort me.

Whatever you need—seek it from God!

Whatever you fear—carry it to God!

Whatever troubles you—lay it before God!

You cannot seek unto Him in vain, or without profit!

"I would seek unto God!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The physician and the patient

"Who heals all your diseases." Psalm 103:3

The Lord is the great Physician. He is especially the healer of the soul.

The patient is a believer.

The cause of all disease and suffering is sin.

The seat of the malady is in the heart.

The nature of the malady is most loathsome and afflictive.

It affects . . .

the memory,

the affections,

the conscience,

the will,

yes the whole man! "Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. You are sick from head to foot—covered with bruises, welts, and infected wounds!" Isaiah 1:5-6

We are all the subjects of this disease. We all suffer from it!

No one can heal us—but the Lord Jesus. He is the great Physician; to Him we may repair and be restored to health. To encourage you to do so, look at His qualifications:

He is infinitely wise, tender and skillful.

His experience is without a parallel.

The remedies He employs are . . .

His precious blood,

His holy Word, and

His blessed Spirit.

The mode of application is by . . .

afflictions,

bereavements,

convictions, and

divine energy.

He never failed in any case—all of His patients are completely cured!

David's was a bad case—but he could say, "He heals all my diseases!"

Sinner—you are sick, mortally sick! Go to Jesus!

Backslider—you are dreadfully sick! Go to Jesus!

Believer, are you not desiring perfect health? Then go to Jesus and plead, "Lord, if You will—You can make me whole!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"When will You comfort me?" Psalm 119:82

The Lord's people often get into a very uncomfortable state, and sometimes they continue in that state for a long season. But there is always some cause for it—and we should seek to know what that cause is, that it may be removed. It is not easy to give an answer to the inquiry, for it must depend on the character of the inquirer.

To one the Lord would say, "I will comfort you—when you humble yourself before Me, cordially approve of My method of salvation, and submit to My righteousness."

To another the Lord would say, "I will comfort you—when you frankly confess your sin, seek pardon through the blood of Christ, and engage to walk according to My Word."

To another the Lord would say, "I will comfort you—when you break off that unscriptural relationship, come out from the world, and separate yourself unto Me."

To another the Lord would say, "I will comfort you—when you stop seeking comfort from selfish motives, and aim at, and endeavor to promote My glory."

To another the Lord would say, "I will comfort you—when you leave the bed of sloth, stir up yourself to take hold on Me, and seek to minister to others."

To another the Lord would say, "I will comfort you—when you enter upon that self-denying duty, and mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts."

In a word, God will comfort you—as soon as comfort will secure His glory, and your good!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Every worm that trusts in Him!

"Fear not, O worm Jacob, O little Israel—for I Myself will help you—declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah 41:14

However mean and despicable we may appear in the eyes of others, however weak and feeble we may feel in ourselves, still our God says, "Fear not!" Though but a worm—yet if a praying Jacob—we need not fear, we should not fear! Our God forbids it because . . .

it injures our souls,

encourages our enemies,

dispirits our friends, and

dishonors His glorious name!

How precious, unspeakably precious, these "Fear nots!" are! How thickly they are strewn through the divine Word!

But WHY should we fear? The Lord expressly tells us that,

"The race is not to the swift,

or the battle to the strong,

nor does food come to the wise,

or wealth to the brilliant,

or favor to the learned."

Ecclesiastes 9:11

Are we believers in Jesus? Then we should not fear, for our God is our Friend—and His care . . .

extends over all time,

embraces every event,

supplies every need,

anticipates every emergency,

comprehends every believer;

and shall everlastingly secure the safety and happiness of every worm that trusts in Him!

His strength is almighty,

His wisdom is omniscient,

His love is unequalled, and

His resources are unbounded!

Therefore, "Fear not, O worm Jacob!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Christ died for us!" Romans 5:8

What an unspeakable blessing is this! Let us very seriously consider it today!

"CHRIST died"—

Jehovah's only begotten Son,

the fountain of being and blessedness,

the center and source of all excellence and glory!

HE died!

"Christ died"—

as our almighty Friend,

who stood up for us in covenant,

who stooped for us from heaven to earth,

whose love was stronger than death!

HE died!

"Christ died FOR US"—the objects of His love—and His Father's choice;

though we were base;

though we were ungodly;

though we were without strength;

though we were rebellious;

though we were His enemies!

Christ died FOR US,

as the Surety for the debtors He had undertaken to set free,

as the Redeemer for captives He was pledged to deliver,

as the Husband for His beloved but fallen bride,
as the Shepherd for the flock entrusted to His care!
Christ died FOR US—
to redeem us from death and hell,
to raise us to eternal life,
to restore us to friendship with God,
to fit us for His holy service, and that we might be crowned with eternal glory!
Christ bore our sins upon the tree,
To seek and save the lost He came,
There was He doomed—to set us free,
From death and everlasting shame;
The captive flock from hell was freed
And ransomed when their Shepherd bled!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Is this your kindness to your friend?" 2 Samuel 16:17

The conduct of Jesus towards us is the perfection of kindness;
but our conduct toward Him is often just the reverse!
How often we treat Him with neglect!
Instead of prayer being a delightful privilege—it is often an irksome task.
How often we violate His positive precepts, or
omit to perform known and acknowledged duties.
How often we . . .
doubt His love,
distrust His Word and
complain of His dealings!
How often we nourish the flesh—which He has directed us to mortify!
How often we prefer the world—which He has commanded us to forsake!
How often we yield to Satan—whom He has exhorted us to resist!

Well may our cheeks burn with shame, and our bosoms fill with confusion, if the question is put to us, in reference to much of our conduct toward our kind and gracious Redeemer: "Is this your kindness to your friend?"

His kindness to us is astonishing—and
our unkindness toward Him is equally so!

Let us seek afresh, the tokens of His forgiving love, and in future when about to yield to temptation, or give way to any sin—put the question to our consciences, "Is this your kindness to your friend?"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

What an astounding fact!

"We know that we are of God." 1 John 5:19

What an honor! What a comfort is this!

We were rebels against Him;
we are now His willing servants!

We were His avowed enemies;
we are now His chosen friends!

We were the children of wrath;
we are now His beloved children!

We know that we are of God . . .

by faith in His Word,

by love to His saints,

by sympathy with Himself,

by the grief we feel when we sin,

by our pleasure in obeying His will,

by the contrast there is between us and the world . . .

in our principles,

in our pleasures,

in our pursuits.

What we are, as distinguished from others—is of God.

Being thus distinguished, we are peculiarly . . .

the Lord's property,
the Lord's treasure,
the Lord's portion,
the Lord's delight!

What an astounding fact!

We are the Lord's! The grace that made us so—must be free and infinite!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

It is as much our duty to behappy—as to beholy!

"The joy of the Lord is your strength." Nehemiah 8:10

Fear and sorrow naturally weakens us;

but faith and joy give us strength!

Joy is the cordial of the soul:

it quickens,

it enlivens,

it emboldens,

and makes us strong.

Our heavenly Father is called the blessed, or the happy God. He is also the happy-making God. He loves to see His people happy; therefore, as the God of all comfort—He has made great provision for our happiness.

There are wells of salvation—and we should draw from them with joy.

There is an inexhaustible fullness in Jesus—and from that fullness we should receive—for every need, for every duty, for every trial. We cannot apply to it too often; we cannot go to it for too much!

Hear our beloved Lord, "Ask, and receive—that your joy may be full."

It is only as we live . . .

out of self,

upon Jesus,

above the world,

in the region of God's free grace,

that we can be happy.

The happy Christian is the strong Christian; and it is the strong Christian who . . .
brings much glory to God,
much credit to His cause, and
does much good in the world.

It is as much our duty to be happy—as to be holy! Both are recommended, and provision is as much made for the one—as the other.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Near and dear

"A people near unto Him." Psalm 148:14

Jesus took our nature, and became one with us—thus He is near unto us. He gives us His Holy Spirit, brings us into union with Himself—and we are near to Him. This is our highest honor—and an unfailing source of happiness and peace.

We are near unto Him, in point of relation—being His children.

We are near unto Him, in point of affection—being loved with an everlasting love.

We are near unto Him, in point of union—being members of His body.

We are near unto Him, in point of fellowship—walking with Him as a man walks with his friend.

We are near unto Him, in point of attention—being the objects of His daily, hourly, tender care.

We shall soon be near unto Him, in point of locality—when our mansion is prepared, for we shall depart to be with Christ, which is far better!

We are near to Him though poor, when deeply tried!

And if ever nearer one time than another—we shall be nearest to Him in death.

If we are near unto Him—then He will . . .

sympathize with us in all our sorrows;

assist us in all our trials;

protect us in all our dangers;

hold fellowship with us in all our lonely hours;

provide for us in all seasons of necessity;

and certainly bring us to glory!

Let us realize this fact daily: we are near and dear to our God!

And am I near to God,

His friend, His child, His care?

O may I walk with Him in love,

By faith and fervent prayer!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He will put us into the fire!

"You have tried me." Psalm 17:3

The Lord tries the righteous. Trials reveal, prove, and brighten his character. Every trial . . .

is necessary for our good;

is ordained by eternal love; and

is continued just as long as requisite—but not one moment longer.

Every saint needs trials—and every saint is tried.

If the Lord intends to make us holy—He will put us into the fire!

"I have tried you in the furnace of affliction!" Isaiah 48:10.

Every time we pray for holiness—we pray for trials!

Trials . . .

enhance the value of the promises,

endear the throne of grace,

render the ordinances profitable, and

make the Savior exceedingly precious!

In trials we . . .

learn to read our own hearts,

see the insufficiency of the world,

humble ourselves before our God, and

look with a longing eye to our glorious eternity.

The tried Christian is likely to be a stable Christian. Very few who walk in a smooth path are either remarkably spiritual, extensively useful, or very happy. Trials, like the frosts of winter, prepare our hearts to receive the good seed of the Word—and then we bring forth fruit with patience.

"When He has tried me—I will come forth as gold!" Job 23:10

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Its pleasures, profits, employments, honors—all dust!

"My soul cleaves unto the dust!" Psalm 119:25

How common is this complaint of the true Christian!

What is the world? DUST! Its pleasures, profits, employments, honors—all dust! That is, they are . . .

comparatively worthless,
beneath an immortal soul,
unsuitable to a child of God. Yet . . .
our thoughts are filled with them,
our affections are entangled by them, and
our graces are weakened through them.

Worldlings are at home in the DUST—they appear to be satisfied with it!

But the Christian, when he cleaves to it most—is not at home, and cannot be satisfied with it. This is a mercy.

My soul, rouse yourself from your lethargy; arise and shake off the dust of the world—and put on your beautiful garments! It is beneath your dignity to lie there in the dust! Treat the things of time as they deserve!

Heaven is your home!

Holiness is your element!

The King of kings is your husband!

Glory is your eternal portion!

Earth is but a wilderness through which you have to pass; a lodging-place for a few days. "Arise and depart—for this is not your rest, because it is polluted!"

~ ~ ~ ~ In heaven, earth and hell!

"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all that I please!" Isaiah 46:10

The counsel of man is often weak and unwise—his knowledge being imperfect, and his mind disordered.

But the counsel of the Lord is the effect of infinite wisdom, and is sustained by omnipotent power!

Men's purposes are often formed under evil influences, or when the mind is confused and perplexed.

But the purposes of God were formed in the calm and quiet of the eternal mind, under the influence of justice, grace, holiness, truth, and love!

Men's counsels are often frustrated

—but God's purposes never can be!

Men's purposes are frequently defeated.

But our God "works all things after the counsel of His own will."

His counsel includes all that is essential to our eternal welfare.

His purposes embrace all the events of this transitory life.

Therefore we ought not to be much affected by anything which takes place around us. There may be confusion, conflict, injustice, oppression, cruelty; but our God, who has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, says, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all that I please!"

Remember, beloved, our God is at work always and everywhere. "He does according to his will" in heaven, earth and hell! And He says to us, "Be still and know that I am God."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We are not all chastened with the samerod

"Whom the Lord loves—He chastens; and punishes every son whom He receives." Hebrews 12:6

Every believer is beloved of his God—yet every believer is chastened by Him.

Chastisement is a proof of divine love.

We are but children—and need it.

We are His children—and therefore receive it.

Some are chastened by losses,

some by sickness,

some by the failure of their favorite schemes,

some by domestic trials,

some by the conduct of friends.

We are not all chastened with the same rod;

but we are all chastened by the same hand!

We are not all corrected in the same way—but we are all corrected by the same wise, holy, and loving Father!

Some suffer most in mind—others in body.

Some are tried most in their circumstances—others more in their relationships.

But let us never forget that every correction flows from divine love; every stroke is given in kindness!

If it goes to our hearts—it comes from our heavenly Father's heart!

He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve us without purpose.

Our follies call for strokes—and our sins for rebukes!

Let us therefore humble ourselves under our Father's hand. Let us not question His love to us, because we are so tried. Neither let us think the discipline unnecessary, and so despise His chastening.

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." Hebrews 12:11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Once again You will have compassion on us!

"Who is a God like You—who pardons the sins His people! You cannot stay angry with Your people forever, because You delight in showing mercy. Once again You will have compassion on us! You will trample our sins under Your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean!" Micah 7:18-19

God's anger has been provoked by our sins; the effects of His displeasure have been felt—but He will not stay angry with His people forever!

Though our sin has made us miserable—His mercy shall make us happy!

He will have compassion upon us, because of the benevolence of His nature, in accordance with His Word, to our comfort and salvation. He is "full of compassion, plenteous in mercy, ready to forgive!" These are His own words, and they contain enough, if we did but believe them . . .

to banish our fears,

to conquer our doubts, and

to fill us with joy and peace!

We have wandered—but He will have compassion!

The wandering sheep shall be restored!

The prodigal shall be received with music and dancing.

He will have compassion on His people—let your fears and sins be ever so numerous!

He will have compassion on His people—for . . .

He has promised,

His nature prompts Him to it,

He has done so in innumerable instances,

and His heart overflows with mercy!

As soon as ever He . . .

sees that you feel your sinfulness,

hears you confess your follies,
finds you broken down in contrition at His throne
—He will have compassion on you,
trample your sins under His feet, and
throw them into the depths of the ocean!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

She had been a great sinner!

"Her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved MUCH!" Luke 7:47

She had been a great sinner!

Convinced of her sin . . .

she sought the Savior,
applied for pardon, and
she found mercy!

Deeply affected with the love of Christ, and the manner in which He displayed it—her soul glowed with love to Him in return. She not only loved Him—but she loved Him MUCH! And therefore she could endure scorn, contempt, and persecution, in order to enjoy His presence and listen to His Word.

Her love could not be confined in her heart—it sought to show itself; she therefore . . .

brought the alabaster box of precious ointment,
washed His feet with her tears,
wiped them with the hair of her head, and
anointed them with the expensive ointment.

Here is an example for us!

We also are great sinners; Jesus has kindly received us and pardoned our sins; His love to us—is as great as it was to this woman! But is our love to Him—equal to hers? I fear not.

But why? Because . . .

our conviction of sin is not as clear,
our views of our unworthiness are not as vivid,
our apprehensions of danger are not as painful, or
our sense of pardoning mercy is not as deep!

We cannot force ourselves to love. But we can direct our thoughts to Jesus, and seek for the Holy Spirit to shed abroad His love in our hearts.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Let us meditate—and let Jesus be our subject!

"My meditation of Him shall be sweet!" Psalm 104:34

To meditate is to think closely, seriously, and for some time upon one subject. If the subject is spiritual—the exercise is peculiarly profitable. If the mind is spiritual—meditation on Jesus will be sweet. Let us think of Him . . .

frequently,

intently, and

seriously.

Let us meditate on . . .

the glory of His person,

the riches of His grace,

the strength of His love,

the tenderness of His sympathy,

the power of His arm,

the merit of His blood,

the magnificence of His righteousness,

the completeness of His conquest,

the splendor of His ascension,

the prevalence of His intercession,

the exalted station He fills in heaven,

His constant care of His people on earth,

what He gives to them,

what He requires of them, and

the eternal glory which He will soon give them!

Let us meditate—and let Jesus be our subject!

Let us go over in meditation all that regards . . .

His person,

His office,

His work,

His kingdom,

His humiliation,

His exaltation, and

His character.

Such meditations will be sweet!

Let us see Him . . .

in nature,

in providence,

and in grace.

Such views of Him will cheer, strengthen, and spiritualize us!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Repent and do the things you did at first!" Revelation 2:5

Repentance implies thought—serious thought in reference to the conduct and state of the heart.

Repentance proceeds from conviction—deep and solemn conviction of our sin and sinfulness in the sight of God.

Repentance proves concern—a concern to escape danger, obtain pardon, and enjoy peace.

Repentance includes sorrow—enlightened, hearty, and abiding sorrow, that we have grieved the Lord, dishonored His cause, and slighted His mercy.

Repentance always leads to reformation. There may be some degree of reformation without repentance—but there can be no repentance without reformation.

Let us think upon our ways, reflect on the dishonor we have done the Savior, be concerned to enjoy anew the tokens of His forgiving love, mourn over our follies and faults, and begin again to do our first works.

Look to Jesus, wait upon God, search His holy Word, and abstain from the very appearance of evil—as we did at first. What love, what zeal, what caution, what carefulness, what entire consecration to God—we manifested then! Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Jesus charges us with dishonoring Him—but He also says, "Repent and do the things you did at first!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Rest in the Lord!" Psalm 37:7

The unbeliever is naturally restless; he is removed from his natural foundation, and the wandering of the desire keeps him in constant agitation. To him, Jesus says, "Come unto Me—and I will give you rest."

The believer has accepted this invitation, and has found rest. But he is often led away by temptations, worldly cares, and unbelief; and then he becomes restless again.

Beloved, you are directed to rest—not in your circumstances, attainments, or enjoyments—but to rest in the Lord.

Rest in the will of God—for whatever He wills is for your good, your highest good. "This is the will of God—even your sanctification."

Rest in the love of God—and often meditate on the words of Jesus on this point, "You have loved them—as you have loved Me!"

Rest in the mercy of God—from which flows endless streams of blessings for your supply.

Rest in the Word of God—for it is true, immutable, and pledges Him to do good unto you.

Rest in the relation your God fills to you! He is your divine Father—kind, powerful, wise, and ever present.

Rest in the Lord as He is manifested in Jesus—working all things after the counsel of His own will, and directing all things for your good and His glory!

Rest in the Lord—and be happy!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Come quickly!

"The Lord is at hand!" Philippians 4:5

Jesus is coming!

WHEN He will come—is uncertain, therefore we should always be ready. If we realized the certainty and nearness of the Lord's coming—we would not be as ensnared by the world as we too often are. Our love would be withdrawn from present things—and we would be daily laying up treasures in heaven for ourselves.

Jesus will come . . .

to close the present world system,

to judge the people,

to be glorified in His saints, and

to reward every one according to his works.

The Lord is at hand! Purposeful thinking on this fact . . .

would preserve us from temptation,

would prevent our backsliding, and
would deepen our seriousness and spirituality.
The Lord is at hand! Therefore we should . . .
expect Him,
prepare for Him, and
be found waiting, looking and longing for His appearing.

When Jesus comes, He will . . .
complete our salvation,
destroy all our foes,
conform us to His own lovely image,
and introduce us to glory!

When Jesus comes—His people will be made completely happy! Sighs, groans, and cries—will be exchanged for eternal pleasures, songs, and triumphant hallelujahs!

Even so, come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He would deny us nothing!

"Show Your marvelous loving-kindness." Psalm 17:7

He has already shown it—by taking us into the nearest, sweetest, and most profitable relation to Himself!

What love, to call a worm—His dear child!

What love, to call a sinful and polluted worm—His beloved bride!

Loving-kindness, is love in the most attractive form; love acting in the kindest manner; or, love robed in tenderness and benevolence.

To show marvelous loving-kindness, is to bestow distinguished favors, such as reason or custom could not warrant us to expect; favors which only a God of love could bestow! Yet such favors we may ask in faith—and expect!

Beloved, never forget—our God rejoices and He delights to give us good things!

If we were but humble, simple-minded, living in the daily exercise of faith—He would deny us nothing!

We have not—but it is because we ask not, or because we ask in an improper spirit, or with an unfitting design—that we may consume it upon our lusts!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He will distress those whom he cannot devour!

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony!" Revelation 12:11

What a formidable representation of SATAN, the context gives us. He is called "the great dragon—that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, who deceives the whole world!"

His power is great—and his cruelty is greater!

His cunning is deep—and his designs are dreadful!

He hates the Savior—and he hates all who love Him!

He attempts to destroy—but he will distress those whom he cannot devour!

He is dreadful as a roaring lion; but he is more likely to harm us—when he comes slyly, and quietly—as a deceitful serpent!

He is always most dangerous—when he assumes the garb of an angel of light, for then we are apt to mistake him!

Every Christian overcomes him—though they were so weak! They conquer him—but not by reason, or argument, or eloquence—but by the blood of the Lamb, and the Word of their testimony. To that blood they looked—when he tempted them to despair; by that Word they walked—when he tried to draw them aside. The blood was their plea, the ground of their hope, and the subject of their rejoicing; the Word was their shield, their solace, and their rule. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

01 My Father's eye!

My Father's eye!

"Your Father—who sees in secret." Matthew 6:6

Can anyone hide himself from the Lord in secret places?

Can I, under any circumstances, escape His notice?

Impossible!

The eye of God has been fixed upon me every second of this day; it is now at this moment fixed fully upon me. But it is my Father's eye! My Father sees in secret!

He sees my needs—and my woes.

He sees every secret working of my foes—and will save me from them.

He sees every secret influence which is likely to injure me—and will prevent it.

He sees . . .

the secret workings of my heart,

my hidden thoughts,

my unuttered desires,

my soul conflicts,

my private temptations.

But He sees also my secret sins!

Every evil thought,

every improper action,

every unfitting word—

passes under His eye!

Solemn consideration this!

May it make me cautious. May it preserve me. . .

from yielding to temptation,

from nourishing sinful thoughts, and

from acting inconsistent with my profession.

My heavenly Father sees me!

He sees me at this moment!

He sees me every moment!

He sees my most secret motives, thoughts, and purposes!

He who thus sees me—hates every sin with an infinite hatred!

02 He was infinitely happy and glorious without

He was infinitely happy and glorious without us!

"Christ, who loved us!" Romans 8:37

No condition can possibly be more dreary—than to feel that no one loves or cares for us!

There is something peculiarly sweet and pleasant—in being the object of another's love. Even the love of a poor child is sweet. But to be loved by one who is most wealthy, most exalted in station, and most honorable in character—must be peculiarly delightful!

How, then, should we rejoice; how happy should we be—who are loved by the Lord Jesus! Especially when we consider:

on the one hand:

how despicable,

how poor,

how worthless, and

how unlovely WE are!

And, on the other hand:

how glorious,

how wealthy,

how worthy,

how lovely JESUS is!

To be loved by Jesus—is to be preferred before the possession of a world!

Think of . . .

the glory of His person,

the vastness of His possessions,

the number of His angelic attendants,

the unlimited sovereignty which He exercises,

and the excellent character He bears!

Also bear in mind—that He knew what loving us would cost Him—how He would be treated by us and by others—for our sakes!

Yet He fixed His love upon US!

He loved US—just because He would!

He passed by others more dignified in nature, more exalted in station—but He chose US!

He did not, could not, NEED us—for He was infinitely happy and glorious without us!

Yet He loved us!

He still loves us!

03 We shall wither, fade and die!

We shall wither, fade and die!

"Like autumn leaves—we wither and fall!" Isaiah 64:6

What a contrast between an unchangeable God—and a sinner withering like a leaf! Yet, this is a true picture of us—and of all temporal things.

We began to look green and bright not long ago—and in a little time we shall wither, fade and die!

"How short is life—and how full of trouble! Like a flower—we blossom for a moment—and then wither!" Job 14:1-2. Humbling consideration! But it may be rendered very useful. Let us endeavor to profit by it.

Shall we soon wither and die? Then let us not be overly concerned by anything that occurs here below. Let us set our affections on things above, and lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Let us live by faith on Jesus, walk with God, and aim principally to please Him in all that we do. Let us also watch against a worldly spirit, and pass the time of our sojourning here on earth, in fear.

We shall soon find that . . .

health gives place to sickness;

strength gives place to weakness;

youth gives place to old age!

The dying bed, the coffin, and the grave—are just before us!

Let us therefore make our calling and our election sure.

Let us cultivate close and filial fellowship with God.

Let us dig deep and lay our foundation upon the Rock.

Brethren, the time is short! Eternity with all its glories is just before us!

"Like autumn leaves—we wither and fall!" Isaiah 64:6

04 He never trusts 'the rod' out of His own hand!

He never trusts 'the rod' out of His own hand!

"The Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons! For what son is not disciplined by his father?"
Hebrews 12:6-7

Christian! God is treating you as His own dear children . . .

in what He bestows—and in what He withholds;

in what you enjoy—and in what you suffer!

Our God has made you His children by adopting you into His family, and new-creating you by His Holy Spirit. He always . . .

looks upon you as His children,

loves you as His children,

treats you as His children!

He will not GIVE you—what will harm you!

He will not PUT you—where you will be in danger!

He corrects you as His child, not in wrath—but in mercy.

He never trusts 'the rod' out of His own hand! Whatever is the MEANS of discipline—your Father is the AGENT! He works all things after the counsel of His own will.

You are at present 'under training'; you are being educated for eternity. The 'lessons' you have to learn—are for your benefit.

Every loss,

every cross,

every disappointment,

every pain—

is necessary!

Do you really believe this?

Do you recognize the hand of God in everything that befalls you?

Can you say with Job, "The Lord GAVE"—health, wealth, children, friends;

"and the Lord has TAKEN AWAY—blessed be the name of the Lord!"

Can you say with Eli, "It is the Lord—let Him do what He thinks best!"

05 He will carry the lambs in His arms, hold

He will carry the lambs in His arms, holding them close to his heart!

"Fear not, little flock!" Luke 12:32

The Savior's flock is small.

It exists in the harsh desert.

Enemies surround it.

His lambs, especially, are timid.

But He says, "Fear not, little flock!"

You are your Shepherd's care!

You are His property!

You are His delight!

He is always present with you!

He is omnipotent to defend you!

Every perfection of His divine nature is employed for you!

He has never lost one of His charge yet—and He never will!

It was said of Him by the prophet, "He will feed His flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in His arms, holding them close to His heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young!" Isaiah 40:11

He gathers His sheep to His fold.

He feeds them in good pasture.

He restores them when they wander.

His CARE of them is incessant!

His LOVE to them passes knowledge!

The PROVISION He has made for them is suitable and abundant.

Beloved, let us know our Shepherd.

Let us listen to His voice.

Let us keep close to His side.

Let us feed and rest among His sheep.

Let us exercise confidence in His kindness and care.

Let us banish our fears, for why should we be alarmed?

Let us cast all our concerns and cares—upon the good Shepherd!

06 The nest was destroyed, and the poor bird

The nest was destroyed, and the poor bird lay bleeding and exposed!

"I thought: Surely I shall die in my nest!" Job 29:18

Job's nest was very comfortable—and appeared to be very secure. It was on high—and not to be easily reached. He knew that death could reach it—but he thought that nothing else would disturb it.

His conduct was consistent,

his conscience was quiet;

God was his Father, and

providence was his friend.

"I thought: Surely I shall die in my nest!"

But, alas! Suddenly a 'storm' arose—the nest was destroyed, and the poor bird lay bleeding and exposed!

No earthly nest is out of danger. Temporal comforts are only lent to us. The higher the tree in which we build—the more exposed to the whirlwind and the storm!

Here on earth—we have no continuing city. In one moment—our fine nest may be devastated! Let us therefore endeavor to leave our matters fully with the Lord—and learn to be content with His appointments.

We must die. But when, and where, and how—should be left with the Lord.

Five minutes after death—it will matter very little whether we died on a bed of down, in a luxurious mansion, surrounded by kind friends—OR as a poor diseased beggar, dying alone in squalor!

Present comforts may all leave us, and our soft nest may be scattered to the winds—but nothing can disturb our salvation and future glory!

"These all died in faith—and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth!" Hebrews 11:13

"They were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a heavenly city for them!" Hebrews 11:16

07 His fruit was sweet to my taste!

His fruit was sweet to my taste!

"Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my Beloved. I delight to sit in His shade, and His fruit was sweet to my taste!" Song of Solomon 2:3

The Lord Jesus is incomparably lovely!

His personal excellencies baffle the powers of description!

Every beautiful figure which nature can furnish—is employed to set Him forth; but a spiritual perception is necessary to discern and delight in Him.

Here He is compared to the apple tree amidst the trees of the forest, as affording refreshing shade and delicious food.

"His fruit was sweet to my taste!"

His fruit includes . . .

the promises He has made,

the pardons He bestows,

the reconciliation He has effected,

the peace He imparts,

the fellowship He has with His people,

the assurances of His love,

the joys of the Holy Spirit,

the hope of eternal life,

access into God's presence, and

the precious foretastes of glory which He gives.

These are sweet, incomparably sweet, to every spiritual mind!

Sheltered from storms,

protected from foes,

preserved from the sultry sun,

and fed with fruits of salvation,

the believer is happy—and his Savior is precious to his soul.

And while the fruits of Jesus are sweet to him—sin is bitter! He has no relish for . . .
the follies,
the vain amusements, and
the sinful pleasures of the world!

08 "Before honor—is humility!" Proverbs 18:12

"Before honor—is humility!" Proverbs 18:12

The Lord always humbles—before He exalts.

He strips us—before He clothes us with the best robe.

He empties us—before He fills us with His grace.

We must be clothed in sack cloth—before we are raised to sit with the princes of His people.

It is the weak—whom He strengthens.

It is the poor—whom He supplies.

It is the condemned—whom He justifies.

It is the homeless—whom He receives.

It is the totally unworthy—whom He crowns with glory!

We must lie low—if we would rise high.

We must be nothing—if we would inherit all things.

We must be quite empty—if we would be filled with all the fullness of God.

He "gives grace unto the humble."

Joseph must lie in the dungeon—before he is seated in the royal palace.

David must be hunted like the partridge upon the mountains—before he is raised to fill the throne of Israel.

Paul must be a poor blind sinner—before he becomes the great apostle.

This is God's plan.

The godly, who are now accounted the "the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world"—are destined to shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father! 1 Corinthians 4:13

Beloved, the lower you descend in humility—the higher you will rise in glory!

The deeper your penitence—the sweeter your joys!

"God resists the proud—but gives grace unto the humble."

09 "They will moan like doves—weeping for their

"They will moan like doves—weeping for their sins!" Ezekiel 7:16

Such is the effect of real conversion to God.

The unconverted man may weep when his iniquity is found out—for he dreads the shame and punishment of his sin.

But only the sincere believer will mourn—because he has sinned against a God of love, and broken a law that is holy, just and good. He will mourn over the sin that dwells in him—which no one knows but himself; as well as for the iniquity that is discovered by his fellow men. He daily mourns—because he daily sins.

Yet he is not unhappy. He knows that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses him from all sin. He knows that he is accepted in Christ, his Beloved. Yet these things make him mourn. "They will look on Me, the One they have pierced—and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for Him as one grieves for a firstborn son!" Zechariah 12:10

The greater his confidence in God;

the sweeter his enjoyment of a Savior's love;

the closer he walks with God—

the more he mourns for his iniquity.

Beloved, do you mourn for your iniquity?

Has there been any sorrow for sin working in your heart today?

You daily sin;

you should daily mourn for your iniquity;

you must daily flee to the fountain opened to cleanse you from sin and impurity.

"They will moan like doves—weeping for their sins!"

10 "In all your ways acknowledge Him—and He

"In all your ways acknowledge Him—and He shall direct your paths!" Proverbs 3:6

Are you in perplexity?

Are you at a loss which way to take—or what to do?

Does providence baffle all your schemes, and leave you in confusion and trouble?

The Lord is teaching you the lesson which He taught his prophet Jeremiah, who said, "I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps!"

You must go to the Lord for wisdom—as well as for grace.

You must look to Him for direction—as well as salvation.

He has marked out your path—but you cannot see His lines. Go to Him in childlike simplicity and ask Him to throw light upon it—and then it will be all plain.

Seek His direction—before every movement.

Beseech Him to go with you—in every enterprise.

"In all your ways acknowledge Him—and He shall direct your paths!"

His eye is upon you for good.

His ear is open to your prayer. He will be very gracious unto you—at the voice of your cry. When He hears you—He will answer you.

Consult His Word,

seek His blessing,

honor His love,

keep His company,

aim at His glory—

and He shall direct your paths.

He will always direct you aright!

"In all your ways acknowledge Him—and He shall direct your paths!"

11 Our 'Ebenezer'

Our 'Ebenezer'

"Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it 'Ebenezer', saying, Thus far has the LORD helped us!"¹ Samuel 7:12

As creatures—we are exposed, weak and foolish—and thus require help.

As Christians—we are . . .

surrounded by snares,
opposed by enemies,
timid and fearful, and
easily turned aside
—and thus require help.

We have received help—divine help in every time of need!

It was through divine assistance, that we were able . . .

to overcome unbelief and evil habits;
to break away from our old friends;
to take up our cross and bear it after Jesus;
to stand our ground amidst storms of temptation;
to persevere in the straight and narrow way.

Having obtained help from God—we continue to this day.

Let us then set up our 'Ebenezer', and acknowledge the help we have received.

Its source was divine—it came from above.

The supply has been . . .

sufficient,
well-timed, and
exactly suited to the circumstances.

What should be the result?

Praise—hearty, grateful, constant praise.

Prayer—fervent, faithful, frequent prayer for help in future.

Patience—waiting in quiet expectation for divine assistance.

Testimony—God is faithful.

Here I raise my Ebenezer,

Hither by Your help I've come;

And I hope, by Your good pleasure,

Safely to arrive at home!

12 And when you feel weak—lean hard!

And when you feel weak—lean hard!

"Who is this coming up from the wilderness—leaning upon her Beloved?" Song of Solomon 8:5

Jesus is the object of a believer's love.

To him—the world is a wilderness.

Heaven is his Father's house—and his home.

He is passing through the wilderness in company with Jesus.

He is represented as the bride leaning on her Beloved.

This is indicative of weakness in herself—and confidence in her Beloved.

He is her strength—as well as her guide.

He is her support—as well as the object of her affection.

She leans on Him—as well as converses with Him.

He supports her—as well as comforts her.

Believer, keep close to your Savior's side! Never leave Him while in this waste howling wilderness.
Lean on Him! And when you feel weak—lean hard!

His strong arm is put forth to support your weak frame.

He will bear you up. He will lead you on.

The more you lean on Him—the more you will love Him!

The more you love Him—the closer you will cleave to Him!

Yield to His guidance,

trust in His love,

lean on His power,

walk by His side.

In His company—you are safe!

In communion with Him—you will be happy! Like the two disciples of old, your heart will be warmed, and you will be at the end of your journey before you are aware of it!

He is always at your side—so lean hard!

"Who is this coming up from the wilderness—leaning upon her Beloved?" Song of Solomon 8:5

13 As soon as your pride, obstinacy, and worldl

As soon as your pride, obstinacy, and worldliness are gone!

"He will sit like a refiner of silver, watching closely as the dross is burned away. He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold or silver." Malachi 3:3

God's people are His precious metal.

Afflictions are His furnace.

Purification is His design.

He therefore puts them into the furnace—and He keeps them there until His end is accomplished.

But He Himself superintends the whole refining process! He . . .

regulates the heat,

watches the operation of it,

and sits waiting for the fulfillment of His design.

He will not be disappointed, for if one affliction does not produce the desired end—another shall!

Beloved, perhaps you have wondered why one trial has followed another in your experience. The reason is this—the dross was not yet removed!

Your sorest trials—are among your choicest mercies, because they are intended to purify you!

Do not think that you are left alone in your sorrows—your Lord sits closely by, as your refiner! He intently watches the purification process—and as soon as your pride, obstinacy, and worldliness are gone—the fire is withdrawn—and your troubles will end!

There shall not be one furnace more than is necessary, nor shall you continue in suffering one moment more than is needful. Your Savior, who died for your sins—is your Refiner! He sits by the furnace during the whole process of refining! He is preparing you for glory!

14 "He shall be great!" Luke 1:32

"He shall be great!" Luke 1:32

So spoke the angel, announcing the birth of the Lord Jesus; and the prediction is fulfilled. He is great, and His greatness is unsearchable! He is great:

in the dignity of His nature,

in the depth of His humiliation,

in the glory of His righteousness,

in the merit of His blood,

in the provisions of His gospel,

in the salvation of His converts,

in the extent of His kingdom,

in the tenderness of His sympathy,

in the variety of His offices,

in the grandeur of His works,

in the estimation of His people,

in the conquest of His foes, and

in the punishment of His inveterate enemies!

His greatness is stamped upon . . .

every promise He has made,

every pardon He grants,

every blessing He gives,

and every victory He gains!

Believer, your Savior is great. Therefore He . . .

saves great sinners,

confers great grace,

bears with great offenders,

treats with great kindness, and

will confer on us great glory!

His greatness shall fill . . .

His people with everlasting joy, and

His foes with never ending woe!

He shall be great on earth, in heaven, and in hell!

15 "He remembered us in our low estate—and free

"He remembered us in our low estate—and freed us from our enemies!" Psalms 136:23

Our state by nature—was truly a low estate. We had . . .

no liberty—being the slaves of Satan;

no ability—being dead in trespasses and sins;

no honor—being allied only to traitors and rebels;

no real pleasure—being tossed about by desires and disappointments;

no prospects—except eternal woe;

no profitable employment—for the fruit of our toil was death.

Our nature was fearfully depraved;

our condition was truly deplorable;

our destiny was most alarming!

"BUT because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in transgressions; it is by grace you have been saved!" Ephesians 2:4-5

"He remembered us in our low estate—and freed us from our enemies!"

16 It is powerful, irresistible, cruel, insat

It is powerful, irresistible, cruel, insatiable!

"He has abolished death!" 2 Timothy 1:10

DEATH is our foe!

It is an implacable enemy!

It has slain millions!

It has robbed . . .

kingdoms of their deliverers,

churches of their ornaments,

families of their supports, and

individuals of their heart's beloved.

It is powerful, irresistible, cruel, insatiable!

"The king of terrors!"

It is a foe that might fill us with fear, and keep us in constant alarm. But we have a Friend—a Friend who is infinitely great, and incomparably good. He . . .

knew us thoroughly,

loved us infinitely,

pitied us tenderly,

engaged for us heartily,

came to deliver us cheerfully,

suffered for us indescribably,

and conquered our foe completely!

He has abolished death! That is:

He changed its nature: it is now quiet sleep!

He changed its office: it is not an executioner—but a waiting servant!

He changed its work: it is now only to take down the prison, and let the prisoner escape!

He changed its end: it was truly fearful; it is now divinely glorious!

Reader, are you prepared for this foe?

Reader, do you know this Friend?

17 "Yes! He is altogether lovely!"

"Yes! He is altogether lovely!" Song of Solomon 5:16

This is the opinion formed of Jesus—by all who really know Him. There is nothing lovely—but it is in Jesus, and it is in Him in full perfection. He is the object of admiration and adoration, to all who are taught by the Holy Spirit.

His person as God-man is altogether lovely—for He possesses every grace that can adorn humanity, and all the glories of infinite deity.

His character is altogether lovely—for He is infinitely wise, dignified, condescending, and kind.

Indeed there is nothing in Christ but what is lovely—and there is nothing lovely but it may be found in Him.

The testimony borne by the spouse will apply . . .

to His offices, as Prophet, Priest and King;

to His government, universal and particular;

to His design in all His dealings with us—even to purify, elevate, and honor us.

Reader, do you know Him?

Reader, do you admire Him?

Reader, do you love Him?

The more you know Him—the more you will love Him!

The more you love Him—the more happy you will be!

"Yes! He is altogether lovely! This is my Beloved, this my Friend!" Song of Solomon 5:16

18 "The power of the Holy Spirit."

"The power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13

The Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with the Father and the Son—in power, majesty, and glory.

Without His agency—salvation is impossible.

He quickens us—when dead in trespasses and sins.

He teaches us—when ignorant and bewildered.

He sanctifies us—when polluted and depraved.

He comforts us—when depressed and cast down.

He helps us in prayer, against temptation, and out of many difficulties.

His power produces our graces, quickens them when dull, and keeps them alive.

He witnesses to our adoption, and seals us unto the day of redemption.

We are His workmanship—and His temple.

He is our teacher, comforter, and inward intercessor.

His power alone can . . .

make the gospel effectual,

subdue the corruptions of our hearts, and

conform us to the likeness of the Lord Jesus.

Our obligation to Him is great,

our dependence upon Him is constant,

and our love to Him should be fervent.

The Holy Spirit . . .

convinces us of sin,

unfolds the glories of Jesus to us,

works faith in our hearts,

leads us to the fountain of His blood,

clothes us in His perfect righteousness,

unites us to His person, and

teaches us to live upon Him.

The great thing we need in the church, and in our hearts—is to experience the power of the Spirit of God!

19 "I abhor myself!" Job 42:6

"I abhor myself!" Job 42:6

The more clearly the Lord manifests Himself to us, and the more He works in us by His Spirit—the deeper will be our humility and self-abhorrence. Self-admirers are utter strangers to close and holy fellowship with God.

Nothing reveals to us the true state of human nature, like nearness to God. Men may speculate, and reason, and boast of their pretended goodness—so long as they are at a distance from God. But no sooner do they come into His presence, than their supposed loveliness is turned into corruption! They not only SEE that they are vile—but they FEEL it!

Job had boasted, and contended with God; but as soon as God came near to him—his views and feelings underwent an entire change, and he cried out, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes!"

Never does grace appear so glorious, or Christ so precious—as when we sink before God in self-loathing and self-abhorrence!

20 You have robbed Me!

You have robbed Me!

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

This is a very solemn question, for to attempt it must be very daring! But who can plead not guilty?

He charges us with the crime: He says, "You have robbed Me!"

We have robbed Him of His time: time which He claims, and which should be devoted to Him.

We have robbed Him of property: what He has entrusted and lent to us—we have claimed as our own. What was given us for others—we have squandered or hoarded for self.

We have robbed Him of the heart: this we have given to others, to idols! They have been loved, trusted, adored, and feared—before Him.

We have robbed Him of our talents: using them for the gratification and aggrandizement of ourselves.

What can we say to such conduct?

Is it not ungrateful—for He is our Father?

Is it not daring audacity—for He could crush us with a look?

Let us reflect upon our characters: "Robbers of God!"

Let us . . .

confess our crimes,

obtain a pardon,

change our course, and

render unto God the things that are God's.

O for honesty of heart and consistency of life!

"Will a man rob God?"

21 His hand is moved by His heart

His hand is moved by His heart

"All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His HAND!" Daniel 4:35

The 'hand of God' is His providence.

God's providence is His wisdom and power in operation for the accomplishment of His will.

No one can possibly frustrate His designs.

Nothing can throw confusion into His plans.

He steadily pursues His object,

easily accomplishes His purpose,

and performs all His good pleasure.

All His saints are in His hand—therefore they are safe.

His hand is at work for them—therefore they shall not be injured.

He always works in accordance with His Word.

His predictions must all come to pass.

His promises must all be fulfilled.

His people must all be safe.

Beloved, the hand of God is lifted up to defend you; therefore you are safe.

His hand is opened to supply you; therefore you shall not lack.

His hand is beneath you; therefore you shall not fall.

Trust in Jesus, in His wisdom and power. Exercise faith in His providence; it is at work for your welfare.

His hand will . . .

crush or convert your foes,

protect you and supply your needs,

guide you through the desert,

and lift you up forever in glory!

Look from circumstances—to the hand that guides and overrules them! It is your Father's hand—and His hand is moved by His heart, which heart glows with unutterable love to you!

He is at work for you, and "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand!"

22 It is not possible to say where it may

It is not possible to say where it may lead you!

"Peter followed Him afar off." Matthew 26:58

And have not we done so too? Once we thought that nothing could cool our love, dampen our ardor, or turn our feet aside; but we have long since discovered our weakness!

For Peter there was some excuse—in the circumstances in which his Master was placed; for us there is none.

Faith brings us near to Jesus—and love keeps us near.

Unbelief is the cause of our slow pace, and declining in His ways. Let us carefully guard against UNBELIEF. It . . .

poisons our comforts,

falsifies our profession,

dampens our zeal,

hinders our communion,

thrusts us to a distance from Jesus,

and alienates our souls from His ways.

Let us encourage and feed our FAITH. It will . . .

strengthen our hearts,

quicken our pace,

endear our Savior,

fortify our minds, and

keep us near to our beloved Lord.

Reader, are you following the Lord fully, closely?

Or, are you like Peter—afar off?

If you are, beware! You know to what evil, this conduct led to in him! It is not possible to say where it may lead you!

"The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter!

Then Peter went outside and wept bitterly!" Luke 22:61-62

Get close to Jesus—and keep close. Let . . .

your thoughts gather round Him,

your affections fix upon Him,

and your hope center in Him.

Cleave to the Savior—as the child to its parent!

Cleave to Jesus—as the limpet to the rock!

23 Have you been walking with God today?

Have you been walking with God today?

"Noah walked with God!" Genesis 6:9

Noah was reconciled to God.

He was intimate with God.

He listened to the voice of God.

He chose the way of God.

He approved of the designs of God.

Noah's God—was his Friend:

with Him, he could converse,

to Him, he could look for counsel,

from Him, he often received favors.

Noah's God—was his Companion: he walked with Him, realizing that He was near, loving His presence, and improving by His society.

He did not sit with the Lord on His throne,

nor stand with Him in His sanctuary—but

he WALKED with Him in His way.

He made progress. He was diligent—as well as devout.

The presence of God was . . .

his happiness,

his security, and

his honor.

This privilege may be ours. It is, if we are really believers in the Lord Jesus. Our God is with us! He is with us as . . .

our Father,

our Friend, and

our Companion.

We walk with Him.

We converse with Him.

We receive from Him.

Beloved, do you walk with God?

Have you been walking with God today?

Does the thought of God's presence with you, give you joy? Does it soothe, and animate, and sanctify your heart?

Retire to rest rejoicing in the fact, "God is with me, as my Father and my omnipotent Friend!"

24 He will guide us to the end of the journey!

He will guide us to the end of the journey!

"He will be our guide—even unto death!" Psalms 48:14

What a precious assurance is this!

Our God is our guide!

He led us out of the world at first,
directed us to the cross, and
conducted us into the path of holiness.

He has led us through all our past difficulties and trials; He leads us by the hand at present, and He will never give up His charge, for He will be our guide even unto death. He will . . .

choose our way;
lead us in the paths of righteousness;
kindly converse with us along the road;
point out the snares and dangers in our path;
keep us by His power through faith unto salvation,
and will patiently bear with us unto the end!

He may . . .

hide His face,
refuse communion,
withhold comforts,
smite us for our follies, and
teach us our dependence on Himself by painful experience;
but He will never forsake us—or give us up!

He will guide us to the end of the journey, and will go with us through the last dark valley!

He will not only lead us to the heavenly kingdom—but put us in possession of it! This He has promised—and He will faithfully perform it.

Beloved, it is our Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom! He will guide us now—and by and by receive us to glory!

25 The Friend of His people in distress!

The Friend of His people in distress!

"You have known my soul in adversities!" Psalms 31:7

Prosperity makes friends—but adversity tries them.

Many will visit and smile upon us—when the sun shines.

Few will venture out to do us good—in the wintry or stormy day!

David had been in adversity; he had been forsaken and neglected by his friends—but not by his God! His God . . .

knew him,

and visited him,

and cared for him,

and sympathized with him,

and supplied him,

and at length delivered him.

This honor have all His saints! We have been in adversity, we have passed through a wilderness; but our God has . . .

led us,

and fed us,

and preserved us,

and brought us out into a wealthy place.

We can witness for Him in reference to the past; and we ought calmly, quietly, and confidently to trust Him for the future. He has pledged His Word that He will deliver us in six troubles, and that in seven no evil shall touch us; and He who has promised is faithful.

He is emphatically, the Friend of His people in distress!

In our greatest trials—He will manifest His richest grace!

26 "Testify against Me!" Micah 6:3

"Testify against Me!" Micah 6:3

By our conduct—we often reflect badly upon the Lord; treating Him with neglect and disrespect, preferring creatures or worldly things before Him! He speaks of this conduct—as if it went to His heart! He says to us, "O My people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me!"

Have you neglected the prayer closet?

Have you slighted the means of grace?

Have you laid your Bible aside and left it unopened?

Have you withdrawn your thoughts and your affections from God—and given them to the world?

Why is this?

What reason have you for doing so?

The Lord asks you WHY? Testify against Me!

He says, "Have you any charges against Me? Bring them forward! Have I treated you unkindly? Have I been false to My Word? Have I acted in any way unfitting My character? Tell Me—why do you treat Me with neglect? Why do you prefer My enemy, the world, to Me? Tell out your reasons, let Me know all; anything but this shyness, this distance, this indifference!"

O believer! Are you not guilty? Have you not wounded your God? Have you not grieved His Holy Spirit? Return to your injured Lord. Go, fall at His feet, confess your sins, beg His pardon, be reconciled, and embosomed in His love!

27 God's presence is offensive to them!

God's presence is offensive to them!

"They say to God: Depart from us—for we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways!" Job 21:14

The ungodly say so.

God's presence is offensive to them!

They wish there was no God!

But as there is a God—they wish Him to keep at a distance from them.

This is not your case beloved. It was once. It would have been your dreadful condition right now—but for sovereign grace! You now desire the presence of God—this is the effect of His love. You have seen something of His glory, in the person of Jesus Christ. You have tasted that He is gracious. You are reconciled to Him, and are at peace with Him. You have nothing to fear from Him, therefore you desire that He would come unto you, and manifest Himself to your soul.

You do not say, "Depart from me," but, "my soul thirsts for God, for the living God! When shall I come and appear before God?"

Those who now say unto God, "Depart from us!" will one day hear Him say, "Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his demons!"

But you who now desire His presence, will hear Him invite you, saying, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father—inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!"

28 Still we may be happy!

Still we may be happy!

"Yet I will rejoice in the LORD!" Habakkuk 3:18

This was a wise determination.

Everything around us, and everything within us may change—but the Lord changes not.

Our light may give place to darkness,
our peace may give place to hostility,
our health may give place to sickness,
our plenty may give place to poverty,
our ease may give place to suffering, and
our friendships may give place to loneliness,
but still we may be happy!

We may rise above circumstances!

For God is immutably the same!

We may rejoice that though much is lost, we have more that we can never lose.

But if we would emulate the prophet Habakkuk—we be sure of our title to all the promises of God's Word. We must know . . .

that our sins are pardoned,
that we are at peace with God,
that He is our best and faithful Friend.

Then we may rejoice in Him at all times, for . . .

His fullness—is our fortune,
His power—is our defense,
His love—is our solace,
His promises—are our security,
His throne—is our place of safety,
and His presence—is our heaven!

Everything in God has a tendency to make us happy; and everything that is done by God will promote our everlasting welfare. We may well say,

"Even though the fig trees have no blossoms,

and there are no grapes on the vine;

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!"

29 "Is it right for you to be angry?" Jonah 4:4

"Is it right for you to be angry?" Jonah 4:4

Jonah quarreled with his God. And who has not? We may not speak as plainly as he did—but we have been in the same temper, and manifested the same morose spirit.

Very few are well satisfied with the Lord's plans.

Fewer still are always pleased with the Lord's works.

How many quarrel with His sovereignty! What hard things have been spoken against it!

How many complain of His providence, and think it unwise, unkind, and almost unjust!

Beloved, we are often angry with God!

This temper shows itself . . .

in fretfulness,

in complaining,

in sullen gloom.

"Is it right for you to be angry?"

Angry with your Father . . .

whose wisdom is infinite,

whose love is as constant as the day, and

who constantly showers His blessings upon you!

Angry with your God, who has . . .

pardoned all your heinous sins,

provided for your innumerable needs,

blessed you with countless spiritual blessings!

Surely it is a sin, a grievous sin, not to be pleased . . .

with all He does,

with all He has provided,

and with all He requires.

"Is it right for you to be angry?"

30 My friend, I know not what your trouble may be

My friend, I know not what your trouble may be

"I would seek unto God!" Job 5:8

This is sound advice. It is much better than . . .

seeking unto men, or

poring over troubles, or

indulging a gloomy imagination, or

giving way to fears.

My friend, I know not what your trouble may be—but "I would seek unto God!"

If I was in perplexity—I would seek unto God for wisdom.

If I was in sorrow—I would seek unto God for comfort.

If I was in weakness—I would seek unto God for strength.

If I was under guilt—I would seek unto God for pardon.

If I was in a severe conflict—I would seek unto God for victory.

If I was in doubt and fear—I would seek unto God for confidence and a sense of His favor.

If I was harassed by Satan—I would seek unto almighty God for protection.

If I was afraid of falling—I would seek unto God to uphold me with His omnipotent arm.

If I was alarmed at death—I would seek for His presence to comfort me.

Whatever you need—seek it from God!

Whatever you fear—carry it to God!

Whatever troubles you—lay it before God!

You cannot seek unto Him in vain, or without profit!

"I would seek unto God!"

31 The physician and the patient

The physician and the patient

"Who heals all your diseases." Psalms 103:3

The Lord is the great Physician. He is especially the healer of the soul.

The patient is a believer.

The cause of all disease and suffering is sin.

The seat of the malady is in the heart.

The nature of the malady is most loathsome and afflictive.

It affects . . .

the memory,

the affections,

the conscience,

the will,

yes the whole man! "Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. You are sick from head to foot—covered with bruises, welts, and infected wounds!" Isaiah 1:5-6

We are all the subjects of this disease. We all suffer from it!

No one can heal us—but the Lord Jesus. He is the great Physician; to Him we may repair and be restored to health. To encourage you to do so, look at His qualifications:

He is infinitely wise, tender and skillful.

His experience is without a parallel.

The remedies He employs are . . .

His precious blood,

His holy Word, and

His blessed Spirit.

The mode of application is by . . .

afflictions,

bereavements,

convictions, and

divine energy.

He never failed in any case—all of His patients are completely cured!

David's was a bad case—but he could say, "He heals all my diseases!"

Sinner—you are sick, mortally sick! Go to Jesus!

Backslider—you are dreadfully sick! Go to Jesus!

Believer, are you not desiring perfect health? Then go to Jesus and plead, "Lord, if You will—You can make me whole!"

32 "When will You comfort me?" Psalm 119:82

"When will You comfort me?" Psalms 119:82

The Lord's people often get into a very uncomfortable state, and sometimes they continue in that state for a long season. But there is always some cause for it—and we should seek to know what that cause is, that it may be removed. It is not easy to give an answer to the inquiry, for it must depend on the character of the inquirer.

To one the Lord would say, "I will comfort you—when you humble yourself before Me, cordially approve of My method of salvation, and submit to My righteousness."

To another the Lord would say, "I will comfort you—when you frankly confess your sin, seek pardon through the blood of Christ, and engage to walk according to My Word."

To another the Lord would say, "I will comfort you—when you break off that unscriptural relationship, come out from the world, and separate yourself unto Me."

To another the Lord would say, "I will comfort you—when you stop seeking comfort from selfish motives, and aim at, and endeavor to promote My glory."

To another the Lord would say, "I will comfort you—when you leave the bed of sloth, stir up yourself to take hold on Me, and seek to minister to others."

To another the Lord would say, "I will comfort you—when you enter upon that self-denying duty, and mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts."

In a word, God will comfort you—as soon as comfort will secure His glory, and your good!

33 Every worm that trusts in Him!

Everywormthat trusts in Him!

"Fear not, O worm Jacob, O little Israel—for I Myself will help you—declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah 41:14

However mean and despicable we may appear in the eyes of others, however weak and feeble we may feel in ourselves, still our God says, "Fear not!" Though but a worm—yet if a praying Jacob—we need not fear, we should not fear! Our God forbids it because . . .

it injures our souls,

encourages our enemies,

dispirits our friends, and

dishonors His glorious name!

How precious, unspeakably precious, these "Fear nots!" are! How thickly they are strewed through the divine Word!

But WHY should we fear? The Lord expressly tells us that,

"The race is not to the swift,

or the battle to the strong,

nor does food come to the wise,

or wealth to the brilliant,

or favor to the learned."

Ecclesiastes 9:11

Are we believers in Jesus? Then we should not fear, for our God is our Friend—and His care . . .

extends over all time,

embraces every event,

supplies every need,

anticipates every emergency,

comprehends every believer;

and shall everlastingly secure the safety and happiness of everywormthat trusts in Him!

His strength is almighty,

His wisdom is omniscient,

His love is unequalled, and

His resources are unbounded!

Therefore, "Fear not, O worm Jacob!"

34 "Christ died for us!" Romans 5:8

"Christ died for us!" Romans 5:8

What an unspeakable blessing is this! Let us very seriously consider it today!

"CHRIST died"—

Jehovah's only begotten Son,
the fountain of being and blessedness,
the center and source of all excellence and glory!

HE died!

"Christ died"—

as our almighty Friend,
who stood up for us in covenant,
who stooped for us from heaven to earth,
whose love was stronger than death!

HE died!

"Christ died FOR US"—the objects of His love—and His Father's choice;

though we were base;
though we were ungodly;
though we were without strength;
though we were rebellious;
though we were His enemies!

Christ died FOR US,
as the Surety for the debtors He had undertaken to set free,
as the Redeemer for captives He was pledged to deliver,
as the Husband for His beloved but fallen bride,
as the Shepherd for the flock entrusted to His care!

Christ died FOR US—

to redeem us from death and hell,

to raise us to eternal life,
to restore us to friendship with God,
to fit us for His holy service, and that we might be crowned with eternal glory!
Christ bore our sins upon the tree,
To seek and save the lost He came,
There was He doomed—to set us free,
From death and everlasting shame;
The captive flock from hell was freed
And ransomed when their Shepherd bled!

35 "Is this your kindness to your friend?"

"Is this your kindness to your friend?" 2 Samuel 16:17

The conduct of Jesus towards us is the perfection of kindness;
but our conduct toward Him is often just the reverse!

How often we treat Him with neglect!

Instead of prayer being a delightful privilege—it is often an irksome task.

How often we violate His positive precepts, or
omit to perform known and acknowledged duties.

How often we . . .

doubt His love,

distrust His Word and

complain of His dealings!

How often we nourish the flesh—which He has directed us to mortify!

How often we prefer the world—which He has commanded us to forsake!

How often we yield to Satan—whom He has exhorted us to resist!

Will may our cheeks burn with shame, and our bosoms fill with confusion, if the question is put to us, in reference to much of our conduct toward our kind and gracious Redeemer: "Is this your kindness to your friend?"

His kindness to us is astonishing—and

our unkindness toward Him is equally so!

Let us seek afresh, the tokens of His forgiving love, and in future when about to yield to temptation, or give way to any sin—put the question to our consciences, "Is this your kindness to your friend?"

36 What an astounding fact!

What an astounding fact!

"We know that we are of God."¹ John 5:19

What an honor! What a comfort is this!

We were rebels against Him;

we are now His willing servants!

We were His avowed enemies;

we are now His chosen friends!

We were the children of wrath;

we are now His beloved children!

We know that we are of God . . .

by faith in His Word,

by love to His saints,

by sympathy with Himself,

by the grief we feel when we sin,

by our pleasure in obeying His will,

by the contrast there is between us and the world . . .

in our principles,

in our pleasures,

in our pursuits.

What we are, as distinguished from others—is of God.

Being thus distinguished, we are peculiarly . . .

the Lord's property,

the Lord's treasure,

the Lord's portion,

the Lord's delight!

What an astounding fact!

We are the Lord's! The grace that made us so—must be free and infinite!

37 It is as much our duty to be happy—as to

It is as much our duty to be happy—as to be holy!

"The joy of the Lord is your strength." Nehemiah 8:10

Fear and sorrow naturally weakens us;

but faith and joy give us strength!

Joy is the cordial of the soul:

it quickens,

it enlivens,

it emboldens,

and makes us strong.

Our heavenly Father is called the blessed, or the happy God. He is also the happy-making God. He loves to see His people happy; therefore, as the God of all comfort—He has made great provision for our happiness.

There are wells of salvation—and we should draw from them with joy.

There is an inexhaustible fullness in Jesus—and from that fullness we should receive—for every need, for every duty, for every trial. We cannot apply to it too often; we cannot go to it for too much!

Hear our beloved Lord, "Ask, and receive—that your joy may be full."

It is only as we live . . .

out of self,

upon Jesus,

above the world,

in the region of God's free grace,

that we can be happy.

The happy Christian is the strong Christian; and it is the strong Christian who . . .

brings much glory to God,

much credit to His cause, and

does much good in the world.

It is as much our duty to behappy—as to beholy! Both are recommended, and provision is as much made for the one—as the other.

38 Near and dear

Near and dear

"A people near unto Him." Psalms 148:14

Jesus took our nature, and became one with us—thus He is near unto us. He gives us His Holy Spirit, brings us into union with Himself—and we are near to Him. This is our highest honor—and an unfailing source of happiness and peace.

We are near unto Him, in point of relation—being His children.

We are near unto Him, in point of affection—being loved with an everlasting love.

We are near unto Him, in point of union—being members of His body.

We are near unto Him, in point of fellowship—walking with Him as a man walks with his friend.

We are near unto Him, in point of attention—being the objects of His daily, hourly, tender care.

We shall soon be near unto Him, in point of locality—when our mansion is prepared, for we shall depart to be with Christ, which is far better!

We are near to Him though poor, when deeply tried!

And if ever nearer one time than another—we shall be nearest to Him in death.

If we are near unto Him—then He will . . .

sympathize with us in all our sorrows;

assist us in all our trials;

protect us in all our dangers;

hold fellowship with us in all our lonely hours;

provide for us in all seasons of necessity;

and certainly bring us to glory!

Let us realize this fact daily: we are near and dear to our God!

And am I near to God,

His friend, His child, His care?

O may I walk with Him in love,

By faith and fervent prayer!

39 He will put us into the fire!

He will put us into the fire!

"You have tried me." Psalms 17:3

The Lord tries the righteous. Trials reveal, prove, and brighten his character. Every trial . . .

is necessary for our good;

is ordained by eternal love; and

is continued just as long as requisite—but not one moment longer.

Every saint needs trials—and every saint is tried.

If the Lord intends to make us holy—He will put us into the fire!

"I have tried you in the furnace of affliction!" Isaiah 48:10.

Every time we pray for holiness—we pray for trials!

Trials . . .

enhance the value of the promises,

endear the throne of grace,

render the ordinances profitable, and

make the Savior exceedingly precious!

In trials we . . .

learn to read our own hearts,

see the insufficiency of the world,

humble ourselves before our God, and

look with a longing eye to our glorious eternity.

The tried Christian is likely to be a stable Christian. Very few who walk in a smooth path are either remarkably spiritual, extensively useful, or very happy. Trials, like the frosts of winter, prepare our hearts to receive the good seed of the Word—and then we bring forth fruit with patience.

"When He has tried me—I will come forth as gold!" Job 23:10

40 Its pleasures, profits, employments,

Its pleasures, profits, employments, honors—all dust!

"My soul cleaves unto the dust!" Psalms 119:25

How common is this complaint of the true Christian!

What is the world? DUST! Its pleasures, profits, employments, honors—all dust! That is, they are .

..

comparatively worthless,

beneath an immortal soul,

unsuitable to a child of God. Yet . . .

our thoughts are filled with them,

our affections are entangled by them, and

our graces are weakened through them.

Worldlings are at home in the DUST—they appear to be satisfied with it!

But the Christian, when he cleaves to it most—is not at home, and cannot be satisfied with it. This is a mercy.

My soul, rouse yourself from your lethargy; arise and shake off the dust of the world—and put on your beautiful garments! It is beneath your dignity to lie there in the dust! Treat the things of time as they deserve!

Heaven is your home!

Holiness is your element!

The King of kings is your husband!

Glory is your eternal portion!

Earth is but a wilderness through which you have to pass; a lodging-place for a few days. "Arise and depart—for this is not your rest, because it is polluted!"

41 In heaven, earth and hell!

In heaven, earth and hell!

"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all that I please!" Isaiah 46:10

The counsel of man is often weak and unwise—his knowledge being imperfect, and his mind disordered.

But the counsel of the Lord is the effect of infinite wisdom, and is sustained by omnipotent power!

Men's purposes are often formed under evil influences, or when the mind is confused and perplexed.

But the purposes of God were formed in the calm and quiet of the eternal mind, under the influence of justice, grace, holiness, truth, and love!

Men's counsels are often frustrated

—but God's purposes never can be!

Men's purposes are frequently defeated.

But our God "works all things after the counsel of His own will."

His counsel includes all that is essential to our eternal welfare.

His purposes embrace all the events of this transitory life.

Therefore we ought not to be much affected by anything which takes place around us. There may be confusion, conflict, injustice, oppression, cruelty; but our God, who has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, says, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all that I please!"

Remember, beloved, our God is at work always and everywhere. "He does according to his will" in heaven, earth and hell! And He says to us, "Be still and know that I am God."

42 We are not all chastened with the same rod

We are not all chastened with the same rod

"Whom the Lord loves—He chastens; and punishes every son whom He receives." Hebrews 12:6

Every believer is beloved of his God—yet every believer is chastened by Him.

Chastisement is a proof of divine love.

We are but children—and need it.

We are His children—and therefore receive it.

Some are chastened by losses,

some by sickness,

some by the failure of their favorite schemes,

some by domestic trials,

some by the conduct of friends.

We are not all chastened with the same rod;

but we are all chastened by the same hand!

We are not all corrected in the same way—but we are all corrected by the same wise, holy, and loving Father!

Some suffer most in mind—others in body.

Some are tried most in their circumstances—others more in their relationships.

But let us never forget that every correction flows from divine love; every stroke is given in kindness!

If it goes to our hearts—it comes from our heavenly Father's heart!

He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve us without purpose.

Our follies call for strokes—and our sins for rebukes!

Let us therefore humble ourselves under our Father's hand. Let us not question His love to us, because we are so tried. Neither let us think the discipline unnecessary, and so despise His chastening.

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." Hebrews 12:11

43 Once again You will have compassion on us!

Once again You will have compassion on us!

"Who is a God like You—who pardons the sins His people! You cannot stay angry with Your people forever, because You delight in showing mercy. Once again You will have compassion on us! You will trample our sins under Your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean!" Micah 7:18-19

God's anger has been provoked by our sins; the effects of His displeasure have been felt—but He will not stay angry with His people forever!

Though our sin has made us miserable—His mercy shall make us happy!

He will have compassion upon us, because of the benevolence of His nature, in accordance with His Word, to our comfort and salvation. He is "full of compassion, plenteous in mercy, ready to forgive!" These are His own words, and they contain enough, if we did but believe them . . .

to banish our fears,

to conquer our doubts, and

to fill us with joy and peace!

We have wandered—but He will have compassion!

The wandering sheep shall be restored!

The prodigal shall be received with music and dancing.

He will have compassion on His people—let your fears and sins be ever so numerous!

He will have compassion on His people—for . . .

He has promised,

His nature prompts Him to it,

He has done so in innumerable instances,

and His heart overflows with mercy!

As soon as ever He . . .

sees that you feel your sinfulness,

hears you confess your follies,

finds you broken down in contrition at His throne

—He will have compassion on you,

trample your sins under His feet, and
throw them into the depths of the ocean!

44 She had been a great sinner!

She had been a great sinner!

"Her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved MUCH!" Luke 7:47

She had been a great sinner!

Convinced of her sin . . .

she sought the Savior,

applied for pardon, and

she found mercy!

Deeply affected with the love of Christ, and the manner in which He displayed it—her soul glowed with love to Him in return. She not only loved Him—but she loved Him MUCH! And therefore she could endure scorn, contempt, and persecution, in order to enjoy His presence and listen to His Word.

Her love could not be confined in her heart—it sought to show itself; she therefore . . .

brought the alabaster box of precious ointment,

washed His feet with her tears,

wiped them with the hair of her head, and

anointed them with the expensive ointment.

Here is an example for us!

We also are great sinners; Jesus has kindly received us and pardoned our sins; His love to us—is as great as it was to this woman! But is our love to Him—equal to hers? I fear not.

But why? Because . . .

our conviction of sin is not as clear,

our views of our unworthiness are not as vivid,

our apprehensions of danger are not as painful, or

our sense of pardoning mercy is not as deep!

We cannot force ourselves to love. But we can direct our thoughts to Jesus, and seek for the Holy Spirit to shed abroad His love in our hearts.

45 Let us meditate—and let Jesus be our subject!

Let us meditate—and let Jesus be our subject!

"My meditation of Him shall be sweet!" Psalms 104:34

To meditate is to think closely, seriously, and for some time upon one subject. If the subject is spiritual—the exercise is peculiarly profitable. If the mind is spiritual—meditation on Jesus will be sweet. Let us think of Him . . .

frequently,

intently, and

seriously.

Let us meditate on . . .

the glory of His person,

the riches of His grace,

the strength of His love,

the tenderness of His sympathy,

the power of His arm,

the merit of His blood,

the magnificence of His righteousness,

the completeness of His conquest,

the splendor of His ascension,

the prevalence of His intercession,

the exalted station He fills in heaven,

His constant care of His people on earth,

what He gives to them,

what He requires of them, and

the eternal glory which He will soon give them!

Let us meditate—and let Jesus be our subject!

Let us go over in meditation all that regards . . .

His person,

His office,

His work,

His kingdom,

His humiliation,

His exaltation, and

His character.

Such meditations will be sweet!

Let us see Him . . .

in nature,

in providence,

and in grace.

Such views of Him will cheer, strengthen, and spiritualize us!

46 "Repent and do the things you did at first!"

"Repent and do the things you did at first!" Revelation 2:5

Repentance implies thought—serious thought in reference to the conduct and state of the heart.

Repentance proceeds from conviction—deep and solemn conviction of our sin and sinfulness in the sight of God.

Repentance proves concern—a concern to escape danger, obtain pardon, and enjoy peace.

Repentance includes sorrow—enlightened, hearty, and abiding sorrow, that we have grieved the Lord, dishonored His cause, and slighted His mercy.

Repentance always leads to reformation. There may be some degree of reformation without repentance—but there can be no repentance without reformation.

Let us think upon our ways, reflect on the dishonor we have done the Savior, be concerned to enjoy anew the tokens of His forgiving love, mourn over our follies and faults, and begin again to do our first works.

Look to Jesus, wait upon God, search His holy Word, and abstain from the very appearance of evil—as we did at first. What love, what zeal, what caution, what carefulness, what entire consecration to God—we manifested then! Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Jesus charges us with dishonoring Him—but He also says, "Repent and do the things you did at first!"

47 "Rest in the Lord!" Psalm 37:7

"Rest in the Lord!" Psalms 37:7

The unbeliever is naturally restless; he is removed from his natural foundation, and the wandering of the desire keeps him in constant agitation. To him, Jesus says, "Come unto Me—and I will give you rest."

The believer has accepted this invitation, and has found rest. But he is often led away by temptations, worldly cares, and unbelief; and then he becomes restless again.

Beloved, you are directed to rest—not in your circumstances, attainments, or enjoyments—but to rest in the Lord.

Rest in the will of God—for whatever He wills is for your good, your highest good. "This is the will of God—even your sanctification."

Rest in the love of God—and often meditate on the words of Jesus on this point, "You have loved them—as you have loved Me!"

Rest in the mercy of God—from which flows endless streams of blessings for your supply.

Rest in the Word of God—for it is true, immutable, and pledges Him to do good unto you.

Rest in the relation your God fills to you! He is your divine Father—kind, powerful, wise, and ever present.

Rest in the Lord as He is manifested in Jesus—working all things after the counsel of His own will, and directing all things for your good and His glory!

Rest in the Lord—and be happy!

48 Come quickly!

Come quickly!

"The Lord is at hand!" Php 4:5

Jesus is coming!

WHEN He will come—is uncertain, therefore we should always be ready. If we realized the certainty and nearness of the Lord's coming—we would not be as ensnared by the world as we too often are. Our love would be withdrawn from present things—and we would be daily laying up treasures in heaven for ourselves.

Jesus will come . . .

to close the present world system,

to judge the people,

to be glorified in His saints, and

to reward every one according to his works.

The Lord is at hand! Purposeful thinking on this fact . . .

would preserve us from temptation,

would prevent our backsliding, and

would deepen our seriousness and spirituality.

The Lord is at hand! Therefore we should . . .

expect Him,

prepare for Him, and

be found waiting, looking and longing for His appearing.

When Jesus comes, He will . . .

complete our salvation,

destroy all our foes,

conform us to His own lovely image,

and introduce us to glory!

When Jesus comes—His people will be made completely happy! Sighs, groans, and cries—will be exchanged for eternal pleasures, songs, and triumphant hallelujahs!

Even so, come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!

49 He would deny us nothing!

He would deny us nothing!

"Show Your marvelous loving-kindness." Psalms 17:7

He has already shown it—by taking us into the nearest, sweetest, and most profitable relation to Himself!

What love, to call a worm—His dear child!

What love, to call a sinful and polluted worm—His beloved bride!

Loving-kindness, is love in the most attractive form; love acting in the kindest manner; or, love robed in tenderness and benevolence.

To show marvelous loving-kindness, is to bestow distinguished favors, such as reason or custom could not warrant us to expect; favors which only a God of love could bestow! Yet such favors we may ask in faith—and expect!

Beloved, never forget—our God rejoices and He delights to give us good things!

If we were but humble, simple-minded, living in the daily exercise of faith—He would deny us nothing!

We have not—but it is because we ask not, or because we ask in an improper spirit, or with an unfitting design—that we may consume it upon our lusts!

50 He will distress those whom he cannot devour!

He will distress those whom he cannot devour!

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony!" Revelation 12:11

What a formidable representation of SATAN, the context gives us. He is called "the great dragon—that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, who deceives the whole world!"

His power is great—and his cruelty is greater!

His cunning is deep—and his designs are dreadful!

He hates the Savior—and he hates all who love Him!

He attempts to destroy—but he will distress those whom he cannot devour!

He is dreadful as a roaring lion; but he is more likely to harm us—when he comes slyly, and quietly—as a deceitful serpent!

He is always most dangerous—when he assumes the garb of an angel of light, for then we are apt to mistake him!

Every Christian overcomes him—though they were so weak! They conquer him—but not by reason, or argument, or eloquence—but by the blood of the Lamb, and the Word of their testimony. To that blood they looked—when he tempted them to despair; by that Word they walked—when he tried to draw them aside. The blood was their plea, the ground of their hope, and the subject of their rejoicing; the Word was their shield, their solace, and their rule. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony!"

51 Obedient children!

Obedient children!

"As obedient children." 1 Peter 1:14

The believer should daily realize the pleasing fact that God is his Father, and this being the case—he is treated as His child. His heavenly Father has made ample provision for all his needs. In Jesus he will find all he needs as a sinner—and all he requires as a saint. Whatever is in Jesus—is for him; and it is his duty, as well as his privilege—to receive grace upon grace out of the fullness of Jesus!

As a child, he should . . .

listen to his Father's voice,

learn his Father's will and

obey his Father's commands.

He has only to obey; his Father will provide.

He has to do with duty—and not with consequences. Only let him ascertain his Father's will upon any point—and it becomes at once his duty, his honor, and his happiness to do it.

Believer, you have a heavenly Father—a Father who loves you more than tongue can tell!

You have a Father who has blessed you with all spiritual blessings in Jesus!

You have a Father who wishes you . . .

to cast every care upon Him,

to leave every burden at His feet,

to trust Him to do you good.

As an obedient child, resign all your will to His—leave all your concerns in His hands! Your safety, comfort, and supplies are certain!

52 He will not take His eye off us!

He will not take His eye off us!

"Surely, I am with you always!" Matthew 28:20

Then Jesus is with us now. He is, and He will be with us, as He has promised, in all future time. He is with us . . .

to afford protection,

to impart consolation,

to subdue our fears,

to inspire with hope.

His presence is pledged to us, and it is . . .

the shield of our protection,

the strength of our hearts,

and the source of our joy.

He will not leave us to go a step alone!

He will not take His eye off us, or close His ear to us for one moment!

He tells us that we are more endeared to Him—than the loveliest infant is to the fondest mother. The ties of nature are not so strong, or so tender, or so lasting—as the ties of grace.

Let us endeavor to keep this fact in view: Jesus is now with us—and ever will be with us. He will be the last to comfort us in time—and the first to welcome us in eternity! He will go through the whole journey with us—and then bring us to be with Himself forever!

We are therefore sure of one thing—the presence of Jesus! His presence is the bliss of heaven—and the glory of immortality. Turn, then, from every creature—to Him! Lay down this night, resting upon the precious promise of Jesus, "Surely, I am with you always!"

53 "I fear God!" Genesis 42:18

"I fear God!" Genesis 42:18

So said Joseph. So may we say, whenever tempted to act inconsistent with our Christian character.

Truefear of God—springs from love, and is deepened and strengthened by filial fellowship with God. It is not a dread of His majesty—but a fear to offend or grieve His heart! It is produced by the Holy Spirit, and is a great preventive to sin. If I fear to offend God—I shall certainly strive to please Him. If I love Him—I shall fear to offend Him.

Truefear of God . . .

makes us cautious, careful and watchful,

will often lead us to prayer,

will prompt us to self-examination,

will lead us to compare our conduct with His Word,

will preserve us from presumption, levity, and dishonesty.

He who fears God—will not . . .

walk in the way of sinners, or

stand in the counsel of the ungodly, or

sit in the seat of the scornful—

but his delight will be in the Word of God, and in His book he will meditate day and night.

Has the fear of God influenced me this day? Have I said by my conduct, "I fear God!" Reflecting upon the inconsistency of others, can I say, "Because of my fear of God—I did not act that way!" Nehemiah 5:15

54 He cannot tolerate it!

He cannot tolerate it!

"Hezekiah's heart was proud!" 2 Chronicles 32:25

It swelled with pride—and was lifted up with vanity! Yet he was a good man, and had just received a remarkable proof of God's distinguishing love.

We are by nature so proud—that we are always in danger of being unduly elevated if God favors us; or of taking offence at God's dealings if He pleases to try us.

There is nothing that God hates more than pride! He cannot tolerate it! "I hate pride and arrogance!" Proverbs 8:13. And yet it is the very thing to which we are most prone! A proud heart is sure to be unfruitful; only the humble bring forth the fruits of righteousness.

Pride generates . . .

fretfulness,

discontent,

envy,

ill will,

hardness of heart, and

a thousand other evils!

Let us therefore beware lest our hearts are lifted up in pride, for if they are, God will be sure to pull them down, and the means, as in Hezekiah's case, may be very severe!

Let us therefore consider . . .

what we were before we received grace,

what we might have been but for grace, and

what we certainly should be forever, if God did not save us by grace—and so be humble.

55 They are gentle doves—not destroying vultures!

They are gentle doves—not destroying vultures!

"Blessed are the meek."Matthew 5:5

Meekness is very different from weakness—and yet the one is often mistaken for the other. The strongest minds are sometimes adorned with the grace of meekness.

The meek . . .

quietly submit to the will of God,

reverence His Word,

tremble at His rod

silently receive God's commands,

patiently copy the Savior's example.

Instead of the mind rising against God, and murmuring at His painful dispensations, it bows like the yielding plant to the breeze, and says, "May the will of the Lord be done!"

The meek walk softly with God—and prudently with men.

They do not seeking their own glory—but the honor of their God and Savior.

They are quiet lambs—not roaring lions!

They are gentle doves—not destroying vultures!

They benefit all around them—as the sheep; not bite and devour—as the wolf!

They live above the storms that agitate others.

They are cool—while others are hot.

They are resigned—while others resist.

They are at rest—while others are anxious.

Such are like Christ, who describes Himself, "I am meek and humble in heart."

"Blessed are the meek."Matthew 5:5

56 Trust His heart—when you cannot see His hand!

Trust His heart—when you cannot see His hand!

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

True religion is never so valuable—as in seasons of trouble, sickness, or death. Then we need something which nature cannot supply.

Our God is our very present help in times of trouble.

He helps us to bear it.

He helps us to improve it.

He helps us through it.

His choicest communications and sweetest manifestations are afforded in times of trial and distress.

Believer, your God is your refuge and your strength—an ever present help times of trouble.

He is never nearer—than when you imagine that He stands afar off!

He is never kinder—than when you think He has shut up His loving-kindness in displeasure.

Do not mistake His difficult dealings.

Do not doubt His divine love.

Do not listen to His lying foe.

Do not forget His faithful Word.

Always remember—if trouble comes, then grace comes with it! And your God is ever present to help you to rise above it, and to derive solid advantage from it.

Trust His heart—when you cannot see His hand!

Your eternal good is consulted in every trouble, and your God will be glorified by every trial. The Lord Almighty is with you! The God of Jacob is your refuge! Therefore fear not, neither be dismayed.

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57 The happy-making One!

The happy-making One!

"The God of all comfort!" 2 Corinthians 1:3

We are poor comfortless creatures in ourselves! We often seek comfort in earthly things—and meet with painful disappointments!

SIN has banished all true comfort and solid happiness from our world.

While God is excluded—comfort is excluded.

Distance from God—is distance from comfort.

Our God is the Happy One! He is also the happy-making One!

His comforts are pure, spiritual, and lasting.

His comforts delight the soul.

One ray of light from His countenance, one word of peace from His lips—will give more solid comfort than all earthly things!

We must learn to live out of SELF—upon our God for comfort, or we shall never know permanent happiness.

He is willing to comfort us. He promises His disconsolate people, "As a mother comforts her child—so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted!"

He commands His servants, "Comfort, comfort My people!"

He sent His beloved Son into our world "to comfort all who mourn."

Let us ever bear in mind—that it is our God who "comforts those who are cast down," and that He alone can comfort us, His children!

58 "Beware, lest you forget the Lord!"

"Beware, lest you forget the Lord!" Deuteronomy 6:12

We are prone to commit this sin, especially in times of temporal prosperity. We then forget . . .

our infinite obligation to Him;

our absolute dependence upon Him;

our accountableness to Him.

We should daily remember . . .

to acknowledge Him in all things;

to apply to Him for all we need;

to commit ourselves and our cause unto Him;

to endeavor in all things and by all means—to please Him;

to expect His promised interposition in trials—and supplies in need.

Let us henceforth beware lest we forget the Lord, for . . .

it dishonors Him;

it deeply grieves Him;

it is injurious to us, for it generates . . .

timidity or hardness;

insincerity or worldliness;

foreboding and prayerlessness;

ingratitude and self-righteousness.

To prevent this crying sin—

let us cultivate the habit of frequent prayer;

let us always endeavor to have some suited subject ready at hand for meditation:

some portion of Scripture,

or some attribute of God,

or some office of Christ,

or some merciful providence,

or some merciless foe,

or some possible danger!

"Beware, lest you forget the Lord!"

59 And we ought to be content with that!

And we ought to be content with that!

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing—we will be content with that." 1 Timothy 6:6-8

We cannot really need more; and if God sees fit to withhold—we ought not even to wish for more.

But our food may be coarse—and our clothing very common. What then! If we have God's blessing, if we enjoy His presence—we are better off than if we possessed a kingdom without them! If God gave us no more—we ought to believe that more would be injurious to us.

God either loves us—OR He does not. He either cares for us and provides for us—OR He leaves things to 'chance'.

If we genuine believers, then . . .

God certainly does love us!

He certainly does care for us!

He certainly does provide for us!

If He has numbered the very hairs of our head, fixed the bounds of our habitation, promised to supply all our needs! He cannot have left anything to 'chance'.

Let us then be content with such things as our heavenly Father gives us. Let us learn to be content in every state and condition. Let us bear in mind that godliness with contentment is great gain. Remember that it is written, that "all things that pertain unto life and godliness," are given to us through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. So that knowing Jesus—we may expect all that is necessary to a godly life—and we ought to be content with that!

60 It is like the passing cloud on the summer's

It is like the passing cloud on the summer's day!

"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy!" John 16:20

The sorrow of the Christian must be transient. It is like the passing cloud on the summer's day; or the chill of winter which must give place to the genial warmth of spring.

Beloved, if you now have sorrow—then your sorrow also shall soon be turned into joy; for joy is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.

Heaviness may endure for the night—but joy comes in the morning.

The SIN that causes your sorrow—shall be pardoned and subdued.

The FOES that disturb your peace—shall be converted or destroyed.

The CLOUDS that obscure your sun—shall soon dissolve in showers of blessing on your favored head.

The hard and weary road between you and your eternal home—will soon be passed! The days of your mourning will be ended, and those who now go forth weeping, bearing precious seed—shall soon return with songs of everlasting joy!

"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy!" John 16:20

61 Our brothers and sisters!

Our brothers and sisters!

"Love the brotherhood of believers." 1 Peter 2:17

All Christians are brethren. If we are truly born of God—then . . .

He is our Father,

Jesus is our elder Brother, and

all believers are our brethren.

They may differ from us in creed, in outward ceremonies and in many other things—but if are truly born of God—then they should be objects of our love.

We cannot refuse to love them, for our God says, "Love them—love them with a brother's love!"

Let us then look upon all Christians . . .

as in Christ,

as the beloved children of God,

as our brothers and sisters!

And let us endeavor to feel for them, and exercise toward them a brother's love.

Such brotherly love is natural, strong, tender, constant, delightful. Let us love them—so as . . .

to pity them in distress,

to relieve them if in need,

to help them in difficulties,

to prefer them to carnal people, however excellent such may in many respects be.

Let us love them . . .

for the sake of their elder Brother,

for their Father's sake, and

because they are so nearly related to us.

Remember, every Christian is your brother.

Remember, God loves every one of your brothers—as He loves Jesus.

Remember, Jesus commands you to love every Christian—as He has loved you!

62 We should SHINE!

We should SHINE!

"You are the light of the world!" Matthew 5:14

We are situated in a dark world.

We have received light—the light of truth and holiness—and we are to let our light shine!

Jesus is the SUN from whom we receive our light; and like the MOON we do not receive light only for ourselves—but to reflect it on others.

Let us then inquire:

HOW does the light shine?

Is it bright and cheerful?

Is it attractive and steady?

Is it mild and free?

Let us then inquire:

WHERE does our light shine?

In the place of employment?

In the chamber of affliction?

In the abodes of poverty and misery?

In the lurking places of ignorance and vice?

Let us then inquire:

In what FORM does our light shine?

In kind words?

In visits to the downcast?

In evangelical tracts?

In donations to the poor?

Let us then inquire:

What has OUR light done?

Has it dried the widow's tears?

Has it supplied the orphan's needs?

Has it conducted sinners to the cross?

Has it comforted others on the banks of the Jordan?

If we are the lights of the world—we should SHINE!

If not, darkness will reign.

As we are but lamps—we should be careful to get plenty of 'oil'—and often go to be 'trimmed'.

Beware of . . .

the bed of sloth,

the bushel of worldly conformity, and

the dark lantern of sinful timidity!

63 You may not know the cause of your

You may not know the cause of your depression or irritability

"He understands how weak we are; He knows we are only dust." Psalms 103:14

This is a sweet and encouraging thought!

Others may imagine us . . .

strong—when we are weak,

healthy—when we are diseased,

out of temper—when we are suffering.

But God understands how weak we are! And it is not bare knowledge—but knowledge united with love; knowledge that awakens sympathy. He knows . . .

the weakness of our constitutions,

the exact nature of our temperament,

the shattered state of the nerves,

the secret disease which causes irritability, or depression.

He can distinguish between what proceeds from physical causes—and what flows from the depravity of our hearts.

He knows every avenue by which temptation can enter, and the effects which external objects, or mental images have upon us.

He knows and often pities us—when others blame us!

He knows and sympathizes with us—when others judge harshly of us!

He knows and makes allowance, saying, "The spirit indeed is willing—but the flesh is weak."

Beloved, you may not know the cause of your depression or irritability, but your heavenly Father knows, and, "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him!"

64 God's Word!

God's Word!

"My tongue shall speak of Your Word." Psalms 119:172

If anything is worth speaking of—it is God's Word!

We have it—that we may . . .

read it,

learn it,

believe it,

love it,

practice it,

enjoy it, and

publish it!

It is the means of conversion—therefore speak of it to sinners.

It tends to edification—therefore speak of it to saints.

It is the instrument of restoration—therefore talk of it to backsliders.

It brings comfort to our own souls—let us therefore meditate upon it.

Let us endeavor to speak God's Word . . .

at proper seasons,

in a kind spirit,

from a good motive,

and with a right aim.

God's Word . . .

restrains the impetuous,

soothes the sorrowful,

directs the perplexed,

restores the wanderer, and

brings peace to the troubled.

God's Word is . . .

bread to the hungry,

light to the benighted,

a staff to the pilgrim,

a sword to the warrior, and

a downy pillow to the way-worn and weary.

Then let us resolve in the Lord's strength—that our tongues shall speak of His Word!

65 "The Lord knows those who are His!"

"The Lord knows those who are His!" 2 Timothy 2:19

Does a father know his child, or a husband his beloved bride? Just so, the Lord knows those who are His. He knows them . . .

as the objects of His love,

as the purchase of His Son's blood,

as the temples of the Holy Spirit,

as strangers and pilgrims upon the earth,

as suffering for righteousness' sake.

He knows that they love Him—and grieve that they do not love Him more.

He knows that they believe Him—and daily struggle with unbelief, mourning that their faith is so weak.

He knows that they trust in Him—though doubts and fears will harass and perplex them.

He knows that they obey Him—and often sigh, "O that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes always!"

Beloved, the Lord knows that you are His, and He . . .

loves you as His own child,

cares for you as His chosen bride,

leads you as the sheep of His pasture,

guards you as the apple of His eye,

tries you as His gold and silver,

keeps you safely as His jewels, and

will soon exalt you as the gems in His crown!

"The Lord knows those who are His!"

66 My Father sees me!

My Father sees me!

"The One who sees me!" Genesis 16:13

The eye of the Lord is upon the righteous, and His ear is open unto their cry.

God sees everything—but He observes His people with special attention.

His eye has been upon me this day! He has seen every movement of my mind, and every action of my body. His eye is upon me now, and will be through the dark watches of the night.

But it is a comfortable thought, that He who sees me always—loves me most! He loves me, notwithstanding all that He sees amiss in me.

Let us ever cherish the thought: "My Father sees me! I am under His eye! He sees all I do, all I suffer, all my desires. Nothing can conceal the least circumstance from His eye. He sees me—when I see not Him. He sees me in the furnace—and is with me. He sees me in the battle—and gives me the shield of His salvation. He sees me when my foot is slipping—and often has the hand of His mercy caught me and held me up! He see me when tempted to sin—when giving way to fear—or when yielding to the world!"

Let me call to mind this solemn fact: My God sees me!

If I sin—it must be immediately under His eye!

If I yield to temptation—it must be in His presence!

66 This is very offensive to the pride of man!

This is very offensive to the pride of man!

"The offence of the cross!" Galatians 5:11

The doctrine of salvation by a crucified Jew, was in Paul's day peculiarly offensive; many stumbled at it and perished.

And the doctrine of complete salvation by faith in Christ alone—is still offensive to many.

Man naturally desires to BE something, to DO something, and to be THOUGHT something! But in the doctrine of salvation by grace—man is nothing; Christ is all.

It presents the crucified One as . . .

the object of faith,

the only ground of hope, and

the medium through which every blessing flows.

It places the cross in the center, directs the eye to it, and makes it the constant object of attention and attraction.

It places all people on the same level:

the harlot—and the virtuous maiden,

the thief—and the honest man,

the poor—and the wealthy,

the illiterate—and the educated.

This is very offensive to the pride of man!

It presents salvation to each on the same terms, requiring all alike to rest upon the finished work of Jesus, and allows no flesh to glory in God's presence.

In a word, the gospel knows no man after the flesh—but points all to Jesus, directs each to the strait gate and narrow way, inculcates self-denial and self-renunciation as necessary to salvation; and shuts up every person to this alternative: he must believe in Christ—or eternally perish!

This is the offence of the cross!

67 "Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren!"

"Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren!" Hebrews 2:11

This is truly astonishing, especially if we consider the amazing CONTRAST between us:

His purity—and our pollution!

His wealth—and our poverty!

His strength—and our weakness!

His happiness—and our misery!

His knowledge—and our ignorance!

His dignity—and our degradation!

But though the contrast is so great—He still acknowledges us!

Yet there is a degree of LIKENESS between us:

we have the same Father—even God;

we possess His nature, spirit, and image in a degree;

our work and His are the same—to glorify God;

our aim and end—are one with His;

and His heaven—is to be our eternal home.

We are often ashamed of ourselves, and ashamed of one another—but Jesus never is! He now owns us in heaven before His Father and His holy angels—and soon He will call us brethren when we sit with Him on His glorious throne!

If Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren—then never let us be ashamed to own each other, though in some things we differ. Jesus owns us ALL! Let us own all as our brethren, whom we have reason to believe are owned by Him.

68 The cross unveils heaven, earth and hell

The cross unveils heaven, earth and hell

"They crucified Him." Matthew 27:35

The Father delivered Him up,

Judas betrayed Him, and

then they crucified Him.

Let us consider the design of GOD in Christ's death.

It was . . .

to satisfy the claims of justice,

to clear His holiness in the salvation of His people,

to display His wisdom,

to manifest His mercy,

to put away our sins, and

to unveil the wonders of His love.

Let us notice what JESUS displayed when He was crucified.

Here we see . . .

His filial obedience to His Father,

His implicit trust in God,

His surprising patience under suffering,

His meek, forgiving spirit,

His astonishing love to His people, and

His entire submission to the divine will.

Let us observe what MAN revealed in this tragedy.

What base ingratitude!

What inexcusable cruelty!

What insulting pride!

What profound ignorance!

What fickle instability!

Judas shows the power and tendency of covetousness;

the Pharisees show the envy and cruelty which lurks under self-righteousness;

Pilate manifests the effect of the fear of man;

Jesus' disciples reveal the weakness which may be found in honest hearts.

In the cross . . .

Jehovah is most clearly revealed,

the nature of sin is set forth,

the true condition of man is unfolded.

The cross unveils heaven, earth and hell.

69 I am the Lord's portion!

I am the Lord's portion!

"The Lord's portion is His people!" Deuteronomy 32:9

We are filled with gratitude and joy when we read, "The Lord is my portion!"

But it is enough to fill us with wonder and astonishment to read, "The Lord's portion is His people!"

He is so great—and they are so insignificant!

He is so holy—and they are so polluted!

He is so glorious—and they are so despicable!

But He chose them—in preference to others, when all lay before His eye.

He redeemed them—when enslaved and alienated from Him.

He rescued them—when held fast by their tyrannizing foe.

He possesses and enjoys them as the objects of His love.

He inhabits them as His temple.

He protects them as His children.

He will dignify them in heaven forever.

They are . . .

the Lord's lot,

His inheritance,

His vineyard,

His garden,

His spouse!

Think, believer, of the honor conferred upon you, in calling you the Lord's portion!

Angels are never called His portion, or His jewels—but you are!

Walk as the Lord's chosen bride, who is going home to be openly united to her beloved bridegroom!

Let me lie down on my pillow tonight, impressed with this thought: "I am the Lord's portion!"

70 "My Beloved is mine—and I am His!"

"My Beloved is mine—and I am His!" Song of Solomon 2:16

"My Beloved is mine!" He is . . .

the Savior in whom I believe and trust;

the Husband whom I reverence and love;

the Lord whom I adore and obey;

the portion on which I live; and

the beloved One upon whom my heart and affections are set.

"And I am His!"

He chose me—or I had never chosen Him.

He redeemed me—or I had still been a slave.

He called me—or I had still been wandering from God.

He sanctified me—or I had still been vile and polluted.

He manifested Himself to me—or I had never seen His glory.

"I am His!"

I am His spouse.

I am His portion.

I am His delight.

I am His choice out of all worlds.

I am His glorious crown!

"My Beloved is mine—and I am His!" Song of Solomon 2:16

71 Have you benefited by the gospel?

Have you benefited by the gospel?

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

The gospel is a benefit—God's greatest and best gift.

It benefits every person who receives it:

It benefits his intellect—informing it.

It benefits his heart—sanctifying it.

It benefits his conscience—giving it repose.

It benefits his temper—controlling and sweetening it.

It benefits his life—preventing many evils, and directing to the attainment and possession of many blessings.

It benefits the family where it rules. It makes . . .

the husband kind,

the wife considerate,

the parents exemplary,

and the children obedient.

It benefits the nation in which it works. It . . .

suggests good laws,

requires good government,

and makes good subjects.

All who partake of this benefit . . .

perceive its divinity,

approve its doctrines,

receive its blessings,

submit to its precepts,

observe its ordinances,

employ it for every useful purpose.

Many listen to the gospel,
some approve of it,
only a few actually partake of it—and are benefited by it.
In their state—they are justified.
In their character—they are sanctified.
In their circumstances—they are happy;
for all things work together for their good.
Have you benefited by the gospel?

72 "You cannot stay angry with Your people

"You cannot stay angry with Your people forever, because You delight in showing mercy." Micah 7:18

The WRATH of God is dreadful—but this is only directed against His obstinate and determined enemies.

The ANGER of the Lord is distressing; this is directed against His people for a time. Each one may say, "You were angry with me!" Let us look at this solemn fact:

God had been angry.

The cause of His anger is sin.

The object with which He is angry is His child.

The nature of His anger is paternal.

The design of His anger is correction.

The effects of His anger are various: sometimes it affects our temporal things; it always affects our spiritual comfort and joy.

The continuance of His anger is transient. His anger endures but for a moment. "You cannot stay angry with Your people forever, because You delight in showing mercy."

He is not naturally angry.

He is never sovereignly angry.

He is not always, nor long angry.

He looks to the atonement;

He listens to the cry of the corrected one;

love works in His heart;

He remembers His covenant;

and He delights in mercy.

His WRATH will burn forever against impenitent sinners, being fed with the fuel of sin!

His ANGER against His child soon burns out, or is quenched by the water of love!

He passes all our follies by,

And all our sins forgives;

His wrath does in a moment die;

His love forever lives!

73 Better than life!

Better than life!

"Your loving-kindness is better than life!" Psalms 63:3

Life is existence. Here it means, existence under the most favorable circumstances: as life in ease, honor, plenty—life surrounded by all that is desirable.

But what then, is God's loving-kindness?

It is His love displaying itself in . . .

kind words,

kind acts,

kind discoveries of His divine excellencies;

feasting the soul with spiritual delights.

This is better than life, for . . .

it bestows greater blessings,

it confers higher honors,

it imparts sweeter pleasures,

it raises higher expectations,

and it throws around us greater security.

It is better, for . . .

it is more lasting;

it is more suited to the nature of the soul;

it is truly glorious.

It is . . .

unmixed good,

unfading pleasure,

inexhaustible wealth!

Well then may the psalmist prefer it to life, and well may he say, "My lips shall praise You" for my present enjoyment of it, and for the prospect of eternally enjoying it!

Do you value life? Do you prefer God's loving-kindness to it?

74 "What do you DO more than others?"

"What do you DO more than others?" Matthew 5:47

What do you POSSESS more than others?

Look around . . .

at the poor house,

at the prison,

at the hospital,

at the sick room,

and at the hovel.

Look around . . .

at the blind,

at the deaf,

at the lame,

at the mute,

at the insane.

Look up into heaven!

Look down into hell!

Can you even begin to count your mercies?

Have you not received much?

You PROFESS more than others. Your principles are far better than those of . . .

the worldling,

the pagan,

the papist,

the deluded professor.

You profess to give the Lord . . .

your heart,

your head,

your hand,
your life,
your property,
your all.

"What do you DO more than others?"

Do you do more than some heathens, or papists, or worldlings?

You know more than others.

You talk more than others.

More is expected from you—than others.

"What do you DO more than others?"

75 "Is not the Lord your God with you?"

"Is not the Lord your God with you?" 1 Chronicles 22:18

Believer, it is your privilege to have the Lord always with you. He is pledged to you by promise. He has said, "I am with you always. I will never leave you—nor ever forsake you!"

He is with you . . .

as a tender father to care for you;

as the Omnipotent God to defend you!

He is with you . . .

to counsel you in difficulty,

to guide you in perplexity,

to strengthen you in weakness,

to deliver you in danger, and

to comfort you in all your troubles.

Is not the Lord your God with you?

Poor Christian!

Tempted soul!

Tried believer!

Sick saint!

Is not the Lord your God with you?

Who sustains you?

Who supplies you?

Who preserves you from desperation?

Is not the Lord your God with you?

He IS with you!

Why then, do you fear?

Why then, do you complain?

Look up to Him.

Call upon Him.

Trust in Him.

If the Lord is with you—then you are a match . . .

for Satan,

for the world,

for every trouble,

yes, for death itself!

Endeavor to realize the fact. Say, "The Lord Almighty is with me! The God of Jacob is my refuge! Therefore I will not fear. I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; He also has become my salvation!"

76 "I have loved you!" John 13:34

"I have loved you!" John 13:34

The love of Christ is an inexhaustible subject.

It is full of sweetness.

He loved us before we knew Him—and He has manifested His love . . .

by making a full and sufficient atonement for our sins,

by conquering all our spiritual foes,

by going to heaven as our Forerunner,

by sending down the Holy Spirit,

by acting as our Advocate and Intercessor,

and by tenderly sympathizing with us.

He has displayed His love in His DEALINGS with us:

He rejoices to save us—though we are great sinners.

He found us enemies to God—and He reconciled us by His death.

He bares with us in all our sins and follies.

He keeps us—for we cannot be trusted alone for one moment.

He only chastens us—when He might justly punish us.

He restores us from all our wanderings.

He supplies all our needs.

He does everything that is necessary for us, and does all cheerfully.

His love is also displayed—in what He INTENDS to do for us:

He will come and fetch us as our Bridegroom.

He will separate us from all sinners.

He will clothe us with glory.

He will publicly marry us.

He will exalt us to reign with Him on His glorious throne!

"May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it!"Ephesians 3:19

77 "Give an account of your stewardship!"

"Give an account of your stewardship!" Luke 16:2

We are God's stewards. As stewards, we should be active, faithful, diligent, and keep the 'reckoning day' in view.

We must give an account.

We may be called upon to do so soon, suddenly.

Our Master is coming, and we must give an account of . . .

our time;

our talents and abilities;

our conduct;

our thoughts and words;

our opportunities for usefulness.

Beloved, you God's stewards!

Do you realize this?

Your Bible is the Master's rule—and your directory!

Do you search it as such?

Your Master's eye is always upon you!

Do you constantly bear this in mind?

O realize your responsibility—and act accordingly!

"Give an account of your stewardship!"

78 "You are the children of the Lord your God!"

"You are the children of the Lord your God!" Deuteronomy 14:1

WHO are the children of God?

Those who are born again, in whom a new nature produces . . .

new desires,

new tastes,

new sorrows,

new joys, and

new pursuits!

The children of God are under solemn obligation. Children should . . .

believe what their Father says,

do what their Father bids,

go where their Father sends;

trust in their Father's care,

expect what their Father promises,

look to their Father for all their supplies!

What comfort such a relationship affords!

You are not, you cannot be, friendless!

You are not orphans—you have a Father, and an incomparable Father!

You should not despond—but remember:

in all your trials—your Father's tender love;

in poverty—your Father's unsearchable wealth;

under reproaches—your honorable relationship;

in sickness—your happy and perfect home;

in death—your endless life of bliss!

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us—that we should be called children of God!
And that is what we are! Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet

been made known. But we know that when He appears—we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!" 1 John 3:1-2

79 The LORD is your keeper

The LORD is your keeper

"He will keep the feet of his saints." 1 Samuel 2:9

The saints are the sanctified ones—who were set apart . . .

by the Father in election;

by the Son in redemption;

by the Spirit in regeneration,

purified, and brought out of the world.

But though thus privileged—they are entirely dependent. They need keeping, constant keeping—the keeping of a God! No one else is sufficient to preserve them.

Their weakness is very great.

Their road is rough, thorny and dangerous.

Their foes are many and powerful, and they are vigilant, experienced, and determined.

Their fears are great—and their courage very small.

Still they are safe—for the Lord is their keeper!

He keeps them . . .

by His Word,

by His Spirit,

by trials,

by disappointments,

by bereavements,

by His ordinances.

Those whom God keeps are safe—but only they.

He keeps all His saints, without one exception.

But He keeps none but saints—therefore mere professors fall.

Believers are kept through faith, by His power, unto salvation.

"Hold me up—and I shall be safe!"

Psalms 121:1-8

I lift up my eyes to the hills—

where does my help come from?

My help comes from the LORD,

Who made heaven and earth.

He will not allow your foot to be moved;

He who keeps you will not slumber.

Behold, He who keeps Israel

Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The LORD is your keeper;

The LORD is your shade at your right hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day,

Nor the moon by night.

The LORD shall preserve you from all evil;

He shall preserve your soul.

The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in

From this time forth, and even forevermore.

80 "Your Word have I hid in my heart!"

"Your Word have I hid in my heart!" Psalms 119:11

The tables of the old covenant were laid up in the ark, and hidden in the holy place.

The contents of the new covenant should be laid up in the believer's heart. By close, daily, prayerful meditation, we should seek to understand, enjoy, and lay up God's holy Word in our hearts.

God's Word is . . .

the manna we are to gather for our daily food,

the light in which we are to walk, and

the rule by which we are to work.

Let us lay up the gracious doctrines—which are the ground of our confidence!

Let us lay up the exceeding great and precious promises—which are inexhaustible sources of comfort!

Let us lay up the kind and holy precepts—which are unerring guides!

If God's Word is hidden in the heart—then no one can deprive us of this precious treasure; nor shall we have it to seek—when we want it to enjoy. But in order to this, we must . . .

know its value,

prize its contents,

search its pages,

ponder it in our minds, and

feed upon it as our daily food.

Except we hide it in our hearts—we shall not be sanctified by it, nor will it be written out in our lives. From the heart it flows—into the life.

May it be our daily prayer, that God would put His laws into our minds, and write them upon our hearts—that we may be the epistles of Christ, known and read by all men!

81 The eternal God should stoop to comfort a

The eternal God should stoop to comfort a vile worm!

"The Lord has comforted His people." Isaiah 49:13

The Lord has a people in the world who are peculiarly His own. This truth is constantly kept before us in His holy Word.

He has always loved them.

He chose them to salvation.

He redeemed them by the precious blood of Christ.

They are united to, and viewed as one with His beloved Son.

They are as dear to Him as the apple of His eye.

Still they are deeply tried.

They often sigh and groan.

They are still sinners, and sin festers within them, when it does not break out into an open wound. It pains them when it does not openly disgrace them. They have more cause for gratitude than Gabriel has—yet they have much to distress and cast them down. But their God comforts them.

He has comforted His people . . .

by giving them His holy Word,

by erecting for them the throne of grace,

by freely and forever pardoning all their sins,

by bestowing His peace and grace upon them,

by assuring them that He is their Father,

by giving them Jesus as their portion—and with Him all things,

by unfolding before them the bright prospect of endless blessedness.

What condescension is this—that the eternal God should stoop to comfort a vile worm! What grace—that He should comfort one who was but recently a rebellious enemy!

82 Joyful in the gloomiest circumstances

Joyful in the gloomiest circumstances

"He gives songs in the night!" Job 35:10

This figure of "night" is often employed to represent afflictions. Losses, crosses, sickness, poverty, old age, death—these constitute a very gloomy night. They are dark, cold, and tedious.

But in the gloomiest night—the Lord can make us happy! His presence will make us sing. "He gives songs in the night!" He tunes the heart with joy and grace. He furnishes us with matter for praise. He enables us to sing—to the wonder and surprise of many.

So did . . . Paul and Silas at Philippi;

the prophet Habakkuk in prospect of famine;

and so did many martyrs in their dungeons.

How many have sung for joy . . .

in poverty,

on the bed of sickness,

and in the Jordan of death!

Christian, your God can make you joyful in the gloomiest circumstances, and give a song in the dreariest night!

Cleave to Him.

Walk closely with Him.

His gracious presence will disperse all gloom, and give you joy, peace, and thankfulness!

"He gives songs in the night!"

83 "Let Me hear your voice!"

"Let Me hear your voice!" Song of Solomon 2:14

This is the language of Jesus to His redeemed people. He loves . . .

to see us come to His throne;

to hear us pour out our hearts before Him.

The prayer of the upright is His delight!

It may be as mournful as the cooing of the dove, and there may be as much sameness in it too—but He loves to hear it! We are wearied with telling the oft-repeated tale—and we imagine that He will be so too. But no, He says, "Let Me hear your voice!" Shall we refuse Him? Rather, let us go to Him more frequently. Let us . . .

confess our sins,

mourn over our follies,

lament our proneness to backslide,

plead His precious promises,

seek the enjoyment of His presence,

beseech Him to pardon our sins, and

beg every blessing which He has to bestow.

We cannot go to Him too often!

We cannot ask for too much at His hands!

We cannot be too frank with Him!

He asks us to pray. He exhorts us to come often to His throne. He expostulates with us because we stay away.

He sends troubles, trials, and afflictions—to force us to draw near to Him!

In every comfort He says, "Let Me hear your voice!"

In every trial He says, "Call upon Me—I will deliver you!"

Beloved, go this night to Jesus, tell Him you are come in obedience to His call, and let Him hear your voice . . .

acknowledging His goodness,

pleading His promises,
and seeking His grace!

84 "Unite my heart to fear Your name!"

"Unite my heart to fear Your name!" Psalms 86:11

To fear God includes . . .

faith in His Word,

love to His character,

zeal for His glory,

concern to please Him,

and the fear of offending Him.

It sometimes signifies to WORSHIP Him.

This embraces . . .

reverence,

adoration,

thanksgiving,

and prayer.

Worship without the heart is worthless! But how often in worship, do we feel our hearts distracted and wandering, and at a distance from God! Well may we pray, "Unite my heart to fear Your name!" That is, calm it, compose it, attract it, fix it, inflame it—that it may throw all its energies into Your worship.

Such a prayer proves that we . . .

love to worship God,

desire to honor Him in it,

feel our own weakness, and

seek to obtain grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

But do all saints feel their hearts thus prone to wander, and find it difficult to engage them in the Lord's worship? They do at times, though some suffer from this much more than others. All occasionally feel some reluctance to worship—or distractions in it; or they are the subjects of dullness and deadness. Therefore they all pray as David did here, "Unite my heart to fear Your name!"

85 A never-failing source of happiness!

A never-failing source of happiness!

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

Our knowledge of God at present is very imperfect. We know but 'in part'. The means of knowledge are in our hands—but we have not always the heart to turn them to account.

God must be known—or He cannot be loved, or He will not be trusted. We shall neither . . .

adore His perfections,

nor reverence His majesty,

nor seek His favor,

nor fear His frown,

nor do His commandments

—except we increasingly know Him.

Paul understood this; therefore he prayed that the Colossians might increase in the knowledge of God.

If we would know Him, we must . . .

read His works,

observe His providence,

and study His Word.

But it is in Jesus—that He reveals Himself most clearly and most fully. Therefore He says, "He who has seen ME—has seen the Father."

Do you know God at all? You did not at one time—therefore be thankful. But your knowledge is small and very imperfect; therefore seek an increase of it.

Remember Jesus said, "This is life eternal—that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." He who truly knows God in Jesus—has eternal life!

But only the one who has an extensive knowledge of Him—has a never-failing source of happiness!

Beloved, make it your daily aim to increase in the knowledge of God.

86 "His compassions never fail."

"His compassions never fail." Lamentations 3:22

This is an unspeakable mercy.

The sympathy of friends may fail.

The affection of relations may fail.

The tender mother's love to her babe may fail.

But the compassion of our God is unailing! It is . . .

an ocean which we can never exhaust;

a sun which will never set!

Believer, your God never was more compassionate than He now is.

His love was never more tender.

His grace was never more free.

Turn from your broken cisterns.

Turn from your withered gourds.

Turn from your dried brooks.

Turn from your gloomy feelings.

Turn from your painful circumstances.

And turn to your God, impressed with this fact, "His compassions never fail!"

He will have compassion on you!

He will bear with your infirmities.

He will pardon your sins.

He will sanctify your sorrows.

He will soothe your griefs.

He will restore your soul.

He will guide you with His counsel—and afterwards receive you to glory, for His compassions never fail!

87 "Is anything too hard for Me?"

"Is anything too hard for Me?" Jeremiah 32:27

Difficulties are for creatures; there can be nothing difficult to God.

His wisdom is infinite;

His power is omnipotent;

His resources are boundless;

His instruments are innumerable;

His plan is formed, and He is working it out. He "works all things after the counsel of His own will."

We are sometimes placed in very trying circumstances;

creatures cannot help us;

our faith falters;

our minds are agitated;

our spirits droop;

we give way to fear.

But the Lord reproves us and asks,

"Is anything too hard for Me?"

Bring the matter to Me,

exercise faith in My Word,

place yourself in My hand,

wait upon Me in My way.

I will work—and none shall hinder Me!"

Beloved, your inward evils and outward trials may be too hard for you; but they cannot be too hard for your God! He can subdue the one, and deliver you from the other, with the greatest ease! His strength is made perfect in your weakness. Let this fact . . .

silence our fears,

strengthen our faith,

revive our hope,

increase our courage,

animate our prayers,

and let us go forward, saying, "Nothing is too hard for the Lord."

Look away from your own weakness—to His strength!

Look away from your trials—to His delivering mercy!

88 "We are the Lord's!"

"We are the Lord's!" Romans 14:8

The Lord has a people peculiarly His own.

They are distinct from all others.

They are preferred to all others, being . . .

the objects of His choice,

the purchase of His blood,

the temple of His Holy Spirit.

He loves them with an everlasting love!

He calls them His portion!

He treats them as His children!

He prizes them as His special treasure!

He is united to them, loves them, and cares for them as His bride!

He keeps them as the apple of His eye!

"We are the Lord's," and we manifest it, for . . .

we have been quickened by the His Spirit,

we are united to His family,

we are walking by His Word,

we are living to His glory, and

we can only be satisfied with His presence and His love.

Beloved, let us rejoice in our privilege—it is great and glorious. Let us realize, in difficulty and danger—the glorious fact, "I am the Lord's!"

89 "What is good for man in this life?"

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

This is a very difficult question, if we refer it to temporal things; and God's providence alone can furnish the answer.

Sometimes prosperity is good—and sometimes adversity;

sometimes health—and sometimes sickness;

sometimes ease—and sometimes pain;

sometimes success—and sometimes disappointment;

sometimes plenty—and sometimes poverty.

If we set our hearts strongly upon anything below, that is the thing that is NOT likely to be good for us. If God denies us, or takes anything from us—we may be sure at once that that is not good for us.

What we actually possess is good for us—if we rightly use it, and improve it for the Lord's glory.

Resignation to God's will, and acquiescence in God's plan, are far better than wishing for this—or longing for that. "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am." Php 4:11. "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have!" Hebrews 13:5

Prosperity is often dangerous, and adversity is usually safe.

It is always good for a man . . .

daily to live by faith on Jesus,

daily to walk with God,

daily to lay up for himself treasure in heaven,

daily to endeavor to benefit all around him.

90 This poor man had just been rescued from Satan!

This poor man had just been rescued from Satan!

"They found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at the feet of Jesus, dressed and in his right mind." Luke 8:35

This poor man had just been rescued from Satan! He felt under the deepest obligation. He was filled with wonder at his Deliverer's power. He was charmed with His preaching, and he took his seat at His feet.

This was the posture of a LEARNER, the place occupied by a disciple. We may still enjoy this privilege. Jesus speaks to us now. Let us . . .

sit down at His feet,

hear His Word with attention,

receive His doctrine with affection,

and own Him as our Lord and Master.

It is the posture of HUMILITY.

The feet of Jesus is our proper place.

There we are safe.

There we shall receive blessings.

There we shall learn the most important lessons.

It is the evidence of ATTACHMENT. How much we have to attach us to the Lord Jesus. How much we have already received. How much we lack—which He only can supply. How much we shall need, as we progress on our difficult journey, which it is vain to look for from any other quarter.

Let us therefore sit down at His feet, and meekly receive His Word. Let us keep our place, not allowing anything to draw us away.

Satan will if he can—because he well knows that he cannot injure us here.

Sinners will if they can—because while we are in this posture our conduct will reprove them, and exalt the grace of God.

91 "He will not break a bruised reed!"

"He will not break a bruised reed!" Matthew 12:20

So tender is the heart of Jesus, so gentle His disposition, that the feeblest need not fear, the most timid may take courage. He notices the first risings of desire, the secret inclination, the buddings of faith—and He admires and approves of them. He knows . . .

the strength of our corruptions;

what terrible conflicts we have;

what poor creatures we are;

and for our comfort assures us that, though as weak and worthless as a bruised reed—He will not reject us, or crush us by His power.

He will bind up the bruised reed.

He will nourish the desire.

He will foster the little faith.

He will receive the imperfect prayer.

He will accept and bless the discouraged soul.

He is represented . . .

as a Lamb—to inspire us with confidence;

as a Shepherd—to preserve us from alarm;

and as a Savior—to attract us to His throne!

He will not break the bruised reed Himself—nor will He allow others to do it!

Beloved, are you bruised by Satan, by your wicked heart, and by an evil world? Do you feel weak and worthless? Are you discouraged and filled with fear?

Fear not! Jesus is gentle, kind, and gracious. He binds up the broken in heart, and heals all their wounds.

"He will not break a bruised reed—and He will not put out a smoldering wick!"

92 "All these things are against me!"

"All these things are against me!" Genesis 42:36

What things?

These losses,
these crosses,
these bereavements,
these persecutions,
these sorrows,
these sicknesses.

Against you?

Never! They can never be against you—unless they . . .

lead you into sin,
bind you faster to this world,
alienate your mind and heart from God,
and prevent your being useful in your generation.

They can never be against you . . .

if they wean you from world,
if they lead you to God,
if they endear the Savior,
if they render the Bible more valuable,
if they make you long for your heavenly home!

They are not against you—but for you!

You forget that they come according to the arrangements of a gracious providence, and that your heavenly Father sends them for your good.

Stop your complaining, for it springs from . . .

ignorance of God's Word, or
forgetfulness of your many mercies and sins, or

from unbelief and a bad temper;

and it reflects badly upon the love, care, and kindness of your God.

Yes, these things are painful, trying, and perplexing; but they are intended to do you good, they are working together under divine direction for your present and everlasting welfare—even while you are complaining about them! Beloved, how apt we are to mistake the design of our trials, and to lose sight of God's promises.

93 Muse upon the tragic scene!

Muse upon the tragic scene!

"The place which is called Calvary." Luke 23:33

Let us visit Calvary today. He is led as a lamb to the slaughter. See Him passing through the gates of Jerusalem, weary, weak, and faint, His cross laid on His shoulders. He ascends the hill, the common place of execution. The cross is laid on the ground, He is stretched upon it, His arms and legs are strained, and the nails are driven through His hands and feet. It is raised up and thrust into its socket with a violent jerk, all His bones are out of joint, and He hangs a spectacle of misery and woe! See . . .

His emaciated frame,

His pale cheeks,

His sunken eye,

His thorn-crowned brow,

His death-stricken countenance,

and hear Him cry, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me!"

Was ever sorrow like unto His sorrow!

He is accursed, He is made sin for us!

He suffers—the innocent for the guilty!

He dies—the just for the unjust!

It is the Shepherd dying for His sheep!

It is the Bridegroom redeeming His bride!

He died for us, in our stead—that we might never die. Often let us visit Calvary, and muse upon the tragic scene—the scene of suffering love!

94 "Hold up my goings in Your paths—that my

"Hold up my goings in Your paths—that my footsteps do not slip!" Psalms 17:5

Failures, follies, and mistakes—should lead us to our forgiving God, and teach us the necessity of close walking with God. We need to be constantly . . .

upheld by divine power, and

guided by divine wisdom.

We are prone to wander and leave the narrow path. Many others have fallen into sin—and we are as much exposed to temptations as they were, and are as liable to be overcome.

Satan is watchful!

Temptations are powerful!

Our hearts are weak!

In every duty—as well as in every trial;

in the calm—as well as in the storm;

we need to be upheld. For unless the Lord upholds us—we shall fall into . . .

presumption—or despair;

into self-righteousness—or licentiousness;

into open sin—or secret backsliding.

We are never safe—but as the Lord keeps us! And He keeps by teaching us our weakness, our proneness to wander—and by leading us to walk softly before Him, in faith, and humility of mind.

We are never so liable to wander—as when we are self-confident.

We are never so likely to fall—as when we think it impossible.

Beloved, if you are not daily seeking divine protection, you are in danger of being overcome!

Watch!

Pray!

Let us therefore cry to the Strong One for strength, and let it be our daily prayer, "Hold up my goings in Your paths!"

95 It is well!

It is well!

"Is it well with you? It is well!" 2 Kings 4:26

What a mercy to be able to say so!

If we are in Christ,

if clothed with His righteousness,

if living upon Him as the bread of life,

"It is well!"

For all our sins are blotted out,

the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts,

God looks upon us and loves us with an infinite love,

our names are in the book of life,

our cause is in the Savior's hands,

and our peace with God is made.

It may be a day of darkness with us—but the Lord is our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning will soon be ended.

Providence may frown upon us—but temporal trials are only intended to endear spiritual blessings.

We may feel weak, very weak—but the strength of Jesus shall be made perfect in our weakness.

Satan may sorely harass and hunt us like the partridge upon the mountains—but God will bruise Satan under our feet shortly.

Our hearts may appear barren, and all within may wear a wintry aspect; but this is only permitted .

..

to drive us out of self,

to prevent spiritual pride, and

to render Jesus and His perfect salvation more precious.

It is well with those who fear the Lord—let outward things be as they may; for He watches over them to do them good, rejoices to bless and make them holy, and turns everything to their benefit.

Though you may trials sharp endure,

From sin, or death, or hell;
Your heavenly Father's love is sure,
And therefore, "It is well!"

96 "Your people shall be willing in the day

"Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power." Psalms 110:3

No man by nature is willing to come to Christ for salvation, or to be saved by free and sovereign grace alone. Human nature is . .

too sinful,

too blind,

too obstinate,

and too proud!

If we are willing—God has made us so.

Nor is anyone desirous, or even willing, to be made truly holy—except he is taught of God. If therefore we would do good, if we are heartily desiring and earnestly seeking to be made holy in heart and life—it is because we are under the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

What a mercy to know this! How often do we give human nature credit for being better than it is, and imagine that what we feel, desire, and do—is merely from our own mind—and not from a sanctified heart!

The Lord's people are made willing—by the Lord's power; but that power works so secretly, so silently, in such strict accordance with our nature and faculties—that we do not perceive it!

Are you in doubt, whether God has really called you by grace or not? Inquire:

Am I willing to be saved by Jesus as a poor, lost sinner?

Am I concerned to be made holy—as well as to be made happy?

Do I pray to be made useful—as well as to be safe?

If so, you are one of the Lord's people—for He has made you willing in the day of His power!

97 "You who love the Lord—hate evil." Psalm 97:10

"You who love the Lord—hate evil." Psalms 97:10

Exhortations to the plainest duties are necessary, for sometimes we forget—but more often sink into a lukewarm, indifferent frame of soul.

Do we love the Lord? If so, we love His prohibitions as well as His promises, knowing that He only prohibits what would do us an injury.

Can we tonight join with David, and say, "O how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day." The law prohibits all evil. Let us therefore drink into the mind of God—and look at sin as that "abominable thing" which he hates.

Let us hate evil thoughts—and strive against them.

Let us hate evil words—and keep the mouth as with a bridle.

Let us hate evil works—and abstain from all appearance of evil.

The evils of the heart are the worst—as all other evils flow from them.

Would you hate evil? Then walk close with God, be much in fellowship with Him, and so will holiness become your element, and every species of evil your abhorrence.

Lovers of God, set your hearts, set your fears against evil!

98 "Joint-heirs with Christ!" Romans 8:1

"Joint-heirs with Christ!" Romans 8:1

Related to Jesus now—we shall inherit with Him by and by; not only as brethren of the same family—but as the bride inherits with her bridegroom. Jesus is constituted heir of all things; we are one with Him, and as such, are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

What dignity!

What an unspeakable privilege is this!

Connection with Adam—involved us in guilt, ruin, and misery!

Connection with Jesus—brings us righteousness, peace, and everlasting salvation!

Now we suffer with Him—but we shall soon be glorified together with Him!

Now we taste the cup of His sorrow—but we shall soon drink of the cup of His joys!

But are we indeed joint-heirs?

Are we children of God by faith in Jesus Christ?

Do we love our heavenly Father?

Are we jealous for His honor and glory?

Do we delight in His presence—and suffer grief and sorrow in His absence?

Is sin the object of our hatred?

Is holiness our desire and delight?

If so, Jesus calls us His brethren—and Jehovah calls us His children!

"Joint-heirs with Christ!"

99 Well, who is to be my God today?

Well, who is to be my God today?

"You cannot serve God—and mammon." Matthew 6:24

Our God is a jealous God. He requires the devotion of the heart, the consecration of all the abilities—and we cannot enjoy religion without these. People who try to unite God—and the world; the service of sin—and the service of God, cannot be happy. We must be decided.

Well, who is to be my God today? Who is to have . . .

my heart,

my talents,

my affections, today?

Is gain, carnal pleasure, or worldly company—to be my idol today?

Or, is Jesus to have my thoughts, my desires, and my talents? Shall I seek His glory—and aim at His honor? Or, shall I say to some worthless bramble, "Come—and reign over me!"

Choose this day whom will you serve! Do not attempt to reconcile opposing claims—but let God or mammon have the whole!

Surely, you are ready to cry out, "I am Yours, Jesus—and You alone will I serve!"

99a My Keeper!

My Keeper!

"Keep me as the apple (pupil) of Your eye!" Psalms 17:8

Through another day the Lord has shielded us, and we should tonight record His faithful love. But while we record His past kindness—we should pray for protection for the future. What a beautiful, expressive, striking prayer is this!

"Keep me," for You are omnipotent, omniscient, and all wise!

Keep me, for I am exposed to enemies and storms!

Keep me, I am in danger from various quarters!

Keep me, for I am weak and inexperienced as the newly fledged bird!

Keep me, for I fear I shall fall!

Keep me, for I have no one on whom I can repose but You!

"Keep me as the apple of Your eye!"

Keep me . . .

carefully,

constantly,

tenderly and

graciously!

Keep me, so that I may be useful and ornamental as the apple of Your eye!

Keep me, for I see many fall into sin, and I feel I am as liable as others.

Keep me, for such numbers decline and grow lukewarm!

Keep me by night and by day; and may I realize Your preserving goodness, that I may with confidence say, "The Lord is my Keeper; the Lord is my shade upon my right hand. The Lord will preserve my going out and my coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore!"

Jehovah, by His ceaseless care,

Whose eye can never sleep,

From earthly foes, from Satan's snare,

My soul shall safely keep!

99b "I have learned by experience." Genesis 30:27

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

So said Laban in reference to the benefit he derived from Jacob's services; and so may the Christian say in reference to the effects of divine teaching.

Experience is knowledge derived from trial, and thus we learn . . .

the truth and value of vital religion,

the importance and dignity of the holy Scriptures,

the true state and condition of human nature,

the character and suitableness of the Savior,

the need and nature of the operations of the Holy Spirit,

the malice and cunning of Satan,

the power and efficacy of believing prayer,

the beneficial tendency of afflictive dispensations,

the emptiness and vanity of the present world,

and the love and faithfulness of a covenant God!

No knowledge is like that which is gained by experience. It is far preferable to what we gain from report, or reading, or mere opinion. It is above every other kind of knowledge . . .

in point of certainty,

in its tendency to usefulness, and

in its power to establish the mind.

Young people should be modest—as they can know but little from experience yet. Established Christians should communicate the results of their experience to others—nothing is more likely to be useful. We should all be careful, that our statements of experience and our practices agree.

99c "He will not fail you!" Deuteronomy 31:6

"He will not fail you!" Deuteronomy 31:6

The expectations raised by His Word—shall never be disappointed.

The promises He has made—shall never be broken.

The trust reposed on His faithfulness—shall never be dishonored.

He will not forget His Word—or neglect our interests.

He never did fail His people—and He never will.

Your faith may be weak,

your fears may be strong,

your doubts may be painful,

your weakness may be great,

your temptations may be very distressing,

and your needs may be numerous and alarming

—but your God will never fail you!

Why should He?

He foresaw all your needs, your woes, and your unworthiness before He called you by His grace!

Your present circumstances are not new to Him. He had them in His eye when He made His promises, and He will get honor to Himself by bringing you through them.

Fail not to trust Him.

Fail not to apply to Him by prayer.

Fail not to cast your every care upon Him.

Fail not to believe His faithful Word.

He will not fail . . .

to support you under your burdens,

to listen to your requests,

to provide for your necessities,

to honor your faith.

However singular your experience, or strange the path may appear to you—His Word is true!

"I will never fail you! I will never forsake you!" Hebrews 13:5

99d He has the Father's ear—and the Father's

He has the Father's ear—and the Father's heart!

"He ever lives to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25

He died for our sins once. But He lives to plead for us daily, hourly, moment by moment!

He possesses an endless life, an unchangeable priesthood.

He appears in heaven as our great High Priest;

our names are on His breastplate;

He is intimately acquainted with our affairs;

and He ever lives to intercede for His people!

He presents His precious blood, His perfect righteousness; and He pleads them for our pardon, preservation, and glorification.

He has the Father's ear—and the Father's heart!

How wonderful His love!

He first left heaven for us, and on earth He labored, suffered, died, in our stead. He then returned to heaven for us—and there He lives, pleads, and secures our best interests!

He witnesses all our changes—but He changes not.

He is often grieved by our inconsistencies and sins—but still pleads on our behalf.

He undertook our cause—when there was nothing in us to move or induce Him to do so! And He still feels the deepest interest in us, pleads for us, and rejoices to do us good!

What a source of comfort, what a ground of confidence is this!

"If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

There, as our great High Priest, He stands,

And pleads before the mercy seat;

Our cause is in His faithful hands,

Our enemies beneath His feet!

99e "The precious sons of Zion." Lamentations 4:2

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

As the Lord Jesus is precious to His people—so are they precious to Him. He calls them . . .

His jewels,

His special treasure,

His portion,

His dear children,

His beloved bride.

His love to them is astonishing. He values them at an infinite price, therefore He redeemed them with His own precious blood; and having purchased them at so great a cost, He will never part with them!

That Jesus should be precious to His people, is not surprising:

He has done so much for them,

He bestows so many blessings upon them,

He stands in such a sweet relation to them, and

He is so perfectly lovely in Himself.

But that we should be precious to Him, is truly astonishing! We are so poor, so vile, so degraded, so deformed, and daily treat Him with such neglect. But His ways are not our ways, nor are His thoughts our thoughts. He loves us with all the strength and tenderness of His nature.

Glorious truth! May we receive it into our hearts, meditate upon it, and rejoice that whatever people may think of us, or however they may feel toward us—we are precious in the sight of the Lord!

99f It will preserve us from innumerable evils!

It will preserve us from innumerable evils!

"I give myself unto prayer." Psalms 109:4

We should be given to prayer as to our business, our daily occupation. It will preserve us from innumerable evils; and bring invaluable blessings into our possession.

God loves to hear us pray. The prayer of the upright is His delight. May we be impressed with this idea whenever we go upon our knees:

God loves to see me approach Him.

He delights to hear me plead with Him.

He looks upon me with a Father's eye.

He listens to me with a Father's ear.

He rejoices over me with a Father's heart.

He is grieved when I neglect His throne of grace, and cannot approve of my hurrying over my devotions, as I sometimes do. He says, "Come! Come boldly!"

If we disregard His Word or slight His invitation, He will send some trial, raise some storm, or let loose some enemy—to drive us to His throne. If we could hear the voice of our troubles distinctly, or understand its language, we would hear it shout, "To your knees, to your knees! Arise and call upon your God!"

99g Beware of a religion without God!

Beware of a religion without God!

"My soul thirsts for God, for the living God! When can I go and meet with God?" Psalms 42:2

It is not enough for the true Christian to know that God is for him; he wants . . .

to realize His presence,

to hold sweet fellowship with Him,

and to enjoy His love.

Being created anew in Christ Jesus, he has an appetite to feed upon, and enjoy divine communications; nor can he be satisfied without them. He longs and prays for the gracious presence of his God—and finds it his joy, his strength, and his delight; but if denied this favor—he is depressed, dissatisfied and cast down.

Ordinances without God—are to him dry breasts.

The Scriptures without God—are a light without heat.

God is his life,

the presence of God is his element,

the joy of the Lord is his strength, and

without God he is lifeless, sickly, and sorrowful.

My friend, is this your experience? Are you in any degree acquainted with it? Can you be satisfied with cold knowledge, empty forms, or what is called 'religion'—without the enjoyment of God? If you can, your state is very suspicious. Beware of a religion without God, without personal dealings with God, without daily fellowship with God.

99h "Delight yourself in the Lord!" Psalm 37:4

"Delight yourself in the Lord!" Psalms 37:4

As the Lord delights in us—so we ought to delight ourselves in Him. In order to do this, we must receive correct views of His loveliness into our minds.

We must meditate on His glorious perfections, as they are revealed to us in Jesus.

We must realize our saving interest in His love, and perfect salvation.

We must turn from every other object to contemplate His beauty, His benevolence, and constant love to us.

We should look to Him—as the fountain of all good.

We should hope in Him—as the promise-performing God.

We should wait on Him—as our bountiful benefactor.

We should trust in Him—as our Father and Friend.

We should delight in Him—as our portion and everlasting all.

Let us endeavor to take off our affections more and more from things below—and fix them upon the Lord.

How few delight in God! If we read of Him, think of Him, call on Him, believe in Him, hope in Him, and feel a little love to Him—we think it enough. But it is not. We should delight ourselves in the Lord.

We should delight in His love—which is set upon us.

We should delight in His vast resources—which are open to supply us.

We should delight in His truth—which secures us.

We should delight in His holiness—which is His beauty.

We should delight in His grace—which deals so bountifully with us.

"Delight yourself in the Lord!"

99i Have you been waiting on your God today?

Have you been waiting on your God today?

"Wait on your God continually." Hosea 12:6

A waiting frame—is a holy frame.

It is a calm, quiet mind,

living before the Lord's throne,

exercising faith in His Word,

hoping in His mercy,

endeavoring to do His will, and

patiently submitting to His good pleasure.

The waiting soul . . .

sees God in all things,

realizes God as present everywhere,

acknowledges His hand in every event.

Wait on your God continually, so will you be safe in every season of danger—and happy under all your numerous trials.

Wait on Him—for He requires it at your hand.

Wait on Him—for He rewards it with a blessing.

Have you been waiting on your God today? Are you in a quiet waiting frame? Can you say, "I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His Word I put my hope!" Psalms 130:5

99j "Will you also go away?" John 6:67

"Will you also go away?" John 6:67

Many left the Savior in the days of His flesh—and many decline from His holy ways now. How many, like Lot's wife—look back; or like the man of God from Bethel—yield to temptation; or like Demas—who forsake the Savior, having loved the present evil world.

"Therefore, while the promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear so that none of you should miss it!" Hebrews 4:1

What! Go away from Jesus! This would be going . . .

from light—to darkness,

from plenty—to poverty,

from happiness—to misery,

from life—to death

from heaven—to hell!

What! Go from Jesus! To whom can we go? We profess to have discovered . . .

the emptiness of the world,

the insufficiency of temporal things to satisfy an immortal soul,

and the pre-eminent excellency of the things of God.

Still many go back—and walk no more with Him. This should lead us to serious consideration. It should make us walk softly and cautiously. It cries to us with a loud voice and in clear accents, "Let him who thinks he stands—take heed lest he falls!"

There can be no cause to leave Jesus for one moment!

It is folly to stir from His side!

It is dangerous to neglect His salvation!

It is madness to turn the back on His ways!

My soul, He asks you tonight, "Will you also go away?"

99k There is a better country

There is a better country

"They desire a better country—a heavenly one." Hebrews 11:16

This was the experience of the patriarchs; the apostles felt the same—and so have all true Christians.

Do we desire a better country? Do we desire a heavenly country?

There is a better country—it is set before us in the gospel, it is promised to all who believe in Jesus, and continue faithful unto death.

Heaven is a country where all enjoy perfect rest—there is no pain, no vexation, no toil, no trials there. All are active—yet all enjoy perfect repose.

Heaven is the home of perfect love—there are no foes, no envious professors, no jealous brethren. All is love—pure, perfect, perpetual love. All love God—and God loves all. Each loves his fellow—just as he loves himself.

Heaven is the residence of perfect holiness. There are no sinners, for all are righteous; there is no sin, for each exactly resembles Jesus. Holiness is the element, the joy, the characteristic of the place.

Heaven is the abode of perfect satisfaction, unbroken joy, and undisturbed tranquility. There Jesus is seen face to face. There God unfolds His glories. There, every desire is gratified, every heart is full, every countenance beams with benevolence and joy!

Truly it is a better country!

99I "The God of all grace!" 1 Peter 5:10

"The God of all grace!" 1 Peter 5:10

How sweet and refreshing are the views which Jehovah gives us of Himself! He is the God of all grace—but still He is the just and righteous God. He is gracious naturally, sovereignly, infinitely, and eternally.

He has "exceeding riches of grace!" Ephesians 2:7

Grace to quicken the dead.

Grace to pardon the guilty.

Grace to comfort the disconsolate.

Grace to strengthen the weak.

Grace to restore the wandering.

Grace to save the lost.

His grace is DISPLAYED in His dealings with His people.

FREE grace—in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus!

SEASONABLE grace—in the salvation of the dying robber on the cross!

UNEXPECTED grace—to Zaccheus, when called down from the sycamore tree!

But these are but examples or patterns, intended to show us what the God of all grace can and will do.

Let us look to our God—as infinitely gracious.

The extent,

the greatness,

the riches,

the freedom of His grace—

is displayed in the salvation of . . .

the undeserving,

the ill-deserving,

the hell-deserving!

Let this check our fears. Let it spur us on to diligence. It calls for confidence, gratitude, and consecration from us. Let us lay the head on the pillow tonight, cheered with the thought, that our God is "the God of all grace."

99m "The sin that so easily ensnares us!"

"The sin that so easily ensnares us!" Hebrews 12:1

Every Christian has his besetting sins. Often they prove to be those sins which he had been enslaved in his unconverted state. But there is one sin to which we are all peculiarly liable; it is called, "THE sin that so easily ensnares us!" This is . . .

the great hindrance in our heavenly race;

the weight that obstructs our progress;

the disease which weakens our powers;

the cloud which fills us with gloom!

"Therefore, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us—and run with endurance the race that lies before us—keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith!" Hebrews 12:1-2

99n "Reconciled to God—by the death of his Son."

"Reconciled to God—by the death of his Son." Romans 5:10

By nature our hearts were enmity against God; and we were enemies to Him by our wicked works!

Whatever He required—we avoided doing!

Whatever He prohibited—we practiced!

Nothing could be more opposite to God—than we were before called by His grace! And yet, while we were altogether sinners, Christ died for us!

In dying for us, as in our stead—He did all that was requisite to reconcile us to God. All our sins are forgiven for His sake. We are accepted by God—solely on the ground of what He did and suffered. We are treated as if we had done what Jesus did—because He did it for us, and it is imputed to us when we savingly believed.

We are now reconciled to God.

We are now His friends.

He is now our loving Father.

He has accepted what Jesus did for us.

He now delights in us.

He now rejoices over us.

He is now preparing us to dwell with Him forever!

99o An excellent example for us to copy!

An excellent example for us to copy!

"She has done what she could!" Mark 14:8

Mary was a believer. Her faith wrought by love. Love brought her where Jesus was, and she did what she could to honor Him and express her gratitude.

An excellent example for us to copy!

Do we dare to say that WE have done all we could?

Have we loved Jesus as much as we could?

Have we been as much in prayer and in praise as we could?

Have we done as much as we could . . .

to spread the truth;

to commend the Savior;

to oppose Satan?

Have we done all we could for the spiritual good of our families?

Have we done all we could for the comfort and prosperity of the church?

Have we done all we could for the Lord's poor?

Have we done all we could for the neighborhood where we reside?

Have we done what we could for the world?

Satan does all the mischief he can!

Many wicked men do all they can to destroy souls!

The times call upon us to do all we can.

The Savior loves to see us do all we can.

Let us therefore . . .

feel the reproof,

nourish the conviction,

seek more grace,

daily remember this woman,

and begin afresh!

99p They trust His heart—when they cannot trace

They trust His heart—when they cannot trace His hand!

"The just shall live by faith." Galatians 3:11

It is by faith—that they become just.

Being justified—they live by faith.

By faith, they overcome their foes.

By faith, they obtain supplies.

By faith, they perform the will of God.

By faith, they walk with God. They . . .

believe His Word,

rest alone on His work,

have confidence in His faithfulness, and

derive their supplies from His fullness.

They go forward—though all appears dark, gloomy, and forbidding.

At times they appear to have nothing but the bare promise. All within is cold, hard, and dead; all without seems to go against them. Then it is that they more particularly trust in the Lord, and stay themselves upon their God. They trust His heart—when they cannot trace His hand!

99q How full of holy comfort!

How full of holy comfort!

"Your comforts delight my soul." Psalms 94:19

Our circumstances are often trying, and our thoughts very perplexing and depressing; but our God has provided comfort for us—a fullness of comfort—a supply of comfort for all times.

What comfort is wrapped up . . .

in the precious promises,

in the perfect work of Jesus,

in the everlasting covenant,

in the prospect of a complete and everlasting deliverance from all sin, suffering, and sorrow!

O what a comfort it is to us to have . . .

a Brother born for adversity;

an Advocate with the Father, ever making intercession for us;

a Friend who loves at all times, who knows our every thought, sympathizes with us in every pain, and will bring us where He is in exact likeness to Himself.

How full of holy comfort! What an antidote it is against despondency and despair! May I live on the Lord's comforts, when all within and around me is wintry, desolate, and depressing!

99r Beloved, are WE led by the Spirit?

Beloved, are WE led by the Spirit?

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God—they are the sons of God." Romans 8:14

Who are the sons of God?

All who are led by the Spirit of God.

To what does the Spirit lead the sons of God?

To know their need of a Savior,
to perceive the exact suitability of the Lord Jesus,
to fly to Him for refuge,
to rest alone on His perfect atoning work.

In brief, He leads them . . .

to loathe themselves,
to repent of sin,
to separate from the world,
to cleave to Jesus,
to walk with God,
to follow after holiness, and
to devote themselves to the Lord's service.

Those who are thus led by the Spirit of God—they are the sons of God.

They were predestined to the adoption of children before time;

They are born of God;
they are taught of God;
they are the beloved of God;
they are treated as His children;
they are heirs of God;
they are appointed to share in the highest honors, and to enjoy the purest bliss!

Beloved, are WE led by the Spirit?

Has He led us this day to Jesus?

Has He humbled us?

Is Christ precious to us?

99s "Lead me to the rock!" Psalm 61:2

"Lead me to the rock!" Psalms 61:2

"That rock was Christ!" 1 Corinthians 10:4

He was first promised, then prefigured, and then manifested.

He is the smitten rock, which supplies His thirsty ones.

He is the rock of ages, which sustains His feeble ones.

He is the great rock, which revives His weary ones.

He is the high rock, which protects His hunted ones.

He is the cleft rock, which hides His timid and fearful ones.

In this rock we are safe.

>From this rock—we can see the promised land which is very far off.

By this rock—we are sheltered from the storm, and screened from the scorching sun.

We often wander from it. At a distance we learn its value, and sigh for the privilege it confers. But wherever we may be, it is accessible to us.

Jesus is all we need. He has all we can possibly want. Led to Him, we shall be raised . . .

above our fears,

above our foes, and

above our expectations!

He is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think!

"From the ends of the earth I call to You, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I!" Psalms 61:2

99t Every pardon is the price of the blood of

Every pardon is the price of the blood of Jesus!

"Who forgives ALL your iniquities!" Psalms 103:3

We daily need to be pardoned—for we daily sin.

Our sins are of an aggravated character:

They are the sins of a ransomed captive—against Him who redeemed him at the price of His blood!

They are the sins of a peculiarly favored servant, who lives in his master's house, sits at his master's table, and owes his all to his master's liberality—against the master who thus favors him.

They are the sins of a beloved child—against the wisest, kindest, and best of fathers.

Our faults are many, various, frequently repeated, and inexcusable! Yet the Lord forgives ALL our iniquities!

He pardons like a God—fully, freely, consistently.

Every pardon is the price of the blood of Jesus!

When He pardons, He secures hatred to sin, sorrow for sin, and a departure from sin.

He pardons like a father—He does so tenderly and frequently.

"Who forgives all your iniquities" David, who bore this testimony to God's pardoning mercy, was no common sinner. He had been guilty of adultery, deception and murder! He led others into sin, charged it upon providence, and slept under the guilt of it for months. He wrote with a smarting conscience, and with a grateful heart.

Reader, are you pardoned? God is ready to forgive.

99u "Once again You will have compassion on

"Once again You will have compassion on us! You will trample our sins under your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean!" Micah 7:19

Here is a melancholy fact intimated: The Lord had turned away His face from His people. He was displeased. There were now no sweet visits, no love-tokens, no intimate communion. But He threatens, He frowns, He smites, He shows His displeasure. He is angry—but not wrathful. He has sworn that He will not be wrathful with us.

He smites—but to correct.

He frowns—but to bring us to repentance.

"Once again You will have compassion on us!" Once again He will look upon us—as He did on Peter when He broke his heart, and brought him back with weeping and supplication.

He will speak to us as He did to Mary, when He said, "Your sins are forgiven—go in peace."

He will smile away our fears,

take us to His gentle bosom, and

again assure us of His love.

He will, for He has promised to do so.

He will, for He has always done so.

He will, for the love of His heart prompts Him to do so.

He will, for He delights in mercy.

Then let us mourn over our follies—but not despair of pardon.

Let us weep, that we have grieved our kind and gracious God—but not yield to gloom.

Let us confess our backslidings, and expect Him to return.

"Once again You will have compassion on us! You will trample our sins under your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean!"

99v "I will be their God!" Jeremiah 32:38

"I will be their God!" Jeremiah 32:38

To WHOM is this promise given?

This was spoken of the literal Israel—but it applies also to the spiritual Israel. It refers to all who are gathered to the Lord Jesus; to every penitent sinner, who is returning to God with weeping and with supplication; to every one to whom the Lord gives a heart to know Him, and who trusts in His gracious Word; to all true believers.

WHAT does this promise include?

They shall have . . .

My wisdom to guide them;

My power to protect them;

My love to assure them;

My mercy to save them;

My holiness to sanctify them; and

My Spirit to comfort them.

As their God . . .

I will be with them.

I will be for them.

I will be a God to them.

I will never fail them, nor ever forsake them.

I will do all that I have promised in My Word for them.

I will confer upon them all I have provided in My covenant.

Believer, see in this promise, God's greatest mercy: He gives you Himself to be your God!

The Christian's highest honor is to have God so near unto him, and engaged for him. Jehovah is his God forever!

99w "The last enemy!" 1 Corinthians 15:26

"The last enemy!" 1 Corinthians 15:26

The Christian has many enemies—but through grace he shall overcome them all.

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is DEATH!"

Death is an enemy to kingdoms—cutting down the wise, the patriotic, and the philanthropic.

Death is an enemy to churches—robbing them of their pastors, their teachers, the youthful, the devoted, and the most zealous members.

Death is an enemy to families—taking away the parent, the husband, the wife, and the children.

Death is an enemy to individuals—to saints, but especially to sinners.

Death was an enemy to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Death is the last enemy.

Death is the last in its introduction: Satan comes first, then sin, then death.

Death is the last in its attack: we have disease, old age, and then death.

Death is the last enemy that will be destroyed: for God has decreed it, Christ has promised it, saints pray for it, the church anticipates it, and Jesus is coming to execute the judgment written.

Yes, death shall be destroyed—certainly, perfectly, forever!

But even now the saint may . . .

be reconciled to its attack,

long for its stroke,

rejoice in its arms, and

spring from its grasp—to the enjoyment of unspeakable glory!

99x "O when will You come unto me?" Psalm 101:2

"O when will You come unto me?" Psalms 101:2

The presence of the Lord—is the heaven of His people. They cannot be satisfied or happy without it. He is . . .

the object of their love,

the source of their enjoyment,

the center of their desires,

and the life of their souls!

If He is present—then all is well.

If He is absent—then nothing can yield them satisfaction:

they are restless,

their souls can find no repose,

their desires can find no rest.

The reasons are many:

in His favor is their life;

in His fellowship is happiness and peace;

in His presence is fullness of joy, safety, rest, refreshment and victory.

His presence . . .

promotes their sanctification,

enlarges their hearts, and

ripens the fruits of grace.

Reader, have you enjoyed the presence of God?

Do you enjoy it now?

Can you find any substitute for it?

Are you crying with David,

"My soul follows hard after You!" or,

"O when will You come unto me!"

If you are careless about God's presence—you are a stranger to it.

99y WHO made us to differ?

WHO made us to differ?

"It pleased God." Galatians 1:15

Paul is speaking . . .

of being separated from his mother's womb,

of being called by grace to be saved,

of Christ being revealed in him, and

of his being made a preacher and an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ;

and he traces up the whole—to the good pleasure of God.

It pleased God to convert, consecrate, and crown the apostle with such eminent success. There was nothing in him to deserve it—nothing in him to move God to do it. God blessed Paul, just because He would—because it pleased Him to do it.

Just so in our case.

Do we differ from others?

Do we differ from our former selves?

Have we spiritual life?

Have we Christian graces?

Why were they conferred upon us—and not upon others?

WHO made us to differ?

We can trace it to no cause—but the sovereign good pleasure of God!

He has mercy—on whom He will have mercy.

He has compassion—on whom He will have compassion.

99z "Continue earnestly in prayer, being

"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving." Colossians 4:2

Prayer is always necessary, and it is always profitable. In prayer . . .

we do homage to the perfections of God,

we exercise faith on His omnipresence,

we express our dependence on Him for our supplies,

we evince the sincerity of our profession,

we acknowledge our poverty and weakness,

we unburden the mind of our secret trials,

we give vent to our feelings of joy and sorrow, of gratitude and grief,

we confess our sins, acknowledge our backslidings, and obtain pardon and restoring grace,

we give utterance to our desires, and spread our case before the Lord.

Prayer is the medium of communication between God and our souls:

we communicate our thoughts, feelings, fears, and desires;

He communicates light, strength, comfort, and grace to us.

Prayer is a very important duty; it is a great privilege.

Prayer should be . . .

constant,

fervent,

believing,

hopeful, and

incessant.

God loves it,

Satan hates it, and

every true Christian values it.

We should be always in a praying frame—though we cannot be always in a praying posture.

Prayer is always . . .

necessary,
profitable and
acceptable to God.

99za Delightful thought!

Delightful thought!

"Perfect in Christ Jesus!" Colossians 1:28

The believer painfully proves that he is imperfect in himself. Imperfection appears to be stamped . . .

upon all that he feels;

upon all his desires,

upon all his joys and sorrows;

and upon all he does.

What says the sigh, which escapes from his heavy heart?

Imperfect!

What says the groan, which ascends from his troubled bosom?

Imperfect!

What says the tear, which glistens in his eye, or rolls down his cheek?

Imperfect!

But there is perfection in Christ! In Him there is . . .

a perfect atonement—to reconcile us;

a perfect righteousness—to justify us;

perfect holiness—to sanctify us;

perfect wisdom—to direct and instruct us.

Our full and eternal perfection is decreed, promised, provided for. It will be realized in heaven, when we see Him as He really is—and shall be made like Him!

Delightful thought! We shall be perfectly holy and perfectly happy!

99zb The family mansion!

The family mansion!

"The whole family!"Ephesians 3:15

The church of Christ is a family. Part of it is in heaven—part on earth—and part is not yet brought into existence.

God is the Father of the whole.

Every child is alike the object of His love, care, and compassion.

Each one lives in His sight, and is dear to His heart.

He will not part with one of His children!

Jesus, who is Surety for the whole, will never have to say with the troubled patriarch, "one is no more!"

The part of the family that is now in heaven, differ from us in place, in purity, in happiness, and employment; but they are not more loved than we are!

The whole family is alike beloved, redeemed, adopted, and destined to perfect holiness and happiness!

Every name is recorded in the book of life, and engraved on the Savior's hands!

Heaven is 'the family mansion'—our Father's house!

99zc Some fall at His feet—but others fly in

Some fall at His feet—but others fly in His face!

"We count them happy who endure." James 5:11

Our afflictions are trials. Every professor shall be tried.

Under affliction, some fall at His feet—but others fly in His face!

Happy is the man who meets his trials like a Christian—with humility, faith, fortitude and patience.

Happy is the man who endures them without repining, complaining, and rebelling against God.

He looks not so much at the rod—as at the hand that uses it; nor only at the hand—but at the heart that guides the hand!

He says, "It is discipline. It is chastisement. It is my Father who strikes—and He never corrects unless I need it! He chastens me for my profit, to make me a partaker of His holiness. I have prayed for deeper sanctification; He is only answering my prayer. Shall I then complain? The 'cup' which my heavenly Father gives me—shall I not drink it?"

99zd "He preserves the way of His saints."

"He preserves the way of His saints." Proverbs 2:8

The believer's journey lies through an enemy's land.

His course is lined with tribulation.

His pilgrimage is exhausting and wearying.

It is rendered more trying by his own weakness, and the inward conflict.

But it is the only way to the Celestial City!

The Lord always accompanies His saints, His holy ones. He suits His mercies to their condition and their needs. He preserves them from being overcome, making His strength perfect in their weakness, and proving that His grace is sufficient for them.

He preserves them with . . .

a watchful eye,

a powerful arm, and

a loving heart!

Beloved, look back and see how He has preserved you.

Look forward and trust Him to preserve you in all time to come!

99ze We shall lose nothing but our dross!

We shall lose nothing but our dross!

"When He has tried me—I will emerge as pure gold!" Job 23:10

Job was in the furnace! It was heated seven times hotter. But he was conscious of his integrity. He knew that though he was imperfect—he was sincere. He knew that he had a living Redeemer; that his God knew his heart, his motives, his desires, and his course. Therefore he felt confident that he would not be consumed—but only refined.

This is the design of all our trials. They are . . .

to make us fit for the Master's use;

to make us reflect the Savior's image;

to fit us for eternal glory.

However fierce the fire—we shall lose nothing but our dross! God sits by the furnace as the Refiner, He superintends the whole process of purification, and He removes us from the fire—the moment His design is accomplished.

Tried Christian, your God is refining you!

His design is most loving!

He will take care of you!

Say with Job, "He knows the way that I take. When He has tried me—I will emerge as pure gold!"

99zf "You have done right!" Nehemiah 9:33

"You have done right!" Nehemiah 9:33

The Lord cannot but do right—this is generally acknowledged. but to be persuaded of this, to realize it and be influenced by it, under severe and heavy trials—is exceedingly difficult!

But the Lord never acts, but according to the plan which He has drawn—which plan is the perfection of wisdom, and proceeds from His infinite love. What He does—He purposed to do! And He purposed to do it—because it was the very best thing that could be done!

We are poor, hasty, selfish, dissatisfied creatures—ready to sit in judgment upon what God does, and to complain of His dealings without the least cause! But there are times when looking back upon our losses, crosses, sufferings, and trials—we can say, and say it heartily, "You have done right!"

Doubtless Jacob felt this—when he embraced his son Joseph in Egypt. "You have done right!"

And Job also—when God had blessed his latter end more than the beginning. "You have done right!"

And Daniel also—when he was taken up out of the lion's den without any harm. "You have done right!"

But it is to feel it—in the trial; to confess—it under the affliction—which is most desirable.

Let us then, when the Lord tries our graces, or buffets us for our faults, endeavor to say, "You have done right!"

99zg "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever!" Hebrews 13:8

Immutability is one of the essential perfections of Jehovah. He claims it as His right. He presents it as a source of comfort to His people, when He says, "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed."

The Lord Jesus is immutable, because He is divine.

He changes not. He is the same . . .

in all the glories of His person,

in all the purposes of His heart,

in all the doctrines of His gospel,

in the greatness of His love,

in the omnipotence of His power,

in the tenderness of His sympathy,

in the merit of His blood, and

in His hatred to sin.

Is Jesus immutable?

Then let us adore Him as divine.

Let us trust Him with implicit confidence.

Let us seek comfort in Him . . .

when all our earthly gourds wither,

when all our cisterns are broken.

He is always Jesus—the Savior! He is always the kind, the compassionate, the faithful, the tender Savior!

99zh "Grace to help us in our time of need."

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

The term 'grace' includes the wisdom and strength which may be necessary to enable us to act aright, under all circumstances.

We daily need grace.

But there are seasons in which we need grace especially:

in times of prosperity—to keep us from getting proud and presumptuous;

in times of adversity—to keep us from complaining or desponding;

in times of temptation—to preserve us from its snares;

in the time of death—that we may die to the Lord's glory.

Grace is to be had. There is a throne erected on purpose to dispense it. It is given to the most unworthy. It is to be had in answer to prayer. "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Let us not attempt anything in our own strength, or imagine that we can accomplish anything by our own wisdom; but let us live under a deep sense . . .

of our need of grace,

of God's willingness to bestow it, and

of the incalculable benefits to be derived from it.

Thus let us approach the throne of grace, pleading the name of Jesus, so we may be supplied. O for grace . . .

to keep me in health,

to cheer me in sickness,

to make me victorious in death!

99zi Angels sinned—and are thrust down to hell!

Angels sinned—and are thrust down to hell!

"The gift of God is eternal life." Romans 6:23

Our desert is eternal death. With this, the law threatens us. But God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

We have the promise of eternal existence; of eternal existence free from sin, pain, sorrow, grief, and disappointment; of eternal existence in the enjoyment of ease, holiness, honor, wealth, peace, pleasure, and satisfaction; eternal employment and enjoyment.

This is given to us—given to us freely. It is the expression of Jehovah's love to us; a display of His sovereign and distinguishing grace.

Angels sinned—and are thrust down to hell!

We sinned, and our God, against whom we have sinned, has given to us eternal life!

Beloved, let us live in hope of this eternal life. Let us press onward to the enjoyment of it. Jesus has promised it to all His sheep. He says, "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish—ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand."

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