

# THE PASTOR'S MORNING VISIT

by James Smith

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*Smith's morning pastoral devotional promoting genuine godliness and drawing believers nearer to God, encouraging habitual dependence on Him, acknowledging His hand in all things, and walking humbly with the Lord.*

3 Chapters

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## 00 The Pastor's Morning Visit

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The Pastor's Morning Visit by James Smith, 1840

### PREFACE

The present humble work is a Pastoral effort, flowing from love to the Lord's people, and a desire to honor His great name. It is an acknowledged fact, that many of the Lord's people are living far below their privileges; and are walking as mere men, not aiming simply at the Lord's glory. This is to be regretted; and while none but the Holy Spirit can produce the change we desire to witness—yet the means are to be used, and we must stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance. In this little work, I aim to speak in the closet, in the cottage, in the kitchen, and even in the field—to the different classes of the Lord's family; endeavoring to draw them nearer to their God and gracious Father. My desire is to promote the power of godliness; and these little pieces are written to convince, comfort, and correct; to fan the flame of devotion, and to produce holiness of heart and life. To this end some degrees of sameness in the pieces, and a repetition of some important truths, appeared absolutely necessary.

Habitual dependence upon God for all we need, acknowledging the hand of God for all we receive, and walking humbly with God, notwithstanding all that may happen to us here below—enter into the very vitals of genuine Christianity; and it is only while we are thus acting, that we enjoy peace with God, and walk in the comforts of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who often uses weak things to confound the mighty—bless this little work to your good—and His glory! The situation in which she died is instructive:

She had hospitably entertained the angels,  
she had believed their message,  
she had obeyed their command,  
she had left Sodom behind her,  
she had forsaken the ungodly.

Yet her heart was left in the city!

She was cut off by a visible display of God's judgment!

"But Lot's wife looked back—and she became a pillar of salt!"

Genesis 19:26

The situation in which she died is instructive:

It was not in Sodom—but on the plain.

She escaped one judgment—but was overtaken by another!

She was deprived of eternal life—for too highly prizing earth's comforts!

She was left as a sad example of God's jealousy, and His displeasure against sin.

God will be honored either by our obedience—or by our punishment!

It is dangerous to trifle with the smallest of God's commands!

We may overcome one temptation—and yet fall by another!

Here is a warning to the covetous—whose hearts are set on earthly things!

Here is a warning to the self-willed—who trifle with God's commands!

Here is a warning to the undecided—who stand between Sodom and Zoar.

Let us examine—are our hearts detached from the world?

Be not high-minded—but fear!

"Remember Lot's wife!" Luke 17:32

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Carry all your concerns to Him—in the arms of faith!

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

The Lord knows all His people—all their needs, and all their trials.

He thinks upon them—to bless, deliver and supply them.

He keeps His eye upon them—in all places, at all times, and under all circumstances.

He has them in His hand—and will not loosen His hold.

He looks upon them always as His own 'treasured possession' . . .

the objects of His eternal love,

the purchase of His Son's blood,

the temples of His Holy Spirit.

They are precious in His sight!

He knows they are weak and fearful—and that they have many enemies. He teaches them to cast themselves and all their cares into His hands! And He has given them His promise—that He will care for them.

It is a Father's care which He exercises. It is a wise, holy, tender, and constant care. Therefore all will be well with you—only trust Him.

Believe that He cares for you this day. Carry all your concerns to Him—in the arms of faith! Leave all with Him, persuaded that He will manage all by His infinite wisdom, and bring all to a good outcome by His omnipotent power.

Cast all your cares upon Him—as fast as they come in.

Do not worry about anything.

"Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will support you! He will never allow the righteous to be shaken!" Psalms 55:22

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He cannot love you more!

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Php 4:6

The Lord cares for His children!

He knows our needs—and has promised to supply them.

He knows our foes—and will deliver us from them.

He knows our fears—and will make us ashamed of them.

All creatures and things are in His hand, and at His disposal; all circumstances are under His absolute control. He . . .

directs the angel,

feeds the sparrow,

curbs the devil, and

manages the tempest!

He is your Father—and His love to you is infinite. You are His delight—His dear child. Will He neglect you? Impossible! Cast then your cares upon Him. Tell out all your desires, fears, and troubles to Him; let Him know everything; keep nothing back. And then in the confidence of faith, expect Him to fulfill His Word, and act a Parent's part.

Bless Him for all He has given, for all He has promised. Plead with Him for all you may need. But never for one moment, or under any circumstances, distrust Him! He cannot love you more! He is your ever present help. He will rejoice over you to do you good, with His whole heart, and with His whole soul.

"Cast all your care upon Him, because He cares about you!" 1 Peter 5:7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Go to Him just as you are—and receive from Him all that you need!

"Come unto Me!" Matthew 11:28

Jesus calls you to His throne of grace. He is there waiting to hear, relieve and bless you. You are to go to Him just as you are—and receive from Him all that you need.

He will give you:

wisdom—to direct your steps;  
peace—to keep your hearts;  
strength—to do His will;  
righteousness—to justify your souls;  
and rest—unspeakably sweet.

He is glorified in bestowing these blessings upon you. He calls you this morning, this moment—to receive all that you need—without money and without price. What a precious Savior is Jesus! What a kind and tender Friend!

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16

"Come!" He says, "Come to Me! Do not go to SELF, to the world, to the empty cisterns which creatures idolize; but come unto Me, and I will do immeasurably more than all you can ask or imagine!

Your sins—I will pardon;  
your graces—I will revive;  
your comforts—I will restore;  
your holiness—I will increase;  
your efforts to glorify Me—I will crown with success;  
I will bless you—and you shall be a blessing!"

~ ~ ~ ~ You are walking in the midst of snares and traps!

"Be very careful, then, how you walk!" Ephesians 5:15 To honor Jesus in your thoughts, words, and every action—should be your constant aim.

You are in an enemy's land; surrounded by temptations; and have a heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked!

This present world is not your home! Satan's family are not to be your intimate friends. Riches, honors, or pleasure—are not to be your objects of pursuit. You are walking in the midst of snares and traps! Be watchful, prayerful, depending upon Jesus, and cultivating fellowship with Him.

O keep your eye on Jesus, as your example! Walk by His Word—as your rule. Do not be venturesome or presumptuous, but avoid the very appearance of evil. Never leave the Lord's ways—to join the world's vanities or to please a carnal lust. Keep close to Jesus—and follow on to know the Lord.

Walk as a beloved child, who is going home to his loving Father's house! "Be very careful, then, how you walk!"

~ ~ ~ ~ This is my Friend!

"You are My friends!" John 15:14

What infinite condescension in Jesus, to call us sinful worms—His friends! But He not only calls us so—but treats us as such! And expects us as His friends—to do whatever He commands us.

Is Jesus your friend?

Then visit Him often—let Him hear your voice in prayer and praise.

Then trust Him confidently—let Him see evidence of your faith in your dependence.

Then walk with Him in love—let Him enjoy much of your company.

Then expect Him to be your Friend . . .

in sickness and health,

in poverty and plenty,

in life and in death!

If Jesus is our Friend—we can never be destitute. If our father and mother forsake us—He will take us up, and take us in.

We can never be miserable—He will receive us and be a wise and loving Father unto us.

We can never be neglected, for He will never fail us nor forsake us—but will do for us all that He has promised in His Word. He will . . .

defend us from foes,

visit us in sickness, and

cheer and support us in death!

Precious Lord Jesus, You are my Friend . . .

in life,

in death,

at the judgment, and

before Your Father's face forever!

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Poor in self—rich in Jesus!

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3

The Lord's people are all poor; they see and feel that sin has stripped them of every excellence; and has left them wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked. They can do nothing of themselves, they can procure nothing for themselves; but free grace has made ample provision for

them, and the Gospel informs them that Jesus has everything they need—and that all that He has, is for them!

When they look at, or into themselves—they are discouraged; but when they look to Jesus—they rejoice! He has riches of grace—and riches of glory; and He says, "Every one who asks—receives." He gives liberally, and upbraids not. Here then is the present blessedness of the Lord's poor: Jesus has all they need! And He is their Redeemer and Friend! Those who seek Him shall not lack any truly good thing.

Am I poor? If so, Jesus bids me to come to Him—and buy gold, clothing, wine, and milk without price—all that is necessary to comfort and support in time, and render me happy throughout eternity! Poor in self—rich in Jesus! Poor at present—rich in eternity! "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven!"

"All things are yours!" 1 Corinthians 3:21

"And my God will supply all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus!" Php 4:19

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Our great lesson!

"I will instruct you." Psalms 32:8

At best we know but little—and we are slow to learn. But the Lord has promised to instruct us. The Lord's teaching always produces . . .

humility,

self-loathing,

confidence in God,

zeal for His glory, and

heart devotion to Christ!

The Lord's teaching always . . .

brings us to the feet of Jesus, and

delivers us from the present evil world.

Under Divine instruction we learn . . .

the true nature of sin,

the vanity of the world,

the emptiness of creatures, and

the fullness and preciousness of Christ!

Is God willing to instruct us? Then let us be early and often at His throne of grace, praying, as the Psalmist did, "Show me Your ways, O LORD, teach me Your paths; guide me in Your truth and teach me—for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in You all day long." Psalms 25:4-5. Then

shall we exclaim, as Elihu did, "God is exalted in His power. Who is a teacher like Him!" Job 36:22

The Lord will teach us to profit, and sanctify us through the truth He imparts. Christ is our great lesson—and to know Him rightly—is life, peace and joy!

Is Jesus your Teacher? Then . . .

sit at His feet,

treasure up His Words,

and show forth His praise!

He says, "Learn of Me." Learn to . . .

know Him,

love Him,

obey Him, and

live upon Him!

"Teach me Your way, O LORD; lead me in a straight path!" Psalms 27:11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Grace personified!

"The glory of His grace." Ephesians 1:6

The glory of grace is its freeness! Grace . . .

fixes upon objects that are most unworthy;

bestows upon them the richest blessings;

raises them to the highest honor;

promises them the greatest happiness;

and all for its own glory.

Nothing can be freer than grace!

The glory of grace is its power! Grace . . .

conquers the stubbornest sinners;

subdues the hardest hearts;

tames the wildest wills;

enlightens the darkest understandings;

breaks off the strongest fetters;

and invariably conquers its objects.

Grace is omnipotent!

The glory of grace is its benevolence! Grace . . .

has delivered, supplied, conducted, supported, and glorified thousands;

and brings the inexhaustible fullness of God—to supply the creature's needs;

opens the treasury of heaven—to enrich poor, miserable, and wretched creatures on earth.

gives away all it has—reserving nothing for itself!

Jesus is grace personified! In Him grace is displayed in all its beauty, excellency, and loveliness.  
He is "full of grace." John 1:14

O Jesus! glorify Your free, powerful, and benevolent grace in me!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He restores the fainting, the dying and the dead!

"I will restore health unto you!" Jeremiah 30:17

Jesus is a skillful Physician.

He heals all the falls, bruises and dislocations of His people.

He brings health to the heart!

Believer, is your heart . .

hard,

wandering,

divided, or

wounded?

Jesus can heal it!

To you He says, "Come and be healed!"

He restores the fainting, the dying and the dead! He is the perfect master of every disease.

His terms are, "I will heal you freely—without money—without price!"

But, He will have an absolute surrender to Him!

You must refuse all other remedies!

You must take all that He prescribes—bitter or sweet!

Jesus is Jehovah Rophi, "The God who heals!"

Therefore look for health to no other.

Consult Him daily.

Lay open your whole case to Him!

Never despond until . . .

His loving nature changes,

His skill fails, or

His promises are withdrawn from His Word.

Be grateful for healing, and show your gratitude by endeavoring to send others to Him.  
Recommend this gracious Physician!

Beloved, come to Jesus and be healed!

Savior, I wait Your healing hand!

Diseases fly at Your command;

Now let Your sovereign touch impart,

Life, health, and vigor to my heart!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He seems to grow more like Satan!

"Their righteousness is from Me!" Isaiah 54:17

The longer the Christian lives—the more he learns. And the more the Spirit teaches him—the more he loathes himself and renounces his own righteousness as filthy rags.

He hoped sensibly . . .

to grow in holiness,

to feel his corruptions subdued, and

to enjoy the presence of his God without interruption.

But instead of this:

he seems to grow more like Satan,

his corruption appears to get stronger and stronger, and

the depravity of his nature appears more and more dreadful!

He thinks himself to be a monster of iniquity, and wonders how God can possibly love him, or show any favor unto him.

Yet, this heart-felt experience . . .

endears God's free grace,  
renders Christ unspeakably precious,  
and the gift of righteousness invaluable!

How can such a man be just before God? Where is his righteousness to come from? Jehovah answers, "His righteousness is from Me!"

Jesus wrought it;  
the Father imputes it to us;  
the gospel reveals it; and  
faith receives it, puts it on, and pleads it before God.  
Precious Jesus! in You alone, I have righteousness and strength!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Paul's estimate of himself

"I am nothing!" 2 Corinthians 12:11

This was Paul's estimate of himself: "less than the least of all saints," and "the chief of sinners."

The more we know of ourselves and of Jesus—  
the more shall we be humbled in the dust before Him;  
and the lower we lie before Him,  
and the happier and holier we shall be.

Sinful MAN will, MUST be something—this is both his pride and his misery.

The Christian is willing to be nothing—that Christ may be all in all.

If we daily felt that we are nothing—how many mortifications we would be spared; what admiring views of the grace of God would fill and sanctify our souls!

Apart from Christ—we are less than nothing; but in Christ—we are something!

We are empty—but He fills us!

We are naked—but He clothes us!

We are helpless—but He strengthens us!

We are lost—but He finds us!

We are ruined—but He saves us!

We are poor—but He supplies us!

All that we are—is by Christ!

All that we have—is from Christ!

All that all we shall be—is through Christ!

Christian, you are nothing! Therefore beware of thinking too highly of yourself; or imagining that you deserve more than you receive—either from God or men.

Humble souls are soon satisfied!

Proud souls are never satisfied!

O could I lose myself in Thee,

Your depth of mercy prove,

O vast unfathomable sea

Of unexhausted love!

I loathe myself when God I see,

Content if Christ exalted be!

~ ~ ~ ~ To nourish a serpent in the bosom!

"Walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

Pride is one of our greatest evils!

To indulge pride—is to nourish a serpent in the bosom!

The grace of God always humbles us; and it is only as we are sincerely humble—that we can be truly happy.

God condescends to walk with the humble man—but He keeps the proud man at a distance.

Consider . . .

what a vile sinner you were by nature,

what evil still lurks in your heart,

what you would have been--but for the grace of God

—and be humble.

All you have which is truly good—is the gift of free grace!

All you do that is good—is the effect of God's working in you!

What then, do you have to be proud of?

What reason then, do you have to boast?

Oh, lie low in the dust of self-abasement!

Nourish humbling thoughts of yourself!

Admire the mercy, condescension, and infinite compassion of God—in even noticing so vile, so unworthy a worm as yourself!

Study the character and conduct of the humble Jesus—and endeavor to walk just as He walked. "Learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart." Matthew 11:29

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We know not what this day may bring forth

"I will surely do you GOOD!" Genesis 32:12

Though this promise was given to Jacob, it was not confined to him—but is intended for all his spiritual seed. It is thus that God speaks to US this morning. How gracious!

We know not what this day may bring forth—but we do know that our God, who superintends every event, will do us good.

We may mistake as to what will be for our good—but He is infinite in wisdom and goodness, and therefore cannot mistake. We may look at afflictions, losses, and crosses, and cry out, "All these things are against me!" But read the history of David. What a train of troubles attended him! Hear his acknowledgment: "It is GOOD for me that I have been afflicted!"

Your God will do you good—therefore He will try you, sift you, humble you, and prove you. He will give you needed bitter medicine—as well as food. He will consider nothing too expensive, or too painful—if necessary for your soul's welfare.

Look at your trials, and say, "This also shall turn to my good!"

Look on the past, and acknowledge, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life."

Look to the future, and rejoice, "The Lord will surely give me that which is GOOD."

Look in every direction, and say, "Surely the Lord will do me good—I will trust, and not be afraid."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The daughter of faith

"You, too, must be patient. And take courage, for the coming of the Lord draws near." James 5:8

Our God is a God of patience.

The Lord Jesus is the great Example of patience.

The Holy Spirit is the Agent producing patience.

Trials, troubles, and disappointments, are the means which exercise and strengthen patience.

The patience that God requires, is a disposition to bear all that He has appointed for us, without complaining; yes, with resignation and hope; to wait God's time for the mercies we need—or for answers to the prayers we put up.

Patience is the daughter of faith. It is only as we believe that God has appointed, overrules, or commands all things for our good and His glory—that we can be patient.

Patience . . .

produces reliance on God,  
shuts the mouth from complaining,  
keeps back the heart from seeking revenge,  
and is a principal point in self-control.

Are you impatient?

Then confess it, and mourn over it before God! Impatience will make you miserable, and lead you to dishonor God. Watch against it!

Look at the patience of the Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs—of Jesus! "You, too, must be patient. And take courage, for the coming of the Lord draws near."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Find rest, O my soul, in God alone!

"I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

There is no rest for the Christian in this world. There will be always something to disturb, perplex or distress him; it is an enemy's land.

But Jesus says, "I will give you rest." He does so by enabling us to . . .

rely on His Word,  
recognize His hand,  
submit to His will, and  
trust in His perfect work.

He assures us . . .

that our sins are forgiven;  
that we are safe in His keeping;  
that His presence shall always be with us; and  
that all things shall work together for our eternal good.

We can rest on His faithfulness—for He has been tried, and found faithful.

We can rest on His love—for He loves us to the uttermost.

We can rest on His power—for it is ever engaged on our behalf.

We can rest on His covenant—for it is ordered in all things and sure.

We can rest on His blood—for it speaks peace, pardon, and acceptance with God.

We can rest at His feet—for there we are safe, and can never be injured.

We cannot rest . . .

on our graces,

on our comforts,

on our friends, or

on our possessions.

We may rest on Jesus alone.

"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will not be shaken!" Psalms 62:5-6

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Look unto Me!" Isaiah 45:22

A new morning opens upon us—and we are still exposed . . .

to sorrow,

to Satan, and

to disappointment!

Sin lives in us—and a thousand things are ready to distress us!

But our God says, "Look unto Me!"

Look unto Me . . .

as the source of happiness,

as the giver of grace,

as your Friend!

Look unto Me . . .

in every trial,

for all you need, and

in every circumstance.

Look unto Me TODAY, I have blessings to bestow! I am waiting to be gracious to you!

Believe that I am deeply interested in your present and eternal welfare!

Believe that I will perform—all that I have promised!

Believe that I am with you—on purpose to bless you! I cannot be unconcerned about anything that affects you! I pledge Myself to make all things work together for your eternal good.

You have looked to SELF, and to others, in times past—and you have only met with trouble and disappointment!

Now look unto Me ALONE!

Look unto Me FOR ALL!

"Look unto Me!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"A friend loves at all times!" Proverbs 17:17

Where shall we find such a friend?

He who redeems from slavery, and delivers from bondage—is such a friend. Jesus does this.

He who restores to the favor of the Judge who condemned—is such a friend. Jesus does this.

He who admits to intimacy with himself, out of pure love, notwithstanding disparity of condition—is such a friend. Jesus does this.

He who counsels in trouble, and gives the best advice in perplexity—is such a friend. Jesus does this.

He who rescues from destructive foes, and renders their attempts to injure us abortive—is such a friend. Jesus does this.

He who takes in the rejected and homeless, who clothes the naked and feeds the hungry—is such a friend. Jesus does this.

He who exposes himself to pain, injury, insult, and death, to do us good—is such a friend. Jesus has done this.

He who expends all his property for our welfare—is such a friend. Jesus did this.

He who kindly reproveth our faults in prosperity; and visits, comforts, and relieves in adversity—is such a friend. Jesus does this.

He who loves us through life, in death, and forever—is such a friend. Jesus does so.

Jesus is the Friend who loves at all times!

Changing scenes change not His affection. His friendship flows from purest love, and is founded in a perfect knowledge of our needs, dispositions, and propensities. His friendship is maintained by infinite patience and boundless pity.

He knows our frame, consults our welfare, and is determined to do us good.

The friendship of Jesus secures all good—and prevents all evil. He will never fail us nor forsake us. He commenced His friendship with a view to extend it through eternity!

O Jesus! You are . . .

our Friend,

our Counselor,

our Brother,

our Lord,

and our God

—in life, death and forever!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Anyone but our God would have left us long ago!

"I will never leave you, nor ever forsake you." Hebrews 13:5

If the Lord is with us—all will be well. He has promised to be with us always—even unto the end. Anyone but our God would have left us long ago! But He is patient, full of compassion, and of great mercy.

He will go through the whole journey with us! He will conduct us through life with safety—and be our God to all eternity!

"Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are Mine! When you go through deep waters and great trouble—I will be with you! When you go through rivers of difficulty—you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression—you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior!" Isaiah 43:1-3

He will be with us . . .

in every trouble—to support us;

in every trial—to comfort us;

in every difficulty—to provide for us;

in every danger—to deliver us;

and under all circumstances—to bless us.

He will be with us . . .

as our heavenly Father;

as our firm and faithful Friend;

as our omnipotent God!

And we shall be with Him shortly—as His children, His jewels—to be glorified with Him forever!

Beloved, let us rejoice in this—that God will never leave us! Troubles may come upon us—but our God will never forsake His people! Having loved His own—He will love them unto the very end!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Do not worry!" Matthew 6:34

Anxiety, or worry—is very injurious; it . . .

unsettles the heart,

distracts the mind,

chokes the Word,

leads to distrust, and

destroys our peace.

Worry is inconsistent with our profession. We have resigned all into the hands of the Lord—and should leave all to His care.

Anxiety, or inordinate care, dishonors God.

It reflects badly upon . . .

His sufficiency—to supply all;

His omniscience—to know all;

His authority and ability—to manage all;

His mercy, bounty and liberality—as if He would fail us;

His veracity, fidelity, and immutability—as though His Word may be forfeited, and His promises broken.

Worry . . .

injures our own souls;

is opposed to contentment and resignation;

nourishes impatience and unbelief;

hinders our usefulness;

hardens our hearts;

cuts off divine supplies;

procures God's rod and frown.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus!" Php 4:6-7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ This glorious, astonishing object!

"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world!" Galatians 6:14

The cross of Christ is the Christian's glory! It embraces the whole doctrine of salvation by grace, and is viewed by the Christian as . . .

the foundation of his hope,  
the object of his faith;  
the end of the law;  
the antidote of his misery;  
the center of truth;  
the mirror, in which Jehovah displays His perfections;  
the key which opens the gates of the celestial paradise;  
the storehouse of eternal wisdom;  
the mystery of incarnate love;  
the destruction of death;  
the gate to everlasting life;  
the object of the angels wonder;  
the cause of the devil's everlasting confusion.

Beloved, let us fix our eyes and hearts upon this glorious, astonishing object!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Take heed, and beware of covetousness!" Luke 12:15

This is a warning from the lips of our beloved Lord. He knows our weakness and our foes—and He cautions us against them.

We need but little here below—for we shall not be here long; and we are going to the land of plenty, rest and joy.

A little with the Lord's blessing—is enough.

We ought not to be anxious about temporals. The Lord will give us enough—if we are living by faith upon Him, and walking in communion with Him.

We are all prone to be covetous—and it is a fearful sin.

Covetousness is idolatry. It steals the heart from God, and sets it upon base and sordid worldly things. It prevents our enjoying either temporal or spiritual blessings.

A covetous man . . .

must be miserable,

must be unholy,

must be lost forever!

Covetousness is sly and insinuating, it is deceitful and powerful. If it once becomes rooted in the heart, nothing but omnipotent grace can root it out!

Well may our dear Lord say, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness!"

"But godliness with contentment is a great gain. For we brought nothing into the world—and we can take nothing out. But if we have food and clothing—we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains." 1 Timothy 6:6-10

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Am I in God's stead?" Genesis 30:2

All our mercies are to be traced up to our God!

All our miseries are to be traced up to ourselves!

We are constantly making ourselves wretched—by departing from our God, or by putting creatures in His place!

We often put people and things in God's stead:

loving them inordinately;

trusting them instead of Him;

idolizing them instead of adoring Him;

expecting them to relieve, comfort, or deliver us.

But 'insufficiency' is written upon every created object!

No creature can fill the place of Jehovah!

Take the richest - the wisest - the kindest - the nearest relative or friend—and you must exclaim, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!"

But Jehovah can fill the place of all:

our fathers,

our spouses,

our children,

our wealth,

our health.

Yes, He can fill the place of all things!

Creatures may say:

"Am I in God's stead?

If not, why do you look to me?

Why depend on me?

Why do you expect from me?

Why so grieve to part with me?

Am I in God's stead? If so, either He will remove me—or I shall disappoint you!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

O for a thankful heart!

"Be thankful." Colossians 3:15

What cause we have to be thankful—what reason we have to be grateful!

Surrounded by mercies, both temporal and spiritual. If we look back, we ought to rejoice that God has chosen us in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world; that He sent His only-begotten Son into the world, to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins; that He sent His Holy Spirit into our hearts, to convince us of sin, lead us to Jesus, and make us fit for heaven!

We have . . .

His Word in our hands,

His grace in our hearts,

His mercies in our houses,

His heaven before our eyes!

O for a thankful heart!

Let us take our poor, hard, ungrateful hearts to Jesus—He can soften them and fill them with gratitude!

Let us confess our ingratitude before Him, and mourn over our unthankfulness at His feet. He is ready to forgive. He can make us holy. He will hear our cry, and pity our complaints.

O Jesus, grant us a deep sense of our utter unworthiness, and of Your unmerited goodness, that our souls may daily praise You with joyful lips! May we live as thankful dependents on Your gracious bounty; as grateful, loving children, before our Father and our God; and daily be thankful.

Through all eternity, to You,

A joyful song I'll raise;

But O eternity's too short,

To utter all Your praise!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Lord, do with it as You will

"Then Jesus said to his disciples: If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." Matthew 16:24

It is required by Jesus that every disciple should practice self-denial. We must deny and crucify the workings of self-righteousness, and venture alone upon His work and worth for salvation. We must also mortify the pride of reason and intellect—and believe as His Word reveals, and walk as His Word directs.

Our nearest relatives, dearest friends, and choicest comforts, must be resigned—if they are opposed to His glory and the furtherance of His cause. A Christian must lay everything at the feet of Jesus, and say, "Lord, do with it as You will." We are not our own, nor is anything we have our own; it is the Lord's.

Our appetites, pleasures and pursuits—must all be brought into subjection and obedience to Christ.

His glory is to be sought at all times, in all things, under all circumstances; and when this is done, we are safe and happy. The servant must obey his Master, and the child submit in all things to his wise, judicious and loving Father. But for whom am I called to deny myself? For Jesus, who lived and died to save me, who is now in heaven interceding for me; and who is the great Pattern of self-denial, who "humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I myself will help you!

"For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you: Do not fear; I will help you. Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you," declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah 41:13-14

Wherever the Lord leads us—He will support us; nor shall the difficulties of the way, or the weakness we feel—be too much for us. His hand is stretched out to us, and it is for faith to lay hold of it and proceed, confident of divine assistance.

His omnipotent arm is the protection of His people in danger, and the strength of His people in weakness. He is "an ever-present help in times of trouble". He is a God at hand. Are you weak, or in difficulty? Plead His Word; it is plain, positive, and sure. He cannot lie. He will not deceive. His strength is made perfect, and is glorified in your weakness. Fear not, underneath you are everlasting arms!

He CAN help—for He is omnipotent. He WILL help—for He has given you His Word. "Trust in the Lord at all times; yes, trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength!" That strength is promised to you, and will be employed for you in answer to prayer.

Why then are you so fearful? Why cast down? He says, "I myself will help you!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I am a worm!

"I am a worm!" Psalms 22:6

Man is naturally vain and proud—but grace strips him and humbles him in the dust. Here the highly-favored King David, the man after God's own heart, cries out, "I am a worm!" How little, how despicable he appeared in his own eyes!

Everyone who humbles himself—shall be exalted. You have looked at Bible saints, and have sighed out, "Ah! they were not like me!" My brother, are you not a poor, weak, worthless worm? Do you not feel so? Well, so did David. The less you are in your own eyes—the more fit you are for the Lord Jesus, and the more welcome will you be at the throne of grace!

But this was also the language of David's Lord; this was the view the Jews had of Him, and they treated Him accordingly. The all-glorious Son of God—is compared to a vile reptile! The express image of the Father—is treated with the greatest contempt!

But it was for us sinful men, and for our salvation. O mystery of mercy! Jesus is reduced to a level with the worm—that we may be raised higher than the angels!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Enough to make an angel weep!

"I go mourning." Psalms 38:6

But what is the cause of your mourning? There is nothing apart from Jesus—worth mourning for; or beside sin—worth mourning over.

Is it because of the unevenness of your walk with God? On account of the deep depravity of your nature? Or because Jesus hides His face, and your graces fade and wither?

You may well mourn after Jesus—but you must not despond; for He will turn again, He will have compassion upon you!

The depravity of your heart is enough to make an angel weep! But do not forget the precious blood that cleanses, or the promised grace that sanctifies.

Do not look too much at the defects which appear in your walk, nor at the corruption which works in your heart; but deal with the blood and grace of Jesus, as the means of your cure. Read and believe His promises; confess and plead at His throne; wait and watch in His ways; be careful, lest by inordinate mourning you grieve His Spirit. He cannot be unkind, He never will forsake you, He was anointed "to comfort all who mourn."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Everything in this world is liable to change!

"Long ago You established the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; all of them will wear out like clothing. You will change them like a garment, and they will pass away. But You are the same, and Your years will never end!" Psalms 102:25-27

Everything in this world is liable to change!

Health may give place to sickness,  
pleasure may give place to pain,  
plenty may give place to poverty,  
love may give place to enmity,  
honor may give place to disgrace,  
strength may give place to weakness,  
and life may give place to death.

Remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. But though all our circumstances and friends should change, there is One who never changes! "He is unchangeable; who can oppose Him? He does what He desires!" Job 23:13. With Him is no variableness. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever—and He is our best Friend, our nearest relation, our gracious Savior!

Yesterday—His name was Jesus; His nature was love; His purpose was to do us good with His whole heart and soul. Today—He is the same; we cannot expect too much from Him, or be too confident in Him, if we are walking humbly with Him. He will be our God—and we shall be His people!

Let us cultivate . . .

intimacy with Him,  
dependence upon Him,  
concern to please Him,  
fear to offend Him,  
zeal to glorify Him;

and it must be well with us in health and sickness, in plenty and poverty, in life and death! For He is the same, and will never turn away from doing us good—but remain the Fountain of love and holiness forever! "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!" Psalms 103:1

This God is the God we adore,  
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend;  
Whose love is as great as His power,  
And neither knows measure nor end!

~ ~ ~ ~ Our everlasting All

"That I may win Christ!"Php 3:8

The aim of men in general—is to make a fortune, enjoy the world, and live respectably. The aim of the true believer is to win Christ. Jesus possesses all he desires, and to possess Christ would satisfy his every wish.

We have now a title to Him, we receive much from Him, and we often enjoy His love; but we want to be present with Him, and to have full possession of Him as our everlasting All. He is set before us as our mark; He is held out as the prize; and is promised as the everlasting portion of every overcomer!

Where is your heart this morning?

Which way do your desires tend?

What is the object of your pursuit today?

If Jesus is the principal object, failing in our pursuit after other things, losses, or crosses—will not much affect us; but our conduct will say, "I aim to win Christ; if He is mine, all is well, other things are but trifles compared with Him!"

Keeping Jesus in view thus, will . . .

prevent murmuring,

cure our impatience, and

keep our hearts in comparative peace.

O may our every action cry in the ears of every observer, "THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST!" He who has Christ, has . . .

an infinite portion;

unsearchable wealth;

and boundless resources!

"In Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand are eternal pleasures!" Psalms 16:11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Be watchful!" Revelation 3:2

Satan is watching—to devour us,

the world is watching—to ensnare us,

and God is watching—to protect us!

Jesus, our best friend, says to us, "BE WATCHFUL!"

Watch . . .

against the vanity of the world,

against your besetting sins,

against seasons of temptation, and  
against Satan, the sworn enemy of your soul.

Unite together:

prayer to God,  
dependence on His holy Word,  
and watchfulness.

Pray to be kept . . .

from sin,  
in temptation,  
unspotted from the world.

Watch therefore, and pray always!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"God is for me!" Psalms 56:9

Beloved, the greatest mercy a sinner can enjoy—is to have God on his side, engaged in his quarrel, and employed in his most important concerns! In Christ, this mercy is yours!

God is for you!

He chose you in Christ before the world began.

He formed you to show forth His praise.

He preserved you in Christ until He called you by grace.

He quickened you by His Spirit, and led you to Jesus.

He has given you His Son, and promised every additional good. He has said to you, "You are Mine!" You have said, "I am Yours!" He is now your refuge and strength! He is . . .

tenderly concerned for your welfare,  
devotedly attached to your cause,  
and observes every step you take!

He may try your faith—but will certainly supply your needs. He may exercise your patience—but will never turn a deaf ear to your cries, except you indulge iniquity in your heart.

No parent ever felt so deeply interested in the welfare of a beloved child—as your God does for all His children. He says, "Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are Mine! When you go through deep waters and great trouble—I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty—you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression—you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy

One of Israel, your Savior!" Isaiah 43:1-3. Trusting such a promise, who can fail!

"God is the best friend—but the worst enemy!" Thomas Watson

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I am EL-SHADDAI, God all-sufficient!

"I will spare them!" Malachi 3:17

Precious assurance! But whom will the Lord spare? All His children; especially those who . . .

Speak of His goodness,

witness to His faithfulness,

think upon His name, and

honor Him before an evil world.

He says, "They shall be Mine, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them as a father spares an obedient and dutiful child."

If we are aiming at the Lord's glory, and walking by the Lord's Word—we have nothing to fear from any of His dealings. He will . . .

shield us from danger,

sanctify our troubles, and

secure our best interests.

If we are living to His praise, we may safely leave our needs and our comforts in His hands; He will supply the one—and preserve the other.

He says, "Do not be afraid—for I am with you! Bring every trouble to My throne of grace; bring every need to My fullness! I am EL-SHADDAI, God all-sufficient! Though I punish the world—I will spare you!"

Believe this—and be happy. Rejoice in this, and glorify Me.

You are no more a servant—but a son; and if a son, then an HEIR of God through Christ!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

You cannot rely too simply upon Him—nor expect too much from Him!

"Hope in God." Psalms 42:11

However gloomy the day,

however difficult the trial,

however distressing the painful visitation

—hope in God.

He is with you,

He is your God,

He has promised to befriend you,

He is the faithful God!

He will . . .

turn your darkness into light,

make your crooked things straight, and

make all grace abound towards you, so that you, having all sufficiency, may abound to every good work.

The changes that affect you—cannot affect Him!

You cannot rely too simply upon Him—nor expect too much from Him!

If all, within and without, seems to conspire to distress you, still say, "I will hope in God!"

Expect Him to be to you—all that a gracious and a loving Father can BE!

Expect Him to do for you—all that a powerful and infinite God can DO!

Hope . . .

for light in darkness,

for relief in distress,

for strength in weakness,

for joy in sorrow,

for deliverance when sinking beneath the wave,

and for life in death.

Hope for all you need—and for all God has promised!

Hope . . .

because God has spoken,

because He is true and faithful,

and because you cannot hope in vain!

Hope in God—and in God alone!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Take your heart to Jesus to be searched

"Search me, O God!" Psalms 139:23

None can truly search the heart, but God.

None are desirous or willing for the heart to be searched, but real Christians. A believer desires to know the worst of himself. He dreads deception. Grace has made him honest, and he prays, "Search me, O God!"

If another person was to search us—he would expose, irritate, and injure us; but if God searches us—He will humble, strengthen, and heal us.

The man who sees himself in the light of Scripture truth, and knows himself as the effect of divine searching—cannot trust himself for one moment!

He flees from SELF—to Jesus!

He flees from law—to grace!

He loathes himself! And while he confidently trusts in Jesus, and rejoices in hope—he walks humbly with his God.

He cannot boast,

he dares not presume,

but walks in holiness, and

ascribes all to free grace!

Beloved, take your heart to Jesus to be searched. He says, "I am He who searches the hearts and tries the thoughts." If He searches you—He will save you from . . .

self-deception,

self-righteousness,

and every false way!

Be this your daily prayer, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way!"

Let a man examine himself. You need searching.

~ ~ ~ ~ Is it possible?

"The Lord delights in you." Isaiah 62:4

Is it possible, that such poor, depraved, unworthy creatures—can be the objects of Jehovah's delight? Yes! The infinite love of God has been fixed upon us from eternity! Because He loved us, He sent His only-begotten Son to die for us! He sent His Holy Spirit into our hearts to regenerate us!

Hear the Apostle: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His GREAT LOVE with which He loved us, even when we were DEAD IN SINS—has made us alive together with Christ: by whose grace you

are saved." Jehovah views us in Jesus—and loves us with an infinite love!

"You have loved them—AS You have loved Me!" John 17:23. Yes, He has loved us—just as He has loved Jesus! Every believer, though . . .

his faith may be weak,

his fears many,

his corruptions strong,

his trouble great, and

his temptations sore—is the object of Jehovah's delight!

Let us therefore endeavor to pass through this day, yes, and every day, believing and realizing, "I am Jehovah's delight! I am the object of His highest love! I am the subject of His sweetest thoughts! I am His portion for evermore!"

O incomparable privilege!

Wondrous source of comfort, holiness, and love!

You have more cause for gratitude than an angel!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We get cold, carnal, and indifferent

"Do not grieve the Holy Spirit." Ephesians 4:30

We are absolutely dependent upon the Holy Spirit for spiritual life, light, teaching and sanctification. Without His presence, power, and operations—we are dead, dark, ignorant and carnal. We should therefore be very careful not to grieve or dishonor Him.

We grieve the Holy Spirit—when we neglect, slight, or make any improper use of, God's holy Word.

We grieve the Holy Spirit—when we indulge in hard thoughts of God; or low thoughts of the Lord Jesus.

We grieve the Holy Spirit—when we mind the things of the flesh, in preference to spiritual things.

We grieve the Holy Spirit—when we trifle with, or indulge in any sin of omission or commission.

We grieve the Holy Spirit—when we slight His intimations, abuse His gifts; and listen to Satan, the world, or the flesh, in preference to Him.

When He is grieved—He suspends His influence, and we find no assistance in spiritual duties.

When He is grieved—we get cold, carnal, and indifferent.

When He is grieved—we taste no sweetness in spiritual things, and the ministry of the Word becomes dry and lifeless.

When He is grieved:  
the Bible in a sealed book;  
there is no power in prayer;  
we have no gratitude for mercies received;  
and religion becomes a dull task!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

More than being our friend, helper, or benefactor!

"I will be to them a God!" Hebrews 8:10

That is, to all His redeemed people.

I will be . . .

the object of their adoration and trust,  
the subject of their meditation,  
and the source of all their happiness.

To be our GOD—is more than being our friend, helper, or benefactor; (creatures may be so to us).  
He engages to do us good according to His all-sufficiency, to bestow upon us blessings which  
none else can!

He will pardon us—and pardon like a God!

He will sanctify us—and sanctify us like a God!

He will comfort us—and comfort us like a God!

He will glorify us—and glorify us like a God!

If He is our God—He is our All.

And all He has is ours! He is our inheritance, and a glorious inheritance He is.

Consider, when . . .

in danger,

in darkness,

in distress,

in temptation,

in duty, or

in affliction—

God will be to you a God . . .

delivering you,  
enlightening you,  
comforting you,  
strengthening you,  
sanctifying you.

Make a God of Him! Look to Him for all He has promised, which is all you need! Adore His Divine perfections, and rejoice that they are all engaged to make you blessed.

Live to His glory, walk by His Word—and He will glorify Himself in your present and everlasting welfare. He rejoices to do good unto His people, He delights to bless them!

~ ~ ~ ~ This is a day of glad tidings!

"Now is the day of salvation!" 2 Corinthians 6:2

What an unspeakable mercy to live at such a period! We are poor, lost, ruined sinners; but this is the day when salvation is freely bestowed, without money and without price!

The Lord . . .

saves His people from the love, power, and consequences of sin,

gives us His Holy Spirit,

writes His law in our heart,

and directs our feet into the way of holiness.

He gives us Jesus—who is our Savior.

He gives us grace—which conquers our sin.

He gives us heaven—to enjoy when our journey of life is ended!

This is the day in which He works deliverance for His people!

He employs . . .

His power,

His wisdom,

His Word,

His providence,

His angels—

for our deliverance!

What then shall we fear? Of whom shall we be afraid? Let us go to His throne of grace, remembering that this is the day of salvation. Let us plead for deliverance from . . .

all that mars our peace,

all that prevents our enjoyment,

all that hinders us in our Christian course.

Let there be no despondency, for this is a day of glad tidings!

It is . . .

Believe—and be saved!

Pray—and be delivered!

Wait on the Lord—and He will strengthen your heart!

Salvation! O the joyful sound!

'Tis pleasure to our ears!

A sovereign balm for every wound,

A cordial for our fears!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He would save you from disappointment, sorrow and woe!

"Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils." Isaiah 2:22

Never trust him—for his heart is deceitful.

Never expect satisfaction from him—for he is an empty cistern.

Never follow him—for he is a false guide.

Do not trust even in a friend. One object of trust is enough: Jesus has all you need.

If you neglect this loving direction, expect to suffer; if you walk by it, your peace will be a river, and your soul will be like a well-watered garden.

He cautions you—because He loves you.

He knows what is in man—you do not.

He would save you from disappointment, sorrow and woe!

"Cursed is the one who trusts in man—who depends on flesh for his strength!" Jeremiah 17:5

"But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD—whose confidence is in Him!" Jeremiah 17:7

"O LORD Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in You!" Psalms 84:12

"In You, O LORD, I have put my trust!" Psalms 71:1

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

COMPLETE!

Do not look too much at yourself—there is nothing but vanity, weakness, sin, and misery there.

Look to Jesus, for "You are complete in Him." Colossians 2:10

You are unholy—but He is made unto you sanctification.

You are foolish—but He is made unto you wisdom.

You are weak—but He is your strength; and you can do all things through His strengthening you.

You are unrighteous—but He is made unto you righteousness.

You are lost—but He is made unto you redemption. He has redeemed you from the curse of God, and from the present evil world, and He will redeem you from death.

In yourself you are not only incomplete—but wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked! But in Jesus you are holy, wise, strong, righteous, rich, happy; in a word, COMPLETE! View yourself, then, at least occasionally, as COMPLETE IN CHRIST!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Who made this difference?

"Who makes you to differ from another?" 1 Corinthians 4:7

There is a wide difference between a Christian and a worldling; the one is dead in trespasses and sins, the other is alive unto God, by Jesus Christ our Lord. He has been quickened by the Son of God, is born of the Spirit, and taught by the eternal Father. He is a new creature, being created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before ordained that we should walk in them.

Who made this difference? You are at once ready to answer, if really taught of God, "By the grace of God I am what I am!" 1 Corinthians 15:10 "By His own choice, He begat me by the Word of truth." James 1:18.

Yes, it was the rich, free, and sovereign grace of God—and that alone, which made you to differ!

Oh, beloved, view yourself as an infinite debtor to grace; and be humble before God who has thus made you to differ. "Look unto the rock whence you were hewn—and to the hole of the pit whence you were dug." Isaiah 51:1

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Behold the Man!" John 14:5

Jesus is presented before you crowned with thorns, scourged, with His face marred more than any man's. His blood is flowing, His heart is breaking, and He is a Man of sorrows. Behold Him, then, for in this man, under these circumstances, dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In Him, the love of God centered and shone forth.

He is your Substitute, Surety, and Redeemer. He is the holy, harmless, and undefiled Lamb of God. Behold Him, for He here discloses the depth of His love; and teaches you patience, meekness, and resignation under insult, suffering, and disgrace. Oh, behold Jesus—and be ashamed of complaining, of repining, or indulging any revengeful feelings.

Behold, and imitate!

Behold, and love!

Behold, and adore!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Teach me what I cannot see." Job 34:32

We were once blind—but now our eyes are open; but still we are absolutely dependent on divine teaching to become truly wise.

When God teaches us:

self will become vile;

the world will become vanity;

sin will become bitter;

the blood of Christ will become most precious;

His righteousness will become glorious;

His name will become our only hope;

His love will become our joy;

His Spirit will become our strength;

His glory will become our aim; and

"Teach me," will become our daily prayer.

Beloved, let us daily plead with God to teach us:

that we may know Christ, and

the power of His resurrection, and

the fellowship of His sufferings, and

be made conformable to His death.

Let us beg the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

Jehovah alone can teach us to profit.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

See this strange sight!

"Being in agony!" Luke 22:44

Beloved, let us visit Gethsemane this morning, and see this strange sight! Here is our divine substitute, the only-begotten Son of God, the brightness of Jehovah's glory, and the express image of His person—groaning on the cold ground, and baptized in blood!

He is deeply distressed and troubled.

His heart is filled with horror—and His mind with dread!

His soul is troubled, tossed with tempests and not comforted.

He is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

The sorrows of death encompass Him, and the pains of hell have gotten hold upon Him.

His heart like wax is melted within Him.

He sweats blood.

He cries aloud, with an exceeding bitter cry, and His heart fails Him. It is the hour and power of darkness.

Our sins meet upon Him!

His soul is made an offering for our sins!

It has pleased Jehovah to bruise Him!

Was ever any sorrow like unto His sorrow?

HE IS IN AGONY! Here . . .

our sins are punished,

our iniquities are expiated,

our justification is procured.

Oh, to love Jesus—even to an agony!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Wait on the Lord—and He shall save you." Proverbs 20:22

Beloved, it is your privilege in every perplexity and trial:

to go to the Lord,

to spread your case before Him,

to plead His precious promises, and

to wait expecting Him to appear for you.

Wait on the Lord . . .

for light to discover the nature and design of your trouble;  
for wisdom that you may act honorably, and endure scripturally;  
for power to sustain you under, and bring you through it;  
and for consolation to make you happy and resigned under it.

Wait upon the Lord . . .

in earnest, simple, persevering prayer;  
in searching, reading, and meditating upon His holy Word;  
in self-examination as to your views, motives, and designs.

Wait upon the Lord, believing that He will . . .

fulfill His Word,  
answer your prayers, and  
send you deliverance.

Beloved, let us look to, trust in, and wait upon our God continually.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He is never hasty in using 'the rod'

"He does not afflict willingly." Lamentations 52:33

Our afflictions do not come by 'accident'—but from our Father's wisdom, holiness and love. He finds no pleasure in our pains, groans, and sighs. He is never hasty in using 'the rod'. His mercy flies to help us—but He is slow to anger and of great kindness. He never afflicts us without a sufficient cause—either . . .

sin has been committed;  
duties have been neglected;  
mercies have been slighted;  
lukewarmness has crept in;  
worldly-mindedness has been tolerated;  
privileges have been abused;  
warnings have been despised;  
temptations have been trifled with;  
or danger is near.

He never afflicts without a good and gracious intention:  
to make us fear, loathe, and flee from sin;  
to show His disapprobation of our unholy course;  
to quicken us in His ways;  
to make us long for, seek, and partake of His holiness;  
to produce contrition and godly sorrow.

He only afflicts . . .

partially,  
occasionally,  
sparingly.

He always 'strikes' in love, and aims at our spiritual welfare. We are often more benefited by afflictions, than we are by comforts and joys. O Savior, sanctify to me every afflicting stroke!

"In faithfulness You have afflicted me!" Psalms 119:75

"It was good for me to be afflicted!" Psalms 119:7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Rejoice in the Lord always." Php 4:4

This is a very difficult precept.

Sometimes the Lord hides His face.

Sometimes we fear and doubt our saving interest in His love.

Sometimes we are almost bewildered through the powerful workings of corruption within us.

Sometimes we are bowed down by Satan's sore temptations.

Sometimes the dispensations of providence are so perplexing, that we are ready to cry out, "All things are against us!"

But we are not bidden to rejoice in frames and feelings, or in the dispensations of providence—but in the Lord. He has loved us with an everlasting love, and His love is immutably the same! He is our God in Jesus, and has promised to be unto us, to do for us, and freely give us—all that our circumstances require—all that will be for our good and His glory.

In weakness—we may rejoice in His power.

In darkness—we may rejoice that He knows our path.

In sickness and sorrow—we may rejoice that He cares for us.

Under any circumstances—we may rejoice in His covenant relations; for He is always our Father, Friend and God.

We should rejoice in . . .

His free grace,

His rich mercy,

His all-conquering power,

His faithful promises,

His special providence,

His unchangeable love!

"Rejoice in the Lord always."Php 4:4

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"The Lord has blessed me hitherto!"Joshua 17:14

Christian, cannot you join with and bear a similar testimony? Your God has blessed you in Jesus, and through Jesus!

Look back to the rock whence you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence you were dug!

Call to mind the time and place, when and where your God first led you to cry for mercy, and seek for salvation; and then remember how your soul was delivered, and the comforts of the Holy Spirit imparted.

Think of . . .

your difficulties and dangers,

your trials and fears,

the deliverances the Lord has wrought,

the favor He has shown,

the comforts He has imparted,

and surely you will gratefully acknowledge, "The Lord has blessed me hitherto!"

You have found Him faithful. He has manifested a father's love, and a mother's tenderness in dealing with you. But what have been your returns? Oh, be humble, for you have been ungrateful! But cleave to Jesus, for God gives no blessing but by and through Him.

Jesus found me, vile and guilty,

I had broken all His laws!

When He looked, He saw me filthy,

All corrupt my nature was!

Mine appeared a hopeless case,

Such it had been—but for grace!

~ ~ ~ ~

Such poor, vile, ungrateful, wretched creatures

"Having loved His own who were in the world—He loved them unto the end!" John 13:1

Man's love is changeable—being a passion.

God's love is unchangeable—being a perfection.

Having loved us once—He always will love us.

Herein is love, that God should take such poor, vile, ungrateful, wretched creatures—and make them . . .

the bride of His Son,

the delight of His soul, and

His portion for evermore!

Oh, the riches of divine love! Admire it, trust it, rejoice in it, and make it the subject of your daily meditation.

On this rock we may rest with confidence!

On this pillow we may repose in peace!

~ ~ ~ ~

Go and tell Jesus!

"They went and told Jesus." Matthew 14:12

When Herod beheaded John the Baptist—his disciples took up his body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. Let us imitate their example—and carry all to Jesus. He loves to listen to the tale of human woe. He can and will sympathize with us in all our trials and troubles.

He is our Father, and to whom should the child tell his troubles—but to his kind and tender parent? He will . . .

direct our steps,

avenge our wrongs, and

turn all things to our advantage.

Does business go wrong?

Are enemies active?

Is corruption strong?

Does faith flag?

Are you tried in your family?

Go and tell Jesus! It will . . .

comfort your mind;

prevent sin;

ensure divine supplies; and

frustrate the designs of Satan.

Do not sit poring over your miseries;

do not go not to fellow-creatures;

do not murmur, nor complain, nor fret;

but go to Jesus!

Go immediately!

Go in hope!

Go and tell Him all, without reserve.

Go this morning, with all your troubles, desires, and fears! Lay them all before Him, and beseech Him to undertake for you.

He loves to hear you!

He has promised to help you!

He will certainly bless you!

It is your duty, and your privilege, to pour out your heart before Him, and find Him your sure refuge!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He has a large store—and a kind and benevolent heart!

"If you shall ask anything in My name—I will do it!" John 14:14

This is the promise of Jesus to us this morning; it is intended to encourage and embolden us at the throne of grace; and to comfort us under all our troubles and needs.

Jesus has all power in heaven and in earth. He has a large store—and a kind and benevolent heart! Let us therefore go to Him . . .

with all our needs—that He may supply them!

with all our fears—that He may quell them!

with all our sins—that He may pardon and subdue them!

Let us therefore go to Him with every thing that troubles us, or is likely to harm us.

Let us go to Him with confidence!

Jesus says to us, "If you ask anything that will . . .

do you good,

promote My cause,

or glorify My name

—I will do it!

Do not be afraid to ask—for I am omnipotent!

Do not doubt—for I give you My Word: I will do it!"

Oh, believer, what a friend is Jesus! how kind! how gracious!

Never complain, never despond, never be cast down—while Jesus is your Friend. He is, and will be your friend forever!

Oh, be a friend to Him!

Visit Him daily!

Trust Him implicitly!

Follow Him fully!

Make Him your all in all.

He is worthy. He will never deceive you—or ever leave you!

~ ~ ~ ~ Our misery—God's mercy!

"His mercy is very great!" 1 Chronicles 21:13

Our misery can never exceed God's mercy!

"Your mercy is great above the heavens!" Psalms 108:4

## 00 The Pastor's Morning Visit contd

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To be in Christ

"And be found in Him—not having my own righteousness." Php 3:9

To be in Christ—is to be united to Him by faith and love. This is of the utmost importance, for:

APART from Christ—we are . . .

wretched,

miserable,

poor,

blind,

and naked.

UNITED to Christ—we are . . .

immensely rich;

immutably safe;

exalted to the highest honor; and

shall appear without a fault before the throne of God!

If we are in Christ, or one with Christ, then we are:

justified by His obedience—as the debtor is cleared by the payment made by his surety;

sanctified through Him—as the vessel is cleansed in the fountain;

protected by Him—as Noah was in the ark;

preserved from condemnation—as the manslayer in the city of refuge;

exalted to the highest honor—as the bride of the Eternal King!

Well may the Apostle desire to be found in Him! No mind can conceive, no tongue can declare—the blessedness that flows from being one with Christ.

Let us therefore, beloved, ask, this morning:

Am I in Christ at present?

Am I living with Him—as His faithful bride?

Am I living for Him—as His devoted servant?

Am I living upon Him—as His dependent child?

Do I renounce all for Christ?

Can I say that I am crucified with Christ?

Can I say that the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I will deal well with you!" Genesis 32:9

So the Lord promised Jacob; and the promises made unto our fathers—He will fulfill unto us, their children. But such a promise does not exclude:

great trials,

sore temptations,

deep personal afflictions,

fiery persecutions,

poverty,

disappointments,

and perplexity!

All these things may happen unto us—and yet the Lord is still dealing well with us. The promise secures . . .

the sanctification of our troubles,

the communication of necessary grace,

deliverance from all real evils,

the supply of all real needs, and

the satisfying of our best desires.

Is not this enough—to know that Jehovah will deal well with us . . .

in sickness and health;

in life and in death;

in time and through eternity?

This promise is . . .

Jehovah's bond,

the believer's plea,

the ground of the Christian's confidence,

a reason for contentment and gratitude,  
and the cause of our enemies' confusion.

Jacob, though tried, found the Lord faithful—and so shall we! Let us therefore rejoice that our God has said, "I will deal well with you! I will make all my goodness pass before you. I will save you with an everlasting salvation. I will be your God and your glory."

Gracious Lord, do as You have said!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

What are these Christians doing on Satan's ground?

"What are these Hebrews doing here?" 1 Samuel 29:3

David's men wanted to mingle with the Philistines' army—this was decidedly wrong.

It is always wrong when God's people unite with the world, contrary to His holy Word.

We may ask, "What are these Christians doing here?" What are they doing—joining with the world? Their Master has told them to "come out from among them and be separate! Touch no unclean thing!" He has said, "Arise and depart—for this is not your rest!" What are these Christians doing out of the path of duty; or by their presence, sanctioning sin?

God has said, "Be holy—for I am holy." What are these Christians doing on Satan's ground? In the enemy's ranks? Do they intend to leave Jesus—and join the world? Are they . . .

tired of His company,

set against His Word, and

determined to throw off His yoke?

Do they intend to share in . . .

the slavery of Satan,

the sinner's doom,

the wrath of God?

What are these Christians doing here? Their conduct is . . .

unnatural,

degrading,

traitorous!

Christian! you should . . .

keep the company of Jesus,

walk with holy people, and

keep yourselves unspotted from the world!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Election injures none!

"You are chosen generation." 1 Peter 2:9

Salvation does not originate in 'chance'—but in the sovereign purpose and the unalterable decree of the Most High God!

Every believer is a chosen vessel. The church had its origin in Jehovah's eternal election. Election . . .

flows from Divine love;

is the exercise of Divine sovereignty;

secures man's salvation and God's glory!

Election injures none—but it pours incalculable blessings upon thousands! It was the act of God before time. He chose us in Christ as our Head—before the creation of the world! It was of pure grace! Election is always—unto holiness.

We were chosen to be . . .

redeemed from sin;

purified from pollution;

separated from the world;

devoted to God; and

eternally happy with Jehovah!

Being chosen of God—we choose God in return.

He chose us to be His people—we choose Him to be our God.

He chose us to be the beloved Bride of Jesus—and we choose Jesus to be our beloved Bridegroom.

His choice caused ours; or else, in the error of our ways—we would have certainly chosen sin and destruction!

"He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favor and will, to the praise of His glorious grace that He favored us with in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding!" Ephesians 1:4-8

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

What kind of people ought you to be?

"Since everything will be destroyed in this way—what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives!" 2 Peter 3:11

The people of God are expected to be different from the world. They profess to have another Spirit in them, and to be the sons of God. They believe that the present earth and everything in it will be burned up. They look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. They confess to be strangers and pilgrims here on earth.

What kind of people then, ought we to be?

Surely we ought to set little value on the things of time—and aim at the things which are eternal.

We ought to be watchful, prayerful, diligent, holy, patient, thankful, and expectant.

Surely, we ought to . . .

be contented with such earthly things as we have;

give all diligence to make our calling and election sure;

and rejoice in our glorious destination!

We ought to walk as Jesus walked.

We ought to live as Paul lived—dying daily to sin and worldly trifles.

Let us ask, this morning, "Do we really believe that the present earth will soon be burned up and dissolved?"

If so, are we habitually acting according to our beliefs?

Are we laying up treasures for ourselves in heaven?

Are we laboring to be rich in good works, and an honor to our Christian profession?

Is the coming of Jesus the object of our desire and hope?

"Since everything will be destroyed in this way—what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives!" 2 Peter 3:11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Open your mouth wide—and I will fill it!

"My grace is sufficient for you!" 2 Corinthians 12:9

You need look to no other quarter for help, relief, or comfort. Jesus assures you that His grace is sufficient. You are welcome to it. You are exhorted to have it; and to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.

His grace is sufficient . . .

to support you under every privation,

to help you over every difficulty,

to strengthen you for every duty,  
to mortify every lust, and  
to fill you with all joy and peace in believing!

His grace is almighty!

His grace is free!

His grace is durable!

His grace brings glorious salvation!

Look not at difficulties, dangers, or your own weakness!

Look to the free, powerful, and promised grace of Jesus!

Go to His throne of grace this morning, on purpose to receive grace for this day!

Go every day—and whenever you feel weak, tempted, or cast down!

His grace has been found sufficient for all Christians in their deepest trials; and it will be found sufficient for you!

He says to each of His children, "I am the Lord your God; open your mouth wide—and I will fill it! Come boldly to the throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy and find grace to help you in every time of need. Everyone who asks, receives!"

~ ~ ~ ~

He will not be satisfied with anything else!

"My son, give me your heart!" Proverbs 23:26

Beloved, the Most High God presents Himself as a Suitor this morning. He asks for your heart!

It is His workmanship, He desires it to be His habitation.

He made it by His power, He desires to rule it by His grace.

He will not be satisfied with anything else!

If He has the heart—He has all.

If He has not the heart—He has nothing.

Let us surrender our hearts to Him this morning, and every morning. Let us ask Him . . .

to sanctify them by His grace,

to fill them with His Spirit,

to engrave on them His image,

to keep them by His power, and

to fill them with the fruits of holiness.

If the heart is truly given to God—then the life will be according to His Word.

If He rules in our hearts—we shall walk as Jesus walked.

If our walk is not holy—then our religion is but an empty form.

"We know that we have come to know Him—if we obey His commands. The man who says, 'I know Him,' but does not do what He commands—is a liar, and the truth is not in him!" 1 John 2:3-4

Oh, how awful—to think and profess that we are the Lord's—and yet to have the heart under the influence of sin, Satan, and the world!

Jesus says, "My son, give me your heart!"

Let our reply be, "Lord, take my heart, reign and rule in it forever!"

~ ~ ~ ~ Your Savior!

"I am Yours—save me!" Psalms 119:94

We profess to be the Lord's.

We are not our own.

We do not belong to the world.

We are no longer the slaves of sin.

We are solely and entirely the Lord's.

We have willingly giving up ourselves into His hands, to be . . .

saved by His grace,

devoted to His service, and

employed for His glory.

We are His children by grace and adoption.

We are His servants by voluntary engagement.

We are His soldiers by public profession.

We are His spouse by affection and union.

Being the Lord's, we may expect His assistance on our behalf.

We should call Him and plead with Him in all troubles and difficulties. He will save us. He will deliver us. Let us, therefore, lay our case before Him; and then ardently expect Him to glorify His grace in us.

Let us walk worthy of God—as His beloved children.

"The LORD who created you says: Do not be afraid—for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name—you are Mine! When you go through deep waters and great trouble—I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty—you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression—you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel—your Savior!" Isaiah 43:1-3

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

God rejectshalfa heart!

"Their heart is divided!" Hosea 10:2

This is a very serious charge! For God demands the whole heart, and His people profess to surrender it!

But have we not reason to fear that many are guilty on this point? Their heart appears to be divided . . .

between God—and the world;

between holiness—and sin;

between truth—and error;

between Christ—and self!

What are the symptoms of a divided heart?

Habitual cleaving to earth.

Being satisfied with a mere form of godliness.

Backwardness to examine ourselves.

A dislike to plain, soul-searching preaching.

Putting eternal things far away.

Beloved, how is it with you?

God rejectshalfa heart! He will have all—or none!

Do you fear on this point? There is a remedy:

Thoroughly examine your heart.

Condemn whatever you detect amiss in it.

Take your divided heart to Jesus—and beseech Him to heal it.

Expose it to the keen edge of God's Word.

Endeavor to keep up a constant sense of the presence of God.

Converse much with eternal realities.

As your heart is—so will your life be; so will your comfort and peace be.

"I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord. They will be My people, and I will be their God—because they will return to Me with their whole heart." Jeremiah 24:7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"He shall testify of Me!" John 15:26

It is the office and work of the Holy Spirit to bear testimony of Jesus.

He has done so in the WORD—there Christ is set forth in His glory and grace.

He testifies of Jesus by the PREACHING of the gospel—for we preach Christ crucified, and are determined (when under Divine teaching) to know nothing else among men.

He testifies of Jesus to the HEART—and then we . . .

see His loveliness,

behold His glory,

pant for a saving interest in His salvation,

trust in His promises, and

melt in love and gratitude before Him.

We have then no doubt about His divinity, suitability or love!

All we want is to enjoy, possess and glorify Him!

Every idol falls before Him!

Every grace springs up and is in exercise upon Him:

we love Him,

we believe Him,

we hope in Him,

we mourn for Him,

we are humbled before Him,

we are zealous for Him!

Our language then is, "None but Jesus! None but Christ for me!"

Oh, for the Spirit to testify of Jesus to our hearts, this day—and every day!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I know their sorrows!" Exodus 3:7

The Lord is acquainted with all the sorrows of all His people. We do not suffer unnoticed. He sympathizes with us—and will sanctify sorrow to us. When we suffer—Jesus sympathizes!

Beloved, He knows our sorrows, and He will be our Comforter. Let us lay them before Him. He will be gracious unto us at the voice of our cry. When He hears—He will answer. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He once suffered—He was "The Man of Sorrows, and familiar with suffering." He is able to support us who now suffer.

His sorrows are ended—and ours will be over soon! Weeping may endure for a night—but joy comes in the morning! We shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. We shall enter into His joy, be filled with His love, and so be forever with Him!

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain!" Revelation 21:4

O Jesus! Do not allow me to dwell on my sorrows—but direct my heart into Your love!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"God is with us!" Isaiah 8:10

The Lord's people are never alone!

God is with them as an Observer. He notices . . .

every thought,

every word,

every action,

every trial,

every foe,

every danger.

He is with them as a Father—loving and holding communion with them.

He is with them as the Lord Almighty—having all power in earth and heaven to help them.

He is with them as a Guide—to lead them.

He is with them as an Advocate—to plead their cause.

He is with them as a Friend—to supply and comfort them.

He is with them as a Savior—to deliver and exalt them.

He is with them as a holy, sin-hating God—to purify them.

He is present with them . . .

to try them,

to reprove them,

to humble them,  
to preserve them,  
to comfort them, and  
to save them with an everlasting salvation!

Beloved, let us remember that God is with us—everywhere and always! This will . . .

check levity,  
prevent impatience,  
make us honest,  
encourage prayerfulness,  
inspire with fortitude,  
and produce diligence.

If God is with us thus—then He is for us! And if God is for us—then who can effectually be against us?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I will not remember your sins!" Isaiah 13:25

We need fear nothing—but sin!

And we have no reason to fear whether God will pardon that, and save us from it—if we believe in Jesus, confess and forsake it. He has promised, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more."

He will not impute sin unto us; but He will impute righteousness, even the righteousness of Jesus! He has made up His mind to glorify the riches of His grace—and thus to display the wonders of His love.

No one sin shall be charged upon us! He will blot them all completely out of His book—and banish them eternally from His mind! He will treat us as though we had not sinned; or rather as having received full satisfaction for all we have done amiss!

If God remembered but one of our sins, and laid it to our charge—we would be eternally undone! But believing in Jesus, we are justified from all sin, we are saved from wrath, and are made "the righteousness of God in Him."

When God forgives our sins—He always forgets them!

This is godlike, glorious, divine!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"My purpose will stand—and I will do all My pleasure!" Isaiah 46:10

The purpose of God cannot be frustrated.

His holy mind can never be disappointed.

His will is law.

His counsel must stand.

He is in one mind—and none can turn Him.

He is pleased to save His people with an everlasting salvation.

He chose them to salvation in Jesus, according to the good pleasure of His will.

He works in them to will, and to do, according to His own good pleasure.

It is our Father's good pleasure, which gives them the kingdom.

He accomplishes the purposes of His will by angels—they are His ministers who do His pleasure.

He accomplishes the purposes of His will by men—both good and bad.

He accomplishes the purposes of His will by devils.

He accomplishes the purposes of His will by Jesus Christ—the pleasure of the Lord prospers in His hand.

For His pleasure all things are, and were created.

He works all things after the counsel of His own will.

If God does His pleasure—our eternal interests are safe.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Though you have not seen Him—you love Him!" 1 Peter 1:8

We have never seen the glorified body of Jesus—yet we we love Him. We love Him, who was exalted, dignified, and glorified from everlasting; as the willing Savior of us poor lost sinners—who became incarnate, suffered, bled and died for our sins!

We love His adorable person:

His countenance is majesty,

His heart is love,

His hand is omnipotence,

His eye is bountifulness,

His affections are compassion,

His presence and smile are heaven!

We love His precious salvation:

in its freeness,  
in its completeness,  
in its glory.

We love His delightful promises:  
which anticipate our needs,  
which meet all our wishes,  
which fill our souls with peace.

We love His throne of grace:  
where He meets us,  
where He attends to our requests,  
where He blesses us indeed.

We love His holy precepts:  
which exhibit His authority,  
which display His love,  
which call us to holiness.

We love His heaven-born family:  
who wear His likeness,  
who are the excellent of the earth,  
who resemble the children of a king.

Oh to love Him more! To love Him with all our hearts, minds, souls and strength!

Oh to manifest our love to Him—by holy actions, and a useful life!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Pray that you enter not into temptation." Luke 22:40

How many eminent saints have fallen! Let us beware!

By temptations, we generally understand solicitations to evil. Satan is the arch-tempter; he uses every possible variety of instrument to draw us into sin and folly; consequently we are always in danger from him. We are liable to be led astray by his temptations, because they are . . .

sudden,  
powerful,  
constant,

deceptive,

so timed as to fall in with our peculiar circumstances.

We are also liable to be led astray by Satan's temptations, because our hearts are . . .

weak,

changeable,

prone to evil, and

open to seduction.

Falling into temptation . . .

dishonors God,

disgrace true religion,

and distresses the soul.

God is able to preserve and deliver us. He has promised. But prayer is implied in every promise.

Beloved, daily remember you have a malicious and designing foe; he is present with you! He will use both saints and sinners as instruments to lead you astray. Pray . . .

without ceasing,

in simplicity,

in sincerity,

with importunity.

God is faithful, and will make a way for your escape.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Hold me up—and I shall be safe!" Psalms 119:117

This should be the Christian's daily prayer!

His way is rough,

the dangers are many,

his foes are powerful,

and he is liable to fall.

This heart-felt prayer, proves that we have . . .

a sense of our own weakness;

a knowledge of the Lord as our strength;

genuine humility working within;  
and a desire to honor God ruling in the conscience.

We are in a hostile world, and unless the Lord holds us up—we shall bring . . .  
guilt on the conscience,  
disgrace on the gospel,  
and dishonor to God.

O believer, lean not on earthly creatures; trust not in a friend; place no dependence on your abilities! But let your daily, yes, hourly prayer be, "Hold me up—and I shall be safe!"

The ear of your God is open,  
the heart of your God is tender,  
the arm of your God is strong!

~ ~ ~ ~ A high-minded Christian

"Be not high-minded—but fear." Romans 11:20

Believers are sometimes tempted to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. They forget that they are indebted to the free, sovereign, and distinguishing grace of God—for all the difference there is between them and the vilest of the vile!

They should consider they are . . .  
still weak—and liable to overcome;  
still foolish—and prone to wander;  
still sinful—and easily vanquished.

They should consider that Satan is . . .  
strong and determined;  
subtle and insinuating;  
malicious and designing;  
active and persevering.

They should consider that the world is . . .  
alluring and ensnaring,  
treacherous and vain,  
attracting and deceitful!

A high-minded Christian is sure to be unfruitful, and is generally left to fall. Let us cultivate humility of mind, and habitual dependence upon God—so shall we be safe, holy, and happy.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Be content with such things as you have." Hebrews 13:5

We may not always have what we desire—but we certainly have what our God thinks is best for us. Every mercy we have, is directed by His infinite wisdom and eternal love.

Let us therefore remember, that our God has chosen our inheritance for us, and it befits us to be content; yes, to be very grateful.

We have infinitely more than we deserve! We have more than many of our fellow-believers.

We have liberty—while the Apostles were shut up in prison.

We have a home—while many of the primitive Christians wandered about in dens and caves of the earth.

Our lives are safe—while the martyrs were burned at the stake.

We live in the sure hope of heaven—while many are lifting up their eyes in hell, being in torments!

Let us strive to be content with present things, and endeavor to learn Paul's lesson, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He waits to fall upon our neck and kiss us!

"Only acknowledge your iniquity!" Jeremiah 3:13

Will the Lord receive us when we have backslidden from Him, and are desirous of returning to Him? Oh, yes, He invites, He exhorts, He beseeches us to return! Nor does He prescribe any hard conditions—but He says, "Only acknowledge your iniquity!"

He is so ready to forgive, so infinitely gracious in His nature—that if we only confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Have we wandered?

Have we left our first love?

Let us go and return to our first husband, for then it was better with us than now. His affections yearn for us, His arms are open to receive us, and He waits to fall upon our neck and kiss us!

Let us go to His throne of grace—and there . . .

confess our sins,

beg His pardon,

sigh for the enjoyment of His love,

and He will restore unto us the joys of His salvation.

Let us daily confess our iniquities unto the Lord, and He will pardon our numerous sins.

In His favor is life. In His frown is distress and woe.

He delights in mercy.

He will receive, pardon us, and bless us—like a God!

His mercy endures forever!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The Lord's people may be poor

"The poor commits himself to You." Psalms 10:14

Many of those who appear the most friendless—have the best and truest Friend! The Lord's people may be poor—but they are not friendless nor forsaken. They have . . .

Jehovah for their God,

Jesus for their Savior, and

the Holy Spirit for their Comforter and Guide.

They know God, and commit themselves and their all to Him. But HOW do they commit themselves to Him?

As the debtor does—to his Surety.

As a sick man does—to his Physician.

As the client does—to his Lawyer or Advocate.

As the needy does—to his rich and generous Friend.

As the loving bride—to her beloved Bridegroom.

As a sinner—to the Savior.

They commit themselves . . .

to His grace—to be saved by it;

to His power—to be kept by it;

to His providence—to be sustained by it;

to His Word—to be ruled by it;

to His care—to be preserved by it;

to His arms at death—to be safely landed in glory!

Let us, beloved, commit ourselves to the Lord . . .

daily,  
heartily,  
deliberately,  
unreservedly  
—and this will produce . . .  
peace,  
safety,  
satisfaction,  
contentment.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Be sure your sin will find you out!" Numbers 32:23

Sin cannot be concealed!

It meets the eye of God—and affects the heart of God!

And unless we find it out, confess it with sorrow, and forsake it with disgust—it will find us out, and expose us to the rod of God, and the contempt of godly men!

Sin found Achan out—and proved his ruin!

Sin found Noah out—and covered him with disgrace!

Sin found David out—so that the sword never departed from his house!

However secret the sin—God is a witness! "He who covers his sin shall not prosper; but he who confesses and forsakes his sins, shall find mercy."

Let us be careful that we give sin no quarter, or vainly imagine that because God loves us—that He is unconcerned about our sin. He assures us our sin will find us out!

Oh, to hate sin as God hates it!

Oh, to loathe it as Jesus loathed it!

Sin is . . .

the source of all our miseries,

the cause of all our pains, and

the occasion of all our troubles.

Sin cannot be hidden!

Sin will find us out—and sorely wound us!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

What an unspeakable mercy to have such a Father!

"Return, you backsliding children!" Jeremiah 3:22

We are prone to wander—and are daily going astray!

Our God might justly cast us off—but He lovingly invites us to return. He bids us take words and come to Him, and gives us every encouragement to hasten to His feet. We are His children, though backsliding; and it is our Father who bids us return!

Beloved, let us return to our God this morning, let us . . .

confess our sin,

deplore our folly,

beg His pardon,

plead His Word,

hope in His mercy, and

expect His reconciliation and love.

What an unspeakable mercy to have such a Father!

So ready to forgive!

So willing to receive!

So desirous that we should be happy and blessed!

His love is astonishing!

His patience is beyond description!

See His arms extended to you; hear His Word inviting you—and hasten to be blessed! Do not dwell on your miseries, or your wretchedness; they are the effects of your backsliding. He says, "I will heal your backslidings!"

"Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for He has torn us—and will heal us! He has smitten us—and He will bind us up!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ When we feel weakest

"My strength is made perfect in your weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:9

The more the believer feels his weakness—the more should he expect his Savior to support and strengthen him. The strength of Jesus is imparted, enjoyed, and displayed—in our sorest trials and most distressing seasons!

Never was Abraham so strong—as when offering up his beloved Isaac upon the mount.

Never were the martyrs so courageous—as when in prison they felt their entire weakness, cried to Jesus for strength; and depending on His faithfulness and love, left all and went to the stake. Then they could exclaim, "None but Christ! None but Christ! Farewell life—welcome the cross of Christ!"

Beloved, when we feel weakest—the strength of Jesus is nearest. He magnifies His mercy—by giving power to the faint, and increasing the strength of the weak.

Let us depend on Him, for we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

He is our strength—a very present help in trouble!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I will call upon You—for You will answer me." Psalms 86:7

Such was David's purpose, and such his assurance; and we have the same warrant for confidence as he had. Our God will answer our prayers.

Let us inquire what is necessary, in order to the assurance that our God will answer us:

We must heartily desire what we pray for.

We must pray for a definite object.

We must pray in accordance with the will of God, as revealed in His promises and precepts.

We must pray in submission to the will of God, as to the time when, and the means by which, He will answer us.

Our motives must be pure—as that God may be glorified, sin subdued, and Jesus exalted.

We must pray with importunity and perseverance.

We must offer all our prayers in the name of Jesus, and expect them to be accepted and honored only for His sake.

There must be no sin indulged; for if we indulge iniquity in our hearts—God will not hear our prayer.

We must pray in faith, believing that God is, and that He is the rewarder of all those who diligently seek Him.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Look, your salvation is coming! Look, His reward is with Him!" Isaiah 62:11

The Lord's people may be now sorely tried and often cast down. But the present is the worst state they will ever be in. Their salvation is just down the road! They will soon be freed . . .

from all disease—from which they now suffer;

from all sin—under which they now groan;

from all foes—of whom they are now afraid;

from all cares and troubles—with which they are now burdened.

Beloved, why are you so fearful?

Why do desponding thoughts arise in your hearts?

"Look, your salvation is coming! Look, His reward is with Him!" He will soon free you from all that pains you—and raise you above all that you fear. The time of deliverance is at hand! Our Savior will arrive to lead you to your Father's house, to the mansions which He has prepared for you—and so you shall be forever with the Lord!

Comfort one another with these words, "Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and welcome Him!"

~ ~ ~ ~ Whom the Lord guides

"You shall guide me with Your counsel—and afterwards receive me to glory!" Psalm 73:24

This supposes a knowledge of the Lord as . . .

infinitely gracious;

inflexibly just;

inconceivably wise;

immutably faithful.

Unless we truly know Him—we cannot sincerely trust Him.

But here is an entire surrender to Him, to be led . . .

where He pleases;

as He chooses; and

by whom He will.

Whom the Lord guides . .

He protects;

He preserves;

He supplies;

He receives to glory!

He receives them now at the throne of grace—to be His charge and His care. And He will receive them at the throne of His glory—and introduce them to perfect holiness, happiness, and honor!

Beloved, have you thus surrendered? Are you daily surrendering? Can you say to your gracious God, "You shall guide me with Your counsel—and afterwards receive me to glory?" If so, you are truly blessed!

~ ~ ~ ~ A new life is expected from new creatures

"We should walk in newness of life."Romans 6:4

All who possess Christ—possess a new nature.

They are brought under new obligations.

They are expected to keep new objects in view.

They should walk as influenced by new principles.

The free grace, holy truth, and divine power of God—should lead them to newness of life.

They should walk by new rules—no longer following customs and ways of the world.

They should walk according to . . .

God's Word,

the Savior's golden rule,

and His holy example.

The love of God,

gratitude to God,

and zeal for His glory

—should be the motives from which they act.

To honor God,

to enjoy His presence,

to exalt Jesus,

to benefit others,

to prove the power and purity of their principles,

to evidence their faith and love,

should be the ends they have constantly in view.

A newlifeis expected from newcreatures. Without it our religion is vain, and our profession a falsehood.

Beloved, do we walk in newness of life?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I am Jesus!" Acts 9:5

Immanuel presents Himself this morning, and tells us He is exactly suited to us, whatever may be our circumstances, or needs!

Are you seeking the Lord? He is Jesus—the gracious, powerful, tender-hearted, ready and willing Savior!

Are you tried, troubled, and cast down? He is Jesus—the constant, sympathizing, present, wise and unchangeable Friend!

Are you a returning backslider, filled with the bitterness of your own ways? He is Jesus, and He says, "I will receive you; I will heal you; I will restore you; I will rejoice over you, as the shepherd over the sheep he had lost."

Beloved, Jesus is the Lord our God, our all in all. Our Savior is merciful, kind, and tender. How cheering to the sinner! How delightful to the saint!

Let us remember, whoever may change, whatever may change—that He is Jesus still! He is . . .

still touched with the feeling of our infirmities;

still able and willing to help us;

still full of compassion;

still plenteous in mercy;

still ready to forgive;

still waiting to be gracious;

still full of pity!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Thanksgiving is never out of season

"In everything give thanks!"<sup>1</sup> Thessalonians 5:18

Everything we enjoy, should be viewed as coming from the gracious and liberal hand of God.

All was forfeited by sin.

All we receive is by grace.

The providence that supplies us—is the wisdom, benevolence, and power of God in operation for us—as expressive of His infinite love and unmerited grace!

Our talents to provide supplies,

our opportunities to obtain,

and our abilities to enjoy,

—are alike from the Lord.

Every mercy increases our obligation—and deepens our debt to free grace!

Thanksgiving is never out of season, for we have always much to be grateful for.

We must view all things as . . .  
arranged by His wisdom,  
dependent on His will,  
sanctified by His blessing,  
according with His promises,  
and flowing from His love!

"In everything give thanks!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Son, go work today in My vineyard." Matthew 21:28

All people are God's sons by creation.

The Jews were God's sons by national adoption.

Christians are God's sons by regeneration. They are born of God, and adopted by God.

Our God never intended that His children should be idle. He says to every child of His, "Son, go work!" This is the command of a Father—it contains affection, and it flows from authority.

Our work is in His vineyard.

There is work for each child.

Some are employed to plant,

some to weed,

some to water,

some to watch.

We are to work for His glory, for the good of others, and to lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven.  
Working for God is . . .

noble,

profitable,

pleasant.

The command is "Work today." The present is the period. Work today, while you have light, strength, and opportunity.

Remember, it is but a day—a short period at longest—but it often proves to be but a short day.

Are you standing idle all the day? Go work in the vineyard!

Are you discouraged? Imitate her who did what she could.

Look to the Lord; He will give opportunity and ability; and crown with success!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We may fall into the grossest sins—and commit the greatest crimes!

"O Preserver of men." Job 7:20

We have neither wisdom nor strength to preserve ourselves. We are daily liable to fall; and unless God preserves us—we certainly shall.

Our hearts are so deceitful,  
our corruptions are so strong,  
and Satan is so vigilant

—that we must look to God as our Preserver every hour, and call upon Him to uphold us every moment!

He can preserve; He does preserve; but only in the way of obedience. Except we are watchful, prayerful, and walking humbly with Him—we have no security. We may fall into the grossest sins—and commit the greatest crimes!

O believer, never think yourself safe—but as you are leaning on Jesus, calling upon your heavenly Father, and cultivating communion with the Holy Spirit!

Indeed you are in danger! Satan, the world, and your corruptions—are all leagued against you! Nothing but omnipotent grace can keep you!

Cease from man, trust not your own heart—but keep close to the good Shepherd. He alone is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"What do you want Me to do for you?" Mark 10:36

So spoke Jesus to the sons of Zebedee—and so He speaks to us. Beloved, do you have your petition ready this morning? Jesus is on His throne of grace; He is in a loving temper; He is ready to bless. He says, "Ask, what I shall give you?"

O Jesus! give me sanctifying grace!

Subdue my corruptions!

Purify my heart!

Make me a vessel of honor, fit for Your use!

Why should sin be allowed to work so powerfully?

Why should Satan be permitted to have so much power over me?

Why should the world attract and lead me astray?

Lord, I would that You should make me holy, and make me useful.

Fill me with Your Holy Spirit.

Write Your Word on my heart, and enable me to write out Your precepts in my life!

O Savior! I would that You should make me like Yourself—as meek, as humble, as diligent, as unselfish, as useful!

May I be holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners!

Oh, make me shine to the honor and glory of Your free and sovereign grace!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Having nothing—yet possessing all things!" 2 Corinthians 6:10

The Lord's family are generally poor. People may look at them as having nothing valuable, important, or calculated to make them happy; but in reality they possess all things, because God is theirs.

Our God has said, "I am their inheritance!"

And we say, "You are my portion, O Lord."

His eternity is the date of our happiness.

His unchangeableness is the the rock of our rest.

His omnipotence is our constant guard.

His faithfulness is our daily security.

His mercies are our overflowing store.

His omniscience is our careful overseer.

His wisdom is our judicious counselor.

His justice is our stern avenger.

His omnipresence is our sweet company.

His holiness is the fountain from which we receive sanctifying grace.

His all-sufficiency is the lot of our inheritance.

His infinity is the extent of our glorious portion.

This is the blessedness of the people of the Lord! They have God for their God, and all His perfections engaged to make them blessed.

O love the Lord! Live upon the Lord! Make Him your portion and everlasting all!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Create in me a pure heart, O God." Psalms 51:10

Purity of heart can only be produced by God.

Such a prayer implies . . .

a conviction of sin,

a sense of pollution,

a desire for holiness,

a knowledge of weakness,

the possession of true wisdom.

It is the prayer of every Christian—let it be our prayer this day. Let us lift up our hearts and voices to our God, and cry, "Remove our guilt and pollution! Produce purity and peace in our hearts! Cleanse us by Your Word, the blood of Jesus, and the influence of the Holy Spirit."

If we love sin, if we can indulge in sin, or if a sense of having sinned does not pain us, and cause us to adopt this prayer—then our religion is spurious, we are destitute of the power of godliness.

No real Christian can live in sin.

He is called to holiness.

He is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Holiness is his element and desire.

His God says, "Be holy—for I am holy!"

And he cries, "Create in me a pure heart, O God!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Why do you strive against Him?" Job 33:13

A believer strive against his God! Yes, it is sometimes the case! He may strive against . . .

some of the doctrines of His Word;

some of the dispensations of His providence;

some of the commands He has issued.

But why do strive against Him?

His wisdom is infinite.

His love is unchangeable.

His ways are all righteous.

His methods may be mysterious,

His dispensations may be trying—but  
His designs are all gracious and good.  
It is your duty to submit—and be still.  
It is your privilege to believe and trust.  
It is rebellion and treason to strive against Him, for He gives no account of any of His matters.  
It is the glory of God to conceal a thing.  
He is not accountable to any.  
He will not be questioned by the curious  
—or called to an account by the proud.  
He demands our acquiescence on the ground of . . .  
His perfections,  
His promises, and  
His Word.  
He will make all plain and clear to us by and by, and then we shall know as we are known, and be perfectly satisfied. He says,  
"Be still, and know that I am God!"  
"Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord!"  
~ ~ ~ ~ Your daily food, your daily meditation, your daily directory!  
"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly!" Colossians 3:16  
The Word which Jesus preached,  
the Word which His servants wrote,  
the whole of Scripture  
—is the Word of Jesus.  
Believer, look at your Bible as containing the Word of . . .  
your best Friend,  
your loving Savior,  
your final Judge.  
Let it find a home in . . .  
your memories,

your affections,

your hearts.

Let it rule, feed, and direct your souls.

Let it dwell in you plentifully and richly . .

to form, guide, and preserve your judgments;

to curb, bound, and regulate your desires;

to raise, confirm, and direct your expectations;

to silence, enlighten, and purify conscience;

to enable you to resist and overcome Satan.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly—and have the best room in your souls! Let it be . . .

your daily food,

your daily meditation,

your daily directory!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The strongest incentive to obedience

"If you love Me—you will obey My commandments." John 14:15

Here we have the Christian's grand rule of action—the commandments of his dear Savior.

Here we have the Christian's grand motive and spring of action—love to Jesus! The obedience of love is easy, hearty, and thorough.

Love to Jesus is the strongest incentive to obedience:

love conquers fear,

love furnishes with zeal,

love equips with courage,

love devises the means,

love surmounts difficulties,

love and triumphs over opposition.

"If you love Me—you will obey My commandments."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy! He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour!" 1 Peter 5:8

Satan is the Christian's unwearied foe! He is the enemy of all righteousness, and aims at our destruction. He is especially the enemy of . . .

our faith,

our comfort,

our spiritual prosperity,

our usefulness.

He . . .

excites to sin,

accuses of sin,

and terrifies for sin!

We can only effectually resist Satan, by steadfastly believing what Christ is to us, as his grand opponent.

Is Satan a deadly serpent?

Jesus is the brazen serpent who heals.

Is Satan a roaring lion?

Jesus is the lion of the tribe of Judah who prevails.

Is Satan our adversary?

Jesus is our Friend.

Is Satan a wolf?

Jesus is the good Shepherd.

Is Satan our tempter?

Jesus is our Deliverer.

Is Satan a deceiver and a liar?

Jesus is the truth.

Is Satan our accuser?

Jesus is our Advocate.

Is Satan the prince of darkness?

Jesus reigns in the kingdom of light.

Is Satan a murderer?

Jesus is the resurrection and life.

Is Satan god of this world?

Jesus is God over all.

Resist the devil—Jesus is all you need.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I will be glorified!" Leviticus 10:3

This is the great end which Jehovah has in view in all that He performs.

He created and He preserves the world—that He might be glorified. He redeemed His people by the blood of His Son—to the same end.

He will be glorified in His sovereignty—always doing as He will.

He will be glorified in His supremacy—always commanding as He pleases.

He will be glorified in His wisdom—disposing of His creatures to secure His design.

He will be glorified in His grace—saving an innumerable company of the lost and wretched, "to the praise of His glorious grace!"

He will be glorified in His goodness—supplying the needs of all His creatures, though in rebellion against Him.

He will be glorified in His justice—punishing the daring impenitent offender.

"After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God!" Revelation 19:1

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Death only opens the prison-door, and sets the captive free!

"Fear of death." Hebrews 2:15

All must die—but all do not die alike; some are cut off suddenly, others by a lingering illness. Some fear death all their lives, others do not. But death must be viewed through Jesus—or we shall fear it, if we think seriously.

Physical death is a separation from the body; the second death is a separation from God. The former we must pass through; not so the latter. What shall separate us from the love of God? DEATH? No! we are more than conquerors through Him who has loved us. Death only opens the prison-door, and sets the captive free! Death is the answer to our many prayers for deliverance, for freedom from sin, and for perfect happiness!

If we are united to Jesus by a living faith, death cannot disunite us; but will only introduce us into His presence, that we may forever enjoy His love. If we walk with God; if we believe the Savior's Word; if we look beyond the valley of the shadow of death—we shall not fear death. Jesus will not leave us then. He will be present according to His Word, and we shall prove His faithfulness, veracity, and love.

"Death has been swallowed up in victory! Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 1 Corinthians 15:54-55

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Why are you so fearful?" Mark 4:40

The disciples appeared to be in danger, and fear filled their hearts—because they did not realize that they were the care and charge of Jesus!

Beloved, you are in the hands of your loving Savior! He has charge of you and all your concerns. He has numbered the very hairs of your head, and watches over you every moment—by night, as well as by day!

He is ever present,

His eye cannot be diverted from you,

His omnipotence is engaged to defend you,

His fullness is engaged to supply you,

His wisdom is engaged to guide you!

All of His perfections will be glorified in your everlasting holiness and happiness.

Why are you so fearful?

Jesus is a very present help!

He is a Friend who loves at all times!

He is your shield, and will be your exceeding great reward!

But perhaps you have wandered from Him; your conscience accuses you, and Satan tempts you to despond. Go, go, and return unto Him, delay not a moment, cast yourself, guilty as you are, at His feet, confess all, and give yourself to Him afresh. He will receive you graciously, love you freely, and restore to you the joys of His salvation!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

You are Mine!

"You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price!" 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

You are not your own! Jesus has . . .

purchased you with His own blood,

quickened you by His Spirit,

espoused you to Himself, and

intends to glorify you with Himself forever!

He claims you, and says, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine!" Isaiah 43:1.

You are . . .

His beloved bride,

His portion,

a member of His body.

In loving you—He loves Himself.

He requires you to live under the daily conviction that you are His—and that all you have is His. You have nothing of your own! All you have—He has freely given to you! And all you have—you profess to have surrendered to Him!

Think more of Jesus—than of His gifts! Cleave to Him—and not to what you may be called to surrender. He will never take anything from you—but He will give you something better! If He strips you—it is to teach you, and to lead you to live upon Himself, and to find your heaven in His company and grace!

Do you live, walk, and act—so as to leave the impression upon the minds of observers, that you are the Lord's?

Do you expect Him to preserve, guide, and supply you?

Let conscience answer!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The lions may grow weak and hungry!

"Then Jesus asked them, 'When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?' 'Nothing,' they answered." Luke 22:35

The Lord will always provide for His own people—who keep His company, do His will, and aim at His glory. If He sends us, though He chooses to carry the purse—our bread shall be given, and our water shall be sure.

The disciples went out unsupplied—but then, Jesus commanded them. On return, they confessed that they lacked nothing, as the God of providence supplied them. If we are in the Lord's way, we may rest assured that we shall meet the Lord's messengers bringing our supply. "The lions may grow weak and hungry—but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing!" Psalms 34:10. He . . .

notices our needs,

remembers His promises,

times His mercies, and

proves Himself a faithful God.

Have you really lacked anything? for body? for soul? He Who has supplied the past—will provide for the future. Jesus is full of grace! Go, and receive—that your joy may be full. Jesus is the God of

providence:

look to Him,

trust in Him,

plead with Him—

and you shall never be destitute!

Believe His Word, He cannot deny Himself; trust in His faithfulness, and He will put honor upon your faith, fulfilling His own Word. "The lions may grow weak and hungry—but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Spiritual prayer

"The Spirit of supplication." Zechariah 12:10

All spiritual prayer is produced by the Holy Spirit; He . . .

convinces us of our sins,

reveals to us the fullness of Jesus,

leads us to the throne of grace,

and helps our infirmities there.

The very desire to pray—is from Him; and the liberty we enjoy in prayer—is His gift. He sympathizes with us, and makes intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.

But how dreadful a thing is sin! Sin has rendered us so vile—that no sacrifice but that of the Son of God Himself, could atone for sin! And sin has made us so weak—that none but the Holy Spirit can enable us to pray with fervor, faith, and success!

See, beloved, how deep are your obligations, and how great your dependence upon this blessed Spirit of grace and supplication. Be careful, lest you grieve Him by your pride, worldliness, or lukewarmness.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Jesus is with you!

"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him IMMANUEL—which means: God with us." Matthew 1:23

Consider Jesus as God with you; God in your nature; God become Man for your salvation and consolation.

Jesus has the nature of Divinity—here is His ability.

He has your nature also—here is His suitability.

Jesus is God with you:  
to hear your prayers,  
to check your fears,  
to redress your grievances,  
to sympathize with you in your sorrows,  
and to be your everyday Friend.

Jesus is God with you:  
observing your conduct,  
directing your ways,  
reproving your follies,  
providing your supplies, and  
making all things work together for your good.

Always remember, Jesus is with you! Every SIN is committed under His eye, against His love, and goes to His heart! Think, when tempted to sin, that you hear Immanuel, the suffering, bleeding, dying, reigning Savior, say, "O do not that abominable thing which I hate!"

Walk before Him in love, peace, holiness, and zeal for His glory. He is God for you, as well as with you. Look to His wisdom, power, and love—for safety and supply; and with filial confidence, trust His Word—so shall you be safe and happy.

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you!" Hebrews 13:5

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Cleave to Him!

"Cleave unto the Lord." Acts 11:23

Every believer is united to Christ, and is one with Him.

Jesus is the vine—he is a branch.

Jesus is the husband—he is the bride.

Satan's design is to lead him from the Lord; he knows well he can do little or nothing—while the Christian cleaves to Jesus.

O, then, cleave to Him by faith, in love, with perseverance! Cleave . . .

to His truth,

to His people,

to His Word, and

to His throne!

Think of Jesus. . .

as the affectionate child thinks of his beloved father;

as the tender bride thinks of her devoted bridegroom;

as the way-worn traveler thinks of his cheerful home.

Let Jesus be uppermost in your thoughts, let His love rule your heart, and let nothing steal away your affections from Him!

Live upon His fullness,

live according to His Word,

live in the element of His love!

There is no living safely, no living happily—but as you cleave unto the Lord.

Never let Satan find you at a distance from Jesus—or he will assuredly be too much for you. He is ever on the watch to find you wandering, that he may worry, deceive, and distress you. Therefore cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart. Cleave to Him as the ivy to the oak—or the infant to the mother's breast!

~ ~ ~ ~ The more you know of Him—the more you will prize Him!

"He is precious!"<sup>1</sup> Peter 2:7

Yes! Jesus is precious to every believer. However Christians may differ upon some points, they all agree in this, JESUS IS PRECIOUS! They cannot always feel towards Him as they wish—but have always one and the same opinion of Him.

He is precious . . .

in His person,

in His word,

in His work,

in His blood,

in His righteousness,

in His intercession!

He is precious . . .

as our Prophet,

as our Priest,

as our King!

He is precious . . .  
in every name He wears,  
in every character He bears,  
in every relation He fills, and  
in every office He sustains.

He is so precious, that none can be compared with Him. His people love Him—but none of them think they love Him enough. They adore Him—but mourn over their lack of fervor when addressing Him. They prefer Him above all things, and consider Him altogether lovely!

Do you find Christ precious this morning? If He was to be sold—what would you give for Him? He is precious to poor, sensible sinners; to strong believers; to holy angels; and to God our heavenly Father. Is He so to you? Live near to Him, be intimate with Him—and you will feel Him precious. The more you know of Him—the more you will prize Him!

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Nothing is left to 'chance'

"My times are in Your hand!" Psalms 31:15

Every event is under Divine control. Nothing is left to 'chance'.

The hand of God is in all that occurs: directing, overruling, and sanctifying everything to our good and His glory.

He appointed all that concerns us, and appointed all in infinite wisdom and love. Therefore we should not judge rashly—or conclude hastily. We know not what may occur today—but we know that the purpose of God cannot be frustrated, nor can His purpose fail. He works all things after the counsel of His own will.

He says, "My purpose shall stand—and I will do all My pleasure." But this is our comfort, that He takes pleasure in His people, and in the prosperity of His servants.

Let us consider, then, that everything . . .

passes under our Father's eye;  
is overruled by our Savior's power;  
is directed by the Holy Spirit to do us good.

It shall not be as our enemies wish, or as our hearts fear; but as our God and Father pleases, and has ordained.

Therefore do not be anxious, troubled, or cast down! The Lord God omnipotent reigns—and He is your Father and your God! He shall preserve you from all evil—He shall preserve your soul.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Then the LORD said to Moses: Is the LORD's arm too short?" Numbers 11:23

No! What He has done—He can do. He will do all He has promised. All that His people need—He will do. He has all power. He knows no difficulty. Why then are we cast down? Because we do not . . .

believe His Word,  
depend simply on His veracity,  
expect all we need from His hand.

He was displeased with Moses when he questioned His power; and He is displeased with us when we doubt His love, distrust His providence, or ask, "How can this thing be?" Whatever may be your difficulty, trial, or need—plead with the Lord, and confidently expect deliverance. And if any temptation is presented to weaken your faith, rouse your fears, or disturb your tranquility—meet it with this question, "Is the LORD's arm too short?"

Beloved, look not to the arm of man—but simply look to the arm of God. Man may disappoint you—God will not. He is faithful who promised. He is a God at hand. He will be near you throughout this day; His arm is able and ready to help you; therefore trust, and be not afraid.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

What is the world?

"Do not love the world." 1 John 2:15

What is the world?

A shadow.

A deception.

The enemy of God.

What can the world do for us?

It may enchant—but it will deceive.

It may please for a time—but it will sting in the end.

This world is the enemy's country; we must pass through it, but we should not be too intimate with the inhabitants of it.

It crucified our Savior;

it is in open rebellion against our God;

it has allured, deceived, and injured many of our brethren;

it is reserved unto fire at the judgment of the great day.

We shall soon be called to leave it, "For what is our life? It is even as a vapor, which appears for a little while, and then vanishes away!"

Let us fix and spend our love upon a worthier object! Let us turn our thoughts to heaven, to Jesus; and let us seek grace that we may daily and heartily say, "Whom have I in heaven but You, and there is none upon earth I desire beside You!" Precious Savior! engross our attention, fix our affections, and be always our All In All! "None but Jesus! None but Jesus!" should be our every day motto. He alone is worthy of our love!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He regulates the heat of the furnace

"I will be with him in trouble." Psalms 91:15

SIN is the parent of all trouble.

All SORROW originates in departing from God. Affliction is generally occasioned by sin, or sent as a preventive to a greater evil. Affliction is intended to correct, improve, and to bring us near to God. Whatever may be our trouble, if we are the Lord's, He is with us; and with us for the most gracious purposes.

He fixes the duration of our troubles—they cannot continue longer than He sees needful.

He regulates the heat of the furnace—nor will He allow us to be tried more than we are able to bear.

He sanctifies our troubles, and causes them to work for our eternal good.

He delivers out of trouble, when the purposes of His love are accomplished. In every trouble remember: "God is now especially present!" He is with you to hear your prayer, increase your strength, direct your way, and make you a conqueror. His grace is sufficient; His presence is sure; your deliverance, in His time and way, is certain.

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish—ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand!" John 10:27-28

All of Christ's sheep know Him, love Him and follow Him. They possess His disposition: He was meek and humble in heart.

Are you one of Christ's sheep? Are you following after the Good Shepherd? If so, He will lead you, feed you, protect you, and save you. Your person, life, comforts, and eternal safety—are committed to His care.

He loved His sheep more than His own life—He laid down His life for them!

He searches and seeks out His sheep wherever they stray.

He feeds His flock. He cares for His sheep more than for all the world beside. He feeds them in the most suitable pasture, and leads them in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

O view Jesus as your Shepherd! Expect Him to lead you, feed you, enfold you, and present you to His Father with exceeding joy. Cleave to Him; let nothing tempt you to leave His feet, His flock, or His fold. He will never leave you—nor ever forsake you.

"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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I flee unto You to hide me." Psalms 143:9

This implies DANGER. The Christian may be in danger from sin, self, or foes.

This implies FEAR—his fears may be groundless—but they are often very painful.

This implies INABILITY—to defend himself or overcome his opposers.

This implies FORESIGHT—he sees the storm in the distance, and looks out for the covert.

This implies PRUDENCE—he hides before the storm, before the enemy comes upon him.

This implies a laudable CONCERN for safety and comfort. The believer, if wise, will at all times flee to Jehovah.

Jacob flies to Laban;

the manslayer flies to the refuge;

the bird to his mountain; and

the Christian flies to his God.

He flees . . .

from sin,

from self,

from the world;

—to Jesus!

The Lord receives, befriends, and secures him. Let us flee to Him by prayer, in faith, with hope, for salvation; and He will receive us, shelter us, and be our refuge and strength.

His heart is ever toward us,

His ear is open to us, and

His hand is ready to help, protect, and deliver us.

His throne is our asylum,

His promise is our comfort, and

His omnipotence is our guard.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"It is I! Do not be afraid!" John 6:20

The fears of the Christian are . . .

a dishonor to his Lord,

a denial of his creed, and

a fruitful source of distress to his own soul.

All things are of God; He works all things after the counsel of His own will, and in every event He says to us, "It is I! Do not be afraid!"

If friends turn to foes and distress us,

if death enters our dwellings and bereaves us,

if sickness lays us aside and fills us with pain,

He says, "It is I! Do not be afraid!"

If losses, crosses, and sore trials come upon us—and discourage, distress, and perplex us, He says, "It is I! Do not be afraid!"

If death approaches, and calls upon us to leave the body and close our eyes upon our beloved relations, friends, and connections, He says, "It is I! Do not be afraid!"

Should we hear the pillars of heaven crack, and feel the strong foundation of the earth give way; should the heavens be rolled up like a scroll, and the great white throne appear; still, amidst the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds, He cries, "It is I! Do not be afraid!"

Happy Christian! your fears are groundless—and your brightest hopes well founded. Rejoice in Jesus.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The Fountain and Friend

"Without Me you can do nothing." John 15:5

Never attempt anything without looking to Jesus for power. You cannot—He can. You have destroyed yourself—in Him is your help found. It is only by receiving from Him, that you can . . .

glorify God,

adorn your profession,

enjoy your privileges, and

obey the holy precepts of the gospel.

Jesus is the Fountain from which you are to draw all your supplies, and the Friend to whom you are to carry all your cares.

"Casting all your care upon Him, because He cares about you!" 1 Peter 5:7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Live at the feet of Jesus

"Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to what He said." Luke 10:39

Let not then the many trifles of time affect, distract, and bewilder you; but let the one thing needful be the constant object of pursuit and desire.

Live at the feet of Jesus—and you are safe.

Seek, above all things, to enjoy Jesus—and you will be happy.

Aim in all things to glorify Jesus—and you will be holy.

Look daily for the coming of Jesus—and you will be consistent.

O Jesus! manifest Yourself to me; draw me to Your feet, and keep me there!

Seek to . . .

know Him,

love Him,

believe Him,

obey Him, and

enjoy Him!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Why are you troubled?" Luke 24:38

Consider what Jesus has done for you, promised to you, and is gone to prepare for you. Consider what He is to you—

your loving Bridegroom,

your faithful Friend, and

your gracious Savior.

What troubles you? Is it sin? He will pardon, subdue, and destroy it.

What troubles you? Is it the world? He has . . .

overcome it,

redeemed you from it, and

is leading you through it.

What troubles you? Is it Satan? He is conquered, condemned, and will soon be imprisoned.

What troubles you? Is it the cares and difficulties of life? Jesus says, "Bring them to Me by prayer, cast them on Me in faith, leave them with Me. I will make a way in the wilderness of trouble, and a path in the desert of perplexity. Trust Me. In all your ways acknowledge Me, and I will direct your paths. I have wisdom, power, and love; and all that I have is yours; to be employed for your good."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## 00 The Pastor's Morning Visit contd1

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Our sufficiency is of God!" 2 Corinthians 3:5

Let us think of this, whenever we are cast down on account of our weakness, or the difficulties we meet with in our pilgrim way. We are weak—but Jesus is strong; and His strength is made perfect in our weakness. He has given us His Word, that He will work in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. He speaks, and it is done. The word of the Lord knows no obstacles or difficulties; all things must obey Him.

His fullness—is our sufficiency; it is opened to us in Jesus, and we receive from it according to our needs, weakness, and faith.

"Through God, " said David, "I shall do valiantly." "I can do all things," said Paul, "through Christ strengthening me."

Look not then at your own emptiness, or weakness; but look at what God is to His people, and what He has promised to give them, and sing, "Our sufficiency is of God!" "God is our refuge and strength—and as our days so shall our strength be." "His grace is sufficient for us; His strength is made perfect in our weakness."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The happier, and holier, and livelier we shall be!

"Quicken me in Your way." Psalm 99:37

What poor, dull, lifeless creatures we often feel ourselves to be! And how needful is this prayer.

It is our duty to RUN in the way of God's commandments; it is our misery that through sin, weakness, and temptation—that we scarcely creep!

We are dependent upon the Spirit for quickening. He alone can strengthen, animate and enliven us. Let us pray to Him to bring us near to God; for the nearer to God—the happier, and holier, and livelier we shall be! Let us ask Him to shed abroad the love of Jesus in our hearts; for the love of Christ will make us . . .

live well,

bear the cross well,

perform duties well,

and die well.

The presence of Jesus, and the communications of His grace, are daily necessary to keep us lively, devoted, and working for God. Lord, quicken me thus!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Christian, you are rich!

"But you are rich!" Revelation 2:9

Real saints always feel themselves to be 'poor sinners'. Many of God's people are really poor in reference to the things of time, for God has chosen the poor of this world—to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him. They are often persecuted, tried, tempted and cast down; so was the church in Smyrna; but Jesus says to her, "But you are rich!" So are all the Lord's people.

Rich by relation—God is their Father, and Jesus their elder Brother.

Rich by donation—Jesus has bequeathed unsearchable riches to them.

Rich by promises—the Lord has promised all good things.

Rich by faith—for he who believes shall inherit all things.

Rich in expectation—for they look for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Christian, you are rich! Jesus has willed to you . . .

His righteousness—to justify you;

His blood—to cleanse you;

His Spirit—to sanctify you;

His heaven—to be your everlasting habitation!

Precious Savior! I would admire and adore Your love! O teach me to live out of self—on Your fullness!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Why this running to creatures for advice and support?

"Has your Counselor perished?" Micah 4:9

The Lord's people need counsel—and Jesus is given to them as a Counselor. He is exactly suited to their needs, being possessed of infinite wisdom, unbounded benevolence, great experience, and high honor. He never lost a cause. He counsels freely, cheerfully, and successfully. He turns the counsel of all our foes, into foolishness.

But though we have this Wonderful Counselor, we neglect to consult, employ or trust Him; and it may often be asked of us, "Has your Counselor perished?" If not,

Why this perplexity?

Why these mistakes?

Why those fears and groans, and forebodings?

Why this running to creatures for advice and support?

He says, "I will counsel you, My eye shall be upon you."

Lord, be my Counselor,

My Pattern, and my Guide;

And through this desert land,

Still keep me near Your side;

O let my feet ne'er run astray

Nor rove, nor seek the crooked way.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I will heal your backslidings!" Jeremiah 3:22

Sin brings spiritual sickness.

The believer can only be healthful as he walks with God—and lives above the world.

At the feet of Jesus we are safe—and shall be healthy; but if we wander from Him—then spiritual diseases will seize upon us. The backslider feels . . .

too weak—to run in the way of God's commands;

too confused, to read his interest in God's promises;

too guilty—to call God Father;

too wretched—to rejoice in hope.

He has . . .

no liberty in prayer;

no enjoyment of his Bible;

no peace in his conscience;

no delight in God's ways.

But the Lord says, "Return, O backsliding children—and I will heal your backslidings!" This is . . .

a message from the Great Physician,

an invitation from our Father's throne,

a promise of our Savior's love.

Oh, let us return unto Him with weeping and supplication, adopting David's prayer as our own, "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You!" Let us take up the determination of the church, "Behold, we come unto You—for You are the Lord our God." He will receive us graciously, and love us freely!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The ear of God

"Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17

In prayer we must approach God as a Father, ask of Him what we really need, and expect to receive according to His wisdom and Word. Our needs are constantly returning; therefore our prayers should be constantly ascending.

The ear of God is always open! He is ever ready to listen to us! He invites, exhorts, and commands us to pray always, in everything.

Every object that meets the eye,  
every circumstance that occurs,  
every employment in which we engage,  
would afford matter for prayer—if properly viewed.

The believer should acquire the HABIT of prayer. He should look up to his God . . .

for all he needs,

through all he sees,

whenever he has a moment to spare.

The prayers of a Christian are pleasant to his God; He says, "Let me hear your voice, let me see your countenance; for sweet is your voice and your countenance is lovely."

The believer should pray as naturally and as constantly as he breathes; for prayer is the vital breath of the soul. Beloved, if prayer dwindles into a mere duty, is but occasionally offered, or become burdensome, it is clear that you are in a most unhealthy state.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

WHO?

"They will be Mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when I make up My jewels!" Malachi 3:17

WHO?

"Those who feared the LORD and honored his name." Malachi 3:16

Those who fear to offend Him because they love Him.

Those who desire above all things to obey Him, be conformed unto Him, and glorify Him.

Those who honor His name, call Him Father, and believe Him to be gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness, and truth.

Those who approach Him as children; who walk before Him, desiring to do everything as under His eye; who are jealous of His honor, and concerned for His glory. Those who . . .

speak of His goodness,

talk of His power, and

adore the riches of His grace.

"They will be Mine, in the day when I make up My jewels!" He will treat them as His children—and prize them as His jewels!

Beloved, are we entitled to claim this precious promise? Do we fear God? Are we grieved at sin, because it dishonors Him? Do we think upon His name with love and reverence? If so—He will spare us, preserve us, and place us among His jewels forever!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

These springs are never dry!

"All my springs are in You." Psalms 87:7

Jesus is the fountain of living water.

The wells of salvation are found in His person, work and Word.

He says, "If any man thirsts—let him come unto Me and drink." The springs of comfort, peace, and salvation—are all in Him. These waters . . .

cleanse from all defilement;

refresh the faint and weary;

and satisfy the longing soul.

These springs bespeak plentitude, for whoever will, may freely come and take. These springs are never dry!

We are absolutely dependent on Jesus—this is our mercy.

We are absolutely independent on any besides—this is our happiness.

Our desires should concentrate in Him;

our affections should be fixed upon Him;

our expectations should be only from Him.

In Jesus is all possible variety! He can do, and bestow—all we can possibly need or desire; for "it has pleased the Father that in Him should ALL fullness dwell."

If all our springs are in Jesus—then let us not then look to any broken earthly cistern. Let us with joy draw water out of the ever-flowing fountains of the Savior. Let us ask—and He will give us Living Water; that we may thirst no more. Only what comes from Jesus—can satisfy the soul.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ As we grow in grace

"Grow in grace." 2 Peter 3:18

Never rest satisfied with present spiritual attainments. God has much to bestow—and we are capable of receiving, enjoying, and using it to His glory.

As we grow in grace—we shall discover more of our own wretchedness, misery, and weakness.

As we grow in grace—we shall discover more of the preciousness, fullness, and glory of Christ.

As we grow in grace—we shall be humble before God, and loving before men.

As we grow in grace—we shall trust in Jesus more simply, having no confidence in the flesh.

Grace always leads out of self—and to Jesus.

Grace is spiritual beauty; it is the very glory of God.

To grow in grace is to grow like Jesus—

mEEK and lowly in heart;

active and devoted in life;

blameless and harmless as the sons of God.

Let us pray for grace—for God loves to bestow it.

Let us grow in grace—for God commands it.

"Grow in grace." 2 Peter 3:18

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

How infinitely tender

"He who touches you—touches the apple of His eye" Zechariah 2:8

How infinitely tender is Jehovah of His people! They had lately been . . .

visited with sore judgments;

reduced to great straits;

appeared to be neglected by God;

were generally despised;

had only just escaped from the enemy's land;

and returned with weeping and supplication, like brands plucked from the burning, to their own country. And now the Lord says, "He who touches you—touches the apple of His eye!"

How wonderful the ways of God!

As the wise physician, He will touch—to cure; but He will not allow others to touch to hurt.

Like the tender mother, He will correct His children Himself—but will not allow others to do so.

How close the union!

How peculiar the affection!

How tender the sympathy!

How kind the care!

How constant the attention!

How merciful the provision!

How safe and how happy they are!

Beloved, take encouragement under all your trials; be comforted in all your afflictions; you are as near and dear to Jehovah—as the apple of His eye!

You are hidden under the shadow of His wings!

Holy Spirit, help me daily to realize this precious truth!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Follow after love." 1 Corinthians 14:1

What can be so worthy of the Christian's thought, care, and anxious desire—as love?

Love to God, the center and source of all excellence.

Love to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, the personification of everything that is lovely.

Love to believers, for His sake, and because they are His children.

Love to sinners, because He commands us.

The law requires love, and the gospel, when applied by the power of the Holy Spirit, produces it.

This divine love is not in our hearts by nature; we are enmity with God and others. It is not to be produced by human effort. It flows from divine grace. It is produced by the Holy Spirit. Its exercise is both our happiness and our holiness.

There is only so much true godliness—as there is sincere love.

Let us follow after love. Let us cultivate love to the Lord's people, for the Lord's sake. Let us love all who love Jesus, though in some things they differ from us.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The best garment for a justified sinner to wear

"Be clothed with humility." 1 Peter 5:5

Humility is the best garment for a justified sinner to wear.

It is of great importance, to have and to nourish right views . . .

of our own littleness and insignificance;

of our vileness and unworthiness; and

of our own absolute and constant dependence on the mercy of our God.

We must be habitually looking at the Lord Jesus,

what He was in His ancient glory;

what He became for us;

what He now is; and

what we shall soon be with Him.

God has said He will look to and dwell with the humble.

He gives grace unto the humble.

He who humbles himself—shall be exalted.

He will hear the cry, grant the desire, and save the humble person.

Jesus, from my proud heart remove

The bane of self-admiring love!

Oh, make me feel and own with shame,

I less and worse than nothing am!

The least of saints with pity see,

The chief of sinners save, in me!

~ ~ ~ ~

"Be still—and know that I am God!" Psalms 46:10

The dispensations of divine providence are often very perplexing! Our God has His way in the sea, and His path in the deep waters, and His footsteps are not known. Reason is confounded, and faith is staggered!

But He hushes our fears, silences our cries, and bids us "Be still—and know that I am God!" We must lie quietly before Him . . .

as the lamb at the shepherd's feet;

as the child in the parent's arms.

He will not harm us Himself, nor will He let others do so.

We must learn that He is God:

infinitely wise,

invariably good,

always a Sovereign.

He does according to His will in heaven, on earth, in the sea, and all deep places. None can stay His hand, or dispute His right to accomplish His will.

Let us therefore keep silence before Him.

He is our God—and we are His people. His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures throughout all generations.

Let us not murmur—for He is gracious.

Let us not complain—for He is a Father unto us.

Let us not fear—for He is faithful.

Rather, let us wait upon Him, submitting in all things to His will, and surrendering ourselves into His hands with, "Here I am—do with me as seems good to You!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"The things that accompany salvation." Hebrews 6:9

Let us inquire, "What are these things that accompany salvation? Do we possess them?"

Spiritual life, evidenced by convictions of sin; crying to God for deliverance from sin; groaning under the weight of the body of sin and death.

An increasing discovery of our own weakness, imperfection, and misery.

A tender conscience, which trembles at sin, and feels deeply for God's glory. Contrition or brokenness of heart for sin, accompanied with holy mourning before God.

A filial fear of God, lest we should dishonor His name, disgrace His cause, and grieve His love.

A deep-rooted concern for holiness, both in the heart and the life.

Fervor in devotion, earnestly breathing out the desires of the heart before God, or grieving when it is not so.

A jealousy of self, as to our sincerity and uprightness of intention; lest we should be led astray by the corruptions which are within.

A chaste life, coupled with fear.

Diligence in the means of grace.

Searching of the Scriptures, to ascertain what is the Lord's will—and our duty.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"My presence shall go with you." Exodus 33:14

So the Lord promised Moses—and so He has promised us. Let us never venture anywhere, if we have reason to think the Lord will not favor us with His presence there.

The Lord's presence . . .

produces holiness,  
imparts power,  
fires with zeal,  
gives comfort, joy and peace,  
supports under losses, crosses and bereavements.

Let us plead for the Lord's presence to go with us; let us expect it; let us not be satisfied with anything else.

He went with Moses—and he persevered.

He went with Joshua—and he conquered.

He went with David—and he reached the throne.

He went with Paul—and he was more than a conqueror.

Nothing can be a substitute for the Lord's presence.

Let us daily cry, "If Your presence does not go with me—do not carry me not up hence."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"The Lord preserves all those who love Him." Psalms 145:20

All who truly know the Lord—love Him supremely, above our natural relations and earthly possessions. We discover in Him . . .

greater glory,  
more real worth,  
pre-eminent beauty,  
and superior excellence.

Those who love Him—are preserved by Him. He preserves them . . .

in trouble,  
in the world,  
from enemies,  
from evil,  
from wrath.

Yes, He will preserve them unto His kingdom and glory.

Do we love the Lord? Are we desiring to love Him? Are we preserved from sin, the world, and evil?  
If so, we must ascribe it to free and sovereign grace!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I lay down My life for the sheep." John 10:15

Oh, what an infinite love was the love of Jesus! He left His Father's bosom, left the songs of angels, left the throne of glory, and became a man, that He might die for His sheep!

Are we among His sheep? His sheep are gentle, harmless, peaceful, humble, dependant upon Him, and devoted to Him. They . . .

hear His voice,

love His ways, and

follow Him wherever He goes!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I will be your God throughout your lifetime—until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you!" Isaiah 46:4

What a sweet portion is this for the aged disciples of the Lord Jesus! Heart and flesh may fail them—but God will not forsake them! Having begun a good work in them—He will carry it on. He will be as kind, as tender, and as gracious at last—as at the first. He will carry us! "The eternal God is our refuge, underneath are the everlasting arms."

He will carry us . . .

safely through every danger,

over every difficulty,

into His presence and glory.

Aged pilgrim, lean upon your God, look unto Him. As the tender mother carries her nursing child, so will your God carry you. Fear not then, in reference to the evening of old age—your God will supply you; He will support you; and at last land you safe where the storms of trouble never blow, where weakness and fears are never felt.

The promise of your God cannot fail you; He will guide you and carry you to His kingdom and glory!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Cast them all on Me!

"Cast your burden upon the Lord—and He shall sustain you." Psalms 55:22

The Lord's people are often weary and heavily burdened. But the Lord kindly directs them to cast every burden upon Him—and promises to sustain them.

Guilt in the conscience and a sense of sin in the soul, often prove an intolerable burden; but the Lord will remove it by the blood of His Son, and the whisper of His Spirit.

Losses, crosses, enemies, temptations, and the inward conflict, often burden the soul; but Jesus says, "Cast them all on Me!"

He will . . .

sanctify them to us,

sustain us through them,

and deliver us out of them all.

He has determined that . . .

we shall use Him,

feel our dependence upon Him,

and glory only in Him.

Believer, He will sustain you . . .

by speaking peace to your troubled heart;

by enabling you to leave your intricate affairs in His hands;

by strengthening you with strength in your soul;

by enabling you to contrast the present with the future.

Precious Jesus, teach me to bring every burden to Your feet, and to cast every care upon You!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Who is on the Lord's side?" Exodus 32:26

Every believer is ready to answer, "I am!"

Well, the Lord has a cause upon the earth; it is weak—and needs your support; it is opposed—and needs your defense.

If you are on the Lord's side—you are on the side of truth and holiness. You go forth to Jesus outside the camp, bearing His reproach. If you are on the Lord's side, He will . . .

spare you as obedient children;

supply you as faithful servants;

protect you as loyal subjects; and

honor you as brave and courageous soldiers.

You will never see any just occasion to change sides; or regret that you decided to serve so good a Master. You will find the Lord to be on your side . . .

supporting you in affliction;

comforting you in trouble;  
giving you victory in death; and  
pronouncing you just in the judgment.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I will look unto the Lord." Micah 7:7

Looking to creatures always ends in disappointment; therefore it is forbidden by Him who loves us best, and consults our best interests at all times.

The prophet had been weaned from this dependence on the creature—by many and sore trials; and now he determines to look unto the Lord. Let us imitate his example. We cannot do better than look to the Lord . . .

as our Captain—to command us;  
as our Master—to direct us;  
as our Father—to provide for us;  
as our God—to defend us.

His name is a strong tower, the righteous run into it and are safe!

Looking to Jesus, will preserve us from a thousand snares!

The eyes of the Lord are always upon us—may our eyes be ever upon the Lord.

Let us look to Him for all we need—and from all that we fear.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Patientwaiters

"After he had patiently endured—he obtained the promise." Hebrews 6:15

Abraham was long tried—but he was richly rewarded.

The Lord tried him by delaying to fulfill His promise;

Satan tried him by temptations;

men tried him by jealousy, distrust, and opposition;

Hagar tried him by despising her mistress;

Sarah tried him by her peevishness!

But he patiently endured. He did not . . .

question God's veracity,

nor limit His power,

nor doubt His faithfulness,

nor grieve His love.

But he . . .

bowed to divine sovereignty,

submitted to infinite wisdom,

and was silent under delays,

waiting the Lord's time.

And so, having patiently endured—he obtained the promise.

God's promises cannot fail of their accomplishment.

Patientwaiters cannot be disappointed.

Believing expectations shall be certainly realized.

Beloved, Abraham's conduct . . .

condemns a hasty spirit,

reproves a murmuring one,

commends a patient one, and

encourages quiet submission to God's will and way.

Remember:

Abraham was tried;

he patiently waited;

he received the promise;

and he was satisfied.

Imitate his example—and you will share the same blessing.

~ ~ ~ ~ An antidote to all our miseries

"The love which God has to us!" 1 John 4:16

Who shall describe it?

What tongue or pen can set it forth?

It is infinite—so what can finite mortals say?

It is the present heaven of the saints—to know and believe the love which God has to them. None but the Holy Spirit can reveal it to us, or shed it abroad in our hearts.

Let us, beloved, daily pray that we may know and enjoy the love which God has to us. This will be an antidote to all our miseries—and a source of joy under all our sorrows.

Our friends and frames may change—but the love of God is unchangeable.

Our temporal prospects may be all blighted—but if we know and enjoy the love of God—we cannot be unhappy.

Who, or what shall separate us from the love of God? Jesus has told us that we shall never perish, neither shall any pluck us out of His hand.

The love of our God is the source of our happiness—and the cause of our safety. Oh, to know and believe the love which God has to us!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"O God, you have taught me." Psalms 71:17

None but God can teach us experimentally; and the lessons He teaches are always useful and important.

He teaches all His scholars to know themselves—their depravity, poverty, and slavery.

He teaches them His law—its purity, claims and penalty.

He teaches them His gospel—its fullness, freeness, and suitability.

He teaches them to know Himself—as a reconciled God, as their Father and faithful Friend.

His teaching is accompanied with power and authority.

Are we taught of God? We may know divine teaching—by its effects. It always produces . . .

humility, they sit at His feet,

dependence upon Him,

abhorrence of sin,

love to God as a teacher,

obedience to the lessons taught,

thirst for further attainments,

and brings us daily to Jesus.

Let us earnestly seek divine teaching; it preserves from . . .

dangers,

sorrows,

snares!

"I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is good—and leads you along the paths you should follow." Isaiah 48:17

Lord, teach me, and make me entirely Yours!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Return unto your rest, O my soul." Psalms 116:7

There is no rest for the Christian—but at the feet of Jesus! When we live near to Him, and exercise our faith upon Him—we are at rest. Then . . .

conscience is silent, or commends us;

the law has nothing to say against us;

the world has but little influence over us;

Satan is weak, and cannot overcome us.

But if we wander from Jesus . . .

we become weak;

we lose our courage; and

darkness, perplexity, and trouble frequently fill our minds.

But we MAY return—for Jesus is still inviting us.

We MUST return—or we cannot enjoy peace.

Let us therefore return unto our rest this morning.

"O Jesus! we come to You! Receive Your wandering sheep, restore unto us the joy of Your salvation, and let us find rest at Your cross. Oh, to rest on Your faithful Word! To rest from slavish fear, worldly care, and distressing anxiety! To rest in Your boundless love, satisfied with the dispensations of Your special providence."

Return, return, my soul from all your wanderings—and find your rest in Jesus, your faithful Friend and Savior!

Sweet assurance: "He will receive us graciously."

O Jesus, be my rest, and the solace of my soul this day!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He will surely take care of His children

"The Lord God Omnipotent reigns!" Revelation 19:6

Our God is . . .

the author of all good,

the only object of worship and fear,

the infinite, all-controlling Being.

He can do all things—with ease, swiftness, and precision.

He is on the throne of the universe!

His reign is merciful, just, glorious.

He reigns universally over . . .

every empire,

every kingdom,

every person,

every thing.

He rules over everything that takes place. Nothing escapes His notice, frustrates His purpose, or disorganizes His plan.

Does the Lord God Omnipotent reign? Then let us . . .

fear to offend Him;

aim to please Him well in all things;

trust in and rely on Him;

call upon Him in times of need.

This will . . .

conquer fear,

prevent sins,

strengthen faith,

nourish all the graces of the Spirit,

and inspirit us in our obedience.

If the Lord God Omnipotent reigns—then He will surely take care of His children. He will manage all their affairs. He will secure their best interests.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!" 2 Peter 3:18

Jesus saves His people by substitution—He took . . .

their place,

their obligations,

and their sins.

Jesus saves His people by communication—giving them grace and His Holy Spirit, with every spiritual blessing.

Jesus saves His people by instruction—for they are all taught of God.

Jesus saves His people by separation—bringing them out of, and delivering them from this present evil world.

Jesus saves His people by translation—

first out of the kingdom of Satan—into His kingdom of grace;

and then out of the present world—into His kingdom of glory.

Jesus saves His people . . .

to display His perfections;

to confound His foes;

to exalt His name;

to satisfy His love; and

from sympathy with them.

Salvation is entirely of God. What happiness to be saved thus!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"O keep my soul, and deliver me!" Psalms 25:20

We are going into the enchanting world; our hearts are false and fickle; let our prayer be, "O keep my soul, and deliver me!"

Keep me from sin—let me not indulge it in my heart!

Keep me from Satan—do not allow him not to lead me astray from You!

Keep me from evil men—do not let prevail against me.

Keep me in Your way—and in Your truth.

Keep me . . .

by Your Word;

by Your Spirit;

by Your presence;

or by Your rod.

Keep me at Your footstool, and deliver me from my own wandering heart. "Keep me as the apple of Your eye!"

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