

Evening Thoughts - August

by Octavius Winslow

The sermon reflects on the significance of Christ's ascension, the essence of true prayer, and the assurance found in His resurrection for believers.

Scripture: Lamentations 3:41, Mark 16:19, John 20:30

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "Ascension of Christ"

Description

Octavius Winslow reflects on the significance of Christ's ascension and exaltation, emphasizing that it was a royal and triumphant event, marked by divine authority and purpose. He highlights the importance of prayer as a vital expression of spiritual health, warning against the dangers of a lifeless routine devoid of genuine communion with God. Winslow also discusses the necessity of recognizing Christ's deity and the transformative power of His resurrection, which assures believers of their victory over sin and death. He encourages believers to examine their faith and relationship with God, urging them to embrace the fullness of His love and grace.

Transcript

EVENING THOUGHTS or

DAILY WALKING WITH GOD

AUGUST 1.

"So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Mark 16:19

The circumstance of the Lord's ascension and exaltation meets with frequent and marked allusion in the word of God. The Holy Spirit has attached to the fact the greatest weight. The writings of the Old Testament frequently and distinctly speak of it. Thus, in Psalm 47:5, "God is gone up with a shout; the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." It is impossible to misunderstand the obvious allusion of these words. He came down as God; He went up as "God manifest in the flesh." The ascension was worthy of His Deity. It was royal and triumphant. He went up as a "great King," and as a mighty Conqueror, "leading captivity captive." Attended by a celestial escort, and amid the shouts and acclamations of all the heavenly hierarchy, He passed within the portals of glory. The demand was made, the challenge was given, the answer was returned: "Lift up your heads, O you gates; and be you lift up, you everlasting doors; and the

King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty--the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates; even lift them up, you everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory." Yes, our Immanuel, God with us, is "gone up with a shout;" the Lord, JEHOVAH-JESUS, "with the sound of a trumpet." And although no echo of the heavenly minstrelsy was heard on earth, and the cloud which received Him veiled His receding form from the gaze of His disciples, hiding from the view the deepening glory which encircled His ascending flight, yet all heaven reverberated with the song, and grew resplendent with the majesty of His entrance within its gates.

The scene and the circumstances of our Lord's ascension were of thrilling interest, and deeply spiritual in their meaning. The period, which it is important distinctly to specify, was just forty days after His resurrection; thus affording ample time to establish, by the most irrefragable proof and tangible evidence, this master-fact of His history. Not only did He take this occasion to answer all the reasonings, and resolve all the doubts, of His still incredulous disciples, but He crowded into this brief space of time instructions the most needed, precious, and momentous to the well-being of His church. Drawing closer around Him, as if by the new and more powerful attraction of His risen body, His devoted apostles--the future builders of His spiritual temple--He proceeds to renew their divine commission to preach the gospel, widening it to the exigencies of the world that gospel was intended to bless. Opening their understandings more perfectly to understand the Scriptures, He cleared and enlarged their view of His Divine nature, the spiritual character of His kingdom, and the offices, ordinances, and discipline which were to be observed in each gospel-constituted section of His church. Thus, even after His atoning work was finished, and the great seal of heaven was affixed to it, our adorable Lord was still engaged in His Father's business, still intent upon promoting His glory, and the eternal welfare of His people. Oh, what love was the love of our Immanuel!

Let us now ascend in spirit with Jesus, and contemplate the glory of His exaltation. His entrance into heaven was the signal for the full development of His mediatorial power and glory. This was the promise of His Father, and this the reward of His death. "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." "Unto the Son He says, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever." "I appoint unto you," says Christ, "a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me." Thus His exaltation at the right hand of the Father was His full induction into His mediatorial kingdom. Now was He exalted "heir of all things"--now were "all things put under His feet"--now "all power in heaven and on earth was given to Him;" and from that moment that He touched the crown, and grasped the scepter, and the government was placed upon His shoulder, His truth was to advance, and His kingdom widen, with ever-growing power, until, supplanting all error, and subduing all kingdoms, He was to reign "King of kings and Lord of lords."

AUGUST 2.

"Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens." Lamentations 3:41

Prayer is the spiritual pulse of the renewed soul; its beat indicates the healthy or unhealthy state of the believer. Just as the physician would decide upon the health of the body from the action of the pulse, so would we decide upon the spiritual health of the soul before God, by the estimation in which prayer is held by the believer. If the soul is in a spiritually healthy, growing state, prayer will be vigorous, lively, spiritual, and constant; if, on the contrary, the heart is wandering, and love waxes cold, and faith is decaying, the spirit and the habit of prayer will immediately betray it.

The spirit of prayer may decline in the believer, and he may not at once be sensible of it. The form and the habit of prayer may for a while continue--but the spirit of prayer has evaporated, and all is coldness and dullness--the very torpor and frigidity of death! But of what real worth is the habit of prayer, apart from the spirit of prayer? Just what this planet would be without the sun, or the body without the living, animating, breathing soul--what but a cold, lifeless form? Yes, and a believer may be beguiled into this lamentable state, and not a suspicion of its existence be awakened; he may observe his accustomed habit, and use his empty form, and not suspect that all is cold and breathless as death itself. Oh, it is not the rigidly-observed form that God looks at; nor is it great volubility, and eloquent fluency, and rich sentiment, and splendid imagery, and rounded periods, that God regards: far from this; a man may not be able to give expression to his deep emotion in prayer, his thoughts may find no vehicle of utterance, language may entirely fail him; and yet the spirit of prayer may glow in his breast--and this--the true language of prayer--finds its way to the ear and to the heart of God. Reader, look well to the state of your soul; examine your prayers; see that you have not substituted the cold form for the glowing spirit--the mere body for the soul. Real prayer is the breathing of God's own Spirit in the heart: have you this? It is communion and fellowship with God: know you what this is? It is brokenness, contrition, confession, and that often springing from an overwhelming sense of His goodness and His love shed abroad in the heart: is this your experience? Again, we repeat it, look well to your prayers; test them, not by the natural or acquired gift which you may possess--this is nothing with God; but test them by the real communion you have with God--the returns they make to your soul.

There should be the searching out and the removal of that which hinders prayer. Many things weaken true prayer: unsubdued sin--unrepented sin--unpardoned sin (we mean the secret sense of it upon the conscience)--worldly-mindedness--light and trifling conversation, vain disputations--much and frequent communion either with unconverted individuals, or cold and formal professors--all these combined, or any single one, will, if suffered to prevail, unfit the mind for converse with God, and cause a decay of the spirit of prayer in the soul. Regard that as injurious which touches the devotional frame of your mind, which abridges the hour of prayer, and removes the fine edge of its holy enjoyment.

AUGUST 3.

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through his name." John 20:30, 31

All the value and efficacy of the atoning blood is derived solely and entirely from the dignity of the person who sheds it. If Christ do not be absolutely and truly what the word of God declares, and what He Himself professes to be, the true God, then, as it regards the great purpose for which His atonement was made, namely, the satisfaction of Divine Justice, in a full and entire sacrifice for sin, it were utterly valueless. We feel the vast and solemn importance of this point; it is of the deepest moment--it is the key-stone of the arch, sustaining and holding together every part of the mighty fabric.

Our examination of the claims of Christ to proper Deity cannot be too close; we cannot too rigidly scrutinize the truth of His Godhead; Jesus Himself challenges investigation. When personally upon earth, carrying forward the great work of redemption, on all occasions, and by all means, He announced and proved His Deity. Thus was He used to declare it--"I and my Father are one." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM." "I come forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father."

Thus was He used to confirm it--"I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father has sent me." "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works; that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in Him." Our blessed Lord saw and felt the importance of a full belief in the doctrine of His Godhead.

If the foundation of our faith were not laid deep and broad in this, He well knew that no structure, however splendid in its external form, could survive the storm that will eventually sweep away every lying refuge. And what, to the believing soul, is more animating than the full unwavering conviction of the fact, that He who bore our sins in His own body on the tree was God in our nature? that He who became our surety and substitute was Jehovah Himself--"God manifest in the flesh?" that, as God, He became incarnate--as God, He obeyed, and as God-man, He suffered the penalty?

What deep views does this fact give of sin! what exalted views of sin's atonement! Pray, dear reader, that the blessed and eternal Spirit may build you up in the belief of this truth. It is a truth on which we can live, and on no other can we die. That Satan should often suggest suspicions to the mind respecting the veracity of this doctrine we can easily imagine. That a dear saint of God should at times find his faith wavering in its attempts to grasp this wondrous fact, "the incarnate mystery," we marvel not.

It is the very basis of his hope; is it surprising that Satan should strive to overturn it? Satan's great controversy is with Christ. Christ came to overthrow his kingdom, and He did overthrow it. Christ came to vanquish him, and He triumphed. This signal and total defeat Satan will never forget. To regain his kingdom he cannot. To recover what he has lost he knows to be impossible. Therefore his shafts are leveled against Christ's members; and the doctrine, to them most essential and precious--the doctrine of Christ's Godhead--is the doctrine most frequently and severely assailed.

Let no believer sink in despondency under this severe temptation. Let him look afresh to the cross, afresh to the atoning blood, and faith in Him, whose word stilled the angry waves of the Galilean lake, and whose look prostrated to the ground the soldiers sent to His arrest, will give Him the victory.

AUGUST 4.

"For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ." 2 Corinthians 1:5

Christian reader, we suppose you to be no stranger to grief; your heart has known what sorrow is; you have borne, perhaps for years, some heavy, painful, yet concealed cross. Over it, in the solitude and silence of privacy, you have wept, agonized, and prayed. And still the cross, though mitigated, is not removed. Have you ever thought of the sympathy of Christ? Have you ever thought of Him, as bearing that cross with you?--as entering into its peculiarity, its minutest circumstance? Oh, there is a fiber in His heart that sympathizes, there is a chord there that vibrates, to that grief of yours. That cross He is bearing with you at this moment; and although you may feel it to be so heavy and painful, as to be lost to the sweet consciousness of this, still it rests on Him, as on you; and were He to remove His shoulder but for a moment, you would be crushed beneath its pressure. "Then why, if so tender and sympathizing, does He place upon me this cross?" Because of His wisdom and love. He sees you need that cross. You have carried it, it may be, for years: who can tell where and what you would have been at this moment, but for this very cross? What evil in you it may have checked; what corruption in you it may have subdued; what constitutional infirmities it may have weakened; from what lengths it has kept you; from what rocks and precipices it has guarded you; and what good it has been silently and secretly, yet effectually, working in

you all the long years of your life--who can tell but God Himself? The removal of that cross might have been the removal of your greatest mercy. Hush, then, every murmur; be still, and know that He is God; and that all these trials, these sufferings, these untoward circumstances, are now working together for your good and His glory.

And what would you know, may we not ask, of Jesus--His tenderness, and love, and sympathizing heart--but for the rough and thorny path along which you have been thus led? The glory and fullness, the preciousness and sympathy of Christ are not learned in every circumstance of life. The hour of prosperity, when everything passes smoothly on--providences smiling--the heart's surface unruffled--the gladsome sunlight of creature-happiness gilding every prospect with its brightness--this is not the hour, nor these the circumstances, most favorable to an experimental acquaintance with Christ. It is in the dark hour of suffering--the hour of trial and of adversity, when the sea is rough, and the sky is lowering, and providences are mysterious, and the heart is agitated, and hope is disappointed--its bud nipped, and its stem broken, and creature comfort and support fail--oh, then it is the fullness, and preciousness, and tenderness of Jesus are learned. Then it is the heart loosens its hold on created objects, and entwines itself more fondly and more closely around the Incarnate Son of God. Blessed Jesus! You Brother born for our every adversity! did You take our nature into union with Your own? And can You, do You, weep when we weep, and rejoice when we rejoice? O You adorable Son of God! we stand amazed, and are lost in this love, this condescension, and this sympathy of Your. Draw our hearts to Yourself; let our affections rise and meet in You, their center, and cling to You, their all.

AUGUST 5.

"Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him."
Romans 6:9

The resurrection of Christ was the consummation of His glorious victory. Until this moment, the Redeemer had all the appearance of one vanquished in the great fight. He was left slain upon the battle-field. Indeed it would appear that He had really endured a momentary defeat. He was now under the dominion of death; and as death was the consequence and penalty of sin, so long as He was subject to its power, He still lay beneath the sins of His people. Cancelled although they were by the blood He had just shed, the great evidence of their remission did not and could not transpire until the resurrection had passed. What gloom now enshrouded the church of God! The Sun of Righteousness was setting in darkness and in blood; and with it was descending into the tomb, the hopes of patriarchs and prophets, of seers and apostles. The "king of terrors" had laid low his illustrious victim; and the cold earth had closed upon His sacred body, mangled and lifeless. Oh, what a victory did hell and sin, death and the grave, now seem to have achieved! But the "triumphing of the wicked is short." In three days the tomb, at the mighty fiat of Jehovah, unveiled its bosom, and yielded back its Creator and Lord. The Sun of Righteousness ascended again in cloudless glory and peerless majesty, to set no more forever. The church of God, now "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," arose from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments. Now was the scene changed. His enemies, no longer wearing even the semblance of victory, were overthrown and vanquished. Hell was disappointed, and its gates forever closed against the redeemed. Sin was thrown to an infinite distance, and "death had no more dominion over him, God having loosed its pains, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." He rose a mighty and an illustrious Conqueror. And all this conquest, let it not be forgotten, was achieved in behalf of a chosen and a beloved people. It was our battle that He fought, it was our victory that He won. Therefore, called though we are to "wrestle against principalities and against powers," and exhorted though we are to "take unto us

the whole armor of God," we are yet confronted with enemies already vanquished. It would seem as though we were summoned, not so much to go out upon the field of battle, as upon the field of conquest; not so much to combat with the foe, as to gather up the spoils of victory. For what is every successful conflict with our spiritual adversaries--what is every corruption mortified--what is every temptation resisted--what is every sin overcome--but a showing forth the great victory already won by the Captain of our salvation? Every triumph of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a regenerate man is a display of the triumph of Him who, in hanging on the cross, and in rising from the grave, "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

AUGUST 6.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." Titus 3:5, 6

The conversion of a sinner to God is a convincing and precious evidence that Jesus is alive. In the regeneration wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, the life of Jesus is imparted. He breathes into the soul morally dead the breath of life, and it becomes a living soul. Until, in the exercise of His distinct office, this Divine Person of the adorable Trinity convinces of sin, quickens and brings the soul to Christ for acceptance, risen with Christ though that soul mystically is, it yet remains totally dead to, and insensible of, its great privilege--an utter stranger to that new life which springs from oneness with the "second Adam." The new nature which the Eternal Spirit now imparts is nothing less than the creation of the life of Christ in the soul; yes, even more than this, it is the bringing of Christ Himself into the soul to dwell there the "hope of glory" through time, and glory itself, through eternity.

Here, then, is an evidence that Jesus is alive, to a renewed mind the most convincing and precious. Thus quickened by the Eternal Spirit, believers become temples of Christ. Jesus lives in them. "I in them." "Know you not that Christ is in you?" "Christ lives in me." "Christ in you the hope of glory." Thus every believer is a living witness that Jesus is alive, because he bears about with him the very life of Jesus. By the indwelling of the Spirit, and realized by faith, Christ abides in the believer, and the believer abides in Christ. "I in them, and you in me, that they may be made perfect in one; that they also may be one in us."

We have already stated that this glorious entrance of Christ within the soul transpires at the period of the new birth. What, then, is every new conversion, every fresh trophy of redeeming grace, but a new manifestation to the universe of the life of Jesus? I see the sinner pursuing his mad career of folly, rebellion, and guilt. Suddenly he is arrested, I see him bowed to the earth, his heart broken with sorrow, his spirit crushed beneath the burden of sin. He smites upon his breast; acknowledges his transgression, confesses his iniquity, deplores it in the dust. Presently I see him lift his eye, and rest it upon a bleeding Savior; he gazes, wonders, believes, adores--is saved! By whom is this miracle of grace wrought?--The Spirit has descended to testify that Jesus is alive. That newly-converted soul, so lately dead in sins, but now quickened with Christ--that sinner but recently dwelling among the tombs, whom no human power could tame, now sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind--demonstrates that Christ is in heaven, and is alive, for evermore. Oh, it is the heaven-descending life of Jesus. Show me, then, a soul just passed from death unto life, and I will show you an evidence that Jesus is alive at the right hand of God.

AUGUST 7.

"And if they be bound in fetters, and are held in cords of affliction; then he shows them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded. He opens also their ear to discipline, and commands that they return from iniquity." Job 36:8-10

The very discipline which a covenant God employs with His child proves the existence and reality of grace in the soul. It is not the lifeless branch that He prunes, it is not the spurious one that He puts in the furnace. When He takes His child in hand to deal with him, it is with a view of drawing forth the grace which He has first implanted in the soul. The very trial of faith supposes the existence of faith; and the trial of any one grace of the Spirit supposes the previous indwelling of that grace in the believer. No man goes to a dry well to draw water from it; no man goes to a bank, in which he has made no previous deposit, to draw money from it. When God, the spiritual husbandman of the church, comes into His garden, and walks amid the "trees of righteousness," and in His sovereignty marks one here and another there for discipline, for pruning, whom does He select for this blessed purpose, but the trees which He has Himself planted? Jesus has declared that every plant which His heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up! And have we not often seen the solemn fulfillment of this threatening in the case of graceless professors?--the first blast of temptation has carried them away. God, perhaps, has brought them into deep trial; the storm of adversity has fallen upon them; death has snatched away the "desire of their eyes with a stroke;" riches have taken wings and flown away; character has been assailed; temptations have overtaken them; and what has been their end? We look for their religion--it has fled away like the chaff of the threshing-floor before the sweeping hurricane; their profession--it is all gone; their prayers--they have evaporated into empty air. The solemn "place of the holy," that knew them, knows them no more; the furnace tested the ore, and it proved nothing but tin; and so it will be with every plant that our heavenly Father has not planted; and so with all the wood, hay, and stubble, built upon an outward acknowledgment and profession of Christ.

But the true child of the covenant the Lord tries; and there is that in every believer, yes, the most eminent child of God--eminent for his holy and close walk--that needs trying. We cannot always see the necessity of the discipline; we wonder often why such a believer is so constantly and, in a sense, so severely dealt with. But what says God?--"I, the Lord, search the heart." Here is the secret revealed; the hidden evil of that holy man of God we could not discover. The powerful corruptions that dwelt in his heart--which he, in a degree, knew, and mourned over, and confessed daily before the Lord--were concealed from our eye; and while we were judging from outward appearance, the Lord was probing and searching the heart, and, for the subjugation of the evil that He discovered there, was thus disciplining His beloved child.

Afflicted believer, do not forget that it is "whom the Lord loves He chastens;" and again He declares, "Whom I love I rebuke and chasten." Then thank Him for the sanctified trial, that weans you from earthly things, that deadens your heart to every rival of Christ, and that imparts an upward spring to faith, hope, and love. Not one unkind thought is there in the heart of the God that now chastens you. True, He may have cut off all your earthly springs, He may lead you down into the deep valley of abasement; yet still is He love, and nothing but love. Could you look into His heart, not a spring would be found dwelling, nor a pulse beating there, that would not speak of love to you at this very moment. All that He seeks with regard to yourself is your increased fruitfulness; and to promote your real sanctification is to promote your real happiness. In all God's dealings with His covenant people, He seeks their greatest good, their highest happiness, and in nothing more manifestly than in this does he show the intense love which dwells in His heart towards them.

AUGUST 8.

"We love him, because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19

All love to God in the soul is the result of His love to us; it is begotten in the heart by His Spirit: He took the first step, and made the first advance--"He first loved us." Oh heart-melting truth! The love of God to us when yet we were sinners, who can unfold it? what mortal tongue can describe it? Before we had any being, and when we were enemies, He sent His Son to die for us; and when we were far off by wicked works He sent His Spirit to bring us to Him in the cloudy and dark day. All His dealings with us since then--His patience, restoring mercies, tender, loving, faithful care, yes, the very strokes of His rod--have but unfolded the depths of His love towards His people; this is the love we desire you to be filled with. "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God." Draw largely from this river--why should you deny yourselves? There is enough love in God to overflow the hearts of all His saints through all eternity; then why not be filled? "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God;" stand not upon the brink of the fountain, linger not upon the margin of this river; enter into it--plunge into it; it is for you--poor, worthless, unworthy, vile, as you feel yourself to be, this river of love is yet for you! Seek to be filled with it, that you may know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, and that your heart, in return, may ascend in a flame of love to God.

Deal much and closely with a crucified Savior. Here is the grand secret of a constant ascending of the affections to God. If you do find it difficult to comprehend the love of God towards you, read it in the cross of His dear Son. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Dwell upon this amazing fact; drink into this precious truth; muse upon it, ponder it, search into it, pray over it, until your heart is melted down, and broken, and overwhelmed with God's wondrous love to you, in the gift of Jesus. Oh, how will this rekindle the flame that is ready to die in your bosom! how it will draw you up in a holy and unreserved surrender of body, soul, and spirit! Do not forget, then, to deal much with Jesus. Whenever you detect a waning of love, a reluctance to take up the daily cross, a shrinking from the precept, go immediately to Calvary; go simply and directly to Jesus; get your heart warmed with ardent love by contemplating Him upon the cross, and soon will the frosts that gather round it melt away, the congealed current shall begin to flow, and the "chariots of Amminadab" shall bear your soul away in communion and fellowship with God.

AUGUST 9.

"Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you." 1 Corinthians 3:16

The believer may cherish an imperfect consciousness of the indwelling of the Spirit in his heart, and in this sense may the Holy Spirit of God be grieved. For the Holy Spirit effectually to call, renew, sanctify, and take possession of the soul, make it His temple, His permanent dwelling-place; and yet for that soul to entertain inadequate views of this great truth, forget who is dwelling with, and in him, slight his heavenly guest, and go out and come in, and live and act, as if he were not a temple of the Holy Spirit--what can be more dishonoring to the blessed and Eternal Spirit! Oh that this momentous truth should even for a single moment be lost sight of by the believer! That he should be the dwelling-place of the Most High, "the High and Lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy," the residence of the Holy Spirit, and yet entertain a feeling or a thought not in perfect harmony with so great a fact, does indeed show the necessity of the apostolic admonition, "Grieve not the Spirit of God."

When, too, the Spirit's still small voice is unheeded, and His gentle constraints are not yielded to, there is a slight put upon His work of a very grievous nature. The abiding Indweller of the saints of God, the Spirit, is perpetually speaking to, admonishing, leading, drawing, and constraining the soul; His great work there is to teach, to sanctify, to shield, to check, and to comfort the believer. Every holy shrinking from sin, every firm resistance of its power, every victory achieved over its motions, every aspiration after holiness, and every feeble desire to walk in the way of filial obedience to, and sweet communion with, God, is the fruit of the indwelling Spirit in the heart. How grieving, then, to that Spirit, when this loving voice of His, and these gentle constraints of His, are overlooked, stifled, disregarded, and slighted by the soul He so tenderly loves, and so faithfully watches over! Grieve not thus the Holy Spirit of God. In all His dealings with you, He seeks but your real good; He aims to deepen His own work in your hearts; He seeks but to promote your holiness, and to mature your soul for the joys and the companionship of the saints in light. Yet more; He desires your true happiness--He would draw you off from carnal things, He would allure you from objects of sense and sin, and open to you springs of higher and purer enjoyment, and lead you into fairer and greener pastures; this would He do by unfolding to you what you possess in Jesus, in the covenant of grace, and in a covenant God. Let your ear, then, be open to the persuasive voice of the Spirit, and follow promptly and implicitly His secret and gentle leadings.

AUGUST 10.

"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a reward. Whoever transgresses, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son." 2 John 8, 9

Dear reader, in whose righteousness do you at this moment stand? Is it all profession merely? Startle not at the question--turn not from it; it is for your life we ask it. Do you wonder that such a scrutiny into the ground of your hope should be made? Are you astonished at the solemn fact implied in this question? Do not be so. Many have lived in the outward profession--have put on Christ in the external garb--have talked well of Him--have been baptized in His name--given liberally for His cause, and, after all, have gone into eternity holding up the empty lamp! Oh, marvel not, then, that we repeat the question--in whose righteousness do you at this moment stand? Mere profession will not save your soul; your being found mingling among the wise virgins will not secure you an admittance with them into heaven; your talking respectfully of Jesus will avail you nothing; your church membership, your liberality, your spotless morality, your regular attendance on the sanctuary, all, all are in vain, without the justifying righteousness of the God-man upon you. What do you know of the broken heart and the contrite spirit? What do you know of the healing blood of Jesus? What do you know of a sense of pardon and acceptance? What do you know of the witness of the Spirit? What do you know of a humble, low, abasing view of yourself? What do you know of a holy and a close walk with God? What do you know of communion and fellowship with the Father and His dear Son? In a word, what do you know of yourself as a helpless, ruined sinner; and of Jesus, as a rich, able, and present Savior? Ponder these solemn questions. The hand that pens them trembles with awe as it traces this page. This is a day of great profession--a day of great ingathering into the church--a day when much chaff must necessarily be gathered with the wheat. It solemnly behooves, then, each professing member of Christ's church, of every name and denomination, narrowly to scrutinize his motives, deeply to prove his heart, and closely and habitually to examine the foundation on which he is building for eternity. Thus shall he walk, if he be an adopted child, in the sweet and holy realization of his pardon and acceptance; thus shall he experience the blessedness of "the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered;" and thus, too, shall he constantly be "a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and

meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

AUGUST 11.

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God." 1 John 5:13

No imagination can fully depict, nor language adequately describe, the importance of this life, the grandeur of its nature and destiny, and the necessity of its progression and its manifestations. Reader, the world without you teems with sentient existence. All is life, activity, and progress. There is vegetable life, and animal life, and rational life. To this may be added a species of moral life maintained by many, developed and embodied in religious forms, observances, and sacrifices.

But there is a life as infinitely superior to all these, as the life of Him whose mind conceived the towering pyramid is to that of the little insect that flutters its brief hour in the sun-beam, and then vanishes forever. It is the life of God in the soul of man. Deep planted in the center of his spiritual nature, lodged within the hidden recesses of his deathless mind, diffusing its mysterious but all-pervading and renovating influence through the judgment, the will, the affections, and linking his being with a future of glory, which "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive"--the world rushes on, and knows not its existence, and sees not its glories, and heeds not its joys--so deeply veiled from human eye, ay, and so far removed from human power, is the spiritual life "hidden with Christ in God."

Reader, there is a religion towering as far above your religion of merit, and of works, and of forms, as the heavens are above the earth, even as the spiritual life of God is above the sensual life of man. It is the religion of a renewed mind, of a renovated heart, of a conquered will, of a soul, all whose sanctified faculties are consecrated to the glory of God here, and are destined to the enjoyment of God hereafter. Have you thus "passed from death unto life"? Have the avenues of the heart, closed and barred against the admission of Christ, been thrown open?

Has the fearful alienation, and the withering curse, and the deep guilt, which portrays to you God as an enemy, and which arms all the powers of your soul against Him as His foe, been revealed, felt, and deplored? Has the captive spirit been disenthralled, the prey taken from the mighty, the power of the destroyer broken, and the soul awakened from its deep slumber to listen to its Creator speaking in tones of mercy, and in thoughts of love? Has light, emanating from the abodes of glory--invisible to others--dawned upon the midnight of your moral desolation?

Has a voice speaking from the throne of heaven--unheard by others--startled your spirit in its deep trance, and dispelled its floating dreams? Has a hand, mighty and unseen, riven the chain, thrown open the dungeon, and led you forth to liberty and joy, to life and immortality? In a word, has another and a diviner life, descending from God, and begotten within you by the Spirit, and unfolding to your view a heaven of brightness, full of purity, and fragrance, and song, been communicated to your soul, thus creating you a new creature, and constituting you an "heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ Jesus"? If so, then you may adopt the language of Paul, and exultingly exclaim, "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me." Oh, deem not this a vain thing, for it is your life!

AUGUST 12.

"That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." Philippians 2:15

Christian influence begins with the first grain of grace, the first throb of life, the first beam of light, the first tear of godly sorrow, the first glance of faith--but its impressions and its results are as lasting as eternity. Solemn thought! The holy, gracious influence of a good man stretches far into the invisible world. But consider his present influence; his sphere, be it what it may, is just what God has made it--but in that sphere, be it limited or boundless, he is God's "salt," designed to preserve and to transform, by the holy influence which he exerts, the community in which he dwells. What a blessing is that Christian! Be the relation what it may that binds him to society--a husband, a wife, a parent, a child, a brother, a sister, a friend--he shines as a light in the circle in which he moves. That little spark which glows in his bosom may light the steps of some benighted wanderer to eternity; that measure of grace, diffusing its fragrance through his soul, may cheer and invigorate some tried and drooping spirit; that degree of spiritual knowledge which he possesses may confirm some waverer, or guide some anxious and perplexed seeker after truth. The holy and commanding influence which God has given him may, with its power, awe and subdue the mightiest agent of evil; or with its smile, cheer and encourage the weakest and lowliest effort of good. Blessed of God, he is a blessing to man. Of course we are describing the character and influence of a spiritually-minded Christian--of the influence exerted by one in whom the spiritual life is in a healthy, vigorous, active state. Such a believer is an incalculable blessing in any sphere in which he may move; we feel, when we converse with him, that we are in the presence of a true Christian, that we are holding communion with one who is used to hold communion with God, one who dwells near the cross, who lives beneath the anointing blood, who walks humbly with God, who lives as: "beholding Him who is invisible." There is that in him which bespeaks the gracious man--there is an echo to your voice, a response to your thought, a vibration to your touch, which rebounds upon your own soul with thrilling effect. You have caught the contagion of his holiness--his example has rebuked you, his zeal has quickened you, his love has melted you, his faith has invigorated you, his grace has refreshed you, his smile has gilded the dark cloud that, perhaps, hung around your spirit, his word has fallen balmy and healing upon your sorrowing, bleeding heart--and the secret of all is, he is "a sweet savor of Christ" to your soul. Seek, then, dear reader, to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is heaven."

AUGUST 13.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Romans 5:10

God in Christ is the covenant God of His people. He is their God; their tender, loving, condescending Father. They may lose for a while the sight and enjoyment of this truth, but this contravenes it not; it still remains the same, unchangeable, precious, and glorious. Nothing can rob them of it. In the tempest let it be the anchorage of your faith, in darkness the pole-star of your hope. Let every circumstance--the prosperity that ensnares, and the adversity that depresses, the temptation that assails, and the slight that wounds--endear to your believing soul this precious thought, "God reconciled--God at peace--God a Father in Christ is my God forever and ever, and He will be my guide even unto death."

This thought is in the highest degree soothing, comforting, and encouraging. It seems to introduce us into the very pavilion of God's heart. There, curtained and shut in, we may repose in perfect peace. Not a single perfection can a believing mind view in Christ but it smiles upon him. Oh! to see holiness and

justice, truth and love, bending their glance of sweetest and softest benignity upon a poor, trembling soul, approaching to hide itself beneath the shadow of the cross! What a truth is this! All is sunshine here. The clouds are scattered, the darkness is gone, the tempest is hushed, the sea is a calm. Justice has lost its sting, the law its terror, and sin its power: the heart of God is open, the bosom of Jesus bleeds, the Holy Spirit draws, the gospel invites, and now the weary and the heavy-laden may draw near to a reconciled God in Christ. Oh, were ever words sweeter than these, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." "Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood." "He is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him."

If to view God in Christ is a comforting truth, it is also a most sanctifying truth. Why has God revealed Himself in Jesus? To evince the exceeding hatefulnes of sin, and to show that nothing short of such a stupendous sacrifice could remove it, consistently with the glory of the Divine nature, and the honor of the Divine government. Each sin, then, is a blow struck at this transcendent truth. The eye averted from it, sin appears a trifle; it can be looked at without indignation, tampered with without fear, committed without hesitation, persisted in without remorse, gloried in without shame, confessed without sorrow. But when Divine justice is seen drinking the very heart's blood of God's only Son in order to quench its infinite thirst for satisfaction--when God in Christ is seen in His humiliation, suffering, and death, all with the design of pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, how fearful a thing does it seem to sin against this holy Lord God! How base, how ungrateful, appears the act, in view of love so amazing, of grace so rich, and of glory so great! Cultivate a constant, an ardent thirst for holiness. Do not be discouraged, if the more intensely the desire for sanctification rises, the deeper and darker the revelation of the heart's hidden evil. The struggle may be painful, the battle may be strong, but the result is certain, and will be a glorious victory--VICTORY, through the blood of the Lamb!

AUGUST 14.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Matthew 25:31

Surpassing in glory all that the eye has ever seen, or the imagination has ever conceived, will be the second personal appearing of the Son of God. A perfect contrast will it present to His first advent. Then He appeared a king, but disguised in the form of a servant, without a retinue, without the insignia of royalty, without visible glory, His throne a cross, His crown the thorns, His scepter a reed. But His second coming will be in perfect contrast with this. He will now have thrown off the garment of humiliation, and will appear clad with the robe of majesty, the King acknowledged and adored.

In the first place, He will appear in the glory of the Father. "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father." As the representative of the Father, He appeared in the flesh: "He that has seen me, has seen the Father." But when He appears the second time, it will be with a clearer, brighter manifestation of the Father's glory; He will come as the Father's equal--as His own beloved Son, and with all the glory which the Father gave Him as the mediator of His church. This will contribute immensely to the splendor of the scene. The Father's glory and the Son's glory will now be seen to be one glory. All His former claims to a oneness with the Father, to a perfect equality with Him in essential dignity, will now be made good. How gloriously will shine out the Father's love, the Father's grace, the Father's wisdom, when the Son of God appears in the clouds of heaven with great glory and majesty! Exalted and precious as had been our previous view of the Father, methinks it will appear as nothing compared with the revelations which at that moment will burst in overwhelming power on the soul.

But more especially will He appear in His own personal glory. "The Son of man shall come in His glory." He will come in the glory of His Divine nature. His Deity will now be unveiled, unclouded, and undenied, the "God over all, blessed for evermore." He will appear as the "Great God, even our Savior." The question of His Deity will be set at rest forever. Will men deny it now? Will they refuse Him divine honor? Will they withhold from Him divine worship? Will they now lift their puny hands, and pluck the crown of Godhead from His brow? No! "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Angels will laud Him, saints will crown Him, devils fear Him, His enemies will bow to Him; every tongue shall confess His Deity. His own glory will shine out to the confusion of His foes, and to the admiration of His friends.

But He will also appear in the glory of His human nature. This was concealed beneath the cloud of sin and sorrow, when He was on earth. Although it was holy, spotless, flawless, yet it was humbled, bruised, and trodden under foot. But He will "appear the second time without sin unto salvation," that same humanity now robed in glory, and exalted in dignity. Especially will the glory of His priestly character now burst forth; and like the Jewish high priest, who, after he had offered the sacrifice, entered the holy of holies, taking in his hands the blood of atonement, then when he had sprinkled the blood upon the mercy-seat, put on his gorgeous robes, and appeared again to bless the congregation; so Jesus, our great High Priest, having offered Himself a sacrifice, and having entered within the veil with His own blood, will appear the second time, robed in majesty and glory, to bless His people, and to take them to Himself forever.

Angels and saints will contribute to the glory of the scene. The celestial beings who sang His natal song, and who escorted Him back to heaven, with ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands more, will now throng His descending way. Clustering around still nearer to His person will be the ransomed church, the "holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." And as she nears the new earth, the future scene of her rest and glory, a "great voice out of heaven" will be heard, saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Oh, blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God our Savior, when He "shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all those who believe"!

AUGUST 15.

"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." John 10:29, 30

The doctrine of Christ's pre-existence affords a most exalted and satisfactory view of the nature, glory, and stability of that covenant of grace entered upon by the infinitely glorious people of the triune God in behalf of the church. This covenant must be rich in its promises of mercy, seeing that it is made by Jehovah Himself, the fountain of all holiness, goodness, mercy, and truth, whose very name is "love." It must be glorious, because the Second Person in the blessed Trinity became its surety. It must be stable, because it is eternal. It must meet all the circumstances of a necessitous and tried church, because it is "ordered in all things." It must be sure, seeing its administration is in the hands of an infinitely glorious Mediator, who died to secure it, rose again to confirm it, and "ever lives" to dispense its blessings, as the circumstances of His saints require. How animating are the words which direct the believer to the fullness of this precious covenant: "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an

everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." And when the children of the covenant are brought by the converting grace of the Holy Spirit into this visible relation, what says God concerning them? "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." And what is the precious blood of Jesus, but the "blood of the New Testament," the "blood of the everlasting covenant," deriving all its value, efficacy, and preciousness from the personal dignity and pre-eternal glory of Him who shed it?

The eternal love, grace, and fullness of Christ to His church spring from this glorious truth. Is the eternity of Christ's being a doctrine of revealed truth? equally so is the doctrine of the eternity of His love, with all the streams of blessing of which it is the spring-head. The love of Jesus runs parallel with His being; and as that is from all eternity to all eternity, so is His love towards the church which He has purchased with His own blood. "I have loved you," says the Lord, "with an everlasting love." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before Him in love." Hard though this truth is to be believed by some, yet in the clearer light of heaven will every child of God see that electing love brought Him there, and but for which He had been lost forever.

Call you this doctrine of Christ's pre-existence a dry, speculative, and uninfluential article of faith? Oh, no! it is manna and fatness to him that believes it with his heart, while it supplies him with the most powerful and persuasive motive to a holy, godly life. On this truth, experimentally and practically received, he can live; and on it in the simple exercise of faith, he, can die. More precious is it to him than gold, yes, than much fine gold, since it endears to his soul the incarnate God, sustains him in his conflicts, comforts him in his trials, strengthens his aspirations for Divine conformity, and will, in the final hour, and amid the swellings of Jordan, enable him to exclaim, "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!"

AUGUST 16.

"Watch you therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:36

How closely and beautifully has our dear Lord connected together these two important Christian duties--"Watch and pray!" The one as necessary as the other is sublime. Watchfulness implying uncertainty as to time; prayer expressive of an earnest desire to be found in an appropriate attitude for the event. "Therefore, be you ready also; for in such an hour as you do not think, the Son of man comes." "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches, and keeps his garments." Surely if our affections were supremely fixed on Jesus--were He to us as the "chief among ten thousand," and did we really feel in our hearts the sentiment which our lips so often utter, "Whom have I in heaven but You? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside You," the return of our Lord would be to us a matter of most delightful expectation and wearisome desire. Our earnest prayer would oftener be, "Why are Your chariot-wheels so long in coming? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

Dear reader, are you prepared for the coming of the Lord? Are you ready to enter in with Him to the marriage supper? Are you a professor? Have you grace-renewing, humbling, sanctifying, Christ-exalting grace in your heart? Is your preparation one of principle, one of habit? Will it abide the searching scrutiny of that day? Examine and see. Take nothing for granted, in deciding a matter so solemn, and involving interests so momentous. Christ must be all in all to you--the entire ground-work and fabric of your

salvation. Mere notions of truth--external membership with the church--sacraments--regular attendance upon means--punctilious observance of days, and forms, and ceremonies, in themselves are no fit preparation for this awful event. As the fruit of a living faith in Jesus, they are valuable; but standing alone, without repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they are the wood, the hay, the stubble which the last fire will consume.

Believer in Jesus! the day of your redemption draws near! The Lord is at hand. Behold, the Judge stands at the door. The days we live in are eventful--the times are perilous. The signs, thickening and darkening around us, are deeply and fearfully significant. We are standing on the eve of events perhaps more awful than the world has ever seen. A period of glory for the church, brighter than has yet shone upon her, and a period of woe to the world, more dark than has yet cast its shadows upon it, seems rapidly approaching. Then, "let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober." "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand." "Watch you, therefore: for you know not when the Master of the house comes; at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly, He find you sleeping." Oh, to blend the steady thought of our Redeemer's coming with every present duty, privilege, and effort, how would it hallow, cheer, and dignify us, consecrating by one of the most solemn motives the lowliest work of faith and the feeblest labor of love!

Thus, too, would there be a growing preparedness of mind for the judgments which are yet to come upon the earth. "For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws near."

AUGUST 17.

"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." Ephesians 1:9, 10

That we have a partial discovery of God, His wisdom, and power, and goodness, in creation, is not enough to satisfy a mind convinced that God is holy, to quiet a conscience convicted of sin, and to soothe a heart bowed with godly grief. The grand inquiries with such a soul are, "How can I be just with God? How can I satisfy His justice, appease His wrath, and propitiate His regard? How may I know that He is my God, my reconciled Father? How may I be assured that He loves, has pardoned, and accepted me, and that I shall be with Him forever?" Traverse in imagination the extent of creation, wander over the most beautiful landscape, pluck the most fragrant flower, glide upon the surface of the fairest lake, scale the highest mountain, soar to the furthestmost star, still the momentous question rushes back upon the mind, "How may I stand with acceptance before this holy Lord God?" Poor anxious searcher for peace, all nature unites in testifying, "It is not in me! it is not in me!"

The knowledge of God derived from His law must also necessarily be partial and shadowy. It is true, the holiness of God is discovered in its precepts; and the justice of God is inferred from its threatenings; but the law can never be more or less than what the Holy Spirit has declared it to be--the "ministration of condemnation." As a fallen creature, revolving the great matter of the soul's salvation, it can afford no

satisfactory reply to the great question, "What must I do to be saved?" It breathes not a sound of mercy to a poor sinner; not one kind, soothing, saving accent falls from its lips. It speaks of death, but not of life; of condemnation, but not of salvation. It asserts the authority, reflects the holiness, and denounces the vengeance of God; but not one beam of hope springing from His mercy, His grace, or His love, does it throw upon the gloomy path of a soul passing on to judgment, bowed beneath the terrors of the Lord. Reader! are you seeking salvation by the law? Alas for you! How can that save which but condemns? How can that give life, which in its nature and design is but the minister of death? Mount Sinai is no refuge for your soul, poor guilty, condemned, heart-broken sinner. Get you down from the mount, before you are consumed. Abandon, as utterly futile and deceptive, all your legal expectations of acceptance, and betake yourself to the one only refuge of your guilty soul--the cross of the incarnate God.

We are now conducted to the consideration of the great point. We have seen that upon an extensive scale a great and fatal experiment had been made by man to know God and happiness. That God existed he had every demonstrative proof. The same evidence which authenticated His being, proved Him to possess great and glorious attributes; and the manner in which these attributes were displayed gave some insight into his character; "so that they are without excuse." Wearied as the creature was with a laborious, and dispirited with a fruitless research, God, in the depths of infinite mercy and wisdom, takes the work of salvation into His own hands. He sends His only-begotten and well-beloved Son into the world, and declares Him to be the perfect revelation of Himself to man. On this important truth Jesus Himself laid great stress. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet have you not known me, Philip? He that has seen me has seen the Father; and how say you then, Show us the Father? Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwells in me, He does the works."

The great revelation of the Godhead, Jesus, is equally the revelation of all the perfections of the Godhead. Is "God only wise"? Jesus is the glory of that wisdom--"Christ, the wisdom of God." He is the master-piece of Divine wisdom; its highest manifestation; its most perfect, finished production. We trace the lesser forms of wisdom in nature; we ascend a scale higher in providence; we reach the summit in grace. Here we launch into a boundless immensity, and, overwhelmed with its greatness, can but exclaim, "Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

AUGUST 18.

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." Colossians 2:14

THE atonement of the blessed Redeemer was a full and entire blotting out of the sins of the believer. Need we say anything upon the vast importance of this truth? Need we say how closely it stands connected with the peace, the sanctification, and the eternal glory of the sinner that builds on Christ? The phraseology which the Holy Spirit employs in announcing the doctrine of Divine forgiveness confirms the statement we have made--"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed you." Where would be the constraining-power of the motive to "return to God," but on the ground of a full and entire blotting out of all sin? This it is that subdues, overcomes, and wins back God's wandering child. This it is that abases the soul, deepens the conviction of its vileness, makes the sin of departure, of ingratitude, of rebellion, so abhorred, when, on the broad basis of a full and free blotting out of sin, God bids the soul "return"--"I have blotted out all your sins, therefore return. Though you have gone after other lovers--though you have departed from me, forgotten,

and forsaken me, yet have I blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions: return, for I have redeemed you." Again, "In those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." What an astounding truth is contained in these two passages! In the one it is declared, that if the iniquity of Israel, and the sin of Judah, be sought for, they shall not be found. So entire was the blotting out, so glorious was the work of Jesus, so perfect His obedience, that if the eye of God's holy law searches--and where can it not penetrate?--it cannot discover them. In the other, it is declared, that, so fathomless are the depths of that sea of atoning blood, which Christ has poured out, that in it are cast, never to be found again, all the sins of the believer. So that the trembling soul may exclaim, "You have, in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption; for You have cast all my sins behind Your back."

Look up, you saints of God, who are disconsolate through fear of condemnation. See all your sins charged to the account of your mighty Surety. Yes, see them all laid upon Him as your substitute. See Him bearing them away--sinking them in the ocean of His blood--casting them behind His back. Look up and rejoice! Let not the indwelling of sin, the remains of corruption, cause you to overlook this amazing truth--the entire blotting out of all your sins, through the atoning blood of your adorable Immanuel. It is truth, and it is your privilege to live in the holy enjoyment of it. Fully received into the heart by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, its tendency will be of the most holy, sanctifying, abasing character. It will weaken the power of sin--it will draw up the heart in pantings for Divine conformity--it will deaden the influence of the objects of sense--expel the love of the world and of self--impart tenderness to the conscience, and cause the soul to go softly--"walking worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

AUGUST 19.

"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Colossians 1:17, 18

In this striking and beautiful passage, Jesus is declared to be before all created things; could this be true, if He Himself were a created being? Christ is either created, or He is uncreated. He is a creature, or the Creator. If a mere creature, then it were absurdity to suppose Him creating all things; for He must have been created before He could create: then He could not have been before all created things. If, too, He were a mere creature, how could He uphold all things? for He would need an upholding power for Himself. No mere creature ever has, or ever can, sustain itself. The angels could not, for they fell. Adam could not, for he fell. And Christ could not have sustained Himself in the solemn hour of atonement, when standing beneath the mighty load of

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