

Evening Thoughts - December

by Octavius Winslow

The sermon explores the profound implications of spiritual-mindedness, love, and the eternal consequences of our character and choices in light of God's truth.

Scripture: Matthew 3:10, Ephesians 2:4

Topics: "Eternal Perspective", "Spiritual Mindedness"

Description

Octavius Winslow reflects on the profound implications of human character and its eternal trajectory, emphasizing that every moment shapes our destiny. He warns of the imminent judgment awaiting the unconverted, urging believers to recognize the urgency of their spiritual state. Winslow highlights the necessity of spiritual-mindedness, which stems from a genuine relationship with Christ, and the importance of love as the driving force behind our actions. He encourages believers to seek a deeper communion with Jesus, acknowledging the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Ultimately, he calls for a life dedicated to God, rooted in love and holiness, as the path to true fulfillment and eternal joy.

Transcript

EVENING THOUGHTS or

DAILY WALKING WITH GOD

DECEMBER 1.

"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Matthew 3:10

It is a solemn and a veritable thought, that human character is training and molding for eternity. Nothing in the universe of matter or of mind is stationary; everything is in motion; the motion is progressive--the movement is onward. Things whose being is limited by the present state, obeying the law of their nature, advance to their maturity, and then perish. They attain their appointed and ultimate perfection, and then die. Beings destined for another, a higher, and a more enduring state, are each moment tending towards that existence for which their natures are formed, and to which they aspire. There is, innate in man, a principle which incessantly yearns for, and reaches after, a state of perfection and deathlessness. He would sincerely, at times, quench in eternal night the spark of immortality which glows in his breast. A

morbid distaste of life, or a pusillanimous shrinking from its evils, or the anticipation of some impending calamity--in most cases springing from a mind diseased, and destroying the power of self-control--has tended to inspire and to strengthen this desire. But eternal sleep is beyond his reach. He sighs for it, but it heeds not his moan; he invites it, but it comes not at his bidding; he inscribes the sentiment over the charnel-house of the dead, but it changes not their estate--he may slay the mortal, but he cannot touch the immortal. The compass of his soul points on to life. The long, bleak coast of eternity, its shores washed by the rough billows of time, stretches out before him; and towards it his bark each instant tends, and to it will assuredly arrive. Such is the chain that links man to the invisible world! So interesting and important a being is he. An eternity of happiness or of misery is before him; from it he cannot escape, and for one or the other, mind is educating, and character is forming.

A truth kindred in its solemnity to this is the nearness of judgment to every unconverted individual. To his eye--its vision dimmed by other and diverse objects--it may appear far remote. Damnation may seem to linger, judgment to tarry. Sentence executed against an evil work may appear delayed. But this is an illusion of the mental eye, a deception of Satan; a lie which the treacherous and depraved heart is eager to believe. Never was a snare of the devil more successful than this. But death, judgment, and hell are in the closest proximity to man; nearer than he has any conception of. His path winds along the very precipice that overhangs the billows of quenchless flame. Let him assume what position he may, high or low, fortified or unguarded, from that position there is but one step between him and death, between death and judgment, between judgment and a fixed and a changeless destiny. As one has truly remarked, what a creature of time is eternity! Time is, in some respects, more solemn and important than eternity. The present decides the future. The future is all that the present makes it. It is troubled or serene, inviting or revolting, happy or miserable, a blessing or a curse, as time, omnipotent time, ordains it.

DECEMBER 2.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ (by grace you are saved;) and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:4-6

All real spiritual-mindedness is the offspring of a new and spiritual life in the soul. It is the effect of a cause, the consequent upon a certain condition of mind. Before a man can exercise any degree of true heavenliness, he must be heavenly. Before he can bring forth the fruits of holiness, he must be holy. Dear reader, is this your condition? Have you the life of God in your soul? Have you passed from death unto life? Is the fruit you bear the result of your engrafting into Christ? You attend upon the service of the sanctuary; you visit the abodes of the wretched; you administer to the necessities of the poor; you are rigid in your duties, and zealous in your charities; but does it all spring from faith in Christ, and from love to God? Is it from life, or for life? Oh! remember, that the spiritual-mindedness which the Bible recognizes, of which God approves, has its root in the life of God in the soul!

But in what does spiritual-mindedness consist? It is the setting of the mind upon spiritual objects. The heart is fixed on God. The bent of the soul--its desires and breathings--are towards Him. It is a firm, growing approximation of all the renewed faculties to spiritual and heavenly realities. God in Christ is the attraction of the heart. That the needle of the soul always thus steadily points to Him, we do not affirm; there are false attractions which lure the affections from God, and deaden the spirituality of the mind. To be carnally-minded brings a kind of death even into the renewed soul; but this is not his reigning, predominant state. Let God remove that false attraction, let the Eternal Spirit apply with His own

quicken power some precious truth to the heart, and the wayward, tremulous needle returns to its center; the heart is again fixed on God, its exceeding joy. Oh, how holy and precious are these restorings!

Individual and close communion with Jesus, in the matter of confession of sin, and washing in the atoning blood, strongly marks the state of spiritual-mindedness. No Christian duty forms a surer test of the spiritual tone of the believer than this. The essence, the very life, of spiritual-mindedness is holiness; and the deepening of heart-holiness is the measure of our sanctity of life. Now, there can be no progress in holiness apart from a habit of frequent laying open of the heart, in the acknowledgment of sin, to Christ. The conscience only retains its tenderness and purity by a constant and immediate confession; the heart can only maintain its felt peace with God, as it is perpetually sprinkled with the blood of Jesus. The soul, thus kept beneath the cross, preserves its high tone of spirituality unimpaired, in the midst of all the baneful influences by which it is surrounded. The holy sensitiveness of the soul that shrinks from the touch of sin, the acute susceptibility of the conscience at the slightest shade of guilt, will of necessity draw the spiritual man frequently to the blood of Jesus. Herein lies the secret of a heavenly walk. Acquaint yourself with it, my reader, as the most precious secret of your life. He who lives in the habit of a prompt and minute acknowledgment of sin, with his eye resting calmly, believingly, upon the crucified Redeemer, soars in spirit where the eagle's pinion ranges not. He walks in secret with God, and "sits in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

DECEMBER 3.

"And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God." 2 Thessalonians 3:5

Love to God is the governing motive of the spiritual mind. All desire of human admiration and applause pales before this high and holy principle of the soul. Its religion, its devotion, its zeal, its toils, its sacrifices spring from love. Love prompts, love strengthens, love sweetens, love sanctifies all. This it is that expels from the heart the rival and false claimant of its affections, and welcomes and enthrones the true. It may, at times, like the pulse of the natural life, beat languidly; yet, unlike that pulse, it never ceases entirely to beat. The love of God in the soul never expires. Fed from the source from where it emanates, the holy fire, dim and dying as it may appear at times, never goes out.

Have you this evidence of the spiritual mind, my reader? Does the love of Christ constrain you? It is the first and the chief grace of the Spirit--do you possess it? "Now abides faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love." It is the main-spring, the motive power, of the spiritual mechanism of the soul; all its wheels revolve, and all its movements are governed, by it. Is this the pure motive that actuates you in what you do for God? Or, do there enter into your service and your sacrifice anything of self-seeking, of thirst for human approbation, of desire to make a fair show in the flesh, of aiming to make religion subserve your temporal interests? Oh, search your hearts, and see; sift your motives, and ascertain! Love to God--pure, unmixed, simple love--is the attribute of the spiritual mind; and, in proportion to the intensity of the power of love as a motive, will be the elevated tone of your spirituality. Nor need there be any lack of this motive power. "God is love," and He is prepared to supply it to the mind's utmost capacity. We are straitened in ourselves, not in Him. The ocean on whose margin we doubtfully, timidly stand is infinite, boundless, fathomless. The Lord is willing to direct our hearts into its depths, but we hesitate and draw back, awed by its infinite vastness, or stumbling at its perfect freedom. But to a high standard of heavenly-mindedness, we must have more of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which He has given unto us. We must love Christ more.

DECEMBER 4.

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one." 1 John 5:7

That the doctrine of the Trinity is a truth of express revelation, we think it will not be difficult to show. We may not find the term employed to designate the doctrine in the Bible, but if we find the doctrine itself there, it is all that we ask. On opening the Bible, with a view to the examination of this subject, the first truth that arrests our attention is a solemn declaration of the Divine Unity--"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." Deut. 6:4. Prosecuting our research, we find two distinct people spoken of in relation to the Godhead, under the titles of the "Son of God," and the "Holy Spirit of God," to whom are ascribed the attributes of Deity, and the qualities of a person, implying Divine personality. A step further brings us to a passage in which we find these three distinct, Divine people, associated in an act of solemn worship--"Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." What conclusion must we draw from these premises? First, that there is a unity of the Godhead; and second, that in this unity, or in this one Godhead, there is a trinity of people, or three distinct subsistences, styled the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Here, then, we have the doctrine for which we plead.

The following passage clearly teaches the same glorious truth, Matt. 3:16, 17: "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up immediately out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and, lo, a voice, from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." What a conclusive evidence is this passage of the blessed Trinity! The Father speaks from the excellent glory; the Son ascends from the water, and receives the attestation of His Father; and the Holy Spirit descends from the heavens, and overshadows Him. Here are three distinct people, to each of whom the marks of Deity are ascribed, and between whom it is impossible not to observe a bond of the closest and tenderest unity. Again, 1 Cor. 12:4-6: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations; but it is the same God who works all in all." With what a sunbeam is this glorious truth here written! How richly it glows with light peculiarly its own! That here are three distinct subsistences, who can deny? And that they are equal, who can doubt? In Gal. 4:6, "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Again, here are three people announced in connection with the blessed act of the Father's adoption of His people. Jude 20, 21, "But you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Wilfully or judicially blind must he be who sees not in these words the great truth for which we plead. And it is the glory of our land, and the joy of our hearts, to know, that from every Christian pulpit, the doctrine of the blessed Trinity is proclaimed whenever the apostolic benediction is pronounced: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen."

DECEMBER 5.

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Colossians 3:10

One important witness which the eternal Spirit bears for Christ is, when He impresses upon the believer the image of Christ. It is the peculiar work of the Spirit to glorify Christ; and this he does in various blessed ways, but none more strikingly than in drawing out the likeness of Christ upon the soul. He glorifies Christ

in the believer. He witnesses to the power of the grace of Christ in its influence upon the principles, the temper, the daily walk, the whole life of a man of God. The image of Christ--what is it? In one word, it is Holiness. Jesus was the holiness of the law embodied. He was a living commentary on the majesty and purity of the Divine law. The life He lived, the doctrines He proclaimed, the precepts He enjoined, the announcements He made, the revelations He disclosed, all, all were the very inspiration of holiness. Holiness was the vital air He breathed. Although in a world of impurity, all whose influences were hostile to a life of holiness, He yet moved amid the mass of corruption, not only untouched and untainted, but reflecting so vividly the luster of His own purity, as compelled the forms of evil that everywhere thronged His path, either to acknowledge His holiness and submit to His authority, or to shrink away in their native darkness. And this is the image the Holy Spirit seems to draw, though it be but an outline of the lineaments upon the believing soul. What a testimony He bears for Christ when He causes the image of Jesus to be reflected from every faculty of the soul, to beam in every glance of the eye, to speak in every word of the tongue, and to invest with its beauty every action of the life!

Oh that every child of God did but more deeply and solemnly feel that he is to be a witness for Jesus!--a witness for a cross-bearing Savior--a witness to the spotless purity of His life, the lowliness of His mind, His deep humility, self-denial, self-annihilation, consuming zeal for God's glory, and yearning compassion for the salvation of souls--a witness to the sanctifying tendency of His truth, the holiness of His commands, the purifying influence of His precepts, the elevating power of His example. It may not be that all these Divine characteristics center in one person, or that all these lovely features are reflected in a single character. All believers are not alike eminent for the same peculiar and exalted graces of the Spirit. It was not so in the early and palmy days of the gospel, when Jesus Himself was known in the flesh, and the Holy Spirit descended in an extraordinary degree of sanctifying influence upon the church: it would therefore be wrong to expect it now.

DECEMBER 6.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another." John 13:34, 35

There is one test--a gentle, sweet, and holy test--by which the most timid and doubting child of God may decide the genuineness of his Christian character--the evidence to which we allude is, love to the saints. The apostle John presents this as a true test. He does not say, as he in truth might have said, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love God;" but placing the reality of this wondrous translation upon a lower evidence, the Holy Spirit, by the inspired writer, descends to the weakest exhibition of the grace which his own power had wrought, when he says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Thus so costly in God's eye would appear this heaven-born, heaven-like grace, that even the faint and imperfect manifestation of it by one saint to another, shall constitute a valid evidence of his relation to God, and of his heirship to life eternal.

Our blessed Lord, who is beautifully said to have been an incarnation of love, places the evidence of Christian discipleship on precisely the same ground; "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another." He might justly have concentrated all their affection upon Himself, and thus have made their sole and supreme attachment to Him the only test of their discipleship. But no! In the exercise of that boundless benevolence which was never happy but as it was planning and promoting the happiness of others, He bids them "love one another;" and condescends to accept of this as evidencing to

the world their oneness and love to Himself.

This affection, let it be remarked, transcends all similar emotions embraced under the same general term. There is a natural affection, a humane affection, and a denominational affection, which often binds in the sweetest and closest union those who are of the same family, or of the same congregation; or who assimilate in mind, in temper, in taste, or in circumstance. But the affection of which we now speak is of a higher order than this. We can find no parallel to it; not even in the pure, benevolent bosoms of angels, until, passing through the ranks of all created intelligences, we rise to God Himself. There, and there alone, we meet the counterpart of Christian love. Believer, the love for which we plead is love to the brethren--love to them as brethren. The church of God is one family, of which Christ is the Elder Brother, and "all are members one of another." It is bound by a moral tie the most spiritual, it bears a family likeness the most perfect, and it has a common interest in one hope the most sublime. No climate, nor color, nor sect, affects the relationship. If you meet one from the opposite hemisphere of the globe, having the image of Christ, manifesting the fruits of the Spirit; who, in his walk and conversation, is aiming to cultivate the heavenly dispositions and holy habits of the gospel, and who is identifying himself with the cause of God and of truth--and you meet with a member of the one family, a brother in the Lord, one who calls your Father his Father, your Lord his Lord; and one, too, who has a higher claim upon your affection and your sympathy than the closest and the tenderest natural relation that life can command.

DECEMBER 7.

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience." James 1:2, 3

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted," has been the exclamation and the testimony of many of the Lord's covenant and tried people. It is often difficult at the moment to justify the wisdom and the goodness of God in His dealings with His saints. David found it so, when he saw with envy the prosperity of the wicked. Job found it so, when, in the hour and depth of his afflictions, he exclaimed, "You are become cruel to me: with Your strong hand You oppose Thyself against me." Jeremiah found it so, when in his affliction he said, "He has hedged me about, that I cannot get out: He has made my chain heavy." And yet, where is the furnace-tried, tempest-tossed believer, that has not had to say, "In very faithfulness has He afflicted me"? During the pressure of the trial, at the moment when the storm was the heaviest, he may have thought, "all these things are against me;" but soon he has been led to justify the wisdom and the love, the faithfulness and the tenderness, of His covenant God and Father in His dealings.

The furnace is a needed process of sanctification. If not, why has God so ordered it? If not, why is it that all His people are "chosen in the furnace of affliction"? Why do all, more or less, pass through it? The furnace is needed--it is needed to "purify the sons of Levi, and purify them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness;"--it is needed to consume the dross and the tin which adhere so closely to the precious ore, to burn up the chaff that mingles with the precious grain, to purify the heart, to refine the affections, to chasten the soul, to wean it from a poor empty world, to draw it from the creature, and to center it in God. Oh the blessed effects of this sanctified process! Who can fully unfold them? That must be blessed indeed, which makes sin more exceedingly sinful--which weans and draws away from earth--which endears Jesus, His precious blood and righteousness--and which makes the soul a "partaker of His holiness." This is the blessed tendency of the sanctified discipline of the covenant, and in this way does the Holy Spirit often sanctify the child of God.

DECEMBER 8.

"But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1:4

Are you a child of affliction, dear reader? Ah! how many whose eye falls on this question shall say, "I am the man that has seen affliction!" Dearly beloved, so too was your Lord and Master, and so too have been the most holy and eminent of His disciples. Then "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy." This is the path along which all the Lord's covenant people are led; and in this path, thorny though it be, they pluck some of their choicest flowers, and find some of their sweetest fruits.

I am not addressing myself to those who are strangers to sanctified sorrow--whose voyage thus far has been over a smooth and summer sea--whose heart's affections have never been sundered, whose budding hopes have never been blighted--whose spring blossoms have never fallen, even while the fruit was beginning to appear--or whose sturdy oaks around which they fondly and closely clung, have never been stricken at their side: to such, I speak a mystery when I speak of the peculiar and costly blessings of sanctified affliction. Not so the experienced child of God, the "man that has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath." He is a witness to the truth of what I say. From this mine, he will tell you, he has dug his richest ore--in this field he has found his sweetest fruit. The knowledge of God to which he has here attained--His tender, loving, and wise dealings with His people--of His glorious character and perfections, His unchangeable love and faithfulness--his knowledge of Christ--His all-sufficiency and fullness, His sympathy and love--the knowledge of himself--his poverty, vileness, unworthiness--oh where, and in what other school, could these high attainments have been made, but in the low valley of humiliation, and beneath the discipline of the covenant of grace? thus does the Spirit sanctify the soul through the medium of God's afflictive dispensations; thus they deepen the work of grace in the heart--awaken the soul from its spiritual drowsiness--empty, humble, and lay it low--thus they lead to prayer, to self-examination, and afresh to the atoning blood; and in this way, and by these means, the believer advances in holiness, "through sanctification of the Spirit."

Blessed school of heavenly training! By this afflictive process, of what profounder teaching, what deeper purification, have we become the favored subjects! It is good for us to have been afflicted. Now have we, like our Lord, learned obedience by the things which we have suffered; and like Him, too, are being made perfect through suffering. The heart has been emptied of its self-confidence--the shrine has been despoiled of its idol--the affections that had been seduced from God, have returned to their rest--the ties that bound us to the vanities of a world, perishing in its very using, have become loosened--the engagements that absorbed our sympathies, and secularized our minds, have lost their fascination and their power--the beguiling and treacherous enjoyments that wove their spell around us, have grown tasteless and insipid--and thus by all these blessed and hallowed results of our trial, the image of the earthy has become more entirely effaced, and the image of the heavenly more deeply engraved, and more distinctly legible.

DECEMBER 9.

"Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth." Ecclesiastes 12:1

Remember Him who created you, and who created you for His glory--who fashioned your form, who endowed your mind, and who placed you in your present position in life, be it of rank and influence, or of

lowliness and obscurity. Remember Him as a holy, sin-hating God, and that you stand to Him in the relation of a fallen creature, impure and unrighteous, impotent and hostile, unworthy to live, unfit to die. Remember what He must have done, and what He must do for you if ever that relation is changed, and you become a new creature, an adopted child, an heir of glory. Remember the strong and inalienable claims He has upon you--claims which He will never relax or revoke. He who commanded that the first of the ripe fruits, and creatures of the first year, to be offered to Him, bids you remember Him in the days of your youth!--your first days, and your best, while the body is in health, and the mind is vigorous, and all the faculties of the soul fit you especially for His service and His glory. Oh, remember Him now, before other things and other objects come and occupy the place which belongs to God alone.

Remember your breath is in His hands; that the axe of judgment lies at the root of the green tree as well as the dry, that the blooming flower and the young sapling are often cut down long before the stately cedar or venerable oak bows itself to the earth. Build not upon length of days; plume not yourself with the laurels which profound learning, or brilliant talent, or successful enterprise, may already have won for you. See how soon they fade upon the brow which they adorn! Think of Kirk White, and of Spencer, of Urquhart, and of McCheyne, of Taylor, of Swain, and of Griffin--those beautiful cedars of God's Lebanon--how verdant and how fragrant were the honors which went down with them to the tomb. But they early lived in the Lord, and unreservedly for the Lord--and the Lord took them early to live with Himself forever. They gave to Him the first and the best, and He took them the first to glory, and has given them the best of glory. Who would not live and die as did they?

Build, then, on nothing beneath the sky, save an immediate and undoubted interest in Christ. Until you are born again, you are in peril; until God possesses your heart, as to any real holiness, usefulness, and happiness, your life is a perfect blank. You live to yourself; and not to live to Him who created you, who upholds you, and who will soon judge you--is a poor life indeed. Oh, give to Christ the golden period of your life. Bind the early sacrifice upon the altar. Lay upon it the first-fruits; Jesus is worthy of your young affections, and of your earliest development of the mind. Oh what a treasure is Christ! To begin life with Christ in the heart, is to begin with a radiant morning--the sure prelude of a smiling day, and of a cloudless evening!

DECEMBER 10.

"Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears my voice. Pilate says unto him, What is truth?" John 18:37, 38

"What is Truth?" Momentous question! The anxious inquiry of every age, of every church, of every lip. Pilate knows it now! And he might have known it when the question first fell from his trembling lips--for Eternal and Essential Truth stood as a criminal at his bar!

But summon the witnesses, and they shall testify what is truth. Ask the devils, who beheld His miracles and quailed beneath His power, and they will answer--"It is Jesus, the Son of God Most High." Ask the angels, who beheld His advent and announced His birth, and they will answer--"It is the Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Ask His enemies, who nailed Him to the tree, and they will answer--"Truly it is the Son of God!" Ask His disciples, who were admitted to His confidence, and who leaned upon His bosom, and they will answer--"We believe and are sure that it is Christ, the Son of the living God." Ask the Father, testifying from the "secret place of thunder," and He will answer--"It is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Summon witnesses from the inanimate world. Ask the water blushing into wine--ask the sea calmed by a word--ask the earth trembling upon its axis--ask the rocks rent asunder--ask the sun veiled in darkness--ask the heavens robed in mourning--ask all nature agonized and convulsed, as He hung upon the tree--and all, as with one voice, will exclaim--"JESUS IS TRUTH!"

Happy are they, who, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, receive Jesus into their hearts as the truth--believe in Him as the truth--walk in Him as the truth--and who, under the sanctifying influence of the truth, are employing their holiest energies in making Him known to others as "the way, the truth, and the life"--thus, like their Lord, "bearing witness unto the truth." In the Lord Jesus, then, as the head of the new-covenant dispensation, grace and truth essentially and exclusively dwell; and sitting at His feet, each sincere, humble disciple may receive grace out of His fullness, and be taught the truth from His lips. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Added, to this, let us not forget that the "Spirit of truth" is promised to "guide us into all truth."

DECEMBER 11.

"Obey those who have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as those who must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly." Hebrews 13:17, 18

Oh you flocks of the Lord, you churches of Christ, you saints of the Most High, pray, pray for your ministers! No one more deeply needs, no one more affectingly asks your prayers than he. For you he toils in the study, wrestles in the closet, and labors in the pulpit. For your best welfare he consecrates his youthful vigor, his mature experience, his declining years. To you he has been the channel of untold blessing. Often has the Lord spoken through him to your oppressed heart, thoughts of peace and words of love. He has often been instrumental of removing doubt from your mind, of clearing up points of truth that were hard to be understood, and of building you up on your most holy faith. Often, too, has he been the means of endearing Christ to you, leading you to Him as a Counselor, as a Brother, as a Friend, and as a Redeemer; thus unveiling His glory to your eye, and His preciousness to your heart. Perhaps he first told you of Jesus! From his lips you heard the life-giving sound of the gospel; by him you were wounded, by him you were healed, and by his hands you were received within the pale of the Christian church. Is it an unreasonable request that he should ask especial remembrance in the petitions which you breathe to God for "all saints"? Think how often you have filled his mind with thoughtfulness, his heart with anxiety, his eyes with tears, his mouth with holy, fervent pleadings at the throne of grace. Then, will you not continue to pray for your pastor? Gratitude demands it.

Remember him not in your petitions on ordinary occasions merely, but let there be especial seasons of prayer set apart for him alone. Particularly if you know him to be passing through a season of trial, or sorrow, or mental anxiety--take him constantly and especially to the Lord. You need not know the cause of that sorrow. Proper feelings dictating, you will not wish to know. It will be enough for you that, with delicacy of perception, you have seen the shade of sadness on his brow; the look of anxiety in his eye; the expression of deep thoughtfulness upon his countenance; you will instantly take him in your heart to the Lord. And oh! who can unfold the extent of the blessing, which your prayers may thus be the channel of conveying to his soul? You may deem yourself, my reader, but an insignificant member of the flock. The grace which the Lord has given you may constrain you to think meanly of yourself, and to retire into the shade; but mean and feeble though you may be in your own eyes, yet you have power with God in prayer. See you yon little cloud sailing athwart that blue sky? it has absorbed its precious treasures from some

hidden spring, and, guided by God's invisible hand, is going to unbosom itself upon some parched and thirsty spot, refreshing, gladdening, and fructifying it. The little rivulet, that flows noiseless and unseen from that shaded spot, has thus transmitted from its sequestered glen an influence felt far beyond it, and to an extent it never conceived, and never can know! Such, dear reader, may be the character, and such the results, of your intercessions in behalf of your pastor. Silver and gold you may have none to offer him; he asks not this at your hands. But your prayers you may give, and your prayers he does ask. He beseeches you, earnestly and affectingly, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive in your prayers to God for him! And oh! the hallowing, cheering influence which those prayers may shed upon his mind--eternity alone can reveal! The return of blessing to yourself will be incalculable and immense. The moisture absorbed from the earth, returns again to the earth in grateful and refreshing showers. And thus every prayer which you in fervency and in faith breathe to heaven for your pastor, will, through him, return again in "showers of blessing" upon your own soul.

DECEMBER 12.

"The mystery of the gospel." Ephesians 6:19

The apostle doubtless borrows the word from the secret rites of the heathen temples, to which none were admitted, and which none understood, but the initiated. To all others they were mysteries. Freed from its original and profane use, it is here appropriately applied to designate the nature and the doctrines of the gospel of Christ; and thus becomes, by its association, a hallowed and expressive term. Nor is this the only place in which it occurs in the same use. Thus in 1 Cor. 2:7, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world for our glory." Equally clear is it, that none are initiated into this mystery of the gospel, but those who are partakers of the second birth. For, "unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is to him a mystery. He is blind, and cannot see the glorious mysteries of this kingdom of grace. Addressing His twelve disciples, our Lord further elucidates this idea, when He reminds them of their great and gracious privilege: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto those who are without, all these things are done in parables." Still more clearly is this truth developed in His remarkable prayer, thus recorded: "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Your sight."

If, dear reader, you have been led in any degree into the knowledge of this glorious mystery of truth, hesitate not to ascribe it to the grace of God. Unto you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom. The sovereignty of God has so ordered it. The learning, the intellect, the philosophy of the worldly-wise and prudent, have afforded you no help in the solution and unraveling of these divine and glorious enigmas. "But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." To babes in Christ--to the lowly-minded disciple--to the learner, willing to receive the kingdom of God as a little child--God unfolds this mystery, that no flesh should glory in His presence. Oh favored, happy soul, if you, through the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit, have been led into the mystery of the Father's love in Christ to poor perishing sinners! "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Your sight."

DECEMBER 13.

"In the multitude of my thoughts within me your comforts delight my soul." Psalm 94:19

As a system of Divine and unfailling consolation, there is a charm in the gospel of Jesus of indescribable sweetness. Originating with that God, not only whose name and whose perfection, but whose very essence is love, and who Himself is the "God of all comfort," it must be a gospel of "strong consolation," commensurate with every conceivable sorrow of His people. Let those testify who, amid the trials and the conflicts of their pilgrimage, have thus experienced it. Indeed it is only by this test that its real character can be estimated. As we can convey no adequate idea of sound to the deaf, of color to the blind, or life to the dead, neither can we by the most elaborate reasoning or eloquent description, impart to a mind estranged from sorrow--if such there be--any proper conception of the magic power of the gospel, as a consummate system of the richest consolation and support. But let a Christian be placed in circumstances of the deepest grief and sorest trial--the bread and the water of affliction his food--the iron entering his soul--the heart bereaved--the mind perplexed--the spirit dark--all human hopes blighted, and creature cisterns failing him like a spring in the summer's drought--then let the Spirit of God, the Divine Paraclete, open this box of perfume, breathing into his soul the rich consolations, the precious promises, the strong assurances, the divine counsels, and the glowing hopes which it contains, and in a moment the light of love appears in his dark cloud, his fainting spirit revives, and all is peace. What a wondrous gospel must that be which can meet the necessities of man at every point; whose wisdom no human perplexity can baffle, and whose resources of sympathy and comfort, no case of suffering or of sorrow can exhaust.

Tried soul! repair to this unfailling spring of comfort. God speaks to you in it--it is the unsealing of the heart of Jesus--it is the still small voice of the Spirit. It speaks to you--it bids you "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you;" "Call upon Him in the day of trouble, and He will answer you." It assures you that, amid all your perplexing cares, "He cares for you." It promises you that, for your flint-paved path, your "shoes shall be iron and brass;" and "that as your days, so shall your strength be." It tells you that "a woman may forget her nursing child, yet will not God forget you;" that in all your assaults, you "shall dwell on high, your place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks," and though hemmed in on every side by a besieging foe, and all other supplies cut off, yet "your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure." It invites you to lay your griefs and weep out your sorrows upon the bosom of Jesus, and so, "leaning upon your Beloved, ascend from the wilderness." Oh, to be led into the heart-felt experience of these truths, even while passing through billows of sorrow to a martyr's flames!

DECEMBER 14.

"It is Christ that died." Romans 8:34

"Delivered Him up for us all." If any other expression were necessary to deepen our sense of the vastness of God's love, we have it here. Who delivered up Jesus to die? Not Judas, for money; not Pilate, for fear; not the Jews, for envy--but the Father, for love! "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." In this great transaction we lose sight of His betrayers, and His accusers, and His murderers, and we see only the Father travailing in the greatness of His love to His family. And to what was He delivered? To the hands of wicked men--God's "darling to the power of the dogs." To poverty and want, to contempt and infamy, to grief and sorrow, to unparalleled suffering, and a most ignominious death. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He has put Him to grief." And for whom was He thus delivered up? "For us all;" for the church purchased with His own blood. For all in that church He has an equal love, and for all He paid an equal price. Deem not yourself--poor, unlettered, and afflicted as you may be--less an object of the Father's love, or less the purchase of the Savior's merits. Oh, blessed, comforting truth! For us all! For you, who are tempted to interpret your afflictions as signals of wrath, and your sins as seals of condemnation; your

poverty as the mark of neglect, your seasons of darkness as tokens of desertion, and your doubts and fears as evidences of a false hope and of self-deception; for you, dear saint of God, Jesus was delivered up.

The death of Christ formed the first of all the subsequent steps, in the working out of the great plan of the church's redemption. To this, as its center, every line of truth converged. It was as a suffering Messiah, as an atoning High Priest, as a crucified Savior, as a Conqueror, returning from the battle-field with garments rolled in blood, that the Son of God was revealed to the eye of the Old Testament saints. They were taught by every type, and by every prophecy, to look to the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Christ must die. Death had entered our world, and death--the death of the Prince of Life--only could expel it. This event formed the deepest valley of our Lord's humiliation. It was the dark background--the somber shading of the picture of His life, around which gathered the light and glory of all the subsequent parts of His history.

But in what character did Christ die? Not as a martyr, nor as a model, but as a substitute. His death was substitutionary. "God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us." This great truth the apostle, in another place, appropriates to Himself. "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Here was the personal application of a general truth. And this is the privilege of faith. There breathes not a babe in Christ, who may not lay his hand upon this glorious truth--"Christ gave Himself for me." Since Christ bore our sins, and was condemned in our place; since by His expiatory death the claims of Divine justice are answered, and the holiness of the Divine law is maintained, who can condemn those for whom He died? Oh, what security is this for the believer in Jesus? Standing beneath the shadow of the cross, the weakest saint can confront his deadliest foe; and every accusation alleged, and every sentence of condemnation uttered, he can meet, by pointing to Him who died. In that one fact he sees the great debt cancelled, the entire curse removed, the grand indictment quashed--and "No condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus," are words written as in letters of living light upon the cross.

DECEMBER 15.

"Yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God." Romans 8:34

This is the second part of the mediation of Christ, which the apostle assigns as a reason why none can condemn the believer. It would seem by the word "rather," that we are taught to look upon this fact of our Lord's life as supplying a still stronger affirmation of the great truth He was establishing. A few observations may make this appear. The atoning work of Christ was in itself a finished work. It supplied all that the case demanded. Nothing could possibly add to its perfection. "I have finished the work which You gave me to do." But we wanted the proof; we required that evidence of the reality and acceptance of the atonement, which would render our faith in it a rational and intelligent act. The proof lay with Him, who was "pleased to bruise Him, and put Him to grief." If God were satisfied, then the guilty, trembling sinner may confidently and safely repose on the work of the Savior. The fact of the resurrection was therefore essential, to give reality to the atonement and hope to man. Had He not returned in triumph from the grave, the sanctity of His precepts, the sublimity of His teachings, the luster of His example, and the sympathies awakened by the story of His death, might have attracted, charmed, and subdued us--but all expectation of redemption by His blood would have been a mockery and a delusion. But "this Jesus has God raised up" and, grounded on this fact, the believer's acquittal is complete. When He bowed His head and gave up the spirit, the sentence of condemnation was reversed; but when He burst the bonds of

death, and appeared in the character of a victor, the believer's justification was forever sealed. "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."

Here, then, lies the great security of the believer. "Delivered for our offences, He rose again for our justification." Resting his hand of faith upon the vacant tomb of his living Redeemer, the Christian can exclaim, "Who is he that condemns? it is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again." Oh, to feel the power of His resurrection in our souls! Oh, to rise with Him in all the reality and glory of this His new-born life; our minds, our affections, our aspirations, our hopes, all quickened, and ascending with our living Lord. "Because I live, you shall live also."

"Who is even at the right hand of God." The exaltation of Christ was a necessary part of His mediatorial work. It entered essentially into the further continuance of that work in heaven--the scene of the intercessory part of the High Priest's office. "The right hand of God" is a phrase of expressive power and dignity. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto Him." What stronger assurance has the believer that no impeachment against him can be successful than this? His Savior, his Advocate, his best Friend, is at the right hand of the Father, advanced to the highest post of honor and power in heaven. All power and dominion are His. The revolutions of the planets, and the destinies of empires, His hand guides. The government is upon His shoulders; and for the well-being, security, and triumph of His church, power over all flesh, and dominion over all worlds, is placed in His hands. Who, then, can condemn? Jesus is at the right hand of God, and the principalities and powers of all worlds are subject to His authority. Fear not, therefore, O believer! your Head and Redeemer is alive to frustrate every purpose, to resist every plot, and to silence every tongue, that would condemn you.

DECEMBER 16.

"Partakers of the Holy Spirit." Hebrews 6:4

Too lax views of the Holy Spirit we may entertain, but too exalted views we cannot. The great danger is in dishonoring and grieving Him, by low thoughts of the place which He occupies in the Church of God, and of the part which belongs to Him in the salvation of man. But who can trace His operations in our Lord, and not rise from the contemplation of the subject with the deepest conviction of the necessity and the importance of possessing a large portion of the Spirit, in order to deep holiness of heart and great usefulness of life? Christian reader, accustom yourself to address the Spirit in your approach to the footstool of mercy, as a Divine and distinct person; recognizing Him in all the offices which He sustains in the great economy of grace. This will very much tend to expand your mind with exalted views of His Divine and personal glory; and, at the same time, by devoutly contemplating His all-sufficiency, will make you more thoroughly acquainted with your own deep and urgent necessity of His grace. And whatever that necessity may be, ever bear in mind the Spirit is more than equal to it.

Who can reveal Jesus to the soul, save the Spirit? As He only could work in Christ the glory which beamed forth from the Godhead through the manhood, so He only can throw that glory in upon the soul of man. Do I want the peace-speaking blood of atonement upon my conscience?--the Spirit applies it. Do I desire to know my acceptance in the righteousness of Christ?--the Spirit seals it. Do I long to see the Father revealed in the Son?--the Spirit unfolds Him. Do I need in all my trials and conflicts to see the Lord Jesus

to be my comfort?--the Spirit, the Comforter, takes of the things that belong to Him, and shows them to my soul--Thus in these, and in a thousand other ways, the Spirit glorifies Christ, first in Himself, and then in His people.

To the Christian reader I would once more say--Jesus is in heaven, alive at the right hand of God, having received the promise of the Father, and is prepared to bestow the Spirit in all the plenitude of His grace on those who ask the gift at His hands. He who so fully possessed the Spirit Himself, waits to give it as richly to others. As man, Jesus knew His own need--as man, He sympathizes with yours. Do not be content, then, with asking this most precious of all boons in a stinted measure, but seek it in its fullness. You are coming to a heart that loved you unto death--that bled for you on the cross--that lives for you on the throne; that desires with all the intensity of infinite affection to pour down upon you the greatest, the richest of all blessings--His own Spirit. Do you want to gain the ascendancy over your easy-besetting sins? then, "be filled with the Spirit." Want you to hold creatures and creature-blessings in their proper place? then, "be filled with the Spirit." Want you that Jesus should be the chief in your affection? then, "be filled with the Spirit." Want you that there shall be no room in your heart for carnal joys, for worldly delights, for sinful pleasures? then, "be filled with the Spirit." Want you to have much of the element of heaven below, inspiring you with longing desires for the full fruition of heaven above? then, "be filled with the Spirit." Thus will you be a living "epistle, known and read of all men." Thus will the world "take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus." And thus, whatever your lawful calling may be, inscribed upon yourself, your labor, your all, shall be Holiness to the Lord.

DECEMBER 17.

"Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself unto us, and not unto the world?" John 14:22

Such is the infinite majesty, and such the superlative beauty of the Lord Jesus, that were He, in our present state, to stand before us fully unveiled to the eye, overwhelmed with the effulgence of His presence we should exclaim, "Lord, temper Your glory to my feeble capacity, or enlarge my capacity to the dimensions of Your glory!" When in the days of His humiliation He stood upon Mount Tabor, in close converse with Moses and Elias, upon the decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem, glowing with the grandeur of the theme, and fired with the thought of the redemption that was before Him, the veil of His humanity would seem for a moment to have dropped, and the Godhead it could imperfectly conceal shone forth with such overpowering splendor, that the disciples who were with Him fell at His feet as dead. After His ascension into heaven and His inauguration at the right hand of His Father, He again manifested forth His glory in an apocalyptic vision to John at Patmos; and again the same overpowering effects were produced: "And when I saw Him," narrates the exiled evangelist, "I fell at His feet as dead."

And yet this is the Savior "whom the nations abhor," whom men despise and reject; possessing to their eye "no form nor loveliness why they should desire Him." This is He to whom the world He created refused a home, and whom man suffered not to live, casting Him out as an accursed thing, too vile in their view to dwell among them--fit only to die! "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears," that I might weep, dear Lord, while meditating upon the ignominy, the insult, and the suffering to which my species subjected You. Had another order of being so insulted Your person, so mangled Your form, so requited Your love, so slighted and abhorred You, I might have wept in secret places, mourned, and afflicted my soul, and vowed eternal vengeance against Your calumniators and Your murderers--but it was hatred, ingratitude, and malignity, wearing my own nature--it was man, yes, Lord, it was I myself! But for my sin, my crime, my hell, that spotless soul of Your had known no burden, that gentle spirit no cloud, that

tender heart no grief, and that sacred body no scar. And when I read the story of Your wrong--how they calumniated You, blasphemed You, scourged You, spit upon You, mocked You, smote You, and then bore You to a felon's death--I could cover me with sackcloth, bury my face in ashes, and no more cherish the sin--the hateful, the abhorred, the accursed sin, that caused it all.

But overpowering as a full unveiling of the majesty of the Lord Jesus would be to us in our present imperfect state, it yet ranks among our most prized and precious mercies, that He does at times so graciously and especially manifest Himself, as to awaken the exclamation, "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!" Holy and blessed are such seasons! Delighted, yet amazed, the believer inquires, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself unto us, and not unto the world?" He answers and resolves the mystery--as He does the mystery of all His dealings with us--into love. "He that loves Me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Our experience of these divine manifestations of Christ, forms one of the strongest evidences of His indwelling in our hearts. To none but those who fear the Lord, is the mystery of His covenant revealed. "The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him." They whose posture of soul most resembles that of the "beloved disciple," are led the deepest into the secret of God's love to us in Jesus. Their intimate acquaintance with Jesus, must bring them into a closer relation and communion with God; it must result in more perfect knowledge of Him--His glory, His mind, and His love. Blessed, but much forgotten truth--he who knows much of the Son, knows also much of the Father.

DECEMBER 18.

"Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." 1 Thessalonians 1:4

The question has often been asked by the trembling life, "How may I be assured of an interest in the eternal purpose and everlasting love of God? By what evidence may I conclude that I am one 'whom He predestinated?'" Listen to the words of the apostle, addressed to the Thessalonian saints: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." But how did he know this? Had he read their names in the Lamb's book of life? No! See how he solves the mystery. "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance." By this he knew their election of God. And by a similar test you must bring the question to an issue. Has the gospel come to your heart by the Holy Spirit? In other words, have you been called by the inward call? Have you fled as a poor sinner to Christ, and is He all your salvation and all your desire? Assume the truth of nothing, take nothing for granted as to your salvation, until this is the case.

It is with the fact of your open call, and not with the fact of your secret predestination, that you have mainly to do. It is this central and visible link in the chain that you must grasp. Secret things belong to God. The things revealed belong to us. You are assuming an attitude of the most appalling temerity, in attempting to force your way into the secret counsels of the Most High, plunging into the fathomless depths of a past eternity, and intruding into those mysteries, veiled and unsearchable, upon whose awful threshold an angel's foot dare not tread. But oh, how near, how visible, how precious, the truth with which you have to do--God standing in the most impressive and winning attitude of a gracious, sin-pardoning God--inviting you; imploring you, all guilty, and burdened, and sorrowful as you are, to accept His mercy; to avail yourself of His forgiveness, to believe in His Son; and thus, by grasping the outstretched hand, by heeding the earnest call, and accepting the gracious invitation, you may set forever at rest the question of your salvation. Let the great, the all-absorbing question with you be, "What shall I do to be saved?" Postpone every other inquiry, adjourn every other debate, until this is met and fairly settled, that you are the called of

God. Take hold of the full and free invitations of the gospel--and Christ, and salvation, and heaven, and yours.

And for your encouragement we would say, that the feeblest puttings forth of grace in the soul are indisputable evidences of the inward and effectual call of the Spirit. If in the spring-time I mark the tender buddings of the costly plant, I rejoice, yet with trembling. The cold wind may blow, and the hoar frost may light upon those buds, and so nip and kill them, that they shall never burst into the beautiful and fragrant flower. But when I trace the buddings of grace in the heart of a poor sinner, when I observe the evidence of the Spirit's operation in the soul, I feel no misgiving, I cherish no fear, for I am assured that He who has begun the good work will carry it on, and perfect it in glory. No worm shall kill its root, no frosts shall nip its leaf, no winds shall scatter its fruit; it shall never, never be destroyed. God will complete the work to which He puts His hand. Oh, precious truth, replete with encouragement to the sorrow-stricken, sin-burdened, Christ-seeking soul! Sweeter music is not heard in heaven than these words addressed to you--"Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out."

DECEMBER 19.

"When I see the blood I will pass over you." Exodus 12:13

It will be recollected that, upon Pharaoh's refusing to release God's people from bondage, the Lord commanded the first-born in every house to be slain. It was a night of woe in the land of Egypt, long to be remembered. The only exception in this work of destruction was in favor of the children of Israel. And yet even they could not escape the judicial punishment, but in the strictest compliance with the Divine method for their safety. They were ordered on the eve of that fearful night, to take "a lamb without blemish, a male of the first year," and to "slay it, and take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts and on the upper door-posts of the houses; and the blood," says God, "shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you! and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." They obeyed God. And when the angel of death sped his way through the land, smiting the first-born of each Egyptian family, he paused with solemnity and awe when he beheld the sprinkled blood--sheathed his sword, and passed on to do the work of destruction where no blood was seen.

Thus will it be with the soul who has no interest in the life-giving and the life-saving blood of Jesus! The sinner who has not this Divine and sacred sign upon him is marked for condemnation; he is under the awful sentence of death! That sentence has gone forth--the destroying angel has received his commission--the sword is drawn--the arm is uplifted--one final word from that God who has long stretched out to you His beseeching, yet disregarded hand--that God whose patience you have abused, whose mercy you have despised, whose law you have broken, whose Son you have rejected--and the stroke falls--and heaven is lost forever! Oh, fly to the atoning blood of Jesus! Not a moment is to be lost. Your only hope is there--your only protection is there--your only safety is there! "When I see the blood I will pass over you." Blessed words! Where He beholds the pure heart's blood of His own Son--so precious to Him--sprinkled upon the broken, penitent heart of a poor sinner, He will pass him over in the great outpouring of His wrath; He will pass him over when the ungodly, the Christless, and the prayerless sinner is punished; He will pass him over in the dread day of judgment, and not one drop of wrath will fall upon him. Escape, then, for your life! Hasten to Christ. It may be late--your evening's sun may be setting, the shadows of eternity may be deepening around you, but you have the Divine promise--plead it in faith, and God will fulfill it in your experience--"And it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light."

Relinquish now all the strongholds of your long rebellion against God, and Christ, and truth--give up your vain reasonings, cavilings, and excuses, and come to the Lord Jesus as a penitent, believing sinner; throw yourself upon His mercy, take hold of His blood, get beneath the covering of His righteousness, and tell Him that if He casts you off you are lost, eternally lost--and you shall be saved! "I went, and washed, and received sight."

When the chill of death is congealing the life-current of your mortal existence, and heart and flesh are failing--the world receding, eternity opening--what think you will then bring life and peace into death itself, illumine the valley, and place you in safety upon the highest wave of Jordan?--It will be the living blood of the Divine Redeemer, at that awful moment applied to the conscience by the Holy Spirit, testifying that all sin is blotted out, your person accepted, and that there is now no condemnation. "Precious blood! precious blood that has secured all this!" will be the grateful expression of your expiring lips, as your ransomed soul crosses the dark stream into the light and glory of heaven.

DECEMBER 20.

"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel." Hebrews 12:24

The subject lifts us to the very porch, and within the porch of heaven. And what is the great truth which it presents to our view there?--the prevalency of the life-blood of Jesus within the veil. The moment the ransomed and released soul enters glory, the first object that arrests its attention and fixes its eye is--the interceding Savior. Faith, anticipating the glorious spectacle, sees Him now pleading the blood on behalf of each member of His church upon earth. "By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." There is blood in heaven! the blood of the Incarnate God! And because it pleads and prays, argues and intercedes, the voice of every sin is hushed, every accusation of Satan is met, every daily transgression is forgiven, every temptation of the adversary is repelled, every evil is averted, every want is supplied, and the present sanctification and the final glorification of the saints are secured. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." Draw near, you Joshuas, accused by Satan! Approach, you Peters, whose faith is sifted! Come, you tried and disconsolate! The mediatorial Angel, the pleading Advocate, the Interceding High Priest, is passed into the heavens, and appears before the throne for you. If the principle of the new life in your soul has decayed, if your grace has declined, if you have "left your first love," there is vitality in the interceding blood of Jesus, and it prays for your revival. If sin condemns, and danger threatens, if temptation assails, and

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