

# Evening Thoughts - July

by Octavius Winslow

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of being in Christ, the fruits of a truly regenerate soul, and the role of love and faith in the Christian life.*

**Scripture:** John 15:4, Romans 11:33, 2 Corinthians 4:11-13, Galatians 5:6, Philippians 4:6

**Topics:** "Union with Christ", "The Life of Faith"

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## Description

Octavius Winslow emphasizes the profound union between believers and Christ, illustrating that true spiritual life and fruitfulness stem from this relationship. He explains that being 'in Christ' means being part of the eternal covenant of grace, accepted in His righteousness, and living a life of faith that manifests the life of Jesus. Winslow encourages believers to recognize their identity as risen with Christ, which calls for a life of holiness and dependence on the Holy Spirit. He also highlights the importance of prayer as a vital connection to God, urging believers to approach Him with confidence and sincerity. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deeper understanding of God's love and the believer's response to it through faith and obedience.

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## Transcript

EVENING THOUGHTS or

DAILY WALKING WITH GOD

JULY 1.

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me." John 15:4

The union of the believer with Jesus, and the consequent fruitfulness, is a glorious truth: the Holy Spirit, in His word, has laid great stress upon it. It is spoken of as a being in Christ--"Every branch in me." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." "So we, being many, are one body in Christ." "Those who are fallen asleep in Christ." But in what sense are we to understand this being "in Christ"? To be in Christ truly, spiritually, vitally, is to be in that eternal covenant of grace made with Christ, as the Surety and Mediator of His people; one of the number spoken of as the Lord's "peculiar treasure;"--"For the Lord has chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for His peculiar treasure;" and concerning whom the Holy Spirit declares that they are elected in Christ--"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed

us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things 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." To be in Christ truly, is to stand accepted in His righteousness, to be justified by Him freely from all things; it is to be brought to the knowledge of our own vileness, insufficiency, and guilt; to be made to cast aside all self-dependence, that is, all works of human merit, and to come as the thief on the cross came, without any allowed confidence in anything of self, but as a poor, helpless, ruined, condemned sinner, all whose hope of pardon and acceptance is through the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus. To be in Christ is to be the subject of a living, holy, influential principle of faith; it is to be brought into the blessed state thus described by the apostle as his own--"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." To be in Christ is to be one with Him; it is to be a member of His mystical body, of which He is the spiritual Head: and the Head and members are one. It is to have Christ dwelling in the heart--"Christ in you the hope of glory." Yes, it is to dwell in the heart of Christ; it is to rest there in the very pavilion of His love, to abide there every moment, to be sheltered there from all evil, and to be soothed there under all sorrow. Oh blessed state of being in Christ! Who would not experience it? Who would not enjoy it? "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

These are the living branches, united to the true vine, which bear fruit. From their union to the living vine their fruit comes--"From me is your fruit found." "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can you, except you abide in me." And oh, what precious fruit does such a living branch bear! The broken heart--the contrite spirit--the mourning over sin--the low, abasing, humbling views of self--the venturing by faith on a full, mighty, willing Savior--the going out of self, and resting in His all-atoning work and all-satisfying righteousness. This is followed by a progressive advance in all holiness and godliness, the fruits of faith which are by Jesus Christ abounding in the life, and proving the reality of the wondrous change--the close walk with God--the submission of the will in all things to His--the conformity of the life to the example of Jesus--the "power of His resurrection" felt--the "fellowship of His sufferings," known--and "conformity to His death," marking the entire man.

These are some of the fruits of a truly regenerate soul. The Holy Spirit testifies, that the "fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth;" and still more minutely, as consisting of "love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

JULY 2.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Romans 11:33

Behold this wisdom, as it shines in the recovery of lost and ruined man by Christ. Here is a manifestation infinitely transcending in greatness and glory the first creation of man in holiness. In the first creation, God had nothing to undo; no dilapidated temple to take down, no occupant to dispossess, no ruin to repair, no rubbish to remove, no enemy to oppose. But in the re-creation of man, how vastly different! The beautiful temple is a ruin--dilapidated and fallen. God is ejected; another and an antagonist occupant dwells in it, and enmity to its Creator is written in letters of darkness upon every part and over every inlet. In rebuilding this structure, all things were to be created anew. "Behold," says God, "I create a new thing in the earth." It was a new and profounder thought of infinite wisdom, unheard, unseen before. Fallen man was to be raised--lost man was to be recovered--sin was to be pardoned--the sinner saved, and God eternally glorified. Now were the treasures of wisdom, which for ages had been hid in Christ, brought forth. Infinite

wisdom had never developed such vast wealth, had never appeared clothed in such glory, had never shone forth so majestic, so peerless, and Divine. Oh, how must angels and archangels have wondered, admired, and loved, as this brighter discovery of God burst in glory upon their astonished vision--as this new temple of man rose in loveliness before their view!

The greatest display of infinite wisdom was in the construction of the model upon which the new temple, regenerated man, was to be formed. This model was nothing less than the mysteriously constituted person of the Son of God. In this, its highest sense, is "Christ the wisdom of God." Here it shone forth in full-orbed majesty. Gaze upon the living picture! Look at Immanuel, God with us--God in our nature--God in our accursed nature--God in our tried nature--God in our sorrowful nature--God in our suffering nature--God in our tempted nature--yet untouched, untainted by sin. Is not this a fathomless depth of Divine wisdom? To have transcended it, would seem to have transcended Deity itself.

The next step in the unfolding of this Divine wisdom is the spiritual restoration of man to a state corresponding in its moral lineaments to this Divine and perfect model. This is accomplished solely by "Christ crucified, the wisdom of God." And here, again, does the glory of God's wisdom shine in the person and work of Jesus. Every step in the development of this grand expedient establishes His character as the "only wise God," whose "understanding is infinite;" while it augments our knowledge, and exalts our views of the Lord Jesus, as making known the Father. Here was a way of salvation for perishing sinners, harmonizing with every perfection of Jehovah, sustaining the highest honor of His government; bringing to Him the richest glory, and securing to its subjects, as the rich bequest of grace, happiness eternal, and inconceivably great. Oh, how truly did God here "work all things after the counsel of His own will"! How has He "abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence"! In Jesus' sacrificial obedience and death we see sin fully punished, and the sinner fully saved--we see the law perfectly honored, and the transgressor completely justified--we see justice entirely satisfied, and mercy glorified to its highest extent--we see death inflicted according to the extreme tenor of the curse, and so vindicating to the utmost the truth and holiness of God; and yet life, present and eternal life, given to all whom it is the purpose and grace of the Father to save. Tell us, is not Jesus the great glory of the Divine wisdom?

JULY 3.

"For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." 2 Corinthians 4:11, 13

What is the life of faith which the believer lives, but a manifestation of the life of the Lord Jesus? The highest, the holiest, the happiest life lived below, is the life of faith. But nature contributes nothing to this life. It comes from a higher source. It is supernatural--it is opposed to nature. It springs from the life "hid with Christ in God." "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Here is a glorious manifestation of the life of Jesus. If we desire any evidence that Jesus is risen, that He is alive again, and that He is the life of the soul, here it is! See the faith of a child of God sifted as wheat, yet not one grain falling to the ground--tried as gold, yet not one particle lost--though in the flame, yet never consumed. And why? Because Christ lives in the soul. Dear believer! your faith may be sharply tempted--severely tried--but never, never shall it quite fail; for Jesus lives in you, and lives in you forever. Oh blessed trial of faith, that manifests in, and endears to, you the life of Jesus! It is the precious trial of "precious faith,"--a faith which the more deeply it is tried, the more deeply it manifests the risen life of its Divine "Author and Finisher."

And what, too, are all the supports of the believer in seasons of trial, suffering, and bereavement, but so many manifestations of the life of the Lord Jesus? What is our path to glory, but the path of tribulation, of suffering, and of death? Our Lord and Master, in the expression of His wisdom and love, forewarns us of this--"In the world you shall have tribulation." And His apostles but echo the same sentiment, when they affirm that it is "through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom." But the life of our risen Lord is daily manifested in us. This it is that keeps the soul buoyant amid the billows, strong in faith, joyful in hope, soaring in love. Thus is Jesus the life of every grace, the life of every promise, the life of every ordinance, the life of every blessing; yes, of all that is really costly and precious to a child of God, Jesus is the substance, the glory, the sweetness, the fragrance, yes, the very life itself. Oh! dark and lonely, desolate and painful indeed were our present pilgrimage, but for Jesus. If in the world we have tribulation, in whom have we peace?--in Jesus! If in the creature we meet with fickleness and change, in whom find we the "Friend that loves at all times"?--in Jesus! When adversity comes as a wintry blast, and lays low our comforts, when the cloud is upon our tabernacle, when health, and wealth, and influence, and friends are gone--in whom do we find the covert from the wind, the faithful, tender "Brother born for adversity"?--in Jesus! When temptation assails, when care darkens, when trial oppresses, when bereavement wounds, when heart and flesh are failing, who throws around us the protecting shield, who applies the precious promise, who speaks the soothing word, who sustains the sinking spirit, who heals the sorrow, and dries the tear?--Jesus! Where sin struggles in the heart, and guilt burdens the conscience, and unbelief beclouds the mind, whose grace subdues our iniquities, whose blood gives us peace, and whose light dispels our darkness?--Jesus! And when the spark of life wanes, and the eye grows dim, and the mind wanders, and the soul, severing its last fetter, mounts and soars away, who, in that awful moment, draws near in form unseen, and whispers in words unheard by all but the departing one, now in close communion with the solemn realities of the invisible world--"Fear not; I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die"?--still, it is Jesus! "

JULY 4.

"It is the Spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63

The Spirit of God undertakes the achievement of a stupendous work. He enters the soul, and proposes to restore the empire of grace, the reign of holiness, and the throne of God. He engages to form all things anew; to create a revolution in favor of Christ and of heaven. He undertakes to change the heart, turning its enmity into love; to collect all the elements of darkness and confusion, educing from them perfect light and perfect order; to subdue the will, bringing it into harmony with God's will; to explore all the recesses of sin, turning its very impurity into holiness; in a word, to regenerate the soul, restoring the Divine image, and fitting it for the full and eternal enjoyment of God in glory. Now, in accomplishing this great work, what instrumentality does He employ? Passing by all human philosophy, and pouring contempt upon the profoundest wisdom and the mightiest power of man, He employs, in the production of a work in comparison with which the rise and the fall of empires were as infants' play, simply and alone, the "truth as it is in Jesus." With this instrument He enters the soul--the seat of the greatest revolution that ever transpired. He moves over the dark chaos, without form and void, and in a moment a world of immortal beauty bursts into view. He overshadows the soul, and a vital principle is imparted, whose stream of existence, once commenced, flows on with the eternity of God Himself. How divine, yet how natural, too, the process! In the lapses of human thought, in the overtaken powers of the human intellect, how often is

the mind impaired and shattered by the severe process through which it passes! But here is a revolution which touches every faculty of the soul, which changes all the powers of the mind; and yet, so gentle, so persuasive, and so mild, is the Spirit's operation, that, so far from deranging the power or disturbing the balance of the intellect, it develops resources, awakens energies, and inspires strength, of which until now it knew not its possession. "The entrance of Your word gives light; it gives understanding unto the simple."

And to what shall we turn for the secret of this? To the gospel, so replete with the glory of Jesus--that gospel, the substance of which is the incarnate God; the theme of which is Christ crucified--that gospel which testifies of His Godhead, which declares His manhood, which unfolds the union of both in the person of a glorious Redeemer; and which holds Him up to view, mighty, and willing to save to the uttermost. Oh, how sanctifying and comforting is the truth which testifies of Jesus! It has but to point to Him, and, clothed with the energy of the Spirit, the strongest corruption is subdued, the deepest grief is soothed. Of what value or efficacy is all our knowledge of the truth, if it lead us not to Jesus; if it expand not our views of His glory; if it conform not our minds to His image; if it increase not our love to His person, and if it quicken not our obedience to His commands, and our zeal for His cause; and mature us not, by a progressive holiness, for the enjoyment of His beatific presence?

JULY 5.

"Faith which works by love." Galatians 5:6

Love is that grace of the Spirit that brings faith into active exercise; and faith, thus brought into exercise, brings every spiritual blessing into the soul. A believer stands by faith; he walks by faith; he overcomes by faith; he lives by faith. Love is therefore a laboring grace--"God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you have showed towards His name." There is nothing indolent in the nature of true love; it is not an inert, sluggish principle: where it dwells in the heart in a healthy and vigorous state, it constrains the believer to live not to himself, but unto Him who loved and gave Himself for him; it awakes the soul to watchfulness, sets it upon the work of frequent self-examination, influences it to prayer, daily walking in the precepts, acts of kindness, benevolence, and charity, all springing from love to God, and flowing in a channel of love to man.

The Holy Spirit distinguishes love as a part of the Christian armor--"Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love." Without ardent and increasing love to God, the believer is but poorly armed against his numerous spiritual and ever aggressive foes; but what a breastplate and helmet is this in the day of battle! Who can overcome a child of God, whose heart is overflowing with Divine love? What enemy can prevail against him thus armed? He may be, and he is, in himself, nothing but weakness; his foes many and mighty; hemmed in on every side by his spiritual Philistines; and yet, his heart soaring to God in love, longing for His presence, panting for His precepts, desiring, above and beyond all other blessings, Divine conformity! Oh, with what a panoply is he clothed! No weapon formed against him shall prosper; every "fiery dart of the adversary" shall be quenched, and he shall "come off more than a conqueror, through Him who has loved him."

In a word, love is immortal; it is that grace of the Spirit that will never die. This is not so with all the kindred graces: the period will come when they will no more be needed. The day is not far distant, when faith will be turned into sight, and hope will be lost in full fruition; but love will never die; it will live on, and expand the heart, and tune the lip, and inspire the song, through the unceasing ages of eternity. "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it

shall vanish away;" but love never fails; it is an eternal spring, welled in the bosom of Deity: heaven will be its dwelling-place, God its source, the glorified spirit its subject, and eternity its duration.

JULY 6.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Isaiah 61:1

We can with difficulty realize, as the eye traces this evangelical declaration, that we are reading the prophecy, and not its fulfillment; the shadowy writings of the Old, and not the noontide revelation of the New Testament; so luminous with the gospel, so fragrant with the name, so replete with the work of JESUS is it. Oh, what tidings of joy and gladness are here to the heart-broken, burdened captive! Could announcements be more suited to his case, more appropriate to his circumstances, more soothing to his heart? Here, from the very heart of the Bible, Jesus Himself speaks. And never, in the days of His flesh, when preaching from the mountain or in the synagogue, were sweeter sounds uttered from His lips than these. This was the work that was before Him--to seek and to save lost sinners, to save them as sinners, to rend asunder their chains, to deliver them from their captivity, and to introduce them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

The quiet, lowly, unostentatious character of Jesus, blending with the most exquisite tenderness of heart, the pen of the evangelical prophet with equal vividness and beauty portrays--"He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." Was not the entire life of our Lord in exact harmony with this prophetic portrait? Did not the glory of His lowly life, which Isaiah saw with a prophet's far-reaching eye, illumine, as with a living light, every step and every act of His history? Verily it did! Truly might He say, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." The most sublime miracles, the most stupendous exertions of power, and the most brilliant displays of philanthropy, on which a self-aggrandizing man would have established successfully his claims to profound and universal homage, He only referred to as sustaining the glory of His Father in His Divine mission; while all earthly honor and temporal power that might have accrued separately to Himself, He utterly rejected, veiling His own person in the deep folds of that humility which clothed Him as a garment. Shrinking from the intense gaze of a delighted multitude, and from the murmuring breath of popular applause, He would vanish as in a moment from the scene of His benevolence, either to lavish His boundless compassion on other and more wretched objects of suffering and woe, or to hide Himself amid the gloom and solitude of the desert. Never was humility like Yours, you meek and lowly Lamb of God! Subdue this hated self in us--lay low this pride--suppress these inward risings, and draw, in fairer and deeper lines, Your own image on our souls!

JULY 7.

"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him; having forgiven you all trespasses." Colossians 2:12, 13

Is Jesus alive? then the saints of God are a risen people. What a glorious character is theirs! Mystically they are risen with Christ from the tomb, and spiritually they are risen from the grave of death and sin to newness of life. One of the most fruitful causes of a feeble Christianity is the low estimate the believer forms of his spiritual character. Were this higher, were it more proportioned to our real standing, our

responsibility would appear in a more solemn light, our sense of obligation would be deeper, and practical holiness of a high order would be our more constant aim. Ours is a glorious and exalted life. Our standing is higher, infinitely higher, than the highest angel; our glory infinitely greater than the most glorious seraph. "Christ is our life." "We are risen with Christ." By this we are declared to be a chosen, an adopted, a pardoned, a justified, and a quickened people. This is our present state; this is our present character. We bear about with us the life of God in our souls. As Jesus did bear about in His lowly, suffering, tempted, and tried humanity the hidden essential life; so we, in these frail, sinful, bruised, dying bodies, enshrine the life derived from a risen Head--the hidden life concealed with Christ in God. What an exalted character, what a holy one, then, is a believer in Jesus! Herein lie his true dignity and his real wealth--it is, that he is a partaker of the Divine nature, that he is one with the risen Lord. All other distinctions, in comparison, vanish into insignificance, and all other glory fades and melts away. Poor he may be in this world, yet is he rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom; for he has Christ. Rich he may be in this world, titled and exalted, yet, if Christ is in his heart, that heart is deeply sensible of its native poverty--is lowly, child-like, Christ-like.

If this is our exalted character, then how great our responsibilities, and how solemn our obligations! The life we now live in the flesh is to be an elevated, a risen, a heavenly life. "If you be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." What is the holy state here enjoined?--heavenly-mindedness. On what ground is it enforced?--our resurrection with Christ. As a risen people, how heavenly-minded, then, ought we to be! How incompatible and incongruous do groveling pursuits, and carnal joys, and earthly ambitions appear, with a life professedly one and risen with the incarnate God! But even here much heavenly wisdom is needed to guide in the narrow and difficult way. To go out of the world--to become as a detached cipher of the human family--to assume the character, even in approximation, of the religious recluse--the gospel nowhere enjoins. To relinquish our secular calling, unless summoned by God to a higher and more spiritual service in the church--to relax our diligence in our lawful business--to be indifferent to our personal interests and responsibilities--to neglect our temporal concerns, and to be regardless of the relative claims which are binding upon us, are sacrifices which a loyal attachment to our heavenly King does not necessarily demand; and, if assumed, are self-inflicted; and, if made, must prove injurious to ourselves and displeasing to God.

But to be heavenly-minded, in the true and Scripture sense, is to carry our holy Christianity into every department of life, and with it to elevate and hallow every relation and engagement. There is no position in which the providence of God places His saints, for which the grace of Jesus is not all-sufficient, if sincerely and earnestly sought. Nor is there any sphere or calling, to which the life of Jesus in the soul may not impart dignity, luster, and sacredness. Christianity, through all grades, and classes, and occupations, is capable of diffusing a divine, hallowing, ennobling influence, transforming and sanctifying all that it touches. Blessed and holy are they who know it from personal and heartfelt experience!

JULY 8.

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

It must be admitted that the believer requires constant exhortation to the sweet and precious privilege of communion with his heavenly Father--that he needs to be urged by the strongest arguments and the most persuasive motives to avail himself of the most costly and glorious privilege this side of glory. Does it not seem like pleading with a man to live?--reminding him that he must breathe, if he would maintain life?

Without the exercise of prayer, we tell a child of God, he cannot live; that this is the drawing in of the Divine life, and the breathing of it forth again; that the spiritual nature requires constant supplies of spiritual nourishment; and that the only evidence of its healthy existence is its constant rising towards God. We tell him, Cease to pray, and your grace withers, your vigor decays, and your comfort dies.

Observe how prayer, as a duty, is enjoined in God's word--"Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." As though the Lord had said, "Call upon me when all is dark, when all is against you. I speak not now of the day of prosperity, of the sunny hour, when your soul prospers, when all things go smooth with you, and the sky above you is cloudless, and the sea beneath you is unruffled; but call upon me in the day of trouble, the day of want, the day of adversity, the day of disappointment and of rebuke, the day when friends forsake, and the world frowns upon you, the day of broken cisterns and withered gourds--call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you." Observe, too, how our dear Lord enjoined this precious duty upon His disciples--"You, when you pray, enter into your closet, and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret." And observe how He also encouraged it--"Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you." In harmony with this, is the sweet exhortation of the apostle--"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." And what a striking unfolding of the true nature of prayer does the same writer give us in another passage--"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." The apostle James bears the same testimony--"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not, and it shall be given him."

But we take higher ground than this; we urge the exercise of prayer, not merely as a solemn duty to be observed, but also as a precious privilege to be enjoyed. Happy is that believer, when duties come to be viewed as privileges. What! is it no privilege to have a door of access ever open to God? is it no privilege when the burden crushes to cast it upon One who has promised to sustain? When the corruptions of an unsanctified nature are strong, and temptations thicken, is prayer no privilege then? And when perplexed to know the path of duty, and longing to walk complete in all the will of God, and, as a child, fearing to offend a loving Father, is it then no privilege to have a throne of grace, an open door of hope? When the world is slowly stealing upon the heart, or when that heart is wounded through the unkindness of friends, or is bleeding under severe bereavement, is it then no privilege to go and tell Jesus? Say, you poor, you needy, you tried, you tempted souls! say, if prayer is not the most precious and costly privilege this side heaven.

JULY 9.

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit." Mark 1:8

"Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord God." Ezekiel 39:29

In a more enlarged communication of the Holy Spirit's gracious influence lies the grand source and secret of all true, spiritual, believing, persevering, and prevailing prayer; it is the lack of this that is the cause of the dullness, and formality, and reluctance, that so frequently mark the exercise. The saints of God honor not sufficiently the Spirit in this important part of His work; they too much lose sight of the truth, that of all true prayer He is the Author and the Sustainer, and the consequence is, and ever will be, self-sufficiency and cold formality in the discharge, and ultimate neglect of the duty altogether. But let the promise be

pleaded, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication;" let the Holy Spirit be acknowledged as the Author, and constantly sought as the Sustainer, of this holy exercise; let the saint of God feel that he knows not what he should pray for as he ought, that the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and that God knows the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to His will; and what an impulse will this give to prayer! what new life will it impart! what mighty energy, what unction, and what power with God! Seek, then, with all your blessings, this, the richest, and the pledge of all, the baptism of the Spirit; rest not short of it. You are nothing as a professing man without it; your religion is lifeless, your devotion is formal, your spirit is unctionless; you have no moral power with God, or with man, apart from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Seek it, wrestle for it, agonize for it, as transcendently more precious than every other mercy. Submerged in His quickening and reviving influences, what a different Christian will you be! How differently will you pray, how differently will you live, and how differently will you die! Is the spirit of prayer languishing? is its exercise becoming irksome? is closet-devotion abandoned? is the duty in any form becoming a task? Oh, rouse you to the seeking of the baptism of the Spirit! This alone will revive the true spirit of prayer within you, and this will give to its exercise sweetness, pleasantness, and power. God has promised the bestowment of the blessing, and He will never disappoint the soul that seeks it.

JULY 10.

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Luke 24:26

As the faithful servant of the everlasting covenant, it was proper, it was just, it was the reward of His finished work, that Christ's deepest humiliation on earth should be succeeded by the highest glory in heaven. "For the joy that was set before Him,"--the joy of His exaltation, with its glorious fruits--"He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." How proper, how righteous does it appear, that the crown of His glory should follow the cross of His humiliation! Toilsome and faithful had been His life; ignominious and painful had been His death. From both there had accrued to God--is now, and will yet be accruing, through the countless ages of eternity--a revenue of glory, such as never had been His before. He had revealed the Father gloriously. Drawing aside the veil as no other hand could do, He caused such Divine glory to beam forth, as compelled every spotless spirit in heaven to cover Himself with His wings, and fall prostrate in the profoundest humility and homage.

The glorious perfections of God!--never had they appeared so glorious as now. The mediatorial work of Jesus had laid a deep foundation, on which they were exhibited to angels and to men in their most illustrious character. Never before had wisdom appeared so truly glorious, nor justice so awfully severe, nor love so intensely bright, nor truth so eternally stable. Had all the angels in heaven, and all creatures of all worlds, become so many orbs of divine light, and were all merged into one, so that that one should embody and reflect the luster of all, it would have been darkness itself compared with a solitary beam of God's glory, majesty, and power, as revealed in the person and work of Immanuel. Now it was fit that, after this faithful servitude, this boundless honor and praise brought to God, His Father should, in return, release Him from all further obligation, lift Him from His humiliation, and place Him high in glory. Therefore it was that Jesus poured out the fervent breathings of His soul on the eve of His passion: "I have glorified You on the earth; I have finished the work which You gave me to do: I have manifested Your name, and now, O Father, glorify You me."

The ascension of Jesus to glory involved the greatest blessing to His saints. Apart from His own glorification, the glory of His church was incomplete--so entirely, so identically were they one. The resurrection of Christ from the dead was the Father's public seal to the acceptance of His work; but the exaltation of Christ to glory was an evidence of the Father's infinite delight in that work. Had our Lord continued on earth, His return from the grave, though settling the fact of the completeness of His atonement, could have afforded no clear evidence, and could have conveyed no adequate idea, of God's full pleasure and delight in the person of His beloved Son. But in advancing a step further--in taking His Son out of the world, and placing Him at His own right hand, far above principalities and powers--He demonstrated His ineffable delight in Jesus, and His perfect satisfaction with His great atonement. Now it is no small mercy for the saints of God to receive and to be well established in this truth, namely, the Father's perfect satisfaction with, and His infinite pleasure in, His Son. For all that He is to His Son, He is to the people accepted in His Son; so that this view of the glorification of Jesus becomes exceedingly valuable to all who are "accepted in the Beloved." So precious was Jesus to His heart, and so infinitely did His soul delight in Him, He could not allow of His absence from glory a moment longer than was necessary for the accomplishment of His own purpose and the perfecting of His Son's mission; that done, He showed His Beloved the "path of life," and raised Him to His "presence, where is fullness of joy," and to "His right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore. "

JULY 11.

"I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; You have chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn you me, and I shall be turned; for you are the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yes, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." Jeremiah 31:18, 19

The divine life in the soul of man is indestructible--it cannot perish; the seed that grace has implanted in the heart is incorruptible--it cannot be corrupted. So far from trials, and conflicts, and storms, and tempests impairing the principle of holiness in the soul, they do but deepen and strengthen it, and tend greatly to its growth. We look at Job; who of mere man was ever more keenly tried?--and yet, so far from destroying or even weakening the divine life within him, the severe discipline of the covenant, through which he passed, did but deepen and expand the root, bringing forth in richer clusters the blessed fruits of holiness. Do you think, dear reader, the divine life in his soul had undergone any change for the worse, when, as the result of God's covenant dealings with him, he exclaimed--"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye sees You: why I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes?" No, the pruning of the fruitful branch impairs not, but rather strengthens and renders more fruitful the principle of holiness in the soul.

It is the will of God that His people should be a fruitful people. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification,"--the sanctification of a believer including all fruitfulness. He will bring out His own work in the heart of His child; and never does He take His child in hand with a view of dealing with him according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, but that dealing results in a greater degree of spiritual fruitfulness. Now, when the Lord afflicts, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies the affliction of the believer, is not this again among the costly fruit of that discipline, that self has become more hateful? This God declared should be the result of His dealings with His, ancient people Israel, for their idolatry--"They shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations." And again--"Then shall you remember your ways, and all your doings wherein you have been defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for all your evils that you have committed." To loathe self on account of its sinfulness, to mortify it in all its forms, and to bring it entirely into subjection to the spirit of holiness, is, indeed, no small triumph

of Divine grace in the soul, and no mean effect of the sanctified use of the Lord's dispensations. That must ever be considered a costly mean that accomplished this blessed end. Beloved reader, is your covenant God and Father dealing with you now? Pray that this may be one blessed result, the abasement of self within you, the discovering of it to you in all its deformity, and its entire subjection to the cross of Jesus.

JULY 12.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:10

It is a self-evident truth, that as God only knows, so He only can reveal His own love. It is a hidden love, veiled deep within the recesses of His infinite heart; yes, it seems to compose His very essence, for, "God is love,"--not merely lovely and loving, but love itself, essential love. Who, then, can reveal it but Himself? How dim are the brightest views, and how low the loftiest conceptions, of the love of God, as possessed by men of mere natural and speculative knowledge of divine things! They read of God's goodness, even in nature, with a half-closed eye, and spell it in providence with a stammering tongue. Of His essential love--His redeeming love--of the great and glorious manifestation of His love in Jesus, they know nothing. The eyes of their understanding have not been opened; and "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," has not as yet "shined into their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

But God has declared His own love--Jesus is its glorious revelation. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." Oh, what an infinite sea of love now broke in upon our guilty and rebellious world, wafting in upon its rolling tide God's only begotten Son! That must have been great love--love infinite, love unsearchable, love passing all thought--which could constrain the Father to give Jesus to die for us, "while we were yet sinners." It is the great loss of the believer that faith eyes with so dim a vision this amazing love of God in the gift of Jesus. We have transactions so seldom and so unbelievably with the cross, that we have need perpetually to recur to the apostle's cheering words, written as if kindly and condescendingly to meet this infirmity of our faith--"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things!"

But, behold God's love! See how He has inscribed this glorious perfection of His nature in letters of blood drawn from the heart of Jesus. His love was so great, that nothing short of the surrender to the death of His beloved Son could give an adequate expression of its immensity. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." Here was the greatest miracle of love--here was its most stupendous achievement--here its most brilliant victory--and here its most costly and precious offering. Seeing us fallen, obnoxious to the law's curse, exposed to its dreadful penalty, guilty of innumerable sins, and deserving of as many deaths, yet how did it yearn to save us! How did it heave, and pant, and strive, and pause not, until it revealed a way infinitely safe for God and man; securing glory to every Divine attribute in the highest degree, and happiness to the creature, immense, unspeakable, and eternal.

JULY 13.

"And all mine are your, and your are mine; and I am glorified in them." John 17:10

The manifested glory of Christ in His church is clearly and manifestly stated in the sublime prayer of our Lord. Addressing His Father, He claims with Him--what no mere creature could do--a conjunction of

interest in the church, based upon an essential unity of nature. What angel in heaven could adopt this language, what creature on earth could present this claim--"All your are mine"? It would be an act of the most daring presumption; it would be the very inspiration of blasphemy: but when our Lord asserts it--asserts it, too, in a solemn prayer addressed on the eve of His death to His Father--what does it prove, but that a unity of property in the church involves a unity of essence in being? There could be no perfect oneness of the Father and the Son in any single object, but as it sprang from a oneness of nature. The mutual interest, then, which Christ thus claims with His Father refers in this instance specifically to the church of God. And it is delightful here to trace the perfect equality of love towards the church, as of perfect identity of interest in the church. We are sometimes tempted to doubt the perfect sameness, as to degree, of the Father's love with the Son's love; that, because Jesus died, and intercedes, the mind thus used to familiarize itself with Him more especially, associating Him with all its comforting, soothing, hallowing views and enjoyments, we are liable to be beguiled into the belief that His love must transcend in its strength and intensity the love of the Father. But not so. The Father's love is of perfect equality in degree, as it is in nature, with the Son's love; and this may with equal truth be affirmed of the "love of the Spirit." "He that has seen me," says Jesus, "has seen the Father." Then he that has seen the melting, overpowering expressions of the Redeemer's love--he that has seen Him pouring out His deep compassion over the miseries of a suffering world--he that has seen His affectionate gentleness towards His disciples--he that has seen Him weep at the grave of Lazarus--he that has followed Him to the garden of Gethsemane, to the judgment-hall of Pilate, and from thence to the cross of Calvary--has seen in every step which He trod, and in every act which He performed, a type of the deep, deep love which the Father bears towards His people. He that has thus seen the Son's love, has seen the Father's love. Oh, sweet to think, the love that travailed--the love that toiled--the love that wept--the love that bled--the love that died, is the same love, in its nature and intensity, which is deep-welled in the heart of the TRIUNE GOD, and is pledged to secure the everlasting salvation of the church. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

JULY 14.

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience." Romans 5:3

By a patient endurance of suffering for His sake, the Redeemer is greatly glorified in His saints. The apostle--and few drank of the bitter cup more deeply than he--presents suffering for Christ in the soothing light of a Christian privilege. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." "But if you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you;" for thereby Christ is glorified in you. Believer, suffering for Christ, rejoice, yes, rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer shame for His sake. What distinction is awarded you! What honor is put upon you! What a favored opportunity have you now of bringing glory to His name; for illustrating His sustaining grace, and upholding strength, and Almighty power, and infinite wisdom, and comforting love! By the firm yet mild maintenance of your principles, by the dignified yet gentle spirit of forbearance, by the uncompromising yet kind resistance to allurements, let the Redeemer be glorified in you! In all that you suffer for righteousness' sake, let your eye be immovably fixed on Jesus. In Him you have a bright example. "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your mind." Remember how, for your redemption, He "endured the cross, despising the shame," and, for your continual support, "is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Remember, too, that it is one peculiar exercise and precious privilege of faith, to "wait patiently for the Lord." The divine exhortation is, "Commit your way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." This patience of the soul is the rest of faith on a faithful God; it is a standing still to see His salvation. And the divine encouragement is, that in this posture will be found the secret of your real power. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Be watchful against everything that would mar the simplicity of your faith, and so dim the glory of Jesus; especially guard against the adoption of unlawful or doubtful measures, with a view to disentanglement from present difficulties. Endure the pressure, submit to the wrong, bear the suffering, rather than sin against God, by seeking to forestall His mind, or to antedate His purpose, or by transferring your interests from His hands to your own.

Oh, the glory that is brought to Jesus by a life of faith! Who can fully estimate it? Taking to Him the corruption, as it is discovered--the guilt, as it rises, the grief, as it is felt--the cross, as it is experienced--the wound, as it is received; yes, simply following the example of John's disciples, who, when their master was slain, took up his headless body, and buried it, and then went and poured their mournful intelligence in Jesus' ear, and laid their deep sorrow on His heart; this is to glorify Christ! Truly is this "precious faith," and truly is the "trial of our faith precious," for it renders more precious to the heart "His precious blood," who, in His person, is unutterably "precious to those who believe."

JULY 15.

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief: when you shall make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Isaiah 53:10

In the person and work of Christ the holiness of God is revealed with equal power and luster. It is only through this medium that we possess the most clear and perfect demonstration of this divine and awful perfection. Where was there ever such a demonstration of God's infinite hatred of sin, and His fixed and solemn determination to punish it, as is seen in the cross of Christ? Put your shoes from off your feet; draw near, and contemplate this "great sight." Who was the sufferer?

God's only-begotten and well-beloved Son! His own Son! In addition to the infinitely tender love of the Father, there was the clear knowledge of the truth, that He, who was enduring the severest infliction of His wrath, was innocent, guiltless, righteous--that He, Himself, had never broken His law, had never opposed His authority, had never run counter to His will; but had always done those things which pleased Him. At whose hands did He suffer? From devils? from men? They were but the agents; the moving cause was God Himself.

"It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief." His own Father unsheathed the sword: He inflicted the blow: He kindled the fierce flame: He prepared the bitter cup. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, says the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd." "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And what were the nature and degree of His sufferings? Imagine, if we can, what must have been the outpouring of God's wrath upon the whole church for all the sins of that church, through eternity!

Can you compute the amount of her transgressions? can you conceive the degree of her punishment? can you measure the duration of her woe? Impossible! Then, who can tell what Jesus endured, when standing in the place and as the Surety of His church, in the solemn hour of atonement, and in the day of

God's fierce anger? Never had God so manifested before, and never will He so manifest again, His essential holiness--His spotless purity--the inconceivable heinousness of sin--His utter hatred of it--and His solemn purpose to punish it with the severest inflictions of His wrath; never did this glorious perfection of His being blaze out in such overwhelming glory, as on that dark day, and in the cross of the incarnate God.

Had He emptied the vials of His wrath full upon the world, sweeping it before the fury of His anger, and consigning it to deserved and eternal punishment, it would not have presented to the universe so vivid, so impressive, and so awful a demonstration of the nature and glory of His holiness, of His infinite abhorrence of sin, and the necessity why He should punish it, as He has presented in the humiliation, sufferings, and death of His beloved Son. What new and ineffably transcendent views of infinite holiness must have sprung up in the pure minds even of the spirits in glory, as, bending from their thrones, they fixed their astonished gaze upon the cross of the suffering Son of God!

JULY 16.

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first love." Revelation 2:4

Should the humiliating truth force itself upon you, my dear reader--"I am not as I once was; my soul has lost ground--my spirituality of mind has decayed--I have lost the fervor of my first love--I have slackened in the heavenly race--Jesus is not as He once was, the joy of my day, the song of my night--and my walk with God is no longer so tender, loving, and filial, as it was,"--then honestly and humbly confess it before God. To be humbled as we should be, we must know ourselves; there must be no disguising of our true condition from ourselves, nor from God; there must be no framing of excuses for our declensions: the wound must be probed, the disease must be known, and its most aggravating symptoms brought to view. Ascertain, then, the true state of your affection towards God; bring your love to Him to the touchstone of truth; see how far it has declined, and thus you will be prepared to trace out and to crucify the cause of your declension in love. Where love declines, there must be a cause; and, when ascertained, it must be immediately removed. Love to God is a tender flower; it is a sensitive plant, soon and easily crushed; perpetual vigilance is needed to preserve it in a healthy, growing state. The world's heat will wither it, the coldness of formal profession will often nip it: a thousand influences, all foreign to its nature and hostile to its growth, are leagued against it; the soil in which it is placed is not genial to it. "In the flesh there dwells no good thing;" whatever of holiness is in the believer, whatever breathing after Divine conformity, whatever soaring of the affections towards God, is from God himself, and is there as the result of sovereign grace. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." What sleepless vigilance, then, and what perpetual culture are needed, to preserve the bloom and the fragrance, and to nourish the growth, of this celestial plant. Search out and remove the cause of the decay of this precious grace of the Spirit; rest not until it is discovered and brought to light: should it prove to be the world, come out from it, and be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing; or the power of indwelling sin, seek its immediate crucifixion by the cross of Jesus. Does the creature steal your heart from Christ, and deaden your love to God?--resign it at God's bidding; He asks the surrender of your heart, and has promised to be better to you than all creature love. All the tenderness, the deep affection, the acute sympathy, the true fidelity, that you ever did find or enjoy in the creature, dwells in God, your covenant God and Father, in an infinite degree. He makes the creature all it is to you. Possessing God in Christ, you can desire no more--you can have no more. If He asks the surrender of the creature, cheerfully resign it; and let God be all in all to you.

JULY 17.

"I acknowledged my sin unto you, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin." Psalm 32:5

This is just what God loves--an open, ingenuous confession of sin. Searching and knowing, though He does, all hearts, He yet delights in the honest and minute acknowledgment of sin from His backsliding child. Language cannot be too humiliating; the detail cannot be too minute. Mark the stress He has laid upon this duty, and the blessing He has annexed to it. Thus He spoke to the children of Israel, that wandering, backsliding, rebellious people--"If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land."

Truly may we exclaim, "Who is a God like unto You, that pardons iniquity, and passes by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage! He retains not His anger forever, because He delights in mercy." And how did the heart of God melt with pity and compassion when He heard the audible relentings of His Ephraim! "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: You have chastised me and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn me, and I shall be turned; for You are the Lord my God."

And what was the answer of God? "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spoke against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my affections are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, says the Lord." Nor is the promise of pardon annexed to confession of sin unfolded with less clearness and consolatoriness in the New Testament writings. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

How full, then, the blessing, how rich the consolation connected with an honest, heart-broken confession of sin! How easy, and how simple too, this method of return to God! "Only acknowledge your iniquity." It is but a confession of sin over the head of Jesus, the great sacrifice for sin. Oh, what is this that God says? "Only acknowledge your iniquity!" Is this all He requires of His poor wandering child? This is all! "Then," may the poor soul exclaim, "Lord, I come to You. I am a backslider, a wanderer, a prodigal.

I have strayed from You like a lost sheep. My love has waxed cold, my steps have slackened in the path of holy obedience, my mind has yielded to the corrupting, deadening influence of the world, and my affections have wandered in quest of other and earthly objects of delight. But, behold, I come unto You. Do You invite me? Do You stretch out Your hand? Do You bid me approach You? Do You say, 'Only acknowledge your iniquity?' Then, Lord, I come; in the name of Your dear Son, I come; restore unto me the joy of your salvation." Thus confessing sin over the head of Jesus, until the heart has nothing more to confess but the sin of its confession--for, beloved reader, our very confession of sin needs to be confessed over, our very tears need to be wept over, and our very prayers need to be prayed over, so defaced with sin is all that we do--the soul, thus emptied and unburdened, is prepared to receive anew the seal of a Father's forgiving love.

JULY 18.

"Whatever you shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John 14:13

In the matter of prayer, ever cultivate and cherish a kindly, soothing view of God in Christ. Without it, in this most solemn and holy of all transactions, your mental conceptions of His nature will be vague, your attempts to concentrate your thoughts on this one object will be baffled, and the spiritual character of the engagement will lessen in tone and vigor. But meeting God in Christ, with every perfection of His nature revealed and blended, you may venture near, and in this posture, and through this medium, may negotiate with Him the most momentous matters. You may reason, may adduce your strong arguments, and throwing wide the door of the most hidden chamber of your heart, may confess its deepest iniquity; you may place your "secret sins in the light of His countenance;" God can still meet you in the mildest luster of His love. Drawing near, placing your tremulous hand of faith on the head of the atoning sacrifice, there is no sin that you may not confess, no want that you may not make known, no mercy that you may not ask, no blessing that you may not crave, for yourself, for others, for the whole church. See! the atoning Lord is upon the mercy-seat, the golden censer waves, the fragrant cloud of the much incense ascends, and with it are "offered the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne." Jesus is in its midst--

"Looks like a Lamb that has been slain,

And wears His priesthood still."

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near." Open all your heart to God through Christ, who has opened all His heart to you in Christ. Remember that to bring Himself in a position to converse with you, as no angel could, in the matter that now burdens and depresses you, He assumed your nature on earth, with that very sorrow and infirmity affixed to it; took it back to glory, and at this moment appears in it before the throne, your Advocate with the Father. Then hesitate not, whatever be the nature of your petition, whatever the character of your need, to "make known your requests unto God." Coming by simple faith in the name of Jesus, it cannot be that He should refuse you. With His eye of justice ever on the blood, and His eye of complacency ever on His Son, Himself loving you, too, with a love ineffably great, it would seem impossible that you should meet with a denial. Yield your ear to the sweet harmony of the Redeemer's voice, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name; ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full."

JULY 19.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians 4:6

That God was under any obligation or necessity to reveal Himself to man, is an idea that cannot for a moment be seriously entertained. It will follow, then, that such a revelation of Himself, His mind and will, to fallen creatures, having been made, it must be regarded as an astounding act of His sovereign mercy, irrespective of any claim whatever arising from the creature man. The source where it originates must be entirely within God Himself.

The only full and perfect revelation of the glory of God is seen in the Lord Jesus; and apart from a spiritual and experimental knowledge of the Son there can be no true, adequate, and saving knowledge of the Father. "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared Him." The vast importance of a correct knowledge of God is a truth which finds an assent in well-near every judgment. Every awakened conscience desires it; every believing mind admits it; every

tried soul feels it. It lies at the basis of salvation; it forms the material of happiness; it supplies the true motive to holiness; it is the ground-work and the prelude of future and eternal glory.

As all knowledge of God out of Christ is defective and fallacious, examine closely, and in the light of the revealed word, the source and character of your professed acquaintance with the nature, character, and perfections of God. Ponder seriously this solemn declaration of Christ Himself. "No man knows the Son, but the Father; neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Has your knowledge of God overwhelmed you with a sense of your sinfulness? Have you caught such a view of the Divine purity, the immaculate holiness of His nature, as to compel you to exclaim, "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips,...for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts; why I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes?" Has your study of His law forced upon your mind the deep and solemn conviction that you are a fallen, ruined, lost, guilty, condemned sinner, at this moment lying under the wrath of God, and exposed to future and everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power? Has it laid you beneath the cross of Christ? Has it brought you to His blood and righteousness for pardon and acceptance? Has it led you utterly to renounce all self-trust, self-confidence, self-boasting, and to accept of Jesus, as "made of God unto you wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"? If it has not wrought this for you, your knowledge of God is but as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." "This," says Christ, "is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." If you know not the Son, you know not the Father. "No man knows the Father, but he to whom the Son shall reveal Him,"--Jesus Himself has declared. Consider well the mercy of having transactions with such a God, in such a Christ. A God so holy and just, so good and wise, in a Christ so truly human, so spotless, so near, so dear and precious! God in Christ! Oh the immensity of the truth! Oh the glory of the revelation! That God reconciled, one with the believer; all His feelings love, all His thoughts peace, and all His dealings parental; each perfection harmonizing in the most perfect agreement with all the others, to secure the highest amount of good here, and of happiness unspeakable and eternal hereafter.

JULY 20.

"I pray with all my heart; answer me, Lord! I will obey your principles. I cry out to you; save me, that I may obey your decrees. I rise early, before the sun is up; I cry out for help and put my hope in your words. I stay awake through the night, thinking about your promise." Psalm 119:145-148

To be heaven!

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