

Evening Thoughts - November

by Octavius Winslow

The sermon explores the reality of indwelling sin in believers and the abundant grace available through Christ to navigate life's challenges.

Scripture: Matthew 21:22, John 1:14, John 5:24, John 20:15, Acts 5:31, Romans 7:20, Hebrews 12:3, 1 Peter 5:10, 1 John 1:9, 1 John 4:7

Topics: "Power Of Prayer", "Indwelling Sin"

Description

Octavius Winslow emphasizes the reality of indwelling sin in believers, explaining that while sin remains a struggle, it is through Christ's grace and the power of prayer that believers can find strength and comfort. He encourages believers to acknowledge their sinfulness and to seek a deeper relationship with God through prayer, which is essential for spiritual growth and sanctification. Winslow reassures that despite the trials and tribulations faced in life, God's love and grace are ever-present, providing hope and assurance of salvation. He highlights the importance of living a life filled with the Holy Spirit, which empowers believers to overcome sin and live in accordance with God's will.

Transcript

EVENING THOUGHTS or

DAILY WALKING WITH GOD

NOVEMBER 1.

"Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me." Romans 7:20

The entire testimony of God's word, and the stories of all the saints recorded in its pages, go to confirm the doctrine of indwelling sin in a believer. The Lord has wisely, we must acknowledge, ordained it, that sin should yet remain in His people to the very last step of their journey; and for this He has graciously provided His word as a storehouse of promises, consolations, cautions, rebukes, admonitions, all referring to the indwelling sin of a believer. The covenant of grace--its sanctifying, strengthening, invigorating, animating provision, all was designed for this very state. Yes, the gift of Jesus--all His fullness of grace, wisdom, strength, and sympathy--His death, resurrection, ascension, and advocacy--all was given with an especial view to the pardon and subjection of sin in a child of God. Perfect holiness, entire sinlessness, is a state not attainable in this life. He who has settled down with the conviction that he has arrived at such a

stage has great reason to suspect the soundness, or at least the depth, of his real knowledge of himself. He, indeed, must be but imperfectly acquainted with his own heart, who dreams of perfect sanctification on this side of glory. With all meekness and tenderness, I would earnestly exhort such an individual to review his position well--to bring his heart to the touchstone of God's word--to pray over the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and to ascertain if there are not periods when the experience of an inspired apostle, once "caught up to the third heaven," will not apply to him--"I am carnal, sold under sin,"--the "sin that dwells in me." The writings and the preaching of men--mistaken views of truth--yes, I would add, even what was once a sincere and ardent desire for sanctification--either of these, or all combined, may have led to the adoption of such a notion as sinless perfection, the nature and tendency of which are to engender a spirit of human pride, self-trust, self-complacency; to throw the mind off its guard, and the heart off its prayerful vigilance, and thus render the man an easy prey to that subtle and ever-prowling enemy, of whose "devices" (and this is not the least one) no believer should be "ignorant."

Oh yes, sin, often deep and powerful, dwells in a child of God. It is the source of his greatest grief, the cause of his acutest sorrow. Remove this, and sorrow in the main would be a stranger to his breast. Go, ask yon weary, dejected, weeping believer the cause of his broken spirit--his sad countenance--his tears. "Is it," you inquire, "that you are poor in this world?" "No." "Is it that you are friendless?" "No." "Is it that worldly prosperity shines not upon you--your plans blasted--your circumstances trying--your prospects dark?" "No." "What is it, then, that grieves your spirit, clouds your countenance, and that causes those clasped hands and uplifted eyes?" "It is sin," the soul replies, "that dwells in me: sin is my burden--sin is my sorrow--sin is my grief--sin is my confession--sin is humiliation before my Father and God--rid of this, and the outward pressure would scarce be felt." Truly does the apostle say--and let the declaration never be read apart from its accompanying promise--"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

NOVEMBER 2.

"And all things, whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive." Matthew 21:22

Draw near, then, seeking soul, with boldness; not the boldness of a presumptuous, self-righteous man, but that of one chosen, called, pardoned, and justified. Draw near with the lowly boldness of a child--with the humble confidence of a son. Dear are you to your Father. Sweet is your voice to Him. Precious is your person, accepted in His Beloved. You can not come too boldly--you can not come too frequently--you can not come with too large requests. You are coming to a King, that King your Father, that Father viewing you in His beloved Son. Oh, hang not back. Stand not afar off. He now holds out the golden scepter, and says, "Come near; what is your request? Come with your temporal want. Come with your spiritual need. Ask what you will, it shall be granted you. I have an open hand, and a large heart." Is it your desire--"Lord, I want more grace to glorify You. I want more simplicity of mind, and singleness of eye. I want a more holy, upright, honest walk. I want more meekness, patience, lowliness, submission. I want to know more of Jesus, to see more of His glory, to feel more of His preciousness, and to live more simply upon His fullness. I want more of the sanctifying, sealing, witnessing, and anointing influences of the Spirit"? Blessed, holy desires! It is the Spirit making intercession in you according to the will of God; and entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, the Lord will fulfill the desires of your heart, even to the half of kingdom.

Watch diligently against the least declension in the spirit of prayer. If there be declension here, there will also be declension in every part and department of the work of the Spirit in your soul. It is prayer that keeps every grace of the Spirit in active, holy, and healthy exercise. It is the stream, so to speak, that supplies refreshing vigor and nourishment to all the plants of grace. It is true, that the fountain-head of all spiritual life and "grace to help in time of need," is Christ; "for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." And Paul's encouragement to the Philippians was, "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." But the channel through which all grace comes is prayer--ardent, wrestling, importunate, believing prayer. Suffer this channel to be dry--permit any object to narrow or close it up--and the effect will be a withering and decay of the life of God in the soul.

Guard, then, against the slightest decline of prayer in the soul. If prayer--family prayer, social prayer, most of all, closet prayer, is declining with you, no further evidence is needed of your being in a backsliding state of mind. There may not yet have been the outward departure, but you are in the way to it--and nothing but a return to prayer will save you. Oh, what alarm, what fearfulness and trembling, should this thought occasion in a child of God, "I am on my way to an awful departure from God! Such is the state of my soul at this moment, such my present state of mind, such the loss of my spirituality, such the hold which the world has upon my affections, there is no length in sin to which I may not now go, there is no iniquity which I may not now commit. The breakers are full in view, any my poor weak vessel is heading to and rapidly nearing them." What can shield you from the commission of that sin, what can keep you from wounding Jesus afresh, what can preserve you from foundering and making shipwreck of your faith, but an immediate and fervent return to prayer. Prayer is your only safety. Prayer, for grace to help in your time of need. Prayer, for reviving grace, for quickening, restraining, sanctifying grace. Prayer, to be kept from falling, to be held up in the slippery paths. Prayer, for the lowly mind, for the contrite spirit, for the broken heart, for the soft, and close, and humble walk with God.

NOVEMBER 3.

"But the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you." 1 Peter 5:10

There is a painful forgetfulness among many of the saints of God of the appointed path of believers through the world. It is forgotten that this path is to be one of tribulation; that so far from being a smooth, a flowery, and an easy path, it is rough, thorny, and difficult. The believer often expects all his heaven on earth. He forgets that whatever spiritual enjoyment there may be here, kindred in its nature to the joys of the glorified--and too much of this he cannot expect--yet the present is but the wilderness state of the church, and the life that now is, is but that of a pilgrimage and a sojourning. Kind was our Lord's admonition, "in the world you shall have tribulation:" and equally so that of the apostle, "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom." Affliction, in some of its many and varied forms, is the allotment of all the Lord's people. If we have it not, we lack the evidence of our true sonship; for the Father "scourges every son whom he receives." But whatever the trial or affliction is, the Holy Spirit is the Comforter. And how does He comfort the afflicted soul? In this way.

He unfolds the love of his God and Father in the trial. He shows the believer that his sorrow, so far from being the result of anger, is the fruit of love; that it comes from the heart of God, sent to draw the soul nearer to Himself, and to unfold the depths of His own grace and tenderness; that whom he "loves He chastens." And, oh, how immense the comfort that flows into a wounded spirit, when love--deep, unchangeable, covenant love--is seen in the hand that has stricken; when the affliction is traced to the

covenant, and through the covenant, to the heart of a covenant God.

The Spirit comforts by revealing the end why the affliction is sent. He convinces the believer that the discipline, though painful, was yet needed; that the world was, perhaps, making inroads upon the soul, or creature love was shutting out Jesus; some indulged sin was, perhaps, crucifying Him afresh, or some known spiritual duty was neglected. The Comforter opens his ears to hear the voice of the rod, and Him who had appointed it. He begins to see why the Lord has smitten, why He has caused His rough wind and His east wind to blow; why He has blasted, why He has wounded. And now the Achan is discovered, cast out, and stoned. The heart, disciplined, returns from its wanderings, and, wounded, bleeding, suffering, seeks more earnestly than ever a wounded, bleeding, suffering Savior. Who can fully estimate the comfort which flows from the sanctified discipline of the covenant? When the end for which the trial was sent is accomplished, it may be in the discovery of some departure, in the removal of an obstruction to the growth of grace, of some object that obscured the glory of Jesus, and that suspended His visits of love to the soul, "Blessed discipline," he may exclaim, "that has wrought so much good--gentle chastisement, that has corrected so much evil--sweet medicine, that has produced so much health!"

NOVEMBER 4.

"Jesus says unto her, Woman, why are you weeping?" John 20:15

In unfolding the tenderness and sympathy of Jesus, the Spirit most effectually restores comfort to the tried, tempted, and afflicted soul. He testifies of Christ especially in the sympathy of His manhood. There can be no question, that in His assumption of our nature Jesus had in view, as one important end, a closer affinity with the suffering state of His people, with regard to their more immediate comfort and support. The great end of His incarnation, we are well assured, was obedience to the law in its precept, and the suffering of its penalty. But connected with and resulting from this, is the channel that thus is open for the outflowings of that tenderness and sympathy of which the saints of God so constantly stand in need, and as constantly receive. Jesus is the "Brother born for adversity."--"It behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest."--"In that He Himself has suffered, being tempted; He is able support those who are tempted."--"We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Come, dear reader, what is your sorrow? Has the hand of death smitten? Is the beloved one removed? Has He taken away the desire of your eyes with a stroke? But who has done it? Jesus has done it; death was but His messenger. Your Jesus has done it. The Lord has taken away. And what has He removed?--your wife? Jesus has all the tenderness that ever your wife had. Hers was but a drop from the ocean that is in His heart. Is it your husband? Jesus is better to you than ten husbands. Is it your parent, your child, your friend, your all of earthly bliss? Is the cistern broken? Is the earthen vessel dashed to pieces? Are all your streams dry? Jesus is yet enough. He has not taken Himself from you, and never, never will. Take your bereaved, stricken, and bleeding heart to Him, and repose it upon His, once bereaved, stricken, and bleeding, too; for He knows how to bind up the broken heart, to heal the wounded spirit, and to comfort those that mourn.

What is your sorrow? Has health failed you? Has property forsaken you? Have friends turned against you? Are you tried in your circumstances? perplexed in your path? Are providences thickening and darkening around you? Are you anticipating seasons of approaching trial? Are you walking in darkness, having no light? Go simply to Jesus. He is a door ever open. A tender, loving, faithful Friend, ever near. He is a

Brother born for your adversity. His grace and sympathy are sufficient for you. The life you are called to live is that of faith--that of sense you have done with. You are now to walk by faith, and not by sight. This, then, is the great secret of a life of faith--to hang upon Jesus daily--to go to Him in every trial--to cast upon Him every burden--to take the infirmity, the corruption, the cross, as it rises, simply and immediately to Jesus. You are to set Christ before you as your Example to imitate; as your Fountain to wash in; as your Foundation to build upon; as your Fullness to draw from; as your tender, loving, and confiding Brother and Friend, to go to at all times and under all circumstances. To do this daily constitutes the life of faith. Oh to be enabled with Paul to say, "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." Oh holy, happy, heavenly life!--the life Jesus Himself lived when below; the life all the patriarchs and prophets, the apostles and martyrs, and the spirits of just men made perfect, once lived; and the life every true-born child of God is called and privileged to live, while yet a stranger and pilgrim on the earth.

NOVEMBER 5.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24

Let us consider what this condition does not imply. It does not include deliverance from the indwelling of sin, nor exemption from Divine correction, nor the absence of self-accusation; still less does it suppose, that there is nothing for which the believer deserves to die. All this exists where yet no condemnation exists. The battle with indwelling evil is still waged, the loving chastisement of a Father is still experienced, the self-condemnation is still felt, and daily in the holiest life there is still transpiring that which, were God strict to mark iniquities, merits and would receive eternal woe; yet the declaration stands untouched and unimpeached--"No condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."

The freedom of the believer is just what it is declared to be--entire exemption from condemnation. From all which that word of significant and solemn import implies he is, by his relation to Christ, delivered. Sin does not condemn him, the law does not condemn him, the curse does not condemn him, hell does not condemn him, God does not condemn him. He is under no power from these, beneath whose accumulated and tremendous woe all others wither. The pardon of sin necessarily includes the negation of its condemnatory power. There being no sin legally alleged, there can be no condemnation justly pronounced. Now, by the sacrifice of Christ, all the sins of the church are entirely put away. He, the sinless Lamb of God, took them up and bore them away into a land of oblivion, where even the Divine mind fails to recall them. "How forcible are right words!" Listen to those which declare this wondrous fact. "I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember your sins." "You have cast all my sins behind Your back." "Having forgiven you all trespasses." Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." The revoking of the sentence of the law must equally annihilate its condemnatory force. The obedience and death of Christ met the claims of that law, both in its preceptive and punitive character. A single declaration of God's word throws a flood of light upon this truth: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." The sentence of the law thus falling upon Surety, who was "made under the law, that He might redeem those who were under the law," there can be no condemnation from it to those who have taken shelter in Him. Thus, then, it is evident that both sin and the law are utterly powerless to condemn a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The perfection of Christ's satisfaction supplies the meritorious and procuring cause of our condemnation. No legal obedience--no personal merit or worthiness of the sinner whatever--is taken into the account of His discharge. This exalted position can only be reached by an expedient that harmonizes with the attributes of God, and thus upholds, in undimmed luster, the majesty and honor of the Divine government. God will pardon sin, and justify the sinner, but it must be by a process supremely glorifying to Himself. How, then, could a creature-satisfaction, the most perfect that man, or the most peerless that angel could offer, secure this result? Impossible! But the case, strange and difficult though it is, is met, fully, adequately met, by the satisfaction of Jesus. The Son of God became the Son of man. He presents Himself to the Father in the character of the church's substitute. The Father, beholding in Him the Divinity that supplies the merit, and the humanity that yields the obedience and endures the suffering, accepts the Savior, and acquits the sinner. Hence the freedom of the believer from condemnation: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation." It is the existence of a present condition. It is the enjoyment of a present immunity. It is the simple belief of this fact that brings instant peace to the bosom. A present discharge from condemnation must produce a present joy. Christian! there is now no condemnation for you. Be yours, then, a present and a full joy.

NOVEMBER 6.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

Deal much and closely with the fullness of grace that is in Jesus. All this grace in Christ is for the sanctification of the believer. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell," for the necessities of His people; and what necessities so great and urgent as those which spring from indwelling sin? Take the corruption, whatever be its nature, directly and simply to Jesus: the very act of taking it to Him weakens its power; yes, it is half the victory. The blessed state of mind, the holy impulse that leads you to your closet, there to fall prostrate before the Lord in lowliness of spirit and brokenness of heart--the humble confession of sin, with the hand of faith on the head of Jesus, the atoning sacrifice--is a mighty achievement of the indwelling Spirit over the power of indwelling sin.

Learn to take the guilt as it comes, and the corruption as it rises, directly and simply to Jesus. Suffer not the guilt of sin to remain long upon the conscience. The moment there is the slightest consciousness of a wound received, take it to the blood of Christ. The moment a mist dims the eye of faith, so that you can not see clearly the smile of your Father's countenance, take it that instant to the blood of atonement. Let there be no distance between God and your soul. Sin separates. But sin immediately confessed, mourned over, and forsaken, brings God and the soul together in sweet, close, and holy fellowship. Oh the oneness of God and the believer, in a sin-pardoning Christ! Who can know it?--He only who has experienced it. To cherish, then, the abiding sense of this holy, loving oneness, the believer must live near the fountain. He must wash daily in the brazen laver that is without; then, entering within the veil, he may "draw near" the mercy-seat, and ask what he will of Him that dwells between the cherubims.

Thank God for the smallest victory gained. Praise Him for any evidence that sin has not entire dominion. Every fresh triumph achieved over some strong and easy-besetting infirmity is a glorious battle won. No victory that ever flushed the cheek of an Alexander or a Caesar may once be compared with his, who, in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, overcomes a single corruption. If "he that rules his spirit is better than he

that takes a city," then, he who masters one corruption of his nature has more real glory than the greatest earthly conqueror that ever lived. Oh, how God is glorified--how Jesus is honored--how the Spirit is magnified, in the slaying of one spiritual enemy at the foot of the cross! Cheer up, precious soul! You have every encouragement to persevere in the great business of sanctification. True, it is a hard fight--true, it is a severe and painful contest--but the victory is yours! The "Captain of your salvation" has fought and conquered for you, and now sits upon His throne of glory, cheering you on, and supplying you with all needed strength for the warfare in which you are engaged. Then, "Fight the good fight of faith, be men of courage,"--"be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,"--for you shall at length "overcome through the blood of the Lamb," and be "more than conquerors [triumphant] through Him that has loved us." Here, beneath the cross, would I breathe for you the desire and the prayer once offered by the apostle of the Gentiles, in behalf of the church of the Thessalonians: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus. Christ." Amen and amen.

NOVEMBER 7.

"For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds." Hebrews 12:3

The assaults of the adversary contribute not a little to the sense of weariness which often prostrates a child of God. To be set up as a mark for Satan; the enemy smiting where sensibility is the keenest; assailing where weakness is the greatest; taking advantage of every new position and circumstance, especially of a season of trial, of a weak, nervous temperament, or of a time of sickness--distorting God's character, diverting the eye from Christ, and turning it in upon self--are among Satan's devices for casting down the soul of a dear believer. And then, there are the narrowness of the narrow way, the intricacies of the intricate way, the perils of the perilous way--all tending to jade and dispirit the soul. To walk in a path so narrow and yet so dangerous, that the white garment must needs be closely wrapped around; to occupy a post of duty so conspicuous, responsible, and difficult, as to fix every eye; some gazing with undue admiration, and others with keen and cold suspicion, ready to detect and to censure any slight irregularity--add not a little to the toilsomeness of the way. Notice, also, the numerous and varied trials and afflictions which pave his pathway to heaven--his tenderest mercies often his acutest trials, his trials often weighing him to the earth--and you have the outline of a melancholy picture, of which he whose eye scans this page may be the original. Does it surprise, then, that from the lips of such a one the exclamation often rises, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."

Remember, there will be a correspondence between the life of Christ in the soul, and the life which Christ lived when he tabernacled in the flesh. The indwelling of Christ in the believer is a kind of second incarnation of the Son of God. When Christ enters the heart of a poor sinner, He once more clothes Himself with our nature. The life which Christ lived in the days of His sojourn on earth was a life of sorrow, of conflict, of temptation, of desertion, of want, and of suffering in every form. Does He now live a different life in the believer? No; He is still tempted and deserted, in sorrow and in want, in humiliation and in suffering--in His people. What! did you think that these fiery darts were leveled at you? Did you suppose that it was you who were deserted, that it was you who suffered, that it was you who were despised, that it was you who were trodden under foot? No, my brother, it was Christ dwelling in you. All the malignity of Satan, all the power of sin, and all the contempt of the world, are leveled, not against you, but against the Lord dwelling in you. Were it all death in your soul, all darkness, sinfulness, and worldliness, you would be

an entire stranger to these exercises of the renewed man.

Behold the love and condescension of Jesus! that after all He endured in His own person, He should again submit Himself to the same in the persons of His saints; that He should, as it were, return, and tread again the path of suffering, of trial, of humiliation, in the life which each believer lives. Oh, how it speaks that love which passes knowledge! How completely is Christ one with His saints! and yet, how feebly and faintly do we believe this truth! How little do we recognize Christ in all that relates to us! and yet He is in all. He is in every providence that brightens or that darkens upon our path. "Christ is all, and in all."

NOVEMBER 8.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14

Before this Vessel of grace let us pause in adoring admiration of its greatness and its beauty. It is the "great mystery of godliness." Angels are summoned to adore it. "When He brings in the first-begotten into the world, He says, And let all the angels of God worship Him." It was the profoundest conception of God's wisdom, the masterpiece of His power, and worthy of their deepest homage. Such an unveiling of the glory of God they had never gazed upon before. In the countless glories with which He had enriched and garnished the universe, there was not its symbol, nor its type. All other wonders cease to astonish, and all other beauty fades, in comparison with this, the grandest, the peerless of all. As if fathoming the utmost depth of infinity, and collecting all its hidden treasures of wisdom and power, of grace and truth, God would seem to have concentrated and embodied, to have illustrated and displayed them all, in the person of His Incarnate Son, "God manifest in the flesh." In this was found to consist the fitness of Immanuel, as the covenant Head of grace to the church. The Divine and costly treasure, no longer confided to the guardianship and ministration of a weak, dependent creature, was deposited in the hands of incarnate Deity, One whom the Father knew, His "equal," His "fellow," made strong for Himself; and thus it was secured to His church, an inexhaustible and eternal supply.

But not in His Divine nature only did the fitness and beauty of our Lord, as the one Vessel of grace, appear. His human nature, so perfect, so sinless, so replenished, enriched, and sanctified with the in-being of the Holy Spirit, conspired to render Him "fairer than the children of men."--But in what did the chief excellence and beauty of our Lord's humanity consist? Was it the glory of human wisdom, of worldly grandeur, of secular power? No; not in these! It was that which the world the least esteems, and the most hates, which formed the rich endowment of our Lord's inferior nature--the grace which dwelt within Him. The world conferred no dignity upon Christ, save that of its deepest ridicule and its bitterest scorn. In His temporal estate, He preferred poverty to wealth, obscurity to distinction, insult to applause, suffering to ease, a cross to a throne. So indigent and neglected was He, though every spot of earth was His, and all creatures were feeding from His hand, He had no nightly shelter, and often no "daily bread." How affecting to those who love the Savior, and who owe all their temporal comforts to His deprivation, and all their glory to His abasement, are expressions like these--"Jesus hungered;" "Jesus said, I thirst;" "Jesus sighed deeply in His spirit." "Jesus groaned within Himself;" "Jesus wept" "The Son of man has not where to lay His head." Thus low did stoop the incarnate God!

But in the midst of all this poverty and humiliation, God did seem to say, "I will make Him, my Son, more glorious than angels, and fairer than the children of men. I will endow Him immeasurably with my Spirit, and I will replenish Him to the full with my grace. I will anoint Him with the oil of gladness above His

fellows." When He appeared in the world, and the eye of the evangelist caught the vision, he exclaimed with wondering delight, "The glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." How did all that He said and did, each word and action, betray the fullness of grace that dwelt within Him! The expressions that distilled from His lips were "gracious words;" the truths He thus taught were the doctrines of grace; the works He performed were the miracles of grace; the invitations He breathed were the promises of grace; the blessings He pronounced were the gifts of grace; in a word, the blood He shed, the righteousness He wrought, the redemption He accomplished, the salvation He proclaimed, the souls He rescued, and the kingdom He promised, were the outgoings, the overflowings, the achievements, the triumphs, and the rewards of grace.

NOVEMBER 9.

"Him has God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31

How glorious an object is this Savior, whom the gospel thus reveals! It is true His essential greatness, like the peace which He Himself gives, "passes all understanding;" yet, like that peace, He may be known, though He cannot be measured. "We may know experimentally," as Owen beautifully remarks, "that which we cannot know comprehensively; we may know that in its power and effect, which we cannot comprehend in its nature and depths. A weary person may receive refreshment from a spring, who cannot fathom the depth of the ocean from where it proceeds." That this is true of the "love of Christ, which passes knowledge," is equally true of the person of Christ Himself, whom "no man knows but the Father." Do not think that all His beauty is concealed. They, in whom it has pleased the Father to reveal His Son, "behold His glory;" they "see the King in His beauty;" the discovery of His excellence often captivates their soul, and the sense of His love often cheers their hearts; while in lively faith and joy they exclaim, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine."

Take one more view of Him, who is the "chief among ten thousand." Look at His sinless yet real humanity; without a single taint, yet sympathizing with all the conditions of ours: afflicted in our afflictions; tempted in our temptations; infirm in our infirmities; grieved in our griefs; "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities;" and now that He is in glory, still cherishing a brother's heart, bending down His ear to our petitions, ever standing near to catch our sighs, to dry our tears, to provide for our needs, to guide us by His counsel, and afterwards to receive us to glory. Oh what a Savior is Jesus Christ! Wonder not, my readers, that when He is known, all other beings are eclipsed; that when His beauty is seen, all other beauty fades; that when His love is felt, He becomes supremely enthroned in the affections; and that to know Him more is the one desire of the renewed mind, and to make Him more known is the one aim of the Christian life.

What glorious tidings, too, does the gospel announce! Take the doctrine of pardon, the very mention of which thrills the soul with gladness. Pardon through the blood-shedding of God's dear Son; for "all manner of sin," and for the chief of sinners! What myriads have gone to glory, exulting with their expiring breath in those melodious words, "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." Is there no music in this declaration, to the ear of a sin-burdened soul? And when the called children of God behold in that blood of Immanuel the sea which has drowned all their sins, the fountain which has cleansed all their guilt, the source of their reconciliation, the cause of their peace, and the ground of their access--is not the gospel a joyful sound to their ears? And yet how few live in the full enjoyment of this truth--"You will cast all my sins behind Your back." "You have forgiven all their iniquity." "I have blotted out as a cloud your

transgression, and as a thick cloud your sins." Precious truth! Since God has spoken it, faith exclaims, "I believe it. On this I can live holily, and on this I can die happily."

NOVEMBER 10.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God." 1 John 4:7

It were as much a libel upon the religion of Jesus to represent it as destroying the instincts of our sympathetic nature, as it were a dim conception of the Divine power of that religion, to suppose that it does not increase, to an intensity and tenderness almost infinite, the depth and power of those instincts. It is generally admitted, that, compared with the Christian economy, the Old Dispensation was characterized by many essential and palpable features of terror and harshness and that those who lived under its sway would naturally imbibe the spirit of the economy to which they belonged. Yet, oppressive as appear to have been many of its laws, unfeeling many of its requirements, and harsh the spirit of its whole economy, we find in that dispensation some of the most real, tender, and touching exhibitions of sympathy springing from holy hearts, recorded in the Bible. Who, as he wanders amid the vine-clad but deserted hills of Palestine, with a heart of cultivated affections, and an ear attuned to plaintive sounds, does not regard it as the sacred home of sensibility--its valleys and its mountains still vocal with the sighings of sympathy and the lamentations of love? There would still seem to vibrate the touching tones of Jacob, pouring forth the tenderness of his soul, for his beloved Rachel, and for his darling son. There, too, would seem yet to linger the mournful requiem of David for the fallen sovereign whom he venerated, for the faithful friend whom he loved, and for the unhappy son whose untimely death he deplored. Could sympathy be portrayed in a picture more vivid, or embodied in words more heart-subduing, than this: "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for you, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Such is a recollection of Palestine. And who can thus think of that hallowed land, and not associate with it all that is elevating, grateful, and touching in sympathy!

But another and a more sympathetic economy has succeeded. Christianity is the embodiment, the incarnation of love. It not only inculcates, but it inspires, it not only enjoins, but it originates, the most refined sensibility of soul. Sympathy is no by-law of Christianity, it is the embodied essence of all its laws; and Christianity itself is the embalmed sympathies of Him, in whom dwelt bodily the fullness of Divine and Essential Love. If the ancient economy, with all its coldness, harshness, and severity, dedicated its temples and tuned its lyres, lent its holy oracles and consecrated the very scenes and scenery of nature, to the highest, noblest, and purest sympathies of the soul; surely the gospel will not frown or pour contempt upon the feelings, emotions, and breathings, which the law held precious and sacred. Oh no! the religion of Jesus is the religion of love. It is the school of the affections; and it is only here that they are fully developed, sanctified, and trained. To love man as man should be loved, God must be the

first and supreme object of our love.

NOVEMBER 11.

"Why the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:10, 11

The doctrine of an assured belief of the pardon of sin, of acceptance in Christ, and of adoption into the family of God, has been, and yet is, regarded by many as an attainment never to be expected in the present life; and when it is expressed, it is viewed with a suspicion unfavorable to the character of the work. But this is contrary to the Divine word, and to the concurrent experience of millions who have lived and died in the full assurance of hope. The doctrine of assurance is a doctrine of undoubted revelation, implied and expressed. That it is enforced as a state of mind essential to the salvation of the believer, we cannot admit; but that it is insisted upon as essential to his comfortable and holy walk, and as greatly involving the glory of God, we must strenuously maintain. Else why these marked references to the doctrine? In Col. 2:1, 2, Paul expresses "great conflict" for the saints, that their "hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding." In the Epistle to the Hebrews, 7:11, he says, "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." In chap. 10:22, he exhorts them, "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." And to crown all, the apostle Peter thus earnestly exhorts, "Why the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure." We trust no further proof from the sacred word is required to authenticate the doctrine. It is written as with a sunbeam, "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

It is the duty and the privilege of every believer diligently and prayerfully to seek the sealing of the Spirit. He rests short of his great privilege, if he slights or undervalues this blessing. Do not be satisfied with the faint impression, which you received in conversion. In other words, rest not content with a past experience. Many are satisfied with a mere hope that they once passed from death unto life, and with this feeble and, in many cases, doubtful evidence, they are content to pass all their days, and to go down to the grave. Ah, reader, if you are really converted, and your soul is in a healthy, growing, spiritual state, you will want more than this. And especially, too, if you are led into deeper self-knowledge--a more intimate acquaintance with the roughness of the rough way, the straitness of the strait path, you will want a present Christ to lean upon, and to live upon. Past experience will not do for you, save only as it confirms your soul in the faithfulness of God. "Forgetting those things that are behind," you will seek a present pardon, a present sense of acceptance; and the daily question, as you near your eternal home, will be, "how do I now stand with God?--is Jesus precious to my soul now?--is He my daily food?--what do I experience of daily visits from and to Him?--do I more and more see my own vileness, emptiness, and poverty, and His righteousness, grace, and fullness?--and should the summons now come, am I ready to depart and to be with Christ?" As you value a happy and a holy walk--as you would be jealous for the honor and glory of the Lord--as you wish to be the "salt of the earth," the "light of the world"--to be a savor of Christ in every place--oh, seek the sealing of the Spirit. Rest not short of it--reach after it--press towards it: it is your duty--oh that the duty may be your privilege; then shall you exclaim with an unfaltering tongue, "Abba; Father," "my Lord my God!"

NOVEMBER 12.

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him." Luke 11:13

God has ordained that prayer should be the great channel through which His covenant blessings should flow into the soul. If it is your anxious desire to attain this sealing influence of the Spirit, I would quote for your direction a remark of that eminent servant of Christ, Dr. Goodwin, "Be sure of this," says he, "that before God ever communicates any good to a soul, He puts that soul in a state of holiness to receive it." To confirm and illustrate this thought, let me ask--what was the state of the apostles, when the Holy Spirit

descended upon them in His witnessing, anointing, and sealing influences? It is described in these words--"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren," Acts 1:14. What is the important lesson thus taught us? That God would have His child in a waiting, seeking, supplicating posture; and in this holy state, prepared to receive the high attainment He is ready to bestow.

Do you earnestly desire the sealing of the Spirit? "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find." As sure as you petition for it--sincerely, humbly, believingly--seeking it in the name of Jesus, through the cross of Christ, you shall have it. The Lord the Spirit is ready to impart it to you. It is the free gift of His love, without respect to any worth or worthiness on the part of the soul that receives it. It is a gift of grace--for the poor, the dependent, the unworthy--those that are little in their own eyes, and little in the eyes of others; and if this is your conscious state, then is it for you. And oh, the blessed results!--who can describe them? Sealed! How will all your legal fears and unbelieving doubts in a moment vanish away! your soul, so long fettered and imprisoned, shall now go free; the cross you have so long looked at, not daring to bow your shoulder to it, shall now be taken up with a cheerful mind; Christ's yoke, so long resisted, will now be easy, and His burden, so long refused, will now be light; and, with a heart enlarged with the love of Jesus, you will "run the way of His commandments," esteeming His precepts better than life. Prayer, importunate prayer, will bring the blessing we plead for into your soul. Seek it with your whole heart--seek it diligently, perseveringly. Seek it by day and by night--seek it in all the means of grace--in every way of God's appointment--especially seek it in the name of Jesus, as the purchased blessing of His atoning blood. "Ask what you will in my name," are His own encouraging words, "and it shall be granted unto you." Then ask for the sealing of the Spirit. Ask nothing less: more you do not want. Feel that you have not "attained," until you possess it--that you have not "apprehended that for which also you are apprehended of Christ Jesus," until you have "received the Holy Spirit" as a sealer.

NOVEMBER 13.

"Be filled with the Spirit." Ephesians 5:18

The possession of the Holy Spirit in the fullness of His grace contributes essentially to the constitution of the spiritual mind. The antagonist of carnality is the Spirit. "If we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." As the Spirit of God, He is the author of all that is spiritual. As the Spirit of holiness, He maintains and carries forward the work of sanctification in the soul. He it is who forms, and He it is who leads forward, the spiritual mind. The large possession of the Spirit! nothing can exceed the blessing. Without the Spirit of God, what is man? He is the mark of every fiery assault, the prey of every prowling foe--a magazine of corruption, around which a thousand sparks--sparks of his own kindling--fall. But possessing the Spirit; even in its most limited measure, what is man? A living soul--a holy being--a temple of God--an heir of glory. But suppose him possessing the Spirit in the plenitude of His grace, not partially, but "filled with the Spirit--what must be the invincibility of his might in the resistance of sin! what the potency of his shield in disarming the power of temptation! and what the eminence of his attainments in spiritual-mindedness, as a child of God! While others are girding for the conflict, or are adjusting their armor, he is covering himself with glory on the battle-field. While others are training for the race, he has well-near reached the goal. "Filled with the Spirit," he is filled with all the fruits of the Spirit. Faith is vigorous, hope is bright, love is fervent. He is mighty in the "Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

It was this possession of the Spirit in His fullness which gave to the apostles, who until then were so timid and unbelieving, such irresistible boldness and power on the day of Pentecost. Some in their hearing exclaimed, "These men are full of new wine." But the secret was, "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit." And the hearts of the great mass to whom they preached the crucified Savior bowed before the power of their preaching, "as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind." Oh seek to "be filled with the Spirit"! then will your thirstings for God be deeper, your breathings after holiness more intense, your communion with your heavenly Father closer, and your faith in Jesus stronger. The indwelling of the Spirit is the root of all holiness; but the communication of the Spirit in the plenitude of His gracious, sanctifying, Christ-transforming influence, is the secret of an elevated tone of heavenly-mindedness. Would you repel some strong assault, or vanquish some powerful corruption, or throw off some clinging infirmity, and abide by the verdant banks and quiet waters of fellowship with the Father and with His Son Christ Jesus?--oh ask, and you shall receive, the fullness of the Spirit.

Beware of being guided by any other than the Spirit of God. The temptation is strong, and the tendency to yield to it equally so, of being biased in forming our theological views, and in modeling our Christian practice, by the profound research, the distinguished talents, the exalted piety, and admired example of men. But this must not be. It is inconsistent with the honor that belongs, and with the love that we owe, to the Spirit. A human must necessarily be a fallible guide; against the influence of whose doctrinal errors, and practical mistakes, no extent of learning, or depth of spirituality, or eminence of position on their part, can insure us. We are only safe, as we constantly and strictly follow our Divine and heavenly guide. Blessed and Eternal Spirit! to Your teaching would I bow my mind. To Your love would I yield my heart. To Your consolation would I carry my sorrows. To Your government would I resign my entire soul. "You shall guide me by Your counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory."

NOVEMBER 14.

"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." 2 Timothy 4:18

Things temporary and transient, be they sad or of joyous, pleasant or painful; indwelling sin, temporary trial, occasional temptations, the momentary suspensions of God's realized love--none of these, or any other things present; shall separate from Christ. What human foresight can predict the future of the earthly history of the child of God? What human hand can uplift the veil that conceals the events that shall yet transpire in his history, before he reaches that perfect world where there will be no future, but one eternal present? Oh, what goodness hides it from our view! But be that future what it may--shady or sunny, stormy or serene--God will stand fast to His covenant with His church, and Christ to His union with His people. Things to come, be they more terrible than things that are past, or that are now, shall not touch their interest in the Lord's love.

No elevation to which He may advance them, no height of rank, or wealth, or honor, or influence, or usefulness, shall peril their place in His love. Thus it was the Lord advanced Moses, and David, and Joseph, and Gideon; but in their elevation to worldly distinction, power, and affluence, they were kept walking humbly with God--and this was the secret of their safety. "The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk in mine high places." From the loftiest height to the lowest depth of adversity, God can bring His servant, yet love him still with an unchanged and deathless affection. But no depth of soul-distress, no depth of poverty, or suffering, or humiliation, shall disturb the repose, or peril the security, of a believing soul in the love of God.

If there be any other thing or being in the wide universe that wears a threatening or unkindly aspect towards the Christian, Divine power shall restrain its force, saying to the proud waves, "Thus far shall you come, and no farther." And thus all the billows, amid which the ark has for ages been tossed, shall but bear it gently and triumphantly onward to the mount of God. On that mount, beloved, where now are gathering all who have the Father's name written on their foreheads, we too, through grace, shall stand, eternally extolling the Lamb, through Him who, because He died, there is for us no condemnation from Divine justice, and through Him who, because He lives, there is for us no separation from Divine love.

NOVEMBER 15.

"For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who has subjected the same in hope." Romans 8:20

The vanity here referred to is opposed to the state of glory in anticipation, and therefore expresses the condition of corruption and trial in the midst of which the renewed creature dwells, and to the assaults of which it is incessantly exposed. The world through which the Christian is passing to his rest may be emphatically called a state of vanity. How perpetually and forcibly are we reminded of the king of Israel's exclamation, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." "Surely every man walks in a vain show." His origin, the earth; his birth, degenerate; his rank, a bauble; his wealth, but glittering dust; his pomp, an empty pageant; his beauty, a fading flower; his pursuits, an infant's play; his honors, vexations of spirit; his joys, fleeting as a cloud; his life, transient as a vapor; his final home, a grave. Surely "man at his best state is altogether vanity." And what is his religion but vanity?--his native holiness, a vain conceit; his natural light, Egyptian darkness; his human wisdom, egregious folly; his religious forms, and rites, and duties, "a vain show in the flesh;" his most gorgeous righteousness, "filthy rags." In the impressive language of Scripture, of him it may be said, "That man's religion is vain." "Lord, what is man, that you take knowledge of him! or the son of man, that you make account of him!"

Truly "vanity" is inscribed in legible characters on each created good. How, then, can the renewed creature escape its influence? He is "subject to vanity," Dazzled by its glare, captivated by its fascinations, ensnared by its promises, he is often the victim of its power. But it is not a voluntary subjection on the part of the renewed creature. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly." It is not with him a condition of choice. He loves it not, he prefers it not, he glories not in it. From it he would sincerely be freed; beyond it he would gladly soar. "For we who are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." His prayer is, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken me in Your way." He pants for a holier and a happier state--a state more congenial with his renewed nature. Like the Israelites under the Egyptian bondage, he is a most unwilling servant, groaning beneath his galling yoke, and sighing for the glorious liberty of the children of God. Ah, yes! God has given you another will, O renewed creature! and your present subjection to this poor, vain world is an involuntary subjection of the divine nature within you. Why God should have subjected the renewed creature to vanity does not appear; we well know that He could have transferred us to heaven, the moment that He renewed us on earth. But may we not infer that in sending His people into the world, after He had called them by His grace, and; in a sense, taken them out of it--that in subjecting them for so many years to this state of vanity--He has best consulted His own glory and their good? The school of their heavenly teaching, the scene of their earthly toil, and the theater of their spiritual conflict they are kept in this world for a season; "made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope."

NOVEMBER 16.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation with which you are called." Ephesians 4:1

The calling here referred to is that inward, effectual calling of which the same apostle speaks in another place "Among whom are you also the called of Jesus Christ: to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." What a glorious vocation is this! To have heard the Holy Spirit's divine yet gentle voice in the deep recesses of the soul--to have felt the drawings of the Savior's love upon the heart--to have listened to a Father's persuasive assurance of a love that has forgotten all our enmity, forgiven all our rebellion, and that remembers only the kindness of our youth, and the love of our espousals--"called to be saints," God's holy ones--called to be sons, the Father's adopted ones--oh, this were a vocation worthy indeed of God, and demanding in return our supremest, deepest affection!

The principle upon which this call proceeds, is said to be "according to His purpose." Thus it is a calling over which we have no control, either in originating or frustrating it, and therefore there is no ground of self-boasting. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will." It excludes all idea of merit on the part of the called. "Who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Oh, yield your heart to the full belief and holy influence of this truth. Does it clash with your creed?--then your creed is defective. Does it awaken the opposition of your heart?-- then your heart is not right. Are you really among the "called of God"?--then ascribe it to His eternal purpose, and believe that you have no ground of boasting, in the possession of a favor so distinguished, save in the sovereign will and most free grace of the most holy Lord God who has called you. Has this call reached you, my reader? Ministers have called you--the gospel has called you--providences have called you--conscience has called you--but has the Spirit called you with an inward and effectual vocation? Have you been called, spiritually called, from darkness to light--from death to life--from sin to holiness--from the world to Christ--from self to God? Examine your heart and ascertain. It is a matter of the greatest moment that you know that you are truly converted--that you are called of God. Has the thrilling, life-inspiring music of that call sounded and reverberated through all the chambers of your soul?

Are we called? Then let us heed the earnest entreaty of the apostle, in the words of our motto, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation with which you are called." Let the lowliest and the highest vocation of life be dignified and sanctified by the heavenly calling. Wherever you are, and in whatever engaged, do not forget your high calling of God. You are called to be saints; called to a separation from the world; called to a holy, heavenly life; called to live for God, to labor for Christ; and soon will be called to be with the Lord forever!

NOVEMBER 17.

"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. But why do you judge your brother? or why do you set at nothing your brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Let us not therefore judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Romans 14:5, 10, 13

The exercise of private judgment is the natural and inalienable right of every individual. Sanctified by the Spirit of God, it becomes a precious privilege of the believer. He prizes it more than riches, claims it as one of the immunities of his heavenly citizenship, and will surrender it only with life itself. Christian love will

avoid infringing, in the least degree, upon this sacred right. I am bound by the law of love to concede to my brother, to its fullest extent, that which I claim for myself. I am moreover bound to believe him conscientious and honest in the views which holds, and that he maintains them in a reverence for the word, and in the exercise of the fear of God. He does not see eye to eye with me in every point of truth--our views of church government, of ordinances, and of some of the doctrines are not alike. And yet, discerning a perfect agreement as to the one great and only way of salvation--and still more, marking in him much of the lowly, loving spirit of his Master, with an earnest desire, in simplicity and godly sincerity, to serve Him--how can I cherish or manifest towards him any other than a feeling of brotherly love? God loves him, God bears with him; and Christ may see in him, despite of a creed less accurately balanced with the word of truth than mine, a walk more in harmony with the holy, self-denying, God-glorifying precepts of that truth. With an orthodoxy less perfect, there may be a life more holy. With less illumination in the judgment, there may be more grace in the heart. How charitable in my interpretation, then, how loving in my spirit, how kind and gentle in my manner, should I be towards him. How jealous, too, ought I to be, of that independence of mind, in the exercise of which he may, notwithstanding, have arrived at conclusions opposite to my own.

Cherishing these feelings, Christians who differ in judgment, will be placed in a more favorable position for the understanding of each other's views, and for the united examination of the word of God. Diversity of judgment, through the infirmity of our fallen nature, is apt to beget alienation of feeling; and consequently, the development of truth is hindered. But where harmony of affection is cultivated, there will be a greater probability of arriving at more perfect agreement in sentiment, thus walking in accordance with apostle's rule--"I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment."

NOVEMBER 18.

"But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him." Psalm 37:39, 40

Of all the consolations which flow into the soul of the afflicted believer, not the least is that he has a covenant God to go to in prayer. What can surpass this? What could supply its place? Nothing. In no way does God more effectually comfort those that are cast down, than by drawing them to Himself. For this He has instituted prayer, sprinkled the mercy-seat with the blood of His Son, and sends the sweet promise and grace of His Spirit, to invite and draw the disconsolate to Himself. "A Christian, when he is beaten out of all other comforts, has a God to run unto. He can wrestle, and strive with God by God's own strength, can make use of His own weapons, and plead with God by His own arguments. What a happy estate is this! Who would not be a Christian, if it were but for this, to have something to rely on when all things else fail?"

Approach, then, disconsolate soul! and pour out your sorrow to God in prayer. Your God is upon the throne of grace, and "waits that He may be gracious unto you." Then "you shall weep no more: He will be very gracious unto you at the voice of your cry; when He shall hear it, He will answer you." Why are you then cast down? "Trust in God, grace will be above nature, God above the devil, the Spirit above the flesh. Be strong in the Lord; the battle is His, and the victory ours beforehand. If we fought in our own cause and strength, and with our own weapons, it were something; but as we fight in the power of God, so are we

kept by that mighty power through faith unto salvation. Corruptions are strong, but stronger is He that is in us than the corruption that is in us. Our corruptions are God's enemies as well as ours; and therefore in trusting to Him, and fighting, we may be sure He will take our part against them."

In each season of casting down, ascend your watch-tower in the full expectation of an especial blessing. This would seem to be the order God: "When men are cast down, then you shall say, There is lifting up." Expect great mercies through the medium of great trials; great comforts through great sorrows; deep sanctification from deep humiliation. All the trying dispensations of God in the histories of His people are preparatory to their greater grace. It was in this school the distinguished apostle of the Gentiles was taught the greatest and holiest lesson of life. Descending from the third heaven, all fragrant with its odors, and glowing with its light, he was plunged into the deepest humiliation, in order that he might be instructed more thoroughly in that truth, which he could not experimentally have learned even in paradise itself--the sufficiency of Christ's grace to sustain the believer the deepest trial. Tried believer! suffering saint! expect an especial blessing to your soul. If Lord has led you in by the north gate, he will lead you out by the south gate. Dark though the cloud may be, and painful the path, have patience in your affliction, and God will give you a happy issue out of all your troubles. And, oh, blessed result, if sin is embittered, if holiness is sweetened, if some tyrant corruption is mortified, if communion with God is quickened, if Jesus is endeared, if your Father in heaven is glorified! "Why are you cast down, O my soul? and why are you disquieted within me? hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

NOVEMBER 19.

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Colossians 1:14

The blood of Jesus is the life of our pardon and acceptance: "Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God--that is, the transgressions of the Old Testament saints; the life-giving blood of Jesus extending its pardoning efficacy back to the remotest period of time, and to the greatest sinner upon earth; even to him "by whom sin entered into the world, and death by sin--such is the vitality of the atoning blood of God's dear Son. And if the pardoning blood thus bore an antecedent virtue, has it less a present one? No! listen to the life-inspiring words! "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according the riches of His grace." Once more, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. It has a present life, an i

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