

# Evening Thoughts - September

by Octavius Winslow

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*The sermon reflects on the divine encounter of Moses with God in the burning bush, emphasizing the significance of Christ's suffering and God's presence in our trials.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 3:2

**Topics:** "Divine Manifestation", "Suffering and Glory"

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## Description

Octavius Winslow reflects on the profound encounter of Moses with God at the burning bush, emphasizing the divine manifestation of Christ in this event. He highlights the significance of God's holiness and justice, symbolized by the unconsumed bush, which foreshadows Christ's suffering and endurance on the cross. Winslow encourages believers to recognize the glory of Jesus in their trials, assuring them that just as the bush was preserved, so too will God sustain them through their afflictions. He calls for a deeper understanding of Christ's love and sacrifice, urging the faithful to turn to Him in their moments of need and sorrow.

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## Transcript

EVENING THOUGHTS or

DAILY WALKING WITH GOD

SEPTEMBER 1.

"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not near here: put off your shoes from of your feet, for the place whereon you stands is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." Exodus 3:2-6

This type--a type it doubtless is--is radiant with the glory of Christ. It shadows forth Christ in the mysterious constitution of His complex person, and in the great work for the accomplishment of which he became so constituted.

The first point demanding our attention is the Divine manifestation. That Jehovah was here revealed, the evidence is most conclusive. When Moses turned aside to see the great sight, "God called unto him out of the midst of the bush." It was no mere vision that he saw, no hallucination of the mind had come over him; he could not be deceived as to the Divine Being in whose immediate and solemn presence he then stood. How awe-struck must have been his mind! how solemn his impressions! how sacred his thoughts! But if further proof were needed, the declaration of God Himself sets the question of the Divine appearance at rest--"I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." No truth could be more clearly established.

But in which person of the sacred and adorable Three, it may be asked, did God thus appear? We have every scriptural reason to believe that it was JEHOVAH-JESUS; that it was a manifestation anticipative of His future appearance in the flesh, of the Godhead of Christ. Thus, then, the type sets forth the glory of the Divine person of our dear Lord. How solemn, and yet how delightful to the mind, and establishing to our faith, is the truth, that the same God who under the old dispensation, on so many occasions, in so many gracious and glorious ways, and in so many remarkable and undoubted instances, appeared to the ancient believers, is He who was born in Bethlehem, who lived a life of obedience to the law, and died an atoning death upon the cross; the Savior, the Surety of His people! What reality does it give to the salvation of the saints! Beloved, remember at all times, the same Jehovah who spoke from the midst of the flaming bush, and said, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," speaks to you from the cross and in the Gospel, and says, "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Oh "glorious Gospel of the blessed God!"

The second point of consideration in this remarkable type, as setting forth the glory of Immanuel, is the symbol in which He appeared. It is full of instruction. And what symbol did our Lord select in which to embody His Deity? Did He choose some tall cedar of Lebanon, or some majestic oak of the forest? No; but a bush--the most mean and insignificant, the most lowly and unsightly of all trees--was to enshrine the Godhead of Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. And what is the truth it conveys? Oh, most glorious and precious. It points to the incarnate glory of the Son of God--the lowliness and lowliness of His nature. Referring again to the type, it will instantly appear that the unveiled, unclouded, and unembodied glory of Jehovah would have appalled and overwhelmed with its ineffable brightness the awe-stricken and astonished man of God. He could not have looked upon God and lived. "There shall no man see me and live," says the Lord. It was therefore proper, yes, it was merciful that all the manifestations of God to His people in the old dispensation should be through the medium of objects on which the eye could look without pain, and on which the mind could repose with out fear. Veiled in a cloud, or embodied in a bush, God could approach the creature with condescending grace, and reveal His mind; the creature could approach God with humble confidence, and open his heart. How kind and condescending in Jehovah to subdue and soften the splendor of His majesty, thus attempting it to the weak vision of mortal and sinful man!

But this was typical of that more wondrous and stupendous stoop of God in the new dispensation. All the subdued and obscure manifestations of the Godhead in the former economy were but the forecasting shadows of the great mystery of godliness then approaching; and possessed no glory, by reason of the glory that excels. But mark the condescending grace, the deep abasement, the infinite lowliness of the Son of God. When He purposed to appear in an inferior nature, what form of manifestation did He assume? Did He embody His Godhead in some tall archangel? Did He enshrine it in some glowing seraph? No! "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of

Abraham." He lowered Himself to our mean and degraded nature--He selected our fallen, suffering, sorrowing, tempted humanity--He takes into union with Deity a creature, not of the highest rank and beauty, but a spirit dwelling in a temple of flesh; yes, not merely the inhabitant of the temple, but He unites Himself with the temple itself: for the "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" and even this flesh not connected with its state of primeval glory, but associated with all the humbling, though sinless, infirmities of its fallen condition. Behold, too, the lowliness of Christ in the world's eye. In Him it sees no glory, and traces no beauty; His outward form of humiliation veils it from their view. He is to them but as a "root out of the dry ground, having no form nor loveliness."

## SEPTEMBER 2.

"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." Exodus 3:2

There is yet another part of this significant type to be considered, equally important and rich in the view it conveys of the glory of Jesus in His work. "And he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." The symbol of fire was expressive of the holiness and justice of God. It is thus frequently employed--"The Lord your God is a consuming fire." "And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire." "Our God is a consuming fire." But that which formed the greatest wonder,--which riveted the eye, and attracted and enchained the feet of Moses to the spot, was the bush unconsumed. "And Moses said, I will NOW TURN aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned."

But a more marvelous and stupendous spectacle meets us in the cross of Christ--Jesus enduring the fire of His Father's wrath; wrapped in the flame of His justice, and yet unconsumed! Let us turn aside from all inferior objects, and for a while contemplate this "great sight." It is indeed a great sight! The Son of God is bound upon the altar as a "burned-offering"--a sacrifice for sin. The fire of Divine justice descends to consume Him; holiness in fearful exercise heaps on its fuel, and the flame and the smoke ascend in one vast column before the throne of the Eternal, "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." But behold the astonishment! Jesus suffering, and yet rejoicing! dying, and yet living! consuming, and yet unconsumed! These prodigies marked the offering up of our great High Priest upon Calvary. The dark billows of sorrow rolled over the human soul of Christ, but the Godhead remained calm and peaceful, its tranquility unruffled by a wave of grief, its sunshine undimmed by a cloud of darkness. He thus passed through all these throbs, and throes, and agonies of death, descended into the grave, rose again, lived, and still lives, the Fountain of life to the created universe. Behold the GOD! Say you, He is a mere creature? Preposterous thought! Mad conception! Soul-destructive belief! Had He been less than Divine, suffering as He did for sin, the devouring fire would have consumed Him in its quenchless flame.

To a heart-broken sinner, how attractive and glorious is this spectacle of an almighty Redeemer, sustaining the wrath, and suffering the justice of God for transgression! Mourning soul! turn aside, and behold yet again this "great sight." "Put off your shoes from off your feet, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground." Lay aside your fleshly reasoning, your carnal views of self-justification, self-salvation, and human power. Put off all your fleshly ideas of God, of His grace, and of His goodness; divest yourself of all your unbelieving and hard thoughts of His power, willingness, and readiness to save you. Thus prepared, approach--gaze--wonder--and adore! No one can stand on this holy ground, but he who stands on his own nothingness; none are welcome here but the poor, the empty, the bankrupt, and the vile. Are you all this? is this your case? Then draw near! God will speak from amid the flame of the sacrifice, and say to you, "Fear not!"

Dear tried and suffering reader, do you resemble this burning bush? Are you in the fire, passing through the furnace? Does some strong temptation assail you--some sore trial oppress you--some deep sorrow wound you? He who dwelt in the bush, dwells in you! and He who kept the bush unconsumed amid the flame, will keep you! Let your greatest care and deepest solicitude be to "glorify God in the fires." Be more prayerful for sustaining and sanctifying grace, than for the removal of your trial. This will bring richer glory to God. Beseech your Father that the flame may not be extinguished until the alloy is consumed, and the tried gold has come forth reflecting more vividly from its surface the image of Jesus--your soul partaking more deeply of the Divine HOLINESS.

SEPTEMBER 3.

"Behold the Lamb of God." John 1:36

In the deep study of the holiness of the law, and the strictness of Divine justice, what a suitable and glorious object for the alarmed and trembling spirit to look upon, is He who came to honor that law, and to satisfy that justice! Are you agitated by thoughts of the Divine holiness, and your own impurity? Do you tremble as you contemplate God's determination to punish sin, by no means clearing the guilty? Look unto Jesus, and let your trembling subside into the calmness with which His whisper stills the tempest. He has become "the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes." His atonement, while it vindicates the majesty of the Father's government, spreads its mighty shield around the Father's child, and thus protected, neither the thunder of the law nor the flaming sword of justice can reach him. Oh! the blessedness of looking, by faith, to Jesus, from the wrath and the condemnation justly due to our transgressions; to see all that wrath and condemnation borne by Him who wept and bled in the garden, who languished and died upon the tree; to see Jesus, with the keys of all authority and power suspended from His girdle, closing up our hell, and opening wide our heaven. In the season of solitude and sorrow, Christian reader, when thoughts of God's holiness mingle with views of your sinfulness, and fears of Divine wrath blend with the consciousness of your just deserts, darkening that solitude, and embittering that sorrow, oh! turn and fix your believing eye upon the Divine, the suffering, the atoning Savior, and peace, composure, and joy will lull your trembling spirit to rest. You are not sick, nor in solitude, nor in sorrow, because there is wrath in God; for all that wrath was borne by your redeeming Surety. You are so--oh, that you could believe it!--because God is love. It must be, since Jesus so bore away the curse and the sin, that God now brims the cup He emptied with a love that passes knowledge. "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be you weary of His correction: for whom the Lord loves He corrects, even as a father the son in whom he delights.

In every position of life, our privilege is to look unto Jesus. God can place us in no circumstances, be they humble or exalted, in which we may not repair to Christ for the wisdom and the strength, the grace and the consolation, those circumstances demand. It is our mercy to know that God adapts Himself to every position of His saints. He knows that in times of prosperity, the feet of His saints are apt to slide; and that in times of adversity, they are often pierced and wounded. Thus, in the smooth path, as in the rough, Jesus is to be the one object to which the eye is raised, and upon which it rests. If He exalts you, as He may do, to any post of distinction and responsibility, look unto Jesus, and study the self-annihilation and lowliness of His whole life. If He lays you low, as in His dealings with His people He often does, from the depth of your humiliation let your eye look unto Jesus, who reached a depth in His abasement infinitely beneath your own; and who can descend to your circumstances, and impart the grace that will enable you so to adapt yourself to them as to glorify Him in them. Thus you will know both how to abound, and how to suffer need.

In each season of affliction, to whom can we more appropriately look than to Jesus? He was preeminently the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. If you would tell your grief to one who knew grief as none ever knew it--if you would disclose your sorrow to one who sorrowed as none ever sorrowed--then in your affliction turn from all creature sympathy and support, and look to Jesus: to a tenderer bosom, to a deeper love, to a more powerful arm, to a more sympathizing friend, you could not take your trial, your affliction, your sorrow. He is prepared to embosom Himself in your deepest grief, and to make your circumstances all His own. So completely and personally is He one with you, that nothing can affect you that does not instantly touch Him. Tender to Him are you as the apple of His eye. Your happiness, your reputation, your labors, your necessities, your discouragements, your despondencies, all pass beneath His unslumbering notice, and are the objects of His tenderest love and incessant care. If Jesus, then, is willing to come and make, as it were, His home in the very heart of your sorrow, surely you will not hesitate in repairing with your sorrow to His heart of love.

#### SEPTEMBER 4.

"But none says, Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night?" Job 35:10

Who but God could give songs in the night? No saint on earth, no angel in heaven, has power to tune our hearts to a single note of praise in the hour of their grief; no, nor could any creature above or below breathe a word of comfort, of hope, or of support, when heart and flesh were failing. Who but the incarnate God has power enough, or love enough, or sympathy enough, to come and embosom Himself in our very circumstances--to enter into the very heart of our sorrow--to go down into the deepest depth of our woe, and strike a chord there that, responding to His touch, shall send forth a more than angel's music? It is God who gives these songs. He is acquainted with your sorrows: He regards your night of weeping: He knows the way that you take. He may be lost to your view, but you cannot be lost to His. The darkness of your night-grief may veil Him from your eye, but the "darkness and the light are both alike to Him." Then repair to Him for your song. Ask Him so to sanctify your sorrow by His grace, and so to comfort it by His Spirit, and so to glorify Himself in your patient endurance of it, and so to make you to know the why of your trial, and your trial so to answer the mission on which it was sent, as will enable you to raise this note of praise--"You have turned for me my mourning into dancing: You have put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing praise to You, and not be silent."

In giving you a throne of grace, God has given you a song, methinks, one of the sweetest ever sung in the house of our pilgrimage. To feel that we have a God who hears and answers prayer--who has done so in countless instances, and is prepared still to give us at all times an audience--oh! the unutterable blessings of this truth. Sing aloud then, you sorrowful saints; for great and precious is your privilege of communion with God. In the night of your every grief, and trial, and difficulty, do not forget that in your lowest frame you may sing this song--"Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, I will draw near, and pour out my heart to God." Chant, then, His high praises as you pass along, that there is a place where you may disclose every need, repose every sorrow, deposit every burden, breathe every sigh, and lose yourself in communion with God--that place is the blood-besprinkled mercy-seat, of which God says, "There will I meet with you, and I will commune with you."

Ah! but perhaps you exclaim, "Would that I could sing! I can weep, and moan, and even trust, but I cannot rejoice." Yes, but there is One who can give even you, beloved, a song in the night. Place your harp in His hands, all broken and unstrung as it is, and He will repair and retune it; and then, breathing upon it His Spirit, and touching it with His own gentle hand, that heart, that was so sad and joyless, shall yet sing the

high praises of its God. How much of God's greatness and glory in nature is concealed until the night reveals it! The sun is withdrawn, twilight disappears, and darkness robes the earth. Then appears the brilliant firmament, studded and glowing with myriads of constellations. Oh the indescribable wonder, the surpassing glory, of that scene! But it was the darkness that brought it all to view; thus is it in the Christian's life. How much of God would be unseen, how much of His glory concealed, how little should we know of Jesus, but for the night-season of mental darkness and of heart-sorrow. The sun that shone so cheerily has set; the grey twilight that looked so pensively has disappeared; and just as the night of woe set in, filling you with trembling, with anxiety, and with fear, a scene of overpowering grandeur suddenly bursts upon the astonished eye of your faith. The glory of God, as your Father, has appeared--the character of Jesus, as a loving tender Brother, has unfolded--the Spirit, as a Comforter, has whispered--your interest in the great redemption has been revealed--and a new earth redolent with a thousand sweets, and a new heaven resplendent with countless suns, has floated before your view. It was the darkness of your night of sorrow that made visible all this wonder and all this glory; and but for that sorrow how little would you have known of it. "I will sing of mercy and of judgment: unto You, O Lord, will I sing."

Suffering, sorrowful believer! pluck your harp from your willow, and, with the hand of faith and love, sweep it to the high praises of your God. Praise Him for Himself--praise Him for Jesus--praise Him for conversion--praise Him for joys--praise Him for sorrows--praise Him for chastenings--praise Him for the hope of glory--oh praise Him for all! Thus singing the Lord's song in a strange land, you will be learning to sing it in diviner sounds--

"With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,

Hymns devout, and holy psalms

Singing everlastingly."

"And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God almighty; just and true are Your ways, O King of saints. Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? for You only are holy: for all nations shall come and worship before You."

SEPTEMBER 5.

"These things said Elijah, when he saw his glory, and spoke of him." John 12:41

It will be observed, that John affirms of Isaiah that he saw the glory of Christ. The glory of the Redeemer has ever been an object visible to the spiritual eye. What the evangelist here records of the prophet, he also avows of himself and his fellow-disciples. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory." Here is a point of vital moment, entering deeply into the very soul of experimental Christianity. May the Spirit of all truth give us a clear and solemn perception of it! If a man sees not the glory of Christ, we hesitate not to say of him, that with regard to all other spiritual objects he is totally blind--he is yet a stranger to the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit. To see the Redeemer's glory, the eye must be spiritual; a spiritual object being only discerned by a spiritual organ. Hence the apostle prays in behalf of the Ephesian Christians, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened." And enlightened by the Spirit of God, the believer beholds the glory of Jesus. Brought

to see no glory in himself, yes, nothing but deformity in that on which the eye once so complacently rested, the glory of the Redeemer, as it is reflected in His person, in His atoning blood and justifying righteousness, His infinite fullness of grace to pardon and to sanctify, fills now the entire scope of his moral vision, and lifts his soul in admiring and adoring thoughts of the holiness and love of God!

More than this, such is its transforming influence, he comes to be a partaker, in a degree, of that very glory which has arrested his eye and ravished his heart. On him the glory of the Lord has shone, the Sun of Righteousness has risen--he rises from the dust, and shines arrayed in garments of light from Christ's reflecting light. A sight of Jesus assimilates the soul to His Spirit; a contemplation of His beauty transforms the believer more and more into "the child of the light;" and thus perpetually "looking unto Jesus," the path he treads kindles and glows with an increasing effulgence, until its luster expands into perfect cloudless day. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The medium through which the spiritual eye beholds the glory of Christ is faith. It is a hidden glory until the Eternal Spirit imparts this mighty principle to the soul. The eye of reason cannot discern it--the eye of intellect and of sense cannot behold it--it remains a veiled thing, "dark with excessive brightness," until God the Holy Spirit utters His voice, "Let there be light." "Abraham," says Christ, "rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." At that remote period, how did he see it?--by faith. Through the long and dreary vista of advancing ages he saw the day dawning, the sun rising. By faith he beheld Jesus approaching. He saw His blood, His righteousness, and His own interest there, "and he was glad." Oh yes, a sight of Jesus by faith--be it distant and dim, be it shadowy and imperfect--fills the soul with ineffable gladness, lights up its onward way, sweetens its solitude, enlivens its loneliness, and soothes it amid its deepest sorrows.

Isaiah not only beheld the glory of Christ, but he also "spoke of it." He could not but speak of that which he saw and felt. And who can behold the glory of the Redeemer, and not speak of it? Who can see His beauty, and not extol it--who can taste His love, and not laud it? "Come," will be the invitation, "see a man who told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" The church of old, as her eye wandered over the beauties of her Lord, broke forth in expressions of wonder and praise; and, after particularizing and extolling these beauties, she then exclaims, as if all language were exhausted, "Yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend." "In His temple does every one speak of His glory." Yes, the saints of the Most High must speak of the King in His beauty. They are constrained to show forth His praise, and tell of His love and loveliness, who is to them more precious than the gold of Ophir; yes, dearer than life itself. The Pharisee may murmur, the worldling may scorn, and the cold-hearted professor may rebuke; yet, "if these should hold their peace," who have been redeemed by His most precious blood, and who are looking forward to His second appearing, as an event which shall conform them to His likeness, "the stones would immediately cry out."

SEPTEMBER 6.

"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled." Colossians 1:20, 21

Only trust the salvation of Christ--He would have us commence with what He has constituted the central truth of the gospel--the cross. God has made it the focus of His glory--for around no object do such wonders and glories gather as the cross of Christ--and He would have us make it the central fact of our faith. What a sure ground of trust for a poor sinner is here--the great and complete salvation of the Lord

Jesus! Here God Himself rests; for He has confided all His glory to Christ, whom "He has made strong for Himself." And surely if the work of Jesus were sufficient to uphold the moral government and secure the eternal honor of God, there need be no demur, no hesitation on the part of the sinner, there to place his entire trust for forgiveness and acceptance. Sinner as you are, here is a salvation worthy of your confidence. "Christ died for the ungodly." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." "Through His blood we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins." "By Him all that believe are justified." The great debt of Divine justice Christ has paid. His resurrection from the dead by the glory of the Father is His complete discharge, and now, "whoever will, may come and drink of the water of life freely." To each guilt-stricken, heart-broken, sorrow-burdened, weary sinner Jesus says, "Only trust me." Beloved reader, no partial trust must this be. Your foothold on every other foundation must give way--your grasp upon every other support must loosen--your clinging to duties, to works, to self, in every form, must yield--and your whole, implicit, sole trust for salvation must be in the one atonement which God has provided, in the one salvation which Christ has finished, in the only name given under heaven whereby we must be saved. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Never was there before--nor has there been since--nor ever will be again--such ancient, marvelous, stupendous love as the love of Jesus. It is the astonishment of heaven, it is the wonder of angels, and, in their best, holiest, and most self-abased moments, it is the marvel of saints on earth, and will be, through eternity, their study and their praise. His condescending stoop to our nature--His descent from heaven's glory to earth's lowliness--His bearing our sins--His endurance of our curse--His suffering our penalty--His exhaustion of our bitter cup--His resurrection from the grave, and His ascent into heaven, are facts which speak, louder and sweeter than an angel's trumpet, the love of Christ to His church. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." But not only was Jesus the unveiler of His own heart, but He came to unveil the heart of God. He came, not to inspire the heart of God with an affection for man, but to make known a love already and from eternity existing. He, who only knew the secret love of God's heart, came to reveal that love, its only revealer, and its most precious gift. Christ is God's love embodied--God's love speaking, God's love acting, God's love weeping, God's love dying, God's love inviting. Blessed truth, that he whose arms of faith embrace Christ, in and through Christ also embrace the Triune Jehovah. The Lord Jesus would have us trust His love when it wears the disguise of displeasure--when, changing its appearance and its tones, it looks and speaks threatening and unkind. What a harsh disguise did Joseph wear to his brethren; and yet beneath it there never heat a more loving, tender, or kinder heart than his. Such is our Jesus--the Brother who has saved us from famine and from death, and has done for us more than Joseph did for his brethren--has died for us. Let us trust this love. Trust it when veiled--trust it when it threatens to slay--trust it when it appears to frown--trust it when even we cannot trace it; still, oh, still let us trust in Jesus' love, when, to our dim sight, it would seem never to smile or speak to us again. The time may come, or the circumstances may arise, that shall put to the utmost test our confidence in the Savior's love. When it shall say to us, "Can you make this sacrifice--can you bear this cross for me?" oh, blessed if your heart can reply, "Lord, relying upon Your grace, trusting in Your love, I can--I will--I do!"

SEPTEMBER 7.

"Holding faith, and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck." 1 Timothy 1:19

Faith is an essential part of the spiritual armor: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked." Faith is also spoken of as the believer's breastplate: "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith." There is not a moment, even the holiest, but we are exposed to the "fiery darts" of the adversary. The onset, too, is often at a moment when we least suspect its approach; seasons of peculiar nearness to God, of hallowed enjoyment--"for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"--are frequently selected as the occasion of attack. But, clad in this armor--the shield and the breastplate of faith--no weapon formed against us shall prosper; no "fiery dart" shall be quenched, and the enemy shall be put to flight. Faith in a crucified, risen, conquering, exalted Savior--faith in a present and ever-living Head--faith eyeing the crown glittering, and the palm waving in its view, is the faith that overcomes and triumphs. Faith, dealing constantly and simply with Jesus, flying to His atoning blood, drawing from His fullness, and at all times and under all circumstances looking unto Him, will ever bring a conflicting soul off more than conqueror. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is He that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Faith is a purifying grace: "Purifying their hearts by faith." It is a principle holy in its nature and tendency: he is most holy who has most faith; he who has least faith is most exposed to the assaults of his inbred corruptions. If there is in any child of God a desire for Divine conformity, for more of the Spirit of Christ, more weanedness, and crucifixion, and daily dying, this should be his ceaseless prayer--"Lord, increase my faith." Faith in Jesus checks the power of sin, slays the hidden corruption, and enables the believer to "endure as seeing Him who is invisible."

Nothing, perhaps, more secretly and effectually militates against the vigor of a life of faith, than the power of unsubdued sin in the heart. Faith, as we have just seen, is a holy indwelling principle; it has its root in the renewed, sanctified heart; and its growth and fruitfulness depend much upon the progressive richness of the soil in which it is embedded: if the noxious weeds of the natural soil are allowed to grow and occupy the heart, and gain the ascendancy, this celestial plant will necessarily droop and decay. In order to form some conception of the utter incongruity of a life of faith with the existence and power of unmortified sin in the heart, we have but to imagine the case of a believer living in the practice of unsubdued sin. What is the real power of faith in him? where is its strength? where are its glorious achievements? We look for the fruit of faith--the lowly, humble, contrite spirit--the tender conscience--the traveling daily to the atoning blood--the living upon the grace that is in Christ Jesus--the carrying out of Christian principle--crucifixion to the world--patient submission to a life of suffering--meek resignation to a Father's discipline--a constant and vivid realization of eternal realities--we look for these fruits of faith, but we find them not. And why? Because there is the worm of unmortified sin feeding at the root; and, until that is slain, faith will always be sickly, unfruitful, and "ready to die."

A looking off of Christ will tend greatly to the weakening and unfruitfulness of faith. It is said, that the eagle's eye becomes strong through the early discipline of the parent; placed in such a position when young, as to fix the gaze intently upon the sun, the power of vision gradually becomes so great, as to enable it in time to look at its meridian splendor without uneasiness, and to observe the remotest object without difficulty. The same spiritual discipline strengthens the eye of faith; the eye grows vigorous by looking much at the Sun of Righteousness. The more constantly it gazes upon Jesus, the stronger it grows; and the stronger it grows, the more glory it discovers in Him, the more beauty in His person, and perfection in His work. Thus strengthened, it can see things that are afar off--the promises of a

covenant-keeping God, the hope of eternal life, the crown of glory; these it can look upon and almost touch. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." O precious, costly grace of the Eternal Spirit! who would not possess you? who would not mortify everything that would wound, enfeeble, and cause you to decay in the soul?

SEPTEMBER 8.

"And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall you be also of the consolation." 2 Corinthians 1:7

Affliction and poverty are the distinctive features of the saints of God under the new dispensation; affluence and exemption from great suffering were probably those of the saints of the former economy. The character of the gospel economy is unique. It is the dispensation of suffering, the economy of the cross. The suffering of the old dispensation was more in type, and shadow, and symbol; that of the new is the great, the dark filling-up of the outline of the picture. The Son of God suffered--the Son of God died! And Christianity derives all its efficacy, and the Christian dispensation all its character, and the Christian all his glory, from this single, this wondrous fact.

Tracing affliction and suffering, whatever its nature, to God as the first great Cause, faith calmly acquiesces and says, "It is well." From nothing does the believer find it more difficult to disengage his mind, in the first blow of his affliction, than second causes. The reasoning of the bereaved sisters of Bethany finds its corresponding frame of mind in almost every similar case. "Lord, if you had been here, my brother had not died!" But with second causes the child of God has nothing to do. Second causes are all by the appointment and under the control of the First Cause. They are but the agents God employs, the means which He selects, to accomplish His own eternal purpose. "He Himself has done it," is the voice of His word, and faith responds, "It is well." Rise, then, above the circumstances of your calamity, and rest in the Lord, from whom your affliction proceeds.

Child of adversity! can you say, "It is well," now that God may have taken from you health, friends, riches, earthly comforts, and creature supports? It must be well, since providence and not accident, God and not man, has done it. But weep not, do not be cast down, all is not gone. God is still your God and Father, Christ is still your Friend and Brother, the Spirit is still your Comforter and Guide, the covenant is still your inexhaustible supply, the promises are still left you, and all these losses and trials are working together for your good. God will not leave you in this time of adversity. In Him let your faith be filial, implicit, unwavering. If you honor Him, by trusting Him now, He will honor your trust by and by. Give yourself to prayer, you will find it a sweet outlet to your full and burdened heart; all will yet be well. Stand still, and let God solve His own deep problems; and you will then see how much infinite love, and wisdom, and faithfulness, and goodness was enfolded in this dark, distressing calamity.

Sick one! "it is well." Is it so, can it be? you doubtfully inquire. Yes, it is, and must be so, since He who loves you has permitted, no, has sent this sickness. His wisdom cannot err, His love cannot be unkind. God's ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. He works His purposes of mercy and love towards us in a way often directly opposite to all our anticipations and plans. This sickness may appear to you a heavy calamity; the result may prove an untold blessing. Sanctified by the Spirit's grace, that bed of suffering, that couch of weakness, those wearisome days, and long sleepless nights, shall teach you truth, and realize to you promises, and bring your soul so near to God, and so endear the Savior to your heart, as shall constrain you to exclaim, "Lord, it is well!" "Commune with your own heart upon your

bed, and be still." "Let patience have her perfect work, lacking nothing." And suppose this should be unto death--will not that be well? What! not to be released from a body of infirmity and sin? Not to go home, and take possession of your glorious inheritance! Not to go and see Christ in His glory, and be reunited to those who have gone before, and mingle with prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, and be as they are--perfected in holiness and love? Oh, yes! it will be far better to depart and be with Christ, if He sees fit. Tremble not to cross the flood. Our true Joshua has paved the path with precious stones--the doctrines, truths, and promises of His word--upon which your faith may plant its feet, and so to pass over dry-shod into the heavenly Canaan. The bitterness of death is passed, to all who believe in Jesus.

Saints of the Most High! over these broken waters of a sinful, sorrowful, toilsome life we shall soon have passed, and standing upon the "sea of glass," with the harp of God in our hand, there shall be reflected from its tranquil bosom the glory, and there shall breathe from every string the praise, of our God in having done all things well. Oh, what harmony shall we then see in every discrepancy, what pardon, what tenderness, and love, and gentleness, and forethought in every stroke of His hand, and in every event of His providence! The mystery of God will be finished, and God will be all in all.

SEPTEMBER 9.

"Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." John 13:1

Dear reader, ever trust in the sympathy of Christ. The blessing of creature-sympathy we would not undervalue. The word of God does not. The Scriptures of truth enjoin and encourage it; yes, command it. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." We believe it to be no small evidence of grace, and to assimilate in no little degree with the mind that was also in Christ Jesus, to "weep with those that weep."

And yet so enamored of it may we be, so look and cling to it, as to be insensible to the higher, purer, deeper sympathy of Christ. The power of human sympathy--like everything created--must necessarily be limited. A Christian brother or sister has so much personal trial, anxiety, and pressure of his own, the marvel is that a single chord of a heart, all whose strings are stretched to such tension on its own account, can emit a solitary note of real sympathy with our grief. Let us, then, be thankful to God for the smallest measure of true human sympathy.

But there is no limit, no fathom, to the sympathy of Jesus. It is real, human, most tender, boundless, fathomless. It enters into all our sorrows, and, with a penetration and delicacy indescribable, it insinuates itself into all the shades and peculiarities of our sorrow. It even enters into our infirmities. Infirmities into which others cannot enter, and still more, with which we can ill bear ourselves, Jesus sympathizes with. Infirmities of temperament--infirmities of constitution--infirmities of habit--infirmities of education--infirmities of position--bodily, mental, and spiritual infirmities--there is One who enters deeply into all!

He has borne them all--bears them still. Commiserating the feebleness of our nature--for it is still the robe He wears in heaven--He patiently bears with us, tenderly deals with us, and gently soothes, supports, and sustains us. "For we have not a 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. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

In this sympathy Jesus would have us confide. And if upon your opening path there falls the forecasting shadow of some approaching sorrow--if the sky is lowering, and the surge is swelling--meet it by a

renewed appeal to the anticipated compassion and intercession of Christ. JESUS!--what a plenitude of sympathy, tenderness, and grace is in that name! Run into it, and you shall be safe from the coming storm. And when the darkling sorrow comes--the rose-hue of health paling--blossoms falling--flowers withering--hope expiring--fame, fortune, friends, like the orient tints of evening, fading one by one away, remember that in JESUS you have a Brother born for your adversity, a Friend who loved you in eternity--loved you on the cross--loves you on the throne--and will love you unto the end. He will make the cloud His chariot--will walk upon your stormy waters--and will say, "Peace, be still!"

SEPTEMBER 10.

"Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, you backsliding Israel, says the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever." Jeremiah 3:12

Where is the heart, deeply conscious of its backsliding, that can resist the power of language like this? Here is the warrant for your return--God's own free invitation! You need no more. What if Satan discourages, what if your sins plead against you, what if guilt, and unbelief, and shame combine to impede your way, if God says, "Return!"--that is sufficient for you. You need no more; if He is willing to receive you back, to pardon your sins, to forget your base ingratitude, to heal your backslidings, and restore your soul, you have the broad warrant to return, in the face of all opposition and discouragement. Yet again, the cheering invitation runs--"Only acknowledge your iniquity that you have transgressed against the Lord your God." "Turn, O backsliding children, says the Lord, for I am married unto you." "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him."

The character of God is such as encourages the return of a backsliding soul. In the invitations He has given, He urges them upon the ground of what He is: "Return, you backsliding Israel, says the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, says the Lord." Oh, touching, soul-subduing, heart-melting argument--"Return unto me, for I am merciful!" Merciful to receive you, merciful to pardon you, merciful to heal you. Oh, the boundless mercy of God in Christ towards a soul returning from its wanderings! Will not this draw you? Again: "I have blotted out as a thick cloud your transgressions, and as a cloud your sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed you." "Return, for I have blotted out your transgressions-- return, for I have put away your sins: return, for I have redeemed you. The work is already done--the pardon has already gone forth--the backsliding has already been forgiven; then linger not, but return, for I have redeemed you." Here, on the broad basis of the Lord's free and full pardon, the wandering soul is urged to return. Truly may the apostle say, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Thus is the character of God, as a merciful, sin-pardoning God, held out in the word as a motive and an encouragement to return. This is just the view of God which you need. In yourself, you see everything to discourage, everything to forbid your return; but God comes forth, and vindicates His own gracious character, unfolds His own love, and, in accents most encouraging and persuasive, addresses Himself to His wandering child, and says, "Return, you backsliding Israel, for I am merciful."

In the parable of the prodigal son, we have the character of God towards a returning soul truly and beautifully drawn. The single point we would now advert to is the posture of the father on the approach of his child. What was that posture?--the most expressive of undiminished love, of yearning tenderness, of eagerness to welcome his return. Thus is it described: "And when he was a great way off, his father saw

him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." All this is God to you, dear returning soul! He is on the eager watch for your first movement towards Him; He is looking as with outstretched neck for the first sign of your soul's return, for the first sound of your footsteps, for the first relentings of your heart: yes, even more than this--or this were nothing--He sends His own Spirit to work that return in your soul, to break your heart, to rouse your slumbering spirit, to draw you, win you to His arms. This is your God--the God whom you have forsaken, from whose ways you have declined, but who in the very extremity of your departure has never withdrawn His eye of love one moment from you.

SEPTEMBER 11.

"But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he has now fulfilled." Acts 3:18

Our adorable Lord was a sufferer--the Prince of sufferers--the Martyr of martyrs. None had ever suffered as He; no sorrow was ever like His sorrow. Scarcely had He touched the surface of our sin-accursed earth, before the cup of suffering was placed to His lips. The deep fountain of human woe, stirred to its very center, poured in upon His soul its turbid streams from every source and through every channel. Human malignity seized upon Him as its victim, and mingled the first draught that He tasted. Linked though He was by the strongest sympathies to our nature, descending though He had, to elevate, sanctify, and save him, man yet ranked himself among His first and deadliest foes. Oh that condescension and love to our race so profound should have met with a requital so base!

The necessity of Christ's sufferings is the chief point that arrests the mind in contemplating this subject. In His wayside conversation with the two disciples journeying to Emmaus, our Lord clearly and emphatically pronounced this characteristic of His passion--"Ought not Christ to have suffered?" The following considerations would seem to justify this plea of necessity.

The sufferings of Christ were necessary in order to accomplish the eternal purpose and counsel of God. To suppose that His sufferings were contingent, originating in the circumstances by which He was surrounded, is to take a very low and defective view of truth. But the light in which the Scripture presents the doctrine of a suffering Redeemer is that which gives the most exalted view of redemption, and reflects in the richest manner the glory of the Triune God. The truth we have now advanced, the apostle Peter embodies in his awakening discourse on the day of Pentecost, and which truth the Holy Spirit employed in the conversion of three thousand souls--"Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Our Lord Himself confirms this doctrine when he says, "The Son of man goes, as it was determined." Dear reader, behold the fountain-head, where arise all those precious streams of covenant mercy which flow into your soul--the electing love of God, which constrained Him to present His beloved Son as an atoning Lamb for the slaughter, from before the foundation of the world! oh! that must be infinite love--vast love--costly love--unchangeable love--which had its existence in the heart of God towards you from all eternity. Oh, repair with humility and gladness to this holy and blessed truth. Welcome it joyfully to your heart as God's truth, from which you may not, you dare not turn, without robbing your soul of immense blessing, and incurring fearful responsibilities. And when by faith you stand beneath the cross, and gaze upon its glorious Sufferer, remember that in His death were fulfilled the eternal purpose and counsel of the Triune Jehovah; and that to predestination--rejected and hated as this truth is by some--you owe all that is dear and precious to you as a ransomed expectant of glory.

To fulfill the types and to make good the prophecies concerning Him, it was necessary that Jesus should suffer. The Levitical dispensation and the prophetic Scriptures point steadily to Jesus; they are replete with Christ crucified. He who reads and investigates them with his eye turned from Jesus will find himself borne along upon a rapid stream of prophetic annunciation he knows not where, and involved in a mass of ceremonial usages to him perfectly chaotic and unintelligible, "without form and void." But with the Spirit of God opening the spiritual eye, and moving upon the word, a flood of light is poured upon every page, and every page is seen to be rich with the history and effulgent with the glory of a suffering Messiah. Thus does our Lord assert this truth--"Think you that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Again, "But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." It was necessary, therefore, that Christ should humble Himself--should be a man of sorrows--should drink deep the cup of suffering, and should be lifted upon the cross, in order to authenticate the Divine mission of Moses, to establish the consistency of the Jewish dispensation, to vindicate the truth of the prophets, to fulfill the counsel of the Lord, and thus to verify His own most blessed word.

SEPTEMBER 12.

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling." Ephesians 4:3, 4

The unity of the mystical church of God consists not in a unity of creed. A higher, a diviner, and more enduring principle united her than this. Ardently as it should be desired, and fervently as it should be prayed for, that the promised day of millennial blessedness might speedily come, when the "watchmen shall see eye to eye," when from every battlement in Zion the silver trumpets shall emit one sweet harmonious sound, yet, even then, not more essentially will the church of God be one than she is now. True, her unity will be more visible, her divisions will be healed, her bleeding wounds will be staunch, her internal conflicts will have ceased; "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim more;" and the harsh sounds of strife, now so loud and discordant, shall be lost in the sweet strains of peace and love floating from every lip; yet is the church at this moment essentially one and indivisible. Not, then, in a unity of creed or of ecclesiastical polity does the real unity of the church consist, but in the "unity of the Spirit"--unity sustained by the "bond of peace." She has been baptized, not into one form of church government, nor into one system of doctrinal truth, but "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink of the same Spirit." The "one Spirit" regenerating all the children of God, fashioning alike their hearts, uniting them by a living faith to the Head, equally dwelling in, teaching and guiding, comforting and sanctifying them, demonstrates the perfect oneness of Christ's body. And thus, then, when an individual crosses our path in whom the Spirit of Jesus breathes, who betrays a union to the Head, and who speaks the language and bears the image of the Father, and a resemblance to the one family, be his climate and color, be his name and minor points of creed what they may, it becomes our solemn duty, as it is our great privilege, to extend to him the recognition, and to greet him with the tender and holy affection of the one brotherhood. In the Lord's eye he is a member of His body and he should be so in ours. And if, refusing to own the relationship, we withdraw the hand of Christian love, we render our own regeneration doubtful, we wound, and grieve, and deny the Spirit in him. It is written--yes, it is written by the pen of the Holy Spirit, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: and every one that loves Him that begat, loves him also that is begotten of Him."

I would recur to what may be considered one of the most fruitful and painful causes of the defective Christian union which so much mars the beauty and impairs the moral power of the church of God in our day. I allude to the great distance from Christ which characterizes the spiritual walk of so many believers. The effect of this upon the operation of Christian love is obvious. A distance of spirit from the Head leads to distance in spirit from the members of the body. As with the beams of the sun, the farther they recede from their center, the wider are they separated from each other; so is it with the "children of the light." Each believer is a solar beam--an emanation from the Sun of Righteousness. The more remote he lives from Christ--the center of the soul--the wider will he be alienated in affection and in spirit from the members of Christ. His eye less simply and constantly looking unto Jesus, his sense of union to, and communion with, Him weakened, love waning, faith declining, there will, of necessity, be a lessening attachment to the church of Christ. But the converse, oh, how precious! The rays of light reflected back to the sun, meeting and rejoicing in their center, meet and rejoice in themselves. So with the saints. Drawn closer to Jesus--our wandering steps retraced--restored by those sanctifying unfoldings of the cross which the Spirit delights to impart, the eye of penitence and faith, swimming though it be in tears, once more turned on Christ, love rekindled in the heart--oh how will the affections, in their fondest and holiest power, go forth towards "all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!" His image will be their passport to our hearts; His name will secure their welcome to our homes.

SEPTEMBER 13.

"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Ephesians 5:25

Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered most voluntarily. In this consisted greatly the perfection of His sacrifice. His penal death had proved of no atoning efficacy but for this willing obedience, and the Divine merit that was in it. It would have been unjust in justice to have inflicted punishment upon an innocent and unwilling person. The full and free concurrence of His own will was essential to the perfection of His sacrifice. Yes, had it not been most free, and acting in perfect harmony with His Father's consent, our sins could not have been imputed to, the punishment inflicted upon Him. Entering, then, most freely into a bond to cancel the mighty debt, it was righteous in God, it was just in justice, and it invested the throne of the eternal Jehovah with surpassing glory, to arrest, in default of the debtor, the Surety, and to exact from Him the uttermost payment.

And here, my reader, is the great point to which we are aiming to bring you--the wonderful love of Jesus in so willingly suffering, "The just for the unjust." Oh, how readily did He humble Himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross! "I delight to do your will, O my God: yes, your law is within my heart." "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" "Who gave Himself for us." "Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for us." This is the spring of all that He has done, for, "Christ has loved us." Constrained by this, He gave Himself as the Son of God, and as the Son of man--His soul and body, His life and death, yes, all that He possessed in heaven and on earth, He freely gave for us. What was there above or below--in His previous state of glory, or subsequent state of humiliation--that He retained? What part of the price did He withhold? When He could give no less--for all angels and all men would not have sufficed--and when He could give no more, He gave Himself. Ah! this made His "offering and sacrifice to God a sweet-smelling savor." And still it perfumes the oblation, and sends it up each moment fragrant and acceptable before the throne of the Holy One. Oh, surpassing love of Jesus! With the burden of sin--the fire of justice--the wrath of God--the ridicule of man--the malignity of devils--the sorrows of Gethsemane--the pains of Calvary, and the sea of His own blood, all, all in vivid prospect before Him, He yet went forward, loving not His own life unto the death,

because He loved ours more. Oh, let your heart bend low before this amazing love. Yield to its sweet and attractive influence; let it draw you from yourself, from the creature, from all, to Him. Are you wounded? Does your heart bleed? Is your soul cast down within you? Is your spirit within you desolate? Still Jesus is love, is loving, and loves you. He has suffered and died for you; and, were it necessary, He would suffer and die for you yet again. Whatever blessing He sees good to take from you, Himself He will never take. Whatever stream of creature love He sees fit to dry, His own love will never fail. Oh, can that love fail--can it cease to yearn, and sympathize, and soothe, and support, which brought Jesus from heaven to earth to endure and suffer all this for us? Be still, then, lie passive and low--drink the cup, and let the surrender of your sin, your obedience, and yourself to Him be as willing and as entire as was the surrender of Himself for you. Then shall you, in a blessed degree, be "able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, filled with all the fullness of God."

SEPTEMBER 14.

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever: the scepter of your kingdom is a right scepter. You loves righteousness, and hate wickedness: therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows." Psalm 45:6, 7

The Divine anointing of the Lord Jesus Christ, constituting an important feature of His official glory, and opening a channel of the most costly blessing to the church, forms a distinct and sacred theme of the prophetic writings. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me." "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him." This anointing was upon the Redeemer, in infinite richness and fragrance. "God gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him." As essentially Jehovah, He needed it not; but as the great High Priest, and the mediatorial head of His "church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all," it was necessary that the anointing oil should be upon Him in its utmost plenitude. As one with Him, all the members alike participate. "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went to the skirts of his garment;" even to the lowest believer. Ah! and he that lies the lowest, obtains the most of this "precious ointment," as it descends from Jesus; the hand of faith, that touches but the hem of His garment, receives from Him who was "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows." Dear reader, are you professedly one with Jesus and His saints? then seek, oh, diligently seek, a large and still larger degree of this holy and fragrant anointing. Rest not short of it. Be not satisfied to proceed another step without it. Do not be content with a mere profession, having a name to live, yet lacking all the essential evidences of real life, while discovering many of the fearful attributes of actual death.

The possession of this anointing of the Holy Spirit will decide the momentous and perhaps, with you, doubtful question of your union with Christ. Men will take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus, and learned of Him. Your life will be a reflection, faint at best, yet a reflection of His holy life. You will bear some resemblance to the "altogether lovely" One; your spirit will breathe His meekness; your demeanor will be stamped with His gentleness; your whole conversation will be seasoned with His grace; all your "garments will smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia out of the ivory palaces;" an unction will pervade your prayers, a power irresistible will accompany your labors, and in every place you will be a sweet savor of Christ, blessed and a blessing.

SEPTEMBER 15.

"Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:6-8

There could have been no restoration and no satisfaction to law and justice, but in the humiliation of the Son of God. The very necessity of the case demanded it. The Divine government had been dishonored--that dishonor could only be removed by the humiliation of one equal in dignity, holiness, and glory--even an infinite Being. The humiliation of every angel in heaven would not have effaced a single stain of its reproach, nor have restored a single beam of its glory. The law of God had been humbled--justice demanded, as a price of its reparation, the humiliation of the Lawgiver Himself. The incarnate God did humble Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Thus it was Jesus "restored that which He took not away." He restored holiness to the law--satisfaction to justice--dignity to the Divine government--honor to God, and happiness and immortality to man. "Then I restored that which I took not away." Oh, what stable foundation is thus laid for the full salvation of every believer.

The humiliation of the Redeemer opens a fountain of infinitely great and ever-glorious grace. Nothing could we have known of the glory of His person, nothing of the character of God, and all the things of His hidden love must have remained forever sealed, had He not so humbled Himself. His coming forth, invested not with the dazzling robes of His infinite Majesty, but wearing our degraded nature, descending to our state of deep abasement--yes, sinking infinitely deeper than we--throws open a treasury of grace as rich in its glory, and ample in its supply, as were the dark humiliation and deep poverty which made it ours. Here is glory springing from His abasement--it is the "glory of His grace;" "We beheld His glory, full of grace." This fullness of grace in Jesus includes all that a poor sinner needs, all that a necessitous believer requires, all that the glory of God demanded. Here is the grace of pardon in all its fullness--the grace of justification in all its fullness--the grace of sanctification in all its fullness--the grace of consolation in all its fullness--the grace of strength in all its fullness. "It pleased the Father, that in Him should all fullness dwell." Grace is poured into His lips, and gracious words proceed from His lips. Hearken! "Com

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