

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR THE LORD'S HOUSEHOLD

by James Smith

Smith's daily meditations for families presenting biblical truth in devotional format, with each chapter offering brief reflection on Scripture with practical application designed to inform the mind, cheer the soul, and regulate life.

110 Chapters

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00 Daily Bible Readings

Daily Bible Readings for the Lord's Household The habit of laying up a text of Scripture in the morning, to be meditated upon while engaged in the business of this world through the day—is both profitable and delightful. It is as a refreshing draught to a weary traveler! My object in these pages is . . .

to stir up the minds of the Lord's people,

to caution them against sin,

to guard them against Satan, and

to stimulate them in the path of holy obedience.

James Smith, 1840

01 "My Father!" Jeremiah 3:4

"My Father!" Jeremiah 3:4

This is a child's cry!

It is full of meaning.

It is full of love.

It is full of comfort.

It is a title which the Lord loves to hear us use!

Lord, give us the Spirit of adoption this morning,
and let us see and feel, that we are Your children!

Believer!

To whom will you repair in trouble?

To whom will you look in difficulty?

To whom will you cry in danger?

>From whom will you ask when in need?

Surely I hear you say, "My Father!"

Who speaks to you in the Bible?

Who tries you by His providence?

Who chastens you with His rod?

Who purifies and cleanses you?

Who humbles and reproves you?

Again you will say, "My Father!"

Who supports the world?

Who controls the nations?

Who chains up Satan?

Who comforts the believer?

Who pardons the backslider?

Again you reply, "My Father!"

Then I exhort you to . . .

trust your Father's Word,

abide in your Father's house,

expect from your Father's hand,

and say in every trial:

"I will arise and go to my Father!"

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02 Unless we are upheld by an invisible arm!

Unless we are upheld by an invisible arm!

"Hold me up—and I shall be safe!" Psalms 119:117

We need God's constant presence, power and grace.

Except He upholds us—we shall certainly fall.

We would have fallen before this—if God had not kept us!

We would fall every day—unless we are upheld by an invisible arm!

This day Satan may lay some snare for us!

This day our evil hearts may deceive us!

This day the world may lay some unexpected bait for us!

And unless the Holy Spirit . . .

opens our eyes,

gives us fresh supplies of grace, or

holds us back by an invisible power

—we shall utterly fall!

"Hold me up—and I shall be safe!"

Let this be our daily prayer! It will never be unsuitable!

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03 Our Maker becomes our Husband!

Our Maker becomes our Husband!

"As the bridegroom rejoices over his bride—so shall your God rejoice over you!" Isaiah 62:5

That God should save a sinner at all—is a surprising display of unmerited grace! But that He should bring that sinner into the closest possible relation to Himself, and rejoice over him—is indeed most astonishing! And yet it is most true! For our Maker becomes our Husband! And as the bridegroom rejoices over his bride—so our God rejoices over us!

He set His heart upon us!

He encircled us with His infinite love!

He determined to raise us to His glorious throne!

He purposed to make us one with Himself!

He sent His only begotten Son to redeem us!

He sent His Holy Spirit to regenerate us!

He intends to raise us from the dead, perfect in holiness, and robed with immortality!

He will present us before His glorious presence with exceeding joy!

"He will rejoice over us with singing!" What exquisite joy will this impart! Jehovah singing with joy over His ransomed and restored creatures, as though their salvation could increase or perfect His happiness!

Let us meditate on this glorious fact, and prepare for the stupendous event!

"Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" Revelation 19:9

"Come, I will show you the bride—the wife of the Lamb!" Revelation 21:9

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04 Everyone had a home—but Him!

Everyone had a home—but Him!

"Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests—but the Son of man has no place to lay His head!" Matthew 8:20

What an astonishing fact!

Here is the Creator of all things—without a home!

Here is the Ruler of the universe—without a habitation!

Here is the eternal, immortal King—more destitute than the birds of the air, or the beasts of the forest!

"Then each one went to his own home—but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives." John 7:53; John 8:1

Everyone had a home—but Him!

What brought Him into these circumstances?

LOVE!

Love for whom?

Love for sinners, the vilest, the basest of mankind!

Why did He stoop so low?

He became poor—that we might become rich!

He was without a poor cottage on earth—that we might possess a splendid mansion in heaven!

He was destitute in time—that we might possess a glorious portion in eternity!

O Jesus, how astonishing is Your love!

O my soul, admire, adore, and praise—the wondrous love of your beloved Lord!

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich—yet for your sakes He became poor; so that you through His poverty might become rich!" 2 Corinthians 8:9

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05 I am going to vomit you out of My mouth!

I am going to vomit you out of My mouth!

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold—or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold—I am going to vomit you out of My mouth!"
Revelation 3:15-16

The Lord Jesus hates lukewarmness! He would rather we made no profession of religion at all—than to profess—and then not practice His precepts!

He loves to see His people zealous—and it is a shame to us, when we are dull and lifeless in His ways.

It is to be feared, that many professors do not realize that their 'indifference' is a sin! They think that having professed Christ, if they just attend to a few religious duties, and creep along in a certain religious course—that this is enough. They are never hot—and they do not really like to see others on fire for the Lord.

Professor of religion, Jesus says, "Be hot—or be cold!"

Be altogether a Christian—OR throw off your vain profession!

Do not wear the Christian name—only to dishonor it!

Professing Christian—are you hot, or cold—or lukewarm?

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06 What can strangers and travelers expect?

What can strangers and travelers expect?

"I am a stranger and sojourner!" Psalms 39:12

This world is not our rest.

Here we have no continuing city.

We are intended for another state.

Our journey lies through the world—but our home is beyond it.

We are here for a time to do good, and to prepare for another and a better state. Let us not then attempt to settle down as children at home, or say as Job did, "I shall die in my nest!" But let us daily move on, keeping the eye steadily fixed on the things which are eternal.

Nor let us wonder if we are annoyed, opposed and tried—for what can strangers and travelers expect? Certainly not to have everything smooth and easy!

Let us keep at a proper distance from the customs, pleasures and practices of the world! Let us beware lest its politics, speculations, and schemes, swallow us up!

We are not placed here to amass a fortune, or gain a name—but to glorify our Father who is in heaven.

"They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth!" Hebrews 11:13

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims—abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul!" 1 Peter 2:11

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07 "Behold, I am vile!" Job 40:4

"Behold, I am vile!" Job 40:4

JOB did not always think so. While at a distance from God—he could boast, argue, and contend with God! But when brought into the presence of God's holiness—the contrast was so striking, that he sunk down in astonishment, clothed with shame, and filled with self-loathing!

The manifestation of God's glory to a sinner—always produces the same effect!

ISAIAH felt as Job did, and exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! My eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty!" Isaiah 6:5

Pride and self-righteousness can never live in God's presence!

The nearer to God—

the more we discover our depravity,

the more we loathe ourselves, and

the more precious does the person and work of Jesus become!

Proud people have never been brought into God's presence!

Only clear, correct and humbling views of SELF—will make Jesus precious to us!

It is only as we see our own vileness—that we shall value the Savior's righteousness!

08 What do you have?

What do you have?

"For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have—that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" 1 Corinthians 4:7

Believer, ponder this question! It is intended to destroy the pride of your heart, and to produce genuine humility.

What do you have?

Look around you—how many mercies!

Look within you—what gifts and graces!

Look before you—what glorious prospects!

Compare yourself with many of your acquaintances; contrast your circumstances with theirs—how different! how preferable!

Who made you to differ?

Who conferred these benefits upon you?

Did you receive them from God?

Then gratefully acknowledge it.

Then be humble before Him.

Then beware of boasting before men—or of despising others!

Trace all your mercies up to their source—and you will find them all to be from God's free and sovereign grace!

In ourselves, we have . . .

nothing that is good,

nothing that is valuable,

nothing that is useful,

nothing that is lovely—but what we have received it from our good and gracious God! Therefore let him who boasts—boast in the Lord—and adore His sovereign grace!

09 Our sins and follies call for stripes!

Our sins and follies call for stripes!

"Whom the Lord loves—He corrects!" Proverbs 3:12

There are many things in us which need correction. Our sins and follies call for stripes!

Our Father knows our frame,

He reads our hearts,

He observes our conduct, and

He has purposed to conform us to His beloved Son.

This will account for most of our trials, afflictions and sufferings. He loves us too well, to even seem to sanction us in anything that is sinful.

If He did not love us—He would not correct us!

If one trial would answer His purpose—He never would send us two!

His mercy is too great.

His heart is too kind.

It is His children—whom He corrects; and by correcting, He is instructing them!

Let us not then, for one moment, suppose that our trials are indications of His wrath. He may be displeased with us, and therefore afflict us; but he has sworn that He will not be wrathful with us. He will visit our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquities with stripes; but He will not withdraw His loving-kindness, nor allow His faithfulness to fail. Precious assurance! Sweet views of troubles and trials!

"God disciplines us for our good—that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." Hebrews 12:10-11

10 The mark at which we aim!

The mark at which we aim!

"But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead—I press toward the mark!"Php 3:14

The believer's mark is perfection—or exact conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ.

His first aim is to possess Christ—and then he aims to be like Christ!

When we are like Jesus . . .

every foe is overcome,

every difficulty is mastered, and

the crown is about to be put on our heads!

The prize is won—and the honor will be worn forever!

We shall not attain exact likeness to Jesus here on earth—but we may be much more like Him than we now are.

Our tempers may be made more heavenly,

our hearts may be more holy,

our conversation may be more spiritual,

we may be more weaned from the present world,

our motives may be more purified,

holiness may become more our element and delight!

We are assured that Jesus, who has begun the good work in us—will carry it on. And as we are now very unlike what we once were—we may yet become very unlike what we now are at present.

But if we would make progress—likeness to Christ must be the mark at which we aim! We must ever keep it in our eye—as the racer did the finish line. If we do not press towards our mark—we will be too well satisfied with present worldly things!

11 Every other refuge will fail him!

Every other refuge will fail him!

"Whoever trusts in the Lord—happy is he!" Proverbs 16:20

The Lord is the only legitimate object of trust for a sinner.

He cannot trust in himself—for his heart is deceitful above all things.

He cannot trust in his fellows—for they are no better.

If he trusts in anyone else but the Lord—then vexation, disappointment, and sorrow, must be the sure result!

In God he MAY trust—for the promise warrants him!

In God he SHOULD trust—for the precept commands him!

In God he MUST trust—for every other refuge will fail him!

The Word of God is . . .

true—and cannot deceive us;

unchangeable—and cannot fail us;

most gracious—and just suits us.

In His Word, God has . . .

promised everything that we can possibly need,

invited us to ask for all that He has promised,

assured us that we shall never be disappointed.

If therefore we rest on His Word, and rely on His faithfulness, we shall prove Him to be true to His Word. And doing so, we shall be happy, for this will . . .

dissipate our doubts,

conquer our fears,

prevent disappointment, and

secure innumerable mercies!

"Many are the woes of the wicked—but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in Him!" Psalms 32:10

12 Let us fall at His feet—and frankly confess

Let us fall at His feet—and frankly confess our folly!

"Come, let us return to the Lord!

For He has torn us—and He will heal us!

He has wounded us—and He will bind up our wounds!"

Hosea 6:1

We have wandered from Him . . .

in our thoughts,

in our desires,

in our pursuits.

We have been running after other lovers—and setting up idols in our hearts!

Our conduct has been sinful—and the effect most injurious to ourselves.

Come then—and let us return to the Lord!

He is willing to receive us!

He will readily pardon us!

Let us fall at His feet—and frankly confess our folly!

Let us endeavor to turn our thoughts, desires, and affections back to Him again!

Especially, let us seek the Spirit of grace and supplication, for without His holy operations, there will be . . .

no godly sorrow,

no hatred of sin,

no self-abhorrence,

no faith in the promises, or

restoration of the joys of salvation.

We must return—or our sin will be aggravated.

We must return—or our misery will be deep.

Let us then at once, without any delay—approach His throne of grace!

We may plead His past mercies,
we may plead His glorious name,
we may plead our Savior's blood—
and we will not we plead in vain!
"Come, let us return to the Lord!
For He has torn us—and He will heal us!
He has wounded us—and He will bind up our wounds!"
Hosea 6:1

13 He is—what He was; and what He is—He ever

He is—what He was; and what He is—He ever will be!

"I AM THAT I AM!" Exodus 3:14

Immutability is the peculiar prerogative of Jehovah.

Everything outside of God—is changeable!

Angels in heaven changed—and became devils!

Man, who was created in the image of his Maker, changed—and now bears the image of Satan!

Saints renewed by grace, often change:

now they backslide—and then are restored;

now they are happy—and then dejected;

now they are active—and then dull and lifeless.

But Jehovah is always the same!

He is—what He was; and what He is—He ever will be!

There can be no addition . . .

to His wisdom—for it is perfect;

to His power—for it is omnipotent;

or to His love—for it is infinite!

There can be no diminution of His justice, His holiness, or His veracity; for He would cease to be God—if He were less just, holy or true.

He never wronged any one of His creatures, by any purpose He formed, or by any work He ever wrought—nor will He ever! He is holy in ALL His ways; and His Word is true—from the beginning to the end.

All of our friends change—but our God is immutably the same!

14 God's way

God's way

"He led them forth by the RIGHT WAY—to a city where they could settle!" Psalms 107:7

It was not the smoothest way,

nor the shortest way,

nor the most frequented way

—but it was the BEST way!

It was the only RIGHT way!

He intended to prove them, and to display His wonders—and this way afforded an opportunity for both.

Thus it is with all God's people.

He has marked out the way in His unerring wisdom;

He guides them into it,

He tries them by it,

He leads them along it, and

glorifies Himself by doing so!

God's way is always contrary to that which flesh and blood would choose. We want . . .

ease,

plenty,

pleasure,

and honor.

But the Lord intends that we shall have . . .

faith,

humility,

patience,

fortitude, and

confidence in Himself alone.

His design is . . .

to empty us,

to strip us,

to humble us,

to force us before His throne of grace;

to endear the adorable Savior,

to sweeten the precious promises,

to make Heaven more desirable.

And this He effects—by sanctifying the trials, the losses, the disappointments, and the troubles we meet with along the narrow way.

Beloved, is yours . . .

a rough way,

a trying path,

a perplexing road?

It is the RIGHT way!

The Lord is leading you—and He never leads wrong!

"He led them forth by the RIGHT WAY—to a city where they could settle!"

"They were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them!" Hebrews 11:16

15 The Christian's infirmities

The Christian's infirmities

"But He said to me—'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.'

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses—so that Christ's power may rest on me!" 2 Corinthians 12:9

The Christian's infirmities are many and very painful!

They often discourage, deject and cast him down!

They hinder him in every duty,

mar his best performances, and

give Satan an occasion against him.

Few have learned the happy art of boasting in their infirmities—so that the power of Christ may rest upon them.

And yet it is—that our infirmities . . .

render the Savior so necessary for us,

and endear Him so much to our hearts!

His power is put forth in our weakness. It is only in His strength, that we can overcome. We can do nothing good without Him; but through Him we can do all things.

The power of Jesus resting upon us will . . .

shelter us amidst all the storms of life,

protect us from all real danger during our journey home,

refresh us amidst all the toils of this dreary land,

give us rest in our most wearisome hours, and

keep us safe until we are beyond the reach of foes!

The power of Christ overshadows His people in their seasons of trial—as a tent the weary traveler in the dry and barren desert.

16 It requires an omniscient eye, an omnipotent

It requires an omniscient eye, an omnipotent arm, and an ever-present friend!

"Preserve me, O God!" Psalms 16:1

Self-confident people are always in danger!

When Peter felt secure—he fell; and so have thousands beside. Let us always fear a fall—when we feel self-confidence working in our hearts. The wisest saints walk closest with the Lord, and fear to be left to themselves for one moment!

The man who trusts in himself, or in his circumstances, is a stranger to his own heart, and the many foes by which he is surrounded.

No one but God can preserve us—for it requires an omniscient eye, an omnipotent arm, and an ever-present friend to do so!

We need to be preserved every moment, and to be under Divine keeping night and day.

The holiest are liable to fall into sin,
the strongest are liable to be overcome by temptation,
and the most confident are liable to yield to unbelief.

May the Lord preserve us this day from . . .

the wiles of Satan,

the snares of the world,

the deceitfulness of our own hearts,

the influence of carnal professors, and

from falling from our own steadfastness!

Let this be our daily prayer, "Preserve me, O God!"

17 His eye is always upon us

His eye is always upon us

"I am He who searches hearts and minds!" Revelation 2:23

Jesus must be the Omniscient God—or He could not do so.

He must desire truth in the inward parts—or He would not do so.

His eye is always upon us, not only on our path, and our outward actions—but upon our hearts! He is perfectly acquainted with every motive, with every purpose, and with every plan—all is known unto Him!

This should make us serious—for it is a solemn thing for the eye of Jesus to be penetrating through all the folds of our hearts!

It should make us sincere—for He must hate all mere pretense, or outward show, with which the heart does not correspond.

It should make us watchful over our hearts—for if we neglect to examine or keep them, He does not withdraw His eye from them.

Let us then endeavor to pass through this day, realizing the fact, that Jesus is searching our hearts and our minds! Let us learn to abhor all hypocrisy, or mere external show—as He abhors it. Beloved, He sees all the good that his Spirit produces in our hearts—as well as all the evil which is naturally there.

"I am He who searches hearts and minds—and I will repay each of you according to your deeds!"
Revelation 2:23

18 Beloved, are you of the world?

Beloved, are you of the world?

"They are not of the world—even as I am not of it!" John 17:16

The world and the church are essentially distinct, and must remain so. Believers and unbelievers can have no real fellowship.

They differ in nature: the one is spiritual—the other is carnal.

They differ in the motives which rule their conduct: the one is influenced by the love of Christ—the other by the love of SELF.

They differ in the grand object of pursuit: the one seeks God's glory—the other seeks the gratification of his lusts.

Christians are chosen out of the world;

they are redeemed from among men;

they are translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son;

they are consecrated to be the temples of the Holy Spirit,

they are brought into vital union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

They are not of the world—and therefore they come out and are separate from it. They must not expect to be loved by the world!

Beloved, are you of the world?

Do you love the world? If so, the love of the Father is not in you.

If you are of the world—then you must share the world's doom!

19 If Jehovah is our God

If Jehovah is our God

"O LORD, you are my God!" Isaiah 25:6

This is the greatest thing anyone can say!

If the LORD is our God—we must be safe—and we ought to be happy.

If He is our God now—then He was not once. There was a time when we did not

know Him,

or love Him,

or believe Him,

or obey Him,

or hold any fellowship with Him.

We said to God, "Depart from us! We do not desire the knowledge of Your ways!"

If Jehovah is our God—then it is entirely of Sovereign Grace!

His Holy Spirit

convinced us of sin,

led us to Jesus,

unfolded the promises,

applied the atonement, and

taught us to say, "Abba, my Father and my God!"

If Jehovah is our God

we know His character,

we believe His Word,

we love His perfections,

we walk in His fear,

we espouse His cause,

we obey His will,

we strive for His glory and honor, and

we look for immortality, and eternal life!

If Jehovah is our God . . .

His will is our law,

His resources are our fortune,

His wisdom is our guide,

His power is our guard,

His promises are our comfort,

His Son is our advocate,

His Spirit is our monitor,

His providence is our protection,

and His heaven is our home!

20 What shall we live for today?

What shall we live for today?

"None of us lives unto himself!" Romans 14:7

"If we live—we live unto the Lord!" Romans 14:8

Is this true of professors in general?

Is it true of you? Are you living . . .

to amass a fortune,

to enjoy pleasure, or

to acquire a worldly reputation?

OR, are you living . . .

as a child of God,

as a servant of Christ,

as a pilgrim traveling to eternity?

If we are living unto ourselves—we are not Christians, whatever profession we may make! For if we are Christians—we shall live to promote the cause of Christ.

If we are Christians—we shall live in some degree as Christ lived—and He lived not unto Himself.

What shall we live for today? Many, too many, make SELF the end in all they do!

What object have we in view? Self—or Christ?

What is our rule of life? Is it God's Word?

Who is our guide? Is it the Holy Spirit?

What is our end? Is it to become more holy—and to glorify the adorable Redeemer?

Lord, search us, and try us—see if we are living to ourselves!

"None of us lives unto himself!" Romans 14:7

"If we live—we live unto the Lord!" Romans 14:8

21 "I have not deserved this!"

"I have not deserved this!"

"The Lord is righteous!" Psalms 129:4

Righteousness is one of the essential perfections of God.

He cannot possibly do wrong.

He has never treated one of His creatures unjustly yet.

He never will—and He never can!

"The Lord is righteous in all His ways—and holy in all His works."

Righteousness reigns in HEAVEN—every creature there is righteous, and practices righteousness.

Righteousness reigns in HELL—there is no injustice there.

No one is there—who ought not to be there.

No one suffers more than he justly should.

Not one can say, "I have not deserved this!"

Justice alone punishes—and punishes justly!

Righteousness reigns in SALVATION—every sinner who believes in Jesus is justly saved. Every perfection of God has its just claim. Every principle of government is honored. Every demand of the law is met. God is just—while He justifies the ungodly who believe in Jesus. Yes, He is never more just—than then!

22 "Your days of mourning will end!" Isaiah 60:20

"Your days of mourning will end!" Isaiah 60:20

Here on earth, we have much to cause us to mourn.

We mourn over . . .

the state of the world, and of the church;

many things in the domestic circle;

the deep depravity of our own hearts;

our evil tempers and passions;

the temptations and fiery darts of Satan;

our losses, crosses, and privations;

the hiding of the Lord's face;

weakness and pain of body.

All these things conspire to make us sorrowful, so that with David we sometimes say, "My sins have flooded over my head; they are a burden too heavy for me to bear. My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness. I am bent over and brought low; all day long I go around in mourning!" Psalms 38:4-6

But there is a bright prospect before us!

Our mourning season will soon be over!

If we now sow in tears—we shall reap in joy.

The days of our mourning will soon be ended.

Then we shall have . . .

light—without darkness,

holiness—without sin,

joy—without sorrow,

service—without toil,

the eternal sunshine of our Father's love—without one intervening cloud!

We shall soon . . .

shed the last tear,

heave the last sigh,
utter the last groan,
express the last wish,
and feel the last pain!

And then all beyond—will be holiness, happiness, and perfect blessedness!

"Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst! The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their Shepherd; He will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes!" Revelation 7:16-17

23 The Lord's care of His people

The Lord's care of His people

"He will come to us like the rain, like the spring showers that water the land." Hosea 6:3

The Lord's care of His people is incessant.

No parent was ever so vigilant over a precious and only child.

No gardener was ever so attentive to a delicate and favorite plant.

God visits, He watches, He supplies.

He studies our needs, and provides for each of them.

He says, "I, the LORD, watch over it; I water it continually." Isaiah 27:3

Then the SUPPLY will be constant—in every season.

It will be suitable—like refreshing moisture to a thirsty plant.

It will be in small portions—as the gently falling rain.

It will be imperceptible—like the morning dews.

It is by these "supplies" that our graces are kept alive.

If the Lord would cease to water—we should soon wither and die!

Our dependence on Him is absolute!

Our obligations to His love are infinite!

Let us not imagine that we are not watered, because we do not sensibly feel it. The constancy, and the gentle gradual manner in which we are supplied, render His loving care virtually imperceptible.

24 Better to be wounded by the sharpest thorn

Better to be wounded by the sharpest thorn

"There was given me a thorn in my flesh!" 2 Corinthians 12:7

Most Christians have some "thorn" which they cannot extract, which is a daily trial, and which wounds deeply and painfully.

If God sends us a thorn—then no one but God can remove it! And if God sends it—it is always sent in love. It is . . .

to prevent some evil, or

to prepare us for some good.

If it makes us pray,

if it drives us to the Lord's throne,

if it humbles us in the dust,

if it endears the promises,

if it makes us long for heaven,

if it teaches us deeply our need of Christ

—then it is a great blessing!

Better to be wounded by the sharpest thorn—than be allowed in ease, health, and prosperity—to wander from the Lord.

Beloved have you some painful thorn in the flesh—carry it to the Lord. It may be . . .

a sickly body,

a trying family,

a cross providence, or

some peculiar temptation;

but whatever it may be—take it to Jesus, and you will find His grace sufficient for you, and His strength made perfect in your weakness.

He only pains us—for our good!

Lord, if consistent with Your will,

Oh take this thorn away;

But if for me 'tis needful still
That it should longer stay,
Then patience give, the thorn to bear,
And faith to trust Your love and care!

25 Our refuge and strength!

Our refuge and strength!

"God is our refuge and strength!" Psalms 41:1

The present world is a wilderness!

Here we are exposed . . .

to storms and tempests,

to dangers and foes!

If left to provide for ourselves—our enemies would triumph over us—and we must perish! But the Lord has condescended to become the refuge of His people. To Him we may repair and . . .

find safety,

receive supplies,

and enjoy repose.

If He defends us—no one can injure us!

If He is our refuge—nothing can overcome us!

Every Christian can say, "The Lord is my refuge!"

Beloved, let us keep this in view today . . .

whatever trials we may meet with,

whatever tempests we may have to pass through,

whatever foes may assail us—

the Lord will protect and defend us . . .

from the wrath of man,

from the rage of hell,

from the storms of time,

—He will shelter and screen us!

He will not only receive and protect us—but he will strengthen us with strength in our souls.

If God is our refuge—we must be safe!

If God is our strength—we shall certainly overcome!

Let us therefore fly to Him—our refuge and strength!

26 His hand which smites us!

His hand which smites us!

"The Lord comforts His people and will have compassion on His afflicted ones!" Isaiah 49:13.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous—but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

Afflictions are as necessary for us—as the winter frosts are for the earth. In affliction—we often feel desolate, we are tempted to think that the Lord deals harshly with us, that He has turned against us. But nothing can be more incorrect! His hand which smites us—is ruled by His heart which loves us! Our present 'winter of affliction' is intended to usher in a spring-time of joy and soul prosperity!

Afflicted Christian, your God will have compassion upon you! He will support you in your trial, He will cause it to work your good, and He will bring you out of it as soon as it has answered the gracious design with which He sent it.

While you are in the furnace—He sits by as the Refiner, and He will see to it, that you shall lose nothing but dross!

Believe that God has sent your present trial in love, that He does not afflict you willingly—but that there is a needs-be for it, though you cannot perceive what it is at present.

"It was good for me to be afflicted—so that I might learn your decrees!" Psalms 119:71

27 When you find 'thorns' in your path

When you find 'thorns' in your path

"I will hedge up your way with thorns!" Hosea 2:6

These words are spoken to the backslider, they flow from God's love, and indicate painful opposition in the path of spiritual declension. It is a fearful thing to be allowed to choose, and pursue our own way—without divine obstruction!

But if God loves us—He will oppose us, when we are found in forbidden paths!

He will lay the 'thorns' in our way!

He will wound us—in order to restore us!

The wounded child will go home for healing—for the sense of pain and danger will humble its proud and haughty spirit.

Beloved, when you find 'thorns' in your path, just stop and ask,

"Am I in the right road?

Is this the true pilgrim's path?

Does this way lead to my Father's house?"

For the 'thorns' are intended to . . .

awaken inquiry,

produce reflection, and

bring to repentance.

We often see and feel the thorns—but we do not see the hand that laid them in our path. Perhaps we do not dream that it is our heavenly Father—but are ready to say, "An enemy has done this!"

These thorns are . . .

sometimes bodily afflictions,

sometimes losses and crosses, and

sometimes opposition from worldly men.

But whatever may be the nature of the thorns—our Father Himself laid them in our path!

28 We were born filthy

We were born filthy

"We are all infected and impure with sin! And all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away!" Isaiah 64:6

This is our state by nature.

We were born filthy, hence the ancient inquiry and reply, "Who can produce something pure from what is impure? No one!"

The impurity of our hearts—soon appears in our lives: we loved the filthy, and pursued the forbidden object.

Impurity separates from God, and disqualifies for Heaven. Nothing evil or impure will be allowed to enter there. We must be pardoned and cleansed—or eternally perish!

The removal of our guilt can only be by the sacrifice of Jesus. His blood must be sprinkled upon us—or guilt will not be removed from us.

Our inward cleansing, or sanctification, is by the Holy Spirit using the glorious gospel. The truth must be applied to us, become a powerful principle within us, and the rule that regulates and guides us.

The more we feel its power—the more we shall discover and deplore our impurity; and the more we shall long, pray, and strive for true holiness, or conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ. Every truly sanctified soul mourns daily over inward defilement, and cleaves to the Lord Jesus as his righteousness, holiness and redemption!

29 The true church comprises . . .

The true church comprises . . .

all who were chosen by the Father,

all who were redeemed by the Son,

all who are sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

All whom the Father chose—the Son died to redeem.

All whom the Son redeemed—the Holy Spirit quickens, calls, and sanctifies.

30 But it is to be feared, that such character

But it is to be feared, that such characters are very rare!

"I have set the Lord always before me!" Psalms 16:8

The one who lives under an habitual sense of the Lord's presence—will live a life of comfort, holiness, and love!

The one who sets God before him as an example which he is to imitate, and keeps His glory in view in all that he does—will be a consistent Christian!

But it is to be feared, that such characters are very rare!

The Lord Jesus did so constantly—the whole time he sojourned on earth.

David purposed to do so—but he failed. He did not keep his eye fixed on God's holiness, or his heart in the enjoyment of God's love—or he never would have fallen as he did! But no doubt his purpose was a preservative, so long as he paid attention to it.

Beloved, let us set the Lord before us this day! Let . . .

His law be our rule,

His love our solace,

His glory our aim, and

communion with Him our chief delight!

In a word, let us . . .

do justly,

love mercy, and

walk humbly with our God!

He who sets God before him in life—will have nothing to fear in death, or beyond the grave!

31 Proud, conceited, selfish professors!

Proud, conceited, selfish professors!

"By the grace of God I am what I am! And His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me!" 1 Corinthians 15:10

Paul traces up all the good in himself—to the grace of God!

What he WAS—he was by grace.

What he DID—he did by grace.

What he EXPECTED—he expected from grace.

His CONVERSION was a remarkable display of grace in its freeness, sovereignty and power.

His GIFTS, GRACES, and USEFULNESS—all flowed spontaneously from the grace of God!

Therefore he felt deep humility—and ascribed the glory of all that he did—to the Lord alone!

He could speak of his sufferings, he could enumerate the great things he had done—but lest anyone should ascribe anything to him, or at all boast in him—he said, "I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me!"

Beloved, let us copy this excellent example, and let us ascribe everything that is really good, either in ourselves or others—to the distinguishing grace of God!

He who honors the grace of God—will be sure to be honored by the God of grace.

Grace always humbles its possessor—and therefore those who have the most grace—are the most humble.

Proud, conceited, selfish professors—know very little, if anything, of the true grace of God experimentally!

32 This medicine is infallible—it never failed

This medicine is infallible—it never failed yet!

"Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Jeremiah 8:22

Gilead of old, was famous for its balm; and what Gilead was, the gospel is—yes more!

The balm of Gilead would heal some wounds—the gospel will heal all wounds!

Is your heart wounded? It may be by . . .

the guilt of sin,

the unkindness of friends,

the opposition of the world, or

the fierce temptations of Satan!

There is balm in our Gilead—and there is a Physician there!

Take your wounded heart to the gospel—take it to the Savior!

Beg the Holy Spirit to apply one of the 'leaves of the tree of life', or the 'precious blood' of the dear Redeemer. Either of these would heal you! Jesus binds up the broken-hearted, and heals all their wounds.

Let not your spirit droop, yield not to dreary despondency—but go up to Gilead—and take balm! Lay hold on the promises of the gospel by faith—they will soothe, soften, cheer, and heal your wounded soul!

This medicine is infallible—it never failed yet! It is a universal remedy—and perfectly suits all ages, cases, climates and characters.

Do not sit there, poring over your wounds!

Do not dwell not on your sorrows!

Do not look not at your griefs!

But apply at once to Jesus, the Great Physician!

He will bring you health and cure!

He will heal your broken heart!

33 Our great pattern and example!

Our great pattern and example!

"Learn of Me—for I am gentle and humble in heart!" Matthew 11:29

Jesus is our great pattern and example! Every disciple should learn from Him. He goes before us through all the duties and trials of life—and shows us how they should be performed and borne. He teaches us . . .

how to bear poverty without complaining,

how to bear popularity without pride,

how to endure persecution without resentment,

how to bestow favors on the unthankful and unworthy.

Go, learn of Jesus . . .

how to live by faith on your Father's Word;

how to cultivate fellowship with your Father in private;

how to do your Father's will in public;

how to suffer all that your Father has appointed you;

how to prefer His will before your own.

Go, learn of him, to be . . .

gentle and humble ;

patient and forgiving;

industrious and devout.

Do not learn from the heathen—however virtuous they may be!

Do not learn from other Christians—however amiable they may be!

But learn from Jesus—for His motives were pure, and His conduct was perfect!

34 Our portion!

Our portion!

"They shall rejoice in their portion!" Isaiah 61:7

The Lord's people often appear to have very little to rejoice in on earth—as the ground of their joy is invisible.

The Lord is their portion now—and in possessing Him—they really possess all things. The Lord Himself is their inheritance.

They shall possess the glorious land also, as their portion soon. It is a land . . .

where storms never arise,

where diseases never come,

where sorrow is never known,

where pain is never felt,

where the Lamb shall be their light,

and a present God their glory!

But they may and do rejoice along their way to this glorious land!

They rejoice that they have infallible direction—so that they can never miss their road!

They rejoice that they have omnipotent protection—so that they shall safely arrive at the end!

They rejoice that they have unfailing supplies—so that they shall never be left to necessity!

They rejoice that they have a sovereign God—who overrules everything for their good!

They shall rejoice in their PORTION:

in its greatness—for it is as vast as infinity;

in its goodness—for it is the best in existence;

in its permanence—for it shall never pass into other hands;

in its purity—for it is perfect holiness;

and in its certainty—for it can never be forfeited or lost!

"They shall rejoice in their portion!"

35 "Pure and undefiled religion before God our

"Pure and undefiled religion before God our Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world!" James 1:27

Pure and undefiled religion is devotedness to God, and supposes . . .

reconciliation to God,

fellowship with God,

coming under the yoke of God, and

being of one mind and purpose with God.

Many profess religion—who do not . . .

understand its nature,

possess its principles, or

practice its precepts!

They are not enlightened.

They are not sincere.

They are not devout.

Pure religion . . .

flows from pure principles,

runs in a pure channel,

and aims at pure ends.

Pure religion is . . .

humble,

laborious,

self-denying.

The truly religious man not only embraces the doctrines of the gospel—but practices its precepts!

He not only worships God—but benefits his fellow men!

He is not only devout before God—but devoted to others. He . . .

pities the fatherless,

sympathizes with the widow, and
keeps himself unspotted from the world.

If he can dry an orphan's tears,

if he can minister to a widow's needs,

if he can bring a soul to God, or

in any way promote the holiness and happiness of his fellow man—he is happy.

Is this the nature of your religion?

If not, it must be spurious!

Let us examine ourselves by this test: "Pure and undefiled religion before God our Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world!"

36 God has dwelt on the earth—as one of the

God has dwelt on the earth—as one of the creatures!

"Will God indeed dwell on the earth?" 1 Kings 8:27

When we think . . .

of His greatness—and our insignificance;

of His holiness—and our impurity;

of His righteousness—and our vileness;

we may well ask this question!

Behold, the heaven—and the heaven of heavens—cannot contain Him!

"The Word became flesh—and made His dwelling among us!" Astonishing! God has dwelt on the earth—as one of the creatures! He dwelt on earth for more than thirty years—and did so, that we might dwell with Him in heaven forever.

Our God became a servant—that we might become His sons.

Our God obeyed the law—that we might be justified at His bar.

Our God purchased us with His own blood—and now dwells in us by His own Spirit.

O wonder of wonders!

37 We must not take off our armor—until we put on

We must not take off our armor—until we put on our shroud!

"The Lord Almighty is with us! The God of Jacob is our fortress!" Psalms 46:7

If the Lord Almighty, who has all creatures at His command, and under his control, is with us—what should we fear?

The Lord Almighty is with us—and He is for us!

He is with us . . .

to defend us from every foe,

to give us courage in every conflict,

to keep us in the hour of temptation, and

to preserve us unto His kingdom and glory.

But His presence is not intended to be a substitute for our efforts, or to excuse our negligence.

He will not defend the coward—or protect the idle!

He says, "Fight the good fight of faith!"

Face your foes,

use your weapons,

watch your opportunities,

obey your Captain's orders,

be faithful unto death—

and I will give you a crown of life!

Beloved, let us ever remember, that the Lord's presence is to give us courage, and to stimulate us to fight a good warfare. While we are here on earth—we must fight! We must not take off our armor—until we put on our shroud! We must not leave the battlefield, until our Captain, to promote us, shall say, "Come up higher!"

38 Answers to our prayers!

Answers to our prayers!

You don't know what you are asking!"Matthew 20:22

Many things appear to be good—which are not really so. And many things are good in themselves—which are not good for us.

The Savior's disciples often ask amiss, and they ask for what would really do them harm; and when they do so—He mercifully denies them.

It may often be said to us, "You don't know what you are asking!"

We ask perhaps for deeper sanctification, but in so doing—we are really asking for trials, losses, crosses and temptations!

We ask to be weaned from the world, but in so doing—we are really asking for troubles, difficulties, and perhaps bodily afflictions!

We ask for stronger faith, hope, and patience, but in so doing—we are really asking for clearer and more painful discoveries of the corruption of the heart, and more violent assaults from Satan than we have ever experienced!

It is very probable that we shall see by and by, that our severest trials and our bitterest sorrows—were just answers to our prayers!

We fix upon some object, we set our heart upon it, we pray earnestly that we may possess it—but we do not think of the painful process through which we must pass to arrive at it!

39 I will look up!

I will look up!

"In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice. In the morning I lay my requests before You—and I will look up!" Psalms 5:3

This was the Psalmist's determination in the morning, and it should be ours.

Preserved and protected through the night—we should look up with gratitude, and praise our God for His goodness.

Aware of our dependence and needs—we should look up and desire mercies of our Almighty God for the new-born day.

Sensible of our foes and dangers—we should look up and pray to be kept, guided, and sanctified by our ever-present God.

If we look within—it will dispirit us;

if we look around—it may distract us;

if we look back—it may awaken fears;

if we look forward—it may arouse foreboding!

But if we look UP—it will preserve . . .

the head from swimming,

the heart from sinking,

the feet from slipping, and

the hands from hanging down!

Beloved, let us look up!

There our loving Father is!

There our interceding Savior is!

There all our supplies are!

There our everlasting home is!

Let others look where they will, "I will look up!"

If we look up to God in faith—then He will look down upon us in mercy; and looking, He will supply all our needs!

40 Friend, have you ever seen Jesus?

Friend, have you ever seen Jesus?

"We would see Jesus!" John 12:21

Curiosity pants to see . . .

great men,

remarkable places,

and uncommon things.

But grace in the heart—pants to see Jesus!

The first object we wish to see when regenerated, is Jesus!

And the last we shall wish to see when leaving the world, is Jesus!

We want to see Jesus, when we are

in sorrow—to cheer us;

in darkness—to illumine us;

in trouble—to deliver us;

in prosperity—to keep us;

in sickness—to comfort us; and

in death—to enable us to triumph.

We would see . . .

Jesus in the manger,

Jesus in the busy crowd,

Jesus by the grave of Lazarus,

Jesus in Gethsemane's garden,

Jesus hanging on Golgotha's cruel tree,

Jesus ascending from Olivet,

Jesus interceding for us before His Father,

Jesus coming again in glory,

Jesus sitting on His throne in heavenly splendor!

Friend, have you ever seen Jesus?

41 Afterwards you will understand!

Afterwards you will understand!

"You do not understand now what I am doing—but afterwards you will understand." John 13:7

We are to walk by faith—not by sight.

We are to trust His heart—when we cannot see His hand!

We are to believe Him—when we cannot understand His mysterious workings!

The Lord is now working in nature, providence, and grace—and He does many things which we do not understand at present. But when His work is complete, and it lies stretched out before us in the light of eternity—then we shall then . . .

comprehend His design,

admire His wisdom, and

adore His divine workings!

Beloved, is God cleansing you by fiery trials, or causing you to pass through deep waters? Are you at a loss to know what His design is, or where the present affliction will end?

Be still. Wait His time.

There is a divine working time—which is the present;

and there is a divine revealing time, which is to come.

The wisest Christians are often in the dark now—but the simplest Christians will see all things clearly by and by.

A little more patience, a little more faith—and all will be well.

"We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God, and who are called according to His purpose!" Romans 8:28

42 I will not forget you!

I will not forget you!

"Can a woman forget her nursing child, or lack compassion for the child of her womb? Even if these forget—yet I will not forget you!" Isaiah 49:15

We often forget the Lord—this is both our sin and our folly!

As we can never be happy but as we live in the enjoyment of His love—so every sin brings its own punishment with it!

We sometimes suspect that the Lord has forgotten us—but He assures us that this is impossible. He admits that the mother may forget her nursing child, and treat it with neglect; but He denies that He can ever forget His redeemed people. They are too deeply engraved on His hands! His love to them is too strong and active—to allow Him to forget them!

Jesus thinks of US this morning. He is thinking . . .

of the trials we shall have to endure,

of the duties we have to discharge,

of the foes we shall have to face, and

of the grace that will be necessary for us.

Friends may forget us; relations may forget us—but Jesus never will! Nor will He forget or overlook anything that concerns us!

O may I never forget Him!

May He live in my memory,

reign in my affections, and

dwell in my heart by faith.

43 His teaching makes practical Christians!

His teaching makes practical Christians!

"But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name—He will teach you all things!" John 14:26

The Holy Spirit is the Teacher of the church. To Him the promise refers, "All Your children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children."

He taught the apostles all things necessary for their office and work.

He teaches the true ministers of Christ, leading them into the truth as it is in Jesus.

And he teaches every believer—all that is really necessary for him to know!

The Bible is the lesson-book,

the believer is the scholar,

the blessed Spirit is the teacher, and

experimental religion is the education!

No one teaches like Him!

He teaches us . . .

gradually,

silently, and

always effectually!

For only what the Spirit teaches us—do we really know!

He teaches us . . .

what God requires in His Word,

what He has provided in His gospel;

what Christ is to His people,

what His people are to Him.

His teaching makes practical Christians—for He always teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world!

44 Nothing is so difficult to get rid of!

Nothing is so difficult to get rid of!

"Deliver me from all my transgressions!" Psalms 39:8

Nothing is so difficult to get rid of—as SIN!

No one can remove it—but God!

Committed in one moment—its effects may remain through all eternity!

Deliverance from it—is the greatest blessing!

But before deliverance—there must be conviction, contrition, prayer, and faith.

We must feel that sin is an evil and bitter thing.

We must be truly sorry for our sin.

We must cry unto God in earnest prayer.

We must believe that only Lord Jesus Christ's sacrifice can atone for it.

If God delivers us—He will do it gratuitously—for He saves by grace alone.

If God delivers us—He will do it effectually—for "as far as the east is from the west—so far will He remove our transgressions from us!"

If God delivers us—He will do it eternally—for we "shall be saved with an everlasting salvation."

"Deliver me from all my transgressions!"

My friend, is this your morning prayer?

Is sin your burden?

Are you weary of it?

Do you long to get rid of it?

Carry it to God's throne, confess it there, plead the blood of Jesus to have it removed—and you shall be saved!

45 The work of the Holy Spirit

The work of the Holy Spirit

"He will bring glory to Me by taking from what is Mine—and revealing it to you!" John 16:14

This is a special part of the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit unfolds to us . . .

the glory of Christ's person,

the riches of Christ's grace,

the merit of Christ's righteousness,

the efficacy of Christ's blood,

the power of Christ's intercession,

the preciousness of Christ's Word, and

the adaptation of Christ's offices to all our needs.

The Spirit takes . . .

Christ's doctrines—and teaches us to understand them;

Christ's promises—and helps us to believe them;

Christ's precepts—and enables us to keep them.

The things of Christ are all great, glorious, and valuable; they are calculated . . .

to strengthen our faith,

to increase our hope,

to influence our love,

to quicken our zeal, and

to consecrate all our powers to His service.

O that the Holy Spirit would take of the things of Christ—and reveal them unto us today! May we . . .

see Christ's glory,

enjoy Christ's presence,

and promote Christ's cause!

"The Spirit will take from what is Mine—and reveal it to you!" John 16:15

46 "The Lord opened her heart to respond

"The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message." Acts 16:14

Every heart by nature, is closed against God.

Nothing can open a sinner's heart—but invincible divine power. It takes the same power to open a sinner's heart—as it did to create the world, or to raise the dead body of Jesus from the grave!

Until the heart is opened . . .

the Word will not enter,

sound conviction will not be felt,

the gospel message will not be received.

The preacher may preach,

judgments may thunder,

mercy may call—

but until God opens the heart—all is in vain!

Sometimes He throws the heart wide open at once—and the change is striking, startling and apparent to all.

Sometimes He opens it by degrees—and then the change is gradual and almost imperceptible.

But if the heart is opened at all—God has done it!

And being once opened—it is never quite closed again.

He opens—and no man shuts!

May the Lord open our hearts, and open them wide, and fill them with His glory!

47 Our almighty helper!

Our almighty helper!

"I have laid help upon One who is mighty!" Psalms 89:19

And who is this mighty One—but Jesus?

He alone can help us . . .

in all our struggles with sin,

in all our conflicts with Satan,

in all our trials in the world,

in all our domestic troubles, and

in encountering the last enemy, death.

Jesus is our almighty helper! We must . . .

look to Him,

expect from Him, and

conquer by the help received from Him.

His grace is sufficient for us, and His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

Every trouble cries, "Go to Jesus for help!"

Every affliction exhorts, "Look to Jesus for help!"

Without His help—we must fail!

With His help—we can never fail!

"For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you: Do not fear—I will help you!" Isaiah 41:13

"Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I Myself will help you!" Isaiah 41:14

48 Partakers of Christ

Partakers of Christ

"We are made partakers of Christ." Hebrews 3:14

This is the privilege of every true believer.

He is united to Christ—and he partakes of Christ.

He partakes of His cross—which saves him.

He partakes of His Spirit—who sanctifies him.

He partakes of His righteousness—which justifies him.

He partakes of His Word—which instructs him.

He partakes of His sufferings—which wear him from the world.

He will partake of His glory—which will fill him with unspeakable joy and love!

Christ is . . .

the life that quickens us,

the bread that feeds us,

the garment that clothes us,

the truth that informs us,

the strength that sustains us,

and the glory that will crown us!

We partake with Christ . . .

in all the honors of His eternal throne,

in all the riches of His grace and glory!

Christ is ours—and all He that has is ours!

Without Christ—we have nothing!

With Christ—we have all things!

We have . . .

His love,

His favor,

His fullness!

Wondrous grace!

Astonishing display of mercy!

49 Beloved, are you in the fire?

Beloved, are you in the fire?

"Glorify the Lord in the fires!" Isaiah 24:15

The fires are afflictions.

These are intended . . .

to try us,

to purify us, and

to endear the Lord Jesus to us.

Every saint must pass through the fire, and our only concern should be to pass through honorably and usefully.

Beloved, are you in the fire?

Is the fire in your business?

Is the fire in your family?

Is the fire in your body?

Is the fire in your soul?

Wherever it is, let it be your one desire to glorify God in it. You may do so . . .

by patiently enduring,

by trusting the Lord's Word,

by speaking of His character and love,

by expecting His support and supplies,

by holding fast your integrity.

Beware that you do not lose the benefit of the affliction—but cry mightily to God that it may be sanctified.

Have you never been in the fire?

If you belong to Christ you will be!

"He will sit as a Refiner and purifier of silver; He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver!" Malachi 3:3

They who are not purified in the furnace of affliction on earth—will be cast as reprobate silver into the fire of hell forever!

50 Sincerity

Sincerity

"That you may be sincere." Php 1:10

Sincerity is a lovely ornament.

Sincerity is one of the essentials of the Christian character.

A man must be sincere—or he cannot be a Christian.

To be sincere—is to be simple, open, free from deceit or duplicity.

A double-minded man,

or a double-faced man,

or a double-tongued man,

is no Christian, whatever he may profess!

God's redeemed people hate hypocrisy and pretense.

To be sincere is to be pure, bearing examination as . . .

to principles,

to possessions,

to practices.

Any man who does not frequently examine himself, and who is afraid of being examined by others—has reason to question his sincerity.

O may we be sincere!

Sincerely believing God's truth,

sincerely seeking God's glory,

sincerely doing God's will, and

sincerely promoting God's cause!

Without sincerity . . .

our profession is a lie;

our pretensions are an insult to God;

and our end will be according to our deeds.

Reader, are you what you profess to be?

Is there pretense or deception in your profession or conduct?

O, that you may be sincere!

51 Our God became our brother!

Our God became our brother!

"A brother is born for adversity" Proverbs 17:17

This is emphatically true of Jesus!

We brought ourselves into adversity—and Jesus became our brother to bring us out!

He who was our God—became our brother!

He who created us—became like us!

And He did so that He might . . .

show his love to us,

sympathize with us,

and deliver us!

As our brother . . .

He became responsible for our debts—and He paid them.

He engaged to restore us to our Father's image and to set us before His face forever—and He will do so.

In all our seasons of adversity—He shows a brother's love.

He visits us.

He counsels us.

He comforts us.

He supplies us.

He stands by us when all others forsake us.

He . . .

makes up all our losses,

sanctifies all our crosses,

bears all our burdens,

and carries all our cares!

He has always a brother's heart.

He performs a brother's part.

He is our nearest of kin, and He performs the part of a kinsman well.

O wondrous love of Jesus, which brought Him into the closest relationship to us, and influenced Him to do everything He could for us!

52 Bought and paid for!

Bought and paid for!

"The church of God, which He purchased with His own blood!" Acts 20:28

Paul was in the habit of viewing the church as a purchased possession.

The price paid for it was the blood of Christ.

The whole church therefore, is bought and paid for! The price paid was satisfactory, and the property will all be given into the Savior's hand. The Father, who received the price, will draw all the purchased ones to the Son.

The church of Christ belongs therefore to no one but Christ. Hence the apostle says, "You are not your own—for God bought you with a high price!"

Beloved, let us view ourselves . . .

as the 'PROPERTY of Jesus';

as property purchased and paid for;

as property purchased at a price which no created mind can calculate; which defies all the powers of arithmetic to set forth! The precious blood of Jesus! The blood of God's own Son!

Who can conceive its value?

Who can question its efficacy?

Who dare trifle with it?

Precious blood of Jesus, may my eye be steadily fixed on you, at all times, and in all places!

52 HE chose US!

HE chose US!

"HE chose US in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will; to the praise of the glory of His grace!" Ephesians 1:4-6

That is, God chose His people in Jesus. This was the first display of Jehovah's grace towards us.

All people lay spread out before His omniscient eye. He saw the whole of them—and what every one would DO and BE. Nothing was concealed from His eye. And with the thorough knowledge of all that His people would be and do—He chose them unto eternal life!

He chose them to be His special redeemed people—above all people that dwell upon the face of the earth.

He chose them in Christ, who was appointed to be . . .

their Head,

their Substitute,

their Surety,

their Representative,

and their infallible Savior!

He chose them . . .

to make them holy,

to raise them to the highest honor,

and to exalt them to perfect happiness.

He chose them in eternity past—before the foundation of the world.

His choosing them was an act of gracious sovereignty.

His choice of them, secures to them . . .

a saving interest in the work of Christ,

union to the person of Christ, and

a share in the glory of Christ!

53 The sanctifying work of the Spirit

The sanctifying work of the Spirit

"God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit." 2 Thessalonians 2:13

The church is comprised of . . .

all who are chosen of the Father,

all who are redeemed by the Son,

all who are sanctified by the Holy Spirit;

all who shall be eternally saved.

God has chosen us to salvation—this is the end.

But it is through the sanctifying work of the Spirit—this is the means.

The sanctifying work of the Spirit . . .

commences in regeneration,

is carried on through life,

and will be completed in the day of Christ.

The sanctifying work of the Spirit consists in making us holy—or conforming us to the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The sanctifying work of the Spirit . . .

creates us anew in Christ Jesus,

separates us from the world,

sets our hearts against sin,

consecrates us to the Lord's service,

makes us zealous for His glory.

The more we experience of the sanctifying work of the Spirit . . .

the more clearly we shall discover our own sinfulness,

the more we shall be tried with our inward corruptions,

the more we shall see the need of the Savior's blood,

the more we shall bless God for the Redeemer's finished work, and

the more carefully and cautiously we shall walk in our fellowship with an ungodly world.

Nothing will prove . . .

our election by the Father, or

our redemption by the Son—

but the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

54 "You are precious in My sight!" Isaiah 43:4

"You are precious in My sight!" Isaiah 43:4

All of the Lord's people are precious in His sight! Never was choice child so precious in the estimation of a fond mother—as the poorest, weakest believer, is to the Lord Jesus!

They are precious to Him as creatures, as sinful creatures—but especially as regenerated creatures.

They are precious to Him—therefore he laid down His life for them!

He will never, never part with one of them!

Their persons are precious,

their graces are precious,

their prayers and praises are precious,

their life is precious,

their death is precious—"Precious in the sight of the Lord— is the death of his saints."

They are precious to the Father—as His choice!

They are precious to the Son—as His bride!

They are precious to the Holy Spirit—as His temple!

They are . . .

redeemed by precious blood,

blessed with precious faith,

interested in precious promises,

entitled to a precious Heaven.

"Therefore, to you who believe—HE is precious!" 1 Peter 2:7

55 Divine contentions

Divine contentions

"I will not contend forever!" Isaiah 57:16

Afflictions are sometimes divine contentions.

If His children will not obey His Word—they shall feel His rod!

Our heavenly Father never makes us smart—without a needs-be for it!

But sometimes our afflictions are long continued, and we imagine that they will never be removed. Therefore the Lord informs us, that He will not contend forever. Nor will He contend one moment longer than it is necessary . . .

for the the stubborn child to yield,

for the proud spirit to bow,

for the haughty look to be brought down.

If we were to mortify our flesh—God would not mortify our spirits.

We must be weaned from the world.

We must pass through the wilderness—to Canaan.

The cross always comes before the crown!

The bitter always comes before the sweet!

Yet the Lord will not contend forever!

The wilderness will soon be crossed, and death will soon lift the cross from our galled shoulder, and God will bestow on us . . .

"a crown of beauty—instead of ashes,

the oil of gladness—instead of mourning,

and a garment of praise—instead of a spirit of despair!" Isaiah 61:3

56 Even while frowns seem to cover His

Even while frowns seem to cover His face, and the rod is seen in His hand!

"Though He causes suffering—yet He will show compassion according to His abundant, faithful love!" Lamentations 3:32

Beloved, are you sorely tried?

Are you writing bitter things against yourself?

Has the hand of God gone out against you?

Are you ready to say, "All these things are against me!"

Cheer up!

The storm will soon cease,

the dark clouds are floating into the distance,

the sun will soon burst forth,

even now faith may see the rainbow in the cloud, for "though He causes suffering—yet He will show compassion according to His abundant, faithful love!"

Even now He pities you with a father's pity! He waits but the fittest time to show compassion to you again.

Infinite compassion reigns in His heart—even while frowns seem to cover His face, and the rod is seen in His hand!

Come to the determination of afflicted Job, "Though He slays me—yet will I trust in Him!"

But He will not SLAY you! He will . . .

try you,

purify you,

fit you for service, and

prepare you for heaven!

"Though He causes suffering—yet He will show compassion according to His abundant, faithful love!"

57 The greatest thing that mercy ever did!

The greatest thing that mercy ever did!

"He saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy!" Titus 3:5

God's mercy is the fountain of every blessing. We may trace every good thing that we receive or enjoy, to this. But the greatest thing that mercy ever did—was to save sinners. Salvation is wholly of the Lord. It is a work of such magnitude, that no creature could ever have conceived it—nor could all the creatures combined have executed it!

Jehovah, to display His wisdom, mercy, and power—determined to save—and to save according to mercy, which always . . .

pities the poor,

sympathizes with the miserable, and

confers its blessings on the unworthy.

If salvation was . . .

by our desert,

or on the ground of some excellency we possessed,

or for the sake of something we were to do—

then we must sit down in despair! For . . .

what do we DESERVE—but hell!

what do we POSSESS—but sin!

what can we DO—which is not polluted and worthless!

But because salvation is according to divine mercy—then the vilest may hope; and the most unworthy may enjoy the blessing!

Mercy can give—what we never could expect or deserve.

By grace are you saved!

Tis not by works of righteousness

Which our own hands have done!

But we are saved by sovereign grace,

Abounding through his Son!

58 The resurrection of Jesus says . . .

The resurrection of Jesus says . . .

"Christ has indeed been raised from the dead!" 1 Corinthians 15:20.

The resurrection of Jesus should fill us with joy.

It is the proof . . .

that His sacrifice was accepted,

that His foes were conquered,

that His Father was well pleased.

He was seized as our Surety,

He was punished as our Substitute,

He died as our Representative, and

He arose as our glorious Deliverer!

The resurrection of Jesus says . . .

that sin is put away,

that righteousness is brought in,

that Satan is defeated,

that death is unstung,

that justice is satisfied,

that the law is magnified,

that Scripture is fulfilled,

that the gates of heaven are thrown open,

that God is at peace with us,

that eternal redemption is obtained, and

that the salvation of all God's people is absolutely certain!

Beloved, Jesus is risen, therefore . . .

let us rise from earth, sin and sadness,

let us set our affections on things above,

let us put off the old man with his deeds,

let us rejoice in God our Savior,

let us trust in His merits,

let us confide in His power,

let us rest on His Word!

59 My hiding place!

My hiding place!

"A MAN will be as a hiding place from the wind,

And a refuge from the tempest,

As rivers of water in a dry place,

As the shade of a massive rock in an arid land!"

Isaiah 32:2

The present world is like a bleak and cheerless desert; the climate is very changeable, and we are exposed to piercing, cutting winds.

Sometimes dangerous errors,

sometimes deep afflictions,

sometimes soul-distressing trials,

like violent winds, blow upon us and fill us with alarm and dread!

At such times—a hiding place is necessary.

Jesus is our hiding place!

He will hide us from . . .

the wrath of God,

the rage of Hell, and

the injurious effects of trials and troubles!

Beloved, are you in this hiding place? If so, abide in it, for nowhere else will you find such safety, or enjoy such repose!

Hail, sovereign love that first began,

The scheme to rescue fallen man!

Hail, matchless, free, eternal grace,

That gave my soul a hiding place!

Against the God who rules the sky,

I fought with hand uplifted high!

Despised the notion of His grace,
Too proud to seek a hiding place!
Enwrapt in thick Egyptian night,
And fond of darkness more than light!
Madly I ran the sinful race,
Secure without a hiding place!
And thus the eternal counsel ran:
"Almighty love—arrest that man!"
I felt the arrows of distress,
And found I had no hiding place!
Indignant Justice stood in view;
To Sinai's fiery mount I flew!
But Justice cried, with frowning face,
"This mountain is no hiding place!"
E'er long, a heavenly voice I heard,
And Mercy's angel form appeared;
She led me on with gentle pace,
To Jesus as my hiding place!
Should storms of sevenfold thunder roll,
And shake the globe from pole to pole;
No flaming bolt could daunt my face,
For Jesus is my hiding place!
On Him almighty vengeance fell,
That would have sunk a world to hell!
He bore it for the chosen race,
And thus became their hiding place!
A few more rolling suns at most,
Will land me on fair Canaan's coast;
Where I shall sing the song of grace,

And see my glorious Hiding Place!

60 We grow cold, careless and worldly minded!

We grow cold, careless and worldly minded!

"O Lord, revive Your work!" Habakkuk 3:2

Christianity is the work of God.

He begins it,

He carries it on,

He completes it.

It is the work of His own hands—which He never forsakes!

It is the work which is to reflect the glory of all His divine perfections.

But this work often needs reviving.

Our graces become weak,

our evidences decline,

our spirituality decays, and

we grow cold, careless and worldly minded!

Then we have . . .

no sweet visits,

no tokens for good,

no heart-affecting fellowship,

no longings for heavenly glory.

Our affections fix on some earthly object,

our conscience becomes benumbed,

our understanding is bedimmed,

and we sink into an unhealthy state.

Our souls cleave to the dust—and all we can do is to cry, "Quicken me according to Your Word!"

When the Lord comes to revive his work, He often . . .

sends some painful cross,

brings us down into the dust by some affliction,

makes us see our sin,
and smart for our folly.

He . . .

convinces us,
humbles us,
empties us, and
makes us feel thoroughly ashamed of our conduct!

Then He . . .

leads us to confession,
produces contrition,
speaks pardon, and
smiles upon us again!

O Lord, revive Your work in me!

61 The words of Jesus

The words of Jesus

"Remember how He spoke to you!" Luke 24:6

So said the angels to the women at the sepulcher, on the resurrection morning. This exhortation is most applicable to us—for we are apt to forget His words.

The words of Jesus ought to have the best place in our memories:

1. On account of their intrinsic value. There are no words like the words of Jesus, which exhibit the nature, will, and promises of God.
2. On account of their veracity. They are all true—the truth itself.
3. On account of their suitability. They . . .

check sin,

control fears,

produce confidence,

inspire with gratitude,

and fill us with love.

4. On account of their usefulness . . .

in our daily trials,

to direct our way,

to rule our expectations,

to comfort our hearts,

to feed and support our faith,

on the bed of sickness,

and at the hour of death.

Let us treasure up the words of Jesus carefully, diligently, and with much prayer.

Are our memories stored with Christ's words?

Do we meditate upon them?

Do we walk by them?

62 Take out every stain!

Take out every stain!

"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity—and cleanse me from my sin!" Psalms 51:2

Sin is spiritual filthiness.

Sin . . .

defiles the conscience,

corrupts the imagination,

depraves the heart,

perverts the will,

pollutes the mind,

sets the tongue on fire by hell,

stains the life, and

renders the man totally and eternally unfit for Heaven!

It is God's work to cleanse a sinner. No one else can. The sinner cannot cleanse himself: he is without the means, the will, or the power! But God in mercy does, and He does it . . .

by His Son, atoning;

by His Spirit, renewing;

by His Providence, working;

and by His Truth, purifying.

The passage contains the believer's prayer:

"Wash me."

"Wash me thoroughly."

It is from "my iniquity—my sin."

Wash me, for . . .

I have discovered my filthiness;

I loathe myself on account of it;

and I long to be delivered from it!

Wash me thoroughly:
take out every stain,
erase every impression,
make me whiter than snow!

Sin always pollutes and defiles us. A believer cannot rest in pollution.

"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity—and cleanse me from my sin!"

63 "Do not be conformed to this world!"

"Do not be conformed to this world!" Romans 12:2

The world is God's foe. It is under the rule of the prince of the power of the air.

Its habits,

style of living,

and practices—

are contrary to God's will.

The believer should not be conformed to the world—but should be conformed to Christ.

He should not be ruled by the maxims of the world—but by the Word of God.

Do not be conformed, for . . .

its ruling principle is pride;

its practice is rebellion against God;

its profession of religion is hypocrisy;

its spirit is enmity against God;

its purpose is selfishness; and

its doom is eternal destruction!

The more we conform to the world . . .

the more we become unlike Christ, and

the more we are exposed to its snares and temptations.

We should avoid all extremes in dress, living, and the customs of the generation in which we live.

"Do not be conformed to this world!"

If we would obey this precept, we must . . .

be much in private with God,

drink deeply into the spirit of Christ,

realize that this world is passing away,

and meditate much on eternity!

64 "Surely You are still our Father! Even

"Surely You are still our Father!

Even if Abraham and Jacob would disown us, LORD, You would still be our Father! You are our Redeemer from ages past!" Isaiah 63:16

A fatherless child is generally an object of pity.

But a believer is never fatherless!

His faith may be weak,

his fears may be many,

his trials may be great,

his foes may be fierce, and

his earthly prospects may be dark

—but God is still his Father!

"We are all the children of God—by faith in Christ Jesus!" Nothing can dissolve this relationship. We may lose the enjoyment of it—but the privilege remains the same.

Once a child of God—a child of God forever!

Beloved, if God is our father,

He will chasten us,

He will put our love and confidence to the test,

He will teach us some hard and difficult lessons,

but He will still . . .

pity us,

spare us,

listen to us, and

give us all that is absolutely necessary.

If God is our father—

He will notice the least good thing that may be in us;

He will see the sincere meaning of our hearts; and

He will accept the smallest offering at our hands!

65 Reader, have you received the Holy Spirit?

Reader, have you received the Holy Spirit?

"The Spirit of God dwells in you." 1 Corinthians 3:16

The Spirit of God dwells in WHOM?

In every Christian. For "if any man has not the Spirit of Christ—he does not belong to Him."

Wherever the Spirit dwells—He works; and His work is the efficient cause of . . .

our salvation,

our sanctification,

our comfort, and

our usefulness.

He dwells in us as the Spirit of life—quickening and reviving us.

He dwells in us as the Spirit of light—instructing and illuminating us.

He dwells in us as the Spirit of liberty—delivering from bondage, dread and terror.

He dwells in us as the Spirit of love—shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, and leading us to love Him and all His dear people.

He dwells in us as the Spirit of power—enabling us to conquer the world, overcome Satan, and crucify the old man with his deeds.

He dwells in us as the Spirit of prayer—teaching us how to pray, and making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

He dwells in us as the Spirit of peace—applying the atonement, giving us peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and producing in us a peaceable disposition.

He dwells in us as the Spirit of Christ—exalting Him in our minds, enthroning Him in our hearts, and glorifying Him in us and by us.

Reader, have you received the Holy Spirit?

66 "They shall obtain joy and gladness!"

"They shall obtain joy and gladness!" Isaiah 35:10

Those who mourn on earth, on account of sin

—shall rejoice in heaven, possessed of holiness!

Many of the Lord's people enjoy but little happiness here on earth—but joy is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. We may have a dreary and difficult seed time—but we shall have a joyous sunny harvest!

A sickly body, a trying family, or a troublesome business—may hinder our enjoying much now; but all these things will soon come to an end!

Sickness—shall give place to health;

trials—shall give place to triumphs;

our employments—will be our enjoyments;

sighs—will give place to songs;

sadness—will be exchanged for gladness;

and everlasting joy will crown us!

We have the worst at the present—the best is all ahead of us!

Joy and gladness is our eternal inheritance!

Our Savior procured it for us by His death,

He secures it for us by his intercession, and

He is waiting to introduce us to it soon!

The time will soon come, when "God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes; and there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain!"

67 "He will not take back His words!" Isaiah 31:2

"He will not take back His words!" Isaiah 31:2

As the Lord never speaks rashly—there can be no cause for Him to take back His words. As He knew the end from the beginning—it would be inconsistent for Him to do it.

His Word is like Himself, immutable.

It must have its accomplishment.

Hence the Savior said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away—but My Words shall never pass away!"

This will apply to all His PROMISES. They are sure to all His people. They can never be broken. Therefore we should place implicit confidence in them, and endeavor to chase away our fears with them. They are all . . .

exceeding great,

very plain, and

most precious!

"They are more precious than gold, even the finest gold! They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb!" Psalms 19:10

Christian, here is your comfort—Your God "will not take back His words!" What He has said—He will do!

Christian, here is your security—the Word of the Lord endures forever!

Unconverted sinner, this subject should make you tremble! God will be as true to His THREATENINGS, as He will be to his promises! Hell shall receive every person who dies in an unconverted state! Here is your certain damnation—the Word of the Lord endures forever!

68 "You who once were far off—have been

"You who once were far off—have been brought near by the blood of Christ!" Ephesians 2:13

Distance from God is the consequence of sin; and to the believer, it is the cause of trouble and distress.

We were all banished far from God once; nor could we ever have been brought near unto him, if Jesus had not become our Substitute, and satisfied the law on our behalf. The blood of Jesus removes every obstacle out of the way of our approaching to God—and it secures us an honorable and certain reception by God. We never could have known the blessedness of nearness to God, if Jesus had not . . .

left his Father's bosom,

obeyed the law in our nature,

and died in our stead!

He is the only way to God.

He stands between God and the sinner, and lays his hand upon both!

He brings God down to us—and he leads us up to God.

There is nothing between us and God now—but Jesus!

He made peace—and he keeps peace.

We are reconciled to God—and God is at peace with us.

He is near unto us—and loves us to be near unto him.

O how precious—we were once far off from God—but have been brought near by the blood of Christ!

69 "Remember me with favor, O my God!"

"Remember me with favor, O my God!" Nehemiah 13:31

It is a common thing for our earthly friends to forget us, especially in seasons of trouble, or in circumstances of poverty. But even if they remembered us—they could do but little for us. When creatures forget, or slight us—let us turn from them to the Lord. He says, "You shall not be forgotten by Me."

Remember my needs, and supply them—for they are many and pressing.

Remember my fears, and disperse them—for they are numerous and distressing.

Remember my foes, and subdue them—for they are fierce and united.

Remember my difficulties, and deliver me out of them—for they fill me with shame and dismay.

Remember my weakness, and strengthen me—for I desire to do your will.

Remember my doubts, and remove them—and give me a steady faith in your Word, and a sweet assurance of your love.

"Remember me with favor, O my God"—

as a little child—that incessantly needs a parent's care;

as a wandering pilgrim—that needs a guide;

as a soldier—that requires courage and supplies.

Let us pray with the man of God, "Remember me with favor, O my God!"

70 "They despised the pleasant land!" Psalm 106:24

"They despised the pleasant land!" Psalms 106:24

What Canaan was to the Jews—that heaven is to us.

It is the pleasant land.

It is 'the land of promise'.

The land that flows with milk and honey.

It is the abode of peace, plenty and variety.

There all is harmony—and all is love.

Holiness is the atmosphere, and joy the light of that blessed place.

There God unveils His glory.

There the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne—leads, feeds, and delights His people.

Everything that can please, satisfy, or enhance our happiness is there—and there in perfection.

All is pleasant, and always pleasant:

no storms ever arise,

no clouds obscure the sky,

the sun ever shines,

the fruits are always ripe,

the songs are ever new,

the employment is always pleasing,

and God is the glory of the place.

And yet we despise the pleasant land!

Beloved, let us beware of Israel's sin—lest we suffer Israel's punishment!

71 Where will He lead me?

Where will He lead me?

"Follow Me!" John 21:19

That is:

copy My example,

imitate My conduct,

walk as I walked.

But if I follow Christ—then where will He lead me?

He will lead you . . .

to Jordan—to confess Him;

to the wilderness—to be tempted with Him;

to the house of prayer—to worship with His people;

to the sick, the poor, and the sorrowful—to labor for Him;

to secret retirement—to hold fellowship with Him;

to the world—to be persecuted for His sake;

to the cross—to crucify the old man with his deeds;

and, finally, to glory—to be forever with Him!

If you follow Jesus . . .

carnal professors will not enjoy your company;

the world will despise your course;

nor will Satan allow you to go on quietly.

If you would follow Jesus . . .

you must be a new creature,

your heart must be renewed,

your corruptions must be subdued,

your motives must be purified.

If Jesus leads you—then you will be safe. If you . . .

catch His spirit,
copy His life, and
keep Him in sight—
you will be peaceful, useful and happy.
O! to imitate Jesus today!

72 "Keep me, O Lord!" Psalm 140:4

"Keep me, O Lord!" Psalms 140:4

Every believer prays to be kept.

This is one of his daily prayers.

He feels that he needs keeping.

He is weak—and his foes are strong.

He is inexperienced—and his dangers are numerous and great.

He cannot proceed safely, or comfortably, or honorably—but only as he is kept by God.

He desires to be kept . . .

from sin—that he may not dishonor God;

from SELF—that he may not injure himself;

from Satan—that he may not be overcome by him;

from the world—that he may not be ensnared and entangled by it.

None can keep him but the Lord.

No one else has . . .

the power,

the patience,

the wisdom,

or the love—

that is necessary!

To God therefore he cries; before the throne of grace he often appears; fervently he prays . . .

to be kept near to God—in holy fellowship;

active for God—in his day and generation;

and aiming at the glory of God—as the grand end of his existence.

Beloved, we need keeping today—for Satan is now studying us—and our own hearts are false and fickle!

"Keep me, O Lord!"

73 Hitherto the Lord has helped me!

Hitherto the Lord has helped me!

"I was pushed back and about to fall—but the Lord helped me!" Psalms 118:13

If He had not helped me—then what would have become of me?

Yes, the Lord helped me . . .

before I knew His name,

before I sought His face,

before I ventured my soul on the finished work of His beloved Son!

But since that happy period,

in how many instances,

in how many ways,

by what a variety of instruments,

has He helped me!

If He had not helped me, then . . .

conviction would have driven me to despair;

Satan would have led me captive at his will;

inbred lusts would have gained the ascendancy;

my circumstances would have been too much for me;

I would have been locked up in the fires of hell!

But He said, "I will help you!" And I have ever found him to be "a very present help in times of trouble!"

Here I lift up my Ebenezer, and, to the honor of his faithful love, say, "Hitherto the Lord has helped me!"

Surely then I may with confidence conclude, that He will help me in time to come, and exclaim as David did, "Surely God is my help! The Lord is the one who sustains me!" Psalms 54:4. Or rejoice and say, "Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice."

"I was pushed back and about to fall—but the Lord helped me!"

74 "He preserves the souls of His saints!"

"He preserves the souls of His saints!" Psalms 97:10

Every creature needs the preserving care of its Creator, for no power short of omnipotence is sufficient to preserve us.

Our weakness is so great,
our corruptions are so strong,
our foes are so crafty, and
our dangers are so numerous—
that we are never safe—unless the Lord keeps us!

The Lord has promised to preserve His saints.

They are . . .
separated from the world,
set apart for His glory, and
inhabited by the Holy Spirit.

They feel that they need preservation,
they exercise faith in God's promise, and
plead earnestly for it at the throne of divine grace.

And the Lord will preserve them . . .
from the evil designs of their foes,
from the natural tendency of inward sin,
from apostatizing from his own cause.

He preserves them by the means which are naturally likely to injure them . . .
by painful afflictions,
by losses and crosses,
by trials and temptations,
by reproaches and persecutions,
by the conflict within, and by opposition without.

"He preserves the souls of His saints!"

75 He is so good—that He cannot be better!

He is so good—that He cannot be better!

"The Lord is good!" Jeremiah 33:11

Creatures may be comparatively good.

God is absolutely good. "There is none good but one, that is God."

He is naturally good—for His nature is the fountain of all goodness.

He is infinitely good—for there is no limit to His goodness.

He is eternally good—for His goodness will never terminate.

His goodness is immutable—and therefore He will never be less good than He is at this moment.

He is so good—that He cannot be better!

He is good to all his creatures, and His mercy is over all His works.

But He is especially good to His people.

His goodness . . .

appears in His works,

shines forth in His providence—but

reigns in all its glory in the salvation of sinners.

Here all the rays of His goodness meet and center!

In the conversion of our souls,

in the pardon of our sins,

in the justification of our persons,

in sending the Spirit of adoption into our hearts,

in giving us eternal life—

His goodness shines in its greatest splendor!

76 He teaches all His children!

He teaches all His children!

"They shall be all taught of God!" John 6:45

God, as a Father, engages for the education of all His children. Yes, he engages to teach them Himself! This being the case—they shall become scholars.

The Lord does not teach us everything we are capable of learning—but all that is necessary for us to know.

He teaches us . . .

to know and loathe ourselves,

to know and love the Savior,

to know and embrace the Gospel,

to know and overcome the world,

to know and resist Satan steadfast in the faith.

Unless we know ourselves—we shall never know Christ!

Unless we know Christ—we shall never successfully resist Satan, or overcome the world!

It is an unspeakable mercy to be taught of God, for only what God teaches us—do we really know.

Beloved, are you taught of God?

He teaches all His children!

Be this our daily prayer, "Lord teach me!"

77 "The Lord is my defense!" Psalm 44:22

"The Lord is my defense!" Psalms 44:22

Sin has . . .

stripped us of our righteousness,
reduced us to a state of weakness, and
left us exposed to innumerable dangers!

We are never safe for one moment—if left to ourselves!

All the hosts of hell are opposed to us, and in league against us: they influence evil men, and sometimes make use of even good men to injure us.

Afflictions crowd our path—and every pore of the body, and every power of the mind, may prove the inlet to something injurious!

Our dangers are numerous and great!

Our folly and weakness are even greater!

We need constant guidance and protection!

Where shall we find one able and willing to befriend us? To whom shall we look for support and safety? Happy is the man who can say, "The Lord is my defense!"

This is the privilege of every Christian.

God is engaged for him.

God is ever with him.

God will never leave him.

If God is our defense—then . . .

we need not fear—for He is omnipotent;
we should not yield to doubt—for He is omnipresent;
we should rejoice and be glad—for protection is certain.

If in trouble—He will keep us from sinking!

If exposed to the fiercest temptation—He will preserve us from ruin!

78 "The Lord is our God!" 2 Chronicles 13:10

"The Lord is our God!" 2 Chronicles 13:10

Many make a god of . . .

ease,

pleasure,

wealth,

or fame.

But as Jehovah is our God, we have . . .

an unfailing source of comfort,

a reason for sweet repose of spirit, and

are certain that our needs shall be supplied.

For as He is our God:

His power will protect us,

His wisdom will guide us,

His mercy will sympathize with us,

His justice will avenge our wrongs,

His providence will make all things work together for our good.

He will never leave us!

He will never take his eye off us!

He will not allow anything to harm us!

Sweet thought! "The Lord is our God!"

79 Carry your troubled heart to Jesus

Carry your troubled heart to Jesus

"I am troubled!" Psalms 38:6

This is very often the case with the believer, he is seldom long without something to trouble him. He has . . .

so much sin within him,

so many foes without him, and

such strange unexpected things in his path

—that he is often agitated and depressed.

Where he looked for comfort—he finds sorrow;

where he expected help—he finds hindrance;

where he promised himself pleasure—he experiences pain.

He is wearied.

Weary of himself,

weary of sin,

weary of the world;

weary of the carnal state of the church.

But what a mercy it is for the troubled Christian, that his Lord has experienced trouble as well as himself; so that he can sympathize with him. Jesus once said, "Now My soul is deeply troubled!" He has a fellow-feeling with us in all our troubles, and will first sanctify them, and then safely bring us out of them.

Beloved, are you troubled this morning?

Carry your troubled heart to Jesus, pour it out before Him, He can calm it, soothe it, and give it cheering repose. Take it to Jesus—to sanctify it for you.

80 On His once thorn-pierced brow—the many crowns!

On His once thorn-pierced brow—the many crowns!

"On His head were many crowns!" Revelation 19:12

Jesus passed through many trials, engaged in many conflicts; therefore He gained many triumphs—and now wears many crowns!

He wears the crown of victory—for every foe is, or will be overthrown.

He wears the crown of sovereignty—for He is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

He wears the crown of creation—for all things were made by Him, and for Him.

He wears the crown of providence—for He sustains, supplies, and rules all that He has made.

He wears the crown of grace—for He . . .

redeemed His people by his blood,

conquers them by His Spirit,

molds them by His truth, and

will bring them all to His kingdom!

He wears the crown of glory—for every one of His glorified people owe their honor, happiness, and blessedness, to Him!

He is crowned by His Father with a splendid diadem, and every knee must bow to him.

Every one of His people crown him, and cast their crowns at His feet as unworthy to wear them in His presence!

His crown is the brightest that ever wisdom devised, mercy jeweled, or power brightened! O to gaze upon His glory, and to see on His once thorn-pierced brow—the many crowns!

81 Let us drag it to the cross!

Let us drag it to the cross!

"I will be sorry for my sin!" Psalms 38:18

This is the least we can do!

And if when sorry for it—we forsake it—then this is the most we can do.

But if we are truly sorry for sin—we must be thoroughly convinced of it by the Holy Spirit. We must see it grieving the heart of God, and crucifying his beloved Son! No true sorrow for sin is felt—until we see that it is sin against a God of love, and that it cost the life of the Son of God to atone for it!

Beloved, what is our sin—our besetting sin?

It is for that, we should be especially sorry.

Is it anger;

or pride;

or covetousness;

or complaining;

or unbelief;

or lust?

Whatever it is . . .

let us know it;

let us drag it to the cross;

let us daily confess it;

let us be very sorry for it;

let us strive against it until we overcome it.

For every sin—we should grieve;

of every sin—we should repent;

against every sin—our hearts should be set.

Have we been sorry for sin lately?

When did we last weep over sin before God?

Let us beware—lest our hearts become hardened.

82 He took them from us—and charged to Him!

He took them from us—and charged to Him!

"The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6

"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree!" 1 Peter 2:24

Jesus was the sin-bearer of His people.

All their sins were imputed to Him,

they all met upon Him,

they all were punished in Him,

they all were put away by Him.

Let us view Jesus as . . .

our substitute,

standing in our place,

meeting our demands,

bearing our punishment, and

securing our everlasting deliverance from sin and all its penal consequences!

The Father laid our sins upon Jesus!

He took them from us—and charged to Him!

What a mystery is this!

The Innocent One—is reputed guilty!

The Holy One—is punished as a sinner!

The Just One—is put to death for the unjust!

This truth ought to be kept constantly before the mind; it will . . .

preserve our peace,

prevent our fears,

strengthen our faith,

enlarge our expectations,

give fervor to our prayers,

and zeal to our praises.

Behold the Lamb of God—who has taken away all our sins! We have redemption through His blood—even the forgiveness of our sins!

83 The 'mirror' in which the glory of God is seen

The 'mirror' in which the glory of God is seen

"I beseech you—show me Your glory" Exodus 33:18

The essential glory of God's nature cannot be seen by us—our powers and faculties are not able to bear it. But the glory of His attributes, as they shine forth in His works, and especially in our salvation—may be seen.

Jesus is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person. He is the image of the invisible God. He is the 'mirror' in which the glory of God is seen. If therefore God answers this prayer in our experience, He will shine into our hearts, and give us the light of the knowledge of his glory—in the face of Jesus Christ. All the glory of God is in Christ; if therefore the eyes of our mind are opened, if the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus to us—we shall see the Lord's glory!

This sight will . . .

humble us in the dust before Him,

overwhelm us with shame on account of our sins,

inspire us with confidence to trust in His Word,

and draw out our warmest love and most solemn reverence toward Him.

The more we see of God's glory, the more we shall . . .

hate sin,

be weaned from the world,

pant after holiness,

delight in worship,

and practice His precepts.

Lord manifest Yourself to me in Jesus today!

84 Those everlasting arms!

Those everlasting arms!

"Underneath are the everlasting arms!" Deuteronomy 33:27

That is—underneath every believer.

Those everlasting arms are there . . .

to bear him up,

to bear him on, and

to preserve from all real danger.

The arms of God are . . .

invisible—no one sees them;

spiritual—no one feels them;

careful—no one falls out of them;

omnipotent—no one overcomes them.

If the everlasting arms of my God are underneath me, then . . .

I may quietly yield myself unto Him;

I may confidently expect divine protection;

I may be certain that He will lift me above my foes;

I may feel assured that He will safely convey me home.

Aged saints may rejoice in this; for to them the Lord says, "I will be your God throughout your lifetime—until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you!" Isaiah 46:4

And weak believers may rejoice in this, for "He will carry the lambs in His arms, holding them close to His heart!" Isaiah 40:11

O to realize this sweet and encouraging truth: underneath me are the everlasting arms!

85 "Why have you been standing here idle?"

"Why have you been standing here idle?" Matthew 20:6

Man was formed for employment, and he cannot be happy, unless he is employed. Idleness always breeds misery and unhappiness!

But believers especially should be industrious; they should be diligent in their worldly callings, and every one should be working for God.

Why have you been standing here idle? You cannot say that you have nothing to do!

There is the truth—circulate it.

There are the ignorant—instruct them.

There are the sick—visit them.

There are the poor—relieve them.

Why are you idle?

Why have you been standing here idle? There is so much to be done, and so much needs doing immediately. Look in whatever direction you will—you will find plenty of work. Why are you idle?

Why have you been standing here idle? If you rested for awhile, you should work the remainder of your time. Work all day, for the night comes, and it will soon be here. Why are you idle?

Why have you been standing here idle? Satan is busy. False teachers are busy. Other believers are busy. Why are you idle?

Reader, God calls the slothful 'wicked'.

Why have you been standing here idle?

86 Prevailing prayer!

Prevailing prayer!

"Lord, teach us to pray!" Luke 11:1

Real prayer is always powerful. Fervent prayer avails much. But we often seem to pray—when we do not really pray. There is . . .

no clear knowledge of need,

no fervent desire,

no earnest pleading,

no strong confidence in God,

no steady expectation,

no wishful watchings,

no patient waiting.

And yet all these are included in prevailing prayer!

Beloved, we must acknowledge with the Apostle, "We do not even know what we should pray for—nor how we should pray!" Romans 8:26

Let us therefore plead with the disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray!"

But if we are answered, perhaps . . .

needs will press us,

trials will surround us,

foes will beset us,

afflictions will come upon us, and

Satan will worry and distress us;

for it is by such things, that the Lord teaches His people to pray.

There is no real prayer without the indwelling, illumination, and direct operation of the Holy Spirit! He . . .

awakens us to feel our need,

quicken desire,

leads to the throne of grace,

helps our infirmities.

"For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words." Romans 8:26

87 Crosses are not curses!

Crosses are not curses!

"The Almighty troubles me!" Job 23:16

But if He does—it is to benefit me.

If He troubles me with one hand—He will support and comfort me with the other.

If providence tries us—grace sustains us.

Troubles are as necessary for our souls—as the frosts and snows of winter are for the earth. They . . .

stir us up,

keep us alive,

make us pray, and

put reality into our religion.

If God troubles us—it is in mercy.

He troubles us now—that He may comfort us by and by.

Crosses are not curses!

Beloved, do not think harshly of God because of your troubles—but remember that He is all-sufficient in the midst of them, and that He will bring you safely out of them.

Sinner, if God does not trouble you with conviction of sin, and heart-felt sorrow for sin—He will trouble you with His fierce wrath and indignation forever!

88 Every real Christian is wise!

Every real Christian is wise!

"The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom!" Job 28:28

Some imagine wisdom consists . . .

in amassing wealth,

or in popularity,

or in self-indulgence.

But Scripture informs us that wisdom consists in fearing and pleasing God. For he who fears to offend God, will be sure to please Him. Those who fear God:

receive His Word,

believe His gospel,

trust in His Son,

worship at His throne,

observe His ordinances,

copy His example,

seek His assistance,

withdraw from His enemies,

unite with His friends,

resist Satan, and

strive against sin.

This is true wisdom, for . . .

the Omnipotent is their friend,

the wealth of the universe is their portion,

and the mansions of glory their home!

If the man who . . .

escapes the greatest dangers,

secures the greatest good,

enjoys the greatest pleasure, and

obtains the greatest honor

—is truly wise; then every real Christian is wise! For such is the happiness of every one who truly fears God.

"The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom!"

89 That man must be a fool!

That man must be a fool!

"To depart from evil—is understanding." Job 28:28

How different is God's estimate of things—than man's.

We think that the man who has great intellect, great learning, and who has stored up great knowledge, is the man of understanding.

But God says, "The holy man—is the wise man."

If we really understand . . .

God's nature—and our own duty;

God's requirements—and our own privileges;

God's grace—and what makes for our own happiness;

we shall study, pray, and strive to depart from all evil.

Nothing is hurtful—but sin!

Nothing should be hateful to us—but sin!

In Scripture, every saint is designated a wise man—and every sinner is called a fool. That man must be a fool . . .

who provokes infinite wrath,

who insults omnipotent power,

who dares immutable justice,

who rejects the richest gifts,

who despises the highest honors,

who rushes into the greatest suffering!

And this, every impenitent sinner does!

"To depart from evil—is understanding."

90 O, keep the eye fixed on the fullness of His

O, keep the eye fixed on the fullness of His grace!

"From the fullness of His grace—we have all received one blessing after another!" John 1:16

It pleased the Father that in Jesus all fullness should dwell. The fullness of the Godhead dwelt in him. The fullness of grace and glory are in him. He has—in order to give. And He freely gives to all comers.

The grace that justifies, and the grace that sanctifies—are alike from Him. Of His fullness we received grace at first—and from His fullness we must receive at the last.

We need go nowhere else—for He has everything we can possibly need!

It is of no use to go anywhere else—for no one else can supply us!

Let us go to His fullness this morning. Let us ask largely. Let us expect to receive grace to help us
...

in every duty,

in every trial, and

in every temptation this day.

O, keep the eye fixed on the fullness of His grace!

91 Nothing will effectually break a sinner's heart

Nothing will effectually break a sinner's heart

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise." Psalms 51:17

Nothing will effectually break a sinner's heart—but the love of Christ!

Nothing can produce true contrition in us—but the Holy Spirit.

When our hearts are broken with a sense of sin, and we are truly sorry for sin—the work of the Holy Spirit is unquestionably experienced by us. We have repentance unto life. The foundation of experimental religion is laid.

But if our religion does not begin with a broken heart and sorrow for sin, it is, to say the least, questionable, and ought to be thoroughly examined and compared with God's Word.

The broken hearted sinner has very low views of himself—and exalted views of God—so that he fears at times that God must despise him. But no, the opposite is true. God looks upon the broken-hearted ones with love. He sent his Son to bind up such, and He will send the Holy Spirit to heal the heart that He has broken. God will visit, revive, and honor the contrite in spirit.

O for a broken and contrite heart!

92 "The Lord takes pleasure in His people!"

"The Lord takes pleasure in His people!" Psalms 149:4

Every intelligent being has some object in which he takes pleasure, except damned souls.

Some take pleasure in their sins,

some in their wealth,

some in their connections,

some in their station,

some in their office,

some in their work, and

some in their families.

But the Lord takes pleasure in His people!

They may be poor, illiterate, despised, oppressed, sick, or sorrowful; but let their circumstances be what they may, the Lord takes pleasure in them!

He is pleased with them—as he views them in Christ.

He is pleased with them as . . .

his chosen ones,

the purchase of his Son's blood,

the temples of the Holy Spirit,

those who are to dwell in His presence forever.

Whoever may be displeased with the saints—God takes pleasure in them!

93 "You have need of patience." Hebrews 10:36

"You have need of patience." Hebrews 10:36

And the patience which you need—you may have. Our God is the God of patience; not only the God who exercises it towards us—but the God who works it in us, and who tries it when He has wrought it.

We shall need patience—to suffer God's will, which is often very trying to flesh and blood.

We shall need patience—to do God's work, which is often very arduous and exhausting.

We shall need patience—to quietly carry our cross after Jesus, which is often very rugged and very heavy.

We shall need patience—to wait God's time for deliverance, and for answers to our prayers, which are often delayed for a long season.

We shall need patience—to diligently watch and look for the coming of our beloved Lord, for while the bridegroom tarries the virgins are apt to slumber and sleep.

"You have need of patience—so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised." Hebrews 10:36

God of patience—give us this grace!

94 God's chief enemy!

God's chief enemy!

"Christ died for our sins!" 1 Corinthians 15:3

Sin is God's chief enemy! God never had an enemy—until sin was conceived and brought forth. Sin is inconceivably aggravating, loathsome, and abominable in His sight. It is . . .

a dreadful evil,

a fearful foe,

an unmerciful tyrant, and

a tremendous pestilence!

We are the subjects of it,

we are infected by it, and

we were in love with it!

In the plan of salvation—we were viewed as sinners.

As sinners—we were chosen to salvation.

As sinners—we were redeemed from the curse.

As sinners—God sent the good news of the gospel to us.

As sinners—the Holy Spirit regenerated us, and began His good work in our hearts.

As sinners—we are saved, and saved by grace from first to last!

Jesus Christ is our Savior, Substitute and Surety, and as such He died for our sins, that He may . . .

.

blot them out as a charge against us;

justify us from them;

cleanse us from their guilt and filth;

make a full and sufficient atonement for them.

"Christ died for our sins!"

95 "He has followed Me fully!" Numbers 14:24

"He has followed Me fully!" Numbers 14:24

This was God's testimony to the consistency of Caleb. May we obtain an equally good report.

To follow the Lord fully, is . . .

to follow Him with all the heart,

to follow Him at all hazards,

and to follow Him all our days.

There must be . . .

no reserve,

no half-heartedness,

no cowardice,

no seeking to please men at God's expense.

Beloved, following the Lord fully, is . . .

the only truly happy life,

the only truly useful life,

the only way to secure a blessed death,

and a glorious eternity!

If we follow the Lord fully, some will scoff at us—and others will condemn us—but the Lord Jesus will commend us. Let us therefore make it our business to imitate the conduct of Caleb, so shall we inherit Caleb's blessing—even a glorious portion in the promised land!

96 Though damped—it never dies!

Though damped—it never dies!

"I will love you, O Lord, my strength!" Psalms 18:1

Real religion flows from God's love to us—and consists in our love to God. Our love is excited and drawn forth—by the displays of God's love to us. When He . . .

pardons our sins,

speaks peace to our consciences,

conquers our fears,

relieves our distresses,

supplies our needs,

gives us victory over our foes,

and enables us to call Him our Father

—then we love Him!

Our love is . . .

sincere and hearty,

supreme and abiding.

Not that there is no interruption in its exercise, or is sometimes buried under the rubbish of our corruptions; but it will revive again—it will break forth anew.

Though damped—it never dies! It is like its author, immortal.

O to love God more!

97 "A friend of publicans and sinners!"

"A friend of publicans and sinners!" Matthew 11:19

This was said of Jesus by way of reproach—but it is His true glory. He IS the friend of sinners!

We needed such a friend. Our state would have been desperate without Him!

To restore us—cost Him all He had.

Never did creatures so much NEED a friend;

never were there creatures who so little DESERVED a friend;

and never was there such a friend as Jesus.

He gave His life—for ours!

He opened the treasures of his grace—to meet all demands that could be made upon us, and to supply all the needs experienced by us.

He was our friend on earth!

He is our friend in heaven!

He is the perfect model of friendship!

We may . . .

go to Him in all our troubles,

ask of Him a supply of all our needs,

consult Him in all our difficulties,

trust Him in all our times of trial, and

expect Him to send us all that is really necessary.

He engaged for us in covenant,

He died for us on Calvary,

He pleads for us in heaven, and

He will soon come and fetch us—that we may dwell with him forever!

O for grace to love Him, trust Him, and obey Him as we ought! O for more familiarity with our Friend!

98 A wise, prudent, and holy Father

A wise, prudent, and holy Father

"What son is not chastened by his father?" Hebrews 12:7

Every believer is a child of God, and every one of God's children frequently require the rod. God is a wise, prudent, and holy Father, therefore He will correct all the follies of His children, and make them wise unto salvation. God never had a child in His family who did not need the rod—and there never was a child of God who did not feel it. If we were not children, He might allow us to go on and punish us with the world; but because we are His children, He chastens us early.

Let us therefore bear our chastisement with patience—for we deserve it.

Let us humble ourselves under it—that our Father may remove it.

Let us be more anxious for its sanctification—than for its removal.

Let us look upon all our afflictions—as proofs of our Father's love—as intended to lead us to repentance, and as calling for a reformation of heart and life.

Better be chastened as God's child now—than be condemned with the world at last.

99 Our strength, the rock and refuge of our souls!

Our strength, the rock and refuge of our souls!

"My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever!"
Psalms 73:26

God in Christ—is the believer's rock. The rock . . .
on which he builds his hopes,
where he secures his treasures,
where he finds safety, and
on which he stands unmoved and firm, amidst storms and tempests.
God is the strength—or 'strengthened' his heart; which He does by . . .
the promises He has given,
the prospects which He unfolds,
the foretastes of glory which He imparts, and
by the exercise of the graces which He produces.
Apart from God—the Christian is weakness itself!
In union with God—he is stronger than all his foes!
If God is the strength of our hearts—then we . . .
exercise confidence in Him,
renounce all dependence on any besides Him,
and go in all our weaknesses to Him.
If God is our strength—then we can have . . .
no ground for fear,
no occasion to doubt,
no reason to look into the future with foreboding.
If God is our strength—then . . .
He will never fail us,
Satan will never overcome us,

the world will never conquer us,

nor will any of the billows of affliction overwhelm us!

O to realize that God is our strength, the rock and refuge of our souls!

99a He cares about you!

He cares about you!

"Cast all your care upon Him, because He cares about you!" 1 Peter 5:7

Jesus . . .

thinks about us,

cares for us,

provides for us,

listens to us,

watches over us,

and delights in us!

His truth is our treasure;

His love is our delight;

His salvation is our theme;

His glory is our aim;

His presence is our heaven!

99a We are never out of danger—while we

We are never out of danger—while we are out of heaven!

"He shall preserve your soul" Psalms 121:7

What being in creation needs such close and constant keeping—as a saint. If God was not our keeper—we could never arrive safe in heaven!

Our foes are so powerful;

our spiritual maladies so numerous;

our danger so great;

our depravity so deep!

O to keep this fact daily before the mind, that we may evermore cry unto the Lord to keep us! He has promised to do so—but He will have us plead with Him, and daily cry unto Him.

We are never out of danger—while we are out of heaven!

If we are healthy this morning—we may be diseased before night.

If we are sound in the faith today—we may be led away by some pernicious error tomorrow.

If we are walking at liberty now—we may be entangled with the yoke of bondage before long.

How kind, how gracious then, for our Lord to undertake to keep us, and to promise to preserve our souls.

Let us therefore, this day, feel . . .

that we are in danger,

that we need an omnipotent preserver,

that the Lord preserves through fellowship with himself, and let us endeavor to walk closely with God.

99b My solace, my subject and my song!

My solace, my subject and my song!

"Your Name is as ointment poured forth! No wonder the maidens love You!" Song of Solomon 1:3

The Name of Jesus is incomparably sweet and precious.

There is no name in heaven like His.

It is above every name.

Its fragrance is unequalled.

We are never weary of it—and we never shall be.

It comprises all that we need.

It contains all that we desire.

Having Christ—we have all things.

He is LORD! All power in heaven and on earth is given to Him. He is supreme—head over all. He is all that God can give us—all that we can require or enjoy.

He is JESUS! God's Savior, by whom God saves sinners, millions of sinners, the vilest sinners!

He is CHRIST! God's anointed One:

Consecrated to be God's Priest—to save His people!

Sanctified to be God's Prophet—to teach His people!

Qualified to be God's King—to reign over His people!

When the Holy Spirit opens up the meaning of His precious Name, and allows us to realize our interest in it—then it appears divinely sweet and glorious! Precious Name! May I . . .

know it more fully,

enjoy it more powerfully,

publish it more effectually,

and praise it more frequently!

May the Name of Jesus, be my solace, my subject and my song!

"Your Name is as ointment poured forth! No wonder the maidens love You!"

99c He kisses the hand that strikes Him!

He kisses the hand that strikes Him!

"My Father, if it is possible—may this cup be taken from Me!

Yet not as I will—but as You will."Matthew 26:39

So said Jesus, when in His agony in the garden. His sufferings were tremendous; He was overwhelmed. He cried, "My Father, if it is possible—may this cup be taken from Me!" But His resignation, His unqualified acquiescence in His Father's will, immediately appears, for He adds, "Yet not as I will—but as You will."

O for such meekness! O for such entire resignation to God's will!

No one ever suffered like Jesus! He suffered immediately from the hand of God! The stroke bruised and mangled Him—yet He kisses the hand that strikes Him! He feels Himself sinking in deep waters, pressed down by the wrath of God—yet He acquiesces. His pains were agonizing—yet He was willing to endure them for us!

Blessed Redeemer, what love was Yours!

What infinite, unparalleled mercy!

Beloved,

if troubles burden us,

if sorrows press us,

if pain tortures us,

if friends forsake us,

if our hearts feel ready to fail us:

let us repair to Gethsemane;

let us take a place by the side of the suffering Savior;

let us compare our sorrows with His; and

let us endeavor to say, "Yet not as I will—but as You will!"

99d Help!

Help!

"In Me is your help!" Hosea 13:9

Destruction is from ourselves—salvation is wholly from God.

We have destroyed ourselves—but God has become our Savior.

As believers, He helps us in all our duties—and out of all troubles.

If God is our help—it will be sufficient;

His help will be prudently afforded;

His help will be suitably conveyed.

Our help is in God—and in God alone. Therefore let us not look to creatures. Let us not trust in ourselves; but let us repair to the Lord in every difficulty, trial, and trouble.

The Lord has helped us in time past; He never was more disposed to help us than he is now; and He will help us to the end of our journey.

His help sustains us—when it does not deliver us; it enables us to hold on—when it does not bring us out of our troubles.

Precious Savior, help us . . .

to resist Satan,

to overcome the world,

to crucify the old man,

to put on the new man,

to do your blessed will,

to glorify your holy name,

to walk with you in peace.

99e We sin away our comforts!

We sin away our comforts!

"I will restore comforts unto him!" Isaiah 57:18

This precious promise refers to backsliders—to those who have gone on frowardly in their hearts. We sin away our comforts—and then none but God can restore them.

Sin makes us miserable, as it . . .

leads us from God,

blinds our minds,

pollutes our consciences,

brings us into bondage, and

obscures our eternal prospects.

When sin has been indulged:

our hearts become hard,

our consciences benumbed,

our tempers irritable, and

our conduct perverse.

Then we become miserable!

Everything goes wrong.

No one acts right.

We rise up in rebellion against God.

Prayer is irksome.

Praise is a task.

The Bible is boring.

Our course is folly.

But God will . . .

arrest us,

convict us,

make us smart,
thoroughly humble us
—and then He will restore comforts unto us!
His grace will comfort us, when it . . .
pardons our sins,
reveals the Savior,
removes our guilt, and
unfolds the gracious character of God.

99f "I will go unto God—my exceeding joy!"

"I will go unto God—my exceeding joy!" Psalms 43:4

The presence of God is dreadful to the sinner

—but it is the joy and delight of the saint!

When our minds are renewed,

when our hearts are regenerated,

when we behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ

—He becomes our exceeding joy.

Then we see . . .

the beauty of His perfections,

the excellency of His character,

and the glory of His salvation.

We perceive that . . .

He is at peace with us,

His heart glows with love to us,

He rejoices to confer favors upon us,

He will withhold no good thing from us.

The pardon He imparts,

the righteousness He bestows,

the peace He confers, and

the prospects He unfolds,

unite to fill our hearts with love to Him, and to overflow with joy.

He is then seen to be . . .

the source of all real good,

the center of all that is lovely and excellent,

and we rejoice in Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

Beloved, is God your joy—your exceeding joy?

In all times of gloom,
in all seasons of sorrow,
in all circumstances of trial—
go to God as your exceeding joy—and ask Him to make you happy in His love!

99g He is pleased with show, parades, and

He is pleased with show, parades, and outward forms

"The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth." John 4:23

Many profess to worship God—who never in reality do so.

They attend to a variety of forms,
they perform many ceremonies—
but they do not worship God.

They have no correct views of His character, or of His extensive requirements. They imagine that He is pleased with show, parades, and outward forms. Whereas "God is Spirit, so those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." The true worshiper is quickened by the Holy Spirit, and taught to see the glory of

God in the person of Jesus Christ. He is . . .

sincere in his service,
simple in his language, and
hearty in his petitions and adorations.
He approaches God only through Christ,
he pleads the atonement for his acceptance,
he throws his heart open before God,
and means just what he says.

The greatness of God awes him;
the goodness of God draws him;
the mercy of God humbles him;
the grace of God emboldens him;
and he worships in faith, fear, and love.

He . . .

believes God's Word,
fears God's displeasure,
and loves God's character.

There is no pretense about him, for he hates hypocrisy, and worships in sincerity and truth.

99h "I will arise and go to my father!" Luke 15:18

"I will arise and go to my father!" Luke 15:18

What a mercy to have a father—a father to whom we can go when in trouble. A father who will receive us, bless us, and make us happy.

Like the prodigal, we have . . .

been wandering from Him,

grieved His loving heart,

dishonored His glorious name,

reduced ourselves to misery and wretchedness!

Let us now arise and go to our heavenly Father! He will . . .

pardon our crimes,

restore us to His favor,

supply all our needs, and

raise us to dignity and honor.

Whenever . . .

Satan assaults us,

or fears beset us,

or troubles oppress us,

or our hearts are downcast within us

—let us arise and go to our Father!

Let us go to Him . . .

for all we need,

with all that troubles us,

notwithstanding all that opposes us.

He bids us to come often.

He wishes us to come freely.

He has promised to sympathize with us.

He is always ready to help us.

O Lord,

draw us to Your feet,

keep us near Your throne,

indulge us with Your smile,

fill us with Your joy and peace, and

cause us to live to Your glory and praise!

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