

# TREASURES FROM JAMES SMITH (CHOICE EXCERPTS)

by James Smith

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*A selection of excerpts from James Smith's writings addressing themes of spiritual wandering, the believer's tendency toward drift despite new birth in Christ, and the treasures of grace found in returning to God.*

5 Chapters

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## Treasures from James Smith 1 (excerpts)

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Treasures from James Smith (A collection of choice quotes from his works)

James Smith (1802—1862) was a predecessor of Charles Spurgeon at New Park Street Chapel in London from 1841 until 1850. Early on, Smith's readings were even more popular than Spurgeon's!

If Jehovah is your God!

"I will be their God — and they shall be My people!" Hebrews 8:10

So has Jehovah purposed, in reference to those whom He has eternally loved and chosen. All of our present and future blessedness, is wrapped up in this holy and gracious purpose.

If Jehovah is your God — then all of His glorious attributes and perfections are engaged and employed for your eternal welfare! His mercy will supply all of your needs. His power will conquer all of your foes. His wisdom will direct all of your ways. His faithfulness will answer all of your prayers. His justice will maintain your cause. His infinite love and mercy will be displayed in all of His gracious dealings with you!

If Jehovah is your God — then . . . His promises are your heritage; His precepts are your rule; His doctrines are your present paradise; His Son is your Savior and King;

His Spirit is your sanctifier and Tutor; and He Himself is your everlasting portion! Psalms 119:57

If Jehovah is your God — then He will freely confer all really good things on you at present — and crown you at last with eternal glory! He will . . . guide you continually,

chasten you occasionally, receive you graciously, and bless you indeed!

If Jehovah is your God — then all things are yours — things present and to come; life, death, the world, Heaven — all are yours!

If Jehovah is your God — then He will consider nothing too great to do for you — and nothing too glorious to give to you! All the treasures of time, and all the resources of eternity — will, if necessary, be employed for your spiritual and eternal benefit! You can lack nothing which is really for your good.

To have Jehovah for your God, is the highest blessedness and honor in the universe!

How blessed is the man — who has Jehovah as his God!

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And to what is this astonishing change to be ascribed?

"Beloved, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears — we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!" 1 John 3:2-3

Let us endeavor to realize our present sonship; it will produce . . . boldness at His throne of grace; contrition at His cross; confidence in His Word; love to His person;

contentment with our lot; victory over the world, zeal for His glory; and encouragement under all our trials and troubles!

We are either children of God — or enemies of God! Every child of God . . . mourns over sin, flies to the Savior, and departs from iniquity! God is now his Father. All the promises are his. The eternal inheritance is his.

Let us look back to the rock from whence we were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence we were dug: How base our origin — the dust! How degraded our condition — slaves of sin and Satan! How fearful our character — enemies to God!

How dreadful our eternal doom — the lake which burns with brimstone and fire!

Contrast this with . . . our present relation — children of God; our high standing — in heavenly places in Christ; our glorious privilege — justified from all things; our fixed destiny — to be forever with the Lord!

And to what is this astonishing change to be ascribed? To love — the love of God in Christ Jesus! "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us — that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" 1 John 3:1

What a mystery of mercy is this!

But if we are unbelievers — then we are . . . God's enemies, children of wrath, under the curse, in imminent danger! Satan is our father! Sin is our element! Hell is our eternal portion!

Reader, are you a child of God?

If not, then you are the child of Satan!

~ ~ ~ ~ A family of such vile, polluted, and wretched beings!

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us — that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" 1 John 3:1

Those whom Jesus loves, being chosen of God to holiness here on earth, and happiness in eternity — are predestined to the adoption of His children — to the praise of the glory of His grace. They are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son — they are to . . . partake of His nature, receive of His spirit, wear His image, and be associated with Him in honor and glory forever!

Jesus calls them, His brethren — heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Himself! Being related to Him, they . . . have a saving interest in Him, are loved by Him, are in union with Him, and shall never be separated from Him!

O wondrous mercy! That God should condescend to make up a family of such vile, polluted, and wretched beings as we are!

O wondrous mercy! That He should write our names in His book of life, give us the gift of the Holy Spirit, privilege us to claim relationship at His throne, and associate us with Jesus as fellow-heirs!

O wondrous mercy! That all this should have been fixed upon and settled — before the world began, and all for the praise of His glorious grace!

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It takes a long and painful process to purge it out!

"I have refined you, but not as silver is refined. Rather, I have refined you in the furnace of suffering!" Isaiah 48:10

The love of Jesus will not preserve His people from trials — but rather, assures them of trials! All whom He loves — He chastens! He has a furnace to purge our dross, and refine our souls. His Word and the Spirit reveal to us our defilement and impurity — and His grace and providence co-operate to remove them. "I am the Lord God, who sanctifies you."

It is divine love which . . . prepares the furnace, kindles the flame, brings the Christian into it, superintends the whole process, and brings him out as gold, seven times purified!

"From all your filthiness and from all your idols, I will cleanse you!" He cleanses them in the laver of the Word by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit. But He also cleanses them by a variety of afflictive dispensations, through which He causes them to pass.

Our sin calls for trials — His love sends them!

Our nature repines at trials — but grace submits to them!

Our corruption is enraged at trials — but the Spirit sanctifies them to our good, and our Savior's glory.

He makes His people choice ones — in the "furnace of affliction!" He says, "I will put you into the fire — and will purely purge away your dross."

Believer, never repine at your trials, nor be over-anxious for their removal. They are appointed by Jesus as your Purifier — and are choice blessings in disguise!

Seek their sanctification, wrestle with God that you may see His love in every stroke, and look to Jesus that you may enjoy His presence when passing through the flame!

Nothing can hurt you — while Jesus is near you; and He is never nearer to you — than when you are in the furnace! For He sits right there as the Refiner . . .

watching the process, regulating the heat, and waiting to effect a gracious deliverance — when the ends of His love are answered.

He is only preparing you for fresh manifestations of His glory — and fitting you for larger communications of His love.

In the furnace, you will lose nothing that is worth keeping — but you will obtain what is truly valuable!

The flesh and the soul need constant cleansings — for corruption is so deeply rooted in our nature, that it takes a long and painful process to purge it out! But in reference to the furnace, your Lord says, "The Lord did this to purge Israel's wickedness, to take away all her sin!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Can Jesus delight in such worms?

Jesus presents Himself unto us as the Bridegroom of our souls. He says, "I will betroth you to Me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord!" He here promises to bring us into the nearest possible union. He becomes one with us. He says, "I will be your portion — and you shall be My possession!"

He manifests His beauties — to attract us, He sends His Spirit — to prepare us, He gives His sweet gospel — to allure us, He puts forth His power and draws us — and then makes Himself over to us in an everlasting covenant.

He calls us by every sweet appellation, such as "My beloved, My dove, My sister, My darling, My flawless one, My delight, My spouse!" (Song of Solomon 5:2)

He gives us . . . His person, His unsearchable riches, and a share in His eternal glories and honors!

He loves us most tenderly, constantly, and prudently.

He assures us . . . that He will never leave us, that He will come and commune with us, and that He will withhold no good thing from us!

He says, "Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed — yet My unfailing love for you will not be shaken, nor My covenant of peace be removed — says the Lord, who has compassion on you!" "No weapon formed against you shall prosper. For your Maker is your Husband — the Lord Almighty is His name!"

"As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride — so will your God rejoice over you! I will take delight in My people!" What love is here!

Can Jesus delight in such worms?

Can He rejoice over such unworthy creatures?

Can He enter into a marriage contract with such depraved beings?

Yes! He loved His Church and gave Himself for it! He has redeemed it unto Himself by His blood — and will everlastingly rejoice over it, to bless it and honor it!

Jesus, the Heavenly Lover, gave His life, my wretched soul to save! Resolved to make His mercy known, He kindly claims me for His own!

Lost in astonishment, I see Jesus, Your boundless love to me! With sin and self, I freely part, And gladly yield to You, my heart!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Who could have thought!

"But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people!" Psalms 22:6

How wondrously did Jesus display His love — when He assumed our nature, took upon Him the form of a slave, and was found in appearance as a man! What love — to stoop so low as to . . . be conceived in a virgin's womb, be brought forth in pain, and experience all the weakness and ignorance of infancy!

Yes, He was brought forth in poverty — a stable for His birth-place, and a feeding-trough for His bed! He passed by the palaces of the noble, and the mansions of the great — yes, even the comfortable cottages of the poor — and was born in circumstances of misery and degradation!

Who could have thought, if they had entered that stable and seen that infant weeping on His mother's bosom — that that infant was the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace! That all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in that little babe! That it was love — incomparable and inconceivable love, which brought Deity and humanity together in such a wonderful and indescribable union! This is the mystery of Godliness! The mystery of love! He left . . . the bright abodes of blessedness and glory, the songs of Cherubim and Seraphim, the bosom of His Father, and the infinite delights which He had eternally enjoyed — to be a worm and not a man; to be scorned and despised by all!

Jesus was once a helpless infant, a feeble child; and yet, at the same moment — He was the Almighty, the self-sufficient God!

What privations He suffered, even from the very beginning of His career on earth! What pain He endured — from His birth unto His death! He went sorrowing, sighing, and groaning — from the stable, to gloomy Calvary; where He . . . finished His work, proved His love, conquered His foes, delighted His Father, and merited everlasting honors and glories for His people!

O mystery of mercy!

Here is love beyond measure and degree!

O my soul, admire and adore!

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Such poor, depraved, insignificant creatures!

"I have loved you, My people, with an everlasting love! With unfailing love, I have drawn you to Myself!" Jeremiah 31:3

The love of Christ is unending; it is not a passion of His humanity — but a perfection of His divinity. He has always existed — and He has always loved His people. His people . . . always had a place in His thoughts, have ever been before His eye, and have always been loved by Him!

He has loved them — ever since He knew them — and He foreknew them from eternity! His love ran through the boundless ages of eternity past — and fixed upon poor sinners who were to appear during the existence of time; and having fixed upon them — His love maintains its hold!

When He created the earth, spread abroad the Heavens, and gave His decree to the sea — His love was fixed upon His people! Their welfare, in connection with His Father's glory — was the object which He sought in all things.

Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth! That Jesus should have fixed His love upon such poor, depraved, insignificant creatures — and that from eternity past!

When we meditate upon eternity past — we can say in reference to the most distant periods, "My Savior lovedmethen! He loved me from all eternity!" Glorious truth! He always loved me — and He always will love me! He loved me . . .before angels existed, before devils appeared, before sin was committed!

He loved me — when the Godhead dwelt all alone! O the depths! Surprising mystery! It seems almost too good to be true! But God has said it, and my soul shall rejoice in it and praise Him for it!

His love to me is as eternal as His nature — without beginning of days, or end of years. From His love, as from a mighty ocean, flows . . .all the acts of His power, all the displays of His benevolence, all the manifestations of His grace, and all the provisions of His gospel.

It is sweet, to silently meditate upon the thought, of such a vile and insignificant creature as I am — that Jehovah-Jesus not only thought of me — but eternally loved me with all the strength of His Deity! He so loved me, as to be willing, when it became necessary — to take my nature, and to save me by His humiliation, sufferings, and death!

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He is the infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, gracious, just, holy, and unchangeable! AM!

The Lord Jesus Christ is God — possessed of all divine attributes, and entitled to all divine honors. He is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit — God over all, and blessed for evermore! He is naturally, essentially, perfectly, and eternally possessed of everything peculiar to Deity.

He owes His existence to none. He says, "I am Jehovah, and beside Me there is no Savior!" He is God — and there is no other. There is no other name given under Heaven, or among men, whereby we can be saved. He is the Rock of Ages. He is the infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, gracious, just, holy, and unchangeable! AM!

Angels worship Him, devils obey Him, saints love Him, and sinners will bow to Him!

He is the author of . . .Creation, Providence, Redemption, and Glorification!

He . . .produced all things by His power, formed them by His wisdom, supplies them by His bounty, rules them by His instruments, and employs them according to His sovereign will.

He is above all — in the glory of His nature. He possesses all — by essential right.

He will judge all — according to His righteousness.

All things are dependent upon Him, and all rational beings are accountable to Him.

Nothing can escape His eye; none can fly out of His hand!

He is exalted above all, and remains King forever!

He is . . .the King of kings, the Lord of lords, and the only supreme Law-giver of the universe!

He is naturally, essentially, and eternally God: one with the Father, equal to the Father, and infinite as the Father.

Thus, the Scriptures reveal Him; as such, saints acknowledge Him, and join the angelic host in worshiping, praising, and adoring Him! As such, He loves all His people — yes, He is love to them. As such, they love Him — and trust their eternal interests into His hands! No person can have right views of the love of Christ — who has not right views of the deity of Christ. His divinity gives lustre and glory — to His love. If He were not God — His love would be only a passion like ours, and would fluctuate and change. But being divine — His love is an infinite perfection, and remains immutably the same!

He loves with all the majesty of God — and with all the tenderness of man! His love has the strength of God — and the gentleness of sinless man!

He is all-loving — and altogether lovely!

"Having loved His own who were in the world — He loved them unto the end!" John 13:1

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ God at work!

"There is nothing too hard for You!" Jeremiah 32:17

There is nothing too hard for God to EFFECT:

"Is anything too hard for Me, says the Lord?"

"I know that You can do everything."

"He does according to His will among the armies of Heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth."

"He works all things after the counsel of His own will."

Nothing is too hard for God — no change in providence — however it may appear improbable, or impossible to us. He could bring water out of the flinty rock. He could supply quail to satisfy the needs, and gratify the lusts of His people in the desert. He could feed Elijah for twelve months by ravens, and for two years and a half more, by a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in the widow's cruse. He could inundate Samaria with plenty — in the midst of famine and fearful desolation. If He wills it . . .

the fire shall not burn the three Hebrew youths, nor the lions injure Daniel,

nor death hold Lazarus in the tomb.

What He has done — He can do; for He is the same. And if necessary for the glory of His name — He will do it, for He will not allow His name to be polluted.

"Providence" is simply God at work — at work for . . .the accomplishment of His decrees, the fulfillment of His promises, the manifestation of His character, and the present and eternal welfare of His people. He can . . .give whatever we need, do whatever we need, and glorify Himself in

giving to us, and working for us!

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How His eyes will sparkle with delight!

"Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus!" 2 Timothy 2:3

"There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award me on that day!" 2 Timothy 4:8

Christian soldier, for encouragement in every conflict — look up to your Captain for supplies — and look forward to the glory that awaits you! The war will soon be over. Your discharge will soon be signed and sent to you. Home is even now in view!

The promised land will be far above our greatest expectations!

The glory to be revealed will far exceed our most enlarged desires!

The weight of glory will transcend our most comprehensive thoughts!

A crown is reserved for you! Not a corruptible crown of laurel or myrtle — but a diadem. A diadem of glory! More durable than gold, more costly than any earthy monarch's crown. Gold, pearls, and precious stones — are not to be compared to it! Its gems will sparkle brighter than the stars on a winter's evening! As a whole, it will shine brighter than the sun on a summer's noon!

It is a crown of glory — a most glorious crown. Not merited by your labors or sufferings in the Lord's service — but graciously promised, and gratuitously bestowed. Promised by your glorious Leader, preserved most carefully in the palace of the Most High God — to be awarded to every faithful soldier at the final and grand review.

Yes, it will be placed on your brow by His hands, who . . . won you to His service,

led you to the battlefield, made you victorious, and will rejoice in your honor and happiness forever!

It will be worn before God's own throne, before the angelic hosts, among God's saints forever. What thrilling joy, what ecstatic pleasure, what inconceivable delight — will you realize, when you first feel it rest on your brow! What a look will your Savior give you — when you lift up your head that He may place it on you, and your eye meets His!

Grace, free grace will shine most gloriously on that day! The songs of the enraptured company will be divinely sweet. O how our blessed Savior's heart will dance for joy! How His eyes will sparkle with delight! His mighty spirit will realize full satisfaction — to see the whole of His redeemed people collected, arranged, and glorified before Him! Not one missing! All whom the Father gave Him — there! All for whom He offered up Himself as a sacrifice — there! All to whom He sent the Comforter — there! All who enlisted under His banner and were sworn into His army — there! Those who were once wounded, weeping, and lagging behind the regiment — there! O glorious salvation — in which every poor, maimed, weather-beaten, discouraged soldier of the cross shall share!

What a prospect is this! How bright, how glowing, how enchanting!

Then, O with what rapture we will sing, "Unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father — to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever! Amen."

Surely, surely we ought to be fired with love, filled with zeal, and prepared for every conflict, however arduous — by such a glorious prospect!

~ ~ ~ ~ If God had not helped us!

"I was pushed back and about to fall — but the Lord helped me!" Psalms 118:13 The psalmist had been reviewing his toils, his trials, and his dangers; he commemorates his deliverances, his conquests, and his triumphs; and he ascribes the whole, to the help of God! If God had not helped him — his faith would have failed, his expectations would have been disappointed, and his foes would have prevailed. Through the Lord, he did valiantly; and now, with joyful heart, he records the loving-kindness of the Lord.

How sweet to look back upon the rough road, the bloody battle-field, the scenes of peculiar trial. Then, if ever, gratitude will work within us, and praises will flow from our tongues and hearts. Delivered from the mouth of the lion, and the paw of the bear — we thankfully acknowledge, "The Lord helped me!" In looking back we see that we have needed help — and more help than any mere creature could afford us! The daily cross, the inward conflict, the domestic troubles, the perplexities of business, the state of the church, the affairs of the world — have all combined to teach us that Divine help was necessary!

If God had not helped us . . . we would have fallen into sin, we would have disgraced our profession, we would have been crushed by our foes, we would have fainted under our trials, we would have apostatized from the faith!

God alone knows what would have been the result — if we had been left to our own resources. We needed help in infancy, in youth, in manhood. We needed help in prosperity — and in adversity! We needed help in temporals — and spirituals. We found our own strength — to be weakness, and our own wisdom — to be folly. The feeblest of our foes — would have been more than a match for us! The least corruption in our hearts — would have overcome us! And we need help now — as much as we ever did; for, unless the Lord helps us . . .

our foes will yet triumph over us,

our crosses will yet prove to be too much for us,

and we shall yet faint in the day of adversity! The Lord has promised help. He has said, "Fear not — for I am with you; be not dismayed — for I am your God! I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness!" And because His people feel themselves to be vile, weak, and incompetent; He stoops to speak to them according to their own views of themselves and says, "Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel — for I Myself will help you! declares the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel!"

Oh, precious promise, of a good and gracious God! It extends to all times, it embraces all circumstances, it belongs to all believers, and it ensures us triumph over all our foes!

Yes, the strength of Jesus has been perfected in our weakness! We have found His grace to be sufficient for us; and to the praise of His glorious grace, in reference to all our trials, troubles, and conflicts — we can truly say, "The Lord helped me!"

Oh, beloved, it is an unspeakable mercy to have God for our helper!

~ ~ ~ ~ When His influence is put forth within us

All that the Spirit does for us, and all that He works within us — is of grace. He graciously . . . quickens the dead, instructs the ignorant, liberates the captives, restores the wanderers, comforts the dejected, strengthens the weak, and sanctifies the impure. His work is His delight — and to see us holy and happy is His pleasure!

The Holy Spirit produces all our graces within us. He is the root — and our graces are His fruits; hence we read, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

When His influence is put forth within us — then we . . . believe God's Word, hope in His mercy, rejoice in His goodness, cleave to His cause, walk in His ways, love His truth, His people, and Himself, holiness is then happiness, duties are then pleasant, and even the cross lays light upon our shoulders.

But if the Spirit hides Himself, withdraws His influences, and leaves us to ourselves — then we . . . doubt and fear, fret and pine, kick and rebel, rove from thing to thing, and nothing will either please or satisfy us. We often then . . . question the past, are wretched at present, and dread the future.

But when He puts forth His power in us again . . . our graces shoot forth like bulbous roots in the spring, our sighs are exchanged for songs, our fears are exchanged for fortitude, our doubts are exchanged for confidence, and our murmurings are exchanged for gratitude and love. We then . . . sink into the dust of self-abasement,

admire the forbearance and patience of God, condemn our own conduct, and wonder that we are out of Hell.

Then we take down our harps from the willows, and with a melting heart, a weeping eye, and a tremulous voice we sing, "The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance." Our wilderness is now turned into an Eden — and our desert into the garden of the Lord!

Come, Holy Spirit, come, and produce a spring season in our souls!

Brethren, we need the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of grace — to make us gracious and graceful Christians. Without the Spirit of grace . . . we cannot live up to our profession; we cannot copy the example of our beloved Master; we cannot keep His commandments; we cannot love one another as He has loved us; we cannot sympathize with lost sinners as we should; we cannot keep God's

glory in view in all that we do; we cannot walk in high and holy fellowship with God; we cannot meet death with peace and joy!

~ ~ ~ The life-boat of free grace!

"I am cast down!"

And why are you cast down?

"My heart is burdened with a sense of my short-comings! Every duty I perform is so imperfect. Every purpose I form is so soon frustrated. Every hope of seeing better days is so soon beclouded. My heart is so fearfully depraved. My life is so unlike the life of Jesus. My temper is so unholy. My prayers are so brief and heartless. My praises are so feeble and fitful. I do so little good. I live to so little purpose. My evidences are so dim. My prospects are so overcast. I am harassed sometimes with the fear of death. I cannot realize the glories of Heaven. I am dissatisfied with the world — and yet glued to it! I hate sin — and yet fall into it! I am a riddle, a mystery, a mass of inconsistency! Is it, then, any wonder that I am cast down?"

No, if you look at yourself, and pore over the things you have named — then it is no wonder that you are cast down! They are enough to cast anyone down! But if you carry them to the throne of grace, if you there confess them before God, if you look to Jesus to save you from them — then, in spite of them — you will not long be cast down.

I know it is difficult to do this. There is a natural proneness to pore over such things. One feels at times a secret liking to indulge in gloomy thoughts.

But we must look away from self — for if we do not, we shall become anxious, doubting and gloomy! We must run the race, not looking at our imperfections, short-comings, and failures — but looking unto Jesus. He knows what we are. He knew what we would be — before He called us by His grace; yes, before He shed His blood for us! He loved us, as sinners. He died for us, as sinners. He called us, as sinners. He saves us, as sinners. He will have all the glory of saving us, and He will get great glory by doing so, because we are such great sinners; and do not, cannot, do anything to repay Him for His wondrous love! Salvation is by free grace — from first to last! Believe this, and it will raise up your drooping mind!

The life-boat of free grace has put you on board the vessel of salvation, and that will convey you safely to the port of glory! Do not look at your spiritual destitution, or feebleness, or incapacity, or imperfections — but trust in your Pilot, rely on your Captain, and expect His mercy and merit to land you safe in Heaven at last!

As imperfect as you now are, and as imperfect you will be — your dying prayer will still be, "God be merciful unto me — a sinner!"

Hope in God! His mercy is great unto the heavens, His grace is as free as the air,

His love is as changeless as His nature, His promise is as immutable as His love.

Hope in God, for you shall yet praise Him. He will save you for His own sake, and present you before assembled worlds as a monument of His mercy, and a trophy of His grace!

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One hour after death!

One hour after death, WHERE shall I be?

One hour after death, WHAT shall I be?

One hour after death, How shall I be EMPLOYED?

One hour after death, What will be my FEELINGS?

One hour after death, How shall I THINK? How differently we shall think of money, pleasure, the indulgence of our lusts, all that we now call great, grand, and desirable — one hour after death! Let us endeavor to think now — as it is probable we shall think then! Let us place ourselves in Heaven — and try to think there! Let us place ourselves in Hell — and try to think there! How different will things then appear!

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He will show to the whole world what you have been doing in the dark!

"The Lord does not see it!" Ezekiel 9:9

"My way is hidden from the Lord!" Isaiah 40:27

The only thing some fear is exposure. They would not be exhibited in their true colors before their fellow-men — for all the world! They wish to live and act in the dark. They do not fear the eye of God — but they dread the eye of man! In public they are one thing — and in private just the opposite! No one really knows them.

There is a vast amount of hypocrisy in the world. Multitudes wear a mask. They are not at all — what they seem to be. The consequences will be fearful by and bye.

Open sinners offend both God and men — secret sinners offend God only!

But it is better offend the whole world — than offend God!

The power of SIN is great. And one of the most fearful things in sin — is its power of self-concealment. It hides its own deformity from many — who are actually under its influence.

The subtlety of SATAN is great. He is said to deceive the whole world (Revelation 12:9). Suppose he should have deceived you! If you are acting under his influence — you have deceived yourself!

Your sin may be hidden from men, it may even be hidden from yourself — but it is not hidden from God! His eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. He searches the heart, and tries the thoughts!

The revealing day is coming! Then if wrong, God will set our iniquities before His face, and our secret sins in the light of His countenance. He will expose every secret sinner! He will show to the whole world what you have been doing in the dark! Hear His own Word, "For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil!" (Ecclesiastes 12:14). The sins that are hidden now — will be hidden no longer!

The Judge on the throne will act justly and impartially, and will render to every man according to his deeds. "The guilt of Ephraim is stored up — his sins are kept on record!" Hosea 13:12

Many will be condemned — who expected to be acquitted!

Many will be driven to Hell — who were sure of being invited to Heaven!

Every false covering will then be stripped off, every deceitful heart will be laid bare — and no longer will anyone say, "My way is hidden from the Lord!"

Then shall be brought to pass the fearful prediction, "The sinners in Zion (God's professing people) shake with fear! Terror seizes the godless! Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?" (Isaiah 33:14).

~ ~ ~ ~

Up and at it!

"ALL at it — and ALWAYS at it!" This was what John Wesley endeavored to impress upon all his followers — and this is what we would like to see impressed upon the mind of every Christian. We have much to do — and we have little time to do it in. We had need therefore, to be up and at it!

If ignorance is to be chased away, if gospel knowledge is to be circulated, if souls are to be saved, if children are to be taught, if churches are to grow, if villages, towns, and cities are to be evangelized— then we had need be ALL at it — and ALWAYS at it! This is just . . . what the times call for, what the Gospel inculcates, what Satan dreads,

what the carnal world dislikes — therefore let us be "all at it — and always at it."

Let everyone undertake that part of the work for which he is most adapted — and persevere in that which he commences.

How many there are who profess Christ — who are doing nothing! How many may easily do twice as much as they currently do. Is it surprising . . . that the church is in such a poor spiritual state, that Popery spreads, that ignorance prevails, that congregations are thin, that little is accomplished, that ministers are dispirited, and

that mature Christians are going home to sigh? No! It is not at all surprising! The wonder is, that things are not worse!

Self-denial is rarely practiced, the flesh is indulged, the world is loved, the earthly is preferred to the spiritual — and the present to the future.

Let us all go at it, and let us be always at it — until we hear the Master's voice calling unto us and saying, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of your Lord!" But if we . . . neglect duty, despise warning, love ease, court pleasure, hunt for honor,

use our Lord's money selfishly, and settle down upon our lees — we shall by and bye see the day, when we will wish we had been ALL at it — and ALWAYS at it!

"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain!" 1 Corinthians 15:58

~ ~ ~ ~ Three Bad Companions!

We are all of us, at times, thrown into company which we do not like; and when so, the best thing we can do is to get out of it as quickly as possible! But sometimes we find that this is more easily said, than done. I have seen some aged people pestered with these very bad companions, and they could not get rid of them if they would! That the young may beware of these three rascals, I will point them out:

POVERTY is the first bad companion. This is often brought on by imprudence, and lack of frugality. When work was good, and health was strong — no provision was made for a rainy day. By and bye, trade failed, strength departed, and old age came on — and then appears the pitiable object, a poor old man! We shall need many little comforts in old age, which we can very well do without now while in good health; therefore, if God has given us the opportunity, let us lay aside a little for old age.

It is hard to beg when the head is gray, to be frowned upon by the wealthy, or be obliged to go into "the poorhouse." These things may be avoided by many, if they would live frugally.

Reader, if you are young, make up your mind, that if poverty should be your companion when you are old, that you will be able to say, "This was not brought on by my intemperance, self-indulgence, or forgetfulness of the future — but by the wise providence of God!" Then you will have a source of comfort, which many elderly people have deprived themselves of.

PAIN is the second bad companion. The pains of old age often spring from the follies, sins, and recklessness of youth. Pain cannot always be prevented — but very much is brought on by ourselves. Many old people are full of pains, which are the effects of their carelessness, rashness, and wickedness in youth. A poor old man full of pain is to be pitied; and yet if we knew the origin of many of his pains — we would be obliged to say that he himself is to be blamed. Friends, if you would not have pain for a companion when you are old — live simply, take regular exercise in the open air, and stay away from rich foods.

PROCRASTINATION is the third bad companion. This has been called "the thief of time!" As, therefore, it would steal one of your most precious jewels — beware of it!

~ ~ ~ ~ And what do many do?

Silver and gold are given to us as God's stewards — and we are to use them for His glory. He often gives them, and then seems to leave us to ourselves, saying, "I will just see what you will do with them."

And what do many do? Look . . .at their opulent homes, at their lavish furniture, at their plush clothes, at their vain amusements, at their expensive foods, at their . . . . .But I forbear!

Only just look on the other hand, at what they give . . .to support the ministry, to assist missions, to circulate the Bible, to distribute tracts, to relieve the poor, etc. etc.

Can we say of such people, as Paul did of others, "None of us lives to himself?"

If these are God's stewards — are they faithful?

~ ~ ~ ~

Living expositions of the truth!

Coldness and lukewarmness in the ways of God, are peculiarly offensive to our Lord and Savior; for if anyone deserves our whole hearts, if anyone ought to have the whole of our energies — it is Jesus!

We should be zealous for the truth of the gospel. It is God's mind. It is the revelation of the Savior's love. It is the remedy for the sinner's woes. It is the charter of the Church's privileges. It is dear to God's heart. It is watched over with a jealous eye. It should be prized as inestimably valuable. It is . . . the mirror, in which God is seen; the map, on which our road is marked out; the law, by which our duty is made plain!

"That they may adorn the teaching of God our Savior in everything!" Titus 2:10

We should zealously adorn the Gospel. Not by the tinsel of human eloquence — but by a consistent and holy walk.

We ought to be living expositions of the truth!

In our conduct — the nature and tendency of the Gospel ought to be seen!

By our meekness and gentleness, by our fidelity and prudence, by our self-denial and benevolence, by our temperance and brotherly kindness, by our patience and fervent love — we ought to adorn the most holy truth of God! God calls for it. The Gospel is calculated to produce it!

~ ~ ~ ~

It is high time to awake out of sleep!

"Be zealous!" Revelation 3:19

The zealous Christian is sure of . . . God's blessing, the approbation of his own conscience, the opposition of Satan, the frown of every lukewarm professor, and the commendation of all godly people.

Let us warm our hearts at the fire of God's love!

Let us quicken our motives by a visit to the cross!

Let us sharpen our weapons by communion with the Spirit!

Let us seek the grace, the courage, the strength necessary at the mercy seat — and then let us zealously fall to work. Let . . . the work of God be our delight, the welfare of our fellow-men be our aim, and the glory of the Lord be our highest object!

Let us live in earnest. Let us live to purpose.

By the shortness of time, by the solemnities of death, by the realities of eternity, by the danger of lost sinners, by the vigilance of Satan, by the poor state of the Church,

by the character of the present times, by the command of God, by the example of primitive believers, and by the counsel of the Lord Jesus — let us stir up our hearts — and stir up one another to "Be zealous!"

Brethren, the time is short, and "It is high time to awake out of sleep!"

By the spread of Popery, by the activity of infidelity, by the condition of our cities, by the needs of the Church, by the woes of the world, by the authority of God, by the blood of the cross, by the promise of the Spirit, by the prospect of success, by the rest of the grave, by the glories of Heaven, by the terrors of Hell, by the rewards of activity, and by the condemnation of the lukewarm and the slothful— allow me to beseech you to "Be zealous!"

Be zealous today — tomorrow you may die!

Be zealous in time — and in eternity, you will rejoice that you have been so!

~ ~ ~ ~ Can this be — for such a vile wretch like me?

"By the grace of God I am what I am!"<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:10

Lord, You have said, "I will cast all your sins into the depths of the sea!" They shall be carried into a land of everlasting forgetfulness. And to confirm all, You have added, "I will never leave you nor forsake you!" Is this, can this be — for such a vile wretch like me? O wondrous mercy! O boundless sovereign, everlasting, unchangeable, love! Yes, it suits me, because it is all of grace, free grace, from first to last — without works, and without boasting.

O how shall I sufficiently admire, bless, praise, and adore the grace "that buries all my sins" and rejoice in that glorious righteousness in which I stand perfect before a holy God! I feel ready to cry out, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, for He has clothed vile, polluted, Hell-deserving me — with the garments of salvation! He has covered me with the robe of righteousness!"

Why is this? O Lord, why is this — that I am made to hear your pardoning voice — while thousands are left to perish in their sins, who are much better than I am? It is even so, Father — for so it seems good in Your sight.

O wondrous depth of sovereign grace, without either a shore or a bottom! Lord, lead me into it, and there let me bathe to all eternity! May I know the wondrous love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge! I now feel as if I was lost in an endless subject — the astonishing love of Christ — the sovereign, boundless, bottomless, free, and eternal love of Christ! O how wonderful that such a poor, vile, wretched, nothing creature, as I am — should be interested in it! Surely none but Jesus could, and none but Jesus would — so love one so vile as me; but He has done it!

What shall I render unto the Lord, my covenant God — for His boundless mercy to such a guilty, Hell-deserving, sinner as I am? O Lord, may I gaze, admire, and adore!

~ ~ ~ ~ The height of folly, arrogance, and weakness!

O to be well pleased with all that my Heavenly Father appoints for me in this valley of tears! Yet, how prone I am . . . to murmur at the Lord's inscrutable ways, to call into question His infinite wisdom, and to arraign His wondrous love at the bar of my poor reason! This is the height of folly,

arrogance, and weakness — and yet I am often guilty of it!

"Oh, a wretched man I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?"  
Romans 7:24

~ ~ ~ Draw me — ordriveme!

The following in an excerpt from the diary of James Smith:

It has just occurred to me, that the reason why the Lord has of late allowed me to be so severely tried — is that I have been very little at His throne of grace. Nor have His promises appeared so precious, pleadable, and suited to my case.

Jesus is determined to have me often at His throne, and if the invitations and promises of His Word will not draw me there — then He will send trials to drive me there! Blessed Jesus, are you not saying to me by every trial, "Call upon Me! Make use of Me! See what I will do for you!"

What a proof of the deep depravity and base ingratitude of my heart is this — that You are obliged to send trials and troubles to bring me to Your feet! Yet it is so! For unless drawn by the cords of Your loving-kindness, or driven by painful trials — I seldom come to You with earnestness, fervor, and life!

I am so prone to wander, to be light and trifling — troubled by shadows, and excited by mere trifles! I abhor myself because I am vile! O how base my heart is, to despise so glorious a privilege, and to neglect so choice a duty! O Jesus, cleanse it by Your precious blood! O Holy Spirit, purify it by Your sacred operations, and keep it by Your power! O Righteous Father, devote it wholly to Yourself! Give me submission — help me patiently to carry my cross after Jesus, though it is rough, heavy, and galling. From the depths of my heart I can say, "A sinful, weak, and helpless worm;

On Your kind arms I fall!"

What a proof of the loving-kindness of Jesus to my soul is this — that He will not allow me to be comfortable or happy, while living at distance from Him!

Blessed Jesus! pardon me, correct me — but never leave me to myself! Draw me — ordriveme; but never allow me to live long at a distance from You!

Gracious Lord Jesus, keep me near You, looking to You, living for You, leaning on You, believing in You, and expecting from You, all that I need!

Surely this is a sweet life — living on Jesus alone, making Him all in all!

"O bring me to Your sacred feet, And let me rove no more!"

~ ~ ~ It blights and blasts!

The following in an excerpt from the diary of James Smith:

December, 1850.

Popery and the aggression of the Pope, just now engage almost everyone's attention. Many liberals appear to me to sympathize a great deal too much with the Man of Sin. The Pope is anti-Christ! Popery is alike the enemy of God and man. It is the mystery of iniquity! It blights and blasts every country where it reigns. It is drunk with the blood of the saints. It hates God's Book, and persecutes God's people to the utmost of its power — and therefore we ought to oppose it! (Editor's note: the same could be said of the Islam religion.)

~ ~ ~ If they knew all about us!

The following is an excerpt from the diary of James Smith:

I am daily more and more vexed with myself — because I am so unlike Jesus — so unlike what I ought to be, and what I wish to be. I shall never glorify Him as I ought, while I have to carry about this body of sin and death.

How kind it is of our gracious God, to conceal from others — what He Himself sees within us; and which if known by others — would alienate them from us, and fill them with disgust! What contemptible creatures we would appear to our friends — if they knew all about us!

We may study our own hearts, and if we study them under the cross, it will not injure us — but benefit us. But no man may study his brother's heart — he is not to be admitted into the chambers of idols within. We may form some idea of the hearts of others — by our own; for as face answers to face in water — so does the heart of man to man.

I find it very difficult to believe that another's heart is as bad as mine — except in the case of some heinous criminal. I cannot charge my friend with being so depraved as I am — for having such base thoughts, vile inclinations, and abominable desires, as I have. But perhaps others think the very same respecting me.

"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked! Who really knows how bad it is?" Jeremiah 17:9

~ ~ ~ The reason why He is not loved

"Yes, He is altogether lovely!" Song of Solomon 5:16

Love is generally drawn forth by beauty exhibited, or by kindness shown. We love the beautiful and the benevolent.

But to the carnal mind, there is no beauty in Jesus — because its taste is vitiated, and its perception is depraved. It calls darkness, light; and light, darkness. It puts bitter for sweet — and sweet for bitter. We do not expect the natural man to see the beauty of the Redeemer's person, or to be inflamed to love by His attractions. Still the beautiful ought to be loved, and "He is altogether lovely!" The reason why He is not loved, is to be found in the corruption of human nature, and the depravity of the sinner's heart.

If you see nothing in Jesus to love — then it is evident that you are under the power of darkness. If you have never really loved Him — then you are dead in trespasses and sins. What a dreadful state! What a fearful thought is this!

Yes, no one will love Him — unless the heart is changed by the Holy Spirit. The mind must be completely changed, before it will love Christ. He is light — but men love darkness. He is holy — but men love sin. He is the image of God — but men love the likeness of Satan.

The Holy Spirit, speaking by the Apostle Paul, says, "If any man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ — let him be accursed!" 1 Corinthians 16:22. How terrible, "let him be accursed!" Let him be condemned by God, driven from God, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God!

"What! blessed apostle, meek and gentle servant of Christ — doom every one to Hell who does not love the Savior?" "Yes, without anger, without any improper feeling, I say — If any man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ — let him be accursed!"

"But think how terrible a place Hell is, how awful God's curse must be, and what tremendous agonies are included in eternal punishment?" "I have thought of that, and, while full of love to man, and desiring above all things, the salvation of all who hear me, or read what I write — yet I repeat — If any man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ — let him be accursed!"

"What! that fine young man?" "Yes, if he does not love Christ."

"What! that amiable young woman?" "Yes, if she does not love Christ."

"What! that venerable, silver-haired, prudent, and kind-hearted old man?"

"Yes, if he does not love Christ. I make no exceptions. If any person does not love Jesus — then he deserves to be accursed — his doom and destiny is to be accursed!"

~ ~ ~ ~

The temptation, and the opportunity

The following is an excerpt from the diary of James Smith:

I have just heard that an old friend, far advanced in life, has fallen into sin! May the Lord pardon and restore him.

In looking back, I wonder that I have not publicly fallen; for I have been powerfully tempted to other sins, equally as bad. I have regularly observed, that in my experience the Lord has not often allowed the temptation, and the opportunity — to meet! And when they have, fear has worked powerfully and kept me back.

"But as for me — my feet were almost gone! My steps had well near slipped!" Psalms 73:2

Ah, how frequently have I been almost gone! I can call to mind places and times, when I have been in the very mouth of danger, on the brink of a fearful fall — and yet the Lord has held me up! But for special keeping — where would I have been this morning? And what would I be? Blessed be God, though it was almost — it was not fully. This word, almost, has been sweet to my soul.

Almost Gone! — but altogether saved, through God's most free, and all-glorious grace!

But I would not merely be kept from open sin, I desire to be so deeply sanctified, that my soul may . . . hate, abhor, and detest sin in every form, tremble at its approach, and

flee from the very appearance of evil — to Jesus!

I find that my nature is still corrupt, depraved, and polluted; and that . . .the blood of Jesus, the restraining power of the Holy Spirit, and the forgiving grace of God— are as necessary as ever!

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

~ ~ ~ ~ O how strange — that God should love a worm, a dung-hill worm!

August 28, 1857.

If some of my congregation knew me better — they would love me less! Yet my heavenly Father . . . knows me well, favors me much, and loves me wonderfully!

O how strange — that God should love a worm, a dung-hill worm — one who was bred in sin, loved sin, felt at home in sin, and at times felt regret that he was debarred from some sins! O if God had left me to myself — what would I have been, and what would I have done!"But by the grace of God — I am what I am!"1 Corinthians 15:10

Surely, surely, I must say, that divine love and wisdom have planned my path — from first to last. I am . . .out of Hell, in the way to Heaven, employed by God, useful to saints, and a blessing to sinners! O how wonderful, how wonderful is this!

~ ~ ~ ~

Almost gone!

(An excerpt from the diary of James Smith)

"But as for me — my feet were almost gone! My steps had well near slipped!" Psalms 73:2

Ah, how frequently have I been almost gone! I can call to mind places and times, when I have been in the very mouth of danger, on the brink of a fearful fall — and yet the Lord has held me up! But for 'special keeping' — where would I have been this morning? And what would I have been? Blessed be God, though it was almost — it was not quite. This word, almost, has been sweet to my soul. Almost gone! — but altogether saved, through God's most free, and all-glorious grace!

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

~ ~ ~ ~ My little daughter Ann was in good health on Monday — and on Thursday she was a corpse!

(An excerpt from the diary of James Smith, when he was 28 years old)

Another sharp stroke! My little daughter Ann was in good health on Monday — and on Thursday she was a corpse! She died just two months after her sister Mercy. But the words of the Patriarch came to silence and humble me, "If He snatches someone in death — who can stop Him? Who dares to ask: What are You doing?"

I fear I loved her too much, for she was a beautiful child. Well, she is gone — and I must follow her, nor can I tell how soon.

"The Lord gave — and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised!" Job 1:21

~ ~ ~ ~ He may be onearthat noon — but inHellat night!

"They walk on in darkness!" Psalms 82:5 The minds of sinners make progress — but it is in the wrong path! They started wrong. They will not believe that they are wrong. Therefore they walk on to their own destruction. It is a painful sight to see thousands, and tens of thousands of travelers, passing through this world — and all going wrong! Every step they take, leaves us less hope — and gives the Prince of darkness more power over them. In temporal things — they see clearly enough; but in spiritual things — they are stone-blind! "They walk on in darkness."

Darkness is the emblem of IGNORANCE. They are ignorant . . .of their true state before God, of the character of the God who made them, of the just desert of sin,

of the only Savior who can deliver them, of the wayofescape opened up before them, and of the dreadful doom that awaits them! They walk on in ignorance! If they were not so ignorant — they would surely fly to the Lord Jesus to save them.

Darkness is also the emblem of SIN. They live . . .in the violation of God's holy law, neglecting Christ's gracious gospel, and making SELF the end of their existence.

They live to themselves, they live for themselves, they neglect God's requirements, they despise His invitations, they turn their backs on His throne of grace, they treat His Book with contempt, they waste their time in idleness and folly— and yet talk as if they expected that He would have mercy upon them at last! They walk on in sin — and yet hope to arrive in Heaven at last!

Darkness represents DANGER. These people are in imminent danger! Disease may arrest them at any hour! Death may remove them out of this world at any moment!

Disease introduces death, death ushers into the presence of God, and God dooms the careless sinner to Hell!

He may be in health in the morning — but a corpse at noon!

He may be onearthat noon — but inHellat night!

He walks upon snares. He is surrounded by the officers of justice. He may be seized any moment. Once seized . . . hope departs, despair approaches, and outer darkness closes up the scene! And yet they walk on in thoughtlessness! They . . .fool away their time, neglect their opportunities of escape, disregard the warning voice, and perish in their own deceivings!

Beast-like — they have no concern for any of these things. They say they shall not be worse off than others — as if it were any relief to be no worse than others, where all are in misery, agony and endless woe! Not worse off than others! Yes, they will — for it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for them. Not worse off than others! Indeed they will — for the men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment and condemn them. Not worse off than others! This is a mistake — for careless, indifferent, Christ-rejecting sinners, "will receive the greater damnation!"

"They walk on in darkness," but if they persevere in doing so — then how fearful will their end be. It will be . . . misery without mercy, darkness without light, despair without prospect of deliverance — and all the result of a willful determination to "walk on in darkness!"

~ ~ ~ ~

It is difficult to say which is the more astonishing!

"You are my portion, O Lord!" Psalms 119:57

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

It is difficult to say which is the more astonishing: that God should be our portion, or that He should take us to be His portion!

"The Lord's portion is His people!" Deuteronomy 32:9

"Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name; you are Mine!" Isaiah 43:1

~ ~ ~ ~ The poor Christian!

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to those who love Him?" James 2:5 Poverty is not spirituality — but sanctified poverty is a great friend to it.

Poverty is no sin — but it is sometimes a preventive to sin.

Poverty has its temptations — but it has also its consolations. The poor ought not to repine at poverty — because God in His infinite wisdom has appointed it, and is able to render it the greatest blessing. God's chosen are generally found among the poor. Not that He chose them because they were poor; but choosing them in Christ — He appointed poverty as the best thing for them.

God's enemies have their full portion in this life — here, they have their good things. Not so with God's children! Here on earth, they have their evil things — and their best things are yet to come! The poor Christian has . . . a rich Father in whom to trust; the fullness of Jesus to supply him; the precious promises on which to depend; the Holy Spirit to be his Comforter; and a glorious inheritance to anticipate and forever dwell in!

All Christians are "heirs of the kingdom" — the kingdom of grace here — and of glory hereafter; the kingdom in which Jesus will reign; the kingdom where they will be princes — yes, kings and priests; the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world! My poor brother — my poor sister! Look up! Look forward! Your cottage will soon be exchanged for a mansion! Your sickness will soon be exchanged for health! Your poverty will soon be exchanged for wealth! Your sin will soon be exchanged for perfect holiness! Your earth will soon be exchanged for Heaven!

You will not always be poor! You will not be poor for long. Jesus will soon come — and then you will reign with Him! For you — an inheritance is reserved in Heaven! For you — a mansion is being prepared! For you — glory, honor, immortality, even eternal life, are in reserve!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Suffering Christian!

"God will wipe every tear from their eyes! There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain!" Revelation 21:4

How much pain many of the Lord's people are called to suffer — and how severe that pain often is! There are times when pain is hard to bear — when our spirits are exhausted and we are sorely tempted to doubt the pity and tender love of our Heavenly Father. Then it is sweet to look forward to the place, and anticipate the time — when God will wipe every tear from our eyes — and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain!

Suffering Christian! Your pain will soon end — and your sufferings will soon be over! Jesus will come and fetch you from your bed of pain, your chamber of affliction, and your house of mourning! Absent from the body — you will be present with the Lord!

Seek grace from the Lord to suffer patiently. There is an end of every pain — and soon you will bless the Lord for the very pains which now cause you to sigh and groan! The songs of Heaven will be sweetened by the groans of earth; and the pleasures of eternity will be heightened by the pains of time!

Every pain endured — leaves one less pain to suffer. And every hour that passes — brings us one hour nearer to the time when the ransomed of the Lord shall leave behind this land of darkness and death, and go home to their Father's house with everlasting joy, while sorrow and sighing shall forever flee away!

"You will weep no more!" Isaiah 30:19

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ All that we can need for life or death, time or eternity!

"There is no lack to those who fear Him!" Psalms 34:9 They are not truly wealthy — who appear to be so — or who boast of being so. The lost sinner must be poor. He has . . . no God to comfort him; no Savior to deliver him; no Guide to conduct him; no Advocate to plead for him; no inward peace to support him; no title to Heaven to encourage him.

He is poor. He is in need. He will need . . . confidence and comfort in death; a wedding garment, in which to appear before God; and a comfortable home throughout eternity!

Every lost sinner is indeed poor. His resources will soon be exhausted, and he will find himself "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked!" He may have the appearance of prosperity — but not the reality. True riches belong to another family. The Lord's people all fear Him; that is, they fear to offend Him, and desire above all things to please Him. And though they may appear poor — they are really rich! God has provided all good things for them — and He gives all good things to them.

They have a solid peace, flowing from a knowledge of acceptance with God, through the blood of Jesus.

They have a joyful hope, which blooms with immortality.

They are assured of strength equal to their day; and of sanctifying grace to make all their troubles work for their good.

They are content with God's wise and holy appointments; and godliness with contentment is a good fortune.

They acquiesce in the will of God; and are often filled with joy which flows from His presence.

They obtain victory over the temptations which would ensnare them.

They live above the world, which would allure and beguile them.

They are sure of support in death.

They look forward to a joyful resurrection.

They rightly anticipate Heaven as their portion forever!

There is no lack to them, for all that they can truly need, is promised — and every promise is confirmed by the blood of Jesus!

Jehovah is theirs — along with all that He is, and has! His power is their support! His wisdom is their guide! His fullness is their fortune! His mercy is their friend! His love is their Heaven.

"Happy are the people who are in such a case!" All the Lord's people are really in this case — and therefore they are all happy!

Just think of having Almighty God for your present, constant, eternal Friend!

Think of having the wealth of Deity to supply and satisfy you! And if you sincerely fear God — then this is the reality of your case! No truth is more clearly revealed in Scripture. No subject is more rich with consolation!

Strength may be exhausted, health may decline, courage may fail, riches may flee, friends may forsake, enemies may increase, all circumstances may change for the worse — but "those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing!"

Sweet promise of a faithful God!

Here, pilgrim, is your staff — take it and travel home!

Here, saint, is your cordial — drink and forget your misery!

Here, believer, is your fortune — take it and live upon it, while a resident here below.

Here, fearful soul, is your antidote — use it to dispel your fears and cheer your fainting heart!

"The young lions may lack food and go hungry — but there is no lack to those who fear Him!"

Here is wealth! Here is comfort!

Here is all that we can need for life or death, time or eternity!

~ ~ ~ ~ A remedy for heart trouble!

"Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God — believe also in Me!" John 14:1

We often trouble ourselves. We often allow our hearts to be tossed about like the waves of the sea, without any real cause. Our Savior forbids it. He forbids it in tender love. He forbids it because it is injurious. It lays us open to temptations, and fosters unbelief and anxiety. Our Lord would have us be calm, patient, and composed; therefore He says, "Let not your heart be troubled!"

He prescribes a remedy for heart trouble, or inward anxiety:

1. "Believe in God." Believe in God as your Father — as loving you, acting for you, and rejoicing in your welfare. See Him . . . ordering all events with consummate wisdom; overruling all with infinite skill; and sanctifying all to your welfare, by His sovereign grace.

There is no room for 'chance' — for His government is perfect. There can be no unkindness — for His love is infinite. All will be directed right — for He personally superintends every detail in the universe! The floating of the atom, the rolling of the sea, and all the movements of every mind — are alike under His control and direction! "He works all things after the counsel of His own will."

2. "Believe also in Me!" Believe. . .that I sympathize with you; that I feel the deepest interest in your welfare; that I never withdraw my eye or heart from you for one moment; that I will support you in every place, and under every trial; that My arm shall be stretched out for you to lean upon, as you come up out of the wilderness of this world; that I will save you to the uttermost; that I will show you a brother's love;

that I will stand by you as a firm friend in every distress; that I will overturn all the designs of your foes against you.

Remember Jesus, that Jesus who . . .lived for you, labored for you, suffered for you,

died for you, rose for you, and is now in Heaven pleading for you — says, "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God — believe also in Me!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Open wide your mouth — and I will fill it!

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth — and I will fill it!" Psalms 81:10 Our great privilege is to have God for our God: to know Him, to love Him, to adore Him, and to trust in Him.

If God is ours — then all must be well. If God has delivered us from . . .the Egypt of this world, the power of sin, and the tyranny of Satan — then He is our God indeed.

He says, "I am Jehovah — the compassionate God . . .who sympathizes with My people in their sorrows, who counts their tears, who feels their groans, and who records their prayers."

"I am Jehovah — the God of power . . .who delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage;

whose strength is as infinite as My nature, for whom nothing is too hard."

"I am Jehovah — the God of love . . .whose resources are boundless, whose pity is tender, and who never fails or forsakes those who trust in Him."

"I am Jehovah — your God . . .pledged to you by promise; engaged for you by covenant; and bound to you by oath! As I am your God . . .look to Me, trust in Me, expect from Me."

"Open your mouth wide!" That is, "Ask **LARGELY** — ask for great, numerous, and costly blessings! Do not be afraid of asking for too much! My heart is large, My love is great, My wealth is unbounded!

Ask **BOLDLY** — do not be afraid — but come boldly to My throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Ask **FREQUENTLY** — I am always ready to give! I am never weary of listening to your prayers. Come whenever you are in need — I rejoice to do you good. No parent ever delighted to give to a darling child — as I delight to give to you! Therefore ask and receive, that your joy may be full.

"Open your mouth wide — and I will fill it!" That is, "I have the very blessings which you need. They are from Me — they are for you! I have the disposition to give! Do not doubt My benevolence, for this grieves My heart. I give you My word, that I will bestow My favors upon you freely, plentifully, and frequently! My Word is plain — read it; it is faithful — trust it; it is honest — plead it; it is sure — expect the fulfillment of it. I will do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think!"

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth — and I will fill it!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Oh, how dreadful the thought — to go to Hell through the church of God!

"A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it — but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard: For three years now, I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree — and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil!" Luke 13:6-7

Let us look at Christ's figure a little: A fig-tree — or a professor of the religion of Christ. A fruitless fig-tree — or a barren, useless professor. A fig-tree with leaves of profession — but not the fruit of holiness.

No place is as dangerous for an unconverted person — as the church of God! It is to be feared that many join the church before they are truly converted; and yet very, very few are ever converted after.

Once under a profession — God expects you to live up to that profession. If you are planted in His vineyard — God expects you to bring forth fruit.

The owner of the vineyard comes and seeks fruit; He comes again, and again; and if He find none, He passes this solemn sentence, "Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil!"

Concerning every fruitless professor God says, "Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil! It drains the ground of its nourishment, for no good purpose. Labor is but lost upon it; expectation is disappointed by it; therefore, Cut it down! My patience and forbearance are worn out; I have come three years seeking fruit — and find none; so, Cut it down!"

It is a fearful sentence! God gives the command to some disease — He says, "Go, cut that barren professor down!" He sends death, like the woodsman with his sharpened axe — at length he strikes the fatal blow; and then the fruitless professor falls!

This command of God is fearful — it is full of terror — it includes utter destruction!

This command is irresistible — we cannot evade it — we cannot brave it out — the boldest heart fails — the strongest body yields to God's "Cut it down!"

This command is final! There is all that is dreadful wrapped up in it — even a certain, fearful expectation of God's judgment, and the raging fire that will consume His enemies!

The fruitless professor is to be cut down and committed to the eternal flames of Hell!

Here is wrath — fearful wrath! Here is justice — inflexible justice! Here is vengeance — the vengeance of an infinite God!

O fruitless professor. . . Consider! Fear! Tremble! Repent!

God looks for fruit from every professor. He will certainly punish — if there is no fruit.

Fruitless professor — where will you be soon? The axe lies at your root, even now! The executioner is only awaiting the command!

Divine mercy will soon urge her last plea; the year of reprieve will soon expire — and then, "Cut it down!" is all that remains! Oh, how dreadful the thought — to go to Hell through the church of God! To profess that you are traveling to Heaven — when in reality you are going with the lost multitude to eternal perdition!

~ ~ ~ ~ The worthless sinner's place!

"Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her!" Luke 10:42

We often manifest our folly in our choices — but Mary displayed her wisdom. She chose to sit at the feet of Jesus as a humble learner — she . . . loved His person, admired His preaching, desired to learn His doctrine, and above all to imbibe His spirit. Her object was communion with Him — in which we become conformed unto His image. In her choice she revealed . . . great spirituality of mind; true wisdom and discernment; attachment to her Lord and His doctrine; deadness to the world and its vain formalities; a concern for the present welfare of her own soul; and a willingness to renounce all for Jesus.

Happy Mary! Honorable woman! May you be my pattern! Your choice was wise; your part was a worthy portion; and your example is held up for our imitation!

At the feet of Jesus we are safe — no enemy can overcome us there! At the feet of Jesus we are holy — no sin can gain dominion there! At the feet of Jesus we are happy — no trouble can be too much for us there!

My soul, choose Mary's place — and Mary's portion. There is a place at the feet of Jesus for you! Your sin is no obstacle in the way — for Jesus will pardon that! Your unworthiness is no barrier — for it is the worthless sinner's place!

Oh, take your place at His feet now! Listen to His sweet voice, receive His holy doctrines, taste His precious love, rest your soul on His atoning blood — and Heaven will immediately begin in your soul!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

God's sweetest attribute!

Men are deficient in mercy — but God, our God in Jesus, will display the greatest kindness and compassion to His children. This renders Him so amiable, suitable, and glorious in the estimation of His people. Mercy is God's sweetest attribute . . .as beautiful as the morning light, as measureless as the waters of the ocean, as boundless as illimitable space, as refreshing as the early dew, as glorious as the noon-day sun!

God's mercy is like His nature — pure, lovely, and eternal. His mercy is suited to all the needs of His children — it is free, full, and meets every case! Christian, the Lord assures you that He has mercy for you!

He has pardoning mercy — which will suit your sinfulness; mercy which will blot out your sins, and remove them from you as far as the east is from the west!

He has delivering mercy — which will meet your misery; mercy which will deliver you from . . .the power of sin, the bondage of Satan, the curse of the law, the fear of death, the terrors of judgment, and all the soul-troubles which may fall upon you on earth!

His mercy is tender mercy — which will suit the sickness of your soul. He will sympathize with you, pity you, and manifest the greatest forbearance and love. His mercy is so tender, that it will not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax. It will . . .encourage the weak desire, fan the feeble spark into a flame, and take the will for the deed.

His mercy is supplying mercy — to meet your needs and defects. It will supply all your needs, according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Whether your needs are temporal or spiritual — He will supply you. He will give you both grace and glory; and no good thing will He withhold from you, if you walk uprightly.

It is also sanctifying mercy — to suit your impurity. It will wash you in the laver of the Word, and in the fountain of a Savior's blood. It will teach you to wash your robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. It will sanctify your troubles, and make all things work together for your good.

It is rescuing mercy, which will appear for you, and deliver you from all the dangers which may line your way — and at last present you faultless before the throne of God!

In a word — God's mercy will meet every case, circumstance, and condition in which it is possible for you to be placed!

Reader, let me exhort you to dwell much on this excellent attribute of your God. Meditate on God as all-merciful and all-sufficient for our every state!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

God's prison!

"Then they will go away to eternal punishment — but the righteous to eternal life!" Matthew 25:46  
The lost sinner takes the greatest of all risks — he risks suffering the torments of Hell forever, rather than yield himself to God.

He is in DANGER — the greatest possible danger; for he has broken God's law, is under its curse, and cannot possibly be saved — unless its demands are met, and its penalty endured.

How can he meet its demands? He is insolvent, and has nothing to pay.

How can he endure its penalty, which is to be punished with everlasting destruction?

The penalty due to sin — is Hell. Hell is torment, wrath, despair! Eternal torment!

Just and infinite wrath! Never-ending despair!

If even the thought of these things is dreadful — then what must it be to actually endure them — and endure them forever, without hope, or mitigation, or end!

O what a fearful thing — to be in danger of Hell-fire! O how terrible the thought of being shut up in black despair, with devils and damned souls — the refuse of God's creation!

Hell is God's prison — where all His enemies are confined!

It is the place of punishment — where everyone suffers the just desert of his crimes!

It is a place horrible beyond description — beyond conception!

O, lost sinner! Hell is a dreadful place! To be damned is a terrible doom! It is forever! Yes, the worm that torments you — will never die; and the fire that punishes you — will never be quenched!

If you, my dear friend, live — neglecting God — walking in your own ways, and gratifying only your own passions and propensities — then you must go to Hell, and suffer God's just wrath — the punishment due to you for your sins!

God asks you, "Why will you die?" Why do you prefer . . . death — to life, damnation — to salvation, Satan — to Jesus, Hell — to Heaven?

Why?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ An unsaved person's perspective of Christians

I do not believe that you Christians believe your own creed — for if you were persuaded that things really are as your Bibles teach, and that we poor lost people were really going to such a dreadful place as you say Hell is — then you would act more humanely toward us.

If you saw our houses on fire — you would run and help us to put the fire out; or if you saw us in danger of death — you would try to do something to save us. But you pretend to believe that we are going to Hell, and that Hell burns with fire and brimstone forever, and that once there we can never get out — and yet you talk to us about all sorts of things — but never say one word to us about saving our souls from this terrible doom!

So I have reasoned thus: either you Christians don't believe what you say — or else you must be the most hardened and unfeeling wretches in the universe! Now, as I don't believe that you are

such cruel, hardened, and unfeeling people as this supposes — then I must conclude that, with all your talk — you Christians don't really believe what your Bibles teach!

For if you really believe what you say about sin, and Hell, and our danger — then you would act differently; and if you have a spark of kindness in your hearts — you would try to save us from such a dreadful doom. And, on the other hand, if you do not believe what you profess — then you Christians cannot be honest; and to say the least, there must be a great deal of hypocrisy among you.

Now, I honestly tell you that these are the things which have stumbled me more than anything, and until I can see you Christians act differently — I will not be persuaded to believe what your sort of folks say.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Friends!

"Henceforth, I no longer call you servants — but I have called you friends." John 15:15

Friends! What — the friends of Jesus! Yes!

And does He love us as His friends? Yes!

And does He treat us as His friends? Yes!

And does He expect us to walk with Him, and converse with Him, and confide in Him as His friends? Yes!

Precious Lord Jesus, how astonishing is Your love, how vast is Your condescension, how amazing is Your grace . . . to call such insignificant worms, such ungrateful sinners, such utterly unworthy creatures — Your friends!

Yes, henceforth, Jesus . . . treats us as His friends, walks with us as His friends, communes with us as His friends, and will take us to dwell in Heaven with Him forever as His friends!

Blessed, blessed forever be the Lord, for His free and sovereign grace!

Henceforth, by the grace of God — I must be a new man, walking by a new rule, and aiming at a new end!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We must continually come to Him!

One great part of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart is to . . . empty us, strip us of self, lead us to feel our own weakness, and bring us as poor sinners to look to Jesus alone, as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. And just in proportion as we feel our need of Christ, and realize our absolute nothingness without Christ — shall we prize Him, enjoy Him, and exercise dependence upon Him.

O how little do many of us know our need of Christ, and therefore it is that we . . . make so little use of Christ, receive so little from Christ, and do so little for Christ!

We come to Him at first — as poor, lost, helpless sinners — that we may be saved by His merit and mercy. And as believers, we must continually come to Him . . . with all our burdens — that He may bear them; with all our cares — that He may manage them; with all our sorrows — that He may sanctify them; with all our foes — that He may conquer them; with all our sins — that He may cleanse them; and with all our needs — that He may supply them.

All that we need is in Christ — and it is in Christ, for us. Our sense of our need of Christ, if it is deep and increasing — will lead us to daily come to Christ for all our supplies.

Our deep necessity fits us for Christ — and His infinite fullness fits Him for us!

Our trials, troubles, temptations, disappointments, and vexations are to teach us our need of Christ; and drive us continually to Him.

There is often much prayer — and yet little communion with Christ. We should realize that He is giving us His whole attention. He expects us to tell Him . . . all that troubles us, all that grieves us, all that pleases us, all that we need, and all that we desire. We should keep back nothing from Him — but speak to Him freely on every subject, and every circumstance. He is always with us, listening to us, and sympathetically entering into all our concerns!

We must be intimate with Christ. We must walk with Him. We must carry everything to Him. We must seek all we need from Him. We must be constantly . . .

going to Christ, conversing with Christ, and obtaining from Christ — if we would receive the consoling influences of His love!

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Let us often think of home!

"I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever!" Psalms 23:6

Notice, David's expectation for eternity. Not in the sheepfold in the wilderness — but in the house of the Lord! The dwelling-place of God — the family residence of the Father of mercies, and His beloved children. In that house, we shall have . . . all our desires gratified, all our prayers answered, and our highest expectations more than realized!

There we shall dwell in peace, united to all the saints, and enjoying the society of all the ransomed brethren! All friendship will be unchangeable, and fellowship perpetual and pure.

There we shall dwell and worship — and our worship will be spiritual, pure, and perfect!

There we shall dwell and enjoy — and our enjoyments will be dignified, delightful, and eternal.

There we shall dwell and obey — and our obedience will be perfect, hearty, and perpetual.

There, we shall dwell and rest — and our rest will be sweet, refreshing, and satisfying. There will be no wilderness storms there. There will be no cruel, crafty, malignant foes there.

O glorious prospect! O sweet anticipation!

In our Father's house are many mansions — and all those mansions will be occupied, for . . .every one beloved and chosen by the Father, every one for whom Jesus became a substitute and sacrifice, every one ever born of the Spirit — will be there!

All God's children shall be there — not one of them lost! All God's sheep shall be there — not one hoof left behind!

There the Eternal Father will be surrounded by, and enjoy the society of all His happy family. There the glorious Savior will see of the travail of His soul — and be fully and forever satisfied. There the Holy Spirit will fill all His temples, and enjoy His divine workmanship, and the presence of all whom He has prepared for glory.

There, Jehovah, at home with His people — will manifest forth His glory, and pour floods of light, love, and blessing upon them forever!

Well then may the Psalmist say, "In Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand are eternal pleasures!"

Let us often think of home! This vain world is not our rest. Here on earth, we have no continuing city. Home, the home of the believer's heart — is in the skies . . .where Jesus is, where Jesus reigns, where love is perfect, where there is always a full tide of joy, where God displays all his glory, where grace satisfies the utmost desires of every renewed soul.

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Such I may have been — but for free and sovereign grace!

"By the grace of God — I am what I am!" 1 Corinthians 15:10

Consider what you were — before saved by sovereign grace. Your heart was enmity against God, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked! You did not have one pure desire, one holy thought, or one feeling of love to God.

Further, what would you have been — but for the grace of God? Look at the vilest, the most debased, the most debauched of our race — and you may truly say, "Such I may have been — but for free and sovereign grace!"

"By the grace of God — I am what I am!" 1 Corinthians 15:10

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The benefits of prayer

Prayer carries every burden to the Lord — and leaves it there. Prayer goes to the Lord . . .with every need — to have it supplied; with every enemy — to have it conquered; with every corruption — to have it subdued; with every trouble — to have it sanctified, and with every promise — to have it fulfilled. Prayer . . .affects God's heart with a groan, opens God's hand with a cry, and obtains the most costly blessings with a tear! While a man can pray . . . he can never sink, he can never be wretched, he can never perish!

Reader, get and maintain a spirit of prayer; it will . . .ease your mind, quell your fears, and fortify your soul against the sorest trials!

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus!" Php 4:6-7

~ ~ ~ ~ His love uses therod— as well as gives the kiss!

"God is love!" 1 John 4:16

That is, in Christ, God is love.

All that God does for His children — is in love!

All that He withholds from us — is in love!

And all that He requires of us — is in love!

His precepts are from love — as much as His promises! His warnings are as much from love — as His invitations! His prohibitions are as much from love — as His permissions! His love uses therod— as well as gives the kiss! His love withholds — as well as gives!

All, all, is done in love!

O sweet and blessed representation of Jehovah! How can I be justified in complaining of any of His dealings? In Jesus, all His thoughts, are loving thoughts;

all His words, are loving words; and all His works, are loving works.

In giving, or withholding — He manifests His love.

In afflicting, or restoring — He alike displays His love.

Every pain, and every pleasure — is from His love.

Every storm, and every sunbeam — is from His love.

The fruitful shower, and the destroying hurricane — are ruled and overruled by divine love, for the good of the believer in Jesus.

"The Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son!" Hebrews 12:6

~ ~ ~ ~ I will come forth as gold!

"When He has tested me, I will come forth as gold!" Job 23:10 The Lord puts all of His people into His furnace! Some are long in melting and refining — and with others the work is quick. But long or short, the Lord will keep His people in the fire — until they are purified! A genuine Christian loses nothing in the furnace, but his dross. He comes forth bettered, purified, refined. He is more humble, his faith is more simple, and his life more spiritual. He shines like molten gold, and reflects the image of the great Refiner.

"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

~ ~ ~ ~

I am God's child!

"We are the children of God!" Romans 8:16

Never let us forget or lose sight of this — but let us live, walk, and act under the impression that, "I am God's child!"

He knows me — and knows all about me.

He loves me — and loves me with the same love with which He loves His only-begotten Son.

He cares for me — and so cares for me that I ought not to be anxious about anything.

He is with me — and will never for one moment trust me out of His sight, or out of the reach of His hand.

He appoints my daily lot — and will overrule everything for my eternal welfare!

~ ~ ~ ~

"Now he is comforted!" Luke 16:25

Poor suffering Lazarus had little comfort on earth — but he has plenty in Heaven. The discomfort he suffered here — must make his comfort there tenfold more sweet!

As it was with him, so will it be with us — we shall not lack comfort for long. We have much to comfort us now, even in our worst seasons — but the best is yet to come! The God of all comfort, who sends down drops of comfort now — will soon call us up to enter into the torrents of the fullness of His joy forever! Weeping may endure for a night — but joy comes in the morning. Soon our sufferings and sorrows will be forever ended!

"God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain!" Revelation 21:4

~ ~ ~ ~

That I may know Him!

Paul desired seven things especially — and they all referred to Christ, and they are all named in his epistle to the Philippians, and I propose to glance at them. Let us compare our desires with his as we go on, and may the Holy Spirit bless our brief meditation on the subject.

First, he says, "that I may KNOW Him!" (Php 3:10.) Christ had appeared to Paul, he was revealed in him, and was constantly preached by him. Christ was . . . the object of his trust, the subject of his ministry, and the joy of his heart! But he knew that there was much in Christ with which he was unacquainted. He knew but in part. He desired, therefore, to know more of . . . the glory of His person, the riches of His grace, the magnificence of His work, the excellency of His natures, the majesty of His kingdom!

Everything in Christ interested Paul. Creation was good — and grace was better; but Christ was best of all. He was never wearied . . . of thinking of Christ, of speaking of Christ, of learning of Christ. He went on with his work, he went on his way — with the desire constantly rising in his

heart, "That I may know Him!"

Beloved, how is it with you? Do you sympathize with Paul in this desire of his heart? Is it your daily wish, ardent desire, and constant aim — to know more of Jesus?

Throughout eternity we shall be learning Christ! He is the lesson placed before us in the church on earth; and He is the lesson placed before the church in Heaven. Time is given us to learn Christ — and, blessed be God, eternity will be given to us to learn even more of Christ!

Nothing endears eternity to me like this — it will be spent in learning, enjoying, and honoring Christ!

~ ~ ~ ~

Can we ever reach the promised land?

Life is but a journey — a journey from the present fleeting world, to the eternal world.

"By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night." Exodus 13:21

Israel needed a GUIDE in their journey from the wilderness to the promised land.

They had a long journey before them, which would take them forty years.

They had to travel by a strange path, on which they had never trodden before.

Numerous foes would endeavor to obstruct their progress. Many dangers lined the way. And they had evil and deceitful hearts!

Fellow-Christians — is it not even so with us? We are going on a journey to a country of which the Lord our God has told us.

The journey is long and trying. It takes some twenty, some forty, and some sixty years to travel from earth to Heaven.

It is a strange path. A path which no one knows — a path we have never trodden before. A path which by nature we could never find, and from which we are prone to turn aside.

We are surrounded by numerous foes, visible and invisible:

The WORLD frowning as a determined persecutor, or fawning as a base deceiver — is our foe. Now by its sneers, sarcasms, or sword — and then, by its gilded vanities, flesh-pleasing baits, and blandishments — it endeavors to turn us aside from the right ways of the Lord.

SATAN and his hosts — crafty, cunning, cruel, united, persevering and determined — set themselves to terrify and drive us back, or to allure us from the way.

And worst of all, in our own natures, we have a determined foe who is . . . ever present, ever vigilant, ever powerful. Yes, the FLESH lusts against the Spirit. We find a law in our members warring against the law of our minds.

The world, the flesh, and the devil all combine to . . .oppose our progress, hinder us in our march, and, if possible, to destroy us in the wilderness!

Then, there are so many dangers: the towering rocks of presumption, the quagmires of doubt and fear, the pitfalls of error, the ravines of willful sin, the fiery-flying serpents of temptation, the scorpions of indulged lust, the sunshine — and the shade;

the barren sands — and the verdant valleys; the granite rocks — and the flowing streams— all of them have dangers concealed in them! Nor can we be trusted alone for one moment — if we are to be safe. Worst of all, there are our distrustful and deceitful hearts!

With . . .so long a journey, so strange a path, such numerous foes, so many dangers, and such unbelieving hearts — can we ever reach the promised land?Can we?

Not if left to ourselves! Not if led only by Moses. We must have a guide . . .who well knows the road; who can conquer our many foes; who can lead us safely through all our dangers, who can bear with our stubborn hearts and lives!

We need a guide . . .whose wisdom is perfect, whose power is almighty, whose care is constant, whose patience is immutable, whose mercy endures forever!

God provided just what the Israelites needed in the wilderness — a guide to lead them by day and night. He went before them — pointing out the road, clearing it of insurmountable difficulties, and conducting them in it.

This is just what our good and gracious God does for us! He is really present with us — though unseen by us. He is never far from any one of us. He marks out our road, He removes every real impediment out of our way, and conducts us step by step in the path to the promised land!

Naturally we do not know the right path; left to ourselves, we would choose the short-cut, the smooth path, and well-frequented road. But He leads us in a zig-zag way, by a rough and uneven road — where there are but few fellow-travelers. His choice is best. The way He points out is the only right one. It is to humble us, and test us, and show what is in our hearts. It is that we may walk by faith — and not by sight. It is to teach us our need of Himself — and to lead us to cleave unto Him. "For this God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death", through death, and beyond it!

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go! I will guide you with My eye!"  
Psalms 32:8

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"That I may WIN Christ!" Php 3:8

Paul was not merely satisfied to know Christ, as the property of someone else; he wanted Christ as his own! He was not only willing to receive Christ as a free gift — but he would win Christ as a prize!

Was Christ to be run for — then he would run. Was Christ to be wrestled for — then he would wrestle. Were there any means by which Christ could be obtained, however painful, however

costly, however difficult — then Paul would use them!

Did he believe? It was that he might win Christ. Did he pray? It was that he might win Christ. Did he preach? It was that he might win Christ. Did he crucify the old man, mortify the flesh, beat his body and make it his slave? It was that he might win Christ. Did he suffer the loss of all things, and count them but dung and dross? It was that he might win Christ. Did he subject himself to stripes, imprisonment, hunger, cold, nakedness, and a martyr's death? It was that he might win Christ.

To possess Christ was his one object, his ruling desire!

Reader, is it your main object and desire?

Are you prepared to part with all to win Christ?

Would you take Christ — in exchange for ease, reputation, wealth, labors, sufferings, yes, even death itself? Paul was; and if you are not, his estimates of Christ and yours cannot be the same.

My soul, I charge you — let this be your object, let this be your aim, always and everywhere: to "win Christ!"

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Isthispleasing to God?

"Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus, to do this more and more!" 1 Thessalonians 4:1

In every place, in every circumstance, in every undertaking — the Christian should ask, "Isthispleasing to God?"

God is pleased or displeased . . .with every thought we think, with every word we speak, with every action we perform, with every emotion we feel.

Perhaps we do not sufficiently realize this. We think, speak, feel, and act — without ever considering whether we are pleasing God, or not. But this ought not to be, for He . . .gave us our being, redeemed us from sin and damnation, called us by His grace, and has blessed us with innumerable and interminable blessings — and all that we may glorify Him! And how can we glorify Him — but by habitually aiming to please Him? If we forget or lose sight of this — we forget and lose sight of the principal end of our being, and well-being.

For instance, the manner in which I employ my spare time — the amount of time I give to recreation or entertainment. Many Christians seem never to think whether the way in which they spend their time, is pleasing to God or not. If they did, would they ever go to some entertainments, or indulge in certain pleasures? Would the world have so much of their time, and the prayer-closet so little? How much time is wasted in frivolous ways, which are neither conducive to the health of the body, nor calculated to promote the spirituality of the mind.

Also, how many squander their money on dress, ornaments, or delicacies for the body — who never relieve the poor, or contribute to establish God's cause in the world; or if they do so at all, it is not in due proportion to their means. The pence are given to the Lord — the pounds are spent in the gratification of SELF!

If, when I am going to lay out money in ornaments or dress, or indulgences for the table, I was to ask, "Isthispleasing to God?" — would it not check my lavish expenditure? Would it not often change the course in which my money flows?

"And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way." Colossians 1:10

My object in everything I do — should be to please God. The one grand end of my life, the grand thing I am to aim at — is to please my Heavenly Father. I have . . . nothing to dread, but His frown, nothing to fear, but His displeasure, nothing to seek, but His approbation. If my Heavenly Father is pleased with me — it is enough.

What a comfort it is to know that my God is easily pleased — that it is not the amount of what I do — but the motive from which I do it, which He looks at! He is pleased with my poorest performances, with my most imperfect services, with only a cup of cold water given to one of His children — if my object is to please Him!

In everything I do, I should ask, "Isthispleasing to God?" If so, all is well.

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do — do it all for the glory of God!" 1 Corinthians 10:31. This is the rule — and we should walk by it.

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It will all end in mercy!

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

If you are a sincere believer in Jesus, whatever may be your present difficult circumstances, however trying, however perplexing, "It will all end in mercy!"

You may not think so now. You may be writing bitter things against yourself. You may be misinterpreting the designs of God's providence. You may be doubting the precious promises of God's holy Word. But, notwithstanding your mistakes, your doubts, your fears, your false conclusions — "It will all end in mercy!"

You do not think so — nor did Jacob once, nor did Joseph once, nor did Job once, nor did thousands once — who are now in glory! They were mistaken — and so are you! They judged by appearances — and so do you! They changed their minds — and so will you!

All your troubles are appointed in infinite love!

They are all weighed out by sovereign goodness!

They are all limited by perfect wisdom!

There is no 'chance' in what happens to the Christian!

Everything is divinely arranged and appointed!

Cheer up, my poor weary fellow-traveler! You will soon arrive at Home, and then you will see clearly and enjoy sweetly the blessed truth — that to the believer "all will end in mercy!"

Take comfort, poor afflicted fellow-Christian! Your afflictions are God's furnace, in which He is refining you! He is only fitting you to occupy a mansion in Heaven, and to sing the sweet and everlasting song — the theme of which will be, "It all ended in mercy!"

Fear not, poor feeble, fickle, faltering follower of Jesus! Though your faith is weak, though your fears are strong, though your doubts are painful, though you conclude that your case is singular and your condition hopeless — "the year of release is at hand," and then . . . your doubts will expire, your fears will flee away, your groans will be silenced, your feeble hopes will be realized, for "It will all end in mercy!"

My brother, are you in poverty, under persecution, or in bodily sickness? Cheer up! Your light shall soon "break forth as the morning!" Write it down in your memorandum book, or impress it upon your memory, or, what is better still — pray the Holy Spirit to give you the sweet inward assurance of the fact, that "It will all end in mercy," for "we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God, and are called according to His purpose!" Romans 8:28

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My friend, how is it with you?

"That Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain!" Php 1:20-21

Paul's third all-absorbing desire was to MAGNIFY Christ!

Paul desired to exhibit and exalt Christ! If he wrote — he wrote of Christ. If he spoke — he spoke of Christ. If he suffered — he suffered for Christ. If he sorrowed — it was because professors dishonored Christ.

Christ was to him dearer than the apple of his eye — and more precious than all things in earth or Heaven! He would live — if he could honor Jesus; or he would die for Him — if that would honor Him more.

He felt his obligation to Christ. He was inflamed with Christ's love. He was a sacrifice on Christ's altar. He was a vessel for Christ's honor. He would go anywhere, he would do anything — if he might but honor Christ. Heartily he would say, "Let the name of Paul perish, if the name of Christ can be magnified thereby!"

To him Christ was, in fact, all and all. He died for Christ; the honor of Christ was the end for which he laid down his life.

My friend, how is it with you?

Does your heart cry, "Oh, that I could honor Christ!"

Does your life make this impression on others: "That person aims to honor Christ!"

Is it your daily cry and prayer: "Let Christ be magnified in me, by me, and through me — in life, in death, in time, and forever!"

Oh my soul, let it be my constant desire and prayer — that Jesus, my Jesus, may be magnified by me!

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Paul desired to be exactly like Jesus!

"I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings — becoming like him in His death!" Php 3:10

Paul's next all-absorbing desire was to be CONFORMED to Christ! It was not enough to know Christ, to win Christ, to magnify Christ, or to be in Christ; Paul wishes to be LIKE Christ! He would . . . breathe His spirit, exhibit His temper,

copy His example, and be just like Christ!

He desired to be . . . like Christ in poverty, like Christ in suffering, like Christ in death itself!

Paul desired to be exactly like Jesus! Meek — as Jesus was meek. Patient — as Jesus was patient. Loving — as Jesus was loving. Useful — as Jesus was useful.

In every point resembling Him!

What admiration of Christ is here! What love to Christ! What self-renunciation!

What power of grace! What a wonderful transformation! How unlike 'Saul of Tarsus', the Pharisee of the Pharisees, the persecutor of the church, the blasphemer of the Nazarene! What could be more unlike? Once he saw no beauty in Christ — now he sees nothing but beauty! Once he could not bear the mention of His name — now he never seems happy, but when pronouncing it! Once he was exceedingly violent against Christ and His people — now his heartfelt abiding cry is, "I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings — becoming like Him in His death!"

Dear reader, have you ever experienced any such change? Are you panting, praying, striving to be like Jesus? Are you willing to be anything that Jesus was — that you may be like Him? Are you willing to suffer even death — that you may be conformed to Him?

My soul, this is a very high attainment — aspire to it! Seek grace day by day at the throne of grace — that you may so love, so admire, so adore the Savior — as to desire to be conformed to Him in life, in death, and forever!

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He felt himself in a great strait!

Paul's next all-absorbing desire was to be WITH Christ!

Paul dearly loved his work. He was greatly attached to the church — which needed his presence, gifts, and labors. He deeply sympathized with poor perishing sinners — who needed the gospel.

But such was his love to Jesus, that he felt himself in a great strait, "I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far!" (Php 1:23) He says nothing about place, or employment, the absence of sorrow, or the possession of joy; his heart was fixed on the person of Christ.

To be with Christ — this was his desire. To be with Christ anywhere — was enough.

To be with Christ forever — was a sufficient Heaven!

Paul was willing to lay down his body — if by doing so, he may be with Christ. To be with Christ, to him was far better than life with all its comforts. To be with Christ, to him was far better than the world with all its privileges and pleasures. To be with Christ! This is . . .the flower of bliss, the crown of glory, the perfection of happiness!

To be with Christ! Paul could desire nothing beyond this!

My friend, can you empathize with Paul here?

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This is a sweet and precious truth!

"I am glorified in them!" John 17:10

That is, I HAVE been glorified . . .by their faith, for they have exercised confidence in Me; by their choice, for they have left all and followed Me; by their ministry, for they went where I sent them, and served as I directed them; by their self-denial, for they have taken up their cross and have followed Me; by their perseverance, for they have adhered to Me when others forsook Me; by their holy character, for they have endeavored to imitate Me.

I SHALL be glorified . . .in their full redemption and perfect salvation, in their worship and services, in their motives and actions, by their undivided love and practical holiness!

Jesus gets glory by all that He does, or suffers, or procures for His people — and by all that they do and suffer for Him! This is a sweet and precious truth to the believer — full of comfort, and a source of the sweetest joy!

Jesus is glorified by all that He does for me — and by all that I do for Him!

Marvelous mystery! Glorious scheme! Worthy at once of the wisdom, majesty, and grace of God!

~ ~ ~ ~ The world's politics, pleasures, and pursuits!

The world and the Church are essentially and eternally distinct — and they ought to be distinguishable. The Church ought not to mix with the world — but to bear a practical testimony against it, that its works and ways are evil. All through our Lord's prayer, He keeps up the distinction, and twice over He asserts of His disciples, "They are not of the world — even as I am not of the world!"

Believers are not of the world. They are born from above, and possess a nature far superior to that of the world — which unfits them for its pleasures and pursuits, and qualifies them for the enjoyments and employments of the Heavenly world.

They are delivered from the thralldom of the world — and are raised above its pursuits and its joys.

They will not be conquered by the world — but overcome it by faith.

They will not be judged with it — but with Christ will sit in judgment upon it.

They will not be punished like it — neither in the present nor in the future state.

True believers are not of the world!

Look at the world's state — condemned; and theirs, justified!

Look at its condition — wretched; and theirs, happy!

Look at its character — enemies to God; and theirs, the friends of God!

Look at its course — sin; and theirs, holiness!

Look at its god — Satan, the most degraded, depraved, and despicable being in existence; and theirs, Jehovah, the high and lofty one, the holy and happy one, the great and glorious one!

Look at its end — destruction; and theirs, salvation.

The world is darkness — they are light. The world is corrupt — they are purified.

The world is in chains — they are free.

We are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world!

If we are poor — let us not, then, envy the world.

A saint in rags — is preferable to a sinner in robes!

A believer in a hovel — is happier than a worldling in a palace!

A Christian at the worst — is far better off than a worldling at the best!

Whatever we have — we have with God's blessing! Whatever the world has — it has with God's curse!

We are training for greatness and grandeur! The world is preparing for shame and everlasting contempt!

The world is no model for a Christian! We should . . . not dress so expensively, nor furnish our homes so extravagantly, nor live so luxuriously — as the world does! But as strangers and pilgrims in the world — we should abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

Let us not be dejected — if we are stripped of what we now have. We are not of the world — we do not have our portion here. We need but little of this world's goods, and our Heavenly Father will see to it that we have enough. He will not allow us to lose anything that is essential to our holiness or happiness. As our lives are insured by our Heavenly Father — so all our needs are anticipated, and provided for. Lose what we may — we shall never lose . . . our God, our title deed to our glorious inheritance, or our place at the marriage supper of the Lamb!

Let us not be much troubled about the world. As we are . . . chosen out of it,

redeemed from it, and shall soon leave it — we should not allow ourselves to be very much affected by any of its affairs. The world's politics, pleasures, and pursuits — should be looked upon by us with the eye of a foreigner — for we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, as all our fathers were. We arrived in the world but yesterday — and we leave tomorrow!

Let us not, therefore, mix up with the world, or be much taken up with its schemes and cares, its speculations or its prospects.

Let us always keep up our distinction from the world. Not in a spirit of pride or self-righteousness, as if conscious of some supposed superiority in ourselves. But in a meek, lowly, and loving spirit — let us avoid all that is really evil, and abstain from what has the appearance of evil.

Heavenly Father, as You have chosen us out of the world — give us grace to live above the world, and enable us to glorify You in the world! Make us like your beloved Son, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Oh, to live in this world as strangers and pilgrims — as those whose treasure is above — and whose hearts are there also!

~ ~ ~ Your portrait!

"Those who are whole do not need a physician — but those who are sick!" Matthew 9:12

The world is one vast hospital. Jesus is the only physician in it; He has healed thousands, He will heal thousands more. But multitudes reject Him; they imagine they can do without Him; they think that they are whole — and therefore do not need a physician.

Sin is the disease of the soul. The sinner's state, is a diseased state. He is sick — mortally sick. His sickness is hereditary. He inherited it from his parents. He brought it into the world with him. That is true of all — which was spoken by David of himself, "Behold I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me!"

Sin is increased by wicked habits. We go astray from the womb, speaking lies. We contract the habit of sinning — so that to sin becomes as natural to us, as to breathe.

The disease of sin is contagious. We contaminate others — and others increase our sickness. "Bad company corrupts good character."

The progress of this disease is constant — it spreads daily — almost insensibly, and especially from neglect.

Sin produces great weakness, so that the sinner cannot of himself, do anything really good.

Sin not only makes us weak, but stupid — so that we become careless and foolish. We are dying of disease — but are unconcerned about it! There is a skillful physician at hand — but we refuse to apply to Him!

Sin has destroyed all our moral beauty — and left us loathsome, unsightly, and wretched! It produces innumerable and horrendous pains — and surrounds us with sorrows, cares, and woes!

Sin brings us to death — not only separating the body from the soul — but separating the soul from God!

Sin is the forerunner of eternal and unmitigated weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth!

There is no sickness like sin — yet this disease is universal. All are sick! "Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good — not even one!" Romans 3:9-12

This disease affects every part of man, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it — only wounds and bruises and putrefying sores!" Isaiah 1:5-6. Man is one mass of moral disease! Every power and faculty is disordered. All the elements of destruction are within himself. He deeply needs a physician, for he is dreadfully sick; so sick, that there is but a step between him and damnation!

My dear reader, this is your state! The Holy Spirit has given your portrait in the passages you have just read. Can you recognize the likeness? If not — your eye is diseased! Do you feel alarmed at the representation? If not — your conscience is diseased! Are you determined at once to apply to the physician? If not — your heart is diseased!

The plague spot is upon you! You are very far advanced in a moral and spiritual cancer — which is secretly hurrying you to eternal death and damnation! O may the Lord . . . open your eyes — that you may see your dreadful state; enlighten your conscience — that you may be alarmed at your condition; and quicken your soul — that you may flee to Jesus and receive health, healing, and everlasting soundness from His hands!

Jesus is the best physician. His work is to heal souls. He is every way qualified for His work.

He is a wise and skillful physician. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Him — and He employs them for the good of souls. He has been employed in healing sinners for six thousand years — His skill has never been baffled, nor has one patient died under His hand yet!

He is a kind and tender physician. Not one harsh word is ever spoken by Him, to a poor broken-hearted sinner; nor does He ever refuse to attend to any case. His kindness is such — that He weeps with those who weep! And His tenderness is so great — that it is said in reference to all His patients, "In all their afflictions — He is afflicted."

He is a friendly and faithful physician. There is nothing forbidding or austere in His manner, nor does He ever deceive. Friendship has erected her throne in His heart, and built her mansion in His bosom; and He is ever faithful to His word, and to the poor sick sinner who applies to Him.

He is a willing and accessible physician. Willing to heal anyone who is willing to be healed by Him — and to go anywhere to perform His miracles of mercy. As when applied to of old, He said "I will come and heal him!" Just so now! He stoops to the beggar in the dust, and visits the needy on the dunghill. He is always ready at hand. You need no messenger to send and fetch Him — He is within hearing! He is nearer than anyone else — He can hear the softest whisper of the heart!

He is the great physician, no one can be compared to Him for qualifications or success.

He is the good physician, no one beside Him can be found — who so kindly, so freely, and so effectually heals every applicant! His blood is the true balm of Gilead.

It is not only His work — but His delight to heal sin-sick souls! And He heals them all freely, certainly, and perfectly! His terms are, "No Money! No Price!" Those whom He restores to health — will enjoy health forever. He makes every one of His patients immortal — and surrounds them with all that can make them holy and happy forever!

~ ~ ~ Will this please God?

"So we make it our goal to please Him." 2 Corinthians 5:9

Our principal business on earth is to please God. This is the grand end of our creation — we were formed to glorify Him. This was the great design in our redemption — to show forth His praise. On this one object — our attention should be fixed! To this one end — all our efforts should be directed!

In every enterprise, our first inquiry should be — Will this please God? And after every engagement, the point we should strive to ascertain is — Have I pleased God in this?

And if this is true — then how have we been living? Day after day has passed away — and we have never once thought about pleasing God! One engagement has followed another — but it has never been our aim to please God! In this we are truly guilty!

And this, while it proves our depravity — also accounts for our unhappiness. We never can be happy — but as we have a well-grounded conviction that we are pleasing God!

Reader, has pleasing God been the main object of your life? Have you been habitually aiming at this one end? Or, rather have you not entirely forgotten it, and busied yourself about almost everything beside?

"That you may live a life worthy of the Lord, and may please Him in every way." Colossians 1:10

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O what a dwelling!

"The sinners in Zion are terrified! Trembling grips the godless! Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burnings?" Isaiah 33:14

These 'sinners in Zion' represent professors of religion.

Many profess the Christian religion — who are not really Christians! They are strangers to the new birth. They have never passed from death unto life. Their opinions perhaps are changed — but their hearts remain just as they were. Their lives may be moral — but their hearts are not spiritual. They are enemies to God — though they profess to be His friends! They are rebels against the government of Jesus — while they profess to be His loyal subjects.

Commending the Savior with their lips — they withhold their heart from Him. In professing Christ — they cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" But by living in sin — they cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" They are not struggling with sin — but sternly attached to sin! It is not weakness which

causes their conduct — but inveterate wickedness!

They are hypocrites — that is, they wear a mask! They pretend to be what they well know they are not. With their mouths they show much love to Christ — but their hearts go after their lusts!

Reader, it is a dreadful thing . . . to be a hypocrite; to be found among the Lord's people — while not really of them; to profess Christ — and not to possess Christ!

You may deceive men — but you cannot deceive God!

You may be bold and fearless now — but when God shall unmask you, and expose the nakedness of your soul — then you will be afraid; fearfulness and trembling will seize upon you suddenly!

If you are indulging in any known sin, under a profession of religion — then you are a 'sinner in Zion' — and your state is most dangerous!

The time is coming, when the 'sinners in Zion' shall be afraid. God has threatened them. He has threatened them with His sorest judgments. He is true and faithful to His Word. His wrath is eternal — for it is His just displeasure against sin, it is His righteous opposition to the sinner. He hates all sin. But He especially hates deception! Hypocrisy is odious in His sight. He has pronounced the most dreadful woes against all such. They will not find any mercy at His hands — if they persevere in their hypocrisy!

How will they be able to lift up their faces before Him in judgement — whose eyes are as a flame of fire, who has been witness to all their hypocrisy, and who hates all the workers of iniquity! In the prospect of that day, God proposes the most solemn QUESTIONS:

"Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire?" Fire inflicts the most dreadful pains. It is used by the Lord to represent the punishment that is to be inflicted upon all ungodly people. It is not merely fire — but consuming fire. Fire in its strength! Fire raging as it does when well fed with fuel! O how dreadful to be tormented in that flame! To be surrounded by that fierce, scorching, destructive element! Sinner! think of devouring fire, a lake of devouring fire — it is the due desert of your sins!

Then, there are everlasting burnings! "Who of us can dwell with everlasting burnings?" There is a fire that never shall be quenched! There are torments that shall never, never, never end! Yes, while God lives to punish, while the cause of punishment remains — the sinner must be punished!

The torments of Hell will not purify. The lost are never sanctified by their sufferings in Hell. They will sin yet more and more — and justice requires that punishment should continue to be inflicted.

Impenitent sinners are to dwell with everlasting burnings. Hell is to be their unchangeable residence, their eternal portion. O what a dwelling! What a doom! What a destiny! And yet it is just — strictly just!

My reader, God directs you to put the question to your own conscience: "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burnings?"

Ah! What if you should! What if your profession should end in this doom! What if your hope should prove like the spider's web? It may! It is possible. Is it probable? Search and look! A mistake here is fearful, it is fatal, it is irremediable!

Deceitful and deceiving professor — ponder these solemn questions. They are especially addressed to you. Every false covering will soon be stripped off. Your heart and your life will be laid bare — by the holy, sin-hating, sin-punishing God!

Do not even dream of redemption from the devouring fire, when once in it — or of the everlasting burnings being quenched! That is the greatest folly. It is an invention of the father of lies — to deceive your souls, and secure your damnation! If you persevere in sin, if you continue to practice hypocrisy — I solemnly warn you, that you shall surely perish! Hell will be opened to meet you at your death, the fierce flames of damnation will curl around you, the doors of the horrid prison of despair will close upon you— and you will be lost, lost, lost forever!

We must sound the alarm! We would alarm you — to prevent your ruin!

Your sin deserves Hell. It demands punishment. It appeals to the justice of God — and its appeal will be regarded. A just God must punish the impenitent sinner. Hear then, the warning voice! Flee from the wrath to come! Hasten and escape from the consuming fire — from the everlasting burnings! Flee, flee for refuge, and lay hold of the hope set before you in the gospel.

Flee, flee, flee from the everlasting burnings!!!

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Nothing is so filthy, so impure, so loathsome!

"Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin!" Psalms 51:2

"Create in me a clean heart, O God!" Psalms 51:10

A clean heart is one that is . . .purified from guilt — by the blood of Jesus; and cleansed from filth — by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our hearts by nature, are all unclean. They are the most unclean things in existence! Nothing is so filthy, so impure, so loathsome — as the human heart!

The awakened sinner discovers that he is unclean, that his heart is unholy — and he desires to be thoroughly cleansed. He is not, he cannot be satisfied with outward reformation; he wants inward renovation. No promise in God's book suits him so well as, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws!" Ezekiel 36:25-27

"O Lord," he cries, "fulfill this precious promise in my experience. Give me the new heart, and take away the stony heart from me. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquities, and cleanse me from my sin. Make me holy — whatever I may suffer in the process."

The clean-hearted person . . .hates sin, shrinks from sin, and longs for entire freedom from sin! But if the heart is not changed, the only thing feared is punishment, and the only thing sought is happiness.

The Holy Spirit alone can give us such views of sin — as will lead us to hate it; and He alone can give us such views of our own hearts — as will prompt us to cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God! Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin!"

~ ~ ~ "Should it be according to your mind?" Job 34:33

We are prone to be fretful, to complain of the dispensations of Divine Providence, and to reflect harshly upon the Lord's dealings with us.

We want our own way.

We wish to carve for ourselves.

We would be treated as God's favorites.

We want our ease, and prosperity, and pleasure, consulted in all things. And if this does not appear to be done — if our wills are crossed, if our schemes are frustrated, if our purposes are broken off — then we stumble, think ourselves badly treated, and look for everybody to sympathize with us.

Under these circumstances, God comes to us — as we sit among our broken cisterns, surrounded by our dethroned idols — and puts this question to us: "Should it be according to your mind?" Are you wiser than God? Are you kinder than God? Are you holier than God? Are you more just than God? Are you better informed than God? May not your mind be dark, or selfish, or foolish? Should it then be according to your mind? Should you reign — or God?

Remember that God acts in the highest wisdom; His motives are grace and justice; and all His purposes are worthy of Himself. The least the Christian can do is to submit — and to prefer God's wisdom, way, and work — to his own. Seeing God has so arranged all events, that all things must work together for the good of His people — they, at least, should daily say, "Father, may Your will be done!"

O my soul, seek grace from God, not only to submit and be resigned to the dispensations of Divine Providence — but to acquiesce in them, and be pleased with the whole of them! Your good is consulted — your best interests are secured; and soon, very soon, it will be seen that infinite wisdom and mercy, grace and goodness, have marked out every step of your road!

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

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"How long will you love vanity?" Psalms 4:2

Vanity represents the light, changeable, carnal, and fading things of time. Upon these things, the natural heart is set; around them, the unsanctified affections gather. What a vanity it is to prefer . . . human friendship — to divine friendship, earthly riches — to Heavenly riches, carnal honors — to spiritual honors, and the pleasures of a day — to the joys of eternity!

Vanity appears in the intoxicating cup, the mirthful and costly attire, and trifling with God. Surely every worldly man walks in a vain show, like an actor on the stage — and displays the most consummate folly!

Reader! are you in love with vanity? Do you love that which leads from God, keeps Him out of the thoughts, and binds you down to earth? This is vanity! How long will you love it? You have been doing so for years — though warned, convinced, and having promised to reform. You are doing so now, though . . .mortality is at work within you, death is very near you, Hell is open before you, and eternity is within a step of you!

You love vanity, when you may . . .obtain divine mercy, enjoy peace with God, receive sanctifying grace, and walk in the way to Heaven.

"How long will you love vanity?" Until . . . some sudden stroke takes you away; or some affliction puts you beyond the reach of mercy; or God's Spirit ceases to strive with you; or Satan fills your heart as he did the heart of Judas; or God laughs at your calamity?

How long? God your Creator would ask you. "Why will you die?"

Will you carefully consider this question, and give the Lord an answer? Will you tell Him why you prefer . . .eternal death — to eternal life, sin — to holiness, and Satan — to Himself?

"They who observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercy!" Jonah 2:8

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See the cause of my happiness

My soul, meditate for a few moments on what Jesus is to you, and what Jesus has done for you. Look back and glance at the circumstances in which He found you — and the deliverance which He wrought for you.

1. The circumstances in which Jesus found you. Jesus found me out of the way. God by His law had marked out a way in which His creatures should walk — its character was holiness, and its end His glory. But all we like sheep had gone astray, we had turned every one to his own way. We were in the path of death and destruction, and on the way to Hell.

We were not only out of the way — but we were enslaved. We were . . .slaves of sin, the drudges of the world, and led captive by the Devil at his will.

We were diseased — as well as enslaved. We were leprous from head to foot. We had the plague of the heart! The whole head was sick, and the whole heart was faint.

We were imprisoned, as well as diseased. We were shut up in unbelief and sin. Our cell was cold and damp, dark and narrow — and our imprisonment was not merely for a few years — it was forever!

We were dead, though still conscious, and to some things alive. Dead in trespasses and sins.

In this state we were — and we loved it well. We neither desired, nor sought deliverance. Left to ourselves. . .we would have wandered on in darkness, until we had perished in our sins; we would have continued the slaves of sin and Satan forever; our disease would have preyed upon our vitals to all eternity; our prison walls would have enclosed us still; we would have remained dead in sin, we would have suffered all the pangs of damnation forever!

2. The deliverance which Jesus wrought for you. Jesus saved me!

He saved me from the roaring lion, who goes about seeking to devour me!

He saved me from my raging lusts, so that sin shall not have dominion over me!

He saved me from righteous wrath, and I, being justified by His blood, shall be saved from wrath through Him!

He saved me from death, the 'king of terrors,' depriving the monster of his sting, and giving me the victory over him!

He has also saved me from the flaming furnace of Hell — from that lake of fire, and those floods of flame in which the lost must welter forever!

See the cause of my happiness — I have a Savior! A Savior who is divine. A Savior who has ever loved me. A Savior who lived, labored, and died for me. A Savior who pleads for me before the throne of His Father. A Savior who is in His Father's house, preparing a place for me. A Savior who will soon come and receive me to Himself, that so I may be forever with Him! Yes, I have a Savior — one who . . . watches over me, walks through the wilderness with me, and rejoices to do me good.

Reader, have you a Savior? Can you use these two precious words, "My Savior"?

Have you realized that you were lost? Have you fled to His cross? Have you fallen into His arms? Have you been cleansed by His blood, and clothed in His righteousness? Do you possess His Holy Spirit?

Make sure work, O make sure work! Eternity is just at hand! Death is coming! Judgment follows! And then — an eternity of happiness or woe! Your eternal all depends on having Jesus for your Savior! No one can save you but Jesus. No one can . . . support you in sickness, comfort you in death, or give you victory over the grave — but Jesus!

~ ~ ~ ~ A most influential sermon!

"You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith, my patience, my love, and my endurance." 2 Timothy 3:10

A holy life is a most influential sermon!

"You ought to live holy and godly lives!" 2 Peter 3:11

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WHY does He love me?

To love, and be loved — is real happiness. Our highest honor, and our sweetest happiness below — is to be beloved of God. For if God loves us — He will withhold no truly good thing from us.

"I will heal their waywardness and love them freely — for My anger has turned away from them!" Hosea 14:4

What will God do for His people? He will love them freely!

He will prefer you to all others — setting His eye and His heart upon you.

He will take you into fellowship — the nearest, dearest, sweetest fellowship with Himself.

He will make you happy with the persuasion of the facts . . . that He has loved you with an everlasting love, that He delights in His love to you, and that He will forever love you freely!

O blessed state — that the great, the infinite, the holy Lord God, will love a worm like me . . . preferring me even to the angels; indulging me with the freest, sweetest fellowship with Himself; and sweetly persuading my soul of His eternal love to me!

WHY does He love me? Just because He will. The cause, the reason — is to be found in His loving heart, and sovereign will alone. Not because I am good, or amiable, or can repay His love — for He loves freely, and fixes His love on the most unlikely and unworthy objects!

How precious the Lord's people are to Him! Notwithstanding all their unworthiness and sinfulness. Notwithstanding all their departures from Him, and unkindness to Him. There is nothing on earth, or in heaven, except His only begotten Son — that is as precious to the heart of God, as His people are!

God's love is always free and unchangeable. Everything outside of God will change — but His love is immutable!

"Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you!"  
Jeremiah 31:3

Lord, help me to believe the love which You have for me — and to love You in return! O shed abroad Your sweet love in my heart, and fill that heart with glowing love to You!

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I am dying! The words of the dying, are often striking and impressive. We remember them, and derive benefit from them. This has always been the case, especially with the saints of God. The words of the patriarch Joseph to his brethren, when he was dying, are so peaceful, so prophetic, so encouraging — that I feel inclined to meditate on them a little. His sun was going down in a calm clear sky: all behind was mercy — all before was glory. His brethren are gathered around him to see him depart, and he said, "I am dying. But God shall surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Genesis 50:24.

"I am dying." Death is always solemn. It generally awakens painful reflections. It is often attended with the sweetest joys.

"I am dying," that is, I am about to leave . . . the wilderness — for the promised land;

the strange country — for my pleasant home; the field of conflict — for the abode of peace!

"I am dying," that is, I will soon . . . heave my last sigh, utter my last groan, feel my last pain, taste the cup of sorrow for the last time!

"I am dying," that is, I am about . . . to depart to be with Christ, to enjoy the glorious presence of God, and to be one with all the glorified forever!

"I am dying," that is, I will soon bid an eternal farewell . . .to all my doubts and fears,  
to all my sins and sorrows, to all my foes and follies, and enter into peace, safety, and perfect holiness! To me, as a believer in Jesus . . .death has no sting, the grave has no terrors, eternity awakens no alarms! My sins are pardoned, for His name's sake, my soul is justified, by His blood, and

my person is in eternal union with His. To die is gain! To die is to be perfectly holy and happy! To die, is simply to go home to my Father's house — to inherit and inhabit the place that Jesus has prepared for me!

"I am dying." Shall I regret it? Shall I dread it? Oh, no! May the Lord give me grace, to hail my dying day with pleasure, and to rejoice in the thought of being absent from the body, and present with the Lord!

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Pierced!

"He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed!" Isaiah 53:5

If we would enjoy peace, grow in grace, and walk with God — there is one object on which the eye of the mind should be constantly fixed. Therefore it is written, as the language of our crucified Lord, "They shall look upon Me whom they havepierced!"Zechariah 12:10.

Pierced! WHO pierced Him? WE did — and pierced Him to the heart! Nor were we satisfied with piercing Him once — for we have pierced Him often, and pierced Him through and through! Our unbelief pierces Him; our ingratitude pierces Him; the coldness of our love pierces Him; our forgetfulness pierces Him; our preferring the world to Him pierces Him; our disobedience to His Word pierces Him; and our doubting of His love pierces Him!

It was WE who pierced Him on Calvary! We put the nails and the hammer into the hands of the executioners! We put the spear into the hand of the Roman soldier!

Yes, it was we who . . .gathered the thorns, picked out the sharpest, formed them into a mock crown, thrust it on His head, and with the staff beat the thorns into His temples!

See, see, there He hangs! Pierced in His head, hands, feet, and side — pierced for us — pierced by us!

Look, my soul, at the pierced One!

God's holy Son hangs on that cross!

O my soul, look at Jesus! He is your Substitute. He is there for you! He is suffering death for you! He is bearing the desert of your sins in His body on the tree! He is enduring your curse, being made accursed for you!

He is revealing . . .what is in man's nature, what is in God's heart, and what He is willing to do and suffer — rather than I should perish!

Yes, Jesus is there for me! He represents my person! He answers for my crimes! He dies in my stead!

O Savior, was ever any love, was ever any agony, was ever any death — like Yours!

Look, my soul, look to Jesus, the pierced One!

Look, and mourn — because your sins degraded, disgraced, and put Him to grief!

Look, and rejoice, for you shall have . . . dignity by His degradation, honor by His disgrace, and life by His death!

Look, and be sorry that you have ever sinned, and so caused Jesus to suffer! Look, and rejoice that you shall live forever to glorify and praise His name!

O my soul, Jesus was wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities! His blood has made your peace with God, His righteousness gives you a title to eternal life, and His death delivers you from dying!

I fix my eye intently on Jesus on the Hill Calvary, and marking all His tears, wounds, and agonies — I feel that I was the cause of all. I myself did it! Yes, I MYSELF . . .

bruised Him, scourged Him, spit on Him, crowned Him with thorns, smote Him with the fist, and nailed Him to the cursed tree! I inflicted it all.

Yet, O wonder of wonders! I derive pardon, holiness, and eternal life from it!

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God shall surely visit you!

"I am dying. But God shall surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Genesis 50:24

"God shall surely visit you." When I can visit my beloved Christian friends no more — God will. He visits all of His children, walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks. When His people meet — He meets with them, whether in public assemblies, or in the social circle. His church is His garden, in which He takes His pleasant walks. It is His city, in which He loves to dwell. It is His family, with which He feels at home.

He visits every individual Christian also. To the babes — He shows tender care, and nurse-like kindness. To the young men — He imparts strength and courage. To the fathers — He opens his heart, and shows them the depths of His infinite love. To the afflicted — He manifests sympathy. To the tempted — He affords support. And to the poor — He brings supplies.

He visits His children . . . in the prayer-closet, at the family altar, and in the house of prayer.

He visits them as they sit around His table, and sing His praise.

He visits them in the valley of trouble — where they sigh and weep.

He visits them when oppressed — to support and set them free.

He visits them in sickness — to comfort and make their bed.

He visits them when they backslide — to restore them.

He visits them in the valley of the shadow of death — to conduct them safely through. The Lord has visited me at times in the past — and, blessed be His name, He will surely visit me in the future. He will visit . . .to sweeten every bitter cup, to sanctify every trying dispensation, and to enable me patiently to bear every cross.

He will visit, to bring me up out of this land — this land of trial and tribulation, this land of sins and sorrows. His last visit will be the sweetest, as introductory to His eternal presence and glory!

He will surely visit His children — but it may be to bereave. It may be to remove some idol. Or it may be, to strip me of something which encumbers and hinders me in my journey.

He will visit, and His visits will be in mercy — whether He comes . . .to commend — or reprove; to comfort — or grieve; to give — or take away; to clothe — or strip;

to fill the mouth with songs — or the eyes with tears! Our prayers call for mercies, and our sins call for stripes — and He will surely answer our call.

Blessed, forever blessed, be His holy name . . . for every visit He has paid me, for every loving look He has given to me, for every sweet word He has spoken to me, and for every blessing He has conferred upon me!

And now, O Lord, visit me often, stay with me long — and manifest Yourself to me more fully, and more gloriously than you have ever done! Especially visit me when on the bed of sickness, and in the hour of death, when I am descending into the grave, that land of darkness and corruption! Then, then let me hear the voice of mercy saying, "God shall surely visit you, and bring you out of this land!"

~ ~ ~ ~ "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest!" Psalms 55:6 The trials of a believer are often severe. Many a storm has he to endure, many a river to ford, and many a fire to pass through — in his way home to the promised land. Little did the Christian think, when he first stepped into the liberty of the gospel — that there were such rough roads, dark nights, and terrible storms before him; but, more or less, every traveler to Mount Zion must experience them. It is generally found to be a rough road, which leads to the celestial city. Many a Christian has found his courage fail him, and his heart misgive him, on his way home. The darkness is sometimes so dense, the cross is at times so heavy, the disappointment is at some seasons so great — that the stoutest heart quails, and unites with the timid spirit, in exclaiming, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest!"

These trials are necessary, to . . .try our sincerity, exercise our graces, and render the promises sweet and precious. When all goes smooth, and everything is pleasant . . .we attach but little importance to the promises, have little power in prayer, and are too apt to over-value ourselves.

But trying times . . .endear the throne of grace, strip us of pride and self-importance, and strengthen our trust in Jesus.

Never is Christ so precious — as in times of peculiar trial. Never is the Bible so valued — as in the day of trouble and distress. The wilderness with its barren burning sands, its storms and tempests, its dangers and its difficulties — endears the promised land; and makes the pilgrim occasionally to cry out, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest!"

Rest! O how sweet is the thought of rest — to the weary, way-worn, exhausted traveler! Rest! O how sweet is the thought of rest — to the afflicted, tried, and tempted Christian! He most generally thinks of Heaven as a place of rest: rest from suffering, rest from sorrow, rest from toil, and rest from conflict.

Rest with Jesus.

Rest in the home of God.

Rest, perfect and perpetual rest.

Peaceful and glorious rest.

We have the foretastes of it occasionally now, which makes us at times long for its fullness and perfection. Like the grapes of Eshcol, which when tasted, stimulates us to hasten across the wilderness, that we may take possession of the promised land; so the inward calm, the secret repose, the rest at times enjoyed in the soul — urges us on, and makes us cry out, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest!"

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O the wonders couched in electing love!

"For you are a holy people, who belong to the Lord your God. Of all the people on earth — the Lord your God has chosen you to be His own special treasure!" Deuteronomy 7:6

God highly prizes His people. Yes, it is impossible to say how highly He prizes them. Those are wondrous words, "For the Lord has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His own special treasure!" Psalms 135:4

Did the shepherd prize his flock? God calls His people, "His flock, His beautiful flock."

Does the miser prize his wealth? God says of His people, "You shall be a special treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is mine."

Does the prince prize his jewels? God says of His people, "They shall be Mine, in that day when I make up My jewels!"

Does the bridegroom prize his beloved and dearly purchased bride? It is written, "As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride — so shall your God rejoice over you!"

Does the reigning monarch prize his crown? God has said, "You shall be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God."

What wondrous love, such expressions as these represent! How precious must the Lord's people be to Him! Truly they are His special treasure!

God CHOSE them to be special unto Himself. He chose them out from among others. He chose them in preference to others.

He chose them out from others, on purpose that they may be a special people unto Himself. And in so doing, He acted FREELY. It was not on account of anything He saw in them, or on account of anything He expected from them; but in the exercise of His most free and holy sovereignty — He chose them to participate in the glory of His Son!

In choosing them, He acted also DELIBERATELY. It was no hasty choice. His thoughts had been eternally filled with them. His heart had been eternally set upon them. Therefore He chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world!

In choosing them, He acted WISELY — as He really desired to have them. For each one of them is ready to confess that if God had not chosen them — that they would never have chosen Him! The nature regulates the choice; and as our nature is carnal and impure — we would never have chosen God, who is spiritual and holy.

His choice was just an early expression of His LOVE. The love which chose them — would do anything for them, and give anything to them! Therefore God spared not His own Son — but delivered Him up for them all; and in so doing, gave them the assurance that He will also freely give them all things in Christ.

O the wonders couched inelectinglove!

This act of choosing such creatures as we are, to be a special people unto Himself, displays . . . such grace, such condescension, such infinite wisdom and love!

God's election says, "The Lord loves you!" Loves us! Yes, and with a love that is eternal, immutable, sovereign, infinite, and free! All the love of God is lavished upon us as His special people in Christ. Oh, those wondrous words of Jesus, "You have loved them — even as You have loved Me!" John 17:23

But few among the worldly wise, But few of nobler race, Obtain the favor of Your eyes, Almighty King of grace!

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Tell them that their poor brother is in flames — tormenting flames, inextinguishable flames!

"I beg you, father Abraham — send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment!" Luke 16:27-28.

Observe the object of the rich man's solicitude — his "five brothers." They were perhaps younger than himself, though it is probable that he was comparatively young.

They were still in the bright land of hope — and he was in the dismal region of despair! They were still under the kind reign of mercy — and he was under the iron rod of justice!

He feared for them — for he knew in what state he had left them!

He feared for them — lest they should persevere in sin, and at length come to the same place of torment! He most ardently desired their salvation, and that they might escape the sure wrath that is coming. He despaired of their salvation by ordinary means, and therefore he petitioned that Lazarus may be sent — that he might testify to them.

Look at this lost soul in Hell — he remembers his brethren, and begs: "Send Lazarus to my brothers! Lazarus is no longer a poor, ulcerated beggar — he will make a fit and suitable preacher! They know that he is dead. They will be greatly affected by his appearance among them, and by the change that has taken place in him. O, send Lazarus, and let him bear testimony to the reality of this place of torment — to the certainty of all impenitent sinners coming here, however rich or distinguished they were on earth. Let Lazarus testify as to the nature of this place of torment, and tell them that their poor brother is in flames — tormenting flames, inextinguishable flames! Tell them that I am denied one solitary drop of water, or anything which will in any way alleviate my dreadful sufferings! Let him assure them . . . that Hell is real, that the punishment is most intense, that the sufferers are immortal, that annihilation is a fiction, and that deliverance from this fearful agony is impossible! Let, O let him tell them, that once here, they are here forever! Forever! Forever! And, O let him warn them of the folly, the madness — of neglecting the soul and its salvation. Let him testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment! It is possible. It is probable. It is certain — if they live and die in sin as I did!"

That poor wretch dreaded their coming there, for if anything could add to his torments — it would be to see his own brothers under the same condemnation, in the same horrid place of punishment! He also dreaded it, as most probably by his own example, and by his influence — he had hardened them in sin, and encouraged them in their ungodly course. It would therefore be an aggravation of his woe, and cause the flame that tormented him to blaze more fiercely — to see their eternal sufferings as his own fault.

It must be dreadful — to be the cause or the occasion of another's soul being lost forever, and to have the sufferings of that soul constantly before our eyes!

O what a terrible thing, the exercise of a strong memory in Hell must be!

Reader! How is it with you? Inquire, inquire diligently, I beseech you! Is there any, even the most remote probability of your being sent into that place of torment? Think . . . of being tormented in flames of fire, of being tormented without the least alleviation, and of being so tormented forever and ever!

Think of going directly from the bright land of hope — to the dismal regions of despair!

Think of going from a land of light, of Bibles, of the means of grace — to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire!

Is not the thought dreadful!

If Hell was to be the doom of your greatest enemy — would you not try to prevent it? What if it should be the doom of your brothers, your sisters, your husband, your wife, your father, your mother! Can you admit the possibility, without being determined to leave no means unused, which would be likely to prevent so fearful a calamity?

But what if Hell should be the destiny of your own soul? What if it should! It will be your certain doom — if you die unconverted. Perhaps there are some now in Hell, once related to you — who are now concerned for you. Are you as much concerned for yourself?

Christian! Have you not some dear ones on the road to Hell — for whom you should be especially concerned?

~ ~ ~ ~ The sanctification of the Spirit

"God has chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit." 2 Thessalonians 2:13

To sanctify, is to separate and set apart for holy purposes and holy uses. The Lord has separated His people, by choosing them in Christ to be holy; and He sanctifies them now for Himself — by the power, operation, and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

In sanctification, a work is commenced which is to make us exactly like Christ. A sanctified person has . . . his heart changed, his will renewed, his understanding enlightened, his conscience purified, and his affections spiritualized.

Sanctification extends to the whole man, soul and body; and is carried on through . . . the Word, the ordinances, and the providence of God.

Sanctification has its seat in the heart; but it regulates the whole man, and appears in his conduct in every-day life. If a man experiences the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, then . . . sin grieves him, Satan tries him, the world troubles him, and Heaven attracts him.

Spirit of Jesus, sanctify us deeply, thoroughly — that we may be just like Jesus! Sanctify us . . . by every trial, by every affliction, by every privilege, by every comfort!

~ ~ ~ ~

We soon grow dull, cold, lifeless, and inactive!

"It is the Spirit who quickens; the flesh profits nothing." John 6:63

All real religion begins with the quickening of the Spirit. When we experience this . . .

we begin to breathe after spiritual things; we open our eyes in a new world; we hunger and thirst after righteousness; and at length taste that the Lord is gracious.

We then have . . . new thoughts, new desires, new hopes, new fears, new joys, and

new sorrows. The eye fixes on Christ, the heart goes out to Christ, and the chief desire of the soul is to be like Christ.

The Spirit not only quickens us at first — but all through life we need and are dependent on the Spirit's quickening. He quickens us to pray, and He quickens us in prayer. It is His quickening which puts . . . life into our graces, energy into our prayers, confidence into our expectations, and enables us to resist Satan, steadfast in the faith.

If His quickening power is withheld — we soon grow dull, cold, lifeless, and inactive! We have . . . no power in prayer, no enjoyment in ordinances, no liberty in speaking to the saints, nor profit in

reading God's Word. Every duty becomes a task,  
every privilege becomes a burden, and every cross appears insupportable!

While under the quickening operation of the Spirit — we can do all things; but without His quickening — we can do nothing.

Often, very often, have we to cry out from bitter experience, "My soul cleaves unto the dust; quicken me according unto Your Word!" Psalms 119:25

Quickening Spirit, daily quicken my soul!

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### The OFFICES of Christ

If we look at the OFFICES of Christ — it endears Him to our hearts.

He is a PROPHET, to . . .instruct the ignorant, lead the blind, and make the foolish, wise. He . . .unfolds the Father's mind, opens the everlasting covenant, and teaches all His people to profit.

He is a PRIEST, to . . .atone for the guilty, reconcile those who are enemies, and intercede on behalf of transgressors. He . . .satisfies justice, magnifies mercy, and

brings a holy God and polluted sinners into an honorable union.

He is a KING, and as such He . . .receives the discontented, rules over innumerable penitent criminals, and defends all His subjects from danger. His power is omnipotent, His resources are boundless, His government is peaceful, and all the statutes of His kingdom are wise, merciful, and just.

He is also our husband — who loves, cherishes, and honors His beloved blood-bought bride. He . . .loves her as He loves Himself, treats her with unutterable kindness, and will allow nothing to separate her from His love.

This causes us to sing: "Jesus my Shepherd, Husband, Friend, My Prophet, Priest, and King, My Lord, my life, my way, my end, Accept the praise I bring!"

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### The garment which the Savior always wore

HUMILITY is a most precious grace — it is filled with beauty, loveliness, and glory. This is the garment which the Savior always wore. This is the grace which gave such a charm to all that He did and said. It is one of our best garments, and without it the soul is generally naked. "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another." 1 Peter 5:5.

For lack of humility — the Church is rent and torn with divisions. For lack of humility — believers bring many trials and crosses on themselves, and sow the bitter seeds of trouble and remorse.

If I were truly humble, I must be happy, for it is with such Jehovah dwells: "For this is what the high and lofty One says — He who lives forever, whose name is holy: I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and humble in spirit." Isaiah 57:15. To such He looks with esteem,

love, and delight: "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at My Word." Isaiah 66:2.

"I hate pride and arrogance!" Proverbs 8:13. Pride is . . . most loathsome to God, injurious to men, and a stronghold of Satan within us.

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble!" James 4:6. He keeps the proud at a distance, and will not allow them to approach him: "Though the Lord is great, He cares for the humble — but He keeps His distance from the proud!" Psalms 138:6. He threatens them with everlasting destruction. "The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished!" Proverbs 16:5

Lord, give me true humility, and let me be clothed with it from day to day!

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O sad spectacle of misery, grief, and woe!

"Jesus came to take away our sins!" 1 John 3:5

Here notice the end of His coming: "To take away our sins!"

Our sins were committed against Himself. They deserved His everlasting displeasure. They called aloud for His vengeance to awake and punish us. He foresaw the whole of them — in all their variety, enormity, and aggravation. He knew that they would be sins against His law, His love, and His tenderest mercy — sins against light, out of bitter enmity, and perpetrated over and over again. He knew the whole amount of our vileness — and yet (Oh, the greatness of His love!) "Jesus came to take away our sins!"

Sin had . . . incensed Divine justice against us, exposed us to Jehovah's wrath, and

brought us under the dreadful curse of His violated law.

Therefore Jesus came and took away our sins, and at the same time . . . satisfied the claims of divine justice, appeased the Father's wrath, and bore our curse Himself!

O wondrous love!

O marvelous grace!

O astonishing mercy!

But more wondrous, more marvelous, more astonishing — is Jesus Himself — who did this for us, and did it freely, without solicitation, or anything in us to induce Him to do it!

But how could Jesus take away our sins? "God made Him to be sin for us." He bore the weight of them, He endured their merited punishment, and He suffered the shame they procured.

He was . . . despised by men, tormented by devils, smitten with the sword of divine justice, forsaken by His Father, mocked by His creatures, overwhelmed with grief, torn with anguish, and His heart was broken with reproach and agony— all for a poor, sinning, sorrowing, Hell-deserving creature like me!

Sin lay upon Him, the wrath of God was endured by Him, the most fearful terrors surrounded Him, Heaven, earth, and Hell, appeared as though leagued against Him!

Men grossly insulted Him, devils tried all in their power to destroy Him, and God was pleased to bruise Him, and then leave Him to languish in heart-breaking sorrow.

O sad spectacle of misery, grief, and woe!

Was there ever sorrow, like unto Your sorrow?

Was there ever love, like unto Your love?

You might have sat upon Your throne, enjoying Your own glory, happiness, and felicity forever — and have justly left us to perish in our sins, and suffer for our own transgressions! But no, you would be Jesus — you would save Your people from their sins! You would come to take away our sins, though in so doing — justice took away Your honor, happiness, and life. You would not leave us to perish — but You would put away our sins by the sacrifice of Yourself. You have . . . turned away Jehovah's wrath, cast all our sin into the depths of the sea, and bore our punishment in Your own body on the tree!

Indeed Your love is astonishing, inconceivable, and almost too great for my weak faith to believe!

Dear Lord Jesus, You are exactly what I need — and You are all that I need. Your love will be . . . a sufficient portion in life, a divine cordial in death, and an ocean of felicity in which to bathe forever!

To see Him, love Him, and extol Him — is the Heaven of every saint.

He is . . . sweeter than honey, more pleasant than the light, and more precious than life itself!

To know Him — is to be truly wise. To live upon Him — is to be happy. To walk with Him — is to be holy. To look to Him, expect from Him, and cast all our cares upon Him — is to honor Him.

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What a delightful and astonishing thought it is!

"Since you were precious in My sight — you have been honorable, and I have loved you." Isaiah 43:4

What marvelous grace is here!

What a delightful and astonishing thought it is — that such poor, vile, rebellious creatures — should be precious to the infinite, holy, and eternal Jehovah!

That He should delight in us! (Isaiah 62:4)

That He should shed His precious blood for us! (1 Peter 1:19)

That He should work precious faith in us! (2 Peter 1:1)

That He should make precious promises — to support, supply, and comfort us! (2 Peter 1:4)

That He should render Christ precious unto us! (1 Peter 2:7)

That He should indulge us with a knowledge of His thoughts, and make them precious to us!  
(Psalms 139:17)

That He should call us His precious children!

Well may we exclaim with David, "What am I — that You should be mindful of me?"

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The great object of our lives!

To exalt the Lord Jesus, to comfort His beloved people, and to benefit our fellow-men — should be the great object of our lives.

For this purpose we were . . . chosen by the Father, redeemed by the blood of the Son, and are sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

To accomplish this end . . . grace is given us, gifts are conferred upon us, and life is continued to us.

We only live consistently — as we live for the benefit of others. No Christian should make SELF his main end; therefore the Apostle says, "No one should seek his own good, but the good of others." If we are influenced by the grace of God, if we study to commend ourselves to God, if we are ruled by the Word of God — our principal object will be, to "do good unto all men, especially unto the household of faith."

Upon this, we shall keep the eye steadily fixed, toward this, we shall bend all our energies, and upon this, we shall habitually set our hearts.

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Let us fix our eyes on Jesus!

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

With the Lord always before us . . . our faith will be strong, our hope will be vigorous, our humility will be deep, our penitence will be abiding, our evidences will be satisfactory, and our example will be bright!

Let us, therefore, set the Lord always before us . . . to meditate upon His love, grace, and goodness; to admire His holiness, condescension, and patience; and to commune with Him, as our Friend and loving Father, from day to day.

Then we shall not . . . fear men, dread death, or be alarmed at the convulsions that take place in our world! Our confidence will be strong, our peace will flow like a river, and our righteousness like the waves of the sea.

It is when we take the eye off the Lord, and look into SELF — that . . . our doubts, fears and unbelief, arise and work, Satan gains an advantage over us, and the world fascinates or frightens us!

Let us, therefore, look . . .out of self, away from the world, above our trials — and look simply to Jesus! This is the way to . . .enjoy peace, grow in grace, and abound in every good work.

Let us look away from sin — to Jesus making atonement for it!

Let us look away from guilt on the conscience — to Jesus as bearing the iniquity of our holy things before the Lord!

Let us look away from imperfect duties deserving punishment — to His magnificent righteousness!

Let us look away from our cold hearts and lifeless prayers — to His constant and all-prevalent intercession!

We shall never maintain . . .peace in our consciences, evenness in our walk, or consistency in our lives — but as we keep the Lord always before us!

Therefore . . . if we wish to be happy, if we desire to be holy, if we would die in peace — let us look simply, only, always, and in everything — to Jesus!

O Savior, may I set You before me as . . .my fountain of supply, my source of comfort, my rock of strength, my way of salvation, and my bright example!

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith!" Hebrews 12:2

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And then the Lord puts us into the furnace!

"Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows!" John 16:33

Every Christian should expect a daily cross — something to try his graces, something to render the promises necessary, something to make the throne of grace desirable.

We are promised trouble in God's Word, all the saints have found trouble in this life, trouble will be our portion to the end of our days.

Here on earth, we have no abiding city. Here we are but travelers and pilgrims, and must, therefore, expect that every day will furnish something new to make us hasten home.

This was David's experience. He would never have prayed as he did, written as he did, or been useful as he has been — but for his trials! He found . . .the Lord to be faithful, grace to be sufficient, and deliverance in the most suitable season. Hence he says, "In the day of my trouble, I will call upon You; for You will answer me!" Psalms 86:17

Here is a gloomy anticipation: A "day of trouble." The believer and trouble are seldom far apart, or long apart. We are born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. Whichever way we look — we see a source of trouble!

If we look into the heart — its depravity, deceitfulness, and wickedness is a fruitful source of trouble. If we look to the different faculties of the soul — all combine to trouble us!

Our memories — how ready to receive, retain, and produce evil, even profanity — and how backward to receive, keep, or produce what is spiritual and good. Scripture is soon forgotten — while anything which we would gladly forget, seems to be imprinted on the mind, and is produced in order to distress us.

The will — how perverse and stubborn, how often does it run out after that which is carnal, forbidden by God, and injurious to us!

The affections — how easily are they impressed with earthly things, and set upon what is vain and worldly.

The conscience — how weak, how hard, how often polluted.

If we turn from ourselves, to our families — children dead in sin; and carnal, earthly-minded relations — such are causes of trouble.

If we look at the world, whether it smiles or frowns — it is an enemy to our God, and us, and a prolific source of trouble.

If we look at the church — what a source of trouble is this! Instead of love — there is jealousy. Instead of peace — there is conflict. Instead of union — there is division. Instead of brotherly kindness — there is envy. Instead of charity — there is an unforgiving spirit.

Here is a good purpose: "I will call upon You." The Lord kindly invites us to call upon Him in trouble — and promises that He will deliver us. Every trouble, rightly understood, is an invitation from the Lord to call upon Him! We are apt to get cold and indifferent — and then the Lord puts us into the furnace — which warms and quickens our hearts. Our best prayers have generally been offered up in times of trouble. In trouble, we feel that we must pray — or sink! Oh, what a mercy to have a God to go to, in every trouble! A God who invites, promises, and will bless us!

The day of our trouble — should be a day of special prayer. Trouble burdens the heart — prayer eases it. Trouble disturbs the heart — prayer quiets it. Trouble perplexes the heart — prayer guides it.

Here is sweet encouragement: "You will answer me." It is sweetly encouraging to know that God will . . .listen to us, sympathize with us, and answer us, in our many trials and sorrows.

We may argue the certainty of the Lord's answering us, from His great mercy towards His children. Divine mercy has . . .a quick ear, a piercing eye, a tender heart,

a full hand, and a swift foot! When mercy hears a poor sinner crying — she always attends, sympathizes with him, and answers. While God remains plenteous in mercy and delights in mercy — we need not fear a refusal to our prayers!

Even if the furnace should be heated seven times hotter — still we have His promise, "In the day of my trouble, I will call upon You; for You will answer me!"

What sweet encouragement is here!

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## Treasures from James Smith 2 (excerpts)1

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Prone to wander!

"My people have wandered, and have forgotten their resting place." Jeremiah 50:6

Even true Christians are prone to wander from their resting place. Every sinner is a wanderer, and while sin dwells within us — we shall always feel a disposition to wander. This is against our better judgment, our solemn profession, and our new nature — yet still there is the disposition to wander, and it is called into exercise by a variety of things:

1. A love of novelty — a desire to see, possess, or enjoy something new — will sometimes set us wandering.
2. The weakness of our graces, as faith, hope, and love — is at other times the occasion of it.
3. The power of corruption within us, which at times works with peculiar force and power — makes us restless.
4. The temptations of Satan, which beguile, bewilder, and captivate us — lead us from our resting-place also.
5. And so do the errors that abound and spread all around us.

False views, Satanic temptations, powerful corruptions, and the weakness of grace — are the principal things which lie at the root of our backslidings.

Reader, are you a restless wanderer? If so, return, return unto Jesus. Go to Him, and confess your sins. Go to Him, and entreat His pardon. Go to Him, and prove the kindness of His heart. Go to Him, and be happy once more in His grace and love.

O Savior, bring me back from all my wanderings by Your invincible grace; let me enjoy rest in Your precious love, and keep me near Your loving heart and bleeding side forever!

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God's perfections and glorious attributes!

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

"If God is for us — who can be against us?" Romans 8:31

Who can prevail against us? Who can really injure us? Let us daily think of God's glorious perfections — and view them as engaged for us at all times.

His power is engaged to support, defend, and strengthen us.

His omniscient eye is constantly upon us — watching over us for good.

His omnipresence is our safeguard from all our foes — for no one can come and find our God absent from us.

His justice and righteousness shine in all His dealings with us — and are like lofty mountains round about us.

His holiness shines in all His purposes and plans — and forbids the thought that He will act unsuitably towards us.

His mercy is ever great towards us — and by it He sympathizes with us in all our sorrows, griefs, and woes.

His goodness will constantly supply us — and is sufficient to fill us with admiration and astonishment.

His truth renders certain — every promise He has given and recorded in His Word.

His immutability bears us up and bears us on — confirming our faith and hope in His Word.

His wisdom frustrates the designs of our foes — and arranges and manages all for our welfare.

His eternity is the date of our happiness — and the duration of our unspeakable blessedness!

Here is enough to . . .engage our thoughts, overflow our minds, and forever fill us with adoration and praise!

What a God is Jehovah! And Jehovah, in Jesus — is ours!

How cheering this fact, and what sweet support it yields to the mind — to meditate on God's perfections and glorious attributes — seeing them all in Jesus — and in Him, engaged for our present and everlasting welfare!

What could shake our minds — if we did but firmly believe that God's omnipotence is engaged to defend us to the uttermost?

What could tempt us to commit any known sin — if we were realizing that God's omniscient eye is ever upon us; yes, that God is present with us, and that He is our sin-hating Father?

What could lead us into murmuring and rebellion — if we were fully persuaded that God's holiness and justice are for us, and will shine resplendent in all His dealings with us?

What could lead us to think that our prayers would not be answered, nor our petitions be regarded — if our minds were influenced by the assurance, that God is truth?

How could we believe that He would ever turn against us — if we rightly viewed His immutability?

Or, how could we think that our affairs could be disordered — if we felt satisfied that His wisdom was working for us at all times!

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

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The Christian's hope!

"The hope which is laid up for you in Heaven" Colossians 1:5

Many Christians have but little in hand — but they have much in hope.

They have little on earth — but they have unsearchable wealth in Heaven!

The present is the worst state they will ever be in. All beyond death — is bright, blissful and glorious!

The Christian's hope consists in both freedom and possession.

The Christian's hope consists in freedom from . . .all the pains which we now experience, both in mind and body; all the hindrances which are so thickly strewed in our way in this evil world; all the fears which now beset, agitate, and harass us, day by day; all the forebodings which often make our lives bitter and gloomy; all the sins which are now our plague, disease, and torment; all our needs, and all possibility of needing — for God will fully supply all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Oh, what a mercy it will be to enjoy such freedom — and to possess the inward consciousness that it will be enjoyed forever!

The Christian will not only be free from all that is painful and distressing — but he will also possess . . .perfect, settled, and everlasting peace; sinless faculties and immortal powers with which to serve and enjoy God forever; permanent, perpetual, and uninterrupted joy; the presence and enjoyment of Jesus — we shall see Him, be with Him, and be like Him; ALL that we can consistently wish or desire!

Our hope is laid up for us in Heaven. This betokens . . .its excellency — being kept in so excellent a place; its certainty and security — no thieves can break through to steal; its nature — it is spiritual, holy, Heavenly.

O glorious hope! O blessed prospect! It leaves us nothing to long for — nothing to desire!

What a mercy it is . . .when comforts run short, when trials press sorely, when a dreary winter of affliction sets in — to remember that we have a priceless inheritance — an inheritance that is kept in heaven for us — pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay!

How this blessed hope should . . .quicken our zeal, animate our spirits, and raise us above fear and despondency.

It is not what we have now — but what we shall have in Heaven — which should affect us.

Our glorious inheritance is vast beyond calculation — it is safe beyond the possibility of failure!

The wilderness will soon be passed, the storms of life will soon subside — and eternal calm and unclouded sunshine, will soon be our happy, endless portion!

All glory to free grace!

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The gospel

"For we know, brethren beloved by God, that He has chosen you — because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction." 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

The gospel reveals . . . a Savior, in whom we must trust; a Sovereign, whom we must obey; a Priest, on whose atonement we must rest; a Prophet, from whom we must learn; a Friend, in whose love we must confide; a Brother, from whom we may expect; a Father, whose authority we must revere; an Apostle, whose mission we must copy; and an Advocate, to whom we must commit our cause.

The gospel . . .flows from the free love, rich grace, and abundant mercy of our God;

is founded in the Savior's person, mediation, and death; becomes effectual through the revelation, operation, and application of the Holy Spirit. By it, He begets faith, imparts love, and excites hope; and when accompanied by His blessing — the gospel is received in demonstration and power.

The gospel . . .produces penitence — and godly sorrow for sin; begets hatred to sin — and love to holiness; weans from the world — and wafts the affections to heaven;

makes us zealous for God — and the good of immortal souls; delivers us from the power of darkness — and translates us into the kingdom of Jesus; crucifies the flesh — and liberates the spirit; unites Christians in love — and raises us above the fear of death; fortifies us against persecution — and makes us rejoice in suffering for Immanuel's name; humbles the spirit — and dignifies the man; destroys covetousness — and makes us benevolent; roots out pride — and implants meekness; transforms us from the world — and conforms us to God; begets hatred to impurity — and makes us chaste; throws down idolatry — and leads us to worship God; conquers SELF — and exalts Christ; softens the hard heart — and produces kindness; delivers from sin, Satan, and the world — and devotes body, soul, and spirit to the Lord.

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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.

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"Your heavenly Father knows!" Matthew 6:32

Yes, believer, your heavenly Father knows . . .the thoughts that trouble you, the needs that oppress you, the sins that grieve you, the enemies that oppose you, the domestic trials that distress you, the financial troubles that bewilder you, the shattered nerves which alarm you, and the complicated sorrows that cast you down.

He knows — for He is God. Knowing, He sympathizes with you — for He is your Father. Being full of paternal sympathy, He will . . .strengthen you, comfort you, and

ultimately deliver you!

~ ~ ~ ~ A Curious Meditation

As I was walking out for exercise in the fields one morning, having been pleading with God to give me some profitable subject for meditation — I suddenly fell into this train of thought, which I afterwards wrote down; and, as it may interest and profit some, it is here inserted.

There are three things which I especially desire: more communion with God, more likeness to the Lord Jesus, and more usefulness to his Church.

There are three things which I deprecate: the withering of my gifts, the decay of my graces, and to become useless in the Lord's vineyard.

There are three things which I dread: that I should become a proud professor, that I should become a lukewarm Christian, and that I should fall into the hands of man.

There are three things which I sometimes wish for (but which God will never grant me on earth): to be totally free from sin, to be delivered from a daily cross, and to be always happy.

There are three things which I feel sure of: hatred by the world, opposition by hypocrites, and love by spiritual believers.

There are three foes which always oppose me: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

There are three friends which will always stand by me: a peaceful conscience, the bride of Jesus, and the Lamb of God.

There are three deaths which have been experienced by me: a death in sin, a death to sin, a death to the law of God.

There are three lives which shall be lived by me: a temporal life, a spiritual life, and an eternal life.

There are three things which burden me: a body of sin and death, the opposition I meet with, and my own ingratitude.

There are three things which support me: the Father's love, the Son's redemption, and the Spirit's work.

There are three things which are a sore trial to me: an irritable temper, a flippant tongue, and self-love.

There are three things which bring strong consolation to me: the open fountain of Christ blood, the promises of God, and the Savior's free invitation.

There are three things which are especially dear to me: the Word of God, the throne of grace, and the ordinances of the Lord's house.

There are three things lacking in me: perfect penitence, entire resignation, and fervent love.

There are three books which are very useful to me: the book of nature, the book of Holy Scriptures, and the book of my own experience.

There are three teachers which are employed to instruct me: the Holy Spirit, a special providence, and the rod of God.

There are three things which are manifested in me: the nature of sin, the power of grace, and the faithfulness of God.

There are three things which would be greatly useful to me: more humility, spiritual wisdom, and enlightened zeal.

There are three things which characterize me: weakness, poverty, and sinfulness.

Yet, there are three things which may be seen in me: Christ's strength, God's grace, and the Spirit's holiness.

There are three things which are feared by me: a stiff neck, a hard heart, and a presumptuous spirit.

There are three things which are matter of joy to me: the conversion of sinners, that my name is written in heaven, and the glory to be given me at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

There are three things which must be renounced by me: preconceived opinions, worldly wisdom, and natural religion.

There are three things which must be held fast by me: the Word of truth, my confidence in God, and my profession of the gospel.

There are three things which are especially required of me: to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with my God.

There are three things which are promised to me: tribulation in the world, sufficient strength in Jesus, and eternal life at the end of my course.

There are three things which the Lord observes and approves in me: the work of faith, the labor of love, and the patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a threefold deliverance which is effected for me: from the dominion of sin, from the present evil world, and from my deserved doom.

There are three things which I would trample under foot: unfounded prejudice, vain distinctions, and self-righteousness.

There are three things which I would aim at daily: to exalt Christ, to glorify God, and to bring sinners to repentance.

There are three things which are still sure to me: a rough road, changing experiences, and safety at last.

There are three things which are behind me: a wicked life, a broken law, and the pit of destruction.

There are three things which are before me: death, perfect conformity to Jesus, and eternal glory.

There are three things which are on my right hand: Satan to resist me, the Lord Jesus to save me, and my own heart set on things above.

There are three things which are on my left hand: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

There are three things which I greatly admire: the Savior's person, the promises of God, and the instruments he employs in carrying on his work.

There are three things which much please me: the doctrines of the gospel, the witness of the Spirit, and the light of God's countenance.

There are three things which I delight in: that Jehovah is my God, the comfort he imparts to me, and the riches of glory which are set before me.

There are three things which I hate: the cant of hypocrites, the flattery of friends, and the pride of professors.

There are three things which are good for me: to draw near to God, to be afflicted, and to sing praises unto the Lord.

There are three things which often disgust me: Satan's temptations, the powerful working of unbelief, and the conduct of religious professors.

There are three things which are prescribed to me: to believe in God, to love the saints, and to observe the Lord's ordinances.

There are three things which are too often neglected by me: self-examination, diligent reading of the Bible, and secret prayer.

There are three things which are too deep for me to fully know: the depravity of my heart, the devices of Satan, and the manner of the Spirit's working.

There are three things which I wish to leave with the Lord: to choose my lot in life, to fight my battles, and to supply all my needs.

There are three things which I do not consider worth having: a form of godliness, without the power, a name to live, while dead, and the commendation of the enemies of Christ.

There are three things in which I glory: the cross of Christ, my saving knowledge of God, and the everlasting gospel.

There are three things which have been taken from me: proud free will, vain boasting, and enmity to God.

There are three things which abide with me: faith, hope, and charity.

I am made up of three men: corruption — the old man, grace — the new man, and the body — the outward man.

I fill a threefold office: a prophet in the Church of Christ, a priest before the altar, and a king anointed to reign with Christ.

I wear a threefold garment: the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, the graces of the Holy Spirit, and the garment of humility.

I have been condemned in three courts — and yet justified in them all: the court of conscience, the Church of God, and the court of God's justice.

I have been justified three times: at the resurrection of Christ my substitute, when faith received his righteousness, and when good works justified my faith before the world.

I am the subject of a threefold sanctification: by the purpose of the Father, by the blood of the Son, and by the cleansing operations of the Holy Spirit.

I am a free man of three cities: the present world, the church below, and the Jerusalem which is above.

I have been an eye-sore to three parties: the devil, the world, and envious professors.

I shall have occupied three peculiar seats: a dunghill by nature, among the princes in the Church by grace, and the throne of glory by special privilege.

I shall have three grand holidays: one when the Holy Spirit sets my soul at liberty, another when death sets me free from this mortal clay, and another when Jesus comes to be glorified in his saints.

I shall then have appeared in three different characters: a vile rebel against God, a supplicating sinner at mercy's footstool, and a justified son of God before his throne.

I shall have had three fathers: a human father, the devil, and Jehovah himself.

I shall have received three laws: the law of nature, the moral law of God, and the law of the Spirit of life.

I shall have passed through three gates: the gate of hope, the gate into Christ's sheepfold, and the gate of death.

I shall have walked in three ways: the broad road of destruction, the highway of holiness, and Jesus Christ the only way to the Father.

I shall have conversed with three distinct classes of beings: carnal men, spiritual Christians, and the Lord himself.

I shall have made three appearances: once all black — like the devil, then speckled — with nature and grace, and then all pure — whiter than the driven snow!

I shall have undergone three momentous changes: one at regeneration — when I passed from death unto life, one at death — when my soul shall be admitted into Heaven, and one at the resurrection — when my body shall be raised powerful, glorious, and immortal.

I view three things as pre-eminently excellent: the fear of the Lord, a sound judgment, and Christ formed in the heart, as the hope of glory.

There are three things which I may covet: the best gifts, a contrite and humble spirit, and to be filled with all the fullness of God.

There are three things which are removed from me: the burden of sin, the wrath of God, and all condemnation.

There are three things which I do not know: what is before me, how God will provide for me, and what I shall be.

There are three things which I do know: that in my flesh dwells no good, that though I was once blind, now I see, and that I must needs die.

There are three things which are prepared for me: a fountain to cleanse me, a robe to adorn me, and a mansion to receive me.

There are three things which await me: a crown of righteousness, a palm of victory, and a throne of glory.

There are three things which shall be done for me: God shall wipe away all tears from my eyes, God shall remove all cause of pain and sorrow from my nature, and the Lamb in the midst of the throne shall eternally satisfy me.

There are three things which shall never be known by me: the frown of divine justice, the curse of holy Jehovah, and the power of God's anger.

There are three things which are hurtful to me: carnal ease, the flattery of professors, and fullness of bread.

There are three things which benefit me: temptation, affliction, and opposition.

There are three things which are pursued by me: to know more of the Lord, to live in peace with all men, and thorough sanctification.

Satan tries to thwart me in three things: by spoiling my comforts, hindering my usefulness, and seeking to devour my soul.

Satan has three things to expect: to be disappointed of his prey, to be judged by the saints, and to be eternally punished for his wickedness.

There are three things which I would never trust: my own heart, an arm of flesh, and my treacherous memory.

There are three subjects which I should never meddle with: the fall of the angels, the origin of moral evil, and how God will justify himself.

There are three things which I cannot understand: the nature of God, the cause of my election, and how divinity and humanity constitute one person.

There are three things which I should often think of: what I have been, what I now am, and what I shall be.

A threefold freedom is granted me: from the law of God, from the reign of sin, and to make use of, and enjoy the Lord Jesus.

I am an heir of three worlds: the natural, the spiritual, and the eternal.

There are three things which will never grieve me: that I have been poor in this world, that I have preached the gospel fully, and that I am related to Jesus Christ.

There are three things which comprise all I wish: to know God, and glorify him, to see Jesus, and be like him; and to be united to the saints, and be eternally happy.

There are three things which shall never be heard by me: Christ reproaching me, God disowning me, and the devils triumphing in my everlasting destruction.

There are three things which shall be eternally enjoyed by me: the love of God, the presence of Jesus, and the company of the saints.

There are three things which will eternally delight me: to be filled with holiness, to be employed in praising Jehovah, and to have gained a complete victory over all my foes.

There are three things which must come down: the pride of men, the devil's kingdom, and the cause of error.

There are three things which will stand: the house built on the Rock, the purpose of God, and the Messiah's kingdom.

There are three things which cannot be removed: the church of God, the covenant of grace, and the kingdom we receive.

There are three things which will stand the fiery trial: genuine faith, the Word of God, and a real Christian.

Lost sinners are like Satan in three things: their nature, their employment, and their end.

Three things make Hell: the wrath of God, the stings of a guilty conscience, and black despair.

Three things prove a man a Christian: worshiping God in the spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh.

Three things are never satisfied: a doubting Christian, a worldly miser, and the man of pleasure.

Christ fills three offices: a prophet — for the ignorant, a priest — for the guilty, and

a king — for the depraved.

Christ has been in three states: ancient glory, deep humiliation, and merited dignity.

What more shall I say!

If you, reader, are a sincere Christian — do three things daily: search God's Word, be much at God's throne, and be diligent in God's work.

If you are an unconverted sinner — do three things immediately: believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of every sin you have committed, seek the witness and pledge of the Holy Spirit in your heart, so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

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Christ Exalted!

If we look at the comparisons which are made use of by the Holy Spirit to set Christ forth — we behold something more of His loveliness.

He is compared to a MOTHER, and is said to have more than a mother's tenderness, kindness, and care. His concern for His people is constant, He never loses sight of them for a moment, and He pledges His Word that He will never forget them!

He is the CITY of REFUGE, with . . .the broad and clear road, the gates wide open, and the hearty welcome awaiting every sinner who approaches to escape the threatened vengeance!

He is the STRONGHOLD, which emboldens, supplies, and secures all the prisoners of hope.

He is the ROCK, which shades, shelters, and refreshes the weary traveler.

He is the DAY-STAR, which betokens brighter scenes, and guides the vessel of mercy across the boisterous deep — to the haven of perfect redemption and safety.

He is the SUN of RIGHTEOUSNESS, whose rising . . .cheers the benighted pilgrim, makes glad the weary citizen of Heaven, and produces moral beauty and fruitfulness in our world.

He is the APPLE-TREE among the trees of the forest . . .whose blossoms are beautiful, whose shade is refreshing, and whose fruit is sweet to the taste.

He is the BREAD of LIFE, which came down from heaven . . .satisfying the hungry, strengthening the weak, and giving life unto the world.

He is the BRAZEN SERPENT, which heals easily, instantly, and perfectly — all who look to Him by faith.

He is the WATER of SALVATION, which . . .cleanses the filthy, refreshes the weary, and makes glad the city of God.

He is the only WAY, which leads from sin, condemnation, and wrath — to life, holiness, and heaven!

He is the HEAD, which thinks, plans, and contrives for the welfare of the whole of His mystical body.

He is the DOOR, which admits to . . .the pastures of Divine truth, the privileges of His Church below, and His Father's glorious presence!

He is the FOUNDATION on which all must build for eternity, and which alone is able to support our hopes and sustain our souls — amidst the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds!

He is the CORNER-STONE, which unites, beautifies, and strengthens the whole building of divine mercy.

He is the TEMPLE, where God . . .meets with us, accepts us, and imparts His blessing to us.

He is the ALTAR, which sanctifies both the gift and the giver.

He is the VINE, which communicates life, nourishment, and fruitfulness to all its branches.

He is the ROSE of SHARON and the LILY of the VALLEY — fragrant, lovely, attractive, perfuming, and unequalled in beauty and grace!

He is the FORERUNNER, who is gone before His flock . . .removing the obstacles, marking out the road, and ready to receive them as they finish their course.

He is the FRIEND . . .who loves at all times, whose mind never changes, whose love never cools, and who never neglects a friend in distress.

He is the greatest, best, and most glorious GIFT of GOD — including, securing, and conferring — every good thing upon those who sincerely receive Him.

He is the KINSMAN . . .who redeems the forfeited inheritance, who ransoms all His poor relatives from slavery, and whose name is held in renown.

He is the LAMB of GOD, who took up, expiated, and forever put away — the sins of all who trust in His blood.

He is the MESSENGER of the COVENANT, who . . .brings good news from God, carries all our requests to God, and ever stands as a Mediator between us and God.

He is the PEARL of GREAT PRICE, or the priceless pearl, which . . .all who sincerely seek — find, all who find — may claim, and all who possess — are enriched forever!

He is the PHYSICIAN, who . . .heals all disorders, restores every patient to perfect health, and bestows medicine and care, freely.

He is the RANSOM, which . . .procured our release, ensures our liberty, and preserves us from going down into the pit!

He is the RIGHTEOUSNESS, which . . .justifies us from all charges, entitles us to eternal life, and enables us to lift up our heads with boldness in God's presence.

He is the TRUTH, which . . .enlightens the mind, purifies the heart, and regulates the life.

He is the FIRE, which . . .purges our dross, brightens our graces, and cleanses our consciences from works which deserve death.

He is the SHEPHERD, who . . .knows every sheep, watches over the whole flock, and never loses a lamb, by disease, accident, or beast of prey.

He is the CAPTAIN of SALVATION, who . . .collects His soldiers, disciplines His troops, and leads them forth to certain victory over sin, the world, and the devil.

He is the LADDER, by which we . . .rise from this earth, lose sight of carnal things, and ascend to the presence of God!

He is the SURETY . . .who engaged for us in the everlasting covenant, who is held responsible for our salvation, who has pledged to set us before His father's throne forever.

He is the WALL of FIRE, which surrounds, enlightens and infallibly protects — all His redeemed people!

He is the chief among ten thousand, and the ALTOGETHER LOVELY ONE!

Precious Lord Jesus, allow me . . . to know You more fully, to trust You more heartily, to serve You more diligently, to enjoy You more frequently, to imitate You more closely, to exalt You more highly, and to show forth Your salvation from day to day!

Your love — is my heaven, Your presence — is my delight, and Your service — is the joy of my heart!

Let me daily . . .walk with You, work for You, and bring glory to You!

Oh, send Your Spirit to my poor heart . . .to exalt You, to honor You, to endear You to my soul!

Use me to bring . . .lost sinners to Your cross, believers to Your throne of grace, backsliders to the path of obedience.

Be my . . .strength in life, solace in death, and eternal portion beyond the grave!

~ ~ ~ ~ The Bitterness of Sin!

"Your ways and your deeds have procured these things unto you! This is your wickedness — it is bitter, because it reaches unto your heart!"Jeremiah 4:18

Sin is the most dark subject that can engage our attention — but we have become so familiar with it, that it scarcely affects us at all. Not so the Lord — he calls it 'that abominable thing which he hates.' Yes, God hates nothing but sin — and no one, but for sin. God never hated a sinless being — and he never can. If we could get rid of sin, we would have nothing to fear; therefore we bless God that deliverance from sin is promised. But sin is not only dangerous — it is bitter, and is the prodigious source of all bitterness! Hence the language of the prophet, "It is bitter, because it reaches unto your heart!"Jeremiah 4:18. It is called the root of bitterness. It may appear pleasant at present, and may taste sweet to the depraved palate of the sinner; but as Joab said of war, "It will be bitterness in the end!" Let us therefore think of: The Bitterness of Sin: Sin is bitter in its NATURE, as it is . . .a departure from God, the source of all real happiness; opposition to God, the

giver of all true pleasure; rebellion against God, the righteous ruler, who is pledged to punish it; the degradation of man, who was made in the image of the holy and happy God.

Sin is bitter in its EFFECTS:

Look over the world — all its divisions, confusions, wars, diseases, bloodshed, and cruelties — are but the effects of sin.

Look into families — all the anger, envy, jealousy, enmity, and lack of love — are but the effects of sin.

Look at individuals — all the sufferings of the body, and all the tortures of the soul; all the sorrows of time, and all the agonies of eternity — are but the fruits of sin.

Look at the seeking soul — all his cutting convictions, bitter reflections, stinging remorse, gloomy despondency, and slavish fears — are but the effects of sin.

Look at the believer — all his terrible conflicts, deep depression, gloomy foreboding, and soul-distressing fears — are all the effects of sin.

Indeed whatever is . . . dark and dreary, distressing and painful, alarming and terrible — is to be traced up to sin!

Every sigh that ever heaved the bosom, every groan that ever indicated a breaking heart, every exclamation produced by violent pain— all, all are the fruits of sin!

Think of . . . the millions who have suffered, and are suffering; the fearful nature and extent of their sufferings; the agonies experienced on earth; the horrors endured in Hell — and say, must not sin, from which all these proceeded, be a bitter thing! But here is: A Season Assigned: "It reaches unto your heart!" Sin is not a wound in the flesh — but a disease in the heart! There it was conceived, there it is nourished, and from thence it flows.

Sin reaches to the heart — and defiles and pollutes it! Indeed, man's heart is one of the most loathsome and polluted things in God's universe! There is pollution enough in one human heart, to corrupt and defile the universe! There is nothing so foul, base, or abominable, in earth or in Hell — but its counterpart is to be found in man's heart!

Sin reaches to the heart — and alienates it from God. It has now . . . no sympathy with God, no desire to please him, no fear of offending him! Man fears punishment — but he does not fear sin!

Sin reaches to the heart — and distracts it. It has . . . no settled peace, no holy calm, no quiet satisfaction. The passions are turbulent. The conscience is defiled. The will is depraved. The understanding is darkened. The memory is a store-house of evil!

Indeed every power and faculty of the soul is injured, perverted, and wrongly influenced — by sin!

Sin reaches to the heart — and damns it! It is condemned already, and if grace does not prevent it — the sentence of condemnation will be executed, and the heart will become the seat of . . . the most terrible agony, the most torturing pain, and the most dreadful despair — and that forever! No lake of fire and brimstone, no bottomless pit, no horrible tempest — can convey to the mind any

adequate idea of the horrors of damnation — which are the just desert of sin.

Truly, "it is bitter, and it reaches unto the heart!"

Reader, see how God speaks of sin, your darling sin, that sin which you now value so highly, and enjoy so much: "It is bitter!" Your sin is so bitter, that no tongue or pen can describe it. And what makes it so bitter is that "it reaches to the heart," the seat of life, the source of action, and therefore . . .defiles the whole person, misdirects the whole life; and exposes the whole man to the wrath and curse of God — and to that wrath and curse, forever! From this bitter root, proceeds . . .all the bitter words, all the bitter tempers, and

all the bitter actions — which make men miserable on earth, and will make the lost eternally miserable in Hell! Our one great business therefore, should be to get rid of sin — this root of bitterness! And by faith in the Lord Jesus, which purifies the heart; and by the work of the Holy Spirit, which cleanses and sanctifies the nature — we may get rid of it. Let us therefore seek first, and before anything else — first, and more than everything else — that we may be washed, and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Holy Spirit, convince us of the bitterness of sin! May it . . .be bitter to our taste, lead us to forsake it in practice, and seek to be delivered from its love and power in our experience!

~ ~ ~ ~ A Child is in the Well! My brother sometimes sends me a subject for my pen, and a letter just received from him contains the following account:

"A child is in the well! A child is in the well!" It is now more than fifty years since I heard that cry. It was a terrible scream, and it is as fresh in my memory, as when it was first uttered by that affrighted woman. A boy had been sent by his mother to the well to draw water, and had taken his little brother with him, and while he was engaged in drawing it, the child unperceived by him — was looking down into the well, and fell in! The wonder was that he was not killed in the descent, by striking against the large iron bucket. The excitement was great. The neighborhood was aroused, and all were filled with alarm, as the well was unusually deep. But it happened that a young woman came for water at the very moment, and in her fright she dashed her pitcher to pieces, and screamed out, "A child is in the well! A CHILD IS IN THE WELL!" This piercing cry reached the ear, and entered the heart of a laboring man, who was at his dinner nearby. He flew to the rescue, and without stopping to consider his danger — descended by the chain, just in time to catch the child, as it was sinking under the water for the third time!

Now all were at work to get the man and the child up in safety, ropes and ladders were procured, and success crowned the efforts of the kind-hearted neighbors. The child was put into the arms of its distracted mother, and the poor man was praised for his kindness and courage. But who shall say how much depended upon that cry — that tearful scream of a woman, "A child is in the well?" The child's life hung upon that cry. Another minute — and the child would have certainly drowned! But, "Not a single shaft can hit, Until the God of love sees fit!" The cry of that affrighted woman aroused the man, the man fled to the rescue, the child was saved from drowning — but the hand of God was not seen or acknowledged, until years rolled on! For more than thirty years, that child has been a preacher of the gospel, and has written many useful works. He has been the instrument in the hand of a wonder-working God, of rescuing many poor ungodly sinners from a far deeper well. Through that child, thousands have heard of the name and fame of Jesus, and those

thousands have in some way been useful to others, and thus the effect will be felt to the end of time. How much depended on, and resulted from, that scream, "A child is in the well!"

"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform!"

~~~~~ The above account of my own preservation when but a child, is sent to me as a subject for my pen — but what can I add to it? My heart as swelled with thankful emotions, and my eyes have been moistened with tears of gratitude, while I have been copying it, and I have been ready to exclaim with Leah, "Now will I praise the Lord!" and with David, "I will sing of God's mercy!"

I cannot but admire the wonderful working of divine providence — how perfectly everything is arranged and adjusted. How well all is timed. I do not wonder the godly say that "we are immortal until our work is done," for new proofs of this are constantly arising. Where is the Christian, the laborer in God's vineyard, who cannot find an illustration of this fact in his own experience? I can find more than one in mine.

Some may perhaps reflect upon me for publishing my brother's narrative, and think me deficient in modesty; but I am not a young man now, nor am I so much affected by what my fellow-men say, or write of me — as I once was. If God, either as the God of providence, or grace, can be glorified, by anything I write or publish — it is enough! And surely no Christian can read the above with an unprejudiced mind, without glorifying God.

How near was I to death — yet God intended me to live. How imminent was the danger — and how simple and suitable were the means of preservation. How wondrously God wrought — and yet no one present then, appeared to see his hand, or acknowledge his intervention.

How much often depends upon a trifling action. Take away one link — and the chain falls to pieces. Not one of the above circumstances could have been omitted — or my life would surely have been lost! The woman must come at the exact moment; alarmed, she must scream at the top of her voice; the laborer must be eating his meal at home nearby; in his fright, he must do, what if he had waited to reflect, he would have feared to attempt! But the hand of God was in the whole. "He performs the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with him."

What effect should the bringing of this circumstance before my mind at this time, have upon me? I trust it has made me feel grateful, and has led me anew to praise my God, for his wonderful works to men. But this is not enough. I would anew in the most solemn manner dedicate myself — my life so wondrously preserved, with all my powers, talents, and opportunities, to the Lord, and to his glory.

Often have I surrendered myself to my God, and consecrated myself to his glory and praise, and I do so with all my heart and soul, again this morning. For the Lord — I desire to live; to promote his cause — I desire to labor; to bring sinners to Jesus, and to comfort and to edify his people — I desire to make the one grand object of my life. As the especial care of his providence, as well as the subject of his sovereign and distinguishing grace — I desire to be his, wholly his, only his, and his forever!

Lord, take me anew into your hands, and make me more and more like your beloved Son; not only so — but as you have used me for the good of others, and the glory of your great name — use me yet more extensively, and glorify yourself by me, ten thousand times more than you ever have

done yet! My one undying desire of my soul, is that Christ may be magnified in me, and be glorified by me, both in life and in death. Many years ago, this desire was kindled at the cross, by a sense of the infinite love of Jesus, and nothing has ever been able to extinguish it yet, nor do I believe that anything ever will.

Reader, can you look back upon any hairbreadth escape from death? Can you look back upon a deliverance, not from a well of water — but from the pit of destruction? Can you say with David, "Great is your mercy toward me, for you have delivered my soul from the lowest Hell!" What would deliverance from death be — if we are not delivered from Hell? Of what value would a few years on earth be — if spent in sin, if filled up with worldly pleasure — if the end should be a place in Hell forever?

Blessed be God, he not only saved my life, and delivered me from an early death; but he saved my soul, and condescended to employ me in his vineyard.

Beloved, life without God's favor — life without a saving interest in Christ — life unless it is spent in God's service — is not worthy the name of life. To live, is to have the life of God in the soul! To live, is to have Christ formed in the heart! To live, is to be inhabited by the Holy Spirit, and to be consecrated to God's glory and praise! O to live as Jesus lived! To keep the same end in view, to walk by the same rule, and to do the works he did! For this, we were redeemed by his blood; for this, we were called by his grace; for this, our lives are preserved in the present world, and for this, his fullness is thrown open to us, and we are invited to make use of his grace.

Holy Spirit, lead us to make more use of Christ, to enjoy closer communion with Christ, and to live, walk, work, and talk, more entirely for the glory of Christ!

Blessed Jesus, accept of us as your own property, fill us with your own sweet Spirit, stamp your lovely image upon us, and use us to exalt your dear name, spread your well deserved fame, and extend your glorious cause!

Father of mercies, God of all grace, receive our praises for your wondrous love, sovereign grace, and special providence! Help us to praise you here on earth, and then take us to praise and bless you eternally in Heaven!

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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!

~ ~ ~ ~ Have you received the Holy Spirit?

"Have you received the Holy Spirit?" Acts 19:2

What are the evidences of having received the Holy Spirit?

If we have received the Holy Spirit — the Lord Jesus stands high in our estimation — and our views of ourselves are very humbling. And just in proportion to the power and depth of the Spirit's work — will be our conceptions of the glory, grandeur, and excellency of the Savior; and our discoveries of the depravity, pollution, weakness, and misery of our own hearts.

If, therefore, we have heart affecting views of the glory of Christ and His finished work — and if we lie low in the dust under a sense of our weakness and worthlessness, so that we are brought to depend wholly on Christ, and on Christ alone — we have surely received the Holy Spirit.

Also, if we have received the Holy Spirit — there is in us a deep-rooted, abiding hatred to sin — all sin, especially sin in ourselves. What was once our darling sin, has become the object of our hatred — and against that sin we set a double guard. For nothing do we sigh so often, for nothing do we desire so ardently — as holiness. The Holy Spirit always sets the whole soul against sin — and longing for perfect holiness.

True, our old desires toward sin will sometimes revive — but then we loath ourselves on account of it, mourn over it, and confess it before God. The cry of the soul is, "Holiness, Lord, more holiness! Deep, penetrating, all-pervading holiness!"

Now, if we hate sin everywhere, all sin, and especially the sin that dwells in us; and if we love holiness, admire holiness, pray for holiness, pant for holiness, and strive for holiness — then there is no doubt that we have received the Holy Spirit.

Once more, if we have received the Holy Spirit — then we are ruled by God's Word; we do not follow custom, or allow our desires or prejudices to dictate our course. In all times of difficulty, when in any perplexity, something seems to say within us, "To the law and to the testimony," and to the precepts of the New Testament, we turn.

The Word of Christ is the law of the true believer. Everything short of it, or beyond it, or beside it, or contrary to it — is sin! "Only what Jesus commands, all that Jesus commands, and because Jesus commands," is the language of the soul.

And while we thus make the Word of Jesus our rule — we deny ourselves. We deny our own wills, our own passions, our own desires, our likes and dislikes. We are before Him, as He was before His Father, when He cried out, "Not My will — but may Your will be done." If, then, we make the

Word of God our guide, and habitually deny ourselves for Christ's sake — we may rest assured, that we have received the Holy Spirit.

Reader, "Have you received the Holy Spirit?" Remember, "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ — he does not belong to Him!" Romans 8:9

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The Judge!

"God is the Judge!" Psalms 75:7

There is one supreme judge of what is right and wrong — and that judge is Jesus. He is qualified to judge, and He is appointed to sit in judgment on all the actions of men, and to reward every one according to his works. But it is not to God's final judgment we are about to refer — but to the present. Many professors talk, or seem to feel, as if great mistakes were made, and therefore they justify themselves in complaining. But Jesus is Judge of what is right, and what is best. His wisdom is infinite; His knowledge comprehends the past, the present, and the future; His power is omnipotent; His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, and is over all His works; His love to His people surpasses knowledge. This being the case, there can be no question that Jesus is the best Judge of what is right, and of what should be.

God is the Judge — as to our PERSONS. Some wish they had more strength, some that they had more health, some that they had more beauty, some one thing, some another thing. Some imagine that they are too tall — and some not tall enough. Some are crooked, or otherwise deformed — and are grieved that they are not straight or well formed. But God is the Judge, and our formation, size, shape, appearance, etc, are all according to His will; and if according to His will — it must be best. Beware of how you sit in judgment on the wisdom of God, or think yourself capable of improving His plans.

God is the Judge as to who should be born — their size, shape, appearance, and every other particular. Therefore be silent before Him; be satisfied with your lot, and believe that by and bye you will see a reason for what tries or troubles you at present. If you were humble, you would not be much affected by what man may think, or what man may say — but would bow before God, and say, "If I can honor You by being deformed, or destitute of beauty, or weak, or diseased — it is enough. May Your will be done, Your name be hallowed, Your glory be advanced — and I am content; more — I am well-pleased!"

God is the Judge — as to our CIRCUMSTANCES.

Whether I am to be rich, or to be poor; whether I am employer, or employed; whether I am healthy, or sick; whether I thrive, or go to wreck — God is the Judge as to which is best. He is Judge as to the nature or number of my mercies, trials, troubles, comforts, crosses, losses, bereavements and varied changes.

I cannot tell what would be best — what would really do me good. I must . . . bow to the wisdom of the All-wise God, accept the appointments of His Grace, and be satisfied with the arrangements of Infinite Love.

If there was anything like 'chance' in the world — I might complain, or wish for an alteration. But since God exercises His judgment, and has ordained my lot — it is for me to approve of it, and

seek grace that I may honor Him in it.

God is the Judge — as to our EVENTS. Many things are sent to try us; and they try our thoughts, our faith, our fortitude, our patience, our humility, and our perseverance. How things may end — we do not know. What certain providences are intended to produce — we are not informed. But we may rest assured of this — that . . .

God's ends will be accomplished, His purposes will be performed, and the predictions of His Word will be fulfilled.

We may, therefore, very safely leave all results to God. The path of duty is plainly marked out. We should walk in that path, taking no thought for the morrow. We should . . . trust God's promises, walk by God's precepts, observe God's providences;

and then we may say, "I have nothing to do with the future, for God is the Judge! He puts down one — and sets up another."

Christian, are you tempted to complain of your lot? Or, do you wish to choose for yourself? It is better to leave it with God — and try to believe that it is best to be as you are, and where you are. There is no doubt that you can glorify God exactly where you are, more than anywhere else.

You can do all that God wishes you to do — right where you are. It is not a change of circumstances — so much as a change of heart that you need. You need more grace and contentment — rather than more health, or wealth, or beauty. Depend upon it, God has made no mistake! And if your body is not so finely formed, or you are not so indulged with health, or so favored with gifts as some are — it is all right, for God is the Judge! It is HIS doing, and "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Defer to God's judgment, lie low before God's throne, seek to be filled with God's Spirit — and so you will be satisfied to have all things ruled by God's will.

He does according to His will in heaven — and there is no complaint or repining there. And he does according to His will on earth — and there should be no dissatisfaction with God's allotments.

We have too high an opinion of ourselves, and of our own judgments; and while this is the case, we shall attempt to invade the rights of the Most High God, or to dictate to the Supreme Ruler! Man — poor, vain man — would gladly be judge! He would take the throne of his Maker! He would . . . snatch the rule from His hand, judge His justice, be the God of God! But who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say unto Him that formed it, "Why have you made me thus?"

God is the Judge! Therefore be silent all the earth, before the Lord!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Your case is sad — very sad!

"Then the King will turn to those on the left and say: Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons!"

"And they will go away into eternal punishment!" Matthew 25:41; Matthew 25:46

Lost sinner, your case is sad — very sad! You are an enemy to God, in open and avowed rebellion against Him! You are forcing your passage to blackness, darkness, and eternal woe, through a thousand obstacles which are thrown in your way! And, O how fearful will your end be! What, O what a dreadful end, must yours be! In Hell, you will be forever deprived of the glorious presence of God!

You will never see light — but be in perpetual darkness! Your abode will be a prison, where there is . . . no comfort — but horror; no voice — but of blasphemers cursing God; no sounds — but the howling of the tortured; no society — but devils and damned people. And these being tormented themselves, will eternally torment you!

You must experience . . . punishment, without pity; misery, without mercy; sorrow, without support; crying, without comfort; mischief, without measure; torment, without ease; where the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched! The wrath of God will seize upon your soul and body, like fire! And in the flame, you will be . . . forever burning — but never consumed; ever dying — but never dead;

ever roaring with pain — but know no end of these pains. Your torments will be always, beginning. Your reflections will be, "All this, I procured by my sin! This I chose — in preference to Heaven! I myself am to blame for my destruction — and God is just!"

Great God, awaken, awaken the sinner! Open, O open his eyes! Snatch, O snatch him as a brand from the burning — and save him through Jesus' blood!! If this is not the case, lost sinner, you may look forward, and exclaim:

Infinite years in torments shall I spend, And never, never, never end! Ah! I must live in torturing despair, As many years — as atoms in the air! When all these doleful years are spent in pain, And multiplied by myriads again, Til numbers drown thought; could I suppose That then my wretched years were at a close. This would afford some ease; but, ah, I shiver — To think upon the dreadful word, FOREVER! The burning gulf, where I blaspheming lie, Is time no more — but vast eternity!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 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

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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 unexpected and difficult things in his path — that he is often agitated and distressed.

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 today?

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.

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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. A believer cannot rest in pollution, and therefore prays, "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity — and cleanse me from my sin!"

~ ~ ~ ~ He will guide us to the end of the journey!

"He will be our guide— even unto death!" Psalms 48:14

What a precious assurance is this!

Our God is our guide!

He led us out of the world at first, directed us to the cross, and conducted us into the path of holiness.

He has led us through all our past difficulties and trials; He leads us by the hand at present, and He will never give up His charge, for He will be our guide even unto death. He will . . . choose our way; lead us in the paths of righteousness; kindly converse with us along the road; point out the snares and dangers in our path; keep us by His power through faith unto salvation, and will patiently bear with us unto the end!

He may . . . hide His face, refuse communion, withhold comforts, smite us for our follies, and teach us our dependence on Himself by painful experience; but He will never forsake us — or give us up!

He will guide us to the end of the journey, and will go with us through the last dark valley!

He will not only lead us to the heavenly kingdom — but put us in possession of it! This He has promised — and He will faithfully perform it.

Beloved, it is our Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom! He will guide us now — and by and by receive us to glory!

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Reader, let me ask you a very important question

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction — and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life — and only a few find it." Matthew 7:13-14

Reader, let me ask you a very important question. I do so in love. It is a solemn and plain question — but do not be offended at its plainness. Receive it, consider it, and reflect upon it: "Do you believe it is possible, that you may go to Hell?" That many go to Hell — cannot be doubted. That Hell is a dreadful place — cannot be questioned. That many are now on the road to Hell — is as clear as daylight. That few are sufficiently concerned to escape from Hell — is very evident. Do you believe it is possible, that you may go to Hell? You, who, perhaps never entertain a thought of doing so? The very supposition is alarming, is it not? But may not any sinner go to Hell? And are not you a sinner? If any sinner may go to Hell, and you are a sinner — why then, may not you go

there?

What if you should?

Yet, it is not only possible — but certain that you shall go to Hell, unless you experience a very great change. For "unless a man is born again — he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

How many go on as careless, as thoughtless, as indifferent about their souls — as if they thought it was impossible for them to go to Hell.

There is John Jones, the weaver. He has read the New Testament, he has heard the gospel, he knows that he has an immortal soul. But he never prays, he very often spends his Saturday nights at the ale-house, and he lies late in bed on Sunday mornings. Week after week he goes on like this. He has no care for his own soul, or the souls of his wife and children. He knows that he must die. He professes to believe in Heaven and Hell — but he acts just as though he never thought for one moment, that it was possible for him to go to Hell. Indeed, he troubles himself so little about God, or his soul, or eternity — that it appears that the thought has never entered into his head!

Roger Thomas, the blacksmith, knows all the news of the village. He talks much. He reads some. He swears often. He loves his pipe and his beer. He goes to church now and then on Sunday; but if you mark his conduct, listen to his conversation, and notice his spirit — you will be led to conclude that he never asks himself the question, "Is it possible for me to be sent to Hell?" No, no! He has too good an opinion of himself to even suppose such a thing. He has no idea that God would ever treat him so harshly as that. What, send him to Hell? If so, what would become of most of the people in the parish! "No, no, God is merciful," says he. He intends to repent by and bye. When he comes to his death-bed — then he will pray, read his Bible, and make his peace with God. Thus he flatters his own pride, deceives his own soul, and secures his own damnation!

Reader! Do you believe it possible that you may go to Hell?

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!'" Matthew 7:21-23

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What does God require of His children?

God requires unqualified submission to His Word. You must . . . receive the doctrines He has revealed, believe the promises He has made, and perform the precepts He has given.

His doctrines are to enlighten you, His promises are to comfort you, His precepts are to direct you, and His providence is to supply you.

God requires you to look upon Himself as your Father, and to walk before Him as such — in faith, love, and holy obedience. He has provided grace to enable you to perform all that He requires — and He bids you to ask and receive.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ What does our church need?

"Our gospel came to you not simply with words — but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction." 1 Thessalonians 1:5

"We have," said one pastor, "the gospel regularly preached, the prayer meetings are continued, the church is in peace — but very few souls are converted to God! What does our church need?"

It needs the presence and power of the Holy Spirit! For unless the Holy Spirit works — your minister may preach, your church may meet — but no real good will be done! God's work is carried on, not by might nor by power — but by the Spirit of the Lord Almighty. It is the Spirit who must . . . open the heart, quicken the soul, and

sanctify the person! And if the Spirit works — then the feeblest ministry is efficient, and the smallest church prospers!

All the success that followed the preaching of Peter, and the labors of Paul — was from the Holy Spirit. Therefore Paul says, "God gave the increase." Then the church felt her need of the Spirit; she realized her dependence on that divine Agent; she prayed with faith, fervor, and importunity for the blessing; and God answered her prayers, and filled His servants with the Holy Spirit and with power! But now-a-days, we merely talk of the Spirit — rather than feel our need! We boast of our instruments — rather than realize our dependence on the Almighty Agent!

~ ~ ~ ~ Was Moses a wise man — or a fool?

"Moses chose to suffer affliction along with the people of God — rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time!" Hebrews 11:25 The choice is done. Moses is determined. He has counted the cost! Instead of honor — shame; instead of praise — blame; instead of respect — contempt; instead of plenty — poverty; instead of a princely portion — a slave's lot.

Was this wise? Was Moses a wise man — or a fool? What do you think of Moses — was he right, or wrong? But if Moses was right, as I suppose you will admit, allow me to ask: Have you acted rightly? Have you made the same choice? Have you looked at the world at its best — and at true religion at its worst; and have you seriously, deliberately, and prayerfully decided to renounce the world, and embrace the despised religion of Christ, with all the scorn, contempt, and sufferings to which it may expose you?

Moses made his choice between the children of God and their sufferings — and the Egyptians and their pleasures. And you must make your choice between . . . Christ — or the world, sin — or holiness, the path to Heaven — or the road to Hell.

"Choose this day whom you will serve!" A master you must have, and it must be either Satan — or Christ. Serve you must, and your service must be either sin — or righteousness.

Look, then at the world — at its honors, wealth, and pleasures; look also at the church — at its poverty, contempt, and sufferings.

Look at Hell — with its bitter reflections, deep sorrows, and indescribable torments;

look also at Heaven — with its sweet thoughts, pure enjoyments, and endless felicity.

Now make your choice! Do you choose the world and its pleasures now — along with Hell and its horrors forever? Do you choose rather to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time, than to serve and suffer with the people of God — though you know your end will be as bitter as wormwood, and as dreadful as the just wrath of a holy and unchangeable God could make it?

If Moses was wise — then what can you be, but a fool? And your foolishness now — will increase your anguish and agony to all eternity!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ My nature is the same as in the harlot, the drunkard, the murderer!

"If this man were a prophet, He would know who is touching Him and what kind of woman she is — that she is a sinner!" Luke 7:39

This woman was a sinner — an open sinner. One who had violated the laws of decency, as well as the law of God. She is condemned and despised. Many are more ready to condemn — than to pity; to despise — than to endeavor to reclaim.

We forget when we look at the profane — that we have the same seeds of profanity in our hearts! We forget that evil human nature is essentially the same in all. We forget that education, circumstances, providence, or the grace of God — make the only difference between us and the vilest man that ever lived!

We are all one man's sons. We were hewn out of the same rock — we were dug out of the same pit. My nature is the same as in the harlot, the drunkard, the murderer; and if left to myself — I would have been as depraved as they are! Humbling consideration this!

While I condemn sin — let me ever pity the sinner. While I mourn over the fallen — let me ask the question so well put by the apostle, "For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have — that you did not receive?" 1 Corinthians 4:7.

Am I vile? Let me take the blame and the shame to myself.

Am I saved and holy? Let sovereign grace have all the glory and praise!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Reader, are you a Christian? Are you a Christian? This is a very important inquiry, because many profess to be so — who are not so in reality. And yet no one can be saved — unless he is a Christian.

If anyone is in Christ — he is a new creature: he is convinced of sin — and mourns over it; he hates sin — and departs from it; he reads the Word of God — and loves it;

he hears the gospel of Christ — and believes it.

He becomes a disciple of Christ, . . . learning His doctrines, trusting His promises, and doing His will.

He receives the Spirit of Christ, which is a spirit of meekness, love, and holiness.

He would rather suffer for Christ — than sin against Christ! He . . . loves the person of Christ, imitates the example of Christ, and observes the ordinances of Christ.

He commits his soul into the hands of Jesus . . .to be pardoned through His blood, to be justified by His righteousness, to be sanctified by His Spirit, to be preserved by His power, to be used for His glory, and to be presented faultless by Him to the Father at last.

He looks for the second coming of Christ with joy — because then he will be like Him, for he will see Him as He is!

Such is a Christian, according to the New Testament.

Reader, are you a Christian? Can you live without prayer? Can you be happy without Christ? Can you neglect or despise the Word of God?

If so — then you are not a Christian!

Every Christian finds . . .prayer to be the breath of his soul, Christ to be the food of his soul, the Bible to be the comfort of his soul, and the Lord's people to be the beloved companions of his soul.

Examine yourself, for thousands bear the Christian name — who know nothing of Christian experience. Multitudes live and die under a delusion — and will say to Jesus at last, "Lord, Lord, we were Christians!" Then He will say unto them, "I never knew you! Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!" This will be dreadful — most dreadful!

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"You fools — when will you be wise?" Psalms 94:8

The Scripture stigmatizes the lost sinner as a fool. He may be rich, he may be learned, he may fill an honorable station in the world — but so long as he neglects the one thing needful — he is called a fool.

Wisdom consists in fixing upon a worthy end — and pursuing it in the most prudent and judicious way.

A wise man . . .thinks of his immortal soul — and seeks its salvation above everything else. thinks of the wrath of God — and endeavors by all means to escape it. thinks of a crown of glory — and sets his heart upon obtaining it. sees that glorifying God is his highest honor, and secures his greatest happiness — and therefore he makes that the grand end of his life.

But the multitude, alas! the multitude overlook, or despise, or treat these things with contempt! They live . . .as if self-gratification were the end of their creation, as if earth were their eternal dwelling-place, and as if glorifying God were no business of theirs!

If we were to judge them by their conduct, we would be ready to conclude . . .that they had no souls to be saved or lost, that there was no Hell to escape, that there was no Heaven to obtain, that there was no crown of glory to be won, that there was no crown of shame to be avoided. Surely the Scriptures are right in designating such men fools — for fools, the greatest fools, they must be!

Should the eye of a worldly man or woman light upon this page — God asks you the question, "When will you be wise?" When will you begin to seek the kingdom of God, and His righteousness? When will you come to Jesus, and be saved from wrath by Him? When will you begin to lay up for yourself treasure in heaven? When will you prepare for death, judgment, and eternity?

"If only they were wise and would understand this, and discern what their end will be!" Deuteronomy 32:29

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"The time has come for my departure! I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day!" 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Agedbeliever, the time of your departure will soon come! Do not let your mind be troubled as to . . . where you shall die, when you shall die, or how you shall die!

These are all minor matters — and ought not to affect you.

Simply look at death as Jesus did: "Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world — and go to His Father!" John 13:1

Why should you regret to leave a poor world like this — where sin, sorrow, pain, grief, disappointment, and anxiety meet you at every turn? Why should you be reluctant to go HOME — to go to your Father? Do you not want to see His face?

Do you not want to enjoy His company? Do you not want to be perfectly happy in His presence?

"I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far!" Php 1:23

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Every creature has somerock

"There is no Rock like our God!" 1 Samuel 2:2

As creatures, we all need . . . an object of trust, one on whom we can lean, one in whom we can confide, one to whom we may look for defense and safety. Every creature has somerock — some object of dependence and trust; for without this, there would be recklessness or despair.

Some make a 'rock' of their wealth, some of their talents, some of their station, some of their friends, some of their good deeds, some of their religious observances, some of their name or fame.

But the Christian's rock is his God, that is — God in Christ. Yes, Jesus is . . . the foundation of his hopes, the source of his strength, the anchor of his safety, and the fountain that supplies him!

In Christ, his Rock — he finds honey; and this Rock pours out rivers of oil for him, "He nourished him with honey from the Rock, and with oil from the flinty crag." Deuteronomy 32:13. This Rock, Christ — is the Rock of his salvation. This Rock of ages — is the Rock of his strength. Of this Rock, he can sing, "The Lord is my Rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my Rock, in

whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior!" 2 Samuel 22:2-3

Looking around upon all others, he can say, "But their 'rock' is not like our Rock; even our enemies concede." Deuteronomy 32:31.

There is no rock like our Rock: none so great, none so ancient, none so durable,  
none so suited to meet all a sinner's needs.

On this Rock we build for eternity! We have no doubt that our immortal interests are safe. To this Rock, we run for safety, and smile at the opposition of all our foes. In this Rock, we hide, and are safe from the sword of divine justice, as well as the rage of infernal Hell. In this Rock we take shelter, and are uninjured by the windy storm and tempest. From this Rock we look for all our supplies — and we are not, cannot be disappointed. Beneath its shade — we enjoy peace and comfort! In its cleft — we are safe for evermore!

How safe, how happy is the believer — having God for his ROCK; for . . .he builds on a foundation that can never decay, he trusts in a stronghold that can never be taken, he hides in a refuge from which he can never be expelled!

"The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock, my Savior!" 2 Samuel 22:47

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Life quickly glides away!

"But this I say, brethren — the time is short!" 1 Corinthians 7:29

Our time on earth is short — and it is daily growing shorter!

Life quickly glides away — and death and eternity rapidly approaches.

In a little while — we shall close our eyes on all the scenes of earth, and be done with all the concerns of time.

Few things fly swifter than time, or teach us more solemn lessons. Yet we slight them, and forget them, or fail to improve them. O for grace to derive comfort, reproof, and stimulus from the brevity of time.

"The time is short!" Then our troubles must be short, for they are all limited to time. They are the offspring of sin, and will not out-live their parent! Every trouble, leaves one the less to be endured. Soon the last trouble will arrive! Let us therefore . . .

bear them with patience, endure them with fortitude, and rejoice in the prospect of bidding them an eternal farewell. Our sharpest, severest trials — will soon be ended! And then, all that will remain, will be eternal peace and joy!

"The time is short!" Then the pleasures of time will soon terminate!

As sweet as they are — they are all fleeting!

Prize them as we may — we must soon part with them. Not one of them will go with us beyond the dying bed. Let us not, then, value them too highly, or set our hearts too much upon them.

Earthly comforts, worldly distinctions and honors — will soon have passed away. The rich and the poor will soon meet together in the graveyard. The peasant and the prince, the beggar and monarch — will alike slumber together in the dust. Let us then, if tempted to think too much of the worldly distinctions, or value too highly the comforts of life — remember that the time is short!

"The time is short!" Then Jesus will soon be here! How will many things appear, which now occupy our time, engross our attention, and steal away our hearts — when Jesus comes?

Believer, "the time is short," lift up your head with joy. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for. . .your tribulation will soon cease, your sorrow will soon flee away, and

the days of your mourning shall be ended.

Time is the limit of your trials, temptations, and troubles.

Time is the limit of your conflicts, doubts, and fears.

Time is the limit of your pains, privations, and griefs.

Beyond time — all is . . .peace and pleasure, purity and perfection, happiness and rest!

Lift up then your head with joy, for your redemption, your eternal redemption draws near!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Our sins forged thenails!

"When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified Him." Luke 23:33

What brought Him there? It was our sins — and His own infinite love. Our sins alone could not — for He was not involved in them. His love alone could not — for as innocent, He could not die. But out of His pure, infinite, and eternal love — He became answerable for our sins. He engaged to bear them, atone for them, and remove them forever!

"He died for our sins." He suffered — because we had sinned, He died — because we deserved to die, and He lay in the grave for a time — that we may not lie in hell forever!

Our sins . . .

forged thenails that fastened Him to the tree, planted the thorns that pierced His brow, and sharpened the spear that was thrust into His heart!

O what an evil must sin be — to bring the Son of God into such a state of suffering and humiliation!

O what love must the love of Jesus be — that induced Him to take our place, and suffer and die in our stead!

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My dear children, As your parent, I feel deeply concerned for both your present and everlasting welfare. Great will be my sorrow and distress — to see you associated with the worldly, the careless, or the profane — and to look forward with the fear of being everlastingly separated from

you! O what an idea — to be separated forever! the parent enjoying unutterable blessedness — but the child enduring unspeakable, unending woe!

With all the solemn realities of eternity before me I write, and with the deepest solicitude I beg your attention. Allow me first, my dear child, to call your attention to the infinite value of your immortal SOUL. You have a soul which is immortal, destined to live forever. Live it must, live it will, and live forever; but it is capable of enduring most dreadful, fearful, and never-ending torments!

I tell you from the mouth of God — that you have an immortal soul; that there is a glorious heaven — and a dreadful hell; that one or the other must be your eternal abode; and I beseech you to consider seriously, reflect in time, and flee from the wrath to come! Your nature is entirely depraved, and always has been! You were conceived in sin, shaped in iniquity, and brought forth under the curse of God! You have grown up hitherto in a sinful state: every thought of your heart, every word you have spoken,

every action you have performed, is more or less sinful. Your heart is a fountain so corrupt, that nothing pure can possibly proceed from it. God, says of your heart, my child, that it is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked!" Every variety of sin and wickedness lurks there! It may be concealed from your view, but yet it is there; and if temptation should present itself, or the Lord takes off his restraints — it would soon make its dreadful appearance.

There never was a sin committed by the vilest malefactor, or a crime perpetrated by the greatest monster of iniquity — but the seed of that sin or crime is to be found in your heart! "For from within, out of the heart," says Jesus, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, covetousness, wickedness; deceit, lust, an evil eye, pride, blasphemy, foolishness! All these evil things come from within and defile a man!" Well then may the Apostle say, "The carnal mind is enmity against God — for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be! So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God!" Do you think that it is possible, my dear child, for anything good to come from a heart like this? But just such a heart is yours — and the reason you do not know it, is because spiritual darkness and ignorance are spread over your soul; the eyes of your understanding are darkened, and you are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The glorious effects produced by it

Most men have some favorite subject — and Paul had his. Many subjects were embraced in his ministry — but one fixed his eye, filled his heart, and occupied most of his attention. We may be sure, from the wisdom he generally displayed, and the abundance of grace that he possessed — that it was an important and worthy subject. It was "Christ crucified!" Therefore alluding to his first visit to Corinth, he said, "I determined to know nothing while I was with you — except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." 1 Corinthians 2:2. What a wondrous subject! What a wondrous Savior! Paul had seen glorious effects produced, by preaching it elsewhere. He knew that if this doctrine would not win them, and bring them back to God — nothing could.

We have been preaching and writing about Christ crucified for many years. We have also seen the glorious effects produced by it. We have seen . . . the hardened — melted down into penitence and love; the miserable — made happy; the sorrowful — filled with comfort; the guilty — put in possession of pardon; the filthy — made pure and holy; the troubled — made calm and peaceful; and the cruel — made kind and gentle!

What an honor God confers upon you, by sending a message to you at all, especially such a message. It is . . . a message of mercy — to miserable sinners; a message of grace — to unworthy sinners; a message of provision made — for very poor and needy sinners; a message of comfort — for desponding sinners; a message to alarm — for careless sinners; a message to solemnly warn — for obstinate sinners; an invitation to backsliders to return — that they may once more be happy and holy;

a message of encouragement, direction, and winning love — to those who believe in Jesus.

"I determined to know nothing while I was with you — except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The believer's happiness

"Oh, that I knew where I might find HIM!" Job 23:3

The believer's happiness consists very much in the presence of God, and a sense of His love. His happiness is not in place, or circumstances, or friends — but in God Himself as revealed in Jesus.

Anywhere, at any time, in any condition, alone or in any company, we can be happy — if we realize that God is present, and can enter into communion with Him.

Real religion always . . . centers in God, feasts on God, and is satisfied with God alone.

The teachings of the Holy Spirit brings us away from other sources of peace and satisfaction — to God alone. And in God, as made known in Jesus — we find . . .

all we want, all we wish, all we can enjoy!

"You have made known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand!" Psalms 16:11. Oh, blessed thought! Having been brought to set our hearts on God, to find our happiness in God — soon, very soon, we shall enjoy His perfect, perpetual presence; and shall never more sigh, or cry, "Oh, that I knew where I might find HIM!"

"And so we will be with the Lord forever!" 1 Thessalonians 4:17

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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!

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More than being our friend, helper, or benefactor!

"I will be to them a God!" Hebrews 8:10

That is, to all His redeemed people.

I will be . . . the object of their adoration and trust, the subject of their meditation, and the source of all their happiness.

To be our GOD — is more than being our friend, helper, or benefactor (creatures may be so to us). He engages to do us good according to His all-sufficiency; to bestow upon us blessings which none else can!

He will pardon us — and pardon like a God!

He will sanctify us — and sanctify us like a God!

He will comfort us — and comfort us like a God!

He will glorify us — and glorify us like a God!

If He is our God — He is our All.

And all that He has is ours! He is our inheritance, and a glorious inheritance He is.

Consider, when . . . in danger, in darkness, in distress, in temptation, in duty, or in affliction — God will be to you a God . . . delivering you, enlightening you, comforting you, strengthening you, sanctifying you.

Make a God of Him! Look to Him for all that He has promised — which is all that you need! Adore His Divine perfections, and rejoice that they are all engaged to make you eternally blessed.

Live to His glory, walk by His Word — and He will glorify Himself in your present and everlasting welfare. He rejoices to do good unto His people, He delights to bless them!

"I will be to them a God!" Hebrews 8:10

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## Treasures from James Smith 3 (excerpts)1

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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 beg 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 to God — 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!

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It is like the passing cloud on the summer's day!

"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy!" John 16:20

The sorrow of the Christian must be transient. It is like the passing cloud on the summer's day; or the chill of winter which must give place to the genial warmth of spring.

Beloved, if you now have sorrow — then your sorrow also shall soon be turned into joy; for joy is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.

Heaviness may endure for the night — but joy comes in the morning.

The SIN that causes your sorrow — shall be pardoned and subdued.

The FOES that disturb your peace — shall be converted or destroyed.

The CLOUDS that obscure your sun — shall soon dissolve in showers of blessing on your favored head.

The hard and weary road between you and your eternal home — will soon be passed! The days of your mourning will be ended, and those who now go forth weeping, bearing precious seed — shall soon return with songs of everlasting joy!

"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy!" John 16:20

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Jesus is only precious to believers

"Unto you therefore who believe — He is precious!" 1 Peter 2:7

Every believer VALUES Christ. Let others think of Him as they may — all who are taught of God, think highly of Him. They can never honor Him as they wish, or enjoy Him to their full satisfaction.

Every believer feels their NEED of him. No weary traveler ever felt his need of rest,

no hungry laborer ever felt his need of food, no drowning mariner ever felt his need of a life-boat — as the believer has felt his need of Christ! They need to be saved — and only Christ can save them. They need to be happy — and only Jesus can make them happy. They need His blood to cleanse them from sin, and procure their pardon. They need His righteousness to clothe their souls, and justify them before God. They need His Spirit to sanctify their nature, and make them fit for Heaven. They need His intercession to secure them from evil, and procure for them good things. They need His fullness of grace to supply all their needs, from earth to Heaven.

Every believer discovers the exact SUITABILITY of Christ to them. He is just what they need — He has all that they need! They are foolish — and He has wisdom. They are unrighteous — and He has righteousness. They are unholy — and He has holiness. They are weak — and He has strength. They are in bondage — and He has redemption. They are lost — and He has salvation. In a word, they are led to see that God has stored up everything in Jesus, and that possessing Him — they have all things!

Every Christian believes on Him to the saving of the soul. They trust Him to procure their pardon, peace with God, and everlasting life. Their heart goes out to Him, they repose confidence in Him, they commit their souls to Him, they build on Him — as God's foundation; they hide in Him — as the sinner's refuge; and they trust themselves with Him — as the almighty Savior.

"Unto you therefore who believe — He is precious!"

But Jesus is only precious to believers. Others do not feel their need of Him, do not see His adaptation to them, and do not depend on Him for pardon, peace with God, and everlasting life.

Beloved, do you have this saving faith — which renders Christ so precious?

If so, admire the sovereign and distinguishing grace of God, which has conferred so great a blessing upon you — for not all are given saving faith.

If so, realize the importance of this faith — which renders Christ so precious. It is the eye — which sees the beauty of Christ. It is the foot — which travels to Christ. It is the hand — which lays hold of Christ. It is the mouth — which tastes the sweetness of Christ. It is the inward principle — which clings and cleaves to Christ.

Avoid therefore whatever weakens faith, or interrupts its exercise; and prize whatever strengthens it, and makes it vigorous!

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Losses, crosses, disappointments and bereavements

"Unto you therefore who believe — He is precious!" 1 Peter 2:7

Christ is especially precious to believers — when the emptiness of the world is discovered. The soul having tried the world, has found it . . .false and fickle, an empty cistern, a dry well, a cloud without water, only vanity and vexation of spirit!

The Christian has experienced that . . . the world's pleasures — end in pain, its honors — end in disgrace, and its wealth — ends in absolute poverty.

Now turning from the world, to Jesus — it finds . . .solid happiness, substantial pleasure, full supplies.

It obtains . . .a deep and lasting peace which passes all understanding, unsearchable riches in Christ, and honors which will never pass away.

O how precious is Jesus, when this world appears to be a valley of tears! Almost everything earthly is at times calculated to . . .cause sorrow, fill us with sadness, and draw forth tears. Losses, crosses, disappointments and bereavements — all conspire to make us sad. Earth is to us a Valley of Achor — the place of trouble and sorrow.

Now turning to Jesus, we find a friend who loves at all times, and a brother born for adversity. He makes up for every loss, He sanctifies every disappointment, and He fills for us every relation.

His presence is . . .like a flowing spring — in a dreary desert, like a cheering fire — on a piercing winter's night, and like a happy home — to the exhausted traveler.

O how precious is Jesus now!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The almighty power of God is exerted!

"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Corinthians 5:17

It is a miraculous thing to be a Christian — for real Christianity is the effect of a new creation! To make a Christian, requires the same power as to make a world — nothing less can raise a sinner from a death in trespasses and sins!

In every instance of real conversion — the almighty power of God is exerted!

The distinguishing PRIVILEGE of the believer, is that he is "in Christ." We were all originally in fallen Adam, and from his loins we flowed. No one is in Christ by nature — but only by an act of

sovereign grace. Yet all Christians are in Christ — nor can anyone be a Christian without being vitally united to Christ.

As the manslayer fled to the city of refuge for safety — so does the believer flee to Christ.

As Noah entered into the ark for preservation from the deluge — so does the believer hide in Christ, that he may be preserved from the wrath to come.

As the branch is in the vine, supported and supplied by the vine, and forms a part of the vine — so is the believer in Christ, supported and supplied by Christ!

As the member is in the body, presided over by the head, and forms part of the body — so the Christian is in Christ, is presided over by Christ, and forms part of Christ. "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

Christ dwells in the believer — as His temple.

The believer dwells in Christ — as his refuge, stronghold, and ark of safety.

The invariable RESULT of being in Christ, is that "he is a new creature."

Being in Christ, we are new created — and have a new LIFE, which is spiritual, derived from a new source, not from Adam but from Christ.

Being in Christ, we feed on new PROVISION — even the bread of life which came down from Heaven, and the living water which only Jesus can give.

Being in Christ, we are occupied with new SUBJECTS, which are placed before us by the gospel — and engage our thoughts, affections, and time.

Being in Christ, we are engaged in new EMPLOYMENTS, we work the works of God, endeavor to do the will of God from the heart, and to glorify our glorious Savior.

Being in Christ, we walk in a new PATH — the way of holiness. We walk in newness of life. We walk with God — and desire to walk worthy of God, who has called us unto His kingdom and glory.

Being in Christ, we act from new MOTIVES, for the love of Christ constrains us, and we no longer labor for eternal life, because we have it; nor for Heaven, because we have already received a title to it — but as bought with a price, we desire only to glorify God in our acts and thoughts.

Being in Christ, we join a new SOCIETY, for we choose the company of the saints, whom we esteem as the excellent of the earth; and therefore we join ourselves to the disciples.

Being in Christ, we look for a new HEAVEN, and in order to the possession of it, we wait for Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.

O blessed state — to be in Christ! O glorious privilege and distinction — to be new creatures!

Union to Christ is of the greatest IMPORTANCE. Without this there is no eternal safety, no true dignity, no solid happiness. It is only as one with Christ — that we are justified, that we are sanctified, that we can be glorified. Let us never rest satisfied with anything short of union to Christ, and that manifested in living fellowship with Christ.

Only by a new birth, only as born of the Spirit — can we come into the enjoyment of this blessed privilege, or enjoy this high distinction. Let no one therefore stop short of that thorough change of heart, which results from saving union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

~ ~ ~ ~ The old serpent is almost sure to be lurking in our path!

"That old serpent called the devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world." Revelation 12:9 Our ENEMY. He is "that old serpent," full of subtlety, craft, and cunning. He is powerful, far beyond what most give him credit for — and brings the experience of six thousand years to bear upon his victims. None escape his notice, or remain unmolested by him.

He is full of bitter hatred to believers, because they love the Savior, and desire to honor Him. His malice is deep and dreadful, which prompts him in every way to seek to injure them. He hates them because . . . they have escaped out of his hand, they oppose his kingdom and government; they hate sin, and pant, and pray, and strive for holiness.

He is a terrible foe, for he never wearies, and though foiled a thousand times — he will renew the attack! If he knows that he cannot devour us, he will do all he can to worry us; and though we may be off our guard — he is never off his. His WORK. "He deceives the whole world." He deceives by misrepresenting objects.

He represents sin as harmless, painful, pleasant, and much to be desired.

He represents holiness as repulsive, injurious, gloomy, and undignified.

He represents man to himself as innocent, dignified, and deserving God's blessing.

He represents himself as man's friend, pitying, and wishing to elevate him, and make him happy.

He represents God as severe, cruel, revengeful, and almost implacable.

He represents the law as harsh, severe, and unnecessarily strict.

He represents the gospel as degrading to man, and very little better than the law.

He represents the Savior as a stern law-giver, an unbending judge, and one very difficult to please.

Indeed, every spiritual object is misrepresented by him!

Then by prejudices, errors, or superstition — he . . . blinds the mind, conceals the true nature of the gospel, and hides the Savior from man's view. "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God!"

He makes use of all kinds of error, and all sorts of false teachers, to . . . hinder God's work, eclipse the glory of the gospel, and destroy the souls of men. If he can lull the soul into false security, his end is answered, and the doom of the poor creature is sealed!

If we were not so ignorant of his devices, or did not forget his unwearied activity, deep rooted malice, and fixed determination by all means to ruin souls — we would not trifle with him as we do. The Extent of His SUCCESS. "He deceives the whole world!" We were all under his dominion

once. We loved his service, believed his lies, and — but for the mercy of God, would have surely perished in our sins!

All around us we see Satan working, deceiving, and leading souls captive at his will. This should make us think and act soberly, as Peter says, "Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour! Stand firm against him, and be strong in the faith."

It should lead us to walk carefully, for the old serpent is almost sure to be lurking in our path!

It should lead us to examine diligently, lest we should be deceived; for if he deceives the whole world, with all its learning, shrewdness, and knowledge — we may well examine carefully, lest he deceive us!

It should lead us to pray fervently. Think of the power and subtlety of the old serpent! Have we not need to cry mightily to God, that he would keep us by His power, shield us by His presence, and preserve us by His grace unto His kingdom and glory.

It should lead us to watch daily, for in a sense, we are always in danger! If we sleep — Satan does not! If we are off our guard — he is ready to take advantage, in order to injure us.

O for wisdom to resist Satan, and overcome him!

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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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 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

God's 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 divine 'supplies' that our graces are kept alive.

If the Lord would cease to water — we would 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.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ What can be more difficult than this?

"For with God, nothing shall be impossible!" Luke 1:37

Difficulties often crowd the believer's path, and trials line his way. Obstacles and opposition meet him at almost every turn. What to do at times — he scarcely knows, for he has been disappointed so often, and is now so completely baffled — that his way is hedged up with thorns! Look whichever way he will, or to whatever quarter he may — there is something to discourage him, and cast him down!

It is of no use looking any way, or to any one — but to the Lord; and while looking to Him, it will be well to remember what the angel said to the blessed virgin, to excite and strengthen her faith, "For with God, nothing shall be impossible."

Look at the Fact. There are no impossibilities with God! He can do — as He will. He will do — all that He has promised. He has promised to do all that you can need or even wisely desire. In Mary's case, much faith was required — it was exercised and honored. A virgin did bear a son. That son was free from all taint of sin. That son was divine. That divine Son was the Savior of men.

What can be more difficult than this?

What should stagger us, after this?

Look at what God IS: look at His power and grace, look at His wisdom and wealth,  
look at His pity and compassion, look at His greatness and glory.

Look at what God has DONE: in nature — by His power, in providence — by His wisdom, in redemption — by His grace. And looking at what God is, and at what He has done — you must come to the conclusion, "With God, nothing is impossible!"

Let us use this fact for our own benefit. Nothing shall be impossible with God!

Not the conversion of that obstinate child. Not that hardened husband. Not that trying and degraded wife. Not the restoration of that backslider — as low as he may have sunk, and far as he may have gone. Not the pardon of those sins — as great, glaring, and numerous as they may be. Not the sanctification of that trouble — as deep, trying, and dreadful as it is. Not the bringing of the greatest good out of that worst evil — though it may have alarmed and terrified you. Not the perfecting of the soul in holiness — as sinful and polluted as it is at present.

No, nothing is too hard for the Lord! Therefore cheer up, press on, take up your cross or burden afresh — and bear it after Jesus.

Let this precious truth, feed and strengthen your faith — that you may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Let it excite and animate your hope — that you may expect great things from God.

Let it stimulate you in prayer — that you may ask largely of God, and ask with confidence too.

Let it crush your fears — that you may press boldly on, until you reach the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Let it stir you up to exertion — for as nothing shall be impossible to God, so nothing shall be impossible to you, which you undertake with His sanction, and with a view to His glory.

Let it encourage and call forth praise — for how grateful and thankful we should be, that our God can do all things, and therefore will do for us, all that is necessary both in life and death.

Let us keep this sweet truth always in mind, and when cast down — chide our fears and excite our hopes, saying, "With God, nothing shall be impossible!"

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And WHY, dear Savior — tell me why?

"He gave Himself for us — that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous for good works." Titus 2:14

"HE gave Himself for us." Note the contrast between the Giver — and those for whom He gave Himself.

The Giver is He who was . . . the only begotten Son of God, the author of creation, the sustainer of the universe, the brightness of divine glory, the source and end of all things! He who was proclaimed by the prophet as "the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." He who is declared by the apostle to be "God over all — blessed for evermore!"

"He gave Himself for US." For US — who at the best are mere creatures, between whom and our Creator, there can be no comparison. But it was not for us as mere creatures — but for us as base, vile, insignificant, and totally depraved creatures! We had debased ourselves, even unto Hell. Our nature could not be worse, for "the human heart is the most deceitful of all things — and desperately wicked!"

The most exalted, glorious, and holy being in the universe — gave Himself for the most vile, polluted, and degraded of His creatures!

O how astonishing!

But He volunteered on our behalf, without any solicitation, offering to become . . .

our Substitute — to fulfill the law in our stead; our Sacrifice — to make a full atonement for our sins; and our Ransomer — to pay the satisfactory price for our redemption.

He engaged to bear the desert of all our sins in His own body — to suffer all that the inflexible justice of God could inflict on our Surety — and so put away our sins forever, by the sacrifice of Himself. He gave . . . His person — for our persons; His blood — as our ransom price; and His life — for our lives!

He gave His entire self, doing and suffering all that was necessary to secure our release from sin's curse, and our everlasting salvation.

O amazing grace of a gracious Savior!

He gave Himself — that He might justly redeem, ransom, or deliver us — from the guilt, power, and penal consequences of sin.

He gave Himself — to expiate the guilt, to destroy the power, and secure us against the eternal desert of our transgressions.

He gave Himself to purify unto Himself, by fully expiating their sins — a peculiar people: a people purchased — to be peculiarly His own; a people sanctified, separated from all others — to be set apart for Himself; a people to be His own subjects — as the King of Zion; a people to be His own soldiers — as the Captain of our salvation; a people to be His own servants — as the Lord of the

house; a people to be His own children — as the everlasting Father!

"He gave Himself!" The love of Jesus is unparalleled. Out of pure love to us who had no love to Him, nor ever would have had — but for His first loving us! He gave, not only His time, His labor, His wealth — but Himself! He gave His entire person as the God-man, the incarnate Jehovah!

"He gave Himself!" This was more than as if He had given a thousand worlds — for these He could create with a word!

"He gave Himself," and not merely to live for us, or labor for us — but even to die for us!

"He gave Himself," and not even to die some easy and honorable death — but the most painful, shameful death, that man ever invented, or creature ever suffered!

O wondrous love!

And WHY, dear Savior — tell me why, You thus would suffer, bleed and die? What mighty motive could Thee move, The motive's plain — 'twas all for love! For love of whom? Of sinners base, A hardened herd, a rebel race! That mocked and trampled on Thy blood, And trifled with the wounds of God!

They nailed Him to the accursed tree; They did, my brethren — and so did we! The soldier pierced His side, 'tis true; But we have pierced Him through and through!

O Jesus, never, never was there love like yours!

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He must afflict us!

"He does not afflict willingly." Lamentations 3:33

Here is a fact well known — the Lord afflicts His children. Trouble never springs out of the dust — nor do afflictions come by 'chance'. No! Every trial and affliction is sent from our Father's throne — and its direction is written by our Father's hand. He appoints the kind, the degree, and the direction of our afflictions.

We are afflicted with disappointments, losses, and crosses. None are exempt. None can always escape, for "the Lord tries the righteous." "Many are the afflictions of the righteous."

"He does not afflict willingly." He only grieves us from necessity. He has fixed His end, which is to make us holy, and to conform us to the image of His Son; from this, He will not be diverted — but He will surely accomplish it.

In the afflictions which He sends, God aims at . . .our deeper sanctification, or our greater usefulness, or simply at His own glory, which is always linked with our good.

He therefore afflicts us — to exercise our graces; these would otherwise often lie dormant, become weak, fade, and wither.

God afflicts His children — to wean us from the world, to which we are too much attached, and would be more so, if it were not for trials, disappointments, and vexations.

God afflicts His children — to embitter sin, which is the prolific root, on which every pain, grief and sorrow grows.

God afflicts His children — to endear the Savior, who is our solace in sorrow, and will be our glorious deliverer from it. Never does Jesus appear so precious — as in the hours of trouble and trial.

God afflicts His children — to prevent our falling into temptation, which we would do more frequently, if we were not kept awake and watchful by our various sorrows.

God afflicts His children — to fit us for usefulness, for as the land must be ploughed, harrowed, and crushed — if it is to be fruitful and supply our needs; just so must we be tempted, tried, and troubled — if we are to be of much use to man, or to bring much glory to God.

God afflicts His children, to make us long for heaven — which we seldom do when all is pleasant, bright, and sunny below.

If God loves us with an infinite love; if He has predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son; if He will make us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; and if He will correct our faults and our follies— He must afflict us!

~ ~ ~ ~ The panacea for all the ills of life!

"The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace." Romans 8:6

Spirituality flows from the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit in the soul, who . . . kindles spiritual love, awakens spiritual desires, and produces spiritual devotion.

The Spirit's work in the believer consists:

1. In convincing us of sin, when we go astray from the right ways of the Lord.
2. In working repentance and sorrow within us, and leading us to confess and mourn over our sins before God.
3. In opening up, and applying the Word of God, so that it . . . meets our case, feeds our faith, fires our love, and deepens our humility.
4. In exciting and drawing forth the soul in prayer, praise, and adoration at the throne of God — so that we sometimes . . . melt in contrition, are crumbled down in humiliation, and are almost dissolved in love.
5. In making us bold in God's cause, and giving us to feel liberty in His presence, through faith in the blood of His dear Son.
6. In giving us soul-refreshing glimpses . . . of the glorious person of Jesus, of the everlasting covenant, and of eternal glory.
7. In melting us down in sincere gratitude before God, under a sense of His undeserved favor.
8. In removing all legal fears, and causing holy peace to flow through the soul like a river.

9. In melting us in meekness, and producing sweet submission to the sovereign will of God.
10. In sweetly soothing and consoling under trials and bereavements; and enabling us to look forward with hope and joy.
11. In giving us sweet intimations of the love of God to us — by pleasing impressions, and holy discoveries of His grace.
12. In witnessing to our adoption, awakening the cry of "Abba, Father!" in our hearts, and enabling us to claim a filial relationship to God.
13. In drawing forth our souls in love to God — under an overcoming sense of His free and unparalleled love to us.
14. In enabling us to mount upward as on the wings of an eagle, and to run with pleasure and delight in God's holy ways.
15. In quickening us to rejoice in the Lord, when all things around are calculated to fill us with despondency and gloom.
16. In producing perseverance in our souls, and enabling us to look away from the things which are seen and temporal — and to look to unseen and eternal realities.

The Spirit works within the Christian, teaching him daily to make use of Christ as the panacea for all the ills of life!

In all these things, and many more — the work of the Spirit in the experience of the believer appears.

Reader, do you know anything of these things in your own experience? Is the Spirit of God daily working in your heart, and do you pay attention to . . .the lessons He teaches, the impressions He makes, and the direction in which He points?

O for more of the Spirit's work within us — that we may live to the praise and glory of Him who loved us, and died to redeem us from sin, death, and Hell!

Holy Spirit, work in us more and more — teaching us the truth, and conforming us to Christ! O for more of Your power, love, and holiness!

~ ~ ~ ~ My friend, I know not what your trouble may be

"If I were you — I would seek unto God! I would lay my cause before Him!" Job 5:8

This is sound advice. It is much better than . . .seeking unto men, or poring over troubles, or indulging a gloomy imagination, or giving way to fears.

My friend, I know not what your trouble may be — but "If I were you — I would seek unto God!"

If I was in perplexity — I would seek unto God for wisdom.

If I was in sorrow — I would seek unto God for comfort.

If I was in weakness — I would seek unto God for strength.

If I was under guilt — I would seek unto God for pardon.

If I was in a severe conflict — I would seek unto God for victory.

If I was in doubt and fear — I would seek unto God for confidence and a sense of His favor.

If I was harassed by Satan — I would seek unto almighty God for protection.

If I was afraid of falling — I would seek unto God to uphold me with His omnipotent arm.

If I was alarmed at death — I would seek for His presence to comfort me.

Whatever you need — seek it from God!

Whatever you fear — carry it to God!

Whatever troubles you — lay it before God!

You cannot seek unto Him in vain, or without profit!

"If I were you — I would seek unto God! I would lay my cause before Him!"

Theeyeof God!

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account!" Hebrews 4:13

"The Lord searches every heart and understands the intention of every thought!" 1 Chronicles 28:9

"I am the one who searches out the thoughts and intentions of every person!" Revelation 2:23

"O Lord, You know!" Jeremiah 15:15

God's perfect knowledge, is like the pillar-cloud which led Israel out of Egypt, and through the wilderness: it is dark and a cause of terror to His enemies — but it is light and a source of comfort to His children.

"O Lord, You know" my SINS and FOLLIES! No one else does. No one else ever will. How could I look anyone in the face — if I thought he knew what was passing in my heart, or what is transacted in the chambers of my imagination within!

The Lord alone can search the heart. He alone knows the worst of us — and He alone knows the best; for the best and the worst, are both concealed in the same heart. Theeyeof God sees . . . every motive, every thought, every lust, every action!

His eye is on that mysterious portion of our nature, called the imagination, on which such strange pictures are often painted, in which such fearful scenes are sometimes transacted. "You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from You!" Psalms 69:5

What streams of moral filthiness sometimes flow from the heart into the imagination! How difficult sometimes to keep it back.

What a depth of pollution there is within us!

What billows of corruption sometimes roll and swell!

Little does the young Christian think — what the pure and holy eye of God sees within him; and what his own eye will one day discover, filling him with alarm — if not with horror, with shame and self-loathing! Then he will enter into poor Job's confession, "Behold, I am vile!" and into Isaiah's exclamation, "Woe is me! I am undone!"

"What more can I say unto You? For You know Your servant, O Sovereign Lord!" 2 Samuel 7:20

But blessed be God, the righteousness of Jesus covers all — and conceals all; and the grace and Spirit of God will ultimately purge away the whole foul heap from us!

Now our iniquities are forgiven, and our sins are covered; but then our natures will be perfectly purified, and be as white as the falling snow! "Beloved, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!" 1 John 3:2

~ ~ ~ ~ Our Father refuses to answer such questions!

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways, My ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth — so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts!" Isaiah 55:8-9

God's dealings are very mysterious. His way is in the sea, and His path in the mighty waters, and His footsteps are not known. We looked for light — but behold darkness. We expected success — but we meet with failure. We anticipated prosperity — but we are plunged in adversity. Our purposes are broken off. Our plans are frustrated. Our skies are clothed with clouds. Beloved, such is the case with us sometimes! Our circumstances are so painful, so different from what we anticipated, that in bewilderment we exclaim, "Truly, You are a God who hides Yourself!"

God will do just as He pleases with His own children. He has the right — and He will exercise it. He will often . . . cross our wills, hedge up our paths, cut off our expectations, and give us wormwood and gall to drink!

And why? Because He loves to cause us pain — or takes pleasure in our sighs and sorrows? No! Oh, no! But because He consults our welfare. Because He is wiser than we are!

Why am I poor — and my brother rich? Why am I sick — and my sister healthy? Why are my efforts crossed — and my neighbor's crowned with success? This is often deeply trying. But our Father refuses to answer such questions! He asks, "May I not do as I will — with My own?" He kindly quiets us by the assurance, "You don't understand now what I am doing — but someday you will." Well did the patriarch exclaim, "He gives no account of any of His matters."

How difficult to say sometimes, "Though He slays me — yet will I trust in Him!" How difficult to believe that this rough road is the right road, which leads to the celestial city.

Our Father wisely appoints the circumstances and lot of every one of His children. He has mapped out the path in which they are to travel. He has appointed their bounds, which they cannot pass. Then with Job we say, "He is in one mind — and who can oppose him? He does whatever He pleases. He will certainly accomplish what He has decreed for me."

We must not murmur, we must not complain — but patiently follow wherever the Lord leads, and quietly bear whatever He lays on us. Patience must calm the spirit, quiet the heart, and close the mouth. Then shall we say with the Psalmist, "I was silent, I opened not my mouth, because You are the One who has done this!" Had it been man — it might have been wrong. Had it been chance — it might have been injurious. But it was You — and, therefore, it must be wise, holy, and kind.

We are required quietly to persevere — though the way is rugged, though the thorns pierce our feet, though we cannot see one step before us! We must walk by faith, not by sight, believing . . . that we are safe — in the midst of danger; that we are right — though everything is perplexing; and that all will end well — for "We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him, and are called according to His purpose!" Romans 8:28

~ ~ ~ ~ In a few days — I may be inHell!

"Are not my days few?" Job 10:20

You may be living as if you thought that your days would be many — living in sin and in folly, and neglecting your everlasting concerns! You may be planning and scheming — as if you were to live here forever, or were at least sure of many years to come. Years! why we are not sure of months, weeks, days, hours, nay minutes! At the best — our days will be few!

If my days are few, then time will soon end with me, eternity will soon open upon me — and I shall soon know what heaven — or hell, really is! How solemn!

In a few days — I may be in Heaven! I may see the Lamb in the midst of the throne. I may be joining with the triumphing multitude in the presence of God.

But in a few days — I may be inHell! In hell? Yes, in Hell! In unquenchable fire! In everlasting burnings! In unutterable torments! The sport of devils. The companion of damned souls. Under the blighting, blasting, and withering curse of God. Hell! Who can tell what Hell is? Who can describe its tortures, its horrors, its terrific scenes?

Are not my days few? Yes! Then I must soon be in Heaven — or Hell.

Reader, your days are few! They may be very few — much fewer than you have calculated on. Suppose they should end! Suppose the decree had gone forth from the eternal throne, "Tomorrow you shall die!" and you were to be informed of it by some angelic messenger who heard it pronounced — how would you feel? How? What would you do? Where would you be for eternity?

"Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom!" Psalms 90:12

~ ~ ~ ~

Behold the Man!

"Behold the Man!" John 19:5

They scourge Him, crown Him with thorns, clothe Him with an old purple robe, smite Him with their fists — and now Pilate brings Him forth, saying, "Behold the Man!"

In His whole life He was holy, harmless, undefiled, full of mercy, and went about doing good. Yet, because He condemned sin, and required submission to God's righteousness — He was hated, persecuted, and murdered!

Let us behold this Man! He exercised all the virtues which could adorn humanity. See His meekness, gentleness, patience, faith, fortitude, pity, and perfect love to God and man. O lovely character! O perfect pattern of holiness!

Behold — and adore Him heartily. Behold — and trust in Him implicitly. My soul, behold the man!

See . . . His grief-stricken countenance, His battered frame, His breaking heart, His bleeding brow; He is enduring all this for you!

Behold Him, and . . . do not doubt His love, nor question His veracity, nor fear your foes, nor dread your heavenly Father's wrath!

Behold Him, as . . . the proof of God's love to you, the confirmation of all the promises made to you, the pledge of all the blessings set before you.

Behold Him — and sympathize with Him; look on the pierced One, and "mourn for Him."

Behold Him — and give yourself afresh unto Him!

Behold Him — and crucify your flesh with its passions and lusts.

Behold Him — until a deep impression is made upon your heart, and the love of sin departs!

Behold Him — if tempted to murmur, or complain, or repine at any of the dispensations of Divine Providence.

Behold Him — when Satan or the world allures you to sin, or would draw you away from your God.

Behold Him — when death stares you in the face, and the grave is ready for you.

"Behold the Man!"

Behold — and love Him more! Behold — and imitate Him more! Behold — and serve Him more!

May the Man of Sorrows be daily before my eye!

And may I also behold Him — coming in power and great glory! What a contrast will there be, between His first and second coming: His cross — and His throne; His crown of thorns — and His crown of glory; as He appeared before Pilate and the Jewish rabble — and as surrounded with all the armies of heaven, and all His saints with Him!

"Behold the Man!"

~ ~ ~ ~

How many of us have sacrificed our children to the idols!

"They shed innocent blood — the blood of their sons and daughters whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; so the land became polluted with blood!" Psalms 106:38

We may plead guiltless as to the shedding of the blood of the body — but there is the blood of souls! How many of us have sacrificed our children to the idols of the present Canaan — fashion, custom, dress, amusements, and worldly conformity in general!

Look at the poor example we give them!

Look at the worldly company we choose for them!

Look at the carnal practices we allow them to indulge in!

O how many of our children have been sacrificed to custom, fashion, and the various idols of the world!

~ ~ ~ The Rest!

"There remains therefore a rest for the people of God." Hebrews 4:9

We shall consider these words as referring to HEAVENLY rest: our Father's house, our Savior's home, and our eternal dwelling-place! To the weary and way-worn — there is something delightful in the thought of REST, and they love to think of Heaven as the place where they shall "rest from their labors."

REST gives us the idea of . . . repose — the calm, quiet repose of the soul; refreshment — the refreshment of the exhausted spirit after conflict, sickness, or toil;

restoration to vigor — after debility, languor, and fainting.

Heaven will be a rest . . . from sin — which will no more grieve us; from sorrow — which will no more trouble and distress us; from fears — which will no more harass and perplex us; and from conflicts — which will no more agitate and suppress us.

It will be a rest . . . with God in His glory, with Jesus in His immediate presence, with saints and holy angels in full perfection and blessedness. This rest is FUTURE — it remains for the people of God. This rest is the object of our hope and DESIRE. We look forward to it, with holy longing and cheering anticipations. This rest is PERFECT — free from all mixture of anything that will agitate, give pain, or cause grief. This rest is UNINTERRUPTED — nothing will ever occur to disturb, distress, or agitate us any more. This rest is GLORIOUS — as bright as the meridian sun, as balmy as the most pleasant morning, as glowing with holiness, splendor, and majesty. This rest is ETERNAL — and this is best of all. The possibility of a change, of a return to former scenes — would spoil all. But that rest will be enduring — as changeless as the Divine nature, and as glorious as the Divine perfections.

Blessed be God for such a rest for the weary, suffering, and downcast believer in Jesus! Oh, to keep the eye fixed upon it, and the heart expecting it — amidst all the troubles and trials of time! This rest is FOR the redeemed people of God. They are now a poor, tried, tempted, and restless people; strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, as all their fathers were.

Satan tempts them, sinners try them, fears harass them, Providence perplexes them, and they often cry out, "O that I had wings like a dove — then would I fly away and be at rest!"

Believer, let the prospect of this eternal glorious rest, cheer you in toil and trouble! Your work will soon be finished, your trouble will soon come to an end — and then rest — the glorious rest, remains for you!

Let your Heavenly rest, quicken your pace homewards! You are going to a rest — a perfect, uninterrupted, and eternal rest — a rest in Heaven, a rest with Jesus, a rest in the presence of your God forever! Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, and press on towards the mark, cheered by the prospect of the end of the race.

Remember, Christian, this rest is SECURE, for Jesus has taken possession of it for you. "I am going," said He, "to prepare a place for you." Yes, Jesus has gone there for you, He has taken possession in your name, He is preparing your place, and will soon come and receive you to Himself!

Remember too, that it is NEAR — very near. Perhaps much nearer than you may think!

You may be sighing, sorrowing, striving, wrestling, doubting, fearing, and cast down today; and tomorrow you may be in your Heavenly rest!

Today, you may be lying like Lazarus, at the rich man's gate, full of sores; tomorrow, you may be basking in the beams of Immanuel's glory!

Today, you may be on the bed of sickness, suffering, and pain; tomorrow, you may be in the presence of Jesus, where there is no more pain, neither sorrow nor crying! Who can tell how near we all are to our Heavenly and everlasting rest?

Remember also, that your very trials, toils, and sufferings here on earth, may SWEETEN your rest to you! And that soon, very soon — you may be rejoicing over your present sorrows, and praising God for what now fills you with grief and sadness. Things will look very different there — from what they do here. Never, never forget, then, in your darkest nights, in your most trying days, in the midst of every storm and tempest, when passing over burning sands and under a scorching sky — that there remains a rest for the people of God, and a rest for you!

"Arise and depart; for this is not your resting place, because it is defiled, it is ruined, beyond all remedy!"

"There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary are at rest!"

~ ~ ~ ~ The object of God's tender, perfect and ceaseless care!

"Casting all your care upon Him — for He cares for you!"<sup>1</sup> Peter 5:7

Our cares must be cast upon our God, or they will prove a burden too heavy for us — they will depress, bewilder, and make us wretched!

WHO is it that cares for us? It is the Lord Almighty — the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy! It is He whom the angels obey, the seraphim adore, and all creation glorifies! It is the Lord — who is so great, that we have no adequate conception of His greatness! It is He who is so good — that it is impossible fully to set forth His goodness! It is He who is so glorious — that no sinner can see His face and live! It is He who created all things with His Word! It is He who

governs all things by His wisdom! It is He who upholds all things by His power! It is He whose resources are infinite! It is He whose compassion is exquisite! It is He whose patience is without limit!

But though He is so exalted, so happy, and so unspeakably great — He cares for you!

He cares for you — as base as you are. He cares for you — as sinful as you are. He cares for you — as depressed and discouraged as you are.

HE cares for YOU!

May I pass through the present world under the impression, "I am the object of God's tender, perfect and ceaseless care!"

~ ~ ~ ~

Watch His hand!

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him — and He shall direct your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6 This implies that God is always present with us, is willing to be consulted by us, and will surely attend to us.

This implies that our way is likely to be difficult, dark, and perplexing; a way in which we have never traveled before, and in which we are likely to be misled.

This implies that only way to be safe, to walk securely — is to seek Divine direction; and this God is willing to give — but He will have us ask it of Him. We are dependents — and we must realize our dependence. We are but children — and we must feel it, and act as under the impression of it.

"In all your ways acknowledge Him."

You have His Word — consult it; make it your counselor, your directory and your guide.

You have His promise — believe it; He says, "I will teach you and instruct you in the way which you shall go, I will guide you with My eye."

You have His throne of grace — flee to it, and plead with Him as a man pleads with his friend.

And, while you consult His Word, believe His promise, and pray for direction — watch His hand! Providence is God working; working to accomplish His purposes, to fulfill His promises, and to answer the prayers of His people.

In His Word — He speaks to us; on His throne — He listens to us, by His providence — He works for us, and those who keep their eye open — will be sure to see His hand.

While you watch His hand — seek grace to submit to His will. He wills to do you good, the greatest good; and if His will crosses yours, depend upon it — it is just because it is most for your benefit.

Gratefully acknowledge His favors as you receive them. Remember that, as sinful creatures, being criminals and traitors — we have no "rights". Consequently, everything short of hell — is a mercy! Everything but eternal punishment — is a favor! How many favors and mercies you receive — and how few praises you render! How many mercies are given you — and how few acknowledgments

you make!

He who habitually . . . consults God's holy Word, believes His faithful promises, pleads at His gracious throne for direction, watches His working hand, submits to His righteous will, and gratefully acknowledges His sovereign favors — will never be allowed to go far wrong, or to go wrong for long; for "He shall direct your steps!"

~ ~ ~ Our path is often slippery!

"But as for me, my feet had almost slipped! I had nearly lost my foothold!" Psalms 73:2

The Christian is always on dangerous ground!

We may fall into sin — even when we cannot fall into hell. We may break our bones — when we cannot break our neck. We may make sad work for repentance — when we do not incur a sentence of final condemnation. We are liable to fall by error — which is specious and powerful. We are liable to fall by Satan — who is crafty and malicious. We are liable to fall by our weakness — which is very great. We are liable to fall by sinful pleasures — in which the flesh takes delight. We are liable to fall by our unhallowed tempers — which need constant watchfulness and incessant prayer.

We are liable to fall by erroneous people — who may, like Satan, lie in wait to deceive us.

We therefore need keeping — constant keeping, divine keeping!

Our path is often slippery — and we are apt to be incautious. But it is our unspeakable mercy, that God has promised to keep us. "He keeps the feet of His saints."

But He will have us feel our weakness, and need of His keeping — and plead with Him to keep us: "Hold me up — and I shall be safe!" Psalms 119:117

"My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth! He will not let you stumble; the One who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, He who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps. The Lord Himself watches over you! The Lord keeps you from all harm and watches over your life. The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever!" Psalms 121:1-8

~ ~ ~ Look up!

"Look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near!" Luke 21:28 We are entering upon a new year, we shall have new toils, new trials, new temptations, and new troubles. In whatever state, in whatever place, into whatever condition we may be brought this year — let us seek grace to follow our Lord's loving advice, and "look up!" Do not look back — as Lot's wife did. Do not look within — as too many do. Do not look around — as David did. But "look up!" Look up to God — He is your Father, your Friend, your Savior. He can help you. He will help you. He says, "Look unto Me, and be delivered — for I am God!"

Look up for light to guide you — and He will direct your path.

Look up for grace to sanctify you — and the grace of Jesus will be found sufficient for you.

Look up for strength to enable you to do and suffer God's will — and His strength will be made perfect in your weakness.

Look up for comfort to cheer you — and as one whom his mother comforts, so will the Lord comfort you.

Look up for courage to embolden you — and the Lord will give courage to the faint; and to those who have no might — He will increase strength.

Look up for endurance to keep you — and the God who preserves you will enable you quietly to bear the heaviest burden, and silently to endure the most painful affliction.

Look up for providence to supply you — and the jar of flour will not be used up, and the jug of oil will not run dry; but God shall supply all your needs, according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Look up in faith — exercising confidence in the Word of a faithful God.

Look up in prayer — asking for what God has graciously promised.

Look up in hope — expecting what you ask in the name of Jesus.

Look up with adoration — and adore the sovereignty, righteousness, and wisdom of God.

Look up constantly — let nothing daunt or discourage you! Rather say, "Our eyes are on the Lord our God — until He shows us mercy."

Look up — for this will keep . . .the head from swimming, the heart from sinking, the knees from trembling, the feet from slipping, and the hands from hanging down!

It is impossible to say what will happen to us, or what will be required of us this year — but "Look up!" This direction, if properly attended to, will . . .procure for us all that we need, secure us against all that we dread, and make us more than a match for all our foes and fears!

Fellow-Christian, are you fearful? "Look up" and hear Jesus saying to you, "Do not be afraid — I Myself will help you!"

Are you discouraged? "Look up" — and your youth shall be renewed like the eagle's, and fresh light, comfort, and courage shall be given to you! Are you desponding? "Look up" for Jesus never breaks the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax. Do not look too much at your sin — look at the infinitely meritorious blood of God's dear Son!

Do not look too much at self — but look at Jesus, who ever lives to make intercession for you in Heaven.

Are you stripped of your comforts, your props, and your goods? Then look up! He who stripped you — loves you! He will be more than all these to you! He will . . .

bind up your broken heart, calm your perturbed spirit, cheer your drooping mind, and fill you with His own peace and happiness.

Look up . . . for all that you need; from all that you fear; through all that would obstruct your way.

Look up every day, saying with David, "In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before You — and will look up!" Psalms 5:3

Look up in every trial, saying "I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence comes my help: my help comes from the Lord, who made Heaven and earth!"

Do not look at your sin — it will discourage you!

Do not look at your self — it will distress you!

Do not look at Satan — he will bewilder you!

Do not look to men — they will deceive, or disappoint you!

Do not look at your trials — they will deject you!

"Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us — looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith!" Hebrews 12:1-2

Look only, look always, look intently — to Jesus!

Run looking, work looking, fight looking, suffer looking, live looking, and die looking — to Jesus, who is at God's right hand in glory.

Oh, look, look, look to Jesus!

~ ~ ~ ~ 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!

~ ~ ~ ~

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 — 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 end 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 8:2

~ ~ ~ ~

He never thought that he would sink into Hell!

Death has a voice — it is sent with a message to us. It says, "I am coming for you soon! Be ready!"

Sudden death reminds us . . .that time is short, that life is uncertain, that death is always near, that we may be die at any moment, that there is only a thin veil between us and eternity, that dying is going to an eternal abode, from whence we shall never return!

Death is always solemn! SUDDEN death is peculiarly so. It should make as serious. It should lead to reflection.

Suppose I should die suddenly? I may. There is no security against it. It is possible, if not probable: "Dangers stand thick all around, To push us to the tomb!" Any one of these dangers may push me down, and in a moment the body and soul may part. Well, suppose it should be so — am I ready? To the true Christian, sudden death — is sudden glory! The soul departs to be with Christ — which is far better than remaining here on this poor earth. But would this be my case? Am I truly in Christ? Am I truly born again? Solemn inquiries these! Without the new birth, there can be no salvation. If I should imagine that I am born again when I am not, and then if, while deceived by such a vain hope, I should die suddenly — what dreadful consequences would follow! Such a

mistake could never be rectified. The effects of it must be endured forever!

Suppose I should die suddenly today! I may! And if I do, where will I spend this night? Where will I be tomorrow? What will be my portion forever?

Jesus tells us of one who in this life, had everything his heart could wish for; and to warn us against neglecting the soul, while feasting the body, He utters these solemn words: "The rich man died and was buried; and in Hell he lift up his eyes being in torments!" Most likely, he was taken by surprise — he never thought that he would sink into Hell!

I dare say, that none of his friends supposed that he was lifting up his eyes in Hell, being in torments. But it was so, and he is in torments now — and in these torments he will remain forever!

O fearful case! But will it be mine? Oh, it is possible — it is more than possible!

If I die suddenly as a true Christian — how glorious the transition will be. How wonderful, to be one hour in a poor world like this — engaged in its difficult duties, enduring its sore trials, and suffering from its evil habits and customs; and the next moment to be in the presence of God, suddenly free from sin, sorrow, care, and trouble; beyond the reach of doubt, fear, and the devil; and to enjoy safety, satisfaction, and the fullness of joy forever. But the alternative! Ah, the alternative! If I die suddenly, and die unholy and unsaved — how dreadful even the supposition! But what must the reality be? To be one hour in comfort, surrounded by kind relatives and friends, in the land of hope and mercy — and the next moment in the regions of eternal despair, filled with anguish, bitter regrets, and hopeless misery!

Reader, you may die suddenly! You may die today — and if you do, your state will be fixed forever. There is no certainty of life — beyond the present moment. Therefore make your calling and your election sure!

~ ~ ~ ~

Felix has had some eighteen hundred years in Hell to rue his folly!

"As Paul reasoned with them about righteousness and self-control and the coming day of judgment, Felix trembled and replied: Go away for now. When it is more convenient, I will send for you!" Acts 24:25

Here is Felix listening to the apostle Paul. He is attentive. He is interested. He is affected. He trembles. He realizes something of the solemnity of eternity. He feels concern — but it is not deep enough, therefore he says, "Go away for now. When it is more convenient, I will send for you!" He does not positively refuse — but he postpones the matter. He thought there would be a more convenient time — but there never was! Felix has had some eighteen hundred years in Hell to rue his folly! He is regretting it at this moment — and he will regret it forever!

Many have imitated his foolish conduct. They say to God's ministers, "Go away for now. When it is more convenient, I will send for you!"

What they are really saying is, "I love sin. It is my element. It is my delight. I cannot give it up just now. The dance — the jovial party — the customs of the present world — these are things that I like. I am not prepared to part with them, and embrace the gospel you preach. Go away for now. I

had rather remain as I am — at least a little longer. I do not wish to be saved at present. By and bye, when I am too old to enjoy sin, or when sickness has made me too weak to follow any carnal pleasures — then, at this convenient season, I will send for you."

Oh, sinner, sinner! Will you spurn God's gracious invitation — will you turn a deaf ear to the message of mercy?

Will you persevere in sin — until you lie down in black despair?

Will you go to Hell — when so near the gates of Heaven?

Will you perish in your own deceivings?

Have you no fear of God?

Have you no dread of eternal torments?

Have you no wish to escape from the wrath to come?

What will you do in that dread day . . . when death arrests you, when the just Judge passes sentence upon you, when Satan seizes you, when Hell opens to engulf you, and when the gates of the infernal pit close upon you forever?

What will you do?

What can you do?

To whom will you flee for help?

How will you, how can you, escape?

Alas! escape then, will be impossible!

Then the door of hope will be forever shut!

~ ~ ~ ~ Heaven's great store-house!

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ!" Ephesians 1:3 "The unsearchable riches of Christ!" Ephesians 3:8 The Lord Jesus is heaven's great store-house, in whom is laid up all treasures, and from whom we are to receive all our supplies!

All that we can need, all that we can enjoy, and all that we can desire — is in Christ!

All the perfections and attributes of God, are in Him. Justice and grace, mercy and holiness, love and power — in all their fullness are in Him, and are displayed by Him.

All the promises of God are in Him — confirmed by His death, to be fulfilled by His own hand.

All the blessings of grace, and all the riches of glory, are in Him; He possesses and He bestows them.

All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Him — and from Him we must receive them.

All saving offices are in Christ — for His people. He is our Surety — to pay all our sin debts. He is our Substitute — to impute His perfect righteousness to us. He is our Redeemer — to ransom us. He is our Mediator — to reconcile us to the Father. He is our Physician — to cure all our soul-diseases. He heals the diseases . . . of the mind; as our Prophet — He imparts saving knowledge, of the conscience; as our Priest — He gives peace us with God, and of the will; as our King — He governs His people.

All we need, therefore, is in Christ!

All God intends to bestow, is in Christ! To Him therefore, we should apply for all; from Him, we should expect to receive all.

Every need — should send us to Christ!

Every desire — should lead us to Christ! In all things — we should have to do with Christ. Everywhere, we should realize the presence of Christ. In a word, we should daily make Christ in our experience, what God has made Him to us in His Word — our Alpha and Omega, our first and last, our all in all. Everything should lead us to Him; and everything should serve to endear Him to us — who is at once our present fountain, and our everlasting portion!

"And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus!" Php 4:19

~ ~ ~ The verybestthings — for the veryworstof men!

"The glorious gospel of the blessed God!" 1 Timothy 1:11

"Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel!" 2 Timothy 1:10

The gospel is most appropriately called "Glad Tidings," for it brings tidings calculated to gladden the heart of the most depressed and sorrowful of men. It reveals God's wondrous love, it tells us of the Savior's grace, and makes known the promise and the power of the Holy Spirit. It is indeed "Glad Tidings of Good Things" — for it informs us of . . . pardon for the guilty, peace for the troubled, wealth for the poor, rest for the weary, and salvation for the lost!

The gospel brings tidings from heaven, tidings for sinners, tidings of good things for them; yes, tidings of the verybestthings — for the veryworstof men!

It is the glorious glad tidings of the blessed God . . . giving correct views of His nature, revealing His loving heart, publishing His gracious thoughts, and making known His mercy to sinful men!

These tidings are calculated to . . . gladden the saddest heart, cheer the desponding mind, and fill the despairing soul with joy and peace.

Never were there such Glad Tidings! No one but an infinite God could have devised them. No one but the All-merciful God would have sent them to rebellious sinners!

Jesus is an almighty Savior. Jesus is an ever willing Savior. Jesus is a loving Savior; therefore He is able to save the vilest, to save freely, and to save all who apply to be saved by Him. The man or woman who reads these lines, is as really, as sincerely invited by Jesus, to come and be saved by Him — as if a letter had been hand-written by Jesus and addressed to that person by name!

Can you conceive of anything better than this! A Savior for vile sinners; a Savior to deliver sinners from the lowest hell; a Savior to raise sinners to the highest heaven; a Savior from sin — the cause of suffering; a Savior from guilt — the source of fear; a Savior from the world — which is doomed to destruction!

The gospel is also the good news of a better country, even a Heavenly one. Heaven is . . . a rest for the weary, a home for the homeless, and the best company for the lonely and desolate.

Heaven comprises . . . all that can feast the intellect, all that can satisfy the heart, all that can fill the soul. It is enriched with all the wealth of God, it is filled with the glory of God, and it is the house and home of God.

In Heaven there is . . . no pain or privation, no grief or sorrow, no losses or crosses, no temptations or trials, no wants or woes.

Heaven contains the highest manifestations of the greatness, grandeur, and magnificence of God. Heaven is the home of the brightest, holiest, and most dignified of God's intelligent creation. Heaven! What is it? Heaven! What does it comprise and comprehend? "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined — what God has prepared for those who love Him!" No one can give the faintest guess at what Heaven is; but whatever it is, whatever it contains — the gospel tells us that it is for saved sinners!

The gospel is God's best message to man. It contains the promise of all that man can need, and all that God can give — to every one who sincerely believes the message. Take heed therefore how you treat the gospel; for we can conceive of no greater sin — than disbelieving God's message; or of any greater insult offered to God — than to treat His message with contempt!

Precious gospel — that such sinners as we are — so vile, so poor, so feeble, so utterly worthless — may obtain God's Heaven, and dwell in it with the Savior forever!

~ ~ ~ The voice!

"Truly, truly, I say unto you: the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God — and those who hear shall live!" John 5:25

Every believer hears the voice of Jesus — and becomes spiritually alive. He becomes deeply, intensely concerned about the things of God — to know them, to possess them, and to enjoy them.

To please Jesus — becomes his delight. To be like Jesus — becomes his highest desire. To be with Jesus — becomes his Heaven.

See then, what we need — that Jesus should speak: speak to sinners — and convert them; speak to drowsy professors — and arouse them. Ministers may speak — but none will heed them. Teachers may teach — but none will be aroused by them. It is the omnipotent voice of Jesus which is needed! His sheep hear His voice — and follow Him!

See, why some are quickened — it is because Jesus speaks to them! He may speak with the preacher — or without him. He speaks just as He pleases — and to whom He pleases.

See, the dignity and power of the Redeemer — He has the power of life and death. It is but for Him to speak — and those who hear shall live! He quickens whomever He will. He gives eternal life — to as many as the Father has given Him.

O the millions to whom He has effectually spoken — and every one of those millions has heard and responded! They lived a life of faith on earth, and they are now living a life of unspeakable joy in Heaven!

See, to Whom we should look. Do we want . . .our children converted, our churches revived, our neighbors brought to God, the heathen turned from darkness to light, or our own souls quickened? We must look to Jesus!

O Jesus, speak to my soul and revive it!

Means without Jesus, are powerless! As the lame man lay for years at the pool of Bethesda, without a cure until Jesus came — so may we. It is Jesus, and Jesus alone — who can infuse life into the means we use, and render them effectual!

See then, Who should have the praise. Have we been quickened? Are we living by faith in the Son of God? Then Jesus has spoken to us! He has done the work — and to Him belongs all the glory. Let us praise His holy name!

"The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live!"

~ ~ ~ ~

Everything short of Hell is mercy!

"What? shall we receive good at the hands of God — and shall we not receive evil?" Job 2:10

Jehovah's Prerogative: He sends GOOD — all good. He sends EVIL — not moral evil, for God cannot be the author of sin, nor in any way give His sanction to it. But He does send afflictions, bereavements, losses, crosses, pains and sorrows. He sends good and evil sometimes in quick succession. He sent the fish to preserve the life of Jonah, and the gourd to screen him from the sun — but He sent also the worm to destroy the gourd, and teach Jonah a beneficial lesson. Who can read the life of Jacob or Joseph, of David or Daniel, and not see that the Lord sends both good and evil upon His people. Hence the prophet asks, "Shall there be evil in a city — and the Lord has not done it?" The Believer's Duty. We should receive all as from God's hand. The reference is not so much to the receiving — for we must receive it; but the manner of receiving — as from God. We often receive good as from God — but we do not so receive evil; yet both alike should be so received.

GOOD should be received with gratitude and praise, with humility and love — with a deep sense of our unworthiness, and God's unmerited goodness. Nor should we forget, that we are held responsible for the use of all the good things we receive from God.

EVIL should be received with patience and submission, saying with Eli, "It is the Lord — let Him do what seems good unto Him." There should be a recognition of His justice, as Aaron, when his two sons were slain — he held his peace. He was dumb, he opened not his mouth, because the Lord did it. There should also be confidence in His love, because the dispensations of His hand —

never prove a change in His heart. He loves us as much when He sends evil — as when He sends good; for His love is not only everlasting — but unchangeable.

We should receive good and evil alike — as from a sovereign, wise, gracious, and holy God! The Expostulation. "What? shall we receive good at the hands of God — and shall we not receive evil?" Are we to view good alone as coming from God? Are we not to look at evil — at our trials, troubles, and tribulations — as coming from Him? Are we to forget His favors, lose sight of His paternal relationship, quarrel with His wisdom and love — and thus act the rebel and the ingrate? Alas! this is too often the case. One trouble swallows up the remembrance of many mercies. We think more of one loss — than we do of the gains of years; and we are more affected with one hour's pain and sickness — than we are with months of ease and health. But it would not be so — if we were properly affected with a due sense of our sinfulness, ingratitude, and unworthiness. Then in the midst of our good things, we would say with Jacob, "I am not worthy of the least of all Your mercies!" And in the midst of our evil things we would say with Job, "The Lord gave — and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord"

It is folly to lose sight of God's hand in our troubles. We should rather say, "This also comes forth from the Lord Almighty, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." Nor is it wise to complain of His dealings with us, for a sinner out of Hell — can never have any reason to complain. Everything short of Hell is mercy!

He assures us that all that He does, is in love. His word to us, when things are at the worst is, "As many as I love — I rebuke and chasten." Silence befits us, though to justify God would befit us more.

We should not make too much of the instruments by which we suffer. Joseph said unto his brethren, "It was not you — but God." David said of Shimei, "Let him curse — for the Lord has bidden him." The holiest of men have always looked more at God who uses the rod — than at the rod which He used. If He appoints it — it is wise. If He permits it — it is for our good. He does nothing, He permits nothing to be done, which affects His children — but they would do themselves — if they were as wise, as judicious, and as far-seeing as He is. Nor is there a doubt — but in eternity we shall bless and praise His holy name — for the very things that grieve and distress us now. Believer, receive everything, whether painful or pleasant — as from God's hand! And bless a taking God — as well as a giving God.

Lord, pardon our folly and forgive our sins, for we have been guilty of both in our conduct toward you; and help us in future if tempted to repine, or if rebellious feelings arise in our hearts to say, "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God — and shall we not receive evil also?"

~ ~ ~ The Christian's Walk

Let us daily walk looking unto Jesus. He is our adorable Redeemer. He is our source of supply. Looking to Him will . . . enlighten us in darkness, cheer us in solitude, strengthen us in weakness, fortify us in conflict, embolden us in danger, comfort us in sorrow, and render us more than conquerors over every foe.

Let us daily walk leaning on Jesus. He will be at our side, He will lend us His arm, yes, His bosom! The posture of the Church should be ours, "Who is this coming up out of the wilderness, leaning

on her Beloved?" As we get nearer to Jesus — we get further from the world! The world loses its attractions — and old sinful habits lose their power.

Let us daily walk communing with Jesus. He loves to converse with us. Let us tell Him of our foes, fears, afflictions, privations, griefs, and woes. Let us tell Him everything that tries or troubles us. He says, "Let Me hear your voice!" Yes, O Savior, You shall hear me; for I will bring all my sorrows and joys, all my trials and triumphs, all my doubts and deliverances — to You!

Let us daily walk imitating Jesus. He has left us an example, that we should follow in His footsteps. In the family, in the world, and in the church — let us endeavor to imitate Jesus. And may we receive grace to conform our conduct to His, that all who see us may take knowledge of us, that we have learned of Him who is "meek and humble in heart;" who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." May our spirit, temper, course, and conduct — all conspire to bear testimony that we are walking with Jesus!

~ ~ ~ ~ A sound creed is exceedingly valuable!

"The doctrine which is according to godliness" 1 Timothy 6:3

Doctrines that lead us to hate sin, loathe self, prize the Savior, and cleave to the Lord — are of the greatest importance!

A sound creed is exceedingly valuable — IF it is adorned with a holy life!

~ ~ ~ ~ Everything in this world is liable to change!

"Long ago You established the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; all of them will wear out like clothing. You will change them like a garment, and they will pass away. But You are the same, and Your years will never end!" Psalms 102:25-27

Everything in this world is liable to change! Health may give place to sickness, pleasure may give place to pain, plenty may give place to poverty, love may give place to enmity, honor may give place to disgrace, strength may give place to weakness, and life may give place to death.

Remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. But though all our circumstances and friends should change — there is One who never changes! "He is unchangeable; who can oppose Him? He does whatever He pleases!" Job 23:13. With Him is no variableness. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever — and He is our best Friend, our nearest relation, our gracious Savior!

Yesterday — His name was Jesus; His nature was love; His purpose was to do us good with His whole heart and soul. Today — He is the same; we cannot expect too much from Him, or be too confident in Him, if we are walking humbly with Him. He will be our God — and we shall be His people!

Let us cultivate . . . intimacy with Him, dependence upon Him, concern to please Him, fear to offend Him, zeal to glorify Him; and it must be well with us in health and sickness, in plenty and poverty, in life and death! For He is the same, and will never turn away from doing us good — but remain the Fountain of love and holiness forever! "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is

within me, bless His holy name!" Psalms 103:1

This God is the God we adore, Our faithful, unchangeable Friend; Whose love is as great as His power, And neither knows measure nor end!

~ ~ ~ ~

PRAYER "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17

How important is a spirit of prayer! It is . . . the proof of regeneration, the manifestation of grace in our hearts, and the evidence our title to mansions in the skies!

Prayer is . . . the breath of the renewed soul, the beating of the sanctified heart, the effect of the life of God within us.

O that I had prayed more!

Prayer should become a habit with us — then everything would furnish us with matter for prayer. Prayer should mingle with our pleasures and our pains, with our labor and our rest. O for more prayer!

We should never do — what we cannot pray God to bless.

We should never go — where we cannot ask God to go with us.

If we would hold fast our profession, if we would adorn the gospel, if we would honor Jesus, if we would enjoy our mercies, if we would get good by our trials, if we would see all things working together for good, if we would conquer Satan, if we would overcome the world, if we would crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts

— we must pray!

Prayer, if it is believing prayer . . . opens Heaven to us, unveils the glorious face of God, and brings down foretastes of the joys of paradise, makes us a match for all our foes, enables us patiently to carry every cross, and with perseverance to climb and pass over the loftiest hills we meet with on our heaven-bound pilgrimage!

Those who pray, will, by deriving strength from Heaven, by drawing down wisdom from above — withstand every storm, and shout God's praises at last.

Tempted Christian — pray, and you will overcome every temptation.

Troubled Christian — pray, and God will deliver you out of every trouble.

Perplexed Christian — pray, and God will make your way plain before your face.

Doubting Christian — pray, and God will disperse your doubts, and chase your fears away.

Trembling Christian — pray, and God will strengthen you with strength in the soul.

Sick Christian — pray, and God will make all your bed in your affliction.

Dying Christian — pray, and death will lose all its terrors, and you will gently fall asleep in Jesus.

Lost sinner — pray, for God who heard the publican and justified him, will hear you and save you.

O for the grace of prayer, that we may in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present our requests to God.

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful." Colossians 4:2

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"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 — 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

~ ~ ~ ~ The Sure Resource!

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble!" Psalms 46:1

God intended Himself to be the great fountain of supply to His creatures. All are to be dependent on Him — and to look for their supplies from Him. Just so, the believer is to apply to God for all. Ample provision is made — but it is only in Jesus. Promises are given — but they are to be fulfilled by Jesus. He possesses all fullness, and as such He presents Himself to us as His needy dependent creatures — and says, "Look unto Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other!" Isaiah 45:22 This is the business of faith and prayer — to look to Jesus, and apply to Jesus for all that we need. Let us consider these words as spoken unto us every day — as calling us away from dependence on the creature, and as directing us how to act under all circumstances. It is Jesus who speaks. Jesus, as God. Jesus, as the Savior. Jesus, full of sympathy and power. Let us therefore listen to — and act upon His Word.

"Look unto Me — and be supplied. Whatever you need, either for body or soul — come to Me for it. I have the very blessing which you require. I am prepared to supply you with it, except it would be to your injury for Me to do so. You must leave Me to judge whether it will be for your good — and whether this is the best time for you to have it; but if it is — I will surely give it to you. Bring all

your needs to Me, express all your desires before Me, exercise faith in Me — and your supplies are certain!"

Let us then leave off complaining, repining, and fretting; and let us look to Jesus for whatever we need, for all we need, and whenever we need. He is able to do more for us, than we are able to ask or think; and He loves to be applied to, for He rejoices to supply our needs.

"Look unto Me — and be strengthened." We are very weak and feeble — and we need much strength. We have . . . crosses to carry, burdens to bear, and innumerable difficulties to overcome. Our journey is long, the way is rough, and our faith is feeble. But Jesus is the Strong One, who has all strength in Himself — and that strength He imparts to the weak, the weary, and the wavering, who put their trust in Him. By looking to Him, or exercising faith in Him — we find strength flow into our soul; and we become strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Absent from Jesus, or neglecting to exercise faith in Jesus — we are weak and faint, and are sure to be overcome. If therefore we would be strong to labor, or to fight the Lord's battles, or to travel our pilgrim way — we must keep the eye of faith fixed on Jesus, and seek our strength from Him.

"Look unto Me — and be comforted." We are poor comfortless things in ourselves — and we meet with much to cast us down and make us unhappy. We daily need daily comfort — as much as we need daily food. Jesus is the Comforter of those who are cast down. He comforts us with loving words, with holy communion with Himself, with sweet meditations, with holy foretastes of heaven. His presence is the joy of His people; and His presence will make them happy everywhere. Let us then, when our souls are cast down, when the springs of joy are low, when everything around and within us is depressing — look to Jesus, and He will comfort us with His love!

"Look unto Me — and be counseled." We often need advice, for we know not what to do, or which way to go. Friends cannot help us; our way appears to be hedged up, nor can we find our paths. We feel at times, that we would give anything if we only knew what to do — or which way to go. We are in deep perplexity, in profound distress. Now is the time to apply to, and prove the kindness of, the "Wonderful Counselor."

Jesus says, "Look unto Me — I will teach you and instruct you in the way which you shall go. I will counsel you, and My eye shall be upon you." Precious Savior! He loves to be consulted, nor will He allow any sincere and simple believer, to consult Him in vain. He knows our path — He will point out our way. He understands our difficulty — and will show us how to escape it!

"Look unto me — and be saved." Saved from every danger. Saved from every foe. Saved from sin — and all its penal consequences. Saved fully. Saved freely. Saved eternally. Jesus loves to save. He saves all who look to Him. Let us therefore look unto Him — in all times of danger, when assaulted by our foes, and when our own hearts mislead us. Let us look to Him all through our life. And when called to face death and eternity — let us especially look unto Him. He will be with us in the dark valley — and whisper peace. He will go with us across the Jordan — and cheer our sinking hearts. He will guide us to the golden gates — and lead us up the glorious streets, and present us unto His Father!

O my soul, look to Jesus . . . whenever Satan assaults you, whenever foes beset you, whenever needs oppress you, and when death stares you in the face!

Look to Jesus for grace — and He will bestow it!

Look to Jesus for strength — and He will impart it!

Look to Jesus for comfort — and He will confer it!

Look to Jesus for counsel — and He will give it!

Look to Jesus for salvation — and He will confer it.

Look for all that He has promised, for all that you feel you need — and He will not deny you what is best for you.

Remember, ever remember, that Jesus is "a Sun and Shield; He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly."

"The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble." Psalms 9:9

"He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield — in whom I take refuge!" Psalms 144:2

"Keep me safe, O God, for in You I take refuge!" Psalms 16:1

~ ~ ~ ~ No one can escape from that prison!

Eternity stamps a seriousness on every subject connected with it.

The soul must live forever.

Hell is eternal.

Heaven is eternal.

The immortal soul must inhabit Heaven — or Hell, forever!

Sudden death would plunge the sinner into sudden Hell — and from Hell there is no deliverance!

No one can escape from that prison!

No one can ever escape from that lake of fire!

"They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire!" Jude 1:7

"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life!" Matthew 25:46

~ ~ ~ ~

More dreadful than Hell!

"Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?" Romans 7:24

The godly man has a deep sense of the evil of sin.

He looks upon sin as the bitter root, from which springs . . . all the woes and wars, all the sadness and sorrow, all the pains and pollution, all the misery and madness, and all the torment and terror

— to be found in God's universe!

He regards sin as that abominable thing which God hates!

It is to him a loathsome object; and a subject fraught with all that is base, degrading, and horrible. He looks at sin as more dreadful than Hell! Indeed, he considers sin to be the evil of all evils, and considers that nothing is evil in comparison with sin!

He often thinks of sin as it has . . .grieved God's heart, murdered God's only begotten Son, and vexed and resisted the Holy Spirit.

O if he could be but free from sin!

"Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be, has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!" 1 John 3:2

~ ~ ~ This is the worst part of the picture!

"Lord, what is man — that You should notice us, mere mortals that You should care for us?" Psalms 144:3

1. What is man MORALLY? This is the worst part of the picture! It is bad enough to see man diseased, suffering, dying, moldering to dust; but when we come to inquire into the cause of all this — it is fearful indeed!

Man is dreadfully depraved. He has fallen from the state in which his good and glorious Creator placed him. He is now totally depraved. He is God's enemy. His heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. His carnal mind is enmity against God. He is full of evil principles and evil passions. He has become, not only unprofitable — but abominable!

No part of God's creation presents such a hideous sight to His pure and holy eyes — as man does; for in man, heart and mind are alike depraved, and set in opposition to Himself.

Man is wicked; but he is not only wicked — he is weak. Sin has become a fearful disease within him. He has no will to do good. He has no power to do good — even if he had the will.

Man is perverse — he closes his eyes, his ears, and his heart against God! It is only for God to require something — and man determines not to do it; or for God to prohibit something — and man immediately desires it! His will is as much opposed to God as it can be. He slights His mercy, dares His justice, and defies His power. He perseveres in sin — unless the Lord by His invincible grace prevents him. He has sunk lower than the beasts which perish!

There is everything in man to offend the eyes of God's holiness, and to grieve His loving heart. Looking at man as fallen, polluted, and under the power of sin — we may well ask, "What is man — that You are mindful of him?" Psalms 8:4

And will God, the great, the glorious, the holy God — take poor, sinful, vile, wretched man for His choice, His child, His companion? He will. He has done it. He is daily doing it. What astonishing grace!

2. What will renewed man BE? This is a question which no man can answer, for even the inspired Apostle John confesses his ignorance, "Beloved," says he, "now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be — but when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!" "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined — what God has prepared for those who love Him!"

Renewed man will be like Jesus. Man will be with God. Man will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of his heavenly Father. Man will see and hear and know, and possess, and enjoy — all that he can possibly desire, all that his glorified nature is capable of. He will be more than unfallen Adam was, more than angels are, for he will be as nearly like God as perfected human nature can be made like the Divine!

~ ~ ~ ~ Would such an inscription look well on some of our costly furniture?

"On that day even the harness bells of the horses will be inscribed with these words: 'Holy unto the Lord.' And the cooking pots in the Temple of the Lord will be as sacred as the basins used beside the altar." Zechariah 14:20

We are to write on all that we ARE, on all that we HAVE — "Holy unto the Lord!" We are no longer live unto ourselves — but unto Him who loved us, and gave Himself up for us. We are to have . . . holy thoughts, holy desires, holy motives, holy aims, holy pleasures, holy sorrows, and pursue holy objects.

1. See then, what we should BE — holy. This was God's end in our election, redemption, and effectual calling. This is God's design in all our trials, troubles, and exercises; they are for our profit — that "we may be partakers of His holiness."

2. See also, what we should DO — write, "Holy unto the Lord!" on all that we possess. We have no right to possess, use, or wear anything — on which we cannot write, "Holy unto the Lord!"

Christian, is there anything in your house, in your business, or on your person — on which it would be unfitting to write, "Holy unto the Lord?" If so — ought you to possess it, practice it, or wear it?

Would such an inscription look well on some of our costly furniture, fine clothing, or entertainments? Would it? Do not shun the question — but let conscience take it up, examine, and return an honest answer.

We should use all that we have — as consecrated to Jehovah's service and praise:

our mental powers, our physical strength, our wealth, our abilities, our possessions

— all should be used for God, and for His glory! When about to employ any of these, we should pause, and ask, "Will putting them to this use honor God? Will it serve His cause? Will it bring praise to His most holy name?"

All who see us, dwell with us, or visit us — should be able to perceive that we have written upon all we have and are, "Holy unto the Lord." Until they can, we are not what we ought to be — and God's end in what He has done for us, and conferred upon us, is not answered.

O Spirit of holiness, come down and by the finger of Your power — write, "Holy unto the Lord!" upon our hearts! Enable us, as the effect, to write upon all we that have and are, upon all that we purpose, plan, and do — "Holy unto the Lord!" in large and pleasing characters, such as all may understand!

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## Treasures from James Smith 4 (excerpts)1

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Home, sweet home! There is no place like home!

"These all died in faith . . . they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth"  
Hebrews 11:13

The day of life with them is ended. Its duties are ended. Its responsibilities are past. Its hours are fled away.

What a trying day some of them had! How stormy. How sultry. How often overcast. How gloomy. But it is now past — and past forever! The toils of the wilderness are over! They had much to afflict and pain them . . . a difficult and dangerous journey, a long wearisome march, many a heavy cross to carry, many a stubborn foe to face, many a painful doubt, numerous gloomy fears. But now the wilderness is all behind them! The afflictions of the pilgrimage are terminated. Those sufferings were sharp, and some of them continued long. Many of them were endured in secret without sympathy, and without relief. They were soul sorrows, agony of mind — as well as sharp pains of body. But however multiplied, however severe, however protracted those sorrows — they are past and gone, never, never to return!

The sweetest repose is now enjoyed. The poor tabernacle has been taken down, and is laid in a quiet resting-place, until the resurrection morning. The soul is gone to be with Jesus. It has traveled through the rough path of life — and is now in God's presence, where there is fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore!

As Christians, we are going to the same place. The graves will soon be ready for our bodies — and the mansions of glory for our souls. We are going home! Home to our Father's house! Home where our hearts have long been. Home where all our prayers will be answered, and all our best desires will be gratified. "Home, sweet home! There is no place like home!" Especially our home! A paradise without a tempting serpent! A paradise where all are holy, all are safe, all are happy. Those pure and perpetual joys, which are at God's right hand, await us! We taste them now, and are delighted with a sip — but there we shall soon drink full draughts of eternal glory, eternal joy, and eternal blessedness!

Amidst present toils and trials, dangers and distresses — when wearied, way-worn, and tempted to fret — remember that you will soon be HOME! Think, think, O my soul, of an eternity of enjoyment — when the sufferings of time are ended! "Weeping may remain for a night — but rejoicing comes in the morning!" Psalms 30:5

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I am God — and not man!

"I will not carry out My fierce anger, nor will I turn and devastate Israel. For I am God — and not man; the Holy One among you. I will not come in wrath!" Hosea 11:9

Thus spoke the Lord, when assigning a reason for not executing the fierceness of His wrath upon guilty and rebellious Israel. A God can do — what a man cannot; and a God can bear — what a man cannot. God always acts in accordance with the grandeur, glory, and greatness of His nature. Every thought of His heart, every word of His mouth, and every work of His hand — is worthy of Himself!

If we bear this in mind, it will . . . fortify our minds, strengthen our faith, and comfort our souls.

Why does God not cut down the wicked immediately? Because He is God — and not man.

Why does He chasten His people so greatly, and allow them to suffer so much? Because He is God — and not man.

Let us meditate on this declaration of our God for a few moments.

"I am God — and not man," and therefore I am infinitely patient, and not soon moved to take vengeance upon My sinful and rebellious creatures!

"I am God — and not man," and therefore I am ready to forgive, and receive back the returning prodigal to My heart and home!

"I am God — and not man," and therefore I receive great sinners, taking to My heart, and putting among My children — such despicable ones as no one else would notice or regard!

"I am God — and not man," and therefore I pardon again and again, not only first offences — but repeated transgressions, forgiving and forgetting them forever!

"I am God — and not man," and therefore bear with such numerous affronts, such gross ingratitude, such inexcusable conduct — in My own people!

"I am God, and not man," and therefore I invite, entreat, and beseech such base backsliders to return unto Me, and prove the power and freeness of My forgiving love!

"I am God — and not man," and therefore I save freely, fully, and forever — such degraded, depraved, and desperate sinners, to the praise of the glory of My grace!

"I am God — and not man," and therefore I remain faithful to My promises and covenant engagements, amidst all the changes and faithlessness of My fickle people!

"I am God — and not man," and therefore I give such rich, costly, priceless gifts — to the poor, destitute, and unworthy sinners!

"I am God — and not man," and therefore I hear, accept, and answer, such poor, imperfect, and worthless prayers — which, no one else could tolerate, much less approve!

"I am God — and not man," and therefore I work such wonders — wonders in providence, and wonders in grace; wonders in the world, and wonders in the heart!

"I am God — and not man," and therefore, I have prepared such mansions, and will confer such a glorious kingdom — on sinners who have no claim upon Me, nor the least reason to expect any good thing from Me!

Yes, because He is Jehovah, and changes not — therefore we poor, sinning, changeable creatures are not consumed!

Believer, to you the Lord says, "I am God — and not man!" Therefore expect from Him as God — and act toward Him as God! He can do exceedingly and abundantly, above all that you can ask or think! Do not measure His heart by yours — but remember that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His thoughts higher than your thoughts, and His ways than your ways!

~ ~ ~ ~ A Seasonable Prescription

As we Christians advance in life, and know more of human nature, and the power of temptation — the greater interest should we take in the young, and the more urgently should we seek their salvation. It is a lovely sight to see aged Christians endeavoring to bring young people to the Savior. And this we ought constantly to see — for they know the power . . .of youthful lusts, of the world's attractions, of Satanic influence,

of the deceitfulness of the heart, and the value of the immortal soul!

Aged friends, do you feel and act, as you should for the young? Do you do all that you can to snatch them as brands from the burning?

Solomon was an old man when he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, and in that book he manifests great solicitude for the young. Again and again he addresses them in different ways — but with what touching and subtle irony, does he speak to them in one place, "Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see. BUT KNOW that for all these things — God will bring you to judgment!" Ecclesiastes 11:9 The Youth's Practice. He is happy in his youth — in his physical vigor, personal attractions, and newly acquired liberty. Feeling strong, he puts the day of judgment far from him. Vain of his person — he is proud of his appearance and abilities. Freed from the restraints of home — he removes the reins from the neck of his lusts. His heart cheers him on — and urges him forward in the pursuit of folly! He walks in the way of his heart — which is always evil. He is ignorant of its powers of deception. He is therefore deceived by the corrupt principles that work within it. He hushes his conscience to sleep, or by violence constrains it to be silent.

He then yields to the alluring influence of the world. And while so doing, Satan tempts him to proceed farther and farther — plotting his eternal damnation!

He does what he thinks best in his own eyes — allowing them to mislead him. He walks by sight — not according to God's Word. He is led away by appearances, and despises the counsel and example of the godly. He refuses to listen to, or be guided by the advice of parents. He despises, or slights, the preacher's admonition, and will be a law unto himself. He chooses vain people for his companions, and follows the example of the foolish! Let us now listen to, The Preacher's Prescription. "Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see. BUT know that for all these things — God will bring you to judgment!"

Take your own course — if you are determined.

Go on in the way which you prefer — if you think it best.

Persevere in the path that you have chosen. BUT KNOW that there is an end to your course — and that end is a judgment! The judgment day is fixed — and it is therefore certain. The judge stands at the door — it is therefore near. The dead, small and great, shall stand before God — it is therefore universal.

Every one of us shall give account of himself before God — it is therefore personal.

Before this final judgment, shall be gathered all nations — it will therefore be open and public.

God will judge in justice and uprightness — it will therefore be righteous.

It will be the great day, the last day — and will therefore be final.

"BUT KNOW that for all these things — God will bring you to judgment!"

You will not be able to escape!

You will not be overlooked or forgotten!

You will be personally summoned — and there will be no evading!

Death will arrest and cast you into prison. From thence, the angels will bring you out — and Jesus will judge you! For "He has set a day when He is going to judge the world in righteousness, by the Man He has appointed!" Acts 17:31

Young man! Young woman! To you is this word of solemn admonition sent! See how many young people are being called away by death! Fatal diseases and accidents — how common. Sudden deaths — how frequent. It is very probable that God may soon call for YOU! How necessary then that you be ready, for death very often gives but a short notice — or no notice! God . . . warns you by His providence; He directs you in His Word; He invites you by His ministers; and He will judge you by His Son!

Whenever therefore you are tempted to indulge in any unholy amusement or practice, remember these words: "BUT KNOW that for all these things — God will bring you to judgment!"

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"The glorious gospel of Christ!" 2 Corinthians 4:4

The gospel is a glorious revelation of divine grace — a manifestation of the purpose and good pleasure of God, to save sinners in harmony with, and to the honor of — all His divine perfections.

The gospel contains . . . the loftiest doctrines, the largest promises, and the freest invitations conceivable!

The gospel exhibits the Lord Jesus Christ, in . . . the glory of His person, the depth of His love, the vastness of His merit, and His infinite willingness to save the vilest sinners!

The gospel is a proclamation . . . of peace by the blood-shedding of God incarnate;

of a full, free, and complete salvation — for all who truly believe on His name; of a glorious inheritance, an everlasting kingdom, and a crown of glory — as a free gift for the vilest of men! Or in other words, the gospel is the good news of pardon, peace, protection, and everlasting life — for

all who are willing to receive and enjoy them!

In the gospel . . . God's heart is laid bare, the fullness of Christ is thrown open, and miserable souls are invited to come and be made eternally happy!

The gospel contains . . . God's kindest thoughts, God's wisest plans, God's most gracious promises, and God's fullest revelation of Himself!

The gospel is . . . balm for sinners' wounds, solace for the troubled conscience, and the remedy for a sin-broken heart!

The gospel is God's powerful instrument, through which He . . . raises the dead in sin, enlightens the blind mind, pardons the guilty, cleanses the filthy heart, heals the sin-sick soul, and makes the miserable, eternally happy!

In a word, the gospel reveals . . . all that God can give, all that man can need, and all that the child of God can enjoy!

Yet many spurn the gospel . . . some on account of its simplicity, some on account of its spirituality, and some on account of its purity.

The gospel lays man in the dust — and places God on the throne! It places man as a sinner, at the sovereign disposal of God. It will yield nothing to man's pride, and pays no compliment to man's supposed goodness or abilities.

If a man is saved at all . . . it is of grace alone, it is by Christ alone, it is to God's honor alone!

The gospel despises the wisdom of the world, and puts the rich and the poor, the moral and immoral, the learned and illiterate — on the same level! The pride of man cannot tolerate this!

The gospel must be experimentally known by the teaching of the Holy Spirit — before it will be loved, prized, and practiced as it ought!

Do WE personally and experimentally know the gospel? Have we tasted its sweetness — as well as felt its power? Is it to us, more desirable than gold — even the finest gold? Is it sweeter than honey — even honey dripping from the comb?

Have we received the gospel with a demonstration of the Spirit's power? Has it . . . enlightened our judgments, purified our hearts, and corrected our lives?

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Last night Sam was at "The Fighting Rooster"

"God is merciful!" said old Mrs. Jenkins, as she came from the funeral home where drunken Sam Voller was just laid out. Last night Sam was at "The Fighting Rooster" and drank too much beer, then he quarreled, a fight followed, and Sam got an unlucky blow — and now he has gone to appear before his Maker, to give an account of the deeds!

Yes, Mrs. Jenkins, God is merciful — but not always. God is merciful — but not to all. There was no mercy for the world of the ungodly, who perished in the flood. Nor was there any mercy for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, who were consumed by fire from heaven.

Neither can we see, though we do not wish to judge harshly of our poor fellow-creatures, how there could be mercy for Sam — who lived in sin, died in sin, and died in consequence of his sin. "He who confesses and forsakes his sin — shall find mercy;" but how can he hope for mercy — who hardens himself in sin, and perseveres in it until summoned to appear before God to give an account of it?

"There is mercy with God — that He may be feared," not that He may be trifled with, and insulted to His face!

Mercy may now be obtained by any one and every one who seeks it. But the Lord, who is now so merciful and gracious — will by and by manifest His wrathful indignation; and say to those who now refuse to come when He calls them, "Depart from me, you cursed ones, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" Terrible words — called forth by persevering in sin, and inflicting a terrible doom! May no reader of these lines, ever endure the threatening contained in them!

In vain for mercy now they cry; In lakes of liquid fire they lie; There on the flaming billows tossed, Forever — O, forever, lost!

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Surely, the very devils will laugh that sinner to scorn to all eternity!

"God has given to us eternal life — and this life is in his Son." 1 John 5:11

What a wonderful display of divine benevolence is this! What an extraordinary exhibition of sovereign love — to rebel sinners such as we are!

"You will not come to Me, that you might have life!" John 5:40. Rejectors of Christ are ungrateful, inexcusable and suicidal. How can we properly represent the blackness of that ingratitude which refuses to come to Jesus for eternal life! Surely, surely, no one can pity the sinner who dies because he will not receive a pardon — because he will not have eternal life!

Sinner, if you perish — you are a suicide! You die by your own hand! You die because you will not come to Jesus, and have eternal life. Such conduct must certainly be inexcusable. Surely, the very devils will laugh that sinner to scorn to all eternity, who goes to hell from beneath the sound of the everlasting gospel.

He would not have eternal life! He would not go to heaven! There was the gate — but he would not pass through it. There was the road — but he would not travel it.

There was eternal life offered — but he would not have it. He would go to hell. He was determined to do so. He chose death and damnation in his erroneous way. He would not be stopped, either by the invitations of divine mercy, or the threatenings of divine wrath!

No offer of eternal life was ever made to devils, after they had fallen; so, that they are more excusable in one sense than the sinner who perishes, because he will not come unto Jesus, and have life.

What a thought is this! There is an enormity about the sin of rejecting eternal life by Christ — not even to be found in the sin of devils!

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My poor, depraved, polluted heart!

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind!" Matthew 22:37

God desires to be loved by His redeemed children. He values our love. He speaks to us as His children, and with paternal tenderness asks, "My son, give me your heart!" How amazing, how astonishing is this! The High and Lofty One, who inhabits eternity — asks for my heart — my poor, depraved, polluted heart!

O my God! take it, purify it, inhabit it — and use it for Your own glory and praise!

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Poor Jack! A few years ago it pleased the Holy Spirit to work a saving change in the heart of a poor sailor, while out at sea. Jack knew nothing of real religion, nor had he one on board with him to whom he could open his mind. Convinced of sin, afraid of hell — he was terrified and alarmed, and knew not what to do. He prayed, obtained a Bible, read it, and sunk still deeper into distress of soul. At length all hope that he could be saved was taken away, and self-despair seized him. He considered his case to be singular, and was now tempted to drown his convictions in the intoxicating cup, and then to end his miserable life by suicide. At length, when he had done business in these deep waters of despair for a time, the Holy Spirit revealed Jesus to his soul as an able and willing Savior; and, committing himself entirely to Jesus, to be saved wholly by him — he found peace with God, and was filled with unspeakable joy. In this state of mind he reached the port, and soon inquired where he could hear the Gospel. He was directed to a place of worship, where a friend of mine was preaching. When Jack entered, he was all eyes and ears. The first hymn was full of Christ, and poor Jack felt his heart swell. In the prayer, the minister appeared to speak the very feelings of Jack's soul. As sweet as the first hymn was — the second appeared to be sweeter, and the tears flowed down poor Jack's cheeks! At length the minister arose to announce his text, which was Colossians 3:11, and fixing his eyes on the poor sailor — he emphatically pronounced the words, "Christ is all!" When the minister once more said, "Christ is all!" Jack could contain himself no longer, and at the top of his voice, Jack shouted — "And poor Jack's nothing at all!" This was just the poor sailor's religion — "Jesus Christ is all in all — and poor Jack is nothing at all!" And this is the religion of every one who is taught of God! The work of the Holy Spirit has a twofold tendency — to humble the sinner, and exalt the Savior! And just in proportion as we are taught by the Spirit of God, shall we have low views of ourselves — and high thoughts of Christ. As the sinner sinks — the Savior rises in his estimation.

Christ is all that the sinner needs — and all that the saint desires. He is a perfect Savior — and an infinite portion. Christ has all, and gives all that we can need: his blood procures our pardon, his

righteousness secures our justification, his Spirit sanctifies our nature, and his fullness supplies all our needs! He is just suited to the sinner — and the sinner is just suited to him. He loves to save, to save freely, to save perfectly, and to save forever; and the sinner who is taught of God, feels that he needs just such a Savior. And this makes the Gospel so sweet and precious to every truly convinced sinner, because it proclaims as from the mouth of God, that the Lord Jesus is a perfect Savior — a present Savior — a willing Savior — who never did, and never will, cast out one that comes to him.

Reader, are you truly saved? If so — your religion is the same as poor Jack's, and you can say: "I am a poor sinner and nothing at all, And Jesus Christ is all in all!"

You must be brought to this — before you can be saved, for salvation is entirely of grace, and grace only saves the unworthy. Grace will save you — if you feel that you are lost, and unable to do anything toward your own salvation, and are willing to be saved gratuitously through simple faith in Christ. Anyone may be saved in this way — but there is no possibility of being saved in any other way; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ — and you shall be saved!" For, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him!"

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HEAVEN!

"You have made known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand!" Psalms 16:11 HEAVEN! What is it?

It is . . . God's residence, the Savior's home, our Father's house, a paradise of pleasure, a temple of worship, and the residence of perfect purity and peace!

There . . . God unveils His glory, the Savior exhibits His charms, the angels perform their service, and the saints are entirely happy with their God. In Heaven . . . sin is banished, holiness is perfected, life is a continual feast, and

mortality is swallowed up in life! From Heaven . . . all pain is banished, all enemies are excluded, and all causes of sorrow are shut out! In Heaven . . . all our prayers are answered, all our desires are gratified, and all our needs are supplied. There is no weeping, wailing, or wishing there. In Heaven . . . our knowledge will be perfect, our happiness will be abiding, our pleasures will be ever new. In Heaven we shall . . . see Jesus, be with Jesus, and be like Jesus, forever!

HEAVEN! Who are there? All tried and tempted followers of Jesus are there. All doubting and fearing disciples of Jesus are there. All poor and despised believers are there. Multitudes, who felt totally unworthy of such glory, and feared they would never reach the place — are there.

All who were chosen by the Father, all who were redeemed by the Son, and all who were sanctified by the Holy Spirit — are there.

HEAVEN! What do they enjoy there? Who can answer this question — but one who has been there; and he would need a new language to state, and new figures to represent the enjoyments of Heaven. They enjoy rest from their pains — and a full supply of all their needs. They enjoy perfect

satisfaction, a fullness of joy, and pleasure forevermore. They see all that they believed, realize all that they hoped for, and possess all that they loved. They have . . . health — without sickness; pleasure — without pain; and holiness — without sin. Every sense is gratified, every power is pleasurable employed — and they are perfectly and perpetually happy!

O Heaven, in you there is . . .no tempting devil, no ensnaring world, no indwelling corruption; no doubts, fears, or misgivings! And best of all, there is no sin!

O Heaven, in you I shall see my God, possess my Savior, and enjoy the fullness of the Holy Spirit!  
O my God, in Heaven I shall be satisfied — for I shall be with You, serving and enjoying You without weariness or cessation!

HEAVEN! Who will yet get to Heaven? Who? Ah, perhaps many we little think of! We shall miss many whom we expected to find there — and find many whom we never expected would reach that glorious place! Who will go to Heaven? That poor man who is striving against sin, mourning over corruption, and loathing himself before God. That poor woman, who sighs because she sins, pants for perfect holiness, and clings to the cross of Jesus. Do you see that poor soul on his knees, confessing his transgressions, pleading for pardon, and seeking grace to sanctify his nature — he will go to Heaven. Do you see that lowly Christian, who is visiting the sick, pointing sufferers to the cross, and trying to alleviate human woe, out of love to Jesus — he will go to Heaven. Do you see that Sunday School teacher, who, after a hard week's work, is regularly in his class, speaking loving words, in tender tones, to win the little ones for the Savior — he will go to Heaven. Do you see that preacher who exalts Christ in his ministry, honors the gospel in his life, and travails in birth for souls — he will go to Heaven.

Heaven will be peopled by all who believe in Jesus, love the brethren, and worship God in Spirit and in truth. There will be a numberless multitude there, all deeply indebted to free mercy, washed in the Savior's blood, and sanctified by the Spirit's grace!

Reader, there is a way — but only one way to Heaven! Only those found in that way will ever reach it! You yourself, may be within an hour or two of either Heaven or Hell — do you know which? If called away suddenly — to which would you go? You have a Heaven to obtain, or a Hell to endure — to all eternity! Which shall it be? O that you were wise, that you properly realized this, that you would consider your latter end!

Heaven with all its glories — or Hell with all its horrors — must be your eternal portion! If you despise the Savior, make light of the Gospel, and neglect God's great salvation — then Hell, an eternal Hell, with all its unspeakable horrors — is your portion!

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined — what God has prepared for those who love Him!" 1 Corinthians 2:9

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HELL!

"The rich man also died and was buried. In Hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him: Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in

agony in this fire!" Luke 16:22-24

HELL! What is it? It is God's great prison, where His criminals are confined. It is the place of punishment — where the wages of sin are paid. It is the house of despair, the residence of desperation, the dwelling-place of the worm that never dies. It is called the lake of fire, burning with brimstone. It is a place of terrible torture, dreadful agony, and soul-racking remorse. Hope never enters there. Repose is never enjoyed there. Light never shines there. But all is pain, gloom, restless agony, and indescribable torment! There is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth — forever!

HELL! Who are there? The rich man, at whose gate Lazarus lay, is there. Judas, who betrayed Jesus, is there. Cain, who slew his brother, is there. Demas, who preferred the world to Christ, is there. The covetous and thieves are there! The immoral and liars are there! The proud and vain are there! All who made light of the Gospel are there! All who neglected the great salvation are there! All who worshiped the Roman beast are there! And they are all "tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb! The smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever — and they have no rest day nor night!"

Many perhaps whom you have known are there! Some of our relations even may be there! Old friends of ours may be there. Some who lived in the same street, met in the same place of worship, and whom we once hoped to meet in Heaven — are there! Who are there? Why, we were nearly there ourselves! We lay at the entrance of Hell! We were within a few inches of Hell! A slight accident, a stroke, or a disease — would have sent us there. Yes — but for free and sovereign grace — WE would have been in Hell!

"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life!" Revelation 21:27

"Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying!" Revelation 22:15

HELL! What do they suffer there? No tongue can tell. No pen can write; no heart can conceive — what lost souls suffer in Hell! Who can tell what the unmixed wrath, the fiery indignation, the endless curse of Almighty God is? Who can set forth what sin deserves, and what is the obstinate sinner's due?

They weep, they wail, they gnash their teeth. They are tormented in eternal flames. In every member of the body, in every power of the soul — the lost in Hell will suffer. Memory, conscience, and the imagination — will especially increase their agonies! And hopeless despair will render their doom indescribably dreadful!

What do they suffer in Hell? Tell! O tell me — what God can justly inflict, what an immortal man can bear, what the threatenings of the violated law require, and how devils can add to the torments of lost souls — and I will tell you what they may suffer in Hell!

But, O! may you never know in your own experience what lost souls have to endure, and endure forever! Could we but lift the veil that conceals that awful place from our view, and see but for five minutes the agonies of those in Hell — we would never forget the sight! Our flesh would tremble, our hair would stand up on our heads, and our souls would be paralyzed with horror!

HELL! Who will yet go to Hell? Who? Perhaps the reader of these lines! Who? ah, perhaps many of whom we have now no suspicion! Will any of our children go there? Will any of our brothers or sisters go there? Will any of the members of the church go there? Will any of this congregation go there? Who will go there? All liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with brimstone and fire. All swearers, all drunkards — will find a place set apart in Hell for them. All immoral people; all covetous and dishonest people — all will find a place in Hell prepared for them. Who will go to Hell? All who live and die impenitent; "for unless you repent — you shall all likewise perish!" All unbelievers; for "he who believes not, shall be damned!" All who are in their natural state; for "unless a man is born again — he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Without faith in Christ, and repentance toward God; without love to God and man, the proof and evidence of the new birth; without union to Christ, and the possession of the Spirit of Christ — there is no escaping the wrath to come — the person must go to Hell! O solemn consideration! Let a man therefore examine himself, whether he is in the faith; let each man and woman prove their own selves, and see if Christ is in them.

HELL! How may we escape it? Only by fleeing to Jesus, by believing in Jesus, and receiving the Spirit of Jesus. No one can save us but Jesus, for there is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we can be saved. Jesus has done all that is necessary to save souls from Hell, and he is ready to put on our account — what he has done to us; whenever we go to him, plead with him, trust in him, and commit our souls to him. We need not go to Hell, for Jesus is both able and willing to save us; and yet we must go to Hell, unless we apply to him, to be saved by him. As therefore Hell is so dreadful; as the punishments of Hell are eternal; as once lost, we are lost irrecoverably — as no one can save us but Jesus — and as Jesus will only save those who make personal application to him — let us at once, with all our hearts and souls, apply to Christ! "Behold! now is the accepted time. Behold! now is the day of salvation." Let us then "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon!" Isaiah 55:6-7

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Most probably, I would have been in Hell!

What WAS I by NATURE? This is a dark and dreary subject, for I was in a sad state, and had acquired a sad character.

My heart was fearfully depraved — my nature was totally fallen.

All within was spiritually dead — and all without was unholy. The creature was loved and served — and the Creator was neglected and despised.

Sin was my element.

Satan was my master. The world was my heaven.

I had no good desires — no holy aspirations — no redeeming qualities.

I was a rebel against God's government — and a traitor against God's crown!

I would have destroyed God if I could — and blotted His name out of creation! The language of my heart and life was, "No God for me!" My heart was filled and fired with enmity against Him, and at times I could have cursed Him to His face! I hated His law. I despised His gospel. I abhorred His people. If I could — I would have crushed His cause!

How astonishing that such a wretch was allowed to live!

How astonishing that God had not crushed me by His power, and sentenced me to Hell!

But, O the patience and the sovereign grace of God! He bore with me. He loaded me with His benefits. He determined to win me with His love. Nevertheless I sinned yet the more, and provoked Him with my ungodly conduct. O how surprising that I am not in Hell! Surely there are many already in Hell — who were never such great sinners as I have been!

But, the Lord is good, ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all who call upon Him. He put a cry into my heart, He listened to that cry — and made me a new creature in Christ Jesus. He unveiled my enormous wickedness before the eyes of my mind, which filled me with confusion, despondency, and shame. He laid me in the dust, and seemed to doom me to despair. He . . . crushed my proud spirit, destroyed my infernal enmity against Him, and melted me into contrition with His love.

What AM I by GRACE? For all that I now am — I once was not. Everything which is in any sense was good in me — must be ascribed to the free grace of God. Yes, with the holy Apostle I must say, "By the grace of God — I am what I am!" All that has been wrought within me, all that has been conferred upon me, and all the good that has been done by me — must be traced to the free and invincible grace of God! Who can tell what I would have been by this time — but for the grace of God? Who can say where I would have been this morning — but for the grace of God? Most probably, I would have been in Hell — where the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched! O what a debtor to grace I am! If anyone should magnify sovereign grace — surely I should. For to God's sovereign grace — I owe everything!

I am not now — what I once was. Why? Because God had a purpose of grace toward me.

I am not now — what I soon shall be. Why? Because grace is always crowned with glory!

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He smote her with a disease which deprived her of strength, destroyed her beauty, and left her deformed!

"I know, O Lord, that in faithfulness You have afflicted me!" Psalms 119:75

"God disciplines us for our good — that we may share in His holiness!" Hebrews 12:10

As God loves His people with an everlasting love — He takes the deepest interest in their welfare, and rejoices to do them good. But love can frown as well as smile; rebuke as well as commend; and God's rebukes are often very pointed, and very sharp. "As many as I love — I rebuke and chasten." Revelation 3:19

Mary Scott was in a good situation, enjoyed many privileges, and was doing well; but she got vain, dressy, and carnally-minded. She thought too much of earthly things, and too little of heavenly things — and at length you could discern but little difference between her and the world! The Lord then laid His afflictive hand upon her — she fell sick, had to leave her pleasant situation, her little all was soon spent — and she is now poor, and totally dependent on friends.

But God has attended the painful dispensation with His blessing — so that she is now humble, spiritual, and heavenly-minded. Worldly things have lost their charms — and spiritual things appear all-important. She now deeply deplores her former worldly course. Her Bible is now her precious companion, and she finds sweet access to God at the throne of grace. She now looks forward to Heaven, rejoicing that there shall be no more pain, nor sorrow, nor crying. She often blesses God for her affliction! This was a loving rebuke from her heavenly Father!

Eliza Brown was naturally proud and high-minded, and thought only of her figure and personal attractions. Being brought to know the Lord — for a time she walked wisely, and was happy in God. But she gave way to her natural besetting sin of pride, carried her head high, and her heart became haughty. She soon lost the humility that was manifest in her life. Meekness and gentleness seemed to forsake her — and she became spiritually dry and barren. For a time this was allowed to continue — but at length the Lord came forth to rebuke her. He smote her with a disease which deprived her of strength, destroyed her beauty, and left her deformed!

At first, her heart rose in opposition to God — she kicked like a wild bull caught in a net, and spoke harshly of God. But the Lord followed her with stroke upon stroke, until at length her proud spirit yielded, she fell down before God, confessing her sin, and mourning over her rebellious feelings. Then the Lord sweetly breathed upon her soul, and she felt a sweet peace of mind; her heart melted like wax before the fire, and she cried, "Lord, do with me as seems good to You." Meekness, humility, submission, and acquiescence in the will of God now characterize her. And, though at times she finds the old feelings arise, and her natural pride work — she daily seeks grace from God, to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. This was a loving rebuke from her heavenly Father!

"Before I was afflicted I went astray — but now I obey Your Word." Psalms 119:67

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

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Twenty-four hours in Hell!

"Why should any living man complain?" Lamentations 3:39

Occasionally, I am tempted to complain of my hard lot — and think myself harshly dealt with. Ingratitude rises and works in my heart. This always makes me wretched. I then find it profitable to look down into Hell — and realize its horrors and agonies as my just deservings.

If anyone ever deserved to go to Hell — I did!

If justice was ever honored in a sinner's damnation — it would have been in mine!

If anyone was ever saved by grace alone — I am the man!

Shall I then, who deserve to be in Hell — but am not; shall I, who am an heir of Heavenly glory — though no one ever deserved it less; shall I, because of a few trials, troubles, and disappointments, or because I have rather a heavy cross to carry — shall I dare to murmur, or fret, or complain, or think myself harshly dealt with?

Shocking inconsistency!

What are my present pains or sufferings — compared with the Hell that I deserve!

All the afflictions that I am called to endure here on earth — cannot be compared with only twenty-four hours in Hell! And yet my desert is, not to be in Hell for a few hours — but forever! Surely every lost soul, every damned spirit — will be ready to upbraid me — if I complain of my present lot! What base gratitude — if I do not praise the Lord with joyful lips, for His rich, free, and sovereign grace!

O my soul, whenever I am tempted to complain of my difficult lot — think of my deservings! Think of what would have been my eternal doom — if God had not saved me by His sovereign grace!

Yes, I do find that looking down into Hell . . . silences my complaints, awakens my gratitude, and humbles me in the dust before my God!

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I am somewhat like that bird!

"As the deer pants for streams of water — so my soul pants for you, O God! My soul thirsts for God, for the living God! When can I go and meet with God?" Psalms 42:1-2

I have just been reading of the last days of a true believer, and his whole dying experience was comprehended in one sentence, "I am sighing for Jesus!" He did not sigh for life, nor for ease — but he was sighing for Jesus.

I cannot help observing, how much of my experience now, is expressed in those words, "I am sighing for Jesus." Yes, yes, I can do without riches, or fame, or the honor which man confers. I am pretty well content with what providence sends me — and yet I often sigh, and sigh deeply too. Some would think me unhappy — but I am not. Some may conclude I am discontented with my situation in life — but I am not. Yet I sigh — I often sigh.

I have read of a bird, which if caught and caged — never ceases to sigh, until it obtains its liberty, or dies. I am somewhat like that bird, and I expect I shall continue to sigh — until I obtain my desire.

I have had a glimpse of Jesus — and I sigh for a full view of Him.

I have tasted the sweetness of communion with Him — and I sigh for uninterrupted fellowship.

I have felt a little of the cleansing influence of His precious blood, and Holy Spirit — and I sigh for a thorough cleansing, that I may be perfectly and forever holy.

I sigh for Jesus — that I may . . . know Him more perfectly, love Him more entirely, and enjoy Him uninterruptedly!

I sigh to be exactly like Jesus!

I sigh to be forever with Jesus!

I believe that if I were just like Him, and always with Him — that I would sigh no more; and I think that nothing else will put a complete stop to my sighing.

Yes, the day is coming, and it may be very near — when the days of my mourning will be ended, and when I shall heave the last sigh, and begin the never-ending song! My sorrows will soon end, and my sighing will forever cease! I shall soon be with Jesus, like Jesus, and everlastingly employed in praising Jesus! And then, I shall sigh no more!

"The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away!" Isaiah 51:11

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The vilest and the foulest thing in all creation!

"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time." Genesis 6:5

"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?" Jeremiah 17:9

No man by nature really believes God's representation of the human heart. Nor does the young Christian realize it fully. God calls us to learn the plague of the heart.

The vilest and the foulest thing in all creation — is the heart of man! There are profound depths of evil there! There are the seeds of all dreadful moral maladies there. No man's conduct, as bad as it may be-is ever as bad as his heart is.

Just in proportion, as we learn the plague of our own hearts — do we . . . admire the free and distinguishing grace of God, see the need of the Holy Spirit's work and operation, value the glorious atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a life's lesson — to learn the plague of one's own heart.

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What does infant baptism do for them?

"But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Acts 8:12

"Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized." Acts 18:8

"So Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus, beginning from that Scripture. As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, 'Look, there's water! What would keep me from being baptized?' And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart you

may.' And he replied, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' Then he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him." Acts 8:35-38  
The New Testament order appears to have been as follows: the Word was preached,

the soul was quickened, faith was professed, the believer was baptized, the baptized were added to the church, and the church surrounded the Lord's table as one holy, obedient, loving family. Such was the first church, and such were the first Christians, who continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayer.

But someone may be ready to ask, "What is to become of our children?" May I ask also, What becomes of them now? What does infant baptism do for them? Does it regenerate them? Does it give them a saving interest in Christ? Does it raise them one inch above, or place them one step above the unbaptized? It does not!

Then some may ask, "Why do we baptize them?" Truly — why do you baptize them? God has not commanded you. His Spirit does not sanction you. His Word does not command you.

Infant baptism has done a world of mischief — but it never did any good. It is doing incalculable mischief at the present time; may the Lord root it up, and root it out, of His church entirely and forever!

"But what are we to do with our children?" Do! bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Teach them that by nature they are without Christ, afar off from God, and exposed to everlasting misery! Show them that they form no part of the Church of God, which is composed only of His friends — but they are numbered with His enemies. Inform them of their need of the pardon which the gospel proclaims, of the sanctifying Spirit, and the finished work of Jesus to furnish them with a title of everlasting life. Teach them that they must repent of sin — or perish; that they must personally believe in Jesus — or be forever condemned. Set forth Christ in all His love and loveliness; and by a holy life, by frequent exhortation, by leading them to the house of prayer, and by endeavoring to render Christianity as lovely — strive to bring them to decision and salvation.

I cannot see that infant baptism . . . gives a parent any assistance, imparts to the child any blessing, brings to the Lord any honor, or does any party the least good! But, it does appear to me . . . to throw a stumbling block in the way, to lead to soul-deception, and to do much mischief.

Infant baptism is, in my view . . . a pillar of popery, the principal basis of corrupt religious establishments, and one of Satan's strongest holds.

Infant baptism . . . divides the Lord's people, unites the world and the church together, and leads thousands into mischief and misery!

It is to me truly astonishing, that a practice . . . so destitute of all Scriptural authority, so totally and entirely useless, so opposed to the nature of the present Gospel dispensation — should be practiced, approved, and defended by so many!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Is it possible?

"The Lord delights in you!" Isaiah 62:4

Is it possible, that such poor, depraved, unworthy creatures — can be the objects of Jehovah's delight? Yes! The infinite love of God has been fixed upon us from eternity! Because He loved us, He sent His only-begotten Son to die for us! He sent His Holy Spirit into our hearts to regenerate us!

"You have loved them — AS You have loved Me!" John 17:23.

Yes, the Father has loved us — just as He has loved Jesus — with an infinite love!

Every believer, though . . .his faith is weak, his fears are many, his corruptions are strong, his troubles are great, and his temptations are sore — is the object of Jehovah's delight!

Let us therefore endeavor to pass through this day, yes, and every day — believing and realizing: "I am Jehovah's delight! I am the object of His highest love! I am the subject of His sweetest thoughts! I am His portion for evermore!"

O incomparable privilege!

Wondrous source of comfort, holiness, and love!

You have more cause for gratitude than an angel!

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Suppose your child was dying

Surely, if parents realized the value of their children's souls; if they had a vivid sight of the danger to which they are exposed; if they felt that they must be saved by the Lord Jesus — or perish for ever — then they would act very differently toward them!

Could a parent, if he believed the Scriptural representation of hell, as a place of torment; and saw that his child hung over that ever-burning lake as by a thread — and might, at any moment, by some accident, be plunged into the bottomless abyss; I say, if he saw and believed this — could he let his child go on, day after day, and month after month, without the tender expostulation, the affectionate appeal, and the heart-felt prayer with him? I think not!

Alas! alas! We do not half believe . . .in the horrors of hell, in the danger of our children, and in the absolute necessity of faith in Christ, in order to for them to be saved — or we could never live as we do!

What anxiety is manifested about their health and their education; and what indifference about their never-dying souls! One feels at times ready to conclude that many professing Christian parents must be half infidels, or wholly insane — to act as they do!

Reader, suppose your child was dying. His pulses are faint and few. He breathes short and hard. You approach his bedside. You take his hand in yours. He asks, "Father, did you believe I was a sinner? Did you know that it was possible I might die young? Were you aware that, without faith in Christ — I must perish forever? Did you, father?"

"I did, my child."

"Then how could you be so cruel, so hard-hearted, as to treat me in the way you have? You never took me aside to talk to me seriously. You never endeavored to impress upon my mind the importance of spiritual things. You never earnestly warned me to flee from the wrath to come. You never lovingly invited me to the Lord Jesus Christ. You never prayed with me as if you believed I was in danger of going to hell, and could only be saved by the grace of God. You were very earnest about temporal things — but indifferent about spiritual realities. You knew that I was going to hell — and you did not try to prevent it. Now I am lost! Lost for ever — and you are the cause of it! Or, at least, you are accessory to my everlasting damnation!"

Or, suppose you were before the Great White Throne, and the Judge seated thereon, and you meet your children there. One of them points to you, and says, "There is my mother! She showed great concern about my body — but she never showed anxiety about my soul. She never knelt by my side in prayer. I never heard her plead with God for my soul, nor did she ever, in downright earnest, plead with me. I charge her, before the Judge of all — with cruelty to my soul; and throughout eternity I shall curse the day that ever I had such a parent! No name will excite my enmity, or draw forth my bitter reproaches, like the name of my mother! I am lost, lost forever — and my mother never heartily tried to prevent it!"

Parents, how could you bear this? Parents, parents! By all the tender ties that unite you to your children, I beseech you to seek, first, principally, and most earnestly — the conversion of your children!

~ ~ ~ ~ He will not do it!

"Cast your burden upon the Lord — and He shall sustain you!" Psalms 55:22

There are some mistaken notions current concerning the way in which God would help us. People think that whenever they have a little trouble, a bit of hard path to go over, a load to carry, a sorrow to endure — that all they have to do is to call upon God, and He will at once take away their sorrow, or free them from the trouble. But this is not the way that God helps us! His purpose of love concerning us is — not to make all things easy for us — but to make something of us!

When we ask God to save us from our trouble, to take the struggles out of our life, to make the paths mossy, to lift off every heavy load — He will not do it! It would be most unloving in Him to accommodate us. We must carry the burden ourselves! All God promises is, to sustain us — as we carry it! He wants us to learn life's lessons, and to do this — we must be left to work out the problems for ourselves.

There are rich blessings which can be gotten only in sorrow. It would be short-sighted love indeed — which would heed our cries, and spare us from sorrow — and thus deprive us of the wonderful blessings which can be gotten only in sorrow! God is too good to us to answer our prayers — which would save us from pain, cost, and sacrifice today — at the price of holier, better, truer life in the end. He would not rob us of the blessing that is in the burden — which we can get only by carrying it!

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Run to your Father!

"This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven" Matthew 6:9

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" 1 John 3:1

Beloved, we have a heavenly Father. He has adopted us into His family. He not only wears a father's name — but he has a father's heart. He loves every believer with a father's love. He watches over each of His children with a father's care. Yes, we have a Father — and He is always near us. His heart is ever disposed to do us good. He will not withdraw His eye from us! He bids us . . .to cast every care upon Him, to expect every blessing from Him, and to carry everything that troubles us, to Him.

Does providence frown on us, perplex, and trouble us? Let us not fret, complain, or forebode — but go and tell Father!

Does Satan tempt, suggest evil thoughts, or endeavor to mislead us? Let us not parley with him, be alarmed at him, or yield to him — but go at once and tell Father!

Everything, whether painful or pleasant — should lead us to our Father in heaven. He loves to listen to our broken prayers. He loves to sympathize with us. He never chides us for coming too often, or refuses to listen to us. Happy child, who has such a Father! And wise is that child — who carries everything to his Father — who tells Him all, keeping nothing from Him. When we carry our cares or our troubles to Him, He says, "Leave them with Me. I will manage them. I will settle them."

Christian, run to your Father from every foe — and from every danger! Tell your Father everything that vexes, grieves, or troubles you. Trust your Father to manage all your affairs. Honor your Father, by consulting Him on all matters, by confiding to Him all your secrets, and by making His written Word your daily rule on all points.

"The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles." With childlike simplicity, filial confidence, and honest hearts — they go and tell their Father!

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"How long will you love vanity?" Psalms 4:2

The Lord is often represented in His word as expostulating with us. He manifests the deepest interest, shows intense pity, and uses many means to draw us back from the vortex of ruin.

But man, thoughtless man, silly man — rushes on his way, trifles with his soul, and plays on the brink of the most dreadful precipice! He is in love with his sin — and therefore in love with his own destruction! But God does not abandon him to despair — but touchingly, tenderly, lovingly — He expostulates with him and asks, "How long will you love vanity?"

Man by nature sets his heart upon what is vain and worthless — that which is not suited to, or required by, his immortal nature. Vanity represents that which is light, changeable, and of brief duration. Man displays his love of vanity . . . by preferring human friendship — to God's friendship, by thinking much more of the creature — than the Creator; by preferring earthly riches — to heavenly felicities; by preferring carnal pleasures — to spiritual delights!

Nor only so — but he manifests his foolishness by indulging in sin — the worst of vanities!

Look at the profane swearer, the drunkard, the glutton, the proud, the lover of pleasure. They are in love with vanity! They imagine that they shall have pleasure and enjoy happiness — but they never ponder the questions, "What shall it profit a man — if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

God asks the lover of vanity, "How Long!" "How long will you love vanity?" You have been doing so for years. Some for twenty, some for forty, and some for sixty years! You have manifested love to vanity — though warned, though convinced you were doing wrong, though you have often promised to reform. You are still loving vanity . . . though mortality is at work within you, though death is very near to you,

though eternity is within a step of you, though hell is ready to receive you!

You persevere in loving vanity . . . while a pardon is presented to you, while peace with God may be enjoyed by you, while holiness may be obtained by you, and while heaven is within your reach!

How long will you love vanity? Until some affliction unfits you to seek the world?

Until God's Spirit no longer strives with you? Until Satan fills your heart? Until God laughs at your calamity? Until some sudden stroke takes you away to hell?

How long?

Let your past foolishness suffice, and now, while the door of mercy is open, enter!

Now, while the way of escape is clear — flee for your life!

No one ever came too soon — thousands have delayed too long! No one ever regretted that he was saved too early — millions have cursed their folly that they were not saved at all! Myriads wish that they had never been born — because they persevered in such folly. Beware then, beware — lest you rue your folly too late! Love vanity no longer!

~ ~ ~ ~ Jesus and the Sinner All that Jesus does for lost sinners — He does freely, out of pure pity, kindness, and love.

Yet we are always looking for something in ourselves — to encourage us! On the other hand, we tend to look at some sin committed by us — which discourages us. Whereas we should look only to Jesus. I want now, for a few minutes, to fix the eye of your mind on what Jesus does for sinners — how He acts toward them at the present day.

Jesus calls the sinner. He says, "Come unto Me. Come, just as you are. Come, this moment. Come, for all that you need. Come, for all that you desire. Come, and be saved. Come, and I will satisfy you. Come, and commit all your concerns to Me, and I will make all things that occur, work together for your good."

Jesus receives the sinner when he comes. He receives every sinner, however base, vile, or unworthy he may be! He receives the sinner graciously — pardoning every sin, forgiving and forgetting all that he has done amiss, and treating him with the utmost kindness.

Jesus cleanses the sinner. In the fountain of His precious blood, and in the laver of His holy Word — He cleanses him from guilt and pollution — fitting him for holy service on earth, and for holier service in heaven. Nor is there any getting rid of guilt — but by His blood; nor of impurity — but by His Spirit working with His Word!

Jesus clothes the sinner. Cleansed from guilt and filth — we are clothed in His garments of salvation, and are covered with His robe of righteousness. All that is necessary for our honorable appearance in heaven among the glorified — He undertakes to provide.

Those who trust in Him, are completely nourished by Him. Jesus feeds the sinner. His flesh and blood becomes our daily food. We can no more live and be healthy, without nourishing food for the body — than we can live and be happy, without sweet and frequent nourishment from Christ. There is in the renewed soul — a craving for Christ, and it is never satisfied — but as it realizes His presence, meditates on His Word, or is solaced with His love!

Jesus employs the sinner. Having called, received, cleansed, clothed, and nourished him — He sets him to WORK. He gives him a cross to carry, and a plot in his vineyard to cultivate. He sends him to speak to others of His grace, and to manifest to others His temper and disposition. He sends him to the poor widow's cottage, to the sick man's chamber, and to the ignorant soul's home — and says, "Feed them for Me; comfort them for Me; and teach them for Me!"

Jesus comforts the sinner. Yes, when he is depressed and discouraged, when he is low and cast down. He consoles by some special providence, by some seasonable portion of His Word, by the counsel of some friend, or by the sweet whispers of His Spirit.

Jesus assures the sinner. Assures him of His love to him, of a saving interest in His finished work, and of a title to heavenly mansions! When Jesus assures us — our doubts and fears depart, our unbelief is destroyed, and our souls are filled with peace and joy.

Jesus visits the sinner. He says, "I will come unto him." And He does come, and brings with Him — pleasant light, precious fruits, and joy and peace. He says, "I will come and sup with him — and he with Me." And He draws him out into such sweet, near and dear communion with Himself — that no costly meal, no delightful company — can be compared to it.

Jesus restores the sinner. For as astonishing as it may appear, it is nevertheless true — that we are prone to wander! We leave light — for darkness! We leave plenty — for poverty! We leave joy — for sorrow! We leave a paradise — for a desert! And having wandered, we would never find our way back — if He did not come after us! But, blessed be His holy name — He does! And then He restores our souls, and again feeds us in green pastures, causing us to lie down beside the still waters!

Jesus reproves the sinner. However He may spare our persons — He never spares our sins! He visits our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquities with stripes! His reproofs are often sharp. Cutting convictions, heavy losses, severe trials, perplexing troubles, bodily sickness, and painful bereavements — are some of the RODS which He employs. But however numerous and heavy His strokes — they are lighter than our guilt, and fewer than our sins! He deals with us as with sons. He chastens us for our profit — and to make us partakers of His holiness!

Jesus glorifies the sinner. Glorifies him with Himself — and confers on him an eternal weight of glory! What it is to be glorified — we do not fully know. At the least, it is to be freed from all that is sinful, painful, and degrading — and to be invested with all that is bright, beautiful, and blessed. It is to be made as like Jesus as possible, and to be with Him where he is forever!

O wondrous grace, of a wondrous Savior!

Believer, this precious Savior is yours! Will you not love Him then? Will you not bear witness to the power and sweetness of His love, to the joy and happiness that are found in His ways? Will you not observe His statutes and keep His laws? Will you not come out of the world, which is peopled by His enemies — and be separated to Him? Can you mingle with the carnal, and frequent places of worldly amusement? Must you go to the world to be gratified and amused?

Beware how you wound your precious Savior's loving heart!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The work of the Holy Spirit

I love to meditate on the work of the Holy Spirit, to whom we are so much indebted, and from whom we receive such great and invaluable blessings. To Him, I feel that I am indebted, for every good thought, and for every good work. How wonderful His patience — that He should bear with me so long; and how wonderful His loving-kindness — that He should confer on me so much! O that I was more deeply sensible of my obligations!

It was the Holy Spirit who quickened me when I was dead in trespasses and sins — imparting a new life, infusing new thoughts, and producing new desires in my soul.

Having quickened me, He conquered me — subduing the enmity of my heart, the obstinacy of my will, the worldliness of my affections — and bringing every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ.

Having quickened and conquered me, He comforted me, assuring me of a saving interest in — the love of God, the perfect work of Jesus, the precious promises of the Word, and the eternal rest which remains for the people of God.

Having quickened, conquered, and comforted me, He sanctified me — separating me from the world, and setting me apart for my Redeemer's glory and praise. As my Sanctifier, He became my Guide — leading me into the truth, conducting me out of the paths of danger, and directing me into the everlasting way. Not only my guide, but He became my Guard — preserving me from danger, protecting me from foes, and becoming a wall of fire round about me.

Whenever I wander — He reproves me; when I willfully go astray — He corrects me, and makes me smart for my folly. The work He began so long ago — He carries on, nor will He withdraw His hand from it, until it is perfected, and I am fully fitted for glory.

Reader, what do you experimentally know of the work of the Holy Spirit? Has He quickened you? Has He conquered you? Does He comfort you? Are you sanctified by His presence, power, and operation in your heart? Does He . . . guide you by His counsel, guard you by His power, and correct you for your follies? The work of the Spirit within us — is as necessary as the work of Jesus for us! For if the atonement of Christ entitles us to glory — it is the work of the Holy Spirit

that prepares us to possess and enjoy it. We must be washed, justified, and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God — or we cannot be saved!

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O fearful state! O terrible condition! O awful doom!

"Whoever believes in Him is not condemned — but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son!" John 3:18

The unbeliever's condemnation is for sin; but his condemnation is not merely for violating the law — but for refusing a pardon, presented to him by God as an act of infinite mercy.

Every unbeliever is presently in a state of condemnation!

He is condemned, BY WHOM? By God, the righteous Judge, the Judge of all.

He is condemned, FOR WHAT? Not merely for breaking the law — but for insulting the Lawgiver, by refusing a pardon, procured at no less a cost than the death of his Son, and presented in the everlasting gospel.

He is condemned, WHEN? Now, already! At this moment, while he reads these lines! The manacled criminal in his cell, waiting for the day of execution, is not more really condemned, than is every unbeliever!

He is condemned, TO WHAT? Ah, who can tell? His punishment is represented . . .

by blackness, darkness, and a horrible tempest! By weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth! By a lake of fire, a bottomless pit, and a gnawing worm which never dies!

He is condemned, WITH WHOM? The devil and his demons — and with most depraved of the human race!

He is condemned, BY WHAT? Both the law — and the gospel; both the Creator — and the Savior!

See then, every unbeliever's state — he is condemned already! Yes, however moral the life, however amiable the disposition — he is condemned already! Condemned to be driven from God, from holy angels, from blessed believers; and to be associated with devils and damned souls forever! Condemned, just because he would not believe in Jesus — he would not accept the pardon — he would not be reconciled to God.

O strange infatuation! O fearful delusion! O astonishing power of sin!

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life — but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath abides on him!" John 3:36

O fearful state! O terrible condition! O awful doom!

Believe at once — and escape so terrible a doom!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The Friend of His people in distress!

"You have known my soul in adversities!" Psalms 31:7

Prosperity makes friends — but adversity tries them.

Many will visit and smile upon us — when the sun shines.

Few will venture out to do us good — in the wintry or stormy day!

David had been in adversity; he had been forsaken and neglected by his friends —but not by his God! His God . . .knew him, and visited him, and cared for him, and sympathized with him, and supplied him, and at length delivered him.

This honor have all His saints! We have been in adversity, we have passed through a wilderness; but our God has . . .led us, and fed us, and preserved us, and brought us out into a wealthy place.

We can witness for Him in reference to the past; and we ought calmly, quietly, and confidently to trust Him for the future. He has pledged His Word that He will deliver us in six troubles, and that in seven no evil shall touch us; and He who has promised is faithful.

He is emphatically, the Friend of His people in distress!

In our greatest trials — He will manifest His richest grace!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Is it nothing to you? The death of our Lord Jesus Christ is the most wonderful, astounding, magnificent event in the history of the universe! Nothing that is, has been, or shall hereafter be — can be compared to it. Yet, as He was suffering the wrath of God, bearing the sins of His people, dying as the voluntary Substitute for guilty, hell-deserving, hell-bent sinners, such as we are — we hear the Son of God expressing the most woeful, unexplainable lamentation imaginable. He cried, "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look around and see. Is any suffering like My suffering that was inflicted on Me, that the Lord brought on Me in the day of His fierce anger?" Lamentations 1:12 When I hear those words falling from the lips of the Son of God, as He hangs upon the cursed tree, I simply cannot avoid asking a question. Of whom does the bleeding Lamb of God speak these words? To whom is the death of Christ meaningless and insignificant?

Nothing in all the universe is more wonderful and magnificent in the eyes of God the Father — than the death of His dear Son! The angels of heaven ever look into the mystery and wonder of redemption by the blood of Christ with astonishment! Faithful gospel preachers are so overwhelmed with the wonders of redemption and the glory of the Redeemer — that they never cease to study, glory in, and preach the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! Redeemed sinners on the earth cherish nothing, delight in nothing, marvel at nothing — like the death of our Lord Jesus Christ for them! The ransomed in glory appear to think of nothing and speak of nothing — except the dying love of the Lamb in the midst of the throne! (Revelation 5:9-12).

Yet, there are some to whom our darling Savior speaks as it were, with astonishment, to whom His death is meaningless, insignificant, nothing! Who are these people to whom the sin-atonement death of Christ is nothing? Our Lord is here addressing Himself to everyone who 'passes by' Him — passes by His death as the sinners' Substitute in unbelief. O unbelieving, Christless soul — it is you to whom the Son of God speaks!

O cold, calculating, heartless, preacher, you who pass by the crucified Christ — and take to your lips the meaningless, insignificant trifles of politics, social corruptions, moralisms, denominationalism, historical religion, creeds, and debates about nothing — it is you to whom the Master speaks!

Christ crucified is mundane, meaningless and insignificant — only to unregenerate, unbelieving souls!

It is my heart's prayer that you will hear these words echoing in your soul — until the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is made to be the most important thing in all the world to you. I pray that we may become totally consumed with the crucified Christ, that our hearts, our lives — every fiber of our souls may be constantly dominated by the death of Christ as our sin-atonement Savior. Let us meditate upon and study the great, sin-atonement sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, until it consumes our every thought!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The pagans run after all these things!

"Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things!" Matthew 6:32

Our gracious heavenly Father bids us to cast all our cares upon Him—assuring us that He cares for us!

His EYE is ever upon us! His eye is a Father's eye, which is always quick, and always affects His heart. He has set His eyes upon us for good. His eye is ever over us—fixed immediately upon us!

His EAR catches . . . our every sigh, our every groan, our every desire! It is always open to our cry. He listens to us—as one most tenderly and deeply interested in us. He knows our every need—and He intends to supply us!

Our heavenly Father has forever determined—that none of His children shall lack any good thing—and that He will never withhold any good thing from them.

"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things!" Matthew 6:31-32

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ An almighty arm!

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

Is the Christian guided aright through this wilderness world?

It is by the wisdom of Christ!

He has no wisdom of his own—and he is surrounded by snares and foes! He has within him a principle of evil, which invariably prompts him to leave the right road. He is prone to miss the mark, like a broken bow. He is attracted and affected by external worldly objects, which feed the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; and but for divine wisdom guiding him—he would stray into the fatal paths of folly and crime! To guide him aright, requires an omniscient eye, a wise intellect, and loving heart; and Jesus possesses and exercises these for the good of His people.

Is the Christian protected from the innumerable dangers and foes to which he is exposed? It is by the power of Christ!

That power is his guard, and his defense. An almighty arm is placed beneath him—to uphold him. An almighty arm is lifted up—to defend him. He looks to it when foes assail him; he leans on it when his own strength fails him; and he trusts in it, in every hour of danger. Without the power of Jesus—he never could persevere; with it—he can never apostatize. It keeps him as a garrison keeps a town, as a shepherd keeps his flock, as a parent does his child.

Is the Christian supplied? Are his needs anticipated and met? It is by the providence of Christ!

Jesus rules over all worlds! He directs and controls all events! He keeps His eye and His heart upon His people! He is engaged to provide for them—and He sacredly keeps His engagement.

He is . . . observant of all our wants, attentive to our cries, and ready to supply our needs.

With Jesus for our provider—we are strengthened, supplied, and supported.

O Jesus! what would we be without You? Dead in our sins! Under eternal condemnation! Slaves of our lusts! Poor condemned criminals! Depraved and polluted wretches! Lost and wandering sheep! Captives of Satan! Wild and lawless rebels! Miserable and starving paupers! Exposed to the just wrath of Almighty God!

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

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## Treasures from James Smith 5 (excerpts)1

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Nothing feeds, nothing refreshes, nothing delights my soul

"My meditation of Him shall be sweet!" Psalms 104:34

The Lord Jesus is the subject of my meditations. Not a day passes but my thoughts are occupied with Him. Forget whom I may—I never forget Him. Nothing feeds, nothing refreshes, nothing delights my soul—like vigorous meditations on Jesus. I dwell at times on . . . the glories of His person, the riches of His grace, the merit of His blood, the transcendent glory of His righteousness, the tenderness of His sympathy, the constancy of His love, the vastness of His resources, the greatness of His power, the glory of His offices, the prevalence of His intercession, and the grandeur of His second coming—until I am enamored with His beauty, and enraptured with His love!

My meditation of Jesus is sweet! I think of Him upon my bed, and meditate on Him through the watches of the night.

Jesus is the solace and joy of my soul. When all is dark within me, when all is dreary around me, when all is discouraging before me—He fills me full of joy with His countenance. One look from His eye, one word from His lips, one breath breathed on my soul—relieves, restores, and makes me happy.

He is the river of pleasure—in which I sometimes bathe! He is the Eden of delights—in which I sometimes walk!

Take away Jesus—and my soul droops, desponds, and dies! Give me Jesus—and the enjoyment of His presence, and I can do without any other heaven!

He is the joy of my brightest days, and my solace in my dreariest nights!

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Under Divine teaching and guidance

"Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me." Psalms 25:4-5

Under Divine teaching and guidance:

SIN is our daily burden.

HOLINESS is our constant pursuit.

The FEAR of God is placed as sentinel of the soul, to watch the approach of the enemy.

GODLY SORROW is appointed the messenger to carry confessions, petitions, and desires to the throne of grace.

ZEAL is armed with a sword to cut off the sinful right hand, or pluck out the sinning right eye.

HOPE is placed on the watchtower to look out for the coming of the Lord—when sin shall expire in His presence, and holiness be perfected in the rays of His glory.

FAITH is engaged to work for God and man, having . . .the promises for its support, the precepts for its guide, and love for its handmaid.

PATIENCE is appointed to keep all quiet and calm within—let the burden ever so heavy, and the trial ever so severe. Patience will call submission and resignation into active employment, if fretfulness, murmuring, or dissatisfaction should attempt to stir.

PEACE is placed as a garrison, to keep the heart and mind from anxiety, foreboding, and fault-finding with the Lord's dealings.

JOY is directed to run backwards and forwards to the wells of salvation, to supply the soul with the reviving, invigorating, and strengthening waters of life! Thus evil is prevented, good is secured, God is glorified, Satan is foiled, and the soul is saved!

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It leaves earth for Heaven—or for Hell!

"This is what the Lord Almighty says: Consider your ways!"Haggai 1:7

God commands you to consider—and you cannot neglect to do so, but you sin. Your circumstances require it of you—and you cannot neglect to do so, but you must be losers thereby. God complains, "My people do not consider!"

Inconsideration has ruined thousands—and will ruin thousands more. But shall it ruin you? It will—if you give way to it. Let me entreat you to do so no longer.

Consider that you are immortal—and must live forever. Your BODY will die—and perhaps soon. But not so your SOUL—it never dies. Death changes its place—but not its nature. It leaves earth for Heaven—or for Hell! It lives as much when the body is dead—as it did before. It is conscious—and capable of enjoying the highest pleasures—or of enduring the most dreadful torments! And one or the other will be its lot.

Heaven—or Hell, happiness—or misery, always follows upon death!

Surely an immortal being ought to consider:

Where shall I be after death?

What shall I be?

Among whom shall I have my eternal portion?

Is it rational to confine our attention to the present time, and the present world—when time bears no comparison to eternity; and our stay in this present world must be brief?

Consider that you are a sinner. You have broken God's law. You have incurred God's displeasure. You are condemned by God's Word. You deserve God's wrath. Your heart is alienated from God. You act in opposition to God. You lie absolutely at God's mercy—and at any moment He could cut you down, and send you to Hell. You have no right to expect anything but justice at His hands! And if He dealt with you after your sins, and rewarded you according to your iniquities—your doom would be indescribably dreadful!

Reader! "Consider your ways!"

Consider that you are immortal—and that you must live somewhere forever!

Consider that you are a sinner—and that you cannot live in Heaven as such!

Consider that you may be saved—for the Lord Jesus Christ is both able and willing to save sinners!

Consider that you can only be saved by sincere faith in Christ!

Consider that you must denounce your own righteousness, and rely solely on His finished work!

Consider that if you are saved by Christ—you will live to Christ. He will be your Lord—as well as your Savior. He will be your example—as well as your atoning sacrifice!

Consider that faith is the root of holiness, and a holy life alone proves our faith to be genuine.

"This is what the Lord Almighty says: Consider your ways!"

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Reader, how is it with you?

"Mary sat at Jesus' feet, listening to what He taught" Luke 10:39

Let us notice Mary's POSITION. She was sitting at the feet of Jesus. Most probably He was reclining on the couch, and she went and took her place behind Him, where she could hear what He said, and occasionally get a glimpse of His face.

It is the posture of HUMILITY—she took the lowest place. She had no wish to be seen, nor did she regard her own ease—she was intent on getting good from Jesus.

It was the posture of ATTENTION—she wished to catch every word, and to understand all that the Lord was saying. If Jesus is teaching—then Mary will attend and listen.

It was the posture of a LEARNER—she was a disciple of Jesus, therefore she sat down at His feet, that she may receive of His words. He need not now say unto her, "Learn of Me," for she was most anxious to do so.

It was the posture of SATISFACTION—if she could but be within the sound of His voice, within the sight of His eye—it was enough for Mary. Anywhere with Jesus—would satisfy her!

It was also the posture of REPOSE—here at the feet of Jesus, she found rest unto her soul. Her desires were satisfied, her love was gratified, her hungry soul was fed. It was enough.

Being at the feet of Jesus was to her—a kind of earthly heaven.

Mary sat at the feet of Jesus in a humble cottage. She now sits by His side in the heavenly mansion!

Reader, how is it with you?

Are you humble enough to take a seat at the feet of Jesus?

Is it your delight to listen to His words?

Are you like a little child desiring to learn of Him, and be taught by Him?

Are you satisfied—if you can but get near to Jesus?

Do you find sweet and refreshing repose in His presence?

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Strength for the Day

"As your days—so shall your strength be." Deuteronomy 33:25

This promise which ensures us suitable and sufficient strength for all future days—is made by One who loves us dearly. Loves us—but who shall describe, who can suitably represent His love! It is Infinite love—and cannot be comprehended! It is Eternal love—and cannot be measured! It is Unchangeable love—and cannot be diverted from its objects! It is Sovereign love—and was fixed on them without anything in them to attract or draw it toward them! It is Divine love—deeper than a father's love; more tender than a mother's love; stronger than a husband's love.

This Divine love is . . . a fire that cannot be quenched, an ocean that cannot be exhausted, a sun that will never set!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ We really need very little

"The lions may grow weak and hungry—but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing." Psalms 34:10

Those who seek the Lord may be sick, or poor, or tried, in a variety of ways; but the Lord will send them supplies, OR give them the grace of contentment, so that they shall not lack any good thing. But how many mistake wishes for needs! And while the Lord has promised to supply all His people's needs—He has nowhere promised to gratify all their wishes.

We really need very little—therefore the apostle says, "If we have food and clothing—we will be content with that!" 1 Timothy 6:8. And again, "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said: Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5

"They shall not lack any good thing." That is, they shall not lack whatever is really good for them at the time—and under the circumstances. Whatever will promote their holiness and happiness—shall certainly be conveyed to them.

Those who seek the Lord are sure of necessary supplies, for four reasons:

First, the Lord is ABLE to supply them. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think!

Second, the Lord DESIRES to supply them. "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him. He knows our frame—He remembers that we are dust."

Third, the Lord has PROMISED to supply them. "The Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." "My God shall supply all your needs, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Fourth, the Lord ALWAYS HAS supplied them. Look at Jacob, at David—and at all who have already arrived in glory. If the question, put by the Lord Jesus, to His disciples, when they returned from their missionary tour, on which He sent them without purse or bag, was put to them: "Have you lacked anything?" Every one of them would readily answer, "Nothing, Lord!"

~ ~ ~ ~ My Support

"They attacked me at a moment when I was in distress—but the Lord was my support!" Psalms 18:18

Aged believer, you and I can look back—and wonder how it is that we are where we are, and what we are: how we have held on, and held out until now. Here is the whole secret of the case—"But the Lord was my support!"

In the seasons of my greatest difficulty, in all my times of sorrow and danger, when I was filled with fears and doubts, when in deep trouble and afflictions, when all creature help failed me, when my heart worried and vexed me, when my enemies were just ready to overwhelm me, when my feet were almost gone, when my steps had well near slipped, in my darkest nights, in my dreariest days, —then the Lord was my support!

My journey has been long, my road has been peculiarly difficult, my heart has been weak, my enemies have been strong, and long ago I must have perished in my afflictions—or been a prey to my foes—but the Lord was my support!

I would have fainted under my heavy burdens, I would have yielded to my enchanting temptations, I would have fled before my powerful foes—but the Lord was my support!

Yes, the Lord has upheld, supported, and supplied me along the treacherous way. To His free grace, to His inviolable faithfulness, and to His unchangeable love—I must ascribe that "By the grace of God—I am what I am!" 1 Corinthians 15:10

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Swallowed up in a worldly church!

"If the world hates you—keep in mind that it hated Me first. If you belonged to the world—it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world—but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you!" John 15:18-19

Such is the testimony of the Lord Jesus.

Real Christians have never been favorites of the world—and while it continues what it is, they never can be.

Nor can the pure and simple gospel be pleasant to the world, because it lays the sinner in the dust, and exalts God as supreme and sovereign. Let us not be surprised then, if we hear worldlings speak against the gospel, and traduce the Lord's people; for what the Romans told Paul, is in a good measure true in the present day, "For concerning this 'sect', we are aware that it is spoken against everywhere!" Acts 28:22

This 'sect' originated with Jesus, the hated Nazarene, who came into the world for its good, and to save His people from their sins. He gathered around Him many—but they were principally the poor and unlearned. There was nothing in them, or about them, to recommend them to the proud and sensual world. They were begotten of God, and made new creatures in Christ. They embraced the truth that He taught. They observed the precepts that He gave. They copied the example that He set.

Their creed consisted pretty much in these facts: that man is a lost sinner, that salvation by works is impossible, and therefore it must be all of grace—or not at all;

that the Lord Jesus came into the world to take the sinner's place, fulfill the law in the sinner's stead, and die as the sinner's substitute.

By such hopes, they were animated, by such rules, they walked, and at such objects, they aimed.

And yet, they were spoken against and despised, because they poured contempt on the luxuries, pride, and honors of this world. They were treated as the off-scouring of all things, unfit for society, unfit to live.

"Do not be surprised, my brothers—if the world hates you!" 1 John 3:13

And yet, like Israel in Egypt, the more they were persecuted, the more they multiplied and grew; until at length they spread not only over the Roman empire—but nearly over the world. And, had they retained . . . the simplicity of their lives, the spirituality of their minds, and the correctness of their creed—they would no doubt have encircled the globe! But at length they were . . . courted by royalty, loaded with wealth, became intoxicated with worldly honors, and then their glory departed! They drank into the spirit of the world, conformed to its maxims and customs, sought its approbation and applause—and so fell from their exalted station, and lost their real dignity. The 'sect' that had been spoken against everywhere, with the exception of a few—was swallowed up in a worldly church!

There are still some, who, like the ancient sect of the Nazarenes, are spoken against everywhere. They will not swim with the stream. They will not compromise their Master's honor, or give up their Master's truth. According to the light they have—they walk; and they rejoice to exalt the Savior, humble the sinner, and proclaim salvation, all of grace. They rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer shame, for His dear name.

Reader! Do you belong to this sect? Is there anything in your religion that is distasteful to the world, anything that draws forth its opposition, or excites its contempt? The carnal mind is still enmity against God, and if we are godlike—that enmity will manifest itself against us!

If we copy Christ's example, as set before us in the gospel; if we testify against the world, that its works are evil, and call upon it to repent, as Christ did—we shall soon be hated by the world!

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There is a way to hell—even from the very gates of heaven!

"You are not far from the kingdom of God." Mark 12:34

Many are in this dangerous position. They are not far from the kingdom of God—but not actually in it.

They have clear light in their heads—but have no grace in their hearts. They know the gospel in theory—but have no inward experience of its power. But no man can be saved by light in the mind; there must be the life of God within the soul.

They have not only clear light—but correct morals. The tongue is controlled. The temper is governed. The life is regulated. But with all this, the soul is dead in trespasses and sins. There may be morality—without spirituality. The life may not only be correct—but there may be a regular attendance on gospel ordinances. They may come as God's people, sit as God's people, hear and sing as God's people—and yet not be in the kingdom of God!

There may be no objection felt, or opposition shown to the doctrines or duties of the gospel. All may be admitted, professed, and even admired; but still the person may not be in the kingdom of God.

There may also be a form of prayer—but prayer without faith—prayer without the heart, without the soul.

They may be employed in teaching God's Word, either in the Sunday School, or in the pulpit—and yet not be in the kingdom of God.

O how solemn is the thought, how searching is the fact—that people . . . may have correct views of truth; may regularly attend on the means of grace; may acquiesce in the doctrines and duties of Christianity; may associate and unite with God's people; may regularly bow the knee in prayer; and may employ their time and talents in instructing others in the things of God—and yet never enter into the kingdom of God themselves!

Reader beware! for many rest short of vital religion. They know nothing of a broken heart for sin, of living faith in Christ, or fellowship with God through Him. They rest in a form of knowledge, or in a routine of religious services. Such may find out their mistake too late, as did the foolish virgins—when the door was shut! Or, like those referred to by our Lord when He said, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" Matthew 7:22-23

Many will come very near to the kingdom—but will never enter it. As John Bunyan says, "There is a way to hell—even from the very gates of heaven!"

But it must be dreadful to come near, so near to heaven—and yet to be thrust down to hell!

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God's jewels are often found buried in the worst filth!

"I have many people in this city!" Acts 18:10

What kind of a city was it? Corinth was one of the most worldly and immoral cities of the east. Here was the temple of Venus, with its degrading and disgraceful services.

What kind of people were they? "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were! But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God!" 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. This is the apostle's own reply to the question.

Observe:

1. The Lord's people are often found in the most unlikely places! Who would have expected to find God's chosen people—a multitude of them—in a place so foul, so polluted, so degraded—as Corinth?

God's jewels are often found buried in the worst filth!

2. The Lord chooses the most unlikely people! Who would ever have thought that the Lord would have chosen: the sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, slanderers, swindlers—to be saved? But He did!

God's people are picked off the foulest dunghills!

O the wonders of sovereign grace!

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Coming daily and hourly to Jesus

"I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things!" Php 3:8

All true Christians know Christ—not with a mere theoretical knowledge, which may be obtained from books; but with a knowledge which the Holy Spirit works in the heart. We know Christ . . . in the glory of His person, in the perfection of His work, and in the riches of His wondrous grace. We so know Christ, that He stands out before us, as the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely One. And the more we know Him—the more intimate we wish to become with Him!

We not only know Christ—but we need Him. And the longer we live—the more we need Him. Nor do we merely need Christ, but we need everything in Christ, or that Christ has. We need . . . His blood to cleanse us, His righteousness to clothe us, and His Spirit to sanctify us. We need Christ daily, hourly!

As we need Christ—so we come to Christ. Not once for all, but we continue to come. We must come to Him . . . in every trial, in every trouble, in every conflict, to unburden our minds, to find rest

for our souls.

We come to Him . . . for wisdom, for strength, for holiness.

Much of experimental religion consists in coming daily and hourly to Jesus.

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened—and I will give you rest!" Matthew 11:28

~ ~ ~ ~ My shield

The privileges of the godly are many and great—but this is an especial one: "My shield is God Most High, who saves the upright in heart." Psalms 7:10

This implies exposure to foes—Satan, evil men, and death—against these we need defense.

It implies opposition—and the opposition of our foes is great, daring, and deadly.

It implies danger to be apprehended—because we are weak, timid, and unskillful—and our foes are strong, daring, and experienced.

Our safety therefore, stands in what the Lord is to us—He is our shield, and such a shield as no one besides has, or can have. He is omniscient to see all our foes and dangers. He is omnipresent to help us at all times, and against all opposers. He is omnipotent to defend us, and secure us from all evil. He is faithful to fulfill His word, and carry out His engagements. He will come between the believer and danger. He will preserve the trusting soul from all real injury. He will protect the upright in heart everywhere, and at all times.

What a mercy! What an unspeakable privilege is this!

"You who fear the Lord—trust in the Lord! He is their help and shield." Psalms 115:11. O for grace to trust the Lord with all, to trust the Lord for all, and to trust the Lord under all! Holy Spirit, strip us of all confidence in the flesh, of all reliance on man, and of all trust in circumstances; and bring us by Your divine and holy teaching—to trust in the Lord alone!

"He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge." Psalms 144:2

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SELF is always the carnal man's god

"So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God." Romans 8:8

No lost sinner, while carnal, while minding the things of the flesh—can ever please God. He cannot . . . at any time—either in youth or old age; in any place— either common or sacred; under any circumstances—of either sickness or health; at any season—either in life or death.

Man is totally depraved. He is wholly fallen. The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint. The leprosy cleaves to him, has spread over him, and dried up all the moral and vital moisture of the soul. The man is therefore lost, wholly lost, eternally lost—unless God interposes for his rescue!

All that he does while he is so—is displeasing to God. "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord." Proverbs 21:27 "The plowing of the wicked is sin." Proverbs 21:4

He has no faith, and "without faith it is impossible to please God." In all his prayers, tears, alms-deeds, and other good works—there is something that is displeasing to God. It is like the offering of Cain; for the person must be reconciled to God—before the sacrifice can be accepted by God. Until then he cannot please God, for he cannot set his heart to do it. He may try—but the innate disposition of the heart while carnal, will be too strong for him, and will lead him to break through all his vows, promises, and resolutions.

He may change his conduct—but he cannot change his heart; for its depravity has become natural to it.

He cannot do what God requires—as God requires it.

If what he does is externally good, it is internally bad.

The motive prompting, and the end aimed at—are alike evil, for SELF is always the carnal man's god.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Paul's criterion

"And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ—he does not belong to Christ."Romans 8:9 This is Paul's criterion. No matter what a man has, if he does not have the Spirit of Christ—"he does not belong to Christ!"

This divine agent, as the Spirit of Christ—always convinces the soul of its need of Christ. He always leads to the cross of Christ! He will not allow the soul to stop at, or rest in, sacraments, ceremonies, or any duties it may perform. He points to the cross. He leads to the cross. He fixes the sinner's eye upon the cross. He brings peace to the soul through the cross. He dedicates and devotes the sinner to God's service at the cross. Every one who has the Spirit of Christ—knows something of the worth, virtue, and efficacy of the cross of Christ.

The Spirit of Christ—always conforms to the image of Christ. Christ is the model after which the Spirit works; and by the Word and ordinances, by providence and His own inward operations—He stamps the likeness of Christ upon the soul. He fixes the eye on Jesus, who, as a mirror, represents and sets forth the glory of God; and by looking at Jesus—a divine transformation takes place—and we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Unless, therefore, we have been taught our need of Christ as a Savior; unless we have been led to the cross of Christ to seek salvation there; unless we are in some degree conformed to Christ, and are daily seeking more conformity—we have not the Spirit of Christ. "And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ—he does not belong to Christ."

The Spirit of Christ—is the great proof that we are Christ's. There may be much feeling, a moral reformation, and a profession of religion—without this.

But if we have the Spirit of Christ, our thoughts will be engaged with Him, our hearts will be going out to Him, and we shall at times long to depart, that we may be with Him, and see Him as He is!

The Spirit of Christ always renders Christ precious—and produces the highest possible esteem of Him.

The Spirit of Christ always makes its possessor like Christ. Not perfectly, here on earth—yet He kindles and keeps alive a desire for perfect likeness. This is the great, the grand, the habitual aim of the soul, always and everywhere—to be like Christ!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Angry with God?

"The Lord asked: Have you any right to be angry?" Jonah 4:4

Jonah quarreled with his God. And who has not? We may not speak as plainly as he did—but we have been in the same sullen temper, and manifested the same morose spirit.

Very few are well satisfied with the Lord's plans.

Fewer still are always pleased with the Lord's works.

How many quarrel with His sovereignty! What hard things have been spoken against it!

How many complain of His providence—and think it unwise, unkind, and almost unjust!

Beloved, we are often angry with God! This temper shows itself . . . in fretfulness, in complaining, in sullen gloom.

"Have you any right to be angry?"

Angry with your Father . . . whose wisdom is infinite, whose love is as constant as the day, and who constantly showers His blessings upon you!

Angry with your God, who has . . . pardoned all your heinous sins, provided for your innumerable needs, blessed you with countless spiritual blessings!

Surely it is a sin, a grievous sin, not to be pleased . . . with all that He does, with all that He has provided, and with all that He requires.

"Have you any right to be angry?"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The sufferings of this present time

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time—are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us!" Romans 8:18

Paul compares present sufferings—with future glory.

Believers are exposed to all kinds of suffering, and instead of obtaining an exemption from afflictions—they are assured that it is through much tribulation that they must enter into the kingdom of God.

Some endure inward suffering, with which no one is fully acquainted but God Himself. They have such darkness, gloom, distress, agitation, trouble, and sorrow—as would not be easy to describe.

Some suffer much in body, from the stressed and disordered state of the nervous system, from chronic diseases, or deformities in the physical frame. They seldom move without suffering, and for years together have but little freedom from weakness and pain. They live a life of suffering, a kind of dying life—and think much of heaven as of a place where there is no more pain.

Some suffer much financially; scarcely anything seems to prosper with them; losses, crosses, and opposition meet them at every turn; and though they live honestly, and conduct their business honorably—they are thwarted, hindered, and filled with perplexity. No one can tell what they suffer from financial trials and difficulties.

Others suffer from reproach, misrepresentation, strife, and persecution in the world, or in the Church—or both! No one seems to understand them, or is prepared to sympathize with them; they are like "a sparrow alone upon the house-top." False friends and open enemies unite to trouble and distress them, so that they often sigh, and say, "O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest!"

Others in the domestic circle, or from some of the relationships of life—are called to suffer long and seriously.

But whether from trouble of mind, sickness of body, trials in business, family difficulties, or persecution for Christ's sake—all suffer, and most believers suffer much!

But compare their present sufferings—with their future glory: Glory which will exclude all pain and suffering, all sin and sorrow! Glory beyond the reach of all foes and the cause of all trouble! Glory which includes happiness—perfect, perpetual, never-ending happiness! Glory which includes honor—the highest, holiest, and most satisfying honor! Glory, or splendor—which will fill the soul, clothe the body, and dignify the entire person forever!

Filled with light, peace, and joy; clothed with beauty, brightness, and magnificence—they will appear with Christ in glory—filling them with wonder and unutterable delight!

This glory will be possessed by us—as part of our marriage portion and inalienable inheritance. But we can form no adequate idea of that glory, for "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined—what God has prepared for those who love Him!" 1 Corinthians 2:9

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ No more disease, no more weakness, no more pain!

"The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay—and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God!" Romans 8:21

We shall soon have 'glorious liberty'!

The SOUL will be gloriously free: free from every fetter that binds it, free from every conflict that tries it, and free from every burden that bows it down.

The BODY will be gloriously free! It will be a glorious body—like the body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

No more disease, no more weakness, no more pain! But health, strength, and ease will characterize it forever!

The whole person, body, soul, and spirit—will be in perfect liberty: free from the curse—and every cross; free from every foe—and all our fears; free from every fault—and our numerous failings; free from frailty—and free from folly; free from all internal, external, and eternal evil.

It will be freedom crowned with glory—with . . . glorious beauty, glorious brightness, glorious majesty, glorious honor, and ineffable splendor!

Eye has never seen, ear has never heard, nor has the heart of man ever conceived of anything so grand, so magnificent, so glorious—as what God has provided, and has in store for His people!

~ ~ ~ ~ We are saved by HOPE

"Salvation is of the Lord!" Jonah 2:9

Salvation includes . . . our election—which is past; our effectual calling and sanctification—which are present; and our glorification—which is future.

We were chosen to salvation by the Father; we are redeemed by Jesus Christ;

we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

God is the author of salvation; grace is the source from which salvation flows;

Jesus is the Savior; faith is the grace that receives salvation; while separation from the world and dedication to God—prove that we are saved.

To all this, our apostle adds another view, and says, "We are saved by HOPE" Romans 8:24

Not in the same sense as we are saved by faith—which delivers us from guilt, degradation, and eternal death—by receiving from Christ, and confiding in Christ.

To be saved by hope—is to be kept, preserved, upheld, or sustained, in the midst of foes, dangers, and trials.

Hope quickens us in duties—and preserves us from becoming cold and dead.

It comforts us in tribulations—and keeps us from being disheartened and gloomy.

It enables us to overcome temptation—and so to hold on our way, looking unto Jesus. It gives us peace in death—in the sure prospect of victory over the grave.

Thus hope saves us: by preventing despair—into which we can never fall while hope lives within us; by preserving us from desperation—to the verge of which we are sometimes brought; by guarding us against rebellion—the seeds of which are still thickly sown in our corrupt hearts; and by protecting us against apostasy—into which we can never fall so long as we hope in God.

From many evils, at many times, in many ways—we are saved by hope!

Hope is in God—as its highest object and best end. Hope is through Christ—who is the way to the Father, the truth, and the life. Hope is on the ground of the Word, which warrants, excites, and regulates it. Hope is for all that God has promised, whether temporal or spiritual, in this world or the next. Hope should be encouraged—as it brings . . . glory to God, comfort to our souls, credit to our religion, and honor to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Holy Spirit, fill us with a lively hope, and teach us to expect . . .all that God has promised, all that Christ has procured, and all that You have revealed in Your most holy Word.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We owe everything to grace!

Glory be to God, for making us, who were once children of wrath—and consequently heirs of hell—children of grace—and consequently heirs of heaven!

We owe everything to grace—free grace, sovereign grace!

Our heavenly Father requires us . . .to believe Him without questioning, to obey Him without objecting, to follow Him without hesitating, and to submit to Him without murmuring or complaining.

As God's chosen, adopted, and redeemed children—filial love, filial confidence, and filial obedience, should characterize our lives.

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope —the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to

redeem us from all wickedness, and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do good works." Titus 2:11-14

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ I myself will help you!

"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. Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you," declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah 41:13-14

Wherever the Lord leads us—He will support us; nor shall the difficulties of the way, or the weakness we feel—be too much for us. His hand is stretched out to us, and it is for faith to lay hold of it and proceed, confident of divine assistance.

His omnipotent arm is the protection of His people in danger—and the strength of His people in weakness. He is "an ever-present help in times of trouble". He is a God at hand. Are you weak, or in difficulty? Plead His Word; it is plain, positive, and sure. He cannot lie. He will not deceive. His strength is made perfect, and is glorified in your weakness. Fear not, underneath you are His everlasting arms!

He CAN help—for He is omnipotent. He WILL help—for He has given you His Word. "Trust in the Lord at all times; yes, trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength!" That strength is promised to you, and will be employed for you in answer to prayer.

Why then are you so fearful? Why cast down? He says, "I myself will help you!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Paul's subject!

Paul was . . .an extraordinary man, called to an extraordinary office, and being sent to perform an extraordinary work—he chose an extraordinary subject.

He knew history, he was acquainted with philosophy, and he was well versed in tradition.

There were . . . few subjects that he could not handle, few themes that he could not discuss, few congregations that he could not interest.

But he made the conversion of sinners the object of his life—and he chose Christ crucified to be the subject of his ministry! No matter where he went—he took his subject with him. No matter whom he addressed—he directed their attention to this point.

He knew what man required—and what man preferred; but it made no matter to him. As he wrote to the Corinthians, so he always acted, "Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified—a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God!" 1 Corinthians 1:22-24

Paul's subject then, was Christ Crucified!

Paul CHOSE this subject—and he had good reasons for doing so!

First, it is a most comprehensive subject, for it is the center where . . .time and eternity, God and man, sin and holiness, life and death—meet!

It is the theater where God . . . displays His perfections, unfolds His purposes, maintains His rights, confounds His foes, and secures His glory!

It is the instrument by which . . . death is destroyed, sin is conquered, rebels are reconciled, saints are sanctified, and heaven is opened!

It is an object which . . .confounds reason, astonishes angels, attracts sinners, imparts holiness, and furnishes matter for endless praise!

Second, it is the most honored subject. It tunes the harps of heaven. It fills the sweetest songs on earth. It is that by which the Holy Spirit works . . .in the conversion of sinners, in the consolation of saints, in the sanctification of believers, and in the establishment of the church of God. By the preaching of Christ crucified . . .the oracles of the heathen were silenced,

the altars of the heathen were cast down, and the temples of the heathen were transformed into houses of prayer. By the preaching of the cross . . .society is elevated, nations are honored, and millions are snatched from Hell!

Third, it is a subject that is intensely hated! Devils hate it, and try to prevent its publication. Erroneous men hate it, and try to substitute something of their own for it. And just in proportion as men are influenced by the prince of darkness, or yield to the pride of their own fallen natures—will they hate the doctrine of the cross! But all Christians love it, all the ministers of Christ glory in it, all poor perishing sinners need it! The more we know of God's nature and government—the more we see of man's natural state and condition. And the more we feel of our own weakness and

depravity—the more shall we prize and value the doctrine of the cross!

Christ, and Him crucified shall be . . .the subject of my ministry, the theme of my songs, the joy of my heart, and the foundation of my everlasting hope!

O my soul, look to Jesus—as crucified for your sins!

Think of Jesus—as dying in your stead!

Speak of Jesus—as full of grace and love!

Christians! WHAT do we preach? We are ALL preachers—and we preach daily!

But do we preach Christ? Do we speak of Him with our tongues? Do we write of Him with our pens? Do we honor Him with our lives? Is Christ and His glory—the grand end and aim of our life?

WHY do we preach Christ? Is it out of love to Him? Is it that we may do good to souls? Is it that we may please God?

Christ crucified should be preached by every Christian. Christ crucified should be preached in all companies. Christ crucified should be preached every day.

Beloved, if we would save souls from death, if we would rescue sinners from eternal misery, if we would make believers happy, if we would cover Satan with shame, if we would deprive death of its sting, and if we would make the road to glory plain—

we must preach Christ crucified; we must exercise faith in Christ crucified; and we must daily meditate on Christ crucified!

May Christ and His cross be all my theme! May Christ and His cross be all my hope! May Christ and His cross be all my joy!

Cross of Jesus! Jesus crucified! To you would I look in life—and all its troubles!

To you would I look in death—and all its pangs! To you would I look in glory—when filled with all its joys!

"God forbid, that I should glory, except in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He never trusts 'the rod' out of His own hand!

"The Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons! For what son is not disciplined by his father?"  
Hebrews 12:6-7

Christian! God is treating you as His own dear children . . .in what He bestows—and in what He withholds; in what you enjoy—and in what you suffer!

Our God has made you His children by adopting you into His family, and new-creating you by His Holy Spirit. He always . . .looks upon you as His children,

loves you as His children, treats you as His children!

He will not GIVE you—what will harm you!

He will not PUT you—where you will be in danger!

He corrects you as His child, not in wrath—but in mercy.

He never trusts 'the rod' out of His own hand! Whatever is the MEANS of discipline—your Father is the AGENT! He works all things after the counsel of His own will.

You are at present 'under training'; you are being educated for eternity. The 'lessons' you have to learn—are for your benefit. Every loss, every cross, every disappointment, every pain—is necessary!

Do you really believe this?

Do you recognize the hand of God in everything that befalls you?

Can you say with Job, "The Lord GAVE"—health, wealth, children, friends; "and the Lord has TAKEN AWAY—blessed be the name of the Lord!"

Can you say with Eli, "It is the Lord—let Him do what He thinks best!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He will carry the lambs in His arms, holding them close to his heart!

"Fear not, little flock!" Luke 12:32

The Savior's flock is small. It exists in the harsh desert. Enemies surround it. His lambs, especially, are timid.

But He says, "Fear not, little flock!"

You are your Shepherd's care!

You are His property!

You are His delight!

He is always present with you!

He is omnipotent to defend you!

Every perfection of His divine nature is employed for you!

He has never lost one of His charge yet—and He never will!

It was said of Him by the prophet, "He will feed His flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in His arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young!" Isaiah 40:11

He gathers His sheep to His fold. He feeds them in good pasture. He restores them when they wander.

His CARE of them is incessant!

His LOVE to them passes knowledge!

The PROVISION He has made for them is suitable and abundant.

Beloved, let us know our Shepherd.

Let us listen to His voice.

Let us keep close to His side.

Let us feed and rest among His sheep.

Let us exercise confidence in His kindness and care.

Let us banish our fears, for why should we be alarmed?

Let us cast all our concerns and cares—upon the good Shepherd!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Thenestwas destroyed, and thepoor birdlay bleeding and exposed!

"I thought: Surely I shall die in my nest!" Job 29:18

Job's nest was very comfortable—and appeared to be very secure. It was on high—and not to be easily reached. He knew that death could reach it—but he thought that nothing else would disturb it. His conduct was consistent, his conscience was quiet; God was his Father, and providence was his friend.

"I thought: Surely I shall die in my nest!"

But, alas! Suddenly a 'storm' arose—thenestwas destroyed, and thepoor birdlay bleeding and exposed!

No earthly nest is out of danger! Temporal comforts are only lent to us. The higher the tree in which we build—the more exposed to the whirlwind and the storm!

Here on earth—we have no continuing city. In one moment—our fine nest may be devastated! Let us therefore endeavor to leave our matters fully with the Lord—and learn to be content with His appointments.

We must die. But when, and where, and how—should be left with the Lord.

Five minutes after death—it will matter very little whether we died on a bed of down, in a luxurious mansion, and surrounded by kind friends—OR as a poor diseased beggar, dying alone in squalor!

Present comforts may all leave us, and our soft nest may be scattered to the winds—but nothing can disturb our salvation and future glory!

"These all died in faith—and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth!" Hebrews 11:13

"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 heavenly city for them!" Hebrews 11:16

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ And when you feel weak—lean hard!

"Who is this coming up from the wilderness—leaning upon her Beloved?" Song of Solomon 8:5

Jesus is the object of a believer's love. To him—the world is a wilderness. Heaven is his Father's house—and his home. He is passing through the wilderness in company with Jesus.

He is represented as the bride leaning on her Beloved. This is indicative of weakness in herself—and confidence in her Beloved.

He is her strength—as well as her guide.

He is her support—as well as the object of her affection.

She leans on Him—as well as converses with Him.

He supports her—as well as comforts her.

Believer, keep close to your Savior's side! Never leave Him while in this waste howling wilderness. Lean on Him! And when you feel weak—lean hard!

His strong arm is put forth to support your weak frame. He will bear you up. He will lead you on.

The more you lean on Him—the more you will love Him! The more you love Him—the closer you will cleave to Him!

Yield to His guidance, trust in His love, lean on His power, walk by His side.

In His company—you are safe!

In communion with Him—you will be happy! Like the two disciples of old, your heart will be warmed, and you will be at the end of your journey before you are aware of it!

He is always at your side—so lean hard!

"Who is this coming up from the wilderness—leaning upon her Beloved?" Song of Solomon 8:5

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 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?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"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!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"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!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The 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 which first began, The scheme to rescue fallen man! Hail, matchless, free, eternal grace, Which 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!

But 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 soon appeared; He led me on with gentle pace, To Jesus as my hiding place!

Should sevenfold storms of thunder roll, And shake the earth from pole to pole; No thunder 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, Shall land me on fair Canaan's coast; Where I shall sing the song of grace, And see my glorious Hiding Place!

~ ~ ~ ~ My Father's home!

"Do not be troubled. There are many rooms in my Father's home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am!" John 14:1-3

How familiar with Heaven—how well acquainted with that "better land" must Jesus be! He calls it "My Father's home!" Sweet view of our eternal residence!

Dying—is but 'going home!' Going home to our Father! Going to our Father's home!

And shall we fear this? Fear it! Can we do anything other than eagerly desire it? Do we not wish to go home and see our Father? We shall not be strangers there—so many of our Christian friends have gone home before us. And even if some of our loved ones are not there—we could not possibly feel unhappy—where JESUS is!

"I am leaving the world," said Jesus, "and am going to the Father!" Such should be our language, in the prospect of death. O that, with child-like simplicity, we could receive into our minds the testimony of God's Word! O that we could view death and Heaven—just as the Scriptures represent them! Where would our doubts and fears be then? What would become of our reluctance to leave the world then? Then, if we spoke of departed Christian loved ones—we would use similar language to that of Judah in reference to his younger brother Benjamin, "He is this day with our Father!" We would no longer talk of losing friends or relatives. Oh no! we should speak of them as being in our Father's house, or of being with our Father!

My soul, I charge you, in future to look to Heaven, simply as your Father's home!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

If only we could but read the writing!

"No one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this." 1 Thessalonians 3:3

Man is born to trouble—as the sparks fly upward. Affliction does not come forth from the dust—neither does trouble spring out of the ground. Trouble is the natural consequence of sin—and all trouble springs from this bitter root. But God makes our trouble—our medicine, and uses it for our present and everlasting welfare.

Our troubles are not the inflictions of an angry God—but the chastisements of a loving Father! He foresaw what we would be, and what would be necessary for us—and consequently He has appointed . . . the number, the nature, and the length of our troubles.

Every Christian has his 'cup of trials'—it is mixed by his Father's wisdom, and put into his hand by his Father's providence. He should therefore take it, endeavor to acquiesce in it, and say with Jesus, "The cup that My heavenly Father gives me—shall I not drink it?" Every trouble . . . comes from God's appointment, is intended to do us good, and will be overruled for our real welfare!

Every trial is labeled "LOVE"—if only we could but read the writing! And in every affliction God calls to us, saying, "Come near unto Me, My son—that I may bless you!"

Let us, then, draw near unto God, and show our trouble to Him! Let us entreat him to sanctify it to us, that it may . . . wean us from earth, consecrate us to Jesus, and fit us for heaven!

All is love—which comes from the God of love!

"He is unchangeable; who can oppose Him? He does what He desires. He will certainly accomplish what He has decreed for me." Job 23:13-14

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Looking unto Jesus!

"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us—and let us run with patience the race that is set before us—looking unto Jesus!" Hebrews 12:1-2

The world is a race-course, life is a race, and every one of us are racers! A mark is set up, at which we are to aim; and a prize is promised to every overcomer.

But there are many difficulties in the way, and we have many weights hanging about us. Those difficulties must be mastered, and those weights must be laid aside.

We must run the race set before us with patience—keeping our eye on Jesus. Jesus is our Example—we must copy Him. Jesus is our Leader—we must follow Him. Jesus is our Sovereign—we must submit to Him. Jesus is our Savior—we must trust alone in Him. We must look . . . to His blood—for pardon, to His righteousness—for justification, to His Spirit—for strength, and to His fullness—for all our supplies.

We must make use of Jesus . . . every day, every hour, every minute!

Christian, look to Jesus! When discouraged—He will animate you! When timid—He will embolden you! When feeble—He will strengthen you! When weary—He will stimulate you! When dying—He will give you the victory! Let your last look—be a look at Jesus!

No one ever looked to Him in vain. As every one who looked to the brazen serpent was healed—so is every one saved, sanctified, and sustained—who looks to Jesus! Look to Him for all you need—and from all you fear.

Keep the eye fixed on Jesus; doing so, you will . . . conquer the world, overcome Satan, reach the mark, obtain the prize!

"Those who look to Him for help—will be radiant with joy." Psalms 34:5

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The physician and the patient

"Who heals all your diseases." Psalms 103:3

The Lord is the great Physician. He is especially the healer of the soul.

The patient is a believer.

The cause of all sorrow and suffering is sin.

The seat of the malady is in the heart.

The nature of the malady is most loathsome and afflictive. It affects . . . the mind, the affections, the conscience, the will, yes the whole man! "Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. You are sick from head to foot—covered with bruises, welts, and infected wounds!" Isaiah 1:5-6

We are all the subjects of this disease. We all suffer from it!

No one can heal us—but the Lord Jesus. He is the great Physician; to Him we may repair and be restored to health. To encourage you to do so, look at His qualifications: He is infinitely wise, tender and skillful. His experience is without a parallel.

The remedies He employs are . . . His precious blood, His holy Word, and His blessed Spirit.

The mode of application is by . . . afflictions, bereavements, convictions, and divine energy.

He never failed in any case—all of His patients are completely cured!

David's was a bad case—but he could say, "He heals all my diseases!"

Sinner—you are sick, mortally sick! Go to Jesus!

Backslider—you are dreadfully sick! Go to Jesus!

Believer, are you not desiring perfect health? Then go to Jesus and plead, "Lord, if You will—You can make me whole!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Sinners in Zion!

"The sinners in Zion are terrified! Terror has surprised the hypocrites! 'Who can live with this devouring fire?' they cry. 'Who can survive these everlasting burnings?'" Isaiah 33:14

The threatenings of God are solemn things.

They are called forth by sin.

They prove God's justice.

They manifest His unutterable abhorrence of all impurity.

Who are these "sinners in Zion"?

These are sinners—who profess to be saints; and such are sinners with an emphasis. They are HYPOCRITES! They pretend to be saints—yet know they are not. They wear a mask. They act a part—like actors in a play!

Of all characters, hypocrites are the worst! The Lord Jesus pronounces more woes against the hypocrites in one chapter—than against the devil all through the New Testament! It is to be feared—that we have many 'masked' men, and many 'masked' women in our churches! Like white-washed sepulchers, they appear beautiful to the eye—but within all is corrupt and vile!

But where are these sinners, these hypocrites? In Zion! Among God's people! Under the preaching of the pure Word. The greatest sinners under heaven—are to be found professing the holiest religion! They are in the church—but they are not of the church!

And when judgment begins, as it will, at the house of God—then these pretenders, these sinners, these hypocrites, will be detected and exposed!

God especially hates deception! He would have us to be . . . either one thing—OR the other; either hot—or cold; either saint—or sinner; either walking in holiness—or following the world.

But to be in the church—and yet of the world; to pretend to be a Christian—and yet live in sin; to turn His holy religion—into a 'mask' to answer a selfish purpose—is especially hateful in His sight!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

If I had my deserts!

There are some things that we should never forget: what we were before God called us by His grace; what we might have been—but for His sovereign mercy; what we certainly would be—if left wholly to ourselves.

We were . . . rebels against God's government, traitors to His cause, and doomed to an eternal Hell!

Everything short of Hell—is mercy!

If I had my deserts—I would be in Hell today!

I would be feeling its fierce flames, enduring its scorching torments, and horrified by its dreadful inhabitants!

I was enmity against God by nature. I would be enmity against God this day—if it were not for His glorious grace. I deserve Hell most justly—and would have been in hell—but for His kindness!

"Look unto the rock whence you are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence you are dug!" Look at the horrible pit from which He raised you, and the miry clay from which He extricated you.

Look—and admire!

Look—and love Him!

Look—and praise His thrice blessed and most glorious name!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

There is a 'buoyancy' in the cross

Cling to the cross—though your sins rise up before you . . . like mountains for their size; like the sands on the sea shore for their number; and glowing like scarlet and crimson, in color!

For no sins, however great, or however numerous—should tempt us to despond, or to let go of our hold on the cross—seeing the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from ALL sin.

There is a 'buoyancy' in the cross—which will never let anyone sink, who clings to it!

If our sins were as ponderous as the globe, or as numerous as all the particles of created matter—yet embracing the cross of Jesus—they are all forgiven, and forgiven forever!

They are all blotted out—like the dark clouds, which obscured the sun for a little while on the summer's morning!

They are all blotted out—like a stone cast from an angel's hand into the depths of ocean!

They are all forgiven and forgotten forever!

Cling to the cross!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Her life-lesson was comprised in four words A Christian minister was dying. He had a young sister whom he tenderly loved, and in whose welfare he felt the deepest interest. She came to pay the last visit, and receive from his lips the last words of advice. The words of a dying minister, realizing the value of the soul, and the solemnity of eternity, are important words. Taking her by the hand, and fixing his eyes upon her with a loving look, he said, "Keep close to Christ!"

What could he say of more import? Her life-lesson was comprised in four words, "Keep close to Christ!" She had come to Jesus, she loved Jesus, she found happiness in Jesus; but the dying brother knew . . . the deceitfulness of the human heart; the power of the world's fascinations, and the craft and subtlety of Satan, therefore he exhorts, "Keep close to Christ!"

May the Lord give us grace to get near to Him; and then give us more grace, to keep near to Him; for alas! how many of us, like Peter, follow Him afar off!

What must we do—to keep close to Jesus?

We must keep close to His Word. Here He . . . reveals His mind, displays His love, and exhibits His beauty!

It is a revelation of His deepest, sweetest, kindest thoughts!

It is an exhibition of His infinite, eternal, deathless love!

It is a mirror in which we may see His unparalleled beauty and excellency!

No one can keep close to Jesus—who does not daily, seriously, and prayerfully read His Word. That Word . . . received into the heart by faith, digested by meditation, and

reduced to practice in the life, will bring the soul and Christ together!

For the more we know of Christ—the more we shall love Him, the more we shall prize, pant for, and seek to enjoy His presence!

Blessed Spirit, help us so to read the Word—as always to find Christ in it; and by it endear Him more and more unto us, and bring us into closer fellowship with Him!

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I am in eternity—and you are on the brink!

Passing through a country graveyard the other day, an inscription on a head-stone struck my eye. The stone was by the side of the path, where everyone could see it, and it was placed there in memory of a young man who died at the age of seventeen. It was—

"Reader, one moment, Stop, and think: That I am in eternity! And you are on the brink!"

In eternity! A young man, only seventeen years of age, in eternity!

In a fixed, a changeless, an eternal state!

In Heaven—or in Hell!

Saved with an everlasting salvation—or damned forever!

If it should be the latter, what a fearful supposition! And yet many have gone to Hell—before they have been seventeen years of age!

"I am in eternity—and you are on the brink!" Yes, though you may be young, apparently healthy, full of life and vigor—you are on the brink of eternity! A slight accident, a few days illness—and you are in eternity! What a solemn thought!

What will eternity be to you?

Where will you be in eternity?

Are your sins pardoned? Are you reconciled to God by the death of His Son? Are you sanctified by the Holy Spirit—and thus made fit for Heaven?

If not, remember that in Hell, there is . . .no gospel, no means of grace, no way of escape from the wrath of God! Once there—and your doom is fixed forever!

Think, O think . . .Of the dreadful consequences of dying in your sins! Of going down to the grave in an unconverted state! Of dying under the curse of God!

"Behold, now is the accepted time! Behold, now is the day of salvation!"

(Reader! The above was written over 150 years ago. All who then read this little piece—are now in eternity! All who now read this little piece—are on the brink!)

"Reader, one moment, Stop, and think: That I am in eternity! And you are on the brink!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

What would Jesus do?

How shall I honor Jesus today?

First, I must DEDICATE myself anew unto Him.

Second, I must look to Him for all I NEED through the day.

Third, I must IMITATE Jesus in all I do. He is proposed to us in His Word as our great example; we should therefore strive to imitate Him. My object should be . . .

to think as Jesus thought, to speak as Jesus spoke, to feel as Jesus felt, and to act as Jesus acted.

Often, very often, should we pause to ask, "Is this like Jesus? Would He indulge such a temper? Would He employ such language? Would He encourage such thoughts?

Would He do—as I am doing?"

Or, if at a loss what to do at any time, we should ask, "What would Jesus do?"

How would Jesus act in this case? What would Jesus do under these circumstances?

What would Jesus say? What temper would Jesus display?"

This would often send us to His Word. We should become familiar with His life. We should be well acquainted with His character. And what a preservative it would be!

What humility it would produce!

Jesus wishes us to be like Himself. He has left us an example—that we should follow in His steps. He says, "Do as I have done!"

If, therefore, I would honor Jesus—I must make it my study, and I must daily seek grace—that I may imitate Him in all that I do, at all times and in all places. O to be like Jesus . . .in my family, in my business, in the church, and when alone with God!

"Whoever claims to live in Him—must walk as Jesus did." 1 John 2:6

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

It would soon oppose us with a deadly hatred!

"All who will live godly in Christ Jesus—shall suffer persecution!" 2 Timothy 3:12

The enmity of the world against God is as great as ever. It may be concealed—but it is not destroyed.

The world will oppose the godly man. If we were more godlike—it would . . . hate us more, oppose us more, and persecute us more!

We have little persecution from the world, because there is so little in us to awaken persecution. Our light is so dim. Our salt has lost so much of its savor. Our approximation to the world is so great. If instead of being conformed to the world—we were transformed by the renewing of our minds; if instead of getting as near to it as we can—we were to stand afar off from its pleasures, amusements, fashions, and spirit; if our lives were a daily testimony against it, and against its works as evil—it would soon oppose us with a deadly hatred!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ It was not human misery—but divine love!

"You are to name Him 'Jesus'—because He will save His people from their sins!" Matthew 1:21

This verse teaches that Jesus came into the world having . . . a definite people in His mind, a definite work in His hand, and a definite principle in His heart.

He had a definite PEOPLE in His mind! They are simply called "His people." He had . . . a special interest in them, a special right to them, and a special concern for them.

They were given to Him as a pledge of His Father's love—to be His associates, joy, and delight; His crown and glory. They were . . . sunk in sin and wretchedness, under the condemnation of the law, the captives of the prince of darkness!

They were His sheep—but lost sheep!

They were His jewels—but jewels in a heap of rubbish!

They were His bride—but in a state of adultery!

He had . . . the eye of His omniscience watching them, the love of His heart pursuing them, and the arm of His omnipotence protecting them.

His eye was upon them . . . when in heaven in His Father's bosom, and when enclosed in Mary's womb! His eye ever was—and ever will be on them—from the beginning to the end of time—to save and to bring them safely to glory!

He had a definite WORK in His hand! It was a work for His Father—and a work His people. He had . . . the law to fulfill, justice to satisfy, sin to remove, heaven to open, Satan to conquer, death to destroy!

This work He proceeded to perform—until in triumph He exclaimed, "It is finished!"

He had a definite PRINCIPLE in His heart. And what was that powerful principle, which brought Him . . . from heaven—to earth, from glory—into contempt,

from unutterable bliss—into inconceivable sorrow?

It was LOVE! Love, the ruling attribute of His nature, the prominent feature of His character, the rule of His conduct towards His people! It was love which . . . eternally existed in His bosom, fanned His heart, and directed His ways!

It was . . . eternal love, immutable love, omnipotent love, unconquerable love, unfathomable love!

It was this sacred principle which led Jesus into our world—and conducted Him through all the stages of His redemptive work!

His name then, is 'Jesus'—because He loves and saves all of His people!

Never think that it was merely human misery, or the doleful cries of suffering mortals—which brought Jesus to our world; for if these would move Him, assuredly He would empty Hell itself!

It was not human misery—but divine love!

It was not man's cries—but His own glory, which brought Jehovah Jesus into suffering circumstances and a miserable condition!

O the love! the depth of the love of Jesus!

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What a wonderful person is my glorious Lord Jesus! All the divine attributes are found in Him. As there are no limits to His fullness—there can be no limit to my supplies, or the least prospect of need.

Jesus is my divine Savior! His bounty will supply me, His omnipotence will deliver me, His omnipresence will protect me, His omniscience will guard me, His love will animate me, His mercy will heal me, His grace will support me, His compassion will comfort me, His pity will relieve me, His goodness will provide for me, His tenderness will soothe me, His kindness will encourage me, His patience will bear with me, His justice will avenge me, His faithfulness will embolden me, His holiness will beautify me, His anger will awe me, His life will quicken me, His light will illumine me, His Word will regulate me, His joy will delight me, His blessedness will elevate me, His long-suffering will lead me to repentance, His immutability will secure the fulfillment of all the promises to me, His truth will be my shield and buckler, His sovereignty will raise my admiration, His condescension will inspire me with gratitude and love, and His all-sufficiency will satisfy me both in time and eternity!

In Jesus, God has reconciled me to Himself—imputing my trespasses to Him—and His obedience to me.

God by Jesus, takes away . . . all my sins, His own wrath, and my deserved condemnation!

All good things . . . are treasured up in Christ, were procured for me by Christ, flow to me through Christ, and are conferred on me for the sake of Christ!

How exactly suited is the Lord Jesus to my case! Inflexible justice demands my blood—but He becomes my substitute, and spills His own!

In Jesus, I see my sin—and God's justice meet! He removes the one—and satisfies the other!

What is Jesus called in God's holy Word? A Savior—in reference to my lost condition. A Reconciler—in reference to the enmity that existed between myself and God. A Redeemer—in reference to my slavery to sin. A Mediator—in respect to the disagreement between myself and the Most High God. A Refiner—with respect to my filthiness. An Advocate—with regard to my perplexed cause. A Prophet—in respect to my ignorance. A Priest—with a view to my guiltiness. A King—in regard to my weakness and foes. A Bridegroom—regarding my lowly estate and relationship. A Physician—with regard to my many soul maladies. In a word, Jesus is "All In All."

O to know more of Jesus, in . . .the glory of His person, the riches of His grace, the perfection of His work, the tenderness of His heart, the strength of His love and the effectual working of His power!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Infected with a most dreadful, fearful, soul-killing disease!

"From the sole of your foot to the top of your head, no spot is uninjured—but only wounds and bruises and putrefying sores! They have not been cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil."  
Isaiah 1:6

The whole race of mankind, in consequence of the fall, is infected with a most dreadful, fearful, soul-killing disease!

You are infected with it yourself!

It is in your nature, and its effects are manifested in your conduct! Its seat is in the heart—which has become deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked!

This malignant disease has spread over every faculty of the soul! The understanding is darkened—so that you cannot see your dreadful state! The conscience is defiled—and no longer warns of evil! The will is powerfully biased to evil—and chooses what God abhors! The affections are earth-bound—and set on forbidden things! The imagination has become sensual—and only employed in evil! The reason is debased—and calls darkness, light; and light, darkness! The memory is depraved—and has become a storehouse of iniquity! The whole soul is paralyzed, polluted, and diseased! Satan has got possession—and endeavors to lead you to hell in a false peace!

You are naturally . . .unfit for heaven, at enmity with God, exposed to His wrath, cursed by His law, condemned by His word, traveling to perdition, and ripening for damnation!

You cannot . . . deliver yourself from sin's dominion, cleanse yourself from inherent defilement, or escape the righteous judgment of God, by anything that you can do.

You are . . .without strength, blind to your everlasting welfare, and a hater of God!

You . . .were born a sinner, have lived transgressing, and dying in such a state, will be banished into irremediable woe!

This is your state, reader—whoever you may be! This is your situation—however you may have lived! This is your condition—whatever you may think! Have you ever seen yourself in this situation? Have you ever felt this to be your case? Have you ever trembled on account of it—and sought a remedy? If not, this is the very worst symptom of your disease! You are . . .insensible of your wretched condition, under a spiritual derangement, and madness is in your heart!

But if you have discovered your malady, if you have felt sin to be really a dreadful disease, if you are seeking for a remedy; then I rejoice in being able to direct you to one that is provided, which may be obtained freely, and will certainly heal you!

God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sin—has devised a way in which He can manifest Himself as a just God and a Savior! He has provided a suitable and glorious remedy for lost, ruined, and undone sinners! This remedy will . . .heal the wounded, cleanse the filthy, sanctify the unholy, justify the condemned, liberate the captive, and save the lost!

It gives . . .peace to the distressed, direction to the perplexed, riches to the poor, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, strength to the weak, wisdom to the foolish, and life to the dead!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Complaining Christian

"Do you have a father?"Genesis 44:19

Standing at my window one day, while the cholera was raging in London, I saw two corpses carried by, followed by one little child, walking alone next the coffins, with a few neighbors behind. That child was now an orphan. Both parents had been carried off by the pestilence. The sight of that child produced deep emotions, and awakened painful sympathy in my heart.

I was led to think of the sorrows and privations of orphanhood, and then of the happiness of the Lord's people to whom Jesus has said, "I will not leave you as orphans." A believer can never be an orphan! He has an ever-living, ever-loving, ever-present Father! But many of the Lord's people do not realize this, therefore they do not live and act under its influence.

There are believers who are always complaining of their circumstances: They are worked too hard. They are tried more than others. They have such a vexing family.

They have such a demanding job. They have such financial losses. They have no end of things to vex, harass, and distress them!

Complaining Christian, "Do you have a father?"

If so, had your Father anything to do with fixing your lot?

Did He place you where you are?

Is He wise?

Is He good?

Has He ever told you, that all things shall work together for your good?

Does He know what is best for you?

Has He left things to 'chance'—or has He arranged all in His own infinite mind, and does He work all by His unerring providence? If He does—then are you justified in complaining?

Have you any real cause to complain?

Will it better your circumstances?

Will it please your Father?

Will it any way help you?

If not, leave off complaining, and "having food and clothing, let us be content with these!"

Seek grace from God, that you may . . .do all that is required, bear all that is sent, and endure all that is to be suffered—to His glory!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

It will fire the soul with unutterable love, and fill it with inexpressible joy!

"Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is!" 1 John 3:2

Every Christian expects to have a sight of Jesus—to see Him as He really is. He will gaze with rapture and delight on His glorified body, tracing the thorn-prints on His brow, and the nail-prints on His hands!

He will realize with ecstatic delight that Jesus is his own Savior, his glorious Redeemer, his ever-living and ever-loving Lord.

The sight of Christ will eclipse the glory of everything visible, and will leave impressions on the soul which will never be erased. It will exceed all that ever was seen, conceived, or anticipated. It will fire the soul with unutterable love, and fill it with inexpressible joy!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The biggest loser!

There are usually two sides: the one dangerous—the other safe; the one is uncertain—and the other is sure.

It is always the wisest—to be found on the safe side!

Look at the unbeliever: He denies the Bible to be God's book. He walks by his own reason. He gratifies his senses and his lusts. He lives in sin. He must soon die. He has no Savior. He has no true hope. If the Bible is false—then he is safe; BUT if the Bible is true—then he is damned forever!

He is certainly not on the safe side!

There are many things in the Bible which he does not like. He is prejudiced against it. It never prophesies good concerning him—but always evil. It requires him to change his present sinful course—but he loves it. He loves sin—and the Bible condemns it. He gratifies the lusts of the flesh—and the Bible bids him to mortify them. In a word, there is as much opposition between the Bible and him—as between light and darkness, holiness and sin, truth and error. Therefore he hates it!

At the best, with him all is uncertain, unsatisfactory, and vexatious.

He is certainly not on the safe side!

Now look at the true Christian: He believes the Bible to be from God. He has examined it. He has evidence of its inspiration in his heart. He fully believes it. What the Bible says of himself as a sinner—he knows to be true. What it says of Jesus as a Savior—he has proved to be a fact. As guilty—he has applied to God for pardon, and obtained it. As impure—he has sought the cleansing operations of the Holy Spirit, and has experienced them. His guilt is gone—therefore he has no slavish fears. His soul is justified—therefore he has peace with God. He approves of the inspired precepts—and regulates his life by them. He carries his cares to God—and is sustained under them. He realizes that God is his Friend, his Father, and his everlasting Portion. He is peaceful. He is often happy. To him death has no sting—and eternity has no terror. He knows Jesus as his Savior—and trusts in Him. He knows God as his Father—and walks with Him. He knows the Holy Spirit as his comforting Teacher—and listens to Him.

He is, perhaps, more tried than the unbeliever—but he has supports, consolations, and pleasures—of which the unbeliever knows nothing. He lives to bless others, to honor God, to prepare for a glorious immortality.

He would not change his worst day—for the unbeliever's best day!

He is on the safe side!

If the unbeliever should be right—then the Christian is no loser.

But if the Christian is right—and he is—then the unbeliever is the biggest loser—an infinite loser!

Reader, on which side are you? There is but one safe side.

There is no safety for a sinner now—but at the Cross!

There will be no safety at death and judgment—but in Christ!

He who is on the safe side now—will be on the safe side then!

There will be no changing sides then!

"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit upon His glorious throne! All the nations will be gathered in His presence, and He will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep at His right hand—and the goats at His left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father—inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world!' (the safe side) Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed

ones—into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons!' (the perilous side) And they will go away into eternal punishment—but the righteous will go into eternal life!" Matthew 25:31-46

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Likesugarin ourtea!

"Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things!" Matthew 6:32

God will display His wisdom—in promoting the eternal welfare of all His children. God's ways are not our ways. They are always profoundly wise; and His wisdom will in the end stand conspicuous and glorious in His paternal dealings with all of His children.

"For what son is not chastened by his father?" Hebrews 12:7 Beloved, if God is our Father—He will chastise us! We need it! We deserve it! We shall have it!

But He will mix mercy with every affliction. Likesugarin ourtea—it sometimes lies at the bottom, and needs stirring up!

But there is always mercy there! A cup of unmixed wrath was put into the hands of Jesus—that such a cup might never be put into our hands!

There is sweetness, in the bitterest cup which our Father gives us!

Let us therefore look for the sugar—as we sip the bitter potion!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

If we could hear the awful splash!

"Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people!" Jeremiah 9:1

Must it not rather be said of many of us—"They perish forever without anyone regarding it?"

Souls are daily, hourly perishing—but who regards it?

Hell is filling—but who regards it?

Satan is reaping a tremendous harvest—but who regards it?

Every hour, every minute, every second, souls are sinking into hell—but who regards it?

Friends, do you ever weep over perishing sinners? Is it not astonishing, that we can go to the house of God and pass multitudes of ungodly, careless creatures that throng our streets—and never shed a tear! Is it not more astonishing still, that we can preach on the torments of the lost, and the joys of the saved—and see the great mass of the people around us rejecting it, yes, refusing to listen to it—and not weep bitter, bitter tears!

We do not half believe what we preach—or what we hear! We do not half believe the infallible statements of Holy Scripture in reference to the dreadful realities of eternal hell—or else we would feel deeply, and weep frequently too.

The holy Apostle Paul, speaking of his labors at Ephesus, says, "Remember, that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one day and night with tears!" (Acts 20:31). Our adorable Lord and Savior, when He came near to Jerusalem just before His death, "He beheld the city—and wept over it!" Oh, to feel as Paul felt! As Jesus felt! If we realized the danger of sinners, and the terrors of hell as they did—we would weep as they wept!

We should feel for sinners—as if we saw them suspended over the burning lake of hell, and one after another falling in! We should feel for sinners—as if we could hear the awful splash, as the lost soul takes its terrific plunge into the liquid flaming brimstone!

"Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people!"

~ ~ ~ ~ The situation in which she died is instructive:

She had hospitably entertained the angels, she had believed their message, she had obeyed their command, she had left Sodom behind her, she had forsaken the ungodly.

Yet her heart was left in the city!

She was cut off by a visible display of God's judgment!

"But Lot's wife looked back—and she became a pillar of salt!" Genesis 19:26

The situation in which she died is instructive:

It was not in Sodom—but on the plain.

She escaped one judgment—but was overtaken by another!

She was deprived of eternal life—for too highly prizing earth's comforts!

She was left as sad example of God's jealousy, and His displeasure against sin.

God will be honored either by our obedience—or by our punishment!

It is dangerous to trifle with the smallest of God's commands!

We may overcome one temptation—and yet fall by another!

Here is a warning to the covetous—whose hearts are set on earthly things!

Here is a warning to the self-willed—who trifle with God's commands!

Here is a warning to the undecided—who stand between Sodom and Zoar.

Let us examine—are our hearts detached from the world?

Be not high-minded—but fear!

"Remember Lot's wife!" Luke 17:32

~ ~ ~ ~ My Father's eye!

"Your Father—who sees in secret." Matthew 6:6

Can anyone hide himself from the Lord in secret places?

Can I, under any circumstances, escape His notice?

Impossible!

The eye of God has been fixed upon me every second of this day; it is now at this moment fixed fully upon me. But it is my Father's eye! My Father sees in secret!

He sees my needs—and my woes.

He sees every secret working of my foes—and will save me from them. He sees every secret influence which is likely to injure me—and will prevent it.

He sees . . . the secret workings of my heart, my hidden thoughts, my unuttered desires, my soul conflicts, my private temptations.

But He sees also my secret sins! Every evil thought, every improper action, every unfitting word—passes under His eye!

Solemn consideration this!

May it make me cautious. May it preserve me. . . from yielding to temptation, from nourishing sinful thoughts, and from acting inconsistent with my profession.

My heavenly Father sees me!

He sees me at this moment!

He sees me every moment!

He sees my most secret motives, thoughts, and purposes!

He who thus sees me—hates every sin with an infinite hatred!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He was infinitely happy and glorious without us!

"Christ, who loved us!" Romans 8:37

No condition can possibly be more dreary—than to feel that no one loves or cares for us!

There is something peculiarly sweet and pleasant—in being the object of another's love. Even the love of a poor child is sweet. But to be loved by one who is most wealthy, most exalted in station, and most honorable in character—must be peculiarly delightful!

How, then, should we rejoice; how happy should we be—who are loved by the Lord Jesus! Especially when we consider: on the one hand: how despicable, how poor,

how worthless, and how unlovely WE are! And, on the other hand: how glorious,

how wealthy, how worthy, how lovely JESUS is!

To be loved by Jesus—is to be preferred before the possession of a world!

Think of . . .the glory of His person, the vastness of His possessions, the number of His angelic attendants, the unlimited sovereignty which He exercises, and the excellent character He bears!

Also bear in mind—that He knew what loving us would cost Him—how He would be treated by us and by others—for our sakes!

Yet He fixed His love upon US!

He loved US—just because He would!

He passed by others more dignified in nature, more exalted in station—but He chose US!

He did not, could not, NEED us—for He was infinitely happy and glorious without us!

Yet He loved us!

He still loves us!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The price of our freedom

"Christ has made us free!" Galatians 5:1

We were once the slaves of sin, Satan, and the world; but Jesus has made us free!

We are now delivered from the law—and are under grace.

We are dead to sin—and are justified from it.

We are delivered from Satan—and are at war with him.

We overcome the world—and are hastening out of it.

We are at liberty to serve God, and walk with Him in friendship and holy love.

The price of our freedom—was the life and death of Jesus!

The grand moving cause—was the infinite and everlasting love of God our Father.

The efficient cause of our freedom—was the power and operation of the Holy Spirit.

The instrument by which we are brought into our freedom—is the holy gospel.

The grace which puts us into possession of our freedom—is faith.

The end of our freedom—is that we may serve our God in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life, and then be glorified with Him forever!

We are freed from sin—that we may be holy and happy.

Let us stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We shall wither, fade, and die!

"Like autumn leaves—we wither and fall!" Isaiah 64:6

What a contrast between an unchangeable God—and a sinner withering like a leaf! Yet, this is a true picture of us—and of all temporal things.

We began to look green and bright not long ago—and in a little time we shall wither, fade, and die!

"How short is life—and how full of trouble! Like a flower—we blossom for a moment—and then wither!" Job 14:1-2. Humbling consideration! But it may be rendered very useful. Let us endeavor to profit by it.

Shall we soon wither and die? Then let us not be overly concerned by anything that occurs here below. Let us set our affections on things above, and lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Let us live by faith on Jesus, walk with God, and aim principally to please Him in all that we do. Let us also watch against a worldly spirit, and pass the time of our sojourning here on earth, in fear.

We shall soon find that . . . health gives place to sickness; strength gives place to weakness; youth gives place to old age!

The dying bed, the coffin, and the grave—are just before us!

Let us therefore make our calling and our election sure. Let us cultivate close and filial fellowship with God. Let us dig deep and lay our foundation upon the Rock.

Brethren, the time is short! Eternity with all its glories is just before us!

"Like autumn leaves—we wither and fall!" Isaiah 64:6

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Look unto Me!" Isaiah 45:22

A new morning opens upon us—and we are still exposed . . . to sorrow, to Satan, and to disappointment! Sin lives in us—and a thousand things are ready to distress us!

But our God says, "Look unto Me!"

Look unto Me . . . as the source of happiness, as the giver of grace, as your Friend!

Look unto Me . . . in every trial, for all you need, and in every circumstance.

Look unto Me TODAY, I have blessings to bestow! I am waiting to be gracious to you!

Believe that I am deeply interested in your present and eternal welfare!

Believe that I will perform—all I have promised!

Believe that I am with you—on purpose to bless you! I cannot be unconcerned about anything that affects you! I pledge Myself to make all things work together for your eternal good.

You have looked to SELF, and to others, in times past—and you have only met with trouble and disappointment!

Now look unto Me ALONE!

Look unto Me FOR ALL!

"Look unto Me!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He restores the fainting, the dying and the dead!

"I will restore health unto you!" Jeremiah 30:17

Jesus is a skillful Physician.

He heals all the falls, bruises, and dislocations of His people.

He brings health to the heart!

Believer, is your heart . . . hard, wandering, divided, or wounded?

Jesus can heal it!

To you He says, "Come and be healed!"

He restores the fainting, the dying and the dead! He is the perfect master of every disease.

His terms are, "I will heal you freely—without money—without price!"

But He will have an absolute surrender to Him! You must refuse all other remedies!

You must take all that He prescribes—bitter or sweet!

Jesus is Jehovah Rophi, "The God who heals!"

Therefore look for health to no other.

Consult Him daily.

Lay open your whole case to Him!

Never despond until . . . His loving nature changes, His skill fails, or His promises are withdrawn from His Word.

Be grateful for healing, and show your gratitude by endeavoring to send others to Him. Recommend this gracious Physician!

Beloved, come to Jesus and be healed!

Savior, I wait Your healing hand! Diseases fly at Your command; Now let Your sovereign touch impart, Life, health, and vigor to my heart!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He seems to grow more like Satan!

"Their righteousness is from Me!" Isaiah 54:17

The longer the Christian lives—the more he learns. And the more the Spirit teaches him—the more he loathes himself and renounces his own righteousness as filthy rags.

He hoped sensibly . . .to grow in holiness, to feel his corruptions subdued, and to enjoy the presence of his God without interruption.

But instead of this: he seems to grow more like Satan, his corruption appears to get stronger and stronger, and the depravity of his nature appears more and more dreadful!

He thinks himself to be a monster of iniquity, and wonders how God can possibly love him, or show any favor unto him.

Yet, this heart-felt experience . . .endears God's free grace, renders Christ unspeakably precious, and the gift of righteousness invaluable!

How can such a man be just before God? Where is his righteousness to come from? Jehovah answers, "His righteousness is from Me!" Jesus wrought it; the Father imputes it to us; the gospel reveals it; and faith receives it, puts it on, and pleads it before God.

Precious Jesus! in You alone, I have righteousness and strength!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Grace personified!

"The glory of His grace." Ephesians 1:6

The glory of grace is its freeness! Grace . . . fixes upon objects that are most unworthy; bestows upon them the richest blessings; raises them to the highest honor;

promises them the greatest happiness; and all for its own glory. Nothing can be freer than grace!

The glory of grace is its power! Grace . . . conquers the stubbornest sinners; subdues the hardest hearts; tames the wildest wills; enlightens the darkest understandings;

breaks off the strongest fetters; and invariably conquers its objects. Grace is omnipotent!

The glory of grace is its benevolence! Grace . . . has delivered, supplied, conducted, supported, and glorified thousands; brings the inexhaustible fullness of God—to supply the creature's needs; opens the treasury of heaven—to enrich poor, miserable, and wretched creatures on earth. gives away all it has—reserving nothing for itself!

Jesus is grace personified! In Him grace is displayed in all its beauty, excellency, and loveliness. "Full of grace." John 1:14

O Jesus! glorify Your free powerful, and benevolent grace in me!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Paul's estimate of himself

"I am nothing!" 2 Corinthians 12:11

This was Paul's estimate of himself: "less than the least of all saints," and "the chief of sinners."

The more we know of ourselves and of Jesus—the more shall we be humbled in the dust before Him; and the lower we lie before Him, and the happier and holier we shall be.

Sinful MAN will, MUST be something—this is both his pride and his misery. The Christian is willing to be nothing—that Christ may be all in all.

If we daily felt that we are nothing—how many mortifications we would be spared; what admiring views of the grace of God would fill and sanctify our souls!

Apart from Christ—we are less than nothing; but in Christ—we are something!

We are empty—but He fills us!

We are naked—but He clothes us!

We are helpless—but He strengthens us!

We are lost—but He finds us!

We are ruined—but He saves us!

We are poor—but He supplies us!

All that we are—is by Christ!

All that we have—is from Christ!

All that all we shall be—is through Christ!

Christian, you are nothing! Therefore beware of thinking too highly of yourself; or imagining that you deserve more than you receive—either from God or men.

Humble souls are soon satisfied.

O could I lose myself in Thee, Your depth of mercy prove, O vast unfathomable sea

Of unexhausted love! I loathe myself when God I see, Content if Christ exalted be!

~ ~ ~ ~ To nourish a serpent in the bosom!

"Walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

Pride is one of our greatest evils!

To indulge pride—is to nourish a serpent in the bosom!

The grace of God always humbles us; and it is only as we are sincerely humble—that we can be truly happy.

God condescends to walk with the humble man—but He keeps the proud man at a distance.

Consider . . . what a vile sinner you were by nature, what evil now lurks in your heart, what you would have been, but for the grace of God—and be humble.

All you have which is truly good—is the gift of free grace!

All you do that is good—is the effect of God’s working in you!

What then, do you have to be proud of?

What reason then, do you have to boast?

Oh, lie low in the dust of self-abasement!

Nourish humbling thoughts of yourself!

Admire the mercy, condescension, and infinite compassion of God—in even noticing so vile, so unworthy a worm as yourself!

Study the character and conduct of the humble Jesus—and endeavor to walk just as He walked. "Learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart." Matthew 11:29

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

We know not what this day may bring forth

"I will surely do you GOOD!" Genesis 32:12

Though this promise was given to Jacob, it was not confined to him—but is intended for all his spiritual seed. It is thus that God speaks to US this morning. How gracious!

We know not what this day may bring forth—but we do know that our God, who superintends every event, will do us good.

We may mistake as to what will be for our good—but He is infinite in wisdom and goodness, and therefore cannot mistake. We may look at afflictions, losses, and crosses, and cry out, "All these things are against me!" But read the history of David. What a train of troubles attended him! Hear his acknowledgment: "It is GOOD for me that I have been afflicted!"

Your God will do you good—therefore He will try you, sift you, humble you, and prove you. He will give you needed bitter medicine—as well as food. He will consider nothing too expensive, or too painful—if necessary for your soul’s welfare.

Look at your trials, and say, "This also shall turn to my good!"

Look on the past, and acknowledge, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life."

Look to the future, and rejoice, "The Lord will surely give me that which is GOOD."

Look in every direction, and say, "Surely the Lord will do me good—I will trust, and not be afraid."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The daughter of faith

"You, too, must be patient. And take courage, for the coming of the Lord draws near." James 5:8

Our God is a God of patience. The Lord Jesus is the great Example of patience.

The Holy Spirit is the Agent producing patience. Trials, troubles, and disappointments, are the means which exercise and strengthen patience.

The patience that God requires, is a disposition to bear all that He has appointed for us, without complaining; yes, with resignation and hope; to wait God's time for the mercies we need—or for answers to the prayers we put up.

Patience is the daughter of faith. It is only as we believe that God has appointed, overrules, or commands all things for our good and His glory—that we can be patient.

Patience . . . produces reliance on God, shuts the mouth from complaining, keeps back the heart from seeking revenge, and is a principal point in self-control.

Are you impatient?

Then confess it, and mourn over it before God! Impatience will make you miserable, and lead you to dishonor God. Watch against it!

Look at the patience of the Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs—of Jesus! "You, too, must be patient. And take courage, for the coming of the Lord draws near."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Find rest, O my soul, in God alone!

"I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

There is no rest for the Christian in this world. There will be always something to disturb, perplex or distress him; it is an enemy's land.

But Jesus says, "I will give you rest." He does so by enabling us to . . . rely on His Word, recognize His hand, submit to His will, and trust in His perfect work.

He assures us . . . that our sins are forgiven; that we are safe in His keeping; that His presence shall always be with us; and that all things shall work together for our eternal good.

We can rest on His faithfulness—for He has been tried, and found faithful.

We can rest on His love—for He loves us to the uttermost.

We can rest on His power—for it is ever engaged on our behalf.

We can rest on His covenant—for it is ordered in all things and sure.

We can rest on His blood—for it speaks peace, pardon, and acceptance with God.

We can rest at His feet—for there we are safe, and can never be injured.

We cannot rest . . . on our graces, on our comforts, on our friends, or on our possessions.

We may rest on Jesus alone.

"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will not be shaken!" Psalms 62:5-6

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Carry all your concerns to Him—in the arms of faith!

"Casting all your care upon Him—because He cares for you!" 1 Peter 5:7

The Lord knows all His people—all their needs, and all their trials.

He thinks upon them—to bless, deliver and supply them.

He keeps His eye upon them—in all places, at all times, and under all circumstances.

He has them in His hand—and will not loosen His hold.

He looks upon them always as His own 'treasured possession' . . .the objects of His eternal love, the purchase of His Son's blood, the temples of His Holy Spirit.

They are precious in His sight!

He knows they are weak and fearful—and that they have many enemies. He teaches them to cast themselves and all their cares into His hands! And He has given them His promise—that He will care for them.

It is a Father's care which He exercises. It is a wise, holy, tender, and constant care. Therefore all will be well with you—only trust Him.

Believe that He cares for you this day. Carry all your concerns to Him—in the arms of faith! Leave all with Him, persuaded that He will manage all by His infinite wisdom, and bring all to a good outcome by His omnipotent power.

Cast all your cares upon Him—as fast as they come in.

Do not worry about anything.

"Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will support you! He will never allow the righteous to be shaken!" Psalms 55:22

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He cannot love you more!

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

The Lord cares for His children!

He knows our needs—and has promised to supply them. He knows our foes—and will deliver us from them. He knows our fears—and will make us ashamed of them.

All creatures and things are in His hand, and at His disposal; all circumstances are under His absolute control. He . . . directs the angel, feeds the sparrow, curbs the devil, and manages the tempest!

He is your Father—and His love to you is infinite. You are His delight—His dear child. Will He neglect you? Impossible! Cast then your cares upon Him. Tell out all your desires, fears, and troubles to Him; let Him know everything; keep nothing back. And then in the confidence of faith, expect Him to fulfill His Word, and act a Parent's part.

Bless Him for all He has given, for all He has promised. Plead with Him for all you may need. But never for one moment, or under any circumstances, distrust Him! He cannot love you more! He is your ever present help. He will rejoice over you to do you good, with His whole heart, and with His whole soul.

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Go to Him just as you are—and receive from Him all you need!

"Come unto Me." Matthew 11:28

Jesus calls you to His throne of grace. He is there waiting to hear, relieve and bless you. You are to go to Him just as you are—and receive from Him all you need.

He will give you: wisdom—to direct your steps; peace—to keep your hearts; strength—to do His will; righteousness—to justify your souls; and rest—unspeakably sweet.

He is glorified in bestowing these blessings upon you. He calls you this morning, this moment—to receive all you need—without money and without price. What a precious Savior is Jesus! What a kind and tender Friend!

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16

"Come!" He says, "Come to Me! Do not go to SELF, to the world, to the empty cisterns which creatures idolize; but come unto Me, and I will do immeasurably more than all you can ask or imagine! Your sins—I will pardon; your graces—I will revive; your comforts—I will restore; your holiness—I will increase; your efforts to glorify Me—I will crown with success; I will bless you—and you shall be a blessing!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ You are walking in the midst of snares and traps!

"Be very careful, then, how you walk!" Ephesians 5:15 To honor Jesus in your thoughts, words, and every action—should be your constant aim.

You are in an enemy's land; surrounded by temptations; and have a heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked!

This present world is not your home! Satan's family are not to be your intimate friends. Riches, honors, or pleasure—are not to be your objects of pursuit. You are walking in the midst of snares and traps! Be watchful, prayerful, depending upon Jesus, and cultivating fellowship with Him.

O keep your eye on Jesus, as your example! Walk by His Word—as your rule. Do not be venturesome or presumptuous, but avoid the very appearance of evil. Never leave the Lord's ways—to join the world's vanities or to please a carnal lust. Keep close to Jesus—and follow on to know the Lord.

Walk as a beloved child, who going home to his loving Father's house! "Be very careful, then, how you walk!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ This is my Friend!

"You are My friends!" John 15:14

What infinite condescension in Jesus, to call us sinful worms—His friends! But He not only calls us so—but treats us as such! And expects us as His friends—to do whatever He commands us.

Is Jesus your friend? Then visit Him often—let Him hear your voice in prayer and praise. Then trust Him confidently—let Him see evidence of your faith in your dependence. Then walk with Him in love—let Him enjoy much of your company.

Then expect Him to be your Friend . . .in sickness and health, in poverty and plenty,  
in life and in death!

If Jesus is our Friend—we can never be destitute. If our father and mother forsake us—He will take us up and take us in.

We can never be miserable—He will receive us and be a wise and loving Father unto us.

We can never be neglected, for He will never fail us nor forsake us—but will do for us all that He has promised in His Word. He will . . .defend us from foes, visit us in sickness, and cheer and support us in death!

Precious Lord Jesus, You are my Friend . . .in life, in death, at the judgment, and  
before Your Father's face forever!

"Yes, He is altogether lovely! This is my Beloved—and this is my Friend!" Song of Solomon 5:16

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Our great lesson!

"I will instruct you." Psalms 32:8

At best we know but little—and we are slow to learn. But the Lord has promised to instruct us. The Lord's teaching always produces . . .humility, self-loathing, confidence in God, zeal for His glory, and devotes the heart to His glory!

The Lord's teaching always . . .brings us to the feet of Jesus, and delivers us from the present evil world.

Under Divine instruction we learn . . .the true nature of sin, the vanity of the world,  
the emptiness of creatures, and the fullness and preciousness of Christ!

Is God willing to instruct us? Then let us be early and often at His throne of grace, praying, as the Psalmist did, "Show me Your ways, O LORD, teach me Your paths; guide me in Your truth and teach me—for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long." Psalms 25:4-5. Then shall we exclaim, as Elihu did, "God is exalted in His power. Who is a teacher like Him!" Job 36:22

The Lord will teach us to profit, and sanctify us through the truth He imparts. Christ is our great lesson—and to know Him rightly—is life, peace and joy!

Is Jesus your Teacher? Then . . .sit at His feet, treasure up His Words, and show forth His praise!

He says, "Learn of Me." Learn to . . . know Him, love Him, obey Him, and live upon Him!

"Teach me Your way, O LORD; lead me in a straight path!" Psalms 27:11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Poor in self—rich in Jesus!

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3

The Lord's people are all poor; they see and feel that sin has stripped them of every excellence; and has left them wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked. They can do nothing of themselves, they can procure nothing for themselves; but free grace has made ample provision for them, and the Gospel informs them that Jesus has everything they need—and that all that He has, is for them!

When they look at, or into themselves—they are discouraged; but when they look to Jesus—they rejoice! He has riches of grace—and riches of glory; and He says, "Every one who asks—receives." He gives liberally, and upbraids not. Here then is the present blessedness of the Lord's poor: Jesus has all they need! And He is their Redeemer and Friend! Those who seek Him shall not lack any truly good thing.

Am I poor? If so, Jesus bids me come to Him—and buy gold, clothing, wine, and milk without price—all that is necessary to comfort and support in time, and render me happy throughout eternity! Poor in self—rich in Jesus! Poor at present—rich in eternity! "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven!"

"All things are yours!" 1 Corinthians 3:21

"And my God will supply all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus!" Php 4:19

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