

The Life of Christ, for Family Devotions - October

by F. L. Mortimer

F. L. Mortimer's sermon explores the significance of Christ's actions during the Last Supper, emphasizing humility, servanthood, and God's providence in our lives.

Scripture: John 14:1-29

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Jesus Teachings"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about the comforting promises Jesus gave to his disciples before his crucifixion, assuring them of his presence, the Holy Spirit's teaching, and the gift of peace. Jesus promises to manifest himself to those who love him, to teach them through the Holy Spirit, and to grant them his peace that surpasses all understanding. He encourages his disciples to keep his commandments, believe in him, and find assurance in his abiding presence within them.

Transcript

A Devotional Commentary on the Gospels

Arranged for family devotions, for every day in the year.

By Favell Lee Mortimer (1802--1878)

OCTOBER 1

Luke 22:7-13. Peter and John prepare the Passover.

The day before his death seems to have been by the Savior passed in holy retirement near Mount Olivet. How different were the scenes of the next day! scenes of tumult and uproar, scenes of barbarity and blood! A sweet season of refreshment was enjoyed by the Lord and his disciples before those horrors were perpetrated. How often God grants such a season to his children before he exposes them to the wintry storm and tempest!

The passover was always eaten in Jerusalem. It was unlawful to kill the lamb in any other place than in the temple, or to eat it anywhere but in the holy city. The Jews at this day having no temple, cannot partake of the paschal lamb. When they celebrate the passover, they cause the shoulder bone of a lamb to be placed

on the table instead of the animal itself. Many thousands flocked to Jerusalem in olden times to keep the feast. The citizens were kind to their brethren on those occasions, opened their doors, and received freely all who pleased to come; so that no man could say to his friend, "I have not found a fire to roast the lamb with, nor a bed to rest in."

With what holy awe the two apostles must have beheld the man carrying a pitcher, of whom their Master had spoken! Here was a fresh display of his omniscience. Though Jesus has not foretold the circumstances of our lives, we are persuaded that he knows them all, both small and great. If he did not appoint the small incidents of our lives, he could not rule the great events, because small incidents give rise to great events. Jesus knew the exact moment when the man bearing a pitcher would be walking near the entrance of Jerusalem; and he knows what we shall be doing at this moment tomorrow, and ten years hence. He knows whom we shall meet today, if we go out, and who will come to see us, if we stay at home. He not only knows these circumstances, but he will, if we love him, so order them that they shall work together for our good; "for all things work together for good to them that love God." (Rom. 8:28.)

How blessed are we if we have committed ourselves, and all we possess, into his hands! Then we need feel no anxiety about the future, for the Lord will provide. At the very moment we need a friend, he will raise one up. There is no request too small for him to regard, nor too great for him to grant. The people of God, especially his aged servants, can relate wonderful histories of his power and truth. They can tell how in their perplexity they were directed, and in their extremity relieved. Had their friends been miraculously informed of the particulars of their cases, they could not have afforded them more suitable or opportune help. At the exact time they needed the supply, the exact sum they required has been sent, and often by the hand of one who knew nothing of their distresses. But the God, who answered the prayer of Abraham's servant, who led Rebekah to the well, and inclined her to utter the very words that servant had asked that she might say, still listens to his people's prayers, and still condescends to give them the request of their lips. "O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusts in him. O fear the Lord, you his saints, for there is no lack to them that fear him." (Ps. 34:8, 9.)

October 2

Luke 22:14-18. Christ gives the cup before supper.

We are too apt to forget that each action of our life will at some period be performed for the last time. It often appears as if we shall continue forever to tread certain rounds of duties or enjoyments; but this appearance is false. As there was a first time of going to the house of God, so there will be a last. Perhaps we can remember the first time--but we cannot foresee the last. It is most probable that when the last time arrives, we shall not be aware of it. As there was a time when our infant lips first pronounced the name of Jesus, so there will be a time when our lips will utter it for the last time on earth. How many happy souls have departed this life, saying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

Some of us, perhaps, can look back upon the time when we first approached the table of the Lord to eat the bread and drink the wine. If we came with a formal spirit--because others came--because we thought it right to come--because our friends expected us to come, there is no sweetness in the remembrance of that time. But if we came as contrite sinners to a bleeding Savior, then we desire never to forget the blessed season. There will be a last time for partaking of the holy communion; it may be in the sanctuary; it may be in the dying chamber. Whenever it arrives may it find us in the same loving spirit in which our blessed Lord sat down with his twelve apostles to partake of his last passover!

Though he knew that one of these apostles would soon deny him, and that all would forsake him, yet his heart lingered over them with inexpressible tenderness. What fervent affection is implied in the words, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer!" Though death was to follow, yet this feast of love was an object of desire to the Savior.

A cup of red wine was usually drunk before the passover was eaten. This cup Jesus took, and said to his disciples, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves." By desiring them to drink out of the same cup, he instructed them to love one another, even as he had loved them. There was another cup which he gave after supper, saying, "This is my blood." The first cup was given before supper.

When the Lord partook of this passover, his heart was bowed down with sorrow. There is an hour approaching when He will rejoice with his people. In the day of his trouble he spoke of that hour, for he said, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come." If he desired so earnestly to partake of the passover before he suffered, how much more must he desire to eat and drink with his people in the kingdom of God! No last time will ever come to that feast, no parting will then be near, no sin will then be feared, no tear will then be shed. Are we meet for the inheritance of the saints in light? All who approach the table of the Lord now, will not surround it hereafter.

The heart must be prepared for heavenly joys; it must be broken by a sense of sin; it must be bound up by a living faith. Christ alone can prepare us to sit with him at his table. He is now preparing the feast, and preparing the guests--and at the appointed time he will come and say, "Eat, O friends; drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved." (Solomon's Song 5:1.)

October 3

John 13:1-17. Christ washes his disciples' feet.

The apostle Paul might well say, "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:1.) Jesus knew that the feet he washed would flee from him that very night, and leave him alone in his troubles; but offences could not quench his love.

When afterwards Peter had denied his Lord, it must have been a comfort to him, in the midst of his bitter tears, to remember what the Lord had said to him as he washed his feet. He had said that Peter was already washed from his sins, and that he needed only to have his feet washed. This is the state of every true believer. He has been washed in the Savior's blood, but still he needs continually to wash his feet; for as he walks in this world he defiles them by sin. Every day he has occasion to say, "Forgive me my trespasses." Whatever sins we have committed, we should go instantly to Jesus to be washed. We need not fear to go to this condescending, this loving Master. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous." He who now lives to make intercession, is the same tender Savior who once took a towel and girded himself, who "poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded."

But by this action Jesus intended not only to teach his disciples what he had done for them, but also what they ought to do for each other. When he sat down again, he plainly said, "You ought to wash one another's feet."

How apt we are to think that it is degrading to perform lowly offices! yet nothing can degrade us but sin. Angels in heaven are not too proud to serve the saints on earth. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent

forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1.)

A holy woman, belonging to a wealthy family, often repeated the following lines, because they expressed the fondest desires of her heart--

O that the Lord would count me meet

To wash his dear disciples' feet,

To share the grace to angels given,

And serve the royal heirs of heaven."

Her life proved that her words were sincere. The destitute orphan and the helpless cripple found a home beneath her roof.

But how different is any condescension that man can show, from the condescension the Son of God displayed! Creatures are only raised a very small degree above their fellows; and even that small distinction will exist for a very little while. At the present moment, in the sight of God, all men are equal. How unbecoming it is in any of us to lift up our hearts above our fellow-creatures! We may indeed remain in the station in which God has placed us; but we must remember that he is no respecter of people; the slave and the beggar are as precious in his sight as the king upon his throne. If we have the mind of Christ, we shall esteem it an honor to be permitted to minister to the wants of a poor saint; and we shall often think in our hearts, "This destitute creature, who now inhabits a neglected hovel, may perhaps shine more brightly than myself in the kingdom of glory."

October 4

John 13:18-22. Christ foretells that one of the twelve shall betray him.

The Lord Jesus had just given his disciples a proof of his love by washing their feet. Now he gave them a proof of his omniscience. He showed them that he knew all things, by foretelling who should betray him.

Had he intended to convince them at that moment of his wisdom, he would have revealed the past secrets of their lives, as he once had done to the woman of Samaria. He told her so much of her past life, that she said to her townsmen, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did." But on this occasion he sought rather to strengthen the disciples' faith in a trying hour that was approaching. He knew that the betrayal of Judas would tend to shake their faith. He knew that they might be tempted to think--"If our Master were the Son of God, he would have known that Judas sought to betray him, and he would have hid himself in some secret retreat." Therefore he told them beforehand; as he said, "Now I tell you before it comes, that when it comes to pass, you may believe that I am he."

For the same reason he has foretold many events that are now coming to pass. He has declared, "Many shall be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." Whenever hypocrites are detected, instead of being staggered by the discovery, we ought to be confirmed in the faith, and to think, "Did not Jesus say that there should be many who would call him Lord, but who would work iniquity?"

Can we conceive what our feelings would be, if we could foresee what would befall those around us? How would our hearts be pained by the thought, "This dear brother will languish long under a tormenting disease. This beloved sister will lose the children that are now smiling on her knees." But how much more

should we be grieved, if we could foresee that some who seem to be faithful followers of Jesus would finally betray him, and perish forever. What, then, must have been the feelings of the compassionate Savior, when he looked around and beheld the face of one who would soon plunge into the depth of crime, and sink into the abyss of misery! "He was troubled in spirit, and testified, saying, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

He still grieves over the sorrows that he foresees. When he looks down upon us, he sees the way that we shall take. Among the guests at the sacramental table he can distinguish those who will sell their birthright, from those who will inherit his kingdom.

Those who do not love their Master, will not always follow him. Judas found it easy to walk with Jesus when an admiring throng tracked his steps; but when circumstances were altered he changed his plan, and found it more convenient to betray him. There are seasons when the way of godliness appears even to the worldly-minded a pleasant and a glorious path; but these seasons do not last. A time arrives, sooner or later, when the path becomes steep and rugged; then the unconverted man turns aside into some by-way. He goes after the world he had forsaken, and seeks for a share in its smiles. At first, perhaps, he does not leave the assemblies of the saints. Like Judas, he may be found by turns in the councils of the ungodly, and in the society of the believers. Is there any one among us who is secretly siding with Christ's enemies, while he appears to be his friend? With what compassion Jesus regards such a miserable creature! He foresees the sorrows that his sins will bring upon him. He knows what remorse will one day tear him; what despair will take hold of him!

October 5

Luke 22:21-30. The apostles dispute concerning which shall be greatest.

We are not surprised that the apostles should be agitated by the thought that one of them should betray their beloved Master. But we are surprised that they should at the same time dispute who should be the greatest. Such a contest would have been sinful at any moment, but it was especially unseemly on this occasion. Their Master was going to suffer the deepest shame, and the acutest torture; his spirit was troubled, and his soul exceeding sorrowful. All his followers should have been engrossed by the desire to console him. Instead of disputing who should be greatest, they should have exhorted each other to cleave closely to their Lord in the trying hour.

How easy it is for us to perceive how they ought to have behaved! But how difficult it is for us to act as we ought to do! A desire to be great, and to be greater than others, is deeply rooted in our sinful nature. Even after we have turned to God, we are troubled by this evil propensity. We often betray it in our conversation, when we are not aware of the spirit that actuates us. We delight to dwell upon the esteem that others feel for us, to describe the exertions we have made, the plans we have suggested, and the influence we have obtained. Even when we keep silence on these subjects, because we think it unbecoming to praise ourselves, we often indulge feelings of self-complacency, and are elated when others notice and commend us. It would not be thus with us, if we were engrossed with the glory of Christ. Then we should desire only to speak of his wondrous works, and to talk of his power, and of the glory of his kingdom. If we spoke of ourselves, it would be with a view of showing his forbearance and faithfulness.

It must have grieved the Lord to hear his disciples striving for the first place in his kingdom. But he would not utter a severe rebuke when partaking with them of his last supper. He had endeavored to teach them humility by washing their feet, and he continued by the softest persuasions to impress the lesson on their

hearts. But he knew that circumstances would soon teach them how unworthy they were even of the lowest place in his kingdom. That night they would all forsake him. When they saw him again after his resurrection, they disputed no more who should be greatest; for each felt that he had forfeited all claim even to the lowest place. Thus will Jesus deal with us, if we are cherishing pride in our hearts. It is wonderful to observe how he humbles his people in their own eyes. Sometimes he allows them to stumble for a moment, that they may not fall into everlasting perdition. He has reserved for them the highest honors--places at his table, and thrones in his kingdom, but he must prepare them for their exaltation by deep humiliation. He knows when they are in danger of becoming proud, and sometimes in his mercy he sends an affliction to keep them humble.

He dealt in this manner with the apostle Paul. These are the apostle's own words--"Lest I should be exalted beyond measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted beyond measure." (1 Cor. 12:7.)

October 6

Matthew 26:21-25. The apostles inquire who shall betray their Master.

What a sorrowful moment it was to the affectionate disciples when the Lord said, "One of you shall betray me." He himself was troubled in spirit, and they were exceeding sorrowful. Each anxiously inquired, "Is it I?" It was right in them to ask this question, rather than to say, "Is it Peter?" "Is it John?" "Is it James?" Not one was so ungenerous as to fix his suspicion upon his fellow. This is the spirit we ought to cultivate. Are we not more apt to suspect our fellows than to distrust ourselves? No doubt each of the apostles felt in his heart that he could not betray his Master, but then each believed that the Lord knew his heart better than he knew it himself--"God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things." (1 John 3:21.) Did Judas believe that God knew all things when he asked, "Is it I?" Surely he must have hoped that he had deceived his Master as well as his fellow-disciples. But how must he have felt when he heard the answer, "You have said!" Probably it was spoken in a low voice, so that none but Judas heard the words.

But even when detected, he was not turned aside from his base purpose; for Satan had entered into him. No threatenings could terrify him; not even the words, "It would be better for that man if he had never been born." More terrible words cannot be imagined. They prove that the lost spirits can never be released from hell, for if at any period (however remote) they were to enter heaven, it would be good for them in the end that they had been born. Judas must have disbelieved this truth. Unbelief prepares the heart for committing the most appalling crimes. Satan finds no easier method of leading men captive than by filling their minds with doubts concerning God's word. He began his communion with our race by saying, "You shall not surely die."

But if Judas could not be awed by fear, could he be melted by love? No, he could behold his Lord seated at his last supper, and hear all his moving words, and still brood over his dark design. He could hear him utter this touching sentence, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer;"--he could see him, girded with a towel, stooping to wash his disciples' feet--he could permit him to wash his own feet--and yet still determine to betray him into the hands of his enemies. Truly may God say of the human heart, that it is desperately wicked. The old serpent has made it his habitation, and he exerts his subtlety in keeping it in his possession. But the grace of God can change the unfeeling, deceitful heart of man. It was grace that made the other disciples so different from Judas. Did not the Lord declare this, when he said, "I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen?" (John 13:18.)

When we consider a wicked character, when we follow its windings, and try to fathom its depths, let us remember that we are studying our own disease. If we were attacked with any dreadful malady for which no cure was known, what should we feel in viewing the body of one who had died of that malady? We should think, "My symptoms will increase, until I am reduced to the same miserable state." Sin is a malady that naturally grows worse and worse, and ends in eternal destruction. None can stop its course, but Jesus alone. Had it not been for him, it might have been said of each of us, "It would be good for this man if he had never been born; it would be good for this woman, for this child." May God of his infinite mercy grant that the reverse may be said of each of us! Whatever afflictions we may pass through, if we keep faithful to Jesus we shall see in the end that it was good for us that we were born. The blessed Savior died, that we might have cause to rejoice forever in having been called into being.

October 7

John 13:23-30. Christ gives the sop to Judas.

How many incidents recorded by John alone are so interesting that we could not bear the idea of being ignorant of them! It is a touching circumstance that one of the disciples leaned his head upon the bosom of Jesus at the last supper. That disciple's name is not mentioned in this place; but we know, from other passages, that it was John. It was the custom in the East to recline upon couches at mealtimes. This custom was not always observed at common meals, but it was considered indispensable at the passover. It is true, the first passover was eaten standing, but in later times the Jews preferred the posture of lying, because they thought it was a better emblem of their freedom from toil and slavery.

Could we have conjectured (had we not heard the fact) that a sinful man should be permitted to lean his head upon the bosom of our Lord? Such condescension became him who took little children in his arms, and who permitted a weeping woman to kiss his feet. Ought we to be afraid of coming to such a Savior? Can we believe he would roughly reject us? Or rather can we conceive how graciously he would receive us, how faithfully he would cleave to us? There is no friend who would so tenderly support our aching heads when oppressed by care and sorrow, or when damp with the dews of death.

We naturally suppose that all the apostles must have considered it a high privilege to sit next the Lord. It seems probable that Judas sat on one side of him, as it was to him he gave the sop when he had dipped it. Peter seems to have occupied a more distant place, as he beckoned, instead of whispering to John, when he desired him to ask a question.

It was not sufficient for Peter to know that it was not he who should betray the Lord; he wanted to discover who it was. When John whispered, "Who is it?" the Lord did not check him for curiosity, but gave him a sign by which he discovered the traitor. It is lawful for Christians to desire to detect hypocrites. Paul exhorts them to look "diligently lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble them, and thereby many be defiled." (Heb. 12:15.)

The token by which the traitor was distinguished was an act of friendship--dipping his morsel in the same dish with the Lord. On the Passover-table a dish was placed composed of the juice of figs and other fruits, mixed with vinegar; and into this mixture all the guests dipped their morsels of the unleavened cake before returning thanks. For the last time the Lord dipped his morsel, wrapped in bitter herbs, in such a dish--for the last time Judas did so also. Both the traitor and his Master were eating their last supper on earth. Often had they supped together; but never to all eternity would they sit again at the same table, or share the same bread. The other apostles would again eat and drink with their Lord in another manner and in

another state; but Judas would hunger forever amid the famished spirits in hell.

How eager the traitor must have felt to escape from the presence of his injured Master! Jesus himself furnished him with an excuse, by saying, "That you do, do quickly." The tone was so gentle in which those words were uttered, that none conjectured they referred to a deed of murder. Judas obeyed, and did his dreadful work quickly--for Satan hurried him on to perpetrate the crime. The wicked spirit who suggested the scheme sustained him while he executed it--"After the sop Satan entered into him." Man's courage would often fail before he had performed his dark designs, if it were not for Satan's help. He strengthens the thief to encounter the darkness, and he nerves the arm of the murderer to raise the bloody knife; but when they have done his will, then he encourages them no more; then he abandons them to remorse and despair.

October 8

John 13:31-35. Christ gives a new commandment.

When the traitor had left the room, the full tide of the Savior's love began to flow out upon his disciples. Many sorrowful words had been uttered at this last supper; but in the midst of grief gleams of joy burst forth. There was holy triumph, no, even rapture, in the words, "Now is the Son of man glorified; and God is glorified in him." Why did the Lord rejoice at the speedy approach of his bitter sufferings? Because in those sufferings his own glory and his Father's glory were manifested.

Have we seen the glory of the cross? Does it appear to us a glorious way of reconciling guilty rebels to their insulted sovereign? Does it not show how God hates sin, yet loves the sinner? He hates sin so much that he would not pardon without an atonement; he loves sinners so much that he consented to give up his only Son to be that atonement. Paul did not behold the Savior expiring on his cross; but like us, he heard the touching history--and what was its effect upon his heart? The cross put out all other glory. He no longer saw any glory in exalted titles and shining thrones, in human learning, or eloquence, or even in a reputation for righteousness--all these appeared to him as dross. The cross alone seemed glorious, and he testified, saying, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14.)

But in the hour when Jesus rejoiced, he looked not only at the glory connected with his sufferings, but also at the glory of his exaltation. "If God shall be glorified in him, God shall also glorify in himself, and shall immediately glorify him." Very soon God would raise him from the dead, and exalt him to his own right hand. He longed for that glorious hour; he showed his anxiety, when he said to Judas, "What you do, do quickly." If Paul in later days had a desire to depart and to be with Christ, how much more must God's own Son have desired to depart to be with his Father! He remembered the glory he had with the Father before the world was; this glory he knew he should soon possess again at his Father's right hand. A few weeks afterwards the dying Stephen looked up, and saw him standing there. A few months afterwards the astonished Paul beheld his brightness above the brightness of the sun. A few years afterwards, and the enraptured John heard him say, "I am he who lives and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." Well might the prospect of such glory cheer the Savior's heart, as he sat at his last supper.

But did he forget his sorrowing disciples? O no, he turned to them with tender love, saying, "Little children, a little while am I with you." While he was with them, they had basked in his love; when he was gone how desolate would they feel! But if they should love each other as he loved them, then they would not be desolate. Therefore he said unto them, "Love one another, as I have loved you." Jesus desires that his

people should be happy. This is one reason why he charges them to love each other. But he has another reason. It is his own glory. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another." Love is the badge of Christ's disciples. Is it then so rare for men to love each other, that true believers can be known by this mark? Yes, it is even so. There is much that looks like love to be found in the world. There is natural affection--there is particular friendship--there is patriotism--there is party-spirit--but there is no love, such as Christ bore towards his disciples. There is no love of this kind to be found on earth but in the heart of a Christian. No human creature, indeed, can love as Jesus does--but his love, though very inferior in degree, may be the same in kind. Paul, the prisoner of the Lord, was filled with this love when he said, "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." (2 Tim. 2:10.) Such love has led missionaries to leave comfortable homes to dwell among snows that never melt, or deserts that are always parched, to brave the hungry lion's roar, and to encounter the savage warrior's shriek. Such love glows in the heart of many who stand in less conspicuous places. They may be found in crowded alleys instructing ragged children, or in miserable hovels, comforting dying saints. "May the Lord make us to increase in love toward one another, and toward all men." (1 Thess. 3:12.)

October 9

John 13:36 to end. Christ foretells Peter's denial.

It must have grieved all the disciples to hear their Lord say, "Where I go, you cannot come." But Peter, as usual, was the first to express his sorrow. This he did by asking the question, "Where go you?" These words were evidently uttered with deep anxiety. Jesus repeated the assurance he had before made, "Where I go, you can not follow me now;" but he added a most comforting declaration, "You shall follow me afterwards." These words must have proved a healing balm to Peter's troubled heart, when a few hours afterwards he was weeping bitterly for his base denial of his Lord. Jesus well knew how much he would require cordials for his faith in that agonizing moment; and he gave him several such cordials, both in the upper room and in the garden of Gethsemane. Had Peter's faith failed after his sin, he would have been driven to despair like Judas, and he would have perished like him. But Jesus sustained his faith by his word and Spirit, and kept him "by his power unto salvation." (1 Peter 1.)

Doubtless there are many who wish that they could obtain such a promise as Peter received, "You shall follow me afterwards." But though it is the privilege of only a few of the saints to hear such an assurance from the lips of their Master, it is the privilege of all to have the inward witness of the Spirit, for it is written, "The Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." Let all believers listen to his gentle voice in their souls. It is a voice not to be heard by the outward ear, but only by the inward ear of the soul or spirit, and it says, "You are mine." When the children of God hear that spiritual voice, they reply, "Father;" as it is written in the Romans, "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father." No slave among the Jews was allowed to use the word "Abba," in speaking to his Master--but believers are not slaves, but children. Only let them beware of grieving by their sins that holy Spirit, who delights in filling their hearts with peace, and joy, and love.

Peter knew not when he should follow his Lord. He was impatient to go immediately, and inquired, "Why cannot I follow you now?" Jesus knows how long it will be before each of us will follow him to glory, (if we shall follow him,) and he knows why one must follow him soon, and another a great while later. He has appointed for each of us that length of pilgrimage that is best for us, and best for others. We are sometimes disposed to wish to alter his arrangements. When tried by lingering sickness, we are apt to cry

"how long?" and when surrounded by those who look up to us for help and comfort, to cry, "O spare me before I go away." But the Lord will judge for us, and call us to himself at the right moment. Moses and Elijah, and Jonah, and Job, all desired, in times of great trouble, to die; but the Lord prolonged their lives. Peter, in the fervor of his affection, desired the same; but his request also was denied. Had he, at that time, been called to lay down his life, he would have shrunk from the trial--for far from having courage to shed his blood, he had not enough to bear a scornful look. The Lord would not bring upon him a temptation greater than he was able to bear, but only such a temptation as showed him what was in his heart, and then he made a way of escape, that he might be able to bear it.

At length Peter obtained a martyr's courage, and now he wears a martyr's crown. The time came when he fulfilled his own declaration, "I will lay down my life for your sake;" and he was stretched on a cross like his beloved Master.

Jesus now hears his people's vows of fidelity. He will try them all and prove their sincerity. In what way he will try us, at what time, we cannot tell. When the trials come, may we be found faithful. Then we shall know the truth of the promise, "Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when (as often) he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him." (James 1:12.)

October 10

Luke 22:31-35. Christ tells Peter he has prayed for him.

What a view this passage gives us of the malice of Satan. That wicked spirit desired to have all the apostles, for Jesus said, "Satan has desired to have you," not Peter only, but the others also. No wonder that he desired to have those men who were to spread the Savior's name throughout the world. He succeeded in obtaining one of them as his prey, even Judas; but his place was afterwards filled up by another apostle (Matthias, Acts 1).

Can we doubt that Satan still desires to tempt the servants of Christ? If we are his servants, he longs to destroy us. He goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8.) These words are the words of one who had himself been rescued from the jaws of the lion. It was Christ who delivered him. He knows all the designs of the enemy. When he sees any of his sheep in danger, he does not flee, but he stays to deliver them. He watched with tender care over all the apostles during their season of temptation, but especially over Peter, who seems to have been the most exposed to the enemy. He had already prayed for him; now he warns him; soon he takes him to the garden with him, and there bids him pray for himself; and even when standing before his judges, does not forget him, but turns and looks at him.

Such is the care Jesus still takes of his people. Were he less watchful, no soul would ever reach the heavenly fold. If we do not fall into some fatal sin, it is because his eye is always upon us. No little child is so dependent upon the watchfulness of its nurse, as we are upon that of Jesus.

Satan desired to sift the apostles as corn is sifted in a sieve, when it is thrown up in the air, and when the chaff is blown away. He hoped that Judas was not the only hypocrite among them; for Satan cannot search the heart. He suspected Job of being a hypocrite, but he was mistaken. He suspected Peter, but in this also he was mistaken. It seems Satan is allowed to try the saints, but these trials do them good, and make them brighter Christians afterwards. Peter loved the Lord before he denied him; but he loved him far better afterwards. "That kind upbraiding glance" could never be erased from his memory; that affectionate message, ("Tell his disciples and Peter;") that early meeting with him alone, (for he was seen by Peter or

Cephas before he was seen by the twelve,) (1 Cor. 15:5,) were tokens of forgiving grace beyond all human thought.

How it binds the hearts of believers to their Lord, to remember the various instances in which their backslidings have been healed! Is there anyone here who, like Peter, has given himself to the Lord, and who yet, like Peter, has been unfaithful? Do you not feel your heart glow with love when you think of the Lord's free forgiveness of your ungrateful wanderings? What does Jesus expect of his restored backsliders? He expects that they should strengthen their brethren. He said to Peter, "When you are converted strengthen your brethren." By the term "converted," he meant "turned back again" into the way of righteousness. David declared, after his grievous fall, "I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners shall be converted unto you." It encourages a wanderer to return to hear another wanderer say, "The Lord has forgiven me." All the apostles must have felt afraid to meet their Lord again, after having forsaken him; but when they heard Peter say, "I did worse than you, I denied him; yet he has forgiven me; I know it by the look he has cast upon me," would they not all be strengthened by such words? We ought not to be ashamed to own our faults to our brethren; but we ought rather to take delight in magnifying the riches of Christ's forgiving love. If we have obtained mercy, why should not others also? What Jesus has done for us is a pattern of what he will do for all, who, like us, shall believe in him to life everlasting. (1 Tim. 1:16.)

October 11

Luke 22:35-38. Christ prepares the apostles for approaching danger.

The Lord deals with his people in various manners. Sometimes he causes all things to go smoothly--at other times he permits difficulties to arise. When Jacob left his father's house, he was cheered on his way by a vision of angels, and he arrived safely at his uncle's abode; but when Joseph left his home, he was assaulted by his brethren and sold as a slave into Egypt. The Lord knows when to appoint trials, and when to bestow prosperity.

Solomon knew this when he said, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven"--that is, to every purpose of God. He then enumerates various times, "a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to weep and a time to laugh." (Eccl. 3.) There were such various times in the lives of the apostles. When their Master first sent them out to preach, he desired them to make no provision for the way. He said, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor bag for your journey." (Matthew 10:9, 10.) They obeyed this command, and at the last supper they testified that they had lacked nothing during their journey. The disciples of Jesus can always testify that their Lord has kept his promises--not one of them has ever failed, or ever will.

On this occasion the Savior gave different directions to the apostles from those he had formerly given. He desired them to take, not only bags and purses, but even swords. Why did he give this command? To prepare them for the great troubles that were coming upon them. He knew that now few would be willing to give them food, and that many would desire to take away their lives; because their Master was soon to be crucified as a criminal. Who would favor the followers of a crucified Master? He reminded them of these words of Isaiah 53, "He was numbered with the transgressors." One of the trials the Savior endured was DISGRACE. He was put to death as a wicked man, with wicked men, and in the manner in which wicked men were put to death. The disciples of such a master ought to expect disgrace. They should not be surprised when they are insulted, reviled, and falsely accused.

But ought they to defend themselves with the sword? We know they ought not. When Peter took one of these two swords and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, his Lord rebuked him, and said, "All those who take the sword shall perish with the sword." If Jesus had intended that his servants should fight, he would not have said that two swords were enough. The only sword that they should use is the sword that their Master wielded when attacked by the prince of darkness in the wilderness--the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Eph. 6:17.)

When temptations come upon us, let us use that sword. Satan cannot resist it. Had Peter used it in that terrible night when his Lord was condemned, he would not have denied him. We know not what great temptations may soon assail us. God often makes the first part of a believer's course very smooth, because he knows his weakness, and will not try him above his strength. But an evil day will come. How shall we stand in that day? Not by our own strength. We must take unto us now the whole armor of God, the bosom-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. When clothed in this armor, we must watch and pray, and then we shall be able to resist all the wiles of the devil. (Eph. 6:11.)

October 12

Luke 22:19, 20. Christ ordains his holy supper.

Of all the touching words that Jesus uttered at the last supper, the most touching were these--"This is my body; this is my blood." The disciples had been unwilling to believe that he would die; but could they doubt it any longer when they heard these words, and looked upon the broken bread and the poured out wine? He would not only die, but he would die a cruel death; his body would be broken like the bread; his blood would be poured out like the wine.

Was Judas present at this scene? It is not certain whether he was there or not. He had partaken of one cup--of the cup before supper--but we know not whether he partook of the cup after supper.

No doubt it was with bitter grief that the loving disciples ate that broken bread, and drank that cup of wine. With what different feelings they partook of the ordinance the next time! When, after their Lord's resurrection, they met together to break bread, how thankful they felt for his dying love! We know not when they first met for this purpose. It must have been an interesting communion! Each must have thought, "What would have become of me if that spotless body had not been lacerated and bruised upon the cross--if that precious blood had not flowed from the pierced hands, and feet, and side!" This is the feeling of every believer when he approaches the table of his Lord.

Ever since man sinned, he has been spared only for the sake of Jesus. When Abel brought a spotless lamb and offered it on the altar, he knew that he deserved to die instead of that lamb. The blood of that lamb was a faint shadow of the blood of the Lamb of God.

What did Jesus mean when he said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you?" By the word "testament," he meant covenant or promise. God made a covenant with Israel in the wilderness. The blood of bulls and goats was shed to confirm the first covenant. As it is written, "Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant." (Ex. 24:8.) From everlasting God made a covenant with his beloved Son concerning the salvation of man; but it was not fully revealed until after Christ had been crucified. His blood was shed to confirm this new covenant. It can never be shed again. But lest we should forget that it was once shed, we are commanded to drink

wine at his table. And can we forget such love as Christ has shown? Yes, when he said, "Do this in remembrance of me," he knew well that we were disposed to remember everything sooner than his love.

There are only a few who even desire to remember it. Why do so many turn away from the Lord's table? Is it not because they do not love their crucified Savior? They are not ashamed or afraid to say by their actions, "We do not love him." They know he is patient--they know he is generous--they know he is forgiving--they hope he will bear their insults, and that, when he spreads his table in his Father's kingdom, he will invite them to sit down with him there. But what if he should come in a day when they do not think, and in an hour when they are not looking for him; and what if he should say, "You shall not taste of my supper; you despised the supper to which I invited you on earth, and you shall not be admitted to my supper in heaven!" But if he should forgive their ungrateful conduct, and welcome them to his heavenly table, will they not wish they had honored his sacramental board?

If grief could enter heaven, it would be felt at the remembrance, not of past trials, but of past ingratitude shown to the Lamb of God. When we feel that all our bliss was purchased by the wounded Savior, shall not we desire that we had always loved, and honored, and adored him?

October 13

John 14:1-3. Christ promises his disciples to receive them into his Father's house.

As we read these words, let us remember in what interesting circumstances they were uttered. Jesus was conversing with his eleven apostles, in an upper room, only a few hours before his crucifixion.

There was a moment in which He himself was troubled in spirit, but now it seems that his disciples were more troubled than himself, for he undertakes to comfort them. He had made one declaration that had grieved them exceedingly; He had said, "Where I go, you cannot come." Peter had expressed his sorrow, and had obtained this sweet assurance, "You shall follow me afterwards." The other apostles must have desired to hear words like these addressed to themselves. Their desire was fully satisfied when Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." There was a mansion, not for Peter only, but also for John and James, and all the apostles. And are these mansions for them alone? Does not each of us inquire, "Is there a mansion for me also?" Yes, there is not only a mansion, but a crown for everyone who loves the Lord. Hear what the apostle Paul says, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:8.) Here is hope, here is assurance, for every one who can sincerely say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Well might the disciples be troubled at the thought of losing such a friend as their Lord had been to them. The kindest friend we have ever known has sometimes treated us coldly, impatiently, or harshly; but Jesus had always been affectionate, sympathizing, and tender. The best friend we have ever had was subject to error and infirmity, but Jesus possessed unspotted holiness, unerring wisdom, and unblemished loveliness. In losing his presence the disciples felt that they should lose the chief joy of their existence. He knew the desire of their hearts, therefore he said, "That where I am, there you may be also." They have now tasted the fulfillment of this promise! The apostles are where Jesus is. Absent from the body they are present with the Lord.

Some who were once with us, are now with him. Would we wish to call them back? Could we make them as happy as Jesus is now making them? While we are enduring trials, exposed to temptations, and

subject to sin, they rest in the mansions that he prepared for them in his Father's house. They do not desire to return to us, but they long for us to come where they are. There are mansions enough for a multitude which no man can number. Every hour some happy spirit is ascending to inhabit the place the Savior has prepared for him. The dying Stephen looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; and as they stoned him he called upon God, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Acts 7:55, 60.)

October 14

John 14:4-7. Thomas makes an inquiry.

How condescending it was in the Lord Jesus to permit his disciples to ask him questions! Yet he discouraged presumptuous inquiries. On this account the disciples, when they saw him conversing with the Samaritan woman, were once afraid to say, "What do you? or, why talk you with her?" But he encouraged them to ask, in a humble spirit, explanations of his doctrines.

At an early part of the conversation at the last supper, Peter interrupted his Lord by saying, "Where are you going?" The answer seems to have satisfied him, for he said soon afterwards, "I will lay down my life for your sake." By this reply, Peter showed that he believed his Master was going to die. But Thomas was not so soon satisfied as Peter. He was a man hard to be convinced, though not slow to act when convinced. It was he who on a former occasion had said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." (John 11:16.) And it was he who, a long while afterwards, carried the gospel to the end of the world, even to the coasts of India. Even now, near Madras, his name is remembered, and the Mount of Thomas may still be seen there. It was this Thomas, this unbelieving Thomas, who now said, "Lord, we know not where you go, and how can we know the way?" His patient teacher repeated the instructions he had so often given, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." But did he reveal where he was going? Yes, for he added, "No man comes unto the Father, but by me." He was going to the Father--he was going to return to that bosom whence he came out--he had been despised and rejected of men; but he was going to Him who had said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And was he going alone? No--had he not said, "I go to prepare a place for you?"

But he was going to do still more--to prepare a way as well as a place. Of what avail would it have been to us, if a place had been prepared, but if no way to that place had been opened? To see, afar off, those glorious mansions, and to feel there was no way by which we could attain them, would be wretchedness indeed. Yet there is no way, except through Jesus. As well might one of us hope to reach the stars, by any contrivance of our own, as to reach heaven through our own goodness, or prayers, or tears, or sufferings. When man had sinned, it was impossible that the just God could receive him as an inhabitant of his palace. What would be thought of a sovereign who should appoint some notorious murderers to be his ministers of state? How was it, then, possible that the holy God should continue to show favor to guilty rebels? But the Son of God took upon him our load of guilt, and died in our stead. Thus he became the way to his Father. Sinners may approach God through him. The great gulf that sin had made between heaven and earth, is now closed. The Son of God is the ladder by which sinners climb up into heaven. It is a useless thing to attempt to come to God in any other way than by Jesus. The men who began the tower of Babel thought they could reach the heavens, but they were mistaken. There are some who fall into a more fatal mistake. They fondly imagine that they shall be able to pile up good works enough to enable them to mount to God's throne; but they shall never succeed--while the humble believer, trusting in his Savior, shall be borne by his Almighty arm into the presence of the King of kings.

October 15

John 14:8-12. Philip makes a request.

Philip expressed the feeling of a pious heart when he said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us." There was something in this request that must have pleased the Son of God. Love to his Father always pleased him. It grieved him to see the creatures of his Father's hand so indifferent to his name. He had beheld another scene in heaven, where every angel and every saint glows with love to his glorious Creator. But worldly men do not care for the Being who made them. Far from wishing to see Him, as Philip did, they wish to hide themselves from him. Instead of saying, "Show us the Father," they say in their hearts, "Give us corn and wine; give us favor with men; give us success in our schemes, and prosperity in our families, and--it suffices us."

But the children of God desire to see their Father's face. Philip was a child of God, and he desired to see his glorious countenance; therefore he said, "Show us the Father." Yet he ought not to have made this request. He ought to have known that Jesus was the brightness of his Father's glory. How gently the Lord reproached him for his unbelief when he said, "Have I been so long time with you, Philip, and yet have you not known me?" Three years was a long time to have familiar communion with the Son of God. Patriarchs and prophets thought themselves highly favored, when they enjoyed short and occasional interviews with their glorious Redeemer. They were more ready to acknowledge him as God than Philip was. When Jacob had wrestled with the angel, he said, "I have seen the face of God, and my life is preserved." But the apostles found it hard to believe how great their Master was! They had seen him hungry and thirsty, weary and weeping. They had even heard him talk of dying. Was it not hard to believe, that the face so marred with sorrow was the express image of the Father's? Yet they ought to have believed this, because of his words and his works.

He spoke as never man spoke; he did works that man never performed. His divine glory shone through the veil of mortal flesh. No light around his person distinguished him from other men; but the apostle John declares, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." (John 1:14.) Once, indeed, his face did shine as the sun, and his clothing was white as the light; but only once; and then only three of the apostles beheld that glorious sight. But his countenance always shone with the light of holiness, and his garments were always white with spotless purity.

When did Jesus fulfill this wonderful promise, "He who believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do?" At the day of Pentecost, when the apostles, by the power of the Spirit, turned three thousand souls to God. When Jesus preached, only a few repented. Chorazin and Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem, repented not; but when the apostles preached, three thousand, by one sermon, were pierced in their hearts. (Acts 2:37-41.) What was the reason for this difference? Jesus explained the reason in these few words, "Because I go unto the Father." Since he has gone unto the Father, to sit at his right hand, multitudes have received the gifts of repentance, and of the forgiveness of sins, because he has gone there for that very purpose; as it is written, "Him has God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5:31.) Have we received these precious gifts? Has the great work been done in our souls--the work of conversion? If it has, then we shall be anxious to do great works ourselves, by saving the souls of our fellow-sinners, and snatching them as brands from the burning.

October 16

John 14:13-20. Christ promises to answer his disciples' prayers.

When friends are about to part, they agree together how they shall serve and please each other while separated. The Son of God was the most tender and faithful of friends. What was it he engaged to do for his disciples when about to leave them? He said, "If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." But what could they do for him? He said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." Jesus has not failed to fulfill his part. As soon as he was ascended up on high, his disciples asked in his name for a glorious gift, and he bestowed it. They asked for what he had promised; for, as Luther says, prayer is the reminding God of his promises. What had he promised? Another comforter, that is, another teacher. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever." The apostles remembered this promise; and when they had parted from their Lord, "they all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." (Acts 1:14.) Then it was that the Holy Spirit came down from heaven with a sound like a rushing mighty wind, and in appearance like cloven and flaming tongues. Peter then preached to the wondering multitude, and said, "Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has shed forth this, which you now see and hear." (Acts 2:33.)

Thus Jesus fulfilled his own promise, "If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." But has he withdrawn that precious promise? May we not still expect its fulfillment? Assuredly we may. How many believers can witness that Jesus has heard their prayers! Sometimes we are certain that the letter we sent to a friend has been received; and why? Because we receive an answer to it. Have we never received answers to our prayers sufficient to convince us that they have been heard? Sometimes Jesus does not grant the very thing his people ask for; because he has promised only to give them good things, and sometimes, in their ignorance, they ask for things not good for them. The apostle Paul thought it would be good for him to be relieved from the thorn in his flesh--but his Savior knew it would be better for him to bear it, lest the abundant revelations he had received should exalt him above measure. Therefore when he besought the Lord three times to take it away, he received this answer--"My grace is sufficient for you." And he found it sufficient; for he was able afterwards to say, "I take pleasure in infirmities." If, then, we do not obtain the very thing we ask, let us not be discouraged. We may have asked for a stone--our heavenly Father will not give us that; but He will give us bread instead.

Christ has not forgotten what he promised to do for us. Let us not forget what he has enjoined us to do for Him. He said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." If we forget this charge, he will be released from his promise. For John says in his epistle, "Whatever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." (1 John 3:22.) What are his commandments? He had given two while sitting at supper with his disciples. One was the new commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you." The other was, "Believe in me." (John 14:1.) Jesus did not say, "Love me." He knew his disciples loved him. He even appealed to their love as a motive of obedience, saying, "If you love me, keep my commandments." Does this tender appeal touch our hearts? If we love the Lord it will be a stronger motive to obedience than the severest threatening. God threatened Adam when he said, "In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die." But this threatening did not deter him from eating the forbidden fruit. How many who love Jesus have been deterred from disobeying him by the tender words, "If you love me, keep my commandments!"

October 17

John 14:21-23. Jude asks an explanation.

How it must have gladdened the hearts of the apostles to hear Jesus say, "I will manifest myself unto him," (that is, unto the man who loves me!) As it was the prospect of his absence that troubled them, the promise of his presence (if they believed that promise) must have cheered them. He had said before, "I will come again and receive you to myself." But he had not said when he would come again. Years might pass away before he took them to the place where he was going. But now he promises to visit those whom he left behind.

To whom did he address the promise? To those who loved him. The apostle Jude well knew that he loved him. Therefore he did not inquire, "Will you manifest yourself unto us?" But he asked, "How will you manifest yourself unto us?" It is a comfortable thing when a man's own heart assures him that he loves his Lord. Our hearts tell us that we love our children and our friends. If we really love the Lord, our hearts will tell us that we do. Yet, lest we should deceive ourselves upon so important a subject, Jesus has given us a sign by which to try our hearts. "If a man love me, he will keep my words." But who keeps the words of Jesus? If tried by this rule who shall stand? None keep them perfectly; but some do keep them in the sense that Jesus meant; for he said, speaking of his own apostles, in prayer to God, "They have kept your word." (John 17:6.) This declaration has been a great comfort to many believers. The history of the apostles shows that they did not keep their Master's words perfectly--they neither believed in him as fully, nor loved one another as warmly, as they ought. Yet still Jesus said to his Father, "They have kept your word."

When he lived upon earth the world saw him as well as his disciples; but, since he has ascended to heaven, the world have seen him no more--but those who love him do see him by faith. There are many who have experienced the truth of this promise--"My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." That faithful servant of God, Dr. Payson, when racked with pain upon his dying bed, declared, "It is not the prospect of heaven that makes me happy, but the sense of heaven in my own bosom." Where the Father and the Son abide, there must be heaven. While sin remains in the heart, the believer's heaven will be darkened by clouds, and shaken by storms--but when sin is utterly destroyed, there will be no more storms, and no more clouds.

The glorified saints are not only in heaven, but heaven is in them. The dawn of this heaven is in believers upon earth. Is there heaven in our souls? Do the Father and the Son make their abode with us? If they dwell not with us now, we shall not dwell with them hereafter. Remember the declaration of the apostle, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Remember also his prayer, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." (Eph. 3:17.)

October 18

John 14:24-26. Christ promises his disciples that the Holy Spirit shall teach them.

When about to part with a friend, we often have cause to regret that we have not profited more from his society. A child standing by the bed of a dying parent, feels the value of those instructions he shall receive no longer--of those prayers he shall never join in again. He endeavors to recall the faithful counsels, to imprint on his memory the familiar expressions, but day by day they fade away.

What must the disciples have felt at the thought of hearing the sayings of the Lord no more! They heard him declare, "He who loves me not, keeps not my sayings." They must have feared lest they should not be able even to remember them, much less to KEEP them. But Jesus knew their feelings, and he gave them a promise suited to their state. He promised that One should come who should bring to their remembrance

all that he had said to them, and who should teach them many things he had not taught them. For he had treated them as children whose understandings were unripe, and had kept back many things that it would hereafter be good for them to know. These things the Holy Spirit would teach them. Did Jesus fulfill this promise? Let us look into the epistles of Peter and Jude, of James and John, and we shall find treasures of heavenly wisdom that the Holy Spirit had taught them. The very discourse which we are now reading was brought back to the memory of John by the Holy Spirit. The precious words which dropped from the Savior's lips as he sat at his last supper, did not fall to the ground; they were gathered up and reserved for our instruction. Do we feel them to be precious? Do we consider these holy words better than gold, and sweeter than honey? Or do we take more delight in a trifling song and an entertaining story, than in the words of the Son of God? The true believer can say with David, "Your word is very pure, therefore your servant loves it."

If we really love it, we may trust that the Holy Spirit will bring it to our remembrance in our time of need. In the hour of temptation he is a faithful friend, and whispers in the ear of the tempted soul such a text as this, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" In the hour of affliction the Holy Spirit brings to the desponding mind such a promise as this, "Whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives." (Heb. 12:6.) And in the hour of death he sustains the sinking soul by such an assurance as this, "When you pass through the waters I will be with you, and through the floods they shall not overflow you." (Is. 43:2.)

October 19

John 14:27-29. Christ promises to give his disciples peace.

We sometimes read of a rich man dying and leaving a vast property to his heirs. But the greatest riches ever bequeathed, were bequeathed by one of the poorest of the sons of men. None was ever poorer in this world than Jesus. Yet he left his disciples the costly gift of "Peace." "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." This is what all the world are pursuing. They are seeking for peace and happiness. They desire an abundant earthly portion because they imagine it will confer peace. Some think that power will confer it; others that praise will impart it; while many hope to find peace in a round of amusements, in the attainment of knowledge, in the endearments of home, or in the performance of active duties. But none of these things, not even the best of them, ever bestowed peace. None has peace to bestow but Jesus. He gives it to those who love him

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