

Evening Thoughts - February

by Octavius Winslow

Octavius Winslow's sermon emphasizes the importance of living in awareness of God's loving gaze, the hope of future glory, and the necessity of self-examination and prayer for spiritual growth.

Scripture: Psalm 33:18-19, Psalm 119:50, Song of Solomon 4:6, Isaiah 35:8-9, John 1:13, John 3:16, Romans 6:4, Galatians 6:4, Philippians 1:29, Colossians 1:22-23

Topics: "Hope in Affliction", "Living Under God's Watchful Eye"

Description

Octavius Winslow emphasizes the importance of living under the watchful eye of God, who tenderly invites us to return to Him despite our wanderings. He encourages believers to seek a deeper relationship with Christ, especially in times of affliction, as it is through trials that our faith is strengthened and our spiritual lives revived. Winslow reminds us that the ultimate hope lies in the promise of eternal glory, where all sorrow and sin will cease, and we will be fully satisfied in God's likeness. He calls for self-examination and a commitment to spiritual growth, urging believers to rely on God's grace and the power of prayer in their daily walk with Him.

Transcript

EVENING THOUGHTS, or

DAILY WALKING WITH GOD

FEBRUARY 1.

Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear him, upon those who hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death. Psalm 33:18-19

A FATHER'S eye beaming with tenderness upon a rebellious, wandering child, inviting, welcoming his return--what adamant can resist it? The deepest, bitterest, truest grief for sin is felt and expressed beneath God's eye alone. When the wakeful pillow of midnight is moistened, when the heart unveils in secret to the eye of Jesus, when the chamber of privacy witnesses to the confidential confessions and pleadings of a contrite heart, there is then felt and expressed a sorrow for sin, so genuine, so touching, as cannot but draw down upon the soul a look from Christ the most tender in its expression, and the most forgiving in its language.

Let us always endeavor to realize the loving eye of Jesus resting upon us. In public and in private, in our temporal and spiritual callings, in prosperity and in adversity, in all places and on all occasions, and under all circumstances, oh! let us live as beneath its focal power. When our Lord was upon earth, "a man of sorrows," His eyes were dim with grief; but now that He is in heaven, they are as "a flame of fire,"--to His saints not a burning, consuming flame, but a flame of inextinguishable love. Deem not yourself, then, secluded believer, a banished and an exiled one, lost to all sight. Other eyes may be withdrawn and closed, distance intercepting their view, or death darkening their vision; but the eye of Jesus, your Lord, rests upon you ever, with unslumbering affection. "I will guide you with mine eye," is the gracious promise of your God. Be ever and intently gazing on that Eye--"looking unto Jesus." He is the Fountain of Light; and in the light radiating from His eye you shall, in the gloomiest hour of your life, see light upon your onward way. "By His light I walked through darkness."

"Bend not your light-desiring eyes below,

There your own shadow waits upon you ever;

But raise your looks to Heaven--and lo!

The shadeless sun rewards your weak endeavor.

Who sees the dark, is dark; but turns toward the light,

And you become like to that which fills your sight."

"We all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

FEBRUARY 2.

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. Song 4:6

THAT we dwell so much in the region of present clouds, and so little in the meridian of future glory, entails upon us a serious loss. We look too faintly beyond the midnight of time, into the daylight of eternity. We are slow of heart to believe all that is revealed of the bliss that awaits us, and do not sufficiently realize that in a little while--oh how soon!--the day will break, the will flee away, and we shall bathe our souls in heaven's full, unclouded, endless light.

And when does this day begin to break, and the shadows to flee? Go, and stand by the side of that expiring believer in Jesus--the daybreak of glory is dawning upon his soul! He is nearing heaven; He will soon be there--in a few hours, perhaps moments--and oh! what wonders, what glories, what bliss will burst upon his emancipated spirit! Hark, how he exclaims to the loved ones who sincerely would detain him a little longer here--"Let me go, for the day breaks!" Oh blessed day now opening upon his view, as shadow after shadow is dispersed, revealing the wall of sapphire, and the gate of pearl, and the jasper throne, and Him who sits upon it, of the New Jerusalem, all inviting and beckoning him away.

But the noon-tide splendor of this day of glory will be at the SECOND COMING of our Lord in majesty and great power, to gather together His elect, and consummate the bliss of His Church. "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all those who believe." Precious in the sight of the Lord as is

the death of His saints, and blissful to the saints themselves as will be the time of their departure, yet not our death, but the Redeemer's glorious appearing, is the hope set before us in the Scriptures. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." Suffering Christian! look rather to this blessed hope of the perfect day, than to the gloomy passage the dark valley. "I will come again," says your gracious Lord, "and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also." Let our hearts respond, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

And where shall we resort until then? Listen to her words: "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense." The Lord has fragrant places of safety and repose people until He comes to fetch them to glory. What a "mountain of myrrh" is Jesus!--in whom we may abide, to whom in all lowering clouds we may repair, "until the day break, and the shadows flee away." Closer and closer let us cling to Christ, whose name is "as ointment poured forth" to the Lord's faint and weary ones--until we see Him face to face. And oh! how fragrant are these "hills of frankincense," which the Lord has provided for His people, in the means of grace, to which He invites, and where He meets and communes with them "until the day break, and the shadows flee away." Such is the secret place of prayer--the place of social prayer--the place and public prayer, where the incense of devotion and love ascends, so precious, so cheering and strengthening to the weary. And what is the ministration of the truth, and what is the word of God, but the "hills of frankincense," to which we are privileged to betake ourselves until our Lord comes to us, or until we go to Him. To these fragrant hills of safety and repose let us constantly repair. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as you see the day approaching."

FEBRUARY 3.

But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. Galatians 6:4

"OH that I were quite sure that I was more than a mere professor!" But why be in doubt? Never was so momentous a matter more easily and speedily settled. "He that believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself." Thus from yourself you need not travel in order to ascertain your true spiritual condition. No one can be a substitute in this great matter for yourself: It is a thing which has too close and personal a relation to you as an individual, to admit of a transfer of its obligations to another. You must feel for yourself--you must experience for yourself--and you must decide for yourself alone. Thus may you come to a right and safe decision in a question involving interests as solemn and as deathless as eternity. Seek the inward witness of the Spirit. Witnessing to what? that your heart has been convinced of sin--that you have renounced your own righteousness--that you have fled to the Lord Jesus Christ--and that your soul is breathing after personal holiness. Do not, I beseech you, rest short of this. Do not be concerned about others; let your first and chief concern be about yourself.

Give all diligence in the use of the means of grace, if you desire a flourishing state of soul. They are the Divinely appointed channels of conveyance from the Fountain. They are the tributary streams from the great Ocean. You cannot possibly maintain a healthy, vigorous state of the inner life without them. You cannot neglect with impunity private prayer, meditation, and self examination--or public ordinances--the ministry of the word, the services of the sanctuary, the assemblies of the saints. A slight thrown upon these must entail a severe loss to your soul. It is in the way of diligent, prayerful waiting upon the means, that the Christian "goes from strength to strength, until he appears before God." Search, oh search, for this living grace. No man shall wait upon the Lord in vain. "Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their

strength." They who plough deeply the fallow ground, and in its furrows sow the precious seed, shall not lack the Holy Spirit's descending influence, in silent dew by night, and in copious showers by day, to quicken and to fructify it. Only honor the God of grace in all the means of grace, and God will honor you by imparting to you grace through the means. "The diligent soul shall be made fat."

Reader, examine yourself, prove your own self, and ascertain truly if you have "Christ in you the hope of glory." Satisfy not yourself with external ceremonies, with the observance of days, of matins and vespers, and frequent communions--with alms-giving and charities. Is Christ dwelling in your heart by his Spirit? This, this is the great and momentous question which, in the near prospect of death, and of the judgment that follows death, it behooves you to decide. "He that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son of God has not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God."

FEBRUARY 4.

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:13.

THE real believer in Jesus is a gracious man. He is a "living soul." He is the partaker of a new and a divine nature, and is the depository of a heavenly and a precious treasure. But grace is a thing foreign to the natural state of a man. His possession of it is not coeval with his birth, nor can it be his by right of hereditary law. No parent, however holy, can transmit a particle of that holiness to his posterity. But see how this mystery is cleared up in the conversation which Jesus held with the Samaritan woman, as He sat wearied upon the mouth of Jacob's well: "Jesus answered and said unto her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, Give me to drink, you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water." This is the grace of which we speak, and this is the source from where it flows into the hearts of all the truly regenerate. It is in you, Christian reader, a "well of water," a springing well, mounting upward, and ascending to the source from where it rises. Blessed words--"springing up into everlasting life"! As the first blush of morning is a part of the day, so the least dawn of grace in the soul is a portion of heaven.

What an exalted character, and what an enviable man, is the true Christian! All the resources of the Triune God unite to replenish this earthen vessel. No angel in heaven contains a treasure half so costly and so precious as that poor believing sinner, who getting near to the Savior's feet, and bathing them with tears of penitence and love can look up and exclaim, "Whom have I in heaven but You? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside You." But what deep humility ought to distinguish the true Christian, as a real professor of the grace of Christ Jesus! The grace which you possess is a communicated grace. All that is really holy and gracious in us springs not from our fallen nature, but, like "every good and perfect gift, comes down from the Father of lights." It is the spontaneous outflowing of the heart of God--the free unmerited bestowment of his sovereign mercy. Then what meekness of heart, what profound humility of mind, ought to mark you! What a prostration of every form of self, self-confidence, self-seeking, self-boasting--should there be, as reasonably becomes those who have nothing but what they have received, and whom free and sovereign grace alone has distinguished from others!

FEBRUARY 5.

Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Lamentations 3:40

LET the spiritual believer but take the history of a single week as the gauge of the general tenor of his life, and what a lesson does it read him of the downward, earthly tendency of his soul! Yes, in one short week how have the wheels lessened in their revolutions--how has the timepiece of his soul lost its power--how have the chords of his heart become unstrung! But his prayer is for Divine quickening. It is his anxious inquiry--What course am I to adopt when I find deadness in my soul, and cannot feel, nor weep, nor sigh, nor desire?--when to read and meditate, to hear and pray, seem an irksome task?--when I cannot see the Savior's beauty, nor feel Him precious, nor labor as zealously, nor suffer as patiently, for Him as I would? The answer is at hand--Look again to Jesus. This is the only remedy that can meet your case. Go direct to Christ; He is the Fountain-head, He is the living Well. May the Holy Spirit open your eyes to see, that while all emptiness exists in you, all fullness dwells in Jesus--there is a fathomless depth in the heart of Christ--of love unchangeable, of grace all-sufficient, of truth immutable, of salvation from all sin and trial and sorrow--commensurate with your need and vast as His own infinity. Never can your grace be too low, nor your frame too depressed, nor your path too perplexing, nor your sorrow too keen, nor your sin too great, nor your condition too extreme, for Christ; because He is both Divine and human: thus uniting the nature that can relieve with the nature that can sympathize. "Son of God! Son of man! how wondrous and glorious are You!"

Be very honest and diligent in ascertaining the cause of your soul's deadness. The correct knowledge of this is necessary to its removal; and its removal is essential to the effectual recovery of the inner life from its relapsed state. Is it indulged sin? Is it the neglect of private prayer? Is it worldliness, carnality, unwatchfulness? Any one of these would so grieve the Spirit of God within you, as to dry up the spirituality of your soul. Do not be beguiled with the belief that the real recovery has taken place, simply because that, conscious of your state, in meaningless regrets you acknowledge and deplore it. "The sluggard desires and has nothing." Observe, He has his desires, but nothing more, because with them he is satisfied. Let not this be your state. Seek earnestly, importunately, believingly, until you possess more abundantly life from Christ. Seek a gracious revival of the life of God in your soul. Seek a clearer manifestation of Christ, a renewed baptism of the Spirit, a more undoubted evidence of your conversion, a surer, brighter hope of heaven. Thus seeking, you will find it; and finding it, your "peace will flow like a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea." Oh the joy of a revived state of the inner life of God! It is the joy of spring succeeding to the gloom and chill of winter. It is the joy of the sunlight after a cloudy and dark day. "Lord, lift You up the light of Your countenance upon, us." " Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts; cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved."

FEBRUARY 6.

Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. Philippians 1:29

Such is the nature of Christ's religion, and such the terms of His discipleship--suffering and self-denial. By those who are not initiated into the mysteries of the kingdom of grace, this is a truth hard to be understood. To them it is inexplicable how one whose person is loved by God, whose sins Christ has forgiven, whose life appears holy, useful, and honored, should be the subject of Divine correction, and perhaps in some instances should, more than others, seem smitten of God and afflicted. But to those who are students of Christ, who learn at the feet of Jesus, this is no insoluble problem. They understand, in a measure, why the most holy are frequently the most chastened. Ah! beloved, in the school where this truth is learned, all truth may be learned--at the feet of Jesus. In His light we shall see light. But men turn from the sun, and wonder that, in the study of divine truth, shadows should fall darkly upon their path. They study the Bible

so little beneath the cross, with an eye intent upon Christ, from whom all truth emanates, of whom all truth testifies, and to whom all truth leads. What says "the Truth" himself? "This is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." The crisis in your life speeds on, when all knowledge, save the knowledge of Christ loving you, pardoning you as a guilty, saving you as a lost, sinner, and reconciling you to God as a rebellious sinner, will prove as unsubstantial as a shadow, as unreal and fleeting as a dream. Oh, let this be the one desire and earnest resolve of your soul, "That I may know Him." "Yes, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

Such, then, as have learned of Christ can understand why a child of God should be a child of affliction. Why "the Lord tries the righteous." Declarations such as these have a significance of meaning they can well comprehend--"I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction." "Whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." And when the present and hallowed results of the Divine dealings are in a measure realized--when some sheaves of the golden fruit of the precious seed sown in weeping are sickled--the heart awakened to more prayer, Christ more precious, sin more hated, self more loathed, holiness more endeared, and the soul brought into greater nearness to God--when the suffering Christian reviews the Divine supports he has experienced in his affliction, how God encircled him with the everlasting arms, how Christ pillowed his languid head, how the Holy Spirit comforted and soothed his anguish, by unfolding the sweetness and fullness of the Scriptures, sealing promise upon promise upon his smitten heart, his chastened spirit can well exclaim, "You have dealt well with Your servant, O Lord, according to Your word." You have broken but to bind up, have wounded but to heal, have emptied but to replenish, have embittered but to sweeten, have removed one blessing but to bestow another and a greater.

"You do but take my lamp away,

To bless me with eternal day."

"Whom have I in heaven but You? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside You."

FEBRUARY 7.

I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with your likeness. Psalm 17:15.

THE beatific vision has brought the believer's whole soul into the most perfect harmony with God. He is satisfied with the character and perfections of God, which now unfold their grandeur without a cloud, and fill the soul without a limit. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." An angel's sight, and an angel's knowledge, enkindle an angel's fervor; and as growing discoveries and endless illustrations of the Divine perfections increase with eternity, glory, honor, and thanksgiving to Him who sits upon the throne will be the saint's undying song.

He is satisfied, too, with all God's providential dealings with him in the world he has passed. The present is the repose of faith--and faith can say, amid scenes of perplexity and peril, of obscurity and doubt, "It is well", trusting in the wisdom and faithfulness of God. And yet how difficult often do we find it to trace God's design, or connect His strange dealings with a wise purpose or a gracious end. We cannot unravel the web. Is it not so, my reader? Let faith look back upon the past of your life, not to revive its painful emotions, but that with steadier wing and bolder flight it may bear you forward.

That dark cloud of sorrow that settled upon your fair prospects--that blast of adversity that swept away riches--that stroke of providence that tore from your sight the wife of your youth, or hurried the child of your hopes prematurely to the grave, or that placed the friend of your bosom, the companion of your hours, into darkness--or that came near to your own person, and arrested you with disease--you pause and inquire, Why is it thus? Ah! the full answer you may never have in this world--for faith must have scope; but, by and by, if not here, yet from a loftier position and beneath a brighter sky, and with a stronger vision, you shall look back and know and understand, and admire it all, and "shall be satisfied."

The glorified are satisfied, too, with the conduct of God's grace. If there is often inexplicable mystery in providence, there is yet profounder mystery in grace. Loving him as God does, yet that He should hide Himself from His child; hating sin, yet allowing its existence, and permitting His children to fall under its influence; leaving them often to endure the fiery darts of Satan, and to tread dreary paths, cheerless, starless--the sensible presence of the heavenly Guide withdrawn, and not a voice to break the solemn stillness or to calm the swelling wave--ah! this is trying indeed!--But all, before long, will be satisfactorily explained.

Now the glorified see how harmonious with every principle of infinite holiness and justice, truth and wisdom, was God's scheme of redeeming mercy; and that it was electing love, and sovereign mercy, and free favor, that made him a subject of grace on earth, and an heir of glory in heaven. And as he bends back his glance upon all the way the Lord his God brought him the forty years' travel in the wilderness--traces the ten thousand times ten thousand unfoldings of His love--the love that would not and the power that could not let him go--the faithful rebukes, the gentle dealings, the unwearied patience, and the inexhaustible sympathy of Jesus, with what depth of emotion and emphasis of meaning does he exclaim, "I am satisfied!"

The saints are satisfied, too, with the heaven of glory to which they are brought. They awake up in God's likeness. Positively and perfectly holy, positively and perfectly happy, actually with Christ, and contemplating, with an intellectual and moral perception all unclouded, the glory of God, how completely satisfied is he with the new world of purity and bliss, of light and splendor, into which his ransomed spirit sprung! The last earthly passion has died away, the last remnant of corruption is destroyed, the last moan of suffering and sigh of sorrow is hushed in the stillness of the tomb; the corruptible has put on incorruption, the mortal has put on immortality, and the glorified spirit stands amid the throng of holy and adoring ones who encircle the throne, and swells the universal anthem--"He has done all things well."

FEBRUARY 8.

That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Rom. 6:4

THE resurrection of Christ is a vital doctrine of Christianity. It sustains an essential relation to the spiritual life of the believer. Viewing it in connection with the union of Christ and His people, the two facts become identical--standing in the relation of cause and effect. Our Lord, in His great atoning work, acted in a public or representative character. He represented in His person the whole elect of God, who virtually were in Him, each step that he took in working out their redemption. In His resurrection from the grave this was preeminently so. The Head could not be resuscitated apart from the body. Christ could not rise without the Church. Thus, then, the new or the resurrection life of Christ, and the inner or spiritual life of the believer, are one and indivisible. Now, when the resurrection of the Head is spiritually realized, when it is fully

received into the heart by faith, it becomes a quickening, energizing, sanctifying truth to each member of His body. It transmits a power to the inmost soul, felt in all the actings and manifestations of the spiritual life. Blessed are they who feel, and who feel daily, that they are indeed "risen with Christ," and who find every new perception of this great truth to act like a mighty lever to their souls--lifting them above this "present evil world"--a world passing away.

Perhaps no circumstance connected with the resurrection of Christ conveys to the mind a clearer idea of its bearings upon the happiness of the Church than the part which the Divine Father is represented as having taken in the illustrious event. His having committed Himself to the fact at once stamps it with all its saving interest. "Whom God has raised." "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead." By this act of raising up His Son from the grave, the Father manifested His delight in, and His full acceptance of, the sacrifice of Christ, as a finished and satisfactory expiation for the sins of His people. So long as Jesus remained in the grave, there was wanting the evidence of the acceptance of His death; the great seal of heaven, the signature of God, was needed to authenticate the fact. But when the Father released the Surety from the dominion of death, he annihilated, by that act, all legal claim against His Church, declaring the ransom accepted, and the debt cancelled. "He was taken from prison,"--as the prisoner of justice--the prisoner of death--and the prisoner of the grave; the Father, in the exercise of His glorious power, opens the prison door, and delivers the illustrious Captive--and by the door through which He emerges again to life, enters the full justification of His whole Church; for it is written--"He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

A more important truth--where all are of infinite moment to the happiness of man--is not found in the Word of God. As it forms the keystone to the mighty arch of Christianity, so it constitutes the groundwork of spiritual life, upon the basis of which the Holy Spirit of God quickens the souls of all, who are "the called according to His purpose." It was a knowledge of this truth which awoke the ardent desire of the apostle's soul, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection."

FEBRUARY 9.

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it; but the redeemed shall walk there. Isaiah 35:8, 9

HEAVEN is the abode of a renewed people; it is a holy place, and the home of the holy; and before the sinner can have any real fitness for heaven, any well-grounded hope of glory, he must be a partaker of a nature harmonizing with the purity, and corresponding with the enjoyments, of heaven. Heaven would be no heaven to a carnal mind, to an unsanctified heart. Were it possible to translate an unconverted individual from this world to the abodes of eternal glory, overwhelmed with the effulgence of the place, and having no fellowship of feeling with the purity of its enjoyments, and the blessedness of its society, he would exclaim--"Take me hence--it is not the place for me--I have no sympathy with it--I have no fitness for it--I have no pleasure in it." Solemn thought! But the Christian is a renewed creature--he is a partaker of the Divine nature; he has sympathies, affections, and desires, imparted to him by the Spirit, which assimilate him to the happiness and purity of heaven. It is impossible but that he must be there. He possesses a nature unfit for earth, and congenial only with heaven. He is the subject of a spiritual life that came from, and now ascends to, heaven. All its aspirations are heavenly--all its breathings are heavenly--all its longings are heavenly; and thus it is perpetually soaring towards that world of glory from where it came, and for which God is preparing it. So that it would seem utterly impossible but that a

renewed man must be in heaven, since he is the partaker of a nature fitted only for the regions of eternal purity and bliss. But what is it that gives the Christian a valid deed, a right of possession, to eternal glory? It is his justification by faith through the imputed righteousness of Christ. This is the only valid title to eternal glory which God will admit--the righteousness of His dear Son imputed to him that believes. Here is the grand fitness of a poor, lost, polluted, undone sinner; the fitness that springs from the spotless righteousness of the Lord Jesus, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." "He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Behold, then, beloved, the high vantage-ground on which a saint of God stands, with regard to his hope of heaven. He stands out of his own righteousness in the righteousness of another. He stands accepted in the Accepted One, he stands justified in the Justified One, and justified, too, by God, the great Justifier.

The spiritual life which God has breathed into our souls will never rest until it reaches its full and perfect development. Deep as are its pulsations, holy as are its breathings, it is yet but in its infancy, compared with that state of perfection to which it is destined. The highest state of sanctification to which the believer can arrive here is but the first dawn of day, contrasted with the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," which will burst upon him in a world of perfect holiness. Heaven will complete the work which sovereign grace has begun upon earth. Heaven is the consummation of the spiritual life of the believer.

FEBRUARY 10.

To present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: if you continue in the faith grounded and settled. Colossians 1:22, 23.

NEXT to an ardent desire to be assured that he possesses the truth--the believer in Jesus will feel anxious for establishment in the truth. It will not suffice for him to know, upon evidence he may not gainsay, that he is a converted man; He will aim to be an advancing Christian. Just to have touched the border of the Savior's righteousness, and obtained the healing, will not satisfy his conscience; with a strong and growing faith he will strive to wrap the robe more closely around him, in that full assurance of his "acceptance in the Beloved," of his "completeness in Christ," which supplies the strongest incentive to a walk worthy of his heavenly calling.

The Christian's faith includes not merely what we are to believe, but also what we are to practice. It embraces not only the doctrines of Christ, but equally the precepts and commandments of Christ. The true Christian desires to stand "complete in all the will of God." No longer under a covenant of works, but under the law of Christ, He aspires to be an obedient disciple, manifesting his love to Jesus by observing the commands of Jesus. He needs Christ to be his King, as he needs Him to be his Priest; to govern him, as to atone for him; to sanctify, as to save him. His faith is characterized by the apostle Jude as our "most holy faith." Its nature is holy, its principle is holy, its actings are holy, its tendencies are holy, its fruits are holy. It seeks to "bring every thought into obedience to Christ;" nor will it cease its mighty work--opposed, thwarted, and foiled, though it be--until the soul it sanctifies takes its place "without fault before the throne," perfected in the image of God and of the Lamb.

Establishment in the faith is a matter of great moment in the experience of a child of God. The relation of stability in the truth with progress in the Divine life, is the relation of cause and effect. It is impossible that there can be any progress of the inner life in connection with unsettledness and instability of opinion on the great points of the Christian faith. Hence the especial stress which the Spirit of truth has laid upon it.

What says the Scripture? "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught." "Now He which establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God." "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end you may be established." Welcome all God's dealings, as designed and as tending to build you up on your most holy faith, and thus advance the life of God in your soul. A hallowed possession of trial is a great mean of soul-advancement. Affliction is God's school. Every true child of God has been placed in it. Every glorified saint has emerged from it. "Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, and teach him out of Your law." Chastening--the school; instruction--the end. Humbling and painful though the process be, who, to secure such an end, would not meekly welcome the discipline?

FEBRUARY 11.

This is my comfort in my affliction: for your word has quickened me. Psalm 119:50.

OH, how many a deeply-tried Christian has set his seal to this truth! What is the comfort sought by the worldling in his affliction? Alas! he seeks to drown his sorrow by plunging yet deeper into that which has created it. He goes to the world for his comfort; that world that has already belied him, betrayed him, and stung and wounded him more keenly and deeply than the adder. But turn to the man of God. What was the Psalmist's comfort in his sorrow? Was it the lightness of his affliction? Was it the soothing tenderness and sympathy of the saints? Ah, no! it was none of these. It was the spiritual quickening his soul received through the truth of God! This healed his sorrow-stricken heart; this poured a tide of richer comfort into his deeply afflicted soul than the sweetest human balm, or even the entire removal of his trial, could have done. Oh, favored soul, who, when in deep and dark waters--when passing through the fiery furnace--are led to desire spiritual quickening above all other comforts beside--sweetly testifying, "This is my comfort in my affliction, Your word has quickened me." That word, unfolding to us Jesus, leading us to Jesus, and transforming us into the image of Jesus, proves a reviving word in the hour of trial.

By bringing us into a closer acquaintance with the word, trial stimulates the inner life. We flee to the word for counsel or for comfort, and the word proves a quickening word. Divine correction not only teaches, but it stimulates our relish for the spiritual parts of God's truth. In times of prosperity we are tempted to neglect the word. The world abates the keenness of the soul's appetite. We taste no sweetness in its promises, and cannot receive its admonitions and rebukes. "The full soul loaths a honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." Replenished with created good, and surfeited with earthly comfort, the soul, in its pride and self-sufficiency, loathes the divine honey of God's word. But when the Lord removes the creature, and embitters the world--both proving cisterns that can hold no water--then how precious becomes the word of Jesus! Not its doctrines and its consolations only, but even its deepest searching and its severest rebukes--that which lays us the lowest in the dust of shame and self-abhorrence--are then sweet as the honey and the honeycomb to our renewed taste. Then in truth we exclaim--"How sweet are Your words to my taste! yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

FEBRUARY 12.

But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 1 Cor. 2:10

THERE is no darkness which God's own Spirit cannot scatter, no difficulty which He cannot remove, no portion of the word which He cannot explain. All that is necessary to your salvation is revealed in the word,

all that can be known of Jesus is there discovered; and all this the blessed Spirit stands prepared to make known to you. He it is who leads you to Jesus; Jesus lifts the veil and reveals the Father; and the Father, when revealed, appears full of love, mercy, and forgiveness, to the poor returning prodigal, who, in penitence and lowliness, seeks an asylum in His heart. And, oh! how ready is the Spirit to instruct you! Such love and grace has He in His heart, the Heavenly Dove seems ever poised upon the wing, ready to fly to that soul who but sighs for His inward teaching. Does He see one oppressed with a sense of guilt, He hastens to apply the atoning blood of Jesus. Does He mark one weary with his fruitless toil? He seals the promise of the Savior on the heart, "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Does He observe one combating with temptation, tormented with fear, harassed with doubts, struggling with infirmity, halting through weakness? Oh, how ready is He to show that soul where its great strength, and comfort, and grace lie--even in the fullness of a most loving, precious, and all-sufficient Savior! Oh, then, in the name of Jesus, seek this glorious gift of God. Seek Him as a life-giving Spirit, as making Jesus known to you--as leading you into the deep things of God's word--as deeply sanctifying you--as imparting to you the love, confidence, and consolation of an adopted child--as comforting you in every sorrow--as strengthening the divine life in your soul--as being to you the earnest and the seal of eternal glory.

Let it be your encouragement to remember that God knows His own work in your heart; and not only does He know, but He acknowledges it; and not only does He acknowledge, but He delights in it. Your faith may be feeble, your strength small, your grace but little, your knowledge limited, your experience defective; yet, if by the Eternal Spirit you have been led out of yourself, to take refuge in Christ, you are one over whom God rejoices with joy. Beautiful to His eye, and dear to His heart, is that mark of holiness in your soul. What is it but the product of His own power, the germ of His own grace, the fruit of His own Spirit, the outline of His own image? Will He, then, despise, overlook, or turn His back upon it? Never! never! Have you been made willing in the day of His power? Have you laid upon His altar the richest and the best of the sacrifice? Oh, honored servant you! Oh, rich, costly, and acceptable offering! Your God delights in it; yes, delights in you! Ask, and you shall receive a fuller teaching and anointing of the Holy Spirit. Possessing Him, your path to glory will grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

FEBRUARY 13.

Why let those who suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. 1 Peter 4:19

THE God who is now dealing with you is love, all love--a God in Christ--your covenant God--your reconciled Father. All His thoughts towards you, peace; all His feelings, love; and all His dealings, mercy. Soon will you be in His heavenly presence, and behold His unveiled glory as it beams forth from the eternal throne. Soon will you be with Jesus, shall see Him, be like Him, and dwell with Him forever. Darkness, and conflict, and sickness, and death shall cease, because sin shall cease.

Then, in your blessed experience, will be realized the beatific vision--"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Let this prospect reconcile you patiently to wait all the days of your appointed time, until your change come. God is faithful. Christ, in whom you believe, is able to keep that which you have committed unto Him against that glorious day.

He will perfect that which concerns you. Nothing shall be consumed in your present fiery trial, but the tin and dross. The precious and imperishable gold shall be "found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Not more safe were Noah and his family, when they sailed in the ark through the storm, than is that soul who is shut up in Christ. If you have come out of yourself, have left all, and have fled to Jesus, this is your encouragement--not a soul ever perished whom the Father gave in covenant to his Son--whom the Son redeemed--whom the Spirit has regenerated, and in whom He dwells.

A threefold cord keeps that precious saint--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. "Kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation." Oh, precious declaration! Press it with a stronger faith to your heart; for if God be for you, who can be against you? In your present state of suffering you find it difficult to think or to pray. But He, who formed you, knows your frame, "He remembers that we are dust." There is One who thinks and prays for you. It is Jesus, your Elder Brother; the "brother born for adversity;" the great High Priest, wearing your nature, who has passed within the veil, "now to appear in the presence of God for us."

Jesus intercedes for you moment by moment. Your faith shall not fail, your grace shall not decline, your hope shall not make ashamed; for He who came down to earth, and was wounded for your transgression, and was bruised for your iniquities, rose again from the dead, and ascended on high, now to appear in the presence of God for you. Christ prays for you, and that, when by reason of confusion of mind and weakness of body you cannot pray for yourself. Precious Jesus! You are that gentle Shepherd, who over-drives not Your little ones.

When they cannot run, You do permit them to walk; and when, through feebleness, they cannot walk, You do carry them. You are He of whom it is said, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom."

FEBRUARY 14.

For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on those who are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. Hebrews 5:1-2

OVERLOOK not the fitness of the Lord Jesus to meet all the infirmities of His people. There are two touching and expressive passages bearing on this point. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Wondrous view of the Incarnate God! That very infirmity, Christian reader, which now bogs you to the earth, by reason of which you can in no wise lift up yourself-- your Savior bore. Is it sin? is it sorrow? is it sickness? is it want? It bowed Him to the dust, and brought the crimson drops to His brow. And is this no consolation? Does it not make your infirmity even pleasant, to remember that Jesus once bore it, and in sympathy bears it still? The other passage is--"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Touched with my infirmity! What a thought! I reveal my grief to my friend, I discern the emotions of his soul. I mark the trembling lip, the sympathizing look, the moistened eye--my friend is touched with my sorrow. But what is this sympathy--tender, soothing, grateful as it is--to the sympathy with which the great High Priest in heaven enters into my case, is moved with my grief, is touched with the feeling of my infirmity?

Let us learn more tenderly to sympathize with the infirmities of our brethren. "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Oh for more of this primitive Christianity! The infirmity of a Christian brother should by a heartfelt sympathy become in a measure our own. We ought to bear it. The rule of our conduct towards him should be the rule of our conduct towards our own selves.

Who would feel bound or disposed to travel from house to house, proclaiming with trumpet tongue, and with evident satisfaction, his own weaknesses, failings, and infirmities? To God we may confess them, but no divine precept enjoins their confession to man. We unveil them to His eye, and He kindly and graciously veils them from all human eyes. Be this our spirit, and our conduct, towards a weak and erring brother. Let us rather part with our right hand than publish his infirmity to others, and thus wound the Head by an unkind and unholy exposure of the faults and frailties of a member of His body; and by so doing cause the enemies of Christ to blaspheme that worthy name by which we are called.

Honor and glorify the Spirit, who thus so graciously and so kindly sympathizes with our infirmities. Pay to Him divine worship, yield to Him divine homage; and let your unreserved obedience to His commands, your jealous regard for His honor, and your faithful hearkening to the gentle accents of His "still, small voice," manifest how deeply sensible you are of His love, His grace, and His faithfulness, in sympathizing with your sorrows, in supplying your need, and in making your burdens and infirmities all and entirely His own.

Nor let us forget that, so condescending is Jesus, He regards Himself as honored by the confidence which reposes our sorrows upon His heart. The infirmity which we bring to His grace, and the sin which we bring to His atonement, and the trials which we bring to His sympathy, unfold Jesus as He is--and so He is glorified. Consequently, the oftener we come, the more welcome we are, and the more precious does Jesus become.

FEBRUARY 15.

You are the salt of the earth. Matthew 5:13

WHEN our Lord reminds His people that they are "the salt of the earth," He describes the gracious state of all real believers. The grace of God is that "salt," apart from which all is moral corruption and spiritual decay. Where Divine grace exists not, there is nothing to stunt the growth, or to check the progress, or to restrain the power, of the soul's depravity. The fountain pours out its streams of corruption and death, bidding defiance to all human efforts either to purify or restrain. But let one grain of the salt of God's grace fall into this corrupt fountain, and there is deposited a counteracting and transforming element, which at once commences a healing, purifying, and saving process. And what parental restraint, and the long years of study, and human law, had failed to do, one hour's deep repentance of sin, one believing glance at a crucified Savior, one moment's realization of the love of God have effectually accomplished. Oh the intrinsic preciousness, the priceless value, the sovereign efficacy of this Divine salt--God's converting, sanctifying grace! Effecting a lodgment in the most debased and corrupt heart, it revolutionizes the whole soul--changing its principles, purifying its affections, and assimilating it to the Divine holiness.

Thus all true believers in Jesus, from their gracious character, are denominated "the salt of the earth." And why so? Because all that is divine, and holy, and precious, exists in them, and in them only. It is found in that nature which the Holy Spirit has renewed, in that heart which Divine grace has changed, in that soul humbled in the dust before God for sin, and now, in the exercise of faith which He has given, reposing on the atoning work of Jesus, exclaiming--

' Other refuge have I none,

Hangs my helpless soul on you."

There, where God's love is felt--there, where the Holy Spirit is possessed--there, where the Savior's atonement is received, and His image is reflected--there is found the precious "salt of the earth." The world does not know it, and even the lowly grace may be veiled from the eye of the Church--few mark the silent tear, or see the deep prostration of the Spirit before the Lord, or are cognizant of its hidden joy, or measure the extent of the holy influence, noiselessly yet effectually exerted; but God, looking from His throne of glory through the ranks of pure intelligences that encircle Him, beholds it; and in that humble mind, and in that believing heart, He sees the divine and precious "salt," which beautifies, sanctifies, and preserves the world. He sees true holiness nowhere else; He recognizes His own moral image in no other. The Christian is emphatically "the salt of the earth."

FEBRUARY 16.

But if the salt have lost its savor, with which shall it be salted? Matthew 5:13

THE indestructibility of the divine life in the soul of man, the imperishable nature of real grace, is a truth so deeply involving the holiness and happiness of the Christian, and--what is of still greater moment--the glory of God, that we would place it in the fore-ground of the statement we are about to advance. In the most searching investigation we would make into the state of religion in the soul, we would never forget, that where there exists real grace, that grace is as imperishable as the God who implanted it; that where true faith has led your trembling footsteps to Jesus, to receive Him as all your salvation, that faith is as deathless as its author.

But with this broad and emphatic statement of a great and holy truth, we must proceed to justify the affecting declaration of the Savior's words, that the salt may lose its savor. In what sense will this apply to the spiritual life of the believer? Most clearly and indisputably, in the sense of a relapsed state of grace, and of its consequent loss of vigorous influence. The first symptom of this state which appears may be a change which the individual detects in his own soul as to his actual, personal enjoyment of religion. Put to him the question--With all your observance of external religious duties and activities, what amount of spiritual enjoyment have you of vital religion in your soul? Have spiritual truths that holy savor and sweetness to your taste which indicate a healthy state of soul? Do you know habitually what close, filial, and confidential communion with God is?--the purifying power of confession?--the frequent sprinkling of the atoning blood?--the meek submissive temper of mind in trials sent by God, or under provocation received from man? Were he to reply to these close, searching interrogatories as a man honest with himself and to his God, he would perhaps unhesitatingly answer--"Alas! the salt has lost its savor! There was a period when all this was the happy experience of my soul. There was then a savor in the very name of Jesus--but it is gone! There was a reality in divine truth--but it is gone! There was an attraction in the throne of grace--but it is gone! I once walked filially with my Heavenly Father--I felt the power of godliness in my soul--I knew what heart religion was, what secret, closet religion was--but alas! the salt has lost its savor!"

But a solemn question is proposed--"With which shall it be salted?" In other words, how can such a relapsed state of the spiritual life be recovered? The recovery is not impossible, and the case, therefore, is not hopeless. The salt may again be salted; the waning strength may be restored. Impossible as this may be to man, with God it is possible. By infusing a new life into the renewed nature, a fresh impartation of grace to the heart, and thus by putting His hand again to the entire work of restoring and reviving the whole inner man, the salt, re-salted, may regain its former sweetness and power. The means by which this great and gracious recovery may be effected are such as His wisdom will suggest, and His sovereignty will

adopt. But of this we may rest assured, all will be under the direction of unchangeable love. Whether it may be by the gentle gales of the Spirit, or by the severe tempest of trial, is but of little moment in comparison of the happy and glorious result. If the salt that has lost its savor be but re-salted, the mysterious process by which it is effected we will calmly and submissively leave in His hands. "This also comes forth from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working."

FEBRUARY 17.

Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon you: for you will answer me. Psalm 86:6-7

THE grace that is brought into exercise in the season of affliction must necessarily tend greatly to promote the revival of the life of God in the soul of the believer. How liable is grace to decay, when all things smile upon a path smooth and unruffled! But God sends affliction, and the grace that lay concealed is brought to view, and the grace that remained dormant is summoned to arms; the whole soul is awakened, and inspired as with new life. "The trial of faith works, patience." Thus one tried grace stirs up another grace, until all the links in the golden chain feel the electric influence, and are set in motion. Oh blessed trouble, that so stirs up the life of God in the soul as to make each grace of the Spirit a "new sharp threshing instrument having teeth;" a weapon re-cast, and newly furbished in the furnace, and so coming forth with keener edge and more polished blade, to "fight the fight of faith" with mightier power and success.

But the influence of sanctified affliction upon the inner life is, perhaps, the most evident and powerful in the revival of the spirit of prayer. Strange, that to this, the highest, holiest, and sweetest privilege prepared for the Christian, he is often the most indifferent, and in its observance his feelings are the most chilled and sluggish. What an evidence--one more melancholy there cannot be--of the moral deadness of the soul by nature, that even after it is quickened with a life that brings it into union with the life of God, after the Spirit of God has entered and made it His abode there, ever dwelling and reigning and working in it, there should still remain so much deadness to that which is spiritual, especially the most spiritual of all duties, and the most precious of all privileges--communion with God.

But in the time of trouble we awake to the conviction that we are in possession of a mighty instrument, which when exerted brings all heaven and the God of heaven into our soul. We start as from a dream; and just at the identical moment when all creature assistance droops, and all earthly resources fail, we discover that we are furnished with a power of relief mightier than the mightiest angels--a power which, when exerted (we speak it with reverence), overcomes, like the wrestling patriarch, Omnipotence itself--the power of prayer! And what is prayer but God's power in the soul of a poor, feeble worm of the dust over himself? It was no human might of Jacob which enabled him to wrestle with, and prevail with, the Angel of the Covenant; it was the power of the Holy Spirit in his soul; and when the Divine Angel yielded, He yielded but to himself; and so God had all the glory--and shall have, of all that He has wrought for us, and of all that we have wrought by Him, through eternity. Oh costly and precious privilege, that of prayer! "You people, pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us."

FEBRUARY 18.

I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because you did it. Psalm 39:9.

THERE are few lessons taught in God's school more difficult to learn, and yet, when really learned, more blessed and holy, than the lesson of filial submission to God's will. There are some beautiful examples of

this in God's word. "And Aaron held his peace." Since God was "sanctified and gloried," terrible as was the judgment, the holy priest mourned not at the way, nor complained of its severity, patient and resigned to the will of God. Thus, too, was it with Eli, when passing under the heavy hand of God: "It is the Lord, let Him do what seems Him good." He bowed in deep submission to the will of his God. Job could exclaim, as the last sad tidings brimmed his cup of woe, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." And David was "dumb and opened not his mouth, because God did it." But how do all these instances of filial and holy submission to the Divine will--beautiful and touching as they are--fade before the illustrious example of our adorable and blessed Lord: "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, your will be done." Oh, how did Jesus, in the deepest depth of His unutterable sorrow, "behave and quiet himself as a child that is weaned of his mother: his soul was even as a weaned child." Such, beloved, be the posture of your soul at this moment. "Be still!" Rest in your Father's hands, calm and tranquil, quiet and submissive, weaned from all but Himself. Oh, the blessedness of so reposing!

"Sweet to lie passive in His hands,

And know no will but His."

"God's love!" It is written upon your dark cloud--it breathes from the lips of your bleeding wound--it is reflected in every fragment of your ruined treasure--it is penciled upon every withered leaf of your blighted flower--"God is love." Adversity may have impoverished you--bereavement may have saddened you--calamity may have crushed you--sickness may have laid you low--but "God is love." Gently falls the rod in its heaviest stroke--tenderly pierces the sword in its deepest thrust--smilingly bends the cloud in its darkest hues--for "God is love."

FEBRUARY 19.

Until the day dawn. 2 Peter 1:19.

THERE awaits the believer such a day as earth never saw, but as earth will surely see--the daybreak of glory. Oh, what a day is this! It will be "as the light of the morning, when the sun rises, even a morning without clouds." Grace now yields its long-held empire, and glory begins its brilliant and endless reign. The way-worn "child of the day" has emerged from the shadows of his pilgrimage, and has entered that world of which it is said, "there shall be no night there." Contemplate some of the attributes of this day of glory.

It will be a day of perfect knowledge. When it is said that there will be no night in heaven, it is equivalent to the assertion that there will be no intellectual darkness in heaven; consequently there will be perfect intellectual light. It is said that we shall then "know every as also we are known." The entire history of God's government will then be spread out before the glorified saint, luminous in its own unveiled and yet undazzling brightness. The mysteries of providence, and the yet profounder mysteries of grace, which obscured much of the glory of that government, will then be unfolded to the wonder and admiration of the adoring mind. The misconceptions we had formed, the mistakes we had made, the discrepancies we had imagined, the difficulties that impeded us, the controversies that agitated us, all, all will now be cleared up--the day has broken, and the shadows have fled forever. Oh, blessed day of perfect knowledge, which will then give me reason to see that all the way along which my God is now leading me, through a world of shadows, is a right way; and that where I most trembled, there I had most reason to stand firm; and that where I most yielded to fear, there I had the greatest ground for confidence; and that where my heart was the most collapsed with grief, there it had the greatest reason to awaken its strings to the most joyous

melody.

It will be a day of perfect freedom from all sorrow. It must be so, since it is written, that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." What a cluster of sweet hopes is there! What a collection of bright beams, throwing, in focal power, their splendor over that cloudless day! Child of sorrow! sick ones dear to Christ! bereaved mourners! hear you these precious words, and let music break from your lips! God will dry your tears. As the mother comforts her sorrowing one, so God will comfort His. Yes, child of grief, there will be no more weeping then; for--oh, ecstatic thought!--"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." And "there shall be no more death." No more rending asunder of affection's close and tender ties; no more separations from the hearts we love; the mourners no more go about the streets; for death is now swallowed up in victory! "Neither sorrow, nor crying." Grief cannot find existence or place in an atmosphere of such bliss. No frustrated plans, no bitter disappointments, no withered hopes, no corroding cares, there mingle with the deep sea of bliss, now pouring its tide of joyousness over the soul. "Neither shall there be any more pain." Children of suffering! hear you this. There will be no more pain racking the frame, torturing the limbs, and sending its influence through the system, until every nerve and fibre quivers with an indescribable agony. "The former things are passed away."

It will be a day of perfect freedom from all sins. Ah! this methinks will be the brightest and sweetest of all the joys of heaven. The Canaanite will no more dwell in the land. Inbred corruption will be done away; the conflict within us will have ceased; no evil heart will betray into inconsistencies and sorrows; not a cloud of guilt will tarnish the unsullied purity of the soul. You holy ones of God! weeping, mourning over indwelling and outbreaking sin, the last sigh you heave will be a glad adieu to pollution--to be tormented with it no more, to be free from it forever. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with your likeness." This is heaven indeed.

FEBRUARY 20.

How sweet are your words unto my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Psalm 110:103

THIS similitude is one of frequent occurrence in the Bible. Moses says, that the Lord made his people to "suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." It is quite clear, then, that we may regard this species of food as the symbol of great spiritual blessings. The sources from where the Christian's nourishment is derived are various. We should be grateful to God that He has not limited us to one secondary source of spiritual nourishment. It was proper, it was wise and gracious in God, that there should be but one Plant of Renown, but one Rose of Sharon, but one Lily of the Valley, but one Living Vine, in other words, that there should be but one Savior and Redeemer, but one Head and Reservoir of the Church. But there are offshoots from this divine plant, there are streams issuing from this sacred fountain-head, from each of which the believer may, by faith, extract the nourishment that strengthens and revives hone?

And what is the word of God but this honey? And from where does this honey fall, but from the heart of God? It is the unfolding of the heart of God. His mind conveys the word, but His heart dictates the word. Take the promises; how "exceeding great and precious" they are. Have you not often found them sweet to your taste as the honey and the honeycomb? When some portion of the word suited to your present need has been brought home to your heart by the sealing power of the Holy Spirit, how have all other sweets become bitter to your taste compared with this! Your Heavenly Father saw your grief, your Divine Captain

beheld your conflict and your exhaustion, and bade His Spirit go and drop that sweet promise into your sad heart, and you found the entrance of God's word gave light and comfort to your sad and gloomy spirit.

The love of God in Christ! Oh, it is sweeter than honey. The love that gave Christ--that chose us in Christ--that has blessed us in Christ--that gives us standing in Christ--surely it passes all knowledge. To see it traveling over all the opposition of our unbelieving minds, and the corruption of our depraved hearts, and meeting us at some peculiar stage of our journey, in some painful crisis of our history, in some bitter lonely trial through which we are passing, how does this exalt our views of its greatness, and bring us into the experience of its sweetness! Such too is the love of the Spirit, His love as tasted in His calling--in His comforting--in His sanctifying--in His witnessing, and in all His effectual and unwearied teaching. "God is love;" and on this truth--sweet in our present experience--we shall be living through eternity, "if so be we have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

FEBRUARY 21.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16.

RICH is the provision which God has made for poor broken-hearted, humble, penitent sinners "God so loved the world." Oh what love was that! This is the love to which, as a trembling sinner, I invite you. And what has this vast and astounding love provided? A "Savior and a great one." Jesus is that Savior! Has the Spirit convinced you of sin? Do you feel guilt a burden, and does the law's curse lie heavy upon you? Then He is your Savior. Believe in Him, embrace and welcome Him. See, how He points to His atoning blood, and bids you bathe in it! See, how He shows you His

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