

Evening Thoughts - June

by Octavius Winslow

The sermon emphasizes the importance of deeper sanctification through the trials and chastisements of life, and the power of prayer and a holy life to demonstrate the Divinity of the Bible.

Scripture: Nehemiah 9:33, Psalm 66:10, Romans 8:33, Ephesians 4:24, Hebrews 10:12, James 4:3

Topics: "God's Holiness", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Octavius Winslow emphasizes the significance of understanding God's holiness through the lens of our afflictions and trials. He explains that while God's chastisements may be painful, they serve a divine purpose in leading us to deeper sanctification and a more profound knowledge of God's character. Winslow encourages believers to view their struggles as opportunities for growth and transformation, ultimately leading to a closer relationship with God. He highlights the importance of prayer and the believer's reliance on Christ for strength and nourishment in their spiritual journey.

Transcript

EVENING THOUGHTS or

DAILY WALKING WITH GOD

JUNE 1.

"Howbeit you are just in all that is brought upon us; for you have done right, but we have done wickedly."
Neh. 9:33

IT would be incorrect to suppose that the chastisements of our heavenly Father were in themselves pleasant and desirable. They are no more so than the physician's recipe, or the surgeon's lancet. But as in the one case, so in the other, we look beyond the medicine to its sanative qualities, we forget the bitterness of the draught in its remedial results. Thus with the medicine of the soul--the afflictions sent and sanctified by God. Forgetting the bitter and the pain of God's dealings, the only question of moment is, what is the cause and what the design of my Father in this? The answer is--our deeper sanctification.

This is effected, first, by making us more thoroughly acquainted with the holiness of God Himself. Sanctified chastisement has an especial tendency to this. To suppose a case. Our sense of God's holiness, previously to this dispensation, was essentially defective, unsound, superficial, and uninfluential. The judgment admitted the truth; we could speak of it to others, and in prayer acknowledge it to God; but

still there was a vagueness and an indistinctness in our conceptions of it, which left the heart cold, and rendered the walk uneven. To be led now into the actual, heart-felt experience of the truth, that in all our transactions we had to deal with the holy, heart-searching Lord God, we find quite another and an advanced stage in our journey, another and a deeper lesson learned in our school. This was the truth, and in this way Nehemiah was taught. "Howbeit you are just (holy) in all that is brought upon us; for you have done right, but we have done wickedly." Oh blessed acknowledgment! Do not think that we speak unfeelingly when we say, it were worth all the discipline you have ever passed through, to have become more deeply schooled in the lesson of God's holiness. One most fruitful cause of all our declensions from the Lord will be found wrapped up in the crude and superficial views which we entertain of the character of God, as a God of infinite purity. And this truth He will have His people to study and to learn, not by sermons, nor from books, not from hearsay, nor from theory, but in the school of loving chastisement--personally and experimentally. Thus beholding more closely, and through a clearer medium, this Divine perfection, the believer is changed more perfectly into the same moral image. "He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness."

The rod of the covenant has a wonderful power of discovery. Thus, by revealing to us the concealed evil of our natures, we become more holy. "The blueness (that is, the severity) of a wound cleanses away evil." This painful discovery often recalls to memory past failings and sins. David went many years in oblivion of his departure from God, until Nathan was sent, who, while he told him of his sin, with the same breath announced the message of Divine forgiveness. Then it was the royal penitent kneeled down and poured forth from the depths of his anguished spirit the fifty-first Psalm--a portion of God's word which you cannot too frequently study. "I do remember my sin this day," is the exclamation of the chastened sufferer. Thus led to search into the cause of the Divine correction, and discovering it--perhaps after a long season of forgetfulness--the "blueness of the wound," the severity of the rod, "cleanses away the evil;" in other words, more deeply sanctifies the soul. "Show me why you contend with me."

JUNE 2.

"For you, O God, have proved us: you have tried us, as silver is tried." Psalm 66:10

FAITH has its trials, as well as its temptations. Affliction is a trial of faith; sorrow in any of its multitudinous forms is a trial of faith; the delay of mercy is a trial of faith; the promise unfulfilled is a trial of faith; the prayer unanswered is a trial of faith; painful providences, mysterious dispensations, straitened circumstances, difficulties, and embarrassments, all are so many trials of faith, commissioned and designed by God to place the gold in the crucible, and the wheat in the sieve, that both may be purified and tried. Ah, is it no trial of the believer's faith, when the foundation upon which it rests is assailed? Is it no trial of faith to have distorted representations of God presented to its eye, dishonoring thoughts of God suggested to the mind, unbelieving apprehensions of Jesus, His love, His grace, and His works, foisted upon the heart? To entertain for one moment the idea that God is unfaithful to His word, or that in His dealings He is arbitrary and unkind? that Jesus is not what He represents Himself to be, an all-sufficient Savior of the lost, the healer of the broken in heart, the tender, gentle Savior, not breaking the bruised reed, but supporting it, not quenching the smoking flax, but fanning it? Oh yes, these to a holy mind are painful trials of faith, from which the tender conscience shrinks, and the sensitive heart recoils.

It is only true grace that is really tried. No man puts mere dross into his furnace, or mere chaff into his sieve. All his toils and pains-taking would go for nothing, for it would come forth in its nature unaltered and unchanged--the dross would still be dross, and the chaff would still be chaff. Now the Lord tries, and Satan

tempts, nothing but genuine grace. It is the wheat, and not the tares, that is made to pass through the fiery trial. Thus do afflictions and trying dispensations prove tests of a man's religion. When there is nothing but tinsel in a profession of Christianity, the fire will consume it; when there is nothing but chaff, the wind will scatter it. The furnace of temptation and the flail of affliction often prove a man's work of what sort it is, long before the discovery is made in a world where no errors can be corrected, and when it will be too late to rectify mistakes. Thus it is that so many professors, who have not the root of the matter in themselves, but endure for awhile, are offended and fall away when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word.

And why is the "wheat" thus sifted? why is so Divine and precious a grace subjected to a process so humiliating and severe? Certainly not because of any intrinsic impurity in the grace itself. All the graces of the Spirit, as they proceed from God, and are implanted in the heart, are pure and holy; as essentially free from sin as the nature from where they flow. But in consequence of the impurity of the heart, and the defilement of the nature in which they are deposited--the body of sin and death by which they are incased--they become mixed with particles of earthliness and carnality, the fine gold with dross, and the pure wheat with chaff. To purify and separate the graces of the Holy Spirit from these things, so foreign to their nature, the Lord permits these temptations, and sends these trials of faith.

Not only may the faith of a child of God be severely assailed, but there are times when that faith may greatly waver. Is this surprising? No, the greatest wonder is, that with all these severe shocks, through which it passes, it does not entirely fail. Nothing but the Divinity that dwells within that grace keeps it. Were it not Divine and incorruptible, fail entirely it must. Look at Abraham--on one occasion in the strength of faith offering up his son, and on another occasion in the weakness of faith denying his wife! Look at David--in the strength of faith slaying Goliath, and in the weakness of faith fleeing from Saul! Look at Job--in the strength of faith justifying God in the severest of His dealings, and in the weakness of faith cursing the day that He was born! Look at Peter--in the strength of faith drawing his sword and smiting a servant of the high priest's, and in the weakness of faith forced by a little maid to deny the Lord whom he had but just defended! Oh! the wonder of wonders is, that there remains a single grain in the sieve, or a particle of metal in the furnace, or a solitary spark in the ocean--that all is not utterly scattered, consumed, and annihilated! Nothing but the power of God and its own incorruptible and imperishable nature, preserve it.

JUNE 3.

"Behold, he prays." Acts 9:11

WHAT a precious fruit of the renewed heart is true prayer! If there is a single exercise of the soul that places the fact of its regeneracy beyond a doubt, it is this. Prayer, that comes as holy fire from God, and that rises as holy incense to God--prayer, that takes me, with every want and infirmity, with every sin and sorrow, to the bosom of the Father, through the smitten bosom of the Son--prayer, that sweetens my solitude, that calms my perturbed spirit, that weakens the power of sin, that nourishes the desire for holiness, and that transports the soul, by anticipation, beyond the region of winds, and storms, and tempests, into the presence of God, where all is sunshine and peace--oh what a wondrous privilege is this!

That there is much of awful mystery yet to be unraveled, in relation to this holy exercise of the soul, we readily admit. How prayer operates upon God, we know not. That it can effect any alteration in His purpose, or change His will, or afford Him information, no one for a moment supposes. And yet, that it

should be an ordained medium by which finite weakness seems to overcome Infinite strength, a human will seems to turn the Divine will, and man's shallow mind seems to pour knowledge into the fathomless mind of God--that it should arrest a threatened judgment, remove an existing evil, or supply a present want--is a marvel in which, like all others of Divine revelation, I submit my reason to my faith, receiving and adoring what my reason cannot, unless I were God, perfectly comprehend. The only solution which we have of this mystery of prayer is contained in these words: "He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God;" the Holy Spirit thus inditing just that petition which is in harmony with the purpose, will, and love of Him who is emphatically the hearer and the answerer of prayer. What a volume might be composed on the subject of prayer, and yet the half would not be told! A compilation of its achievements would of itself be the work of the longest life. Blessed are they who can enter into the spirit of these words--"I give myself unto prayer." "It is good for me to draw near unto God." "Pray without ceasing." "Praying always with all prayer." "If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us; and if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." Have you, reader, this fruit? Then restrain not prayer before God.

JUNE 4.

"They are of those that rebel against the light." Job 24:13

So far from cooperating with the Spirit in the new creation, the natural man presents every resistance and opposition to it. There is not only a passive aversion to, but there is an active resistance of, the work. The stream of man's natural inclinations runs counter to all holiness. A strong and steady current has set in against God and all that God loves. The pride of reason, the perverseness of the will, the enmity of the mind, the heart's love of sin, all are up in arms against the entrance of the Holy Spirit. Satan, the great enemy of God and man, has been too long in quiet and undisturbed possession of the soul, to resign his dominion without a strong and a fearful struggle to maintain it. When the Spirit of God knocks at the door of the heart, every ally is summoned by the "strong man armed" to "quench the Spirit," and bar and bolt each avenue to his entrance. All is alarm, agitation, and commotion within. There is a danger of being dispossessed, and every argument, persuasion, and contrivance must be resorted to, in order to retain the long-undisputed throne. The world is summoned to throw out its most enticing bait--ambition, wealth, literary and political distinction, pleasure in her thousand forms of fascination and power--all are made to pass, as in review, before the mind. The flesh, exerts its influence--the love of sin is appealed to, affection for some long-cherished lust, some long-indulged habit, some "fond amusement," some darling taste--these, inspired with new vigor, are summoned to the rescue. Thus Satan, the world, and the flesh are opposed to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, in the great work of spiritual regeneration. Oh let no individual be so deceived as to believe, that when God the Eternal Spirit enters the soul, He finds the temple swept, and garnished, and prepared for His reception--that without the exercise of His own omnipotent and irresistible power, the heart bounds to welcome Him, the reason bows submissively to His government, and the will yields an instant and humble compliance. Oh no! if He that is in the regenerate were not greater and more powerful than he that is in the world, such is the enmity of the heart to God, such the supreme control which Satan exerts over the whole empire of man, God would be forever shut out, and the soul forever lost. See how clearly regeneration is proved to be the work of the Spirit. God has written it as with a sunbeam, "that we are His workmanship," and that the Eternal Spirit is the mighty agent.

JUNE 5.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Rom. 10:3

WHAT is man's own righteousness, the best that he ever made, but the hewing out of a created cistern, in the place of the infinite fountain? His obedience, at best, must be but a partial and an imperfect one; and, failing in a single point, entails eternal despair. "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." But not only is it a shallow and contracted, it is also a "broken cistern." It can hold no water of life or of peace, of consolation or of joy. In vain his spirit, tormented with guilt and agitated with fear, repairs to it for satisfaction and repose--it supplies it not. Let a man, for example, who is thus seeking salvation by the law, take the holiest day in the calendar of his life; let it be as free as it is possible for a fallen creature to make it from sin; let it be filled up with religious duties and services--it closes, and the curtains of night have drawn around him. Reposing on his pillow, he throws forward a glance into the eternal world--he thinks of the holy God, of the righteous law, of the solemn judgment, and the question, "What if this night I should be summoned to stand before my Judge!--what if to-morrow's sun should rise upon my corpse, and I, a departed spirit, should be mingling with the dread realities of an unseen world?"--and he trembles and turns pale. What! has not his best obedience, his holiest day, his strictest observance, brought peace to his conscience and quietness to his soul? What! does no bright hope of glory play around his pillow, and no loving, peaceful view of God cradle him to rest? Ah, no! He has "forsaken the fountain of living waters, and has hewed him out a cistern, a broken cistern, that can hold no water," and his night closes in upon him with the drapery of hopeless gloom.

To you, reader, is this solemn word now sent. Ah! while your eye has been scanning this page, has there not been in your heart the secret conviction of its truth? You have forsaken the righteousness of God, and for years have you been digging into the law, hoping thus to find in its strictest observance some well-spring of life and peace to your soul. But all your toil has been in vain, and all your time misspent. And why? because "by the works of the law should no man living be justified." As true peace only flows through the channel of justification by faith, turning your back upon that channel, there is, there can be, no peace for your soul. Oh that this voice, now sounding in faithfulness on your ear, might awaken you to a sense of your delusion and your folly, and win you to the "good and the right way." Oh that you might be persuaded to abandon the implements of a self-wrought righteousness, with which you have so long fruitlessly labored, and just as you are--poor, guilty, vile, helpless, and hopeless--betake yourself to the "righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ." The law is a "broken cistern;" it holds no sweet waters of salvation, it gives out no streams of peace. But the Lord Jesus is a living fountain. He is the "end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." He has brought in a new and an "everlasting righteousness," for the full justification of poor sinners, such as you. Abandon at once and forever the broken cistern of a creature-righteousness--too long has it allured but to deceive you--and repair to the fountain of a Divine righteousness, which never has and never will deceive a believing sinner. Drink, oh drink, from this life-giving fountain. Here are peace, joy, confidence, and hope. Clothed in this righteousness, you can look your sins in the face, and death in the face, and fear nothing.

JUNE 6.

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." Psalm 112:6

HOW great the power and charm of a holy life! The world is replete with beauty. There is beauty in nature, beauty in art, beauty in countless forms; but there is no beauty like "the beauty of holiness." The brightness which gleams through a good man's life outshines the sun in its meridian splendor. The world,

too, is mighty in its forces. There is the power of intellect, of learning, and of genius, the power of wealth, of influence, and of rank; but there is no power so commanding and so effective as the power of holiness. The power it wields is omnipotent for the achievement of good. And a more precious and enduring legacy parental affluence and affection cannot bequeath to posterity, than the record of a life traced by the sanctifying influence of faith, the achievements of prayer, and the endowments of holiness. Such a life is a living demonstration of the Divinity of the Bible, and does more to confirm its veracity, and spread its truths through the world, than all that has ever been spoken or written on the evidences of Christianity.

How measureless the loss of such saints of God! To their family and friends, to the Church of Christ and the world, the withdrawal forever from earth of their living piety, fervent prayers, holy conversation, and consistent example, is a serious and far-reaching calamity. And yet they still live among us, not in our hearts and memories only, but in the undying influence of a holy life. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." The grave hides them from sight, but not from memory. Neither the green turf nor the salt wave can bury the still surviving and still molding recollections of the holy dead. In the embalmed remembrance of their graces, their prayers, and their actions, they still live to guide, stimulate, and cheer us in our homeward march. Nor do we cease to live with them. They remember and love us still. Bearing their friendships with them to the skies, purified, sublimated, and enlarged, they yet think of us, yearn over us, and pant to have us with them there, with a tenderness of interest, and an intensity of affection, such as they never felt on earth. For anything that we know, they still hover around our people, encompassing our path to the abodes of bliss. Angels are ministering agents to the heirs of salvation; and may we not suppose that many of the glorified spirits of "just men made perfect" are gifted with a like embassy? "They serve Him day and night in His temple;" and who will say that it may not enter essentially into that service for the Lord, to administer in some unknown way to their former companions in tribulation, and the expectant sharers of their glory? But until we rejoin them in the home of the Father, we should think of them but to follow their holy example, to gather encouragement from their faith and patience, to learn lessons from their failings, and to take up and carry forward the work of the Lord, which dropped from their dying hands; until we, too, are summoned to rest from our labors, and receive our reward.

JUNE 7.

"For 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." 1 Cor. 13:12

THE expansion and perfection of the intellectual faculties will result in a consequent enlargement and perfection of knowledge; and this is no inferior element of the future happiness of the redeemed. All that is gracious and sanctifying in the soul of the believer has its basis in a certain degree of spiritual knowledge. The mind is the medium through which the first communications of the Spirit are received. A knowledge of ourselves has led to a knowledge of Christ; and a knowledge of Christ has laid the foundation of all the joy, and peace, and hope, the soul has experienced. And as our spiritual knowledge increases--the mind becoming more and more informed in Divine truth, there is a corresponding and proportioned increase of the blessing which an experimental acquaintance with the truth yields.

Now, if this be so here, what must it be in the glorified state? Think we not that it will greatly augment the happiness, and heighten the glory, of the saints in heaven, that in their enlarged mental capacity, in the fullest development of their intellectual powers, they shall be enabled to take a wider range of thought? That they shall compass a greater knowledge of God, and see infinitely more of the glory and drink infinitely deeper of the love of Christ, than the most exalted angel in heaven? If in the present school of

God--often the school of deep trial, as we advance from truth to truth, knowing more of Jesus, and increasing in the knowledge of God, we grow more holy and more happy; our peace flowing like a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea; our confidence in God strengthening, and our affections cleaving more closely to the Savior--what, we ask, will be the glory deepening around us, when all the present obstructions and impediments to our advancement in spiritual knowledge are removed, and our intellectual faculties, then unclouded and unfettered, expand their long-folded wings, to sweep an infinite circle of intelligence--knowing even as we are known? If our progress in spiritual knowledge is an accession to our happiness here, what hereafter will be the felicity ever expanding our glorified souls through the medium of an enlarged mind, illimitable as its range of thought, and pure and transparent as the atmosphere it traverses? Deem it not, then, O expectant of heaven! an inferior element of the glory that awaits you, that your intellectual enjoyment, perfect in its nature, shall ever be augmenting in its degree. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," and "then shall we know even as also we known."

JUNE 8.

"They are without fault before the throne of God." Rev. 14:4

A STILL higher element of future glory will be perfect holiness. The very utterance of the thought seems to awaken music in the soul. Seeing Christ as He is, and knowing Him as we are known, we also shall be like Him. Perfected in holiness! Oh, what a conception! what a thought! No more elements of evil working like leaven in the soul. No more traces and fetters of corruption. No more evil heart of unbelief, perpetually departing from God. No more desperate depravity. No more sin warring within, and no more temptation assailing from without. All is perfect holiness now! The outline of the Divine image is complete, for the believer has awakened in the finished likeness of his Lord. The spirit of the just man is made perfect. Is there not enough in this anticipation to make us long to be there? What now shades your spirit, and embitters your joy; suffuses your eyes with tears, and inflicts the keenest pang? Not adversity, nor sickness; not changed affection, nor blighted hopes; not the shaded landscape of life, nor the hollow falling of the earth as the grave closes from your view the heart's precious treasure. Oh, no, not these! It is the sin that dwells in us! Extirpate all sin, and you have erased all sorrow. Complete the grace, and you have perfected the glory. You then have chased all sadness from the heart, and have dried all tears from the eye. That glory will be the glory of unsullied purity. Nothing of sin remains save its recollection, and that recollection but heightens our conception of the preciousness of the blood that shall have effaced every stain, and of the greatness and sovereignty of that grace which shall have brought its there. "Let the saints be joyful in glory," for their battle with sin is over. "These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

"We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." We wait the Bridegroom's coming. We wait the descent of the chariot. We wait the Father's summons to our home. We wait the Master's call to our rest. We wait the uncaging of the spirit, that it may fly. The desire to depart is ardent, but patient. The longing to be with Christ is deep, but submissive. For the full realization of a hope so sublime, so precious, and so sure, we can patiently wait. The theater of suffering is the school of patience; "And patience works experience, and experience hope;" and hope, in the depth of the trial and in the heat of the battle, looks forward to the joy of deliverance and to the spoils of victory. It is well remarked by Calvin, that "God never calls His children to a triumph, until He has exercised them in the warfare of suffering." Thus all who shall eventually wear this palm must now wield the sword. For the consummation of this hope, then, let us

diligently labor, meekly suffer, and patiently wait. Living beneath the cross, looking unto Jesus, toiling for Jesus, testifying for Jesus, and cultivating conformity to Jesus, let us be always ready to give a reason of the hope that is in us; and be always ready to enter into the joy and fruition of that hope, the substance and security of which is--"Christ in you the hope of glory."

JUNE 9.

"Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity." Matthew 7:21-23

OUR blessed Lord foresaw and forewarned men of this evil, that an outward profession of the Gospel may exist, and yet the heart be a stranger to its power. Let His words--searching and solemn as though now uttered from the judgment-seat--sink down into our ears. If, in the days of our Lord, and of His faithful and vigilant apostles--the days when a public profession of attachment to Christ was to mark a man for the cross and the stake--if in their days, and under these circumstances, there were found those who could take refuge in a mere outward profession, is it astonishing that now, when it costs a man nothing to profess Christ, but rather adds to his worldly influence and emolument, thousands should run upon this quicksand, and make shipwreck of their souls? Oh, it is no marvel.

There may be in an individual's frame of mind and outward conduct much that bears a strong affinity and resemblance to many of the positive evidences of the new birth, without a single step towards that state having been taken. There may be, as regards the state of mind, a deep and clear knowledge of Divine truth, a strongly enlightened judgment, and a sound and scriptural creed. There shall be a strong attachment to, and a zealous maintenance of, some of the distinguishing doctrines of grace--even a desire to hear of Christ, and an ability to judge between sound and unsound, savory and unsavory preaching, and all the while the heart shall be encased in the hardness of impenitence and unbelief--a stranger to the regenerating influence of the Spirit of God. Do not misinterpret our meaning. We speak not anything against a true, spiritual, and experimental acquaintance with Divine truth. We do not forget that there can be no faith in Christ, without some knowledge of Christ. The very existence of faith in the heart implies the existence of, and an acquaintance with, the object of faith--the Lord Jesus. We speak not against an enlarged possession of Divine knowledge. It would be well for the Church of Christ, and would greatly promote her stability and real spirituality, were the standard of Divine knowledge more elevated in her midst. It would screen her from much of the unsound theology and false philosophy, which, at this moment, threaten her purity and her peace. It cannot, with perfect truth, be said--touching an elevated and spiritual taste and thirst for experimental truth--that "wisdom and knowledge are the stability of our times." Much of the prevalent religion is characterized by "itching ears," 2 Tim. 4:3;--habit of change, Proverbs 24:21;--unstableness, 2 Peter 3:16;--affected by "every wind of doctrine," Eph. 4:14; and which, in its influence, is "barren and unfruitful," 2 Peter 1:18. Were there a more diligent and prayerful study of God's word--a more regular and constant attendance upon a stated ministry (if that ministry be found productive of spiritual benefit), connected with frequent seasons of retirement, consecrated to meditation, self-examination, and secret prayer, there would be less of that superficial Christianity which marks the many in this day of high and universal profession. We want more depth of knowledge--more spirituality--more experience--more of the life and power of true godliness; in a word, more of the anointing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

JUNE 10.

"My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." Luke 1:47

THE regenerate soul possesses and acknowledges a new Savior. How glorious, suitable, and precious is Jesus to him now! Not so formerly. Then He had his saviors, his "refuges of lies," his fatal confidences many. Jesus was to him as "a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor loveliness." It may be, He denied His Deity, rejected His atonement, scorned His grace, slighted His pardon and His love. Christ is all to him now. He adores Him as the "mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace;" as "over all, God blessed forever;" as "God manifest in the flesh;" as stooping to the nature of man, becoming bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; as offering Himself up, the "propitiation for our sins;" as dying "the just for the unjust." His righteousness is glorious, as "justifying from all things,"--His blood is precious, as "cleansing from all sin,"--His fullness of grace is valued, as "supplying all need." Oh how surpassingly glorious, inimitably lovely, and unutterably precious is Jesus to a renewed soul!

Truly He is a new Savior. "Other lords" he has renounced; "refuges of lies" He has turned his back upon; "false Christs" He no longer follows. He has found another and a better Savior, Jesus, the mighty God, the Redeemer of sinners; the "end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." All is new to his recovered sight: a new world of glory has beamed on his mind; Jesus the Lamb is the light and glory thereof. Never did he suppose there was such beauty in His person, such love in His heart, such perfection in His work, such power and such willingness to save. That blood, which was trampled under foot, is now precious. That righteousness, which was scorned, is now glorious. That name, which was reviled, is now as music to the soul, yes, "a name that is above every name."

Jesus is his only Savior. Not an allowed confidence has he out of Christ. The covenant of dead works he has renounced. The Spirit, having brought him out of and away from it, has led him into the covenant of grace, the substance and stability and glory of which is Jesus. On the broad basis of Immanuel's finished, atoning work he rests his whole soul; and the more he presses the foundation, and the more he leans upon the corner-stone, the stronger and the more able to sustain him does he find it. True, a self-righteous principle he feels closely adhering to him all his journey through the wilderness. When he prays, it is there; when He labors, it is there; when he reflects, it is there: he detects it when suspicion of its existence would be most at rest. But in the sober moments of his judgment, when prostrate beneath the cross, and looking up to God through Jesus, this principle is searched out, abhorred, confessed, and mourned over; and with the eye of faith upon a suffering Savior, the language of his expanding heart is,

"Other refuge have I none,

Hangs my helpless soul on You."

JUNE 11.

"Partakers of the heavenly calling." Heb. 3:1

WHAT are some of the attributes of this calling? It is holy. "Who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling." They who are the subjects of this call desire to be holy. Their direst evil is sin. It is, in their experience, not a silken chain, but a galling fetter, beneath whose weight they mourn, and from whose bondage they sigh to be delivered. It is a high and heavenly calling. "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "Partakers of the heavenly calling." How does this calling

elevate a man--his principles, his character, his aims, his hopes! It is emphatically a "high vocation." So heavenly is it, too, it brings something of heaven into the soul. It imparts heavenly affections, heavenly joys, and heavenly aspirations. It leads to heaven. Could he look within the veil, each called saint would see a prepared mansion, a vacant throne, a jeweled crown, a robe, and a palm, all ready for the wearing and the waving, awaiting him in glory. Thus it is a call from heaven, and to heaven. It is an irrevocable calling. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." God has never for a moment repented that He chose, nor has the Savior repented that He redeemed, nor has the Spirit repented that He called any of His people. Not all their wanderings, nor failures, nor unfruitfulness have ever awakened one regret in the heart of God that He has called them to be saints. "I knew that You would deal very treacherously." "Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him; nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." "Faithful is He that calls you."

Nor must we overlook the Divine sovereignty, which appears so illustrious in this especial calling. All ground of human boasting is removed, and God has secured to Himself, from eternity, the entire glory of His people's salvation. So conspicuously appears the sovereignty of God in this effectual calling, that all foundation of creature-glory is annihilated. And if it be asked by the disputers of this truth, why one is called and another is left?--why Jacob, and not Esau?--why David, and not Saul?--why Cornelius the Gentile, and not Tertullus the Jew?--why the poor beggars in the highway, and not the bidden guests? why the woman who washed with her tears the Savior's feet, and not Simon, in whose house the grateful act was performed?--the answer is, "He will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy." To this acquiescence in the sovereignty of the Divine will our Lord was brought, when He beheld the mysteries of the Gospel veiled from the wise of this world: "I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Your sight." To this precious truth let us bow; and if the efficacious grace of God has reached our hearts, let us ascribe its discriminating choice to the sovereign pleasure of that Divine and supreme will, which rules over the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth, and to which no creature dare say, "What do you?"

JUNE 12.

"Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ."
Romans 16:25

THE Holy Spirit breathed the spiritual life in the soul, and He keeps, and nourishes, and watches over it. Let it not be supposed that there is anything in this life that could keep itself. There is no principle in Divine grace that can keep it from decline and decay. If it do not be watched over, nourished, sustained, and revived perpetually by the same omnipotent power that implanted it there, it is liable to constant decline. What experienced child of God has not felt this? Where is the believer that has not been made, solemnly and painfully, to learn it? That there is not a grace of the Spirit in him, but that grace needs, at times, greatly invigorating--not a particle of faith, but it needs strengthening--not a lesson, but he needs to re-learn--not a precept, but requires to be re-written upon his heart. Now this is the work of the ever-watchful, ever-loving, ever-faithful Spirit. He watches over, with a sleepless, loving eye, the work He has wrought in the soul. Not a moment but He has His eye upon it. By night and by day--in summer and in winter--when it decays, when it revives, He is there its guardian and its protector--its author and its finisher.

And how does He nourish it? Spiritually. As the life is spiritual, so the support is spiritual. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." "Nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine." How does He nourish it? By leading the soul to Jesus, the substance of all spiritual truth. By unfolding His fullness of all grace, and strength, and sanctification. By leading constantly to His blood and righteousness. By teaching the believer the sweet lesson of living out of himself, his convictions, his enjoyments, his fruitfulness--upon Christ, and Christ alone. What is there in a child of God, in his best estate, that can supply adequate nourishment and support for this principle of Divine life? He has no resources within himself. He cannot live upon evidences--how soon they are clouded! He cannot grow upon enjoyment--how soon it is gone! He cannot find nourishment in any part of the work of the Spirit within him, precious and glorious as that work is. Christ is the "true bread," that sustains the life of God in the soul of man. Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." Again, "As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father: so He that eats me, even he shall live by me." The renewed soul only lives as it lives on Jesus--it only advances, grows, and "Brings forth much fruit," as it draws its vigor, its nourishment, its support, and fruitfulness simply and entirely from Christ. These again are His words, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me."

Dear reader, long, it may be, have you been looking to yourself for nourishment, for strength, for comfort, and for fruitfulness. And the more you have looked within yourself, the more emptiness, poverty, and barrenness have you discovered. And now, the blessed Spirit, the nourisher, as He is the author, of the life within you, may give you such a new and enlarged view of Jesus as you have never had before. It may be, He will unfold to your soul such a fullness in Him--strength for your weakness, wisdom for your folly, grace for every corruption, tenderness and sympathy for every trial--as will bring you out of your bondage, introduce you into a "large room," and cause you to exclaim, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." Thus does the Spirit nourish and sustain the work He has wrought in the soul. He leads to Jesus.

JUNE 13.

"You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts." James 4:3

A believer may urge a request that is in itself wrong. The mother of Zebedee's children did so, when she asked the Lord that her two sons might sit, the one on His right hand, and the other on the left, in His kingdom. Who does not mark the self that appears in this petition? Although it was a mother's love that prompted it, and, as such, presents a picture of inimitable beauty, and one exquisitely touching to the feelings, yet it teaches us that a parent, betrayed by his love for his child, may ask that of God which is really wrong in itself. He may ask worldly distinction, honor, influence, wealth for his child, which a godly parent should never do; and this may be a wrong request, which God, in His infinite wisdom and love, withholds. This was the petition of the mother, which our Lord saw fit to deny. Her views of the kingdom of Christ were those of earthly glory. To see her children sharing in that glory was her high ambition; which Jesus promptly but gently rebuked. Let a Christian mother ask for spiritual blessings for her children, and whatever else is needful the Lord will grant. Let converting, sanctifying, restraining grace be one and the constant petition presented at the footstool of mercy, and then she cannot ask too much, or press her suit too frequently or too fervently.

To allude to another illustration of our remark it was wrong in Job to ask the Lord that he might die. "Oh that I might have my request " (are his words), "and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that He would let loose His hand, and cut me off!" It was an unwise

and sinful petition, which the Lord in great mercy and wisdom denied him. Truly "we know not what we should pray for as we ought." What a mercy that there is One who knows!

A child of God may ask for a wise and good thing in a wrong way. There may be no faith in asking, and no sense of God's freeness in bestowing. No filial approach--going as a child--as one pardoned--"accepted in the Beloved,"--as one dear to the heart of God. There may be no honoring of the Father in Himself--no honoring of Him in the Son--no honoring of the Blessed Spirit. There may be no resting upon the cross--no pleading of the atoning blood--no washing in the fountain--no humble, grateful recognition of the "new and living way" of access. There may be a want of lowliness in the mind--brokenness in the spirit--sincerity in the heart--reverence in the manner--sobriety in the words. There may be no confession of sin--no acknowledgment of past mercies--no faith in the promised blessing. How much there may be in the prayer of a dear child of God that operates as a blight upon his request, that seems to close the ear and the heart of God! But oh, to go to Him with filial confidence--sweet faith--love flowing from a broken heart--to go to Him as the people of His choice--dear to Him as the apple of His eye--viewed each moment in His Son--and who would, for the love He bears us, undeify Himself, if that would be for our real good, and His own glory. Did He not once empty Himself of His glory--did He not become poor--did He not humble Himself--did He not take upon Him human nature, all for the love He bore His people? That was approaching so near, in appearance, the cessation of Deity, that, as we gaze upon the spectacle, we wonder what another step might have produced! We seem to think He could not have gone further without ceasing to be God. Behold the broad basis, then, on which a child of God may approach Him in prayer. His love, oh how immense! it is past finding out!

JUNE 14.

"As you have sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." John 17:18

NOT into the solitude of the desert--not into the calm but selfish repose of the domestic circle--not into the hallowed but restricted fellowship of the Church--but into the world--encircling them, for a season, by its vanity, and subjecting them to its trials. And what is their mission? That they should love the world? comport with the world? fraternize with the world? Oh, no! not for this were they sent into it. An object more worthy of His wisdom who sends, and more in harmony with their high calling who are sent, is before them. They are sent into the world that their lives should be a constant, uncompromising, and solemn protest against its vanities and its sins.

Mark again the words of Christ, in our motto "As you have sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." Christ was commissioned to testify of the world, that the works thereof were evil. He came to labor for the world--to bless the world--to honor His Father in the world. It was the glory of the world that the Son of God was sent into it--that He made it for awhile the place of His temporary abode, and the scene of His stupendous redemption. It was the glory of the earth, that He trod upon its turf. It was the glory of the ocean, that He sailed upon its bosom. It was the glory of the sun, that it beamed upon His head. It was the glory of the air, that it fanned His brow. It was the glory of the waters, that they quenched His thirst. It was the glory of the flowers, that they perfumed His path. It was the glory of the sky, that it spread above Him its blue canopy. What planet has been so honored as this? What world so visited, so distinguished, so blest? Such is the Christian's pattern. Why has Christ placed you in the position you now occupy? Why are you begirt with so much folly, and trial, and danger? You are converted in the midst of the world--your family is in the world--your associates are in the world--your calling is in the world. Why is it so? Even that, like your Lord and Master, you might, by your unworldly, heavenly life, testify of the world

that the works thereof are evil, and only evil, and evil continually.

Saints of God, have close relations and intimate dealings with your Elder Brother. Repose in Him your confidence, yield to Him your affections, consecrate to Him your service. He regards you with ineffable delight. With all your interests He is identified, and with all your sorrows He sympathizes. He may, like Joseph, at times speak roughly to His brethren, in the trying dispensations of His providence; yet, like Joseph, He veils beneath that apparent harshness a brother's deep and yearning love. Seek a closer resemblance to His image; to which, ever remember, you are predestined to be conformed. In order to this, study His beauty, His precepts, His example; that "with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, you may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

JUNE 15.

"Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit." Romans 8:23

THE figurative allusion is to a familiar law of the Jewish economy. It will be recollected that, under the Levitical dispensation, the Lord commanded that the first-fruits, in the form of a single sheaf, should be sickled and waved before him by the priest; and that this wave-offering was to be considered as constituting the herald, or the pledge, of the ripened and full harvest. And not only should it be an earnest and a pledge, but it should represent the nature and character of the fruit which, before long, in luxuriant abundance, would crowd with its golden sheaves, amid shouts of gladness, the swelling garner. When, therefore, it is said that believers in Jesus have the "first-fruits of the Spirit," the meaning clearly is, that they have such communications of the Spirit now, as are a pledge and foretaste of what they shall possess and enjoy in the great day of the coming glory. "In whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."

We remark, in general terms, that if we are believers, then are we partakers of that grace which is the earnest of glory. Do we partake of the grace of life? It is the same life which beats in the souls of the glorified. In us its pulsations are faint and fluctuating; in them they are deep and constant--yet the life is the same. And if we have the spirit of life dwelling in us now, then have we the first-fruits of the life which is to come. Have we the spirit of adoption? What is it but the earnest and the seal of our certain reception into our Father's house? The love to God which overflows our hearts, the yearnings of those hearts to be at home, are the first-fruits of our consummated and glorified sonship. Thus might we travel the entire circle of the Christian graces, which form, sanctify, and adorn the Christian character; illustrating the truth, that each grace wrought by the Spirit in the heart, on earth, is the germ of glory in heaven, and that the perfection of glory will be the perfection of each grace. The present character and tutelage of the child of God are preparatory to a higher state of being--yes, they are essential parts of that being itself. Oh, it is a holy and inspiring thought, that every development of grace, and every aspiration of holiness, every victory of faith, every achievement of prayer, and every gleam of joy in the soul here below, is the earnest-sheaf of the golden ears of happiness and glory garnered for the saints on high. "He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Have yore the "first-fruits of the Spirit"? Guard them with tender, sleepless care. Nature, in her richest domain, yields no such fruits or flowers as these. Employ all the means and appliances within your reach, to keep verdant and fruitful the sacred garden of your soul. Unveil it to the sun's light, the gentle showers, and the soft gales of heaven. Let your incessant prayer be, "Awake, O north wind; and come, you south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his

garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." Oh, guard those precious "first-fruits"! Soon the glory they foreshadow will be revealed. The autumnal tints are deepening, the golden ears are ripening, the reaper's sickle is preparing, and before long we shall join in the song of the angels' harvest-home, "Grace, grace unto it!"

JUNE 16.

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting until his enemies be made his footstool. Heb. 10:12, 13

AND what was that sacrifice? It was God's own Son, "who gave Himself for us," "when He had by Himself purged our sins." By this sacrifice He "condemned sin in the flesh." The word never implies simply to destroy or remove. Consequently the present and entire destruction of sin in the believer, was not the condemnation secured by the sacrifice of Christ. But in two senses we may understand the word. First, He bore the condemnation and punishment of sin, and thus forever secured our pardon. Secondly, and chiefly, He actually so condemned sin in His own material actually body, that it lost the power of condemning His spiritual body, the Church. So that neither sin, nor the consequence of sin, can ever lay the believer under condemnation. Thus, while sin condemned Jesus as the Surety, Jesus condemned sin as the Judge, assigning it to its own dark and changeless doom. That, therefore, which itself is condemned, cannot condemn. Thus it is that the last song the believer sings is his sweetest and his most triumphant--"O death! where is your sting?" Sin being condemned, pardoned, and forever put away, death, its consequent and penalty, is but a pleasing trance into which the believer falls, to awake up perfected in God's righteousness. Let us, in deep adoration of soul, admire God's illustrious method of meeting the impotence of the law. How suitable to us, how honoring to Himself! Relinquishing all thought of salvation by the works of the law, let us eagerly and gratefully avail ourselves of God's plan of justification. Let our humble and believing hearts cordially embrace His Son. If the law is powerless to save, Christ is "mighty to save." If the law can but terrify and condemn, it is to drive us into Christ, that we might be justified by faith in Him. In Him there is a full, finished, and free salvation. We have but to believe, and be saved. We have but to look, and live. We have but to come, and be accepted. Disappointed of our hope in the law, and alarmed by its threatenings pealing in our ears louder than seven thunders, let us flee to Jesus, the "hiding place from the wind, and the covert from the tempest."

There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus. All is peace, all is rest; all is security there. The instant that a poor trembling sinner gets into Christ, he is safe to all eternity. Nor can he be assured of safety one moment, out of Christ. Repair, then, to the Savior. His declaration is--"him that comes unto me I will in no wise cast out." None are rejected but those who bring a price in their hands. Salvation is by grace; and not to him that works, but to him that believes, the precious boon is given. The turpitude of your guilt, the number of your transgressions, the depth of your unworthiness, the extent of your poverty, the distance that you have wandered from God, are no valid objections, no insurmountable difficulties, to your being saved. Jesus saves sinners "to the uttermost"--to the uttermost degree of guilt--to the uttermost limit of unworthiness--to the uttermost extent of time. And not only let us look to Christ for salvation, but also for strength. Is the law weak? "Christ is the power of God." He is prepared to perfect His strength in our weakness. And the felt conviction of that weakness will be the measure of our strength. Without Him we can do nothing; but strong in His might, we can do all things. "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength."

JUNE 17.

"He says to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, loves you me? He says unto him, Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." John 21:16

"God is love," and the expression of that love is the sending His own Son into the world, to achieve what the law, in its weakness, could not do. Was ever love like this? "God so loved." And was Jesus willing to engage in the embassy? Did He voluntarily clothe Himself in our rags, stoop to our poverty, consent to be arrested and thrown into prison for us? Was He made a curse that He might deliver us from the curse? Did judgment pass upon Him, that we might be saved from the wrath to come? Oh here is infinite, boundless love! Then let Him have in return our love; it is the least that He can ask, or we can make. Let it be a hearty, cordial, obedient, increasing love. Alas! it is but a drop, when it should be an ocean. It is but a faint spark, when it should be a vehement flame.

How should our best affection flow out toward Him who assumed, and stills wears, our nature! What an attractive, winning object is the Incarnate God, the God-man Mediator! Fairer than the children of men, the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely, He is the wonder and admiration, the beloved and the song, of all heaven. Why should He not be equally so of all earth? Did the Son of God take up our rude and suffering nature, and shall we be loth to take up His lowly and despised cross, and follow hard after Him? Forbid it, Lord! Forbid it, you precious Savior! What humiliation, what abasement, can be too much for us, the sinful sons of men, when You, the sinless Son of God, did so abase and humble Yourself! Let Your love constrain us to stand firm to You, to Your truth, and to Your cause, when the world despises, when friends forsake, when relatives look cold, and all seem to leave and forsake us. And as You did condescend to be made in the likeness of our human and sinful nature, oh conform us to the likeness of Your Divine and holy nature. As You were a partaker with us, make us partakers with You. As You were made like unto us, in what was proper to man, make us like You, in what is proper to God. And as You did come down to our sinful and dim earth, lift us to Your pure and bright heaven!

What a privilege is nearness to Christ! Yet, dear and precious as it is, how sadly is it overlooked! We may trace this, in some degree, to the believer's oversight of his oneness with Christ. Yet to forget this truth is to forget that He lives. As the branch has one life with the vine, the graft one life with the tree, so he that is united to Christ, and grafted into Christ, has one life with Christ. Go where he may, he is one with Christ. Be his circumstances what they may, he is one with Christ. And as he is in Christ, so Christ is in him. And if Christ be in him, dwelling in him, living in him, walking in him, so also is Christ in every event, and incident, and circumstance of his history. He cannot look upon the darkest cloud that overhangs his path, but he may say, "Christ is in my cloud; Christ is in my sorrow; Christ is in my conflict; Christ is in my need; Christ is all to me, and Christ is in all with me."

JUNE 18.

"Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David." Psalm 89:35.

HOLINESS is an essential perfection of God: it is an inseparable part of His being. To conceive of a God infinite in essence, divine in majesty, almighty in power, wise in counsel, and eternal in duration, and yet destitute of holiness, infinite, essential purity--to suppose such a Being possessed of the least contagion of moral evil, would be to portray to the imagination--in reverence be it written--an infinite monster! We should picture Him before us arrayed with infinite power, wisdom, and duration, and yet wanting in that perfection which tempers, chastens, and beautifies all, and which makes Him truly what His word reveals Him to be--a God of love. A denial of His being would not be a crime so fearful, nor involve guilt of deeper

dye, than would be a denial of His holiness. He who refuses to acknowledge that God is immaculately holy breathes a more tremendous libel against God than the atheist, who, standing in the midst of ten thousand overwhelming demonstrations of His existence, yet impiously declares there is no God!

How rich and palpable are the Scripture proofs--rather say, revelations and unfoldings--of God's holiness. One or two must suffice. That is a sublime and conclusive one uttered by the lips of the veiled cherubim--"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of Him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke." Was there no other Divine perfection, which they might have thus extolled? Oh yes! Jehovah was infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, and infinitely good; but holiness was the greatest and grandest of all; and so they cry, "holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts!" thus breathing forth their adoration to the holy Triune God.

Again, in the words of our motto, "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David." Why did not God swear by His veracity, by His wisdom, or by His power? Because He was about to enunciate a great truth to the house of David; and with a view of imparting to that truth its greatest force, solemnity, and beauty, He swears by His holiness. As if He did say "Holiness is my most illustrious perfection, my grandest attribute; and by it I swear that I will make good my word, that I will not lie unto David." For as "men, verily swear by the greater," so God swears by His holiness, His greatest perfection and highest glory. Oh, you saints of the Most High, who, standing in the region of doubt, and enshrouded by dark providences, are led to ask, "Will God make good the promise upon which He has caused my soul to rest?"--look at this great truth--God has sworn by His holiness that He will not lie, and you have the warrant and the encouragement to trust in God, to confide in His word, and to resign yourself and all your interests into His fatherly, faithful, though chastening hands. By this solemn oath He has bound Himself to make good to the letter His every precious promise.

JUNE 19.

"And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. 4:24

TAKE another view of this subject. Holiness is the image which God transfers from Himself to the renewed creature. God, in regeneration, draws upon the soul of man His own moral portrait. And what is the image of Himself which He thus transfers, glorious and imperishable, to the renewed mind? Is it His wisdom? No! Is it His truth? No! Is it His love? No! It is His holiness! as if He would say, "I will draw my image upon the renewed man, and it shall be that which is my glory, my beauty, my grandest perfection; and in making the creature holy, I will make him like myself." How strikingly has the Holy Spirit brought out this truth in the words of our motto: "And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;" a truth worthy of our profoundest study. In nothing does the renewed soul so closely resemble God, as in holiness. May the Lord, the Spirit, write this truth deeply upon our heart!

But how has God manifested His holiness? He has not only revealed the fact in His word, but He has exhibited the perfection in various ways. Its most palpable, awful, and august demonstration is in the cross of His Son Jesus Christ. Behold the redemption which He has wrought; contemplate this the most stupendous of God's works, and where will you find such a demonstration of God's holiness, as that which the cross of the incarnate God exhibits? Not all the vials of judgment that have ever been poured or that ever will be poured out--not the flaming furnace in the conscience of the ungodly--not the irretrievable

vengeance of God against the angels who kept not their first estate--not all the woe and suffering of the condemned in hell, convey any adequate idea of the holiness of God, compared with the death of His own beloved Son. There hung the holy, spotless Lamb of God! He had never sinned; there had never been the slightest hostility of His will to His Father's; He had never harbored one treason thought against Jehovah, but had "always done those things which pleased Him." Yet we behold Him exhausting the cup of Divine wrath, His human soul scathed by the lightning-stroke of Divine justice, and His sinless body bruised, and wounded, and slain. What do we learn from the spectacle, but that God was so righteous, so holy, He could not pass by the iniquity of the Church, but as He punished it with the utmost severity in the person of its Surety. And what was the perfection of God, the contemplation of which in the hour of His agony upheld Him? In prophetic language He tells us--"My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? why are You so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? Oh my God, I cry in the day-time, but You hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But You are holy." This was the truth which gave His agitated soul rest, beneath its overwhelming pressure. He saw God so holy in His withdrawal, so holy in the billows which went over His soul, so holy in taking vengeance for His people's sins, that He bowed His head in meek acquiescence to the Divine will: "But You are holy."

JUNE 20.

"It is God that justifies." Rom. 8:33

IT would appear that there are two links in this marvelous chain--the purpose of God, and its final consummation; both so remote and invisible, as to bring the mind to a calm, unquestioning belief in certain doctrines of God's word, which may more properly belong to the "deep things of God." But while the two extremes of this chain of truths must for the present be left invisibly locked in God's hand; there are certain intermediate and visible links, upon which if the perplexed and inquiring reader lay hold, he shall be saved, though all the rest remains wrapped in the profoundest mystery--like its Divine Author, dwelling in lone and unapproachable grandeur. It is not essential to our salvation that we lift the veil of that awful mystery, and penetrate the depths of a past predestination, and a future glory; but it is essential to our salvation that we are called of God, and that by God we are justified. We may arrive at heaven without fathoming the awful profound of the

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