

Evening Thoughts - October

by Octavius Winslow

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of obedience, surrender, and love for God, and the need to maintain a close walk with Him through prayer.

Scripture: Psalm 19:7, Jeremiah 14:7, Daniel 9:13-14, Romans 4:5, Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 2:7, 1 Corinthians 15:20, Galatians 1:23-24, 1 Timothy 3:15, Hebrews 11:8

Topics: "God's Law", "Faith and Transformation"

Description

Octavius Winslow reflects on the profound nature of God's law, emphasizing its perfection and the necessity of love for God as the ultimate fulfillment of the law. He discusses the mystery of divine wisdom and the transformative power of faith, illustrating how true understanding of God comes through experience rather than mere reason. Winslow highlights the glory brought to Christ through the conversion of sinners and the assurance of believers' resurrection through Christ's own resurrection. He urges believers to maintain a close relationship with God through prayer and to recognize the importance of confession and reliance on Christ for spiritual sustenance.

Transcript

EVENING THOUGHTS or

DAILY WALKING WITH GOD

OCTOBER 1.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Psalm 19:7

Emanating from a Being infinitely perfect in every moral perfection, it follows as a natural sequence from this truth, that the law, designed to be a transcript of what God is--a copy of Himself--must be in every respect a most perfect law. How could it be otherwise? Is it rational to suppose that a Being of infinite holiness, wisdom, and goodness would form a rule for the government of moral creatures, that would fail to place before their eye the loftiest standard of excellence, and that should not demand and secure their supreme obedience and happiness? It follows, then, that the law being essentially and perfectly holy, all its requirements must be equally so. It cannot change, nor compromise, nor soften down either the nature or the outline or the enforcement of a single enactment. It demands of every creature the profoundest homage, the most implicit obedience, and the most perfect love. In requiring this, the creature shall have

no ground for impeaching the Divine goodness. He shall have no reason for alleging of God that He is harsh and austere. As if fearful of perplexing the mind with a multitude of enactments, our Lord has presented one precept of the law, the perfect keeping of which resolves itself into a virtual fulfillment of all--"Jesus said unto him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment."

Who but an infinitely wise Lawgiver could have embodied all the requisitions of an extended code in a single one? What an unfolding of the wisdom of God is here! In securing to Himself the supreme love of His creatures, He wins a willing obedience to every precept of His law. Such is the all-commanding, all-constraining power of love to God! Employing no other than this gentle and persuasive motive, God asks your intellect--your time--your service--your rank--your substance--your person--your life--your all. In demanding this complete surrender, His law stands forth, in view of all created intelligences, as a rule worthy of Him from whom it emanates. Oh yes! it is a most righteous law.

OCTOBER 2.

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." 1 Corinthians 2:7

There is much of deep mystery in revelation. God, considered both in Himself and in His operations, is a mystery stretching far beyond the most sublime power of finite reason. "Can you by searching find out God? can you find out the Almighty unto perfection?" and of His operations may we not exclaim with the inspired penman, "Lo! these are parts of His ways; but how little a portion is heard of Him!" Christ, too, is the great "mystery of godliness." Whether His complex person is regarded--the union of the Divine and human natures in one--or whether we look at His work--His obedience and death constituting a full atonement to Divine justice in behalf of the sins of His people--it must be acknowledged a depth too profound for human thought adequately to fathom. What can poor finite reason accomplish here? What beams can its feeble, flickering light cast upon this world of mystery? And if ever it stands forth invested in its own native impotence, it is when it sits in judgment upon the doctrines and facts of revelation, discarding or retaining such only as are intelligible to its dwarfish capacity. "Which things," says the apostle, "the angels desire to look into." Mark his expressions! He represented not these celestial beings of purity and intellect as scaling the heights and diving into the depths of redemption's mystery, but "which things the angels desire"--scarcely dare--but "desire to look into." And yet for a fallen and unrenewed mind to sit in judgment upon God's truth can only be exceeded in its temerity by the depravity which prompts it.

If the truth of God, in its doctrines and facts, is a mystery incomprehensible to unrenewed reason, what shall we say of the truth as experienced in the heart? If reason cannot understand the vast framework of truth, how can it comprehend the secret power by which it operates? The very fact, that to be understood it must be experienced, accounts for the difficulty. The transforming operation of the Holy Spirit upon the mind--giving it a new bias, new inclinations, turning its darkness into light, and kindling its enmity into love; the life of God in the soul, creating the man anew in Christ Jesus--that life which is hidden, ever productive of a holy life that is seen--its hopes and its fears, its defeats and its triumphs--the causes which operate to deaden it, and the spiritual nourishment by which it is supported--all, all is incomprehensible to human reason. Truly "the world knows us not."

The cause of this incapacity of reason, in its natural state, to comprehend spiritual and experimental truth is its corruption and perversion by sin. Sin has impaired our mental faculties--enslaved, clouded, and

debased our reason. We open God's word, and it declares that since the fall the nature of man has been corrupt, and his reason blind; his understanding darkened, and his heart, the seat of his affections, polluted: "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." The natural man, while in that state, so far from being able to explore the wide domain of spiritual truth, hates and flees from it when proposed to his consideration, "receiving not the things of the Spirit of God, they being foolishness unto him." This being the state of man, God's word consequently declares it necessary that, before spiritual truth can be understood, he should be "transformed by the renewing of his mind;" that he should be restored to that sound mind, and enlightened understanding, and spiritual discernment, with which his nature was endowed when it came originally from the hand of God; in a word, that he should be born again, created anew in Christ Jesus; that old things should pass away, and that all things should become new. Then, and then only, will he be able to understand the "truth of God in a mystery."

OCTOBER 3.

"But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past, now preaches the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me." Galatians 1:23, 24

In the conversion of His people--their translation from nature to grace--the Redeemer is glorified. This is the first step to a manifest glorifying of Christ in His called saints. Conversion is the commencement of an endless revenue of glory to Christ. To behold a poor sinner living a life of practical enmity to God, hatred to Jesus, rebellion against the Divine government, and willful and determined hostility to the one glorious plan of salvation--perhaps a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious--now changed, now conquered, now sitting at the feet of Jesus, "clothed and in his right mind," oh, is there no glory thus brought to the grace of Christ Jesus? To see him translated out of darkness into God's marvelous light, emancipated from the power of sin and Satan, and made the Lord's free-man--the rebellious will conquered, the hard heart subdued, the proud spirit humbled, the hatred turned into love, and the long roving mind now finding its center of rest and fountain of happiness in a reconciled God--oh! is there no crown of glory placed on the head of Jesus in all this. Say, you angelic spirits, bending over the mercy-seat in deep contemplation of its awful mysteries of incarnate grace and dying love--whose eyes glisten with new effulgence, and whose bosoms expand with new joy, over one sinner that repents--do you see no glory deepening around the Son of God, as each vessel of mercy is called in, emptied of self, and filled with Jesus? Oh, how are the power, the wisdom, the grace, the love of the Redeemer glorified, and God through Him, by every new accession thus made to the number of the redeemed! Aim to be instrumental of bringing one soul to receive the Lord Jesus as all its salvation, and you bring more glory to His name than were a thousand worlds like this to start into being at your fiat. "Those who be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

In what a solemn and responsible position is every believer placed! "You are my witnesses, says the Lord." "I have created him for my glory." "You are my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Then how "very jealous for the Lord of hosts" should we be! How vigilant, lest in any degree, or in any way, we withhold from Christ the glory due unto Him! There are many ways by which we may be betrayed into this grievous sin--a careless walk--unmortified sin--self-indulgence--a light and volatile spirit--a neglect of means--a distant walk with God--coldness of love towards the saints; but especially mixing up with, and indulging in, a sinful conformity to the world--its fashions, its pleasures, its literature, its religion! Christian reader, put the question fairly, honestly, and closely to your conscience--"Do I bring glory to Christ? Is my Redeemer magnified in me before the world and the church?" Oh, aim for a high standard! Do not be an

ordinary Christian. "Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples." Thank God for the little, but, oh, aim for the "much fruit"--strong faith, ardent love, self-consuming zeal, unreserved obedience, holy, entire, and supreme surrender. Come, drawn by grace, constrained by love, attracted by the glory and the preciousness of Jesus--come now to that one "altar which sanctifies both the giver and the gift;" and as you lay yourself upon it, body, soul, and spirit, exclaim with the apostle, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." The solemn vow is taken! The holy surrender is made! It is seen, it is heard, it is ratified in heaven! May you be so strengthened from above, "that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

OCTOBER 4.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." 1 Corinthians 15:20

The resurrection of Christ is the pledge and earnest of the glorious resurrection of the believer. This great event--the crowning bliss of the church--has long been as a star of hope, on which the eye of faith has loved to gaze. Who does not recognize the doctrine of the resurrection, and trace the yearning of his soul for this glorious event, in the expressive and touching words of Job?--"There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant." How strikingly and beautifully significant is this figure of the resurrection! His faith grafted upon the doctrine, see how his heart longed for the arrival of the event--"Oh that You would hide me in the grave, that You would keep me secret, until Your wrath be past; that You would appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time" (not the appointed time of his death, as some interpret it, but of his resurrection, for this is the event he is now anticipating), "will I wait until my change come. You shall call"--oh! how sweetly will fall the sound of the archangel's trumpet upon the ear of those who sleep in Jesus!--"You shall call, and I will answer: You will have a desire to the work of Your hands." But, if possible, in terms yet more distinct and glowing, the holy patriarch announces his faith in this doctrine, and expresses his ardent longing for this event--"I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."

The hope to which the resurrection of the Lord has begotten the believer is termed by the apostle a "lively," or, as it may be rendered, a "living hope." Its life springs from the resurrection-life of Christ, just as the same glorious event imparts quickening to the whole Christian economy. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Thus the believer, and he alone, can adopt the language of his Lord, as he resigns his body to the dust--and oh! Let it be the epitaph of all who sleep in Jesus--"MY FLESH ALSO SHALL REST IN HOPE." A living hope, based upon the resurrection of Jesus, smooths his suffering pathway to the tomb; hope dissipates its gloom, and kindles within its somber recesses an immortal radiance; and hope--the beacon of the sepulcher--throws its bright beams across the dark waters of eternity, revealing in all its glory an "inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away." Observe how closely the two events--the resurrection of Jesus, and that of the believer--are interwoven one with the other. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of those who slept." "Every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming." What was the meaning of the first sheaf, which, under the law, was commanded to be

presented before the Lord in His temple? Was it not to be considered as an earnest, a pledge, and a pattern of the future harvest, ripening for the sickle? So was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In like manner He burst from the grave, the "first-fruits," the earnest, the pledge, and the pattern of a future and a glorious harvest. As surely as He rose, so surely shall all His people rise. As certainly as the first golden sheaf has been presented in the temple, and waved before the throne of God, as certainly shall the "blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear" be sickled in and gathered home, "and not the least grain fall upon the earth." "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

OCTOBER 5.

"Yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand your truth. Therefore has the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he does." Daniel 9:13, 14

All backsliding has its commencement in the neglect of prayer: it may date its beginning at the throne of grace. The restraining of prayer before God was the first step in departure; and the first step taken, and not immediately retraced, was quickly succeeded by others. Reader, do you tremble at the possibility of ever becoming a backslider? do you dread the thought of wounding Jesus, then restrain not prayer before God; vigilantly guard against the first symptom of declension in this holy exercise, or if that symptom has already appeared, haste you to the dear Physician, who alone has power to arrest its progress, and heal your soul.

A distant walk from God will super-induce distant thoughts of God, and this is no light consequence of the soul's declension in the spirit and habit of prayer. If the simple axiom be true, that the more intimate we become with any object, the better we are prepared to judge of its nature and properties, we may apply it with peculiar appropriateness to our acquaintance with God. The encouraging invitation of His word is, "Acquaint now yourself with God, and be at peace." Now, it is this acquaintance with God that brings us into the knowledge of His character as a holy, loving, and faithful God; and it is this knowledge of His character that begets love and confidence in the soul towards Him. The more we know of God, the more we love Him: the more we try Him, the more we confide in Him. Let the spiritual reader, then, conceive what dire effects must result from a distant walk with God. When He appears in His corrective dealings, how will those dealings be interpreted in the distant walk of the soul? As of a covenant God? as of a loving Father? No, far from it. They will receive a harsh and unkind interpretation, and this will neutralize their effect: for in order to reap the proper fruit of the Lord's dealings with the soul, it is necessary that they should be viewed in the light of His faithfulness and love. The moment they are otherwise interpreted, the soul starts off from God, and wraps itself up in gloomy and repulsive views of His character, and government, and dealings. But this will assuredly follow from a distant walk. Oh guard against a declension in prayer; let there be no distance between God and your soul!

Do not forget that the season of trial and of bereavement is often the sanctified occasion of a revival of prayer in the soul. The Lord has marked your wanderings, He has had His eye upon the declension of your soul. That voice, always so pleasant to His ear, has ceased to call upon Him; and now He would recover you; He would hear that voice again, and how will He effect it? He causes you to "pass under the rod," sends some sore trial, lays on you some weighty cross, brings trouble and sorrow into your soul, and then you cry unto Him, and do besiege the mercy-seat. Oh how eagerly is God sought, how attractive and how precious does the throne of grace become, when the soul is thus led into deep waters of trial! No

longer silent, no longer dumb, the believer calls upon God, pleads with "strong crying and tears," wrestles and agonizes, and thus the slumbering spirit of prayer is stirred up and revived in the soul. Oh sweet affliction, oh precious discipline, that brings back the wandering soul to a closer and a holier walk with God!

Again we exhort the believer--guard against the least declension in prayer; let the first unfavorable symptom that appears alarm you, go to the Lord in your worst frames; stay not from Him until you get a good one. Satan's grand argument to keep a soul from prayer is--"Go not with that cold and insensible frame; go not with that hard and sinful heart; stay until you are more fit to approach God!" and listening to this specious reasoning, many poor, distressed, burdened, longing souls have been kept from the throne of grace, and consequently from all comfort and consolation. But the gospel says--"Go in your very worst frames;" Christ says--"Come just as you are;" and every promise and every example but encourages the soul to repair to the cross, whatever be its frame or condition.

OCTOBER 6.

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivers him out of them all." Psalm 34:19

How many and diversified are the peculiar trying circumstances of God's dear family! Each heart has its own sorrow--each soul bears its own cross; but Jesus is enough for all--He has sympathy for each and all His suffering people. Are you suffering from pining sickness? are your days wearisome, and your nights sleepless, from the inroads of disease? Then there is sympathy in Christ for you: for it is written, "Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses." He remembers that you are but dust--and we doubt not, His blessed body knew what languid days and sleepless nights were. Oh, then, think of Jesus. That disease that wastes--that pain that racks--that debility that unnerves you, Jesus knows full and sympathetically. True, He is now beyond all physical feelings, yet His tender heart sympathizes still.

Are you suffering from temporal poverty? Are sources on which you depended broken up? Friends on whom you have leaned removed? Does want stare you in the face? And are you at a loss to know from where the next supply may come? Even here, my brother, even here, my sister, can Jesus sympathize with you. He, like you, and like the greater part of His people, was poor in this world's goods. No home sheltered, no daily-spread table provided for Him; He was a poor, homeless, houseless, friendless wanderer. The foxes had holes, and the birds had nests, but Jesus had not where to lay His blessed head--that head that ached and bled for you. Take your poverty to Him--take your needs to Him. Let the principle of faith now be exercised. Has He died for your soul--has He pardoned your sins--has He given you Himself, then will He not with Himself freely give you all things necessary for your temporal comfort, while yet a pilgrim upon earth? Take your poverty and your want simply and directly to Jesus; He has an ear to hear your cry, a heart to sympathize with your case, and a hand to supply all your need. Then again we say, take your needs simply and directly to Christ.

Has death entered your domestic circle, plucking from it some precious and valued member? Has He put lover and friend far from you, leaving the heart to weep in silence and sadness over the wreck of hopes that were so bright, and over the rupture of ties that were so tender? Oh, there is sympathy in Christ for this! Jesus knew what it was to weep over the grave of buried love--of friendship interred; He knew what it was to have affection's ties broken, leaving the heart wounded and bleeding. He can enter into your sorrow, bereaved reader; yes, even into yours. See Him at the tomb of Lazarus--see Him weep--"behold how He loved him." What! do you repair to the grave of the dear departed one to weep, and Jesus not

sympathize with you? Let not unbelief close up this last remaining source of consolation--the tender sympathy of Christ. He can enter into those tears of yours: the heart's desolateness, loneliness, and disappointment are not unknown and unnoticed by our blessed Immanuel. And why has the Lord dealt thus with you? why has He torn the idol from its temple? why has He emptied the heart, and left it thus lonely and desolate? Oh why, but to prepare that temple for Himself; why, but to pour into its emptiness the full tide of His own precious love and sympathy. For this, beloved, has He been, and, it may be, is now dealing with you. That heart belongs to Him--He bought it at a costly price; it belongs to Him--He vanquished it by the omnipotence of His Spirit; it belongs to Him--He sealed it with His precious blood. And He would have you know this, too, by deep and sweet experience. He would have you know how He has loved you, and loves you still; He would have you know that you are His--His by eternal election--His by gift--by purchase--by conquest--by a covenant that all your departures, all your unfaithfulness, all your unworthiness, all the changing scenes through which you pass, shall never and can never alter. All this it is His will you should experience. Then bow with submission to the discipline; as a weaned child, sit you at His feet, adopting His own blessed words, "Not my will, but Your be done."

OCTOBER 7.

"But God commends his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

From what other and higher source could the atonement have proceeded, if not from the very heart of God? And from His heart it did proceed. And not more freely does the sun pour forth its streams of light, and not more freely does the air fan with its refreshing influence, and not more freely does the ocean-billow heave, than the atonement flows from the heart of God! "God is love;" and the seat of that love is His heart. Towards a sinner standing in the righteousness of His Son, that heart is love, and nothing but love. Not an unkind thought lodging there; not a repulsive feeling dwelling there; all is love, and love of the most tender character. Yes, we dare affirm, that towards His chosen people there never has been, and there never will be, one thought of unkindness, of anger, of rebuke in the heart of God: from eternity it has been love, through time it is love, and on through eternity to come it will be love. What! are not their afflictions, their chastisements, the rough and thorny path they tread, proofs of God's displeasure? What! is that individual loved of God, whom I see yonder bearing that heavy and daily cross; against whom billow after billow dashes, to whom messenger after messenger is sent; whose gourds are withered in a night, and whose fountains are all broken in a day; who is poor, feeble, and dependent; what! is that individual beloved of God? Go and ask that afflicted saint; go and ask that cross-bearing disciple; go and ask that son and daughter of disease and penury; and they will tell you, their Father's dealings with them are the most costly proofs of His love: that instead of unkindness in that cross, there was love; instead of harshness in that rebuke, there was tenderness; and that when He withered that gourd, and broke up that cistern, and removed that earthly prop, it was but to pour the tide of His own love in the heart, and satiate the soul with His goodness. Oh, dear cross! oh, sweet affliction! thus to open the heart of God; thus to bring God near to the soul, and the soul near to God.

Let it not be forgotten that the atonement had its origin in the heart of God; it follows, then, that it must be free. Does the sun need bribing in order to shine? does the wind need persuasion in order to blow? does the ocean-wave need argument in order to roll? is the sun-light purchased? is the air purchased? is the water that flows from the fountain purchased? Not less free is the love of God, gushing from His heart, and flowing down through the channel of the cross of Christ, to a poor repenting, believing sinner, without works, without merit, without money, without price, without a previous fitness. Convictions do not merit it;

repentances do not merit it; tears do not merit it; faith does not merit it. Pardon to the chief of sinners--forgiveness to the vilest of the vile--the blotting out of sins of the deepest dye--the justification and acceptance of the most unworthy--all, free as the heart of God can make it. The hungry and the thirsty, the poor and the penniless, the weary and the heavy-laden, may come to the gospel provision, for the heart of God bids them welcome.

The objects contemplated in the special and gracious design of the atonement establish its perfect freeness beyond all question. Who are they? Are they spoken of as the worthy, the righteous, the deserving, the rich, the noble? The very reverse. They are sinners, ungodly, unworthy. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." And see how our blessed Lord confirms this statement: "I am not come to call the righteous (that is, the self-righteous--those who were righteous in their own estimation, and despised others), but sinners to repentance." And who did He save when upon earth? Were they the worthy or the most unworthy? were they the righteous or sinners? Take the case of Saul of Tarsus. His own description of his previous character will certainly be believed: "which was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." And yet he "obtained mercy:" and why? "That in me Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." If Saul of Tarsus, then, obtained mercy--obtained it as a sinner of the deepest dye--obtained it fully, freely, aside from all human merit--penitent reader, so may you.

OCTOBER 8.

"But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Romans 4:5

Faith has to do with the understanding and the heart. A man must know his lost and ruined condition before he will accept of Christ; and how can he know this, without a spiritually enlightened mind? What a surprising change now passes over the man! He is brought, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, to a knowledge of himself. One beam of light, one touch of the Spirit, has altered all his views of himself, has placed him in a new aspect; all big thoughts, his affections, his desires, are diverted into another and an opposite channel; his fond views of his own righteousness have fled like a dream, his high thoughts are humbled, his lofty looks are brought low, and, as a broken-hearted sinner, he takes his place in the dust before God. Oh wondrous, oh blessed change! to see the Pharisee take the place, and to hear him utter the cry, of the Publican--"God be merciful to me a sinner!"--to hear him exclaim, "I am lost, self-ruined, deserving eternal wrath; and of sinners the vilest and the chief." And now the work and exercise of faith commences; the same blessed Spirit that convinced of sin presents to the soul a Savior crucified for the lost--unfolds a salvation full and free for the most worthless--reveals a fountain that "cleanses from all sin," and holds up to view a righteousness that "justifies from all things." And all that He sets the poor convinced sinner upon doing to avail himself of this, is simply to believe. To the momentous question, "What shall I do to be saved?" this is the only reply--"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." The anxious soul eagerly exclaims--"Have I then nothing to do but to believe?--have I no great work to accomplish, no price to bring, no worthiness to plead?--may I come just as I am, without merit, without self-preparation, without money, with all my vileness and nothingness?" Still the reply is, "Only believe." "Then, Lord, I do believe," exclaims the soul in a transport of joy; "help my unbelief." This, reader, is faith--faith, that wondrous grace, that mighty act of which you have heard so much, upon which so many volumes have been written, and so many sermons have been preached; it is the simple rolling of a wounded, bleeding heart upon a wounded, bleeding Savior; it is the simple reception of the amazing truth, that Jesus died for the ungodly--died for sinners--died for the poor, the vile, the bankrupt; that He invites

and welcomes to His bosom all poor, convinced, heavy-laden sinners. The heart, believing this wondrous announcement, going out of all other dependencies and resting only in this--receiving it, welcoming it, rejoicing in it, in a moment, all, all is peace. Do not forget, reader, that faith is but to believe with all the heart that Jesus died for sinners; and the full belief of this one fact will bring peace to the most anxious and sin-troubled soul.

OCTOBER 9.

"That you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Timothy 3:15

God has been graciously pleased to appoint His church the great conservator of His truth, and His truth the especial medium of sanctification to His church; there is a close and beautiful relation between the two. The church may be compared to the golden lamp which contains the sacred oil, which, in its turn, feeds the flame of its light and holiness. The church is to guard with a jealous and vigilant eye the purity of the truth, while the truth is to beautify and sanctify the ark which preserves it. Thus there is a close relation, and a reciprocal influence, between the church of Christ and the truth of God.

Every individual believer in Jesus is himself a subject, and therefore a witness, of the truth; he has been quickened, called, renewed, and partially sanctified through the instrumentality of God's revealed truth: "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." "For the truth's sake which dwells in us." "You are my witnesses, says the Lord." Here is unfolded one of the most solemn and affecting truths touching the character and individual responsibility of a child of God. He is a subject of truth, he is a repository of the truth, and he is a witness for the truth; yes, he is the only living witness to the truth which God has on earth. The world he lives in is a dark, polluted, God-blaspheming, Christ-denying, truth-despising world. The saints who have been called out of it according to His eternal purpose and love, and by His sovereign, distinguishing, and free grace, are the only lights and the only salt in the midst of this moral darkness and corruption. Here and there a light glimmers, irradiating the gloomy sphere in which it moves; here and there a spot of verdure appears, relieving the arid and barren desolation by which it is surrounded. These are the saints of the Most High, the witnesses of the Divine character, the omnipotent power, and the holy tendency, of God's blessed truth. Let the saints of God, then, solemnly weigh this affecting fact, that though the written word and the accompanying Spirit are God's witnesses in the world, yet they are the only living exemplification of the power of the truth, and, as such, are earnestly exhorted to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." Let them be careful to maintain good works, and so walk in all the holiness of the truth they profess; let them see that by no carelessness of deportment, by no want of integrity, by no worldly conformity, yes, by no inconsistency whatever, they bring a slur upon the holy doctrines they avowedly maintain and love; but let them show that, with the truth in their judgments, they possess grace in the heart, and unspotted holiness in the life.

OCTOBER 10.

"Our backslidings are many; we have sinned against you." Jeremiah 14:7

All spiritual declension in the true believer necessarily implies the actual possession of grace. We must not lose sight of this truth. Never, in the lowest condition of the believer, does Christ deny His own work in the soul. "You have a little strength," are His heart-melting words to the backsliding church in Sardis. Oh, what a gracious, patience Savior is ours! But let us briefly trace this melancholy state to some of its causes, that

we may be better able to point out its appropriate remedy.

The first cause undoubtedly is, the unguarded state of the soul. A Christian living in the daily neglect of self-examination must not marvel if, at a certain period of his religious course, he finds himself trembling upon the brink of gloomy despondency, his evidences gone, his hope obscured, and all the past of his Christian profession appearing to his view as a fearful delusion. But here let me suggest the cure. Examine before God the real state of your soul. Ascertain where you have lost ground. Retrace your way. Look honestly and fairly at your condition. Discouraging and repelling as it may appear, look it fully in the face, and lay it open before God exactly as it is, in the spirit and language of the Psalmist: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

The grieving of the Spirit of God is a most fruitful cause of spiritual relapse. We have yet much to learn of our entire dependence upon the Holy Spirit, and of our eternal obligation to Him for all the blessings of which He is the author and the conveyancer. What themes for grateful contemplation to the spiritual mind are the love of the Spirit--the faithfulness of the Spirit--the tenderness of the Spirit--the patience of the Spirit! And yet in the long catalogue of the believer's backslidings, not the least is his grieving this Holy Spirit of God. But there is a remedy. Seek that Spirit whom you have driven from your presence; implore His return: beseech Him for Jesus' sake to revisit you, to breathe His reviving influence as of old upon your soul. Then will return the happy days of former years, the sweet seasons of your early history, and you shall "sing as in the days of your youth, and as in the day when you came up out of the land of Egypt."

"Return, O holy Dove, return,

Sweet messenger of rest;

I hate the sins that made You mourn,

And drove You from my breast."

Distance from the cross contributes greatly to a state of spiritual declension. Retiring from beneath its shelter and its shade, you have left the region of safety, light, and peace, and, wandering over the mountains of sin, worldliness, and unbelief, have lost yourself amid their darkness, solitude, and gloom. Turning away from the cross of Jesus, you have lost the view you once had of a sin-pardoning, reconciled Father; and judging of Him now by His providences and not by His promises, and contemplating Him through the gloomy medium of a conscience unsprinkled with the blood of Christ, you are disposed to impeach the wisdom, the faithfulness, and the love of all His conduct towards you. But listen to the remedy. Yield yourself afresh to the attractions of the cross. Return, return to it again. No burning cherubim nor flaming sword guards its avenue. The atoning blood there shed has opened the way of the sinner's approach, and the interceding High Priest in heaven keeps it open for every repentant prodigal. Return to the true cross. Come and sit down beneath its grateful shade. Poor, weary wanderer! there is life and power, peace and repose, for you still in the cross of Christ. Mercy speaks from it, God smiles in it, Jesus stands by it, and the Holy Spirit, hovering above it, is prepared to reveal it to you afresh, in all its healing, restoring power.

OCTOBER 11.

"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth." Acts 8:32, 33

In the person of the Son of God, the two extremes of being--the infinite and the finite--meet in strange and mysterious, but close and eternal union. The Divine came down to the human--Deity humbled itself to humanity. This was humiliation indeed! It was not the creature descending in the scale of creation, but it was the Creator stooping to the creature. "God was manifest in the flesh." "He humbled Himself." Oh, it is an amazing truth! So infinitely great was He, He could thus stoop without compromising His dignity, or lessening His glory.

But, if possible, a step lower did He seem to descend. Thus in prophetic language did he announce it: "I am a worm and no man." What astounding words are these! Here was the God-man sinking, as it were, in the depths of abasement and humiliation below the human. "I am a worm, and no man!" In the lowliness which marked His external appearance, in the estimation in which He was held by men, in the contemptuous treatment which He received from His enemies, the trampling of His glory in the dust, and the crushing of His person on the cross, would seem in His own view to have robbed Him, not only of His glory as God, but even to have divested Him of His dignity as man! "I am a worm, and no man!" Oh, here is glory--glory surpassing all imagination, all thought, all power of utterance! He who bent His footsteps along this flinty path, He who sunk thus low, was Jehovah, the "mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth! Lowliness and majesty, humiliation and glory, how strangely were they blended in You, O incarnate God!

The assumption of our nature, in its depressed and bruised condition, constituted no small feature in the abasement of the Son of God. That, in the strong language of the Holy Spirit, He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," is a truth we cannot too distinctly affirm, or too earnestly maintain. The least misgiving touching the perfect sinlessness of the human nature of our Lord tends to weaken the confidence of faith in the atonement, and so to enshroud in darkness the hope of the soul. As a single leak must have sunk the ark beneath the waves, so the existence of the slightest taint of sin in Jesus would have opened an inlet through which the dark billows of Divine wrath would have rolled, plunging both Himself and the church He sustained in eternal woe. But that "holy thing" that was begotten of the Holy Spirit knew not the least moral taint. He "knew no sin," He was the sacrificial "Lamb without spot." And because He presented to the Divine requirement a holy, unblemished, and perfect obedience and satisfaction, we who believe are "made the righteousness of God in Him."

But His taking up into subsistence with His own our nature in its fallen condition, comprehends the sinless infirmities and weaknesses with which it was identified and encompassed. When I see my Lord and Master bowed with grief and enduring privation, when I behold Him making the needs and sorrows and sufferings of others His own, what do I learn but that He was truly a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"? Is there any spectacle more affecting, than thus to behold the Incarnate God entering personally and sympathetically into all the humiliations of my poor, bruised, vile nature, and yet remaining untouched, untainted by its sin?--taking my weaknesses, bearing my sicknesses, sorrowing when I sorrow, weeping when I weep, touched with the feeling of my infirmities, in all points tempted like as I am.

OCTOBER 12.

"Then Jesus spoke again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8:12

Are you, my reader, a searcher of this life? Are you breathing for it, panting after it, seeking it? Then be it known to you, that He who inspired that desire is Himself the life for which you seek. That heaving of your heart, that yearning of your spirit, that "feeling after God, if haply you may find Him," is the first gentle pulsation of a life that shall never die. Feeble and fluctuating, faint and fluttering, as its throbbings may be, it is yet the life of God, the life of Christ, the life of glory in your soul. It is the seedling, the germ of immortal flower; it is the sunshine dawn of an eternal day. The announcement with which we meet your case--and it is the only one that can meet it--is, "THIS MAN RECEIVES SINNERS." Oh joyful tidings! Oh blessed words! Yes, he receives sinners--the vilest--the meanest--the most despised! It was for this He relinquished the abodes of heavenly purity and bliss, to mingle amid the sinful and humiliating scenes of earth. For this He quitted His Father's bosom for a cross. For this He lived and labored, suffered and died. "He receives sinners!" He receives them of every name and condition--of every stature and character and climate. There is no limit to His ability to pardon, as there is none to the sufficiency of His atonement, or to the melting pity of His heart. Flee, then, to Jesus the crucified. To Him repair with your sins, as scarlet and as crimson, and His blood will wash you whiter than snow. What though they may be as clouds for darkness, or as the sand on the sea-shore for multitude; His grace can take them all away. Come with the accusations and tortures of a guilty conscience, come with the sorrow and relentings of a broken heart, come with the grief of the backslider, and with the confession of the prodigal; Jesus still meets you with the hope-inspiring words--"Him that comes unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Then, "return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon you; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon!"

OCTOBER 13.

"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." 1 Peter 1:5

This salvation takes in all the circumstances of a child of God. It is not only a salvation from wrath to come--that were an immeasurable act of grace--but it is a present salvation, anticipating and providing for every exigency of the life that now is, including deliverance from all evil, help in all trouble; comfort in all sorrow, the supply of all want, and through all conflicts, assaults, and difficulties, perfect safety and final triumph. The present and certain security of the believer is provided for in the covenant of grace, made sure in Jesus the covenant Head, and revealed in the glorious covenant plan of salvation. May the Holy Spirit unfold to us this great and consoling truth, that in the midst of all their weakness, waywardness, and tendency to wander, the Lord is the keeper of His people, and that they whom He keeps are well and eternally kept.

The Lord could not in truth be said to be the keeper of His people, if there were anything of self-power in the believer, any ability to keep himself--if he were not weakness, all weakness, and nothing but weakness. Of this the believer needs to be perpetually put in remembrance. The principle of self-confidence is the natural product of the human heart; the great characteristic of our apostate race is a desire to live, and think, and act independently of God. What is the great citadel, to the overthrow of which Divine grace first directs its power? what is the first step it takes in the subjection of the sinner to God? what, but the breaking down of this lofty, towering, independent conceit of himself, so natural to man, and so abhorrent to God? Now, let it be remembered, that Divine and sovereign grace undertakes not the extraction of the root of this depraved principle from the heart of its subjects. The root remains to the very close of life's pilgrimage; though in a measure weakened, subdued, mortified, still it remains; demanding

the most rigid watchfulness, connected with ceaseless prayer, lest it should spring upward, to the destruction of his soul's prosperity, the grieving of the Spirit, and the dishonoring of God. Oh how much the tender, faithful discipline of a covenant God may have the subjection and mortification of this hateful principle for its blessed end, who can tell? We shall never fully know until we reach our Father's house, where the dark and, to us, mysterious dealings of that loving Father with us here below shall unfold themselves in light and glory, elevating the soul in love and praise!

What an affecting confirmation do the histories of some of the most eminent of God's saints afford to this most important truth, that the creature, left to itself, is perfect weakness! If the angels in their purity, if Adam in his state of innocence, fell in consequence of being left, in the sovereign will of God, to their own keeping, what may we expect from a fallen, sinful, imperfect creature, even though renewed? Do we look into God's blessed word, and read what is there declared, touching the power of a renewed creature to keep itself? How affecting, and at the same time conclusive, these declarations are: "Having no might;" "Without strength;" "Weak through the flesh;" "Out of weakness were made strong"! Could language more forcibly set forth the utter weakness of a child of God? An what are their own acknowledgments? "The Lord is the strength of my life;" "Hold You me up, and I shall be safe;" "Hold up my goings in Your paths, that my footsteps slip not;" "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me;" "By the grace of God I am what I am." And what are the examples? Look at the intemperance of Noah, the unbelief of Abraham, the adultery and murder of David, the idolatry of Solomon, the self-righteousness of Job, the impatience of Moses, the self-confidence and trimming, temporizing policy of Peter. Solemn are these lessons of the creature's nothingness; affecting these examples of his perfect weakness!

But why speak of others? Let the reader, if he is a professing child of God, pause and survey the past of his own life. What marks of perfect weakness may he discover, what evidences of his own fickleness, folly, immature judgment, may he trace, what outbreakings of deep iniquity, what disclosures of hidden corruption, what startling symptoms of the most awful departure and apostasy from God, does the review present! And, this, too, let it be remembered, is the history of a believer in Jesus, a renewed child of God, a partaker of the Divine nature, an expectant of eternal glory! Holy and blessed are they who, relinquishing all their fond conceit of self-power and self-keeping, shall pray, and cease not to pray, "Lord, hold You me up, and I shall be safe!" "Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall."

OCTOBER 14.

"Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."
Philippians 1:11

There is a perpetual proneness to seek our fruitfulness from anything save a close, spiritual, and constant dealing with the cross of Jesus: but as well might we expect the earth to clothe itself with verdure, or the tree to blossom, and the blossom ripen into fruit, without the sun's genial warmth, as to look for fruitfulness in a regenerate soul, without a constant dealing with the Lord Jesus Christ; for just what the sun is to the kingdom of nature, Jesus the Sun of righteousness is to the kingdom of grace--the blessed source of all its verdure, fragrance, and fruitfulness. Then, let all your expectations be centered here. No real good can come to you, no healing to your spirit, no fruitfulness to your soul, from a perpetual living upon convictions of sin, legal fears, or transient joys; the Divine life can derive no nourishment from these. But live upon the atoning blood of Jesus--here is the fatness of your soul found; this it is that heals the wound, wins the heart, and hushes to repose every fear of condemnation; this it is that enables a poor sinner to look full at God, feeling that justice, holiness, truth, and every Divine perfection are on his side. It is the blood of

Jesus, applied by the Spirit, that moistens each fibre of the root of holiness in the soul, and is productive of its fruitfulness; this it is that sends the warm current of life through every part of the regenerate man, quickening the pulse of love, and imparting a healthy and vigorous power to every act of obedience. And when the spiritual seasons change--for it is not always spring-time with the soul of a child of God--when the summer's sun withers, or the autumnal blast scatters the leaves, and winter's fiercer storm beats upon the smitten bough, the blood and righteousness of Christ, lived upon, loved, and cherished, will yet sustain the Divine life in the soul, and in due season the spring blossom and the summer fruit shall again appear, proving that the Divine life of a believer is "hid with Christ in God." Then shall be said of you, as was said of the church by her Beloved: "The winter is past, and the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." Then let your heart respond, "Awake, O north wind, and come, you south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out."

Let the believer be aware how he despises what little fruitfulness the Lord the Spirit may have given him: there is danger of this. But, dear reader, it is a mercy for you to know that the Lord does not regard your estimate of a fruitful state; else, were the Lord to judge and condemn us as we do ourselves; were He to despise His own work as we too frequently do, it would indeed go hard with us. But He does not: that which we have often thought unworthy of His notice, He has looked down upon with the greatest complacency and delight. See, then, that you despise not what the Lord has wrought for you. Any desire of the heart for Christ, any secret brokenness, any godly sorrow over indwelling sin, any feeble going out of self and leaning on Jesus, is the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, and must not be undervalued or unacknowledged. A truly humbled view of self is one of the most precious fruits of the Spirit; it indicates more real fruitfulness, perhaps, than any other state of mind. That ear of corn which is the most full of grain hangs the lowest; that bough which is the most heavily laden with fruit bends the nearest to the ground. It is no unequivocal mark of great spiritual fruitfulness in a believer, when tenderness of conscience, contrition of spirit, low thoughts of self, and high thoughts of Jesus, mark the state of his soul. "Who has despised the day of small things?"--not Jesus.

OCTOBER 15.

"He looks upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light." Job 33:27, 28

Let the child of God be encouraged to take all his sins to his heavenly Father. Have you sinned? Have you taken a single step in departure from God? Is there the slightest consciousness of guilt? Go at once to the throne of grace; stay not until you find some secret place for confession--stay not until you are alone; lift up your heart at once to God, and confess your sin with the hand of faith upon the great, atoning Sacrifice. Open all your heart to Him. Do not be afraid of a full and honest confession. Shrink not from unfolding its most secret recesses--lay all bare before His eyes. Do you think He will turn from the exposure? Do you think He will close His ear against your breathings? Oh no! Listen to His own encouraging, persuasive declarations--"Go and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, Return, you backsliding Israel, says the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, says the Lord; and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity that you have transgressed against the Lord your God." "I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him." Oh, what words are these! Does the eye of the poor backslider fall on this page? And as he now reads of God's readiness to pardon--of God's willingness to receive back the repenting prodigal--of His yearning

after His wandering child--feels his heart melted, his soul subdued, and, struck with that amazing declaration, "Only acknowledge your iniquity," would dare creep down at His feet, and weep, and mourn, and confess. Oh! is there one such now reading this page? then return, my brother, return! God--the God against whom you have sinned--says, "Return." Your Father--the Father from whom you have wandered--is looking out for the first return of your soul, for the first kindlings of godly sorrow, for the first confession of sin. God has not turned His back upon you, though you have turned your back upon Him. God has not forgotten to be gracious, though you have forgotten to be faithful. "I remember you"--is His own touching language--"the kindness of your youth, the love of your espousals." Oh! then, come back; this moment, come back; the fountain is still open--Jesus is still the same--the blessed and eternal Spirit, loving and faithful as ever--God ready for pardon: take up, then, the language of the prodigal and say, "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in Your sight, and am no more worthy to be called Your son." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The blessings that result from a strict observance of daily confession of sin are rich and varied. We would from the many specify two. The conscience retains its tender susceptibility of guilt. Just as a breath will tarnish a mirror highly polished, so will the slightest aberration of the heart from God--the smallest sin--leave its impression upon a conscience in the habit of a daily unburdening itself in confession, and of a daily washing in the fountain. Going thus to God, and acknowledging iniquity over the head of Immanuel--pleading the atoning blood--the conscience retains its tenderness, and sin, all sin, is viewed as that which God hates, and the soul abhors.

This habit, too, keeps, so to speak, a clear account between God and the believer. Sins daily and hourly committed are not forgotten; they fade not from the mind, and therefore they need not the correcting rod to recall them to remembrance. For let us not forget, God will eventually bring our sins to remembrance; "He will call to remembrance the iniquity." David had forgotten his sin against God, and his treacherous conduct to Uriah, until God sent the prophet Nathan to bring his iniquity to remembrance. A daily confession, then, of sin, a daily washing in the fountain, will preserve the believer from many and, perhaps, deep afflictions. This was David's testimony--"I acknowledged my sin unto You, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord, and You forgave the iniquity of my sin."

OCTOBER 16.

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went." Hebrews 11:8

The entire spiritual life of a child of God is a life of faith--God has so ordained it; and to bring him into the full and blessed experience of it, is the end of all His parental dealings with him. If we desire to see our way every step of our homeward path, we must abandon the more difficult though more blessed ascent of faith; it is impossible to walk by sight and by faith at the same time--the two paths run in opposite directions. If the Lord were to reveal the why and the why of all His dealings--if we were only to advance as we saw the spot on which we were to place our foot, or only to go out as we knew the place where we were going--it then were no longer a life of faith that we lived, but of sight. We shall have exchanged the life which glorifies, for the life which dishonors God. When God, about to deliver the Israelites from the power of Pharaoh, commanded them to advance, it was before He revealed the way by which He was about to rescue them. The Red Sea rolled its deep and frowning waves at their feet; they saw not a spot of dry ground on which they could tread; and yet this was the command to Moses-- "Speak unto the children

of Israel that they go forward." They were to "walk by faith, not by sight." It had been no exercise of faith in God, no confidence in His promise, no resting in His faithfulness, and no "magnifying of His word above all His name," had they waited until the waters cleaved asunder, and a dry passage opened to their view. But, like the patriarchs, they "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but were strong in faith, giving glory to God." Have little to do with sense, if you would have much to do with faith. Expect not always to see the way. God may call you to go out into a place, not making known to you where you go; but it is your duty, like Abraham, to obey. All that you have to do is to go forward, leaving all consequences and results to God: it is enough for you that the Lord by this providence says, "Go forward!" This is all you may hear; it is your duty instantly to respond, "Lord, I go at Your bidding; bid me come to You, though it be upon the stormy water."

"Having begun in the Spirit," the believer is not to be "made perfect in the flesh;" having commenced his divine life in faith, in faith he is to walk every step of his journey homewards. The moment a poor sinner has touched the hem of Christ's garment, feeble though this act of faith be, it is yet the commencement of this high and holy life of faith; even from that moment the believing soul professes to have done with a life of sense--with second causes--and to have entered upon a glorious life of faith in Christ. It is no forced application to him of the apostle's declaration: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."

OCTOBER 17.

"These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify your Son, that your Son also may glorify you: as you have given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given him." John 17:1, 2

The certain glorification with Jesus of every believer is a truth as much involving the honor of God, as it does the present comfort and future happiness of the church. The opposite sentiment--the possibility of a child of God falling short of eternal glory (a doctrine, let it be observed, at total variance with the entire Scriptures of truth), by unhinging the soul from God, and throwing it back completely upon itself, must necessarily lead to low and dishonoring views of the Divine character; while it begets in the mind a spirit of bondage, and a sense of the most painful apprehension, both equally inimical to a healthy and fruitful Christianity. But the most solemn, I may say awful, light in which the doctrine of the believer's final insecurity presents itself is, that it casts a thick veil over the glory of Immanuel. It touches every perfection of his being. Oh could the dear saints of God, thus tossed in the troubled sea of doubt, and thus agitated with a "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation," but be brought to see how the Jesus whom they love is wounded, dishonored, and shorn of His glory by this unscriptural tenet, would they not unhesitatingly renounce it as leading to a result so fearful? Can that, I earnestly ask, be a doctrine of Divine revelation, which tends in the slightest degree to shade the glory of Christ? If one of those given to Him of His Father--one whose sins He carried, whose curse He bore, whose soul He has renewed by the grace of His Spirit--were permitted finally and eternally to perish, where would be His glory? where the glory of His truth? where the glory of His power? where the glory of His love? where the glory of His work? Gone! Every perfection of His Divine being would be impeached, and every beam of His Divine glory would be tarnished.

But all shall be brought safely to heaven. Hark, how distinctly and authoritatively He pleads for this, their crowning blessing, when on the eve of His mysterious passion, and about to spring from His cross to His throne. "Father, I will that they also whom You have given me be with me where I am; that they may

behold my glory." Sublime prayer!--comprehensive and tender petition! How did the Head long to have with Him, where He was, each member of His body! Having had fellowship with Him in His humiliation, it was His desire that they should have fellowship with Him in His glory. And this He asks not as a gift, but claims as a right. In virtue of His covenant engagement with the Father, His full satisfaction to Divine justice, His perfect obedience to the Divine law, His finished redemption of His people, He reverently bows at the mercy-seat, and pours out His full soul, and unburdens His loving heart, in the most sublime petition that ever ascended from mortal lip: "Father, I will that they also whom You have given me be with me where I am." And mark the reason why--"that they may behold my glory." Consummation of glory!--overflowing cup of bliss!--height of perfect holiness! Was it the parting charge of Joseph to His brethren--"You shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall haste and bring down my father here"? Our Joseph, with love infinitely more intense, desires that all His brethren be brought to heaven, that they may behold His glory there--the glory of His unveiled Deity--the glory of His glorified humanity--and the glory to which, as Mediator, His Father has advanced Him.

OCTOBER18.

"But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many." Romans 5:15

From the want of clear and spiritual views of the freeness of the atonement, the perfectly unconditional bestowment of the blessings of pardon and justification, many are kept, even among those "called to be saints," from entering fully into the liberty and peace of the gospel. They have been convinced of their need of Christ; they have been made to hunger and thirst for pardon and acceptance; they have been brought, it may be, through a deep "law-work of the soul," to stand as on the very borders of the land that flows with milk and honey; but looking more to themselves, and less to Christ--lingering on its margin, while the river flows so richly and so freely at their feet, waiting for some condition to be performed, some fitness to be experienced, or some price to bring--they are kept back from those rich and untold blessings which a closing in with Jesus the Savior of sinners would assuredly bring into their possession.

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