

# Morning by Morning

By

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**VOLUME TWO**

*He wakeneth morning by morning,  
he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.  
Isaiah 50:4*

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Note: This devotional can be accessed at: [www.lifebpc.com/devotions](http://www.lifebpc.com/devotions)

*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth:  
for thy love is better than wine.  
Song of Solomon 1:2*

**F**OR several days we have been dwelling upon the Saviour's passion, and for some little time to come we shall linger there. In beginning a new month, let us seek the same desires after our Lord as those which glowed in the heart of the elect spouse. See how she leaps at once to *Him*; there are no prefatory words; she does not even mention His name; she is in the heart of her theme at once, for she speaks of *Him* who was the only *Him* in the world to her. How bold is her love! It was much condescension which permitted the weeping penitent to anoint His feet with spikenard—it was rich love which allowed the gentle Mary to sit at His feet and learn of Him—but here, love, strong, fervent love, aspires to higher tokens of regard, and closer signs of fellowship. Esther trembled in the presence of Ahasuerus, but the spouse in joyful liberty of perfect love knows no fear. If we have received the same free spirit, we also may ask the like. By kisses we suppose to be intended those varied manifestations of affection by which the believer is made to enjoy the love of Jesus. The kiss of *reconciliation* we enjoyed at our conversion, and it was sweet as honey dropping from the comb. The kiss of *acceptance* is still warm on our brow, as we know that He hath accepted our persons and our works through rich grace. The kiss of daily, present *communion* is that which we pant after to be repeated day after day, till it is changed into the kiss of *reception*, which removes the soul from earth, and the kiss of *consummation* which fills it with the joy of heaven. Faith is our walk, but fellowship sensibly felt is our rest. Faith is the road, but communion with Jesus is the well from which the pilgrim drinks. O lover of our souls, be not strange to us; let the lips of thy blessing meet the lips of our asking; let the lips of thy fulness touch the lips of our need, and straightway the kiss will be effected.

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*And he answered him to never a word;  
insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.*

*Matthew 27:14*

**H**E had never been slow of speech when He could bless the sons of men, but He would not say a single word for Himself. “Never man spake like this Man,” and never man was silent like Him. Was this singular silence *the index of His perfect self-sacrifice*? Did it show that He would not utter a word to stay the slaughter of His sacred person, which He had dedicated as an offering for us? Had He so entirely surrendered Himself that He would not interfere in His own behalf, even in the minutest degree, but be bound and slain an unstruggling, uncomplaining victim? Was this silence *a type of the defencelessness of sin*? Nothing can be said in palliation or excuse of human guilt; and, therefore, He who bore its whole weight stood speechless before His judge. Is not patient silence *the best reply to a gainsaying world*? Calm endurance answers some questions infinitely more conclusively than the loftiest eloquence. The best apologists for Christianity in the early days were its martyrs. The anvil breaks a host of hammers by quietly bearing their blows. Did not the silent Lamb of God furnish us with *a grand example of wisdom*? Where every word was occasion for new blasphemy, it was the line of duty to afford no fuel for the flame of sin. The ambiguous and the false, the unworthy and mean, will ere long overthrow and confute themselves, and therefore the true can afford to be quiet, and finds silence to be its wisdom. Evidently our Lord, by His silence, furnished *a remarkable fulfilment of prophecy*. A long defence of Himself would have been contrary to Isaiah’s prediction: “He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.” By His quiet He conclusively proved Himself to be the true Lamb of God. As such we salute Him this morning. Be with us, Jesus, and in the silence of our heart, let us hear the voice of Thy love.

*Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified.  
And they took Jesus, and led him away.  
John 19:16*

**H**E had been all night in agony, He had spent the early morning at the hall of Caiaphas, He had been hurried from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate; He had, therefore, but little strength left, and yet neither refreshment nor rest were permitted Him. They were eager for His blood, and therefore led Him out to die, loaded with the cross. O dolorous procession! Well may Salem's daughters weep. My soul, do thou weep also.

What learn we here as we see our blessed Lord led forth? Do we not perceive that truth which was set forth in shadow by *the scapegoat*? Did not the high-priest bring the scapegoat, and put both his hands upon its head, confessing the sins of the people, that thus those sins might be laid upon the goat, and cease from the people? Then the goat was led away by a fit man into the wilderness, and it carried away the sins of the people, so that if they were sought for they could not be found. Now we see Jesus brought before the priests and rulers, who pronounce Him guilty; God Himself imputes our sins *to Him*, "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all;" "He was made sin for us;" and, as the substitute for our guilt, bearing our sin upon His shoulders, represented by the cross; we see the great Scapegoat led away by the appointed officers of justice. Beloved, can you feel assured that He carried *your* sin? As you look at the cross upon His shoulders, does it represent *your* sin? There is one way by which you can tell whether He carried your sin or not. Have you laid your hand upon His head, confessed your sin, and trusted in Him? Then your sin lies not on you; it has all been transferred by blessed imputation to Christ, and He bears it on His shoulder as a load heavier than the cross.

Let not the picture vanish till you have rejoiced in your own deliverance, and adored the loving Redeemer upon whom your iniquities were laid.

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*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;  
that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

*2 Corinthians 5:21*

**M**OURNING Christian! why weepest thou? Art thou mourning over thine own corruptions? Look to thy perfect Lord, and remember, thou art complete in Him; thou art in God's sight as perfect as if thou hadst never sinned; nay, more than that, the Lord our Righteousness hath put a divine garment upon thee, so that thou hast more than the righteousness of man—thou hast the righteousness of God. O thou who art mourning by reason of inbred sin and depravity, remember, none of thy sins can condemn thee. Thou hast learned to hate sin; but thou hast learned also to know that sin is not thine—it was laid upon Christ's head. Thy standing is not in thyself—it is in Christ; thine acceptance is not in thyself, but in thy Lord; thou art as much accepted of God today, with all thy sinfulness, as thou wilt be when thou standest before His throne, free from all corruption. O, I beseech thee, lay hold on this precious thought, *perfection in Christ!* For thou art "complete in Him." With thy Saviour's garment on, thou art holy as the Holy one. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Christian, let thy heart rejoice, for thou art "accepted in the beloved"—what hast thou to fear? Let thy face ever wear a smile; live near thy Master; live in the suburbs of the Celestial City; for soon, when thy time has come, thou shalt rise up where thy Jesus sits, and reign at His right hand; and all this because the divine Lord "was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

*And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon,  
a Cyrenian, coming out of the country,  
and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.  
Luke 23:26*

**W**E see in Simon's carrying the cross a picture of the work of the Church throughout all generations; she is the cross-bearer after Jesus. Mark then, Christian, Jesus does not suffer so as to exclude your suffering. He bears a cross, not that you may escape it, but that you may endure it. Christ exempts you from sin, but not from sorrow. Remember that, and expect to suffer.

But let us comfort ourselves with this thought, that in our case, as in Simon's, *it is not our cross, but Christ's cross which we carry*. When you are molested for your piety; when your religion brings the trial of cruel mockings upon you, then remember it is not *your* cross, it is *Christ's* cross; and how delightful is it to carry the cross of our Lord Jesus!

*You carry the cross after him*. You have blessed company; your path is marked with the footprints of your Lord. The mark of His blood-red shoulder is upon that heavy burden. 'Tis *His* cross, and He goes before you as a shepherd goes before his sheep. Take up your cross daily, and follow Him.

Do not forget, also, *that you bear this cross in partnership*. It is the opinion of some that Simon only carried one end of the cross, and not the whole of it. That is very possible; Christ may have carried the heavier part, against the transverse beam, and Simon may have borne the lighter end. Certainly it is so with you; you do but carry the light end of the cross, Christ bore the heavier end.

And remember, *though Simon had to bear the cross for a very little while, it gave him lasting honour*. Even so the cross we carry is only for a little while at most, and then we shall receive the crown, the glory. Surely we should love the cross, and, instead of shrinking from it, *count it very dear*; when it works out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

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*Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp,  
bearing his reproach.*

*Hebrews 13:13*

**J**ESUS, bearing His cross, went forth to suffer without the gate. The Christian's reason for leaving the camp of the world's sin and religion is not because he loves to be singular, but because *Jesus did so*; and the disciple must follow his Master. Christ was "not of the world:" His life and His testimony were a constant protest against conformity with the world. Never was such overflowing affection for men as you find in Him; but still He was separate from sinners. In like manner Christ's people must "go forth unto Him." They must take their position "without the camp," as witness-bearers for the truth. They must be prepared to tread the straight and narrow path. They must have bold, unflinching, lion-like hearts, loving Christ first, and His truth next, and Christ and His truth beyond all the world. Jesus would have His people "go forth without the camp" *for their own sanctification*. You cannot grow in grace to any high degree while you are conformed to the world. The life of separation may be a path of sorrow, but it is the highway of safety; and though the separated life may cost you many pangs, and make every day a battle, yet it is a happy life after all. No joy can excel that of the soldier of Christ: Jesus reveals Himself so graciously, and gives such sweet refreshment, that the warrior feels more calm and peace in his daily strife than others in their hours of rest. The highway of holiness is the highway of communion. It is thus we shall hope *to win the crown* if we are enabled by divine grace faithfully to follow Christ "without the camp." The crown of glory will follow the cross of separation. A moment's shame will be well recompensed by eternal honour; a little while of witness-bearing will seem nothing when we are "forever with the Lord."

*O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame?  
how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing?*

*Psalm 4:2*

**A**N instructive writer has made a mournful list of the honours which the blinded people of Israel awarded to their long expected King. (1) They gave Him *a procession of honour*, in which Roman legionaries, Jewish priests, men and women, took a part, He Himself bearing His cross. This is the triumph which the world awards to Him who comes to overthrow man's direst foes. Derisive shouts are His only acclamations, and cruel taunts His only paeans of praise. (2) They presented Him with *the wine of honour*. Instead of a golden cup of generous wine they offered Him the criminal's stupefying death-draught, which He refused because He would preserve an uninjured taste wherewith to taste of death; and afterwards when He cried, "I thirst," they gave Him vinegar mixed with gall, thrust to His mouth upon a sponge. Oh! wretched, detestable inhospitality to the King's Son. (3) He was provided with *a guard of honour*, who showed their esteem of Him by gambling over His garments, which they had seized as their booty. Such was the body-guard of the adored of heaven; a quaternion of brutal gamblers. (4) *A throne of honour* was found for Him upon the bloody tree; no easier place of rest would rebel men yield to their liege Lord. The cross was, in fact, the full expression of the world's feeling towards Him; "There," they seemed to say, "thou Son of God, this is the manner in which God Himself should be treated, could we reach Him." (5) *The title of honour* was nominally "King of the Jews," but that the blinded nation distinctly repudiated, and really called Him "King of thieves," by preferring Barabbas, and by placing Jesus in the place of highest shame between two thieves. His glory was thus in all things turned into shame by the sons of men, but it shall yet gladden the eyes of saints and angels, world without end.

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*For if they do these things in a green tree,  
what shall be done in the dry?*

*Luke 23:31*

**A**MONG other interpretations of this suggestive question, the following is full of teaching: "If the innocent substitute for sinners, suffer thus, what will be done when the sinner himself—the dry tree—shall fall into the hands of an angry God?" When God saw Jesus in the sinner's place, He did not spare Him; and when He finds the unregenerate without Christ, He will not spare them. O sinner, Jesus was led away by His enemies: so shall you be dragged away by fiends to the place appointed for you. Jesus was deserted of God; and if He, who was only imputedly a sinner, was deserted, how much more shall you be? "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*" what an awful shriek! But what shall be your cry when you shall say, "O God! O God! why hast thou forsaken me?" and the answer shall come back, "Because ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." If God spared not His own Son, how much less will He spare you! What whips of burning wire will be yours when conscience shall smite you with all its terrors. Ye richest, ye merriest, ye most self-righteous sinners—who would stand in your place when God shall say, "Awake, O sword, against the man that rejected me; smite him, and let him feel the smart forever"? Jesus was spit upon: sinner, what shame will be yours! We cannot sum up in one word all the mass of sorrows which met upon the head of Jesus who died for us; therefore it is impossible for us to tell you what streams, what oceans of grief must roll over *your* spirit if you die as you now are. You may die so, you may die now. By the agonies of Christ, by His wounds and by His blood, do not bring upon yourselves the wrath to come! Trust in the Son of God, and you shall never die.

*And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.*

*Luke 23:27*

**A**MID the rabble rout which hounded the Redeemer to His doom, there were some gracious souls whose bitter anguish sought vent in wailing and lamentations—fit music to accompany that march of woe. When my soul can, in imagination, see the Saviour bearing His cross to Calvary, she joins the godly women and weeps with them; for, indeed, there is true cause for grief—cause lying deeper than those mourning women thought. They bewailed innocence maltreated, goodness persecuted, love bleeding, meekness about to die; but my heart has a deeper and more bitter cause to mourn. My sins were the scourges which lacerated those blessed shoulders, and crowned with thorn those bleeding brows: my sins cried “Crucify Him! crucify Him!” and laid the cross upon His gracious shoulders. His being led forth to die is sorrow enough for one eternity: but my having been His murderer, is more, infinitely more, grief than one poor fountain of tears can express.

Why those women loved and wept it were not hard to guess: but they could not have had greater reasons for love and grief than my heart has. Nain’s widow saw her son restored—but I myself have been raised to newness of life. Peter’s wife’s mother was cured of the fever—but I of the greater plague of sin. Out of Magdalene seven devils were cast—but a whole legion out of me. Mary and Martha were favoured with visits—but He dwells with me. His mother bare His body—but He is formed in me the hope of glory. In nothing behind the holy women in debt, let me not be behind them in gratitude or sorrow.

“Love and grief my heart dividing,  
With my tears His feet I’ll lave—  
Constant still in heart abiding,  
Weep for Him who died to save.”

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*And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.*

*Luke 23:33*

**T**HE hill of comfort is the hill of Calvary; the house of consolation is built with the wood of the cross; the temple of heavenly blessing is founded upon the riven rock—riven by the spear which pierced His side. No scene in sacred history ever gladdens the soul like Calvary's tragedy.

“Is it not strange, the darkest hour  
That ever dawned on sinful earth,  
Should touch the heart with softer power,  
For comfort, than an angel's mirth?  
That to the Cross the mourner's eye should turn,  
Sooner than where the stars of Bethlehem burn?”

Light springs from the midday-midnight of Golgotha, and every herb of the field blooms sweetly beneath the shadow of the once accursed tree. In that place of thirst, grace hath dug a fountain which ever gusheth with waters pure as crystal, each drop capable of alleviating the woes of mankind. You who have had your seasons of conflict, will confess that it was not at Olivet that you ever found comfort, not on the hill of Sinai, nor on Tabor; but Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha have been a means of comfort to you. The bitter herbs of Gethsemane have often taken away the bitters of your life; the scourge of Gabbatha has often scourged away your cares, and the groans of Calvary have put all other groans to flight. Thus Calvary yields us comfort rare and rich. We never should have known Christ's love in all its heights and depths if He had not died; nor could we guess the Father's deep affection if He had not given His Son to die. The common mercies we enjoy all sing of love, just as the sea-shell, when we put it to our ears, whispers of the deep sea whence it came; but if we desire to hear the ocean itself, we must not look at every-day blessings, but at the transactions of the crucifixion. He who would know love, let him retire to Calvary and see the Man of sorrows die.

*I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint:  
my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*

*Psalm 22:14*

**D**ID earth or heaven ever behold a sadder spectacle of woe! In soul and body, our Lord felt Himself to be weak as water poured upon the ground. The placing of the cross in its socket had shaken Him with great violence, had strained all the ligaments, pained every nerve, and more or less dislocated all His bones. Burdened with His own weight, the august sufferer felt the strain increasing every moment of those six long hours. His sense of faintness and general weakness were overpowering; while to His own consciousness He became nothing but a mass of misery and swooning sickness. When Daniel saw the great vision, He thus describes His sensations, "There remained no strength in me, for my vigour was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength:" how much more faint must have been our greater Prophet when He saw the dread vision of the wrath of God, and felt it in His own soul! To us, sensations such as our Lord endured would have been insupportable, and kind unconsciousness would have come to our rescue; but in His case, He was wounded, and felt the sword; He drained the cup and *tasted* every drop.

"O King of Grief! (a title strange, yet true  
To Thee of all kings only due)  
O King of Wounds! how shall I grieve for Thee,  
Who in all grief preventest me!"

As we kneel before our now ascended Saviour's throne, let us remember well the way by which He prepared it as a throne of grace for us; let us in spirit drink of His cup, that we may be strengthened for our hour of heaviness whenever it may come. In His natural body every member suffered, and so must it be in the spiritual; but as out of all His griefs and woes His body came forth uninjured to glory and power, even so shall His mystical body come through the furnace with not so much as the smell of fire upon it.

*I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint:  
my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*

*Psalm 22:14*

**O**UR blessed Lord experienced a terrible sinking and melting of soul. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Deep depression of spirit is the most grievous of all trials; all besides is as nothing. Well might the suffering Saviour cry to His God, "Be not far from me," for above all other seasons a man needs his God when his heart is melted within him because of heaviness. Believer, come near the cross this morning, and humbly adore the King of glory as having once been brought far lower, in mental distress and inward anguish, than any one among us; and mark His fitness to become a faithful High Priest, who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Especially let those of us whose sadness springs directly from the withdrawal of a present sense of our Father's love, enter into near and intimate communion with Jesus. Let us not give way to despair, since through this dark room the Master has passed before us. Our souls may sometimes long and faint, and thirst even to anguish, to behold the light of the Lord's countenance: at such times let us stay ourselves with the sweet fact of the sympathy of our great High Priest. Our drops of sorrow may well be forgotten in the ocean of His griefs; but how high ought our love to rise! Come in, O strong and deep love of Jesus, like the sea at the flood in spring tides, cover all my powers, drown all my sins, wash out all my cares, lift up my earth-bound soul, and float it right up to my Lord's feet, and there let me lie, a poor broken shell, washed up by His love, having no virtue or value; and only venturing to whisper to Him that if He will put His ear to me, He will hear within my heart faint echoes of the vast waves of His own love which have brought me where it is my delight to lie, even at His feet forever.

*A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me;  
he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.  
Song of Solomon 1:13*

**M**YRRH may well be chosen as the type of Jesus on account of its preciousness, its perfume, its pleasantness, its healing, preserving, disinfecting qualities, and its connection with sacrifice. But why is He compared to “a bundle of myrrh”? First, for *plenty*. He is not a drop of it, He is a casket full. He is not a sprig or flower of it, but a whole bundle. There is enough in Christ for all my necessities; let me not be slow to avail myself of Him. Our well-beloved is compared to a “bundle” again, for *variety*: for there is in Christ not only the one thing needful, but in “Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;” everything needful is in Him. Take Jesus in His different characters, and you will see a marvelous variety—Prophet, Priest, King, Husband, Friend, Shepherd. Consider Him in His life, death, resurrection, ascension, second advent; view Him in His virtue, gentleness, courage, self-denial, love, faithfulness, truth, righteousness—everywhere He is a bundle of preciousness. He is a “bundle of myrrh” for *preservation*—not loose myrrh to be dropped on the floor or trodden on, but myrrh tied up, myrrh to be stored in a casket. We must value Him as our best treasure; we must prize His words and His ordinances; and we must keep our thoughts of Him and knowledge of Him as under lock and key, lest the devil should steal anything from us. Moreover, Jesus is a “bundle of myrrh” for *speciality*; the emblem suggests the idea of distinguishing, discriminating grace. From before the foundation of the world, He was set apart for His people; and He gives forth His perfume only to those who understand how to enter into communion with Him, to have close dealings with Him. Oh! blessed people whom the Lord hath admitted into His secrets, and for whom He sets Himself apart. Oh! choice and happy who are thus made to say, “A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me.”

*All they that see me laugh me to scorn:  
they shoot out the lip, they shake the head,  
Psalm 22:7*

**M**OCKERY was a great ingredient in our Lord's woe. Judas mocked Him in the garden; the chief priests and scribes laughed Him to scorn; Herod set Him at nought; the servants and the soldiers jeered at Him, and brutally insulted Him; Pilate and his guards ridiculed His royalty; and on the tree all sorts of horrid jests and hideous taunts were hurled at Him. Ridicule is always hard to bear, but when we are in intense pain it is so heartless, so cruel, that it cuts us to the quick. Imagine the Saviour crucified, racked with anguish far beyond all mortal guess, and then picture that motley multitude, all wagging their heads or thrusting out the lip in bitterest contempt of one poor suffering victim! Surely there must have been something more in the crucified One than they could see, or else such a great and mingled crowd would not unanimously have honoured Him with such contempt. Was it not evil confessing, in the very moment of its greatest apparent triumph, that after all it could do no more than mock at that victorious goodness which was then reigning on the cross? O Jesus, "despised and rejected of men," how couldst Thou die for men who treated Thee so ill? Herein is love amazing, love divine, yea, love beyond degree. We, too, have despised Thee in the days of our unregeneracy, and even since our new birth we have set the world on high in our hearts, and yet Thou bleedest to heal our wounds, and diest to give us life. O that we could set Thee on a glorious high throne in all men's hearts! We would ring out thy praises over land and sea till men should as universally adore as once they did unanimously reject.

"Thy creatures wrong Thee, O Thou sovereign Good!

*Thou art not loved, because not understood:*

This grieves me most, that vain pursuits beguile  
Ungrateful men, regardless of Thy smile."

*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

*Psalm 22:1*

**W**E here behold the Saviour in the depth of His sorrows. No other place so well shows the griefs of Christ as Calvary, and no other moment at Calvary is so full of agony as that in which His cry rends the air—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" At this moment physical weakness was united with acute mental torture from the shame and ignominy through which He had to pass; and to make His grief culminate with emphasis, He suffered spiritual agony surpassing all expression, resulting from the departure of His Father's presence. This was the black midnight of His horror; then it was that He descended the abyss of suffering. No man can enter into the full meaning of these words. Some of us think at times that we could cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" There are seasons when the brightness of our Father's smile is eclipsed by clouds and darkness; but let us remember that God never does really forsake us. It is only a seeming forsaking with us, but in Christ's case it was a *real* forsaking. We grieve at a little withdrawal of our Father's love; but the real turning away of God's face from His Son, who shall calculate how deep the agony which it caused Him?

In our case, our cry is often dictated by unbelief: in His case, it was the utterance of a dreadful fact, for God had really turned away from Him for a season. O thou poor, distressed soul, who once lived in the sunshine of God's face, but art now in darkness, remember that He has not really forsaken thee. God in the clouds is as much our God as when He shines forth in all the lustre of His grace; but since even the *thought* that He has forsaken us gives us agony, what must the woe of the Saviour have been when He exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

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*But with the precious blood of Christ,  
as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:  
1 Peter 1:19*

**S**TANDING at the foot of the cross, we see hands, and feet, and side, all distilling crimson streams of precious blood. It is “precious” because of its *redeeming* and *atoning efficacy*. By it the sins of Christ’s people are atoned for; they are redeemed from under the law; they are reconciled to God, made one with Him. Christ’s blood is also “precious” in its *cleansing power*; it “cleanseth from all sin.” “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” Through Jesus’ blood there is not a spot left upon any believer, no wrinkle nor any such thing remains. O precious blood, which makes us clean, removing the stains of abundant iniquity, and permitting us to stand accepted in the Beloved, notwithstanding the many ways in which we have rebelled against our God. The blood of Christ is likewise “precious” in its *preserving power*. We are safe from the destroying angel under the sprinkled blood. Remember it is *God’s seeing* the blood which is the true reason for our being spared. Here is comfort for us when the eye of faith is dim, for God’s eye is still the same. The blood of Christ is “precious” also in its *sanctifying influence*. The same blood which justifies by taking away sin, does in its after-action, quicken the new nature and lead it onward to subdue sin and to follow out the commands of God. There is no motive for holiness so great as that which streams from the veins of Jesus. And “precious,” unspeakably precious, is this blood, because it has *an overcoming power*. It is written, “They overcame through the blood of the Lamb.” How could they do otherwise? He who fights with the precious blood of Jesus, fights with a weapon which cannot know defeat. The blood of Jesus! sin dies at its presence, death ceases to be death: heaven’s gates are opened. The blood of Jesus! we shall march on, conquering and to conquer, so long as we can trust its power!

*And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

*Hebrews 12:24*

**R**EADER, have you come to the blood of sprinkling? The question is not whether you have come to a knowledge of doctrine, or an observance of ceremonies, or to a certain form of experience, but *have you come to the blood of Jesus?* The blood of Jesus is the life of all vital godliness. If you have truly come to Jesus, we know how you came—the Holy Spirit sweetly brought you there. You came to the blood of sprinkling with no merits of your own. Guilty, lost, and helpless, you came to take that blood, and that blood alone, as your everlasting hope. You came to the cross of Christ, with a trembling and an aching heart; and oh! what a precious sound it was to you to hear the voice of the blood of Jesus! The dropping of His blood is as the music of heaven to the penitent sons of earth. We are full of sin, but the Saviour bids us lift our eyes to Him, and as we gaze upon His streaming wounds, each drop of blood, as it falls, cries, “It is finished; I have made an end of sin; I have brought in everlasting righteousness.” Oh! sweet language of the precious blood of Jesus! If you have come to that blood once, you will come to it constantly. Your life will be “Looking unto Jesus.” Your whole conduct will be epitomized in this—“To whom coming.” Not to whom I *have* come, but to whom I am *always coming*. If thou hast ever come to the blood of sprinkling, thou wilt feel thy need of coming to it every day. He who does not desire to wash in it *every day*, has never washed in it at all. The believer ever feels it to be his joy and privilege that there is still a fountain opened. Past experiences are doubtful food for Christians; a present coming to Christ alone can give us joy and comfort. This morning let us sprinkle our door-post fresh with blood, and then feast upon the Lamb, assured that the destroying angel must pass us by.

*And she said, According unto your words, so be it.  
And she sent them away, and they departed:  
and she bound the scarlet line in the window.  
Joshua 2:21*

**R**AHAB depended for her preservation upon the promise of the spies, whom she looked upon as the representatives of the God of Israel. Her faith was simple and firm, but it was very obedient. To tie the scarlet line in the window was a very trivial act in itself, but she dared not run the risk of omitting it. Come, my soul, is there not here a lesson for thee? Hast thou been attentive to all thy Lord's will, even though some of His commands should seem non-essential? Hast thou observed in his own way the two ordinances of believers' baptism and the Lord's Supper? These neglected, argue much unloving disobedience in thy heart. Be henceforth in all things blameless, even to the tying of a thread, if that be a matter of command.

This act of Rahab sets forth a yet more solemn lesson. Have I implicitly trusted in the precious blood of Jesus? Have I tied the scarlet cord, as with a Gordian knot in my window, so that my trust can never be removed? Or can I look out towards the Dead Sea of my sins, or the Jerusalem of my hopes, without seeing the blood, and seeing all things in connection with its blessed power? The passer-by can see a cord of so conspicuous a colour, if it hangs from the window: it will be well for me if my life makes the efficacy of the atonement conspicuous to all onlookers. What is there to be ashamed of? Let men or devils gaze if they will, the blood is my boast and my song. My soul, there is One who will see that scarlet line, even when from weakness of faith thou canst not see it thyself; Jehovah, the Avenger, will see it and pass over thee. Jericho's walls fell flat: Rahab's house was on the wall, and yet it stood unmoved; my nature is built into the wall of humanity, and yet when destruction smites the race, I shall be secure. My soul, tie the scarlet thread in the window afresh, and rest in peace.

*And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;*  
*Matthew 27:51*

**N**O mean miracle was wrought in the rending of so strong and thick a veil; but it was not intended merely as a display of power—many lessons were herein taught us. *The old law of ordinances was put away*, and like a worn-out vesture, rent and laid aside. When Jesus died, the sacrifices were all finished, because all were fulfilled in Him, and therefore the place of their presentation was marked with an evident token of decay. That rent also *revealed all the hidden things of the old dispensation*: the mercy-seat could now be seen, and the glory of God gleamed forth above it. By the death of our Lord Jesus we have a clear revelation of God, for He was “not as Moses, who put a veil over his face.” Life and immortality are now brought to light, and things which have been hidden since the foundation of the world are manifest in Him. *The annual ceremony of atonement was thus abolished. The atoning blood which was once every year sprinkled within the veil, was now offered once for all by the great High Priest, and therefore the place of the symbolical rite was broken up. No blood of bullocks or of lambs is needed now, for Jesus has entered within the veil with His own blood. Hence access to God is now permitted, and is the privilege of every believer in Christ Jesus. There is no small space laid open through which we may peer at the mercy-seat, but the rent reaches from the top to the bottom. We may come with boldness to the throne of the heavenly grace. Shall we err if we say that the opening of the Holy of Holies in this marvellous manner by our Lord’s expiring cry was the type of the opening of the gates of paradise to all the saints by virtue of the Passion? Our bleeding Lord hath the key of heaven; He openeth and no man shutteth; let us enter in with Him into the heavenly places, and sit with Him there till our common enemies shall be made His footstool.*

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*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood,  
he also himself likewise took part of the same;  
that through death he might destroy him  
that had the power of death, that is, the devil;  
Hebrews 2:14*

**O** CHILD of God, death hath lost its sting, because the devil's power over it is destroyed. Then cease to fear dying. Ask grace from God the Holy Ghost, that by an intimate knowledge and a firm belief of thy Redeemer's death, thou mayst be strengthened for that dread hour. Living near the cross of Calvary thou mayst think of death with pleasure, and welcome it when it comes with intense delight. It is sweet to die in the Lord: it is a covenant-blessing to sleep in Jesus. Death is no longer banishment, it is a return from exile, a going home to the many mansions where the loved ones already dwell. The distance between glorified spirits in heaven and militant saints on earth seems great; but it is not so. We are not far from home—a moment will bring us there. The sail is spread; the soul is launched upon the deep. How long will be its voyage? How many wearying winds must beat upon the sail ere it shall be reefed in the port of peace? How long shall that soul be tossed upon the waves before it comes to that sea which knows no storm? Listen to the answer, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." Yon ship has just departed, but it is already at its haven. It did but spread its sail and it was there. Like that ship of old, upon the Lake of Galilee, a storm had tossed it, but Jesus said, "Peace, be still," and *immediately* it came to land. Think not that a long period intervenes between the instant of death and the eternity of glory. When the eyes close on earth they open in heaven. The horses of fire are not an instant on the road. Then, O child of God, what is there for thee to fear in death, seeing that through the death of thy Lord its curse and sting are destroyed? and now it is but a Jacob's ladder whose foot is in the dark grave, but its top reaches to glory everlasting.

*For I know that my redeemer liveth,  
and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:  
Job 19:25*

**T**HE marrow of Job's comfort lies in that little word "My"—"My Redeemer," and in the fact that the Redeemer lives. Oh! to get hold of a living Christ. We must get a property in Him before we can enjoy Him. What is gold in the mine to me? Men are beggars in Peru, and beg their bread in California. It is gold in my purse which will satisfy my necessities, by purchasing the bread I need. So a Redeemer who does not redeem *me*, an avenger who will never stand up for *my* blood, of what avail were such? Rest not content until by faith you can say "Yes, I cast myself upon my living Lord; and He is mine." It may be you hold Him with a feeble hand; you half think it presumption to say, "He lives as *my* Redeemer;" yet, remember if you have but faith as a grain of mustard seed, that little faith *entitles* you to say it. But there is also another word here, expressive of Job's strong confidence, "*I know*." To say, "I hope so, I trust so" is comfortable; and there are thousands in the fold of Jesus who hardly ever get much further. But to reach the essence of consolation you *must* say, "I know." Ifs, buts, and perhapses, are sure murderers of peace and comfort. Doubts are dreary things in times of sorrow. Like wasps they sting the soul! If I have any suspicion that Christ is not mine, then there is vinegar mingled with the gall of death; but if I know that Jesus lives for me, then darkness is not dark: even the night is light about me. Surely if Job, in those ages before the coming and advent of Christ, could say, "I know," we should not speak less positively. God forbid that our positiveness should be presumption. Let us see that our evidences are right, lest we build upon an ungrounded hope; and then let us not be satisfied with the mere foundation, for it is from the upper rooms that we get the widest prospect. A living Redeemer, truly mine, is joy unspeakable.

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*Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*

*Acts 5:31*

**J**ESUS, our Lord, once crucified, dead and buried, now sits upon the throne of glory. The highest place that heaven affords is His by undisputed right. It is sweet to remember that the exaltation of Christ in heaven is a *representative exaltation*. He is exalted at the Father's right hand, and though as Jehovah He had eminent glories, in which finite creatures cannot share, yet as the Mediator, the honours which Jesus wears in heaven are the heritage of all the saints. It is delightful to reflect how close is Christ's union with His people. We are actually one with Him; we are members of His body; and His exaltation is our exaltation. He will give us to sit upon His throne, even as He has overcome, and is set down with His Father on His throne; He has a crown, and He gives us crowns too; He has a throne, but He is not content with having a throne to Himself, on His right hand there must be His queen, arrayed in "gold of Ophir." He cannot be glorified without His bride. Look up, believer, to Jesus now; let the eye of your faith behold Him with many crowns upon His head; and remember that you will one day be like Him, when you shall see Him as He is; you shall not be so great as He is, you shall not be so divine, but still you shall, in a measure, share the same honours, and enjoy the same happiness and the same dignity which He possesses. Be content to live unknown for a little while, and to walk your weary way through the fields of poverty, or up the hills of affliction; for by-and-by you shall reign with Christ, for He has "made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign forever and ever." Oh!, wonderful thought for the children of God! We have Christ for our glorious representative in heaven's courts now, and soon He will come and receive us to Himself, to be with Him there, to behold His glory, and to share His joy.

*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors  
through him that loved us.*

*Romans 8:37*

**WE** go to Christ for forgiveness, and then too often look to the law for power to fight our sins. Paul thus rebukes us, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” Take your sins to Christ’s cross, for the old man can only be crucified there: we are crucified *with Him*. The only weapon to fight sin with is the spear which pierced the side of Jesus. To give an illustration—you want to overcome an angry temper; how do you go to work? It is very possible you have never tried the right way of going to Jesus with it. How did I get salvation? I came to Jesus just as I was, and I trusted Him to save me. I must kill my angry temper in the same way. It is the only way in which I can ever kill it. I must go to the cross with it, and say to Jesus, “Lord, I trust Thee to deliver me from it.” This is the only way to give it a death-blow. Are you covetous? Do you feel the world entangle you? You may struggle against this evil so long as you please, but if it be your besetting sin, you will never be delivered from it in any way but by the blood of Jesus. Take it to Christ. Tell Him, “Lord, I have trusted Thee, and Thy name is Jesus, for Thou dost save Thy people from their sins: Lord, this is one of my sins; save me from it!” Ordinances are nothing without Christ as a means of mortification. Your prayers, and your repentances, and your tears—the whole of them put together—are worth nothing apart from Him. “None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good;” or helpless saints either. You must be conquerors through Him who hath loved you, if conquerors at all. Our laurels must grow among His olives in Gethsemane.

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*And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it;  
and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it.*

*Nehemiah 9:38*

**T**HERE are many occasions in our experience when we may very rightly, and with benefit, renew our covenant with God. After *recovery from sickness* when, like Hezekiah, we have had a new term of years added to our life, we may fitly do it. After any *deliverance from trouble*, when our joys bud forth anew, let us again visit the foot of the cross, and renew our consecration. Especially, let us do this after any *sin which has grieved the Holy Spirit*, or brought dishonour upon the cause of God; let us then look to that blood which can make us whiter than snow, and again offer ourselves unto the Lord. We should not only let our troubles confirm our dedication to God, but *our prosperity* should do the same. If we ever meet with occasions which deserve to be called “crowning mercies” then, surely, if He hath crowned us, we ought also to crown our God; let us bring forth anew all the jewels of the divine regalia which have been stored in the jewel-closet of our heart, and let our God sit upon the throne of our love, arrayed in royal apparel. If we would learn to profit by our prosperity, we should not need so much adversity. If we would gather from a kiss all the good it might confer upon us, we should not so often smart under the rod. Have we lately received some blessing which we little expected? Has the Lord put our feet in a large room? Can we sing of mercies multiplied? Then this is the day to put our hand upon the horns of the altar, and say, “Bind me here, my God; bind me here with cords, even forever.” Inasmuch as we need the fulfilment of new promises from God, let us offer renewed prayers that our old vows may not be dishonoured. Let us this morning make with Him a sure covenant, because of the pains of Jesus which for the last month we have been considering with gratitude.

*My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love,  
my fair one, and come away.  
Song of Solomon 2:10*

**L**O, I hear the voice of my Beloved! He speaks to *me*! Fair weather is smiling upon the face of the earth, and He would not have me spiritually asleep while nature is all around me awaking from her winter's rest. He bids me "Rise up," and well He may; for I have long enough been lying among the pots of worldliness. He is risen, I am risen in Him, why then should I cleave unto the dust? From lower loves, desires, pursuits, and aspirations, I would rise towards Him. He calls me by the sweet title of "My love," and counts me fair; this is a good argument for my rising. If He has thus exalted me, and thinks me thus comely, how can I linger in the tents of Kedar and find congenial associates among the sons of men? He bids me "Come away." Further and further from everything selfish, grovelling, worldly, sinful, He calls me; yea, from the outwardly religious world which knows Him not, and has no sympathy with the mystery of the higher life, He calls me. "Come away" has no harsh sound in it to my ear, for what is there to hold me in this wilderness of vanity and sin? O my Lord, would that I could come away, but I am taken among the thorns, and cannot escape from them as I would. I would, if it were possible, have neither eyes, nor ears, nor heart for sin. Thou callest me to Thyself by saying "Come away," and this is a melodious call indeed. To come to Thee is to come home from exile, to come to land out of the raging storm, to come to rest after long labour, to come to the goal of my desires and the summit of my wishes. But Lord, how can a stone rise, how can a lump of clay come away from the horrible pit? O raise me, draw me. Thy grace can do it. Send forth Thy Holy Spirit to kindle sacred flames of love in my heart, and I will continue to rise until I leave life and time behind me, and indeed come away.

*And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said,  
Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you:  
this do in remembrance of me.  
1 Corinthians 11:24*

**I**T seems then, that Christians may forget Christ! There could be no need for this loving exhortation, if there were not a fearful supposition that our memories might prove treacherous. Nor is this a bare supposition: it is, alas! too well confirmed in our experience, not as a possibility, but as a lamentable fact. It appears almost impossible that those who have been redeemed by the blood of the dying Lamb, and loved with an everlasting love by the eternal Son of God, should forget that gracious Saviour; but, if startling to the ear, it is, alas! too apparent to the eye to allow us to deny the crime. Forget Him who never forgot us! Forget Him who poured His blood forth for our sins! Forget Him who loved us even to the death! Can it be possible? Yes, it is not only possible, but conscience confesses that it is too sadly a fault with all of us, that we suffer Him to be as a wayfaring man tarrying but for a night. He whom we should make the abiding tenant of our memories is but a visitor therein. The cross where one would think that memory would linger, and unmindfulness would be an unknown intruder, is desecrated by the feet of forgetfulness. Does not your conscience say that this is true? Do you not find yourselves forgetful of Jesus? Some creature steals away your heart, and you are unmindful of Him upon whom your affection ought to be set. Some earthly business engrosses your attention when you should fix your eye steadily upon the cross. It is the incessant turmoil of the world, the constant attraction of earthly things which takes away the soul from Christ. While memory too well preserves a poisonous weed, it suffereth the rose of Sharon to wither. Let us charge ourselves to bind a heavenly forget-me-not about our hearts for Jesus our Beloved, and, whatever else we let slip, let us hold fast to Him.

*Then shall the earth yield her increase;  
and God, even our own God, shall bless us.*

*Psalm 67:6*

**I**T is strange how little use we make of the spiritual blessings which God gives us, but it is stranger still how little use we make of God Himself. Though He is “our own God,” we apply ourselves but little to Him, and ask but little of Him. How seldom do we ask counsel at the hands of the Lord! How often do we go about our business, without seeking His guidance! In our troubles how constantly do we strive to bear our burdens ourselves, instead of casting them upon the Lord, that He may sustain us! This is not because we may not, for the Lord seems to say, “I am thine, soul, come and make use of me as thou wilt; thou mayst freely come to my store, and the oftener the more welcome.” It is our own fault if we make not free with the riches of our God. Then, since thou hast such a friend, and He invites thee, draw from Him daily. Never want whilst thou hast a God to go to; never fear or faint whilst thou hast God to help thee; go to thy treasure and take whatever thou needest—there is all that thou canst want. Learn the divine skill of making God all things to thee. He can supply thee with all, or, better still, He can be to thee instead of all. Let me urge thee, then, to make use of thy God. Make use of Him *in prayer*. Go to Him often, because He is *thy* God. O, wilt thou fail to use so great a privilege? Fly to Him, tell Him all thy wants. Use Him constantly *by faith* at all times. If some dark providence has beclouded thee, use thy God as a “sun;” if some strong enemy has beset thee, find in Jehovah a “shield,” for He is a sun and shield to His people. If thou hast lost thy way in the mazes of life, use Him as a “guide,” for He will direct thee. Whatever thou art, and wherever thou art, remember God is just *what* thou wantest, and just *where* thou wantest, and that He can do *all* thou wantest.

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*Remember the word unto thy servant,  
upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*

*Psalm 119:49*

**W**HATEVER your especial need may be, you may readily find some promise in the Bible suited to it. Are you faint and feeble because your way is rough and you are weary? Here is the promise—"He giveth power to the faint." When you read such a promise, take it back to the great Promiser, and ask Him to fulfil His own word. Are you seeking after Christ, and thirsting for closer communion with Him? This promise shines like a star upon you—"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Take that promise to the throne continually; do not plead anything else, but go to God over and over again with this—"Lord, thou hast said it, do as thou hast said." Are you distressed because of sin, and burdened with the heavy load of your iniquities? Listen to these words—"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions, and will no more remember thy sins." You have no merit of your own to plead why He should pardon you, but plead His written engagements and He will perform them. Are you afraid lest you should not be able to hold on to the end, lest, after having thought yourself a child of God, you should prove a castaway? If that is your state, take this word of grace to the throne and plead it: "The mountains may depart, and the hills may be removed, but the covenant of my love shall not depart from thee." If you have lost the sweet sense of the Saviour's presence, and are seeking Him with a sorrowful heart, remember the promises: "Return unto me, and I will return unto you;" "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee." Banquet your faith upon God's own word, and whatever your fears or wants, repair to the Bank of Faith with your Father's note of hand, saying, "Remember the word unto Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope."

*Be not a terror unto me: thou art my hope in the day of evil.*

*Jeremiah 17:17*

**T**HE path of the Christian is not always bright with sunshine; he has his seasons of darkness and of storm. True, it is written in God's Word, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;" and it is a great truth, that religion is calculated to give a man happiness below as well as bliss above; but experience tells us that if the course of the just be "As the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," yet sometimes *that* light is eclipsed. At certain periods clouds cover the believer's sun, and he walks in darkness and sees no light. There are many who have rejoiced in the presence of God for a season; they have basked in the sunshine in the earlier stages of their Christian career; they have walked along the "green pastures" by the side of the "still waters," but suddenly they find the glorious sky is clouded; instead of the Land of Goshen they have to tread the sandy desert; in the place of sweet waters, they find troubled streams, bitter to their taste, and they say, "Surely, if I were a child of God, this would not happen." Oh! say not so, thou who art walking in darkness. The best of God's saints must drink the wormwood; the dearest of His children must bear the cross. No Christian has enjoyed perpetual prosperity; no believer can always keep his harp from the willows. Perhaps the Lord allotted you at first a smooth and unclouded path, because you were weak and timid. He tempered the wind to the shorn lamb, but now that you are stronger in the spiritual life, you must enter upon the riper and rougher experience of God's full-grown children. We need winds and tempests to exercise our faith, to tear off the rotten bough of self-dependence, and to root us more firmly in Christ. The day of evil reveals to us the value of our glorious hope.

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*And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!*

*Numbers 14:2*

**T**HERE are murmurers amongst Christians now, as there were in the camp of Israel of old. There are those who, when the rod falls, cry out against the afflictive dispensation. They ask, "Why am I thus afflicted? What have I done to be chastened in this manner?" A word with thee, O murmurer! Why shouldst thou murmur against the dispensations of thy heavenly Father? Can He treat thee more hardly than thou deservest? Consider what a rebel thou wast once, but He has pardoned thee! Surely, if He in His wisdom sees fit now to chasten thee, thou shouldst not complain. After all, art thou smitten as hardly as thy sins deserve? Consider the corruption which is in thy breast, and then wilt thou wonder that there needs so much of the rod to fetch it out? Weigh thyself, and discern how much dross is mingled with thy gold; and dost thou think the fire too hot to purge away so much dross as thou hast? Does not that proud rebellious spirit of thine prove that thy heart is not thoroughly sanctified? Are not those murmuring words contrary to the holy submissive nature of God's children? Is not the correction needed? But if thou *wilt* murmur against the chastening, take heed, for it will go hard with murmurers. God always chastises His children twice, if they do not bear the first stroke patiently. But know one thing—"He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." All His corrections are sent in love, to purify thee, and to draw thee nearer to himself. Surely it must help thee to bear the chastening with resignation if thou art able to recognize thy *Father's* hand. For "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons." "Murmur not as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer."

*His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.*

*Song of Solomon 5:13*

**L**O, the flowery month is come! March winds and April showers have done their work, and the earth is all bedecked with beauty. Come my soul, put on thine holiday attire and go forth to gather garlands of heavenly thoughts. Thou knowest whither to betake thyself, for to thee “the beds of spices” are well known, and thou hast so often smelt the perfume of “the sweet flowers,” that thou wilt go at once to thy well-beloved and find all loveliness, all joy in Him. That cheek once so rudely smitten with a rod, oft bedewed with tears of sympathy and then defiled with spittle—that cheek as it smiles with mercy is as fragrant aromatic to my heart. Thou didst not hide Thy face from shame and spitting, O Lord Jesus, and therefore I will find my dearest delight in praising Thee. Those cheeks were furrowed by the plough of grief, and crimsoned with red lines of blood from Thy thorn-crowned temples; such marks of love unbounded cannot but charm my soul far more than “pillars of perfume.” If I may not see the whole of His face I would behold His cheeks, for the least glimpse of Him is exceedingly refreshing to my spiritual sense and yields a variety of delights. In Jesus I find not only fragrance, but a bed of spices; not one flower, but all manner of sweet flowers. He is to me my rose and my lily, my heart’s-ease and my cluster of camphire. When He is with me it is May all the year round, and my soul goes forth to wash her happy face in the morning-dew of His grace, and to solace herself with the singing of the birds of His promises. Precious Lord Jesus, let me in very deed know the blessedness which dwells in abiding, unbroken fellowship with Thee. I am a poor worthless one, whose cheek Thou hast deigned to kiss! O let me kiss Thee in return with the kisses of my lips.

*I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but  
that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

*John 17:15*

**I**T is a sweet and blessed event which will occur to all believers in God's own time—the going home to be with Jesus. In a few more years the Lord's soldiers, who are now fighting "the good fight of faith" will have done with conflict, and have entered into the joy of their Lord. But although Christ prays that His people may eventually be with Him where He is, He does not ask that they may be taken at once away from this world to heaven. He wishes them to stay here. Yet how frequently does the wearied pilgrim put up the prayer, "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest;" but Christ does not pray like that, He leaves us in His Father's hands, until, like shocks of corn fully ripe, we shall each be gathered into our Master's garner. Jesus does not plead for our instant removal by death, for to abide in the flesh is needful for others if not profitable for ourselves. He asks that we may be kept from evil, but He never asks for us to be admitted to the inheritance in glory till we are of full age. Christians often want to die when they have any trouble. Ask them why, and they tell you, "Because we would be with the Lord." We fear it is not so much because they are longing to be with the Lord, as because they desire to get rid of their troubles; else they would feel the same wish to die at other times when not under the pressure of trial. They want to go home, not so much for the Saviour's company, as to be at rest. Now it is quite right to desire to depart if we can do it in the same spirit that Paul did, because to be with Christ is far better, but the wish to escape from trouble is a selfish one. Rather let your care and wish be to glorify God by your life here as long as He pleases, even though it be in the midst of toil, and conflict, and suffering, and leave Him to say when "it is enough."

*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

*John 16:33*

**A**RT thou asking the reason of this, believer? Look *upward* to thy heavenly Father, and behold Him pure and holy. Dost thou know that thou art one day to be like Him? Wilt thou easily be conformed to His image? Wilt thou not require much refining in the furnace of affliction to purify thee? Will it be an easy thing to get rid of thy corruptions, and make thee perfect even as thy Father which is in heaven is perfect? Next, Christian, turn thine eye *downward*. Dost thou know what foes thou hast beneath thy feet? Thou wast once a servant of Satan, and no king will willingly lose his subjects. Dost thou think that Satan will let thee alone? No, he will be always at thee, for he “goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” Expect trouble, therefore, Christian, when thou lookest beneath thee. Then look *around thee*. Where art thou? Thou art in an enemy’s country, a stranger and a sojourner. The world is not thy friend. If it be, then thou art not God’s friend, for he who is the friend of the world is the enemy of God. Be assured that thou shalt find foe-men everywhere. When thou sleepest, think that thou art resting on the battlefield; when thou walkest, suspect an ambush in every hedge. As mosquitoes are said to bite strangers more than natives, so will the trials of earth be sharpest to you. Lastly, look *within thee*, into thine own heart and observe what is there. *Sin* and *self* are still within. Ah! if thou hadst no devil to tempt thee, no enemies to fight thee, and no world to ensnare thee, thou wouldst still find in thyself evil enough to be a sore trouble to thee, for “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Expect trouble then, but despond not on account of it, for God is with thee to help and to strengthen thee. He hath said, “I will be with thee in trouble; I will deliver thee and honour thee.”

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*Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods?  
Jeremiah 16:20*

ONE great besetting sin of ancient Israel was idolatry, and the spiritual Israel are vexed with a tendency to the same folly. Remphan's star shines no longer, and the women weep no more for Tammuz, but Mammon still intrudes his golden calf, and the shrines of pride are not forsaken. Self in various forms struggles to subdue the chosen ones under its dominion, and the flesh sets up its altars wherever it can find space for them. Favourite children are often the cause of much sin in believers; the Lord is grieved when He sees us doting upon them above measure; they will live to be as great a curse to us as Absalom was to David, or they will be taken from us to leave our homes desolate. If Christians desire to grow thorns to stuff their sleepless pillows, let them dote on their dear ones.

It is truly said that "they are no gods," for the objects of our foolish love are very doubtful blessings, the solace which they yield us now is dangerous, and the help which they can give us in the hour of trouble is little indeed. Why, then, are we so bewitched with vanities? We pity the poor heathen who adore a god of stone, and yet worship a god of gold. Where is the vast superiority between a god of flesh and one of wood? The principle, the sin, the folly is the same in either case, only that in ours the crime is more aggravated because we have more light, and sin in the face of it. The heathen bows to a false deity, but the true God he has never known; we commit two evils, inasmuch as we forsake the living God and turn unto idols. May the Lord purge us all from this grievous iniquity!

*"The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate'er that idol be;  
Help me to tear it from thy throne,  
And worship only thee."*

*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?  
for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said,  
I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God,  
and they shall be my people.*

*2 Corinthians 6:16*

**WHAT** a sweet title: “My people!” What a cheering revelation: “Their God!” How much of meaning is couched in those two words, “My people!” Here is *speciality*. The whole world is God’s; the heaven, even the heaven of heavens is the Lord’s, and He reigneth among the children of men; but of those whom He hath chosen, whom He hath purchased to Himself, He saith what He saith not of others—“My people” In this word there is the idea of *proprietorship*. In a special manner the “Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” All the nations upon earth are His; the whole world is in His power; yet are His people, His chosen, more especially His possession; for He has done more for them than others; He has bought them with His blood; He has brought them nigh to Himself; He has set His great heart upon them; He has loved them with an everlasting love, a love which many waters cannot quench, and which the revolutions of time shall never suffice in the least degree to diminish. Dear friends, can you, by faith, see yourselves in that number? Can you look up to heaven and say, “My Lord and my God: mine by that sweet *relationship* which entitles me to call Thee Father; mine by that hallowed *fellowship* which I delight to hold with Thee when Thou art pleased to manifest Thyself unto me as Thou dost not unto the world?” Canst thou read the Book of Inspiration, and find there the indentures of thy salvation? Canst thou read thy title writ in precious blood? Canst thou, by humble faith, lay hold of Jesus’ garments, and say, “My Christ”? If thou canst, then God saith of thee, and of others like thee, “My people;” for, if God be your God, and Christ your Christ, the Lord has a special, peculiar favour to you; you are the object of His choice, accepted in His beloved Son.

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*Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us,  
because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

*1 John 4:13*

**D**O you want a house for your soul? Do you ask, "What is the purchase?" It is something less than proud human nature will like to give. It is without money and without price. Ah! you would like to pay a respectable rent! You would love to do something to win Christ? Then you cannot have the house, for it is "without price." Will you take my Master's house on a lease for all eternity, with nothing to pay for it, nothing but the ground-rent of loving and serving Him for ever? Will you take Jesus and "dwell in Him?" See, this house is furnished with all you want, it is filled with riches more than you will spend as long as you live. Here you can have intimate communion with Christ and feast on His love; here are tables well-stored with food for you to live on for ever; in it, when weary, you can find rest with Jesus; and from it you can look out and see heaven itself. Will you have the house? Ah! if you are houseless, you will say, "I should like to have the house; but may I have it?" Yes; there is the key—the key is, "Come to Jesus." "But," you say, "I am too shabby for such a house." Never mind; there are garments inside. If you feel guilty and condemned, come; and though the house is too good for you, Christ will make you good enough for the house by-and-by. He will wash you and cleanse you, and you will yet be able to sing, "We dwell in Him." Believer: thrice happy art thou to have such a dwelling-place! Greatly privileged thou art, for thou hast a "strong habitation" in which thou art ever safe. And "dwelling in Him," thou hast not only a perfect and secure house, but an *everlasting* one. When this world shall have melted like a dream, our house shall live, and stand more imperishable than marble, more solid than granite, self-existent as God, for it is God Himself—"We dwell in Him."

*But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;*  
*Matthew 12:15*

**WHAT** a mass of hideous sickness must have thrust itself under the eye of Jesus! Yet we read not that He was disgusted, but patiently waited on every case. What a singular variety of evils must have met at His feet! What sickening ulcers and putrefying sores! Yet He was ready for every new shape of the monster evil, and was victor over it in every form. Let the arrow fly from what quarter it might, He quenched its fiery power. The heat of fever, or the cold of dropsy; the lethargy of palsy, or the rage of madness; the filth of leprosy, or the darkness of ophthalmia—all knew the power of His word, and fled at His command. In every corner of the field He was triumphant over evil, and received the homage of delivered captives. He came, He saw, He conquered everywhere. It is even so this morning. Whatever my own case may be, the beloved Physician can heal me; and whatever may be the state of others whom I may remember at this moment in prayer, I may have hope in Jesus that He will be able to heal them of their sins. My child, my friend, my dearest one, I can have hope for each, for all, when I remember the healing power of my Lord; and on my own account, however severe my struggle with sins and infirmities, I may yet be of good cheer. He who on earth walked the hospitals, still dispenses His grace, and works wonders among the sons of men: let me go to Him at once in right earnest.

Let me praise Him, this morning, as I remember *how* He wrought His spiritual cures, which bring Him most renown. It was by taking upon Himself our sicknesses. “By His stripes we are healed.” The Church on earth is full of souls healed by our beloved Physician; and the inhabitants of heaven itself confess that “He healed them all.” Come, then, my soul, publish abroad the virtue of His grace, and let it be “to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off.”

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*And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.*

*John 5:13*

**YEARS** are short to the happy and healthy; but thirty-eight years of disease must have dragged a very weary length along the life of the poor impotent man. When Jesus, therefore, healed him by a word, while he lay at the pool of Bethesda, he was delightfully *sensible of a change*. Even so the sinner who has for weeks and months been paralyzed with despair, and has wearily sighed for salvation, is very conscious of the change when the Lord Jesus speaks the word of power, and gives joy and peace in believing. The evil removed is too great to be removed without our discerning it; the life imparted is too remarkable to be possessed and remain inoperative; and the change wrought is too marvellous not to be perceived. Yet the poor man was *ignorant of the author* of his cure; he knew not the sacredness of His person, the offices which he sustained, or the errand which brought Him among men. Much ignorance of Jesus may remain in hearts which yet feel the power of His blood. We must not hastily condemn men for lack of knowledge; but where we can see the faith which saves the soul, we must believe that salvation has been bestowed. The Holy Spirit makes men penitents long before He makes them divines; and he who believes what he knows, shall soon know more clearly what he believes. Ignorance is, however, an evil; for this poor man was much *tantalized by the Pharisees*, and was quite unable to cope with them. It is good to be able to answer gainsayers; but we cannot do so if we know not the Lord Jesus clearly and with understanding. The cure of his ignorance, however, soon followed the cure of his infirmity, for he was *visited by the Lord in the temple*; and after that gracious manifestation, he was *found testifying* that “it was Jesus who had made him whole.” Lord, if Thou hast saved me, show me Thyself, that I may declare Thee to the sons of men.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly  
places in Christ:  
Ephesians 1:3*

**A**LL the goodness of the past, the present, and the future, Christ bestows upon His people. In the mysterious ages of the past the Lord Jesus was His Father's first elect, and in His *election* He gave us an interest, for we were chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world. He had from all eternity the prerogatives of *Sonship*, as His Father's only-begotten and well-beloved Son, and He has, in the riches of His grace, by adoption and regeneration, elevated us to sonship also, so that to us He has given "power to become the sons of God." The eternal covenant, based upon suretiship and confirmed by oath, is ours, for our strong consolation and security. In the *everlasting settlements of predestinating wisdom* and omnipotent decree, the eye of the Lord Jesus was ever fixed on us; and we may rest assured that in the whole roll of destiny there is not a line which militates against the interests of His redeemed. The *great betrothal* of the Prince of Glory is ours, for it is to us that He is affianced, as the sacred nuptials shall ere long declare to an assembled universe. The *marvellous incarnation* of the God of heaven, with all the amazing condescension and humiliation which attended it, is ours. The bloody sweat, the scourge, the cross, are ours for ever. Whatever blissful consequences flow from *perfect obedience, finished atonement, resurrection, ascension, or intercession*, all are ours by His own gift. Upon His breastplate he is now bearing our names; and in His authoritative pleadings at the throne He remembers our persons and pleads our cause. His dominion over principalities and powers, and His absolute majesty in heaven, He employs for the benefit of them who trust in Him. His high estate is as much at our service as was His condition of abasement. He who gave Himself for us in the depths of woe and death, doth not withdraw the grant now that He is enthroned in the highest heavens.

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

**T**HE whole system of Christianity rests upon the fact that “Christ is risen from the dead;” for, “If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain: ye are yet in your sins.” The *divinity* of Christ finds its surest proof in His resurrection, since He was “Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” It would not be unreasonable to doubt His Deity if He had not risen. Moreover, Christ’s *sovereignty* depends upon His resurrection, “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.” Again, our *justification*, that choice blessing of the covenant, is linked with Christ’s triumphant victory over death and the grave; for “He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Nay, more, our very *regeneration* is connected with His resurrection, for we are “Begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” And most certainly our *ultimate resurrection* rests here, for, “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” If Christ be not risen, then shall we not rise; but if He be risen then they who are asleep in Christ have not perished, but in their flesh shall surely behold their God. Thus, the silver thread of resurrection runs through all the believer’s blessings, from his regeneration onwards to his eternal glory, and binds them together. How important then will this glorious fact be in his estimation, and how will he rejoice that beyond a doubt it is established, that “now is Christ risen from the dead.”

“The promise is fulfill’d,  
Redemption’s work is done,  
Justice with mercy’s reconciled,  
For God has raised His Son.”

*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have  
commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always,  
even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

*Matthew 28:20*

**I**T is well there is One who is ever the same, and who is ever with us. It is well there is one stable rock amidst the billows of the sea of life. O my soul, set not thine affections upon rusting, moth-eaten, decaying treasures, but set thine heart upon Him who abides forever faithful to thee. Build not thine house upon the moving quicksands of a deceitful world, but found thy hopes upon this rock, which, amid descending rain and roaring floods, shall stand immovably secure. My soul, I charge thee, lay up thy treasure in the only secure cabinet; store thy jewels where thou canst never lose them. Put thine all in Christ; set all thine affections on His person, all thy hope in His merit, all thy trust in His efficacious blood, all thy joy in His presence, and so thou mayest laugh at loss, and defy destruction. Remember that all the flowers in the world's garden fade by turns, and the day cometh when nothing will be left but the black, cold earth. Death's black extinguisher must soon put out thy candle. Oh! how sweet to have sunlight when the candle is gone! The dark flood must soon roll between thee and all thou hast; then wed thine heart to Him who will never leave thee; trust thyself with Him who will go with thee through the black and surging current of death's stream, and who will land thee safely on the celestial shore, and make thee sit with Him in heavenly places for ever. Go, sorrowing son of affliction, tell thy secrets to the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother. Trust all thy concerns with Him who never can be taken from thee, who will never leave thee, and who will never let thee leave Him, even "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." "Lo, I am with you always," is enough for my soul to live upon, let who will forsake me.

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*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

*John 14:21*

**T**HE Lord Jesus gives special revelations of Himself to His people. Even if Scripture did not declare this, there are many of the children of God who could testify the truth of it from their own experience. They have had manifestations of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in a peculiar manner, such as no mere reading or hearing could afford. In the biographies of eminent saints, you will find many instances recorded in which Jesus has been pleased, in a very special manner to speak to their souls, and to unfold the wonders of His person; yea, so have their souls been steeped in happiness that they have thought themselves to be in heaven, whereas they were not there, though they were well nigh on the threshold of it—for when Jesus manifests Himself to His people, it is heaven on earth; it is paradise in embryo; it is bliss begun. Especial manifestations of Christ exercise a holy influence on the believer's heart. One effect will be *humility*. If a man says, "I have had such-and-such spiritual communications, I am a great man," he has never had any communion with Jesus at all; for "God hath respect unto the lowly: but the proud He knoweth *afar off*." He does not need to come near them to know them, and will never give them any visits of love. Another effect will be *happiness*; for in God's presence there are pleasures for evermore. *Holiness* will be sure to follow. A man who has no holiness has never had this manifestation. Some men profess a great deal; but we must not believe any one unless we see that his deeds answer to what he says. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." He will not bestow His favours upon the wicked: for while He will not cast away a perfect man, neither will He respect an evil doer. Thus there will be three effects of nearness to Jesus—humility, happiness, and holiness. May God give them to thee, Christian!

*For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life:  
weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.  
Psalm 30:5*

**C**HRISTIAN! If thou art in a night of trial, think of the morrow;  
cheer up thy heart with the thought of the coming of thy Lord.  
Be patient, for

“Lo! He comes with clouds descending.”

Be patient! The Husbandman waits until He reaps His harvest.  
Be patient; for you know who has said, “Behold, I come quickly;  
and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his  
work shall be.” If you are never so wretched now, remember

“A few more rolling suns, at most,  
Will land thee on fair Canaan’s coast.”

Thy head may be crowned with thorny troubles now, but it shall  
wear a starry crown ere long; thy hand may be filled with cares—it  
shall sweep the strings of the harp of heaven soon. Thy garments  
may be soiled with dust now; they shall be white by-and-by. Wait  
a little longer. Ah! how despicable our troubles and trials will  
seem when we look back upon them! Looking at them here in the  
prospect, they seem immense; but when we get to heaven we shall  
then

“With transporting joys recount,  
The labours of our feet.”

Our trials will then seem light and momentary afflictions. Let  
us go on boldly; if the night be never so dark, the morning cometh,  
which is more than they can say who are shut up in the darkness of  
hell. Do you know what it is thus to live on the future—to live on  
expectation—to antedate heaven? Happy believer, to have so sure,  
so comforting a hope. It may be all dark now, but it will soon be  
light; it may be all trial now, but it will soon be all happiness. What  
matters it though “weeping may endure for a night,” when “joy  
cometh in the morning?”

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*And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

*Romans 8:17*

**T**HE boundless realms of His Father's universe are Christ's by prescriptive right. As "heir of all things," He is the sole proprietor of the vast creation of God, and He has admitted us to claim the whole as ours, by virtue of that deed of joint-heirship which the Lord hath ratified with His chosen people. The golden streets of paradise, the pearly gates, the river of life, the transcendent bliss, and the unutterable glory, are, by our blessed Lord, made over to us for our everlasting possession. All that He has He shares with His people. The crown royal He has placed upon the head of His Church, appointing her a kingdom, and calling her sons a royal priesthood, a generation of priests and kings. He uncrowned Himself that we might have a coronation of glory; He would not sit upon His own throne until He had procured a place upon it for all who overcome by His blood. Crown the head and the whole body shares the honour. Behold here the reward of every Christian conqueror! Christ's throne, crown, sceptre, palace, treasure, robes, heritage, are yours. Far superior to the jealousy, selfishness, and greed, which admit of no participation of their advantages, Christ deems His happiness completed by His people sharing it. "The glory which thou gavest me have I given them." "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." The smiles of His Father are all the sweeter to Him, because His people share them. The honours of His kingdom are more pleasing, because His people appear with Him in glory. More valuable to Him are His conquests, since they have taught His people to overcome. He delights in His throne, because on it there is a place for them. He rejoices in His royal robes, since over them His skirts are spread. He delights the more in His joy, because He calls them to enter into it.

*And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

*Acts 13:39*

**T**HE believer in Christ receives a *present* justification. Faith does not produce this fruit by-and-by, but *now*. So far as justification is the result of faith, it is given to the soul in the moment when it closes with Christ, and accepts Him as its all in all. Are they who stand before the throne of God justified now?—so are we, as truly and as clearly justified as they who walk in white and sing melodious praises to celestial harps. The thief upon the cross was justified the moment that he turned the eye of faith to Jesus; and Paul, the aged, after years of service, was not more justified than was the thief with no service at all. We are *to-day* accepted in the Beloved, *to-day* absolved from sin, *to-day* acquitted at the bar of God. Oh! soul-transporting thought! There are some clusters of Eshcol's vine which we shall not be able to gather till we enter heaven; but this is a bough which runneth over the wall. This is not as the corn of the land, which we can never eat till we cross the Jordan; but this is part of the manna in the wilderness, a portion of our daily nutriment with which God supplies us in our journeying to and fro. We are *now*—even *now* pardoned; even *now* are our sins put away; even *now* we stand in the sight of God accepted, as though we had never been guilty. "There is therefore *now* no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." There is not a sin in the Book of God, even *now*, against one of His people. Who dareth to lay anything to their charge? There is neither speck, nor spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing remaining upon any one believer in the matter of justification in the sight of the Judge of all the earth. Let present privilege awaken us to present duty, and now, while life lasts, let us spend and be spent for our sweet Lord Jesus.

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*Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;*  
*1 Timothy 6:17*

**O**UR Lord Jesus is ever giving, and does not for a solitary instant withdraw His hand. As long as there is a vessel of grace not yet full to the brim, the oil shall not be stayed. He is a sun ever-shining; He is manna always falling round the camp; He is a rock in the desert, ever sending out streams of life from His smitten side; the rain of His grace is always dropping; the river of His bounty is ever-flowing, and the well-spring of His love is constantly overflowing. As the King can never die, so His grace can never fail. Daily we pluck His fruit, and daily His branches bend down to our hand with a fresh store of mercy. There are seven feast-days in His weeks, and as many as are the days, so many are the banquets in His years. Who has ever returned from His door unblest? Who has ever risen from His table unsatisfied, or from His bosom unemparadised? His mercies are new every morning and fresh every evening. Who can know the number of His benefits, or recount the list of His bounties? Every sand which drops from the glass of time is but the tardy follower of a myriad of mercies. The wings of our hours are covered with the silver of His kindness, and with the yellow gold of His affection. The river of time bears from the mountains of eternity the golden sands of His favour. The countless stars are but as the standard bearers of a more innumerable host of blessings. Who can count the dust of the benefits which He bestows on Jacob, or tell the number of the fourth part of His mercies towards Israel? How shall my soul extol Him who daily loadeth us with benefits, and who crowneth us with loving-kindness? O that my praise could be as ceaseless as His bounty! O miserable tongue, how canst thou be silent? Wake up, I pray thee, lest I call thee no more my glory, but my shame. "Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake right early."

*He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk,  
even as he walked.*

*1 John 2:6*

**W**HY should Christians imitate Christ? They should do it for *their own sakes*. If they desire to be in a healthy state of soul—if they would escape the sickness of sin, and enjoy the vigour of growing grace, let Jesus be their model. For their own happiness' sake, if they would drink wine on the lees, well refined; if they would enjoy holy and happy communion with Jesus; if they would be lifted up above the cares and troubles of this world, let them walk even as He walked. There is nothing which can so assist you to walk towards heaven with good speed, as wearing the image of Jesus on your heart to rule all its motions. It is when, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you are enabled to walk with Jesus in His very footsteps, that you are most happy, and most known to be the sons of God. Peter afar off is both unsafe and uneasy. Next, for *religion's sake*, strive to be like Jesus. Ah! poor religion, thou hast been sorely shot at by cruel foes, but thou hast not been wounded one-half so dangerously by thy foes as by thy friends. Who made those wounds in the fair hand of Godliness? The professor who used the dagger of hypocrisy. The man who with pretences, enters the fold, being nought but a wolf in sheep's clothing, worries the flock more than the lion outside. There is no weapon half so deadly as a Judas-kiss. Inconsistent professors injure the gospel more than the sneering critic or the infidel. But, especially for *Christ's own sake*, imitate His example. Christian, lovest thou thy Saviour? Is His name precious to thee? Is His cause dear to thee? Wouldst thou see the kingdoms of the world become His? Is it thy desire that He should be glorified? Art thou longing that souls should be won to Him? If so, *imitate* Jesus; be an "epistle of Christ, known and read of all men."

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*For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.  
And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality  
and power:  
Colossians 2:9, 10*

**A**LL the attributes of Christ, as God and man, are at our disposal. All the fulness of the Godhead, whatever that marvellous term may comprehend, is ours to make us complete. He cannot endow us with the attributes of Deity; but He has done all that can be done, for He has made even His divine power and Godhead subservient to our salvation. His omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability and infallibility, are all combined for our defence. Arise, believer, and behold the Lord Jesus yoking the whole of His divine Godhead to the chariot of salvation! How vast His grace, how firm His faithfulness, how unswerving His immutability, how infinite His power, how limitless His knowledge! All these are by the Lord Jesus made the pillars of the temple of salvation; and all, without diminution of their infinity, are covenanted to us as our perpetual inheritance. The fathomless love of the Saviour's heart is every drop of it ours; every sinew in the arm of might, every jewel in the crown of majesty, the immensity of divine knowledge, and the sternness of divine justice, all are ours, and shall be employed for us. The whole of Christ, in His adorable character as the Son of God, is by Himself made over to us most richly to enjoy. His wisdom is our direction, His knowledge our instruction, His power our protection, His justice our surety, His love our comfort, His mercy our solace, and His immutability our trust. He makes no reserve, but opens the recesses of the Mount of God and bids us dig in its mines for the hidden treasures. "All, all, all are yours," saith He, "be ye satisfied with favour and full of the goodness of the Lord." Oh! how sweet thus to behold Jesus, and to call upon Him with the certain confidence that in seeking the interposition of His love or power, we are but asking for that which He has already faithfully promised.

*I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as  
servants upon the earth.*

*Ecclesiastes 10:7*

**UPSTARTS** frequently usurp the highest places, while the truly great pine in obscurity. This is a riddle in providence whose solution will one day gladden the hearts of the upright; but it is so common a fact, that none of us should murmur if it should fall to our own lot. When our Lord was upon earth, although He is the Prince of the kings of the earth, yet He walked the footpath of weariness and service as the Servant of servants: what wonder is it if His followers, who are princes of the blood, should also be looked down upon as inferior and contemptible persons? The world is upside down, and therefore, the first are last and the last first. See how the servile sons of Satan lord it in the earth! What a high horse they ride! How they lift up their horn on high! Haman is in the court, while Mordecai sits in the gate; David wanders on the mountains, while Saul reigns in state; Elijah is complaining in the cave while Jezebel is boasting in the palace; yet who would wish to take the places of the proud rebels? and who, on the other hand, might not envy the despised saints? When the wheel turns, those who are lowest rise, and the highest sink. Patience, then, believer, eternity will right the wrongs of time.

Let us not fall into the error of letting our passions and carnal appetites ride in triumph, while our nobler powers walk in the dust. Grace must reign as a prince, and make the members of the body instruments of righteousness. The Holy Spirit loves order, and He therefore sets our powers and faculties in due rank and place, giving the highest room to those spiritual faculties which link us with the great King; let us not disturb the divine arrangement, but ask for grace that we may keep under our body and bring it into subjection. We were not new created to allow our passions to rule over us, but that we, as kings, may reign in Christ Jesus over the triple kingdom of spirit, soul, and body, to the glory of God the Father.

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*Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them.*

*Psalm 17:7*

**WHEN** we give our hearts with our alms, we give well, but we must often plead to a failure in this respect. Not so our Master and our Lord. His favours are always performed with the love of His heart. He does not send to us the cold meat and the broken pieces from the table of His luxury, but He dips our morsel in His own dish, and seasons our provisions with the spices of His fragrant affections. When He puts the golden tokens of His grace into our palms, He accompanies the gift with such a warm pressure of our hand, that the manner of His giving is as precious as the boon itself. He will come into our houses upon His errands of kindness, and He will not act as some austere visitors do in the poor man's cottage, but He sits by our side, not despising our poverty, nor blaming our weakness. Beloved, with what smiles does He speak! What golden sentences drop from His gracious lips! What embraces of affection does He bestow upon us! If He had but given us farthings, the way of His giving would have gilded them; but as it is, the costly alms are set in a golden basket by His pleasant carriage. It is impossible to doubt the sincerity of His charity, for there is a bleeding heart stamped upon the face of all His benefactions. He giveth liberally and upbraideth not. Not one hint that we are burdensome to Him; not one cold look for His poor pensioners; but He rejoices in His mercy, and presses us to His bosom while He is pouring out His life for us. There is a fragrance in His spikenard which nothing but His heart could produce; there is a sweetness in His honey-comb which could not be in it unless the very essence of His soul's affection had been mingled with it. Oh! the rare communion which such singular heartiness effecteth! May we continually taste and know the blessedness of it!

*If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

*1 Peter 2:3*

**I**F:—THEN, this is not a matter to be taken for granted concerning every one of the human race. “If:”—then there is a possibility and a probability that some may not have tasted that the Lord is gracious. “If:”—then this is not a general but a special mercy; and it is needful to enquire whether we know the grace of God by inward experience. There is no spiritual favour which may not be a matter for heart-searching.

But while this should be a matter of earnest and prayerful inquiry, no one ought to be content whilst there is any such thing as an “if” about his having tasted that the Lord is gracious. A jealous and holy distrust of self may give rise to the question even in the believer’s heart, but the *continuance* of such a doubt would be an evil indeed. We must not rest without a desperate struggle to clasp the Saviour in the arms of faith, and say, “I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him.” Do not rest, O believer, till thou hast a full assurance of thine interest in Jesus. Let nothing satisfy thee till, by the infallible witness of the Holy Spirit bearing witness with thy spirit, thou art certified that thou art a child of God. Oh, trifle not here; let no “perhaps” and “peradventure” and “if” and “maybe” satisfy thy soul. Build on eternal verities, and verily build upon them. Get the sure mercies of David, and surely get them. Let thine anchor be cast into that which is within the veil, and see to it that thy soul be linked to the anchor by a cable that will not break. Advance beyond these dreary “ifs;” abide no more in the wilderness of doubts and fears; cross the Jordan of distrust, and enter the Canaan of peace, where the Canaanite still lingers, but where the land ceaseth not to flow with milk and honey.

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*And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.*

*Psalm 107:7*

**C**HANGEFUL experience often leads the anxious believer to enquire “Why is it thus with me?” I looked for light, but lo, darkness came; for peace, but behold trouble. I said in my heart, my mountain standeth firm, I shall never be moved. Lord, thou dost hide Thy face, and I am troubled. It was but yesterday that I could read my title clear; today my evidences are bedimmed, and my hopes are clouded. Yesterday I could climb to Pisgah’s top, and view the landscape o’er, and rejoice with confidence in my future inheritance; today, my spirit has no hopes, but many fears; no joys, but much distress. Is this part of God’s plan with me? Can this be the way in which God would bring me to heaven? Yes, it is even so. The eclipse of your faith, the darkness of your mind, the fainting of your hope, all these things are but parts of God’s method of making you ripe for the great inheritance upon which you shall soon enter. These trials are for the testing and strengthening of your faith—they are waves that wash you further upon the rock—they are winds which waft your ship the more swiftly towards the desired haven. According to David’s words, so it might be said of you, “so He bringeth them to their desired haven.” By honour and dishonour, by evil report and by good report, by plenty and by poverty, by joy and by distress, by persecution and by peace, by all these things is the life of your souls maintained, and by each of these are you helped on your way. Oh, think not, believer, that your sorrows are out of God’s plan; they are necessary parts of it. “We must, through much tribulation, enter the kingdom.” Learn, then, even to “count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.”

“O let my trembling soul be still,  
 And wait Thy wise, Thy holy will!  
 I cannot, Lord, Thy purpose see,  
 Yet all is well since ruled by Thee.”

*The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me:  
thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever:  
forsake not the works of thine own hands.  
Psalm 138:8*

**M**OST manifestly the confidence which the Psalmist here expressed was a *divine confidence*. He did not say, “I have grace enough to perfect that which concerneth me—my faith is so steady that it will not stagger—my love is so warm that it will never grow cold—my resolution is so firm that nothing can move it; no, his dependence was on the Lord alone. If we indulge in any confidence which is not grounded on the Rock of ages, our confidence is worse than a dream, it will fall upon us, and cover us with its ruins, to our sorrow and confusion. All that Nature spins time will unravel, to the eternal confusion of all who are clothed therein. The Psalmist was wise, he rested upon nothing short of the *Lord’s* work. It is the Lord who has begun the good work within us; it is He who has carried it on; and if he does not finish it, it never will be complete. If there be one stitch in the celestial garment of our righteousness which we are to insert ourselves, then we are lost; but this is our confidence, the Lord who began will perfect. He *has* done it all, *must* do it all, and *will* do it all. Our confidence must not be in what we have done, nor in what we have resolved to do, but entirely in what *the Lord* will do. Unbelief insinuates—“You will never be able to stand. Look at the evil of your heart, you can never conquer sin; remember the sinful pleasures and temptations of the world that beset you, you will be certainly allured by them and led astray.” Ah! yes, we should indeed perish if left to our own strength. If we had alone to navigate our frail vessels over so rough a sea, we might well give up the voyage in despair; but, thanks be to God, He will perfect that which concerneth us, and bring us to the desired haven. We can never be too confident when we confide in Him alone, and never too much concerned to *have such* a trust.

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*Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer,  
nor his mercy from me.*

*Psalm 66:20*

**I**N looking back upon the character of our prayers, if we do it honestly, we shall be filled with wonder that God has ever answered them. There may be some who think their prayers worthy of acceptance—as the Pharisee did; but the true Christian, in a more enlightened retrospect, weeps over his prayers, and if he could retrace his steps he would desire to pray more earnestly. Remember, Christian, how *cold* thy prayers have been. When in thy closet thou shouldst have wrestled as Jacob did; but instead thereof, thy petitions have been faint and few—far removed from that humble, believing, persevering faith, which cries, “I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.” Yet, wonderful to say, God has heard these cold prayers of thine, and not only heard, but answered them. Reflect also, how *infrequent* have been thy prayers, unless thou hast been in trouble, and *then* thou hast gone often to the mercy-seat: but when deliverance has come, where has been thy constant supplication? Yet, notwithstanding thou hast ceased to pray as once thou didst, God has not ceased to bless. When thou hast neglected the mercy-seat, God has not deserted it, but the bright light of the Shekinah has always been visible between the wings of the cherubim. Oh! it is marvellous that the Lord should regard those intermittent spasms of importunity which come and go with our necessities. What a God is He thus to hear the prayers of those who come to Him when they have pressing wants, but neglect Him when they have received a mercy; who approach Him when they are forced to come, but who almost forget to address Him when mercies are plentiful and sorrows are few. Let His gracious kindness in hearing such prayers touch our hearts, so that we may henceforth be found “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.”

*Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me.*

*Psalm 38:21*

**F**REQUENTLY we pray that God would not forsake us in the hour of trial and temptation, but we too much forget that we have need to use this prayer *at all times*. There is no moment of our life, however holy, in which we can do without His constant upholding. Whether in light or in darkness, in communion or in temptation, we alike need the prayer, "Forsake me not, O Lord." "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." A little child, while learning to walk, always needs the nurse's aid. The ship left by the pilot drifts at once from her course. We cannot do without continued aid from above; let it then be your prayer today, "Forsake me not. Father, forsake not Thy child, lest he fall by the hand of the enemy. Shepherd, forsake not Thy lamb, lest he wander from the safety of the fold. Great Husbandman, forsake not Thy plant, lest it wither and die. 'Forsake me not, O Lord,' now; and forsake me not at any moment of my life. Forsake me not in my joys, lest they absorb my heart. Forsake me not in my sorrows, lest I murmur against Thee. Forsake me not in the day of my repentance, lest I lose the hope of pardon, and fall into despair; and forsake me not in the day of my strongest faith, lest faith degenerate into presumption. Forsake me not, for without Thee I am weak, but with Thee I am strong. Forsake me not, for my path is dangerous, and full of snares, and I cannot do without Thy guidance. The hen forsakes not her brood, do Thou then evermore cover me with Thy feathers, and permit me under Thy wings to find my refuge. 'Be not far from me, O Lord, for trouble is near, for there is none to help.' 'Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation!'"

"O ever in our cleansed breast,  
Bid Thine Eternal Spirit rest;  
And make our secret soul to be  
A temple pure and worthy of Thee."

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*Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee:  
he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.*

*Psalm 55:22*

**C**ARE, even though exercised upon legitimate objects, if carried to excess, has in it the nature of sin. The precept to avoid anxious care is earnestly inculcated by our Saviour, again and again; it is reiterated by the apostles; and it is one which cannot be neglected without involving transgression: for the very essence of anxious care is the imagining that we are wiser than God, and the thrusting ourselves into His place to do for Him that which He has undertaken to do for us. We attempt to think of that which we fancy He will forget; we labour to take upon ourselves our weary burden, as if He were unable or unwilling to take it for us. Now this disobedience to His plain precept, this unbelief in His Word, this presumption in intruding upon His province, is all sinful. Yet more than this, anxious care often leads to acts of sin. He who cannot calmly leave his affairs in God's hand, but will carry his own burden, is very likely to be tempted to use wrong means to help himself. This sin leads to a forsaking of God as our counsellor, and resorting instead to human wisdom. This is going to the "broken cistern" instead of to the "fountain;" a sin which was laid against Israel of old. Anxiety makes us doubt God's lovingkindness, and thus our love to Him grows cold; we feel mistrust, and thus grieve the Spirit of God, so that our prayers become hindered, our consistent example marred, and our life one of self-seeking. Thus want of confidence in God leads us to wander far from Him; but if through simple faith in His promise, we cast each burden as it comes upon Him, and are "careful for nothing" because He undertakes to care for us, it will keep us close to Him, and strengthen us against much temptation. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

*So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.*

*2 Samuel 9:13*

**M**EPHIBOSHETH was no great ornament to a royal table, yet he had a continual place at David's board, because the king could see in his face the features of the beloved Jonathan. Like Mephibosheth, we may cry unto the King of Glory, "What is Thy servant, that Thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" but still the Lord indulges us with most familiar intercourse with Himself, because He sees in our countenances the remembrance of His dearly-beloved Jesus. The Lord's people are *dear for another's sake*. Such is the love which the Father bears to His only begotten, that for His sake He raises His lowly brethren from poverty and banishment, to courtly companionship, noble rank, and royal provision. Their *deformity shall not rob them of their privileges*. Lameness is no bar to sonship; the cripple is as much the heir as if he could run like Asahel. Our right does not limp, though our might may. A king's table is a noble hiding-place for lame legs, and at the gospel feast we learn to glory in infirmities, because the power of Christ resteth upon us. Yet grievous *disability may mar the persons of the best-loved saints*. Here is one feasted by David, and yet so lame in both his feet that he could not go up with the king when he fled from the city, and was therefore maligned and injured by his servant Ziba. Saints whose faith is weak, and whose knowledge is slender, are great losers; they are exposed to many enemies, and cannot follow the king whithersoever he goeth. This *disease frequently arises from falls*. Bad nursing in their spiritual infancy often causes converts to fall into a despondency from which they never recover, and sin in other cases brings broken bones. Lord, help the lame to leap like an hart, and satisfy all Thy people with the bread of Thy table!

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*Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called:  
and whom he called, them he also justified:  
and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

*Romans 8:30*

**H**ERE is a precious truth for thee, believer. Thou mayest be poor, or in suffering, or unknown, but for thine encouragement take a review of thy “calling” and the consequences that flow from it, and especially that blessed result here spoken of. As surely as thou art God’s child today, so surely shall all thy trials soon be at an end, and thou shalt be rich to all the intents of bliss. Wait awhile, and that weary head shall wear the crown of glory, and that hand of labour shall grasp the palm-branch of victory. Lament not thy troubles, but rather rejoice that ere long thou wilt be where “there shall be neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.” The chariots of fire are at thy door, and a moment will suffice to bear thee to the glorified. The everlasting song is almost on thy lip. The portals of heaven stand open for thee. Think not that thou canst fail of entering into rest. If He hath called thee, nothing can divide thee from His love. Distress cannot sever the bond; the fire of persecution cannot burn the link; the hammer of hell cannot break the chain. Thou art secure; that voice which called thee at first, shall call thee yet again from earth to heaven, from death’s dark gloom to immortality’s unuttered splendours. Rest assured, the heart of Him who has justified thee beats with infinite love towards thee. Thou shalt soon be with the glorified, where thy portion is; thou art only waiting here to be made meet for the inheritance, and that done, the wings of angels shall waft thee far away, to the mount of peace, and joy, and blessedness, where,

“Far from a world of grief and sin,  
With God eternally shut in,”

thou shalt rest for ever and ever.

*Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness:  
therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee  
with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.  
Psalm 45:7*

**B**E ye angry, and sin not.” There can hardly be goodness in a man if he be not angry at sin; he who loves truth must hate every false way. How our Lord Jesus hated it when the temptation came! Thrice it assailed Him in different forms, but ever He met it with, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” He hated it in others; none the less fervently because He showed His hate oftener in tears of pity than in words of rebuke; yet what language could be more stern, more Elijah-like, than the words, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer.” He hated wickedness, so much that He bled to wound it to the heart; He died that it might die; He was buried that He might bury it in His tomb; and He rose that He might for ever trample it beneath His feet. Christ is in the Gospel, and that Gospel is opposed to wickedness in every shape. Wickedness arrays itself in fair garments, and imitates the language of holiness; but the precepts of Jesus, like His famous scourge of small cords, chase it out of the temple, and will not tolerate it in the Church. So, too, in the heart where Jesus reigns, what war there is between Christ and Belial! And when our Redeemer shall come to be our Judge, those thundering words, “Depart, ye cursed” which are, indeed, but a prolongation of His life-teaching concerning sin, shall manifest His abhorrence of iniquity. As warm as is His love to sinners, so hot is His hatred of sin; as perfect as is His righteousness, so complete shall be the destruction of every form of wickedness. O thou glorious champion of right, and destroyer of wrong, for this cause hath God, even Thy God, anointed thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.

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*Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines:  
for our vines have tender grapes.  
Song of Solomon 2:15*

**A** LITTLE thorn may cause much suffering. A little cloud may hide the sun. Little foxes spoil the vines; and little sins do mischief to the tender heart. These little sins burrow in the soul, and make it so full of that which is hateful to Christ, that He will hold no comfortable fellowship and communion with us. A great sin cannot destroy a Christian, but a little sin can make him miserable. Jesus will not walk with His people unless they drive out every known sin. He says, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." Some Christians very seldom enjoy their Saviour's presence. How is this? Surely it must be an affliction for a tender child to be separated from his father. Art thou a child of God, and yet satisfied to go on without seeing thy Father's face? What! thou the spouse of Christ, and yet content without His company! Surely, thou hast fallen into a sad state, for the chaste spouse of Christ mourns like a dove without her mate, when he has left her. Ask, then, the question, what has driven Christ from thee? He hides His face behind the wall of thy sins. That wall may be built up of *little* pebbles, as easily as of great stones. The sea is made of drops; the rocks are made of grains: and the sea which divides thee from Christ may be filled with the drops of thy little sins; and the rock which has well nigh wrecked thy barque, may have been made by the daily working of the coral insects of thy little sins. If thou wouldst live with Christ, and walk with Christ, and see Christ, and have fellowship with Christ, take heed of "the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." Jesus invites you to go *with Him* and take them. He will surely, like Samson, take the foxes at once and easily. Go with Him to the hunting.

*And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.*

*2 Samuel 15:23*

**D**AVID passed that gloomy brook when flying with his mourning company from his traitor son. The man after God's own heart was not exempt from trouble, nay, his life was full of it. He was both the Lord's Anointed, and the Lord's Afflicted. Why then should we expect to escape? At sorrow's gates the noblest of our race have waited with ashes on their heads, wherefore then should we complain as though some strange thing had happened unto us?

The KING of kings himself was not favoured with a more cheerful or royal road. He passed over the filthy ditch of Kidron, through which the filth of Jerusalem flowed. God had one Son without sin, but not a single child without the rod. It is a great joy to believe that Jesus has been tempted in all points like as we are. What is our Kidron this morning? Is it a faithless friend, a sad bereavement, a slanderous reproach, a dark foreboding? The King has passed over all these. Is it bodily pain, poverty, persecution, or contempt? Over each of these Kidrons the King has gone before us. "In all our afflictions He was afflicted." The idea of strangeness in our trials must be banished at once and for ever, for He who is the Head of all saints, knows by experience the grief which we think so peculiar. All the citizens of Zion must be free of the Honourable Company of Mourners, of which the Prince Immanuel is Head and Captain.

Notwithstanding the abasement of David, he yet returned in triumph to his city, and David's Lord arose victorious from the grave; let us then be of good courage, for we also shall win the day. We shall yet with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation, though now for a season we have to pass by the noxious streams of sin and sorrow. Courage, soldiers of the Cross, the King himself triumphed after going over Kidron, and so shall you.

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*And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.  
And the evening and the morning were the first day.  
Genesis 1:5*

**W**AS it so even in the beginning? Did light and darkness divide the realm of time in the first day? Then little wonder is it if I have also changes in my circumstances from the sunshine of prosperity to the midnight of adversity. It will not always be the blaze of noon even in my soul concerns, I must expect at seasons to mourn the absence of my former joys, and seek my Beloved in the night. Nor am I alone in this, for all the Lord's beloved ones have had to sing the mingled song of judgment and of mercy, of trial and deliverance, of mourning and of delight. It is one of the arrangements of Divine providence that day and night shall not cease either in the spiritual or natural creation till we reach the land of which it is written, "there is no night there." What our heavenly Father ordains is wise and good.

What, then, my soul, is it best for thee to do? Learn first *to be content* with this divine order, and be willing, with Job, to receive evil from the hand of the Lord as well as good. Study next, *to make the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice*. Praise the Lord for the sun of joy when it rises, and for the gloom of evening as it falls. There is beauty both in sunrise and sunset, sing of it, and glorify the Lord. Like the nightingale, pour forth thy notes at all hours. *Believe that the night is as useful as the day*. The dews of grace fall heavily in the night of sorrow. The stars of promise shine forth gloriously amid the darkness of grief. *Continue thy service* under all changes. If in the day thy watchword be labour, at night exchange it for *watch*. Every hour has its duty, do thou continue in thy calling as the Lord's servant until He shall suddenly appear in His glory. My soul, thine evening of old age and death is drawing near, dread it not, for it is part of the day; and the Lord has said, "I will cover him all the day long."

*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*  
*Galatians 5:17*

**I**N every believer's heart there is a constant struggle between the old nature and the new. The old nature is very active, and loses no opportunity of plying all the weapons of its deadly armoury against newborn grace; while on the other hand, the new nature is ever on the watch to resist and destroy its enemy. Grace within us will employ prayer, and faith, and hope, and love, to cast out the evil; it takes unto it the "whole armour of God," and wrestles earnestly. These two opposing natures will never cease to struggle so long as we are in this world. The battle of "Christian" with "Apollyon" lasted three hours, but the battle of Christian with himself lasted all the way from the Wicket Gate to the river Jordan. The enemy is so securely entrenched within us that he can never be driven out while we are in this body: but although we are closely beset, and often in sore conflict, we have an Almighty helper, even Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, who is ever with us, and who assures us that we shall eventually come off more than conquerors through Him. With such assistance the new-born nature is more than a match for its foes. Are you fighting with the adversary today? Are Satan, the world, and the flesh, all against you? Be not discouraged nor dismayed. Fight on! For God Himself is with you; *Jehovah Nissi* is your banner, and *Jehovah Rophi* is the healer of your wounds. Fear not, you shall overcome, for who can defeat Omnipotence? Fight on, "looking unto Jesus"; and though long and stern be the conflict, sweet will be the victory, and glorious the promised reward.

“From strength to strength go on;  
Wrestle, and fight, and pray,  
Tread all the powers of darkness down,  
And win the well-fought day.”

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*These were the potters, and those that dwelt among plants and hedges: there they dwelt with the king for his work.*

*1 Chronicles 4:23*

**P**OTTERS were not the very highest grade of workers, but “the king” needed potters, and therefore they were in *royal service*, although the material upon which they worked was nothing but clay. We, too, may be engaged in the most menial part of the Lord’s work, but it is a great privilege to do anything for “the king”; and therefore we will abide in our calling, hoping that, “although we have lien among the pots, yet shall we be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.” The text tells us of those who *dwelt among plants and hedges*, having rough, rustic, hedging and ditching work to do. They may have desired to live in the city, amid its life, society, and refinement, but they kept their appointed places, for they also were doing the king’s work. The place of our habitation is fixed, and we are not to remove from it out of whim and caprice, but seek to serve the Lord in it, by being a blessing to those among whom we reside. These potters and gardeners had *royal company*, for they dwelt “with the king” and although among hedges and plants, they dwelt with the king there. No lawful place, or gracious occupation, however mean, can debar us from communion with our divine Lord. In visiting hovels, swarming lodging-houses, workhouses, or gaols, we may go *with the king*. In all works of faith we may count upon Jesus’ fellowship. It is when we are in His work that we may reckon upon His smile. Ye unknown workers who are occupied for your Lord amid the dirt and wretchedness of the lowest of the low, be of good cheer, for jewels have been found upon dunghills ere now, earthen pots have been filled with heavenly treasure, and ill weeds have been transformed into precious flowers. Dwell ye with the King for His work, and when He writes His chronicles your name shall be recorded.

*But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour  
toward man appeared,  
Titus 3:4*

**H**OW sweet it is to behold the Saviour communing with His own beloved people! There can be nothing more delightful than, by the Divine Spirit, to be led into this fertile field of delight. Let the mind for an instant consider the history of the Redeemer's love, and a thousand enchanting acts of affection will suggest themselves, all of which have had for their design the weaving of the heart into Christ, and the intertwisting of the thoughts and emotions of the renewed soul with the mind of Jesus. When we meditate upon this amazing love, and behold the all-glorious Kinsman of the Church endowing her with all His ancient wealth, our souls may well faint for joy. Who is he that can endure such a weight of love? That partial sense of it which the Holy Spirit is sometimes pleased to afford, is more than the soul can contain; how transporting must be a complete view of it! When the soul shall have understanding to discern all the Saviour's gifts, wisdom wherewith to estimate them, and time in which to meditate upon them, such as the world to come will afford us, we shall then commune with Jesus in a nearer manner than at present. But who can imagine the sweetness of such fellowship? It must be one of the things which have not entered into the heart of man, but which God hath prepared for them that love Him. Oh, to burst open the door of our Joseph's granaries, and see the plenty which He hath stored up for us! This will overwhelm us with love. By faith we see, as in a glass darkly, the reflected image of His unbounded treasures, but when we shall actually see the heavenly things themselves, with our own eyes, how deep will be the stream of fellowship in which our soul shall bathe itself! Till then our loudest sonnets shall be reserved for our loving benefactor, Jesus Christ our Lord, whose love to us is wonderful, passing the love of women.

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*And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.*

*Genesis 7:16*

**N**OAH was shut in *away from all the world* by the hand of divine love. The door of electing purpose interposes between us and the world which lieth in the wicked one. We are not of the world even as our Lord Jesus was not of the world. Into the sin, the gaiety, the pursuits of the multitude we cannot enter; we cannot play in the streets of Vanity Fair with the children of darkness, for our heavenly Father has shut us in. Noah was shut in *with his God*. “Come thou into the ark,” was the Lord’s invitation, by which He clearly showed that He Himself intended to dwell in the ark with His servant and his family. Thus all the chosen dwell in God and God in them. Happy people to be enclosed in the same circle which contains God in the Trinity of His persons, Father, Son, and Spirit. Let us never be inattentive to that gracious call, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, and hide thyself as it were for a little moment until the indignation be overpast.” Noah was so shut in that *no evil could reach him*. Floods did but lift him heavenward, and winds did but waft him on his way. Outside of the ark all was ruin, but inside all was rest and peace. Without Christ we perish, but in Christ Jesus there is perfect safety. Noah was so shut in that *he could not even desire to come out*, and those who are in Christ Jesus are in Him for ever. They shall go no more out for ever, for eternal faithfulness has shut them in, and infernal malice cannot drag them out. The Prince of the house of David shutteth and no man openeth; and when once in the last days as Master of the house He shall rise up and shut the door, it will be in vain for mere professors to knock, and cry Lord, Lord open unto us, for that same door which shuts in the wise virgins will shut out the foolish forever. Lord, shut me in by Thy grace.

*Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee?  
I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.  
Job 40:4*

**O**NE cheering word, poor lost sinner, for thee! You think you must not come to God because you are vile. Now, there is not a saint living on earth but has been made to feel that he is vile. If Job, and Isaiah, and Paul were all obliged to say “I am vile,” oh, poor sinner, wilt thou be ashamed to join in the same confession? If divine grace does not eradicate all sin from the believer, how dost thou hope to do it thyself? and if God loves His people while they are yet vile, dost thou think thy vileness will prevent His loving thee? Believe on Jesus, thou outcast of the world’s society! Jesus calls *thee*, and such as thou art.

“Not the righteous, not the righteous;  
Sinners, Jesus came to call.”

Even now say, “Thou hast died for sinners; I am a sinner, Lord Jesus, sprinkle Thy blood on me”; if thou wilt confess thy sin thou shalt find pardon. If, now, with all thy heart, thou wilt say, “I am vile, wash me,” thou shalt be washed *now*. If the Holy Spirit shall enable thee from thy heart to cry

Just as I am, without one plea  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that thou bidd’st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come!”

thou shalt rise from reading this morning’s portion with all thy sins pardoned; and though thou didst wake this morning with every sin that man hath ever committed on thy head, thou shalt rest tonight accepted in the Beloved; though once degraded with the rags of sin, thou shalt be adorned with a robe of righteousness, and appear white as the angels are. For “now,” mark it, “*Now* is the accepted time.” If thou “believest on Him who justifieth the ungodly thou art saved.” Oh! may the Holy Spirit give thee saving faith in Him who receives the vilest.

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*Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.*

*Psalm 97:10*

**T**HOU hast good reason to “hate evil,” for only consider what harm it has already wrought thee. Oh, what a world of mischief sin has brought into thy heart! Sin blinded thee so that thou couldst not see the beauty of the Saviour; it made thee deaf so that thou couldst not hear the Redeemer’s tender invitations. Sin turned thy feet into the way of death, and poured poison into the very fountain of thy being; it tainted thy heart, and made it “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Oh, what a creature thou wast when evil had done its utmost with thee, before divine grace interposed! Thou wast an heir of wrath even as others; thou didst “run with the multitude to do evil.” Such were all of us; but Paul reminds us, “but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” We have good reason, indeed, for hating evil when we look back and trace its deadly workings. Such mischief did evil do us, that our souls would have been lost had not omnipotent love interfered to redeem us. Even now it is an active enemy, ever watching to do us hurt, and to drag us to perdition. Therefore “hate evil,” O Christians, unless you desire trouble. If you would strew your path with thorns, and plant nettles in your death-pillow, then neglect to “hate evil”; but if you would live a happy life, and die a peaceful death, then walk in all the ways of holiness, hating evil, even unto the end. If you truly love your Saviour, and would honour Him, then “hate evil.” We know of no cure for the love of evil in a Christian like abundant intercourse with the Lord Jesus. Dwell much with Him, and it is impossible for you to be at peace with sin.

“Order my footsteps by Thy Word,  
And make my heart sincere;  
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,  
But keep my conscience clear.”

*For there fell down many slain, because the war was of God.  
And they dwelt in their steads until the captivity.  
1 Chronicles 5:22*

**W**ARRIOR, fighting under the banner of the Lord Jesus, observe this verse with holy joy, for as it was in the days of old so is it now, if the war be of God the victory is sure. The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh could barely muster five and forty thousand fighting men, and yet in their war with the Hagarites, they slew “men, an hundred thousand,” “for they cried to God in the battle, and He was entreated of them, because they put their trust in Him.” The Lord saveth not by many nor by few; it is ours to go forth in Jehovah’s name if we be but a handful of men, for the Lord of Hosts is with us for our Captain. They did not neglect buckler, and sword, and bow, neither did they place their trust in these weapons; we must use all fitting means, but our confidence must rest in the Lord alone, for He is the sword and the shield of His people. The great reason of their extraordinary success lay in the fact that “the war was of God.” Beloved, in fighting with sin without and within, with error doctrinal or practical, with spiritual wickedness in high places or low places, with devils and the devil’s allies, you are waging Jehovah’s war, and unless He himself can be worsted, you need not fear defeat. Quail not before superior numbers, shrink not from difficulties or impossibilities, flinch not at wounds or death, smite with the two-edged sword of the Spirit, and the slain shall lie in heaps. The battle is the Lord’s and He will deliver His enemies into our hands. With steadfast foot, strong hand, dauntless heart, and flaming zeal, rush to the conflict, and the hosts of evil shall fly like chaff before the gale.

*Stand up! stand up for Jesus! The strife will not be long;  
This day the noise of battle, The next the victor’s song.  
To him that overcometh, A crown of life shall be;  
He with the King of glory Shall reign eternally.*

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*The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.*

*Psalm 126:3*

**S**OME Christians are sadly prone to *look* on the *dark* side of everything, and to dwell more upon what they have gone through than upon what God has done for them. Ask for their impression of the Christian life, and they will describe their continual conflicts, their deep afflictions, their sad adversities, and the sinfulness of their hearts, yet with scarcely any allusion to the mercy and help which God has vouchsafed them. But a Christian whose soul is in a *healthy* state, will come forward joyously, and say, "I will speak, not about myself, but to the honour of my God. He hath brought me up out of an horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings: and He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad." Such an abstract of experience as this is the very best that any child of God can present. It is true that we endure trials, but it is just as true that we are delivered out of them. It is true that we have our corruptions, and mournfully do we know this, but it is quite as true that we have an all-sufficient Saviour, who overcomes these corruptions, and delivers us from their dominion. In looking back, it would be wrong to deny that we have been in the Slough of Despond, and have crept along the Valley of Humiliation, but it would be equally wicked to forget that we have been *through* them safely and profitably; we have not remained in them, thanks to our Almighty Helper and Leader, who has brought us "out into a wealthy place." The deeper our troubles, the louder our thanks to God, who has led us through all, and preserved us until now. Our griefs cannot mar the melody of our praise, we reckon them to be the bass part of our life's song, "He hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

*For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die,  
we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die,  
we are the Lord's.*

*Romans 14:8*

**I**F God had willed it, each of us might have entered heaven at the moment of conversion. It was not absolutely necessary for our preparation for immortality that we should tarry here. It is possible for a man to be taken to heaven, and to be found meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, though he has but just believed in Jesus. It is true that our sanctification is a long and continued process, and we shall not be perfected till we lay aside our bodies and enter within the veil; but nevertheless, had the Lord so willed it, He might have changed us from imperfection to perfection, and have taken us to heaven at once. Why then are we here? Would God keep His children out of paradise a single moment longer than was necessary? Why is the army of the living God still on the battle-field when one charge might give them the victory? Why are His children still wandering hither and thither through a maze, when a solitary word from His lips would bring them into the centre of their hopes in heaven? The answer is—they are here that they may “*live unto the Lord,*” and may bring others to know His love. We remain on earth as sowers to scatter good seed; as ploughmen to break up the fallow ground; as heralds publishing salvation. We are here as the “*salt of the earth,*” to be a blessing to the world. We are here to glorify Christ in our daily life. We are here as workers for Him, and as “*workers together with Him.*” Let us see that our life answereth its end. Let us live earnest, useful, holy lives, to “*the praise of the glory of His grace.*” Meanwhile we long to be with Him, and daily sing—

“My heart is with Him on His throne,  
And ill can brook delay;  
Each moment listening for the voice,  
‘Rise up, and come away.’”

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*We love him, because he first loved us.*

*1 John 4:19*

**T**HERE is no light in the planet but that which proceedeth from the sun; and there is no true love to Jesus in the heart but that which cometh from the Lord Jesus himself. From this overflowing fountain of the infinite love of God, all our love to God must spring. This must ever be a great and certain truth, that we love Him for no other reason than because He first loved us. Our love to Him is *the fair offspring* of His love to us. Cold admiration, when studying the works of God, anyone may have, but the warmth of love can only be kindled in the heart by God's Spirit. How great the wonder that such as we should ever have been brought to love Jesus at all! How marvellous that when we had rebelled against Him, He should, by a display of such amazing love, seek to draw us back. No! never should we have had a grain of love towards God unless it had been sown in us by the sweet seed of His love to us. Love, then, has for its parent the love of God shed abroad in the heart: but after it is thus divinely born, it must be *divinely nourished*. Love is an exotic; it is not a plant which will flourish naturally in human soil, it must be watered from above. Love to Jesus is a flower of a delicate nature, and if it received no nourishment but that which could be drawn from the rock of our hearts it would soon wither. As love comes from heaven, so it must feed on heavenly bread. It cannot exist in the wilderness unless it be fed by manna from on high. Love must feed on love. The very soul and life of our love to God is His love to us.

“I love thee, Lord, but with no love of mine,  
For I have none to give;  
I love thee, Lord; but all the love is thine,  
*For by thy love I live.*  
I am as nothing, and rejoice to be  
Emptied, and lost, and swallowed up in thee.”

*TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances,  
and art found wanting.*

*Daniel 5:27*

**I**T is well frequently to weigh ourselves in the scale of God's Word. You will find it a holy exercise to read some psalm of David, and, as you meditate upon each verse, to ask yourself, "Can I say this? Have I felt as David felt? Has my heart ever been broken on account of sin, as his was when he penned his penitential psalms? Has my soul been full of true confidence in the hour of difficulty as his was when he sang of God's mercies in the cave of Adullam, or in the holds of Engedi? Do I take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord?" Then turn to the life of Christ, and as you read, ask yourselves how far you are conformed to His likeness. Endeavour to discover whether you have the meekness, the humility, the lovely spirit which He constantly inculcated and displayed. Take, then, the epistles, and see whether you can go with the apostle in what he said of his experience. Have you ever cried out as he did—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death"? Have you ever felt his self-abasement? Have you seemed to yourself the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints? Have you known anything of his devotion? Could you join with him and say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"? If we thus read God's Word as a test of our spiritual condition, we shall have good reason to stop many a time and say, "Lord, I feel I have never yet been here, O bring me here! give me true penitence, such as this I read of. Give me real faith; give me warmer zeal; inflame me with more fervent love; grant me the grace of meekness; make me more like Jesus. Let me no longer be 'found wanting,' when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, lest I be found wanting in the scales of judgment." "Judge yourselves that ye be not judged."

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*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

*Revelation 22:17*

**J**ESUS says, “take freely.” He wants no payment or preparation. He seeks no recommendation from our virtuous emotions. If you have no good feelings, if you be but willing, you are invited; therefore come! You have no belief and no repentance,—come to Him, and He will give them to you. Come just as you are, and take “Freely,” without money and without price. He gives Himself to needy ones. The drinking fountains at the corners of our streets are valuable institutions; and we can hardly imagine any one so foolish as to feel for his purse, when he stands before one of them, and to cry, “I cannot drink because I have not five pounds in my pocket.” However poor the man is, there is the fountain, and just as he is he may drink of it. Thirsty passengers, as they go by, whether they are dressed in fustian or in broadcloth, do not look for any warrant for drinking; its being there is their warrant for taking its water freely. The liberality of some good friends has put the refreshing crystal there and we take it, and ask no questions. Perhaps the only persons who need go thirsty through the street where there is a drinking fountain, are the fine ladies and gentlemen who are in their carriages. They are very thirsty, but cannot think of being so vulgar as to get out to drink. It would demean them, they think, to drink at a common drinking fountain: so they ride by with parched lips. Oh, how many there are who are rich in their own good works and cannot therefore come to Christ! “I will not be saved,” they say, “in the same way as the harlot or the swearer.” What! go to heaven in the same way as a chimney sweep. Is there no pathway to glory but the path which led the thief there? I will not be saved that way. Such proud boasters must remain without the living water; but, “WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY.”

*Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

*Psalm 37:4*

**T**HE teaching of these words must seem very surprising to those who are strangers to vital godliness, but to the sincere believer it is only the inculcation of a recognized truth. The life of the believer is here described as a *delight* in God, and we are thus certified of the great fact that true religion overflows with happiness and joy. Ungodly persons and mere professors never look upon religion as a joyful thing; to them it is service, duty, or necessity, but never pleasure or delight. If they attend to religion at all, it is either that they may gain thereby, or else because they dare not do otherwise. The thought of *delight* in religion is so strange to most men, that no two words in their language stand further apart than “holiness” and “delight.” But believers who know Christ, understand that delight and faith are so blessedly united, that the gates of hell cannot prevail to separate them. They who love God with all their hearts, find that His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace. Such joys, such brimful delights, such overflowing blessednesses, do the saints discover in their Lord, that so far from serving Him from custom, they would follow Him though all the world cast out His name as evil. We fear not God because of any compulsion; our faith is no fetter, our profession is no bondage, we are not dragged to holiness, nor driven to duty. No, our piety is our pleasure, our hope is our happiness, our duty is our delight.

Delight and true religion are as allied as root and flower; as indivisible as truth and certainty; they are, in fact, two precious jewels glittering side by side in a setting of gold.

“’Tis when we taste Thy love,  
Our joys divinely grow,  
Unspeakable like those above,  
And heaven begins below.”

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*And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh,  
so that all that hear will laugh with me.*

*Genesis 21:6*

**I**T was far above the power of nature, and even contrary to its laws, that the aged Sarah should be honoured with a son; and even so it is beyond all ordinary rules that I, a poor, helpless, undone sinner, should find grace to bear about in my soul the indwelling Spirit of the Lord Jesus. I, who once despaired, as well I might, for my nature was as dry, and withered, and barren, and accursed as a howling wilderness, even I have been made to bring forth fruit unto holiness. Well may my mouth be filled with joyous laughter, because of the singular, surprising grace which I have received of the Lord, for I have found Jesus, the promised seed, and He is mine for ever. This day will I lift up psalms of triumph unto the Lord who has remembered my low estate, for “my heart rejoiceth in the Lord; mine horn is exalted in the Lord; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies, because I rejoice in Thy salvation.”

I would have all those that hear of my great deliverance from hell, and my most blessed visitation from on high, laugh for joy with me. I would surprise my family with my abundant peace; I would delight my friends with my ever-increasing happiness; I would edify the Church with my grateful confessions; and even impress the world with the cheerfulness of my daily conversation. Bunyan tells us that Mercy laughed in her sleep, and no wonder when she dreamed of Jesus; my joy shall not stop short of hers while my Beloved is the theme of my daily thoughts. The Lord Jesus is a deep sea of joy: my soul shall dive therein, shall be swallowed up in the delights of His society. Sarah looked on her Isaac, and laughed with excess of rapture, and all her friends laughed with her; and thou, my soul, look on thy Jesus, and bid heaven and earth unite in thy joy unspeakable.

*And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish,  
neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

*John 10:28*

**T**HE Christian should never think or speak lightly of unbelief. For a child of God to mistrust His love, His truth, His faithfulness, must be greatly displeasing to Him. How can we ever grieve Him by doubting His upholding grace? Christian! it is contrary to every promise of God's precious Word that thou shouldst ever be forgotten or left to perish. If it could be so, how could He be true who has said, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I never forget thee." What were the value of that promise—"The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Where were the truth of Christ's words—"I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." Where were the doctrines of grace? They would be all disproved if one child of God should perish. Where were the veracity of God, His honour, His power, His grace, His covenant, His oath, if any of those for whom Christ has died, and who have put their trust in Him, should nevertheless be cast away? Banish those unbelieving fears which so dishonour God. Arise, shake thyself from the dust, and put on thy beautiful garments. Remember it is sinful to doubt His Word wherein He has promised thee that thou shalt never perish. Let the eternal life within thee express itself in confident rejoicing.

"The gospel bears my spirit up:  
A faithful and unchanging God  
Lays the foundation for my hope,  
In oaths, and promises, and blood."

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*Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth;  
for the faithful fail from among the children of men.*

*Psalm 12:1*

**T**HE prayer itself is remarkable, for it is short, but seasonable, sententious, and suggestive. David mourned the fewness of faithful men, and therefore lifted up his heart in supplication—when the creature failed, he flew to the Creator. He evidently felt his own weakness, or he would not have cried for help; but at the same time he intended honestly to exert himself for the cause of truth, for the word “help” is inapplicable where we ourselves do nothing. There is much of *directness, clearness of perception, and distinctness of utterance* in this petition of two words “Help, Lord,”; much more, indeed, than in the long rambling outpourings of certain professors. The Psalmist runs straight-forward to his God, with a well-considered prayer; he knows what he is seeking, and where to seek it. Lord, teach us to pray in the same blessed manner.

*The occasions for the use of this prayer are frequent.* In providential afflictions how suitable it is for tried believers who find all helpers failing them. Students, in *doctrinal difficulties*, may often obtain aid by lifting up this cry of “Help, Lord,” to the Holy Spirit, the great Teacher. Spiritual warriors in *inward conflicts* may send to the throne for reinforcements, and this will be a model for their request. Workers in *heavenly labour* may thus obtain grace in time of need. Seeking sinners, in *doubts and alarms*, may offer up the same weighty supplication; in fact, in all these cases, times, and places, this will serve the turn of needy souls. “Help, Lord,” will suit us living and dying, suffering or labouring, rejoicing or sorrowing. In Him our help is found, let us not be slack to cry to Him.

*The answer to the prayer is certain*, if it be sincerely offered through Jesus. The Lord’s character assures us that He will not leave His people; His relationship as Father and Husband guarantee us His aid; His gift of Jesus is a pledge of every good thing; and His sure promise stands, “Fear not, I WILL HELP THEE.”

*For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name;  
and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel;  
The God of the whole earth shall he be called.  
Isaiah 54:5*

**J**ESUS, the Redeemer, is altogether ours and ours forever. All the *offices* of Christ are held on our behalf. He is king for us, priest for us, and prophet for us. Whenever we read a new title of the Redeemer, let us appropriate Him as ours under that name as much as under any other. The shepherd's staff, the father's rod, the captain's sword, the priest's mitre, the prince's sceptre, the prophet's mantle, all are ours. Jesus hath no dignity which He will not employ for our exaltation, and no prerogative which He will not exercise for our defence. His fullness of *Godhead* is our unfailing, inexhaustible treasure-house.

His *manhood* also, which he took upon him for us, is ours in all its perfection. To us our gracious Lord communicates the spotless virtue of a stainless character; to us he gives the meritorious efficacy of a devoted life; on us he bestows the reward procured by obedient submission and incessant service. He makes the unsullied garment of his life our covering beauty; the glittering virtues of his character our ornaments and jewels; and the superhuman meekness of his death our boast and glory. He bequeaths us his manger, from which to learn how God came down to man; and his Cross to teach us how man may go up to God. All His thoughts, emotions, actions, utterances, miracles, and intercessions, were for us. He trod the road of sorrow on our behalf, and hath made over to us as his heavenly legacy the full results of all the labours of his life. He is now as much ours as heretofore; and he blushes not to acknowledge himself "*our* Lord Jesus Christ," though he is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Christ everywhere and every way is our Christ, for ever and ever most richly to enjoy. O my soul, by the power of the Holy Spirit! call him this morning, "thy Redeemer."

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*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

*Acts 2:4*

**R**ICH were the blessings of this day if all of us were filled with the Holy Ghost. The consequences of this sacred filling of the soul it would be impossible to overestimate. Life, comfort, light, purity, power, peace; and many other precious blessings are inseparable from the Spirit's benign presence. As sacred *oil*, He anoints the head of the believer, sets him apart to the priesthood of saints, and gives him grace to execute his office aright. As the only truly purifying *water* He cleanses us from the power of sin and sanctifies us unto holiness, working in us to will and to do of the Lord's good pleasure. As the *light*, He manifested to us at first our lost estate, and now He reveals the Lord Jesus to us and in us, and guides us in the way of righteousness. Enlightened by His pure celestial ray, we are no more darkness but light in the Lord. As *fire*, He both purges us from dross, and sets our consecrated nature on a blaze. He is the sacrificial flame by which we are enabled to offer our whole souls as a living sacrifice unto God. As heavenly *dew*, He removes our barrenness and fertilizes our lives. O that He would drop from above upon us at this early hour! Such morning dew would be a sweet commencement for the day. As the *dove*, with wings of peaceful love He broods over His Church and over the souls of believers, and as a Comforter He dispels the cares and doubts which mar the peace of His beloved. He descends upon the chosen as upon the Lord in Jordan, and bears witness to their sonship by working in them a filial spirit by which they cry Abba, Father. As the *wind*, He brings the breath of life to men; blowing where He listeth He performs the quickening operations by which the spiritual creation is animated and sustained. Would to God, that we might feel His presence this day and every day.

*For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.*

*Amos 9:9*

**E**VERY sifting comes by *divine command and permission*. Satan must ask leave before he can lay a finger upon Job. Nay, more, in some sense our siftings are *directly the work of heaven*, for the text says, "I will sift the house of Israel." Satan, like a drudge, may hold the sieve, hoping to destroy the corn; but the overruling hand of the Master is accomplishing the purity of the grain by the very process which the enemy intended to be destructive. Precious, but much sifted corn of the Lord's floor, be comforted by the blessed fact that the Lord directeth both flail and sieve to His own glory, and to thine eternal profit.

The Lord Jesus will surely use the fan which is in His hand, and will *divide the precious from the vile*. All are not Israel that are of Israel; the heap on the barn floor is not clean provender, and hence the winnowing process must be performed. In the sieve true weight alone has power. Husks and chaff being devoid of substance must fly before the wind, and only solid corn will remain.

Observe the *complete safety of the Lord's wheat*; even the least grain has a promise of preservation. God Himself sifts, and therefore it is stern and terrible work; He sifts them in all places, "among all nations"; He sifts them in the most effectual manner, "like as corn is sifted in a sieve"; and yet for all this, not the smallest, lightest, or most shrivelled grain, is permitted to fall to the ground. Every individual believer is precious in the sight of the Lord, a shepherd would not lose one sheep, nor a jeweller one diamond, nor a mother one child, nor a man one limb of his body, nor will the Lord lose one of His redeemed people. However little we may be, if we are the Lord's, we may rejoice that we are preserved in Christ Jesus.

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*Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.*

*Psalm 45:2*

**T**HE entire person of Jesus is but as one gem, and His life is all along but one impression of the seal. He is altogether complete; not only in His several parts, but as a gracious all-glorious whole. His character is not a mass of fair colours mixed confusedly, nor a heap of precious stones laid carelessly one upon another; He is a picture of beauty and a breastplate of glory. In Him, all the “things of good repute” are in their proper places, and assist in adorning each other. Not one feature in His glorious person attracts attention at the expense of others; but He is perfectly and altogether lovely.

Oh, Jesus! Thy power, Thy grace, Thy justice, Thy tenderness, Thy truth, Thy majesty, and Thine immutability make up such a man, or rather such a God-man, as neither heaven nor earth hath seen elsewhere. Thy infancy, Thy eternity, Thy sufferings, Thy triumphs, Thy death, and Thine immortality, are all woven in one gorgeous tapestry, without seam or rent. Thou art music without discord; Thou art many, and yet not divided; Thou art all things, and yet not diverse. As all the colours blend into one resplendent rainbow, so all the glories of heaven and earth meet in Thee, and unite so wondrously, that there is none like Thee in all things; nay, if all the virtues of the most excellent were bound in one bundle, they could not rival Thee, Thou mirror of all perfection. Thou hast been anointed with the holy oil of myrrh and cassia, which Thy God hath reserved for Thee alone; and as for Thy fragrance, it is as the holy perfume, the like of which none other can ever mingle, even with the art of the apothecary; each spice is fragrant, but the compound is divine.

“Oh, sacred symmetry! oh, rare connection  
 Of many perfects, to make one perfection!  
 Oh, heavenly music, where all parts do meet  
 In one sweet strain, to make one perfect sweet!”

*Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.*

*Zechariah 6:13*

**C**HRISt Himself is the builder of His spiritual temple, and He has built it on the mountains of His unchangeable affection, His omnipotent grace, and His infallible truthfulness. But as it was in Solomon's temple, so in this; the materials need making ready. There are the "Cedars of Lebanon," but they are not framed for the building; they are not cut down, and shaped, and made into those planks of cedar, whose odoriferous beauty shall make glad the courts of the Lord's house in Paradise. There are also the rough stones still in the quarry, they must be hewn thence, and squared. All this is Christ's own work. Each individual believer is being prepared, and polished, and made ready for his place in the temple; but Christ's own hand performs the preparation-work. Afflictions cannot sanctify, excepting as they are used by Him to this end. Our prayers and efforts cannot make us ready for heaven, apart from the hand of Jesus, who fashioneth our hearts aright.

As in the building of Solomon's temple, "there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house," because all was brought perfectly ready for the exact spot it was to occupy—so is it with the temple which Jesus builds; the making ready is all done on earth. When we reach heaven, there will be no sanctifying us there, no squaring us with affliction, no planing us with suffering. No, we must be made meet here—all *that* Christ will do beforehand; and when He has done it, we shall be ferried by a loving hand across the stream of death, and brought to the heavenly Jerusalem, to abide as eternal pillars in the temple of our Lord.

"Beneath His eye and care,  
The edifice shall rise,  
Majestic, strong, and fair,  
And shine above the skies."

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*Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people;  
Ephraim is a cake not turned.  
Hosea 7:8*

**A CAKE** not turned is *uncooked on one side*; and so Ephraim was, in many respects, untouched by divine grace: though there was some partial obedience, there was very much rebellion left. My soul, I charge thee, see whether this be thy case. Art thou thorough in the things of God? Has grace gone through the very centre of thy being so as to be felt in its divine operations in all thy powers, thy actions, thy words, and thy thoughts? To be sanctified, spirit, soul, and body, should be thine aim and prayer; and although sanctification may not be perfect in thee anywhere in degree, yet it must be universal in its action; there must not be the appearance of holiness in one place and reigning sin in another, else thou, too, wilt be a cake not turned.

A cake not turned is *soon burnt on the side nearest the fire*, and although no man can have too much religion, there are some who seem burnt black with bigoted zeal for that part of truth which they have received, or are charred to a cinder with a vainglorious Pharisaic ostentation of those religious performances which suit their humour. The assumed appearance of superior sanctity frequently accompanies a total absence of all vital godliness. The saint in public is a devil in private. He deals in flour by day and in soot by night. The cake which is burned on one side, is dough on the other.

*If it be so with me, O Lord, turn me!* Turn my unsanctified nature to the fire of Thy love and let it feel the sacred glow, and let my burnt side cool a little while I learn my own weakness and want of heat when I am removed from Thy heavenly flame. Let me not be found a double-minded man, but one entirely under the powerful influence of reigning grace; for well I know if I am left like a cake unturned, and am not on both sides the subject of Thy grace, I must be consumed for ever amid everlasting burnings.

*And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.*

*But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

*Luke 11:27, 28*

**I**T is fondly imagined by some that it must have involved very special privileges to have been the mother of our Lord, because they supposed that she had the benefit of looking into His very heart in a way in which we cannot hope to do. There may be an appearance of plausibility in the supposition, but not much. We do not know that Mary knew more than others; what she did know she did well to lay up in her heart; but she does not appear from anything we read in the Evangelists to have been a better-instructed believer than any other of Christ's disciples. All that she knew we also may discover. Do you wonder that we should say so? Here is a text to prove it: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." Remember the Master's words—"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." So blessedly does this Divine Revealer of secrets tell us His heart, that He keepeth back nothing which is profitable to us; His own assurance is, "If it were not so, I would have told you." Doth He not this day manifest Himself unto us as He doth not unto the world? It is even so; and therefore we will not ignorantly cry out, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee," but we will intelligently bless God that, having heard the Word and kept it, we have first of all as true a communion with the Saviour as the Virgin had, and in the second place as true an acquaintance with the secrets of His heart as she can be supposed to have obtained. Happy soul to be thus privileged!

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*O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!*

*Isaiah 40:9*

**O**UR knowledge of Christ is somewhat like climbing one of our Welsh mountains. When you are at the base you see but little: the mountain itself appears to be but one-half as high as it really is. Confined in a little valley, you discover scarcely anything but the rippling brooks as they descend into the stream at the foot of the mountain. Climb the first rising knoll, and the valley lengthens and widens beneath your feet. Go higher, and you see the country for four or five miles round, and you are delighted with the widening prospect. Mount still, and the scene enlarges; till at last, when you are on the summit, and look east, west, north, and south, you see almost all England lying before you. Yonder is a forest in some distant county, perhaps two hundred miles away, and here the sea, and there a shining river and the smoking chimneys of a manufacturing town, or the masts of the ships in a busy port. All these things please and delight you, and you say, "I could not have imagined that so much could be seen at this elevation." Now, the Christian life is of the same order. When we first believe in Christ we see but little of Him. The higher we climb the more we discover of His beauties. But who has ever gained the summit? Who has known all the heights and depths of the love of Christ which passes knowledge? Paul, when grown old, sitting grey-haired, shivering in a dungeon in Rome, could say with greater emphasis than we can, "I know whom I have believed," for each experience had been like the climbing of a hill, each trial had been like ascending another summit, and his death seemed like gaining the top of the mountain, from which he could see the whole of the faithfulness and the love of Him to whom he had committed his soul. Get thee up, dear friend, into the high mountain.

*All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?*

*Isaiah 14:10*

**WHAT** must be the apostate professor's doom when his naked soul appears before God? How will he bear that voice, "Depart, ye cursed; thou hast rejected me, and I reject thee; thou hast played the harlot, and departed from Me: I also have banished thee forever from my presence, and will not have mercy upon thee." What will be this wretch's shame at the last great day when, before assembled multitudes, the apostate shall be unmasked? See the profane, and sinners who never professed religion, lifting themselves up from their beds of fire to point at him. "There he is," says one, "will he preach the gospel in hell?" "There he is," says another, "he rebuked me for cursing, and was a hypocrite himself!" "Aha!" says another, "here comes a psalm-singing Methodist—one who was always at his meeting; he is the man who boasted of his being sure of everlasting life; and here he is!" No greater eagerness will ever be seen among Satanic tormentors, than in that day when devils drag the hypocrite's soul down to perdition. Bunyan pictures this with massive but awful grandeur of poetry when he speaks of the back-way to hell. Seven devils bound the wretch with nine cords, and dragged him from the road to heaven, in which he had professed to walk, and thrust him through the back-door into hell. Mind that back-way to hell, professors! "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." Look well to your state; see whether you be in Christ or not. It is the easiest thing in the world to give a lenient verdict when oneself is to be tried; but O, be just and true here. Be just to all, but be rigorous to yourself. Remember if it be not a rock on which you build, when the house shall fall, great will be the fall of it. O may the Lord give you sincerity, constancy, and firmness; and in no day, however evil, may you be led to turn aside.

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*And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: intreat for me.*

*Exodus 8:28*

**T**HIS is a crafty word from the lip of the arch-tyrant Pharaoh. If the poor bonded Israelites must needs go out of Egypt, then he bargains with them that it shall not be very far away; not too far for them to escape the terror of his arms, and the observation of his spies. After the same fashion, the world loves not the non-conformity of nonconformity, or the dissidence of dissent, it would have us be more charitable and not carry matters with too severe a hand. Death to the world, and burial with Christ, are experiences which carnal minds treat with ridicule, and hence the ordinance which sets them forth is almost universally neglected, and even contemned. Worldly wisdom recommends the path of compromise, and talks of “moderation.” According to this carnal policy, purity is admitted to be very desirable, but we are warned against being too precise; truth is of course to be followed, but error is not to be severely denounced. “Yes,” says the world, “be spiritually minded by all means, but do not deny yourself a little gay society, an occasional ball, and a Christmas visit to a theatre. What’s the good of crying down a thing when it is so fashionable, and everybody does it?” Multitudes of professors yield to this cunning advice, to their own eternal ruin. If we would follow the Lord wholly, we must go right away into the wilderness of separation, and leave the Egypt of the carnal world behind us. We must leave its maxims, its pleasures, and its religion too, and go far away to the place where the Lord calls His sanctified ones. When the town is on fire, our house cannot be too far from the flames. When the plague is abroad, a man cannot be too far from its haunts. The further from a viper the better, and the further from worldly conformity the better. To all true believers let the trumpet-call be sounded, “Come ye out from among them, be ye separate.”

*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

*Hebrews 12:2*

**I**T is ever the Holy Spirit's work to turn our eyes away from self to Jesus; but Satan's work is just the opposite of this, for he is constantly trying to make us regard ourselves instead of Christ. He insinuates, "Your sins are too great for pardon; you have no faith; you do not repent enough; you will never be able to continue to the end; you have not the joy of His children; you have such a wavering hold of Jesus." All these are thoughts about self, and we shall never find comfort or assurance by looking within. But the Holy Spirit turns our eyes entirely away from self: He tells us that we are nothing, but that "Christ is all in all." Remember, therefore, it is not *thy hold* of Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not *thy joy* in Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not even faith in Christ, though that be the instrument—it is Christ's blood and merits; therefore, look not so much to thy hand with which thou art grasping Christ, as to Christ; look not to thy hope, but to Jesus, the source of thy hope; look not to thy faith, but to Jesus, the author and finisher of thy faith. We shall never find happiness by looking at our prayers, our doings, or our feelings; it is what *Jesus* is, not what *we* are, that gives rest to the soul. If we would at once overcome Satan and have peace with God, it must be by "looking unto Jesus." Keep thine eye simply on Him; let His death, His sufferings, His merits, His glories, His intercession, be fresh upon thy mind; when thou wakest in the morning look to Him; when thou liest down at night look to Him. Oh! let not thy hopes or fears come between thee and Jesus; follow hard after Him, and He will never fail thee.

"My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness:  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name."

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*For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

*1 Thessalonians 4:14*

**L**ET us not imagine that *the soul* sleeps in insensibility. “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise,” is the whisper of Christ to every dying saint. They “sleep in Jesus,” but their souls are before the throne of God, praising Him day and night in His temple, singing hallelujahs to Him who washed them from their sins in His blood. The body sleeps in its lonely bed of earth, beneath the coverlet of grass. But what is this sleep? The idea connected with sleep is “*rest*,” and that is the thought which the Spirit of God would convey to us. Sleep makes each night a Sabbath for the day. Sleep shuts fast the door of the soul, and bids all intruders tarry for a while, that the life within may enter its summer garden of ease. The toil-worn believer quietly sleeps, as does the weary child when it slumbers on its mother’s breast. Oh! happy they who die in the Lord; they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. Their quiet repose shall never be broken until God shall rouse them to give them their full reward. Guarded by angel watchers, curtained by eternal mysteries, they sleep on, the heritors of glory, till the fullness of time shall bring the fullness of redemption. What an awaking shall be theirs! They were laid in their last resting place, weary and worn, but such they shall not rise. They went to their rest with the furrowed brow, and the wasted features, but they wake up in beauty and glory. The shrivelled seed, so destitute of form and comeliness, rises from the dust a beauteous flower. The winter of the grave gives way to the spring of redemption and the summer of glory. Blessed is death, since it, through the divine power, disrobes us of this work-day garment, to clothe us with the wedding garment of incorruption. Blessed are those who “sleep in Jesus.”

*And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them;  
that they may be one, even as we are one:*

*John 17:22*

**B**EHOLD the superlative liberality of the Lord Jesus, for He hath given us His all. Although a tithe of His possessions would have made a universe of angels rich beyond all thought, yet was He not content until He had given us all that He had. It would have been surprising grace if He had allowed us to eat the crumbs of His bounty beneath the table of His mercy; but He will do nothing by halves, He makes us sit with Him and share the feast. Had He given us some small pension from His royal coffers, we should have had cause to love Him eternally; but no, He will have His bride as rich as Himself, and He will not have a glory or a grace in which she shall not share. He has not been content with less than making us joint-heirs with Himself, so that we might have equal possessions. He has emptied all His estate into the coffers of the Church, and hath all things common with His redeemed. There is not one room in His house the key of which He will withhold from His people. He gives them full liberty to take all that He hath to be their own; He loves them to make free with His treasure, and appropriate as much as they can possibly carry. The boundless fullness of His all-sufficiency is as free to the believer as the air he breathes. Christ hath put the flagon of His love and grace to the believer's lip, and bidden him drink on for ever; for could he drain it, he is welcome to do so, and as he cannot exhaust it, he is bidden to drink abundantly, for it is all his own. What truer proof of fellowship can heaven or earth afford?

“When I stand before the throne  
Dressed in beauty not my own;  
When I see Thee as Thou art,  
Love Thee with unsinning heart;  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—  
Not till then—how much I owe.”

# **Scripture Memory Programme 2013**

## **Wisdom for Daily Living**

The Book of Proverbs is filled with wisdom for daily living. The 52 proverbs in this booklet have been carefully selected to equip you with divine wisdom to know what is good and what is evil, and with the right attitudes that will enable you to live in conformity to God's will.

Memorise them and meditate on them prayerfully to be spiritually enriched!

### **January 6 – True Wisdom**

Proverbs 9:10 – The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

### **January 13 – Trusting God**

Proverbs 3:5 – Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

### **January 20 – Guidance from God**

Proverbs 3:6 – In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.

### **January 27 – True Wisdom**

Proverbs 3:7 – Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

### **February 3 – Security in God**

Proverbs 18:10 – The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

### **February 10 – Contentment**

Proverbs 15:16 – Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.

### **February 17 – Contentment**

Proverbs 30:8 – Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.

### **February 24 – Hypocrisy in Worship**

Proverbs 15:8 – The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is His delight.

### **March 3 – Right Motives**

Proverbs 21:2 – Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

### **March 10 – Discernment**

Proverbs 14:15 – The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

### **March 17 – Fear of Man**

Proverbs 29:25 – The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

### **March 24 – True Value**

Proverbs 13:7 – There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

### **March 31 – Hatred and Love**

Proverbs 10:12 – Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

### **April 7 – Forgiveness**

Proverbs 17:9 – He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.

### **April 14 – Slothfulness**

Proverbs 13:4 – The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

### **April 21 – Diligence**

Proverbs 30:25 – The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer.

### **April 28 – Being Frugal**

Proverbs 21:20 – There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.

### **May 5 – Love for Pleasure**

Proverbs 21:17 – He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

### **May 12 – The Godly Woman**

Proverbs 31:30 – Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

### **May 19 – Addiction to Wine**

Proverbs 20:1 – Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

### **May 26 – Exercising Moderation**

Proverbs 25:16 – Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.

### **June 2 – Choice of Friends**

Proverbs 13:20 – He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

### **June 9 – True Friendship**

Proverbs 17:17 – A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

### **June 16 – Parenting**

Proverbs 22:6 – Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

**June 23 – Faithfulness**

Proverbs 11:13 – A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

**June 30 – Folly of Pride**

Proverbs 16:18 – Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

**July 7 – Being Considerate**

Proverbs 25:17 – Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.

**July 14 – Correction**

Proverbs 27:6 – Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

**July 21 – Willingness to Learn**

Proverbs 13:18 – Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.

**July 28 – Counsel**

Proverbs 27:9 – Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

**August 4 – God's Judgment**

Proverbs 14:34 – Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.

**August 11 – Honesty**

Proverbs 12:22 – Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.

**August 18 – Honesty**

Proverbs 11:1 – A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.

### **August 25 – Habitual Borrowing**

Proverbs 22:7 – The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

### **September 1 – Character Moulding**

Proverbs 27:17 – Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

### **September 8 – Peace with Man**

Proverbs 16:7 – When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

### **September 15 – Love Your Enemy**

Proverbs 24:17 – Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth.

### **September 22 – Doing Good**

Proverbs 3:27 – Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

### **September 29 – Respect for Parents**

Proverbs 23:22 – Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.

### **October 6 – Boasting**

Proverbs 27:2 – Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

### **October 13 – Guarding the Heart**

Proverbs 4:23 – Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

### **October 20 – Integrity**

Proverbs 22:1 – A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

### **October 27 – Counsel**

Proverbs 11:14 – Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

### **November 3 – Handling Conflicts**

Proverbs 15:1 – A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

### **November 10 – Confession**

Proverbs 28:13 – He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

### **November 17 – Effects of Speech**

Proverbs 12:18 – There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

### **November 24 – Restraint in Speech**

Proverbs 10:19 – In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

### **December 1 – Self-Control**

Proverbs 16:32 – He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

### **December 8 – Warning against Evil**

Proverbs 4:14 – Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

### **December 15 – Care for the Poor**

Proverbs 19:17 – He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will He pay him again.

### **December 22 – Generosity**

Proverbs 11:25 – The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

## **December 29 – Love Wisdom**

Proverbs 23:23 – Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

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### **EPILOGUE: Love and Seek True Wisdom**

Proverbs 8:17 – “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.”

Wisdom loves her lovers and seeks her seekers. He is already wise who seeks to be wise, and he has almost found wisdom who diligently seeks her. What is true of wisdom in general is specially true of wisdom embodied in our LORD Jesus. Him we are to love and to seek, and in return we shall enjoy His love and find Himself.

Our business is to seek Jesus early in life. Happy are the young whose morning is spent with Jesus! It is never too soon to seek the LORD Jesus. Early seekers make certain finders. We should seek Him early by diligence. Thriving tradesmen are early risers, and thriving saints seek Jesus eagerly. Those who find Jesus to their enrichment give their hearts to seeking Him. We must seek Him first, and thus earliest. Above all things Jesus. Jesus first and nothing else even as a bad second.

The blessing is that He will be found. He reveals Himself more and more clearly to our search. He gives Himself up more fully to our fellowship. Happy men who seek One who, when He is found, remains with them forever, a treasure growingly precious to their hearts and understandings.

LORD Jesus, I have found Thee; be found of me to an unutterable degree of joyous satisfaction.

*(Taken from “Faith’s Checkbook” by C.H. Spurgeon)*

