



Morning by Morning

By

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VOLUME THREE

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

Note: This devotional can be accessed at: www.lifebpc.com/devotions





July 1

And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

Zechariah 14:8

THE streams of living water which flow from Jerusalem are not dried up by the parching heats of sultry midsummer any more than they were frozen by the cold winds of blustering winter. Rejoice, O my soul, that thou art spared to testify of the faithfulness of the Lord. The seasons change and thou changest, but thy Lord abides evermore the same, and the streams of His love are as deep, as broad and as full as ever. The heats of business cares and scorching trials make me need the cooling influences of the river of His grace; I may go at once and drink to the full from the inexhaustible fountain, for in summer and in winter it pours forth its flood. The upper springs are never scanty, and blessed be the name of the Lord, the nether springs cannot fail either. Elijah found Cherith dry up, but Jehovah was still the same God of providence. Job said his brethren were like deceitful brooks, but he found his God an overflowing river of consolation. The Nile is the great confidence of Egypt, but its floods are variable; our Lord is evermore the same. By turning the course of the Euphrates, Cyrus took the city of Babylon, but no power, human or infernal, can divert the current of divine grace. The tracks of ancient rivers have been found all dry and desolate, but the streams which take their rise on the mountains of divine sovereignty and infinite love shall ever be full to the brim. Generations melt away, but the course of grace is unaltered. The river of God may sing with greater truth than the brook in the poem—

“Men may come, and men may go,
But I go on for ever.”

How happy art thou, my soul, to be led beside such still waters! never wander to other streams, lest thou hear the Lord's rebuke, “What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt to drink of the muddy river?”





*For our heart shall rejoice in him,
because we have trusted in his holy name.*

Psalms 33:21

BLESSED is the fact that Christians can rejoice even in the deepest distress; although trouble may surround them, they still sing; and, like many birds, they sing best in their cages. The waves may roll over them, but their souls soon rise to the surface and see the light of God's countenance; they have a buoyancy about them which keeps their head always above the water, and helps them to sing amid the tempest, "God is with me still." To whom shall the glory be given? Oh! to *Jesus*—it is all by Jesus. Trouble does not necessarily bring consolation with it to the believer, but the presence of the Son of God in the fiery furnace with him fills his heart with joy. He is sick and suffering, but Jesus visits him and makes his bed for him. He is dying, and the cold chilly waters of Jordan are gathering about him up to the neck, but Jesus puts His arms around him, and cries, "Fear not, beloved; to die is to be blessed; the waters of death have their fountain-head in heaven; they are not bitter, they are sweet as nectar, for they flow from the throne of God." As the departing saint wades through the stream, and the billows gather around him, and heart and flesh fail him, the same voice sounds in his ears, "Fear not; I am with thee; be not dismayed; I am thy God." As he nears the borders of the infinite unknown, and is almost affrighted to enter the realm of shades, Jesus says, "Fear not, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Thus strengthened and consoled, the believer is not afraid to die; nay, he is even willing to depart, for since he has seen Jesus as the morning star, he longs to gaze upon Him as the sun in his strength. Truly, the presence of Jesus is all the heaven we desire. He is at once

"The glory of our brightest days;
The comfort of our nights."





July 3

And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke.

Genesis 41:4

PHARAOH'S dream has too often been my waking experience. My days of sloth have ruinously destroyed all that I had achieved in times of zealous industry; my seasons of coldness have frozen all the genial glow of my periods of fervency and enthusiasm; and my fits of worldliness have thrown me back from my advances in the divine life. I had need to beware of lean prayers, lean praises, lean duties, and lean experiences, for these will eat up the fat of my comfort and peace. If I neglect prayer for never so short a time, I lose all the spirituality to which I had attained; if I draw no fresh supplies from heaven, the old corn in my granary is soon consumed by the famine which rages in my soul. When the caterpillars of indifference, the cankerworms of worldliness, and the palmerworms of self-indulgence, lay my heart completely desolate, and make my soul to languish, all my former fruitfulness and growth in grace avails me nothing whatever. How anxious should I be to have no lean-fleshed days, no ill-favoured hours! If every day I journeyed towards the goal of my desires I should soon reach it, but backsliding leaves me still far off from the prize of my high calling, and robs me of the advances which I had so laboriously made. The only way in which all my days can be as the "fat kine," is to feed them in the right meadow, to spend them with the Lord, in His service, in His company, in His fear, and in His way. Why should not every year be richer than the past, in love, and usefulness, and joy?—I am nearer the celestial hills, I have had more experience of my Lord, and should be more like Him. O Lord, keep far from me the curse of leanness of soul; let me not have to cry, "My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me!" but may I be well-fed and nourished in Thy house, that I may praise Thy name.





July 4

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.
John 17:17

SANCTIFICATION begins in regeneration. The Spirit of God infuses into man that new living principle by which he becomes “a new creature” in Christ Jesus. This work, which begins in the new birth, is carried on in two ways—mortification, whereby the lusts of the flesh are subdued and kept under; and vivification, by which the life which God has put within us is made to be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. This is carried on every day in what is called “perseverance,” by which the Christian is preserved and continued in a gracious state, and is made to abound in good works unto the praise and glory of God; and it culminates or comes to perfection, in “glory,” when the soul, being thoroughly purged, is caught up to dwell with holy beings at the right hand of the Majesty on high. But while the Spirit of God is thus the author of sanctification, yet there is a visible agency employed which must not be forgotten. “Sanctify them,” said Jesus, “through thy *truth*: thy word is truth.” The passages of Scripture which prove that the instrument of our sanctification is the Word of God are very many. The Spirit of God brings to our minds the precepts and doctrines of truth, and applies them with power. These are heard in the ear, and being received in the heart, they work in us to will and to do of God’s good pleasure. The truth is the sanctifier, and if we do not hear or read the truth, we shall not grow in sanctification. We only progress in sound living as we progress in sound understanding. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” Do not say of any error, “It is a mere matter of opinion.” No man indulges an error of judgment, without sooner or later tolerating an error in practice. Hold fast the truth, for by so holding the truth shall you be sanctified by the Spirit of God.





July 5

*To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father,
and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Romans 1:7*

WE are very apt to regard the apostolic saints as if they were “saints” in a more especial manner than the other children of God. All are “saints” whom God has called by His grace, and sanctified by His Spirit; but we are apt to look upon the *apostles* as extraordinary beings, scarcely subject to the same weaknesses and temptations as ourselves. Yet in so doing we are forgetful of this truth, that the nearer a man lives to God the more intensely has he to mourn over his own evil heart; and the more his Master honours him in His service, the more also doth the evil of the flesh vex and tease him day by day. The fact is, if we had seen the apostle Paul, we should have thought him remarkably like the rest of the chosen family: and if we had talked with him, we should have said, “We find that his experience and ours are much the same. He is more faithful, more holy, and more deeply taught than we are, but he has the selfsame trials to endure. Nay, in some respects he is more sorely tried than ourselves.” Do not, then, look upon the ancient saints as being exempt either from infirmities or sins; and do not regard them with that mystic reverence which will almost make us idolators. Their holiness is attainable even by us. We are “called to be saints” by that same voice which constrained them to their high vocation. It is a Christian’s duty to force his way into the inner circle of saintship; and if these saints were superior to us in their attainments, as they certainly were, let us follow them; let us emulate their ardour and holiness. We have the same light that they had, the same grace is accessible to us, and why should we rest satisfied until we have equalled them in heavenly character? They lived *with* Jesus, they lived *for* Jesus, therefore they grew *like* Jesus. Let us live by the same Spirit as they did, “looking unto Jesus,” and our saintship will soon be apparent.





July 6

*But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely,
and shall be quiet from fear of evil.*

Proverbs 1:33

DIVINE love is rendered conspicuous when it shines in the midst of judgments. Fair is that lone star which smiles through the rifts of the thunder clouds; bright is the oasis which blooms in the wilderness of sand; so fair and so bright is love in the midst of wrath. When the Israelites provoked the Most High by their continued idolatry, He punished them by withholding both dew and rain, so that their land was visited by a sore famine; but while He did this, He took care that His own chosen ones should be secure. If all other brooks are dry, yet shall there be one reserved for Elijah; and when that fails, God shall still preserve for him a place of sustenance; nay, not only so, the Lord had not simply one "Elijah," but He had a remnant according to the election of grace, who were hidden by fifties in a cave, and though the whole land was subject to famine, yet these fifties in the cave were fed, and fed from Ahab's table too by His faithful, God-fearing steward, Obadiah. Let us from this draw the inference, that come what may, God's people are safe. Let convulsions shake the solid earth, let the skies themselves be rent in twain, yet amid the wreck of worlds the believer shall be as secure as in the calmest hour of rest. If God cannot save His people *under* heaven, He will save them *in* heaven. If the world becomes too hot to hold them, then heaven shall be the place of their reception and their safety. Be ye then confident, when ye hear of wars, and rumours of wars. Let no agitation distress you, but be quiet from fear of evil. Whatsoever cometh upon the earth, you, beneath the broad wings of Jehovah, shall be secure. Stay yourself upon His promise; rest in His faithfulness, and bid defiance to the blackest future, for there is nothing in it direful for you. Your sole concern should be to show forth to the world the blessedness of hearkening to the voice of wisdom.





July 7

*Brethren, pray for us.
1 Thessalonians 5:25*

THIS one morning in the year we reserved to refresh the reader's memory upon the subject of prayer for ministers, and we do most earnestly implore every Christian household to grant the fervent request of the text first uttered by an apostle and now repeated by us. Brethren, our work is solemnly momentous, involving weal or woe to thousands; we treat with souls for God on eternal business, and our word is either a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. A very heavy responsibility rests upon us, and it will be no small mercy if at the last we be found clear of the blood of all men. As officers in Christ's army, we are the especial mark of the enmity of men and devils; they watch for our halting, and labour to take us by the heels. Our sacred calling involves us in temptations from which you are exempt, above all it too often draws us away from our personal enjoyment of truth into a ministerial and official consideration of it. We meet with many knotty cases, and our wits are at a non plus; we observe very sad backslidings, and our hearts are wounded; we see millions perishing, and our spirits sink. We wish to profit you by our preaching; we desire to be blest to your children; we long to be useful both to saints and sinners; therefore, dear friends, intercede for us with our God. Miserable men are we if we miss the aid of your prayers, but happy are we if we live in your supplications. You do not look to us but to our Master for spiritual blessings, and yet how many times has He given those blessings through His ministers; ask then, again and again, that we may be the earthen vessels into which the Lord may put the treasure of the gospel. We, the whole company of missionaries, ministers, city missionaries, and students, do in the name of Jesus beseech you

“BRETHREN, PRAY FOR US.”





July 8

*And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee,
wherein thy great strength lieth,
and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee.
Judges 16:6*

WHERE lies the secret strength of faith? It lies in the food it feeds on; for faith studies *what the promise is*—an emanation of divine grace, an overflowing of the great heart of God; and faith says, “My God could not have given this promise, except from love and grace; therefore it is quite certain His Word will be fulfilled.” Then faith thinketh, “Who gave this promise?” It considereth not so much its greatness, as, “Who is the author of it?” She remembers that it is God who cannot lie—God omnipotent, God immutable; and therefore concludeth that the promise must be fulfilled; and forward she advances in this firm conviction. She remembereth, *why the promise was given*,—namely, for God’s glory, and she feels perfectly sure that God’s glory is safe, that He will never stain His own escutcheon, nor mar the lustre of His own crown; and therefore the promise must and will stand. Then faith also considereth the amazing *work of Christ* as being a clear proof of the Father’s intention to fulfil His word. “He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Moreover faith looks back upon *the past*, for her battles have strengthened her, and her victories have given her courage. She remembers that God never has failed her; nay, that He never did once fail any of His children. She recollecteth times of great peril, when deliverance came; hours of awful need, when as her day her strength was found, and she cries, “No, I never will be led to think that He can change and leave His servant now. Hitherto the Lord hath helped me, and He will help me still.” Thus faith views each promise in its connection with the promise-giver, and, because she does so, can with assurance say, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life!”





July 9

*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:
Psalm 103:2*

IT is a delightful and profitable occupation to mark the hand of God in the lives of ancient saints, and to observe His goodness in delivering them, His mercy in pardoning them, and His faithfulness in keeping His covenant with them. But would it not be even more interesting and profitable for us to remark the hand of God in our own lives? Ought we not to look upon our own history as being at least as full of God, as full of His goodness and of His truth, as much a proof of His faithfulness and veracity, as the lives of any of the saints who have gone before? We do our Lord an injustice when we suppose that He wrought all His mighty acts, and showed Himself strong for those in the early time, but doth not perform wonders or lay bare His arm for the saints who are now upon the earth. Let us review our own lives. Surely in these we may discover some happy incidents, refreshing to ourselves and glorifying to our God. Have you had no *deliverances*? Have you passed through no rivers, supported by the divine presence? Have you walked through no fires unharmed? Have you had no *manifestations*? Have you had no *choice favours*? The God who gave Solomon the desire of his heart, hath He never listened to you and answered your requests? That God of lavish bounty of whom David sang, “Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things,” hath He never satiated *you* with fatness? Have you never been made to lie down in green pastures? Have you never been led by the still waters? Surely the goodness of God has been the same to us as to the saints of old. Let us, then, weave His mercies into a song. Let us take the pure gold of thankfulness, and the jewels of praise and make them into another crown for the head of Jesus. Let our souls give forth music as sweet and as exhilarating as came from David’s harp, while we praise the Lord whose mercy endureth for ever.





July 10

*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners,
but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;
Ephesians 2:19*

WHAT is meant by our being citizens in heaven? It means that *we are under heaven's government*. Christ the king of heaven reigns in our hearts; our daily prayer is, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The proclamations issued from the throne of glory are freely received by us: the decrees of the Great King we cheerfully obey. Then as citizens of the New Jerusalem, *we share heaven's honours*. The glory which belongs to beatified saints belongs to us, for we are already sons of God, already princes of the blood imperial; already we wear the spotless robe of Jesus' righteousness; already we have angels for our servitors, saints for our companions, Christ for our Brother, God for our Father, and a crown of immortality for our reward. We share the honours of citizenship, for we have come to the general assembly and Church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven. As citizens, we have *common rights to all the property of heaven*. Ours are its gates of pearl and walls of chrysolite; ours the azure light of the city that needs no candle nor light of the sun; ours the river of the water of life, and the twelve manner of fruits which grow on the trees planted on the banks thereof; there is nought in heaven that belongeth not to us. "Things present, or things to come," all are ours. Also as citizens of heaven we *enjoy its delights*. Do they there rejoice over sinners that repent—prodigals that have returned? So do we. Do they chant the glories of triumphant grace? We do the same. Do they cast their crowns at Jesus' feet? Such honours as we have we cast there too. Are they charmed with His smile? It is not less sweet to us who dwell below. Do they look forward, waiting for His second advent? We also look and long for His appearing. If, then, we are thus *citizens of heaven*, let our walk and actions be consistent with our high dignity.





July 11

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

1 Peter 5:10

YOU have seen the arch of heaven as it spans the plain: glorious are its colours, and rare its hues. It is beautiful, but, alas, it passes away, and lo, it is not. The fair colours give way to the fleecy clouds, and the sky is no longer brilliant with the tints of heaven. It is not *established*. How can it be? A glorious show made up of transitory sun-beams and passing rain-drops, how can it abide? The graces of the Christian character must not resemble the rainbow in its transitory beauty, but, on the contrary, must be stablished, settled, abiding. Seek, O believer, that every good thing you have may be an abiding thing. May your character not be a writing upon the sand, but an inscription upon the rock! May your faith be no “baseless fabric of a vision,” but may it be builded of material able to endure that awful fire which shall consume the wood, hay, and stubble of the hypocrite. May you be rooted and grounded in love. May your convictions be deep, your love real, your desires earnest. May your whole life be so settled and established, that all the blasts of hell, and all the storms of earth shall never be able to remove you. But notice how this blessing of being “stablished in the faith” is gained. The apostle’s words point us to *suffering* as the means employed—“*After that ye have suffered awhile.*” It is of no use to hope that we shall be well rooted if no rough winds pass over us. Those old gnarlings on the root of the oak tree, and those strange twistings of the branches, all tell of the many storms that have swept over it, and they are also indicators of the depth into which the roots have forced their way. So the Christian is made strong, and firmly rooted by all the trials and storms of life. Shrink not then from the tempestuous winds of trial, but take comfort, believing that by their rough discipline God is fulfilling this benediction to you.





July 12

Sanctified by God the Father - Jude 1
Sanctified in Christ Jesus - 1 Corinthians 1:2
Through sanctification of the Spirit - 1 Peter 1:2

MARK the union of the Three Divine Persons in all their gracious acts. How unwisely do those believers talk who make preferences in the Persons of the Trinity; who think of Jesus as if He were the embodiment of everything lovely and gracious, while the Father they regard as severely just, but destitute of kindness. Equally wrong are those who magnify the decree of the Father, and the atonement of the Son, so as to depreciate the work of the Spirit. In deeds of grace none of the Persons of the Trinity act apart from the rest. They are as united in their deeds as in their essence. In their love towards the chosen they are one, and in the actions which flow from that great central source they are still undivided. Specially notice this in the matter of sanctification. While we may without mistake speak of sanctification as the work of the Spirit, yet we must take heed that we do not view it as if the Father and the Son had no part therein. It is correct to speak of sanctification as the work of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit. Still doth Jehovah say, "Let us make man in our own image after our likeness," and thus we are "his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." See the value which God sets upon real holiness, since the Three Persons in the Trinity are represented as co-working to produce a Church without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." And you, believer, as the follower of Christ, must also set a high value on holiness—upon purity of life and godliness of conversation. Value the blood of Christ as the foundation of your hope, but never speak disparagingly of the work of the Spirit which is your meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. This day let us so live as to manifest the work of the Triune God in us.





July 13

And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.

Jonah 4:9

ANGER is not always or necessarily sinful, but it has such a tendency to run wild that whenever it displays itself, we should be quick to question its character, with this enquiry, "Doest thou well to be angry?" It may be that we can answer, "YES." Very frequently anger is the madman's firebrand, but sometimes it is Elijah's fire from heaven. We do well when we are angry with sin, because of the wrong which it commits against our good and gracious God; or with ourselves because we remain so foolish after so much divine instruction; or with others when the sole cause of anger is the evil which they do. He who is not angry at transgression becomes a partaker in it. Sin is a loathsome and hateful thing, and no renewed heart can patiently endure it. God himself is angry with the wicked every day, and it is written in His Word, "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." Far more frequently it is to be feared that our anger is not commendable or even justifiable, and then we must answer, "NO." Why should we be fretful with children, passionate with servants, and wrathful with companions? Is such anger honourable to our Christian profession, or glorifying to God? Is it not the old evil heart seeking to gain dominion, and should we not resist it with all the might of our newborn nature. Many professors give way to temper as though it were useless to attempt resistance; but let the believer remember that he must be a conqueror in every point, or else he cannot be crowned. If we cannot control our tempers, what has grace done for us? Some one told Mr. Jay that grace was often grafted on a crab-stump. "Yes," said he, "but the fruit will not be crabs." We must not make natural infirmity an excuse for sin, but we must fly to the cross and pray the Lord to crucify our tempers, and renew us in gentleness and meekness after His own image.





July 14

*And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone,
thou shalt not build it of hewn stone:
for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.
Exodus 20:25*

GOD'S altar was to be built of unhewn stones, that no trace of human skill or labour might be seen upon it. Human wisdom delights to trim and arrange the doctrines of the cross into a system more artificial and more congenial with the depraved tastes of fallen nature; instead, however, of improving the gospel carnal wisdom pollutes it, until it becomes another gospel, and not the truth of God at all. All alterations and amendments of the Lord's own Word are defilements and pollutions. The proud heart of man is very anxious to have a hand in the justification of the soul before God; preparations for Christ are dreamed of, humblings and repentings are trusted in, good works are cried up, natural ability is much vaunted, and by all means the attempt is made to lift up human tools upon the divine altar. It were well if sinners would remember that so far from perfecting the Saviour's work, their carnal confidences only pollute and dishonour it. The Lord alone must be exalted in the work of atonement, and not a single mark of man's chisel or hammer will be endured. There is an inherent blasphemy in seeking to add to what Christ Jesus in His dying moments declared to be finished, or to improve that in which the Lord Jehovah finds perfect satisfaction. Trembling sinner, away with thy tools, and fall upon thy knees in humble supplication; and accept the Lord Jesus to be the altar of thine atonement, and rest in Him alone.

Many professors may take warning from this morning's text as to the doctrines which they believe. There is among Christians far too much inclination to square and reconcile the truths of revelation; this is a form of irreverence and unbelief, let us strive against it, and receive truth as we find it; rejoicing that the doctrines of the Word are unhewn stones, and so are all the more fit to build an altar for the Lord.





July 15

*The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar;
it shall never go out.
Leviticus 6:13*

KEEP the altar of *private prayer* burning. This is the very life of all piety. The sanctuary and family altars borrow their fires here, therefore let this burn well. Secret devotion is the very essence, evidence, and barometer, of vital and experimental religion.

Burn here the fat of your sacrifices. Let your closet seasons be, if possible, regular, frequent, and undisturbed. Effectual prayer availeth much. Have you nothing to pray for? Let us suggest the Church, the ministry, your own soul, your children, your relations, your neighbours, your country, and the cause of God and truth throughout the world. Let us examine ourselves on this important matter. Do we engage with lukewarmness in private devotion? Is the fire of devotion burning dimly in our hearts? Do the chariot wheels drag heavily? If so, let us be alarmed at this sign of decay. Let us go with weeping, and ask for the Spirit of grace and of supplications. Let us set apart special seasons for extraordinary prayer. For if this fire should be smothered beneath the ashes of a worldly conformity, it will dim the fire on the family altar, and lessen our influence both in the Church and in the world.

The text will also apply to *the altar of the heart*. This is a golden altar indeed. God loves to see the hearts of His people glowing towards Himself. Let us give to God our hearts, all blazing with love, and seek His grace, that the fire may never be quenched; for it will not burn if the Lord does not keep it burning. Many foes will attempt to extinguish it; but if the unseen hand behind the wall pour thereon the sacred oil, it will blaze higher and higher. Let us use texts of Scripture as fuel for our heart's fire, they are live coals; let us attend sermons, but above all, let us be much alone with Jesus.





July 16

And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

Exodus 16:21

L *ABOUR* to maintain a sense of thine entire dependence upon the Lord's good will and pleasure for the continuance of thy richest enjoyments. Never try to live on the old manna, nor seek to find help in Egypt. All must come from Jesus, or thou art undone for ever. Old anointings will not suffice to impart unction to thy spirit; thine head must have fresh oil poured upon it from the golden horn of the sanctuary, or it will cease from its glory. Today thou mayest be upon the summit of the mount of God, but He who has put thee there must keep thee there, or thou wilt sink far more speedily than thou dreamest. Thy mountain only stands firm when He settles it in its place; if He hide His face, thou wilt soon be troubled. If the Saviour should see fit, there is not a window through which thou seest the light of heaven which He could not darken in an instant. Joshua bade the sun stand still, but Jesus can shroud it in total darkness. He can withdraw the joy of thine heart, the light of thine eyes, and the strength of thy life; in His hand thy comforts lie, and at His will they can depart from thee. This hourly dependence our Lord is determined that we shall feel and recognize, for He only permits us to pray for "daily bread," and only promises that "as our days our strength shall be." Is it not best for us that it should be so, that we may often repair to His throne, and constantly be reminded of His love? Oh! how rich the grace which supplies us so continually, and doth not refrain itself because of our ingratitude! The golden shower never ceases, the cloud of blessing tarries evermore above our habitation. O Lord Jesus, we would bow at Thy feet, conscious of our utter inability to do anything without Thee, and in every favour which we are privileged to receive, we would adore Thy blessed name and acknowledge Thine unexhausted love.





July 17

Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

1 Thessalonians 1:4

MANY persons want to know their election before they look to Christ, but they cannot learn it thus, it is only to be discovered by “looking unto Jesus.” If you desire to ascertain your own election;—after the following manner, shall you assure your heart before God. Do you feel yourself to be a lost, guilty sinner? go straightway to the cross of Christ, and tell Jesus so, and tell Him that you have read in the Bible, “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” Tell Him that He has said, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Look to Jesus and believe on Him, and you shall make proof of your election directly, for so surely as thou believest, thou art elect. If you will give yourself wholly up to Christ and trust Him, then you are one of God’s chosen ones; but if you stop and say, “I want to know first whether I am elect,” you ask you know not what. Go to Jesus, be you never so guilty, just as you are. Leave all curious inquiry about election alone. Go straight to Christ and hide in His wounds, and you shall know your election. The assurance of the Holy Spirit shall be given to you, so that you shall be able to say, “I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.” Christ was at the everlasting council: He can tell you whether you were chosen or not; but you cannot find it out in any other way. Go and put your trust in Him, and His answer will be—“I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” There will be no doubt about His having chosen *you*, when you have chosen *Him*.

“Sons we are through God’s election,

Who in Jesus Christ believe.”





July 18

All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan were an hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred.

They shall go hindmost with their standards.

Numbers 2:31

THE camp of Dan brought up the rear when the armies of Israel were on the march. The Danites occupied *the hindmost place*, but what mattered the position, since they were as truly part of the host as were the foremost tribes; they followed the same fiery cloudy pillar, they ate of the same manna, drank of the same spiritual rock, and journeyed to the same inheritance. Come, my heart, cheer up, though last and least; it is thy privilege to be in the army, and to fare as they fare who lead the van. Some one must be hindmost in honour and esteem, some one must do menial work for Jesus, and why should not I? In a poor village, among an ignorant peasantry; or in a back street, among degraded sinners, I will work on, and “go hindmost with my standard.”

The Danites occupied *a very useful place*. Stragglers have to be picked up upon the march, and lost property has to be gathered from the field. Fiery spirits may dash forward over untrodden paths to learn fresh truth, and win more souls to Jesus; but some of a more conservative spirit may be well engaged in reminding the church of her ancient faith, and restoring her fainting sons. Every position has its duties, and the slowly moving children of God will find their peculiar state one in which they may be eminently a blessing to the whole host.

The rear guard is a *place of danger*. There are foes behind us as well as before us. Attacks may come from any quarter. We read that Amalek fell upon Israel, and slew some of the hindmost of them. The experienced Christian will find much work for his weapons in aiding those poor doubting, desponding, wavering, souls, who are hindmost in faith, knowledge, and joy. These must not be left unaided, and therefore be it the business of well-taught saints to bear their standards among the hindmost. My soul, do thou tenderly watch to help the hindmost this day.





July 19

And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.

Deuteronomy 5:24

GOD'S great design in all His works is the manifestation of His own glory. Any aim less than this were unworthy of Himself. But how shall the glory of God be manifested to such fallen creatures as we are? Man's eye is not single, he has ever a side glance towards his own honour, has too high an estimate of his own powers, and so is not qualified to behold the glory of the Lord. It is clear, then, that self must stand out of the way, that there may be room for God to be exalted; and this is the reason why He bringeth His people oftentimes into straits and difficulties, that, being made conscious of their own folly and weakness, they may be fitted to behold the majesty of God when He comes forth to work their deliverance. He whose life is one even and smooth path, will see but little of the glory of the Lord, for he has few occasions of self-emptying, and hence, but little fitness for being filled with the revelation of God. They who navigate little streams and shallow creeks, know but little of the God of tempests; but they who "do business in great waters," these see His "wonders in the deep." Among the huge Atlantic-waves of bereavement, poverty, temptation, and reproach, we learn the power of Jehovah, because we feel the littleness of man. Thank God, then, if you have been led by a rough road: it is this which has given you your experience of God's greatness and lovingkindness. Your troubles have enriched you with a wealth of knowledge to be gained by no other means: your trials have been the cleft of the rock in which Jehovah has set you, as He did His servant Moses, that you might behold His glory as it passed by. Praise God that you have not been left to the darkness and ignorance which continued prosperity might have involved, but that in the great fight of affliction, you have been capacitated for the outshinings of His glory in His wonderful dealings with you.





July 20

Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:14

OH! what enlightenment, what joys, what consolation, what delight of heart is experienced by that man who has learned to feed on Jesus, and on Jesus alone. Yet the realization which we have of Christ's preciousness is, in this life, imperfect at the best. As an old writer says, "'Tis but a taste!" We have tasted "that the Lord is gracious," but we do not yet know *how* good and gracious He is, although what we know of His sweetness makes us long for more. We have enjoyed the firstfruits of the Spirit, and they have set us hungering and thirsting for the fulness of the heavenly vintage. We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption. *Here* we are like Israel in the wilderness, who had but one cluster from Eshcol, *there* we shall be in the vineyard. Here we see the manna falling small, like coriander seed, but there shall we eat the bread of heaven and the old corn of the kingdom. We are but beginners now in spiritual education; for although we have learned the first letters of the alphabet, we cannot read words yet, much less can we put sentences together; but as one says, "He that has been in heaven but five minutes, knows more than the general assembly of divines on earth." We have many ungratified desires at present, but soon every wish shall be satisfied; and all our powers shall find the sweetest employment in that eternal world of joy. O Christian, antedate heaven for a few years. Within a very little time thou shalt be rid of all thy trials and thy troubles. Thine eyes now suffused with tears shall weep no longer. Thou shalt gaze in ineffable rapture upon the splendour of Him who sits upon the throne. Nay, more, upon His throne shalt thou sit. The triumph of His glory shall be shared by thee; His crown, His joy, His paradise, these shall be thine, and thou shalt be co-heir with Him who is the heir of all things.





July 21

*This is the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him;
The virgin, the daughter of Zion,
hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn;
the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.
Isaiah 37:22*

REASSURED by the Word of the Lord, the poor trembling citizens of Zion grew bold, and shook their heads at Sennacherib's boastful threats. Strong faith enables the servants of God to look with calm contempt upon their most haughty foes. *We know that our enemies are attempting impossibilities.* They seek to destroy the eternal life, which cannot die while Jesus lives; to overthrow the citadel, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. They kick against the pricks to their own wounding, and rush upon the bosses of Jehovah's buckler to their own hurt.

We know their weakness. What are they but men? And what is man but a worm? They roar and swell like waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame. When the Lord ariseth, they shall fly as chaff before the wind, and be consumed as crackling thorns. Their utter powerlessness to do damage to the cause of God and His truth, may make the weakest soldiers in Zion's ranks laugh them to scorn.

Above all, *we know that the Most High is with us,* and when He dresses Himself in arms, where are His enemies? If He cometh forth from His place, the potsherd of the earth will not long contend with their Maker. His rod of iron shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel, and their very remembrance shall perish from the earth. Away, then, all fears, the kingdom is safe in the King's hands. Let us shout for joy, for the Lord reigneth, and His foes shall be as straw for the dunghill.

“As true as God's own word is true;
Nor earth, nor hell, with all their crew,
Against us shall prevail.
A jest, and by-word, are they grown;
God is with us, we are his own,
Our victory cannot fail.”





July 22

*Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD;
for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city,
and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:
Jeremiah 3:14*

CHRI^ST Jesus is joined unto His people in marriage-union. In love He espoused His Church as a chaste virgin, long before she fell under the yoke of bondage. Full of burning affection He toiled, like Jacob for Rachel, until the whole of her purchase-money had been paid, and now, having sought her by His Spirit, and brought her to know and love Him, He awaits the glorious hour when their mutual bliss shall be consummated at the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Not yet hath the glorious Bridegroom presented His betrothed, perfected and complete, before the Majesty of heaven; not yet hath she actually entered upon the enjoyment of her dignities as His wife and queen: she is as yet a wanderer in a world of woe, a dweller in the tents of Kedar; but she is even now the bride, the spouse of Jesus, dear to His heart, precious in His sight, written on His hands, and united with His person. On earth He exercises towards her all the affectionate offices of Husband. He makes rich provision for her wants, pays all her debts, allows her to assume His name, and to share in all His wealth. Nor will He ever act otherwise to her. The word divorce He will never mention, for “He hateth putting away.” Death must sever the conjugal tie between the most loving mortals, but it cannot divide the links of this immortal marriage. In heaven they marry not, but are as the angels of God; yet there is this one marvellous exception to the rule, for in Heaven Christ and His Church shall celebrate their joyous nuptials. This affinity as it is more lasting, so is it more near than earthly wedlock. Let the love of husband be never so pure and fervent, it is but a faint picture of the flame which burns in the heart of Jesus. Passing all human union is that mystical cleaving unto the Church, for which Christ left His Father, and became one flesh with her.





July 23

*In the day that thou stoodest on the other side,
in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces,
and foreigners entered into his gates,
and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them.*

Obadiah 1:11

BROTHERLY kindness was due from Edom to Israel in the time of need, but instead thereof, the men of Esau made common cause with Israel's foes. Special stress in the sentence before us is laid upon the word *thou*; as when Caesar cried to Brutus, "and *thou* Brutus"; a bad action may be all the worse, because of the person who has committed it. When *we* sin, who are the chosen favorites of heaven, we sin with an emphasis; ours is a crying offence, because we are so peculiarly indulged. If an angel should lay his hand upon us when we are doing evil, he need not use any other rebuke than the question, "What *thou*? What dost *thou* here?" Much forgiven, much delivered, much instructed, much enriched, much blessed, shall we dare to put forth our hand unto evil? God forbid!

A few minutes of confession may be beneficial to thee, gentle reader, this morning. Hast thou never been as the wicked? At an evening party certain men laughed at uncleanness, and the joke was not altogether offensive to thine ear, *even thou wast as one of them*. When hard things were spoken concerning the ways of God, thou wast bashfully silent; and so, to onlookers, *thou wast as one of them*. When worldlings were bartering in the market, and driving hard bargains, wast thou not as one of them? When they were pursuing vanity with a hunter's foot, wert thou not as greedy for gain as they were? Could any difference be discerned between thee and them? *Is there any difference?* Here we come to close quarters. Be honest with thine own soul, and make sure that thou art a new creature in Christ Jesus; but when this is sure, walk jealously, lest any should again be able to say, "Even thou wast as one of them." Thou wouldst not desire to share their eternal doom, why then be like them here? Come not thou into their secret, lest thou come into their ruin. Side with the afflicted people of God, and not with the world.





July 24

And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

Exodus 14:13

THESE words contain God's command to the believer when he is reduced to great straits and brought into extraordinary difficulties. He cannot retreat; he cannot go forward; he is shut up on the right hand and on the left; what is he now to do? The Master's word to him is, "Stand still." It will be well for him if at such times he listens only to his Master's word, for other and evil advisers come with their suggestions. *Despair* whispers, "Lie down and die; give it all up." But God would have us put on a cheerful courage, and even in our worst times, rejoice in His love and faithfulness. *Cowardice* says, "Retreat; go back to the worldling's way of action; you cannot play the Christian's part, it is too difficult. Relinquish your principles." But, however much Satan may urge this course upon you, you cannot follow it if you are a child of God. His divine fiat has bid thee go from strength to strength, and so thou shalt, and neither death nor hell shall turn thee from thy course. What, if for a while thou art called to stand still, yet this is but to renew thy strength for some greater advance in due time. *Precipitancy* cries, "do something. Stir yourself; to stand still and wait, is sheer idleness." We *must* be doing something at once—we must do it so we think—instead of looking to the Lord, who will not only do something but will do everything. *Presumption* boasts, "If the sea be before you, march into it and expect a miracle." But Faith listens neither to Presumption, nor to Despair, nor to Cowardice, nor to Precipitancy, but it hears God say, "Stand still," and immovable as a rock it stands. "*Stand still*";—keep the posture of an upright man, ready for action, expecting further orders, cheerfully and patiently awaiting the directing voice; and it will not be long ere God shall say to you, as distinctly as Moses said it to the people of Israel, "Go forward."





July 25

*And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me:
and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.*

Genesis 39:12

IN contending with certain sins there remains no mode of victory but by flight. The ancient naturalists wrote much of basilisks, whose eyes fascinated their victims and rendered them easy victims; so the mere gaze of wickedness puts us in solemn danger. He who would be safe from acts of evil must haste away from occasions of it. A covenant must be made with our eyes not even to look upon the cause of temptation, for such sins only need a spark to begin with and a blaze follows in an instant. Who would wantonly enter the leper's prison and sleep amid its horrible corruption? He only who desires to be leprous himself would thus court contagion. If the mariner knew how to avoid a storm, he would do anything rather than run the risk of weathering it. Cautious pilots have no desire to try how near the quicksand they can sail, or how often they may touch a rock without springing a leak; their aim is to keep as nearly as possible in the midst of a safe channel.

This day I may be exposed to great peril, let me have the serpent's wisdom to keep out of it and avoid it. The wings of a dove may be of more use to me today than the jaws of a lion. It is true I may be an apparent loser by declining evil company, but I had better leave my cloak than lose my character; it is not needful that I should be rich, but it is imperative upon me to be pure. No ties of friendship, no chains of beauty, no flashings of talent, no shafts of ridicule must turn me from the wise resolve to flee from sin. The devil I am to resist and he will flee from me, but the lusts of the flesh, I must flee, or they will surely overcome me. O God of holiness preserve thy Josephs, that Madam Bubble bewitch them not with her vile suggestions. May the horrible trinity of the world, the flesh, and the devil, never overcome us!





*And beside this, giving all diligence,
add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;
And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience;
and to patience godliness;*

2 Peter 1:5, 6

IF thou wouldest enjoy the eminent grace of the full assurance of faith, under the blessed Spirit's influence, and assistance, do what the Scripture tells thee, "*Give diligence.*" Take care that thy *faith* is of the right kind—that it is not a mere belief of doctrine, but a simple faith, depending on Christ, and on Christ alone. Give diligent heed to thy *courage*. Plead with God that He would give thee the face of a lion, that thou mayest, with a consciousness of right, go on boldly. Study well the Scriptures, and get *knowledge*; for a knowledge of doctrine will tend very much to confirm faith. Try to understand God's Word; let it dwell in thy heart richly.

When thou hast done this, "Add to thy knowledge *temperance.*" Take heed to thy body: be temperate without. Take heed to thy soul: be temperate within. Get temperance of lip, life, heart, and thought. Add to this, by God's Holy Spirit, *patience*; ask Him to give thee that patience which endureth affliction, which, when it is tried, shall come forth as gold. Array yourself with patience, that you may not murmur nor be depressed in your afflictions. When that grace is won look to *godliness*. Godliness is something more than religion. Make God's glory your object in life; live in His sight; dwell close to Him; seek for fellowship with Him; and thou hast "godliness"; and to that add *brotherly love*. Have a love to all the saints: and add to that a *charity*, which openeth its arms to all men, and loves their souls. When you are adorned with these jewels, and just in proportion as you practise these heavenly virtues, will you come to know by clearest evidence "your calling and election." "Give diligence," if you would get assurance, for lukewarmness and doubting very naturally go hand in hand.





July 27

*Whereby are given unto us
exceeding great and precious promises:
that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature,
having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
2 Peter 1:4*

IF you would know experimentally the preciousness of the promises, and enjoy them in your own heart, *meditate much upon them*. There are promises which are like grapes in the wine-press; if you will tread them the juice will flow. Thinking over the hallowed words will often be the prelude to their fulfillment. While you are musing upon them, the boon which you are seeking will insensibly come to you. Many a Christian who has thirsted for the promise has found the favour which it ensured gently distilling into his soul even while he has been considering the divine record; and he has rejoiced that ever he was led to lay the promise near his heart.

But besides *meditating* upon the promises, *seek in thy soul to receive them as being the very words of God*. Speak to thy soul thus, “If I were dealing with a man’s promise, I should carefully consider the ability and the character of the man who had covenanted with me. So with the promise of God; my eye must not be so much fixed upon the greatness of the mercy—that may stagger me; as upon the greatness of the promiser—that will cheer me. My soul, it is God, even thy God, God that cannot lie, who speaks to thee. This word of His which thou art now considering is as true as His own existence. He is a God unchangeable. He has not altered the thing which has gone out of His mouth, nor called back one single consolatory sentence. Nor doth He lack any power; it is the God that made the heavens and the earth who has spoken thus. Nor can He fail in wisdom as to the time when He will bestow the favours, for He knoweth when it is best to give and when better to withhold. Therefore, seeing that it is the word of a God so true, so immutable, so powerful, so wise, I will and must believe the promise.” If we thus meditate upon the promises, and consider the Promiser, we shall experience their sweetness, and obtain their fulfillment.





So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.

Psalm 73:22

REMEMBER this is the confession of the man after God's own heart; and in telling us his inner life, he writes, "So foolish was I, and ignorant." The word "*foolish*," here, means more than it signifies in ordinary language. David, in a former verse of the Psalm, writes, "I was envious at *the foolish* when I saw the prosperity of the wicked," which shows that the folly he intended had *sin* in it. He puts himself down as being thus "foolish," and adds a word which is to give intensity to it; "so foolish was I." *How foolish* he could not tell. It was a sinful folly, a folly which was not to be excused by frailty, but to be condemned because of its perverseness and wilful ignorance, for he had been envious of the present prosperity of the ungodly, forgetful of the dreadful end awaiting all such. And are we better than David that *we* should call ourselves wise! Do we profess that we have attained perfection, or to have been so chastened that the rod has taken all our wilfulness out of us? Ah, this were pride indeed! If *David* was foolish, how foolish should *we* be in our own esteem if we could but see ourselves! Look back, believer: think of your doubting God when He has been so faithful to you—think of your foolish outcry of "Not so, my Father," when He crossed His hands in affliction to give you the larger blessing; think of the many times when you have read His providences in the dark, misinterpreted His dispensations, and groaned out, "All these things are against me," when they are all working together for your good! Think how often you have chosen sin because of its pleasure, when indeed, that pleasure was a root of bitterness to you! Surely if we know our own heart we must plead guilty to the indictment of a sinful folly; and conscious of this "foolishness," we must make David's consequent resolve our own—"*Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel.*"





July 29

*Nevertheless I am continually with thee:
thou hast holden me by my right hand.*

Psalms 73:23

“NEVERTHELESS,”—AS if, notwithstanding all the foolishness and ignorance which David had just been confessing to God, not one atom the less was it true and certain that David was saved and accepted, and that the blessing of being constantly in God’s presence was undoubtedly his. Fully conscious of his own lost estate, and of the deceitfulness and vileness of his nature, yet, by a glorious outburst of faith, he sings “nevertheless I am continually with Thee.” Believer, you are forced to enter into Asaph’s confession and acknowledgment, endeavour in like spirit to say “nevertheless, since I belong to Christ I am continually with God!” By this is meant continually upon His *mind*, He is always thinking of me for my good. Continually before His *eye*;—the eye of the Lord never sleepeth, but is perpetually watching over my welfare. Continually in His *hand*, so that none shall be able to pluck me thence. Continually on His *heart*, worn there as a memorial, even as the high priest bore the names of the twelve tribes upon his heart for ever. Thou always thinkest of me, O God. The bowels of Thy love continually yearn towards me. Thou art always making providence work for my good. Thou hast set me as a signet upon thine arm; thy love is strong as death, many waters cannot quench it; neither can the floods drown it. Surprising grace! Thou seest me in Christ, and though in myself abhorred, Thou beholdest me as wearing Christ’s garments, and washed in His blood, and thus I stand accepted in Thy presence. I am thus continually in Thy favour—“continually with Thee.” Here is comfort for the tried and afflicted soul; vexed with the tempest within—look at the calm without. “*Nevertheless*”—O say it in thy heart, and take the peace it gives. “Nevertheless I am continually with Thee.”





July 30

And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

Mark 14:72

IT has been thought by some that as long as Peter lived, the fountain of his tears began to flow whenever he remembered his denying his Lord. It is not unlikely that it was so, for his sin was very great, and grace in him had afterwards a perfect work. This same experience is common to all the redeemed family according to the degree in which the Spirit of God has removed the natural heart of stone. We, like Peter, remember *our boastful promise*: “Though all men shall forsake Thee, yet will not I.” We eat our own words with the bitter herbs of repentance. When we think of what we vowed we would be, and of what we have been, we may weep whole showers of grief. He thought on *his denying his Lord*. The place in which he did it, the little cause which led him into such heinous sin, the oaths and blasphemies with which he sought to confirm his falsehood, and the dreadful hardness of heart which drove him to do so again and yet again. Can we, when we are reminded of our sins, and their exceeding sinfulness, remain stolid and stubborn? Will we not make our house a Bochim, and cry unto the Lord for renewed assurances of pardoning love? May we never take a dry-eyed look at sin, lest ere long we have a tongue parched in the flames of hell. Peter also thought upon *his Master’s look of love*. The Lord followed up the cock’s warning voice with an admonitory look of sorrow, pity, and love. That glance was never out of Peter’s mind so long as he lived. It was far more effectual than ten thousand sermons would have been without the Spirit. The penitent apostle would be sure to weep when he recollected the *Saviour’s full forgiveness*, which restored him to his former place. To think that we have offended so kind and good a Lord is more than sufficient reason for being constant weepers. Lord, smite our rocky hearts, and make the waters flow.





July 31

*I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;
and that the world may know that thou hast sent me,
and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

John 17:23

IF such be the union which subsists between our souls and the person of our Lord, how deep and broad is the channel of our communion! This is no narrow pipe through which a thread-like stream may wind its way, it is a channel of amazing depth and breadth, along whose glorious length a ponderous volume of living water may roll its floods. Behold He hath set before us an open door, let us not be slow to enter. This city of communion hath many pearly gates, every several gate is of one pearl, and each gate is thrown open to the uttermost that we may enter, assured of welcome. If there were but one small loophole through which to talk with Jesus, it would be a high privilege to thrust a word of fellowship through the narrow door; how much we are blessed in having so large an entrance! Had the Lord Jesus been far away from us, with many a stormy sea between, we should have longed to send a messenger to Him to carry Him our loves, and bring us tidings from His Father's house; but see His kindness, He has built His house next door to ours, nay, more, He takes lodging with us, and tabernacles in poor humble hearts, that so He may have perpetual intercourse with us. O how foolish must we be, if we do not live in habitual communion with Him. When the road is long, and dangerous, and difficult, we need not wonder that friends seldom meet each other, but when they live together, shall Jonathan forget his David? A wife may when her husband is upon a journey, abide many days without holding converse with him, but she could never endure to be separated from him if she knew him to be in one of the chambers of her own house. Why, believer, dost not thou sit at His banquet of wine? Seek thy Lord, for He is near; embrace Him, for He is thy Brother. Hold Him fast, for He is thine Husband; and press Him to thine heart, for He is of thine own flesh.





August 1

And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

Ruth 2:2

DOWNCAST and troubled Christian, come and glean today in the broad field of promise. Here are abundance of precious promises, which exactly meet thy wants. Take this one: "He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." Doth not that suit thy case? A reed, helpless, insignificant, and weak, a bruised reed, out of which no music can come; weaker than weakness itself; a reed, and that reed bruised, yet, He will not break thee; but on the contrary, will restore and strengthen thee. Thou art like the smoking flax: no light, no warmth, can come from thee; but He will not quench thee; He will blow with His sweet breath of mercy till He fans thee to a flame. Wouldst thou glean another ear? "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What soft words! Thy heart is tender, and the Master knows it, and therefore He speaketh so gently to thee. Wilt thou not obey Him, and come to Him even now? Take another ear of corn: "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, I will help thee, saith the Lord and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." How canst thou fear with such a wonderful assurance as this? Thou mayest gather ten thousand such golden ears as these! "I have blotted out thy sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud thy transgressions." Or this, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Or this, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." Our Master's field is very rich; behold the handfuls. See, there they lie before thee, poor timid believer! Gather them up, make them thine own, for Jesus bids thee take them. Be not afraid, only believe! Grasp these sweet promises, thresh them out by meditation and feed on them with joy.





August 2

*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance,
being predestinated according to the purpose of him who
worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:
Ephesians 1:11*

OUR belief in God's wisdom supposes and necessitates that He has a settled purpose and plan in the work of salvation. What would *creation* have been without His design? Is there a fish in the sea, or a fowl in the air, which was left to chance for its formation? Nay, in every bone, joint, and muscle, sinew, gland, and blood-vessel, you mark the presence of a God working everything according to the design of infinite wisdom. And shall God be present in creation, ruling over all, and not in *grace*? Shall the new creation have the fickle genius of free will to preside over it when divine counsel rules the old creation? Look at *Providence*! Who knoweth not that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father? Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. God weighs the mountains of our grief in scales, and the hills of our tribulation in balances. And shall there be a God in providence and not in grace? Shall the shell be ordained by wisdom and the kernel be left to blind chance. No; He knows the end from the beginning. He sees in its appointed place, not merely the corner-stone which He has laid in fair colours, in the blood of His dear Son, but He beholds in their ordained position each of the chosen stones taken out of the quarry of nature, and polished by His grace; He sees the whole from corner to cornice, from base to roof, from foundation to pinnacle. He hath in His mind a clear knowledge of every stone which shall be laid in its prepared space, and how vast the edifice shall be, and when the top-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings of "Grace! Grace! unto it." At the last it shall be clearly seen that in every chosen vessel of mercy, Jehovah did as He willed with His own; and that in every part of the work of grace He accomplished His purpose, and glorified His own name.





August 3

*And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon,
to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it,
and the Lamb is the light thereof.
Revelation 21:23*

QUIETLY contemplate the Lamb as the light of heaven. Light in Scripture is the emblem of *joy*. The joy of the saints in heaven is comprised in this: Jesus chose us, loved us, bought us, cleansed us, robed us, kept us, glorified us: we are here entirely through the Lord Jesus. Each one of these thoughts shall be to them like a cluster of the grapes of Eshcol. Light is also the cause of *beauty*. Nought of beauty is left when light is gone. Without light no radiance flashes from the sapphire, no peaceful ray proceedeth from the pearl; and thus all the beauty of the saints above comes from Jesus. As planets, they reflect the light of the Sun of Righteousness; they live as beams proceeding from the central orb. If He withdrew, they must die; if His glory were veiled, their glory must expire. Light is also the emblem of *knowledge*. In heaven our knowledge will be perfect, but the Lord Jesus Himself will be the fountain of it. Dark providences, never understood before, will then be clearly seen, and all that puzzles us now will become plain to us in the light of the Lamb. Oh! what unfoldings there will be and what glorifying of the God of love! Light also means *manifestation*. Light manifests. In this world it doth not yet appear what we shall be. God's people are a hidden people, but when Christ receives His people into heaven, He will touch them with the wand of His own love, and change them into the image of His manifested glory. They were poor and wretched, but what a transformation! They were stained with sin, but one touch of His finger, and they are bright as the sun, and clear as crystal. Oh! what a manifestation! All this proceeds from the exalted Lamb. Whatever there may be of effulgent splendour, Jesus shall be the centre and soul of it all. Oh! to be present and to see Him in His own light, the King of kings, and Lord of lords!





August 4

And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

Daniel 11:32

EVERY believer understands that to know God is the highest and best form of knowledge; and this spiritual knowledge is a source of strength to the Christian. It strengthens his *faith*. Believers are constantly spoken of in the Scriptures as being persons who are enlightened and taught of the Lord; they are said to “have an unction from the Holy One,” and it is the Spirit’s peculiar office to lead them into all truth, and all this for the increase and the fostering of their faith. Knowledge strengthens love, as well as faith. Knowledge opens the door, and then through that door we see our Saviour. Or, to use another similitude, knowledge paints the portrait of Jesus, and when we see that portrait then we love Him, we cannot love a Christ whom we do not know, at least, in some degree. If we know but little of the excellences of Jesus, what He has done for us, and what He is doing now, we cannot love Him much; but the more we know Him, the more we shall love Him. Knowledge also strengthens *hope*. How can we hope for a thing if we do not know of its existence? Hope may be the telescope, but till we receive instruction, our ignorance stands in the front of the glass, and we can see nothing whatever; knowledge removes the interposing object, and when we look through the bright optic glass we discern the glory to be revealed, and anticipate it with joyous confidence. Knowledge supplies us reasons for *patience*. How shall we have patience unless we know something of the sympathy of Christ, and understand the good which is to come out of the correction which our heavenly Father sends us? Nor is there one single grace of the Christian which, under God, will not be fostered and brought to perfection by holy knowledge. How important, then, is it that we should grow not only in grace, but in the “knowledge” of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.





August 5

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

UPON some points a believer is absolutely sure. He knows, for instance, that God sits in the stern-sheets of the vessel when it rocks most. He believes that an invisible hand is always on the world's tiller, and that wherever providence may drift, Jehovah steers it. That re-assuring knowledge prepares him for everything. He looks over the raging waters and sees the spirit of Jesus treading the billows, and he hears a voice saying, "It is I, be not afraid." He knows too that God is always wise, and, knowing this, he is confident that there can be no accidents, no mistakes; that nothing can occur which ought not to arise. He can say, "If I should lose all I have, it is better that I should lose than have, if God so wills: the worst calamity is the wisest and the kindest thing that could befall to me if God ordains it." "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." The Christian does not merely hold this as a theory, but *he knows it* as a matter of fact. Everything *has* worked for good as yet; the poisonous drugs mixed in fit proportions have worked the cure; the sharp cuts of the lancet have cleansed out the proud flesh and facilitated the healing. Every event as yet has worked out the most divinely blessed results; and so, believing that God rules all, that He governs wisely, that He brings good out of evil, the believer's heart is assured, and he is enabled calmly to meet each trial as it comes. The believer can in the spirit of true resignation pray, "Send me what thou wilt, my God, so long as it comes from Thee; never came there an ill portion from Thy table to any of Thy children."

"Say not my soul, 'From whence can God relieve my care?
Remember that Omnipotence has servants everywhere.
His method is sublime, His heart profoundly kind,
God never is before His time, and never is behind.'"





August 6

*The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir,
Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?
Isaiah 21:11*

WHAT enemies are abroad? Errors are a numerous horde, and new ones appear every hour: against what heresy am I to be on my guard? Sins creep from their lurking places when the darkness reigns; I must myself mount the watch-tower, and watch unto prayer. Our heavenly Protector foresees all the attacks which are about to be made upon us, and when as yet the evil designed us is but in the desire of Satan, He prays for us that our faith fail not, when we are sifted as wheat. Continue O gracious Watchman, to forewarn us of our foes, and for Zion's sake hold not thy peace.

“Watchman, what of the night?” *What weather is coming* for the Church? Are the clouds lowering, or is it all clear and fair overhead? We must care for the Church of God with anxious love; and now that Popery and infidelity are both threatening, let us observe the signs of the times and prepare for conflict.

“Watchman, what of the night?” *What stars are visible?* What precious promises suit our present case? You sound the alarm, give us the consolation also. Christ, the polestar, is ever fixed in His place, and all the stars are secure in the right hand of their Lord.

But watchman, *when comes the morning?* The Bridegroom tarries. Are there no signs of His coming forth as the Sun of Righteousness? Has not the morning star arisen as the pledge of day? When will the day dawn, and the shadows flee away? O Jesus, if Thou come not in person to Thy waiting Church this day, yet come in Spirit to my sighing heart, and make it sing for joy.

“Now all the earth is bright and glad

With the fresh morn;

But all my heart is cold, and dark and sad:

Sun of the soul, let me behold Thy dawn!

Come, Jesus, Lord,

O quickly come, according to Thy word.”





August 7

*Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me
into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will
remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.*

Song of Solomon 1:4

BELIEVERS love Jesus with a deeper affection than they dare to give to any other being. They would sooner lose father and mother than part with Christ. They hold all earthly comforts with a loose hand, but they carry Him fast locked in their bosoms. They voluntarily deny themselves for His sake, but they are not to be driven to deny *Him*. It is scant love which the fire of persecution can dry up; the true believer's love is a deeper stream than this. Men have laboured to divide the faithful from their Master, but their attempts have been fruitless in every age. Neither crowns of honour, now frowns of anger, have untied this more than Gordian knot. This is no every-day attachment which the world's power may at length dissolve. Neither man nor devil have found a key which opens this lock. Never has the craft of Satan been more at fault than when he has exercised it in seeking to rend in sunder this union of two divinely welded hearts. It is written, and nothing can blot out the sentence, "*The upright love Thee.*" The intensity of the love of the upright, however, is not so much to be judged by what it appears as by what the upright long for. It is our daily lament that we cannot love enough. Would that our hearts were capable of holding more, and reaching further. Like Samuel Rutherford, we sigh and cry, "Oh, for as much love as would go round about the earth, and over heaven—yea, the heaven of heavens, and ten thousand worlds—that I might let all out upon fair, fair, only fair Christ." Alas! our longest reach is but a span of love, and our affection is but as a drop of a bucket compared with His deserts. Measure our love by our intentions, and it is high indeed; 'tis thus, we trust, our Lord doth judge of it. Oh, that we could give all the love in all hearts in one great mass, a gathering together of all loves to Him who is altogether lovely!





August 8

*They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web:
he that eateth of their eggs dieth,
and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.
Isaiah 59:5*

SEE the spider's web, and behold in it a most suggestive picture of the hypocrite's religion. *It is meant to catch his prey:* the spider fattens himself on flies, and the Pharisee has his reward. Foolish persons are easily entrapped by the loud professions of pretenders, and even the more judicious cannot always escape. Philip baptized Simon Magus, whose guileful declaration of faith was so soon exploded by the stern rebuke of Peter. Custom, reputation, praise, advancement, and other flies, are the small game which hypocrites take in their nets. A spider's web is *a marvel of skill:* look at it and admire the cunning hunter's wiles. Is not a deceiver's religion equally wonderful? How does he make so barefaced a lie appear to be a truth? How can he make his tinsel answer so well the purpose of gold? A spider's web *comes all from the creature's own bowels.* The bee gathers her wax from flowers, the spider sucks no flowers, and yet she spins out her material to any length. Even so hypocrites find their trust and hope within themselves; their anchor was forged on their own anvil, and their cable twisted by their own hands. They lay their own foundation, and hew out the pillars of their own house, disdaining to be debtors to the sovereign grace of God. But a spider's web is *very frail.* It is curiously wrought, but not enduringly manufactured. It is no match for the servant's broom, or the traveller's staff. The hypocrite needs no battery of Armstrongs to blow his hope to pieces, a mere puff of wind will do it. Hypocritical cobwebs will soon come down when the besom of destruction begins its purifying work. Which reminds us of one more thought, viz., that such cobwebs *are not to be endured in the Lord's house:* He will see to it that they and those who spin them shall be destroyed for ever. O my soul, be thou resting on something better than a spider's web. Be the Lord Jesus thine eternal hiding-place.





August 9

*And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon,
to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it,
and the Lamb is the light thereof.
Revelation 21:23*

YONDER in the better world, the inhabitants are independent of all creature comforts. They have no need of raiment; their white robes never wear out, neither shall they ever be defiled. They need no medicine to heal diseases, “for the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.” They need no sleep to recruit their frames—they rest not day nor night, but unweariedly praise Him in His temple. They need no social relationship to minister comfort, and whatever happiness they may derive from association with their fellows is not essential to their bliss, for their Lord’s society is enough for their largest desires. They need no teachers there; they doubtless commune with one another concerning the things of God, but they do not require this by way of instruction; they shall all be taught of the Lord. Ours are the alms at the king’s gate, but they feast at the table itself. Here we lean upon the friendly arm, but there they lean upon their Beloved and upon Him alone. Here we must have the help of our companions, but there they find all they want in Christ Jesus. Here we look to the meat which perisheth, and to the raiment which decays before the moth, but there they find everything in God. We use the bucket to fetch us water from the well, but there they drink from the fountain head, and put their lips down to the living water. Here the angels bring us blessings, but we shall want no messengers from heaven then. They shall need no Gabriels there to bring their love-notes from God, for there they shall see Him face to face. Oh! what a blessed time shall that be when we shall have mounted above every second cause and shall rest upon the bare arm of God! What a glorious hour when God, and not His creatures; the Lord, and not His works, shall be our daily joy! Our souls shall then have attained the perfection of bliss.





August 10

*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear,
then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

Colossians 3:4

PAUL'S marvellously rich expression indicates, that Christ is the *source* of our life. "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." That same voice which brought Lazarus out of the tomb raised us to newness of life. He is now the *substance* of our spiritual life. It is by His life that we live; He is in us, the hope of glory, the spring of our actions, the central thought which moves every other thought. *Christ is the sustenance of our life.* What can the Christian feed upon but Jesus' flesh and blood? "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." O wayworn pilgrims in this wilderness of sin, you never get a morsel to satisfy the hunger of your spirits, except ye find it in Him! *Christ is the solace of our life.* All our true joys come from Him; and in times of trouble, His presence is our consolation. There is nothing worth living for but Him; and His lovingkindness is better than life! *Christ is the object of our life.* As speeds the ship towards the port, so hastes the believer towards the haven of his Saviour's bosom. As flies the arrow to its goal, so flies the Christian towards the perfecting of his fellowship with Christ Jesus. As the soldier fights for his captain, and is crowned in his captain's victory, so the believer contends for Christ, and gets his triumph out of the triumphs of his Master. "For him to live is Christ." *Christ is the exemplar of our life.* Where there is the same life within, there will, there must be, to a great extent, the same developments without; and if we live in near fellowship with the Lord Jesus we shall grow like Him. We shall set Him before us as our Divine copy, and we shall seek to tread in His footsteps, until He shall become *the crown of our life* in glory. Oh! how safe, how honoured, how happy is the Christian, since Christ is our life!





August 11

*Oh that I were as in months past,
as in the days when God preserved me;
Job 29:2*

NUMBERS of Christians can view the past with pleasure, but regard the present with dissatisfaction; they look back upon the days which they have passed in communing with the Lord as being the sweetest and the best they have ever known, but as to the present, it is clad in a sable garb of gloom and dreariness. Once they lived near to Jesus, but now they feel that they have wandered from Him, and they say, "O that I were as in months past!" They complain that they have lost their evidences, or that they have not present peace of mind, or that they have no enjoyment in the means of grace, or that conscience is not so tender, or that they have not so much zeal for God's glory. The causes of this mournful state of things are manifold. It may arise through a comparative *neglect of prayer*, for a neglected closet is the beginning of all spiritual decline. Or it may be the result of *idolatry*. The heart has been occupied with something else, more than with God; the affections have been set on the things of earth, instead of the things of heaven. A jealous God will not be content with a divided heart; He must be loved first and best. He will withdraw the sunshine of His presence from a cold, wandering heart. Or the cause may be found in *self-confidence* and *self-righteousness*. Pride is busy in the heart, and self is exalted instead of lying low at the foot of the cross. Christian, if you are not now as you "were in months past," do not rest satisfied with *wishing* for a return of former happiness, but go at once to seek your Master, and tell Him your sad state. Ask His grace and strength to help you to walk more closely with Him; humble yourself before Him, and He will lift you up, and give you yet again to enjoy the light of His countenance. Do not sit down to sigh and lament; while the beloved Physician lives there is hope, nay there is a certainty of recovery for the worst cases.





August 12

*The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice;
let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.*

Psalms 97:1

CAUSES for disquietude there are none so long as this blessed sentence is true. *On earth* the Lord's power as readily controls the rage of the wicked as the rage of the sea; His love as easily refreshes the poor with mercy as the earth with showers. Majesty gleams in flashes of fire amid the tempest's horrors, and the glory of the Lord is seen in its grandeur in the fall of empires, and the crash of thrones. In all our conflicts and tribulations, we may behold the hand of the divine King.

“God is God; He sees and hears
All our troubles, all our tears.
Soul, forget not, ‘mid thy pains,
God o’er all for ever reigns.”

In hell, evil spirits own, with misery, His undoubted supremacy. When permitted to roam abroad, it is with a chain at their heel; the bit is in the mouth of behemoth, and the hook in the jaws of leviathan. Death's darts are under the Lord's lock, and the grave's prisons have divine power as their warder. The terrible vengeance of the Judge of all the earth makes fiends cower down and tremble, even as dogs in the kennel fear the hunter's whip.

“Fear not death, nor Satan's thrusts,
God defends who in Him trusts;
Soul, remember, in thy pains,
God o’er all for ever reigns.”

In heaven none doubt the sovereignty of the King Eternal, but all fall on their faces to do Him homage. Angels are His courtiers, the redeemed His favourites, and all delight to serve Him day and night. May we soon reach the city of the great King!

“For this life's long night of sadness
He will give us peace and gladness.
Soul, remember, in thy pains,
God o’er all for ever reigns.”





August 13

*The trees of the LORD are full of sap;
the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;*

Psalm 104:16

LEBANON'S cedars are emblematic of the Christian, in that *they owe their planting entirely to the Lord*. This is quite true of every child of God. He is not man-planted, nor self-planted, but God-planted. The mysterious hand of the divine Spirit dropped the living seed into a heart which He had Himself prepared for its reception. Every true heir of heaven owns the great Husbandman as his planter. Moreover, the cedars of Lebanon *are not dependent upon man for their watering*; they stand on the lofty rock, unmoistened by human irrigation; and yet our heavenly Father supplieth them. Thus it is with the Christian who has learned to live by faith. He is independent of man, even in temporal things; for his continued maintenance he looks to the Lord his God, and to Him alone. The dew of heaven is his portion, and the God of heaven is his fountain. Again, the cedars of Lebanon are *not protected by any mortal power*. They owe nothing to man for their preservation from stormy wind and tempest. They are God's trees, kept and preserved by Him, and by Him alone. It is precisely the same with the Christian. He is not a hot-house plant, sheltered from temptation; he stands in the most exposed position; he has no shelter, no protection, except this, that the broad wings of the eternal God always cover the cedars which He Himself has planted. Like cedars, believers *are full of sap* having vitality enough to be ever green, even amid winter's snows. Lastly, the flourishing and majestic condition of the cedar is *to the praise of God only*. The Lord, even the Lord alone hath been everything unto the cedars, and, therefore David very sweetly puts it in one of the psalms, "Praise ye the Lord, fruitful trees and all cedars." In the believer there is nothing that can magnify man; he is planted, nourished, and protected by the Lord's own hand, and to Him let all the glory be ascribed.





August 14

*For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work:
I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*

Psalm 92:4

DO you believe that your sins are forgiven, and that Christ has made a full atonement for them? Then what a joyful Christian *you ought to be!* How you should live above the common trials and troubles of the world! Since sin is forgiven, can it matter what happens to you now? Luther said, “Smite, Lord, smite, for my sin is forgiven; if Thou hast but forgiven me, smite as hard as Thou wilt”; and in a similar spirit you may say, “Send sickness, poverty, losses, crosses, persecution, what Thou wilt, *Thou hast forgiven me*, and my soul is glad.” Christian, if thou art thus saved, whilst thou art glad, *be grateful and loving*. Cling to that cross which took thy sin away; serve thou Him who served thee. “I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Let not your zeal evaporate in some little ebullition of song. Show your love in expressive tokens. Love the brethren of Him who loved you. If there be a Mephibosheth anywhere who is lame or halt, help him for Jonathan’s sake. If there be a poor tried believer, weep with him, and bear his cross for the sake of Him who wept for thee and carried thy sins. Since thou art thus forgiven freely for Christ’s sake, go and tell to others the joyful news of pardoning mercy. Be not contented with this unspeakable blessing for thyself alone, but publish abroad the story of the cross. Holy gladness and holy boldness will make you a good preacher, and all the world will be a pulpit for you to preach in. Cheerful holiness is the most forcible of sermons, but the Lord must give it you. Seek it this morning before you go into the world. When it is the Lord’s work in which we rejoice, we need not be afraid of being too glad.





August 15

*And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide:
and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and,
behold, the camels were coming.
Genesis 24:63*

V*ERY* admirable was his occupation. If those who spend so many hours in idle company, light reading, and useless pastimes, could learn wisdom, they would find more profitable society and more interesting engagements in meditation than in the vanities which now have such charms for them. We should all know more, live nearer to God, and grow in grace, if we were more alone. Meditation chews the cud and extracts the real nutriment from the mental food gathered elsewhere. When Jesus is the theme, meditation is sweet indeed. Isaac found Rebecca while engaged in private musings; many others have found their best beloved there.

Very admirable was the choice of place. In the field we have a study hung round with texts for thought. From the cedar to the hyssop, from the soaring eagle down to the chirping grasshopper, from the blue expanse of heaven to a drop of dew, all things are full of teaching, and when the eye is divinely opened, that teaching flashes upon the mind far more vividly than from written books. Our little rooms are neither so healthy, so suggestive, so agreeable, or so inspiring as the fields. Let us count nothing common or unclean, but feel that all created things point to their Maker, and the field will at once be hallowed.

Very admirable was the season. The season of sunset as it draws a veil over the day, befits that repose of the soul when earthborn cares yield to the joys of heavenly communion. The glory of the setting sun excites our wonder, and the solemnity of approaching night awakens our awe. If the business of this day will permit it, it will be well, dear reader, if you can spare an hour to walk in the field at eventide, but if not, the Lord is in the town too, and will meet with thee in thy chamber or in the crowded street. Let thy heart go forth to meet Him.





August 16

*Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name;
worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*

Psalms 29:2

GOD'S glory is the result of His nature and acts. He is glorious in His character, for there is such a store of everything that is holy, and good, and lovely in God, that He must be glorious. The actions which flow from His character are also glorious; but while He intends that they should manifest to His creatures His goodness, and mercy, and justice, He is equally concerned that the glory associated with them should be given only to Himself. Nor is there aught in ourselves in which we may glory; for who maketh us to differ from another? And what have we that we did not receive from the God of all grace? Then how careful ought we to be *to walk humbly before the Lord!* The moment we glorify ourselves, since there is room for one glory only in the universe, we set ourselves up as rivals to the Most High. Shall the insect of an hour glorify itself against the sun which warmed it into life? Shall the potsherd exalt itself above the man who fashioned it upon the wheel? Shall the dust of the desert strive with the whirlwind? Or the drops of the ocean struggle with the tempest? Give unto the Lord, all ye righteous, give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto Him the honour that is due unto His name. Yet it is, perhaps, one of the hardest struggles of the Christian life to learn this sentence—"Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy name be glory." It is a lesson which God is ever teaching us, and teaching us sometimes by most painful discipline. Let a Christian begin to boast, "I can do all things," without adding "through Christ which strengtheneth me," and before long he will have to groan, "I can do nothing," and bemoan himself in the dust. When we do anything for the Lord, and He is pleased to accept of our doings, let us lay our crown at His feet, and exclaim, "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me!"





August 17

*But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God:
I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.
Psalm 52:8*

MEDITATE a little on this mercy of the Lord. It is *tender* mercy. With gentle, loving touch, He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He is as gracious in the manner of His mercy as in the matter of it. It is *great* mercy. There is nothing little in God; His mercy is like Himself—it is infinite. You cannot measure it. His mercy is so great that it forgives great sins to great sinners, after great lengths of time, and then gives great favours and great privileges, and raises us up to great enjoyments in the great heaven of the great God. It is *undeserved* mercy, as indeed all true mercy must be, for deserved mercy is only a misnomer for justice. There was no right on the sinner's part to the kind consideration of the Most High; had the rebel been doomed at once to eternal fire he would have richly merited the doom, and if delivered from wrath, sovereign love alone has found a cause, for there was none in the sinner himself. It is *rich* mercy. Some things are great, but have little efficacy in them, but this mercy is a cordial to your drooping spirits; a golden ointment to your bleeding wounds; a heavenly bandage to your broken bones; a royal chariot for your weary feet; a bosom of love for your trembling heart. It is *manifold* mercy. As Bunyan says, "All the flowers in God's garden are double." There is no single mercy. You may think you have but one mercy, but you shall find it to be a whole cluster of mercies. It is *abounding* mercy. Millions have received it, yet far from its being exhausted; it is as fresh, as full, and as free as ever. It is *unfailing* mercy. It will never leave thee. If mercy be thy friend, mercy will be with thee in temptation to keep thee from yielding; with thee in trouble to prevent thee from sinking; with thee living to be the light and life of thy countenance; and with thee dying to be the joy of thy soul when earthly comfort is ebbing fast.





August 18

*We are confounded, because we have heard reproach:
shame hath covered our faces: for strangers are come into
the sanctuaries of the LORD'S house.
Jeremiah 51:51*

IN this account the faces of the Lord's people were covered with shame, for it was a terrible thing that men should intrude into the Holy Place reserved for the priests alone. Everywhere about us we see like cause for sorrow. How many ungodly men are now educating with the view of entering into the ministry! What a crying sin is that solemn lie by which our whole population is nominally comprehended in a National Church! How fearful it is that ordinances should be pressed upon the unconverted, and that among the more enlightened churches of our land there should be such laxity of discipline. If the thousands who will read this portion shall all take this matter before the Lord Jesus this day, He will interfere and avert the evil which else will come upon His Church. To adulterate the Church is to pollute a well, to pour water upon fire, to sow a fertile field with stones. May we all have grace to maintain in our own proper way the purity of the Church, as being an assembly of believers, and not a nation, an unsaved community of unconverted men.

Our zeal must, however, begin at home. Let us examine *ourselves* as to our right to eat at the Lord's table. Let us see to it that we have on our wedding garment, lest we ourselves be intruders in the Lord's sanctuaries. Many are called, but few are chosen; the way is narrow, and the gate is strait. O for grace to come to Jesus aright, with the faith of God's elect. He who smote Uzzah for touching the ark is very jealous of His two ordinances; as a true believer I may approach them freely, as an alien I must not touch them lest I die. Heartsearching is the duty of all who are baptized or come to the Lord's table. "Search me, O God, and know my way, try me and know my heart."





August 19

*And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God;
and they shall abide: for now shall he be great
unto the ends of the earth.*

Micah 5:4

CHRI^ST'S reign in His Church is that of a *shepherd-king*. He has supremacy, but it is the superiority of a wise and tender shepherd over his needy and loving flock; He commands and receives obedience, but it is the willing obedience of the well-cared-for sheep, rendered joyfully to their beloved Shepherd, whose voice they know so well. He rules by the force of love and the energy of goodness.

His reign is *practical in its character*. It is said, "He shall stand and feed." The great Head of the Church is actively engaged in providing for His people. He does not sit down upon the throne in empty state, or hold a sceptre without wielding it in government. No, He stands and feeds. The expression "feed," in the original, is like an analogous one in the Greek, which means to shepherdize, to do everything expected of a shepherd: to guide, to watch, to preserve, to restore, to tend, as well as to feed.

His reign is *continual in its duration*. It is said, "*He shall stand and feed*"; not "He shall feed now and then, and leave His position"; not, "He shall one day grant a revival, and then next day leave His Church to barrenness." His eyes never slumber, and His hands never rest; His heart never ceases to beat with love, and His shoulders are never weary of carrying His people's burdens.

His reign is *effectually powerful in its action*; "He shall feed in the strength of Jehovah." Wherever Christ is, there is God; and whatever Christ does is the act of the Most High. Oh! it is a joyful truth to consider that He who stands today representing the interests of His people is very God of very God, to whom every knee shall bow. Happy are we who belong to such a shepherd, whose humanity communes with us, and whose divinity protects us. Let us worship and bow down before Him as the people of His pasture.





August 20

*Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,
2 Samuel 23:1*

AMONG all the saints whose lives are recorded in Holy Writ, David possesses an experience of the most striking, varied, and instructive character. In his history we meet with trials and temptations not to be discovered, as a whole, in other saints of ancient times, and hence he is all the more suggestive a type of our Lord. David knew the trials of all ranks and conditions of men. Kings have their troubles, and David wore a crown: the peasant has his cares, and David handled a shepherd's crook: the wanderer has many hardships, and David abode in the caves of Engedi: the captain has his difficulties, and David found the sons of Zeruiah too hard for him. The psalmist was also tried in his friends, his counsellor Ahithophel forsook him, "He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me." His worst foes were they of his own household: his children were his greatest affliction. The temptations of poverty and wealth, of honour and reproach, of health and weakness, all tried their power upon him. He had temptations from without to disturb his peace, and from within to mar his joy. David no sooner escaped from one trial than he fell into another; no sooner emerged from one season of despondency and alarm, than he was again brought into the lowest depths, and all God's waves and billows rolled over him. It is probably from this cause that David's psalms are so universally the delight of experienced Christians. Whatever our frame of mind, whether ecstasy or depression, David has exactly described our emotions. He was an able master of the human heart, because he had been tutored in the best of all schools—the school of heart-felt, personal experience. As we are instructed in the same school, as we grow matured in grace and in years, we increasingly appreciate David's psalms, and find them to be "green pastures." My soul, let David's experience cheer and counsel thee this day.





August 21

*The liberal soul shall be made fat:
and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.*

Proverbs 11:25

WE are here taught the great lesson, that to get, we must give; that to accumulate, we must scatter; that to make ourselves happy, we must make others happy; and that in order to become spiritually vigorous, we must seek the spiritual good of others. In watering others, we are ourselves watered. How? Our efforts to be useful, *bring out our powers for usefulness*. We have latent talents and dormant faculties, which are brought to light by exercise. Our strength for labour is hidden even from ourselves, until we venture forth to fight the Lord's battles, or to climb the mountains of difficulty. We do not know what tender sympathies we possess until we try to dry the widow's tears, and soothe the orphan's grief. We often find in attempting to teach others, that we *gain instruction for ourselves*. Oh, what gracious lessons some of us have learned at sick beds! We went to teach the Scriptures, we came away blushing that we knew so little of them. In our converse with poor saints, we are taught the way of God more perfectly for ourselves and get a deeper insight into divine truth. So that watering others *makes us humble*. We discover how much grace there is where we had not looked for it; and how much the poor saint may outstrip us in knowledge. Our own *comfort is also increased* by our working for others. We endeavour to cheer them, and the consolation gladdens our own heart. Like the two men in the snow; one chafed the other's limbs to keep him from dying, and in so doing kept his own blood in circulation, and saved his own life. The poor widow of Sarepta gave from her scanty store a supply for the prophet's wants, and from that day she never again knew what want was. Give then, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and running over.





August 22

*I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved,
that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.*

Song of Solomon 5:8

SUCH is the language of the believer panting after present fellowship with Jesus, *he is sick for his Lord*. Gracious souls are never perfectly at ease except they are in a state of nearness to Christ; for when they are away from Him they lose their peace. The nearer to Him, the nearer to the perfect calm of heaven; the nearer to Him, the fuller the heart is, not only of peace, but of life, and vigour, and joy, for these all depend on constant intercourse with Jesus. What the sun is to the day, what the moon is to the night, what the dew is to the flower, such is Jesus Christ to us. What bread is to the hungry, clothing to the naked, the shadow of a great rock to the traveller in a weary land, such is Jesus Christ to us; and, therefore, if we are not consciously one with Him, little marvel if our spirit cries in the words of the Song, “I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, tell Him that I am sick of love.” *This earnest longing after Jesus has a blessing attending it: “Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness”;* and therefore, supremely blessed are they who thirst after the Righteous One. Blessed is that hunger, since it comes from God: if I may not have the full-blown blessedness of being filled, I would seek the same blessedness in its sweet bud-pining in emptiness and eagerness till I am filled with Christ. If I may not feed on Jesus, it shall be next door to heaven to hunger and thirst after Him. There is a hallowedness about that hunger, since it sparkles among the beatitudes of our Lord. But the blessing *involves a promise*. Such hungry ones “*shall be filled*” with what they are desiring. If Christ thus causes us to long after Himself, He will certainly satisfy those longings; and when He does come to us, as come He will, *oh, how sweet it will be!*





August 23

*And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people:
and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her,
nor the voice of crying.
Isaiah 65:19*

THE glorified weep no more, for *all outward causes of grief are gone*. There are no broken friendships, nor blighted prospects in heaven. Poverty, famine, peril, persecution, and slander, are unknown there. No pain distresses, no thought of death or bereavement saddens. They weep no more, for *they are perfectly sanctified*. No “evil heart of unbelief” prompts them to depart from the living God; they are without fault before His throne, and are fully conformed to His image. Well may they cease to mourn who have ceased to sin. They weep no more, because *all fear of change is past*. They know that they are eternally secure. Sin is shut out, and they are shut in. They dwell within a city which shall never be stormed; they bask in a sun which shall never set; they drink of a river which shall never dry; they pluck fruit from a tree which shall never wither. Countless cycles may revolve, but eternity shall not be exhausted, and while eternity endures, their immortality and blessedness shall co-exist with it. They are for ever with the Lord. They weep no more, because *every desire is fulfilled*. They cannot wish for anything which they have not in possession. Eye and ear, heart and hand, judgment, imagination, hope, desire, will, all the faculties, are completely satisfied; and imperfect as our present ideas are of the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, yet we know enough, by the revelation of the Spirit, that the saints above are supremely blessed. The joy of Christ, which is an infinite fulness of delight, is in them. They bathe themselves in the bottomless, shoreless sea of infinite beatitude. That same joyful rest remains for us. It may not be far distant. Ere long the weeping willow shall be exchanged for the palm-branch of victory, and sorrow’s dewdrops will be transformed into the pearls of everlasting bliss. “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”





August 24

The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them.

Micah 2:13

INASMUCH as Jesus has gone before us, things remain not as they would have been had He never passed that way. He has *conquered every foe* that obstructed the way. Cheer up now thou faint-hearted warrior. Not only has Christ travelled the road, but He has slain thine enemies. Dost thou dread sin? He has nailed it to His cross. Dost thou fear death? He has been the death of Death. Art thou afraid of hell? He has barred it against the advent of any of His children; they shall never see the gulf of perdition. Whatever foes may be before the Christian, they are all overcome. There are lions, but their teeth are broken; there are serpents, but their fangs are extracted; there are rivers, but they are bridged or fordable; there are flames, but we wear that matchless garment which renders us invulnerable to fire. The sword that has been forged against us is already blunted; the instruments of war which the enemy is preparing have already lost their point. God has taken away in the person of Christ all the power that anything can have to hurt us. Well then, the army may safely march on, and you may go joyously along your journey, for all your enemies are conquered beforehand. What shall you do but march on to take the prey? They are beaten, they are vanquished; all you have to do is to divide the spoil. You shall, it is true, often engage in combat; but your fight shall be with a vanquished foe. His head is broken; he may attempt to injure you, but his strength shall not be sufficient for his malicious design. Your victory shall be easy, and your treasure shall be beyond all count.

“Proclaim aloud the Saviour’s fame,

Who bears the Breaker’s wond’rous name;

Sweet name; and it becomes him well,

Who breaks down earth, sin, death, and hell.”





*As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
so is my beloved among the sons.
I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
Song of Solomon 2:3*

FAITH, in the Scripture, is spoken of under the emblem of all the senses. It is *sight*: “Look unto me and be ye saved.” It is *hearing*: “Hear, and your soul shall live.” Faith is *smelling*: “All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia”; “thy name is as ointment poured forth.” Faith is spiritual *touch*. By this faith the woman came behind and touched the hem of Christ’s garment, and by this we handle the things of the good word of life. Faith is equally the spirit’s *taste*. “How sweet are Thy words to my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my lips.” “Except a man eat my flesh,” saith Christ, “and drink my blood, there is no life in him.”

This “*taste*” is faith *in one of its highest operations*. One of the first performances of faith is hearing. We hear the voice of God, not with the outward ear alone, but with the inward ear; we hear it as God’s Word, and we believe it to be so; that is the “*hearing*” of faith. Then our mind *looketh* upon the truth as it is presented to us; that is to say, we understand it, we perceive its meaning; that is the “*seeing*” of faith. Next we discover its preciousness; we begin to admire it, and find how fragrant it is; that is faith in its “*smell*.” Then we appropriate the mercies which are prepared for us in Christ; that is faith in its “*touch*.” Hence follow the enjoyments, peace, delight, communion; which are faith in its “*taste*.” Any one of these acts of faith is saving. To hear Christ’s voice as the sure voice of God in the soul will save us; but that which gives true enjoyment is the aspect of faith wherein Christ, by holy taste, is received into us, and made, by inward and spiritual apprehension of His sweetness and preciousness, to be the food of our souls. It is then we sit “under His shadow with great delight,” and find His fruit sweet to our taste.





August 26

He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.

Psalm 111:9

THE Lord's people delight in the covenant itself. It is an un failing source of consolation to them so often as the Holy Spirit leads them into its banqueting house and waves its banner of love. They delight to contemplate *the antiquity* of that covenant, remembering that before the daystar knew its place, or planets ran their round, the interests of the saints were made secure in Christ Jesus. It is peculiarly pleasing to them to remember *the sureness* of the covenant, while meditating upon "the sure mercies of David." They delight to celebrate it as "signed, and sealed, and ratified, in all things ordered well." It often makes their hearts dilate with joy to think of its *immutability*, as a covenant which neither time nor eternity, life nor death, shall ever be able to violate—a covenant as old as eternity and as everlasting as the Rock of ages. They rejoice also to feast upon *the fulness* of this covenant, for they see in it all things provided for them. God is their portion, Christ their companion, the Spirit their Comforter, earth their lodge, and heaven their home. They see in it an inheritance reserved and entailed to every soul possessing an interest in its ancient and eternal deed of gift. Their eyes sparkled when they saw it as a treasure-trove in the Bible; but oh! how their souls were gladdened when they saw in the last will and testament of their divine kinsman, that it was bequeathed to them! More especially it is the pleasure of God's people to contemplate *the graciousness* of this covenant. They see that the law was made void because it was a covenant of works and depended upon merit, but this they perceive to be enduring because grace is the basis, grace the condition, grace the strain, grace the bulwark, grace the foundation, grace the topstone. The covenant is a treasury of wealth, a granary of food, a fountain of life, a storehouse of salvation, a charter of peace, and a haven of joy.





August 27

And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?

Numbers 14:11

STRIVE with all diligence to keep out that monster unbelief. It so dishonours Christ, that He will withdraw His visible presence if we insult Him by indulging it. It is true it is a weed, the seeds of which we can never entirely extract from the soil, but we must aim at its root with zeal and perseverance. Among hateful things it is the most to be abhorred. Its injurious nature is so venomous that he that exerciseth it and he upon whom it is exercised are both hurt thereby. In thy case, O believer! it is most wicked, for the mercies of thy Lord in the past, increase thy guilt in doubting Him now. When thou dost distrust the Lord Jesus, He may well cry out, "Behold I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves." This is crowning His head with thorns of the sharpest kind. It is very cruel for a well-beloved wife to mistrust a kind and faithful husband. The sin is needless, foolish, and unwarranted. Jesus has never given the slightest ground for suspicion, and it is hard to be doubted by those to whom our conduct is uniformly affectionate and true. Jesus is the Son of the Highest, and has unbounded wealth; it is shameful to doubt Omnipotence and distrust all-sufficiency. The cattle on a thousand hills will suffice for our most hungry feeding, and the granaries of heaven are not likely to be emptied by our eating. If Christ were only a cistern, we might soon exhaust His fulness, but who can drain a fountain? Myriads of spirits have drawn their supplies from Him, and not one of them has murmured at the scantiness of His resources. Away, then, with this lying traitor unbelief, for his only errand is to cut the bonds of communion and make us mourn an absent Saviour. Bunyan tells us that unbelief has "as many lives as a cat:" if so, let us kill one life now, and continue the work till the whole nine are gone. Down with thee, thou traitor, my heart abhors thee.





August 28

*Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense,
Exodus 25:6*

MY soul, how much thou needest this, for thy lamp will not long continue to burn without it. Thy snuff will smoke and become an offence if light be gone, and gone it will be if oil be absent. Thou hast no oil well springing up in thy human nature, and therefore thou must go to them that sell and buy for thyself, or like the foolish virgins, thou wilt have to cry, "My lamp is gone out." Even the consecrated lamps could not give light without oil; though they shone in the tabernacle they needed to be fed, though no rough winds blew upon them they required to be trimmed, and thy need is equally as great. Under the most happy circumstances thou canst not give light for another hour unless fresh oil of grace be given thee.

It was not every oil that might be used in the Lord's service; neither the petroleum which exudes so plentifully from the earth, nor the produce of fishes, nor that extracted from nuts would be accepted; one oil only was selected, and that the best olive oil. Pretended grace from natural goodness, fancied grace from priestly hands, or imaginary grace from outward ceremonies will never serve the true saint of God; he knows that the Lord would not be pleased with rivers of such oil. He goes to the olive-press of Gethsemane, and draws his supplies from Him who was crushed therein. The oil of gospel grace is pure and free from lees and dregs, and hence the light which is fed thereon is clear and bright. Our churches are the Saviour's golden candelabra, and if they are to be lights in this dark world, they must have much holy oil. Let us pray for ourselves, our ministers, and our churches, that they may never lack oil for the light. Truth, holiness, joy, knowledge, love, these are all beams of the sacred light, but we cannot give them forth unless in private we receive oil from God the Holy Ghost.





*Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness:
according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies
blot out my transgressions.
Psalm 51:1*

WHEN Dr. Carey was suffering from a dangerous illness, the enquiry was made, “If this sickness should prove fatal, what passage would you select as the text for your funeral sermon?” He replied, “Oh, I feel that such a poor sinful creature is unworthy to have anything said about him; but if a funeral sermon must be preached, let it be from the words, ‘Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.’” In the same spirit of humility he directed in his will that the following inscription and nothing more should be cut on his gravestone:—

WILLIAM CAREY, BORN AUGUST 17th, 1761:

DIED—

“A wretched, poor, and helpless worm
On Thy kind arms I fall.”

Only on the footing of free grace can the most experienced and most honoured of the saints approach their God. The best of men are conscious above all others that they are men at the best. Empty boats float high, but heavily laden vessels are low in the water; mere professors can boast, but true children of God cry for mercy upon their unprofitableness. We have need that the Lord should have mercy upon our good works, our prayers, our preachings, our alms-givings, and our holiest things. The blood was not only sprinkled upon the doorposts of Israel’s dwelling houses, but upon the sanctuary, the mercy-seat, and the altar, because as sin intrudes into our holiest things, the blood of Jesus is needed to purify them from defilement. If mercy be needed to be exercised towards our duties, what shall be said of our sins? How sweet the remembrance that inexhaustible mercy is waiting to be gracious to us, to restore our backslidings, and make our broken bones rejoice!





August 30

*Wait on the LORD: be of good courage,
and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.*

Psalm 27:14

IT may seem an easy thing to *wait*, but it is one of the postures which a Christian soldier learns not without years of teaching. Marching and quick-marching are much easier to God's warriors than standing still. There are hours of perplexity when the most willing spirit, anxiously desirous to serve the Lord, knows not what part to take. Then what shall it do? Vex itself by despair? Fly back in cowardice, turn to the right hand in fear, or rush forward in presumption? No, but simply wait. *Wait in prayer*, however. Call upon God, and spread the case before Him; tell Him your difficulty, and plead His promise of aid. In dilemmas between one duty and another, it is sweet to be humble as a child, and *wait with simplicity of soul* upon the Lord. It is sure to be well with us when we feel and know our own folly, and are heartily willing to be guided by the will of God. But *wait in faith*. Express your unstaggering confidence in Him; for unfaithful, untrusting waiting, is but an insult to the Lord. Believe that if He keep you tarrying even till midnight, yet He will come at the right time; the vision shall come and shall not tarry. *Wait in quiet patience*, not rebelling because you are under the affliction, but blessing your God for it. Never murmur against the second cause, as the children of Israel did against Moses; never wish you could go back to the world again, but accept the case as it is, and put it as it stands, simply and with your whole heart, without any self-will, into the hand of your covenant God, saying, "Now, Lord, not my will, but Thine be done. I know not what to do; I am brought to extremities, but I will wait until Thou shalt cleave the floods, or drive back my foes. I will wait, if Thou keep me many a day, for my heart is fixed upon Thee alone, O God, and my spirit waiteth for Thee in the full conviction that Thou wilt yet be my joy and my salvation, my refuge and my strong tower."





August 31

*My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth,
and mine arms shall judge the people;
the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.
Isaiah 51:5*

IN seasons of severe trial, the Christian has nothing on earth that he can trust to, and is therefore compelled to cast himself on his God alone. When his vessel is on its beam-ends, and no human deliverance can avail, he must simply and entirely trust himself to the providence and care of God. Happy storm that wrecks a man on such a rock as this! O blessed hurricane that drives the soul to God and God alone! There is no getting at our God sometimes because of the multitude of our friends; but when a man is so poor, so friendless, so helpless that he has nowhere else to turn, he flies into his Father's arms, and is blessedly clasped therein! When he is burdened with troubles so pressing and so peculiar, that he cannot tell them to any but his God, he may be thankful for them; for he will learn more of his Lord then than at any other time. Oh, tempest-tossed believer, it is a happy trouble that drives thee to thy Father! Now that thou hast only thy God to trust to, see that thou puttest thy full confidence in Him. Dishonour not thy Lord and Master by unworthy doubts and fears; but be strong in faith, giving glory to God. Show the world that thy God is worth ten thousand worlds to thee. Show rich men how rich thou art in thy poverty when the Lord God is thy helper. Show the strong man how strong thou art in thy weakness when underneath thee are the everlasting arms. Now is the time for feats of faith and valiant exploits. Be strong and very courageous, and the Lord thy God shall certainly, as surely as He built the heavens and the earth, glorify Himself in thy weakness, and magnify his might in the midst of thy distress. The grandeur of the arch of heaven would be spoiled if the sky were supported by a single visible column, and your faith would lose its glory if it rested on anything discernible by the carnal eye. May the Holy Spirit give you to rest in Jesus this closing day of the month.





September 1

*Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,
and afterward receive me to glory.*

Psalms 73:24

THE Psalmist felt his need of divine guidance. He had just been discovering the foolishness of his own heart, and lest he should be constantly led astray by it, he resolved that God's counsel should henceforth guide him. A sense of our own folly is a great step towards being wise, when it leads us to rely on the wisdom of the Lord. The blind man leans on his friend's arm and reaches home in safety, and so would we give ourselves up implicitly to divine guidance, nothing doubting; assured that though we cannot see, it is always safe to trust the All-seeing God. "*Thou shalt,*" is a blessed expression of confidence. He was sure that the Lord would not decline the condescending task. There is a word for thee, O believer; rest thou in it. Be assured that thy God will be thy counsellor and friend; He shall guide thee; He will direct all thy ways. In His written Word thou hast this assurance in part fulfilled, for holy Scripture is His counsel to thee. Happy are we to have God's Word always to guide us! What were the mariner without his compass? And what were the Christian without the Bible? This is the unerring chart, the map in which every shoal is described, and all the channels from the quicksands of destruction to the haven of salvation mapped and marked by one who knows all the way. Blessed be Thou, O God, that we may trust Thee to guide us now, and guide us even to the end! After this guidance through life, the Psalmist anticipates a divine reception at last—"and afterward receive me to glory." What a thought for thee, believer! God Himself will receive *thee* to glory—*thee*! Wandering, erring, straying, yet He will bring thee safe at last *to glory*! This is thy portion; live on it this day, and if perplexities should surround thee, go in the strength of this text straight to the throne.





*But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever,
and anon they tell him of her.*

Mark 1:30

VERY interesting is this little peep into the house of the Apostolic Fisherman. We see at once that household joys and cares are no hindrance to the full exercise of ministry, nay, that since they furnish an opportunity for personally witnessing the Lord's gracious work upon one's own flesh and blood, they may even instruct the teacher better than any other earthly discipline. Papists and other sectaries may decry marriage, but true Christianity and household life agree well together. Peter's house was probably a poor fisherman's hut, but the Lord of Glory entered it, lodged in it, and wrought a miracle in it. Should our little book be read this morning in some very humble cottage, let this fact encourage the inmates to seek the company of King Jesus. God is oftener in little huts than in rich palaces. Jesus is looking round your room now, and is waiting to be gracious to you. Into Simon's house sickness had entered, fever in a deadly form had prostrated his mother-in-law, and as soon as Jesus came they told Him of the sad affliction, and He hastened to the patient's bed. Have you any sickness in the house this morning? You will find Jesus by far the best physician, go to Him at once and tell Him all about the matter. Immediately lay the case before Him. It concerns one of His people, and therefore will not be trivial to Him. Observe, that *at once* the Saviour restored the sick woman; none can heal as He does. We may not make sure that the Lord will at once remove all disease from those we love, but we may know that believing prayer for the sick is far more likely to be followed by restoration than anything else in the world; and where this avails not, we must meekly bow to His will by whom life and death are determined. The tender heart of Jesus waits to hear our griefs, let us pour them into His patient ear.





September 3

*Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest,
where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be
as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?
Song of Solomon 1:7*

IT is well to be able, without any “if” or “but,” to say of the Lord Jesus—“*Thou whom my soul loveth.*” Many can only say of Jesus that they *hope* they love Him; they *trust* they love Him; but only a poor and shallow experience will be content to stay here. No one ought to give any rest to his spirit till he feels quite sure about a matter of such vital importance. We ought not to be satisfied with a superficial *hope* that Jesus loves us, and with a bare trust that we love Him. The old saints did not generally speak with “buts,” and “ifs,” and “hopes,” and “trusts,” but they spoke positively and plainly. “I know whom I have believed,” saith Paul. “I know that my Redeemer liveth,” saith Job. Get positive knowledge of your love of Jesus, and be not satisfied till you can speak of your interest in Him as a reality, which you have made sure by having received the witness of the Holy Spirit, and His seal upon your soul by faith.

True love to Christ is in every case the Holy Spirit’s work, and must be wrought in the heart by Him. He is the *efficient cause* of it; but the logical reason why we love Jesus lies in Himself. *Why* do we love Jesus? *Because He first loved us.* *Why* do we love Jesus? Because He “*gave Himself for us.*” We have life through His death; we have peace through His blood. Though He was rich, yet *for our sakes* He became poor. *Why* do we love Jesus? Because of the *excellency of His person.* We are filled with a sense of His beauty! an admiration of His charms! a consciousness of His infinite perfection! His greatness, goodness, and loveliness, in one resplendent ray, combine to enchant the soul till it is so ravished that it exclaims, “Yea, He is altogether lovely.” Blessed love this—a love which binds the heart with chains more soft than silk, and yet more firm than adamant!





September 4

*And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand,
and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.*

Mark 1:41

PRIMEVAL darkness heard the Almighty fiat, "light be," and straightway light was, and the word of the Lord Jesus is equal in majesty to that ancient word of power. Redemption like Creation has its word of might. Jesus speaks and it is done. Leprosy yielded to no human remedies, but it fled at once at the Lord's "I will." The disease exhibited no hopeful signs or tokens of recovery, nature contributed nothing to its own healing, but the unaided word effected the entire work on the spot and for ever. The sinner is in a plight more miserable than the leper; let him imitate his example and go to Jesus, "beseeching Him and kneeling down to Him." Let him exercise what little faith he has, even though it should go no further than "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean"; and there need be no doubt as to the result of the application. Jesus heals all who come, and casts out none. In reading the narrative in which our morning's text occurs, it is worthy of devout notice that Jesus touched the leper. This unclean person had broken through the regulations of the ceremonial law and pressed into the house, but Jesus so far from chiding him broke through the law Himself in order to meet him. He made an interchange with the leper, for while He cleansed him, He contracted by that touch a Levitical defilement. Even so Jesus Christ was made sin for us, although in Himself He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. O that poor sinners would go to Jesus, believing in the power of His blessed substitutionary work, and they would soon learn the power of His gracious touch. That hand which multiplied the loaves, which saved sinking Peter, which upholds afflicted saints, which crowns believers, that same hand will touch every seeking sinner, and in a moment make him clean. The love of Jesus is the source of salvation. He loves, He looks, He touches us, WE LIVE.





September 5

*Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech,
that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!*

Psalms 120:5

AS a Christian you have to live in the midst of an ungodly world, and it is of little use for you to cry “Woe is me.” Jesus did not pray that you should be taken out of the world, and what He did not pray for, you need not desire. Better far in the Lord’s strength to meet the difficulty, and glorify Him in it. The enemy is ever on the watch to detect inconsistency in your conduct; be therefore very *holy*. Remember that the eyes of all are upon you, and that more is expected from you than from other men. Strive to give no occasion for blame. Let your goodness be the only fault they can discover in you. Like Daniel, compel them to say of you, “We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.” Seek to be *useful* as well as consistent. Perhaps you think, “If I were in a more favourable position I might serve the Lord’s cause, but I cannot do any good where I am”; but the worse the people are among whom you live, the more need have they of your exertions; if they be crooked, the more necessity that you should set them straight; and if they be perverse, the more need have you to turn their proud hearts to the truth. Where should the physician be but where there are many sick? Where is honour to be won by the soldier but in the hottest fire of the battle? And when weary of the strife and sin that meets you on every hand, consider that all the saints have endured the same trial. They were not carried on beds of down to heaven, and you must not expect to travel more easily than they. They had to hazard their lives unto the death in the high places of the field, and you will not be crowned till you also have endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Therefore, “stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”





September 6

*That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God,
without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation,
among whom ye shine as lights in the world;
Philippians 2:15*

WE use lights to *make manifest*. A Christian man should so shine in his life, that a person could not live with him a week without knowing the gospel. His conversation should be such that all who are about him should clearly perceive whose he is, and whom he serves; and should see the image of Jesus reflected in his daily actions. Lights are intended for *guidance*. We are to help those around us who are in the dark. We are to hold forth to them the Word of life. We are to point sinners to the Saviour, and the weary to a divine resting-place. Men sometimes read their Bibles, and fail to understand them; we should be ready, like Philip, to instruct the inquirer in the meaning of God's Word, the way of salvation, and the life of godliness. Lights are also used for *warning*. On our rocks and shoals a light-house is sure to be erected. Christian men should know that there are many false lights shown everywhere in the world, and therefore the right light is needed. The wreckers of Satan are always abroad, tempting the ungodly to sin under the name of pleasure; they hoist the wrong light, be it ours to put up the true light upon every dangerous rock, to point out every sin, and tell what it leads to, that so we may be clear of the blood of all men, shining as lights in the world. Lights also have a very *cheering* influence, and so have Christians. A Christian ought to be a comforter, with kind words on his lips, and sympathy in his heart; he should carry sunshine wherever he goes, and diffuse happiness around him.

Gracious Spirit dwell with me;
I myself would gracious be,
And with words that help and heal
Would thy life in mine reveal,
And with actions bold and meek
Would for Christ my Saviour speak.





September 7

And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

Mark 2:4

FAITH is full of inventions. The house was full, a crowd blocked up the door, but faith found a way of getting at the Lord and placing the palsied man before Him. If we cannot get sinners where Jesus is by ordinary methods we must use extraordinary ones. It seems, according to Luke 5:19, that a tiling had to be removed, which would make dust and cause a measure of danger to those below, but where the case is very urgent we must not mind running some risks and shocking some proprieties. Jesus was there to heal, and therefore fall what might, faith ventured all so that her poor paralyzed charge might have his sins forgiven. O that we had more daring faith among us! Cannot we, dear reader, seek it this morning for ourselves and for our fellow-workers, and will we not try today to perform some gallant act for the love of souls and the glory of the Lord.

The world is constantly inventing; genius serves all the purposes of human desire: cannot faith invent too, and reach by some new means the outcasts who lie perishing around us? It was the presence of Jesus which excited victorious courage in the four bearers of the palsied man: is not the Lord among us now? Have we seen His face for ourselves this morning? Have we felt His healing power in our own souls? If so, then through door, through window, or through roof, let us, breaking through all impediments, labour to bring poor souls to Jesus. All means are good and decorous when faith and love are truly set on winning souls. If hunger for bread can break through stone walls, surely hunger for souls is not to be hindered in its efforts. O Lord, make us quick to suggest methods of reaching Thy poor sin-sick ones, and bold to carry them out at all hazards.





*Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?
I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree.
From me is thy fruit found.
Hosea 14:8*

OUR fruit is found from our God as to *union*. The fruit of the branch is directly traceable to the root. Sever the connection, the branch dies, and no fruit is produced. By virtue of our union with Christ we bring forth fruit. Every bunch of grapes have been first in the root, it has passed through the stem, and flowed through the sap vessels, and fashioned itself externally into fruit, but it was first in the stem; so also every good work was first in Christ, and then is brought forth in us. O Christian, prize this precious union to Christ; for it must be the source of all the fruitfulness which thou canst hope to know. If thou wert not joined to Jesus Christ, thou wouldst be a barren bough indeed.

Our fruit comes from God as to *spiritual providence*. When the dew-drops fall from heaven, when the cloud looks down from on high, and is about to distil its liquid treasure, when the bright sun swells the berries of the cluster, each heavenly boon may whisper to the tree and say, "From me is thy fruit found." The fruit owes much to the root—that is essential to fruitfulness—but it owes very much also to external influences. How much we owe to God's grace-providence! in which He provides us constantly with quickening, teaching, consolation, strength, or whatever else we want. To this we owe our all of usefulness or virtue.

Our fruit comes from God as to *wise husbandry*. The gardener's sharp-edged knife promotes the fruitfulness of the tree, by thinning the clusters, and by cutting off superfluous shoots. So is it, Christian, with that pruning which the Lord gives to thee. "My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Since our God is the author of our spiritual graces, let us give to Him all the glory of our salvation.





September 9

*Call unto me, and I will answer thee,
and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.
Jeremiah 33:3*

THERE are different translations of these words. One version renders it, "I will shew thee great and fortified things." Another, "Great and reserved things." Now, there are reserved and special things in Christian experience: all the developments of spiritual life are not alike easy of attainment. There are the common frames and feelings of repentance, and faith, and joy, and hope, which are enjoyed by the entire family; but there is an upper realm of rapture, of communion, and conscious union with Christ, which is far from being the common dwelling-place of believers. We have not all the high privilege of John, to lean upon Jesus' bosom; nor of Paul, to be caught up into the third heaven. There are heights in experimental knowledge of the things of God which the eagle's eye of acumen and philosophic thought hath never seen: God alone can bear us there; but the chariot in which He takes us up, and the fiery steeds with which that chariot is dragged, are prevailing prayers. Prevailing prayer is victorious over the God of mercy, "By his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto Him: he found Him in Beth-el, and there He spake with us." Prevailing prayer takes the Christian to Carmel, and enables him to cover heaven with clouds of blessing, and earth with floods of mercy. Prevailing prayer bears the Christian aloft to Pisgah, and shows him the inheritance reserved; it elevates us to Tabor and transfigures us, till in the likeness of his Lord, as He is, so are we also in this world. If you would reach to something higher than ordinary grovelling experience, look to the Rock that is higher than you, and gaze with the eye of faith through the window of importunate prayer. When you open the window on your side, it will not be bolted on the other.





September 10

*And he goeth up into a mountain,
and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him.*

Mark 3:13

HERE was sovereignty. Impatient spirits may fret and fume, because they are not called to the highest places in the ministry; but reader be it thine to rejoice that Jesus calleth whom He wills. If He shall leave me to be a doorkeeper in His house, I will cheerfully bless Him for His grace in permitting me to do anything in His service. The call of Christ's servants comes from above. Jesus stands on the mountain, evermore above the world in holiness, earnestness, love and power. Those whom He calls must go up the mountain to Him, they must seek to rise to His level by living in constant communion with Him. They may not be able to mount to classic honours, or attain scholastic eminence, but they must like Moses go up into the mount of God and have familiar intercourse with the unseen God, or they will never be fitted to proclaim the gospel of peace. Jesus went apart to hold high fellowship with the Father, and we must enter into the same divine companionship if we would bless our fellowmen. No wonder that the apostles were clothed with power when they came down fresh from the mountain where Jesus was. This morning we must endeavour to ascend the mount of communion, that there we may be ordained to the lifework for which we are set apart. Let us not see the face of man today till we have seen Jesus. Time spent with Him is laid out at blessed interest. We too shall cast out devils and work wonders if we go down into the world girded with that divine energy which Christ alone can give. It is of no use going to the Lord's battle till we are armed with heavenly weapons. We must see Jesus, this is essential. At the mercy-seat we will linger till He shall manifest Himself unto us as He doth not unto the world, and until we can truthfully say, "We were with Him in the Holy Mount."





September 11

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,
2 Corinthians 6:17

THE Christian, while in the world, is not to be of the world. He should be distinguished from it in *the great object of his life*. To him, “to live,” should be “Christ.” Whether he eats, or drinks, or whatever he does, he should do all to God’s glory. You may lay up treasure; but lay it up in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, where thieves break not through nor steal. You may strive to be rich; but be it your ambition to be “rich in faith,” and good works. You may have pleasure; but when you are merry, sing psalms and make melody in your hearts to the Lord. In your *spirit*, as well as in your aim, you should differ from the world. Waiting humbly before God, always conscious of His presence, delighting in communion with Him, and seeking to know His will, you will prove that you are of heavenly race. And you should be separate from the world in your *actions*. If a thing be right, though you lose by it, it must be done; if it be wrong, though you would gain by it, you must scorn the sin for your Master’s sake. You must have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Walk worthy of your high calling and dignity. Remember, O Christian, that thou art a son of the King of kings. Therefore, keep thyself unspotted from the world. Soil not the fingers which are soon to sweep celestial strings; let not these eyes become the windows of lust which are soon to see the King in His beauty—let not those feet be defiled in miry places, which are soon to walk the golden streets—let not those hearts be filled with pride and bitterness which are ere long to be filled with heaven, and to overflow with ecstatic joy.

Then rise my soul! and soar away, Above the thoughtless crowd;
Above the pleasures of the gay, And splendours of the proud;
Up where eternal beauties bloom, And pleasures all divine;
Where wealth, that never can consume, And endless glories shine.





September 12

*God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth,
and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries,
and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.*

Nahum 1:2

Y*OUR* Lord is very jealous of your love, O believer. Did He choose you? He cannot bear that you should choose another. Did He buy you with His own blood? He cannot endure that you should think that you are your own, or that you belong to this world. He loved you with such a love that He would not stop in heaven without you; He would sooner die than you should perish, and He cannot endure that anything should stand between your heart's love and Himself. *He is very jealous of your trust.* He will not permit you to trust in an arm of flesh. He cannot bear that you should hew out broken cisterns, when the overflowing fountain is always free to you. When we lean upon Him, He is glad, but when we transfer our dependence to another, when we rely upon our own wisdom, or the wisdom of a friend—worst of all, when we trust in any works of our own, He is displeased, and will chasten us that He may bring us to Himself. *He is also very jealous of our company.* There should be no one with whom we converse so much as with Jesus. To abide in Him only, this is true love; but to commune with the world, to find sufficient solace in our carnal comforts, to prefer even the society of our fellow Christians to secret intercourse with Him, this is grievous to our jealous Lord. He would fain have us abide in Him, and enjoy constant fellowship with Himself; and many of the trials which He sends us are for the purpose of weaning our hearts from the creature, and fixing them more closely upon Himself. Let this jealousy which would keep us near to Christ *be also a comfort* to us, for if He loves us so much as to care thus about our love we may be sure that He will suffer nothing to harm us, and will protect us from all our enemies. Oh that we may have grace this day to keep our hearts in sacred chastity for our Beloved alone, with sacred jealousy shutting our eyes to all the fascinations of the world!





September 13

*Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well;
the rain also filleth the pools.*

Psalms 84:6

THIS teaches us that the *comfort* obtained by one may often prove serviceable to another; just as wells would be used by the company who came after. We read some book full of consolation, which is like Jonathan's rod, dropping with honey. Ah! we think our brother has been here before us, and digged this well for us as well as for himself. Many a "Night of Weeping," "Midnight Harmonies," an "Eternal Day," "A Crook in the Lot," a "Comfort for Mourners," has been a well digged by a pilgrim for himself, but has proved quite as useful to others. Specially we notice this in the Psalms, such as that beginning, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" Travellers have been delighted to see the footprint of man on a barren shore, and we love to see the waymarks of pilgrims while passing through the vale of tears.

The pilgrims dig the well, but, strange enough, it fills from the top instead of the bottom. We use the means, but the blessing does not spring from the means. We dig a well, but heaven fills it with rain. The horse is prepared against the day of battle, but safety is of the Lord. The means are connected with the end, but they do not of themselves produce it. See here the rain fills the pools, so that the wells become useful as reservoirs for the water; labour is not lost, but yet it does not supersede divine help.

Grace may well be compared to rain for its purity, for its refreshing and vivifying influence, for its coming alone from above, and for the sovereignty with which it is given or withheld. May our readers have showers of blessing, and may the wells they have digged be filled with water! Oh, what are means and ordinances without the smile of heaven! They are as clouds without rain, and pools without water. O God of love, open the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing!





September 14

*And when they had sent away the multitude,
they took him even as he was in the ship.
And there were also with him other little ships.
Mark 4:36*

JESUS was the Lord High Admiral of the sea that night, and His presence preserved the whole convoy. It is well to sail with Jesus, even though it be in a little ship. When we sail in Christ's company, we may not make sure of fair weather, for great storms may toss the vessel which carries the Lord Himself, and we must not expect to find the sea less boisterous around our little boat. If we go with Jesus we must be content to fare as He fares; and when the waves are rough to Him, they will be rough to us. It is by tempest and tossing that we shall come to land, as He did before us.

When the storm swept over Galilee's dark lake all faces gathered blackness, and all hearts dreaded shipwreck. When all creature help was useless, the slumbering Saviour arose, and with a word, transformed the riot of the tempest into the deep quiet of a calm; then were the little vessels at rest as well as that which carried the Lord. Jesus is the star of the sea; and though there be sorrow upon the sea, when Jesus is on it there is joy too. May our hearts make Jesus their anchor, their rudder, their lighthouse, their lifeboat, and their harbour. His Church is the Admiral's flagship, let us attend her movements, and cheer her officers with our presence. He Himself is the great attraction; let us follow ever in His wake, mark His signals, steer by His chart, and never fear while He is within hail. Not one ship in the convoy shall suffer wreck; the great Commodore will steer every barque in safety to the desired haven. By faith we will slip our cable for another day's cruise, and sail forth with Jesus into a sea of tribulation. Winds and waves will not spare us, but they all obey Him; and, therefore, whatever squalls may occur without, faith shall feel a blessed calm within. He is ever in the centre of the weather-beaten company: let us rejoice in Him. His vessel has reached the haven, and so shall ours.





September 15

*He shall not be afraid of evil tidings:
his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.
Psalm 112:7*

CHRISTIAN, you ought not to dread the arrival of evil tidings; because if you are distressed by them, *what do you more than other men?* Other men have not your God to fly to; they have never proved His faithfulness as you have done, and it is no wonder if they are bowed down with alarm and cowed with fear: but you profess to be of another spirit; you have been begotten again unto a lively hope, and your heart lives in heaven and not on earthly things; now, if you are seen to be distracted as other men, what is the value of that grace which you profess to have received? Where is the dignity of that new nature which you claim to possess?

Again, if you should be filled with alarm, as others are, *you would, doubtless, be led into the sins so common to others under trying circumstances.* The ungodly, when they are overtaken by evil tidings, rebel against God; they murmur, and think that God deals hardly with them. Will you fall into that same sin? Will you provoke the Lord as they do?

Moreover, unconverted men often run to wrong means in order to escape from difficulties, and you will be sure to do the same if your mind yields to the present pressure. Trust in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. Your wisest course is to do as Moses did at the Red Sea, "Stand still and see the salvation of God." For if you give way to fear when you hear of evil tidings, you will be unable to meet the trouble with that calm composure which nerves for duty, and sustains under adversity. How can you glorify God if you play the coward? Saints have often sung God's high praises in the fires, but will your doubting and desponding, as if you had none to help you, magnify the Most High? Then take courage, and relying in sure confidence upon the faithfulness of your covenant God, "let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."





*Whereby are given unto us
exceeding great and precious promises:
that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature,
having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
2 Peter 1:4*

To be a partaker of the divine nature is not, of course, to become God. That cannot be. The essence of Deity is not to be participated in by the creature. Between the creature and the Creator there must ever be a gulf fixed in respect of essence; but as the first man Adam was made in the image of God, so we, by the renewal of the Holy Spirit, are in a yet diviner sense made in the image of the Most High, and are partakers of the divine nature. We are, by grace, made like God. “God is love”; we become love—“He that loveth is born of God.” God is truth; we become true, and we love that which is true: God is good, and He makes us good by His grace, so that we become the pure in heart who shall see God. Moreover, we become partakers of the divine nature in even a higher sense than this—in fact, in as lofty a sense as can be conceived, short of our being absolutely divine. Do we not become members of the body of the divine person of Christ? Yes, the same blood which flows in the head flows in the hand: and the same life which quickens Christ quickens His people, for “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Nay, as if this were not enough, we are married unto Christ. He hath betrothed us unto Himself in righteousness and in faithfulness, and he who is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Oh! marvellous mystery! we look into it, but who shall understand it? One with Jesus—so one with Him that the branch is not more one with the vine than we are a part of the Lord, our Saviour, and our Redeemer! While we rejoice in this, let us remember that those who are made partakers of the divine nature will manifest their high and holy relationship in their intercourse with others, and make it evident by their daily walk and conversation that they have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. O for more divine holiness of life!





September 17

*He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation,
how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?
bring him unto me.*

Mark 9:19

DESPAIRINGLY the poor disappointed father turned away from the disciples to their Master. His son was in the worst possible condition, and all means had failed, but the miserable child was soon delivered from the evil one when the parent in faith obeyed the Lord Jesus' word, "Bring him unto me." Children are a precious gift from God, but much anxiety comes with them. They may be a great joy or a great bitterness to their parents; they may be filled with the Spirit of God, or possessed with the spirit of evil. In all cases, the Word of God gives us one receipt for the curing of all their ills, "Bring him unto me." O for more agonizing prayer on their behalf while they are yet babes! Sin is there, let our prayers begin to attack it. Our cries for our offspring should precede those cries which betoken their actual advent into a world of sin. In the days of their youth we shall see sad tokens of that dumb and deaf spirit which will neither pray aright, nor hear the voice of God in the soul, but Jesus still commands, "Bring them unto me." When they are grown up they may wallow in sin and foam with enmity against God; then when our hearts are breaking we should remember the great Physician's words, "Bring them unto me." Never must we cease to pray until they cease to breathe. No case is hopeless while Jesus lives.

The Lord sometimes suffers His people to be driven into a corner that they may experimentally know how necessary He is to them. Ungodly children, when they show us our own powerlessness against the depravity of their hearts, drive us to flee to the strong for strength, and this is a great blessing to us. Whatever our morning's need may be, let it like a strong current bear us to the ocean of divine love. Jesus can soon remove our sorrow, He delights to comfort us. Let us hasten to Him while He waits to meet us.





September 18

*Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another,
envying one another.*

Galatians 5:25

THE two most important things in our holy religion are the *life of faith* and the *walk of faith*. He who shall rightly understand these is not far from being a master in experimental theology, for they are vital points to a Christian. You will never find true faith unattended by true godliness; on the other hand, you will never discover a truly holy life which has not for its root a living faith upon the righteousness of Christ. Woe unto those who seek after the one without the other! There are some who cultivate faith and forget holiness; these may be very high in orthodoxy, but they shall be very deep in condemnation, for they hold the truth in unrighteousness; and there are others who have strained after holiness of life, but have denied the faith, like the Pharisees of old, of whom the Master said, they were “whitewashed sepulchres.” We must have faith, for this is the foundation; we must have holiness of life, for this is the superstructure. Of what service is the mere foundation of a building to a man in the day of tempest? Can he hide himself therein? He wants a house to cover him, as well as a foundation for that house. Even so we need the superstructure of spiritual life if we would have comfort in the day of doubt. But seek not a holy life without faith, for that would be to erect a house which can afford no permanent shelter, because it has no foundation on a rock. Let faith and life be put together, and, like the two abutments of an arch, they will make our piety enduring. Like light and heat streaming from the same sun, they are alike full of blessing. Like the two pillars of the temple, they are for glory and for beauty. They are two streams from the fountain of grace; two lamps lit with holy fire; two olive trees watered by heavenly care. O Lord, give us this day life within, and it will reveal itself without to Thy glory.





September 19

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Galatians 5:1

THIS “liberty” makes us *free to heaven’s charter—the Bible*. Here is a choice passage, believer, “When thou passest through the rivers, I will be with thee.” You are free to that. Here is another: “The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee”; you are free to that. You are a welcome guest at the table of the promises. Scripture is a never-failing treasury filled with boundless stores of grace. It is the bank of heaven; you may draw from it as much as you please, without let or hindrance. Come in faith and you are welcome to all *covenant blessings*. There is not a promise in the Word which shall be withheld. In the depths of tribulations let this freedom comfort you; amidst waves of distress let it cheer you; when sorrows surround thee let it be thy solace. This is thy Father’s love-token; thou art free to it at all times. Thou art also *free to the throne of grace*. It is the believer’s privilege to have access at all times to His heavenly Father. Whatever our desires, our difficulties, our wants, we are at liberty to spread all before Him. It matters not how much we may have sinned, we may ask and expect pardon. It signifies nothing how poor we are, we may plead His promise that He will provide all things needful. We have permission to approach His throne at all times—in midnight’s darkest hour, or in noontide’s most burning heat. Exercise thy right, O believer, and live up to thy privilege. Thou art free to all that is treasured up *in Christ*—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. It matters not what thy need is, for there is fulness of supply in Christ, and it is there *for thee*. O what a “freedom” is thine! freedom from condemnation, freedom to the promises, freedom to the throne of grace, and at last freedom to enter heaven!





September 20

*And the three companies blew the trumpets,
and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands,
and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal:
and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.*

Judges 7:20

GIDEON ordered his men to do two things: covering up a torch in an earthen pitcher, he bade them, at an appointed signal, break the pitcher and let the light shine, and then sound with the trumpet, crying, “The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon! the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!” This is precisely what all Christians must do. First, *you must shine*; break the pitcher which conceals your light; throw aside the bushel which has been hiding your candle, and shine. Let your light shine before men; let your good works be such, that when men look upon you, they shall know that you have been with Jesus. Then *there must be the sound*, the blowing of the trumpet. There must be active exertions for the ingathering of sinners by proclaiming Christ crucified. Take the gospel to them; carry it to their door; put it in their way; do not suffer them to escape it; blow the trumpet right against their ears. Remember that the true war-cry of the Church is Gideon’s watchword, “*The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!*” God must do it, it is His own work. But we are not to be idle; instrumentality is to be used—“*The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!*” If we only cry, “The sword of the Lord!” we shall be guilty of an idle presumption; and if we shout, “The sword of Gideon!” alone, we shall manifest idolatrous reliance on an arm of flesh: we must blend the two in practical harmony, “*The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!*” We can do nothing of ourselves, but we can do everything by the help of our God; let us, therefore, in His name determine to go out personally and serve with our flaming torch of holy example, and with our trumpet tones of earnest declaration and testimony, and God shall be with us, and Midian shall be put to confusion, and the Lord of hosts shall reign forever and ever.





September 21

*Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good,
and I will plant them in this land assuredly
with my whole heart and with my whole soul.*

Jeremiah 32:41

HOW heart-cheering to the believer is the delight which God has in His saints! We cannot see any reason in ourselves why the Lord should take pleasure in us; we cannot take delight in ourselves, for we often have to groan, being burdened; conscious of our sinfulness, and deploring our unfaithfulness; and we fear that God's people cannot take much delight in us, for they must perceive so much of our imperfections and our follies, that they may rather lament our infirmities than admire our graces. But we love to dwell upon this transcendent truth, this glorious mystery: that as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so does the Lord rejoice over us. We do not read anywhere that God delighteth in the cloud-capped mountains, or the sparkling stars, but we do read that He delighteth in the habitable parts of the earth, and that His delights are with the sons of men. We do not find it written that even angels give His soul delight; nor doth He say, concerning cherubim and seraphim, "Thou shalt be called Hephzibah, for the Lord delighteth in thee"; but He does say all that to poor fallen creatures like ourselves, debased and depraved by sin, but saved, exalted, and glorified by His grace. In what strong language He expresses His delight in His people! Who could have conceived of the eternal One as bursting forth into a song? Yet it is written, "He will rejoice over thee with joy, He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." As He looked upon the world He had made, He said, "It is very good"; but when He beheld those who are the purchase of Jesus' blood, His own chosen ones, it seemed as if the great heart of the Infinite could restrain itself no longer, but overflowed in divine exclamations of joy. Should not we utter our grateful response to such a marvellous declaration of His love, and sing, "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation?"





September 22

*Let Israel rejoice in him that made him:
let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.*

Psalm 149:2

BE glad of heart, O believer, but take care that thy gladness has its spring *in the Lord*. Thou hast much cause for gladness in thy God, for thou canst sing with David, “God, my exceeding joy.” Be glad that the Lord reigneth, that Jehovah is King! Rejoice that He sits upon the throne, and ruleth all things! Every attribute of God should become a fresh ray in the sunlight of our gladness. That He is *wise* should make us glad, knowing as we do our own foolishness. That He is *mighty*, should cause us to rejoice who tremble at our weakness. That he is *everlasting*, should always be a theme of joy when we know that *we* wither as the grass. That He is *unchanging*, should perpetually yield us a song, since *we* change every hour. That He is full of grace, that He is overflowing with it, and that this grace in covenant He has given to us; that it is ours to cleanse us, ours to keep us, ours to sanctify us, ours to perfect us, ours to bring us to glory—all this should tend to make us glad in Him. This gladness in God is as a deep river; we have only as yet touched its brink, we know a little of its clear sweet, heavenly streams, but onward the depth is greater, and the current more impetuous in its joy. The Christian feels that he may delight himself not only in what God is, but also in all that God *has done* in the past. The Psalms show us that God’s people in olden times were wont to think much of God’s actions, and to have a song concerning each of them. So let God’s people now rehearse the deeds of the Lord! Let them tell of His mighty acts, and “sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously.” Nor let them ever cease to sing, for as new mercies flow to them day by day, so should their gladness in the Lord’s loving acts in providence and in grace show itself in continued thanksgiving. Be glad ye children of Zion and rejoice in the Lord your God.



*To the praise of the glory of his grace,
wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.
Ephesians 1:6*

WHAT a state of privilege! It includes our *justification* before God, but the term “acceptance” in the Greek means more than that. It signifies that we are the objects of *divine complacency*, nay, even of *divine delight*. How marvellous that we, worms, mortals, sinners, should be the objects of divine love! But it is only “*in the beloved.*” Some Christians seem to be accepted in their own experience, at least, that is their apprehension. When their spirit is lively, and their hopes bright, they think God accepts them, for they feel so high, so heavenly-minded, so drawn above the earth! But when their souls cleave to the dust, they are the victims of the fear that they are no longer accepted. If they could but see that all their high joys do not exalt them, and all their low despondencies do not really depress them in their Father’s sight, but that they stand accepted in One who never alters, in One who is always the beloved of God, always perfect, always without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, how much happier they would be, and how much more they would honour the Saviour! Rejoice then, believer, in this: thou art accepted “in the beloved.” Thou lookest within, and thou sayest, “There is nothing acceptable *here!*” But look at Christ, and see if there is not everything acceptable *there.* Thy sins trouble thee; but God has cast thy sins behind His back, and thou art accepted in the Righteous One. Thou hast to fight with corruption, and to wrestle with temptation, but thou art already accepted in Him who has overcome the powers of evil. The devil tempts thee; be of good cheer, he cannot destroy thee, for thou art accepted in Him who has broken Satan’s head. Know by full assurance thy glorious standing. Even glorified souls are not more accepted than thou art. They are only accepted in heaven “in the beloved,” and thou art even now accepted in Christ after the same manner.



September 24

For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.

Ezra 8:22

A CONVOY on many accounts would have been desirable for the pilgrim band, but a holy shame-facedness would not allow Ezra to seek one. He feared lest the heathen king should think his professions of faith in God to be mere hypocrisy, or imagine that the God of Israel was not able to preserve His own worshippers. He could not bring his mind to lean on an arm of flesh in a matter so evidently of the Lord, and therefore the caravan set out with no visible protection, guarded by Him who is the sword and shield of His people. It is to be feared that few believers feel this holy jealousy for God; even those who in a measure walk by faith, occasionally mar the lustre of their life by craving aid from man. It is a most blessed thing to have no props and no buttresses, but to stand upright on the Rock of Ages, upheld by the Lord alone. Would any believers seek state endowments for their Church, if they remembered that the Lord is dishonoured by their asking Caesar's aid? as if the Lord could not supply the needs of His own cause! Should we run so hastily to friends and relations for assistance, if we remembered that the Lord is magnified by our implicit reliance upon His solitary arm? My soul, wait thou only upon God. "But," says one, "are not means to be used?" Assuredly they are; but our fault seldom lies in their neglect: far more frequently it springs out of foolishly believing in them instead of believing in God. Few run too far in neglecting the creature's arm; but very many sin greatly in making too much of it. Learn, dear reader, to glorify the Lord by leaving means untried, if by using them thou wouldst dishonour the name of the Lord.



To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Romans 3:26

BEING justified by faith, we have peace with God. Conscience accuses no longer. Judgment now decides for the sinner instead of against him. Memory looks back upon past sins, with deep sorrow for the sin, but yet with no dread of any penalty to come; for Christ has paid the debt of His people to the last jot and tittle, and received the divine receipt; and unless God can be so unjust as to demand double payment for one debt, no soul for whom Jesus died as a substitute can ever be cast into hell. It seems to be one of the very principles of our enlightened nature to believe that God is just; we feel that it must be so, and this gives us our terror at first; but is it not marvellous that this very same belief that God is just, becomes afterwards the pillar of our confidence and peace! If God be just, I, a sinner, alone and without a substitute, must be punished; but Jesus stands in my stead and is punished for me; and now, if God be just, I, a sinner, standing in Christ, can never be punished. God must change His nature before one soul, for whom Jesus was a substitute, can ever by any possibility suffer the lash of the law. Therefore, Jesus having taken the place of the believer—having rendered a full equivalent to divine wrath for all that His people ought to have suffered as the result of sin, the believer can shout with glorious triumph, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Not God, for He hath justified; not Christ, for He hath died, “yea rather hath risen again.” My hope lives not because I am not a sinner, but because I am a sinner for whom Christ died; my trust is not that I am holy, but that being unholy, He is my righteousness. My faith rests not upon what I am, or shall be, or feel, or know, but in what Christ is, in what He has done, and in what He is now doing for me. On the lion of justice the fair maid of hope rides like a queen.



September 26

*I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse,
and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom;
and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white.*

Zechariah 1:8

THE vision in this chapter describes the condition of Israel in Zechariah's day; but being interpreted in its aspect towards us, it describes the Church of God as we find it now in the world. The Church is compared to a myrtle grove flourishing in a valley. It is *hidden*, unobserved, secreted; courting no honour and attracting no observation from the careless gazer. The Church, like her head, has a glory, but it is concealed from carnal eyes, for the time of her breaking forth in all her splendour is not yet come. The idea of *tranquil security* is also suggested to us: for the myrtle grove in the valley is still and calm, while the storm sweeps over the mountain summits. Tempests spend their force upon the craggy peaks of the Alps, but down yonder where flows the stream which maketh glad the city of our God, the myrtles flourish by the still waters, all unshaken by the impetuous wind. How great is the inward tranquility of God's Church! Even when opposed and persecuted, she has a peace which the world gives not, and which, therefore, it cannot take away: the peace of God which passeth all understanding keeps the hearts and minds of God's people. Does not the metaphor forcibly picture the peaceful, *perpetual growth* of the saints? The myrtle sheds not her leaves, she is always green; and the Church in her worst time still hath a blessed verdure of grace about her; nay, she has sometimes exhibited *most* verdure when her winter has been sharpest. She has prospered most when her adversities have been most severe. Hence the text *hints at victory*. The myrtle is the emblem of peace, and a significant token of *triumph*. The brows of conquerors were bound with myrtle and with laurel; and is not the Church ever victorious? Is not every Christian more than a conqueror through Him that loved him? Living in peace, do not the saints fall asleep in the arms of victory?





September 27

*Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee,
O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help,
and who is the sword of thy excellency!
and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee;
and thou shalt tread upon their high places.*
Deuteronomy 33:29

HE who affirms that Christianity makes men miserable, is himself an utter stranger to it. It were strange indeed, if it made us wretched, for see *to what a position it exalts us!* It makes us sons of God. Suppose you that God will give all the happiness to His enemies, and reserve all the mourning for His own family? Shall His foes have mirth and joy, and shall His home-born children inherit sorrow and wretchedness? Shall the sinner, who has no part in Christ, call himself rich in happiness, and shall we go mourning as if we were penniless beggars? No, we will rejoice in the Lord always, and glory in our inheritance, for we “have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” The rod of chastisement must rest upon us in our measure, but it worketh for us the comfortable fruits of righteousness; and therefore by the aid of the divine Comforter, we, the “people saved of the Lord,” will joy in the God of our salvation. We are married unto Christ; and shall our great Bridegroom permit His spouse to linger in constant grief? Our hearts are knit unto Him: we are His members, and though for awhile we may suffer as our Head once suffered, yet we are even now blessed with heavenly blessings in Him. We have the earnest of our inheritance in the comforts of the Spirit, which are neither few nor small. Heritors of joy for ever, we have foretastes of our portion. There are streaks of the light of joy to herald our eternal sunrising. Our riches are beyond the sea; our city with firm foundations lies on the other side the river; gleams of glory from the spirit-world cheer our hearts, and urge us onward. Truly is it said of us, “Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?”





September 28

*The LORD looketh from heaven;
he beholdeth all the sons of men.
Psalm 33:13*

PERHAPS no figure of speech represents God in a more gracious light than when He is spoken of as stooping from His throne, and coming down from heaven to attend to the wants and to behold the woes of mankind. We love Him, who, when Sodom and Gomorrah were full of iniquity, would not destroy those cities until He had made a personal visitation of them. We cannot help pouring out our heart in affection for our Lord who inclines His ear from the highest glory, and puts it to the lip of the dying sinner, whose failing heart longs after reconciliation. How can we but love Him when we know that He numbers the very hairs of our heads, marks our path, and orders our ways? Specially is this great truth brought near to our heart, when we recollect how attentive He is, not merely to the temporal interests of His creatures, but to their spiritual concerns. Though leagues of distance lie between the finite creature and the infinite Creator, yet there are links uniting both. When a tear is wept by thee, think not that God doth not behold; for, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Thy sigh is able to move the heart of Jehovah; thy whisper can incline His ear unto thee; thy prayer can stay His hand; thy faith can move His arm. Think not that God sits on high taking no account of thee. Remember that however poor and needy thou art, yet the Lord thinketh upon thee. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him.

Oh! then repeat the truth that never tires;
No God is like the God my soul desires;
He at whose voice heaven trembles, even He,
Great as He is, knows how to stoop to me.





September 29

*Then the priest shall consider: and,
behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh,
he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague:
it is all turned white: he is clean.*

Leviticus 13:13

STRANGE enough this regulation appears, yet there was wisdom in it, for the throwing out of the disease proved that the constitution was sound. This morning it may be well for us to see the typical teaching of so singular a rule. We, too, are lepers, and may read the law of leper as applicable to ourselves. When a man sees himself to be altogether lost and ruined, covered all over with the defilement of sin, and no part free from pollution; when he disclaims all righteousness of his own, and pleads guilty before the Lord, then is he clean through the blood of Jesus, and the grace of God. Hidden, unfelt, unconfessed iniquity is the true leprosy, but when sin is seen and felt it has received its death blow, and the Lord looks with eyes of mercy upon the soul afflicted with it. Nothing is more deadly than self-righteousness, or more hopeful than contrition. We must confess that we are “nothing else but sin,” for no confession short of this will be the whole truth, and if the Holy Spirit be at work with us, convincing us of sin, there will be no difficulty about making such an acknowledgment—it will spring spontaneously from our lips. What comfort does the text afford to those under a deep sense of sin! Sin mourned and confessed, however black and foul, shall never shut a man out from the Lord Jesus. Whosoever cometh unto Him, He will in no wise cast out. Though dishonest as the thief, though unchaste as the woman who was a sinner, though fierce as Saul of Tarsus, though cruel as Manasseh, though rebellious as the prodigal, the great heart of love will look upon the man who feels himself to have no soundness in him, and will pronounce him clean, when he trusts in Jesus crucified. Come to Him, then, poor heavy-laden sinner,

Come needy, come guilty, come loathsome and bare;
You can't come too filthy—come just as you are.





September 30

Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.

Psalm 66:2

IT is not left to our own option whether we shall praise God or not. Praise is God's most righteous due, and every Christian, as the recipient of His grace, is bound to praise God from day to day. It is true we have no authoritative rubric for daily praise; we have no commandment prescribing certain hours of song and thanksgiving: but the law written upon the heart teaches us that it is right to praise God; and the unwritten mandate comes to us with as much force as if it had been recorded on the tables of stone, or handed to us from the top of thundering Sinai. Yes, it is the Christian's *duty* to praise God. It is not only a pleasurable exercise, but it is the absolute obligation of his life. Think not ye who are always mourning, that ye are guiltless in this respect, or imagine that ye can discharge your duty to your God without songs of praise. You are bound by the bonds of His love to bless His name so long as you live, and His praise should continually be in your mouth, for you are blessed, in order that you may bless Him; "this people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise"; and if you do not praise God, you are not bringing forth the fruit which He, as the Divine Husbandman, has a right to expect at your hands. Let not your harp then hang upon the willows, but take it down, and strive, with a grateful heart, to bring forth its loudest music. Arise and chant His praise. With every morning's dawn, lift up your notes of thanksgiving, and let every setting sun be followed with your song. Girdle the earth with your praises; surround it with an atmosphere of melody, and God Himself will hearken from heaven and accept your music.

"E'en so I love Thee, and will love,
And in Thy praise will sing,
Because Thou art my loving God,
And my redeeming King."





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.

* * *

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)

