

A GOLDEN TREASURY
FOR
THE CHILDREN OF GOD,
WHOSE TREASURE IS IN HEAVEN

Consisting of
Selected Texts of the Bible,
With Practical and Devotional Observations
for Every Day in the Year

BY
C. H. von BOGATZKY.
(1690-1774)

With a preface
on the right use of this book.

Where your treasure is, there will your heart also be.
(*Matt. 6:21*)

CONTENTS

Page No.

Biographical Note of the Author and his Writings	(i)
---	------------

The Readings

Biographical Note on the Author and His Work.

Carl Heinrich von Bogatzky was born into a titled family in Germany in 1690, living until 1774. He trained for the ministry and studied theology under August Hermann Franke, an exponent of the German Pietist movement within the Lutheran Church. However due to his ill health, he was prevented from taking any appointment to a pastorate.

What must have been of much disappointment and frustration to him proved to be the seed-bed of a fruitful, written ministry. The Lord dispensed to him a field of activity which doubtless called for much patience and submission to the divine will, but how the church has profited as a result.

His writings show an intimate acquaintanceship with the spiritual turmoils and difficulties attendant on seeking to walk the Christian way. His own experience no doubt underlies the acute insights he displays in his writings and he is a reliable guide. Constantly he makes reference to the text of the Bible and brings out the experiential truth of the sacred text. The whole is permeated with his desire for a closer walk with God and a deeper appreciation of what the dear Lord has done for us, and is still doing for us.

Here is religion as the inner life of the soul, a daily avoidance of sin, an awareness of being tempted by the attractive deceitfulness of Satan and the need for constant vigilance on the part of the believer. The pull of this world is set before us, together with warnings against it and instruction in how to escape its winsome attractions. Not forgotten is comfort for the fallen, admonition to the backslider and encouragement for the weak. The writer may well be described as a man for all seasons, in season and out of season. Take it and read it. In a day of Laodicean religion, it is essential reading. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me.' (Rev. 3:20) The Lord bless you.

JANUARY 1

HOSANNA (Mark 11:9).

A NEW scene of time now begins: raise your Hosanna, so that the Lord may save, bless and prosper you; may He grant you a happy new year indeed! For this purpose begin it with a dedication of yourself to God. Your time, circumstances and life are in His hands, implore His blessing and protection over you this ensuing year. Begin this and every following day with prayer. Let God have your first thoughts in the morning and the impression they make will not easily be erased by worldly matters. Grace is promised in the use of means; be diligent and punctual in their performance. Let your daily request be for an increasing knowledge of yourself and of Jesus Christ in His offices; for a sense of pardoning mercy; for a lively vigorous faith; for communion with the Father and His Son through the Spirit; for true holiness in heart and for strength and protection against your spiritual foes, and for persevering grace to hold out to the end. Pray for the prosperity of Zion; they prosper who love her; for your friends and relations, asking the Almighty to take them into a covenant relation with Himself; for a blessing on your worldly affairs; for a sanctified use of health or sickness, prosperity or adversity, as God is pleased to send. Perhaps, this may be the last year of the Lord's patience and your pilgrimage. Is your state safe? Are you a real believer in Jesus? Is there the oil of grace in your vessel? If so, you are prepared for every emergency.

* * * * *

JANUARY 2

I will ransom you from the power of the grave. I will redeem you from death; O Death I will abolish you! O Grave, I will be your destruction (Hosea 13:14)!

Christ, having despoiled principalities and powers, made a show of them openly, triumphing over them openly in it (i.e. in His cross) (Col. 2:15).

THE world is afraid of hidden poison where there is none. The real hidden poison of sin the Lord grant me to fear everywhere, for it has infected all things and all places. But, O dear Saviour, being my all-sufficient preservation and antidote in all places, dwell in me continually and increase my faith, so that I may know You and enjoy You more and more. Take away all slavish fear of death and hell from my soul, for You have conquered both for me.

* * * * *

JANUARY 3

But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are Your clay and You our potter, and we are all the work of Your hand (Isaiah 66:8).

BEING only clay in your hands, O Lord, as I must not, so I would not resist Your workings by any means. And I pray and hope that You will prepare and perfect me for a fit vessel of grace in spite of a thousand hindrances. No work of Yours comes ever short of its intended perfection, for who can stay Your hand? It is your own saying, ‘I will work, and who will hinder it (Isaiah 43:13)?’

An artist delights in his own workmanship and would not purposely leave one single flaw or defect in it (Phil. 1:6.). Then look upon me, O wise Creator; see how flesh and blood disorder my poor soul, and deliver me from all that may endanger my spiritual life. Knowing You can do no less than a human artist, who is ever ready to exert his skill to amend and perfect his work, I trust that You will not always suffer these impediments to hinder and disgrace Your work. Indeed, such is Your wisdom and power that out of darkness You can bring light, out of sickness health; and though I am now destitute of strength, and life, I believe Your work will be finished at last and glorify the name of its Maker (1 Pet. 5:10).

* * * * *

JANUARY 4

*Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!
When the Lord brings back the captivity of His people,
Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad (Psalm 14:7).
Divine answer: If the Son makes you free, you will be free
indeed (John 8:56 See also verses 31,32).*

IT is not as if sin should be utterly destroyed, or entirely dead and could not stir any more in the heart of believers, for the scripture speaks of them as still having the lusts and motions of sin (Gal.5:17). But it imports only that it has no power either to condemn or to reign over us, indeed, it will be weakened more and more (Rom.6:12,14). And so Christ reigns in the heart even where sin dwells, in the midst of His enemies. It is a dangerous error indeed to believe that sin is destroyed in the root. If indeed it were so, whence those frequent expressions and exhortations to crucify, withstand and rule over it (Gal. 5:24)?

* * * * *

JANUARY 5

All that will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). The world hates them, because they are not of the world (John 17:14).

THE children of God do not love and please the world, and are often greatly afflicted on account of abounding wickedness, particularly the profanation of the Lord's name. Now, when you can like the world, and the world like you, there must be much worldliness in you, for the world loves its own.

Many pretend to be Christians, but they will not endure persecution. Instead of this, they blame others for too much rashness, and not acting prudently enough to avoid the mockery and hatred of the world. Therefore they propose to take wiser measures and in order to do more good, take great care not to be 'despised and rejected by men (Isaiah 53:3).' But under the pretence of wisdom and prudence very often lies concealed a dangerous love of the world and a fear of men. Be noble-minded, live as a Christian indeed and do not be ashamed to bear the cross of Christ. 'The disciple is not above his Master (Matt. 10:24).' Has eternal Love, Wisdom and Power endured 'the contradiction of sinners (Heb.12:3).'? Indeed, you would be wiser than Him if you could escape the reproach and hatred of the world.

* * * * *

JANUARY 6

All things are possible to him who believes (Mark 9:23).

FAITH is the principal thing in the Christian religion. It is the spiritual eye, enlightening the mind, directing the feet and cheering the heart; the whole turns upon it. As our faith is, so is our strength and fruitfulness in good works. But at the same time there is nothing more out of our own power than to believe, even after the work of grace has been actually worked in our hearts. Therefore nothing is more needful than to pray for faith as long as we live. May the Lord give and increase it continually.

Nothing can be stronger in the universe than the hand of faith. By it we lay a sure hold on our glorious and almighty LORD in heaven, and such an unbreakable union is established between Christ and a believer that none can separate the one from the other, nor all the powers of hell and sin avail anything against it. Faith breaks through the greatest obstacles, removes mountains and has, as it were, a kind of omnipotence in it. 'For this is the victory that overcomes the world: our faith (1 John 5:4).' Indeed, it even wrestles with God and prevails (Gen. 32:28). Just as straw cannot withstand the power of fire, so since God is a wall of fire around His people, the greatest power of our mighty enemies will be consumed like the stubble. And so look on Him steadfastly and believe in Him with a simple heart. Wondrous are His ways with His people and past finding out and at last all their sorrows and strife, by the management of His infinite wisdom, must give way to a glorious and triumphant end.

* * * * *

JANUARY 7

Christ is all and in all (Col. 3:11).

For a believer to receive and know Christ as his all is the only means truly to live a life of faith; and when he has done this it will not be hard to resign all other things. To talk much of Christ and make frequent use of His name to one another is commendable, if the heart goes along with the words; but to call upon God the Father with a filial confidence is also our duty and does not contradict the apostle's meaning at all, for it is only through Christ we can do it. And as He says Himself, 'I and My Father are One (John 10:30).' You are my All, O gracious Lord. What then can I want? I desire no more than to be put always in mind of this by the animating voice of Your Spirit.

* * * * *

JANUARY 8

They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of GodWhoever believes on Him will not be ashamed (Rom. 10:3,11).

THE same mistake which proved so fatal to the Jews proves equally fatal to many who pretend to call themselves Christians. Ignorant alike of the divine character of their own, they build their hope of the favour of God and eternal life upon some works of righteousness which they have done, or intend to do, and reject the righteousness of Christ, in which alone they can be justified and accepted. In this mistake the decent and the profane are equally involved, for the worst of mankind fancy themselves possessed of some virtues and good qualities that will entitle them to the divine favour. The delusion remains till the light of the Holy Spirit darts in, like a sunbeam, upon the mind, and reveals the guilt and pollution that defiles the best of us. We then abhor ourselves and look to the free grace of God in Christ Jesus for pardon and salvation. We have a hope that makes us not ashamed.

* * * * *

JANUARY 9

I cried with my whole heart, 'Hear me, O LORD I will keep Your statutes.'.....Those who love Your Law have great peace, and nothing will cause them to stumble.....I have kept Your precepts and Your testimonies, for all my ways are before You.....I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments (Psalm 119:145,165,168,176).

THE Word of God should ever be connected with prayer, for why is it that many hear and read without being the better? They do not pray in faith for a blessing. We must, like David, pray with the utmost fervour. Thus we may understand and retain the word of God and bring forth fruit, for a Christian has nothing so much at heart, as that he may always act according to the will and word of God. His prayer is, 'Lord, let my footsteps be sure according to Your Word, and let nothing contrary to Your Law have dominion over me, either in my doctrine or practice.' If this prayer is granted, great will be our peace, for the Word of God is a word of peace. Jesus Himself will be our peace and then nothing will cause us to stumble. We shall take heed to all our ways before God and so walk before Him as to continue humble like David, who considered himself a straying and lost sheep. Lord, we are by nature straying and lost sheep; seek and fetch us back from the error of our ways, and preserve us in Your pasture.

* * * * *

JANUARY 10

I have waited for Your salvation, O LORD (Gen. 49:18).

MANY have received comfort from these words in death and have waited in faith for their salvation. The thoughtless and impenitent wait only for temporal prosperity in their lives and therefore cannot expect eternal bliss, but on the contrary a dreadful judgement after death. Would that they would enter into themselves this very day, so that at the eve of life they might, like Jacob and Simeon, depart in peace. We will not therefore look for any earthly things but for the Saviour, Who has already come, Who will grant us His salvation, His aid and deliverance in life and death, and Who will conduct us safely to the last, though we should wait some time for His help. Yes, my Redeemer, those who wait, depend upon and hope in You will not be ashamed; grant us only faith and patience, so that we may wait on You from one morning watch to another. May we, enduring all things, make the whole course of our lives one perpetual expectation of Your aid, and may we ever abundantly experience Your help and salvation, especially at our latter end.

* * * * *

JANUARY 11

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life; for God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believes on Him is not condemned (John 3:16,28).

OH that these truly precious words were ever warmly impressed on our hearts, that they were our last thoughts at night, and the first at our waking in the morning, that they were improved in such a manner as to make our dying-bed easy in the evening of our life and to ensure our rising with gladness on the morning of the resurrection. And what more blessed and delightful meditations can I daily dwell upon, than to think thus? God has loved me, even me, when I was His enemy, and so loved me that He gave me His only Son. Bless me with faith in Christ, then Christ is mine and all things are mine (1 Cor. 3:21), for He has not spared His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. How will He not with Him also freely give us all things (Rom. 8:32)? He will never suffer a believing soul to perish; He has passed His word for it. It is he who says, 'I shall not perish: I shall not be condemned, but have everlasting life if I believe.' This I will build on and depend on till my last moments, as upon an immoveable rock. Amen and Amen.

* * * * *

JANUARY 12

In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:14)....having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of the ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross (Col. 2:13,14). When Jesus had received the vinegar, He therefore said, 'It is finished (John 19:30).'

HAVE you felt the weight of your own guilt and misery and been enabled, in reality and truth, to lay hold of the blood of Christ by faith for your redemption and faithfully to devote yourself to Him in heart and life? In that case you have a sure foundation to go on and let it be your constant care to depend firmly on these and suchlike declarations. Look to Jesus for every blessing you stand in need of. Has Christ brought life and immortality to light? Then look to Him and live. Is there redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins? Then throw all your guilt on His atonement. Has He blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances which was against you? Then shake off all self-righteous dependence, and legal fear also. Did He die for your sins? Then let His goodness and love lead you to unfeigned repentance. Let the sense of your sins break your heart, but encourage your hope in the gospel.

* * * * *

JANUARY 13

Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of Your wings (Psalm 17:8). Divine answer: He will cover you with His feathers and under His wings will You trust. His truth will be your shield and buckler (Psalm 91:4).

THERE is no one, O Lord, who has more need continually to keep close to You in prayer and faith; and at the same time no one is more unable to do it than I am, the least of all Your flock. Oh that You would be graciously pleased to incline and enable me to this blessed work; and grant that Your good Spirit, according to His own pleasure, may never allow me to be faint and backward in the same. While I truly rest my faith under the wings of Your grace, I am sure of defence, power and comfort, but as soon as I wander from You, I am in danger of losing the comfortable sense of these privileges and falling into various errors and perplexities. 'Guide me, O Lord, by Your counsel, and at last receive me into glory (Psalm 73:24).' Amen.

* * * * *

JANUARY 14

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt. 4:17).'

THE kingdom of heaven appertains to those who repent. The first mark of repentance is poverty of spirit, because of which Jesus says, (Matt. chap. 5:3) 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' John preached repentance, Jesus preaches it here, and so did his apostles afterward. Thus true repentance is necessary for all, and the beginning of it is to acknowledge ourselves poor, miserable sinners, depraved by nature and totally devoid of righteousness and any worth of our own. It is to confess our nakedness, to drop all the fig-leaves of vain excuses and false comfort, to lay open our poverty, our shortcomings, before GOD, to plead guilty to all our sins, and seek mercy from Christ. If we do this we are blessed, and the kingdom of heaven is ours. This poverty of spirit is both the first and last foundation laid in the heart; for the faithful are more and more grounded in poverty of spirit, the nearer they approach their consummation.

* * * * *

JANUARY 15

Pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17).

If we have not got grace enough it is because we do not pray enough. For most true it is that we do not need to strive to move God to compassion and extort from Him, as it were, by our prayers the blessings which He has promised to give. Very far from it. He is every minute communicating Himself to us; in every word He holds forth Christ and every good thing to us. But we must always have a soul hungering after Christ and by incessant prayer stretch out the hand of faith to receive Him. This is chiefly to be understood of the inward desires and groanings of our spirit, but we must not omit to pour out our supplications daily by words as often as we can, else our secret mental prayers may at last become so secret as to cease perhaps entirely.

* * * * *

JANUARY 16

'Abide in Me (John 15:4).' *'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life (John 6:68).'* *'It is good for me to draw near to God. I have put my trust in the Lord God (Psalm 73:28).'*

TO abide in Christ, Who is our righteousness and strength, and not to be removed from Him, is the very life and power of Christianity. We do this when our thoughts are going out after Him, our hearts cleaving to Him and our minds staying upon Him. Now to know Christ, and thus to abide in Him as our righteousness, brings peace and joy. Further, this joy in the LORD is certainly followed with strength to overcome sin and the world, which believers renounce the more readily, since they have found something better in Christ. May the LORD give me grace likewise to abide immoveably in Him.

* * * * *

JANUARY 17

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree;' so that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal 3:13,14).

THE Spirit of sanctification is the gift of Christ. Consequently there is a great difference between moral actions done by our own strength, and true sanctification of the Spirit. The latter cannot take place before the soul truly receives Christ and abides in Him as its only propitiation, righteousness and peace; for being first made our righteousness to us by God, He will then likewise be made our sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30). And the kingdom, work and image of God will go on best when we trust least to our own strength. Sanctification now becomes a more easy task, since Christ lives and works in us and we, in a childlike frame of mind, live henceforth to Him Who died for us.

* * * * *

JANUARY 18

Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom. 10:4).

THE Law calls for a perfect righteousness which will never be found in ourselves, but all the Law's demands were fulfilled by our Surety. Every true believer finds that righteousness which he stands in need of in Christ and is enabled, through the Spirit, to rest upon it for his justification. He faithfully endeavours to obey the Law as the great rule of his duty both to God and man, yet is so sensible of his own manifold defects that he would utterly despair if he could not look up to Jesus and say, 'You must answer for me, O Lord my God.'

* * * * *

JANUARY 19

But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned to Noah into the ark. Then he put out his hand, took her and pulled her to him into the ark (Gen. 8:9).

THAT dove-like Spirit communicated to the soul in regeneration, can find no rest for the sole of His foot until He brings us to Jesus, Who is the great Ark of the Covenant. Many, on their first awaking from sin, apply themselves to very hard works and rigorous duties, thereby expecting to find rest for their wounded consciences. But, though the right and diligent use of all the means of grace is absolutely required, yet great care must be taken not to quiet ourselves by that only. We should not place any confidence at all in our own doings, but only look for rest, through the blood of Christ. To be found justified and accepted in Him would soon fill our hearts with peace, indeed, encourage and enable us to do good works (2 Chron. 17:6).

* * * * *

JANUARY 20

'By this will all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:35).' Forbearing one another in love. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Let the sun not go down on your wrath; but be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you (Eph. 4:3,26,32).

HUMBLE Christians never affect singularity nor pretend to have the preference over one another. They rather study to be of one mind, do not strive about words, lest the general harmony existing between them and the edification of souls should be hindered. Whoever judges and blames everything and can never agree in words and notions, or join in devotions with experienced Christians, is puffed up with self-conceit and is in the way to make a dangerous shipwreck, for 'pride comes before a fall.'

* * * * *

JANUARY 21

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept (Matt. 25:5).

OH that I may be roused out of my slumber and be watchful and ready against the coming of my Bridegroom! How many are there who set out in good earnest on their way to heaven and run well for some time, but at last are lulled to rest and entangled again with a false notion of liberty. Even the wise virgins fell asleep. Let this be a warning to me, O Lord. Set a guard before my eyes, ears and other faculties, lest the world should again enter through these avenues of the heart. If the spark is not speedily extinguished it would soon break out into a flame. Likewise, sin is of a progressive nature and its venom spreads quickly and very widely, unless it is stopped and opposed in time. Watch, therefore, over this unsteady heart of mine, O Keeper of Israel, so that as soon as it begins to wander from You, I may be alarmed and flee from sin as from a serpent. Give me grace to look upon every hour as my last, so that being ever wisely upon my guard, I may meet You with joy, when my time is run out, whenever it pleases You to call me hence.

* * * * *

JANUARY 22

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way (Matt. 13:25).

NO wonder that Christians lose their power and strength if the enemy of souls finds them asleep. How soon may he gain an advantage from without, if a strict guard is not kept within. Though Satan seems to sleep sometimes, and we should by all appearance be in no great danger, it is only his stratagem to make us careless. He never fails to be vigilant and watch his opportunity, so that he may offer us battle with his advantage; and who knows but that he may gain the victory by those very sins to which, perhaps, we for many years had hardly any temptation. How cunningly he works, how enticing the world is. Even in lawful things, very often, the most dangerous snares lie hidden. A single word that we hear may be able to disturb our peace. One unguarded look is sometimes enough to infatuate our hearts. There is danger on all sides. Unless the Lord opens our eyes and preserves us on all occasions, each of us, even the best, may still be overcome and deadly hurt by sin and the world. Satan is particularly busy to sift the godly most of all; and having caught them in his net, he triumphs exceedingly over them. O Lord, let me never fall asleep again.

* * * * *

JANUARY 23

The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage. And God looked upon the children of Israel and God had respect unto them (Exod 1:12, 2:23, 25).

THE more we are oppressed by our spiritual and temporal enemies, the more will the kingdom of God increase in us and through us. And when distress and dangers oppress us most, God hastens to us and makes our necessity itself the means of relief; for the ways of GOD are always wonderful. It was an extreme distress when the children of the Israelites were cast into the river, but this was the means of preserving Moses, their intended deliverer. When Moses came, they were not relieved immediately, for their calamities increased. This is God's method. But they cried the more to God and He relieved them by signs and wonders. After this, their distress was greater than ever at the Red Sea. Likewise, after God has shown His glory in assisting us, He can still send greater trials. But when they were beset on all sides by distress and death, then came the most glorious succour of all, and their enemies perished in the Red Sea. Lord, let us not despair in any extremity, but enable us to believe and experience that the greater our distress, the nearer and more glorious will be Your aid, and all our enemies will be consumed as stubble before the devouring flame.

* * * * *

JANUARY 24

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:10,19). 'He who loves Me will be loved by My Father; and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him. We will come to him, and make our abode with him (John 14:21,23).'

What a glorious promise! What manner of love this is! LORD, I would not exchange my cross and sufferings, much less Your love, for the love and honours of the world. Only make it known to me how great Your love is, and how much You have forgiven me, that I may love You much again, and be thereby still better purged from the inordinate love of temporal things. It is my earnest desire that the gates of my heart should be open to none but You, that You alone may dwell in me. Shed Your love abroad in my heart, quicken and renew all the faculties of my mind and body, and work everything in and for me.

* * * * *

JANUARY 25

Therefore we labour, so that whether present or absent, we may be acceptable to Him (2 Cor. 5:9).

THIS indeed is the true disposition of a soul espoused to Christ. She has but one care, which is to please Him in all things. And this desire to do His will is, as it were, the ring and seal of her Bridegroom, which she may look on even in the absence of all spiritual joy, as a token for good, that she is His spouse.

Did not this day, then, my soul, ought to be a new wedding-day to Christ? He desires that you should be betrothed to Him right now, and waits only for your consent. Listen, daughter! consider and incline your ear! Be no longer married to the world. Forget your own people and your father's house, and take Him alone for your husband. Thus will the King greatly desire your beauty (Psalm 45:11). Will you give the refusal to this glorious and loving Saviour? I hope not. Give it rather to the world and resolutely say, 'It is enough, I have done with you, poor world! I break the bonds of my former love; my eyes and my feet will henceforth only be directed to the blessed and eternal city of the new Jerusalem, where my heavenly bridegroom resides. And what need I have to be duly prepared, dressed and beautified against His coming, and the time of His taking me home to Himself? Lord Jesus, keep me longing for Your appearance.'

* * * * *

JANUARY 26

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16).

WOULD we were all wise enough to prepare and provide ourselves in due time with the right armour of faith, before the time of need and hour of death approaches. Let us begin now and go directly to the gate of mercy, lest we should come too late and be undone. Listen to the encouragement of Christ. 'I am the door (John 10:9),' and, 'I am the way (John 14:6).' Now by this door you may find the entrance into the heart and favour of God, Christ Himself sitting on the mercy-seat to receive and welcome the worst of sinners. And there is no drawing near to God but through Him and clothed in the robes of the righteousness of Him Who is our only Redeemer, Mediator and Advocate. He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, indeed the very All in All to believers. With Christ they can never part, He never part with them.

* * * * *

JANUARY 27

But God commends His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, shall we be saved from wrath through Him, for if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life (Rom. 5:8,9,10).

HERE we have much more reason to cry out than Moses 'Indeed, He loved the people.' But here I must beseech You, too, O Lord, that this infinite gift of Your Son may appear to me greater and greater every day, and that Your love shining out in His redemption may so go on to increase in my soul that I despise all the clouds of darkness, unbelief and hard thoughts of your goodness. Whenever this slanderous spirit tries to lift up its head, grant that in spite of all its suggestions my faith and love may be quickened and strengthened in such a manner that I praise heartily Your great love. This is the chief desire which I offer You in all my prayers, night and day. My want of faith and love, I am sensible, is still my greatest want. My soul is like a large empty vessel, but I pray You to fill it speedily, notwithstanding any opposition that may be made by my old nature.

* * * * *

JANUARY 28

For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered on our behalf, leaving us an example, so that you might follow in His footsteps (1Pet. 2:21).

TO believe in Christ for justification is but one half of the duty of faith. It respects Christ only as He died and suffered for us as He made atonement for our sins, peace with God, and reconciliation for us, and as our righteousness. Unto these ends He is indeed principally proposed to us in the gospel: and with respect to them we are expected to receive Him and to believe in Him. But this is not all that is required of us. Christ in the gospel is proposed as our pattern and example of holiness. And as it is a cursed imagination that the whole end of His life and death was to exemplify and confirm the doctrine of holiness which He preached, likewise to neglect the consideration by faith of His being our example for that end and labouring after conformity to Him, is evil and pernicious. Therefore let us be much in contemplation of what He was, what He did, how in all instances of duties and trials He carried Himself, until a glorious image of His perfect holiness is implanted in our minds, and we are hereby made like Him.

* * * * *

JANUARY 29

(The gospel).....is now made known to all nations for faith to obey (Rom. 16:26).

THE obedience of faith here spoken of is the same thing as believing the report of the gospel (Rom. 10:16). It is a hearty submission to the righteousness of God, indeed to Christ, Who is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes. This obedience of faith, strictly speaking, is that by which we give glory to God, take the full shame of ourselves, renounce all that nature is proud of and are brought to rest for our justification and acceptance with God on that alone which has satisfied His Law and justice. However slightly we may be disposed to pass over this, it is a high point of obedience, not easily brought about in such a creature as man and needing effectual light and energy from above. It is taught purely from above, and he who would learn it must seek it by prayer continually. We shall strive in vain to obey God in other things until we learn to obey Him in this. Careless reader, see to it that you learn your need of Christ. Awakened and distressed sinner, do not seek to heal yourself by a forced obedience, but learn the obedience of faith, so that you may be purged in your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (*see* Heb. 9:14). Self-despairing sinner, obey the gospel call of God to your soul and live. Believer, let your fruit be holiness.

* * * * *

JANUARY 30

Come unto Me all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matt. 11:28).

THIS is a free invitation to every weary and heavy laden sinner, made by the One Who alone is able to take away the load and guilt of sin. Every person under the pressure of sin not only may, but must, come to Jesus, thus laden with guilt, if he hopes to succeed for pardon. While we endeavour to prepare our way by holy qualifications, we rather fill it with stumbling blocks, whereby our souls are hindered from attaining to salvation by Christ. Christ would have us believe on Him Who justifies the ungodly (Rom.4:5), and therefore He does not require us to be godly before we believe. He came as a physician for the sick and does not expect that they will recover health in the least degree before they come to Him. The worst sinners are fitly prepared and qualified for this design, which is to display the exceeding riches of divine grace in pardoning our sins and saving us freely (see Eph. 2:5-8). It is no affront to Christ, or slighting or despising the justice and holiness of God to come to God while we are polluted sinners. Rather is it an affront and despising of the saving grace, merit and fulness of Christ Himself, and of all holiness and righteousness in Him by faith.

* * * * *

JANUARY 31

The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it (Matt 13:45, 46).

THEY are blessed to whom the gospel has made known the unsearchable riches of Christ. He is that one pearl of great price in comparison with whom all other goodly things that men desire are worthless. Without Him we are poor and miserable, though we abound in all manner of worldly store. Yet if we have found Him and discovered the excellency of His name we are in possession of a treasure that makes us rich indeed. We have reason to be content with our portion though stripped of every earthly comfort, for the Father gives grace and glory, indeed eternal life, in His Son Jesus Christ. The man who has the Son has life. My soul, you, like the merchant, have been seeking goodly pearls and looking eagerly here and there for happiness all your days. Have you at length been enlightened to perceive where true joys are to be found? Then you will be willing to sell everything in order to win Christ and to be found in Him. If there is anything with which you are unwilling to part for His sake, you do not know His value, you are not worthy of Him.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 1

God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6).

WITHOUT this saving knowledge, we have no God, no Christ, no grace, no faith, no union with Christ, no actual justification, pardon of sin, peace, nor eternal life. But whoever has found Christ, the pearl of great price, the hidden treasure, has found matter of great rejoicing. He was poor before, but this treasure enriched him; he was naked before, but, finding this treasure, he is gloriously clothed. He was forced before to feed on husks, but now he feeds on the bread of life; he was far in debt before, but now he sees the debt is paid and that he is justified from all things and pardoned for ever. He was a child of wrath before but now he has become a child of God; he was a captive and in chains before, but now he is set at liberty. He was condemned before, but now he sees there is no condemnation to him, nor to anyone who is in Christ Jesus; though he was a fool before, now he is made wise to salvation. Can you set your seal to the truth and power of such experience? Then you are wise indeed. If not, you have much to learn, and so apply with speed, remembering it is God alone Who gives this light and knowledge.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 2

This is His commandment, that we should believe on the Name of His Son, Jesus Christ (1 John 3:23), for God has sent His only-begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him (1 John 4:9).

THE Father breaks out, as it were, through the whole Scripture in high praises of His Son. He calls out of heaven, ‘This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear Him (Matt.17:5).’ Nothing, therefore, can be more agreeable to Him, than for us to receive this His Son; and to believe His report, ‘The Father Himself loves you because You have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God (John 16:27).’ And on doing this we shall have life, but by omitting it, we look on Him as a liar. Unbelief, therefore, which refuses to accept this great gift, is, no doubt, the greatest of all sins. O Lord, teach me this and grant me faith.

‘Why are you so backward, my poor soul, to believe, like the rest of God’s children, in Christ? Have you not as good a right to it as they have? Who can dispute with you this privilege? It is the express will of the Father, indeed, He even commands you to do it. Has He not given His only Son, by an act of inconceivable love, to die for you, to the very end that you should live? What a pleasing thing it will be to Him, for you to put your whole trust on this His well-beloved Son. This would be the joy of His heart more than anything else. Therefore delay no longer to receive what His love has offered you, but firmly believe that the Father loves you, as well as the Son.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 3

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing (Rev. 5:12).

O Lord, what mean and slight notions I often have of Your great power. By these I am discouraged and You are robbed of Your praise. Grant, therefore, that though I would always be duly abased and convinced of my vileness in such a manner as never to ascribe any good to myself, or think myself worthy of the least thing in the way of merit, for at best I am an unprofitable servant, yet may Your grace and power at the same time appear to me abundantly greater than all my sins, so that I may always have encouragement enough to believe in and praise Your holy name.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 4

My soul will be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth will praise You with joyful lips (Psalm 63:5). Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready (Rev.19:6,7).

WHAT tends not to Your glory, O Lord, and is not Your own work, whatever appearance it may have, is not really good and profitable; preserve, assist me, therefore, to do all things as from You, in Your sight, and to Your honour. May my soul be ever glorifying Your name, O my dear Redeemer and Bridegroom, and my whole conversation be directed to Your praise. Grant that my heart and mouth may be ever full of Your great mercies, and overflow continually with thanksgiving.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 5

*Forsake not the works of Your own hands (Psalm 138:8).
Divine Answer. 'He Who has begun a good work in you
will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil.1:6).*

THE right way to grow in grace is to give yourself up wholly to your heavenly Father, Who knows all your wants and has engaged to supply them. Then labour diligently to walk with Christ and carefully cherish the new life, which, be it ever so weak and little now in comparison to the old man, will increase and gradually outgrow him as a new skin does the old. May the Lord just give us grace to watch against the opposite extreme, so as never to be lulled into a false rest or lukewarm spirit, but to be ever diligently and seriously employed in crucifying the flesh, and using all the means of grace. Then we need not be anxiously troubled for the growing of the work of God in our souls.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 6

The form of this world passes away (1 Cor. 7:31).

AS long as we feed on the husks of this world and are in love with it, we are neither willing nor able to taste the comforts of the love of God; but when sin and the world have become an abomination to us and we desire to be rid of them, and diligently seek Jesus Christ for the help of His grace and the benefit of His blood, we are then in a right way to receive the love of God and every blessing of salvation. And though we are chastened by the Lord, yet He is not angry with us but does it to make sin and the world more and more bitter to us, and make us loathe them, so that we may not be condemned with the world.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 7

Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever. Amen (Matthew 6:13). [They] cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power (Rev. 4:10,11).'

SOMEONE who is truly poor in spirit, though he has practised the duty of a Christian life ever so long and ever so diligently, always thinks himself to have received but a little portion of Christ, and that the work of sanctification is hardly begun in his soul. So far is he from believing he has already attained it, that, after all his best actions, he counts himself not worthy to be called by the name of a grateful son; he is never pleased with himself. No degree of holiness will satisfy his soul. He seeks and finds no rest or comfort but in the infinite mercy of God and in the pardon of his sins by faith, though he does not divide Christ but receives Him in all His offices, and gives himself entirely up to Him without reserve, to be more and more sanctified and perfected. In this state he is safe indeed; he is prepared for death and has no reason to be anxiously afraid, though earnestly desirous of higher degrees of sanctification.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 8

He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire (2 Sam.23:5). I have made a covenant with My chosen (Psalm 89:3).

THIS was David's plea and confidence, when, with eternity full before him, he was going to make his appearance before an infinitely pure God. This must be our plea also, if ever we would obtain the approbation of our Judge. After a life of most eminent holiness, the best of men will have reason to cry out, 'Enter not into judgement with Your servant, O Lord.' It is true, indeed, the believer will reveal some evidences of grace, just to show he is a child of God, and no more; but they are all so imperfect that he dares not ground his expectation on them. Here the covenant of grace steps into his relief and in this he sees ample provision for the security of his eternal interest: for the covenant is made with Christ and His seed. It is an everlasting covenant, not only made before time, but extending its beneficial effects through the ages of eternity. It is ordered in all things, therefore nothing can be wanting in it, either to promote the glory of God, or the salvation of believers. It is also sure, depending on conditions requiring nothing but what it gives, conferring its blessings freely and making them sure to all the offspring, being established upon better promises (Heb. 8:6). Happy the souls who are interested in this well-ordered covenant. May it be all my salvation and my desire.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 9

'I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him, neither knows Him. But you know him; for He dwells with you and will be in you (John 14:16,17).'

WHEN God designed the great and glorious work of recovering fallen man, and the saving of sinners, 'to the praise of the glory of His grace,' He appointed, in His infinite wisdom, two great means thereof: the one was His giving of His Son for them; and the other was His giving of His Spirit unto them. Thus a way was made for the glory of the blessed Trinity be manifested, a way which is the utmost end of all the works of God. Here was the love, grace and wisdom of the Father in the design and contrivance of the whole; the love, grace and condescension of the Son, in the execution, purchase and procurement of grace and salvation for sinners; with the grace and power of the Holy Spirit made gloriously conspicuous in the effectual application of all this to the souls of men. To these headings all the promises of God may be reduced. Happy for the church, that the Spirit is to abide with it for ever: awful to think the unconverted world can neither receive nor know the Holy Spirit.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 10

Godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world works death (2 Corinthians 7:10).

THERE is a sorrow that is called godly, because it is produced in us by the Spirit of God uncovering the evil of sin and the plague of the corruption of our own hearts. It deeply humbles us under a sense of sin, produces evangelical repentance and leads the soul to cry to the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon and salvation, the Holy Spirit at the same time enabling us to believe in Him and rest on His person, blood and righteousness for redemption and salvation. This repentance will never be repented of, but sorrow, arising from the love of this world, works death, eternal death. Lord Jesus, grant me to feel more of this godly sorrow for sin, and rejoice more in You as my Saviour.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 11

Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart (Psalm 97:11). Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness; he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous (Psalm 112:4). Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has a reward of great recompense; for you have need of patience, etc. For yet a little while, and He Who is coming will come, and will not delay (Heb.10:35,37). (See also Isaiah 58:10-12.)

THIS shows that believers are subject to many changes of joy and sorrow. In a state of gladness, therefore, we have reason to fear and, in the hours of trouble and sadness, to entertain good hopes. Thus we shall always be able to keep the happy medium between extremes of levity and despair. Before a man has a true sense of his own miseries, the complaints and infirmities of the saints are often a stumbling-block, but afterwards they will administer to him great comfort. This is the reason that God has revealed them in Scripture, for the complaints of His elect children bring about more comfort than all their most heroic actions.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 12

I find, then, a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me (Romans 7.21).

YOU are always striving, yet sin is always stirring. You fear the truth grace brings, because you find the working of sin, but it will always be thus. You cannot come out of Egypt without Amalek laying wait in the way; the flesh will be sure to trouble you, although it will never be able to conquer you. Therefore when a man sits down and is at rest in sin, it is a sign that Satan is there, the strong man, because his kingdom is in peace. However, where there is any work of Christ, there will always be war with sin. Sin was the womb of death, and only death must be the tomb of sin. God would have my soul humbled; therefore, though He has broken my prison, yet He has left the chains on my feet. God would have my graces exercised; therefore, though He has translated me into the kingdom of life, yet He has left the Canaanite in the land. God would have my faith exercised; therefore Goliath still shows himself in the field, so that I might go out to him 'in the name of the Lord of Hosts (1 Sam. 17:45).' I will betake me to the strength of Christ; though I cannot help the rebelling power of sin, yet, through grace, I will labour to prevent the ruling power of it.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 13

God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, for He has made Him Who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor.5:19,21).

IT highly concerns believers, who desire to keep a constant peace in their bosoms, to be ever sensible of their spiritual poverty, and to feed and rest wholly on the all sufficient atonement and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Disquiet of mind and laziness of soul often proceed from self-righteousness, and not looking to Christ for everything, but trusting secretly to something in ourselves.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 14

Nevertheless I am continually with You. You have held me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but You, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside You? My flesh and my heart fails, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever (Psalm 73:23-26).

BABES in religion not only long for Christ, but for sensible communion with Him; and very often they are indulged with it so that they may be weaned from the world. But those of fuller age, who have their senses exercised (Heb. 5:14). are thankful they can trust Him when they do not see Him, and can follow Him when they feel no comfort. They rely more on the Word and covenant of God than on sweet sensations, which, though ever precious and desirable, are often withdrawn in times of trouble and temptation.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 15

There is a river, the streams of which will make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her, and that right early (Psalm 46:4,5). You are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you, than He that is in the world (1 John 4:4; see also Psalm 110:2; Zech. 2:5).

TRUE Christians, in a right spirit, are still subject to temptations from within and without but, watching unto prayer, they do not fall by them. On the contrary, as temptations are great helps to discover their hidden infirmities and stir them up to be more cautious, serious and faithful, they are followed with great and glorious victories. Temptations are not indeed joyous in themselves, but are attended with good fruit and blessed effects in the faithful. Hence, James bids us count it all joy when we fall into various temptations (James 1:2). What reason have we, then, to be afraid of temptations, since every one carries a new blessing along with it?

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 16

Let not sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey it in its lusts (Rom. 6:12). Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

HOW awful is our state by nature and practice. Sin has gained a dominion over us; its influence is universal over the soul and body, and over every son and daughter of Adam. It has brought death on the body and subjected the soul to everlasting misery; its authority is unjust, its power cruel and destructive. Lord Jesus, let me adore Your effectual grace, in that it has in any measure delivered me from sin's power, and assist my poor heart in opposing and rejecting every temptation to obey sin in its lusts. Let Your precious blood effectually secure me from the guilt of sin in this life and the punishment of it in another. If I am a faithful follower of Jesus, though Satan received a deadly wound when Christ was crucified for us, yet his malice is still the same. I have a thousand enemies, and the devil is the leader of them all. Oh may I, with the deepest humility, look to Jesus, rest upon Jesus, derive daily strength from Him to resist the devil and finally come off conqueror, and more than conqueror, through Him that loved me. Amen.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 17

Though we have known Christ in the flesh, yet now henceforth we know Him no more (2 Cor.5:16).

WHAT is it to know Christ in the flesh? It is to content ourselves with carnal views of His person, character and kingdom. This was the case with all those who followed Him, not on account of His miracles and doctrines, but for the loaves and fishes. Alas, are there not too many who wish to know Christ for carnal, worldly interest, and not that they may be saved from a proud, rebellious heart and an ungodly life? Let me see to it that my seeking after Christ may not be carnal, but spiritual. Worldly interest is too apt, it may be feared, to influence both private professors and even public preachers. True believers can say that henceforth this carnal knowledge of Christ is not their pursuit. Where the Spirit of Jesus regenerates the heart, and we are brought to a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ, we shall love Him, rejoice in Him, humbly submit to His will in all things, and daily pray to become more and more like Him. Dear and precious Jesus, grant that this may be more and more my experience, till I know You in all Your holiness and glory for ever and ever.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 18

The Lord preserves the simple. I was brought low, and He helped me (Psalm 116:6).

HE who walks in godly simplicity and humility, accounting his own infirmities always the greatest, will be best preserved from being puffed up and sifted by the enemy of souls; and truly, nothing should humble us more than justification by free grace. The more we consider and carefully cherish this, the more this simple, childlike, quiet temper will increase, for there is nothing in ourselves which can be depended upon; everything must be freely received from Christ. This, at the same time cuts off all vain boasting, brings us low, settles our peace in Christ, Who is our all and is sure enough to be rested upon. It is only from You, dear Saviour, that I can learn true simplicity. Teach me, therefore, to turn my eyes, not upon others, but upon myself. Humble me to the uttermost, and fashion me after Your own mind so that I may be careful to avoid everything that is contrary to love. Keep me from all self-dependence and self-conceit, bridle my carnal reason and pull down all vain imaginations (2 Cor. 10:5). Grant that my eye may be fixed only upon the one thing needful, which lasts eternally; and that in all my words, deeds and gestures I may always resemble the simplicity, innocence, fidelity and love of a little child (Matt. 18:3).

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 19

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want (Psalm 23:1).
'I have come that they might have life, and that they might
have it more abundantly. I give to them eternal life; and
they will never perish, neither will any pluck them out of
My hand (John 10:10,28).'*

IS the Lord Jesus your shepherd? Has He called you out of the wilderness, called your heart from the love of sin and the world and brought you into a close attendance on His ordinances? And does He refresh and feed your soul with His Word? Can you distinguish the Shepherd's voice from the voice of a hireling? And does your heart cleave to the Shepherd in faith and love, adoring His person and approving His laws, as well as admiring His doctrines? Then fear not; the Lord is with you, Jesus is your Shepherd. You will want for nothing that is really good; follow the Shepherd till He brings you to glory.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 20

The everlasting gospel (Rev. 14:6).

THE gospel is properly called 'glad tidings' for these reasons: we are polluted with the filth of sin and in the gospel is opened a fountain for sin and uncleanness: the way to heaven is blocked up by our sins; the gospel reveals 'a new and living way, through the flesh of Christ (Heb. 10:20).' We are debtors imprisoned by multiplied transgressions; the gospel shows that a price, the most inestimable, has been paid to discharge us. We have by nature hard, cold and impenitent hearts; in the gospel is promised a heart of flesh. We can of ourselves do nothing; the gospel shows that through Christ we can do all things. We feel that we are liable to err and backslide; the gospel declares that God will scourge us till we return to Him, but not take His loving-kindness from us. We know that we are liable to many calamities; the gospel teaches us that they will all work together for good. We see that we are dying creatures; by the gospel we are assured that we have a forerunner in heaven and an eternal habitation with God in glory. Lord, send abroad and bless this gospel.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 21

They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him (Titus 1:10).

THERE is a profession of a special kind, which in its own nature is exposed to the reproach of the world: 'They that will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.' There is a claim to being in Christ, but not living godly; for there are branches in the vine, by profession, that bring forth no fruit. These are men who do not have in them the mind that was in Christ Jesus, which torments the men of earth. But they who will live godly, that is, engage in a profession of religion which will, on all occasions and in all instances, manifest the power of it, will suffer persecution. We see many every day keep up a profession, but such a profession as will not provoke the world. Now this is to be ashamed of the gospel, to be ashamed of the power and glory of it, to be ashamed of the Author of it. No man can put Jesus Christ to greater shame than by professing the gospel without showing the power of it. 'For many walk, of whom I have often told you, and now indeed tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18).' There can be no more vile and sordid hypocrisy than for any to pretend to inward, habitual sanctification, while their lives are barren in the fruits of righteousness and obedience. Of all the dangers in profession, beware of customary, traditional, or doctrinal owning of gospel truths, without an experimental acquaintance with the reality and efficacy of them; for all such will have their portion where is 'wailing and gnashing of teeth.'

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 22

'I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her Offspring; it will bruise your head, and you will bruise His heel (Gen. 3:15).'

BY 'the seed of the woman' is to be understood Christ the Saviour; not excluding His friends and followers in every age of the world. This prediction of a Saviour signified to our first parents these four things: 1. That the promised Saviour was not to be the man's but the woman's offspring, or, born of a virgin. 2. That He was to be a man by that expression, 'You will bruise His heel.' 3. That He would break the head of the serpent, or destroy his power and dominion over mankind, and punish him, and all his votaries, with an utter destruction. 4. That in order to our Saviour's doing so, He must have His own heel, or human nature, the lowest part of His mediatory person, bruised by the serpent, or, persecuted and put to death by the devil and his emissaries. This was the first intimation of a Saviour that was made to the world. It was made to the serpent, for his immediate confusion; made in the presence of our first parents, and before their sentence was pronounced, to inspire them with the hope of pardon and life, and with a sense of the distinguishing mercy of God, Who, before He denounced so much as any temporal punishment, animated them with the hope of eternal redemption.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 23

'The Lord do that which seems good to Him (2 Sam. 10:12).'

A CHRISTIAN still feels the motion of self-will, and, consequently, of sin in his heart. And if it be asked: How can Christ and sin dwell together in one heart? the answer is: As a king and rebels in one kingdom or town; he does not agree or correspond with them, but subdues them and maintains peace. But where self-will has the dominion, there is nothing but trouble and confusion; for unsanctified passions and a bad conscience not only are inward torments, but often occasion perplexity and damage in our worldly affairs. On the other hand, in the blood of Christ we have a good conscience, abundance of peace, and can be content and happy in the most indifferent circumstances. Take heed, therefore, my dear Christian, never to be led by your own spirit, even in such things as seem to bring glory to God, if they are not of His own appointment. Our hearts are sometimes very deceitfully desirous of what pleases ourselves, while we pretend to seek God's glory: and were we not crossed in these our designs, they would prove a great burden to our life. Blessed is he who not only prays with his lips, but is heartily willing also that nothing but the will of the Lord should be done in everything. It is God alone Who understands what may be good or dangerous to our spiritual or temporal circumstances. We, being often blinded or drawn by our lusts, are too much inclined to choose at random what would, perhaps, be detrimental.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 24

The Lord will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer (Psalm 102:17). They looked unto Him and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed (Psalm 34:5). See also the instance of the woman of Canaan (Matt. 15:21-28), also what Christ says (Luke 11:5-13, and 18:1-8). likewise of a tossed vessel (Matt. 8:24-27).

THE load of outward and inward affliction, is not always prayed away with a few words, or in a few days. Sometimes it is necessary even to wrestle with God, and be very instant too; how else could faith and practice be exercised? If, therefore, the trials are sharp and lasting, it is not to weaken our faith, but to stir us up to be more instantly zealous in prayer and in the right use of the Word of God. By these means we will be so much more gloriously delivered, and strengthened in faith; for whatever God sends upon us is not for the lessening but for the increase of our faith.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 25

'I dwell in the high and holy place, and with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite one. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wrathful, for the spirit would fail before me, and the souls which I have made (Isaiah 57:15,16).'

TO insist too much upon the sensible joys of faith, might make weaker souls weaker still. Many a sincere Christian's heart is like a bottle with a very narrow neck, which can receive the dew of heavenly comfort only by little drops. But do you feel yourself quite naked, and void of all good? Christ will surely cover you with a robe of righteousness. Go entirely out of yourself, looking only to Him for everything; and whatever gifts of joy, peace and holiness may be given you, be very thankful for them, yet do not trust in them, but in Christ alone. This will make you sure and keep your heart at rest.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 26

Lord, by Your favour You have made my mountain to stand strong: You hid Your face, and I was troubled (Psalm 30:7).

SEE in this verse a picture of your own experience; Show much you are like David. When I look up to heaven how often do I see the sun both shine and set. When I look down into myself, how often do I see my comforts rise and fall. One time I am upon Mount Tabor, and have a glance of heaven; another time I lie in the valley of Bochim weeping, because I have lost sight of my heavenly country. When God would quicken my affections, He gives me a glance of heaven, so that I may be in love with what I see. When I begin to bless myself and rest in my happy privileges, He draws a veil over the bright vision, in order that I may rest in nothing but Himself, nor loathe what I so greatly love. He suffers my happiness here to be imperfect, so that so I may press on to that place where I shall be perfectly happy for ever. Lord, when You show yourself, let me love You; when my mountain stands strong, let me praise You; when You withdraw Yourself, let me follow You; when Your countenance is hidden, let me believe still that You love me. Under all my changes here, let my soul be always breathing, panting, longing and reaching after You, till I shall so perfectly enjoy You that I may never lose You anymore.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 27

*'Satan has desired to have you,** that he may sift you** as wheat; but I have prayed for you*, that your* faith does not fail (Luke 22:31,32).' Yet will not the least grain fall upon the earth (Amos 9:9). 'I will keep you* from the hour of temptation (Rev. 3:10).'*

** plural * singular

SOMETIMES we imagine ourselves to be divinely convinced of the will of God, both by seeming outward providences and inward persuasions of faith; and yet it is possible that the siftings of Satan are at the bottom. However, the Lord will overrule him at last and order all things to the best for His people. May the Lord make us watchful against our own spirit and against the evil one, especially when he is transformed into an angel of light, that it may not be in his power to sift us so as to gain an advantage over us, by our listening to his inward suggestions, or yielding to his subtle temptations.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 28

A woman's adornment is not to lie in the outward adornment of braiding the hair, wearing gold,.....but let it be the hidden woman of the heart, in what is not corruptible, a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price (1 Peter 3:3,4). In returning and rest will you be saved; in quietness and confidence will be your strength (Isaiah 30:15).

A CHRISTIAN's best accoutrements and festival clothes, in which he daily celebrates his Sabbath, are called 'The new man,.....bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, patience:.....and above all, charity (Col. 3:10,12,14).' These are our true ornaments, and we should seek to be dressed in them. What do you adorn most, body or soul? O meek and quiet Lamb of God, justly I blush before You when I consider my impatience, for I am never innocent like You. I humbly beseech You to forgive me my transgressions, since You have made sufficient atonement for all by Your meritorious silence; and to deliver me from this choleric, hot and peevish temper also. And give me grace in all inward and outward troubles, to have the long-forbearing mind which was in You. Make me daily more and more like a lamb, so that on all occasions, grievous and joyful, I may be duly composed and show that excellent ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, not in many words, but in reality and power. Amen.

* * * * *

FEBRUARY 29

'Look, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: why does it cumber the ground?' 'Lord, let it alone this year also, till I dig around it and dung it: and if it bears fruit, well; and if not, then after that you shall cut it down (Luke 13:7-9).'

YOU fruitless fig-tree! You barren professor! Do you hear this and not tremble? God has come seeking fruit: will your bare profession, your knowledge of the principles of religion, satisfy the great God? Will the notions of truth in your head, your talking and disputing, your hearing the Word preached, your commending or censoring sermons and preachers, just as you are in the mood, will this serve your turn? Will you thus endeavour to ward off the heart-searching God? Do you know, God has come to seek for fruit, and for good fruit from you, not the fruit of good words only, but the fruit of good works; and not the fruit of talking well but of walking well, the fruit of holiness in life and conversation? Fruit short of this God will not regard. If your conscience is awakened, look to your merciful High Priest, consider well His intercession for such a barren soul as you are: 'Lord, let it alone,' etc. 'Father, let this man live one year longer. Oh turn away from your anger. I will yet see what may be done; I will try what corrections may do. Perhaps the rod may work more upon him than My Word has hitherto done, and may tend to make his barren heart fruitful. I will also stir up my servants to awaken him by a more sharp and searching manner. And if these new efforts are blessed to him, all will yet be well, Your grace glorified, and his soul saved; if not, then You shall cut him down.'

* * * * *

MARCH 1

The life I now live I live by faith in the Son of God (Gal. 2:20).

IN spiritual things we are too often living upon self. We seek, in frames, forms, creatures and animal life, that inward peace and stability of mind which is only to be found in the Redeemer. Outward duties are well in their place; they are to be performed, but not to be trusted in. They are as the scaffold is to the building, a means to carry on the work but not the work itself. When favoured with the gracious presence of Jesus, they are blessings, without it, they are nothing. The whole dependence must be on Jesus: He is the way, the truth and the life and without Him, prayers, praises, rites and ordinances are carcases without a soul. This is the case with every external service that is destitute of the presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit. He alone imparts communion of heart and a quickening of the soul in faith and in love of Jesus, and often a delightful view of that which is behind the veil of the ordinances, (such as no carnal eye can behold,) a purely spiritual discovery of the Lord in His goodness, beauty, grandeur and glory. Vain are our fancies, mere airy flights, if faith is cold and dead; nothing but a living power unites to Christ the living Head. It is faith that changes all the heart, faith that works by love, that bids all my sinful joys depart and lifts the thoughts above.

* * * * *

MARCH 2

..... *Broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who go in it;..... but narrow is the way which leads to life, and few there are that find it (Matt. 7: 13,14).*

THIS sounds too harsh in the ears of the old man, who would not have the Law made use of in these gospel times, either to the converted or unconverted; and yet the Law, and not the gospel, properly belongs to the old man. Paul, the great preacher of the gospel, made use of the Law to rouse unconverted Felix from his security, (Acts 24:25) and to warn the unconverted Romans from falling into it again. (Rom. 8:13)

Which way do you walk? Examine yourself; is it the narrow way? Are you quite sure of it? Do not venture to go on any further at random; it is a matter of great consequence. If you would be safe, try better for it; you may be easily deceived. Alas, you are surely on the broad road to destruction, if you still love and are conformed to the world. Are you but indifferent regarding the things of God, relishing more the vanities, pleasure, company, treasures and honours of this world? You are not in the good, narrow way that leads to life. Oh, consider this well, and stop short before it is too late and you drop into the bottomless pit of perdition.

* * * * *

MARCH 3

And Aaron will bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment, upon his heart, when he goes into the holy place, for a memorial continually before the LORD. And you are to put into the breastplate of judgment the Urim and Thummin and they will be on Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron will bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually (Exod. 28:29,30).

NOW, says the believer, I am for ever in gracious remembrance with God, since my great High Priest and Advocate, Christ Jesus, bears my name continually before Him on His heart. Whenever I am troubled about my sins, His powerful mediation will surely plead mercy for all my transgressions and supply my wants abundantly, God not denying Him anything. I can through Him continually be heard and obtain grace, for He makes perpetual intercession for me in heaven, by which all my prayers at all times, and even now, are sanctified and presented to the Father, Who hears Him always. Who would not send up his petition to heaven in faith?

* * * * *

MARCH 4

'If any man will follow after Me, let him deny himself (Luke 9:23).'

DOING this, all the rest will be easy. If we know that we are nothing, are unworthy of anything and have nothing of our own, we can lose nothing. We have no property since we are but stewards of the Lord. We have no honour or shame of our own after the manner of the world, this being our only honour if God is glorified, and our only shame if He is dishonoured by us. The glory of God we must have at heart, and in His cause be lions but in our own cause like lambs. Therefore, when we are crossed in things, which do not concern the real glory of God and the real good of our neighbour but only concern our own interests, and are unwilling to suffer anything, we shall miscarry and be involved in greater troubles. But, denying ourselves, we shall lose only a good deal of vexation and instead of this receive Christ with all His spiritual and temporal blessings, as far as we want them, which alone can make us cheerful and happy. But whoever desires to please the world, seeking himself and his own glory, cannot be a follower of Christ. And how will it be with him in the hour of death and judgment? By this everyone, learned or unlearned, may try themselves: whom do they please, God or the world?

* * * * *

MARCH 5

Unto you therefore who believe, He is precious (1 Pet. 2:7).

READER, put these few following questions to your heart, as in the presence of God. If you can answer them in the affirmative, do not doubt your interest in Him and in His great salvation: Is the Lord Jesus precious to me as He is to all who believe? Once He was to me without form or comeliness, and I saw no beauty in Him. He is now to me the chief of ten thousand, indeed, altogether lovely. Do I see an infinite amiableness and glory in His person, a transcendent excellency in His righteousness, an unexhausted fulness in His grace and a heaven of happiness in His love? Do I esteem Him above every name, love Him above every creature and thing and value an interest in Him before ten thousand worlds? Is my language, 'None but Christ, none but Christ.' 'Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none on earth that I desire beside You (Psalm 73:25).' Is all the world, all that is admired in it, esteemed to me as refuse, and beheld with the greatest contempt when compared with a glorious Christ, the ravishing sweetness of His love and the unsearchable riches of His grace? Do I wish nothing so ardently, seek nothing so diligently and rejoice in nothing so greatly, as to win Christ and be found in Him? Be this my portion, and I can say, I want, I wish, I ask no more.

* * * * *

MARCH 6

On your right hand stood the queen in gold of Ophir. Listen, daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget both your own people and your father's house. Thus will the King greatly desire your beauty, for He is the Lord; and worship Him.....The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold (Psalm 45:9,10,11,13).

OBSERVE, my soul, that the celestial Bridegroom does not require any ornament, merit, worthiness or beauty of your own. No, He will wash you Himself with His blood, He will soon adorn you, and make you truly loving toward Himself and His Father. What sweet and eternal truth. 'He has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.' And being clothed with His righteousness, we have more than angelic beauty. If we have received the Spirit of Adoption, let us cleave to Christ alone, love Him above all things, and walk in His commandments. This is not only our duty, but a needful evidence of our sonship.

* * * * *

MARCH 7

They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Gal. 5:24).

ALTHOUGH the flesh is alive still and frequently stirs, yet it cannot fulfil its desires when it is fastened to the cross; we have to do with the crucifying of the flesh as long as we live. This is the cross we are to take up daily, and which either prevents many outward crosses, or at least yields great comfort under them. Since the cross is an extraordinarily good means to experience the sweetness of the word of God, we must always be prepared for it. And if none come from without, take care to break your will in everything. Painful and hard as this may seem at first, yet it will certainly very soon grow easier and be a matter of real joy. Blessing and peace will attend your ways and steps, and you will glorify God for having been resigned and guided, not by your own, but by His good will and pleasure. Self-will, on the other hand, creates nothing but vexation, trouble and uneasiness. It is punished by itself, deprives us of real blessings and therefore deserves to be, and is best to be, broken and crucified in its first motions.

* * * * *

MARCH 8

And the Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering, but to Cain and to his offering He had no respect (Gen. 4:4,5).

Here are two brothers, each of them bringing an oblation to the Lord. Cain, as a husbandman, brought some of the produce of the ground he cultivated, Abel, as a shepherd, some of the firstlings of his flock, with the fat of them. Both therefore indicated that they believed there was a God Who had made the world and was to be worshipped; and yet one was accepted and the other rejected. Cain's sacrifice was wholly eucharistic, or a thank-offering to God, for the blessings of His providence. Abel's was not only of the eucharistic kind, but of the expiatory kind; and while it was an expression of gratitude for the blessings of providence, it was typical of the atonement of Christ and expressive of his hope of redemption through Him. But what made the chief difference between them was this, that Cain presented his offering while his heart was withheld and without faith, and so he was of the wicked one. Abel brought himself personally with the sacrifice, an offering to the Lord. He presented his oblation and performed the other parts of worship with faith in God and the promised Saviour, and this he did with sincerity, humility and love. Thus God had respect to him and his offering; He first accepted him personally as justified, then his offering. But neither the person or offering of Cain found acceptance with God. Mark the difference; by this, Abel speaks to you: are you in a state of acceptance with God by faith in Jesus? Is your whole dependence for pardon and life on Christ crucified? Do you obey from a principle of love? Then you will be blessed with righteous Abel here and for ever.

* * * * *

MARCH 9

On that day the priest is to make an atonement for you to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. It is to be a Sabbath of rest to you and you are to afflict your souls, by a statute for ever (Lev. 16:30,31). The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul (Lev. 17:11).

Our great day of atonement is that on which Christ shed His blood for us on the cross, and thereby made atonement for us. Now if it was necessary for the Israelites to afflict their souls and chastise their bodies on the great day of atonement, how much more ought we to pray for humility and repentance, as the evidence of our interest in the propitiation made by Jesus Christ? And as they abstained from all labour on that day, when the high priest alone was employed, so should we abstain from all our sinful works, and particularly from all self-sufficiency in our righteousness, and seek our salvation only in the meritorious blood of atonement shed by our High Priest, for the life of our souls is in the blood of Jesus. O my Redeemer, may I, with an afflicted soul, ever seek my atonement, life and salvation in Your blood and death; and may I lie down and rise up in a comfortable hope that I am pardoned through Your blood, Your Spirit bearing witness of it to my conscience.

* * * * *

MARCH 10

By the grace of God I am what I am (1 Cor.15:10).

LET this be my motto, both as to my natural and spiritual life; how else could I have existed at all? Had not foreknowledge planned, wisdom contrived and power put every atom together, and all conspired to fix my scene of action, I had not been here. Nor is this God of grace less to be seen in every motion of my soul towards Him. Had not every spring been in Him, this table on which I lean had felt as much bias toward Him as I. The first check of conscience, the first sensation of fear, the first view of guilt, the first tear of penitence, were all His own. The first drawings of the Spirit, the first sight of Christ, the first dawn of hope, were all His own. Every succeeding step in the path of duty, every attainment in grace, every victory over the world and sin, every evidence and token of the safety of my everlasting state and every sweet interval of communion I have had with Him were still all His own. And the last labour of love, the last act of faith, and conquest over sin, death and hell, together with an admission to glory must and will be all His own likewise. The spring is love, the man is Christ, the footing firm. ‘And He will bring forth the headstone with shouts, crying, “Grace, grace to it (Zech. 4:7);”’ and grace will be crowned with everlasting glory.

* * * * *

MARCH 11

The love of Christ constrains us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then they all were dead; and He died for all, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him Who died for them, and rose again (2 Cor. 5:14,15).

IF the love and power of Christ constrains us, we must needs be meditating and relying on Him and His death. This will cut off all workings of our own and make room for Christ to work everything in us and through us. O Lord, may Your love on the cross fire my frozen heart also, so that I may now begin to love and praise You purely and fervently, and to offer my whole life up to You as an entire sacrifice of love.

* * * * *

MARCH 12

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work, device, knowledge or wisdom in the grave, to which you go (Eccles. 9:10).

THE business of life is to glorify God and to work out our own salvation: all other concerns are subordinate to these. 'The time is short (1 Cor. 7:29);' 'In the place where the tree falls, there it will be (Eccles.11:3).' and where death strikes down, there God lays out, either for mercy or misery. And so I may compare it to the Red Sea. If I go in an Israelite, my landing will be in glory and my rejoicing in triumph, to see all my enemies dead upon the sea shore. But if I go in an Egyptian, if I am on this side of the cloud, on this side of the covenant, and go in hardened amongst the troops of Pharaoh, justice will return in its full strength, and an inundation of judgment will overflow my soul for ever. Or I may compare death to the sleep of the ten virgins, of whom it is said, 'They all slumbered and slept(Matt. 25:5).' Now, if I lie down with the wise, I shall go in with the Bridegroom; but if I sleep with the foolish, without oil in my lamp, without grace in my soul, I have closed the gates of mercy upon me for ever. I see, then, that this life is the time in which I must go forth to meet the Lord, and this the hour in which I must do my work, for the day in which I must be judged according to my works is at hand. I do not know how soon I may fall into this sleep, therefore, Lord, grant that I may live every day in Your sight, as I desire to appear the last day in Your presence.

* * * * *

MARCH 13

Sin is a reproach to any people (Prov. 14:34).

DO not therefore be deceived with false notions of faith. Where there is true faith, no sin has dominion. Sin will be ever stirring, often raging, sometimes prevailing, but never reigning where there is true faith. A believer, through strong and sudden temptation may be captivated by sin, but he is no willing captive. He hates sin and prays and watches against it; and as faith increases, his power over sin increases too. A man, having no feeling of the desperate wickedness of his heart, may imagine he has faith enough; but being once convinced of that wickedness, he soon perceives that it is the hardest thing in the world to believe. It requires the same power by which Christ was raised from the dead. Paul most emphatically describes it with six remarkable words, ‘the exceeding greatness of His power (Eph. 1:19,20).’ How then can any man think it an easier matter to believe? Oh the dreadful blindness and false security which all the world runs into. May the Lord open their eyes.

* * * * *

MARCH 14

At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, at the commandment of the Lord they pitched; as long as the cloud abided upon the tabernacle, the children of Israel rested in their tents. And when the cloud stayed long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord and did not journey (Num. 9:18,19).

THUS the spiritual Israelites; they ought not to undertake anything from their own will, lest confusion and disappointment should encompass every path. The unconverted are full of their own will; how will they succeed? They are bewildered here, and run into perdition eternally. Sometimes the faithful may, with a good design, when they are engaged in a good work, outrun the will of God and not wait for His counsel. And yet the Israelites did not journey, though the cloud tarried many days and they might imagine they were losing time on their journey. O God, grant that in all things, even in my best works, I may be guided by Your eye, and wait for Your counsel with a resigned temper. May I speak or be silent, work or rest when and as You will. Then will my ways be blest, and You will never leave me or forsake me.

* * * * *

MARCH 15

In Him was life; and the life was the light of men (John 1:4).

WHATEVER notional knowledge men may have of divine truths, as they are doctrinally proposed in the Scripture, if they do not know them in their respect to the person of Christ, as the foundation of the counsels of God, if they do not discern how they proceed from Him and centre in Him, they will bring no saving, spiritual light to their understanding, for all spiritual life and light is in Him and from Him alone. The difference between believers and unbelievers, as to knowledge, is not so much in the matter of their knowledge as in their manner of knowing. Unbelievers, some of them, may know more, and be able to say more, of God, His perfections and will than many believers; but they know nothing as they ought, nothing in a right manner, nothing spiritually and savingly, nothing with a holy, heavenly light. The excellency of a believer is not that he has large apprehensions of things, but that what he does apprehend, which may, perhaps, be very little, he sees in the light of the Spirit of God in a saving, soul-transforming light. And this is what gives us communion with God, and not prying thoughts or curious, unsupported notions. In this knowledge, Lord, grant me to increase every day.

* * * * *

MARCH 16

We, then, that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves (Rom. 15:1). Consider yourself, lest you also be tempted (Gal. 6:1). Who are you that judges another man's servant (Rom. 14:4).

SINCE extraordinary quickenings and strengthenings are often followed by particular temptations, conflicts and sufferings, a particular watchfulness is required if we would be earnest not to provoke the Lord to visit us with severe punishments for our carelessness. Fear, therefore, rejoice with trembling, and, as a needful means to secure yourself from falling, temper your joy with true humility and gentleness towards the faults of others. Never be so high-minded, at the miscarriages of others, as to think you would not do so, should it happen to be your case. If God does not hold you up Himself, you will surely make greater mistakes. Therefore you had better not look at others but at yourself; and for fear of falling, be continually watchful in prayer. A great many would not have fallen so deep had they been truly humble, and more charitable in judging others. The man who exalts himself and does not bear with the weak, is sometimes humbled and abased below the very weakest of all. Therefore bear with them, since God bears with you; and he that bears most with others shows the greatest strength.

* * * * *

MARCH 17

You are my rock and fortress; therefore for Your name's sake, lead me and guide me (Psalm 31:3). They will come with weeping, and with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, in which they will not stumble, for I am a father to Israel (Jeremiah 31:9).

HE who comes in this manner will certainly be lead by God. Now, O Lord, I am blind, and heartily desire also to be directed by You alone in all my ways and steps, in great and little things. Permit me never to follow my own spirit and natural inclinations, whatever good appearance they may have. Be pleased to cross them continually, whenever they are contrary to Your will. Often have I been deceived by false appearances; my zeal has not always been according to knowledge. I have put natural passion in its place and thought I was contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, only to find it afterwards no better than the effects of a party spirit. Be then a father to me, O Lord; instruct Your waiting child in all necessary truths and lead me in all Your righteous ways.

* * * * *

MARCH 18

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength (Isaiah 26:3,4). Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me, and he will make peace with Me (Isaiah 27:5).

TO enjoy an undisturbed peace, great care must be taken that we do not look and depend upon anything in ourselves, since all is but imperfect and ever will be so. We are to trust only in the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29), to feed our souls continually in this gospel of peace. We are ever to be seeking Him in diligent prayer, watchful, faithful, quiet and humble, for we never lose anything of our peace, except it is stolen by pride, or some other unguarded affections.

* * * * *

MARCH 19

Your Maker is your husband; the Lord of hosts is His name (Isaiah 54:5). The ransomed of the LORD will return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads (Isaiah 35:10).

WHEN Cyrus took the king of Armenia, his son Tigranes and their wives and children prisoners, upon their humble submission, beyond all hope he gave them liberty and their lives. On their return home, as they all fell to commending Cyrus, some for his personage, some for his power, some for his clemency, Tigranes asked his wife, 'What do you think of Cyrus? Isn't he a comely and a proper man?' 'Truly,' she said, 'I do not know what kind of man he is; I never looked at him.' 'Why,' he said, 'Where were your eyes all the while? Who did you look at?' 'I fixed my eyes on the man (meaning her husband) who, in my hearing, offered to Cyrus to lay down his life for my ransom.' Thus it is if any ask the devout soul, formerly indeed captivated by the world, but now enamoured with Christ, her heavenly bridegroom, whether she is not charmed with the riches, pleasures and gaities of the world? Her answer is that her eyes and her heart are now fixed on a nobler object, on Him Who not only made an offer to die in her stead, but actually did lay down His life to ransom her. And as her dear Bridegroom is now in heaven, her looks are after Him, and she can esteem nothing on earth in comparison to Him.

* * * * *

MARCH 20

You are to have no inheritance in their land, neither are you to have any part among them. I am your part and your inheritance (Numb. 18:20).

WHOSOEVER loves and possesses the Lord Jesus finds unspeakably more delight, honour and riches in Him, than in all other things. Then all is willingly denied for His sake, and this denial springs from faith. Now, O Lord, You are the All I need to make me happy, the only inheritance that can supply my every want and to draw near to You is my greatest joy. I desire to love You evermore and to show that love by keeping Your commandments. I pray that a sweet sense of Your love to me may become my daily portion and my only bosom treasure.

* * * * *

MARCH 21

Likewise the Spirit helps our infirmities; for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us (Rom. 8:26).

GOD is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). God has many worshippers on particular occasions who cannot be called spiritual worshippers. Contrast, for instance, the prayers of wicked men under their conviction, their fears, troubles and dangers, and the prayers of believers. The former is merely an outcry that distressed nature makes to the God of it, and as such alone it considers Him; but the other is the voice of the Spirit of adoption addressing itself in the hearts of believers to God as a father. Woe to professors of the gospel, who will be seduced to believe that all they have to do with God consists of their attendance upon moral virtue. It is fit for them to do so, who being weary of Christianity, have a mind to turn to paganism. ‘And truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3),’ under the promised working and intercession of the Spirit, for by these alone are the love of the Father and the fruits of the mediation of the Son communicated to us. Without the work of the Spirit we have no interest or comfort in the Father’s love or in the mediation of the Son. By the influence of the Spirit alone we are enabled to make any acceptable returns of obedience to God. To exclude the internal operations of the Holy Spirit is to destroy the gospel.

* * * * *

MARCH 22

Every man contending in the games exercises self-restraint in everything, striving to receive a short-lived crown, but we strive in order to receive a lasting one (1 Cor. 9:25). The one who overcomes will inherit all things (Rev. 21:7).

TO be an almost Christian is a very hard thing, but to be a Christian altogether makes all easy and pleasant. Those who desire to have the whole of Christ, His whole salvation and all that He is, must needs give themselves up to Him, not only in part but wholly, according to that fundamental and most reasonable rule, 'All for all.' And as far as we deny Him anything, we make ourselves unhappy; but the more we are resigned to Him, the more we are fit to enjoy Him and His spiritual blessings.

Many would sooner be persuaded to follow Christ if it was allowed to serve Him by halves and reserve some things for themselves. But what could that profit them? Christ will not be bargained with, and nothing is more dangerous than dividing our hearts between Him and the world, or waiting for a more convenient season to break through. Thus you may live many years and be neither hot nor cold, and so at last be spat out of our Lord's mouth. Consider this well, you double minded, lukewarm souls. Christianity requires great striving and the overcoming of all things, even our dearest, most favourite lusts. Therefore rouse your drowsy heart, spare yourself no longer, rise above the trifles of this world, fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life, to which you are called.

* * * * *

MARCH 23

I am giving you a new commandment, to love one another; just as I have loved you, so you also are to love one another (John 13:34).

ALL the commandments of God are commandments of love, tending to our real good and great happiness. Far from being grievous to those who have faith, the practice of them is life and peace. The world might think it a grievous burden, but this is a great mistake indeed. Sin is grievous. In hatred, envy, anger, revenge and pride, there is nothing but torment and slavery, but in love there is a sweet rest and pleasure. Thus a sinner always punishes himself, and is robbed of great peace and blessing by transgressing the commandments of God.

* * * * *

MARCH 24

One thing is needful; and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken from her (Luke 10:42).

WE must not pretend to serve God with only going to church, and doing other acts of outward devotion. While we are dead and cold, our religion is vain. The man who by faith first seeks grace from the words of Christ like Mary, is served by Christ; and this constrains him ready again to serve Christ and his neighbour. It is almost impossible for such to go on in haughtiness, envy, hatred and disobedience. Grace and faith will resist it and make them lowly, gentle, willing, obedient, active, without relying on any works of their own.

He who obtains Christ, the one thing needful, receives with Him all the rest, and has no more need to be troubled about many things. Since He is our all, we may always live happily; whereas the children of this world must always be cumbered and divided between fears and hopes about their fate. In the vanity of this world, we shall never find this good part, neither is there any salvation in the works of the Law. Faith alone takes hold of it. And whoever withdraws his heart from the noise and bustle of this world, who quickly looks for salvation through the blood and righteousness of Christ, will certainly find it his better part.

* * * * *

MARCH 25

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.....Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities (Psalm. 51:7,9). Though your sins be as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they will be as wool (Isaiah 1:18). I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a thick cloud, your sins; return to Me, for I have redeemed you (Isaiah 44:22).

WE must not keep away from Christ on account of our stumblings and various faults; this would cast us under the Law again, and bind us under condemnation. Instead we should humble ourselves directly before God and seek earnestly for pardon through the blood of Christ. The longer we delay this, the worse our case will grow, and the sooner it is done, the sooner we shall have forgiveness. The Lord does not impute to us those sins which are sincerely repented of and our soul returns to its rest again. Instead of falling into carnal security, as some may think, this will rather strengthen our faith and make us more watchful. Hasten, then, come as soon and as well as you can. He will receive you, even if you can but creep.

* * * * *

MARCH 26

Deliver us from evil (Matt. 6:13). Divine Answer: Fear not, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name, you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; neither will the flame kindle upon you (Isaiah 43:1,2). [Christ,] by His own blood, entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb. 9:12).

THIS precious redemption is the foundation of our present deliverance and will, finally, produce an everlasting deliverance from all evil. He who loathes and detests not only the evil of punishment but of sin itself, and consequently pants after Jesus, both for His love and for His likeness, has faith already and sin has lost its dominion over him. And though he may be tempted with it severely, yet he is under the Law no more, for the reigning power of sin being broken, the Law has lost its condemning power also. We are delivered from the power of the evil one, and we may be sure of continual, indeed eternal, redemption. We may often feel the evil, but, by prayer and watchfulness, be as often delivered from it also.

* * * * *

MARCH 27

Stir up the gift of God which is in you (2 Tim. 1:6, Psalm 52:3, 1 Sam. 7:18,28).

HOW can this be done? Answer: By looking on your own great poverty and wants as well as on the riches of grace which are in Christ for you, and so through faith in Him drawing near to God. But it is not enough to do this once for all, or now and then only; it is to be your daily work. One day's omission may greatly hurt your soul. The morning hours especially are very proper for this purpose. These must directly be laid hold on to converse with God in prayer before we meddle with anything else in our business, needful and important though this may be, for fear of being entangled and distracted, perhaps, the whole day. To gather the more strength, draw as near to Christ as possible and even wrestle with Him, as if it were for the last time. Pour out your whole heart before Him, not giving over too soon; but be urgent in your supplications, at least with continual inward groaning, until your heart burns within you and you feel the quickening influence of His grace and Spirit. Then great care is to be taken to preserve this blessing and strength in a quiet and well-composed mind, examining yourself frequently, especially at night, as to how the day has been spent.

* * * * *

MARCH 28

For everyone who uses milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe (Heb. 5:13).

THE apostle, with some severity of expression, tells the Hebrews, or converted Jews to whom he wrote, that instead of being capable of strong meat, or attaining to the perfection of Christian doctrine and being skilful in the word of righteousness, they chose to continue babes in knowledge. Like children, they had all their work to begin again. It is, therefore, a matter of the greatest importance to know what that word of righteousness is, in which they were unskilful, not having their senses exercised to discern between good and evil, truth and error. Let it only be observed, that they were looking back to the Law, and consequently in danger of returning to it for justification, and thus falling from the doctrine of grace, and it will appear at once that the righteousness they were ignorant of, or ready to reject, is that of Christ, 'Who by one offering,' the finishing act of His obedience, 'has perfected for ever those who are sanctified (Heb. 10:14).' How many, at all times, who have the name and appearance of well grown Christians, are just such babes as the Hebrews were, and have the same need to be told that they are unskilful in the word, reason, or ground of a justifying righteousness, and to be exhorted to go on to perfection in Christian doctrine, as well as to further degrees of Christian holiness.

* * * * *

MARCH 29

For our gospel came unto you not in word only, but also in power (1 Thess. 1:4).

BY the gospel, the Son of God and divine truths are revealed to us; and by the Spirit they are revealed in us. External revelation by the Word, and internal by the Spirit, are both necessary for salvation. Though Paul was separated from his mother's womb to be called by the grace of God, yet he did not have an inward revelation of Jesus Christ until he heard the external word of Christ in his ear, saying, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me (Acts 9:4)?' And so learn to prize both the outward testimony of the word and the inward testimony of the Spirit. The gospel is a revelation of Jesus Christ, without which we could never have known that our sins are atoned for by the blood, our persons justified by the righteousness of our souls, which are everlastingly saved by the work of Christ. But is this knowledge all that is necessary to salvation? No; persons may attain a notion of these things in the head and understand something of them, and yet the heart be without precious faith in Christ, destitute of the love of Christ and of any saving faith in Him. Professor, look well to it; many have said 'Lord, Lord,' and have heard Christ preach in the streets, who little expected to meet with this rebuff from Him, 'I do not know from where you are; depart, you workers of iniquity.' Many heard the gospel preached in Thessalonika, but only those were blessed to whom it came 'in power, in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance (1 Thess. 1:4).'

* * * * *

MARCH 30

To reveal His Son to me (Gal.1:16).

FROM hence begins spiritual life, a life proceeding from God and holding communion with God, and tending to the glory of God. The honour and happiness of our souls arises from this revealing of Christ in us. We long for the reviving comfort of this while we consider it. To reveal Christ in us is to make such a clear disclosure of the matchless charms and glory of His person to our souls as we never saw before, so that our hearts are enamoured with Him, we choose Him, love Him, delight in Him and cleave to Him in all His offices and characters. It is by the eye of the soul, we then behold His glory, 'the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth' (John 1:14) to us miserable sinners. Hence He is the only beloved of our souls. Without this revelation of Jesus Christ in us, what is all outward profession? It is no more than mere talk, dry formality and heavy drudgery. I speak to myself and you as dear friends, do not be content to live without a constant revelation of Christ to your souls. This makes the conscience peaceful, the heart heavenly, the soul happy. This inspires love and subdues lust, captivates the affections, makes the whole man happy in God and creates heaven in the soul. If Christ is within the the heart, all will be right and well without in the life. If you believe in Christ as revealed in the word, this blessed promise is for you; 'I will manifest Myself to him (John 14:21).'

* * * * *

MARCH 31

The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

WHATEVER we do of ourselves in answer to our convictions, is a covering not a cleansing; and if we die in this condition, unwashed, uncleansed, unpurified, it is utterly impossible that we should be admitted into the blessed presence of the holy God (see Rev. 21:27). Let no man deceive you with vain words. It is not the doing a few good works, it is not an outward profession of religion that will give you an access with joy to God. Unless you are washed from your actual transgressions in the blood of Christ, and cleansed from the pollution of your nature by the Spirit of God, you will not inherit the kingdom of God. Indeed, without this washing you will be a horrible sight to saints and angels, to yourselves and to one another, when the shame of your nakedness is made to appear. If, therefore, you would not perish, and that eternally, if you would not perish as a base, defiled creature, an abhorrence to all flesh; then, when your pride, your wealth, your beauty, your ornaments, your duties stand you in no stead, look out betimes after that only way of purifying and cleansing your souls, which God has ordained: 'Without shedding of blood there is no remission (Heb. 9:22).' 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).' 'You were redeemed not with corruptible things,.....but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. 1:18,19).'

* * * * *

APRIL 1

I set My bow in the cloud, and it will be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth (Gen. 9:13).

THE rainbow is a token of the covenant of preservation made with Noah and with all the creatures of the earth. It is fixed and sure and it may be considered also as an emblem of the covenant of grace (Isaiah 54:9,10). Or rather, it may be an emblem of Christ Himself (Rev. 10:1), as appears in many particulars. When we are apt to fear being overwhelmed by the rain, Jehovah shows this seal of His promise that we shall not. Thus He removes our fears, when we weep for sin, and are afraid of a flood of wrath, by reminding us of the covenant of grace established in Jesus. The thicker the cloud is, afterwards the brighter is the bow in the cloud; so when afflictions abound, consolations do much more abound. The bow appears when one part of the sky is clear, which intimates mercy is remembered in the midst of wrath. The rainbow is caused by the refraction of the beams of the sun; likewise all the glory of the covenant of grace and the significance of the seals are derived from Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. The bow of the archer speaks terror, but this bow is without string or arrow, is directed upwards and not to the earth. God looks upon this bow to remember His covenant and so should we, that we may be mindful of the covenant of grace with faith and thankfulness.

* * * * *

APRIL 2

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world (Gal.6:14).

A TRUE believer has nothing to glory in but Christ alone. Even in his very best performances he will be often deeply humbled and cry out, '[LORD,] enter not into judgement (Psalm 143:2).' And well he may; for the ground of our glory, comfort and salvation is not in works but in Christ and the free grace of God, Who, for His Son's sake, lays nothing to our charge, but daily covers and richly pardons all our iniquities. And thus believers, walking steadily, may always be kept in solid peace, for the cross of Christ is a solid and unshaken foundation.

* * * * *

APRIL 3

Purifying their hearts by faith (Acts 15:9).

BY faith in the Son of God, we get an interest in His great and glorious salvation; we are justified by faith; we have peace with God by faith. This is an excellent grace which brings us out of a state slavery and sin into the liberty of the sons and daughters of God, and will issue in everlasting salvation. Faith purifies the heart of man, naturally vicious, and unites us to Christ, the root of all holiness. Now, reader, examine yourself whether you are in the faith? Try the tree by its fruits; ask yourself these questions: Has my faith a purifying influence on my heart? Does the view of Christ dying for my sins make me die to them? Has my faith in Christ, as wounded for my transgressions and bruised for my iniquities, made me bitterly lament them, sincerely hate them, and seek the death of every one of them? Though there may be still much sin in me, is there none allowed? Is there one, including that sin which does most easily beset me, which I desire to be spared and excused? Do I rather look on all sin as the enemy of Christ and my own soul, and as such do I hate it with a perfect hatred. Am I praying fervently for divine grace to subdue it and, in the strength of that grace, do I maintain a constant and vigorous war with it, determined never to give it any rest in my heart, never to cease my conflict with it until I have gained the complete and everlasting victory? Then you are upright; go on and prosper.

* * * * *

APRIL 4

He will cause those who come of Jacob to take root. Israel will blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit (Isaiah 27:6). The house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward (Isaiah 37:31). They will bring forth fruit in old age; they will prosper and flourish (Psalm 92:14). Her leaf will be green, and will neither be careful in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit (Jer. 17:8).

TRUE evangelical Christians look upon themselves as barren trees, ever crying out, ‘O my leanness, O my leanness.’ Even before the judgement seat of Christ, they acknowledge no fruits, nor will plead them, though they have been fruitful (see Matt. 25:37-39). The reason is, they are poor in spirit, and are not pleased with their fruits but only with Christ. Grant Lord, that I may earnestly seek to bring forth fruit, may grow in faithfulness as I grow in years, and never cease from yielding fruit, hereby proving myself to be a tree of the Lord’s planting, whose leaf is green and whose branches are flourishing and fruitful. Yet bless me also with deep poverty of spirit, that I may see myself still nothing, having nothing of my own to glory in or to justify me, that thus I may esteem Christ my all and rest wholly upon Him.

* * * * *

APRIL 5

Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world (John 16:33; see also Heb. 12:1, 2).

SOMETIMES the enemy seems to get an advantage over us, but the battle is not over yet. At last you will have the victory and carry the day for all that. In hard struggles remember the power of Christ, Who in His resurrection broke through everything. With Him you can also break through and be more than conqueror. Indeed, in every conflict, if your faith is firm, you can be sure of victory beforehand, for faith engages Christ's power, and His power ensures victory. Christ, as our King, is the Author and Finisher of faith and it is as impossible for your enemies to keep you always in bonds as it was impossible that Christ should be kept in the grave by the stone, the seal and the keepers. Indeed, the greater their force is, the more glorious will be the victory of Christ over them.

* * * * *

APRIL 6

Can two walk together, except they be agreed (Amos 3:3)?

THEY must be agreed in heart, in affection, in will, in their inclinations and pursuits, or they cannot walk together in any mutual confidence and comfortable communion. ‘What communion has light with darkness, and what concord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has he who believes with an infidel (2 Cor. 6:14,15)?’ We cannot walk with Jesus without a living union with Him, a hearty love to Him, and a holy delight in Him; nor can He walk with us on any other principles. We cannot walk with each other without mutual love. A living walk with Jesus, cemented and sealed by His Holy Spirit, is the only bond of union and agreement between Christians, whereby they can walk together, to the honour of God, and their own benefit. Alas! how much it is to be lamented, that those who through grace, are thus united, should be so visibly shy of each other, because they differ in lesser matters. Dear Saviour, help me to be more agreed with You, and walk more closely with You and in more real affection and love with all those who are really Yours, to the praise and glory of Your grace.

* * * * *

APRIL 7

*Let all men meet with your forbearance (Phil.4:5).
Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies (1 Cor. 8:1).*

IF you rebuke others, and would have them to be like you, you ought to examine yourself first, whether your motive flows from blind party zeal, impatience and self-will, or from a true principle of true love, also whether you are also much in prayer for them, both before and after. The man who truly lays the sufferings of the Son of God to heart, and considers how gently He has treated him, and still treats him, like the weakest child, must needs be forbearing also towards all men, and think, 'If nobody bears with others, surely I must.' Lord, give me a spirit of meekness, to show all lenity to my fellow-Christians!

* * * * *

APRIL 8

Put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book (Psalm 56:8)? Divine answer: Those who sow in tears will reap in joy. He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, will doubtless come back with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him (Psalm 126:5:6).

BELIEVER, if you are now reaping in joy, and singing hymns of triumph, be thankful; but remember that this work belongs more to the next world than the present. Here weeping and rejoicing follow each other, and sorrow will often find a lodging in the bosom of faith. There is no retreat from the field of battle, and your enemies will not leave you while you have a breath to draw. Let this be a check to impatience. It is indeed needful to be humbled under a sense of your misery, so as to sigh, groan, and weep often; and this is the true seed for eternity. Not a single tear and groan will be lost. They are all in the book of the Lord.

* * * * *

APRIL 9

The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer (Psalm 6:9). The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble, and those who know Your name will put their trust in You; for You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You (Psalm 9:9,10). The needy will not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor will not perish for ever (Psalm 9:18).

WHOSOEVER would receive comfort from these words must first be sensible of poverty and misery, and show it by confessing his sins and feeling nothing in himself but helplessness and unworthiness. He must come, with all his poverty, to a rich Saviour and daily entreat His mercy, carefully remembering that the Lord has promised to supply all our wants, however great our poverty and misery may be. Therefore beware of unbelief and do not suspect the Lord's kindness; but seek Him, hope in Him, and expect all good things from Him, assuring yourself that neither your hope, nor your prayer, nor a single sigh of yours will be lost. O God, grant me faith that I may say, 'The Lord hears my supplication; the Lord receives my prayer.' God be praised, Who has not rejected my prayer, nor turned away His goodness from me, but is my protector and my hope.

* * * * *

APRIL 10

Lead us not into temptation (Matt. 6:13). Divine answer: God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, so that you may be able to bear it (1 Cor. 10:13).

THE nearer to heaven, the higher the mountains, the deeper the valleys and the sharper the conflicts. But don't be discouraged; it is only for the trial of our faith. God gives also more strength, carries us through all, as He has done from the beginning, and permits none to be ashamed who trust in Him. Sometimes we may seem to be tempted above measure and we are afraid of being confounded, but far from it; it is quite impossible we should. Here you have the plain words of the Lord. Take hold on them and wait His time, for since the world has stood, none have been confounded in anything who have waited for His promise, and surely He will not make you the first instance of the failure of His word; by no means. 'For the mountains will depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness will not depart from you, neither will the covenant of My peace be removed,' says the Lord Who has mercy on you (Isaiah 54:10).'

* * * * *

APRIL 11

O satisfy us early with Your mercy (Psalm 90:14). Divine Answer: Open your mouth wide and I will fill it (Psalm 81:10). My people will be satisfied with My goodness (Jer. 31:14). The river of God is full of water (Psalm 65: 9). With joy shall we draw water from the wells of salvation (Isaiah 12:3). In that day there will be a fountain opened..... for sin and for uncleanness (Zech. 13:1).

MY soul, keep close to the gospel; there only is there a fulness to supply all wants, food for the hungry and clothing for the naked soul, and everything in plenty. Whoever will, may come and be fed, without money and without price. Do not therefore let the Law hinder you from eating and drinking, rejoicing and adorning yourself in a gospel manner. The Law, as someone justly observes, brings in a great bill, but nothing with which to pay it. It sets the soul to working, but so as to neglect the proper nourishment necessary for it. No wonder, then, that she is destitute of sufficient strength, that she faints, and never reaches the right mark. There is no such thing as making amends by the Law; we must go directly to Christ and from His fulness first receive by faith the grace and strength required.

* * * * *

APRIL 12

Fear not, daughter of Zion (John 12:15). But greatly rejoice and shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, your King comes unto You; He is just and having salvation (Zech. 9:9). For the Lord has taken away your judgments: He has cast out your enemy; the King of Israel, the LORD, is in the midst of you: you will not see evil any more (Zeph 3:15). Behold, they will surely gather together, but not by Me; whoever will gather together against you will fall for your sake (Isaiah 54:15). Let them return to you, but do not return to them (Jer.15:19).

HOWEVER strong your inward enemies, your corruptions, may be now, do not fear and do not be discouraged. Your King is bound by His office, love and promise to help you with strength to overcome. Even the hardships of a Christian work together for his good in this world and brighten his crown of glory in the world to come. To often, instead of casting and leaving a burden on the Lord by faith at once, we parley with temptation, and undertake to heal ourselves by a thousand false contrivances, the effect of which is to make a conflict long that might have been short (2 Chron.16:7,8,9). Lord, give me the grace to be watchful and to keep on the armour of faith, that, as I pass from conflict to conflict, I may pass on conquering and to conquer, daily pressing forward, and experiencing Jesus every hour, my mighty King and Saviour.

* * * * *

APRIL 13

You are not to be afraid of them, but are to remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt (Deut.7:18). Be not terrified because of them, for the Lord your God it is who goes with you, to fight against your enemies to save you (Deut. 20:3,4). Hitherto will you come, but no further; and here will your proud waves be stayed (Job 38:11).

THE assaults of original sin will always return and we must not be surprised when one conflict is over, that another arises. This contest is unavoidable, for the enemy is within us. It makes us more careful and humble to know this, than if we believe that we have only to encounter sin from without and not from within. And if we desire to feel less evil within us than God suffers us to have, we may be assured that this desire proceeds either from pride, seeking to glory in our own righteousness, or from an impatient wish to get rid of the trouble of striving always against sin. It should be enough for us that God suffers it, does not lay it to our charge, and carries us through all dangers.

* * * * *

APRIL 14

Verily You are a God Who hides Yourself, O God of Israel, the Saviour (Isaiah 45:15). All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth (Psalm 25:10).the LORD of Hosts, Who is wonderful in counsel, excellent in working (Isaiah 28:29).

GOD is wonderful in all His doings, His ways are past finding out; at the end we can see best the wise and gracious steps He took with us. Therefore, when things take such an unforeseen turn that we are quite at our wit's end and do not know which way to go on, we may believe the hand of the Lord is in it, and some good will come of it at last. As we experience the name of Christ to be 'Wonderful' at such times, we may well expect that He will show Himself to be our Counsellor and Mighty God also. At first, everything may seem to be against us and go quite contrary, but at last we see plainly that it was highly needful that it should go contrary to our corrupt nature, and that thus it went well. Though the ways of God are to be wondered at, yet they are glorious.

* * * * *

APRIL 15

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy (Exod. 20:8). I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day (Rev.1:10).

READER, I do not know who or what you are, but may the God of all grace bless this meditation to your soul. Perhaps you are a careless sinner, who until today has trifled with Sabbaths. Oh do not profane the Lord's day anymore, but if you place any value on your soul, attend upon His worship and desire to be 'in the Spirit' on this day. Then you will see and feel your malady. Look to Jesus for pardon, and Sabbath days will become precious to your soul. Perhaps you are a self-righteous Pharisee, punctual in outward services. So far it is praiseworthy, but awful is your mistake if you make any outward service the ground of your acceptance, especially as the language of the day is, 'In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' And so will you say, if you are 'in the Spirit.' Or you may have been a splendid professor, but now a grievous backslider. May you be 'in the Spirit on the Lord's day,' then you will look to God for pardon, to Jesus for fresh sprinklings of His blood, and to the Spirit for His quickening influences. If you are a believer under sharp trials, may you be 'in the Spirit,' for then when tribulations abound, consolations will also abound. If you are a believer walking closely with God, rich in knowledge and experience, you will wish to be 'in the Spirit,' that grace may be glorified, Jesus more loved, and His name more honoured. Reader, whether you are master or servant, parent or child, and would have your temporal and spiritual concerns prosper, make it a matter of conscience to keep the Sabbath day holy.

* * * * *

APRIL 16

Remember me, O God, for good (Neh.13:31). Divine Answer: Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spoke against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy on him (Jer. 31:20).and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the LORD and thought upon His name (Mal. 3:16,17,18). I know the thoughts I have towards you, thoughts of peace and not of evil (Jer.29:11).

AS soon as I appear with my prayers before the Lord, He writes all my petitions in His book of remembrance. Should I not pray much? Yes, O Lord; and though I have many things already in Your book, yet I will give You occasion to write down more and more every hour. Thus nothing can be forgotten. All will be granted by Him. Delays we must expect, but all will be made up with so much larger the gift in due time, though the best will be reserved for a blissful eternity.

* * * * *

APRIL 17

And in this mountain will the Lord of hosts make to all people a feast of sumptuous things, a feast of wines well aged, of sumptuous things full of marrow, of wines well aged, well refined (Isaiah 25:6).

A FEAST bespeaks plenty, harmony and joy. Many feasts were appointed under the Law in commemoration of various deliverances and mercies. The gospel appoints one great perpetual festival in consequence of the one great blessing which comprehends all other mercies, 'redemption by the blood of Christ.' The table is always spread, the company are always welcome, the joy is always new. Lord, I was once feeding upon husks, upon ashes, upon the wind and drinking down iniquity like water. But, oh wonderful love! You invited me and brought me to Your own feast. You feed me with the bread of life and cause me to drink the wine of Your own consolation. May I never more have an appetite for the vanities of the world.

APRIL 18

And he believed in the Lord, and He counted it for righteousness (Gen. 15:6).

IT is no uncommon thing in scripture to put the act for the object, especially with regard to faith and hope. Thus hope signifies the object of hope (Jer. 14:8, 1 Tim.1:1, Heb. 6:18). Faith also is often put for the object, or doctrine of faith, or that which is believed in, as when it was said that Paul preaches the faith which once he destroyed (Gal.1:23), when Felix heard him preach concerning faith in Christ, when scripture speaks of keeping and contending for the faith, and of holding the mystery of the faith, and the like. Thus when Abraham is said to believe in the Lord, the meaning is that he believed in Him as his Saviour and Redeemer. He believed in Him for righteousness and he believed in His righteousness as justifying him before God. It was not the act of his faith, but the object of it, not the promise he believed, but what was promised; and his faith indeed received Christ and His righteousness. We see this fully explained in Rom. 4:3,10, 22-24.

Mark well how Abraham was justified before God, not by faith as a work, but as apprehending Christ; follow this example of the father of the faithful. It is by faith in Jesus Christ alone that we can be justified before God. All the Old Testament saints were justified by faith, as well as the New. This distinguishes the Christian religion from all systems of mortal man, and to err in this is to err in the fundamentals of Christianity.

* * * * *

APRIL 19

This do in remembrance of Me (Luke 22:19).

COME, obey your dying Lord's command; let it be your delight, as it is your privilege, to attend your Master at the table to take a nearer view of His bleeding love, and by a renewed act of faith, obtain a fresh taste and a renewed pledge of the precious benefits contained therein. Do not stagger through unbelief; it is a blessed truth: Jesus died for sinners. This is the foundation of a sinner's hope; let this encourage you. You are a sinner, guilty and defiled; Jesus' blood cleanses from all sins; He is the Fountain opened for your uncleanness. You are by nature a child of wrath, condemned by the Law, exposed to the curse, but Jesus was made a curse for you. You are unrighteous, unholy, but God makes Jesus righteousness and sanctification to you. You are weak, beset by enemies, but His strength will be perfected in your weakness and you, by faith, will be more than conqueror through Him Who loved you. You are afraid of perishing at the last; look to Jesus; He purchased you with His blood; He will not give you up; none can pluck you out of His hand.

Rise then, come to the banquet of love, and partake of the blessing of the everlasting covenant; beseech the Lord to manifest His love and seal your pardon, renew your strength and enable you to travel the remaining part of your pilgrimage till you come to Mount Zion and be admitted a welcome guest at the marriage supper in heaven.

* * * * *

APRIL 20

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His sake; I write unto you, fathers, because you have known Him Who is from the beginning; I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one (1 John 2:12,13).

GOD has saints of several degrees and sizes, and some of them have more communion with Him than others. From among the multitude, He chose twelve to be with Him; from among the twelve He chose three, Peter, James and John, who were of the privy council; from among the three He chose out John as His bosom favourite, of whom it is said five times in St. John's Gospel, that 'he was the disciple whom Jesus loved.' So now at this day, God has His babes who live upon milk and nothing else; He has His children also who know their Father and are assured of His love. Moreover, He has His 'young men,' who go out to war and fight His battles victoriously; and He has 'fathers in Israel,' who abound in grey-headed experience and wisdom, for they knew Him from the beginning, and they remembered His words. It is a great mercy to be one of God's little ones, even to be the least of all; to be a star, though not of the first magnitude, to be a disciple though not a John, not one of the three, nor one of the twelve, nor one of the seventy. But to be a John, to lie in His bosom, how great a mercy. It is a mercy to be newborn, to be taken into the family of God and the household of faith, but to grow up to a perfect stature, to be a man in Christ Jesus, how great a mercy. Lord, You know my desire: perfect that which concerns Your servant, indeed that which concerns all Your servants.

* * * * *

APRIL 21

Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering (Gen. 22:2).

A BRAHAM desired earnestly to see into the mystery of redemption, and to instruct him in the best manner by which humanity is capable of receiving instruction, and in the infinite extent of divine goodness to mankind, God, Who did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, let Abraham feel by experience what it was to lose a beloved, only-begotten son. 'Take now your son, your only son, your Isaac, the staff of your age, the hope of your family. None else do I require; offer him up for a burnt offering; and in this transaction see My love to sinners when I give up my only Son Jesus as a sacrifice for them.' Abraham obeyed and virtually sacrificed his son. But a ram was substituted in his place, and blessings poured upon the faithful patriarch. In the whole story we have a living type of greater things. We are shown the day when God did not spare His only Son, when He was bound with cords, when He bore His cross, and on this mountain, probably on this very spot, was offered up an offering for sin. And then we are shown Him when, triumphant over the grave, He rose again to live for evermore, and sow the seed of His redeemed people, whom no man can number, and who possess the glories of heaven and eternity.

And now meditate on these things. Are you a son of Abraham? Is there in your heart a darling sin? Draw the knife and strike it to the heart. Has God not spared His Son for me and shall I spare what He commands me to sacrifice? No, gracious Saviour, no. Help me to be faithful, to keep back nothing from You. Search the ground of my heart. When You have tried me, crown the faith You have bestowed, and the obedience You have worked, with that unfading glory You have promised to those who are faithful unto death.

APRIL 22

God is rich in mercy and because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in transgressions, He quickened us together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up together, and sat us together in the heavens in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2: 4-6).

CHRIST being the head of the body, His church, all who are His real members are together with Him dead, buried, raised up and seated in heavenly places; for He is the new Adam and has done all these things as our representative, in our stead and for our good. Therefore, a true believer may rejoice and say: 'I have already suffered in You, O my glorious Head, for all my sins; I am discharged, I have no punishment to fear any more respecting the guilt and curse of sin. You have fully answered the charge against me and for me satisfied the infinite justice of God; it is impossible, with His equity and love, to require a double payment of my debts. Consequently, I die no more, since You can die no more. Indeed, I live already and have my place eternally in heaven, since the Head cannot, nor ever will, part with even the weakest of His members, but influence them and draw them after Him wherever He goes.'

* * * * *

APRIL 23

The One Who knew no sin God has made sin for us, that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). But to him who does no works, but believes on Him Who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (Rom. 4:5).

THESE are very sweet and precious words to those who look upon their own best virtues and performances as sinful, and upon their best condition by grace as extremely weak and imperfect. How comfortable is the justification of the ungodly by faith, when we are stripped quite naked before God and thoroughly convinced of our wickedness and weakness. A mere moral, legal man does not meddle with this; he pretends to make amends for his former sins by altering his course and doing better works, but this is not making amends at all, since we are but unprofitable servants and continually need forgiveness of sins, even when we have done all. There is but one way to be justified and to obtain and preserve the blessing of a good conscience, which is by humbling ourselves, confessing ourselves guilty, and looking for forgiveness and righteousness only in Christ. In this way by Him we are the righteousness of God itself. May the Lord put us all in this way.

* * * * *

APRIL 24

God has exalted Him (i.e. Christ Jesus) with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31).

DO not say, 'What reason have I to repent? I am no murderer or robber.' You are both. By your sins you have murdered the Son of God, and by your pride robbed God of the service due to Him. Therefore, if your old heart is not changed into a new one, and yet you feel some uneasiness about your salvation, do not look on this concern as a fit of the vapours, or as a temptation of the devil, but believe it is the work of Christ, Who now awakes you from the sleep of sin and offers you repentance. He will change your heart and make you a new man, if you can yield yourself up to Him. He says, 'I stand at the door and knock, and say, "If any man hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."' "

* * * * *

APRIL 25

God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has set the world in their heart, yet so that no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end (Eccles. 3:11).

O LORD, I am like a little child, knowing neither the beginning nor end of my ways. But You, being Wonderful, Counsellor, I think it my only wisdom to be advised and ruled by You. Always show me then Your way in all things, even in the least, that I may never miss to do Your work in due season and due order. Make me such a faithful steward, as not to go one inch from Your will, but on all occasions to act and suffer according to Your good pleasure.

* * * * *

APRIL 26

Now He Who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us is God, Who has also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Cor.1:21,22; Eph.1:14).

A SENSIBLE joy of faith, and great delight in prayer, are not the only evidences of this pledge and sealing of the Spirit. These sometimes are wanting when we know we are sealed by these other marks, namely when we receive Christ in all His offices, and have a sincere desire to do the will of God in all things, when we love the ordinances of Christ, and regard the children of God with a brotherly affection and seek to do them good; when we hate sin and watch and pray against it; and, lastly, when we are poor in spirit, base in our own eyes and are led by the Spirit into a further acquaintance with Christ Himself and with the gospel. These are constant marks even for the weakest.

* * * * *

APRIL 27

God be merciful to me a sinner (Luke 18:13). Look upon my afflictions and my pain, and forgive all my sins (Psalm 25:18). Divine Answer: The LORD is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy; the LORD is good to all and His tender mercies are over all His works (Psalm 145:8,9). Therefore my son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you (Matt. 9:2).

JUSTIFICATION, or remission of sins before the tribunal of God, and the comfortable assurance of it in the heart, do not always go together. The pardon is passed in heaven at once, and in the most perfect manner; yet the sense of that pardon may be wanting, for the assurance of that pardon is mostly given in degrees, as believers are able to receive it. Feeble glimpses appear now and then, and many love tokens usually pass between Christ and a believing soul before the Spirit gives a full and clear witness to his conscience. Therefore, a penitent soul must converse much with the gospel and pray continually for more light, and a greater degree of faith and peace.

* * * * *

APRIL 28

Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4).

IF you desire to delight yourself in the Lord only, and are more solicitous for the increase of faith, love and holiness than for temporal happiness, and would even part with some earthly good, provided it enlarges your spiritual welfare, this does not come from nature, but is an infallible mark of grace and regeneration. And the Lord will give you also the desires of your heart, and even more than you desire.

Nothing can be more foolish than to harbour one or more secret lusts in our hearts, after we have once been awakened. We must certainly suffer for it; our conscience will check us and we cannot enjoy them with half the pleasure as before; our course is hindered and our peace disturbed. How much more prudent and profitable, then, would it be to forsake all and follow Christ narrowly, for He alone can satisfy the desires of our heart. Consider this and act the wiser part; let your eye be single and cleave to Him alone. Others, seeking to serve two masters, God and Mammon, will be woefully disappointed at last; avoid this folly, and be wholly for Christ. In this way you will taste the crystal streams of His comforting and heavenly love.

* * * * *

APRIL 29

Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed (Jer. 17:14). Divine Answer: I am the LORD Who heals you Exod. 15:26). Those that are whole need no physician, but those that are sick (Matt. 9:12). I have seen his ways and will heal him (Isaiah 57:18; 43:4; 41:1). He healed all that were sick (Matt. 8:16).

CHRIST'S healing of all bodily sickness was a token of His power and grace to heal all spiritual diseases of our souls, though ever so desperate and dangerous they may be. Therefore, give yourself only up to His care; He understands your disorder also and will certainly restore You. He has healed a great many already, indeed all those who desired it, of their infirmities. You can never be too miserable and bad for Him; He is ever willing and able to help you. The worse your case is, the more He will pity you and have patience. Before we can be made whole, His way is to make us thoroughly sensible of our sickness, and lay our wounds more and more open. But then, as the physician is most wanted, we must be the more earnest to implore His help. He will surely bind us up again and heal us, not at once, but by degrees, often slowly and wonderfully, yet thoroughly, at last. He heals all, even the most incurable disease (Psalm 103:3).

* * * * *

APRIL 30

Confess your faults one to another (James 5:16).

IT is related of St John while on his return from Patmos to Ephesus after the death of Domitian, that he was set upon by a company of thieves, amongst whom was a young man, their captain. To him St John applied himself by way of wholesome counsel and advice, which took so good effect, that he became a new man, was converted, and thereupon went to all his fellow thieves, and besought them, in the name of Jesus Christ to walk no longer in their former wicked ways. He told them also that he was troubled in conscience for his former wicked life and earnestly asked them that as they attended to the welfare of their own souls, they would now leave off their old wicked way of life and live more conscientiously for the time to come. The counsel was good and well taken, so that many of those robbers became great converts. And so it is that one sinner's confession of his faults may happily prove the conversion of another. Hence the meaning of that precept, 'Confess your faults to one another,' is thus interpreted by some to mean that those who have been partners together in sin should go to one another and seriously confess their sin to each other. Let the man who has been a drunkard, or in any way else a wicked liver, go to his companions in sin and tell them that he is troubled in conscience because of his former excess and perhaps he may be the means of converting them. Are you a converted man? Follow this method; go to your old friends, warn them of their danger and you will be either the means of converting them or will get rid of their company in future. Again, he who has injured another should confess his fault to that other, as well as to God, and beg forgiveness from both.

* * * * *

MAY 1

Lord, enter not into judgment with Your servant (Psalm 143:2). Divine Answer: In all truth I tell you, he who hears My word, and believes on Him Who sent Me, has everlasting life; he will not come into condemnation, but has passed from death to life (John 5:24; see also John 8:51; Isaiah 25:8).

SINCE the judge Himself is described as a brother, a bridegroom, the Lord of death and life, indeed, even our life, believers cannot die eternally, because ‘they have passed from death to life.’ He that owns the justice of God’s judgment confesses himself guilty in all things, appeals from from the judgment-seat to the mercy seat, and him the Lord will own and justify through the righteousness of His Son, for, if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. Indeed, we shall even sit in judgment together with Christ (see 1 Cor. 6:2), and surely in that day we shall not pass a sentence of condemnation on ourselves, much less will Christ, for He loves us more than we do ourselves.

* * * * *

MAY 2

Give heed to me, O Lord (Jer. 18:19). Divine Answer: Behold, He that keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep (Psalm 121:4). Cast all your care upon God, for He cares for you (1 Pet. 5:7).

THE care of the Lord, which He takes for His little ones, infinitely exceeds the care of the most tender mother over her weak and helpless child. Then, whilst I feel and own myself weak, foolish and wretched, the Lord, being the guardian of such babes, will have patience with me, for they, with me, are the vessels of His grace. Knowing myself, therefore, to be always a weak and ignorant child, I will labour to keep close to Jesus in waiting and prayer. And since He is the minister of the sanctuary, He will never let me want anything that is good for me, but will defend me and feed me, and train me up in the best and most suitable manner.

* * * * *

MAY 3

They said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of your saying; for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world (John 4:42).' If so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious (1 Peter 2:3).

IT is an important thing to know assuredly that the Scripture has such a witness as experience, and that there is a real correspondence between the saints and the Word, between the believer and Christ. This matter lies out of the common way of the world. Sinners not awakened can have no experience of this kind, and therefore it is often ridiculed by them. But what an empty thing would religion be without experience and heart-felt knowledge of its truths. Experience is the sure and secret mark whereby the Christian knows that scripture is of God; he feels his own interest in Christ and has often been helped out of a plunge into darkness by the sealing of the Word in his heart. What an excellent interpreter is experience; taste and see; for thus the serious Christian gets a view of the Scripture and spiritual things, which the most subtle and piercing eye of unsanctified scholars cannot reach. (See Psalm 34:8; 116:10; 2 Timothy 1:12; Gal. 2:16; Hebrews 4:3)

This cannot be found in books; men will not meet with it in a throng of the choicest notions; it confounds the wise and the disputer of this world, while the lowliest and most simple Christian understands it well, to the sanctification of his soul. Reader, press after experience. Do not live by hearsay and upon the comforts of others, but seek the Lord, that He would give you this inward testimony, for it will help you in future trials. It will remove many fears, make your passage through life easy and comfortable, and act as a pledge of your future glory.

* * * * *

MAY 4

Whoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me; for whoever will save his life will lose it. But whoever will lose his life for My sake will save it (Mark 8:34,35; Luke 9:23). Whoever he is of you that does not forsake all that he has, cannot be My disciple (Luke 14:33).

THIS doctrine is discarded by all who call Christ 'Lord, Lord, but do not do the things which He says (Luke 6:46).' The language of their heart is, 'Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits (Isaiah 30:10).' How different was that of the apostle! 'So I fight, not as one who jabs the air; but I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (1 Cor. 9:26, 27).' No cross, no crown; we are not, then, to be afraid of the cross; for when we bear it, it bears us; and when we refuse to take it up we refuse the staff of every Christian pilgrim, and the weapon of every Christian soldier; we renounce the tree of life for that of knowledge, and practically 'deny Christ and Him crucified.'

* * * * *

MAY 5

Whatever things you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them (Mark 11:24). Truly, truly, I say to you, Whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto you have asked nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full (John 16:23,24). But ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavers is like a wave of the sea. Let that man not think that he will receive anything of the Lord (James 1:6,7).

HEROD promised with an oath to give the daughter of Herodias whatever she would ask, even to the half of his kingdom. How advantageous was his promise! But how much more so that of the Lord! ‘By myself have I sworn,.....that I Who bless will bless you (Gen. 22:16,17).’ When He bids us ask, He does not lay us under a restriction of not asking above half a kingdom. No: we ask a whole kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, consisting both of grace and glory. Both are purchased for us by the blood of the Lamb, both promised to believers in the word of the gospel, and both actually bestowed: grace upon praying souls in the church militant, glory upon praising souls in the church triumphant. If now we do not enjoy the kingdom of grace, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, it is merely because we have not asked, or have asked amiss, which is to ask without faith, without patience, or in our own name, and not in the all-prevailing name of Jesus.

* * * * *

MAY 6

*O Lord, pardon my iniquity; for it is great (Psalm 25:11).
Divine Answer: Where sin abounded, grace did much
more abound (Rom.5:20). God will abundantly pardon
(Isaiah 55:7).*

IT is all one with God to forgive a repentant sinner his
trespasses, whether great or small, many or few,
because they are all paid for with one ransom. No sin,
properly speaking, is little in itself; but none is greater
than the grace of God, and the infinite price laid down for
it. Whatever sins, therefore, a man feels, he may yet
throw himself upon the abounding grace of God. But this
grace must always be our comfort; depend upon it alone,
even when things are best with us; for it is only best with
us when we depend alone on grace, and live in it as in our
element.

* * * * *

MAY 7

Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am weak (Psalm 6:2). Strengthen me according to Your Word (Psalm 119: 28). Divine Answer: My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). He does not delight in the strength of a horse; He does not take pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy (Psalm 147:10,11). The LORD will give strength to His people (Psalm 29:11).

IN whatever part we are weak, and most beset by corrupted nature, we may still be strong enough, through grace, to come off conquerors. Therefore, hope against hope and do not despair of overcoming by the power of God, although your corruption within and your enemies without, are ever so strong and obstinate. I am weak indeed, but Christ is strong; I am poor, He is rich; I am sick, He the Physician of the sick, I am a sinner, He is the Saviour of sinners; consequently, He suits me, and I suit Him, extremely well. But let me look to Him daily, seek His face earnestly, and find grace to help in every time of need.

* * * * *

MAY 8

By what means will a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Your Word.....Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law.Remove from me the way of lying; grant me Your Law graciously.....I have chosen the way of truth; Your judgments have I laid before me.....Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes; and I will keep it to the end (Psalm 119:9,18,29,30,33).

NEITHER the old nor the young can walk uprightly, without taking heed to the word of God. If they depart from that, they soon fall into error and the ways of vice. But if they would make the Word their rule, they must read it carefully, and pray diligently, for the enlightening of the Holy Spirit. If David considered his eyes as shut, how much more should we consider ours so, and pray, ‘Open my eyes’ etc. He who does not fervently pray thus, is still blind, and has no eye, even though he should think himself a profound divine, and be esteemed so by others. Lord, give me to see the wonders both of Your Law and gospel, and turn my feet from every crooked path. Let Your commandments be always before me as my guide; enable me to choose the narrow path of truth and steadfastly to walk in it to the end; for this was David’s request throughout this long Psalm.

* * * * *

MAY 9

Teach me Your way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path because of my enemies (Psalm 27:11). Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; knit my heart to the fear of Your name (Psalm 86:11). Divine Answer: Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will He teach sinners in the way. What man is he that fears the Lord? Him will He teach the way he should choose (Psalm 25: 8,12).

OLORD, be pleased to fulfil this gracious promise in me also. You have inclined my heart to do Your will, and yet I am often in darkness about Your will. Here it is written, 'Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He will teach sinners in the way.' It is Your own word; I may depend on it, and would plead it with You; many times You have fulfilled this promise already, and are willing and able to do it evermore for Your own name's sake. You are ever mindful of Your Word, and I would keep close to it. Then let Your Spirit explain Your Word, and write it on my heart, enabling me to understand, to love and to practise it.

* * * * *

MAY 10

Turn again our captivity, O LORD (Psalm 126:4). Divine Answer: The LORD has anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound (Isaiah 61:1). For thus says the LORD,....I will give You for a covenant to the people,.... that You may say to the prisoners, 'Go out;' to those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.' They will feed in the ways, and their pastures will be in all high places. They will not hunger nor thirst (Isaiah 49:8-10; see also Isaiah 35:10).

O LORD I am hungering after the righteousness and freedom, not only of faith, but of holiness also; not that I may make holiness the foundation of hope, but the evidence of faith; and that I may be able to rejoice and take comfort from Your righteousness alone, without deceiving my soul. Grant, therefore, that I may be truly filled, and may be strong, easy and free, so as to be kept no longer in any of the subtle bonds, either of the Law, unbelief and a bad conscience, and of a carnal worldly mind.

* * * * *

MAY 11

How long will You hide Your face from me, O LORD (Psalm 13:1)? Divine Answer: For a small moment I have forsaken you; but with great mercies will I gather you. In a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the LORD your Redeemer. Now this is as the waters of Noah to Me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wrathful with you, nor rebuke you (Isaiah 54:7-9).

WHEN the Lord is pleased to quicken us in our prayers with a lively impression of one or more promises, we are apt to think that the hour of His help has come. But afterwards, it may be, He not only hides Himself for a great while again, but things take even a strange and contrary course, as if all had been nothing, or as if nothing was more uncertain than the word of God, indeed, even than God Himself. They who deny such temptations are strangers both to themselves and to the devices of Satan. But Christians must then be prudently on their guard, thinking that God is going to do some glorious things for them; for if they are first convinced of their utter unworthiness, if they act with faith and patience, and be more earnest in prayers, they are fit to receive so much more grace afterwards. Yet, after all, God, as a Sovereign, will give such measures of grace, at such seasons, and to such persons as He pleases.

* * * * *

MAY 12

*How long will You forget me, O LORD (Psalm 13:1)?
Divine Answer: Can a woman forget her sucking child,
that she should not have compassion on the son of her
womb? Yes, they may forget, yet I will not forget You.
Behold, I have engraved You on the palms of My hands:
your walls are continually before Me (Isaiah 49:15,16). I
will not leave you comfortless (John 14:18).*

WERE all our sins and afflictions so soon to be
prayed away with a few words, why these sad and
repeated complaints of David? Why should God advise
us to wait for Him, and persevere in hope? And how
could faith and patience be exercised? In our closets we
may be lifted up with high speculations; seem to be
strong, and able to leap over all the walls; but when in
great distress, we see how dejected and distrusting our
hearts often are (see Psalm 30:7,8), but the Lord pre-
serves us.

* * * * *

MAY 13

Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths (Psalm 25:4). Show me now Your way, that I may know You (Exod.33:13). Divine Answer: I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you will go. I will guide you with My eye (Psalm 32:8). My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest (Exod. 33:14).

O LORD, do not allow me to step aside one inch from Your way, much less fall away from You, the true Vine and Fortress of my soul, by any plausible insinuation of my own brain and imagination. May I never run before You have called me, to the hurt of my soul; but constantly and confidently abide in You, always drawing first the necessary light and strength from You by never-ceasing supplications. Grant that, my eye being fixed constantly on You, I may be guided into all truth, my doings being attended with Your blessings, and my whole life a constant progress towards heaven. **CHRIST'S ANSWER:** 'I will keep You as the apple of My eye, so that no evil will come near you. As a careful mother watches over her child, so have I undertaken to teach you My path, and guide you with My own eyes. Whatever faintings and fastings may befall you, yet I will ever be faithful, raising you up again and leading you evermore in My ways. Indeed, as a good Shepherd, I will carry you in My own arms, whenever your increasing weakness requires.'

* * * * *

MAY 14

By these, my son, be admonished (Eccles.12:12), Like new born babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby (1 Peter 2:2).

NEWBORN babes must not, self-conceitedly, be desirous of high things and strong meat. Such as these have more need experimentally to understand the first oracles of Christ, and taste the milk and saving power of the gospel. This would best make them grow in grace and wean them from the world, since a nursing child esteems nothing else in comparison with its mother's breast. Likewise, those who delight in more lofty, vain imaginations than the Bible, do not follow the right spirit and at last must come to their catechism again. The more a Christian is approaching his end, and desires to be duly prepared for heaven, the more he walks in deep humility and godly simplicity, placing himself on the lowest bench of weak and little children. And thus they are fittest vessels of grace; they will certainly be enlightened, and have the mystery of Christ revealed in their hearts (Matt.11:25).

* * * * *

MAY 15

For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened..... (Eph. 3:14-16; read on to v. 21).

THIS is a prayer and form fit to be used by ministers for their congregations, and by all Christians for themselves. It may be used as a daily prayer and we should offer it up in faith, without apprehension that the favour we ask is too great. God will do exceedingly more for us than we can either ask or understand. Whatever we ask, He will grant us still more; for though we are sinners, yet Jesus has received gifts even for sinners. To every one of us (ch. 4:7) is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, so that we may enjoy all things richly, Christ being rich towards all those who call on Him. O God, You are our Father, reconciled to us in Christ; grant us, therefore, power, great power, according to the riches of Your glory, not according to the narrowness of our hearts. We stand in need of great power, for we have great enemies: strengthen us by Your Spirit in the inner man. Lord Jesus, dwell in our hearts, and grant us to be rooted in Your love, so that we may know it more and more, that it may be shed abroad in our hearts and that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.

* * * * *

MAY 16

Your Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You.....Establish Your word to Your servant, who is devoted to Your fear.....Then I shall not be ashamed, when I have respect to all Your commandments.....I will run the way of Your commandments, when you enlarge my heart.....Therefore, remember the word to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope (Psalm 119:11, 38, and vv. 6,32,49).

GOSPEL comforts sweetly and powerfully urge us to obedience; and the terrors of the Law check us from resting on that obedience. Both are needful to guard us from security and legality. Whoever despises or neglects obedience entertains a false notion of the gospel, and is running headlong into licentiousness and ruin; while he who relies on his obedience to justify him defeats the design of the gospel and frustrates the grace of God, making it of no effect. May the Lord lead and keep us in the right way.

* * * * *

MAY 17

I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live to God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me (Gal. 2:19,20).

CHRIST being our Head, in Whom all fulness dwells, He will certainly fill all His members with life and strength, according to His promise, ‘Because I live, you will live also (John 14:19);’ and, ‘This is life eternal, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You have sent (John 17:3).’ To know Christ, and God in Christ, as love, is true light and life; the man who has this has enough. O the excellency of the knowledge of Christ! O Lord, teach me to know You as the Bridegroom of my soul, that the Law may not rush into my conscience, now Your bride-chamber, and condemn me any more. I desire to be devoted to You alone, ‘..... that you should be married to another, to Him Who is raised from the dead (Rom.7:4).’ Grant, therefore, that my whole heart and life, all my words and actions, may be governed only by a living faith in You, Who loved me and gave Yourself for me.

* * * * *

MAY 18

I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me (Psalm 109:22). Divine Answer: I know your....poverty, but you are rich (Rev. 2:9). Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:3). The meek will eat and be satisfied; they will praise the Lord that seek Him; your heart will live for ever (Psalm 22:26). The Lord heals the broken in heart;.....the Lord lifts up the meek (Psalm 147:3,6). A broken reed He will not snap, a smoking wick He will not quench, till He brings judgment forth victorious (Matt.12:20).

SUCH are the tender mercies of Christ towards the weakest of His people, that He supplies them from time to time with all necessary strength, till at last they are able to gain complete victory. As soon, therefore, as we are sensible of our poverty or miserable condition, are desirous of grace and strength to overcome sin, and evidence that desire to be sincere by constant prayer, we have actually some grace and spiritual life, and are delivered already from the jaws of hell; for there is no feeling in dead souls and in hell there is only a desire to be delivered from the punishment of sin, but not from sin itself.

* * * * *

MAY 19

I am the light of the world; he that follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (John 8:12). Walk while you have the light, lest darkness comes on you; for he that walks in the darkness does not know where he goes (John 12:35).

HE that is faithful, keeping ever close to Christ, and His light, strictly watching and obeying the motions of His Spirit will be evermore tender in conscience and receive so much more light. Consequently, he will be from time to time more deeply rooted in repentance, faith, and assurance, so as either to be preserved from many combats and disorders, or at least to be carried sooner through the same. He may meet with dark valleys in his pilgrimage, (for nature is covered with darkness and grace sometimes only glimmers with a spark,) yet by degrees it will blaze and at last break through and enlighten all our darkness.

* * * * *

MAY 20

I am the LORD God Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way that you should go. Oh that you had listened to My commandments! Then your peace had been like the river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea (Isaiah 48:17,18). Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him and I will sup with him, and he with Me (Rev. 3:20).

HOW often and how variously does the Lord knock at the door of our hearts, by the voice of His word, the voice of His Spirit, or the voice of conscience! But how seldom are we inclined to give Him the hearing! We are often so distracted with business or pleasure that we hardly observe His voice through the hurry and noise of worldly things and are not at home when He knocks and seeks to take up His abode with us. Well, even now He is knocking by this paper. Listen to His voice and open the door to Him directly, since He desires nothing from us that might be grievous, but intends to make our heart a glorious residence and a banqueting-room of love, to fill it with heavenly treasure and give us everything along with Himself.

* * * * *

MAY 21

I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away: and every branch that bears fruit, He purges, that it may bring forth more fruit..... Abide in Me, and I in you.He that abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit (John 15:1,2;4;5).

O LORD, I trust that this word will have its accomplishment in me also, though as yet I have great reason to be humbled on account of my barrenness. Grant, therefore, that I may always abide in You faithfully and quietly, since there is everything in Your power and nothing can be done by our own strength. But as it is Your will, and tends to the glory both of Your Father and You, I depend upon being replenished in due season with fruits of righteousness. Oh, allow nothing in me which may dishonour Your name, and which would prove hurtful to me and offensive to others! But whatever You think as yet fit for me to suffer, let it work my real good.

How can I sufficiently adore the patience of the Lord, my gracious Husbandman, Who still bears with me, the weakest of all branches? He has not cut me off yet, but still dresses me, to bring forth more fruit, though like a degenerate plant, I yield little else but wild grapes. Why then should I grumble at the application of the pruning-knife? It is really for my good. He is angry only with the degenerate, unfruitful branches. The more these are purged, the more fruit I shall bring forth.

* * * * *

MAY 22

I am glorified in them:....I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one....And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them (John 17:10,23,26).

O GLORIOUS promise! How could He love us more? What a blessed and intimate union is this! Oh for such a faith that could always truly believe it! Christ is the vine, believers are the branches; He is the bridegroom, they are the bride; He is the head, they are the members of His body, of the very flesh and very bones, and consequently one body with Him. And who ever hated his own flesh? So in loving and cherishing believers, He loves Himself (see Eph. 5:28,29). Whenever He will cease to love Himself, then, and no sooner, will He cease to love and cherish them also. It is His own delight to do them good.

* * * * *

MAY 23

I am weary with my groaning (Psalm 6:6). Divine Answer: He gives power to the faint, and to those who have no might He increases strength (Isaiah 40:29). I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul (Jer. 31:25). Come unto Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest to your souls; for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light (Matt. 11:28-30).

HERE Christ is commending His own meekness, both as a pattern for imitation, and as an encouragement for heavy-laden sinners to draw near to Him with confidence. And His rest is promised not for the merit of our labour and humility, but merely for our coming to Him, and believing in Him. He says, 'Take My yoke upon you.' 'But how shall I take it?' 'Why,' says Christ, 'learn of Me: let Me be your teacher, and though you are blind and foolish, fretful and forgetful, indeed, wholly polluted with sin, I can bear with you, because I am meek and lowly in heart; not rough and haughty to offenders as Pharisees usually are, but full of compassion towards them, willing to receive them, and ready to forgive and comfort them.' etc. Therefore come to Him, sinner. with all your load of sin and misery, and He will in no way cast you out, but receive you gladly.

* * * * *

MAY 24

I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments (Psalm 119:176). Divine Answer: Behold, I, indeed I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, will bind up that which was broken and will strengthen that which was sick (Ezek. 34:11,16). He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom (Isaiah 40:11).

HE who is wise in his own conceit, as philosophers usually are, does not pray, like David, to be sought after and healed by Jesus Christ. He therefore continues amidst all his boasted wisdom, deeply ignorant of his fallen nature and ruined state. But, since You have given me, O good Shepherd, to understand my lost and helpless condition; and that, like a wandering sheep, I can neither find myself when lost, nor advise myself how to return, I beseech You to seek, heal, lead, feed, carry, and strengthen me also as my various needs require; that I may be able to say with David, ‘The *LORD* is my shepherd, I shall not want (Ps. 23:1).’

* * * * *

MAY 25

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which You have showed to Your servant (Gen. 32:10). Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that You have brought me hitherto (2 Sam.7:18)?

A SOUL truly humbled highly esteems every favour, and judges itself utterly unworthy of the least, looking on everything as a free gift and bestowed only for Jesus Christ's sake. Now, O my dear Father, it is true, in myself I deserve none, no, not the least of Your mercies; but, as You have graciously looked on me, and given me Your only Son, Who has purchased all blessings for sinners at a high price, I do believe that goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life (Ps.23:6). Amen. Be it so, holy Father, to Your glory and my everlasting joy.

* * * * *

MAY 26

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:1,2).

THE presentation of our bodies a living sacrifice to God, when attended with serious prayer and reading the Scriptures, is the best means of knowing the will of God. To neglect this and use other means is tempting God, and exposing ourselves to the temptations and siftings of the wicked one. We may think ourselves to be divinely convinced by faith of the will of God, though we follow our own imaginations and spoil the best of our actions. Self-will generally takes quick resolutions and has a great deal of assurance, whereas God very often leads His people blindly and takes methods quite different from ours. Who, therefore, believes, will not make haste (Isaiah 28:16). Let everyone be careful that he does not mistake self-will and plausible representations for divine convictions and assurance of faith. Let him always strictly examine himself first, whether his body, soul, will, affections, are entirely offered up to the goodwill and pleasure of God, for God requires the service of the whole man, even a sacrificing of our whole selves to Him at all times, not only in the house, but in all other places so that we do not conform to the world, but be daily transformed by the renewing of our minds.

* * * * *

MAY 27

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul will be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels (Isaiah 61:10).

IN vain do I dress and adorn myself before I approach Christ. To Him I must come, filthy, naked and miserable as I am, and He will clothe and adorn me Himself. In this ornamentation alone shall I rejoice, for the very best of our robes and performances are not without spots, but still need to be washed in the blood of Christ and covered with this adornment. (Rev. 7:14) This, and this alone, is the way to rejoice and maintain true peace. This will enable us to rejoice that our names are written in heaven.

* * * * *

MAY 28

I have sinned against the Lord. Divine Answer: The Lord also has put away your sin; you will not die (2 Sam. 12:13). If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged (1 Cor. 11:31).

THE man who, with repentance, accuses and judges himself, accounting his own righteousness and best doings as filthy rags, and seeks for mercy through Jesus, may expect forgiveness for all his sins at once, though chastisement may follow; for pardons are not bestowed in parcels or various measures, as spiritual gifts are. God, through Christ, receives the whole person of a penitent sinner into His favour, forgiving both original and actual sins in one instant, so that either none or all are forgiven. But though repentance is needful to humble a sinner, and to bring him to Christ, yet no sins are forgiven on account of this repentance, but through faith alone in the blood of Christ. This fountain washes away the guilt of all sins, though ever so numerous and heinous; for it is written, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).’

* * * * *

MAY 29

They are darkened in their understanding, being alienated from a godly life through the ignorance which is in them due to the obstinacy of their heart. They feel no shame and have given themselves over to unbridled promiscuity, greedy to work every uncleanness (Eph. 4:18,19).

IF a man is naturally dead, bring a candle into a room and he does not see it; let the sun shine in his face, he does not perceive the beauty, or feels its warmth; offer him rich presents, he does not receive them; he has no eye to see them, no heart to desire them, no hand to reach out to them. Thus it is with one who is spiritually dead; let the sunshine of the gospel blaze out ever so clear, he does not see it, because he is in darkness; though he lived under plentiful means and dispensations, yet he is blind and sottish. Offer to him the rich pearls of the gospel, those rich treasures of the grace of Jesus Christ, yet he has no heart for them, no hand of faith to lay hold on them. So blind, so sottish, so stupid and senseless is he, that though these rich treasures, these graces, these pearls of the gospel, be conveyed to him in earthen vessels, in a plain and familiar manner, yet he does not, he cannot apprehend them. Judgments do not frighten him and mercies cannot allure or persuade him. Yet this creature is all life in the element of sin; he loves it, he pleads for it, he commits it with greediness. This is St. Paul's account of the unconverted Gentiles and how many such we have under a Christian name. O Lord, exert Your great power, quicken all who are thus dead in trespasses and sins; turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Your own self. Amen.

* * * * *

MAY 30

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits (Psalm 130:5). Divine Answer: They that wait on the Lord will renew their strength: they will mount up with wings of eagles: they will run, and not be weary: they will walk, and not faint (Isaiah 40:31). The Lord is good to them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeks Him (Lam. 3:25).

WHEN we have prayed, we must remember to wait also; for this is well pleasing to the Lord, and expressly commanded by Him. The more we wait, and keep instant in prayer, so much more will He give; indeed, He always hears and grants our supplication directly, and lays them up for His children. But that we may not abuse them, He gives the enjoyment only when it is most needful; therefore we may confidently say, such and such gifts I shall have, since I have prayed for them. They are actually laid up for me; and their use and benefit I shall reap in due season, especially in death and in eternity.

* * * * *

MAY 31

In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Your comforts delight my soul (Psalm 94:19. See also 2 Cor. 1:3-5).

A contented man, without afflictions, is ready to place his trust and seek his comforts in temporal things. Earthly desires crowd upon him, filling his soul with vanity, and he cannot well taste the sweet comforts of God's word except under the burden of the cross. Here we often enjoy more solid rest than if we were without a cross, and then that word is fulfilled which Christ says: 'My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.' (Matt.11:30) Thus our hearts are set against the world, reconciled to heavenly things, and easily separated from many idols which we could not resist or forsake before. Well, then, may we bear these salutary burdens, which, when sanctified, will produce present comfort and soon issue in eternal rest and glory. And since the Lord has promised to give strength sufficient for the day, so that we may not be tempted above measure, there is abundant reason again to say that His burden is light indeed.

* * * * *

JUNE 1

For I decided to know nothing while among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, etc (Psalms 111:10). But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy (James 3:17). Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies (1 Corinthians 8:1).

CHRIST crucified, and He alone, is the power and wisdom of God, Him all Christians, and especially ministers, should make particular practice to study well. Were our faith built on human wisdom, then surely carnal philosophers would be the greatest believers, whereas they are sometimes the worst infidels, or at best the most silly and faithless people in times of distress. And besides, their being puffed up is another evidence that they have not the true wisdom; for the wisdom from above is only with the lowly (Prov. 11:2), and babes (Matt.11:25) who pray for it earnestly. What would all knowledge avail us, then, without the knowledge of Christ? One spark of pure love yields more power than all the stores of human learning. May the Lord Jesus shed His love abroad in my heart! Him only I have determined to know; His love at the cross I account my greatest wisdom and glory.

* * * * *

JUNE 2

I will not let You go, except You bless me (Gen. 32:26). Forsake me not, O Lord; O my God, be not far from me (Psalm 38:21). Divine Answer: Behold, I am with you, and will keep you in all places where you go; for I will not leave you, until I have done that of which I have spoken to you (Gen. 28:15). I know you by name, and you have also found grace in my sight (Exod. 33:12). I will never leave you, nor forsake you (Heb 13:5).

GOD will have me to be faithful, and should He not be so Himself? Am I to trust in His word? Then, surely, He will not forsake me, but be as good as His word. Heaven and earth must pass away, but His word will not; He is ever faithful. If I do not believe this, I think blasphemously of God and can have no help or comfort from His word. But if I truly believe Him to be faithful, I believe enough. This is what He only desires; and if I really do believe, my faith will not be moved even in the hottest trials; the Word will hold me up, though I receive it even in weakness. But my faith must be attended by continual prayer.

* * * * *

JUNE 3

I say to you, that every idle word people utter, they will give account for on the day of judgment (Matt. 12:36; see also Eph. 4:29, 5:4).

HERE all corrupt communications, jesting, foolish talking, or whatever is not convenient and good to the use of edifying, is plainly forbidden. But who truly believes the report and the truth of these awful words? Surely the world does not believe them at all; this is quite plain, from the very common and shocking practice of judging, lying, swearing, jesting, and talking all manner of filthiness: indeed, even religious people very often do not believe and consider them sufficiently. How many heedless, slanderous, idle and unprofitable words are sometimes spoken by these. Be careful therefore to weigh every word, and to make light of none; for such will increase your account. Whenever you are going to speak, let the question be first: 'Is it needful to speak? Does it tend to the glory of God? Will it profit me or others?' O Lord, grant that never an idle word may drop from my lips. Whenever I am to converse with others, give me grace first to converse with You by secret prayer. In all companies let Your presence be before my eyes, always looking upon You as the chief Person in the place, and receiving direction when and what I am to speak. May Your good Spirit always teach me, and sanctify all my thoughts and words.

* * * * *

JUNE 4

Let each remain in the circumstance in which he was when called (1 Cor. 7:20).

MOST the employments of life are in their own nature lawful; and all those that are so may be made a substantial part of our duty to God, if we engage them only so far, and for such ends, as are suitable to beings who are to live above the world. This is the only measure of our application to any worldly business; it must have no more of our hands, our hearts, or our time than is consistent with a hearty, daily, careful preparation of ourselves for another life. Since all true Christians have renounced the world to prepare themselves, by daily devotions and universal holiness, for an eternal state of quite another nature, they must look upon worldly employments as upon worldly needs and bodily infirmities: things not to be desired, only to be endured and suffered, till death and the resurrection have carried us to an eternal state of real happiness. A person's being called into the kingdom of grace is not to make void the duties that arise from his own calling or situation in life, but to enforce the practice of them in such a way as may be most to the glory of God. He, therefore, who does not consider the things of this life as of little moment, or even nothing, in comparison of the things that are eternal, cannot be said either to feel or believe the greatest truths of Christianity.

* * * * *

JUNE 5

And the loftiness of man will be bowed down; and the haughtiness of men will be made low; and the LORD exalted in that day (Isaiah 2:17).

PRIDE was not made for man,' says the son of Sirach: 'and the proud in heart are an abomination to the Lord.' And yet what is more common than pride and self-righteousness among the fallen children of Adam? So deeply are they ingrafted in our corrupt natures, that nothing short of almighty grace can root them up. It is the great design and effect of the blessed gospel, wherever it is applied to the heart by the Spirit of God, to mortify this cursed temper. In that day, the haughtiness of man, his self-will, which he set up in opposition to the will of God, will be brought down; and his self-righteousness, by which he thought to recommend himself to the favour of God, will be made low and Christ and His righteousness alone will be exalted. Has this precious promise ever been fulfilled in your experience? Is the will of God your rule? Is the righteousness of Christ your hope? And is the language of your heart and life, 'Let God in all things be exalted in me and by me, through Christ Jesus?' Without this, your profession is vain, your faith is also vain, and you are still in your sins.

* * * * *

JUNE 6

I know also, my God, that You try the heart, and have pleasure in uprightness (1 Chronicles 29:17). He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly (Prov. 2:7). The Lord looks on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

AS God searches the heart and tries the reins, He cannot be deceived by outward form; we ought not, therefore, to deceive ourselves in this particular. It is no real proof of conversion to God, if we only reform the grosser sins of our former lives, much less if we only abstain from such things as by nature we are not so much inclined to indulge; but if our hearts are so renewed by the grace of the Holy Spirit as to be firmly and habitually opposed to our most beloved lusts, we have a good evidence of a real conversion. These inward, capital enemies the Lord and all His upright followers attack most, before all the rest. If we would give over that which is dearest to us, we must first know and believe that Christ is both able and willing to help us, and has lovingly engaged His word that none will seek His face in vain. Let us keep this thought in our minds, and it will both stir up faith and encourage diligence in seeking after salvation.

* * * * *

JUNE 7

I will hedge up your way with thorns, and make a wall, so that she will not find her paths. She will follow after her lovers, but she will not overtake them; she will seek them, but will not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go and return to my first husband; for then it was better with me than now (Hosea 2:6,7).'

AS it is only with You, dear Saviour, that I can be happy, I would never leave You any more. And that I may not slip from You unawares, even under good pretences, I desire to have my way hedged up, and be encompassed everywhere with thorns. Let me quickly discover and crucify everything which would give the least disturbance to the enjoyment of Your love, that I may always closely walk with You alone, and never take a step out of Your way, for fear of running myself into the thorns, and bringing unnecessary sufferings on myself; yet I do not mean to avoid the cross of Christ in other respects, but would willingly submit to any sufferings which are never without good fruit. Glory be to You, O blessed Saviour, that You have not given me up yet and allowed me to run into destruction in my own ways. Oh be pleased to restrain me evermore; and whenever I am in danger of sliding into the broad way, let me find no rest till I am brought back, though it be through the briars of affliction.

* * * * *

JUNE 8

And he said: 'Are you indeed my son, Esau?' And he said, 'I am (Gen. 27:24).'

THERE are certainly some circumstances in this affair which may help a little to excuse Jacob and his mother, but cannot justify them. The case may be thus stated: It cannot be denied, on the one hand, but that both Jacob and his mother were justly to be praised for having a due esteem of the father's solemn blessing, and for endeavouring to attain it; since this could not proceed from any other motive than a full persuasion of the truth of God's promises and covenant with Abraham. And thus, from the consideration of the goodness of the end, Jacob's title to the blessing accompanying the birthright, as also the fore-appointment of God, together with Isaac's approbation of the thing done, there may be drawn some arguments to lessen the crime. But on the other hand, it must be confessed that the means used to attain their ends were highly criminal. Rebecca was wrong in her advice to her son, and he was wrong in following it; for though God, before he was born, designed him to inherit the blessing, yet he ought to have waited until the Divine Wisdom opened the way, and not have anticipated God, and procured the blessing by an irregular act of his own. Beside, both of them presumed to limit the power of God, by thinking that fraud was needful to accomplish God's purpose

* * * * *

JUNE 9

Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:13).

DOES sin present itself? Turn away from it with loathing and prayer. Give it not a look, lest it ensnares you. If you commit sin, and die without repentance, your soul is lost, and your redemption ceased for ever; or if you commit sin, and do repent, yet expect the chidings of God's face and breaking of bones, as David felt to his cost. What bitter pangs, what painful throes, what shadows of death, what terrors of hell, may seize upon you before you can make your peace, or settle your assurance. Will you give way to sin because it is delightful, or because it is pardonable? Who loves poison because it is sweet; or drinks poison because he may have an antidote, seeing it will work to his trouble if it does not work out his life? I have a precious soul; shall I lose it for lust? I have a gracious God: shall I venture Him for sin? No, Lord, give me grace to resist sin, give me victory over it. Let me always reject that, for the indulgence of which I am sure to lose my peace and endanger the loss of my immortal soul.

* * * * *

JUNE 10

This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself.....And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that has the Son has life (1 John 5:6,10-12).

JESUS came with water and blood; not with water alone, to sanctify us, but also with His blood, to make atonement for our sins. We should therefore, first of all, penitently seek and obtain remission of sins in His blood, then we may hope to obtain the water of life, the Holy Spirit for our inward purification and sanctification. His Holy Spirit will bear witness within us, that the gospel is truth, and that God will fulfil His word, by giving us everlasting life, as He has promised. We have three witnesses of it in heaven, and three on earth. And if we believe in Christ, we have this true testimony in ourselves and may therefore assuredly know, that having the Son of God, we have life, eternal life. For He is, according to verse 20 'eternal life,' and consequently, being in Him, we have already entered into everlasting life.

* * * * *

JUNE 11

And no man has ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, the Son of man, He being in heaven (John 3:13).

NO mere man whatever has entered, or can enter, into the secrets of God's heart in heaven, relating to the great mysteries of salvation, so as immediately and perfectly to understand them and make them known to others. This privilege is peculiar to the Messiah, Who is spoken of under the character of the 'Son of man (Psalm 80:17; Dan.7:13).' He always had an existence in heaven as the Son of God, and He came from thence into an incarnate state, so that He might reveal God's counsels to men. As many are perplexed about the divinity of Christ, the following may help them to conceive of that matter more properly: As the divine and human natures of Christ were united in the person of Christ, some things are attributed to one nature which properly belonged to the other. Thus when it is said (1 Cor. 2:8) the Lord of glory was crucified, and (Acts 20:28) He is called God, Who purchased the church with His own blood, the meaning is not that He, as the Lord of glory, was crucified, or, as God, shed His blood, as if the divine nature could be crucified and bleed; but it means that the person who was the Lord of glory in one nature, was crucified in the other nature, etc. So, when it is said, 'The Son of man, is in heaven;' the meaning is not, that He, as the Son of man, was there also whilst He was on earth; but that He, Who was here in His human nature, was there in His divine nature.

* * * * *

JUNE 12

I will perform My good word toward you.....For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then you will pray to Me, and I will listen to you and you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart;.....I will turn away your captivity (Jer. 29:10-14). The word of the Lord is right..... for He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast (Psalm 33:4,9).

WERE it so light a matter to rely on the faithfulness of God in times of distress, what need would there be to give us so many and various promises? If our faith is right, we must also endure and wait His time with patience. This is certainly not an easy task since the promise of the Lord not only tarries very often, but sometimes His providence goes contrary to His word, and makes His word seem to fall to the ground. But then we must remember that these are the very ways and methods of God, which have ever been deep and acted contrary to our expectation. This the corruption of our natures requires and the wisdom of God ever chooses, first to help us inwardly, by exercising faith and patience, and so prepare us for a right use of His outward favours. Thus we receive a double blessing at once from His hands.

* * * * *

JUNE 13

Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortingly to her (Hosea 2:14). Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages (Song of Solomon 7:11).

O LORD, this world is nothing to me but a wilderness, a place of tribulation, where, being tossed to and fro, I enjoy no rest. But when I lift up my heart and look for peace in You I am supported and comforted. Grant that I may thus be strengthened for the time to come, whenever I am at a loss what course to take. Enable me always firmly to believe You are a present help in trouble, Who is able and willing to bear me up under all outward distresses, till I safely arrive at the rest of the people of God.

* * * * *

JUNE 14

When you pray, say, 'Our Father,' etc (Luke 9:2). You ask, and do not receive because you ask amiss (James 4:3).

MANY say the Lord's prayer who do not pray it; they, like Augustine, before his conversion when he prayed for love, are afraid lest God should hear them. They do not wish for God to say Amen, though they themselves will say it. They say 'Our Father,' but if He is their Father, where is His honour? They say 'Who is in heaven;' but did they believe it, how dare they sin as they do upon earth? They say, 'Hallowed be Your name;' yet take God's name in vain. They say 'Your kingdom come,' yet oppose the coming of His kingdom. They say, 'Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven;' yet they will not stand by their words, for the will of God is their sanctification; but they want none of that. They say, 'Give us this day our daily bread;' yet are not careful to feed their souls with 'the bread (Christ Jesus) which came down from heaven.' They say, 'Forgive us as we forgive others;' but, if God should take them at their word, how undone were they whose hearts burn with malice and revenge. They say, 'Lead us not into temptation;' yet run into it and tempt Satan himself to tempt them. They say, 'Deliver us from evil;' and yet deliver themselves to evil, and give themselves up to 'fulfil the lust of the flesh.' Indeed, it has been observed, that those who are sticklers most for the saying of it sin most against this prayer. How often have You been guilty of such vain petitions and repetitions? Do not wonder, if you pray in such a manner as this, that you receive nothing. Labour to get a deep sense of the majesty of God and His mercy, on your mind, so that your prayers may be fervent and earnest; and God will bless you.

* * * * *

JUNE 15

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). Who by God is made to us wisdom, righteousness and sanctification;....that, as it is written, 'He that glories, let him glory in the Lord (1 Cor.1:30,31).' To finish the transgression, make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness (Dan. 9:24). In the Lord I have righteousness and strength (Isaiah 45:24).

IN ourselves we find nothing but misery; in Christ all that is good; indeed, He is Himself our All. He works and gives what is necessary to salvation and therefore we cannot, we need not, bring anything to Him of our own. But since He is made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and our All, we may and must rely on His name, and draw everything from Him by the continual prayer of faith. And when by living faith in Christ He becomes our All, then the law, sin, Satan, and even our own judgments, have lost their power and right of condemnation over us.

* * * * *

JUNE 16

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another (1 John 4:11). I say unto you, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, so that you may be the children of your Father Who is in heaven (Matthew 5:44,45).'

HYPOCRITES may counterfeit the children of God in many things, but they cannot love their enemies from their hearts. And so by this standard we must try and know ourselves, whether we are really the children of God or not. The world very easily, but falsely, suppose themselves to be God's children, but sincere Christians find it often very hard to believe it, without a divine sense and assurance of it. It costs them many a severe conflict, for if Satan disputes with Christ over His Sonship, much less will he spare any of us. But since a true love to the children of God and to our enemies is sure evidence of our state of grace, we have our title clear to it, though we should walk in darkness and be destitute of all pleasant sensations.

* * * * *

JUNE 17

And he said to his servant, 'Go up now, look toward the sea.' And he went up, looked and said, 'There is nothing.' And he said, 'Go again seven times (1 Kings 18:43).'

SIX times Elijah's servant looked toward the sea before he could see anything. The seventh time he saw a cloud, but no bigger than his hand; yet that cloud, within a few hours, covered the heaven with darkness and the earth with rain. Just so may be the case with many a one, when he is praying to his God, as Caleb's daughter did to her father (Judges 1:15). You have hitherto made me the owner of a dry, a barren heart; but give me now some springs of water, some feeling, at least, some sorrow for my sins. Well, though at the sixth time of bending your knees God does not grant it, and though at the seventh there appears but one small drop swimming in your eyes, yet do not be comforted. That drop may prove a shower, the beginning of that thaw may at last dissolve your whole heart to water. And as there is a full joy for the thorough conversion of a sinner, there may be a suitable measure of joy for one tear, for one desire of a tear, of any one sinner who repents.

* * * * *

JUNE 18

You are to drive out all the inhabitants of the land. But if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it will come about that those of them which you let remain will be prickles in your eyes, thorns in your sides, and will vex you in the land in which you dwell (Numb. 33:52,55). See this fulfilled (Judges 1:27). Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean, etc., and the Canaanites would dwell in that land; so that they (the Israelites) could no longer stand before their enemies (Judges 2:14).

THE very same thing is to be observed in the holy and spiritual battles of the Lord. The man who fights only against outward sins, is but very little, if at all, acquainted with the dangerous enemies in his heart, or the deep corruption of original sin; and so the tempter may easily gain an advantage over him. Experienced Christians guard more against the inward assaults of wickedness; they are at peace with no sin, but keep up a constant war with their most subtle and dearest lusts. However, though the Canaanites, our inbred foes, must be conquered, they will dwell in the land, and cannot be wholly thrust out of the bosom, which makes the Christian warfare continue till death. Yet give me grace, O Lord, never to spare my sinful lusts and tempers, but to look to destroy them without delay, as soon as they begin to move or stir, so that I may not be destroyed by them.

* * * * *

JUNE 19

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and was void. Darkness was upon the face of the deep and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters (Gen. 1:1,2). We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to (do) good works, which God has previously appointed for us to walk in them (Eph. 2:10).

BEFORE we can really grow in holiness, we must be born again. How is it possible for a man to grow in sanctification without a real change first being worked in his heart? It is the Spirit's way first to strip us of our own righteousness and strength, to show us our nakedness and nothingness, to fill us with godly sorrow for sin, and then lead us to Jesus for pardon, sanctification and justification. Christ being the Vine, we must first be planted by Him and draw nourishment and strength from Him by faith. Then it is fulfilled, 'they will feed and lie down' (in His pasture,) 'and none will make them afraid (Zeph. 3:13).' Then we shall be able to bring forth good fruits and to obtain victories; for it is God Himself Who thus makes us perfect in every good work and prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies (Psalm 23:5).

* * * * *

JUNE 20

In the Lord I have righteousness and strength (Isaiah 45:24; 2 Cor. 2:14; 5:19).

JUSTIFICATION through faith in Christ, at first, is a very dark doctrine, hard to be understood; but afterwards we find by experience, that it would be impossible to be saved in any other way, and that nothing can be surer than this, though all mankind should turn away from it. And when we are made to see that our best performances are unclean in the sight of God, and could not be accepted without the covering of Christ's righteousness, then we are brought to submit entirely to Christ, and at last to look upon ourselves as wholly justified through Him, something which alone produces rest, strength and a gentle spirit, the true image of Christ. In vain do we hope to procure this rest by any reasonings or strong resolutions of our own; for if we are sometimes able to master our affections by our own strength, this is still a building of our own, and keeps us from earnest wrestling in prayer. We have now a form of godliness without its power, and are still deceiving our own souls; for nothing can be pleasing in the sight of God, and profit us in the last day, but what He works Himself. Away, therefore, with all these doings of our own. Let us acknowledge the weakness and nothingness of our strength, and in our wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked condition (Rev. 3:17) apply to the blood and righteousness of Christ; then we shall also find power and dominion over sin (Isaiah 33:24).

* * * * *

JUNE 21

In the day of my trouble I will call upon You: for You will answer me (Psalm 86:7). Divine Answer: Then you will call, and the Lord will answer: you will cry, and He will say, 'Here I am (Isaiah 58:9).' The Lord is rich to all who call upon Him; and it will come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. This, to the comfort of the weak, is several times repeated in Scripture, (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; Romans 10:12,13). The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles (Psalm 34:17). The Lord is near to all those who call upon Him (Psalm 145:18). The earnest prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5:16).

O GLORIOUS promise! How can God deny me any thing now that I pray for? He has passed His word for it; His Son has purchased it; the Holy Spirit inspires the prayer; the word holds it forth and the prayer of faith lays hold of it and actually receives it. Prayer is the mouth of faith. If you will have much, 'Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.' Who, then, should not be stirred up to pray much? Oh, what foolishness is this, that we have nothing, but may obtain all from God, and yet are so loath to pray much and pray aright.

* * * * *

JUNE 22

Swear not at all (Matt. 5:34).

SWEAR not by the creatures: that in effect is swearing by their Maker. Neither swear by your Maker, unless called to it by authority to put an end to strife: swear not falsely, that is, calling the God of truth to witness a lie. Do not swear needlessly or rashly, as Saul did (1 Sam. 14:39). Such oaths or vows are ensnaring, better broken than kept, but best not made at all. Swear not idle, common oaths, such as O Christ! O God! Faith and troth! By my soul! As I live! God bless me! If we must give account of every idle word, much more for every idle oath, and most of all for horrible cursing and blasphemy that profane God's name and is the very language of hell. The man who is guilty of perjury is not only destroying his own soul but is seeking to ruin his neighbour, by perverting justice and robbing the innocent of his right. Indeed, sometimes God takes a false-swearer and self-curser at his word, and strikes him dead on the spot. Lord, help the guilty to repent of their sin, and help all to watch and pray against it.

* * * * *

JUNE 23

Dear beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay; says the Lord (Rom.12:19).'

JUDGE then, my brethren, would it be wise to snatch the rod out of the all-powerful hand of God, to take it into our own, even were it in our power to do so. We are taught by the holy prophet not to avenge ourselves, it being daring presumption to usurp God's province, and to step into His throne. Will He Who chastises the nations not correct? Might may overcome right for a time, to try God's children. But, whether that is done with close hand, so as not to be discovered, or with a high hand, so as not to be controlled, God will, in His due time, show Himself and assert His right of vengeance against all who would take it from Him. It is, therefore, our wisdom to call to mind our blessed Lord's silence, when He suffered, and copy it, committing ourselves to Him Who judges righteously.

* * * * *

JUNE 24

If any man is in Christ, he is new creature (2 Cor:5.17).

LET no man be discouraged from coming to Christ, because he does not find in himself that godly sorrow for sin, that ability to repent, that disposition of heart which he desires to have; we must first be in Christ before we are new creatures. This is a common fault among us; we gladly would have something before we come. We think God's pardons are not free, but we must bring something in our hand; whereas the proclamation runs thus: 'Buy without money:' that is, come without any excellency at all, because we are commanded to 'come, and take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17).' Therefore do not say, 'I have a fretful disposition, and a hard heart, and cannot mourn for sin as I should; therefore, I will stay till that be done.' It is all one as if you should say, 'I must go to the physician, but will have my wounds well and my disease healed first.' The purpose of going to Christ is that this very hardness of heart may be taken away; that this very deadness of your spirit may be removed; that you may hate sin, for He is your physician. Don't look for sanctification, nor for genuine fruits of righteousness, till you are united to Christ by a living faith; for it is faith that purifies the heart, and works (that is, produces good works) by love. You must first be in Christ, grafted into Christ by faith, before you can be a new creature.

* * * * *

JUNE 25

All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any (1 Cor. 6:12).

MANY who are well affected to religion, and receive religious instructions with pleasure and satisfaction, often wonder how it comes to pass that they make no greater progress in that religion which they so much admire. The reason is that their religion lives only in their head, while something else has possession of their heart; and therefore they continue from year to year mere admirers and praisers of religion, without coming up to the reality and perfection of its precepts. If it is asked why religion does not get possession of their hearts, the reason is, not because they live in gross sins or debaucheries, for their regard to religion preserves them from such disorders. It is because their hearts are constantly employed, perverted and kept in a bad state, by the wrong use of such things as are lawful to be used; for our souls may receive very great hurt merely by the abuse of innocent and lawful things. What is more innocent than rest and retirement, and yet what is more dangerous than sloth and idleness? What is more lawful than eating and drinking, and yet what more destructive of virtue than sensuality and indulgence? How lawful and praiseworthy is the care of the family, and yet what so prejudicial as an anxious, worldly frame of mind? Follow the apostle and beware of lawful things; keep your heart free from their power.

* * * * *

JUNE 26

There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God Who works all in all (1 Cor. 12:6).

SOME believers are remarkable for the strength of their faith in trials; others for liveliness and activity in duty; others for wisdom, conduct and prudence, in temporal and spiritual matters; others for their zeal in defence of the truth; others for knowledge in the mysteries of truth; others for meekness and patience; others for outward usefulness; and some for an inward and spiritual life of communion with God. But all these are various gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, dividing severally to every man as He will (1 Cor. 12:11), and they are, moreover, given to profit, according to his place in the church or in the world. My fellow Christians, let us from this learn a lesson of forbearance to our brethren. It is not right to judge another by your own pattern. Are you a warm and active Christian? Do not condemn him whose endowments may be more placid and contemplative than yours. He who now creeps like a snail in humble silence, may, by one lift of divine power, be raised higher than you are. The same may be said of the differences among the followers of Jesus. Let us then no longer envy one another, or indulge a rash and censorious spirit, but rather covet earnestly the best gifts of meekness and love, and, by the help of divine grace, faithfully improve the talent committed to our trust, so that each of us may receive that heart-reviving word, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.'

* * * * *

JUNE 27

Every good and every perfect gift is from above (James 1:17).

IT is a point of greatest importance to know that every evil thing is of ourselves and every good thing of God. Without faith we cannot be saved, but, says St. Paul (Eph.2:8), 'By grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.' We are called on to repent; but in Acts 5:31 we read that Christ is exalted at the Father's right hand, to be a 'Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel.' We must be born again; but regeneration is wholly of God's will: '.....who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:13).' Saving knowledge is likewise the gift of God: 'Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (Matt.13:11).' Effectual calling is also of God's grace: '.....Who has saved us.....according to His own will and purpose (2 Tim. 1:9).' Justification is of God's grace; we are justified freely. Adoption is also an act of grace; He grants that high privilege, not in common to all, but only to as many as He pleases. Perseverance in duty is also God's gift; for we 'are kept by the power of God for salvation (1 Peter 1:5).' Eternal life is also a gift; for 'the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23).' A right knowledge of these things will keep you humble and dependent upon God; it will not only dispose you to give Him the glory for His grace, but to seek Him diligently for it.

* * * * *

JUNE 28

We would see Jesus.....Search the Scripture; for in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me (John 12:21; 5:39).

IT is remarkable that the wise men, travelling to find Christ, followed only the star. As long as they had that in view, they were assured that they were in the right way, and we may believe they had great pleasure in their journey; but when they entered Jerusalem (whereas the star did not lead them there, but to Bethlehem), and there would be instructed where Christ was born, they were not only ignorant of the place where, but also lost sight of the star that would guide them there. By this we are taught a useful lesson, that when we are going to learn Christ, and seek Christ, Who is above, we need to be wary we do not lose the star of God's Word, which is the only mark that shows us where Christ is, and which way we may come to Him. To which it may be added, that if with David we make the word of God 'a lamp to our feet, and a light to our paths,' we shall not be led aside by every false fire that presents itself before us. But by keeping close to the Word of God, we shall be brought to a knowledge of Christ here, and the full enjoyment of Him hereafter. This little book is only designed to lead you to 'search the Scriptures,' which are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ.

* * * * *

JUNE 29

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good for the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.....Let filthiness not be once named among you, or jesting or suggestive wit, which are not becoming (Ephes. 4:29,30; 5:4).

IDLE words are hurtful words; they grieve the Holy Spirit, destroy what power has been obtained by prayer, and cause nothing but levity and distraction of mind. Let this be a caution against talking too much; for if it does not tend to the glory of God, it is nothing but corrupt communication. May all Christians take heed to refrain their tongues, and never speak unadvisedly, but always consider first whether their words can be profitable to others, and acceptable to God in heaven. O Lord, teach me by Your wisdom to keep my mouth as it were with a bridle, and to weigh all my words like gold. Let my heart and lips be moved and governed by the Holy Spirit, that both my silence and talking may be according to Your will and direction. Grant that I may always chiefly converse with You in prayer and thanksgiving for the good of my own soul and others; and whenever I am to open my lips in due time, let my words be seasoned and blessed as to administer grace to the hearers.

* * * * *

JUNE 30

And he dreamed, and there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it (Gen. 28:12).

THIS ladder the Lord Jesus applies to Himself (John 1:51), and it may be considered as representing the Divine Providence which governs all things. The several steps of the ladder are the motions and actions of Providence; the angels going up and down show that they are the great ministers of Providence, never idle, but employed in the preservation of the just. Their ascending indicates going up to receive the divine orders and commands; and their descending, their coming down to earth to put them into execution. Thus, in this representation, God signified to Jacob, now full of care and uneasy apprehensions, that the man who was under the custody and protection of divine providence lacked no company in a wilderness, no security in the midst of dangers, no direction in the most difficult of undertakings, since there were so many ministering spirits holding correspondence between earth and heaven and daily and hourly sent forth from God's presence 'to minister to them who are to be heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14).'

* * * * *

JULY 1

Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigns (Rev. 19:6).

GOD is the Lord of hosts, the great commander of heaven and earth. It is He Who directs all conflicts in war. No field is pitched, no battle fought, but by His special order and commission, and all for the accomplishment of His glory. It happens to us as it does to those who stand at the same level as two great armies ready to engage; they conceive them to be a disordered multitude. But notwithstanding, if they watched from a high hill, they would discern that they were ranged in order, with everyone serving under his own colours. Just so, men who behold the state of the world with the eyes of flesh and blood, dim by reason of the corruption of their judgments and the weakness of their affections, think all things are out of order. They 'see servants riding on horses, and princes going on foot; that the worse men are, the better they fare; and the better they are, the worse they fare.' But if they would go into God's sanctuary and judge of the occurrences by heavenly principles, then they would confess that no army on earth could be better marshalled than the great army of all the creatures of heaven and earth, indeed, and of hell too; and that, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, all is well, and will end well, especially for God's people; and that the God of order will bring light out of darkness, and order out of the greatest confusion, could they but have patience and let Him alone with His own work.

* * * * *

JULY 2

You have thrust severely at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me (Psalm 118:13). Preserved in Jesus Christ, and called (Jude 1).

CHRIST was in the council, undertook our cause, struck hands in the covenant as our Surety and worked a righteousness for us. He suffered our curse on the tree to redeem us and ever lives, ever loves and ever pleads our cause, while He represents our persons before the everlastingly gracious and infinitely just and righteous Jehovah, His Father and our Father, now well pleased with us who are accepted and preserved in the Beloved. Are these things so? And has the Lord the Spirit, the glorifier of Jesus, enlightened our understandings to see these things, enabled us to believe, and assured our hearts of our own happy share and interest in them? Stop, reflect, dwell on such wonderful power, marvellous favour, distinguishing love, and appropriated mercy. Now let all my enemies exert their utmost power, I will not be afraid. Afflictions, pains, temptations may await me, waves and storms may go over my head, Satan may sift me as wheat, the waters of death may prove bitter to my taste, yet I will not be discouraged. He Who died for me will take care of me; He Who pardoned my aggravated offences will heal my infirmities; He Who knew the power of temptation will support and deliver me out of all. This I believe; Lord, help my unbelief. The wisdom, the power, the love, the promise, the covenant, and the oath of Jehovah, all stand engaged for the preservation of a poor, unworthy believer in Jesus. Hallelujah!

* * * * *

JULY 3

Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you will find rest for your souls (Matt. 11:29).be clothed in humility; for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time (1 Peter 5:5,6).

SUCH as are haughty and self-conceited rush against the mighty hand of God and destroy themselves; but those that are humble under it will be protected by the same. Whatever knowledge or skill we obtain in the schools of human learning, the Scripture still does not allow that we are truly wise, but calls us blind and merely worldly students until we learn to be poor in spirit, lowly in heart and dead to the world (Prov.11:2,1; 1 Cor. chaps 1 and 2). Therefore, the more a man dies to the world, the more he is enlightened.

* * * * *

JULY 4

And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him (Gen. 32:1).

AS Jacob was favoured with a heavenly vision when he first departed from his father's house, so the Divine Being thought proper to favour him again with the same token of His protection on His return thither, in order to encourage him to meet with confidence those dangers he had to encounter. Hence we may observe, that when God designs His people for extraordinary trials, He prepares them by extraordinary comforts. We should think it had been more reasonable for these angels to have appeared to him just in the heat of his engagement, either with Laban before, or Esau after, than in this calm and quiet interval, when he did not see himself in any imminent peril. But God will have us, when we are in peace, to provide for trouble, so that when trouble comes, we may draw comfort and encouragement from former experiences, knowing assuredly that He Who has delivered in six troubles will also deliver in seven, and in due time out of all. This may be a representation of God's people at death, who are then returning to Canaan, to their heavenly Father's house; and then the angels of God will meet them, to congratulate the happy finishing of their labours, and carry them to their everlasting rest.

* * * * *

JULY 5

For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned (Matt.12:37).

THE general turn of a man's discourse will clearly disclose the bent of his mind; for 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.' Other outward marks may be imitated; but not to offend in tongue, to be free from detraction and boasting, to speak the truth in love, to 'let no corrupt communication (nothing contrary to peace or holiness) proceed out of the mouth;' this is the finger of God. Here the hypocrite and formalist always fail. Let us earnestly pray for grace to bridle the tongue, 'O Lord, set a watch before my mouth, keep the door of my lips(Psalm 141:3),' that I may never bring a reproach upon my profession by speaking proud, false, foolish or censorious words.

* * * * *

JULY 6

....loose them, and bring them to me. And if any man says anything to you, you are to say, 'The Lord has need of them:' and straightaway he will send them (Matt. 21:2,3). The Spirit of the Lord came mightily on him, and the cords that were on his arms became like flax that was burnt with fire, and his bonds were loosed from his hands (Judges 15:14).

THUS the Spirit of the Lord makes us free from all spiritual bonds; for 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Cor. 3:17).' If I was torn from Christ by the enemy, yet as a robber he gets no right to me. For this reason Christ does not give up His right which He has to me on so many accounts; and as soon as I am willing by His grace to give up myself to Him, and desire to be delivered from the power of Satan, He vindicates and saves me as His property; I am His, Satan loses his hold, and nothing in the world can withhold me from Him. All fetters must fall off.

* * * * *

JULY 7

Make yourself a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek. 18:31; see also 2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

MANY are converted, but not entirely to Christ and from their own righteousness, so as to be truly sensible of their abominable wickedness, and they earnestly flee to Christ for reconciliation and righteousness. But because their conversion is not entire they never seek Jesus to make new the heart and spirit, but continue on, in their mere outward moral state, year after year. O Lord, let me daily receive a word from You, to nourish and strengthen my soul, so as to be renewed daily by it more and more.

* * * * *

JULY 8

Martha, Martha, you are careful and troubled about many things (Luke 10:41). Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life (Prov. 4:23).

AS the strength of a spirituous liquor evaporates by degrees in a vial which is not properly stopped, in a like manner the life and power of the Spirit will insensibly vanish away if the heart is not kept with all diligence. Of the former there remains only water; of the latter, nothing but the form of religion, or perhaps some false principles and errors which have crept in. Therefore many must be tried and sifted, so that they may know, like Hezekiah, what is in their hearts (2 Chron. 32:31). Consequently, what more needful than to take heed to our own spirits, and to keep close to the written Word? For as the latter times draw nearer, the more plausible will errors and seductions appear, both on your right hand and on your left. Beware of being drawn off from the truth, either by the worldly prudence of half-hearted professors, or by pretences to merit in the self-righteous Pharisee.

* * * * *

JULY 9

My soul thirsts after You, as a thirsty land (Psalm 143:6). Let him that is thirsty come and whoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17). If any man thirsts let him come to Me, and drink. He that believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water (John 7:37,38).

WHEN you are dry and barren, examine yourself closely as to what may be the cause; ask pardon for all known offences and take care to amend them. And though you may not find anything particular, still humble yourself deeply before the Lord, but at the same time remember that you are accepted, beloved, justified and blessed in Christ. In this frame of mind quietly wait the returns of some new drops of living water and grace, but be also sure afterwards to cherish and make right use of them. Thus you will be like a watered garden and a spring of water (Isaiah 58:11).

* * * * *

JULY 10

My soul waits on God; from Him comes my salvation. He only is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.....Trust in Him at all times, you people, pour out your heart before Him. God is a refuge for us (Psalm 62:1,2,8).

THE more patient, believing and single-eyed we are, the sooner we shall see the salvation and victory of the Lord. Double-minded souls have the greatest struggle and the slothful must tarry longer. Sometimes, it is true, though we are faithful, yet we must cry out, ‘O Lord, how long (Psalm 6:3)?’ Nevertheless, He always hears and delivers us, though we do not see or feel it directly, but seem to suffer continually. In heaven we shall certainly see it, and reap the blessed fruits of all our afflictions and prayers.

* * * * *

JULY 11

I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his children begging bread (Psalm 37:25).

SWEET declaration! encouraging experience! The Lord indeed cares for the righteous, for those who, having known the want of mercy, rely for it on the promise of God, that there is forgiveness with Him through the meritorious life and death of Jesus Christ. He has promised that He will never leave or forsake them, that He will withhold from them no manner of anything that is good. He cares also for their children, so that they will not beg their bread. He frequently provides for them, when their parents are no more, in such unexpected ways that many who see it are constrained to acknowledge, 'This is the Lord's doing.' And sometimes, while they are living, He brings bread to their mouths and also furnishes them with opportunities to hear of and seek for the Bread which came down from heaven, and which endures to everlasting life; thus He snatches them from the jaws of ignorance and destruction. O Lord, if my ears have heard, if my eyes have seen, and more especially if I partake of such blessings, thankfully may I own that You are a God Who keeps covenant and mercy, and make this proof of Your faithfulness a ground of reliance upon You for all needful, promised blessings. Help me to cast all my care on You, and endeavour by prayer, instruction and example, for Your goodness to be sanctified to my children, that we may live together, here and hereafter, to the praise of the glory of Your grace.

* * * * *

JULY 12

Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power (Col. 1:11).

WHAT encouraging words are these! How full of meaning! The Lord our righteousness is the Lord our strength. He is near at hand, to strengthen according to our need, not in one or two respects, but with all might, with a supply suited to every various occasion, and that to the utmost, answerable to what may be expected from the exertion of 'His glorious power.' Happy state of the believer in Jesus! Although feeble in himself, surrounded with enemies and exercised with a continual warfare, he will not be overpowered, for the promise and the arm of God are on his side. The Lord Who can do what He pleases, is in alliance, indeed, in covenant with a believer; and, therefore, he will be made more than a conqueror through Christ who has loved him.

* * * * *

JULY 13

My beloved is mine, and I am His (Song of Solomon 2:16). Divine Answer: I will betroth you to Me in righteousness, in judgment, in loving-kindness and in mercies. I will indeed betroth you to Me in faithfulness; and you will know the Lord (Hosea 2:19, 20).

BY faith in the blood of Christ we are accepted and closely united to Him as our Bridegroom. By that we daily eat His flesh and drink His blood, and are sprinkled all over. And need there is of a daily sprinkling so that our persons and services may be accepted, since the best of our works, our prayers and praises, our duties and graces, are all unclean till washed in the blood of Jesus. This appears from Heb. 9:19-21, where it is said that all the vessels of the ministry, and even the scroll, were sprinkled.

* * * * *

JULY 14

When You said, 'Seek My face;' my heart said to You, 'Your face, Lord, I will seek (Psalm 27:8).' I am Yours, save me; for I have sought Your precepts (Psalm 119:94). Divine Answer: Those that seek Me early will find Me (Prov. 8:17). The humble will see this and be glad; and your heart will live who seek God (Psalm 69:32). Seek, and you will find (Matt. 7:7). Whoever finds Me finds life (Prov. 8:35). I am. . . . the life (John 14:6).

SUCH arguments and entreaties we may use with God, to strengthen us in faith: He does not want them, but we do; and He is well pleased when we take Him at His word. For if we would not draw near to God in prayer till our hearts are quickened, perhaps we might never come to it. Therefore, we must not indulge ourselves in a state of dullness, but rather put a force to ourselves, and pray against our natural inclination. Being faithful and instant in this, we shall certainly have our affections warmed, and great power and blessings given from above so that our hearts may live. O Lord, I plead Your precious promises and You cannot deny Your word. You have laid Yourself under obligation to help a feeble, praying soul. Then let Your Holy Spirit abide with me to quicken my soul when fainting, and to rule my heart in all things, so that no sin may have dominion over me.

* * * * *

JULY 15

O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed (Psalm 25:2). In You, O Lord, do I hope; You will hear, O Lord, my God (Psalm 38:15). Let none that wait on You be ashamed (Psalm 25:3). Divine Answer: Hope makes not ashamed (Rom. 5:5). They that trust in the Lord will be like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides for ever (Psalm 125:1). For yet a little while and He Who is to come will come, and will not delay (Heb. 10:37). Then you will know that I am the Lord: for they will not be ashamed that wait for Me (Isaiah 49:23).

DOES God delay His promises, and the enemy raise a suspicion against His faithfulness? Remember it is said, 'Pray and wait.' You are still alive, and will be a witness to God's faithfulness. If He was not faithful and true, He could not be God. His faithfulness is eternal, and as sure and as great as He is: above all our thoughts. You will at the last the more gloriously experience it, and not be ashamed: heaven and earth will pass away, but His word will not fail, because He 'keeps truth for ever (Psalm 146:6).'

* * * * *

JULY 16

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all mankind to Me (John 12:32).

THIS Christ spoke of His death, And it is the remembrance of His cruel death, of what He suffered, said, and finished, when He hung naked and wounded on the cross, that relieves an afflicted conscience, and effectually captivates the sinner's heart to Himself. The sharpest convictions, if not relieved by this sight, will never teach the heart of love. The strongest resolutions, unless made with this bleeding object in view, will melt away like snow, but a crucified Saviour is a powerful loadstone indeed. Multitudes have been drawn by it from sin to holiness, from Satan to God, from earth to heaven.

* * * * *

JULY 17

(Love) seeks not her own, is not easily provoked,..... Love never fails (1 Cor. 13:5,8).

O MY dear, heavenly Father, I desire to love You and my neighbour with a pure heart fervently, and beg You would let me know and enjoy Your love in Christ, as the only means of producing this love in me. For how can my heart be cold, when resting at the cross of Christ, and feeling the power of His blood? Or how can it be hard, when lying in Your bosom, richly tasting Your grace, and sweetly experiencing Your everlasting love to me a base, miserable sinner? Oh may a sense of Your love melt my hard heart into love, and change it thoroughly.

* * * * *

JULY 18

*Unto You, O Lord, do I lift up my soul (Psalm 25:1).
Divine Answer: You have heard the desire of the humble;
You will prepare their heart, You will cause Your ear to
hear (Psalm 10:17).*

FAITH desires only Christ, and neither delights in the gain nor grieves much at the loss of temporal things; Through an earnest desire for Christ and His word, it rises above all creatures and overcomes all worldly pleasures and fears; and this, being the work of God, will certainly be accomplished. Indeed, it is looked upon as really accomplished already in our desires and endeavours after it in the same manner as evil desires are reckoned for deeds in the sight of God, though they never proceed to outward acts.

* * * * *

JULY 19

You drew near in the day that I called upon You: You said, 'Fear not.' O Lord, You have pleaded the cause of my soul; You have redeemed my life (Lam. 3:57,58). Fear not, for I am with You (Isaiah 43:5). I am He that lives, and was dead; and, look, I am alive for evermore, amen, and have the keys of hell and of death (Rev. 1:18).

CHRIST has overcome, led captivity captive, and, by one offering, perfected for ever those that are sanctified (Heb. 10:14). Whoever leaves this world believing in Him, being perfected already, has nothing to fear after death. O my heavenly Father, dispose me to seek diligently after holiness; and though the work of sanctification will be imperfect in this life, which should humble me much, yet let it cause no fear of death, nor disturb my confidence in You, since my salvation and my confidence do not depend on perfect holiness here, but on my being in Christ and adopted through Him. Now, this adoption the weakest child has as well as the strongest, though both are not equally sensible of it. For every true believer, whether weak or strong, has eternal life, and will not fall into condemnation. If, therefore, I am a child of God, though a weak one, I am still an heir, and will find life and deliverance in death.

* * * * *

JULY 20

And He gave him a sign, but Hezekiah did not render back according to the benefit done to him; for his heart was lifted up (2 Chronicles 32:24,25).

AHAZ, trusting in the Assyrians for help, had refused a sign graciously offered by God as a token of deliverance. He did not choose to put his whole trust in God, though his pretence was he would not tempt the Lord. This may have lead his son Hezekiah to ask for a sign; and it proved a snare to him. The king of Babylon, on finding Hezekiah so highly honoured by the sun, (as they imagined) thought it incumbent upon him to send ambassadors with letters and a present to such a favourite of the god of the Babylonians. Hezekiah listened to them, and sought craftily to avail himself of this false notion of the king of Babylon, and, by not affronting their god, he hoped to gain a safe protection against the king of Assyria. Isaiah was ordered to acquaint him that, as he preferred an arm of flesh to his Almighty deliverer, he would experience the sad effect of his folly in not honouring God; and all, that he had in vanity showed his visitors, would be carried to Babylon. Hezekiah ought to have testified to the ambassadors that the Lord God of Israel, stopped the sun in its progress. He had here a fair opportunity of showing them and their king the vanity of idolatry in worshipping the sun, which was evidently under the direction of a superior Being. He ought also to have given God all the glory in this matter, and have rested for safety in Him, and Him alone, Who had just then given him such a striking proof of His power and favour. Worldly wisdom is arrant folly; and, when set in opposition to the will of God, will be sure to disappoint us. Even the noblest instance of wisdom and love God ever showed in the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ, if not accepted with humility and simplicity in God's own way by faith, will not have its blessed effect. Worldly wisdom ensnared Hezekiah; and carnal wisdom, ever attended with loftiness of heart, is daily destroying its thousands.

JULY 21

*Can two walk together, except they be agreed
(Amos 3:3)?*

I SUPPOSE you to be a religious person, one who has been converted by the power of grace; one who is desirous to glorify God in life and conversation; one who has an interest in Jesus, and wants to have it made more manifest to your own self every day; one who considers this life as a passage to a better, and would be glad of a spiritual companion to go along with you, for ‘two are better than one.’ Do not give the right hand of fellowship to any before you have tried him, for two cannot walk comfortably together except they are agreed. Bring him to the law of God – the eternal moral law of God, contained in the ten commandments – and ask him, does he look upon that law of God as the rule of his life? If he denies it, avoid him. If he says he is not under the commanding power of it, turn away from him. But if he says that he sincerely takes it as God’s revealed will to him, owning its authority over his conscience and way of life, ‘Thus says the Lord’ breathing after universal obedience, repenting and mourning where he falls short and fleeing by faith to Christ for all peace and pardon, take such a one for a friend and companion.

* * * * *

JULY 22

*My soul faints for Your salvation, but I hope in Your word.
.....My soul is continually in my hand.....Uphold me
according to Your word, so that I may live: and let me not
be ashamed of my hope.....Look upon me, and be merciful
to me, as has been Your way to those who love Your name
(Psalm 119:81,109,116,132).*

O LORD, I love Your name also, since You are called merciful, gracious, long suffering, and indeed the Lord our Righteousness. Therefore I depend upon nothing of my own, but throw myself entirely upon Your free grace and righteousness, which alone keeps me in peace. Without You I am ignorant and weak; and Satan, being as wicked as he is cunning, what would become of me if I was not kept and preserved by You? Your name is a tower, and the righteous runs into it and is safe (Prov. 18:10). There let me abide also continually, and so I shall be safe from every adversary.

* * * * *

JULY 23

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory (Psalm 115:1).

HOW little reason have we to glory in anything of our **H**own, since nothing but sin is ours, which even defiles that which is of God. O Lord, grant that I may always give You the praise which is Yours, and may learn to delight and glory in You, having no other aim than to walk before You in godly simplicity and sincerity; for ‘He that walks uprightly walks surely (Prov. 10:9).’ All disquiet of mind arises from our own lusts and unmortified tempers, which make the bosom like a troubled sea. And no settled calm shall we find till we have a single eye to God’s glory, and can count ourselves worthy of no good. Then we may draw comfort out of trouble and learn to praise the Lord, both for what He gives and for what He takes away (Job 1:21), being sure that both all things are working together for good and tending to God’s glory, which He knows best how to promote, and that nothing but sin can make us unhappy and miserable.

* * * * *

JULY 24

Who is there to lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, indeed rather, that is risen again, Who is indeed at the right hand of God, and Who also makes intercession for us (Romans 8:33,34).

THERE is a story of how the devil appeared to a dying man and showed him a parchment roll, which was very long. Inside were written on every side the sins of the poor sick man, which were many in number. There were also written the idle words he had spoken in his life, together with the false words, the unchaste words and angry words. Afterwards came his vain and ungodly words and lastly, his actions, summarised according to the commandments. Whereupon Satan said, 'See here, look for your virtues! See here what your examination must be.' To this the poor sinner answered, 'It is true, but you have not set down everything; for you should have added and set down here below, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).' This also should not have been forgotten, that 'whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).' At this the devil vanished. Thus if the devil should muster up our sins and set them in order before us, let but Christ be named in a faithful way and he will give back and fly away with all speed.

* * * * *

JULY 25

But all of us, when with unveiled face we behold as in a looking glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the selfsame image, from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18). Therefore, Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5). Leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps (1 Peter 2:21).

IF, before we say or do anything, we would always consider whether it was agreeable to the pattern of Christ, a multitude of sins would be avoided. O Lord, however guilty and miserable I am, yet when I can humble myself before You as the vilest of sinners, and look to You by faith, depending only on Your free grace, I enjoy peace. Grant, therefore, O my God, that this beholding of You may be my constant exercise, and that by this means I may be strengthened cheerfully to follow Your pattern, and be daily changed into the glorious image of Your love, patience, and humility, and thus be ripening for eternal life.

* * * * *

He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matt. 5:45).

MANY serious people are very ready to give alms to the devout part of their poor brethren, but are afraid of relieving a common beggar. And it must be owned that, as riches are a talent from God, they who have them must be discreet in the distribution of them. Only common, healthy beggars are forbidden alms, concerning whom God says, 'If they will not work, neither shall they eat (2 Thess. 3:10).' While the religious poor have the best claim, others ought not be entirely overlooked, as is plain from the conduct of God Himself, for 'He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good (Matt. 5:45).' It may be said of these others, 'They will make ill use of your bounty.' But what then? Is not this very goodness recommended to us in Scripture, by imitating which we may show ourselves to be 'the children of our Father Who is in heaven, Who sends rain on the just and the unjust?' Shall I withhold a little money or food from my fellow creatures for fear he should not be good enough to receive it from me? O I beg of God to deal with me, not according to my merit, but according to His own goodness; and shall I be so absurd as to withhold my charity from a poor fellow-creature, because he may not perhaps deserve it? Shall I use a measure toward him which I pray God never to use towards me? Lazarus was a common beggar; and yet he was the care of the angels and carried into Abraham's bosom. 'I was a stranger, and you took me in,' says our blessed Saviour. But who can perform this duty, and not relieve persons who are unknown to them? 'As we have therefore the opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith.'

* * * * *

JULY 27

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff both comfort me (Psalm 23:4). (See also Exod. 14, of the deliverance of the Israelites and the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea.)

TO rejoice in the light of God's countenance is certainly most pleasant, but not always so profitable to everyone, as sometimes to walk in the dark, indeed, in the valley of the shadow of death. Some are more humble and cautious while walking in the dark than in the light and glimpses of grace are then exceedingly precious. But such should consider for their humiliation, that darkness or deadness are commonly the effects of a wrong spirit and careless walk. O Lord, grant that when I am deprived of sensible comforts I may yet be enabled to rely upon Your bare word, and in death may be refreshed by the light of Your countenance. Amen. Indeed, You have declared that 'the righteous has hope in his death (Prov. 14:32).'

* * * * *

JULY 28

Hear, you children, the instructions of a father, and give attention to get understanding (Prov. 4:1). We speak what we do know, and testify what we have seen (John 3:11). Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are from God (1 John 4:1).

WHOEVER you are who comes to this book for instruction and edification, let the following admonitions, the result of long experience and observation, be acceptable to you: they are designed for your spiritual good, will warn you against errors and, if complied with, will give you a true taste of gospel peace and redeeming love. Let the life you now live in the flesh be by faith in the Son of God. Labour after a constant soul-reviving fellowship with the Father and the Son, through the Holy Spirit. Watch over your passions, conduct and conversation, so that the Spirit of the Lord is neither grieved, nor His comfortable influences withdrawn from your soul. Be ready for every good work, as you have ability and opportunity, and take special care that your good is not evilly spoken of through the manner of your performing it. Let no external services whatever, either respecting yourself or others, make you neglect a constant watchfulness over the inward motions of your own heart. Let the written word of God be your invariable rule, both in principle and practice. Whatever persuasion there is which does not advance the Redeemer's honour, and does not tend to magnify His grace, work and salvation, be sure it does not come from Him Who calls us. Be very earnest after meekness, humility, patience, self-denial, inward holiness and all other graces of the Spirit; these carry their own evidence that they are worked by God, and in their blessed effects will remain with you for evermore. 'My son, if your heart is wise in these things my heart, indeed mine, will rejoice (Prov. 23:15).'

* * * * *

JULY 29

Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law (Psalm 119:18). Lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death (Psalm 13:3). With You is the fountain of life; in Your light shall we see light (Psalm 36:9). Divine Answer: I have come, a light, into the world, that whoever believes on Me should not remain in darkness (John 12:46). The Lord opens the eyes of the blind (Psalm 146:8).

MANY imagine their eyes are opened and that they have clear notions of religion in their heads, but they see just like Eve did after eating the forbidden fruit. Their hearts being corrupted, they are destitute of Christian simplicity and godly sincerity; for he who does not understand the word of God by the light of the Holy Spirit, through prayer and faith, but only by his natural reason, is certainly blind (Rev. 3:17), and one devilish and plausible temptation to error and sin is enough to break the strongest chain of human reasoning, for it is only faith that gets the victory (1 John 5:4).

* * * * *

JULY 30

Without Me you can do nothing; therefore abide in Me (John 15:4,5).

I CAN no more do without You, O my dear Saviour, than the branch can do without the vine. Keep me, therefore, always in You, else I shall have recourse to my old, fancied stock of grace, though I have been a thousand times convinced of its insufficiency. May I never be left in the least thing to my own strength, but be directed, assisted, and blessed by You in all my doings; for as far as I trust to myself, I am distrustful of You and consequently weak; and, on the other hand, the more I distrust myself, the more I trust You, and will be strengthened and blessed.

* * * * *

JULY 31

Offer to God thanksgiving; and pay your vows to the Most High: and call to Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will glorify Me.....Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and to him that orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God (Psalm 50:14,15, 23; see also Isaiah 25:9).

NOTHING moves God more to hear us than glorifying Him by faith with thanksgiving, and keeping up a childlike confidence in Him as our reconciled Father in Christ: and nothing quickens faith more than the sure promises of answering our prayers. Thus God will certainly hear and deliver us, since all His ways are only designed to strengthen us in faith and save our souls. What need we, then, to be afraid in times of trouble? Ought we not rather to draw near to God in prayer and thanksgiving, and glorify Him even beforehand, confidently believing that we shall certainly meet with new deliverances and quickenings of faith?

* * * * *

AUGUST 1

Say to the righteous, that it will be well with them; for they will eat the fruit of their doings (Isaiah 3:10). Therefore, mark the perfect man and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace (Psalm 37:37).

MANY are for having first what is not to be expected till the end; they would be glad of triumph, but will not fight. Waiting for the Lord seems to them too long; but for the most glorious promises we must often wait the longest. Jacob was obliged to wait longer than Esau, though he had greater promises than his brother. And how long was it before the promise of Christ, the greatest of all, was accomplished? It therefore ought to be well observed that it is said at last that it will be well with the righteous, and the end of the upright is peace. When his faith, love, and patience are tried in the furnace of affliction, then the acceptable year will come, and the blessed days of joy will appear.

* * * * *

AUGUST 2

Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart (Psalm 26:2). Search me, O God, and know my heart; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:23,24).

David, the man after God's own heart, did not trust himself, but presented his heart to the Lord to be tried. Much less can we or ought we to trust our hearts; for 'he that trusts in his own heart,' says the wise man, 'is a fool (Prov. 28:26).' We have more reason to be afraid of our own hearts than of all other enemies. It is not necessary for us to know when, or by what means, the Lord searches our hearts; but everyone who is really in a state of grace, and walking in the fear of the Lord, will pray Him to search the heart, and deliver him from every wicked way. The Holy Spirit has various ways of searching the hearts of His people, and makes use of the different means with the same person. We are not to limit the mode or extent of His operations; but it is our duty to pray that He will in everything guide us in the way that leads to everlasting life. Some may be worked upon very differently from what we have been, but the whole is under the direction of infinite wisdom and tends to manifest the glory of divine grace in our salvation.

* * * * *

AUGUST 3

Lord, all my desire is before You (Psalms 38:9). Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth: unite my heart to fear Your name (Psalm 86:11).

ENCOURAGED by Your blessed word of promise, O Lord, that before men call You will answer, and while they are still speaking You will hear (Isaiah 65:24), I now draw near to You and present my supplication before You. Teach me, by Your Word and Spirit, the things of my everlasting peace; let my soul be cast into the mould of the gospel and let me be obedient to Your will in all things. Manifest Yourself to me, as You do not to the world; show me my inward corruption and let me see into the depth of iniquity that is in my heart; grant me the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom; incline my heart to Your testimonies; lead me into all truth; help me to learn that he who believes will not make haste; restrain the impetuosity of my natural temper, so that I may do all things deliberately, as becomes one who fears always, who is ever looking to You for direction. Lord, preserve me calm in my spirit, gentle in my commands and watchful that I do not speak unadvisedly with my lips, moderate in my purposes, yielding in my temper, even where the honour of God is not immediately concerned, and be ever steadfast where needful. Lord, grant me Your protection, and may Your blessing be upon me, so that I may not bring an evil report upon that good land I was permitted to spy out; but walk honourably through the wilderness, and pass triumphantly over Jordan into Canaan. Amen.

* * * * *

AUGUST 4

Strive to enter in at the strait gate (Luke 13:24). Press on in your own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). Forgetting those things which are behind, I reach forth to those things which are before (Phil. 3:13).

HE that feeds only upon Christ, and yet with fear and trembling presses on in his own salvation, is in the right way, the former preventing discouragement, and the latter presumption. Grant, O Lord, that I may still continue to fight the good fight of faith, and never look back on the flesh-pots of Egypt, but rather choose ‘to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 12:25).’ May the painful death which You suffered on the cross have an abiding place in my heart, so that thereby unbelief and slavish fear may be destroyed on the one hand, and (false) security on the other, that I may walk at all times and in all places with holy and filial reverence, as in Your presence. Amen.

* * * * *

AUGUST 5

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me (Psalm 51:10). Divine answer: I will put a new spirit within you;....and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh.....that they may walk in My statutes (Ezek. 11:19,20).

HERE is a glorious promise, which may be relied on, and will certainly be fulfilled, if heartily pleaded in prayer. 'Blessed are the pure in heart; for they will see God (Matt. 5:8).' In regard to justification, we are perfectly clean by Christ's atonement; but in regard to sanctification, our hearts are not perfectly clean yet, but we have still need to pray, 'Create in me a clean heart.' Amen. O Lord, may Your blood and Spirit cleanse and sanctify me thoroughly from all my sins. Amen.

* * * * *

AUGUST 6

And Enoch walked with God (Gen. 5:24).

THEY are happy who in their early days are turned from sin, themselves and the world, by repentance towards God and faith in the promised Offspring, as Enoch was, who, from the time of his conversion, walked with God, in a continued progress in his works and ways. To 'walk with God' is to come out of a sinful generation and cleave to the Lord, as Noah and Caleb did; and God requires this of all believers (2 Cor. 6:17). It is setting the Lord before our eyes continually, and fearing Him always as Joseph and Nehemiah did, thereby avoiding everything that would offend Him. Enoch was making an open profession of faith in Him and zeal for His service is our highest honour and best interest. Further, it is such a walk as obtains a holy intimacy and communion with God, which is kept up by constant meditation, prayer and praise, listening to the voice of His Word and Spirit, and walking humbly before Him. Hereby holiness is promoted and encouraged in the soul. It was in this way that 'Enoch walked with God (Gen 5:22).' Thus he maintained a holy confidence in Him, committing all his ways to Him, always expecting help from Him, and rejoicing in the hope of being with Him for ever. For these happy ends the grace of God is sufficient for all who see their need and ask for that grace. The Lord help us to seek it so that, like Enoch, we may walk with God here below, and live with Him for ever in glory. Amen.

* * * * *

AUGUST 7

See that you walk circumspectly, not as the foolish but as the wise.Therefore do not be unwise, but understanding what the will of God is (Eph. 5:15,17). That you may approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offence (Phil.1:10). And you yourselves be like men who wait for their lord (Luke 12:36).

BELIEVERS have nothing more at heart than the will of God and being convinced of that, they immediately set about it despite all hazards. But sometimes they cannot come to a thorough knowledge of the same without great conflicts and patience (Heb. 10:36), for the flesh is exceedingly crafty and perverse. Although often forbidden to go, it is often calling out, 'However, let me run (2 Sam.18:23).' But the Lord will, nevertheless, carry them through. Indeed, Lord, this You have done innumerable times. Oh that I might trust You also for the time to come, and not be so weak in faith any more.

* * * * *

AUGUST 8

If you are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you; for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you (1 Peter 4:14:19). Rejoice on that day, and leap for joy; for behold, your reward is great in heaven (Luke 6:23). Whoever will confess me before men, him will I confess before My Father Who is in heaven. But whoever will deny Me, him will I deny before My Father Who is in heaven (Matt.10:32,33).

EVERY real Christian must expect persecution from the world; and though he should take heed of giving needless offence by self-will or rash conduct of any kind, yet he should not seek to shun the cross by what some men call prudence, or a sneaking compliance with the world, but be willing to suffer everything rather than to hurt the cause of God in the least, and to depart a hair's breadth from His express will, out of deference to the world. Christians should openly confess Christ their Lord, and not mind being called fools by the wicked, as they know that in the end they will call themselves by that name. Therefore we do not care for the approbation and praise of the world, but count it a great honour to bear the reproach of Christ.

* * * * *

AUGUST 9

Take heed to your spirit (Mal. 2:15). The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it (Jer.17:9).

PRIVATE loop-holes, sinful lusts, can hide themselves at times so well as to seem quite dead; but if we grow careless, they spring up again on a favourable occasion, and sometimes appear in a spiritual shape and take a fine spiritual name. Thus, though the flesh exceedingly likes sensual indulgences, yet to flatter its lust of pride, and the vanity of being thought a perfect man, it will sometimes endure great mortification. We therefore always ought to be jealous of ourselves and guard as much against self-righteousness as licentiousness; for the flesh is never more fleshly and dangerous than when it has the most spiritual appearance and covers its lusts with the holiness and spirituality of angels.

* * * * *

AUGUST 10

Oh send out Your light and Your truth: let them lead me, let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your tabernacles (Psalm 43:3). Divine Answer: The path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day (Prov. 4:18).

THE wiser we are in our own conceits, the more negligent are we in prayer, the more destitute of true wisdom and faith: for the Lord gives sight only to the blind, and to babes, who pray for it. Therefore, the deepest humblings go before the greatest blessings. O my blessed Saviour, since I am always blind and ignorant of myself, if I am not guided by Your eyes, I desire always to look up to You, and to do everything under Your direction.

* * * * *

AUGUST 11

By grace you are saved (Eph. 2:5).

TO rely on grace and to desire to be saved only by free grace is a sweet exercise; but so far from being practised enough, we all have need to learn the prayer of the publican better still, since the Pharisee is ever busy to creep in again. But care must be taken that we do not build our faith only upon the sweet enjoyments of the grace of God, as it is procured by Christ, and promised to us through Christ. For this reason God sometimes denies us those perceptible enjoyments so that true faith may begin to act like itself, and depend upon nothing but His free grace in Christ. And this we have also boldness to do, should we ever seem to fall short of the due measure of faith, godly sorrow and repentance. Since there is no merit to be placed in these things, there is no certain measure and degree prescribed for all: but it is enough truly to hate sin, to desire grace and sincerely to enter upon (the patience of) the Christian race.

* * * * *

AUGUST 12

Whoever commits sin transgresses also the Law, for sin is the transgression of the Law. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins (1 John 3:4,5).

THERE is a far greater power in the blood of Christ to save and cleanse than there is in sin to defile and destroy (Rom. 8:3). The Law was weak to do good, but it has the power to condemn: 'The strength of sin is the Law (1 Cor.15:56);' the law gives strength to sin, because, by virtue of the curse of the Law, sin reigns and defiles the soul of men, through that righteous curse, 'The soul that sins will die.' But the blood of Jesus Christ has greater power to save than sin, together with the Law, has to condemn, for the blood of Christ takes away and abolishes it utterly. Where this blood is applied and brought home, sin itself cannot ruin the soul. The soul is poisoned and corrupted by sin, but the blood of Christ takes away the guilt of sin, yet not its existence, since we are sanctified but in part. We can only be earnest at the throne of grace so that we may be kept by almighty power, and that Jesus may be for us, Who is stronger than all that can come against us.

* * * * *

AUGUST 13

Do not be as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding, and whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near to you (Psalm 32:9). Therefore, if you call on the Father, Who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear (1 Peter 1:17).

DO you believe there is a God, and that He will shortly judge you for every evil action you have done, for all the secret iniquity of your bosom? There will be no room for dissembling, excusing or escaping then. How can you then meet your Judge, unless your heart is changed and your sins are pardoned? Begin, therefore, in time, wretched man, to consider how you must appear before the awful judgment-seat! The door of mercy is still open. Call upon the Lord Jesus for repentance and pardon, before the door is shut, and you are lost for ever.

* * * * *

AUGUST 14

Be strong and of good courage. I will be with you: I will not fail you, nor forsake you. Only be strong and courageous. Be unafraid, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:5-7,9). I have indeed called you by your name; I have surnamed you, though you have not known Me (Isaiah 45:4).

WHAT a sweet commandment! What a glorious promise! God calls upon us to be strong in faith; and strong faith will make men cheerful and courageous, and enable them to overcome difficulties. Therefore, if your feet and heart are bound for Canaan, trust stoutly in the Lord to carry you safely through. Feeble as you are, yet go on, and fear nothing, for God is with you. He that has but this one care and fear, not to displease God, need not care for, or fear, anything else; his safety is ensured in the promise of God, Who will keep him unharmed in all things.

* * * * *

AUGUST 15

Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29)! These are those who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple (Rev. 7:14,15).

HE who washes himself continually in the blood of Christ does not make light of sin, but detests it above all things; for what can be more abominable than sin, since it cannot be taken away but by the blood of the Son of God? This humbles true believers, and makes them watch against sin; and if it has not the same effect on you, matters are not right with your soul. Talking of the blood of the Lamb, and yet trifling with sin, cannot agree together, but show a false or deceived heart.

* * * * *

AUGUST 16

*Truly, I say to you, 'They have their reward (Matt. 6:2).'
Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteous-
ness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at
that day; and not to me only, but also to all those who
love His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8).*

FOR this crown faith strives. And because this faith justifies, it makes the world say, 'Well, I also believe.' But where is their conflict and conquest? It is answered, 'I rely on Christ and grace.' But Canaan was also a free gift of grace and yet it was not taken without conflicts. Moreover, as worldly people are unacquainted with the wickedness of their hearts, they do not trust alone upon grace, but on their duties and an outward form of godliness, while self-love and pride still reigns in their hearts.

* * * * *

Let us run with patience the race that is set before us (Heb. 12:1).

HE who runs and lacks patience will never get to the end of his race; for in the race of God's commandments men have foul play. One comes and rails on him for his zeal, for running so fast, when he thinks himself so slow. Another gives him a blow and strikes him down: but up he gets and runs again. Every man will make room and give way to him who is in a race here, while he who runs the heavenly race may expect, and will find, many to stand in his way and stop him all they can, so that he will have great need of patience. Without it everything will offend him. What is a wise man, a zealous man, without patience? He will bear nothing, suffer nothing, and can do no great good. David had many enemies who spoke mischievous things against him and laid snares for his life; but he 'like a deaf man did not hear, and was like a dumb man who does not open his mouth (Psalm 38:13).' Saul was twice in his power, yet he would not avenge himself on him: he lacked neither courage or wisdom; he had a stirring spirit, a working head, was sensible of wrongs, knew himself innocent, his adversaries malicious. His thoughts must needs be troubled, yet he is his own man under all; he committed his cause to God, his patience was in exercise, and he waited God's time of deliverance. Christ's active and passive obedience made Him a complete Mediator. May active and passive obedience make you a complete Christian.

* * * * *

Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God (Rom. 3:25).

GOD set forth the propitiation from all eternity when He proposed Christ to be the mercy-seat; thus everything springs from the Father, Who is love. He proposed, revealed, and made Christ known to Adam, to Abraham and to the prophets; He proposed the mercy seat as an object of faith in all the sacrifices that were types of Christ, and this mercy seat is clearly and fully set forth in the gospel dispensation. In this plan the righteousness and justice of God are declared, while He vindicates the honour of His perfections and laws, and maintains the authority of His government by punishing the offences of rebel subjects in the sufferings of the Surety, 'Who was made sin, (i.e. an offering for sin) that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).'

Where shall I, a poor sinner, conscious of guilt and apprehensive of wrath, flee for refuge? Where shall I find it? Where, but under the shelter of atoning blood. While others have recourse to 'a refuge of lies (see Isaiah 28:15) and would establish a righteousness of their own, I find rest and safety in the 'Lord, our Righteousness (Jer. 23:6),' and in Christ 'have a strong consolation, having fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before me (see Heb. 6:18).'

Does Jehovah from His mercy seat pardon me, a rebellious sinner? Do I hear His voice beseeching me to be reconciled to Him, through Christ, by propitiation and peace? Shall I not hear His voice of mercy, and live and rejoice in God through Christ, by Whom I receive the reconciliation? Will God commune with me from His mercy-seat, and bless me with the manifestation of His love? Oh delightful interview, when I am most alone, retired from the world, but least alone when with my God. Oh the inexpressible pleasure of secret devotion, of a life, 'hid with Christ in God.' If the contemplation of divine love here below is so ravishing, what shall I experience above? My God, guide me here by Your counsels, and afterwards receive me to Your glory.

AUGUST 19

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (Matt. 6:24).

DOES Satan tempt you either by pleasures, dignities, or profits? Stand on your guard, gird your strength with such thoughts as these: What can the world profit me, if its cares choke me? How can pleasures comfort me, if their sting poisons me? Or what advancement is this, to be triumphing in honour before the face of men here, and trembling with confusion before the throne hereafter? What are the delights of the world to the peace of my conscience, or the joy that is in the Holy Spirit? What are the plaudits of men to the crown prepared by God? Or what is the gain of the world to the loss of my soul? The vanity of the creature is far beneath the excellency of my soul and the things of time not worthy to be mentioned with the things of eternity. Two masters of such opposite principles as God and Mammon I cannot serve; therefore, Satan, upon the most deliberate consideration, I must give you and your service up, for you invite me to my loss.

* * * * *

Oh taste and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8). Jesus

AUGUST 20

Christ the same yesterday, today and for ever (Heb. 13:8).

THERE is an infinite fulness of all spiritual blessings treasured up in Christ Jesus for all His people; and out of His fulness they do receive, indeed grace for grace. But alas! we are slow of heart to believe the truth: we please ourselves with small things and come slowly forward to a daily growth from that fulness. Young converts, enamoured with what they have in hand, or living upon their feelings, are ready to flee from knowledge as something dangerous and destructive of holiness; and mere professors are apt to deny or even deride their precious feelings, as though the affections had no share in the Christian religion, and that the whole consisted in having a crowded head. Come then, divest yourself of pride of party and the strife of tongues. Be a humble supplicant at the feet of Jesus, for both a live coal from the altar, to purge away your iniquity and warm your affections, and also for the aid of the Holy Spirit, to lead you into the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Then you will not only taste but see, not only see but taste, both sweetly taste and clearly see that ‘the Lord is good.’

* * * * *

We utter the secret wisdom of God, a wisdom which has

been concealed and which God ordained before the world for our glory (1 Cor. 2:7).

THERE are some things declared in the gospel which are absolutely its own, which are proper and peculiar to it; things such as have no precedents in the Law, or in the light of nature, but are of pure revelation, belonging to the gospel alone. Of this nature are all things concerning the love and will of God in Christ Jesus: the mystery of His incarnation, of His offices and His whole mediation; of the ministry of the Spirit and our participation therein, by which we are united with Christ; our adoption, justification and effectual sanctification, which proceed thence. In a word, everything that belongs to the purchase and application of saving grace is of this sort. These tidings are properly evangelical, being peculiar to the gospel alone. Hence the apostle Paul, to whom the charge of it was committed, puts that eminency upon them so that (in comparison) he resolved to insist on nothing else in preaching (1 Cor. 2:2), and to that purpose he describes his ministry (Eph. 3 7-11). Now, observe two things: What God reveals in His word, let your reason submit to; what He proposes as objects or matter of faith, beg Him to enable you to believe.

* * * * *

AUGUST 22

*Blest be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heav-
enly places in Christ (Eph.1:3).*

FROM our natural constitution we earnestly expect present gratification. It is by no means sufficient, therefore to explain to us our duty or enforce it by future rewards and punishment. There must be pleasures at hand to outweigh the enticements of sin and outbid whatever that sorceress can offer. The religion of Jesus is constituted in this manner; it brings the possession of the best happiness here, a rich foretaste, in this life, of heavenly glory. Salvation comes from the Lord to the sinner upon believing, like a most ample estate bequeathed to a beggar in debt. At once it alters his whole condition, pays all he owes, supplies all he wants, gives him rank, figure and authority to which before he was a perfect stranger. Such blessedness in the pardon of all my sins, in access to God with confidence, in victory over my spiritual enemies, give me, O my God, to enjoy!

* * * * *

AUGUST 23

Spare not, lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes: for you will break forth on the right hand and on the left; and your offspring will inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited (Isaiah 54:2,3).

HOW comfortable it is to the religious man to see an increase of the true worshippers of God, and more especially, in that place where his soul has dwelt among lions, and been day to day ‘vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.’ To see the banner of Christ set up there and numbers flock to it as doves to their windows, to see the kingdom of Satan weaken and contract and the kingdom of God and His Christ strengthen and enlarge, to see the hand of the Lord protecting and providing for His people, going before them, like the pillar and cloud, refreshing them by day and by night. This indeed is a feast of sumptuous things. Lord, grant that I may be thankful for what I have already seen, and may behold Your glory thus displayed more and more. And while You lengthen our cords, enable us to strengthen our stakes, by holding fast the form of sound words, living as persons professing godliness, showing that we are Christians indeed by love to each other and keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Thus will our light shine before men, the light of the gospel break forth on the right hand and on the left and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

* * * * *

AUGUST 24

If a man strives in a contest, yet he is not crowned except he strives lawfully (2 Tim.2:5). Until now the kingdom of heaven is taken by violence and the violent take it by force (Matt.11:12).

IF those cannot expect to be crowned who strive, but not lawfully, what must become of those who do not strive at all? We strive, namely in faith, by which we have the victory. And as the enemies return again and again, and are always crafty and strong, we must continually be in arms. O Lord, strengthen me therefore to get the victory, for it greatly exalts Your glory if the power of my enemies is broken. Your grace is able to overcome the greatest power of sin, and will destroy it effectually at last, since You have promised that grace will endure, grow and conquer, whilst sin is condemned to death and is actually dying more and more, when nailed to the cross of Christ.

* * * * *

AUGUST 25

So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God, Who shows mercy (Rom. 9:16). You have a little strength (Rev. 3:8). Go in this your might,.....Surely I will be with you (Judges 6:14,16).

ALITTLE strength is also the strength of God through Christ, the second Adam, and consequently stronger than the power of Satan and the first Adam, should that seem ever so strong. Indeed, it is the death of the old man already, and kills him by degrees more and more, till at last, when we drop this body of sin, it will destroy him entirely. Believers in such a state think themselves weaker than before they had any grace, not being able now to put such a force upon themselves as formerly, because they dare not now be wrought on by pride. For they no longer swim with the stream thus experiencing no resistance but, swimming against the stream, feel the force of the current of lust. Yet it is to be remembered that hypocrisy and proud nature, desirous of being seen and taken notice of, sometimes can outdo grace in outward things and have a better appearance in the eyes of man. But real Christians, not being willing to be worked upon by nature any longer, and yet having but little strength, cannot put such a constraint on themselves continually, but they may be in this manner tossed to and fro. This the Lord wisely permits for their good, to convince them the more of their own insufficiency and nothingness, that they may rely on the strength of the Lord. Therefore we must not give over praying and hoping in this case, but as it is only the mercy and power of Christ which preserves and strengthens the poor and feeble, we rather ought to be more earnest in drawing near to Him with all our misery, weariness and nakedness.

* * * * *

AUGUST 26

If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning (2 Peter 2:20).

SOME affirm that experienced Christians meet with no strong temptations, feel no evil suggestions from within, and there are consequently no strivings against the same. However, it is quite the contrary; for beginners strive more against the outward pollutions of the world, whilst the experienced turn their force more against their inward and spiritual iniquities. Therefore take heed to your spirit, though your meaning be ever so good and your assurance ever so great. Do not be high-minded, for fear of failing. Beware of all sins; for the least may, unawares and by degrees, draw you into many others, so as to be at last entangled in such a manner, that without great watchfulness it will be impossible to be disengaged. So therefore do not be deceived; flee all occasions of sin. Don't say within yourself that it is a light matter, it only concerns outward things, which do not belong to the essence of Christianity. Such outward liberty is a sure evidence of a false, inward levity of mind and a conscience not tender. By conforming to the world, we give a good handle to the enemy of souls to ruin us and by sad experience we shall be convinced, in time, that our latter end is worse than the beginning.

* * * * *

If it is possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men (Rom. 12:18).

THERE is much contest in the world about property; but believers taking Christ for their only property, Whom nobody can take from them, have in Him alone immense treasures and lasting peace. And since wrath and anger turn into nothing but disquietude and are punished by themselves, why do you suffer yourself to be easily moved by them? The least provocation, even a single word, perhaps, will stir up the corruption of your heart, so as to change your countenance and make you utter dreadful words. Therefore consider how God bears with you, and what an abomination anger is. It is a fire from hell, the true image of the old dragon. But, being called to bear the image of God and bring forth the fruits of the good Spirit, you are to follow the lamb-like mind of Christ. To that purpose it is highly necessary: First, to avoid all occasions of strife and contention. Secondly, to bridle our tongue, if quarrels arise. Thirdly, to suffer when we are wronged. Fourthly, to pray directly and quench the sparks of fire before they break out into a flame. This is the easiest and the only method to prevent great troubles and lead a peaceful happy life; for anger carries uneasiness, but love a sweet rest in itself.

* * * * *

AUGUST 28

But when Christ came, a high priest of the good things to come,.....neither by the blood of goats and calves but by His own blood He entered once the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.How much more will His blood purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say His flesh, and having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Heb. 9:11,12,14; 10:19-22).

CHRISt has purged our sins by Himself for ever; ‘For by one offering He has perfected for ever those who are sanctified,’ v. 14. And to this sprinkling of the blood of Christ all believers, even the weakest, are to come, in order to receive the forgiveness of sins. And the blood is said to be ‘sprinkled’ to show the need of its application to the conscience by the Holy Spirit. In this purple fountain the believer daily washes; it is his element and life. Thus he lives, always applying His ransom to his soul, and pleading His merits before his heavenly Father, which keeps his conscience pure and easy.

* * * * *

AUGUST 29

That which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has showed it to them (Rom.1:19).

THERE are some things declared and enjoined in the gospel which have their foundation in the law and light of nature; such are all the moral duties which are taught therein. These the remaining light of nature, though obscurely, still does teach and confirm. The apostle, speaking of mankind in general, says, 'That which may be known of God is manifest in them;'. The essential properties of God, rendering our moral duty to Him necessary, are known by the light of nature and by the same light are men able to make a judgment of their actions, whether they are good or evil (Rom. 2:14,15). The same law and light which reveal these things also enjoin their observance. Thus is it with all men before the preaching of the gospel to them. The gospel adds two things to the minds of men:

1. It directs us to a right performance of these things, from a right principle, by a right rule, and to a right end; so that they, and we amongst them, may obtain acceptance with God; hereby it gives them a new nature, and turns moral duties into evangelical obedience.
2. By a communication of that Spirit, Who is part and parcel of that dispensation, it supplies us with strength for their performance in the manner it directs.

* * * * *

AUGUST 30

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us (Rom. 8.35,37).

STARS shine brightest in the darkest night; torches are better for the beating*; grapes do not come to proof, till they come to press; spices smell best when bruised; young trees root the faster for the shaking; gold looks brighter for scouring; juniper smells sweetest in the fire; the palm tree proves better for pressing; camomile, the more you tread it, the more you spread it. Such is the condition of all God's children: they are, then, most triumphant, when most tempted; most glorious, when most afflicted; most in the favour of God, when least in man's and least in their own. As their conflicts, so their conquests; as their tribulations, so their triumphs. Like true salamanders**, they live best in the furnace of persecution, so that heavy afflictions are the best benefactors to heavenly affections. Where afflictions hang heaviest, corruptions hang loosest; and grace that is hid in nature, like sweet water in rose leaves, is the most fragrant when the fire of affliction is put under it to distil it out.

* Von Bogatzky was writing before the advent of electricity and his 'torch' would have been a burning brand.

**The salamander was once thought able to endure fire.

* * * * *

AUGUST 31

The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land..... Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, who is in the clefts of the rock,.....let Me see Your countenance, let Me hear your voice (Song of Sol. 2:11-14).

OLORD, how often has it been winter with me, but You have always quickened me again. Grant that by these experiences I may be so used to Your ways as always to expect the best from You in everything, and to have only this one care, namely, how I may please You as Your bride and dove, and be accepted through You with Your Father. Let my faith be so strengthened by all Your various dealings with me, that at last I may have boldness and find complete rest in Your wounds, my crucified Saviour, where there is room for the greatest of sinners, even for me.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 1

Do not be conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2). Do not love the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.....And the world passes away, and its lust, but he who does the will of God abides forever (1 John 2:15-17).

WHOSE will do you do? Examine yourself. Perhaps you think to love the world and to do its will cannot be a great sin, because many reputed honest men and good Christians do the same. No, but for your soul's sake consider what the Scripture says: 'If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you.' Without this love of the Father, you have no faith and, being destitute of faith, you have no Christ, and consequently no life and salvation. Consider further, whether you do not love the world above either God or your own soul? Do you not have more than a hundred thoughts about the world for one of God or your own soul? And do you not talk a hundred times more about the world than about God or your soul? And is not your pursuit continually after the world, to the neglect of God and your soul? Why, then, the world is your idol; you do not love God and are murdering your soul. What a piteous case you are in. The Lord have mercy on you.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 2

Not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as He Who has called you is holy, so are you to be holy in all manner of conduct (1 Peter 1:14,15). Give diligence to make your calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10). The time past of life suffice for us to have worked what the Gentiles desire..... (1 Peter 4:3).

NONE can be so sure of salvation as to be for ever free of fears and doubts, for there is no assurance without conflicts; therefore all diligence is required to be evermore sure of it, so as to have boldness even in death. But let us take heed of presumption, since we do not know what may befall us at last, and be careful not to despise or overdrive the weaker sort of Christians, nor make our own experience a general rule for others, lest this comfortable doctrine of assurance prove a torment to them who have not yet attained it. Let all who have received a measure of grace be thankful. Yet they are not to rest in it, but press forward, fighting the good fight of faith, till they lay hold on eternal life.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 3

The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

WHOSOEVER seriously seeks to be saved both from the power and punishment of sin, and seeks deliverance only through Christ, should not give way to heaviness of heart. Consider, 'Are you a lost sinner? Are you seeking His salvation?' This is a good token that Christ has sought you, else you would not seek after Him. Whom Christ seeks He saves. Now therefore call on Him diligently to set up His kingdom in your bosom, and say to yourself, 'It was the very purpose of Christ's coming into the world to save sinners circumstanced just as you are. Indeed, though your sins are as scarlet, though they are red as crimson, don't be cast down and don't be disquieted within yourself. Instead, encourage a cheerful hope in your covenant God; instead of poring only over your sins, consider the exceeding love of Christ in dying for them. Then, by a sense of that love, do your diligence to live for Him; you will find He will enable you to do this by His Holy Spirit.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 4

Repent, and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15).

REPENTANCE, or godly sorrow for sin, is the doctrine of the gospel; this is absolutely necessary to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and a life of union and communion with Him. John the Baptist calls you to repent: Jesus calls you to repent: the God of heaven and earth calls you to repent: and without it you will perish eternally in outer darkness. Can you not give yourself the grace of repentance? You cannot. Oh then, pray and cry to the blessed Jesus, that His Holy Spirit may produce this saving grace in you. Pray to Him that He would give you a living, justifying faith in His blood and righteousness, and that your heart may be filled with real sorrow for sin, with holy indignation against it, and with a sincere and active departing from it. Oh pray that you may walk by faith and not by sight, as seeing Him continually Who, to the natural eye, is invisible.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 5

What I say to you I say to all: Watch (Mark 13:37).

ON a day set apart for the celebration of some great event, how anxious are people to get in time to the place appointed. What earnestness is seen in their looks. As earnest should we be in watching for the hour in which our Lord will come so that we may not be ashamed before Him. A heart deceived by sin may suggest many arguments against this holy earnestness, but they are the reasonings of folly. It is a general warning, 'What I say to you I say to all: Watch.' Almost every day affords an instance of someone hurried into eternity on a sudden. Were not hourly watchfulness necessary, a merciful God would not permit sudden deaths. But He has sounded the alarm, 'You do not know what hour your Lord comes.' Give me grace, Lord, always to live as if I heard that solemn voice sounding continually in my ears, 'Awake, you dead, and come to judgment.'

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 6

Now also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not (Psalm 71:18). O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in You. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on You (Psalm 25:20,21). Divine Answer: Listen to me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by Me from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made and I will bear; indeed I will carry, and deliver you (Isaiah 46:3,4).

GOD never does forsake a true believer, since he is as closely united to Christ as a child to its mother. Indeed, a mother may forget her nursing child, but Jesus never forgets His ransomed people. His eyes are on them for good continually: they are graven on the palms of His hands, and lodged in His pierced side, close to His heart. We may expect everything confidently from Him, and this confidence pleases Him above all things. Then may I 'be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make my requests known to God (Phil. 4:6),' always trusting that He will certainly carry me through all difficulties to come, as He has done hitherto. Thus I may indeed give Him thanks for it beforehand. Lord, grant that I may practise this better still.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 7

Trust not in lying words, saying, 'These are the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord;' but through and through amend your ways and your doings, etc (Jer. 7:4,5). They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Present your bodies a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). Pure religion before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world (James 1:27).

AS a contrite heart is the most pleasing temple of God, so speaking with God in words of our own, as a child does with his father, is the best book of prayer. The most cunning method by which Satan deceives many now, is their mistaking extensive knowledge and assurance of their own making, without the witness of the Spirit, for true faith. He leads others to trust in some outward form of worship, or having communion with others, or pretending to gospel experience and liberty and thereby claiming the office of building up souls, though a true change has never been worked in their own hearts. For what can all our reading, prayers, going to church and sacrament, profit us, without this? Before all this is acceptable to the Lord, we must be renewed in our minds, and prove by our words and deeds that we are the living temples of God.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 8

Forsake me not, O Lord; O my God, be not far from me (Psalm 38:21). Divine Answer: The mountains will depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness will not depart from you, neither will the covenant of My peace be removed, says the Lord, Who has mercy on you. O afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted; behold, I will lay your stones with fair colours, and lay your foundations with sapphires; and I will make your windows of agates, and your gates of carbuncles, and all your borders of pleasant stones (Isaiah 54:10-12).

SUCH as have never felt spiritual distress cannot relish this word of promise; but they who have been brought out of great misery by this sweet word, or any other word of promise applied to their hearts by the Holy Spirit, will henceforth take hold of it and prize it. Indeed, they should firmly believe, even without a present feeling of its comfort, that God will certainly perform the promise He has once sealed upon them. He is a God Who does not change, and a God in covenant with His people. His covenant is everlasting and therefore He will not forsake His people, but order all things for their good and conduct them safely through their pilgrimage, though violent enemies assault them and mighty tempests fall on them. His faithfulness stands engaged for this.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 9

Lean not to your own understanding (Prov. 3:5). Do not be wise in your own conceits (Rom. 12:16). The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God (1Cor. 3:19).

WHOEVER desires to know the will of the Lord, and prays earnestly for instruction, will certainly know His will. But he must not be wise in his own conceits, nor lean to his own understanding, nor expect that the wisdom or learning of this world will explain the things of God. He must not seek to reconcile the Word to his lusts, but combat his lusts by the Word. In short, he must come to Jesus for instruction, with the same simplicity as a child comes to learn its letters: and not come for a month or a year, but sit all his life at the feet of Jesus, to receive instruction from Him. Now, make me jealous of myself, enable me to go in and out with prayer, and keep me from all errors that may hurt my soul.

* * * * *

..... *So we preach, and so you believed (1 Cor.15:11).*

THE method of the gospel is this: First, it proposes things which are peculiarly its own. So the apostle sets down the constant entrance of his preaching (1 Cor.15:3). It reveals its own mysteries, laying them as the foundation of faith and obedience; and it also inlays them in the mind, thereby conforming the whole soul to them (Rom. 6:17; Gal. 4:19; Titus 2:11,12; 1 Cor.3:11; 2 Cor. 3:18). Second, this foundation being laid, it grafts all duties of moral obedience on to the stock of faith in Christ Jesus. Where this foundation is not laid through ignorance, or rejected through prejudice, the gospel has nothing to do with such men; it neither renews their souls, nor produces any genuine fruit of obedience. Thus, the apostle Paul, in all his letters, teaches first the mysteries of faith that are peculiar to the gospel, and then descends to those moral duties which are regulated thereby. Likewise, we must first hear the gospel and be acquainted with its revelations, before we can believe aright. Then, when our faith is rightly founded, it is to show itself in the practice of all those good works that are required of us in the Scriptures: ‘As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and on the God of Israel (Gal.6:16).’

* * * * *

How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God (Gen. 39:9).

JOSEPH was a slave and in a strange country. Here he was tempted by a wanton and revengeful mistress and had he complied, he would have been sure of secrecy and rewards. But if he resisted, he might expect her keenest resentment, if not the loss of his life. All these could not influence him; he chooses to submit to every inconvenience rather than be guilty of so foul a crime and sin against God. Hence we may learn that the fear of God is a most effectual preservative against all sinful indulgences. It was this which restrained Joseph and will, where it is possessed, have the same effect on all mankind upon all occasions and in every scene of life. It strikes at every passion, every spring of human action, and includes in it all the most powerful motives by which the conduct of mankind is determined. If self-interest is the principal thing that sways us, that surely cannot be so certainly promoted as by securing the favour of God and avoiding His displeasure. If we are governed by our fears, He is the most formidable Being in the universe to a mind that has perverted its faculties and transgressed the laws of its nature. If we are governed by hope, He is the supreme good: if by love, He is the most amiable and perfect excellence: if by gratitude, He is the author of all our happiness.

* * * * *

I have found the book of the Law in the house of the Lord..... Because your heart was tender, and you have humbled yourself before the Lord, etc (2 Kings 22:8,19).

THE priests, probably to save themselves the trouble of writing, and the people of reading the book at large, had furnished themselves with summaries of the Law, leaving out, or slightly mentioning, some parts thereof, particularly the threats. Josiah was much affected by this whole body of writing, as being new to him. The book of God's Law seems in our day to be lost; it is a sealed book to most of the congregations that profess themselves Christians; imperfect accounts of it are given, which hide the promised blessings and threatened curses of God. When this book by spiritual light is found, and on reading or hearing it conviction reaches the conscience, it is a great instance of God's favour, a token of good, and must be faithfully acknowledged as such. Are you truly apprehensive of the weight of God's wrath, and solicitous to obtain His favour? Then seek earnestly on your knees, and in the house of the Lord, redemption from the curses of the Law; pray that Jesus may be revealed to you, for the blood of the Lamb of God alone can take away the guilt of sin. Having found the Law, do not rest till you find the gospel also, and arrive at a comfortable assurance of your interest in its blessings. Josiah's heart was tender, he wept, and was encouraged; follow his sorrow, and you will partake of his blessings; make the Law of God your delight and counsellor.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 13

Draw me, we will run after You. The King has brought me into His chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in You, we will remember Your love more than wine; the upright love You (Song of Sol. 1:4). In You the fatherless finds mercy (Hosea 14:3).

THE needle's point in the seaman's compass never stands still, but quivers and shakes till it comes right against the North Pole. The wise men of the east never rested till they were right against the star which appeared to them, and the star itself never stood till it came right against that other Star, which shone more brightly in the manger than the sun did in the sky. All the while she was fluttering over the flood, Noah's dove could find no rest for the sole of her foot till she returned to the ark with an olive branch in her mouth. So the heart of every true Christian can find no rest all the while hovering over the waters of the world, till with the silver wings of a dove, and the olive branch of faith, it flies to Jesus, the true Noah and rest of our souls, Who puts forth His hand out of the ark and, taking the dove in, receives it to Himself.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 14

What do you think of Christ (Matt. 22:42)?

OUGHT we not to put this question to our souls, when our happiness for ever depends upon Him, and when without Him we are undone to eternity? How ought we then to think of the Lord Jesus Christ? Surely as the Scripture represents Him to be: ‘the chief among ten thousand,’ and ‘altogether lovely (Song of Sol. 5:10,16).’ We ought to think of Him in His person as the great God incarnate; in His work and His offices, as the Saviour of Israel: we ought to think of Him as one in whom justice is satisfied, love and righteousness are manifested, and sinners are saved. How highly God’s people have ever thought of Jesus Christ. And how exultingly do the saints now in heaven think of Him! But what do we think of Christ, when burdened with sin, when oppressed with affliction? When we cannot entertain a good thought of ourselves, can we then think of Christ as highly as heretofore? Alas! how very weak is our faith at the best. Lord, strengthen our faith, inflame our love, enlarge our views, support us in trials, guide us by Your counsel, and receive us into glory, that we may sing Your praise to all eternity. Amen.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 15

Our citizenship, is in heaven (Phil.3:20). Therefore rejoice because your names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20). Set you affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:2).

A CHRISTIAN, being only a traveller through the world, must expect a traveller's fare: bad roads sometimes, bad weather and bad accommodation. But since his journey's end and city is heaven, all his actions, sufferings, prayers, business and conversation, turn that way. O Lord, grant that my eyes may always be fixed upon this mark, so as to regulate all my designs and doings accordingly, asking myself in everything, whether it be fit for heaven, and agreeable to the mind of the heavenly Bridegroom and to the manners of the heavenly citizens.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 16

To Him all the prophets give witness, that through His name whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43;4:12). Your name is as an ointment poured forth (Song of Sol. 1:3). The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe (Prov. 18:10).

IN this name we should draw near to the Father in prayer and not approach Him with strange fire of our own, (Numb. 3:4) kindled from the fancied merit of devotion; then He will draw near to us again (James 4:8). He will certainly grant our petitions and we shall receive, that our joy may be full (John 16:24). The Lord is good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all those that call upon Him (Psalm 86:5). And all these promises ‘in Him are Yes and in Him are Amen (2 Cor. 1:20).’ Thus every believer may say, ‘The Lord will receive my prayer (Psalm 6:9).’ ‘Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer nor His mercy from me (Psalm 66:20; 13:6).’

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 17

In Your presence is fulness of joy; at Your right hand there are pleasures for evermore (Psalm 16:11). And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2-4,10,12).

OMY dear Saviour look upon me in mercy. You see what earthly desires and unmortified tempers are still found in me; and though I cry to You daily, my enemies still prevail over me. Yet You are almighty to save, and have promised to cast out none that come to You. Let me, then, experience the power of Your grace in raising me up to more newness of life, in stirring up prayer and strengthening faith, in creating hungering after righteousness and thirsting after God, and in bestowing a right, heavenly mind upon me, that my soul may be as a bride prepared and adorned for her husband. Give me also a frequent taste below of those pleasures which are at Your right hand for evermore, that my heart may be kept waiting and eagerly looking for Your coming.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 18

Watch and pray.....Let us be going (Matt. 26:41,46). Remember Lot's wife (Luke 17:32). This is the way, walk in it, when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left (Isaiah 30:21).

TO be kept from self-righteousness on one hand and from false liberty on the other is the Christian way. But how shall I find this way? O my dear Jesus, You are the way. Teach me then to walk in Your strength, to live in Your faith, to gaze much on You, to cleave firmly to You and abide ever in You. Thus shall I experience the liberty of the gospel, which yields no license for sin, but brings joyful deliverance from its power, for when my heart rests on You, it cannot rest in the flesh and seek to fulfil its lusts, but being delighted with Your beauty and glorious love, all other things vanish and I am kept watchful, close and fervent.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 19

Walk before Me (i.e. in My presence), and be perfect (Gen. 17:1). Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it is good, or whether it is evil (Eccles. 12:13,14).

CONSEQUENTLY all such things as are now called indifferent in their nature will also be brought to the bar, and not be called indifferent there, but judged as actually good or actually evil. What prodigious harm is done by the false doctrine of innocent things. It opens the door to innumerable sins, for though our conscience often tells us that we should not do such things as are not actually good, yet at present innocence is pleaded. It is called a harmless thing, which, though it could not be said to be good, yet it is not evil either, but quite indifferent in its nature. By this, thousands are drawn into the snares of the devil. O Lord, grant that all my works may be done to You, and in Your presence, agreeably to Your commandments so that my leaves indeed may not wither, and whatever I do may prosper and abide forever.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 20

Truly, truly, I say to you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3).

CONSEQUENT upon this, no outward form of religion will do; we must be renewed by the Spirit of God, and have our hearts changed, else we cannot enter the kingdom of God. Christ, by saying, 'Truly, truly,' has confirmed this twice by an oath. How is it possible, then, that mere honest and moral men can be saved? Will Christ break His double oath? No, surely. Now, when outward gross vices only are blamed in conversation or preaching, a moral man slips through the Law without censure, and the careless think they can leave off their sins at one time or another. Thus none are duly concerned to be thoroughly converted, but when the new birth and a real change of heart is insisted on, and held forth in this the only true way, everyone who would be saved must be changed.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 21

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God (Psalm 42:11). I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which will be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18).

BELIEVERS, we are here assured, may be in great distress; but though much perplexed, and often discouraged, they are secretly held up by faith and brought off conquerors. If God had commanded us to pray and hope only till a certain time mentioned, and His help had failed to come within that time, we might justly despair. But since He requires us to hope even to the end or last moment of life, this should keep us from impatience and despair; for though He should delay even to the end, believers will certainly experience Him then to be faithful to His promise. He may try our faith and patience to the utmost, but He cannot break His own word. Dear Lord, whatever load You are pleased to lay upon me, enable me to wait, in faith and in prayer, till the joyful hour of deliverance comes.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 22

Do not be readily disturbed in your mind (2 Thess.2:2). I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). In Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden away (Col. 2:3).

O MY dear Saviour, enable me to rest humbly and quietly in You, avoiding all such novelties as might breed presumption, distract my thoughts and cause my heart to swerve from You. Whoever has tasted the sweetness of Your Word will be satisfied with it; and better it is to improve in the life of faith and power of godliness, than in new words, forms and professions. May the Lord quicken me by the old truths, and humble my heart evermore, so as to receive them better, and to abide in that which I have heard from the beginning. Novelty is the bane of souls, by which we are often grievously tormented and distracted. It is work enough for a meek and quiet soul to keep within the bounds of a settled mind, to centre effectually in God. How can such enjoy true rest, who, from a vain curiosity to know everything, are ever running after new doctrines, or prying into every man's business? Lord, save me from this unsettled mind and make me determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Amen.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 23

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin (Psalm 51:2). Divine Answer: The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

UNDER the ceremonial law, all things were purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood there was no remission; thus it is impossible that any one sin, even the least sinful motion, should be taken away, except by the blood of Jesus Christ. May this teach me the atrocity of sin, keep my heart humble and my conscience tender, for how dreadful must the stain of sin be, since nothing but the blood of Christ can wash it out. Blessed be God for opening this fountain, and keeping it open day and night, for the vilest sinners to wash in. May my polluted soul be daily washed in this fountain and receive both peace and strength from it.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 24

Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5).

BUT is there any need of such self-examination, when yet we preach Christ and stay ourselves on His name? Alas, it is possible both to preach and profess Him, indeed, to have a seeming confidence in Him, call Him our Rock, talk of His grace, and yet be lovers of sin and haters of holiness and thereby show we have no interest in Him, but are on the road to destruction. Thus Jesus has told us (Matt. 7:22,23). Let us examine ourselves: Is our faith in Him accompanied with much self-abhorrence, in the views of our sinfulness and pollution before Him? Do we prize Him, not only for His favour to us, but for His own goodness, His grace, and His excellence? Do we love Him, so as to love nothing else in comparison with Him, neither self, the world, our ease nor advantage? Then we are surely His and He also is ours. These graces are the fruits of His Spirit within us: they are the proofs of our faith and of our union with Him. And if we are united by the Spirit of Jesus, He will certainly own us before men and angels; He will never forsake us in time or eternity. But how dreadful will their case be who deceive themselves here, and habitually give themselves to sin and iniquity, whilst they still make mention of Jesus Christ with their lips. Keep us, Lord, we beseech You, from such sad delusion. Oh give us to remember all our past provocations, and to know, love, and serve You in sincerity.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 25

What do I still lack (Matt. 19:20)? You still lack one thing (Luke 18:22). But one thing is needful (Luke 10:42).

THIS one thing needful is to have Christ; but He must first serve and treat us with His grace before we can draw strength from Him to serve Him again. We must be taught to see our food and to hunger for Him, before we can feed upon Him, or do anything for Him. And as Christ is the author of faith, He gives it increase out of His fullness; and faith, being somewhat strengthened, begins to work for Him, though it be but faintly. However, we become Christians and remain in a perfect state of salvation, not by what faith works, but by what it receives; for though a feeble faith will perform feeble works, it can receive a whole and perfect Christ; which is the one thing needful.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 26

Joseph is a fruitful bough;. . . the archers have severely grieved him, and shot at him and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; [from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel] (Gen. 49:22-24).

JOSEPH is acknowledged to be an eminent type of the Messiah: by bringing some circumstances under one view, the resemblance will appear conspicuous and striking. Joseph was in a special manner beloved by his father; Christ is the dear Son of His Father's love. Jacob made for Joseph a coat of many colours; God prepared a body in human nature for Christ, filled and adorned with the various gifts and graces of the Spirit without measure. Joseph was hated by his brethren, and they could not endure to think he should have dominion over them; the Jews, Christ's brethren according to the flesh, hated Him and would not have Him reign over them. Joseph was sent by his father on a long journey to visit his brethren and know their welfare; Christ was sent from the bosom of the Father, to seek and to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Joseph's brethren conspired to take away his life; the Jews said, 'This is the heir, let us kill him;' and they consulted to take away His life. Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver, at the motion of Judah; and Christ, by one of the same name, was sold for thirty pieces of silver. Joseph was delivered to strangers, and Christ to the Gentiles. Joseph being reckoned dead by his father, and yet alive, may be an emblem of Christ's death and resurrection from the dead.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 27

What things were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ; indeed, without doubt, I also count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness (Phil. 3:7-9).

THIS was the life and constant mind of St. Paul. The words, 'in Him,' 'in Christ,' 'in the Lord,' etc., occur continually. I choose them also for my staff and my song in the wilderness; for they will be my great tower, my strong fortress, my sweet paradise, my only surrounding and life. Here may I take up my abode forever, and the Lord keep me steadfast. 'It is good for us to be here;' for this is Pisgah, the Mount of the Lord, where Jesus, being transfigured, reveals His glory to His disciples. Here we should build our tabernacle; and here may death find me at last.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 28

What must I do to be saved? Divine Answer: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, and your house (Acts 16:30,31).

FAITH is not a confidence of our own making, but it is God that works it in a broken and repentant heart. This faith purifies the heart, crucifies the old Adam, overcomes the world, changes us in heart, mind and all the powers and faculties of the soul and is the true faith, and not that which only thinks and says, 'I believe.' All true believers have received it under a sense of godly sorrow and with brokenness of heart. If we feel something of this, and apply to Christ, by prayer, for faith and grace, we have a sure mark of faith already; for if we did not believe we would not pray. And he who daily applies to the blood of Christ for cleansing, has true faith and hope already, though he is but weak, and does not taste any joy.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 29

Abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22), That you may be blameless and innocent as the sons of God, spotless amidst a dishonest, depraved generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world (Phil. 2:15).

LORD, I desire to shine in good works, the genuine fruits of faith; therefore I will give myself up to You, to purge me that I may bring forth more fruit. Looking upon myself as Yours, I would not only abstain from evil, but the very appearance of it. Some are satisfied with knowing they are blameless, and do not care what others think of them. But, for the gospel's sake, I desire to appear blameless before others, lest some offence should come through me, which, as far as lies in me, I would prevent. Your children, O God, are as lights in the world. Oh pour Your grace, that heavenly oil, into my lamp, and so trim it that it may give light to all around, that they may be led to glorify Your holy name.

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 30

Let him who thirsts come; and let him whoever will take freely of the water of life (Rev. 22:17).

IF there is a sense of sin, a lack of spiritual blessings, and a willingness to be saved by grace, though you know not that it is Christ's secret power which makes you willing, yet, being thirsty and willing, you are invited. Do not puzzle and perplex yourself with such questions as these:— Am I elected? Have I a right? Am I prepared? Come upon the invitation, take pardon, peace, righteousness and every gospel blessing, as free gifts to the needy. If someone ready to perish with hunger and thirst was invited to a feast and assured of welcome, and he stood hesitating, Have I a right? Am I worthy? would it not seem preposterous in him thus to demur, when his necessities were pressing upon him, and a plentiful table was before him? The weary, the hungry, the thirsty, the guilty, the worthless, the vilest are invited to believe on Jesus, Who came only to save sinners. He has assured them in His word that those who thus come to Him, 'I will in no way cast out (John 6:37).'

* * * * *

OCTOBER 1

Don't weep; the Lion, who is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome (Rev. 5:5). The Son of God has appeared for this purpose, to undo the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).Sin will not have dominion over you (Rom. 6:14).

MANY complain that though they will not turn back, yet they have no power to advance further. If this should be your case, remember that the enemy of souls will discourage you. Go to praying, and venture the matter evermore on the Lord. Consider how He awakened you at first, how He has heard your prayers afterwards, and assisted you in many hard struggles. Surely He will help you now also. If that will not do, begin as it were afresh; acknowledge yourself guilty in every respect; and, as the chief of sinners, plead for mercy. Be instant in your humble supplications, looking at the same time upon God as a reconciled Father through Christ, Who is willing to receive you, pardon and bless you, in spite of all your misery; then you will soon make a better progress. To despair of our own strength is good; but we must never despair of the power of Christ, Who is risen from the dead, for with Him we are sure to overcome at last. He will certainly help you in the due and best season.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 2

Whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God is dealing with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father does not chasten?But He (chastens us) for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12.6,7;10).

TO these chastenings belong outward afflictions, which are precious means, and are sanctified to believers. O my dear heavenly Father, You are pleased with a true child-like confidence, but I am still of a distrustful heart, when anything comes upon me on a sudden. Help me always to entertain the kindest thoughts of You, and to fear no adversity, looking upon it as a token of love and not of hatred and really believing it to be intended as a blessing for my good. Whatever providence may order, let me only be convinced of Your fatherly affection, and fall in with Your wholesome and loving designs.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 3

The entrance of Your Word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple (Psalm 119:130). Order my steps in Your word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me (Psalm 119:133).

WE may have a clear sight and a real taste of the gospel, and yet be soon deprived of the comfort of it again, if we do not walk in godly simplicity and poverty of spirit; for Christ will have none but humble child-like disciples. But if we abide in Christ, by a close and humble walk with Him, we shall come to a great and lasting assurance. Neither a sweet sense of Christ, nor even faith itself in Christ, is the ground of our salvation, but Christ alone, received into the heart as the Saviour. Faith does not save, but enables us to receive the Saviour, and with Him salvation. Neither does a sweet sense of Christ save us. It only shows the Saviour is present with us. Now the weakest, true believer does receive Christ as well as the strongest, though he reaps no present comfort from his faith. We must first believe before we can feel, and be thankful for our feelings, but not trust in them.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 4

Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken me in Your way (Psalm 119:37).

IF you were to see a man endeavouring all his life to satisfy his thirst by holding up one and the same empty cup to his mouth, you would certainly despise his ignorance, but if you should see others of brighter parts, and finer understandings, ridiculing the dull satisfactions of one cup, and thinking to satisfy their own thirst by a variety of gilt or golden, empty cups, would you think these were even wiser or happier, or better employed for their finer parts? Now this is all the difference that you can see in the happiness of this life. The dull and heavy soul may be content with one empty appearance of happiness, and be continually trying to hold one and the same empty cup to his mouth all his life. But then let the wit, the great scholar, the fine genius, the great statesman, the polite gentleman, lay all their heads together, and they can only show you more and various empty appearances of happiness. Give all the world into their hands, let them cut and carve as they please, they can only make a greater variety of empty cups; for, search as deep and look as far as you will, there is nothing here to be found that is nobler or greater than high eating and drinking, than rich dress and human applause, unless you look for it in the wisdom and laws of religion. Reflect upon the vanity of all orders of life who live without godliness, and see how all the ways of the world are only so many different ways of error, blindness and mistake, so that you may be earnest in prayer to be turned from the creature, and seek for happiness in the Creator.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 5

Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not Yourself from my supplication (Psalm 55:1). Christ's Answer: Truly, truly, I say to you, Whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give it you (John 16:23), for the Father Himself loves you (v.27). He has promised: Before they call I will answer: and while they are still speaking, I will hear (Isaiah 65:24). Therefore I say to you, Whatever thing you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them (Mark 11:24).

HE who converses much with God in prayer, and has some child-like confidence in His word, will certainly be heard. These answers of prayer are undeniable evidences of the truth, the faithfulness and the love of God; they greatly strengthen his faith and at last bring him to be intimately acquainted with God. The more we receive, the more we are enlightened to see how much there is still wanting. This stirs us up to more fervent desires; and the more we desire and believe that we shall receive it, the more will be granted. Unbelief receives nothing (Matt. 13:58), but faith opens all the treasures of God, and never goes away empty.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 6

If I still pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ (Gal.1:10). Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good, to build him up (Rom. 15:2).

FEAR or love of men, and hypocrisy, very often are closely allied. 'A man who flatters his neighbour spreads a net for his feet (Prov.29:5).' 'But he who rebukes a man will find more favour afterwards than he who flatters with the tongue (Prov.28:23).' We are inclined to extremes, even when God has begun His work in our soul. At one time we are apt to run into a false activity for the conversion of others, trusting too much to our own sufficiency and strength; at other times, perhaps, we are too remiss and inactive in the salvation of others. May the Lord therefore always guide me to steer the middle course, so as to walk in all singleness and humility of heart, as well as in true fervency of spirit, faith, and love, that it may be said, 'I believed, therefore have I spoken (Psalm 116:10).' Grant, O my dear Saviour, that I may shine as a light and be useful to all about me, never seeking my own but only the salvation and good of others, with unfeigned love. Oh that Your love may constrain me in all things. Amen.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 7

Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and will assure our hearts before Him (1 John 3:19).

THE evidence of our assurance of eternal happiness is that which every soul pants after, that makes serious reflections on matters of religion. It is therefore necessary to know upon what foundation this blessed evidence is built and from what principles it arises. Those, I think, are chiefly faith, love and obedience, since no man can have this assurance who does not feel in himself the principle of obedience. Nor can he have obedience without the principle of love, nor love without the principle of faith; for it is a notorious contradiction to imagine that anyone can be assured of the pardon of Almighty God without obeying Him, assured of His favour without loving Him, or assured of the eternal enjoyment of Him, without a firm and steadfast belief in Him. But here many mistake the nature of these things: true belief in God represents Him to the mind as being infinite in glory, power, wisdom, goodness and in all perfections, as having such charms, beauty and loveliness as to captivate and ravish the affections of the soul so that it is smitten with the Divine love. True love reigns triumphant in the soul, engrosses all its affections, strips other objects of their charms, indeed, makes them appear vile and contemptible in comparison with the supreme good. True obedience strives to please God, to resemble Him, to render itself acceptable to Him, and ardently desires the enjoyment of Him.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 8

He that endures to the end will be saved (Matt.24:13). Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which you have, so that no man takes your crown (Rev.3:11). Therefore let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he falls (1 Cor. 10:12).

HE that stands in faith, and by nature is of a cheerful temper, must not magnify the measure of his own faith, or undervalue that of weaker souls; for such conduct would declare that he has now fallen into pride and into contempt for his brother. Therefore, however fast we may seem to stand, let us be wary and watchful. We are never so near a fall as when we grow self-confident. He who knows the nature and power of temptations will not discourage the weak, nor insist too much upon particular enjoyments and sensible assurances, which are not the constant witness and marks of faith. The Holy Spirit Himself is the pledge and seal of adoption and He is to be known not only by this joy, but by all His other fruits and operations. To trust too much upon feeling leaves our peace disturbed as soon as it is gone; but to rely on the word of God preserves a settled assurance.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 9

If any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not one of His (Rom. 8:9; see also verses 7,8,14).

NOT only gross wickedness but even a carnal mind (Phil. 3:18,19) and 'the friendship of the world,' is enmity against God (James 4:4). But how do I know that I have the Spirit of Christ? Answer: I have prayed for Him earnestly; this cannot be in vain (Luke 11:13). He also works hatred of and sorrow for sin; He rebukes, comforts and drives me to Christ and to prayer. This activity, built upon the word of God, is the abiding witness to Him which no man of this world can have, but even the weakest believer enjoys.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 10

Whoever has, to him will be given, and he will have more abundance (Matt.13:12). The water that I will give him will be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14).

OF the remarkable increase in the kingdom of God, even from the least beginning, see also Matt.13:31-33, and that beautiful figure, Ezek. 47:1-12. This well being opened, it highly concerns us to draw living water out of it daily by fervent prayer, and then it will spring up freely. But, reader, if you begin to be slothful and distracted with worldly cares, not abiding closely with Christ, nor calling diligently on Him, your spirit will soon be dried up, and you will scarcely be able, with anxious groans, to draw a single drop from this well. Therefore, take heed to your spirit; and if you desire your own comfort and God's glory, keep near the well's mouth. Be drawing its water continually by prayer and drinking it sweetly by faith.

* * * * *

Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt.25:30).

LOOK at this man to whom his lord had given one talent; he could not bear the thought of using his talent according to the will of the one from whom he had it, and therefore choose to make himself happier in a way of his own. 'Lord,' said he, 'I know you that you are a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not strewed, etc.' But his lord having convicted him out of his own mouth, dispatched him with this sentence, 'Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness etc.' Here you see how happy this man made himself by not acting wholly according to his lord's account, a happiness of murmuring and discontent: 'I knew you,' he says, 'that you are a hard man:' it was a happiness of fears and apprehensions; 'I was,' he says, 'afraid:' it was a happiness of vain labours and fruitless travels; 'I went,' he said, 'and hid your talent;' and after having been awhile the sport of foolish passions, tormenting fears, and fruitless labours, he is rewarded with darkness, eternal weeping and gnashing of teeth. Look at the man with his five talents: 'Lord you gave me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more, etc.' Here you see a man wholly intent on improving his talents; he has no uneasy passions, complainings, vain fears and fruitless labours, like the other. His work prospers in his hand and his happiness increases upon him; the blessing of five becomes the blessing of ten talents and he is received with a 'Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Lord.'

* * * * *

OCTOBER 12

He who separates himself seeks according to his own desire and contends with all wisdom (Prov. 18:1). But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal. 5:22,23).

THROUGH pride and self-will, a man having separated himself from the written word of God and the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, seeks to set up and pull down, and to establish everything according to his own wisdom, self interest or ambition, instead of humbly following the truth as it is in Jesus. Self-will never becomes a Christian, and much less reviling those who differ from us. The Lord was not in the strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire; but in the still small voice (1 Kings 19:11,12). The man who finds offence in everything that differs from him, shows great weakness. It is written, 'Destroy it not (Isaiah 65:8).' Though the grape is young, there is wine in the cluster. All spiritual exercises are good: brotherly love renders them beautiful and lovely. The Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ breathes love to him, holy joy in his salvation, and a divine and peaceable temper, with long-suffering and gentleness towards the weakness and infirmities of all around us. The fruit of the Spirit is real goodness in heart and life, steadfast faith in a precious Jesus, a partaking of His divine meekness, temperance, etc. By these things let us daily try our own spirit instead of sitting in judgment on the spirit of others.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 13

By this will all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one to another (John 13:35).

GOD is love; and everyone that loves is born of God (1 John 4:7).’ if we love one another as brethren in Christ, and love all saints as saints, not because they are this or that party; and if we love not in word only but in deed, and show the truth by works and labours of love, this is solid proof to ourselves and to others that we are real disciples of Jesus. It is a clear testimony that we have His Spirit and His love is shed abroad in our hearts, that we are of the family and household of faith and will enjoy all the family privileges. This is a better evidence, and more convincing to all around us, of what we are, than all knowledge, gifts, attainments and outward privileges whatever. O God of love, cause me to love You and all Yours; the poor, the weak and feeble as well as the strong; for all are Yours.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 14

Watch therefore; for you do know what hour your Lord comes (Matt. 24:42).

TO watch is the wise exercise of a gracious soul, who is sensible of his own weakness, loves his Saviour, and fears to grieve His Spirit; who is well acquainted with the depth of corruption in fallen nature; is well apprised of the invisible powers of darkness; and listens to the voice of his kind and adorable Shepherd. This watchfulness shows an awakened attention to spiritual concerns and has the love of Christ for its motive. It is attended with constant dependence on Christ for protection from dangers and for strength against all enemies, together with supplies of grace in every time of need. If our religion is only in outward profession, it may pass without watching; but if there is true grace in the heart from Jesus Christ, that sacred treasure will need to be guarded by circumspect watchfulness. The exhortation is to all God's children, is necessary in every condition, in every stage of a Christian's life, in youth, manhood, old age; in prosperity and adversity, in the seasons of consolation, in the times of temptation, in company and alone. O blessed Jesus, help me to watch and pray; let me be always ready; keep me in Your love, and preserve me by Your power, till my change comes.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 15

As the hart pants after the water brooks so my soul pants after You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God (Psalm 42:1,2). Divine Answer: Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money come, buy and eat; indeed, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Listen diligently to Me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance (Isaiah 55:1,2).

THERE is a great difference between a legal and a faint-hearted soul: the former is puffed up with self-righteousness, but the latter humbly thirsts after Christ's righteousness. Therefore he is not under the law but has grace already. It is only the child, or the new man actually born, that can cry and thirst. And though he cannot so fully believe it, yet to have grace is one thing and to feel and enjoy it is another. Therefore, don't let the weak be confounded, which is done very easily, the enemy himself contributing to it as much as he can. But let it be declared, even to the weakest, that they have saving grace when they are brought to be earnestly panting and made truly willing to receive all without price (Matt. 5:6).

* * * * *

OCTOBER 16

How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily (Psalm 13:2)? Divine Answer: Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God (Phil. 4:6). Commit your way to the Lord; trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass (Psalm 37:5). Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you; He will never suffer the righteous to be moved (Psalm 55:22). You have done wonderful things; Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth (Isaiah 25:1).

TO BE careful for nothing is a wall against a thousand troubles. But if we give room to any care and unbelief, it is like a leaven that spreads through all our actions. Therefore, we ought never to despair in our lawful calling, but rely in all things on the good providence and faithfulness of God, firmly believing He will never fail to carry us through the most difficult and intricate circumstances, though there should be ever so little appearance of it in our own eyes.

* * * * *

It is done (Rev. 21:6).

WHEN Jesus bowed the head, and gave up the spirit, He said, 'It is finished.' – The arduous and important work of obedience and suffering, which I have undertaken in My mediatorial capacity, is finished. I have glorified My Father on earth; I have finished the work He gave Me to do.

When all the redeemed are gathered, He Who sits on the throne beholding those He purchased with His blood and brought to glory, rejoicing in these works of His hands, thus expresses Himself: 'It is done.' The means and helps appointed for training you up, and preparing you for glory, are now laid aside, being no longer necessary; the scaffolding is now taken down, the grand and glorious building in all its parts being finished. That which is perfect has come, and that which was in part is done away. What depth of wisdom, what beautiful order, there is in the plan of salvation and in the tendency of its various parts to perfect the glorious redeeming love agreeably to the eternal counsel of peace. How harmoniously connected are all the links of the golden chain (Rom. 8:29,30). This is the doing of the Lord; and is it not marvellous in my eyes? When receiving the Spirit that is of God, I see things that are freely given by God, do I not see and admire my dear Immanuel in the whole of the plan, in Him the beginning and finishing of this grand design? Am I part of the plan? Is not His eye on me, His hand about me? O amazing wisdom and love. Will no part be neglected? Can nothing fail in the Redeemer's hands? Will even the weakest be supported? Will none be lost? Will all His have eternal life? Why then should I fear? The mighty One will do all His work in me and for me. Is the prospect by faith of this finishing work pleasant and transporting? What must the immediate blessed vision be? O my God, I will live in hopes of one day joining with all the redeemed in the song of Moses and the Lamb; keep me by Your power to everlasting salvation.

OCTOBER 18

We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). Therefore.....let us run with patience the race that is set before us (Heb.12:1). You have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin (Heb. 12:4).

SOME licentious professors of religion think there is no need to strive against sin; and some would seem so holy as to be above it. But here we are plainly told of striving against it. What St Paul speaks (Gal. 5:17) of the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, is to the same purpose, and the most experienced Christians are witness to it. The Word of God is said to be a sword, our prayers a wrestling, and our faith the victory. Thus our whole race consists in strivings and conquests. There is always an enemy to be conquered first, before we can make a considerable progress in anything that is good. None of our enemies are to be overcome very easily, but some are very stubborn. Courage and patience are therefore required; and thus we may be sure to have the victory at last.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 19

....but in His grace are justified freely through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, Whom God has unveiled as a propitiation, through faith in His blood, so that He may show His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past (Rom. 3:24,25).

HOW sweet are the words, 'By grace you are saved.' Here is an overflowing fountain of comfort and divine strength. But how little are the generality of vain and worldly people, who still feed upon husks, acquainted with these words. How little are they relished by our self-righteous moral Christians. But O how deliciously does a poor, hungering sinner fare upon them. There is hardly anything less known and understood, as to its power and experience, than the mystery of Christ's suffering and dying for us and justification by faith in Him, and this though it is the only paradise and element of believers and the greatest jewel restored by the Reformation. Such talking and representations of sin as only strike the imagination are not sufficient; we must also feel the mortal wounds of sin, by which the flesh is mortified, and be actually healed by the stripes of Christ.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 20

See that you do not fall out along the way (Gen. 45:24).

JOSEPH, having shown himself fully reconciled to his brethren, dismisses them with this caution; 'See that you do not fall out along the way.' He knew that they were but too apt to be quarrelsome. One might say. 'It was you that upbraided him with his dreams;' another, 'It was you that said, "Let us kill him;"' another, 'It was you who stripped him of his coat;' 'It was you that threw him into the pit;' another, 'It was you that sold him to the Ishmaelites,' etc. Thus their journey to their father's house would be very uncomfortable, if this spirit of quarrelling and upbraiding once got possession of them. Fellow Christians, what a lesson there is here for us. What says our Lord Jesus to us? Love one another; live in peace: whatever occurs, let us not 'fall out along the way.' Are we not all brethren? Have we not all one Father? Are we not all subjects of free and sovereign grace? Are we not all agreed in essential points? Are we not all sinners by nature and practice? Have we not all one object of faith? Are we not all travelling the same road? Oh, then, why should we fall out by the way? Suppose we are of different denominations, yet, holding the same Head, why cannot we love as brethren? The best and most enlightened of all 'see but in part, through a glass darkly.' And what a powerful reason is here for mutual forbearance. Let the strong not despise the weak, nor the weak judge the strong. Suppose our way should part a little as to externals; yet since all set out for the same spiritual Egypt, all under the same Leader, why may not we all hope to meet at last in the true Canaan? Have we not open and secret enemies around enough, but we must quarrel one with another? Satan, false professors and the ungodly world are unanimous in their opposition to us; let us be united so that they do not prevail against us (Phil. 2:1,2).

* * * * *

OCTOBER 21

Where shall I find rest? Divine Answer: Thus says the Lord, Stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk therein, and you will find rest for your souls (Jer. 6:16; see also Matt. 11:28, 29).

IN our own way there is nothing but trouble; but giving ourselves entirely up to be guided by God at His own pleasure, we may always be easy, since we know that by every step He brings us nearer to heaven. The only way to rest is the way of repentance and faith, in which we consider ourselves, from the beginning and indeed to the end of our Christian life, as utterly lost and condemned by the Law, and as perfectly reconciled and justified through Christ. Thus to abide in Him, to let Him work alone, and be truly resigned to His ways, will certainly have the desired effect; whilst by the righteousness and workings of our own heart we can never attain to it, and, which is worse, may be lulled into a false rest.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 22

You are complete in Him (Col. 2:10).

THINK, believer, with wonder and amazement; reflect with gratitude and love, that whilst you are deploring the common ruin of human nature, and mournfully feeling its sad effects upon your own soul, you may yet look through all your imperfection, frailty and unworthiness to your glorious Representative, and see yourself complete in Him. The Law which would condemn you, He has completely satisfied: the obedience which it requires, in order for your acceptance with God, He has completely paid. Thus that eternal life, from which your sinful imperfections must have for ever barred you, has now become your inalienable inheritance, as the reward of His righteousness Who lived and died for you. Go forth, then, and glorify Him in heart and life; the more you believe in Him, the more you will love Him; and the more you love Him, the better you will serve Him. And till He removes you from this valley of sin and sorrow, let your song in the house of your pilgrimage be this: "Complete in Him."

* * * * *

OCTOBER 23

Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for Him (Job 13:7)? Your Word is truth (John 17:17).

WHEN Moses saw an Egyptian and an Israelite striving together, he killed the Egyptian and saved the Israelite (Exod. 2:12). But when he saw two Israelites striving together, he laboured to reconcile them, saying, ‘You are brethren, why do you strive?’ So when we read, or see, the Apocryphal books, or heathen story, or popish traditions, contradicting the Scriptures, as for instance, Jacob cursing the wrath and anger of Simeon and Levi for murdering the Shechemites (Gen.49:7), and Judith blessing God for killing them (The Apocrypha, Judith 9), then here, and in such like places, let us kill the Egyptian, but save the Israelite—set a value on the Scriptures, but slight the Apocrypha. But when we meet with any appearance of seeming contradiction in the canon of Scripture, as where it is said, ‘God tempted Abraham (Gen. 22:1),’ and God ‘God tempts no man (James 1:13),’ here and in other places, we must be reconcilers, and distinguish between a temptation of trial, which is from God, and a temptation of seduction, which is by the devil. If we do this, then these two seemingly different friends will appear to be brethren, and agree well.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 24

And Joshua blessed him, and gave to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance (Joshua 14:13).

THE spies that went up to view the promised land all, except Caleb and Joshua, made a formidable report of the gigantic inhabitants of Hebron, saying, 'We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.' Caleb (answering well to his name, which signifies All-heart) stilled the people before Moses, and said, 'Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome.' We are told he had another spirit with him, and followed God fully. Moses, therefore, because he wholly followed the Lord his God, was commissioned to make him a grant of all the land on which his feet had trodden, which was the mountain of Hebron. Caleb was eighty-five years old when he reminded Joshua of this promise; he was forty when Moses sent him to spy out the land; thirty-eight years the Lord kept him in the wilderness, through the plagues of the desert, and seven years in Canaan, through the perils of war. The city of Hebron was already reduced, but the inhabitants had retreated to the fastness of the mountain: these he wanted to dispossess, assuring Joshua he had now the same strength of body and holy confidence in God to engage in this dangerous enterprise, as he had at forty years of age, when he was sent as a spy. Joshua blessed him, acknowledged his claim and deserts, besought God to prosper him in his undertaking, and gave him the country: thus was his fidelity and uprightness rewarded.

Reader, are you like-hearted with Caleb? Are you longing after Hebron, that is, communion with God? Are you eager to fight against your spiritual foes, those sons of Anak, lusts, passions, the devil, and the world? If so, remember the promise, 'As your days, so shall your strength be;' keep up the fellowship with God, and no enemy will be too strong for you; follow God fully; eye the Captain of your salvation, fight in His name and strength, and you will conquer every foe.

OCTOBER 25

And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on his throne, to the first-born of the prisoner who was in the dungeon (Exod. 12:29).

THE death of every first-born of the Egyptians carried so lively a resemblance, and bore so natural a relation, to their sin in destroying every male of the Israelites, that they must needs perceive it was inflicted as a punishment for that very cruelty; and consequently must conclude that the God of Israel took particular notice of human transactions, and sooner or later rewarded every man according to his works. The gradual increase of judgment inflicted on Egypt is somewhat remarkable, and equally expressive of the mercy and justice of God. The first four plagues were loathsome rather than fatal to the Egyptians; but after that of the flies came the murrain, which chiefly spent its rage upon the cattle; the boils and sores reached both man and beast, though there was still a reserve for life; the hail and locusts extended, in a great measure, even to life itself, the first by an immediate stroke, and both, consequently, by destroying the fruits of the earth. That of darkness added consternation to their minds and lashes to their consciences: and when all this would not reclaim, at length came the decisive blow; first, the slaying of the first-born, and then the drowning of the incorrigible tyrant and all his host. ‘Great and marvellous are Your works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Your ways, O King of saints (Rev. 15:3).’

* * * * *

OCTOBER 26

Draw me, we will run after You (Song of Sol. 1:4). Divine Answer: I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you (Jer. 31:3).

MANY and various are the ways the Almighty takes in bringing His children to Himself and to a knowledge of the things of peace. Sometimes He draws by the silken hand of love; sometimes by the still small voice of His Spirit; sometimes by the knotted cords of pain and sickness; sometimes He drives them by the storm and tempest of His broken Law; but most effectually in giving His Son to die for them. Always pray to Him to make you sensible of the secret, tender drawings of His love, and willing to follow them directly. This praying is very needful, because we are always in want, and without being instant and earnest we cannot receive much. It is therefore not a hard command but a great benefit and privilege, as if God should say, 'You are always wanting something; but you may always pray to Me, and I will always hear and assist, and draw you after Me.'

* * * * *

OCTOBER 27

Them that honour Me I will honour: and they that despise Me will be lightly esteemed (1 Samuel 2:30).

THIS is the part of the prophet's message to Eli, when he honoured his sons above God. He had indeed reproved them, saying, 'Why do you do these things, for I hear of your evil doings by all the people?' But he did not exert his authority in punishing them as they deserved when they slighted his reproof. This was accounted by God as winking at their sin. He therefore acquaints him that Hophni and Phineas, as they had sinned together, should die together, and his posterity be cut off in the flower of their age, and from the high priesthood. Eli was not much affected with this prophecy, till the threatening was repeated by Samuel, an artless child, who did not know the voice of Lord till Eli instructed him. Then it appeared much more terrible than from the mouth of the prophet and led him humbly to acknowledge the justice of God, and to submit to the sentence with a truly penitent heart. This is written for our admonition. Are we valiant for the truth, regarding neither father nor mother, nor the most tender relation, where the interest and honour of our God is concerned? Parents, let this be a warning to you, to train up your children in the fear of the Lord.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 28

Against hope (Abraham) believed in hope (Rom. 4:18).

YOU have not one single promise only, like Abraham, but a thousand promises, and many patterns of faithful believers before you; it behoves you, therefore, to rely with confidence on the word of God. And though the Lord delays His help, and the evil seems to grow worse and worse, do not be weak but rather strong. Rejoice, since the most glorious promises of God are generally fulfilled in such a wondrous manner, that He steps forth to save us at a time when there is the least appearance of it. He commonly brings His help in our greatest extremity, that His finger may plainly appear in our deliverances. And this method He chooses, that we may not trust upon anything that we see or feel, as we are often apt to do, but only upon His bare word, which we may depend upon in every state.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 29

Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood (Gal.1:16). The king's commandment was urgent (Dan. 3:22). Not slothful in busyness, serving the Lord (Rom.12:11).

THE speediest and easiest method to accomplish our desire of overcoming the evil and doing the good is an immediate compliance with our first convictions, without conferring with flesh and blood. If we delay the work, we give room to other people without, and to Satan and to our sinful hearts from within, to persuade us to the contrary; by which the flesh can easily renew its strength and the spirit will be weakened. And what will be the consequence of this but that either we miscarry in our design, or that the conflict will be afterwards so much sharper and the good work, if not stifled, will be dropped entirely? And if it is done, it will not be done completely, and with such singleness of heart, as it should be. But if we narrowly watch our hearts, and directly engage with every least opposition when it stirs, then our enemies will not be so strong; and we shall have no reason to despair.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 30

Neither yield your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members unto God as instruments of righteousness (Rom. 6:13).

IF God has my members as weapons in His hands, I shall certainly be able not only to work, but also to conquer, since He understands how to manage them. Only may the Lord give me grace not to wind myself out of His hands, else I must needs be like a dead, useless carcass. How can a pen write alone, without being in the hand of a writer? It is true, indeed, that it is very hard, indeed, impossible, to be really good, and to do all that is good, if we undertake it alone. But with God Himself living and working in us, and we truly delighting in Him, it is very easy and pleasant. Therefore care is only to be taken that our hearts may be always the work-place and our members the instruments of God, in which and through which He can perform everything Himself.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 31

The fear of man brings a snare (Prov. 29:25). Do not be conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2). If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him (1 John 2:15).

HOW many people swell with pride and vanity over such things as they would not know how to value at all, but that they are admired in the world. How fearful are many of having their houses meanly furnished, or themselves poorly clothed for one reason only, that the world should make no account of them, and place them amongst low and poor people. How often would a man have yielded to the haughtiness and ill-nature of others and shown a submissive temper, but that he dares not pass for such a poor-spirited man in the opinion of the world! Many a man would often drop a resentment and forgive an affront, but that he is afraid, if he should, the world would not forgive him. How many wish to be real Christians and would carefully practise temperance and sobriety, were it not for the censure which the world passes on such a life. Others have frequent intentions of living up to the rules of the Christian religion, but they are frightened by considering what the world would say of them. Thus does the impression which we have received from living in the world enslave our minds, so that we dare not attempt to be eminent in the sight of God and holy angels, for fear of being little in the eyes of the world. How is it with you? Are you still hanging between God and the world? Consider, for a moment, what can the world give you in exchange for the favour of God? What can it help you in sickness, death and judgment? Make serious reflection on this with prayer to God, and the snares of the world will be broken.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 1

At the beginning of your supplications the commandment came forth (Dan.9:23). Continuing instant in prayer (Rom. 12:12).

OH, comfortable and encouraging thought, that in the same moment that the supplication ascended from the prophet's heart, the gracious answer descended from Jesus. When we call upon the name of the Lord with simplicity and holy earnestness of soul, the return of grace and love meets our request before it has ascended halfway to heaven. And when the Lord is going to bless us, He pours out a spirit of prayer and raises a cry in our hearts after that blessing He is going to communicate. Therefore, when we are enabled to pray earnestly, we may be sure that blessings are coming and that we shall receive, in due time, a seasonable and visible help. Then let us only go on, and put, as it were, one weight of prayer after another on the scales of the sanctuary. Our greatest distress will at last be surely over-balanced and salvation brought down. But it is well to be observed, that we must also be watchful, and not act contrary to the intent of our prayers, which might provoke the Lord to annul His grant, or at least to delay His help. But when He delays long, it is not His intention to give us a denial, but rather make us more desirous and earnest, that He may bestow the more upon us. He will certainly recompense for this delay and grant us abundantly above all that we could ask or think.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 2

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate and gave also to her husband with her; and he ate (Gen. 3:6). Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin, etc (James 1:14,15).

THUS, one sin always begets another. Sin by the eyes rushes into the heart; from the heart it proceeds into the mouth, hands and feet; from us it is transferred upon others; and thus we go on sinning and falling deeper and deeper. We must therefore set a strict guard over our eyes and ears, be very cautious and resist the least beginnings of sin, not making light of any. The least spark of worldly lust being entertained and cherished, we eat of the forbidden tree standing everywhere before us, and thereby a great fire may be kindled. But if we always have our eyes fixed in all our conversation upon the presence of God in Christ, so as to walk continually in the light and directly to quell the least inward notions of evil, they will never break forth into gross outward sins, but we shall daily grow in grace. May the Lord enable me to practice this good lesson, and Himself watch continually over my heart, eyes, lips, and all other senses and thoughts.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 3

The preaching of the cross is.....unto us which are saved the power of God (1 Cor. 1:18).

OH that I might always feed on the cross, and experience its power, till I have obtained a complete victory. Whoever was bitten by a fiery serpent and looked on the brazen serpent lived (Numb. 21:9). Thus always to look on Christ crucified is the one thing needful, from which all other blessings flow (John 3:14,15). Oh may the eyes of my faith be fixed immovably on You, my crucified Saviour, for as long as I live I shall feel the biting of the old serpent and I have need therefore to look to You continually. Gracious Lord, afford me healing, day by day with an entire cure at last.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 4

The Law is not made for a righteous man (1 Tim.1:9).

THE righteous man being dead to the Law by the death of Christ, and living to God in righteousness, the Law can condemn him no more than it can a dead man, or one who lives in heaven already, indeed, Christ Himself, for it condemns only the sin. But the righteous man in Christ is without sin, for the sin being abolished, the wrath and the curse of the Law are also removed, and grace and blessing restored in its place. Christ has taken all his sins upon Himself, and imparted to him His own perfect obedience to the Law. Therefore, in Christ he has fully satisfied all the demands of the Law, and is entirely free from its dreadful curse in his conscience, since the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sins and, consequently, from an evil conscience (Hebrews 9:9-14;10:22). Being sprinkled with His blood, and graciously covered with His golden robes, the Lord is perfectly pleased and finds no fault with us. The atoning blood makes intercession for us with God, crying continually, 'Abba, Abba; mercy, mercy; peace, peace,' and obtains grace, life and salvation.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 5

There is none like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides on the heaven in your help, and in His excellence on the sky (Deut. 33:26).

IN these last words of Moses, we have the glory of God set forth in the communication of good to His Israel. God has made the whole universe for His own use, to be the chariot for Him to ride in, as is represented in Ezekiel's vision. In this chariot God's seat or throne is heaven, where He sits and governs. This visible universe, subject to continual changes and revolutions, we may compare to the wheels of this chariot. God's providence is represented by the motion of the wheels; He brings to pass His counsels in the lower world, and manages and directs all as a man does his chariot, which he turns as it pleases him. How safe, then, must they be who are under the wing of the God of Jeshurun, who find Him reconciled to them by the death of His Son and feel themselves reconciled to Him by the power of His grace. 'He rides on the heavens for their help,' and none can outstrip His progress, or overturn His purpose. Truly, it is He Who gives strength and victory to His people, blessed be God. Is the God of Jeshurun, the God of Israel, your God? Is He Who rides on the heavens your help? Does your heart trust in Him alone, and does His grace subdue your outward iniquities and your inbred corruptions? Is He Who rides on the sky your excellence? Does He seem only excellent in your eyes, and does He cause you to excel in virtue? Has He planted you among His excellent ones of the earth, and made you to abound in faith, love and fruits of righteousness? If the Lord is not your help, you will be slain by sin, and be a ruined soul. If the Lord is not your excellence, you are still an apostate spirit, a stranger to God and to His Christ. Awake, arise, and call on God; His ear is open to prayer and you are still on mercy's ground. Call on Him speedily, and cry to Him earnestly, so that you do not perish.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 6

Let your way of life be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have (Heb.13:5). But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition; for the love of money is the root of all evil, etc (1 Timothy 6:9,10).

A COVETOUS man is called an idolater and has no part in the kingdom of God. But who believes that he is covetous? Now here you see that everyone is covetous who is not content with what he has. And what says the apostle of such as will be rich? They fall. Not only they may fall, but they actually do fall: nor can the fall be avoided, if men are determined they will be rich. We should be frightened; get the covetous desires of your heart subdued and keep disentangled from worldly things, for who knows how soon you must go out of this world and leave everything behind? Away with it from your heart, else your death will be very hard. The Christian motto is 'God and enough,' for he who has God is content, and consequently always rich enough, even in poverty. He must be a covetous man indeed, who has not enough, having God. O Lord, make me so free by faith from the love of earthly things, that I may equally praise You, whether You are pleased to give me something, or take it away from me. May I never covetously refuse to others or to myself what You have given for my own and my neighbour's comfort.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 7

The soul of the diligent will be made to abound (Prov. 13:4).

YOU are concerned for having no more grace. What is the reason. Perhaps you are indolent, careless and unfaithful. And though you have no warrant even for an hour to live, yet unreasonably you suppose you have time enough; therefore you are not serious, diligent and fervent in prayer for sufficient strength always to be prepared, and to have boldness in death. No wonder you always are weak and discouraged, if you do not immediately resist sin so that it grows strong. And how can you expect to receive more grace, if you do not faithfully improve what little you have? If you would but diligently and faithfully apply yourself to the Word and prayer, God would certainly not be wanting on His part to fulfil His promises and give you enough; but not otherwise. It is well to be observed, and we must know it once for all, that unless we are mindful of ourselves there is no progress in grace. On the one hand we must watch and pray against all sins and whatever may be a hindrance and on the other follow with all diligence what is good and may be a furtherance. It is not enough to use some, but we must use all diligence; and accordingly as our grace is increased, our diligence must increase also.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 8

In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves (Phil. 2:3). Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ; for if a man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another (Gal; 6:2-4).

IF we were truly humble and looked upon ourselves as most miserable sinners, we would willingly submit to all adversities, and patiently bear the burdens and infirmities of others, considering that God has borne with us a great deal more. Observing, therefore, the faults of another, we must not forget our own; maybe in other things we are weaker than him. This will restrain us from judging rashly, or speaking unadvisedly to others. First we should speak to God about it and then try, with gentle means, to bring them to rights again. Indeed, the best method is to consider our neighbour on the good and ourselves on the bad side, and to see whether we can excuse him and accuse ourselves. If this fault could not be excused in any manner, we must not let him stir up our corruptions, but come with prayer in between God and him, to plead his cause before His throne in heartfelt love. It is very easy to find fault with others, but to show love and restore them by prayer and brotherly correction is quite another thing.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 9

You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing (Psalm 145:16).

WHO considers these words enough? The hand of God being my chief provision and store-house, is it not a shame to be anxiously careful about anything? Has not the Lord all things in His hands? Surely I will receive what He has for me: no one will be able to withhold it. Faith has always a free access to the treasures of God, Who is never wanting. Christians have their chests and treasures in such a high place, indeed in God, that no thief can rob them; and they are sure to have enough from God. Though the Lord should try them with want a little while, yet He relieves them in due time: their bread must rain from heaven, rather than they should be left without it. 'You need not,' says Christ, 'seek these other things; they will be brought to you, if you only abide in Me.' If this does not comfort and strengthen us, nothing else will. Many rely on their full pockets and purses, but if they had true faith, it would be enough that they believed and had faith in God's hand, purse and cash box. If the Lord is pleased to bestow some provision on His servant, he is very thankful for it and is careful to apply it well. But if God thinks it proper to deny him, he is still content and cheerful.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 10

And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said to him, 'It does not appertain to you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but to the priests of the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed. Neither will it be to your honour from the LORD God (2 Chron. 26:18).

HERE is the only blot we find on the name of Uzziah; Has long as he sought the Lord and worshipped according to the divine appointment, God made him prosper..... and he was marvellously helped till he was strong, but when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his own destruction (see 2 Chron. 26:5, 15,16). He was not content with the honours God had put on him, but would usurp those that were forbidden him. The chief priests and the other priests were ready to burn incense for the king, according to the duty of their office, and they plainly acquainted him, that if, through a mistaken zeal, he offered to do it himself, he would incur the wrath of God and suffer for it. But this only served to excite his wrath, till he felt the judgment of God's hand in his punishment. Though he strove with the priest he would not strive with his Maker, but retired as soon as he was smitten with the leprosy. We see, in the present instance, as in many others, that 'the God with Whom we have to deal is a jealous God,' Who expects all that serve Him to do it according to his own institutions. Do you come to Him in the way of His appointments? Take care that you come not with unhallowed fire before the Lord, lest you be also smitten. Our prayers, our graces and our duties must all be put by faith into the the hands of our Lord Jesus, the great high priest of our profession, to be presented by Him to God along with the sweet incense of His merits, else we shall find ourselves deceived, and have no acceptance with God.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 11

(The LORD) will beautify the meek with salvation (Psalm 149:4). Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:3).

ALL this for the humble and poor in spirit. How does that agree, poor and yet blessed? Oh yes, poor in ourselves, but blessed and glorious in Christ. If we never experience His glory, the reason is, we are not truly sensible of our misery; but when we have come quite low, let us confidently lay hold of Christ and we shall be blessed; for all is ours. We may say, 'O Lord, if You are a glorious help to the needy, here is want and misery enough: therefore I come, with all my want and poverty, to the fulness of Your grace and riches, with my darkness to Your light, with my death to Your life. Grant that all my evils may be swallowed up by Your goodness and glorious deliverance. My innumerable wants I set before You, like so many empty vessels, and desire to have them filled with Your spiritual and heavenly blessings.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 12

Be renewed in the spirit of your mind (Eph. 4:23).

OLORD, grant me daily repentance and a tender feeling of my sins, that by the power of Your death the old man may be crucified and by the power of Your resurrection, the new man may rise up and grow in grace, being filled and refreshed by the fruits of the Spirit. Let me ever be earnest and look upon every day as the first and the very last, that with each I may, as it were, begin anew to work out my own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12), and so be always prepared for death and eternity. Give me grace to surmount all difficulties and avoid everything that may prove a torment of conscience in the hour of death. And, as there is no standing still, I humbly beseech You to stir me up daily and hourly more and more, so that I may make all haste, and ‘give all diligence to make my calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10.)’

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 13

He has dispersed, he has given to the poor: his righteousness endures for ever (Psalm 109:9). In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening withhold not your hand (Eccles.11:6).

THOSE who lay up treasures on earth let nothing lie long useless but lend it out as fast as they can; and such as desire to reap soon and plentifully are careful to sow soon and plentifully. Therefore, lend and sow also in good time, for there may be times when you cannot show charity, or at least not so largely. We must not pretend to pay the debt of charity with a few poor coppers. If you will give something, give bountifully. Take your hands full, as if you were sowing like the poor widow with her two farthings. These she sowed freely, though they were her whole substance. But the rich ones, who were not so liberal, covetously offered only what they could spare very well. It is not thus we should sow. Seedsmen sow with their hands full, and so should we; for God loves a cheerful giver and will, in His turn, dispense again bountifully to you, so that you should have a sufficiency in all things for every good work. With God dispensing so bountifully to you, why should you then grudge Him anything, or only make such poor returns? What we do to our neighbour, is the same as if it were done to God Himself, if done in faith and love.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 14

He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities (Psalm 130:8). O Hope of Israel, his Saviour in time of trouble (Jer.14:8). In wrath remember mercy (Hab. 3:2).

DO not despair in any tribulation or conflict, as if it were impossible to overcome it. The all-healing Word of God contains advice and comfort for all cases. The Lord being your helper in adversity and able to turn the sharpest afflictions into the greatest blessings, He would never smite you or withhold something from you, if He was not also willing to heal and give you something better in its place. O Lord, I trust You will carry me through all difficulties. However great my misery and weakness, yet there is nothing too great for You; it is Yours alone to help in great and little distresses. Indeed, the more I am surrounded with grief and weakness, the more You will pity, spare and nourish me, as a tender mother does the least of all her children; and the more occasion there will be to display Your mighty salvation. The sharper and longer my distress and conflicts have been, the nearer, greater and sweeter, I trust, will also be my salvation; for the same Lord Who has said I shall not be tried above measure, has also engaged to lead me on conquering, till at length all my enemies are subdued.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 15

There is an accursed thing in the midst of you, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies, until you take away the accursed thing from among you (Joshua 7:13). Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Peter 1:4).

THE entertaining of any worldly lust and the indulgence of any known wilful sin is an accursed thing, by which we are deprived of the power of God and cannot stand before our enemies. Behold, therefore, the severity of God (Joshua 7:24-26), and be more earnest. Make all haste to flee from the lust of the world, especially from the lust of the eye, which is the love of money. What is there more needful than to break away from the most subtle and specious bands of unrighteousness? Unless the splinters of unjust mammon are taken out, the wound cannot heal up. Indeed, examine yourself closely in other things and whatever sinful lust harbours in your heart, be faithful to put it out and flee from it, else you must not wonder at your being so weak in spirit. The man who does not resist the sinful motions of his heart will very easily give freedom to his hands and tongue, but the one who immediately subdues his inward corruptions will certainly be preserved from their breaking out in sinful actions. O Lord, deliver me from all accursed things and keep my heart always under Your closest inspection and discipline. Amen.

* * * * *

I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes (Job 42:6).

REFLECT for a moment who it was that made this confession, and consider the many excellencies that he had (see Job 31). Doubtless you will be ready to ask, 'Why this self-abhorrence? What did this man lack?' Let me give this answer to you: Before his eyes were opened, he lacked humility, or the knowledge of his own baseness, the very thing that you lack unless deeply humbled; and the lack of this makes every man base in the eyes of God. Elihu charges Job with a home truth, that he had an undue opinion of his own righteousness. Further, God, Who by stroke upon stroke, and not one too much, had brought him to the dunghill, is represented as carrying on the same accusation against him. The whole issues in Job's humbling and conveys a most important lesson of instruction to all mankind, never to take a stand upon their self-vindication with God. The book, in this view of it, is preparatory to the gospel and is a striking comment upon those words of St. Paul and the Psalmist, 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).' 'In Your sight will no man living be justified (Psalm 143:2).' 'God be merciful to me a sinner' is a prayer easy to be said, but hard to be felt. One eye upon the perfections of God's laws and another upon your own heart may bring you up to it, but the Spirit's light is also needful, for which you must pray earnestly.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 17

And they sang a new song, saying, 'You are worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation (Rev. 5:9).'

IN heaven the saints have a full sense of their great deliverance, together with a perfect knowledge of sin far beyond anything we may conceive of it, and the glory of redeeming grace will be the whole eternal ground of their love and adoration. On earth, it is the great exercise and difficult work of faith to see sin and Christ at the same time, or be penetrated with a lively sense of our deserts and our absolute freedom from condemnation. But the more we know of both, the nearer the approach we shall make to heaven. We are our own greatest enemies if, together with the fullest comprehension of sin and the deepest humility for it, we do not look steadfastly to Jesus and see it taken away by the Lamb of God. This, though continually repeated by the heavenly choir, is their new song, because it is always a matter of as great joy to them as if they had never sung it before, and because the love of God and Christ, in their redemption, is always opening on them with new and increasing wonders. Let nothing, indeed not your sin, hinder you from beginning it now.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 18

Follow Me (Luke 5:27). Therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:3).

WOULD you follow Christ? Then follow Him in self-denial, in humility, in patience and in readiness for every good work. Follow Him with a daily cross on your back, and look to His cross to make your burden light. Follow Him as your guide and guard and learn to see with His eyes and to trust in His arm for defence. Follow Him as the Friend of sinners, Who heals the broken in heart, gives rest to weary souls and casts out none that come to Him. Follow Him with faith, resting your whole acceptance with God, and your title to heaven, on His meritorious blood and righteousness. Lastly, follow Him with much prayer, for though He is full of compassion, He loves to be much entreated, and when He is determined to give a blessing, you must still wrestle with Him for it. Thus follow Jesus, and He will lead you to glory.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 19

(The Lord) is not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, move and have our being (Acts 17:27,28). Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered (Luke 12:7).

THE close and tender love of the Lord over His people. Nothing is so lowly, but it is under the providence of God, since even the least thing can either hurt or profit the soul. How sweet it is to observe His footsteps, even in the minutest things, and to be satisfied that we may trust our greater and lesser concerns to His care. O Lord, grant that I may never swerve from, nor do anything without You, but that my goings out and comings in may be always done in Your presence, as if I had to do with none but You. Indeed, may it be as if we both lived together alone in the world. Oh that I could transact all my affairs with You alone, and in all places look upon You as if You were a God for me only. Let me carefully mark the inward workings of Your grace and the outward tokens of Your providence, so as daily to have a true sense of Your gracious presence in everything, more or less important. May I thereby ever be strengthened in faith and kept in a composed state of mind, considering that nothing happens by mere chance, but that all is wisely ordered by Your providential care to our good. Grant me the firm belief that if anything goes contrary to expectation, something better will follow in its stead, if I can only be quiet and wait the time.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 20

Cleave to that which is good (Rom. 12:9). Seek those things which are above (Col. 3:1).

THE manners of such things or persons as we frequently converse with cleave very easily to us. If we converse much with God and heavenly things, we shall be heavenly-minded, but if we deal much with the world and temporal things we must be sensual and earthly-minded. Up, therefore, with your heart to God; lift it hourly up to Him, and though it often sinks down to the earth again, yet the Lord has patience and will as often receive it again. Therefore raise it up continually and take great care to keep it above, so that it may not sink down and be defiled by earthly things again. Thus it will be easy to abide in a spiritual frame, but without this care we cannot abide in it at all. A feather easily rises higher and higher when kept above the ground, but it moves very heavily upwards when once fallen into the dirt. This you may take as a lifelike figure of an easy and heavy method in the practice of religion. Choose now which you please. Oh that I may always choose the best, namely to cleave to the Lord, seeking the things which are above, and never plunge into the world to defile and distress my soul.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 21

Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, etc (Luke 2:29,30). Say to them that are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, fear not.' etc (Isaiah 35:4).

WILFUL unbelief only is damnable, and not the weak faith of a fearful and tempted believer. If I do not reject the ransom of Christ, my Surety, but feel my utter need of it, and am heartily desirous to accept it by faith, God can no more reject me than He can reject my Surety, or His own eternal decree. Yet, since I have very weak faith, and am often ready to sink into despair, it passes my understanding to conceive how I can depart this life in peace. But as Your peace is said to pass all understanding (Phil. 4:7), it is sufficient to keep the weakest or most fearful soul, because it is not by any power of our own, but solely by Your Divine power that we shall be kept 'through faith unto salvation.' And it is equally the same to You to carry the weakest or the strongest through the gates of death; for since You are always the same wise, gracious and mighty God in all circumstances, and must do the work alone for both, I trust You will lend me also, a poor and weak creature, Your all-sufficient help in time of need.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 22

O Lord, how manifold are Your works. In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your riches (Psalm 104:24). Whoever is wise, and will observe these things, will understand indeed the loving-kindness of the Lord (Psalm 107:43).

OLORD, how many are Your unknown mercies. I am surrounded with them on all sides; yet how little do I observe them, and acknowledge them to Your praise. If You have punished even the heathen for not having minded and glorified You in Your works, what will become of me? Pardon, O Lord, this blindness of mine and to all Your other kindness to me add a thankful heart so that I may joyfully praise You for all the blessing of my creation, the daily bounty of Your providence and the adorable gift of Your Son. In all Your creatures may I see and adore Your infinite power, wisdom and goodness and thereby be continually strengthened in faith and stirred up to Your praise and love. Thus let me always converse with You, cleave to You, and have uninterrupted communion with You, so that nothing may in the least interfere and disturb this religious disposition of my soul. Indeed, O Lord, grant me this wisdom and close attention for Your glory's sake. Amen.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 23

The sword of the Lord and of Gideon (Judges 7:20). They are bread for us; fear them not (Numb. 14:9). But My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went (Numb. 14:24). Indeed the wrath of man will praise You (Psalm 76:10).

TAKE care that there is also another, namely a kingly, spirit with you, as there was with Joshua and Caleb, so that you are not discouraged on account of your weakness and great number of frailties and enemies, as if it were impossible to live holily and get the victory. Behold, Christ, the true and great Joshua and Caleb, marches out before you, to make war Himself against your enemies; and who can conquer Him? He is unchangeable, His Spirit is as mighty now as ever, His Word as powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword. Against your various infirmities He offers also a variety of divine strengths, and against each of your enemies He holds forth to you a particular sword in His word: and, abiding in His word, you will surely conquer. Though the enemy should raise your inward and outward calamities to the highest degree, like so many strong walls, yet he must fall; one single word will strike him down.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 24

Listen to Me, you stout-hearted, who are far from righteousness: I bring near My righteousness; it will not be far off, and My salvation will not tarry.....We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 46:12,13; 64:6).

TRUE religion is founded upon the knowledge of the true God. Sinners are apt to think that they have a high opinion of God, because they think highly of His mercy, whereas God is as holy and just as He is merciful, and He will as certainly punish the guilty as He will pardon the penitent and believing soul. 'God, I thank You that I am not as other men are (Luke 18:11),' says every self-righteous sinner; not considering that if God were extreme to mark what is amiss, no flesh living could be justified. 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' (Luke 18:13),' says every true Christian and real believer. Until this is your language, until you feel yourself lost, ruined and helpless, until you are brought to acknowledge the justice of God in your condemnation, until you are driven to Christ as your only refuge and hope of salvation, you are ignorant of God's righteousness. You are trying to establish your own righteousness and not submitting to the righteousness of Christ.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 25

You, therefore, are to endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:3).

PRINCES combat with flesh and blood, Christians wrestle with principalities and powers; their wars give days of truce, ours not a minute's rest; conditions of peace there may cause retreat, nothing but death here can raise the siege; kings, if overcome, may save themselves by flight, but Christians may as soon fly from themselves as from their enemies. The soldier of Christ is in a field of continual conflict; if he lets fall his hands, Amalek prevails (Exod. 17:11). Not to be a conqueror is to be a prisoner; not to win in the field is to lose the soul; yielding kills you, but victory crowns you. Therefore watch for your life, fight for your soul. The time will come when 'these enemies you see today you will see no more forever (Exod. 14:13).' Then you will lay down the sword, take up your crown and sing. 'Victory, victory,' for ever, through the blood of the Lamb! Let, then, the prospect of heavenly glory fire you: though your enemies are powerful, yet remember to go forth against them in the strength of the Captain of your salvation. Though assaults be many and my enemies mighty, if God strengthens me I have enough to comfort me. The greater my enemy, the more glorious my victory and the more glorious my victory the more triumphant is my glory.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 26

I will heal your backsliding (Jer. 3:22). It is God Who works in you of His good pleasure both to will and to do (Phil. 2:13).

O MY dear Saviour, I would gladly believe in You, be faithful, obedient and work always that which is good. And since this is also Your will, I trust it will be done, for, if You will and I will, who can hinder it? True it is, that sin, flesh, the world and devils are against it, but will these enemies be stronger than You, the mighty God? Will their opposition be able to quell Your work in me, if I do not consent to it? That can never be. The more violence they use on me, the more earnest may I be with You in prayer; and the more I pray, the more glorious will Your assistance be. The more they hinder, the more You will further, so that all their hindrances may be swallowed up by Your furtherances, as the serpents of the sorcerers in Egypt were swallowed up by the serpent of Moses. The enemy will fall by his own sword and the greatest opposition will turn to my good and to the promotion of Your work. Everything, indeed, can overcome me if I do not abide in Christ by a continual acting in faith and prayer. But by thus abiding in Him, all opposition proves not only weak in itself, but profitable to my soul.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 27

I am like a green fir-tree; your fruit is found from Me. (Hosea 14:8). I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he will not destroy the fruits of your ground (Mal. 3:11. See also Isaiah 27:3,6).

HOW disagreeable a thing it is for a gardener to see the finest blossoms and fruits destroyed by caterpillars? Does it not rejoice him to see all the branches bow with ripe fruits? O my heavenly Lord, grant that I may not but rejoice Your heart also. Let me abide in Christ, my true Vine, and always bring forth good fruits. But since every fruit has its enemies, and You have no sooner worked anything than the insects of sin endeavour to destroy it, I beseech You to make me watchful for these insects and diligent in every good work. Rebuke the devourer now and preserve me as a branch of Christ, night and day, as You have promised, so that my fruits may endure to eternity. Does a diligent gardener not dress and cultivate his garden as well as he can? Why should not You cultivate my heart also, since You are honoured by my fruits? Indeed, I trust the crystal stream of Your throne will water me, so that I may bring forth a greater plenty of fruit.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 28

*If you ask anything in My name, I will do it (John 14:14).
(The Lord) will fulfil the desires of those who fear Him
(Psalm 145:19).*

YES, He does ‘way over and beyond all that we ask or think (Eph.3:20),’ granting not only according to the notion of our narrow hearts, but according to the riches of His glory, as becomes His majesty. Christ delights in great petitions, for He is a great Lord and is rich to all who call on Him. He has all the riches of His merits and gifts, not for Himself (since, being very God, He lacked for nothing Himself,) but only for us, even the rebellious, who sincerely call on Him. Therefore, what He has as Mediator all belongs to me, if I do but call on Him faithfully. And so pray to Him; indeed, be much in prayer and as often as you pour out your soul before Him in prayer, let nothing resound in your heart but these words: ‘I will; I will do it.’ As God can never lie, there is not one single groan lost, but every one will be found to be a jewel in the life to come. By this your riches are increased and one treasure put upon another. Oh, how much neglect there is in this already. Why should you not be earnest now, to redeem that little remaining part of your time by prayer for eternity, to lay up there many treasures and richly adorn your crown? O Lord, grant that this may be done.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 29

Joshua did not draw back his hand with which he stretched out the spear, until he utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai (Joshua 8:26). The Son of God was manifested for this purpose: that He might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

A WILLING subjection to any one sin is not consistent with the grace of God and true saving faith (Rom. 6:14), for though wicked inhabitants will abide in the heart, and sometimes prevail over the believer, they must not reign there, nor should they be suffered to stir without resistance, for we may be utterly ruined by the dominion of a single sin, that is, by a single subjection to it as by the dominion of a thousand, just as a bird is caught by a single snare. Even though you are actually converted and have gained the dominion over your sins, yet you must not draw back your hand and lay the spear and sword of the Spirit aside. There is no truce in this war, nor any rest found, but in fighting; for if you do not beat your enemies, they beat you. Therefore, the Christian soldier's watchword is: 'Fight on, looking to Jesus.' Satan left Christ only for a time; much more will he renew his assaults upon us again and again. But if the conflict lasts long, remember that is also the case of others, even the ancient fathers having undergone it till they were gray. But at last the victory will be the more sweet and glorious. Only, above all things take the shield of faith, for faith alone triumphs. By faith we are in covenant with Christ, and He makes one cause with us.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 30

Come,.....and buy without money and without price (Isaiah 55:1). Come: for all things are now ready (Luke 14:17). He that comes to Me I will in no way cast out (John 6:37).

HOW could a tender mother's heart cast out her sick child calling for help? Just come as well as you can. Better to come in a cold, fearful and miserable condition, than not at all, for if we cannot come boldly to Christ with a strong faith, we must indeed come trembling, just as we are. Nor will such who come be offensive to Christ, for He says, 'He that comes to Me I will in no way cast out.' A feeling of joy is not necessary to bring us to Christ, but a feeling of our needs, for it is not required to bring anything of our own worthiness but only the whole heap of our misery and desire grace. God does not look upon the sensible joy of faith, (for this is His particular gift, which He could soon give, if need was) but upon the sincerity, application and earnestness of a poor sinner. John Bunyan very fitly compares such a one to a man who would gladly ride at full gallop, but whose horse is hardly able to go at a good trot. In this instance, the intention of the rider is not to be judged by the slow pace of the horse, (which resembles our corrupt and unwilling nature,) but by the way he spurs on the animal.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 1

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Rom.12:21). Who is he who will harm you, if you are followers of what is good (1 Peter 3:13)?

THE Christian life is a warfare and the conflict between sin and holiness, sorrow and comfort is often very violent. The child of God has many evils to encounter. Sin, Satan, self and the world, are daily enemies. He is also often exposed to poverty, affliction, reproaches and persecution. O my Saviour, help me to overcome every evil in the strength of Your grace; give me a heart to do good to all who may seek to hurt me. ‘Who is he that will harm you, if you are followers of that which is good?’ Not the Father, for He loves you: not Jesus, for He died for you; not the Spirit, His work is to comfort you; not good men, they love those who follow that which is good; not wicked men or devils, for though enemies, they are confined and cannot stir a step beyond what your God and Saviour permits. When you meet with a trial, do not look to men but to Jesus. Pray for patience to bear it, and look up for a blessing on it. Then all things will work together for good (Rom. 8:28). Let every temptation make you more careful and put you on a closer watch against the enemy. Cleave to Jesus by faith and prayer, like a child to its parent when it sees an enemy coming towards it. Behold Him, flee to Him, rest on Him, and then you will rejoice in Him.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 2

Prayer will be made for him continually; and daily will he be praised (Psalm 72:15).

WHAT a condescending King we have, Who may always be approached. Who would not pray? You say, 'Oh that my coldness and indifference would permit me to do it.' But are you sensible of your wants and miseries? Is not this coldness and backwardness misery enough? Therefore you ought always to pray and to pray most when you are dull and drowsy, else it will never be better with you. Arise, therefore, and pray; the good Spirit of God will assist you. Encouraged by the promises of a prayer-hearing God, and the special assistance of the Holy Spirit in this work, we must, even in the greatest conflicts, not omit to resist the temptations of the devil. And though we have sinned, do not defer it long but pray directly, and say, 'The Lord is merciful, and I am unworthy and unable to pray, but, alas! what shall I do? Shall I wait till I am worthy and able? But no; perhaps that time will never come, for I am always a great, miserable sinner.' A Christian always stands in the need of prayer, for since the sense of sin does not leave him, he must not leave off prayer. Lord, grant me more of the spirit of prayer and let it never be extinguished in my heart.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 3

What are you doing here, Elijah (1 Kings 19:13)?

LET us suppose this question be addressed to us:-
What are you doing in this world into which you are sent? Are you working 'the work of Him Who sent you?' Or are you standing all the day idle? How do you acquit yourself in the duties of your particular calling? Are you upright, conscientious and useful therein? Are you in the post assigned you by Heaven, truly called and properly qualified for it? Or have you thrust yourself into it without warrant or invitation, and therefore have no cause to expect success? What are you doing here in this retirement? Is the world shut out of your thoughts and are visits of the blessed Spirit invited? What are you doing here, if your peace with an offended God is not already made, or being more earnestly desired and sought after? If you really want peace and safety, plead the blood of Jesus, flee to the city of refuge before the avenger of blood overtakes you and you perish from the way. 'Remember Lot's wife;' and do not look behind you, lest you become a monument to God's wrath. What are you doing here in times of trial and temptation? Are you flying from the danger or boldly facing it in the name and strength of the Lord? Are you ashamed of the cross, or do you willingly take it on you? Elijah failed here; he fled from Jezebel. If such a one as Elijah feared, then howl, you fir-trees, if the cedars are thus shaken. If the strong fall hold fast by Christ, you weak ones. What are you doing here below? Are you pitching your tent this side of Jordan, satisfied with your present portion? Or are you looking for a better country, to a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10)? Life is uncertain, death approaches, the Judge is at the door: then, 'Prepare to meet your God.'

* * * * *

DECEMBER 4

My eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He will pluck my feet out of the net (Psalm 25:15). Happy is the man who fears always (Prov. 28:14).

HOW long some enemies can hide their nets before our eyes and then draw them in all of a sudden. It is unspeakable how cunning and powerful our enemies are, how they lie in wait everywhere so that in all places and at all times we are surrounded with cruel murderers of souls. He is a blessed man who keeps clear from self confidence and, fearing always, says within himself as soon as he awakes in the morning, 'Who knows what temptations I may meet today? Perhaps, when I arise, by the first step my feet may be entangled in dangerous snares and nets.' And as self confidence ever will be ashamed but a firm confidence in the Lord will never fail (Rom. 9:33), grant, O Lord I beseech You, that distrusting myself, I may fully put my trust in You, watching evermore in all things and looking cautiously in all places about me, where there is any fear of danger. Whatever I am about to do or say, let me converse with You by prayer, so that, keeping always close to You, I may be preserved against the power and craft of my enemies, as in a stronghold, and confidently say, according to Your own pattern, 'I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved (Psalm 16:8).'

* * * * *

DECEMBER 5

My Father works hitherto, and I work (John 5:17).

IS the blessed Trinity, your God in three Persons, not able to destroy the works of the devil and fulfil His good will in you? Oh yes, He works both to will and to do; and the very thing which is above your own power He alone works. If you can do little, He works much; if nothing at all, so much the better, then He works all; for He is our all, since we are nothing and can do nothing. Happy are we that we can have Him for our support in all things, and that the children of God are not required to direct their own steps, but will be led by their heavenly Father. Now, O Lord, since by the will, guidance and workings of my own heart, I throw only so many hindrances and blocks in my own way, grant that, in true dependence upon You, I may venture everything on You. Despairing of my own sufficiency, may I always abide in You. May I draw all necessary strength from You by prayer and bring forth many good fruits which may last to eternity, for Your work in true believers, weak as it may seem now, will last forever, and none will be able to destroy it.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 6

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you (James 4:7,8). The effectual prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5:16).

DRAW near to God in prayer, and He will draw near to you. Be instant in it and the devil cannot stand against you, for prayer will drive away sin and Satan as the wind drives away smoke before it. Prayer works and will make possible what seems most impossible. If God has given you some spiritual blessings, this is an encouragement to hope also for what you still lack. Therefore pray, but confidently, and you will receive evermore; for unbelief is the only reason that God cannot work wonders in us.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 7

The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God (Gal. 2:20).

IN spiritual things we are too often living upon self. We seek in frames of mind, forms, creatures and animal life that inward peace and stability of mind which is only to be found in the Redeemer. Outward duties are well in their place, but they have no divine life in themselves, or to give it. They are performed but not trusted in, used with grace, but unable to buy grace. They are as the scaffold of the building, a means for carrying on the work, but not the end of the great design. In the power of Christ they are blessings; without it they have no power. The whole trust must be in Jesus. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; without Him prayers, praises, rites and ordinances are carcasses without a soul. Every performance of outward worship is so, unless the Saviour fills it with His Divine Spirit. Then it is we experience a communion of heart, a reviving of the soul after the adorable Jesus, and a delightful view behind the veil of outward ordinances, (such as no carnal eye can behold,) manifesting the Lord in His goodness, beauty, grandeur, blessedness and glory.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 8

Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages (Exod. 2:9).

AS Moses was ordered to be saved by the most cruel Enemy's daughter, so Satan himself, even when he meditates our destruction, may be a means of our life. [See also Matt.12:48; 'Who is my mother?' etc. Isaiah 8:10; 9:6.] O Lord Jesus, if You are a child born to us, and I am willing to receive You as my Immanuel, You will be my shield and exceedingly great reward, and defend me powerfully against all my enemies. O dear Saviour, if You are mine, all is mine, even Your Father, Your Spirit and Your heavenly glory; all accidents, all enemies, must work for my good and be instruments and ministers of my salvation. Oh that I may, trusting in You, never fear anything; but thinking directly it is mine, may only make good use of everything. Thus even the very worst would turn to my great blessing; and without it perhaps I should be destitute of something as needful to me as water is to a mill or wind to a ship.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 9

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and spiritual hymns (Ephes. 5:19).teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns (Col. 3:16).

IF we are obliged to promote the temporal good of our neighbour, how much more the spiritual, by edifying discourses. But how is it? The children of God, when a person visits them (says a certain minister), are sometimes troubled and do know not what to talk about; at last they begin an unprofitable discourse, or at least allow others to do it and are silent themselves. I will tell you what I have done in such cases: I first prayed to God, saying, ‘O good God, here I receive a guest and have nothing to set before and treat him with; I pray you to give me the right bread for him;’ which the Lord was pleased to hear in such a gracious manner, that I could the sooner enter into edifying discourse. Thus we keep our consciences clean. And though perhaps the lips were frozen up at first, they are thawed and opened up by prayer. Some foolish philosophers, to the great offence of others, mock at divine things and even at prayer, as if we needed no other help than our own depraved reason and will. But what St. Paul says (Rom.1:22) is fulfilled in them:– ‘Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.’ What will become of these poor scoffers on their dying bed, and at the day of judgment? Oh that they would take warning while it is time!

* * * * *

DECEMBER 10

Tell His disciples, and Peter (Mark 16:7). If any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the whole world (1 John 2:1,2). Therefore revive the limp hands and the shaky knees (Heb. 12:12).

HAVE you been slack, unfaithful, and fallen away? You are not to make light of it. But are you willing to continue in your fallen condition any longer and complain? Get up and ask pardon of Christ; He is ready to forgive and receive you again, as He did Peter, 'having received gifts for the rebellious.' Do not delay to lay hold of your ransom, which is greater than all the sins of the world, indeed, the ransom paid for this very sin and a pardon purchased by it already. Therefore sue for it and do not be discouraged, nor listen to the temptation of giving up hope and turning back to the world. The Lord even now reaches forth His hand to you anew by this very word. Come, lift yourself up at it and be careful for the time to come to be so much more cautious, humble and gentle toward others; for a Christian's foot may trip, but when recovered, it slides deeper into humility.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 11

Behold, we come to You (Jer. 3:22). I will come to you (John 14:18). A lifelike representation of this happy meeting. Zaccheus ran.....and (Jesus) said to him, 'Make haste and come down; for today I must abide at your house (Luke 19:4-6).'

O SAVIOUR, since I come to You, and You to me, we shall certainly meet one another. Who will oppose and obstruct it? The devil and sin? No, this wall of separation is pulled down. Christ says, 'Come to me; I am not an angry judge, but a loving mediator between God and your frightened conscience; keep to Me, and don't fear wrath. I sit here, so that believing in Me to make intercession for you with God, you will find no wrath or disgrace can befall you. Wrath and punishment must first come upon Me; wrath is quite impossible on you.' Jesus is the dear Son of God, in Whom dwells all the fulness of grace; and when the Father looks on Him, His wrath must vanish away and everything in heaven and earth be changed into smiles of love and grace (See Ephes.1:6). Dangers and conflicts being hot, God hastens with His assistance. At other times He waits, and the work of our whole renovation goes on little by little, so that, improving in the exercise of patience and faith, we must also bear with others, and learn not only to quicken our diligence, but also to wait for Him.

* * * * *

My iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me (Psalm 38:4).

IT is a sure sign that a man is awakened out of his sleep, when he discovers the error of his dream. In drawing up water out of a deep well, so long as the bucket is under water we do not feel the weight of it, but as soon as it comes above water, it begins to hang heavily on the hand. When a man dives under water, he feels no weight of the water, though there are many tons of it over his head; whereas a tub half full of the same water, taken out of the river and set upon the same man's head, would be very burdensome to him and soon make him grow weary of it. In like manner, so long as a man is over his head in sin, he is not sensible of its weight, it is not troublesome to him. But when he once begins to come out of that state of sin in which he lay and lived before, then sin begins to hang heavy on him and he groans under its weight. So long as sin is in the will, the actual seat of sin, a man does not feel its weight but, like a fool, it is a sport and pastime to him to do evil. It is therefore a good sign that sin is removed out of its seat, out of its chair of state, when it becomes burdensome to us. Such a sense of sin may well be considered as an entrance into a state of grace.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 13

Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings (Jer. 3:22). When he was yet a great way offLuke 15.20).

THEREFORE, you backsliding children and lost sheep, hear the voice of your loving heavenly Father and Shepherd crying earnestly, 'Return, return.' Do not run in the broad way with the world any longer. Are you not yet tired of the husks of the world? Do you feel no troubles in your soul? Will not these drive you to God? Look, your Father and Shepherd seeks you. He has gone forth to call and meet you already. He will receive you willingly and joyfully. But come praying as the prodigal son, and He will forgive you everything, although you have sinned ever so much. He is also able to heal and correct the most desperate corruptions of your heart; He can deliver you from the very jaws of hell and the devil. Indeed, if you were possessed with more than seven devils, He can still cast them out. Begin to call on Him earnestly in prayer and, poor and wretched as you are, come to Him as the physician of your soul; for the physician and the sick, a rich Saviour and a poor sinner, are ideally suited to one another. He heals all our diseases and can make possible what seems most impossible to you.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 14

Watch therefore, and pray always (Luke 21:36). Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us (Heb. 12:1).

THE hearts of men are not like clocks, which only need to be wound up once a day. No, dullness and distractions are too great and dangerous. We must lift them up many times a day, indeed, watch continually to lay aside every weight. Our going out and coming in, indeed all things, even the very least, we must do with prayer, always strictly examining what is the will of the Lord. Otherwise if they are done after our own will, they do not tend to the glory of God and cannot be attended with His blessing. But if we earnestly strive against our own will in prayer, patiently suffering every hour what the Lord thinks proper to lay upon us, and are willing to be ruled by His hints and the slight strokes of His rod, many heavy afflictions, scourges and whips may be avoided. The burdens which we bring upon ourselves, by our own will and impatience, are always the heaviest. A Christian has daily his proper burden, like a clock its weights, by which the flesh is kept under, so that the spirit can rise up. Therefore, when anything comes to cross him, he looks upon it as his weight for the day, to stir him up to exercises of prayer and meditation in the word of God. O Lord, grant that I may always bear Your easy yoke, and never be the cause of my own distress and dullness.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 15

Give an account of Your stewardship (Luke 16:2).

OLORD, how I have wasted my time, my goods and faculties. Pardon me for Your mercy's sake; blot out my debt by Your blood and grant that henceforth, keeping daily a good account and acting more prudently, faithfully and diligently, my reckoning may not be false at last. But preserve me also from all needless cares, since the care to get something is not the steward's business, which is but to husband everything carefully. 'Teach me, O Lord, and give me wisdom and grace to govern my house and manage all my affairs rightly. Be the principal governor and father of my family; I would be nothing except Your servant, but direct me in all things, so that I may not suffer or do any harm.' He that does not expostulate with God, but accuses himself as guilty in all things, even in his best performances, and flies to Christ as his only refuge, will be justified by God through the righteousness of His dear Son. And being thus adopted by God, he is ready and willing to be governed and directed by Him in all things as a child.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 16

*Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith
(2 Cor. 13:5).*

MANY might be induced to pray for faith, if they did not presumptuously pretend to have it, thinking they were not heathens, but had faith already. Such as actually have faith often doubt whether they have it or not; and those that are without it imagine they have enough. But faith is only worked in the souls of those who are deeply humbled by a thorough conviction of the greatness and heinousness of their sins. Confessing themselves, not only with their lips but with a true sense of their hearts, to be the chief of sinners, they look upon themselves as the most unworthy of all creatures. Without this repentance we do not enter through the right gate and our faith is only fancy, a false imagination in our minds; for faith is the greatest and most difficult thing, even to the child of God. It receives Christ into the heart and overcomes the devil, world and all sins, which is not easily done. In general all that Christians mean by faith is to give mere assent to the Bible as being true. If this was true faith, nothing would be easier than to believe, but then there would be no more need to pray for faith, nor to examine ourselves as to whether we have it. The wicked, therefore, who live in sin, deceive themselves in thinking they have faith; for faith gives victory over the world. And all who trust in their own works deceive themselves too; for the prayer of faith is, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' If then the first Christians had need to examine themselves, how much more have we. The best and safest way is therefore, to pray earnestly for that faith which has boldness and triumphs even in death.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 17

For Your name's sake lead me, and guide me. Pull me out of the net they have laid secretly for me (Psalm 31:3,4). When the ark set forward, Moses said, 'Rise up, Lord, and let Your enemies be scattered; let them that hate You flee before You (Numb. 10:35).'

EVERY one has his own particular gift and has also his own particular enemies, who lay various nets and hindrances in his way. But as everybody must clear the way for a king when he travels, much more so must our enemies, when the King of kings guides us and goes before us. Grant, O Lord, that all my goings and restings may be done at Your will (Numb. 9:17,23). Be pleased to go always triumphantly before me and to make room, so that my enemies may be scattered and fall into their own nets. For You, Who dwells in heaven, laughs at all, even my inward, spiritual enemies, and are able to confound their deepest craft and strongest power. Enlighten my darkness, blessed Jesus, that I may see my enemies distinctly; strengthen my faith in You, that I may not fear them. Be the Captain of my salvation; lead me on praying and believing, and fight all my battles for me. So shall I come off conqueror through Your love and will give You eternal praise.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 18

And Moses said to them, 'This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat (Exod. 16:15).

THIS manna is entirely different to common manna, which is shaken from the leaves of trees and used only in medicine; this dropped down from the clouds and was truly a miraculous production, as is evident from the following circumstances: that it fell only six days in the week, that it fell in such prodigious quantity as sustained almost three million souls, that a double portion of it fell the day before the Sabbath and none on that day, etc. This manna is called 'spiritual meat (1 Cor.10:3),' because it signified spiritual blessings in heavenly things. Christ Himself is the true manna, the bread of life, of which that was a figure (John 6:49-51). The Word of God is manna too, by which our souls are nourished (Matt.4:4). The comforts of the Spirit are also a 'hidden manna (Rev. 2:17).' These come down from heaven as the manna did and are the support and comfort of the divine life in the soul while we are in the wilderness of the world. The manna they gathered in the wilderness was not to be hoarded, but eaten; so that they who have received Christ must live upon Him daily by faith, and not think of laying up a stock today, to serve them tomorrow. Those who ate manna in the wilderness hungered again, whereas those who feed on Christ by faith will never hunger. 'Lord, evermore give us this bread.'

* * * * *

DECEMBER 19

What do you wish for, Queen Esther, what is your request? It will be given to you up to the half of the kingdom (Esther 5:3).

DO you want for nothing? Have you nothing to ask for? Oh yes, you say, a great deal. Well then, draw near to your gracious King and Bridegroom without fear. He holds out His golden sceptre to you, saying, 'Only ask; not the half, but the whole of My kingdom will be granted; indeed, I will give Myself to you.' And so pray, and tell Him everything that is wanting, be it ever so great or ever so small. His loving-kindness will hear even the least petition; indeed, He will seem to be ignorant of what you have to tell Him. But whatever is poured out before Him is actually addressed and lodged in its proper place, and does not lie upon your heart any longer but upon His heart, which cannot rest till you are relieved. And if you have experienced His help previously in great or small things, you may depend on His readiness to help you out of troubles hereafter; only in earnest pray for His help. We often imagine we were willing and drawing near to Him, but He was unwilling and refused our request. But it is not so; He rather draws us and desires our relief more than we do; for it is He that works even this willing mind.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 20

What do you wish me to do to you (Luke 18:41)?

O LORD, do you ask me also this question? O yes. Well then, I answer, 'That I may see how gracious you are; that, knowing Your love in Your light, I may love You again. This is the sum and substance of all my prayer, because You require it so seriously of me (1 Cor.16:22). But You do not require it as of myself, well knowing that I can do nothing, but signify only what I am to ask of You, and what You are willing to give and to work; for You do not require anything, but what You work Yourself, and You work everything that You require. Therefore, faith and love being required by You, I require the same from You first. Grant, oh grant them to me, that I may return them to You again. And since nothing is pleasing to You but what is Your own gift, I trust that You will certainly hear and fulfil this request. However, as my salvation is not grounded in my own, but on Your and Your Father's eternal love and counsel, save me by free grace through Your merits, and let me go covered all over with grace and pardon. This is treasure enough, with which my heart can be well satisfied.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 21

In returning and rest will you be saved, in quietness and in confidence will be your strength (Isaiah 30:15). Possess your souls in patience (Luke 21:19).

CHRISTIANS must suffer patiently and patience is their armour while God is fighting for them. But when we are unwilling to suffer, going about to make complaints everywhere and to seek comfort or to rid ourselves by contrivances, we lose the comfort of the Lord's help. We are stirring up the wasp's nest of our unruly thoughts and bring more trouble upon ourselves and others. Indeed, we are fighting against God, Who hereby intends to cure our impatience, pride and anger, for the more peevish and wild we are, the more desperate is our disease. Consequently we have so much more need of sharp and wholesome trials of affliction to mortify those bad passions of the flesh. Therefore we must not presume to murmur and complain, which will only make bad worse; for he who through impatience will fly from one trouble, may run into ten others. And though it is possible sometimes to rid ourselves of trouble, yet the help is not so glorious and blessed as if we had waited for help from the Lord.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 22

Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he that hates reproof is brutish (Prov.12:1).

NOTHING can be said so bad of us, the root of which we do not have in our heart. And though we are convinced of and strive against our own weakness, yet we may not strive so earnestly as to conquer. Therefore God comes to our assistance in the form of a sharp reproof from others, for He knows how to use even the faults of others for our good. If we recognise everything as coming from Him alone, we certainly gain a great victory and blessing in our struggle against this our frailty of giving offence to our neighbour. But if we grow impatient and make many excuses, being unwilling to put up with anything, we make evil worse and neglect the amendment of ourselves and others. O Lord, make us better and give us patience.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 23

We therefore conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law (Rom. 3:28). You see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only (James 2:24).

Both these apostles wrote by inspiration. Paul answers this question both affirmatively and negatively; ‘that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law;’ and in the 20th verse positively affirms, that ‘by the deeds of the Law will no flesh be justified.’ James asserts that ‘by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.’ Paul speaks of a justification before God; James, of a justification before men. Paul speaks of a justification of penitent sinners before God; James, of the justification of saints before men. Paul speaks of the justification of sinners believing in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon and life; James, of the works of righteousness after justification by faith in Christ. Paul speaks of faith touching its office in the matter of justification before God: James, of faith in its fruits and effects. Paul’s faith is a supposed faith fruitful in obedience, in consequence of an interest in the merits of Christ; James’ faith is declared to be so by obedience performed. Whenever there is true faith, it must fix on Jesus Christ alone for salvation; that is its principal act. This same faith unites to Christ and where there is union, there must be love; where there is love, there must be obedience; where there is obedience, there will be a reward of grace; and where the reward is acknowledged to be of grace and not of merit, God will have all the glory in time and eternity.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 24

For wherein will it be known here that I and Your people have found grace in Your sight? Is it not in that You go with us? So shall we be separated, I and Your people from all the people that are on the face of the earth (Exod. 33:16).

DO you adopt the language of Moses and request with him that in all your movements, God's presence may go with you, so that you be not permitted to stir without this distinguishing testimony that you are in the path of duty? Are you waiting on the Lord in earnest to serve Him in sincerity and truth, 'not being conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of your mind,' and are you desirous to be numbered with His separated people? Then you may expect the Divine blessing and your way to be prosperous. It was a distinguishing privilege of the Israelites, that they were to dwell alone and not to be reckoned among the nations. And it is the privilege and duty of the spiritual Israel to be separate and distinct from the world. They are a separate people in the love of God, in their election in Christ, in the covenant of grace made with them in Him, in effectual calling, in their being seated with Him for all eternity. Nor are they reckoned among the nations, but as they are called out of them and generally treated as the refuse and offscourings of all things, they do not reckon themselves to be of the world, but as pilgrims and strangers in it. Lord, let me be among Your separated people, the righteous, both here and for eternity

* * * * *

DECEMBER 25

And you are to call His name JESUS; for He will save His people from their sins (Matt.1:21).

SIN is the deadliest foe we have; it cast our first parents out of paradise; it defaced God's image in man; it brought pain, sickness and death into the world, and a spiritual death into the soul. It causes a distance from God and a dislike to His holy ways; it gives Satan an interest in and a power over, mankind. It once drowned the world and will destroy it at last; it exposes body and soul to the just judgment of a holy God, and will sink every unpardoned offender into everlasting destruction. How is this deadly foe to be conquered? How is this fretting leprosy to be cleansed? Be careful in this matter and seek for a remedy that will be lasting and efficacious. Duties, prayers, tears, sacrifices, morality and partial reformations avail nothing in this case; all lower than Christ Jesus will prove physicians of no value. Jesus is the only Saviour; God the Father sent Him into the world to save sinners. His name declares the same, He is 'called Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.' His blood is the only atonement for sin. This sprinkled on the heart by the Spirit and apprehended by faith, removes the guilt and curse of sin and speaks pardon and peace. His grace breaks the power of sin and turns our former love for it into utter hatred of it; thus is holiness secured in the heart and walk, as well as peace in the conscience. He will save from the very being of sin, after the conflict between the spirit and the flesh is over. His people are all who believe in Him and depend upon Him for pardon, peace and everlasting salvation. In that happy number may you and I be found. May we be enabled to look to Him, to receive Him as our Lord Jesus, able and willing to save to the very uttermost. And may we walk as the redeemed of the Lord, in righteousness and true holiness, all the days of our life. Amen.

* * * * *

Pour out your heart before God (Psalm 62:8).

WHAT a different view does this lively text give of praying, when opposed to the usual expression of saying our prayers; saying what our books and our parents teach us; saying what we have been long used to say, perhaps of our own composing, in a formal and customary manner. To pour out our hearts is like emptying a vessel of all its contents, so that nothing remains and what a pleasing, awful, important thing this must be. Whatever is in my heart, my guilt or fears, my sins or sorrows, my cares and crosses, my wants, my dangers, my weaknesses, temptations, darkness and ignorance, my doubts and anxieties respecting both body and soul, myself and others, the church and the world. I have permission to empty myself of every thought that rises relating either to past, present, or future, to pour out by drops, or in a more copious stream, till not one burden remains. And this is not by myself or before men, for what help can I get from either? It is before God, Who is a prayer-hearing God, both able and willing to relieve. He will not turn away from His creatures who pour out their heart before Him and empty themselves by prayer, but will fill them with His consolations, which are neither few nor small. He can send a Hannah away no longer sad;(1 Sam. 2:1) can say ‘Son, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you;’(Matt. 9:2) and send an instructor to an inquiring Cornelius, to inform him what he must do. (Acts 10:4,5) No wonder, then, that real prayer is so much unknown, but is such a cordial when it is made before Him Who is a refuge for us. Away then for ever with the prayer of the formalist. May I learn fervency of devotion from my heavenly Master, Who in His agony prayed till drops of blood fell down. In all my sorrows and distresses, spiritual and temporal, in life and in death, like Him may I be heard by my heavenly Father in the things I fear. To a suffering Jesus I look for pardon and cleansing. Oh let me be accepted in the Beloved, purged daily from my defilements and so become a vessel for honour, sanctified for the Master’s use for ever, Amen.

DECEMBER 27

By the grace of God I am what I am (1 Cor. 15:10). Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God..... As new born babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby (1 Peter 1:23; 2:2).

WHAT made the wonderful difference between Saul the Pharisee and Paul the Christian? Grace. What made him trample upon his former legal righteousness and desire to be found in the righteousness of Christ? Grace, enlightening grace. In what does the difference between the mere formalist and the real Christian consist? There may be moral conduct when there is no grace, no principle of saving, divine faith; there may be the fear of the Lord, taught by the precept of men and not by the Spirit of God. One may attend the ordinances of religion, have a regard to outward decency, have a name to live while dead, be high in a profession and at the same time a stranger to the power of godliness. Many things outwardly decent and praiseworthy may be done without a principle of grace in the heart: witness Paul before his conversion. Have I this principle called grace in my soul? Have I been born of the incorruptible seed? Have I got the taste of a child of God? Have I tasted that the Lord is gracious? Then I shall desire the pure milk of the Word. The babe loves the pure milk of the breast; I shall love the milk of the pure Word, and from these breasts of consolation will seek comfort and nourishment for my soul (Isaiah 66:11). Redeeming love will be my delightful subject; it will sweeten everything in the service of Jesus, will constrain to extensive usefulness in my path of life. The grace of God in Christ Jesus will enlarge my views, keep me humble in heart and give the praise where it alone is due. Through the sincere milk of the Word may I grow daily and be nourished up to eternal life. Amen.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 28

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10).

AND are there scoffers, who walk madly after their own lusts and question the coming of the Lord? The hour hastens, when infidelity will doubt no more: 'The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.' How will sinners fade away and be afraid in their inner places, when, visible to all, the Judge will appear on His great white throne, and from His face the earth and the heaven flee away. Before Him will stand the whole race of men, small and great and by the testimony of God and their own consciences, it will be fully proved, and openly declared, what they have been and what they have done. Then sentence, most righteous, irrevocable, and big with eternity, will be pronounced. On the wicked, everlasting punishment; on the righteous, life eternal. Think, oh think, what destruction is hanging over your heads, you obstinate transgressors; 'Behold, He comes with the clouds and every eye will see him; and those also who pierced Him, and all wicked kindreds of the earth will wail because of Him. 'Now, now, is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation;' embrace Him now as your offered, your all sufficient Saviour. Thus will you be ever delivered from Him as your angry Judge. If you neglect this now, how will you abide the day of His coming in flaming fire, to take vengeance on all that do not know God and do not obey His gospel? Lift up your head, my soul; none else is to judge but Christ. Will He, Who bore my sins, plead against me in judgment? No; but He will put strength in me. I know in Whom I believed; and He is able to keep that good thing, my soul, which I have committed to Him against that day.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 29

We, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members of one another (Rom. 12:5).

OH the blessed communion of the saints! One member has the benefits of all the other members' gifts, prayers and ministrations. One prays for all, and all pray for one. What one has, the other enjoys also. It may be truly said of them, 'All is yours (1 Cor. 3:22).' There is no envy, no haughtiness, no harm or strife among real saints; for why should I envy that which is my own? Why should I despise that which serves for my necessary assistance? And why should I strive against and hurt him whose hurt is my own? Is there any strife between the members of our natural body? By no means; they serve, help and assist one another; and if one is injured and suffers, all the rest run to his relief and are neither tired nor angry if the healing does not follow immediately. O Lord, unite us all in heart-felt fellowship and tender feelings for each other; and stop all open and subtle divisions which are fermented by lofty spirits, who always boast of mighty things and being wise above the rest. Do not allow self-conceit and a party spirit, which is the spirit of the world, to influence the members of Your body, but bless and grace them all with true humility. Then shall we live in a solid union and uninterrupted harmony.

* * * * *

DECEMBER 30

You are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tables of stone, but on the fleshy tables of the heart (2 Cor. 3:3).

THE image is beautiful and instructing: 'The epistle of Christ written, not in tables of stone,' not on a stony heart, but on a heart of flesh; a heart softened by grace, and made capable of good impressions; the heart, the seat of vital religion. So runs the gracious promise (Jer.31:33). The word read and preached is not effectual without the operation of the Spirit of God. By the Spirit, Christians are cast into the gospel mould and thereby get evangelical, spiritual and heavenly dispositions. Their resemblance to Christ is gradually increased; they have the witness in themselves, have the comfortable experience that they are Christ's, when they can read His image on their hearts. They are manifestly declared to others, that they are the epistles of Christ, by their good conduct and conversation in the world, confessing Him before men and speaking forth His praise. 'Holiness to the Lord,' is written with lovely characters on this epistle. They also resemble one another in mutual love and in love to all that bear their Master's image. They are the epistles of Christ, as sealed by His Spirit to the day of redemption, and are enabled to show forth the truth, reality and power of religion in times of affliction, and often at the hour of death. Am I an epistle of Christ? Do I read the epistles of Christ in my Bible and find them written in my heart? Do I see the finger of God in this divine book, and feel the finger of His Spirit renewing and reviving my soul? Do I read the mind of God there and heartily approve of His mind? O blessed discovery! What condescending grace, that the great God, Whom I have offended, should by His Spirit dictate epistles so loving and kind, should send me pardon, not only in His Word, but by His Son also! Do I read the word of reconciliation in His gospel? Do these glad tidings of great joy revive my drooping spirit? I would read this epistle from heaven over and over again. How much do I find in it, while the Spirit opens my understanding to understand the Scriptures.

DECEMBER 31

HALLELUJAH (Rev. 19:1).

WE began the year with a Hosanna, imploring the Lord's blessing; can we now conclude it with a Hallelujah? Surely we can celebrate the praise of a gracious and loving God. Take a review of the year past. Have we not had many mercies? Have not the eyes of the Lord been upon us for good, from the beginning of the year to its end? Has God not conducted us through many seen and many more unseen dangers? Can we not with truth as well as gratitude set up our Ebenezer, saying, 'Hitherto the Lord has helped me (1 Sam.7:12).'? If you have not been so fruitful in good works as might have been expected, is the Lord to blame, or ourselves? Whatever good has been done in us or by us surely belongs to the grace of God; and whatever has caused shame or humiliation is chargeable nowhere but to ourselves. Then, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, Who forgives all your sins, and heals all your infirmities; Who saves your life from destruction, and crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercy (Psalm 103:1-3).' May we be crowned at length with everlasting glory. We will soon enter on another year. Let dearly bought experience teach us to avoid all occasions of evil and keep us close to God. If we live to see another day, let us set out afresh and remember to offer our daily sacrifices of obedience, as well as praise, to our gracious God. Let every revolving day remind us of our approaching, last day, and to be daily preparing to meet our God, so that when our days are ended, we may sing Hallelujahs before the throne of God and the Lamb for ever and ever.

Abraham? Is there in your heart a darling sin? Draw the knife and strike it to the heart. Has God not spared His Son for me and shall I spare what He commands me to sacrifice? No, gracious Saviour, no. Help me to be faithful, to keep back nothing from You. Search the ground of my heart. When You have tried me, crown the faith You have bestowed, and the obedience You have worked, with that unfading glory You have promised to those who are faithful unto death.