***~~Food for Hungry Souls~~***

by James Smith

**PREFACE** *Quickened*souls are *hungry*souls, and hungry souls need *food*. Some can eat *solid*food — and some must be fed with *milk*. God's word provides for all, and gives a portion to each; and God commands his servants to do so likewise. All believers need to be *fed*, and this little book is intended to set *food*before them. If the reader is a hungry soul — he will find something in it to meet his case; though it is probable that for some it may be too simple, and they may turn from it to seek something more to their taste. Solomon, long ago said, "The full soul loathes the honeycomb, but to the hungry soul — every bitter thing is sweet."

*Babes*in grace will here find some milk — and the *young men*will find some strong meat. The *bread of life*, and *streams of living water* — are to be found here. The *Lamb of God*, and the *fatted calf* — are set forth also, in these pages. May the Lord give the reader a good appetite, that he may eat, and in the strength he derives from the food, work right heartily for God. The Savior presides at the table, and he says, "Eat, O friends, drink, yes drink abundantly, O beloved!"

If the reader derives profit himself, he will do well to recommend the work to others, as also to give or lend copies to the poor. This is one very easy way of doing good, not to one, but to many; not for once, but in perpetuity. *When we give a good book*, we know not where it will be carried, or how many years it will be preserved. Let us circulate such books, to the utmost of our power, asking God's blessing on our efforts.

Gracious Lord, let your blessing attend this work through the land. Command it to spread, and wherever it shall spread, let your Spirit accompany the reading of it — to the *conversion*, or *consolation*, or *sanctification*of every reader's soul. May it . . .  
exalt Jesus,  
honor free grace,  
confound Satan,  
humble the proud heart, and  
place the poor among God's princes.

May both writer and reader be found among the blessed of the Lord. Amen.  
James Smith

***~~Food for Hungry Souls~~***

"He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things!" [Psalm 107:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps 107.9)

The hunger of the *body*is painful — but the hunger of the *soul*is worse; the Lord has provided for the former in his *providence* — and he has provided for the latter in his *word*. As in every family, the head provides — but an inferior often dispenses; so it is in the Lord's family.*We have food in the Bible — but his servants are sent to place it in suitable portions before his children.* But whoever may be employed, as the Lord gives the *appetite* — so the Lord satisfies it. "He gives food to the hungry." Or as in the language of the blessed virgin, "He has filled the hungry with good things." [Luke 1:53](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke 1.53). Observe,

**The Favored Character.**"The hungry." The hunger intended is *spiritual*, and is produced by the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. They hunger principally for the Lord Jesus, to *know*him as their own Savior, to *love*him from a consciousness that he has loved them, and to *enjoy*him in his gracious relations and glorious offices. The Spirit's work always produces a *longing for Jesus*, and a hungering and thirsting after *righteousness*. The hungry long also for *holiness*of heart and life: hatred to sin is produced within them, and a love of holiness is kindled in the bosom — so that before health or wealth, pleasure or pastime — they desire to be made holy within, and to live a holy life before men.

The hungry long also for the presence and blessing of God. *Mere notions*in the head will not satisfy them. *Dry facts*will not meet their case. They want to realize the presence of God with them as a kind and loving Father, and to enjoy his blessing resting upon them. Often they sigh, as from the very depths of their souls, "O for the presence and blessing of God!" They look beyond the boundaries of time, and long for a peaceful and happy end. As they wish to honor God while they *live* — so they wish to honor him when they *die*. They wish their death-bed to be made easy and happy by the divine presence, that from thence they may speak of Jesus, to all about them; and having testified of him with their dying breath, ascend to receive a crown of glory which fades not away. Reader, are *you*a hungry soul?

This hunger ***proves life***; and as it is a hunger for *spiritual*things — it proves *spiritual*life. A life produced by the Holy Spirit, and which only finds its home and happiness in Christ. The strength and frequency of this hunger, proves the power of the spiritual nature within; life must be supplied with its proper nourishment — and life and health, requires constant supplies of nourishment. This hunger is distinguished from the natural craving of the soul, by its being fixed upon its object. It must have what it hungers for, nor will it accept a substitute. If it hungers for Christ — it must have Christ, and nothing but Christ will do.

Just so, if it fix upon holiness, the sanctification of the Spirit — and the sanctification of the Spirit alone will satisfy it.

This hunger is also ***frequent***, as the natural body needs to eat several times in the day, or it will experience the cravings of hunger — so must the soul which is made alive to God. Jesus is therefore called, "the *Bread*of life," as that food of the soul which is most necessary, and most frequently necessary. If I eat in the morning — I shall hunger again before night; and if my soul is in spiritual health — that will do so too.

This hunger is ***influential*** — it will lead to action. The hungry man will do something, almost anything, to obtain food to satisfy the cravings of his body; and the hungry soul will make use of any means, of all means, to obtain the food desired by the soul. It will not be satisfied with desiring, longing, or talking about its needs — but in real earnest it will set about seeking, nor will it rest until it obtains a supply! Reader, have *you*this appetite?

**The Lord's Kind Conduct.** "He fills the hungry with good things." He gives them the good things of his grace — so that they discover their interest in Jesus, they feel their hearts drawn out in love to him, and are filled with the sweet enjoyment of his presence. The soul that hungers for Christ, will never be left to die of starvation; but Christ in his glorious person, finished work, and complete salvation, will be its portion! Nor will the soul that longs for holiness, die unsanctified — for the Lord will sanctify it, and preserve it unto his kingdom and glory.

He satisfies the longing soul; and fills the hungry soul with goodness. He gives them the good things of his *providence* — so far as they will be for their good. Sometimes he diminishes the desire — and sometimes he satisfies it. Sometimes he gives a special blessing with a little, and it is enough — and sometimes he opens his hand and satisfies the desire as it is. In the end, he gives the good things of glory — and then comes perfect, perpetual, and everlasting salvation.

Yes, soon all that have over felt a hungering of soul after spiritual things, will be filled with the joys, the wealth, and the splendors of glory! The whole company will stand together, and upon every bright! and beaming countenance shall be read, "He has filled the hungry with good things."

But *why*does the Lord manifest such kindness to poor hungry souls? The reasons are many — but chiefly because it exalts his name and gives him glory!

***~~Great Grace for Great Sinners!~~***

"Come now, let us reason together. Though your sins are like scarlet — they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson — they shall be like wool." [Isaiah 1:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa 1.18)

Man's sin is great — but the grace of God is greater! *Sin*is the fruitful source of all of man's misery, and the cause of great dishonor to God. *God's grace*is the source of all the good things which we enjoy — and is the cause of eternal glory to God. God, in the exercise of his grace, looked upon man in his guilt, misery, and unworthiness — and pitying his lost and ruined condition — provided a Savior in the person of his own beloved Son.

The Son of God condescended to take man's nature, suffer in man's stead, and remove every legal impediment out of the way of in man's salvation. His precious blood made an atonement for man's guilt, and now it cleanses from all sin. On the ground of what the Lord Jesus Christ did and suffered — God is prepared to pardon the foulest sins, and to receive the greatest sinners to his friendship. There is nothing on his part, to prevent the worst of mankind from obtaining pardon, being reconciled to him, and enjoying peace and comfort. To sinners as *sinners*, as *great*sinners, he speaks, and says, "Come now, let us reason together. Though your sins are like scarlet — they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson — they shall be like wool." What precious words! Like the Savior to which they lead — they are full of grace and truth. Look at,

**The Parties Addressed.** They were a *miserable*people. Miserable, because *guilty*. Nor was their guilt ordinary. They were *exceedingly*sinful, so that the Lord speaks of them in terms of astonishment. "Listen, O heavens! Pay attention, earth! This is what the Lord says: The children I raised and cared for have rebelled against me! They were *rebels*, in open opposition to God's paternal government. They were habitually *thoughtless*. More thoughtless and careless than the brute creation! Therefore it follows, "Even an ox knows its owner, and a donkey recognizes its master's care — but Israel does not know its master. My people do not recognize my care for them!"

They were exceedingly *perverse*. They had been corrected, they were black and blue with the chastisements inflicted — and yet they would not yield! Therefore God asks, "Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness — but wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores!"

They were most *provoking*, which led the Most High to exclaim. "Oh, what a sinful nation they are — loaded down with a burden of guilt. They are evil people, corrupt children who have rejected the Lord. They have *despised*the Holy One of Israel and *turned their backs*on him!"

They were very determined and *persevering*in sin, so that judgments did not terrify them, nor mercy melt them, therefore it is added, "Your country lies in ruins, and your towns are burned. Foreigners plunder your fields before your eyes and destroy everything they see. Beautiful Jerusalem stands abandoned like a watchman's shelter in a vineyard, like a lean-to in a cucumber field after the harvest, like a helpless city under siege!"

They were as bad as Sodom and Gomorrah, therefore the prophet thus addresses *them*, "Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah!" Yet they hypocritically observed religious ordinances, they were thus bad under a *profession of religion* — which greatly aggravated their sin, and increased their guilt.

This led the Lord to ask, "I am sick of your burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fattened cattle. I get no pleasure from the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to worship me — who asked you to parade through my courts with all your ceremony?"

Their conduct was disgusting, and appears not only to disgust — but to trouble the paternal heart of God. Hear how he speaks of it, "Stop bringing me your meaningless gifts; the incense of your offerings *disgusts*me! As for your celebrations of the new moon and the Sabbath and your special days for fasting — they are all sinful and false. I want no more of your pious meetings. I *hate*your new moon celebrations and your annual festivals. They are a *burden*to me. I *cannot stand*them!" What language for God to use! What an indictment for God to draw up!

Could any people be worse? Reader, is it possible for *you*to be more guilty, or more depraved?

Are you exceedingly sinful? So were they.

Have you been very perverse, and most provoking? So had they.

Have you been determined and persevering in sin? So had they.

Are you as bad as the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah? So were they.

Has your conduct been most disgusting, and have you wickedly done all under a profession of religion? So had they.

I can conceive no worse case! But observe,

**The Invitation.** "COME now, let us reason together. Though your sins are like scarlet — they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson — they shall be like wool." Come to *me.*Come to my *mercy-seat*, the refuge of the miserable. Come to my *throne of grace*, where the greatest favors are dispensed to the most unworthy. Come near to my person, as vile as you are — confess your guilt, and I will pardon.

"Come now!" As *wicked*as you are, and *lost*as you are — come. Notwithstanding all the past, let conscience accuse as it may — let Satan suggest what he will — come now!

"Come and let us *reason*together." Come and let us converse about the matter, let us in a friendly way talk about your conduct — and my mercy; your guilt — and the blood of my Son. Come, and let us see what can be done. Come, for I am ready to pardon, I will forgive your numerous, enormous, and aggravated sins!

Your *scarlet crimes* — shall be purged away!

Your *crimson sins* — shall be all blotted out!

Your *guilty consciences* — shall be cleansed!

The long list of your transgressions — shall be cast into the depths of the sea! They shall be — as though they never had been — there shall not be one trace, mark, or proof of them left! This shall be the case now, though you have gone *so far*, though you have *delayed*so long, notwithstanding all that you have thought spoken or done — yet COME and I will cleanse you from all your iniquities, and will make you whiter than the whitest wool — whiter than the freshly driven snow! I can, for I am God! I will, for I give you my word.

Lost sinner, what God says — he means. What God promises, he will perform. You may, therefore, be so thoroughly cleansed from your sin, as to be presented before God's glorious throne, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!

There is *hope*for the *greatest sinners!*Hope! There is more. There is the certainty of a present, perfect, and everlasting pardon of all sin, for the vilest of the vile, through the blood of Jesus — when they come unto God by him. The word *hope*is too faint, too feeble to use; unless it is taken to mean a strong, steady expectation of receiving the greatest blessings at the hand of God, by the greatest sinners, on the ground of free grace alone!

All the sinner's fears of acceptance with God are groundless. They spring from unbelief, and are fostered by Satan to dishonor God. If God speaks the truth in his word — then the sinner who comes to God through Jesus, must meet with a hearty welcome, must be accepted, and pardoned, and saved. God has spoken, and it is impossible for God to lie. God says, "Come now — though your sins are like scarlet — they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson — they shall be like wool."

God can pardon without difficulty. His *justice*is satisfied — by the death of His Son. His *law*is magnified — by the obedience of the Savior. As easy as the rising sun chases away the mists of morning — as easy as the sponge wipes the figures from the slate — as easy as the strong hand casts the stone into the sea — yes, with infinitely *more*ease, can God blot out the sins of the greatest sinner who comes to him through Jesus!

He not only *can* — but *will* — and will do it with pleasure, because he *delights in mercy*. God will receive the foulest transgressor. He would never have invited them to come unto him — if he had not intended to receive them. If any one doubts this, let him try it. Let him come to God, with all his sins upon him; just as he is at this moment, let him confess his sins, pleading the blood of Jesus for their pardon — -and if he gives credit to God's word, and trusts in the sacrifice of Christ — he is pardoned, and he will feel it in his own heart, and the peace of God will flow into his soul.

If it is so — then the salvation of the sinner must be great and glorious. And so it is, salvation is free for the *vilest*, free for the *most depraved*, free for whoever will. Nor is there anything *freer*on earth, or in Heaven — than the salvation of the sinner. It is as *great*as it is free, for it is . . .  
the pardon of all sin,  
the communication of all grace,  
deliverance from all evil, and  
the possession of all good!

What can go beyond this? It is glorious — as glorious as . . .  
the free grace of the Father,  
the infinite merit of the Son, and  
the presence of the Holy Spirit — can make it!

It is as glorious as highest Heaven, with all its grandeur and magnificence.

Reader! Is this salvation yours? It may be. If it is not — the fault is all your own, for God still says, "Come!" Come and be thus saved.

Come, guilty souls, and flee away,  
Like doves, to Jesus' wounds;  
This is the welcome Gospel day,  
Wherein free grace abounds!

God loved the world, and gave his Son  
To drink the cup of wrath  
And Jesus says he'll cast out none  
who come to him by faith!

***~~God's Great Love~~***

"For God *so loved*the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life!" [John 3:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John 3.16)

When our Lord appeared on earth in human nature, and attracted great attention by his doctrines and miracles — a Jewish ruler came to him by night to converse with him respecting his mission and work. At once the Savior directed his attention to a subject of the greatest importance, telling him that he must undergo a *change*similar to a new creation, or a regeneration — before he could discern, or enter into the kingdom of God.

*Nicodemus*ought to have been well versed in the Old Testament Scriptures, in which a new heart is promised and prayed for — but he did not catch Christ's meaning. He was caught in the meshes of religion, and asks, "How can these things be?" His notions were wholly carnal, and supposed that such a change must be effected by some extraordinary *effort*of man, or some *miracle*wrought by God.

Our Lord led his mind back to a piece of old testament history, to illustrate his subject, saying, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness — so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whoever believes on him should not perish — but have eternal life." As if he had said, "How was that wonderful change effected in the Israelites, when they were suffering and dying by thousands? Was it not by simply looking at the bronze serpent, which Moses had set up?" Just so, when the Son of man shall be lifted up — soul-healing, health and everlasting life shall be received and enjoyed by simply believing in him! "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life!"

GOD'S GREAT LOVE.

He loved the world. That is, the inhabitants of our globe. He loved *men* — though they were guilty criminals, having broken his law, cast off his authority, and acted as basely as they could. They were feeble sinners, weakened by their wickedness, so that they were "without strength." They had no *will*to please God, nor had they the *power*if they had the will. They were the *prey of Satan*, taken *captive*by him at his will. He possessed them, worked in them — and they gladly yielded themselves to his dictates and impulses!. They were *a race of ungodly creatures*. They were all gone out of the way, they had all renounced God's authority, they were all in heart, set against God. But as bad as they were — God loved them! And his love was unspeakably great, no tongue can set it forth, no heart can conceive its vastness.

His love to them was perfectly *free*, there was nothing in them to induce him to love them, nor could anything be expected from them to repay him for his love!

His love to them is the *source*of all the good they enjoy, and of all the good they can expect in time or eternity!

LOVE'S GREAT GIFT.

God so loved the world, and his heart was so set upon saving sinners, that to render salvation not only possible or probable — but certain; he gave his only begotten Son. A greater gift — he could not give. A costlier favor — he could not bestow. He had one Son — that Son was his equal, his only begotten Son. That son was the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person. That Son was with him, rejoicing always before him, and was the object of his highest delight. The whole creation was as nothing to him. Indeed all things were made *by*him, and *for*him, and by him all things are held together. By his word they were created, for his pleasure they were made, and *for his glory*they are continued in existence.

This Son, this only begotten Son, this great, glorious, divine Son of God — was given by his Father, to be, to do, and to suffer all that was necessary to make the salvation of sinners of the human race certain; so that man may have only to look and live. This Son he gave — unsolicited, unasked, undesired. No one would, or could ever have thought of his doing so, or if such a thought could ever have entered into a creature's mind — no creature could have dared to ask such a thing!

*Unsolicited favors*are always prized the most — and so should this be. God gave his Son, not reluctantly, but cheerfully! Though it was to stoop to the lowest act of humiliation, to endure the most tremendous suffering, and die the most ignominious death, yet "he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." He gave him with the kindest motive, that every one might see the deep, intense, and wondrous love of his heart; that every one may see the truth of his own solemn declaration, "As I live says the Lord, I have no pleasure at all in the death of him that dies." That every one that wishes to be saved, or is willing to be saved, may be — by simply looking to him as he said, "Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth!"

LOVE'S GRACIOUS DESIGN.

"That whoever" — any person, of any race, at any time, under any circumstances — "that whoever believes," gives credit to the gospel report, fixes the eye of the mind on the crucified Savior, goes out in the exercise of the heart to him, and trusts in his word and work, "should not perish, but have everlasting life!"

It is a terrible thing to perish! See the branch separated from the parent stem, acted upon by sun, wind, rain, and frost — it perishes. Faint, very faint representation of a sinner, separated from God, acted upon by all kinds of evil — making it miserable, wretched, and awfully unhappy, and that ever.

Perish! That is what every sinner deserves. Perish! That is what every sinner without Christ must expect. To perish! It will take an eternity of torment, an incalculable amount of misery — to make up that is contained in this one word PERISH!

But God tells us in his word that he "not willing that any should perish — but th all should come to repentance." Gracious and beneficent God, how wondrous your love, how gracious your gift, how manifest your design — that men, such vile men as we are — should not perish — but have everlasting life! This is the greatest, the best, the most glorious thing we can have.

Everlasting life! That is life *from*Christ — life *like*that possessed and enjoyed by Christ — life *with*Christ, enjoying his presence, his love, and his -]or forever. Everlasting life! Life in God's favor — life in God's likeness — life in God's happiness, and that forever!

Reader! You have heard of God's love, do you believe it? Do you believe that God, instead of *hating*the world, refusing to have anything to do with the world, unless to punish it as it deserves — loved it! And so loved it, as rather than deliver it over to suffer its desert of eternal punishment — sent his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish — but have everlasting life. So loved the world, as not only to provide a way of salvation — but a way so easy, a way so free, a way so suited to the guilty, feeble, and degraded men! O wondrous love!

You have heard of Gods gift — will you receive it?

***~~The Faithful Promiser~~***

There are seasons, when the mind of the believer needs to be directed to certain portions of divine truth, which are calculated to strengthen, encourage, and stimulate it. To me, the present is such a season, and after looking up to the Lord for the gracious teaching of his Holy Spirit — I feel my mind fixed on that encouraging view of the Most High God, presented to the Hebrews, to encourage them to hold fast their profession, "He is faithful that promised." [Hebrews 10:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb 10.23). Precious view of our covenant God! May we be able to enter into and enjoy it. Let us ask three questions,

First, WHAT HAS GOD PROMISED?

And to this we may at once reply — what has he *not*promised? Has he not foreseen all that we can possibly need — and having provided it in his everlasting covenant, promised it in his holy word? Yes, there is not a good thing that we can need, or the infinitely wise God can bestow — but it is clearly and positively promised in his word. But let us look at a very few of his promises — and then look into the *future*through them.

He has promised, *"As your days — so shall your strength be."*Then, whatever strength we may need, to *do*or *suffer*the will of God — we are sure it will be given us. Not *before*the day — but *on*the day. Not for *us*to proportion to the day — but the *Lord*will proportion it, and give out his strength just as it is needed. Strength for the *day*. Strength for *every*day, even the last *dying*day. Strength for *every step*of the journey, until we step into Heaven. This was given in Old Testament times, and has ever been made good; and we have a very similar one given under the present dispensation:

*"My grace is sufficient for you — for my strength is made perfect in weakness."* I know not what I may need — but the Lord assures me that I shall have *sufficient* *grace*. I know not how extreme my *weakness*may be — but the weaker I am, the more will God put forth his power in me, and show the perfection of his strength, in the weakness of his child. O blessed assurance, sufficient grace . . .  
for prosperity or adversity,  
for sickness or health,  
for life or for death!

What then should discourage me, dampen my zeal, or cool my ardour?

Not only so, but *instruction*and *guidance*is promised too! "I will *instruct*you and *teach*you in the way which you shall go. I will *guide*you with my eye." By his gracious providence, when we

yield ourselves to him — he will guide us into the right way; and in the way he will teach us, making known his ways unto us, as he did unto Moses, and Israel of old. He will keep his eye on us, protecting and preserving us from evil — and will *counsel*us in every emergency and difficulty.

Nor is this a he has promised "to supply all our needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus!" It pleased the Father that in Jesus — *all* *fullness*would dwell. His riches are unsearchable — and according to his glorious riches, as the Lord of providence and grace — he will he supply al our needs!

Or, as it is stated in the Old Testament, "The Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly." All things necessary for life and godliness, whether spiritual or temporal — are promised us most clearly and explicitly by our God and Father!

To *crown*all, we may say with John, "This is the promise which he has promised us — even eternal life!" This is the great, the crowning promise. So that with Paul, we may live, "in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began!"

Assured of . . . *strength*for the day; *sufficient grace*for all seasons and circumstances; *instruction*, *counsel*, and *guidance*all through our wilderness journey;  
all *necessary supplies*of temporal and spiritual good;  
and of *eternal life*at the end of our course —  
may we not, ought we not, to go forward with confidence and courage?

Second, TO **WHOM**ARE THE PROMISES MADE?

"To Abraham — and *his seed*were the promises made." "Those who are of *faith* — are blessed with faithful Abraham." "If you are Christ's — then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

All the promises are *in Christ*. Made to him as the head of the church, they are all confirmed in him, and will be made good to all who sincerely trust in him. All the promises are made to *all true believers*. Faith accepts, appropriates and trusts the promises of God; and God fulfils them to all who trust in him.

They belong even to the *fearful* — who are so often bidden not to fear. "Say to those who are of a fearful heart be strong — do not fear, behold your God will come and save you!" The strong believer claims the promise and confides in it, and God honors him in so doing. The weak and timid believer looks at it with a longing eye, sighs for a sense of interest in it with a fearful heart, pleads it in prayer with a dread of presumption — and God fulfills it to him.

To those who walk uprightly — keeping the eye on God's *precepts*as their rule, and on his *glory*as their end. "The Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly." Daring to be singular though exposed to persecution, or threatened with loss — they walk erect, doing justly and loving mercy. The upright man is the Lord's delight; and though for a time, he may allow him to be tried, and to be tried severely — yet will he appear for him and *make good*his promises to him.

To the *tried*, *opposed,*and *buffeted*, as Paul was — some of the most precious promises belong! It was to him, when in such circumstances, that the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And to all believers in similar circumstances, the promise still belongs. The *thorn*may remain — and appear to rankle in the flesh; infirmities may increase — and deeply humble the soul, but God will supply with *strength* — until he sees fit to deliver!

All who *love*God, even though their love is feeble — may claim all of the promises! Around such a one — they all cluster; to such a one — they shall be made good. Therefore it is that with confidence we say with the apostle, "We know that all things work together for good, to those who love God; to those who are the called according to his purpose."

In a word, all the promises belong to all who *know*the Lord — which knowledge always leads the soul to repose in trust and confidence in him. Hence we read, "Those who know your name, will put their trust in you; for you Lord have not forsaken those who seek you." If therefore, I know the Lord, as to place m confidence in him — I am entitled to all of his promises. I may confide in them, and expect him to make them good. Every promise I believe, and taking up in faith, plead with God to make it good — is mine!

Third, WHAT *SECURITY*HAVE WE THAT GOD WILL PERFORM HIS PROMISES? "He is *faithful*who has promised." The perfection of his nature is sufficient guarantee. He cannot change his mind, or evoke his word. He solemnly, deliberately, and out of pure love — *made* the promises, and he will *fulfill*them. As he has said, "I am the Lord — I do not change! Therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed!"

Infinite in wisdom,  
perfect in knowledge, and  
unchangeable in his love —  
he cannot fail to make good his word!

In every age, in the experience of every believer — he has performed his promises. As our Lord on the cross said, "Our fathers trusted in you — and you delivered them."

We have also his *solemn oath*appended to his *promise*, as if to give the greater security and to make us happy: that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. Yes, blessed be his holy name, he has said, "Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed — yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you!"

His *faithfulness*so long, and so often proved — is our security. "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak — and then not act? Does he promise — and not fulfill?"

Let us then steadfastly *believe*the promises — resting upon the faithfulness of the almighty Promiser! "The Lord is faithful, who will establish you, and keep you from evil."

Let us *plead*the promises, and take encouragement from the fact, that "if we believe not — yet he abides faithful; for he cannot deny himself." Let us act upon the advice of the apostle, suffer what we may, be circumstance as we may; he says, "Why let those who suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator!"

Holy Spirit, give us a strong, steady, active faith in this great truth: "He is faithful who promised!"

***~~The Design of the Gospel~~***

God's word is one of our greatest blessings, as it intended not only to inform the mind — but by leading us to us Jesus — to give us peace, comfort, and everlasting life. It is the only *essential*book, others are *useful*, some of them are very *precious* — but this book contains all that we really need. Written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it is full of wisdom, and full of love. Every part of it is more or less *necessary*, it contains nothing *redundant*, nor has it any *defects*. God may have written much more — but it was not needed; for it contains all things necessary to life and godliness.

*John's gospel*is a peculiarly precious portion of the divine word, and I want to fix your mind on the *design*with which it was written; hear the apostle's testimony concerning the things recorded in it: *"These are written — that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing — you might have life through his name."*[John 20:31](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John 20.31). Here is,

A GRACIOUS RECORD.

It is the testimony of Jesus — of **who**he is: The Christ, the Messiah, the anointed One, upon whom the Holy Spirit rested in fullness and power, qualifying and preparing him for his glorious work. The Son of God, possessing the divine nature in union with the human, he is therefore *both God and man in one person*.

It is the testimony of Jesus — of what he **did**for man: Healing his diseases, forgiving his sins, and conferring on him innumerable blessings. Of what he *did*for man, in . . .  
obeying the law,  
offering up himself as a sacrifice for sin,  
conquering Satan,  
opening Heaven and making a new and living way to it, at once free, easy of access, and safe forever traveler.

It is the testimony of Jesus — of what he **said**: the conversations he held, and the sermons he delivered. Here we have a correct account of . . .  
the *doctrines*he taught,  
the *precepts*he gave,  
the *ordinances*he instituted,  
the *promises*he made, and  
the *encouragements*he held out.

*John's gospel is full of Christ!* Here . . .  
his *person*is clearly set forth,  
his *discourses*and *prayers*are sweetly recorded,  
and some of his wondrous *miracles*are attested.

Precious gospel, may I . . . *read*it more, *understand*it more, *love*it more, and *practice*it more!

ITS GRACIOUS DESIGN.

"That you might ***believe***." Give credit to the great fact, that Jesus of Nazareth, is the Son of God. Confide in the *faithful word*, which announces, that he came into the world to save sinners. Rely on his finished work, which comprises — all that God can require; and all that we can need in order to our acquittal at God's bar and being entitled to eternal life.

Trust in him as the *loving Lord*, who has promised to forgive and perfectly save, all who come unto God by him.

"That believing you might have **life**." A right to live, and to live forever, and to live forever in the most blessed and glorious circumstances.

Life, under the *law* — was by doing; life, under the gospel — is by believing. Every believer shall live, that is — enjoy eternal existence without guilt or gloom; existence in peace and purity; existence in happiness and honor; existence with God and the glorified.

"That believing — you will have life in his name." Every believer has a right to expect this life. On every believer, God is pledged freely to confer it. And when he confers it, he invariably sustains and perfects it. Life, eternal life, is through *Jesus*alone, and through Jesus by believing alone.

Reader! You need life — eternal life. There is no alternative between eternal life — and eternal death. John wrote his gospel, and God by his providence has put that gospel into your hands, that you night believe on Jesus, and believing have life through his name. Life is in Jesus — and in Jesus *alone*. From him you may obtain it — but from no one else. He is ready to bestow it, and complains of many, as of old, "You will not come unto me — that you might have life."

Life comes into our possession *only*by faith. By believing we live — and by believing alone. God has appointed *faith*to be the instrument by which we shall receive life from his beloved Son; just as he appointed *looking*to be the only medium of healing, to the serpent-bitten Israelites of old.

Faith comes by God's word. *Hearing*, or *reading*God's word, is used by the Holy Spirit — to beget faith in the heart. We ought therefore to be swift to hear the gospel, ready to peruse the Scriptures, looking up to God to *produce faith*in our hearts.

The right use of the Bible is to *believe*it, and so believe it, as to obtain *life*through Christ. If we do not make this use of the word of God — then we do not make a proper use of it. And if we do not make a proper use of it — it will witness against us at the last day.

Beloved, have *you*everlasting, life? Every *believer*has. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and so believe, as to have life through his name? This is a most important question. You have the *means*of faith — but have you faith? You have the testimony of God — but do you receive that testimony, and so receive it as to witness that God is true? "He who believes on the Son of God has everlasting life; and he who believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him!" If therefore you are not a believer — the wrath of God abides on you! And as an unbeliever, it will abide on you forever!

***~~The Promise of the Spirit~~***

Next to the gift of his *Son* — God can give us no greater gift than his *Holy Spirit*. Nor is there any gift that we more *need*. This gift was promised in both Testaments, and has always been in some measure in the Church. But more of the Spirit's *presence, power, and operations*are needed — and should be therefore should be *sought*.

Can we look into the world, or the church, or into our own families — and not see that we need more of the Spirit's influence, than we now have? Let us then look at one promise, to excite and encourage our hearts, to seek with more faith and fervor this great blessing. Our heavenly Father speaks to his people, after having charged home many grievous sins upon them — and it is a wonderful display of his free and sovereign grace. "For I will pour *water*on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my *Spirit*on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams!" [Isaiah 44:3-4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa 44.3-4)

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH. Dry and thirsty ground. Having little or no vegetating power — so that though much seed is sown, and good seed too — but little springs up.

It appears generally *barren*, with only here and there a green and pleasant spot — only now and then a convert.

It is pretty much *parched*, having but little sweet and pleasant verdure — but little sweet, savory, and profitable conversation.

It is more like a *desert* — than the garden of the Lord. It is dry and thirsty land. Like *sand soil* — it drinks in much, and produces but little. It needs constant moisture, or nothing will grow.

It is a *weary*and *wearying*land. The members are dissatisfied, they pine for something they have not, and therefore pray for the early and latter rain. It is a mercy when the Lord's people *thirst*to possess, *pant*to enjoy, and *pray*the Lord to give — his Holy Spirit unto them.

THE PROMISE. It is a promise of the *Spirit*, represented by *water*. How exactly adapted to his people's needs — for water is not more suited to the thirsty land, or the dry ground — than the Holy Spirit is to the world and the church.

Does water *soften*the soil? So does the Holy Spirit the heart.

Does water *enrich*the ground? So does the Holy Spirit the soul.

Does water *fructify*and make fruitful the earth? So does the Holy Spirit the church of God.

Does water produce *beauty*in the garden and the field? So does the Holy Spirit in the church of God.

It is water *from Heaven*. This shows it to be *God's free gift* — and not at all at the command of man. *Pray*for it — we may; produce it — we cannot. As no one but God can produce rain — so no one but God can give the Holy Spirit.

"I will *pour*water on the thirsty land, and *streams*on the dry ground!" It not a promise of a light summer shower — but in floods. This shows that we are not straitened in God —  
whose love is infinite,  
whose heart is large,  
whose resources are boundless!

It directs us also — to ask and expect great things from God.

The *effect predicted*is most encouraging. "They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams!" So shall converts spring up. There shall be a great increase. It may appear small at the first — but it shall grow rapidly, spread widely, become ornamental, remain *permanent*as the poplar, and be useful as well as beautiful.

See *what we need* — what the Church generally needs. The Spirit's powerful influences. The Spirit is like a steady rain to the mown grass, which renders it fruitful.

See *what God has promised*. His Spirit — the very thing we need! His Spirit in *abundance*like a flood, in the very *manner*we need it. O the goodness of God, in adapting his promises — to our necessities! Let us realize the *love*of God — as displayed in the promise of the Spirit. Look to his *power* — to fulfill the promise; and depend on his *faithfulness* — to make good the promise.

Let us *plead*with God for the outpouring of his Spirit, as a *man*for the preservation of his property — more, as a *criminal*for the sparing of his life! God loves prayer, especially *pleading*prayer.

Let us *believe*the promise of the outpouring of his Spirit — not by giving a cold credit to it — but exercising a warm-hearted confidence in it. Let us not only plead and believe — but let *expect*God to be as good as his word, and to do as he has said. *Freely*he made the promise, and exactly adapted it to our circumstances; *faithfully*will he keep the promise, and fulfill it in our experience. He says, "I will," which is the language of a God, the language of one who means what he has said.

"For I *will*pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I *will*pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants!" Can language be more positive, more decisive? Nothing can tempt him to break his word — let us therefore by faith and prayer, seek to bring down the promised influence of the Spirit on our world, on the church of God, on our families, and also on our souls. Let nothing dishearten, or discourage us, until see a glorious work of grace around us, and the power of the Holy Spirit within us — and the promise becomes an historical fact.

***~~Jesus Always the Same~~***

What a changeable world we live in! Everything within us, and without us is change! Our frames how variable — our friends changeable! Yet our souls need something permanent on which to rest, someone unchangeable with whom to walk. For this must turn away from all creatures, and fix the eye and the heart on Jesus alone. He is the same. Always the same. Hence apostle's testimony, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." [Hebrews 13:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb 13.8). Holy Spirit, lead me to think of Jesus, and to write of Jesus, so as to glorify his dear name.

Jesus is unchangeable in his PERSON. He cannot change. His humanity is pure and perfect, and it is united to, and inhabited his divinity. He is truly God, and truly man — God and man in one person. He cannot be improved — for he is perfect; nor he be deteriorated — for his divine nature preserves his humanity from that. Jesus *is —*what he *was*; Jesus ever *will*be — what he *is.*Whatever change may take place in me, in my friends, or relations — no change ever take place in Jesus. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Jesus is unchangeable in his OFFICES. He is the same wise, holy, and condescending *Prophet*, who by his Spirit reveals the mind of the

Father to us. He is the same great and gracious High *Priest*, who having atoned for our sins by his blood — ever lives to make intercession for us. The blood he shed for our ransom on the cross, he ever presents to his Father, for our security; so that being reconciled by his death, we shall be saved by his life. He is the same glorious and condescending *King*. On the throne of his Father, he rules all worlds for our good, and is looking forward to the time when God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and all his enemies shall be put under his feet.

Jesus is unchangeable in his WORD. His *promises*are like the ancient mountains, and his *threatenings*like the inexhaustible ocean. Heaven and earth may pass away — but his word shall never pass away. We may depend on what he has spoken, for all that he has said — shall surely come to pass. Others may be unable to fulfill their word — but Jesus will make good every tittle of his. Others may violate their word — but Jesus never can. His word endures forever, and the thoughts of his heart, embodied in his words, to all generations.

Jesus is the same in all his varied PERFECTIONS. He is the same in his *grace*. Never was he more gracious than now, nor will he ever be less gracious to any that believe on his name. He is the same in his *mercy*. Never did he sympathize with people in their sufferings more than he does now, nor will he ever sympathize with the less. He is the same in his *faithfulness*not only to his word — but faithfully fills every relation he has assumed. He is the same in his *holiness*, and is the holy One Israel, who on earth appeared as holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He is the same in his *love*, for having low his own — he loves them unto the end. The are no *fluctuations*in his love, no *ebbing or*flowing in this ocean. His love is everlasting, like his divine nature, it is without variableness or shadow of turning.

Jesus is unchangeable in his TEMPER and DISPOSITION. He is still the Lamb, though in the midst of the throne. He is still meek lowly of heart, and he who waited for sinners, looked out for sinners, and receives sinners, in the days of his flesh — does so still. He never did breaks the bruised reed, quenches the smoking flax, nor will he. loving-kindness is as great, as good, and tender as ever. There was nothing in him to alarm a timid bashful child, therefore children allowed him to take them up in arms and bless them, and he is as gentle loving now. Patient love, and meek mercy, appear prominently in the temper and disposition of the ever blessed Jesus.

Jesus is unchangeable in his DEMANDS upon us. He still demands . . .  
our unhesitating faith in what he says,  
our cheerful obedience to his commands,  
our heart's entire trust in his sacrificial death, and  
our constant preference of him to all besides.

He demands of us that we confess him before men, and that we be decided in his cause. Not health or wealth, friends or relatives, ease or comfort, nor life itself, must be preferred before him.

He requires the person, the whole person, and all that belongs to the person — to be brought to his altar, surrendered for his acceptance, and consecrated to his service and praise. Less than this, never satisfied our adorable Redeemer, and less than this never will — for he is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

If Jesus Christ is always the same, then he is truly and properly God, for God alone is absolutely unchangeable. But Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever — therefore he is the true God and eternal life. The language of the God of Israel exactly befits him, "I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed." If Jesus is unchangeable — then the foundation of our faith and hope is firm — for on him they rest, and on him alone. As therefore Jesus is the Rock of ages, the long tried stone which God has laid in Zion for a foundation, building our faith and hope on him we can say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

If Jesus is ever the same, then the fountain of our *comfort*is inexhaustible. Brooks may dry up, and if we left to depend on *creatures*for comfort, may be left miserable and unhappy; but the *ocean*is ever full, and if we live on Christ for our comfort, we shall never know what it is to lack a friend, or a source of sweet consolation.

If Jesus never changes, the the prospects of the Church are most animating. Is not the Church his body? Is not the Church his bride? Has he not give himself for his Church, and promised to glorify her with himself? What then may not the Church expect to receive from Christ?

Is Jesus immutable, then the *punishment of impenitent sinners*is certain. He has warned them most solemnly. He has set before them the consequences of living and dying in sin, most faithfully. He has told them the worm which never dies, and of the fire which is never quenched. He has cautioned them and offered to save them, complaining of some, that they would not come unto him, in order that they might be saved by him.

If Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever — then we may go wherever he sends, and do whatever he bids us with confidence and courage. He who command the winds and the waves — and they obey him; he who raised the dead, and fills demons with fear and alarm — is our Savior, our Redeemer, our Friend, and he has said, "Lo, I am with you always." Do we wonder then that he bids his disciples not be troubled, whatever may happen, directing them as they had confidence in his Father — to have confidence in him? I wonder not. O my soul, rejoice — your Savior is always the same! Ever trust him — for he will stand by you, appear for you, and at length — glorify you with himself!

***~~Not of the World~~***

The world and the church were originally one, and were alike represented by the first Adam when he fell. But *sovereign grace*distinguishes the one from the other, and they are now separate. The world remains under the covenant of works; while the church comes and the covenant of grace. No two parties can be more distinct from each other, than the world and the Church are — the believer and the unbeliever. Our Lord always appeared to view them as distinct, and speaks of them as such. Even when praying to his Father for his disciples, twice he distinctly says, "They are not *of*the world — even as I am not of the world." [John 17:14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John 17.14), [16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John 17.16). Let us notice,

THE FACT.

They are not *of*the world — but *chosen out*of it. The Father speaks of Jesus, "I have laid help upon one who is mighty; I have exalted one *chosen out*of the people." Jesus was chosen out of the world — and so are all his people, as we read, "If you were of the world — the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world — therefore the world hates you." This was true, not only of his immediate disciples — but of all who at any time believe on his name. As they are *chosen out*of the world, so they possess *another spirit*than the world, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Which Spirit is the same Spirit as rested upon Christ, wrought in Christ, and spoke by Christ. Therefore, said Paul, "If any man has not the Spirit of Christ — he is none of his." And again, "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts."

Nor are they *at home*in the world, Jesus said, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests — but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." The patriarchs "confessed that they were *strangers*and *pilgrims*upon earth" — and as they were, so we are; therefore Peter exhorts, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul."

"Strangers," we have not been here long; we are not acclimated to the world's customs. "Pilgrims," we shall not be here long, for we are *traveling*to our Father's house, looking for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. We are not *of*the world — because *chosen out*of the world, possessing a spiritual disposition which will not allow us to settle down in the world, or *mix*with the world — therefore we have no home in the world, even as Christ had no home in the world.

Jesus was *in*the world for a time, and for an important purpose — and so are we. Nor should we be anxious to hurry out of it — but rather seek to do the will of God, and glorify him in it. Jesus sought to benefit the world — and so should we. He . . .  
fed its hungry poor,  
healed its sick,  
proclaimed liberty to its captives,  
went about doing good, and  
preached the gospel of the kingdom to all —   
leaving us an example, that we should follow in his steps.

Jesus lived *above*the world, walking in high and holy fellowship with his Father, and seeking always and in everything to please him — and so should we. He spent whole nights alone with God, and was ever with God by day, even in the busiest seasons of life — teaching us to walk humbly with our God.

Jesus was *hated*by the world, because his conduct reproved and condemned it, and in his ministry He testified unto it that the works thereof are evil. If our conduct was like the conduct of Jesus, and if our testimony was as explicit, as plain, and as condemnatory of the world, as was the life and testimony of Jesus — it would hate us too, far more bitterly than it does at present!

Jesus *left*the world to go unto his Father, such was his representation of *death*, his own dreadful, shameful, bitter death. Such is dying to every believer. It is going to our Father. Going home to be forever with the Lord.

Beloved, while *in*the world — let us seek by all means to benefit the world. Let us live *above*the world, nor wonder if we are *hated*by the world. And when our end draws near, let us just look at death, as *leaving the world to go unto the Father.*

Let us now try and IMPROVE THE FACT.

If we are not *of*the world — then we should not allow ourselves to be *led*by the world. The wisdom of this world, is foolishness with God. No believer should allow the world to *rule*him — for the spirit of the world is the very opposite of the Spirit of God. Nor should we, like the world, set our hearts upon wealth, ease, or carnal pleasure — but rather lay up treasures for ourselves in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupts — setting our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.

Neither should we allow ourselves to be *burdened*and *cumbered*with cares like the world — but should cast all our cares upon our God, who cares for us.

Nor should we set our hearts upon, or allow our affections to be entangled by the *comforts*of the world, seeing they are like summer flowers, which if they manage to live into autumn — the first frost will kill.

The *troubles*of the world should not burden us, nor the *crosses*

of the world disquiet us. If we are not *of*the world — then we should not be anxious to live, nor be afraid to *die*. Life is at best — but brief, and its pathway is strewed with thorns. Death is at worst — but short, and introduces us to the presence and joy of our Lord.

Let us therefore use the world, as not abusing it; and pass through it, as those who have a duty to perform in it, and who are looking for something infinitely better beyond it.

The difference between us and the world, originates in God's sovereign ***election***of us — who *chose*us to salvation, *predestined*us to adoption, and *set us apart*for his praise. What a glorious privilege to be chosen in Christ — chosen out of the world — chosen to stand perfectly holy before God in love!

As we were chosen out of the world — so we were ***redeemed***from among men. By the mercy of God, by the merit of Jesus, and by the power of the Holy Spirit — we were distinguished from those around us, and raised far above them.

As we were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ — so we were sovereignly and eftectually ***called***out of darkness into God's marvelous light, by the almighty energy of the Holy Spirit. We were called to be saints — holy ones. Called to God's kingdom and glory.

And, as we were called by the efficient ministry of the Holy Spirit — so we are *preserved*in the world, *led*through the world, and made *useful*to the world, by his sacred and ***sanctifying***influences and operations.

O marvelous grace thus to select, separate, and bless such poor, vile, and unworthy sinners as we are! O to grace, what wondrous debtors we are, and shall eternally be! Blessed Lord, as you have by your

sovereign decree — *separated* us from the world, and as by the effectual working of your power — you have *called*us out of the world, and *distinguished*us from the world — *preserve* us we beseech you, by your mighty power, from *conforming*to the world, *mixing*up with the world, or in any way laying a stumbling-block before the world. May our spirit, temper, and whole behavior say that we are not of the world, even as Jesus was not of the world.

Dead be my heart, to all below,  
To mortal joys and mortal cares,  
To sensual bliss that charms us so,  
Be dark, mine eyes, and deaf my ears!

Lord! I renounce my carnal taste!  
Of the fair fruit that sinners prize  
Their paradise shall never waste  
One thought of mine — but to despise.

All earthly joys are over-weighed  
With mountains of vexatious care;  
And where's the *sweet*that is not laid  
A bait to some destructive snare?

Begone, forever, mortal things  
You mighty mole-hill, earth, farewell! *Angels*aspire on lofty wings,  
And leave the *globe*for *ants*to dwell.

Come, Heaven, and fill my vast desires;  
My soul pursues the sovereign good  
She was all made of heavenly fires,  
Nor can she live on meaner food!

***~~Justified by His Blood~~***

The great *leading doctrine*of the gospel, is the justification of a sinner by simple faith in Jesus. The apostles continually dwell on this, and keep it ever before the minds of the Lord's people. Just so should we, for only as we are well-grounded in this doctrine — shall we enjoy peace with God, or be strong to labor in the Lord's cause. This doctrine is viewed from various points, which accounts for the various representations given of it, as "being justified freely by his grace" — "being justified by faith" — and *"being now justified by his blood."*Romans 5 9. Let us look at this last representation of it.

THE **BLESSING**.

"Justification." This is more than *pardon*, for a man may be pardoned — and yet not justified. To *justify,*is to pronounce a man guiltless, to acquit him of all charges brought against him, and to declare him to be a righteous person. The justified man, is freed from all condemnation; no one can lay anything to his charge in the *court of divine justice.*He is delivered from the *law* — being dead to it, and it being dead to him. He is placed under grace — or admitted into the free, full, and unmerited favor of God. He is admitted into *friendship with God*, who holds free and familiar fellowship with him. He is entitled to participate in, and enjoy, all the blessings of the new and better covenant — such as . . .  
peace with God,  
liberty and freedom of access to God,  
safety through life, and  
the glorious inheritance when life is ended.

THE **SOURCE**OF THIS BLESSING.

"Being now justified by his blood."

*Who*is the justifier? God the righteous judge of all.

*Whom*does He justify? Ungodly sinners who believe in Jesus.

*Why*does He justify? Of his own most free and glorious grace.

*When*does he justify them? The moment they repent, renounce self, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

On what *ground*does he justify? On the ground of the death of Christ, who shed his precious blood — or laid down his life as their substitute to atone for their offences, and satisfy all the claims of the divine law for them. Or, on the ground of his perfect atoning work, which was finished when he shed his blood on the tree; which work is placed to the account of every one who believes on his name. The whole work of Christ is *imputed*to the believer, and is as much his own to plead before God for his acquittal — as if he had wrought it himself, through the free gift of God. It is *reckoned ours*as believers, and is acknowledged at God's throne when we plead it. Jesus was *made sin for us*, having all our sins placed to his account, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Justification is a **present**blessing. "Being *now*justified by his blood." There is therefore now no condemnation, to those who are in Christ Jesus. It is *wholly*on account of what Christ has done. The *works of man*are not taken into account at all. There is no more virtue in our*good works*to justify us — than there is in our *sins*to justify us! On account of the perfect work of Christ, and the perfect work of Christ *alone* — we are justified.

Justification *secures us from wrath*. Therefore Jesus is said to have delivered us from the wrath to come. Everyone who reads these lines, is either justified, and so entitled to Heaven; or is condemned — and so doomed to suffer the bitter pains of eternal death. But if we are not justified now, we may be, we shall be — if we believe in Jesus — but in no other way. If we do not believe — then we are condemned already, not only as having broken God's law — but because we have not believed on the name of his only begotten Son.

If we are justified by the blood of Jesus — then he should have all the praise. He wrought out the righteousness by his obedience unto death, and we are justified in his name and for his sake. O *mystery of mercy!* Jesus took my sins and suffered for them — and I receive his righteousness and am justified by it!

If we perish in our sins, with the Bible in our hands, and the gospel sounding in our ears — we must take all the blame to ourselves. We cannot say that there was no Savior, or that we had no warrant to apply to him, or that he refused to save us; for there *is*a Savior, and he *invites*us to come to him, and he has given us his solemn word that He will not refuse us, saying, "I will *never*cast out!" Reader, how is it with you? Are you justified by the blood of Jesus — or are you condemned for *willfully*and *wickedly*rejecting him? One or the other must be the case — which is it? Examine closely, decide instantly, and act accordingly.

In vain do poor blind creatures try  
By *works*themselves to justify;  
Your righteousness, O God, exceeds  
Men's duties, and their brightest deeds!

Proud Pharisees shall strive in vain  
The law's perfection to attain;  
While sinners, self-condemned, receive  
The gift of righteousness, and live!

Jesus, your life has clearly showed  
What means the righteousness of God;  
On you your people's hope is laid,  
By *your obedience*, righteous made.

And where your righteousness is given  
Your Spirit *sanctities*for Heaven;  
And still renews us by his grace,  
Until *perfected*in holiness.

Though nothing in ourselves we are,  
Through Him we shun the sinful snare;  
In every strait his hand we see;  
And as our day — our strength shall be!

***~~Saved from Wrath~~***

Salvation from the power, guilt, and condemnation of sin — is a present blessing; but salvation from all the righteous consequences of sin — is a future blessing. There is no condemnation now — there will be no wrath at the end of our course. If we are now justified — then full salvation at death is certain. Hence we read, "Since we have now been justified by His blood — how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!" [Romans 5:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom 5.9)

THE SINNER'S DESERT. He deserves wrath — the eternal wrath of God, which is most terrible. The wrath of man, a great man, a strong man, an incensed man is bad — but what must the wrath of God be! Divine wrath, is an expression of God's infinite hatred of sin, and his punishing the sinner for it, in proportion to its desert. It is represented as burning — burning to the lowest Hell. God's wrath is inconceivable — for we have no figure adequately to represent it, nor language to convey the full concept of it — therefore the mind can have no proper idea of it. It is eternal wrath. Sin, being the cause of Hell, will never cease — but rather increase in Hell; so God's wrath is represented by a fire that nothing can extinguish — unquenchable fire!

God's wrath is future — the day of wrath is coming. The revelation of the mercy of God is now — but the full revelation of his wrath is future.

THE BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE. "We shall be saved from God's wrath." We shall be hidden in the day of the Lord's fierce anger. We shall be screened, secured, and raised above it. As Israel was saved from the Red Sea, while the Egyptians were destroyed by it — so shall we be saved from the wrath to come. We, who deserved it as much as others — but having been convinced of our desert and danger, having been alarmed at the fearful prospect opening before us, having been directed to the Lord Jesus as the only refuge — we fled to him, took shelter beneath his cross, and trusted in his blood!

"We shall be saved from God's wrath through Him." The only way of escape, is Jesus! He endured the wrath of God for penitent sinners. He delivers every sinner from Hell, who comes to Him by faith. He will take care that wrath shall not come near any soul that shelters in Him.

THE CERTAINTY OF HIS SAFETY. "Since we have now been justified by His blood — how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!" If God so loved us when we were his enemies — as to give his Son for us; if when we were yet sinners — Christ died for us; then how much more now that we are reconciled to God, and justified by the blood of Jesus — shall we be saved from wrath through him. If God would give his Son for his enemies — he will never pour out his wrath on his friends! If Jesus died for us as ungodly — then he will assuredly save us, now we are dedicated to him.

Let us then ask, Have we come to Jesus? Is our full dependence for eternal life placed solely on him? Do we render the Savior prompt obedience? If so, then there is no doubt but we shall be saved from eternal wrath through him.

If we are saved from wrath ourselves — then we should feel for and seek to save others. God saves by means. By means of his word, of his word spoken, of his word spoken by such as we are. Let us then speak to sinners; speak to them of Jesus; speak to them with this object in view — that they may be saved from eternal wrath through him.

If we are saved by Jesus — then we should seek to please and honor Him. Gratitude dictates this. Reason demands this. Being delivered from so great a damnation, from so dreadful a doom, and delivered at such an expense as Christ's humiliation, suffering, and death — then surely, surely, we shall desire to please our great Deliverer; and nothing will make us so happy as pleasing Him.

If we are certain that we shall be saved from wrath through Jesus — then we ought to be happy, we ought to be active in His service, and we ought to be watchful against all that would displease or dishonor Him.

If we are not saved from wrath by Jesus — then we ought to come to him at once. No one can save us from Hell, but Jesus. But He only saves such as come to him to be saved. The present time is given to us, that we may come unto him. If we neglect his great salvation now — we will be lost forever! In a very short time we may have in dreadful agony to exclaim, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended — and we are not saved!"

"Tis finished!" the Redeemer said,  
And meekly bowed his dying head.  
While we the sentence scan,  
Come, sinners, and observe the word,  
Behold the conquests of our Lord,  
Complete for helpless man.

Finished the righteousness of grace,  
Finished for sinners pardoning peace;  
Their mighty debt is paid;  
Accusing law, cancelled by blood,  
And wrath of an offended God  
In sweet oblivion laid!

Who now shall urge a second claim?  
The law no longer can condemn,  
Faith a pardon can show;  
Justice itself a friend appears.  
The prison-house a whisper hears,  
"Loose him, and let him go!"

O unbelief, injurious bar!  
Source of tormenting fruitless fear,  
Why do you yet reply?  
Wherever your loud objections fall,  
"Tis finished!" still shall answer all,  
And silence every cry!

***~~Be Strong, Do not Fear~~***

Some of the Lord's people are naturally *timid*and *fearful*. They need much encouragement — and for such, the Lord has provided much encouragement in his holy word. He has also commanded his servants to encourage and comfort them. This they often find to be a difficult task — but through the Lord's blessing, it is rendered effectual. To his servants now, he speaks as he did to his servant of old, stating, "Say to those with fearful hearts:*Be strong, do not fear; your God will come . . . He will come to save you."*[Isaiah 35:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa 35.4)

**THE OBJECTS OF SYMPATHY.**The fearful, the timid. Those who have faith — but it is weak, in whom *unbelief*works powerfully, who not only disbelieve much that they ought to believe — but they often *misbelieve*, applying to others — what belongs to themselves, and applying to themselves — what belongs to others. They generally look at the *dark side*of everything; they see the *cloud* — but not its golden fringe. They are afraid of *men* — especially relatives, determined foes, or lofty professors of religion. They are afraid of *Satan* — trembling before him, instead of resisting him. They are afraid of *God* — looking at him through the medium of his broken law, or some frowning providence, instead of beholding his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

Even Moses said, under such circumstances, "I exceedingly fear and quake!" And Manoah said," We shall surely die!" Such fearful ones are generally hasty or rash, drawing wrong conclusions, and needlessly afflicting their own souls. But in reference to such, God gives,

**THE COMMAND.**"Say to those with fearful hearts," as from God who loves and sympathizes with them — in order to *correct*and *reprove*them — also to *encourage*and comfort *them*: "Be strong," or be bold, courageous and undaunted. "Do not fear." Do not fear, for God is at peace with you, God is for you, God is with you, and God will appear to deliver you, fill you with joy, and enable you to rejoice in his great name. You have his promise — trust in it. You have the history of his saints — draw comfort from that. Be strong in faith, for the word of God is true, and God who spoke the word is faithful. Be strong, and expect . . .  
the *deliverance*you need,  
the *mercies*you require,  
and the *supplies*you ask for.

We should ever be ready to *sympathize*with the timid — for God sympathizes with such. As *weak*as they are — God is able to make them stand. As *fearful*though they be — as their day, so shall their strength be.

The Lord listens to their *sighs*,  
he registers their *groans*,  
he is affected with their *cries*,  
and he will arise and *save*them.

Timid soul, look to Jesus, He never breaks a *bruised reed*like you; nor quenches a weak faith, which resembles the *smoking flax*, as yours does. As the weak *ivy*entwines round the sturdy oak tree — so you must *cling*to Jesus, and *entwine*about him; so doing, He will sustain you, strengthen you, and glorify his powerful grace in you.

We should endeavor to strengthen the weak . . .  
by presenting the *precious promises*,  
by leading them afresh to Jesus, and  
by speaking to them of our own personal experience.

We should endeavor to animate, embolden, and encourage them. These *lambs*are the Shepherd's especial care, he gathers them with his arm, and carries them in his bosom. These *burdened*ones He gently leads along life's rough, and uphill road. In them — his grace is glorified; and in them — his tenderness is displayed.

These *fearful*ones have really nothing to fear — for . . .  
the *eye*of the Lord is ever *upon*them,  
the *everlasting arms*of the Almighty are ever *beneath*them, and  
the *strong hand*of the Most High is ever stretched out to *defend*them!

Do not fear, then my poor timid *brother* — for Jesus assures you that it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Do not fear, for though a troop may overcome you now, you shall overcome at the last. Be strong, my poor fearful *sister* — for our God gives power to the faint, and to those who have no might, He increases strength. You therefore shall renew your strength — to the praise and glory of his grace.

***~~Compel Them to Come In!~~***

There is a natural reluctance in fallen man to everything that is spiritually good. *Represent*it as clearly and positively as you may. *Illustrate*it in whatever manner you will. *Urge*it by whatever arguments you choose — it is of no avail.

The gospel is set forth by a feast, a great supper; a feast when the hours of business are over. A general invitation is sent — but all with one consent, begin to make excuse. To prove the sincerity of the Lord, and his heartiness to make sinner's happy by the gospel, he not only *invites* — but He says, "*Compel*them to come in — that my house may be filled." [Luke 14:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke 14.23). Notice,

**WHERE THEY ARE.** Outside, in the streets and lanes of the city. Either employed in business, seeking pleasure, or committing sin. In the highways and hedges — so sunk, depraved, and vile, that they shun *city*society. The gospel is sent to all *places*, to all *classes*of society; all *characters*are invited to come and share in the blessings of grace — both the busy citizen, and the idle loiterer in the country lanes.

**WHAT THEY NEED.** They have many needs — but all may be comprised in one, they need a *home*. A home where they can enjoy sweet repose, meet good society, obtain plenty of nourishing food, find true comfort, and rest in constant safety. All this, the grace of God has provided. All this is to be found in Christ. To all this, sinners are invited by the gospel. Yet, strange to say, homeless and miserable as they are — they will not come!

**WHAT THEY MANIFEST.**Disinclination. They make *excuses*. The real reasons are — they love sin, they prefer carnal pleasures, they utterly dislike spiritual religion — and they are willing to risk the most fearful consequences, which must result from a rejection of the gospel. Some few, disbelieving the gospel message, imagine that it is of no use for them to apply, that there is *no room*at the feast for such sinners as they are, that the *provision*is not made for them, that for them there is no hope. All this is utterly groundless, and is the result, either of misunderstanding the gospel, or of disbelieving it.

**WHAT ARE WE TO DO?** "COMPEL them to come in." Not use physical force — but all the *moral*and *intellectual*power we can obtain. We are to make up our minds — to persuade some. We are to go to the work in downright earnest. We are to expect divine enablement. We are to persevere, refusing to take a denial. We must endeavor to remove every *impediment*out of the way, answering all objections, and showing the folly of all their excuses. We must bring them under the gospel, and if possible to Christ.

But some may object, *"I am so unworthy to be saved!"*The deeper your sense of unworthiness — the better, if you do not let it keep you from Christ. He looks for no *worthiness*in you. Strange to say, the worse you are — the more welcome!

*"But I have sunk so very low in sin."* So much the greater reason is there for you to come, and to come at once. The more desperate the disease — the more need for the physician. Just so, the greater your sin — the more your need of the Savior.

*"But perhaps I am not elected."*If you knew you were, you would have no more right to come than you have now. The invitation is not sent to the *elect* — but to *all*who are in the streets and lanes of the city, to all who are in the *highways*and *hedges*, to all who need salvation and cannot save themselves. Whoever will, may come. All who hear the *invitation*should come, and take of the fountain of the water of life freely. There is no *presumption*in coming — but there is gross *ingratitude*in staying away.

*"But after all, I am afraid."* Afraid of what?

Being refused? That is impossible.

Afraid of whom? Of Jesus? He sent the invitation to you.

Of the Father? He made the feast for you.

Of the Holy Spirit? He drew up the invitation received by you.

Of the Lord's people? They will only be too happy to see you come. Come then, O come, for all things are ready! Come to the gospel feast!

Beloved, are you at work? Are you going into the streets and lanes of the city, and out into the country villages, to tell of this glorious feast, and bid poor starving sinners to it. Every Christian should be engaged in this work. There is room, therefore there is work for all, and to each and all — the Master says, "*Compel*them to come in."

How are you succeeding? Have you induced many to come in? Success is encouragement — but whether we succeed or not — our duty is plain. The *reward*of every active, diligent, persevering servant is certain, according to his *work* — not according to his *success*. "Every man shall receive his own reward — according to his own *labor*." Success may crown your future efforts — if it has not the past. But whether successful or not — it will be glorious to hear the Master say at last, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things — I will make you ruler over many things! Enter into the joy of your Lord!"

***~~No Longer Strangers~~***

The Lord sometimes directs his people to *look back*and *remember*what they were — that the contrast between the past and the present may . . .  
increase their *gratitude*,  
deepen their sense of *obligation*, and  
fill them with admiring thoughts of his *free and sovereign grace!*

Paul often does this in his epistles to the Churches — let us look at one instance. "Now therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners — but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." [Ephesians 2:19](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph 2.19).

**WHAT WE WERE BY NATURE.** "Strangers." Strangers upon earth — strangers to all that is great, good, and glorious. We were strangers to *ourselves*, as fallen, depraved, and yet immortal beings. We knew not the *disease*under which we labored, nor the only *remedy*by which we could be restored. We knew not our extreme *weakness* — or our desperate *wickedness*. We were strangers to God, having no correct views of his *nature*or government, much less of his covenant character, as" a just God and a Savior." We knew him not as revealed in Jesus, nor Jesus himself as the only, almighty, and all-willing Savior. We were strangers to the spirituality of the *law*, and the extent of its requirements; and also to the graciousness of the *gospel*, and its wondrous provisions. We knew scarcely anything of the most solemn and important subjects, living as we did without hope and without God in the world.

We were not only *strangers*, as we might be in some parts of our own country — but we were "foreigners." We were subjects of another prince, having lived in another kingdom. The Lord's *people*, their experience and privileges, were altogether strange to us. We could not . . .  
comprehend their *ideas*,  
understand their *language*,  
like their *habits*, or  
enjoy their *privileges*.

All were new, strange, and uncommon to us; as they must be to all — until they are born again, and by the Spirit's teaching enter into the kingdom. This is well called being *delivered from the power of darkness*, and being *translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son*. We come among strangers, and into a city where all is new, because all is spiritual.

**WHAT WE ARE BY GRACE.** We say *by grace*, because it is of grace alone — that we differ from what we were. We were afar off from God and his people — but we are made near by the blood of Christ, who is our peace. He made peace with God for us, and by his gospel proclaimed peace to us, and entitled us to free and uninterrupted access to God.

We are now "fellow citizens with the saints." We are come to the mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and are entitled to all the privileges and immunities of that honored and beloved city. We are at liberty to *wash*in the city fountain, opened for sin and uncleanness, where we may cleanse our persons, and make our robes white in the blood of the Lamb. We are entitled to wear the city *robes*, which constitute our court dress, and in which we are declared to be all *fair*. These are the garments of salvation, and the robe of righteousness. We may make use of the city *treasury*, and from the unsearchable riches of Christ draw all that we need, and as we need it. It is our privilege to claim a place at the city *feasts*, enjoying fellowship with the most exalted personages in the city. We share in the city protection, being surrounded with the walls of salvation and the bulwarks of grace. We have access to the chief *magistrate*, even the King of kings and Lord of lords. We worship at the city *altar*, even that altar which sanctifies both the giver and the gift. We are also of the "household of God." God, the eternal God, is our father. The unsearchable riches of Christ are our *birthright*. The glorious host of angels are our *attendants*. Heaven, which is our Father's house, is our final *home*. O blessed state! O glorious privilege!

*Man by nature*is truly miserable. He is a stranger to all that is good, and destitute of all that is necessary to make him happy. He is afar off from God — and involved in guilt and misery. All at present, all is dark and dreary, and the future is charged with all that is alarming and dreadful.

*Saints by grace*are really happy. They are reconciled to God, and enjoy peace with him. They are acquitted from all charges, and enjoy the divine favor. They are accepted in the Beloved, and are assured of everlasting life.

If we enjoy this happiness, we should be affected with the contrast between the present and the past.

We *were*children of wrath — we are now the children of God.

We were strangers to God — we are now His friends.

We were foreigners — we are now fellow citizens with the saints.

We were homeless and fatherless — we are now members of the household of God.

We should therefore praise the *riches of divine grace*, which has made us to differ! We should spread abroad the glorious good news of our redemption and salvation. We should help the city *heralds*, in publishing the city proclamations, and in inviting others to the city feasts! We should help the city *watchman*, in guarding the walls, and being on the look out for invading foes! We should be prepared to co-operate with the city *guards*, in defending the rights, privileges, and honors of the city! We should assist the *stewards*of God's household, in the varied duties that devolve upon them, especially in feeding the young of the family.

Reader, what is your state? Are you in the state of nature — or in grace? Are you afar off from God — or made near by the blood of Jesus? Are you a stranger — or a member of God's household? Are you a foreigner — or a fellow citizen with the saints? One or the other you must be. You were the former naturally, as all are by nature; but are you the latter by grace, as only the Lord's people are? No *strangers*enter Heaven, only those of the household. No *foreigners*are admitted to the inheritance of the saints in light — but only those who are now fellow citizens with the saints. Gracious Lord, where am I? What am I? Let me not live and die a stranger to you — but let me be your friend, your servant, your child — for Jesus' sake!

***~~Look upon Me!~~***

Humble hearts prize small mercies — and in their prayers they often ask for very simple things. A word or a look from God, is at times, all that they can venture upon asking — or a ray of light from a father's loving countenance. It was a sweet prayer presented by the Psalmist, when he cried, "Look upon me, and have mercy on me, as you always do to those who love your name." [Psalm 119:132](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps 119.132). Observe,

**THE REFERENCE.**It is God's usual method of dealing with His people, David therefore simply prayed for the family portion. The Lord has looked upon His people . . .  
in their natural state — and pitied them,  
when under conviction of sin — and pardoned them,  
when in sadness and sorrow — and comforted them,  
when in confusion and perplexity — and directed them,  
when in trouble and trial — and delivered them,  
when in need — and supplied them,  
when in danger — and shielded them,  
when passing along the last stage of their journey at death — and received them!

Yes, the eye of the Lord has ever been on His people,  
His hand has been open to supply them, and  
His heart has rejoiced over them, to do them good.

**THE PETITION.**"Look upon me."

Look, and have mercy — for I am sorely tried.

Look, and sympathize with me — for I am greatly troubled.

Look, and strengthen me — for I am very feeble.

Look, and encourage me — for I am full of fears.

Look, and be a Father unto me — for I long to be treated as one of Your children.

Look, upon me, as you did on Peter — and break my heart, for I have sinned.

Look upon me, as you did on Gideon — and give me courage, for like him, I am timid and very fearful.

Look upon me, as you did on Israel — and deliver me, for I also am in difficulty and danger.

Look upon me, as you did on Elizabeth — and take away my reproach, or I also shall be despised.

It is God's custom to look upon, and show mercy to his own people. They are brought where they need mercy, then they prize mercy, then they cry for mercy, and the Lord looks — and they receive mercy.

Where there is real grace, there the desire of the heart is to be treated as one of God's own children. "Remember me with the favor which you bear unto your people." If we have no distinct law, or special promise, then we may plead custom. "Look upon me, and have mercy on me, as you always do to those who love your name." God has ever been accustomed to deal tenderly and graciously with those who love his name, therefore we may plead with him to deal mercifully with us.

Beloved, do you ever pray thus? Are you desirous to be treated just as God's people are? Are you satisfied with the portion of God's poor and afflicted people? The poorest saint, is better off than the richest sinner! The most afflicted believer, is happier than the healthiest and most prosperous unbeliever. One merciful look from the Lord, will turn . . .  
a prison — into a palace;  
a dungeon — into a paradise; and  
the chamber of sickness — into the vestibule of Heaven!

Lord, look upon me, and help me to look up to you — so shall I not only be numbered among your people — but shall share with them in all the blessings of grace now, and all the blessings of glory at my journey's end.

O Savior, may we never rest  
'Til You are formed within;  
'Til You have calmed our troubled breast,  
And crushed the power of sin!

Oh may we gaze upon your cross,  
Until the wondrous sight  
Makes earthly treasures seem but dross,  
And earthly sorrows light!

Until, released from carnal ties,  
Our spirit upward springs,  
And sees true peace above the skies,  
True joy in heavenly things!

There as we gaze, may we become  
United, Lord, to thee;  
And in a fairer, happier home  
Your perfect beauty see!

***~~It Behooved Christ to Suffer~~***

The sufferings of Christ, as the substitute of his people, is a very marvelous subject. That he should take the nature of the sinner, put himself in the place of the guilty, and bear their sins in his own body on the tree — is truly astonishing. Such a plan of salvation, manifesting such love, never could have entered into any mind — but the mind of God. The Scriptures are full of this subject, they not only set it forth — but show the *necessity*there was for it. Let us look at one passage on this point. "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." [Luke 24:46](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke 24.46).

***~~IT BEHOOVED CHRIST TO SUFFER. WHY?~~***

*Because out of the depth of his infinite love to his people* — he had offered to do it in the everlasting covenant. His offer had been accepted, and it was arranged, that in the fullness of time he should be made of a woman, and die the just for the unjust, to bring sinners unto God.

*The justice of God had decreed it.* The *penalty*of sin must be paid, the *desert*of sin must be suffered. If this fell on man — he would be lost forever. Jesus, to prevent this, offered to endure it — the offer was accepted, and divine justice decreed that standing in the sinner's place, he should suffer and die in the sinner's stead.

*The word of God declared it.* The word reveals, not only the *events*of time — but God's eternal *purposes*. It testified therefore, "He shall make his soul an offering for sins." "He shall bear their iniquities." "He shall magnify the law, and make it honorable." Jesus therefore in order to make good the word, was delivered for our offences, and died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.

*The sacrifices of old times prefigured it.*They were the *shadow*of good things to come. They all pointed to Christ, and but for the sacrifice of Christ, they would be all useless. As the antitype of the sacrifices, as the end of the law for righteousness — it behooved Christ to suffer.

*Man's sin deserved it.* All that Jesus did, was necessary to justify our persons; and all that Jesus suffered, was the desert of our sins. We committed the crime, and he paid the penalty. We accumulated the debt — and he came and discharged it. All that sin deserved — Jesus endured; and as he had engaged to do so — it behooved him to suffer.

*Redemption required it.*We could be redeemed without money — but not without a price, and that price must at least be equal in value to the property redeemed. Such a price no one could furnish but God, nor could it be found any where but in the blood of his dear Son. As therefore we were to be redeemed from sin, Satan, death, and Hell — as Jesus came to give his life as the ransom price — it behooved Christ to suffer.

*The glory of God is advanced by it.* Every perfection of his nature, and every principle of his government, is glorified in our salvation through the sufferings of his Son! His glory is great in our salvation, and throughout eternity he will be reaping a revenue of glory from the same. As God could thus be greatly and eternally glorified in our salvation, by the substitution and death of Jesus — it behooved Christ to suffer.

**IT BEHOOVED CHRIST TO RISE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD.** A dead Christ could be no Savior. He must rise from the dead. The *Scriptures*foretold it — and they must be fulfilled. *Justice*demanded it — for all it could exact, was paid; all it could inflict, was endured. His word and work required it. He had said he would rise again, and his word could not be broken. His work was finished, and finished to perfection; and its perfection required that He should be raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father. He had promised to send the Comforter, and his resurrection was necessary to the fulfillment of this promise. He had to represent his people in Heaven before his Father, to intercede for them with his Father, to prepare their places in his Father's house, and to complete his engagement by sending down all that was necessary to secure their eternal salvation. In order to all this — it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.

Christ has suffered all that our sins deserved. If therefore we believe in him, take shelter in him, and look for salvation to him — then we shall never suffer for sin. We may be corrected, or instructed by the rod — but punishment, in the proper sense of the word, will never be inflicted on us, for Jesus has borne it all. Jesus is liberated from the prison of death. God sent his glorious angels to fetch him out, thereby testifying that the debt was fully paid, that justice was perfectly satisfied; and that the sinner's substitute must now go free!

His resurrection is for the justification of every believer. His freedom, declares us free, who believe on his dear name. He who *bore*our sins for us — will *pardon*sin in us. To bear the punishment of sin was hard — but to pardon sin that has been atoned for is easy. Jesus has power to forgive sins, and he pardons all who apply to him, and as often as we apply to him. As Jesus arose from the dead — so must his people. The resurrection of the *head* — secures the resurrection of the *body*. He arose as the first fruits of those who slept, and as the first fruits are presented to the Lord, the whole harvest is sanctified, and shall be safely gathered in. In the *death*of Jesus — our death to sin was secured; and in the resurrection of Jesus — our glorious resurrection is rendered certain.

There is now an everlasting, ever-living Savior, for lost and ruined sinners. Christ being raised from the dead, dies no more, death has no more dominion over him. He ever lives, and lives to save all who come unto God by him. Having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, he will never put away the sinner, who seeks salvation at his hands. Having conquered Satan for us on the cross — he will conquer Satan in us, by his grace.

Beloved, if you are a believer, rejoice that Christ has suffered, and has thereby made an infinite atonement for your sins! Rejoice more, that Jesus arose from the dead, as a conqueror over all your foes; and has gone into Heaven to take care of all your spiritual and eternal interests, and that now He ever lives to make intercession for you.

Sinner, here is a precious Savior, who having died for sin, is now able to save you; not only *able*, but *willing*also. If you will be saved by him — you must come to him, call upon him, believe in him, commit your soul to him. Only sincerely believe, and your sins are pardoned, and your resurrection to life and glory are sure!

***~~The Blessing Commanded~~***

Peace, unity, and love are among the greatest blessings which a church of Christ can enjoy — and they are generally found in company. Without love — there can be no unity; and without unity — there can be no peace. Where brethren dwell together in unity, God's blessing rests — it descends copiously, regularly, and suitably; like the ointment on the head of Aaron, or the dew on the mount Hermon, or on the mountains of Zion. "It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing — even life forevermore." [Psalm 133:3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps 133.3). *Mount Zion and its fructifying dews*, is a beautiful picture of a peaceful, united, and prosperous Church.

**THE PLACE.** Mount Zion, the spot chosen for the erection of the temple, the palace and dwelling-place of God. God's *church*is God's *choice*. He has *chosen*it for his habitation. It is his earthly dwelling place. It is all that is good, or excellent or desirable. It exists as the effect of God's choice of it in Christ, his connecting of it with Christ, and the grace which he gave it in Christ before the world began.

God's Church — is the Savior's rest. Here be rests with his people, enjoys communion with them, and indulges them with the manifestations of him blessed self. Here he unfolds his truth, bestows his grace, and imparts his Spirit.

God's church — is the saint's home. Here the *brethren*dwell. Here the *Father*presides. Here the Savior and elder Brother expends the riches of his grace. Nowhere on earth, do believers enjoy so much home feeling, as in the church. It is often like the ante-chamber of Heaven, where they enjoy *foretastes*of the inheritance of the saints in light. God's church, is the Spirit's temple. Here the *Comforter*is worshiped and adored. Here he bestows his gifts, carries on his work, assists the family in their devotions, and glorifies the exalted Redeemer. Blessed place! Glorious society! May the church of God be my choice, my resting-place, my home on earth, and the temple where I worship a triune God!

***~~THE PRIVILEGE.~~***

"*There*the Lord commanded the blessing." Here is *sovereignty*. There, not everywhere — there, not anywhere — there in his church, the Lord, in the exercise of his unquestionable right, gives the blessing.

Here is *authority*. "He *commanded*the blessing." God's will — is his creature's law. If he commands — the universe must obey. If he blesses — none can hinder, or revoke it. He has blessed his church, and blessed her with all spiritual blessings.

Here is *love*. He might have exercised his sovereignty, he might have displayed his majesty — without his showing infinite love. Sovereignty, authority, and love, are alike exercised and displayed — when God blesses his church. The blessing he gives is *great*, like the all-pervading dew. The blessing he gives is *numerous*, as the myriads of drops that compose it. The blessing he gives is *constant*, as the dew falls in eastern countries.

**THE *NATURE*OF THE BLESSING.** "Even *life*for evermore!" LIFE is God's greatest blessing, for by this — he banishes death, introduces happiness, and stamps with immortality. It is life in his *likeness* — for we shall be made as much like God as creatures can be! It is life in his *service* — for we shall be employed in serving and glorifying him forever! It is life in his *presence* — when we shall see his face, hear his voice and enjoy his manifestations forever! It is life in his favor — in the sunshine of his smile, under a sense of his approbation, and persuaded of his infinite and eternal love!

The happiest place on earth, is God's Zion. Here . . .  
his people meet,  
his presence is enjoyed, and  
the dew of his blessing continually descends.

Perfect happiness is no where to be found on earth — but the nearest claim to it, is what is enjoyed in a holy, peaceful, and prosperous gospel church.

The *greatest*gift is eternal life. This Jesus gives to all of his sheep. This God confers upon the whole of his beloved church. Let us therefore live in expectation of eternal life. Let us in the midst of this dead and dying world — rejoice in the prospect of life for evermore.

*Authority*and *grace*unite to make the Lord's people blessed. The *Sovereign*and the *Father*are alike seen, in the blessedness of the Lord's people. God, on the throne of his *holiness* — commanded the blessing to descend. God, in the exercise of his *paternal love* — sent his only begotten Son to bless us! Thus the prayer is answered, "O that you would bless me indeed!"

The benefit arising from *peace*, *unity*, and *brotherly love* — is incalculable. Wherever these reign, there the text is fulfilled, the fructifying dew descends — and the blessing, even life for evermore, is commanded. Sinners are converted, believers are quickened, and the whole body is favored with lively hopes, vigorous faith, and spiritual joys.

Gracious *God*, give to every Church of Jesus, union, and love; and on the whole of your family on earth, let *your blessing*be copiously enjoyed.

O *Jesus*, you are the life — as such dwell in me, and dwell among your people with whom I meet and worship, for your mercy's sake.

*Holy Spirit*, you are the spiritual dew, descend, O descend on your people, and make them fruitful, beautiful, and glorious!

O that God would command the blessing on our poor fallen world — even life for evermore!

***~~Whose Slave Are You?~~***

Scripture religion is variously represented. Sometimes it is a *glorious privilege* — and sometimes a *solemn duty*. It is in reality, both. A more glorious privilege man cannot enjoy — than to be the adopted child of God; a more solemn duty cannot devolve on a creature — than to be the slave of the Son of God. Slaves are known often by their *uniform* — and God's slaves are to be known by their *holiness*. Slaves of old, were often known by their master's *brand* — and the slaves of Christ were often known by their *sufferings*. Like the Apostle of old, they "bear about in the body, the marks," or the brand, "of the Lord Jesus."

There are *two distinct classes*of slaves in the world, and it is important to know to which we belong. The apostle teaches us how to do this, especially when he says, "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves,*you are slaves to the one whom you obey* — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?" [Romans 6:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom 6.16). This passage,

**SUGGESTS AN INQUIRY.** *Who is your Master?*There are but *two great masters*in the world — and we all serve one or the other. Who then is your master?

Is it SATAN? If so — then sin is your service. You neglect what God requires — and you do what God forbids. You . . .  
indulge the lusts of the flesh,  
enjoy the lust of the eye,  
and walk in the pride of life.

*The world is your home!* Only give you enough of the world, and health and opportunity to enjoy it — and you need no more. You would rather have your portion in Paris — than in paradise.

If so, then *Hell will be your wages!*For the wages of sin is death. If you obey Satan, you love sin and live in its indulgence. You follow the multitude in the broad road that leads to destruction. You yield to the flesh, and allow it to tyrannize over your conscience and affections.

Who is your master? Is it CHRIST? Then holiness is your delight, and obedience to gospel precepts is your joy. The Church of God is your home, and believers in Christ are your brethren. Eternal life will be your reward, not as merited or deserved by you — but as freely given you by your generous and gracious Master. The gift of God is eternal life — if you obey Christ, you reverence the divine word, both the holy law, and the gracious Gospel. You hallow your Savior's name, never using it lightly, or uttering it without reverence. You rely on his precious blood and glorious righteousness, as the ground of your acceptance with God. You yield to his Spirit — speaking to you in the word, or working within you, and prompting you to perform good works. You unite with his people — whom you esteem the excellent of the earth, and in whom is all your delight. You look and long for his glorious appearing, and as you anticipate his second advent, you often exclaim, "O to see my Master!" The passage also,

**EXHIBITS A DISTINCTION.**If you obey SATAN — then you are his slaves. He *works*in you. He *rules*over you. He leads you *captive*at his will. You know nothing of liberty — but are tied and bound by the fetters of sin, and chained with unbelief. You are his property. He dwells in you. He lays claim to you. He often appoints you to the most degrading services. You are his *companions* — gladly walking with him in the broad way to eternal destruction. You are Satan's *child* — and to you the language of Jesus may be applied, "You are of your father the devil — and the lusts of your father you will do!"

If you are CHRIST'S — then you are a free man, for whom Jesus employs he liberates, and if the Son makes us free, then are we free indeed. Our freedom is worthy of the name. You are his *brother*, as he said," Whoever shall do the will of my father who is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

If you are Christ's — then you are his *co-heirs*. "Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." O how wonderful for a slave to be a free man — -not only a free man — but the master's brother — not only the master's brother — but a joint heir with him of his vast property, and magnificent estates!

How much then depends on the question, "Who is your master?" How plain is the answer, "You are slaves to the one whom you *obey*."

Let us then examine — whose are we? Christ's or Satan's — we must be. To belong to both at the same time is impossible. Therefore Jesus said, "You cannot serve both God and mammon."

Who has our hearts? What engages our thoughts most? Whom do we habitually aim to please? If Jesus is our master — then . . .  
he will have our *affections*,  
around him our *thoughts*will gather, and  
our great *aim*and *desire*will be to please him.

Let us then *prove*to *whom*we belong. This is to be done by our *service*. Mere *profession*proves nothing — but *obedience*does.

If the will of Jesus is our law,  
if the precepts of Jesus are our rule,  
if the smile of Jesus is highly prized by us, and  
f the approbation of Jesus is sought before anything else —  
then there can be little doubt but that Jesus is our master!

Let us *beware*, lest we should be *mistaken*. "Be not deceived," is a divine caution. *Satan*is a great deceiver. The *heart*is deceitful above all things. And we read, "Exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the *deceitfulness of sin*."

With a deceitful heart within us, a deceitful devil practicing upon us,

and the deceitfulness of sin in action all around us — we may well exhort one another to beware! Especially when we consider what we have at stake!

All the slaves of *Satan*, will at last be commanded to depart from the Savior — into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his demons. All the slaves of Jesus, will be invited by the all-glorious King to accompany him, and take possession of the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Do not wonder then, that we press home the question, "Whose slave are you?"

***~~Has God Forgotten to Be Gracious?~~***

The variations in the *Christian's experience*are often very perplexing, especially to the young Christian. Both in providence and grace, things occur the very opposite to what he *expected*. He forgets that he is to walk by *faith* — and not by sight; and therefore he falls to *reasoning*. This misleads him, and increases the gloom around him, so that he falls to *questioning*all that God has wrought within him, or spoken to him in his holy word. At times he sinks as low as Asaph did, and asks,*"Has God forgotten to be gracious?"*[Psalm 77:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps 77.9).

Let us notice **WHAT THE QUESTION SUPPOSES**. It supposes at least, that God was known to be gracious, and had been gracious to the soul aforetime. His grace had once been seen and enjoyed. But a *change*had taken place, and the party was now sorely tried either in providence or grace, or both. The *hand*of God was not seen, the *love*of God was not felt, the *work*of God did not appear. *Satan*takes advantage of this, and plies the soul with temptations, while *unbelief*works powerfully within. The aspect of everything is now changed — and the soul walks in darkness having no light. Wrong views of God are taken, portions of Scripture are misapplied, the design of providence is mistaken — and the soul is cast down and troubled!

This leads to **THE INTERROGATION ITSELF**. "Has God forgotten to be gracious?" Strange question this, for a *believer*to ask. What — the Lord forget *his child?*Impossible! Mothers may forget their offspring — but what says the Lord? "Yet, I will never *forget*you." What — forget his *covenant*, in which He pledges his word, that he will not turn away from you from doing of you good? What, forget his *promise?*No, he still says, "O Israel, you shall not be forgotten by me!"

Can God change his *nature?*He is naturally gracious. Can God break his engagement? His word is, "I will be very gracious unto you at the voice of your cry; when I shall hear — I will answer." Can God deny his*name?* It is, "Gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and in truth." But if not — then why ask such a question?

You say perhaps, "Needs pinch me. Men oppress me. Means fail me. No answers to prayer are given me. God appears to *neglect*me. Providence seems to have turned against me. The Comforter that should relieve my soul — is far from me. The work of God is at a stand-still, both within me and around me. Can it then be any wonder, that I ask: Has God forgotten to be gracious?"

**THE REPLY.** No, God has not forgotten, grace is at the bottom of all that you complain of. His *delays*are gracious. The *hiding*of his face is in mercy. He intends . . .  
to try — and then revive your grace;  
to quicken you in prayer — and then answer your petitions;  
to enhance the value of your mercies — and lead you to prize them more;  
to make you of use to others — and your experience a blessing to your fellow believers.

He will allow Satan to pursue you for a time — and then he will signally confound him. He intends to stir you up to more energetic efforts in his cause, for the glory of his name, and the spread of his truth.

God is naturally and unchangeably, gracious!

He may change his *dealings* — but nothing shall change his *nature*. He may *act*differently to what he did — but his *heart*remains unchangeably the same. The *sun of grace*does not always shine. But though it does not always shine on you — it is still in the heavens and shines on others; and the *cloud*that now prevents its rays reaching you, will soon pass away. Though it is dark now — it will be light soon. Darkness is but for the night — joy comes in the morning. Wait awhile, believe and pray, and soon, very soon — the light of joy and peace will shine upon you!

***~~The Savior's Assurance~~***

The *tenderness*of Jesus, and his concern for the happiness of his dear people, appears on almost every page of his history. His gentle nature, his lamb-like character, his unfailing love, are always being presented to our view. As he revealed his Father, his aim seems constantly to be to produce love to his Father, and to lead his beloved ones, to exercise strong confidence in him. How sweetly he informs them that it was not absolutely necessary for him to pray to the Father for them, to induce him to give good things to them, assuring them, "The Father himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came from God." [John 16:27](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John 16.27).

Notice how he describes **THE BELOVED ONES**. "You have loved Me." All who love Jesus — are beloved of his Father. If we love Jesus — we love him as the Savior of sinners, the Savior of our souls; as the Son of God, given to deliver us from the wrath to come. We love him for what he has *done* — in laying down his life for us. We love him for what He has *given* — his Holy Spirit and his word. We love him for what he has *promised*yet to do — even to come and receive us unto himself, that where he is, there we maybe also. We love him so as to confess his name, and profess our faith in him so as to obey him — and if need be, to suffer in his cause. We love him so as to imitate him — and make his example the rule of our life.

"You have believed that I came from God." All who believe in Jesus, are beloved of his Father. We believe in his pre-existence, that he was God before he was man; and was with God before he was with us. We believe in his voluntary undertaking for us, and in his covenant engagements on our behalf. We believe in his divine mission, that he came forth from God, to do his Father's will, speak his Father's words, and testify to his Father's love. We believe in his love to us — and therefore we love him in return. Wherever there is faith in Christ, however weak; or love to Christ, however feeble — there is a proof of the Father's love.

Think the, of**THE LOVE IN WHICH THEY ARE INTERESTED**. "The *Father himself*loves you."

It is *paternal*love. Such love as the Father feels toward his only begotten Son, who is emphatically called, "The Son of his love."

It is *invincible*love. It cannot be conquered or overcome, however resisted. It is not only as strong as death — but stronger than death. Nor would it be too much to say that it is *omnipotent*love.

It is ever *active*love. It never rests, nor will it, while it can in any way benefit or bless its beloved objects.

It is *condescending*love. It stoops to anything and everything, even to wash poor sinners' feet — to wash their feet! It stooped to *death*for them, even the death of the cross.

It is *forgiving*love. O how much it has forgiven! How often it has forgiven! How ready it is to forgive! How precious is that testimony, "God for Christ's sake, has forgiven you."

It is *freely-giving*love. Anything that the loved ones need — all that the loved ones need — this love is prepared to give, and to give all *freely*.

It is *never-ending*love. God himself calls it "everlasting love." We cannot trace out its *beginning*, we cannot discover any *interruption*in it, nor will it be possible to find an *end*to it.

Man' s greatest dignity — is to be loved of God. O how wonderful that God should love *us* — and love us with a love that is paternal, invincible, ever active, condescending, forgiving, bounteous, and everlasting! The clearest evidences of our interest in this love — are *faith*in, and *love*to Jesus. Our *faith*is the *gift*of God — a gift of his love. Our *love*is produced by God — and is the effect of his own love to us. So that if we confide in Jesus — it is because God has given us faith; if we love Jesus — it is because God has shed abroad his love in our hearts. Faith and love are the gifts and proofs of God's love to us. The kindness of Jesus is great in giving us this assurance. What could he have said so calculated to make us happy, as to inform us, "The Father himself loves you!"

Holy Spirit, place this kindness of Jesus before us in the clearest and most striking light, that so we may be deeply and permanently affected by it. Increase our *faith*in Jesus, and our *love*to Jesus — that our *evidences*of interest in the Father's love may be plain and satisfactory. Help, O help us, to value the dignity conferred upon us, that we should be constituted the objects of God's infinite and eternal love!

Father of Heaven, almighty King,  
How wondrous is your love,  
That worms of dust, your praise should sing,  
And you their songs approve!

Since by a new and living way,  
Access to you is given,  
Poor sinners may with boldness pray,  
And earth converse with Heaven!

***~~Is Your Heart Right?~~***

*Solemn questions*often make deep impressions. Many such questions are found in God's word. And some, not so solemn when literally taken, become so when spiritually applied. The question of Jehu, to Jehonadab, is one of these. *"Is your heart right?"*[2 Kings 10:15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2 Kings 10.15).

Everything is — as the heart is. The heart by nature is wrong — all wrong. In order to its being right — it must be changed. The work of the Holy Spirit must be experienced.

Let us look at its **PREPARATION**. Life and light are imparted by the Spirit, and the result is — we see its filthiness. Nothing that we have ever seen is so polluted! It must be cleansed, and cleansed thoroughly — before it can be right with God. We feel it to be *depraved*. Ten thousand evils work in it! All its tendencies are to sin. It is indeed fallen, and fallen very low. We prove it to be wicked. Every promise of amendment, it violates. Every resolution to change for the better, it breaks. It will keep within no bounds. It will walk by no rule, or least of all by God's rule. It loves sin — and after sin it will go. We find it infirm. When at any time a good thought rises or a good purpose is formed — we are unable to carry it out. "When we would do good — evil is present with us." Sin, Satan, and the world are too strong for us! We attempt in vain to produce the desired change.

We are strong to do evil — but weak to do good. We see the *need*of a change, we even *desire*a change, we attempt to *effect*a change — but we are tied and bound by sin and evil habits! "How to perform that which is good, we find not." We despair of ever correcting its evils. It may be long before we come to this — but come to it we must. A very painful and wearisome process may precede it — but here we must be brought, for until we sink into self-despair — the heart is never right. Then we take it to Jesus, and surrender it to him. We are obliged to take it just as it is — lay it at his feet, and beseech him to take it, cleanse it, and make it fit for himself! This he always condescends to do, and when the heart is in Christ's hand, cleansed in his blood, and adorned with the graces of his Spirit — it is *right*.

Let us glance at, **THE PROOF**. If the heart is right — we approve of what God requires. We consent unto the law, that it is good. We delight in the law of God after the inward man. We esteem all his precepts, concerning all things to be right, and we hate every false way. To us his commandments are not grievous.

We *believe*what God *reveals*. We no longer stumble at doctrines, or object to ordinances. Whatever God says — we believe. Whatever God commands — we do. We admit his wisdom, admire his condescension, and gratefully receive all his communications. We seek what God promises. If we have a need, and God has promised — we make no doubt but he intends to bestow, and we ask of him accordingly. Confidence in the *promise*arises out of confidence in the character of the *promiser*, and this confidence takes us to the throne of grace, with the promise in our hands for all we need.

We *enjoy*whatever God *sends*. A sense of our unworthiness sweetens God's mercies, and what we receive with gratitude, we enjoy with pleasure. Seeing that our good things flow from God's grace — gives a peculiar relish and sweetness to them all.

We *hate*what God hates. Drinking into his spirit, we share in his sympathies. God hates only sin — but he hates all sin, and hates all sin everywhere, and at all times. We therefore, when our hearts are right — hate sin too, and *all*sin, and we *always*hate sin. We love him most, whom God commends.

The upright, consistent, useful *believer*is commended of God, and is sure to be beloved by as. But Jesus, as the only begotten Son, who is commended by his Father to us, is especially beloved by us. We love him for his Father's sake, for his own sake, and for the sake of what he has done for us.

***~~THE RESULT.~~***

If the heart is right — God will visit it. He says, "To this man will I look — and with him will I dwell." The love-visits of our heavenly Father will be sure to be enjoyed, if our hearts are right with him.

If the heart is right — Christ will dwell in it. The Christian's heart is the Savior's home. He dwells in the heart by faith. He dwells in us as the hope of glory. If our hearts are right, we shall be privileged to say with Paul, "Christ lives in me!"

If the heart is right — the Spirit purifies it. He *cleanses*it with the word, and the precious blood of Jesus. He *purifies*it by faith. He implants his *grace*in it, which brings forth all the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.

If the heart is right — the *love of God*is shed abroad in it. This produces love to God in return, and also love to all that are godly. It is our *present Heaven*, and a foretaste of our future Heaven.

If the heart is right — we mourn over the sins of it. The heart is never right, unless there is godly sorrow for sin. This sorrow works repentance unto life. It produces that *brokenness of heart*which God so much approves, and which he accepts as a sacrifice.

If the heart is right — then *holiness*is much prized by it. We cannot rightly mourn over sin, without hating it; and we cannot hate sin — without loving holiness. Love to holiness, proves that the heart is clean, evidences the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and is one invariable result of its being right with God. Heaven is prepared to receive it.

If the heart is right — then God's holy Heaven, is to be the home of all holy hearts. If our hearts are right with God on earth, we shall doubtless dwell forever with God in Heaven. In Heaven, every heart is right with God; and every heart on earth that is right with God, will soon be in Heaven.

Some have the ***head***right — but not the *heart*. A sound creed — but not a new nature. Clear light — but not holiness of heart.

Some have the ***conduct***right — but not the heart. Correct morals — but no gracious dispositions. Old nature improved — but no new creation.

Some have the **heart**right — but not the head. Sound experience but not very clear conceptions of gospel truth. A heart panting for holiness and usefulness — with a creed part law and part gospel.

Some have the heart, head, and conduct right! This is the very best state we can be in — with . . .  
Christ in the heart,  
truth in the head,  
and holiness in the life.

Or, the entire person under the sanctifying, teaching, and guiding operations of the Holy Spirit.

If the heart is right now — then all will turn out right at the last. The heart cannot be right — unless the Holy Spirit has begun a good work in it; and if He has, we are "confident of this very thing — that He who has begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

***~~The Lord Has Done Great Things for Us!~~***

Our natural condition is truly miserable. Like that of Israel in Egypt or Babylon . . .  
the crown has fallen from our heads,  
our liberty is lost,  
a tyrant rules over us, and  
we are as degraded as we well can be!

In this state, the Lord . . .  
looks upon us,  
displays his grace, and  
manifests his sovereign mercy.

He imparts his Spirit, exerts his power, and wonderful effects follow, so that with the church of old we may well say, *"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy!"*[Psalm 126:3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps 126.3)

**THE FACT**. "The Lord has done great things for us!"

In *providence*, he has supplied us, protected us, elevated us, and distinguished us from thousands of our fellow creatures.

In *grace,*he has redeemed us by the blood of his Son; called us to the knowledge of himself, by his invincible grace; introduced us into the liberty of the gospel, by sending the Spirit of adoption into our hearts; and by numbering us among his holy and happy children. Nor has he wrought for us as *individuals*alone — but for his *church*of which we form a part. He has . . .  
converted sinners,  
comforted believers,  
restored backsliders,  
frustrated the designs of Satan, and  
conferred innumerable and invaluable blessings!

**THE EFFECT.** "The Lord has done great things for us — and *we are filled with joy!"*And well we may be. Would it not be astonishing if we were not filled with joy? Glad for our *own*sakes — who realize that we are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. Glad for the sake of our *relatives* — who are benefitted in a variety of ways. Glad for the sake of the *saints* — who are comforted and filled with joy. Glad for the sake of *sinners* — who are snatched from death, and saved from the wrath to come. Glad for the sake of *Jesus* — who sees of the travail of his soul, and is greatly glorified thereby. We are glad — and in testimony thereof, we praise and bless his great and glorious name! We consecrate ourselves afresh to his service, desiring to be more than ever devoted to his praise. We endeavor to spread his fame, and strive to bring many more to experience the same joy, and share the same blessedness!

Reader, What has God done for you? Are you one of the favored ones? Have you been delivered from Egyptian bondage, and from the Babylonish yoke? You were Satan's bondslave, and if you are delivered — you must have some knowledge of it. Some of the younger members of the Israelitish families, would not have so distinct, impressive, and powerful a sense of the Lord's delivering mercy in bringing them out of Egypt as the elder ones — but all would know something about it. Just so, all who are delivered from the bondage of sin and Satan, have not the same deep and vivid sense of the Lord's delivering grace — but all have some sense of it.

Has the Lord done great things for you?

If he has *chosen*you to eternal life,  
if he has *redeemed*you from death,  
if he has *called*you into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ,  
if he has put you among his *children*, and  
is he made you one of his *heirs* —  
then he *has*done great things for you!

What have you done for God? All for whom God does great things — are desirous of doing something for him; and in proportion to the sense they have of his mercy — is the strength of the desire to do much for him. Have you done *anything*for God, out of simple *gratitude*for what he has done for you? How do you feel toward God? Do you love him? Do you feel as a kind-hearted child does toward his loving and indulgent father? Or, as an emancipated slave, toward his kind and generous deliverer? How do you feel before God? Glad? Thankful? Full of gratitude? Israel did, and as they reviewed what God had done for them, their gratitude seemed to deepen and glow, and with glad hearts they said, *"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy!"*

If the Lord has done anything for you — he is prepared to do more; if he has done great things for you — He is ready to do greater. What he did, he did *freely*, out of his own loving heart — and He is ready and willing to show you greater things than these. God's doing for us — always precedes our doing for him. Our doing for God — always flows out of what He has done for us. May the Lord do for us yet, exceeding and abundantly above all that we can ask or think!

***~~Delight in God~~***

"*Delight yourself in the Lord* — and He will give you the desires of your heart!" [Psalm 37:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps 37.4)

Sin has taken our attention off of God — and fixed it upon ourselves, or the things around us.

Grace calls our attention off of everything else — to fix it upon God. It directs us to . . .  
look to the Lord,  
come to the Lord,  
trust in the Lord,  
wait on the Lord,  
hope in the Lord, and  
even delight in the Lord.

"Delight yourself in the Lord." Take delight — not in health, or wealth, or position, or character, or friends, or in anything that is changeable — but the unchangeable Lord. Delight yourself in His glorious character — as gracious, merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

Delight yourself in Him, as . . .  
the father of the fatherless,  
the friend of the friendless,  
the hope of the wretched,  
and the Savior of the lost.

Delight yourself in His gracious covenant, which . . .  
anticipates your needs,  
provides for your needs,  
limits your trials, and  
provides strength for the day, as every day's work requires.

Delight yourself in His paternal relation. He is not only your God — but your Father!

He cares for you, with a father's care!

He loves you, with a father's love!

He pities you, with a father's pity!

He will receive you to Heaven, as to your father's house!

Delight yourself in his precious promises. They are but drops from His ocean of love! They are intended to . . .  
show His love,  
display His grace,  
manifest His care,  
draw out your confidence,  
banish your fear, and  
assure you of all necessary supplies.

Delight yourself in his special providence. A providence that . . .  
marks your steps,  
directs your paths,  
measures your troubles,  
bounds the rage of your enemies,  
numbers the very hairs of your head, and  
makes all things work together for your good!

God in His providence, superintends all your affairs, even the most minute — so that nothing can happen to you by 'chance', or inadvertently do you harm!

"Delight yourself in the Lord." This is *more*than . . . *hope*in the Lord, or *believe*in the Lord, or *wait*on the Lord, or *love*the Lord, or even *rejoice*in the Lord.

To delight is to make God your joy, your exceeding joy, your highest pleasure. Peter speaks of "rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory!" and David says, "I would go unto God, unto God my exceeding joy!" Here are our *patterns*.

But if we would delight ourselves in the Lord, then . . .  
we must often and devoutly read what He has said of himself in his word;  
we must seriously and prayerfully think over it;  
we must realize its truth and importance;  
we must trust in his faithfulness and love;  
we must walk with him in familiar and holy fellowship; and  
we must resign ourselves and all we have to him to be used by him, and disposed of just as he sees fit.

**THE INDUCEMENT.**"Delight yourself in the Lord — and *he will give you the desires of your heart!"*If we delight ourselves in the Lord — then our principal and ruling desire will be his glory. Our hearts' daily cry will be, "Let the Lord be glorified!" We shall drink into his holy mind, and becoming like-minded with him — thus we shall desire only those things that please him. Our subordinate desires will be *generated by his grace*, and be *regulated by his holy word*. He will therefore gratify us, by giving what we wish, or by working what we desire. He will satisfy us, by bringing our minds into unison with his, so that with Jesus we shall say, "Not my will — but may yours be done."

He will delight us, either by giving us what we ask for — or some sweet manifestation of his love and grace instead. What we desire, or something *better* — he will give us, if we delight ourselves in him.

The way to be happy then — is to delight in God. To ensure our own way — is to seek the Lord's. God's will is best and wisest — ours therefore must be subordinate.

Delight in *creatures*only produces disappointment, dissatisfaction, and discomfort; but delight in *God*ensures satisfaction, comfort, and certainty. To delight in God, is only to prefer . . .  
the *fountain —*to the stream;  
the sun — to the candle;  
the fullness — to the shallow vessel.

We have never made *God*our object and our end — without being blessed. We have never preferred the *creature* — without smarting for it.

Delight in *God* — is one of the elements of the *happiness of Heaven*; and is at once the joy and dignity of our ransomed nature. Delight in *creatures* — is a great cause of the misery and unhappiness of earth; and proves that . . .  
our nature is fallen,  
our hearts are corrupt, and  
our understandings are darkened.

Gracious Lord, teach us to delight . . .  
in you, in your law,  
in your people,  
in your ways,  
in approaching to you,  
in doing your will,  
in suffering your pleasure —  
that in any way and every way we may promote your glory!

O Lord, I would delight in you,  
And on your care depend;  
To you in every trouble flee,  
My best, my only friend!

When all created *streams*are dried,  
Your *fullness*is the same;  
May I with this be satisfied,  
And glory in your name!

No good in creatures can be found  
But may be found in thee;  
I must have all things, and abound,  
While God is God to me.

***~~The Bridegroom Came!~~***

The Lord's people are looking forward and anticipating a most solemn and glorious event — even the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, in majesty and great glory.

The present period and the state of the Church, is represented by our Lord by an eastern wedding. The bride had been betrothed, the period had arrived for the husband to fetch her home. The virgins who were to be his attendants, took their lamps and went forth to meet him; but as He delayed — they fell asleep, at *midnight*the cry was heard, "The bridegroom comes!" Those who were ready met him with joy — the rest went to procure oil. While they were gone, "the Bridegroom came," and they were excluded from the ceremony and the feast. I want to fix the attention principally on one point, "The Bridegroom came!" [Matthew 25:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt 25.10).

**THE GLORIOUS PERSON APPEARING.**This is the Lord Jesus Christ, on whom the *eyes*of his people are fixed, and in whom all their *affections*center. We are not so much taken up with *doctrines*or even *facts*about him — as with a *person*, the person of Christ. He is the beloved One. He is loved by all his people, and preferred by them to all others. Their *salvation*, their *happiness*, their *all*is in him. He is at present *absent*from them, and while he is absent — they cannot be perfectly satisfied, or fully happy.

He is the *Bridegroom*, who ransomed his bride with his own blood, who has espoused us for himself, provided our marriage robes, prepared our mansion, won our love, and desires our presence. As much as He has in Heaven, as much as he delights in his Father's love — nothing will fully satisfy him, but having us with him! The language of his heart still is, "Father, I want those whom you have given me to be with me where I am — that they may behold my glory!"

**THE FACT ANNOUNCED.** "The Bridegroom came!" He came once in deep humiliation — *to pay the ransom price of his beloved bride*. Having done so, he sent his servants with the glad tidings, to espouse her unto himself. He went back to his Father — to use his influence on her behalf, and secure her safety and honor. He promised to come again — and receive her unto himself.

His believing people had been expecting him to come — but for wise and holy reasons, his advent had been delayed. But he is ever true to his word, and though the virgins became drowsy and fell asleep, at the time appointed time — he came. Such is the *outline of his history*, and as the former part of it has been fulfilled — so will the latter also.

Jesus will come again in His *glory*. He will come to consummate his marriage with His bride. He will then present her to His Father without spot — all glorious both within and without. He will satisfy her with His beauty, presence, and love forever! He will put her in possession of the promised inheritance — the kingdom provided for her from the foundation of the world. Then she will be freed from all sorrow, suffering, care, fear, and sin! Then she will behold His glory — and be glorified with Him forever!

What a stir the sudden coming of the Bridegroom will make among many of our *sleepy professors* — how it will startle, alarm, and terrify them! Into what confusion it will throw many of our money-loving, money-making church members — frustrating their schemes, and disappointing their expectations! How it will surprise many *proud pretenders*, who now pass for believers — and will only be discovered at the appearing of our Lord and Savior!

Let us then seriously put the question to the conscience, Am I espoused to Jesus? Do my desires, thoughts, and affections, center in him? Am I *prepared*for his coming? Is it to me the most *desirable*, as well as the most *glorious*event? Am I *watching*for it — as those that watch for the morning? Am I *waiting*for it — as the bride waits for the wedding day? Am I ready to go forth and *meet*the Bridegroom whenever the cry shall be heard, "Behold the bridegroom comes?"

If so, the *hope*will soon be realized. Jesus is now on his way. There are intimations of his near approach. We ought therefore to be on the tip-toe of expectation. The fact will soon be registered, "The Bridegroom came!" But if when he comes, our lamps should have gone out. If when we arise to *trim*them — we find that we have*no oil*in our vessels! If we should have to procure oil — when we ought to have to use! If while we attempt to obtain — he should enter into the bride chamber and the door be shut! How dreadful to be shut out from Jesus — to be shut out at midnight — to be shut out in the dark — to be shut out with hypocrites and unbelievers! This will be the doom of many, will it be ours? What if it should!

But may it be prevented? It may. Let us not only have the virgin *garb*, the *lamp*, and the *light* — but let us see to it that we have **oil**in our vessels with our lamps! Let us make sure that we have the **Holy Spirit**in our hearts. Let us not be satisfied to conclude from some *past experience*, that we *had*the Holy Spirit once — but let us daily seek the supplies of the Spirit of Christ. Let us make our calling and our election sure. Let us live in constant fellowship with Jesus, looking for the *blessed hope*, even the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior!

Satan will try all means in his power to divert us from this — but let us so watch and pray, that he may never prevail. Holy Spirit, prepare us, and keep us waiting, looking, and longing for the coming of Jesus!

***~~True Wisdom Incomparable~~***

"For wisdom is more profitable than silver, and her wages are better than gold. Wisdom is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. She offers you long life in her right hand, and riches and honor in her left. She will guide you down delightful paths; all her ways are satisfying. Wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her; happy are those who hold her tightly." [Proverbs 3:14-18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov 3.14-18)

The wisdom of God is a perfection of his which He *knows*all things, *arranges*all things, *provides*for all things, so that none of his purposes can be frustrated, or any of his plans be defeated. His every purpose, every plan, is infinitely wise, and must therefore carried out.

The Lord Jesus is the personal wisdom of God. Or, the wisdom of God personified, and represented — for in him dwells all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He is the only wise God, revealed and manifested. Divine wisdom in man, is real religion; or man sympathizing with God, fixing on the same end, falling in with the same plan, and carrying on the same work.

To get wisdom, is to become wise unto salvation; wise to secure all real good, and to escape from all real evil. Wisdom is commended to us by the wisest of men, and we are exhorted to get it and retain it; in order to which it is set forth as pre-eminently excellent. Hear the word, "She is more precious than jewels; nothing you desire compares with her!" [Proverbs 3:15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov 3.15)

Like some lovely female, having length of days in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor, leading in pleasant ways and peaceful paths — she is presented to engage our attention and win our love.

Let us look at **THE OBJECT**. True wisdom — or *real religion*as it stands in the knowledge and fear of God. At present, real religion is comprised in four things:

1. In the knowledge of Christ. He is the Savior. He saves all who put their trust in him. Every one who knows him, trusts in him, and is saved by him. No science is to be compared to the knowledge of Christ. It is never perfect — but will be forever capable of increase. Paul knew much — but how ardently he desired more. For it, he suffered the loss of all things, and still cried out, "That I may *know*him!" To know Christ is to be truly wise, eternally safe, and really happy.

2. The knowledge of Christ, always leads to ***union***with Christ. On him alone we rest. From him we draw all our supplies. By him we are empowered and directed. As the *building*rests on the foundation, as the *branch*receives from the vine, and as the *member*is directed by the head, so being in union with Christ, are we blessed and benefitted by him. As united to him, we are interested in all that belongs to him, and derive incalculable and eternal blessings from him.

3. This leads to ***conformity***to Christ. Receiving his Spirit, we observe his word, copy his example, and resemble him in some faint degree. The more we resemble Christ — the more we desire to do so; nor will anything but inward and outward likeness to Jesus, ever satisfy us.

4. Then comes the prospect of being ***forever with Christ***.

*Knowing*him — we cannot rest until we are in union with him; *united*to him — the highest object of our desire is to resemble him;  
and *resembling*him — the heart longs to be *with*him.

This is true religion, the religion of Christ. It has . . .  
Christ for its *object*and *subject*;  
Christ for its *source*and *cente*r;  
Christ as its *Alpha*and *Omega*.

It brings us to Christ — as sinners;  
unites us with Christ — as believers;  
conforms us to Christ — as Christians;  
and forever connects us with Christ — as saints.

**THE *transcendent excellency*OF THIS OBJECT.**"She is more precious than jewels; nothing you desire compares with her!"

Men desire *health* — but bodily health is only for a time. Divine wisdom gives perpetual health, both of body and soul.

Men desire *wealth* — but riches are not forever. Divine wisdom gives unsearchable riches — durable riches and righteousness.

Men desire *life* — but human life is brief. Divine wisdom gives everlasting life, and life in perfection and interminable blessedness.

Men desire *honor* — but earthly honor is fading. Divine wisdom confers the highest honors, associating us in the nearest relation with God, who is the source of all real honor.

Men desire *pleasure* — but what does earthly pleasure amount to? Wisdom leads to *rivers*of pleasure, to *oceans*of joy, to *fountains*of purest delight!

Men desire fame — but fame among sinners, is but a puff of noisy breath. Divine wisdom makes us famous, if not on earth — in Heaven; if not in time — in eternity.

If therefore we would possess health and wealth; if we would live forever, and live forever in honor; if we would enjoy endless pleasure, and shine among God's worthies — then we must get wisdom! It is transcendently excellent, for all the world would not purchase it — though God freely gives it! Nor would the possession of the whole world make up for the loss of it — if we neglect and despise it. Nor would a world, or ten thousand worlds, make a man half so happy.

If we obtain this wisdom, or if we are truly godly — then we shall exist forever in health, wealth, honor, pleasure, and renown. We shall dwell with God, be like his beloved Son, and never know a painful desire, anxious wish, or gloomy fear!

Let us therefore *value*, or *prefer*true wisdom to everything else, for all desirable things are not to be compared with it.

Let us diligently *seek*wisdom. God gives it, and gives it freely and liberally, without upbraiding. Let us make sure that we *possess*this wisdom. There are counterfeits. Some are deceived. We may be mistaken. Let us therefore carefully examine ourselves, for it is a matter of the greatest importance.

Let us also endeavor to *display*wisdom.

By avoiding sin.

By choosing wise companions.

By working in God's cause.

By always keeping eternal life in view.

Let us try to *induce others*to embrace wisdom. She calls to the sons of man. She has provided a sumptuous feast. She is willing to receive all that come. To all about us then let us employ the invitation, "Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you!" [Proverbs 4:6-8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov 4.6-8)

***~~Do Not Be Afraid!~~***

*Faith*and *fear*often inhabit the same heart, and they often come into contact, which accounts for many of the severe conflicts which the Lord's people feel. Faith is drawn forth and appears strong — then suddenly some circumstance arises which seems to give it a death-blow, and the most painful fears are awakened. Whenever this is the case, we may hear our Lord speaking to us as to one of old, "do not be afraid — only believe." [Mark 5:36](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark 5.36)

**DO NOT BE AFRAID**. It is *natural*to fear, but it is often *injurious* — and it is at times *sinful*. It is difficult to *restrain*fear — and yet we are required to do it. Like the ruler, we have come to Jesus for some blessing; perhaps we have no plain, positive *promise*; but encouraged by his *character*, we come and appeal to his mercy.

We come for deliverance from some powerful temptation. Or, we come for the light of his countenance and inward peace. Or, for power in prayer, and the enjoyment of God's presence at the mercy seat. Or, we come to him for others, for the conversion of a child, a brother, a wife, or some other relation or friend. Or it may be, we come to plead for the Church, that God would revive it, increase it, unite it, and make it holy and happy.

Having laid the matter before Jesus, we plead with him, urge the matter upon him, and feel confident that he will hear and help us. But instead of an *immediate*answer, he delays, things get worse and worse, and we come into extremity, and are ready to give up all hope, just then Jesus says, *"do not be afraid!"*

Everything else seems to bid us fear, for never did the blessing seem to be further off than now. We feel . . .  
our hearts sinking,  
our faith staggering,  
our hope dying out —  
and how can we help fearing!

Jesus says, "Judge not by appearances — listen to no one but me. To me you have *committed*the matter — and now *leave*it with me. do not be afraid."

"**ONLY BELIEVE**." Unbelief is the root from which our fear, anxiety, and trouble springs. Faith will produce patience, peace, and expectation. Fear is a fault — faith is a Christian grace. We are required, let what will happen — to *believe the character of Jesus*, that he is kind and loving, true and faithful. Nothing can affect this, or produce a change in him.

We are to believe the ***power***of Jesus — that he is able to do what we ask; yes, that he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

We are to believe the ***love***of Jesus — that he is willing to do, and willing to give — whatever will be for our real welfare. Out of his own loving heart, the promise flows — and by his own almighty power the promise will be fulfilled.

We are to believe the ***word***of Jesus, which is his bond, a bond which he cannot break. He will do — just as he has said. He will make good every promise he has given.

Fear is unfitting for a Christian. He must bring his fears to Jesus. With a heart overflowing with love, and with all power in Heaven and in earth in his possession — what ground can there be for fear? *Faith*is required — if we would receive from him. Nothing stands in the way, but unbelief. When one came to him saying, "If you can do anything — have compassion on us and help us." He replied, "If you can believe — all things are possible to him that believes." Just so here, "Only believe." Our confidence in Jesus *honors*him — and he honors our confidence in him.

No adverse circumstances should be allowed to destroy our hope. They are *permitted*to try us — but they should not *discourage*us. Though the ruler's child dies before Jesus reaches the house, he is not to fear — but still believe. He who could restore the sick — could also raise the dead. No case is too hard for Jesus. To him nothing is difficult; with perfect ease he can work the most wonderful miracle — therefore we should have confidence in him, let what will appear.

The prayerful believer is sure to succeed in the end. He who *awakens*prayer in the heart — will *listen*to it. He who bids us pray — will answer our prayer. He may *delay*. He may allow discouraging circumstances to arise. He may permit Satan to tempt us to doubt and fear. But he will not deny himself. He will be very gracious unto us at the voice of our cry, and will prove that the prayer of the upright is his delight.

Reader, do you pray to Jesus? Do you bring your *needs*to Jesus to be supplied — and your *wishes*that they may be granted? Do you believe that Jesus *can*do what you ask, and that he *will?* Then do not fear, however long he may make you wait, however he may try your hope and patience — still persevere. Continue to believe, hold fast by his word, cry mightily to him, and you shall obtain the blessing. Jesus receives sinners, he hears the sinner's cry, and he will give him the desire of his heart.

Blessed Jesus, whenever I am tempted to doubt or give way to fear — may I hear you sweetly whispering to my soul, "do not be afraid, only believe."

***~~Wake Up!~~***

We are all apt to get drowsy and lethargic, therefore we need to be *aroused*and stirred up — and the Lord uses many means for this purpose.

Sometimes He speaks to us by his *providence*,  
sometimes by the intimations of his *Spirit*,  
and always by his holy *word*.

To every drowsy soul he speaks and says*, "It is high time to awake out of sleep!"*[Romans 13:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom 13.11).

**THE REPROOF IMPLIED**.

*Lost sinners*are asleep, they sleep the sleep of death, to such the Lord says, "Awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light!"

Many *mere professors*sleep in carnal security — to such he says, "Let him who thinks he stands — take heed lest he fall.

Some *real Christians*are asleep in indolence and ease, and to such he says, "It is high time to awake out of sleep!" For being asleep, they do not hear when the Lord speaks, either to warn them of *danger*, to call them to *work*, or to *comfort*them in his ways. They do not see the plain path of *duty*, though it lies open just before them. They do not employ their *talents*for God's glory, or do the *work*allotted to them for man's good. They do not improve the opportunities for usefulness presented to them, but like the sluggard — they are asleep in harvest!

They do not enjoy their *privileges*, as costly and precious as they are — so they derive no comfort and benefit from them.

They do not watch their *foes*, and therefore it is no wonder if they are surprised and overcome.

They do not *prepare*for the coming of the Lord, and therefore they will probably be found asleep when he comes.

This is a very unfitting state for any child of God to be found in! The Lord's people should all be useful and watchful — ever doing the will of God from the heart.

The **ADMONITION DELIVERED**. "It is high time to awake out of sleep!" The Sun of Righteousness has arisen, the darkness of pagan night, and the twilight of Judaism is past — it is now "gospel day". The *foe*is busy and has been seeking to do all the mischief he can. Our *fellow-servants*are at work, and some of them have done much good, and have gained many honors. The *seed*of the kingdom is given to us, with the direction to plough up the fallow ground, and not sow among thorns. The command is to all, "Son, go *work*today in my vineyard!" Also, "Work while it is called *day*, for the night comes, in which no man can work."

Popery, infidelity, idolatry, and many deadly *errors*, with those who hold them — are awake, and are doing a world of mischief!

*Time*flies fast, and once lost, it cannot be regained — but is lost forever. The Lord is at hand, and he is coming to take account of his servants, and to reward every one according to his works.

Look around then, rouse yourselves up, and ask, "Am I awake? Am I wide awake?" Who has not been *napping*, and to whom may not the admonition be given, "It is high time to awake out of sleep!"

Sinners perish by millions — and yet professors sleep!

Preachers call upon them to arise and work — and yet they sleep!

The heathen cry, "Come over and help us!" — and yet they sleep!

Societies are formed to facilitate the work, render it easy, and cut off expenses — and yet they sleep!

*Doors of usefulness*open on every hand, and every kind and degree of talent is called for and required — yet many sleep!

*Instruments*offer themselves in every direction, and only need to be taken and employed — and yet many sleep!

God is blessing the efforts of his people, and waits to be more gracious still — and yet what multitudes sleep!

From all quarters, in every direction, we hear the words addressed to God's drowsy church, *"It is high time to awake out of sleep!"*

Reader, have you ever been awakened by the thunders of God's holy law — or by the music of Christ's gracious gospel? Have you fled from danger to the only refuge provided for poor lost sinners? Are you in Christ? If so, are you awake to the *needs*of the age, and prepared to serve your generation by the will of God? Are you awake to the *responsibility*that rests upon you — the field of honorable labor opened before you, and the *prize*that may be won by you?

If saved yourself — then you ought to seek to lead others to Jesus, that they may be saved too. And if you are not doing so — to you is this word of admonition sent, "It is high tinge to awake out of sleep!" It is time to work for God. Every talent should be employed for Jesus. The day goes away, and soon the shadows of evening will be stretched out. The Lord is coming — may he find us working diligently for him when he does. Or, if he sends to take us *home*to rest with him awhile first — may his message find us in the field, and call us from labor to repose, that so when he comes — we may come with him, to receive our reward, according to our own labor.

Gracious Lord, rouse up your people, and in the conscience of every drowsy professor, let the admonition be heard, "It is high time to awake out of sleep!"

***~~God Leading His People Through the Wilderness~~***

How much we have to be thankful for. How many reasons we have to praise God. No wonder that the Lord's people of old, so frequently commemorated the Lord's mercy; for everything short of Hell — is mercy! Everything he did for them, or conferred upon them — is ascribed to his mercy, and to mercy the praise is rendered. "Give thanks to him who led His people through the wilderness — for His mercy endures forever!" [Psalm 136:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps 136.16).

THE OBJECTS OF GOD'S CARE. "His people." Those whom He has chosen for his own, and eternally set apart for his praise. Those whom He has redeemed from the claims of justice by his blood, and from every daring foe by his power. Those whom he has called out of the world, separated from old associations, and consecrated to his service and praise. Those with whom he has entered into covenant, saying, "I will be your God — and you shall be my people!" They are his own, in the highest, holiest, and most blessed sense.

THEIR PILGRIMAGE. They are brought into a wilderness. That is, the world becomes a wilderness to them — in consequence of his precious work within them. They have to pass through the wilderness, where they experience spiritual hunger and thirst, and are often sighing for full and suitable supplies. Nor hunger only — but spiritual weariness, for they have little rest or repose. Many foes meet them, oppose them, and come into conflict with them. Dangers in every direction surround them, and many painful privations are felt by them. These and other things discourage them. But it is the way to the promised land!

Egypt has been left,  
the wilderness is now being journeyed,  
and Canaan with all its glory is before us!

THE MANNER OF GOD'S GUIDING. He employed means. He used the cloud, and at length the ark conducted them across the Jordan. So the Lord leads us by his servants, by his providence, and by his Word now. He leads us like a faithful shepherd leads a flock — with care, watchfulness, and wisdom. He leads us like a kind parent leads a little child — with gentle attention, and love. He leads us like a mother eagle, who teaches her young to fly, watches it if there is the least danger, and darts beneath it and carries it on her wings. He leads us like a God alone could, whose patience, love and grace, are as constant as the day!

Thus the Lord leads us, never taking his eye off us, or remitting his care at any time for one moment.

THE CAUSE OF GOD'S ATTENTIVE LEADING. "His mercy endures forever!"

His mercy fixed upon them — and chose them for his own.

His mercy took charge of them — to conduct them to the promised land.

His mercy continued with them — through the whole of the long, tedious, and trying journey.

His mercy was glorified in them — in its constancy, and power to supply.

In his mercy he led them — to try them, to prove them, to humble them, to teach them — and to do them the greatest good.

The Lord always makes the world — to be a wilderness to His people. They cannot feel at home in it — nor will it yield them suitable or sufficient supplies. In the wilderness — they learn His ways. They learn . . .  
  to trust in Him,  
  to look to Him, and  
  to expect everything from Him.

In the wilderness — He becomes everything to them!

He conducts them by light, heat, and shade. By the light of his word, by the warmth of his love, and by the shade of his providence.

In the wilderness — He prepares them for 'Canaan'. He . . .  
   weans them from the world,  
   empties them of self, and  
   shows them the insufficiency of all creatures!

All who follow the Lord as their leader — arrive safe in their Heavenly home. He does not lead them by the shortest way, nor by the easiest way — but He leads them in the right way, which is the best way. Following Him, they . . .  
   escape dangers,  
   find supplies,  
   master difficulties,  
   overcome their foes, and  
   arrive with certainty at their journey's end!

Gratitude should render praise. Indebted to mercy — we should prize mercy; and prizing mercy — we should praise mercy. We should sing of mercy on earth, preparatory to our singing of mercy in Heaven.

Reader, what is the world to you? Is it a home — or a wilderness?

What are you in the world? Are you a resident — or a stranger and a pilgrim?

Is God leading you through it — or are you making your home in it?

If God is leading you through the wilderness — then do not be surprised if you meet with changes, trials, difficulties, and troubles; they are wilderness fare.

If you can make your home in the wilderness — then do not be surprised if you are excluded from the 'Promised Land'. For only those whom God leads through the wilderness — ever arrive safely there!

***~~The Honor of the Godly~~***

*Character*, springing from holy principles in the heart, is of great price in the sight of God. Godly character . . .  
develops God's purpose,  
manifests the indwelling of the Holy Spirit,  
and proves the existence of a work of grace.

We find, therefore, that *character*is constantly placed before us in the Word of God. This we are required to notice, to trace it up to its source, and to mark its design.*"But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself."*[Psalm 4:3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps 4.3).

***WHO*ARE THE GODLY?**

The godly are those who are characterized by godly **sincerity**:  
whose word maybe taken,  
whose professions may be believed,  
whose promises may be trusted,  
who are transparent in their lives.

The godly are those who experiencegodly **sorrow**.

They know that they sin.

They feel the bitterness of sin.

They are sorry, very sorry for their sins.

They confess their sin, loathe themselves on account of it, and weep and mourn over it.

They enjoy the pardon of sin.

No one ever sorrows over sin after a godly sort — but the soul whose sins are pardoned.

Conviction leads to confession;  
confession springs from faith; and  
faith has to do with the precious blood of Christ.

Confessing sin, with the eye fixed on the blood of Jesus — always brings a sense of pardon into the soul.

The godly are those who exercisegodly **fear**. They fear to sin, not so much because they are afraid of Hell — as because they fear to offend God, and grieve his loving Spirit. They walk cautiously and carefully in the world, not trusting to themselves — but depending on God's grace alone.

The godly are those who love **purity**. They are taught by God's word, and are induced by God's grace — to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts — and to live soberly, and godly, and righteously, in this present world.

The godly are those who often suffer **persecution**. Indeed the apostle declares, "If any man will live godly in Christ Jesus — he shall suffer persecution." And most godly people find this to be true, in a greater or less degree. However, this is their comfort — that suffer as they may, the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

**WHAT IS TESTIFIED OF THEM?**"The Lord has set apart the godly for himself." He has *distinguished*them from others, and placed them on one side, as peculiarly his own. They are for himself, to walk with him in holy friendship and fellowship. To be his portion and peculiar delight. They reflect his excellencies and publish his praise. They proclaim his name on earth and dwell with him forever in Heaven.

But WHEN did he set them apart? In the council and covenant of eternity past, when he chose them in Christ, gave them to Christ, and predestined them to the adoption of children by Christ. Also, in the day of his power, when he quickened them by his Spirit, brought them out of the world, proclaimed a jubilee in their hearts, filling them with love, joy, and peace. In *eternity*He passed the irrevocable purpose — and in *time*he executed it.

We are bidden therefore to observe, consider, and feel assured, that the godly are *the Lord's special people*, set apart for himself. So esteem them highly for the Lord's sake, and treat them kindly as his children — though they may be poor, illiterate, and despised by the world. Carefully to copy their example, catch their spirit, and choose them for our companions, as God has for his.

Observe, Real religion is *likeness to God*. Grace always conforms man to God's moral excellencies. It makes him holy, merciful, righteous, and loving. Just in proportion as we resemble God — are we godly. It is not our knowledge, gifts, or attainments; it is not even our convictions, sorrows, or joys; but our *godlikeness*, which decides our state.

We were ungodly by nature; if we are not ungodly now — then it is because grace has produced a supernatural change. If we are not at all like God — then we are in our natural state, still dead in sin, and under condemnation!

The godly are a peculiar people. Grace has *made*them so, and grace will *keep*them so. They are unlike their *former selves* — and they are unlike the *world*around them. Sin is the object of their hatred — and they ardently desire holiness. To be *perfectly like God*in all his moral excellencies, is the highest object of their ambition.

God's peculiar ones should be observed. Not with the eye of envy, or jealousy — but with the eye of *love*and *admiration*. We should know or acknowledge them. We should so know as to prefer them, because God prefers them, and because, if believers — we shall dwell with them in the presence of God forever.

Our greatest *honor*is to be set apart for God. Nothing can exceed this. What a wondrous declaration is that made concerning Israel of old, "The Lord has chosen Jacob for himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure." HIS PECULIAR TREASURE! O the honor conferred on sinful mortals . . .  
to be *chosen*of God,  
to be *set apart*for God,  
to be the objects of the *highest love*of God!

But this honor have all his saints!

Holy Spirit, make me truly, thoroughly, visibly godly; give me the inward witness that God has set me apart for himself; and enable me so to live and act on earth, that all who see and observe me, may be convinced that I am one of those whom the Lord has set apart for himself — that they may glorify God in me!

***~~Come Boldly to the Throne~~***

*Right views of God*in prayer are of great importance; they involve God's glory — and our soul's good. That we may have right and encouraging views — he has revealed himself in Jesus, and wishes us to look at Jesus as his representative. And to encourage us to approach him with courage, confidence, and comfort — he has erected a throne of grace, where as a Sovereign and a Father — he sits to . . .  
hear our prayers,  
receive our petitions,  
and accept our praises.

Before that throne Jesus stands, he represents us, he introduces us, he pleads for us, He procures choice and invaluable blessings for us. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace — that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." [Hebrews 4:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb 4.16) Observes four things,

**1. WHERE we should come.**Not to a mercy-seat on earth, as the Jew; but to a throne of grace in Heaven.

A throne, which grace erected for the *unworthy* — that without qualification, or pre-requisite, or preparation — they may come and open their hearts, confess their sins, and seek and obtain God's blessing.

A throne, on which grace sits in majesty and glory — to display its power, sovereignty, and magnificence so that the graceless may be encouraged to come and sue for pardon, peace, and comfort.

A throne where grace is dispensed, dispensed freely, frequently, and plentifully. Grace to pardon, grace to sanctify, and grace to fit us for God's service and praise.

A throne where grace is glorified — and grace is glorified in giving *freely*, giving *plentifully*, and giving *often*. . .  
the *richest blessings*to the most unworthy,  
the *choicest favors*to the most degraded, and  
the *sweetest comforts*to the most miserable of men.

Reader, for such as *you*the throne of grace was erected. Grace is personified and enthroned on purpose to encourage you. Grace is dispensed to the vilest — without money and without price. When you go to the throne of grace:  
go often,  
ask for much, and  
obtain all that you need.

**2. HOW we should come.** "Come boldly." There was no boldness under the law — but there should be no dread or fear in coming to God under the gospel. Boldness *springs*from grace, is *encouraged*by grace, and is *pleasing*to the God of grace. God wishes us to come as *children*, conscious of our acceptance in the Beloved, and to ask great things at his hands. He says, "Open your mouth wide — and I will fill it." The more we feel at home, and the more freely we speak to our God on the throne of grace — the more he considers himself honored.

He would have us to *plead earnestly*, not to induce him to give, as if he were unwilling — but to show . . .  
our sense of need,  
the ardency of our desire,  
and our faith in his word.

He would have us to feel *confident*of being heard, not only because He has promised — but because his heart is full of love, and he delights in mercy.

He would have us to rely steadily on Jesus. On his *priesthood*, which is perpetual, on his *promise*which is everlasting, and on his *presence*, for he now appears before God for us.

**3. WHY we should thus come.**We have a great High Priest, a High Priest who is the Son of God, and He has undertaken to . . .  
expiate our sins,  
justify our persons,  
present our petitions, and  
obtain answers of peace for us.

He has finished his work on earth; he has passed through the heavens into his Father's presence; he is now pleading on our behalf with his Father, and ever lives to carry on his work of intercession.

But he is not only the Son of God — having an influence with his Father; but he is the Son of man — having deep compassion for us, his poor, tried brethren on earth. Before his Father, He owns us; with his Father, He pleads for us; and is ever ready to take up our cause. He is a *merciful*High Priest, feeling at his heart — all the sorrows, sufferings, and woes of his people. He is also a *faithful*high Priest, true to his word, and always acting in character as the brother and friend of all who come unto God by him.

**4. For WHAT we should come.**For sympathy — for we always need it — and sometimes look in vain to man for it. But Jesus is touched with the feeling our of infirmities. Mercy supposes sympathy, if therefore we are bidden to come for mercy, it intends that we should come, that our heavenly Father may sympathize with us, soothe our minds, and comfort us with his love. We are to come for mercy . . .  
to pardon our daily sins,  
to relieve us in all our distresses,  
and to comfort us in all our sorrows.

We are to come that we may find *grace*to help us in time of need.

Grace for *duty* — that we may perform the precepts given us.

Grace for *conflict* — that we may contend with, and conquer every evil.

Grace for *victory* — that we may overcome every foe.

For all grace, and for grace for all purposes — we should come boldly to the throne, bearing in mind, that, let us have received ever so much, or ever so often — he gives *more grace*.

Beloved, the throne of grace is *near*. We have no distance to go, for wherever we are — there the throne of grace is. And whenever we need — God is at liberty to attend to us, and is always disposed to bless us.

The throne of grace is always *accessible*. Be where we may, in whatever state of mind we may — we can come to the throne of grace, and come *boldly*too — because Jesus is there, and he is there for us.

The throne of grace is always filled by a *Father*, by *our*Father — who gave his only begotten Son for us, as a pledge and proof that He will withhold no good thing from us. We should therefore always go to the throne of grace with *confidence*. We should go as *invited*, as specially invited. We should go as *commanded*, for authority unites with love, in welcoming us to the throne of grace, in wishing us to come.

*God's paternal heart*yearns over us to bless us, and to do us good, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

We should go to the throne as *encouraged*in every possible way. Greater *encouragement*, we cannot have; greater *inducements*cannot be held out, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace — that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need."

Reader do you pray? In prayer, do you go to a throne of grace? Do you approach and plead with God as a Father? Do you really obtain mercy? Pardoning mercy? Do you receive grace — grace to help you in the performance of duty, in enduring trials, and in seeking to honor God in all things? There is an *ocean of mercy*, an infinite fullness of grace! Go therefore to the throne, assured of acceptance, and obtain a full supply!

***~~David Before the Lord~~***

No one ever loses, by anything he does for God — for God will never be any man's debtor. Nay, even if it is not done — but only *purposed*and *planned* — God approves, accepts, and rewards it. David purposed to build a house for God, it was not permitted — but God immediately promised to make him a source of blessing to all generations. Overwhelmed with a sense of the Divine goodness, he went and sat before the Lord, poured out his full heart, and enjoyed a little *Heaven upon earth.*The close of his interview with God is very instructive, may the Lord make it profitable unto us. "O Lord, you are God! You have promised these good things to your servant. Now therefore let it please you to bless the house of your servant — that it may be before you forever. For you, O Lord, have blessed it, and it will be blessed forever!" [1 Chronicles 17:26-27](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1 Chron 17.26-27)

**HIS ACKNOWLEDGMENT**. "You have promised." Promises are freely made, especially God's promises. They arise out of the infinite goodness of his nature, and are the utterances of his eternal love. No one could wring a promise from him. Nothing out of himself could induce him to make one. As he *loves*freely — so he *promises*freely. But promises once made, bring under sacred obligation. No man is at liberty to break a promise which is seriously and deliberately made. God can have no temptation to do so. Nothing can arise which he did not know before he promised. As therefore he promised with a perfect knowledge of all that could or would appear, a reason to depart from his word can never occur. Solemn thought, for our comfort, that we might have strong consolation. God has bound himself by his own word, to be to us a God, and to do for us all that our circumstances can call for.

God's promises are exceeding *great*. They include all we can need in time — and all we can enjoy in eternity. They embrace all the fullness that is treasured up in Christ. The greatest and most costly blessings, in the greatest fullness and variety — are promised us by our gracious God and loving Father.

God's promises are *invaluable*. Being priceless, no price can be set upon them. They contain . . .  
all that God can give,  
all that we need while on earth,  
and that all eternity can unfold!

As great as his own love,  
as gracious as his Divine nature,  
and as glorious as his almighty power —  
are the promises which God has given us in Christ.

**HIS PRAYER.** "Now you have been pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight." He acquiesced in God's will, and approved of what God had promised. His heart echoed back God's word, and He cried, "Do as you have said." His soul panted to enjoy the blessings which God had graciously promised.

God's promises are intended to awaken and regulate our desires; and to draw out our souls in ardent and earnest prayers at the mercy seat. David earnestly *pleaded God's word*, and *pleading prayers*are the best prayers. When we take God's own words to us, and present them as expressive of what we desire from him. He says, "Put me in remembrance, let us plead together."

Promises viewed rightly, suppose *need*, we need mercy and great blessings, both temporal and spiritual, and God anticipating our needs — promises to supply them. Promises demand *faith*, if God says, "I will give" or "I will do" — the least we can do is to *believe*him; and the least that he can expect, is that we place confidence in him. Promises call for *prayer*, for though God has promised, He expects to be appealed to, and pleaded with by his people — that he may do for them, or give unto them. Promises are connected with *diligence*. When we receive the promises, we are to *understand*them, place *confidence*in them, and then go about God's work, persuaded that he will make them good.

This leads us to notice, **HIS FAITH**. "You are God." He believed that Jehovah was God, and that he alone was God. He had therefore the word of *God*to trust in, and depend upon.

"You are God" — and therefore **cannot deceive**. God never . . .  
trifles with misery,  
mocks necessity, or  
disappoints the expectations raised by his word.

He cannot *say*what he does not *mean*-or fail to make good what He has spoken.

"You are God," and **cannot change**. He is ever in one mind. He is without variableness or the shadow of a turn. To Israel he said, "I am the Lord, I do not change — therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed." God's *immutability —*is our *security*. Jesus also, in whom all the promises are deposited and confirmed, "Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

"You are God," and are therefore **able**to do, able to make good every promise you have given with perfect ease. He is able to do exceeding and abundantly above all that we ask or think. "You bless, O Lord — and it shall be blessed forever." Man can *pronounce*a blessing — God only can *impart*it. God's blessings are not *trifles* — but solid, lasting, inestimable blessings. They are not for a season — but are forever. They embrace all time — and they reach forward into eternity. If God once blesses — he will bless forever, for he is the everlasting God.

Promises properly appreciated produce *humility*. They did in David, who was filled with wonder, that God should promise such great and good things to *one like him*. Just so it is with every believer, feeling his own *nothingness*and *utter unworthiness* — the goodness and condescension of God breaks his heart, and lays him in the dust of self-abasement, full of gratitude and love.

True humility always leads us to God's throne of grace. There the full heart vents itself, in *sighs*if it is distressed; or in *songs*, if it is impressed with a sense of the Lord's goodness.

Grace from God — always leads us back to God, that we may make our acknowledgment, and give thanks to the Lord's most holy name. At the throne of grace, the humble plead what God has promised. There the Lord hears his children telling him — what he has first told them; and asking of him — what he has promised to confer upon them. The Father loves to meet his child thus, to listen to his simple pleading, and grant him his request.

Believer, can you lay claim to any of God's promises? Do they express what you *need*, what you *desire*, what you would give anything to possess? Then they are yours! You may *take*them as from God's mouth, *carry*them with confidence to God's throne, and *plead*them there in the name of Jesus until they are fulfilled. God will not refuse to *listen* — if you ask for what you feel you need; nor to *give* — if you plead any one of his precious promises. He gives liberally and upbraids not. He listens, sympathizes, and makes good his word. Therefore it is said, "Every one who asks receives, he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks — it shall be opened."

Good and gracious God, I bless you for *making*the promises, for *recording*them in your book, for putting them into my hand, above all for *fulfilling*so many of them in the experience of one so vile, so utterly unworthy, and depraved!

***~~Neglect of Duty — a Sin~~***

There are sins of *omission* — as well as sins of *commission*. There are sins of *neglect* — as well as sins of *misdoing*. Every Scriptural *precept*is given to be obeyed — and *neglect*treats the lawgiver with contempt. Therefore the apostle James testifies, "To him who knows to do good, and does no do it — to him it is sin." [James 4:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James 4.17).

**WHAT IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO WELL-DOING.***Light*goes before *duty*; and *information*before *requirement*; we must *know —*in order to *do.*But if we do know — then obedience is imperative. We must know by what authority a thing is commanded, and if anything is commanded of God, or of the Lord Jesus Christ — then, as professed believers, we are bound to obey. Everything in the New Testament is based on the authority of him who . . .  
created us by his power,  
redeemed us by his blood,  
called us by his grace, and  
who has promised us everlasting life.

We must have a knowledge of the command. Not only that there is a command — but what it requires of us; and *God's commands are generally very plain*. Knowing *who*commands, and *what*is commanded of us — we should feel our obligation to obey, even to the very letter what God has commanded.

Our obligation arises from our relation to the law-giver — but it is heightened by our dependence upon him, and the favors we receive from him. If he have afforded us a knowledge of the *design*with which the duty is required of us — it often helps to make the duty both easy and pleasant. If in addition to this, we see the *goodness*and *excellency*of the thing commanded — our duty appears, if possible, still more imperative.

Some things required of God, are good in themselves, as to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. So also the requirements of the moral law, as supreme love to God, and love to our fellow-men, equal to that which we have for ourselves.

But many things are good — simply because God requires them. As in old times, God required the sacrifice of beasts, the burning of incense, the wearing of vestments, the sprinkling of blood, and various washings — these were good, not in themselves — but simply because God prescribed them, and employed them as *types of better things*. Just so now, baptism and the Lord's supper, have no intrinsic excellency in them — but because the Lord Jesus instituted them, and required his disciples to observe them, are they good. Baptism without faith, or the supper without discerning the Lord's body — do us no good — but when believing we attend to them, in order to obey and honor him who instituted them — then is our service acceptable to God.

If a thing is *clearly commanded*us of God — then we are bound to do it, and it is good. Good, though it may be *strange*and *unusual*, as the making of the ark of the covenant, and the building of the Tabernacle was. Good, though it may appear *simple*and *undignified*, as the carrying of the ark round the walls of the city of Jericho, in the days of Joshua did. Good, though it may appear to some *imprudent*, as the circumcision of Abraham at his advanced age may have done. Good, though it may even seem to be *unnatural*, as the offering up of Isaac on the mountain of Moriah. Good, though it may appear to some to be *unworthy of God*, as the killing of bulls, and goats, and sheep, and lambs, and the offering them up in sacrifice to the Most High. Good, though it may expose us to the greatest *sufferings*, and even death itself — as the preaching the gospel, and bearing witness for Christ — as did the apostles, martyrs, and others. Good, though it may appear very *unnecessary*, as the requirements in the case of the Nazarites of old. Good, even though it may *provoke others to*sin, as in the case of Abel, when God had respect unto him, and to his offering.

Many of these remarks may be made to bear upon some who raise objections to the ordinances of the gospel, and endeavor to *excuse*themselves, and even *justify*their neglect of them. But we may be sure of this: that whatever God has instituted — whatever God commands us to do, is good; and if we *knowing*to do good, and *neglect*it — then to us it is sin.

**WHAT IS THE *CHARACTER*OF OUR NEGLECT?** All neglect of any of God's commandments, is *sin*. We may wish to soften it down, and to use some gentler term — but *God designates it sin*. Can God, the God of wisdom, holiness, and love — require anything that is not good? If God requires anything of us — we are bound to revere his authority, and obey his command! If we *refuse*, or even *neglect*to do so — it is wrong. It is sin.

Do we not set up our own judgment above the judgment of God? Do we not leave the position of the *subject*, to invade the rights of the *Sovereign?*If the Sovereign is our *Father* — if our Father has pardoned in us the greatest sins, and saved our lives at the greatest expense — then our neglect and disobedience is gross ingratitude! God's precepts should be our *rule*. God's authority should be our *reason*. We ought to obey without questioning. We ought *scrupulously*to observe without hesitation. Be it as it may, we cannot get rid of our responsibility, or shake off our obligation.

We must give account of ourselves to God. We must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Every one shall be rewarded according to his works. "But if you do what is wrong — you will be paid back for the wrong you have done." That servant, who *knew*his Lord's will and did not obey it — shall be beaten with *many*stripes. These portions of God's word must mean something. They apply to those who have *knowledge* — but who do not reduce their knowledge to *practice*. To those who *know*to do good — but do not do it.

Let us then bring *home*the subject to ourselves. Do we *practically*observe God's precepts? Do we observe the requirements of Jesus — ALL of them, so far as we know them? Or, do we see that there are in the New Testament things required of the disciples of Jesus — and yet we, though we profess to be his disciples — live in the *neglect*of them? Are we in the habit of looking at the *omission*of any duty — as sin? Or, do we *excuse*ourselves from observing anything that Jesus has commanded, because we consider that it is not essential to salvation, and may therefore be omitted without affecting our eternal safety?

Let us beware, lest directly or indirectly, we make the Lord Jesus the *minister of sin*. Let us beware of so making use of gospel *doctrines* — as to interfere with gospel *precepts*. Let us not put the blood of the cross — in the place of *filial obedience*. Doctrine rightly understood and properly employed — becomes a stimulus to good works. And the promises of *grace* — urges us to carefully keep the precepts of the Scripture.

We cannot too carefully exclude every good thing of our own, from the *foundation*on which we build for our *acceptance*with God; nor can we be too cautious lest we should make God's glorious grace, and the Savior's finished work — an *excuse*for neglecting moral duties, or the observance of Christ's positive institutions. Let us trust in the work of Christ alone for eternal life — as though there were no duties to perform; and then perform our duties — as though we had no work of Christ wherein to trust.

All that I am, and all I have  
Shall be forever Thine,  
Whatever my duty bids me give  
My cheerful hands resign.

Yet if I might make some reserve,  
And duty did not call,  
I love my God with zeal so great  
That I should give him all.

***~~Bitter and Sweet~~***

Real religion is a *personal*thing. Every man's religion must be his own — produced in his own heart by the Spirit of God, and nourished by the word and prayer. In every man's religion, there is something distinguishing, and something only known to himself. To every believer the proverb may be applied, "Each heart knows its own *bitterness* — and no one else can fully share its *joy*." [Proverbs 14:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov 14.10).

Every Christian has some **HIDDEN SORROW**. "Each heart knows its own *bitterness*" — his *secret*bitterness. It may *vary*at different times, and under different circumstances — but still there it is.

At one time it may be *sorrow for sin*, some besetting sin, or the sins of the past life, brought and placed in review before the mind, by the Holy Spirit. Sin is a *root of bitterness*, and is sure to bear bitter fruit.

At another time it may be reflection on the past life, so many *mercies abused*, so many duties neglected, so many opportunities for usefulness lost — such reflections awaken bitter sorrow.

Or it may be *secret and terrible thoughts*, which agitate and torment the soul. They are at times the most filthy, base, degrading, and abominable! They spring up, work within, and torment us when on our knees in prayer, when reading God's word, and when attending upon the ordinances of the gospel. The more sacred and solemn the employment — the more powerful and horrible they are. We dare not utter them, or speak of them to anyone, for we imagine that ours is a singular case, and that they indicate desperate wickedness.

Then there are *violent temptations*, secret and powerful solicitations to evil. Sometimes to curse God. Sometimes to blaspheme Christ. Sometimes to speak against the Holy Spirit. Sometimes to indulge the lusts of the flesh. O the violent, terrible, and frightful temptations, from which the Lord's people often suffer! They cause bitterness of heart with a witness.

Then at times the *Lord hides his face*, we have no enjoyment of his presence in the closet, in his worship, or in any of our means of grace. There is no liberty in prayer, nor answers to prayer. At times no *heart*to to pray, for the soul is so discouraged that it thinks that it is of no *use*for it to pray. There is a painful sense of need, a searching after the Lord, a sighing and sorrowing for the presence of the Lord; but he hides his face, and we are troubled.

Then there is *indwelling sin* — the deep and powerful corruption of our nature, which works and mixes itself with all that we do, and spoils all that we attempt to perform. This evil is present with us — *always* and *everywhere*present! It strives with everything good, and opposes everything gracious — so that we cannot do the things that we would. It mixes with our prayers and praises, and works when we endeavor to meditate on God's word, or hear the gospel to profit! It often makes us cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death!"

Sometimes a *bitter word*spoken, either by ourselves or others, will cause much heart sorrow. It fixes in the memory, revolves in the mind, and proves a mental rack on which the soul is tortured.

Besides all these sinful things — almost every believer has some secret source of bitterness in the *family* — it may be a *wife*, whose temper, whose tongue, or whose conduct, wounds him to the very soul, and pierces him through with many sorrows. Or a *carnal husband*, an *undutiful child*, or an *unnatural parent*. O how many Christians have sources of bitterness in their families, of which they dare not speak to others; but in consequence of which, they bleed inwardly, sighing and sorrowing before God!

Others have secret causes of sorrow in *business*, in the *church*of God, or in their *social*relations; but every heart has emphatically — its *own*bitterness. The cup from which it drinks, and drinks often — contain draughts of wormwood and gall.

What bitter *thoughts*are generated, what bitter *feelings*are produced, and what bitter *regrets*are felt — by many of Zion's pilgrims in the secrets of the soul.

But it is not all bitter, there are also **HIDDEN JOYS**. "No one else can fully share its *joy*." No *stranger*can understand it, share it, or at times even disturb it.

There is the joy of *salvation* — when after conviction, depression, seeking, sighing, and sorrowing — the Lord appears and says unto the soul, "I am your salvation!"

There is the joy of *faith* — when we are enabled to claim, appropriate, and plead the promises. Then we see their suitability, taste their sweetness, and feel their power. We draw water with joy out of these *wells of salvation*.

Then there is the joy produced by a believing view of *Jesus* — when the Holy Spirit reveals his glory and beauty to us — filling our minds with the sweetest thoughts, and our hearts with the choicest delight.

O how glorious is his *person*,  
how excellent is his *love*,  
how perfect is his *work*,  
how precious is his *blood*,  
how sweet is his *voice*, and  
how ravishing is the thought of being *with him*forever!

Our souls are now full of Christ. We can think of nothing else, speak of nothing else, enjoy nothing else. Jesus is all fair, all lovely, all glorious — and we rejoice in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

And at times in *communion with God* — we have exquisite joy. Now a holy stillness, a sweet composure, a calm deep happiness — while we converse with God, as a man does with his friend. Then a *devout ecstasy*, when the thoughts, the affections, and the whole soul, seem too happy to be still. We want all to be as happy. We want all to unite in praising and blessing the Lord. We are then . . .  
ravished with his love,  
delighted with his grace, and  
overwhelmed with a sense of his wondrous condescension!

Occasionally we have *foretastes of glory*, we almost seem to see the pearly gates, we could almost imagine we were walking under the shade of the jasper walls, and could hear the distant sounds of the songs of the glorified. The soul fills with love to God, overflows with gratitude, and tastes of the pleasures which are at God's right hand. Now we *know*there is a Heaven, for we are impressed with a sense of its glory, we taste some of its fruits, and are almost like Paul, who said, "Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell — God knows." All believers know more or less of what the*Lord's love visits*mean, when Jesus comes to manifest himself unto us as He does not unto the world — when be comes, that He may sup with us, and we with him. Then we can say with the Spouse, "My beloved is mine — and I am his!"

Yes, we can go farther than this, and say, "I am my beloved's — and his *desire*is towards me." We cannot, we dare not doubt his love, or our saving interest in him. We are wholly taken up with him, and to . . .  
see his face,  
taste his love,  
and enjoy his presence —  
is all the Heaven we desire!

These are joys which sanctify and satisfy the soul. They are generally enjoyed in *secret* — no stranger can intrude or understand them. For the loving Lord, and his beloved child — enjoy themselves alone, and appear to *win*, and to *fill*each other's hearts.

There are then secret SORROWS *in religion*. Yes, *heart*sorrows — sorrows which no one is privy to or suspects — but those who endure them. They sigh and cry before God. They mourn alone. They suffer martyrdom within. Between . . .  
Satan, the world, and their own hearts;  
the mysterious dealings of God in his providence and grace;  
the trials of business coming in contact with a tender and honest conscience;  
the troubles of of the domestic circle, (and how bitter they are at times, God only knows!)  
and the sin which does so easily *beset*them —  
the Lord's people find much bitterness, and bitterness which their own hearts alone know.

There are secret JOYS in religion too. Pleasure unknown to all — but believers themselves. Joy that is solid, substantial, and durable. Joy often, in the *midst*of sorrow, for when all without is dark and dreary — then the candle of the Lord often shines brightest within. Joy, that is more than enough to counter-balance all the sorrows we endure.

The joy of *hope* — looking forward into the future; and the joy of possession — when the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.

Our *sorrows*and our *joys*are alike peculiar unto ourselves; but our sorrows all end at death — while our joys will last forever!

Reader, do you know anything of this *experience*in your own soul? All of the Lord's people do, more or less. All are not alike deeply *taught*, nor deeply *tried* — but all know what *sorrow*for sin is, and what the *joy* of salvation is. All have some peculiar cause of *bitterness* — and all hidden sources of *joy*.

If you are quite a stranger to them — can you be a Christian? What a question is this? Not a Christian! Why if you are not, you are an unbeliever, and Jesus has said, "He who believes not — shall be damned!" If you are not a Christian, you do not believe on the Son of God, and He said, "He who does not believe — is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

But do not write bitter things against yourself, because you have not passed through *all*that I have written — but rather bless God that you have escaped the bitter, and look forward to the enjoyment of the sweet — for there is unspeakable joy and endless glory before you!

Boast not, O sons of earth,  
Nor look with scornful eyes,  
Above your highest mirth,  
Our saddest hours we prize.  
For though our cup seems filled with gall,  
There's something secret, sweetens all.

***~~Look Higher~~***

The believer, as *one*with Christ, as *redeemed*from among men, as a *child*of God — ought to be very *distinct*from this poor, fallen, degraded world. But alas, we are too often *mixed up*with the world — and are too much *like*the world! We forget the dignity of our high calling, and our glorious destiny — as the heirs of eternal life. To us the Holy Spirit speaks, calling us to take *higher ground* — and to seek for far greater blessings. "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God!" [Colossians 3:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col 3.1)

Mark,**OUR PROFESSION**. "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ." We profess to be *connected*with Christ, as . . .  
the head of His Church,  
the fountain of grace, and  
the pattern of his people.

We profess to *resemble*Christ, as dead to the law, sin, and the present evil world — and as raised from the dead by virtue of our union to Him. He represented us in his death and resurrection, in consequence of which we become *vitally united*to Him, the living and life-giving one. We are *raised above*curse and condemnation — raised to the enjoyment of blessing and acceptance with God, so that we sit down with Him in the heavenly places. Our life is a *resurrection*life — and we should *live*as those who are raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father.

**THE EXHORTATION.**"Set your hearts on things above." Seek to possess what God gives from Heaven — and which distinguish Heaven from earth. Seek *holiness* — or inward and outward conformity to Jesus. Seek *peace* — not only reconciliation to God — but tranquility of soul, and friendship with all the Lord's family. Seek spiritual *joy* — which fills all in Heaven, and may be enjoyed on earth in much greater measure than it is. Seek *entire consecration*to God — which will lead to hearty, perpetual, and cheerful obedience to the will of God. Seek *unity* — all in Heaven are united, seek therefore the unity of the Church, and your own union with all who love the Lord. Seek to *promote*, or make known those things which are above. Speak of them . . .  
to saints — to stimulate them;  
to seekers — to encourage them; and  
to sinners — to instruct and win them.

***~~"Set your hearts on things above!"~~***

**THE INDUCEMENT.**"Where Christ is seated at the right hand of God." He is at home with His Father. He is in the seat of all honor, power, and authority. He sits at the right hand of God. His work on earth is done. He is enjoying *rest*after all His toils and labors. He is in possession of perfect *freedom*. He realizes His right to the celestial mansions, as the Redeemer of His people. He still retains the office of Mediator, Representative, and Intercessor. He is therefore — there for us. As our Brother beloved, as our Savior trusted, as our adored God — Jesus is at the right hand of His Father. We are there now *in*Him, and by virtue of being represented by him — we shall soon be there *with*him, and rejoice always before Him.

Beloved, you profess to be *dead*with Christ, to be *buried*with Him in baptism, and to be raised with him by the faith. It is therefore your solemn duty, to live as those who are alive from the dead. You are recognized by those around you, as professing to be Christians — therefore you are *under obligation to live Christ-like lives*. You will suffer loss, and your sin and folly will be inexcusable — if you do not.

Rise therefore, like the liberated *eagle*. Leave the world with all its follies and fascinations! Set your heart on Heaven and heavenly things. Seek to obtain all from Heaven that you can. Seek to enjoy as much of Heaven on earth as possible. Make your life *sublime*, by endeavoring to attract and lead many to Heaven with you. There is room enough and to spare there, and it will be a source of joy and everlasting rejoicing, if any arrive there through your efforts and instrumentality.

Be thorough Christians.

Be heavenly minded — for yours is a heavenly calling.

Be holy — because your Father in Heaven is holy.

Work for Jesus — for he wrought long and arduously for you. Work now — for you will rest soon; you also shall sit down with Jesus as he sat down with his Father. Never fear suffering here, it must be short; there is *happiness*as well as *rest*in Heaven, and it will be forever! Live *for*Heaven, and live as much as you can *in*Heaven — even before you arrive there!

Rise, from these earthly trifles, rise  
On wings of faith and love;  
Above your choicest treasure lies,  
And be your hearts above!

But earth and sin will drag us down,  
When we attempt to fly;  
Lord! send your strong attractive power  
To raise and fix us high!

***~~The Restless Bed~~***

What is *sown*now — will be *reaped*in eternity.

Eternal life is the *free gift*of a gracious God.

Eternal punishment is the *just wages*of eternal sin.

We deserve Hell now — but we may escape it by fleeing to Jesus. If we refuse to do so — then we can only expect to *reap the fruit of our folly*.

Heaven is the gift of God's grace — but Hell is the wages of sin.

Every sinner makes his own Hell. In this light, let us look at the words of the Psalmist, *"If I make my****bed****in Hell."*[Psalm 139:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps 139.8)

**THE RESIDENCE.**"In Hell."

***~~WHAT is Hell?~~***

Hell is the *prison* — in which the *prisoners of God's justice*are confined.

Hell is where *punishment*is inflicted on all who die at enmity with God.

Hell is the place where Satan acts the part of the chief tormentor.

Hell is the place where *conscience,*armed with terrible power, torments the guilty soul.

Hell is the place where *reflection*, aided by a strong and tenacious *memory*, afflicts without mercy or cessation.

Hell is the place where *God frowns justly and eternally*on the naked soul.

Hell is the place where everything calculated to . . .

satiate with terror,

fill with agony, and

torture with pain, exist.

While everything calculated to inspire hope, give pleasure, or impart relief — is excluded forever.

***~~WHO is in Hell?~~***

Satan and his demons — all those foul, wicked, and degraded spirits — who are filled with envy, malice, and enmity against God and man.

All unrepentant sinners — of all classes, creeds, places, and periods.

All who have . . .  
stained the world with their crimes,  
afflicted others with their cruelties, and  
degraded themselves by their vices.  
All the lowest, vilest, and basest of the human race!

*God*is there too, in his glorious majesty, almighty power, impartial justice, and awesome holiness! O how it will aggravate the sufferings of the lost — to have God's eye always fixed upon them, and the justice, holiness, and majesty of God ever shining before them!

***~~WHAT is in Hell?~~***

*Justice*with its flaming sword — is there.

*Memory*stored with the whole history of ones life — is there.

The *worm*that gnaws the vitals of the soul, but never dies — is there.

The *fire*that cannot be quenched, which tortures but never destroys our nature — is there.

But there is no *Bible*there.

There is no *gospel*with its joyful sound.

There is no gentle, loving *Savior*.

There is no loving *friend*or dear relation.

There is nothing to *lessen*or *alleviate*suffering!

Hell concentrates in itself, all the elements of misery, degradation, wretchedness and woe!

**THE REST.**"My bed." "If I make my bed in Hell." *Rest*in Hell? A *bed*in Hell? What kind of a *bed*could that be?

A bed composed of the thorns of bitter reflection.

A bed made up of the terrible inflictions of incensed justice.

A bed embracing . . .  
the horrors of a guilty conscience,  
the blackness and darkness of despair,  
the ceaseless outpouring of the vials of the wrath of God!

This bed is . . .  
ever *heaving* — like the restless ocean;  
ever *sinking* — like a millstone, in the bottomless depths;  
ever *burning* — like a lake of liquid brimstone; and  
ever *inflicting torments* — beyond description or conception.

"MY bed" — the bed I *procured*by a life of sin.

"MY bed" — the bed I *deserve*for rejecting the Savior, and neglecting the great salvation.

"MY bed" — the bed *awarded*me by a just and holy God.

My OWN bed —  
the only bed I can *claim*;  
the only bed I can *expect*;  
that bed for which I *labored*; and  
which is the *righteous wages*of my sin.

My OWN bed — the only bed I shall have forever!

My OWN bed — on which there can be no rest day nor night. Ever wakeful, ever weary, ever cursing and condemning myself — here on my infernal bed — I am doomed, and justly doomed to lie forever!

**THE EMPLOYMENT.** "If I **make**my bed in Hell." Every man makes his own bed, and on the bed he makes for himself — he must forever lie.

What are sinners on earth doing? *Making their bed in Hell!*

*Drunkard* — you are making your bed in Hell, and a terrible bed it will be!

*Dishonest*man, by your tricks in trade, and various dishonest practices — you are making your bed in Hell, and an awful bed it will be!

*Liar*, by your falsehoods and deception — you are making your bed in Hell — and a liar's bed will burn with brimstone and with fire!

Profane *swearer* — you also are preparing for yourself, a dreadful couch!

*Promiscuous*man — the lusts you indulge now, will entwine about your soul like serpents, and sting and poison you, on your *bed*in Hell forever!

*Hypocrite*, pretending to be religious, when you know that you are not — I suppose few will have a *more racking or torturing bed*to lie on forever — than you will!

*Careless sinner* — you are making your bed in Hell, and you will perhaps repent of it when it is too late.

*Trifling professor*, *worldly-minded church member* — you too are making your bed in Hell, and it is to be feared that many will go from the church of God on earth — to be tormented forever on a bed in Hell!

There is a Hell — an *eternal*Hell. Justice provided it originally for the devil and his demons — but there is room in it for rebellious men, and if they die impenitent — they will be forever doomed to it!

No one will have a place in Hell, who does not richly merit and deserve it. Hell is*just wages* — for present sinful work. "The *wages*of sin is death" — eternal death. O terrible thought, to be *working*so hard on earth — only to receive the *wages*of eternal punishment in Hell!

"If *I* make *my*bed in Hell."

*Young*man — what if *you*should make your bed in Hell? It will be your own act and deed.

*Young*woman — what if *you*should make your bed in Hell? And you may — for the dance, the ball-room, pride of dress, and neglect of God, without any *grosser*vices — will be sufficient to prepare for you a bed in Hell!

*Aged*man — what if *you*should make your bed in Hell? What a *dreadful close —*to a long and trying life on earth.

*Aged*woman — is it possible that *you*should make your bed in Hell? It is — and more than possible!

*Religious*man — what if *you*should make your bed in Hell? What if after all your prayers, sacraments, and contributions to religious societies — your bed should be in Hell! And it will — if you are not found in Christ!

It does not matter — whether young or old, whether professor or profane —  
unless you are washed in the blood of Jesus;  
unless you are sanctified by the Spirit of God;  
unless you are reconciled to God by the death of His Son  
 — you will certainly make your bed in Hell.

Look well to it, then, I beseech you — that you have saving faith in Christ, and that you are regenerated by the Holy Spirit — for without true holiness, no one can see the Lord. Without holiness — you will certainly make your bed in Hell!

***~~God's Word to Young Women~~***

Holy, consistent young women, are among the greatest ornaments of our race, and the greatest blessings to society. Their influence is great, and when rightly used, proves of immense importance. It is no wonder then, if we are anxious to see them . . .  
converted to God,  
walking with God, and  
adorning the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To young women, we think the language used in the Psalm may be applied, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget also your own people, and your father's house. So shall the king greatly desire your beauty — for he is your Lord; and worship him." [Psalm 45:10-11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps 45.10-11)

Mark, **THE EXHORTATION**. A father calls for attention — for the attention of his child. He loves that child, he seeks her welfare, he has something of importance to say unto her. He calls not only for attention — but for consideration, "Hearken and consider." Who speaks? "God as a Father," as a father full of pity, full of love, and deeply concerned for your everlasting welfare. What does he call you? "Daughter." Intimating endearment and tender sympathy.

To whom does he call attention? "To the king." That is Jesus, his beloved and only begotten Son. Whom to know is everlasting life. Whom to love, is true happiness. To be united to whom, is the highest honor.

Why does he speak? Because he seeks your happiness, and desires your everlasting welfare. Consider then the consequence of attending to his word, you are made forever. The result of refusing to listen to him is, that you cannot escape the due desert of your sins.

"Incline your ear," pay close attention, listen until your heart is won.

"Forget" all old connections, forsake your former pursuits, resign your carnal pleasures, give up your old follies, and give Jesus all your heart.

**THE ASSURANCE AND DIRECTION.**"So shall the king greatly desire your beauty." This will make you beautiful in his eye, and draw out his love to you. He says, "I love those who love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." He will . . .  
accept you at his throne,  
listen to your requests,  
betroth you for his own,  
unite you to his person,  
and confer all he has upon you.

"He will greatly desire your beauty." Nothing will satisfy him — but the possession of you, the closest union to you — and you will find his love to be strong as death.

"He is your Lord," intended to be your husband, by the arrangements of the Father; and as your husband, he will support you, rule you, love you, bless you, and make you truly happy.

"Worship him." Treat him with the deepest reverence, cheerfully do his pleasure, in all things serve him and honor his name. Reverence his person, word, and will. Adore his divinity, and glorious perfections. In this way — you will become happy, wealthy, holy, safe, and ultimately glorious.

God speaks on behalf of his Son. He speaks to . . .  
win our hearts,  
engage our affections,  
and bring us into his family.

God speaks *lovingly*to you. He sees you connected, mixed up with, and at home in the world; and he says, "Come out from among them, and be separate — and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Listen then to his words. This is the least you can do. If you have any respect for his authority, if you have any regard for your own welfare — then listen to what our heavenly Father says; nor only listen — but carry out his exhortation, and in so doing you are made forever.

Believe, and engage the heart of Jesus, obey and honor the commands of Jesus; keep your eye on the king, and honor him in all things, always, and everywhere. So will He greatly desire your beauty, and will commend you before his Father, and the holy angels. Yes, He will say to you, as to his church of old, "You are all beautiful, my beloved — there is no spot in you."

***~~Happy Service~~***

When the Queen of Sheba came to visit King Solomon, she was so struck with the grandeur and magnificence of his palace, the order and supplies of his household, the wisdom he communicated, and the gracefulness of his utterances — that she considered it both happiness and honor to be allowed to serve in his court, she therefore exclaimed, "Happy are these your servants!" [2 Chronicles 9:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2 Chron 9.7)

But I have been thinking, if the servants of *Solomon*were happy — then how much more happy must the servants of *Jesus*be. Yes, they are happy, and that on many accounts — we will confine our attention to two.

**First, because they are connected with the King.**They are of the court, and of the court of the King of kings, and Lord of lord's. Solomon is in every sense outdone by him.

Solomon was *wise* — but in Jesus dwells all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Solomon's wisdom was a drop of wisdom — his an ocean of wisdom. Solomon's a tiny spark of wisdom, his a glowing sun of wisdom.

Solomon was *wealthy* — but Jesus has *unsearchable riches*. All created wealth is his, and all the uncreated riches of Deity are his too.

Solomon was *honored* — but Jesus has a name above every name; a throne, above every throne; and a kingdom, above every kingdom.

In *wisdom*, *wealth*, and *honor —*He is unequaled, and his servants share in all. Happy are his servants.

**Second, because *employed*by such a sovereign.** In his service, they are sure of the best *provision*, and plenty of it. They obtain good wages, and they are promptly paid. They receive many and great gifts, they enjoy various pleasures, and they have the promise of eternal life.

Being fed with the choicest food, even bread from Heaven; possessing peace of conscience; receiving innumerable tokens of divine love; enjoying high and hallowed communion with God, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and looking forward to eternal life, which includes glory, honor, and immortality — they are truly happy. Yes, with much more propriety may *we*say of the servants of Jesus, than the Queen of Sheba said of Solomon, *"Happy are these your servants!"*May their happiness be mine!

Does Jesus want any servants now? He does. Will you, my reader, engage to be one? Or, if you are one of the happy servants of Christ, will you endeavor to engage more?

*What kind of people will he engage?* *Any*and *all*who are willing to serve him.

*How does he engage them?*When anyone really wishes to be a servant of Christ, he comes to him, in prayer he bows before him, he makes the proposal to him, and agrees to accept of his terms. Or, he yields his heart to Jesus, and engages to serve him, and so the bargain is struck.

*How will he treat his servants?*Ask any of them, and all will unite to testify that he treats them as his children — with the utmost kindness, gentleness, and love. His treatment of them is most honorable — far above their highest expectations.

*What servants does he like best?*He likes to engage his servants while they are young, therefore he says, "I love those who love me, and those who seek me *early* — shall find me." But whether young or old, if they wish to serve him — he engages them. And then loves to see them earnest and energetic; meek and humble; whole hearted and decided in his cause.

*What will be the portion of his servants, when their work on earth is done?* Hear his own words. "If any man *serves*me, let him *follow*me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serves me — him will my father honor." *Wherever*Jesus is — his servants will be. Whatever Jesus *has* — his servants will share with him. Whatever Jesus *is* — his servants will be like him. Well, then, may we say, "Happy are these your servants!" Happy in their state, happy in their connection, happy in their employment, and happy in their eternal prospects!

Reader, are you a servant of Christ? Have you engaged yourself to him? If not — then will you? Jesus is ready to engage you, he has a situation that will just suit you, all he will say to you will be, "Go and serve me, and whatever is right that shall you receive."

***~~The Love of Your Espousals~~***

Love is a noble passion, and when fixed upon a worthy object, and wisely reciprocated — it is a source of the sweetest pleasure. God intended Himself to be the highest object of our love; and that He might win back our affections to Himself — He has revealed Himself in Jesus, in the most lovely and attractive form. God in Jesus is love, and only love — unto all who come to Him in His name. He prizes our love, and has therefore entered into every near and dear relation, in order to draw forth and fix our love upon himself. He proposes a union with himself, as near and dear as the marriage union is among men. This was set forth in his dealings with his people of old, and in their attachment to him, alluding to which he says,*"I remember the love of your espousals."*[Jeremiah 2:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jer 2.2).

**THE FACT.**God and man become united, as does the husband and the wife. Just so it is with Jesus, and those who believe on his name.

Just look at the *parties*. Israel, a poor, sinful, unworthy people; and the infinitely great and glorious God. So still. On the one side a poor sinner, so insignificant, so base, so vile, so miserable, that it is difficult to set it forth. On the other side, Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person. Jesus, who is infinitely great, supremely glorious, perfectly holy, and eternally happy.

Look to the *act*, "your espousals." Jesus moved first, by His word and Spirit, on the conscience and the affections. Then the sinner moved toward Him with fear, desire, hope, faith, and at length love.

Then came the *agreement*, Jesus said, "I will be for you, and you shall be for me." And the soul said, "I am yours, yours only, yours forever!" The union was now formed, the soul was betrothed to the Savior; and by and by, the union will be consummated at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

**THE AFFECTION.** "The love of your espousals." There was a love of *pity*and *benevolence*before — now there is the love of *delight*, on the part of Jesus. There may have been a love of gratitude on the part of the sinner — but now it is his purest, strongest love. It is more than *filial*love, or the love of a child to its parent. It is more than *fraternal*love, or the love of brother to his brother. It is *espousal*love, or the love of the espoused one toward Him whom she desired, and preferred to all others. It is love to the person, and the person alone; and such love as leads us to surrender all *for*Him, and *to*Him. It is as *strong*as death — nothing can destroy it. It is more *pleasing*than all things besides. It is a source of the sweetest, purest, sublimest happiness.

It is love, near akin to the love of Jesus, being reflected by it, and flowing from it. It is an *increasing*love, for the more we know of Jesus — the more we love Him, and shall do so, to all eternity.

Where there is no love, there is no espousal. Jesus never espouses one who does not love Him. He first wins the *heart* — and then gives the *hand*. He fixes on the person, determines to be united, wins the affection, and the espousal follows. No espousal — no marriage. If we are not espoused to Jesus while He is away — we shall not be married to Him at His glorious appearing.

This is the design of the preaching of the gospel, as Paul said to the Corinthians, "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

No marriage — no inheritance. We inherit through Jesus, and by virtue of our union with Him. If we are Christ's — then His *wealth*is ours! And if the wealth of Christ is ours — then we shall possess the kingdom, and reign forever and ever. No possession — no real Heaven. Our Heaven, is having Christ for ours, and being *with*Him, and *enjoying*Him forever and ever.

As espoused to Him — we expect to be publicly married; as married to Him — we shall have full and eternal possession of Him; and eternally possessing Him — we shall have a *Heaven*comprising all we can desire or enjoy!

Reader, are you espoused? Has He taken your *hand* — and have you given Him your *heart?*Have you forsaken all besides — to seek your happiness, your all, in him alone? He is *worthy*of your highest love. He is *necessary*to your perfect happiness.

Do you desire to be espoused to Jesus? You may be. Jesus is willing to be the husband, of every soul that desires to be married to Him. He has sent His servants, as Abraham sent Eliezer, to woo and win a wife for Him. He has *beauty*, He has *nobility*, He has *wealth*. In Him dwells, and dwells in perfection — all that is necessary to meet the wants, wishes, or desires of anyone, and everyone who is willing to be holy and happy.

Espoused to Jesus — your fortune is made. You have an ever-living, ever-loving, never-changing husband. He will never leave, never forsake, never fail you. He will *. . .  
guide*you with His eye, *guard*you with His hand,  
and *satisfy*you with His love.

O happy, happy soul, that is espoused to Jesus!

Holy and eternal Spirit, lead every reader to Jesus, unfold His beauty, reveal His love — and so win the heart; and may the reading of these few remarks lead some to love Jesus, to give their hearts to Jesus, and so join themselves to Jesus in an everlasting covenant, which shall neither be forgotten nor broken!

***~~Job's Experience~~***

However mysterious the dispensations of divine providence — they are all in mercy; and by them often the Lord answers the prayers of his people. The dealings of God with his servant Job were very *trying*, and *long*continued — but they ended in special mercy. It is probable that Job had often prayed the Lord to manifest himself, little thinking what means he would take to do it. In the end of his long affliction, we find him saying,*"I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear — but now my eye sees you! Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes!"*[Job 42:5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job 42.5), [6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job 42.6).

**JOB'S EARLY EXPERIENCE.**He had *heard*of God. Knowledge was handed down by oral instruction. The memories of the parents, were the *family library*. He had been told that there was a God, a fact revealed clearly, needing no proof — but only demanding belief. He no doubt had been informed that God was supreme, glorious, gracious, and just. That he required *obedience*to his moral precepts, and the performance of his positive institutions. Or, that man was to be moral; and being sinful, must come to God through a sacrifice, which was to bleed in order to make atonement, and direct the eye forward to the Lamb of God, who was to take away the sin of the world. He *believed*what he heard, he *did*as he was commanded — and so *prospered*in his ways. Thus he was a sincere and upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

**HIS PRESENT ATTAINMENT.** "Now my eye sees you!" Not that God has appeared to him in a visual manner, or that he had seen any similitude, or representation of God; but as the *eye*takes in a more clear, distinct, and impressive view than the *ear* — so his knowledge of God was more clear, distinct, and impressive. God is to be seen in *nature* — here all may behold him. He is also seen in *revelation* — here all who have his word may view him. He is also seen in *Jesus* — here all who know his Son may study him. But he is made known also, by the *inward operation of the Holy Spirit*. God who at the first commanded the light to shine out of darkness — shines into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.

Job now saw God in another manner than he had ever done before. He saw more . . .  
of his greatness and glory,  
of his purity and sovereignty,  
of his grace and mercy.

Just so, we, by the constant teaching of the Spirit, and the dispensations of divine providence — come to *know*God more thoroughly, and therefore we *trust*him more implicitly.

**ITS EFFECT.** "Therefore I abhor myself." He had disgusting and humiliating views of himself. Having a clearer and more correct view of his God — led him to despise himself, and he turned from himself with loathing! He now abhorred the *rashness*he had displayed, the *impatience*He had manifested, the *complaints*he had uttered, the *self-righteousness*he had indulged, and the *reflections*He had cast on his God.

Now he says, "I repent." My mind is changed, and I am sorry for my misconduct. According to the custom of the country, and the times in which he lived — he sat down on ashes, put dust on his head, humbling himself before God — loathing himself in his own sight for all his abominations.

To *hear*of God is a mercy. To be *correctly informed*of his existence, nature and perfection, to be taught to know his righteous law, and gracious gospel — is a greater mercy. To *see*God is a greater mercy. To have him *revealed*to us by the Holy Spirit, and to have him revealed in us, as an act of special grace — is the crowning mercy.

A sight of God always ***humbles***us. It humbled the prophet *Isaiah*, who when he saw God, cried out, "Woe to I am ruined! For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty!" It humbled the apostle *Peter*, who when he perceived the dignity and glory of Jesus, exclaimed, "Depart from me — for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" It humbled the beloved *John*, who when Jesus appeared to him in Patmos, fell at his feet as dead. God's glory always lays the believer in the dust of self-abasement.

Our views of God may yet be *clearer*, and our impressions of his majesty *deeper*. We have seen but little of his glory yet. We have felt but little of the sanctifying effects of his presence yet. But "we shall know, if we follow on to know the Lord." Those who know the most of God — think the least of themselves. Pride cannot live in the presence of God. His glory . . .  
consumes our self-righteousness,  
dries up our conceit, and  
spoils all our supposed beauty.

The higher we rise in our knowledge and enjoyment of God — the lower we shall sink in our estimation of ourselves. True repentance, is always attended with self — abhorrence. We abhor not only *sinful*self; but *righteous*self — everything of our own, and cry out with Paul, "That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law — but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

True faith always goes *hand in hand*with repentance. The stronger our faith — the deeper our penitence. The more we believe God's love to us — the more we mourn over our sin and sinfulness. The *tear of penitence*will drop from the *eye of faith,*on the crystal threshold of the gate of the New Jerusalem. And then the light of *glory*will extinguish the light of *faith* — and there shall be no more sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain — for the former things will have passed away!

***~~Hating Christ~~***

Love and hatred are two opposite passions in the human soul. Love is for the beautiful and good, hatred for the deformed and evil. If we had never sinned, we would only love the excellent and holy; and we would only hate the loathsome and sinful. But in consequence of sin, the very opposite is the case, in a moral or spiritual point of view; for we call evil good, and good evil; we put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Men have become haters of God, lovers of sin; haters of light, and lovers of darkness. Hence the wisdom of God says, "All those who hate life, love death." [Proverbs 8:35](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov 8.35). They hate the good — and love the evil.

**THE OBJECT OF HATRED**. This is *Jesus*, the personal wisdom of God, who complains in the book of Psalms, "They *hated me*without a cause." [John 15:25](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John 15.25). And personally in the days of His flesh, "Now have they both seen and *hated both me*and my Father." [John 15:24](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John 15.24). It is a solemn thought, that many sinners who hear the gospel, hate Jesus. Hate Jesus! Yes, though He is infinitely wise, exquisitely beautiful, perfect in holiness, unparalleled in goodness, almighty in power, and the very personification of love. Jesus, who is represented by the gentle lamb, the fructifying dew, the safe refuge, the fragrant rose, the beautiful and useful light; who is the desire of all nations, and the altogether lovely one. Jesus who left Heaven and its glories, who came and labored on earth, who suffered unparalleled indignities and pains, who died on the accursed tree, and who now pleads in Heaven for all who seek salvation by Him. Jesus, who is both able and willing to pardon all their sins, to lift them up to Heaven, and who has power and authority to thrust them down to Hell. O what folly, what madness to hate Jesus — and yet multitudes do so!

**THE CRIME.** "All those who hate me." Many will say, "but we do not hate Jesus." Do you not? You act as if you did at any rate.

How do you treat His word? Do you read it, believe it, and practice it? Or, do you allow it to He unopened day after day? Or if you read it, do you read it with that deep seriousness, profound thought, and close attention which it deserves? How do you act in reference to His throne of grace? He has erected a throne of grace, he invites you to come boldly unto it, and to pour out your hearts before him. Are you often at his throne? Are you there . . .  
as a *criminal*seeking for mercy,  
as a *servant*seeking supplies, or  
as a *child*asking for favors and indulgences?

How do you treat his house? It is opened that you may meet with Him, worship him, and hear from him. Are you often there? Are you there regularly and early? Do you go there as to your home, to meet with your Father and converse with him?

How do you treat his servants and their message? With respect and attention? With affection and regard? If not, how can you say you love him? Look at your *thoughts* — are they full of Christ, and do you think of him with pleasure? Look at your *words* — do you speak of Christ, and speak of him as of one you love, and in whom you confide? Look at your *conduct* — do you imitate Christ, making his example and His word your law? If not, how can you say that you love him? If you do not love him — you hate him, and therefore treat him with indifference and contempt.

This conduct is *cruel*, after all he has done to save sinners. It is *foolish*, for it excludes from salvation, and exposes to the wrath of God. It is *inexcusable*, for no reason can be assigned for it, or legitimate ground of excuse found. A more unreasonable, inexcusable sin, than hating the Lord Jesus, was never committed.

**THE RESULT**. "All they that hate me — love death." They love that which will be their death. The death of hope, the death of happiness, and that forever. The death which includes outer darkness, distance from God, and eternal damnation. O strange infatuation, to love death! If they do not love death itself, they choose the way that leads to it. They prefer risking it, to coming to the Lord Jesus for life. They pursue it in the error of their way. They seem determined to dare it.

Here is the *epitome of folly.*How can anyone be more foolish than this? Here is the almost universal sin. Almost all manifest dislike to Jesus, and refuse to seek salvation by him. Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads unto death, and *many*there are, who go in thereat.

Here is the chief complaint of the Son of God. Jesus *deserves*to be loved. He *desires*to be loved. He has done everything he could to win our love — and yet the great majority of mankind hate him! Well might he weep over Jerusalem, when treated so by its inhabitants. Well might his apostle say, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ — let him be eternally accursed." Well may he say at the last to all who have treated him thus, "Depart from me, you cursed ones, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Reader, will he say so to you? If you hate him, if you are indifferent to him, or if you treat him with cold neglect — he most assuredly will. Fearful will be your case then. Eternal will be your punishment then. The hater of Christ must perish!

***~~What Mercy Did for us~~***

Israel's history is full of wonders. Wonders of *grace*on God's part — and wonders of *sin*on theirs. All that was good in their history, began with God, and was to the praise of the glory of his grace. How striking the testimony of Moses on this point. "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness. He led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye." [Deuteronomy 32:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut 32.10).

The words are equally applicable to us, and point out**OUR NATURAL CONDITION**.

**WHERE we were.** In a *desert*land — a land on which God had turned his back, where there was nothing to satisfy the cravings of an immortal — but sinful soul. Just as the traveler in the desert longs for water — but finds none, though almost dying for thirst; and as he would give all he is worth for bread — but can purchase none, though he is ready to gnaw his tongue with pain.

All is *desert* — nor only desert, but *doleful*. The howling winds of *error*and *temptation*blow. The *beasts*of the forest, and the *serpents*of the dust — track our path! Every now and then we hear the dismal howl, the shrieking cry of people lost and left to perish!

O, to the awakened sinner — the *world*is a *desert*, a *dismal*place; nothing . . .  
suits his case,  
meets his condition, or  
ministers to his needs!

We found ourselves truly in a desert land.

**WHAT we were.** We were *lost* — for we had no resources, and were therefore famishing for need. We had no friend, and were therefore wretched, miserable, and undone! No traveler in a desert land, or in a waste howling wilderness, ever appeared more lost than we did — until Jesus appeared to us, and for us. But for him, our case would have been hopeless, and our end without mercy!

Let us then look at **OUR DISTINGUISHING MERCY**.*God found us!*

In his love, pity, and compassion — he came in *search*of us. When we could not seek him — he sought us. When we could not go to him — He came near to us.

He *came*where we were,  
he *called*us to his feet,  
he *spoke*kindly to us,  
he *undertook*to be our Savior.

Yes, he undertook . . .  
to slake our thirst,  
to satisfy our hunger,  
to lead us out of the desert, and  
to bring us into the promised land — a land flowing with milk and honey.

He *amply provided*for us — all that was necessary for soul and body, for time and eternity.

"He led us about." To *pleasant Elim* — with its fountains and palms; to *disappointing Marah* — with its bitter waters; among rocks, sand, and serpents He conducted us — but He never left us, or took his eye off us!

"He instructed us." By his *Spirit*, by his *rod*, and by his *ordinances* — he taught us . . .  
to know ourselves,  
our dependence upon him,  
our obligation to him, and  
the glaring ingratitude of our conduct toward him.

"He kept us as the apple of his eye." That is — with the greatest care, constancy, and tenderness, he kept us.

By his angelic messengers,  
by his special providence,  
and by his indwelling Spirit —  
he has kept and preserved us until now.

To us, his mercy has been *sovereign*, *distinguishing*, and *free*. To his mercy, we owe . . .  
our *deliverance*from so great a death,  
our *preservation*in so dangerous a place,  
and our *guidance*along so intricate a path.

See, what SIN did for us! Sin brought us into a desert land.

See, where the LAW left us! In a waste howling wilderness.

See, how God's SOVEREIGNTY shines in our experience. We were sought, found, and saved — and all of grace; free, sovereign, and distinguishing grace!

See, how MERCY accommodated itself to us. It came to us — unsolicited and unsought. It did everything for us, and fully and freely supplied us.

See, how gloriously GRACE shines in us. Whatever we are — we are by the grace of God. All that we have — was given by the grace of God. All that we expect — is from the same source.

Grace chose us to salvation.

Grace redeemed us from death.

Grace brought us to the cross.

Grace has led us, fed us, protected, and preserved us until now.

Grace will complete its work by glorifying us.

And then throughout eternity, grace shall have all the praise!

***~~Eternal Life~~***

If life is a blessing — then what must *eternal*life be?

If life on earth is good — then what must life in *Heaven*be?

To live *with*God. To live *like*God. To live, enjoying the closest and most hallowed *communion*with God. Yet this life may be obtained and enjoyed. It is a free gift, and it is offered to every hearer or reader of the gospel. To this, God witnesses; to this, he bears record, as we read, "This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." [1 John 5:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1 John 5.11).

**THE INESTIMABLE GIFT**. "Eternal life." It is inestimable — just look at its opposite. Eternal death is . . .  
the most terrible infliction man can suffer,  
the most awful doom that can be pronounced upon a sinner,  
ever dying — never dead,  
ever suffering — never at ease!

Look at what *eternal life*comprehends. *PARDON*, or a change of state. No more a criminal — but a justified man; no more under condemnation — but a child of God, beloved and honored.

A new *PRINCIPLE*, or a change of nature. This new principle produces a change of taste, of appetite, of pursuit, of end. The man is a new man — a new creation — an heir of God, and a joint-heir with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then comes new *POSSESSION*, or a change of place. We are taken from earth — to Heaven. We rise above all the effects of sin, all the effects of the curse — and shall be forever with the Lord.

**ITS BESTOWMENT**. Eternal life is not a *reward*for service done, or *wages*for a work performed — but a *free*and *generous*gift. God promised it before the world began.

God *promised*it to Jesus for his people, and to us as believers in him.

God *revealed*it, first in his word, and then by his Son. "Life and immortality," or immortal life, "is brought to light by the gospel."

God *presents*it to every sinner who hears the gospel.

Jesus is ready to *impart*it, and complains because sinners will not come and receive it. He says, "you will not come to me — that you might have life."

God *confers*it — and confers it on every believer. He who believes, has everlasting life, and shall never come into condemnation.

God *crowns* it. Crowns it with his presence, his glory, and the full enjoyment of his love.

The life that *comes*from God — *leads* us to God, and only finds full satisfaction in the glorious presence of God.

**ITS DEPOSITORY AND CHANNEL**. "This life is in his Son." In him was life originally — all life, as the author of creation. In him is life, all *spiritual*life — as the head of grace, the mediator between God and man.

It was placed in Jesus for *safety*. Life in *Adam*was lost — but life in Jesus is safe and secure.

It is in Jesus to be *conveyed*to us, and it is received and enjoyed by *faith*.

Jesus is *accessible*. He is easy of access, we come to him, and we receive eternal life from him. It is in Jesus that its communication may be certain, nothing can fail, with which Jesus has to do. No one can fail, who goes to Jesus for eternal life.

**ITS OBJECTS**. "God has given to US eternal life." He has given eternal life to us, who were under sentence of death, and could look for nothing else. He has given eternal life to us *sinners*; as sinners, as most unworthy sinners, as nothing but sinners. He has given eternal life to us *freely*, without condition, except that we come to Jesus and receive it without money and without price. Given to *whoever*will, to anyone, and everyone who is willing to receive it.

Herein is love — free love, wondrous love, that God has given eternal life to sinners — to sinners who were his enemies; and has placed it in Jesus, that they may come and receive it without reluctance, and without fear.

Eternal life then is to be *had*. No one perishes because he *cannot*be saved — but because he *will not*be saved. There is eternal life in Jesus, and that life is for sinners. Those who would have it, must come to Jesus. It is to be had *nowhere*else, nor in any other *way*. Jesus is entrusted with eternal life — and Jesus alone. All may come to Jesus who will. All are welcome. All are invited. No man who hears the gospel, can say that he was never to Christ — for the gospel invites all. The minister who does not invite all his hearers to Jesus, does not preach a full, free, and unfettered gospel.

Whoever comes — obtains. No one is cast out. No one is refused. Every one who asks — receives; and he who seeks — finds. He who has not eternal life, has never come to Jesus; for all who have come, have obtained it.

Rejecters of eternal life are ungrateful — ungrateful to a God of love! They are suicidal, they destroy themselves with an everlasting destruction! They are inexcusable, for who can excuse or pity them, who thrust God's free gift from them, and pronounce selves unworthy of everlasting life!

***~~The Bitter Taunt~~***

Few things are more painful to a sensitive mind than to be *taunted* — and especially to be taunted when in affliction and sorrow. Whoever suffered from this, like the Son of God? Now they *ridicule*him, "the friend of publicans and sinners!" And when in the bitter agonies of death, they *insulted*him, exclaiming, "He saved others — he cannot save himself!" [Mark 15:31](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark 15.31). But, as in the former case he assumed the title — so in this, he admitted the fact. If he would save his people — he could not save himself.

**HE SAVED OTHERS**. Yes, he had saved many from severe sufferings, and some from the power of death. But above and beyond this, he had saved millions from the bitter pains of eternal death! Yes, millions would have been in Hell — but for him. He saved others —  
saved them, without solicitation;  
saved them, at the expense of his own life;  
saved them, in honor of his Father's command;  
saved them, to the everlasting honor of his own name;  
and saved them, because none else could.

What wondrous love! What surpassing condescension! What amazing grace! And is he *taunted*with this? Yes, his cruel foes, his bitter enemies, insulting him cry out, to embitter his last hours, *"He saved others — he cannot save himself!"*

**HE COULD NOT SAVE HIMSELF**. *Why?*

Because He had engaged in the everlasting covenant, to pay his people's debt, to ransom their persons with his blood, and to die in their stead.

Because every sin offering, every trespass offering, and every burnt offering had pre-figured his death — they were all types of him; and as the antitype, He must answer to them.

Because it had been predicted by the prophets, that Messiah should be cut off — but not for himself; that the shepherd should be smitten for the sheep — and that his soul should be made an offering for sin.

Because he had been expected by his saints in all ages, to bruise the serpent's head, to make an atonement for iniquity, and to magnify the law, and render it honorable.

Not only so — but thousands, yes, millions had been admitted into Heaven on credit, because He had undertaken to satisfy justice on their behalf, and discharge the debts they had contracted.

Besides which, God had righteously threatened Satan, that the *seed of the woman*would bruise the serpent's head — and that he would bruise his heel.

The glory of God in the salvation of risen,  
the peopling of Heaven,  
the delivering of the earth from the curse,  
and the happiness of innumerable myriads  
 — all depended upon his laying down his life, and dying the bitter death of the cross. How then could Jesus save himself?

*Had He saved himself* — then . . .  
his people would have been lost,  
Satan would have triumphed,  
the promises would have failed,  
God would have forfeited his word,  
the Scriptures would have been broken,  
all God's gracious purposes would have been frustrated,  
his plans would have been deranged,  
Heaven would have been empty, and  
Hell would have been crowded with the objects of God's love!

How then could Jesus save himself? He would not — but would rather have died a thousand deaths. He could not, or his character for truth, faithfulness, and love, would have been lost forever.

Let us then, admire the *self-denial*of Jesus. His whole life was a life of self-denial. He left the throne of glory — to tabernacle on God's footstool; he laid aside the robes of royalty — and wore the rags of a rebel; he made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death — even the death of the cross. No one ever did, no one ever could — practice the self denial which Jesus did.

See, to what your salvation reduced the Savior. If he would save you — then he must *suffer*for you, *die*for you, and be *degraded*to the lowest possible degree for you.

He sank beneath your woes.

He bore your curse.

He suffered your sentence.

He paid your penalty.

He endured of your sins!

You owe *everything*to him. Had he spared himself — then justice never would have spared you. Had he not died on Calvary — then you must have endured all that is included in the second death, in Hell forever. Rejoice then, in the fact that Jesus did not save himself. He preferred rather suffer death for a time — than leave you to suffer forever!

For you, he left his Father's bosom;  
for you, he endured privation on earth;  
for you he stood as a criminal before Caiphas, Herod, and Pilate;  
for you, he suffered cruel mockings, scourgings, and the agonies of the cross itself,  
for you, he died and was buried in Joseph's tomb;  
for you, he arose, ascended to Heaven, and now pleads at God's right hand,  
for you, He ever lives, and will soon come and receive you unto himself — that where he is, you may be also. He saved *you* — and therefore he could not save himself!

***~~Holy Violence!~~***

In all matters of importance — *zeal*, *effort*and *determination*are commendable. The *energetic*generally succeed — the *lukewarm*seldom. But in nothing is determined action so necessary and commendable, as in seeking the salvation of the soul. This is variously set forth in God's holy word — but let us look at one passage, which appears to be full of fire and fervor. "The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force!" [Matthew 11:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt 11.12)

**THE PRIZE**. A *kingdom* — a *heavenly*kingdom. That is — to be under the *paternal*government of God. Not under his *natural*government, which all are; nor under his *legal*government, as the Jews were; but under his *gracious*government. He who is in possession of this kingdom, enjoys . . .  
the *pardon*of all sin;  
a sweet and holy *peace*of conscience;  
sure and certain *protection*from all foes;  
a constant and unfailing *supply*of all his needs;  
the hallowed *gratification*of an enlightened mind;  
the employment of all his talents, for a noble purpose;  
and the bright and blessed prospect of *everlasting glory!*

What a prize! Surely this is worth striving for!

**THE EFFORT.** "The violent take it by force." The violent are the energetic — the determined. Such every sinner ought to be, in the matter of salvation. If we take this kingdom by force . . .  
the *eye*will be directed to it;  
the *heart*will be set upon it; and  
the *whole soul*will be determined to possess it.

Energy, or effort will be put forth in . . .  
breaking of old connections,  
conquering old habits,  
wrestling with God in prayer,  
striving against unbelief,  
resisting the attacks of Satan,  
forcing the way through all difficulties,  
and refusing to rest, but in the kingdom. Nothing will do for the determined soul — but the *title deeds of the kingdom*in the hand, and the joys of the kingdom in the heart!

There is a *kingdom*to be won! A great, a glorious, an everlasting kingdom. A kingdom of *grace*on earth — a kingdom of *glory*in Heaven! A kingdom . . .  
whose *sovereign*is a Father,  
whose *laws*are love,  
whose *resources*are boundless, and  
all whose *subjects*are both safe and happy!

Crowds have violently taken possession of it. They set their heart upon it, and would not be diverted from it; they energetically sought to possess it — nor would they rest until they obtained possession.

Those who would win it — must be determined. No half-hearted, half-convinced, half-converted soul will ever obtain it. We must strive — agonize to enter in at the strait gate. We must *labor*to enter into that rest. It is worth all the *effort*we can make, all the *energy*we can put forth. Energy, violent energy, is commendable. Commendable! Nothing is so commendable. We should . . .  
strain every muscle,  
use every means,  
employ every moment —  
until we can call the kingdom ours!

Who would lose a kingdom —  
for a little *ease*,  
for a little *indulgence*of the *flesh*, or  
for the enjoyment of a few of the fleeting *pleasures*of the world!

Who? Alas, *multitudes*do!

Now is the time to win so great a prize. The *race*must be run now. The *struggle*must take place now. The *violence*must be put forth now. "Behold, now is the accepted time! Behold, now is the day of salvation!"

It may soon be too late.

The time is limited.

The season is short.

The *day*is fast passing away.

The *night*will soon shroud us in its darkness.

Then it will be too late — eternally too late.

Let us then seize the present hour — for death may soon be here. If we let the present opportunity slip — we shall regret it forever.*Hell is filled with useless regrets.*The lost soul eternally condemns its folly, and adds to its torment, by reflecting upon . . .  
mercies slighted,  
invitations refused,  
opportunities lost, and  
the kingdom of glory forfeited, and forfeited forever!

Faint hearts will surely fail. But who will be faint-hearted, when a kingdom is at stake, a kingdom which may be taken, honorably taken; nor only taken — but be held and enjoyed forever!

Reader, are you *forcing*your way to Jesus. Are you pressing through the crowd of sin, difficulties, and obstacles? Remember, it is for a *kingdom* — an *everlasting*kingdom. You may be a king! You may reign in splendor and glory forever!

You must either be one of the most honorable beings in Heaven — or one of the most degraded creatures in Hell. There is no alternative.

A kingdom — or a dungeon,  
dignity — or damnation,  
Heaven — or Hell,  
which shall it be?  
One it must be.

O may you be one of those who take the kingdom of Heaven by force!

***~~God Is Mighty~~***

*Greatness*and *goodness*meet and unite in God. *Majesty*and *mercy*are alike displayed by him. He is high — but he has respect unto the lowly. He is *glorious*beyond conception — but He is as *gracious*as he is glorious.

Everything in God is infinite!

Infinite *goodness*and infinite *greatness*;  
infinite *majesty*and infinite *mercy*;  
infinite *glory*and infinite *grace* — are alike in God. "Behold, God is mighty — and does not despise any." [Job 36:5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job 36.5).

Here is, **GOOD NEWS FOR WEAK SOULS**. "Behold, God is MIGHTY." There is nothing too hard for him. He can do all things. He can do all things . . .  
with perfect ease,  
without effort,  
without assistance,  
without instruments or means,  
though all should conspire to oppose him!

Whatever is for his own glory — he will do. Whatever he has promised — we may ask him to do. If it is for our good — he will do it; therefore having asked — we may expect him to do it.

Let us therefore look *away from weak man*, who often cannot help us if he would — for the Lord always can.

Let us look *above strong foes* — for the Lord is infinitely stronger; and if they are our foes — he is our friend.

Let us go to him with our *powerful corruptions* — that he may destroy them; and in our weakness — that he may make us strong.

Are you weak? Behold God is mighty — and He will glorify his strength in your weakness!

Here is also, **AN ENCOURAGING TESTIMONY**. "He does not despise any." *Despising*would be an act of pride — and pride cannot dwell with God. He is so mighty — that he fears none; and so merciful — that he despises none. He despises not the *poor*, for "this poor man cried and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." He despises not the *afflicted*, "for he has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither has he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him — he heard." Nor does he despise the *guilty*, for to the adulteress Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." Nor does he despise the most *unworthy*, therefore he sent his gospel to the murderers of his Son.

Instead of despising —  
he *listens*to their cries,  
he *regards*their prayers,  
he *relieves*their distresses,  
and he *saves*their souls!

Had he despised any, it might have been wicked Manasseh — but he heard, pardoned, and saved him. Or the woman who was a notorious sinner — but Jesus pardoned her and bade her go in peace. Or, it may have been the blind beggars, the filthy lepers, or the devil-possessed madmen in the days of his flesh — but no, he never despised one!

Reader, he will not despise you.

However *low*you may have sunk,  
however *wicked*you may have been,  
however *guilty*you may feel —  
the Lord will not despise you, nor refuse to save you.

Here is a plea to carry to the throne of grace. We may tell the Lord, that it is said in his word, that he does not despise any, and therefore we venture to come, and however despicable in ourselves, we cannot think that he will despise us.

Here is a prospect for the *poor*. The rich, the great, the noble of this world, may despise the poor — but God will not. He is *the poor man's friend*. He is ever ready to hear the poor man's cry. Yes, he has *chosen*the poor of this world, who are rich in faith, to be heirs of his kingdom.

God is mighty in ***working*** — therefore let *believers*rejoice, for he will do for them exceeding and abundantly above all that they ask or think. He will fulfill in them all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.

God is mighty in his ***wrath***, therefore let obstinate sinners tremble. He will rule them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel. His wrath is as a consuming fire, which nothing can ever quench. Let us then take hold of his strength, and be at peace with him.

God is mighty. Behold and admire his might in *creation*, in *providence*, and in *grace*.

God is mighty. Behold and improve this thought, by making him your friend, by walking with him in peace and holiness.

God is mighty. Behold and tremble — if you have God for your enemy. O seek his grace — for you cannot bear his wrath! Be reconciled unto him, for you cannot endure his terrible judgments, which will be executed on all impenitent sinners.

If the eye of an unconverted man rests upon this page, to you, my fellow sinner, I must say — you have cause for fear. Living as you do, without God and without hope in the world, a stranger to the power of true religion, the preciousness of Christ, and the peace of God in the conscience — you are in the greatest danger! At any moment you may be cut down. *Sudden death* would be to you — *sudden damnation!*How dreadful the thought, to be one hour on earth, surrounded with all its comforts and pleasures — and the next hour in Hell! And yet this must be the case — unless you come to Jesus, commit your soul to Jesus, and obtain the salvation that is in Jesus.

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." [John 3:36](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John 3.36)

***~~The Glorious Builder~~***

The Bible, like God's heart — is full of Christ. God never appears to be weary of speaking of, and commending his beloved Son. How glorious Jesus must be, thus to occupy the mind, and the thoughts of God! O that he may fill our minds, as he does his Father's!

Jesus is employed about all that is great, grand, and glorious. When God would have a world created — Jesus was employed to create it. When God would have a *temple*erected for his habitation and glory — Jesus is engaged to erect it. Hence we read, "He shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory." [Zechariah 6:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech 6.13).

**THE GLORIOUS PERSON**. He is called "the Branch" — the figure being employed to represent him. The *hidden root*from which He sprung, is his *divinity*. His humble appearance is compared to a branch, his invaluable *fruit*is a temple for God, and the highest honor for men. He is glorious in the constitution of his *person* — being God and man, in one Christ. He is glorious in his official *character*, as mediator and Savior — the prophet, priest, and king of his church. He is glorious in his magnificent work, raising a temple for God, a temple worthy of God.

**THE MAGNIFICENT BUILDING**. It is a *temple*for God, where he will dwell, and display all his glorious perfections. A temple *worthy*of God, being spiritual, holy, and perfect. A temple *approved*by God, of which he says, "Here will I dwell, for I have desired it." A temple to be *filled*with God, and filled with God forever. It will be . . . *large* — beyond man's conceptions; *living* — all its materials being full of spiritual life; *lasting* — not subject to decay or change.

Jesus undertook the work in the everlasting covenant. He has the plan of the entire structure in his possession. He can command the resources — as vast as they must be. He has laid the foundation, firm, strong, and immoveable. He is successfully carrying on the erection, notwithstanding opposition. He will not fail nor be discouraged until it is completed.

**THE SATISFACTORY RESULT**. "He shall bear the glory." He has the honor . . .  
of *procuring*all the materials — at an immense cost;  
of *preparing*the materials — with immense labor;  
of *superintending*the entire erection — appointing to each stone its place;  
of *preserving*it from the attacks of foes, and the possibility of decay;  
of *perfecting*it, so that it shall stand forth an amazing monument of his skill, his wealth, his perseverance, and faithfulness!

He shall bear the glory . . .  
of its *grandeur* — which is great;  
of its *perfection* — which is complete; and  
of its *architecture* — which is wonderful.

The glory of its purity and spirituality, and of its incomparable beauty — will be ascribed to him. He shall have glory . . .  
from *God*, who inhabits it;  
from *angels*, who admire it;  
and from *men*, who compose it.

His glory will be great, increasing, and eternal!

See then — what Jesus is doing. He is raising a temple for Jehovah to inhabit forever.

See then — what the church is. The temple of the living God, a consecrated habitation for the Most High.

See then — what Christ will gain. Honor, glory, and renown, which he will enjoy and wear forever.

See then — what the church will be. A monument of the Savior's wisdom, wealth, power, and perseverance. It will be a perfect temple, nothing redundant, no defect; nothing forgotten, or omitted, or to be desired. An incomparable temple, the wonder of the universe, the chief of the works of God, the finest production of his infinite mind!

See then — of what we should make sure. That we form part of the material of this temple. That we are laid upon, and cemented to — the foundation — Christ. That we are in *union*with the different parts of the building. That our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, and that God now dwells in us.

See then — what we should seek. To bring glory to Jesus. To ascribe glory to him. All the glory of his Father's house belongs to him. Every believer should seek to live to the praise of his glory, and to exalt, extol, and magnify him, to the utmost of their power.

Beloved, what do you *think*of Christ? What do you *know*of Christ? Are you built by him into this spiritual temple? Do you *catch*the rays of his glory — and *reflect*them upon others? Is it the *desire*, the *endeavor*, the *delight*of your soul — to glorify Jesus, and to see and hear others glorify him? My soul cries out, O that I could glorify him ten thousand times more than I do — more than any others do; glorify him as he richly and righteously deserves.

***~~The King on His Throne~~***

The Lord Jesus is a most wonderful person, and everything truly wonderful meets in him. God loves to speak of him. Angels love to praise him. All who are taught by the Holy Spirit love to exalt him. The inspired writers are always setting forth, and exalting Jesus. They are continually giving some new view of him, ever pointing to some fresh excellency in him. He is the *great king*, and the testimony is, "He shall sit and rule upon his throne!" [Zechariah 6:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech 6.13).

**THE SOVEREIGN**. The Lord is a great king — a great king over all the earth. JESUS is our king, God's king — and a great and glorious king he is. Greater than *David*, the man after God's own heart. Greater than *Solomon*, the wisest among men.

He is *incomparable*.

His *wisdom*is infinite, knowing neither limit nor bound.

His *empire*is universal, for all things are put under his feet.

His subjects are innumerable, like the dew drops of the morning, or the sands on the sea shore.

His *resources*are boundless, and his power to create more is infinite!

His *laws*are equitable, for justice and judgment are the basis of his throne.

His *reign*is eternal, for he shall rule forever and ever.

Wonderful Sovereign!

Wonderful Savior!

Sovereign and Savior in one!

**CHRIST'S THRONE**. Not constructed of ivory or gold — but glory. It is a glorious high throne, and it is the place of our sanctuary.

It is *lofty*, above the heavens;  
it is *magnificent*, dazzling to behold;  
it is *eternal*, and can know no decay;  
it is encircled with a *rainbow*, the emblem of security and peace.

It is Christ's own throne.

His by heirship, as the only begotten of the Father.

His by the ordination and appointment of his Father.

His by right of purchase, being founded in his own most precious blood.

His by the suffrages of his people, for they all unite to vote him the throne, and desire that he should reign forever and ever.

**CHRIST'S HAPPINESS**. He sits upon his throne! He has not to fight for it, or raise an army to defend it. But there he sits and fills it with calm dignity and majesty. He possesses it by lawful right. He retains it by the exercise of grace and justice. He enjoys it with holy satisfaction and pleasure. He satisfies the whole of his subjects — there is not a traitor among them.

He rules . . .  
by *love* — pure and holy love;  
by *law* — suited to the nature and character of his subjects;  
by *power* — having authority to reign, and might to exercise that authority;  
and by *wisdom* — the highest wisdom, which overrules all things for his own glory, and the highest good of his subjects.

His throne is now *invisible*to mortal eyes — but it will be seen by and bye. John beheld it in vision, and writes, "I saw a *great white throne*, and him who sat on it, before whose face the earth and Heaven fled away!" "And he who sat upon the throne, said, Behold I make all things new."

Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord Almighty shall reign in the new Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. Then shall be fulfilled the prediction, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."

His *government*will be successful and eternal, fulfilling all the Scripture has spoken, and answering every end designed by it. He will never be deposed. He will never abdicate, for the Lord shall reign forever, even your God, O Zion, unto all generations. All his saints are ordained to be sovereigns, and will reign by virtue of their union with him, and relation to him. "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, and tongue, and people, and nation; and have made us kings and priests unto our God — and we shall reign on the earth."

Well therefore, may all who love his name unite to exalt him, and join in singing, "Unto him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever, Amen!"

The Lord Jesus is our *judge*, the Lord Jesus is our *king*, the Lord Jesus is our *law-giver* — he will save us!

Hark, ten thousand harps and voices  
Sound the note of praise above!  
Jesus reigns, and Heaven rejoices;  
Jesus reigns, the God of love.  
See, he fills yon azure throne,  
Jesus rules the world alone!

King of Glory, reign forever:  
Yours an everlasting crown  
Nothing from your love shall sever  
Those whom you have made your own.  
Happy objects of your grace,  
Destined to behold your face!

Savior, hasten your appearing;  
Bring, O bring the glorious day;  
When, the awful summons hearing,  
Heaven and earth shall pass away  
Then with golden harps we'll sing,  
Glory, glory to our King!

***~~The Priest on His Throne!~~***

Jesus, as the King of Zion is on his throne — reigning over his people by right of his ransom, and doing as he desires in Heaven and on earth. But he is not only the enthroned *King* — but the enthroned *Priest*; and the only priest who has any right to a throne. But his right is unquestionable, and his dignity will be durable. "He shall be a Priest upon his throne!" [Zechariah 6:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech 6.13).

**WHAT HE IS.***"A Priest."*As such, he came into our world to make an atonement for our sins, and put them away forever.

On him, they were laid.

By him, they were borne.

In his person, they were punished.

By his blood, they were expiated.

Through his perfect work — they are covered, concealed and cancelled forever.

As a priest *he offers up our sacrifices* — our prayers, praises, tears, broken hearts, our bodies, and our souls. He pleads for his brethren. Pleads his own blood, their new relation to him, and his Father's love to them. He obtains *answers*to our prayers — answers of peace.

He *bears the iniquity of our holy things*before the Lord — and renders them acceptable unto God. He is now in the holiest of all, interceding for us — but he will soon come out to bless us, and be glorified in us.

**WHERE HE IS.**"He is a Priest *upon his throne*." He is a sovereign priest — merit and majesty meet in him; tenderness and dignity are displayed by him. His throne is his own: on his *cross*he made the atonement, on his *throne*he makes and publishes laws. He *rules*over all his ransomed ones, and rules over them as the purchase of his blood, as the objects of his strongest love. He will soon come and *reign*visibly on earth, when all his saints, from all quarters will be collected and gathered around him. All who surround him will be loyal, and whole-hearted in their service. The good land so long promised — will be possessed. The royal city, the new Jerusalem — will descend out of Heaven from God, having the glory of God resting upon it.

The *RULE*of this sovereign priest will be peaceable — there shall be no wars. It will be prosperous — for in his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endures. It will be *eternal* — for his throne is forever and ever. It will be *universal* — he shall reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

In Jesus, the office of the priest and the king are united — and cannot be divided. He *is*all that his people need, and will *do*all that his people require. He will . . .  
get rid of their sins,  
purify their persons,  
perfect their happiness,  
and rule over them evermore!

His atonement is the foundation of his throne.  
He humbled himself,  
took the sinner's place,  
died in the sinner's stead, and  
procured for the sinner an honorable discharge from all legal obligations.

Therefore God has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess him *Lord*.

The sovereign priest will be most *glorious*.

His *person* — glorious.

His *work* — glorious.

His *offices* — glorious.

His *kingdom* — glorious.

His *subjects* — glorious.

All about him, and all connected with him — will be glorious.

The *subjects*of this sovereign priest will be all happy. Every cause of discomfort will be removed forever. Everything essential to happiness will be possessed, and possessed forever.

*Behind*them, they see a long train of mercies.

*Before*them, opens an eternity of splendor and glory.

*Within*them, peace and joy reign uninterrupted.

*Above*them God shines in glory and beauty.

O blessed state! O happy, happy people!

Reader, do you know this priest?

Has he put away your sins?

Has he given you his Spirit?

Is he enthroned in your heart?

Are you living near his throne?

Do you look and long for his glorious appearing?

Is he the object of your confidence, reverence, and love?

He must reign, and put every enemy under his feet. If you therefore are found among his *foes*when he comes — he will *tread*you under his feet in his wrath, and *trample*upon you in his sore displeasure!

Resist him — you cannot.

Escape from him — you cannot.

Be reconciled unto him — you may.

If therefore you are not experimentally reconciled to Jesus, if you are not yet at peace with him, in all kindness and love — we urge you to "acquaint now yourself with him and be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto you."

Christ by his sacrifice alone,  
Has purged away our guilty stains;  
And now a Priest upon his throne,  
Above the highest heavens he reigns.

He by one offering perfect made  
All whom the father set apart;  
On him their countless sins were laid,  
And all their names upon his heart.

Endless redemption he has wrought,  
By an almighty act of grace;  
His blood with which our souls are bought,  
He took to Heaven, the holiest place.

He reigns until time shall be no more,  
To claim the purchase of his blood;  
And saves forever by his power,  
All who by him approach to God.

He reigns believers to defend,  
And all they need will freely give;  
Through him our prayers to God ascend,  
Through him we triumph and shall live.

***~~An Enlarged Heart and its Effect~~***

Liberty is a great blessing — but the enjoyment of *evangelical*liberty is the greatest blessing.

To be freed from the claims of the violated law,  
to be delivered from the power of guilt on the conscience,  
to be brought up out of a horrible pit,  
and have the feet set upon a rock —  
is an unspeakable privilege!

This liberty lies at the root of *cheerful obedience*, which made the Psalmist say, "I will run the way of your commandments, when you shall enlarge my heart." [Psalm 119:32](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps 119.32). What a desirable state! What a blessed result!

**THE PRIVILEGE**. *"An enlarged heart."*Man's heart is naturally *contracted*by sin, especially by selfishness, which makes man his own idol, and gathers his thoughts and affections around himself, to the neglect of others. But *unbelief* closes the heart against God, refuses to believe his love, and prevents the enjoyment of his soul-enlarging truth. The *love of the world*always has a contracting and hardening tendency as well. So that if a man is under the power and guilt of sin; if selfishness, unbelief, and the love of the world rule in him — then he is sure to be narrow, contracted, and unfitted for duty.

The enlargement of the heart is of sovereign grace. It flows from the atonement, which is a glorious exhibition of the unselfishness, love, and large-heartedness of God. It is produced by the Holy Spirit, who sheds abroad the love of the Father in it, applies the precious blood of the Son to it, and makes the doctrine of free grace work effectually upon it.

Nothing will enlarge the heart like . . .  
a *knowledge*of God and his wondrous love; *faith*in Jesus and his finished work; *love*to God and his people; *joy*in God;  
and the *peace*of the gospel enjoyed within.

Enlargement comes through . . .  
the *word*, believed and appropriated; *prayer*, when the heart is drawn out to, and engaged with God;

and the sweet but powerful operations of the *Holy Spirit*, as the Comforter, and Spirit of adoption.

**THE PROMISE**. "I will run the way of your commandments." God's commands are reasonable and sacred. But men are not willing, generally, to do as God bids them, until grace teaches and constrains them. David says, "I will — if God enlarges my heart." If God will give me love and power — I will do whatever God has commanded.

I will do it *readily* — for I will run.

I will do it *steadily* — I will do it from my heart.

I will do it *punctually-just*as God has commanded.

I will do it *cheerfully* — as one that loves the work, and his employer too.

"I will run," this expresses great affection, and joyful perseverance.

God's commands — are man's rule; and by these we should carefully and constantly walk. Religion must be voluntary and practical — or it cannot be pleasant to us, or acceptable to God. A *large*heart is a loving heart — beating with love toward God and man, and glowing with a desire to honor the Savior. A *loving*heart is an *obedient*heart — for love always prompts us to please the beloved object, and to do just as he wishes us. The *life*is — as the heart is. If the *heart*is selfish and contracted — so will the life be.

Man's work — flows from God's work. If God works within — we work without. If he enlarges the heart — the effect is sure to appear in the life. With the church we may say, "You, O Lord, have wrought all our works in us." *God's free grace* — is the root of man's cheerful obedience!

Reader, did you ever experience this *enlargement*of the heart? If so, you felt as if you must run in the way of God's commandments . . .  
out of pure love to him,  
to express your obligation to him,  
and to glorify his sovereign grace.

If you have never had a heart enlarged by the Holy and ever blessed Spirit — then you know nothing of the sweetness of experimental religion; nor do you know what true holiness means. It takes a large heart to hold much of God's grace, and it takes much grace to make poor, dull, heavy creatures like us heartily say, "I will *run*the way of My commandments!"

***~~Jesus in Heaven~~***

We love to *fix*the eye on Jesus — and to *keep*it fixed on him. He is . . .  
the light of our eyes,  
the joy of our hearts,  
the food of our souls, and  
his glory is the great end of our lives.

O to *think*of him, *speak*of him, and *write*of him as he deserves!

I want for a few minutes to fix my mind on Jesus — as now in the presence of his Father, "For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered Heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence." [Hebrews 9:24](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb 9.24)

***WHERE*HAS CHRIST GONE?**Not into *earth's*holy places, the tabernacle or the temple — these were but figures or types, and Jesus was no Levitical priest. He is not now a priest on earth, he has no need to offer sacrifices, or make an atonement — that has been done once for all. There is now no more offering for sins. Jesus has once suffered, and forever put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself. He has gone into Heaven itself, the immediate presence of God, the home and residence of the Father, where angels and the spirits of just men made perfect worship and adore him. He has carried his blood there, that it may speak on our behalf. He has taken our nature there, as the first fruits of those who slept. He has gone there in our name as our forerunner, intercessor, and advocate. He is ever before the mercy-seat, with our names on his breast, and our cause in his hands.

***WHY*IS HE GONE THERE?** "To appear for us in God's presence." He is gone to stand between God and us, as the *glorious Mediator*. He is gone to present the blood . . .  
which made our peace,  
which was the price of our ransom, and  
which met the demands of God's inflexible justice.

He is gone there to meet and silence every accuser, answering every accusation that may or can be brought against us.

He is gone there to receive, perfume, and offer up our prayers and praises to his Father. He is gone to obtain blessings for us — and confer those blessings upon us. He is gone there to encourage us to follow him — and to embolden us when we draw near unto God. He is there to secure our salvation, assuring us, that being reconciled unto God by his death, we shall be saved by his life.

Jesus, once appeared on *earth*for us,  
encountered Satan and overcame him;  
met divine justice, and answered all its claims;  
faced the sufferings deserved by our sins, and endured them all;  
overcame death, and perfumed the grave, and procured for us a title to everlasting life.

Jesus is now in *Heaven*for us, this should . . .  
comfort us in the hour of temptation,  
encourage us to come with confidence to God in prayer,  
embolden us in the prospect of death —  
seeing Jesus has gone before, and is waiting in Heaven to receive us.

O what a mercy to have such a high priest, such a high priest before the throne, before the throne *for us* — on our behalf! O how sweet the thought, Jesus is gone into Heaven, on purpose to appear in the presence of God for me!

But the case of the unbeliever is sad — very sad! He has . . .  
no *hope*in Jesus,  
no *help*from Jesus,  
no interest in the *intercession*of Jesus,  
no *advocate*before the throne!

For him, no *friend*appears before God; to him, no precious *promises*belong. No good hope of Heaven cheers his heart, amid the toils and trials of life. For him, no light shines at the end of life's weary pilgrimage, to encourage him to hasten home.

O sinner, sad, sad is your case! You cannot look back to the *cross*, and say, "There Jesus bore *my*sins in his own body on the tree!" You cannot not look up to *Heaven*, and say, "Jesus has gone there to appear in the presence of God for *me!" Nor*can you look forward to the *coming*of Jesus, and say, "Jesus is coming to receive *me*unto himself, that where he is, there I maybe also!"

Let me beseech you to bethink yourself, and ask, "What shall I do when God rises up, when he calls me to appear before him in judgment? What shall I do, when he demands of me an *account*of my life, and my reason for neglecting the great salvation?"

Ah, what will you do? Your only way is to come to Jesus now, secure an interest in Jesus now — and then you will find him to be your friend at last.

***~~Ready for the Bridegroom~~***

The Christian should be *prepared*for all that can happen. As one that is dead to the world, and risen with Christ, as one that is united to Christ, and living in fellowship with Christ; as one that witnesses for Christ, and is to share in the coming glory of Christ — he should be ready for anything, and everything.

Especially should he be ready for the coming of his Lord. His life, in one view of it, should be a going forth to meet and to welcome his Lord; that so when he comes he may share in the happiness and honor of the wise virgins, of whom we read, "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut!" [Matthew 25:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt 25.10).

**THE EVENT**. It is called a *wedding banquet*, one of the most joyous events among men. Jesus has married our nature, when he took it into union with himself, in the womb of the virgin. So that now he is one with us, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. God and man are one Christ. He has betrothed our persons, this was done through the gospel, and by the agency of the Holy Spirit. We are solemnly engaged to him, and he is pledged to us. We are to be his — and his forever. He is to be ours — and ours to all eternity.

He will come to be publicly wedded to his glorious and glorified church. Then shall she be beautiful and glorious indeed. Then as represented in the song, she will look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun. Then he will display all his riches and honors, shining forth as the heir of all things, as the brightness of glory, as the image of the invisible God. Then, all his beloved people, will be filled with joy unspeakable and pleasure inconceivable. O it will be a glorious day, when Jesus looks upon the *Church*he has loved, and for which he laid down his life, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing — the perfection of beauty, the very counterpart of himself.

**THE HAPPY VIRGINS**. They were *ready*. As *cleansed*from all sin in his precious blood, and *purified*from every stain by the operation of the Holy Spirit. As *clothed*with the magnificent robe of the Savior's righteousness, and the beautiful garments of salvation. As *anointed*with the holy unction, or the Spirit's grace and gifts. As adorned with all the *virtues*that can beautify humanity, and the *graces*that can dignify the Christian name.

Having a well-trimmed lamp,  
shining with the light of knowledge,  
supplied with the oil of grace.

Thus washed and robed, anointed and adorned, and letting their light shine before men — they were *ready*. Therefore they went in with him to the wedding banquet, and enjoyed what they had long wished and prayed for — a full sight of him in all his glory and beauty! It was now their privilege to stand before him accepted, approved, and blessed. They were now acknowledged as his, and honored as his beloved bride. They were now to be everlastingly shut in with him, free from sin, and filled with holiness, while sorrow, sickness, pain and death, Satan and every foe are shut out! Full of holiness, light, and love — they are happy; perfectly and eternally happy.

**THE DISMAL DOOM OF ALL BESIDE**. "The door was shut!" Saints are shut in. Sinners are shut out. All within are safe — and safe forever. All without are miserable — eternally and unspeakably miserable. Forever excluded from God's presence, shut out from the Savior's wedding feast, they can never take part in the celestial service. Worse than this; they are shut out where *hope*expires, and black *despair*forever reigns; where *rest*can never be enjoyed, or *comfort*be ever tasted. They will be shut in with devils, and the souls of the damned, and shut in with them forever!

How *sad*, to be so near to Christ — and yet to be separated from him forever! To be so near, even at the door of the wedding chamber — and yet never allowed to enter it.

How *searching*is this subject, how it urges upon us the duty of self-examination, and presses home upon us the solemn question,*Am I ready?*

How glorious, how unutterably glorious, it will be, to be admitted with Jesus, to share in all the happiness and the honors of Jesus, and to be forever with the Lord. Holy Spirit, am I ready? Am I prepared for an event so solemn, so sublime, so glorious? Heart-searching God, search, O search my heart, and see if all is right there, and as a display of your infinite grace, prepare me for that glorious day, so that when Jesus, as the Bridegroom comes — I may be ready and go in with him to the marriage, before the door is forever shut.

If anyone reads these lines, who is not ready, O Lord prepare that soul, and let not one of my readers come too late, and find the door shut — and shut forever!

***~~Holding the Head~~***

With the Apostle Paul, *Christ was all*. He was his constant subject.

If he preached — he preached Christ.

If he boasted — it was in the cross of Christ.

If he lived — it was by faith in Christ.

He was concerned to bring all to Christ, and then to keep them near Christ. He would not have them allow anything to divert their attention, or draw them away from Jesus. Therefore he cautions the Colossians to beware of false philosophy, superstition, and Jewish ceremonies, lest they should be taken up with them; and warns them of some, who are vainly puffed up by the fleshly mind, "Not holding the head." Coloss. 2:19.

JESUS IS THE HEAD OF HIS CHURCH. As such, all *authority*centers in him, all its *laws*proceed from him. He rules his church, and every individual member of it. He alone has a right to make its laws, and regulate all its actions. He is the head of *influence*, as well as of *authority*. All the *grace*of the church is in Christ. The *life*of the church is Christ. He quickens all its members, and keeps every one alive. All their *supplies*are from Jesus, as all their *springs*are in him. The whole family is united to him, its head.  
He rules it,  
he supplies it,  
he defends it,  
and he will glorify it.

As head of the church, he *sympathizes*with it in prosperity and adversity; and he will get great *glory*through it.

BELIEVERS HOLD THE HEAD. They hold the doctrine of Christ's headship, and rejoice in it. They are connected with Christ's person, and this is their glory. Each one knows Christ for himself. Knows him as a Savior, and as the Son of God. Knows him as the only *help*, and source of *supply*to the sinner. Knows him, so as to attach themselves unto him. As the *limpet*attaches itself to the rock — so the believer attaches himself to Christ. As the *ivy*attaches itself to the oak — so does the believer to Jesus. As one loving heart becomes attached to another — so does the heart of the Christian to the Savior.

The sense of *need felt*,  
the beauty and glory of Christ discovered,  
and the love of Christ experienced —  
brings about a union between the soul and the Savior, which neither life nor death can sever. They *adhere*to Christ, or *cleave*to him with full purpose of heart.

They hold to his *doctrine*,  
they cleave to his *people*,  
and they hold fast by *himself*.

As well may the member live without the head, as the believer in a state of separation from Christ.

SOME DO NOT HOLD THE HEAD. They put something between the soul and Christ — it may be the priest, or the sacraments, or feelings, or religious services. But between the soul and Christ, nothing should be allowed to come.

Or, they expect help through some other medium. Whereas Christ alone conveys everything from God to us, and from us to God. It is not duties or works, it is not experience whether painful or pleasant — but it is Christ through whom all our blessings comes to us.

Or, they cut themselves off from the church, whereas all that are in union with Christ, should be in union with his saints. For while every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from above, he uses the different members of his church as means to impart to them. We read therefore of Christ the Head, "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love — as each part does its work." [Ephesians 4:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph 4.16).

Without close union, and intimate communion with Christ — we cannot thrive spiritually. Without union and communion with the church, we have no right to expect to thrive either. If we have no hold of the head, in the way of a living union, and experimental communion, our profession will end in confusion, and we shall expose ourselves to shame, and everlasting contempt.

Let us then, *look*to Christ as his Church's head, the source of her life, dignity, and supplies. Let us lay hold on Christ, and ever look to Christ as the *great source of supply*. Let us hold on to Christ, let what will happen; and the fiercer the opposition, the heavier the cross, the greater our trials — the *closer*let us cling to him!

Let us *expect*all we need from Christ, to whom we are united, and who loves to give good things unto all his members. Let us *draw*all we need from Christ — by simple faith and fervent prayer. These are the means we should constantly employ, and employing them aright we are sure to succeed. Let us live and die cleaving to Christ, to his doctrines, to his cause, and his person.

The *doctrine*that does not *center*in Christ, *radiate*from Christ, and *lead*unto fellowship with Christ — is not the doctrine of Christ; such we may discard. The *cause*that does not honor Christ, spread the truth of Christ, is not the cause of Christ — to such we may not be united. But above all things let us cleave to the person of Christ. What Christ is in himself — is the cause of all that Christ is to his people; what Christ is to his people — is the source of all their holiness and happiness. Let us see to it then that we are in union with Christ, let us hold to Christ, hold with Christ, and live as members of Christ evermore.

***~~Relationship and Attention~~***

*God's promises*are especially intended for trying times. They are presented to us, that we may . . .  
believe them,  
draw comfort from them,  
plead them with God,  
and obtain their fulfillment.

Whenever God made a promise, he called his people to prayer; and in answer to prayer, he condescends to make it good. Trying, very trying, were the circumstances of Israel, when they came up out of the Babylonish captivity — but the promises God gave them, and the messages he sent to them, were very precious. How sweetly he says, owning them in their low estate, "I am the Lord their God, and will hear them." [Zechariah 10:6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech 10.6).

THE RELATION. "I am the Lord *their*God." Whose God? The God of Israel — the poor, scattered, and afflicted remnant, who for seventy years had been in bondage in a strange land. They had been great sinners — but in such the Lord displays great grace: for where sin abounded — grace did much more abound. They were gross backsliders, they had forsaken the Lord, and had fallen by their iniquity: but most lovingly he addresses them, and calls them back. They were now few in number, poor in their circumstances, and despised and persecuted by men. Yet the Lord says, "I am their God."

*What was he?*Their God who had *corrected*them for their waywardness and follies. Who had *watched*over them in the enemy's country, and *preserved*them from being swallowed up. Who had now brought them back to the land of their fathers, that they might dwell there and have it in possession. Whose heart was full of pure and holy *love*to them, for never did he love them more. Who was now waiting to bless them, and to do them good in a way that was worthy of a God.

THE DETERMINATION. "I will hear them." *Men*may turn a deaf ear to them — but *God*will not. Man may forget or neglect them — but God will not. He will hear them, though *Satan*may accuse and resist them, as he did Joshua their high priest. Though their *sin*testifies against them, and calls for judgments upon them. Though *doubts*and *fears*harass them, desolating their faith, and weakening their souls in prayer. Though a sense of *unworthiness*depresses them, and casts a gloom over their mind.

Yes, out of his own love, he will hear their prayers — and *glorify himself*in doing so.

He will hear them — and *pardon*their sins, however numerous, or however aggravated.

He will hear them — and *revive their graces*, however feeble and drooping they may be.

He will hear them — and *increase*their numbers, making them like a fruitful flock.

He will hear them — and restore the *privileges*, which by sin and folly they bad lost.

He will hear them — and disperse their *foes*, however numerous or mighty they may be.

He will hear them — and be a *wall of fire*roundabout, and the glory in the midst of them.

Covenant relationship remains the same under all circumstances. If the Lord is once our God — then he is our God forever. The relation which God sustains to us, he will acknowledge and honor; nor will he turn away from us, from doing us good. The *prayer*which God *produces*by his Spirit — he *answers*in the exercise of his grace. The *blessings*he has promised — he will give, however costly, or numerous they may be. The *people*whom he loves — he will save, and save with an everlasting salvation. What encouragement for poor, sinful, unworthy creatures!

Reader, is the Lord your God? Have you had *personal dealings*with him on the throne of grace? Has he ever been revealed to your soul, as — the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin? If so, however you may feel at present, whatever your circumstances may be — he will hear you. Therefore call upon him, lay your whole case before him, if he appears to delay — plead with him, for he is the Lord your God, and he will hear you.

If you are a stranger to his grace, if you have never felt the power of his love — yet seek him, seek him in Jesus, and he will befriend you.

In you — he will glorify his grace.

In you — he will make good his word.

In you — he will exhibit the saving power of the Redeemer's blood.

In you — he will prove that he is able to do exceeding and abundantly above all that we ask or think.

O what a mercy to have Jehovah for our God, and to know that in all times of trouble, sorrow, pain, grief, and woe — that he will hear us! O blessed privilege, to have the *promises*to plead, and *grace*to plead them, and to be *assured*of their fulfillment!

Thus says the Lord to all his saints,  
Who on his grace rely;  
I will attend to your complaints  
And all your needs supply.

I will in providence appear  
Crosses shall blessings prove;  
And you shall find me ever near;  
The objects of my love.

I will your numerous sins forgive,  
And keep you day and night,  
You shall upon my fullness live,  
And in your God delight.

I will complete what I begin,  
My work I'll not forsake;  
You shall the prize of glory win,  
And of my bliss partake!

***~~Drawing Back~~***

Perseverance in the Lord's ways, is every professor's *duty* — and it is the privilege and *mark*of a true believer. Others may apostatise — but the Christian will hold on his way. Yet all are to be warned, cautioned, and advised. Every man's *responsibility*is to be recognized, and his *duty*pointed out. This accounts for many things the apostle Paul *said*, and for some things the apostle *did*. Like a wise father, like a loving mother — he wrote to the professors of his day, to prevent evil, and to stimulate them in the right path. To the Hebrews he said, quoting from the prophet, "If any man draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." [Hebrews 10:38](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb 10.38).

Here is, A PLEASING FACT IMPLIED. *The Lord has pleasure in some.* Yes, in *all*those who believe his word, receive his unspeakable gift, and walk in his ways — he has pleasure.

He is pleased with their *persons* — as a father with his children.

He is pleased with their *progress* — as the teacher with his scholar.

He is pleased with their *devotion*to his cause — as the sovereign with his subject.

He is pleased with their poor *services* — as the master with the servant, who serves him out of love.

Yes, he is pleased with their *desires*, *motives*, and *prayers* — as a God of love, mercy, and compassion.

Sweet thought! God takes pleasure in his poor, weak, and infirm children. He is pleased with that in them, which few if any beside would be.

But here is, A DANGEROUS COURSE REFERRED TO. "If any man draws back." The Bible gives every man credit for being what he *professes*to be — *until*he proves the opposite. Therefore some, who profess to be the Lord's, are spoken of as *drawing back unto perdition*; and others who are his, draw back for a time — but are recovered again.

Let us beware of drawing back. It begins almost imperceptibly . . .  
first in the heart,  
then in the closet,  
and then in the Church.

Private prayer loses its attractions,  
lively and spiritual conversation ceases,  
and then the means of grace are neglected.

Drawing back very often manifests itself*. . .*in trifling with divine things,  
in undue attachment to the world,  
in levity of mind and manners,  
in carelessness about the soul's prosperity, and  
in putting the prospect of death and eternity into the far off distance.

Then we have, AN ALARMING THREATENING DELIVERED. "My soul shall have no pleasure in him!" It God is not pleased with us — then he is offended, and then he will not hear our cry, or take *pleasure*in our prayers. He will not *pity*our distress, or arise to *relieve*our sufferings. He will not *appear*for us in our troubles, or *save*us out of our distress.

In the case of a *mere professor* — God will forsake him, deliver him over to Satan, and at last punish him with eternal fire.

In the case of a *genuine believer* — God will correct, chastise, and bring him back, with deep sorrow, distress and woe.

Let us then beware of the *first backward step*. We know the *beginning*of evil — but God alone knows to what it may *lead*. If we yield to go one step with the tempter — he will at once propose two, and step by step will he lead us on, until like Israel, we are found wandering upon every mountain and every hill, having forgotten our resting place!

If we have at all departed from the Lord — let us return at once! He is calling us back, and saying, "Return, O backsliding children." He desires to see us . . .  
at his *feet*in contrition,  
at his *throne*in devotion,  
and in his *ways*filled with joy.

He says, "I will *receive*you graciously, I will *love*you freely, I will *pardon*you fully!"

Let us examine ourselves — are we living by faith? Does *confidence*in God, *reliance*on Jesus, and *fellowship*with the Holy Spirit characterize us? Are we *walking*with God? If we are not, we are *wandering*from God. If we do not keep God's company — we shall be sure to run into mischief. He who does not press forward, draws back.

Are we then drawing back from God? Let us beware of self-confidence, and false security, listening to the apostle's words, "Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall."

Drawing back does not alarm many, it is so *gradual*. No man falls away from God all at once. He has approached the precipice, he has been looking over, and then his head turned giddy. The backslider never thought of being *what*he is, or *where*he is. The apostate never dreamed that he would turn his back so completely on the Lord's ways.

Let us close with those fearful words of Peter, "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to *turn*from the holy commandment delivered unto them."

Never let me leave your breast,  
From you, my Savior stray;  
You are my Support and Rest,  
My true and living Way!

Never let me go, until I  
Upborne on wings of love,  
Gain the region of the sky,  
And take my seat above!

See you by all Heaven adored,  
And all your glorious fullness know;  
Keep me, keep me, gracious Lord,  
And never let me go!

***~~God Speaking~~***

Man's *enmity*to God is astonishing. God and everything godlike — man hates. That God, the infinitely wise, just, and gracious God, should have his way, and carry out his purposes — is considered a great grievance. Fallen man continually testifies in a variety of ways, that he considers that *man*ought to be God — and that God should act in subordination to him!

Never was this more clearly manifested, than in the birth, life, and death of Jesus; and afterwards in the history of his Church. Therefore the Lord asks, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 'Let us break their chains,' they say, 'and throw off their fetters!'" Do they think to frustrate the Lord's purpose, or to hinder the accomplishment of his eternal decrees? It can never be. He may allow them to go on for a time, but soon, "The One enthroned in Heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath!" [Psalm 2:4-5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps 2.4-5). This will be terrible, and on these latter words I want to fix attention for a few minutes.

Observe, GOD SPEAKS TO MAN IN **LOVE**NOW. The *gospel*is the dispensation of *love*. It breathes *mercy*. It publishes *salvation*. It represents God as standing in a suppliant posture, and by his servants, beseeching sinners to be reconciled unto him. O wondrous words, "We beg you in Christ's stead — be reconciled to God!"

If God speaks to us of our *danger* — it is to urge us to flee for safety to the refuge he has provided.

If God speaks to us of the *value of the soul* — it is to rouse us to seek salvation.

If he speaks to us of *Hell* — it is to warn us, that we may never go to that place of torment.

If he speaks to us of *mercy* — it is to encourage us to seek it.

If he speaks to us of *Heaven* — it is to attract us to it.

He speaks to us of his Son — just to draw us to him.

He speaks to us of *salvation* — that we may seek and find it.

He speaks to us of his *love* — to allure us, and bring us to his feet.

He speaks in *simple words* — in terms the easiest to be understood.

He speaks in the *gentlest tones* — that he may not terrify or alarm.

He speaks to us by *human lips* — pleading with us as a man pleads with his friend.

He speaks to us with the most *gracious design* — even to save us from the wrath to come.

But will he *always*speak so? Will he ever treat us thus? No, if we continue to manifest our opposition to him, if we refuse to be reconciled — the time is coming when all will be changed.

The *door of mercy*will be closed,  
the way of escape will be closed, and  
death and destruction will ride in triumph!

GOD WILL SPEAK IN **WRATH**BEFORE LONG. Then, he will speak of your sins — but it will be to *condemn*you for them. He will speak of your treating his salvation with neglect — but it will be to *silence*you, as he sentences you to your dreadful doom. He will speak of your obstinancy and determination to live in sin, to exhibit you as inexcusable before all worlds. He will speak then in *alarming*tones. By the terrific blast of the arch-angel's trumpet — by the opening graves — by an awakened conscience — and by the just sentence of the righteous judge — he will speak, and speak to you in his wrath!

"Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath!" [Psalm 2:5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps 2.5).

How will the *proud*be terrified, to be sentenced to the same doom, and have as fellow-sufferers forever, those whom they have despised and disdained on earth?

How will the *cruel*be terrified, to be bound up in the same bundle with those whom they have oppressed and punished, and be forever taunted and tormented by them.

How will the *seducer*be terrified, to have associated with him forever, those whom he has seduced, charging their destruction on his guilty head?

God will terrify them . . .  
by casting them out of his presence,  
by inflicting the severest pain,  
by shutting them up in despair, and  
by terrifying their consciences forever.

Then, he will . . .  
reprove them for their crimes,  
terrify them with a sense of their guilt,  
toss them on the waves of the ocean of his wrath, and  
rebuke them in his anger and terrify them in his wrath!

Then,  
after He has long borne with them,  
when he gives them up to their own heart's lust,  
when he shall render unto every man according to his works!

O sinner, God speaks lovingly to you *now*, for he is slow to anger and of great mercy!

Hear him — and flee from wrath.

Hear him — and come to Jesus. Hear him, and be saved with an everlasting salvation.

He will not long speak as he does now. *Patience*, even the patience of God — *has its limit*. Mercy, the mercy of the eternal God — has its bound.

Will you despise God's warnings?

Will you neglect his great salvation?

Will you force your passage to the flames of Hell?

O extreme of madness!

O amazing folly!

Shall it be said of you, that Jesus would have gathered you, and have safely housed you from the storm — but you would not come? Shall it be said, that God called — and you refused, until at last he laughed at your calamity, and mocked when you were filled with fear? Must he, who now speaks to you with all the love of a tender Father's heart — be compelled by your careless indifference, by your obstinate folly, by your stubborn perverseness — to "rebuke you in his anger and terrify you in his wrath?"

***~~Boast Not!~~***

The Christian life is a warfare. The believer has to *contend*for truth, for the honor of his Lord — yes, for his very spiritual life! He must *fight*all the way to Heaven. Young believers are apt to be self-confident. They think more highly of themselves, than they ought to think. To them may be applied the words of Ahab to Benhadad, *"One who puts on his armor — should not****boast****like one who takes it off!"*[1 Kings 20:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1 Kings 20.11). This appears to have been a *proverb*in Israel, and it is a very wise one. Christian, let us look at it, and consider.

**OUR WARFARE**. We are the *soldiers of the cross*. We voluntarily enlisted into the army of the Savior.

We are sworn to do battle with SIN — all sin. With sin *within*us — mortifying it, crucifying it, and seeking its death. With sin *without*us — endeavoring to conquer or escape from it. Our motto is, *"No peace with sin!"*

We are in deadly conflict with SATAN, and with all who are in league with him. We must conquer — or be conquered. We must overcome — or be overcome. To resist Satan, to strive against sin — is our daily business! Another of our mottos is, "No compromise with Satan!"

We have also to overcome the WORLD. It is the enemy of God. It murdered the Savior. It is still in determined opposition to him. We must *separate*from it. Walk *contrary*to it. Be determined never to be ensnared or entangled by it. Another of our mottoes is, "Not of the world!"

Here then is work for us. Enough . . .  
to call forth all our courage,  
to employ all our skill, and  
to engage all our strength!

Let us look at **OUR AMOR AND WEAPONS**.

*Truth*, the truth of the gospel; and sincere attachment to the Savior — is the *belt*that strengthens our loins.

*Righteousness*,  
right-heartedness in God's cause, and  
the perfect obedience of the Son of God placed to our account  
 — defends the conscience and the heart.

The *peace*and pleasure which flows from the gospel, prepares us to walk in the roughest road — yes, to run in the way of God's commandments.

The *hope of salvation*protects the understanding, as the helmet defends the head.

With the *shield of faith*we catch and extinguish all the fiery darts of the devil.

With the *sword of the Spirit*, which is the word of God, we cut down all that would oppose our progress, or cause us to fall.

And using *all-prayer*, we draw down supplies from above, so that we may not only conquer every foe — but Be more than conquerors through him that loved us.

**THE CAUTION**. Boast not — young man, fresh recruit. In your new regimentals, and new armor, you may be tempted to do so — but remember the *enemy*is to be met, to be faced, to be *overcome* — before you will have cause for boasting. Inexperienced soldiers are apt to be vain-confident. They know not the strength, the craft, or the cruelty of the foe — or they would be humble. Satan may puff us up with a view to deceive us, for we are never in greater danger than when we have a *high opinion*of ourselves, and imagine that we can do wonders. *Self-confidence*ane *self-dependence*are very dangerous. It is by faith in Jesus, by keeping close to Jesus — that we conquer.*Great grace is a silent warrior.*It fights — but never boasts. It overcomes — but takes no credit to itself.

**THE CONQUEST**. When the victory is won — we shall take off the armor. This is future — but it may not be long. To the *faithful*soldier it is certain, for grace secures it. To the *conqueror*the prospect is delightful. But not until every foe is overcome, not until the *last enemy*is destroyed — shall we be justified in putting off our armor. No, every Christian must fight now. Our *duty*and the *dangers*of the campaign, exclude boasting. The most upright and honest need to be cautioned. The *conqueror's armor*will only be hung up in the *hall of glory*.

Reader, have you enlisted into the army of the Savior? Have you put on the *whole*armor of God? Have you joined the ranks of your regiment? Are you in deadly conflict with the foe? If so, fight on and do not fear! The battle may be fierce — but with Jesus for your Captain, with his strength made perfect in your weakness, with his conquering banner floating over your head — every foe shall be slain or flee — and victory, eternal victory is sure!

Soon, very soon, the victorious army will return home in triumph! Soon, very soon, war shall cease, and peace, perpetual peace shall be your portion. "and the ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away!" [Isaiah 35:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa 35.10)

***~~The Cause of Conquest~~***

God-given grace is sure to be victorious. It may be overcome for a time — but it shall overcome at last. Just so the Christian, having . . .  
God on his side;  
Jesus, as his Intercessor; and  
the Holy Spirit in his heart —  
he is sure to be a conqueror.

This led John to write, "You are of God, little children, and have *overcome*them; because greater is he who is in you — than he who is in the world." [1 John 4:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1 John 4.4).

"YOU ARE of GOD." They were born of God, by a new and spiritual birth, and were thus brought into a new covenant relation. They were therefore related to God as their Father, Redeemer, and Comforter. The image of God was stamped upon them, and they were conformed to Jesus, by the renewing of the Holy Spirit. God claimed them as his portion, possession, and property, and as such highly prized them. They were *greatly loved*, and *tenderly cared for*by the Lord, therefore they are called," little children."

"YOU HAVE OVERCOME THEM." Overcome who? The false spirits which were gone forth into the world, tempting men to deny Christ, reject the evidences of his Messiahship, and forsake his cause. The false teachers, sent and equipped by those false spirits, who preached against the godhead, mediatorial character, and saving work of Christ. These were numerous, crafty, and powerful — but genuine believers had grace and wisdom to overcome them.

"BECAUSE GREATER IS HE WHO IS IN YOU, THAN HE WHO IS IN THE WORLD." Satan, the god of this world, was in these deceivers — as in all false teachers and preachers. Jehovah, the God of Israel, was in the saints — as he is in all true believers. He is greater than the world and its god, and greater than all pretenders.

Greater in *wisdom* — to counsel, instruct, and direct them.

Greater in *authority* — to command, arrange, and rally his forces.

Greater in *power* — to strengthen, support and animate.

Greater in *operation* — overcoming the principles of evil, and bringing all the powers of the soul into subjection to his will.

Hence we can understand why the simple, weak, and unlettered believer can and does withstand the sophistry of earth and Hell. Hence we find encouragement to believe that we shall overcome, though Satan, false teachers, and the world are all banded against us. At best, they are but mighty — but he who is in us is ALMIGHTY, therefore we should not fear. Never therefore be discouraged by looking at your *foes*, the *obstacles*and *difficulties*in your path — or for one moment forget that the Omnipotent One is in you.

Remember, O believer, you are of God, a child of the Most High, the dwelling-place of the Almighty — therefore watch against sin, Satan, and false teachers.

Reader, ask your conscience, Does God dwell in me? Do I bear the image of God? Am I looking to him that I may overcome every foe?

***~~You Are Dead~~***

The state of the true Christian is truly blessed — but few clearly *perceive*it, and fewer still *live*in the full enjoyment of it. We are so earthly, so carnal — whereas we ought to be heavenly and spiritual. As united to Christ, as indentified with Christ — our thoughts, desires, and affections should be set on those things which are at God's right hand. So Paul taught the Colossians, saying, "For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Coloss. 3:3.

THE DISTINGUISHING PECULIARITY.*"You are dead."*

Dead to *SIN* — which was laid on Jesus, punished in Jesus, and put away by Jesus. It no longer *reigns*and *rules*in us as it once did. It is not our element, or the business of our life. We do not *enjoy*it, and *indulge*in it — as we once did.

Dead to the *WORLD*, to which we were once all alive.

Its *pleasures*no longer charm us,

its *pursuits*no longer fascinate us,

nor do its *threats*alarm and terrify us.

Dead to the *LAW*, Jesus having fully obeyed it for us. It has now no claim upon us, having received full satisfaction. It does not now fill us with fear and dread, as we can now present an answer to it.

We *sin* — but are not under the power of sin;  
we are in the *world* — but are not of the world;  
we love the *law*, wish to do all that the law commands — but, are not under its power, or exposed to its penalty.

To these things we are dead, and were killed to them by a sight of . . .  
the *law*in its severity,  
the *gospel*in its glory,  
and *Christ*in his excellency.

THE GLORIOUS PRIVILEGE. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." The state of the Christian, is a *resurrection*state. He died *in*Christ. He died *with*Christ. He died *through*Christ. He is now raised from the dead — leaving the world, the law, and sin behind him. His present life is hidden — it is secret. The world knows him not — nor does it, nor can it understand his life.

His is a life of *faith*upon the Son of God.

His is a life of *communion*with Christ.

His is a life of *obedience*to Christ.

Its joys and its sorrows, its conflicts and its conquests — are *secret*.

His life is hid with Christ in God, it is therefore *safe*. Nothing can destroy it. Nothing can endanger it. Nothing can touch it. It was God's gift, the effect of his paternal love. It is Christ's care — and he has identified it with his own. It is in *God's hand* — the *safest*place in the universe. Our treasure, our happiness, our eternal all then is safe! How can it be otherwise — hid as it is with Christ in God?

Believers *die to present things*. It may be gradually — but they do so really. Just in proportion to their faith in Christ, and fellowship with Christ — will they realize a death to the *world;* and will come to look upon it, as having crucified their Lord, and as being in a state of hostility and enmity with God. And just in proportion as they realize that they are dead to the world — will they live in high and holy fellowship with Christ.

Believers *live with Christ*. They are raised up together, and are made to sit together in heavenly places in him. He has their *hearts*, their *thoughts*, and their *desires*with him. He has won their *love* — and has become the great object of their faith and *hope*. They . . .  
are in vital connection with him,  
receive their *supplies*of spiritual blessings from him,  
and wish to live wholly and entirely to him.

For them, to live is Christ — and to die is gain.

They are *entirely dependant*upon him. The *babe*is not more dependant on its parent, the *branch*is not more dependant on the tree — than the believer is dependant upon Christ.

They draw all their chief *comforts*and *enjoyments*from him. He is the life of their life, and the joy of their joy.

Believers are in God's keeping. This is their safety. This is their grand distinction. He keeps them as the apple of his eye, and hides them under the shadow of his wings. Their life is hidden in God — no stronger idea of security can be given.

They are *safe* — if God can make them so.

They are *honored* — if identification with God can confer honor upon them.

They are *distinguished* — for of none but believers, are such things said.

And now, O my soul, are you dead unto the *WORLD?* Is Christ more to you than all the world, or than a thousand such world's would be?

Are you dead unto the*LAW?*Do you look away from all your own doings and feelings — to Jesus Christ alone, for life, pardon, peace, and complete salvation? Do you look to Christ only, and always — for your acceptance with God, and realize that you are complete in him?

Are then dead unto *SIN?* Has it lost its power to *charm*you, to *rule*you, and to *lead*you away captive? Do you hate sin as the murderer of your Lord and Savior, turning from it with disgust and abhorrence?

Gracious Lord, give me a more full, complete, and perfect deliverance from sin, the world, and the condemning law; and grant that I may be made thoroughly holy, unearthly, and evangelical. Teach me not only to see — but to realize in the depth of my soul's experience this death; and also that my life is hid with Christ in God. O for a deeper experience of this great and precious truth, that I may not live as too many professors do — with very little difference between me and the world that lies in the Wicked One! Merciful Lord, for the glory of your great name, give me deeper sanctification, and more thorough conformity to Christ!

***~~Is the Young Man Safe?~~***

Paternal love is intensely strong. What have not fathers borne? What have not fathers forgiven! Anything rather than give up a child. Look at David — as basely as Absalom acted toward him — how solicitous he was for his safety. Hence when the army was going out to battle, He said, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom." And when tidings were brought him of the victory, his first question was, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" [2 Samuel 18:29](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2 Sam 18.29). Let us apply the words to our *young men,*and notice,

**THE SUPPOSITION**. Young men are exposed to *danger* — the *greatest*danger. They are in danger of falling . . .  
into sin,  
into infidelity,  
and into Hell!

Their danger arises . . .  
from their *corrupt passions* — which are apt to be fierce and fiery,  
from their *inexperience* — the path of life is new and strange to them,  
from *false friends* — who feed their vanity, and gratify their lusts,  
from *wicked associates* — which are often fascinating, and always injurious,  
from *Satan*the seducer — who watches them, lays in wait for them, and seeks their destruction.

In a wicked *world*like this,  
with deceitful *hearts*like ours, and  
with such evil *influences*acting upon us —  
we are all in danger — but the young especially, and young men most of all.

But here is, **AN INTIMATION**. They *may*be safe. Blessed be God, many young men are. But it requires *caution*in reference to the choice of your *companions*, the *books*you read, and the way in which you *walk*.

There must be care and caution, or before you are aware — you will be entrapped, ensnared, and be placed in circumstances of the greatest danger!

There must be *faith*, faith in Jesus. Without faith . . .  
we have no interest in Christ,  
we can derive no benefit from Christ,  
no blessing flows to us from Christ.

But when we *come*to him, *entrust*our souls to him, and exercise *confidence*in him — then we are safe. He becomes our guardian, defender, and Savior.

There must be *prayer*, and where there is faith — there will be. Prayer will call in God's aid, obtain from God wisdom, and place us under the shadow of his wings for protection.

When young men proceed with *caution*, are careful with whom they walk, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and seek divine keeping by prayer — then they are safe.

Then comes, **THE INQUIRY**. "Is the young man safe?" When a father asks this question, it shows deep solicitude and great kindness. In David's case, his heart was wrung. O how many godly fathers are almost broken heart-hearted about their sons! With what intense anxiety they put the question, *"Is he safe?"*

Well, does he respect the Bible, and treat it as God's book?

Does he avoid evil company, associating with the wise and good?

Does he abstain from bad habits, and cultivate purity and piety?

Does he strive to improve himself by reading and proper cultivation of his mind?

Does he unite with young Christians, and attend to the means of grace?

Does he believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and keep his commandments?

If so — he is safe.

Absalom was not safe, nor are many young men now.

If they are mirthful, vain of their appearance, and fond of dress;  
if they are selfish, conceited, and covetous;  
if they are careless, reckless, or indifferent —  
they are not, they cannot be safe!

There is no real safety — but in Christ, and through faith in his name. Until a young man is . . .  
convinced of sin,  
sensible of his danger,  
and embraces Christ —  
we cannot pronounce him safe.

As the shipwrecked sailor is not safe until picked up by the life boat, or otherwise conveyed on shore; so the sinner is not safe until free grace picks him up, as he is floating on the waters of this world, and brings him to Christ as the harbor of safety!

Young man, are *you*safe? You were not always so, and if you are now, you must have passed through a great and important change.

You are *not*safe because you have been convinced of sin, have *reformed*your life, and have felt comfortable in your mind; for this may be true — and your soul be in the greatest danger. You are not, you cannot be safe — unless you are in Christ. If you are resting on his finished work, if you are copying his holy example, if you are really united to his person — then you are safe — safe for time, and safe for eternity. Then if the question is put, "Is the young man safe?" The answer is, "Yes, safe, and safe forever!"

***~~ETERNITY!~~***

We are too much taken up with the things of *time*. We think too little, too seldom — of eternity and its solemn realities. No *word*is more vast, no *subject*is more serious — than ETERNITY! Eternity is existence without limit — no commencement, no succession of periods, no end. In this sense, God only is eternal. He is eternal in his *nature*, *perfections*, and *purposes*.

As God is eternal, the believer has an eternal *FATHER* — who ever lives, ever loves, and ever cares for him.

He has an eternal *PORTION* . . .  
the *limits*of which he can never reach,  
the *fullness*of which he can never exhaust,  
and of the *variety*in which he can never weary.

He has an eternal *INHERITANCE* — which he can never lose, of which He can never be deprived, and which shall never pass from him into the possession of another.

Eternity is duration without cessation, a point towards which we are tending, a state in which we shall soon be placed. In eternity, there will be no *mixtures*as here . . .  
in this *world* — the wheat and the chaff;  
in the church — both saints and sinners;  
in the *believer* —  
sin and holiness,  
fear and confidence,  
the old man and the new.

There is no mixture in HELL — there all are bad, and there is . . .  
wrath without mercy,  
justice without grace,  
holiness without love.

There are no mixtures in HEAVEN — there all are good, and there is . . .  
pleasure without pain,  
joy without sorrow,  
and holiness without sin.

There are no *trials*either in Heaven or Hell. Here we are tried by providence, by the gospel, by ordinances; we are tried to prove or improve us. God tries our faith, our fervor, and all our principles.

There are no *changes*in eternity. Here we change from bad to good, from good to better, and sometimes from good to bad. But in Hell — all are wicked; in Heaven — all are good. In eternity — all is fixed, permanent, and enduring.

Once in Hell — in Hell forever!

Once in Heaven — in Heaven forever!

Eternity, O how affecting the thought!

Eternity, O how ponderous the idea!

Time introduces to eternity.

Every moment brings it nearer.

A moment may plunge us into it!

How trifling *time*would be — if eternity did not follow it. But living once, we exist forever. *Exist*we must, but how — and where? O how terrible the idea of eternity, to a thoughtful sinner! O how glorious the prospect of eternity, to the happy believer! Life is a *preparation*for eternity. The only preparation for it. We may now escape the bitterness of eternal death. We may now secure the happiness of eternal life. We shall now fit ourselves for Hell, and for association with devils and the damned; or, we must yield ourselves to God, to make us fitt to he partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Life! O how important is*life!*

*Death* is our *entrance upon eternity*. We then pass into a fixed and immutable state. After death, we shall hear no gospel preached, we shall receive no loving messages from a gracious God, there will be no place for repentance, no work for faith.

If lost — we shall be lost forever.

If we die in sin — we shall lie under the power and condemnation of sin forever.

If saved — our salvation is eternal.

If we die in Jesus — we shall never know condemnation, or suffer pain.

Holiness alone, can *qualify*us to enjoy it. Without holiness — no one can . . .  
see the Lord with comfort,  
stand before him with acceptance,  
or enjoy the unveiling of his glory.

We must be cleansed from sin.

We must be renewed in the spirit of our minds.

We must be born again. For as we were born into the world of nature — so we must be born into the world of grace. And as our first birth qualified us for the employments and enjoyments of *time* — so our second birth qualifies us for the employments and enjoyments of *eternity*.

We were never so *near*to eternity as at this moment. Solemn thought, we never had so little time to *prepare*for it. Soon, very soon we must *enter*upon it! Time hurries us forward, and eternity as with slow and solemn tread, comes forward to receive us. Before another day — we may be in eternity. Many will — we may. Before another *day!*Yes, before another *hour!*Accidents are not infrequent. Sudden death is not uncommon. If I should fall suddenly — would I fall safely? If I should die without a warning — would I be found ready for the separating stroke? O my soul, look to it, that you are prepared for eternity — look to it, that you are in Christ — be sure that you are born of God. If you are not in Christ — you have no title to Heaven; and if the Holy Spirit is not in you — you have no fitness for it!

Eternity, stupendous theme!  
Compared herewith, our life's a dream;  
Eternity, O, solemn sound,  
A deep, where all our thoughts are drowned!

Eternity, the dread abode  
And habitation of our God!  
His glory fills the vast expanse,  
Beyond the reach of mortal sense.

But an eternity there is  
Of endless woe — or joyful bliss;  
And, swift as time fulfills its round,  
We to eternity are bound!

And is eternity so near?  
And must we all, and soon, be there?  
Prepare our souls, O blessed God,  
To meet our long, our last abode!

***~~Write the Vision~~***

*Temporal*calamities, in the Old Testament, very frequently prefigured *spiritual*judgments; and the way to escape them, is set forth the way of salvation. This was the case in the days of Habakkuk, when the Chaldeans as the executors of God's threatenings, were about to be brought into the land. The prophet cried unto the Lord, and waited before him — and at length the ultimate deliverance of Israel was showed him, and a very important command was given him. "And the Lord answered me, and said: **Write the vision**, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run, who reads it." [Habakkuk 2:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hab 2.2). Looking at these words in the light of the gospel, let us notice,

THE DANGER SUPPOSED. The danger is the wrath of God, revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men. This wrath is *just* — but it is exceedingly *dreadful*. This wrath is *calm* — but it is *eternal*. It is the flowing forth of God's just and infinite hatred against sin, and the righteous punishment of the same. The *cause*of God's wrath is sin — and only sin. Sin as it is *rebellion*against God, and *forgetfulness*of God.

Wrath's *revelation*is in the *law*, which pronounces a curse upon every transgressor.

This wrath is *certain*, for there is an *accuser*who watches, registers, and remembers our sins. There is a day of judgment appointed, and the Judge is just and impartial. God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he has appointed.

THE DIRECTION GIVEN. "Write the vision." A vision is a revelation from God, which revelation is to be recorded on a writing tablet, that all may read.

Write — a way of escape is revealed. Jesus is the way, and by faith in him, sinners may be saved from the wrath to come. The way of escape is to be recorded.

Write it — that it may be preserved. Let it not be entrusted to a treacherous memory — but let it be faithfully registered. The record is to be *plain*. So plain, that children as well as grown people, that the most illiterate may understand it. We cannot make the way of salvation too plain, or set it forth in too simple terms. The plain record is to be exhibited. It is for public use. Every one should see it. Every one should be able to read it. Every one should be affected by it.

THE DESIGN IN VIEW. "That he may run, who reads it." The way of salvation is open to every reader, and to every hearer of the gospel. Anyone may enter the strait gate. All are directed to the narrow way. Every reader should run. Only by running, can we be safe. As therefore all are in danger, everyone should flee from the wrath to come. No one who runs, should rest until he arrives in safety. As there is safety only in Christ — no one should rest, until he rests in Christ: until he is saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

Yet, some *read* — but do not *run*, their reading has no *good effect*upon them. Some run — but do not read, and are therefore in danger of running wrong! They generally run to the *church*, to the *priest*, or to *duties* — instead of running to Christ. Some neither read nor run — but entirely neglect so great salvation, these are of all men most inexcusable.

Friends, by nature, we are all in danger, in great danger of the wrath of God, for we are sinners, and sin calls down God's wrath on the sinner's head! God has graciously provided and revealed a way of escape. He provided it at an infinite expense, and he has revealed it in his word in the plainest terms. It is now the business of every minister, of every Sunday School teacher, and of every Christian man and woman — to make the way plain to others. They should *write*of it, or *speak*of it — until all about them clearly understand it.

Every one that sees God's way, should *use*it. God says, "*Walk*therein, and you shall find rest unto your souls." It is a *public*way — a way for all. It is a *free*way — without toll bar, or pay gate, so that the poorest can have no excuse.

No sinner should rest short of Christ, for there is safety no where else. There is no salvation in sacraments, church services, or any creature performances; no priest, prelate, or pope — can save a soul. Jesus can save — and Jesus alone. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." If sinners perish, who have God's word in their hands, or who sit under the preaching of the gospel — they are suicides! They destroy themselves! They will not come unto Christ, that they might have life. O sinner, look at the end of your course, the endless wrath of God, see the way of escape, opened through the Savior's life and death; RUN, RUN, RUN in that way — until you realize that you are saved forever.

Let us all then, read the *threatenings*of God's word — and run from danger, for to this end the threatenings are given.

Let us read the *invitations* — and run to the refuge, for to this end are the invitations sent.

Let us read the *precepts* — and run to duty, for to this end are the precepts published.

We read to little purpose, if reading does not lead us to Christ; and certainly we do not come to Christ, if we are not saved from sin, and consecrated to the service of God. God cuts off all excuse from the sinner, for he prepares the way, sends the gospel, commands it to be written, requires the writing to be plain, directs it to be placed in conspicuous places, and then bids every one run that reads it. And, so plainly is the way of salvation set forth in the word of God, that children can understand it, and the way-faring men, though fools, do not err therein.

Holy Spirit, stir, up all the Lord's people, to make the *vision plain*to their fellow men; and give grace to sinners all around us, that reading, they may run for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them!