Pearls of Great Price!

William Nicholson, 1855

Showing How the Christian Is Blessed with All Spiritual Blessings in Christ

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." Ephesians 1:3

PREFACE  
The design of the following pages is to remind the Christian of his distinguished blessings and happiness as a believer in Christ Jesus. Accustomed to engage in the avocations of life, surrounded with domestic scenes, sometimes of trouble and inconvenience; sometimes basking under the sun of prosperity, or at other times exposed to the storms of adversity—it is no wonder that he should at times forget the wondrous privileges which the Lord of life has conferred upon him. Hence the necessity of "stirring up his mind by way of remembrance." O Christian, forget not your dignity! It is more exalted, and more substantial, than that of kings, or of the most renowned conquerors!

The privileges of the Christian are not confined to the body, nor limited by time. They are strictly applicable to the soul; they are enjoyed in time, and their duration is eternity. What, then, can better employ the mind than the frequent contemplation of these glorious realities?

A Christian is . . .  
a sinner saved by grace,  
admitted to fellowship with the Most High,  
guarded by the strength of Omnipotence,  
guided with infallible wisdom,  
his name written in the Lamb's book of life,  
borne up amid the swellings of Jordan,  
conveyed by angels to the celestial paradise,  
there to receive the crown of immortality, and a palm of eternal victory!

Oh! what earthly honors can be compared to these! Earthly honors! name them not—they are laid in the balance, and found lighter than vanity" But, Christians, your honors are not shadowy, but substantial. Therefore, forget them not. Enjoy them. They are wells of salvation. Drink of them freely. They are the dews of Heaven—let them refresh your soul! They are clusters of fruit from the cross, and streams from the ocean of heavenly felicity! "Eat, O friends—drink abundantly, O beloved!"

They proclaim to you eternal salvation—a proclamation sweeter than the music of the spheres; listen to its rapturous sound, and strive to be cheered by it every moment!

Thus . . .  
the sorrows of life will be deprived of their gloom,  
hope will gild the future,  
and the undying spirit will ultimately be prepared for the felicities of Heaven.

Pray for the Spirit . . .  
to assure you that these blessings are yours,  
to make them sweet to your taste, and  
to produce in you, and for you, their blissful effects.

William Nicholson

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS  
Dear Reader, if you were in quest of a splendid fortune, supposed to have been bequeathed to you by some departed friend—would you not be extremely anxious to discover your relationship to the deceased, and your claim to the bequest? You would leave no means untried to make such a discovery, and to come to such a realization.

But to speak spiritually, there is a great testator, even Christ—who has actually bequeathed to all his children, immense property and incalculable privileges and immunities. Thousands of gold and silver, the cattle upon a thousand hills, earthly dignities and honors—are base and empty, when compared with them. In the estimation of all the pious on earth, of all perfected spirits in glory, of angels round the sapphire throne—they are Pearls of Great Price, whose value is partly known and enjoyed below. They will be more fully discovered and realized in Heaven—and will progressively unveiled through eternity!

A Christian's privileges! Oh! they give to him a surpassing grandeur, a halo of inconceivable splendor!

A Christian's privileges! Should they not excite a seraphic impulse in every bosom, exciting an intense ambition that refuses to be satisfied until the ethereal spirit mounts up to Heaven, in which they are consummated and crowned?

Does a person manifest intense concern to establish his claim to earthly possessions? Then will not you, Christian, go and do likewise? The exalted privileges of the gospel are given to believers, as the scriptures uniformly declare. The prayer of the Redeemer was offered up on the behalf of his disciples: "Father, I will that those whom you have given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory!"

Then the vital question is this: Am I a true believer in Christ? Do I sit at his feet as a lowly and an obedient disciple? Does my heart condemn me not? Have I confidence towards God? Christian, can you answer in the affirmative? If you can, rise and claim those blessings—become conscious of your real dignity—look down and smile on kings!

The following characteristics of a true servant of Christ, will enable the reader to investigate his condition, and ascertain whether he is an heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures

Here mines of knowledge, love, and joy,  
Are opened to our sight;  
The purest gold without alloy,  
And gems divinely bright!

The Bible is an invaluable book. To the real Christian, it is more precious than gold and silver. It is a lamp unto his feet, and a light to his path; and frequently, when he perceives its design, and feels its encouraging influence, he exclaims, "Oh! how I love your law!" "Your statutes have become my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." The intelligent and pious, of every age, have estimated the Bible as invaluable. The patriarchs did, and also the prophets. So did Christ and his Apostles.

The words of David are very expressive in Psalm 19:7-11, "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

"Search the Scriptures," said Christ, "for in them you think you have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."

The following opinions of eminent men are worthy of notice:

The justly celebrated Sir William Jones, one of the brightest geniuses and most distinguished scholars of the eighteenth century, observes, "I have carefully and regularly perused these holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that the volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from ALL other books, in whatever language they may have been written."

It is related that the eminent English poet, Collins, in the latter part of his mortal career, "withdrew from study, and traveled with no other book than an English New Testament, such as children carry to school. When a friend took it into his hand, out of curiosity to see what companion a man of letters had chosen, 'I have only one book,' said he, 'but that is the best.' "

John Locke, so distinguished a philosopher, in the latter part of his life, studied scarcely anything but the word of God; and, when asked which was the surest way for a young man to attain a knowledge of the Christian religion, he replied, "Let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament. Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has:

God for its author;  
Salvation for its end; and  
Truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.

When Salmasius, who was one of the most consummate scholars of his time, came to the close of life, he saw cause to exclaim bitterly against himself. "Oh!" said he, "I have lost a world of time! time, the most precious thing in the world! If I had but one year more, it would be spent in reading David's Psalms and Paul's Epistles! Oh! sirs," said he again to those about him, "mind the world less, and God more."

When that eminent Christian, James Hervey, who died in triumph, apprehended himself to be near the close of life, with eternity full in view, he wrote to a friend at a distance, to tell him what were his sentiments in that solemn situation. "I have been too fond," said he, "of reading everything valuable and elegant that has been penned in our language, and been peculiarly charmed with the historians, orators, and poets, of antiquity; but, were I to renew my studies, I would take my leave of those accomplished trifles. I would resign the delights of modern wits, amusement, and eloquence—and devote my attention to the Scriptures of Truth. I would sit with much greater assiduity at my Divine Master's feet, and desire to know nothing in comparison of Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Thomas Scott remarks "that the most learned, acute, and diligent student cannot, in the longest life, obtain an entire knowledge of this one volume. The more deeply he works the mine, the richer and more abundant he finds the ore! New light continually beams from this source of heavenly knowledge, to direct his conduct, and illustrate the works of God and the ways of men. He will at last leave the world, confessing that the more he studied the Scriptures, the fuller conviction he had of his own ignorance, and of their inestimable value."

The attention of the reader will now be directed to consider some of the excellencies of the Bible.

Consider its ANTIQUITY. Whatever may be said of its inspiration, some of the books which compose it are unquestionably the most ancient literary compositions extant, and perhaps the most ancient that ever were written. Nor is it very improbable that letters were first employed in recording some parts of them, and they were written in the language first spoken by man. It is, also, not only the most ancient book, but the most ancient monument of human exertion—the oldest offspring of human intellect, now in existence. Unlike the other works of man, it inherits not his frailty. All the contemporaries of its infancy have long since perished, and are forgotten; but this volume, this wonderful volume, still survives. Like the fabled pillars of Seth, which are said to have bid defiance to the deluge, the Bible has stood for ages, unmoved in the midst of that flood which sweeps away men, along with their labors, into oblivion.

The interest of this volume will further appear, if we consider the violent and constant OPPOSITION it has encountered, and the almost innumerable ENEMIES it has resisted and overcome.

We contemplate, with no ordinary degree of interest, a rock which has braved, for centuries, the ocean's rage; practically saying, "Hitherto shall you come, but no farther; and here shall your proud waves be stayed."

With still greater interest, though somewhat of a different kind, should we contemplate a fortress, which, during thousands of years, had been constantly assailed by successive generations of enemies, around whose walls millions had perished, and to overthrow which the utmost efforts of human force and ingenuity had been exerted in vain.

Such a rock—such a fortress, we contemplate in the Bible. For thousands of years, this volume has withstood, not only the iron tooth of time, which devours men and their works together, but all the physical and intellectual strength of man.

Pretended friends have endeavored to corrupt and betray the Bible. Kings and princes have perseveringly sought to banish it from the world. The civil and military powers of the greatest empires of the world, have been leagued for its destruction. The fires of persecution have been lighted, to consume it and its friends together. And, at many seasons, death, in its most horrid forms, has been the almost certain consequence of affording the Bible an asylum from the fury of its enemies.

It has been, also, almost incessantly assailed by weapons of a far different kind, which to any other book would be more dangerous than either fire or sword. In these assaults, wit and ridicule have wasted all their shafts; misguided reason has been compelled, though reluctantly, to lend her aid; and, after defeats innumerable, has been again dragged to the field. The arsenals of learning have been emptied, to arm her for the contest; and, in search of means to prosecute it with success; yet still the object of these attacks remains uninjured, while one army after another of its assailants has melted away.

Though it has been:  
ridiculed more bitterly,  
misrepresented more grossly,  
opposed more rancorously,  
and burnt more frequently,  
than any other book, and perhaps than all other books combined—it is so far from sinking under the efforts of its enemies, that the probability of its surviving until the final consummation of all things, is now evidently much greater than ever. The rain has descended; the floods have come; the storm has arisen and beaten upon it; but it falls not, for it is founded upon a rock. Like the burning bush, it has ever been in the flames—yet still it is unconsumed. This is a sufficient proof, were there no other, that He who dwelt in the bush, preserves the Bible.

The powers of earth and Hell, in vain  
Against the sacred word combine.  
Your providence, through every age,  
Securely guards the book divine.

You, its great Author, Source of light,  
You, its Preserver, we adore,  
And humbly ask a ray from Thee;  
Its hidden wonders to explore.

From this source, millions now in Heaven, derive the strongest and most invaluable consolation. Scarcely can we fix our eyes upon a single passage in this wonderful book, which has not afforded comfort or instruction to thousands, and been met with tears of penitential sorrow or grateful joy, drawn from eyes that will weep no more. Thousands have sealed their belief of its truth with their blood; rejoicing to shed it in defense of a book which, while it led them to the stake, enabled them to triumph over its tortures.

Nor have its efforts been confined to individuals; nations have participated largely in its benefits. Armed with this volume, which is at once sword and shield, the first heralds of Christianity went forth, conquering and to conquer. No less powerful than the wonder-working rod of Moses, its touch crumbled into dust the temples of Paganism, and overthrew, as in a moment, the immense fabric of superstition and idolatry, which had been for ages erecting. To this volume alone it is owing that we do not now assemble in the temples of idols; that stocks and stones are not our deities; that cruelty, intemperance, and impurity, do not constitute our religion; and that our children are not burnt as sacrifices at the altar of Moloch.

To this volume we are also indebted for the Reformation, in the days of Luther; for the consequent revival and progress of learning; and for our present freedom from papal tyranny.

Wherever it comes, blessings follow in its train. Like the sun, its fittest emblem, it has, like that luminary, from the commencement of its existence, shed an unceasing flood of light on a benighted and wretched world. Who, then, can doubt that he who formed the sun, gave the Bible to be "a light unto our feet, and a lamp to our path?" Who that contemplates this fountain, still full and overflowing, notwithstanding the millions that have drunk of its waters, can doubt that it has a real, though invisible, connection with that river of life, which flows forever at the right hand of God?

In the fabulous records of Pagan antiquity, we read of a mirror endowed with properties so rare, that, by looking into it, its possessor could view any object he wished to see, however remote, and discover with equal ease, people and things, above, below, behind, and before him. Such a mirror, but infinitely more valuable than this fictitious looking-glass, do we possess in the Bible. By employing it in a proper manner, we may discern objects and events, past, present, and to come. Here we may contemplate, the all-infolding circle of the Eternal Mind, and behold a perfect portrait of him whom no mortal eye has seen,

drawn by his own unerring hand. Piercing into the deep resesses of eternity, we may behold "Him who is invisible," existing, independent and alone, previous to the first exertion of his creating energy.

We may see Heaven, the habitation of his holiness and glory, aflame with the excessive brightness of his presence.

We may see Hell, the prison of his justice, with no other light than that which the fiery billows of his wrath cast, pale and dreadful, serving only to render "darkness visible."

Here, too, we may witness the birth of the world which we inhabit; we may stand, as it were, by its cradle, and see it grow up from infancy to manhood, under the forming hand of its Creator.

We may see light, at his summons, starting into existence, and revealing the world of waters without a shore. Controlled by his word, the waters subside, and islands and continents appear, not as now, clothed with verdure and fertility, but sterile and naked as the sands of Arabia.

Again he speaks, and the landscape appears, uniting the various beauties of Spring, Summer, and Autumn, and extending farther than the eye can reach.

Still all is silent; not even the hum of the insect is heard; the silence of death pervades creation, until, in an instant, songs burst from every grove; and the startled spectator, raising his eyes from the carpet at his feet, sees the air, the earth, and the sea, filled with life and activity, in a thousand various forms!

In this book we may contemplate the origin and infancy of our race. We may trace, from its source to its termination, that mighty river of which we compose a part; and see it separating into two great branches, one of which loses itself in the gulf which has no bottom.

In this looking-glass we may also discover the fountain whence flow those torrents of vice and wretchedness which deluge the earth.

We may trace the glorious plan of Divine Providence, running, like a stream of lightning through the dark and stormy clouds of sublunary events; and we see light and order breaking in upon the mighty chaos of crimes, revolutions, wars, and convulsions which have ever devastated the world; and which, to a person unacquainted with the Scriptures, must ever appear to produce no beneficial effects, but to succeed each other without order, and to happen without design.

Here, too, we may contemplate ourselves in every conceivable situation and point of view; see our hearts laid open, and all their secret recesses displayed. We may trace, as on a map, the paths which lead to Heaven and Hell. We may ascertain in which path we are walking. We may learn what we have been, what we are, and what we shall be hereafter. Above all, we may see displayed to view that wonderful scheme of the redemption of self-destroyed man, into which angels desire to look, and without which, the knowledge of God and of ourselves would serve only to plunge us into the depths of despair.

We may behold him whom we had seen previously creating the world . . .  
lying as an helpless infant in a manger,  
expiring in agonies on the cruel cross,  
and imprisoned in the tomb.

We may see him rising; ascending to Heaven, sitting down at "the right hand of God, the throne of the Majesty on high;" there swaying the scepter of universal empire, and "ever living to make intercession for his people."

Finally, we may see Jesus coming in the clouds of Heaven, with power and great glory, to judge the world. We may see the dead, at his command, rising from their graves, standing in solemn silence and suspense before his tribunal, and successively advancing to receive from his lips, the sentence which will confer on each of them an eternal weight of glory—or consign them forever to the mansions of despair!

Equally important to the present and future happiness of man, are the precepts which the Scriptures inculcate. Hence Dr. Payson observes; "That spiritual kingdom whose laws they promulgate, consists in 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.' And were these laws universally obeyed, nothing but righteousness, peace, and holy joy, would be found upon earth. Should anyone deny this, after perusing them attentively, it would prove nothing but the weakness of his understanding, or the depravity of his heart. They require us to regard God with filial affection, and our fellow-creatures with fraternal affection. They require rulers to 'be just, ruling in the fear of God;' and subjects to 'lead quiet and peaceful lives, in all godliness and honesty.'

The Scriptures require the husband to love the wife, even as he loves himself; and the wife to respect her husband. They require parents to educate their children 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;' and children to 'love, honor, and obey, their parents.' They require masters to treat their servants with kindness; and servants to be submissive, diligent, and faithful. The Scriptures require of all, temperance, contentment, and diligence; and stigmatize, as worse than an infidel, him who neglects to provide for the necessities of his faintly.

The Scriptures provide for the speedy termination of animosities and dissensions, by requiring us to forgive and pray for our enemies, whenever we pray for ourselves; and to make reparation to all whom we have injured, before we presume to appear with our offering in the presence of God.

In a word, the Scriptures teach us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ!'

In addition to these instructions and precepts, the Scripture furnishes us with the most instructive examples; examples which most plainly and convincingly teach both what we must shun, and what we are to pursue. On every rock where immortal souls have been wrecked—at the entrance of every path which leads to danger, they show us some self-destroyed wretch, standing like a pillar of salt, to warn succeeding travelers not to approach it; while, at the gate and in the path of life, they place many divinely-instructed and infallible guides who lead the way, beckon us to follow, and point us to the happy mansions in which it ends.

By opening this volume, we may at any time:  
walk in the garden of Eden with Adam;  
sit in the ark with Noah,  
witness the faith of Abraham;  
ascend the mount of God with Moses;  
unite in the secret devotions of David; or  
listen to the eloquent and impassioned address of Paul.

Nay more—we may here converse with Him who spoke as never any man spoke; and enjoy sweet communion with our heavenly Father, through his Son, Jesus Christ.

This precious volume also contains strong consolations; consolations suited to every possible variety and complication of human wretchedness; and of sufficient efficacy to render the soul not only resigned, but joyful, in the lowest depths of adversity! Not only tranquil, but triumphant, in the very jaws of death! It is the appointed vehicle by which the Spirit of God, the promised Comforter, communicates not only his instructions, but his consolations to the soul. It is, if it may be so expressed, the body which he has assumed, in order to converse with men; and he lives and speaks in every line. Hence it is said to be "living," and "powerful." Hence its words are "spirit," and they are "life"—the living, life-giving, words of the living God.

The consolation which it imparts, and the blessings which it offers, are such as nothing but omnipotent goodness can bestow.

It finds us guilty, and freely offers us pardon bestow.

It finds us polluted with innumerable defilements, and offers us moral purity.

It finds us weak and enslaved, and offers liberty.

It finds us wretched, and offers happiness.

It finds us dead, and offers everlasting life.

It finds us, having no hope, and without God in the world, with nothing before us but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation—and places glory, and honor, and immortality fully in view! And, while it urges us to pursue them;. by the exercise of faith in the Redeemer, and "patient continuance in well doing," it encourages and animates us in the pursuit, by the most condescending offers of assistance, and by exceeding great and precious promises—promises signed by the immutable God, and sealed by the blood of his eternal Son; promises which, one would think, are sufficient to render indolence active, and timidity bold.

Unfailing pleasures, durable riches, immortal honors, imperishable mansions, an unfading crown, an immovable throne, an everlasting kingdom, an eternal weight of glory! Perfect, uninterrupted, never-ending, perpetually increasing felicity in the full fruition of God—are the rewards which these promises assure to all penitent believers.

Again it is observed, by Dr. Payson: "In proportion, also, to the importance of its contents, are the evils which would result from its absence or loss.

"Destroy this volume, as the enemies of human happiness have vainly endeavored to do, and you render us profoundly ignorant:  
of our Creator,  
of the formation of the world which we inhabit,  
of the origin and progenitors of our race,  
of our present state,  
of our eternal destination,  
and consign us, through life, to the dominion of imagination, doubt, and conjecture.

"Destroy this volume, and you rob us of the consolatory expectation, excited by its predictions, that the stormy cloud, which has so long hung over a suffering world, will at length be scattered, and a brighter day follow. You forbid us to hope that the hour is approaching when nation shall no more lift up sword against nation; and righteousness, peace, and holy joy, shall universally prevail; and allow us to anticipate nothing but a constant succession of wars, revolutions, crimes, and miseries, terminating only with the end of time.

Destroy this volume, and you deprive us of religion, with all the animating consolations, hopes, and prospects which it affords; and leave us nothing but the liberty of choosing (miserable alternative!) between the cheerless gloom of Infidelity and the monstrous shadows of Paganism.

"Destroy this volume, and you unpeople Heaven; bar forever its doors against the wretched posterity of Adam; restore to the king of terrors his fatal sting; bury hope in the same grave which receives our bodies; consign all who have died before us to eternal sleep or endless misery; and allow us to expect nothing, at death, but a similar fate.

"In a word, destroy this volume, and you take from us, at once, everything which prevents existence from becoming the greatest of all curses! Destroy this volume, and you blot out the sun, dry up the ocean, and take away the atmosphere of the moral world; you degrade man to a situation from which he looks with envy to the brutes that perish.'

"Who, then, would not earnestly wish to believe the Scriptures, even though they came to him unattended with sufficient evidence of their divine origin? Who can be so much his own enemy, as to refuse to believe them, when they come with evidence more than sufficient to satisfy all but the willfully incredulous? Who, in this view of them, (which is a most imperfect one,) is prepared to say that they are not of all books, the most important; that they ought not to be prized and studied, as such, by all who possess them, and put, without delay, into the hands of all who do not?"

Consolation Amid Spiritual Conflicts

The terms which the scriptures employ to represent the nature of the Christian conflict, imply that the believer is a soldier, and that he has enemies whom he is expected to fight and overcome. Hence it is said, "Fight the good fight of faith;" and "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." "War a good warfare." This has always been the case; nor can we find any on earth exempt. All who now wear the crown of endless life, once fought under the banner of the cross, and finally became more than conquerors, through Christ who loved them. Go, reader, and do likewise.

The Christian soldier has to fight against the evil propensities of his own mind. In the minds of men, by nature, evil propensities hold the sway and empire; and, as men are called out of the world, they have to fight against these, until they are destroyed. The passions, the appetites, and affections of men, are in a state of warfare and rebellion against what is good. Hence Christians are called to fight against "the lusts which war in their members;" and to "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." See Romans 7.21-24. Objections may be started as to the application of these words to the Christian life; but there is no possibility of living in a state like ours, without feeling their truth. The believer cannot pass a day without a struggle, without feeling that he is in a state of warfare.

So darkness struggles with the light,  
Until perfect day arise:  
Water and fire maintain the fight,  
Until the weaker dies.

Thus will the flesh and Spirit strive,  
And vex and break my peace;  
But I shall quit this mortal life,  
And sin forever cease.

In accordance with this experience, the eminent martyr, Bradford, on one occasion, observed, "O Lord! sometimes methinks I feel it so with me, as if there were no difference between my heart and the wicked. I have as blind a mind as they; as stout, stubborn, rebellious, and hard heart as they." Henry Martyn, so greatly distinguished for piety, wrote in his journal, "What a dark atheistical state do I live in! Alas! that this creation should so engross my mind, and the Author of it be so slightly and coldly regarded! Amazing patience! he bears with this faithless, foolish heart!" Yet the same pious man, when breathing forth the holy feelings of his soul, could say, "Let me praise God, for having turned me from a life of woe to the enjoyment of peace and hope. The work is real. I can no more doubt it than I can doubt my existence. The whole current of my desires is altered. I am walking quite another way, though I sometimes stumble in that way. I had a most blessed view of God and divine things. I looked forward to complete conformity to him, as the great end of my existence; and my assurance was full. I triumphed, and said, almost with tears: Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? This is my bliss, that Christ is all. Upheld by him, I smile at death. Oh! what have I to do but labor, and pray, and fast, and watch, for the salvation of my soul?"

Another Christian will say, "I have yet a bad heart, in spite of all my conflictings, strivings, and praying. I am yet so molested with sinful imaginations and sinful inclinations. If I do not perform duty with any life, I am troubled for my dullness. If I do it with any life, I am troubled with pride. If, sometimes, I do not pray, I cannot bear the pain occasioned by the omission; if, sometimes, I do pray, I am distressed with myself; and the crowds of other thoughts frequently prevent pleasure in praying."

Another Christian complains bitterly of secret blasphemies, atheistical risings; another of private murmurings, discontent, and unbelief, though those evils are not visible either in the language or the conduct.

Reader, the main battle of a Christian is not in the open field; his conflicts are principally within; his enemies attack him within his own bosom. When he has reformed an evil life, it will cost him much more to reform an evil heart. At the commencement of his course, he may receive so much power from grace, that will enable him to effect a moral reformation in his conduct; but it will be the work of his whole life to obtain a complete conquest over secret corruption. Hence a pious Negro slave said to a Missionary, "wicked things trouble me too much. Me want to do good, but me wicked heart won't let me. Me heart runs away all this week—run all about. Suppose I pray, my heart runs all about. Sometimes them things one no want to remember, come in my heart; and then me can't say no more but, 'Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me!' Me afraid me no love Jesus Christ yet. Me want to love and serve him much; but me bad heart! Me think sometimes me have two hearts—'one want to do good; that other always want do bad! O Jesus, have mercy upon me, a poor sinner!"

The Christian soldier has to fight against the temptations of an ungodly world. There is much in the world to which the words will apply, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." There is "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;" and God frowns disapprobation on all these. "Know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" The object of much around you, Christians, is to bring you down from the dignity of your calling; and it is only by strenuous and constant resistance to the attacks of the world, that you can overcome, and please God. See John 15.18, 19. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil." And one great point of the Christian's profession is, "to keep himself unspotted from the world."

But there is something of still more awful magnitude than even the propensities of your own minds. You have to fight against the supernatural powers of darkness. Yes; there are beings confederated against all who have entered the Christian course; beings whose aim is to establish a blasting dominion over the souls of men. "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." How solemn is this statement! Over multitudes, these powers reign with an undisputed sway, and exert all their hellish arts to harass and injure those who are translated out of their dark kingdom.

Remember, soldiers of Christ, that, though you are delivered from the power of Satan, unto God—yet the efforts of these beings are to bring you down from your high estate; for this they use all their efforts, and employ all their infernal arts. The Scriptures tell you that Satan "goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." To effect this, he practices deception. Hence we read of his "deceiving the nations;" of the "depths of Satan;" of the "wiles of the devil;" and of "Satan's devices." The devices of a wicked spirit that has been laboring to deceive mankind for almost six thousand years, must be innumerable. How skilled in deception are some men, even in a few years! How much more skilled must the father of lies have become, in six thousand! Hence the Christian has particular need to watch against the wiles of the devil; for these are, doubtless, adapted to the age, situation, and circumstances, of those whom he assaults.

Sometimes his temptations are sudden and violent; at other times, his temptations are sly and insinuating. Under his influence, or that of corrupt nature, all the most valuable truths of the Bible are perverted into means for hardening men in their carelessness and guilt. The modes of Satan's attacks are various; but the writer cannot, in the small place allotted for the subject, dwell upon them at length. But though we cannot here describe, nor at any time fully comprehend, their agency, we are compelled again and again to feel their influence.

Sometimes their arrows reach the mark;  
My throbbing heart with anguish tear.  
Each lights upon a kindred spark,  
And finds abundant fuel there.

Come, Lord, and chase the cruel host.  
Heal the deep wounds I have received;  
Nor let the powers of darkness boast  
That I am foiled, and you are grieved!

Some of God's people occasionally walk in darkness, and have no light. Then they recollect a time when the presence of God cheered them—when their souls rejoiced in his love—when their hopes were bright, and when they anticipated Heaven with pleasure. They looked to the Savior, with grateful delight, and could say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me!" But now their joy is changed for mourning, their day for night, their peace and tranquility for doubt and fear. They fear that God has withdrawn from them, and say, "Oh! that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shone upon my head, and when, by his light, I walked through darkness!" Is not this a distressing state?

Again, some Christians are frequently tossed on the sea of affliction; some become the subjects of painful and inscrutable bereavements; others are persecuted for righteousness sake; and others have to endure all the inconvenience and corroding anxieties of poverty. But we cannot enumerate all the trials of God's people. They are soldiers; and their enemies are numerous, formidable, and strong. They must fight, or be taken captive; they must conquer, or die!

But the believer is not left to himself in this conflict; nor is he destitute of strong consolation. He is upheld by Almighty power, without which he would fall, to rise no more.

An arm of flesh must fail  
In such a strife as this.  
He only can prevail,  
Whose arm immortal is.  
'Tis Heaven itself the strength must yield,  
And weapons fit for such a field.  
And Heaven supplies them, too.  
The Lord, who never faints,  
Is greater than the foe;  
And he is with his saints.  
Thus armed, they venture to the fight.  
Thus armed, they put their foes to flight.

Do not, Christian soldier, be discouraged in your spiritual warfare. Learn to endure hardness, to fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life.

Does inherent depravity distress you? Oh! remember that the merciful God compassionates your state. He knows your frame; he remembers that you are but dust; and, with his all-animating voice, he tells you, "My grace is sufficient for you." He will give his Spirit, through whose powerful and efficient influence you may keep down the rage of inbred corruption, and bring every desire, thought, and affection, into obedience to Christ. That Spirit and that grace will be granted to you, as long as you live; they will dwell in you, as the great opposing power to the heart, which, by nature, is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Therefore, fear not.

Does the world annoy and distress you? Christ can be with you in every scene, and impart to you such a degree of faith and courage that its smiles shall not unduly elate you, nor its frowns terrify you—that its adversity shall not sink you, nor its prosperity captivate you. Your beloved Redeemer presents you to the preserving power of his Father, and says, "I pray not that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil of the world." This prayer has been answered again and again. Millions, now before the Savior's throne in glory, once tabernacled on this vile earth, and had to contend with all its cares and toils; but Christ gave them strength; he increased their faith; and lo! this was "the victory which overcame the world, even their faith."

You see, Christians, nothing before you but darkness;  
nothing above you nothing but clouds and tempest;  
nothing on your right and left hand, worldly smiles and frowns; and in your path, nothing but briars and thorns?

Is your way hedged up by poverty, so that you know not what to do? Is Satan at your right hand; or do innumerable foes compass you about? Perilous, indeed, soldiers of the cross, is your situation; but the Almighty Captain, who is for you, is more than all those who are against you.

He is your Shepherd, and you shall be fed, and he will keep you.

He is your Counselor, and he will effectually direct you.

He is your Sun, and moral and spiritual darkness shall be dispersed.

He is your Shield, and he will ably defend you.

He is your faithful and infallible Friend, who will keep you from falling, and ultimately present you, faultless, before the presence a his glory, with exceeding joy.

Come, Lord, your powerful grace impart,  
Your grace can raise my wandering heart  
To pleasures perfect and sublime,  
Unmeasured by the wings of time.

Let those bright worlds of endless joy,  
My thoughts, my hopes, my cares, employ.  
No more, you restless passions, roam.  
God is my bliss, and Heaven my home.

In your warfare with Satan, be not alarmed at the strength, the repetition, or the horrid nature, of temptations. Satan tempted Jesus; hence all his disciples must expect similar assaults. He continued to tempt the Redeemer; and, when one temptation failed, he employed another. It is evident, then, that Satan will not easily depart from those whose souls he is anxious to destroy. He tempted Christ with the most awful of temptations, even that of falling down and worshiping himself—a devil. Do not then be surprised, believer, if the enemy should harass you with suggestions equally dreadful. But, though the Redeemer was so awfully and perseveringly tempted—yet he successfully repulsed the enemy.

It is not temptation, but compliance with temptation, that stains the soul with sin. Often are the people of God cast down by not regarding this distinction. They infer that they cannot be Christ's disciples, who have such horrid thoughts and temptations as they have. But Christ had them; and was he less acceptable to his Father on that account? No! Temptation tries the courage, the faith, and the love, of believers—but cannot destroy them.

In order to overcome, watch and pray. "Blessed is he who watches." "Take unto you the whole armor of God;" and you will, through divine strength, triumph over the wicked one.

Jesus persevered and triumphed; and angels came and ministered unto him. Follow him, and he will minister to your needs; and, when the last temptation is over, angels will come and minister to your triumphant spirit, and bear it away, as a happy conqueror, to worlds of eternal light!

Again, be not dismayed, if occasionally you walk in darkness. The design of God in withdrawing comfort from you, is gracious. It is to make you humble, and to strip you of pride. It is to reveal to you your helplessness, and to lead you to value Christ more, and to depend upon him entirely for all you need, both in time and eternity. Faith and love are exercised most in the dark and cloudy day of sorrow. To believe, when all is pleasing and happy, is an easy thing; but to believe, when all is dark and dreary, when no comfort is felt within, when no light is seen without—this is the faith that God values. To love Him, when the soul feels assurance of God's love, and the joys that love imparts, is easy; but to love Him, when his presence is withdrawn, when doubts and fears infest the soul, this is love of a stronger too nobler and kind. Hence the design of God, in those seasons of darkness, "That the trial of their faith be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Soldiers of Christ have peculiar cause for encouragement from the character of their LEADER. They have a faithful "High Priest, who has passed into the heavens; and who knows how to support those who are tempted;" as "he was in all points tempted like as" they are, "yet without sin." Think of his wisdom, his power, his love. How capable is he of securing, to his lowliest follower, an everlasting victory! Hence he says, "Because I live, you shall live also."

Oh! in your spiritual warfare, forget not that you have a Savior who is always ready to comfort and support you. If he were present with you, would not his kind declarations repress your doubts, and subdue your unbelief? But if he were, he would not speak comfort in language stronger than that in which his sufferings and death should speak peace to every believing heart.

Turn your attention to the pages of Christian history, and mark how many have already overcome. In the first ages of Christianity, believers esteemed it an honor to suffer shame for the name of Christ. They forced their passage to Heaven, through all that is most dreadful; and sought admission there, at the expense of all that is most dear. Riches, health, and ease, pleasure, and life—all were trifles in their esteem. Their tormenters were weary of inflicting pain, before martyrs were weary of bearing it. They seemed like a different race of beings—like creatures of a different world! They trod the path to glory, however thorny, and rejoiced in hastening to an early crown.

Polycarp, when condemned to martyrdom, was so fearful lest the prayers of his friends should prevent the execution of the sentence, that he begged them to forbear; "I fear," said he, "lest your love should injure me."

Does one of all those martyred myriads now repent? Did one, when landing on the heavenly shore, ever think, 'I have endured too much for him who bore the cross for me?' Look at the patience of the saints, about two hundred years ago. See English confessors, of whom the world was not worthy, encountering persecution in their native isle; or encountering savages, or famine, amid the wilds of America. See dungeons filled with their captives, and deserts peopled with their exiles. See persecutors hunting out their little haunts; denying them the enjoyment of religious worship, even in solitary fields or lonely woods! Oh, think of these things, and be not slothful, but followers of those who, through faith and patience, now inherit the promises.

The soldiers of Christ shall finally overcome! Their connection with Christ is that which gives them the hope of victory. He came to earth, that he might obtain a conquest over the powers of darkness, and that he might give, to his people, a saving interest in that conquest. When he hung on the cross, he obtained peace and pardon for his people; there he stood "alone," and conquered great and important foes. His death was a grapple with the powers of death and Hell; and when he died, he was indeed the victor. He rose and ascended; and then he was proclaimed, "The Lord of hosts, strong and mighty in battle." "He must reign, until he has put all enemies under his feet." And your victory, Christians arises from your union with him who died on the cross, who conquers and shall conquer.

Add to this, he gives you the Spirit of Faith and the Spirit of Prayer; nay, the whole Christian panoply: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." Ephesians 6:10-13

Using these powerful and successfully-tried weapons, confiding in the skill of your Leader, and depending upon his gracious power—you are sure to triumph, and to receive the reward of life and immortality.

In the Book of Revelation, you have this enrapturing assurance; "He who overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white clothing; and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my FATHER, and before his angels." Conquerors are characters to whom the men of this world give the greatest honor. Philanthropists have been forgotten; legislators have been forgotten; but the conqueror has remained. History has recorded his achievements, for him the richest garland has been wreathed; the pride and blazonry of honor have gathered around his tomb and the fabric of his fame has been cemented by the blood of warriors and the tears of widows and of orphans.

But the Christian warrior is to be more gloriously recognized, amid all the splendors of the day of final retribution. Yes, the Christian soldier shall then be clothed with white clothing! In former times, white clothing was the clothing of priests and kings. And of Christians it is said that they shall be "Kings and priests unto God, forever,"—that they shall "sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,"—and that they shall "reign forever and ever."

In the world, they are oppressed by contumelious scorn; but then they shall shine in dignity and honor, forever. Such need not seek, "To climb the steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar."

They need not seek to have their names inscribed upon their tombs; for, when the blast of fame has died away in future ages, their honor shall still be fresh—their names shall still be remembered. Immortality is the reign of their glory; and their joys endure for ever and ever.

The Captain of salvation says, "I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." The Christian is not left to stand in the crowd; he is not left under a dark lowering cloud, as he sometimes appeared to be on earth. No! "I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Think of this, believer. It is as if the great Captain of salvation took every individual's hand, and presented him to God, by name, as if worthy of an introduction to glory and honor, "this is the man who believed in my name, who enlisted under my banner, who resisted unto blood, striving against sin; and now I confess him before you!"

Oh! how great will be the Christian's transport, when he hears Jesus say, "Come, you blessed ones, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" Happy, happy Christians, then! Oh! what blessed triumphs are theirs! What glorious spoils! What everlasting shouts of victory and songs of joy! Their triumph is a never-ending triumph! Their palms will never fade; the luster of their crown can never be tarnished. The light of day will be extinguished, and the stars of Heaven be darkened; but the brightness of their glory will be as incorruptible as the throne of God.

Christian soldier, go forward in the name of him who "endured the cross, despising the shame." Go forward, and remember that those who endure the cross, shall wear the crown. Go forward, remembering that earthly conquerors fight to "obtain a corruptible crown, but you an incorruptible crown!"

Much in sorrow, much in woe,  
Onward, Christians! onward go!  
Fight the fight; and, work with strife,  
Steep with tears the bread of life.

Onward, Christians! onward go!  
Join the war, and face the foe.  
Shrink not—much does yet remain.  
Dreary is the long campaign.

Shrink not, Christians—will you yield?  
Will you quit the battle-field?  
Will you thus desert and leave  
Him who died your soul to save?

Onward, Christian, to the fight!  
Soon shall end this weary night.  
Think, when tempted to complain,  
"If we suffer, we shall reign."

Christians, do not thus deplore  
What you leave; but look before.  
What are country—parents—wife,  
To the soul's eternal life?

Soon the day-star shall arise,  
Gladdening every Christian's eyes.  
It shall cheer the thorny road  
That leads to happiness and God!

Afflictions a Privilege

It was a wise decree that man should bear  
Affliction's burden, in this valley of tears.  
Were all enjoyment, without grief and care,  
How would he pass the current of his years?

Seduced by pleasure, roll'd by vice's cheers,  
Prurient desires would taint his easy heart.  
Alas! what were our hopes, without our fears!  
There is a mercy in affliction's smart—  
It heals those wounds of sin, which mock all human art.

In the world you shall have tribulation," said the Redeemer to his followers; "but in me you have peace." Those whom the Almighty beholds with delight and love, are generally exercised with sharp afflictions. The singularity and greatness of a calamity, increase the sorrow when it is apprehended as a sign of extraordinary guilt in the afflicted, and of severe displeasure in God who sends it; but, to prevent or alleviate the pain that may arise from the apprehension, the Bible records the heavy afflictions that happened to God's chosen servants and peculiar people.

Moses, whom God honored with the most condescending and familiar discoveries of himself, was tried by long afflictions.

David, a man after God's own heart, was a long time hurled to and fro by tempestuous persecution from his unjust and implacable enemies.

Isaiah, who was dignified with such heavenly revelations that his description of the sufferings of Christ seems rather the history of an evangelist than the vision of a prophet, was sawn asunder.

All whose holy example is displayed in the sacred Scriptures, and whose piety shone with the brightest luster, passed along a chequered path to Heaven. Job, and Joseph, and other patriarchs, Elijah, and Daniel, and other prophets; Paul, and the Apostles, were trained for glory and happiness in scenes of earthly trial. Even Jesus was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

Other examples might be furnished, nay, a whole cloud of witnesses is presented to our attention in the revelation of God, that God, by afflictions, testifies his love to his people. Though they "are grievous, and not joyous; yet they afterwards yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness, to those that are exercised thereby," and eventually prepare them for heavenly glory. "Whom the Father loves, he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives." Hebrews 12.5-11. God may be angry with his child, and yet not hate him. He may chastise with his rod—yet love him with his whole heart. While storms and tempests distress a man here below, all may be calm and fair above. God, as a sovereign and a father, may, in the way of his all-governing providence, sweep away a man's estate, remove a valuable friend, allow his reputation to be injured; and yet the design of this may not be revenge, but remedy; not destruction, but discipline. "He chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness." This the Christian has often experienced, and often said, from his heart, in the language of Cowper:

'Tis my happiness below  
Not to live without the cross,  
But the Savior's power to know,  
Sanctifying every loss.

God in Israel sows the seeds  
Of affliction, pain, and toil.  
These spring up, and choke the weeds,  
Which would else overspread the soil.

Trials make the promise sweet.  
Trials give new life to prayer.  
Trials bring me to his feet;  
Lay me low, and keep me there.

Bastards may escape the rod,  
Sunk in earthly, vain delight;  
But the true-born child of God  
Must not, would not, if he might.

"When the grace of an afflicted saint is in exercise, his heart is like a garden of roses or a well of rose-water, which the more they are moved and agitated, the sweeter is the fragrance they exhale."

The gracious design of God in chastening his people, is worthy of attention. Sometimes he does it in order to wean them from the creature, and to bring them to a more entire devotedness to himself. At first, they are often ready to murmur and repine, imagining that they are undone; but, when they find that, in consequence of the failure of the streams, they have been led to the fountain of living waters, they become thankful for the change, and acknowledge it is good for them that they have been afflicted.

How pleasing, in this view, is the promise, "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her; and I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt."

When Moses was wandering, with the Israelites "in the wilderness, in a solitary way, and found no city to dwell in," he familiarized God under the image of a home, and said, "Lord, you have been our refuge and dwelling-place in all generations."

When David was driven from his palace, by the rebellion of Absalom, and was obliged to keep the field, he said, "Be my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort."

A pious female, in the most distressing bereavement, was able to say,  
"You do but take the lamp away,  
 To bless me with unclouded day."

And a godly man, who had endured the wreck of fortune, being asked how he had borne the change so cheerfully, replied; "When I had all these good things, I enjoyed God in all; and, now I am deprived of them, I enjoy all in God."

How many can bear witness that he has made that condition comfortable, which they once deemed insupportable; that, "as the sufferings abound, the consolations abound also;" and that the light of his countenance, the joy of his salvation, the comforts of the Holy Spirit, are effectual substitutes for every deficiency in created good.

Afflictions are God's most effectual means of preservation in the narrow way that conducts to eternal rest. Without this hedge of thorns, on the right hand and left, we would with difficulty keep the way to Heaven. If there be but one gap open how ready we are to find it, and turn out at it. When we become proud, worldly, and carnal, it is then the work of afflictions to reduce us and humble us. Every Christian, as well as Luther, may call afflictions one of his best schoolmasters; and, with David, may say, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now I keep your word."

Many thousand restored sinners may cry, "O healthful sickness! O comfortable sorrows! O gainful losses! O enriching poverty! O happy day that ever I was afflicted!" Not only the green pastures and still waters, but the rod and the staff, they comfort us. Though the word and the Spirit perform the principal work; yet suffering so unbolts the door of the heart, that the word has a more ready entrance. Afflictions show us the darkness of the world and the brightness of Heaven. Afflictions stimulate to perseverance to death, in order to receive the radiant crown of everlasting life.

Afflictions are designed to brighten the graces of God's people—to strengthen their faith and patience. Hence it is said, "The trying of your faith works patience." James 1:2, 3. "Now for a season (if need be) you are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold which perishes, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1.6, 7.

Sometimes God, by afflictions, designs to transfer the affections of his children to a better world, while he enables them to declare; "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

Divine chastisements lead to the exercise of resignation and submission. "Tribulation works patience." "May the will of the Lord be done." Afflictions cause the soul to cleave unto Christ, and to exclaim, "Whom have I in Heaven but you? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever!"

Respecting affliction as a privilege, listen to the language of experienced Christians:

"How good is it (says one) for me to be afflicted; for before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept your word."

"I was at ease (says another,) I doted on my children; they became my idols; but I saw them unexpectedly snatched away, and now I have learned how necessary it is that God alone should be my portion."

"The wheel of business (says a third) ran round so rapidly, that nothing else engaged my attention; but suddenly it stopped. Mortified and dispirited, I retired; I flew to the Bible, and there I read, 'Set your affections on things above, and not on things of the earth.' At once the passage was explained; and my own conduct became the best expositor."

"Gladly (says a fourth) would I have gone through yonder flowery fields, where the refreshing stream delightfully glides along, and where the prospects seem so charming and pleasant. But no, says Providence, you must tread a different path, a path where, to all appearance, nothing but barrenness, briars, and thorns, could be seen. Here (says the Christian) as I advanced, behold the crooked was made straight, the rough places plain, and the wilderness became a fruitful land; while, looking with more discernment on yonder field of pleasure, there I saw that, though thousands entered with such willing feet and happy countenance; yet, behold! the end was indolence and wretchedness, poverty and death. Thus (says the Christian) would I no more desire my own will, but be resigned to him who know what is best for his creatures; and who, though he leads them not in a path of their own choosing—yet conducts them in a right way."

I knew an excellent woman, says one, who was extremely generous to the poor in the days of her affluence. At length, the wicked conduct of her own child reduced her to poverty. She then said to me, "It was once my duty to do good; it is now my duty to suffer ill; but all will be peace and joy hereafter; these light afflictions, I find, are working out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!"

Martin Luther, in his last will, says, "Lord God, I thank you, for you have been pleased to make me a poor and indigent man upon earth. I have neither house, nor land, nor money, to leave behind me. You have given me wife and children, whom I now restore to you. Lord, nourish, teach, and preserve them, as you have me."

During the persecutions of paganism, a Christian was condemned to die for her attachment to Christ. The day before her execution, she fell into the pangs of childbirth, and, crying out in her sufferings, the jailer insulted her, saying, "if you make such a noise today, how will you endure a violent death tomorrow?" To this she replied, "Today I suffer what is ordinary, and have only ordinary assistance; tomorrow I am to suffer what is more than ordinary, and shall hope for more than ordinary assistance." Nor did her hope exceed the Divine promise, "as your day, so shall your strength be."

An aged pious lady, who lost the use of her arm by a fall, said to a friend, smiling, that she had just been considering the circumstances of all her acquaintances, but had not been able to fix upon one who could with less inconvenience sustain such a loss than she could. She, therefore, admired the Divine wisdom and goodness in appointing her to bear that affliction rather than any other person.

A tract distributor, in the fourteenth ward of an American almshouse, met with a poor but pious man, who had once been wealthy, but who thankfully received a tract, and said, "You see, sir, I am poor, but I have seen better days. I am sixty-five years of age. I once had a large property, but it is gone. I had children, too, but they are all dead. A wife, (his tears flowed)—but six months ago she departed to her eternal rest, and on the eve of her departure she sang,

Jesus can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are!

Ala! sir, there is no delusion here. Many would persuade me that faith in Christ is a delusion; but it is not so. Property; it is a delusion; I had it, but it has vanished. My children have vanished—my dear wife is gone—but faith in Jesus, that remains."

Two English gentlemen, Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Weld, were overtaken with a storm on board a vessel on one of the American lakes. In the same vessel was Volney, the French atheist. The storm was violent, and the danger considerable. There were many female as well as male passengers on board, but no one exhibited such strong marks of fearful despair as Volney; throwing himself on the deck, now imploring, now imprecating, the captain, and reminding him that he had engaged to carry him safe to his destination; vainly threatening, in case anything should happen. At last, however, as the probability of their being lost increased, he began loading all his pockets, and every place he could think of, with gold dollars, to the amount of some hundreds; and thus, as he thought, was preparing to swim for his life, should the expected wreck take place. Mr. Bancroft remonstrated with him on the folly of such acts, saying that he would sink like a piece of lead with so great a weight on him; and, at length, as he became so very noisy and unsteady, as to impede the management of the ship, pushed him down the hatchways. Volney soon came up again, having lightened himself of the dollars, and, in the agony of his mind, threw himself upon the deck, exclaiming, with uplifted hands and streaming eyes, "O my God! my God! what shall I do? What shall I do?" This so surprised Bancroft, that he exclaimed, "Well, Mr. Volney! What—you have a God now!" To which Volney replied, with the most trembling anxiety, "O yes! O yes!" The ship, however, arrived safely; and Mr. Bancroft made every company which he went into, echo with this anecdote of Volney's acknowledgment of God.

Here are Christianity and infidelity in contrast. The young Christian, all peace; the philosophic infidel, notwithstanding his boasted wisdom, all terror and alarm. Blessed Gospel, which can thus fill young and tender hearts with peace, in the midst of appalling danger! Reader, are its blessings yours? Oh! never rest until you are cheered by its hopes, and enjoy its heaven-born peace!

While God manifests his gracious designs in the chastisements his hand inflicts, the believer has reason to rejoice, even in affliction. God promises to support his suffering family, and directs them to contemplate a time when all their trials will come to an end. Afflictions are under his control, are sent in mercy, and will end in good. "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God," etc. While they continue, he gives the promise of Divine support; "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Psalm 46. "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." " I, even I, am he who comforts you." Psalm 28.10, 33, 18, 19. "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you; when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you." Isaiah 43.2. "I will never leave you, nor forsake you!" Hebrews 13.5

Precious promises! What more can be desired than the support and presence of your God?

But afflictions are of short duration. So the Apostle expresses it. "They truly, for a few days, chastened us, after their own pleasure." Hebrews 12.9, 10. Only for "a few days." The child soon became a man; and the course of restriction and preparation resulted in a state of maturity. This applies to our heavenly Father, as well as to our earthly ones, and contains an encouraging intimation that the whole season of trial, when opposed to our future being and blessedness, is but a short period. Indeed, the argument is much stronger, in this case, than in the former. Here is some proportion between the days of minority and manhood; but there is none between time and eternity; there is none between the introductory and the final state of Christians. If life is short, and it is a vapor which appears for a little time, and then vanishes away—trouble cannot last long. The Scriptures seem to labor for expressions to diminish any apprehension of length, as an attribute of our grief. You shall have "persecution ten days;" but what are ten days? Weeping may "endure for a night;" but what is a night? I will keep you from the hour of temptation;" but what is an hour? This light affliction is but "for a moment;" but what is a moment? Yet this is not short enough to answer, (shall we say) the impatience of the great Deliverer. "For a small moment have I forsaken you, but with great mercy will I gather you."

Yes, Christians, your trials are short, for eternity is near; and, when you awake to the enjoyment of eternal bliss, how trifling will what you suffered here seem! What will the loss of property, or the loss of reputation, signify then? When, a few moments after dissolution, your spirits look back on this world, how vain a dream will all the scenes of life appear? How diminutive its greatest trials? Oh! when ten thousand ages have passed away, and you look back on what now seems like a sea of trouble, that ocean of affliction will be like the drop of a bucket. Formidable as it once appeared, it will then appear as nothing. Let the expectancy of eternal bliss mingle with the evils of earth; and its heaviest trials will appear as unworthy to be compared with that glory which is shortly to be revealed in you.

O Christians, every day of trial—every hour of conflict, hastens you to the haven of eternal peace. As sometimes the tossing and driving of the tempest may hurry a shattered ship sooner to its harbor than the fairest wind that blows; so the rough winds of worldly sorrow, as well as the peaceful gale, and perhaps more hastily, may urge the Christian mariner to the port where every storm shall cease.

There all the ship's company meet,  
Who sail'd with their Savior beneath.  
With shouting each other they greet,  
And triumph o'er trouble and death.

The voyage of life's at an end.  
The mortal affliction is past.  
The age that in Heaven they spend,  
Forever and ever shall last.

Seep that peaceful port in view! Faith will soon be lost in sight; hope will make way for certainty; time and its shadows be eclipsed by the glories of eternity. The dark night of life will shortly close; affliction's last tempest will be hushed in peace; and the bright morning of eternal day will open on the tranquil and enraptured soul. Then an eternal farewell to chastisement, to grief, and pain. Oh! it will then be seen that the discipline of our gracious Father, has succeeded well in elevating his children to his throne of glory! Precious affliction! Triumphant outcome!

In the floods of tribulation,  
While the billows o'er me roll,  
Jesus whispers consolation,  
And supports my sinking soul.  
Thus, the lion yields me honey:  
From the eater food is given:  
Strengthen'd thus, I still press forward,  
Singing, on my way to Heaven.

Sweet affliction! sweet affliction!  
That brings Jesus to my soul!  
'Mid the gloom, the vivid lightnings  
With increased brightness play:  
'Mid the thornbrake, beauteous flowerets  
Look more beautiful and gay.  
So, in darkest dispensations,  
Does my faithful Lord appear,  
With his richest consolations,  
To re-animate and cheer.

Sweet affliction! sweet affliction!  
Thus to bring my Savior near!  
Floods of tribulation heighten,  
Billows still around me roar,  
Those who know not Christ, you, frighten;  
But my soul defies your power.  
In the sacred page recorded,  
Thus his word securely stands:  
"Fear not; I'm in trouble near you.  
Nothing shall pluck you from my hands."

Sweet affliction! sweet affliction!  
That to such sweet words lays claim!  
All I meet I find assist me,  
In my path to heavenly joy,  
Where, though trials now attend me,  
They can never more annoy!  
Wearing there a weight of glory,  
Still the path I'll ne'er forget,  
But, reflecting how it led me  
To my blessed Savior's seat—  
Cry, affliction! sweet affliction!  
Haste! bring more to Jesus' feet!

REPENTANCE

A penitent sinner cannot but feel sorrow for all his past and present deviations from the law of God. Being led by grace, to the fountain of living waters—he deeply laments his having so long endeavored to hew out broken cisterns which can hold no water. He wonders how he could be so blinded and so hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin—as to seek for satisfaction in the ways of death, and madly dream that his happiness would improve in proportion as he strayed from God

Above all, when he finds that the expiation of his guilt and his redemption from eternal perdition, could be effected by no less expense than by the miraculous incarnation and most bitter death of God's Son—how powerfully does this induce him to sorrow after a godly sort! What carefulness and concern does it work on the heart! What self-indignation! What fear of God! What vehement desires for forgiveness! What revenge and abhorrence of sin! These are the evidences of genuine repentance—these, these are the true evidences of engraftment into Christ. There is joy in Heaven over such repentance as this. God the Father acquiesces with delight, in the soul that is thus brought to his mercy-seat. The Redeemer sees the reward of his sufferings, and is glorified. The Holy Spirit smiles on his own work, hastens to comfort the sinner whom he has subdued, and goes on to accomplish the sanctification he has begun.

Have you, reader, been the subject of the above-mentioned operations? Have you exercised repentance towards God? Much depends upon this; for the Redeemer said, "Except you repent, you shall likewise perish!"

SAVING FAITH

The believer, at the commencement of his course, beheld Christ as a Savior admirably adapted to his circumstances as a sinner. He was guilty—but he relied upon the efficacy of Christ's blood to wash it all away. He was made sensible of his ignorance—and Christ became his light. He was made sensible of his weakness—and Christ became his strength. In short, by the reposing of faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice—Christ is now made unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Therefore, he now rejoices in Christ Jesus, and has no confidence in the flesh. He says, with the Church, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength!"

The best obedience of my hands,  
Dares not appear before your throne;  
But faith can answer your demands,  
By pleading what my Lord has done!

The believer therefore comes to God by Christ; and he looks for acceptance as to his person and service, through Christ; and, while he makes mention of his righteousness alone, he also goes forth in Christ's strength. He feels that without him he can do nothing—that he can stand no longer than Christ holds him; that he cannot walk further than Christ leads him. But at the same time he perceives that the Redeemer possesses an all-sufficiency; and he believes that while without him he can do nothing, he equally believes that through Christ's strengthening him, he can do all things. As he begins his course in this way, so he carries it on. However advanced he may be in the divine life—yet he acknowledges himself to be an unprofitable servant; and looks for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Do you believe on the Son of God? Have you a proper knowledge of his real character? Do you regard him as the image of the invisible God, the grand subject of ancient prophecy, the only atonement of human guilt, and the perfect pattern of moral excellence; the way, the truth, and the life?

Is this your reply?—On every earthly object I can close my eyes, if to me it is given "to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." To every earthly object I can close my heart, if to me it is given "to know the riches of the glory of this mystery, Christ, in me, the hope of glory."

Do you rely on the honor and the grace of Jesus, for salvation and eternal life? The Savior is most worthy of your firmest reliance. In trusting in Christ, you lean not on a broken reed, but on the rock of ages, on the pillar and the ground of truth.

Is your reliance on Christ partial? Is it accompanied with confidence in your excellencies and good works? Or is Jesus all your hope? "We are the true circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh."

Has your faith its proper influence?

True faith purifies the heart. Can a man believe that Christ gave himself for us in order to redeem us from all iniquity—and still continue in sin? Can a man believe that "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"—and indulge the lustful propensities in his soul?

True faith overcomes the world. The eye that looks to celestial splendor, will not be dazzled with the vain pomp of this world; nor will the afflictions of a moment render that heart whose treasure is in Heaven, a fountain of tears.

Faith works by love. The perception of Christ's excellence directs the affections to him; and his dying love produces in the heart the most fervent charity, which constrains the Christian to do good and forget not to be fruitful in every good work.

REGENERATION

The believer, having obeyed the calls of the gospel to repentance and faith, is now a "new creature."

All by nature are "dead in trespasses and sins." They are "far from God, and alienated from the life of God;" the "servants of sin," who follow the course of this world. But "if any man is in Christ," in a covenant relation to him by faith—then "he is a new creature; old things have passed away, and all things have become new."

But in what sense? Is it a physical sense, or moral one. New physical faculties are not given him; but his faculties have new qualities and applications. They receive a new bias, and are engaged in new and different views and pursuits.

The understanding is enlightened, and has different ideas and sensations of spiritual things.

The desires are fixed on God and holiness.

The will is submissive to the word and will of God; and the renewed person enjoys peculiar satisfaction and delight in whatever is heavenly and divine. "In simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he now has his conduct in the world." He now . . .  
hates sin,  
conquers the world,  
obeys the divine precepts,  
loves all his brethren in the Lord,  
and pursues holiness in the fear of God.

Blessed change! Who is the author of it?

Creation is a work of omnipotence, and belongs exclusively to God. This is not denied by any. Men will allow that God alone can make a blade of grass—and that in him they live, and move, and have their being—and yet, with astonishing inconsistency, they would be their own saviors, and derive from themselves that spiritual life which is emphatically called the "life of God," not only to show its resemblance, but its origin.

We are said to "live in the Spirit; to walk in the Spirit; to be born of the Spirit." Apart from the Spirit's influence, all remain in the state of sin; and if you see anything like a state of profession, which appears to argue the possibility of the approach of one who is unconverted, to the character of one who is a Christian—the ornaments which are around him are but like the flowers which you have sometimes seen scattered around a corrupting corpse. They may veil the terrors and deformity of death; they may shed a transient beauty over the scene before you, but they can do no more, and they leave it a corpse still.

Christians are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man—but of God." Do you not, then, perceive that everything which assists to perfect a Christian's character is truly and essentially divine; that every grace which flourishes in his heart is implanted there by the power of the Almighty; that every principle which is formed within him, and breathes a consecrated glory, is an emanation from Heaven? The Alpha and Omega—the beginning and the ending—the first and the last, of a Christian's character—is the sovereign mercy of God; and to that mercy, in time and eternity—he may well ascribe all the praise!

UNION to the Savior

The Christian is one who has a relation to Christ; not a professed relation, but a real relation—not a nominal relation, but a vital relation. Yes, a very peculiar and pre-eminent relation, rising above every other that can be mentioned.

This relationship is spiritual in its nature, and never ending in its duration. It derives the possession and continuance of every enjoyment from Christ.

Beware of a Christianity without Christ! It is a stream without a fountain; a branch without a living root; a body without a soul. This union is strikingly expressed by the Savior; "I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing." Also, by the Apostle; "And you are complete in him." It is from him alone that strength can be derived to subdue the corruptions of our nature. Faith in the Great Head of the Church engages the assistance of the Holy Spirit on behalf of believers, without whose special influence it is impossible for the soul to do anything effectually in point of duty, or to oppose any sin with success.

Reader, are you thus related to Christ? If so, you are the subject of all those promises of comfort here, and of glorious happiness hereafter, which he has given to all his disciples.

Love to Christ's DOCTRINE

The true Christian is a lover of Christ's doctrine.

You can only be Christians, by holding the particular doctrines of Christianity—and these are to be found only in the Scriptures. There a Christian searches for them; there he kneels before the oracles of divine truth there he takes up those principles, and says, "These, however mysterious they may be to my reason, however humiliating to the pride of my heart—these I take upon the authority of Him who has revealed them. I sit, with Mary, at Christ's feet. I pray to be led by his Spirit, into all truth.

Hence the believer becomes the subject of all those various emotions towards his Master, and his Master's work, which, from its nature, it is necessitated to inspire.

The divinity of Christ becomes the object of his worship;  
the condescension of Christ becomes the object of his gratitude;  
the example of Christ becomes the object of his imitation;  
the atonement of Christ becomes the object of his trust;  
the glory of Christ becomes the object of his expectation;  
the reign of Christ becomes the object of his joy;  
the coming of Christ becomes the object of his hope.  
  
Unto those who believe, Jesus is precious!

Christ the Believer's PATTERN

The Christian is a copier of Christ's example. Without this, in vain you contend for the truth, and talk of your regard to him. "He who says he abides in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

Christians are said to be predestined to be conformed to his image. They are described now as "beholding, in a mirror, his glory," and as being "changed in the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." Jesus, indeed, had the Spirit, without measure; but the believer possesses the same Spirit; for "if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." You must, therefore, if you are Christians, resemble him who went about doing good; who said, "Zeal of your house has consumed me."

The example of Christ is in itself preeminently beautiful and lovely. His meekness, gentleness, humility, compassion, and universal sweetness of disposition, are not less distinguished than his greatness and glory.

Solomon, beholding his character, in distant vision, exclaimed, He is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely!

David, in prophetic view of the excellence of his life, exclaimed, You are fairer than the sons of men.

God the Father, beholding him with infinite delight, announced his character to the world, with a voice from Heaven: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

To these divine declarations, all true believers have subjoined their Amen. O Christians, there is nothing you have more to bewail than your lack of conformity to him. You know that, hereafter, you shall be like him completely, for you shall "see him as he is"—but there is nothing you now pray for with more earnestness than, O that I might be more like Jesus!

Thus the character of a Christian, in its most important and essential features, has been briefly described. And much of their blessedness is visible even in that description. For is it not a glorious and unspeakable transformation, to be translated from the kingdom of Satan, into the kingdom of God's dear Son? All who really experience this change, perceive its greatness, and adore its Author. They despise the trifles of earth, and look for a more enduring substance in Heaven!

The heirs of Heaven may well forego  
The world's applause, nor feel the loss.  
The gold is theirs, and well they know  
The world's applause is worthless dross!

Spiritual Blessings Comprehensive

How vast the treasure we possess!  
How rich your bounty, King of grace!  
This world is ours, and worlds to come!  
Earth is our lodge, and Heaven our home!

Oh! glorious portion of the saints!  
Let faith suppress our sore complaints;  
And tune our hearts and tongues to sing  
Our bounteous God, our sovereign King!

In describing the privileges of the believer, it is impossible to know where to commence, and where to close. When we speak of them, we seem as though we stood at the entrance of a fair and beautiful garden, within whose limits we cannot move a step without plucking flowers, and beholding fruits on the tree of life, whose very "leaves are for the healing of the nations."

Hence says an apostle, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to came; all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's!"

The Bible tells us that some have their portion in this life. What this portion is, it is very possible to express and describe. Solomon, a master of all history, all observation, and all experience, tells us that it is "vanity and vexation of spirit." But there is attached to the portion of the Christian—eternity, immensity! Therefore it is said, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into, the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love him."

The privileges of the saints are present and future; or they are distinguished by grace and glory. David refers to the former, when he says, "You shall guide me by your counsel"—he refers to latter, when he says, "And you shall afterwards receive me to glory." He refers to both, when he exclaims, "Oh! how great is your goodness which you have laid up for those who fear you; which you have wrought for those who trust in you." Here he reminds you, Christians, not only what God has laid up, but what he has laid out; he reminds you not only of what the Christian has in reversion, but in possession; not only what he has in expectation, but in experience. Though, at present, he does not rest from his labors—yet he finds a rest in them; though he has not arrived at the promised land, he has reached Elim, where are twelve fountains of water, and seventy palm trees; and, in the desert, he often receives clusters of grapes, from Eschol.

Behold the Christian in the performance of religious duties—behold him in reading the Scriptures—see him in his closet—in the house of God—at the table of the Lord—and behold him on a dying bed, and you have a striking proof that, living or dying,

The men of grace have found  
Glory begun below;  
Celestial fruits, on earthly ground,  
From faith and hope do grow.

God, the Portion of His People

It is the privilege of Christians to say, "For this God is our God forever and ever! He will be our guide even to the end!" Psalm 48:14

The believer is also called an heir of God, which implies that he is entitled, through grace, to all that the Infinite Jehovah possesses, so far as shall be needful to make him completely and eternally happy.

Christians, rejoice that God is yours! All of His glorious attributes and perfections are yours!

His mercy is yours . . .  
to save you,  
to remove your guilt, and  
to sympathize with you in times of distress.

His wisdom is yours . . .  
to provide for you,  
to counsel you, and  
to direct all things for your good.

His omnipotence is yours . . .  
to guard and protect you in the hour of danger,  
to support you in every conflicting scene, and  
to preserve you unto His heavenly kingdom.

His goodness is yours . . .  
to supply all your needs,  
to enrich you with the best of blessings, and  
to grant you unfading happiness in the mansions of glory.

His omniscience is yours . . .  
to behold you in every situation, adverse or prosperous;  
to foresee all the attacks your adversaries intend to make upon you;  
and to provide for your present and everlasting security.

His omnipresence is yours, therefore He has said:  
"In six troubles I will be with you, and in seven I will not forsake you."  
"I will never leave you nor forsake you."  
"Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

His justice is yours . . .  
to fulfill all covenant engagements,  
to reward you with a dwelling-place in the realms of bliss,  
to punish all those hostile powers incessantly opposing you.

His immutability is the rock of your security, and the source of your unspeakable joy!

His faithfulness is yours, as the pledge for the accomplishment of all those promises which are exceeding great and precious to those that believe.

Such, Christians, is your happiness. Rejoice in it, and say, "The Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in Him!"

How great is the condescension of God, in becoming the eternal portion of such worthless worms!

God is . . .  
an infinite Being,  
without bounds to His essence,  
wonderful in His actions,  
inconceivable in His purposes,  
and inexpressible in His attributes.

He is . . .  
infinitely more than worlds in himself;  
too high for our speculations,  
and too majestic for our descriptions!  
  
Though He seems at an immeasurable distance from us; and reason seems to prevent fellowship between this glorious Being and such sinful creatures as we are—yet He is the God of all His redeemed people!

Here then comes in the incarnate Word of God, to soften the dazzling splendor of his greatness. The beautiful testimony concerning him, throws a sweet and sacred mildness round his throne, that its radiance may not be too much for us. "Though the Lord be high—yet he has respect to the lowly."

Remember, Christians, that the infinite grandeur and majesty of God, as well as his astonishing condescension, will answer many of your inquiries, and remove some of your doubts.

For instance, you ask: How can it be true that God should so love a world so sinful and insignificant as this, (which, one would have thought, would have been lost in the immensity of his works)—as to send his only begotten Son into it, to save lost and fallen man? How can it be true?

The answer is plain: Because "he is the high and lofty One;" and, in his eye, one world is no more insignificant than a thousand, and a thousand no more important than one; and because it is his glory to pity the fallen and miserable; and "to revive the heart of the humble, and the spirit of the contrite ones."

Again, you ask: How can it be true that, when overwhelmed with distress and fear, we should enter our closet, and give vent to the fullness of our hearts—how can it be true that the groans and tears, the cries and breathings, of worthless wretched individuals like us, should rise into the ears of the Lord Almighty, and procure any deliverance or answer of peace?

The answer is plain: Because "he is the high and lofty One," in whose presence a thousand archangels, in the Heaven of heavens, are really no more than the most base, groveling, struggling soul in a cottage of dust; and because it is one essential exercise of his greatness, to regard contrite desire; and it is one of his favorite employments, "to lift the poor out of the dunghill;" "to say, to the fearful heart, be strong!"

Again, is this your language: "Oh! what shall we do when God rises up to judge us?" How can it be true that we should ever pass through "the valley of the shadow of death," with any composure, or bear to stand before his naked tribunal, with any confidence or hope?

The answer is plain: Because He can so calm your minds, that you shall lose a sense of all the grandeur and awfulness of divine majesty and power, so far as they would be distressing to you, in the mildness and tenderness of all the most familiar and endearing character and relations in which he stands to you; so that you shall feel no more terror at the change of worlds, than a sheep would feel at being conducted, by the shepherd's hand, from one pasture to another, or a child at being removed, by a smiling father, from one room of his dwelling-house to another.

Oh! the happiness of the Christian, in having the Lord for his God! What blessedness is connected with this delightful appropriation! You are my God, and I will praise you! You are my God, and I will exalt you! And, believers, there is a foundation for this appropriation. There is nothing else that is really your own. Your wealth is not your own—your children are not your own—your souls are not your own—but God is your own! You may say, with the church, "God, even our own God, shall bless us."

Christians! This God is really your own, and entirely your own, and eternally your own!

This appropriation enables one in distress to approach God with boldness and confidence; for then he deals with him on the ground of an interest in him. Yet this is not always an easy thing. There are many who are afraid of this language of appropriation, and yet it belongs to them; they conclude they have no part nor lot in the matter, when, at the same time, their heart is right with God.

There are two senses in which Christians are able to use this language.

For surely, first, you can say that you hope that he is your God. This hope you may have to war with numerous doubts and fears, but still you would not give it up for a thousand worlds. It may not at present be able to give you full relief; but then it ascends to the throne of grace, and makes you familiar with the foot of the cross.

This hope is like laying hold of a branch, just sufficient to keep your head above water, to preserve you from sinking, until some more effectual assistance be brought to extricate you. It is like a ray of light thrown athwart the darkness, just sufficient to show you that it is the darkness of the chamber, and not the darkness of Hell, in which you are placed.

And there is another sense in which this language can be used. You can say that he is your God, by preference and submission. The ambassador of a certain nation applied to the Romans to be admitted as their allies. They were refused. Then said they, "We will be your subjects, for we will not be your enemies." Is not this the case with you? You can say, "Lord, I am not my own—I will not be for another lord. I am yours—save me! If you refuse to acknowledge the relation, (and I deserve to be refused as a friend,) Oh! make me as one of your hired servants. Lord, what will you have me to do?"

Christians, you are wishing to say, "O my Savior-God!" Why, you have said it; and if the preceding language is sincere, you have effectually said the Lord is your God and portion, and therefore you may hope in him.

My God, my portion and my love,  
My everlasting all,  
I've none but you in Heaven above,  
Or on this earthly ball.

What empty things are all the skies,  
And this inferior clod  
There's nothing here deserves my joys,  
There's nothing like my God!

Christ the Portion of Believers

Christians! The Redeemer with all His glorious salvation, in all His offices, and under all the characters which He sustains—is yours! You may say, with the fullest assurance, "My beloved is mine—and I am His!" You are the objects of the blessed Redeemer's particular care, given into His hands by His and your Father, to be saved by Him . . .  
  from the guilt and dominion of sin,  
  from all the powers of darkness, and  
  from the vengeance of eternal fire!

He executes all of His offices on your behalf:  
  
As a Priest, He has made an atonement for your sin, and reconciled you to God.

As a Prophet, He teaches you all that you need for life and godliness, from His Word.

As a King, He reigns in His Church, and rules in the heart of every believer.

He is a Physician to heal the diseased.

He is a Shepherd to feed and guide His flock.

He is a Counselor to direct them in all the intricate paths of life.

He is a Friend that sticks closer than a brother, and whose friendship is unchangeable and everlasting.

He is an Advocate to plead His people's cause.

He is a Redeemer to emancipate their souls from sin's bondage.

He is . . .  
a Sun to enlighten you,  
a Shield to defend you,  
a Door to admit you to Heaven,  
a Tree for fruit to nourish you,  
a Balm of Gilead to heal your soul maladies!

Well may Christ be called "the Consolation of Israel," for . . .  
His unchangeable grace and mercy,  
His perfect obedience unto sin-atoning death,  
His constant divine intercession,  
are replete with comfort to the lost and undone sinner.

By the power of Christ's grace . . .  
our unbelief receives a death-wound,  
our distracting fears are hushed to silence and  
we are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory,  
while in ecstasy we exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world!"

I have found him whom my soul loves!

I've found the pearl of greatest price!

My Christ is first, my Christ is last, my Christ is all in all!

Look, Christians, to your Redeemer, and listen to the gracious words that proceed from his mouth:

"As the Father has loved me—so have I loved you."

"You are my friends, if you do what I command you."

"The Father himself loves you, because you have loved me!"

"I am the Good Shepherd. My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish—ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand."

What more could your Lord say? Here he opens his heart to you, and declares that no good thing will he withhold from those who are united to him. Oh! contemplate the great object of your devout desires, and look to the glorious Friend who utters these promises, and guides your feeble steps.

Are your minds depressed? The chief Shepherd is always near you; and he who offered his life for you, will undoubtedly make your present and eternal welfare his care. Rest your faith on the Savior's dying love for you, and then you can trust him for all the darksome things on this side of the grave—and all will appear radiant beyond it. If occasionally you sow in sorrow—then you will undoubtedly reap in joy.

The Redeemer is your portion, and he has said,  
"My grace is sufficient for you."  
"Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world."  
The power of Christ is as infinite, as his love is immeasurable!

"All power is given unto him, in Heaven and in earth." The kingdoms of nature, of providence, and of grace, are totally under his control. He is "the mighty God," the Creator and upholder of all things. With what confidence may the people of Christ repose on such an all-powerful Friend! There are no difficulties into which they can be plunged, from which he cannot extricate them. There are no enemies who can effectually contend with them—for Jesus is by their side to protect them.

Are they afflicted with sickness? He can say to the pestilence, "Go!" and it goes.

Are they oppressed with poverty? He can send his ravens to feed them.

Are they immured in prisons? He can commission his angels to deliver them.

Are they in perils of water? The winds and the waves obey his voice.

Are they exposed to ravenous beasts? He can stop the mouths of lions.

Are they cast into the burning furnace? He can quench the burning of fire.

In spiritual concerns is he less mighty to save? Hear his own declaration: "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish—ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand!" Hear the declaration of his holy apostle, Paul: "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." What comfortable declarations to the people of Christ!

Satan may desire to have them, that he may sift them as wheat—but stronger is he who is with them, than he who is against them. In themselves they are weak and ready to fall; but underneath them are the everlasting arms. He who loved them and gave himself for them—is able to save them to the uttermost! He "will keep them by his power, through faith unto salvation."

O Christian, every attractive excellence meets in the Redeemer. His heart overflows with compassion to all his people; for in his pity and in his love he redeemed them. Though he is invested with infinite majesty—still he is meek and lowly in heart. The compassion which dwelt in his heart when dying upon the cross, is still existing there. Your friend is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever."

The progress of time changes man; but the revolution of eternal ages will not alter the compassion of God, who is of one mind; and who can turn him? Read his life, mark his conduct, behold him wounded, bleeding, and dying; then listen to his heart, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" and it will be acknowledged that,

His heart is made of tenderness,  
His affections melt with love.

In accordance with this representation, the Redeemer is said to nourish and cherish the church, "For we are members of his body, and of his flesh, and of his bones." Beautiful and apt representation!

You naturally feel interested in the welfare of your body. You are concerned . . .  
to supply it with food,  
to shield it from injury and pain,  
and to promote its comfort and welfare.

This assiduous and anxious care is declared to be like the care of the Redeemer to nourish and cherish his redeemed people—but how faint the comparison! With a greater fondness than that of a parent bird fostering her young; with more than the tenderness of a compassionate mother nourishing her newborn infant; with a love stronger than that self-love which induces a man to feel for his own body—does Christ care for his church, and feed and bless his flock!

Believers are the peculiar property of Christ. "If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord."

We are His, through the purchase of His blood—we were bought with an inestimable price! Delightful thought! May the believer say, "I am the Lord's!" What more can my soul desire, in order to secure its happiness? I am the Lord's—delightful words, as sweet as the harmony of Heaven! Thousands of times might the charming announcement be made, and yet . . .  
not all its power is felt,  
not all its worth is comprehended,  
nor all its glory seen!

I am the Lord's! Then welcome . . .  
poverty with all its toils,  
persecution with all its frowns,  
labors with all their arduousness,  
death which will end all my conflicts here, and lead me home to Him whose I am—who loved me, and gave Himself for me!

I am the Lord's! Then against me death can have no power, and for me Satan can produce no claim. I am washed in the blood of Christ, sanctified by his Spirit, stamped with his glorious image, and shall never, never perish!

I am the Lords! Then while eternal ages last, the diadem of glory shall glitter on my brow.

Jesus Christ is the believer's portion—his Redeemer—his brother—his friend! How wonderful the love which applies such endearing names for the comfort of the chief of sinners.

All that is valuable in earthly friendships, and infinitely more—is comprehended in Jesus' friendship to his redeemed people. Earthly friendships are mutual expressions of love, by which each receives, and each gives.

But Oh! how different is the friendship of him who died for us, when we were his enemies by wicked works.

The Savior is an Almighty Friend—but the dearest friends on earth are frail as the flowers of the field. When they have a willing heart—they have often a feeble hand. But Jesus' means are not thus limited. When earthly friends can only weep with those that weep—this Almighty Friend can drive those sorrows away; and when all other friends fail you—he will show himself "a friend that sticks closer than a brother."

O Christians, is Christ your Friend? Is Christ your all? Are you united to him, and he to you? If so, then immense and countless blessings, for time and eternity, result from such a union. Here is enough to alleviate your distress, and to heighten your happiness. This is a sovereign antidote to every human ill. This exalted privilege is calculated to render even mourners happy. Possessed of this privilege, you may calmly look forward to a world where the friendship and love of Jesus shall be enjoyed in higher perfection, through eternal ages. Yes, and in every future season of distress—when the earthly frame shall give symptoms of its decay—in the valley of the shadow of death—amid all the solemnities of judgment, Christ, your friend, will be with you, with all his power, and love, and consolation—as a friend that sticks closer than a brother!

Poor, weak, and worthless, though I am,  
I have a rich Almighty Friend!  
Jesus, the Savior, is his name,  
He freely loves, and without end!

He ransomed me from Hell, with blood,  
And by his power my fears controlled,  
He found me wandering far from God,  
And brought me to his holy fold.

He cheers my heart, my needs supplies,  
And says that I shall shortly be,  
Enthroned with him above the skies,  
Oh! what a friend is Christ to me!

The Preciousness of Christ—Illustrated by Christian Experience

Jesus was precious to the great Apostle of the Gentiles, for he said, "I count all things but loss, that I may win Christ!"

An Italian confessor said, when tempted to forsake his Lord, "Let their money perish with them, who esteem all the gold in the world worth one day's society with Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit."

A martyr once said, "My wife and children are dearly beloved by me, so as not to be bought from me for all the wealth of Bavaria; but for the love of my Lord God I will willingly forsake them."

Another sufferer, when asked if he loved not his wife and family, replied, "Yes; if the world were gold, and mine to dispose of, I would give it to live with them, though it were but in prison; yet my soul and Christ are dearer to me than all."

Once, a poor aged Christian was observed making her scanty meal of bread and water. Expressing the warm gratitude of her heart, because the Savior was hers, she said, "All this--and Jesus too!"

It is related that a gentleman once took an acquaintance to the top of his house, to show him the extent of his possessions. "There," said he, waving his hand about, "that is my estate!" Then pointing to a great distance on one side, "Do you see that farm? That is mine." Then pointing to the other side, "Do you see that house? That belongs to me."

His friend said, "Do you see that little village, yonder? There lives a poor woman in that village, who can say more than all this."

"What can she say?"

"She can say, Christ is mine!"

Here, then, is abundant proof that "unto those who believe, Christ is precious."

A lady of wealth and piety, who had lately met with heavy afflictions, and was expecting more, related some of her sorrows to a poor but pious woman, whose cottage she entered.

The poor Christian, taking the lady to a closet, said, "Do you see anything?" The lady replied, "No." She took her to another closet, and repeated the question, to which, with some surprise, the lady again answered, "No."

"Then, Madam," said the poor woman, "you see all I have in this world. But why should I be unhappy? I have Christ in my heart, and Heaven in my eye. I have the unfailing word of promise, that bread shall be given me, and water shall be sure, while I stay a little longer in this valley of tears; and, when I die, a bright crown of glory awaits me, through the merits of Christ."

No man was tortured at the stake with more cruelty than the holy martyr, John Lambert. They burnt him with a slow fire, by inches. When his legs were burnt off, and his thighs were mere stumps in the fire--they threw his poor body upon pikes, and lacerated his broiling flesh with their axes. But God was with him in the midst of the flame, and supported him in all the anguishing torture. Just before he expired, he lifted up his hands, all flaming with fire, and cried out to the people, with his dying voice, "None but Christ! None but Christ!" He was at last beaten down into the fire, and expired.

James Owen, a pious minister in Shrewsbury, being asked, when on his death-bed, whether he would have some of his friends sent for, to keep him company, replied, "My fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ; and he who is not satisfied with that company, does not deserve it."

Archbishop Usher and Dr. Preston, two eminently pious and learned men, were very intimate, and often met to converse on learning and general subjects; when it was very common with the good archbishop to say, "Come, doctor, let us say something about Christ, before we part."

A good old minister, who died in America, in 1807, at nearly ninety years of age, had lost his recollection, and been long incapable of engaging in public services. Towards the last days of his life, he was moved to the house of a beloved son, where he was attended on by the most filial affection. On the evening before his death, a neighboring minister visited him, but he did not know him. Being told who he was, he answered, "No, I do not remember any such person." His beloved son was introduced to him; but no, he did not know him, "I do not remember that I have a son," said the good old man. In short, his memory was so impaired, that he knew none of his friends or family about him.

At last he was asked, "Do you not remember the Lord Jesus Christ?" On this his eyes brightened; and, attempting to lift his hands in the hour of death, he exclaimed, "Oh! yes, I do, I do! I remember the Lord Jesus Christ! He is my Lord and my God, by whom I hope to be saved!"

The Christian, a Temple of the Holy Spirit

The Bible represents the followers of Christ as preparing for a state of infinite glory and happiness, and as being made fit for the inheritance the saints in light. In preparing them for such felicity, a divine power is employed. No earthly power can cause them to resemble Jesus. No earthly power ripens them for eternal bliss. These blessed effects are ascribed by the Word of God, to the agency of the Holy Spirit.

In the scriptures, the Christian is described as the temple the Holy Spirit, by a mode of representation peculiarly forcible and expressive: "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?" 1 Corinthians 3:16. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" 1 Corinthians 6:19. "In Christ the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." Ephesians 2:21-22

It is true that the operations of the Holy Spirit, considered as the means of regeneration, spiritual comfort, etc., are mysterious; and, therefore, it cannot be stated how the Spirit comes down to influence the minds of men. "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it comes, and where it goes—so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Yet, mysterious as this subject is, it is known by the happy effects produced, that the Spirit exists and operates in the soul of every Christian who is quickened by the Spirit, and to live in the power of the Spirit. Therefore this doctrine is not to be renounced on account of its being incomprehensible to man; for the same mysteriousness characterizes the works of nature and the dispensations of Heaven.

The influences of the Holy Spirit are still poured out, and are most important to effect the salvation of the soul. Christians, meditate with delight on those influences.

He is a Spirit of REPENTANCE. When he comes, "he will reprove the world of sin;" and well was this office fulfilled on the memorable day, when, from the lips of thousands, the simultaneous cry was heard, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" It is his work to convince of the evil and danger of sin, and to produce that "godly sorrow" for sin, which forms an integral part of that "repentance which is unto life."

He is the Spirit of FAITH—that faith which is the only instrument of justification and salvation.

He is the Spirit of POWER—hence we read of being "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power."

He is the Spirit of KNOWLEDGE—he "guides us unto all truth."

He is "the Spirit of WISDOM and revelation in the knowledge of Christ"—"enlightening the eyes of the understanding," that Christians may "know what is the hope of their calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints;" by which they may be "able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the length and breadth, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge, that they may be filled with all the fullness of God."

He is the Spirit of HOLINESS—he bears the name of Holy. He leads and assists men to "crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts;" and the " fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth."

He is the Spirit of LOVE—he unites all Christians, and induces them to "keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." Ephesians 4:3-6

He is t Spirit of COMFORT—he is emphatically called the Comforter. He heals the soul, wounded and distressed by sin. He diffuses life and joy throughout the whole man.

Hence Mr. Hervey says, "Observe some beautiful and copious river. How it exhilarates the country, and fructifies soil through which it passes—bestows a thousand conveniences, and yields a thousand delights! So the Comforter, dwelling in the heart, gives such charming views of Christ and his unsearchable riches, as gladden the conscience, and make us truly happy. Hence, as from an inexhaustible source, true holiness and every spiritual good flow. This will raise our desires far above earthly, sensual, transitory things; even as David's thoughts were raised far above the shepherd's scrip, when he sat exalted on the throne of Israel."

He comforts every heavy heart,  
By sin and sorrow pressed.  
He to the dead can life impart,  
And to the weary rest!

His sweet communion charms the soul,  
And gives true peace and joy,  
Which Satan's power cannot control,  
Nor all his wiles destroy.

He comforts where distress abounds,  
Makes all the conscience clean,  
And heals, with balm from Jesus' wounds,  
The mortal wounds of sin!

He is the Spirit of ANTICIPATION—for, while he enables you to exclaim, "Abba, Father," you know that you are "heirs—heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus!" You look beyond the shadows of the grave, to bright and ineffable glory—to the incorruptible inheritance, undefiled, and that fades not away.

In short, the Spirit is given, to inspire in the minds of men, all those emotions by which they may be . . .  
changed in their state,  
dignified in their character,  
purified in their conduct,  
elevated in their hopes, and  
brightened and glorified in their future and everlasting state!

Happy, happy Christians, who are made the habitation of God, through the Spirit!

Bear witness, O Christians, to the NECESSITY of the Spirit's influence. Necessity! Yes, for, independent of His saving and sanctifying influence—there can be no spiritual joy on earth, and no prospect of any beyond the grave.

More, the truth must be plainly stated: nothing can remove the darkness of the soul, correct its disorders, restore its health, brighten its hope, renovate its course, produce its salvation—short of the saving influence of the Spirit. Grant that men are naturally carnal and dead in sin—and the truth will come home to your minds with all its force. Yes, the channel must be dry—until the showers of the Spirit descend. The moral wilderness must be barren—until the Spirit be given from above. The bones in the valley will remain cold and lifeless—until the Spirit breathes upon them. The world will remain in ignorance and sin—until the Spirit is poured out from on high. "Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty."

Means are useful, and must be employed—yet they will be of no effect, if unblessed by the Spirit. Ministers might address men, with all the stores of learning, in all the strains of harmony, with all the soothings of affection, with all the yearnings of pity, with all the vehemence of zeal—and yet all will be in vain, without the influence of the Spirit!

Vain the cathedral pomp—the solemn chant—the glowing eloquence! It will all resemble the flowers that deck a corpse—the sun-beam shining on a ruin—the gaudy escutcheon floating over the tomb!

The Atonement of Christ, a Source of Joy

The two great ends of public justice, are the glory of God, and, in connection with it, the general good of his creatures. It is essentially necessary to the attainment of these ends, that the authority of the government of God should be supported, in all its extent as inviolably sacred—that one jot or one tittle should no wise pass from the law—that no sin, of any kind in any degree, should appear as venial—that, if any sinner is pardoned, it should be in such a way as, while, displays the Divine mercy, shall at the same time testify Divine abhorrence of his sins.

All this is gloriously effected in the gospel, by means of ATONEMENT—by substitution of a voluntary Surety, even of him whose name is Emmanuel, to bear the curse of the law, in the place of the guilty. In his substitutionary atonement, we see displayed, in a manner unutterably affecting and solemn—the holy purity of the Divine nature; for no testimony can be conceived more impressive of infinite abhorrence of sin, than the sufferings and death of the Son of God!

In the Atonement of Christ, we also behold the immutable justice of the Divine government, inflicting the righteous penalty of a violated law. It is to be considered as a fixed principle of the Divine government, that sin must be punished; that, if the sinner is pardoned—it must be in a way that marks and atones for the evils of his offence. This is effected by substitutionary atonement; and, as far as we can judge, could not be effected in any other way.

In inflicting the sentence against transgression, on the voluntary and all-sufficient Surety—Jehovah, while he clears the sinner, does not clear his sins. Although clothed with the thunders of vindictive justice against transgression—he wears, to the transgressor, the smile of reconciliation and peace. He dispenses the blessings of mercy from the throne of his holiness; and, while exercising grace to the guilty, he appears in the character, equally lovely and venerable, of the sinner's friend—and sin's eternal foe.

In this way, then, all the ends of public justice are fully answered. The law retains its complete unmitigated perfection. It is "magnified and made honorable." The dignity and authority of the divine government are maintained, and even elevated. All the perfections of the Deity are gloriously illustrated, and exhibited in sublime harmony. While the riches of mercy are displayed for the encouragement of sinners to turn to God, the solemn lesson is at the same time taught, by a most convincing example, that rebellion cannot be persisted in with impunity; and motives are thus addressed to the fear of evil, as well as to the desire of good.

Such a view of the Divine Being is presented in the cross, as is precisely calculated to inspire and maintain (to maintain, too, a power which will increase in influence the more closely and seriously the view is contemplated) the two great principles of a holy life—the love and the fear of God—filial attachment, freedom and confidence, combined with humble reverence and holy dread.

Consolation Arising from the Adaptation of the Gospel to the Circumstances of Man

Viewing man as a fallen creature—the gospel is a system, and the only system, adapted to his case. Its divine origin invests it with all the authority which a system adapted to such a purpose requires, while the proofs of its divinity irresistibly commend it to man's belief. The more he contemplates it, the more he perceives its precious adaptation to his dreadful state. The gospel is . . .  
light, for the darkness of his reason,  
peace, for the tumult of his conscience,  
joy, for the anguish of his mind,  
hope, for the gloom of his despair.

Is he guilty? The gospel presents a sufficient Savior, an atoning sacrifice, and a forgiving God.

Is he impure? The gospel opens up for him a fountain for sin and for uncleanness—a hallowed flood supplied from the Redeemer's cross, where the vilest sinner may wash from his heinous pollution.

Is he alienated from God--at an infinite distance from the only source of happiness and forgiveness? Here is a medium of approach, a way of access to the thrice holy God. Here the middle wall of partition is broken down—the Alpine elevations of his guilt are leveled to the dust. Here the prodigal returns, is freely received, fully forgiven, elevated to a place in his heavenly Father's family, and never lost from his heavenly Father's heart.

Is he the victim of ignorance and error? Here he receives the lessons of a heavenly prophet—the Spirit of God becomes his kind instructor. Here the untutored savage is made wiser than the learned sage, "wise unto salvation!"

Does he feel himself the subject of passions that lead him continually astray from God? The same Spirit becomes the inhabitant of his bosom . . .  
  to subdue his passions,  
  to curb his lusts,  
  to control his will, and  
  to sanctify the nature He has first renewed, and which shall finally be glorified with Christ.

In every point of view, the gospel meets his case!

Is he a sinner? It offers pardon!

Is he a debtor? It gives him a full payment of his dept!

Is he a captive? It gives him liberty.

Is he fallen into utter depravity? It elevates him to God's throne, and constitutes him "a king and a priest unto God."

Is he thirsty? It is a river of life.

Is he weary? It is a sweet repose.

Is he ignorant? It is a divine instructor.

Is he spiritually diseased? It is immortal health and vigor to his soul.

Is he dying? It is eternal life.

This is the prevailing character of its proclamations, the general style of its appeal:

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live." Isaiah 55:1-3

"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life!" Revelation 22:17

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30

"Turn! Turn! Why will you die?"

Yes, in the gospel—the law is fulfilled, justice is atoned, the divine perfections are harmonized in man's redemption.

The Inexhaustible Fullness of the Redeemer

"It pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell." Colossians 1:19

Christians may behold, in this arrangement, an infinite fullness; yes, an eternal fullness of spiritual blessedness. And this blessedness, remember, depends upon the divinity of the Redeemer; for without it there is no foundation upon which a sinner can rest his soul.

No, take all the fullness of creation, all the fullness of grace that is to be found in angels and archangels—all the fullness that is to be found, in the spirits of those who are made perfect, and all the grace that is to be found in the millions of creatures that have inhabited, and will inhabit, this world; add them all together, and suppose them to be treasured up in Jesus—and still that would not be sufficient to meet the cases and, exigencies of his people.

It is the fullness of God in Jesus. It is written, "In Him dwells all the fullness the Godhead bodily!" Those who would strip Christ of his Divinity, not only condemn their souls to eternal wretchedness, but they charge falsehood on the Redeemer of men, because they deny the truth of what he declared, "I and the Father are one!" "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last."

Now the Divinity of Christ is something upon which you may rest your souls. It is the Godhead that stamps eternity, immutability, and infinity, on Christ, and upon all that he did in our nature. His deity sheds a luster on His every name and on every office.

An infinite fullness! It is the Divinity of Christ that makes redeeming love so important in reference to your soul. Firmly believing in that Divinity, you see something real, something substantial, in that love which has brought you near to God.

It is a love which has broken many a heart of stone—a love that has opened many sin-blinded eyes.

It is a love that has led you to the cross, where, from the hand of the Divine Sufferer, you have received full acquittance from guilt.

It is a love that has delivered from the power of darkness, and translated you into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

It is a love that has, in some degree, brought down Heaven into your souls, and given you a title to enjoy it forever and ever!

Oh when you feel this, when you do experience it in your heart—how does it waft your soul to Heaven, in praise and adoration! Here are broad rivers and streams sufficient to lave the soul in peace, and joy, and gladness.

But take away the Divinity of Christ, and then where will be the source of that love which, we say, brings salvation to the heart? Oh! there is no consolation in such a creed as that.

What is it that gives such efficacy to the sacrifice of Christ; that, when it is applied to the broken heart, brings such peace home to the soul; calming the troubled waters; hushing the storm; and delivering from every source of fearful apprehension? It is because Divinity is in that blood which cleanses from all sin.

What is it that gives the advocacy of the Redeemer prevailing authority in the court of Heaven? It is because there is in it an infinite fullness, a display of every attribute and every perfection. Thus his pleading becomes effectual with the Father, and will always be the source of triumph to his people.

If Christ did not possess infinite power—then how could he manage, conduct, and control, all the cases and circumstances of his redeemed people? How many cases crowd before his court—how many requests are brought before his throne, every moment, moment by moment; yes, millions upon millions, moment by moment. And who will undertake to resolve the number of cases and circumstances, many of which are so very perplexing and intricate? How many afflictions, sorrows, and distresses, are brought and laid upon the altar, waiting for redress, counsel to direct, and strength to sustain, besides ten thousand other needs and evils, to which he, as the Head of the church, must listen. If his wisdom were not infinite—then how could he meet them all?

Large indeed must be the heart of Christ, to enter into all the feelings and sorrows of his redeemed people; administering a blessing to all and to each of them, as though the care of one solitary individual was all that to which he had to attend! And infinite must be the arm by which he preserves the church, and guides it, through the wilderness, into the possession of that heavenly Canaan which he has reserved, beyond the grave, for all his ransomed people.

The fullness of Christ is inexhaustible. If that fullness were the fullness of a mere creature, it would not be sufficient for the needs of man, which are connected with his immortal existence. And if we were to combine all the graces that are to be found in all the creatures under Heaven, and if we were to hive them up in Christ, separate from his Divinity—then all those graces would be insufficient.

Why? Because it would be liable to fade away—it would be exhausted by the millions of guilty and diseased souls that are constantly coming to the fountain—they would soon drain it dry! And it would be proved that Christ, out of God, was insufficient to meet all the needs and exigencies of his people.

The fullness necessary to reach the boundless, endless, countless, exigencies of his people, must be as boundless as the stars of Heaven, and as countless as the sands on the sea-shore.

Is there one solitary moment that you can stand alone? Oh! call to remembrance how often have you been on the very verge of falling, one foot, perhaps, over the precipice—and yet you were held up! Or perhaps you have fallen, and yet you were restored!

Call to remembrance the many tender expostulations and complaints of the Savior, that you would not come unto him, that you might have life! Had the patience of Christ been the patience of a mere man, would not you have been in Hell by now? It is owing to his goodness that you have not been eternally consumed. The patience of Jesus is an inexhaustible patience—and that is the reason he has so long borne with you. How much and how long has his patience been tried by the millions of the earth, for now nearly six thousand years, and still Jehovah Jesus is infinite in patience—still he waits to be gracious. The fullness of Christ is an inexhaustible fullness—and therefore it must be the fullness of God.

It is pleasing to reflect that, if this fullness is inexhaustible—then it is also an abiding fullness.

Dear dying Lamb, your precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till all the ransomed church of God  
Be saved, to sin no more!

As Christ's human nature is inseparably united unto the Godhead—the fullness of Christ is an indwelling fullness, and abides forever. Therefore, we read He is a very present help in every time of need, because his fullness is an essential one.

Not in him merely today and tomorrow—no, but it dwells in him forever—grace to help in every time of need. Therefore we may come to him at all times, and find him to be the Savior we so much need—because, by virtue of this abiding fullness which is in him, he is everywhere present.

Remember, the pure river of water of life, (Rev. 22.) clear as crystal, flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. So long as that throne shall endure, that river will flow, because Christ is the rock of ages. All those pleasant and exhilarating streams of love and grace that we receive, flow from the Redeemer's pierced side. The riven rock follows his church through every stage of its progress through the wilderness, to refresh the weary spirit of the traveler to Mount Zion above.

The Power of Christ to Save!

"He is also able to save to the uttermost, those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25

Triumphant declaration!

There are no barriers thrown around the cross, nor any impediment or objection in the way to Calvary, but such as are furnished by our impenitence and unbelief. The country of the world, race and language, rank and gender, and station and condition in life—these things have nothing to do with the willingness and ability of Christ to save. Whether the man is black or white, rich or poor, high or low, barbarian or civilized, savage or polished, rustic or philosopher, peasant or prince—he is equally welcome to the Redeemer.

There is no exception furnished by the number or extent of his sinful enormities, or the aggravating circumstances of his previous crimes--for Christ is able to save even the worst sinner to the uttermost. It is not in the power of man or angel to conceive, much less for language to express, the uttermost of his ability to save!

Let the aggravation of man's guilt be piled up to Heaven--that uttermost shall scale the amazing height. Let his deep degradation be horrible as Hell--that uttermost can fathom the amazing depth. It can cleanse the utmost possible extent of man's misery and woe.

If it were possible for all the crimes ever perpetrated, from the first of men to the present hour, to be pressed into one individual person; if that criminal but looked by faith to Calvary, the moment that he looked there, the whole load of sin would be wiped away. Washing in the fountain opened for sin and impurity, his conscience would be cleansed from the foul and deadly stain!

O'er sins unnumber'd as the sand,  
And like the mountains for their size,  
The seas of sovereign grace expand,  
The seas of sovereign grace arise!

But language has no terms sufficiently powerful; neither has nature, through all her ample range, images sufficiently impressive, to convey the mighty feeling of declaration such as these: "If any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin." "Let wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world, to save sinners."

But consider the various specimens of Divine forgiveness, as exhibited in the scriptures. Look at that impassioned woman, how she washes the feet of the Redeemer with her tears, and wipes them with the hairs of her head. Ah! she loves much, for she has had much forgiven her.

Can you conceive of guilt more enormous than that of the three thousand who were pricked to the heart under the first sermon ever delivered after the outpouring of the Spirit from on high? They had rent the heavens with the bitter cry, "Away with him, away with him! Crucify him, crucify him!" They had done him the deep indignity of blows and of spitting. They had pressed upon him, as he trod the path of Calvary, with blasphemies and horrid insults; and, with an infernal malignity, they had railed upon him in the very agonies of death. And yet they—they who reared the cross, were the first to fly to it for shelter; and they who nailed the Redeemer to the accursed tree were among the first to feel the pardoning, consoling, healing virtue of the blood they shed. They were pricked to the heart—they were won to the Savior—and there were added to the church, the same day, three thousand souls.

Behold the malefactor hung by the Redeemer's side on Calvary! Who can tell the number, the enormity, and all the aggravated circumstances, of his crimes? Society had cast him off from her embrace, as a wretch not fit to live. But, as his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth, in the agonies of dissolution, he turned to the expiring Savior, and he said, "Lord, remember me, when you come into your kingdom!" Jesus stretched out his hand, strong in death, and snatched the brand from the burning, just as he was sinking into the flame! Jesus took him with him, from the cross on which he agonized—to the throne on which he reigns.

Ah! Christians, if there is joy in the presence of God, over one sinner that repents—then what do you think must have been the transport, and how would they strike their harps in tunes of still deeper harmony—when the inhabitants of the celestial world saw the Redeemer enter, fresh from the conquest and conflict of mount Calvary, bearing with him the dying thief, as a sample of his ability and willingness to save!

To pass over other examples, perhaps no case can be considered more to the point than that of the great Apostle of the Gentiles himself. You admire his spirit, you revere his character, you are astonished at his labors, you exult as you behold his emancipated spirit ascending, from the agonies of his martyrdom, to his glorious Lord. But who was he? Hear him tell: "I used to blaspheme the name of Christ. In my insolence, I persecuted his people. But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life!" 1 Timothy 1:13-16

Oh! this is a truth as sure as it is precious—that no sins are of too deep a dye for Christ's blood to wash away; no habits of vice are too firmly entrenched for his victorious grace to extirpate; for he can make his grace to superabound, even where sin has most abounded. He who could extend his salvation to Saul of Tarsus, an enraged and most bloody persecutor of his church, and make him a 'vessel of honor,'—an instrument for the conversion of multitudes of sinners—what can his grace not do?

He who could expel Satan from a Magdalene, and take possession of the heart where seven unclean spirits had taken up their abode—what can he not do? Or what bounds can contract his saving power? Truly, it is boundless and unlimited; and therefore even the very chief of sinners have no cause for despair! Remember those exhilarating words, "Therefore he is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for us."

Is there a thing that moves or breaks  
A heart as hard as stone,  
Or warms a heart as cold as ice?  
'Tis Jesus' blood alone.

One drop of this can truly cheer  
And heal the wounded soul;  
What multitudes of broken hearts  
This living stream makes whole!

Hark! O my soul! what sing the choirs  
Around the glorious throne!  
Hark! The slain Lamb for evermore  
Sounds in the sweetest tone!

The elders there cast down their crowns;  
And all, both night and day,  
Sing praise to him who shed his blood,  
And washed their guilt away!

The Gospel Enjoyed and Believed

The gospel is enjoyed, as well as believed. Its truths are felt, as well as admired. Angels contemplate it with pleasure. The Christian meditates upon it, and feels intensely interested in it.

It is pleasant to investigate the laws which regulate the material universe, to follow the sun in its course, to mark the increase of the moon, to trace the alternate succession of day and night, and to observe the gradual revolution of the seasons; and is it not also pleasant to reflect that these laws were ordained, that this sun shines, that this moon changes, and that these seasons revolve, for us? But greatly is that pleasure increased by actually enjoying the light and warmth of the sun's rays by day, the soft splendor of the moon by night, the seed-times, and harvests, and fruitful seasons.

Thus the gospel, as a divine scheme, affords genuine delight! When recognized as that which delivers from sin and guilt, it fills the Christian with ecstacy and gratitude.

Think, Christians, what you once were by nature, and what, if you are indeed Christians, you now are by grace! Once you were the children of disobedience, and heirs of wrath—now you are born again into the family of God, and made joint-heirs with Christ!

Cheering is the early dawn, to the traveler wandering by night in a land unknown; but to you far more pleasant is the Day-spring from on high, which has delivered you from error, and from that moral darkness which formerly clouded your minds. "You were once darkness, but now are you light in the Lord."

Pleasant, to those who go out to the sea in ships—is the calm which follows a storm; but their cause of joy is not equal to yours, who have been snatched from the thunderings and terrors of Sinai, and have been brought to Mount Zion, to the tranquil scenes of "the city of the living God."

How gladdening to the captives is deliverance from the miseries of the prison-house! But the gospel proclaims "deliverance to the captives"—deliverance from the bondage of fear, from the awful forebodings of judgment, and from the bottomless pit prepared for those who forget God.

The prisoner of men may have hope, that, one day, he may elude the vigilance of his guards, or that some favorable circumstance may occur to assist his escape. But the fetters of condemnation in which you were bound, were those of the divine law—conscience was the herald of its sentence, and God, its author, was himself its executor. The law you could not evade, for its authority and obligations are as universal as the being and the presence of its Maker. From conscience you could not fly, for it haunted you everywhere—in the field, and in the secret chamber; and from the hands of God there was no escape. But now you are delivered from the law and its power to condemn.

Hence, said Christ, "The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn." Isaiah 61:1-2

Justification from the Guilt and Condemnation of Sin

Exposed by sin to God's just wrath,  
We look to Christ and view;  
Redemption in His blood by faith,  
And full redemption too!

This is a special privilege! It is that which constitutes the Christian character, and that which renders the Christian happy. It is an ordination of Heaven that the exercise of faith in the blood of Christ shall be the medium of imputing his merit to the believer; so that he who believes is justified, and is counted holy before God, no longer in a state of condemnation; no longer peril or perdition; and no longer in peril at the judgment! "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!"

Among a number of condemned criminals—that man would be deemed the happiest, who had obtained the king's pardon; though others were less criminal than he. For he would expect, in cheerful hope, the opening of his prison door, to set him at liberty from his confinement, and restore him to the comforts of life. This hope would render the temporary hardships of his situation more tolerable.

Whereas the rest would dread the hour when they were to be brought from prison to an ignominious and agonizing execution; which prospect would add to the gloom and horror of the dungeon.

We all are criminals before God. Death terminates our confinement in this vile body and this evil world. At that important moment, the pardoned sinner goes to Heaven—and the unpardoned sinner drops into Hell. The very thought of this closing scene and its all-consuming consequences, must have a mighty influence upon the inward feelings of their minds, during the uncertain term of their remaining lives.

Nothing can be more evident than that the Scriptures declare the sins of all believers to be actually pardoned, and their persons completely justified. "There is," says the apostle, "no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Romans 8:1, 33-35

The apostle assures us that all who believe are justified from all things; that the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin. So that the forgiveness and justification of believers are stated to be already past; and their deliverance from condemnation is not represented as a future contingency, but as secured to them now by faith in the blood of Jesus us. The apostle declares, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

The true Christian being justified by faith, is "reconciled to God." A perfect amity follows, and a covenant of peace and friendship is signed and ratified. He is therefore honored by the appellation of the friend of God.

When, Christians, you contemplate the infinite majesty, justice, and holiness of God—and contrast with them the guilt, pollution, and ingratitude with which you are chargeable; when you consider that God could easily, and might justly, have destroyed you in Hell forever; that you cannot profit him; and that he could have created, by his powerful word, innumerable millions of nobler creatures to serve and glorify him; and when you consider the enmity of your carnal mind against all God's attributes, his cause and people—how can you sufficiently admire his marvelous love, and your own unspeakable felicity, in being admitted to this blessed peace and friendship with the God of Heaven!

This is still more enhanced by the consideration that Christ is your peace—and that he made it by the blood of his cross! Nor can the advantages resulting from it be sufficiently realized. While believers are brought to love the character, servants, cause, and truths of God; to hate the things which he hates; to separate from his enemies, and to seek their felicity in his service—then the Lord considers all kindness or injuries done to believer, as done to himself. He will "bless those who bless them, and curse those who curse them."

All his perfections, which before seemed with united force to insure your destruction, now harmoniously engage to make you eternally blissful!

Listen, believers, to the voice of Christ: "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you!" "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." This is a divine promise—here you may rest with confidence.

Adoption into the Family of God!

The believer is a member of God's family, and admitted to all the honor and felicity of his beloved children. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us—that we should be called the sons of God!" He has called you, Christians, by his Word, to come out from the world, and to be separate, as befits the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. This call being accompanied by the regenerating power the Holy Spirit, your minds are influenced to obey his sacred dictates—thus you are brought to repentance and faith in Christ; your sins are pardoned; and you pass from the family and kingdom of Satan, into the household of God, by a gracious adoption.

This term was borrowed from a custom of the ancients, who frequently took the children of others, and, by a solemn legal process, adopted them into their own family, gave them their name, educated them as their own, and bequeathed to them their estates. Regeneration communicates to the soul a holy nature, and makes you the children of God; and adoption recognizes you as such, and admits you to the enjoyment of the privileges belonging to that relationship. Thus pardoned rebels become the children and heirs of the eternal God, by faith in Christ Jesus.

But where can language be found to express the value of this distinguished privilege? The adoption of the meanest beggar, or the vilest traitor, into the family of the greatest monarch, to be the heir of all his dignities, would produce but a trivial alteration in his circumstances; for vexation, sickness, and death, would still await him; and the distance between the mightiest and the most abject of men or of creatures, is as nothing compared with that which exists between the Almighty Creator and all the works of his hands. (See Isaiah 40. 13-26.)

Hence one very beautifully observes, "The brightest beam, the warmest ray, of the fire of Divine love, that ever broke into the region of creation, and shone upon the children of men, was God's declaration that sinful men, the heir of corruption and death, should be his own children, and the heirs of immortality and in finite fullness! Who, upon such terms, would not choose to say to corruption, "You are my father, and to the worm, you are my sister?" Infinite love surmounts all impossibilities. He deigns to say to the miserable victim of corruption, descending into the unrelenting jaws of death, "I will remit the sentence! I will pray the price and ward off the eternal blow due unto you. Be not afraid—you are my son. Look up to Heaven—behold the sun by day, and the moon and the stars by night. When your eyes can penetrate no further, call in your imagination, and soar infinitely beyond them. While you are walking in darkness, stumbling among the rubbish of corruption, under the momentary apprehension of which shall be your last fall; when you shall never gather your feet, nor rear your head again upon the stage of nature—then lift up your eyes. Do they fail you? No matter. Give unbounded scope to your most towering conceptions; let them break through the barriers of creation—launch into the regions of eternity, the realms of uncreated day, and say: "Yonder I shall live—there I have a Father still! If I am to be a reptile of nature no longer, still I am what is infinitely greater, I am his son."

To be adopted as the children of God, is not a mere name—it is a substantial good, an honor, a dignity, and an advantage which eclipses and swallows up all other benefits which can be obtained by any creature. Yes, the privileges this relation render adopting love most wonderful. Christians, you have privileges which angels can never possess. Your adoption connects you with the Lord Jesus, by ties more close to those by which he is connected with angels. God is yours, in a fuller sense than he is theirs. You have place in the covenant which they cannot occupy, feelings at the communion table which they cannot participate, and a song of praise which they cannot sing. It is true that they are free from your sorrows, but they know not the comforts of that mercy which heals the broken-hearted, nor the renovating power of repentance unto life.

There is not a blessing, Christians, in the great salvation, which he will deny you—nor a moment of your being which is not marked by his bounty. "If you are His children, then you are His heirs—heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." And lest you should imagine that any possible honor, advantage, or felicity, was excepted, when the inheritance of the children of God was mentioned—he has been pleased to expand your views, and enlarge your expectations, by language taken from all the other most endeared relations of life.

All of the obedient disciples of Christ are his brethren, his sisters, his friends; yes, their Master is their Husband—the Lord Almighty is his name.

The perpetuity of this blessing of adoption is astonishing. There have been instances in which a father has been induced to disinherit a prodigal son, whom neither kindness, nor threats, nor corrections, could refrain from utter profligacy, and to banish him from his house and presence.

Do you not sometimes fear that your unworthy conduct will provoke God to cast you off forever? There were morning stars which fell from the firmament, and sons of God who were cast out of Heaven; but such events shall not again occur. The grace of God shall keep you from the excesses of the reprobate; his corrections shall reclaim you from your wanderings; and in his ordinances he shall confirm you in every holy tendency. Trust in him who will keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the throne of his glory, with exceeding joy!

God a Compassionate Father to His People

God has graciously assumed the title, and expressed the tenderness, of a father. What our imagination or presumption might ascribe to the Divine Being, is one thing—and what he has chosen to assume himself, is quite another. Therefore, if it had been a mere figure of rhetoric, a mere oratorical flourish of some eloquent preacher, or a mere poetic figure, that had ascribed the pity of a father to God, though it had been uplifting—yet there would have been no solidity in it, and no comfort to be derived from it. But how consoling that God himself has directly assumed it, and ascribed the tenderness implied in it to himself!

Though God is often mentioned under the character and attributes of a father, in the Old Testament—yet it is said that men were never commanded to address him as such, until Christ authorized them: "When you pray, say, Our Father in Heaven." Realize him under that character. It is delightful to think how frequently Christ uses the term, "Your Heavenly Father." "Like as a father pities his children; so the Lord pities those who fear him."

Think, Christians, what are the exercises of a father's heart towards his child, and learn from thence to understand the subject.

Does the dependent weakness of your child excite your sympathy, your love, and your care?—There is something answerable to it in God. The immediate comprehension which he must necessarily have of your perpetual dependence upon himself, must excite a kind of delicacy of tenderness to his feeble and helpless offspring, answerable to what you experience. Hence the scripture expressions of "Having respect to the work of his hands;" "Not despising anything which he has made;" "Knowing our frame, and remembering that we are but dust," seem to convey the thought.

Does the foolishness of your children's understanding excite your pity? Yes, in con sequence of that weakness, the tenderness of a father rises in your heart; you take a pleasure in listening to them, love to hear them prattle, and delight to answer their simple inquiries.

Now, to the Divine Being, the best of Christians are nothing more than children in understanding, and babes in knowledge. Their reasonings, inquiries, and thoughts, are those of children; and the God of knowledge takes pleasure in illuminating the understandings, and assisting their inquiries. "Good and upright is the Lord—therefore will he teach sinners in the way; the meek will he guide in judgment, and teach them his way."

And this is the characteristic of Christ, "One who can have compassion on the ignorant." The peculiar temper of your children excite your pity and watchful care. But still, when you think it right to express your indignation, or use the rod, there is a prevailing mixture of the tenderness of pity; their helplessness and weakness disarm you; there is a strong sensation of the kindness of parental affection; your strokes are blows of authority, of rational necessity—not of inclination. You strike your own heart every time you must spank them.

Now this very sensation of parental pity for human frowardness is ascribed, in scripture, to God, under terms of forbearance and patience. "Do you despise the riches of the kindness and patience of God?" How beautifully was this displayed in the conduct of Christ, to his poor, erring, imperfect disciples, and in his apologies for them! It was, all along, a father pitying and apologizing for his children! Oh! it is true that,

A bruised reed he will not break.  
Afflictions all his children feel.  
He wounds them for his mercy's sake.  
He wounds to heal.

Their sickness and pains touch the tenderest feelings of your hearts. You seem as if you could not be well, while your child is ill; as if you could number its groans, and put its tears into your bottle; as if you longed to bear its pains, and lie down in its place and stead. And, strange as it may sound to some ears, this peculiar tenderness is ascribed to God himself. "In all their affliction, he was afflicted." "He kept them as the apple of his eye." "He who touches you, touches the apple of my eye." What an expression of sympathy!

The falls of your children excite your pity. Whether they are the consequences of inattention, rashness, folly; or opposition to your will, you naturally and wisely blame them, and, in some cases, chastise them. But still you feel for them; you reach out the willing hand to help them up again, and do all in your power to heal and end the evil, and to comfort them. Here again, as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delights in his way; though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholds him with his hand."

But parental love, in its strongest form, cannot rival God's love. "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget—yet will not I forget you!"

Divine love and compassion can never be measured. "Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens." Who can measure height of Heaven, or stretch a line from the east unto west? Yet this were an easier task than to tell the extent of Divine love. "As the Heavens are high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."

This charming excellence is his delight: "He delights in mercy," "and takes pleasure in those who fear him, and who hope in his mercy."

Communion with God

Inquire of saints yet on earth, wherein their happiness consists; their answer will be, "In having fellowship with the Father, and his son, Jesus Christ." Again, could we ask those whose spirits are now glorified and triumphant in Heaven—what it is that renders their Heaven so glorious, and their glory so incomprehensible—their answer would be they have now attained a complete enjoyment of that sufficient, all-satisfying, ever-blessed, and ever-blessing, object—God in CHRIST.

Fellowship with God, while believer tabernacles on earth, is realized by reading his word, attending his worship, meditating on his names, person and work, especially by habitual prayer. With regard to the latter exercise, Jehovah is represented in scripture, as sitting upon a throne. The idea of a throne inspires awe, bordering on terror—it repels rather than invites. Few could approach it without trembling.

But what is the throne of the greatest earthly monarch that ever swayed a scepter? The God, Christians, which you address, is the "King of kings, and the Lord of lords." In his eye, an Alexander is a worm; yes, all nations before him are as nothing and vanity. How can you enter his presence, or approach his infinite Majesty? Blessed be his name, he fills the mercy seat; he is on a throne of grace; and you are allowed, and even commanded, to come to it boldly. "We have boldness to enter into the holiest, through the blood of Jesus; and come to the throne of grace, in order to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need." You are directed to ask what you will, and assured that it shall be given you; "for the prayer of the upright is the Lord's delight."

The wicked conceive of God as the arbitrary governor of their destinies, or as delighting in the miseries of his creatures; and therefore they either do not worship him at all, or secretly dislike both him and his service. It was thus with the wicked and slothful servant, who hid his master's money in the earth, instead of employing it faithfully in his service.

But, believers, you know that Christ is a merciful and compassionate master, who accepts the lowest service of his people, and abundantly rewards all who diligently seek him. You approach God, not as an avenging Judge, but as a kind and indulgent Father. You can say, with Judah, in a foreign land, "Doubtless you are our Father." Instead of flying from him, like Adam—you cleave to him with full purpose of heart; and the more you enjoy of his presence and blessing, the more you love to commune with him. "Seven times a day I praise you," said David; and every believer finds the more fellowship he has with the God of Heaven, the more he wishes that fellowship to be renewed.

Christians, is it not an invaluable privilege to be allowed to come into the immediate presence of your reconciled Father, seated upon a throne of grace, whenever you will—to present whatever petitions your needs and circumstances suggest; to multiply, repeat, and enforce them with all importunity, earnestness, and freedom; to be assured of the most cordial welcome, and of the most gracious answers to your fervent petitions? Yes, you say; this is privilege which dignifies the believer, and makes him, however lowly his outward condition, more happy than a monarch!

True experimental Christianity, then, is a life of communion with Christ. Do not understand, by this, constant, actual, literal exercises of devotion and piety. This is not the experience of a Christian; it is not the attainment of the present state; it is not content with many other claims of gospel duty. But it may be illustrated by the case of two of the dearest and most intimate friends who live in the same house. They are not always together; they are not, always talking together; they are not always expressing affection to each other, in acts of kindness; but there is a kind of habitual cordial fellowship between them, from day to day; "they dwell together in unity."

This is illustrative of actual Christian communion with Jesus Christ. The Christian life is a life of mental and spiritual fellowship with Jesus Christ, in the daily devotions of the closet; looking to Him as the Mediator and Intercessor, in reading and meditating on the Scriptures, in receiving supplies of strength in the hour of difficulty, in the house of God, and at the table of the Lord.

In these cases, Christ and the believer are like friends dwelling together, and conversing together in mutual acts of friendship and affection. Hence the Apostle prayed for the Ephesians, "That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith." And this is the purpose of that promise, "If any man loves me, he will keep my word, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him; and my Father will love him, and we will come, and make our abode with him"—by spiritual communion and fellowship. And though the degree in which this is experienced, differs in different people, and in the same people at different times—yet the thing itself enters into the essence of the Christian life. "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

You may as well suppose that two friends, who cordially love one another, can live in the same house, and yet have no conversation, never see each other, and have no connection with each other—as picture to yourself a Christian without any communion with Christ.

This wilderness affords no food,  
But God for my support prepares;  
Provides me every needful good,  
And frees my soul from needs and cares.

With Him sweet converse I maintain.  
Great as He is, I dare be free.  
I tell Him all my grief and pain;  
And He reveals his love to me!

PRAYER

Christians, if you would be rich in all grace, you must be much in prayer. It is a privilege of immense value, and its influence is glorious. Conversing with God assimilates the soul to him, and beautifies it with the beams of his holiness, as Moses' face shone when he returned from the mount. It is prayer that brings all your supplies from Heaven, draws a sufficiency of grace from God's hand, and subdues sin and the power of darkness. Prayer entertains, and augments our friendship with God, raises the soul from earth, and promotes its purification. The experience of believers testifies that, as they abate in prayer—all their graces sensibly weaken. Therefore, when the apostle Paul has suited a Christian with his whole armor, he adds this to all, pray continually; for this arms both the man and his armor with the strength and protection of God.

The value of prayer, and the strongest encouragement for it, appear in the numerous

 promises made to it, with which the Scriptures abound.

"Those who seek the Lord, shall not lack any good."

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous; and his ears are open unto their cry."

"Call upon me, in the day of trouble—I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."

"The Lord is near unto them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear him. He also will hear their cry, and will save them."

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him that knocks, it shall be opened."

"If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in Heaven, give good things to those who ask him?"

"If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it."

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you."

Jesus Christ himself repeats the promise that prayer shall not be made in vain; "Whatever you shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father might be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it."

In prayer, Christians, let your faith fix on these promises—plead them earnestly, and attentively wait their fulfillment. A believer, so praying, cannot be denied, unless God denies himself. The word of God is himself—it is his will. So the soul may go with a holy boldness unto God, for a thing that is promised is half done. God may keep us in suspense awhile; but he expects you should live upon the word, and depend upon it, until the promise is fulfilled. All that faith labors for is, to produce, in the soul, assurance that God will deal with us according to his word. And if you can make it out that such a promise belongs to you, you have enough to live on.

The blessings that have been given in answer to prayer, show its importance and worth. The Scriptures supply us with ample information on this head, from reading which we cannot forbear adopting the language of a pious writer, "Who can express the powerful victory of a believer's prayer? The little word Father, lisped forth in prayer by a child of God, exceeds the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and all the most renowned orators in the world. We knock at Heaven's door—and the heart of God flies open!"

Abraham prayed for Sodom; and, if ten righteous people could have been found in it, God would have spared the guilty city.

Jacob, alarmed at Esau's approach, in his distress prayed to God, and prevailed, and Esau became his friend.

Moses prayed that the plagues might be removed from Egypt, and they were removed. Frequently did he implore mercy for rebellious Israel, and Israel was spared, even when God had threatened to exterminate that guilty nation.

When Israel was oppressed by the Philistines, Samuel prayed, and those invaders were scattered, and fled.

Elijah, doubtless to correct and reform a murderous, idolatrous nation, "prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months. He prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." On another occasion, when vindicating the honor of his God, he prayed, and fire descended from Heaven, and consumed the sacrifice he was offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the water that was in the trench around the altar; while the astonished idolatrous multitude cried out, "The Lord he is God; the Lord he is God!"

Hezekiah, near to death, prayed, and fifteen years were added to his life. His country was invaded by Sennacherib's apparently irresistible army—he prayed, and, in one night, an angel from the Lord destroyed 185,000 of that mighty host.

Daniel and his companions, threatened with destruction, because none could tell Nebuchadnezzar his prophetic dream, prayed, and the dream and the explanation were revealed to him.

Jonah, amid the swelling of the deep, prayed, and was delivered from his dismal prison. Nineveh, warned, by Jonah, of impending ruin, prayed, and God turned the judgment aside.

The Apostles, threatened by their enemies, prayed that with all boldness they might speak the word, and the place where they were assembled was shaken; they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke with the boldness they desired.

Peter was imprisoned by Herod. The church of God prayed without ceasing for his deliverance; and their prayer was more powerful than chains, and bars, and bolts, and prison doors, and military guards. While they prayed, God heard. An angel descended, and liberated Peter; and he himself became, to those who were praying for him, the messenger of his own deliverance.

Cornelius prayed, and an apostle was divinely instructed to go and preach the gospel to him.

Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi, shut in the inner prison, and fast in the stocks. They prayed. and an earthquake shook the prison to its foundations; and all its doors were opened, and every one's chains were loosened.

Such is the power of prayer!

Testimonies of Eminent People, Respecting the Usefulness of Prayer.

We have advanced, from Scripture, proofs that God delights to answer prayer. It is a delightful exercise—and is productive of present and everlasting good to those who engage in it, as the experience of thousands can testify. In addition to what the Scriptures say on the subject, consult the following opinions of people eminent for piety—men who have engaged in prayer, realized its beneficial influence, and seen its effects upon the church of Christ at large, as well as upon individual members of it.

Prayer is the avenue to all good, temporal and eternal, and to us the only avenue. He who will not pray, therefore, shuts up the only passage which has been opened for him by God, to the attainment of happiness. Without prayer, there is no virtue, no piety, no obedience to God. The commencement of piety in Saul of Tarsus, was thus announced by the Holy Spirit: "Behold! he is praying." Timothy Dwight

Prayer is an action of likeness to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of gentleness and dove-like simplicity. It is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of our recollections, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempests. Jeremy Taylor

Prayer is our best resource in the hour of affliction. When every prop of earthly happiness is withdrawn, and our weakness totters under the pressure of increasing and complicated distress—this heavenly support is still present with us, still sufficient to sustain us. Anonymous

"Ask, and you shall receive." Such language is unspeakably gracious; and we ought not to limit and clog it with conditions. He who paid the price of man's restoration to God, states the terms on which we may receive it. He thus lays out the practical riches to which we are invited. The treasures of grace are open to the draft of real prayer. We have only to come in the way of God's appointment. Rev. E. Craig.

O my soul, what can you desire beyond this? Ask whatever you will, in the name of Jesus, and in faith in his holy word; and, if it is for the glory of God and the real good of your soul, you shall as surely have the request granted, as that the Lord Jehovah lives and answers prayer. Rev. Marks

Prayers of faith are filed in Heaven, and not forgotten—though the blessing prayed for is not speedily given. Prayers made by people when young and coming into the world, are often answered to them when old and going out of it. Zachariah's prayer for a son was answered after he had long ceased to speak to God, of that matter. Matthew Henry

The throne of grace is our dispensary, where every healing medicine is prepared; our treasury and asylum, where all our riches and resources are found! Rev. John Thornton

Every general command or exhortation to pray is an encouragement to all who desire to pray; and whatever guilt they have contracted, or in whatever depths of temptation and misery they are plunged, it says to them, "Be of good comfort, arise, he is calling for you"—for every one that asks, receives. Nor is there one instance upon record, of a single prayer being rejected, except for the hypocrisy, wickedness, and unbelief, with which it was presented. Thomas Scott

Prayer heightens the relish of common mercies. A devotional spirit throws a luster over the beautiful and sublime works of nature, which doubles the delight of the beholder. Prayer is the oil of gladness, which diffuses around a lasting fragrance. Rev. John Thornton

Prayer, when seriously engaged in, tends directly to increase our acquaintance with ourselves and our own character and situation; to lead our attention to the promises of God; to abstract the mind from all selfish and carnal confidences, and thus to bring us into that humble, dependent, and waiting, frame of spirit, which is the preparation for duly receiving and using every divine blessing. To pray in a suitable manner, in effect is to say, "Lord, we are poor, vile, helpless, wretched creatures; we have no other refuge to flee to; we know not what to do—but our eyes are unto you; because we believe that you are ever ready to forgive and save all who call upon you." Rev. Thomas Scott

Prayer draws all the Christian graces into its focus. It draws charity, followed by her lovely train; her forbearance with faults, her forgiveness of injuries, her pity for errors, her compassion for need. It draws repentance, with her holy sorrows, her pious resolutions, her self-distrust. It attracts faith, with her elevated eye. It attracts hope, with her grasping anchor. Benevolence, with her open hand. Zeal, looking far and wide to serve. Humility, with introverted eye, looking at home. Prayer, by quickening these graces in the heart, warms them into life, fits them for service, and dismisses each to its appropriate practice. Anonymous

What the key is to the watch, prayer is to religion: it winds it up, and sets it going. Prayer is the guard to secure the fort-royal of the heart. Prayer is the porter, to keep the door of the lips; and prayer the strong hilt which defends the hand. Richard Sibbes

Of a Christian prince, it ought to be said, that he is a man who prays, and governs a kingdom; that a Christian general is a man who prays, and conducts an army; of a Christian magistrate, that he is a man who prays, and administers justice; that a Christian tradesman is a man who prays, and labors in his business; that a Christian farmer is a man who prays, and cultivates the earth; and that the Christian mother of a family is a woman who prays, and superintends her domestic concerns. Prayer enters into every vocation and condition, and sanctifies them all. Many occupations, when hallowed by prayer, become lawful and good, which, without this sacred exercise, would be profane, heathenish, or even sacrilegious. Nicole, a foreign divine.

Prayer, without activity in duty, is like a goodly stem without fruit; activity without prayer is like boughs bending with fruit, which, being severed from the stem, soon wither away. Baptist Noel.

The more a saint is exercised in devotion, the more are faith and love, courage and fortitude, gentleness and resignation, with all the fair train of graces and virtues which attend them, illustriously displayed. Rev. John Thornton.

Devotion sets a new edge on the blunted faculties and feelings of the mind. A dull and heartless frame can never long oppress one who waits at the divine mercy-seat, and rekindles the best sentiments of the soul at the eternal fountain of light and love; and besides, it is in this way that we gain some glimpses and anticipations of that future bliss which is unmingled with sin and sorrow. Rev. John Thornton.

When the privations of life have diminished the objects of social happiness; when death has dried up the fountains which ran freely from their beneficial waters; when pain and disease have altered the character of existence, and changed the scene of buoyancy and activity, into the scene of suffering, inactivity, patience—then to go to the throne of grace, and to draw closer the ties that no privation, nor suffering, nor vicissitude, can dissolve, this is to connect a "time of need" with the best and brightest manifestations of mercy and grace to the soul. Many may be the hours of comparative repinings, of wounded hopes, and of unhealthy wanderings; but these are sometimes exchanged for hours passed at the throne of grace, to which no eye but that of God is witness; hours when Christ speaks, and pain and sorrow are forgotten; hours when, cut off from the din of life, and separated from friends, and left alone with God—every murmuring is hushed, and every privation is repaid; hours when the manifestation of the Redeemer's glory to the soul has shed a calm and blissful radiance around every prospect, and proved the pledge of that better heritage which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away! Rev. G. T. Noel

How delightful is it, O my soul! for you to enjoy sweet communion with your God, and thus to dwell upon divine objects. I am here safe, and at rest, in this dear place of quiet; and earnestly pity all the men of business and hurry, whose heads are full of perplexing contrivances to procure a little happiness in a world where there is no such thing. O blessed freedom! O charming solitude! I will grasp you, and I will hold you fast—the delight of silence and retreat! Here I can unburden my soul, and pour it out before God. Here I can wrestle with the powers of Heaven, and not let them go until I have obtained a blessing. Here I can confess my sins, and, with hopes of comfort, lay open my troubled bosom before the merciful Hearer of my prayers. Kenn

You are never so happy as when you unburden and unbosom all your soul before God, and throw all your heart into every word you utter. You never can forget the hallowed moments of retirement, when you first caught the spirit of prayer, and felt what it is to commune with God at the mercy-seat. You understand at once what Melancthon meant when he said of Luther, "I have overheard him in secret prayer; and he spoke as if God had been in the closet with him!" You can believe this of Luther, for you have at times felt as if God was in your closet. Accordingly, what you want is to get back to this devotional spirit, and to continue in it. No wonder! There is much that is pleasing to God, in the broken sighs and unutterable groanings of a contrite spirit. Rev. R. Philip

A hungry man might as well be expected to abstain from food, or a thirsty man from drink—as a Christian from prayer. Prayer is the breath on which the Christian lives, and from which it derives peculiarly its power, activity, and enjoyment. Timothy Dwight

How can he be dejected, who, by sweet communion with God, seats himself in Heaven, nay, makes his heart a kind of Heaven, a temple, a holy of holies, wherein incense is offered unto God? It is the sweetest branch of our priestly offices to offer up these daily sacrifices. Sweet is human friendship—sweet is the communion of saints, but sweeter far is fellowship with God on earth. Henry Martyn

A monarch vested in gorgeous habiliments, is far less illustrious than a kneeling suppliant ennobled and adorned by communion with God. Consider how august a privilege it is, when angels are present, when Cherubim and Seraphim encircle with their blaze the throne—that a mortal may approach with unrestrained confidence and converse with Heaven's dread Sovereign. Oh! what honor was ever conferred like this? When a Christian stretches forth his hands to pray, and invokes his God—in that moment he leaves behind him all terrestrial pursuits, and traverses, on the wings of intellect, the realms of light. He contemplates celestial objects only, and knows not of the present state of things during the period of his prayer—if that prayer be breathed with fervency. Chrysostom

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,  
The Christian's native air,  
His watchword at the gate of death,  
He enters Heaven by prayer.

The value of prayer is further proved by the gracious answers which the God of all grace has been pleased to give to the supplications of his people. "He is faithful who has promised." Few that are acquainted with the grace of God, are unacquainted with the efficacy of prayer.

FAITH

Faith adds new charms to earthly bliss,  
And saves me from its snares;  
Its aid in every duty brings,  
And softens all my cares;  
Extinguishes the thirst of sin,  
And lights the sacred fire  
Of love to God and heavenly things,  
And feeds the pure desire!

Faith, in general, implies confidence in the truth of certain declarations which are presented to the view of the mind—a credence resting upon sufficient evidence. This kind of faith the Christian exercises in reference to the Bible and its glorious contents, the truth of which, his faith assures him, is indubitably supported by internal and external evidence.

Admitting, then, that the gospel is a system of glad tidings and great joy to fallen man—full of precious promises—and applicable to his state—replete with the unsearchable riches of Christ, and that it is calculated to inspire with the hope of Heaven; how important and invaluable does faith's appear! What a happy and sanctifying influence will it have upon those who possess it!

But faith implies more than mere credence. It implies admiration, approval of the way of salvation through the atonement of Christ, a full conviction of the adaptation Christ, as a Savior, to the spiritual exigencies of the sinner, and a complete surrender of the soul to the skill and power of the great Physician, Prophet, Priest, and King.

It is then that the wonders of grace are beheld and felt by the sinner. Sins, in number like the sand on the sea-shore—sins, like mountains for their size—are all forgiven, and the remembrance of them cast into the depths of the sea! Guilt, as black as Hell, is rolled away. The application of the Redeemer's blood and his all-conquering Spirit, sanctifies the conscience from dead works, and renews the heart to serve the living and the true God. This is done throb faith.

"Be it known unto you, men and brethren, through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all who believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the of Moses." It is there that the Christian begins his course by faith. By faith he became a child of God—by faith he walks in the paths of life—by faith he stands in the evil day—by faith he sees the land of glory afar off—and by faith he persuades himself that when, mortality shall be swallowed up of life, he shall enter that land, and participate in all its felicities.

His whole pilgrimage on earth is a life of habitual faith in the Savior of men. "The life which I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

The Scriptures state the beneficial effects of faith in the following beautiful manner:

Faith conquers the world. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4. In the case of Abraham and Moses, and of myriads of martyrs, this achievement of faith has been gloriously manifested.

Faith produces love to Christ. "We love him, because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19. "To you who believe, he is precious." 1 Peter 2:7. "Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love, in whom, though now you see him not—yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Peter 1:8.

Faith produces holy obedience. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments," John 14:15. "I will show you my faith by my works. Faith without works is dead. As the body without the spirit is dead, so, faith without works is dead also." James 2:18.

Faith promotes inward purity. "God put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Acts 15:9. "Behold, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that has this hope, purifies himself; even as he is pure." John 3:2, 3.

Faith is the source of peace and comfort. "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13.

Faith produces patience and fortitude. "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Psalm 27:13. "We are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation." 1 Peter 1:3. "But let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and, for an helmet, the hope of salvation." 1 Thessalonians 5:8. "Above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." Ephesians 6:16.

Faith spiritualizes the affections. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:18. "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." 2 Corinthians 5:6-8.

It is impossible for faith to exist, without producing such fruits as those described above. This is evident from observing that, in the most solemn manner, Christ declares that only those shall enter Heaven who do his Father's will; and yet that, with equal certainty, salvation is promised to every believer. "Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of my Father, who is in Heaven." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." The inference is clear: every believer will do the will, and hearken to the precepts, of God. Need we wonder that the faith which produces such effects, and with which the most valuable blessings are connected, is described as "precious faith;" and have we not reason to unite in the frequent prayer of the apostles, "Lord, increase our faith!"

The above delightful effects of faith, are illustrated by the experience of primitive believers. The great Apostle Paul, amid all his trials and sacrifices, could say, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Here the apostle, by faith, recognizes heavenly glory, as so grand and enrapturing, that he felt no difficulty in resigning the comforts, the honors, and the grandeur, of this world.

We do not look at the things that are seen—the perishing trifles that charm the eyes, and engage the hearts, of men. To us they are so insignificant, that, instead of charming our hearts, and engaging our attention, we do not even look at them. Rather, the scenes of immortality engage our care; the things of the invisible world fill our thoughts—as faith presents them to our view. We look at the things which are not seen—for they are eternal.

Thus faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. The blessings announced in the precious promises, and the glorious felicities of eternity, are things hoped for. Faith invests these with a reality, and makes them appear, not like airy visions, but sublime and solemn certainties. They are so real and so certain, that the transient wealth and honor of the world are shadows in comparison with them.

To the eye of a fool, a planet appears but twinkling star; but, if he looked through a telescope, and was able to calculate, he would perceive that it is a great world, and he would be astonished at its distance and magnitude.

While unbelievers are moving on their little molehills, full of intense anxiety—faith thus reaches beyond the world. It looks at Heaven, and catches a glimpse of its glory. It looks at Hell, and sees the torments of the condemned. It looks at judgment, and realizes that awful day. It looks at eternity, and says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present world, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

We walk by faith, and not by sight. Hence a popular writer observes:

Had Noah seen the deluge—could he have done more than build the ark? Had Abraham seen country to which God would lead him, and beheld even a thousand attractions—could he have yielded a more ready obedience to the divine command? In the case Moses, what could sight have done, which faith did not effect? Could he have suffered with more resolution? Could he have chosen God as his portion, with more decision? Could he have sought eternal rest, with more patient perseverance? He suffered, he lived, he endured as seeing Him who is invisible, and seeing the unseen eternal realities.

The same were the effects of faith on the holy host of confessors, who were tortured, were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; who wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy! Surely the faith of these sufferers accomplished all that could have been accomplished, if they had actually beheld their God in glory, and their wished-for eternal home.

Could they, who died martyrs that they might obtain a better resurrection, have done more than die, if all the solemn and triumphant scenes of that resurrection had been exhibited to their view? Could those who met death in a hundred horrid forms, or wandered in the dens of wild beasts, more desolate than they—could they have endured more constantly if the world they sought had been continually before their eyes?

Faith was, indeed, to all these—the substance of things hoped for. They all endured, as seeing things invisible!

"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.

For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:18

The Christian is described as one who "walks by faith, and not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7. The idea suggested appears to be that the Christian pilgrim pursues his journey to eternity with his heart, and soul, and affections, and actions--directed by those solemn eternal objects which are as yet unseen. He goes forward step by step, influenced solely in his choice, and heart, and conduct--not by the visible objects which charm the deluded eyes of worldly men, but by faith in the invisible realities of the everlasting state.

Behold, then, the excellence of faith! It is . . .  
the grand principle of the Christian's life,  
the very soul of all his enjoyments and duties,  
the conquering weapon with which he lays his enemies prostrate in the dust,  
the very channel through which, from God to him, flow the streams of heavenly strength and comfort,  
the powerful telescope by which he gazes at the glory of the heavenly Canaan,  
the strong staff by which he passes through the swellings of Jordan, and arrives at his final and everlasting home!

Having this principle within him—what shall he fear "The Lord is the strength of his heart, of whom shall be afraid? He who is for him, is more than all they t are against him." Therefore he triumphs!

The earth may shake; the pillars of the world may tremble under us; the countenance of Heaven may be a palled; the sun may lose his light, the moon her beauty; the stars may lose their glory; but concerning the man who trusts in God, if the fire has proclaimed itself unable so much as to singe a hair of his head; if lions, ravenous beasts by nature, and keen with hunger, being set to devour, have, as it were, abstained from the flesh of the faithful man—then what is there in the world that shall change his heart, overthrow his faith, alter his affection toward God, or the affection of God towards him?

I know in whom I have believed. I am not ignorant of whose precious blood has been shed for me. I have a Shepherd full of kindness, full of care, and full of power—unto him I commit myself! His own finger has engraved this sentence on the tables of my heart, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!" Romans 8:35-39

HOPE

What would the life of man be without hope? Remove it, and you take away at once the relish of prosperity, and the support and solace of adversity. Let the tide of prosperity rise ever so high, and flow with unebbing fullness ever so long—if the hope of its continuance is destroyed, then it is instantly deprived of all its power to satisfy. Let the prosperous man be certainly assured that his prosperity is to last but one day longer—that, at the close of so short a time, its springs are to be dried up, and he is to be left in all the dreariness of universal desolation—would that day, do you think, be enjoyed by him? No. The extinction of hope would be the extinction of joy. And Oh! what would adversity be without hope!

Hope is the last lingering light of the human bosom, that continues to shine when every other has been extinguished. Quench it—and the gloom of affliction becomes the very "blackness of darkness,"—cheerless and impenetrable. Hence it is, that there is no temper so generally indulged as hope; other passions operate by starts, on particular occasions, or in certain parts of life; but hope begins with the first power of comparing our actual with our possible state, and attends us through every stage and period; always urging us forward to new acquisitions, and holding out some distant blessings to our view, promising us either relief from pain, or increase of happiness.

If hope, in general, is so valuable, how useful must it be when well-founded! how peculiarly advantageous to the Christian! From the experience he has had of the divine munificence, the many interpositions of Divine Providence, and the fulfillment of the Divine promises—his hope is strengthened, and he looks forward with a degree of cheerfulness and confidence. "Having obtained help of God," he exclaims, "I continue unto this day. He has led me forth in a right way. He has been my help every moment in my past life. Why, then, should I doubt of future support? Will he conduct me part of the way, and abandon me at last? That is far from him! God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore I will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

Thus experience feeds hope, and hope produces courage, stimulates to exertion, and fills the soul with pleasure. How sweetly does hope whisper to the Christian, as he passes along, "Persevere, O Christian; strength shall be given equal to your day. Temptations may discourage, darkness may intimidate, and opposition may alarm; but these are all under the power of your Sovereign Guide. He knows your ways he can support, yes, he will not leave, nor will he ever forsake you. The mountains

shall become plains, and crooked things straight, as they have already been. all shall work together for good; and at last you shall arrive at that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Thus "hope is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and enters into within the veil." Hope is here beautifully compared to an anchor. When a vessel is at anchor, the sea may be dreadfully boisterous, the wind may blow, etc., but, if the ship is sea-worthy, the cable sufficiently strong, and the anchor struck deep into tenacious soil beneath, though she be most alarmingly tossed about by the winds and waves—yet she rides in security on the surface of the deep. The anchor is a stay to her, and keeps her from driving among rocks, and striking upon quicksands; if all be firm, and steady, and tight, she rides upon the storm, and outbraves the tempest, severe as it may be.

The most eminent, exemplary, and hopeful Christians, while they are in the body, are not exempt from trouble, arising from the world, and the conflicts of the Christian warfare. They all find their Savior's prediction verified in one way or another, "In the world you shall have tribulation." They are sometimes "tossed with tempests," on the uncertain, turbulent, and changeful, ocean of life; but the question is: "In these circumstances, what do they find the gospel-hope to be to them? Does it still the storm, as with a word, and, as by miracle or magically produce instantaneously a great calm?"

No; in ordinary cases it does not; in some very extraordinary ones, it may have done so. The ordinary operation of the Christian hope is exactly that, to the renewed mind, which the anchor is to the vessel at sea—it is a stay and rest to it; it keeps the storm as it were at bay; it keeps the mind from being driven to temptation, despondency, and destruction; there is a humble, cheerful, consoling, supporting sense of security amidst all, in the promises of the everlasting covenant. "The peace of God which passes all understanding, keeps the heart and mind, through Christ Jesus."

Hope does not annihilate the cares and troubles of life, nor ward off their influence altogether, but keeps the mind in some degree of security and serenity, in the midst of all.

Christians, does not this just correspond with your experience? Your hope is not the actual accomplishment of everything to you; you are not yet in the harbor; you have not yet reached the eternal shore; you find yourself still at sea, and sometimes tossed and agitated; but your hope remains with you, as a fast and steady friend. Amidst the howlings of the storm, hope whispers, so as to be heard, "Be not afraid, only believe! There shall be deliverance. Believe, and you shall be established! Be sober, and hope to the end."

No more, with trembling heart, I try  
A multitude of things;  
Still wishing to find out that point  
From whence salvation springs.

My anchor's cast; cast on a rock,  
Where I shall ever rest,  
From all the labors of my thoughts,  
And workings of my breast.

What is my anchor? if you ask  
A hungry, helpless mind,  
Diving with misery for its weight,  
Until firmest ground it find.

What is my rock? 'Tis Jesus Christ,  
Whom faithless eyes pass o'er;  
Yet there poor sinners anchor may  
And never be shaken more.

Anchors, though so ingenious in their construction, and so useful in design—yet they are made of brittle and uncertain materials; the strongest cordage may snap; the iron itself must bend, and yield to superior force; but it is the peculiarity of the Christian hope, that it is an anchor sure and steadfast. Only let it be genuine, and it will endure anything, and that for the reason assigned by the apostle: it is founded on the immutable counsel, promise, and oath, of God; it is identified with the Divine perfections, providence, and promises of God. God must fail, before the Christian's hope can; providing that the hope is sincere.

This hope hangs on the faithfulness of a promising God. "I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, ordered in all things and sure."

God has fixed the first link of the golden chain of gospel-hope upon his own throne; they must stand or fall together. This is the strong language of scripture: "God, willing more abundantly to make known, to the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that, by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon this hope."

An anchor may of itself be ever so inflexible, and the cable to which it is united be ever so strong—and yet cast upon a rock, which would defeat the whole purpose of casting the anchor at all; or upon a loose and fragile soil, where it could obtain no firm or lasting hold, and thus be dragged along by the violence of the winds, and deceive the poor sailors' confidence.

But it is the peculiarity of the Christian's hope, that it is cast on nothing so uncertain and fragile as any terrestrial soil. "It enters into that which is within the veil." It strikes through mortality into eternity itself. It fastens on invisible and imperishable things. It darts into celestial soil, and there keeps fast its hold, and will not let it go.

To drop, for a moment, the figure under consideration, it is "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," to which the Christian hope reaches, and in which it centers. The anchor drops upon the soil that cannot, will not, yield; "for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal."

In many instances, with all the assistance of anchors, all the management of skillful captains, and all the exertions of intrepid sailors—ships are stranded and cast away, and the captain, as well as the crew, perishes; or he and they are cast upon some desolate island, in a wretched and destitute condition.

But the Christian hope looks to a commander who, as a forerunner, has actually entered within the veil, "where Jesus, the forerunner, has entered for us." He is gone before us, for the purpose of receiving and welcoming us on the shore; to direct us safely into harbor, through the last storm of death; and to provide all things for our reception and enjoyment there. "I go," says he, "to prepare a place for you; and, if I go, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

How valuable, then, is the hope that enters into that which is within the veil! It delightfully anticipates the perfect and everlasting happiness of Heaven. The believer hopes there to be free from all his sins and all their attendant sorrows; and to be perfectly holy and happy forever. He hopes to see his God and Savior, and to spend a happy eternity in society with him, and in his service. He hopes to join the company of angels, and of his fellow-saints of the human race. He hopes to improve in knowledge, and in capacities for action and enjoyment.

In short, he hopes to be as happy as his glorified nature will admit, through an endless duration. What a magnificent hope is this! It has induced many a soul to welcome death with open arms, and to burn with intense "desire to be with Christ, which is far better." Yes, this hope has sweetly swallowed up the sensations of bodily pain. Indeed, without it, even immortality would be an object of terror and not of hope; the prospect would be insupportably dreadful. But the expectancy of a happy and holy immortality, what can charm us more?

Hence an eminent minister, after having been silent in company for a considerable time, and being asked the reason, signified that the powers of his mind had been solemnly absorbed with the thought of eternal happiness. "O my friends," said he, with an energy that surprised all present, "consider what it is to be forever with the Lord—forever, forever, forever!"

But how valuable will be the Christian's hope, by and by! Christians, you cannot part with it for a thousand worlds. Now you do not know how to calculate its value; and yet it does not do everything for you; at least, it has not accomplished everything for you; it is only as an anchor to the ship at sea; it is only your stay to keep your heart. But, if it be worth so much now, though it does no more for you than this—then Oh! what will it be worth, do you think, by and by? When it lands you on eternal shores; when it conducts you to your Father's house; when it actually opens the gates of the heavenly rest to you; when it brings forth the crown of glory, the palm of victory, and the robe of blessedness, from the Divine treasury, to clothe and adorn you! What will be the worth of the gospel-hope then? Oh! what will it appear to be worth then?

Reader, have you this hope? Important question!

HUMILITY

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ my God!  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood!

Humility is a principal grace, and is so necessary in forming the Christian character, that without it true religion cannot exist. Hence a writer observes, "Those who are destitute of the grace of humility, whatever profession they have made of Christianity, have in truth, the rudiments of it yet to learn. If they have been soaring upward to Heaven itself, in the sublimest speculations; if they have built up their hopes to the greatest height upon other grounds, without laying this at the foundation—they must be content to come down again to learn this lesson, which enters into the elements of Christ's religion. A proud Christian is a contradictory character, as much as it would be to say a wicked saint. The whole gospel, in its precepts, its great example, its glorious prospects, tends to humble the pride of man; and, therefore, whoever will come after Christ, must, in this respect, deny himself."

The discoveries which the gospel makes of the glorious attributes of the Creator, and the discoveries which grace makes of the imperfections and depravity of the creature—cause the Christian to lie low in his own esteem, and to think highly of his God. Thus Isaiah, after a view he had of the Divine glory, exclaims, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes has seen the King, the Lord Almighty." Thus the apostle, notwithstanding all his superior attainments, calls himself "the least of all saints." So John, when he beheld the glory of his Redeemer, was so overpowered that he fell at his feet, as dead.

We may consider humility as one of the first, and one of the surest, evidences of the health of the soul. And it is this which, though the most lowly, is the most lovely, of the Christian graces, and throws an amiable luster on all the rest. It is, in the Christian life, the same as the well-disposed shades in a picture, which set it off to advantage; for, though the shades are not striking in themselves—yet they give an inexpressible beauty to the whole piece.

How pleasant is it to see the humble Christian! While the proud are racked with envy and jealousy, pushed on by ambition and vanity, so as to become restless and wretched—the humble Christian walks on, quietly and contentedly. The provocations of men do not ruffle him; the reproaches of the world do not depress him. The happy spirit he possesses, teaches him to think lowly of himself, to bear with injuries, to forgive unkindness. If he hears that any one has reviled him, he is ready to say, "Had he known me better, he would have said worse things of me than that!"

The opinion of the world, popular applause, and honors which fade away, are not sought for by him. And, as he aims not at these objects, so he meets not with those vexations which generally disturb the minds of those who are anxiously pursuing them. He considers himself more secure in the valley than on the mountain; as the weakest plant is preserved in the one, while the loftiest tree is often torn to pieces by the tempest on the other.

It must not, however, be understood that the Christian is of a weak and cowardly mind; that his views of himself and of things, destroy his peace, and prevent his rejoicing. We grant that there may sometimes be an extreme even in this, and that the enemy may take an advantage to confine our attention so to our unworthiness, as almost to prevent our application to Christ as the Savior. But true, genuine humility is of a calm, peaceful, happy nature. Yes, if happiness is to be found anywhere, it is in that bosom where humility reigns. Humility is the grand key to contentment; and a man can only be at peace as he is humble. With such a character, afflictions are met without repining, and borne without impatience. Duties are not thought hard, nor crosses unnecessary. Contentment, meekness, forbearance, patience, kindness--are the lovely train that attend the abodes of humility, while they adorn and bless its happy subject.

The value of the grace of humility is strikingly represented in the word of God. "Though the Lord be high—yet he has respect unto the lowly." "He gives grace to the lowly." "Thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." "Be clothed with humility."

Of this grace, an old divine quaintly remarks: "Humility is the first step in Jacob's ladder—the foundation of virtue—the basis of goodness—the center of rest—the ballast of the soul—a man's truest grandeur—a way by which we exalt ourselves by descending. Humility is a tree whose roots the deeper they spread in the ground, the higher its branches extend towards Heaven."

Lord, if you your grace impart,  
Poor in spirit, meek in heart,  
I shall as my Master be  
Rooted in humility.

Simple, teachable, and mild,  
Changed into a little child,  
Pleased with all the Lord provides,  
Weaned from all the world besides.

Father, fix my soul on thee;  
Every evil let me flee,  
Nothing want, beneath, above;  
Happy in redeeming love!

HUMILITY ILLUSTRATED BY ANECDOTES.

Real Christians cannot forbear contrasting the pollution of their nature—with the infinite purity of God; their defective virtues—with his unblemished excellencies; their weak graces and imperfect services—with those perfect glories that adorn his character, and with that perfection of purity and obedience which his law requires. As, in the bright beams of the noon-day sun, innumerable atoms, before unseen, become clearly visible, and are seen floating in the air—so, in the presence of Jehovah, innumerable defects, and faults, and sins, perhaps before unseen, become conspicuous in the view of the soul. Angels veil their faces in his presence; and the most exalted saints sink before him, into the lowest depths of self-abasement.

The eminently pious Doddridge, expressing his feelings, not long before the close of a life of distinguished usefulness, and activity, said, "My confidence is, not that I have lived such or such a life, or served God in this or the other manner; I know of no prayer I ever offered, no service I ever performed, but there has been such a mixture of what was wrong in it, that, instead of recommending me to the favor of God, I needed his pardon, through Christ, for the same. Yet I am full of confidence; and this is my confidence; there is a hope set before me; I have fled, I still fly, for refuge to that hope."

Usher stated, "Men little understand what sanctification and the new creature mean; it is no less than for a man to be brought to an entire resignation of his own will to the will of God, and to live in the offering up of his heart continually in the flames of love, as a whole burnt, offering to Christ."

When a Christian, eminent for charity, had conferred some help upon an orphan, a lady, who received it, said, "When he is old enough, I will teach him to name and thank his benefactor." "Stop," said he, "you are mistaken; we do not thank the clouds for the rain. Teach him to look higher, and thank him who gives both the clouds and the rain."

When a friend was endeavoring to comfort the eminently useful Richard Baxter, on his death-bed, by reminding him of the good done by his preaching and writings, he replied, "I was but a pen in God's hand. What praise is due to a pen?" So, whatever you are, or ever may be, God is the source of your graces; praise should be his, and humility yours.

Sir Ralph Abercrombie said, "To be the humble instrument in the office of an elder, of putting the tokens of my Savior's dying love into the hands of one of the meanest of his followers, I conceive to be the highest honor that I can receive on this side Heaven."

Dr. Waugh used frequently to introduce to Mr. Newton, such of his Scottish brethren as happened to visit London, and who were naturally anxious to see that distinguished writer and excellent man. On one of those occasions, Dr. Waugh said, "Well, sir, I have brought another of my northern friends to see you." "Alas, my brother," said the venerable Newton, "I was once a wild lion on the coast of Africa; there God took me, and tamed me, and brought me to London; and now you come to see me, as they do lions in a cage."

Two or three years before the death of this estimable minister of Christ, when his sight had become so dim that he was no longer able to read, an aged friend, and brother in the ministry, called on him to breakfast. Family prayer succeeding, the portion of the scripture of the day was read to him, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." It was the good man's custom, on these occasions, to make a few short remarks on the passage read. After the reading of this text, he paused for some moments, and then uttered the following affecting soliloquy, "I am not what I ought to be! Ah! how imperfect and deficient! I am not what I wish to be! I abhor that which is evil, and I would cleave to what is good! I am not what I hope to be! Soon, soon, I shall put off mortality, and, with mortality, all sin and imperfection! Yet, though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be—I can truly say, I am not what I once was, a slave to sin and Satan; and I can heartily join with the apostle, and acknowledge, 'By the grace of God, I am what I am!' Let us pray."

A Good Conscience

The Christian will find a good conscience towards God and men, of singular importance, as a source of consolation. For what is conscience?

The mildest balsam, or the sharpest steel,  
That wounds can wish, or the unwounded feel;  
The softest pillow, or the sharpest rod,

The balm of blessing, or the scourge of God!

Conscience does the work of a monitor and a judge. In some cases, conscience is like an eloquent and fair-spoken judge, who declaims not against the criminal, but condemns him justly. In others, the judge is more angry, and affrights the prisoner more; but the outcome is the same. For in those sins where the conscience affrights, as in those which she affrights not, supposing the sins equal but of differing natures, there is no other difference but that conscience is a clock, which in one man strikes aloud and gives warning; and, in another, the hand points silently to the figure, but strikes not. By this he may as surely see what the other hears—that his hours pass away, and death hastens, and, after death, comes judgment.

A good conscience is only to be enjoyed by having such an application of the blood of Jesus to the soul, as shall fully convince the conscience that God can, and does, forgive sin, and justify sinners, in perfect harmony with all of his attributes. And without this, whatever men may speak of a good conscience, they labor under a gross delusion, and are saying, "peace, peace, when God has not spoken peace."

But the Christian also receives grace to enable him to guard against the accusations of conscience, with regard to sins of omission and commission; to be upon terms of peace with God's great representative within; to lie down, at night, upon the pillow of peace, and to rise, in the morning, with the sun shining in upon the mind, whether it shines into the room or not.

Some grasp at riches; others seek great things; but the Christian's highest object is that things be kept right in the conscience that, whatever storm may beat abroad, it may be peace at home; that whatever censures without, there may be a friend and advocate within; in other words, "that the heart may not condemn."

It is the Gospel hope of a blessed eternity, that supports the conscientious exercises of a godly man's mind. Hence, says an Apostle, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man." "Herein," in what? What went before, "Hope towards God, of a resurrection both of the just and the unjust." In other words, the great doctrine of eternity, and hope towards God, through Jesus Christ, of enjoying a blessed eternity. And these are the two things that give weight and authority to conscience, and energy to the exercises of the soul towards it.

If you expected to die like one of the brutes, and had nothing to look for beyond death, you would think it of little consequence whether you acted agreeably to conscience, or not. In some instances, it would be prudent to do so; in others, you might gain in the worldly sense of the word, by violating conscience. It is eternity that gives conscience all its weight! You will rise again—there is a world after this. If there were no Savior and no Scripture promises; if eternity were but a dark and dreadful gulf, you would have nothing to feed a daily regard to conscience. You would say, What does it avail? What end does it answer? It will all end in the blackness of darkness and despair. But it is hope towards God that supports the struggle; that feeds the exercises of the Christian's mind. Happy are those who have a good conscience! Sweet will be their dying moments, and triumphant their appearance before their Judge.

Hence Bishop Taylor observes; "There is no bed so soft, no flower so sweet, so fragrant and delicious, as a good conscience, in which springs all that is delectable, all that may sustain and recreate our spirits."

Upon this pillow, and on this bed, Christ slept soundly in a storm; and Peter, in a prison, slept so soundly, that the brightness of an angel could not awaken him, or make him rise up, without a touch on his side. A good conscience refreshed the sorrows of Hezekiah, when he was smitten with the plague; and not only brought pleasure for what was past, and so doubled the good of it, but it also added something to the number of his years. A good conscience made Paul and Silas sing in prison, and in an earthquake. Bernard said, "A good conscience is here a perpetual comfort; it will be hereafter an eternal crown."

Oh! how secure and blessed are they  
Who feel the joy of pardoned sin!  
Should storms of wrath shake earth or sea,  
Their minds have Heaven and peace within.

An old divine quaintly remarks: "A good conscience is a continual feast—a perpetual melody—a paradise of contentment within one's self—a thousand witnesses—a sweet companion—a cordial friend—a bed of down—secure armor—an inward antidote—an impregnable fortress—a tower of defense—the center of security—the root of bliss—the soul in embraces—the heart of life—a sweet singing bird in one's own bosom, drowning all the harsher notes of outward discord—a temple, wherein, retired, a man may adore the eternal God, undisturbed with the amazement and confusions of the world—an enchanted tower, surrounded always with the charms of love, and securing the soul from foreign tyranny—Elisha's salt and Elisha's meal, cast into the pot of sour gourds, and expelling death. It is the smile of Heaven, and the face of God shining in the soul."

Divine Providence

Your Providence is kind and large.  
Both man and beast your bounty share.  
The whole creation is your charge;  
But saints are your peculiar care.

All things on earth, and all in Heaven,  
On your eternal will depend;  
And all for greater good were given;  
And all shall in your glory end.

If ever opinion was fraught with more than ordinary absurdity and cruelty, it is that which, excluding the Divine Being from the government of the world he has formed, represents it as abandoned to the sport of a blind and uncertain chance. For, were it possible to conceive that Infinite Wisdom knows not our affairs; or that, supremely happy in himself, the God of unbounded love does not concern himself about them; could it be credited that, of him "who fills all things," the world is empty; while we gaze upon "the fatherless void," we might exclaim as Paul did, under a supposition not more abhorrent to truth, "We are of all men most miserable!"

Another sentiment upon this subject is entertained, which, if more feasible, is not less scripturally incorrect. It is the theory which represents the Almighty in all the infinite grandeur of his character, and only condescending to afford mankind some general and undefined regards; and his government as a mere mechanical agency, controlled by certain immutable laws, which admit not of one peculiar or benevolent attention. Persons of an infidel character have attempted to derive support to such views, from the consideration of man's comparative insignificance. In the flowery numbers and classic style of poetry, we have been taught

The Universal Cause  
Acts not by partial, but by general, laws.  
He sees, with equal eye, as Lord of all,  
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall;  
Systems or atoms into nothing hurled,  
And now a bubble burst, and now a world."

But do not these lines contain an awful reflection upon God? It is true that a thinking man, contemplating the grandeur of the Creator, may, for a moment, be tempted to question the individuality of his intentions. Led by the discoveries of science, the imagination may travel from world to world and system to system, amidst the still increasing magnificence of the Divine formations, until our earth becomes an indiscernible speck, and appears to bear no more proportion to the other productions of creative energy, than a single leaf compared to the foliage of a widely extended forest. Amid the illimitable expanse around, we may feel ourselves dwindle into nothingness, and, with somewhat of the hesitancy of unbelief, may ask, "What is man, that you are mindful of him?"

But, be it remembered that little and great are distinctions of finite minds, which will bear no correct application to the Divine Being; and when we consider that he "fills all in all," that he is at the same moment everywhere, then no object can be too minute for his attention; and while he "hangs the earth over the empty space," and wheels planets in their orbits; he, with no less regard, superintends "the flutterings of the bee," and directs the smallest corpuscle of blood that flits through the veins of the smallest animalcule.

One difficulty is opposed, by some, to the subject of a particular providence; namely, the apparent disorder that exists in many providential arrangements. But of this we are incompetent to judge because we cannot embrace the whole circumference of the Divine proceeding. The mighty chain of his dealings seems often intercepted and broken; but, when we are enabled to trace up the chain of causes and events to their ultimate tendencies, to look along the line to its termination, everything will demonstrate the perfection of a Divine agency.

At present, "we know" only "in part." The infinite combinations and workings of the admirable machinery, which, to the eye of the artist, are simplicity itself, may seem to us mere complicated machinery; but when, in the light of eternity, and with an eye strengthened by the vision of God, we look through the perplexing movements, then everything will appear honorable to the wisdom and benevolence of him who, in adoring wonder, we shall perceive, "has done all things well."

"Clouds and darkness are round about him; but justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne."

Every difficulty, however, with which this subject is perplexed, gives place to the authority of God; it is sufficient for the believer to know that the doctrine of a particular providence is pre-eminently that of the scriptures. It is true that the tender mercies of God are over all his works—that he cares for all of his creatures, animate and inanimate. "He makes the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice." He covers the fields with abundance. He "crowns the year with his goodness." He beams forth in the spring, and approaches us in the bounties of summer, and loads us with the profusion of autumn. During the stormy winter, the insignificant sparrow, chirping on the hedge, "falls not to the ground without his notice." He "feeds the young ravens" and "cares for oxen." "The eyes of all wait upon him; and he gives them their food in due season."

Incomparably beautiful in this view, is the language of Christ to his disciples, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them."

But the arrangements of Providence, like the dispensations of grace, concern man more immediately. God has made man capable of knowing and loving himself. In the visitations that meet him, the Christian can recognize his Father; and, through the channel of benevolent communication made to him, man can return to the source of all his blessings. And man needs the most effective expressions of divine attention. Immortals, standing on the brink of eternity, and yet ignorant of the events of the next hour; capable of celestial enjoyments, but placed in circumstances inimical to their attainment; surrounded with enemies, and incident to a thousand unseen calamities—how wretched would be their lot, if they were left to struggle alone with their difficulties! Unworthy as men are—yet Providence is cooperating with grace to save them.

In what period has God left himself "without witness, doing good, sending rain and fruitful seasons, and filling men's hearts with food and gladness?" To what part of the world has he not gone forth in expressions of beneficence and mercy; shining in the splendor of the sun, instructing by the pale glory of the moon, and by the luminous splendor of the stars? In everything, the Lord is regarding the interests of man!

God is the Savior of all men, but especially of those that believe. This is true as it regards Divine Providence.

His saints are lovely in his sight.  
He views his children with delight.  
He sees their hope; he knows their fear.  
He looks, and loves his image there.

Happily, on a point of so much consequence, we are not left to mere conjectures. Had we no express declarations on the subject, we might indeed, safely rest it upon deduction; and an inference the most obvious, drawn from the most simple premises, would immediately offer itself; an inference from the divine interest in us. Shall not the Maker care for his works? Does the potter form his vessel, that it may be instantly dashed to pieces by the first crude hand that may touch it? Does the artist employ his pains and skill in constructing an intricate piece of art, and then abandon it to the sport of a blind or malevolent curiosity?

But God has expended, upon believers, wonders of wisdom and goodness. He has done more; he has made them miracles of mercy—and can he cease to feel interested in their welfare? Similar, on this subject, was the reasoning of the adorable Redeemer, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them falls to the ground, without your Father. You are of more value than many sparrows."

Lo! the lilies of the field,  
How their leaves instruction yield!  
Hark to Nature's lesson given  
By the blessed birds of Heaven!

Every bush and tufted tree  
Warbles sweet philosophy:  
Mortal, fly from doubt and sorrow.  
God provides for the morrow!

Say, with richer crimson glows  
The kingly mantle than the rose?  
Say, have kings more wholesome fare  
Than we, poor citizens of air?

Barns nor hoarded grain have we;  
Yet we carol merrily.  
Mortal, fly from doubt and sorrow.  
God provides for the morrow!

One there lives, whose guardian eye  
Guides our humble destiny.  
One there lives, who, Lord of all,  
Keeps our feathers lest they fall.

Pass we blithely then the time,  
Fearless of the snare and lime,  
Free from doubt and faithless sorrow.  
God provides for the morrow!

The doctrine of Divine Providence is not a subject involving the least uncertainty. It is revealed is the most explicit terms. Direct your attention to the scriptures, where the subject is fully established. "Fear not, Abram; I am your shield and your exceeding great reward." But was this gracious promise confined? No, it applies to all God's people. For "those who are of faith are Abram's seed, and heirs according to promise." Again, "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in a waste-howling wilderness; he led him about; he instructed him; he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirs up her nest, flutters over her young, spreads abroad her wings, takes them, bears them on her wings—so the Lord alone led him."

This, you say, refers to the Israelites; recollect, however, that "the things which happened to them, were examples." In the Psalms it is said, "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous; and his ears are open to their prayers." "He shall deliver you; you shall not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flies by day, nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor for the destruction that wastes at noon-day." Psalm 91:5, 6. "Because he has set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him." Psalm 91:14. "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the fiery furnace. God sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him." Daniel 3:17, 22. Job says, "He shall deliver you in six troubles, and in seven there shall no evil touch you." These are some of the passages indicative of providential deliverances. The scriptures abound with such instances.

The above passages are principally from the Old Testament. In the New Testament, this doctrine, like that of immortality, shines still more refulgence; and the sermons of our Lord, and the epistles of his apostles, are in perfect match with the above passages recommended to notice.

Whence this fruitless mourning? Christians, why those tears? Why give way to sadness, doubts, and anxious fears?

Grieve no more, desponding one—on your God rely.  
Mark, He feeds the ravens. hears their young ones cry.  
Harvests shoot and ripen, nurtured by his hand.  
Showers refresh, and sunshine warms, at his command.

He the spotless lilies clothes in dazzling white.  
Say, what monarch's splendor half so pure and bright?  
Since the birds and flowers are objects of his care,  
Much more, Jesus tells us, saints his love shall share.

Friends, away with sadness; waste not thus your days.  
God's unnumbered mercies call for rapturous praise.  
Though we all have sinned, Jesus for us died.  
All things thus are given us; God is on our side.

E'en our sharpest griefs are messages of love.  
Be patient, yes, be joyful; raise your hearts above.

Is it asked, Do the Divine proceedings correspond with this language? Appeal to facts. The subject derives the most ample illustration from experience. A few instances may suffice for selection. Refer to the history of Joseph. The preference of Jacob had rendered Joseph obnoxious to his brethren's hatred. When sent to the fields of Dothan to inquire after their welfare, the brutal brothers seized the opportunity of revenging the preference of their father, upon the innocent object of his affections; and "Joseph was sold into Egypt." To conceal their crime from the aged patriarch, they dyed Joseph's coat in the blood of a goat, and set out towards the valley of Hebron, the family residence.

Behold the venerable patriarch ascending the hill, then looking wistfully towards Dothan, and, as if boding some ill, retiring thoughtfully to his home. At length, the ten sons make their appearance; he directs to them his inquiring eye, and has scarcely asked for Joseph, when they produce the blood-stained robe, and, with all the apathy of guilt, say, "Behold! this have we found; know now whether it be your son's coat or not!" He replied, "It is my son's coat. Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces—some evil beast has devoured him. I will go down to the grave unto my son, mourning."

His tears were scarcely wiped, his wounds not yet closed, when his sons, returning from Egypt, where they had been to purchase grain to support them during the famine, informed their father that unless young Benjamin returned with them to Egypt, the governor would sell them no more grain. Jacob might well reply, "How was it you dealt so ill with me, as to tell the man you had a brother? Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and now you will take Benjamin away! All these things are against me! You will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave!" Stop, venerable patriarch, Stop! God "cares for you." "Joseph is yet alive, and is governor of Egypt."

And when, a few weeks after, Jacob had embraced the long lost-exile on the plains of Goshen, he heard the same from his own lips, "God has sent me before you, to save your lives by a great deliverance."

Again, we also find that Laban and Esau came against Jacob, with designs of mischief; but, by Divine Providence, their hands were restrained. Genesis 31:24.

Balaam ran greedily, for reward, to curse Israel; but Providence fettered him with effectual bonds of restraint. Numbers 22:25, 38.

Injuries done to God's people have been avenged by the inflictions of Divine Providence. Hence the pious Flavel remarks,

"Pharaoh and the Egyptians were cruel enemies to God's Israel, and designed the murder of their innocent babes; and God repaid it, in smiting all the first-born of Egypt, in one night." Exodus12:19.

Haman erected a gallows, fifty cubits high, for good Mordecai; and God so ordered it that himself and his ten sons were hanged on it.

Ahithophel plots against David, and gives counsel, like an oracle, how to procure his fall; and that very counsel, like a surcharged gun, recoils upon himself, and procures his ruin; for, seeing his counsel rejected, it was now easy for him to guess at the outcome, and so at his own fate. 2 Samuel 17:23.

Charles the Ninth most inhumanly made the very canals of Paris to stream with Protestant blood; and, soon after, he died miserably, his blood streaming from all parts of his body.

Stephen Gardiner, who burnt so many of God's dear servants to ashes, was himself so scorched up by a terrible inflammation, that his very tongue was black, and hung out of his mouth; and, in dreadful torments, he ended his wretched days.

Maximinius, "that cruel emperor who set forth his proclamation, engraved in brass, for the utter abolishing of the Christian religion, was speedily smitten, like Herod, with a dreadful judgment; swarms of maggots preying upon his entrails, and causing such a stench, that his physicians could not endure to come near him, and, for refusing it, were slain.

The same arm which Jeroboam stretched out to smite the prophet, God smote.

The Emperor Aurelian, when he was ready to subscribe the edict for the persecution of the Christians, was suddenly cramped in his knuckles, that he could not write.

Henry the Second of France, in a great rage against a Protestant counselor, committed him to the hands of one of his nobles, to be imprisoned, and that with these words, that he would see him burnt with his own eyes. But mark the righteous Providence of God! Within a few days after, the same nobleman, with a lance put into his hands by the king, did, at a sword match, run it into one of the king's eyes, whereof he died.

Yes, Providence has made the very place of sinning, the place of punishment. 1 Kings 21.19. "In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick your blood;" and it was exactly fulfilled. 2 Kings 11.26.

Thus Tophet was made a burying place for the Jews, until there was no room to bury; and that was the place where they offered up their sons to Moloch.

We find a multitude of providences so timed, to a minute, that, had they occurred either sooner or, later, they would have been comparatively of little importance. Certainly it cannot be accident, but counsel, that so exactly meets the opportunity. Accidents keep no rules.

How remarkable, to this purpose, were the tidings brought to Saul, that the Philistines had invaded the land, just when he was ready to grasp his prey! 1 Samuel 23.27.

The angel calls to Abraham, and shows him another sacrifice, just when his hand was giving the fatal stroke to Isaac. Genesis 22.10, 11.

A well of water is revealed to Hagar, just when she has left her child, not being able to witness his death. Genesis 21.16, 19.

Rabshakeh meets with a blasting providence, hears a rumor that frustrated his design, just when ready to give the shock against Jerusalem. Isaiah 27.7, 8.

So, when Haman's plot against the Jews was ripe, and all things ready for the execution, on "that night could not the king sleep." Esther 6:1.

When the horns are ready to gore Judah, immediately carpenters are prepared to fray them away. Zechariah 1:18-21.

How remarkable was the relief of Rochelle, by a shoal of fish that came into the harbor, when they were ready to perish with famine, such as they never observed before nor after that time.

Dr. Tate and his wife, in the Irish rebellion, flying through the woods, with a nursing child, which was just ready to expire, the mother, going to rest it upon a rock, puts her hand upon a bottle of warm milk, by which it was preserved.

A godly woman told me that, being driven to a great extremity, all her supplies failing, she was exceedingly plunged into unbelieving doubts and fears, not seeing whence supplies should come; when lo, at that very time, by turning over some things in a chest, she unexpectedly found a piece of gold, which supplied her present needs, until God opened another door of supply.

If these things fall out accidentally, how is it they observe time so very exactly, as that it is become proverbial, in Scripture, Genesis 22.14, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

Were these things accidental and contingent, how can it be that they should happen so immediately upon, and consonantly to, the prayers of the saints; so that, in many providences, they are able to discern a very clear answer to their prayers, and are sure they have the petitions they asked of him? 1 John 5.15.

Thus, when the sea divided itself, just upon Israel's cry to Heaven. Exodus 14.10.

When so signal a victory was given to Asa, immediately upon that pathetical cry to Heaven, Help us, O Lord our God! 2 Chronicles 14.11, 12.

When Ahithophel hanged himself, just upon that prayer of distressed David. 2 Samuel 15.31.

When Haman fell, and his plot was broken, just upon the fast kept by Mordecai and Esther. Esther 4.16.

Our own Mr. Speed, in his history of Britain, tells us that Richard I. besieged a castle with his army. They offered to surrender, if he would spare their lives. He refused, and threatened to hang them all. Upon this, a soldier shot his bow, making first his prayer to God that he would direct the shot, and deliver the innocent from oppression; it struck the king, whereof he died, and they were delivered.

Abraham's servant prayed for success; and see bow it was answered. Genesis 20 4:45.

Peter was cast into prison, and prayer was made for him by the church; and see the event. Acts 7.5-7, 12.

I could easily add, to these, the wonderful examples of the return of prayers which was observed in Luther, and Dr. Winter in Ireland, and many more; but I judge it needless, because most Christians have a stock of experience of their own, and are well assured that many of the providences that befall them, are, and can be, no other than the return of their prayers.

And now, who can be dissatisfied in this point, that wisely considers these things? Must we not conclude, as it is in Job 36.7, "He withdraws not his eye from the righteous;" and as 2 Chronicles 16.9, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him?" His providences proclaim him to be a God hearing prayers.

The following Anecdotes illustrate and confirm the providence of God in preserving the lives of his people.

At the time of the Irish massacre of the Protestants, in 1641, there lived in the city of Dublin, a Protestant family, named Blacket, who had a Catholic servant. She was fully aware of the awful work of murder which was about to commence; and, though apparently unconcerned about the safety of the family in general, she had an ardent attachment to an infant child which she had for some time taken care of. When she put this child to bed, one evening, she was overheard by someone of the family, to weep with bitterness, and to say, "My dear Henry, I must sleep with you no more." This, being reported to the parents, excited an alarm. The girl was called and examined; and, at length, after much pressing, her affection for the child triumphed over superstition; she disclosed the fact of the massacre which was to take place at midnight, and thus afforded them an opportunity to escape, which they immediately embraced. They came to England. That child grew up; labored, for many years, in the county of Durham, as an able minister of Jesus Christ; and some of his descendants are yet living to promote that holy cause in the world.

When Dr. Adam Clarke was a lad, he resided with his father, in Ireland, and, on one occasion, was most remarkably preserved from drowning. He was a fearless youth, and went on horseback to a fine river which poured itself into the sea. Going farther into the water than he at first intended, they were swamped; he became disengaged from the animal, and lost all consciousness of being alive. After some time had elapsed, he found himself, he knew not how, sitting in the water, near the shore, to which place the tide must have conveyed him. The air, acting again on his lungs, produced considerable pain. He always considered that his life was, in a sense, then renewed. It made a deep impression on his mind; and, at the distance of sixty years from that time, he gave a full account of the affair, while preaching before the Royal Humane Society.

A creditable historian tells us that, about one hundred and fifty years ago, there was an earthquake in Switzerland, by which part of a mountain was thrown down, which fell upon a village that stood under it, and crushed every house and inhabitant to atoms, except the corner of one cottage, where the master of the house, with his poor family, were together, praying unto God.

Samuel Procter was trained up in the use of religious ordinances, and, in early life, felt some religious impressions. He afterwards enlisted for a soldier in the first regiment of foot guards, and was made a grenadier. Notwithstanding this, the impressions made upon his mind continued; and the fear of the Lord, as a guardian angel, attended him through the changing scenes of life. There were a few in the regiment who met for pious and devotional exercises; he cast in his lot among them. He took part in the struggle on the plains of Waterloo, in the year 1815, and always carried a small Bible in one pocket, and his hymn book in the other. In the evening of June 16, in the tremendous conflict just mentioned, his regiment was ordered to dislodge the French from a forest, of which they had taken possession, and from which they annoyed the allied army. While thus engaged, he was thrown by force, a distance of four or five yards, for which he could not account at the time; but, when he came to examine his Bible, he saw, with overwhelming gratitude to the Preserver of his life, what it was that had thus driven him. A musket-ball had struck his hip, where his Bible rested in his pocket, and penetrated nearly half through that sacred book. All who saw the ball, said that it would undoubtedly have killed him, had it not been for the Bible, which served as a shield. The Bible was kept as a sacred deposit, and laid up in his house, like the sword of Goliath in the tabernacle. "That Bible," said Procter, "has twice saved me, instrumentally—from darkness and condemnation, and from the shot of the French, at the battle of Waterloo. It was the first Bible I ever had of my own; and I will keep it as long as I live."

During the rebellion of Ireland, in 1793, the rebels had long meditated an attack on the Moravian settlement at Grace Hill, Wexford. At length, they put their threat into execution; and a large body of them marched to the town. When they arrived there, they saw no one in the streets nor in the houses. The brethren had long expected this attack; but, true to their Christian profession, they would not have recourse to arms for their defense, but assembled in their chapel, and, in solemn prayer, besought Him in whom they trusted, to be their shield in the hour of danger. The ruffian band, hitherto breathing nothing but destruction and slaughter, were astonished at this novel sight. Where they expected armed hands, they saw them clasped in prayer, and the whole body of men bending before the Prince of Peace. They heard the prayer for protection, the request for mercy to be extended to their murderers, and the song of praise and confidence in the sure promise of the Lord. They beheld all in silence; they were unable to raise a hand against them; and, after having for a night and a day lingered about, they marched away, without having injured a single individual, or stolen a loaf of bread. This singular mark of the protection of Heaven, induced the inhabitants of the neighborhood to bring their goods, and ask for the protection of these Christians.

Vavasor Powell was one of those devoted ministers who, in the seventeenth century, were grievously persecuted. In an account written of the trials and mercies he experienced, he tells us that two of the enemies of religion, on one occasion severely beat him; one of whom, with a cudgel, greatly wounded him, but his life was preserved; that, at another time, four armed men waylaid him, intending to kill him, but were unexpectedly discovered by two strangers, who dispersed them. One of these persecutors that very day became, under Mr. Powell's preaching, convinced of his sin; and refrained ever after from persecution. At another period, a poor man took an oath to kill him; but, after several ineffectual attempts to accomplish his purpose, he went to hear Mr. Powell deliver a sermon, in which he so delightfully held up Christ as the Savior of the worst of sinners, that his heart was melted; he entreated Mr. Powell to pray for him, and became his friend. On another occasion, he was apprehended while preaching; and on his way to the Magistrate, he so preached as to be the instrument of causing one of his greatest enemies to weep; and, when they arrived at the house of the magistrate, and found him from home, he preached even there; and the impression on the minds of his two daughters was such, that they became his intercessors, and he was released.

A godly man, some years ago, wished to visit France; but, on his way to the ship, he broke his leg, by which he was disappointed of his voyage. The ship was lost, and all on board perished. On hearing these facts, he was thankful for his broken leg, and saw that what was a disappointment at the time, was sent, by the God of love, to preserve his life. Little trials, as in this case, are often sent to prevent greater ones.

Thomas Wills, several years a minister of Cornwall, and afterwards of Silver Street Chapel, in London, and who died in 1802, once related, from the pulpit, the following fact:

A young woman was strongly tempted to destroy herself; and so far did the temptation succeed, that she went to the river, to put the dreadful plan into execution. While, however, she was adjusting her clothes, that they might not float, she felt her Bible, and took it out of her pocket, to look into it, for the last time. The passage, "My grace is sufficient for you," 2 Corinthians 12.9, attracted her attention, impressed her mind, and induced her to return home, praising God for having delivered her from temptation.

The relation of this circumstance, remarkable as it was in itself, was still more so in its results. A man and his wife happened to be present, who were living in a state of constant enmity; and their habitation was a scene of confusion and discord. The wife, one evening, left her house, to go to the river to drown herself; but, as it was rather too light for the accomplishment of her purpose, she stepped, for a little while, into the place where Mr. Wills was preaching, and heard him relate the preceding anecdote. She heard with attention, and returned home, quite an altered woman. Her husband looked at her with surprise; for her countenance, which before indicated great malevolence, seemed to manifest the meekness of a lamb. He asked her where she had been. She told him; when he further inquired, "Did you see me there?" She replied, "No." He added, "But I was; and, blessed be God, I found his grace sufficient for me also." The reality of the change which each of them now felt, was evidenced in their future lives, which were such as befit the gospel of Christ. May every reader seek the grace which is able to make him happy amidst the trials of life, and to prepare him for the joys of the world to come.

The following anecdotes illustrate the Providence of God in the conversion of sinners.

William Tennant, formerly a very eminent minister of the Gospel in New England, once took much pains to prepare a sermon, to convince a celebrated infidel of the truth of Christianity; but, in attempting to deliver this labored discourse, he was so confused as to be compelled to stop, and close the service by prayer. This unexpected failure, in one who had so often astonished the unbeliever with the force of his eloquence, led the infidel to reflect that Mr. Tennant had been, at other times, aided by a Divine power. This reflection proved the means of his conversion. Thus God accomplished, by silence, what his servant wished to effect by persuasive preaching. Mr. Tennant used afterwards to say, his dumb sermon was one of the most profitable sermons that he had ever delivered.

Cornelius Winter, who was a very useful minister of the last century, had, when a young man, often heard the celebrated Whitefield preach, with much pleasure, without deriving any real advantage; but, one night, while playing at cards with some of his fellow-servants, the thought presented itself to his mind, that he might, that evening, hear his favorite preacher. He broke off from play, in the midst of the game, which much enraged his companions, who suspected where he was going. He tells us that it was a night much to be remembered. He had reason to hope the scales of ignorance were then removed from his eyes, a sense of his misery was excited, and an earnest inquiry was made by him after the way of salvation. It is scarcely necessary to say that he never, after this time, played at cards.

When Charles Buck was once preaching in Silver Street Chapel, a sailor, passing along, seeing an entrance which seemed to lead to a place of worship, thought within himself, "I am shortly going to sea; I shall perhaps never have another opportunity; I'll go in." During the sermon, something so deeply impressed his mind, that he determined to inquire the name of the preacher, which he never forgot. He went to sea, and all his impressions wore away; but, after he returned, he was ill, and was visited by some pious gentlemen, who found him very ignorant. He acknowledged his neglect of divine things, but said there was a religion that he liked, and that was what he once heard a Mr. Buck preach at Silver Street Chapel. They continued their visits, and at length witnessed his happy death. One of his last expressions was, "I now take my cable, and fix it on my anchor, Jesus, and go through the storm." But what makes this circumstance more interesting is, that the landlord of the house where this sailor was lodging, was himself brought to a state of repentance, by listening at his door, to hear what was going on between this man and his pious visitors.

In the seventeenth century, Mr. Vennor, being a constable at Warwick, was called on, with others, one Lord's day, to break up a religious assembly, and take the attendants into custody. They went with their prisoners to the court-house, to wait for the magistrates; but, from some cause or other, they did not come; and each constable, therefore, agreed to take a prisoner home with him to dine. Through the blessing of God on the conversation of the prisoner, that day, Mr. Vennor was brought to the acknowledgment of the truth of the gospel.

A man in Yorkshire once saw a book by the puritan Richard Alleine at a sale. He coveted the book, and stole it; but, on taking it home and reading it, it proved the means of his conversion to God. He then honestly took it back to its original owner, acknowledged his crime in stealing it, but blessed God who had overruled it for the salvation of his soul.

A young man, who was employed in a large manufactory, was frequently made the butt of ridicule by his companions, because he would not join in their drinking parties and Sunday frolics. Among these people, the, foreman was most prominent. One day, as the youthful Christian was at prayer, he was overheard by this foreman, who found that he was himself the subject of the young man's supplications. He was presenting to God the hardness and infidelity of his heart, and earnestly imploring for him the blessings of repentance and faith. The foreman, who had never known anything of the true nature of prayer before, was deeply impressed with what he heard, and wondered at the eloquence and fervor with which his own unhappy case had been pleaded before God. "I never," said he to himself, "thus prayed to God for myself." The next day, he entreated the instructions of the young man, and earnestly begged his prayers for him. They knelt down together, cried to the God of all grace, and found acceptance with him. From that day, they were bosom friends, went together to the house of God, and frequently united in their prayers and thanksgivings. Their conduct adorned their profession; and the mocker became a confessor of the grace which he had so often abused and turned into ridicule.

Lady Huntingdon once spoke to a workman who was repairing a garden wall, and pressed him to thoughtfulness on the state of his soul. Some years afterwards, she was speaking to another man, on the same subject, and said, "Thomas, I fear you never pray, nor look to Jesus Christ for salvation." "Your ladyship is mistaken," said the man; "I heard what passed between you and James, at such a time; and the word you designed for him, took effect on me." "How did you hear it?" "I heard it on the other side of the garden, through a hole in the wall, and shall never forget the impression I received."

Soon after the late excellent Mr. Robinson, of Leicester, commenced his ministry in the Isle of Ely, he was driven, by tempestuous weather, into a house near the village of Coveney. He endeavored, according to his usual custom, to improve the incident, to the spiritual advantage of those among whom he had fallen. Enjoying a singular felicity in availing himself of passing events, and being always on the watch to speak for God, he could make the occasion preach for him, by eliciting the most affecting truths from the simplest occurrences. A poor woman happened to be in the cottage into which he was thus driven, who afterwards confessed that she had been, for some time, meditating to kill herself; but so impressive was his conversation, that she was diverted from her purpose, embraced new views and principles, and became an eminent Christian.

John Cooke, of Maidenhead, was once called on to preach at the opening of a chapel. Six years afterwards, a man came to him, after preaching at Bristol, and told him that, at the period first referred to, he belonged to an awfully wicked society called "the hell-fire club," the members of which always endeavored to coin a new oath for each evening on which they met. As this man was walking towards his club, he was asking himself what sin he had not committed; resolving he would commit it before he went to bed. His attention was arrested by the lights of the chapel and the voice of the preacher. After some hesitation whether he should enter the chapel, for sport, now, or as he returned from the club, he determined on the former. He entered as the preacher was repeating his text, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; and whoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come." He described the nature of the sin, the reason why it was unpardonable; showed who had not committed it; and proved that their sins might be pardoned. The man went home, locked himself in his bedroom, fell on his knees, thanked God he was out of Hell, and prayed for the pardon which he was delighted to know he might yet receive, though he had often wished to die, that he might know the worst of Hell. He read, prayed, heard the gospel, looked by faith to Christ, and soon enjoyed a sense of pardon, and the privilege of friendship with God. In his case he considered,

Jehovah here Resolved to show  
What his almighty grace could do.

The supply of temporal needs by providence.

The believer has the firmest ground of confidence that all his temporal needs will be supplied, and that everything which can possibly conduce to his advantage, will be conferred on him, by his Almighty Friend and Father. But, Christians, you are not authorized to desire and expect great things for yourselves in this world; and, indeed, it must be evident to you that constant prosperity has so great a tendency to excise the envy, or enmity of others, and to feed the distempers of men's minds, that it adds nothing to the real enjoyment of life. But, if you have the security of the promise and providence of God, you are more sure never to lack anything really good for you, than that man is who possesses the greatest wealth; for riches often make themselves wings and flee away; but the Possessor of Heaven and earth, who has all hearts in his hand, can never be unable to provide for those who trust in him. "Bread shall be given them; their water shall be sure:" "truly they shall be fed:" their "Father knows what things they have need of;" and, "a little which the righteous has, is better than the riches of many wicked men." It is, therefore, the privilege and duty of every believer, to cast all his cares and burdens upon the Lord.

Mr. Colston, an eminent merchant of Bristol, who lived a century ago, was remarkable for his liberality to the poor, and equally distinguished for his success in commerce. The providence of God seemed to smile in a peculiar manner on the concerns of one who made so good a use of his affluence. It has been said that he never insured, nor ever lost, a ship. Once, indeed, a vessel belonging to him, on her voyage home, struck on a rock, and immediately sprang a leak, by which so much water was admitted as to threaten a speedy destruction. Means were instantly adopted to save the vessel; but all seemed ineffectual, as the water rose rapidly. In a short time, however, the leak stopped, without any apparent cause; and the vessel reached Bristol in safety. On examining her bottom, a dolphin, was found fast wedged in the fracture made by the rock, when she struck; which had prevented any water from entering, during the remainder of the voyage. As a memorial of this singular event, the figure of a dolphin is carved on the staves which are carried in procession, on public occasions, by the children who are educated at the charity schools founded by Mr. Colstone.

John Newton relates that many proofs had passed under his immediate notice, of the faithfulness of God, in answering the prayers of parents who had left behind them young and helpless children. He especially mentions a friend of his, a laborious Christian minister, in the west of England, in whose family the Divine promise was fulfilled. This godly man, when dying, was advised to make his will; but he replied, "I have nothing to leave but my wife and children, and I leave them to the care of my gracious God;" and, soon after, died happily. No prospect appeared for the support of his family; but the Lord disposed a man, who had always despised his preaching, to feel for his destitute family; and, by his means, £1,600 were raised for them; and the clergy of Exeter, who had never countenanced his ministry, gave his widow a house and garden for her life; so that she lived in greater ease and plenty than in the lifetime of her husband.

D. Anderson, formerly minister at Walton-upon-Thames, being the subject of persecution in England, in the year 1662, and apprehensive of the ascendancy of popery, removed to Middleburgh, in New Zealand. The little money he took with him was soon expended; and he was reduced, with his family, to very great poverty, which his modesty would not allow him to make known. In this perplexity, after he had been at prayer one morning with his family, his children asked for some bread for their breakfast; but he having none, nor money to buy any, they all burst into tears. While they were thus sorrowing together, the door bell rang. Mrs. Anderson went to the door, where she was met by a man who presented a small parcel, saying it had been sent by a gentleman, and that some provision would be sent in shortly. When they opened the paper, they found it to contain forty pieces of gold. Soon afterwards, a countryman arrived, with a horse-load of whatever could contribute to their comfort. These supplies were continued at intervals to his dying day, without his knowledge where they came from. It afterwards appeared that these kindnesses were shown by a pious merchant at Middleburgh; who, observing a grave English minister frequently walk the streets, with a dejected countenance, inquired privately into his circumstances, and sent him the gold by his apprentice, and the provision by, his country servant, saying, "God forbid that any of Christ's ambassadors should be strangers, and we not visit them, or in distress, and we not assist them;" at the same time expressly charging them to conceal his name.

Alfred the Great, who died in the year 900, was of a most amiable disposition, and, we would hope, of genuine piety. During his retreat at Athelney, in Somersetshire, after his defeat by the Danes, a beggar came to his little castle, and requested alms. His queen informed Alfred that they had but one small loaf remaining, which was insufficient for themselves and their friends, who were gone in search of food, though with little hope of success. The king replied, "Give the poor Christian one half of the loaf. He who could feed five thousand men with five loaves and two fish, can certainly make the half loaf suffice for more than our necessity." The poor man was accordingly relieved; and Alfred's people shortly after returned with a store of fresh provisions.

A venerable clergyman, in the west of England, of the name of Thompson, had annually, for many years, made it his custom to distribute the overplus of his farm among the poor of his parish, after having supplied the needs of his own household. One year, however, he was compelled to depart from this plan. His benevolence had led him to engage to give thirty pounds towards the erection of a chapel, in a town whose inhabitants needed more church-room. He was compelled, instead of giving his corn to the poor, to sell as much of it as would raise the sum promised. He regretted the circumstance, but it was unavoidable. Having thus procured the money, he left his home, to be the bearer of his own benefaction. On the road, he overtook a young lady, mounted on a single horse, like himself, whom he addressed with frankness and kindness. They traveled together over a hill, and found they were going to the same place. His conversation and manner won much on the respect of the young lady, who listened with attention to his serious and holy conversation. She learned his name and his residence, and, when they were about to part, was invited, by the old clergyman, to call upon him at his friend's in the town. In the course of the evening, the young lady related, with great pleasure, at her friend's where she was on a visit, the very gratifying journey she had traveled, with a clergyman of the name of Thompson. "Thompson!" exclaimed the lady of the house, "I wish it was Mr. Thompson for whom we have for many years been inquiring in vain. I have money, tied up in a bag by my late husband, due to a person of that name, who desired to leave it until called for. But I suppose he is dead; and his executor, whoever he may be, knows nothing of it." It was proposed that the old clergyman should be asked if this were any relation of his. He was sent for, came, and it soon appeared that the Mr. Thompson to whom the money was so long due, was his own brother, who had been dead several years, and to whose effects he was executor and residuary legatee. The money was paid him; he fell on his knees, blessed God, who had thus interposed on behalf of his poor people, hastened to his friend to tell him the joyful news, and, as he entered his house, exclaimed, "Praise God; tell it in Gath, publish it in Askelon, that our God is a faithful God."

While George Whitfield was preaching, one time, at Plymouth, he lodged with Mr. Kinsman, one of the ministers of that town. After breakfast, on Monday, he said to his friend, "Come, let us visit some of your poor people. It is not enough that we labor in the pulpit; we musts endeavor to be useful out of it." On entering the dwellings of the afflicted poor, he administered to their temporal as well as spiritual needs. Mr. Kinsman, knowing the low state of Whitfield's finances, was surprised at his liberality, and suggested that he thought that he had been too bountiful. Mr. Whitfield, with some degree of smartness, replied; "It is not enough, young man, to pray, and put on a serious face; true religion, and undefiled, is this—to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and to supply their needs. My stock, it is true, is nearly exhausted; but God, whom I serve, and whose saints we have assisted, will, I doubt not, soon give me a supply." His hopes were not disappointed. A stranger called on him in the evening, who addressed him thus; "With great pleasure I have heard you preach; you are on a journey, as well as myself; and traveling is expensive. Do me the honor to accept of this;" at the same time presenting him with five guineas. Returning to the family, Mr. Whitfield, smiling, held out the money in his hand, saying; "There, young man, God has speedily repaid what I bestowed. Let this in future teach you not to withhold what it is in the power of your hand to give. The gentleman to whom I was called, is a perfect stranger to me; his only business was to give me the sum you see." It is remarkable that this gentleman, though rich, was notorious for a penurious disposition; but Elijah was fed by ravens.

Do you number all my hairs?  
What have I then to fear?  
Watch your child and his affairs,  
Forever kind and near.

It the ravens you do feed,  
Surely you will feed your dove.  
You did as my ransom bleed;  
And shall I doubt your love?

Many eyes on me are fixed.  
Although my heart is stone,  
Every cup's with mercy mixed.  
The Father loves his own.

He who rolls yon flaming spheres  
Through the vast immense of space,  
Bottles up my contrite tears,  
And guides me by his grace.

Angel watchers round me keep  
Alternate watch and ward;  
Give the Lord's beloved sleep,  
My sentinels and guard.

Coming in, and going out,  
Night or noon, by sea or soil,  
I'm encircled round about  
By God's perpetual smile.

Tranquil, I to rest retire;  
For I have naught to dread.  
Mercy, like a "wall of fire,"  
Surrounds my board and bed.

Of her golden cup I drink;  
At her ordinary dine;  
On her couch to rest I sink;  
And call her wardrobe mine.

Thus, beneath my spreading vine  
Or fig-tree, calm I rest;  
Call Creation's Master mine,  
And lean upon his breast.

Seas to waft me roll their waves.  
Suns to light me daily rise.  
Grace my ransomed spirit saves,  
And glory is my prize.

The Sabbath

Awake, my heart; my soul, arise.  
This is the day believers prize.  
Improve the Sabbath, then, with ease.  
Another may not be your share.

The Sabbath is a rest—a rest even to the brute creation. God takes care for oxen. He once said, "that your ox and your donkey shall rest, as well as you." If animals were endued with reason, they would bless God for the kind design of the Sabbath; but, alas! how frequently does the wickedness of man counteract and defeat the goodness of God!

The Sabbath is a rest for the body. In this respect, it must be valued by thousands who are compelled to labor, as it is written, "In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, until you return unto the ground." But is there nothing to soften the rigor of the obligation? Who could bear everlasting drudgery and fatigue? Behold a refreshing cessation from labor! The laborer puts down his implements of industry, changes his attire, unbends his weary limbs, enjoys the fresh air of Heaven.

Then who would be so cruel and senseless as to blot out the Sabbath from the days of the year? How heavily and joylessly would time pass away, without these precious intervals of rest! How many pleasing emotions associate themselves with the idea of a Sabbath!

But the Sabbath is principally a SPIRITUAL REST. Thus, it is not a day of inactivity, but of reflection and devotion—a day in which, disengaged from the concerns of time and sense, we may attend to the things which belong to our peace, examine our state and character, inquire where we are going, and what preparations we have made for our journey. It is almost the only opportunity that some of the laboring poor have to gain pious information. It is the return of this day that reminds them that they are men—and yet heirs of immortality. It is the worship of this day that preserves in them a sense of that dignity and importance which they are so likely to lose while groveling on the earth, or toiling among the beasts that perish. A pious mind will overflow with joy to behold them under the sound of the gospel, and to think of the accomplishment of these words, "Though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water

of affliction—yet shall not your teachers be removed into a corner anymore; but your eyes shall see your teachers, and your ears shall hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it, when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left." A pious mind will delight to enter the cottage, and witness the Sabbath scenes. The Bible is taken down, the family collected together, and a portion is read of that blessed book which "brings glad tidings to the poor," and teaches us, that "in whatever state we are, therewith to be content."

The real Christian, however, does not confine his devotion to particular seasons. He will mingle piety with business, and endeavor to acknowledge God in all his ways. But still he finds week-days to be worldly days. He needs a retreat; he needs a time of refreshing in the presence of the Lord. When, therefore, he awakes in the morning, he can say,

Welcome, sweet day of rest,  
That saw the Lord arise:  
Welcome to this reviving breast,  
And these rejoicing eyes.

With the return of this day, a thousand pleasing recollections occur to the Christian's mind. It calls to recollection the final completion of the works of creation, and the triumphal resurrection of his Lord and Savior. It reminds him of the great goodness of the Almighty, in making such gracious provision for his creatures. He hears the heavenly voice, saying, "Soul, come up hither; and bid adieu to the anxious cares of the world for a while, and rise into ardent contemplation and blissful thought." It calls him to hold communion with his Lord, and to devote himself, with increased zeal, to his service. It calls him to partake of the bounties of his grace; and his soul is "filled as with marrow and fatness."

The king himself comes near,  
And feasts himself today.  
Here we may sit, and see him here,  
And love, and praise, and pray.

Here is such a day as Christians desire—a day entirely for their souls and their God. They feel impressed and sacred; everything wears a new appearance. And,

With joy they hasten to the place  
Where they their Savior oft have met;  
And, while they feast upon his grace,  
Their burdens and their griefs forget.

Oh! then, let us praise the Divine Being, for an institution which shows his concern for our present and everlasting welfare, and marks his loving-kindness more than his sovereignty; for "the Sabbath was made for man." Let us bless God that our lives are spared, when we are about to join the multitude who keep holiday, saying, "Let us go into the house of the Lord." Let us bless him, that we are in circumstances which promise us ability to join in the sacred exercises, and that we are not, by accidents or diseases, doomed to pass a solitary Sabbath, and prevented from seeing the beauty of the Lord, in his temple.

Pray, Christians, that you may be duly prepared for the enjoyment of such a privilege. Beseech the Lord to grant that you may be "in the Spirit, on the Lord's day"—that his "grace may be sufficient for you"—that you may worship the Lord, "in the beauty of holiness"—in short, that "your spiritual strength may be renewed."

Such a Sabbath will leave you prepared for the duties and trials of the week. It will lead you to say, "A day in your courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Such a Sabbath will be a foretaste of glory—the beginning of Heaven!

What is Heaven? " There remains," says the apostle, "a rest for the people of God." Such is the representation of the happiness above; and, Oh! how instructive, how endearing, it is to those who love Sabbaths below! Soon your weekdays will be over; and the Saturday evening of life will come. You will lie down, and fall asleep, and open your eyes on a Sabbath infinitely superior to any you can expect on earth.

Here we worship with a few. There we shall join the general assembly.

Here we often feel unsuitable frames; and all our powers are always unequal to our work. There our faculties will be raised to the highest degree of perfection, and we shall "serve him, day and night, in his temple."

Here our Sabbaths end; and we soon go down again, from communion with God, into the vexing and debasing things of this world. There the Sabbath will be eternal; and we "shall go out no more." "We shall be forever with the Lord." "Therefore, comfort one another with these words."

Yes I shall share a glorious part,  
When grace has well refin'd my heart,  
And fresh supplies of joy are shed,  
Like holy oil, to cheer my head.

Sin, my worst enemy before,  
Shall vex my eyes and ears no more.  
My inward foes shall all be slain,  
Nor Satan break my peace again.

Then shall I see, and hear, and know,  
All I desired or wished below;  
And every power find sweet employ  
In that eternal world of joy!

Christ Present with His Church

"The prince shall then be in their midst. When they go in, he shall go in; and when they go out, he shall go out." Ezekiel 46:10.

This is a common representation of our Lord's station. It was typified in paradise, by the tree of life in the midst of the garden. It was typified under the law, by the tabernacle of the congregation, which was placed in the middle of the camp, and by the mercy-seat, which stood between the cherubim, in the temple. In Heaven, Jesus is the Lamb in the midst of the throne. To point out his constant inspection and care in the church on earth, he is said to walk in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. "Cry out and shout, you inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of you."

Christ, in the midst of his people, is accessible to all. Earthly princes are accessible only to a few; and to approach them requires much influence, and a compliance with many rules and precautions.

But the feeblest voice may whisper its desires into Jesus' ear.

The trembling hand may touch the hem of his garment.

The eye of sorrow may drop its tear upon his feet.

Every suppliant may put his petition into his hand, and receive an answer directly from himself. Little children may come to him, with their Hosannahs. The aged and the helpless may come to him, with their infirmities. Behold, in that circle . . .  
attention sitting at his feet,  
entreaty stretching out its hands,  
affection walking by his side,  
faith leaning on his arm, and  
obedience treading in his steps.

Christ, present with his people, is ready to perform for them every necessary office. He is at hand . . .  
to supply the needs of the indigent,  
to lighten the burdens of the sorrowful,  
to strengthen the weak hands,  
to revive the hearts of the humble,  
and to bind up the hearts of the contrite.

He is, in his church, like a father in his family, to receive their testimonies of confidence and affection, and to teach and warn them in all wisdom! He is there as a prince in his court, receiving the homage of his courtiers, and distributing his favors among them.

History records that a heathen emperor sighed over a day as lost, because in it he had conferred no favor. While you admire the generosity which awakened this regret, you can rejoice that, in the administration of him who is exalted as a Prince and a Savior, not a moment is lost to mercy!

The Magnificence on Zion

"Walk about Zion, go around her, count her towers, consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them to the next generation." Psalm 48:12-13

What is her foundation? The rock of ages.

Who is her inhabitant? Her inhabitant is God.

Not a flaw, not a blemish is to be seen; every stone is in its proper place; and all contributing to the beauty of the whole.

There is no lack of symmetry in the general outline and plan—nothing imperfect in the execution of each part. Behold! it stands an eternal monument to the glory of God, of his power, and wisdom, and grace! It is all bright and glorious, wherever you take your view of it—radiant in every part, with the beamings of Divine glory! Her light is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper. It is a temple of souls! Every stone is a living soul—a blood-bought spirit. Every one is a chosen warrior, who has fought his battles in his days, and has conquered! They have come out of great tribulation, to be living stones for this building! Affliction gave them their polish; and the cement which unites them is love!

But, while we admire its beauty, let not the suspicion arise that anything should happen to mar its form or impair its glory. Earthly fabrics have, indeed, everything to fear from inclement skies; for they must all, in their turn, become like those ancient cities, where thorns come up in the palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; where the moldering arches and half-remaining walls show the devastating iron tooth of time.

But our Zion has nothing to fear from time; for time ceases, when her glory begins; and though she must be exposed to the storm and beating of the rain, during the dark watches of the flight, yet, when the morning of the resurrection comes, it will be as clear sunshine after rain, "even as a morning without clouds!"

As she shall suffer by no natural causes of dissolution, so neither shall she fall by hostile violence. It was truly said by Christ, to those who spoke of the temple at Jerusalem, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, that the day should come upon her when one stone should not be left upon another, which should not be thrown down; but it shall not be so with our spiritual temple! Even now we may ask, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" Even now we may look at her foundations, and ask, "What shall shake your sure repose?"

Resting on him, she mocks the assaults of besiegers, even in her weakness; but when the day of her perfection has come, the very sound of the shoutings of her enemies can be heard no more. Satan and his agents must first break through their chains of darkness, before they can again plant their engines against her. "In righteousness shall you be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you."

The Intercession of Christ

The Redeemer, Christian, ever lives to intercede for you. He appears in the presence of God, presenting the memorials of his sufferings on your behalf. The Jewish High Priest went on the day of atonement, into the most holy place, to sprinkle the blood of of the sacrifice before the mercy-seat. The worshipers remained outside; but bells of gold were placed upon the hem of his robe round about, that their sound might announce to them the safety of the High Priest, and the acceptance of the sacrifice.

Your great High Priest, Christians, has not entered into the holy place made with hands, but into Heaven itself. "He has gone there, not with the blood of goats or calves, but with his own blood.

Now this appearance of Christ in Heaven, which is expressed by his standing in the midst of the throne, as a lamb that had been slain, may properly be called a virtual intercession. There is a language in that circumstance, more forcible than in any words that we can imagine.

It is happily illustrated by the pious John Flavel, by the story of two brothers, Amyntas and Aeschylus. Aeschylus was condemned to death by the Athenians, and was just going to be led to execution. His brother Amyntas had signalized himself in the service of his country; and, on the day of a most illustrious victory, in great measure obtained by his means, had lost his hand in battle. He came into the court, just as his brother was condemned, and, without saying anything, drew the stump of his arm from under his garment, and held it up in their sight; and the historian tells us that, when the judges saw the mark of his sufferings, they remembered what he had done—they discharged his brother, though he had forfeited his life.

Thus does Christ our dear elder brother, silently but powerfully plead for our forfeited lives; and such is the happy consequence. His Father looks on the marks of his sufferings, and remembers what he has done; and, in this sense, his blood is continually speaking better things than the blood of Abel. We have an Advocate with the Father, who is also the atoning sacrifice for our sins. The fragrance of his sacrifice fills the land of

glory; and the merits of his cross are mingled with the splendors of his throne. Not one pang which he suffered, and not one effort which he made, for your salvation, can be forgotten. The traces of his blood are to be seen on every garment, and on every blessing there. Lift up your eyes to the land of glory; see the blood sprinkled by his hands before the throne of grace; see

your names shining on his breastplate, and compassion for your infirmities dwelling in his heart, and listen to that voice which, while the sorrows of Calvary rise in memorial before God, again proclaims, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Your Savior presents your services to the Father, "I saw an angel, having a golden censor, and much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints. Your tears of repentance, your labors of faith and love, your songs of gratitude; your gifts of charity, your acts of obedience—he lays before his Father, as purified by his gracious influence. Amidst the worship of angels, apostles, and martyrs, he disdains not to present the sighs of the prisoner, and the petitions of the broken in spirit. He prays, "Father, forgive them;" and, the sins of the guilty are blotted out. He prays for your consolation; and the Comforter is sent to impart it. He prays for your protection; and the Almighty's hand is stretched down to shield the feeble and the defenseless. He prays for your sanctification; and the grace of God makes you perfect in every good word and work. He prays, "Father, I will that those who you have given me, be with me where I am;" and commandment is given, "Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter in!"

The intercession of your Lord is constant! The most benevolent people have seasons of languor; the efforts of generosity sometimes seem a burden; and attention to their own interests, often withdraws their minds from the affairs of others. But Jesus can listen at the same moment, to the praises of the happy, and to the cries of the wretched. He can bestow blessings, while he solicits them. He can stretch forth the scepter of mercy to the suppliant, while he presents the golden censer at the altar.

How perilous would your state be, if Jesus were to intermit his intercession on your behalf! But he maintains that intercession with unabated energy; your best Friend will never cease to care for your souls. From his lips, your names are never taken; and from his hands, the censer never drops. He ever lives to make intercession for you!

The Promises

Sweet is your glorious word, O God.  
'Tis for our light and guidance given.  
It sheds a luster all abroad,  
And points the path to bliss and Heaven.

Its promises rejoice our hearts.  
Its doctrines are divinely true.  
Knowledge and pleasure it imparts.  
It comforts and instructs us, too.

This is the valuable privilege of the saints of God: "Unto us are given exceeding great and precious promises!"

Believers, contemplate these promises in their connection with your Lord. To him they were all first made. "In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised us in Christ, before the world began."

Jesus is the **glory**of the promises. His name sheds a luster over them. The salvation they exhibit—it was the purpose of his heart, from eternity, to bestow. His precious blood was the price by which all the blessings contained in the promises were purchased. It is on Mount Calvary that those sacred streams take their rise, which run through the various fields of human life; spreading fertility an cheerfulness wherever they flow.

Jesus is the **substance**of the promises. It is his salvation that fills them; he fills all graces. He fills . . .  
faith with strength,  
love with fervor,  
hope with vigor, and  
patience with steadfastness.

Jesus fills all promises.

In the promise of pardon, you see his blood.  
In the promise of comfort, you see his sympathy.  
In the promise of acceptance, you see his righteousness.  
In in the promise of protection, you see his arm.

Jesus is the stability of the promises; for "they are all in him, yes and amen, to the glory of God by us."

And he is the end of the promises; for, in the enjoyment of him in glory, all the promises of the gospel will have their consummation.

How rich are the blessings which the promises exhibit!

Is pardon of sin a blessing of the greatest value? It screens us from the vengeance of God, and delivers from the lowest Hell.

Is not adoption a blessing of great value?

Are the graces of the Holy Spirit of great value?

The promises contain them all.

In this ark, we see laid up:  
the shield of faith,  
the anchor of hope,  
the belt of truth,  
the ornament of humility, and  
the breast-plate of righteousness.

Nay, in this blessed ark, behold laid up: the celestial palm, the scepter and the crown, the hidden manna, and the white robes which shall be worn in the land of glory.

How sweet is the consolation which the promises yield! See the pious widow, bereft of the guide of her youth, and destitute of friends to care for her or for her helpless children. What was it that supported your heart, when your husband gave his last sigh, when your hand was laid upon his eyes; and when his remains were conveyed from your dwelling to their long home? What is it that sustains your spirit, when your children cry for their father, and entreat you with sobs and tears, to conduct them to him? What is it that animates your noble exertions to provide for them the comforts of the present life, and to point out to them the path that leads to a better life? Precious is your answer to these questions. "It is the gracious promise of my God: Leave your fatherless children, I will preserve them; and let your widows trust in me."

See there another disciple, who, by the misconduct of his connections in business, has lost his worldly property; and who has seen the wealth he had acquired by honest industry, dissipated by folly, or pilfered from him by the basest arts. The fair prospects of his children are blasted; and nothing opens before him but manual labor to which his strength is unequal, or poverty at which his heart sickens. What is it that enables you to possess your soul in patience, and to trust that you shall never be seen forsaken, nor your seed begging bread? You answer, "My God shall supply all my needs, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus."

Instances in which the promises have yielded support, are innumerable. Let the afflicted, the oppressed, the persecuted, the tempted, and the desponding, disciples of the Redeemer, bear witness that they are applicable to every state, and effectual in giving comfort in every scene. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is faithful to usward."

Contemplate the promises, in the relation which they bear to the graces of the Holy Spirit, and in their influence on them. They are the firm ground on which hope casts her anchor, and the resting-place where patience reclines. Here grow the fruits by which faith is nourished, and the branches in which joy sings. Here rises the summit from which, heavenly-mindedness sees the land that is afar off. Here also is the secret place where repentance weeps, and mourns before him who does not

despise the broken and the contrite heart. She presses to her heart the reviving assurance; Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted!"

Let the promises, Christians, be frequently read and studied by you. Mark, with attention, those which present themselves to your view as you search the scriptures, and observe the particular situation to which they refer, that, when providence places you there, you may have recourse to them. Let the promises of the divine presence accompany you, as you go to the house of the Lord. In short, let the promises be rendered to you, by frequent meditation, exceeding great and precious!

The Ministry of Angels

Happy those to whom the expression of the apostle is applicable, "Heirs of salvation!" for to them angels are ministering spirits! Heirs of salvation; remember, these spirits are never said to minister to the wicked. These spirits, under the direction of Him who is the great Angel of the Covenant, watch over the saints, until they shall are done with time, and shall form a part of the glorified inhabitants of Heaven.

As Christians, then, you are come to "an innumerable company of angels!" You are united to them, by a bond which unites together every member of the happy family of God. You are blended with them into one vast and harmonious society. The discordance necessarily subsisting between these pure spirits and the sinful inhabitants of a fallen world, is destroyed. Clothed in the merits, and washed in the blood, of the Redeemer, you no longer present to them that impurity with which their holy nature could hold no alliance. They perceive in the redeemed of the Lord, hearts blotted, indeed, by much imperfection; but yet impelled by the same principles, hopes, tastes, and affections, as their own. Your song is, at least, the faint echo of theirs. Your Father is, in every sense of the word, their Father; "your God is their God." Touched by these considerations, although once they guarded at the gate of the earthly paradise to prevent our entrance, now they bend from the golden walls of the heavenly city, to invite you to a participation in the joys of which they alone, of all created beings, know the fullness, the intenseness, and the perpetuity.

According to this declaration, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation?" we are furnished by the scriptures, with numerous examples of their actual ministry to the children of God. Thus, angels delivered:  
Lot from Sodom,  
Jacob from Esau,  
Daniel from the lions,  
his three companions from the fiery furnace,  
Peter from Herod and the Jewish Sanhedrin, and  
the nations of the Israelites, successively, from the Egyptians, Canaanites, and Assyrians.

Thus, they conducted Lot, Abraham, and the Israelites, in seasons of great difficulty and danger, to places and circumstances of safety and peace. Thus, they conducted  
Gideon to the destruction of the Midianites,  
Joseph and Mary to Egypt, Philip to the Eunuch,  
and Cornelius to Peter, to the knowledge of the 'gospel through him,' and to the salvation of himself, his family, and his friends. Thus, angels instructed Abraham, Joshua, Gideon, David, Elijah, Daniel, Zechariah the prophet, Zachariah the father of John the Baptist, the Virgin Mary, the Apostles, and their fellow disciples. Thus, they comforted Jacob at the approach of Esau, Daniel in his peculiar sorrows and dangers, Zechariah in the sufferings of his nation, Joseph and Mary in their perplexities, Christ in his agony, the Apostles and their companions after his resurrection, Paul immediately before his shipwreck, and the church universally, by the testimony and instruction given in the Revelation of John.

Angels are present when the believer is dying. They wait to convey him home. They are passing, and they ever will pass, between this world and another. And, if your eyes were opened, you would be struck with the multitude of the spirits that are ever near. Hence, when the human spirit is about to drop the tabernacle it has long inhabited, then are there angelic spirits near, to bear it to the paradise of God!

When they die, they are carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, where, like them, they are made to flourish in immortal youth and vigor; and are like angels, in Heaven. Well, then, might the Apostle say, Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation?

Religious Ordinances, a Delight to God's People

It is well known that friends are fond of interviews, and delight in each other's company. But people who are disaffected to one another, are shy, and strange, and distant. Now the Divine Being has been so condescending as to represent his Ordinances as so many places of interview for his people, where they may meet with him; or, in the scripture phrase, draw near to him, appear before him, and carry on a spiritual fellowship with him. Hence it is that they delight in his ordinances—that they love to pray, to hear the word preached, to commemorate the death of Christ, and to draw near to the throne of grace, in all the ways in which it is accessible. These appear to them, not only duties, but exalted and delightful privileges, which sweeten their pilgrimage through this wilderness, and sometimes transform it into a paradise! One of those ordinances which ministers to the people of God much comfort and edification is,

THE MINISTRY BE THE WORD.

The ministers of the gospel are given for their comfort and assistance. When Jesus ascended up on high, he gave gifts unto men. Ephesians 4:11-13, "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

The duty of ministers is to labor for the conversion of sinners to God, as well as for the service, comfort, and edification of believers; and to these services, gospel ministers are called to be particularly devoted. For these important purposes, they pray, they preach, they study and labor, in season and out of season. Although it is their duty to preach "the gospel to every creature," and to deliver divine messages from the word of God, to all who come within the sound of their voice—yet they are particularly appointed by their great Master, to "feed the church of God," and to administer to the feeblest of his children, "the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby."

In all their difficulties and doubts, the weakest believer has a complete right to make application to their pastors. To the guardian care of gospel ministers, under Christ, those who are converted may, and they ought to, give up themselves; and they may demand a portion of their labors, and of the advantage which results from the exertion of their best abilities. For "all things are yours," says the apostle, "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Christ, or the world, or life, or death." Ministers are given to the saints; not to "lord it over their faith, but to be the helpers of their joy."

The mind of the real Christian when seated in the congregation, is filled with reverence; he is humbled under a sense of his own, imperfections. He now views the world through a proper medium; all the turbulent passions of the soul are hushed into silence. The guilt that he had contracted, gradually diminishes as the cross is presented to his view. Truths that he had almost forgotten, are, by the word preached, recalled to his mind. The powers which lay almost dormant, are awakened; serious contemplations are suggested, holy dispositions are excited, and the heart is mellowed into a calm and tranquil frame.

When we consider these advantages as flowing from the ministry of the word, it is no wonder that the disciple of Christ should express his strong attachment to the house of God, and that he should grieve when deprived of attendance on public ordinances. "As the deer pants after the water-brooks, so pants my soul after you, O God." "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." "My tears have been my food day and night; while they continually say unto me, Where is your God?" "When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me; for I had gone with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

is another privilege which is found to be exceedingly pleasant and profitable to the Christian. Here he commemorates the dying love of his adorable Savior. Here he considers himself as brought into his banqueting-house, "whose banner over him is love." He sits down with pleasure to the feast. He looks to Calvary, by faith; and, on the cross, beholds this delightful inscription, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin." He finds it good to be there. It is, to him, a place of heavenly refreshment along the way.

"This do in remembrance of me." "As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you show forth the Lord's death until he comes!"

The Lord's Supper is designed to commemorate Christ crucified. To commemorate is to preserve the memory of something by some public act. Thus, circumcision was appointed as a memorial of the covenant with Abraham. The stones taken out of Jordan, were appointed as a memorial of their passing across that river, on dry land. The Passover, (in addition to its typical design,) was appointed as a memorial, a perpetually repeated memorial, of the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt.

We would, if left to ourselves, soon forget our benificent Deliverer; and, the pride of our hearts is ever leading us to rely on ourselves, rather than simply rest on his promises of salvation; and hence the need of this memorial. The precept calling 'upon us' to remember Christ, shows that we are called on chiefly to remember his sufferings and death, and intimates that we are never to forget what he endured for us and for our salvation. All taken up with the Savior, you may thus meditate, "Precious Redeemer! Was it for me that your blood was shed? For me—so unworthy, so vile, so sinful! Was it for me that your sacred brow was crowned with thorns, your body nailed to the cruel tree, and pierced to the heart? Was it for me that you bore such indignity, suffer such pain, and at last die such an ignominious death? Was it for my sins that you were deserted by the Father, insulted by men, tormented by Satan, and forsaken by all? Was it for me that your holy soul was so exceeding sorrowful, your countenance marred more than any man's, and your spotless character so unjustly vilified? Ah! Lord, was it for me that your sufferings were so bitter, and your agony so intense as to sweat great drops of blood?

Then let me be yours forever. You have a just and powerful claim to my body, my soul, my abilities, my time, my all. Whatever I forget, let me never forget you. To you, O Savior, I desire to dedicate myself. On your merits, I depend. Your presence, I implore. Oh! that I may be fully yours! May I never glory but in your cross! There may my eye be fixed! There may my hopes center! There may I live, there may I die, and there may I rest forever!"

Farewell, world, your gold is dross,  
Now I see the bleeding cross.  
Jesus died to set me free  
From the law, and sin, and thee.

He has dearly bought my soul.  
Lord, accept, and claim the whole!  
To your will, I all resign,  
Now no more my own, but Thine.

The Lord's Supper engages our meditation, not only on the cross and sufferings of Christ, but on his resurrection, ascension, and intercession at the right hand of God. We learn, at his table, to reflect where he now is, as well as where he once was. We view the Lord of glory, as well as the Man of sorrows. We remember that our Redeemer has entered Heaven as our surety and forerunner; and that he has promised to come again, that he may receive us to himself.

This sacred feast, then, carries on our thoughts to our Savior's present glory, his intercession, his dominion over all worlds, his mediatorial throne, his infinite grace. And what a benefit is this! What consolation! Every time we receive the Lord's Supper, we receive a pledge that where he is, there we shall at length be also.

Even the King of Terrors yields to the cross of Christ. In the Sacrament, we may view the Savior dying in pain, and darkness, and agonies; though he was the Son of God and the heir of all things. There we may learn to walk with such a Leader, even through the darkest valley. We may there view death deprived of its sting, robbed of its power, and quite altered in its property. The body and blood of Christ, offered up to God, have taken away the gloom of death, and made it the gate of everlasting life! The blessed participation of the body and blood, gives a delightful pledge of that heavenly joy which is purchased for all believers. We may go to that Supper, and learn to resign our bodies to the grave. We may learn to yield up our souls to the God who gave them, and to say, as we descend to the tomb, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, against that day!"

Preservation unto Final Salvation

It is the believer's privilege "to be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." The actual comfort of this privilege depends on the exercise of faith in Christ. So long as faith is lively, you may lay claim to all those delightful promises which respect your final salvation. Christ declares that "his sheep shall not perish; and no one shall pluck them out of his hand;" and that "the water he gives shall be in them, as a well of water, springing up into everlasting life!"

The Apostle assures you that "nothing shall ever separate believers from the love of God in Christ," The Lord has made with them "an everlasting covenant," and has engaged that "he will not turn away from them to do them good, and that he will put his fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from him." And God says, to every believer, "I will never leave you, nor ever forsake you!"

But how often is this word spoken to disappoint the fond expectations of the simple and affectionate heart!

Riches say, "We will never leave you!" but they make to themselves wings and fly away as an eagle!"

Honors say, "We will never leave you!" but they pass away, like the glistening dew on the grass in the morning. A few hours do not elapse, until the moistened plants are as parched as before.

Friends say, "We will never leave you!" "Yet, as a brook; and as the stream of brooks, they pass away." Where the floods once lifted up their voice, not a rill now murmurs. Your hand has felt affection's last grasp; your ears have heard its last farewell.

But God will never leave you. Never! "My kindness shall never depart from you." His Spirit will never leave you; for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. His care will never leave you. His peace will never leave you. His ministering angels will never leave you. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed from their places; but my kindness shall not depart from you; neither shall the covenant of my peace be broken."

How can you sink, with such a prop,

That bears the world and all things up?

Romans 8:35-39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

The Christian, A Citizen of Heaven

You have been reminded that, as Christians, you are but pilgrims and strangers upon earth; but, if you are Christians indeed, even while on earth you belong to a better world, a heavenly rest, a heavenly home, where your holy friends and kindred dwell. "You are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." "Our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named."

Once, your guilt and corruption formed an insuperable barrier; but now, having found Christ, who is the only way to the Father, we have entered through the gates into the city, and become citizens of that city where light, and beauty, and grandeur, and safety, and pleasure meet together. Yes, Christians, your citizenship is in Heaven, from whence you look for the Savior! These passages assert that you belong to Heaven. Heaven is the country to which you belong; the sweet paradise of your home; the land whose protection you claim; whose rights and privileges you enjoy; whose inhabitants are your fellow citizens; whose laws are yours; whose sovereign is your King. And beneath eternity's unclouded day, in the tranquil mansions of that peaceful land, you soon shall rest with all the family of God.

Even now, you are partakers with the saints, in the presence of -their Sovereign. You participate 'the safety which they find in his protection, and share the happiness which they enjoy under his government.

Do their eye's behold the King in his beauty? You, also, have access to his palace. Is there a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God? You also, have tasted of the stream, and dwell in peaceful freedom on its banks. This is the happy state in which you are now in the kingdom of grace, before you ascend to the kingdom of glory.

Yes, your citizenship is in Heaven! How pleasing is the idea! All the followers of Jesus, on earth and in Heaven, now form but one family. These who have passed the stream of death, rest from their labors. Eternal peace and joy are theirs. The eternal love of God is theirs. They 'shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Happy spirits! your brethren still remain below, in the valley of weeping; but still they belong to the same heavenly family. The same family on Heaven and on earth, has the same parent, and is loved with the same love. The whole flock has but one Shepherd, and the same interest in his guardian care. The same blood redeemed them all. Part of the family are landed on the heavenly shore; while the gales of death are wafting the others into the harbor. And to it, all the rest, urged on by wind and tide, hasten apace. The whole family, in Heaven and in earth, will soon be the one great and glorious family in Heaven; a family forever unbroken there!

Such, beloved of the Lord, is your present happy position! Heirs of Heaven now—and you will soon come to the possession of it forever! Oh! press forwards in the Christian course. A thousand influences around you, labor, to impede your progress. But press forward and allow them not.

Amid those influences, a voice from Heaven cries, "Arise and depart; for this poor earth is not your rest!" "A house not made with hands," raises its turrets at the end of your pilgrimage. The spirits of the prophets, the apostles, and your spiritual fathers, already inherit it; and they wait to receive you. They long for your arrival; they prepared to "cry unto you that your warfare is accomplished."

Already some of the enjoyments of life melt into distance, and fall into the shades of the long perspective. Yet a little season, and the fading visions of time shall float in broken images before your closing eyes. The sun dips below the horizon. The shadows of the evening descend around you. The mist has thickened upon your friends and family. Many of your friends have gone before, and left you to the approach of night alone. The voice of your departed years returns upon you in solemn admonitions. The voice of God calls you home. Oh! do not delay any longer. Earth recedes. Time vanishes. Eternity is at hand. "Arise, let us go hence!"

The Resurrection

Christian, when your body shall be consigned to the dust, the Redeemer will be its guardian, until the resurrection morn. Through how many ages has the spirit of the martyred Abel "waited for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body"—waited not with trembling anxiety, much less with hopeless despair—yet conscious that the bliss of Heaven cannot be complete, until both body and soul have their perfect consummation and bliss in the kingdom of God! But the ashes of the saints are the Redeemer's charge. His eye is on their sleeping dust; and, whether borne by the winds of Heaven to the remoteness of the untrodden desert or the summit of the inaccessible rock; whether deeply buried in the abysses of the ocean, or reposing amid the teeming population of the crowded city, not a solitary particle, essential to the identity of the meanest of his followers, shall be lost. Every body shall be built again, and receive its own appropriate tenant to an eternal residence, never more to be made weary of its habitation by reason of disease, or ejected by the stroke of death.

The body that's consigned to dust,  
Our Father's care shall keep,  
Until the last angel rise, and break  
The long and dreary sleep.

Then love's soft dew o'er every eye  
Shall shed its mildest rays;  
And the length silent dust shall burst,  
With shouts, of endless praise!

"No doctrine," says Dr. Dwight, "devised by philosophy concerning man, is so sublime, so delightful, or so fitted to furnish consolation and hope to beings whose life in this world is a moment, and whose end is the grave. To this, dark and desolate habitation, man, by the twilight of nature, looks forward in despair, as his final home. All who have gone before him, have pointed their feet to its silent chambers; and not one of them returned to announce that, an opening has been discovered, from their dreary residence, to some other more lightsome and

more desirable region. His own feet daily tread the same melancholy path. As he draws near, he surveys its prison walls, and sees them unassailable by force, and insurmountable by skill. No lamp illumines the midnight within. No crevice opens to the eye a glimpse of the regions which lie beyond. In absolute despair, be calls upon philosophy to cheer his drooping mind, but he calls in vain. She has no consolations for herself, and therefore can administer none to him. 'Here' she coldly and sullenly cries, 'is the end of man. From nothing he sprang; to, nothing he returns. All that remains of him is his dust, which here mingles with its native earth.'

At this sullen moment of despair, Revelation approaches, and, with a command at once solemn and delightful, exclaims, 'Lazarus, come, forth!' In a moment, the earth heaves—the tomb opens—and a form rises from the earth.

The resurrection of the saints is secured by the death of Christ and his consequent resurrection. Confidence in his power and promises, supports the minds of believers when looking forward to the scene of death. The succession of ages will not impair the fullness of Christ's merits; and, when the last trumpet sounds, it will be seen that, from the sepulcher in which the Redeemer lay, a living virtue has proceeded to every grave which contains the moldering bones of a saint. Then the sentence which doomed the body to return to the dust, shall be repealed; and the prisoners of death, who were prisoners of hope, shall come forth, and, with acclamations of joy, hail their Great Deliverer.

"He will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself;" that mighty working, by which, in the beginning, he collected, arranged, and combined into one fair, harmonious, and stupendous system, the myriads of atoms of which the material universe is composed.

"How he will do it," says one, "is a question that never troubles me. The assurance that he will do it, is a sufficient ground on which to rest my confidence. If, indeed, I had never seen the loveliness and fertility of spring burst from the coldness and torpidity of winter; if I had never seen the ripened harvest waving in the wind, from the grains of corn that were committed to the ground, and perished in the soil; if I had never witnessed the power of the magnet, that collects the particles of steel from the midst of other matter with which they have been mingled; if I had never "considered the heavens, the work of his fingers," those suns, the centers of other systems, in magnitude and beauty far surpassing ours, rolling in the immensity of space around me, all brought into existence by the fiat of his omnipotence; if I had never contemplated the curious structure of my own frame, so fearfully and wonderfully made, in the deep retirements of nature, and inspired by his breath with a living soul and an intelligent mind; if, in that, I had any doubt as to the divinity of Christ, or the being of a God—I might anticipate, with fearful apprehension, the day of death, and look with trembling anxiety for the promised resurrection morn; but, as it is, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the last day, upon the earth," to raise and remodel the dust of all who sleep' in him. Nor can he, who built the body at first, be at any loss for power and skill to bring it again from the darkness of the sepulcher, and rebuild it, in loveliness and beauty, from the ruins of the grave.

How great will be the beauty of the glorious body! The bodies of the saints "will be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body," and their souls endowed with immortal life; their "faces will shine as the sun, and their clothing be white and glistening." There are countenances in this world which, when united with fine forms, and composed of superior features; when animated with intelligence, and molded by superior virtue into the clear and strong expression of worth and loveliness, fascinate the eye, and engross the heart. What, then, must be the appearance of that aspect, which is wrought into harmony, beauty, and dignity, by the most exquisite workmanship of God, inspired with the intelligence of Heaven, and lighted with the beams of angelic excellence; around which virtue plays with immortal radiance, while joy illumines the eye with living splendor, and glory surrounds the head with its crown of stars! In this manner will be arrayed and adorned, "a multitude which no man can number, of all nations, kindreds, and tongues."

How delightful, how astonishing, must it be to behold this vast assembly rising from the tomb, throughout every part of the habitable world, and ascending, as by one instinctive impulse, to meet their Divine Redeemer, and to be welcomed to the seat of approbation and honor at his right hand!

Trace them one step further. How magnificent, how sublime, how enrapturing must be the prospect of these glorified beings, surrounding, after the judgment is terminated, the Lord of all glory, and rising in his train, as a cloud of splendor, to the mansions of eternal joy! Then will come the "manifestation of the sons of God!"

The Christian Triumphant at the Judgment Day

The Christian's hope of triumph at the day of judgment, rests on the atonement made by the blood of the cross. Convinced that there is only one spot on the face of this earth, from which a guilty creature, whose heart has been contrite, can view the solemnities of an approaching judgment without dismay, the Christian transports himself in imagination to the heights of Calvary; takes his station there at the foot of the cross; and, with one arm embracing the sacred tree, and the other uplifted towards Heaven, surveys, with steady eye, the overwhelming scene. The heavens open, not in tranquil serenity, as when, on the banks of Jordan, the Spirit of peace alighted on the Redeemer, to consecrate him to his office; but rending and rolling away, a, with mighty noise; he beholds the descending

Judge, revealed in effulgent glory, and "all his holy angels with him," " ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands!" He hears "the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God, louder than a thousand thunders!" He sees the great white throne erected, the millions of the dead starting into life, and gathering before the dread tribunal. While, "from the face of him who sits upon, the throne, the heavens and the earth flee away, and no place is found for them!"

The judgment set and the books opened, the whole race of mankind assembled, on the right hand and on the left, all waiting their respective dooms; with joyful hope, or trembling apprehension! With the eye of prophetic faith, the believer beholds all this; and, with deep solemnity of spirit, he anticipates his own appearance at the bar of judgment. Conscious of his unworthiness and guilt, and impressed with holy awe in contemplating the purity and majesty of the Judge, and the inconceivable magnitude of the results of that "great and dreadful day of the Lord," he prays with humble fervor, "God be merciful to, me a sinner!" "If you, Lord, should mark iniquity, Who, O Lord, should stand?" " Enter not into judgment with your servant; for in your sight, no flesh living can be justified." But his supplications are not the language of despair. He has hope, "good hope, through grace."

Did he look only to the throne, indeed, only to the judgment-seat, with all its attendant solemnities—his heart would fail him; but, looking alternately to the throne and to the cross, the view of the one takes away the terror of the other. He who occupies the throne of judgment, is the same who "bore the sins of his people in his own body on the tree." The Judge is his Savior!

The remembrance of this important truth, reassures his spirit, and animates him with the confidence of hope. "There is forgiveness with you, that you may be feared." Oh! this is strong Consolation! Amid the "wreck of matter and the crush of worlds"—amid the groans of the lost—lamentation, mourning, and woe! At the conclusion of time—the cessation of this world's revolutions, and the commencement of a glorious and an solemn eternity—the Christian here beholds his Judge, and exclaims, before assembled millions, "Behold! This is my God! I have waited for him; I will be glad and rejoice in his salvation!"

CONCLUSION

Reader, if you are a true child of God, you are savingly interested in all the glorious privileges mentioned in the preceding pages. Even while sojourning upon earth, you are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus! And when you die, Christ will be your precious portion! And in the future, Heaven will be your peaceful, rapturous, and everlasting home!

Are you a child of God? Have you become so by faith in the Redeemer's blood, and by the renovating influence of the Holy Spirit? Do you bear the image of Jesus? Upon whom and upon what are your affections placed? Do you love him who so ardently loved you? Do you care for his cause, and labor to advance it? In the privileges allotted to you on earth, do you see and feel Heaven begun? And feeling that these enjoyments are only as a drop from the ocean of heavenly felicity—as the first-fruits before the great harvest—as only a glimpse of the splendors of eternity? Do you exclaim, "Oh I when shall I come and appear before God?"

Beloved, you must realize these feelings and operations of the Spirit to prove that every blessing and privilege purchased by Christ is yours! For "he who believes, has the witness in himself." If you have realized them, then the happiness of Christians is yours. You are an "heir of God, and a joint heir With Christ." Children of God behold! Behold your vast inheritance, and rejoice in hope of enjoying it for ever. God is your father, even the eternal God; who is your refuge and strength, and a very present help in every time of trouble. Christ with all his glorious salvation and spiritual blessings, is yours. Everything you need is to be found in him, and received from him; for "he is made unto you, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

The Holy Spirit dwells in your hearts, to support you under every trial, however severe, and to "bear witness, with your spirits, that you are the children of God." The ministers of Christ have been appointed for your edification, and to be the helpers of your joy.

Look at the promises! How rich how great their adaptation to every state of the Christian life! The ordinances of the gospel, in all their refreshing influence, are yours. Angels are your companions and guardians. God in his Providence will cause everything to work together for your good. And Heaven, the purchased possession of Christ, will be your everlasting habitation!

Such, beloved of the Lord, is your happy state. Then rejoice in the Lord always; and again rejoice. And, until the time of your glorification comes, contemplate, realize, and live upon, the significant words of the Apostle, which belong to every child of God, "ALL THINGS ARE YOURS, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come! ALL ARE YOURS! and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 1 Corinthians 3:21-23