CONSIDER JESUS
Thoughts for Daily Duty, Service, and Suffering

by Octavius Winslow, 1870

"**Consider Jesus**, the apostle and high priest whom we confess."
–Heb 3 1

Preface

Consider Jesus– in Lowliness of Birth

Consider Jesus– in the Elevation of Rank

Consider Jesus– in the Possession of Wealth

Consider Jesus– in the Straitness of Poverty

Consider Jesus– in the Exercise of Influence

Consider Jesus– in Filial Subjection

Consider Jesus– in Obedience to Divine Law

Consider Jesus– in Obedience to Human Law

Consider Jesus– the Object of Popular Favor

Consider Jesus– the Object of Popular Hate

Consider Jesus– as Without Deceit

Consider Jesus– as Tempted by Satan

Consider Jesus– as Afflicted

Consider Jesus– Our Paymaster

Consider Jesus– as Forsaken by Man

Consider Jesus– as Forsaken by God

Consider Jesus– in Loneliness

Consider Jesus– as Not Alone

Consider Jesus– in Soul-trouble

Consider Jesus– in Communion with God

Consider Jesus– in the Forgiveness of Injury

Consider Jesus– in the Exercise of Praise

Consider Jesus– in the Avoidance of Offence

Consider Jesus– in Sickness

Consider Jesus– in the Anticipation of Death

Consider Jesus– in Intercessory Prayer

Consider Jesus– in Bereavement

Consider Jesus– as Receiving Sinners

Consider Jesus– in His Atoning Blood

Consider Jesus– in the Power of His Resurrection

Consider Jesus– in His Second Appearing

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"O Jesus! make Yourself to me
A living, bright reality;
More present to Faith's vision keen
Than any outward object seen;
More dear, more intimately near,
Than even the sweetest earthly tie."
–Charlotte Elliott

PREFACE

"**Consider Jesus**, the apostle and high priest whom we confess." Heb 3 1

It is a great privilege of the believer to live *by the day* upon Jesus. He cannot properly or safely go beyond it, nor has he any especial promise to warrant his so doing. The promise is, *"as your days so shall your strength be."* And it is no little achievement of faith if, indeed, its strength lasts even to this limited period. Each day's need is enough to task all our energies, and exhaust all our supplies, without our "taking thought for the *morrow."*

But what a mercy thus to live upon Christ! To feel that, when we exchange the morning's dreams for the day's stern and trying realities, that the prayer of faith may draw large supplies from Jesus; and, that thus replenished and equipped, we may safely reach its close unscathed by the fiery ordeal through which we have passed.

To aid the Christian in this daily life, these pages have been written. The subjects selected are, for the most part, of a doctrinal and practical nature--subjects, indeed, upon which ponderous tomes have been written--and yet the plan pursued by the author has necessarily restricted his meditations to the smallest possible space, and to a mere fragmentary and elementary unfolding of each topic. But, unpretending as his work is, it may meet the needs of the *weary*, the *suffering*, and the *sorrowing* believer not having time or strength for a more elaborate volume; and thus be as a small casket of perfume, incensing some couch of languor, and filling some chamber of sickness with the fragrance of that Name which is above every name, and which, to those who know and love it, is as ointment poured forth--the divine, the precious, the ever-to-be-adored name of--JESUS!

CONSIDER JESUS--in Lowliness of Birth

"Is not this the carpenter's son?"-- Mat 13 55

What a remarkable fact in the history of Jesus does this question, asked with mingled surprise and contempt, betray! It presents Him in a point of light in which, perhaps, few have paused to study Him, and yet than which there is scarcely another more real and instructive. It invites us to consider Jesus as the Son of man, as the son of a carpenter, and in all probability, until He began to be about thirty years of age, assisting Joseph in his humble calling. Hence it was asked concerning Jesus, "Is not this the *carpenter?"* How truly did the Son of God identify Himself with the humanity and the curse He came to ransom and remove. And when we see those hands which built the universe building earthly dwellings for man--squaring the beam, plying the saw, thrusting the plane, driving the nail, constructing and raising the framework--we behold personally Him tasting the bitterness of that part of the curse which enjoined, "In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread."

We learn from this that, **obscurity of birth and lowliness of craft are no dishonor** to him whose condition it may be; and that they have often been found in alliance with true greatness of character, high devotedness to God, noble and useful deeds for man. God, who is no respecter of people, looks upon man's outward estate with a very different eye to that with which the world looks upon it. You ask for the proof. Behold, the Incarnate Son of God, instead of selecting, as He might have done, a princess for His mother and a palace for His birth, lo! His reputed father is a carpenter, His mother, though of royal lineage, is too poor to present on the day of her purification an offering more costly than "a pair of turtle-doves," and the scene of His wondrous advent is among the beasts of the field feeding quietly at their troughs.

But, consider Him. You are, perhaps, taunted for your obscure birth, looked down upon for your humble calling, slighted for your social position, and are discouraged from any attempt to rise above it and strike out a path of wider influence and nobler exertion. But learn from Jesus that there is no dishonor in humble parentage, that true dignity belongs to honest toil, and that personal piety, consecration to God, and far-reaching usefulness to man, may be closely associated with those whose niche in society is low in the scale, and whose walk through life is along its more shaded and secluded pathway.

We have referred to LABOR. Here, again, Jesus demands our consideration. Our Divine Savior might be termed, in modern parlance, a 'working man.' He was, in early life, a *carpenter.* Labor was concurrent with man's creation. Before the fall, God sent him into the garden to keep it. And although the ground brought forth spontaneously, yet it was beneath his culturing hand that the earth was to bloom and blossom as the rose. Idleness was no part of our original constitution; God never intended that man's powers should be stunted, and that his life should evaporate in useless and ignoble repose. Be up, then, and doing. Be ready for any labor, prepared for any duty, willing for any sacrifice, active, honest, and earnest in any and every sphere in which God may place you.

Consider Jesus! He knows your walk. He will sympathize with, and give you grace for, the difficulties and discouragements, the temptations and trials, peculiar to your position in life. And however obscure your birth, or lowly your calling, or cramped your powers, strive to imitate, please, and glorify Him. Not totally hidden will then your light be. Your trust in God, your resemblance to Christ, the example of your honest industry, patient endurance and virtuous bearing--which poverty could not crush or obscurity veil--will influence for good all whose privilege it may be to know, admire, and love you. Thus your "light will shine out of obscurity," and, humble though your course and limited though your sphere may have been, you will not have lived for God and for man in vain.

CONSIDER JESUS--in the Elevation of Rank

"King of kings, and Lord of lords." –Rev 19 16

The twofold nature of Jesus brought Him into the closest personal relation to, and sympathy with, the two great divisions of the race--the Commonalty and the Nobility--and thus He becomes a proper subject of instructive study to both. We have considered His obscurity and abasement as man; it remains that we study Him as possessing the highest rank and as wearing the noblest title as God--*"KING of kings, and LORD of lords."* The present reflection, therefore, addresses itself to those upon whom is conferred the honor, the duties, and the responsibilities of high birth and rank. It is not often that such are especially selected by the ministers of religion as objects of pious instruction. For every other class Christian sympathy is felt, and religious efforts made; while those of higher caste in society are passed by in cold neglect, as if their eternal interests were not equally as precious, and as if their soul-perils were not transcendently greater. But what are the godly instructions we may gather from a consideration of Jesus in the light of His elevated rank?

The first that impresses us is that, **human rank is of Divine appointment.** Every privilege of nobility originates with God. *"He puts down one, and raises up another."* Human society in its framework manifests His molding hand. It is impossible to trace the various grades which exist, the dependent relation of each to the other, and of all to God, and not admire His wisdom and adore His goodness in the marvelous construction of societies. To Him, then, you are to refer your rank. Whether by inheritance, or by privilege, you are bound to acknowledge God in its bestowment, seriously pondering the end for which it was given, the responsibilities it involves, the duties it imposes, and the solemn account you have to give of its use at the last Great Day.

Consider Jesus as on no occasion either denying or renouncing His rank. On the contrary, at the very moment that He was engaged in the most condescending act of His life He asserted it. *"I, your LORD and MASTER, have washed your feet."* It has been the mistaken idea of some good men that, conversion to Christ imperatively demanded and necessarily involved a relinquishment of their social position. No judgment could be more at fault, no step more unscriptural. The religion of Christ *levels* and destroys nothing but ungodliness and error. The Bible teaching is, *"Let every man abide in the calling wherein he was called."* If, then, the grace of God has called you in the higher walks of life, ennobled and titled, to relinquish your position and, consequently, its moral influence in the Church and in the world, were a folly and a sin. Providence and Grace never clash. Where Grace has called you, there let Providence keep you, and use you for God.

Consider Jesus in the humility and condescension which rank imposes. Was there ever a being so high, and yet ever one so meek and lowly, as Christ? Watch against the arrogance of high birth. The costliest and brightest gem in your coronet will be the humility with which you wear it. *"Condescend to men of low estate." "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart."*

Consider Jesus as consecrating His rank to the good of man and the glory of God. See that yours is not selfishly possessed, but magnanimously employed. Wear it not as a mere adornment, but use it as a mighty power, capable of conferring elevation, prosperity, and happiness upon all who are privileged to come within the warmth and glow of its sunshine. Keep the impressive fact full in view that, at Jesus' feet every princely diadem, and sacred mitre, and noble coronet, and ermined robe must be laid, and into His hands the stewardship be surrendered! Lay your title at His feet *now*--a holy and a consecrated thing to God! Under a solemn sense of its dreadful responsibility, seek grace from Christ to devote it to the increase of His kingdom, the furtherance of His gospel, and the well-being of man in the world

CONSIDER JESUS--in the Possession of Wealth

"He was RICH." –2Co_8_9

Rank and wealth may exist apart from each other. In Jesus they were combined. He could not be the Divinest, and not be the Richest Being in the universe; the Creator, and not the Owner of all worlds. Moreover, He could say, *"All SOULS are mine"* –a wealth second only to the affluence of His own absolute Godhead. Thus He becomes a study for the wealthy--a study for a *rich Christian*--oppressed with the anxieties, exposed to the snares, armed with the power, and speeding to the final Judgment laden with the fearful responsibilities and the solemn account of WEALTH! But, 'Consider Him.'

Jesus ascribed His wealth to God. While asserting essential Deity, He ever acknowledged His dependence upon His Father as the Mediator and Redeemer of man. In this light we interpret His remarkable declaration--"The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He sees the Father do." "As the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself." Thus consider Him! To God you owe, and to God you are bound to ascribe, your wealth. Your own efforts and skill had been a failure, disappointing and ruinous, but for His enriching blessing. Say not in your heart, *"My power and the might of mine hand has gotten me this wealth. But you shall remember the Lord your Godfor it is HE that gives you power to get wealth."* Do you thus give God the glory? And as you survey your broad acres, and count your treasured gold, and speculate on your profitable investments, do you in your heart gratefully and devoutly acknowledge, "I owe all this to God! Not my hand, nor my skill, nor my toil, but to Your favor, help, and blessing, O Lord, alone I attribute it?"

Jesus, though rich, was destitute of the PRIDE of wealth. Human pride is one of the most operative causes of self-destruction--and wealth is its prolific parent. "Behold," says God to Jerusalem, "this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom, *pride and fullness of bread."* The poor are often oppressed with a sense of their insignificance, but the rich are prone to be inflated and self-important, "pride"--*purse-pride*--"compassing them about as a chain." Rejoice if Divine grace has taught you your spiritual poverty, nothingness, and vileness, so enabling you to walk humbly with God in your wealth. "Let the *rich* rejoice in that he is *made low* " –laid low beneath the cross--"because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away."

Jesus was free from the WORLDLINESS of wealth. The rich are peculiarly exposed to the world. The means which they possess of surrounding themselves with its pomp and show, its luxury and pleasures, are a terrible snare, which the grace of God alone can conquer. Study Jesus! With the world at His command, how unworldly! From not thus studying and imitating Him, many a wealthy professor has made shipwreck of his faith, character, and usefulness, swept away by the irresistible force of *unsanctified* riches. "Demas has forsaken me, *having loved this present world."* Oh! beware of the world! Your "riches will become corrupt, your gold and your silver cankered, and their rust shall be a witness against you," if they plunge you into the temptations, covetousness, and sins of this present evil world!

Jesus devoted His riches to the glory of God. Is your wealth thus devoted? Is "Holiness to the Lord" impressed upon your coin? Whose superscription does it bear? Christ has poor brethren needing help. His cause languishes from lack of support. His devoted, faithful ministers, many of them, are toiling amid straitness and pinching poverty. Oh, liberally scatter your wealth, and as you lay it down at the feet of Jesus, exclaim with lowliness and gratitude, "Of *Your own* have I given You, dearest Lord!" Thus cultivating a generous liberality, watching against the temptations of riches, and keeping in full view the solemn account of your stewardship, let your constant, earnest prayer be--"In all times of our WEALTH, good Lord, deliver us!"

CONSIDER JESUS--in the Straitness of Poverty

*"He became **poor**."* – 2Co_8_9

The *wealth* of Jesus, of which we have already spoken, was *essential;* His *poverty,* of which we are now to speak, was willingly *assumed.* "He became poor." By an act of unparalleled beneficence, He emptied Himself of His wealth and linked Himself with a life of dependent poverty. The only riches He retained--and these He scattered with a profuse and unbounded generosity--were the 'unsearchable riches of His grace', bestowed indiscriminately and freely upon the vilest of the race. So poor was He, holy women ministered to Him of their substance; and so homeless, the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air nests, but He, the Creator of the world, had not where to lay His head! "Consider Him."

We learn, in the first place, that **poverty may exist in alliance with greatness and moral wealth.** There is nothing in poverty essentially degrading or demoralizing. Wealth, unsanctified by Divine grace, may depress our moral instincts, vitiate and impair our noblest faculties, developing and arming, to an almost unbounded extent, the innate evil of our nature; but poverty, hallowed of God, has often proved a school of grace in which that same nature has been molded into a vessel of honor, pencilled with the beauty of holiness, sanctified and made fit for Christ's service.

Thus, poverty is not essentially sinful, though springing from original sin, and is often the sad and bitter fruit of willful transgression against the soul and God--improvidence, indolence, and intemperance, entailing poverty and need, misery and woe. Yet, as in the case of our adorable Lord, and in countless instances of His disciples, it may be allied to the highest intellectual development, to the richest spiritual grace, and to the noblest formation of character. Did there ever exist one so poor in this world, yet one so holy, so gracious, and so useful as Jesus? Learn of Him, then, who stamped with so great a dignity, and invested with so rich a luster, a life of virtuous poverty and need, before which the worth and glitter of unsanctified riches fade into insignificance.

Straitened circumstances aid in the development of a life of faith in God. Such was the life of Jesus. As man, He as much lived by faith on God as His disciples. He never bids us walk in a path divergent from His own, but in each one *"left us an example that we should follow His steps."* Thus the poor are dependent upon God, and the poverty of the Christian--often his greatest wealth--leads him to prayer, and prayer brings him into closer acquaintance with God, and the more he knows of the character of God, the more he learns to love and fear and trust in Him. *"The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."* Oh, take your poverty to God. Your Heavenly Father knows and is pledged, has promised and is able, to supply all your needs. Do you think that He who feeds the birds of the air will neglect the children of His love? Never! Oh, how your very poverty may enrich you in prayer, faith, and grace! Sweet to live a life of childlike dependence upon God! To know and feel, "My Father thinks for, and takes care of, me."

The poverty of Jesus was the wealth of others. Thus there are none, so straitened and tried in their circumstances, who may not contribute, in some degree, to the temporal or the spiritual necessities of others. *"As poor, yet making many rich."* Hence we often find in the poor the greatest sympathy and help for the poor. Let not your limited resources, then, be a veil for stinginess; your poverty an excuse for unkindness. But imitate the early Christians, whose *"deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality;"* and consider Jesus, *"who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich."* Be submissive to God's will in poverty. LET CHRIST BE YOUR SOUL'S PORTION. Lay up treasures in heaven. And let your life, amid its toil and trial, its poverty and need, be a holy preparation for your riches of glory above. *"Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed."*

CONSIDER JESUS--in the Excercise of Influence

"Be followers of me, even as I am of Christ." –1Co_11_1

INFLUENCE is the subject which these words suggest for our present meditation--the influence of Christ reflected in the influence of the Christian. *"Follow me, as I follow Christ."* The power of influencing others is a wonderful and responsible gift of God. Every individual possesses it. Unknown though his name, and obscure though his sphere may be, he is the center of a circle touching at every point for good or for evil all who come within the radius of his moral power--the potency of which cannot be measured, the results of which can never be fully known.

No person is absolutely neutral in this life--none so humble as not to take hold on the vitalities of some individual's inner being, thoughts, and feelings. High or low, rich or poor, we throw off from us, and we receive in return, trains of influences which shape the opinions, mold the characters, and determine the destinies, both of ourselves and others. We may not be able to explain the nature or estimate the results of this law; nevertheless, in the last great day the truth will flash upon us with startling effect--*"No man lives to himself."* The question once defiantly and insultingly asked of God, *"Am I my brother's keeper?"* will be answered with a Divine affirmative crushing as thunder, or thrilling as music,"You *were!* and you have *ruined* him forever by your ungodly example," or, "You have *saved* him forever by your holy influence!" How solemn this truth! It is this power of action and reaction--this reciprocity of moral influences--which gives a character, reality, and responsibility to all our thoughts, words, and deeds in this present life; and which makes every man, in every circle, to a great extent his brother's keeper. But consider Jesus.

His influence was INDIVIDUAL. There was an individuality in His life which acted powerfully upon all whom it reached. But we forget our individuality! We lose ourselves in the crowd. We follow it, act with it, and thus we forget that, with regard to the religious opinions which we hold, the moral influence which we insensibly exert, the solemn reckoning which we are finally to meet, *"every one of us is to give an account of HIMSELF to God."* "Resolved, that I will live and act as an *individual."* So wrote Harlan Page in his diary; and so he lived and died, and God used his individual influence to the conversion of hundreds. Let us keep in mind the fact, that individual responsibility, duty, and influence, are *untransferable.* We cannot make them over to a church, or to a society, or to another individual. Born as individuals, we live as individuals, and as individuals we die, and shall be judged.

The example of Jesus was HOLY and SANCTIFYING. All who came into His presence could feel how dreadful, yet how attractive, HOLINESS was! Is ours such? Can we in sincerity say, "Follow me, *as I follow Christ?"* Is our example as a religious professor such as to influence others for good?--as a *parent,* such as you would desire your children should imitate?--as a husband or wife, as a brother or sister, as a master or mistress, such as to mold for holiness in this life, and for happiness in the life to come, those whom it daily reaches? Is our example such as to attract them with the beauty of holiness, to impress them with the excellence of Jesus, the service of God, and the solemnity of eternity?

Oh, let your example pencil, like the sun, the image of Christ upon all on whom its transforming rays are reflected. But this can only be *as you yourself follow Christ.* If you would that others be a holy reflection of you, you yourself must be a true and holy reflection of Jesus. Let the light of your influence so shine, that others seeing may rejoice in it. Be a "living epistle of Christ," so legible and lovely as to be known and read of all men, that all may be affected by the reading thereof. Thus men will behold your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Consider Jesus– in Filial Subjection

"He was subject unto them." –Luk_2_51

This was one of the most instructive and lovely traits in our Lord's character--*His subjection to parental authority*. What period and what condition of life has He not personally impressed with His greatness and hallowed with His sanctity? As Irenaeus beautifully remarks, "He came to save all who are born again unto God; infants and little ones, and children and youths, and those of old age. To little ones He was a little one, sanctifying those of that age, and giving them an example of godliness, righteousness, *and dutiful subjection."* To this latter feature of our Lord's early life let us direct our present consideration. *"He was SUBJECT unto them."* What a study for the young! what an example for the Christian youth! May the Holy Spirit unfold and impress upon our hearts and lives the holy and beautiful lesson!

The submission of Jesus to His parents was NATURAL. Our Lord was ever true to nature, as nature was ever true to Him, its Creator. Filial submission is an instinct of our being. The existence of parent and child implies the existence of a law prescribing and regulating their relative duties. Had there been no divine precept, and irrespective of all that is positively commanded, nature would prompt the child's duty to its parents. But, what reason dimly teaches, revelation clearly and positively enjoins. When the word of God says, *"This is right,"* it means, this is just or equitable. Deny the obligation to obey, and you deny the authority to command; ignore the child's duty, and you repudiate the parent's relation. Thus, though our humanity is like a smitten and decayed trunk, the instincts and affections of our nature still cling to it as the ivy clasps with inseparable tenacity the crumbling oak around which it entwines.

The submission of Jesus to His parents was *obediential*--that is, He *obeyed* them. Obedience is the great law of filial piety--disobedience its most unnatural and unholy violation. Under the Mosaic dispensation disobedience to parents was thus fearfully punished*"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate and a drunkard.' Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death."* (Deu_21_18-21).

Is the law of the Christian dispensation less binding? Listen to the command--*"Children, OBEY your parents in the Lord, far this is right."* Again--*"Children, OBEY your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord."* Beware of this sin! If under the law it was so terribly marked, of how much more severe punishment shall they be counted worthy who violate this law of filial obedience under a dispensation clothed with such solemn sanctions!

Jesus' subjection to His parents was the subjection of LOVE. Filial affection will secure the profoundest reverence for parental authority, and the most implicit obedience to parental command, when that command contravenes no higher law, and asks the surrender of no Christian principle. Oh, how sweet and lovely to submit to the will and obey the command of a parent we deeply reverence and love! It is that invests with such surpassing dignity, holiness, and beauty the unquestioning obedience of a child of God to his Heavenly Father. He obeys God because he loves Him, and there is no obedience so willing, so cheerful, or so complete as the obedience of love. *"If you LOVE me, keep my commandments."* If God has removed your earthly parent, be it your aim to transfer your love, submission, and obedience to your Heavenly Father, *"in whom the fatherless finds mercy."*

Consider Jesus– in Obedience to Divine Law

"He became obedient unto death." –Php_2_8

A higher obedience of Christ is this, than that we have just considered, since it is obedience to a Divine law and to a Heavenly Parent. Those who honor and obey God will not be found willfully and persistently dishonoring and disobeying an earthly one. The higher law, recognized and honored, will mold and regulate all subordinate relations. Oh that the fear of God in our hearts might so shape and sanctify the ties, duties, and trials of this present probationary scene, as to make them subservient to His glory! *"Surely I know that it shall be well with those who fear God."*

But consider the obedience of Jesus. It was **SUBSTITUTIONARY obedience**. Although consenting to come under a law which He had never broken, no obedience, therefore, to that law was required for Himself. Made under the law as man, He was bound to obey it, but it was the obligation of a Surety. He honored to the utmost every precept, but it was on behalf of those for whom in the covenant of grace He had entered into engagement. It was strictly substitutionary. *"By THE OBEDIENCE of one shall many be made righteous."* My soul! contemplate this blessed truth. Your covenant Surety Head has answered in your stead all the requirements of the law you had broken, and under whose great condemnation you did lay, thus paying all your great debt and delivering you from a terrible and eternal condemnation.

It was **DIVINE obedience**. It was the obedience of GOD in our nature, and therefore the righteousness which springs from it is termed the *"Righteousness of God."* God, intent upon accomplishing His eternal purpose of saving a portion of the race, provided a divine righteousness for our justification in the obedience of His co-equal and co-eternal Son, and so we are "made the righteousness of God in Him." Glorious truth! *"In your righteousness shall they be exalted."* It *exalts* us above angels, above ourselves, above sin, above condemnation. And because it is divine, it places us before God in the condition of a present and complete justification.

"And lest the shadow of a spot
Should on my soul be found,
He took the robe the Savior wrought,
And cast it all around."

The obedience of Christ is IMPUTED to us by the Spirit. In the same manner by which He became sin for us, we become righteous in Him--*by imputation*. Glorious truth! It is the marrow and fatness of the gospel to those who feel the plague of sin, and who have long starved their souls with the husks and chaff of their own worthless doings. *"Unto whom God imputes righteousness without works."*

It follows that **the obedience of Jesus is ours FREELY**, because ours by *faith.* Are you, O my soul, bankrupt of all merit and worthiness? Have you *nothing* to pay? Then, listen to the divine declaration--sweeter than angels' chimes--*"By GRACE are you saved through FAITH, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."* –My soul! It is not yours by your own doings, nor your deservings, nor your sufferings. *"It is by FAITH, that it might be by grace."* "Lord, I believe! help my unbelief."

Imitate Jesus. Let your walk before the Lord be *obedient.* Let your obedience be loving and unreserved. *"Behold, to OBEY is better than sacrifice, and to HEARKEN than the fat of rams."* Aim, Caleb-like, to 'follow the Lord fully,' standing complete in all the will of God. If Jesus thus fully obeyed for you, all He asks in return is that, if you love Him you will evince that love by OBEYING His commandments. *Love* will make any act of self-sacrifice for Christ sweet, the relinquishment of any sin unhesitating, and the bearing of any cross pleasant.

"Jesus, Your blood and righteousness,
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.
"When from the dust of death I rise,
To take my mansion in the skies,
Even then shall this be all my plea–
Jesus has lived and died for me."

Consider Jesus– in Obedience to Human Law

"Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's." –Mat_22 21

The obedience of Jesus, whether natural or moral--whether yielded to a divine or a human law--was, like all that He did, worthy of Himself. In no instance did He exhibit anything approaching resistance to constituted authority. Rebellion against Satan and sin was the only insubordination that marked our Lord's life on earth. On no occasion did either His doctrine or His practice come into direct and hostile antagonism with the State. The example before us is striking and conclusive of this. We read that the "Pharisees took counsel how they might entangle Him in His talk." They came to Him and inquired, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why are you tempting me, you hypocrites?" Had He pronounced it unlawful, caught in their snare, they would instantly have denounced Him to Herod as teaching treason against Caesar, and thus have evoked the rage of the people and the hostility of the government. But mark the wisdom and equity with which He defeated the design and exposed the craft and wickedness of His enemies, and in so doing, enunciated and enforced the moral precept which we are now to consider--*"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's."* The consideration of the duty we owe, as Christians and citizens, to human law, may not be out of place, since there exists a strong and growing tendency to override all human law, and to ignore all civil authority, than which there is not a more direct violation of God's word or a more palpable violation of the spirit of Christianity.

Jesus recognized the existence of the civil power as an institution of God himself*"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves."* (Rom_13 1-2). Such must be our starting-point in all our relations to civil government. Recognizing the human ordinance to be of divine appointment, the question of reverence to authority and of obedience to law will not reasonably admit of a moment's hesitation.

Jesus rendered unhesitating and implicit submission to both CIVIL and ECCLESIASTICAL law. We have seen it in reference to the State; another example is before us of His reverence for the *Temple.* When "tribute money" was demanded--or the *didachma,* or half-shekel levied for the religious purposes of the temple--He acknowledged its lawfulness, and, lest He should give offence by refusing to obey, He at once wrought a miracle, and paid the money (Mat_17 24-27). Thus complete was our Lord's obedience to God and man. Upon no civil or religious law would He trample, since He had declared, *"It becomes us to fulfill ALL righteousness."* If a law presses upon conscience, or contravenes religious liberty, the remedy is obvious--not disobedience, but repeal; not tumultuous assemblies and inflammatory harangues, but constitutional petition. The Legislature and the Throne are accessible to the lowest and most oppressed subject of the land.

Jesus taught us that **subjection to the civil magistrate was not incompatible with reverence to, and the fear of, God.** How skillfully He combines them both*"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."* As disciples of Jesus, as children of God, as Christian citizens, let us so walk as to stand complete in all the divine will. First, and above all, let us obey God. Then will follow, in the Family relation, obedience to parents; in the State, obedience to magistrates; and in the Church of Christ, "obedience to those who have the rule over us" (Heb_13 17).

"Let Caesar's due be ever paid
To Caesar and his throne;
But consciences and souls were made
To be the Lord's alone."

Consider Jesus– the Object of Popular Favor

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" –Mat_21 10

Jesus was now enthroned upon the highest wave of popular favor. It was, perhaps, the only moment in His earthly history in which it might be said that His popularity was in the ascendant. The sun of human glory now shone upon Him in all its splendor. He was for a moment the idol and the delight of the people. They thronged His path, carpeted it with their garments, strewed it with foliage, and rent the air with their loud and joyous hosannas. All this was strange to Jesus. It was a new page in His history, a new lesson in His life, which would fit Him in all future time to sympathize with and support those who should be subjected to a like perilous ordeal in their Christian career.

We learn that, **seasons of earthly prosperity in the experience of the Christian may be perfectly compatible with his close walk with God.** The sunshine of God and the smile of the creature may be permitted for a while to blend, tinting with their bright hues the varied forms and objects of existence. These are some of the few 'lights' intermingled with the many 'shadows'--with which God pencils the picture of life. Are our callings prospered, are our homes happy, do friends smile, are neighbors kind, and have the lines fallen to us in pleasant places? These are gleams of light upon our path across the desert, and in them, O my soul! see that you trace a Father's hand, and acknowledge a Father's heart. The picture of your life is not all somber. If the clouds shade, the sunshine brightens it; if judgment frowns, mercy smiles; and if the bread and the water of affliction are at times your appointed portion, with it He gives His love to soothe you, His presence to cheer you, His arm to sustain you, His Heaven to receive you, and says, *"You shall not be forgotten by Me."*

We learn, also, **how meekly and lowly a child of God should walk in times of worldly prosperity.** Jesus was not inflated with pride, nor lifted up with vainglory by this ebullition of popular favor. Oh, how great the grace required to walk humbly with God in times of worldly prosperity! When *"Jeshurun waxed fat, he kicked."* When earthly riches increase, or worldly honors are bestowed, or human applause is lavished, then is the time to flee to the mountain of strength, to the armory of truth, to the solitude of the closet, and to wrestle with God for help to resist and overcome the soul-perils to which all these seductions fearfully expose us. O my soul! be doubly on your guard, be whole nights in your watch-tower, when floating with the tide, wafted by the wind, irradiated with the sunshine of creature good, of earthly prosperity. The world's dizziness, the creature's caresses, the heart's self-satisfaction, would prove your downfall and ruin but for the restraining grace of God.

We also learn *how empty and evanescent a thing is the bubble of popular favor.* When Jesus was come into Jerusalem, "all the city was stirred." But before many days elapsed, the air that rang with His acclaim echoed with His execrations; the voices that then sang "Hosanna!" now shouted "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" and from that very city they led Him out to die. O my soul! bid low for the world's applause; set light by man's favor; be not ensnared by creature smiles. Fill not your censer with the incense, and shape not your sail to catch the breath of, human popularity; still less the favor and adulation of the saints. Their idol today, you may be their object of ridicule tomorrow. 'Hosanna' now, 'Crucify Him' then! Walk humbly with your God. Cling to the faithfulness of the unchanging One, to the friendship of the loving One, to the strength of the Almighty One, and to the compassion and sympathy of the crucified One, and let your Jesus be all in all.

"Earthly friends may fail or leave us,
One day soothe, the next day grieve us,
But this Friend will ne'er deceive us
Oh, how He loves!"

Consider Jesus– the Object of Popular Hate

"He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief." Isa_53 3

Our Lord's was a chequered history. Lights and shadows thickly blended in the marvelous picture of His life. The lights were but few; the shadows predominated. He did not come into the world to be joyful and happy, but to make others so. Hence the portrait--*"He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief."* We have just looked upon one of the earthly lights thrown upon the picture; we are now to contemplate one of its dark shadows. From viewing Him as for the moment favored with the adulations of the multitude, we turn to behold Him the object of their bitter scorn and rejection.

"He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief." There is much in this chapter of Jesus' history worthy of our consideration, and not a little that may be found to reflect in no inconsiderable degree the experience of many Christians. My soul, turn to it. It is a mournful yet a holy picture of Him you love. There is a bitterness in the contemplation, and yet a sweetness indescribably sweet. It is pleasant and cheering to know that your Lord Jesus has gone before you, has trodden the path you tread, and that the sorrow which now rests upon your soul so darkly is but the shadow of the yet darker sorrow that rested upon His.

Jesus was the object of popular hate, because of the DIVINITY OF HIS PERSON. Are real Christians less so? Were we not partakers of the *Divine* nature, we would not drink, in some small degree, of this cup that He drank of. The world despises the image of Christ. If it hated the fair and perfect Original, it will also hate the copy, however dim and imperfect it may be. Be of good cheer, then, if a portion of the world's hatred of Jesus comes upon you. It is a sure evidence that you are in some measure assimilated to your beloved Lord, reflecting His divine and holy image, though marred with many a blot, and shaded with many a cloud.

Jesus was despised because of the UNWORLDLINESS OF HIS LIFE. "The world hates me because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." His whole life was one ceaseless testimony against the ungodliness of this ungodly world. It rejected Him because He was holy. In proportion as the life we live is a solemn and consistent protest against the vanities and sinfulness of the world, so will it hate and cast us out. *"You are not of the world; therefore the world hates you."* In His memorable intercessory prayer, Jesus reminds His Father, *"The world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."* Accept, then, the world's despisings as your glory. The farther you recede from it, the more powerful your testimony, and the more decided and consistent your unworldly walk, the more virulent will be its malignity, bitter its hate, and wide its separation.

Jesus was equally the object of offence to the world, because of HIS TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH. On one occasion His enemies took Him to the brow of a hill to hurl Him down to His death, for the testimony which He bore to the Sovereignty of Divine Grace. And it is recorded that, on a similar occasion, many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. **The offence of the cross is not ceased.** If, through the Holy Spirit's teaching, and the Savior's grace, you are enabled to bear a humble, loving, yet firm and uncompromising testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, think it not strange if you are called to suffer.

The more spiritual and unadulterated, the more scriptural and unworldly your views of the gospel--its doctrines, its precepts, and its institutions--the more the world, even much of the so-called religious world, will separate from your company, hate, and despise you. But rejoice with exceeding joy if thus counted worthy to suffer shame for Jesus' sake. Keep your eye intently upon Him, and ever remember His animating words--"Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life." Lord, let the world despise, and even the saints reject me--enough that I am loved and approved of You!

CONSIDER JESUS--as Without Deceit

*"He committed no sin, and no **deceit** was found in his mouth."* 1Pe_2 22

Purer than the purest crystal, more transparent than the brightest sun, was the character of Jesus. It needed but the visual organ purged from the blinding and distorting effects of sin to have looked into the deepest recesses of His heart, to have seen every pulse, to have read every thought, and to have fathomed every purpose of His soul--so open, transparent, and childlike was He. His foes sought with deception to ensnare Him, but He was too innocent to be ensnared. The moral atmosphere of His being was too pure and translucid for their wicked purposes to find a single fault. They could fix no thought, excite no passion, rouse no imagination within His breast that would have left a taint or a cloud upon that pure, bright spirit of His. What He declared of Satan could with equal truth have been affirmed of ungodly men--*"The prince of this world comes, and has nothing in me."* They found no evil in Him upon which their own sinfulness could work. Wickedness could not for a moment exist in an atmosphere so holy.

Consider the integrity and honesty of Jesus as the *fulfillment of a prophecy"Neither was any deceit in His mouth"* (Isa_53_9). Ponder carefully, my soul, every fulfillment of prophecy concerning your precious Jesus. It will fortify you against the assaults of infidelity and the suggestions of Satan, and enlarge your knowledge of, and deepen your love to, the Savior. Behold the fulfillment of this remarkable prediction--*"Neither was deceit found in His mouth."*

There was no deceit in THE TRUTHS WHICH JESUS TAUGHT. All that the Father revealed to Him He made known to His disciples. He falsified nothing, obscured nothing, kept back nothing. What a lesson for us! Are we ministers of Christ? Then it is our solemn duty to guard against deceit and hypocrisy in our ministrations of the truth. There must be no adulteration of the Word, nothing doubtful in our statement of the Deity and Atonement of Christ, no mental reservation in preaching the doctrines of grace, no denying or neutralizing the Person and work of the Spirit, not the slightest vestige of craftiness or deceitfulness in handling the word of the living God. Woe unto us if we preach not the great truths of the gospel as Christ taught them! We must preach Christ only and wholly, and with Paul be able to testify--*"We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."* My soul! beware of holding the truth with guile!

Jesus was guileless in ALL HIS ACTIONS. Everything that He did was as open and as transparent as the light of day. Thus, my soul! learn of Him. Let there be nothing doubtful or ambiguous in your dealings with the world; no deceit or equivocation in your communion with the saints; but let every action and motive and end be as clear and pure as the sun's noontide splendor. Lord, in all things "let integrity and uprightness preserve me."

Above all, **Jesus was without guile in HIS WALK BEFORE GOD.** He could say, and He only, *"I do always those things which please Him."* It is here, O my soul, you have the most closely to commune with your own heart, and to weigh and ponder and scrutinize every step you take. *"You, Most Upright One, do weigh the path of the just."* Oh, walk before God with a perfect heart, and let your prayer be--Lord, search me! and should I not be real, honest, transparent--graciously, effectually root up every noxious weed, especially that hateful weed of hypocrisy, from Your own garden; and let no principle or motive, aim or end exist but what You approve, and what will be for Your honor and glory. By the sanctifying grace of Your Spirit, by the searching power of Your word, by the hallowed discipline of temptation, affliction, and sorrow, make me *an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!*

CONSIDER JESUS--as Tempted by Satan

"Then was Jesus led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." –Mat_4_1

It is a consolatory reflection to the child of God that, since the temptations of Satan constitute so severe, yet so essential a part of his spiritual training for glory, Jesus, his Surety-Head, was Himself subjected to a like discipline, equally as essential, yet infinitely more severe, to the completeness of His mediatorial character as the High Priest "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." My soul! devoutly consider your Jesus in this interesting point of light, and with faith's lowly hand pluck a rich cluster of refreshing fruit from Him, your living, life-giving, and life-sustaining Vine. Never forget that, through electing love, and most free and sovereign grace, you are an engrafted branch of that Vine; and that all the *fruit* that grows upon, and that all the *fruitfulness* that springs from it (Hos_14_8), belongs to you. *"He that abides in me, the same brings forth much fruit."*

Of whom was our Jesus tempted? "Of the *devil."* The 'heel' of the 'woman's seed' was now bruised of the 'serpent.' And oh, *what* a bruising! Forty days and forty nights enclosed with the devil in the wilderness, and during that period subjected to every form of fierce assault, until, exhausting his quiver, Satan defeated, retired from the conflict for a season. Such, O my soul! is your great accuser and tempter.

Emancipated from his captivity, you are not yet entirely exempt from his fiery darts. Think it not a strange thing that you should be his target. All the saints of God, more or less, are subjected to a like discipline. He incited David to number the people, smote job with great boils, sifted Peter as wheat, hindered Paul again and again; and, selecting the most shining mark of all, hurled his darts, thick and flaming, at the Lord Himself. Cheer up, then! your great adversary is wounded, deadly wounded; you have to do with a conquered foe, ever under the control of the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," and you yourself shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

And what were some of the darts hurled by Satan at Jesus? The devil tempted Him to distrust God, to commit self-destruction, to yield to the splendor, riches, and possessions of the world, to pay him religious homage. Such was the fiery ordeal through which the Son of God passed. And such are some of the darts by which the devil seeks to wound your conscience and disturb your peace. In need, you are tempted to distrust God; in despondency, to self-violence; in ambition, to grasp the world; and in the idolatrous propensities of your nature, to love and worship the creature more than the Creator. O my soul! count it a great honor to be tempted by the same tempter and with the same temptations as your blessed Jesus, through whom you shall get the victory.

Jesus was now being made like unto His brethren. It was necessary, in order to His perfect sympathy with us, that He should be in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb_4_15). Fly to Him, then, O tempted one! He is not a High Priest who can be indifferent to your present assault, since He was pierced by Satan, and in a measure is still pierced by the fiery darts which now pierce you. *Accept your present temptation as sent to make you better acquainted with His preciousness, His sympathy, His grace, His changeless love.* Regard it, also, as a part of that spiritual discipline that is to teach your hands to war, and your fingers to fight in the present with the world, the flesh, and the devil; and to prepare you to take your place among the palm-bearing conquerors of heaven, who overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, who shout the victor's song, and cast their crowns at Jesus' feet. "Take the shield of faith, with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

Consider Jesus– as Afflicted

"He was afflicted." –Isa_53_7

For this Jesus was born. His mission to our world involved it. In the righteous arrangement of God, sin and suffering, even as holiness and happiness, are one and inseparable. He came to destroy the works of the devil; and sin, being Satan's master-work, Jesus could only destroy it as He Himself suffered, just as He could only 'abolish death' as He Himself died. He was truly "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." In the gospel according to Isaiah--the fifty-third chapter of which might have been written by a historian recording the event of the Savior's sufferings *after* it had transpired, rather than by a prophet predicting it seven hundred years before it took place--the circumstances of our Lord's afflictive life are portrayed with a fidelity of narration and vividness of description which can only find their explanation in *"the Spirit of Christ, which was in him, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow."*

"He was afflicted." What touching and expressive words are these! Consider them carefully, my soul. Attempt, if it be possible, an analysis of your Lord's afflictions. And the first feature that presents itself is, that **He was afflicted BY GOD.** How clearly is this fact put--*"We did esteem Him smitten by God and afflicted. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief."* Was Jesus, then, afflicted of God? So are we! The God that smote Him, smites us; the paternal hand that mingled His cup, prepares ours. O my soul! refer all your trials to God. Be not tossed about amid the troubled waves of *second causes,* but trace all your afflictions, however dark, bitter, and painful, directly to the wisdom, righteousness, and love of your Father in heaven. "Himself has done it." Enough, Lord, if I but see Your hand and Your heart guiding, shaping, and controlling the whole.

Jesus was afflicted BY MAN. "He was despised and rejected *by men."* Beloved, how many of our trials, and how much of our wounding, springs from the same source! This should teach us to cease from man, and to put no confidence in the arm of flesh, since ofttimes the staff we thought so pleasant, and on which we leaned so confidingly, is the first to pierce the hand that too fondly and too closely pressed it.

Jesus was afflicted IN THE SOUL. "My soul is sorrowful, even unto death." Is not *soul*-sorrow our greatest, even as the soul is the most spiritual, precious, and immortal part of our nature? Is your soul-sorrowful? Are you conflicting with sin, harassed by doubts, depressed with fears, sorrowful almost unto death?--consider Jesus as having passed through a like soul-discipline, and uplift your prayer to Him--"My heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."

Jesus was BODILY afflicted. We do not read of actual disease of body, but we do read of bodily suffering such as infinitely surpasses all to which we can possibly be subjected; and endured, be it remembered, O my soul! for YOU! This may be the Lord's affliction in your case. A diseased body, distressing nervousness, extreme debility your daily cross. Be it so--it is all the fruit of everlasting and eternal love. Receive it believingly, endure it patiently, and be anxious only that the rod thus laid upon you by a Father's hand should bloom and blossom with holy fruit to the glory of God.

Affliction was a SCHOOL for Jesus. *"He LEARNED obedience by the things which He suffered."* Not less is it ours. We enter it, for the most part, with but a mere notional, theoretical acquaintance with God, and with Christ, and with our own selves; but sorrow's hallowed discipline transforms us into *experimental* Christians, and, gazing upon the lowly Savior, we exclaim--"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." O my soul! if this be the result of affliction, let the scythe mow you, the furnace dissolve you, the flail thrash you, the sieve sift you; it will but conform you the more closely to your once afflicted, suffering Lord.

CONSIDER JESUS--Our Paymaster

"He was oppressed." –Isa_53_7

The Hebrew word here rendered "oppressed," signifies to *exact,* or, to demand payment. It is so rendered in the following passage--*"The creditor shall not EXACT of his neighbor, nor of his brother, in the year of release."* The word *taskmaster* comes from the same root; and as there is no noun prefixed to the original, the words may be fitly rendered--it was *exacted* of Him, *demanded, required,* and He was 'afflicted,' or, He *answered.* A truer view of the office and work of the Lord Jesus does not exist; nor is there a more gracious and comforting point of light in which a poor, sin-burdened, guilt-oppressed soul can study Him.

By nature all are God's debtors, owing Him supreme love, perfect holiness, entire obedience, and unreserved service--yes, our whole being, body, soul, and spirit. To meet this great debt, we are--by nature, in consequence of the fall, morally and utterly unable--bankrupt of all righteousness and strength, having "nothing to pay." No will, no heart, no might--in a word, there being in us no good thing. O my soul! ponder this your state by nature--owing an infinite debt to God, with no possible way of discharging a single fraction of the claim, deserving to be cast into the prison of eternal punishment until you have paid the uttermost farthing.

But **consider Jesus as the Church's great PAYMASTER and SURETY.** Jesus, in eternity, entered into a bond, signed with His own hand, and afterwards sealed with His own blood, to free us from all this great debt. In fulfillment of that covenant engagement, in the fullness of time He was born of a woman, made under the law, and by His perfect obedience and atoning death, He gave full satisfaction to the Divine government, and so Law and Justice exacted from Him the obligation He had undertaken to meet. And now was fulfilled His own prophecy concerning Himself--*"Then I restored that which I took not away."* Jesus restored the glory of God, of which He had not robbed Him. He satisfied Divine justice, which He had never injured. He fulfilled a Law He had never broken, and so restored to it a righteousness He had never taken away. And He made satisfaction for sins He had never committed; and so, *"He restored that which He took not away."*

Sin is a debt--Jesus paid it when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. *Obedience* is a debt--Jesus paid it when, by the obedience of One, many were made righteous. *Death* is a debt--Jesus paid it when He bowed His head on the cross and gave up the spirit. And when thus we behold Him dragged into the court of human justice, and sentenced to a felon's death--and when we follow Him to the garden of His sorrow, sweating great drops of blood, and thence to Calvary, and see Him nailed to the accursed tree--suffering, bleeding, dying--what do we behold but the *exacting* from Him the full payment of the bond for the honoring of which He had entered into an eternal suretyship on His people's behalf?

What life and liberty are bound up in these words--*"I forgave you all that great debt!"* Believing soul, the debtor's prison is no longer your abode. The bond is cancelled, and God, the Creditor, fully satisfied with the Atonement of His beloved Son, has given a full discharge both to Him and to us, in that He raised Him from the dead. No longer, then, look at your sins, unworthiness, nothingness, and poverty; but look to Jesus, and, looking constantly by faith at Him, walk in the holy, happy liberty of one all whose debt is cancelled, and for whom there is now no condemnation. Is Jesus your Paymaster, O my soul? Then He has equally engaged to provide for your *temporal* needs, to deliver you out of all your difficulties, and to enable you to meet all your worldly engagements. Surely He who has paid your greater debt to God, will help you honorably to pay your lesser debt to man.

Consider Jesus– as Forsaken by Man

"Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled." –Mat_26_56

What a sad contrast does this picture present to the one we have just been viewing--*"Jesus, our fellow-sufferer."* His time of suffering has now come, but, lo! "all His disciples have forsaken Him, and fled." Is there nothing, my soul, in this affecting and significant fact from which you may gather much that is instructive and consolatory concerning your own condition? We have been contemplating the sympathy of Jesus with His afflicted saints. And oh, what heart can conceive, or imagery portray, the reality, humanity, and tenderness of that sympathy! In all our afflictions He is afflicted, in all our trials He is tried, in all our persecutions He is persecuted, in all our temptations He is tempted. My soul! there is no sympathy among men, saints, or angels, that can compare with Christ's. And yet how thankful should you be for the smallest measure of human sympathy given you. It may have been, and doubtless was, but as a drop in comparison of the ocean-fullness of Christ's; nevertheless, that drop has proved inexpressibly and immeasurably soothing, sweetening many a bitter trial, gilding many a cloud, and lighting the pressure of many a burden. For this uplift your praiseful heart to God.

But even this drop of 'creature sympathy' afforded you was denied your suffering Lord. How earnestly and touchingly did He ask it! *"Stay here and watch with me, while I go yonder and pray."* And when from the scene of His conflict and anguish He returned, sobbing and gory, to bury His grief in their compassion and love--lo! He found them sleeping! How gentle, yet how searching, His rebuke--*"Could you not watch with me one hour?"* What condition in the experience of the saints does this page of our Lord's history meet? It meets a sad and painful one--one which could only thus be met--the lack of human sympathy.

You are, perhaps, in a condition which needs the sympathy of a kind and loving spirit, and your sad and clinging heart yearns for it. But, as in the case of your sorrowing Lord, it slumbers at the moment that you most needed its wakeful, watchful expression. And yet its very absence may prove your richest soothing, by bringing you into a closer experience of the sympathy of Jesus. Having Himself felt its need and its lack, He is all the more fitted, as your fellow-sufferer, to sympathize with, and supply your present need.

You are, perhaps, **suffering from MISPLACED AND WOUNDED AFFECTION.** You have naturally allowed the fibers of your heart to entwine around some object of its warm and clinging love; but chilled affection, or the whisper of envy, or the venomed tooth of slander, has wrenched those fibers from their stem, and trailed them, torn and bleeding, in the dust. How like Jesus now you are, of whose loved disciples it is recorded, *"They all forsook Him, and fled."*

Or, you are **suffering from BETRAYED AND DISAPPOINTED CONFIDENCE.** One you thought a friend, tender and true, has deserted you; a judgment upon whose guidance you leaned has misled you; a source upon whose supplies you depended has failed you; a confidence in which you too implicitly reposed has betrayed you; and thus you are learning the lesson Jesus learned when, *"all His disciples forsook Him, and fled."*

Cheer up, my soul! there is One who has promised never to leave you. When father and mother, husband and wife, lover and friend, forsake you, the Lord will take you up. He who was deserted by friends and followers, will cling to you in prosperity and in adversity, in weal and in woe, with unfaltering fidelity and unchanging love; and though all forsake you, yet will He not in life, in death, and through eternity. How great and precious the divine promise--"They may forget, yet I will not." "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." Precious Jesus! though all forsake me, as all forsook You; yet YOU will never leave me, nor forsake me!

Consider Jesus– as Forsaken by God

"My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" –Mat 27 46

My soul! was it not enough that your Lord should be forsaken of *man* in His sorrow? Was it essential to the accomplishment of your salvation, and to your support and comfort in seasons of soul desertion and darkness, that He should likewise be forsaken of *God?* Yes! it *must* be so. The history of the universe never presented such an abandonment--a being so holy, and yet so entirely and so severely forsaken of God and man--as that which Jesus was now experiencing upon the accursed tree. With what a depth of emphasis that word must have sounded from His pale lips, quivering with agony--*"'My God, my God, why have YOU FORSAKEN me?'* You, my Father--You whose glory I am vindicating, whose government I am honoring, whose Name I am glorifying, whose Church I am redeeming--why, my God, my God, have YOU forsaken me? I can endure to be abandoned by man, but to be forsaken by YOU, my Father, in the hour of my deepest sorrow, at the moment of my keenest suffering, is the bitterest ingredient in my cup of bitter, the darkest hue in my cloud of darkness." Let us devoutly consider Jesus as passing through this eclipse of His soul, and receive the holy instruction and comfort the spectacle was designed to convey.

Of WHOM was Jesus forsaken? *His Father*. And when, O my soul! you walk in a sense of divine desertion, who is it that says to you, *"For a small moment have I forsaken you, but with great mercies will I gather you?"* –it is your *Father* in heaven. It is a *Father's* momentary withdrawment; and although this thought adds keenness to the discipline and intensity to the cloud, is there no consolation in knowing that the hiding is paternal--a Father secreting Himself from His child--and but for a moment? Thus, though He hides Himself, He is a *Father* still.

But, what was a cloud of thick, all-enshrouding darkness to Jesus is salvation's light to us. Even as His sorrow is our joy, His wounds our healing, His death our life--so His abandonment on the cross, as a foreign divine expresses it, is "our bridge to heaven; an unfathomable abyss for all our sins, cares, and anxieties; the charter of our citizenship, the key whereby we may open the secret chamber of communion with God."

Thus, if you are, O my soul! walking in darkness and have no light, let the thought be as a ray playing on the brow of your cloud, that, it is not the darkness of hell and condemnation, but the darkness only through which all the 'children of light' more or less travel--the darkness with which the Sun of Righteousness Himself was enshrouded--and which, when it is past, will make the sunshine of God's love and the Savior's presence all the sweeter, dearer, brighter.

And how did Jesus deport Himself in this season of Divine forsaking? What supported and comforted Him during this total and dreadful eclipse through which His sinless soul passed? *He trusted in God.* His *faith* could still exclaim, "MY God, MY God." So lean upon your covenant God, O you children of light walking in darkness. As the veiling clouds, though they hide, cannot extinguish the sun, neither can your gloomy seasons of Divine desertion extinguish one beam of the Savior's love to you. If all is dark--a hidden God, an absent Savior, a frowning providence--now is the time *to have faith in God*. "Who is among you *that walks in darkness, and has no light? let him trust in the name of the lord, and stay upon his God."* Stay yourself upon His covenant faithfulness and unchanging love, and believe that Jesus intercedes for you in heaven, and that soon you shall reach that blissful world where your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself.

"Through waves, and clouds, and storms,
He gently clears your way
O Wait His time--your darkest night
Shall end in brightest day."

CONSIDER JESUS--in Loneliness

"And shall leave me alone." –Joh 16 32

Jesus, for the most part, lived a lonely and solitary life. It was of necessity so. There was much in His mission, more in His character, still more in His person, that would baffle the comprehension, and estrange from Him the interest and the sympathy of the world; compelling Him to retire within the profound solitude of His own wondrous Being.

The TWOFOLD NATURE of Jesus contributed essentially to the loneliness of His life. The 'great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh,' would of itself confine Him to an orbit of being infinitely remote from all others. Few could sympathize with His perfect sinlessness as man, fewer still with His essential dignity as God.

As it was with the Lord, so, in a measure, is it with the disciple. The spiritual life of the renewed man is a profound mystery to the unregenerate. Strangers experimentally to the New Birth, they cannot understand the 'divine nature' of which all believers are 'partakers.' Nor this only. Even among the *saints* we shall often find our path a lonely and solitary one. How much may there be in--the truths which we hold, in the church to which we belong, and even in the more advanced stages of Christian experience we have traveled, which separates us in fellowship and sympathy from many of the Lord's people. Alas! that it should be so.

Our Lord's WORK contributed much to His sense of loneliness. How expressive His words--"I have food to eat *that you know not of.* My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to finish His work." And so may it be with us. The Christian work confided to us by Jesus may be of such a character, and in such a sphere, as very much to isolate us from the sympathy and aid of the saints. It has concealed temptations, hidden trials, unseen difficulties, distasteful employments, with which we can expect but little sympathy and pity; compelling us, like our blessed Lord, to eat our 'food' in solitude. But, oh, sweet thought! the Master whom you serve knows your appointed sphere of labor, and will, by His succouring grace, soothing love, and approving smile, share and bless your lonely meal.

The TEMPTATION of Jesus rendered His path lonely. He was alone with the devil forty days and nights in the wilderness. No bosom friend, no faithful disciple, was there to speak a word of soothing sympathy. And are not our temptations solitary? How few are cognizant of, or even suspect, the fiery assaults through which we, perhaps, are passing. Of the skeptical doubts, the blasphemous suggestions, the vain thoughts, the unholy imaginations transpiring within our inner man they know nothing--and this intensifies our sense of loneliness. But the Tempted One knows it all, and will not leave us to conflict single-handed with the tempter, but will with the temptation make a way for our escape. "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation."

The SOUL-SORROW of Jesus rendered His path lonely. Prophesying of Himself, He said, "I have trodden the winepress *alone; and of the people there was none with me."* How lonely may be your grief, O believer! None share your sorrow, few understand it. You are 'as a sparrow alone on the house-top.' There are none to watch with you in the garden of your anguish--your wounded heart, like the stricken deer, bleeds and mourns in secret. But your sorrow is all known to your loving, compassionate Savior; whose wisdom appointed it, whose love sent it, whose grace sustains it, and who will soothe and strengthen you with His tenderest sympathy. Let your labor of love, your lonely sorrow, throw you more entirely upon, and bring you into closer, more believing, and more loving relations with, the Savior; wean you more from the creature; separate you more from the world; and set you more supremely apart for God. Oh! then you will thank Him for the discipline of *loneliness* as among the holiest and most precious blessings of your life!

Consider Jesus– as Not Alone

"And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." –Joh 16 32

There is a sweetness in every cup, a light in every cloud, a presence in every solitude of the Christian's experience. It was so with Jesus, who will mold all His followers like unto Himself. We have just considered Him in *loneliness*--forsaken by man, deserted by God. But now comes the alleviation--the sweetening of the bitter, the gilding of the cloud, the soothing of the solitude. He was never less alone than at the moment that He mournfully said to His retiring disciples, *"You shall leave me alone;"* for, as if immediately recovering Himself from the painful sense of MAN'S DESERTION, He added, *"And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."* No; Jesus never was really alone. Shunning human society, and plunging into solitude the most profound, as He often did, His Father's presence was there to sweeten and soothe it, to replenish and strengthen Him for the work He had given Him to do, and to make those long midnight hours of holy watching and wrestling prayer, melodious with the music, and radiant with the sunshine of heaven. Oh yes, Jesus was *not* all alone!

Nor are you really alone, O child of God! Alone, indeed, you may be as to human companionship, affection, and, sympathy. Nor is this trial of your spirit to be lightly spoken of. God has, perhaps, given you by nature a confiding, warm, and clinging heart; a heart that yearns for companionship, that seeks a loving, sympathizing friend, to whose bosom you may confide the thoughts and emotions of your own--"another self, a kindred spirit, with whom you may lessen your cares by sympathy, and multiply your pleasures by participation." But the blessing is not permitted you; or, if once possessed and enjoyed, is possessed and enjoyed no longer--the coldness of death, the yet colder and more painful chill of 'alienated affection and changed friendship', has left your heart like a tree of autumn, stripped of its foliage, through whose leafless branches the wintry blast moans piteously.

But this discipline of the affections, though intensely painful to a heart gushing with sensibility like yours, may prove one of the costliest blessings to the soul. A heart that is satiated with the creature, has little or no place or yearning, for Christ. And when the Lord is resolved to be supreme, and finds a 'rival sovereign' enthroned, or a 'created idol' enshrined, He wisely and lovingly removes it, to make room for Himself. Oh, it is when the heart is withered like grass--when its chords are all broken, and its fibers are all torn, and silence, desolation, and solitude reign within--wounded by one, betrayed by another, forsaken by all--that Jesus approaches and occupies the vacant place, takes down the harp from the willow, repairs and retunes it, then breathing His own sweet Spirit upon its wires, wakes it, to the richest harmonies of praise, thanksgiving, and love. My Father, I cannot be alone, blessed with Your presence, solaced with Your love, cheered with Your fellowship, kept by Your power, and wisely, gently led through the solitude of the wilderness, home to be with Yourself forever! "You are near, O Lord!"

"You are near--yes, Lord, I feel it–
You are near wherever I rove;
And though sense would try conceal it,
Faith often whispers it to love.

"Am I fearful? You will take me
Underneath Your wings, my God!
Am I faithless? You will make me
Bow beneath Your chastening rod.

"Am I drooping? You are near me,
Near to bear me on my way;
Am I pleading? You will hear me–
Hear and answer when I pray.

"Then, O my soul, since God does love you,
Faint not, droop not, do not fear;
For, though His heaven is high above you,
He Himself is ever near."

Consider Jesus– in Soul-trouble

"Now My soul is deeply troubled." –Joh 12 27

In this lay our Lord's greatest suffering--His *soul-sorrow.* Compared with this, the lingering, excruciating tortures of the cross--the extended limbs, the quivering nerves, the bleeding wounds, the burning thirst--were, as nothing. This was physical, the other spiritual; the one, the suffering of the body, the other, the anguish of the soul. Let a vessel traversing the ocean keep afloat, and she may still plough the deep and brave the tempest; but let the proud waves burst in upon her and she sinks. So long as our blessed Lord endured outwardly the gibes and insults and calumnies of men, not a complaint escaped His lips; but, when the wrath of God, endured as the Surety-Head of His people, entered within His holy soul, then the wail of agony rose strong and piercing--"Save Me, O God, for the floodwaters are up to My neck. Deeper and deeper I sink into the mire; I can't find a foothold to stand on. I am in deep water, and the floods overwhelm Me. I am exhausted from crying for help; My throat is parched and dry. My eyes are swollen with weeping, waiting for my God to help Me." Psa 69 1-3

How true is God's word--"The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; *but a wounded spirit, who can bear?"* Such was Christ's. And why was His soul troubled? One rational answer alone can be given--He was now bearing sin and, consequently, the punishment of sin--the wrath of God overwhelming His soul. This was the 'cup' which He prayed might, 'if possible, pass from Him.' Divine justice, finding the sins of God's elect meeting on His holy soul, exacted full satisfaction and inflicted the utmost penalty. And thus a glorious gospel truth shines out of this terrible cloud of Jesus' soul-sorrow– that is, the *substitutionary character* and the *atoning nature* of His sufferings and death. Upon no reasonable ground other than this can we satisfactorily account for His language--*"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."* But turn we now from Jesus to His saints.

Believer in Jesus, yours is, perhaps, *soul-sorrow.* A sense of sin troubles you, the consciousness of guilt distresses you, and you begin to think you know nothing of God's pardoning love. Oh, what would you not give to be *quite sure* that your sins were all forgiven for Jesus' sake!

Or, your soul is in sorrow, perhaps, from the painful loss of the evidences of your saintship and adoption. Like Bunyan's pilgrim, you have dropped the 'white stone with the new name,' and, retracing your steps, mournful and sad, to recover it, you exclaim, *"Oh that it were with me as in days that are past, when the candle of the Lord shone round about me."*

Or, you are, perhaps, in soul-distress in consequence of the corroding doubts and distressing fears which assail you; and instead of going on your heavenly way rejoicing, forgetting the things that are behind, and pressing on towards those things that are before, your time is spent, as just intimated, in searching for Christian evidences, and in battling with unbelieving doubts and fears.

Or, perhaps, your soul may be in sorrow because you discern so little love to God, so faint a resemblance to the Savior, and so little real, vital, operative religion in your life--in a word, the spiritual life beating with a pulse so sickly and faint, that your soul is cast down within you.

One word of encouragement. Be thankful to God for this soul-sorrow--it is *a sure evidence of spiritual life*. A soul dead in sin is insensible to any real distress because of sin; a heart destitute of love to God, feels no distress because it does not love Him. A graceless sinner never longs for gracean unrenewed person never thirsts for holiness, and a dead soul never breathes after life. Take heart, then, O believer, for your soul-sorrow is the prelude to your soul's eternal joy.

But see to it that Christ has alone to do with your present sorrow. Take it only to Him. It will prove the greatest, the holiest joy of your life, if it makes you better acquainted with Jesus. O sweet and welcome sorrow, which He who changed the water into wine changes into a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Any sorrow, Lord, if it but enthrone YOU more supremely upon my heart, to reign--"the Lord of every motion there."

Consider Jesus– in Communion with God

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." –Mar_1_35

To whom can this impressive picture of high devotion properly apply but to Him whose life was one continuous act of prayer; whose vital and all-pervading atmosphere was communion with God? Jesus literally "walked with God." As man, He was deeply conscious of the spiritual necessities of man; and as the God-man Mediator, He felt the need of looking up to the Strong One for strength, to the Wise One for wisdom, to the Loving One for sympathy--in a word, to His Father in Heaven for the constant replenishing of His daily need from the boundless resources of His own Infinite Being, for the great work His Father had given Him to do.

Wise will it be for us to consider Jesus touching the article of *prayer.* If He, the sinless One, He the mighty One, He the divine One felt, deeply and momentarily felt, the need of drawing from above by the breath of prayer those supplies needful for the accomplishment of His work and for the glorifying of His Father, oh, how much more have we need that prayer should precede, accompany, and follow every step we take; that communion with God should prompt, aid, and sanctify every act of our lives; that, in a word, in imitation of our blessed Lord, we should often rise up a great while before day, and depart into a solitary place, and, before secular and worldly things took possession of our minds, *give ourselves to prayer.*

My soul! consider this precious privilege! Is there a holier, sweeter, or more needful one? Consider Jesus in this matter, and form your prayerful life upon the model of His. **He always approached God in prayer as His Father**. His spirit, His language, His approach was *filial.* "Holy Father." "My Father." Equally is this your privilege. God stands to you in the close, the endeared relation of a *Father* by adopting grace, and it were a dishonor done to His name, and an ignoring of His Fatherhood, to approach Him in prayer in any other relation and character than this. Oh, feel that, when you pour out your sinful heart, your sorrowful heart, your broken heart before Him, you are pouring it all into a *Father's* ear, a *Father's* bosom.

The prayer of Jesus was REAL COMMUNION with God. So let yours be, O my soul! Rest not content with the form of prayer, the duty of prayer, the act of prayer. Be not satisfied unless conscious of the listening ear of God, the responding heart of Jesus, the vital breathing of the Spirit. Oh, let your communion with heaven be a blessed *reality*. Do not leave the Mercy-Seat without some evidence that you have been in solemn, holy, precious audience with the Invisible One. It may be the evidence of contrition, of humiliation, of confession; or, of simple faith, of child-like love, of filial trust--but leave it not until God in Christ has spoken to you face to face. Oh, whatever your sin, or sorrow, or need may be, rise amid the twilight shadows which drape your soul, and give yourself to prayer!

By this example of Jesus, we are taught **the necessity and the blessedness of secret prayer.** "He departed into a *solitary place,* and there prayed." My soul! enter into your closet, and shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in secret. You have secret declensions to confess, secret sorrows to unveil, secret wants to present, secret blessings to crave. Away, then, to your chamber. Take with you the blood of Jesus, and with your hand of faith upon His Word, *open all your heart* in filial, loving confidence, to God, and, in paternal love, He will open all the treasures of His heart to you. Let nothing keep you from secret communion with God. Business, family, friends must all give place to this, if you want soul prosperity. Five minutes alone with Jesus will carry you through five hours of toil and trial. "Come, my people, enter into your chamber." Lord! I come!

Consider Jesus– in the Forgiveness of Injury

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." –Luk_23_34

If the Christian precept of FORGIVENESS be estimated by the magnitude of the injury forgiven, then these words of Jesus present to our view a forgiveness of an inconceivable and unparalleled injury. *The greatest crime man ever committed* was the crucifixion of the Son of God; and yet, for the *forgiveness* of that crime, the Savior prays at the very moment of its perpetration, fully persuaded of the sovereign efficacy of the blood His enemies were now shedding, to blot out the enormous guilt of the sin of shedding it.

This interceding prayer of Jesus for His murderers was in the sweetest harmony with all He had previously taught. On no gospel precept did He seem to lay greater stress than the precept of forgiveness of injury. *"FORGIVE, and you shall be forgiven." "When you stand praying, FORGIVE, if you have anything against any." "But if you do not FORGIVE, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive you your trespasses." "How often shall my brother sin against me, and I FORGIVE him? Until seven times? Jesus says unto him, I say not unto you, Until seven times, but UNTIL SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN."* Where shall we find any Christian precept enjoined in our Lord's teaching so lucidly explained, so frequently enforced, or so impressively illustrated, as *the forgiveness of injury?*

Thus, what Jesus taught in His preaching, He embodied in His example. In addition to this prayer for His murderers, uttered amid the insults and tortures they were at that moment inflicting--see Him healing the ear of one of the band sent to arrest Him; see Him turning a look of forgiving love upon the penitent dying at His side; listen to the charge He gave to His apostles after His resurrection, to 'begin' their work of unfolding the message of salvation 'at Jerusalem,' whose inhabitants were to be the first to drink of the Rock they had smitten, and the first to wash in the blood they had shed. Oh, was ever forgiveness of injury like Christ's? My soul, sit down at His feet, yes, beneath His cross, and learn the lesson now so solemnly taught, and so touchingly enforced, even the lesson of forgiving and praying for your enemies, and for all who despitefully use you--*"Father, forgive them!"*

We cannot pass through an ungodly world, nor even mingle with the saints, and not be often unjustly misrepresented, strangely misunderstood, and unkindly wounded. The lily grows among thorns; the lamb goes forth among wolves. So Jesus reminded His disciples. And yet it is the saddest thought of all that, our deepest wounds are those which we receive in the house of our friends. There are no injuries so unexpectedly inflicted, or so keenly felt, as those which we receive from our fellow-saints.

But, oh, the blessedness of writing as Christ did, those injuries upon the sands, which the next flood-tide of forgiving love shall instantly and utterly efface! Standing before this marvelous spectacle of forgiveness--Christ on the cross praying for His slayers--what true believer in Jesus can think of the wrong done to himself, the injustice inflicted, the pain produced, and yet harbor in his heart a revengeful, unforgiving spirit? My soul, go to the brother who has offended, to the sister who has wounded you, and say, "In lowly imitation of my Savior, I FORGIVE you all that wrong." "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Col_3_12-13

This prayer of Jesus was ANSWERED. On the Day of Pentecost among the three thousand converts were many of His murderers, who, pierced in their heart, washed in the fountain their own hands had opened, and were forgiven. So soon did God answer the prayer of His Son! Let us, like Jesus, "pray for those who despitefully use us." Who can tell how soon God may answer, turn their hearts, convert and save them?

Consider Jesus– in the Exercise of Praise

"I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." –Heb_2_12

These are the words of Jesus quoted by the apostle from a prophetical psalm concerning Him. We have considered Him as teaching us by His example to *pray;* it may promote our personal holiness by considering Him as teaching us to PRAISE. Praise is an element of the gospel. It entered essentially, if not prominently, into our Lord's personal life. "A man of sorrow," though He was--oftener seen to weep than to smile--yet there were moments when gleams of joy shone upon His soul, and strains of praise breathed from His lips.

Our Lord was of a THANKFUL spirit, and a *thankful* spirit is a *praiseful* spirit. How often the words were on His lips, "I *thank* You, O Father." He thanked God for the sovereignty of His grace for manifesting Himself to His disciples, for the food He was about to distribute, and over the grave of the friend He was about to raise from the dead. In all things Jesus was of a *thankful,* and therefore of a *praiseful* spirit.

And so, my soul, should *you* be! You have everything to praise God for. For the GLORIOUS GOSPEL of the blessed God; which, in the blessed announcements it makes of full pardon, of free justification, of gracious adoption, of present grace and future glory--is praise, all praise, eternal praise. There is not one announcement in the gospel to dishearten or repel a poor, penitent sinner. To such it is a 'joyful sound' without one jarring note, a salvation without a condition, a righteousness without a work, a pardon without money, a heaven without human merit or purchase--all the *free gift of God's most free and unmerited grace.* Is not *this* sufficient to awaken the deepest gratitude and the loudest praise in your soul?

And, O my soul! what shall be said of the praise due from you for the GIFT OF JESUS? Can you think of Him for a moment, and not feel your whole soul thrilling with thanksgiving and tremulous with praise? Oh, praise God for Jesus--for such a divine yet such a human Savior--for such a life, for such a death, for such a righteousness, and for such an Atonement as His. Is there no deep response of your heart to the thankful, praiseful words of the apostle--*"Thanks be unto God, for His unspeakable gift?"* Oh, praise Him for such a lovely and loving, for such a gracious and precious Savior, but for whom, you had been lost forever!

And have you not reason to praise God for YOUR CONVERSION? Oh, what a wonder of sovereign grace that ever you were brought out of nature's darkness into God's marvelous light! That, ever divine power drew you, and divine love chose you, and divine blood cleansed you, and a divine righteousness was imputed to you! That, ever you did hear the voice of Jesus, when lying in your blood, cast out to the loathing of yourself, saying to you, "Live!" And that then He washed you, and clothed you, and decked you with ornaments, and put a fair chain on your neck, a crown and a mitre on your head, and you became lovely through His loveliness put upon you--a *king* and a *priest* unto God! Praise, oh, praise Him loudly for that happy day when, having betrothed you in eternity, He savingly drew you to Himself, and you became His. Can you recall the memory of that blissful hour, and not make the desert ring with your loudest, sweetest praise?

"Oh! to grace, how great a debtor!"

My soul! seek from God the spirit of thankfulness, and cultivate habitually the grace of praise. It is a soul-purifying and a God-glorifying grace. It keeps the heart in perpetual bloom, and *converts the life into a daily psalm!* Praise God for *all*--praise Him for the blessings--of His *providence,* for the barrel of meal and for the cruse of oil that have not failed, for the providence that brightens, for the sorrow that shades, for the mercy that smiles, and for the judgment that frowns--for God's *love* breathing through all. Thus shall you be learning to sing the 'new song,' and to unite in the never ending music of heaven, where–
"Praise shall employ our noblest powers,
While immortality endures."

CONSIDER JESUS--in the Avoidance of Offence

"Lest we should offend." –Mat_17_27

How truly was our Lord Jesus 'harmless' because He was 'undefiled.' In Him was no sin. That His Gospel should have been an offence to the scribes and Pharisees, and that His cross was an offence to the world, is no marvel. It was so then, it is so now, and it will be so to the end. But our Lord never, in any one instance, gave NEEDLESS offence. His heart was too tender, His disposition too kind, His nature too holy, maliciously and thoughtlessly to wound the feelings or offend the 'innocent sentiments' of others. Maligned by His enemies, misunderstood and neglected by His friends, yet on no occasion did He retort, revile, or wound; but, with the harmlessness of the dove and the innocence of the lamb. He opened not His mouth. Let us learn of Him in this holy feature of His character, study it closely, and imitate it faithfully.

A desire to avoid offence does not demand a compromise of our Christian faith or profession. On no occasion did it in the life of Jesus. When He might have avoided a snare, or warded off a thrust, or escaped a wound by concession, conciliation, or compromise, He stood firm to His own truth and His Father's honor, unswerving and unswerved--and yet the *"sword"* with which He fenced and foiled His foes was, *"bathed in heaven"* (Isa_34_5). Thus, O my soul! learn of Him. Let this be your guiding precept, as it was Christ's, *"speaking the truth in love."* Offences will come. For, since *"the offence of the cross is not ceased,"* we cannot maintain its great distinctive and essential doctrines purely, faithfully, manfully, and not evoke animosity against us; nor the hostility and offence of the world.

And yet the Christian law, *"giving no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God,"* is unrepealed; and the Christian precept, "that you may live pure and BLAMELESS lives until Christ returns" is still binding upon all true followers of the meek and harmless Savior. "The mind that was in Christ Jesus," dwelling in us, will lead us to respect the convictions, to be tender towards the feelings, and to be charitable towards the infirmities, and to honor the consciences of other Christians differing from us in things not essential to salvation. *"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby your brother stumbles, or is offended, or is made weak."*

"Lest we should offend." What instructive words, O my soul, are these! How much evil in the world, dissension in the Christian Church, and alienation in families would be avoided and averted were the holy precept taught in these words of Jesus more fully observed. Let us, then, pray and watch against every least violation. Let us be careful of our words, our motives, and our actions, lest, wounding and offending one of Christ's little ones, we offend and wound Christ Himself. Oh never give needless cause of offence to a weak believer, to a conscientious Christian, to a tried, tempted child of God--to one who, in his own way and sphere, is seeking to serve his Lord and Master. Let us deny ourselves any and every gratification, and allow any and every loss involving not disloyalty to Christ and compromise of His truth--rather than hurt the feelings, wound the conscience, or put a stumbling-block in the way of one who loves Jesus, and for whom the Savior died.

Oh, how seldom we remember, how faintly we recognize, the perfect ONENESS of Christ with His people! That it is utterly impossible to do an injury to, or confer a favor upon, a true believer in Jesus, and not be brought into personal contact with Jesus Himself--*"He that touches you touches the apple of my eye." "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."* Lord, help me more and more clearly to see *You* in Your saints; and in conferring upon them a kindness, or in inflicting on them an injury, to see *Jesus only!*

Consider Jesus– in Sickness

"He Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses." –Mat_8_17

How closely and tenderly is Jesus *one* with His Church! Take the subject of the present meditation as an illustration. There is not a chamber of pining sickness, nor a couch of suffering languor, at which His presence may not be experienced in all the divine power and human sympathy of His nature. The careful reader of His life must have been deeply impressed with the frequency with which His personal contact with bodily infirmity and disease is recorded, and with what promptness and skill He addressed Himself to the task of alleviation and cure. *"And He healed people who had every kind of sickness and disease."* And still His power and skill are needed, and still are the same. Into the shaded chamber of how many a sick one whom Jesus loves will these pages come, breathing, it is humbly prayed, the soothing fragrance of His Name around the restless pillow! *"He Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses."* Let us consider IN WHAT WAY Jesus did this.

He bore our sicknesses WHEN HE BORE OUR SINS. Sin is the prolific source of all evil, and especially of all disease. This reflection embitters and intensifies the sufferings of the child of God. The thought that, perhaps, had it not been for some particular defection, some hidden declension of soul, some sin of omission or of commission, his Heavenly Father would not have not sent the discipline of sickness--is intensely painful to the heart that desires to please God in all things. But how consolatory the truth that, if we may trace all disease to sin as its original and primary cause, we may also trace all sin to the cross of Christ, where He atoned for it, unsealing in His own heart's blood a stream which has cleansed it all away. Oh, let this thought, my soul, soothe and comfort you--that in all your bodily suffering there is no condemnation, the atoning blood of Jesus having washed you whiter than snow, leaving you not the *cause,* but the *effects* only of your sin.

But, if sin is the originating cause of sickness, *love*--divine, everlasting, unchangeable love--is the immediate and proximate cause. That is a sweet expression in reference to Lazarus--*"He whom you LOVE is sick."* No physician can bring to your sick-bed a medicine so healing, a remedy so soothing, as this truth--*that your sickness originated with a Father's love*--love selecting the NATURE, love appointing the TIME, love grouping all the CIRCUMSTANCES of the affliction. If, Lord, I can but see that *Your love* kindled this burning fever, appointed these silent hours, this darkened room, this unrefreshed bed, these quivering nerves, this throbbing head, this fluttering heart--"may Your will, not mine, be done."

Jesus bears our sickness in the grace and sympathy by which He enables *us,* uncomplainingly and submissively, to bear it. Oh, what a hallowed sanctuary is often the sickroom of a child of God! What divine presence is there felt, what glorious manifestations of the Savior are there made, what holy lessons are there learned, what heavenly prospects are there unveiled! Jesus is there, and thus makes it all that it is.

Be not hasty in judging of the state of your soul in sickness. Mind and body reciprocally and powerfully act upon each other. A diseased body will often impart its morbid complexion to a healthy soul; and, looking away from Jesus, will fill it with doubt, darkness, and despondency. It is what *Christ* is, and not what *you* are, that is to fill you with peace, joy, and hope.

Cheer up, my soul! this long, this painful sickness is not unto death, but that God may be glorified. When He has tried you, you shall emerge from this fire all the holier, and more Christ-like--rising from your couch and going forth from your sick-room, *"as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race."* And thus by the *sanctifying discipline of sickness*, your covenant God and Savior is but preparing you to dwell in that happy land, the inhabitants of which shall no more say, "I am sick."

Consider Jesus– in the Anticipation of Death

"Father, save Me from this hour." –Joh_12 27

There were some expressions of feeling in our Lord's life which can only be accounted for on the ground of His perfect *humanity*. Such, for example, as His apparent shrinking from suffering and death. And this, in its turn, can only find a solution in the fact that, He was not suffering as a common sufferer, but as the Sin-Bearer of His Church. We read of martyrs going to the stake displaying, apparently, much more fortitude than Jesus did in view of His death. The reason is obvious. In the case of the Christian martyr there was no burden of sin, no mental anguish increasing the tortures through which they passed to glory. The sense of God's forgiving love, and of acceptance in Christ, transformed the fiery chariot in which they ascended to heaven into a 'chariot of love'.

But the case of our Lord Jesus was essentially and totally different. His holy soul was suffering for the sins of His Church, and this was the cause of the shrinking and the cry in the garden of Gethsemane--*"If it is possible, let this cup pass from me."* He bore in His sufferings the burden of their *sins,* while they in theirs bore only the burden of His *love*. But what comfort springs from this consideration of Jesus *shrinking* from suffering and death, to those who are expecting the near approach of the hour of their dissolution!

Consider Jesus as having Himself TASTED death. What a comfort is this fact! He knows what death really is. He tasted its bitterness, was pierced by its dart, felt its sting, and at length succumbed to the foe. He *died!* Thus, He can enter into your expectancy, fear, and shrinking, in view of this terrible crisis of your being, as no being on earth, or even in heaven, can. The glorified spirits look *back* upon death, but you are looking *forward* to death, and in its solemn anticipation there is but One Being in the universe who can deliver you from its bondage and its fear, That being is--JESUS.

But Jesus not only died, but, in dying, **He OVERCAME and ABOLISHED death.** It is no longer in the experience of the believer in the Lord Jesus death to die. Jesus has, in a sense, so annihilated death, so entirely absorbing it in His own Essential life, that He has declared; *"If a man keeps my saying, he shall not SEE death."* What an entire abolishment of death, must that be when a dying believer shall *not see death!* Yes, O my soul! looking in simple faith to your Savior, you shall see JESUS ONLY in that solemn moment. So entirely will He fill the whole scope of your vision, that death will be an invisible object--the pale messenger entirely hidden from your view by the personal sufficiency, beauty, and presence of Jesus. Glorious Savior! veiling the foe so long and so painfully dreaded, my dying eye will see You only--death's illustrious Victim, yet death's triumphant Conqueror.

Be not, then, O my soul! distressed in the prospect of your departure. Christ has come to *"deliver those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage."* Alas! **through lack of faith in Jesus, we suffer a thousand deaths in anticipation**, while in reality we shall not suffer one! *"Those who SLEEP in Jesus"* is the epitaph which the Holy Spirit inscribes over the dust of every believer in Him. Away, then, with your fears, O my soul! Learn to die daily to sin, to self, to the world; and then from the valley of the shadow of death will ascend, as you pass down, the triumphant shout, *"Thanks be unto God, who gives me the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

O You! from whose belt hang the keys of Hades and of death; *go ahead of* the "last enemy" with Your grace, *accompany* him with Your presence, and *follow* him with Your power; then shall I fear no evil, but fall asleep in Your arms and wake up in Your likeness.

"It is not death when souls depart,
If You depart not from the soul."

Consider Jesus– in Intercessory Prayer

"I pray for them." –Joh_17 9

There is no part of Christ's Priestly office more soothing to the sick, tried, and suffering believer, than His intercessory supplication on their behalf. To know that we are borne upon the prayerful hearts of our fellow-Christians, in times when providences are trying, and our hearts are breaking, is unspeakably soothing. How much more so is the thought that Jesus, our merciful High Priest, Friend and Brother born for adversity, is praying for us in heaven--our names worn upon His heart, our woes and needs, sins and sorrows entwined with His prayers before the throne; that, His intercession for us is not a *past*, nor even an *anticipatory* intercession alone; but, that it is a *present* intercession, an intercession moment by moment, "NOW appearing in the presence of God for us."

O sweet thought that, when some new trial comes, and some dark cloud lowers, and some bitter sorrow crushes; at *that very* moment *Jesus is praying for us*, asking His Father on our behalf the strength that will support; the grace that will sanctify; the love, comfort, and precious promise applied by the Spirit, that will calm, soothe, and sustain us. Thus consider Him.

Intercessory prayer for others is one of our most spiritual and richest privileges. *"Pray one for another." "Praying for all the saints,"* is the divine and apostolic precept constantly enforced, and by arguments the most persuasive and touching. How many of the Lord's tried ones, through bodily pain, or mental depression, or crushing sorrow, *cannot pray for themselves!* What a privilege to pray for them, to be "God's remembrancers" on their behalf, to imitate Jesus, and intercede for them *outside* the veil, while *He* intercedes for them *within* the veil! Thus, intercessory prayer on earth, and intercessory prayer in heaven, will envelop them as with a cloud of incense, and the tried saint will be upheld, and the weak strengthened, and the tempted shielded, and the sorrowing comforted, and the sick soothed, and the dying one supported and cheered, as he passes down the valley, homeward to be forever with the Lord.

For the use of those who visit the sick and the dying, the following PRAYER for one who appears to be approaching the eternal world is affectionately suggested–

"O Father of mercies, God of all comfort, our only help in time of need, we fly unto You for support on behalf of this sick person lying under Your hand, in great suffering and weakness of body. Look graciously upon him, O Lord; and the more the outward man decays, strengthen him, we beseech You, so much the more continually with Your grace in the inner man. Give him sincere repentance for all the errors of his past life, and true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that, washed in His atoning blood, which cleanses from all sin, he may have peace with God before he goes hence and be seen no more . We know, O Lord, that there is nothing impossible with You, and that, You can raise him up as from the grave, and prolong his life; yet, if it be Your will that he should die, so fit and prepare him for the solemn change by the regenerating grace of Your Spirit, and simple reliance upon the Savior of sinners, that his soul may have an abundant entrance into Your everlasting kingdom, through the sole merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, in union with Yourself, O Father, and with You, O Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen."

Offering up by that dying couch and in that solemn moment, this prayer in faith of the Divine assurance, that, *"He is able also to save them to the uttermost* that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them," we may humbly hope that, at the evening time it shall be light; and that, at the last moment, the brand shall be plucked from the burning, and free grace wear the crown.

Consider Jesus– In Bereavement

"Jesus wept." –Joh_11 35

With what baptism of suffering was not Jesus baptized? What cup of sorrow did not He drink? Well may He ask, *"Are you able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"* "Yes, Lord," every believing saint may reply, "by Your grace I AM ABLE; for, while without You I can do nothing, with You strengthening me I can do all things." Jesus replies, "You shall, indeed, drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; for all My members shall be conformed to Me, their Head." "Dear Lord," responds the believing soul, "if affliction, temptation, and sorrow but mold me into Your image, and conform me to Your life, do with me as seems good in Your sight."

There are few sorrows more bitter and more keenly felt, than *the sorrow of bereavement.* Jesus knew what this sorrow was; let us consider Him in this light.

Are you bereaved? so was Jesus. When the wondrous words were written on which this meditation is founded, He was weeping at the grave of the friend He deeply, tenderly loved, and now as tenderly and deeply mourned. Baptized with your present baptism of woe, drinking your present cup of grief, He knows your sorrow, can fathom with His love its depths, soothe with His sympathy its anguish, and enter into all the intricate and delicate network of the loss and loneliness it entails. "Jesus wept."

And still in compassionate sympathy He weeps with those who weep. How truly human was the heart, and Divine the arm, of Jesus. With the one He moistened the grave with tears, and with the other He unclosed its doors and set its captive free. Both these natures--the Divine and the human--encompass you in your present bereavement. You need both, and both you have. The exercise of His DIVINE POWER in *resurrection* He may reserve for the moment when *"those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him; when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of Godand the dead in Christ shall rise first."* But the outflow of His HUMAN SYMPATHY shall be *now*, tear mingling with tear, sigh responding to sigh, in this dark hour of your calamity.

My soul! let your first, your great desire be--not that your wound may be stanched, or your grief soothed, but that your God may be glorified in the fires; that henceforth your smitten and grieved heart may enshrine and enthrone Jesus, as the object of its single homage, and as the sovereign of its supreme rule. Has your God written you a *widow?*--then will He be to you the widow's God. Has He made you an *orphan?*--in Him the fatherless finds mercy. Has He by this visitation of death broken a supporting staff, dried a spring of affection, severed a source of supply, put out the lights of life one by one?--fear not! you shall now lean upon His arm, repose upon His heart, live upon His resources, and walk in His light. Thus learning by sweet, though painful experience, that **the Lord never removes one blessing but to replace it with a greater**; never seals up one spring of happiness but to unseal a deeper one. Then, let your bereaved heart exclaim--*"Whom have I in heaven but You, and who is there on earth that I desire besides You?"* All are not gone! Your God may have removed one by one of earth's sweet treasures; but He will never take Himself from you. Death may rob you of all but Christ.

"Launched on the tide of God's eternal love,
His ark beneath you, and His light above,
What can you fear? Be still, my soul, be still!
Your God has never left you--never will."

CONSIDER JESUS--as Receiving Sinners

"This man receives sinners!" –Luk_15 2

Nothing gave greater offence to the scribes and Pharisees than the divine mission of Jesus to save sinners. No greater and more virulent accusation could they allege against Him, than that, He extended His compassionate regards to the vile and the wretched, admitting the most flagrant offenders to His mercy, and inviting the most notorious sinners to His fellowship. And yet this, His greatest reproach, was His highest honor. Pluck this jewel from His mediatorial crown, and it has lost its costliest gem. Extract this note from the "joyful sound," and you have hushed its sweetest melody. Remove this object of His mission from His coming, and you have reduced His incarnation, sufferings, and death to a gigantic waste.

Oh, with what glory does the fact that, *"This man receives sinners,"* invest the Son of God! How should our hearts glow with gratitude, praise, and love! If the individual who makes two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before, is regarded as a public benefactor; if we deck the person of him who, at the risk of his own, saves the life of another, what shall we feel towards the Son of God who, in the plenitude of His compassion and love, bowed the heavens, and came down to save countless myriads of our race from the "bitter pains of eternal death"!

Yes, "He receives sinners." He receives them *as sinners*--lost, undone, self-destroyed sinners--sinners too vile and too helpless to save themselves--who, if He does not save them, never can be saved. He receives sinners of all conditions and of every hue, of every depth of guilt and character of crime. Oh, if there were a sinner out-sinning all sinners--every sin tainting, every crime attaching to him--an abandoned profligate, an unbelieving scorner, a reviling blasphemer, a red-handed murderer, a profane infidel, a daring atheist, a moral parricide whose transgressions have broken a mother's heart and bowed a father's gray hairs in sorrow to the grave--sins as scarlet and red as crimson--as a cloud for darkness, and as the sands on the sea shore for multitude--if, I say, there be such a one whom He *would not* save, and *could not* save, then would there be silence in heaven and exultation in hell at the announcement that Jesus Christ had ceased to save to the uttermost bounds of sin and guilt all who, in penitence and faith, came to God through Him.

It follows, then, that, receiving them just as they are, He receives them *freely,* apart from all fitness or worthiness, of their own. *"By grace are you saved." "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved."* What a joyful sound! Come, then, O my soul, to Jesus, without hesitation or delay.

"Just as I am I and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot;
To Him whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come."

Assured of the fact that you yourself have come to Jesus and are saved, be it your aim to bring others to Him, that they may be saved too. Oh, live and labor, if need be, suffer and die for Him, whose greatest glory is, that He receives and saves sinners, who has received and saved *you!*

"He receives sinners." Hear it, you that are afar off, wandering in ignorance and sin. Hear it, you who, amid the tortures of a guilt-oppressed conscience, are inquiring, "What must I do to obtain mercy and forgiveness?" Hear it, you who once walked in the way of holiness, but have turned aside to sin and folly. Hear it, you who are resigning yourselves to dark despair, tempted to terminate a present misery by the self-infliction of a future, a more fearful and interminable one. Oh, hear it, all you poor and wretched, you humble and penitent, you broken-hearted and burdened--*"This man receives sinners, and eats with them."* "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Consider Jesus– in His Atoning Blood

"The blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from every sin." 1Jn_1_7

The blood of Jesus is everything. It is the *central* doctrine of our faith, the present and eternal life of our souls. There is no pardon, no salvation, no heaven but *by blood*--the blood of the Lord Jesus. Were we to relinquish every other revealed truth, and concentrate upon this one our supreme and lasting study, resolving all our knowledge of the Bible into an 'experimental and personal acquaintance' with ATONING BLOOD--as, like a purple thread, it runs from Genesis to Revelation, it would not be a too exaggerated view of this vital and momentous subject. The blood is everything to us--it is everything to God. He provided it, is satisfied with it, beholds it, and when He sees it on the soul, that soul becomes a living and a lovely soul in His sight. May our meditation on atoning blood exalt our views of its dignity, increase in us its power, and endear to our hearts the preciousness of Him who shed it!

The blood of Jesus is DIVINE. It is the blood of God's Son, the God-man Christ Jesus. In this consists its sovereign virtue. The Divine nature of Christ rendered His obedience and death an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savor.

The blood of Jesus is ATONING. It was shed for sin, it has made to Divine justice a full satisfaction for sin, it puts away sin. Is sin your burden, O my soul? Is it for your sins you do moan and weep, and are cast down? Behold, the sin-atoning blood of Jesus; believe, and weep no more. Here is that before which not a sin can stand.

The blood of Jesus is CLEANSING. It "cleanses us." Oh, this is what you do so deeply need, my soul! Sin-forgiving, guilt-removing, heart-cleansing, conscience-purifying blood. All this is the blood of Jesus to you. Wash in it, and you shall be whiter than snow. *"He that is washed is clean, every whit."* And mark the tense of the wonderful words on which this meditation is based--it is the *present* tense. The blood *"cleanses."* It *has* cleansed, it *will* cleanse, but, as touching our daily walk as believers in Jesus, we have to do with its *present* cleansing. In our Christian travel through a sinful world the feet are apt to slide, prone to wander, and are constantly contracting fresh defilement, needing the *daily washing* in the blood. What a sweet thought, O my soul! that the fountain is *open*, and the blood *cleanses*, even *now* cleanses us, from all sin.

The blood of Jesus SPEAKS. "The blood of Christ that *speaks."* Oh, what a voice has the blood of Jesus! What sweetness and majesty, what gentleness and power! It speaks, and the troubled conscience is at rest; it speaks, and the broken heart is healed; it speaks, and the tormenting doubt is hushed; it speaks, and the trembling fear is quelled. It speaks, also, within the veil. The voice of Jesus' blood is heard in glory, sweeter and louder than the voices of all the minstrels round about the throne. My soul, the voice of Jesus' blood pleads louder for you in heaven, than all your sins can plead against you on earth.

It is *sprinkled* blood--that is, **APPLIED blood**. Therefore it is called, *"the blood of sprinkling."* The blood of Jesus practically will not avail us unless applied to the conscience, just as the blood of the Paschal lamb had availed nothing to the Israelite, when the first-born of Egypt was slain, had it not been sprinkled upon his house. And so God said, *"When I SEE the BLOOD, I will pass over you."* O my soul! look well to this. Why is it that you are so doubting and fearful? Why are you not walking in a full sense of your pardon and acceptance in JESUS–basking in the sunshine of a present and assured salvation? Is it not because you are stopping short of the *applied* blood? Oh, come to the blood, the blood of sprinkling! Keep no guilt upon your conscience, no anguish for uncleansed sin in your heart; but wash daily in the precious blood of Christ, which cleanses from ALL sin.

Consider Jesus– in the Power of His Resurrection

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." –Php_3_10

Is there not some danger of lingering too exclusively at the *cross,* to the exclusion of the *grave* of Jesus? In other words, do we give the subject of Christ's RESURRECTION that place in our faith and meditation which we give to His Death, and which God gives it in the great scheme of our salvation? Essential and precious as the atoning Death of Jesus is, it had availed us nothing apart from *His Resurrection*. We needed more than *death*--we needed *life!* We needed more than the bond presented by Divine justice, and *paid*--we needed the seal of its acceptance on the part of God. This was given when God raised up Jesus from the dead, *"who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."*

Christ's Resurrection from the grave by the power of God was the Father's attestation to the completeness of the Son's work, and His public acknowledgment of its acceptance. Thus the Resurrection of Christ is to us what a legal acknowledgment is at the hands of a creditor whose claim has been met, whose bond is cancelled. The believing soul sees in the emptied tomb of Jesus the evidence and the acknowledgment of his full discharge from all the demands of Law and all the threatenings of justice. Now, it is the *power* of this truth in our souls that more immediately concerns us. The Resurrection of Jesus is an accomplished fact--what we want to experience is, *His Resurrection-life in our heart.* This was Paul's prayer--*"That I may know Christ, and the POWER of His Resurrection."*

We first feel this when we realize our mystical union with Jesus. There can be no experience of the power of anything apart from a personal contact with it. Let us first settle the question, "Am I one with Christ?" Have I a vital and spiritual union with the Savior? If so, then I am risen with Him, as the apostle says--*"If you be risen with Christ."* O my soul, consider into what an exalted and blessed state your union with Christ places you, making you, through free and sovereign grace, a partaker of all that He was, of all that He now is, and of all that He will be when He comes with all His saints in majesty and glory.

By the power of Christ's Resurrection, we enter into a new, or *resurrection-life*--*"Quickened together with Him."* Our blessed Lord, when He rose from the dead, rose with a new-born life. Leaving in the tomb the grave-clothes--the napkin and the shroud--He came back clad with His resurrection robes--a new and wondrous life! Of this resurrection-life all are partakers who know the POWER of His Resurrection.

O my soul, fear not, then, that anything shall ever separate you from Christ. This cannot be, since your spiritual life is bound up and hidden with the Resurrection-life of Jesus.

The power of Jesus' Resurrection is experienced by us when by it we rise above earth, and *"seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God."* Has Jesus risen? Then we, also, must rise. As He left death and earth behind Him, so we, if we be risen with Him, "through faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead," must rise superior to the deadly pomps and vanities of this poor world, and walk with God in "newness of life." Oh to feel the "power of His Resurrection," in a life dead to sin and the world, but living to holiness and God!

We wait to know yet more of the "power of Christ's Resurrection," when the trumpet of the Archangel shall sound, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. The slumber of the grave gently broken, the glorified spirit returns to its awakened dust--then both ascends into the air to meet the descending Lord. O blessed, glorious consummation of the power of Christ's Resurrection!

Consider Jesus– in His Second Appearing

"Looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." –Tit_2_13

A Savior 'to come' has been the hope of the Church of God in every age and dispensation. The Old Testament saints looked for His coming to *save*; the saints of the New Testament look for His coming to *reign*--even *"The GLORIOUS appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."* There are, in fact, *three* personal appearances of our Lord mentioned in the Scriptures. His first, when *"He APPEARED to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."* The second, *"Now to APPEAR in the presence of God forever."* The third, when *"He shall APPEAR the second time without sin* (that is, without a sin-offering) *unto salvation."* In each of these appearances of Jesus, my soul! you have a personal and precious interest. His *past* appearance was to save you, His *present* appearance is to intercede for you, His *future* appearance will be to glorify you.

And so Jesus is the "Alpha and Omega" of your salvation, from the *first* eternal throb of love towards you--if we may speak of a beginning of that which in reality had *no beginning*--to the *last* throb of love to you--if we may speak of the end of that which in reality has *no ending.* Thus, Christ is all and in all to you, the First and the Last, and, as good Romaine was used to express it, "and all that comes between." Let us consider Jesus in the light of the blessed hope, His glorious appearing, a befitting subject for the close of our daily meditation upon Him.

It will be a PERSONAL appearing. As He went up into heaven so will He *return--in person*. *"This SAME Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven."* So says God's Word, and so we believe. As His ascension was *personal,* so will be His coming again. This is a sweet thought, my soul, for you to dwell on. He will come not by His spirit, or by His angels--thus gathering His saints unto Him by *proxy*--but He will come for them *Himself.* It will be a *personal* appearing of the great God, our Savior.

It will, consequently, be **a VISIBLE appearing of Jesus.** "Behold, He comes with clouds, *and every eye shall see Him."* "When He shall appear *we shall see Him as He is."* Oh the thought of gazing upon His person, of beholding Him robed in majesty divine, and yet looking so human, so like His brethren, of whom He will now appear, more manifest than ever, the Elder Brother!

He will come WITH ALL HIS SAINTS. Those who sleep in Him will be raised, and those who are alive at His coming will be translated. Moses and Elijah, who appeared with Him in His transfiguration, were eminent representatives of these two conditions of the saints at His coming; Moses, representing those who died, and Elijah, those who will then be translated so that they shall not see death. *"The DEAD in Christ shall rise firstthen we who are ALIVE and remain on the earth shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air."* Thus, whether living or dying in the Lord, we shall all meet again around the descending Person of Jesus, heart pulsating with heart, hand clasped in hand, one anthem sweetly chiming from every lip. "Worthy is the Lamb, for He was slain for us."

This subject is eminently PRACTICAL. It makes Jesus more precious. How quicker beats the pulse and warmer throbs the heart of the bride anticipating the speedy return of her long absent lord! Blessed Jesus! You are the Bridegroom of Your Church, and the Beloved of my soul, and the thought of soon and forever beholding You makes my soul as the wings of Amminadab--unclasped, uplifted, and ready to fly!

O my soul! let not the coming of the Lord surprise you in a state of unregeneracy, unconverted and unprepared! None can meet Him with joy but those who are BORN AGAIN of the Spirit, washed in His blood, and clothed in His righteousness. Is this your assured condition? Then, happy are you!