CHRIST IS ALL (The Gospel in Genesis-Deuteronomy)

The Gospel in GENESIS

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PREFACE

The object of these pages is simple, clear, holy. It is to arouse attention to the blessed truth, that **Christ pervades all Scripture**, as *salt* all waters of the sea, as *light* the brightest day, as *fragrance* the garden of choice flowers.

To see this is my prime delight. To testify it is my happiest duty. Devoted loyalty to Him who is the first and last, the sum and substance of all Scripture, impels me. Earnest zeal for the undying souls of men constrains me. I know, and am intensely persuaded, that *all peace, all joy, all salvation, are in Jesus.* My eyes are widely open to the fact that men are blessed, and are blessings, just in proportion as they live, ever gazing on Christ, ever listening to His voice.

Shame, then, and guilt and woe would be my portion, if I should leave any effort untried to unfold His glorious image. Let me rather use every power of life and pen to *magnify* and *exalt* Him—to beseech men to *ponder* Him—to *search* for Him—to *receive* Him—to *love* Him—to *follow* Him—to *serve* Him—to *commend* Him—to *live* in Him, and through Him, and for Him. I would thus strive, the Spirit helping, to assail and melt and conquer hearts, that Christ may there be enthroned, in all His rightful majesty, a beloved and adored Lord.

There can be no excess in the faith and love and adoration and obedience of the only Savior, the King of kings and Lord of lords! Has there ever lived the saint, whose moan it has not been, that, always striving to learn, he still was miserably ignorant in the full purpose of the Bible? What is there comparable to the profit of this knowledge? It is helpful to men in everything, hurtful in nothing. Whatever be the station or employment, if the duties are performed with loving eye intent on Jesus, with mind rejoicing in His discovery, with heart luxuriating in His riches, then toil will be no toil, because of the constant refreshment.

Who will deny that the happiest man on earth is he who is most enriched with enlightened views of Christ, and acts out most devotedly this faith? He lives at heaven's high gate. He holds close communion with Him, through whom his transgressions are forgiven, his sins are covered, his person accepted, his soul saved. He knows in whom he believes. He discerns the glories of His person, the redeeming worth of His wounds, the ransoming efficacy of the pierced hands and feet, the sheltering shadow of the cross. He reads the assuring language of Calvary. He sees his name written on the God-man's heart. To him the morning sweetly dawns, because it awakens to the renewed light of Jesus' grace. To him the day gladly speeds on, because its advance is progress in divine instruction. To him the night is calm repose, because he rests on the pillow of atoning love. The darkest cloud is fringed with rays of joy, while he meditates on salvation's Lord, and all events drop gladness. Can I know this, and not beseech men to make Christ their All?

Until this is truly done, how dreary is the present state, and the future prospect! **Without Christ**, religion is a sunless sky; public service a casket without the jewel; life is a dreary passage to a dreadful end; the home is no abode of peace; the family has no strong bond of lasting love; the trade yields no returns of worthy profit; death is a downfall into the unfathomable abyss; eternity is a prolongation of unutterable woe.

Without Christ, prosperity is an adverse tide, and adversity is a foreshadowing of deeper misery. Birth is no benefit, if Christ is never born within. Life is no gain, except to live is Christ. **Without Christ**, God is an adversary; Scripture sounds condemnation; and Satan is waiting for his victim, which his prison-house is ready to receive. Can I know this, and not beseech men to make Christ their All?

We live, too, in days when countless fallacies court men in garb of truth. How shall we meet, expose, expel them? Wisdom is needed, for theological error is shrewd and bold. It often is opposed by error, and then victory leaves darkness more dark. The conquering champion's panoply is full intelligence of Christ. Christ is the *sword*, before which Roman frauds and novel sophistries fall low. He is the *shield* which guards the heart from all the poisoned arrows of the deceiving and deceived. In Him there is reply for every error's every wile. Christ truly seen is an impregnable fort. Christ well applied smashes all falsehood's weapons. He is God's wisdom in the highest. The man is safe on wisdom's high ground who is well versed in Him.

Therefore my desire in these pages is to turn minds to clear discoveries of the Lord Jesus. The *Father's* eye moves not from Him. The *Spirit* never wearies to reveal Him. *Angelic* intellect pants to dive more into His depths. The *saints* in light find Him increase of everlasting light. May the unfolding Spirit help each reader to glean more in the golden field of Scripture; and may the Pentateuch be found *a boundless treasury of Christ!*

LIGHT

"God said, Let there be **light**: and there was light." Gen 1:3

The speaker is God. The time is before time was. The word is omnipotence. The result is the grandest of gifts. Darkness heard and vanished. "God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

Reader, strive to imagine the scene, when this first voice called this first blessing into being. This world of full delights was then one huge mass of unarranged material. It had no form, and therefore it had no beauty. It was vacancy, and vacancy lacks all that pleases. It would have been cheerless, even if robed in cheering light. But impenetrable night shrouded the lifeless void.

From this crude quarry, however, the home of man is to be built. This waste is to be peopled with beings, whose age is immortality. It is to be the field, from which heaven's garner shall be stored. Therefore, deformity must assume form; disorder must melt into order; shapelessness must be shaped into loveliness.

How shall this be done? God had but to will, and in one instant creation arises in full-blown perfection. But it is not so. He works by gradual process. He works. Let us hence learn the wisdom and the need of effort. He works by gradual process. This teaches, that patient diligence is the path to all well-doing.

But what is the first wonder, which steps forth to usher in the train of harmony and grace? It is LIGHT. Do you ask what is the chamber of its birth? and what the art, by which it is composed? The reply is, "God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

To know more is impossible. And it is impossible, just because more knowledge would neither tend to profit nor to good. There are, however, truths linked with light, which are open to our earnest search. It is a casket rich in Gospel jewels. In its fair form we see the fairer features of the Lord of light. The Holy Spirit—no doubtful guide—proclaims, "That was the true light, which lights every man, which comes into the world." Jesus, too, exalts it as His emblem, when He instructs, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The prophet, too, gazing on the rays of Christ, sings, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." The apostle, intent on Jesus, exhorts, "Show forth the praises of Him, who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." We should close our eyes, then, on the high purposes of light, if we failed to trace therein the transcendent beauties of salvation's Dayspring.

Light is **pure**. In it there neither is, nor can be, mixture or pollution. Its property repels defilement. It traverses unstained each medium of uncleanness. Snow is brilliant; no whiteness can surpass it. But man's step mars it. Water sparkles brightly from its spring. Man's hand can soil it. But none can make light's purity less pure. Such is Christ. When man on earth, He was as pure as God in heaven. He passed through a world of sin, as a sunbeam through the vilest hovel. He took indeed sin's form, that He might bear sin's due: but He never knew sin's stain. In Bethlehem's manger He was the holy Child. He returned to heaven in holy triumph, as the holy Conqueror.

Reader, study much the essential holiness of Jesus. It is one of the anchors of our Gospel-hope. He must be as holy as God is holy, or He cannot mediate with God for us. If but a shadow of a sinful shade be on Him, atonement is needed for Himself: then He must save Himself: and we are left unsaved. But Jesus is all-sufficient to redeem us, because He is Jehovah's co-holy fellow.

Study it, too, as the model of the new-born soul. Salvation is conformity to His image, "He that has this hope in Him, purifies himself, even as He is pure."

Light is **bright**. Indeed, what is brightness but light's clear shining? The day is bright, when no clouds hide the sun. The prospect is bright, which reflects unnumbered rays. The hope is bright, which glitters free of foreboding gloom. Such is Christ. He is "the brightness of His Father's glory." He embodies, as in one constellation, every Divine perfection. He shines, the midday splendor of Jehovah's attributes. That time is the brightest time, in which the Lord is nearest. That page is the brightest page, in which most of Christ is found. That sermon is the brightest sermon, in which most of Christ is heard. That life is the brightest life, in which most of Christ is seen.

Light is **lovely**. Beauty cannot live without it. Exclude it, and every charm would hang a blighted head; the sun would fade, and color be extinct. Such is Christ. It is a true record, "You are fairer than the children of men"—"the chief among ten thousand—and altogether lovely." What fullness of beauty is in that person, who is both God and man! what harmony of grace is in that work, which joins God to man! what charms are in those precious Scriptures, which show His worth! To see His varied excellence is heaven begun. The sight makes earth a blank, and all its glories but a withered flower. Just, too, as lovely light makes lovely, so Christ decks all on whom His beams descend. He beautifies the meek with salvation.

Light is **free**. The wealth of the wealthy cannot purchase it. The skill of the skillful cannot frame it. The labors of the laborious cannot earn it. The poverty of the poor cannot debar from it. Wherever it comes, it flies on freedom's wings. It gilds the hall, unbribed by price. It illumines the hut, unbought by toil. Such is Christ.

Sinner, do you crave this precious treasure? Open the casement of the heart, and it is yours. "Come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." Waste not then time in seeking a price for Him, compared with whom an angel's worth is nothing worth. All your fancied merits are only demerit. You best is sin, and will you offer sin for Christ? Plead misery and take mercy. Bewail darkness and He will give you light. All who bask in His joyous rays, are one in this testimony. Each sings, My treasure is a free-grace gift: He *loved* me, because He would love me: He *called* me, because He would call me: He *blessed* me, because He would bless me: He *saved* me, because He would save me: He *shone* into my soul, because He would shine. When I was darkness, He said, "Let there be light: and there was light," and the light was Himself.

Light is **all-revealing**. So long as darkness casts its mantle round, we move unconscious amid foes and mire. A pit gapes at our feet; an arrow is ready on the murderer's bow; each touch is a stain; but we are heedless of our woe. Let the light dawn, then ruin and uncleanness stare us in the face. Such is Christ. By His rays, SIN is detected, as lurking in every corner of the heart; and the WORLD, which we so fondled, is unmasked, as a monster, whose embrace is filth, and in whose hand is the cup of death.

Reader, do you discern the defilement of sin, and the poison baits of the world? If not, light has not visited your conscience. Christ is not in your heart. In the lament of faith there is always this note, "Behold, I am black." In its mouth there is always this cry, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

But as the sun is seen by its own light, so Christ reveals not perils only, but HIMSELF. He shows His cross—the glorious proof of boundless love. He shows His blood—the precious payment of all debts. He discloses the treasures of His word. Then testimonies, and promises, and endearing calls, and soothing notes of comfort, spring into brilliant life, as beauties in the sun-lit landscape. He draws back the curtains of His heavens, and we see a reconciled God, and catch the glimpses of a weight of glory.

Light is the parent of **fruitfulness**. Regions, which the sun rarely cheers, are barren wastes. In shade, vegetation languishes; and trees droop. Perpetual winter is perpetual desolation. But mark the change, if genial warmth returns. The garden, the vineyard, the fields are soon clothed with fragrant and luxuriant plenty. Such is Christ. In His absence the heart is profuse with every weed, and every noxious berry. But when His gleams enliven, the seeds of grace bud forth, the tree of faith pours down its golden fruit.

Light is the chariot, which conveys **heat**. Without it, earth congeals into a rocky pavement. Our soil would be adamant, if our skies were black. So the heart without Christ is ice. But when He enters, a glow is kindled, which can never die. Love burns and blazes in every chamber of the inner man. This is the spark, which flares to heroism in the faithful minister and the toiling missionary. *Christ seen and loved is warmth to the heart.* Warmth in the heart is fire in the lips. Fire in the lips is a flame in the hearers. Thus hardened congregations melt into a flood of holy zeal.

Light, too, is the harbinger of **joy**. For three days Egypt was all blackness: sight failed and motion ceased. It was a dreary time. In Paul's tempestuous voyage, for many days neither sun nor stars appeared. It was a dreary time. But far more dreary is the Christless soul. Not until He lifts up His countenance can the happy morn begin, which has no night. Present light, however, is but the morning-star of coming glory. Here on earth, mists will sometimes rise. Heaven is a cloudless God. Then in bodies of light, and robes of light, the redeemed sit down in a city of light, "which has no need of the sun neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of the Lord does light it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Reader, are you journeying from light to light? Be not deceived. There is the candle of REASON. This guides to no haven. There are the many false lights of error. They delude to rocks, and quicksands, and whirlpools of destruction. Vain meteors glare from many pulpits, and in many books. The self-pleased votaries of forms and superstitions are dazzled by the tinsel of a fictitious cross. Beware! there is but one sun in the skies. So there is but one Christ in the Bible—one Christ of the Spirit—one Christ of the Father—one Christ of the saved.

I ask again, 'Has your darkness passed away?' It is so, if you see this one Sun of Righteousness, and hate sin, and crucify the flesh, and trample on the world. It is so, if you rejoice in His beams, thirsting for clearer knowledge, and a brighter path. But, perhaps, you love darkness rather than light, because your deeds are evil. Ah! think how fearful is the broad road! It goes straight down into the abyss, which is outer darkness, and where is weeping and gnashing of teeth for ever. Stop, I beseech you. Will you not turn to "the true light?"

Believer, you see the sunny spot, which is your home. In your full joy, remember, that this garden of the Lord is a place of work, and not of sleep. Your light is come, that you may arise and shine. You are light, that others may be light through you. Say not, 'it is not mine to *create* or to confer light.' True; but it is yours to *reflect* it. The planet casts back rays. The mirror returns the image. The Christian shows forth Christ. Say not, 'I move among the blind.' True; but your Sun gives *sight* as well as *light*. You saw nothing, until He said, See. Give Him no rest, until in your family, in your neighborhood, in your country, throughout the world, His voice be heard, Let there be sight; and there will be sight—Let there be light; and there will be light.

÷Gen 2.7

ADAM

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." Gen 2:7

The life of Adam is but a brief page. But each line supplies a volume larger than the books of human mind. We find in it the key of all, which amazes us in that marvel—Man. The countless now on earth—the countless in unutterable bliss—the countless in eternal woe—all hang on him as the parent-tree of being. All, who shall yet be born to shine in heaven or to burn in hell, must flow as streams from this fountainhead.

When we go back to the birth of him, we naturally ask, of what material is the work? Pride would conclude that no lowly quarry could produce such a frame. But pride must lie low before the unerring word, *"Dust* you are." Ponder this first truth. The mightiest monarch—and the Lazarus at his gate—are one in base original. The common parentage is that of *worms*. The flesh of each is but the filth, which our feet scorn. Who, then, will boast of beauty or of strength? There is a voice in dust, which mocks such pitiable folly.

But man is *more* than a shell of clay. The lowly case holds a matchless jewel. God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul." The flesh is of the earth and earthy. The spirit is from on high and heavenly. One is the clog of matter. The other is a ray from God. One soon crumbles back to vileness. The other is a deathless principle. One sinks as to the level of the beasts. The other gives the wings of immortality. Reader! you cannot think too highly of the soul. It cannot cease to be. Age after age imprints no wrinkle on it. It neither withers nor decays. Its time is timeless. Its death is never.

Thus man was formed. A lovely garden was the palace of creation's lord. Fragrance and fruit charmed and refreshed each sense. Converse with God was the soul's easy flow. To live was unalloyed delight. The smile of innocence met the smile of heaven. The heart was only love—the worship only praise. But man was a *creature*, and a creature must obey. In heaven the *angels* do their Maker's bidding. God cannot be, except on a throne of rule. But obedience shall be no heavy yoke. Only one command is issued—only one tree forbidden. To transgress is death. "In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die." Who can hear this penalty, and think that *sin* is a trivial fault—easily to be pardoned—soon to be effaced? No! the slightest sin is the soul in open rebellion. *It casts God from the heart. It strives to tread Him in the dust. It avows the godless principle of independence. It proves that self has erected the idol of self-love.*

Can God then merely ignore evil? Ah, no! The whole of Deity abhors it! Therefore, to transgress is death. Such is the penalty. But who can fathom the depths of misery in this curse? It involves the instant withdrawal of heavenly presence. It denounces withering to the core of every spiritual faculty and perception. It warns, that to rebel is to become death-stricken in body, and dead in soul. It shows that sin's proper home is the eternal gnawings of accusing conscience, and eternal tossings on the bed of wrath.

We now approach earth's darkest day. The tempter comes. We reason not with those who ask if this might not have been averted. We see that piety untried is piety uncertain. With subtlety the snare is laid. Evil suggestion is presented. The first lie is muttered. Our parents pause to listen. Will they yield? Can they touch and taste? Alas! a perfect man is but a tottering reed. The *one* command is broken. Sin enters. Innocence expires. The life of God is extinguished in the soul. Adam hangs down his head, fallen and guilty, in a cursed and doomed earth!

It becomes us to consider well the **miseries** of this foul deed. It is the clue of all the dark confusion, which perplexes us without, and humbles us within. The universe moves not on the pivot of right order. The brier, the thorn, the hard toil tell of a *cursed* soil. The storm, the hurricane, the earthquake, the blight, the pestilence, proclaim, that displeasure frowns from heaven. All things, by *tending to decay,* show, that death wields an unrelenting scepter. The tears, the sighs, the groans, and all the train of sorrows, which follow in the rear of pain and bereavement, evidence that an angry God deals angrily. But this is not all. The bitterest curse fell on the *heart*. Alas! what a wilderness is it of hateful weeds! We read, and conscience echoes, it is true—"Every imagination of man's heart is only evil continually." "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that understand and seek God. They are all gone aside—they are altogether become filthy. There is none that does good, no, not one." The *mind* is vain—the *understanding* darkened—ignorance sits as guide—right feeling has fled. The creature is worshiped and served more than the Creator. The faithful Witness states it. All experiences confirm it. The records of the fall explain it. *All **woe** came hand in hand with **sin!***

"In Adam all die." Reader! next mark, how it is, that all our race had a share in the first sin. Adam stood before God, not as an isolated being, but as a common person. All generations were in his loins. The whole family of man were wrapped in that casket. As one seed holds a forest; so all nations of all ages were involved in this one head. As all rays are in one sun; so all descendants were in this common stock. Thus *Adam's act affects each child born*, as taint in the spring is taint in each issuing drop. It follows, then, that in him we break the Covenant of Works. *We sin in his sin.* We offend in his offence. We transgress in his transgression. We are guilty in his guilt. In him we depart from God. In him we enter the cells of wrath. In him we put on the prison-garb of condemnation. In him we receive the heritage of curse. Will *pride*, which finds all elements of good in self, deride this statement? Let it first show *why infants die*—and why the first thoughts are buds of evil. There is no better proof of *nature's blindness*, than such wallowings in the *mists and mire of unscriptural conceit*.

To this point, our view of Adam has been a cloud—gloomy, and scattering gloom. But look again. There are bright rays behind. As we mourn, the Spirit flies on wings of love to change the scene. Sweet voices cry, Adam "is the figure of Him who was to come!" "The first man Adam was made a living soul. The *last Adam* was made a quickening Spirit." "The first man is of the earth earthy. The *second man* is the Lord from heaven." "As in Adam all die, even so in *Christ* shall all be made alive." Blessed tidings!—blessed privilege to trace the likeness! May the Spirit help us now to look off from the *sin-bringing* to the *sin-bearing* Adam!

Is Adam the parent of the whole family of nature? So Christ is the parent of the whole *family of grace*. It is written, "He shall see His seed." "A seed shall serve Him." He is "the everlasting Father." As Adam is the stock of *corruption and of death;* so Christ creates anew to righteousness and life. He is a quickening Spirit. As those who are born after the flesh are flesh; so those who are thus born again are spirit. Their powers, and faculties, and perceptions are as light from darkness. Once they were a mass of death. Now they have ears to hear His call—and eyes to see His beauty—and mouths to worship God and sing His praise—and hands to cling to the cross—and feet to mount the hill of Zion. Once their hearts were stone—now every pulse is love. Once their taste was low and sordid as the earth—now they are high and pure as heaven. The best of books is their sweet pastime. The best of themes is their happy converse. New desires and sentiments prove that they are newborn. Such is the happy progeny of grace. They sit in harmony around the table of Christ, and adore Him as the author of their being, and their joy. Thus in *Christ's garden*, plants are made fit for the Paradise above—as in *Adam's wasteland*, weeds blacken for the burning.

But the contrast extends. Adam falls, and in him the world is cast down. Christ stands, and in Him all His seed lift up the head. He appears in flesh the common Head of His adopted ones. As such, He strides in triumph over every assault of Satan. As such, He moves in one unbroken, perfect course of pure and perfect love. God's fullest will is the one movement of His heart. His every member shares the victory and is righteous in the Righteousness. Thus each true believer boasts, "In the Lord I have righteousness," and knocks at heaven's gate with the unanswerable plea. In Christ, my law-fulfilling surety, I bring the Righteousness of God. Great was the loss in Adam; but far greater is the gain in Christ!

So likewise, as a common person, Jesus hangs upon the cross. In Him His people suffer unto death. In Him they exhaust the cup of wrath. In Him they taste the bitter pains, which sin deserved. In Him they pay the uttermost farthing into the scales of justice. In Him they endure, until each attribute of God requires no more. Thus each child of faith exclaims, with adoring praise, "I am crucified with Christ." Who can lay anything to the charge of one, who in Christ is discharged of all? In Adam we merit all wrath. In Christ we undergo it. Christ rises from the dead. The icy bands cannot detain Him. But still He holds His people in Himself. In Him each sees a pledge of that resurrection-morn, in which this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. In Adam we crumble in the grave. In Christ we find it the gate of life. In Adam we lie down in beds of darkness. In Christ we put on light as our robe forever.

The work of redemption being ended, Jesus returns on high. Does He ascend disconnected from His members? Can the Head live apart? No! In Him they enter in and take their seats before the throne of God. It is not written without meaning or without truth—"He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Every seat has been prepared from everlasting ages; and in the view of God no seat is vacant. Do you say this is a mystery? It is! But it is *true as deep*. And it is revealed for the believer's comfort. For what comfort like assurance of oneness with our Lord in all which He has done, and is now doing? It is, too, *the seed of holiness*; for who can dwell in spirit amid heaven's glories, and touch the debasing vanities of earth?

Reader! it is a clear fact, that natural birth has brought you into the old world of sin. How important the question, Has spiritual birth translated you into the new world of grace? It is so, if you are Christ's—and you are Christ's, if Christ is yours—and Christ is yours, if He dwells in the heart by sincere faith—and faith is sincere, which ventures on Him, and ventures wholly—which loves Him fully—which hears His voice and follows Him. If this evidence be absent, you are still in a land of ruin. And will you remain a wretched wreck? Oh! cry to Him, who always helps the helpless at their cry. Seek life from Him, who is the Lord of life. Apply for quickening to Him, who is the quickening Spirit.

Gen 2.23

THE HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM

"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." Gen 2:23

Our Bible is a very Paradise of each sweet flower and each regaling fruit. But the believer sits down most gladly in those choice spots, which are thickly set with tokens of the Savior's tenderness. Surely happiness mounts up to heaven, when on Scripture's ground, and under the Spirit's light, the soul discerns that Jesus loves with an everlasting love. Reader! this humble tract will visit you in a favored hour, if it should lead you to drink deeply of such joy.

We cannot move far amid the pages of the Word, without hearing the silver voice—Give ear unto Me, that I may tell you of My love. For this purpose each tender image speaks by turn. Does a *father* love with strength of manly love? Jesus is the Everlasting Father. Is a *mother* gentle in her soft caressings? Jesus is more constant—"they may forget, yet will I not forget you." Is a *brother* generous in his affections? Jesus is the firstborn among many brethren. Is the *sisterly union* as the intertwining of hearts' fibers? The Church is "His sister, His spouse." Is a *friend* noble in his sympathies? We read, "Henceforth I call you not servants, but I have called you friends."

Will not these parallels suffice? No! not if another can be added. As all colors combine to form pure light—so *all tints must join to form the full portrait of a loving Savior.* There remains the full-blown endearment, when heart flows into heart in *bridal*-union—and will Jesus claim His people as His bride? It is so! This is the emblem, which is the Spirit's choice delight. It meets us in the garden of Eden. It walks by our side throughout the green pastures of the word. It only leaves us, when Revelation writes no more. "The Spirit and the Bride say Come." Echo replies to echo, "As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you." "I will betroth you unto Me forever; yes, I will betroth you unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies."

Following such holy guidance, let us now seek Jesus in that pure feeling, which innocently played in Adam's heart, before sin entered with unhallowing touch. The narrative is simple. "So the Lord God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. He took one of Adam's ribs and closed up the place from which He had taken it. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib and brought her to Adam." But the mystery is deep. A greater than Adam and the first spouse are in this history of sinless union. Faith has been taught, and quickly learns, that *the spiritual Bridegroom and the mystic bride are here!* Earth's first espousals are but the shadow of heaven's far earlier love.

The *second Adam* sleeps a sleep—even the sleep of death; but not in Eden's innocent delights, but on *the hard altar of His ignominious cross.* His side is pierced. There flow thence the means to constitute the Church. There is blood to expiate every sin—and water to wash from every stain. The Father presents the bride to Adam. The same Father gives the favored bride to Christ. Adam receives her as portion of himself. Christ's word takes up the same welcome. They "are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

We are thus emboldened to draw with reverential pen some lines of likeness. Marriage can only be in kindred race. Here the bride is low in lowly origin. Her coarse material is clay. But Jesus dwells in heaven's bright palace, bright in all the brightness, glorious in all the glories of His own Deity. How can union be? He leaves His home. He veils His Almighty might. He seeks our cell. He scorns not our loathsome rags. He is born a child of man in Bethlehem. He lives the Son of Man in human nature.

O my soul! did your Lord thus stoop to make you His forever? He did. Infinite was the distance—but He came with lightning-speed on wings of love—and rested not, until He rested in your far-off abode. The bridegroom counts all efforts light to win the bride's regard. *Can it be, that Jesus strives to gain unlovely souls?* It is so! He lives, when we love. He scarcely seems to reign, until the heart presents her throne. Hence in the Scriptures He sends letter upon letter, each burning with the pure flame of tenderness. Hence He follows with the fond call—Turn! turn! Look unto me. Come unto Me. Return unto Me. Follow Me. Abide in Me. Hence He sends His faithful ministers—the friends of the Bridegroom—to plead His cause—to appeal in His behalf—to beseech in His name—to set forth His matchless charms—to show that His love is strong as death, and pure as the light, and boundless as eternity. That ministry is most true to Christ—most rich in everlasting fruits, which paints most vividly the mind of Christ.

But more than this. The *Holy Spirit* comes commissioned by the Father and the Son. He reveals the Lord in all the beauties of His person—all the wonders of His grace—all the glories of His work. He subdues all prejudice—turns the stream of opposing will—and kindles a blazing torch in the dark corners of the soul. Thus union is achieved. The faithful soul forgets her own people and her father's house. She casts out the former rivals, which bewitched her thoughts. She comes out and is separate from a once-fondled world. She leaves all, and cleaves to Christ.

In nuptial bonds the bride rejects the distinction of her former name. A new address attests that she is no more her own. It is just so in spiritual union. What! though the nature of Jesus proclaims essential Deity—that very nature is the Church's diadem. We are first told, that "The Lord our Righteousness" is His name. The same is her portion, for it is added, "The Lord our Righteousness" is her name too.

The bridegroom courts the **closest communion**. It is even so with Jesus. By His Word, and through His messengers, He allures His people to His side. He opens to them the purposes of His grace—the secrets of His kingdom. He encourages them to tell out their every need, and fear, and desire, and hope. He tenderly invites, "Let me see your countenance, let me hear your voice, for sweet is your voice, and your countenance is lovely."

Who can portray *a bridegroom's sympathy?* It is, however, but a drop compared to the full ocean of a Savior's care. "We have not a High Priest, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." "He who touches you, touches the very apple of His eye." "In all our affliction He is afflicted." No suffering member can be pained on earth, but the participating Head cries out in heaven, "Why are you persecuting Me?" Reader! you have often heard these truths. Do they touch a responsive chord within? If not, yours is not the bride-like spirit.

The bridegroom brings his **dowry**. And does not Christ enrich with gifts? Angels may marvel, dazzled by the Church's wealth. He holds back nothing from her. All His attributes are her grand inheritance. His *wisdom* is hers to guide. His *power* is hers to uphold. His *love* is as the sun to cheer. His *faithfulness* and *truth* are her shield and support. His *Spirit* is poured down in unfailing measure to teach, to solace, and to bless her. His *righteousness* is hers, to be her spotless robe. His *heavens* are hers, to be her home. His *throne* is hers, to be her seat. His *glory* is hers, to be her crown. His *eternity* is hers, that she may joy forever. Happy the soul, which responds—All this I steadfastly believe!

The bridegroom shrinks from no labors, which bring support and plenty to his beloved. Thus Jesus lives a life of watchful work. He rests not night and day. His outstretched hands are ever pleading, and ever pouring down supplies of grace. He purchased all Heaven's blessing, that His people may never lack. And as each need arises, He is all vigilance to see—all bounty to bestow. Earthly union often knows the pang of separation. *Duty's* stern voice may say—Depart. *Necessity* may force to lonely distance. *But nothing in heaven, or earth, or hell, unlocks the arms which cling around a divine Bridegroom!* At each moment He is nearer than the shadow to the side. Life is but leaning on His arm. Death is but sleeping on His breast. There is a never-failing bond in the sure world, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

In this cold world, affections cool. The day, which dawns in love, may close in hate. Tastes vary and cause variance. Discordant tempers make discordance. Far otherwise is the heavenly wedlock. It is ever true, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

When Jesus *calls* in love, He *changes* by His spirit. He imparts a new nature, whose every pulse is unison with Himself. It is heaven's own harmony, when Christ is all. Here a house is often tears, because of godless offspring. Many a one has sighed, "O Absalom, my son, my son!" But from *heavenly union* nothing springs but *heavenly seed.* Believers are *married* to Christ, that they should bring forth *fruit* unto God. Apart from Him, the heart is the hotbed of evil. United to Him, it is the holy parent of each holy grace.

But at present the Church sees her Bridegroom *only by the eye of faith.* The veil of flesh impedes the meridian gaze. But yet a little while and the day of visible espousals will arrive. A startled universe will hear the shout, "Behold the Bridegroom comes." There will resound, "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honor to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." Then shall He shine forth, "to be admired in His saints, and to be glorified in all those who believe." The bride "shall be brought unto the king in clothing of needlework; with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought, they shall enter into the king's palace." The nuptial song shall be one ceaseless Hallelujah. Happy soul, which responds—All this I confidently expect!

Reader! is it your happy privilege to know that a union, which thus lives forever, cements your heart to Christ, and Christ to you? Remember, then, that this blessed relationship demands your faithfulness. The Lord is jealous of His people's love. You must not stray from Him for one single moment, or in one single thought. The caution is needful; for days are come, in which *strangers* are gone forth, professing to be the Bridegroom's friends. They even stand in pulpits, and give instruction in His name. By this sign you may know them. They exalt the bride rather than her Lord. They magnify His ordinances rather than Himself. They beguile her to admire herself, to lean on herself, to trust in herself, and to decorate herself in the mock robes of false humility and superstition. Take heed; the ground is slippery. It may seem pleasant to self-loving nature; but it slopes towards Antichrist!

It may be that some worldling reads this whose life is wedded to another lord. Would that such may turn and burst their fearful bonds! There is indeed the prince of this world. His promises are lies. His dowry is anguish. His embrace is death. His chamber is darkness. His bed is flames of fire. His marriage-wail is agony's wild shriek. Worldling, can you love this spouse?

Gen 3.15

THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." Gen 3:15

These are *the first words of grace to a lost world.* When were they spoken? By whom? To whom?

When *were these words spoken?* Just after sin had come in, and innocence was gone, and man had become a guilty creature before God. One command had been given, for the purpose of seeing whether he would love, and fear, and serve his Maker. That one command had just been trodden under foot. Pause here for one moment and think. Some people dream of earning eternal life by doing God's will. This way has been tried. It failed. The end of it was ruin. Our first parents were *innocent*, and had no inward tendency towards evil, but they rushed into it. But we are *born with corrupt hearts*, and fully bent on sin, and can we keep ourselves holy and spotless? It is a vain thought. Let us cast it away. We cannot continue blameless. Our wicked nature is always drawing us out of the straight path of godliness. We have not stood blameless during one hour of one day of our lives. The charge is true, and every honest conscience will confess it.

By whom *were these words spoken?* We read, "*The Lord God* said." What proof is here, that our God is merciful and gracious! Think how He had been offended! Think, with what base ingratitude—with what contempt He had been treated! *Satan's lie* had been trusted rather than *His truth*. His easy yoke had been broken, as if it had been some hard restraint. The language of the proud heart had been—We will not have God to reign over us!

God, even He, descends. No thunder-bolt is in His hands. No avenging angels follow to sweep the rebels into perdition. The voice which speaks is the voice of mercy. The tidings which are brought, are the tidings of deliverance. O my soul, can you consider the Speaker, and not exclaim—Truly, God is good—He wills not the death of a sinner! Reason as the wife of Manoah did, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, He would not, as at this time, have told us such things as these."

To whom *were these words spoken?* Three only were present. First the guilty pair. Mark their state, and learn from it that *the first step in the way of salvation is taken by God.* We have sure evidence before us. He wills to save, when man wills to die. He moves to save, when man moves to perish. Our first parents are before Him, a picture of all fallen sinners who would be born of them. As they were, so are we by nature. They were sinners, *blind and hardened.* So are we. Blind, I say; for *their eyes were not opened to the dreadful condition* into which they had passed, *or the dreadful misery*, which was now their lot. Hardened, I say—for they did not confess their sin, or humble themselves, or weep tears of sorrow, or utter prayers for mercy. Just such is man's natural blindness and hardness from that day to this. And still to such God comes in love—to such God speaks of recovery to His favor and His kingdom.

Reader! calmly meditate on this. You will see, that when man is all careless, God is all care; when man can do nothing, God does all; when man deserves nothing, God gives all. *Salvation is from first to last of* ***grace!*** Man rushes to hell. Grace calls to heaven.

Next, another being was present. But there was no hope for him. He was only told that destruction was his doom. We have here a proof that *God makes a difference between offenders.* Let us not vainly ask, why mercy yearns over *man*, and turns from the *angels* which fell? There can be but one reply, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight." And can we so reply, and not sing praise, that we, who have so *sinned*, should be so *pitied*, and have such rich provision of *pardon?* O my soul, think on these things.

But *what is this rich provision?* We read the answer in the word, "her seed." Here is a promise, that *a deliverer* would come into this world, who would be born of a woman. If the question be put, "Who is this seed of the woman?" We readily reply—The Lord Jesus Christ. The blessed Savior. The only Redeemer. The only begotten Son of God Most High. True, the voice of God here promises that Jesus, appointed to save—should be made man—should be one of our family by birth—should be bone of our bones, flesh of our flesh. The fact is easily stated. But, Reader! is it your habit to ponder over the great and precious truths belonging to it? *Mark! The mighty God, without ceasing to be God, becomes man to redeem us! Wonder of wonders!* The like to this never has been—never could be.

Let the *greatest king* become the lowest beggar—let the *richest prince* leave his palace for the vilest cell of a loathsome prison—it is as nothing compared to the act of Jesus, when *He left heaven to put on the rags of our mortality!* The Creator of all things appears a creature! The Almighty is a weak babe!—The Eternal is a child of time!—The Infinite is contracted into the limits of this poor flesh! Is not this the wonder of wonders? Is not this grace which has no bounds?

Reader! do you seriously believe that Jesus thus humbled Himself even for you? If you do, you cannot but feel that no debt can be like your debt; and that, as heaven is high above the earth, so great is what you owe, beyond what you can ever pay. In the poor matters of this earth, a prince's or a noble's birth awakens signs of far-extending joy. The banners wave. The steeples sound. The festive table is spread.

Shall we then call upon the realm of *nature* to celebrate with worthy praise this praise-surpassing fact? What if the *sun* could hang forth millions of lamps, each brighter in brilliance than itself; what if each drop of *ocean's* water could raise a chorus of ecstatic hallelujahs; what if each leaf of every *forest* could cast back the pealing shout; it would be shame to offer *a tribute so unfit!* But there is a testimony of delight which Jesus seeks. He is repaid, when grateful hearts throw wide their portals to receive Him, and when welcoming praise extols His saving name. O my soul, will you not then bid all that is within you, to clasp the hands of loving worship around the manger at Bethlehem?

When *Abraham* saw the day of Christ afar off, he rejoiced and was glad. The *unborn Baptist* could not restrain emotion, when the unborn Jesus was brought near. The beacon-star filled the journeying *sages* with exceeding great joy. The multitude of the *heavenly host*, who shared not in redemption's mercies, made heaven's vault to echo with their praises. O my soul, can *you* be silent? Hear you not the angel's cry? "I bring you good tidings of great joy." Will you not with great joy drink in these tidings? "Unto you is born a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Will you not, in aged *Simeon's* spirit, clasp Him to the heart of faith, and lift up the hymn of praise?

Next, have you, too, seriously pondered, *for what exact purpose did Jesus become the Woman's Seed?*—Our peace and happiness depend on the right knowledge of this. It was just for this purpose, that He might be qualified to stand in the poor sinner's stead; and might be in a condition to represent him. You know that the Word of God has spoken, and cannot be called back, "The soul that sins, it shall die." You know, too, that to die, in this sentence, *means to suffer forever the torments of the lost.* Under this condemnation you and I are brought by sin. You and I, then, must thus endure, unless God be pleased to take the death of a sinless one in the place of our death. Jesus is willing to bear all for us; how could He do so, without being man? He could not. Therefore, He is made man. So when God's Truth and Justice say—I must have that man's life; Jesus is ready to reply—I am of his nature, here is my life for his. Mark, then, He is the Woman's Seed, that He may have a life to lay down, and have blood to shed, for the *ransom* of such as we are. See clearly, that Jesus takes man's flesh, that He may redeem from death all of man's family who trust in Him.

Thus, also, in man's nature, *He obeys all the commandments of God.* But the righteousness thus worked out is not for Himself. It is wrought, that He may impute it to all who come to Him. This He never fails to do. So when the poorest believer presents himself for admission into heaven, he can show, for his passport, a perfect righteousness placed over him by Jesus. It is so all-sufficient, that, when weighed in the balances of God, it lacks nothing. I repeat these truths, because they are the groundwork of true faith. Jesus was the Woman's Seed, that, being exactly as we are, yet without sin, His *death* might be a substitute for our death—His *righteousness* might be a substitute for our righteousness.

Reader! are you a poor sinner, feeling your misery and dreading eternal wrath? Flee to the Woman's Seed! There is pardon in Him to wash away all iniquities. The faithful of the old world knew Him by no other name, but they believed God, that, in due time, He would come, and thus satisfy God's justice for them. They looked to Him who would be born. They looked, and none can look in vain. Do you seek after a righteousness to make you fit to appear in heaven? It is all ready in the Woman's Seed. Stretch out the hand of faith, take it, and it is yours forever. Whatever you need dwells richly in Jesus, the Woman's Seed. Cast on Him your vileness, and take His purity; cast on Him your poverty, and take His riches; cast on Him your nothingness, and take His fullness; cast on Him your curse, and receive His blessing.

Do you hesitate—do you stagger—fearful to approach one so excellent in holiness? Well might you tremble, if bade to draw near to God in His glory. But He who calls you, is your Kinsman—the Woman's Seed. You may fly up to Him on the wings of faith, and embrace Him with the arms of faith, and cling to Him with the hands of faith, and lay your weary head upon His breast, and tell Him all your sorrows; and you will find that His heart is a brother's heart, as tender to sympathize, as His power is all-sufficient to save.

Do you still stand doubting? What, when Jesus has come so far for you, will you not stir one step towards Him? When He has stooped so low, will you not ascend to Him? When He brings Himself, in man's form, to your very door, will you not open and welcome Him? Surely there is enough in the Woman's Seed to slay all unbelief; enough to win and conquer every heart.

Here we see heaven coming down to earth, that earth may be raised to heaven. Here we see the Son of God becoming man, that men may become the children of God. Will not this satisfy—persuade—allure? *Surely God could do no more!* Man, then, can say no more.

I close with this earnest entreaty; read these few words again and again, until you find the flame of faith and love kindling in your soul; and then, on the bended knees of gratitude, exclaim—I bless You, Heavenly *Father*, for the promise in Eden of the Woman's Seed. I bless You, for sending, in the fullness of time, the Woman's Seed. I bless You, O *Lord Jesus Christ*, for coming to save me, as the Woman's Seed. I bless You, *Holy Spirit*, for revealing to my soul the Woman's Seed.

THE SERPENT'S HEAD BRUISED

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." Gen 3:15

We look around us, and we see the world full of sin. We look within us, and we find hearts full of the same sad plague. It is a terrible fact—and we ask with a sigh, *how did evil gain this rule?* God's word only can give the answer. We there read, that one in the form of a serpent enticed our first parents, and, by prevailing, changed their nature. But who is this serpent? We further learn that it is the devil. He thus disguised himself, that he might deceive. The Bible does not close, until this truth is left beyond a doubt. It is twice written, "that old serpent, who is the Devil and Satan." The moving cause, then, of our being born in sin, and living in sin, stands confessed—it is the Devil.

He obtained his first power over our race by *deceiving*. He continues that power by deceiving still. His main art is to keep us blind concerning himself, and concerning the great Deliverer. I am sure of this, because I see many who pass all their days without one real thought, that they have a foe always near, plotting their misery. They hear and perhaps speak of him, as though he were an empty name, and not a mighty and most malignant power. Reader! this may be your case. If so, turn not, I humbly implore you, from a few words, which, by God's grace, may be light to your darkness, and life to your captive soul.

Consider the *nature* of Satan. His titles show it. He is the 'prince of this world'. Therefore his sway is world-wide. All the millions of our race, without one exception, were born his slaves. They entered life with his chains around their hands, and with his throne erected in their hearts. Can they gain freedom for themselves? No. His guards are too many and his fetters too strong. Do they desire it? No. The will, by nature, chooses his service. Jesus warns, "You are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father you *will* do." He is the god of this world. He sets up the idol of fame, or pleasure, or money; and men fall down and worship it. He opens his churches, and decks them with attractive show, and serves therein a pleasing cup of error, and multitudes go in to learn his creed. He is leader of countless troops.

There is not a spot, not a house, in all the world, which he leaves unoccupied. Do we go forth? we are surrounded. Do we seek solitude? we are followed. In the courts of God—in the place of gathering—his vassals swarm around us. We read of a legion in one person. How vast then must be the collected army! Hence there is a sense in which *omnipresence* is his; because there is no place, which some of his emissaries do not fill. So, too, *omniscience* may be claimed for him; because there is nothing, which some ear does not hear for him. Whatever be our acts, he beholds; whatever be our words, he hears. He is a spirit. Therefore *he has access to the secret places of the heart.* He can plant the seeds of all evil in the mind. If we close the outward gates of sense, he can still come in, and defile the thoughts, and make every imagination as wicked as himself. He entered into Judas Iscariot. He filled the heart of Ananias. Reader! has he not often made lodgment within you? Oh! think, then, why is not your lodgment among his slain ones!

He is as *crafty* as he is strong. *His real design is seldom known, until his bait is taken.* His web is not seen, until the victim is entangled. The hidden pit is only discovered by the fall. He has been employed in the same work for nearly six thousand years. Therefore he well understands his *tools*, and the *materials* on which he works. He is studying our tempers and characters all the day long. *We know little of ourselves—he knows us perfectly.* He sees the weak point—the fitting time—and accordingly he lays the snare.

Gehazi little thought that Naaman's visit would be the tempter's trap. *Hezekiah* as little thought that the embassy from Babylon would unmask his vain-glory. A question from a servant girl in a moment plunges *Peter* into cowardly guilt. Reader! ever watch, ever pray, if you would escape temptation. *This is a dark picture.* Who can view it, and not tremble? But, though fearful, it is only *a faint outline of the mighty and cruel enemy of souls.*

Give ear now to the tidings which I proceed to proclaim. Though he is *strong*, there is One far stronger. Though he is *great*, there is One gloriously greater. Though he is *mighty*, there is one Almighty. Though he is *wily*, there is One who is All-wisdom. Though he is *many*, there is one Infinite. Though he is a *captivator*, he has been taken captive. Though he is an *enslaver*, he has become a slave. Though he forges *chains*, he is enchained. Though he has brought low, he lies low. Though he is a *conqueror*, he has been conquered.

The blessed Jesus comes a Conqueror, a Deliverer, a Redeemer, a Savior. He treads down the devil, and gives deliverance, redemption, salvation to all the children of men, who stand under His banner of victory. Reader! perhaps you are one of anxious spirit, and are not ignorant of many tremblings, lest at last you should perish by the hands of this foe. If so, how eagerly you will say, Give me proof that Jesus crushes this tyrant's power. All praise be to the God of grace! proofs abound. Listen to the voice of the Lord God in Eden. "He," the Seed of the Woman, the Lord Jesus, "shall bruise your head." Did not God know what would happen? He did. Can God speak, and His word not come to pass? Impossible! Then this fact is true—the serpent's head must be bruised by Jesus. Take comfort, then; take courage. *Man was scarcely ruined, when he who ruined him, was doomed to ruin.* The *savage joy* of having marred creation's beauty was only felt, to be turned into the writhings of hopeless rage. Success was despair. He removed his foot from the neck of fallen man, and fled from the garden with the undying sound echoing in his ears, "He shall bruise your head." Such was the sure sentence of God.

Now take a case which shows that Satan's power has indeed a power above it. You know the story of *Abel*. He trod this earth a fallen being, as we are—hated by Satan, as we are—exposed to all his wiles, as we are. But he trusted in the promised seed for escape; Satan could not hold him. His early death, by a murderer's hand, landed him not in the kingdom of hell, but of God. Thus *the first soul* which left a human body, proved that Jesus could rescue the prey out of the destroyer's jaws.

You know, too, the story of *Enoch*. He was a man of like nature with us, born in corruption. You cannot doubt that Satan shot his every arrow at him. But his soul received no fatal wound. It was guarded by faith in the coming Savior. By faith in this promise he walked with God. By faith he mounted to heaven—another jewel in the Conqueror's crown. In the same way, *all the holy men* of the old world found that there was shelter and safety under the wing of the promised Conqueror. One promise convinced them, and gave them life. How many testimonies tell you of this rescue! Oh, let them not teach in vain!

But, in fullness of time, *the Conqueror* appears in human form. Satan knows Him well. He heard the voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He makes one desperate effort to obtain the mastery. The blessed Jesus meets the conflict. Every advantage of outward circumstance is given to the adversary. He draws from his quiver his often-tried and most successful darts. He musters his strength and all his skill. His empire depends on the outcome. The most that hell can do, is done. But all in vain. Each blow falls harmless before the Word of the Lord. The devil quits the field, baffled and beaten. He finds himself held down by the chain, "He shall bruise your head."

He makes one effort more. He stirs up wicked men to seize and nail the blessed Jesus to the cross. When the Woman's Seed bows His head and dies; the enemy *seems* to triumph. But the end of the combat shows where the victory is. If Satan is the stronger, let him keep Jesus in the grave; let the prison detain the prisoner. But it does not—it cannot. Jesus bursts the doors—comes again from the dead—shows Himself alive—and ascends in triumph to the heavens. Thus the victory is forever won. The destroyer lies forever destroyed beneath His feet.

And when a few more years are past, the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with power and great glory, and the devil shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever! There is everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. "He shall bruise your head." The point, then, is clear. God is true. Jesus is Conqueror. *The Goliath of hell is fallen!*

Reader! this battle has been fought, this victory won, that poor sinners may be rescued. May the Holy Spirit help you to behold your high tower of safety, and to flee into it! Satan cannot but hate you—for his name is hatred, as surely as God is love; and he desires to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But if you are found in Jesus, you are high above his reach. He will attack. He will threaten. He will affright. But Jesus will be your shield; and that shield must be shattered before you can be harmed. Study the records of the Word. It is the history of the long war between the children of light and "the power of darkness." You will see that he has tried every weapon in the armory of hell. He has no other in reserve. But all have failed. They cannot rise higher than *the heel.* The head is safe with Christ in God.

Mark, too, how a mightier hand guides his blows to wound himself. Satan's kingdom is made to totter under Satan's assaults. He brought in *sin*—and so the door flew open for the *Gospel*. He persecutes the early converts—and the truth spreads rapidly abroad throughout the world. He casts Paul into the dungeon of Philippi—and the jailor believes with all his house. He sends him a prisoner to Rome—and epistles gain wings to teach and comfort all the ages of the Church.

Fear not, then, believer, the curse is on your foe. *Dust is his food. He cannot swallow the jewels of Christ's crown.* He may entice you with many things sweet to sense; but look to the Cross, and you see them no more. He may terrify you with roarings, as of a lion; show him *the wounds of the Lamb, and he is gone.* He may stand as your accuser at the judgment seat; but if you are washed in the blood of Jesus, he can find no mark in you, by which to claim you as his own. Be assured, if you are one with Jesus by faith, His full triumph is yours, "and the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

If such be your happy case, lift up your head with joy and sing the holy song, "Your right hand, O Lord, is glorious in power. Your right hand, O Lord, dashes the enemy to pieces. In the greatness of your majesty, you overthrew those who rose against you. Your anger flashed forth; it consumed them as fire burns straw." Exo 15:6-7

Gen 3.21

THE GUILTY CLOTHED

"The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them." Gen 3:21

There is one God and one access to His smile. There is one heaven and one door to it. The Savior, who was to come, and the Savior, who is to come, is one Christ. The faith of Abel and of the Baptist looked to the same object. Noah did not preach one righteousness, Paul another. The Patriarchs did not rejoice in one hope, the Apostles in another. From first to last, all the pilgrims to the hill of Zion lean on one arm. All the voyagers, who cross the sea of life to the haven of eternal rest, are guided by one compass. How all-important, then, is the thought for you, for me—Have we escaped the many by-roads of destruction? Are we securely journeying along the one only track which leads to life?

The Lord Jesus Christ is this one way. The rays of His redeeming love burst forth, so soon as there was a sinner to be enlightened. The garden of Eden witnessed the dark sight of innocence *destroyed;* but it witnessed, too, an earnest of more than innocence *restored*. The parents of our race were not driven into the wide wilderness of the earth without a cheering prospect, and a strong comfort, and a precious promise, and a distinct hope of full recovery. The heavenward road was marked out before them in a clear map. Jesus was pictured to them in living colors.

Even the *clothing* made for them, and put upon them, preached the Gospel to them. Consider their case. They were conscious of shame, and blushed to meet the light of day. In their distress they sought concealment. They contrived—human invention could do no more—a shadow of a clothing. How flimsy, how tattered was it! But God in mercy came to their relief. He supplied all their need. He made "coats of skins and clothed them."

It may be that until now you have seen nothing in these garments but a warmth for the body and a screen from the wintry blast. But be assured, the meaning is far larger. It is spiritual. It tells us of the robe of Righteousness, which God has provided to adorn and beautify the naked soul. May the Lord, by His Spirit, show this wonder to us! We gain light on the subject by examining *the substance of which the coats were made.* It was not leaves joined together—nor twisted bark—nor plaited roots. It was the skin of lifeless animals. Death, then, must have commenced its desolating work within the garden. But how did it approach its earliest victims? Not in the slow step of gradual decay. This was the *morning of existence*. Time was in its infancy. The wastings of age were yet far off. These beasts of the field must have fallen by the hand of violence.

But why? Not to supply man with food. Before the flood, *herbs alone* sufficed for nourishment. Noah was the first who heard the enlarged grant, "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." They were slain, then, for some other purpose. It could have been no unholy purpose, for God regarded their slaughter with no displeasure. This He testified by using their skins. If, then, they died according to the will of God, but not to feed man, there remains only the solid conclusion, that *they were offered in sacrifice*. Thus they foreshadowed the Lamb "foreordained before the foundation of the world." And hence we learn that in Eden victims bled. Yes! the first drop, which stained the earth, the first expiring groan, proclaimed in the most intelligible terms, "the wages of sin is death;" and "without shedding of blood is no remission." The doctrine of these rites is the doctrine of the Cross.

All doubt is thus removed as to the skins, which supplied man's first apparel. They were taken from the offerings for sin. Hence each sacrifice presents to the eye of faith the double sign of full salvation. Each altar casts a shadow, not only of the blood, which buys from hell; but also of the Righteousness, which buys all heaven. Such is the figure—It is indeed admirable for simplicity. But who can express the length and breadth of the truth which it unfolds?—a truth which is the very key of heaven, and the green pasture of the soul. Until we understand this, we are only at the threshold of the Gospel. Will you not, then, draw nearer with me to seek the full comfort of full knowledge?

I cannot doubt that your earnest desire is, when this short life is past, to enter into the joyous mansions of the blest. But have you robes of your own suitable for such abode? To be in heaven is to be with God. All there are beauteous in holiness. All shine in purity. All are white in spotless perfection. The eye of God rests on each with delight. He can find no blemish in them. He counts them all fit to sit on thrones of glory. But *how* have they obtained this unsullied clothing? It can be nothing framed by man. Defiled hands can only work defilement. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." It is plain, then, that if we could dwell where nothing but Righteousness reigns, we must bring Righteousness with us. It is equally plain, that we can as easily make ourselves gods, as array ourselves in unstained robes.

Who then will adorn us, that we may be found worthy? This reasoning leads us to the glad tidings of the glorious Gospel. All is provided for us in the Savior Jesus. The Righteousness needed by us, and presented to us, is His obedience. He does for us, what we could never have done. In Him we become what we never could have been without Him. He works out an infinite worthiness, that He may be to us all that His name imports, "The Lord our Righteousness." How precious is this well of truth!

Let us draw deeper refreshment from it in gratitude and faith. Behold again and again the glorious fact. One, made of a woman, has passed through human life without once straying from the path of God. The earth has seen a man pure as God is pure, holy as God is holy, perfect as God is perfect, sinless as God is sinless. He went round the circumference of the law without one deviating step. With strong wing He soared to its utmost height, and neither paused nor flagged. The searching eye of God always upon Him, could not once find the absence of heavenly love in any thought, or word, or deed. He had all trials, but no fault—all temptations, but no sin. The ground was ofttimes slippery, but He never slipped. He was assailed on all sides, but He never fell. Thus He stood before God, holding in His hands a full unbroken obedience—accomplished—completed to the minutest letter. But it was all *for us!* He wrought it, that He might give it; and He gives it to every naked sinner, who in faith flees to be thus sheltered by Him.

Reader! perhaps you eagerly exclaim, Are these tidings confirmed to me by the mouth of the Lord? They are! They are! Listen to His words: "The Righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all those who believe." Fully trust this saying, and all peace is yours. It is "unto all," as payment placed to their credit in the book of account. Thus when God reckons with the believer, and asks the fulfillment of the law, behold! there appears on his behalf, deposited by the hand of Christ, an obedience extensive with the very uttermost demand. God neither desires nor can receive more. So, too, it is "upon all." Hence, when the believer stands at heaven's gate, he appears in heavenly robes—the righteousness of Christ is upon him. What more can be required? It is as bright and glorious as God Himself.

I wish, indeed, that you should be satisfied on this point. In this affectionate desire, I beseech you to weigh well another Scripture: "He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in Him." Blessed is the man in whose heart these words take root! They are precious beyond ten thousand times ten thousand worlds. Do not they state that we—even we—who are all vileness by sin, if only we are one with Christ by faith, are made the Righteousness of God! To be reckoned *righteous* would be much. To be made *Divine* Righteousness is far more. O my soul! limit not this mercy. Rejoice in the full comfort. The humble believer re-echoes Scripture when he says, I am made in Christ the Righteousness of God.

It is manifestly the Lord's will that this provision for the soul should be always present to our adoring eye. Therefore it is, that the object most familiar to our senses—even the covering of the body—is planned to portray it. Study, then, this lesson. It is suited to every mind. The palace and the cottage alike teach it. It is as clear to the unlettered as to the learned. I would sincerely commend it to your faith and your affection; but I find that earthly shadows fall as far short of the heavenly reality, as the creature is nothing when compared with the Creator.

We admire Adam's robe of innocence. It was pure and lovely, but it was human. Not so this robe. It is Divine. The God-man, Jesus, is its Author. Adam's robe was soon soiled and lost. Satan touched it, and it crumbled into nothingness. This Divine robe is kept in the height of heaven; the destroyer cannot reach it. The skins brought to Adam would soon wax old, and perish. This is "everlasting Righteousness." Age rolling after age brings no decay; its newness is unfading. Earthly robes are sometimes of surpassing splendor. But what would be the brightness of Solomon's royal apparel beside this?—dim as the fairest star before the sun in mid-day strength.

Here I stop, feeling that eternity cannot exhaust the praises of this garment. But I have not written in vain, if these few words make its preciousness more precious to the souls of any. Reader! do you desire to possess it? Ask, and you have. Seek with earnest faith, and it is yours. The prodigal returns, and the father says, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." The weeping penitent comes, and heaven's best robe is cast around him. Be wise, then, and listen to the voice which cries from above, "I counsel you to buy from Me, white clothing, that you may be clothed." What can you desire more? Here is Christ's worthiness, for our unworthiness. His sinlessness, for our sinfulness. His purity, for our impurity. His beauty, for our deformity. His sincerity, for our deceit. His truth, for our falsehoods. His meekness, for our pride. His constancy, for our backsliding. His love, for our hate. In a word, His fullness, for our emptiness. His glory, for our shame. His one Righteousness, for our manifold unrighteousness.

Happy the man, who replies, I hide myself in You, O blessed Jesus! I receive You, as of God made unto me Righteousness. He sweetly sings, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of Righteousness." He humbly adds the note of transport, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all those who love His appearing."

Gen 4.4

THE MORE EXCELLENT SACRIFICE

"But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering." Gen 4:4

A long course of years has fled since the earth drank in the blood of Abel. His was the earliest of all graves. But he is not silent in it. His faith has an ever-living voice. No time can stop its warning sound. "By it, he, being dead, yet speaks." Such is the heaven-told fact. Surely then there must be much most worthy of notice in his testimony, since it thus rolls on from age to age. Its subjects must be all-important. It is so—none can be compared to it. It is so—for it proclaims the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the purpose of its call to every child of man, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." Trust in His blood. Plead nothing but His death before God. Make His cross your only hope.

Reader! perhaps you have never found all this Gospel in Abel's brief life. But it is there. Unfold with me the record; and let us do so in humble prayer, that the Spirit may graciously teach. For without His aid, none ever see the Lord. Abel stands before us in the lovely character of one whose spirit rejoices in God his Savior. This is the prominent feature in his portrait. He selects the firstborn of his flock. He brings it as an offering. He lays it on the altar. He raises the knife. He takes the life, as a debt due to God. Such is his conduct. But what moves him to this mode of worship? He must have some grand intent. Let us trace it.

Did *reason* convince him that he was a sinner, and show him that, as such, his own life was forfeited? Did it whisper the hope, that he might recover it, by giving another in its place? Did it suggest the idea that the death of a guiltless victim might be the release of a guilty soul? That could not be. *A sinner's blindness never suspects the real desert of sin*—much less can it imagine a blood-stained ransom. There is God in that thought.

But while we thus inquire, Scripture draws back the veil and tells us the principle, which lived in his heart. It was faith. "By *faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Thus the case is cleared. For faith is trust in God, and humble reliance on His Word. God speaks—and faith hears—believes—obeys. Faith can breathe only in the atmosphere of revelation. It can stand only on the rock of divine promise. It has no ear, but for heavenly tidings. It can read only what the finger of God writes. It can always give a reason, even this, "The mouth of the Lord has spoken it."

We are sure, then, that since Abel offered in faith, he was following the positive directions of God. We are thus led to read many of the workings of his soul in this service. It cannot be, but that his parents had made known to him, in terms of shame, the enormity of their willful fall. Hence he knew how it occurred, that he was born a child of wrath, and an heir of corrupted nature. But could they pause here? Oh! no. Adoring gratitude would constrain them to add that pardon was provided, and that a Redeemer, all-qualified and mighty to save, was coming to lay down His life. They would teach, too, that a holy rite had been ordained by God to exercise faith, and to keep alive the expectation of the atoning lamb. This was the Bible unto Abel. Here he would read the main lessons of the Gospel of salvation. He staggered not through unbelief. He embraced the truth wholly unto life eternal. In the twilight of the world, he saw the Sun of Righteousness.

Reader! does not this bring condemnation to multitudes, who in the full blaze of light never get saving faith? We thus gain insight into the spiritual man of Abel. He stands at this altar, a man of humility—faith—love. He is full of self-abasement. He abhors himself in dust and ashes. His act confesses that he is a lost, and ruined, and undone sinner. He sees that eternal rejection is his due. He feels that he has no power of himself to help himself.

But he is full of faith. In looking off from himself he looks upward to another. He knows, that in the heaven of heavens there lives a Savior ready to fly down with healing in His wings. He sees in the blood of his victim, a pledge of the blood prepared to cleanse him to the very uttermost. He is full, too, of sanctifying love. *For no man can trust in mercy so full, so unmerited, so suitable, so effectual, without feeling, that thus purchased from perdition, he must live a willing sacrifice to the God of grace.*

At this time there was another by the side of Abel. But now a great gulf parts them. It was his brother Cain. He was born in like guilt. He doubtless shared the same parental instruction. In outward advantages there was no difference. But is their spiritual character the same? Far otherwise. The truth which melts the one, only hardens the other. One receives the blessing. The other abides under the curse. Their dealings with God manifest them. It is a sad sight. But we must not shrink from observing how Cain discovers himself. He seems to come to God. This is good. But what does he bring?—"The fruit of the ground." The first appearance is fair. But the disguise falls; and we see the hideous marks, which prove that he "was of that wicked one."

We find **self-will** at the root of his religion. God has ordained the way in which He was to be approached. Cain thinks that he can use a course more suited to the majesty of heaven and the dignity of man. He places his puny reason above the counsels of the All-wise. He turns from a revealed will to grope in the darkness of his own vain conceits.

Reader! is not this a pitiful case? But it is the delusion of many. "Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools." Self-will first makes a god—then a religion—and at last a pit of destruction for itself.

We next see **pride** in him. This must be, for it is the first-born of unenlightened reason. Creation leaves man dust. Sin makes him the vilest of dust. *But still he walks vainglorious, until grace opens his eyes, and lays him low in his proper humility.* So it is with Cain. He feels neither sin, nor need of pardon. Therefore he proudly tramples on an offering, which tells him of nature's pollution. High-minded, he will not wash in the blood of the Redeemer, that he may be purified. Thus he is a model of that class, who, in every age, say, "We are rich and have need of nothing; and know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

There was **unbelief**, too. God had set before him the redemption of Jesus Christ. It was proclaimed in promise and in type. What more could have been done? But Cain believes not. Unbelief closes his *eyes*—he will not look to Jesus. It closes his *hand*—he will not lay hold on Him. It clogs his *feet*—he will not run to Him. It closes his *ear*—he will not hear of Him. It closes his *mouth*—he will not cry unto Him. It closes his *heart*—he will not receive Him. Do you marvel at his folly? Take heed! Take heed! Conscience may know, "You are the man."

The end is quickly told. Bad soon becomes worse. Unbelief swiftly goes down to its place, where the Gospel is never preached, and hope never comes. God expostulates. Cain yields not. He sees the righteousness of faith, only to hate it. He seeks, by the murder of his faithful brother, to extinguish the light which upbraids him. He falls into the recklessness of despair. And now, from his everlasting chains, he cries, "Beware of rejecting the more excellent sacrifice."

Reader! it may be, that, careful about many things, you have, until now, been careless concerning that which should be the main concern of man. Listen, then, for a moment, I beseech you. Do you not hear a startling question from this story? It is this. *Are you a follower of Abel or of Cain?* In simpler terms, are you receiving or neglecting the Lord Jesus? I say the Lord Jesus. For this is the real point. He was the end of the "more excellent sacrifice," which Abel brought, which Cain scorned. He is the Lamb appointed by God, accepted of God, and led to our very doors in our Bibles. Who can utter the mighty motives which urge the sinner to avail himself of this sacrifice? They are more than the moments of eternity. Each speaks as loud as the thunders of Sinai. Each has a thrilling clang, as the trumpet of God.

Only consider its real *power*. It is just this. It saves forever all the souls of all poor sinners, who present it to God in faith. Now, is not your soul precious? It is so beyond all thought. It needs redemption from wrath and ruin. Are you prepared to offer its equal price? Suppose the balances of heaven brought out. What can you place as a counterpoise in the counter-scale? You have nothing, but what is lighter than vanity. Produce now "the more excellent sacrifice." Its worth is beyond all weight. Offer this, and you are saved. Will you now be Cain-like, and reject "the more excellent sacrifice"? Your sins are many. The sands of the sea-shore are few in comparison. But each must be blotted out, or you die. A sin unpardoned cannot enter heaven. What, then, will you do? One thing is clear. You cannot undo the done. You cannot recall the past. But behold "the more excellent sacrifice." It cleanses from all sin. Through it all manner of sin is forgiven to the children of men. It makes the scarlet, white as now, and the crimson, like wool. It changes the vilest into perfect purity. Its merits can render you spotless.

Will you be Cain-like, and reject "the more excellent sacrifice"? You need peace. Satan threatens. The law condemns. Conscience accuses. Your wounds are deep. Your burdens heavy. Memory shows frightful specters. The heart bleeds. You go mourning and heavy laden. You look to *self*. It is despair. You look to the *world*. It mocks your woe. You look to *reform*. It is a broken cistern. You fly to outside *performances of devotion*. They are reeds, which break and pierce the hand.

How different is "the more excellent sacrifice!" It tells you that God is satisfied, guilt remitted, and all accusers silent. It thus brings peace—perfect peace, which passes all understanding. Will you now be Cain-like, and reject "the more excellent sacrifice"?

You desire sanctification. You pant to be conformed to the image of Christ. This is well; for it is an eternal law of God, that without holiness no man shall see His face. But holiness can be learned only at this altar. It is a sight of the dying Jesus, which kills lust. It is the shadow of the cross, which causes evil to wither. A lover of iniquity cannot dwell on this hallowed ground. But there never was a holy man, who did not live in glory in "the more excellent sacrifice." If ever you would walk with God in true righteousness, you must not be Cain-like, and reject it. But remember this sacrifice is only one. Jesus by the one offering of Himself, once made, "has perfected forever those who are sanctified." Pass by it, and you can find none else. Pass by it today, and you may seek it in vain tomorrow.

Hear, then, the voice of Abel, which calls you without delay to hasten to the one altar of salvation. Reader! turn not from these humble lines, until in truth you can say, I rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, I find Him to be "the more excellent sacrifice."

Gen 5.29

THE CONSOLATION

"He will comfort us." Gen 5:29

Thus speaks the patriarch Lamech. Such is his voice of joy, when he receives his first-born Noah. He was tilling a soil hardened by the curse—fruitful only in thorns and thistles. But now a son is given to share the painfulness of his daily toil. Cheered by this hope, he calls his name *Noah*, which has the meaning of *Rest* or *Comfort*. Reader! in these simple pages there is but one thing sought: the best good of undying souls. Therefore I examine not whether this name was designed as another ray of the coming Savior. I rather proceed to realities, which all experience. I rather turn to tidings, which are bright on the Gospel surface.

I first state a fact, which is ancient as the fall, and wide-spread as man. It is this—A sinful world is a tearful world. Wherever we stand, our shadow is sorrow. It s so before the flood. It is so now. In all climates and ranks, the head is weary, and the heart is sick.

I next state a truth, which came in, as twin-born, with the earliest promise. It is this—Consolation is provided. God has sent forth Christ Jesus from the bosom of His love to be the Consolation of this woe-worn world. It is my longing desire that this heavenly knowledge would more largely shed its pure balm. I mourn that men should drink nothing but the dregs of bitterness, while healing streams flow close beside them. Let me invite you, then, to come with me for a few moments into some of the chambers of earth's grief. I can show you there, with the Spirit helping, that in Jesus Christ there is a pillow for the throbbing brow—a cordial for the fainting spirit—a plank for the sinking—a haven for the tempest-tossed.

I need scarcely say that the heart of misery is misery of heart—the soul of anguish is anguish of soul. But where is the home of this extreme distress? Surely in the breast of him whose conscience is awake to discern the nature—the evil—the wages—of his sins. *The nest of self-delusion has now become a bed of thorns.* Before his eyes God frowns, dreadful in justice. In his ears the law thunders a tremendous curse. He moves forward, and there is a gaping hell. Shall he stir—the next step may cast him headlong into flames. Shall he sleep—he may awake among the lost. Where can comfort reach a mind thus tortured? It cannot spring from earth. For let the world now present its every charm; how worthless are they! The world has nothing, but for a sin-blinded man. When things are seen as they really are, *earthly toys* are worse than empty bubbles.

Comfort, to be comfort now, must come from heaven. All is mockery, except it can tell of God reconciled—sin pardoned—the soul safe. Now Jesus can raise out of these lowest depths; and He alone. He can guide the trembler to His cross. He can reveal to him there a heavenly Father, arrayed in glories of eternal love. He can point to His own dying as the death of wrath. He can show the sword of justice sheathed in His own heart—the flames of vengeance quenched in His own blood—the hand, that was uplifted to strike, now extended to bless—all hell piled upon the Guiltless, and heaven freely given to the guilty! Is not this Consolation? It is! And Jesus pours it from His wounded hands and pierced side!

Is not this, I repeat, Consolation? Ask those who have tasted it. Ask the jailor. Terror-stricken he sprang in—wrath was at his heels—he heard of Jesus—peace soothed his fears, and he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. But it occurs, alas! too often, that they who have escaped, as drowning mariners, to this rock, are enticed again to stray. They cease to watch and pray. Then the tempter finds an open door. They neglect the preserving means of grace. Then the foe creeps in. The Spirit is grieved and withdraws. Corruptions regain their power. *Woe to backsliders!* what wretchedness is theirs! Consciousness of peril returns, and it is embittered by keen self-reproach. They see how basely they have deserted the Friend, who had said to them, while in their blood, Live.

Reader! perhaps this agony is yours. You once had rest in Jesus, but it is gone. The fault is wholly your own. He did not drive you from Him. You have departed from Him. And now you sigh, Oh! that it were with me, as in the days when the Sun of Righteousness shone upon my path. Do not be tearless, for grievous is your fall. But do not be hopeless, for Jesus is yet near. His voice still follows you, "Return, and I will not cause My anger to fall upon you." In nothing is His tenderness more tender, than in stilling the sobs of those who sob in penitence before Him. Return then. The Lord still extends the arms of His pitifulness. He is the balm in Gilead. He is the Physician there. He cannot be silent to the cry, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation."

There are others who closely cling to the Lord, and yet are disquieted. They gratefully acknowledge, "Hitherto has the Lord helped us;" but heaven seems far off; the pilgrimage is long; adversaries are many; their own strength totters—they look to the winds and waves, and trembling takes hold upon them; they say with David, we shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.

Reader! perhaps you have such heart-felt misgivings. Truly if Jesus were other than He is, you might thus faint. But now I am bold to bid you arise and shake yourself from the dust. Open your eyes and read His heart. It speaks one language. It is all encouragement. It tells of faithful love, which, as it never had beginning, so it can have no end. He draws you to the shelter of His wings, and there stifles each rising doubt by assurances as large as they are free—as gentle as they are countless. He tells you, "Because I live, you shall live also." "Your life is hidden with Christ in God." If you ask richer Consolation, you ask more than God can give.

But afflictions break upon you with ceaseless tide. This is to be expected. It is our common lot. There is no home so lowly, but some sorrow finds the door. There is no palace so upraised, but some sorrow mounts the steps. Faith shields not from this. "In the world you *shall* have tribulation." But welcome all sorrow, if Jesus enters by its side! This always is so to the true believer. Health may wither like a fading flower; languor and disease may feed upon the frame; there may be tossings to and fro until the dawning of the day. But Jesus can relax with smiles the pain-contracted brow, and charm with songs the wakeful night. Earthly possessions may crumble to decay; poverty may sit where affluence used to smile.

But can the believer's portion fail? Oh, no! he has all the treasures in the word, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not lack." Friends may forsake; averted looks may chill. There may be treachery or open hate, where once much love was pretended. Jesus knew this trial in its bitterest form. Hence He is quick to prove that He changes not with the changing world. He magnifies His sympathy by sticking closer than a brother. His own presence more than fills each void within.

But *death* draws on with rapid step. Yes! it will soon draw back the covers of your bed, and extend an *icy hand* to bear you there. You will then need strong Consolation. Long-tried props can prop no more. Alone you must go through the dark valley. But not alone! For Jesus whispers, "I am with you. Thus I guide to my many-mansioned home." *So the last trial is the last and largest Consolation.*

Believer, let me beg you to live and die leaning on Jesus as your Consolation. Would you be expert in this happy state? Make it, then, your daily habit to meditate upon Himself—His promises—His dealings. Hold close communion with Him. Measure the breadth, the length, the depth, the height of His office and His work. Be assured that all that He is, and all that He has, and all that He has done, and all that He is doing, and all that He will do, is yours. You have never been absent from His heart, and never can be. You are a member "of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." *Abide in Him at all seasons, and all seasons will be comfort.*

Strike, too, the *rock of the promises* with *the rod of faith*. Sweet waters will gush out. They will flow very deep, and very broad, and all within this channel, "Comfort, comfort, my people, says your God." Take frequent walks also by the side of the faithful pilgrims of old. Precious is their companionship. They may be sorrowful, yet they are always rejoicing. They may be homeless wanderers, as Jacob was, yet they are comforted. They may pine long in dungeons and under evil fame, as Joseph did, yet they are comforted. They may be destitute of all things, as Elijah was, yet they are comforted. They may flee for their lives and hide themselves in caves of the earth, as David did, yet they are comforted. They may be in the hottest fire of persecution, as the three captive youths were, yet they are comforted. They may be in all perils, and in the wildest storms, as Paul was; they may be called to bear faithful witness in scoffing crowds, or before frowning tyrants, as this apostle was, yet they are comforted. They may die the martyr's death under showers of crushing stones, as Stephen did, yet they are comforted. They may lose all things, yet they never lose the Consolation, which is in Christ Jesus. It is the work of His Spirit. It is the gift of His grace. It is the token of His indwelling. It is the foretaste of His heaven!

Perhaps the eyes of some rest upon these pages, who are strangers to this deep well-spring of Consolation. Unhappy men! Your hearts are a disconsolate blank. You have been sowing vanity, and what do you now reap? You have made the world your all, what has it given you? If much be obtained, more is coveted. Possessions do not content. Pursuits only weary. This hour is fretfulness. The next is a dreaded abyss. You wander over fields of anxiety, and there is no place of rest. Society is a hollow insipidity. Solitude is a dismal gloom. Where are your comforts? There are none in the retrospect, none in hand, none in the horizon. The past upbraids, the present dissatisfies, the future terrifies! A condemning voice within tells you, that is true. Turn not, then, from the beseeching voice of this page. Be persuaded. Consent, consent to be happy. "Seek the Lord while He may be found." "Take with you words." Plead with Him His office, "The Lord has anointed Me to comfort all that mourn in Zion." Plead with Him His call, "Come unto Me, all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Plead with Him His promise, "I will not leave you comfortless." Plead with Him His title, "The Consolation of Israel." Plead with Him His tender voice, "As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you." Plead with Him the dreadful gulf between the saved and the lost, "Now he is comforted, and you are tormented." Plead with him the command from heaven, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God." Cease not thus to plead, until you can say of Him, who is far greater than Noah, "This same shall comfort us."

Gen 7.1

THE ARK

The Lord then said to Noah, "Go into **the ark**, you and your whole family." Gen 7:1

The story of **the ark** has been familiar to us from memory's birth. It gave interest to our earliest lessons. Its very name revives the instructions by a tender mother's side, or from some anxious teacher's lips. It brings us back to the first pages of our first Bible, and to our seats as children in our childhood's class. In a land of Christian teaching, most in their youth thus pondered *the record of a wretched world's most wretched end.* In thought they trace and retrace each particular, until the whole is vivid, as a witnessed scene. But they who go no deeper, *only trifle as with a nursery-toy.* Their feet reach the threshold of truth's palace, but they enter not into the wide chamber, in which God dispenses light. They do not break the box of precious ointment. They are like Hagar—a well of water is near—she thirsts, but sees it not.

Reader! do not be deceived. The Bible is a mirror in your hands for this grand end—that you may see therein a loving Savior's loving heart, and a mighty Savior's mighty deeds. Jesus is the treasure of the field of Scripture. If you win Him, you are rich and wise forever. If you win Him not, all other wealth is poverty—all other knowledge is *a brilliant folly.* Act on this soul-saving principle; and never close the sacred pages until you are cheered by the smile of Him, who is the smile of heaven.

Come, then, and with holy longing after the light of life, let us contemplate the Ark. Jesus is there in all the glories of redeeming love. "Make an ark of gopher wood." Here is no human forethought. It is a voice from heaven. But for what purpose? The reply pencils the dark background, on which the bright features of God's grace appear most prominent in beauty. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually," or every day. Sin enormous—sin all-prevailing—sin without ceasing, was the vapor which went up from earth. But can *sin* thus rear its head, and *wrath* lie still? Impossible! Sin is the abominable thing, which God hates. It cannot move onward without dragging vengeance in the rear. Behold the proof. God the holy and the just proclaims, "The end of all flesh is come before Me." But would any plead that the threat was vague, and gave no definite alarm? Judgment draws not the glittering sword, until the clearest trumpets sound the clearest sound.

Mark the next thrilling note, "Behold I, even I, will bring a flood of waters upon the earth." Thus all might know what terrors were gathering around. Thus all heard the tolling of execution's bell. God is righteous. He strikes not without cause. He strikes not without warning. The notice, though thus distinct, seems to have been uttered only by one preacher's voice. But who can count the messages upon messages, throughout all ages, which have clustered around our earth, each testifying that the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men draws near? Reader! you have been often told that *everlasting burnings are the bed of sin.*

The threatened vengeance moved with reluctant step. Patience suffered long. Years dawned and closed, and still the sun was bright, the skies were clear. Surely if space for repentance brought the grace of repentance, the world would have been clad in sackcloth of penitence and shame. But something far mightier than *external opportunity* must work before a soul can feel, and confess, and forsake its sins. *Man, not arrested from on high, is man going downward in guilt.* A lengthened respite is often nothing but a lengthened iniquity. I beg you, apply this. It is not mine to know your years, your warnings, or your calls. But years you have; and warnings you have had; and every moment is a call. Say, then, has the goodness of God led you to repentance? Let conscience answer. Believe me, reprieves are not pardons. Execution delayed is not execution escaped. Agag is spared today, to die more signally tomorrow. If you are still a wanderer from God, let this hour see your tears, and hear your prayers; *or soon you may never cease to weep, where prayer is never made.*

Amid this spreading flood of evil the ark continues to rise. Noah had heard the word, "Make an Ark." The command was startling. He was to provide against a judgment, new and unknown. Reason would question, how can it be? Experience—which knew not the like—would darken doubts. Prejudice, with many ready cavils, would hint that it was improbable, if not impossible. But God has spoken—The man of God was persuaded. He acted, and prepared, and was saved. It could scarcely be, but that ridicule and sneer would embitter his days of trustful toil. Many who saw him work, would mock his unabating labor. He would stand a very by-word for brain-sick delusion.

This is faith's constant trial. The natural man understands not its motives, its hopes, its expectations, its doings. But it is quick of ear to hear, and quick of eye to see a guiding God. It well knows whom it believes. It has an assurance far more assured than all conclusions of reason or testimonies of sense. Thus nothing moves it. It tramples down hindrances. It embraces the cross, and wins the crown. The last hour strikes at last. The cup of iniquity overflows. Who now can stay the right hand of the Lord? The clouds gather—the ceaseless torrents fall. *Where now is the jest—the taunt—the bravery of unbelief?* The truth of God is a truth discovered too late. Destruction is found to be a reality, when the victim feels the grasp. Refuge has ceased. The loftiest buildings, the tops of the highest rocks, are only a watery grave. Earth is a whirlpool of despair, and then the silence of departed life.

Such is the solemn fact. *Wrath denounced, and wrath not feared, is wrath without escape!* But hearken! for *every drop of this huge deluge has a voice*, which sighs; as surely as the ungodly of the old world once lived, so surely did they sink in anguish. The word of God responds with as many tongues; as surely as men tread the same earth, so surely will the final flames burst forth. What! though the hour is not expected. Unheeded slumber is one sign that it is near. Decreasing moments will soon decrease no more. A worn out thread scarcely restrains the sluices of a fiery flood. The end rolls forward. Soon, and it will be here. Soon, and it will be past. Soon, and we shall have had our part in it.

Reader! will it find you in the Ark of salvation, or writhing in the billows of the lost? Pause, and reflect. The world decrepit and blind in sin, is tottering to the gulf of ruin. Are you, then, secure in an all-sufficient haven; or are you unsheltered, as a tiny bark in the midst of a wild ocean's roar? Why do I thus ask? Because I would have you safe, and happy, and peaceful, and blessed forever. But safety there is none—happiness there is none—peace there is none—and blessedness there is none, except in the Gospel-ark, who is Christ Jesus. Behold Him! Behold Him!

What is the Ark of old to us, but an emblem of His full redemption? He is the one deliverance from all peril. He is the heaven-high refuge. He is the all-protecting safety. He is the building of enduring life; the foundation of which was laid in the counsels of eternity; which was reared in the fullness of time on the plains of earth; and the head of which towers above the skies. He is that lofty fabric of shelter, which God decreed, appointed, provided, and sets before the sons of men. He is that sure covert, which is so fortified, that all the thunderbolts of the almightiness of divine judgment play harmless around it; and all the raging storms of vengeance, and all the fury of the waves of wrath, only consolidate its strength. It must be so. For our hiding place is the mighty God. Our salvation is Jehovah's fellow. Our glorious sanctuary is the glorious Jesus.

This Ark is brought very near—even to your feet. Its portals are widely open. All things *call* you, no, *command* you to come in. God's finger writes above the door, "whoever enters is forever safe." No powers of earth or hell can injure or affright the rescued inmates. Do you pause? Alas! too many a brow proclaims in letters of worldly-mindedness, frivolity, indifference, profaneness, and sin—"as our fathers were, so are we." *But will you be self-slain?* Would that I could pierce the windings of your heart, and detect the fatal hesitation, which administers its opiate there! I would drag the monster into light. I would give you no rest, until you had trampled it to death.

Think, do any of the following marks betray the foes which lodge as murderers within you? Convictions are sometimes hushed by the silly smile—"we are only as the mass around us. If we are in peril, who is not? Can these crowds all perish? Surely there is mercy in God, which will hold back such an ocean of unfathomable woe." This thought is an old deceiver. Numbers change not the truth of God, or the character of sin; neither can they frame a bark to float on waves of fire.

Youth, if it thinks at all, may think that *coming years* will bring some refuge. This is an idle dream. When did hardened hardness melt into softness? *Will unbelief, by growing old, ripen into faith?* The morning of life was no barrier against the flood. Who can count *the cradles* which it devoured? If you are young, be wise, and laugh not through a speck of time, and then wail through an immeasurable eternity.

Others are at ease, because they have been taught the truths of Jesus. The Ark was well studied of old. Day after day it was the gaze and discourse of thousands. But this did not save them. *They who trust to the mere head knowledge, will find their memory a keen edge to the gnawings of the undying worm.* It may be that in forms, and ordinances, and services, you draw very near, and seem to place your hands on saving grace. Thus many *touched* the Ark, and did no more. As the water rose, they would cling to it with agonized grasp—in vain! They are outside. And all outside is death.

Others hope, sometime before they die, to cry and pray. How many sank in fruitless shriekings for some help! Perchance you are high in gifts, in talents, in position, in influence, in diligence, in self-esteem, in man's applause. But as the peaks, which soared above the clouds, dwindled before the flood; so the loftiest pretensions are very dust before the great white throne. Is it so, that you have a shadowy hope, that at last *something self-framed*, will be a plank of escape? Many devices were devised, when the deluge began its unsparing work. But all were as a mocking straw.

Reader! do not be cheated of your soul's life-blood by impostors in such thin disguise. Turn to the truth of God. Seek the one real, solid, substantial provision, to which our Bibles point with extended arm. There is but one name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. There is but one security. *We are only safe when enclosed and wrapped up in Christ. We are above peril only, when dwelling within Him, the Ark.* We are covered only, when we nestle in His wounded side. We are hid only, when gathered under His widely-spread wings. Never rest until you have passed the threshold of this heaven-wrought Ark. Then you may rejoice with the people of God. "Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to You while You may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him." Psa 32:6

Gen 7.20

THE ALTAR

"Noah built an **altar** unto the Lord." Gen 7:20

To know the sanctifying power of grace, we must trace its actings in holy men. A machine of many wheels is a complex puzzle, until each part is seen in motion and in work. Thus it is by close study of godly models, that we learn what *spiritual temples can arise from vile materials of earth;* and how poor sinners, weak as we are, can become courageous like heroes in the field of trial.

The scene may vary with the sun and with the cloud. But still *some prominent marks* can never be obscured. The child of God will always exhibit—ready obedience to a heavenly Father's will—undoubting trust in His Word—calm submission to His guidance—constant approach to Him through reconciling blood—and hallowed joy in prayer and praise. It is no tree of faith, if it is not laden with these fruits. It is no purified metal if it is not stamped with this image. It is no heaven-born soul unless it proves its descent by these features. It is no heavenward walk, except along this consecrated road.

The truth of this is written, as with a sunbeam, in the annals of Noah. God said, "Make an ark." The work, though strange, is instantly begun. The Lord calls, "Come, and all your house, into the ark." If there be perils without, there are also countless perils within. But in calm confidence he enters—and in following the Lord fully, he has all safety and all peace. Again the same voice speaks, "Go forth from the ark." He leaves his refuge to stand on the grave of a buried world. He had known the earth as the riot-house of evil; but now it is a noiseless solitude. He reads in one vast ruin the epitaph of sin. It is rightly concluded, that **worship** was his first employ. "Noah built an altar unto the Lord."

The peculiar moment gives peculiar complexion to this act. Matters upon matters were crowding for attention. He was houseless. There was no fold for the herds. He had all to do; and all demanded thought, and plan, and arrangement, and effort, and toil. If ever man might plead that distracting necessities excluded God, Noah was that man. If ever there was a time too full for thoughts of heaven, this was the time. But no! All shall yield to Him, who is above all. He, who is First, shall have the first. He, who is Best, shall have the best. The earth's first building is an Altar to its Maker. The patriarch's first care is to bless the care, which has so cared for him. His first posture is the bended knee and the uplifted hand!

If I seem to linger on the outskirts of my subject, it is to press this point: Satan often holds back the arm upraised to knock at mercy's gate by the check, Not now, not yet! Earthly duties must have their dues. This hour is claimed by the family—the trade—or rest. Listen not. No time is lost by giving it to God! No work is good, except begun, continued, and ended in Him. Devote to Him your earliest—your last. *He will not be your debtor!* He, who never can be paid, will more than overpay you.

The Altar was raised, that offerings might bleed thereon. You doubt not, that the dying victim and the flowing blood pictured the dying of the Lamb of God. This is the first letter of the Gospel-primer. It is, however, equally true, though not so obvious, that the Altar preaches Him, who is the sum and substance of redemption's wonders. Jesus is every part of sin's atonement. As He is the true **Priest**, and the true **slain one**, so, too, He is the true **Altar**. He presents Himself to die upon Himself. Believer, thus your sacrifice is perfect because it is entirely divine. You have a **Priest**—and only one; and He has passed into the heavens, and sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high. You have a **Lamb**—and only one. No more is needed. And He died but once; for once was absolutely sufficient to satisfy and save. So, too, you have an **Altar**—and only one. It ever stands before the throne of God. Jesus is this Altar.

This is no dream of imagination. It is the faithful saying of our God. The Spirit Himself leads to the Altar, and bids us read in it this Gospel-lesson. He guided the Apostle's lips to utter, "We have an Altar." Therefore an Altar is counted among our treasures. But where is it? It must be where the Priest is, and where the blood is. They are not here. They are within the veil of heaven. There, too, is our Altar; and, being in heaven, it can only be the Lord Jesus. This is the well of truth which the Spirit opens. With joy let us draw water from it.

The Altar has many uses; but this is the main—it is the victim's dying bed. Hence Jesus, when He comes to die, must have such a bed. Now, let faith go back to Calvary—the cradle of its hopes. There, in the fullness of time, our great High Priest is seen, leading a willing Lamb. The Lamb is Himself. It bears no common burden, "for the Lord has laid on Him the iniquities of us all." The weight of one sin would thrust a soul forever and ever, downward and downward, deeper and deeper into the bottomless pit of woe. But who can count the sins under which Jesus groans? The number is infinite, and each a mass which knows no measure. On what altar, then, can this heavy-laden sufferer lie? Let all angels spread beneath Him their combined strength—it is but a broken reed. Shall worlds be piled upon worlds?—They would crumble into dust. Heaven can give no aid. It is all dark above, when Jesus cries, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?" Earth has fled. He looked, but there was no man. But all that He needed, He was in Himself. *His Deity is the Altar of His expiring humanity.* He is His own support. Supported by Himself, He fails not under the whole flood of Jehovah's outpoured wrath. Upheld by Himself, He drinks the last dreg of the cup of fury. Firm on this rock, He pays, until justice cries, Enough. Strong in His own might, He satisfies, until satisfaction overflows. Immovably based on His own Godhead, He blots out iniquity, until iniquity no more is found.

Reader! I thus earnestly exalt Jesus, as the one Altar of expiation, that you may learn more clearly, that He is All in buying the soul from death. Believe me, it is not easy, it is not common, to see this truth in its unclouded glory. Satan and all hell strain every nerve at every moment to darken it with mists. Poor nature is prone to drink the potion, that *some help* from Christ makes all things safe. Self, bewitched with self, and self-performances, fondles the conceit, that man's meritoriousness, decked with Christ's merits, is the key of heaven. What is this, but to *build an altar of human rubbish, with human tools, and then add Christ thereto?* This is the **delusion**, which, with Christ on its front, stalks through the earth, and murders thousands! This is the **poison tree**, beneath the shade of which, many lie down and dream that they make Christ their only hope, while *the main weight of trust is hung on self!* This is the **fiend**, which mocks the lost, by showing them too late that Christ extolled in name, is not Christ reigning in the heart. This is the **foe**, which often makes the faithful ministry a fruitless field.

Men imagine that to hear of Christ, and to commend the sound, amounts to saving grace. Self, in some form, is earth's loved altar. Here is the deep mischief of *the Church of Rome.* Here is the net so speciously wrought—so craftily spread, by *that power of darkness*. That heresy admits enough of Christ to calm the conscience, but it retains enough of self to slay the soul. It denies not, that Jesus lived and died to save—but it denies that Jesus alone can suffice. It therefore erects very *many* altars—and very *high*—and very *captivating* to sense and fancy. It makes these *the real groundwork of the sinner's hope.* It then surmounts the whole with Christ, and, like a Babel-builder, thinks that the summit will extend to heaven. There is a semblance of uplifting Christ. But it is Christ added to angels—Christ added to saints—Christ added to a train of mediators and intercessors—Christ added to the church—Christ added to penance—Christ added to purgatory—Christ, as the pinnacle of a pyramid of man's works. This is *the papal Gospel*. But the feet of the image are of clay. It cannot stand—and its downfall will crush, like Dagon's temple.

Others sport with this idol, who are papists in heart, though not in name. They find an altar in forms, and services, and self-denials, and superstitions. They build on a foundation of their own, and then call Christ to decorate their structure. They grant that the scale is light without Him; so at last they cast in the plea of His merits to supply defects. This creed may seem to lead to life, but it goes down to hell. The word is sure, "You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace!"

But there are other uses of the altar. *It received the gifts and first fruits of the worshiper.* From it, supplies of food were taken. To it the guilty fled. Its ground was a sanctuary; its horns a refuge. Jesus is all this. Reader! your calling is to dedicate yourself—your soul—your body—all that you are—all that you have—all that you can do—a sacrifice to God. You may not keep anything from Him, who has given more than all heaven for your ransom. Settle this truth, then, steadily in your mind; that there is no acceptance for person, or services, except in the Beloved. Words and works are worse than worthless, except when offered in the faith, and through the merits, and for the sake of Jesus. That fruit is only rottenness, which is not sanctified by His blood, and consecrated to His glory. Cement yourself, your every intent—your every doing to Him. Nothing but the rich incense, which curls from this Altar, can render you, and your life, a sweet savor unto God.

Reader! be much in *prayer*. This is the breath of a living soul. Each moment is a need, each moment should be a heaven-ascending cry. But it is only at one altar, that petitions gain power to prevail. Supplicants, with Christ in their arms, take heaven by storm. But prayer unmixed with Christ is a smoke vanishing into air. It is scattered, as the chaff of the summer threshing-floors.

Abound, too, in *thanksgiving*. The command is, "In everything give thanks." The tide of mercies ever flows. Shall the stream of grateful love ever ebb? But it is no welcome praise, unless it be fragrant from this Altar. Adoration must here plume its wings, or it can never fly above the skies.

The soul needs hourly food. And it is here that it must seek refreshment. Rich indeed is the meal to which the Gospel calls! The word—the promises—the ordinances—the sacraments—are spread as an abundant feast. *But it is Christ, who constitutes the essence of the nourishment!* Apart from Him means of grace are but a choking husk.

The Altar, too, had horns. The offender clinging to them was safe. No avenging hand could touch him. Thus, all who flee to Christ, may smile at every foe. No threat of the law, no sword of justice, no pursuer's rage can harm. Happy the believer, who has made this Altar the home of his safe delights! Beneath its shelter he will often resolve, "Here I have laid down the burden of my every sin; here will I add, by the Spirit's power, the whole of a devoted and adoring life. He, who is the Altar on which I die to sin, shall be the Altar on which I live to God. For pardon and for godliness, Christ shall be my All."

Gen 8.21

THE SWEET SAVOR

"The Lord smelled a sweet savor." Gen 8:21

Reader! do not you desire that your soul may prosper at the throne of grace? Perhaps you reply, "Such blessedness is beyond all price. But how can one so low as a creature—so vile as a sinner, gain happy acceptance?" Blessed be God! there is a ready door. Draw near, leaning by faith on the arm of Jesus—robed by faith in His righteousness—pleading by faith the costly merits of His blood, and you enter encircled with songs of welcome! All heaven rejoices over you with joy unutterable.

Our Bible seems written with the grand intent thus to guide, by an ever-living way, to the rest of God. Therefore it is, that in its pages we see the golden portals flying open, when touched by hands like ours. *Abel* comes with the appointed Lamb—no frown repels him. "God accepted Abel, and his offering." *Noah* comes with the same key—no bolts obstruct him. His service is grateful incense. "The Lord smelled a sweet savor." So it ever has been. So it ever must be.

There is a virtue in the death of Jesus, so precious, so mighty, that it has resistless power with God. Whenever the poor sinner presents it, there is new chorus to the hymns on high; "again they say Hallelujah." How important is it, that this truth should be as a sun without a speck before us! Hence the Spirit records, that when Noah shed the blood which represented Christ, "The Lord smelled a sweet savor." Thus the curtains of God's pavilion are thrown back; and each attribute appears rejoicing in redemption. The Lamb is offered, and there is fragrance throughout heaven. O my soul, these are blessed tidings. They show the irresistible plea, by which we may obtain pardon, and every needful grace.

This lesson might indeed have been spread over a wide expanse of reasoning and of proof; and still the outline might have been scarcely touched. But the Spirit simply states, "The Lord smelled a sweet savor." We catch one glance, and all is seen. The cross is raised, and clouds of prevailing odor pierce the skies.

This image is a bright jewel in the Bible-treasury, because it speaks the language of every class, in every age, in every climate. It was light to pious pilgrims in patriarchal times. After the lapse of centuries, it is equally light to us. It revived our elder brethren. It will revive the last saint. It stoops to the lowliness of the most lowly hut. It soars above the loftiness of the most lofty intellect. "The Lord smelled a sweet savor." All read and understand alike, that Jehovah reposes in Jesus, and is satisfied to the extent of Deity. Just as one orb contains all light, so this brief word is the whole Gospel of reconciliation. The children of Israel were taught in the twilight-rites the fullness of the work of Christ. The flowing blood preached all forgiveness. But to assure their hearts, over each victim this olive-branch was waved—"The priest shall burn all on the altar to be a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord."

So, too, when the Apostle Paul uplifts the cross, he proves its power by the same emblem. "Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." This is the magnifying medium, through which we see, that *the dying of Jesus is the garden of God's sweetest perfumes.* His one sacrifice is eternal and unbounded fragrance.

Let us now draw nearer, and learn how the whole Godhead here expands itself in limitless delights. When we contemplate God in His majesty, we see upon His head the many crowns of every pure and holy excellence. They all shine in one grand harmony of infinite, unchangeable glory. They cannot be parted. They cannot exist asunder. They are united by bands, which God alone could frame, but which God can never disunite. The question instantly arises, How can they all concur in raising a sinner to share the Eternal's throne?

First, let JUSTICE speak. Its claim strikes terror. It has a right to one unbroken series of uninterrupted obedience through all life's term. Each straying of a *thought* from perfect love incurs a countless debt. It has in its hand an immeasurable roll, written within and without against us. If it be willing to relax, it would merely overlook evil, and God would cease to be God. Therefore it sternly cries, *pay me what you owe!* But how shall he pay, who has nothing of his own but sin?—Behold the Cross. Here Jesus pays a death, the worth of which no tongue can reckon. Justice holds scales, which groan indeed under mountains upon mountains of iniquity—but this one sacrifice more than outweighs the pile. Thus justice rejoices, because it is infinitely honored. For if all the family of man had been cast into the prison-house of torment—if they had writhed forever, paying the penalty of hell-pains—the whole could never have been cancelled. Eternity could not have seen the end. But Jesus dies, and justice at once is crowned with everlasting satisfaction.

A case from common life, though far short of the entire truth, may help to clear it to our view. A debtor's debt amounts to thousands. His means can render a penny on each day. The creditor arrests him and takes the daily mite. Years pass, but the mass scarcely lessens. The removal of a daily grain will not wear out the ocean's sands. But let a rich man come, and in one sum discharge the whole. The claim ceases. The prisoner goes free. The creditor exults in a payment, which is unlooked-for gain. Thus at the cross, justice receives a cup of atonement, so full, that it can hold no more. It revels in the sweetness of the savor.

Ponder the wonders which are here achieved. Justice not only drops its avenging sword, but it becomes arrayed in smiles of approving love. It is no more an *adversary*, demanding condemnation. It stands, as an *advocate*, insisting on acquittal. The principle, which rigidly requires death for each sin, as rigidly refuses to take the payment twice. Cling then to the cross. There justice, by a mighty plea, establishes your right to heaven.

Next, there is a sweet savor here to the TRUTH of God. If justice is unyielding, so too, is Truth. Its yes is yes; is no is no. It speaks, and the word must be. Heaven and earth may pass away, but it cannot recede. Now its voice is gone forth, denouncing eternal wrath on every sin. Thus it bars heaven's gates with adamantine bars. In vain are tears, and penitence, and prayers. Truth becomes untrue, if sin escapes. But Jesus comes to drink the cup of vengeance. Every threat falls on His Head. Truth needs no more. It claps the wings of rapturous delight, and speeds to heaven to tell that not one word has failed.

Take another faint image. A king issues a decree. His oath is pledged that death shall follow disobedience. A subject rebels. He is convicted. Execution is required. If the king hesitate, where is his truth and faithfulness, and where is the majesty of his empire? But let the king's son, in the offender's stead, endure the penalty. Then the law is magnified, the statute is inviolate, the sacredness of order rejoices, while the guilty lives. Thus, when Jesus suffers, Truth gains honor for its every saying, and smells a sweet savor of content.

Believer, rejoice in the cross. Here only, the Word, which had forged such mighty chains, finds that it can live in your life. It demands salvation for you; for it has nothing against you, but all for you in the unalterable promise, "Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

Need I add, that Jesus is a sweet savor to the HOLINESS of God. This perfection is the sensitive plant of heaven. It recoils from the approach of sin. It cannot look upon uncleanness. It has no eye, but for unsullied righteousness. It only breathes where all is pure. Now, at the cross a marvel is effected, which is joy to every fiber of its heart—a stream thence flows, which washes out the crimson-dye, until it can be no more found. Nor is this all. *The sinner looks to the cross, and, as he gazes, the love of evil withers, and the love of God buds forth.* Thus the cross presents to Holiness "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Reader! would you obtain a title and fitness for heaven? Live at the cross. It gives a *fitness* to inherit. It gives an *aptness* to enjoy. Ministers of Christ, would you weaken the sway of Satan? Preach the cross. They only die to the rule of sin, who die in Jesus to its penalties. *There is no sanctifying principle but faith in Christ!*

Sweet too is the savor which MERCY here inhales. Mercy weeps over misery. In all afflictions it is afflicted. It tastes the bitterest drop in each cup of woe. But when anguish is averted, the guilty spared, the perishing rescued, and all tears wiped from the eyes of the redeemed, then is its holiest triumph! Loud is its rapture, when it sees a countless multitude snatched from the bitterest agonies, and borne to celestial bliss! Overflowing is its delight, when it hears voices, like ocean's waters, hymning the victories of the Lamb! Infinite is its joy, when it realizes that this adoration will swell louder in melody through endless ages! But it is only at the cross that Mercy raises this exulting head. I am painfully aware that many of the sons of sin have some vague thought of finding mercy without finding Christ. Oh! that they might learn, before it is too late, that *God's saving mercy is only found at Calvary!*

Reader! I trust, that you now distinctly see, how every attribute sings, and rejoices, and gives thanks, and glories in the all-satisfying Jesus. His incense ascends, and heaven luxuriates in the savor. Hence the Father brings in the Son with the happy voice, "Behold my elect, in whom my soul delights;" and again, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Reader! is the like mind in you? Is the joy of heaven your joy? Is its refreshment the refreshment of your heart? Is its perfume the perfume of your spirit? Does your every faculty expand and rejoice in Jesus? Is He your Paradise of every spice and every flower? Is He your Garden of Eden, in which each moment is a moment of blossoming, and each blossom opens in increasing fragrance?

Believe me, every sweet savor is in Him. Believe me, there is no sweet savor elsewhere. The world is a foul desert. The vapor of its weeds is corruption and rottenness. Turn from its thorns and briers. Come and walk up and down in the verdant places of the Gospel. Partake of the deliciousness which here abounds. The ransomed all sing in the ways of the Lord; "His name is as ointment poured forth." "He is the Rose of Sharon." "A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved unto me." "He is as a cluster of henna blossoms." "All your garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia." He is the sweet savor, which can never fail.

Can any hear this and turn to Christless habits? Ah! child of sin, pause, I beseech you. Apart from Christ, your person is accursed—Your merit is a filthy rag—Your prayer is an abomination—Your praise is an insult—Your service is a mockery—Your walk is a daily step from God—Your death is a downfall into hell. Tell me, is it not far better to be unto God a sweet savor of Christ? Think! a life redolent of Christ will be an eternity of fragrance through the realms of light. But a life which is the scent of earth's corruptions, becomes at last a loathsome fume in the charnel-house of darkness.

Gen 9.13

THE RAINBOW IN THE CLOUDS

"I have set My **rainbow in the clouds**, and it will be the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth." Gen 9:13

In the rainbow there is a charm, of which every eye is conscious. It looks forth through the dark windows of the storm, and earth rejoices in the reviving visit. Its lovely hues proclaim that the gloom is past. It spans the clouds, as the fair herald of returning clearness. Its noble form, its various shades of distinct and blended color, surpass all praise. Admiration can only say—it worthily magnifies its mighty Maker. Such delights become us. *The book of nature is the penmanship of God.* Every line should be a sanctifying lesson. Enlightened piety sings, "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all those who have pleasure therein."

But the shining light of the rainbow teaches far more than that our God is excellent to plan, and almighty to perform. To receive its especial instruction we must ponder its birth. Let us go back, then, and take our station by the side of Noah, when it first awakened his grateful thanks. His feet again trod on the solid pavement of earth. But the sound of rushing torrents had left their echo in his ear. The expanse of desolation had not faded from his view. What had been, might be again. Each gathering *cloud* might mantle the world in final ruin. Each falling *raindrop* might open the sluices of another deluge. Thus fears would lodge in his breast; and "fear has torment."

From the foreboding patriarch, let us turn to our God. He is glorious in tenderness, and pity, and compassion, and watchful care towards His people. It is His merciful will that they should repose in perfect peace. He invites them to feed by the still waters of confiding love. He would have the wings of each breeze to flutter over them—laden with joy. He would have every shadow to spread the covert of protection. But how will He calm the trembling anxieties of Noah? A *word* of heaven-sent *promise* might suffice. But He, who multiplies to pardon, multiplies also to give comfort. His word indeed shall go forth, but it shall go forth sealed with an enduring, ever-speaking seal. He will call a new wonder into being. A *smiling offspring of the weeping cloud* shall tranquilly assure the earth, that waters have no more a mandate to lay waste. And what is this wonder? An arch, cheering and bright, embraces the skies. On a scroll of variegated light there is inscribed, These storms drop fertility—they break to *bless* and not to injure.

How is this wonder framed? Jehovah's works are sublime in their simplicity. The sun looks forth from the opposite skies. Its rays enter the descending drops, and returning to the eye in broken pencils, paint the rainbow on the illuminated background. Heaven dries up the tears of earth, and the high roof above seems to take up the Gospel-hymn, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." Thus the rainbow is more than an evidence of skill and power. It is the brilliant signet on God's preserving arm. It is *the golden impress*, by which He ratifies the covenant, that "the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh."

But faith looks further. It is ever intent to catch the image of its beloved Lord. It has learned the sound principle, that *the whole field of nature reflects the beauties and glories of Jesus.* It has read the testimony, that He is the "true Light," and the "true Bread," and the "true Vine." Hence it is not slow to inquire, Is He not too the truth of the "faithful witness in Heaven?" While it thus listens to drink in some Gospel-music from the rainbow, the word sounds plainly: "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with great compassion I will take you back. In a moment of anger I turned my face away for a little while. But with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the Lord, your Redeemer. "Just as I swore in the time of Noah that I would never again let a flood cover the earth and destroy its life, so now I swear that I will never again pour out My anger on you. For the mountains may depart and the hills disappear, but even then I will remain loyal to you. My covenant of blessing will never be broken," says the Lord, who has mercy on you. Isa 54:7-10.

Here the great depths of God's love are broken up. As the deluge overtopped the highest hills, so this assurance drowns the pinnacles of doubt and hesitation. It places the covenant of *Noah* in contrast with the covenant of *Jesus*. God promising to hold back a flood, pictures God, making oath, that He will save to the uttermost. The earth safe from watery waste is the Church safe from all wrath.

But if the former had a pledge impressed on the firmament, much more has the latter a seal of unfading perpetuity—even Jesus high in the glories of heaven. Thus faith sees the rainbow in the cloud, and adores the Savior on the right hand of God.

But this is not all. The rainbow, which cheers us in the first pages of our Bible, shines brightly to the last. We read in the Revelation, that John was in the Spirit—a door was opened before him in heaven—and behold, a throne was set. But what encircled it? The Rainbow! As the vision advanced, he saw a mighty angel come down from heaven clothed with a cloud, and a *rainbow* was upon his head. Thus in the fullest blaze of the Gospel, the rainbow continued the chosen emblem of the grace and truth, which came by Jesus Christ. How can we render thanks enough for this super-added pearl in our diadem of encouragements?

We are thus led to look for our rainbow on the brow of every threatening storm. In the world of *nature* it is not always visible but in the world of *grace* it ever shines. When the darkest clouds thicken around us, the Sun of Righteousness has neither set nor has eclipsed: and its ready smile converts the drops into an arch of peace.

Let a few cases from the diary of experience illustrate this. In our journey through the wilderness, the horizon is often obscured by *storms* like these; terrors of conscience, absence of peace, harassing perplexities, crushing burdens of difficulties. But from behind these dusky curtains, the *rainbow* strides forth in its strength. It is indeed a cheerless day, when terrors of conscience pour down pitiless peltings. Specters of past sins start up. A grim array of bygone iniquities burst their tombs; and each terrifies by hideous form, and each points to eternal death as its due. The light of life seems excluded by the dread, "Can there be hope, when sins have been so many, and so grievous—and against the clearest knowledge—and after such tender pardons, and such healings of mercy?"

Wild is this tempest's roar—but in its midst faith can still look upwards, and see Jesus with outstretched arms before the throne of God. *There is a rainbow upon His Head*, and the bright colors write, "Father, forgive them." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." The darkness vanishes, and clear joy returns.

Absence of peace, too, is a heavy cloud. Many a cross of spiritual distress lies in the believer's path. Today he may recline joyously on the sunny slopes of the Gospel—tomorrow the thunders of Sinai affright. Today David sits high at the banquet of the king—tomorrow he is an outcast in the cave of Adullam. Now the Church rejoices in the voice of her Beloved, that knocks, saying, "Open to Me:" soon she laments, "I sought Him, but I could not find Him."

I must not pause to explore the *marshes*, from which these chilly mists arise. But it is sure, that *the fault is with our hearts.* Sin may be indulged—then comforts die. Means of grace may be neglected—then heavenly communions are shut out. But in these dreary hours the gladdening rainbow, which crowns the Redeemer's head, will suddenly appear. In letters of light the truth is emblazoned, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." "I change not, therefore are you not consumed." "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Again the darkness vanishes, and clear joy returns.

Perplexities are often as a mass of clouds. The pilgrim would climb the hill of Zion, but impassable rocks are on either side—the sea is in the front—the Egyptians in the rear. He sighs, as the lepers of Samaria, "If we say, we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit still here, we die also." He is in the straits of David. The enemy has left him desolate; his friends are ready to stone him. But he looks aloft to Jesus, and the rainbow is bright. The "faithful and true Witness" cheers him onward: "This is the way, walk in it." "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go, I will guide you with My eye."

So, also, *burdens of difficulties* often oppress. The believer is ready to sink beneath the weight. Moses felt this when he said, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel?" But a Bow was in the cloud, and it sparkled with the promise, "Certainly I will be with you." He went and prospered. The women on the way to the sepulcher were in gloom, "Who," said they, "will roll us away the stone?" But a rainbow was in the cloud. Hoping against hope, they advanced, and the stone was gone. Paul trembled, when he was to stand alone before the tyrant and his court. But a rainbow was in the cloud, and he took courage: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."

Believer, have you, like Noah, been called by God into the ark of Salvation? Then, like Noah, *you may trace the rainbow in every trial and discouragement.* Go forward undismayed, for you are encompassed with heaven's hosts of covenant-grace. Nothing can separate from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. You believe that no waters can again destroy this earth. So believe, that neither sin, nor Satan can sweep you to perdition. Your "life is hidden with Christ in God." The eternal God is your tower of security. The arms of Christ are the guards around you. While God is God, mightier than Satan, you are safe. While Christ is Christ, all-sufficient to redeem, you are safe. Behold the rainbow. Satan cannot pluck it from the skies. Behold your Jesus. Satan cannot reach His throne.

But do not extol the beauties of the rainbow, you who are strangers to the sheltering ark. Alas! it is no harbinger of peace to such. It tells indeed, that God is love, and God is true. But love rejected is no friend: and truth unheeded is a relentless foe. When the clouds blacken, let such tremble—for truth says, "upon the wicked He will rain fire and brimstone, storm and tempest." When the rainbow gleams sweetly forth, let them tremble—for it warns, God has set me here as a pledge, that His word cannot be broken.

Believer, these lines guide you to look upward; may they also help you to look onward! Here you have no rainbow without a cloud and without a storm. Here you see Jesus only by the eye of faith, in emblems, in records, and in means of grace. But soon, throughout eternity's calm brightness, you will gaze upon the rainbow of His glory. And as you gaze, you will shine, even as He shines. For we shall be like Him, when we shall see Him as He is!

Gen 12.3

THE BLESSING

"In you shall all families of the earth be blessed." Gen 12:3

Our Heavenly Father is love. The proof is the gift of His Son. Jesus is love. The proof is the gift of Himself. The Spirit is love. The proof is, He brings Jesus into the heart of faith. Hence, the Scripture is framed by the hand of love, as a chart to show the glories of the Lord to the children of men. Each page adds new tints to the glowing picture. Almost each person is a herald preceding Jesus with a clearer note. Thus Abraham appears from the shades of idolatry, and instantly the Gospel is preached. The tidings sound aloud—"In you shall all families of the earth be blessed." Faith hears and cries, This must be a prophecy of Jesus. Who but He is the blessing of the world?

When the Patriarch was raised to this pinnacle of truth, what prospects, as floods of light were spread before him! He gazed on countless masses of immortals, blessed through countless ages. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad."

Reader! would you behold like wonders, and share like joys? Would you be blessed while you live, and when you die, and throughout eternity? Would you bask each day in the smiles of God's favor, and repose each night under the shelter of His wings, and go down to the grave leaning on His arm, and pass through the gate of death into the new Jerusalem? There is all this blessedness in Christ. Would you at each moment lift up a tranquil heart, and say—The great Creator is my Father—Jesus is my redeeming kinsman—the Spirit is my indwelling teacher, and sanctifier, and comforter—the saints in light are my brethren—the Angels are my guardian-attendants—Heaven is my home—a throne of glory is my seat—a weight of glory is my crown? Would you realize that the wheels of Providence revolve for your welfare—and that the world, with all its intricate perplexities of machinery, is a scaffold to build up the fabric of your best interests?

There is all this blessedness in Christ. But apart from Him, there is no blessing. The blessing hand hangs down, the blessing voice is mute, except in Him. Such is the fact; and the clear knowledge of it lies at the root of Gospel-truth. Do you ask, Why can no blessing fly to earth, but on the wings of Jesus? Sin is the hindrance. Sin chokes the road. Blessings can find no channel, until some mighty power clears the course. But sin does more than obstruct. It mantles our race under a thick pall of curse. The curse is the ground, on which we are born. On that dreary waste, then, nothing but woe can fall. We must be translated into an Eden of Grace, before showers of favor can visit us.

Many sport through life, thoughtless that they are thus in misery's land. As you value your soul, examine then with me the solemn case. Let us put aside all the false maxims of the world. Let the childish conceits of puny reason hide their heads. Let the Word speak from its lofty and infallible tribunal. Its sentence is most clear. No dullness can mistake it. No deceit can obscure it. The Lord thus decides, "Cursed is *every one* who continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law." Tremendous voice!

Sinner! is it not an arrow through your conscience? It speaks of you, for it includes "every one." The net encompasses the whole family of man. Neither the riches of the rich, nor the poverty of the poor; neither the greatness of the great, nor the lowliness of the lowly; neither the age of the aged; nor the youth of the youthful; neither the learning of the learned, nor the polish of the polite, nor the ignorances of the untutored, are a door of escape. No condition, no qualities, no attainments can extricate. All born of woman, in every climate, and in every age, are fast bound by the dread sentence.

Do you further ask, What is this edict of the Law? Its one straight rule is love. This is its one requirement. But the width goes widely over every thought; the length is as long as all time. It says, Love God, love man, in every movement of mind, in every period of being. Love God, love man, perfectly, without faltering, without a pause. What if there be failure? Then comes the stern penalty, "Cursed are you." *There is no place for excuse, nor for tears, nor for penitence, nor for prayers, nor for promises of reform.* Disobedience is Curse.

Turn not from this honest dealing. But rather mark, how the work affects yourself. Do I add to Scripture? Your answer must be, No. Do I magnify? How can terrors be added to what is infinitely terrible? How can unutterable awe be made more dreadful? Look around your frightful cell. The wall has no crevice. It is high; you cannot scale it. It is broad; you cannot find its boundary. From all points the thunder roars, "Cursed are you." But *what is the curse?* It is the endless accumulation of all the miseries which God's resources can command, and God's power can inflict. It is the fiery torrent from the lake of fire. It is pain which cannot be keener. It is despair which cannot be blacker. It is anguish which cannot be more bitter. It is eternity in the oneness of all torment. It is Hell.

Reader! such is the fearful state of all who have never fled from Sinai's terrors, and who die unblest with Zion's saving mercies. But why have I led you to this fearful valley? It is, that you may look up to Jesus, "leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills" of Blessing. If there be curse in the Law, wide and relentless, there is blessing in Him, co-extensive and co-eternal. He abolishes the curse. *He crowns himself with thorns, that He may crown His people with glory.* He transacts this gracious work in the garden and on the cross. But how? Not by denying any claim. Not by suing for mitigation. Not by pleading extenuations. Not by asking clemency. No, He honors and magnifies the law to the uttermost. He glorifies the command as just, and righteous, and good. He grants, that the curse is fully merited, and that it must be fully borne. Let it, then, all descend, He cries, but not on the poor sinner. I offer Myself, as substitute, to endure the whole, and upon Him the whole is poured. *He is made a curse for us. The sword of vengeance to the very hilt is sheathed in His breast. The last dreg of wrath is drained by Him. Not one drop remains for those whom He represents.* Thus He takes all the curse out of the hands of God, and stands the one Blessing of the world.

Sincerely would I invite you to adore with me our Blessing of blessings. But before such glories, all thoughts and words are the shadows of a shade. Is freedom a blessing to a pining prisoner; and the sovereign's pardon to a convicted traitor; and the endearments of his native land to a returning exile? Is ease a blessing to the pain-racked, and the voice of health to the wasted in sickness, and opening sight to the sightless? Is comfort a blessing to the comfortless—rest to the weary—a home to the houseless—bread to the famished—peace to the fearful? This is but a faint outline of the blessings which abound in Jesus. It would be joy to roam over all the Scriptures, which re-echo these tidings. But one brief notice must suffice. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." The saying is one, but it leaves nothing unsaid.

Survey this treasure-house of grace; how rich! how full! The believer may say, This heritage is all my own. Measure, if it be possible, *the golden chain*, which extends from one hand of God in eternity past to the other in eternity to come. Every link is a Blessing. Behold the starry canopy. The glittering orbs outshine all beauty, and exceed all number. Such is the firmament of Christ. It is studded with blessings. But millions of worlds are less than the least; and millions of tongues are weak to tell them. Mark how they sparkle in the eye of faith. There are constellations of pardons. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

There is the bright shining of *adoption* into the family of God. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." There is the milky-way of *peace*—perfect peace, heaven's own peace. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." There is the morning-star of *sin destroyed*. "God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." There is the luster of *divine Righteousness*. "This is His name, whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness." There is the light of *life*. "I give unto them eternal life." There is all *glory*. "The glory which You gave Me, I have given them." There is the possession of all present, and the promise of all future *good*. "All things are yours," "things present—things to come." There is the assurance that *nothing shall harm*. "All things work together for good to those who love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

Such is *the blaze of Blessings*, on which the believer calmly gazes. But are they yours? They are, if you have found refuge in the ever-blessing arms of Jesus. If not, take warning! Yours is the starless night of the terrific curse.

Perhaps I address some *minister* of the Lord. Sir, like Jesus, you are set for the falling and rising again of many. If you would happily work happiness, tell your flock of Him. Preach Him clearly—fully—only—in season—out of season. Guide from the wilderness of the curse to the only pastures in which true Blessings can be gathered.

Do I address a *parent?* You love your children. With yearning heart, and tearful eye, you often sigh, Oh that the Lord would bless them indeed! Teach them Christ. Other instruction, if He be omitted, only adds sting to the curse, and accomplishes for hell.

Reader! you have friends dear to you as life. To advance their interests you count all labors light. Remember, he is a foe who befriends not the soul. To befriend the soul is to point it to Christ. Perhaps you occupy a position of responsibility. You have dependents in the family—the trade—the shop—the farm. You feel for their comfort, and you provide for it. They look to you for support, and you give it. This is so far well. If this world were all, you would be a Blessing to them. But *the world beyond the grave is all.* Therefore to be a Blessing to them, you must win them to the knowledge, and faith, and love, and service of Jesus.

But perhaps you are of *humbler* station. Be it so. Some of the Lord's most successful laborers were poor, yet making many rich. You have a tongue, which daily utters many words. Each word enters some ear, and may enter some heart. Be persuaded then, and let your lowly words minister grace and blessedness, by being channels to convey the salvation of Jesus.

Whoever you are, turn not then from these earnest truths, until the Spirit bear witness with your spirit, that the one Blessing of all the families of the earth is the Blessing of your heart. Abide in Him; and the Blessing of the friend of God is yours. "I will bless you, and you shall be blessed." But the full grant of blessedness cannot be imagined, until His own welcome be heard, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Gen 14.18

MELCHIZEDEK

"Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the most high God." Gen 14:18

The first war, which darkens history's page, is ended. Abraham is moving homewards—crowned with success—laden with spoil. Suddenly a scene breaks on us—marvelous in what it reveals—marvelous in what it conceals. A personage, who is all wonder, stands on the stage of Scripture. His name bids us mark him well. It is a full Gospel-note. He is high in earthly dignity, for he is Salem's *king*. He is high in holy function, for he is the *priest* of the most high God. Do we ask his lineage? It is shrouded in a veil, which we may not pierce. Do we seek the morning of his days? His sun never rises. Do we seek the evening of his life? His sun never sets. He only appears in full-blown stature, and in meridian blaze. So obscure is he in sublimity, so sublime in obscurity, that it is no surprise to hear the question, *Can this be merely man?* He comes forward with neither empty hand nor silent lip. He strengthens the patriarch with refreshment for the way. He adds, too, the greater strength of blessing in the name of God. Abraham owns the claim to reverence and to homage. He presents a tenth part of all.

Such is the record. But Scripture pauses not here. It teaches us, that *all these lines of mystery are lineaments of Jesus*. It shows, in this stately person, no doubtful glimpse of the glories of the office of the Lord. It tells us in distinct phrase, he is "made like unto the Son of God." The tidings are often repeated, that Jesus is "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Hence faith, which only lives looking unto Jesus, sits at His feet in holy, happy musings, and finds the cheering of full Gospel-rays.

Behold Melchizedek! In wise purpose his descent is hid far beyond our sight. So, too, clouds and darkness mantle the first rise of Jesus. He is, by eternal generation, the co-eternal Son of the co-eternal Father. But who can grasp such mystery? He, who begets precedes not the begotten. This truth is a boundless ocean. Let us meekly stand on the shore and marvel. But let us not repine, that *we cannot fathom what is fathomless.* This truth hides its lofty summit in the heaven of heavens. Let the poor worms of earth repose in reverence around the base. But let them not venture to climb the giddy heights. To know God's essence, we must have God's mind. To see Him as He is, we must be like Him. To span the lengths of His nature, we must have His infinitudes. To survey His magnitude, we must sit as compeers on His throne.

We read, and are assured, that Jesus, by eternal birth, is God of God, and very God of very God. But while we cannot dive into the depths, we bathe our souls in the refreshment of the surface. For hence it follows, that He is sufficient to deal with God and to satisfy God, and thus to save His people to the uttermost. We see not Melchizedek's cradle. But we distinctly see him man on earth. Eye-witnesses, who heard Jesus and handled Him, give testimony, that He, too, has tabernacled in our clay, and thus was qualified to shed His life-blood as our ransom.

In Melchizedek we find neither first nor last hours. No search can tell when he began or ceased to be. Here is Jesus. His age is one everlasting day. From eternity past to eternity to come, His being rolls in one unbroken stream. Before time was, His name is, "I am that I am." When time shall have run its course, His name is still, "I am that I am."

Reader! does such greatness fill you with tremblings of awe? Do you sigh, How can I draw near? How can I cast myself into His arms? Behold Him! His eternal being is eternal love. He never lived, He never will live, but with His people engraven on His heart, and spread before His eye. "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you." Zion's walls are continually before Him. Immeasurableness encourages, for it is immeasurableness of tender grace.

Melchizedek! How mighty is this name! He that utters it, says, *"King of Righteousness."* Who can claim that title, in its full purport, but Jesus? What is His person, what His work, but the glory of Righteousness? Since Adam fell, earth has seen no Righteousness apart from Him. But His kingdom is first *Righteousness*, then *Peace*. There is a throne in it righteously erected to dispense Righteousness. All the statutes, decrees, ordinances, every precept, every reward, every penalty—is a sunbeam of Righteousness. Each subject is bright in royal robes of purity—each wears a crown of Righteousness. Each delights in Righteousness, as his new-born nature.

Reader! do you not long to be righteous, even as He is righteous? There is one way—only one. Cleave to Jesus. His Spirit-giving scepter will kill in you the love of sin, and plant in you the living seeds of Righteousness. Melchizedek was a local monarch. His city was graced with the name of Salem, which is Peace. The war which stalked through the land, troubled not these tranquil citizens. Here again we have the sweet emblem of Jesus' blissful reign. His kingdom is one atmosphere of peace—one haven of unruffled calm. Heaven is at peace with the inhabitants. Sin had rebelled. It had aroused most holy wrath. It had armed each attribute of God with anger. It had unsheathed the sword of vengeance. It had pointed the arrows of destruction against our world of transgression. But Jesus cleanses His flock from every stain of evil. He is "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." The eye of God can no more find the cause of antagonism. A flood of smiles descends upon the blood shed kingdom. The inhabitants are at peace with heaven.

Sin had filled them with hatred of God's holiness—dread of God's avenging arm—aversion to God's presence. But Jesus, by His Spirit, plucks out the heart of stone, and implants a heart of filial love. The one delight is now to draw near to God—to walk by His side—to listen to His voice—to sing His praise. The inhabitants are at peace within. The sight of the cross stills each rising storm of conscience, and stifles the accusing voice of Satan. They see a divine Redeemer quenching by His blood the flames of hell—building by His merits the palace of heaven. Trouble vanishes before this morning star.

Reader! there is no peace but in this Salem. But within these walls there is one song of perfect peace. The gates are yet wide open. The Prince of Peace calls to His standard. Blessed, blessed are they, who hear, and hasten, and are at rest!

Melchizedek is called to the most hallowed functions. He is the consecrated **priest** of the most high God. As king, he sat above men. As priest, he stands before God. This holy office exhibits Jesus. He spurns no office which can serve the Church. The entrance of sin calls for expiation. No sinner can approach a sin-hating God without a sin-removing plea. This expiation can only be by the death of an appeasing victim. The victim can only die by a sacrificing hand. Hence we need a Priest to celebrate the blood-stained rite. And all which is needed, we have in Jesus. Cry out and shout, O happy believer, your "Christ is all." An altar is upraised. The altar is Christ. No other can suffice. He alone can bear the victim, which bears His people's sins. A lamb is led forth. The lamb is Christ. None other has blood of merit co-equal with man's guilt. Jesus, therefore, God in essence, man in person, extends Himself upon the accursed tree. But who is the Priest who dares approach a super-human altar? Who has a hand to touch a victim-God? The very sight would shiver man into annihilation. Therefore *Jesus is the Priest*. But *can He slay Himself?*

Reader! God's will is His nature. Love for His people is His heart. He looks to God—He looks to His Church, and counts it joy to give His blood. Believer, open wide your eyes of faith—gaze on this glorious work of your glorious High Priest. He spares not Himself, that all who flee to Him might be spared forever. But mark it well, the Lamb has died once and forever. The Priest's work on earth is finished once and forever. The shadows are passed away. The one Priest entered with His own blood into the holy of holies, having obtained *eternal* redemption. Will any now speak of *priests,* and *altars,* and *sacrifices* on earth? Let them beware. Let them consider. It is no light matter to trifle with the Spirit's language, and the names of Jesus. What begins in ignorance may end in death. "It is finished," is gloriously inscribed on the Priest's work below. "It never ceases," is as gloriously written on the work above. Jesus lives and His office lives!

Believer, behold Him on the right hand of the Majesty on High. He appears in priestly vesture. The names of the true Israel are on His *shoulders*—a token that all His strength is theirs to uphold them. The names are on His *breast*—a token that, while His heart beats, it beats for them. The voice of His pleading ever sounds and ever prevails. Father, forgive them; and they are forgiven. Father, have mercy on them; and mercies speed on rapid wing. The incense of His intercession ever rises. Father, bless them; and they are blessed. Father, smile on them; and it is light around. With extended hand, He takes their every offering of prayer, and praise, and service. He perfumes all with the rich fragrance of His merits. He makes all worthy in His own worthiness, and thus our nothingness gains great reward.

Melchizedek meets Abraham with bread and wine. The weary warrior is way-worn and faint. Refreshment is provided. The Lord is very tender of His people's needs. Dreadful is the curse on the Ammonites and the Moabites, because they did not meet Israel with bread and water in the way, when they came forth out of Egypt. Here again we see our great High Priest. With God-like bounty, He bestows every supply, which wasted strength, and sinking spirits, and failing heart require. The fight of faith is fierce—the journey of life ofttimes seems long—but at every step a banquet-house is open, and refreshing delights are spread.

There is the solid sustenance of the *Word:* there are the overflowing cups of the *promises*: there is the abundant feast of holy *ordinances*, as manna from the hand of God: there is the spiritual food of His own body given—of His own blood shed. Our true Melchizedek invites us to draw near. And while we regale in soul-reviving faith, the gracious voice still sounds, "Blessed be Abraham by the most High God." The Patriarch, in grateful reverence, makes an *offering* of a tenth part of all. O my soul, what will you render to your great High Priest? Let your adoring language be, O Lord, I am Yours! You have bought me by Your blood! You have won me by Your melting grace! You have called me by Your constraining voice! You have subdued me by Your all-conquering Spirit. I am Yours! My soul is Yours to adore You! My heart is Yours to love You! My body is Yours to serve You! My tongue is Yours to praise You! My life is Yours to glorify You! My eternity is Yours to gaze on You—to follow You—to hymn Your name. But Eternity! Eternity! Eternity is too scanty for a redeemed soul to magnify a redeeming Jesus!

Gen 15.1

THE SHIELD

"Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your **shield**." Gen 15:1

Abraham had heard the terrible clang of war. He had been in perils of fight. Thus he knew, that without the safeguard of a Shield, the warrior must go forth to overthrow and death. The sword was scarcely sheathed, when the Lord, remembering His mercy, visits His faithful servant. Seasonable are His words of comfort. "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your **shield**." Here was assurance, that all foes were as chaff; for the patriarch was encompassed with God, as with a shield.

In Abraham *warring*, and Abraham *shielded*, every soldier of the blessed Jesus sees himself. The service of the Lord, soothed as it is with heaven's own peace, is still a storm of assaults from earth and hell. The *repose of faith* excludes not the *fight of faith*. Rest in trouble is not rest from trouble. Hostile bands must meet us in hostile land. Satan is yet at large, and is full of wrath. The flesh is still the flesh, and lusts against the spirit. The world is still the world; and, though worn out by centuries of sin, is vigorous to hate, apt to wound, powerful to captivate, strong to enchain. Hence a ceaseless tide of battle rolls. But it is vain, for Jesus ever lives, and ever loves, and still cheers every believer, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your **shield**."

But what is a shield? It is armor framed for defense. Borne on the arm of the combatant, by rapid movement, it baffles the assailant's aim. Whatever be the attack, its broad surface intervenes, and all behind is safe. Just so in the fierce battle-field of faith, Jesus is a wide-spread covering. Hence every foe hurls every dart, as *a harmless straw.*

Reader! here is a holy image. May it speak holy lessons to the soul! It will do so, if by the Spirit's life-giving grace, it makes Jesus more clear to faith, and more dear to the heart. Let us then take our prayerful stand on the ground of truth, and solemnly mark what perils threaten, and how Jesus wards them off.

How few duly consider the tremendous dangers, to which they are exposed by sin! Could *the monster* be so lightly regarded, so trifled with, so fondled, if its nature and its consequences were really seen? Could men so live in its embrace, if they felt that it makes God an enemy? But truly it fortifies God, and all that God is, with weapons of just wrath. The thunderbolts of divine fury burn hot against it. The right arm of omnipotent displeasure is ever raised to sweep it to destruction.

Such is the dreadful fact. But how can *dust and ashes* stand, when God arises in the magnitude of infinite vengeance, and in the multitude of infinite resources? *Flight* there is none, for God is everywhere. *Resistance* there is none, for God has all power. *Self* is ruin, because self is sin: and sin is the only cause of the furor.

But do I in these pages converse with anyone who is most righteously provided in Christ Jesus? Jesus stands between the justly-offended majesty of God, and the justly-perishing offender. He presents Himself to receive each blow. They fall, they all fall, they all must fall. Truth and holiness require it. But they fall, they all fall, on Him. Terrible is the outpouring of the indignation, which beats terribly against Him. "It pleased the Father to bruise Him." But He bears all. If Deity assails, Deity sustains. It is against His fellow, that Jehovah wakes His sword. All the arms of the armory of an avenging God fall harmless, because all spend their fury in the breast of God's co-eternal and co-almighty Son. Thus the believer meets God's wrath, and lives.

Reader! are you safely hidden in Jesus? Woe is merited by you, and it must come. To brave it in the open plain of defenseless nature is sure perdition. There is no shadow of safety, but under these sheltering wings. Have you by faith made this refuge yours? Faith, and faith only, admits into the impenetrable defense. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But God's abhorrence of evil is not our only adversary. There is *the evil one*, red with the blood of myriads of our race. He cannot but hate, for his heart is hatred. He cannot pity, for he revels in man's misery. He cannot spare, because he lives, when we die. The first days of our pilgrimage are the first days of his plots—his wiles—his cruel warfare. He lays an ambush at every turn. Now a shower of darts pelts pitilessly. Now the weight of incessant batterings descends. Now a sudden arrow flies swiftly in the dark; and suddenly we fall, before danger is suspected. He never slumbers, never is weary, never relents, never abandons hope. He deals his blows alike at childhood's weakness, youth's inexperience, manhood's strength, and the totterings of age. He watches to ensnare the morning thought. He departs not with the shades of night. By his legions he is everywhere, at all times. He enters the palace, the hut, the fortress, the camp, the fleet. He enshrouds every chamber of every dwelling, every pew of every sanctuary. He is busy with the busy. He hurries about with the active. He sits by each bed of sickness, and whispers into each dying ear. As the spirit leaves the tenement of clay, he still draws his bow with unrelenting rage.

Such is our terrific and life-long fight. How can it be that each moment is not a death-wound? We could not but be cast down, except some Shield, far stronger than our own struggles, or our own resolves, were cast around us. And where can we find this shelter, but in Jesus? He interposes the might of His intercession: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not." His prayers are our victory. They gain supplies of divine aid. They brace us with heaven's strength. Thus we resist the devil, and he flees from us.

Jesus shields us, too, by giving *the shield of faith*. He is the author and finisher of this grace. Against this all the fiery darts of the wicked are powerless. They touch it, only to be quenched. *The sprinkling of His blood is also an impregnable security.* Satan sees this and trembles. It is an armor which he cannot pierce. This is the one experience of the Church of the firstborn. They are all sorely pressed, but they are more than conquerors, for they overcome by the blood of the Lamb! Thus the Evil One touches not the shielded ones of Jesus.

But there are other foes swarming in every secret corner of the camp. We have to wrestle with **self**, which cleaves to us as a girdle of destruction. The flesh gives no quarter. Its lusts are terrible shafts. They have strewn the earth with heaps of mighty slain. *David* met them without his Shield, and his scar went down with him to the grave. *Joseph* was assailed. The enemy's aim was skillful, and bold, and strong. But the Lord covered his heart, and temptation entered not. "How," said he, "can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" The blow recoiled, and he was safe.

The *pleasures*, the *luxuries*, the *honors* of high station, also beat down their countless victims. None can withstand them in human strength. But none can be vanquished, who have the Lord for their breastplate. *Moses* was tried by their most seductive craft. He might have sat next to the king in royal state. But he "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." And being dead, he tells us how to drive back this wily troop of fascinations.

Man's frown and *persecution's* threat give deadly wounds. All this fury frightened *Daniel* and the captive youths. The tyrant's wrath, the burning fiery furnace, the den of raging beasts gaped menacingly on them. But they fled to the Lord. He was their Shield, and they were unharmed in spirit and in body. Moreover, the Zion-ward path is in the face of batteries, from which hosts of *cares and anxieties* pour down their envenomed darts. How suddenly will they muster their efforts to disquiet! It is well with me today through grace. But what may come on the morrow? Friends may fail. Their pleasant seats may be a melancholy void. Disease and languishings may make the frame a misery. Such thoughts are pointed with keen anguish. And there is no shelter, but in the Lord. He alone can deaden their sting. But He can shield by spreading before our eyes His eternal love, His never-failing presence, His ever-watchful care, His ever-living promises.

No apprehensions can slay the life, or vigor, or calm of the soul, when the voice of Jesus whispers, "Do not fear, for I am with you." "All things are yours." "This God is our God forever and ever, He will be our guide even unto death." The soul is surely cased in peace, when it is folded in the arms of Jesus.

Reader! are you a true disciple of this Lord? If so, bring forth your trial, your foe, your peril, your need, and I will show you Jesus Almighty, and immovable, and ever-watchful to screen you from this very hurt. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe."

But do I in these pages converse with anyone who is afar off from Christ? Unhappy child! can I speak to you of security? No, I warn you, that you are on all sides defenseless, and in the midst of ruins. Where is your shelter from the wrath of *God?* Where, from the rage of *Satan?* Where, from the death-blows of *self?* Where, from the soul-murdering *world?* You have none! Oh! think. It is not yet too late. You yet live, and your wounds, though many, may all be healed; and your foes, though many, may all be driven, like vanishing smoke, before you. The words, on which your eye now rests, direct you to the *only* refuge. *Flee to Jesus!* He is always near, and always sufficient to be your all-sufficient Shield.

Believer, will not you put your seal to this truth? Have you not found *a cluster of aid* in Him? Can you not say with David, "Many there be who say of my soul, there is no help for him in God. But You, O Lord, are a shield for me!" Will you not cry, "Blessed are you, O Israel! who is like you, a people saved by the Lord? He is your shield and helper and your glorious sword." And will you not exhort, "O Israel, trust in the Lord, He is their help, and their Shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord, He is their help and their Shield. You that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord, He is their help and their Shield."

What especial encouragement is here to *the faithful minister* of Christ! What a tower of all-prevailing strength to the humble laborers in the Gospel-field! They seem to sow in weakness the seed of a few weak words. But it takes root. A gracious plant springs up. It sheds forth fragrance like Eden, and bears fruit for the garner of the King of kings. It thus flourishes, though checked by uncongenial climate, scorched by fiery suns, battered by rain and hail. The wild-boar out of the woods cannot ravage it; nor the wild beast of the field devour it. How is this? No weapon that is formed against it, can prosper; for the Word of the Lord is truth, "I am your Shield." Therefore, you servants of the living God, bless His holy name. He always causes you to triumph in Christ. Go on with the shield of faith, and under the covering of your Lord. Soon will the conflict end—and in Salvation's kingdom you will sing the glories of Salvation's Shield!

Gen 15.1

THE EXCEEDING GREAT REWARD

"I am your shield, and your **exceeding great reward**." Gen 15:1

It is a grand truth, that pleasantness and peace hold constant court in the believer's breast. But it must be so. For where faith dwells, there is Christ; and He enters as the author and giver of all joy.

Reader! come apart for a little moment, and pray over the simple words, which here endeavor to confirm this principle. If the Christ-revealing Spirit withdraws the veil, you will see the well-spring of happiness. Drinking of this pure stream, you will go on your way, blessed with much of heaven in possession—with all heaven in prospect.

We here fly back to Abraham's inspiring annals. He was dwelling in the land of his birth, in the home of his childhood, amid the friends of his heart. A voice shakes him from his dead repose. "Get out from your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house." Many would have said, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" Not so the called of the Lord. By faith he "obeyed, and he went out, not knowing where he went." He was no loser. He received manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting. Again, when he had scattered kings in the rescue of Lot, princely treasures courted his acceptance. Masses of gold and silver sparkled at his feet. "Take the goods for yourself," was a tempting offer, but with holy indifference he turned away. He was no loser. After these things, an assurance richer than all the riches of earth enriched him. "Fear not, Abram, I am your Shield and your exceeding great reward."

Now in this narrative we have an unerring teacher's voice. It tells us that *the true Christian is called to many relinquishments, to much self-denial, to constant trampling on earth's gilded baits.* But it tells us, that *every relinquishment is wealth, and every loss is gain. For he who leaves all for Christ, receives more than all in Christ.* A few particulars will establish this truth. There is a plain inscription over the portal of the heavenward-path: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way." He, then, who would enter, must be stripped of all those flowing robes, in which men flaunt and swell in nature's broad road. Self-righteousness must be torn off to its every shred. This is the very flaying of the soul. Dependence on imagined merit adheres as the very skin. But it all must yield. Self, in its most cherished form, must be despised and hated, as an abominable thing. All our darling excellences, all our fond conceits, all our superiorities must be rejected, as a filthy rag. It is hard work to cast all this away, and to go naked to be clothed by Jesus. But, if ever we would be saved, it must be done.

So, too, every hope which finds a Savior in the externals of rites and services, and means of grace, must be ground to powder and given to the winds. The channels of grace are not grace. The way is not the end. The implements by which we feed, are not food. The husk is not the kernel. The casket is not the jewel. The scaffold is not the building. The door is not the mansion. Here again is work, which requires a martyr's spirit, and more than human discernment. Satan is quick to deck our holy things, and our holy places with a show of saving efficacy. He whispers, that to put these into their proper place, is to put religion out of all place. But we must not hesitate. *Christ must be embraced, unaided and alone, or not at all.*

I need scarcely add, that every sweet sin, which has long been caressed in the recesses of the heart, must be dragged to the light and slain. This is ofttimes as the plucking out the right eye. But there must be no sparing. Christ is light. Sin is darkness. How can they be one? Sin loved, indulged, retained, binds fast the soul to the wheels of the chariot in which Christ cannot sit.

Again, the love of the world, in its foolish vanities, its empty shows, its godless maxims, its defiling pleasures, its lying principles, its soul-beclouding books, and all its idol-worship of talent, wit, and falsely-called glory, must be nailed to the cross. Its conformity must be shunned, as poison—its touch shunned, as a viper's sting. The heart must have no throne, but for Christ. Every joy must center in Him—every flower of refreshment must be gathered from Him. This walk is a departure from nature's country, from sin's kindred, and from the devil's home. It is a march towards a land, which Christ will give. It requires efforts many, and struggles many, and conflicts many, thus to take up the Christian's staff, and to put on the Christian's sandal, and to spurn all things dear to nature and to self.

But what is *rejected?* Nothing but husks and shadows—nothing but vexation, and disappointment, and misery—nothing but an oppressive load, a mocking shadow, a gnawing care, a weary chase after emptiness, a groaning under present burden, a dread of future reckoning.

What is *gained?* The substance of all good, the perfection of all excellence, in Christ. He welcomes to the secret chambers of His love. He opens His heart. A voice is heard by every coming sinner, You thus give yourself to Me, because I gave Myself for you, and now I give Myself to you. Fear not, I am your "exceeding great reward." O my soul, is this all-satisfying treasure yours? It turns all dross to gold, all clouds to sunshine, all sighs to song, and earth to the very gate of heaven.

Mark well the vast assurance, "**I** am your exceeding great reward." There would have been wondrous grace in the word, I will give some recompense. But it is more than grace to say, I Myself am your reward. The prospect of future glory would have been sweet encouragement, but it is mercy above mercy to bestow a present, instant privilege. **I** am your reward. There would have been marvelous comfort in the pledge, You shall lose nothing in my service. But it is very God to speak, "I am your exceeding great reward." Mark, then, the vast assurance. *Christ Himself* is the reward—the present reward—the great reward—the exceeding great reward, which fills believing hearts. All He is, and all He has is theirs. Theirs by His *love*, which had no birth—theirs by His *grace*, which has no bounds—theirs by His *promise*, which has no change; theirs by His *gift*, which cannot be recalled. Theirs, because He delights to bless them. Theirs, because He overjoys in their joy.

Sincerely would I speak of the reward, which He gives in the gift of Himself. But here the tongues of men and angels fail. He is God. Is *His deity* a treasure? He says to His people, Open wide your hands, My deity is yours! As God, His power is Omnipotence. He uses it for them. It protects them by night and day from the fury and hate of earth and hell. It stands every moment a high barrier between them and destruction. It prevails with Satan to beat him back. It prevails with the Father to draw Him near. His *wisdom* is unsearchable. But it is all for them. He so *plans and disposes*, that the fate of empires and the falling sparrow alike yield them good. His *Spirit* is theirs. He is sent forth to awaken, to reveal salvation, to win to the cross, to cheer, to sanctify, and to lead into the pastures of truth and holiness.

He is God-man. As such He has died, and endured agonies, and sustained a curse, and wrought righteousness, and possesses a kinsman's heart to sympathize. All is theirs. His *death* is theirs, that they may never die. His *agonies* are theirs, to expiate. His *curse* is theirs, to redeem. His *blood* is theirs, to wash them whiter than the whitest snow. His *righteousness* is theirs, to deck them in beauties fit for the Father's admiring gaze. His *sympathy* is theirs, that He may have a fellow-feeling in all their infirmities, and a brother's pity in all their griefs. So, too, His *present life* is theirs, that they may live forever. His *intercession* is theirs. Hence streams of blessings ever flow. His *advocacy* is theirs. Hence pardons cease not: and God's countenance is ever the meridian-sun of smiles.

Yet a little while, and He comes again. His *return* is theirs, to receive them in glorified bodies unto Himself. His *heavens* are theirs, that they may dwell in one home. His *throne* is theirs, that they reign on one seat. His *angels* are theirs, as ministering guards. His *providences* are theirs, always revolving around the pivot of their welfare. His *ministers* are theirs, to call, to feed, to build them up. His *Scriptures* are theirs, as a mirror, in which they may see His work and learn His ways. His *ordinances* are theirs, as nourishment and strength, as seals and pledges of His everlasting covenant. Thus they live, that they may receive grace from Him. They die, that they may receive glory in Him. They revive, that they may see all the perfections of Jehovah, and feast upon all joys before Him.

Reader! strive to expand these hints. They tend to show the blessedness of the "exceeding great reward" in Christ. But is it your desire to have your portion in such happy state? Come, then, surrender all for Christ. Make Him your own by faith. Lift up the gate of your heart, and this King of Glory will come in. Abide in Him, and He will abide in you. Give Him your confidence, and He will be to you this boundless recompense. Can you think that He is less rich to bless now, than He was of old? Have His rewards lost one grain of their immeasurable greatness? It cannot be.

Act the faith of Abraham, and you will hear as Abraham heard, and find as *Abraham* found, "I am your exceeding great reward." You will testify, as grateful *Jacob* did, "God has dealt graciously with me, and I have enough," or rather, "I have all things." You will experience with *Moses*, that the reproach of Christ is greater riches than the treasures of kingdoms.

You will touch the chord of David's harp, and sound aloud, "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup." Your overflowing heart will testify, that *the half was not told you!* But we need not go back to the early records of faith to show that Christ is this "exceeding great reward." It is the one experience of all His servants. Many are cottages, in which, while *penury* frowns, the godly inmate smiles content, and sings the song of heaven over scanty fare. Many are the *reviled* and the *oppressed*, in whose mouth is neither railing nor complaint, but one meek utterance of praise. Many are the chambers of *languishing and pain*, in which the very groans are melodies of gratitude. Many are the beds of *dying*, in which death is abolished and peace triumphs.

Faith can explain all this. It knows Him, who, by His presence, makes all burdens light—all sorrows joy. It is the Lord. He dwells there by faith. He is the "exceeding great reward." Faith, too, can take wings and pierce the skies, and enter the home of the redeemed. What is that scene? Multitudes upon multitudes, with robes of white, and crowns of righteousness, and palms of victory, and songs of endless praise, follow the Lamb wherever He goes. This is the recompense of Christ. He bought it all. He gave it all. He prepared it all for them. He prepared them all for it. Is He not an "exceeding great reward?" Can you now take the world instead of Him? Look again. Read again. Think again. Holy Spirit! allow no one to put these pages aside, until, by Your mighty power, Christ is established in the heart, as the "exceeding great reward."

Gen 17.7

THE COVENANT

"I will establish My **Covenant** between Me and you, and your seed after you, in their generations, for an everlasting Covenant." Gen 17:7

Reader! does your conscience certify that you are a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you cast a helpless soul into His helpful arms? Have you buried all your guilt and all your fears in the grave of His wounds? By *death unto sin*, do you prove that you are crucified with Him? By *life unto righteousness*, do you manifest the power of resurrection with Him? If so, what cause have you to bless God that He breathed the breath of life into your nostrils, and the Spirit of life into your soul! For great are your privileges, rich is your portion, bright are your prospects, sure is your inheritance. Your blessedness is summed up in the word, the great God is your Covenant-Father. Search your Bible. Study the charter of your heavenly freedom. Read the title-deeds of your high estate. This world's miser counts his gold, his jewels, and his fields. Shall not the heir of two worlds know his imperishable wealth? Clasp especially to your heart the roll of blessings. They are sanctification of spirit—adoption into God's family—divine light—and eternal pardon. The believer may claim them all by covenant pledge. "But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day," says the Lord. "I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people. And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their family, saying, 'You should know the Lord.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will already know me," says the Lord. "And I will forgive their wickedness and will never again remember their sins." Jer 31:33-34

Few are the eyes, which are not dazzled, when such treasures shine, as fields of light, before them. Wondering thought will question, How can *God*—the high, the holy One—whose being is perfection—whose home is eternity, have fellowship with *man*, the low—the vile—the loathsome, the offspring of the dust—the fluttering insect of a moment? No monarch would make league with the base rebel in the dungeon. How then can the height of heaven thus descend to misery, disease, and filth? When nature looks down to the pit, in which human nature grovels, impossibilities seem many. But still the fact is sure, God is in Covenant with every child of grace. Let witnesses be called!

First, let *Abraham* appear. He was born in sin, prone to evil—the child of wrath, laden with iniquity, just as we are. But his evidence asserts, that God thus communed with him. "As for Me, Behold My Covenant is with you." "I will establish My Covenant between Me and you and your seed after you." Let *David* next be heard. By natural descent, he was as we are. But his truthful gratitude exclaims, "He has made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." Thus far the point is clear. God covenants with man. But, perhaps some trembling believer may doubt whether such grace extends beyond the favored elders in the household of faith. Mercy speeds to give the reply, The Covenant is established with Abraham and his seed after him. And "if you are Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Reader! this truth is now resplendent as the sun in its brightness. It cannot be denied, that if you are Christ's, you are a covenant-child of God. We are thus prepared to examine the nature of God's Covenant, in its conditions and confirmation. The first step is to settle deeply in your mind, that this Covenant is no covenant of works. Once, indeed, such compact was proposed. "Do this," was the requirement. "Live," was the recompense. But it saw the light only to perish. Man placed it not in his heart, but beneath his feet. He touched it only to scatter it to the winds. The privilege was instantly forfeited. The voice which began in promise, ended in wrath. The beauteous column fell, never to rise again. The gracious page was torn, never to be re-written. I fear that there are many, who in the dark night of nature dream the idle dream, that this Covenant still lives, and that they shall live through it.

But a broken reed is no support. The sinking sand is no foundation. A violated treaty is no sound plea. It is a pitiable argument, I claim, because I have no claim. As well might the prodigal demand, Receive me again, because I am undutiful: or the rebel, Restore me, because I am a traitor: or the criminal, Acquit me, because I am guilty: or the debtor, Release me, because I am fraudulent. Such are the delusions of those who trust in a vanished Covenant. It began and ended in Adam. The strength of *innocence* could not hold it. How then can the weakness of *guilt* recover it, or the tongue of transgression plead it?

But far different is the Covenant of grace, which is the believer's safeguard. It is written in unfading letters of eternal love. It is based on the rock of changeless purpose. It is such, because "God has commanded it forever." But where do its birth, its vigor, its undying freshness come from? It exists, it is strong, it is everlasting, because it is made with Jesus. He stands before God as the second Adam; the head of a Spirit-born progeny. God commits to Him terms and promises for them. He binds Himself to terms and promises for them. Thus God pledges to them, Christ pledges for them. God stipulates; Christ undertakes.

But what are the conditions? God requires that they be all cleansed from all sin—all clothed in all righteousness—all renewed in every faculty of soul and spirit. Christ is responsible for the full performance. God promises that He will be their God. Christ promises that they shall be His people. Such is the new Covenant—made and ratified in Christ. Let us now sit down beneath the tree of Scripture, and catch some precious fruit, which falls into the lap of faith.

What rich supplies come from Isa 42:6, and Isa 49:8! Here Jehovah communes with His co-equal Son. We are brought into the council-chamber of eternity. God, in His majesty, says, "I, the Lord, have called You in Righteousness, and will hold Your hand, and will keep You, and give You for a Covenant of the people." And again, "I will preserve You, and give You for a Covenant of the people." We are here bade to gaze on Jesus, as Himself the Covenant. And such He is: for it has no being, no continuance, no power but in Him. He is its *essence,* its *reality,* its *fullness,* its *all*. It is founded, erected, concluded in Him. No Christ, no Covenant. Receive Him, and it is yours in all its truth and riches. Reject Him, and you perish, because you have not the shadow of a plea. He is the Covenant, because, as Jehovah's fellow, He designs it, and wills it, and orders it, and frames it, and accepts it. He is the Covenant, because, as God-man, He takes it into His own hand, and works out its every condition.

Receive next the evidence of Mal 3:1, "The Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the *Messenger of the Covenant*, whom you delight in." Here Christ is the Messenger of this Covenant. But what is the office of a messenger? He conveys tidings from party to party. Just so, Jesus comes traveling in the greatness of His strength, flying on the wings of His love, hastening in the zeal of His heart to proclaim, that a Covenant is made, and to tell what the Covenant contains. In the Word, through His ministers, by sealing ordinances, He reads to us, line by line, the provisions of this charter. He shows us, as in a glorious mirror, God reconciled, peace established, all grace purchased, and heaven's portals opened. O my soul! has Jesus caused the sweet notes of this message to be the music of your holiest delights?

But the messenger flies back to the courts above, and gives report to His heavenly Father, These poor sinners have heard of Your Covenant-grace; they have hidden their faces in the dust of penitential shame; they have clasped the records with the eager hand of adoring faith; old things are passed away from them, all things are become new; out of darkness they are light: from hatred they are love: they are no more aliens, but children. O my soul! are you thus brought within the bonds of the Covenant?

Again, glean the tidings of Heb 7:22, "By so much was Jesus made a *Surety* of a better testament," or Covenant. Here Christ is the Surety of this Covenant. But what is the work of a Surety? He engages, that each party shall fulfill the contract. There was no surety in the Covenant of works, and it quickly failed. But here the God-man Jesus is the Surety. He is Surety for the Father. He is Surety for His people.

I need not repeat what boundless blessedness the Father promises. All shall be given. Not one drop shall be withheld. The cup shall overflow. It must be, for Jesus is Surety. The conditions of believers are alike secure. They shall kneel in penitence; and live by faith; and cling to the refuge; and be fruitful trees of righteousness. In due time Jesus will call them all, and work in them to will and to do, and at last present them cleansed, and washed, and beautified, and sanctified, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. The truth, the love, the power of the Surety will accomplish this.

What delights, too, flow from Heb 12:24, "To Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant." As Mediator, He stands between God and man. He is one with God, and one with man. He places His hands on each. Thus they become one in Him. Separation vanishes: union is effected. Thus Covenant-blessings never fail to wing their way from heaven. Thus the Covenant-incense of holy love, and filial fear, and willing service never ceases to ascend.

Feast, moreover, on the truth of Heb 9:15, "He is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions which were under the first Testament, they which are called, might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Covenants of old were rendered valid by a victim's blood. When God showed Abraham the Covenant of grace, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between the slaughtered limbs. Hence the everlasting Covenant must be sealed with blood. An atoning, a peace-making sacrifice dies. It is none other than the Mediator Himself. The Father is well-pleased, and cries, "My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." The believer responds with overflowing praise, God is my Covenant-Father forever and ever. His Covenant is sure with me; by the Spirit's help, my covenant shall be inviolate with Him.

Reader! is such the language of your thanks-giving and thanks-living heart? Many, alas! prefer to enter into treaty with the world. Its easy terms are easily proposed. It demands compliance with its fashions—adoption of its principles—putting on its habits—neglect of the Bible—worship in mere forms. It offers in return a full-frothed cup of carnal and mental joy. The deluded victims sign. They take the tinsel-goblet. They drink nothing but the dregs of disappointment and of shame. Then comes the end. An eternity of woe puts a seal to the truth, that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Flee from this deceiving truce-breaker! Come out. Stand apart. Be separate. Lost souls discover too late that a league with the world binds them over to hell.

Gen 22.14

JEHOVAH-JIREH

"Abraham called the name of that Place Jehovah-Jireh." Gen 22:14

Faith is the brightest star in the firmament of grace. High is its origin—for it is born in heaven. Lowly is its abode—for it dwells on earth in the hearts of the redeemed. Mighty are its deeds—for it prevails with God, and over sin and Satan. It treads down seeming impossibilities. It strides to victory over mountains of stupendous hindrance. It speeds to its haven through oceans, in which each billow is an overwhelming difficulty. It braces the Christian warrior for every combat—giving a shield to screen, and a sword to subdue. It has a keen eye to discern things invisible. It reads the mind of God, as written in the tablets of eternity—as emblazoned on the cross of Christ—as wrapped up in the folds of providence. It enthrones Jesus, as king of the inner man. It kindles and fans the flame of love. It opens the lips of prayer and praise. It turns the current of life into a strong stream of spiritual service. It endures, until the gates of light open at its touch. It only expires, when it sees the Lord face to face.

Should we not then earnestly covet this gift of gifts? Should we not prize it, as the treasure of treasures? Should we not boldly use it, as our best defense? Should we not seek it, as our truest wealth? With this desire, come with me, and let us view faith's prowess in one of the noblest passages of Abraham's noble life. And may the Lord the Spirit so accompany us with His gracious teaching, that we may become heirs of the faith and blessedness of this heroic servant of the Captain of Salvation!

God had looked on Abraham, when he was low in Satan's dungeon. He had called him from bowing down to stocks and stones to see the light of life. He had turned the darkest night into the luster of truth. He had ofttimes shone around him in cheering communion. He had opened to his wondering gaze the unsearchable riches of redemption. He had given pledge, that the Savior from on high should put on human nature in his family. Nature called hope of progeny an idle dream. But the Lord spoke, and Isaac lived. After such miracles of mercies, after such wondrous promises, and more wondrous fulfillments; "God tested Abraham." A trial was sent to test the reality and the strength of his grace.

Reader! faith untried, unprobed, unproved, is faith uncertain. The quality of the metal is ascertained, by what it can do and bear. The courage of the soldier is evidenced in the field. The depth of the root is shown by resistance to the hurricane. It is a rock, if no lashing surges can move it. It is a good foundation, when no batterings shake the building. But trials do more than search whether faith is deep-rooted. They also consolidate and invigorate it. The often-strained sinew becomes more firm. The long-strained racer wins the prize. By exercise new powers expand and fit for the wrestle.

Reader! if you are a partaker of this blessed gift, think it not strange, that you are called to breast the thwarting current of many an opposing wave. It is needful—it is right—it is good. The issue will be a richer harvest of assurance and delight. Lift up then the head, and "count it all joy, when you fall into diverse trials." But what furnace was ever hot as that which burnished Abraham's faith? He was rejoicing in his child—the signal token of God's signal favor. Suddenly the voice, which had so often caused his heart to burn, freezes his heart to stone. "Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will point out to you." He hears, but can he hear aright? His fondest hopes become a ruin. The promise, dearer than life, withers as a blight-stricken bud. The tree which held salvation's seed, falls low. The channel of redemption's stream is choked.

But God spoke—that is enough. The command is from heaven—positive and clear. It cannot err. Isaac may die, but faith dies not. It can reason, God has all wisdom, and power, and truth; "with Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Clouds and darkness may shroud the event. But through clouds and darkness, the faithful word and the loving purpose will break forth, as a summer's morn. So Abraham rose up early, and hastened to do His will.

Let this example teach, that *prompt obedience is the surest wisdom*. God loudly addresses you in your Bible. He shows you the one path of life. He calls you to bring one sacrifice to Him in the arms of faith, and to offer one Lamb on one Altar. Rise up early and obey. To linger is to court ruin. *Delay is the craftiest net of Satan.* It is the terrible pitfall, out of which there are rare escapes. Many in torment will forever deplore the miserable hesitation, which ended in their miserable end. They tarried, but death tarried not. They paused, and the voice of mercy ceased. Commands unheeded are the common and the rapid road to hell.

For three days Abraham journeyed towards the appointed mount. This was large opportunity for unbelief to whisper many a dissuading thought. This was long time for the father's heart to ache. He looks on his child, and there is agony. He looks up to his God, and the agony melts into the calmness of unruffled peace. He turns to his child, and his foot would sincerely falter. He turns to his God, and the step is firm in resolute resolve.

Reader! faith is a persevering and unflinching grace. It holds fast by the Word—so it holds on—so it holds out. But now every fiber of affection is wrung by the simple inquiry of his confiding Isaac, "My father, behold the fire and the wood, but *where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"* None can tell the anguish of such a moment, for none were ever pierced by such an arrow, but it laid open the recesses of his heart, only to show how faith there reigned. Abraham answered, "God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."

Here is faith in its simple element of trust, and in its single consistency of acting. It totters not. Its stand is as a giant's stand on earth: because its head towers above the skies, gazing upon God. It leaves the time, the place, the means, the method, the all to Him. So it goes forward. It knows that God's leadings lead to God's glory. And God's glory is its happy paradise. It was so. Isaac is bound. And must he really die? Faith stops not to inquire. He is laid upon the altar. The hand is stretched out. The knife is taken. The last moment has come. But the last moment is the fit time to crown faith with reward, and victory, and peace. The voice which bade, now forbids. He who said, "Take your son," arrests by saying, "Lay not your hand upon the lad."

Behold God's wondrous way. His word is honored. Faith triumphs, and is honored too. It is tried, and by the trial is confirmed and expanded. The patriarch now begins a new life of heavenly joy. For the joy of *Isaac born* is nothing to the joy of *Isaac restored*. A giving God was love in the highest. A restoring God is love in higher heights.

Nor is this all. A memorial is raised to cheer the faithful throughout all generations. So Abraham called that place 'The Lord Will Provide.' And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided." Believer, this memorial proclaims the full provision, which is laid up in Jesus for His waiting people. They are indeed loved, and cared for, and enriched. Jehovah-jireh is this sweet mountain of spices, on the many slopes of which they delightedly recline, and find all blessings strewn around them. These pages are written to exhort you to make this spot your daily and your holy pleasure-ground. Intimately acquaint yourself with these green pastures. Be assured, that here sufficiency abounds for you, while time shall be, and when time shall be no more—sufficiency for every need of body and of spirit, which has been, or shall be, or can be.

I well know that your *poverty* is deep—your *perils* countless—your *strength* a quivering reed. But still you are rich, and safe, and strong; for Jesus changes all your broken and your empty cisterns into overflowing fountains of most suitable supply. When you feel that the burden of your sins is intolerable, and pressing you to the lowest depths of the bottomless abyss, come to Jehovah-jireh! Your Jesus provides relief. His arm is the arm of Omnipotence. His shoulders are the shoulders of Deity. With strong hand He places all your guilt on Himself, and bears it away, and it is no more found. When you sigh to be assured that your every debt is paid, your every penalty endured, come to Jehovah-jireh! Jesus is made flesh, and become your nearest kinsman, that in your very nature, and in your stead, He may pay all, and suffer all. When your soul is trembling and fluttering, as the dove among unsparing vultures, or the lamb before devouring wolves, come to Jehovah-jireh! Jesus presents aid in each trial, power for each duty, shelter in each storm. He is the high place, which the shafts of the foe cannot reach—the covert which the storm cannot pierce. His sure voice proclaims, "I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment. Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."

As the sun is full of light, and the ocean of drops, so He is the full-stored treasury of needful grace. He is the tree laden with all fruits at all seasons. Whenever we approach, the produce is ripe, and bending low to the hand of faith. In Him are supplies of *living* grace for a living hour, of *working* grace for a working hour, of *striving* grace for a striving hour, of *praying* grace for a praying hour, of *suffering* grace for a suffering hour, of *dying* grace for a dying hour—grace for prosperity and for adversity—grace for the family, the closet, the sanctuary, and the public haunts of men—grace for the palace, the hut, the camp, the fleet—for those who rule, and for those who serve—grace for childhood, for manhood, and for age—grace for health, for sickness, and for pain—grace for those who rejoice with the joyous, and for those who mourn with the mourners, and weep at the grave. When the Father gave Jehovah-jireh to the Church, the gift was all things. "He who spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

Reader! let me solemnly ask, have you sought Jehovah-jireh? Is Jesus the king and mainspring of your heart? Then know your rich possession. Rejoice in it. Live on it. Cease to spend money for that which satisfies not. But eat the good which is before you, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Pine not in your own hut of penury, while His palace of all plenteousness courts your entrance. Lean not on your own crumbling staff, while the Rock of ages is near to uphold you.

It may be that some poor sinner hears of this all-sufficiency, and wails, Oh that I had interest in these blessed provisions! But alas! I starve, while others feast. Friend, why is it so? Why are you a stranger to this fertile mount? It is not because Jehovah-jireh is far distant. It is not because repelling barriers drive back. Scripture ever points to it, crying, "Yet there is room." No, Jesus draws near to the very door of your heart and knocks. In the lines before you, He beseeches you, Open unto Me, open unto Me. Will you tarry? Will you refuse? What! will you be poor now, and poor forever—miserable now, and miserable forever—while Jehovah-jireh, with inviting fullness, presents to you the overflowings of present grace, and future glory?

Gen 28.12

THE LADDER

"Jacob had a dream in which he saw a ladder resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it." Gen 28:12

The voice which cannot err, denounces, "Be sure your sin will find you out." Thus, by eternal law, misery stalks in transgression's rear. Out of the Gospel-path, our feet are in furrows sown with woe. Godliness is a quiet haven. Departure from it is a sea of trouble. This truth is darkly written on many a sigh and many a tear. The case of Jacob painfully attests it. Behold him a downcast and a lonely wanderer. He treads a cheerless, solitary way. A journey is before him—long and perilous. He tenderly sorrows for delights behind him. He tremblingly forebodes the evils of tomorrow. But his keenest anguish is an upbraiding conscience. He leaves his home, because he first left his God.

O my soul, bear all things, suffer much, suffer long; but never venture, by ungodly schemes and ungodly guile, to run before the pillar and the cloud. The sin of man hastens not the set purposes of God. No, it rather stays the hand upraised to bless, and arms it with a chastening scourge. Perhaps the declining sun never withdrew its light from one more deeply in gloom than Jacob when he paused at Luz. The canopy of heaven was his only roof—the bare earth his couch—the rugged stone his pillow. Instead of a tender mother's tender care, he had hardness in its hardest form.

But Jacob was an heir, from everlasting ages, of an everlasting portion which is never lost. Hence an unchanging Friend grieved in his every grief, and marked with sympathy his every step. The Lord, whose love is wisdom, and whose wisdom is love, leads His children into depths for their good; but leaves them not in depths to their hurt. It was so with Jacob. It will be so while saints on earth need to be brought low, that they may more securely rise.

Sleep closes his eyes. But in the night-watches marvelous teachings gladden the unclosed eye of faith. "Jacob had a dream in which he saw a ladder resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven." Here was no obscure sign of Him, who comforts most by revelations of Himself. The seed of the Woman, the Blessing of the Earth, the Covenant of His people is unfolded in clearer emblem. The Redeemer is displayed wondrous in His person, His work, His grace. Thus the patriarch found, as many find, that *the absence of man is the nearness of God*, and that the dark pages of trial are inscribed with new lessons of love. He arises, and exclaims, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not."

Reader! this image, so radiant in Gospel-truth, vanished not when morning came. It has a power to teach in every age, and to make each lonely spot a Bethel to the pilgrim's heart.

Ponder well this Ladder. Another like it, earth never saw. Mark its **extent**. It unites the worlds of Deity and man. It connects our sin-vile hovels with the abode of the Eternal. Resting on the ground, which our feet defile, it rises and stretches upward, and pierces the skies, and mounts to the very throne of God! As such it pictures Him, who is at once the Highest of the high, and the Lowliest of the lowly—who, while he thinks it not robbery to be Jehovah's fellow, counts it all joy to be the poor man's kinsman. It shows Jesus, in the miracle of His person—man, without ceasing to be God—God, without scorning to be man. These are blessed tidings! Hold them fast, as the anchor of all hope—hold them up, as the beacon of all salvation—hold them forth, as realities of grandest significance.

Our Jesus is the mighty God! All that there is in the Godhead of power, and might, and wisdom, and love, and dominion has been His, and must be His forever. Eternity is His birth-place. Heaven is His home. His strength is Omnipotence. His arm is Infinity. His eye is All-seeing. His ear is All-hearing. His mind is Omniscience. He wills, and it is done. He puts on glory for a crown; and the brightness of that diadem is the redemption of souls. Think forever, and you reach not the threshold of His vastness. Adore forever, and you touch not the skirts of His praises. The SUMMIT of this Ladder is Jesus reigning, the ever living God.

Observe, too, that a Savior less than this, could have been no Savior for a sin-stained soul. For what is sin? It is an infinite evil, because it outrages every infinite attribute of God. Hence, it is inseparably linked with infinite woe. Oh! who can tell the boundlessness of its dread results. It scales the heavens, and awakens wrath. It goes down to hell, and kindles inextinguishable flames. It rolls on, a ceaseless tide, throughout eternity. A moment did it. But no ages can undo it. Who then can bear it away? The touch of *man* makes it more sinful. Angels' efforts are as a straw before a rock. But Jesus comes. His blood is sprinkled, and it vanishes. He hurls it from Him, and it is no more found. Why? Because Jesus is God. If the height of heaven were the pulpit; if the pealing thunder were the voice; if the universe were the audience; no more worthy utterance could sound, than that the blood of Jesus blots out sin, because the blood of Jesus is the blood of God.

Hence the delights which Jesus gives to the awakened heart. It is conscious of iniquities towering to the skies. But, in the merits of a Savior-God, a grave is found to bury all. Hence, too, we learn why many think so little of this great salvation, and are content with a mock shelter of their own construction. They are dead as to what sin is. But when the Spirit once strikes the conscience with its sin-discovering rod, there can be no peace but in a divine refuge, no rest but under infinite covert. Christ, and Christ only, is such refuge, and such covert. I fear, that to many this is a hidden truth. If once men saw it, they might dare to sport with the lightning, or to wrestle with the whirlwind; but they would not dare to trample on a Savior-God.

This image proclaims Jesus as invested also with our nature. The Ladder set up *on the earth*, is Jesus very man, as truly as He is very God. Yes, our Creator is our brother, that He may redeem us. Man must die. Jesus hangs on the cross—*man*, that He may represent; *God*, that He may render a sufficient sacrifice for man's sin. His Deity enables. His manhood qualifies. The one is all-sufficiency. The other is all-fitness. Thus He cancels every debt, and makes all payment, and endures all punishment, and exhausts the whole curse, and works a glorious righteousness, and rescues all His sheep from the jaws of hell, and exalts His spouse in spotless luster to the throne of His glory!

Next, the common uses of the Ladder instruct much in the divine art of using Jesus for hourly help. By the Ladder *we leave the lower ground.* By it we rise to things which are above. Just so, by Jesus there is open passage for our souls and services from our lowest estate, to Zion's heavenly heights. Sin not only left us prostrate, with no means to soar: but it fixed an intervening gulf, which unaided man could never pass. But Jesus interposes, and distance disappears. Believer, your heart's desire is that your prayers and praises may speak to God. Place them on Jesus, and they fly aloft. None can check their ascending speed. They are breathed below, and instantly resound on high. You long that your tears of penitence and sighs of shame may be heeded, where mercy reigns. There is no hindrance. *Mourn with godly sorrow, clinging unto Jesus, and you melt a heavenly Father's heart!* You strive in word and work to glorify His name. Labor with every effort intermixed with Jesus, and nothing can be done in vain. How sweet is it to the eye of faith, to see its every cry, and hope, and deed, thus carried buoyant to the court of God!

Soon you must die. Be it so. Commit your departing spirit to the care of Jesus, and, released from its cage of clay, it will mount with eagle-wings, and tarry not until the portals of eternal day are passed.

But the Ladder also affords means of DESCENT. We need supplies from above. Through what channel can they come? Jesus alone presents an open course. Through Him the Spirit is outpoured. The light which dispels our darkness—all views of saving love—strength to begin and persevere on the heavenward race—the joys, which make this wilderness to blossom as the rose, all wing their downward flight by this connecting Ladder! The believer stands upon this Ladder, and voices run along it, each assuring him that his iniquities are pardoned, his person accepted, his soul saved. By this path the promises come down into his willing hand, and answers tell him that his prayers are heard. By this way ministering angels hasten to encamp around, and to beat back the host of unseen foes. O my soul, can you enough bless Jesus, who thus unites a blessed people with a blessing God?

Reader! this subject is personal and practical. Tell me, then, have you found, do you duly prize, *do you daily use these heaven-wrought steps?* The solemn significance of the solemn question is this—Have you by faith grasped Jesus? Are you by faith cleaving unto Him? Faith is the *eye* which sees the Ladder—the *hand* which touches it—the *strength* which holds it—the *feet* which mount it. Has the Holy Spirit opened to you this figure, which was new life to Jacob? There is a ready test. Is the world beneath your tread? Do you trample on its love, its fashions, its maxims, its principles? *Feet set on a Ladder, no more rest on earth!* The man, who is in Christ is high above the world. "You are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

There is another test. Is yours *an ascending life?* On the ladder there is upward movement. So the believer rises, step by step, from grace to grace. As there is no progress while one foot cleaves to the dust, so there is no growth in grace while lingering affections adhere to mire. We must be wholly Christ's or none of His.

Again, *are your days all effort?* There is no mounting without toil. Saints strain every nerve. They run an unwearied race. They wrestle in prayer. Their praises are as the ceaseless rapture of angelic chords. Their zeal flows, as the ocean's tide. They rest not—digging in the mine of Truth, and scattering abroad the riches which they find. Thus they take heaven by holy violence.

Reader! if you are some *lazy loiterer*, some dreaming slumberer, I tremble for you. *Christ* worked on earth. Christ works above. As is the Head, so are the members. As is the Lord, so are the servants. Take heed, too, of *false ladders*. Satan has forged many. Their form is specious. Their height seems heaven-high. But the summit points hell-ward. The steps are rottenness, and soon they break. Salvation's Ladder is only one—Christ Jesus.

Believer, you profess to be on this Ladder. Hold fast. Watch and pray. Some, who seemed to climb well, have foully fallen. The most perilous slip is from the highest round. Perhaps you are conscious that your foot has slipped. If so, arise and adore God, that you live. Arise and pray for grace, that you may re-ascend.

Unbeliever, you know nothing of this approach to God. You are afar off now. How will you bear to be far off forever? Hear then; and may the Spirit bless the concluding word! There is a Ladder from every *sin* and every *sorrow* upon earth. But there is no ladder of escape from hell's wages, and from hell's pains. There are no stairs, by which the rich man may soar to Abraham's bosom. There is no stairway by which Judas can leave "his own place."

Gen 32.30

PENIEL

Jacob named the place **Peniel**—"face of God"—for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared." Gen 32:30

The happiest heart in the world is that in which faith and prayer have undisturbed rule. The truth of this statement follows from the fact, that *faith has the key of heaven;* and *prayer has the ear of God.* And who is happy as the man who is always free to enter within the veil, and hold communion there?

Reader! you would sincerely be happy among the happiest. Beseech the Spirit, then, to fan these graces into brightest flame. With this desire let us hasten to Peniel, the scene of their liveliest exercise: and may we tarry there, until the holy fire kindle!

Jacob's hard servitude is ended. Home, with its fond endearments, is again before him. But, when he reaches the borders of his native land, he finds it garrisoned with perils. Esau, terrible in fury, mighty in force, is armed to intercept, and to destroy. The wanderer, who fled from death, returns to die. But many terrors quench not faith. Jacob, urged by its impulse, flies directly to the mercy-seat. *He humbles himself, as unworthy of grace's least crumb.* Thus faith strips itself of all, that all the glory may be God's. He pleads that he is in obedience's path. Faith has no other ground on which to stand. He meekly claims the promises; for gracious promises are the title-deeds of hope. But *faith*, busy in heaven, is not idle upon earth. In thoughtfulness and diligence it sows the seed, from which successes spring. With upward eye it labors and prevails; while *unbelief* looks inward—downward—and so fails. The plans of Jacob are all wisely formed. Then darkness mantles the earth. But it brings no pillow for his head. He stands, and stands alone, on Jabbok's banks. We here see again, how grace gains oil for his lamp.

Reader! be sure of this, he is not a thriving and a well-stored saint, who is not much in solitary communion with God. No public ordinances, no social worship, no Christian fellowship, no mutual interchange of godly thought, can be a substitute for calm approach to God. It is when all other things are banished, that the smiles of Jesus are most sweet, His voice most clear, His comforts most supporting. Then it is, that the Word reveals its treasures, and the promises teem with life. Many mourn lifelessness of spirit, and fruitlessness in work. The withering cause may be, that busy haunts are too busily frequented, and the quiet chamber is too rarely sought.

But is the lonely Jacob long alone? Oh no. A *stranger* suddenly draws near, and grapples with him, and strives with mighty energy to stop his progress, and to lay him in the dust. But who thus wrestles in the solemn stillness of this solemn night? The form is human, but the person is Divine. We read, "As a prince you have power with God;" therefore the wrestler is God. Jacob confirms the fact: "I have seen God face to face." Thus, through the veil of apparent mortality, we trace the angel of the everlasting covenant, our great Emmanuel, God manifest in the flesh.

As man, He spoke with Adam in the garden; as man, He walked by Abraham's side; as man, He here struggles with the wandering patriarch. It is indeed a rich display of grace, that Jesus thus should stand in sinners' likeness on this sin-rank soil. But it is grace above grace, that, in the fullness of time, He should take our manhood into God, and wear it on the cross, and in the grave! and then bear it to heaven, as His triumphal robe forever!

But why is this wrestling? Every act of Jesus is a volume written within and without in golden letters of instruction. Thus Jacob, and every successive pilgrim, learns that *the land of promise is only gained by battling through opposing armies.* At the Lord's word, troops of trials, and sorrows, and fears, and troubles arrange themselves against us. They strive, with determined might, to stop our onward march. Behold *Joseph*. It was to him no easy task to escape entangling foes. Consider *Job,* and *David,* and *Paul*, and the *Apostles*, and all the worthies who shine in Scripture-page. What struggles, what perils of overthrow were theirs! They wrestled earnestly, and almost unto blood.

Reader! if you know little of spiritual conflict, it may be you know nothing of the camp of Christ. Examine yourself. Are you truly in the faith? If so, at the cross you have drawn a sword, which never finds a scabbard upon earth, and rarely finds a respite of repose. Those who win the crown, fight a good fight. "the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it."

But perhaps the struggle, thus severe, was short? Not so. It lasted until "the breaking of the day." Earth is a valley of darkness and of gloom. But yet a little while the shadows will flee away. The brightness of a cloudless eternity will dawn. The weary pilgrim will enter the city which has "no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light." *Then*, in a perfect place, there will be perfect rest.

Next the *prowess* of Jacob claims our wonder. Though nothing but a feeble worm, he is not crushed. He meets power with power, might with might, strength with strength, skill with skill. He will not, he cannot yield. He awakens again and again his energies. He exerts again and again every vigor of every nerve. He is but flesh and blood, as we are, yet he cannot be subdued. It is all-important that we rightly see what was the grand *mainspring* of Jacob's indomitable heroism. It cannot be too plainly urged, that it was *faith.* He was following the Lord fully. He knew that the voice which called him, was victory. Hence he was confident that it were easier to scale and storm the heavens, than to frustrate his assured success. *Faith is a rock, when thus based on the rock of promise.* It is not of earth, therefore it is imperishable. It is of heaven, therefore its energies are Divine. It looks to Jesus, therefore it overlooks all difficulties. It leans on Jesus, therefore it is as firm as God.

But Jacob wrestled not in faith only, but in supplication and in *tears*. Thus Hosea writes, and Hosea's pen was in the hand of God, "Yes, he wrestled with the angel and won. He wept and pleaded for a blessing from him. There at Bethel he met God face to face, and God spoke to him." Hos 12:4. We hence learn that faith is always in *earnest*, therefore it prays. It is always *humble*, therefore it weeps.

Here, again, a door is opened in heaven; and we see *Jehovah vanquished by a praying saint!* True prayer is indeed bold. It draws near to God, and closes with Him, and gives Him no rest, until an approving smile testifies that the suit is granted. God neither can, nor will, release Himself from the intensity of his efforts. He cannot, because the truth is set up in heaven, that prayer shall prosper. He will not, because *prayer is the moving of His Spirit in the heart, and the speaking of His Spirit on the lips.* To deny prayer would be to deny Himself. To be silent to it would be to be silent unto Himself. "If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us: and if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."

O my soul, examine well the Scripture's picture of prayer. It is "to take hold" of Him. It is "taking hold of His strength." It is to "give Him no rest." Learn these truths in their power. Use them as the habit of your life. Then you will know prosperity and peace of soul.

But the heart strong in faith and prayer loses all nature's hardness. It becomes soft, as the sympathy of Jesus; and tender, as the whispers of His grace. Thus Jacob's streaming eye proclaimed with what subdued sincerity he loved the Lord, whom he so tightly grasped—and how deeply he was melted by inward consciousness of sin's demerit.

Reader! remember, except you have faith, and prayer, and brokenness of heart, you have no signs of spiritual life. Prove, then, yourself at Peniel. Never leave it, until you hear these voices, "Great is your faith, be it unto you even as you will." And again, "Behold, he prays." And again, "She has washed My feet with tears; therefore, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much."

But we are so framed, that *spiritual greatness may be a snare.* It may unduly exalt, and lead us unduly to exult. That is destructive victory, which leaves the victor in *the chains of pride.* Our guardian Lord knew this, and since it is better to prevent than to heal, He "touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and it was out of joint." Here we have a mirror, which reflects many of the Lord's dealings with His favored children. In prevailing they are crippled, lest by prevailing they should perish. *Strong grace is checked by enfeebled flesh,* lest it should climb the dizzy heights of self-esteem. Many halting infirmities convince them that a yielding Lord has power to lay low. They learn that victory is His gift, and not the wages of their might. They feel that they are broken reeds, except God works with them to will and to do.

Let us behold once more *the triumphs of persevering faith.* The angel concedes the victory, and sues to be released from the unyielding arms. Jacob, with limb disjointed, but with faith confirmed, seeks no advantage but an increase of heavenly favor. With holy boldness he exclaims, "I will not let You go, except You bless me." He cares not for healing of body, or for outward prosperity, he only asks for increased tokens of God's love, and for increased health within. "Bless me," is his prayer. Such noble yearnings are the Lord's delight. He honors them, because they honor Him. He crowns them with all that God Himself can give. Count, if you can, the spoil which Jacob won, when the Lord blessed him there! And now, a new name shall give perpetual fame to this exploit. Heroic deeds have endless life. Wherever the Word of God is preached or read, *Israel* is a title, which tells of *Jacob's princely power* with God and men. The record is true. As a prince, he constrained God to bless him. As a prince, he drew the heart of Esau like a captive into his arms.

Reader! be an *Israelite* indeed, and heaven is yours, and earth is yours. Heaven is yours to bless you. Earth is yours to serve you. Jacob receives a name, and gives a name. He calls the place *Peniel*, "for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Again I say, be an Israelite indeed, and every place will be your Peniel. In every scene you will behold God near. Through life, in death, you will have an eye to gaze undazzled on Him. Your secret chamber will be Peniel—as you kneel, God will come down, and show His smiling face. The family-sanctuary will be Peniel—you will see Him extending the wings of mercy over you and yours. Every page of the Bible will be Peniel—bright with the radiance of Him, who is "the Light of Life," and "the Sun of Righteousness." Your post of daily toil will be Peniel—for you will set the Lord always before you. His earthly temples will be Peniel—in the prayers and praises of the assembled worshipers, in the proclamations of His truth, He will manifest Himself unto you, as He does not unto the world. Your dying bed will still be Peniel—Jesus will come again, to bear you safely to a Father's home. Eternity will be a glorious Peniel—for it will be *one unclouded view of God face to face!*

Lord God of Israel, nothing is too hard for Your power, nothing is too good for Your love. Will You give, by these poor lines, to bring some soul to Peniel!

Gen 39.20

NUMBERED WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS

"Joseph's master took him and put him **in prison**, the place where the king's prisoners were confined." Gen 39:20

Prison is a place of humiliation and of shame. It is peopled by those who are under accusation of crime, or who are awaiting the sentence of outraged law. As such, the very name suggests ideas of infamy, and chains, and death. The inmates are the actual or suspected perpetrators of evil, whose name is a reproach—whom society casts out—who are as the noxious weed, which must be rooted from the soil, and as the plague-spot, which it is peril to approach.

But *who is the prisoner*, into whose cell these words admit us? Within these walls of guilt we find *a guiltless man*. The blameless *Joseph* is here immured. Without offence, he is wronged as an offender—without transgression, he is numbered with transgressors.

Reader! the pure delight, the sanctifying feast of Scripture, consists in this. In every page the voice of Jesus is heard—at almost every turn the image of Jesus is discerned. It is clearly so in the dungeon-scene before us. *Joseph* in custody, reviled for iniquity which he did not commit, foreshadows *Jesus*, who, without sin, is made sin for us. Yes, He for whom the heaven of heavens is no worthy throne, is clothed for us in prison-garb, and tastes for us the prison-shame. Hence the Spirit records, "He was taken from prison and from judgment."

In approaching this truth, it is well to ask the amazing question, *By whom* was Jesus arrested? and often to ponder the more amazing reply. *He was arrested by the justice of God.* But why? Had any fault stained His path? The bare thought is chilling, as the shock of blasphemy. Let it be met with a shudder of denial. Holiness was the essence of His being—the pulse of His soul. He was born the *Holy* Child Jesus. He lived the *Holy Man* Jesus. He died the *Holy Sufferer.* He rose the *Holy Conqueror*. He ascended in *Holy triumph.* Holiness is the scepter of His kingdom forever.

How, then, could *justice* touch Him with a jailor's grasp? Because, though no shade of sin was *in Him*, still *mountains of sins were upon Him.* Although infinitely far from personal offence, He stood before God laden with all the countless transgressions of a countless multitude. Here is the godlike grace of God. He consents to *remove guilt from the guilty, and to place it on the guiltless.* He transfers the sins of the sinful to His sinless Son. Wondrous is the word, but true as wondrous, "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquities of us all." So Jesus is our sin-bearing surety. He appears, *by substitution*, as covered, defiled, deformed by the whole accumulated mass of all our guilt. He is verily accounted, and is verily treated, as the perpetrator of every evil deed—as the speaker of every evil word—as the harborer of every evil thought, which had stained, or should stain, each child in the redeemed family.

Hence we understand the agony of His heart: My iniquities have taken hold upon Me, they are more than the hairs of my head. He presents His back to receive the hateful load. Justice finds it on Him. And therefore justly claims Him as his prisoner.

O my soul, have you by faith a saving interest in Christ? Then know your full relief. He snaps the chain which would have dragged you down to hell. He passes under the dark waters of your pollution, that you may be reckoned clear of every stain. He becomes your unrighteousness, that you may be the righteousness of God in Him. The Bible is a sealed book—the story of the cross is a beclouded page—peace is a delight untasted—hope is an idle fiction, until Jesus is prized as a substitute and a surety. How great the change, when He is so revealed! Then *Justice* shines in all its glory—*Grace* in all its brightness—*Mercy* in all its triumphs—*Salvation* in all its riches. Then the Gospel-trumpet sounds with power, "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world."

But in the Egyptian dungeon we see more than a resemblance of the blameless Jesus bearing blame. Transactions are transacted there, which help to unclasp the records of the empire of grace. There are *two offenders* of no common note by Joseph's side. Human judgment looks in vain for difference between them. They are similar in outward calling—involved in like displeasure and degradation—expecting like ignominious end. But soon they are parted. One mounts the path of favor, and is crowned with honors—the other is left in bonds to die. Such is the relation.

But in it there is a predictive picture. It is a signal of the distant wonders of the cross. When man's rage and Satan's craft seem to prevail, and Jesus is led as a lamb to the slaughter, a corresponding circumstance occurs. To fill the cup of insult to the brim, notorious culprits are linked as His befitting companions. But this studied effort to degrade Him to the level of the vilest sons of infamy, only attests His truth. The word which cannot fail, had said, "He was numbered with the transgressors."

Behold the fulfillment. He is uplifted between two malefactors. When will vain men learn, that *opposing rage only works out the purposes of God?* The wildest rebellion is yoked to the chariot of His counsels, and His will. But let us draw nearer and trace the coinciding features of the two events. We take our station at Calvary. The accursed trees are upraised. The three are transfixed thereon. Jesus hangs in the midst.

Reader! again and again I beseech you, be often at this spot. That cross is the price of countless souls! the ransom of all the redeemed! and the glory of God in the highest! He knows nothing of sin's remission, who makes not these wounds his covert. He will never taste life, who washes not in the fountain here opened. He only enters heaven, who pleads this plea. Jesus here suffers, that He may wrest the scepter from the hands of Satan—overthrow the empire of darkness, and cause every perfection of Jehovah to be a pledge for salvation. It is a truth to be maintained before all the world, that the religion which glories *not* in the blood of the Lamb, is but a superstition of ignorance and conceit. The blood-besprinkled hope alone can live.

We look next, to those who writhe in torture on each side. It seems that they both begin to die, hard as the very nails which pierced them. But soon a change—as great as light from darkness—life from death—love from hate, passes over the *one*. He loathes the sin which once he fondled. He confesses its enormous malignity, and he professes to fear the God whom he had scorned. But from where is this newness of every feeling? It is not the fruit of outward circumstance. All visible appearances are common to them both. But *one alone* is touched, and taught, and enlightened, and turned. How is he thus softened? Some *invisible power has entered the recesses of his heart, and there crushed every godless foe.* It can only be the Spirit of the Most High. It is His sole prerogative to convince of sin. Without Him the outward fact of trial, affliction, pain, suffering, warning, threat, entreaty, never opens the blinded eye, or turns the wandering feet. Whenever awakened conscience cries, "Behold I am vile, I loathe and abhor myself," Omnipotence has aimed the blow, which brought the rebel to his knees.

But more than this. A *trusting eye* now gazes upon Jesus. To the mocking mob He seems "a worm and no man" but through all the rags and poverty of humanity, through all the disguise of blood and of infamy, faith knows the King of kings, the Conqueror of Satan, the divine Deliverer, the all-subduing Savior! The shameful cross is discerned as the glorious high throne of incarnate Deity. Here again we see the mighty Spirit's work. *He alone can show Jesus to the soul.* But when He speaks the word, the despised and rejected of men is loved and adored as the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely One, the one dispenser of the mercies of salvation.

But this is not all. A man may confess, "I have sinned," and yet perish. Such was the case of Judas. The knowledge of the *head* may boast, "We know You, who You are," and never obtain life. Such is the case of devils. To gain interest in Christ, there must be *a personal application* to Him—close dealing with Him. But when the soul is deeply taught its need, and sees that Christ alone can minister relief, it cannot be kept back. It receives a strength which bursts all fetters—wades through oceans of difficulty—surmounts mountains of obstacles—and never rests, until, safe in His sheltering arms, it hears the welcome of His lips. It was so with the dying thief. Mark his cry, "Lord, remember me." I am perishing, but You can save me. The flames of hell almost encompass me, but You can rescue. "Lord, remember me."

Reader! is your *need* less than his? No! For it is great as need can be. And things infinite admit not of comparison. Is your *loss* less precious than his? Is your *eternity* less eternal? It cannot be. Have you, then, cried with his intensity, "Lord, remember me?" Happy they, whose hearts thus wrestle with the Lord! They win the priceless prize of heaven. They gain the matchless gain of everlasting joy. It was so with the dying thief. So it will always be. Quick is the heart of Christ to feel, and swift His word to cheer. "This day you shall be with Me in Paradise." There is no doubt, no demur, no delay. A sinner mourns, the Savior pities! A sinner looks, the Savior smiles! A sinner speaks, the Savior hears! A sinner prays, the Savior answers! The petition is, "Remember." The grant is "You shall be with Me." Blessed sorrow! blessed faith! blessed prayer! blessed grace!

Blessed Savior! You are worthy to be called Jesus. You are worthy to reign on the throne of the adoring heart. You are worthy to be extolled with every breath. You are worthy to be proclaimed by every lip in every climate, in every age. You are worthy to be the eternal hymn of eternal hallelujahs.

It may be, that I address some, who, through many years of worldly-mindedness, and unbelief, have been tottering on the precipice of perdition. But you yet live; and Christ still lives; and the Spirit has ever a heart of tenderness, and an arm of power. Therefore there is hope. The door, though closing, is not yet closed. The thief pressed forward and found grace. He had a golden moment; he seized it, and he is now with Jesus. What will you do? Will you sit still and perish?

But perhaps Satan, that liar from the beginning, is suggesting the thought that a death-bed will bring grace to repent, and to believe, and to seek mercy. Believe him not. Was it so with *the other thief?* The gnawing of agony only hardened him. Hell was near, but he neither saw, nor feared, nor shunned it. And now from the midst of a fiery lake he warns, as a frightful beacon, that *death approaching with sure tread, and touching with strong hand, neither changes the heart, nor begets faith.*

But let me rather hope that you have drunk truly of the cup of life. If so, you differ, you widely differ, you infinitely differ from former self, and from the mass around. But from where is the difference? Surely you will gratefully allow, *Sovereign love* looked lovingly on me—*conquering grace* dealt graciously with me. Surely you will add, "By the power of sin I was what I was. By the grace of God I am what I am. Sin numbered me with transgressors. But eternal purpose and eternal love laid help for me on One that is mighty. Jesus was numbered with the transgressors, that I might be numbered with His saints in everlasting glory!"

Gen 41.56

THE STOREHOUSES OPENED

"So with severe famine everywhere in the land, **Joseph opened up all the storehouses** and sold grain to the Egyptians." Gen 41:56

He has much to learn, who has not found a garland of delights in Joseph's story. The variety of incident, the rapidly changing scene, the crowded picture of *man* in every character and every circumstance, make it a choice pleasure-ground for young and old, for peasant and for sage. The sacred pen, pointed by heaven, and deeply dipped in the human heart, enters each chamber, in which feeling dwells. We weep with the weeping father; we grieve in his protracted grief; we revive, when he lives again in his son restored. We tremble with the youth trembling in the pit. We sigh with him sighing in his exile. We take courage with him trampling on his temptation. We are disconsolate with him, disconsolate in his dungeon. We triumph with him, when he surmounts reproach, and takes his seat as the ruler of a mighty empire.

But the grand value of the narrative is not the simple style, the tender pathos, the amazing events, the winding thread of providential arrangement, or the happy end. These lead the mind through luxuriant fields of captivating interest. But if this be all, the profit is as a fading flower, or as a morning gleam. He only gains, who gains a blessing for his soul. The soul is the real man. All else is earthly as earth; and transient as time. The book, the employment, the companion, the scene, which adds not to spiritual store, whatever may be the seeming promise or the present attraction, is an injury, an enemy, a poison, and a blight.

The Scripture before us is precious, because every view of Joseph exhibits Jesus! Who is the envied, and hated, and rejected of his brethren? Who is the sold for pieces of silver; the cast out into Egypt; the numbered with the transgressors; the apparent culprit between two offenders, of whom one is exalted, the other perishes? Who is raised from the prison to the right hand of majesty? In all these outlines, is not Jesus seen? He it is on whose shoulder the government is laid. He it is, who rescues His kindred from perishing. He it is, whose heart yearned over them, when they knew Him not. He it is, to whom the perishing must flee. He it is, who has the key of all supplies. The name is Joseph. The true image is Jesus.

But the text of this chapter limits our view to one feature of this spacious picture. The **bounty** diffused by Joseph is the **bounty** which is in Jesus. Let us draw near, then, to this treasury of treasuries. And may the Spirit, sweet in His omnipotence, and omnipotent in His sweetness, open our eyes to see its fullness—and our hands to take of it!

The narrative discloses *a universal misery*. Affliction in an appalling form brooded over a paralyzed world. The staff of life failed. Hunger presided grimly at every board. The pallid cheeks, the hollow voice, told the sad tale of death begun. But amid all the hopelessness there is hope. Storehouses had been filled with grain; and Joseph was appointed, as a minister of mercy, to deal out relief.

The glad tidings fly gladly through the land. Crowds throng the life-restoring gates. Do you ask, why is there speed in every step—and eagerness in every look? Hunger touches them with an iron grasp. Home gives no hope. In toil there is no help. Only one can relieve. To linger is to die. To apply to Joseph is to regain abundance. They rush from ruin into remedy. *Here we see the starving sinner fleeing unto Jesus!* There is a day, in which poor man sits careless in the hovel of his need—content with husks of his own procuring. But *when light from on high reveals his impoverished state*, then a very earthquake shakes the whole fabric of his delusion. He finds that, as a terrific famine, sin sucks his life-blood. In mercy's hour he hears, "You yet may live. There is bread enough, and to spare, in Jesus." What now can keep him back? He bounds over all mountains of difficulty: he wades through all oceans of hindrance: he strides over all opposing taunts and sneers: he breaks every detaining fetter. You may tie the winds with a thread: you may allay the storm with a word: you may sweep back the ocean with a feather, but you cannot stop the awakened sinner, who hungers for a *crumb of mercy*, and who knows that to reach Jesus is to have all-sufficiency forever.

But perhaps I address some, who have not fled in rapid flight towards this *one center of relief.* Awake, awake, before you sleep the sleep of death! Do you not know that your land is famine-stricken? It is so. Sin, as a desolating waste, has ravaged all the field of *human nature.* It yields no healthful pastures for the soul. It has no regaling fruits with juice of life. It is only a rank wilderness of thorns, and briers, and noxious weeds. You must get *heavenly manna*, or you die! The hands of Jesus alone dispense it. Will you not, then, arise and seek Him?

Others, with some consciousness of peril, and some efforts to escape, yet pine and languish. They set forth in search of food. But Satan's false sign-posts mislead them. So they turn aside to granaries, which 'error' has erected, and which 'self' has furnished. Here they feed on the empty bubbles of outward rites, and forms, and unsubstantial religious show. The cravings of *sense* and *imagination* may be satisfied. But sense and imagination are not the soul.

Others advance farther, and yet never reach the coffers in which *saving treasure* is laid up. It may be, *they pause at the portals of God's word.* This guide is indeed divine. In every word of every verse the voice from heaven speaks. But to listen to instruction is not safety. The *knowledge* of the storehouse, is not food for the famishing. *Ah! miserable woe, to fall into hell with Scripture on the lip!*

Others rest in *the Church* as their sufficient aid. It is indeed a heaven-raised fabric. It is the pillar and ground of the truth. It warns and teaches. But it can neither give nor retain life. *Ah! miserable woe, to drop into hell from the scaffold of salvation!*

Others feed only on *Sacraments*. These are indeed ordained of God, as precious signs and seals of grace; but signs are not the substance, neither are seals the deeds. *Ah! miserable woe, to enter hell with Sacramental elements in the hands!*

Others are content with the refreshment, which faithful *ministers* afford. They are indeed the stewards of Christ's mysteries, the heralds of His grace, the under-shepherds of the flock. It is their province to go in and out before the sheep. But the *true nourishment* of the soul is not kept by them. *Ah! miserable woe, to enter hell through the schools of heaven!*

Others delight themselves in *labors* for Christ's name. Works are indeed the *evidence* of faith, and shoots from its root. But the evidence is not the motive—the shoot is not the root. *Ah! miserable woe, to lie down in hell in a garb of outward godliness!*

Reader! believe me, to obtain support, and grace, and life, *we must go directly unto Jesus!* No hands but His deal out supplies. Does any tremblingly inquire, "Will a ready welcome meet my suit?" Myriads have sought, and all have found. He never yet sent suppliants away. The decree is sure—"Him who comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out." His character varies not: "He has filled the hungry with good things." The silver tone of the call yet sounds; "Eat, O friends; drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved."

Do you further ask, "What are the provisions of this banquet-house?" I could more easily count ocean's sands, than tell the plenteousness, which is here spread. "Hear, O you heavens, and give ear, O earth." The Lord gives His body and His blood for food. "My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." Faith stretches out an eager hand, and adoringly partakes. But how? Not with carnal lip. The thought is heresy. Reason scorns it. Infidelity derides it. Scripture denies it. All experience rejects it as a pitiful and profitless conceit. No. *Faith takes and digests the feast with the pure and holy relish of the heart!* The hidden manna is the savory truth of Christ's body given, and Christ's blood poured out for sin. The spiritual reception of this fact is strength, and vigor—not to a crumbling house of clay—but to a new-born, ever-living soul. The inner man thus nourished, fights, with a giant's might, the fight of faith, and mounts up with eagles' wings towards Zion's heights.

Here, too, we gain the full nourishment of *precious promises and Scripture-truths*. When the Lord's hand applies them, then every word is spirit and is life. The poor, the weary, and the heavy-laden come. Trials, afflictions, and temptations weigh them down. They crave support, and they find it in gracious testimonies, and refreshing tokens of eternal love. Like Jonathan, they taste the honey. Their eyes are lightened, and their spirits cheered.

Indeed, there is no sustenance for Christian life, which is not here provided. It is a grand word, "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." Fullness not for Himself, for He is glorious as God can be—but that He may replenish weary pilgrims. As the sun is light and gives light—so Jesus is grace, and diffuses grace. The one experience of all His suppliants is, "Of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." The empty return full. The impoverished are made rich. The weak become strong. The faint revive. The drooping are renewed in vigor. The famished are fed. To some there was a tedious journey to the storehouses of Joseph. But the rapid *flight of faith* brings us in one moment to the depository of grace. Perhaps there were *appointed hours*, at which Joseph distributed the grain. The gates of Jesus are widely open day and night. Crowds might be detained by Joseph, while others were relieved. Jesus is always waiting to give ready ear. The Egyptian granaries, though very full, might be exhausted. Our supply is not in a cistern, but in an ever-flowing spring. The contents are as deep as infinity, as boundless as God. The Egyptians are required to purchase. We receive all, without money, and without price. Over the Gospel-mart is inscribed, "Ask, and you shall have."

Do you perish for need of the bread of life? Remember, you are unfed, because you will not feed—you starve, because you will not take. Are you as a sapless plant with little fruit and scanty shoots? It is because you rarely seek the Joseph of the Gospel. But think again. "He gives more grace." He has come, that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly. Child of God, you have drawn near. You know how quickly to your cry the door flew open. You sued for pardon. It was granted. You sought for joy and peace. Your heart was filled. You told your need of light and guidance. Directing rays shone brightly on your path. A suppliant eye longed for some tokens of a Savior's love. Soon you beheld his heart, engraven with your name—bleeding for your ransom.

Now, go and show your gratitude. You best can do this by constant coming to the Storehouse door. Jesus ever stands to open. Will not you ever stand to knock? He lives a life to give. Will not you live a life to take and to dispense?

Gen 49.10

SHILOH

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until **Shiloh** comes; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Gen 49:10

Shiloh is a word first uttered in a dying chamber, and by dying lips. Reader! how soon may your eyes be closing to the speck of earth, and opening on the expanse of boundless being! Accept the humble hope, that in such hour Shiloh, who is Christ, may be your solid support; and that the light of His presence may make the dark valley bright.

Shiloh introduces us to a solemn scene, in which death and joy stand hand in hand. The aged patriarch had known the perils and tossings of a stormy voyage. But the longed-for haven now opens to receive him. Our billows, too, may rage and swell. But let us struggle on in hope. They waft the believer by rapid tide to the calm water of eternal rest. Shiloh is almost the last testimony of the expiring parent. Happy is it thus to leave a legacy of cheering blessings to those who watch around us! Happy to direct the mourner's thought to Him, who has abolished death, and who will gather all His children into one home of blessed union—where union is eternity.

Shiloh. It is a sweet and mighty name. Sweet, for it is His, whose name is as ointment poured forth. Mighty, for it is His, whose name is above every name. In it He comes near to hold enlightening converse with our minds. His love delights to reveal the riches of His goodness, and of His glory, to His people. Thus while the highest angels veil their faces while they worship at His throne, He draws the poor sinner to His side, and bids him read, line upon line, the records of His grace. He passes before us in a long train of titles: each giving fresh knowledge and awakening fresh rapture. But while other names shine each as one ray of attribute, Shiloh is a very wreath of light. Others are as separate jewels. This is a fully-set diadem. It has many tongues. May each, by the Spirit's power, speak much to us!

Shiloh is the **Sent**. "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation, Sent." Here then Jesus spreads, as it were, His credentials before us. He bids us mark, that He comes not without authority; that He is commissioned by some court. Yes, truly, He brings a message from a far-off kingdom. He speaks an absent Sovereign's will. *By whom* is He thus sent? Hear one of the many voices, with which Scripture scatters the reply throughout its pages. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us; because God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The eternal *Father* sends the eternal Son. We adore the love of *Jesus*, in visiting this earth. We adore the love of the *Spirit*, in aiding us to see His work and hear His voice. Let us adore, with every power of adoration, the love of the Father, in opening the door by which He came. The praise of every breath can never reach the glorious Giver's glorious gift. The fountain of redemption lies deep in the Father's heart. The first link of salvation's golden chain is in the Father's hand. The thought, "Let us send a Savior," sprang into being in His mind. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." "God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Let us strive to measure the greatness of the love in the greatness of the Sent One. The Father's Shiloh is the Father's Son. In the fullness of time "God sent forth His Son." If He had emptied heaven of all its shining hosts, and despatched them in glorious array, it would indeed have been a brilliant embassage. But all would have been as dross, compared with Jesus. He as much transcends all multitudes of angels, as the Creator can transcend the thing which He has made. He had lived a whole eternity, while they were wrapped in nothingness. How much more precious He than they! Could then no other Shiloh execute the errand? Impossible! The work to be accomplished is the sinner's redemption. Infinite righteousness must be spread over the unrighteous. For this Jesus is needed. For this Jesus is sent. Expiation must be made for sins, infinite in number, and each infinite in guilt, and therefore Jesus comes. Jesus alone is able to atone.

Believer, read then in your Shiloh the tender graces of the Father's heart. He sends so much to save you, that He could send no more. Read the boundless worth of your soul. Shiloh's merits are its only price. Read the unutterable anguish of the lost. Shiloh alone had strength to bear it for you. Read the inconceivable glories of the redeemed. That heaven must be bright indeed, which is the purchase of a divine Shiloh's blood.

Shiloh! The next expression of the word is—**He for whom it is reserved**: He to whom the kingdom appertains: He, who is the heir of all things. Thus Jesus is revealed, as seated on the throne of redemption's glories. We catch the sound of the proclamation, "There was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed." Here is that sure purpose, and that sure promise, which is faith's high tower of undoubting confidence. Here is the foreshadow of the onward coming of victories, which must be.

What though the world is foolish, in mad rebellion against Shiloh? What though iniquity may seem a mighty potentate? What though the pure truths of Jesus are trodden as the mire beneath ungodly feet? The name of Shiloh laughs all foes to scorn. It is a banner of triumph, on which is inscribed, "His is the kingdom, and the scepter, and the sway." "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." "Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool." Yet a little while, and Jesus will take to Himself His great power and reign, "and the wicked shall be silent in darkness."

Believer, cease then to be downcast, because you see not yet all things put under Him. Your Shiloh must prevail. Look *back* and see what wonders have followed the preaching of His name. Look *around* and see what numbers are flying to the cross, as doves to their windows. Look *onward*, and delight yourself in the view of fields ripening for the harvest. In following Him, you follow a mighty Conqueror to mighty victories. In His service you march to blessed triumphs. How soon, and every foe shall lick the dust! How soon, and every cry of opposition shall have died away! How soon, and His chariot-wheels shall drive gloriously, and Satan, and the grave, and hell, and all the legion of sin's slaves, shall writhe in captive chains! The kingdom is reserved for Shiloh. It may be you have often prayed, "Your kingdom come." It is at hand. The answer tarries not. How will it find you? Does faith bear witness, that you are called to inherit the kingdom? Or does conscience tremble, lest His glory should be your everlasting shame. Prepare to meet Him. Shiloh's reign is at the door.

Shiloh brings another message. It means—**His Son**. Do you ask, whose Son? Faith takes the largest view. It answers, the Son of God—for Jacob's mind is fixed on God. The Son of Man—for Jacob speaks of Judah. Deity and humanity are here claimed for Christ, and both are His.

He is Jehovah's Son. This is the keystone of salvation's arch. This is the light of salvation's skies. He is one with the Father. One in nature—one in essence—one in every perfection. In every sense He is His co-eternal and co-equal fellow. From everlasting to everlasting He is the Mighty God. Before all worlds, and world without end, He is God over all. They know no hope, who know not Christ, as God. It is mockery to say, "Look unto Me and be saved," unless the speaker be divine. If He were less, He could not remove one speck of iniquity from a sin-soiled soul. It cannot be too firmly maintained, that *each sin is an infinite evil, and therefore requires the expiation of infinite merit!* But you have all infinitudes in Shiloh. He is omnipotent to bear away the countless sins of the whole multitude of the redeemed. He is sufficient to clothe them with righteousness fit for heaven. He is irresistible to subdue every foe. He is all-glorious to present them all-glorious before the throne of God—and to encircle them with all glories forever. This He can do, because He is Shiloh, the Son of God.

But Shiloh—His Son—may mean **the Son of Judah**. Here then we have another sign of the Woman's Seed. Jesus shall be the Lion of Judah's tribe. He shall put on the rags of our poor flesh, as the offspring of one of Judah's daughters—cradled in Judah's city. This is the wonder of heaven, of earth, of hell, of all eternity. Does it fill your heart with raptures of adoring praise? Do you find in it precious token of His boundless love, and sure proof that He is qualified to redeem?

Ponder well the fact. If Christ is not truly man, there is no atoning death—no expiating blood—no justifying righteousness—no kindred sympathy—no open way to God—no center of union. God is infinitely far from man. And man is immeasurably below God. But Shiloh comes to make them one, with every property and faculty of man, and every power of God. Faith is satisfied, and cries, "My kinsman, my Lord, my God, my full, my complete Salvation!"

But there is yet another chord from Shiloh's harp. It sounds the sound of **Peacemaker**. What sweet music to a poor trembling sinner! He knows that sin makes tremendous enmity. It turns the heart of God to wrath. It fills His lips with threats, and His hands with destroying weapons. It builds the walls of hell, and kindles the fire, and hurries its victims to the never-dying worm. But Shiloh flies to earth, and wrath departs, and love resumes the throne, and peace puts on the crown. He takes away the provoking cause. He buries sin in the fathomless ocean of His blood. God looks on the believer wrapped up in Jesus, and loves him with immeasurable love, and blesses him with countless blessings, and honors him with heaven's honors, and glorifies him with heaven's glories! Shiloh is our peace with God.

But He is more. He causes the waters of perfect peace to flow in sweetest tides over the troubled surface of an awakened soul. When the Spirit-taught conscience feels what we really are, and what we really merit, what agonies come over him! There can be no ease, no hope, until Shiloh bears us to His cross, and opens to us His wrath-appeasing wounds. But when we see all our punishment descending upon Him, each fear is lulled to rest. The storm of anguish becomes the calm of heaven's own joy. The trial of life, the apprehensions of trouble, the threats of poverty and of pain, the frowns of the ungodly, no more can harass. He, who has Shiloh in his heart, has no room for anything but peace. He hears no voice, but that of the Prince of Peace, always whispering, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." Such is the Shiloh promised by the dying patriarch. He has come. He has fulfilled all.

Reader! Do not put aside this feeble testimony, until you can say, I know Him—I love Him—I cling to Him in all the offices, which the large terms reveal.

Gen 49.28

SALVATION

"I have waited for Your Salvation, O Lord." Gen 49:18

Salvation! Blessed be God, that our fallen earth has heard the joyful sound! It is unheard in hell. Reader! blessed be the grace, which brought it to your ears! Multitudes of man's family are strangers to it. But thrice-blessed be the Spirit's love, if it is the sweetest melody which charms you—the loudest note, by day and by night, of your unwearied praise! To multitudes, it is a tuneless cymbal.

Salvation! It peoples the many mansions of the heavenly kingdom. It is the bliss of the ever-blissful. It is the joy of the ever-joyful. It is the happiness of the ever-happy. It is the song of the ever-singing. It is the peace of the ever-peaceful. It is the rest of the ever-resting. It is the glory of the ever-glorified. O my soul! see to it that you are saved.

Salvation! It is a register written by Jehovah's pen. It is the decree of Divine councils: the fruit of omniscient mind: the first-born of unmeasured love: the perfection of eternal thought: the strength of omnipotence. It is the fabric, which every attribute of God erected, with concurring hand; in which every stone is brought by mercy, and shaped by wisdom, and laid by grace; in which there is no defect—no blemish—no decay! It is the soul-built temple, which will rise and shine in growing splendor through all ages. O my soul! see to it that you are saved.

Salvation! It is the work for which *Jesus* was born in Bethlehem, and lived on earth, and died at Calvary, and descended into the grave, and burst the bonds of death, and mounted to heaven, and sits on the right hand of God. For this He trod the lowest valley of shame and grief. For this He drank the deepest cup of wrath and torment. For this He grappled with all the powers of darkness. For this He reigns and prays on high.

It is the work, for which the *Spirit* seeks our earth, and knocks at the barred entrance of the sinner's heart. For this He assails the fortress of self-love, and reveals the perils of sin, and wrestles with ignorance and vain excuses. For this He strives, until the arms of rebellion fall, and the contrite soul flees to the cross, and embraces Jesus, and shelters in the sure refuge of His wounds! O my soul! see to it that you are saved.

Salvation! It is the first message which mercy uttered to a ruined world. It is the end of every prophecy—the significance of every precept—the beauty of every promise—the truth of every sacrifice—the substance of every rite—the song of every inspired lip—the longing desire of every renewed heart—the beacon, which guides through the voyage of life—the haven, to which the tides of grace convey—the end of faith, the full light of hope, the home of love. O my soul! see to it that you are saved.

Salvation! It is the absence of this blessing, which builds the prison-house of hell, which kindles the never-quenched fires—which forges the eternal chains—which wraps the dreary regions in one mantle of blackness—which gives keenness to the undying worm—which bellows up the smoke of torment—which gives the bitterness of despair to the hopeless wail. O my soul! see to it that you are saved. Better not have been born, unless you are saved. Life is a curse, death is the abyss of misery, without this joy of salvation. To what profit would it be, to hold the scepter of kingdoms, to call the whole race of men our vassals, to look around on all the world as our own possession, to see in every creature only an instrument of our indulgence, to revel in every ease and luxury, to drink the fullest cup of pleasures, to sit on the highest throne of honor, to be caressed by all the affection, and to be extolled by all the adulation of man, unless you are saved? All these things, if they could be multiplied beyond our powers to calculate, and piled beyond our faculties to grasp, and stretched to time which we could not count, would be as nothing, and less than nothing, would be only the mockery of splendid woe—without salvation. Gain this, and all, and more than all, is gained. Lose this, and no words can express, no thought conceive, the amount of wretchedness, which is your endless doom. O my soul! see to it that you are saved.

Do you ask, but *where* is this treasure, so surpassing all treasures, to be found? It is all in Jesus Christ. He is full, and perfect, and eternal Salvation. Hear the voice from heaven: "You shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Hear the lips which were touched by the living coal: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." Hear the testimony of the Spirit: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Here is truth—unerring truth—divine truth—high as the heavens—clear as light—sure as God. Sophistry cannot perplex it. Falsehood cannot deny it. Salvation is Jesus Christ! You may be clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day, as Dives did—and not be saved. You may rule vast provinces, and command vast armies, as Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar did—and not be saved. You may be beautiful and lovely to behold, as Absalom was—and not be saved. You may belong to a Church, pure, and simple, and apostolic, and blessed with holy ordinances, as Ananias and Sapphira did—and not be saved. You may live under the highest blaze of Gospel-teaching, as Judas did: no, you may bear witness to the truths of Jesus, as he did—and not be saved. You may be exalted unto heaven in privileges and opportunities, as Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were—and not be saved. You may have the shrewdest intellect, as Ahithophel had—and not be saved.

But you cannot believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and fail of Salvation. The word abides for ever, "Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Let the rich man believe, and he is saved. Let the poor man believe, and he is saved. Let the young believe—let the old believe—let the wise believe—let the ignorant believe—and all is safe! Christ is theirs, and Christ is Salvation.

Does any eager soul exclaim, "Tell me further, wherein Salvation's blessedness consist?" Is it *a blessed rescue*, to change ceaseless wailings into endless praise—the blackness of darkness into the glories of brightness beyond the sun in his strength—the woeful dungeons of the lost into the palace of Jehovah—the chains of misery into palms of triumph—the beds of flame into the throne of glory? Salvation effects this.

Is it *a glorious work*, to turn hatred into love—cursing into adoration—every fiendish passion into one flow of holy peace—and to exalt the poor sinner from being the comrade of devils into partnership with the saints in light? Salvation speaks, and this is done.

Does any add, "Let me clearly understand, *how* this is all accomplished?" Come, see the excellent things, which Jesus works. He saves, by rescuing from hell. He saves, by giving title to heaven. He saves, by making fit for heaven. All praise be to the Captain of our Salvation. He saves, **by rescuing from hell.** Hell is the home of sin—the wages of sin. The steps of sin tend towards it. The toil of sin is to earn this payment. But if sin be removed, hell is escaped. Now Jesus takes away sin. From His wounded side, and pierced hands, from the cross on which He died, from the altar on which He makes atonement, a stream of blood flows forth, of efficacy so mighty—so cleansing—that it washes away every speck and stain of iniquity! Plunge all the sins of all who ever sinned, into this unfathomable ocean of merit, and they disappear forever! The foulest transgressor, bathed in this blood of atonement, becomes so pure, so white, that God can discern no blemish in him. Satan can no more allege a fault, or establish a claim against him. Why should he be made over to the dungeons of that jailor? He owes no debt, for all is discharged! He has no mark of perdition on his brow—for all is obliterated. How can he receive the wages of wrath? They have been already paid to the Surety in his stead. Thus Jesus saves His people from hell, because He breaks the only chain, by which the sinner can be tied down. No sin, no wrath—no sin, no hell. But sin can no more be found when Jesus casts it from view, far as the east is from the west.

He saves, **by giving title to heaven**. He not only expiates on the cross. But moreover, He weaves, by His most pure and Godlike life on earth, a mantle of divine righteousness. This completely clothes all who are one with Him. His fulfillment of the law is reckoned their very doing. Thus robed in celestial robes, the redeemed have right to pass the gates of life. They are free to the citizenship of heaven. They are privileged to advance to the very throne of God. No seat is too high, no honors too vast for those who shine in this garment of Salvation.

But the believer needs more than a key to unlock the heavenly gates. He must bring more than outward decoration. There must be *an inward fitness*, or joy would not be joy. There must be a nature congenial to the nature which exists in heaven. The atmosphere above is all *holiness*. There is but the one pulse of perfect love in that abode. To an unrighteous man, this home would be a dismal solitude. From every sight he would shrink, every sound would be a discordant note. The presence of the godly inmates would be reproach and misery. Their one employ would be hateful irksomeness. Their one song, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts," would fill him with vexation and distress.

But the Salvation of Jesus prepares for such rapture. He by His Spirit dethrones the love of sin: implants delight in God: takes barren hardness out of the soil: fills it with the flowers of Paradise: transforms it into the garden of the Lord. He of God is made unto us *sanctification*, as well as *redemption*. His pure robe decks those only, whom His spirit purifies. It is the hand of a new nature, which receives the new clothing. "The king's daughter is all glorious within," as well as arrayed in "wrought gold." All, who present the plea of Christ's righteousness, exhibit conformity to His likeness, and bring heart-longings for His immediate presence. Such is the great Salvation. O my soul! see to it that you are saved.

It is great, because willed, provided, accepted by a great God, even the *Father:* because wrought out and finished by a great God, even *Jesus:* because applied by a great God, even the *Spirit*. It is great, because it averts great woe: bestows great grace: and blesses a great multitude. O my soul! see to it that you are saved.

Happy is life, when we can say with Paul, "He has saved us, and called us with an holy calling." Happy is *prayer*, when the Spirit supplies the loud Amen. "Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Happy is *praise*, when faith adds the chorus, "The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, He also has become my Salvation." Happy is *death*, when truth can testify, as in Jacob's case, "I have waited for Your Salvation, O Lord." Happy is *eternity*, when adoration sings, "Salvation to our God, which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!" O my soul! see to it that you are saved. But give ear, the Spirit warns, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation?"

Exo 3.3

THE BURNING BUSH

by Henry Law

"He looked, and, behold, **the Bush burned with fire**, and the Bush was not consumed." Exo 3:3

Wondrous is the sight which here meets our view. It is a Bush in flames, but not consumed. Destroying fire fails to destroy. Perishable wood refuses to be fuel. Reader! this surely is no new object to you. But know that it abounds in lessons which your search cannot exhaust. It must be so. *The unsearchable riches of Jesus are in this mine!* He, who is the Wonder of Wonders, is the true Wonder of the Bush.

Reader! you must see Christ by faith, if ever you would see God and enter heaven. You must know Christ in heart, if ever you would know peace in conscience and hope in death. Ask then the Holy Spirit that He would make the blazing Bush to be a blaze of saving light within your soul. The way to the burning Bush lies through an avenue of instructive thoughts.

Moses is mercifully rescued from an early grave of waters. Pharaoh's decree dooms to death. But Pharaoh's daughter is the means of life. *When God has purposes to work, He can make foes his tools!* The oppressor's court becomes the refuge of the oppressed. The Hebrew child is caressed as an Egyptian prince. But the perils of the Nile are scarcely greater to the body; than the perils of the palace to the soul. Worldly pomp is very dazzling. Worldly luxury is very entrancing. Worldly pleasures are very ensnaring. But there is an ark of safety in the flood of vanities, as in the flood of waters. Moses is neither dazzled, nor entranced, nor ensnared. He looks above, and sees a splendor far more bright. He deliberately chooses scorn and affliction and loss and poverty, with the people of God. And he finds such scorn to be the truest honor—such affliction to be the purest joy—such loss to be the richest gain—such poverty to be the most enduring wealth.

Reader! it is an important principle, that none can tread the world beneath their feet until they see a fairer world above their heads. When the Lord is set before you, your eyes are dim to lower objects. The beauty of the all-beauteous One makes other loveliness unlovely. Moses proves the mighty energy of soul-elevating, soul-purifying faith. This stirring principle turns his whole course from ease and affluence and self, into one stream of daring activities for God. He beholds with aching heart Israel's crushed tribes. He boldly presents himself to avenge their wrongs, and to erect the standard of their freedom. But what is the welcome which awaits him? Alas! he is thrust away with a rejecting taunt, 'Who made you a prince and a judge over us?'

Reader! your eyes are open to such pitiable folly. You sigh over a serfdom, which is content to do a tyrant's bidding, rather than defy a tyrant's rage. But such may be your own case. The Gospel, like Moses, approaches men. It tells them that *they grind in Satan's prison-house.* It calls them to arise from the dust, to lift up the head, to burst the fetters, to dare to be free. It shows them Jesus, the Captain of Salvation, inviting them to the banner of His cross. It assures those who this Leader never lost a battle—and never lost a man. It beseeches them to cast off the filthy fetters, and to stride boldly towards the sparkling crown. What *answer* is returned? Alas! multitudes hate the voice which would arouse them. They hug the bonds which bind them to perdition's cell. *They little think how soon each link in that chain will become a deathless scorpion and a quenchless flame!*

'Then Moses fled at this saying.' Reader! take heed. The decree may issue, he 'is joined to idols; let him alone.' An *un*welcomed Savior may depart forever. The wings of love may fly away in judgment.

He was hidden as a stranger in the land of Midian forty years. But the God who was his *shield* in the crowd, was his *sun* in the desert. It is sad, that *the Lord's servant must be earth's outcast.* But it is sweet to see how heavenly wisdom can make the hardest usage to yield our choicest blessings. The sweetest honey is from the stony rock. There was work for Moses which required *lamb-like meekness with lion-like resolve.* He must be calm as the ocean when it sleeps—firm as the rock which smiles at storms. These are the lessons of tribulation's school—therefore, *in tribulation he must be schooled.* Metal becomes pure by long process in the furnace. The wisdom which is profitable in the busy haunts of busy men, *grows in retirement's still shade.* In the seclusion of Arabia, Paul drinks calmly of truth's fount. In the wilds of Midian, Moses sits at the feet of God.

At last the appointed time of rescue came. God's works are the reflection of decrees ordained of old. When His purposes were ripe, a marvel startles the shepherd-prophet. A Bush blazes before him, each branch, each fiber reddened in the flame. But neither branch nor fiber received hurt. The brittle wood waved an uninjured head. Well might Moses wonder. But wonder deepened into awe, when from the Bush a voice was heard, even the voice of God.

Reader! it becomes us now to ask, *what is the Gospel of the burning Bush?* Jesus Himself appears in His person, suffering, and all-resisting might.

His person—He is God, and yet He stoops to be made man. He is man, and yet He continues to be God forever. Withdraw the Godhead, and His blood cannot atone. Withdraw the manhood, and no blood remains. The union gives a Savior able, and a Savior fit. Look to the Bush! It shows this very union. The *wood* denotes the poor and feeble produce of earth. It exhibits the 'tender plant'—the 'root out of a dry ground.' But it holds God as its inhabitant. The voice out of its midst proclaims, Your God is here.

His sufferings—*Fire* wraps the Bush. No clearer image can depict the hot assaults of wrath. The life of Jesus knew these well. It was one struggle with keen anguish. Earth was a thorny path. Hell shot its every shaft. Heaven darkened with the horrors of its frowns. All the fierce pains which infinite displeasure could inflict, made Him their prey. He wrung out all, which all the ransomed would have tasted, if hell-agonies had been their doom forever!

His all-resisting might—In vain the fire assailed the bush. It stood unharmed. So every blow recoiled from Jesus. *Sustained by His indwelling Deity*, He trod all foes beneath His feet. He burst the bands of death. He shivered the grave's gates. He stood victorious on the ruins of hell's empire. He mounted in triumph to the heaven of heavens.

We have next **an unquestionable type of the whole family of faith.** Persecutions and trials are the fire, which assails them with ceaseless fury. But still they thrive and strengthen and bud and blossom and flourish. How can it be? Deity indwells them! And where Deity resides there must be undecaying life.

The Church's story is a mirror of this truth. How often do we see it as a tiny bark tossed in engulfing waves. The powers of the mighty, the craft of the subtle, the rage of the frantic, have seized it with terrific grasp. Evil men have done their worst—evil spirits have aimed blows—evil fiends have put forth spite. Surely the fragile Bush must sink in ruin! But no! It defies all foes. It stands, and will stand forever, verdant and fragrant and fruitful. But the power of resistance is not its own. *The Lord is in the midst of it!* He has chosen it as His abode forever. They are precious tidings. 'In the midst of the seven candlesticks is one like unto the Son of man.'

It is true that Jesus, as God, holds all space within His hand. 'His center is everywhere, His circumference is nowhere.' But still *the Church is the chosen home of His unbounded love.* Here His all-protecting might, His all-preserving care, His full delights, repose. He received it from His Father as His spouse—His jewels—His peculiar treasure—His portion—the fullness of His body—the completeness of His mediatorial glory. He is engaged to seat it, as an undiminished family, before the throne. If one member be injured, Christ is marred; if one be absent, Christ is maimed. Hence He is ever with it—all *heart* to love—all *eye* to watch—all *hand* to help—all *wisdom* to direct—all *power* to beat back foes. Let, then, the fire rage! It must be mightier than Almightiness before the Bush can droop to nothingness.

Do these lines meet the eye of one who plots and strives against Zion's (the church's) welfare? Vain man, forbear! The promise ever lives, 'Lo! I am with you always.' Can you tear the sun from its high seat? Can you beat back ocean with a feather? Can you bind the lightning with a straw? Such task would be easier than to pluck Jesus from the Bush. Because He lives there, His people shall live also!

Here, too, another mystery is solved. **Grace** seems but a tender plant in the believer's heart. It has to contend with nipping frosts and desolating storms. *Satan's* rage burns hot against it. The *world* brings fuel upon fuel to consume it. The *flesh* blows fiercely to fan the flame. *But grace still thrives!* Its roots spread. Its branches rise. Its fruit ripens. Why? Christ walks within His garden—a guardian-God. His hand sowed each seed. The dew of His favor nourishes it. The smile of His love matures it. Hence it overtops all fiery foes, and lifts its head towards heaven.

Believer, think much of the 'goodwill of Him who dwelt in the Bush.' Fears then will flee away. If you stood alone, it would be presumption to hope. Because you are not alone, it is offence to tremble.

Look **back**. Many conflicts are behind, and yet you live. How is it? You reply with Paul, 'The Lord stood with me and strengthened me.' 'The Bush burned with fire, and the Bush was not consumed.' Your present fight is hot. But you hear a much-loved voice, 'Do not fear, for I am with you.' 'The Bush burns with fire, and the Bush is not consumed.'

You look **forward**. The horizon is dark with clouds of tribulation. But the same voice cheers, 'Do not fear, for I am with you; when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned.' The captive youths, a cloud of witnesses, an army of blessed martyrs, wave you forward. They tell that persecuting flames may be divested of all their sting. Rejoice then. The Bush shall burn with fire, but it shall not be consumed!

Reader! pause here, and search your conscience. Is your body a temple of Jesus Christ, through the Spirit? Is Christ dwelling in your heart by faith? Is Christ in you, the hope of glory? If it is not so, touch not the comfort of the burning Bush. Remember, there are *thorns and briers, 'whose end is to be burned.'* No Savior saves them. Tares must be bound in bundles for wrath's full-heated furnace. A terrible voice wails from the region of the lost, 'I am tormented in this flame.' 'The day comes that shall burn as an oven and all the proud, yes, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble.' 'The smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever.'

Reader! here are words by which, through grace, you may be saved. Turn not away to everlasting burnings. If you are so mad, this warning will lie, as a hot coal, upon your soul forever!

Exo 3.14

'I AM THAT I AM'

"I am that I am." Exo 3:14

The believer is called to wayfaring and warfaring struggles. He has to bear a daily cross and to fight a daily fight. But in every hour of need a sure support is near. Behold Moses. The ground which he must tread is very slippery. The hill of his difficulties is very steep. A foe opposes every step. But a staff and a sword are provided for him in the name of his guiding and protecting Lord. 'I AM THAT I AM.' On this he can lean the whole burden of his cares, and fears, and pains. By this he can scatter kings as dust. This support is still the same, ever mighty, ever near. The feeblest pilgrim may grasp it by the hand of faith. And whoever grasps it is 'as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides forever.'

'I AM THAT I AM.' Such is the voice from the burning bush. The Speaker, then, is hidden in no mask of mystery. It is the Angel of the everlasting Covenant. It is the great Redeemer. He would establish His people on the firm rock of comfort. Therefore with trumpet-tongue He thus assures them that *all the majesty, all the supremacy, all the glory of absolute and essential Deity, are His inherent right.* O my soul, *into what a speck must poor man dwindle before such greatness!* The limits of the mind cannot scan it. The arms of the heart cannot embrace it. Words are mere skeletons before it. Intellect would desire to fly on eagle's wing around the ever-widening circle. But vain is the effort. Its height is on heaven's summit. What mortal arm can reach it? It is as space which has no bounds. What human line can measure it? Our mortal eyes cannot pierce unlimited expanse. Our scales cannot weigh the mountains. Our vessels cannot measure the ocean's depths. So our faculties are too short to probe the immensities of God. To grasp divine essence requires divine largeness. 'I AM THAT I AM' alone can read the volume of that title.

Shall we then repine? What! repine because our God is so great? Where is the subject who frets because he cannot count his prince's treasures? Let us rather bow our heads in pious adoration. Let us rather give thanks that *a mine is open in which the very dust is gold!* Let us rather humble ourselves, that we are so slow and careless to gather up the *manna of rich truth* which falls at the tent-door. Let us rather pray the Spirit to illumine more clearly the written page. Let us rather long for the day when every cloud which veils our God shall brighten into perfect light; and when His people 'shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is.' Come then, and with such loving teachableness let us take our seat beside *this sea of truth*, and strive with reverence to touch the spray which sparkles on the shore.

'I AM THAT I AM.' Here the first sound is **eternity**. Jesus, as God, here puts on eternity as His robe. He knows no past. He knows no future. He lives unmoved in one unmoving present. He stretches through all the ages which are gone and which are yet to come. His only bounds are immeasurable boundlessness. Before time was born, He is 'I AM THAT I AM.' When time shall have expired, He still is 'I AM THAT I AM.' If there had been the moment when His being dawned, His name would be, 'I am what I was not.' If there could be a moment when His being must have end, His name would be, 'I am what I shall not be.' But He is, 'I AM THAT I AM.' Thus He treads first and last beneath His feet. He sits on the unbroken circumference of existence, as He who ever was, and ever is, and ever shall be. Let thought fly back, until in weariness it faint; let it look onward until all vision fail; it ever finds Him the same 'I AM.'

Reader! look down now from this astounding glory and fix your eye on *Bethlehem's manger*. A lowly Babe lies in the lowly cradle of a lowly town, the offspring of a lowly mother. Look again. That child is the eternal 'I AM.' He whose Deity never had birth, is born 'the woman's Seed.' He, whom no infinitudes can hold, is contained within Infant's age, and Infant's form. He, who never began to be, as God, here begins to be, as **man**. And can it be, that the great 'I AM THAT I AM' shrinks into our flesh, and is little upon our earth, as one newborn of yesterday? It is so! The Lord promised it. Prophets foretold it. Types prefigured it. An angel announces it. Heaven rings with rapture at it. Faith sees it. The redeemed rejoice in it.

But why is this wonder of wonders? Why is eternity's Lord a Child of time? He thus stoops, that He may save poor wretched sinners such as we are. Could He not do so by His will or by His word? Ah! no. He willed, and all things were. He speaks, and all obey. But he must die, as man, that a lost soul may live. To rescue from one stain of sin, the Eternal must take the sinner's place, and bear sin's curse and pay sin's debt, and suffer sin's penalty, and wash out sin's filth, and atone for sin's malignity. 'I AM THAT I AM' alone could do this. 'I AM THAT I AM' alone has done it.

What self-denial, what self-abasement, what self-emptying is here! Surely, royalty in rags, angels in cells, is no *descent* compared to Deity in flesh! But mighty love moves Jesus to despise all shame, and to lie low in misery's lowest mire. Through ages past His 'delights were with the sons of men.' Eternity to come is but a void, unless his people share His glory. Therefore He humbles Himself to earth, that specks of earth may rise to heaven's immortality. Believer, you rejoice in prospect of thus living with Him forever. But why is there full rapture in the thought? Do not you feel that the crowning ecstasy is in this? Eternity will afford you time to gaze with steady look on a Savior's glories, to sing with unwearied hymn a Savior's praise, to bless with perpetual blessing a Savior's name, and to learn with ever-expanding knowledge a Savior's worth!

There is another note in this loud chorus of truth, which is especial sweetness to the believer's ear. It tells melodiously that **Jesus cannot change**. He is as constant as He is great. As surely as He ever lives, so surely He ever lives the same. He is an infinity of never-varying *oneness. He sits on the calm throne of eternal serenity.* Change is the defect of things below—for things below are all defective. Immutability reigns above—for immutability is perfection's essence. Our brightest morn often ends in storm. Summer's radiance gives place to winter's gloom. The smiling flower soon lies withered. The babbling brook is soon a parched-up channel. The friend who smiled, smiles no more friendly welcomes. Bereavement weeps where once the family beamed with domestic joy. Gardens wither into deserts. Babylons crumble into unsightly ruins. On all things a sad inscription writes 'fleeting—transient—vanishing.' Time flaps a ceaseless wing, and from the wings decay and death drop down. 'I AM THAT I AM' sits high above all this. He is 'the same yesterday, and today, and forever.'

The unchangeableness of Jesus is the unchangeableness of His **attributes**. Each shines brightly in this bright mirror. But a rapid glance at His love and power must suffice. His **love** is in perpetual bloom. It is always in summertime. The roots are deeply buried in Himself; therefore the branches cannot fade. Believer, drink hourly of this cup of joy. Do not allow Satan to infuse a poisonous doubt. Christ loved you fully when, in the councils of eternity, He received you into His heart. He loved you truly when, in the fullness of time, He took upon Himself your curse, and drained your hell-deep dues. He loved you tenderly when He showed you, by the Spirit, His hands and His feet, and whispered to you that you were His. He loves you faithfully while He ceases not to intercede in your behalf, and to scatter blessings on your person and your soul. He will love you intensely in heaven when you are manifested as His precious purchase and crowned as His bride!

To each enquiry—has He loved? does He love? and will He love?—the one reply is, 'I AM THAT I AM.' Do not raise the objection, if He thus loves, why am I thus? why is my path so rugged, and my heart like flint? You will soon know that your bitterest trials and your sorest pains are sure tokens of His love. The father corrects because he loves. In attentive care the physician deeply probes the wounds. Thus Jesus makes earth *hard*, that you may long for heaven's holy rest. He shows you your self-vileness that you may prize His cleansing blood. He allows you to stumble that you may cleave more closely to His side. He makes the world a blank that you may seek all comfort in Himself. If He seems to change, it is that you may change. He hides His face, that you may look for Him. He is silent, that you may cry more loudly. His desertion prevents your desertion. *He saves from real hell, by casting into seeming hell.* But love fails not. All His dealings are its everflowing, overflowing tide. On each the eye of faith can read, 'I AM THAT I AM.'

Power goes hand in hand with love. They co-exist and co-endure. It was a mighty voice which said, 'Be'—and all things were. It was a mighty hand which framed this so wondrous universe. It is a mighty arm which turns the wheel of *providence*. This power still is, and ever will be, what it always has been. No age enfeebles, and no use exhausts it. This is the Church's rock. The Bible, blazing with its exploits, encourages the 'worm Jacob' to 'be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.' He can still bid the *seas of difficulty* to recede. He can cause hurricanes and tempests to cease. He can make straight, the crooked paths of evil. He can level the mountains of high-towering corruption. He can stop the lion-mouth of persecution. He can quench the scorching flames of every lust. In the face of all Goliaths, He cheers His followers to victory, under the banner of 'I AM THAT I AM.'

Reader! these thoughts scarcely touch the boundary line of the *shadow* of this glorious name. But surely they show the blessedness of those who, guided by the Spirit, repose beneath the wings of Jesus. 'The eternal God is your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.' 'I AM THAT I AM' must perish or must change, before their names can be cast from His heart. Some greater power must arise, before they can be plucked from His tight-grasping hand. The bare idea is folly. Happy flock! 'I AM THAT I AM' loves them, and they are loved—calls them, and they follow Him—sanctifies them, and they are sanctified—blesses them, and they are blessed—gives them life, and they live—gives them glory, and they are glorified.

But perhaps it is your wretched case to live unsprinkled by His saving blood. Will you die thus? What! thus appear before His great white throne? His *truth* condemns you—and it cannot change. His *wrath* burns hotly against you—and it cannot relent. His *power* has commission to destroy you—and it cannot be withstood. 'I AM THAT I AM' becomes an idle fable, if truth and wrath and power war not eternally with sin. And can they war and not prevail?

Believer, the eternity and unchangeableness of 'I AM THAT I AM' makes heaven to be heaven forever. Sinner, the eternity and unchangeableness of 'I AM THAT I AM' makes hell to be hell forever.

Exo 12.11

THE PASSOVER

"It is the Lord's Passover." Exo 12:11

These words send us back to the last night of Israel's bondage in the land of Egypt. The captives had suffered much and long. The iron furnace had been heated by unpitying hate and by unsparing hands. But God, in His high council, had decreed that a morn of deliverance should dawn. The appointed hour came. No power can now detain. Mad opposition becomes weak. The chosen people must go free.

Believer, stay your soul on the rock of the promises. They are as immovable as He who speaks them. At the set moment you shall march in triumph to your Canaan.

Let us, in thought, intermingle in the solemn scene. It was a night black in dismays, terrible in judgments, wild in affrights, keen in anguish. Throughout the whole of Egypt's empire every house was woe, every face was horror, every heart was misery. Death forced all doors. *Each eldest child was a lifeless corpse.* There was no exception. The monarch and the slave alike bewailed, in bitter cry, their first-born's sudden and untimely slaughter.

It was a night memorable, also, in sweet displays of tender love. Israel's favored sons were all assembled. But neither death nor fear was in their dwellings. They were equipped for departure from all cruelties and pains. They were feasting at a heaven-appointed table. They were rejoicing in a Gospel ordinance. They were partaking of a slain lamb. This exhibited, in loudly-speaking rites, all the certainties and all the mercies of spiritual redemption. They realized present escape. They looked forward to future safety. They had much in hand. They had more in view.

Reader! let us with joy join these joyous companies. And may the Christ-revealing Spirit show Christ to us, as the substance and truth and glory of the spread feast! God Himself selects the offering. His voice says, 'They shall take to them every man **A LAMB**.' Thus Jesus is appointed by heavenly wisdom to be the one redeeming sacrifice. An elected Savior is the strong foundation of salvation's pyramid. Blessed provision of our blessing God! Where could we turn, if bidden to find a guilt-removing victim? But grace meets every need. Hearken to the sure tidings, 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold—my elect, in whom my soul delights.'

Reader! God's only begotten Son is God's only appointed Redeemer. He only is called to bear His people's sins. For He alone can sustain such load. He alone is sent to make atonement. For He alone has worthy blood to shed. He alone is commissioned to bring in reconciliation. For He alone can covenant with God. Obey God—present Jesus in the arms of faith. Then your crimson stain is whiter than snow. Your soul is saved. Reject Him, and there remains no more sacrifice for sins.

The lamb must be **a male of the earliest age**—'Your lamb shall be *a male of the first year.'* These are signs of vigor in unbroken perfection. Truly He who is to save must be mighty in strength. For think *what mighty hindrances oppose.* Whose arm can hold back the descending arm of divine wrath? Whose shoulder can sustain the weight of countless sins? Whose force can close hell? Whose power can open heaven? Whose prowess can trample down satanic rage, satanic spirits, and satanic men? In none but Jesus can such sufficiency be found. In Him it abounds to the overflowing of almightiness. The Father's voice proclaims, 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty.' The pledge is given, 'He shall send them a Savior, and a great one.' The fulfillment is in Jesus, 'The great God and our Savior.' He is the Lamb in all the energy of perfect strength.

The Lamb must be **without blemish**—*'Your lamb shall be without blemish*, a male of the first year.' Jesus, while man below, was pure as God in heaven's brightness. Sin strove in vain to soil Him. Foul temptations thickly fell, but left Him spotless as the light of day. The Father's eye, which cannot look upon uncleanness, delighted in Him as the clear mirror of His own glory. In Him, human nature shone in the luster of divine holiness. In Him was sinlessness which could atone for sin. In Him was righteousness which satisfied the law.

The lamb must be **'set apart for four days.'** Thus in heaven, through eternal days, Jehovah's eye inspected Jesus, as the fore-ordained expiation for the foreseen evil. Thus on earth, through the days preceding the cross, He was tested by every judge—and thus, universal consent crowned Him with the crown of untarnished blamelessness. Even Satan, speaking by blood-guilty lips, proclaimed that there was no fault in Him.

The lamb must be **'slain by the whole assembly of the congregation.'** Not one voice was silent, when the dreadful cry went forth, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him.' Believer, not one sin of all your life was absent, when Jesus was dragged to the cross. All your transgressions strained the cords. They concurred to drive in the nails, and to make deep the wounds. Your iniquities brought in His death. His death brings in your life.

The **'blood must be sprinkled on the lintel, and on the doorposts of each dwelling.'** The shed blood must be used. It must be openly exhibited as a distinguishing sign. If the destroyer finds the preserving mark, the foot of vengeance must pass over. If there be no shield of blood, the arrows of death must do their work.

Reader! the Gospel moves poor sinners to appropriating efforts. Christ is uplifted, that *eyes* may look to Him. He is an open refuge, that *feet* may fly to Him. His blood flowed, that it may be taken by the *hand* of faith. Do you live a blood-besprinkled life? Is your soul at all times fresh dripping from this stream? If so, you safely dwell beneath salvation's wings. Justice cannot drag you to execution. The curse cannot blight you. The law cannot condemn you. Vengeance cannot slay you. The blood upon you cries—Away! stand back! no foe can touch, where I protect. But are you thus marked as Christ's? If not, arise speedily and flee unto the wounded Lamb. The day is far spent: the night of ruin is at hand. The destroyer is at your heels. Each house unmarked was a house unspared. Each soul unwashed will be a soul undone. An applied remedy alone can heal.

Not one drop stained the floor. The blood of Jesus is the most precious thing in heaven and in earth. The Father honors it with all heaven's honors. The saints in light praise it with all heaven's praises. The saints on earth rejoice in it with all heart's rapture. Satan flees before it. Shall godless men treat it with rejecting scorn? Let them beware—on the heart it is a seal of life—beneath the feet it is the stamp of hell.

The flesh must be roasted with fire. We have here the keenest image of the keenest torture. The pain of pains is to be slowly devoured by the scorching flames. But this is a faint image of what Jesus verily endured. O my soul, deal closely with the sufferings of your suffering Lamb. Let the amazing facts be the very fibers of your constant thought. Daily visit the *garden*. Hourly study the *cross*. What is the sight, what are the sounds, which there confront you? The God-man Jesus lies crushed to the earth. He bends beneath a weight of woe. The saddest groans proclaim the writhings of a tortured soul. Each pore weeps blood. Agony could not more agonize. A piteous cry confesses that the black horrors of desertion blackened around Him. These marks of extremest anguish have clear meaning. *The Passover Lamb is roasted with fire.*

Believer, Jesus was tormented in your stead. All the wrath which all your sins deserved was outpoured on Him. The vengeance of God descended in all its fury on Him. The curse of the law exacted its utmost on Him. The flames of hell tightly grasped Him. He endured the very miseries which all His people must have endured if they had wailed forever in the lake of fire. Faith sees it and exclaims—I live, for Jesus died. I cannot suffer. Jesus has exhausted all. Wrath cannot touch me, because it has touched Him!

Each inhabitant of the house must feed upon the lamb. So every one who would be saved must verily partake of Christ. To hear of Him, to touch the emblems of His dying love, to know His merits, to commend His worth, will profit little. Faith takes Christ, Christ Himself, as its own. It makes Him the very juice and substance of the inner man. Jesus is the believer's never-ending banquet. He feasts on Christ now. He will feast with Christ forever.

A bone of the lamb may not be broken. Jesus indeed was harshly treated. But no wounds marred His bones. They weakened not the pillars of His strength. He lives all-vigorous in salvation's might. He stands the unbroken, the unblemished column of His people's hopes. The marvelous fulfillment, also, of this command, proves Jesus of Nazareth to be the true Passover of God. When the soldiers 'came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they broke not His legs.' The unwitting heathen unwittingly accomplished the Jewish type. Infidelity, what can you reply? Know, that as no ignorance is like yours, so no ruin will be like yours.

The lamb must be eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. These requirements shadow out the combined graces of *penitence and sincerity*. Reader, do you boast of hope in Christ? It only dwells in a heart ground to powder under a sense of sin. *Tears are the magnifying medium through which the cross attracts.* Faith has no root in rocky soil. It only blossoms in the moist garden of a weeping spirit. They come in sorrow's sackcloth who receive Christ's justifying robe.

Do you boast that Christ is your feast? Where is your unleavened bread? Sin loved, sin cherished, sin retained, turns heaven's food into hell's poison. A searching eye comes in to see the guests. Leaven in their hands, leaven in their mouths, leaven in their hearts, is a fatal mark. They must go away to the cell of hypocrites.

The lamb must be eaten **'in the attitude of haste, and with equipment for departure.'** The loins must be girded. The feet must be shod. The hands must hold the staff. Here is the believer waiting for his summons, with wings expanded towards his far-off home. Earth's ties are all severed. Anchors are weighed. The eye is strained for the signal, 'Come up here!' Reader, are you thus ready? It is miserable to have ought to do, when doing-time is past. He is a foolish *servant* who has to seek the key when his Lord knocks. He is a poor *advocate*, who has to find a plea when he is called to plead. *When death comes, have nothing to do, but just to die.*

Believer, may you hear, in these poor lines, the Spirit calling you to this Gospel feast. It is His voice, 'Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.' I deeply feel that without His light, His grace, His power, we cannot see or know or love or serve or glorify our Lord. But may He be pleased to open our eyes, that we may behold the rich plenteousness of our paschal-feast! Ma

Exo 13.13

REDEMPTION

"You must **redeem** every firstborn son." Exo 13:13

If there is a theme which claims incessant thought, it is Redemption. Job's sweetest word is, 'I know that my Redeemer lives.' Heaven is a pyramid of redeemed souls. The melody of eternal harps is, 'You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood.'

Reader! study, then, I beg you, Redemption more and more. Explore its need, its plan, its worth, its end. Without this knowledge your soul is dark, your heart is cold, faith has no sure resting-place, hope has no anchor, love has no kindling flame, service has no constraining motive. Except this stream flow in a deep channel, the Bible is the mocking course of a summer brook.

It is the Spirit's will that we should clearly see and tightly grasp this subject. He announces it in *plainest terms*. He embodies it in *distinct images.* He paints it in *vivid types*. He predicts it in *prophetic song.* He exhibits it in *holy rites.* Thus in the earliest pages of Israel's story an ordinance stands forward, which surely is designed to cast a flood of revealing rays on the main features of redeeming work.

The first-born of every family throughout Egypt's empire are cut down by one fell swoop. But in the blood-marked dwellings no parent weeps, no offspring bleeds. A child is spared. But He who spares it claims it as His own. The Lord speaks unto Moses, saying, 'Sanctify unto me all the firstborn.' They are doubly His. He created; He preserved.

But tender mercy here finds an opening to show a smiling face. Ransom is decreed. If a fit sum, according to the balance of the sanctuary, be paid, the claim shall be remitted, the forfeited progeny shall be free—'collect five pieces of silver for each person, each piece weighing the same as the standard sanctuary shekel.'

Such is the rite. It has especial value, because it gives a clue to the grand lesson of the Gospel-school. We here are taught the meaning of Redemption. It is *recovery on account of payment made.* A Redeemer receives again, only because He fills the scales with satisfying sums.

Reader! now lift aloft this torch. It helps you to discern the realities and immensities of the Redemption which is effected by the Lord. Sinners are the lost property. Souls are the captive heritage. Christ regains them at the price of His most precious blood. Ponder the breadth and length of this great fact. Mark the vile thraldom into which sin brought our race. It spoiled us all of spiritual liberty. It dragged us into the lowest cell of a dark prison-house. It placed Satan as the stern jailer of a guilt-enfettered world. From the day in which Adam touched the forbidden fruit, each child is born a captive, because he is born in sin. External circumstance may differ. But it changes not internal state. The high, the low, the rich, the poor, lie in one base level of sin-grasped, sin-sold misery. The whole family breathe their first breath, as common slaves in common slavery. Not only spiritual liberty is lost, but spiritual life is slain. No slave of sin is conscious of his abject state. There is no loathing of the loathsome jail. There is no longing to reach holier ground. There is no panting for a purer climate.

But try to suppose a case which cannot be. Let the heart wish against the heart's desire. Let corruption sigh to burst corruption's bond. Where can one gleam of hope be found? Will tears or cries induce the jailer to relent? Can his hatred cease to hate? Can his malice melt to love? Can rocks dissolve to softness? Such things might be. But Satan must be Satan still. His being is to revel in our woe. But can no striving strength beat down the subjugating? Alas! Feebleness is a feeble word to paint our power when compared with his. Self cannot rescue self; nor man deliver man. But cannot angels render aid? We may conceive that they look down in tender pity. But pity is not power. A yearning heart is not an arm of might. Let all the hosts of heaven fly forward to your help. How can they force open the prison walls which sin has raised? Captivity must remain, except Omnipotence arise to help!

Reader! now look to Jesus. All hope centers in Him. His gracious eye surveys a captive world. Within sin's walls He sees the bride, from all eternity beloved—the portion which the Heavenly Father gave Him—the jewels which are to be His crown forever—the sheep whom He is pledged to tend—the children whose names are written on His heart—the heritage which was His delight before the worlds were made. He beholds them vile, in iniquity's vile rags—wretched to the last length of wretchedness—dark in the blackest night of hopelessness—trembling on the brink of uttermost perdition. He beholds them in this mire. He beholds them such, and yet He loves them. Can He love and not seek their rescue? Can He live if they die? Can He rejoice if they wail? Can He reign if they perish? Can He shine in glory if they burn in hell? It cannot be. They are His property by His Father's gift. They are the fullness of His mystic body.

He must redeem them. But how? Suppose Him suppliant at the dungeon-gate. Can He by word of strong entreaty gain their freedom? No! the Holy attributes of God forbid. A book appears against them, written throughout with countless charges, and exhibiting countless debts. Each debt is a catalogue of infinite extent. Can He pay all? He knows that in the boundlessness of His Deity He has strength to endure the penalty, and resources to wipe out the debt. Will He hesitate? Oh no! love constrains Him, pity moves Him; mercy urges Him; the eternal covenant compels Him. To the extent of infinity He will suffer, if only by the infinity of His sufferings His people can be free. So He takes Redemption into His hands.

And will He verily accomplish it? O my soul, draw near and see. In the fullness of time, He comes flying on the wings of redeeming grace, striding in the might of redeeming power, clad in the armor of redeeming prowess, wearing on His brow Redemption's helmet, bearing in His hands Redemption's price. Proceed with Him to the work of redemption. Enter with Him into the *garden*. Take your station beside His *cross*. He presents Himself to redeem. He draws near to endure His people's pains, to pay their wretched owings. The penalty of each sin is everlasting curse. Must this descend upon the sinless Surety? It must! It does. Holy wrath cannot spare. Holy Truth cannot unsay its word. The sinner's soul must die. All the agonies of never-ending dying must be borne. Jesus sustains all, until justice can inflict no more. So, also, each debt is fully cancelled. The scales of heaven are brought forth. In the one there is the weight of iniquities, which would weigh worlds upon worlds into the lowest dust. Into the other Jesus casts His blood as counter-payment. The value infinitely exceeds. Justice exclaims, Release those souls, the debt has been paid to the last mite! Jehovah issues His mighty mandate concerning each, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom!'

What now can Satan do? His rage, his malice, and his hate, are impotent to harm. The blood of Jesus has satisfied all claims. That death has slain all foes. That cross has silenced each accusing voice. The portals of heaven can no more be barred. The chains of bondage are shattered. The prisoners are free. The captives are redeemed. Who now presents a charge? Who now can urge a claim? Christ's death is super-abounding Redemption-price.

O my soul, live reading those letters of love, which brightly shine around the cross. It is written, 'In whom we have Redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.' *Believer, you are purchased by this inestimable price.* Know, then, what blessedness is yours. You are forever free from all hell-misery. Multitudes must reap the harvest which sin sows, in anguish never-ending. But avenging wrath cannot touch you. The gnawing worm cannot prey on you. The Redeemer has ransomed you. Rejoice, and give Him praise.

The wicked will soon be bound, body and soul, in bundles for the endless burning! Oh! the woe to be forever linked with foul fiends—to be forever hearing from their parched lips the execrating wail of hatred and despair! But you are safe. The Redeemer has ransomed you. Rejoice, and give Him praise!

How many pass their pilgrim-days in the vile service of this world's prince! He drives them at his will to every godless word and work. *They drink the gall of disappointment, vexation, discontent, and terrible foreboding.* But He who redeemed your life from destruction crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies. You have peace which passes all understanding—joys which are the pledge of Paradise—and hope which enters now within the veil of heaven. Rejoice, and give Him praise!

Many tremble at the approach of **death**. They know that it will snap the thread of earthly being, and plunge them into agony's abyss. They hate life, because it ends in dying. They hate dying, because it ends their hopeless hopes. But death's features have no frown for the Redeemed. It comes as a welcome friend to open the cage-door of the flesh, that the rejoicing spirit may fly swift to the Redeemer's breast. The slaves of Satan dread the grave. They are conscious that it cannot detain the body long. Their dust must live again. The tabernacle in which they sinned must be the tabernacle in which they receive sin's wages. But your ears of faith have heard the Conqueror's shout, 'I will ransom them from the power of the grave. I will redeem them from death.' The archangel's voice will soon awake the slumbering clay, and then it will put on the glorious robes of immortality, and shine forth in beauty, bright as His beauty, and in perfections fitted for the Eternal's throne.

Believer, hell only can draw up the murky veil, and fully show the miseries from which you are snatched by Christ. The resurrection morn, the nightless day alone can manifest your blood-bought blessing.

But listen! the Spirit speaks a word of wholesome warning. *Redeemed ones are no more their own.* 'You are bought with a price—therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' Your **time** is redeemed; use it as a consecrated talent in His cause. Your **minds** are redeemed; employ them to learn His truth and, to meditate on His ways. Thus make them armories of holy weapons. Your **eyes** are redeemed; let them not look on vanity; close them on all sights and books of folly. Your **feet** are redeemed; let them trample on the world, and climb the upward hill of Zion, and bear you onward in the march of Christian zeal. Your **tongues** are redeemed; let them only sound His praise, and testify to His love, and call sinners to His cross. Your **hearts** are redeemed; let them love Him wholly, and have no seat for rivals.

A redeemed flock should live in Redemption's pastures. The Redeemer's freedmen should evidence that they are called to holy liberty, and that their holy liberty is holy service. The chain of sin is broken. The chain of love now holds them!

Exo 13.21

THE PILLAR

"The Lord went before them by day in a **pillar** *of a cloud* to lead them the way; and by night in a **pillar** *of fire*, to give them light; to go by day and night." Exo 13:21

The children of Israel are about to tread an unknown path. A desert is before them, wide and desolate and trackless. They have no chart to show the way. There are no friendly lips to counsel or to warn. They must proceed, and yet they fear to stir.

This is a common need. Perhaps you, who read, discern your very case. You have left Egypt. The hated bonds are burst. But Canaan's rest is far away. An intervening wilderness extends. Hence the sigh rises in your breast, Oh! that some guide were near! How can the distant end be safely reached?

Israel's story gives the glad reply. Were they allowed to wander without beckoning support? Oh, no! Whose hand, then, waved them forward? Did the Lord send some natives of the wilderness to teach where the paths were safe? No! Did He inspire their ruler's mind with instinct of the untrodden land? No! He comes Himself. He stoops to take the office of their guide. But by what method is His directing aid made clear? A visible form, which every eye might see, reveals the wondrous guide. A pillar descends, and rests upon the camp. When the *day* shines, it is a cloudy column. When *darkness* comes, its mass is fire. Its presence never is withdrawn. It moves, a signal for advance. It rests, to bid them pause. Such is the protection and guidance of the desert-march.

Do you now ask, what is the Gospel significance of this type? The type distinctly shows that **no believer ever moves unled.** The prophet proves this, when he selects this emblem to portray Christ's care—'Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a *cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night*; over all the glory will be a canopy.' The conclusion, then, is sound. The *Pillar* preaches *Christ*, the preceding Shepherd of His flock. Faith gazes on it, and drinks in the comfort of an ever-leading, never-leaving God.

Reader! come now, and seek some comfort for your pilgrim-days, from Israel's Pillar. Especial circumstances marked it. It was but one. In midday brightness, and in night's deep gloom, the substance was the same. Thus Christ is ever one. He who was shadowed out in Eden; He to whom Abel looked; He who was Abraham's seed and David's offspring and the sweet theme of every prophet's harp; He who was pierced on Calvary and laid in the grave; is the same Jesus who shall shortly come again.

No sinner escapes death, but through one victim, one righteousness, one faith, one hope, one clinging to one cross, one cleaving to one Lord, one journeying in one blood-stained path. There is one only Savior of all the saved, one only door of heaven, one only plea before the judgment-seat, one only ransom of a guilty soul. If Israel had turned to other guidance, they would have rushed to sure destruction.

Reader! deluded men, with Cain-like pride, frame other saviors, and find no Savior. Take heed. Look only to the one Christ, and to the one Bible, and to the true church. He is not divided. Do not be divided from Him.

The Pillar ever rose in **firm solidity**. Cloudy masses bend quickly before a driving breath of wind. The storm beats on them, and they vanish. But *this Pillar* mocked the lash of hurricanes and watery floods. Amid the roar of elements, it smiled unmoved, immovable. It was quiet, as a rock among unquiet waves. Thus no assaults can shake salvation's *Pillar*. Satan has done his worst. Each weapon which hell can point has been hurled at Him. The might and craft of man have marshaled all their forces. But every shaft of shrewdness, ridicule, and wit; the strong man's strength, the great man's greatness, the prince's power, and all plotting wiles; have fallen baffled at His feet. Reader! you can have confidence in your Guide's strength. The heavens may crumble into dust. But He cannot be shaken.

But the Pillar, though firm and solid, yet **changed its appearance**. In day its look was dark. In night it shone in brilliant blaze. It put on the fittest garb to gain observance. Here is *the tender grace of Jesus!* Mark His unwearied efforts to draw minds towards Himself. It is with this design that every Bible-page proclaims some feature of His saving truth. For this, heaven-born, heaven-taught, heaven-sent heralds in pulpits and by dying-beds, in public teaching and in private converse, call and beseech men to behold Him, as the only way of life. What more can Jesus do to cause His mercy to be fully seen?

Reader! if your eyes turns elsewhere, the blame is not with the conspicuous Pillar. When night's mantle wrapped the earth, the Pillar clad itself in robes of fire. It shone, that *all* might see. It shone, that all in seeing might rejoice. Such is the love of Jesus. When is His presence most clear, most cheering? Surely in the *dark hour* of need. When gloom oppresses, when mists of horror rise, when prospects blacken, when the beclouded eye discerns no safety and no peace in earth, then the smile of Jesus gives light. Unusual glories then illumine the road.

The Pillar had an upraised arm. Its ascending spire directed to the skies. So Jesus calls us to an upward flight. How solemnly He warns to rise above the mire and filth of a soul-murdering world! How faithfully He tells that all its baits are poison, its touch pollution, and its wages death! How tenderly He cries—Come unto Me, and leave such vanities below—lean on My arm, and climb the hill of peace—mount by My side, and I will bring you to a reconciled Father's throne, and the high mansions of your God! Thus Jesus points to the heavens. Reader! be wise. To look to Jesus is to soar to heaven.

Such were its peculiar properties. But **its main purpose was to lead.** When it preceded, the willing host advanced. When it stood still, their camps were fixed. They were not called to reason, or to ask, or doubt. All who wish to go or tarry submitted to the ruling column. Their guide was God. His will was love. His way was knowledge. His end was safety. Nothing was left for them, but to observe and follow.

Shall twilight types outshine the Gospel sun? It cannot be. The heirs of grace are cared for, as truly now as then. Their Leader is the same. Be it so, that Christ directs not now by *visible display* of manifested presence. Be it so, that the eye of nature sees not a moving or a halting pillar. Still faith can trace an unseen hand, and the enlightened mind can read the warnings of a heavenly Lord. *Christ guides now by His* **Word**. The Book of books is always by our side. It is a present and a perfect chart. The upward path, the downward slopes, the hidden snares, the plains of safety, the meadows of repose, are all here pencilled with inspired skill. This is the blessed handbook of the blessed route. The humble pilgrim meekly prays, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.' The answer tarries not—'This is the way, walk in it. Is it not pledged, 'When you go, it shall lead you; when you sleep, it shall keep you; and when you awake, it shall talk with you; for the commandment is a lamp and the law is light.' The believer's daily walk attests the truth. When perils have been near, and pitfalls have gaped, and by-ways have enticed the steps, a beacon from the Word has warned and saved.

Reader! would you reach Canaan? Then cling to this ever-living guide. Search it day and night. Make it your chosen friend of every hour. Engraft it by prayer into the soul of every thought. Let it direct the helm of each desire. Think, as it thinks—speak, as it speaks—move, as it beckons—rest, as it counsels. Your steps will then be safe and pure. For the light of Scripture is the light of life. It is Christ's hand, Christ's heart. What was Israel's Pillar to our open Bible's page?

But Jesus multiplies His guiding help. He also extends the **hand of Providence**. He moves the ever-moving wheels of circumstances. No sparrow falls, no leaf decays, but in accordance with His ordering mind. He wills, and things occur. *Chance* is a figment of a dreaming pillow. It never was. It never can be. Thus to the child of God there is no trifle or unimportant event. Momentous issues often hang on rapid words, on sudden looks, on unintended steps. It is so, because the Lord's direction plans and overrules life's every concern.

Hear *Eleazar's* grateful witness, 'I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren.' When *Joseph's* brethren thirsted for his blood, who caused the pit to be unoccupied with water? Who brought the Ishmaelites to bear him into Egypt? Who gave the sleepless night to Persia's *King*? Who brought the aged *Simeon*, the pious *Anna*, at the exact moment, to the temple? Who led *Onesimus* to hear Paul's saving words at Rome?

But perhaps some mind may sometimes ask—Is *this* event the leading of my Lord? There are sure rules. No opening is safe which contradicts the Word. Christ's voice abroad, at home, without, within, is always one. It calls to *seek God's glory, to promote redemption's kingdom, to conquer self, to tread down sloth, to flee the world's applause and lusts, to lift the standard of the cross, and to march boldly in the path of righteousness.* If the path leaves these lines, avoid it. Christ leads not here. Some foe misleads.

But Christ is a Pillar **with more than skill to guide.** There is a virtue in Him to open eyes, that they may see—to quicken feet, that they may follow—to tear reluctance from reluctant hearts. All this He effects by His almighty Spirit. Without such light, the Bible-page is a dark chaos, and wheels of Providence an intricate confusion. Sin has benumbed right sense in souls. Sin has brought blindness on the inner man. But Jesus speaks. The Spirit heals. Sight is restored. A new creation lives—and new-born powers perceive and love and tread the heavenly road.

The Pillar had power to screen. It is written, 'He spread a cloud for *a covering.'* The scorching rays of the sandy desert were thus warded from the journeying host. Reader! I trust that you well know *the cool retreat and sheltering covert of a Savior's wings.* The pilgrim's day is often long and hot, and darts of Satan burn with fiery sting. How soon the heart would faint, how soon the worn-out strength would fail, unless our Pillar cast a grateful shade. It is still true, 'The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night.'

The Pillar never failed. Provoking sins abounded. Ungrateful murmurs sent forth hateful sound. But still no wrath withdrew the guidance. It only vanished when Jordan's stream was reached. Here is the boundless grace of Jesus. If severe iniquity could quench His love, who would not long ago have mourned His absence, and found life to be a starless night? But no! He loves, and lovingly He guides unto the end. The Pillar leaves not until the full blaze of heaven breaks forth. Like Bethlehem's star, it brings to the very place where Jesus is. The beacon shines until the haven is attained. Christ leads to where Christ reigns.

Reader! whom do you follow? Think, Oh! think, whom do you follow? There are hell-ward leaders—not a few. There are downward ways, alas!—too many.

Exo 14.30

THE RED SEA

"Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians." Exo 14:30

Israel's infancy is in a cradle of miracles. The people struggle into being amid displays of more than human help. They prosper, and prevail, in the clear sunshine of God's interposing hand. He watches over them and blesses them, not in the obscure cloak of providential arrangement, but in open manifestations of His present care. These ancient dealings are but a map of what God's children always find. Individual experience is a clear-toned echo to this sacred page. Many a lowly heart in many a lowly hut sees, by the Spirit's light, the features of its inner life in the grand marvels of this God-led race.

Reader! come then, encamp for a few moments by the waters of the Red Sea. We may discern Christ's glories there, as plainly as on the shore of Galilee. The host begins to march, only to find that it can march no further. The door of escape just opens to show escape receding from their grasp. The joyful morn brings in a fearful night. The budding flower hangs withered in their hand. *The moving pillar leads to destruction's jaws!* The camp is pitched. And what is the station? In front break the billows of the Red Sea. Terrific barriers enclose each side. Here stands a wall of rocks, which human steps cannot surmount. There frowning forts forbid approach. But is there safety in the rear? Oh, no! The deadly foe, with deadly rage, pursues. The entangled prey is enfolded in despair. Surely here is the hour when hope must die. To stir is a watery grave. To stir not is to fall by cruelty's sharp scythe. The waves, the sword, alike gape ready to devour. The lashing surge, the battle-cry, speak fast-approaching death. Earth never saw poor prisoners so tightly barred.

Every child of God has some acquaintance with these straits. Through dreary years he may have slaved at bricks, beneath the yoke of hell's foul prince. At last he hears the Spirit's call to peace and freedom. He quickly strives to burst the chains. A few delighted steps are made, and Canaan's rest seems near. But suddenly fresh terrors gather round. The memory of evil days spreads as an ocean in the path. Wave upon wave presents tremendous hindrance. Behind, the thunders of the law wax loud. The fierce sword of justice glitters. On the right, nature's corruptions tower to the skies. On the left, Satan's batteries bristle with near death. These are appalling times. They alone can conceive the misery, who have drunk deep draughts of spiritual distress.

But let no one despair, who knows the Savior's voice, 'Look unto Me, and be you saved.' Other obstacles hem in the heaven-ward road. The sneers, the threats, the taunts, the false reports of persecuting men, form an impeding wall. Joseph and David, and Daniel, and other elders in the family of faith were thus encircled. But let the prayer fly upwards, 'Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Your name.' And the song will soon go forth, 'He brought me forth also into a large place—He delivered me, because He delighted in me.'

Narrow resources often draw narrow bounds. Cherith's brook dries up. The widow says, 'I have but a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse.' *Poverty* obstructs the front. Increased demands cry pressingly in the rear. But broken means do not break the staff of hope. He who lives on the bread of life dies not for lack of earthly grain. *The pensioner on heaven's gold will always have sufficiency of this world's dross!* It is not pledged in vain, 'All things are yours—things present, and things to come.'

The sequel of this history proves all this. Look now to Israel's leader. He rides above this swell of trouble, in all the calmness of unshaken faith. *Firm trust in God is a bolt to keep out fear. It is a door to let in peace.* The sea, the swords, the rocks, the forts, are seen by him without dismay. He knows that all is well when God precedes—that all is safe when God protects—that all is sure when God gives promise. He had heard, 'Certainly I will be with you.' The word ensures success. He had been taught that the mighty Savior, the incarnate God, would spring from Judah's line. The tree must live which holds that seed. Towering on this rock, he commands, 'Do not fear, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you today.'

'Do not fear.' What shall they fear, above whose head the Gospel-standard floats? Faith reads thereon, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' But use no fruitless efforts. The waves are deep. The foes are strong. There is no help in *self*. 'Stand still.' Leave all to *God*.

Reader! here is the **Gospel-warning**. *There is no self-salvation. No power of man can save one soul from one sin's stain.* Cease, then, the vain attempt. 'Stand still.'

Here, also, are **Gospel-tidings**. 'See the salvation of the Lord.' Jesus *alone* has finished all. Alone He paid the penalty of sin. Alone He satisfied each claim of God. Alone He brought in everlasting righteousness. Alone He trod down every hindrance which guilt and hell could raise. This work is gloriously accomplished. Receive it—and you live forever. Turn from it to self-deliverance—and self delivers you to sin's deserts.

The cheering word is added, 'The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.' Jesus is all might, all strength, all victory. *All creatures which are, which have been, which shall be, are less than the least dust before Him!* Who can resist when He uplifts His arm? Believer, all this power is put forth to be your shield and sword. The wrath of man, the malice of devils, can never slay a God-defended life. The tender Shepherd cries, 'My sheep shall never perish.' Stand, then, behind a fighting God, and you are high as heaven above all harm. Raise not the battle-cry, as if the charge was *yours*. Let all your breath be prayer and praise.

And now the voice from heaven is heard. 'Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.' Here is a watchword for the Christian camp. Forward, onward, upward, heaven-ward, should be the daily and hourly shout. Believer, is your life this rapidly-progressing course? Alas! how many loiter! The past year finds them no gainers in the holy race. Others, alas, go back. They did run well. Where are they now? They paused, they lingered. *Dangers threatened. Ease allured. Pleasures seduced.* They turned back. And can they be restored? 'O Lord God, You know.' Believer, rally your energies. In all haste move forward, onward, upward, heaven-ward.

Do overwhelming waves impede the way? Heed them not, if God distinctly speaks. He cannot lead you but in safety's path. Do you say, 'Go forward' contradicts 'Stand still?' It may seem so to reason's blinded sight. But faith finds harmony, when grace gives light. We take no step to expiate our sins, to pay our debts, to appease just wrath, or to procure redemption. While we 'Stand still,' Jesus does all. We are saved by grace, through faith. It is the work of Jesus. It is the gift of God.

But motion and progress prove that we have life. Efforts evince that we have strength. *Works evidence that we have faith.* Fruit is the sign of healthy trees. Warmth is the token that gratitude's bright flame glows warmly in the heart. *Heaven is reached, not by toil, but in toil.* Blessings descend, not for deeds, but on deeds. Faith comes with empty hand. Christ fills it with salvation. *The saved hand soon brings the offerings of devoted love.* Christ dies upon the altar of atonement. Our lives ascend, as incense to His praise. None go so surely *forward to the throne* as they who *stand still at the saving cross.*

My soul, mark next the *prelude* to the final scene. 'Then the angel of God, who had been leading the people of Israel, moved to a position behind them, and the pillar of cloud also moved around behind them. The cloud settled between the Israelite and Egyptian camps. As night came, the pillar of cloud turned into a pillar of fire, lighting the Israelite camp. But the cloud became darkness to the Egyptians, and they couldn't find the Israelites.' Exo 14:19-20

Thus Jesus is a high wall of defense. He encompasses His blood-bought flock. They who would injure His redeemed must beat down His omnipotence. There is no passage for the destroyer's sword, but through the fort of a protecting God. He has, however, a two-fold aspect. What floods of light flow from His smile to each believing heart! Others see nothing but the dark frown of an avenging Judge. Like the pillar, *He has two sides.* 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father,' shines on one. 'Depart, you cursed ones,' is blackly lettered on the other.

Moses now lifts his rod. This hand is first made leprous. Then it is used as a minister of miracles. God works by humbled means. He brings down. Then He exalts. Man is nothing. God is all. The unruly billows heed the commanding sign. Submissive they retire. They open wide a passage through their trackless depths. The watery particles cement into solid walls. The ransomed go forward. Impossibilities flee before them. The God of creation wills deliverance, and all creation meekly lends its help.

The children of *Israel*, obedient to the heavenly call, go on in faith, and reach the longed-for shore. The children of *Egypt* rush in presumptuously, without command. O my soul, follow God fully, and stagger not. But never move without the light of guidance from on high. *Faith walks dry-shod. Presumption drowns.*

For a brief moment vengeance seems to pause. But in the morning-watch the Lord *looked* on them, and His look was trouble. Who can conceive the power of that eye? It broke the heart of Peter. It showed at once his sin and pardon. It brought the trembling woman to her knees. It made her tongue tell all.

Reader! soon will it pierce each corner of your soul. 'For every eye shall see Him.' Think, will the glance of the returning Jesus seal your eternal bliss, or drive you lost into despair's abode? The same instrument saves or destroys, as God commands. Thus the obedient waves flow back. With resistless might, they sweep the ruined to a wretched end. 'There remained not so much as one of them.'

The Holy Spirit erects a column on the shore, and writes a worthy record. 'Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians—and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.' O my soul, read it in prayer, in wonder, and in praise. It tells the final glory of the Gospel—the saved all saved—the lost all lost. Yes, the Lord will surely save His people with an everlasting salvation. No peril shall impede their triumph. No foe shall hinder. Trials and snares, afflictions and temptations shall not impede. The grave shall not detain. Death shall yield up its prey. The true Israel shall reach the land of never-fading joy. With palms in their hands, and crowns on their heads, they shall ascribe, in ceaseless songs, all victory to the cross of Jesus.

In *ruined Egypt* mark the last doom of the ungodly world. Too late they see their madness. Too late they strive to flee.

Reader! take warning. Perdition is a truth which many learn too late.

Exo 15.23-25

MARAH

When they came to **Marah**, they could not drink its water because it was **bitter**. (That is why the place is called Marah.) So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?" Then Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the Lord made a decree and a law for them, and there he tested them. Exo 15:23-25

Perhaps joy's bright flame was never brighter than in Israel's sons, when they moved onwards from *the marvels of the sea.* Slavery's chain was wholly broken. Their foes lay prostrate. The Lord was for them. The Lord was with them. What more could be desired? Can it be, that a people thus guarded, and thus guided, shall find trouble? Where the Lord precedes, can the path be other than the sunny slope of unalloyed delight? True it is, that *heavenly leading is always a right way.* But true it is, that *the right way may be sharp with thorns, and rough with difficulties, and beset with storms.* Paul's voyage was ordered, but he was sorely tossed, and barely reached the shore.

This truth is on the forefront of Israel's truth-teaching story. 'They went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.' Here was *a sudden check to hope's high tide.* They then advanced to Marah. Water there flowed. It was, however, but a *mocking* stream. The taste was bitter, and they could not drink.

Reader! behold **two stages in the Christian journey**. A grievous need occurs. A grievous disappointment presses in its rear. But let not such things move you, nor excite surprise. Are you not called to be as a richly-laden tree? Your every branch must bend with fruits of faith and hope and patience. But *faith thrives most in trouble's soil.* Hope's note is sweetest in the tempest's roar. Patience gains strength beneath the cross's weight. The diamond sparkles because the file is rough. Trials are needful, or they would not be. Trials are needful, therefore they abound. They walk as sisters beside goodness and mercy. They attend the believer, as appointed guards to heaven's gate. No saint sinks in these wholesome waves. But many a thoughtless soul sleeps fatally, because *the downy pillow* is not shaken. Learn, then, from Marah, to *expect some bitter draught.*

Next, Marah withdraws a veil, and we can **trace the line between a graceless and a gracious heart.** The multitude turns *from* God. Moses flees *to* Him. One looks to *earth* and frets. The other looks *above* and hopes. Believer, let me ask you, why is a *throne of grace* so near? Why have you open access to it? It is, that burdens may not crush you. It is, that fears may die as soon as born—that doubts may wither as a blighted bud. Mercy and grace are always strewed in rich abundance round it. Faith may take empty vessels and fill them until they overflow. The case of Moses teaches this. He knocks. The door flies open. A ready ear hears. A ready hand supplies. The people's hard and thankless thoughts present no bar. A faithful servant cries. A loving Father grants. 'The Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet.'

Reader! learn next, that **it is the Lord's wisdom to give relief in the use of means.** He whose word called all things out of nothing could in one moment have caused healthful springs to bubble forth. But no. A *remedy* is announced. Faith must trust. Obedience must comply. Diligence must work. Effort must be up and doing. The poisoned Israelites must *look* to the uplifted pole. The leprous Naaman must *wash* in Jordan seven times. The perishing sinner must *flee* to the crucified Jesus. The needy saint must *hasten* to the mercy-seat. *Sloth's couch is at the gate of hell.* Activities and energies scale heaven. Striving enters the strait gate. The fighting warrior receives the prize.

Reader! you are thus prepared to hear, that in following Jesus, *your pilgrim-steps will often reach a bitter well.* But murmur not. At every Marah there is **a tree** whose leaves drop sweetness and whose taste is balm. But bear in mind, the eye of faith alone can see it—the hand of faith alone can touch it.

Holy Spirit of the living God, we look to You. Increase our faith. Help us to discern, help us to apply the remedy which grace provides. Shine on this lowly effort to commend the sweetness of the 'plant of renown.' May all who read experience its healing worth!

Let us now take the cases most familiar to each pilgrim's route. The bitterest Marah is **bitterness of heart**. Each heaven-bound traveler well knows this spot. The downcast Heman pitched his tent beside it. The prolific fountain where these waters spring is *an accusing memory.* It causes all the past to live again. At its command a train of buried sins appear in frightful freshness. They seem as young as the deeds of yesterday, and hideous as the fiends of darkness. Each tells a tale which cannot be denied. Each points to fiery death as the wages of its work. Each shows an open prison-door. Each shakes the chain of ruin's cell. Well may the stricken conscience quake. A stern voice, also, is heard, 'Can he who sinned these sins have hope of life? Hell's jailer sneers, You will be mine at last!' Who can drink this wormwood and survive?

But sweet relief is near. **Jesus, the tree of life**, extends His bending branches to the anxious touch. Let the poor sinner boldly shake it. A shower of healing leaves falls thick. Each yields the honey of these honeyed tidings, 'I, even, I, am He, that blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins.' 'As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.' When such relief is intermixed, the hateful and bitter taste goes away. *The virtue of a Savior's death extracts all poison from the cup.*

Another Marah soon appears. **The believer is tempted to seek refreshment from some inward source.** Then nothing meets him but a brackish pool. What is man's heart, but the loathsome depths of the Dead Sea? Adam's first sin defiled the fountain-head, and poisoned *springs* give nothing but poisoned *streams*. Alas! what ceaseless currents of corruptions force their way! Who has not cause to mourn with Paul, 'When I would do good, evil is present with me'? *What raging passions, what unruly tempers, what vile desires, what godless thoughts, what vain conceits, pollute our cisterns with their noxious fluid!* The best of fallen human nature is a miry ditch.

Is there no help? There is, in **the all-sweetening tree!** Jesus presents His cure. Welcome the hallowing Savior, and grace will distill from Him, to make each stagnant marsh a rivulet of health. He can create a new heart, and renew a right spirit. He can sanctify wholly. He can preserve pure and blameless. He can work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. No Marah is so bitter, as the heart when Christ is absent. No spring is so health-giving as the heart which Christ inhabits.

There is another Marah in **the world's biting hate**. Enmity still separates the seed of the serpent and the seed of Christ. The race of *Ishmael* still persecutes the child of promise. Motives are mistaken. Words are distorted. Love for souls is reviled as airs of superiority. To warn of danger seems to boast of self. Zeal for truth is termed a party-strife. To depart from evil is pharisaic pride. This draught is bitter to a tender spirit. But Christ can make it sweet. His arms of love especially embrace His suffering witnesses. The music of His whispers drowns the harsh thunder of the hardest threats. *Daniel* will tell you that his sweetest night was in the lion's den. The *captive children* never felt heaven nearer than in the chamber of the flames. *Paul* never sang more joyously than in the inner prison cell. View, also, the glorious *martyrs* of our blessed church. They clasped the stake. They reveled in the fires. Jesus was with them. They drank of the bitterest brook. But there was no bitterness therein.

Believer, perhaps you go heavily because of some **personal or domestic ordeal.** Few are unused to this affliction's gloom. Is it your case, that nights are pain, and the returning light brings langour? Does your frame totter as a reed? Is sickness your consuming guest? This is your Marah. Bitter indeed it is to nature's palate. But I am bold to uplift Jesus, as ready to make even this well all sweet. Failing strength is not a sign of failing interest in a Savior's heart. Lazarus was loved. Yet Lazarus was sick. Feeble may be the cry. But feeble cries are strong to move our sympathizing Savior. His precious cordials will revive the drooping spirit. Can He be present, and joy not sit beside Him? How many languid smiles attest that *hours of pain are pledges of the painless heaven!*

Perhaps **poverty** may touch your inventory with withering hand? You once were full; you now are empty. This is your Marah. Who will deny that the trial is most grievous? But experience in God's Word and ways will prove, that this cup may run over in abundance of content. There is no empty coffer to him who sings, 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not lack.' *Elijah* had no bursting barns. But heaven-sent messengers supplied his earliest and his lattermost needs. *The faith which finds all things in Christ extracts all gall from poverty.*

Do you sit in **bereavement's** solitude? Is a much-loved form no longer seen? Is a much-loved voice no longer heard? This is your Marah. The cup is bitter. But Jesus's comforts blossom most, when earthly flowers die. He lives, and lives to heal your weeping wounds. Ask the mourning widow of Nain who changed her sorrow into joy. Ask the disconsolate sisters of Bethany who dried their tears. The quick reply is—Jesus. Has He ceased to pity? Can His tenderness grow hard? It cannot be. His presence can fill, and more than fill each void.

Reader! there is another Marah. The brink of it is at your feet. Another step may reach the stream of **death**. The waters here seem often to be very bitter. But Jesus has efficacy to make them sweet. Approach, then, leaning on His arm, trusting in His cross, hidden in His wounds, covered by His righteousness, and you will find the taste be all joy. *The bitterness of death is sin unpardoned.* But the blood which takes away all sin, takes out all poison.

When you have passed this brook, all Marahs are behind you. But what is the ocean which now stretches onward and onward, without limit, without shore? It is the heaven of God's pleasures. It is the ocean of God's glory. The redeemed drink forever. And as they drink, the depth seems deeper, and the sweetness sweeter.

Reader! are you *a stranger to a Savior's grace?* If so, your dwelling now is always at a Marah's side. Your daily well holds the bitter water of vanity, vexation, sorrow, disappointment, discontent. Time bears you swiftly to the final stage. What then? There is the cup of trembling and of wrath. Your hands must take it. Your mouth must drink. But you can never drain it. There is no last drop. *Infinite vengeance* ever fills it to the brim. Eternal wrath is ever bringing more. The merciless tormentor, with unwearied savageness, presents it to the lips.

Reader! think of the rich man and his uncooled tongue. Think of the redeemed. 'The Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters.'

Exo 15.26

THE HEALER

by Henry Law

"I am the Lord who **heals** you." Exo 15:26

These words first cheered the heart of Moses. But they are the common heritage of the Church of God. This day they reach our ears. May they bring healing on their wings!

Reader! in thought survey the porches of *Bethesda's pool.* Can earth present a sight of deeper woe? Malady makes every form its prey. Each sound is burdened with a sufferer's groan. The heart is hard which can repress the sigh, Oh! that these pains might end! But vain may be the wish. For *human ailment often baffles human skill.* It knows no certain cure. Are you prepared to see your own case in those cells? Transfer the sickness from the *body* to the *soul*, and then your couch is surely spread among these sufferers. ***Sin** makes this world a universal hospital. It drives earth's millions into one Bethesda.*

Reader! do you sigh here, Oh! that these deeper pains might end! This speedily may be. There is *one sure relief.* **Jesus** stands near, a spiritual Healer, mighty to cause the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, the leprous to be clean, and every wound to close. *No case exceeds His healing power!* These lines are written, that *sin-diseased souls* may now be led to drink at this truth's fount.

Holy Spirit! grant Your aid. Show that the *malady* of sin abounds throughout man's tribes. Show that all *remedy* much more abounds in Christ. The cure will be more prized, if first we mark the many features of our deep disease. Let us remove the mask, then, and behold the multiform malignity of this fiend—sin. Sin is a universal taint. No child of man escapes it. We tread this earth diverse in climate, in station, in mental power, in mold of temper, and in frame of body. But all who breathe life's breath are spotted with this plague. Adam's foul fall infused the evil poison into nature's veins. Each parent sows this seed. No offspring is infection-free. Cain was conceived in sin. The last babe must be corruption's heir.

Reader! your cradle may have been wealth's downy pillow, or poverty's harsh provisions. You may have intellect to command a gazing world's applause, or you may crawl unknown to an unknown grave. In these externals no two may be the same. But all are one in oneness of distempered soul. Each mother's infant is transgression's child. Sin is an all-spoiling evil. It is a weed which overruns the garden. It stains all men, and every part in each.

It enters to **pervade**. Its root is in the soul. Eden saw it planted there. But its fibers and its branches spread through each faculty of mind and body. See how it masters the whole inner frame. The heart first sickens. This becomes harder than the nether millstone, the nest of every unclean bird, the den of lust's vile brood. The head soon grows distempered. Hence error and ignorance expel right judgment. The world is worshiped as a rightful lord. Hell is derided as some weak fable. Repentance is reserved for dying moments. The glorious Word is scorned as the bewildered page in which the brain-sick and fanatic glean delusions. The eye is blind to see the 'chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely One.' The ear hears nothing but discord in the Gospel-note. The palate has no relish of healthful food. The lips, the mouth, the throat, the tongue, are festered with contaminating sores. Alas! how many words go forth to spread contagion and to scatter death. Thus the disease runs wildly through the whole man

Sin is the union of all spiritual maladies in one compacted mass. It is no solitary evil. It comes in troops, in flocks, in swarms. In our frames one member may be weak, the others strong. But in this hospital, all sufferings at once make every sufferer their prey. One ailment is all ailments. One part infected leaves no part in health. Sin never yields to earth-born cure. All trials have been tried. But failure is the end of each. Self has ransacked the stores of *self*. Wounds have been washed with tears, and bound with bands of a strict moral life. The cup of penance and of rigid religious vows has often been drunk with eager lip. But remedy is not in these. A feather cannot halt the fast-rushing stream. A little pruning will not kill the branch. Oil will not quench a flame.

Shall then the sin-sick fly to religious forms and ceremonies and hallowed rites? Alas! their anguish lies too deep for superficial cure. Uplifted hands and bended knees, and all the sacredness of sacred things, have in themselves *no virtue to choke evil's fount!* The love of holy service is a *sign* of health. But it cannot *bestow* health. Restored cripples leap and walk and praise as *evidence* of strength, but not to gain it. No human medicines give soul-health.

Sin's end is endless death. Its course is sure. The falling stone rolls downward to the lowest depths. The stream flows on until the ocean's bed is reached. Thus *sin's strong bias rushes to the pit of hell. Oh! mark those writhing sufferers in the burning lake!* Ask them what brought them to their woe. One wild shriek answers, Sin! Sin uncured, unchecked. Ah! sinner, your inward malady seems little now. What will it prove, hereafter? Its present touch gives little pain, but it has *iron arms.* The embrace seems gentle now. But it will tighten into ever-tightening torture.

This sketch is dark. The reality is darker far. But why are these black colors laid? The purpose is, to form a background for the Scripture-light. The malady's malignity is drawn to show that one Physician alone can avail. Look now toward the chambers of the Gospel-feast. The horizon gleams with rays. The Sun of Righteousness appears; and there is 'healing in his wings.' Amid Bethesda's crowded seats, the blessed Jesus stood, omnipotent to heal. Amid the soul-sick, He as surely stands with like omnipotence. He comes, and His voice is, 'I am the Lord who heals you.' Behold His outstretched hands. They bear a perfect remedy. He takes away sin's poison, and it cannot kill. He soothes its wounds, and they can no more pain. He cuts its roots, and they can no more spread. Come, hear these tidings from His Word of Truth.

Your first complaint is, that your sickness is the seed of everlasting death. True! It is dragging you with rapid force towards a gaping grave! *But Jesus takes your sins and nails them to His cross!* Then in His death they die. Then in His wounds they disappear. He washes you with His heart's blood. He bathes you in this precious stream. And never, never are your sins found again. Thus condemnation is forever gone.

Is not that sickness healed which has no power to harm? Thus Jesus is the sinner's Healer. He brings in pardon. Pardon changes malady to health, because it changes death to life. Believer, you are thus relieved. Let your song ever be, He forgives all my iniquities—and so He heals all my diseases.

But you still sigh that, though future punishment is gone, yet present pain still gnaws. The scar may cause pain, which is not unto death. You are a guilt-touched wretch. And sense of guilt is an unceasing ache. Truly these tears are bitter. But in Jesus there is solace for these pangs. No ease can come, but by the Spirit's hand. He only takes it from the Savior's blood. But He brings soothing virtue thence and lulls the accusing conscience into rest. He can present, as an assuaging cup, the tender promise, 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' He can apply the calming argument—Why should memory dwell sobbingly on what God casts behind His back forever? He can teach, that *a head crowned with pardon's crown should not hang down.* Thus Jesus fulfils the word; He gives 'unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning.' Thus sin is cured because its pain is soothed. Believer, will you not confess it? He 'is sent to heal the broken-hearted'?

But you may add, that more is needed to restore full health. *You mourn that the vile roots lie deep within.* No child of God is unconscious of the lurking evil. While the flesh is flesh, it is the hot-bed of corruption. **But Jesus can subdue the plague!** By sanctifying grace He can create a clean heart and renew a right spirit. He can implant a counteracting principle of godly love. He can give strength to fight the good fight of faith, to run with patience in pure paths, and to find no delight but in God's will. *O my soul, cling then to the cross! In its atmosphere evil withers, and holiness grows firm!*

Thus Jesus cures all sin. It can no more condemn nor vex nor rule. They walk in healthy peace with God, in healthy peace within, in healthy paths of holy life, whose hearts have heard, 'I am the Lord that heals you.'

Perhaps you still fear, lest *the extreme malignity of your case* should baffle all this skill. It would be so, except the Healer were Jehovah-Jesus. But mark. His title shivers all such doubts. He cries 'I am the Lord who heals you.' *Almightiness is the property of this arm!* He wills, and it is done. He works, and none can thwart. If all the maladies of all the sufferers in earth and hell formed one huge sickness centering on your soul, let Christ the Lord but speak, and perfect is your cure!

Are you distressed, lest *long lying on sin's couch* should bar against you every door of hope? Consider well, **the Healer**. At Bethesda's pool he singles out the wretchedness of him who 'had been now *a long time* in that case.' *Extremity of misery* was a melting plea to Jesus. His heart is still the same. Take courage. If, from the day of Adam's fall, your malady had rolled onward as a swelling stream, His tender love could turn it all to health!

Does conscience groan beneath the load of prominent provocations? You may have turned from many a gracious call. This very case is met by mercy's sweet voice. Read your sure welcome in the page of life. 'I was angry and punished these greedy people. I withdrew myself from them, but *they went right on sinning*. I have seen what they do, but *I will heal them anyway!* I will lead them and comfort those who mourn.' Isa 57:17-18

You reply, that *the hand of faith alone can take the remedy.* But your faith so trembles that it scarcely lives. Behold the *timid woman* of the Gospel. With down-cast eye, with tottering step, she comes, and instantly the touch was life. Do but the same—and you will hear, 'Your faith has made you whole; go in peace.'

Shall all this earnest pleading fail? It only remains, then, to pray again that the all-conquering Spirit would make you willing to be among the Healer's healed ones. *Oh! look to Jesus's cross.* It was ordained of old. It was erected on Calvary. It is uplifted in the Gospel. It is magnified in every faithful pulpit. But why? Surely that miseries may end, and spiritual diseases may be cured! *On it the Heavenly Healer dies Himself, that His death may be the death of sin!* On it He *bleeds*, that His blood may drop health. On it He *suffers* wounds, that the wounded may be whole. On it He gives His body to most painful pains, that ease may be His people's portion. On it He lays down His life, that they may have life.

And now He cries, Come, without money, without price. Come, leave your sickness, and return with health! Will you not join the blessed company, who sing in renewed strength, 'With His stripes we are healed'? Will you not enter the land in which no inhabitant mourns, 'I am sick—the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity'?

Exo 16.15

MANNA

"It is **Manna**." Exo 16:15

Food was provided for the chosen tribes, unseen before by human eye, untouched before by human hand. 'They knew not what it was.' Reader! when here the Manna is presented to your view, I hope it comes as a familiar thought. It is faith's way to lay it up in *memory's ark*, as the rich **emblem of Salvation's feast.**

Manna has many tongues. But its first sound proclaims, that **God is gracious**. Mark the occasion of these showers of bread. Hunger pressed sore upon the journeying host, and pressed vile murmurs from their fretful hearts. The deep-toned mutters reached the courts on high. Will the swift lightning check rebellious madness? Oh, no! The Lord is full of pity, and delights in love. He opens heaven to pour down supplies. The supply is a miracle. The miracle is a wreath of combined wonders. Each wonder is a rich display of Jesus, and *teaches* now, as clearly as it *fed* of old. Thus God puts on a diadem of **grace**, and *crowns the thankless with most tender mercies.*

But goodness in bestowing food is mere *candle*-grace beside the bright shinings of redemption's gift. They who would see grace in its zenith must trace it in the Gospel-scheme. When the whole family of man, in Adam's loins, stood before God, lost, ruined, and undone—*one leprous mass of misery and sin*—shameless, tearless, prayerless—**mercy** took up the song, and promised that a Savior should descend, even an incarnate God! Reader! your heart is rock indeed, if you hear this, and give no praises to Jehovah's grace.

It was all dark around, when this soft shower reached our earth. We read, 'When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the Manna fell upon it.' In like manner, spiritual blindness was the world's thick shroud when Jesus came, distilling blessing from His wings. So when His gentle droppings first touch *the sinner's heart*, He finds it *a black mass of midnight gloom.*

When *morning* came, the dew dissolved and left the Manna obvious to the sight. Thus for a while Jesus lies hidden in the Word, and ordinances, and Gospel-rites, which fall in thick and sparkling abundance around our homes. It is not until the Sun of Righteousness arises, that the real treasure is discerned. Then unsubstantial privileges fade off, and Christ remains the whole of soul-support. Reader! the dew was a fit mantle for this heaven-sent food. But it has neither taste nor vital juice. Just so *the means of grace* are lovely caskets of the heavenly treasure. But he who would have life must pass beyond them to the Lord Himself.

The Manna was *small,* and *round,* and *white,* and *sweet*. Each property tells much of Jesus's worth into the ear of faith.

It was **small**. It lay a little seed upon the bare earth. Pride would take up a ready sneer. Can this *simple mite* proceed from *heaven's* store? Jesus appears. No royal state surrounds. No royal home receives. No royal retinue attends. In lowly guise, He appears as the lowliest of lowly men. His highest station upon earth is in humility's deep valley. But *meekness is His Majesty.* Abasement is His Glory. Believer, He puts on your flesh, that He may clothe you in His brightest glory. He sinks to nothingness, to exalt you above all greatness. He lives and dies in shame, contempt, and pain, that you may reign in all the honors of the highest heavens. Your blessings bud forth from His despicable estate.

The Manna was **round**. The hand which handled found no first and no last point. It was *a surface without beginning, without end.* Behold the wondrous Jesus. Who can ascend to the spring-head of His birth? Who can stretch forward to the boundary of His life? Who can discern a limit in the circles upon circles of His being? Look through the ages of *eternity past.* In all He lives unchanged, unchangeable. Look through the ages of *eternity to come.* He still lives unchanged, unchangeable. Believer, is not this thought *an ocean of delight*, as wide as the breadth and length of your Savior's love? He never was, but with your image on His heart. And while He lives, your image will be there.

The Manna was **white**. *It covered the mire of earth*, a bright contrast to surrounding stains. Its spotless hue proved its descent to be from a pure home. Turn now to Jesus. His every look and word and step are as dazzling, as the holiness of heaven. *He was the Righteousness of God embodied in the flesh of man.* He trod this earth, as perfect as God is perfect. He ever shined untainted, as the beam from the mid-day sun. It could not be otherwise. Deity forbade anything else. *Impossibility of sin* is Jehovah's essence. It must be so. Redemption needed it. *He who would save a soul from sin must give the offering of a sinless soul.* Reader! would you be blameless before God? Put on Christ Jesus.

The Manna was **sweet**. The palate tasted, and delighted in the luscious savor. It **nourished**, and the nourishment brought pleasure to the lips. This is the Savior's emblem. *He is all sweetness to the feasting soul.* Is it not heaven's own luxury to feed upon divine assurances that all sins are fully and forever pardoned—all guilt fully and forever cancelled—all debts fully and forever paid—all pledges of glory faithfully and forever pledged? Is it not sweet to gaze with open eye on a reconciled Father's smile—to receive unmeasured comfort, instruction, strength, and guidance from the indwelling Spirit—to realize, that ministering angels encamp around—that holy men love us, evil men serve us, and all things present and to come are our sure heritage? *Jesus is this sweet Manna!* Is it not sweet to be regaled all day at *such a banquet*, to repose all night on *such a pillow*, to walk through life in *such green pastures?* This is the believer's Manna. Worldling, is your meal thus sweet?

Each day the multitude was busy in the field. The constant food fell thick, the constant hand collected. O my soul, let *gathering* be your daily work. Time is prolonged, that you may thrive. And what is thriving, but to gain more truth? *The worldling toils a life-long drudgery in gleaning mere husks!* Can you sit still, when Christ is to be won? Believe me—that is your richest day which accumulates the most of Jesus. Your best, without Him, is an empty blank.

They went forth **early**. The sun's first beams illumined them to their happy task. Here mark, how *morning diligence succeeds.* It is the truest wisdom, the surest peace, the largest profit, when opening day finds you with *open heart* before the mercy-seat, with *open lip* adoring God, with *open Bible* seeking the Lord. The arrow long retains the first direction of the hand that propels it. The vessel rarely loses the savor of its first contents. *The day-break blessing is a day-long gain.* Let Jesus draw back your *morning*-curtain, and He will sanctify the *mid-day* labor, and lull you to the *night's* repose.

Perhaps some *youthful* eye is resting on this page. Beloved, turn not from a wise entreaty. Give to the Lord the first fruits of your being. He is worthy, for He is all worthiness. He calls you with especial grace—'Those who seek me early, shall find me.' And finding Him, you find an ever-blessing portion. Apart from Him, you must be lost. In Him you shall be saved. *All is a wilderness of woe without Him. All is a Paradise of joy with Him.* If angels sing with sweeter song, methinks it must be round a Christian youth. Come early. Come now. None ever came too soon. Many, alas, have sought too late!

For every hand there was exact sufficiency. 'By gathering two quarts for each person, everyone had just enough. Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered only a little had enough. Each family had just what it needed.' *Infinite are each poor sinner's sins; and each sin has infinite demerit!* Boundless is the unrighteousness of every soul, boundless the covering which is needed. Countless are the needs which cry for countless helps. But he who lives *bathing in a Savior's blood*, and suing out a Savior's righteousness, and wrestling for a Savior's grace, will never say that the blood, the righteousness, the grace, exceed his daily need. *He gets enough, but he has nothing to spare.*

He, also, who flees at the last, and only touches with a trembling hand the extremest edge of Jesus's robe, if it be but the touch of *heaven-born faith*, receives full pardon and eternal life. *A crumb* of Jesus's merits is the saving of the soul forever!

The daily food was only for that same day. To *hoard* was to distrust the daily-giving hand. If kept until the next day, it became corruption, to be buried out of sight. So, also, in grace, *the present handful is for present use!* The morrow's necessity will have the morrow's shower. Away with chilly fears. The Manna came as **surely** as the light. Jesus never fails to pour His plenties down. Trade, then, with the *present* stock. The worst of cases is the case of grace misused. The *buried talent* cries with condemning voice. Christ not diffused, is Christ misused. Treasure is not enjoyed, until it be well employed. He is most rich, who most enriches others.

For every state and age, the Manna was the one remedy. There is only one dreadful plague. There is only one precious cure. The highest palace and the humblest cot; the lettered hall and the unlettered cabin; the aged bed, the cradle of the young; *all alike are tainted with one leprous spot.* One only remedy meets the one malady—the remedy of the life and death of Christ.

The Manna came not through man's toil. But still it came not to encourage sloth. Active labor must grind and sweeten for the use. Vain is it that Christ with all salvation is at the door, vain is the Bible-store, vain is the pulpit-food, except the eager soul gird up the loins of eager doing. *Faith labors all the day to draw out sweetness from the Gospel-page.* With skillful care it sifts each word. With anxious appetite it sucks the sweet.

The Manna preaches, also, with wisdom's voice. It cries, Keep holy the Sabbath-day. It comes from heaven, therefore it proclaims God's law. It comes to be a blessing, therefore it points to obedience as the path. When will man's blindness learn that there is no profit, and no peace, but in the ways and will of God? Who ever gained in Sabbath-shops, or by a Sabbath-spade? From the seed of Sabbath-work springs up a harvest of soul-piercing woe. Israel's rest was never Israel's loss.

The Manna sustained the body for a little while. But it was weak to blunt the shafts of death. In the wilderness they ate and died. But Christ gives endless life to each partaking soul. Reader! drink in the tidings, 'I am the living bread, which came down from heaven—if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever—and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'

Lord, increase my faith! Help me to see in Your broken body, all that I need for strength, for vigor, and for joy of heart. The more we crave, the more we get. The more we get, the more we crave.

The Manna lasted through the wilderness-march. Thus Jesus is an enduring supply for all life's weary way. And when *time's crumbs* are no more needed, *eternity's full feast* begins. Sweet is the present *taste* of grace—but what will be *the heavenly feast?* My soul, press onward—and you soon will know!

Exo 17.6

THE SMITTEN ROCK

"I will meet you by the rock at Mount Sinai. **Strike the rock**, and water will come pouring out. Then the people will be able to drink." Moses did just as he was told; and as the leaders looked on, water gushed out. Exo 17:6

It was a bitter trial when Marah's bitter spring mocked the parched lip. But sweet relief was near. The sweetened draught soon changed vexation into joy. After a little pause the same dark trial re-appears in darker form. The multitude advance into the desert's depths. And here all streams quite fail. They thirst and search, but search in vain. The scene is universal drought. *Thus troubles die and live again.*

This is a common circumstance in faith's march. Afflictions clear away; but soon the self-same shadows grow thick. *Joseph* escapes the pit, and then the dungeon binds him fast. *David*, safe from Adullam's cave, must seek a refuge in Engedi's wilds. Troops, also, of *lusts* which seemed through grace, quite slain in former days, with mustered force will re-assail old age. The weeds of evil, long plucked up, will rear again their noxious head. Satan lays Abraham low in Egypt, and shoots an arrow from the same shaft in Gerar. The falling spoke of the revolving wheel soon re-ascends. The ebbing tide rolls in again tomorrow.

Believer, do not think of *undisturbed repose* until the flesh is forever dropped. *There is a ceaseless cycle of sorrow and temptation here in this world.* But do not despise the scourge. It has a teaching voice. It is held by a loving Father's hand. Hence the command, 'Hear the rod, and Him who has appointed it.' This *school of trial best discloses the hidden vileness of the heart, and the vast riches of a Savior's grace.* It is so in the case before us. The hard repinings of the chosen race betray poor human nature's sinful bias. But on rebellion's base a lovely pillar rises, on which all ages read the golden glories of the Lord.

The people chide, and tempt their God. Moses seeks the open refuge of a mercy-seat. How precious is this spot! A gracious answer soon allays all fears, and soon supplies all need. The Lord said to Moses, "Take your shepherd's staff, the one you used when you struck the water of the Nile. Then call some of the leaders of Israel and walk on ahead of the people. I will meet you by the rock at Mount Sinai. Strike the rock, and water will come pouring out. Then the people will be able to drink." Moses did just as he was told; and as the leaders looked on, water gushed out. Exo 17:5-6

Reader! draw near in reverence. The ground is holy. *That Rock is Christ! That gash is His wounded side! Those streams are His abundant grace!*

First sift the foremost thoughts which the idea of **ROCK** presents. It is a mass of **mighty strength**. The lashing billows lash in vain. The raging storm stirs not its fixed repose. All changing ages find it still unchanged. These properties exhibit Christ. Mark His decrees. Eternal love arranged salvation's scheme. The hand of sovereign grace drew the wise record of His wondrous kingdom. This chart is framed forever. To blinded reason, chance may seem to rule, and man's wild will to hold the helm. But all things serve the counsels of His plan. The falling sparrow and the tottering throne, the fading leaf, and the declining empire, obey a fixed resolve. His purpose cannot be moved. He is a Rock.

Survey His **wondrous love**. It yearns over a vast multitude of ruined souls. It calls them to His knowledge. It gives them pledges of His zeal to save. How is this love requited? Alas! what cold indifference, what harsh ingratitude, what proud contempt, what daring rebellion, what ceaseless provocations, concur to shut up His loving-kindness in displeasure! But still, He loves unto the end of endless ages. And why? He is a Rock.

When He sought earth on mercy's wings, all powers of evil met Him with their deadliest force. The might of Satan is the united might of fallen spirits. With what ease he sweeps his crowds from earth to hell! With what resistless power he forges chains to bind men in the fiery lake! He put forth all his efforts to lay Jesus low. But every aim recoiled. The battering blows were death-blows to himself. Jesus stands as a Rock.

Reader! this Rock is near, your one support, your only refuge. Be wise, and lay your every **sin** on Him. The weight indeed would weigh down worlds. But He can bear *all*. He can bear all *away*.

Be wise, and cast your every **care** on Him. Cares come indeed with rapid tide, and threaten to overwhelm. But let them waft you to the mercy-seat, where Jesus waits to take them. In faith and prayer roll them on Him. They cannot over-burden Him. He is a Rock.

Moses must **SMITE** the Rock. And do not blows fall heavily on Christ? He comes to undergo all penalties of sin. The holy Law has spoken from its holy throne. In all the majesty of God it has denounced unutterable and immeasurable woe on every breach of its most glorious code. Transgression is an inevitable curse. The statutes of heaven would be a trifler's jest, the threats of God would be an unmeaning tale, unless this vengeance in its utmost fury fall. Who can pass heaven's gate by trampling on heaven's edicts? The Word, severe in righteousness and righteous in severity, must reign inviolate.

The stricken Jesus is proof that it is so. The Surety-God meets the violated law. Can it spare Him? To spare Him is to make salvation void. It spares Him not. The command is, "Smite the Rock!" The antitype is the smitten Jesus. He gives His back to the relentless vengeance, until by His stripes His people are all freed. He is smitten for them. They are smitten in Him. He dies for them. They die in Him. The Rock receives fast-falling blows. Thus it is shelter, and the sheltered are unharmed.

These sufferings of the bleeding Lamb are the brightness and the glory of our Bible. Let the cross vanish, let the agony be put aside, let the dying cry be no more heard, and what is the Gospel message? Its promises deceive. Its hope is wild despair. Its peace is torture. Its life is endless death. Its freedom rivets stronger chains. They who trust in it lean on a piercing reed. They who plead it plead a betraying plea. It is an atonement which atones not. It is expiation which removes no guilt. It is satisfaction which answers no demand. It is redemption which pays no price. It is salvation which saves no soul. But blessed be the gracious God of all grace! the cross erects its heaven-high head throughout the Scriptures. A bruised God-man bleeds thereon. In his heart the sword of justice is hidden to its very hilt. Jehovah's fellow exhausts Jehovah's wrath.

Reader! mark well the smitten Rock. Behold these clefts. They gape to screen offenders from pursuing rage. Flee to them. Enter in. Hide yourself, your soul, your sins, in those deep wounds. Secreted there, you are safe, safe from all foes, safe for all ages. No curse can touch you. No wrath can find you. Satan cannot reach you. Guilt cannot ruin you. The pierced side is a God-wrought, a God-strong refuge.

The host needs **water**. But can the hard stone melt into running streams? Yes! All things can change their nature at their Maker's will. To serve His people the sea congeals, the flint dissolves. Believer, this is a marvel which your own heart knows. It once was as the nether-millstone. But struck by the Spirit's rod, it flows a rivulet of faith, and gratitude, and praise, and love. When Jesus is uplifted, scorn may demand, Can blessings break forth from that pierced side? Yes! By those stripes the heaven of heavens opens, all hindrances remove, and a wide channel spreads for grace upon grace to flow. The wounds of Jesus are the Spirit's avenue. They send forth blood indeed to purchase pardon. They give forth *water*, also, the sparkling emblem of the *power of grace*.

Sweet was this blessing to the pilgrims of the desert. It allayed all *thirst*, it cleansed all *stains*, it cooled when heat oppressed. But sweeter far are spiritual supplies from the true Rock to the true sons of God. Gracious souls are as the parched soil. They thirst, they daily thirst for clearer views of God, for deeper knowledge of redeeming love, for brighter light on Gospel-hopes. And they thirst not in vain. The Spirit gives deep cups of glorious truth. They drink with gladness, and their hearts rejoice. He is most happy who lives the nearest to this stream.

Gracious souls need constant cleansing. They mourn corruptions which still live within them. With hateful wing their thoughts and feelings hover over evil's mire. They pant for inward purity. For this the Spirit's help is near. He sprinkles clean water on their wills and ways, and thus preserves them from the hated filth. He is most holy who draws most water from this fount.

Gracious souls are often pierced with fiery darts. The flames of passion irritate and scorch. Nothing in self, nothing of earth can give the cooling ease. They long, with David, 'Oh! that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem.' The Spirit hears, and calming promises are soon applied. He is most peaceful whom sheltering wings protect and soothing streams refresh.

Through the long way, the supply was ever near. When Israel stirred and stayed, the water babbled by their side. So neither place nor time nor state can check the mighty Spirit's flow. All praying lips shall always quaff, 'If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.'

The gift was **free**. The wealthy and the poor alike required and alike received. So, also, the call of grace is wide as earth and long as time. 'Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.' Do any fear lest the pure stream may flee the touch of unclean lips? The type forbids the doubt. The hardest murmurer in the camp partook. The Spirit scorns not a poor sinner's heart.

Reader! would you be blessed, and a blessing? Drink often, drink more of this inspiring stream. The grace-receiving are the grace-diffusing. *They who live near to heaven attract to heaven.* At Kadesh, Miriam's praising lips were closed in death. And then the flowing blessing seemed checked. What shall be done? The heavenly Teacher wisely teaches, '**Speak** unto the rock, and it shall give forth its waters.' It is forever true, 'Ask, and you shall have.'

Moses *in haste* again uplifts the rod. Where was his faith? Was his eye dim to the full light of this clear Gospel type? The rock was smitten once for all. No further stroke was needed or allowed. Christ suffers once. His one grand sacrifice is sin's one death. The wound once given buys remission of all guilt forever. Believe, delight, and glory in the one cross. It is enough. It is an all-sufficient price. The thought of repetition is ignorance, distrust, and blasphemy. O blessed Jesus! Your one offering is all salvation. I would pray unto You with every breath, but woe unto me, if I bid You die again.

Worldling, you rest not on this *Rock*, but on the *sand*. Your hope fast crumbles. Flee from it, before it sink into perdition. You drink not of these healthful waters, but of a poisoned puddle. The present taste is bitter—you thirst again, and thirst in vain. Beware, lest soon, in hopeless thirst, you wail for one drop to cool a tongue tormented in the flame

Exo 17.11

PREVAILING INTERCESSION

"As long as Moses held up the staff with his hands, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites gained the upper hand." Exo 17:11

Alarms soon trouble the advancing host. Amalek attacks their rear. Esau's tribe has evil will against the house of Jacob. The birthright sold, the blessing lost, had deeply laid the seeds of malice. And now occasion ripens hatred into fierce assault. Believer, the race of Cain, of Ishmael, of Esau still lives. Be ready. Their hate is sure. Their wily steps are near. When least expected, they will plot their worst. How shall such foes be met? He who follows Christ must neither flee nor yield nor fear. He must stand fast in faith, and he must kneel in prayer. So Moses teaches. He commands Joshua, 'Choose some men, and go out, *fight.'* Heaven's crown sits only on a *warrior's* brow.

But carnal weapons are impotent alone. In fighting, *by not fighting*, we prevail. So when Joshua struggles in the plain, Moses wrestles on the hill. He seeks the summit, bearing the rod. Prayer brings all heaven to the aid. Thus Israel's hands are strong or weak as those of Moses rise or drop. Large Gospel lessons here expand before us. We may roam up and down this field and find no end in gathering precious fruit. But one especial tree calls us to shake its richly-laden boughs. **Moses interceding on the hill shows Jesus interceding on the higher heights.**

Come then, my soul, with joyful wing fly upward. It is good, it is wise, it is blessed, to be much with Jesus in the *suffering* valley. Faith visits often the manger, the garden, and the cross. It seeks all sin's remission in the stripes, the wounds, the agony, the death of the bleeding Lamb. But these amazing truths are but the *porch* of more amazing glories. Hence it delights to follow Jesus in His *bright ascent*, to gaze undazzled on the throne, to mark His present doings by His Father's side.

What? Is He still engaged in work? Wondrous tidings! Hear, all who call Him Lord—He ever loves you, and ever labors in your cause. His eye is never turned away. His hands cannot hang down. His heavens are the office-chamber of your soul's concerns. Do you ask, *What is His work?* Listen, the Holy Spirit cries, *'He ever lives to make Intercession.'* His every day and every hour is ceaseless energy of interceding love.

Do you add, *But what is Intercession?* An intercessor stands between two parties, pleading for the one to look with favor on the other. The parties here are God the Father, and poor worms of earth. 'If any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' Before the Father, then, the Mediator pleads. But is not the Father an overflowing ocean of free grace? Is it not His grand delight to crown His sons with all heaven's blessings? Why, then, shall prayers, like constant incense, move Him to give what He is unwilling to withhold? Salvation's scheme is wholly ordered to show forth love in brightest rays. It is to aid this end, that Intercession has its place.

Believer, what kindles flames of comfort in your heart? What decks your brow with smiles, when trials and temptations throng? Is it not *a view of Jesus pleading at God's right hand?* The thought is rapture, peace, and victory. Remove the Advocate, and all your hope goes down in gloom. Christ prays, because He loves so much. He prays, because the Father loves not less. Intercession is the fair fruit of their co-loving heart.

Next, see **for whom** this Intercession strives. Imagine a father begging for his much-loved son, a mother for her first-born child, brother for brother, friend for friend, the ardent bridegroom for his darling bride. What cries! What tears! What earnestness! What moving words! What melting arguments! What strong appeals! What fervor of desire! What bold resolve to gain the petition! But all these ties, with all their warmth, converge in Jesus. In Him there is the *father's* deep affection, the *mother's* tenderness, the *brother's* zeal, the *friend's* devoted sympathy, the *bridegroom's* burning love. He urges, These are My children—the travail of My soul—the offspring of My wounds—My sister—My spouse—My beloved, around whom My heart has been entwined forever—the bride of My Father's gift, and of My loving choice—My portion—My jewels—My crown—the sheep of My pasture—My wealth—My delight—the members of My mystic body—the very apple of My eye. Such prayer is as the heart-strings strained. Reader! are you one with Christ? Then all day long, and all time long, He wrestles thus for you.

Mark, also, **how** Jesus executes this office. Come, see the proceedings of *the heavenly court.* Jesus appears. This is the opening act. The Spirit teaches, 'Christ has not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.' He presents His person. The Father's eye rests on Him. Oh! with what love, what rapture, what delight! It is His son, His only begotten Son, His well-beloved Son, His elect One, His beauty, His express image, His glory, His treasure, compared with whom the heavens are an empty void, and all worlds' charms a vacant nothingness. It is Jesus—even the Servant, who has performed all His will—who has brought all honor to His attributes—who has ransomed all His people—who has filled heaven with all its song. Jesus Himself appears. O my soul, your cause is in good hands!

Jesus appears. But **in what form?** A LAMB is seen, 'looking as if it had been slain.' What, then, does He show? His wounds, His bruises, His scars, His pierced hands and feet, His open side. *There is no eloquence like the eloquence of a slain Redeemer!* There is no argument like the argument of a God-man's death. The blood of Abel cries. Much more the blood of Jesus. It loudly proves that His people are all bought with a worthy price, that their sins are all washed away, that they are all whiter than snow, that the covenant is all fulfilled, and that every grace is their purchased due. Thus Christ appears as 'He that lives and was dead.' O my soul, your cause is in good hands!

Jesus appears. But **by what right?** He comes as one whom office and duty bring. He is called and appointed and ordained to this especial work. He comes, because He must be faithful to the trust received. He comes, because it is His privilege to pass the veil. The great day in which atonement must be pleaded has arrived. The High Priest cannot be absent. O my soul, your cause is in good hands!

He comes, also, with **authority**. He prays as one who may command. Equal addresses equal. O wondrous thought! what can the language be? 'Father, I will.' Yes! It is even so. 'Father, I will.' 'I will,' is God's petition to a granting God. The kingly Priest with king-like power prays. O my soul, your cause is in good hands!

He enters, also, as **Advocate**. As such, His Intercession has judicial force. He states the laws of the realm, the statutes of the empire, the decrees of the sovereign, the rights of the subject, the justice of the case, the demands of equity and truth. He unfolds the volume of the covenant of grace. He claims a judgment in accordance with well-counseled compact. Righteousness fails, heaven's edicts must be rewritten, if such pleadings be cast out. O my soul, your cause is in good hands!

Believer, perhaps next you anxiously enquire, what is the **significance** of such mighty Intercession? You sigh, Oh! that I surely knew what are the blessings which He seeks for me. Draw near. His interceding voice sounds in the Gospel-page. He cried boldly and clearly from the cross, 'Father, **forgive** them.' He cries as boldly and as clearly from the throne, 'Father, forgive them.' As king He reigns, taking away sin. *As quick as the sin-stain defiles, He spreads His wounded hands.* Pardon cannot linger. Sins and iniquities are remembered no more.

Listen! He pleads again. It is, that His flock may be **kept**. 'Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me.' The prayer is heard. Jehovah's wings become their shield. Omnipotence defends them. Angels encamp around them. All things work together for their good. Each foe is foiled. The chosen seed gets safely to heaven.

His word, also, is gone forth, 'I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another **Comforter**, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.' The eternal Spirit hastens to comply. He flies with conquering wing into the willing heart. He shows the cross in its attractive glory. He shines upon the sacred page. He lifts up Jesus to the enraptured gaze. Without Christ's prayer the Spirit never comes. Without the Spirit, there is no faith, no truth, no godliness on earth.

He next **gains acceptance for our prayers.** What feeble babbling is our holiest worship? But answers come, surpassing our largest hopes. How can it be? The incense of Christ's merits fills the censer. Thus more is granted than the suppliant sought. We coldly plan, we feebly work, to magnify His name. But we succeed, and He is glorified in us. But how? His voice wins help and help we receive. Believer, pray much. Pray more. Think *whose* prayers are mixed with yours. Work much—work more. Think who obtains for you the strength to prosper.

Will Christ ask more? He surely asks, until God's treasury is drained. He speaks again, 'Father, I will that those also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am.' This is the summit of His love. This is the summit of His people's joy. He has no heaven without them. They have no heaven but with Him. His throne is for them. Their throne is by His side. Believer, mark it, you must ever be with the Lord. *This Intercession is the golden chain which draws and binds you to Him.* It is *uttered*. It is *continued*. It is *heard*. It is *granted*. His presence is your endless heritage.

It must be so. This Intercession must **prevail**. Mark the ascending steps by which the Spirit leads up to the proof. Read Rom 8:34. Christ's death is full redemption. 'Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who *died*.' His resurrection rises higher. It manifests in clearer light the acceptance of the finished work. 'Yes, rather, that has *risen again*.' His ascension soars yet higher. It crowns assurance with a heaven-high crown. 'Who is even *at the right hand of God*.' But Intercession reaches heights more lofty. It consummates, it perfects, it applies, it secures complete salvation. 'Who also makes Intercession for us.' Blessed *death!* it reconciles. More blessed *life!* it much more saves. Blessed *blood!* it redeems. More blessed *Intercession!* It saves to the uttermost. O my soul, your cause is in good hands.

Let others seek their mediators many, who are mediators none. Let others fly to intercessors many, who are intercessors none. Will not you shout that Christ is enough—Christ is All!

Exo 17.15

THE BANNER

"Moses built an altar, and called the name of it **Jehovah-nissi**." (**The Lord is my Banner**) Exo 17:15

The fight with Amalek is past. He is given as the dust to Israel's sword, as driven stubble to his bow. Let mad assailants learn that no weapon formed against the Church of God can prosper. The arrow shot against the sun falls back upon the head. The oak rebounds upon the slashing hands.

But **why** was sure victory on Israel's side? Because the Lord was with them. He braced their courage—they were girded with strength. He frowned—the foe can no more stand. He smiled—His people can no more fall. To whom, then, shall the praise be given? Shall worms of earth in vaunting vanity ascribe it to their worth, their counsels, the leader's leading, or the soldier's might? The thought is anguish to a pious mind. Without the Lord, what is the best man's best? He only prevails when the Lord supplies the wisdom, implants the prowess, and commands the outcome. And shall not He who is the first, the last, the whole, in all success, have all the glory?

So Moses judged. He hastens to put the crown on the real Victor's head. He raises a building, not to man, but God. He adds a truthful name. He calls the altar 'Jehovah-nissi—the Lord is my Banner.' This is right. This is wise. Let God have God's place—the highest of the high. Let man have man's place—the lowest of the low. If there be baseless pretension, it is when dust claims honor, as the worker of Jehovah's works. The *tool* is not the worker. The *pen* is not the spring of thought. The laborer's *spade* makes not the crop to grow. The steps towards this altar give such warning.

But the structure itself is a far brighter lesson. The Spirit shows by it new features of our precious Savior. He plainly states that the root of Jesse, David's son, is the ensign (banner) of the Redeemed. Hence, in Jehovah-nissi, faith adores Christ Jesus as its Banner. Who hears of a Banner, and thinks not of a battle-cry? Its stand is among warrior-ranks. It tells of conflicts and of struggles. It reminds of foes assaulting, and of shocks to be sustained.

And is not the believer's hope a camp? He drinks indeed deep draughts of heavenly peace, but still the hand which takes the cup holds high the sword. His calm is like the calm of Jesus, who slept while billows tossed around. Experience proves this truth. The sandals of the Gospel are bare-worn on a battle plain. Hope rears its helmet battered by many a blow. Faith shields a heart which surely rests, but rarely knows repose. The Spirit's sword is corroded by no scabbard's rust. Can it be otherwise?

Are not God's children met by an Amalek who neither dies, nor sleeps, nor spares, nor pities? This foe is Satan. His *might* is such, that Almightiness alone exceeds. His *knowledge* such, that it nears the confines of omniscience. His *skill* is sharpened by observance of every heart in every climate and every age. His *wrath* is barbed by knowing that His time is short. His *hopes* are plumed by slaughtered millions beneath his feet. *He assails each inlet of each sense.* He raises barriers before the throne of grace. No knee ever bows but his shaft flies. He aims at every worshiper in every pew—at every hearer of the sacred truth—at every reader of the Word of God—at every hand which takes the sacramental food—at every tongue which tells of Jesus's love—at every eye which sheds the tear of penitence.

But *Satan* has a **world** to aid him. He strives to slay each man by each, and all men by all. He can paint brilliant prospects. He can raise piles of *wealth*. He can deck *honor's* crown with dazzling jewels. He sets the *secret ambush*. He digs the fearful pitfall. Like Jael, he shows the dainty dish, but hides the hammer and the nail.

Satan also has **fallen nature** on his side. There is 'the *body* of this death.' From this there is no escape. Self cannot separate from self. And self has a traitor's hand to introduce the foe. Self murders self, when it can work its will. Such are the troops of Amalek. But let not the believer fear. Jehovah-nissi is God's pledge, that their enemies shall be put out forever.

This Banner leads to VICTORY. In earthly fight, the end is doubtful. The brave, the strong, may fall. The few may chase the many. Hostile hands may seize the standard. But they who cling to Christ must surely triumph. Before they strike one blow the day is won. They venture forth with *conqueror's crowns*, unseen indeed by eye of sense, but firmly fixed upon their brows. Do any ask how this can be? The Banner is Jehovah. All strength, all multitudes, are feeble nothingness before it. Believer, trust to your Leader, and go forward. He has led through countless conflicts, but He never lost a battle. He never left a follower slain. The plains, though blood-stained, have never been the grave of faith.

Each soldier may suffer much in mortifying sin. But triumph is His portion. Is it not said, 'My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand'? *Jacob* had many conflicts—but his aged lips bear witness to 'the Angel which redeemed me from all evil.' *David's* was a struggling life, but his last song extolled a never-failing help. 'I beat them as small as the dust of the earth; I stamped them as the mire of the street.' *Paul* leaves earth with the shout, 'I have fought a good fight—henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' Search all hell's borders. There is not one amid the lost who really fought beneath Jehovah-nissi.

The Banner is EXALTED. It waves high. It courts the gaze of earth. 'Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.' When man fell, it was unfurled in Eden. Abel embraced it, and flew swift to heaven. Prophets and seers unfurled it more; widening hosts saw it and lived. In due time the Lord Himself appears, and plants the standard on the cross of Calvary. That was a noble eminence. That was a height which Satan could not reach. A dying malefactor discerned its clearness from the very jaws of hell, and found the gate of Paradise in dying. And from that day no sinner ever turned a longing eye to it in vain. And now the faithful *preacher's* voice, the toiling *missionary's* love for souls, and every true *disciple's* holy walk, uplifts it still with ceaseless zeal. In pulpits, in heathen wilds, in filthy haunts of ignorance and vice, in thronging crowds, by dying beds, in lonely cottages where sickness preys and trials vex, they cry, 'Behold Him, Behold Him!' No distance intervenes. No mists obscure. To the opened eye the beauteous Banner is both near and bright. Believer, will you not strive by every effort, at every cost, in every place, at every moment, to make the Banner more conspicuous? Live, labor, die, pointing to it. Wave it while you can raise an arm. Earn the high glory of a standard-bearer's crown.

The Banner is ATTRACTIVE. It wins a willing troop. Jacob with dying gaze beheld a thronging multitude, and he bore record, 'Unto Him, shall the gathering of the people be.' Isaiah's rapturous notes enquire, 'Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?' And He who is the Truth has pledged, 'And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.' So it has ever been—so it must be. There is a *magnetic power* in the uplifted cross! An influence subjugates the charmed mind. Its streaming scroll exhibits all which needy souls can need. The *conscience-stricken* sigh for ease. The *guilty* long for pardon. The *weary* and the heavy-laden seek repose. The Banner promises that *beneath this standard everything is yours!* Here is blood to *cleanse*; righteousness to *clothe*; strength to *help*; mercy to pity; grace for *demerit*; life for *death*; all-sufficiency for *all-deficiency*. The sinner sees, believes, enlists. He cannot help but listen. *Opposing friends, a sneering world, and all the wiles of Satan, are weak to stop him.* Thus every day and every hour the numbers swell. And angels never cease to sing, because on earth fresh converts vow, We are the Lord's. So it shall be until heaven's army is complete.

The Banner is a worthy theme of boast. Let the vile sinner be ashamed of sin. Let the weak worldling blush at this silly world. Let unbelief hang down its childish head. Let Popery mutter its base impostures in the dark. But let the believer with pure pride, exult in his high standard. *Think*—but thoughts fail—*say*, but words fail—what noble glories cluster here. Men boast of what is great and good and wise and lovely.

Greatness? it vanishes when Christ is named. He is the mighty God. He is Jehovah's equal. He is more ancient than the eternal ages. He endures when time is gone. He spoke and all worlds were. The wheels of providence subserve His will. He ever sat, and will sit, omnipotent on Omnipotence's throne. Great is the Banner. Let it be greatly praised.

Goodness? He who would learn what goodness is, must read it in the face of Christ. Is it goodness to deck nature with all things suitable to please each sense—to robe the sun with light, the air with purity, the fields with verdure, and man with faculties to enjoy? Is it goodness to look with mercy on a race undone, to lay down life to save? This is poor outline of a Savior's goodness. Believer, boldly shout, Good is the Lord.

Wisdom? It is Christ's name. All its treasures lie hidden in Him. His plans, His work, His words, are wisdom in the highest. True wisdom never was, but as a stream from the deep fountain of His mind. Believer, wave your Banner; there is no wisdom but beside these colors.

Loveliness? The Spirit, who sees Him as He is, proclaims Him as *altogether lovely*. He must be lovely who is God's brightness. Mark His sweet smiles of gentle grace. Who can withdraw the admiring eye? Who can restrain the adoring tongue? Beside Him the sun hangs a black orb, and nature's charms are but a withered leaf. Sweet is it now to savingly know Him. What will it be to see Him as He is? Let, then, faith's soldier cry aloud for joy; let him take up his manly boast before all heaven and all earth, Christ is a beauteous Banner, which surpasses praise, exceeds all worth, and soars above renown.

Believer, in conclusion, allow an exhorting word. In every place, in every company, boldly display your Banner. Away with weak timidities. Tread down unworthy fears. Reserve is treason. Let all who know you, know Whose you are and Whom you serve. The world would tremble, unbelief would flee, if Christian warriors would rally as a compact band, 'fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with Banners.' Take home this warning. Let no shame cloak your Banner.

O my soul, unfurl it in the eyes of all the scorn, and all the hate of all the world. Unfurl it in the face of all the threats and all the malice of all hell. Unfurl it—and all sins vanish, and conscience-accusations cease. Unfurl it—and the flames of hell curl back before it. Unfurl it—and heaven's portals open. Unfurl it—and you march to heaven's throne of victory.

You are now brought to the banqueting-house, where the Banner over you is love. The palace is in sight, where the Banner over you will be glory!

Exo 20.1

MOUNT SINAI

"God spoke all these words." Exo 20:1

Mount Sinai is not rightly seen until the Gospel-sun shines brightly on it. The total aspect then is changed. Its terrors disappear. The darkness melts into the light of life. The angry roar is hushed in notes of peace. Reader! approach this scene with humble prayer. If the Spirit guide your steps, it will open, as a gate, to Zion's blissful slopes.

Who brings the sons of Israel to Sinai's base? It is the God of everlasting grace. His mercy looked on their enslaved estate. He burst their bonds and crushed their cruel foes. He was feeding them morn after morn with food from heaven. He was sending streams to supply their thirst. And now, by beckoning cloud, He leads them to this spot. They may advance, then, without fear. His counsels will bud forth in blessings. This mount will be a platform to show Christ to souls. Grace must continue to be grace.

When the host reached these heights, they are addressed from heaven. **Who is the speaker?** The voice is that of JESUS. The Spirit clears this fact. He tells us, that the Angel, the messenger of the eternal Covenant, communed with Moses on the Mount. If Jesus speaks, the accents will be tender love. It is so here. His prelude thus brings peace into their hearts, 'You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.' This preface does not look like a door to woe. It seems the first drops of a fresh shower of goodness. An especial mandate is next heard. The Lord announces that new revelations are at hand. Especial preparation, then, must now be made. The people are sin-soiled. Their bodies know pollution's touch. Purifying rites, therefore, must prepare them for God's approach.

Reader! you cannot learn too deeply, that *we are all infected and impure with sin, and all our righteous acts are but filthy rags!* Do you see self as one mire-heap of filth? Do you loathe human merit as a plague-spot? Have you received the warning word, 'If I wash you not, you have no part with Me?' Pause before Sinai, and weigh well your need of cleansing before you can meet God.

The third day comes. The mount is fenced. Then clouds of terror thicken. Dismay stalks forth in most appalling form. Each sight amazes, and each sound affrights. Is thunder terrible?—peal upon peal cracks in increasing roar. Are lightnings plumed with wings of swiftly-flying awe?—a forked blaze pours its incessant darts. Is it a cheerless time when light is absent?—night with its blackest pall mantles the heights. Do stoutest hearts wax cold when clanging trumpets yell?—echo now maddens with their din. Was Sodom's smoking plain a frightful destruction?—the range of hills flares, as a murky furnace. Is it terrific to see cloud-capped summits tottering to the fall?—the rocky mass now shivers as a wind-tossed reed.

But **why** do all terrors settle on the mount? The answer is a page of solemn truth. The Spirit's mouth shall give it. 'The Lord came from Sinai. From his right hand went a fiery law for them.' The Lord wills now to manifest His Law. The hand which holds it shakes terror over a transgressing world. We thus are led to ask **the purpose of the Law**. Until the soul discerns the nature of this code, God is not truly known. His Gospel is a sealed book. His holiness is an unsubstantial name.

The Law reveals Jehovah's majesty. It sets Him on the throne of spotless purity. It unveils the stature of His boundless righteousness. It crowns Him with the diadem, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.' It cries with trumpet-tongue that *holiness* is the pavement of His heavens, the atmosphere of His kingdom, the portals of His palace, the delight of His heart. **It shows what God is, and what they must become who would appear before Him.** Where is the sinner who will now draw near without some better righteousness than *self* can weave? Well might Mount Sinai quake, when on its pedestal a Law like this is given.

But was the Law now first shown? Far otherwise. On creation's morn it was inwrought in Adam's heart. The parent of our race set his first steps on earth in the very likeness of the great Creator. *The Maker's hand could only plant a perfect plant.* Man's new-born eye thus looked unmoved on God. He trod this soil in happy innocence. His soul was purity. His voice was perfect praise. *Evil* was a weed unplucked. *Transgression* was a path untrod. *Guilt* was a torture yet unborn. The law of love was in each fiber of his heart. Adam thus stood. The Law was in him. He knew that to obey was life, to disobey was death.

But sinlessness soon withered in his hands. The tempter came. The tempted yielded. The beauteous fabric of the Law was shivered. Its promised life expired. Its dreadful curse became our heritage.

This Law, implanted in the *heart* of our first parents, must now be heard again on Sinai. It is God's will to show it as a *written* statute. Its voice, however, is the same. There is no change in its exact requirements. Its measure seems to be more vividly displayed. Its breadth and length are more distinctly marked. But its essence is all one. Two tables now contain it. Ten separate edicts open out its claims. But these brief words admit a summary more brief. The one **sum** of the demand is simply this—*pure love*. Without it none can see God's face. But why is it thus renewed? Is it God's will to cancel now the many promises which cheered the elders of the house of faith? Shall the fair page of hope, based on the blood of cleansing, be scattered to the winds? Shall Adam's race again be sent to *work* for life? *Must their own hands erect a tower of safety from rubbish of earth's quarry?* Away with such a fearful thought! It would lead headlong to despair's foul depths. Can the poor cripple run? Can the broken wing expand? Can the withered tree bear fruit? Can the sentenced culprit burst his chains? Can the dead arise and walk? Enfeebled nature might more easily do this, than man's lost strength fulfill one mandate of the righteous Law. To send him to pluck innocence in guilt's wild wilderness; to *patch a righteousness with shreds and rags of sin*; to mount to heaven by a broken ladder's crumbling rounds; would be to mock his ruin and deride his woe. The Law is not republished with designs so vain.

Look steadfastly at Sinai. Amid all the terrors, angels' forms are seen. *A mediator's hands receive the tables.* These signs establish that *grace* is there. Such is the truth. God states His claims, that we, with open eye, may see our need. *Our sense of ruin makes the Gospel prized. To those who have no help in self, God's love appears more lovely, His mercy more merciful, His pity more pitiful, His tenderness more tender, His forbearance more forbearing, God more Godlike, Christ more precious, His blood more cleansing, His righteousness more beauteous, His cross more glorious, His pardons dearer, His salvation surer, His Gospel the one home, His wounds the only refuge.* Is it not grace to urge us onward towards the cross? This work is never truly done, until *the Law displays God's holiness, sin's sinfulness, and hell gaping at our feet.*

Satan is ever ready to persuade that a heavenly Father is too gentle to cause woe. Sinai dashes this error to the ground. It shows that *God's whole nature abhors evil, and is pledged to execute just wrath.* The conscious sinner looks, then, for help. There is such help in Christ, and Christ alone. Thus Sinai drives him to a Savior's arms. This work is grace. Sinai shows sin to be exceeding sinful and exceeding strong.

In the world's school, and by deceiving lips, disguise is spread around the monster's forms. It is but faintly blamed as nature's blemish without power to hurt. But *as light manifests a chamber's filth*; as heat revives the frozen viper; as the sun's rays draw out the offensive vapor; as barriers cause the rushing stream to overflow; so the *Law's restraints make sin to show its hideousness and giant-size!* A sinner thus convinced of sin looks with horror on himself. Where shall he flee? Jesus draws near. His blood obliterates. His grace makes free. Thus Sinai magnifies a Savior's saving worth. This work is grace.

It is at Sinai that the Law makes bare its vengeful arm. *It must have sinless purity.* But if offence occurs, there is no pity, there is no escape. The curse points sternly towards perdition's lake. When this is known, how precious are the sheltering arms of Jesus! Thus Sinai's truth endears the Gospel-hope. This work is grace.

Reader! has Sinai proved this Gospel-blessing unto you? If not, come now and have close dealings with it. It states its claim. You show your moral principles, your upright life, your inoffensive walk. But this is not one course of love. You startle. You are undone. The thunder roars; the lightnings flash; the mountain quakes; hell is before you. But stop. This is a warning to seek help in Jesus. You cry for mercy with imploring tears. On bended knee, with broken heart, you plead for *pardon*. How vain! The Law cannot relent. No agony of grief can move its iron breast. The thunder roars; the lightnings flash; the mountain quakes; hell is before you. But stop. This is a warning to seek help in Jesus.

You urge that your transgressions were but rare, your penitence most deep, your reformation most sincere. If this were true, (but true it is not), yet it cannot undo what has already been done; or cancel what is past; or build again your fallen innocence. Oh, no! The curse must have its course. The thunder roars; the lightnings flash; the mountain quakes; hell is before you. But stop. This is a warning to seek help in Jesus.

You perhaps think religion's holy rites most punctually discharged. That hope, you think, will surely stand, which rests on the baptismal font, the hallowed feast, the constant service, and a strict train of unremitted forms. How good, how precious are all these, as *signs* of inward life, and *proofs* of a devoted heart! But what is their power to give unblemished righteousness? It this your best defense? The thunder roars; the lightnings flash; the mountain quakes; hell is before you. But stop. This is a warning to seek help in Jesus.

We here discern why multitudes seek peace in Rome, and Rome's poor flimsy fabric of deceits: they never saw with open eye Mount Sinai's terror. Its thunder never rolled through their awakened conscience. They know nothing of the Law's pure code. Its curse has never struck them to the ground. Their wound seems slight. A slight remedy will therefore cure. Their need seems little. Human absolution, and human sprinklings, and human prayers, will therefore make them safe. Oh! it will be dreadful to awake from such a dream, when the great white throne is set, and God requires a righteousness as vast as God.

Reader! if you have fled from Sinai to the cross, this righteousness you have. Christ has fulfilled for you its utmost demand. Christ has endured for you the total of its direst curse. *The Law, completely satisfied, claims heaven for you.* Mount Sinai's steps exalt you to the heights of glory. Its voice of thunder hymns you to salvation's rest.

Exo 21.5-6

THE WILLING SERVANT

"But the slave may plainly declare, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children. I would rather not go free.' If he does this, his master must present him before God. Then his master must take him to the door and publicly pierce his ear with an awl. After that, the slave will belong to his master forever." Exo 21:5-6

As in *nature's* field, so in *Israel's* story, almost every object reflects Christ. Happy the hand which holds a key to open the rich treasure's door! Happy the soul which learns the art of feasting at the hallowed table! To see Christ now by faith is heaven begun. To see Christ soon in glory will be heaven complete.

The narrative before us seems at first glance to tell but a simple incident of domestic life. A Hebrew slave is the subject of the story. His period of servitude is past. All claims have therefore ceased. He has now the option to breathe freedom's air. But freedom has no charms for him. Attachment binds him to his master's home. His dearest joys are there. His hearty language is, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children. I would rather not go free.' A new ordinance is appointed to sanctify this *willing offer of perpetual service.* The judges must bear witness. An inflicted wound must also be a visible and enduring seal: 'Then his master must take him to the door and publicly pierce his ear with an awl. After that, the slave will belong to his master forever.' Willing consent is thus proclaimed. The testifying brand is fixed. And a beloved work, while life shall last, is grasped by self-devoting hands.

It may perhaps come as a new thought to some, that in this servant's choice, and in this constant love, Jesus reveals Himself. But doubts are worse than folly, when the Spirit speaks from His high seat. Read, then, the 40th Psalm. There faith ascends in heaven-high flight. It hears the eternal Son in close communion with the eternal Father. It catches these wondrous notes. 'Sacrifice and offering you did not desire but *my ears you have pierced*.' Jesus announces the amazing fact. Father, My ears are pierced by Your hand.

Here is a grand truth. Read it, O sons of men. Read it, my soul. Hell sees it and turns pale. Heaven sees it and resounds with praise. These words state at once, that Jesus becomes man. They speak of **'ears.'** None can have these, except they wear the garments of our flesh. We have the Spirit's comment. He writes in after pages, as a co-equal clause, 'a *body* You have prepared Me.'

But more than this is taught. The ears are 'pierced.' Here a clear finger points to the Willing Servant's pledge. We see the God-man stooping to the lowest grade. He seeks a servant's office, and a servant's toil. Jehovah's Fellow is Jehovah's workman in the labor-field of grace. For God to take us into heaven, and on the throne of worlds, would be grace beyond all thought. But for God to become man in lowest bonds of servitude, is grace which none but Jesus' heart can know.

We have, then, in this abject state, **a speaking portrait of Christ's love.** This image is the sweetest fountain of His people's peace. It is the deepest mystery set forth in simplest terms. Hence Scripture, laboring to reveal the Lord, presents *the Servant's motif* in repeated terms. The Father's voice announces, 'Behold My Servant, whom I uphold.' And again, 'Behold I will bring forth My Servant the Branch.' Jesus meekly adds, 'I am among you as he that *serves*.' The Spirit echoes, 'Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God—but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a *Servant*.' He is a servant, whose time and toil are not his own. Strong obligations bind Him to execute another's will.

Reader! come now and mark **THE SERVICE** to which God calls His Son. It is to build the fabric of salvation. What strength, what zeal, what might, what wisdom, what patience, what endurance, what self-sacrifice, are needed! Survey the **hindrances**. In depth they reach to hell. In height they mount to heaven. Their breadth and length extend illimitable arms. A countless multitude of immortal beings lie in the vile quarry of vile sin. They must be rescued from this misery's cell. They must be made fit with all-beauteous grace. Each soul is black with stains more countless than the ocean's sands. These stains must disappear. Each owes a debt of infinite amount. This must be cancelled. Each is most justly sentenced to eternal woe. This sum of wrath must be endured. Each is weighed down beneath the Law's stern curse. This burden must be borne away. Satan has riveted his iron chains around each. These fetters must be broken off. The walls of his dark prison-house enclose them. The mighty barrier must be leveled. They are all loathsome in most filthy rags. White clothing must be wrought for them. In each the nature is estranged from God. This must be changed in every pulse and every feeling. A new heart must be implanted. Old things must pass away. Grace must commence its new-born reign. They are as scattered outcasts in a wide world's wilderness. All must be brought to hear one Shepherd's voice, and feed in one most holy fold. All must be set before the Father's throne, clear of all guilt, free from all charge, as pure as God, as blameless as heaven, as bright as eternal day.

Such is Jehovah's gracious will. Not all the hosts of angels or of men can render aid. Deity's whole might is needed to subserve this cause. There is a train, also, of revealing *types*. They must be accurately answered. There is a volume of prophetic *promise*. All must be fulfilled. There is a fearful catalogue of righteous *threatenings*. All must be executed. Each *holy attribute* presents strong claims. Each must be fully satisfied. God would be cast down, His empire would be a broken reed, His sovereignty would be a shadow's shade, unless justice remains just, and truth continues true, and holiness shines forth inviolate. It is no easy task to render these attributes their due honor. But such is the service which must be performed.

O my soul, rejoice, be glad, give thanks, shout praises; a willing Servant undertakes to do it! O my soul, rejoice, be glad, give thanks, shout praises, while you draw nearer and behold the fulfillment. The time to work arrives. Will Jesus now draw back? It cannot be. 'Lo, I come,' is still the language of His willing heart. He must, then, stoop to put on human flesh. He must be one in lowly nature with our race. He shrinks not. He lies a babe of Adam's stock. He takes our kinsman's place. He, for whom heaven is no worthy home, is cradled, as the lowest child of earth. Jehovah's service, man's redemption, demands descent to depths thus low. Salvation's Servant must go slowly on through every stage of suffering life. Be it so. It is His food and drink to do His Father's will. We find not one reluctant pause. He dwells unknown in a despised town. He toils, as workman, with a workman's tools. Each cup of degradation is wrung out. The final scene, the bitterest effort, comes. Will Jesus flinch? He hastens forward to meet all.

Go with Him to the **garden** of woe. There torturing agonies collect, which human thought is far too weak to grasp. The sufferer stands laden with His people's guilt. He is not spared. Wrath rushes down with outpouring fury. He meekly bows before the just infliction. The Willing Servant pays the whole debt, bears the whole curse, receives each crushing load, exhausts each vial of wrath. All heaven hears the voice, 'I have glorified You on the earth—I have finished the work which You gave Me to do.'

And now the cross is upraised. The scaffold stands. Will Jesus hesitate? He is the Willing Servant to the end. *Man's bitter hate drives in the nails.* Hell makes its direct assault. The Father hides His smile. All earth, all heaven, desert Him. But Jesus willingly serves on, until the mightiest of all mighty words sounds forth, 'It is finished.' Yes! Salvation is accomplished! Redemption is secured! Each type is answered! Every payment is paid! Each penalty is thoroughly endured! The curse is drained! Satan is vanquished! Hell's borders are broken down! His people are all free! The Father's will is done, the holy service is performed, Jehovah's Servant has acted out the glorious work! 'It is finished!'

O my soul, you may indeed stand fearless on the rock of this completed service. The work is *done*, is *fully* done, is done *forever*. The heavens again receive Him. The Servant enters with a Victor's crown. There He still serves. *Salvation's building* consists of countless stones. All must be found, and fitly framed together. They lie on many a mountain's brow, in many a hidden valley, on many a distant plain. Each is a precious soul. Each must abhor the loathsomeness of self, and rejoice in Jesus's blood, and cling with sincere faith to His saving arms.

By day, by night, without one moment's pause, Jesus pursues the work of winning souls. He sends His Spirit on the wings of love. He calls and qualifies ministering pastors. At His command they raise the beacon of the cross. Devoted missionaries break all endearing ties, and seek the outcasts beneath tropic suns, in ice-clad rocks, and amid tribes which Satan holds in death-cold bonds. Thus Christ still serves the purposes of grace. A mighty voice cries, *Come!* And all who are ordained to life obey. Onward the healing waves will roll until the blessed company is complete. Then comes the end. The glorious plan is gloriously finished. The kingdom is delivered to the Father. The Willing Servant shows the collected mass all gathered in, all saved. Not one is lost. Not one is absent. Each member of the mystic body fills its place.

Reader! at that day where will be your place? Oh! pause. Put not the question away from you. Perhaps you sigh, I would like to be numbered with the saved, but how can I have hope? Tell me. Where is your fear? Is it lest the tremendous billows of your sins should swell above His willingness to save? If all the guilt of all the lost multiplied and magnified beyond all power to count or measure, weighed heavily upon your conscience, still venture to His feet. The willing Jesus will not cast you out. His heart, His love, His zeal, His pity, His bleeding wounds, His undertaken office, all forbid it. Let not His acts on earth, let not His voice from heaven, be in vain.

Did misery ever seek relief from Him, and not receive more than a ready welcome? Fly forth in spirit to the bright saints in light. The testimony from each rejoicing heart is one. They all give glory to a willing Jesus. With united voice they tell, that when they cast their ruined souls upon Him, He *tenderly embraced, and sweetly cheered, and fully pardoned, and entirely saved.* Hear now His voice. Throughout the Bible, and from faithful lips, it still is sounding—Will you? Will you be made whole?

Be persuaded then. Tarry not. Let this accepted moment find you a willing suppliant at a willing Savior's cross. None ever perished because Christ would not hear. None ever fell into the burning lake because He turned from the beseeching cry.

But stay, there is another word. It seals perdition on all who stand apart. Take heed, lest it enclose you in its hopeless doom. 'You will not come to me, that you might have life.'

Exo 25.10-11

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

"Make an **Ark** of acacia wood—a sacred chest 3 3/4 feet long, 2 1/4 feet wide, and 2 1/4 feet high. Overlay it inside and outside with pure gold, and put a molding of gold all around it." Exo 25:10-11

Reader! come see the chief wonder of the wondrous Tabernacle. It is the Ark. For this the holy tent was upraised. For this the holiest place was set apart. This is the richest jewel of the sacred casket. The topstone of the hallowed Tabernacle. Its form was first displayed in heaven. God gave the plan to Moses. In heaven it still is visible to faith. John saw it with enraptured eye. We read, 'The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the Ark of His testament.' Rev 11:19

All this exhibits Christ. He is the **ARK of redemption**, the scheme of which was drawn above. In fullness of time it was set up below. And now it shines, and ever shall shine, the glorious glory of the new Jerusalem. When God describes the holy vessels, observe, this Ark takes precedence. He first shows that which shows His Son most clearly. It is His will that Christ should be set forth without a cloud, in full-orbed splendor. May the same mind be ours! May He fill up the foreground of each thought and work! Let no reserve, let no unworthy veil obscure the brightness of His brightest smile. God puts the glories of His Firstborn first. Woe to the man who hides Him in the rear!

The Ark is **a plain chest**. Its length is less than four feet. Its height and breadth are scarcely more than two. *Jesus is simple majesty.* He needs no art to decorate His grace. It is impure and pitiable taste which craves for outside show.

The substance of the Ark is **wood**. This proves *an earthly birth.* Trees spring from this our lower soil. Here Jesus is portrayed the woman's Seed—the kinsman of our race. O my soul, ponder more and more Christ's visit to our low abode. He takes our prison rags, that He may bear our prison woe. He becomes man, that with man's lips He may exhaust our cup of wrath. Christ's sufferings in the flesh leave us no sufferings to pay. This is no common wood. Corruption cannot soil it. It defies decay. So human nature, as put on by Christ, is human nature without spot of sin. It is a lovely sight to see man treading earth, and no mire cleaving to the feet; and breathing our polluted air, without infection's taint.

The Ark is more than wood. Its every part is **covered with pure gold.** This metal, put over the coarse wood, shows that our Jesus is much more than man. Grand truth! Sing, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth. *The lowly Savior is the mighty God!* Vain were the wounds, the blood, the agony, the death, unless the *merit* had a boundless worth. One soul which never sinned might buy one sinning soul from curse. But Jesus satisfies for multitudes, as many as the sea-shore grains, and countless as the stars of night. *His Deity enables Him for the stupendous work.* His every act and every pain is as measureless as God can be. Infinite *deaths* are died upon His *cross*. Infinite *obedience* is wrought out in His *life*. O my soul, look often at the Ark. It witnesses that Christ is very man, a *spotless man*, and man co-joined with *perfect Deity* and so the Savior whom your case requires.

A crown (or molding) of gold surrounds the summit. This speaks of kingly state. And is not Christ a king? The Father's voice decides it; 'Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.' The Spirit cries aloud, 'He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.' Who will not add, Lift up your heads, O portals of my heart, and let the King of Glory enter in? Happy they, who give Him the throne of every thought, and crown Him daily with high crowns of praise! Let the ungodly pierce Him with mockery's thorns. Reader! place on His brow the jewel of your ransomed soul.

Coffers are made to **hold some treasure**. They have the custody of precious things. That surely, then, must be a priceless prize, which shall be guarded within walls like these! And so it is. The Ark receives the **Tables of the Law**. God had revealed His will. He had drawn on a chart His own transcendent holiness. This transcript of the eternal mind was folded in this chest. Now look to *Christ. He is the Law-containing Ark.* The Spirit, not the letter, dwells in Him. The world reviled this code. Man cast it from him. Christ gave Himself to be its sacred home. He hid it in the chambers of His breast. Hear His appeal, 'I delight to do Your will, O My God! yes, Your law is within My heart.' Christ is embodied Law.

Next, the Ark is **covered**. A lid of solid gold is placed for especial purpose, and with especial name. The purpose is to hide the Law from every eye. This brings us to the glorious work of Christ. The Law has a stern voice. Mark its *requirements*. They are very long and very wide. Their breadth embraces the whole of each man's life. They rigidly exact obedience, without one falter or one flaw. Mark, also, its *curse*. It has one fearful threat. Eternal ruin is transgression's doom. *Christ comes to hide these terrible demands.* He spreads Himself along the vast dimensions of the requiring and the condemning code. His life is satisfaction to the whole. So, also, He bears its utmost penalties. He suffers until its wrath can take no more. God looks upon His Son. He finds obedience rendered and the curse endured. An exact covering conceals all claims. No part appears to ask for further dues.

The lid has **an especial name**. It is the **Mercy-seat**. We now are taught why pure gold, without any admixture, is its substance. Mercy has no birth-place but in heaven. It yearns, indeed, over our fallen race. It speeds, indeed, to earth. But its high origin is far above. *Hence nothing but pure gold, God's emblem, can form this Mercy-seat.* It is a fitting name. For what is mercy, but Christ in His finished work? Christ is the *ocean* of mercy, in which every drop is infinite compassion. He is the *mountain* of mercy, towering above mountains, in which every grain is God's own goodness. He is the mirror of God's loving heart, the pinnacle of tender grace. O my soul, know the full comfort of the Mercy-seat. When your short-comings fill you with dismay, see Christ, your mercy-seat, spreading His own robe around you; when threatening thunders peal, seek safety in His covering side. Bless Jesus more and more. His mercy *shelters*. His mercy *saves*. His mercy *endures forever*.

Can more be added to the Ark? Faith would see some **token of redeemed souls.** It looks again. Nor looks in vain. At either end a **cherubim** has its place. No foreign metal frames this glittering pair. They and the Mercy-seat are of one piece. Aloft they spread their wings, thus shadowing the lid. Their faces turn towards each other, but look intently on the seat below.

Reader! come learn some obvious lessons from these cherubim. They **rest** upon the Mercy-seat. The heirs of life have no dependence but on Christ. On Him they lean for every help. On Him they cast the burden of their sins. 'Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

They are, also, **part and parcel of the Lord.** He is the Head—they are the members. One sap pervades the stem and branch. Christ's Spirit animates each fiber of the Church. All are 'partakers of the divine nature.'

Their **expanded wings** proclaim their readiness for instant work. The cry of grateful love is always one—'Lord, what will You have me to do?' Speak but the word, and swiftly I will fly. My plumes delight to speed in Your behalf.

They **turn towards each other**. Oneness of purpose, oneness of heart, oneness of action, is the pure mark of God's pure sons. They look not to their own, but to the common good. Without diverging glance, in harmony and love, they seek the glory of their glorious Lord.

But every eye is riveted on Christ! They dwell with prying gaze on the mysteries of the Mercy-seat. They have no look for other objects, nor mind for other knowledge. Their sigh is, Oh! that we might know Him more and more, and see with clearer view the wonders of His person, His grace, His love, His work. The more they search the more they learn. The more they learn the more they crave. Eternity must end before the end of Christ be reached.

A **promise**, bringing heaven down to earth, surmounts the whole. God adds, 'There will I meet with you, and I will commune with you from above the Mercy-seat. The anxious soul will often breathe the longing thought, 'Oh! that I knew where I might find Him.'

Reader! there is no doubt. The spot is fixed. Come to the Mercy-seat! There God is present to hear, to answer, and to bless. There He will open all His heart, and deal as friend with friend, in all the freeness of intimate love. Then linger not. Plead Christ, your law-fulfilling righteousness. Claim Christ, your law-appeasing victim. Show Christ as set forth of God to be an atoning sacrifice, or Mercy-seat, 'through faith in His blood.' As you draw near, God will draw near to you. In Christ you come. In Christ He meets you. The Mercy-seat joins you to God. The Mercy-seat joins God to you.

Will any say that the Ark of Moses no more exists? True. When the Temple fell, this *framework* disappeared. But Christ, the *substance*, ever lives. In heaven the Throne of Grace cannot be moved. The name is changed, but the reality is one. Material *forms* are lost. Substantial blessings have eternal life. Yes! While needs lasts we may go boldly to a ready throne. God waits with open hand. With open hand His people take. O my soul, pass often through the parted veil. You will return laden with mercies, rich in grace, refreshed with heavenly communion, and made fit for a heavenly home.

Moreover, the Ark had **poles**. By these the priests carried it. It was the constant center of the marching host. It moved or tarried as they moved or stayed. Thus Christ abides, the inhabitant of the faithful heart. At home, abroad, in solitude, in work, indwelling Deity gives dignity and peace. The poles might not be taken out. They kept their place in readiness for instant movement. It is true that Christ never finally deserts His own who once have welcomed Him. But let them watch and pray, and hold Him fast with clinging love and fervency of zeal. For *if the world creeps in, and rival lusts are fondled*, His gracious smile will cease to cheer, His precious presence will *seem* to vanish. Let congregations, also, and churches fear. The poles give *warning, that departure may be near.* The Gospel comes. It calls. It is not heeded. What then? It passes on, and may be no more heard. The true Light has shone on many a spot which now is dark as death's dark valley.

Reader! let not the Ark thus speak to you in vain. Receive it, prize it, and Obed-edom's blessings will enrich you. 'The Ark of the Lord remained there with the family of Obed-edom for three months, and the Lord blessed him and his entire household.' 2Sa 6:11

Enshrine it in your heart. Then all strongholds of sin, like Jericho, will fall before it. The idols of *self-righteous forms* will lie, like shattered Dagons, at its feet. And when you reach the stream of Jordan, Christ, the true Ark, will lead you onward, and parting waters will be your passage to the land of rest!

Exo 25.30

THE TABLE OF THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE

"You must always keep the special **Bread of the Presence on the table** before me." Exo 25:30

Reader! have you passed the threshold of the home of grace? Is soul-death behind you? Is soul-life your portion? If so, *you daily hunger for divine meal.* The proof of life is sure. *The new-born craves for food. And no food satisfies, but Christ Himself.*

These lines are written to commend such feast. A Table here is spread, of which the whole provision is Christ's person and Christ's work. The saints of old found their abundance here. Yet there is more. The banquet still is rich. The Spirit's call is ever heard, 'Eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.' Our gracious God directs, 'make a **table** of acacia wood, 3 feet long, 1 1/2 feet wide, and 2 1/4 feet high. Overlay it with pure gold and run a molding of gold around it.' Observe this. The **thought and plan** are wholly from above. It is no human pattern or design. God loved, God willed, God spoke. As Christ is the offspring of free grace, so grace contrives each image which reveals Him.

In height it is co-equal with the Ark. The measure of its length and breadth is less. Its substance is identically one. The inward frame is that choice wood, of which the virtue could resist all taint. The outside shines in the chaste splendor of pure gold.

Reader! revolve the precious teaching of these chosen signs. Their terms are plain. They show the redemption-wonder. *Wood* is co-joined with *gold*. This is poor manhood taken into God. This is the Godhead linked to our lowly flesh. God remains God, and yet is man. Man remains man, and yet is one with God. Such is our Jesus; moving, working, dying, upon *earth*. Such is our Jesus; sitting, working, reigning, in the *heavens*.

Reader! let ceaseless praises prove that your gratitude discerns this truth. Cry out and shout—Christ is man; His doings are put down as mine. Christ is God; His doings must suffice.

The Table is well-stored. Christ is the richness of all rich supply. Count all the drops of ocean, and all the grains which form our globe, and all the rays, which pour down from the sun. They are base scantiness compared with Him. View other tables. The dainties of the WORLD are choking dust. The hungry eat, and hunger bites with sharper tooth. SELF is a barren waste. No soul of man can reap refreshment in that blighted field. The mere outside of RELIGIOUS FORMS and RITES is as unsubstantial as the passing cloud. Many, indeed, visit these tables; but disappointment mocks them all. The same is true of every table but Christ. He is the one abundance which abounds forever. He is the one full Table which is ever full.

But what is the food? It is **bread**. 'You must always keep **the special Bread of the Presence** on the table before me.' Faith knows this emblem well. It has often sat in rapture at the feet of Jesus, and heard His own lips say, 'I am the bread of life.' It knows, also, the **reviving** taste. It has found Christ to be its staff of strength, the healthful juice of its exhausted powers.

But bread is formed of grain, which *earth* brings forth, and labor grinds, and culinary process kneads, and oven's heat completes. Christ is all this. He is bone of our bones, flesh of our flesh. The heavy burden of man's sins bruised Him to powder, crushed Him to the grave. All hell put forth its endeavors to sift Him as the wheat is shaken. And all the flames of God's wrath blazed fiercely round Him. Thus He became the Bread of God—the saving food of souls!

Will **any grain** avail to make this consecrated bread? What says the Lord? 'You shall take **fine flour**.' No unclean grain, no refuse husk, no worthless chaff, can taint this holy lump. All its material is pure perfection. Here is Christ's manhood, as free from evil as God's life can be. This truth is precious. The anxious soul will often ask, May I lie down and die, without one fear, on Christ? The Spirit uses sword after sword to slay each doubt. He testifies by frequent *word*, in frequent *type*, that *sin could no more touch Him, than man's hand can reach God's throne, or soil the sun with stains.*

A **name** distinguishes this food. It is called Show-bread. The term implies *Bread of faces*, or **Bread of the Presence**. There is a length of truth wound up in Bible names and titles. As we unfold them, there seems to be no end. We here are taught that *this Bread was spread forth before Jehovah's face, laid out in His immediate presence.* This is an emblem of our Lord. There never has been moment in which He lived not the darling of the Father's eye. There never can be. He says, 'Before the worlds were framed, I was by Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.' God viewed Him, then, as the one center of His heart's desire. And never can His eye stray from Him. He views Him still with loving gaze, as having executed all His purposes of grace, as having magnified His name beyond all honor, as having vindicated the majesty of truth and justice. All that God is, finds sweet refreshment in this *Bread of the Presence.*

The number of the loaves is fixed. They must be twelve. 'Place the bread in the Lord's presence on the pure gold table, and arrange the loaves in two rows, with six in each row.' Lev 24:6. There is sweet meaning in this gracious rule. The twelve express the tribes of Israel. Each has allotted place on the presenting table. These classes had their differing marks. In size, in wealth, in promises, in privilege, in heritage, their state was diverse. But here *not one* is overlooked—not one is put aside. The Table sets all *equally* in order before God.

The numbered tribes of Israel are a clear picture of the numbered Church. Hence every child of faith is present in the Presence-bread. They all are members of the Lord. *In Jesus,* they all appear before the Father's eye. Degrees of faith may vary. Some may but touch with trembling hand the very edge of Jesus' garment. Others may live with their enraptured head upon His very breast. But if there is vital faith, there is an oneness with the Lord which never, never can be parted. Christ holds each one within Himself. He shows Himself to be made up of them all. They lived in Him. They died in Him. They rose in Him. They sit together in heavenly places in Him. God's look, which rests upon His Son, sees them. The love which smiles on Jesus smiles on them.

Believer, whatever be your need, your misery, your sense of sin, your loathing of vile self, turn to the *Bread of the Presence.* Your image there is lovely. Christ lives to represent you. While God delights in Him, He must delight in you. He perpetually sees you wrapped up in His Son.

The Bread received a crown (or rim) upon its summit. The crown was **frankincense**. Thus constant fragrance shed delight around. Christ is sweet savor. The sin-removing blood, the interceding prayer, the spotless righteousness, the incense of the finished work, are *heaven's own myrrh.* O my soul, is Christ this frankincense to you? You hear the voice, 'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.' Is there the glad response, This is *my* beloved Savior—in Him, I am indeed well pleased?

On the return of every Sabbath morn, the priests brought **fresh supplies**. At no moment was the Table empty. You ministers of Christ, mark well this fact. It is a sign which teaches you how you must teach your flocks. The Sabbath hours are golden time. The pulpit opens to you. Assembled crowds hang on your lips. The hungry press round you to be fed. What bread do you produce? *No food can satisfy which is not Christ.* This must be gathered in the fair fields of Scripture, where nothing grows but holiest grain. It must be sifted with most anxious search. It must be worked upon the knees. It must be *'mixed'* with agonizing prayer. It must be always new, but always one. Its savor must be only Christ.

The Presence-bread was **still the same in substance and in form**—but newly placed and newly prepared for its sacred use. O Sirs, look well to this. A dwindled and decaying flock might move angelic multitudes to tears. But dwindle and decay they must, if the bread you give them is poison; or if the food is stale. Woe to the preacher who thus sins! There can be no excuse! The Bible is before him. It is a storehouse in which Christ is *All*—and *ever new.* Will he not take that he may give? Will he not give that he may save from death? Listen to the moan of many a famished soul—"I starve; this food is Christless. I starve; this food is tasteless."

The Bread afterwards became **the priests' meal.** Within the holy place they ate the holy food. There is especial care for those who do especial work. And why? They have especial need. Such is the pastor's case. What cares oppress! What toils exhaust! What anxious days and nights beat down! But Jesus calls him to the secret chamber of His presence, and feeds him with the first-fruits of His truth. Thus with new power he runs anew his sun-like course. But woe, indeed, to him who sermonizes a Savior whom he has never seen, and preaches Christ from Christless heart, with Christless lips. O Sirs, there is a voice from *Balaam's bed of fire*, there is a wail from the *low cell of Judas*, which warns with an appalling note. *Let none take Christ upon the preaching lip, who do not feed on Him with ravished heart!*

But here is **food for the whole family of faith**. In Gospel day, the lowest servant is a priest of God. 'He has made *us* his kingdom and his *priests* who serve before God his Father.' Hence, all are welcomed to the Bread of His Presence. Children of grace, know your high privilege. The table with all its treasures is for you. Look to the Bread of His Presence again. It tells you what is the true act of faith. Is it enough to *hear* of food? Is it enough to *see*, to *smell*, to *touch?* Oh, no! Hearing and sight remove no hunger and supply no strength. To gain nourishment, the lips must taste, the food must circulate throughout the frame. So Christ must be received in all His grace, in all His truth, into each fiber of the heart and soul. He must be present in the inner man, life of our life, strength of our strength, health of our health, joy of our joy!

Reader! is your soul craving thus for Christ? Is it thus feasting on Him? He is before you. You have not far to seek. Faith can receive Him at any moment and in any place. It cries, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread'—and as it cries, it takes—and as it takes, it rejoices—and as it rejoices, it blesses—and as it blesses, it takes more, and strengthens more, and shows its greater strength in greater labors and in louder praise.

But perhaps you care nothing for this gospel feast, this *Bread of His Presence*. May God the Spirit in mercy lead you to it! Listen! He cries, 'Come! for all things are now ready.' Will you refuse? Remember *Eve*. The tempter showed her the forbidden fruit. How easily she yielded; how quickly she took! He now shows you the *husks and rubbish of the world.* Will you be as easily enticed? Sin touched, sin tasted, sin digested, is hell and all hell's pains. But come to this Feast! Take Christ, love Christ, feed daily, hourly, on Christ—and yours is the fullness of joy now, and all heaven's blessedness forever!

Exo 25.31

THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND

"Make a **lampstand** of pure, hammered **gold**. The entire lampstand and its decorations will be one piece—the base, center stem, lamp cups, buds, and blossoms." Exo 25:31

Reader! in holy thought enter the holy Tent. You pass a curtain rich in richest hues. Then what a scene appears! Light in its loveliest softness gleams around. The pure-gold sides, the pure-gold vessels, the sparkling canopy cast back resplendent rays. From where flows this glow of day? The orbs of heaven lent not their aid. No sun-gleam plays, no moon-beam sleeps upon the radiant walls. A Lampstand alone lifts high a seven-crowned head—and night is no more known. Faith looks, and soon discerns the truth of the bright vessel. Glad memory recalls the word, 'The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and *the Lamb is the light* thereof.' It sees that this must be an image of that heavenly home in which *Christ is the full light.* The light, then, here exhibits Him. Christ is the seven-lighted Lampstand. It is so. All is darkness without Him.

Let us now pause, and trace with humble prayer the beauties of this Gospel-portrait. Holy Spirit, we desire to see Jesus. Will not You reveal Him? No heart of man can learn, except Your teaching voice go forth.

First, **what** shall be brought to make up a Lampstand which shall prefigure Christ? Our costliest wealth seems mean for such high use. Value is valueless beside Him. But earth can only give her *purest* substance. It is pure *gold*. This is the metal, then, which God, the great craftsman, selects.

Reader! this choice proclaims that *Christ is an all-gold Savior!* Yes! There is no dross, no flaw, no blemish in Him. Mark well His blood. Oh! wondrous truth. It is divine. Divinely it weighs down all mountains of vile sin. Divinely it pays all claims of infinite demands. Divinely it sets free the debt-bound of a countless family. Divinely it satisfies, until satisfaction overflows. Gaze on *His righteousness*. It also is divine. God's eye can never rejoice in it enough. God's throne can scarcely give it worth. This decks the Church in her spotless robe. 'The King's daughter is all glorious within—her clothing is of wrought gold.'

Give ear to **His unfailing prayer**. Its incense is perpetual fragrance. Its power moves the heart of God. It cannot ask in vain. Thus golden blessings bless the ransomed race.

Next, **the pure gold is BEATEN**. Fast-falling blows hammer it to shape. This image leads us to *the stricken Jesus.* Redemption is an agonizing work. It cost but little to form countless worlds. It costs but little to sustain them. God willed, and they shone forth. He wills, and they still shine. But torments without limit must be borne to free one soul from sin's dues. My soul, often ponder this amazing truth. *Your sins are many as all ocean's sands. Each is most justly doomed to all the fury of most righteous wrath. God hates your evil, and is pledged to punish all of it.* Truth dies if sin escapes. In person or by proxy you must take its curse. But Jesus is this proxy. He 'suffers, the just for the unjust.' He pleads—"I come to represent a sentenced culprit. Spare him, and pour all punishment on Me." God in His grace consents. Wound follows wound, until in the deepened grave of scars, all guilt is buried from His sight.

But O my soul, your case is only one. Salvation's roll has names which baffle number. For each, for all, Christ bears all woe. He flinches not, until *the last sin of His last child is fully washed out by His bleeding stripes.* Thus Christ is *bruised*. Thus the pure gold is *beaten*. The anvil and the hammer of inflicted blows work out a perfect Savior. The gold is beaten into beauteous form. A luxury of ornaments decks every part. The branches shine as clustered trees of fruit and flowers.

Reader! we thus are led to mark the full-blown loveliness of Christ. Say, *what is beauty?* Is it not the union of symmetric charms? Is it not a matchless harmony, in which each part adds grace to each? Is it not a power which rivets gaze, and chains each sense in fetters of delight, and makes the mind a flood of ecstacy? Then **what is beauty but Christ Jesus?**

Survey His PERSON. It is our manhood decked in glorious Deity. It is a luster which outshines the sun. It is a loveliness besides which the heavens look black. It is the statue for which eternal counsels cannot raise a pedestal too high.

Survey His WORK. It is exact proportion. All claims of God, all need of man have their just place. It is a city based in eternal love, and crowned with eternal glory. Each stone is a saved soul. Each is the mirror of Jehovah's greatness.

They who, through grace, thus see their Lord, never withdraw their love. Their hearts are fixed. *The beauties of Christ eclipse all other charms.* This is the delight of Scripture. Christ beautifully shines in every page. This is the sweet relish in each Gospel-ordinance. Christ is enjoyed, the savor of the whole. Hence springs the longing to depart. To die is to meet Christ face to face.

The central stem of the Lampstand sends forth **six branches** from its sides. It thus presents the image of a spreading tree. And such is Christ. At Calvary a little seed is cast into the soil. But soon the vigorous sprouts appear. The boughs go forth into all lands and distant nations find luxuriant shade. What though this earth is most uncongenial to the plant! Still it thrives and blossoms and bears fruit—and grateful foliage screens reposing crowds.

Reader! is your calm seat beneath this shelter? Is your soul-feast from these soul-feeding tendrils? If it is not so, what is your hope? where your excuse? You cannot say that Christ's arms spread not above your dwelling. Open your eye and behold Him. Stretch out your hand and touch Him. If you refuse, you perish. And it is sad death to die beneath the tree of life.

The seven branches support **seven lamps**. Each summit is a coronet of fire. Little would be the profit of the costly frame, unless light sparkled from it. But it burns brightly. This is its especial purpose. The mystic number and the constant blaze show Christ *a perfect and unfailing light.* Study this light, this first-born of creation's gifts. It is the life, the joy, the grace of nature's world. And is not Christ the life, the joy, the grace of the poor sinner's soul? Without this Lampstand, where is the Tabernacle's splendor? Its brilliant colors are all colorless. Its golden walls are a dark blank. All form, all shape, all rays are the black sameness of a vault. The eye looks round on undistinguishable night.

Without the sun, where are creation's charms? The trees hang down their withered heads; the meadows are a noxious swamp; the melody of groves is hushed; the skies above frown as a pall of adamant; the earth's flowery carpet is an icy rock; death shivers on a frozen throne. Such is man's heart, without the light of Christ. It is *a poisoned marsh, a barren desert, a joyless waste, a rayless night, a deathful tomb!* It must be so, because God is unknown. The great Jehovah is love and grace and mercy and tender pity and power and wisdom and truth and holiness and justice. But where is this discerned? What is the grand school of such high thought? *Nature* cannot teach this. It is not written in the page of *providence*. The *law* shows nothing but angry frowns. *Reason's* poor candle only cheats. *Unaided wisdom*, with its strongest wing, can only flutter in the valley of vanity. No earth-born eye can catch a glimpse of God.

But let *the Sun of Righteousness* arise; let *Christ* send forth His heaven-bright rays. Then the scene changes. Then what floods of glory roll the mists away! The face of Jesus shows the truth of God. Each attribute is seen in Him as the clear blue of heaven. All then appear entwined in harmony's embrace, taking delight in bringing in salvation, and glorifying God in glorifying man. Behold the cross! A halo round about it writes in golden letters—God hates sin, and loves the sinner. He is just, and justifies the ungodly. He is righteous, and passes by unrighteousness. He is holy, and makes fit the unholy for His kingdom. He is free grace, and populates heaven from lost souls. He is glory, and builds His glorious palace from *the mire of earth's quarry*. Christ, Christ alone, shows this. Christ, then, is Light.

Without Christ, also, *the affairs of this world are but a puzzled maze. Poor blinded man sees nothing as it really is. He does not know the true end of being. He imagines the tinsel to be gold. He counts the true gold as dross. He treasures up the chaff as wheat. All his view is bounded by time's narrow line! All his heart is fixed on vanity's vain trifles! He chases bubbles on perdition's brink! He profits no one and he ruins himself!*

The case is different when Christ shines on his heart and mind. The opened eye then clearly sees the purpose and the end of being. The Bible-lamp then shows that man's true object is to win salvation. Wisdom then cries—Seek pardon for transgression, pleas for remission, acquittal at the judgment bar, and hope beyond the grave. The Gospel-torch reveals the mighty fact that time is granted to gain grace. Christ brings man to this clear-day life. Christ, then, is Light.

Reader! is He the Lampstand within your soul? Then see that its pure blaze ascends. It was the priest's part to trim and dress it every morning. It had golden implements to remove the dross and to revive the flame. And golden implements are ready for your hand. You know them well. Oh! use them rightly, and with pious zeal. Prayer, meditation, Scripture-ordinances, holy communion, holy labors, are *golden tools* for this most sacred work.

God ordained means to tend these lamps. He provides helps to fan the flame within you. It may be that you sometimes sit in the dark chamber of distress and doubt and fear. Your light is dim. But why? The fault is not with Christ. He is still near, and ready to shine forth. Arise! Apply the *oil* which the *Spirit* brings. In prayer before the Gospel-page, stir up the fading embers. Brightness will soon re-appear, and cheering rays make gladness more glad.

Is there a reader whose heart is not the tabernacle of these lamps? Ah! Sir, your case indeed is sad. Your eyes have never seen that lovely sight which is the joy of heaven and earth. Gross darkness covers you, but thicker night awaits you. But listen! A wondrous word calls after you. Oh! that it might rise as Bethlehem's star, to guide you to the Savior! Oh! that it might be the first ray of salvation's orb! Listen! it cries, 'Awake, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.' Christ is both the giver and the gift. Christ is the enlightener and the light. May you receive! May you reflect!

Exo 26.1

THE TABERNACLE

"Moreover you shall make the **Tabernacle**." Exo 26:1

The worship of the living God was well known to Israel's sons. They had raised altars to His name. The slaughtered victim and the curling smoke had often declared acquaintance with the way of peace. In holy rites, at many a bloodstained stone, their faith had used the ordered means. But until they reached the base of Sinai, no stated house for stated service had been reared. Here first the gracious word went forth, "I want the people of Israel to build me **a sacred residence** where I can live among them." Exo 25:8. Here mercy planted the earliest symbol of God's constant presence. Here earth received her eldest model of a consecrated sanctuary. Happy the day throughout the camp when this Tent showed its new-born head. What thrilling joy would beat in every heart? What anxious scrutiny would scan each part!

Reader! draw near in spirit. Take your stand amid the wondering crowd. Admire with them the progress of the work. First, a measure-line is drawn. The length extends to forty-five feet—the breadth to fifteen. Solid foundations then are placed. A belt of silver sockets is laid down. Into this base the sides are fixed. These much exceed in preciousness. They are composed of choicest wood, and clad in purest gold. Their height ascends to fifteen feet. Especial care joins the corners together. And bars of gold stretch out their binding arms, to make the walls secure. Five shining pillars guard the eastern entrance. Rich drapery thence hangs. Such is the *outward* frame.

Four pillars rise within, to separate *an inner chamber*. These pillars hold a veil of costly work, to screen the Holiest from all view. This room is fifteen feet in each extent. The breadth, the length, the height, are one in uniform dimension. The house thus shaped is covered by four curtains. The first is wrought with brilliant hues, and sparkles with cherubic forms. A starry canopy thus vaults the roof. Next, a stronger skin of red is spread. The outward garment is a coarse sheet of rough material. This last completes the structure. Such is the front which meets the eye.

But mark, God Himself gave this gracious blessing. He drew the plan. He gave the model. He inspired the skill. Each part, then, is His wisdom. Each has a Gospel-tongue. Each heard aright reveals that 'Christ is All.' This is not fancy's dream. It is the Spirit's clear-toned lesson. He cries to all the family of faith—Look to the Tabernacle, and behold your Lord. There is a pulpit from which no voice is heard but His. It is the Bible. Its pages teach, 'Here is the main point: Our High Priest sat down in the place of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand. There he ministers in the sacred tent, the true place of worship that was built by the Lord and not by human hands.' Heb 8:1-2

This *earthly* Tabernacle, then, is but a sketch of that gorgeous frame of Christ, which God, the Holy Spirit, wrought and planted in this earth. Again, like testimony sounds: 'So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that great, perfect sanctuary in heaven, not made by human hands and not part of this created world.' Heb 9:11. The word is plain. The *earthly* Tabernacle points to a *spiritual* Tabernacle, which human hands produce not, which human skill erects not, which human imperfection taints not. What can this be but Christ in the flesh, but not of flesh? Surely all doubts take wing. Divine authority decides the fact. Christ is discerned, the end and excellence of the predictive house.

Reader! pursue the clue thus found—and steep your soul in depths of heaven-born truth. View through this glass the various parts.

Bright silver forms the base. Where does this wealth come from? By whom and with what purpose is it given? It is the ransom-price of souls. Each numbered child of Israel brought a redemption-sum. It was a silver coin. Wealth might not add, nor poverty subtract. This holy tax supplied the base. My soul, what lessons cluster here! We see how sin destroys, how grace redeems. Our liberty is gone, our life is lost. A tyrant claims us. Justice demands its dues. But Jesus is laid low. The earth drinks in His blood. His merits are our ransom-price. His death is ransom paid. The Father testifies content—'Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.' The **sockets** add the echo of their proof. The Gospel-structure rests on a ransom. Remove it, and redemption falls. Without a price, the Savior has no saved ones. But the foundation is most sure. The Tabernacle firmly stands. Our Gospel-sockets never can be moved.

Next mark what splendid **boards** are tightly fastened to these pure supports. Two substances are here combined. They show a double nature—and thus proclaim the Incarnate God. Yes! Christ is here in Deity's transcendent blaze, in manhood's spotless purity. O my soul, how great, how perfectly fit is your redeeming Lord! All power is His to rescue and to satisfy, for what can resist the boundless might of God? He is entirely fit to take your place. He bears your flesh. He wears your form. This is the fact which wins for Him salvation's throne. This is the truth on which faith lives and joys and dies and soars to glory. Hence, types prefigure it, and prophets sing it, and Gospel narrative records it.

Hence, at each step of Jesus' life, the Spirit points, Behold the *man*—Behold the *God!* A *babe* is cradled in a manger-bed, while wondering angels announce 'Christ the *Lord*.' A lowly abode scarcely shelters the young child; while a special STAR brings distant sages to His feet. He sleeps as weary man; He arises as the mighty God, and stills the raging storm. He sits a worn-out traveler by the well, but speaks eternal life to a dead sinner's soul. He weeps in human sympathy at the grave but utters the sovereign mandate, 'Lazarus, come forth.' He moves about as lowliest of our lowly race but at His word, mute sing, lame leap, blind see, deaf hear, the weeping smile, each malady departs, and homes of anguish brighten with delight!

As *dying worm*, He hangs upon the cross—as *Lord of life and glory*, He snatches a poor lost one from the jaws of hell. As a weak corpse, the tomb receives Him. As conqueror of the grave, He strides forth in the strength of God. As friend, He gives last counsels to His friends—as God He mounts to heaven's high throne. Thus Scripture labors to fix the deep truth, that *a God-man redeems us!* O my soul, grasp tight the glad tidings. In face of sin and guilt and death and hell and judgment, cry out and shout, Christ is my All, for He is God—Christ is my All, for He is God in my own form. His manhood qualifies. His Godhead gives Him power. He is a perfect Savior!

Look now upon the **wood co-joined with gold**, and see how the bright Tabernacle's wall reflects this Gospel of God's grace. All skill was used to tighten and to brace the work. The corners were most carefully made fast. Five binding bars cemented the whole frame. Thus it was compact in solidity. This shows our Jesus as *redemption's Samson.* What arms of might are needed for His task! *Hell's gates* are strong; they must be borne away. *Heaven's portals* move not at a slender touch—they must be opened wide. The blows of Satan have terrific force—they must be all sustained. The weight of one least sin would crush a million worlds—all must be carried far from the sight of God. The cares and needs of the redeemed are burdens of unmeasured mass. Beneath this load, Christ stands unshaken as these mystic walls. Reader! you may confide in Him. He cannot collapse. Omnipotence cements His skill.

The Tent was divided. There was a lower and a second room. Faith hence is taught that *there are diverse grades in the knowledge of the Lord.* They who see much may yet see more. They who dive deep may still go deeper. They who soar high find higher heights. My soul, let not your wings hang down. Let each moment be an onward flight. The veil will soon be passed, and heaven display *full glories* to your view.

The entrance-curtain hangs from five pillars. Only four hold the inner veil. The lessening number seems to teach that opening space expands to welcome the advancing saint. If any find the first gate to be strait, let them press on. Each progress leaves some hindrance behind. *The end of holy conflict and unflinching faith is wide admission to the courts of heaven.*

Lastly, the **coverings** have a voice to speak to us. Spirit of Truth, speak by them to our hearts. The first has no inviting look. Its color shines not. Its texture is CRUDE. Thus to the worldling, Jesus shows no charms. The eye which seeks some tinsel-glitter will turn away in scorn. But there is much folly and peril here. Offence at the meek Savior's lowly appearance may be a rapid downfall into hell's worst depths. But while faith gazes, the features change.

The second covering is RED. The sign is not ambiguous. It testifies of blood. He who would save must die. From wounded sides and pierced hands a crimson stream must flow. This cries for pardon. This atones for guilt. This pays all debts. True Gospel-hope is a rich treasure from a blood-stained field. Pure Gospel-light shines from behind a blood-red cloud.

Beneath the red a SNOW-WHITE pure sheet appears. This sign, also, is a Bible-leaf. We read the spotless purity which shone in Christ. He bears man's flesh without one stain of sin. We see, also, the cleansing power of His blood. All washed therein are whiter than the snow-clad hills.

But look again. The tent now sparkles in variety of hues. The dazzling forms of shining cherubim adorn it. My soul, look onward to the day when Christ your Lord shall come. All faithful eyes shall see Him, fair in salvation's beauty, bright in salvation's glory, crowned with salvation's crown, praised with salvation's hymns. Reader! in that day will you shout and sing?

We cannot leave the Tent, and not observe the **absence of a floor.** Solemn the warning! Nothing which pictures Christ may lie beneath heedless feet. No paschal blood was wasted on the threshold. No type of Christ is trodden down. Let the poor scoffer fear. The wages of their contempt are paid in hell.

Another lesson craves our hearing. **No door is closed**. All day, all night, the Tabernacle stands open. No bolts, no bars obstruct. It seems to invite *approach*. Such is the Savior with His outstretched arms, calling poor sinners to His very heart. The lips of ever-willing love are ever open. Why will you perish? Come to Me.

The Tent was a token of **a present God.** There He was pledged to commune with His sons—to show His face—to hear their cry—so in Christ Jesus heaven meets earth, and earth ascends to heaven. The Father comes and clasps the guilty to His arms. The guilty come and find a home in God. Eternal smiles chase fears away, and reconciliation claps her hands. The sinner asks, the Father gives. The Father gives, the sinner asks yet more. And more bestowed calls forth the louder praise. Here mercy sings, and grace exults, and happy concord reigns, and love waves high an olive-branch of peace.

Reader! Do not leave these humble lines until you find that Christ, the Tabernacle, makes you thus one with God forever!

Exo 27.1-2

THE BRONZE ALTAR

"Using acacia wood, make a square **altar** 7 1/2 feet wide, 7 1/2 feet long, and 4 1/2 feet high. Make a horn at each of the four corners of the altar so the horns and altar are all one piece. Overlay the altar and its horns with **bronze**." Exo 27:1-2

A spacious court enclosed the Tabernacle. There was admittance by one only gate. All worshipers must pass one door. Immediately in front of this the Bronze Altar stood. This object first arrested view. Each eye must first behold, each step must first approach its hallowed structure. All heaven-taught souls acknowledge *Jesus as the Altar* of the Church. Most plain instruction flows, then, from this prominent position. *Christ should be foremost in the heart's desires.* Each thought should first go forth towards Him. He should receive the first-fruits of our love. His ear should hear our earliest praise. He should be felt, the Alpha of life's every move.

Parents and ministers mark this. In all your teaching make Christ the morning-star. Let His sweet rays precede all other light. Let other knowledge follow behind Him, and be the lowly handmaid of pure wisdom's Lord!

"Each day you must sacrifice a young bull as an offering for the atonement of sin." Exo 29:36. The Bronze Altar faced the entrance-gate. It was a solemn sight. Perpetual fire blazed. Perpetual smoke went up. Perpetual victims died. Perpetual blood was shed. Perpetual offerings came. Why must this carnage be? Who slew all these? What kindled such devouring flames? These questions lead us to a dreadful truth. Fire is the dreadful sign of wrath. The Altar smokes, then, because wrath is gone forth—because transgressions must pay death. These flames write glaringly, 'See what sin earns.'

Reader! you cannot weigh enough the misery and guilt of sin. It wakes eternal fury. It is the fuel of the quenchless fire. And what are you but one vile mass of sin? How, then, can you escape? There is one only hope. This Altar shows it. Come, now, and see its saving wonders. Come, seek its refuge. Come, receive pardon from its blood-stained horns. Depart from it—and you pass to bear, unsheltered, the thunderbolts of wrath.

The Altar's **component parts** first bid us pause. *Its twofold substance presents the twofold nature of our Lord.* If frequent types show forth this truth, it is that frequent thoughts may cluster round it. If this sweet flower be fragrant in all spots of Scripture's field, it is that grateful hands may pluck it at each turn. The frame is choicest **wood** combined with **bronze**. The wood alone could not suffice. The flames would quickly give it, as ashes, to the sporting winds. A mass, also, of unmingled brass would be a weight too cumbrous for a journeying host. The union fits the Altar for its destined use.

Here is our Jesus, the *mighty God,* the *lowly man*. As God, He deals with God. As man, He takes the sinner's place. The God-man saves because the God-man suffers. The pains sufficed for they are infinite. He touches heaven and earth and makes both one. *The double substance aptly shows how this rare suitableness combines in Christ.*

The form is **square**. It stands the massive symbol of *solidity*. It resists all efforts to overthrow it. Faith sees this and exults in its stronghold. Christ is Salvation's Rock. The raging billows of hell's fury lash Him in vain. Earth's ceaseless hate can not jar it. He sits in triumph on the shattered fragments of opposing weapons. The wit, the arguments, the sneers of man, have all fallen harmless at His feet. The cause of Christ still rears its conquering head. He reigns, and ever will reign, immovable in might. Reader! this image calls us to deeper trust. Christ's truth, Christ's word, Christ's work, can never be cast down.

This shape presents to every quarter the same appearance. Be the approach from east, from west, from north, from south, the appearance does not change. Thus Jesus meets the sinner's eye, in every age, in every place; *the same.* There is no averted look by Him. There is no half reception. There is one broad display of manifested and inviting grace. Sinner, four equal sides face every point. They meet you at each turn. Expanded arms bid you draw near.

Horns branch, also, from each quarter. These are a well-known sign. They speak of *all-subduing might.* The horned beasts (rhinoceros) move as the forest's terror. When they assail, they triumph. Christ is thus armed for conquest. The thought is precious. My soul, revolve it often. SELF is a broken arm, a pointless dart, a crumbling staff. But strong assaults must be repelled, and strong corruptions trodden down, and strong temptations baffled, and heavy trials borne. Man's sinews cannot wrestle with such foes. But Christ is near. Receive Him as your sword of strength. Leaning on Him, poor worms thresh mountains, and earth's feeblest things do valiantly. Hence the grand power of that wondrous word, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' It is the horn of Jesus, which prevails. It never can be broken. Therefore His people raise their heads—and victory is their crown.

These horns were more than types of strength. They were realities of **refuge**. The criminals who reach it must not die, but live. The sword of vengeance lost its power here. All peril died. The spot was hallowed SAFETY. This is the full security of Christ's protecting arms. Satan can no more harm. Can He seize Christ, and drag Him from His throne? He must do this before he can pluck the weakest sinner from the breast of Christ. O my soul, let nothing part you from salvation's horns. Let all your guilt, let every view of sin, let the dread thunder of the threatening law, let the swift darts of wrath quicken your flight to Him. Adhere to Him. Hold fast by Him. Live in His wounds. There is no other spot of peace.

The Altar's **main design** *was to receive burnt-offerings.* At early morn, throughout the day, at evening's close, the flames were bright, the spire of smoke ascended. He has no Gospel-light who sees not Christ in all this blaze. Each fire-made offering typified His death. But on what Altar can Christ place Himself? The promised God-man comes to die—what arms are able to bear Him up? All things below are worse than worthless for such glorious use. If structure could be raised, in which each stone were brighter than a million suns, it would be black beside Him. *Creation* has no fit support. When Jehovah's fellow dies, Jehovah's fellow *must sustain Himself.* Men little think what burdens pressed Him down. The least transgression of God's righteous law is load beyond all thought. Its weight would sink the sinner deeper and deeper through unending ages in unfathomable gulfs. But this holy victim bears the countless sins of countless multitudes. What can support Him when the avenging fire falls? Angels have no sufficient arms. The help of worlds would crumble into dust. Earth can supply no prop or pillar. Christ alone can now uphold Himself. His Deity alone can keep humanity uncrushed. Christ's only Altar is Himself.

Reader! pause now. Behold God's Altar and God's Offering. Christ stands, the fire-applying Priest. Christ comes, the fire-receiving Lamb. Christ lies, the fire-sustaining Altar. All is sufficient, for all is divine. There is enough in all, for there is God in all. The wrath breaks forth. The fury is outpoured. Vengeance demands her due. The Law exacts its curse. But the burnt-offering fails not. Each attribute of God exults. Each sin of the whole family is expiated. Christ bears the whole, because an Altar, strong as His Godhead, bears Him to the end. There is no sweeter thought on earth, there is no louder song in heaven, than praise to the Priest who offered, to the Lamb who suffered, to the Altar who sustained.

Reader! survey again salvation's fabric in its wondrous parts. Extend your hand. Write *glory* on each stone. It is all worthy of Him who willed, of Him who planned, of Him who wrought it out. God comes. God comes in flesh to die. God upholds the victim in His dying. *Christ is the gift, the Altar, the All.* My soul, here is a remedy for all your sins. Your need is great, but the atonement is far greater.

Reader! this Altar still stands high in heaven. It stands, and sinners may draw near and use it. Heed, then, a solemn word. Do you discern it with faith's clear eye? Do you cling to it with faith's strong hand? Do you prize it, as God's best gift? Do you frequent it, as your soul's loved home? Is life's main work transacted here? Need, urgent need there is, that hearts should be thus probed.

TIME is, at most, but very *short*, and *rapid* is its ceaseless flight. Eternity with all its magnitudes is at the door. The last breath may be quivering on the lip. Undying souls are on the threshold of eternal doom! And SATAN strives, with every art, to close our eyes and lure us to his nets. The WORLD surrounds us with its poisoned baits. It checks us with its sneers and frowns. It courts us with its treacherous smiles. SELF, also, is no friend to the soul. It acts a traitor's part. It opens to the murderous foe. Hence there is need that honest lips should press home honest truth. Say, then, is Christ the precious Altar of your faith, your joy, your hope, your love, your zeal? Look inward. Search yourself.

In every age, not least in this, *Satan erects his many counterfeits, and calls them Christ.* He decks them with false disguises. He slopes a flowery path into the bewitching snare. He smooths with skillful hand the slippery descent. He plants the altar of *man's imagined worth.* He prompts the dream, that rubbish dug from nature's quarry, and shaped by sin-soiled hands, and worked by sin-soiled tools, may form a sufficient base. He bids men to offer Christ on this altar, and then lie down content.

Reader! cast such coiled vipers from your breast. What! pile sin on sin, add filth to filth, and call it a fit pedestal for Christ! The very thought is hell's worst lie. No! *Christ must be all, or nothing!* He must do all the WORK, have all the MERIT, and possess all the GLORY. Would that they whose hearts turn fondly towards Rome's religious frauds, would hear. They often sound the Altar's name—but they tread down the Altar's truth. They build, indeed, a Babel-tower. They raise high steps, as an ascent to heaven. But is Christ there, the First, the Last, the All? Far otherwise. *Man's merit* lays the broad foundation. His tears of self-wrought penitence, his long array of self-denials, his train of vaunted charities, his ritual postures, and his external rites, construct the fabric. Such is their altar. Christ then, in name only, is added, as a fair jewel to *an earth-made crown.* Thus proud conceit and Satan's fraud, join hand in hand to cast down Christ.

Reader! such altars stand on ruin's ground. They decorate a downward path. Think what the end must be of Christ-denying creeds, and Christ-rejecting worship, and Christ-ignoring forms? Are you this dreamer? Awake! Awake*! Hell has its altar, also!* On it lost souls lie down forever. Satan's bellows will not cease to blow. Tormenting anguish will not cease to flare. But imperishable victims cannot be consumed. Awake! Awake! Behold! heaven's saving Altar is not yet beyond your reach!

Exo 28.1

THE PRIEST

"Take unto you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto Me, in the **Priest's** office." Exo 28:1

No pencil's art can represent the sun. No image can portray Christ's riches. He leaves all boundaries behind. But still His knowledge is the soul's choice food. It is the joy of joys, it is the life of life. The tabernacle stood to be the witness of His truth. The Altar was upraised, the victims died, the incense curled, the lamps were lighted, the Bread of the Presence was presented, to paint in varied ways **His varied worth.** These many types taught much. But this full cluster is not a full picture. A living office, therefore, receives birth. An active order is now added. The Priest appears, to be an ever-moving type of redeeming work.

Reader! we live in times when erring lips misrepresent our Lord. But err we cannot, when we behold Him in the Priestly ordinance. Our Priest is not on earth. The Spirit witnesses, 'We have a great High-priest, who has passed into the heavens.' Who can this be but Christ? Thus Christ is the Priest who ministers for us. Ignorance makes many priests. Faith knows but one.

First, mark the call. It is most clear. No human mind selects **THE PRIEST**. No *self-called* man usurps the work. The service is *ordained by God.* The sacred order has a door which none can pass but by divine command. The heavenly will thus speaks—'Take unto you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him.' The purporse is distinct: 'No man takes this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' In Christ the fulfillment is found. 'That is why Christ did not exalt himself to become High Priest. No, he was chosen by God.'

There is a volume of instruction here. Christ swiftly flies on outstretched wings of love. But all the flight, and all the course are in *the path which God marked out.* The Father *chooses* and the Father *sends*. The Son obeys and hastens to the work. Hence all poor sinners may repose, without one fear, on Christ. He comes commissioned to discharge a settled service. He saves according to *decree*.

The office is protected by another fence. *None can pass through who have **defect**.* The mandate is stern. All who draw near must show completeness in complete perfection. Thus says the Lord, 'Whoever he be of your seed in their generations that has any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God.' This leads us to explore *the all-surpassing **worthiness** of Christ.* He is beauty in its full-blown blaze, and grace in its most graceful form. He is as bright as God is bright. He is as perfect as God is perfect. Righteousness is His belt. Glory is His robe. The very heavens are unclean beside Him. *Reader! keep Jesus always in your sight. The world in all its tinsel-show will then no more be seen.*

This admiration has **transforming power**. Faith looks, and as it looks, an inward likeness to Jesus grows. We 'are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' He is the holiest man who sees by faith the most of Christ. Let Christ, then, take the Priesthood for His people. He has full worthiness. No sin ever stained Him.

Through this vestibule, we may press on to view **THE PRIESTLY WORK** itself. It is a tree of many branches. The main are thus described—'Every High-priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may *offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.'* At the altar the chief functions were discharged. There is an altar, then, at which Jesus served. Calvary shows it. Let faith, with open and adoring eye, survey that scene. *It gladdens heaven and affrights all hell.* It should be meditation's happiest seat.

The promised Lamb appears. The victim chosen before time began, the theme of prophet's song, the crown of patriarchal hope, the jewel in each typifying casket, is now led forth. It is the God-man Jesus, Jehovah's fellow, creation's author, the Lord of all things, the Prince of life. He comes to die, that He may save; to bleed, that He may make atonement; to lay down life, that sin may be destroyed. An altar is prepared. *It is sufficient for the mighty load. Its pillars are the strength of Deity.*

But *what Priest* leads this Lamb and binds Him to the Altar? The Priest is *Jesus*. He teaches this when speaking of His life. He says, 'No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.' The Spirit bids us mark the Sacrificer's hand, when He adds, He 'through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God.' Jesus well knew that nothing but His blood could satisfy the holiness of God, and He did not withhold it. He loved to save, and therefore loved to die. He joyed to do His Father's will, and therefore joyed to give Himself. The language of the cross is loud and clear. All that *my Father's glory* asks—all that *My people's need* requires—I willingly present. I gladly die to *honor God and bring redemption to My flock.* My soul, turn often to this self-sacrificing act. Do you seek proof that He desires your pardon? Behold it in His arm stretched out to give Himself. You must be spared. He will not spare Himself.

But when the blood was shed, the Priestly work was not concluded. On the most solemn day of Israel's year, the High-priest passed within the veil. He stood before the mercy-seat. But not without the proof of sacrifice enacted. He brought the blood. He *sprinkled it before the ark.* Is Jesus here? What is the Spirit's comment. 'By His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' We thus gain vision of the courts above. Our eyes are opened to a wondrous sight. We see our Jesus transacting still the priestly functions.

My soul, be much in spirit, and by faith, in heaven. It is a sin, a shame, a folly, and a loss, to live apart from Him who ever lives for you. Abide by Jesus. He is never absent from the Father's side. He ever shows His soul-redeeming blood. It has an eloquence which must prevail. It has a plea which no accusing rage can answer. It is full price for all the ransomed race. It fills the scales which justice brings. It gives to truth its every demand. It silences the Law's stern curse. It claims all pardon, and all sins are pardoned. What now can Satan say? The High-priest shows the blood. All charge is answered, all guilt removed, the blood-bought are absolved.

The High-priest bears a **censer**, also. From it a cloud of rising incense covers all the mercy-seat. Thus Jesus fills the heavens with fragrance. His precious intercession sheds precious aromas round. He pleads that all His work on earth is done. He spreads His wounded hands. He shows His wounded side. He proves that every term of the vast covenant of grace is kept, that sin is punished, and His people free. Oh! the rich savor of such rich pleas! All attributes take up the shout, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?'

The High-priest exercised another function. It was his happy province to strew blessings round. 'Instruct Aaron and his sons to *bless the people* of Israel with this special blessing.' Jesus is called to be a blessing Lord. Mark His departing act—'He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.' And now He lives in heaven a blessing-life, and opens there His blessing-hands, and utters there His blessing-voice, and displays there His blessing-smile.

Poor sinners feel their sin. They see the Savior. They flee to wash in His all-cleansing blood. They hide beneath His glorious righteousness. This is a blessing. They burst the bonds of sin and Satan; they love the sacred feasts of Bible-truth and holy ordinances. This is a blessing. They rejoice with joy unspeakable; they trample on the world, and all its snares, and all its baits. They see hell vanquished, heaven their home, saints their brethren, angels their ministering guardians, Jesus their all. This is a blessing! Life is theirs; Death is theirs; Christ is theirs; Heaven is theirs; Glory is theirs; Eternity is theirs. This is a blessing! All these streams flow down from Jesus our High-priest, who ever lives to execute this blessing work.

It is the Spirit's solemn will that we should know and use this Great High-priest. Hence, by repeated contrasts, He magnifies His worth. This teaching bids us give ear. Let us advance, then, and pluck some fruit from these luxuriant boughs.

"There were many priests under the old system. When one priest died, another had to take his place. But Jesus remains a priest forever; his priesthood will never end." Heb 7:23-24. The priests who ministered to Israel's sons were only men. Dust was their substance and to dust they soon returned. Death soon removed them from their post. Our Great High-priest is very God. His life is immortality. Eternity is His day. No time can bring decay to Him. No age makes His seat void. So long as mediating work remains, His mediating office lives.

"He does not need to offer sacrifices every day like the other high priests. They did this for their own sins first and then for the sins of the people. But Jesus did this once for all when he sacrificed himself on the cross." Heb 7:27. The high priests were of corruption's seed. Sin cleaved to their most holy service. Their very best was vile and black. They must make offerings for themselves. They needed blood to wash away their guilt. Jesus is pure as God is pure. He breathed no atmosphere but perfect holiness. Poor sinners have a sinless Priest in Him.

"But only the high priest goes into the Most Holy Place, and only once a year, and always with blood, which he offers to God to cover his own sins and the sins the people have committed in ignorance." Heb 9:7. The high priests passed the veil but once in every year. He entered heaven as His own abode. There, day and night He pleads, and will present incessant pleas, until the last saint be safely gathered home.

"Once for all time he took blood into that Most Holy Place, but not the blood of goats and calves. He took his own blood, and with it he secured our salvation forever." Hebrews 9:12. The high priests' victims were but creatures of this lower world. The blood was only blood of beasts. It had no saving power. It could not touch transgression's infinite pollution. Jesus presents Himself to God. He brings the very blood of God. All worlds are worthless when compared to this. Believer, this is your full salvation.

"Under the old covenant, the priest stands before the altar day after day, offering sacrifices that can never take away sins. But our High Priest offered himself to God as one sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down at the place of highest honor at God's right hand." Heb 10:11-12. The high priests offered often. The victims died, the altars blazed, the incense burned from year to year, from day to day. Jesus presents one victim once. His death once died, His life once given, His blood once shed, fully and forever washed out His people's sins, redeemed His people's lives, and saved His people's souls. His one surrender of Himself as the atoning Lamb, forever quenched all wrath, forever took away all curse, forever satisfied all claims, forever saved the family of faith, forever opened heaven, forever vanquished hell. To add to infinite perfection is impossible. Woe be to them who think such offering incomplete!

The Spirit cries, 'fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.' Heb 3:1. Reader! obey. Make Him the center of your every thought, the home of your adoring mind, the first, the last of meditation's joys. Christ's Priesthood is a theme which time cannot exhaust. It is a theme for which eternity is short!

Exo 28.2

THE HOLY GARMENTS

"You shall make **Holy Garments** for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty." Exo 28:2

If ever eyes beheld an object in which splendor shone, it was the high-priest in his Holy Garments. God planned each part 'for glory and for beauty.' Hence every brilliant color sparkled. Hence richest jewels cast back dazzling rays. The rainbow's varied hues, the sun's meridian light, seemed to concentrate in a human form. Earth brought her best. Art framed them with a Spirit-given skill.

Reader! such is the figure to which these humble pages would now invite your gaze. But you will look in vain if you see nothing but the costly robes. Here is delight for faith's enraptured heart. Jesus is here! What is *beauty*, but His form, His grace, His work! What is *glory*, but His manifested sight! This workmanship would never have seen birth, except to show His all-surpassing worth.

Spirit of Truth, look down! We long for clearer vision of the Lord. It is Your sovereign province to display Him. Cause, then, these Holy Garments to fulfill their office.

First, there was the **inmost coat**. Its texture was of *finest linen*. Exo 28:39. It covered the whole frame. It clothed the arms and flowed down to the ground. It thus showed *purity* from head to foot. Do any ask—Where can such full-length purity be found? The Gospel answers by revealing Christ. He is one blaze of spotless righteousness. This truth is the firm pedestal of all our hopes. If one defect had touched Him, He must have needed an atonement for Himself. But being sinless, He can take the sinner's place. He hangs a sinless body on the cross. He gives a sinless soul to bear God's wrath. Thus wrath is satisfied!

This snow-white tunic exhibits, also, the *righteousness* which Christ wrought out on earth. His active obedience covers the whole surface of the law. Heaven's palace must have heaven-pure garments. Christ weaves them. Christ bestows them. Faith takes them, and is thus made fit for the throne of God.

Reader! think well; you must sink low in hell, except a righteous Savior cleanses your guilt. You cannot stand before God's eye, except you face Him righteous as He is righteous. You cannot breathe in heaven, except a newborn nature love its holy climate. The hands of Jesus hold all this mercy for you. His holy blood is perfect atonement for sin. His full obedience is your royal robe. His Spirit can impart all grace. Behold the High-priest in this inner tunic, and let its snow-white hue teach you these truths.

The coat was tightly fastened by a **belt**. To gird the loins was to prepare for toil. *Activity* is thus insured. This sign, then, shows our Jesus equipped for all the labors of redeeming service. It was no light task to save souls. Mountains of difficulty must be overcome. Untiring strength must be put forth. He promptly exerts all of His energy. He meets each foe. He clears each obstacle. He rests not until the path from earth to heaven is free. Yet He will work until His flock is safely gathered home. He worked on earth because He greatly loved. He works in heaven because He loves as greatly.

Reader! see Jesus all activity to save. He never weakens nor loiters nor desists. One thing He does. He girds His loins for labor. Are you as earnest to be saved? Are you as active to seek Him? Are you as zealous to subserve His cause? His persevering zeal should shame man's listless indolence. His belt is reproach to our ungirded loins.

Above the coat a **robe** was placed. Exo 28:31. In measure it was less. It had no covering for the arms. It scarcely reached below the knees. But its chief difference was its lovely hue, and the magnificence of the bordering hem. The color was pure blue. It thus reflected the clear canopy of heaven. The high-priest ministered in a sky-blue robe. Thus Jesus brings all heaven to our thought. Heaven is in His every word. His hands extend the gift of heaven. To see Him now is heaven begun. To be with Him forever is heaven complete. Faith knows no heaven but Him. Reader! see Jesus as your High-priest in azure robe, and you will die to earth, and earth will die to you. A brighter scene will win you to love brighter things.

This robe had a **rich fringe**. Its hem was a broad belt of pomegranates and golden bells. These **pomegranates** were richly worked in purple, blue, and scarlet. Of all the fruits, this is most *rich in seed*. Therefore it is fit emblem of *luxuriant shoots*. Here Jesus is portrayed, as the 'Everlasting Father' of a countless race. His blood is sown on earth; a harvest of saved souls springs up. Mark the crowds who throng the throne of glory. They all are produce of redeeming love. Mark all who in the wilderness of earth show signs of new-imparted being. They all derive existence from one stem; they all are fruit of one regenerating Spirit. We see the ornamented edge, and we adore the truth, 'So shall your seed be.' Gen 15:5.

The pomegranates were intermingled with **golden bells**. The high-priest could not stir but *melody* announced that he was near. Israel's sons found special comfort in this ordinance. Their high-priest passed the veil. He stood before the ark. It was a solemn moment. The spot was tremendous in awe. The thought might rise, Can man draw near to symbols of God's glory and not die? But a sweet note lulls all such fears to rest. The golden bells are heard. All hearts rejoiced. The high-priest faced the mercy-seat and yet he lived. The golden bells still sound. Faith is no stranger to their voice. Jesus, indeed, is no more seen by mortal sense. The heavens hide Him. He prosecutes His work before a throne unseen by us. And there He lives. The proof is clear and sweet as music from the golden bells. Each tender whisper of His love, each soothing application of His word, each sweet assurance of unfailing care, are sounds which evidence that Jesus lives. The golden bells forever ring the joyful tidings, 'Because I live, you shall live also.'

Believer, look often to the fringe of the blue robe. Jesus is there, the fruitful author of your every grace. Jesus is there, assuring that He lives to give you life.

The **ephod** was next added. Exo 28:6. This was a tunic, shorter in form than the preceding robe. But while the robe was simple in one azure shade, this ephod was all radiant in diversity of hue. They shall make it, said the Lord, 'of gold, of blue, of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with skillful work.' Earth brought its choicest produce. Art used its utmost effort. The purpose is most clear. We thus are taught that *all rare graces are combined in Christ*. His person, which is God and man; His work, which fills all heaven with glory; His tender dealings; His loving heart; His faithful truth; these are the perfection of all charms. None ever see true beauty until Christ appears in His salvation's robes.

Two **shoulder-pieces** fixed it. No common skill prepared them. Sockets of gold were formed. In each an onyx stone was placed. These stones were *engraved with the names of Israel's tribes.* O my soul, what streams of comfort issue from this sight! Your name, your very name appears on high, uplifted on the shoulders of your Lord. How then can foes work harm? They may assail, they will assail. But you are high above their reach. Can they scale heaven? The thought is folly. Yet they must lay Christ low before they can touch you. Your seat is safety. Your prop is Deity. Rejoice, be glad. High is your Lord—are you less high? Thus, weak in yourself, you soar above all peril, and sit as more than conqueror on eminence of Almightiness!

Rich is this comfort. But the Lord of comfort yet gives more. It is His will that joy unspeakable should fill His people's souls. A **breast-plate** therefore is inserted in this ephod's front. No words can show its matchless splendor. Richly embroidered like the ephod, twelve precious jewels were set upon it. Each glittering stone exhibited the name of one of Israel's tribes. This work is all arranged to prove *how dearly Jesus loves His own people.* The world may scorn them as the vilest dust. But Jesus guards them as His choicest treasure, and put them on as the delight of His delights. Redeemed souls are His chief ornament. He wears them on His heart.

Believer, look to Christ. Mark, He displays His very heart. What do you read there? Your name! Your very name! Do you ask, And can He love *me?* Surely the manger, the garden, and the cross are proof. But lest such evidence should not suffice, His *breast-plate* is shown as a scroll written with your name. Be then persuaded. His life is love for you. His heart has never been, and never will be, without your image. You dwell entwined amid His affection's fibers. Your High-priest ever wears this precious breast-plate. He ever shows your name before God's throne. You are inseparable portion of His heart.

This is not all. The breast-plate holds more wondrous treasure yet. But here is mystery which we cannot scan. We know, and it is much to know, that the **Urim and Thummin** were adjoined. The meaning of the terms is clear. Their meaning is 'light and perfection.' Their holy use is also known. By means of these the Lord *revealed His will*, and gave responses to the consulting priest. The Gospel of the ordinance is likewise clear. Christ is our light. He is our full perfection. Do we need wisdom? Do we seek guidance? We may draw near. From His heart pure light will shine. Do we mourn that imperfection cleaves as our very skin? He only can relieve. His blood, His righteousness, His Spirit, His dealings, are perfect and make perfect.

Reader! seek Christ, and light is yours. Seek Christ, and all perfection is your portion. Our Urim and our Thummin are His smile.

The Holy Garments are not yet complete. The head must now receive its crowning grace. For this a **mitre** is prepared. Fair linen is the substance. A belt of blue surrounds it. On this a golden plate is fixed. And then the glorious name, 'Holiness to the Lord,' shines forth. Exo 28:36. My soul, look up to heaven. Jesus there ministers to consummate salvation. What is it that His **mitre** declares? 'Holiness to the Lord.' Adore Him—for such is His just title. His **person** is 'Holiness to the Lord.' Unspotted purity is His essence. If it were otherwise, He could not take a Savior's place. His **work** is 'Holiness to the Lord.' He came to set Himself apart, that He might do His Father's will. His **blood**, His **righteousness**, His **prayers**, are 'Holiness to the Lord.' His **people**, in their souls, their walk, their ways, are 'Holiness to the Lord.' He found them sinners. He made them holy. He gave them new hearts, new lives, to be forever 'Holiness to the Lord.'

Such is our robed High-priest. Is He not glory? Is He not beauty? Who will not love Him? Who will not praise Him? Who will not pray, Glorify me in Your glory! Beautify me in Your beauty! for I am Yours!

Exo 30.1-3

THE INCENSE ALTAR

"Make an **altar** of acacia wood for burning **incense**. It is to be square, a cubit long and a cubit wide, and two cubits high—its horns of one piece with it. Overlay the top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold, and make a gold molding around it." Exo 30:1-3

He whose daily life is an upward flight to Christ has heaven on his way to heaven. Wide indeed are these fields of light. We may journey far, but they stretch farther. From every point more lofty heights appear. The subject is a book whose pages end not. The more it occupies us, the less it wearies. It richly feeds, but ever leaves an appetite for more. The Redeemer's image is embodied in the Tabernacle-service. 'Behold Him! behold Him!' is the one universal cry. But nowhere is this voice more plainly heard than at the Golden Altar. This filled the tent with richest streams of fragrance. So it preached Him who is the Incense of the courts above.

Reader! this now invites our notice. In mercy may the Spirit cause the sacred odor to arise. The **position** of this Altar first claims thought. The Lord, who orders all things with wise end, especially enjoins, 'Place the incense altar just outside the inner curtain, opposite the Ark's cover—the place of atonement—that rests on the Ark of the Covenant. I will meet with you there.' Exo 30:6. Mark where he stands, then, who discharges service at this sanctuary. The expiating altar is behind. His steps have brought him to the borders of the holiest place. He has passed the spot where dying victims bleed (the bronze atoning altar). Heaven's clearest emblem (the Ark of the Covenant) is now close by. Thus the Incense Altar's chosen position seems as a link to join the cross and crown.

Reader! the spot calls you to pause and look within. Say, have your feet attained this position? Has the *first altar* seen you humble, guilt-stricken, smiting on your breast, and confessing all your miserable sins before it? Has eager faith there touched the atoning Lamb? Is pardon in your hand? Is your soul calm in knowledge of the curse removed and full remission given?

Have you thus pressed towards this inner Altar, where the incense burns? If so, the veil is almost touched. This screens the sanctuary, which pictures heaven's bright rest. The space is narrow now, which parts you from eternal bliss. The ever-smiling smile of God, the ever-present presence of the Lamb is your near portion. Swift-flying moments will soon waft you to the kingdom from all eternity prepared, throughout all eternity prolonged.

Reader! is such in very truth your place? If so, *adore the grace which led you to it!* You may have *wealth*. It cannot profit long. You may have *health*. Decay will cause its flower to fade. You may have *strength*. It soon will totter to the grave. You may have *honors*. A breath will blast them. You may have flattering *friends*. They are but as a summer brook. These boasted joys often cover now an aching heart. They never gave a grain of solid peace. They never healed a conscience-wound. They never won approving looks from heaven. They never crushed the sting of sin. But floods of peace surround this golden incense altar! Its worshipers grasp mercy and survey glory. They look back on all transgression blotted out. Heaven's rays are breaking on their blood-washed souls. The Incense Altar is so set that these truths sparkle from its instant sight.

Next, let this altar's parts be viewed. No human mind designs this incense altar. God, who gives Christ, gives each foreshadowing sign. His voice directs, 'Let **gold** be joined to **wood**.' Christ is the corresponding wonder. He is equal to God in Godhead's greatness, and fellow to man in humanity's low state. He is bold to ascend to Jehovah's throne, and willing to share the sinner's rags. Such is the Savior whom God sends. Such is the Savior whom sin needs. More cannot be. Less would be nothing worth. Would that all tribes of men could form one audience, to hear one word from these poor lips. It should be this—A God-man only can redeem a sinner's soul. A God-man, even Jesus, *undertakes* the work. A God-man, even Jesus, *finishes* the whole.

Its **form is square**. Such is the shape, also, of the atoning altar. We thus are taught again, that *our salvation is exceeding strong.* It is support which cannot fail. It is most firmly based on God's own might forever. We further learn that one inviting picture is turned to every comer. From every quarter, then, let sinners flee here. Christ never did, He never will, He never can reject. One face, arrayed in ready welcomes, smiles on all.

It had its crown, its horns, its poles. Each sounds glad tidings to faith's listening ear. The **crown** is a *royal* emblem. Let Jesus take it, then. It is His right. The prophet sings, 'The government shall be upon His shoulder.' Isa 9:6. The Father cries, 'Yet have I set my King upon My holy hill of Zion.' Psa 2:6. Once, indeed, derision mocked Him with its circling thorns. But now in heaven He wears redemption's everlasting diadem. But though He rules thus high, *His darling throne is the poor sinner's heart!* His brightest crown is jeweled with saved souls.

The **horns** speak *mighty prowess*. They prove that victory is on His brow. It is so. No strength can stand before Christ! He speaks and He prevails. Hell quakes. The captives come forth free. Sin's chain is shattered. Opposing lusts lie down subdued. The baffled world is trodden under foot. Believer, at this Altar, then, cast out all fear. A conquered kingdom cannot conquer you. *A horn has pierced each adversary's heart.* You stride to triumphs over death-stricken ranks.

The **poles** were signs of readiness to move. The Gospel-sound must go into all the earth. Place has no power to shut out Christ. He penetrates the lonely wastes. He cheers *Elijah* by the desert brook. No bars give effectual hindrance. He wakes a song within *Paul's* inmost cell. He watches by the wandering *Jacob*. He walks beside the faithful *youths* in the furnace-heat. He animates the warring *Joshua*. He stoops to *poverty's* most squalid mire, and sits beside the outcast *Lazarus*. He mounts the steps of lofty palaces, and guards His followers in Caesar's household. There is no pilgrim in the fleet, the camp, the rustic hut, the lordly fort, the hall of science, whose heart Christ cannot reach. His swiftly-flying love calls all His children in from east, from west, from north, from south. They all draw near to Him because He first draws near to them.

Believer, at this altar learn that in life's busiest haunts, in retreat's solitary hours, *Christ is an attending friend.* It is true that here no victim died. But is it true, that here no blood was seen? Oh, no! On solemn days, which saw atoning rites so solemnly performed, blood was here largely scattered. The high-priest dyed these horns, and sprinkled this holy vessel seven times.

Reader! be wise, and learn the heaven-taught art of **mixing blood with every service.** Let prayer be mighty in the plea of Jesus's death. Let praise ascend from blood-cleansed lips. Let love be as a flame from blood-besprinkled hearts. Let every work be worked with blood-washed hands. God's eye looks for this sign (the blood of Jesus). When it is seen, mercy's wide door flies open, and acceptance cannot delay. But woe is theirs whose offerings are not so washed. Cain's miserable end gives warning that we bring no sacrifice without atonement.

But this Altar's main use was to receive and inflame the incense. Here the sacred spice was burned. When the morning lamps were trimmed, and when the evening lights were lit, the perfumed flame was kindled.

Reader! observe the process. The fire was first brought. The holy powder was then spread. The streams of aroma then flew high. And the whole tent was fragrant as the garden of the Lord. The Spirit has selected **incense** as the type of **prayer**. 'Let my *prayer* be set forth before You as *incense*.' Psa 141:2. We here, then, have a graphic image of the prayer of prayers, **the intercession of the King-priest Jesus.**

Mark **where** the kindling fire was brought from. It came not from a human hearth. The outer atoning altar gave the supply. It was the very fire from heaven. It was the very fire which consumed each offering. Great truth is here involved. The atoning-altar feeds the Incense-altar. *The prayer of Christ receives its life, its power, its vigor, from His blood-stained cross!* The prayer which prevails is drawn from justice satisfied, from payment made, from wrath appeased, from law fulfilled, from curse endured, from covenant discharged. Christ's *intercession* rests upon His *death*. Thus incense never ceases to ascend. Heaven is ever fragrant with its precious savor!

Compare all other knowledge with this truth. It flees and vanishes as an unsubstantial mist. This is the brightest jewel in the crown of grace. This is the fullest cordial in the Gospel-cup. Where is there joy like realizing views of the great work, which Christ now acts on high? He pleads. He lives to plead. He ever lives to plead. He shows His finished work. He stretches forth His pierced hands. He claims fulfillment of redemption's contract. Our heavenly Father rejoices in the grateful streams. His every attribute has infinite delight. He smiles approval. His ready hands are opened. All blessings are poured out. Pardons are sealed. The Spirit is bestowed. Ministering angels hasten to their guardian-work. The happy flock are gathered into the one fold of grace, and prepared for the one fold of glory.

O my soul, may this sweet incense be your constant joy! Shall heaven be glad, and you not clap the hand, and shout all praise? Learn more and more your high and privileged estate. *Grasping these horns,* you may cast back all doubts and fears which Satan would suggest. He often will whisper that our prayers are weak and worthless, and nothing but insults to the ears of God. Alas! this is too often true. But hope relies not on *our* holiest work. Christ prays. Christ prays most worthily. And *in His prayers* acceptance stands. Our praises are often as a dull smouldering smoke. Alas! here is our sin, our shame, our base ingratitude! But Jesus' voice is heard. His merits sweeten our short-coming utterance. Our hearts are cold and dead. But Christ ever loves, and proves His love by unceasing prayers.

O my soul, think how prevailingly Christ works for you. Shall the king say to Esther, 'What is your request? it shall be even given you to the half of the kingdom.' And can the cry of God's co-equal Son be coldly met? Is the promise pledged, 'Whatever you shall ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you?' And shall there be less acceptance when Christ in His own person supplicates? This cannot be.

Prize, then, your Incense Altar. Delight in it. Use it until you pass the veil. But listen! A word of solemn warning sounds. *The incense is most hallowed.* God adds, 'Whoever makes *any like it* to enjoy its fragrance must be cut off from his people.' Exo 30:38. The type profaned was hopeless death. Will any trifle with the grand reality? If common use were sacrilege, what must the rejection be? Some join with it the fancied prayers of mediating saints. What! is there not enough in Christ? Can He be undervalued, and God pleased? Can they reach glory who rob Him of His crown?

Exo 30.18

THE WASHBASIN

"Make a **bronze basin**, with its bronze stand, **for washing**. Place it between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and put water in it." Exo 30:18

Reader! whatever your earthly lot may be, your outward frame contains a priceless gem! You hold within you an immortal soul. No matter what your condition, you are on an inevitable passage to a changeless home! Our common portion is eternity! What, then, is man's grand concern? Surely, to make safe provision for this wondrous soul. What should be the first, the last of all his efforts? Surely to win endless happiness for endless days. This point is clear. All who can think, admit it to be true. God's Word directs us to life's only way. Oh! that His Spirit might give eyes to see it.

The soul, both by nature and by practice, is one vile mass of sin! Christ alone can remove these stains. The everlasting hope is lost through sad transgression. Christ only can restore it. Hence, *God* from His high throne, *Jesus* in countless ways of love, the *Spirit* by most gracious strivings, the *Bible* in its every page, call sinners to accept *the one great cure.* Such is the aim which now knocks at your heart's door. Such motive brings the holy washbasin to your sight. It is a clear-toned witness of redeeming grace. It paints in vivid rays the cleansing worth of Christ. Use it, and your soul is clean. Use it, and your eternity is joy.

God bids His servant to construct the washbasin. 'Make a **bronze basin**, with its bronze stand, **for washing**. Place it between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and put water in it.' Exo 30:18

Observe **the choice material**. It is **bronze**. This strongest metal shadows forth *the strength of Christ.* He came to do the mightiest of mighty works. And He brings omnipotence in His hand. But where is the bronze obtained? Whose hands supply it? The piety of females furnishes it. They gladly give their mirrors for this holy use. 'The bronze washbasin and its bronze pedestal were cast from bronze mirrors donated by the women who served at the entrance of the Tabernacle.' Exo 38:8

Faith seeks, nor seeks in vain, to gain instruction from this fact. **Women** give aid to form this Gospel-type. Here seems to be a bud of truth. The virgin-mother (Mary) holds the full-blown flower. Look to Bethlehem's inn. There the meek Jesus lies, made of a woman, the kinsman of our race. *The gift of gifts comes in through female means!*

They bring their mirrors. The bias of their hearts is changed. New feelings bear new fruit. These mirrors recently were prized as implements of vanity, and handmaids of self-love. But now the eyes are opened to far nobler views. *Self has no charms, when once the wondering gaze has caught some glimpse of things divine!* Reader! if your faith sees the glorious beauties of the Lord, surely all other features are a dismal blank.

The offering is not scorned. That which was framed to cast back poor nature's image is accepted to form semblances of grace. *We see to what high use our worldly vanities may rise.* Reader! you perhaps have stores of needless extravagance. Turn them to real benefits. Devote them to the Lord. Present them as the means to spread abroad some tidings of His truth. Do not forget that the washbasin, which in these pages preaches Christ, was *bronze from women's mirrors.*

It occupied **a midway space** between the bronze altar and the tabernacle's door. A strict command was issued that no priest should touch the one or pass the other until his hands and feet had been here washed. Such is the ordinance. It sternly warns that *no defilement may approach the Lord.* It sweetly adds that He who demands such purity provides the purifying stream. The Lord who says that you must be cleansed, brings near His cleansing Laver!

Believer, mark well your calling. It is to minister a livelong service to the Lord. Life is not life, until each act serves our God. Our feet should only move for Him. Our hands should know no work but His. *But Ah! these feet, these hands, how soiled, how black they are! The dust of earth forms a polluting path, and through it is our daily walk.* The things of earth leave a defiling stain, and such we always handle. With feet, with hands like these, can we bring the sacrifice of faith, or burn the incense of devoted love? But a *washbasin* is prepared! It stands beside us at each step. It has a voice loud as the roar of many waves, sweet as the melody of heaven—Wash and be clean.

Eternal *love* devised the plan. Eternal *wisdom* drew the model. Eternal *grace* comes down to build it. But **by whom can it be filled?** Jesus Himself pours in the stream. He brings the rich supply. It is blood, blood from His own veins, blood from His very heart! Nothing in heaven or earth could help, but this. He bleeds, to fill the washbasin. He dies, to open wide the pardoning fount.

But is there virtue in this flood to wash out sin? It is a significant point. My soul, rest not until you grasp a clear reply. *Sin is indeed a hell-dark stain!* Wash it with all that human nature knows or man can bring, and its black dye becomes more black. If tears of penitence could flow forever, they would not lessen the frightful filthiness. The waters from the murky puddle of man's best resolves leave the stained soul in aggravated stains. Let rivers after rivers of religious rites and forms, and strictest self-denial and most severe observances pass over it, yet still the deeply-grained pollution would be uncleansed. If all angelic hosts could wash the spots with all the innocence of angels' tears, the crimson would be crimson still. And why? Because of sin's intense malignity. Infinity belongs to its polluting touch. Its slightest breath inflicts irreparable soil.

If, then, the washbasin would cleanse sin, it must contain a stream of more than human or angelic power. It must be perfectly divine. It must have all the properties of God. My soul, now view this washbasin. It holds a remedy, large as your every need. The blood therein is Jesus's blood—and Jesus is Jehovah's fellow. It must suffice, because its might is vast as He who shed it—and He who shed it is the God-man Jesus.

Your sins, indeed, are many, black and vile. They have all aggravation and all filth. They have been acted and reacted, in defiance of all light, all conscience, all rebukes, all checks. Their number leaves the sands behind. Their color makes the night seem bright. But plunge them into these waters. They meet an essence which is infinite to change their hateful hue. No speck can now be found. It flees, as night before the face of day. The sin-black soul becomes as white as wool, whiter than the whitest snow.

Satan beholds, and can discern no remnant of a flaw. Nothing is left which he can touch. God looks with an all-searching eye, but sin has fled as far as the east is from the west. It has vanished in the efficacy of this perfect cleansing. The blood, the all-powerful blood has washed it out. The Christ-bathed soul is pure and clean and bright and spotless and as fit for heaven, even as Christ Himself. It is so. It must be so. Hear the Spirit's witness. 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.' 1Jn 1:7.

Lift up your eye! Behold the bright array which throng the throne. Where is their title to the heavenly home? The blood which bought them has removed all stains. Look down to that dark pit where darkness spreads its ever-darkening pall. Ah! what a spectacle of filth and woe! But why do these wretched spirits writhe in their polluted beds? They never sought, they never found, they never used, the cleansing Laver of a Savior's blood. Hell holds not one who found it. Unwashed souls must sink. The washed must rise. Vile fetters chain the one. The others mount up with silver wings, and feathers of yellow gold.

But sins forgiven in the court of *heaven* are not soon forgotten in the court of *conscience*. Satan finds entrance here in our conscience. With savage voice and clamorous demand, he drags our bygone acts before its bar. If he cannot cast victims into hell, he will affright the heaven-ward pilgrims with wild storms of fear. Thus he reads out long scrolls of past transgressions. He argues that souls so black are only fuel for his endless flames. Woe unto them who strive to reason with this wily foe! Denial cannot be. The case is true. Memory bears tearful witness. Excuses are in vain. These vessels are all full of leaks. They cannot give any defense.

The only refuge is this washbasin! They who have Gospel-light will cast themselves therein. Then peace resumes her peaceful reign. Then Satan flees in disappointed rage. Then terrifying threats melt into songs of safety. The adversary yields. He cannot destroy a blood-supported peace.

Reader! would you have conscience to be an unruffled calm? Would you repose in pastures of heart-ease? Then heal all memory's wounds in this pure washbasin! Beside its brink you may securely shout—"God is appeased! my troubles shall not live! He sees my sins no more! they are behind His back! they therefore shall not frown before my face."

But the washbasin holds more precious water yet. He, who finds Christ, finds *every good* in one! Do you ask—Can more be needed, if sin has lost its filth and guilt? Yes, its vile **seeds** remain. There is the evil heart bent on all evil. The fire of lust burns strong. The oven of impure desire is hot. But there is water here to purify the will. Christ gives His Holy Spirit to work renewal and to conquer sin. What streams of comfort flow in the channel of the Word. "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart." Eze 36:25-26. The Gospel echoes: He is made unto us, not only wisdom and righteousness, but *sanctification* too!

Reader! has this washbasin brought this change to you? Are you a new-made creature in Christ Jesus? Mark well the solemn truth, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' There is no heaven, but for newborn souls. Insuperable bars shut the old nature out. If title to heaven must be found in Christ, so fitness for heaven must be gotten from Him.

But steadily behold the washbasin. All is ready here. The blood which buys all *pardon*, and confers all *peace*, earns all supplies of *sanctifying grace*. The constant cry is: Wash and be clean from every outward stain. Wash and be clean from all accusing fears. Wash and be clean from the deep springs of inward evil. Wash and be clean from this world's corrupting love.

There was only **one** washbasin. If Israel's priests had sought some other fount, their case would have been hopeless; the wrath would have consumed them. Reader! cast out the vain conceit that anything but Christ can cleanse the soul. He is enough, He is at hand. But fail to use Him, and your filth remains! Wash here; wash **only** here. No other vessel can add merit where all merit thus abounds. So only will your walk be clean on earth. So only will you reach the pure abodes where holy lips forever sing, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts.'

Exo 33.18-19

THE NAME

Then Moses said, "I beseech You, show me Your glory." And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim My **Name**, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Exo 33:18-19

Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed His **Name**, the Lord. And He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord God, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished." Exo 34:5-7

Earth owes much to supplicating lips. Abundant harvests have been reaped from a little seed of interceding grace. An instance meets us here. A tree of glorious truth rears its high head. Its wide-spread branches have been refreshing shade to multitudes of every age. But where its birth? A hearty prayer was breathed. The noble plant sprang up. Believer, in every place, and at every time drop seeds of prayer. The crop may live when your short race is run.

The **suppliant** here is Moses. *He thirsts for clearer knowledge of his God.* He had seen much, and therefore burns for more. He cries, 'I beseech You, show me Your glory.' It is a large desire. But *gracious souls crave all that God can give.* It is a large petition. But large petitions honor the Giver and are honored by Him.

Mark the **reply**. "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim My **Name**, the Lord, in your presence." God's *glory* is His *goodness*. His goodness is His glory. His Name is the page in which these wonders shine.

Reader! have you this holy wish? Do you long to see this glory, to taste this goodness, to feast at the banquet of this knowledge? Come then in faith. Come in the lowliness of humble awe. The Lord is passing by. He speaks. Heed His proclaiming voice. "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished."

A retinue of glory issues from the courts of heaven. Each image shows some glimpse of Him, whose full display would blind our mortal sight. The foremost in the group utters the name, 'Lord' or '**Jehovah**.' Oh! wondrous sound! It casts the mind back through the ages of eternity gone by; it bears it forward through eternity to come. It loudly tells that through the past, the present, and the future, **One is.** It pictures Him as 'I am,' *before time* was—'I am,' *when time shall be no more.* It robes Him in all the majesty and dignity and grandeur and boundlessness of changeless unity. It exhibits Him as the sole great fount of every stream of life.

O my soul, such is your Lord. Great beyond thought! vast beyond grasp! immeasurable by human line! untraceable by human search! But from this lofty throne His eye was ever fixed on you! Through all infinities, your image filled His heart. His age is immortality; He grants the same to you. Will you not adore and reverence and bless Him, and love and praise and serve Him?

Before another sound is heard, Jehovah's name is **doubled**. 'The Lord, the Lord.' The repetition bids us look again. It tells us that thought upon thought must search the mysteries of the great 'I am.' The soaring wing must soar still higher. Our praise must only pause, to recommence its endless work.

'The Lord, the Lord **God**.' The title 'God' is now co-joined. This speaks of power and strength. God is unbounded in His sovereignty! He sits indeed upon an omnipotent throne! He wields the scepter of unlimited control! His right hand is all power! He speaks, and it must be! He works, and who can hinder? Pile worlds on worlds, His mere breath can drive them into nothingness. Collect all multitudes from earth and hell, His foot can drive the mass to dust. Shall then powerless man vaunt against God? How can a rebel stand when God shall gird Himself with wrath? Sinner, be wise in time. Vengeance comes on apace. It strides resistless in its force. There is no refuge but at Calvary's cross!

Believer, this name flies down on wings of peace to you. Know the full might, which is your full support. This God is your *shield*. What foes can harm? He is your *sword*. Who can assail? He is your *fortress*. Are you not safe? He is the *wall of fire* round about you. Who can break through to wound you? He has promised life eternal as your portion. Who can prevent it? He is bearing you in His own arms to heaven. Who can pluck you from His grasp? This God is your full salvation. Therefore you shall be fully saved.

'The Lord, the Lord God, **merciful**.' The voice proceeds to open out Jehovah's heart. This heart is mercy. As the sun abounds in sparkling rays, the sea in drops, the sky in glittering orbs, so God is one vast treasure-house of mercy. This is the brightest jewel of His crown. It overtops the heavens. It outlives all time. It outshines all perfections. It is the riches of His riches.

But **what is mercy?** It is that sweet and tender love which has a tear for all distress, which grieves in grief, and sorrows in sorrow, and yearns over misery, and only lives in healing wounds, and calming anguish, and converting sighs to joy. This Mercy looked on man in his lost estate. It marked the present suffering and the future woe. It tarried not. It found a full and perfect remedy, even a God-man's life and death!

The **Father** is all mercy. A Savior *called*, a Savior *sent*, a Savior *accepted* is the proof. **Jesus** is all mercy! The manger, the garden, the cross, the blood, the righteousness, the never-ceasing prayer, proclaim it. The **Spirit** is all mercy. His striving in the heart, His light-diffusing presence, His guidance to the Savior's arms, His many visits of consoling love, His rich outpourings of renewing grace, bear witness to this truth.

Reader! whatever be your misery, come to this God, and mercy will relieve it! *Paul* knew the burden of tremendous guilt, but he 'obtained mercy.' The *penitent* pleaded, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner.' Floods of peace over-flowed. The *wretched blind beggar* cried, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.' Jesus stood still. The answer lingered not. 'Go your way, your faith has made you whole.' The *sorrowing mother* supplicated, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David,' and all relief was given.

Mercy still reigns in heaven. Bring then your *sins*, they shall be pardoned! Bring your *tears*, they shall be wiped away! Bring your *conscience-wounds*, they shall be healed! Bring your *sighs*, they shall be lulled to rest! Bring your *need*, it shall be all supplied! Bring your *difficulties*, they shall be smoothed.

'Merciful and **gracious**.' The view is changed. Another facet courts the eye. Grace shows its beauteous form. As **mercy pities misery**, so **grace is helpful to unworthiness**. Mercy brings balm for wretchedness. Grace hastens to demerit's aid. Mercy finds tender motive in man's woe. Grace has no impulse but from God. The world presents a hateful front. The wide-spread field is rank with mad rebellion's weeds. There is no shame, no penitence, no downcast look, no weeping eye, no sobbing breast, no wringing hand, no prayer for pardon, and no cry for pity. **Sin** follows sin as wave on wave. But **grace** springs forth, free as God's freeness, vast as God's vastness. It says, 'I love because I love. I will save because I will save. I will redeem from hell because I will redeem.'

It has no cradle but God's own heart. It has no spring but God's own purpose. But it is a worthy offspring of that worthy source. It girds itself to wondrous work. It draws Salvation's plan. It leads forth Salvation's captain. It chooses Salvation's heirs. It consummates Salvation's scheme. It lays the *first* stone. It adds the *top*-stone. It cannot rest, until the shout be heard, Grace to it, Grace to it, forever!

Reader! *merit* is as far from you as east from west. Your only possession is sin. But you may shine in glory, because God is grace. Oh! hasten to Him. Take pardon as a free-grace gift. Seek heaven as a free-grace prize. But if your pride rejects free grace, your own deserts will be the undying worm.

"Merciful and gracious, **long-suffering** (slow to anger)." The citizens of Zion sometimes quake, lest grievous guilt should drain all mercy and exhaust all grace. A ray next shines to dissipate these clouds. Behold Me, says the Lord, I am long-suffering. Here is a plank, on which the wave-tossed soul may rest. What! though the annals of the heart are but a sin-vile tale. What! though each day, each hour, is but the hot-bed of provoking evil. What! though the holiest prayers are often solemn mockery, the holiest works but incense to self-love. Still, vengeance stops its hand, and blessings pour their blessing-showers down.

If *angels' patience* ruled for one hour, would it be so? No! Man's whole race would be a shattered ruin. *But He who reigns is a patient God.* Hence, where offence abounds, His patience rises higher. We live because our God forbears. But the day comes when boundless patience finds its bounds. Sinner, when God's patience can no more bear, then your long sufferings will no more cease.

'Merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and **abundant in goodness and truth.**' But while patience still is patient, may not the stores of **goodness** fail? It cannot be. God's goodness is Himself. While He has life, it is His life to scatter goodness round. Believer, come to this *tree*. Its boughs forever bend, and all its fruits are goodness. Drink of these *waters*. They ever flow, and all the stream is goodness.

Truth is the handmaid which provides and scatters far these never-failing gifts. A covenant oath is pledged, "I will certainly bless you richly." Heb 6:14. Truth then must die before the hand of goodness can hang down. Abundant truth secures abundant goodness.

'Keeping mercy **for thousands**.' O my soul, hearken to the melody of this sweet note. The thought may sometimes rise, that mercy visits but a favored few, that the rare gift enriches but rare souls. No! mercy's *arms* are very wide. Mercy's *heart* is very large. Mercy's *mansions* are very many. It has brought saving joy to countless multitudes. It has saving joy for countless yet. The doors stand open. Thousands have found. But there are stores for thousands yet.

Will any hesitate? Will any sigh, 'There cannot be this hope for me?' Why this fear? Is the reply, 'My iniquity forbids it'? This Name sweeps down such obstacle. It cries, The Lord is a God, 'forgiving iniquity.' Is it added, 'But my transgressions are so vile'? The Name still speaks, The Lord is a God forgiving iniquity and transgression. Is it further said, 'But my sins appear in countless multitudes'? The Name continues, Our Lord is a God forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

If all the sins of all the lost, if all the filth of all the fiends in hell, were piled on your one conscience, flee to the cross, plead this sure word, and as our God is true, He will be found forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

But if you fail to cast yourself on Christ, there is no other refuge. This word of richest comfort is stern condemnation to all who stand in their own guilt. **"He will by no means clear the guilty."** No sinner can take unpardoned sins to heaven. No soul unwashed can enter there. Evil must have what evil earns. Christ our Surety appeared bearing our sins. He was not spared. Wrath seized Him. Vengeance took its due. *In Him*, all who are His are cleared, because His death is theirs. *Out of Him*, all who have sin must die, because their sins are theirs.

"The Lord, the Lord God, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished." Reader! such is God's saving Name. Oh! hear it now, and with the ear of faith. It is not heard in hell.

Lev 1.17

THE BURNT OFFERING.

"Then he will burn it on top of the wood fire on the altar. It is a whole burnt offering made by fire, very pleasing to the Lord." Lev 1:17

Reader, you are invited here to take your stand within the tabernacle's court. A crowded and a busy scene appears. Many worshipers bring many offerings. All is activity. But all the active zeal has one great object—to honor God in God's appointed way.

Each offering in this court is a full page of Gospel-truth. Christ in His grace and work is the golden key to open every part. Leviticus is Calvary fore-shown. Calvary is Leviticus unfolded. The one casts forward the morning ray. The other pours down the mid-day blaze. But the early and the brighter beams stream from one Sun—Christ Jesus. The brazen altar is the herald of the cross. The cross re-echoes to the brazen altar's voice.

In a long train of ceremonial teaching the Burnt offering takes the lead. Let this, then, first be noticed.

An offerer comes. Mark what he brings. If his offering be from the herd, it must be an unblemished male. Lev 1:3. It must be the choicest produce from his pastures—the primest flower from his fields. There must be strength in fullest vigor, and beauty without one alloy. Such are the properties required.

The meaning is distinct. Jesus is here. The victim chosen before worlds were framed is thus portrayed. Strength and perfection are main colors in His portrait. He is as strong as God can be. The shield of omnipotence is on His arm. Hence He is able to achieve the grandest of all victories—even to tread down Satan and his empire. Hence He is able to bear away the weightiest of all burdens—even the vast mass of all His people's sin!

Perfection finds embodiment in Him. His every aspect is beauty, without one flaw. All evil buffeted Him, but it left no stain. Sin could not touch Him, though He sojourned in its home. Earth saw in Him one sinless inhabitant. From the manger to the cross, He shone one ray of godlike purity.

O my soul, you need strong help. Repose on Jesus: His strength suffices, and it cannot fail. You need a perfect ransom and a perfect robe. Repose on Jesus; He gave to God a spotless life, a spotless soul, to be your price. He gives to you a spotless righteousness to be your clothing. Thus the unblemished male pictures the beauteous and the strong Redeemer.

We next approach the chambers of the offerer's heart. We read, "He shall offer it of his own voluntary will." Lev 1:3. There is no compulsion. There is no reluctance. His step is willingness.

This is a picture of faith's happy actings. Its chariot-wheels move swiftly. It feels sin's miserable need. It knows the value of redeeming blood. So it flies, with rapid wing, to plead it at the mercy-seat. Formalists may frequent God's courts. Habit's cold chains may drag them. Self-righteousness may urge them to the heartless task. But faith is a willing grace.

The eager offerer puts his hand upon the victim's head. Lev 1:4. Do any ask the meaning of this rite? It graphically shows a transfer. Some load oppresses, which is thus cast on the victim. Some burden passes to another's person. Here is again the happy work of faith. It brings all guilt, and heaps it on the Savior's head. One sin retained is misery now, and hell at last. All must be pardoned by being brought to Christ. And He is waiting to receive. His office is to be this burden-bearer. His love constrains, and He cannot draw back.

Do any read this, who never have thus dealt with Christ? Sirs, where are your sins? They adhere tighter than your very skin. They have a millstone weight. They press to misery's unfathomable depths. But flee to Jesus. He can remove them all, and He alone.

Believer, where are your sins? On Jesus they are placed, and you are free. I ask again, Where are your sins? You answer, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." Psa 103:12. You may rejoice and sing aloud, Christ is accepted as a substitute for me; I shall not be condemned. Thus with one hand faith casts away all misery, and with the other grasps all joy.

The victim, to which sins thus typically pass, must DIE. "He shall kill the young bull before the Lord." Lev 1:5. Can Jesus, who in reality receives our guilt, not lay down life? It cannot be. The holy Word stands sure; "In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die." Gen 2:17. The sinner's surety, then, cannot be spared. He gives His life to pay the debt—to satisfy the wrath—to bear the curse—to expiate the guilt.

O my soul, "Christ died" is all your hope—your plea—your remedy—your life. "Christ died" opens your path to God. "Christ died" turns every frown into approving smiles. When the law thunders, and conscience quakes, and Satan accuses, interpose "Christ died," and fear no more. When the grave opens, whisper "Christ died," and sleep in peace. When the white throne is set, shout "Christ died," and take the crown of righteousness!

The victim's blood is SPRINKLED "round about upon the altar." Lev 1:5. The blood is evidence that life is paid. This token then is profusely scattered. The priestly hands bedewed the altar with it. Thus Jesus enters with His own blood into the holy place. Heb 9:12. He strews it round, and claims the purchased flock, the covenanted blessings—the full reward, the fruit of His completed work.

O my soul, you are bought, and cleansed, and comforted by blood. Your every blessing is a blood-bought gift. Let every prayer, and praise, and work, and service, be a blood-sprinkled offering.

The victim is next SKINNED. Lev 1:6. The skin is torn away. The sacrificing priest received this, as his portion. It gave supplies of clothing. Is there no Gospel here?—say you, who joy in Jesus as "the Lord your righteousness." Yes, here is a picture of that heaven-pure robe, in which Christ decks each child of faith. His blood, indeed, removes all curse. But it is His obedience, which merits all glory. Because He died, we live. Because He lived, we reign.

The piercing knife divides the limbs. Members are torn from members, and all the parts, without, within, to which defilement usually adheres, are diligently washed. Lev 1:9. The type of Jesus must be clean. No shadow of impurity may darken it. Again and again the truth resounds, that God's eye can only rest on perfect purity. How, then, shall the sinner stand, who ventures near apart from Christ? Reader, consider this at once! Oh! never rest until you know, that you are cleansed without by cleansing blood, and cleansed within by sanctifying grace.

The parts thus severed, and thus washed, are placed upon the altar. Consuming fire is brought. It preys on every limb. The raging flame devours, until this fuel is reduced to ashes. Lev 1:9.

Let us now seek the truth, which echoes from this blazing fire. The garden and the cross unfold it. There Jesus presents Himself, laden with all the sins of all His chosen race. O my soul, have you a saving interest in Him? If it be so, He there appears, bearing the guilt of all your guilty life. The Sinless is accounted sinful, that the sinful may be spared as sinless.

What then occurs? Sin merits wrath. This wrath must fall. Justice must claim its due. Truth must be true. Holiness must show how evil is abhorred. The majesty and honor of God's empire cannot descend from their high throne. Sinner, be sure that sin cannot be spared. You must take woe, except this Surety take it for you.

What then occurs? See Jesus crushed to the earth beneath the load of anguish. Each bleeding pore proclaims, that more cannot be borne.

But whence is the God-man's mighty agony? The fire of heaven's wrath has fallen on Him. Vengeance has seized its prey. He undergoes the every pang, which would have tortured His redeemed people, if they had tossed in hottest flames forever. The fire burns—the anger rages—until each sin has infinitely suffered what it infinitely earned. No fuel then remains. All is consumed. The fire dies. The wrath expires. Hark! Jesus utters the wondrous word, "It is finished!"

O my soul, in calm and holy reverence, survey this dreadful scene. It is your ransom. It is your escape. It is your rescue from eternal ruin. It is another draining hell's cup for you. This one Burnt offering receives all vengeance. The fire of justice, that died in Christ, cannot revive to injure you.

The Spirit seals the record with this approving seal—"It is a Burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord." Lev 1:9. Here is witness worth ten thousand worlds. Here is the sweetest cordial, which the lips of faith can drink. The dying Jesus is heaven's "sweet savor." When the God-man victim burns upon the altar of the cross, each attribute is satisfied; no more, exults with ever-exulting joy; no more, is magnified to the highest heights; no more, is glorified until glory overflows.

Reader, the type blazes to win you to the saving cross. Whatever be your state or grade, be wise, and seek your richest pleasures here. The rite distinctly shows, that rich and poor alike need pardon, and alike must come. Sin has soiled all. All, then, must wash in expiating blood. The wealthy brought their victim from the herd. He, who had less of worldly wealth, offered his lamb or kid. The poorest inhabitant of the poorest hut gave the young pigeon or the turtle-dove. All placed upon the altar a burnt-sacrifice. A Savior is the one need of rich and poor. The richest is most poor, until Christ be found. The poorest is most rich, when once this pearl be clasped.

Such is the Gospel of the Burnt offering. Reader, leave it not without three solemn thoughts deep written in your heart.

1. Fire burns there. It burns to tell us what is sin's due. It frightfully portrays what all must bear, on whom that plague abides. Look at the consuming blaze and meditate on the tossings of the fiery lake—the flames, which cannot die—the gnawings of the ever-gnawing worm—the raging of relentless wrath—the agony, which tortures mind, and soul, and body. See in this sight God's utmost power put forth to inflict utmost pains through endless ages. See sin's sure doom. May the sight drive you rapidly to Christ!

2. Mark here God's wondrous grace. To save lost souls He gives the Son of His love to the fury of His wrath. He heaps all woe on Him, that no woe may remain for the redeemed. His frown is pitiless towards Him, that He may smile unceasingly on them. How dear must they be to His heart! He, who is the preciousness of heaven, descends to bear the worst of their vile doom. The Burnt offering sweetly cries, Abundant grace exceeds abundant sin.

3. What shall the ransomed render to salvation's Lord? The Burnt offering demands from them self offering. Let all heaven hear—let all earth take knowledge, that they give themselves, their souls, their bodies, their every faculty and gift, all influence, all means, their morning, midday, evening hours, to be a free-will sacrifice to free grace. Let the high altar of self-consecrating gratitude be raised. Let the whole life be one clear blaze of flaming love and ever-brightening service!

#Lev 2.1

THE GRAIN OFFERING.

"When you bring a grain offering to the Lord, the offering must consist of choice flour. You are to pour olive oil on it and sprinkle it with incense." Lev 2:1

Faith gleans rich lessons in the tabernacle's court. Rapid variety marks the scene. But every change still shows a changeless object. The varied rites have one grand purpose. Their several parts have one mind—and that, the mind of God. Each has an end—to illustrate redemption. Each has an office—to unfold the Gospel. Each is a witness to life-giving truth. Scoffers are blind to Calvary's cross. It is no marvel, that they find no Savior here. But truly Scripture contains more of Christ than human eye has ever yet discerned.

Reader, pause now, and ponder the Grain offering. It holds the second place in the display of these Christ-teaching rites. May the great Spirit's rays so brightly shine upon it, that some new view of Jesus may appear!

God's wisdom terms it "The Grain offering;" and justly so, because its larger part supplied the priest with food. Its substance and its use are the chief points, which claim attention.

Its main material is FLOUR. Ver. 1. Is there no meaning in this choice? Mark, God's own mind selects it. His mind is the abode of wondrous thought. Examine flour. By what process is it formed? Earth yields the grain; repeated blows thresh it from the husks; the grinding mill reduces it to powder.

Reader, this thought glides easily to Christ. He stoops to be the poor offspring of poor earth. He, whom no heavens can hold, is born the woman's seed. And then what batterings assail Him! The earliest prophecy predicts His bruised heel. Hell spares no blow. Earth's fury lashes Him with ceaseless rage. The strokes of Justice crush Him to the dust of death.

O my soul, a suffering Jesus is your full salvation. A bruised God-man is your blessed hope. His wounds are your safe refuge. His stripes heal you. He was broken to make you whole. He was crushed to raise you up. He groaned to bring you ease. He died, that you may live.

The QUALITY of the flour is distinctly marked. It must be FINE. All coarseness must be sifted out. No impure speck may stain it.

Reader, see the lovely beauties of the Lord. His charms bring comfort to the anxious soul. Let but one flaw be found in Him, and salvation's pillar moulders into dust. Then cleansing would be needed for His own defects. No blood would then remain for others' guilt. But He comes forth in all the glory of pure sinlessness. Thus He can take the sinner's place, and pay the sinner's debt, and cast a spotless mantle round His church. Thus we are beauteous in His beauty; fair in His fairness; lovely in his loveliness; robed in His grace. The pure Grain offering sounds the Gospel-note, "He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2Co 5:21.

OIL is added. Lev 2:1. Its many properties are emblems of the Spirit's grace. Christ's very name imports, that all the Spirit was outpoured on Him. His life attests this truth. When He appeared in earthly frame, it was the Spirit's workmanship. Luk 1:35. When He ascended from the streams of Jordan, the Spirit, as a dove, descended on Him. Luk 3:22. When He approached His direst conflict with the power of hell, the Spirit led Him by the hand. Luk 4:1. When, on the altar of the cross, He gave His soul an offering for sin, the Spirit's might upheld Him. Heb 9:14. When He burst the fetters of the grave, the quickening Spirit aided. 1Pe 3:18. His lips dropped wisdom—His steps were goodness—His hand was boundless power—His heart was overflowing love. It must be so. The God-man was the Spirit's home. God gave not the Sprit by measure unto Him. Joh 3:34. The Grain offering was rich in oil. Jesus abounded with the Spirit's grace.

Believer, are you conformed to your anointed head? Are you the living temple of the Holy Spirit? "Be filled with the Spirit," is his trumpet-tongued command. Eph 5:18. Can He thus speak and not be ready to dwell fully in you? Can He be ready, and will you exclude Him? Oh! grieve Him not—wrong not your needy soul. Admit Him in His every gift. He is no Christian, who is unlike Christ. He is unlike, in whom the Spirit works no likeness.

INCENSE is sprinkled on the mass. Lev 2:1. Thus the Grain offering scatters fragrance round, and as the senses with delicious joy.

And is not Christ the incense of delight, in heaven, in earth? The precious merits of His work regale each attribute of God. He brings full honor to their every claim. No Christ-saved soul sits down in bliss, but to add glory to Jehovah's name, and to bring brightness to Jehovah's crown, and to deck justice, mercy, truth, in more resplendent rays.

He, also, is perfume to His people's hearts. Say, you who know Christ Jesus, is not His name "as perfume poured out?" Is He not your sachet of myrrh?—your "bouquet of flowers?" Son 1:13-14. He blots out every sin. He bears away all curse. He heals all wounds. He dries all tears. He stills all conscience-fears. He shows God reconciled—hell vanquished—heaven won. In Him the past has lost its terror. In Him the present is hope's clear watchtower. In Him the future is an expanse of glory. Can there be incense more gladdening, than these refreshing truths? Reader, grasp Him, and refresh yourself in this garden of sweet joy.

No LEAVEN and no HONEY may be added. Lev 2:11. The leaven is quick to change and taint the meal. It rapidly pervades. It casts a savor into every part. Hence, leaven is evil's emblem. For sin admitted will run wildly through the heart. Its course pollutes. Its touch leaves all impure.

Honey is most luscious to the palate. But is it harmless? No, it soon proves a sickening and fermenting pest. Its sweetness tempts. But bitterness ensues. Here is a symbol of sin's flattering bait. It shows enticements in its front. It seems to call to rich delights. It promises a honied feast. But ah! the juice is gall. The dregs are wormwood. Sin's smiles end in hell-pains.

No such admixtures may defile this type. To paint the sun, we use our brightest tints. To show forth Christ, we must have pure and purifying signs.

But SALT must be infused. Lev 2:13. Its properties repel corruption and defy decay. Where it is sprinkled freshness lives. At its approach time drops its spoiling hand. Again behold the Lord. His essence and His work are purity's bright blaze. He soars above defilement, high as the heavens excel the earth. He washes, and His saints are cleansed. He breathes within them, and corruptions cease.

Believer, you too are called to be this vile earth's salt. Mat 5:13. When you go forth may purity walk hand in hand! When your lips speak may purity's best seed be dropped! May your whole life be counter-active of sin's taint! May many an error die when you are near!

Salt, also, portrays the perpetuity of grace.

Believer, you know that Jesus loves you. You read it in His cross. You see it in the Word—that mirror of His heart. You hear it in His Spirit's call. Know, that this love is as eternal as Himself. The covenant of salt precedes the birth—survives the death, of time.

The Grain offering is thus significantly formed. Its USE is next distinctly shown. The offerer is to "Bring this offering to one of Aaron's sons, and he will take a handful of the flour mixed with olive oil, together with all the incense, and burn this token portion on the altar fire. It is an offering made by fire, very pleasing to the Lord." Lev 2:2. A part is cast upon the altar's hearth. The fire enwraps it in devouring folds. It is the prey of the consuming blaze.

Faith knows full well the Gospel of this act. It sees wrath falling on the spotless and anointed victim. The burning grain exhibits Jesus in the furnace of acute anguish. What awe, what peace, live in this wondrous sight!

What AWE! Here is full evidence of sin's deserts. Sin rouses the just vengeance of our righteous God. It is an outrage to His honor, to His nature, and His name. It must have torment. An adamantine chain unites it to excruciating woe. If it escapes, God's majesty is wronged. The God-man in the garden and on the cross shows how God's anger deals with this foul foe.

What PEACE! Jesus consents to suffer all. Each vial is outpoured on Him. The fire finds its prey, and spares not. Believer, see the Grain offering on the altar, and let your every fear subside. Gaze, and let tranquil peace lull every anxious thought. Wrath ends in Jesus. It takes its dues from Him. It leaves Him not until all is paid. Its sting then dies. No penal woe remains for you. Justice forbids, that punishment should twice be asked. You may look calmly on the fiery lake. A suffering Christ has quenched its flames for you. Happy believer, your sins, though many, have endured their death. Happy believer, where are hell's pains for you? Your Surety has exhausted all.

The Grain offering had further use. "The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons: it is a most holy part of the offerings made to the Lord by fire." Lev 2:3.

Here is another view of Christ. It shows most tender and providing love. The Gospel truth is bread of life to hungry souls. They, who serve Christ, sit down at a rich table. A feast is spread to nourish and to regale. Christ gives Himself—heaven's richest produce—as substantial food. He is the bread of life. His flesh is food indeed: His blood is drink indeed. The Spirit is ever calling to the banquet-house, "Eat O friends," "Eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Faith hears, faith hastens, faith partakes, and thrives, and feasts again, and gains recruited energies for new work.

Poor worldlings snatch at miscalled pleasure's husk. They eat, and fret, and pine, and perish.

In preparing the Grain offering account was made of varying grades of outward circumstance. Diverse utensils were enjoined to meet diversity of rank and state. The rich must use their best. The poor must humbly bring from their more humble hearths. But rich and poor alike must offer. Lev 2:4-5, Lev 2:7.

One Christ is the one plea at heaven's gate. The rich man's riches open not the door. The poor man's poverty has no moving voice. Hear this, you RICH. Earthly pelf is little now, and nothing to buy pardon. But Christ enriches in present and in endless time. His treasure is ennobling gain, enduring joy, a crown of life, a throne of glory. Bring this Grain offering, and you are rich indeed.

You POOR, draw near. Especial welcomes beckon you. Your toil-worn hands may clasp the cross. Your lowly huts may entertain the Lord of lords. Without Him poverty is hard indeed. But He can make you kings and priests to God. By His side, work is light. In His arms rest is sweet. In His love, life has few frowns. In His faith, death sweetly smiles. Bring this Grain offering, and you are no more poor.

Spirit of God, great Teacher of the Church, blessings be Yours, for thus revealing Christ.

Lev 3.1

THE PEACE OFFERING.

"If someone's offering is a peace offering, and he offers an animal from the herd, whether male or female, he is to present before the Lord an animal without defect." Lev 3:1

"On earth peace!" Thus angels' lips announce the Savior's birth. "On earth peace!" It comes, it lives, it thrives with Christ. "On earth peace!" Such is the olive-branch, which these brief lines would wave. "On earth peace!" Great Spirit, plant this happy inhabitant in each reader's heart!

God strives in every way to bring poor sinners to His peaceful sway. Before the worlds, eternal councils planned the way of peace. When enmity began, grace hastened to reveal it. A stream of prophecy rolled the news onward. And here a graphic ordinance portrays it. A model stands to show the parts and working of the reconciling scheme.

Some anxious soul sighs for felt peace with God. What shall be done? God smooths the way. His voice declares, let the sin-appeasing victim be now brought. Peace rightly sought shall surely be obtained.

Now mark this VICTIM. It may be male or female. It may be taken from larger cattle, or from sheep or goats. Lev 3:1, Lev 3:6, Lev 3:12. This is permission of unusual breadth. The prince—the peasant—from richest pastures, or bare mountain's brow, may readily obtain the expiating means. The purport is both gracious and distinct. Where is the man, who would have peace with God? No barrier keeps him back. No distant search is needed. The appointed offering touches his threshold. The soul at every moment may find Christ. The hand may grasp Him at each turn. He is the nearest object to the rich man's hall. He sits beside each Lazarus at the gate. He is ever present—ever willing. No sinner pines in wretchedness, because the Peace offering is beyond his reach. Behold Me—take Me—is the burden of the Gospel-cry.

But from whatever flock the male or female came, one test must prove it. It must be without defect, free from fault. A blameless type proclaims the blameless Lord. He is the essence of pure excellence. He was made flesh without corruption's taint. His walk on earth was as holy as His throne in heaven. If but one speck had soiled Him, it would have turned God's smile into a frown. To have bought favor for Himself would then have cost His all. But now His hands are sinless; therefore they can take our sins. He needs no payment for Himself; and so can buy our peace.

Such are the marks of the Peace offering. God next directs the offerer to "lay his hand on the head of his offering." Lev 3:2. This act denotes the transfer of all guilt. The burdened one thus rolls off his load. The lightened shoulder thus receives relief.

This is the happiest exercise of faith. It knows, that Christ is called, and comes, and dies, to take His people's guilt. It sees Him ever ready to receive the weight. With rapid step it ventures near. With eager hand it casts off misery. The unburdened conscience grasps deliverance.

Believer, why should you lie in dust, oppressed and crushed by fears? Why are your eyes so dull to see heart-ease? Hark! our Peace offering presents Himself. Christ calls, Give Me your every sin—transmit the whole mass of it to Me! I will remove it, so that God no more shall find it. Wrong not your soul—obey. There is no peace, while sin-distress weighs down. There is all peace, when the huge mountains of sin sink. The sting extracted leaves no pain.

The victim is then slain. Lev 3:2. Here is the wondrous fact, which is the light of types, and rites, and prophecies, and solemn texts. Here is the brightest sunshine of the Bible-page. Death is denounced, as the desert of sin. But, through amazing grace, it falls on Christ! He claims the dying place. He gives His life to the avenging stroke. Each blood-besprinkled altar preached a peace thus bought. It told of sin-satisfying agony, and reconciling blood, and an accepted surety. It showed the price all paid—the wrath removed—the curse endured—the flock all free.

Reader, you often hear and read this blessed truth. Say, is this peace-procuring work the perfect rest of your reposing soul? Do you sit down beneath the cross and sing, 'The enmity died there?'

The slaughtered animal was then divided. The best—the choicest of the parts, were placed upon the burning altar. Devouring flames preyed on them. Lev 3:3-5. Another portion was the priest's own due. Lev 7:31-32. The rest supplied the offerer with food.

Here is a wondrous feast! Three parties are regaled. O my soul, you too are called. The Gospel-banquet has an open door. Each hungry soul may find a welcome seat.

1. God claims His share. All, which seems rich and precious, is first brought to Him. The holy fire reduces it to dust. It is the fuel of the raging blaze. Thus Jesus meets the fierceness of Jehovah's wrath. Thus every attribute is as filled as an overflowing cup. Justice exacts its dues. Anger, and righteous vengeance, and pledged truth have large demands. But are they not content, when they have reveled at this costly table? God's name is honored in a God-man slain! and heaven takes up a hymn of peace. Reader, in faith place Christ between God and your sins, and then, live, rejoice, work, die in the sweet knowledge, that God's scales are full.

2. Provision is then made for those who ministered. The altar-servant never lacks. They, who leave all for God, have all in God. Zeal in His cause is richest gain. The Lord is never debtor unto man. Strength spent for Him is strength recruited with the best supplies. Toil in His vineyard is the wealth of wealth. His service is a golden mine. It is a field, where harvests always wave. Each happy workman finds his wages in his work.

But mark what constitutes the priestly food. It is part of the self-same victim, in which God delights. The dying Jesus regales heaven. The dying Jesus regales earth. But the refreshment mainly cheers the pastor's heart. Here, then, we clearly learn, that ministers derive their health—their vigor—their success, from the grand truth of peace through Christ. Those cannot work with zeal—with unction—and with fervent love, who have not tasted this substantial feast. Knowledge of reconciling grace is the grand pulpit-power. It warns the heart. It girds the loins. It arms with courage, which no difficulties check. It brings an energy, which cannot flag.

You Ministers, live at this table. Rejoice in the victim, who slays wrath, and opens wide the gates of peace. And then strong in the Lord, and tranquil in His love, go toil, strive, pray, until thronging numbers crowd the banquet-house, where Christ is All.

3. The offerer then takes his part and eats. Here is a teaching fact. We see the essence of true faith. It finds soul sustenance in Jesus' work. Light in the head will not give peace. Lips may be fluent to depict Christ's praise, while all within is death. The outward handling of truth lulls not the conscience-fears. More is required. Christ to be peace must be received within. The hungry soul must draw sweet juices from the dying Lamb! Wretched are they, who mourn, and pine, and starve, when such supplies are near!

A solemn warning is adjoined. The legally unclean might not partake. Lev 7:20. Impurity excluded from the table of peace. Means are provided to cleanse stains. But means neglected, raise exclusion's bar. They are cast out, who seek the wedding with no wedding-robe. Mat 22:13.

Reader, this precept loudly testifies, that none taste peace, who wilfully offend. Sin willingly retained must plunge into a troubled sea. Can Israel prosper, while accursed goods are hidden? Can he gain health, who lingers in infected air? Shall he, who sows the whirlwind, reap a calm? The path of evil leads from peace. The love of evil hides God's smile.

But the believer hourly mourns, that sad corruption follows him as his shadow. He loathes iniquity, but still its roots are deep, and constant outbreaks prove its life. His thoughts, his words, his works fly, as vile broods of vipers from a vile nest. May he not venture to the Peace offering feast, while this indwelling evil is his plague? The ordinance foresees the case; and thus provides. Unleavened cakes must fill the offerer's hand.

Lev 7:12. This leaven is the emblem of the tainting principle. Its presence teaches, that sinners may draw near, although the hated trouble be not dead.

Reader, if you have any light from heaven, you see poor nature's proneness to transgress. While flesh is flesh, its tendencies are base. This malady should not obstruct your way to peace. No, let it prompt you to more vigorous effort. When the wolf prowls, the lambs leave not the fold. Your restless foe should drive you to the fort of peace.

We next are told what special motives prompted the Peace offering. They were two-fold; a sense of gratitude for mercies past, and a desire to bind the heart by vow. Lev 7:12, Lev 7:16. He, who would praise—he, who would vow, thus sought the altar. Here are spiritual dealings, which cannot be performed, until the soul knows peace with God. These are plants, which only bloom in reconciliation's sunshine. These are barks, which only glide on tranquil waves.

Believer, let not this teaching be in vain. There is no moment, when the inner man should not flow forth in boundless streams of praise. Count—but the number baffles thought—count, if you can, the crowning mercies, which fill high your cup. Each MERCY should awaken songs of love.

Next, weigh your mighty DEBTS to God. He ever lives, pouring His blessings on your head. Each binds you to devote your all to His one service. His throne should ever hear your self-surrendering vows.

But mark, you cannot praise nor vow apart from peace in Christ. These are the acts of an accepted child. This is free converse with a reconciled Father. Praise only lives, where peace abounds. He only consecrates himself, who fears no wrath. You must draw near in Christ, or you can never serve.

When the Peace offering came, as token of thanksgiving, it must be eaten before the morning's light. When it bore witness to a voluntary vow, the rule was still the same. The feast must be without delay. No remnant on the third day might be touched. Lev 7:15-16. Who can hear this, and not discern the tenderness of grace? God would not leave one moment's space between the cross and peace. The Gospel-cry is, Rejoice, Rejoice. Why tarry? Why linger? Why hesitate? What mean those miserable doubts? Why such trembling and reluctant steps? God spreads a feast of peace, and bids His guests sit down to instant joy!

Believer, hasten to obey. Today, this hour, receive the gladness of the offered blessing. There is some lurking pride—some seeds of unbelief in slow acceptance of this gracious boon.

Reader, this offering was ordained "to guide your feet into the way of peace." Come then to the banner of the Prince of Peace. Is not His kingdom peace above, within, around, forever? The Spirit cries, "Of the increase of His government and peace, there shall be no end." Isa 9:7. Hear, and the Lord of Peace Himself will give you peace, always, by all means. 2Th 3:16.

Lev 4.3

THE SIN OFFERING

"He must bring to the Lord a young bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed." Lev 4:3

Sin! The sound is brief. But it presents a dark abyss of thought. No mind can trace its birth. No eye can see its death. Before the worlds it scaled the heavens, and dragged angels down. In life's first dawn it entered Eden and slew innocence. It ends not with the end of time. It ever rolls an ever-deepening course.

Reader, think much of sin.

It is earth's death-blow. It marred the beauty of a beauteous world. It stripped it of its lovely robe. It caused the soil to harden; the leaves to wither and decay. It turned fertility to weeds, and armed the brier with its bristling thorns. It made the clouds to blacken, and the storm to rage. It raised the tempest's roar, and plumed the lightning with its forked wings. It placed its foot upon a perfect workmanship—and left it a disordered wreck.

Reader, think much of sin.

It is man's ruin. Its most tremendous blight fell on our inner life. It drove the soul from peaceful fellowship with God. It changed the loving child into a hardened rebel. It robbed the mind of light. It rendered reason a bewildered maze. It made the heart a nest of unclean birds; a spring of impure streams; a whirlpool of tumultuous passions; a hot-bed of ungodly lusts; a den of God-defying schemes. It is the malady—the misery—the shame of our whole race. It is the spring of every tear. Each sigh, which rends the breast—each frown, which ploughs the brow—each pain, which racks the limbs, are cradled in its arms. It is the mother of that mighty monster—death. It digs each grave in every grave-yard. Each widow and each orphan tastes its gall. It fills each hospital with sick. It strews the battlefield with slain. It is the core in every grief. It is the worm which gnaws the root of peace.

Reader, think much of sin.

Its terrible destructions die not in the grave. There is a region, where its full-blown torments reign. It built the prison-house of hell. It kindled quenchless flames. It forged the chains, which bind lost sinners to their burning beds. It sharpened the undying sting of an upbraiding conscience. It arms the jailer—Satan, with his scourge. It bars the hopeless in that outer darkness, where weeping ever weeps—and wailing ever wails—and teeth forever gnash—and all is woe, which knows no respite and no end.

Reader, think much of sin.

It works this bitter and eternal anguish, because God's curse attends it. It raised a rebel-hand against His will. It dared to violate His holy law. It strove to lay His honor in the dust. It trampled on the statute-book of heaven. Therefore God's anger fiercely burns against it. Hence every misery follows in its succession. He must be wretched who has God against him.

Reader, here is a picture, in which all horrors meet. Regard it with an earnest eye. No fiction colors it. No power can over paint the terrible reality. No artist's skill can represent a flame. The dreadful truth exceeds report. The lost writhe out eternity in fully learning the deserts of sin.

These terrors are the best prelude to the tidings of the sin offering. Tears magnify the cross. The trembling heart is the best soil for seeds of peace. Hell seen beforehand, is hell escaped forever. Satan disclosed, is Satan baffled.

As the bright sun behind a threatening cloud, the sin offering waits to change the frightful aspect of sin. At Sinai's base this rite steps forth to show the reconciling work of grace. Reader, receive the soul-reviving voice— Though sin is death, the sinner need not die. There is a fortress of escape. There is a remedy to heal these wounds. What though your sins be countless as the sands? They all may disappear. What though the dye of each be double crimson? Each may be washed away. The filth may all be cleansed. The debts may be wiped out. The soul may meet Jehovah's eye without one stain. There is a way, by which the vilest may stand pure. This is the blessed and the wondrous truth, which the Sin offering proclaims.—God's love decreed a plan. He willed a ransom, and His Son achieved it. Let us draw nearer to the amazing sight.

When God would save, justice, and truth, and holiness proposed tremendous terms. Each sin must bear its merited load of woe. Each curse must be endured. Each violation of the holy law must drink the dregs of condemnation. Jesus comes forth to help. The guiltless One, takes the guilty place. The God-man represents His flock. He stands their ready and complete sin offering. He pays in anguish and in blood their every due. Wrath is endured. Penalties are paid. Sufferings are suffered. Agonies are agonized. The work requires infinity of woe. Infinity of woe is borne by Him. His Deity enables. His manhood qualifies. Thus sin is fully punished. Thus the redeemed are fully saved.

Such are the tidings of the Sin offering. Say, is not this the truth of truths? All minds should ponder it. All hearts should welcome it. All eyes should gaze upon it. All hands should grasp it. All lips should praise it. Parents should teach it. Children should learn it. Pulpits should echo it. The cottage—the sick chamber—the dying bed, should brighten with this light. It should be the stable center of the soul—the joy of social converse—the bond of Christian fellowship. Men should walk up and down in the full freedom of redemption's plains.

Until by the Spirit's aid, the eye of faith discerns a substituted sufferer, the conscience has no peace; the Bible is a locked-up page; life has no steady compass; death has no pillow of assured repose.

Reader, is this truth, the light—the feast—the joy—the strength—the rapture of your soul? Does morning wake you to bring this offering to the Mercy-seat? Do you go forth with your hands resting on its head? Do you lie down with the blood sprinkled on the day's misdeeds? It should be so. In every way God sets this sacrifice before you. Christ knocks for entrance at the sinner's heart. The Spirit joys to show the God-appointed victim.

And now in these poor lines another message craves attention. Come mark, then, how the Sin offering in every part proves sin to be a vanquished foe.

There are indeed some grades of difference in this type, as rank or as offence might differ. The first example will illustrate all. The offender is the anointed Priest. Lev 4:3. Sin has allured—ensnared—defiled him. But now he sees his guilt. He cannot rest until pardon be obtained. God's voice directs his course. He must bring a young unblemished bull to the tabernacle-door. Behold the proof, that God has found a ransom. This is an idle and an empty rite, unless it shows the victim of God's choice. This is but mockery, except it witnesses, that help is laid on the redeeming Jesus.

The type is clear. It ushers in the Gospel antitype. Atonement is indeed provided. We are not left to hopelessness, or human schemes. Sins are our own. The remedy is His.

A SOLEMN ACT is next enjoined. The offender's hands must be laid on the victim's head. This sign too, has no meaning, unless it bids the sin-lost to transmit their guilt. Without such a meaning, it is a puzzling and deceiving shadow. But God gives not an ordinance in vain. He thus consents, that sin should pass to the Sin offering. He thus instructs the heavy-laden to roll all on Christ.

Reader, if sin be found adhering to yourself—if it should weigh you into nether-hell—it is not, because the chain cannot be broken—it is not, because Christ refuses to receive—it is not, because you never heard of transfer. It is, because you care not for relief. It is, because self-will retains the mass of sin.

The substitute is then slain. Lev 4:4. Sin must have death. The curse must fall. God pardons not by bidding anger to hold back. His hatred must be shown—His majesty must be maintained—His truth must be preserved. Pardons indeed abound. They freely and they gladly fly. But all proceed along a blood-stained path.

Believer, your sins slew Christ. They cannot now slay you. His death is yours. Therefore you live. God's smile is on you, not because your sins are none, but because each has died in Christ.

The precious rite continues to unfold the Savior's worth. It shows THREE USES OF THE OUTPOURED BLOOD.

1. The veil is sprinkled seven times. Lev 4:6. This veil hung in front of the Mercy-seat. It was the entrance to the holiest place. The truth is manifest. They, who would enter into heaven, must plead blood shed.

Reader, the blood, which flowed at Calvary, still flows within your reach. Take it by faith, and mount the holy heights. You may have heaven, as your eternal home. Your sins are no insuperable bar. Without one doubt, present the price. The gates will lift their heads. The everlasting portals will fly back.

2. Part dyed the golden-altar's horns. Lev 4:7. This was the place where incense rose, as emblem of ascending prayer. Christ's intercession is Salvation's crown. But it prevails, because its plea is blood. The wounded hands cannot be stretched in vain. Who, also, are they, who thrive most in the growth of grace, and work most boldly in the Savior's cause? They, whose incessant prayers most sweetly savor of the dying Lamb. The bleeding cross is supplication's strength.

3. The brazen-altar drank the rest. Lev 4:7. Thus all is used to bring assurance to the anxious heart. Each drop subserves its part. Atonement needs the whole. The whole is given.

Reader, behold each altar reeking with this stream of blood, and doubt not, that God's claims are satisfied.

This is not all. No effort is untried to deepen peace. Hence we see more than the sin offering's death. Other rites follow. Let them be marked. The costliest parts are piled upon the burning altar. Lev 4:10. The angry fire receives them, as its prey. It burns—it blazes, until all disappears. Thus wrathful fury seized the soul of Jesus. All torments dealt most fiercely with Him. He suffered, until eternal vengeance asked no more.

Reader, if you are one with Christ, hell-pains are past for you. If you are not, they still remain. Alas! how shall you bear them!

Again, this is not all. The curse is linked to sin. A perfect sin offering, then, must be abhorred, as an accursed thing. Abomination must pursue it. Turn now to the type. The remnant of the victim, vile and contemned, is borne outside the camp. Lev 4:12. It is spurned, as hateful to the sight and touch. A pile of wood is raised. Again the fire is brought, and burning work does its part. Here is clear emblem of Christ made curse for us. The garden misery showed anger wrestling with His soul. But further anguish presses in the rear. He is led out beyond the gate. The city loathes Him, as earth's refuse.

He hangs conspicuously a curse for sin. Here the last vengeance falls. Blessed are they, whose curse descends on the Savior's cross.

Reader, in pity to your soul, flee to the Sin offering. Make Christ by faith your own. When fears affright—when Satan claims—when death draws near—when the great judgement throne is set—place Him—your shield—before God's wrath. They cannot fail, who thus make Him their All.

Lev 5.15-16

THE GUILT OFFERING

"When a person commits a violation and sins unintentionally in regard to any of the Lord's holy things, he is to bring to the Lord as a penalty a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver, according to the sanctuary shekel. It is a guilt offering. He must make restitution for what he has failed to do in regard to the holy things, add a fifth of the value to that and give it all to the priest, who will make atonement for him with the ram as a guilt offering, and he will be forgiven." Lev 5:15-16

Sin is a monster which has many forms! Each form has many hands. Each hand deals wounds. Each wound is death. It touches to destroy. But for each wound help is prepared. Jesus appears omnipotent to heal.

This is the truth, which Eden heard; which types displayed; which prophets sang; which cheered the saints of old; which martyrs sealed with blood; which faithful pastors still proclaim. This is the truth, which Satan hates; which infidelity derides; which worldlings tread beneath contemptuous feet. But it lives throughout the Bible-page; and will live forever—the joy of heaven and the rage of hell. This is the prospect, to which the Guilt offering calls. It shows a pillar with a two-fold front. One indeed sternly asks for penalty. But the other brightens with atonement made.

Reader, the verses, which here meet your eye, state the first case of Guilt offering. It will suffice to ponder this. The other instances in name may vary, but in principle are one.

A soul commits a trespass, and sins through ignorance in holy things. God's law is thus infringed—His will transgressed. The rewards of heaven are withheld. Such are the features of offence.

Can unintentional sins be but trifles? Shall no wrath arise? Shall deeds unholy cause no holy frown? This cannot be. Iniquity is hated by our God. Can he be clean who loathes not filth? Can he be pure, who shrinks not from impurity? Would not God's throne be tarnished, if sin be not condemned?

Let this ordinance be heard. First, the Guilt offering unveils God's wrath. Offence is dealt with terribly. The trespasser must seek the altar with a ram. The victim must lay down his life. The blood must flow. The costliest parts must be the food of flames. Where trespass has been, death must flow. So speaks this witness, with no faltering voice.

Is the question asked, why is the life thus taken? What means such a sacrifice, terrible in death and gore. The answer loudly thunders, Trespass brings death! No soul can sin and live. Such is the language of this solemn rite. Let all, who hear take heed.

Ignorance of this truth is the dark veil, which blinds our race. It is the downward path, which slopes to hell. Alas! how few believe, that all the streams of trespass flow to ruin's gulf.

Survey the giddy crowds, who throng earth's path. The mirth—the levity—the godless words—the silly unconcern, prove, that they little know the peril of their state. The current of their thoughts—the bias of their being—the channel of their words and works, widely transgress the law's strict rule, and still they sport, as moths around a flame. They fall to sleep, as Sisera in Jael's tent. Jdg 4:21. They take the dainties from a treacherous hand, but neither see the hammer nor the nails. Like Amasa, they seek a friend's embrace; but heed not the sword which Joab holds. 2Sa 20:10. Thus multitudes unconsciously are slain.

But this rite specially condemns transgression in God's holy things. Alas! this is a frequent case. Many sacrilegiously invent a religion of their own conceit. God plainly speaks from His high throne. He states His will. He shows the only path to heaven. But man's indifference refuses to be taught. He pursues the light, which erring reason kindles. He chooses the rags of sinful human nature, rather than the Gospel-robe. But none reach heaven by such Babel-steps. This trespass cloaked in a fair guise, allures a Cain-like crowd. But it is trespass, and it slays the soul.

Some would buy heaven by the price of 'religious forms'. They bring the offering of 'external rites' duly kept. They diligently tread the 'ceremonial round'. They never doubt, that 'ritual strictness' will secure the crown.

Reader, take heed of error here. Truth is a narrow line. Men easily diverge. On either side there is a foul descent. In Satan's creed there are opposing falsehoods. One lowers 'forms' to dust. The other raises them to saving worth. He cares not which delusion is embraced. But each delusion is soul-peril. Forms are not nothing. They are ordained of God. They feed the soul. They fan the flame of faith. Their due observance proves the inward life. This is their Scripture-place.

But means will never cleanse one sin. They have no strength to hold back vengeance. Woe then is theirs, who use them as their only plea, and clasp them, as their only hope. Would that each eye discerned this snare! Would that each pulpit gave a warning note! This error only lives in dens of ignorance. It cannot breathe when dragged to light. But it is sin. Therefore it is death. The Gospel slighted, leaves no hope.

But when heaven's rays in mercy dissipate these mists—when error, as a murderer, is seen—then the deep sigh is heard, "Is there no remedy—no refuge—no escape? Must everlasting vengeance seize me as its prey?"

Now view the Trespass offering again. While faith beholds, a saving gleam breaks forth. A dying victim comes. A substituted life is taken. Another suffers in the offender's place. Pardon is granted through a proxy's blood.

Believer, here is the picture, in which faith delights. A Guilt offering is prepared in Christ. He is made all your sin. He drinks your every drop of woe. Amazing grace! Astounding love! This is God's way to save. This is the song of all the saved—the joy of all, who really joy—the hope of all, who have true hope. This is the fact, which conquers death, and tramples on the grave, and gives enduring peace, and furnishes resistless pleas, and satisfies each attribute of God, and crowns Jehovah with His brightest crown. Look clearly at this ordinance. The Guilt offering bleeds, and guilt is forgiven. So Jesus dies, and His whole family is saved. It is a heaven-taught challenge, "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" It is a heaven-brought answer, "It is God who justifies." The Spirit prompts the question, "Who is He, that condemns?" The same voice sounds the triumph-note, "It is Christ who died." Each Guilt offering shouts aloud this truth.

This cup of grace is not exhausted yet. The sinner's need is a vast varied field. No single image can depict its breadth. But Jesus's work completely covers all. His life is laid down as guilt expiation. But death alone crowns not salvation's pyramid. More is required. More is performed by Christ. More is pre-figured here. The value of the trespass must be reckoned. Scales must be brought. The offender must pay down the estimated cost according to the sanctuary's weight. Further addition of a fifth part must be made. Equivalent will not suffice. Excess is superfluous. Lev 5:16. This rule sets guilt in a clearer light. Death is entailed—that is the misery. Debt is incurred—that is the penalty and shame.

We thus are taught, that sin defrauds God. Creation's law makes us His sole possession. No faculty of mind or frame—no power of intellect or thought—no talent of influence or time—no opportunity—no gift—no grace, is property of our own. All then should serve the cause of the one sovereign Lord. Reason should plan, and eyes should see, and hands should work, and feet should run, to do Him honor and augment His praise. Our every energy should fly abroad with morning light, to gather fruits of glory for His name. Each night should prove, that faith and love have labored to advance His kingdom upon earth.

But is it so? What is the witness of each hour? Alas! SELF mounts the great Creator's throne. We rise, we enter on the day, we journey on, as if self-seeking were legitimate employ. Whether we rest or toil it is unto ourselves. Is not this trespass? Such is its lightest name. It robs our God. It wastes His remuneration. Reader, this is a solemn thought. It fixes on our souls the blackest dye of wrong. It brands us, as purloining from a Father's and a Benefactor's treasury!

Some perhaps may ask, "can no amends be made? Can no devotedness repay?" That is a vain conceit. If not one thought of any moment ever swerved from a pure effort for the Lord, it would but be, that moment's due. Surplus of merit is the papist's dream. But our best acts are only increase of our debt. Hence all our works make bankruptcy more deep. When justice calls to the white throne, the fairest reckoning is one huge debt. Who then can stay arrest?

Here the true Guilt offering again presents relief. Jesus is salvation to the full. Hence death for sin is not the whole of his grand work. This decks us with no merit. It fills no hands with fruits of righteousness. He must also pay a whole life's homage to the Law. He gives compliance to its largest rule. It asked for one undeviating course of love. Jesus was love without one straying step.

Reader, if you are Christ's, this pure fulfillment of the Law is for you. For you Christ wrought it. To your account He puts it. Ponder its wondrous worth. Since Christ is God, Deity embodies all His acts. When He obeys, it is Divine obedience. Unsullied righteousness is sought from man. The righteousness cast over him is the righteousness of God.

The Guilt-offerer added a surplus. But who can weigh the surplus, which Christ brings? Jesus piles the scales, until God can give, and God can take no more.

Such is the Gospel, which pervades this rite. It is clear, and full, and rich, and precious, and divine. Reader, it comes to you this day. It deals most lovingly, most closely with you. It tells you in emphatic terms, that sin and guilt stain your heart, your soul, your mind, your life, your every day, your every hour. It warns, that every trespass strengthens Satan's claims, and fans the flames of hell. It strips off every self-framed hope. It places a vast barrier between you and God.

But next it sweetly shows a full recovery. Christ's cross and life are pictured in the brightest hues. You see Him dying to pay the guilt-penalty. You see His righteousness supplying guilt-wrongs. He tenderly persuades, "only believe, and take My overflowing cup of merit. Come, cling by faith to Me, and all your trespasses are buried in My wounds—and all your guilt is covered by My robe—Come, and by faith be one with Me—here is full pardon—no charge against you can be found—here is full beauty—no speck of filth remains. Here is My cross—your all-sufficient expiation. Here is My surplus payment—as your wealth."

Reader, what answer do you give? Can you reject the only Guilt offering?

Lev 9.24

THE ACCEPTED OFFERING

"Fire blazed forth from the Lord's presence and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When the people saw all this, they shouted with joy and fell face down on the ground." Lev 9:24

A train of solemn rites preceded the priests' admission to their functions. The entrance-path was long and holy. None might draw near uncalled—uncleansed—without atonement made through blood—without the sprinklings of anointing oil. Lev 8:6, Lev 8:24, Lev 8:30.

Through a whole week the victims died, and consecrating services flowed on. During these days the sacred tent enclosed the devoted band. They might not pass its separating gate. The world was left. A barrier parted them from common life. They dwelt shut out from man—shut in with God. Lev 8:33.

Here is a teaching voice for all, who boast, that they are Christ's. The priestly office shadows out their calling. They have a high employ. Their rank is "royal priesthood." 1Pe 2:9. They have new natures, and they do new work. All in God's household minister.

Reader, have you approached by rightful steps the servant's place? The path is here marked out. Is the blood used as your atoning plea? Is there the Spirit's inward witness of adoption to the family of grace? Is the world shunned, as mire? Is life regarded, as a dedicated walk? They, who are truly called, pass this admission-gate.

In heaven a perfect priesthood serves in perfect praise. But consecration here is prelude to that bliss. Say, have you more than empty name? God's service is reality. Is your heart really His? Perhaps you doubt. Oh! then awake and strive to enter by the only door. Space is yet yours. But it is on the wing. It may be almost sped. Alas the woe, if death shall find you not a priest of Christ! Are your signs clear? All, who serve Him, wear livery—washed in his blood—bright in world-shunning grace.

The seven days of dedication passed. The eighth dawn saw the services complete. Lev 9:1. There is no more delay. The holy office is assumed. The life is now one cloud of incense to the Lord. From morn to night the willing priests discharge foreshadowing forms.

Ministers of Christ, your work may differ, but should your zeal be less? Altars no more are raised. All vanished in the cross. Victims no longer die. No lights are lighted, and no incense burns. The Sun of Righteousness is risen. Twilight ordinances fled from its glorious orb. But still wide fields of labor open. Your life is to proclaim the Lamb of God—the blood once and forever shed. Souls are undone, because they know not Christ—the true end of rites. Your voice must never cease the cry. Behold the truth—bathe in this stream—trust in this death—plead this atoning cross. Shame would it be, if legal priests relaxed not typifying work, and your hands wearied in uplifting the grand substance—Christ.

In this first day of priestly work, a striking circumstance occurs. When all the offerings had been duly made, Moses and Aaron seek the holy tent. Lev 9:23. For a short season they retire. They leave the busy scene. It is their wish in stillness to seek God's clearer face. He was before them in the public rite. But calm retreat would give more calm approach.

The true believer labors in the open day. In busy haunts of busy men he strains the toiling nerve. The world is the wide field. There are the precious souls, which need the wholesome warning and the faithful word. There sin abounds; and misery dwells; and ignorance spreads its blinding veil. There Satan rules with deathful sway. In this wild waste the good seed must be cast. In graceless crowds grace must be manfully displayed. But private hours gain strength for public zeal. When all is still the opening heavens pour down their dew.

In quietude the soul draws nearer to Christ's arms. Then tender whispers testify of love. Then truth unfolds the wondrous page; and promises assume substantial form; and distant prospects brighten to the view. It is apart from men that grace takes deeper root; temptations wither; the world's false glitter fades; the inner man is strengthened to resist and loins are girded for the battle field. The soldier of the cross goes forth from solitude to fight his fight. He, who seeks God alone, has God in public by his side.

Moses and Aaron soon return. But they come not with empty hands—they are enriched with the best gifts. Here is sweet evidence of gainful commerce with the Lord. Laden with good, they haste to scatter good around. Their souls are redolent of heaven. "They blessed the people." Lev 9:23.

The blessed of the Lord bless earth. And they are the most blessed, who most throng the mercy seat. The wise, the rich, the learned, and the strong, are tools employed by God to move the world's machine. But it is piety, which strews real weal, on men. They, who descend from Zion's heights, are, as the clouds, which drop refreshing rain.

And now a sudden marvel fills all minds with awe. While blessings fall from blessing saints, heaven brightens with resplendent signs. Glory shines round. Fire is sent forth. But why? Is it to seize the guilty sons of men? Is it to hurl on them deserved wrath? Far otherwise. It comes with olive branch of peace. It seals with heaven's own seal the atoning rites. It settles on the altar. It feeds on the victim, as its feast. Thus it brings evidence of God's delight. Thus it fills hearts with tranquil peace. The flame with blazing tongue proclaims, here is the sacrifice, which God selects—approves—calls men to bring—and never will refuse.

Reader, this is the fact which now addresses you. The altar-victims were the shade of Christ. The attesting fire speaks God's acceptance of His dying Son. Faith, therefore, loves this scene. It is one of the wells, from which it gladly draws new joy. It is one of the meadows of its richest food.

But faith soon asks, what is the antitype of the descending flame? It opens the clear Gospel-page. There distinct testimonies answer to this approving sign. Let some now pass before delighted gaze.

The mighty God has scarcely taken human frame, when heralds speed from the high courts. An angel's shout announces tidings of transcendent joy—a Savior given—a Savior born—a Savior in man's home. The host of heaven take up the wondrous strain. The echoing skies cast back the chorus—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." Luk 2:14.

Reader, the sealing fire here falls. Can evidence be more complete? Here is the assurance, that the infant lives, sent by the Father to save souls. It must be so, or why do those joyful wings expand? It must be so—that messenger cannot mislead. Then venture on the Incarnate God. Commit your soul to Him. You may appeal to God—I take Him, because Your signet stamps Him, as Your chosen Lamb.

The day arrives, when Christ must be distinctly shown. As surety of His flock, He must fulfill each righteous ordinance. Therefore He hastens to the baptismal stream. Let all eyes now behold. While He uplifts His soul in prayer, the heavens above cast back their gates. The Spirit, like a dove, flies to the lowly suppliant, and the Father's sovereign voice is heard, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Luk 3:21-22. The fire again descends. Oh precious token! The Father and the Spirit join to seal and to anoint our Lord.

Rich in the mercy of this pledge. The thought will sometimes rise, Is Christ indeed sufficient? Sins are a mighty load. Can He sustain them? The claims of justice are a long roll. Can He pay all? The Father's voice decides. It leaves no spot, on which a tottering doubt can rest. He cries, "well-pleased."

Reader, and will not you respond, "well-pleased?" Receive Him with adoring love. Cling to Him with most holy rapture. In Him you cannot fail. In Him you must prevail. He is Salvation by the Father's will—the Father's word. Cleaving to Him, you cannot be cast out. He is the Father's chief joy. And seen in Him, the Father loves you, as He loves His Son.

As time rolls on, select disciples view a wondrous sight. Jesus withdraws the veil, which hides His glory. He stands before them in more than brightness of the mid-day sun. His visage and His robes outvie all light. Here is full proof, that Deity is His right—Jesus transfigured must be very God. But now a super-added testimony sounds. The fire again descends. The Father again speaks. The note is still the same, "This is my beloved Son."

My soul, here is another call to you. Take Christ as your beloved one. Haste to respond—Great Lord, each inmost fiber is pure love to You. Each pulse is an adoring throb.—The voice adjoins, "Hear Him." Heed the wise counsel. He, whom the Father thus attests, is worthy of all notice of all ears. Happy, thrice happy he, who can reply, I hear the good Shepherd's voice. I gladly follow. He leads me to His wounds; and I am clean. He calls me to His side, and whispers peace. He bids me climb a heavenward path. He soon will seat me by His side.

Reader, approach the bitter garden scene. Here all the waves of anguish beat on the Redeemer's soul. His every look and every cry make known, that He is wrestling with extremest pangs. Each pore weeps blood. But whence this overwhelming grief? The hour is still. The place is deep retreat. No hostile bands appear. None but His loved-ones are in view. It is an unseen arm, which now arrests Him. The sword of hidden wrath now really pierces to the quick. The fire from God's right hand now truly falls, and fiercely deals with the self-offered Lamb. Each inward travail shows, that God is now exacting debts from Him, until the boundless price is paid. My soul intently gaze. You see wrath visibly outpoured on Christ. Then be content—the cup is drained. No drop remains for you.

Another scene is near. The death is died. The grave contains its precious captive. The stone is rolled. The seal is fixed. The guard is set. The hand of justice has borne Jesus off. The prison gates are closed. Where are our hopes?

Are claims all satisfied? Will God declare, that He demands no more? Will there be manifested proof, that all His people are redeemed? Draw near and witness. The grave restores the mighty dead. Jesus appears released—alive. Here the fire of satisfaction falls. The topstone of acceptance is brought forth. The pyramid of God's approval is complete. Christ is accredited, as the full Savior of the fully saved.

When Israel's host beheld the fire from God, what was their feeling? "They shouted and fell on their faces." Lev 9:24. Sweet joy was theirs. Deep adoration warmed each heart. Exulting praise burst forth. Profoundest worship was their instant act.

Believer, do the like. God sends His Son to seek—to save. He lays on Him your every sin. He gives you every pledge, that He approves—attests—receives—delights in the Accepted offering. Witness after witness from His courts assures, that pardon, acquittal, release from every woe, admission to the home of heaven, are y ours. Oh! then, let every breath praise God. Let every hour of every be inward worship.

Lev 10.1-2

THE STRANGE FIRE

"Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered strange fire (unauthorized) before the Lord, contrary to his command. So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord." Lev 10:1-2

Sounds of high joy had just been swelling through the holy court. Sure tokens of approving love had rested on the typifying altar. The flame, which might not die, and which alone might now be used, witnessed God's smile on the appointed victims. The Covenant of Grace was sealed anew with blazing seal. The obedient worshiper had proof, that God was near him—with him—for him.

Reader, this sight is opening heaven unto us. Who would not ever gaze? But earth is yet our home. Here a vile foe is always near. He writhes, when souls are safely climbing Zion's hill. He saw the joys of Eden, and he flew to mar. He sees the Gospel of this heaven-sent fire, and he will strive to quench. So now he comes. The place is sacred, and the office holy. But he has keys for every gate. No station is too high for his foul wing. No consecrated functions scare him back.

He seeks the side of Aaron's first-born sons. Their calling to be priests is no protecting shield. He can ascend the altar-steps. He knows the fit temptation for the holiest place. So now he fosters self-exalting zeal. He leads to worship; but the worship must be 'unauthorized'. He prompts an offering; but the offering is not God's.

Such was his bait. Mark its success. Nadab and Abihu take each his censer. Was this God's will? Did He require this act? Their first step strays. They next add fire. Whence was it brought? God had provided what alone He would receive. It was not distant. An outstretched hand might instantly obtain. They madly reason, What, will no other flame avail? Will this alone cause incense to ascend? Impious self-will thus reasons into ruin.

Unauthorized fire is seized, and a unauthorized service acted. Oh! miserable men! their hands simulate holy work, but rebel feet tread down God's ordinance. Oh! terrible result! To despise God is rapid downfall. His frown is withering blight. It arms each creature with destructive sting. Behold a proof. The pledge of favor inflicts sudden death. The symbol of accepted service now hurls the disobedient into ruin's gulf. The fire thus scorned, puts forth its mighty strength. It vindicates its sacred significance. They, who rejected, cannot now cast off. It wraps them in its burning arms, and lays their blackened corpses in the dust. Thus Nadab and Abihu perish from the earth.

But still the judgment lives. This story stands, as a dark beacon on a rocky coast. It cries, 'Beware, to all despisers of the Gospel-scheme!' It shows, that those who stray from God's appointed path, fall into quicksands of tremendous wrath.

Reader, these lines draw near bringing this counsel to your heart. Listen, with humble mind—with earnest prayer. And may the Lord of mercy mercifully bless!

The Bible-page stands open. It courts your eyes. It craves attention. It wears no dark disguise. It is an azure sky of truth. It writes with an unerring pen, the mission and the work of Christ. It tells you, that when you were ruined and undone—when condemnation's thunder roared—the Father sent His Son, to bear the curse—to die the death—to suffer in the sinner's stead, and save with uttermost salvation. These tidings loudly sound their silver note. The testimony is distinct, 'Behold the Lamb of God—Look to His cross—Hide in His wounds—Enter the refuge of His merits—Cement yourself by faith to Him. Grasp Him as your all-prevailing plea.' A train of faithful promises assures, that none thus seeking are cast out. But threats re-echo, There is no other name; no other sacrifice remains; despise, reject, neglect, and death without a remedy is near—and hell without escapes gapes for you.

Reader, a question meets you here—let honest truth reply. Did the attesting fire on Israel's altar blaze with more brightness, than this clear mind of God? Oh, no! The fact defies denial. Such is the way marked out by God. Here is the door, which mercy opens. Here is the refuge raised by sovereign love. Here is the cure of all sin's wounds. God gives, and God authenticates, His Son, as full redemption for the lost.

How is such wondrous news received? Surely all earth will throb with one ecstatic pulse of joy. Surely each sinew will be strained to grasp the gift of gifts. But is it so? Draw back the curtains of man's inmost soul. Enter the chambers, in which hidden thoughts dwell. In many corners many Nadabs and Abihus lurk. They hear of Christ, and sneer. They see the cross, and count it a vain thing. The fire of their own hearths is their delight. They rather choose self-kindled sparks.

Reader, draw near, and mark some leaders of this blinded troop. SELF-RIGHTEOUS PRIDE claims foremost place. It is a bold unblushing rebel in earth's camp. It lifts a daring head, and wears a helmet plumed with nature's gaudy crest. Its mouth abounds with self-invented pleas. What are they? Fancied innocence of grievous sins—a fancied treasury of virtue's deeds—a train of duties towards God—a train of charity towards man. It views this household flame, and fondly asks, 'What lack I more?' Ah! the rash madness! Ah! the wreck of soul! Take nature's best, what is it, but a noxious plant, rooted in filthy mire—laden with poison-berries—plucked by polluted hand! Uplift self's purest clothing to the light of heaven. It is a tattered rag. No thread is clean—no part is whole. But still for this God's well-beloved Son is scorned—for this His righteousness is put aside.

What is the end? The judgment comes. The great white throne is set. How will these Nadabs and Abihus stand? He, who alone could save, is now the Judge. Where is the blood, which once flowed near? There was a plea, which might have fully saved, but this was cast behind them. Can a rejected Jesus, screen rejecting foes from judgement? Can a refused shield, ward off death-blows? Vengeance descends, and human merit takes its own wages with the lost.

Others confess the evil of their early years. When they look back, the traversed path seems foul. They readily allow, that vile transgressions soiled their hands—their feet—their hearts. But they now flee all 'flagrant fault'. They have sown reformation-seeds, and gathered reformation-fruits, and Cain-like, bring the produce of their fields. Here Nadab and Abihu re-appear in a patched-up garb. Amendments pile their censers high. This is the fire of their choice. But it is unauthorized. God's altar gave not such supply.

Reader, do not think that 'reformation' is of any worth. You must be born again. None but new-born can enter heaven, or be happy there. But outward changes are not always grace. Lot's wife left Sodom, but she perished by the way. A new dress may be worn without new heart. A painted surface will not purify a tomb. A Herod may reform without new-birth.

Besides, where grace is real, it is no covering for past offences. This year's honesty has no receipts for last year's debts. Again, a trust in 'reformation of life' is evidence of an unchanged heart. The Spirit leads not to such rotten ground. He never prompts such arrogant conceits. The saintliest man increasingly sees evil cleaving to himself, as the bark to trees—as feathers to the fowl. He knows no hope, but Jesus' life, and Jesus' death. This is the fire, which God prescribes. And this alone the child of God will bring.

Some Nadabs and Abihus come with streaming eyes. Sin has brought loss. Some worldly prospect has been crushed. Thus Esau weeps. Conscience sometimes is quick to see the misery of guilt. Saul's flowing tears own this. So, also, the Gospel's melody will often melt a heart. It falls, as tender dew upon a moistening soil. Feelings relax, as ice beneath the sun. In these relaxing moments, Satan whispers, 'there is merit here.' The mourning spirit fondly hopes, that 'mourning' can buy peace with God. The tearful eye sees virtue in its drops. Thus signs of penitence are offered, as a ransom-price. Doubtless, no heart loves Christ, which hates not self, and bitterly bewails its grievous state. Doubtless the arms of penitence twine tightly round the cross. But seas of grief cannot wash out soul-stains. Sorrow, when brought as pardon's price, is but strange fire. And all unauthorized fire calls vengeance down.

The class of formalists may not be overlooked. They crowd God's courts. Each attitude—each look—is studied reverence. Their lips drop holiest words. Their hands touch holiest symbols. Their souls seem rapt to heaven on devotion's wing. If services discharged—if rites observed—if outward show were Christ, their cup of safety would be full. But these are only means. In their right place, they are most salutary helps—but decked as saviors—they impose; mislead; destroy. To use them, as meek handmaids of the Lord, is piety's delight; to trust in them, as reconciliation's price, is superstition's blind conceit. Then they become strange fire. These worshipers reject the substance, and repose on signs. But ritual services have in themselves no saving power. Such planks span not the gaping gulf. Such ladders reach not to the throne of God. Their office is to lead to Christ; and witness of His love. They are the channels of His precious grace. But they wash out no sin; they satisfy no wrath; they stay no vengeance; they have no key of heaven; they snatch not from the grasp of Satan; they are no plea for pardon; they hold no title-deeds of glory's kingdom. Christ is Salvation—Christ alone. Such is the work, which God commissioned Him to work. He undertook it. And He gloriously achieved. The mighty truth is ever true, "I have finished the work, which You gave Me to do." They, then, who now present another sacrifice, like Nadab and Abihu sin—like Nadab and Abihu die.

Reader, now view your censer; now say, what are its contents. Surely you hold some 'offering' in your hands. Surely some confidence keeps conscience still. What is it? God has sent forth His Son—the only way—the only truth—the only life—the only ransom-price—the one atonement, for all sin. Is He the rock, on which you rest? Is He the center of your hopes? Is He the one foundation of your trust? Is He your only argument for mercy? One sun illuminates the world. One ark delivered from the flood. One Joseph fed in times of famine. One brazen-serpent healed the poison's sting. One fire came down for tabernacle-use. One Savior saves the saved. One Christ is first and last to merit life. God sends, anoints, accepts, proclaims Him. If you plead Him in real faith, you cannot fail. To grasp another savior, is to grasp a straw.

Hark, Abel and all saints of old, and all believers of all times, and the one shout around the throne, tell, that eternal safety is beneath His wings. Hark, the wild wails of Cains, and Nadabs, and Abihus, warn, that other fire kindles a quenchless flame. Christ, by God's will, is heaven's gate. Strange offerings are hopeless hope. And hopeless hope must plunge in black despair.

Lev 11.44

HOLINESS

"You must be holy because I am holy." Lev 11:44

Holiness! There is sweet music in the very name. It tells of sin subdued—of boisterous passions lulled—of fiery lusts becalmed—of miry paths made clean. It sets before us a pure walk, where peace and joy go hand in hand, and scatter heaven-born fragrance round.

Reader, this grace for a few moments claims your view. God's voice commends it to your love. May His might graft it in your heart.

Holiness! To cause this lovely plant to thrive—its roots to deepen—and its branches to bear fruit, is one grand purpose of the scheme of grace.

Fly back in spirit to the day, when sovereign love made its all-wise decrees, and life's fair book received the blessed names. We find election choosing souls in Christ. What is the final cause? It is, that they should be holy and without blame before God in love. Eph 1:4. A holy stone is laid, that thence a holy fabric may arise. The will to save wills Holiness in the saved.

Predestination next draws the full chart of the believer's course. The path is Holiness. "A highway shall be there, and a way; and it shall be called the way of Holiness." Isa 35:8. The holy pilgrims may not walk in mire. They all show features of a heavenly birth. "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." Rom 8:29. The God-like travelers must tread a godly road. When the due time is come, Jesus appears with full redemption in His hands. Doubtless the first note of the Gospel-trumpet is rescue by His death from sin's tremendous woe—payment by His blood of sin's immeasurable debt—endurance on His cross of the law's curse—satisfaction through His sacrifice of all God's claims. Wondrous achievement! Noble triumph! Worthy display of everlasting love and power!

But is this all? Are there not other waters in this well? Are there not other summits on this rock? Yes. Christ is redemption's overflowing cup. Christ is the uttermost of man's vast need. Hence He frees from the rule and sway of evil, as surely as from its endless pains. Holiness is the Redeemer's essence; and the redemption's end. Hark, the word loudly cries, "He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity." Tit 2:14. "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world." Gal 1:4. He sows the seeds of blood, that Holiness may bloom. He spares no price, that He may buy a holy treasure.

In the fair day of grace, the tender Shepherd seeks each straying sheep. Long they may wander in earth's desert waste—exposed to cruel foes—and famished by the weeds of nature's soil. But He well knows them, and they must know Him. So the sweet notes of His alluring call at last fall softly on their ears. They hear—they yield—they follow—they obey. The call is holy. 2Ti 1:9. 1Th 4:7. Sin henceforth is avoided; abhorred; and a pure flock feeds in pure meadows.

Thus the whole Gospel-plan bears, as its mitre, "Holiness to the Lord." Its every step is turned towards Holiness. Its every part subserves a holy end.

Reader, perhaps you now may say, show me some picture of this beauteous grace. A ready text points upwards. The Lord's own voice proclaims, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." Lev 11:44. Our God is Holiness, and Holiness is likeness to our God. "The new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." Col 3:10. The new-born nature is similitude to God.

Let not man's cavils shade the brightness of this truth. Take no inferior standard. True Holiness is divine. It loves, what God loves. It shuns, what God shuns. Holiness is God in the heart—the life—the lips—the ways—the walk. It is a stream, in which each drop is heavenly and heavenward. It is a sun, in which each ray is from God's throne. God can propose no model but Himself. A lower thought would acquiesce in evil. Therefore the mandate is, "Be perfect, even as your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect."

Mat 5:48. Holiness falls short, when it falls short of God.

But perhaps you say, such glorious luster is too bright for sight. The heavenly sunshine dims the dazzled eye. But still draw near. God's Holiness, in human form, has visited and trod our earth. JESUS takes flesh and tabernacles here. His walk in our soiled paths is clean as on celestial pavement. Mark every act. Hear every word. They have one feature, Holiness. No trial spared Him. Hell's every snare was laid. No circumstance, which ever won, or drove, to sin, failed to put forth its craftiest wiles. But all was vain. Each wave rebounded from the holy Rock. In childhood—in youth's bloom—in riper age—to earthly parents, and to heavenly Father—to treacherous friends, and open foes—alone, abroad, in work, in rest, in ease, in agony, in life, in death. He showed one glorious front; He stood one glorious column—Holiness. There has been perfect Holiness on earth. Reader, your eye can scan—your mind can grasp this pattern. Such is the Holiness of God.

But some may add, this righteousness was wrought out for the Church. Christ kept each edict of the law for them. He places this obedience in their hands, as key to heaven—as the right to eternal life—as a title-deed to bliss—as a beauteous robe to shine in heaven's light. This is made over as the portion of His saints. Can they need more?

True, this righteousness is the wedding-dress, in which He decks His bride. It is her spotless beauty, and her coronet of gems. But it is more. The life of Jesus draws the clear portraiture of Zion's citizens. Heaven's courts, and atmosphere, and inhabitants, are all holy. None but the holy can there walk, and breathe, and taste delight. Heaven is no heaven to old sinful natures. To such, the sounding harps sound only discord. To such, the one employ is only misery. There is no pulse in common. Man must be Holiness—not to buy heaven—that is Christ's work only; not to fill merit's cup—that is Christ's gift; but to gain fitness to associate; to win capacity for bliss. Without Christ's righteousness, the gate cannot be passed. Without internal Holiness, the entrance is no gain. No Holiness, no heaven.

Mark next the SOIL, in which this flower has roots—the seed, from which it springs. Man's pride must here lie low. It never thrives in nature's field. Neither can hand of nature plant it. When sin came in, each gracious fiber died. The curse fell blightingly on earth, but most so on the human heart. The thorns and briers of the outward world are dismal emblems of the wilderness within. God's likeness was effaced at once, and hideous enmity established its one rule. How then can Holiness revive? Until the waste becomes a garden—the plant cannot be set; until heaven gives the seed, it can no where be found. God must prepare the soil. God must infuse the seed. The work is wholly God's.

But this is all arranged in the sure Covenant of grace. The Holy Spirit lends His aid. By His Almightiness, He forms anew the texture of the soul. He takes away the barren rock. He brings down scions from the garden of the Lord. He graciously inserts them. And thus true Holiness again lifts up its fruitful and its fragrant head.

Reader, be not deceived. Trust not to powers, which are powers none. You must gain help from God, or you can never be a holy man. The wish and the ability are both divine. Can darkness melt itself to light? Can rocky mountains flow in liquid streams? Can poison's stem produce the luscious grape? Can hatred love? Can the dry bones re-animate themselves? These changes cannot be. Neither can dead souls burst their tombs, and clothe themselves in self-made life. The mighty agent is above, and until He works, no work is done.

Reader, next mark the renovating MEANS. The wondrous engine is the Gospel-truth. The Spirit wins by charming notes. He opens ears to hear new melody. He gives the eye to see new scenes. He reveals Christ—the beauty of all beauty. He shows the cleansing blood—the sympathizing heart—the perfect refuge—the all-sufficient aid. These sights wave a transforming wand. A new affection subjugates the man. Jesus and purer hopes now occupy the mind. Darkness is passed. The true light shines.

The grace of faith springs up. This is the chain, which binds the soul to Christ, and makes the Savior and the sinner one. A channel is now formed, by which Christ's fullness plenteously flows down. The barren branch becomes a portion of the fruitful stem. Christ's vital juices permeate the whole. The limbs receive close union with the head, and one life reigns throughout the total frame.

Reader, would you be holy? There is only one way. All other roads lead down to deeper mire. Christ must come in. All is dark death, except where Jesus lives. All is pure life and loveliness, where Jesus reigns. Draw near and nearer to the Gospel-page. There gaze on Christ, until the soul's features melt into His likeness. The Gospel heard, and read, and loved, are the bright wings on which the Spirit flies. The Spirit's presence brings the Savior near. The Savior welcomed, is all Holiness begun. The Savior cherished, is all Holiness advancing. The Savior never absent, is Holiness complete. Holiness complete, is heaven's full blaze.

Believer, this subject has a warning voice. You mourn short-comings. You find the hated monster sin still striving for the rule. Evil is present, when you would do good. Help is laid up for you in Christ. Seek clearer interest in Him. Faith sows the seeds. Assurance brings in golden sheaves. They, who most deeply feel, that they have died in Christ and paid in Him sin's penalties, ascend to highest heights of godly life. He is most holy, who has most of Christ within, and relishes most fully in the finished work. It is defective faith, which clogs the feet, and causes many a fall.

We here discern why Gospel truth is so assailed with hate. It is the lever, which moves men's minds from sin. It is the sweet attractive to the heaven-pure path. Hence the sin-loving world turns angrily away. Evil is more congenial to the taste. Evil is sweet. Corruption rejects Christ.

But evil's sweets are a deceptive cup. The draught is poison. The drops prove only gall. Reader, delay not. Cast it from you. Peace with God only blooms beside the Gospel-road. There is no happiness, but on the Gospel-mount. True blessedness is holy oneness with the holy Savior. When He is near, what sorrow can distress? His smile dispels all gloom. His words of comfort make each burden light. Seek Holiness, and happiness in Christ. They are conjoined by God; and thus conjoined forever.

But if you madly turn to the false candle of this world's show, too late this truth will bar heaven's gate against you—Oh! heed it now, before "too late" arrives. "Holiness—without which, no man shall see the Lord." Heb 12:14.

#Lev 11.47

Clean and Unclean

"To make a difference between the unclean and the clean." Lev 11:47.

"You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean." Lev 11:47

Where is the spectacle, which can compare with the true child of God? He once was as a withered branch. No loveliness—no worth adorned him. But in due time a gracious eye looked on his ruined state; a gracious hand transferred him to the garden of the Lord. And now unfailing grace continues its preserving care. Old things are gone. All things are fresh in verdure—fragrance—bloom.

The believer is a new-born heir of heaven. As such he journeys in new companionship along new paths to his new home. He is no longer of the earth and earthly. While his hands hold the title-deeds of heavenly life, his separated walk is worthy of his lofty prospects. His demeanor is as distinguished, as his hope. His heart is far away; and an uplifted heart uplifts the thoughts, and words, and works. An impulse from on high compels high motives and desires. The stream must seek its native level. The attracted steel must tend towards the magnet. Thus the new man is drawn towards God, and thus he soars above the world's debasing plain.

No doubtful text proclaims this truth. 'Come', is the constant Gospel-cry. What is it to come, but to leave sin, the world, and self, and enter fenced pastures, where Jesus guides His guarded flock?

But more than precept teaches separation. A nation stands its living type. Israel's children picture the family of grace. Were they commingled with the common race of man? Far otherwise. Peculiar ordinances set them apart. Peculiar institutions were a broad barrier around. Peculiar laws raised the high pathway, in which they walked alone.

Their every act in every day was a distinction. Their code was a sign-post guiding from open thoroughfare. Many rules enclosed them within holy bounds. Many commands secured a differing life.

But one especial instance here claims notice. Their tables were hedged around. A garrison of prohibitions circled them. Their diet was most rigidly confined. Were all the beasts, which browsed in meadows, or which climbed the hills, or lurked in forests, their allotted food? Might they partake of all the watery tribe, which sported in the lakes, or hid in the sea's depths? Did all the winged creation minister regalement to their palate? Might choice select all creeping reptiles, at its will? It was not so. Only certain ones might be touched. The rest must be most scrupulously shunned. A mark was fixed on each. There was no animal—no fish—no bird—no insect of the soil, which was not Clean or Unclean—permitted or forbidden. Each had its voice. Taste or taste not.

Reader, it is well to delve the mine of this extensive law. It must be wise; the God all-wise ordains it. It must be good; the hand of love dictates it. What then is the significance of the law? May the Spirit's light reveal!

They stop far short who limit the design to some intrinsic difference in created flesh, or only find a guidance to nutritious food. The palate needed not such heaven-sent aid. Luxury would soon discern the luscious and the vile. Besides, the mark is not, healthy—unhealthy; tasteful—tasteless; but Clean—Unclean. No. These instructions teach the wing of faith to stretch to higher regions of exalted thought. Here is a school to benefit the soul. The mind is hereby disciplined to spiritual advance. The need of inward purity is here prescribed.

The first result is far removal from all heathen contact. God's chosen tribes could hold no social fellowship with idol-worshipers. There was no common eating-table. The foods of the nations were unclean. The Jew could have no seat at impure tables. The dish, there presented, might contain polluted food. Thus a wide gulf divided. Thus a strict ordinance prevented intermixing union. Reader, this law commands God's people to be separate.

The literal code indeed has ceased. All shadows vanish. The Gospel-substance is revealed. But still the principle is divine. It cannot die. The holy significance lives, and will live on, until the last saint shall pass through glory's porch.

The need remains, because the world is still the world. Its baits, its filth, its vile corruptions, are unchanged. It still extends a net for the unwary soul. It still is the broad road going down to hell. It still is the wide gate courting the giddy multitude. Hence Scripture's voice still cries, Beware. Beacons still show a coast bestrewed with wrecks, and wisdom calls the holy pilgrim from a treacherous path.

Reader, you grant, that a clear precept prohibits the world. But perhaps the term conveys no definite idea. Some shrouded phantom passes in shadowy guise. No features broadly stare you in the face. Be not deceived. The world, though masked, has still its own most fearful form. The mass of mankind, strangers to God, and rebels to His grace, are its material. They, whose chief good resides in things of time and sense; they, whose horizon stretches not beyond this fleeting scene; they, whose one object is to press most earthly joy into earth's little day; they, who dance after pleasure's bubble, and scorn the cross, and make not Christ their all, are the vile stones which form the worthless pile. All, who bear Satan's yoke, and do his work, and wear his badge, and heed his will, are subjects of that wide empire—world. The line is really broad. Enlightened eyes discern it. Believers may not cross it. They must be separate, as light from darkness—filth from purity—life from the dreary grave.

There is much mercy in the strict command. Come, mark this. The climate of the world checks growth in grace. True godliness is a tender plant. It cannot thrive, when nipped with chilling winds. A clinging weed destroys the opening flower. A coiling serpent sucks the heart-blood. Rough contact blunts an edge. Thus the world injures souls. It must be left, or holiness will sicken, and wither, and die. The sun of Solomon goes down in clouds of shame, because his swerving heart declined to pleasure's lure. Love therefore warns. "Be not conformed to the world." Rom 12:2.

The world stands forward, as Christ's open foe. It wages an incessant war against pure truth. Is it not then a traitor's part to hold close converse with the adversaries camp? Is it not shame, and worse than shame, to take familiar counsel with a rebel host? He cannot raise the banner of the cross, or march to victory by Jesus' side, who wavers between hostile ranks. Love cries again, "Come out,"—"Be separate." The true believer glories in his Lord. In every company, act, and step, he is to show the livery of his King. It is false witness to adopt the language of an alien race. It is desertion of the holy service, to take the garb of a strange household. Can Moses live, as an Egyptian prince? He chooses hardships, that he may testify allegiance to the cause of God. "We are the salt of the earth." But mixed with filth, the salt will lose its savor.

All usefulness is slain, when Christ is left. It is a common sneer, that saintliness is a mere pretense, and faith is but hypocrisy's disguise. Suspicion fastens on the wavering steps. The world, with all its blindness, quickly reads the language of the life. It slowly credits a consistent saint. But soon, how soon, it derides inconsistent walk! In such cases, zeal is a pointless arrow and a broken bow. No argument—no eloquence—no diligence prevails. Words, which seem insincere, touch not the heart. No teacher really teaches with a doubtful fame. Therefore Jesus says, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Joh 17:14.

Believer, ponder well these obvious thoughts. Would you know peace, as an unfailing stream? Would you pluck joys from ever-verdant boughs? Would you from morn until night bask in the sunshine of Christ's smile? Would you have happy consciousness, that every step is an ascent towards heaven? Would you be cheered with the sweet hope, that life is not a barren field, or summer brook? Would you pour comfort into many hearts, and wear at last a diadem of saved souls? If such be your desires, avoid the poison of the world. If you tread down the barrier line, if you stray out beyond the fold's wide fence, you wrong your soul—you bring reproach upon the Lord—your days will be uncertain sound—your memory will be no instructive page. Cling to the confines of the cross. There is no blessedness without.

But this rule of unclean foods did more than cause the Jews to dwell alone. It forced UNCEASING VIGILANCE. It placed them in the tower of constant circumspection. It always whispered in their ears, 'Beware!' Their eyes could scarcely look around, without the thought of God's dividing line. Each object of their touch was "Clean or Unclean."

The lesson is most obvious. We thus are taught at every step to ask God's will—at every moment to inquire, 'Is this a lawful path?' It is a grievous error to suppose, that each minutest matter is not the seed of some results. The circumstance of every moment affects the soul, and so affects the endless state. The stamp, "Clean or Unclean," belongs to every movement of each mind—to every act throughout each day. Reader, learn hence to cultivate a watchful course. Apply a constant test.

When thoughts arise, (and multitudes, which baffle number, hourly pass the threshold of the heart) examine them in Gospel-light, and let none linger, which are found to be unclean. In converse, words roll forth—many as drops in the fast-flowing tide—each is according to God's will, or adverse to His mind. Pause, and reflect. Pause, and uplift the prayer, "Set a watch upon my mouth, and keep the door of my lips." Let all be checked, which go not forth, as 'Clean', to minister pure grace.

No ground is neutral. We always stand in right or in wrong path. Hence the enquiry should often sift the soul, "What are you doing here?" Is "Clean or Unclean" God's judgment of this place? This line, when drawn by Scripture-rule, would sweep God's children from many a contaminating place.

No book is so insipid, as to have no character, and leave no tinge. How many trifling offsprings of the worldly pen would find an early and unknown grave, if the enquiry, "Clean or Unclean," were solemnly applied. Let, then, the truth be settled in each mind, that there is no indifferency on earth. Each moment flies on high, recording, "Clean or Unclean," concerning life's employ.

Reader, another thought demands reply. Your soul, your precious soul, your never-dying soul, Is it "Clean or Unclean?" By nature it is the vilest filth. All Adam's race flow forth, as unclean waters from an unclean spring. But are you cleansed? Do you live bathing in a Savior's blood? Are you the mansion of His purifying Spirit? Jesus can cleanse from every sin, and He alone. Cleave then to Him. The Spirit sanctifies, and He alone. Seek His indwelling. Now is the only cleansing day. The door will soon be closed. "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still." Rev 22:11.

Lev 12.6-7

THE CHILD-BIRTH

"When the time of purification is completed for either a son or a daughter, the woman must bring a year-old lamb for a whole burnt offering and a young pigeon or turtledove for a purification offering. She must take her offerings to the priest at the entrance of the Tabernacle. The priest will then present them to the Lord and make atonement for her. Then she will be ceremonially clean again after her bleeding at childbirth. This is the law to be followed after the birth of a son or a daughter." Lev 12:6-7

This chapter brings us to new fields of thought. The curtains of domestic life fall back. A mother and her new-born babe appear. Where is the mind, which can turn heedlessly away? Where is the heart, which will not pause and melt? In this event, being begins, which never can have end.—Such is the fact, and it speaks solemnly.

The cradled infant is but a tiny rill. It scarcely seems to trickle. But it must onward flow, until its waters form an ocean without bottom—without shore. A tender blade just sprouts, but roots must deepen, and boughs spread, through the expanse of an interminable age. Each birth is deathless increase to the world of spirits. A new 'eternity' gains life.

Reader, these magnitudes are yoked to every mother's babe. What scales can weigh the value of each child? Pile suns on suns—bring all the treasures, which all nature holds—ransack all mines of choicest ore, their wealth, though large, is finite. But here is a new infinity. Offspring, which once breathes, runs far beyond all time, and outlives all the glory of all worlds.

Thus solemn is the scene. Next God's voice sounds beside the Jewish cradle. Solemnity becomes more solemn. What are its accents? Is its call to gratitude and joy alone? Is its design to kindle praise for peril past, and dear addition to the family delights? Not so. It writes 'pollution' on child-bearing.

It sentences the mother, as 'unclean'. It bars her from communion of social life and pious rites. It bows her head in shame. It dooms her, as though some leprous spot was seen, to solitude's retreat. Lev 12:2-5.

Reader, reflect. What is the moral of this rule? Is it our wisdom to enquire. True, 'ceremonial' stains have long since ceased. True, 'legal' offerings no more can cleanse. The Gospel-rays scatter all twilight mists. But principles have undying root. The cause, which then existed, still survives. Mothers in every age are virtually addressed.

But why is shame the twin of every offspring born?

Behold the infant, and receive reply. What is its nature, character, and taste? Let not fond feeling shrink from weighing it in scales of truth. Is it a little innocent? conceived in purity? and shaped in holy mold? Is its essence clean?

It is indeed a wondrous fabric. But what is the quarry, which supplies its parts? The tender frame contains the germ of countless passions—multitudinous desires and thoughts—as many as the ocean's sands. Are these the germs of godly life? Do they give promise of ripe fruit for God? If so, the birth is holy; and bearing mothers should not bear the brand of shame.

But facts show not this smiling face. The babe is sinful produce of a sinful race. Corruption's seal is fixed upon its brow.

Reader, trace back the cause. Return in thought to Eden's terrible offence. When our first parents fell into sin's mire, what a tremendous change changed their entire being! Innocence forever died in man. Iniquity, as a conqueror, claimed the captive land. The fountain-head received deep poison. No drop could henceforth issue, free from taint. The root of human life is rotten to the core. All sprouts have evil taste. Human nature was spoiled of God's fair image. What nature no more has, it can no more bestow. Its properties are guilt; and guilt alone can be imparted by it. From Adam's fatal passage into Satan's realms, each child is Satan's bondslave. Each birth now propagates corruption. Hence she, who bare, is warned to bend, as bullrush in the valley. She must sit solitary as unclean.

There is strong need to show the case, without deception's mask. Nature is prone to partial love. She sees her own with an admiring eye. She pictures infants, as fair purity's abode. But it is never gain—it rather is great loss—to trample upon truth. No flowers of profit can be plucked from error's barren branch. The wise man finds his happy seat at Scripture's feet. His only guidance is; "Thus says the Lord."

Let then, no mother, while she clasps her babe, deck it in robes of visionary innocence. Her love makes it no lovely object in God's sight. Affection's estimate is not the estimate of heaven. A soul, indeed, is born to immortality. But let its birth state be distinctly seen. It brings no soul-life with it. Nature gives various senses—but no sense of God. The heart has neither eye to see, nor ear to hear, nor foot to seek, the upward path of life. Each feeling has a bias to transgression's ways. Leave but the child to the inbred desire, and evil—only evil—will be sought. When choice can choose, it will take Satan's yoke. When hands can handle, they will grasp his tools. When lips can speak, his language will be learned. When feet can run, they will rush headlong towards hell. So wisdom teaches. So experience finds.

Will then the mother say, alas! that such a life has birth from me? Faith speaks not thus. It knows, that there is remedy for all this evil. It looks to Christ, and fears recede before hope's dawn. Apart from Christ, the babe must enter on a voyage of woe, and pass through troublous billows to the whirlpool of despair. Apart from Christ, its course must be one flow of misery; its end one gulf of ruin. But if Christ looks on it with love; if He receive it to His arms of grace; then neither thought can think, nor words proclaim, how blessed is a birth on earth!

Think what Christ grants. There is a merit in His precious blood, which wipes out all sin's stains. There is a refuge in His wounded side, which screens from wrath and curse. There is a beauty in His glorious righteousness, which is fit mantle for the courts of heaven. He can send forth the Spirit's power, to breathe new life into the dead-born soul. He can remove the blindness from the eye—the deafness from the ear—the torpor from the heart. He can convert the stone into the tender soil, in which all fruits of godliness shall spring. He can burst Satan's iron yoke. He can keep pure from all temptation's snares. He can make earth an upward flight to heaven. He can present the spirit blameless before God. Through His transforming might, that child of wrath may brightly shine a jewel in redemption's crown. Through His all-saving work, it may sing sweetly in the realms of light.

There is such hope in Christ. He is the treasury of full, rich, blessed, glorious grace. The second Adam more than repairs the damage of the first. He snatches from the lowest depths. He raises to the highest heights. He can exalt to all that heaven contains.

Prayer is the Christian mother's stronghold. It is a golden key to unlock God's treasury. Faith's importunities prevail. Mighty desires, which cannot sit down mute, spring from above, and will not fail. The Spirit pleads within such wrestling heart; and all His pleadings reflect the mind of God. The offspring of much prayer is loved in heaven, before it is loved on earth. Scripture writes not in vain, how interceding parents ever gained their suit. They cry. Christ hears, and smiles, and answers—and His answers are, Satan despoiled, and saving grace bestowed. When nursing is one strong petition, the child is nestled in Salvation's arms.

Faith next draws comfort from the baptismal font. Christ gives a special ordinance, to which new-born may come. It is a token of His early care. It is a seal of his adopting grace. Herein we read a tender Savior's tender heart. Is it His will, that infant offspring should be as outcasts in vile nature's waste? Sacramental provision slays such doubt. We see His arms out-stretched—we hear His urgent call, "Allow little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." This rite abounds in hope. It is no mocking form. It is ordained, as means of grace. Cast out the thought, that infancy excludes the Spirit's breath. If willful sin be no impervious bar; much less the fault of an inherited disease. Jeremiah's heart began to beat with sanctified pulse. The Baptist's second birth was scarcely younger than the first. The God, who blessed them, is always one. Mercy has trod this early path, and may tread it again.

Christian mother, proceed to educate your child for Christ. So soon as thoughts begin to flow, they must have channel. Why should that course be nature and not grace? What, though the tender mind be weak for argumental proof? The truths of Jesus are not arguments, but facts. The precious truths of life's high tree may fall down into childhood's lap. The tender Shepherd—seeking a lost lamb—and dying on the cross to buy it from a robber's hand—and washing it in streams from His own side—and feeding it in verdant pastures—and bearing it in His strong arms—and loving it with constant love—and raising it to a bright home, are thoughts, which weakest minds can grasp. These, when once grasped in saving power, can never be completely lost. Let the first lesson be the love of God—the grace of Christ—the Spirit's present help. Let the young eye be early turned to Calvary's dying scene. Let memory's page take its first lines from Jesus's life. Let thought's soft tendrils be entwined around truth's stem. Then, through rich mercy, there is solid hope, that the child born on earth, is born an heir of heaven. Corruption's seed will not prevail. Satan's chains will fall. The unclean will be cleansed. The Child-birth thus adds citizens to heaven.

The infant in the Jewish lap reminds of other truth. If it be son, the days of the maternal shame are less. If it be daughter, the unclean period is double. Lev 12:2, Lev 12:4-5. We may not pass this difference unremarked. The cause seems hidden from a casual glance. But thought, which dives into the ocean of God's mind, is here soon carried back to Eden's guilt, and the first act of sin. It was the woman, who first listened to the serpent's wile. Her mind first went stray. Her will first lusted. Her hand first touched. Rebellion in the man was inexcusable offence; but woman's transgression beckoned to the snare. There is no difference in the sin. The guilt of each is infinite in dye. But there is slight difference in order of event; and a recording rite keeps this in memory's view. The stamp of lengthened degradation was fixed on each female birth. Sin's entrance was thus marked. Hence the foul misery is more abhorred. Hence the one remedy is more loved.

When the appointed days of shame are past, the excluding barrier is solemnly removed. Especial rites are ordered. Two victims are now slain. The one, as a burnt-sacrifice, blazes on the altar. The other is an offering for sin. Lev 12:6.

The Gospel here speaks loudly. Defilement cannot cease, without blood shed. A dying Savior must atone, before sin vanishes, and the sinner is brought back to God.

Reader, you are unclean. There is no act—no word—no thought of any day, which is not dark before God's eye. But Jesus is near, and able to make pure. Wash, and be clean. Wash, and be reconciled. Wash, and be welcomed to receiving arms. Wash, and look upward to a Father's smile. Wash, and look onward to a Savior's throne!

Lev 13.45

THE PLAGUE OF LEPROSY

And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be torn, and his head bare. Then, as they go from place to place, they must cover their mouth and call out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' Lev 13:45

The mercy of mercies is a Savior given. But a Savior given is a Savior scorned, until deep need is felt. Hence mercy super-adds a gracious work. It paints a man's malady in hideous tints. It drags the lurking monster to clear light. The conscious sufferer thus sees his plague, and hastens to the healing fount. The Leprosy subserved this end.

They err, then, who see nothing but judgment in this foul disease. Keen was its woe. No cup of misery held more bitter drops. But still its voice allured to peace. It showed, in a long train of emblem, the complex loathsomeness of sin, that hence the evil might be more abhorred. Thus when the time was come for Israel's sons to gain new insight of redemption's scheme, this malady appeared, as admonition of soul-sense. Thus, also, when the great Healer trod our earth, the frequent Leper received aid. The outward misery taught a deeper plague, while ready cure cast light on saving grace.

This malady crept on with stealthy step. It was not easily discerned. Here human skill was blind. The are most conversant in signs of sickness, traced not these symptoms. Wisdom from on high was needed. The sanctuary must be sought. The anointed Priest must search. His mind alone could ascertain. His lips alone could manifest the case.

Reader, turn now to that deep evil—sin. Its poison lurks within the veins. Its deadly venom spreads throughout the frame. Its deathful work is running on. But nature feels it not. The world has no detecting eye. Poor reason views it with no shuddering glance. The self-pleased soul boasts of fancied health. Death is begun, when all seems life. The plague devours, but ignorance sees not.

The dream must last, until a power beyond man's shall rouse the sleeper. This is the Spirit's sole prerogative. He only can convince of sin. He only can reveal the inborn and defiling sore. He works this knowledge mainly by the Word. In sanctuary hours, or in the stillness of retired thought, he sets the soul before the mirror of God's law. He tears away the blinding scales. He opens sightless eyes. What follows? The sinner startles. A frightful spectacle appears. It is the hideousness of polluted SELF. Soundness is fled. Health and fresh beauty lie, as a withered leaf. He stands revealed one noisome mass of wide-spread misery. The light from heaven shows Leprosy throughout. The unsuspected filth is no more hidden. Thus when God's voice is heard within, the conscience answers, 'I am vile.'

Was it not so with Job? He plumed himself on moral rectitude, and upright walk. By outward hearing he had some surface-notions of his God, and therefore only surface-notions of himself. But when his opened eye beheld heaven's truth, he quickly saw the loathsomeness of self. His Leprosy was clear. His piteous cry confessed, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:6. Isaiah's case bears further witness. In soul he was a Leper but he knew it not, until revelations met him from above. The brightness of the Lord shone forth. The blackness of poor man was the dark contrast. Hear the contrition of his humbled spirit, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." Isa 6:5.

Through many years Paul boasted of his blameless life. He felt no conscience pains. He seemed some lovely tree, whose branches bowed with golden fruit. He thus portrays himself, "I was alive without the law once." I knew not my Leprous state. But the Priest searched me with a penetrating eye. "The commandment came." It probed me to the soul. Then "sin revived." The malady, which slept, started to giant life, "and I died." He felt the Leprosy's entwining grasp. In agony he sighs, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." Rom 7:24.

Reader, it may be, that self-ignorance locks you in its dark cell. Listen, I beg you, to this warning voice. Oh! perish not self-murdered. Reject the opiate of 'imagined' soundness. Sleep not to death on poppied pillows of false health. Think of the multitudes, who knew not, that the plague had seized them, until they awoke in dungeons, where cure never comes. Bring heart, and thoughts, and ways, and life, to the true standard of the Word. Sit down beneath its all-revealing beams. Consult not the world's counsel. Take not its faulty measure. Call in the faithful witness, which neither errs nor leads astray. View self in Scripture-mirror. What, though the sight shall humble you to dust? Go on. Shrink not. Self-knowledge is a step towards Christ. The malady perceived leads to the malady relieved. Sin, when thus felt, extorts the cry, "Heal me, and I shall be healed."

The sufferer hears the Priest's condemning voice. He is pronounced Unclean. He goes forth. He tastes no more the joy of social scenes. Shunning and shunned, he hides himself in gloom. His face, his whole demeanor, proclaim the misery of his downcast heart. Earth cannot find a picture of more woeful woe. His clothes are torn. His head is bare. A covering hides his upper lip. And when the hollow voice must speak, it sounds the plaintive knell, "Unclean, unclean."

These marks write fearfully the wretchedness of sin. The clothes are torn. This meaning is distinct. It is the signal of the bitterest grief. The Scripture-page gives many proofs. Jacob beholds the blood-stained coat of Joseph. His son, his much-beloved son, is surely slain. Did ever heart so bleed? All comfort fails. In token of his live-long woe, he tears his clothes.

It was a mournful day, when David and his subjects followed Abner's bier. The public sorrow must be publicly displayed. The king's command was, "Tear your clothes." 2Sa 3:31.

Message on message followed fast to Job, and each was burdened with a heavier note. His goods are a wild wreck—his sons all slain. Deep waters overflow his soul, and a torn mantle proves a heart forlorn. Job 1:20. Thus where sorrow's wounds were deep, the tattered robe proclaimed the inward state.

Reader, should not he grieve, who feels the burden of his guilt? What sorrow is like his? The loss of righteousness is more than loss of property and friends. There is no ruin like the frown of God. Shall not his eyes then weep, who hates himself—who dares not look to God—who has no resting-place on earth—no resting-place beyond? There is no Leprosy like sin. There is no Leper like the sinner. Shall the Leprosy be clad in tattered garments—and shall not sin sit mourning in the dust?

The head must bend uncovered. This was the attitude of lowly shame. Job felt abasement and bewailed, "He has stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head." Job 19:9. The bereaved Aaron may show no sign of degradation. Therefore the command is, "Uncover not your heads." Lev 10:6.

In the poor Leper thus despoiled, we see how sin inflicts an ignominious brand. Should not shame's home be on the sinner's brow? Hear Ezra's piteous wail, "O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up myself to You, my God." But why this shame? "Our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens." Ezr 9:6.

Is there disgrace in folly—in rebellion—in ingratitude—in disobedience to a tender Father's rule? These lines all center in the sinner's heart. His life is one mistake. Is not that folly? His rebel hands are raised against the King of kings. His hardness hates a blessing God. His impious feet tread down a loving Father's will. Thus sin and shame are linked. Our guilty parents hasten to hide themselves; and Paul's bold challenge is, "What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed?" Rom 6:21.

A covering hides his upper lip. The muffled mouth is sign, that silence is enjoined. The sorrowing and the shame-stricken find their utterance choked. This marked the prophets, from whom God withdrew. "Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded; yes, they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer of God." Mic 3:7. Sin should be mute. While faithful lips abound in prayer, and send forth songs of praise, and tell in gladsome strains the wonders of redeeming grace; what are the sinner's sounds? His throat is an open sepulcher. Let, then, that sepulcher be closed. His words sow seeds of evil. Let, then, those words be checked.

But if some passing steps draw near, a piteous warning must be heard. A doleful mutter sounds the repelling note, "Unclean, unclean." Approach not. There is pollution here, "Unclean, unclean."

Reader, close not your eyes to sin's intense malignity. It is unutterable filth. See the priest Joshua before iniquity passed from him. He stood filth-soiled before the Angel. Zec 3:3. A true word paints our nature state, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Is. 64:6. The heart is every foul bird's cage—the spring of every impure desire. The waters, which flow forth, are filthy pollution. The hands touch but to soil, The feet leave impress of defilement. The sinner speaks, and noxious blight flies round. His words, his looks, his ways, his life, bear one black stamp, "Unclean, unclean."

The Leper is cast out from social life. No home may welcome him. No friendly hearth may cheer. His dwelling is far off from men. In solitary loneliness he pines. No station gains exemption. A Miriam must be shut out. Num 12:14. Kingly Uzziah must dwell alone. 2Ki 15:5. Ah! sin, what have you done? Let sinning angels, driven from heaven's light, reply. Let multitudes, who know not the ecstacy of close communion with their God—who walk not in sweet company with Zion's sons—whose hearts ascend not on the wing of social praise—who share not the holy fellowship of common prayer—who kneel not delighted at the consecrated table; let these sad exiles from the heaven-bound flock, tell the lone miseries of their desert-life.

But is this all? Death is at hand. Eternity is near; a gulf will then forever part the filthy sinner from salvation's blessed throng. God is afar off; He cannot be reached. Jesus is high above. There is no longer access to His arms. Heaven's gates are barred. The saved are all within—within forever. The lost are all outside—outside forever. Thus the Leper stands an emblem of sin's deathful plague.

Reader, why are these frightful colors laid? Why is the sight thus brought before your eyes? Is it, that hopeless horror may affright? Is it, to sink you in despair's abyss? Far otherwise. Mercy here scares you; but it is to mercy's arms. The great High Priest is near. He comes to earth with "healing on His wings." He cries to every weary, heavy-laden soul, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." You need not be an outcast from His flock. He bids you nestle in His wounded side. He gives His blood to purify each taint. His remedy is ready and is sure. Take it. Oh! take it, and be whole. Turn not from His outstretched hand. Harken to His cry, 'I will make you clean.' Rest not, until adoring lips reply, 'Great Lord, Your touch has touched me, and my plague is stopped.'

Lev 14.2

THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER

"This shall be the law of the Leper, in the day of his cleansing." Lev 14:2.

No earthly skill removed the Leper's shame. He pined in woe, until compassion smiled from heaven. When God's time came, the dreary trial ceased, and the gay spring of health put forth its bud.

The case of sin is similar. The plague runs on, until free grace relieves. God is the first, throughout Salvation's work. He wills. He speaks. The sinner hears the inward voice, and seeks the cross, and in the cross finds renovated life.

The Leper's misery had been a long, dark night. What must have been his joy, when the bright morn of cleansing came!

Reader, learn here, that there is happiness brighter far, than bodily relief. Soul-cure is cure of cures. The sense of pardon—the Father's smile—the hope of glory—the Spirit's fellowship, are the supremest bliss. The heart, which Christ has healed, is the fair garden, in which unfading pleasure blooms. Earth's happiest sons are they, who are God's sons in Christ. They, who are one with Him, have fixed their tents on loftiest summits of delight.

Full of these thoughts, approach the Leper's various cleansing rites. They are as streams, from many a mountain brow, all meeting in one ocean lap. They are, as rays from distant points, combining in one central blaze. They are, as different notes, uniting in one choral swell. All point to Christ, and testify, that "Christ is all."

The priest alone pronounced unclean, and he alone can now pronounce the cure. But how can meeting be? The tainted sufferer is an outcast from the camp. He may not seek the tabernacle-court. Therefore the priest will leave the gates, and hasten to the spot, where lonely misery sits. Lev 14:3.

Here faith discerns the willing flight of Jesus to our earth. His throne is heaven. His abode is light. His dwelling is bright glory. But the poor sinner mourns below. Can Jesus turn away? Oh! no. He scorns not to put on our flesh. He counts it joy to seek the lost. The way is long—the ignominy deep. But toil and shame cannot obstruct. Need calls. Jesus draws near. Reader, shall He leave all for you, and will you not leave all for Him? His self-devoting zeal chides man's self-murdering sloth.

The cleansing rites must now be closely viewed. Spirit of light, reveal them in true light! Our eyes are blinded, until aid comes from You.

Clean birds are brought. In number they are two. One is death-doomed. Its trickling blood descends into an earthen vessel filled from the running stream. The other is plunged beneath the blood-dyed water, and then sent forth with dripping wing towards heaven. A bunch of hyssop is next bound with scarlet-wool unto a cedar staff. With this the blood is seven times cast upon the meekly bending man. Lev 14:4, 7. These birds are Christ. One sign is narrow to show all His work. Collect all types—He is the truth of each, and far more than the truth of all. One bird is slain. Oh blessed news! Our Jesus dies. Think, O my soul, your joy—your peace—your hope—your heaven, spring from a Savior's grave. Your life is forfeited through sin. Stern justice draws the sword. The outraged law frowns ruin. You see the vengeance, and you hear the threat. But still you tremble not. You calmly point to Jesus and the accursed tree.

You know the refuge of the wounded side. You rightfully maintain that you are free. Christ's death is paid, that you may never die. His life is given, that you may live forever. Blood is outpoured, which outweighs every claim. Rejoice—give thanks—sing praise. Through death, you tread down death. The cross uplifts you to eternal day.

The other speeds all red towards heaven. The dying Jesus is sin's death. The ascending Jesus is Salvation's life. The grave restores—Heaven's courts receive Him. The gates lift up their heads. The everlasting doors unfold. The King of Glory enters in.

My soul be wise—stretch, also, your upward wings; pierce intervening clouds; dwell at heaven's gate; gaze on the work within the veil. Christ ever stands before the throne. You live because a living Savior prays. Hence rising sins are pardoned, because a risen Advocate pleads. Hence heaven awaits you, because a Forerunner holds possession for you.

Seven-fold sprinklings from the cedar wand then follow. A distant Savior is a Savior none. A remedy far off removes no evil. The mighty benefit must be applied. The heart must know—the conscience feel—the life proclaim, that Christ is formed within.

By varied means God brings the sinner into contact with the cure. Mainly the preacher's voice is used. You ministers of Christ, behold your work. Souls sit before you, waiting to be cleansed. What is it, that you scatter round? What is the cedar—what the hyssop, which you wave? Are your words dipped in blood from the Redeemer's heart? You often mourn that the flock's leprosy abides. You seek their health, but still disease pollutes. May it not be, because your lips drop scantily the healing dew? No Leper could be clean, until the blood fell seven times on him. No soul stands pure, until the stream from Calvary imbue it. Sermons should be as drippings from the cross.

Next all his hair is shaved away, and all his garments washed. Lev 14:8. Nothing is kept, which harbors seed of re-appearing plague. Believer, heed the lesson. It is wisdom's voice. Faith grasps a pardon, and wins endless bliss. But still the Adam-nature lives. Your present dwelling is in infection's climate. The flesh still lusts to evil. Sin daily strives to roll you in the mire. Open your eyes. Flee from each tempting circumstance. Avoid each slippery path. If there be place, or book, or man, or trade, which draws from God, or slopes the way to fall, shun them, oh! shun them, as contagious nest. The offending eye, though needful, must be closed forever. The offending hand, or foot, though useful, must be cut off. Reprieve is ruin. The loss is gain. The pain is joy. That most befriends, which keeps out sin. That injures most, which re-admits our deadliest foe.

Six days elapsed and then this cleansing is renewed. Lev 14:9. While the believer lives, a watch-tower is his place. Occasions will return. The ebbing tide will flow again. The mortifying knife must still be used. While the foe plots, the shield and helmet may not be laid down. David seeks ease, while warriors fight, and David finds, that his leprosy still lives. Peter is warned to watch and pray, but Peter slumbers, and the bait succeeds.

This teaching volume holds more pages yet. Lev 14:10, Lev 14:13. Fresh rites ensue. More victims yet must bleed. Reader, mark here the Spirit's loving heart. He never wearies to exhibit Christ. He multiplies, to win us to the pardoning cross. Did the Burnt offering bring forth Christ wholly wrapped in flames of unremitting wrath? A Burnt offering must now blaze. Did the Sin offering show sin's hateful filth? A Sin offering must now die. Did the Trespass offering cast more light on the redeeming work? Did the Grain offering change the scene, and give another aspect of the cross? Trespass offering must now be added. Grain offering must now be brought. All signs are sought to magnify, uplift, commend, the glorious work of our atoning Lord. Do any seek for cleansing, without blood? Let such survey this blood-stained chain of rites. Their voice is loud, and clear, and often-repeated. All sound this note. Apart from Christ—apart from His vicarious pains—there is no cure.

Blood from the Trespass offering is now significantly used. The priest applies it to the ear, the hand, the foot. Lev 14:14. The mark is written on every extreme point. And why? All parts need cleansing—and cleansing is provided for all parts. Complete remission of all guilt is the grand comfort of the Gospel scheme. Christ is no partial Savior. He takes away not some, but all our sins. If but one speck remained, there could be no admission to the courts of light. The father's eye can only rest on purity as pure as God. But Calvary's stream makes whiter than the whitest snow. Doubtless each member has transgressed. The ear has readily admitted evil sounds. The door has quickly opened to the poisoning foe. Thus the whole mind has caught infecting taint. But sprinkle the blood, and all is clean. The hand has often been the tool of Satan. It has done guilty work in his foul service. But there is ready remedy. Wash here, and lift up holy hands, without one fear. The feet, also, often tread the miry paths, and rush unchecked to every scene of guilt. But all this filth must disappear. The vilest sinner, touched by this blood, can silence every accusing charge. Christ brings a pardon, entire throughout, for every sin of all, who flee to Him. Can any hesitate? Will any heart refuse to shout, Blessed be God, for Jesus Christ?

Another rite remains. The priest takes oil—fit emblem of the Spirit's grace. With this again, the ear, the hand, the foot are touched. The rest is poured upon the Leper's head. Lev 14:15, Lev 14:18. The oil surmounts the blood. The blood obliterates offence. The Spirit purifies the inner man. Where one is seen, all condemnation flees. Where the other lives, the reign of sin is burst. One gives the plea for life. The other fits for the heavenly home. One is the key. The other forms a fitness to enjoy. Unjustified, man stands outside. Unsanctified, he cares not to go in. But pardon and renewal are linked in holy chains. One comes; the other speeds to follow.

As cleansing is complete, so renovation must pervade each part. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." 2Co 5:17. Each member lives anew to God. The ears hear for Him. They gather holy sounds, that holy truth may sink into the heart. The hand, the foot, seek only holy work. The one employ is to show forth God's praise—commend God's ways—advance God's kingdom, and adorn His truth. The wilderness is lovely as the rose. Where thorns and briers once were sharp, the myrtle blossoms, and the fir-tree waves.

Reader, here is a ready test for you. You often hear of Jesus's cleansing work. Perhaps you boast of interest in His cross. But is your hope sincerely rooted in the Gospel truth? Let now this tract enquire. Where are your signs? Fruit proves the nature of the tree. Warmth is the evidence, that fire burns. Light manifests the risen sun. He, that is cleansed, abhors all filth. He, that has put on Christ, shines in the robes of light. The grace, which brings to Christ, imparts new life.

True, there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus; but they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. He, who is truth, proclaims, "If I wash you not, you have no part with Me." Joh 13:8. But truth adjoins, "If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Rom 8:9.

Lord, cleanse me throughout with cleansing blood! Lord, fill me throughout with purifying grace!

Lev 16.8

THE SCAPEGOAT

"Aaron is to cast sacred lots to determine which goat will be sacrificed to the Lord and which one will be the scapegoat." Lev 16:8

There is great power in words. A written page imprints distinct ideas. But when the pencil adds its skill, then objects stand in bolder shape. Forms seem to live. The canvass almost moves. So too the tongue may ably express the wheels and works of a complex machine. But let a moving model play; then intricacies open out; obscurities are clear. The eye stamps every part upon the tablets of the mind.

Transfer these thoughts to Gospel truth. Doubtless each statement there is a clear stream; each doctrine is a cloudless sunbeam. The blindness, which discerns not, is the blindness of the lost. But when types pass in long and varied train; when living semblances appear; then deep impressions gain a deeper root.

Reader, such is the teaching of God's glorious book. All modes are used, to manifest Christ Jesus. To see Him is eternal life—to see Him not is ruin's lowest depths. Hence words state facts; and types are joined to words; and images bring in their help. The Bible is a lesson for each class of mental grade. It is a text-book for each mode of thought. Is proof required? Israel's Atonement-day most graphically gives it. What prophets sang; and what apostles preached and what the Savior did, here take a shape, and through the eye impress the soul. Faith looks, and at each moment sees a pictured Savior. Each sight gives being to some text.

On this day many victims died. The stream of blood flowed deep. Each holy altar and each holy place received the reconciling sign. This visible display attests, that death is the dread curse of sin. Each sacrifice proclaims, that substituted sufferings avail. Sounding this truth, they are as heralds, who precede the Lord. If such be not their mind, they only puzzle and perplex. But year by year these shadowy rites recurred. Their note was to predict. They were as morning stars of a far brighter sun. Effectual aid was not in their previous display. They now have vanished. The cross has dug their grave. Their need is past. Christ, their full truth, has once laid down His life. That once is all-sufficient for all the sins of all His happy flock. That once fills to the full the cup of satisfaction. That once seats all the ransomed on the high rock of everlasting pardon. Who then are as blind as they, who now renew the sacrifice—once and forever passed? A bloodless offering is an dreadful cheat. It robs the cross of its consummate glory. It pretends to re-enact what has been done forever. Mock repetition nullifies the finished work. Judaic rites are Christ foreshown. Romaic mass is Christ denied.

But in the service of the atoning day, one part stands singularly forth, and singularly asks survey. Two goats are brought for a sin offering. The priest receives them at the tabernacle door. Then lots are cast. Man's mind may not select. Some unseen hand takes one for death, and bids the other live as the Scapegoat.

Reader, this scene reveals the council of eternal love.—Before the worlds, God's will called Jesus to the saving work. Each portion of the scheme was pre-resolved. Each was consigned to His receiving hands. This truth is precious comfort. They, who feel sin, need much to win their trust. They will not grasp a straw. Without credentials, Christ seeks their heart in vain. But when the Father ushers in the Son—when His voice seals the chosen Lamb—then pyramids of doubt sink low. He, whom God sends, is able for God's work. This rock is raised by God. It is enough. It must stand firm. What sinner can ask more?

The sentenced goat then died. Now mark, my soul, the uses of its blood. With this the high-priest ventures within the mystic veil. The mercy-seat receives the drops. The holy tent is also strewn throughout. Seven times the golden altar's horns are touched.

How fearful, yet how comforting, this sight! There is an universal need. There is a co-extensive cure. Man cannot move, but sin moves with him. Man cannot move, where reconciliation cannot come. There is wide remedy for the wide malady. But further mark the Gospel of this blood-red scene. Blood is our purchase-price. Justice has claims. The law has dues. Our debts are countless. Every moment swells the amount. How can we buy our souls from wrath? Our best is only sin. But let all creditors bring forth their books. Christ sprinkles every page. The dreadful writing disappears. Let heaven suspend its scales. Sin's load is an exceeding weight. But here is blood divine. Therefore it out-weighs.

Blood is our peace. Sin seen in its true light—sin felt in its strong power—is misery's misery, and anguish more than scorpion's sting. The broken heart is one abode of woe. The wounded conscience writhes, and cannot rest. But when the Spirit shows the blood, all dread forebodings cease. It proves, that peace is signed in heaven. It waves an olive-branch throughout the soul. It places pardon in the happy hand.

The blood has a sin-killing power. Sin is a weed with many roots. They widely spread, and ever strive to rise. But touch them with the blood. Let the heart feel, that sin slew Christ, and nailed the God-man to the accursed tree. How can that now be loved, which pierced that brow, those hands—those feet—that side? A holy feeling shudders at the thought. It clasps the Savior, and treads down His foe.

The blood drives Satan back. There is no place impervious to his tread. There is no moment free from his approach. No palace, and no hut exclude. He has a key for every chamber—every pew. No busy hours are too full for him; no stillness is too still. Nothing can daunt him, but this blood. The messengers of wrath passed not the lintels marked from the paschal lamb. So when this ensign is displayed, temptation starts and flees.

The blood bars hell. Those cells cannot admit a Christ-washed soul. If it be possible, let such approach. The chains refuse to touch. The fires curl back abashed. The gnawing worm can find no prey. The jailor drops his keys. My soul, see to it, that this blood is yours. It is sure safeguard against hell-pains.

The blood removes the hindrances to heaven. Behold the countless multitudes before the throne. All nations, kindreds, people, and tongues swell the vast throng. But every robe is white, and every hand uplifts a palm. The question has been put, "Whence came they?" The answer tarried not. "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." My soul, is not your one desire to join this company, and share their joy? See to it, that this blood is yours. No other cleansing can remove the heaven-expelling guilt.

The blood fills heaven with songs. The ransomed fall before the Lamb. This is the substance of their mighty song. "You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood." Angels swell the strain, "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain." My soul, is time fast bearing you to raise this chorus higher? It is so, if this blood is yours. They cannot sing above, who have not washed on earth.

But seek again the ritual scene. It changes. The other goat appears. With anxious eye the multitude intently gaze. It is a moment big with results. The high-priest comes. His outstretched hands are pressed upon its head. This gesture is token of transmitted guilt. He then tells out the fearful catalogue of Israel's sins. In sign the substitute receives the mass of sin. What a deep feeling would pervade the camp! How many lightened hearts would say, 'My burden leaves me. The Scape-goat takes it, and I am relieved.'

The laden victim is then led away. It is borne beyond the camp—beyond all sight—beyond the track of man—to the far borders of a desert wild. Released, it disappears in rocks and thickets of an untrod waste. Unseen, unknown, forgotten, it departs from mortal view. It is now buried in oblivion's land.

There is no brighter picture of the full pardon of all sin in Christ. Faith knows this Scapegoat well. Daily it uses the relief. It hides no sin. It cloaks no guilt. It tells out all upon the head of Christ. Thus have I done. Such is my wretched state. But I cast all on one, who waits to bear, and bears it far away. Christ hastens away with the accursed load, and God's all-searching eye can no more find.

Oh precious tidings! Oh heart-cheering truth. The spirit wills, that this full comfort should most largely flow, and hence by frequent testimony He confirms the truth. Is the east distant from the west? Can we move through the intervening space? As we advance the horizon still recedes. Infinite separation infinitely separates. Thus far our Scapegoat bears our guilt away. Psa 103:12.

Can we recover what the ocean buries? No line can reach to the unmeasured depths. It has sunk downward, never to arise. Deep waters hide it, and it must be hidden. Such is the grave of sin. Our Scapegoat drowns it in a fathomless abyss. The word is sure. "You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Mic 7:19.

Can that be seen, from which the eye is turned? Are objects visible, when the front shuns them? Our Scapegoat hides transgression in the distant rear. Is it not said, "You have cast all my sins behind Your back?"

Isa 38:17.

Who has not seen a mass of blackening clouds? They threaten to wrap all the skies in one vast pall of night. But suddenly the rays of sun dart forth. The darkness melts—the sable mantle becomes thin—and soon, how soon the gathered mists are gone, and one clear robe of transparent blue decks the pure arch of heaven! Thus when Christ shines upon the mountains of our guilt, they vanish, and no sight can more behold. It is so. Hear the Spirit's voice, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and as a cloud your sins." Isa 44:22.

The tender Shepherd seeks each straying sheep. He never rests, until all be found. But no search finds His people's sins. A land of infinite forgetfulness conceals them. Mark well the word, "In those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none: and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon the remnant I spare." Jer 50:20.

The covenant of grace has precious articles. They are all wonder, wisdom, love. The Father plans them—the blood of Jesus seals—the Spirit is the witness. This code declares, "I will remember their sin no more." Jer 31:34. The 'Scapegoat ordinance' confirms the truth. Heaven is holy work remembered—unholy deeds forgotten.

Believer, you need comfort. Drink deeply of this stream of joy. Live pondering this gospel type. Lie down in pastures of delight. Your sins, so many, vile, and hateful, pass to your Scapegoat, and so pass away. Faith thus transfers them. Christ thus removes them. God sees you in the glories of His Son, and thus sees no defect.

Reader, have your hands touched the Scapegoat's head? If not, your loathsome load remains. Christ, and Christ only can relieve. But Christ neglected is all sin retained. And sin retained is filth and shame. What if death find you so? What! Oh! learn not the reply in hell.

Lev 17.10-11

HOLY BLOOD

"And I will turn against anyone, whether an Israelite or a foreigner living among you, who eats or drinks blood in any form. I will cut off such a person from the community, for the life of any creature is in its blood. I have given you the blood so you can make atonement for your sins. It is the blood, representing life, that brings you atonement." Lev 17:10-11

How solemn is this ordinance's voice! It speaks a stern command. It sets a rigid fence around all blood. No common use may touch. No lips may taste. It is laid up among God's holiest things. All reverence enshrines it. A dreadful sanctity excepts it from the food of man.

My soul, this is a consecrated spot. Approach it meekly and in prayer.

What, if offence occur? What, if the appetite profanely take? What, if rash hands shall bring it to the table? Then penalty frowns terribly. God's smile withdraws. His favor ceases. Wrath darkens. Excluding judgments follow. The rebel is cut off from among the people.

My soul, terrors frequent this spot. Approach it meekly and in prayer.

But why is blood thus sanctified? No slight design can frame a law so strict. There must be significance—wise as the author—great as the originating mind. It is so. For is not blood the Altar's food? Yes. There is its constant flow. It is the stream from the expiring victim. Blood reminds of death, as the desert of sin; and it bears witness, that remission is prepared. Thus it is linked with expiating grace. No eye should see it, without thought of the tremendous curse, and of a substituted sufferer.

Blood then is holy, because it points to Calvary's cross. Its instant language proclaims Christ. It shadows forth the wrath-sustaining death of God's co-equal Son. It introduces Jesus bleeding, that souls may live. Blood is full symbol of the redemption's price. It is clear emblem of the one atoning Lamb.

Thus the grand significance of its holiness appears. When an enlarged decree gave animals for food, the prohibition was annexed, "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it." Gen 9:4. So soon as meat was granted for the table, this sign of expiation (the blood) was reserved. From age to age, until the expected Jesus came, the same forbidding voice was heard, 'Touch not, taste not, the blood. It is devoted unto God. It is most holy unto Him. It pictures out redeeming suffering. It is atonement for the soul.'

Reader, the elders of faith's family were thus constrained to note this mark. No day could pass without remembrance of its hallowed end. We live in Gospel-day. The wondrous death is no more veiled in mystic types. We gaze with open eye upon the blood-stained cross. We can approach the fountain opened in a Savior's side. We may sit down beneath the trickling drops. We may there wash our every sin away. Shall we, thus privileged, fall short in reverence? Forbid it faith, forbid it love, forbid it every throb of every new-born heart.

Come, think for a few moments of the grand antitype—Christ's blood. Ponder its worth—its use—its mighty power—its unspeakable results. And may the Spirit reveal its glories in their fullest light.

Revere it, for He is great, who sheds. Enter the garden. Stand beside the cross. The sufferer seems a lowly man. Scorn and affliction mark Him, as their own. Man verily He is. If it were otherwise, He could possess no human blood. But is He only man? Oh! no. In that poor body Deity is encased. He is the mighty God. He is the grand Creator, sovereign Ruler of all worlds. Jehovah's plenitude of power is in His hand. Jehovah's every glory is His right. Jehovah's everlasting being is His age. Godhead is His property. Divinity is linked to all His sufferings in flesh, to all His doings in our stead. That blood, then, is the blood of God. Act 20:28.

If it were less, O sinner, what could it avail for you? Your soul is justly sentenced to infinity of woe; because your sins have trampled on infinity of claims. If all the angels in man's form could die a myriad deaths, the pains would fall short of what you owe. Nothing but boundless substitution can release. Jesus is God, and He brings blood, which is essentially divine. Therefore it is enough.

Turn not your eyes from the grand dignity of Calvary's Lamb. This is the marrow of all Gospel-hope. This brings in merit. God cannot ask, or find, a greater or a worthier price. Oh! bless the Father for this appointed help. Bless Jesus for this all-sufficient aid. Here is an able Savior, for the blood flows in the channel of omnipotence.

From its grand worth turn to its efficacious work. But here all tongues of men and angels fail. It is a theme, which endless ages of incessant praise must leave untold. It is the ransom-price of all the saved. This multitude is vast. Their number baffles number. Each entered life the slave of Satan. Each was defiled with darkest stains of guilt. Each owed a countless debt to every attribute of God. But now behold them. Their robes are white. Not one speck spoils. Their penalties are paid. Not one claim can be found. Their chains have dropped. Each adversary's lips are mute. Whence is their freedom? Whence is their uttermost deliverance? Whence is their open passage to eternal bliss? Whence their loud song—their happy praise—their mansions in God's court? The blood has washed, and they are clean. The blood has saved, and they are saved.

It is the peace of all the sons of peace. There was a day when the awakened conscience tossed on the billows of acutest pain. The misery, and filth, and woe of sin were deeply felt. The thundering law denounced its curse. The wrath of God displayed avenging strength. Tormenting flames glared fierce and near. All heaven frowned. All hell seemed gaping at the feet. To live was piercing fear. To die was agony of despair.

But all these clouds have vanished. A bright and lovely morn has dawned. Whence issued forth these cheering rays? They all spring joyously from Jesus's blood. The Spirit led the trembler to the cross. He opened an enraptured eye to see the cleansing stream. He showed its reconciling worth. He gave a living power to the truth, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa 1:18. Faith heard, and washed, and left accusing guilt behind. Faith looked, and entered on the pastures of repose.

It is the fruitful source of sanctifying grace. He is the holiest man, whose tent is fixed beside this well of life. He most flees sin, whose eye is riveted upon the blood. Can he love that, which gave those wounds to Christ? Can he embrace the monster, which pierced Jesus's heart? It cannot be. The sight of Calvary slays the love of sin. The cross unmasks the hideous form, and kindles righteous hate.

O child of God, make this your study. For first, for last, for every thought, here is food. Let morning call you to this view—let mid-day find it your delight—let evening's hours close round it. Here is a depth, which you can never probe—a height, which you can never reach—a length and breadth, which you can never grasp. Angels here fix a prying gaze. They wonder. They adore. But they glean no advantage from it. To you it is Salvation's price. To you it is the gate of heaven. Then study it with intensest thought.

Need I add, love it. Heart's every fiber should here entwine. It is the proof, that God loves you, as His own Son—that Jesus loves you better than Himself. He is not spared that you may be redeemed. Let then this blood sit high on your affection's throne. Hold it tightly in your soul's embrace. Your warmest feelings should here cluster. That mind is rock, which is not melted by such flame.

Need I add, praise it? All lips commend the charms of beauty and heroic deeds. But what is as beauteous as grace leading Jesus to the Cross? Where is a noble act, like His surrender of Himself for you? It is the bright display of Godlike glory. It shows Jehovah on His highest throne. It has done that for you, which nothing but itself could do. My soul, my soul, praise Jesus's blood.

Need I add, use it? Use it. When? In every hour; for every hour may be hallowed by it. Use it, when temptation's darts are flying round. It is a sure defense. No hell-sent arrow ever pierced the blood-anointed shield. Use it, when you seek light from Scripture's page. Those lines are brightest, in which the blood is seen. Use it in prayer. It is the plea of pleas. It goes directly to the heart of God, and wins a blessing smile. Use it in sanctuary-services. That service is cast out, which is not perfumed from this fragrant field. Use it in all your holy work for God. It consecrates the motive, way, and end. Seed, sown in Jesus's blood, brings harvests to heaven's garner. Use it, when death draws near. The chilling waters then recede, and a bright passage opens to God's home. Use it, when seated upon glory's throne. You then need noble theme. This theme is nobly fit for God.

You ministers of Christ, if any read, lift high your voices to set forth this blood. Your office is to show Christ's saving power. But can Christ save, apart from His atoning blood? Christ and no cross, is an unmeaning tale. You doubtless long to win souls to salvation. Here is the magnet of attraction. Cast wide this net, and large will be your gain. You strive to lead a righteous flock in holy ways. But flames unkindled will not blaze. Motives must be supplied. The mightiest motive is grateful love resulting from Christ's dying love.

You cannot prosper, without the Spirit's aid. It is His province to apply the blood. If this be cast behind, your helper will depart. Here is safe teaching, which cannot mislead. Here is a truth, with triumph in its hands. If then you would add jewels to the Savior's crown—use this grand instrument. The blood can uplift from nature's filth. It can upraise to God's own throne.

Parents and teachers, you have anxious charge. The young drink earliest lessons by your side. You occupy the heart's first ground. The seed sown by you takes deep root. The color of your words will tinge the life. Your precepts perish not, when things earthly die. Think, shall your training be a link in glory's, or in perdition's, chain! It will be so, according as the blood is shown or hidden. All knowledge, without this, is splendid folly. He only, who knows this, is wisdom's son.

Reader, pause now, and look within. The blood is precious in God's sight. Its type profaned brought woe. What is their case, who scorn the grand reality? Think, then, what is its value to your heart? Can you reply, I prize it above price. It is my all. Ah! perhaps you hesitate. Its blessed sprinklings are not on your soul. Remember Israel's dwellings. The door-posts without blood were no exclusion to the messenger of wrath. The absent sign gave passage to destruction. But your destruction has not yet arrived. Awake! Awake! Flee to this only remedy for sin. How blessed will this hour be, if it finds you blood-marked—blood-washed—blood-saved! Almighty Father, grant it, for Christ's sake! Compassionate Redeemer, plead until hearts yield! Resistless Spirit, conquer by these feeble words!

Lev 23.3

THE SABBATH

"Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; you shall do no work therein; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings." Lev 23:3.

Leviticus enacts a train of rites. But their immediate purpose is brief and transient. Their life is short. They find an early grave. And now they teach, as records of a by-gone time—as text-books of the Church's infancy.

There is, however, a grand exception. In this code the Sabbath holds conspicuous place. But Gospel-beams have not obscured its light. It is no star, which waned before the orb of day. Far otherwise. It arose not as a ceremony among ceremonies. Sinai was not its birth-place. The wilderness was not its cradle. Therefore Calvary is not its tomb.

Reader, write this among undoubted truths. The Sabbath is as old as man. Adam's first day was hallowed rest.

The thought may here occur, why was Creation a six-days' work? Omnipotence requires no time. To will—to do—are one with God. Why was a gradual progress used? The reply is, God is wise love. Step succeeds step in forming worlds to sanctify our patient toil. God then announces, that He rests, to sanctify required rest.

Thus with high sanction, and benevolent intent, the Sabbath entered Eden by man's side. In its origin, it stands the firstborn of all ordinances. It is a portion of primary law. Its date precedes the date of sin. Away with the vain thought, that it is a short-lived flower of ritual field.

Reader, next mark how it endured. It flowed a blessing through the patriarchal age. That period was a foul hot-bed of iniquity. Rebellious hands were raised against God's will. Incessant blows were aimed at righteous law. But all this darkness failed to put out the Sabbath-light. Survey the chain from Adam until Noah. Adam received it. Intimations tell us, that Noah knew it. Therefore the intermediate links must have transmitted it. Eden received the seed. The ark upon the waters held the plant. Noah sends out the dove at intervals of seven days. Hence the conclusion is most sound, that antediluvian times observed the Sabbath-day. It lived, then, a long life before Judaic rites came in.

After the flood, there was extensive space before peculiar ordinances separated Israel's race. Noah and Moses are the extreme points of this line. The first, before the ark is left, recognizes, as has been seen, a weekly period. The latter taught, why manna fell not on the seventh day. Hear his clear testimony, "Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord." Exo 16:23. This interval then dawns and closes with recognition of this day. The truth is thus confirmed. The Sabbath ever kept its unimpaired existence. Its stream rolled onward from the ark to Sinai's base. Again observe, its life is long, before Judaic rites come in.

Reader, advance to Sinai. A scene of more tremendous awe cannot be found. The thunder roars. The lightning glares. The mountain totters to its base. Appalling sights—appalling sounds—announce the present majesty of God. He comes to speak, as moral ruler of the world. The law, originally written on man's heart, is re-enacted amid prodigies of terrible display. Now mark what occupies the tables' central spot. It is the Sabbath-day. Thus God's own finger writes it, a portion of His unalterable will.

As such the golden ark within the veil received it. As such a curse attends its least infringement. Who now can turn from Sinai's fiery height, to pluck the Sabbath from its glorious place? It is no passing rite. It is the transcript of Jehovah's mind. It shines a jewel in the high crown of moral law.

When Prophets subsequently taught, did they remit its claims? Their lips denounce each violation, as a heinous sin. Their fervent eloquence repels intruders from the holy ground. They pull not down what God had raised so high. They cannot desecrate what God has permanently hallowed.

Next Jesus comes Himself. The mighty God instructs in human form. Are now the land-marks of this day removed? Is it laid open for promiscuous use. He has authority to bind or loose. As "Lord of the Sabbath," He is supreme. But He puts forth no abrogating power, when He states its purport to be the good of man. "The Sabbath was made for man." Mar 2:27. This is a mighty word. It looks backward, and forward. It seems to say, It always has been, for man always had need. It always shall be, for man will always need. Thus Jesus decks the Sabbath with undying freshness.

He finishes His work, and rises victor from the dead. Prefiguring ceremonies vanish. If the Sabbath's mission be fulfilled, it now will disappear. Is such the case? Far otherwise. A change indeed is made, but only to set the edifice on firmer base, and to bind it more closely to our living Head. The resurrection-day becomes the Christian rest. The same memorial records creation ended, and redemption finished. The same repose reminds of two completed works. The Lord's day tells of rest, when worlds were made—of rest, when souls were saved.

Next call Apostles to bear witness. They were most jealous of the Gospel-truth. With open mouth they warn, that the Judaic forms had fallen, as autumnal leaves. But no word from their lips—no thought in their pages—chases the Sabbath from our sight. Oh! no. They keep—they reverence—they commend it. As soon would they deny the Lord, as undervalue the Lord's day.

Reader, review now its position. It is God's first command. The Patriarchs kept it. Sinai preached it. The holy tables gave it central place. The holy Ark encased it. The Jewish church revered it. Prophets enforced it. Jesus upheld it. The Apostles sanctioned it. The Christian church throughout all time has prized it. The prophetic finger still points to it as a last-day blessing. Isa 66:23. Eternity waits to be an eternity of Sabbath.

What, if profane indifference would tread it down? Vain is the effort. It still must live. It has an innate life. The will, which made it, is divine. As in the ark, it rode triumphant over ungodly graves, so now it strides above ungodly foes. It must march on, until time is lost in one Sabbatic rest.

Reader, thus holy is the tree. Come sit awhile beneath its shade. Much precious fruit descends. It showers down rest upon a work-worn world.

Man's body is a wondrous fabric. Its various parts are exquisitely wrought. They are designed for toil. But toil brings strain. Rest must repair the waste. Rest must renew the vigor. Rest must bring oil to the wheels. The Sabbath day supplies it. "The seventh-day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God, in it you shall not do any work." Exo 20:10.

Would man give this indulgence to himself? The love of gain—the reckless lust of profit—grudges each moment unemployed. It counts it to be miserable loss. Man would work self to early wreck, and drive self an early skeleton to dust.

Would man grant this repose to other men? Heartless taskmasters would lash their victims to a ceaseless mill. Work! work! would be the only cry. Work! work! until the enfeebled dying hands could no more move. If God's most positive command scarcely restrains, what would earth be, if left unchecked to human mercy? A dwindled race would fall as blighted buds. Incessant labor would be incessant woe.

Is renewed energy of body the fruit of seasonable rest? Let every tongue, then, bless the Sabbath's Lord.

But fleshy material is not the whole of man. There is that wondrous inner gift—the mind. There is the chamber, in which thought resides—the cradle, in which ideas are nursed. Here is our moving mainspring. These fibers are fine. Their edge soon loses point. To overwork them is to destroy. But overworked they will be, unless the Sabbath interpose its calm. Experience often shows the stream of thought run dry, because the seventh-day barrier has been broken down. This respite saves our noblest faculties from pre-mature decay. Let, then, each healthy intellect sing praises to the Sabbath's Lord.

But this day is more than resting-place for body and for mind. It brings refreshing nurture to the soul. It makes not a vacancy to leave it void. It shuts out the world only to make clear room for God. True it is, that the new-born heart lives habitually above. Its whole employ flows in a holy course. But when the Sabbath comes, God is not only mixed in every thought, but God and His work alone are present. The Scripture is the only Book. Things heavenly are the only converse. God's service is the one concern. This day, then, is the school of spiritual well-being. It keeps alive religion in the world. It checks the hand, which would expel devotion. Now countless multitudes learn the plague of a sin-fettered heart, and hear of Jesus, and turn from misery to joy—from Satan's chain to glorious liberty. These are the hours, when crowds rejoice in views of dying love—in deeper draughts of sanctifying grace—and in larger visions of the eternal weight of glory. Can there be one, who would divert these channels of pure joy? Vain man forbear! Earth, spoiled of Sabbaths, is a rapid road to hell.

The Sabbath serves a higher value yet. It is much more than outward health. It provides more than leisure to gain grace. Its name and use are emblems of Christ Jesus. As a mirror it reflects His work—His truth. It is a scroll, in which faith reads from age to age, the grandest lessons of redeeming love. What is the Sabbath? It is rest. What is Jesus? He is rest. God rests in Him. Souls rest in Him. Eternity is rest with Him.

God rests in Him. Each attribute here gains repose. Justice has claims. Each sin is debt, which must be paid. Jesus pays all; and justice is content. Truth finds in Him complete fulfillment of its every word—and asks no more. Holiness is more than satisfied; for every sin is washed from the redeemed, and all shine bright in righteousness divine. Mercy and love here trace a passage for their fullest exercise. Their arms embrace a family of ransomed souls. In Christ they sing an endless hymn, and enjoy an endless joy. No more is sought. God is well pleased. Christ is this Sabbath throughout heaven.

Souls rest in Him. When once the eyes are open to the realities of sin, the torpor of indifference ceases. "What must I do to be saved?" absorbs the man. Duties, and penitence, and ritual strictness, present no mountains, which the feet refuse to scale. But efforts like these remove no load of guilt. They guide to no peaceful haven of repose. The wearied soul becomes more weary. But when the Spirit leads the anxious trembler to the cross, then all disquietude is gone. Here is the needed rest. What more can be required? Jesus brings in one flood of peace. The search is over. All is obtained. Jesus is all for everlasting rest. The husks are left. Refreshing food is found. Faith ceases from all empty drudgery, to take up healthy toil for Him.

Heaven is one ocean of repose. No billow heaves. No storm affrights. No foe can enter. No change can cloud the calm expanse of the unruffled sky. But what is heaven, but to see Christ, as He is—to gaze forever on His unveiled beauty—to sit with Him—to realize, that never for one moment can there be absence from Salvation's home? Heaven is heaven, because it is an eternal Sabbath by the side of Jesus.

Reader, you see the varied blessings of this day. If every breath were praise, it could not adequately hymn the love, which gave it. Be wise; be wise; and let not Satan rob you of your treasure. He hates the ordinance. He hates its profitable use. He knows, that it stands high, a barrier to beat him back. By many wiles he strives to disfigure it, as a dull and gloomy check to joy. Be not deceived. Can it be dull to walk with God? Can it be gloom to hold communion with the center of delights? Oh! no. The Sabbath-breaker is the wretched man. His heart condemns him. His unhallowed merriment is gall. His foreboding mind sees pains and tortures, which no rest relieves. The holy Sabbath keeper lives with God—for God. Can happiness be more?

Lev 23.10-11

THE SHEAF OF THE FIRST-FRUITS

"When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first-fruits you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before the Lord so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath." Lev 23:10-11

The book of nature is a fruitful study. That heart is dull indeed, which marks unmoved the varied beauties of recurring seasons. But they, who ascribe these lovely scenes to nature's course, pause at the threshold of delight. The infidel's cold creed can thus praise verdant and luxuriant charms. He only gleams real joy, who everywhere beholds the hand, the care, the love, the power, the truth, the wise decree of God.

My soul, bring God into your every view; and then the view is elevating rapture. Trace God in all the produce of the soil, and then the produce is a step towards heaven.

Our tender Father knows, that happiness thrives not, where He is hidden. Therefore in all His works He strives to fix attention on Himself. In feeding the body, He would show Himself unto the soul.

But goodness, as in nature's constant stream, may fail to impress. The regularity may rather lull than rouse. Hence in the case of harvest, a solemn rite is added to the Jewish code, to obviate the evil of indifference.

Reader, the teaching of this ordinance now claims your mind. Come listen to its voice. Mark well its apt solemnities. Receive its sanctifying moral.

When the season of the Paschal-feast returns, the appointed harvest tarries not. The early promise is fulfilled. Gen 8:22. The firstlings of the grain are ripe. The fields of barley wave their golden heads.

But shall the gatherers now heedlessly collect their treasure? Shall thoughtless hands now bear the riches to the garner? Oh! no. The Altar must unlock the reaping gate. Hence the first ears are bound, as holy, into a holy Sheaf. The priest with reverence receives, and heaves it aloft towards heaven. He waves it to and fro. A victim is next slain, and then the happy reapers hasten to the crops. Such is the rite. God is thus sought. Then man begins the blessed toil.

Reader, survey this rite more closely. The harvest's first act adores the harvest's Lord. The first grains feed the altar. The first sickle cuts an offering for God. The lesson is plain. The thought of God should precede every work.

Let morning dawn with Him—to Him—for Him. Let prayer be the foundation-stone of each design. Nothing is well done, except begun in God. All is disorder, unless the First be first.

The priest uplifts the Sheaf on high. The First-fruits represent the entire produce of the fields. This is confession, that all earth's yielding is the property of God. Without His will no seed takes root—no blade appears—no stalk ascends—no grains mature. Man's toil and care may be employed, but all the power is divine. Where then is foolishness like his, who fondly dreams, that he is lord of lands? The richest hands hold nothing but a loan. Let that, then, which is God's, and only His, be wholly His.

The Sheaf is then waved to and fro. It floats from east to west—from north to south—as traversing the globe. This motion warns, that every spot, in every climate, is God's. His is an universal sway. In every land one sovereign owner reigns.

In this solemnity the offering is small. He, who might justly claim the whole, takes but one Sheaf. The large abundance remains for man's supply.

Thus, while a bounteous hand fills our garners; while valleys bend with corn; and clouds distill their fatness; the Giver makes His small demand. All must not be consumed on self. The poor need food. The shivering cry for clothing. The famine of the Word must be relieved. The heathen perish for the bread of life. Such are the claims on our First-fruits. Will any rush to copious crops, and grudgingly withhold God's Sheaf?

Reader, mark next, the Paschal sacrifice introduces the Wave-sheaf. A firstling of the flock, also, without blemish, accompanies the offering. A Gospel-truth here shows its light. The hand, which would bring gifts to God, must first be washed in the atoning stream. In every service God's eye looks for His Son's blood. If this be present, sure acceptance smiles. If this be absent, stern rejection frowns. The worldling's heart may throb a grateful throb. But it cannot approach in nature's filth. He must be cleansed, or he can gain no access. And nothing cleanses, but the blood of Christ. Cain would not live without some homage. But Cain despised the victim. He and his offering were cast out. Reader, let the sweet savor of the cross perfume your thanksgiving. Let this clear mark distinguish your thanks-giving. Then all your gifts, and all your life will mount, as welcome fragrance, to your God.

Already we have found rich teaching. But faith asks more. It has an eye, which ever searches for one object. It has a thirst, which Gospel-wells alone assuage. But here Christ's person quickly meets the seeking heart. The name of First-fruits—the day of offering—lead by straight paths to Him. The Spirit's voice is very clear. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the First-fruits of those who slept." "Christ the First-fruits; afterwards those who are Christ's, at His coming." 1Co 15:20, 1Co 15:23. These First-fruits, then, distinctly picture Christ.

The day of offering next seals this truth. On the morning, which succeeds the Paschal Sabbath, the Sheaf is waved. On this same dawn Jesus arose, avowing himself the antitype. Faith, then, has solid ground, when here it chiefly sees the Lord.

Following this clue, let us now gaze on Jesus in this type. The Sheaf relates a tale of triumph. It brings back thought to a seed cast into the ground. To view, it was a dry and worthless husk. Earth's tomb then buried it. Mighty hindrances assailed it. The frost retained it with iron grasp, and many storms repressed it. At last it raised a living head. Here life gains victory over death.

Thus Christ descended to the grave. Life seemed to be extinct. Corruption threatened to devour its prey. The grave made fast its bars. But every foe is foiled. Death and hell yield. The tomb throws back its portal. The mighty conqueror strides forth alive. He shows himself to God—the First-fruits from the dead.

Believer, now in this Sheaf discern redemption finished by your rising Lord. It was an anxious moment, when the dying Jesus bowed His head. Justice had seized Him. To the prison He was dragged. In the conflict Satan was strong, while He expired. The anxious heart would anxiously enquire, will He now suffice to pay the countless debts of countless souls? He came—He died—to save; but may He not have failed? But before the question can be fully asked, behold, He rises; He lives; He comes forth again to God. All claims then must be satisfied; all enemies must be subdued. His resurrection manifests, that all hell's worst is now a broken reed.

Clap then the hands of joy. Raise high the voice of your ecstatic praise. Exult and glory in your waving Sheaf. The book of justice has no charge against you. The dying Lamb has washed the pages clean. Can the stern jailer now detain you? His scepter lies the shadow of a shade. Jesus, appearing on the third day, is full assurance of redemption finished, and Satan's empire spoiled.

Again behold the Sheaf. It stands alone—but it is not alone. It enters first, but a long train will surely follow. It is the earnest of the coming crop. It tells, that countless grains will soon succeed. Thus Christ is waved, the Head of His blood-purchased flock. His many members all gain life in His life, and triumph in His triumph. The Spirit sees this harvest, when He cries, God "has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Eph 2:6.

Believer, this mystic-resurrection is long passed. When the Redeemer burst the bands, you rose arrayed in clothing of eternal life. God's eye beams on you, as brought back in Jesus to His home.

Know, also, that the reality is near. Doubt not. Death is to you a conquered foe. It will indeed approach. It will extend an icy hand. It will take down your tottering house. It will consign you to a narrow cell. It will call worms to do their work. Your body is sin-soiled; let it then be dissolved. But cast away all fears. Death's seeming triumph is a real defeat. It lays you low, that you may rise the higher. It wounds to heal. It weakens to give strength. It mars to bring in fresher beauty. The grave must part asunder. A clarion note will wake the sleeping clay. Those who are Christ's, will rise as portions of His body. But, oh! how changed! The crumbling dust will then shine brighter than the mid-day sun. Decay will bloom into unfading youth. The mortal will be robed in immortality. The fleshy clog will be all spirit.

Reader, our present thought cannot conceive such a state. But it is true, and it is near. The trumpet is prepared to sound. The Lord of life is at the door. Hear these sure tidings in the First-sheaf's voice, and glory in your resurrection-hopes.

But there is more than future rising—there is constant presentation here. This is one marvel of all the Bible-types; each form gives multiform instruction; each ray will split into a variety of color. So here a changing view reveals the never-failing work of Christ above. The great High-priest is ever standing before God. He there presents—not blood alone—He shows the Sheaf of First-fruits. He displays the many members, who compose His body. Upon His shoulders and His breast the names of all His Israel appear. He pleads, that they are gathered from the world. He offers them, as consecrated for His Father's use. If there is rapturous joy, it is when we look up, and see a Savior's hands waving our persons and our work to God. If, also, there is glorious prospect, it is the thought, that a great day is flying onward, when the whole mass shall really be reaped from earth's wide field, as holy as God—and fit for the eternal throne.

Another thought remains. They, who make boast of Gospel-joys, confirm their right by Gospel-signs. They, who are safe in Jesus's hands, display His mind. They, who rise in Him to a resurrection-state, rise with Him to a resurrection-walk. They move in this world, as "begotten with the word of truth, to be a kind of First-fruits of His creatures." Jas 1:18. They are no more their own. If God is theirs—they, also, are God's. They love and seek His glory. They wear His livery, and do His service. You who profess that you are First-fruits unto God, have you these First-fruit marks?

This offering sanctified the crop. "If the First-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy." Rom 11:16. Thus the little handful of Christ's band leavens the mass of human race. Believer, see your calling. You are blessed above men, and you must be a blessing unto men. Your family, your friends, your country, the world, must be the better for your being. Your light must lighten—your salt must sprinkle savor—your grace must scatter grace.

Reader, are you these First-fruits unto God?

Lev 23.13

The Drink Offering

"You must also offer one quart of wine as a drink offering." Lev 23:13

What a changed scene would earth become, if every heart yielded its throne to Christ! His smile is life. His lips drop grace. His rule is purity and peace. To realize—I am the Lord's—the Lord is mine—is remedy for every care.

That there is true happiness in piety is among the lessons of the Tabernacle-rites. On most occasions wine is outpoured, within these courts; and a Drink offering completes the worship. This seems intended to express, that gladness thrills throughout the soul, which renders homage to a reconciled God.

Eternal Spirit, grant Your revealing rays, that so the Drink offering may shed enlivening savor round!

Reader, begin by viewing well the offering now brought. There is a cup produced. The contents of this are wine. Can faith hear this, and not fly swiftly to the last Paschal-feast? Oh! wondrous sight! The time is fully come for shadows to recede. The mighty substance brightly shines. He, to whom all types point, at this grand moment, takes a cup full of the juice of vine. Ponder His action—feast upon His words. He uplifts thanks, then gives the vessel to His little flock. "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Mat 26:28.

At this hallowed feast we safely reach one eminence of truth. Wine is here chosen as a Gospel-sign. It henceforth bears divine inscription. It takes its place among the holiest symbols. "This is my blood." Our hands thus find a key, which opens the mystic treasure-house of the Drink offering. The vessel holds the choicest emblem of redeeming grace. We may no more behold it, without the prominent remembrance of blood.

Reader, mark the Drink offering now, and let deep reverence deepen. Its fluid shows that stream from Calvary, which is exceeding preciousness in heaven and earth. Jesus has blood, or else He is not man. Without it, He is no kinsman to our race. He must be man, if He will be man's surety. He must have blood, if He will verily be man. But He assumes it without ceasing to be God. His blood is man's, and yet divine. His blood is God's, and yet human. Mystery of grace! Angels marvel, while they view it. Saints in heaven record its power. Saints on earth plead it, and are saved. My soul, rejoice in it! Love, praise, and use it more. The wine within the cup touches at once these strings of thought.

Next, what is the offerer's act? More is here seen than a cup brought. It is poured out for a sweet savor unto the Lord. Num 15:7.

We thus advance to see Christ pouring forth the blood, which He adopts. Until it flows, remission is not bought. Heb 9:22. But His blood is not withheld. See in the garden, how it falls in showers. Behold the sufferer on the cross. His brow—His hands—His feet—His side—His heart, weep as an open torrent. Oh! blessed proof of full atonement made! Without this sight the trembling heart can find no peace. But in these drops we read Salvation finished. The trickling stream sends forth its voice; the Son of God thus dies—a death divine is thus endured—the Lamb from all eternity ordained is thus vicariously slain.

Children of men, none perish, because Jesus bowed not the head. Myriads rush hell-ward trampling on His cross. Take heed. The blood is shed, that souls may live. But its neglect is all despair. The outpoured wine thus preaches the atoning death.

We now approach the peculiar instruction from this offerer's cup. Wine is the sign of gladness. It speaks of lively, happy feeling. It is not an unmeaning word, "Wine, which cheers God and man." Jdg 9:13. Thus this one symbol connects blood and joy.

We now are led to the delights, which flow from the redeeming cross. It is expansive joy in heaven and earth.

In heaven—because it clears the way for grace to execute its plans. From all eternity, God willed to people heaven with exulting souls. Before man was, salvation was decreed. But mighty barriers interposed. How can they disappear? Sin sank a fathomless abyss. How can sin-fettered spirits pass to heaven? God's council-chamber heard conflicting claims. While mercy wept; stern justice frowned. Truth closed the door, which love would sincerely expand. But Jesus smooths each hindrance. He brings all attributes to one consent. God now beholds His chosen race complete in Christ, all ready for admission to His throne. His heart desires no more. His banished ones are all brought back. His loved ones are all fully saved. He sits a glorious Father, at a crowded table. Each seat is occupied. The chorus lacks no voice. This is the noble triumph of the cross. God is well pleased. The word is true. The Drink offering of redeeming blood cheers God.

And do not angels find their share of joy? Their tender hearts yearn tenderly for man. When but one sinner turns to God, there is loud swell in the celestial song.

Luk 15:10. How must the praise roll on, when, one by one, a countless multitude flocks to the cross? This blessedness comes all through Christ. Without His death—without His work—Satan retains his sway. Angels might pity, but they could not help. If they should all consent to die, their suffering would leave man lost. But where they fail, Christ gloriously prevails. He saves fully—wholly—everlastingly—a world of souls. Deep is the rapture, then, when heaven's bright inhabitants shout, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain." O my soul, it will be sweet to hear that song. It will be sweeter to respond, 'Amen!' Thus Christ is heaven's delight.

The Drink offering next shows, that here is man's unfathomable flood of bliss. But where are words to testify the joy of faith? The Spirit pauses, and exclaims, "Unspeakable." 1Pe 1:8. What lips, then, will essay to speak it? It is far easier to count earth's flowers, than the rich jewel of this diadem. But gratitude will strive, where power must fail. God Himself is the believer's overflowing cup. The great Creator—the sovereign Lord of all—becomes the portion of the family of faith. At all times there is access to His smile. The weary head may always rest upon a loving breast. When the lips plead, My Father and my God—my God and Father—then the full heart can throb no happier throb.

Jesus is in this cup. He invites us to read all His heart. It is a volume of firm love. He loved before the worlds were made. He loves, when worlds have ceased to be. He loves so largely, that He gladly gives Himself. He loves so fervently, that heaven seems vacant, until the redeemed sit enthroned beside Him. The soul, assured of a saving interest in this love, is on a solid pedestal of joy.

The Holy Spirit is not absent. He is sent forth to bless. He finds the heart dead, cold, vile, profuse with nature's weeds. The eyes now open to discern self's filth, and to adore the beauties of the Lord. Faith springs to being, and bounds rapidly to Christ. It nestles in the willing arms. It washes in the streaming side. Each day now dawns a grand reality of bliss. Life is not life, unless thus Spirit-born, and Spirit-taught, and Spirit-led, and Spirit-fed.

Angels hover round. They count it honor to subserve God's blood-bought flock. They shelter with their ministering wings. They cease not guardian-service, until they escort the liberated spirit in its upward flight. Let them exult, who are surrounded by this host of God.

Heaven super-adds its prospects of delight. It is a purchased home. From all eternity it was prepared. Jesus still works to make each mansion suitable. As flesh and blood cannot inherit: so mortal mind cannot conceive the awaiting bliss. But there are thrones, and crowns, and robes of white, and palms of victory, and songs of triumph. There is the tree of life, and living fountains, and hidden manna, and no more going out. Faith holds the keys of glory's palace. Shall it not pour out the Drink offering of joy?

Providence contributes daily peace. To many eyes this is a misty whirl. All seems confusion, without aim, or cause, or significance. Such thought is vanity's fond dream. No sparrow falls without our Father's hand. Each incident acts out a wise decree. Prosperity awakens praise, and brings God nearer to the view. Adversity shows earth's poor emptiness, and self's dependence, and so deepens filial trust. Wealth gives ability to glorify the Giver. Constricted means endear the heavenly prize. Life is the season to gain grace. Death lands on the eternal shore. Thus all events sow seed of good. Such is faith's Drink offering cup. It holds all this—and more—much more.

Believer, your Gospel-right is joy like this. God opens wide the gate, and calls you to your heritage. No, He commands you to partake. Hark! it is His voice, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." Php 4:4. If then your head sinks down, when thus enjoined to lift it up, you scorn the Word, and wrong your soul.

The Drink offering was duly brought by Israel's sons. To have refused, would have been bold rebellion. Is it less evil to go mourning, when God invites to gladness? Would not the angels raise triumphant songs, if Gospel-hopes were placed within their reach? Would they be sad, if called to your estate?

But may not cases be, when joy hangs withered in the Christian hand? It is so, when erring steps stray from the Gospel-path. Joys are luxuriant flowers beside the way of life. But if forbidden ground is sought, the feet are pierced by thorns, and gathering clouds obscure the cheering light. If Satan gain advantage, through prayer checked, or means of grace forsaken, or evil thoughts retained, then gloom and darkness follow.

But there may be return. Child of God, if you have entered evil climate, marvel not, that flowers fade. But still give thanks, that yet you live to mourn. Utter the prayer—which never can go forth in vain—"Restore unto me, the joy of Your Salvation, and uphold me with Your free Spirit." Psa 51:12.

Reader, you thus see the truth, that joys walk closely by the side of Christ. But they walk only there. We cannot breathe without the air. We cannot see without the light. Fruits ripen not without the sun. The soul is joyless, if it deserts joy's only home.

We see much misery, and hear sad moans. The cause is evident. Christ dwells not in the heart, and therefore sorrow holds it as his own. Learn, that all search for happiness is vain, except in Christ. Apart from Him, God gives it not. He then is a consuming fire. Heaven cannot grant it, for out of Christ there is no channel of conveyance. Some dig for it in the LAW'S mine. Nothing but curse can thence be brought. So, also, SELF is a stream, whence bitter waters flow. The WORLD allures to disappoint. Riches bring cares, and often stretch departing wings. Health, friends, and honors, drop the mask, and show a mocking skeleton.

Who can read this, and turn again to vain pursuits? You, who know Christ, and long to drive distress and anguish from our earth, the means are ready. Use them—use them. Diffuse the knowledge of Christ's saving name. Open a door, that God's word may have freer course. Enlarge the Missionary-band. Convey glad tidings to the lost at home—abroad. Let your one effort be to expel sorrow by admitting Christ.

Lev 23.16-17

The Feast OF Pentecost

"Keep counting until the day after the seventh Sabbath, fifty days later, and bring an offering of new grain to the Lord. From wherever you live, bring two wave loaves of bread to be lifted up before the Lord as an offering. These loaves must be baked from three quarts of choice flour that contains yeast. They will be an offering to the Lord from the first-fruits of your crops." Lev 23:16-17

No sickle moved in Israel's land before the wave-loaves had been brought. God's bounteous hand must be revered, before man's taking hand may work. Such was the ordinance. This was more than due worship. It was pure delight. There is no joy like gratitude. They most enjoy, who most perceive and bless the Giver. Reader, your earthly comforts should give wings to praise. Your daily blessings should uplift to heaven.

But when this holy service is discharged, alacrity pervades the fields. With cheerful heart—with animated look—with rapid step, the crowding reapers hasten forth. A rich abundance meets them, at each turn. All is busy joy. No hand is idle. Every sinew strains. Toil is delight, when toil is hallowed by God's smile. Labor is sweet, when labor is God's call.

Reader, come gaze now on this harvest-scene. Mark, idleness has here no place. This is a picture of what life should be. Now is our in gathering-day. So soon as every morning dawns, the ascending thought should fly to God. It is the time to reap. The crops are ripe. The gates are open. God calls. Who now may loiter or sit still?

Will any ask, where is my field, and what my crop? Whenever the true prayer is breathed, "Lord, what will You have me to do?" a beckoning hand will show the appointed task. But let these pages give a general hint.

There are the waving treasures of the Word. The Scripture-field is ever ready—ever ripe. How many stalks invite the gathering hand? Each hour should bring some golden riches to the garner of the heart. Reader, what have you gained this day from the rich Bible-page?

Next, there are peculiar duties growing at each door. Not one should fall neglected to the ground. It is most true, that human doings wash no sin away. "By grace are you saved through faith, and that, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph 2:8-9. Christ and His worth—Christ and His merits—are our full salvation. No labor adds to this full cup. But works are surest proof of faith. Happy the life, which gathers a plenteous store! O my soul, seek earnestly the praise, "She has done what she could." Mar 14:8. An empty hand proclaims a graceless heart.

The world, also, is a wide-spread plain—thick-set with never-dying souls. These call for the ingathering. They must be severed from their earthly ties. They must be brought into the Gospel-garner. Will not laborers labor? Here every grain is an eternity. What! shall they perish through neglect? Forbid it all, who feel for souls, and love the Lord, and glory in His triumphs.

The reaping means are many. Some may go forth and bear the hot day's toil. Some may urge others to the Godlike work. All can besiege the mercy-seat with prayer. These rapid thoughts suffice to show, that Christian life should be a constant striving in a harvest-field.

But harvest-season lasts not long. Its end comes on apace. Time is allowed; but it has narrow limits. In a few weeks the fields are cleared; the sheaves are all laid up; work is concluded, and silence takes the place of noisy toil.

Reader, so all your opportunities expire. Your moments wave a rapid wing. Their flight is speedy. The ebbing tide cannot be checked. Death will soon close the working door. What you would do must then be quickly done. Say, do your garners evidence industrious life? Has faith been active? Has love never flagged? Where are your signs, that diligence has diligently toiled? Woe to the man, whose day is not a reaping-day! No idler clears a harvest-field—no idler rests in heavenly rest.

The Jewish harvest ran through seven weeks. The fiftieth day, or Pentecost, then came. This was a solemn feast. Now Israel's sons return to meet their God. Before their crops were reaped, one sheaf alone was waved. But now their hands present a weightier gift. The grain is kneaded into two leavened loaves. These are devoutly brought, as a thank offering from their collected wealth.

Thus gratitude expands. Each mercy should sow seed of larger thanks. As goodness falls in swelling showers, so adoration should ascend in higher flame. Our life should be an ever-deepening praise.

O my soul, thus try your state. Each day comes laden with fresh tokens of your Father's grace. Each hour adds blessings to your store. Say, is each evening's song a richer tribute of expanded love? Is your wave-sheaf augmented to two loaves?

But other increase marked the Pentecostal feast. When the sheaf was waved, a single lamb was slain. But now the word goes forth, "Along with this bread, present seven one-year-old lambs with no physical defects, one bull, and two rams as burnt offerings to the Lord. These whole burnt offerings, together with the accompanying grain offerings and drink offerings, will be given to the Lord by fire and will be pleasing to him. Then you must offer one male goat as a sin offering and two one-year-old male lambs as a peace offering." Lev 23:18-19. The altar seems to groan beneath this pile. A sea of blood flows, as a deluge, round. Here is clear proof, that faith's most happy act is to present redeeming blood.

These increased victims tell faith's story. It has its infancy—its gradual growth, and its maturer age. Its feeblest utterance pleads a Savior's death. Its weakest effort clasps the cross. But as years glide, the death of Jesus becomes more prized—its need more felt—its value more discerned. The aged pilgrim finds at every turn greater necessity to plead the blood.

Believer, is such your ripening state? More and more should be the motto of your life. Higher and higher should be your heavenward flight. Deeper and deeper should be your stream of love. Brighter and brighter should be your flame of faith. Louder and louder should be your song of praise. Fuller and fuller should be your offering hand. Wider and wider should be your fields of work. Larger and larger should be the produce of your toil. We are not straitened in our giving God. His kingdom's rule is to give more grace. Jas 4:6. And true grace ever grows.

Such are the lessons, which the solemn feast directly gives. But Pentecost is more than pious offering for plenteous blessing. It is connected with most glorious scenes. The day recalls a grand event. Its date is on the fiftieth morning from the Paschal-sabbath. Let thought revert to the first Paschal-feast, and Israel's rapid flight from Egypt. Through fifty days they journey onward, and then Sinai's heights are reached. Instantly, what marvels meet them! Amid displays of terror and dismay, the glorious Law re-issues. The date displays it, as Pentecostal edict.

True it is, that Scripture marks not the coincidence. No voice from heaven shows the connecting link. But the fact is sure, and lacks not meaning.

This truth lies on the surface. While God is blessed, as tender in His providential care, His moral excellence claims reverence. The Lord, who crowns our earth with fruitful beauty, is He, who sits on the pure throne of righteousness. One voice commands luxuriant seasons, and the moral law. Thus, Sinai's code, and earth's rich plenty, are as converging rays to show Jehovah's brightness. Goodness is holy. Holiness is good. A finished harvest, and the given Law, are celebrated on the same fiftieth day.

One significance of the law is here, also, graphically shown. At Pentecost, the sickle has laid low the produce of the fields. It has performed its slaying work. This leads the mind to contemplate the Law's effects. There is no instrument like this, to sever souls from earthly hopes. Many, who now rejoice in solid peace, bless God for His awakening Law. They slumbered long on pillars of delusion. They dreamed, that all was safe—that life was no polluted walk—that God looked on them with no angry frown—that death would land them on the shore of bliss; that heaven would surely be their home at last. Thus they were rooted in unstable ground. But when the Law applied its searching rule, then carnal confidence expired. It swept them quickly from all tottering props. It placed before them the pure mirror of God's will. This showed the startling image of their native vileness. They saw, that penitence could wash no sin away—that reformation left them still unclean—that stricter walk still fell short of God's demands—that there could be no hope for sinful man, in sinful self. The Law's keen scythe thus laid them in the dust.

You ministers of Christ, here is a mighty weapon for your use. Apply it fearlessly to every heart. It shakes the conscience. It tears veils away. It paves the way for Jesus to come in. You often mourn the apathy of men. They dread not death, nor hell. Careless they live. Careless they die. No anxious thought disturbs. No sense of sin alarms. How can this be? The case is clear. They never spiritually hear the Law's demands. They perish. You must give account. The reaper plies the sickle's point to gain the grain. You too must use the Law to burst the sinner's bands.

But Pentecost presents another view. True, on its earliest day the fiery Law went forth. But when God's purposes were fully ripe, a greater marvel signalized its end. Christ came, and died. Redemption's work was finished. Types vanished in His glorious light. Foreshadowing festivals waxed dim, and the last Pentecost arrived. On this same day, Jesus expands His hands, and pours the promised Spirit down. Cloven tongues of fire fall, and blaze on the Apostle's heads. New powers of speech proclaim His presence; and in all tongues the Gospel-truth is heard. A blessed harvest instantly is brought. The gifted heralds speak. They tell of Christ—His dying love—His resurrection-power. The present Spirit seals the word. Blind eyes are opened. Frozen feelings melt. Pride is laid low. Strong prejudice gives place. Hearts open. Jesus enters. And on that day about three thousand souls were added to the church. Act 2:41. Thrice blessed Pentecost! The church presents her First-fruit loaves. The reaping time of souls is come; and heaven's garners swell with immortal produce.

Reader, learn then from Pentecost, that souls are the grain—the Spirit the Ingatherer. Without His aid no efforts prosper—no success ensues. His presence is the might of means. His hand alone unlocks the sin-bound heart. His voice alone can pierce the grave of sin. The Spirit's sword requires the Spirit's arm. He is the only chariot, in which truth rides to triumph. Without Him faith cannot live—nor Christ be seen. Without Him, preaching is an empty sound—and toil but beats the air.

Servants of Christ, would you be rich in harvests of saved souls? Then never strive in your own strength; and never speak or preach, but wrestling for this life-inspiring power. Seek more His help. Lean more upon His arm. Pray Him to give your every word. Pray Him to write it with His finger on the heart. Then will your ministry be a Pentecostal-day. Then when the end shall come, you will present your precious shocks to God—and wave your Pentecostal loaves—an evidence of good seed sown—of good work done.

Lev 23.23-25

The Feast of Trumpets

The Lord told Moses to give these instructions to the Israelites: "On the appointed day in early autumn, you are to celebrate a day of complete rest. All your work must stop on that day. You will call the people to a sacred assembly—the Festival of Trumpets—with loud blasts from a trumpet. You must do no regular work on that day. Instead, you are to present offerings to the Lord by fire."

Lev 23:23-25

Israel's civil year was ushered in with animating notes. Trumpets welcomed the earliest light. Throughout the day the same clear voice resounded. A day-long cry aroused all ranks.

The Lord ordained this rite. It is a mine, then, full of teaching wealth. We see at once, that these long echoes were designed to awaken each slumbering mind. Is there not need? How many perish, because thought sleeps! Life is dreamed through. It is a careless passage down a rapid stream. Eyes are fast closed. Realities are never seen. It is rich mercy, then, to break these bands. Therefore at solemn seasons—and when each month commenced—but mainly when the new-year dawned, God bids the Trumpets to send forth this clang.

Reader, the theme shakes drowsiness away. Let all that is within us now take heed. Observe, these Trumpets sound the knell of a departed year. They dig the grave of days and months forever fled. They warn, that time once present, is now gone. The question follows, What is its record? What is the witness, which its pen engraves? Who can reply, without the sigh of shame?

There is no talent so misused, as time. Its golden moments offer space to trade for heaven—to seek God's face—to glorify His name. But this is not their one employ. Man rather seeks his own—his ease—his pleasure, and his gain. The dying saint often weeps his opportunities unused. The lost are lost, because life's course was not improved. Who can look back without a penitential tear?

The Trumpets tell of a new period's birth. God in His mercy gives a respite. Sinner, another day now dawns. You live. You yet may turn in penitence to God. You yet may gain heaven's bliss. You yet may flee the coming wrath. Say, can you doubt, or hesitate, or pause? The opportunity is in your hands. But, while you read, it flees. Oh! grasp it, use it. Turn it to salvation. May it now hear your inward cry, 'Jesus have mercy. Wash me from my every sin. Convert me to Yourself. Receive me to Your arms of love. Pluck me, as a brand, from hell!' The Trumpets warn, 'lose not another day.'

Child of God, your life too is prolonged. It is your only time to show your gratitude, and to work for Christ. Vast is your debt. He gave Himself—His life—His blood, for you. Will you not give this day—each day to Him? Vast is your privilege. You may do more for Him on earth, than all the angels, who surround the throne. Let no more sands fall through unused. Discern their worth. The night draws near. Next new-year's Trumpet may find your ears locked in the grave. Be wise. Thus the shrill Trumpets teach—Time was; time is; Repent; Amend.

Next they bring Sinai's mount to view. They had grand part in earth's most dreadful scene. It was a fearful day, when God descended to renew His Law. The air was one appalling crash. "When the voice of the Trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice." Exo 19:19.

Reader, there is the deepest need, that man should often revisit Sinai. The Law is rarely read aright. Thick darkness hides its nature and its end. When truly seen, when truly heard, it cries, Behold the will of God—mark well, what all must be, who would see Him. Its terms are simple. Love—perfect love—in every movement of the soul, from earliest to latest breath. This do, and life is purchased; heaven is won. If you thus share His holiness, you may ascend His throne—the law presents no forbidding debt—the lips of Satan can prefer no hindering charge. But if you fail, then hope from self forever dies. The broken Law frowns terribly. It claims its payment. It utters its inexorable curse. Perfect obedience is its due. One breach makes it a foe forever.

Reader, heed then this Trumpet's voice. Obey and live. Transgress and die. You cannot stand the scrutiny. Your every moment is transgression. The curse cries loudly for your life. 'Bind him hand and foot—cast him into the quenchless lake,' is the Law's sure decree. See then the state of all, whose trust is in the Covenant of works. They lean upon a broken reed. They clasp a sinking plank. Their vessel leaks, and soon must sink. Their robe is nothing, but a filthy rag. Their best is sin. Their plea is false. Hence clear rejection stands before them. Their everlasting home must be outside. But outside heaven is within hell. Their never-ending cry must be, 'Undone—undone!' Thus the Law cries, 'Flee hence. No sinner finds a refuge here.' Happy they, who learn this lesson from the Trumpet's roar.

But there is sweeter music in this rite. The Trumpet is assuredly a Gospel-sign. The Prophets who saw most of Christ, thus sings, "The great Trumpet shall be blown." Isa 27:13. John witnesses, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a Trumpet."

Thus faith is led to keep a constant Trumpet-feast. The notes of grace always send melody from Zion's hill. They call attention to Salvation's scheme. The world indeed is lost through sin. Its inhabitants are a rebel-race. They follow only their own heart's desires. Vengeance might justly sweep all to the fathomless despair. But no. God sends His Son with healing on His wings. And now a tender voice, with Trumpet-clearness, cries, "a remedy is found! This is my beloved Son, hear Him."

Reader, come listen to these clarion notes.

Your sins need pardon. It is all prepared. His blood has mighty virtue to wash all away. Its worth is boundless, for it flows from a God-man. If all the sins, which ever were, or can be, centered on your soul, they vanish in this stream. No case exceeds its power. No vileness is too vile. No blackness is too black. Whoever will, let him wash, and he is whiter than the whitest snow. Sweet are these Trumpet-tidings.

You tremble at hell-pains. You hear of fire ever-burning—darkness ever dark—the worm, which never dies—the misery, which finds no ease. These are sin's wages. But Christ saves from all. His suffering death extracts the sting. The Jailer cannot touch—the dungeon cannot hold—the chains cannot detain. This is a precious note. It calls from agony's extremest pang.

You hear the Law's terrific threat. Its thunder peals above your head. But there is shelter in Christ's wounded side. They, who are nestled in that safe retreat, smile at its wrath. The curse exhausted is a blunted shaft. The edge is gone. It can inflict no wound. This sound is precious to a sin-crushed worm.

You hear of heaven, and its pure delights. It is the home of God. None are admitted, who have not suitable robes. You pant for the pure rest. But you possess no passport of your own. You have no clothing for the royal court. But look to Jesus. His hands have wrought a wedding-dress. He stretches out a righteousness divine. God's eye desires no more. Its beauty far outshines the sun. Its purity makes angels dark. Reader, believe, and it is yours. Sweet is this Gospel-note.

You look within. Your heart is vile. Who can turn back the current of these rushing lusts? Can there be power to cause old things to pass away, and all things to be new? Look up to Christ. He is an ocean full of sanctifying grace. He speaks the word—the mighty Spirit comes—iniquity recedes—pure holiness takes root—the newborn soul receives a newborn life. This is a happy Gospel-note.

But fears live long. There is no saint, who mourns not daily falls. The wounded conscience takes alarm, lest Christ provoked, should turn away. It would be so, If He were man. But He is God. Christ is not Christ, unless He be unchangeably the same. His word, also, is gone forth. "My sheep shall never perish." Thus faith has an imperishable strength. While it endures, the soul can never die, and it endures because its Giver is, "I am." "Because I live, you shall live also." This Trumpet has a cheering note.

But trials thicken—temptations threaten—and affliction's tide runs strong. Death, also, draws near, and shows a chilling form. But still take comfort. He, who is with you, has an arm of power—a heart of tenderness—and a voice of love. In deepest billows, He will hold you up. And the last wave will waft you safe to Canaan's shore. Thick blows may batter, but will not beat down. The last blow breaks the gates of flesh, and sets your happy spirit free. Christ is this sure and present help. Be thankful for this Trumpet-note.

Reader, there is no need in life—in death—in present or in future days—for which Christ is not all-sufficient support. Behold Him. He is life for the dead—sight for the blind—feet for the lame—strength for the weak—joy for the sad—cleansing for the filthy—freedom for the bound—clothing for the naked—purity for the unclean—redemption for the captive—a God without to save—a God within to cheer—a God above to bless—a God, who came in flesh to die—a God, who reigns in power to help—a God who comes in glory to receive.

Bring me your misery, and I will show you its relief in Christ. He loves, as God. He aids, as God. He saves, as God. God is not full, if there can be deficiency in Christ. But God is full, and all His fullness is in Christ for His beloved flock. Reader, this is a glorious Gospel-note.

Say, can you slight this Trumpet-call? Hark! yet again it calls you to the cross. Past disregard has not closed mercy's gate. Yet you may enter in. All joy and peace may yet be yours. The plank across the fearful gulf is not removed. Hope is not dead, while yet you hear the Gospel-cry.

But linger not. Another Trumpet is about to sound. The great white throne will soon be set. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the Trumpet of God." 1Th 4:16. The Trumpet will sound—the graves will open—all the dead will rise—among them you must take your place.

Oh! realize this solemn scene. The world would try to ignore the dread account. But it comes—it quickly comes—and you must bear your part. Is your plea ready? Can you appeal to Christ, that you are His? Can you establish evidence of a saving interest in all His work? Faith can. It humbly reasons with the Judge, 'I may not die, for You have died for me. My condemnation is long past, it fell at Calvary on You.' This plea is sure. I ask again, Is this plea yours? The Gospel-trumpet still offers it. The Judgment-trumpet will soon demand it.

These notes were sounded by the priests. Such was the office of the Tabernacle servants. You Ministers of Christ, this work has now fallen on you. The charge is solemn. If notes are muffled, ruin follows. Flocks may rush hellward, following pulpit voice. Your teaching should be clear, as liquid words from Jesus's lips. The faithful herald has no 'yes and no'. His teaching is no shifting line. He shows not Christ today, and hides Him on the morrow. He builds not with one hand, and with the other pulls all down. He frames not a joint covenant of grace and works. He tells of no conditions, but man's need—no plea for welcome, but a ruined state. Only one refuge is proclaimed. Only one name is magnified. There is but one foundation laid. None but Jesus. "Christ is all." They, who thus preach, call to the Trumpet-feast.

Lev 23.34

The Feast OF Tabernacles

"Tell the Israelites to begin the Festival of Tabernacles on the fifth day after the Day of Atonement. This festival to the Lord will last for seven days." Lev 23:34

The Feast of Tabernacles closely follows the Atonement-day. It is a season of especial joy succeeding to especial grief. Highest delights wipe penitential tears away; and gladness loudly sings, where sighs so mournfully were heard.

This near connection teaches much. It is a picture of experience. It marks a path, which true believers often tread.

When is the Lord most precious to the soul? When are heart-raptures at their fullest tide? It is, when sins have been most keenly felt, and meek confession has most humbly wailed. Extraordinary beauty then shines from the cross. Then faith embraces it with stronger grasp, and fervent praises raise triumphant notes.

Morn is most welcome after stormy night. The rays most cheer, which gleam from a dark cloud. Peace is most peaceful after tossing doubts. The hope, which once was lowest, rears the strongest head. He most loves Christ who most discerns his need. The expiation-day, which ushers in the happy Tabernacle-feast, confirms these lessons.

The time of this celebration next claims notice. The date is, when all harvests are concluded. Not only barns are laden with their grain—not only toil throughout the fields has ceased—but vines, and palms, and olive-trees have added their full store. All that earth gives of plenty is received. The golden ears are reaped—the clustering grapes are plucked—the olive-boughs have yielded their supplies. Ingathering hands have brought their treasures home. The year's rich produce is all gained. This is the season for exuberant joy. Therefore God's word goes forth, 'Let Israel's sons now hasten to My courts.'

The lesson of this edict is most clear. When bounties multiply, more praise should sing. Reader, cultivate a thankful mind. Yours is an overflowing cup—yours should be ever-flowing thanks. Your daily table is spread with daily bread. With each day's light new blessings come. You merit not these gifts. Should not your life then be a Tabernacle-feast? Think well. No shame is like the debt of gratitude unpaid. No sacrilege is like the thankless robbery of God.

Peculiar rites are now ordained. All Israel's males are called from their accustomed homes. The shelter of their roofs must for a while be left. Booths are constructed from the boughs of trees. The olive and the pine—the myrtle and the palm—the willows of the brook—contribute spreading shade. These branches form an intertwined abode. And here throughout the feast the multitudes repose. They seem as pilgrims sojourning beneath the forest's arms. The city has become a foliaged tent.

Do any here enquire the significance of this singular decree? The word of God replies, "During the seven festival days, all of you who are Israelites by birth must live in shelters. This will remind each new generation of Israelites that their ancestors had to live in shelters when I rescued them from the land of Egypt. I, the Lord, am your God." Lev 23:42-43. This then is a reminding sign. It sets the past before the pondering eye. It calls the thoughts to intermix with bygone scenes. The population is thus made to live again the infant annals of its race. It here rehearses the marvels of the nation's birth.

Let us with them go back in wondering thought.

It was a solemn time, when God arose to rescue Israel's sons. With mighty arm He broke the tyrant's yoke. With mighty signs He led them through the deep. With beckoning hand He marked their march. With food from heaven He satisfied their needs. A trickling stream brought waters in their rear. With fearful majesty He re-published the glorious Law. He ordered a long train of Altar-rituals to shadow out redeeming grace. He framed peculiar codes to form their character—to discipline their minds—to seal them, as His chosen treasure. Such was the nursery of the favored tribes. Thus God came down to win them to Himself. What grace, what tenderness—what evidence of special favor! No nation ever saw the like. No family was ever thus espoused.

But through these wondrous days, they had no settled home. They wandered in a desert-waste. They dwelt in tents, as a wayfaring tribe. It is to fix these early dealings on their minds, that God constrains them year by year to sojourn in these verdant booths. Each circumstance around would re-awaken memory's delights. In happy converse they would trace and retrace their former mercies and their privileged estate. We are the people, whom the Lord has blessed. To us pertain "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises." Rom 9:4. Our fathers rested beneath shade like this, when first God called them to be His. The flame of faith would thus be fanned, and shadows of the past would add rich colors to their present joy.

Believer, here is instruction for your heart. You too should come apart, and take your seat beneath the branches of reviving thought. Contemplate the past. You once were in a desert state. There was a time, when God first visited your heart, and called you to His feet, and whispered words of love. Sweet was this manna to your happy lips—cool were these waters to your taste—and memory's wings should often fly back to these hours. Their record should be read, and read again. The grateful lips should often repeat, 'I once was dead, but now I live. I once was blind, but now I see. I had no refuge; now I dwell in God. I had no hope, now glory dazzles me around.' It is a rich Tabernacle-feast when faith reviews its infant converse with the Lord.

The booths, also, were a fragile shelter. They were not reared for durable continuance. A few brief hours raised them. A few brief days would see them cast aside. Here is a picture of life's little speck. What are these bodies, but tents of crumbling flesh? Today they live—tomorrow they lie low. Man breathes but to expire. The Word of truth exhausts similitudes to warn us of our brevity. Each rapid and most short-lived object shows that departure is at hand.

This is another lesson from booth-dwellings. Reader, you are a tenant of a falling shelter. Dream not of a long stay. In a few years at most, all the vast multitudes, who throng this earth, will have returned to kindred dust. This very day your tenement may fall. Live then with your loins girded, and your staff prepared to march. Act every act, as if your last. Speak every word, as if with dying breath. Move, as if moving to the judgment-seat. Flee every scene, where you would tremble to resign your life. Your tent is but a withering branch. You must soon leave it. Make sure your title to an everlasting home.

But there is deeper doctrine here. These lowly homes foreshow the tent of humble flesh, in which the Son of God scorned not to sojourn. They turn attention to Bethlehem's manger. Christ's perfect manhood is the fact, from which faith draws its deepest streams of peace. On this our rapturous eye should without ceasing dwell. The mighty God—Jehovah's fellow—indeed put on our flesh. He, who is far too bright for angel's gaze, has veiled His glories in a tenement of clay.

We must endure the penalty for our sin, either in person or by proxy. He takes our place. His Gospel is, 'My flock has sinned, and, as poor sinners, they are doomed to wrath; I come to earth to occupy their place, to bear their guilt, and to sustain their curse. Their life is forfeited—My life shall be the substitute. Just wrath demands their death—My death shall be presented in their stead.' Thus Jesus is a pilgrim in our lowly abode. Thus He responds to the main feature of the Tabernacle-feast.

Let us now mingle with the rites.

Throughout this Feast the Altar groaned with victims slain. Each animal was brought. Burnt offerings; grain offerings; sin offerings; drink offerings, scarcely found an end. Blood flowed in a full tide.

Reader, in joy's happiest flights redeeming blood must have a foremost place. No blessings speed but through a Savior's death. Christ is the pathway, along which mercies come. Sin chokes all other channels. Hence when praise sings, it looks towards the cross. The lips, which celebrate God's tender love, are touched with a live-coal from atonement's altar. None truly blessed, apart from Jesus's work.

The bulls in these offerings diminish gradually. It is not easy to assign the cause. The descending scale might show, that typifying rites were tending towards their close. Their end would come. The orb of day would soon arise. Then all mists melt into full light. So too faith's pleadings only last throughout the present time-state. Each hour brings consummation nearer. Then prayers and ordinances cease. Then Christ will shine in one unclouded blaze, and all eternity be one enraptured gaze.

But there were other ceremonies in these days. The joyful crowds come forth. Each hand uplifts a palm-tree branch, and waving high their verdant wands, they march around the Altar. As they move on, they raise triumphant songs, and send their loud Hosannas to the skies. The courts re-echo with a chorus of delight. While thus in thought we join this shouting throng, another congregation rises to our view. Behold a glowing scene. "After this I beheld, and lo! a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Rev 7:9-10.

Reader, this joy, these victory-shouts, this palm-waving ecstacy draws near. Shall you be one among the countless mass? Will your hands bear this conquering sign? It cannot be, if you are this world's slave. It cannot be, if your days toil for sin. It cannot be, except your heart be given to Christ—unless you are all cleansed in His all-cleansing blood—unless you make His wounds your life. They only, who are Christ's by faith, sing this Salvation's hymn.

Another service was adjoined. With golden vessel the priest approached Siloam's pool. He thence drew water, and outpoured it at the altar's base. This rite drew forth the loudest thrill of joy. The multitudes in swelling chorus sang again. They take the prophet's blessed words, "With joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation." Isa 12:3. Their spirits seemed to soar away from earth, and catch the rapture of the saints in light. If earthly shadows be thus glad, how will the heavenly realities exceed.

Reader, the eye of Jesus while on earth surveyed this scene. He witnessed and thus spoke, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." Joh 7:37-38. Have these words come in power to your soul? Have you in truth drawn water from this saving fount? Mark—you are called. Christ graciously invites. He will not turn away. His word secures your welcome. Come, come, partake. The draught will give you life for evermore, and cause you to dispense the living stream. Come, and in spirit keep the Tabernacle-feast. Read not in vain the Savior's cry. Read not in vain this record of these festive days.

Lev 25.10

The Jubilee

"The fiftieth year will be set apart as holy, a time to proclaim release for all who live there. It will be a jubilee year for you, when each of you returns to the lands that belonged to your ancestors and rejoins your clan." Lev 25:10

Who can return too often to the truth, that Jewish services are framed with closest reference to Christ? This is their wondrous worth. Hence day by day the victims bleed, and constant rites portray the scheme of grace. He, who is Spirit-taught, distinctly reads the Gospel in this page of types.

But one recurring season is as the sun in the bright skies of signs. It is the year of Jubilee. Faith here delights to revel with especial joy. It is the richest foretaste of Gospel-truth. May we gain wisdom from its various parts!

In Israel's land each fiftieth year is universal rest. No toiling hand may move. The sickle and the spade are laid aside. Tillage and harvest sleep. No seed may now be sown. No crop may now be reaped. The grape, the olive, wave their treasures, but no gatherer collects. Repose is the one law for man—for beast—for soil. A year-long Sabbath reigns. Here God asserts His sovereign right to earth. No fields are to be tilled or used, except as He is pleased to grant.

This is a lesson, which man slowly learns. His pride is prone to call the lower world his own. He thinks—he acts—as if he were creation's lord. His imagination builds a throne, and crowns himself the king. But this decree establishes God's rule. We are dependent tenants of His fields. When He permits, we occupy. When He forbids, we pause. And never is the gift enjoyed, but when we meekly bow before the glorious Giver. Happy the man, whose grateful heart often sings, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." Psa 24:1. This is the Jubilee's first note.

We next are taught God's power to provide. A plentiful harvest depends not solely on our prudent thought. God wills, and crops abound. He speaks, and garners are full. Thus through this year of rest, need never came. This marvel is more marvelous, because the Jubilee succeeds a Sabbath-year. In that, also, seeding and reaping had not stirred. In that no grain had been collected with precautionary care. But God gave forth a triple harvest in each forty-eighth year. Thus through the long repose previous abundance ministered full food. As the poor widow's meal and oil, it proved an unexhausted feast. As Joseph's well-replenished store, it fed the hungry, and never failed.

When God provides, need disappears. The unbelieving heart will sometimes strive, by undue means, to heap up wealth. Alas! what madness and what sin! The unpermitted gain is poverty's worst poverty. None can succeed, without the Lord; and none shall lack, who truly follow Him. Faith has the richest table. It works, when God says, 'Work'. It rests, when God says, 'Rest', and in obedience thrives.

Next mark, this year is an emblem of soul-rest in Christ. The soul is the real man. There is no gain, except the soul get benefit.

Before the refuge of the cross is seen, the awakened mind frets like the troubled sea. It has intense desire to flee the coming wrath. It trembles at the prospect of unending woe. Heaven seems a height beyond all reach. Hell gapes before the feet. Can there be peace? All efforts must be made. Each nerve is strained to form anew the inner man—to bring to God the offering of a better life—to blot out guilt by tears, and sighs, and prayers, and religious forms, and self-inflicted pains, and a long train of doings and undoings. Such striving is in vain. Wrath is not thus appeased, nor heaven thus won. But when the Spirit shows Christ's finished work, then toil for reconciliation ends. Christ's blood atones. What more can be required? Christ's righteousness completely covers. What can be added to it? The soul sees this, and sits content beneath the sheltering shadow of the cross. Its Jubilee has come. It rests in Christ, and only lives in exercise of grateful love. Reader, reflect, that man can never be self-saved. Jesus is all, for sin's remission, and repose of heart.

Observe the entrance to this consecrated year. It instantly begins, when the Atonement-day has ceased. When penitence has deeply mourned—when the Scapegoat has borne sins out of sight—when the High-Priest has sprinkled the mercy-seat—this holy season dawns.

A light here shines upon the path, which leads to rest. It lies through penitence and sense of pardon given. How many live, with little knowledge of their state! They feel no burden pressing them to hell! They smite not on the breast with penitential shame. Their life may be a drowsy dream, but it is far from Gospel-peace. To them no Jubilee has come.

Others, with consciousness of soul disease, see not the precious remedy. They lay not the hand upon a Savior's head. They tell not out to him their miserable need. They do not thus transfer the overwhelming weight. To them the Scapegoat is an idle tale. Therefore to them no Jubilee has come.

Others rejoice not in a risen Lord. They see Him not within the veil. Darkness conceals His great transactions there. To them no Jubilee has come. Reader, do not forget, it is acquaintance with atonement made, and Jesus sprinkling the throne above, which introduces Jubilee-repose.

And now the day arrives. The trumpet sounds throughout the land. In every place—by every ear—the long-expected notes are heard. They tell no doubtful tale. They speak, and Israel knows, that Jubilee's great joys are theirs. They speak, and universal happiness prevails.

Such is your work, you ministers of Christ. The gladdest tidings are your theme. Angels might covet your employment. Oh! see, that your lips publish rest in Christ. Then hearts will joy in your report. "Comfort! comfort My people, says your God." Isa 40:1.

There was much cause for Israel's delight. The downcast debtor now was free. The bondman cast away the yoke. All forfeited estates returned. The oppressor might no more oppress. No servant trembled at a lord's stern voice. The former owner claimed his father's fields. The ancient landmarks were rebuilt, and liberty resumed its sway. In every house—in every heart—there was a consciousness of relief. Sorrow and mourning fled away.

So there is all-deliverance in Christ. The Gospel is true Jubilee in every sense. We are poor debtors. But our Lord brings help. We owe obedience to our Maker's will. Our time—our strength—our means—our opportunities—our every faculty—our minds—our frames—are His. We hold a trust and stewards must be faithful. But is it so? Conscience turns pale. Each hour bears witness to a misused gift. God has been robbed. His own has not been paid. His goods have been misspent. Denial is in vain. Our debts exceed the moments of our lives. But justice must have reckoning. There is no trifling with God. Sinner, look onward to the day, when you must face each charge. What can you bring to wipe away your score? Self gives no hope. Your best at every moment fails to meet that moment's dues. If you this day did all, the service leaves past duties unfulfilled. Your state, then, is insolvency. What can you say, why justice should not now arrest you?

But hark! Your Jubilee is come. Christ has come to earth with treasure in His hands. He cries, 'Tell me what justice needs.' The amount is vast. But He avails to pay. The scales are heavy. But He pours in His reconciling death. Its value mightily outweighs. The roll of strict demand is long and dark. His blood obliterates each charge. He touches, and the page is whiter than the whitest snow. Thus all His ransomed ones are free. Let the believer then rejoice in his glad Jubilee. No debt remains. No creditor affrights. Without man's money and self's aid, the payment is all paid by the grand Surety, Christ.

The Jubilee relaxed the ties of bondage. So, also, Christ liberates from fetters. "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." Joh 8:36. Each soul, apart from Him, is a poor slave. Tyrants are many, and their yoke is hard.

First, Satan enchains the heart, and drags His vassals to vile service. There is no will—no power—to resist. By nature all lie prostrate at Satan's feet. But Jesus wrestles with this cruel foe, and hurls him from his throne, and breaks his scepter, and gives him a death-wound. He can no more detain the freed-men of the Lord. He may—he will—assail, affright, and tempt. He may gain some success. But it is brief. All, who are Christ's, abhor his sway, and breathe the air of liberty. The Gospel-Jubilee sets free from Satan's power.

Then, also, sin rules the captive race of men. It subjugates each soul, and it must reign, until expelled by Christ. All moral principle—all sense of shame—all longings to be pure—are weak as feathers to withstand sin's flood. But when Christ shows His dying love, and His blood streaming to atone, then a new passion gains the throne. The yoke is burst. The Gospel-Jubilee sets free from sin.

Next, this vile world is a foul tyrant. Its smile allures. Its frown deters. Its fashions force compliance. Its laws exact submission. It drives its millions to a slavish toil. But when Jesus unmasks the monster's hideous filth—when He reveals the beauties of the Gospel—then the chain snaps, the enemy is loathed, and its debasing ways are shunned. The Gospel-Jubilee sets free from the world's snares.

Death, also, is a fearful tyrant. Its chilly features terrify. It points to a near grave—it stretches forth an icy hand, strong to bear hence. The stoutest quail. The fear of dying often makes it misery to live. None can relieve, but Christ. He promises to meet His people in their hour of need—to give His arm, as their support—to brighten all the darkness with His smile. Death's dread thus dies. Its coming is a welcome chariot to carry to a better home. The Gospel-Jubilee sets free from death's affrights.

The Jubilee restores inheritance. Here Christ again appears. Sin wrought a cruel work. It drove man from a lovely abode. It forced him to a wilderness of weeds and woe. God's present smile was lost. The blessing of communion ceased. Life was an outcast drudgery. Death led to outcast anguish. But Christ restores in more than Eden-heritage. He places in a land of peace, where God is our near God forever. Here more is found, than was destroyed by sin. They have a sure estate, who realize this property in God. All that He is—all that He has—is theirs.

Reader, would you possess this heritage? Clasp the cross, and all is yours. Christ came—He lived—He died—He reigns—to grant this Jubilee to souls. Hear His own words, and may the Spirit bless them! "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the downtrodden will be freed from their oppressors, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come."

Luk 4:18-19.

Blessed Jesus, Your people praise You—as their life, their liberty, their ransom, their peace, their joy, their hope, their heaven, their glory. Faith lifts its hands, held by no chains, to bless You. Love wings its way, checked by no bands, to serve You. Praise sings aloud, awed by no tyrant's frown, to adore You. The whole soul, free as air, reposes in a Jubilee of joy

#Lev 25.25

THE KINSMAN

"If any of your Israelite relatives go bankrupt and are forced to sell some inherited land, then a close relative, a kinsman redeemer, may buy it back for them." Lev 25:25

Reader, your heart is hidden from man's view. But surely you are one of human race, and, therefore you partake of human need. Sin is your birth-place, and your cradle, and your native air. It is the stream, on which you naturally glide; and its course tends to ruin's depths, except some helper intervene.

But help is ready in the Savior Christ. There is more power to Him to rescue, than in sin to slay. Say, are these tidings music to your ears? If so, each image will be dear, which shows some feature of delivering grace. This is the value of the Bible-page. It is an ever-varying picture of one precious scene. Faith cannot look, but some new beauty of the beloved Lord appears.

An instance meets us in the Kinsman's rights. The tale is simple. One of Israel's sons is destitute. His goods—his lands—are torn away. The creditor demands. The claim is just. All must be yielded. But is there some Kinsman, whose heart feels pity, and whose means abound? Then he has right to pay the price, and to buy back the forfeited estate. He may not be denied. He speaks, and restitution must be made. Redeeming privilege is his.

Such is the statute of the Jewish realm. But it is more than tender mercy to those in distress. It shows far more than civil remedy for helpless debt. It is bright transcript of the work of Christ.

Mark the clear parallel. He saw our misery. He felt that no one but a Kinsman could redeem. He tarries not. He puts on our flesh. He visits earth, as man; and so is qualified to rescue our estate. Thus He stands forth the end and substance of the Kinsman's type.

Let us draw nearer. None value this restoring grace, but they, who realize their poverty. Many exclaim, 'Are we thus poor?' Nature is blind to nature's lowliness. It flaunts in rags, and calls them royal robes. It counts its tinsel to be gold. It proudly struts, as the possessor of all treasure. Alas! the misery of such conceit! What is the soul as seen by God? What is its spiritual estate? All innocence is forfeited and sold. The glorious inheritance of righteousness is gone. The title-deeds of heaven are torn away. One property alone remains—an amassed pile of sin. No beggar is so spiritually poor as man.

This is the wreck, which Jesus saw with pitying eye. His mercy moved Him, and He could not rest. His love constrained Him, and He must relieve. His heart could not forbear. He must redeem.

But mighty hindrances opposed Him. Let them be viewed. Gigantic is the mass of obstacle. The needy ones are offspring of poor earth. Dust is their origin; the worm their brother; the clod their home. But to redeem requires a kindred birth. How can this intervening gulf be spanned? Jesus is God. Infinite distance parts the natures. One sits enthroned on glory's highest seat. The other grovels in earth's lowest mire. One is as great as God can be. The other is the lowest of the ignoble.

Jesus may love. But how can He relieve? As God alone, He cannot claim the Kinsman's right. Are then the destitute beyond relief? My soul, are you then hopelessly undone? It must have been so, if Jesus's grace and wisdom had known bounds. But they are vast as Deity. Thus they are able to devise and execute a scheme. Since the Redeemer must be man, Jesus connects Himself with human ties.

My soul, draw nearer to the wondrous fact. What! will He lay aside His glorious robe, and leave His glorious throne? What? will He tread on earth in human nature, and in human form? He, whom no heavens can hold, will He be imprisoned in a case of clay? He, whose eternal age has seen no birth, will He be born an infant child of dust? Will He, who made all worlds, be made a man? Will He, who spans infinity, contract to be a humble sojourner in our abode? Will He, whose brightness far outshines the sun, wear our dull rags? Yes! One of the family alone can help—therefore one of the family He will become.

And verily it is so. There is no fact more true. The Holy Spirit lends His aid. A human frame is marvelously framed. A Virgin mother bears the heavenly child. The mighty God, Jehovah's compeer, breathes as the brother of our lowly tribes.

O my soul, what costly love is here? We count that to be real, which in its efforts sacrifices self. It is not difficult to help in word. But sincere truth is tried, when it must strip itself, and bear hard burdens, and submit to pain. Such is this love. It willingly comes down to shame and scorn.

You often think, that worlds would be low price to buy assurance of a Savior's love. You may read this at Bethlehem. The lowly manger has a voice mighty in sweetness—sweet in its might. It tells, that He has done so much, that no more could be done. God becomes man. Here then is love—high above height; broad beyond breadth; deep below depth; immeasurable; unspeakable; inconceivable. It is the God-man's godlike love. Be satisfied—give thanks—adore.

Reader, scorn not this statement—as the element of truth—the earliest lesson, which our childhood learns. No—no. God joined to man—man joined to God—is heaven's highest wisdom, and deepest thought, and most transcendent glory. It is so vast, that all the Spirit's might alone can bring us to receive it. It is the mystery, which Abel sealed with blood—and Abraham gladly saw—and David and the prophets sang—which Jesus verified—and the Apostles boldly preached. He only is the blessed man, who sees a God-man living as a Kinsman to redeem.

But mark, the Kinsman must be armed with more than ties of family. He must avail to pay the required price. Keep this in view, and then survey the vast inheritance, which is here forfeited. It is a mass of souls. Each is infinity. Each is eternity. Build a high pyramid of worlds—these riches will have bounds. Deal out earth's jewels to an endless age—the value reaches not one spirit's price. But the lost property is a company of souls more numerous, than tongue can tell. They multiply, beyond the stars, which glitter on the brow of night. What then can Jesus bring to equipoise such worth?

Reader, often weigh the price paid down by Christ. Salvation surely would be prized, if its full cost were once discerned. Our Kinsman gives Himself—His life—His blood—and they are all divine. He rescues not with money—that were vain. He brings no finite payment—that would fall short. He makes His soul an offering for sin. His Deity imparts sufficiency. Much is required; more is bestowed. The price is boundless the payment far exceeds. The power and right both meet in Christ. He comes in flesh. He pays a God-man's blood.

Reader, such is the Savior of the Gospel-page. Such is His love—His tenderness—His willingness—His might. Study His heart—His character—His plenitude—His power—His work. The every view invites—attracts—allures. Can you refrain from flying to His arms? Surely the rocky heart must melt beneath the sunshine of such grace. Surely no fears can keep you from such a Kinsman's side. Would He be man, unless He longed to save? And, being man, can He be silent to a brother's cry? Approach. Draw near. Oh! rest not, until you know, that you are His—and He is yours. Plead His near kindred-ties. Tell Him, that He is one of your own family—your nearest friend—flesh of your flesh—bone of your bone. Remind Him, that He alone has the redeeming right and might. Kneel with petitions for your ruined soul. Urge this, and you fail not. Ask all the saved. One voice responds, our elder brother never drives a coming sinner from His cross. Ask all the hell-bound. They miserably sigh, we never sought Him—therefore we are here.

Believer, awake, and see your happy state. Your soul is rescued. Your heavenly home is sure. The chains are broken. Your loving Kinsman buys you from each adverse claim. Tremble no more at Satan's rage. No longer fear the Law's stern curse. Once and forever all is paid. You are redeemed. Live a redeemed life. Often repeat, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Eph 1:7.

Awake, awake, and see your access to heavenly delights. The earthly path is often rough. Griefs press with heavy hand. Afflictions flow, as wave on wave. Tears stream, because of relatives no longer seen. Pain racks the limbs. Sickness brings langour and distress. The world points piercing sneers. False friends inflict a festering wound. You need much solace. You have it in your Kinsman's love. The Man of Sorrows tasted each bitter cup. Now from His throne He calls us to relate our every woe to Him. Each aching head may rest upon His breast, and find a pillow of relief. Trouble takes wing, when once His smile is seen. Fears are not heard, when His sweet promises speak peace. Cares are no cares, when laid on Him. Burdens are gone, when cast down at His feet. Who can be sad, who have a God-man Kinsman near?

But let your life proclaim, that being bought, you are no more your own. The Kinsman claims your heart—your love—your all. Shame, shame, to those, who would defraud Him of His purchased due! Believer, let Christ's great glory be your one pursuit. Seek it in all your time—with all your strength—with all your means. It is the Kinsman's joy to see His people bearing grateful fruits. Oh! multiply this joy. It is His glory, when you bring rich praises to His name. Let then each breath be praise.

You ministers of Christ, would you win souls? Then preach the Kinsman. Apart from Him, all topics are a chilling blight. The terror of the Law may scare. But it gives no relief. It may wound sorely. But it lacks the healing balm. The charms of virtue fascinate. But they paint summits, which unredeemed feet can never reach. External rites and forms have specious show. They seem a haven of repose. They promise steps, which mount to heaven. Experience proves, that without Christ, they only cheat. They cannot ease a tortured mind. They cannot blot out past offence. The path seems flowery. But it beguiles to aggravated woe. The Kinsman is the only help. Then publish the story of the incarnate God. This cannot be in vain. Christ never was upraised, but sinners fled into the fortress, and were safe. Proclaim the Kinsman, and souls will hang delighted on your lips, and bless you now, and bless you for evermore.

Preach Him with tender zeal. He is your model. He yearned for souls. Their misery led Him willing to the cross. Can you tell this with icy lips? Can you be listless shepherds of a listless flock? You know His earnestness. With eager flight He sought this earth. He scorned no agony—no shame—no pain. Here is again your model. Burst all the bands of self-indulgent ease. Up and be doing. Strive, as if your striving rescued men from hell. Toil, as if your toil conveyed them swift to heaven.

The Kinsman shortly will appear again. May His approving smile then be your heaven of heavens! May His glad welcome own you as brethren of His heart—the fellow-helpers of His work.

Lev 26.3-14

The Blessing and Curse

"If you walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them—But if you will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments." Lev 26:3-14.

Throughout Leviticus the voice of mercy sounds. For what is mercy, but a remedy for woe? At Sinai's base grace sweetly smiles. For what is grace, but safety for the lost? Before this mount the Gospel clearly speaks. For what is the Gospel, but God's scheme to save, while justice remains just, and truth continues true, and holiness appears more pure, and honor bends not from its highest throne? These truths here gleam in a long train of types. He, who would probe redemption's depths, will often seek this hallowed ground. He, who would drink true wisdom's cup, will often search this book with prayer.

But before the tribes advance, God labors to impress a lesson upon them. Truly, when sinners rush to hell, they strive against a warning God—they stop the ear—they set the face like flint—they harden the proud neck. They choose perdition, and so perish.

Reader, these final pages thus instruct. Heed the awakening message. There is a sacredness in parting words. Last admonitions usually sink deep. May the Lord's pen now touch the tablets of each heart!

Here God adjoins paternal counsels to a sovereign's command. He shows what blessings crown obedient paths—what miseries beset the rebel-way. Emphatic images come in to win and to deter. Two passages, as sign-posts, are upreared. The one invites to the abode of peace. The other cries, 'Flee, for all wretchedness is here'. Alluring promises first court the listening tribes. Read Lev 26:3-13. Clusters of temporal good hang thick. Survey the dazzling catalogue—unfold the roll. It is a picture, in which plenteousness abounds. The earth in season yields luxuriant crops. Scarceness and need are buried in deep graves. Peace waves her gentle scepter. Invading hosts scare not the quiet valleys. No ravening beasts watch for their prey. And if assailing armies make attack, they move to sure defeat. A little band puts multitudes to flight. A happy progeny rejoices in each house. These are external gifts—but spiritual delights are scattered with copious hand. God's presence is assured. His near abode is with His sons. He claims them as His own. He gives Himself to them. "I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be My people." Lev 26:12. Such are the blessings pledged, if statutes are observed. Can any read this list, and hesitate? Can any hear, and choose rebellion's lot?

Tremendous threats forbid. Read Lev 26:14-39. The scene now changes. Peal follows peal of terrifying awe. The disobedient must wring out appalling dregs. Health shall hang down its withered head. Each pining malady—each sore disease—each racking pain—shall prey upon the tortured frame. Famine shall raise its ghastly form. Poverty shall sit at every hearth. Seed shall be sown, but no crops spring. The trees shall mock with fruitless boughs. The forest shall send forth its ravenous hordes. The children and the cattle shall be mangled in the roads; and thus the homes shall be a solitary waste. The sound of constant war shall roar. The hostile banner shall deride the fallen city. The holy sanctuary shall be no refuge. If offerings be brought, God will refuse. Such is the heritage, if the covenant be not kept. Can any read this, and tremble not?

God's word is as fixed, as heaven's high throne. He speaks. Performance is at hand. The sons of Israel madly scorned His rule. They rashly followed their own heart's desire. And the foreshadowed doom arrived. Witness the desolation of their beauteous land, and their tribes scattered through the world's wide breadth. The sterile plains at home—the outcast wanderers abroad—bear witness, that the threatened vengeance fell.

But there are nearer lessons from these blessings and this curse. The voice is spiritual. It pictures the fair land of grace. It shows the mercies, which gird, as a belt, the true family of faith. It opens, also, the blighted waste, in which proud unsubmission dwells. The Gospel prized is all this joy. The Gospel scorned is all this woe.

Reader, words are an empty shadow, when Gospel blessedness is the theme. He, who would know, must taste, and then the half cannot be told. In Christ God gives Himself. Who can scan God? But until our God is scanned, the treasure is not fully weighed. But come and catch some glimpse.

Believe in Christ, and you are welcomed as God's child—God's heir. Your seat is at His table. Hear His assuring voice, "All things are yours—all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 1Co 3:21-23. At every moment you may draw near. You may tell out your every sorrow, and your every need. The ears of love receive. The hand of power relieves. Supplies of grace are largely given. The heavens come down in showers of goodness.

The gift of Jesus leaves no gift withheld. "He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things."

Faith finds abundance in the land of grace. For every sin there is a fountain close. For all unrighteousness there is a glorious robe. "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." For every burden a support is at hand. "Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." Light, guidance, peace sparkle throughout the Gospel-page. When Satan terrifies, the cross is seen. When conscience trembles, the dying Jesus shows His hands and side. When the law thunders, Calvary spreads its sheltering wings. When heart-corruptions vex, the Spirit comes with renovating grace. Surely that life is blessed, in which the citizenship is above, and all the hours rejoice at heaven's gate. The past is one wide flood of mercy—the present is a stream of joy—the future is all glory's ocean.

But when the end is come, and the freed spirit wings its upward flight, who can conceive the rapture? Then Jesus is revealed. No distance intervenes. No separation can again occur. If faith finds Him so dear, what, what will be the realizing sight!

And when the grave restores its prey—when this poor body puts on immortality's attire, and shines more brightly than a thousand suns—like Christ—like Christ—forever. What then? God then is fully known, and fully loved, and fully praised—while endless ages build the glory higher. Eternal love plans all this blessedness—the blood of Jesus purchases—His promise seals—His Spirit fits—His power will soon confer the crown.

It is sweet joy to linger on this scene. But God in faithfulness presents a contrast. Crowds upon crowds reject this Gospel-call. The Savior's charms, charm not. His messages are scattered to the wind. Unhappy dupes of unbelieving pride! There is no misery like yours. God's curse embitters your whole cup. The past is dark. The present gives no light. The future is an endless night. Each day, each hour, is sin. But your feet seek no cleansing fount. Therefore your sins remain. Your inner man is filth's vile mass; no Savior spreads His merits, as your cloak. Troubles abound; there is no refuge to protect. Satan compels you to his miserable work; no mighty deliverer breaks the chain. The world enslaves and cheats; no better portion calls you from its snares. If you look upwards the heavens are barred—God frowns—each attribute condemns. Friends bring no peace. Foes wound, and no balm heals. Prosperity is no bright day. Adversity is a dark gloom. Wealth cannot help. Poverty is a hard load. Thus life is misery. Death plunges into deeper woe. Eternity is hell. Such is brief outline of the accursed doom.

God's grace is scorned. His precious Son is crucified afresh. Mercy can show no mercy. Pardon cannot release. God is an adversary. All that God is must strive to heat the furnace of His wrath. Ah! unbelief! Your heritage is one unmitigable curse. Ah! rebel souls! How will you grapple with almightiness of wrath?

Do any such peruse these humble lines? Ah! Sirs, you see your case! Will you remain on this accursed ground? Will you still live a blighted tree—fit only for the burning? Will you thus hug the chain, which drags you to perdition? Oh! stay. You live, and Jesus lives. Who then can say, that you may not be saved? I sincerely would reason with you; turn not away. The Spirit's power may reach your heart.

Perhaps you abound in earthly wealth. You never knew a scanty table. But say, can gold procure God's smile—or hide your sins—or blunt the sting of death—or give a plea before the judgment-seat? You know its utter emptiness. Then cast your cheating idol to the winds. Seek Christ. He is a treasure, which can never fail. He can grant pardons. He can give title to the endless life. Be rich in Him, and then your riches reach to heaven. Escape the curse. Receive the blessing.

But perhaps the humble cottage is your home, and daily toil scarce earns the daily fare. The poor man without God is poor indeed. It is not poverty, but grace, which saves. But Jesus never scorns the lowly hut. Many a Lazarus rests on Abraham's breast. Admit Him to your heart. His presence brings contentment, which gilded palaces can never buy. His favor sets above the monarchs of this earth.

Is learning yours? The cultivated mind may roam through every field of science—and ransack all the stores of thought. But no philosophy gains heaven's key. This can be found in Christ alone. He, who knows all which mind can grasp, and knows not Christ, is but a splendid driveler. A Christless life goes down to a fool's grave.

Perhaps days are in the wane, and you look back on a long track of years. Bless God, that yet forbearing pity spares the worn-out thread. But the review is sad. What opportunities of seeking Christ have perished profitless! But is "too late" your doom? Is the door barred? Arise and knock. It has often opened to an aged hand. May it be so to you! Oh! what a change, if like the aged Simeon you depart in peace, clasping the Savior in rejoicing arms!

It may be so, that youth is in its bud. Who can regard you, without anxious thought? The world is watching to ensnare. Satan prepares his most beguiling baits. But grace can win you to the cross. Would you be wise? True wisdom is in Christ. Would you be great? He raises to a Godlike path. Would you be happy? He fills the cup with never-failing joys. Would you win others to a blessed life? He, who lives Christ, strews blessings all around. But linger not. Youth must soon fly. It often sinks into an early grave.

Are children yours? How much may turn upon the early bias, which you give. Tell them of Christ. They who have intellect to grasp one thought, may learn the truth of a redeeming cross, and of pure joys beyond the grave. When hearts can feel, they may love Christ. Remember, apart from Christ, all here, and ever, is a dark curse. Christ, and Christ only, is eternal life. Blessed are they, and only they, who know, and love, and serve Him.

You ministers of Christ, behold your theme. So dreadfully denounce the curse, that you and yours may flee it. So sweetly paint the blessing, that you and yours may grasp it. So fully preach the Savior, that you and yours may be forever saved. Blessed are they, who, living, preaching, dying, make Christ their All.

Lev 27.34

THE SUMMARY

"These are the commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai." Lev. 27:34.

Leviticus thus ends. Bright is this jewel in the Bible-crown. This Book stands as a rich tree in a rich garden of delight. Happy are they, who gather wisdom from its laden boughs!

These last words fall with solemn weight. They are the farewell of these pages. They seem to seat us on some height, whence we survey the traversed plain. They bring the whole into a narrow view. They bid us to cast back a parting glance, and count our gain before we onward move.

As we reflect, one truth is obvious. The main lesson of this Book is Christ. He is the light and luster of each part. To read aright, is to walk up and down with Him. Have we thus found? Is He more deeply engrafted in our hearts? Is He more closely enshrined within our thoughts? Has He become the mainspring of our being? Have we no longer any mind but His? Christ is the juice—the life—the heart-blood of Leviticus. If it instruct not thus, the veil is on the reader's mind. He gropes in darkness amid glorious rays.

He who sees Christ—the glory of this Book—sees quickly, that our God is love. The Son reveals the Father's heart. The gift proclaims the Giver. Here golden letters write God's name of love.

Hear it, O Earth. Let this bright sunbeam shine through every climate. Behold God's loving mercy in redemption's plan. He calls His Son to bear the sinner's sins. He lays all help upon a mighty helper. Such scheme is as a flood of grace bursting from springs of love. The first thought and the last is love. When then Leviticus exhibits Christ, it calls us to adore our God, as Love.

This Book, also, is a signal proof of God's desire to bless. Strong efforts are here made to break down ignorance—to dispel mists—to introduce pure light—to open out the Gospel-way. A remedy unknown heals no disease. A shield unused wards off no blows. A chart unstudied is no guide. A savior hidden is savior none. Hence types and figures are profusely given. They leave no mode untried to picture Christ. They show clear models of His saving work. Part after part moves, as a living semblance, on the stage. The Gospel is here displayed in skillfully-constructed forms. One is exhibited. Another comes. And then another is adjoined. But all have one design—to set Christ before men. In varied colors the same features shine. In every portion "Christ is All." Can we thus read, and doubt God's mind?

Is not the significance as clear as day? If constant efforts prove desire, here is desire, that eyes may see—and hands may grasp—and feet may swiftly follow—and hearts may love—and souls may trust, the Savior sent by God. Who can draw back, when God thus strives to teach? Reader, can you pass through Leviticus to death?

Leviticus next graphically shows, how Jesus saves. It is a blood-stained record. The rites are full of death. The page resounds with victims' groans. Is not Christ here? He comes not with entreaties on His lips. He strives not to melt justice by appeals. He brings no pleas for mitigation or reprieve. He grants, that His poor flock are lost—wholly and helplessly undone. He writes condemned on each, and He allows, that endless misery is justly earned. He vindicates Jehovah's glory in demanding death. But He claims right to save by substitution. He pleads the Covenant, which gives Him license to be Surety. He comes a proxy by eternal compact. The sinful seed are flesh and blood. He takes this nature. He assumes this flesh. So He becomes our Kinsman. If flesh must suffer—He is flesh. If soul must agonize—a human soul is His. Thus He is wholly fit to bear—to suffer—and to die. He bounds, as ardent courser to the guilty place. With eager step He mounts the Altar. His people's sins are piled on Him. The hateful load is bound upon His back. And He endures, until every penalty is fully paid. He drinks the cup, until every dreg is drained. The sword of justice is sheathed within His heart. He verily sustains the all of all that torment, which endless hell would have been pouring on His flock.

This is that fact, on which Salvation hinges. Until this be fully seen, the soul drifts hopelessly towards shores of woe. Oh! it is worth ten thousand times ten thousand worlds, to be assured, that death has died—and sufferings suffered—and agonies endured—and the worm slain—and vengeance satisfied—and sins washed out—and debts all paid. It is the joy of joy, to see no frown in God—no stern repulse—no look but tenderness and smiles. It is, as heaven begun, to see hell's portals closed—its chains all shivered—its fires extinct. It is ecstatic rapture to behold an open passage to a glorious home—a blessed rest—a reign with God forever.

Leviticus is blazoned with this fact. The altar prominently stands. What is it, but an emblem of the cross? Victims without number die. They each are typal representatives of Christ. A stream of blood flows without ebb. Each drop displays the wounded Savior, and the dying Lamb. Priests spare not the death-blow. The uplifted arm shows justice with the avenging sword. The blazing fire consumes its prey. Here all demands of wrath are met. The tabernacle-service thus displays a reconciling Calvary. It leads directly to the curse-bearing tree. It is a varied model of Christ taking away guilt—of God inflicting punishment on Him—of sinners ransomed by His anguish—of wrath expiring in the God-man's wounds.

Such are the rays, which mainly constitute Leviticus' light. Reader, an earnest question knocks at your heart's door. What is your profit from this Book? It may be, that you see no heaven-born virtue in these signs—that all these rites seem but a meaningless parade of death. Tremble. The Gospel hidden is the grave of hope. But look again. Each sacrifice allures you to Christ's side. Each record brings the only Savior to your door. Each altar is a call to Calvary.

Ah! can it be, that Jesus's emblems have no charms for you! Sad is this evidence. The all-lovely is not lovely in your eyes. The all-precious is accounted vile. God's grandest gift is scorned. Heaven's glory is cast, as a husk to wind. But look again. Think of the misery of a Christless state—the peril of a Christless life—the anguish of a Christless death. You dare not say, that you are without sin. The hardest heart—the dullest mind—the blindest of the blind—allow, that there is error in their lives. Be sure iniquities are an appalling mass. The sands of all the ocean's shores reach not their number. In height, they tower above the skies—defying God. In depth, they penetrate to hell—there claiming the just due. Each stone of this tremendous pile is such an outrage against God, that finite penalty can never make amends.

Now read Leviticus again. Its pages cry, 'Sin need not be your ruin.' There is a death which saves from death. There is a stream, which cleanses from all stains. There is a wounded side, which shelters—hides—redeems. A Savior dies. And, if through grace you clasp His cross, all—all—is pardoned. Leave not Leviticus, until you shout, "I see salvation's glorious scheme. I see a God-man bleeding in my place. I see transgression laid on Him. He has endured my hell. He calls me to His heaven." Then will these types be chosen pleasure-ground, and steps to ever-brightening views.

But there are some, who, spirit-led, have found the cross. Thrice-happy men! You are God's sons, and glory's heirs. But here you pant—you long—you strive—you pray, for deeper knowledge of your precious Lord. More—more—is your intense pursuit. The day is blank, unless you study Christ. To you Leviticus is a boundless mine. The more you dig, the richer is the ore.

When Satan whispers that your sins are vile, these many sacrifices pass in review. Each puts a seal to the reviving truth, that God's own Lamb bears guilt away, and so these rites extract all conscience-stings.

You hear of coming wrath. You know that quenchless fire is terrible reality. But every altar shows fierce flame consuming an offering, that the offerer may be free. You thus are taught, that all the vengeance, which you earn, expires in Jesus's agony.

You seek renewed assurance, that God's smile is towards you. These rites forever sound, that enmity no more remains—that reconciliation is complete.

Your piercing eye would read the language of Christ's heart. These rites unfold it. Each death proclaims; 'Christ dies for you'. He counts no sufferings great, to buy you, as His own; He wades through all the billows of God's wrath—through all the flames of hell—through all the depths of torment, to set you free, and cleanse you from all stains, and rescue you from foes. His anguish passes thought. And why? Because His love for you exceeds all bounds. Leviticus displays its costly efforts, and thus proves its truth. Faith claps the hand in every ordinance—and sings, 'See how Christ loves me!'

But you are conscious of an evil heart. You would be pure, as God is pure; but vile corruptions raise their hated head. You would have every thought in heaven; but a depressing weight drags down to this earth's mire. You would have life one spiritual employ; but an indwelling foe prevents. Seek for relief amid these types of Christ. Draw nearer to the slaughtered victims, and the streaming blood, and the uplifted knife. Through these discern the tortures of the cross. Each pang shows sin to be exceeding sinful—a monster of unspeakable deformity—an enemy, which slew the Lord—the executioner of all His stripes. You must loathe that, which pierced Christ's heart. Down, down with that, which spared not Christ. Thus he, who probes by faith the wounds of Christ, most hates iniquity—most flies its touch. Leviticus thus leads to a sin-loathing walk.

Learn more and more the quickening lessons of this Book. You live in a cold world. You breathe a freezing air. You have to climb an adverse hill. You have to struggle with resisting tides. Your chariot wheels need oil. Fresh fuel is required to keep your fire alive. Seek warmth and a reviving gale from these invigorating rites. Here Christ is seen a quenchless flame of zeal. He is one effort to save souls. Behold and catch the holy warmth. Behold, and be Christ-like.

These are sad days of indolent profession. There is a 'superficial faith' in soft attire. There is much loitering by the brooks of sloth. Whence this indulgent ease? Christ and His dying love are little studied—and are poorly felt. He, whose eye cannot long be absent from the cross, will find his heart all fire—his feet all speed—his lips all fluency—his life all effort to save souls—to thwart Satan—to testify of Christ—to glorify his God. Self dies in Jesus's death. Life in Christ's service springs from Jesus's cross. Zeal is the fruit of this Book duly read.

"Great Spirit of the living God, we bless You for this Gospel-book. Hear an imploring prayer, and make Leviticus a seed of life—a ray of hope—a flood of peace—a pasture of delight—a garden of pure comfort—a step towards heaven—a text-book of redeeming love—a picture of Christ's heart, to many a pilgrim through this sin-sick world. Hear, for Christ's sake. Amen."

Num 1.2-3

THE NUMBERED PEOPLE.

"Take a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families, listing every man by name, one by one. You and Aaron are to number by their divisions all the men in Israel twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army." Num 1:2-3

These verses bring us to the camp of Israel still circling Sinai's base. Christian thought--waiting for dews of heavenly grace--delights to linger here. Let us observe the people closely. They are snatched by God's hand from tyrannizing foes. A miracle of care supplies their daily needs. A moving pillar guides their way. The law has been repeated to them amid terrific phenomena. Moreover they are fenced around by strict peculiarities of social custom and of typical worship. Their contact with the world is broken. They move amid the nations of the earth, as a stream flowing through the ocean's bed, unmingling with contiguous waves. God near, with sheltering arms, is their defense. Goodness and mercy guard their present steps. The land of promised rest is the horizon of their hopes.

Reader, these annals are a historic mirror. They picture a heavenly Father's special dealings with each child of faith. In every age and place there is an Israel thus mercifully loved, and led, and fed. The antitype will never fail, until the last Christian's course is run.

Hence precious teaching meets us in the study of this chart. We often err and fail, through dim discernment of our state. Peace would abound, and comforts cheer, and strength put forth more vigor, if right perceptions shed a clearer light. Let us, then, *view ourselves* in Israel's varied story. Our every step finds counterpart in them.

The parallel is quickly drawn. They once groaned bitterly in cruel bondage. But mercy set them free. Believer, you too were once a slave at Satan's will. He ruled you with an iron yoke. But now the chain is broken, and you rejoice, the ransomed freed-man of the Lord. Egypt is escaped. The tyrants holds you not.

Israel's tribes are journeying, as strangers, through a desert-waste. And is not yours a wilderness-wandering? The abiding country is not here. The rest is far away. But they are escorted and protected by a heavenly guide. So, too, a beckoning hand marks out your wanderings by day--by night. Is your soul needy? The bread of life fails not. Are you athirst? The wells of life are ever open.

They had heard "the voice of words"--the fiery law. This law has also pierced the deep recesses of your inner man. You have thus learned the glorious righteousness of God--the hateful sinfulness of sin--your ruined state in SELF. You hence are taught to prize the grace of your curse-bearing Lord, and the rich worth of His imputed merits.

Was Israel God's special portion? You, too, are not your own. You are a purchased property--a peculiar race. You shun the world, as a forbidden path--a rebel camp--an uncongenial climate--an alien tribe--a Jael's tent--a land of filth and snares.

This is a scanty outline. Daily experience fills in the picture. Let each similitude be traced. For each is a fruitful school of wisdom and improvement. There is, indeed, no novel thought in this recital. Each Bible-reader knows these things. But common truths--like common blessings--soon lose their point. Colors soon fade, without renewing touch. The flame expires, without reviving breath. Reader, be wise, and often trace your own case in this predictive story.

And now, before the people move, God speaks again. He gives command to register the Number of each tribe. Account must be distinctly taken. All names must be recorded. Their multitudes must all be reckoned and exactly known.

New instruction meets us here. God ever leads us in a brightening path. Fresh dealings are fresh seeds of wisdom. They call us to discern anew His mind. May, then, this Numbering-act enrich faith's stores!

In common matters, men count possessions, which are *choice, and dear, and prized*. They, whose base joys are fixed on this world's pelf--thus calculate their gold. Their coffers are often opened. Frequent reckonings review the contents. See, too, the watchful shepherd's care. His marking eye perpetually surveys the flock. As they go forth--as they return--the Number is most diligently kept.

Do we, then, stray beyond sound limits--do we indulge unfounded fancy--when in God's Numbering we read God's love? Do not clear characters here write, that His people are thus Numbered, because loved--counted, because prized? This truth extends to all the children of faith's family. My soul, come bow before it. Its worth exceeds all worlds.

There is no blessedness like his, whose glowing gratitude often realizes, My God loves me--my name is in His heart. The Lord of all creation esteems me among His choicest jewels.

The knowledge of this fact is reached by happy steps. They are all scripturally firm. Review them. **Why** was Jesus sent to bear your sins, and deck you in His robe of righteousness? Why did Jehovah inflict on Him the hell-pains, which were justly yours? Why was Christ slain? Why are you spared? There can be only one reply, 'God loves you'.

And why did the Spirit speed to arouse your sleeping conscience--to show self's ruin, and the remedy of the Cross? Why did your inward adamant dissolve, and unbelief melt into faith, and your whole heart clasp Jesus, as its own? There can be only one reply, 'God loves you'.

How is it, that your slender bark still rides above the raging billows of an engulfing world? How is it, that your tottering feet are still upheld along the slippery hill, which leads to Zion's heights? The *strength* is not your own. It is most freely given. There can be only one reply, 'God loves you'.

When did this love commence?--Tell me, when God began to be, and I will tell you, when His love began. Will not this love expire? Can God be no more God? While God is God, He must be love.

God loves you! Would that the eye of faith forever rested on this glorious truth! Heroic might will brace the inner man, just as this thrives and strengthens. God loves you! What an amazing impulse to bear the willing servant over all mountains of doubt, and fear, and hindrance! God loves you! What a strong shield to ward off Satan's darts! God loves you! It is victory, before one blow is struck. It is a pillow of unfailing peace. It is light in the dark day of trial. It is a cordial of invigorating comfort. It is the holy wing to lift above the world. It is an foretaste of a sure heaven.

Next, **who** are Numbered? The young--the weak--the female--stand apart. None are enrolled, but those whose age and strength enable them for WAR.

Christ's service is a mighty work--a valiant struggle--a determined fight. *Satan* disputes each onward step. We must undauntedly resist. The *world* presents its countless troops--all quick to wound--and skilled to capture. We must defy them with unwavering front. The *flesh* is an internal foe--haunting the secret chambers of the heart, and entwined around our very being. It gives no respite. No respite must be given to it.

Believer, yours is this warrior-life. Fight, as one fighting for eternity. Strive, as one striving for a kingdom. March, as one resolute to take heaven by storm. Jesus calls--commands--precedes. Follow Him boldly. The Numbered host is Numbered for the fight. The fighting host will soon shout, Victory. No one will triumph, who has never fought. No one, who truly fights, will fail. Each Numbered soldier paid a **ransom price**. Exo 30:12. The rich--the poor--were equally assessed. There was no difference for differing age or state.

The Gospel of this fact is clear. All in Christ's camp are ransomed by His blood. All join the chosen band, confessing, that they need redemption, and glorying in redemption found. All plead one sacrifice. All bring the same expiation-price.

Next count the register. It presents a vast array of Numbered warriors. They stretch beyond six hundred thousand men. Num 1:46. Whence is this marvelous increase? One family had entered Egypt. Hardship, and cruelty, and toil had done their worst to keep them low. But now, within the lapse of a short period, they stand an army of this vast extent. Whence is this multiplied expanse?

God's early promise was their portion. "I will make of you a great nation." Gen 12:2. God's purpose never fails. When He has spoken, seeming impossibilities may rise--but all in vain--fulfillment will not tarry. The Numbered People prove, that our God is Truth as well as Love. His promise is a seed, which surely ripens into fruit.

Reader, behold again this multitude. It is an emblem of a far larger host. The conflict will soon end; and then before the throne a countless company will be spread. Rev 7:9. They are the saved from every nation--kindred--people--tongue. Their robes are white; for Jesus's blood has washed them. Their hands wave palms; for they have conquered in His name. Say--say--will you rejoice and triumph with them? Say--say--are you now warring, a comrade in these ranks? The *fight* is prelude to the *crown*.

About a year has passed since the last Numbering of this family. The Levites then formed part of the collected mass. They are not now included. They stand apart, a separate portion. But mark a wondrous fact. The Number then and now amounts exactly to the same. Israel has surrendered Levi's tribe, but Israel's forces are not thereby less. Here is a profitable lesson. We never lose by giving to the Lord. Selfishness is poverty. Christian benevolence is wealth. We often grudgingly withhold. The result is loss, not gain. The coffers drain not, which supply God's cause. The more thus given is the more possessed. They, who thus lay out, lay up.

Reader, once more survey the Numbered People. You are inclined to say, this band will safely reach the promised land. Surely their willing steps will ever run in the appointed way. Alas! two, and two only, steadfastly adhere. The multitude distrust the Lord. They wilfully provoke Him. Therefore just indignation dooms them to exclusion. Their corpses strew the desert. And one by one they line the road with graves. They fall, a dreadful proof, that **outward privileges alone** do not save. Unbelief nullified their many means of grace. It poisoned their cup of blessing. "They could not enter in, because of unbelief." Heb 3:19.

Ah, unbelief! It is the sin of sins--the misery of miseries--the hopeless malady--the death of souls--the bar, which shuts out Christ.

Reader, is this vile viper lurking in your heart? Oh! drag it to the cross, and slay it there. Implore the Spirit, by His mighty sword, to hew it into shreds. If it survives, you die. The case is clear. Can he be healed, who scorns the only cure? Can he reach home, who leaves the only homeward path? Can he be cleansed, who flees the only cleansing stream? Can he go in, who will not pass the door? Can he escape from the fast-sinking wreck, who spurns the life-boat? Who can reach God, who puts aside the Mediator? Who can be saved, who tramples down the only Savior? Unbelief rejects the Gospel, and so perishes. It turns God's truth into a lie, and it goes hence to learn its folly, where faith never comes. Many may be Numbered, as the Church's sons, who are not Numbered, as the heirs of life.

Num 2.2

THE CAMP.

*"Each tribe will be assigned its own area in **the camp**, and the various groups will camp beneath their family banners. The Tabernacle will be located at the center of these tribal compounds."* Num 2:2

When Balaam looks down upon the outstretched Camp of Israel, his very soul expands. It must break forth in praise. The beauty captivates. The order charms. The evidence is clear--no common people there reside. He rapturously exclaims, "How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel!" He paints a landscape of delights. "They spread before me like groves of palms, like fruitful gardens by the riverside. They are like aloes planted by the Lord, like cedars beside the waters." Num 24:5-6. Images of choice fruits--elaborate arrangement--luxuriance--verdure--stateliness--fragrance--lend colors to depict the scene.

Reader, let us, too, mount the heights of godly meditation, and in spirit view this favored Camp. And as we gaze, may rays from heaven illumine every part!

The points rich in instruction are--the tents themselves--their order--position--standard.

1. THE TENTS. Abodes present themselves. They are not splendid palaces, and golden columns, and sparkling capitals, and giant pyramids. They are not constructed, as lasting monuments to future times.

The simple contrast meets the eye. They are poor tents. They stand today. Tomorrow sees the cords relaxed--the fastenings removed, and a vacant place. They are the pilgrim-dwellings of a pilgrim-troop--the short-lived homes of short-lived sojourners.

This first view instantly reminds of mortal state. What is our body? It is nothing but clay. These frames have one origin--the dust. The vilest reptile and the proudest prince are composites of one poor mire. Is it not folly, then, to pamper and admire this flesh? At best these bodies are a tent--than which creation knows no humbler thing.

How soon they crumble! No care--no thought--no art can lengthen out continuance. The countless families of foregone ages--where are they now? Dust they were. To dust they are gone back. The many families of this our day--where do they speed? Dust they are--to dust they hasten. The tents must fall. But when? Perchance this very hour. Is he not then the fool of fools, who boasts him of to-morrow's dawn!

My soul, from Israel's tents, you learn, *how fleeting is life's day!* Press then the question, 'When I go hence, is an abiding mansion mine? There is a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. Is it for me? Christ lives to prepare everlasting homes. Are they for me? Oh! turn not from this Camp, until faith clearly reads its title to the heavenly home.

Flesh is a *lowly* abode. This thought commends the grace of Jesus. He scorned not to assume it. Amazing fact! He took this clothing, as His own. Beneath these *rags* He hid the glories of His glorious Deity. No man was ever man more thoroughly than Jesus. He tabernacled in manhood's baseness, as truly as He shone in Godhead's brightness. He thus descended, that He might endure--suffer--bleed--die--might bear the curse--and hang upon the cross.

This none but man could do, therefore His tent was pitched, as man, among the sons of men. He was made *man*, that He might be made *sin*. He was made sin, that He might take it thoroughly away. He sought a lowly tent (body) to do a godlike work.

But soon the degradation passed. Humiliation's valley was left. The cross was triumph's chariot. And now in heaven--at God's right hand--on glory's throne--the God-man sits. Manhood now shines in Him arrayed in light of Deity. And all, whom faith makes one with Him, will soon behold and share this luster. Their vile bodies shall be changed. Weakness and frailty shall put on unfading freshness. The lowly bud shall bloom into a glorious flower. The glorious Head will leave no member in decay.

Blessed are they, whose faith discerns Him nailed as their Surety on the tree. He comes--He quickly comes to gild mortality with life. Happy the inhabitants of these crumbling frames, if only they are Christ's! They now are vilest dust. They soon will shine more brightly than ten thousand suns.

2. THE ORDER. Let Israel's Camp be now more closely scanned. What perfect regularity appears! Rule draws each line. Arrangement is complete. These streets of tents are uniformity's perfection.

One truth is here distinctly written. Our God delights in order. Where He presides, confusion vanishes.

Is it not so in every Christian heart? When Jesus takes the throne, wise rule prevails. Disturbing lusts lie down. Perplexing doubts flee far. Gusts of sinful desire are lulled. The soul is like the well-set garden, in which *method* plants each shrub and flower.

Is it not so in Christian life? Each duty occupies its stated post. There is no tangled labyrinth of plans--no misspent diligence--no toil without a purpose. God's worship has its sacred place--and no intruder interferes. The Scripture claims appointed study--and then the door is barred against disturbing entrance. The family demands due care--due care is given. The home--the closet--the public--the world, in turn have claims--in turn are served. Each morning dawns--each evening closes, on a well-ordered scheme of work.

How different is the worldling's day! It seems an upset hive. The notes all jar--movements all jostle. It is a jumbled chaos of desire--attempt--design. Motives conflict with motives--thoughts with thoughts--plans with plans. Why is it so? God rules not. Wisdom holds not the rudder. Therefore the ship is sport to every wind and wave. There is no order, but in the Camp of God.

But in Israel's Camp each tribe has its place. The family of Aaron guard the tabernacle's door. The sons of Levi encircle the holy tent. The other tribes occupy appointed ground. God fixes all the bounds, and all the bounds are gladly kept.

The same all-ruling mind disposes now each member of Christ's body. Each enters on the stage of life, as God is pleased to call. Each runs a pre-ordained course. Each disappears, when the allotted task is done. We see this clear arrangement throughout the Church's history. At the set time the sun of *Moses* sets--the star of *Joshua* dawns--the several *Judges* rule--the several *kings* ascend the throne. In the right season Paul labors--and *apostles* preach--and *martyrs* seal the truth with blood--and each devoted *teacher* toils--and each disciple aids the Gospel-cause. God plans each champion's station in the Gospel-Camp.

Reader, bow humbly before this ordering mind. Then discontent will not arise. No murmurings will mourn an obscure lot--a grievous burden--a lengthened pilgrimage--or an early grave. The time--the task--the place--will be regarded, as most wisely fixed. What if self-will could make a change? Would it not mar the work on earth, and tarnish the eternal crown? The foot should not desire the hand's employ--or the eye's higher seat. Ephraim is pleased, that Judah leads. Judah would not take Ephraim's rear place.

3. THE POSITION. But all these tents share one grand privilege. "Around the *Tent of Meeting* shall they camp." They all have common focus. As the planets circle the sun, so these surround the sanctuary. *God is the center.* They form the wide circumference. And from each door one sight--the holy tent--is visible.

Is there no *meaning* here? There is!--and it is *precious*. God in Christ Jesus is the center--the heart--the life--the strength--the shield--the joy of His believing flock. In their midst He dwells--their glory and delight. When they go forth, their eyes are fixed on Him. When they return, it is to nestle round His presence.

Is there no *warning* here? There is!--and it is *wise*. Let Christians ponder this Camp's plan, when called to fix their dwellings upon earth. When weighing the advantages of the right place to settle, the foremost thought should be, 'Is God known here? Are His pure truths here clearly taught?' There may be rites and forms. But an external rituals are not grace. A heaven-directed church spire leads not infallibly to heaven. 'Ichabod' is the name, if God in Christ be not proclaimed.

Soul-profit is real profit. And soul-profit cannot be apart from Christ. Soul-loss is saddest loss--and the soul loses, when not led to Christ. Our children, too, and all who form our household, claim, that their first good be first considered. Was Lot a gainer, when his eye only coveted the fertile plains? How David's pious spirit mourns, when exiled from the house of God! Can fairer fields, or sweeter temporal prospects, make amends for a cold blank within? Can healthful air repay for inward sickness and a spiritual decline? What, if any tribe should have receded to spots, from which the cloud could not be seen! The end would have been sure. It was cut off from Israel. So all, who willingly abide far from the Gospel's light, choose present darkness leading to far darker night.

4. THE BANNER. A banner floats above each tribe. Beneath the well-known sign they rest. And by its side they march.

Believers have a banner too. The banner over them is Jesus's love. Son 2:4. Enlightened eyes can ever catch these waving flag folds, and read therein the great Commander's heart.

The banner is a pledge of **safety**. True, mighty foes hate and assail. True, night and day they plot and rage, and draw the bow, and lay the snare. But they must fail. The fight may be both fierce and long, but in Christ's Camp no follower can finally expire.

Beneath it there is **sweet repose**. The weary spirit and the worn-out flesh can often watch no more. Unless the vigilance of heavenly love defend, surprise will overpower the fainting bands. But as is the vineyard of the Lord, so is His Camp. "I, the Lord, will watch over it and tend its fruitful vines. Each day I will water them; day and night I will watch to keep enemies away." Isa 27:3

Beside it there is **victory**. Many have fought beneath the Gospel-banner, and all have triumphed. They, who go boldly forward, looking unto Jesus, assuredly prevail. Paul lifts aloud the happy cry--"Thanks be to God, who always makes us to triumph in Christ." 2Co 2:14. What is the one testimony of the saints in light? We strove and conquered "by the blood of the Lamb." We waved His banner and now we wave these palms. We clung to it, and now we wear these crowns. Happy Camp, where Jesus is Salvation's Captain--His cross salvation's banner--His heaven salvation's rest!

Believer, glory in your banner, and be steadfast. Alas! Sometimes shame, and timidities, and fears, have caused ignoble tremblings, and flights, and falls. Peter denied his noble flag. Deep was his wound, and bitter his repenting sighs. His warning cries, "Be courageous. Be strong." Demas was allured, and left the ranks. Was he recovered from the world's embrace? The all-revealing day alone can tell. But that dread time will show a cowardly troop bewailing the hour, when they deserted Christ. Cling, then, cling boldly, constantly, to Him. Let every company--moment--place--witness your firm resolves. Wave now and ever the glorious banner--"Christ is all."

Thus dwell within the Camp, and you will reign upon the throne.

Num 6.21

THE NAZARITE.

*"This is the law of **the Nazarite**."* Num 6:21

Here a new ordinance appears. It seems a special flower set by God's hand within the garden of the Jewish code. Therefore let special fragrance now be sought by faith, for surely special fragrance may be found.

Israel's whole race was severed from the world. But the wide circumference encompassed a narrower circle. Where all were separate, the Nazarites occupied special separation.

These stood apart, as a peculiar dedication to the Lord. Amid surrounding columns they rose the highest pyramids. Among God's servants they wore distinctive clothing. Where all were nationally holy, they showed the holiest badge.

They bound themselves by voluntary vows. Some mighty motive must have urged their hearts. But it is not revealed. Conjecture may suppose, but cannot be assured. The vow might be the act of men weighed down by consciousness of sin--appalled by sight of inborn evil--or penitent for grievous falls. It might be gratitude for signal mercies. It might be zeal to arouse others to think more of God. But the real cause is veiled. This only is declared, that Nazarites, obeying a strong impulse, gave themselves peculiarly to God.

My soul, the Nazarite here speaks with warning voice to you. Your days, are they devoted service? Your public walk, is it resplendent godliness? Are all observers led to mark, that you are wholly God's? But surely above all you should be pre-eminently His.

Think of His dealings with you--His tender love--and smiles of never-failing care. Think of your Jesus--His cross--His blood--His wounds--His agonies. Think of the mercy-seat--the interceding prayer--the coming glory--the eternity of bliss. Think of hell merited, and heaven your free-grace home. Surely each morn should see you self-bound by stricter vow--and dedicated to more signal piety.

The Nazarite's motives are unknown. But Nazarite-rules are rigidly prescribed. They are threefold. Let them now be viewed.

1. No juice of **GRAPE**, no produce of the vine, from seed unto skin, may touch the consecrated lips. Not only the intoxicating cup is banished far, but all, which grows on the intoxicating tree. Enticement's total troop, from first to last, must be expelled. Like Achan, and his little ones--all must die. Num 6:3-4.

Believer, this principle is broad and deep. You openly avow, that you are not your own. Your body--spirit--mind and soul--are purchased by redeeming blood. They all are bound a living sacrifice to the one altar--Christ. Hence you must keep them pure--clean--bright--strong--vigorous for His work. They should stand, as servants with loins girt--ready at all times to discharge His will.

Then sedulously flee whatever, like the juice of grape, may tend to weaken the firm energy, or to stir up the sleeping brood of sensual and ungodly lusts. Alas! what evil lingers still in every saintly heart! A sudden spark may cause a fearful blaze. Keep far from the beguiling cup.

Touch not the seed or the skin. Flee not strong potions only, but all that may insidiously corrupt the taste. More than gross vice is branded here. Evils may enter in a pigmy form. At first they may seem harmless, as the gentle dove. Avoid them. They are the cancer's touch. They are the weed's first seed. Rapidly they grow. Fatally they spread. Mightily they strengthen. Soon they pervade the weakened soul.

2. No **RAZOR** approaches the Nazarite's hair. His flowing locks openly announce his separate state. His head pre-eminently bears the signal of his service. The dedication must not be a secret act, known only to the conscience and the Lord. The front must witness, that the man is God's. Num 6:5.

Believer, here is another lesson for your life. Religion is not for the closet or the knees alone. It is not a lily, growing only in the shade. It is to be the one attire, in which you move abroad--the holy crown of hair, which sparkles on your brow. It must be conspicuous, as locks pendant from the head. It is not to be cut short or hidden. It must arrest attention. Like the flag, it must proclaim the country, to which the ship belongs.

Christian meekness, and the Spirit's wisdom, never conceal our faith. Truth scorns all cowardly modesty. Bold honesty rejects such timid shame. Pure religion shines as the sun without one cloud. Thus others profit by its rays. Thus, like an attractive magnet, it draw souls to God.

3. He must **AVOID ALL CONTACT WITH THE DEAD**. He must not close the eyes of his expiring friends, or catch their parting breath, or bear their corpses to the grave. Among the living, he must live. Where life is absent, he must be absent too. Num 6:6-7.

Why is death to be thus shunned? Reasons are obvious. It is the penalty of sin--the sign of God's most righteous wrath. It is a proof of innocence destroyed--of evil touched--of vengeance merited. It is abomination's colleague. Therefore it is emblem of what holy men should abhor. Life, too, is God's inseparable essence. He cannot die. Therefore to intermix with death, denotes a separation from our God.

Here is again a rule for Christian walk. He, who is Christ's, must flee the touch of everything allied to sin. The holy garments may not be defiled. The blood-washed feet must shun polluted paths. The vessels for the Master's use may have no stain. The spirit's temple must be pure. Corruption in no form may soil it.

Believer, rigidly apply this maxim. It drives you from the contagion of ungodly scenes. How many crowds are nothing but a crowded charnel-house! The bodies breathe, but hold no breathing soul. The words--the works--are odious, as an open grave. Arise--depart. The living dwell not amid tombs. The atmosphere pollutes. Depart, touch not the dead.

How many books are deathful! They may have fascinating garb. But they are only gay, as corpses decked with flowers. Their taint destroys. Their chilly touch corrupts.

This rule brands many a pulpit, as a plague-spot. A lifeless teacher often guides in paths of death. No spark from heaven has vivified his soul. What, then, but putrefaction issues from his lips? *On earth there is not a more pitiable sight, than death, in a preacher's form, digging the grave of souls.*

Here, too, we see the misery of those, who by dead works expect to buy soul-life. All works are dead, which grow not on the stem of faith. Such are but rotten berries. They live not unto God. How can they purchase life?

But no precautionary care can always keep men from the dying scene. Death has an unrestricted range. It moves among the busy haunts. Its icy hand is everywhere. In every spot it seizes victims. Thus the most watchful Nazarite might most unwillingly stand by the dead.

If so, corruption has been by his side--pollution has polluted him--his vow is broken. Therefore atonement must be made. The ordinance now commands him, as guilty, to seek God. He is required to place a whole burnt-offering on the blazing altar. He must then add a sacrifice for sin. Moreover, as a debtor, he must buy remission by a trespass-offering. Thus the chief types, which shadowed out Christ's blood, must all be brought.

This is not all. The former period of his Nazarate is cancelled. The previous days are counted, as lost time. He must cut short the locks, which hitherto had proved his separate state. He must commence afresh his dedicated walk. Num 6:9-12.

Hark! What a voice here cries, Beware of sudden evil! Satan is a lurking foe. He shoots his darts from hidden ambushes. When all seems safe, a wound is given. There is a pitfall in the firmest paths. Where least suspected, nets are spread. David arose, unconscious of the slippery ground. A few brief moments rolled him in the mire. But there is hope for suddenly contracted guilt. This type attests this blessed truth. It bids the failing Nazarite to recover his lost state by offerings of blood. Reader, at all times there is an open access to a remitting God. There is a Savior waiting to obliterate. Come, plead His merits--present His expiating death. There is no stain, which He removes not.

The type, moreover, shows, that pardon found must be the starting post of new devotedness. The washed feet ascend anew the holy hill. The cleansed hands fight with more vigor. The Nazarite, passing the appointed gate, enters again upon his sacred course.

These reconciling rites were ordered, if the offence were sudden, unintended, and abhorred. But what, if deliberate transgression be indulged? The ordinance is silent here; and thus warns solemnly. Where shall he turn, who turns presumptuously from God? Where is his hope, who boldly touches sin? Reader, never burst conscience-bounds. Grieve not the Spirit's gentle mind. Drive not the holy inhabitant from your breast. Some, who ran well, have wantonly cast off the gracious yoke. The after-course has been fall upon fall, without a check or turn.

The Nazarite vow continued only for a fixed time. The days expired. The vow was then discharged. The badge of consecration was laid down.

But grand solemnities attested the completion of this hallowed state. The Nazarite enters the tabernacle's gate. He stands beside the sacrificing altar. He brings each victim, which symbolizes sin's desert. No rite is absent, which confesses need of remission, and trust in reconciling blood. A lamb, as a burnt-offering, dies. A lamb again, as a sin-offering, is utterly consumed. A perfect ram, as a peace-offering, solicits peace. Meat-offerings in every form are piled. Drink-offerings in abundance flow. Voluntary gifts profusely follow. All hair is next shorn off. The fire receives it. It ascends in the ascending flame of the peace-offering. Num 6:13-21.

But why is there this expenditure of blood? What is the significance of this multitude of rites? They all seek expiation. They all look onward to the cross--and thus they graphically show, that *holiest deeds of holiest men can only find acceptance through the dying Jesus.* For surely this full train of pardon-petitioning sacrifice distinctly states, that the Nazarite's devoted course still needed to be cleansed.

Believer, is not this the conscious feeling of your humbled soul? You are the Lord's. You strive to serve Him--wholly--unreservedly--forever. You would bring to Him your every moment--faculty--and power. You would present the offering of your thoughts--your words--your works. But ah! what failures! You would do good--evil is present. In public acts, what inconsistency! In private duties, what outbreakings of corruption! In the closet, evil thoughts assail. On the knees, the tempter haunts. Some base imagination stains ascending praise. Your self-denial is too often self-indulgence. *The badge of the 'Nazarite vow' too often hides a worldling's heart.* What, then, shall be done? Behold the cross. There is your only help. Thence only is your peace. In that most precious blood you only can obliterate your guilt. Come, wash therein your every duty--service--prayer--thanksgiving. Cleanse there the stains of your most holy hours. Live under vows, as a strict Nazarite. But wrestle for forgiveness, as a sad short-comer.

Num 6.24-26

THE THREEFOLD BLESSING.

"The Lord bless you and keep you--the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." Num 6:24-26.

How gracious is our God in Christ! His mercy overtops the heaven of heavens. Throughout the Bible-page, at every turn, it beams forth in fresh rays. Behold a signal instance. He speaks in these verses, and blessings drop from Him, sparkling as the morning dew--large as Jehovah's heart.

The tribes are now prepared to move. The guiding pillar will soon conduct them into desert-paths. Doubtless they go encircled with all pledges of support. Their cup of favor mantles to the brim. But God still multiplies new stores of comfort. He adds--He superadds--vast bounties. He tells, that all, which heaven contains, shall fall in showers upon their heads.

With this loving mind He thus instructs the priests. "This is how you are to bless the Israelites." The act is ordered. "You shall bless." The distinct form of blessing is supplied. "This is how you are to bless." He wills to give. Is not this grace? He wills, that the vast amplitude of His gifts be evidently seen. Is not this grace on grace?

Mark the broad channel of their course. "The Lord bless you, and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." The bounteous God thus opens wide the treasures of His bounty-house--and tells the people, 'All these riches are for you.'

Believer, come now and listen to these sounds, as you sit calmly on your Gospel-heights. You see it is the office of the priest to bless. This introduces Jesus to the eye of faith. He is 'the Church's blessing Priest'. The only priesthood is wrapped up in Him. The earthly office, ministered by men, long since expired. When His own hands brought His own life a victim to the altar-cross, all 'typical' functions were fulfilled. But now on heaven's throne He ministers. There He presents the ever-fragrant incense of His blood. There He portions out the covenanted mercies. Thence freely He outpours them. He came--He lived--He worked--He died, that He might bless. He gave Himself--the price of blessings. He rose--He took His seat on high, that He might reign a Priest, forever blessed, and forever blessing.

Is there a child of Adam's needy race, who covets blessings from the courts of heaven? Let him approach. There is one open way. No fiery sword drives from it. No--a gracious hand is ever beckoning--and gracious invitations call. Hasten to Christ. He is the home of blessings.

Do any ask, When did Aaron's sons thus bless the people? On what occasion were these sounds proclaimed? The Spirit gives not a distinct reply. It is conjectured, that when the morning lamb was offered, the happy worshipers were thus dismissed. If so, when they drew near to gaze on emblems of the dying Lord, these notes hymned peace round their departing steps. It is ever true, that no poor sinner can look up to Christ, without receiving harvests of delight. Who can approach, and not retire with overflowing cup?

If the foregoing thought be right, the sons of Israel once only in each day rejoiced in this blessing. It only fell as morning-manna. But now, around the Gospel-camp, the sound unceasingly is heard. There is no moment, when the believer may not be thus cheered. Christ--his Priest--is always near. In every place--in every work--he may realize His voice, and hear the constant music of the mighty blessing, "The Lord bless you, and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." The heavenly voice is never mute. The heavenly sun knows no eclipse.

Next, the **terms** are aptly chosen to solace individual hearts. Observe--these blessings are not given, as a general store. They are not cast, as handfuls to a crowd--where some may gather much, and some return with none. Far otherwise. They single out each separate child of faith. They call each one alone, and say, Here is a blessing for your own bosom-need. Each one, apart from all his fellows, takes for himself a full supply.

These lineaments pervade our Gospel. It proclaims special grace. It brings home direct comfort to each soul. The true believer comes apart from men; he leaves the maze of general mercies; he feels, Christ "loved me, and gave Himself for me," as if redemption centered all in me. He lives in heaven, and prays at God's right hand, and fits a bright throne, *for me*, as if I were His only care. I see my own name foremost on His breast. To me the words come especially, "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace."

But if there be this special mercy in the singular address, is there not threefold mercy in the triple voice? With tender love Jehovah is thrice named. Blessings are multiplied--again--again--again. Faith quickly grasps the significance. Three glorious persons form the glorious Godhead. Doubtless they are one in undivided essence--one in coequal majesty--one in the singleness of unchangeable decree--one in the boundlessness of love--one in the exercise of might--one in accomplishment of plan. But there is Trinity in this mystic Unity. One Deity is three in office.

But the whole heart of the Triune Jehovah yearns over the redeemed. They all concur to save. They all combine to help. They all unite to bless. Surely the Threefold Blessing sounds this truth.

Heed--heed again the heaven-sent form. "The Lord," Jehovah the Father, "bless you and keep you." Again--"The Lord," Jehovah the Son, "make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you." Again--"The Lord," Jehovah the Holy Spirit, "lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."

Our souls are now prepared to press the juice of these rich clusters.

1. Open the hand wide. The **FATHER** comes to fill it. "The Lord bless you, and keep you." The first word is large, as God is large. It gives so much, that it leaves nothing ungiven. It floods the cup, so that no other drop can enter. It shows a prospect, in which there is no vacancy. "The Lord bless you." May He, who speaks, and it is done; who wills, and it must be; who holds all power in His hands; who sits on the high throne of universal rule, may He bless you!

WHEN? Now and ever--throughout the moments, which are and shall be--when you go out--come in--sit down--rise up--through all your living space, and when the last breath flutters on your lips.--"The Lord bless you."

WHERE? In every place, in which you tarry, or to which you move; in the closet--at home--abroad--in still retreat, and in the busiest haunts--in the publicity of open work--and in the sanctity of holiest spots.--"The Lord bless you."

HOW? By causing all things to minister to your true good--by crowning your lot with all real happiness.--"The Lord bless you."

Perhaps the soul, conscious of weakness, finding SELF to be a broken reed, and seeing many perils all around, sighs specially for protection. Be it so. Protection here is stretched out, as a shield--help is extended, as a sustaining arm. It is added, "and keep you." From WHAT? From every foe's injurious assault--from every secret dart--from every direct attack--from self--from men--from evil's legion--from the world's smile and frown. HOW? By the shelter of His shadowing wings. HOW LONG? Until all need is past, and danger's region is quite left behind, and heaven's safe haven is attained. Happy believer--thus blest--thus kept of God!

2. **JESUS** comes next. "The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you." The greatest change on nature's brow is when light dawns. Gloom dwells beneath the pall of night. When clouds cast their thick shade, dark chilliness prevails. But with returning beams the landscape sparkles, the groves are melody, the fields are joy. It is so with the soul. *Sad are the hours, which are not bright with Jesus.* Then sins affright, and wrath dismays, and all the future is despair. There is no misery like the absence of His look. But when His face again is seen, the heart is happiness, the lips are praise. This blessing promises the shining of His face--not a brief ray, but the full blaze of concentrated love. Heaven's fullness is to see Him face to face. Heaven's foretaste, is to catch this pledge of His smile. "The Lord make His face shine upon you."

Here, too, a precious pearl is added. It is GRACE. The words proceed, "and be gracious unto you." What wonders are wrapped up in grace! Its birth is in the heavens--its fruit upon the earth. It looks on those, in whom no merit dwells. It sees them lost. But still it loves, and pities, and relieves. It drew salvation's scheme. It named salvation's sons. It raised the cross, and led the Savior to it. Apart from Christ--it has no being--and no admission-door to its beloved work. But now, through Christ, its visits come on sanctifying wing. The graceless become gracious, because grace *works*. The gracious become glorious, because grace *triumphs*.

3. The blessing voice still speaks. "The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." Can they, who have received so much, need more? But more is wondrously given. The truly blest have all the blessings of a Triune Jehovah. Hence the **SPIRIT'S** favor is moreover pledged. Some covet earthly honors and applause. Some seek the bursting coffer and the large estate. But what is earth, and all its contents, compared to this possession? The Spirit's countenance converts the soul from death to life, and raises it from hell to glory. He shows its utter need, and its recovery in Christ. He teaches the vile loathsomeness of sin--and the just punishment of hell. He then reveals the God-man slain--the shelter of His wounds--the mantle of His righteousness. He points to welcoming arms. He testifies, that none can perish at the cross. When He lifts up His countenance, the mists of ignorance, the clouds of unbelief, melt off--and SELF is seen, that it may be abhorred--and Christ is seen, that He may be embraced and loved. Then peace will surely follow. There is no peace in soul-blindness, in distance from Christ, in unsubdued iniquity, in wallowing in nature's mire. But when the Spirit joins the soul to Christ--when He renews the nature, and sows seeds of godliness; then peace--abundant peace--peace always, by all means, establishes glad sway.

Reader, seek Christ--adhere to Him--abide in Him--make Him your all--then will this Threefold Blessing be your crown. Hear it once more. "The Lord bless you, and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."

It is the gift of gifts--the prize of prizes--the Father's full protection--the Savior's smiling grace--the Spirit's countenance and peace. Reader, do you ask, Can such transcendent property be mine? Pause--think. Why is it thus revealed? God speaks these blessings, not to mock, but to fulfill. Can they be mine? Oh! cast yourself without one fear on Christ, and you will quickly know.

Num 10.2

THE SILVER TRUMPETS.

"Make two Trumpets of Silver." Num 10:2.

Sinai's ordinances here end. The hallowed mount must now be left. But before the onward-signal sounds, God speaks again. A final token testifies, that Israel's every matter occupies His heart.

A mandate issues to form Trumpets. In number they are two. Their metal is pure silver. As in the golden candlestick, each is constructed from one piece. There is no joint--no link--no mixture. The priests alone may use them. Their purpose is fourfold.

1. Their liquid note convenes assemblies to the tabernacle-door.

2. They sound, when the moving pillar calls the tribes to march (Num 10:2).

3. They warn, when hostile armies threaten battle (Num 10:9).

4. On festive days they peal melodiously around the blood-stained altar. Such are these Trumpets--such their use. Each order is divine.

Reader, this is our grace-day. We live, that we may glean soul-profit. The Bible is our harvest field. Here this ordinance now meets us, and offers no small riches to our store.

An obvious thought stands on the threshold. We see God's all-pervading care. He directs all things for His people's welfare. Their least arrangements are arranged in heaven.

How happy; then, is the child of faith! The grand concerns of his eternal home are firmly settled. The door is opened--the passport is provided--fit robes are wrought, by the God-man's redeeming work. A new heart, fit for pure joys, is created by the Spirit. But this is not all. Heavenly plans are not restricted to these heavenly things. *Each little matter on the earthly stage is offspring of decree.* The countless links in each day's chain are framed above. The way, then, must be right, because divinely marked. Chance guides no vessel through life's waves.

Reader, hence learn to scorn no matter, as too small for thought. There are no trifles in a soul's career. *Minute things* sometimes seems to turn the scale for heaven or hell. Make conscience of each trivial event. It has an influence on eternity. When God appears to order two Silver Trumpets for the camp, surely He stamps all little things with magnitude.

The MATERIAL must be silver. This is a metal carefully prepared. Repeated fires cleanse it from all dross. Hence it is emblem of rare purity. "The words of the Lord are pure words--as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Psa 12:6. Each vessel in the camp of God must be thus clean. "Holiness becomes Your house, O Lord, forever." Psa 93:5. Ministers should precede with silver-brightness. The flock should follow, as silver without alloy.

Let us now draw nearer to the camp. Two priests are seen. Each blows a Silver Trumpet. Light falls hence on *the office of God's ministers.* Their voice should sound with trumpet-clearness through the flock. They are entrusted with God's message to a fallen world. Theirs is the privilege to tell the story of redeeming grace. They bear grand tidings, which are life to the dead--health to the sick--liberty to the captive--joy to the mourner--comfort to the broken-hearted--wealth to the poor--sight to the blind--recovery to the lost--strength to the weak. As heralds, they have to announce, that God is reconciled--a ransom found--a remedy provided--a Savior given--a Deliverer sent. It is their work to cry, Behold the cross--look to the dying Lamb--flee to His sheltering arms--hide in His wounded side--nestle beneath the covert of His wings--put on the glories of His righteousness--trust in His finished work--plead His atoning sacrifice--present by faith His wrath-appeasing death--receive Him, as all wisdom, joy, and peace--cling to Him through life, in death, forever--in answer to all Satan's wiles, and conscience-fears, shout, 'Christ is All'. They have to warn of the world's murderous arts--of sin's tremendous doom--of fire, which is never quenched--of anguish, which exceeds all thought--of an eternity in darkness and despair.

Should they not, then, with clarion-shrillness, rouse the flock? The Silver Trumpets sent a PIERCING note. So should the Gospel-herald utter aloud the Gospel-news. Away with timid whisper--and a stammering tongue. The servant's lips should glory in the Master's name. Let statements be unmistakable, as the sun without one cloud–clear, as the crystal stream--distinct, as the unmuffled trumpet's voice.

Note, the Trumpets were of ONE PIECE. So is the Gospel-message. It knows no mixture. It is no piece-meal fabric. It is not partly grace and partly works. It calls not men to finish what the Lord commenced. From first to last--in origin--in progress--in conclusion--Gospel-salvation is a free gift. All merit is in Christ. He opens heaven. He closes hell. He washes, decks, and fits. He presents His children pure and faultless. Their pardon and their fitness is His work. They follow Him, because He calls. They love, because He wins their hearts. They conquer, because He is their sword and shield. They persevere, because His hand upholds. Their grace is offspring of His love. Their glory is the payment of His worth. Thus Christ is All. No diverse metal soiled these Trumpets. No intermingling error should soil pulpits.

The type, moreover, fixes attention on the Christian as a worshiper--a pilgrim--a warrior--a son of joy. For let the OCCASIONS, on which these Trumpets sounded, be now more closely marked.

1. The call the people to God's sanctuary. Reader, mark this. It is a Gospel-ordinance, that worshipers should throng the holy courts--that public prayer and praise should reverence the glorious name. Who will not hasten to obey? Who will not join the people, who keep holy-day? A saintly congregation is an foretaste of heaven. It is earth's holiest scene. What sanctity pervades the spot! What blessedness inspires the company! The Triune God is mighty in the midst. The SPIRIT intercedes within the soul. He prompts longing desires. He makes sin's burden to be felt. He deepens penitential grief. He fans the flame of wrestling supplication. He brightens the torch of love. The GREAT HIGH-PRIEST draws near. He takes each prayer, and washes it in cleansing blood. He perfumes every note of praise. He then presents the fragrant sacrifice before the throne. The FATHER is well-pleased. The service is accepted. Pardons are sealed. Blessings fly down. The faithful meet to honor God. They honor and are honored. They come in faith, and they depart in peace.

Reader, do not think, say not, that such assemblage is superfluous. Doubtless God is not linked to means. He can bless in solitude, and hear in the secluded closet. But it has pleased Him to order public worship. His commands are always gain. The pious congregation thrives. Faith hears--obeys--and finds obedience to be wealth.

2. The trumpets give command to march. Christians are portion of a *marching* host. The Bible warns, that earth is not our rest. We live a stranger-life. We occupy a moving tent. We hold a pilgrim-staff. What is there stationary here? Our days are a fast-flowing stream. The rapid current rushes onward. Let then no heart cast anchor on these sands. Let not affection entwine its fibers around earthly stems. Our mansions are on high. Our home is far away. Be prepared for the journey. Let all be ready for departure. Death should not find a Christian unequipped for march. It is a friend, for whom expecting eyes should watch. The ears should listen for the chariot-wheels. When it appears, let there be no tremor--no surprise--no work unfinished. The Gospel's Silver Trumpets ever cry, 'Arise, Depart. Come up here'.

3. The trumpets sound for war. The life of faith is one incessant fight. Beneath the cross, a sword is drawn, of which the scabbard is cast far away. The attitude of bold defiance is assumed. Until the victor's crown is won, unflinching combat must go on. The foes are many--mighty--wily--restless. They meet us, at each step. They lurk in every corner. They infest our public walk. They enter our closed doors. They are without--around--within. Count, if you can, the hateful legions, who compose hell's hosts--they all rush at the soul. Survey the world--its snares--its foul seductions--its enticing arts--its siren calls--its smiles--its venom-sneers--its terrifying threats. Each in its turn assails--and each, when foiled, renews the assault. Behold the heart, and all its brood of lusts and raging passions. How often it betrays! How often it beguiles! The Gospel-trumpet ever cries, 'Battle is near. Stand firm. Resist'.

But when the Gospel calls, it promises sure triumph. It gives an armor, wrought by God. This, rightly used, cannot be broken. It points to a Captain, by whose side no battle can be lost--beneath whose banner, no warrior was ever slain.

Believer, hear, and go forth in hope. Face all your foes. Grasp manfully your sword. Use skillfully your shield. Lift up the head, safe in salvation's helmet. Shout boldly your great Leader's name. The fight will soon be over. The victor's song will soon be on your lips.

4. They have a further use. **In the grand feasts the trumpets cheer the worshipers around the bleeding victims.** While the altar streams, and happy crowds look on, the heavens resound with these exulting melodies. The precept is obeyed, "Sing aloud unto God our strength--make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob." Psa 81:1.

Believer, thus, too, the Gospel teaches you to rejoice--to rejoice with heart abounding with melodious praise, when you in faith contemplate, and in worship plead, the meritorious death of Christ.

My soul, obey, remember Calvary, and sing--shout--pour forth music of delight. Let all, that is within you, swell the adoring chorus. Gaze on the cross--and let exulting hallelujahs testify, how fervently you love--how rapturously you extol--how undoubtingly you trust, that *death*, which is your life--that *blood*, which is your ransom--those *wounds*, which are your shelter--that *Jesus*, which is your full salvation--that *Christ*, which is your All.

Reader, the Gospel-trumpet is now within your hearing. But it is prelude of another melody. Yet a little while, and "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout--with the voice of the Archangel and the trumpet of God." 1Th 4:16. That note will open every grave, and wake the sleeping dust, and gather mankind to the great white throne. Quickly you will hear it--for every ear shall hear. It introduces the coronation-day of saints. It is the knell of execution to the lost. Are you prepared? Do you stand ready--one with Christ? If you heed now the Gospel-trumpet calling you to Him, you will hear then the last-day-trumpet calling you to glory.

It is faith's happiest hour, when it goes forth in spirit to intermingle in the fast-coming scene. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last Trumpet--for the Trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass the saying, that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?" 1Co 15:51-55.

My soul, hark! hark! This Trumpet soon will sound. Bless Jesus--and fear not.

÷Num 10.29

THE INVITATION.

"One day Moses said to his brother-in-law, Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, We are journeying unto the place, of which the Lord said, I will give it to you--come with us, and we will do you good--for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel." Num 10:29.

Israel's sojourn round the mount is over. The pillar is about to wave its beckoning hand. The silver trumpets are prepared to sound. The happy tribes are ready for the march. Soon all will be an onward progress toward the promised land.

The sight strongly arrests a Christian heart. Who can survey it, and not cry–'Blessed are those who follow a preceding God! Father, lead me, guide me, keep me to the end!'

At this moment the eye of Moses turns with tender yearning to his kinsman Hobab. He for a while had been the comrade of these tribes. Thus he had learned, that they were God's peculiar care. The mighty proofs of present Deity were all familiar to his mind. But outward evidence alone conveys not inward grace. He is not fixed. His feelings fluctuate. He hesitates. He casts a lingering look towards the attractions of an early home. The former ties retain their hold. The well-known scenes allure him back. Like Lot's wife, his eyes look back. While Israel girds the pilgrim-garb, he deliberates on going back.

Moses well knew, that to return was wreck of soul. It is no gain to move from God. There is no profit in forbidden paths. Happiness departs, when God is left. All earth is but a barren waste, without the dew of grace. All is a void, unless God smiles and fills.

Moses had the experience of the better choice. He scorned the courtly pomp. He had trampled on all Egypt's treasures. He had embraced affliction with God's people. And he had found God's favor to be wealth of wealth--the joy of joys.

Reader, make God your own, and you have all. To barter Him for lower things, is to clasp a shadow--snatch a husk--pursue a mocking candle--lean on a broken reed. There is no poverty like a worldling's lot. What is a crown upon a godless head? What is a scepter in a graceless hand? What is all gold to an impoverished soul? What were the plains of Sodom to ease-seeking Lot? Had Lazarus or Dives the happier heart?

Moses beholds the doubting Hobab. He pities--and he sincerely would win him to a wiser choice. Therefore he thus tenderly expostulates. *"We are journeying to the Promised Land. Come with us and we will do you good, for the Lord has promised good things to Israel!"*

He states the fact. We are indeed a moving camp. Our rest is yet far off. But we advance not as uncertainly. We follow no deceiving guide. There is a home conspicuously bright in view. It glitters in the rays of heavenly pledge. God's love, and word, and power, secure it.

And then he pressingly invites, *"Come with us."* Turn not away. Recede not to a heathen land. Join not again the people, whose home is darkness--whose walk is misery--whose end is woe. But cleave to us. All good is then your portion. We move not blindly. God's voice is gone forth, strewing blessings round us. Goodness and mercy from His courts walk, as companions, by our side. He dwells in us. We dwell in Him. Come then, come then with us.

So Moses reasoned--so he called.

1. His invitation shows **FAITH'S HAPPY STATE**. It is a mirror reflecting the features of calm trust. Full faith has eagle-eye. It penetrates all earthly mists. It gazes steadily on Zion's highest light. It is content to live a stranger-life on earth. It would not settle in this thorny nest. It would not lie down beside such poison-streams. This climate is too cheerless. It looks aloft. Its true affections center round a purer scene. So daily it moves forward. And nightly realizes, that an upward step is made. We are journeying unto the promised place.

What is this place? Faith gazes--it ever gazes with increasing rapture--but it fails fully to describe.

It is **rest**. The happy inhabitants go no more put. No further step is needed. No loftier summit can be scaled. The pilgrim lays aside his staff, and sits down in undisturbed delight. The warrior's wounds are healed. His struggles and his conflicts cease. The watch-tower is exchanged for sure repose. The sword has found its sheath. The shield wearies the arm no more. No foe can enter into victory's domain. Reader, do you not long to reach it?

It is perfect **purity**. Earth's misery is sin. Saints groan, because they so often stumble. The constant struggle and the frequent fall cause anguish. The flesh is weak. Temptations fiercely and most craftily assail. The garments contract stains. But in this place sin cannot come. The tempter is barred out. No step again can be unclean. No thought again can go astray. Heaven would not be welcome to a new-born man, unless it were one flood of godlike purity. Reader, do you not long to reach it?

It is **joy**. Where sin is absent, peace must reign. Where God is present, happiness must overflow. Heaven is a boundless ocean, in which each swelling wave is pleasure in the highest. It is a prospect ever widening, in which each scene is rapturous delight. It is skies, forever brightening, in which each orb is sparkling ecstacy. It must be so--for love is the one pulse in every heart--praise is the endless sound from every lip--hallelujah the one ceaseless echo. The blessed cannot cease to sing, because fresh views of their thrice-blessed state continually arise. It must be so--for they behold the glories of their Lord--not in dim distance--not through the varying medium of faith--but near, and never to depart--but clear, and ever clearer. Transporting joy! daily to read new glories in the face of Christ--daily to dive into the deep wonders of the love of God. Reader, do not you long to be there?

Faith holds the title-deeds of this celestial mansion. The word is spoken. "I will give it to you." It is a gift--and a gift worthy of the God, who gives--worthy of the blood, which bought--worthy of the Spirit, who calls to it. No human merit pays the price. No human strength can scale the steps. No human hand opens the gate. Some proudly hope for heaven, as if they had some claim. But none go proudly in. They all fall low before the throne, shouting glory to free grace--Salvation to the Lamb--"Christ is All."

But it is sure. "I will give it to you." **Who** utters this wondrous promise? Even the Lord, whose might is almightiness--before whom all men, and all the hosts of hell, are nothing, and far less. Let every foe swell into millions of ten millions--let all their power be thousand-fold increased--His arm can shiver them to dust--His breath can drive them, as a feather on the hurricane's wing. The Lord, whose word is truth--whose counsels are immutability--whose purpose ever stands--says, "I will give it to you." Faith hears and knows, that every wave and every gale convey it prosperously to the assured haven. "We are journeying unto a place, of which the Lord said, I will give it to you--come with us." Such is faith's happy state. Reader, have you this faith?

2. This invitation shows, that **FAITH IS AGGRESSIVE**. "Come with us." Each heaven-set plant strives for expanse. True grace has one sure sign--it longs and labors to communicate its wealth. A saving view of Christ slays self--relaxes every icy band--widely extends embracing arms, and yearns to multiply delights. When the heart burns, the life must labor. Where is the fire, which emits no warmth? Where is the sun, which darts forth no rays? Thus the history of faith is *a chart of plans and toils for Christ.*

It looks around. It first marks the Hobabs of the home-circle. It stops not here. It takes a wider prospect. It surveys the neighboring abodes. It then mounts higher ground, and flies around the circumference of the native land. It still ascends, and in the telescopic gaze of love, it comprehends the world, with its broad circuit, and all its mass of people--kindred--tongues.

While it thus muses, what is the deep desire? Oh! that these souls might be the heirs of heavenly life! Their nature-state dooms them indeed to wrath. Their steps unturned must bear them down to hell. Their hearts unchanged must link them to the lost. But Jesus died, and in that death there is redemption. But Jesus lives, and while He lives, who can despair? If only they can hear of Him--if the sweet mercies of the Spirit help--if faith convey them to the cross--then soul-graves open--then endless misery flees, as night before the orb of day--then hell is robbed, and angels shout.

While faith thus pants with longing hopes, it asks, 'How shall this be?' The answer is at hand. God tells what aid must be employed. The means are the clear proclamation of the Gospel-truth. And this proclamation is from preachers' lips. Then preachers must be sent forth. The men of God, with Christ on their lips--the Bible in their hands--must take their stand between the living and the dead. They must lift high the Gospel-beacon amid a lost world's night. Rejoicing in their known salvation, they must importunately urge, "We are journeying unto the place, of which the Lord said, I will give it to you--come with us, land we will do you good."

Faith then will hasten to give far-flying wings to these appointed means. This holy zeal became the parent of missions to home-destitute, and distant heathen. Hence arose that precious brotherhood of combined believers, who send salvation's tidings far and near. But how scanty are their efforts before a world's need! How crippled are the sinews of their strength! How poor their coffers! How few their laborers!

Reader, are you the called of Christ? Are you a traveler to the promised place? Then show it by your self-denying support to these enlisting laborers. Help them, for they need it. Help them, for the time is short. Help them, for the Lord requires it. Help them, as you would have sure token in the day of Christ, that you obeyed His mandate, and that your faith was not a barren stock.

But perhaps some Hobab reads these lines, who is not pressing on to Zion's joys. Sir, pause and reflect. This tract, with Moses-like entreaty, grasps your hand, and looks you tenderly in the face, and knocks imploringly at your heart's door. It asks with loving zeal, Where do your footsteps tend? It prays you to turn and join yourself in heavenly fellowship to heaven-bound travelers. "Come with us."

Your present path is misery--briers--thorns--rough places--pitfalls--disappointments, all sloping towards hell. Before us there is peace, and an eternity of light. Turn, "come with us." The world, and sin, and Satan, pierce with death-wounds. But "we will do you good." Behold the Savior, whom we love, and trust, and serve. Can you depart from Him? Oh! mark His tender grace--His zeal for souls--His surety-sufferings--His guilt-expiating agony. Can you leave Him? Think of His patience--His frequent calls--His precious promises--His outstretched arms. Think of the rapture of His seen smile--the comfort of His felt presence--the calm delights of converse with Him, and the full glories of His near kingdom. Think of the dying Lamb--the risen Lord--the reigning and triumphant King. "Come with us." Jesus has spoken good concerning Israel.

May the mighty Spirit prompt the quick reply, 'Grace conquers, and I come!' May hesitation hide its face in shame! May wise decision make you Christ's forever.

Num 10.35-36

THE RISING AND THE RESTING PRAYER.

"It came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let Your enemies be scattered; and let those who hate You, flee before You--And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." Num 10:35-36.

When the ark moves, a praying voice is heard. When the tribes halt, and tents receive them, again it sounds. Prayer consecrates the going forth and coming in. It opens the door for departure. It bolts the resting-place. It is the vanguard to precede. It is the rear-guard to lock in. It sanctifies the extreme links--and so the entire chain.

My soul, often view this teaching fact. Moses begins and ends with hands--with eyes--with heart--uplifted. The first--the last look, is towards heaven. He seeks a journeying blessing, before he stirs. He asks resting blessing, when he rests.

This is true wisdom and real grace. Happy the life, which is one flow of prayer! It is the pilgrim's staff--the warrior's sword--the pillow of the weary--the refuge of distress--the cry, which proves the man to be new-born. It is the wing, on which the soul flies upward. It is the tongue, which asks--the hand, which takes--great things. It has free access to a mercy-seat, and there it carries on a gainful trade.

Believer, to you each day is a new journey. Each circumstance is an onward step. Each morning calls you to a march. Each night is as the spreading of a resting tent. Each finished work is as another pause in your advancing pilgrimage. Let then your progress be one stream of supplication. None ever prayed enough. Many in life and death bewail soul-poverty. The cause is poverty of prayer. Much is badly done--much is undone--because prayer is not well-done. What scales can weigh the profit, which might thus be earned! What thought can estimate the loss, which prayerless hours incur!

"Rise up, Lord." "Return, O Lord." Such is the Rising and the Resting Prayer. There is strong significance in the petitions. They are as arrows wisely pointed to a mark. They breathe a definite design. They are not weak in vagueness of unmeaning generality. Some prayers are forms, in which no feature is exact. The words are many, but clear thought is rare. But true grace always realizes *need*. And then distinctly seeks *relief*. It asks with known and felt intent.

Let, now, the substance of these prayers be sifted.

1. THE RISING PRAYER. "Rise up, Lord, and let Your enemies be scattered--and let those who hate You, flee before You." Here is confession, that Israel's onward path was thronged with foes. It is so still, and so will always be. Opposing armies are in front. Each step must be through hostile ranks. The rest is reached through many a fight. The Canaanite--the Amorite--the myriads of Satan's seed--still live. They leave no stratagem untried--no weapon unemployed. There is no hour, when sword and shield may hang unused.

Next Moses feels, that his own might is nothing--vain are his counsels--powerless is his arm. When not upheld, he falls. Unaided, he is driven back. His hope--his trust--his strength--his armor--his success--his triumph--are from God. Therefore to God he flees. "Rise up, Lord." So now, if God's right hand be not our help, the tide of foes must bear us down. But God is moved by importunities of faith. "Rise up, Lord," is a cry, which brings all heaven to aid. It puts sure victory on the wing.

Observe here, how the prayer of faith yearns for God's glory. "Let *Your* enemies be scattered." These enemies hate God. They would impede the progress of His truth. They would extinguish His word's light. They would cast down His righteous rule. Can faith sit still and see Him thus dethroned? Oh! no. It agonizes with desire, that He would vindicate His holy cause--uphold His honor, and add trophies to His name. "Rise up, Lord, and let those who hate You, flee before You."

Believer, act out this pattern. Be zealous for God's kingdom. Let every thought center in Him. Strive that He may increase. Let Him be magnified--exalted--glorified--and then care not, that SELF lies low.

Realize, too, your oneness with the Lord. His life is your life. His death is your death. His resurrection is your revival. In Him you died, and rose, and sit now at God's right hand. So, too, His cause, His foes, are yours; and yours are His. Thus, when temptations fiercely try, you may appeal to Him, These are Your conflicts--"Rise up, Lord." These weapons seek Your injury--"Rise up, Lord, and let Your enemies be scattered--and let those who hate You, flee before You."

2. THE RESTING-PRAYER. "Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel." The going forth would have been ruin, except the Lord moved in the front. The rest will be no rest, unless the Lord return. Prayer called Him to precede their steps. Prayer calls Him to abide around their resting tents. Vast was the multitude. But what are numbers without God? His presence is their power--their peace--their joy--their glory--their strength--their fortress--their shield, and their repose. They know it, and they cry, "Return, O Lord."

Reader, what is your home--what is your heart--if God be absent? That family alone is blessed, in which God has His constant seat. The table is a sweet feast, when He presides. The home circle beams with pure delights, when He is seen in every smiling look. The house is sheltered, when His wings spread the canopy around.

But is God willing to abide with men? His word expels all doubt. The promises hang in clusters. "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." Jas 4:8. Do you ask, 'But how can one so vile, so base--so hateful through iniquity--so stained with sin's polluting filth--draw near to one so holy and so high?' A ready path is open. Christ is the way. Flee to His arms, and you reach God. In Christ distance is swallowed up--and union is cemented.

Hear next Christ's sweet assurance. "If a man loves me, he will keep my words--and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Joh 14:23. Give then your heart to Christ. Make His commands your constant walk. And then you are the temple of His presence. He will come in, and with Him all the glories of indwelling Deity.

Heed, too, the wondrous word, "Thus says the high and lofty One, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy--I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Isa 57:15. Then ask the Spirit to lead you along humility's low valley. God will meet you there, and make your heart His home. Thus you may be filled with all the fullness of your God--your soul may be a present heaven--your eye may ever rest upon His smile--your ear may ever hear the whispers of His love. At the close of every hour--duty--conflict, pray with undoubting faith, "Return, O Lord," and surely God will come.

We are next taught, that these petitions have enduring life. They are a model to the end of time. Let none suppose, that, when the ark crossed Jordan, they were cast aside. No rather, they flow on a never-failing stream. They blossom, as an over-verdant tree. Let David give the proof. When ages had flown by, he brought the ark, with joyful pomp, to Zion's hill. Where shall his heart find fitting praise? These words supply it. "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered--let them also, who hate Him flee before Him." Psa 68:1. My soul, may you, too, ever use this Prayer--at all times fit!

But these high words from David's lips open a more glorious view. When he thus sings beside the ark, he has an onward look to Christ. He sees redemption's Lord riding in redemption's chariot. He lauds Him, as the mighty conqueror traveling in triumph's pomp. Else, why should he add, "You have ascended on high--You have led captivity captive--You have received gifts for men, yes, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them?" Psa 68:18. You have done gloriously, as salvation's captain. All your foes, where are they? They have fled. They are all scattered, as the dust before the wind.

Thus the **Rising** and the Resting Prayer beside the rising and the resting ark lead us directly to our conquering and our coming Jesus. Faith claps the hand, and sings aloud, 'Here is my Lord'.

Yes. The moving ark is type of Jesus going forth to cast down rebel foes. It is high joy to trace the Antitype's victorious march. How mightily the Lord advanced! The strength of God was in His arm. His sword was Deity. His darts were barbed with all Jehovah's might. "He had on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." Rev 19:16. His foes, indeed, strove mightily. It was no easy work, to rescue souls from Satan's grasp--or to lay low the prison-house of darkness. The enemy rushed on, clad in his fiercest armor--wild in his keenest rage--wily in his deadliest crafts. He plied His every temptation, as a terrific battery. But the true Ark never quailed. The adversary licked the dust. Malignant passions maddened in opposing breasts. The kings stood up--rulers took counsel--all plots were laid--the ignominious death was planned and executed. But still the Ark moved on. The cross gave aid--not injury. The grave could not detain. Death could not vanquish. The gates of hell fly open. The mighty conqueror appears. And as in Canaan, the ark ascended Zion's hill amid triumphant shouts, so Jesus mounts on high. The heaven of heavens receives Him. The Father welcomes the all-conquering Savior. Angelic hosts adore the glorious God-man. The Rising Prayer has full accomplishment, "Rise up, Lord, and let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You."

And now from glory's throne He cheers His humble followers in their desert-march. Their toils, their conflicts, and their fears are many. They ofttimes seem, as a poor worm beneath the crushing feet. But they survive--they prosper--they lift up the head. As of old the ark was victory--so Jesus is victory now. Yes--every child of faith shall surely set a conquering foot upon the host of foes. Hear this, you mad opposers, and desist. Where are the nations, who resisted Israel? Where are the Pharaohs--the beleaguered kings--the Herods--the chief-priests--the Pilates? Share not their malice, lest you share their end. Read in this word your near destruction, "Rise up, Lord, and let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You."

And as the Rising Prayer has never failed, so, too, the **Resting Prayer** now teems with life. "Return, O Lord." Jesus is ready to fly back. Israel's many thousands wait, but wait not in vain. "Yet a little while, and He who shall come will come, and will not tarry." Heb 10:37. Oh! joyful day--triumphant sight! What ecstacy--what shouts--what glory! Salvation's Lord returns. Welcome--welcome to Him!

Reader, what will be your state on that bright morn? Will your lips shout, "This is the Lord, we have waited for Him?" What is the answer of your heart? Is it now swelling with the cry, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly?"--"Return, O Lord, to, the many thousands of Israel."

This is the grand event, for which the earth now sighs. And will it tarry long? Scripture has long since said, "The coming of the Lord draws near." "The Judge stands before the door." Jas 5:8. Believer, be wise. Be looking from your watch-tower. Are there no rays streaking the horizon? Extend the listening ear. Is there no sound of chariot-wheels in startling events?

Num 13.23

GRAPES OF ESHCOL.

"When they came to what is now known as the valley of Eshcol, they cut down a cluster of grapes so large that it took two of them to carry it on a pole between them!" Num 13:23

"They came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes." Num 13:23.

We reach the valley of Eshcol through a humbling path. Before we touch its clustering grapes, let the dark steps be traced. The story shows, how vile is man–and how gracious is our God! It proves our proneness to transgress. It then presents an emblem of the heavenly bliss.

When Sinai is left, the march of Israel advances prosperously. There is no check. No enemy annoys. No difficulties hinder. Each day the intervening wilderness decreases; and the desired land is neared. And now the very borders are in view. A few more steps will plant the pilgrim-host in Canaan.

Surely courage will now brace each nerve--joy will beat high in every heart--and with triumphant praise they will plant conquering banners. But is it so? Alas! they pause--they hesitate. Jehovah's ancient covenant fades from their view. The pledged support--the daily help--the experienced favor--are forgotten, as an unsubstantial dream. The unworthy thought creeps in--perchance the nations are too strong for us--their walled cities, and their iron gates may beat back our assault.

Thus they distrust--and tremblingly propose to search the country by spies. They take weak counsel with their carnal minds. They follow sight--not faith. They cast behind their backs the oath to Abraham--the repeated promise to their fathers--and the rich map of the luxuriant plains, so often drawn by God's describing hand.

Such are the workings of *vile unbelief*. And that dark monster is not dead. Yet--yet it lives. It lurks in corners of each heart. It ever watches to bring its disguise to every eye--its poison-draught to every lip. It is crafty to whisper, that perhaps God's many promises may fail; that faith may be pursuing a vain shadow; and may lie down at last misled--deceived--undone.

Reader, beware--look inward. If you discern the slightest trace of this beguiling serpent, oh! spare it not--seize it and slay it on the altar of revealed truth. Take for the solid pavement of your steps, "It is written." Then manfully advance. Grasp tight the promises; and boldly march toward your pledged inheritance. Let nothing tempt you to test heaven's counsels at the bar of human sense. He is the fool of fools, who tests divine assurances in the scales of mortal vision.

But this timid policy befools Israel's camp. The spies are named. They are sent forth to ascertain, whether their God be true. They pass from place to place. They view the mountains and the valleys. Then in their progress they reach Eshcol's brook. Here fruit before unknown for size, for beauty, and for luxuriant juice, meets their admiring gaze. They pluck one cluster from the vine. The treasure needs two men to bear it. Upon a staff they prop it up. And thus they seek the camp, laden with a trophy of the country's wealth.

Here let the spies be left. Here let a curtain fall on their sad errand and their sin. Their sin--for they bring back a false report--and while they show the fruit, they largely dwell upon the walled towns, and monster-forms, and other formidable sights. But from such conduct let us turn. It is more solacing to contemplate that cluster, which they bear--that earnest of rich fields.

The Spirit teaching, we may draw hence a foretaste of the full riches of our celestial land. These grapes are proof of Canaan's exuberant fertility. The giant-produce testifies abundance. So, too, there is **a heavenly Eshcol** before faith's eye. It shows delicious clusters. And should we not delight to walk in the enchanting ground, and cheer our spirits with the glowing prospect? Surely Eshcol's luxuriance portrays our glorious Canaan. It pictures heaven--our looked-for rest--the mark, to which we press--the haven of our storm-tossed voyage--the end of weary pilgrimage--the soul's eternal home--the land of every delight. This Eshcol should be ever in our view.

The joy before Christ cheered His heart. The joy before us should gird up our loins. The racer bounds, when he discerns the goal in sight. The mariner is alert, when land is seen. The soul spreads swifter wings, when heaven seems to open.

Reader, come, then, in Eshcol's grapes, read *faith's amazing prize.*

But here thought flags--mind fails--all words seem emptiness--all images fall short. No angel's tongue can adequately paint the brightness of those realms. Mortal powers shrink into very nothingness. None can describe heaven, but those who enter it. And those who enter it, find their delight an ever-swelling flood--an ever-brightening day--an ever-opening flower--a volume, which eternity cannot read through!

Heaven! It is the palace of the great Eternal. Salvation is its walls--its gates are praise. Its pavement is purity's most golden luster. Its atmosphere is perfect love. Heaven! It is the home prepared by God before the worlds were made, for His redeemed children. It is the mansion, which the ascended Jesus still labors to make fit. Heaven! It is so attractive, that all Jehovah's skill cannot increase the beauty--so full, that nothing can be added--so rich, that it can hold no more.

But Eshcol's luxuriance allures us to more close examination. Let us draw nearer. This cluster was the vine's perfection. So, too, perfection is the essence of our heaven. Nothing can enter there to stain--to soil--to vex--to humble. Oh! what a contrast to our present state! We would be holy--but, alas! a treacherous adversary rolls us in the mire. Our hearts are daily pierced. We loathe and we abhor ourselves. But our high home is barricaded against sin. Never--never--never--can iniquity again intrude. The soul forever joys--righteous, as God is righteous--pure, as God is pure. Reader, seek heaven. But heaven is more than this.

Here on earth, the **foul tempter** all day long is spreading nets. There is no saint too saintly for his vile approach. In Eden he approached the innocent. To Jesus he said, 'Worship me'. His whispers, his bold lies, as keenest anguish, haunt the regenerate heart. And while life lasts, there is no respite. He watches every dying bed. But in heaven this misery has ceased. *No serpent crawls along that pavement!* Satan is outside--far off--the bottomless pit has shut its mouth upon him. Reader, seek heaven. But heaven is more than this.

Here on earth, **fears** rush in. The ground is slippery. A precipice is near. We tremble on the brink. Fiery darts fly round. We shudder, lest some poison penetrate our veins. The torturing thought breaks in, 'Will my frail bark hold out! Will even God's own grace endure my daily provocations! May I not, after all, fail of salvation! May not my end be with the lost!' But fear dies at heaven's gate! The happy company realize, that they are lofty above injury. Their throne is safety in the highest. They know it--what then can they fear? Reader, seek heaven. But heaven is more than this.

Earth is **affliction's** home. A troop of sorrows compass us about. Tears stream. The bosom sighs. The brow is furrowed by the lines of care and worry. Death tears away the much-loved friend. Sickness invades the frame. The home is desolate. The table is destitute. We look to the right-hand, and there is trouble--on the left, and still fresh troubles frown. But heaven is a wide sea of bliss without a ripple. All tears are wiped away. All faces beam with one enraptured smile. All lips confess, 'The cup of happiness overflows'. We bathe in oceans of delight. Reader, seek heaven. But heaven is more than this.

Here **unbelief** often gathers, as a chilly cloud. It mantles the soul in darkness. It suggests apprehension, that His love has ceased, and that desertion is, or may be, our lot. This is a miserable condition. When God is felt to be a God at hand, woe ceases to be woe, and burdens are all light. But in heaven a present God is always everywhere. *We cannot move beyond the sunshine of His love.* His countenance is universal brightness. Reader, seek heaven. But heaven is more than this.

Here **ignorance** leads us in a floundering path. We thirst for knowledge, but we reach it not. How much concerning God is utterly beyond our grasp! Blindness curtails our perspective. Clouds narrow our view. But heaven is a realm without horizon. We know God, as we are known. We love intelligently. We understand, whom we adore. Reader, seek heaven. But heaven is more than this.

Sin is shut out--temptations banished--fears buried in an unfathomable grave--sorrow and unbelief have fled away--knowledge is perfect--our souls are purity--our bodies are imperishable beauty--we completely share the glory of our all-glorious Lord. How much is this! But yet this is not all.

In the true Eshcol's cluster there is this richer fruit--Jesus is seen. This is the crown of heaven. This is the pinnacle of bliss. The rising of the sun makes day. The presence of the king constitutes the court. The revelation of the Lord, without one intervening cloud, is the grand glory of the endless kingdom. Heaven is full heaven, because Christ shines there exactly as He is--seen and admired of every eye.

Faith searches for Him now in types, and shadows, and prophetic forms, and sacraments, and holy emblems. This sight is precious--gratefully to be enjoyed--devoutly to be improved. But these are faint outlines of the eternal vision. These often are obscured. But in heaven Jesus ever stands conspicuous in one undiminishable blaze.

Believer, what will it be to gaze on the manifested beauty of Him, who is so altogether lovely! What! to read clearly all the deep mysteries of His redeeming will! What! to dive down to the vast depths of His unfathomable heart! What! to fly upward to the very summit of His boundless love! What! to trace clearly all His dealings in providence and grace! What! to comprehend all that Jesus is! What! never to lose sight of Him--no, not for a moment! What! to be ever drinking fresh raptures from His present smile! What! to feel, that this joy is mine forever! What! to shout, 'Come on, you ages of eternity, you never part me from my Lord!' This--this is heaven. This--this is Eshcol's full cluster.

Reader, are you a traveler towards this heaven? When you behold the grapes of Eshcol, do you know, that the vineyard is your sure heritage? The question may be solved. This kingdom is for the subjects of the King--this palace is for His sons. Are you, then, His by faith? They, who are in Him now, will dwell with Him forever. They, who live Christ on earth, go to Him in the upper world. Then ask, "Is your soul knit to Him? Are you a branch engrafted in the heavenly stem? Are you the bride espoused to the Lamb?" Conscience well knows.

The link, which thus connects, is faith. This is that precious grace, which sees His worth--flees to Him--embraces Him--and holds Him tight. This is that heaven-given power, which, with glad hand, receives the title-deeds of heaven. This is that Spirit-implanted confidence, which looks to Eshcol, and claims all Canaan, as a promised home.

Reader, never rest, then, until, standing on firm Gospel-ground, you can look up and cry, "Lord, I believe." Then daily feed on Eshcol's grapes. Then daily move towards Canaan. You soon will hear, "Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Mat 25:34.

Num 17.8

THE BUDDED ROD.

"The next day Moses entered the Tent of the Testimony and saw that Aaron's staff, which represented the house of Levi, had not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds." Num 17:8

A new miracle now meets us. It is God's work. It is the Spirit's record. Therefore it stands here for our souls' profit. A withered rod, long severed from the parent stem, in which all vital juice was dried, sprouts in fresh verdure. Buds show their infant forms, and clustering blossoms open, while fruit in ripe luxuriance hangs.

This fact claims special thought, from its position in the sacred page. It raises a conspicuous head high in a vast field of miracle. Israel's whole journey is a chain of marvels. The falling manna--the guiding cloud--the flowing stream--prove heavenly care. Each day evidences, that omnipotence is active for them. But here a fresh prodigy starts to life. God superadds another sign to win confiding trust.

To us this story of the Budded Rod now comes. May He, who wrought the wonder, work wonders through it for our growth in grace!

But before we view it with a nearer eye, we must not disregard the preceding notes. The faithless spies draw an appalling picture of the searched land. The fortresses defy assault. The men are giants. Israel's hosts are less than insects at their feet. Such is their evil record. And it is received. Hearts quake. Blaspheming tongues reproach their guiding God.

Thus nature shows its proneness to doubt, to tremble, and to distrust. But such UNBELIEF brings misery in its train. It is a seed, from which ill ever springs. It changes blessings into curse. It arms the hand of love with an avenging scourge.

So now wrath instantly goes forth. The murmuring hosts are doomed to turn their back upon the home just reached. The wilderness must be re-entered. They now must wander up and down for forty years. Thus their bright prospects end in darkest night. Their hopes of rest--almost attained--are gone. They must wear out in woe their dismal days.

Distrust! truly you are the parent of all woe! My soul, never distrust--cleave fast to God--cast deep your anchor in His word--bear all things--suffer all pains--but never let one rebel doubt arise.

Pause now, and pray, "O Spirit of the living God, never withdraw--leave me not to the fears, which sense and folly would excite. Lord, I believe; help my unbelief."

Surely the downcast host will now tread tremblingly their retrogressing path--their lips will now be sad with penitence and shame. They, who so reason, are yet blind to the deep roots of sin. *As there is no mercy, which man's heart will not abuse, so there is no judgment, which it will not proudly scorn.* Open rebellion soon follows these murmurs and this punishment. Korah and his company dispute the rule of Moses. They challenge it, as usurpation and self-arrogance. Thus God's authority is dethroned. But these leaders are leading at His call. Therefore, to revile them is to revile His will.

Instantly terrific vengeance vindicates God's ways. Moses proclaims the near approach of impending wrath; and, "He had hardly finished speaking the words when the ground suddenly split open beneath them. The earth opened up and swallowed the men, along with their households and the followers who were standing with them, and everything they owned. So they went down alive into the grave, along with their belongings. The earth closed over them, and they all vanished." Num 16:31-33

Again we are disposed to cry, 'surely now rebellion must be buried in that grave! Surely obedience now will meekly walk with God!' But we soon find, that *sin has seeds so deep*, and fibers so far-spreading, that while most withering judgments are descending, it still will germinate and bring forth its weeds.

The morrow dawns, but not to see contrition in each face. No, rather, it finds one flood of universal rage. The camp is indignant against the servants of the Lord. The whole assembly raises the cry, "You have killed the people of the Lord," But sin cannot thus sin, and wrath not multiply to punish. A slaying plague speeds forth. It rapidly mows down the God-defying host. Moses beseeches Aaron to rush forth. He grasps his censer--fills it with incense--adds the altar-fire--and takes his station between the living and the dead. God sees the mediating high-priest–the type of His dear Son. The sight checks wrath. But still a plague-struck pile stands, as a mighty pyramid--a monument of sin's deserts.

Now, at this moment, God gives the miracle of the Budded Rod. Another sign now shames unbelieving doubts, and pictures Gospel-truth. The people had scorned Aaron's priestly rights. God's overflowing love selects this very time to add confirmation of His choice. Twelve rods are taken. Each bears the name of the chief ruler of a tribe. They are deposited before the ark. Thus the night passes. When the morrow comes, Moses re-enters. Eleven lie, as they were placed, withered, lifeless, dry. The twelfth, engraved with Aaron's name, is changed--most marvelously changed! Verdure adorns it--but not verdure only. No branch was ever so enriched. Blossoms are joined to buds. And amid blossoms ripe fruits swell. Man's hand has no share here. The proof of God's immediate power appears in every part. The rod, thus vivified, is to be kept a constant sign. God's voice commands, "Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a sign against the rebels." Num 17:10.

Let us now advance from the ancient record, to the still-living Gospel of the fact. The Rod in many graphic tints shows Jesus. The very name is caught by raptured prophets. Hark, how they announce Him. "There shall come forth a *Rod* out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." Isa 11:1. "Behold the man, whose name is The *Branch*; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord--and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne--and He shall be a Priest upon His throne." Zec 6:12-13. Thus faith gleans lessons from the very title--Rod.

But the grand significance of the type is to REJECT ALL RIVALS. It sets Aaron alone upon the priestly seat. The parallel proclaims, that similarly *JESUS is our only Priest*. God calls--anoints--appoints--accepts, and ever hears Him--but Him alone. In His hands only do these functions live. He sprinkles the true mercy-seat with ever-pleading blood. He bears His people's name upon His breast. He perfumes all their petitions--praises--service, with meritorious fragrance. He intercedes, and they are pardoned. He blesses, and all blessings crown them. But He shares not the glory with a colleague. They, who seek God with *censers of their own*, like Korah scorn the only avenue--like Korah rush to ruin. My soul, be satisfied with Jesus. Shout–"None but the consecrated God-man--He is my total Priest--I need no more."

Next, the constant luxuriance has a clear voice. In nature's field, buds--blossoms--fruit, soon wither. The grove--the garden--lovely in spring--laden in autumn--soon droop. Not so this Rod. Its rich abundance was forever rich. Its verdure was forever green. Its fruit was ever ripe. Beside the ark it was reserved in never-fading beauty. Here is the ever-blooming Priesthood of our Lord. "You are a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." Psa 110:4. "This man--because He continues forever--has an unchangeable Priesthood." Heb 7:24. What joy--what rapture fills the heart of faith, when with adoring eye it looks aloft and sees its ever-living High-Priest on the throne! At every moment Jesus stands in all the freshness of salvation's vigor. Our prayers are ofttimes cold and languid. Our lips are dull to speak. Our thoughts stray far away. Petitions are as an intermitting stream. The channel sometimes is quite dry. It is not so in heaven. There, always is full tide of priestly mediation. Here is the cause why saints prevail, and grace survives. Hence Satan with all his legioned host is beaten back. Hence faith's tiny bark rides on the crest of mountain-waves, and safely reaches the blest haven. Hence plans for Gospel-progress triumph. Because Christ ever lives, and ever loves, and ever prays, and ever works, therefore His kingdom swells.

And so it shall be, while the need remains. But when the last of the redeemed is safely gathered in, then heaven shall no more hear the interceding Priest. Then the one sound from the vast throng shall be--Hallelujah. Thus the Rod, ever fresh--shows Jesus ever mighty in His Priestly power.

Mark, moreover, that types of Jesus often comprehend the CHURCH. It is so with these rods. The twelve rods at first seem all alike. They are all sapless twigs. The same grove saw their birth. Man's eye sees but one likeness in their dry forms. But suddenly one puts forth loveliness--while the others still remain worthless and withered. Here is a picture of God's dealings with a sin-slain race. Since Adam's fall, all are born lifeless branches of a withered stock. Many abide so, and thus pass as fuel to the quenchless fire. But in a chosen remnant, a new birth occurs. The grave sprouts into life. The sapless put forth buds. Blossoms appear. Fruit ripens. Whence is the difference? It is not nature's work. No dry stick can restore itself. No withered helplessness can deck itself with verdure. This cannot be. When any child of man arises from the death of sin, and blooms in grace, God has arisen with divine almightiness. Free, sovereign love decrees renewal. Boundless power achieves it.

Believer, the Budded Rod gives another warning. It is a picture of LUXURIANCE. Turn from it and look inward. Is your soul thus richly fertile? Is life in you abundant life? *Where are the almonds?* They are rare. Instead of fruit, you often yield the thorn. Should it be so? "Herein is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, so shall you be My disciples." Joh 15:8. Whence is the fault? Why is the stem thus bare? The fertilizing means abound. Perhaps they are little heeded. "Abide in Me and I in you--as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can you, except you abide in Me." Joh 15:4. Perhaps your neglectful soul departs from Christ. Thus fructifying sap is checked. Thus bloom is nipped. Thus early buds fall off. You leave the sunny slopes of Zion's hill. You stray into the chilly marshes of the world. Then blight and mildew mar the expected fruit. The Word is not the daily food. Hence the roots drink not renovating moisture--and the withered leaf drops off. Meditate in God's law day and night, and you "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters, that brings forth his *fruit* in his season--his leaf also shall not wither--and whatever he does shall *prosper*." Psa 1:3.

But if the Budded Rod rebukes the scanty fruit in the newborn soul, what is its voice to unregenerate worldlings? Alas! these are a forest of sticks, wholly dry. The curse, which fell on Eden's garden, blasted their nature to the core. Thus withered they were born. Thus withered they continue. What will their end be? That end draws near. What then awaits them? Can they be beams and rafters in the palace of heaven's King! Oh! no. The decree is sure. Faithfulness has warned. Almighty power will execute. "That, which bears thorns and briers, is rejected, and is near unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." Heb 6:8.

Num 19.2

THE RED HEIFER.

"Tell the Israelites to bring you a ***red*** ***heifer*** *without defect or blemish and that has never been under a yoke."* Num 19:2

Contact with death is the occasion of this type.

DEATH! The very sound falls heavily. What mind can lightly think of it? What eye unmoved can see it? The limbs, once full of vigor, stir no more. Sinews, once elastic in activity, become rigid. The form, so wondrous in its mechanism, becomes an inert mass. The features, once the reflecting mirror of ten thousand thoughts, are marble-monotony. The vessel, once so proudly merry, lies a deserted wreck. The fabric, once so sparkling in beauty, is a deserted ruin.

Death! It is more than animation fled. Decay draws near, with a polluting touch. Corruption fastens on its prey. The friends, most dotingly attached, cannot but turn loathingly away. A stern necessity requires, that offensive remains be buried out of sight.

Reader, here pause and meditate. This death is pressing at your heels. It soon will lay you low. Your weeping friends will hide you in the dust. A forgetting world will go on merrily, as though you had not been. Say, do you joyfully await its touch? Can you feel, Death comes as with friendly hand to open the cage-door, that my freed spirit may fly to its high home? Remember, you cannot escape. This tyrant wields a universal sway.

But in what cradle is it born? Whence is it armed with that destroying scythe? It is transgression's child. Sin is the womb which bore it. A sinless world would have been deathless bloom. But the world is sinful, and therefore is an open tomb.

In Eden sin was foreseen, and therefore death was fore-announced. Obey and live--but disobey, and "you shall surely die." Gen 2:17. The miserable sequel is well known. The tempter came. The bold lie triumphed. And from that day our fallen earth has been one charnel-house.

Hence death is no ingredient in creation's primal law. It is a shadow cast by a blighted ruin. In its features we read wrath--displeasure--curse. Its voice is sternly one--God is offended. Its scourge vindicates eternal majesty and truth.

Death, then, is perpetual evidence, that rebellion has worked extensively. It follows, because sin has preceded. Now God, in love, desires to set this truth conspicuously before each eye. Hence He writes a clear decree in Israel's code. "Whoever touches a dead body, is unclean seven days." Num 19:11. The man, thus soiled, is outcast from the tabernacle-service. He is exiled from social fellowships. The rule is universal. "This is the ritual law that applies when someone dies in a tent: Those who enter that tent, and those who were inside when the death occurred, will be ceremonially unclean for seven days. Any container in the tent that was not covered with a lid is also defiled. And if someone outdoors touches the corpse of someone who was killed with a sword or who died a natural death, or if someone touches a human bone or a grave, that person will be unclean for seven days." Num 19:14-16

This is a rigid law. But it speaks clearly. How awfully it shows *God's sense of sin!* Whoever is brought near to *death*--sin's symbol--is symbolically vile. Proximity to *lifelessness*--sin's work--is counted, as proximity to sin itself. The contact with the sign, is branded, as contact with the thing signified.

But pollution may thus occur, which no forethought could flee. Without intent the foot might touch a grave. In ignorance a tent might be entered, where death sat. The decent *offices of love* might require, that lifeless relatives be carried out. Care must hide those, who cannot hide themselves. Be it so. It matters not what be the cause--if death is touched, legal uncleanness is incurred.

We hence are taught, *how sin surrounds us, and how suddenly it soils.* It is the very atmosphere of earth. Man cannot move, but some contamination meets him. His casual walk is along *miry* paths. In the discharge of *pious* duties some *stain* may soon defile. Thus each day's course may render us impure.

This is a humbling truth. But in this very darkness there is light. We are not left bereft of remedy. The unclean may be cleansed. All stains may vanish. There is a fountain opened for all soul-filth. There is full help for foulest need. Where sin abounds, sin's cure exceeds. Where pollution spreads its wide pall, the Savior brings His wider covering. This is the Gospel-message. And this stands prominently forth in the provision for removing the defilement of death's touch.

Reader, come view now the ordinance of the Red Heifer. And while you view, bless God for the great antitype--Christ Jesus.

God, who sentences the unclean, appears now to relieve. No remedy could be devised by man. None could be credited, unless it brings heaven's seal. Faith cannot rest, but on a God-erected rock. But He provides, and He reveals. *"Tell the Israelites to bring you a* ***red heifer*** *without defect or blemish and that has never been under a yoke."* Num 19:2.

In the first place THE VICTIM IS SPECIFIED. But still the people must present it. Thus Christ, God's sacrifice for sin, is taken from earth's sons. That it may be so, He puts on our nature. He clothes Himself with humanity, as the Woman's Seed. So our race is enabled to give from its fold the sin-removing offering. The pitying angels could not find this help. Their nature is distinct from ours. Their glittering hosts hold not a substitute for man. The children of Israel must bring a Red Heifer.

The HEIFER'S COLOR is precisely fixed. It must be **red** throughout, without one spot. Faith learns most precious lessons from this rule. What is Adam, but red earth? Hence, then, the ruddy type manifests our Lord, as Adam's offering. Yes, He is truly man, that He may take man's place, and bear man's guilt--and pay man's curse--and suffer in man's stead. The Heifer--RED--proclaims, that in nature Christ is verily what Adam was--sin always excepted--and verily what Adam's children are. Believer, rejoice. As man, you sinned--as man, you merit hell--but Christ has lived, and worked, and died, a God-man in your stead.

But Scripture-types have many phases. PURE RED recalls the thought of **blood**. And can faith look to Jesus and not mark His streaming wounds? He stands in vesture dipped in blood. He shed it, and thus satisfies for sin. He shows it by the Spirit to the soul, and thus infuses peace. He pleads it before God, and thus obtains the blessings, which His Cross bought.

"WITHOUT DEFECT OR BLEMISH." The Heifer must be perfect. This is a general requisition. Completeness must adorn each victim on God's altar. The slightest blemish was exclusion. This always shows our Jesus--spotless in perfection's brightest luster. Truly He was man, but truly He was man immeasurably far from sin. From the first breath, until His return in triumph to His throne, He was as clean from evil, as Jehovah in the highest. No sunbeam is more clear from darkness, than Jesus from sin's shadow. If it could have been otherwise, how could He have atoned for us? Sin's touch would have made Him subservient to justice. Death would have been due for His own faults. But now He gives His soul--His body--without one blemish, a pure--fit--all-sufficient sacrifice for all the sins of His most sinful flock. Such is the lesson from the Heifer without blemish.

THE NECK ALSO MUST BE UNMARKED BY YOKE. It never may have yielded to compulsion's lash. It must be unused to *imposed work*. Thus Jesus bounds with willing step to Calvary, "Lo I come." Constraint compelled Him not. No force reluctantly dragged Him. His moving impulse was pure love--love for His Father's name--love for immortal souls--love springing fresh from the deep fountains of His heart--love, as free as the air.

Christ is all willingness. Who can be tardy, when He calls? Christ flies on rapid wings to save. Who will not fly on rapid wing towards Him?

The Heifer is then dragged outside the camp. As a vile thing it is cast out. The dwelling place of man rejects it. The type is answered, when Jesus, reviled--despised--spit on--mangled--scorned, is led beyond the city's gates. Ignominy's cup then over flows. He is reproached, as vilest refuse.

Believer, do not expect favor with the world. They, who scorned Jesus, will not honor you. Submit with His most lamb-like patience. Follow Him amid all sneers. Endure the *cross*. It raises to a *crown*.

Next it is SLAIN. And did not Jesus die? He did, for death was our desert. Therefore, He drank that cup. What grace what love! what glorious rescue! what complete redemption! what full atonement! In very deed the God-man dies. Believer, clasp the truth--exult--adore. When sins reproach--when conscience stings--when Satan rages--when the white throne is set, shout, "Christ died!" This answers every charge--silences each adversary's voice--breaks Satan's chains--quenches hell's flames--tears out the worm's sting--annihilates destruction--brings in salvation. The truth, that Jesus died, is glory to God--glory for man--glory forever!

The Priest then turns towards the Mercy-seat, and seven times SPRINKLES THE BLOOD. The Gospel-story is replete with blood. We here again are taught its triumphs. It opens the door to the pure sanctuary above. It clears the way. None enter, but along this consecrated path. This sprinkling is the only key.

FIRE IS THEN APPLIED, and the whole Heifer is *consumed*. The *unsparing element* devours all, and soon reduces it to ashes. We see in this, how *vengeance deals relentlessly with our sin-laden Surety.* It only checks its hand, when no more can be taken. Sweet are the tidings, that no wrath remains for those, who die in Christ. Their agony is past--their punishment is paid--all now before them is eternity of love.

Finally, THE ASHES ARE COLLECTED. Mingled with water from a running stream, they form a purifying store. This is laid up for those polluted by the touch of death. Through seven days such must be counted, as unclean. Upon the third and seventh, they are sprinkled by a hyssop-rod dipped in this fluid. And then impurity departs. Then the excluding taint is cleansed away.

Thus ends the rite. But Gospel truth still lives in the eternal record. A fundamental truth is prominent. As these ashes purify the ceremonially impure--so virtue from the dying cross takes moral guilt away.

But we learn more. The ashes are not used alone. They are commingled with PURE WATER. This sparkling produce of the spring portrays the **Spirit's grace**. Hence, though Christ's death obliterates *condemnatory* stains, the Spirit must come in with further aid, to wash the heart, and fit it for heavenly home. This hallowed fluid is applied by a hyssop-bunch. This rod is emblem of the faith, which ventures near, and claims the merit of redemption's store, and then applies it to the soul. Ashes unsprinkled availed not. The Gospel-hope ungrasped is worth nothing. Faith's hand must clasp and use it.

Reader, is there not here most large instruction for your soul? Each day sees you unclean. Say, is your faith each day most closely dealing with the Savior's death, and with the Spirit's love? In the Red Heifer you are taught the remedy prepared by God. He hates, indeed, the filth of sin, But He provides--proclaims--extends full expiation. All is now ready to make you whiter than the whitest snow. Come, then, draw near in faith. Be clean--be sanctified--be saved.

Num 21.8-9

THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

*"The Lord said unto Moses, Make a **fiery serpent**, and set it upon a pole--and it shall come to pass that every one who is bitten, when he looks upon it shall live. So Moses made a **serpent** out of **bronze** and attached it to the top of a pole. Whenever those who were bitten looked at the bronze snake, they recovered!"* Num 21:8-9

Alas! what broods of vileness nestle in man's heart! As wave succeeds to wave, sin presses on the heels of sin. If a brief calm seems to give peace, a fiercer storm soon rises. The seeds of evil, for a while concealed, revive as weeds in spring. All human history proves this. But the recurring murmurs in the wilderness are saddest evidence. Seven times already has rebellion raged. And now again, because the way is long, there is revolt, and blasphemies are muttered, "and they began to murmur against God and Moses. 'Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die here in the wilderness?' they complained. 'There is nothing to eat here and nothing to drink. And we hate this wretched manna!'" Num 21:5

Here is another proof, that *there is no blindness like UNBELIEF.* Surely the sweetest manna fell with every morning's dawn. Surely the purest stream flowed closely in their rear. But harsh ingratitude sees frowns on mercy's loveliest brow. Reader, are not your features in this picture? By nature this same quarry is your cradle. You spring, a branch of this sin-bearing tree. And if fretful distrust be not your constant fruit, free grace has wrought in you a mighty change.

Israel's murmurs soon plunge them into deep waters of distress. Hence learn to dread this evil. Flee its touch. Bar fast the door against its entrance. Wrath follows in its rear. The dregs of woe are in its cup. Whoever sinned and suffered not? See what swift vengeance overtakes these rebels! "The Lord sent *fiery serpents* among the people, and they bit the people--and many people of Israel died." Num 21:6.

The camp is now wide-spread dismay. These *messengers of wrath* beset each path. No care can flee them. Their dart is sudden. Their sting is death. Thus multitudes sink tortured to the grave.

But Israel's sin gives opportunity for grace to smile. Mercy often uses punishment, as a cure. A scourge is sent to check the downward course. How many find recovery in *suffering's valley!* How many rise, because they were cast down! A rod is often evidence of love. It is so here. The stricken crowds now feel their guilt. Self-loathingly they mourn. They beseech Moses, "Pray unto the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us."

Moses complies. He here appears a type of his forgiving--mediating--Lord. He gives no railing for their cruel taunts. He upbraids them not for unbelief. He reminds them not, that this misery was the due wages of their ways. He quickly flies to God. Can prayer knock earnestly at heaven's gate and be unheeded? Eternal truth proclaims, "Ask, and you shall have." Christian experience responds, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." Psa 34:6. Rejoicing multitudes have proved--are proving--that *faithful petition prospers.* Its gains are ever sure and large. When supplication wrestles, plenteous showers of grace are on the wing.

But it is mercy's way, to give more than our hearts expect. Behold a proof. The people seek a respite from the plague. This would, indeed, have been a gracious boon. But it would have left *the bitten* to expire. It would, indeed, have checked the flowing tide of fiery ill. But it would not have eased the pain-racked limb. And what is more, it would have reared no Gospel-beacon for all ages of the Church. But the reply exceeds requests. It thus is worthy of a giving God. It is an ocean of vast love. It is a volume of deep wisdom. It is a flower redolent of saving truth. God takes occasion from this sin to cheer souls to the end of time. "The Lord said unto Moses, Make a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole--and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looks upon it shall live." Num 21:8.

Relief for body is conceded. But, so marvelous is the plan, that human skill is silent in amaze. No mind could have conceived such mode. Indeed, proud reason would assuredly despise it. But cure for body is the smallest portion of this mercy. It shows the cross, in form too clear for doubts--in colors, which no age can fade.

It is instructive to observe, how Moses staggers not here in unbelief. God speaks. That is enough. Therefore the plan is wise--therefore it must succeed. So, instantly he executes. "He made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole--and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." Num 21:9.

Behold God's method--simple, yet mighty; one only, yet sufficient for each case. The prince, the poor, must seek the selfsame remedy. The mightiest intellect--the most expanded mind--the most inventive thought--could find no other rescue. The most illiterate had instant access to it. The aged raised the eye, and health returned. The youthful gazed, and malady was gone. In some, the pains were great, and death seemed near, but *one view killed the plague.* Others had just felt the sting, and found the pain to fly. Some were far off in distant borders of the camp--some had their dwellings around the uplifted pole--but every look--from far--from near--was full, complete, and instantaneous cure.

Did any scorn the means? If so, neglect was ruin. No other help could heal the bite. But all, who acted trust in God's appointed mode, found sure deliverance. There was only one remedy--free--open unto all--but only one. Look, and be healed. Look, and let life return.

The glory of this type now gloriously breaks. Let minor thoughts now vanish, as stars before the sun. **The Brazen Serpent on the pole is Christ.** The look towards it is faith. This must be granted. The lips, which cannot err--which cannot lead astray--decide. When Jesus opened wisdom's volume to Nicodemus, He brought him to this very scene. The words are as bright as midday. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up--that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life." Joh 3:14-15.

Blessed record! sweet sound! amazing truth! grand tidings worth ten thousand worlds! Here then, in emblem, is *the gospel of free grace!* Here is the remedy of God. Here is relief commensurate with all the need of all poor sin-sick souls. Reader, give ear. See in this figure your hope--your joy--your peace--your full redemption--your complete salvation--your curse removed--your sins all blotted out! Come, and look **in**ward--realize your neediness--your pain--your rankling sore--your just exposure to eternal death. And then look **up**ward and behold health in a bleeding Savior's wounds--life in a dying Savior's death.

Mark, PERISHING is no fable's vain conceit. These words warn of it, "that whoever believes in Him should not perish." The bitten sufferer truly pictures our very case. We too are pilgrims journeying through a wild wilderness. It is infested with the old serpent and his brood. At every step, at every turn, we meet some forked attack. Each day the mischief taints our veins. Satan's least touch is fatal venom. In Eden he began his murderous work. And still his fiery darts fly round. No mother's son escapes. All earth is perishing like Israel's camp. But earth brings no relief. If penitence forever wept--if sighs ceased not--if rolling hours were one continued wail--the streaming eye--the smitten breast--the bending knee--the upraised eye--the wringing hand--the supplicating lip could not extract the sting. Self has no help. The Law is no physician. Its glance detects disease. Its voice proclaims the hopeless state. But it holds no cordial remedy in its stores . It denounces the leprous spots. It sternly sentences, and leaves the wounded to expire. Man cannot help himself--or save his brother. No rites--no forms--no services--suck out the poison. As all the sick in Israel's camp were surely lost, unless God had decreed to heal--so all the serpent-wounded upon earth must surely have sunk down to hell, unless free mercy had most freely pitied. But He who said, Raise up a serpent on the pole, said also, Lift up My Son upon the accursed tree.

Thus God resolves to help the helpless--to stay the plague--to save the lost. Praise--praise--His name! Our God is love. Gaze on the proof. He calls His Son to bring relief. Bless--bless His grace! He sends His Jesus from His own bosom to give health!

And can it be, that Jesus refuses to come and deliver us? No, He flies gladly on redeeming wings. He thinks no load too heavy--no agony too great--no ignominy too vile--no shame too shameful, if only He may restore.

My soul, ponder again this healing work. The serpent's sting had slain man's race. The God-man comes to bruise this serpent's head. He, without sin, assumes the form of sinful flesh--and in that form is lifted high up on the cross. He hangs the graphic antitype of the brass-serpent. He is thus raised up on the cross, that He may be conspicuously displayed to all earth's sons--and that all faithful ministers may learn to lift aloft this only beacon.

Reader, look then from other things towards this cross. Look with assured faith. He, who there hangs, is verily the mighty God. Therefore divinity belongs to those deep wounds. They have infinity of merit to expiate infinity of guilt. He wears your form--He bears your nature--that His sufferings may be accounted, as your own. In Him all power--all fitness--all sufficiency combine. God sends--accredits--appoints--accepts Him. In Him all attributes are more than satisfied. He is salvation to the uttermost. He is God's glory in the highest.

Look yet more earnestly. The look of faith is saving. You cannot turn a trustful eye to Him and not receive fullest salvation. Did any wounded Israelite look and not live? So no beholding sinner dies. The remedy is sure--is near. You may be **aged**, and long years of sin may show a blackened course. Look, and the mighty mass of sin is gone. You may bewail a life of aggravated guilt. Your stains may be the deepest crimson. You may be plunged and replunged in vilest filth. Look, and be whole. If all the sins of all the lost were yours, they would not exceed this expiating power.

You may be **young**--and life's first buds be opening. But you are born *a withered branch on withered tree. The serpent's poison tainted your infant veins.* You never can have health, but from the cross. The rich must look--for riches cannot save. The *poor* must look--for poverty is no cloak for guilt. The *learned* must look--for learning can devise no other help. The *ignorant* must look--for ignorance is not heaven's key. None ever lived without soul-sickness. None regain strength apart from Christ. But His cross stands uplifted high--even as the pole in Israel's camp. And it is not a vain voice, which cries, "Look unto Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth!" Isa 45:22.

Believer, you know, that you have **daily** need to look. You are raised high by faith, but not above the *flying* serpent's reach. Alas! how suddenly he wounds God's saints. And all his wounds bring pain. But the reviving cross is ever in sight. There alone, can the venom lose its pain. Then live with your eye riveted on Christ. Thence flow your streams of peace. Turn not away your gaze in life--in death--until you enter the blessed home, where the old serpent cannot come

÷Num 24.17

JACOB'S STAR AND ISRAEL'S SCEPTER.

*"There shall come a **Star** out of Jacob, and a **Scepter** shall rise out of Israel."* Num 24:17.

Jesus is here sweetly preached--but from a heart, which never loved Him, and by lips, which never more shall praise Him. It is indeed an dreadful personage, who now speaks. A cloak of fearful mystery enwraps him. He journeys far to *curse* God's people. But when he comes, he cannot choose but to bless them.

His name is BALAAM. His mind, his motives, and his frightful course, are a deep study. *They are a sign-post, showing hell's downward road.* Thus they present a vast expanse of profit, of which the barest outline only can be touched.

His dwelling was amid the mountains of the East. His intellect had there acquired some knowledge of the living God. His name was wide-spread, as a man enriched with heavenly gifts. He was revered, as having mystic influence in the unseen world.

Hence Balak, Moab's king, dismayed at Israel's conquering course, thinks, that Balaam's aid would avail more than armaments. Therefore he calls him, saying, "I know, that he whom you blessed, is blessed--and he whom you curse, is cursed."

Common reputation thus made him more than man. *But all his outward sanctity concealed a graceless heart.* Disguised in holy livery, he was the slave of this world's prince.

The messengers arrive. Their errand is declared. Balaam's first answer suits his fame. God seems the foremost object of his thoughts. He thus professes, that God's will is his only guide--"Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me." And can so fair a morn be soon a rayless night? Alas! a good commencement secures not a good end. The bud may never blossom, and the blossom may not ripen into fruit. *Many a lost one once looked heavenward.*

He tells the matter to his God. The clearest answer is returned. "You shall NOT go with them--you shall not curse the people--for they are blessed." And can it be, that God thus communes with unrighteous men? Yes! Truth may pass the threshold of the mind, and not subdue the heart. Alpine snows reflect the sun, but are not softened by it.

Balaam's half-heartedness now creeps from its disguise. His *ear* received God's plain reply. But his *eye* looked on Balak's rich rewards. He cannot but dismiss the princes. But his weak words betray his hankering heart. He *slightly* says, "The Lord refuses to give me leave to go." Here is not truth in its full stature. The prohibition is withheld--"You shall not curse." The grand decree is cloaked--"For they are blessed."

Unhappy man! one honest speech would have uplifted him above temptation's reach. Alas! for those who halt and linger on the borders of untruth. The timid clippers of God's word, the trembling fritterers, suppress reality, and so deceive.

Satan has cast a wily net. His arts succeed. Balaam told less than God's reply. The princes hasten back, and they tell even less than Balaam's words. Dilution is diluted more. They only say, "Balaam refuses to come." God is now totally left out--and man's demurring will appears the sole hindrance.

The temptation is thus courted to return. And it will not be slow to seek the half-inviting door. Balak sends mightier princes, with larger entreaties, and more costly bribes. Balaam's *mask* now further drops. He frowns them not away. Professing loyalty to God, he urges them to tarry, while he sought further guidance. But he fully knew God's will. Still, regardless of this, a secret longing lurked, that he might get some doubtful word, which seemingly might make compliance guiltless. Alas! for those, who, while they scruple to impinge against a bolted *door*, seek by some *crevice* to get out.

God speaks again; but the restraining rein is slackened. Those who shun light, will soon be left to stumble in the dark. Balaam now only hears, "If the men come to call you, rise up, and go with them." Here is a lowered barrier. And, intent on gain, he quickly overleaps it. Uncalled, he early rises. *And so he rushes down the stream to earthly treasure, and soul-death.*

But now a prodigy bars up his course. The Angel of the Lord thrice stands an adversary in the way; and then "he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey--a beast without speech--who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness." 2Pe 2:16. Heaven and earth miraculously restrain him. Still his desire of lucre will not stop. He is surrendered to his evil will. Restraints diminish. He gains the terrible permission to advance. "Go with the men." He deserts God. God deserts him. Thus Balaam reaches Moab's land. And here he still pretends devotedness to God, while his whole heart worships the idol of cheap reward.

What scenes ensue! Altars are raised. Victims profusely bleed. The king beseeches, tempts, caresses. The wretched prophet struggles to comply. He seeks all means to curse, that so he may grasp the cursed bribe. He mounts the summit of the lofty rock. He thence surveys the outstretched camp. He opens his mouth--and longs for words to blast God's people, and secure the gold. But all is vain. As a reluctant instrument in mightier hands he cries, "How shall I curse, whom God has not cursed?"

Surely he will now desist. Ah! No. A hateful passion has become his lord. Another vile attempt is made. He moves to Pisgah's heights. Thence but the outskirts of the camp are seen, and there he tarries, courting a seeming license to oppose God without open rejection of a servant's garb. The Lord again distinctly overrules. The struggling traitor cannot but cry, "Behold, I have received commandment to bless--and He has blessed--and I cannot reverse it." Will he not yield to this clear voice! Will he not turn, and rather heap his curses on God's foes!

Ah! what can change the heart, which worldly passions hold in bonds? Once more he seeks an eminence. He fully looks upon the multitudinous company. Again his bad lips open. Again God conquers, and the truth is heard, "Blessed is he, who blesses you, and cursed is he, who curses you."

Do any read, who, against conscience and clear light, would touch forbidden ground? Balaam's case cries, Forbear--forbear! Be firm--be resolute--at once, forever turn away. Dally not with an unholy wish. Now to escape, may not be hard. Tomorrow, resistance weakens, while the lure strengthens.

The prophet vexed--the king enraged, now part. Balak reproaches--Balaam recriminates. They both are foiled. The evil union ends in evil. But Balaam's lips speak once again. Unhappy man! he must proclaim a Savior, in whose salvation he shall have no share.

"I shall see Him, but not now--I shall behold Him, but not near--there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." Num 24:17.

Thus is the Gospel preached by a dead soul. Let preachers search their inmost hearts. Christ only in the *mind*--the *lips*--the *pulpit*, will not save. Many, many show, who never shall behold, Him. They raise the cross, yet turn away themselves. They praise the blood, yet never wash. They tell of wounds, which they touch not. They open out redemption's scheme, but never clasp redemption's Lord. They teach the truth, and live a lie. They point out the source of life, and pass by it to death. The apostle Judas from the side of Jesus went to his own place. The prophet Balaam thus preached to others, and yet he died the vilest of the vile.

But his clear prophecy now asks attention. Where can more glowing terms of Christ be found? A Star--a Scepter--a two-fold phase of the most glorious sight, which men or angels can behold.

"There shall come a **STAR** out of Jacob." A Star, what is it, but a glittering orb set in the canopy of night? It sparkles, as a gem amid surrounding gloom. It darts a cheering ray on the black pall around. It smiles with lovely radiance on a dark ground.

Such is Christ Jesus. Where He beams not, it is unmitigated night. It is the skies without a star. What is such blackness, but a chilly type of ignorance, and wretchedness, and sin? Take the poor soul, in which Christ never shone. All these vile troops there brood. Is God there known? Far otherwise. There may be vague idea of some supreme director. But the realities of God's grace, and love, and truth, and justice, are utterly unseen. There is no basking in a Father's smile. Each step is through the maze and thickness of impenetrable doubts. There is no joy of a felt pardon. There is no knowledge of sins blotted out. Such is each Christless soul. But let the Star appear--what loveliness pervades the scene! So when Christ rises in the heart, that brightness comes, before which sin and misery flee.

Balaam proclaimed this Star. But his beclouded eye discerned it not. Reader, say, do you see its beauteous light? All, who behold it, reflect its rays.

Next Jesus, who thus enlightens, **exercises sway**. His presence cheers and also subjugates. Another aspect therefore is adjoined. "A **SCEPTER** shall rise out of Israel." These types of Christ may seem most diverse. But they have mystic union. Is not a Savior seen most surely *loved?* Is not a Savior loved most warmly *served?* As surely as we cannot love, until we know; so surely we cannot know and fail to love--so surely we cannot love and not desire to please. Thus the Gospel-beams always give sanctifying warmth. Thus the Star brings a **Scepter** with it.

Experience proves this truth. The holiest man is always he, whose soul is the widest flood of Gospel-light. *The more the Star is seen, the more the Scepter is outstretched.* The more Christ shines within, the more ungodly weeds decline. The Gospel-truth makes all its subjects willing in a day of power. And, when made willing, they no longer live to self, but unto Him, who governs by His love. Balaam proclaimed the Scepter with a rebel-heart. Reader, submit to this most righteous rule.

Mark finally, that Balaam is forced to utter TERROR to a Christ-refusing world. "A **scepter** will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the sons of Sheth." Num 24:17. As His willing subjects are exalted, so the rebellious world must perish. They, who submit, are saved. They who resist, are dashed to powder.

Reader, now answer, what is your state? Are you among the happy heirs of this Star's kingdom? If not, take warning. His coming is at hand. His glorious chariot draws near. A blessed gathering throngs it. They sing. They triumph. They give praise. The rebel mass lie prostrate at His feet. The crushing wheels destroy them, and from His presence they are driven to that woe, where no Star rises in the endless night--and the one Scepter is hell's iron sway.

Think, think again of Balaam. He had an inward hell, while yet he lived on earth. Where is there misery like this foresight of woe? "I shall see Him, but not now. I shall behold Him, but not near." His eyes shall see the Lord--too late. Yes. They must open to His glorious view. "But not near!" What! when He calls His ransomed to His side, and bids them occupy His throne, and gaze forever on His beauty, and never leave Him more--what! then to be cast out! Reader, beware! Soon will each doom be fixed!

÷Num 25.10-13

Phinehas.

*The Lord said to Moses, "**Phinehas** son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites; for he was as zealous as I am for my honor among them, so that in my zeal I did not put an end to them. Therefore tell him I am making my covenant of peace with him. He and his descendants will have a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites."* Num 25:10-13

Phinehas appears, as a rainbow on the bosom of a storm. He is as a flower on a wild heath--a fertile spot in a parched desert--pure gold in a crude quarry--a fragrant rose upon a thorny hedge--faithful among faithless.

The wretched Balaam, held back from cursing, returns not sorrowing to his distant home. He is *restrained*, but not *reformed*. Deep seeds of evil often live, though not permitted to break forth. So it is in him. He lingers still in Moab's godless land. Though often foiled, venom still works within. It seeks an outlet in secret and abominable plots. He counsels Balak to spread lustful lures, and to entice the people to the idol-feast. Let *weapons* be now laid down--*banquets* prepared--and *blandishments* displayed. "Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality." Rev 2:14.

Ah! what destruction may one bad man cause! One spark may kindle desolating flames. One evil thought may be the seed of many a poison-tree.

Balak adopts the evil plan. The fascinating and enticing net is spread. The people rush in crowds, like fluttering moths to a destroying flame. And thus they fall self-slain. A bosom-traitor yields the fort.

Reader, your greatest danger is from SELF. Bar fast the heart. Chain your own thoughts. Satan's outward malignity may fall innocuous, like Balaam's stifled curse. But, if the heart gives up the door, lusts in vile troops will enter, and do murderous work. How many die--the slaughtered of a yielding will!

While thus the people sin, God's vengeance rises with a giant-arm. Sentence of death is passed upon the guilty. The judges raise the gallows. The offenders perish ignominiously. And, as if executions were too tardy, a pestilence moreover comes, and sweeps its thousands into penal graves.

This is a moment of terrific dread. All sights and sounds of death appear. The frightful scene seems as a picture of the last-day wrath.

Surely now the stoutest heart will quake! Surely one cry for mercy will wail tremblingly in every tent! It is not so. *Judgments, apart from grace, may harden.* The bit may only chafe ungovernable steeds. Thus this appalling moment witnesses the outbreak of increasing sin. Zimri, a prince of loftiest rank, whose station made him the observed of all, dares wrath--sneers at the legal sentence--braves the plague's withering stroke--raises his rebel-hand against all decency and fear, and openly, in plainest vision of the weeping crowds, stalks boldly into sin's embrace. Amid the annals of iniquity, madder contempt of God cannot be found. Sin has sinned vilely, but this is among its most unblushing acts.

Phinehas, the priest, beholds. And zeal for God swells through his soul. He cannot stop the impulse to wipe out the stain. His arm must hasten the just punishment. Thus, with his javelin, he indignantly sweeps hence the titled culprit, and the high-born partner in filth.

So Phinehas felt; and so he acted. What is the result? The Lord gives respite. The plague is stayed. And an approving voice honors the righteous zeal. Behold "I give unto him My covenant of peace--and he shall have it, and his seed after him--even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood."

Reader, now pause, and mark the mighty principle, which rolled like a torrent in the heart of Phinehas. The Spirit leaves it not obscure. The praise is this, "He was zealous for his God." He could not fold his arms, and see God's law insulted--His rule defied--His will despised--His majesty and empire scorned. The servant's heart blazed in one blaze of godly indignation. He must be up to vindicate his Lord. His fervent love--his bold resolve--fear nothing in a righteous cause. The offending Zimri was a potent prince--nevertheless he spared him not.

Believer, can you read this and feel no shame? Do your bold efforts testify your zeal? Sinners blaspheme God's name. Do you rebuke? His Sabbaths are profaned. Do you protest? False principles are current. Do you expose the counterfeits? Vice stalks in virtue's garb. Do you tear down the mask? Satan enthralls the world. Do you resist? No, rather are you not *dozing unconcerned?* Whether Christ's cause succeeds, or be cast down, you little care. If righteous zeal girded your loins, and braced your nerves, and moved the rudder of your heart, and swelled your sails of action, would God be so unknown, and blasphemy so daring?

Mark, next, the zeal of Phinehas is sound-minded. It is not as a horse without rein--a torrent unembanked--a hurricane let loose. Its steps are set in order's path. It executes God's own will in God's own way. The mandate says, let the offenders die. He aims a death-blow, then, with obedient hand. The *zeal*, which heaven kindles, is always a *submissive* grace.

This zeal wrought wonders. It seemed to open heaven's gates for blessings to rush forth. God testifies, "He has turned my wrath away from the children of Israel." He has made atonement for them. My name is rescued from dishonor. The haughty sinner is laid low. Therefore I can restrain my vengeance. Men see, that sin is not unpunished--mercy may now fly righteously to heal.

ZEAL is indeed a wonder-working grace. It scales the heavens in agonizing prayer. It wrestles with omnipotence, and takes not a denial. Who can conceive what countries, districts, cities, families, and men have sprung to life, because zeal prayed? It also lives in energetic toil. It is the moving spring in hearts of apostles, martyrs, reformers, missionaries, and burning preachers of the Word. What hindrances it overleaps! What chains it breaks! What lands it traverses! It encompasses earth with efforts for the truth--and pyramids of saved souls are trophies to its praise. My soul, bestir your every power for Christ. The labor will not be in vain.

Next mark, how heavenly smiles beam on the zeal of Phinehas. Honor decks those, who honor God. The priesthood shall be his. It shall live in his line from age to age. He and his sons shall bear the name of Israel on their breast-plate, and make atonement in the sanctuary. Grand privilege! Such is the fruit of zeal.

Brave works for God win crowns. There is no merit in them. But the grace, which gives the will, and nerves the arm, and brings success, awards a recompense. Among earth's happiest sons, and heaven's most shining saints, devoted laborers hold foremost place.

This lesson ends not here. Phinehas forever stands a noble type. He reflects faith's grand object--salvation's precious champion--Christ Jesus. Yes. Christ is here. In Phinehas, we see Christ's heart, and zeal, and work, and mightily constraining impulse. In Phinehas we see Christ crowned, too, with the priesthood's glory.

Let thought here pause and commune with salvation's story. What brought Christ from the highest heavens? What led Him, firm amid reproach--unchecked by hindrances--along earth's wretched paths? What nailed Him, a curse, to the accursed tree? They answer well, who say--His love for souls--His burning eagerness to snatch them from hell's flames. But the reply falls short.

True! tender mercy throbbed in His every pulse. But there were mightier motives urging Him with mightier force. The deepest depth was ZEAL FOR GOD. His strongest impulse was to bring glory to His Father's name. Hear His own words, "Lo! I come. I delight to do your will, O my God."

Come, now, view in this light redemption's work. Behold the law--dazzling in purity--wide as infinity in its demands--incapable of change. If it be set aside, God's honor suffers loss. If its decrees are thoroughly fulfilled, God's honor is maintained. Jesus places Himself, as man, beneath its yoke. It asks for nothing, which He gives not. He lives a life of pure compliance. What it exacts, He yields. Can God be honored more? The covenant of grace permits Him to impute this obedience to the ransomed seed--and thus heaven's courts are filled with crowds, in whom no flaw, no speck, no blemish, can be found. All pass those thresholds robed in sinless obedience. Thus Christ exalts God's law. He put on a panoply of zeal, and wrought this magnifying work.

This zeal, too, led Him to the accursed tree. All, whom He saves, are by nature and by act deeply plunged in guilt. Each sin is linked to the unalterable curse. If it descend not, where is God's truth? But Jesus meets it in man's form. Each vial of pledged wrath is outpoured on Him. No sin of His vast family escapes the scourge. Tremendous threats are ratified tremendously. Christ's zeal for God takes the full cup, and drinks it to the dregs. What follows? Justice is just--truth remains true--holiness appears most holy and righteousness most righteous--while grace exults, and mercy sings, and souls are saved, and every attribute is honored.

See then, that God's glory is the brightest jewel in redemption's diadem. The Gospel is Jehovah glorified. If all sin's race had passed to endless woe, justice and truth would have sat sternly on an iron throne--compelling dues--but never satisfied--while loving-kindness would have pined powerless to help. But Jesus's zeal crowns all with glory. Reader, study the Gospel. It is a god-like scheme.

But Phinehas received reward for zeal--even the covenant of everlasting priesthood. So Jesus passed through a low valley to a glorious height. "And being found in appearance as a man, *he humbled himself* and became obedient to death--even death on a cross! Therefore *God exalted him* to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name." Php 2:8-9. "I have glorified You on the earth," is the strong plea. "And now, O Father, glorify me, with Your own self, with the glory which I had with You, before the world was," is the vast prayer. Joh 17:5.

The plea was mighty, and the prayer was heard. Jesus has turned away eternal wrath. He has brought in eternal reconciliation. Therefore He sits a Priest upon His throne. "All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth." He sways the scepter of all rule. Thus He consummates redemption's scheme. He takes away the heart of unbelief. He implants love. He engrafts faith. He sows the seeds of righteousness. He waters the tender plants of grace. He matures the precious fruit. He intercedes a conquering Advocate. He perfumes with sweet incense the cry and work of faith. So He, who once laid down His life in zeal, now reigns an all-prevailing Priest.

Believer, such is your Lord. Such was His zeal. Such is His glory. Be then conformed to Him. Let the same mind be the one flame in you. Work for Him--with Him. "It is a faithful saying, For if we have died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him."

÷Num 35.6

REFUGE.

"Among the cities which you shall give unto the Levites, there shall be six cities for Refuge." Num 35:6.

REFUGE is a thought dear to every Christian heart. It is, as haven to the ship, when clouds blacken--as dove-cote to the bird, when hawks pursue. When once the wrath of God is seen in its true light--when once the conscience has turned pale in terror--when once hell's gulf has opened at the feet--when once the quenchless flames have glared in prospect, despair must seize its prey, unless some Refuge be discerned. But Christ a sure Refuge stands, high as the heavens, wide as infinity, lasting as the endless day.

An emblem now is given--seal of this Gospel-fact. Some types of Christ appeared for a brief season, and then vanished. The guiding cloud, the manna, and the flowing stream ended on Jordan's banks. But here is a sign, which lived through Canaan's history. It never failed, until the cross was reared.

The story of the ordinance is brief. The case was possible, that man, without intent--without one evil or revengeful thought, might stain his hands in human blood. An unaimed blow might fall. An undirected arrow might wound fatally. There might be murder unawares.

When such event took place, a kinsman was permitted to arise in wrath, and claim the slayer's life. The law gave license to take blood for blood. He, who had slain, was open to be slain.

Reader, conceive the hapless injurer's state. Peace--happiness--security, were fled forever. Each sight would startle. Each rustling sound would bring alarm. The crowd was peril, for there the kinsman might unsheath his sword. In deep retirement, some ambush might be laid. Thus every spot and every hour would threaten death to the poor trembler's mind. His life was one continual terror.

But Israel's God ordains a means to rescue from such life long woe. He bids, that several cities should be set apart. In number they are six. They are distributed throughout the land. Thus no place is very distant from these walls. They stand on lofty hills, conspicuous from afar. They are to be sanctuaries. The manslayer, reaching their Refuge, was at once secure. The angry kinsman might not enter. The townsmen might not close their gates, by day nor night--nor cast the fleeing stranger out. Here then security enclosed him in its arms. Here he might turn and boldly face his enemy. He had the felt reality of full escape. He knew, that every danger was left far behind, and that his days might now glide sweetly, without one shadow of alarm. But he must closely keep within the covering walls. Outside there still was danger. If he but stepped beyond the bounds, his life was open to the kinsman's blow.

He must abide thus sheltered, while the *high-priest* lived. That death dissolved avenging claims--and then the slayer was at large. Instantly he might go forth--and unmolested move from place to place.

It is recorded, that all care was taken to help the slayer in his flight. Wide roads were formed, and kept in strict repair. All hindrances were smoothed. And at each turn, where doubt might rise, posts were erected, which on their pointing arms proclaimed, "Refuge, Refuge!"

Such is the type. Spirit of love, arise to teach! Send forth Your Christ-revealing light! Grant, that some soul may hence discern the truth of Gospel-Refuge.

Poor sinner, this type at once displays your case. The slayer is your counterpart. Perhaps, startled, you cry, "What, are my hands blood-stained?" In answer take this truth. There may be murder, though no man be slain. There may be carnage of duties--talents--time--souls. And alas! there is. No day, no hour, passes in which this guilt is not incurred. Earth seems a battle-field, in which we level blows at God's just claims. It is a charnel-house piled with the skeletons of slaughtered means of grace. Our words and looks are often arrows barbed with deathful poison. Who treads not upon slain opportunities of good? There may not always be premeditation in the sin. *But as the manslayer did not plot his deed, so sinners blindly commit these murders through ignorance and unwatched thought.*

Take now the sinner awakened to the sense of this guilt. He is as the slayer rushing in terror from the kinsman's wrath. He knows himself to be pursued. Vengeance is pressing at his very heels. An arm is raised to fell him to the ground. The furious sword is glittering near. The bow is bent. The arrow is poised upon the string. Another moment, and the fatal wound is given. His mind is agony. Each fiber quivers. Tremblings beset him. You conscience-stricken, say, is not this *your* terrified condition?

One kinsman only hunted the slayer. But many adversaries threaten the guilt-stained soul. Mark the long troop. See, how it rushes on. God's JUSTICE takes the lead. It has strong claims. Its wrongs are many. It has clear right to execute revenge. And it is swift, as God is swift--and strong, as God is strong--and dreadful, as God is dreadful. Can man escape? Ah! sinner, tremble! This foe is near. Its wrath is righteous. Its aim is sure. If you are caught in *nature's plain*, you surely die. If you are clad in nature's armor, you have no safeguard. You must perish.

The LAW is in pursuit, winged with all vengeance. It demands pure unblemished love to God, from the cradle to the grave--from first to last breath--in every child of man, whatever be his station--talent--rank. Exception cannot be. All, who transgress, become its prey. And who transgresses not? Where is the thought, in which love reigns supreme? Where is the moment free from blame? This law must have its dues. It follows sternly. It can never spare. Its curse rolls onward, as a swelling flood, to sweep offenders into the dread abyss. Ah! sinner, tremble! Unless your head has some almighty shelter, you cannot escape.

The TRUTH of God, too, points an inexorable sword. It has decreed, that every sinner must die. Can it recall the righteous word? Can it be false? But false it is, unless the vengeance falls. Sinner, what shield will hide you from this blow?

SATAN moreover follows with huge strides. He claims the sinning soul as his. He has commission to destroy all, who are sin-marked. His eye is keen. His steps have lightning speed. His hate is bitter. He delights to slaughter souls, and drag them to the beds of flames! Ah! sinner, tremble! This cruel foe will surely seize you, unless you reach some shelter higher far than earth--some fortress stronger far than human arm can raise.

These adversaries rush on speedily. Who undismayed can hear their nearing steps? *Thus the fleeing manslayer is a faint shadow of the pursued sinner.* Do any cry, 'where shall we flee? Is there a Refuge?' The question opens the main tidings of this type. Yes. The sheltering cities represent our Refuge. Would that all multitudes, who throng this earth, could hear the blessed truth! Would that a voice of thunder could pervade all lands, proclaiming–'Refuge!' Would that from shore to shore--from hill to hill--from plain to plain, the echo might resound, 'a Refuge is prepared, full--complete--secure!'

Draw near, you guilty sons of men. You need not die. Approach, all you, whom sin oppresses--conscience terrifies--and torturing memory scares. You may be safe. Flee, all who tremble, lest your souls should perish. You may have peace. Fears may be lulled. Anguish may proceed to joy. You may face every foe, and laugh to scorn their every threat. There is a Refuge. It is Christ the Lord. Flee to Him! Flee!

God has been pleased, in wondrous love, in overflowing grace, to set Him as a sheltering sanctuary. The word is pledged, that all in Him are everlastingly secure. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Rom 8:1.

Let faith now calmly gaze on this city, and mark its TOWERS. Christ's *person* is the grand pillar of security. His strength is full omnipotence. He is Jehovah-Jesus. Who then can snatch from His protecting arms? No one, who is not mightier than God, can burst these gates. While Jesus lives, and lives the mighty God, this safety is complete.

His finished work builds up the Refuge. The walls--the bulwarks of this city--are red with blood. There is inscribed above each gate--"Christ died." Justice draws near. It sees the mark--and asks no more. The wounds of Christ are the deep grave of God's avenging sword. Believer, you may meet justice with the bold challenge, 'Nothing is due from me. My heavenly Surety paid His life for mine. In Him--by Him--I clear your uttermost demand.'

The law's stern curse falls harmless here. It falls, indeed, because it may not be infringed. But Christ receives its weight. And all, locked up in Him, are as unharmed, as Noah within the ark.

Satan pursues up to these gates. But here he pauses. Wherever he finds sin, there he demands his prey. Polluted souls bear mark, that they are his. But all within these walls are washed, and cleansed, and purified, and clothed, and beautified. He must confess, that they are no more his. He must retreat. Their sins are blotted out. Therefore he cannot touch them.

Blessed be God, for this sure Refuge! Reader, imagine every foe in eager chase. See them advancing, in strong flood. Mark their wild rage and frantic hate. Hear their affrighting menaces. See their terrific weapons. Survey the fearsome army. Then rush to Jesus. From all He rescues. From all He shelters. The vilest sinner, nestling in His arms, is safe--safe, as the inhabitants of the highest heaven--safe, as Jehovah on His throne!

Mark, too, this Refuge is AT HAND. In Israel the slayer had to flee oftimes along a tedious road. But our city stands right beside us. At each moment the cry is in our ears, 'Behold Me. Behold Me.' "But the way of getting right with God through faith says, "You don't need to go to heaven" (to find Christ and bring him down to help you). And it says, "You don't need to go to the place of the dead" (to bring Christ back to life again). Salvation that comes from trusting Christ—which is the message we preach—is already within *easy reach*. In fact, the Scriptures say, "The message is *close at hand*; it is on your lips and in your heart." Rom 10:6-8. Outstretched arms invite you. Fall this day within them. The gates are close. Enter this hour. Now all is ready. Oh! linger not. Now is the accepted time.

Believer, you are within this Refuge. You know it to be home of joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Your experience testifies, that its climate is "the peace of God, which passes all understanding." Surely, then, you will cleave tightly to it. Set not one foot beyond the holy precincts. Many temptations will allure you to come forth. Oh! stir not.

Deu 18.15

THE PROPHET.

*"The Lord your God will raise up for you a **prophet** like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him."* Deu 18:15

All fullness dwells in Christ. Reader, come ponder--praise--admire--adore Him. Those who know Him, never can commend enough. Ignorance alone neglects--despises--disesteems Him.

The neediest of needy sinners find all supply in Him. He is salvation's overflowing well. He fills all vessels, so that they can hold no more. He is a treasure-house, in which gold never fails.

Let the surface of this truth be touched. You are sin-soiled. Here is a fountain of all-cleansing blood. Wash, and be whiter, than the spotless snow. Satan, and SELF, and life-long trespasses condemn you. Here is Jesus' wounded side, presenting an acquitting plea. Your best obedience is a filthy rag. Here is the righteousness of God--a perfect covering--a glorious robe. Your *heart* by nature is a lifeless stone. Christ sends His Spirit, and the entrance is life. He is a PRIEST, offering His blood--living to intercede--pouring down blessings. He is a KING--ruling above--within--around. He is a **PROPHET**, giving all knowledge--leading in wisdom's paths--diffusing floods of light--teaching salvation's lessons.

It is this latter office, which now claims special thought. Let us approach it by enquiring, what man's state must be, unless rays beam from heaven?

When sin invaded earth, knowledge of God was slain. That lovely plant was blighted to the root. That beauteous column fell a shattered ruin. The mind lost power to fly aloft. Its wings were clipped. The eye was dim to pierce the skies. The wish and skill to find out God were utterly extinct. Man's intellect--alert to grovel in the dust--could never scale this height. Here mental shrewdness slobbered, as a fool. Witness the silly failures of philosophy's most boasted efforts.

Unless, then, some revelation had been given, God and His essence must have been shrouded in impenetrable night. Man could not dig such a jewel out of his own quarry. He could not find it in his own empty chambers. Along a brief career of blindness he must have gone down to that deep prison-house, where darkness ever darkens, and God is never seen. The world by wisdom knows not God.

The case of need, then, is most clear. But all is met by Jesus. He undertakes to save, and undertakes to teach. The Church's Savior is the Church's Prophet. He is not slow to enter on His work. In Eden's garden, where the light expired, He strikes a new spark. There He is quick to speak of *remedy* and *rescue*--of a woman-born Savior--and His final triumphs. As time rolls on, He adds fresh light. By types, by prophecies, by figures, and by signs, He pictures redemption. He raises holy men, and puts His words into their mouths. He shakes a torch of truth in the world's night. He shows His Calvary through vistas of long time--and so guides many a benighted pilgrim in the path to heaven.

Thus the Prophet's voice is early heard--the Prophet's school is early open. But in appointed time, the Prophet-God must come in person. Moses thus states the fact. *"The Lord your God will raise up for you a **prophet** like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him."* Let us now mark the marvelous fulfillment.

1. Our Prophet shall be of our brethren--one of our house.

Here is considerate wisdom. If He were solely God, His mission must be death, not life. Humanity must perish at the sight. If He stooped only to angelic order, how could He mix with inhabitants of earth? How could we hang upon His lips? But our Prophet truly is man. He dwelt here as one of our family. He hid His glories in our tent of clay. He trod life's walk, as our very brother. Therefore, with fearless love, we may approach. We may sit down, with Mary, at His feet. We may recline, with John, upon His breast. As the disciples on the way to Emmaus, we may cling to His side. We may confidingly disclose the history of our souls. A brother will not scorn a brother's tale. When we seek counsel, He will gladly--fully--tenderly impart. As a near kinsman, He invites, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart--and you shall find rest unto your souls." Mat 11:29.

2. But more. The Prophet shall not be only man. He shall be man *marked with a wondrous sign.* He shall appear as ANOTHER MOSES. Israel's leader shall revive in Him. As face to face, He shall respond to a conspicuous type.

This similitude must now be traced. The search, amid a mass of profit, distinctly proves, that an omniscient mind pervades all revelation's story. No 'mere chance' could frame a close resemblance between distant men. Infidelity cannot maintain such folly. Christ, then, *foreshown* as Moses, *coming* as Moses, stamps His commission with a divine seal. In Him this type is realized--and in Him alone. For until He appeared, there was no counterpart to Moses. Since He ascended, none such has arisen.

See, how the pictures correspond. **Moses is born**. No peaceful cradle rocks the child. No mother's arms securely clasp him. A tyrant dooms him to immediate grave. He is cast to the Nile's waves.

Jesus is born. He, too, reposes in no tranquil home. No rapturous welcomes greet the heaven-sent babe. In Herod another Pharoah plots. Massacre casts a wide-spread net to catch Him. Thus He is Moses-like in early persecution.

Moses at the appointed time goes forth from Egypt. Jesus is banished to the selfsame spot, that out of Egypt God may call His Son. Hos 11:1. Egypt sends out the human type. The heavenly antitype leaves the same country.

When Moses hastens to avenge his nation, what is his welcome? It is rejection. Derision scorns his claims. Jesus, the mighty Savior, comes. There is deliverance in His heart and in His hand. But His own receive Him not. He is despised and reviled. The cry pursues Him, 'Away with Him, Away with Him!' Jesus and Moses are alike thrust out.

Moses retires awhile. The wilderness conceals him. At last, as the sun issuing from a cloud, he breaks from darkness. Thus Jesus passes many years in deep seclusion. Unknown in Nazareth the God-man toils. Earthly obscurity could not be more obscure.

When Moses shows himself again, astounding wonders prove his high commission. Nature at his command changes its course. Prodigies attest, that God is with him. So Jesus moved as God on earth. He willed, and the blind saw--the deaf heard--the dumb spoke--the dead lived--each form of sickness fled--abundance fed the hungry crowds--the water turned to wine--the sea became a pavement for His feet. In form He stood as man. In power He worked as God.

Moses must die before the people can pass Jordan's waters. He must endure a signal penalty for his offence. And must not Jesus die, before His people can pass heaven's gates? Yes. Their vile sins were all on Him, and on the cross due suffering must be paid. As Moses was at birth--in life--in death--so Jesus at birth--in life--in death, responded.

Moses mediated between heaven and earth. From the mount he brought down God's commands. He offered Israel's prayers. He made intercession and prevailed. Thus Jesus is our great intercessor. He represents His children before God. He represents our God to us. He gives the Gospel-law. He ever prays, and ever is He heard.

Moses was favored with most close communion. While dreams and visions taught the other seers, God communed with Moses face to face. Thus Jesus in counsel--purpose--will--ever was Jehovah's fellow. From all eternity He was "by Him, as one brought up with Him, and He was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Pro 8:30. All salvation's scheme was spread as a chart before Him.

Such is the resemblance. But the DIFFERENCE is infinite. Moses is but a twilight gleam. Our Jesus is the midday splendor. Moses is a tiny rill. Our Jesus is the shoreless ocean. Moses appears a little bud. Jesus is the full fragrance of the opened flower.

From contemplation of these outward signs, let us now enter within **THE PROPHET'S SCHOOL**--and drink in His amazing lessons. What grand instructions meet us! Behold! His mighty hands draw back the curtain, which hides God. He holds a text-book, bright with saving truth. This text-book is His own cross. **Jehovah** is there displayed as loving sinners, and yet hating sin--just, yet forgiving--righteous, yet pardoning--holy, yet peopling heaven from unholy earth.

The Prophet leads onward to knowledge of **Himself**. He bids faith come, and read His heart. There are the names of all His chosen seed indelibly inscribed. There is love, preceding and out-living time. He shows the virtue of His blood to obliterate the crimson dye--to wash out deepest stains of guilt--so to pay debts, that Justice has no further claim--so to acquit, that accusations cease. Wondrous lesson! It calms the conscience into peace. It kindles the flame of love. It changes the whole heart into devoted service.

He teaches the marvel of **His righteousness**--a robe so bright, that God Himself cannot sufficiently admire--so pure, that angels are unclean beside it. He assures, that His redeemed may take it--plead it--wear it. He tells of His prevailing prayer--ever encircling the mercy-seat. He teaches faith to hear its constant cry, Father forgive them, for my blood is shed--spare them, for I have suffered--remember the Covenant, and pour all blessings on them.

Lessons are added revealing the **Spirit's grace**. He melts the stony heart. He turns the perverse will. He stills the rebel-passions. He opens the blind eye to see that sight of sights--the Christ of God. He opens the deaf ear to hear the music of that voice--Come unto Me.

The Prophet teaches, too, **the righteous path, which leads to Zion's rest.** He tells, how saints obey and please their God. He imprints the truth, that holiness is evidence of faith--and that the living tree must bear good fruit. Such is a scanty outline of the Prophet's lessons.

Reader, do you eagerly exclaim, I sincerely would be a pupil! Then take up your Bible. Here Christ comes to teach. Throughout it His voice sounds. He speaks in every verse. Make it your constant study. Think every hour to be lost, in which you glean not from it. Draw near with reverence, as to a speaking God. The ground is holy, let no proud thoughts intrude. Approach with prayer, beseeching the Prophet to cause His Spirit to illumine the page. Approach with faith, not doubting, that your soul will thrive. Call on Him to fulfill His office. Tell Him your ignorance and ardent thirst to learn. He will be true. He will instruct you unto profit. All Zion's "children shall be taught of God." Join then the happy scholars of this school. These lessons cast out every care. They are eternal life. They work conformity to heavenly image. *As we imbibe His truth, our souls put on His image.*

You ministers, it is your work to propagate the lessons of this school. Come then to Christ for every thought. Obtain from Him your every word. Let your instructions always echo Him. Sad! when a teacher stands before his flock to *un*say what the Lord has said--to contradict His simple verities--to set some fiction in the place of truth--to scatter base coin in the room of gold. Beware! beware! Let all your sermons flow in the one channel, "Thus says the Lord." In every pulpit let the great Prophet's voice be clearly heard.

Deu 21.23

THE CURSE.

"Anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse." Deu 21:23

This is a dreadful sentence. It shows the misery of miseries--the inmost core of agony--the very soul of anguish--the sting of woe--despair's extremity. This sum of evil is the Curse of God.

When God blesses, sorrow is joy--pain has sweet ease--and burdens lose their weight. Beneath His *smile*, the bed of sickness is repose, and death's approach is welcomed. If He is absent, there is a void, which nothing can supply. But if He *frowns*, what horrors multiply! What shall be said, then, of that *Curse*, which is His uttermost display of wrath! Better, far better, not to have been born, than to meet this. O my soul, whatever be the cost, escape it.

With this resolve approach the text before us. The outside casket may seem rough, but it contains a precious jewel. "He, that is hanged, is accursed of God."

The meaning must be primarily sought. Mark, this is no statement, that criminals uplifted on a cross thereby pass into deeper guilt. There was, indeed, extremest ignominy in this mode of death. It was the brand of utter loathing. But *man's* contempt entails not *divine* curse. Earth may abhor, while heaven approves. The cross could never be the cause of Curse. A saint might rise to heaven from that tree. It is not meant, then, that a man, by being hanged, becomes accursed of God.

This word describes not malefactors in the mass. It is particular. It has a prophet's voice. It is a Gospel-sign. It eyes exclusively the Crucified Jesus. It only tells the fact, that He, who came to bear God's Curse, should hang upon the tree. It pictures His especial mode of dying. A cross shall be the evidence, that Jesus thereon sustains the law's full threat.

Reader, this brings us to ponder closely the Lord's work. From all eternity it was decreed, that He should bear His people's sins. This is the essence of the covenant of peace. He willingly consents. The guilt is all transferred to Him. Each violation of the law is charged to His account. He stands the guilty one. Thus all His ransomed are released from blame. Their penalties--their curse--are wholly claimed, received, and borne by Him. A substitute suffers all, that they may suffer none.

These are the terms arranged in everlasting counsels. The Savior is to be a substitute. The saved are to be free, because He pays. The law remits no due. It takes all from another's hand. Jesus is a vicarious Curse.

Such is God's grace--such the Redeemer's love--such the simplicity of Salvation's scheme. This text, then, gives a signal mark, whereby the Curse-sustaining Surety shall be known. Already had a typal picture taught the truth. A brazen serpent, hanging on a pole, had shown the Savior hanging on a tree. But here plain words speak plainly. Hanging is now distinctly named. The voice cries, He, who is hanged, is the Curse of God. No doubt remains. It stands announced, that when the true Deliverer shall appear, upon the cross He shall expire. A pledge is given, too marvelous for man's invention--too clear for man to misinterpret.

If this should fail, faith loses her sure ground. If other death makes Christ its prey, Christ takes not the Curse away. The Gospel-fabric crumbles into dust.

But this fails not. Outside the city's gate, the cross is raised. To it the Lord is bound. On it He is upraised, a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men.

But wondrous steps lead to this wondrous end. It seemed, as though it could not be. While Israel's power remained supreme, the cross was not a *Jewish* malefactor's death. If Jesus die, then, by their rule, He will not die with pierced hands and feet. *Stones* will crush. But difficulties vanish before God's decree. The scepter, therefore, passes from the ancient people. The *Roman* law prevails. It must condemn and execute. But, when the Romans slay, they crucify. Hence Christ, sentenced by Pilate, is hurried to the tree. Hence on the cross He hangs. The prophecy is thoroughly fulfilled. And faith, pointing to Calvary, shouts, Our God is true--Jesus completely saves--*"Anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse."*

Reader, here for a moment take your meditative seat. But vain the cross, except the Spirit gild it with His light. Therefore send forth the fervent cry, 'Come, Holy Spirit, teach me the glory of Calvary's scene!'

The prominent truth is this. Jesus there hanging is the Curse of God.

Fully to realize the joy of this, we must distinctly understand the Curse. Whence springs it? What kindles this fierce flame? Disobedience is the one cause. If all men loved their God--if His one law ruled in each heart--beamed in each look--spoke in each word--moved in each step--then earth would not have known the name of Curse. The loving child, walking with God, would only bask in smiles, and feast on blessings.

But ah! how different is the case! In Adam's fall the human family pass into rebellion's realm. The fountain-head, being poisoned, only can send evil from it. Hence wrath arises. Hence the Curse thunders.

Reader, make this truth practical. For until ruin be discerned, Christ's shelter never will be sought. Boldly then ask, 'Is this Curse mine?'

Let God reply. Behold His mirror. View yourself therein. Take His true standard. Measure yourself thereby. Produce His faultless scales. There weigh yourself. The Spirit from His lofty throne thus speaks, "Cursed is every one, that continues not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them." Gal 3:10.

Oh! solemn word! But it is plain as solemn. Hear it, you sons of men. Sift carefully its several parts. What is written in this edict-book? The terms are brief and exact. They ask for love to God--to man. This is the one demand--and this must reign in every movement of the heart from cradle to the grave. All thought must flow in one broad channel--love. All words must sound one echo--love. All works must have this spring--this course--this end. Exception there is none. This rule's enclosure holds our total race. No rank ascends above it. No poverty descends below it. Gold cannot purchase license. Poverty cannot evade. Talent and learning cannot frame excuse. All, who have breathed life's breath, from Adam's day to this hour--all, who shall breathe, until the Lord's return--are under the distinct command of love. If there be failure in one single thought, the law is broken, and the Curse accrues.

But eyes are slow to open to this giant-truth. Could silly earth be one wide scene of *unconcern*, if this reality were felt? Could giddy crowds thus laugh and sport, if once they saw the hand of Curse upon them?

Reader, perchance you fondly reason, The law is broken, but the Curse will not fall on me. My pleas are many. They will land me on some rock. Well, then, produce your pleas. The law says, 'Give me unsullied love', and points to your defects. You cannot deny guilt, and thereby you allow the Curse to be your due. But you reply, 'I erred in early days, with unformed mind and thoughtless heart'. Be it so--early transgression is transgression still, and therefore you are Cursed. You add, 'but I was sorely tried. Could human nature stand, when so assailed?' The law knows nothing of an extenuating cause. To err--be the occasion what it may--to err is to be Cursed.

But perhaps you plead your penitence--your broken-heart--your streaming eyes--your smitten breast--the floor worn out by your knees. Can penitence recall the past, or undo what is done? It cannot. Offence remains offence, and each offence is Curse.

Do you betake yourself to cries, and humbly supplicate mercy--reprieve--space for reform! Do you say, Let me commence my course afresh--blot out the debt, and let me enter on a new career! It cannot be. Past deeds have earned their wages. The wages must be paid, and they are Curse.

Reader, do not evade this reasoning. Whatever be your age or state, to this point you are brought--in self--by nature--by your own deed--you stand accursed of God. There is no hour, in which love has not failed. Therefore each hour has linked you to the Curse.

But perhaps you ask, 'What is this Curse?' You feel no present wrath. The canopy of heaven is bright above. Shelter, and food, and friends, abound. Unnumbered comforts cheer your path. It may be so. But this present will not be always present. The future is drawing near. Death presses at your heels. And judgment follows death. Then sin's deserts must be received. And the deserts are Curse.

Do you still ask, 'What is the Curse?' Words cannot fully tell. Thought cannot grasp the magnitude. No images can paint the boundlessness of this anguish. But it cannot fall short of this. God puts forth all His might--stirs up His utmost strength--strains every effort--all for one purpose--to assert His majesty--to avenge His broken law--to heap perdition on the offender's head. In brief, **the Curse is Hell.** Ah! what is here implied! *Conscience* is tortured by the undying worm. Remorse inflicts unmitigated stings. *Memory* upbraids with bitterest reproach. The *body* writhes in all intensities of pain. Each sense gapes, as inlet of agony. God is far off. Blackness of darkness thickens all around. Satan insults. Wretched companions deepen the horror by their wails. The woe increases by full knowledge of *eternal hopelessness*. Years will roll on, but misery will be misery still. Ages will follow ages, but respite will not dawn. The present will be ever present, *an infinity of suffering.* Such is an outline of the Curse--just--merited--and sure. It *must* be. The broken law demands it. It *will* be. God's truth declares it.

But why is this picture drawn? The purpose is to endear the tidings of escape. The motive is to magnify the glorious truth, "*"He who is hung on a tree"* even Jesus *"is accursed of God."* The desire is, to win all thoughts to Him--the substituted Curse.

With this intent let us return to Calvary. The cross is there erected. The mighty God-man is dragged to it. The nails affix Him, and He there expires. Thus He becomes the Curse of God. Thus the whole vengeance falls on Him. He there bears all the anguish, which would have been His people's doom, if they had tossed forever on flame-beds. No grain of misery is withheld. No pity spares Him. The Curse--the dreadful Curse--the total Curse--in all its boundless length and breadth, pours its whole weight upon Him.

Surely, then, all, who are contained in Christ, may now confront the law. Let it bring forth their guilt. They own the justice of the charge. Let it cry, 'Take my Curse'. They point to Jesus taking all. The plea is valid. They cannot suffer what their Surety has first borne. They are secure and free, simply because He has endured for them.

Believer, will you not live beside the cross! Can you withdraw your eyes! Read its clear language. Take its rich comfort. Clasp its full joy. Doubt not--be verily assured--that it absorbs your Curse. Drink its deep streams of peace. And bless your precious Lord, who thus vicariously saves. Give all your heart--give all your life--to Him. Is He not worthy! Think, that, without His love, your endless state would have been endless Curse. Think, that, through His curse-bearing death, your present state is blessing--your eternal home is glory.

Deu 30.34

JESUS VERY NEAR.

"The word is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it." Deu 30:14.

Here the Gospel beams forth brightly. This is a picture with Christ in the foreground. Here is a compass needle, pointing to Him--the pole. There is no place for doubt. Cavils are silenced. For the Spirit, who thus speaks by Moses, interprets also by the mouth of Paul. He draws back every veil. He rolls away all clouds; and shows the Lord, as the heart and marrow of this record.

This passage, then, is rich in exceeding worth. As such, it should be studied with exceeding care. Paul thus unfolds it--"describes the righteousness, which is of the law, that the man, who does those things, shall live by them." Rom 10:5. Mark, you who fondly dream of human merit. The legal covenant is clearly stated. Fulfill the terms--perform the works--bring an obedience without one blemish--an unbroken whole--and then the recompense is earned. Then life eternal is won as a rightful due. But if transgression be incurred, the mouth is closed--the plea is gone--reward is forfeited. Who can say, 'pay me, for my task is incomplete! or, give me the prize, although it is unwon! or, crown me, though I am vanquished in the race!' But such is the language of self-righteous men. Can folly be more foolish--blindness more blind! Thus *merit-claimants* grope down this dark path to a darker night.

Paul proceeds to state the contrast. "But the righteousness, which is of faith, speaks on this wise." Rom 10:6. Blessed be God! All glory to His sovereign grace! There is a righteousness pure--perfect--wrought not by man, but by Christ. It is declared to be "of faith," because faith's happy sons receive it--wear it--plead it; in it they stand and prosper; by it they mount to heaven. This righteousness is here introduced, as a person uttering a glorious voice "Say not," O anxious sinner, "in your heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what does it say? The word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith, which we preach."

"The word is near you." Do any ask, What word? The answer is, "The word of faith." The Gospel-tidings about Christ; that word, which faith bears--prizes--welcomes--clings to--lives by--that record, from which delightedly it draws strength--peace--joy--comfort--glory.

We here are plainly told, that this word was very near to Israel's sons. Their knowledge was comparatively twilight, but still abundant gleams broke on them from the Sun of Righteousness. Their every rite was Christ, in shadow. He was the soul of every ordinance. He was reflected by the tabernacle in all its parts. The altars stood His graphic form. He died in every dying lamb. He bled in all the flowing blood. He groaned in every victim's groan. The curling incense was His fragrant prayer. The veil portrayed His flesh. The priest in the resplendent robes--in every sacrificial act--in the uplifted hands--in the grand words of blessing, showed Him, as He ministered below, and as He ministers above. The leper preached the malignity and cure of sin. The true instruction from Mosaic lips was Christ--His grace--His person--and His perfect work. The outstretched finger of each part pointed to Him. A constant voice called to one sight--"Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world"--turn to the promised seed--the bruiser of the serpent's head--the great High-priest--the efficacious blood. Leviticus was a mirror, in which our elder brethren might read the full salvation, which the Father planned, and which the Son in due time achieved. Thus Gospel-truth was very near to Israel's sons.

Reader, learn hence to study Moses with mind intent on Christ. Dig in this mine, as miser eager for pure gold. The flowers of this garden all breathe heavenly fragrance. As salt is in each ocean's drop, so Jesus is in each portion of these rites. You lose the prize, except you find Him. Never take only superficial chaff from fields of such rich grain.

But if the Lord was "very near" in ancient signs, is He not more than near to those, on whom the full light shines? Believer, come then and realize your favored state. Bask on your sunny hill. Luxuriate in your abundant pastures. Walk up and down your spicy gardens. To you there should not be a desert-spot. The whole scene should blossom as a rose.

Jesus, indeed, is more than near. He came from heaven--He took our flesh, that He might unite us, as living members, to Himself, the living Head. Nearness has become oneness. The separating wall is broken down. The intervening distance is removed. He asks our hearts, that He may dwell therein. He opens wide His arms, that we may there repose. "Abide in Me, and I in you."

Precious truth! There is no place, nor time, nor state, when faith may not uplift the eye--open the ear--put out the hand--and realize a present Savior. Friends may depart--death may sever tightest bonds. But He, who ever lives, is ever living by our side. Solitude is not too lonely for His visits. Crowds exclude Him not. The morning and the evening hours--the busy day--the silent night--alike admit Him. Climate is no hindrance. In realms of snow or plains of scorching heat, the Savior journeys and tarries with His faithful servants. The rich man's hall is not above His reach--the poor man's hut is not below it. He, whom the heaven of heavens is narrow to contain--He, whom space cannot hold--He, from whose sight the angels veil their eyes--He, who sits enthroned co-equal on Jehovah's throne, always is "very near" to the poor worms, who take Him, as their all.

Believer, here is your never-failing help. Let some cases, well known in Christian life, lend their aid to make this truth more clear. *Conscience* will often tremble on the review of sin. Iniquities will rise, as spectres from their long-closed graves. They will pass by in terrible array. Their hideous forms will point to torment, as their due. Their taunting voice will ask, 'What hope can dwell in hearts so stained!'

But turn from such terrors to your present Lord. He, too, is "very near," showing His hands--His side. You may there read with open eye the total ransom paid. There is no need of distant wanderings to escape these alarms. The wells of everlasting peace are open at your feet. "The word is very near unto you, even in your mouth and in your heart." It shouts, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow--though they be red like crimson, they shall be white as wool." It adds, "There is redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Who can be sad, with such a volume full of pardons in his hand! Who can despair, while he can eye a guilt-removing Jesus!

When *Satan* ragingly assaults--when he puts forth his utmost might to thrust you headlong into depths of sin--when his ensnaring net encompasses your feet--when the betraying heart offers the key to let the murderer in--when the weak flesh begins to slide down the alluring slopes--when the world tenders its most fascinating and alluring charms--is there not peril? There is! Sad annals testify, how easily saints fall. But fall not. There is a staff near. "The word is very near unto you--in your mouth, and in your heart." Listen to the sweet encouragements--"The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation." "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." "Resist the devil and he will flee from you--draw near unto God, and He will draw near unto you." These mighty rocks are "very near." Set your feet fast upon them, and your stand is firm.

Sometimes *afflictions* roll wave upon wave. Your eye on all sides rests on woe. The dearest relatives are hidden in the grave. Bereavement sits your solitary guest. Pains rack the frame. Vigor and health decline. The nights are wearisome. The days bring anguish. Poverty can scarcely obtain the needful clothing and the daily bread. Your best designs are blackened by suspicions. Reproach and taunt ply their thick darts. Earth seems one wide-spread desolation. But in these troubles faith faints not. Christ's voice "is very near unto you, in your mouth and in your heart." A very chorus of support swells happily around--"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not lack." "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble." Surely these consolations will uplift the head above all threatening billows.

You may be called to *duties*, which surpass your strength. You feel, that you are weak to bear the burdens, and to scale the heights. You fear, that you must yield--defeated--crushed. And truly you must be overwhelmed, if you are alone. But alone you cannot be, while Jesus lives. If only you be really called, you may advance high above trembling. His voice "is very near unto you, in your mouth and in your heart." Grasp the ready promises--"As your days, so shall your strength be." "I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying unto you, fear not, I will help you. Fear not, you worm Jacob, and you men of Israel--you shall thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shall make the hills as chaff." Who can faint--who will not rather be courageous, with help divine so near!

A trying hour comes on apace. *Death* still exercises universal sway. "It is appointed a unto all men once to die." None should think lightly of an event so solemn. Momentous change! Time ceases--eternity arrives. Its accompaniments, too, are humbling. The powers droop. A languid body scarcely holds a languid mind. Beloved friends must all be left. Satan sees his last hope, and therefore musters his whole force to barb his final thrust. He draws with craftiest skill his *farewell bow*. This passage would indeed be dark and perilous, without a Savior "very near." But the believer grasps a reviving word--"Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil--for You are with me, Your rod and Your staff they comfort me."

Jesus, now gone to fit mansions in the heavenly home, then comes to receive His people, that where He is, there they may ever be. He draws the nearer, as the need increases. His everlasting arms are underneath. Thus the cold waters cannot drown. Thus martyrs' fires have been welcomed, and the excruciating stake been rapturously clasped. Believer, dread not death. Hope, rather, that Jesus will be "very near." Expect His presence--and it will be given. Ask His support, and it will surely come.

But after death, what meets you then! To die is to be with Christ. To soar from earthly scenes is to escape the clouds of sense--the mists of partial glance--the darkness of a prison-state. Then faith expires, and eternal sight expands. Then Jesus in very presence is forever "very near."

Surpassing blessedness! amazing joy! perfection of all glory! The very thought is rapture. What must be the full reality! The expectation dazzles. What will be full enjoyment! The Lord--the Lord Himself--is near in all the brightness of His Deity. Separation never can occur. Nothing can ever part. Jesus--Jesus in seen glory--is now "very near."

Some read these lines, whose conscience warns, that they possess no title to such bliss. Christ is not theirs by faith. They have not fled to Him for refuge. They cling not to His cross. Their hearts have never opened to admit this inhabitant. Sirs! tremble. But why tarry thus? Arise--make haste--draw near. The penitential prayer of faith soon reaches Him--for He is "very near."

Deu 33.6

REUBEN.

"Let Reuben live and not die--and let not his men be few." Deu 33:6.

Reuben was Jacob's firstborn. From him one section of the Jewish nation sprang. One tribe called him their father. When these words were uttered by Moses, the patriarch Jacob had long been numbered with the dead. But his descendants had reached Canaan's border--a mighty portion of a mighty people.

Let every father, who reads this, reflect *what multitudes may flow from him.* He may be seed of a vast forest of immortal plants. From him, as center, wide circles may expand. Children's children may be a swelling stream. By prayer, then, let him bequeath to each this Reuben-blessing. Let his lips often ask, that each may live, an heir of grace--that none may die the death of never-ending woe.

Recall the day, when Moses thus spoke. His eager wings were spread to fly from earth. His noble race was run. His valiant fight was fought. His place--so profitably filled--must now be vacant. The people--served so long--must see his face no more.

God in His providence calls faithful men to guide, and teach, and rule His flock. When His designs are ripe, He brings them forth, as the fit instruments. But their allotted course must have its end. Their longest space is brevity. While they are spared, let their good help be prized. Let them be honored--for honor is their due. Let them be loved--they are entitled to affectionate requital. But they go hence. All flesh is grass. God alone, never fails.

But of the men, who have done service in their day, where can be found the peer of Moses? He has pre-eminence, which few have reached. He has renown, which outshines every fame. His life was a grand blessing. His parting words are blessing. Living and dying, he is a tree, whose branches drop good fruit.

He long had toiled for Israel's welfare. And now his closing eye looks with intense affection on each tribe. He sees by faith their vast inheritance of mercies--and his last breath delights to draw the chart.

In this we have the very spirit of Salvation's Captain. Jesus left heaven--assumed our flesh--dwelt on this earth, that He might bless. When the redeeming price was paid, He ascended in the attitude and act of blessing. And from His throne, His glory-life is ever the self-same employ. He is one eternal--unfathomable--ever-flowing blessing. As from the sun light only streams, so from Him one flood of good descends.

Believer, pause at this point, and meditate your high distinction. You, too, are filled, that you may be enabled to dispense. You are enriched, that you may help. Doubtless, exalted station and vast talents enlarge the hands of usefulness. In this respect all may not stand on the same vantage-ground. All are not called, as Moses, to rule tribes. But all may strive to follow him by living a blessing life--by dying a blessing death.

Let us draw nearer now to his amazing legacy of blessing. The first view shows the last testament of Moses, as enumerating earthly treasures of honor--excellence--pre-eminence--abundance.

The happy tribes are here endowed, as rich, renowned, and mighty upon earth. Splendor and prowess are their promised crown. Their sons are to surpass in arts and arms. Their fields shall wave with all luxuriance. But beneath this outward mantle, faith sees the inner form of better and more lasting gifts. The farewell words begin, indeed, with time-estate; but they conclude not there. They are a ladder set on earth, but mounting to the skies. These images have wide-spreading meaning. The truth, which runs throughout, looks to eternal good. The real substance is not of the earth, and earthly--it is of heaven, and heavenly.

Thus, of the eldest, it is said, "Let Reuben live and not die--and let not his men be few." We instantly are led to remember this tribe's exposed position. It stands a frontier-barrier. Thus it lies open to the onset of invading foes. There is then danger, that it may soon be trodden down--that hostile attack may lay it low--that it may dwindle and become extinct. But let Reuben live--live a vast host. The blessing, at first, seems a shield against diminishing catastrophe.

But this is only the first fold. As we unwrap the words, the better portion is discerned. This is the surface; as we descend, a mine of richer ore is found. This is the shell--a precious kernel is within. A life is intimated longer than temporal--even reaching through eternal time. A death is here deprecated, worse than the body mouldering in dust--even soul-ruin. The multitudinous increase here mentioned foreshows the innumerable throng around the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Thus the true significance of the Reuben-blessing unfolds a threefold joy. 1. Life for evermore, and heaven won. 2. Death abolished, and hell escaped. 3. The expansive circle of the countless congregation of the saved.

Next we must banish far the narrow thought, that this inheritance was limited to Reuben's tribe. It is no by-gone wish. Far otherwise. It stands a wide-spreading oak, beneath which saints of every age may happily repose. It flows a ceaseless stream, from which God's sons may ever drink. Reuben's hand plucked the earliest produce, but still the flower blooms, the fragrance sweetens, and the ripe fruit courts our touch.

Behold, then, here is the heart--the mind--the will of God, to all the chosen seed. Here is no partial legacy only to the elders of the house. Succeeding children may claim it too. We have this explanation recorded by the Spirit's pen. The Gospel principle is, "If you are Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal 3:29. Faith here obtains a key--and by it enters the spiritual treasury of ancient promise. The blessings are all free to all the family of God.

Believer, now draw near. Hear Moses' voice, as if addressed directly to yourself. It tells the blood-bought portion of all Christ's family. It shows your vast inheritance--your golden wealth. To every one the legacy is left, Let this man live, and not die. Of the redeemed it is immutably decreed, Let not their men be few.

Come, then, and with appropriating faith review the wondrous gifts. Life--soul life--first shows its head. "Let Reuben live." How grand this mercy! *All men are spiritually dead-born.* Sin entered with a murderous hand. It planted deep its dagger in the inner man. Knowledge of God--love of His name--delight in holy communion--sweet fellowship with heaven--the happy worship of unsullied praise--the blissful gaze on the Creator's smile, and all the circle of pure joy, were buried in a deep grave. The soul became a total wreck--a withered tree--a dried-up stream--a wilderness of weeds--a starless night--a chaos of beclouded thought--a rebel's camp--the shattered home of misery--the region in which death reigned. The eyes were dim and saw not God. The face was turned away. Each step led downward. The hands were lifted in defiance. The mouth was opened to blaspheme. Man was a dying body holding a dead soul. He moved an unmixed evil--a sin-spreading pest. All this is sad--but there are sadder things behind. This is tremendous woe--but deeper woe comes on. This is dark night--but darker shades will deepen yet. This is full wretchedness--but still the cup may hold more drops.

This fleeting scene must end. The earthly mansion must be left. Death comes. It drives poor sinners to their final home. And what is that? Reader, shrink not--withdraw the darksome veil. Look down into the dread abode. Ponder the lost in their low cells. Hell is their everlasting doom. Do not think that hell is the mere phantom of a brain-sick thought. It is no fable fondly framed to scare weak minds. It is a near reality. It is a gigantic certainty. It is the sure conclusion of a godless life. It is the gulf, to which transgressing streams rush hopelessly. And it is not far away. It gapes before the feet. Another step may plunge the ruined into this abyss.

But what is hell? Ah! reader, may you never know. It is described by what is absent--what is present.

The *negative misery* declares, that God is not there. It is "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." 2Th 1:9. Where God is absent, there is no light--no joy--no pure repose of heart. But in that darkness God is never seen. Therefore all is one blank of dreary wretchedness.

The faithful word moreover brings to view mountains upon mountains of *active torment*. From this immensity of agony let one element be drawn. The tender Jesus thus describes the end. "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather, out of His kingdom all things, that offend, and them, which do iniquity--and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Mat 13:41-42. Fire shows pain's uttermost extreme. It has a pungent sting, maddening with all that is most hotly fierce. Hence hell is agony in all its might. Wailing denotes the bitter grief. Gnashing of teeth proclaims the deep remorse. And, as the suffering proceeds, it swells. There is no distant ray of possible relief. Forever will the smoke ascend. Forever will the anguish burn. Forever will the misery endure.

Eternal is hell's night. Such is it to lack life. Such is it to be heir of death.

But hearken, you, who through rich mercy yet inhabit earth. A voice cries, "Let Reuben live and not die." There is a Savior, who delivers from this death. There is a friend, who bestows heavenly life. Jesus appears, and on the cross endures the death, and by His righteousness brings in new life. The Father fully satisfied, says of each true Reuben, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom." Let him not die, but live.

But what is this life? Believer, you must enter heaven to know. We read--we speak--we meditate--we hear of heaven; and bright and lovely is the prospect. But what thoughts--what words can estimate the actual bliss! Sin and temptation are outside forever. God and the God-man are there clearly displayed. There is no cloud--no veil--no distance--no separation--no departure. The ransomed, ever happy, ever hymning praise, float on wide oceans of delight.

And are there *many* joying in this joy? "Let not his men be few." The Father's love--the Savior's grace--the Spirit's tenderness are large, and embrace many. A great multitude, whom no man can number, shout hallelujahs round the throne.

O my soul, seek to inherit Reuben's blessing. Give up all for heaven. It will immeasurably repay each sacrifice. The door is not yet barred. Press to enter in. Take it by violence. Jesus is the way. Walk in it. Jesus holds the key. Flee unto Him, and He will open wide the gates. He has spoken, and it must be--"Him that comes to Me, I will in nowise cast out." Joh 6:37. Many of Israel's true children there rejoice--will not you be among them? Draw life and energy from the partriarchal promise, "Let Reuben live and not die--and let not his men be few." Rest not, until you can say, "Through grace, I live--through grace, I shall not die--through grace, I have my lot among the sons, who are not few."

Deu 33.7

JUDAH.

"This is the blessing of Judah--and he said, Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah; and bring him unto his people--let his hands be sufficient for him--and be a help to him from his enemies." Deu 33:7.

Judah is the royal tribe. To it the throne, the scepter, and the authority belong. It is the cradle of the nation's kings. This is great honor. But its main glory is its connection with the God-man Jesus. He is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." A maid of Judah bears the wondrous babe. In Judah's house, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, puts on our flesh. Hence expectation eagerly surveys the blessing cast into its lap. Surely signal favors will deck the tribe so signally exalted. Surely the mercies in his crown will have transcendent luster.

Let us now turn to listen. These sounds go forth--"Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah." One fact is instantly made clear. Judah is loud in prayer. That must be uttered, which is to be heard. Mute lips gain no reply. The silent tongue arrests no notice. Judah's voice then encompasses the mercy-seat. In spirit and in cry he often visits heaven. The opening words stamp him, as a praying tribe.

Prayer is the heart-home of each child of God. This is the first sign of new birth. This draws his morning-curtain. This wakens with his earliest thought. This is the atmosphere, which his soul breathes. This is the staff, on which he leans. Thus every act begins--proceeds--and ends. This bolts the evening door. This is the pillow, on which the head reclines. Trials--temptations--troubles--and life's countless ills, here find their refuge. When sins prevail, here is relief. When dangers threaten, here is sweet shelter. When mercies beam, they beckon to this sunny hill. Each place, and company, and time, promote this gainful traffic. The child of grace lives, as Judah, crying unto God "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah."

But **what** is prayer? The question is not vain. Many are prayerless, who seem prayerful. All glittering tinsel is not gold. It is not a vain attitude--nor repetition of unfelt words. It is not copious phrase. It is not the uplifted eye--the outstretched hand--the bended knee--the prostrate form--the smitten breast--the heaving sigh--the falling tear. All these may be, and yet no prayer.

It is reality, not external show. It is the soul in earnest wrestling with God. It is the inner man's intensest agony. It is a mighty grasp clinging to Jehovah's strength. It is a struggling effort. It is the heroic cry, "I will not let You go." It is divine in origin--in confidence--in plea. The Spirit from on high kindles, and fans, and cherishes the flame. The covenant of grace is its strong rock. Standing on such vantage ground, it boldly shouts the name of Jesus and never shouts in vain.

But is not such prayer rare? O my soul, what is the answer of your secret hours? If you hang down a conscious head--pause, and take shame, that you are not more Judah-like.

Think of the **motives** calling to this exercise. A mercy-seat stands ready. An open path invites. The door is never shut. The golden scepter courts your touch. Calvary gives you an unfailing plea. Commands impel you. It is sin to hesitate. Promises, too vast to measure or to count, come forth in crowds to fill your hands. All blessings wait to be received. In this art, misery learns to smile--peace flows into the conscience--weakness becomes strong--faith matures--and every power to do and bear expands into a vigorous tree. Whatever be your age--state--frame--need--circumstance, be wise, and pray. Pray more. Cease not. Faint not. Judah's Son--the glorious Jesus--is your example, model, lesson. On earth, His life was prayer. In heaven, His intercession ceases not.

Mark, too, what rich **encouragement** pervades the first note of this blessing. "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah." Fear not. No prayer was ever lost. It is the Spirit's voice within. God will not turn away. It sounds a name, which must be heard--all heaven will listen with delight. It is the child's entreaty--the Father's heart will melt. Grace is no grace--truth fails--and mercy hardens into flint, if this cry prospers not. If all the annals of all saints were spread, as an open page, their testimony would be this, true prayer will speed.

But this text belongs primarily to Judah's story, in which we read prayer's mightiest exploits. Mark *David*. We have a volume of his prayers. And with expiring breath he witnesses, "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God--and He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry entered into His ears." 2Sa 22:7. Call *Solomon*; he begs, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge." 2Ch 1:10. Was he not heard? "Wisdom and knowledge are granted unto you." Go to *Abijah's* day. "When Judah looked, behold the battle was before and behind--and they cried unto the Lord." Instantly "the men of Judah gave a shout, and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel, before Abijah and Judah." 2Ch 13:14-15.

Proceed to *Asa*. The Ethiopians--a thousand thousand--threaten to destroy. The king sends forth this arrow--"Lord, it is nothing with You to help, whether with many, or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O Lord, You are our God, let not man prevail against You. And then the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah--and the Ethiopians fled." 2Ch 14:11-12. *Jehoshaphat* used well this weapon, and thus repelled the myriads of Ammon. *Hezekiah* thus wrestled against the Assyrians. An angel was sent forth to help--and the vast host became a pile of slain. He thus contended against malady--and sickness bloomed to health. 2Ch 32:21, 2Ch 32:24.

Jesus, this tribe's high pride, when on earth, gives the like witness--"I know that You hear Me always." Joh 11:42.

Believer, lift up your eyes. Pierce heaven with faith's keen gaze. You see your Jesus by the throne. What is His employ? He prays for you--for all His needy flock. And is He heard? Yes--every petition is success. He asks and gains all that His blood purchased--all that the covenant secures. Here is the spring of your soul's being, health, and prosperity. You thrive--you prosper--you prevail, because your mighty Advocate mightily pleads. Your inward life is proof, that His intercessions triumph. "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah." Judah's voice is ever heard.

The blessing thus continues--"And bring him unto his people." The tribes were often called to war. The quiet hearth must then be left. Their feet must tread the tedious march. But in these cheering words they catch the hope of safe return. Here seems a promise, that their corpses shall not strew a distant land--but that a peaceful home again shall welcome the victorious troops. This primary message floats upon the surface.

Believer, there is, moreover, something here for your support. You have a home. It is not this polluted scene. It is far off--in peace--in light--in purity--in heaven. And you shall safely reach it. The way may be both rough and tedious. But advance. The end is sure. Waves and storms may threaten to engulf the bark; but you shall enter the haven. The hill may be a wearisome ascent; but you shall gain the summit. Pluck this assurance from the word, "Bring him unto his people." The Lord's hand led you out from the world. The Lord's power will bring you to the company of the saved.

It is not altogether a strained thought, which applies these words to Jesus. He has a people, and greatly do they need His coming. This blessing seems a pledge of His arrival. The good Shepherd's flock is widely scattered. They wander far on hills, and valleys, in every land, and every climate. Some pant beneath a tropic sun. Some shiver in perpetual snows. A watchful eye sees all. And in fit time each is approached. Jesus Himself draws near. He wins the heart. He enters in. He takes the throne. He shows His smile. He melts the rock. He turns the enmity to love. He sits a conqueror in a once rebel camp. All given by the Father come to Him, because He comes to them. They follow, because He calls. They run, because He draws. He opens out His arms--and then they flee quickly to the shelter. Thus faith finds an accomplishment of the words, "Bring him unto his people."

It follows--"Let his hands be sufficient for him." Judah was called to work and war. But there is comfort in each struggle. His hands shall not hang down. His vigor shall not droop. His energies shall still suffice. Is the task heavy? His strength shall bear unto the end. Is the fight long and fierce? He shall hold out.

Believer, to you each day brings burdens. Act faith, then, on this heaven-sent support--"Let his hands be sufficient for him." So long as work remains to be performed--so long as conflicts last, your streams of power will not be drained. Their fountain cannot fail. David's triumph will be yours. "He teaches my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by my arms. I have pursued my enemies and destroyed them, and turned not again, until I had consumed them." 2Sa 22:35, 2Sa 22:38.

Here, too, again **behold your Lord**. Were not His hands sufficient for Him? Hell arose with all its hosts--kings of the earth, and godless men conspired. But He strode over them to victory.

And still His arm is strong as Deity in your defense. It is most true, that you require unlimited aid. But you have it all in Him--your ever-present sustainer. If for one moment His hands fail, you sink. But rejoice--give thanks. His hands are braced with all sufficiency.

The blessing thus concludes--"Be a help to him from his enemies." All the true sons of Judah are thus made more than conquerors. What are they in themselves? There is no image weak enough to show their weakness. Their strength is feebler than the tottering reed--the wind-driven dust--the storm-tossed chaff. But all their enemies--countless in number--principalities in might--cannot destroy. And why? Only because the Lord of Hosts is with them--the God of Jacob is their refuge. Jehovah-Jesus is their shield and sword.

Reader, such is Judah's blessing. Let not the picture be a blank to you. See what rich clusters hang from this tree's boughs. See what wealth sparkles in this mine. Do you not long to share these mercies--to repose beneath this shade--to feed in these sweet pastures--to drink of this deep stream? Read it again. "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah; and bring him unto his people; let his hands be sufficient for him; and be a help to him from his enemies." Mark the *praying tribe addressing a prayer-hearing God.* Mark the safe convoy to their home. Mark their sufficiency for every need. Examine well this chain of good. Can you desire, can you conceive, a happier lot? And may it not be yours? Did ever any ask, and not receive? When sinners knock in penitence and faith, the portals ever open. A blessing God--a blessing Savior--a blessing Spirit are at hand. Let not indifference turn scornfully away. Take Judah's God, as yours--and Judah's heritage will surely be bestowed.

Deu 33.8-11

LEVI.

"Of Levi, he said, Let Your Thummin, and Your Urim be with Your holy one, whom You tested at Massah, and with whom You contended with at the waters of Meribah--who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him--neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children--for they observed Your word and kept Your covenant. They shall teach Jacob Your judgments and Israel Your law--they shall put incense before You, and whole burnt-sacrifice upon Your altar. Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands--smite through the loins of those who rise against him, and of those who hate him, that they rise not again." Deu 33:8-11.

Levi was peculiarly the Lord's. This tribe toiled not in military service. Its happy hours revolved in *holy* duties. Its life was round the altars. The tabernacle was its charge, and its employ looked always unto God.

Thus it appears *a ministerial type*. We see in it the pastor's portrait. It represents that heaven-born, heaven-sent band, which stands apart to deal with man for God.

This is life's highest privilege--earth's grandest dignity--honor, which angels do not share--glory, which drives all other heroes into shade. The greatest minister is our greatest man. His words achieve the noblest triumphs on the world's stage.

What then, will Moses' lips pour forth, when Levi's tribe comes for its blessing? Reader, draw near to hear! Spirit of God, draw near to teach!

Choice servants are addressed--therefore, choice gifts will be bestowed. Levi's outline is first drawn. Three bold characteristics are displayed. These threefold marks are, holiness--acquaintedness with trial--impartial zeal.

1. The tribe is HOLY. "Let Your Thummin and Your Urim be with Your holy one." Holiness! What is it, but the image of our God--conformity to Christ--the stamp of heaven upon the soul. It is God living in the heart--moving in each step--breathing in each breath--heard in each word--pervading the whole man. It is the Spirit's presence, saying, let there be light, and there is light--let there be love, and there is love--cleaving sin's roots, and they decay--sowing pure seed, and it bears fruit. It is an upward course--leaving the world behind--eschewing evil--hating what Jesus hates--panting to be godlike. It is that lofty state, which springs from reception of the Gospel. Truth sanctifies. Error is darkness in mind and life. Christ seen--Christ loved--forms the new man. So, too, it is happiness without alloy. The holy man alone is happy. All sin is misery. Departure from it is the path of peace.

Servants of Christ, seek holiness. Let this crown sparkle on your brow. From head to foot let this robe clothe you. Inhabit earth as Zion's citizens. So will your life preach louder than your lips. So will your walk have magnet-influence, attracting unto heaven. A holy shepherd wins a holy flock.

2. Next, Levi had conflicted with TEMPTATION--"Whom You tested at Massah, and with whom You contended with at the waters of Meribah."

It was one of Israel's darkest days, when the camp murmured, because water failed. We lack clear evidence, that Levi was not tainted with this guilt. But from this mention, we take hope, that he stood firm, when others fell. But whether he resisted or gave way, the temptation put him to the test. Massah proved him. Meribah sifted his principles.

All Adam's sons live tempted lives. Satan is not yet chained. There is no place--no heart--which he infest not. His wily crafts exceed all power to count. And his wrath increases, as the time grows less. But the Lord's ministers are his especial hate. Against them every dart is hurled. For them all snares are laid. And why? Their fall brings many to the dust. The sheep will wander, when the shepherd strays.

But still his weapons often wound himself. For frequently temptation proves to be a purifying furnace, and a brightening file. The tempted lose their dross, and gain more brilliant polish. So, too, it is *a school of discipline*. Here ministers drink deeply of experience's cup. They thus become expert to sympathize with others' woes--to open out the adversary's arts--to point to strongholds of defense--to stay the slipping feet, and to pour balm into the stricken soul. Thus trials give ability and skill. Satan uses them; and the result is injury to himself.

3. Levi has, too, the praise of honest ZEAL--"Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him--neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children." These words again remind of dreadful evil in the camp. Moses was absent in the mount. The impatient people ask for gods to lead them on. A golden calf is made. They worship it. The air echoes with festive noise. Moses in haste comes down, and cries, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." Exo 32:26. They draw their swords. They rush to vindicate the cause of God, They spare not friend nor relative. No ties of kindred or of blood screen from due vengeance. Where they find sin, there they deal death. God gave the zeal, and braced their nerves, and smiled upon their deed, and thus applauds it.

You ministers, mark this. Your office calls you to reprove--rebuke--condemn. Evil is evil, wherever it is seen. You must stand *flint-like* before all the world. If relatives and friends transgress, they must be boldly checked. You speak for God. You must be honest, fearing no man's face.

Levi, thus portrayed in threefold character, then receives a sixfold blessing.

1. A grand **distinction** first appears. "Let your Thummin and your Urim be with your holy one." The message is distinct. Let Levi ever stand a priest before his God. Let the breast-plate, with its mysterious contents, ever gird him. These contents, though shrouded in some mist, intimate *perfection* and *light*. At once we see the foremost ornaments of ministerial life.

PERFECTION! Nothing inferior may be sought. The walk may have no stain. The garments must be purely white. The keen observer may detect no fault. Oh! what vigilance--what care--what prayer are needed! Lapses in those who guide, produce extensive ruin. Lord, lead Your servants in a perfect way! Be a protecting shield around! Adorn them beauteously with every grace!

LIGHT! Father of lights, be their light! May they forever dwell beneath Your rays, and, as reflecting mirrors, scatter radiance around! May they go forth, as champions clad in armor of light! Thus may true Thummin and true Urim ever be the glory of those, who are ambassadors for Christ!

2. Next, "They shall **teach** Jacob Your judgments and Israel Your law." Here is the pastor's solemn dignity. He occupies a pulpit-throne. Thence he announces the decrees of the eternal kingdom. The flock sit round to hear God's judgments--to receive God's law.

Preacher, take heed. Your volume is heaven-inspired. Add not--it is impiety. Detract not--it is sacrilege. It is not yours to frame a system or devise a code. Your message is prepared. Your text-book is divine. Read and proclaim. Let all your teaching flow in one clear stream--"Thus says the Lord." The Gospel committed to your trust is God's glory--His wisdom in the highest--the transcript of His mind--the mirror of His love--the power, which drives out darkness, softens hearts, gives new birth to dead souls, breaks Satan's chains, snatches from hell, uplifts to heaven, converts bold rebels to devoted friends, and plants a paradise in the world's waste. Then PREACH THIS WORD--only--clearly--fully. Be faithful. Be distinct. Signs of salvation will then surely follow. The seed of truth is never lost. It has an innate life. It is impregnate with divinity. Who can destroy it? Truth long since would have died, if Satan or man's hate had power to slay.

3. **Honors** are added. "They shall put incense before You--and whole Burnt-sacrifice upon Your altar." They shall cause *sweet savor* to ascend. The Gospel-savor is the sweet merits of Christ's fragrant work. They shall pile victims on the altar. The Gospel has but one victim--the God-man slain.

These words are as a trumpet-voice to warn each minister. The pulpit stands his golden altar, from which precious fragrance should never fail to rise. Sermons should all be redolent of Jesus's worth. Each utterance should be, as curling incense, filling heaven and earth with joy. The pulpit stands, too, his brazen altar, on which victims bleed. The congregation should be led to sit around the cross. The dying Jesus should be the one grand sight--giving Himself a willing offering, that guilt may thus be cleansed, and sins obliterated, and debts paid, and curse removed, and God appeased, and hell's gates closed, and heaven's throne won.

4. It follows--"Bless, Lord, His substance." Levi had no allotted lands. "I am your portion, and your inheritance," said God. Num 18:20. The tabernacle-offerings are their supply. A special maintenance is their lot. Special servants are specially sustained.

They must be well fed, whom God thus supplies. Let then no faithful pastor fear. He may not have--he covets not--abundance of earth's pelf. But the barrel will not fail. The cruise will still suffice. In God he has incalculable wealth. "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup--you maintain my lot." Paul testifies, "I have all, and abound--I am full." Php 4:18.

5. It is encouragingly added--"Accept the work of his hands." Smile, Lord, when Levi thus draws near. Turn not from the prayer, the service, and the praise, which he presents upon Your altar.

Here is the joy, the hope, the strength, the victory of the faithful servant. He knows, that truth proclaimed by life and lip--in public and in private--cannot but prosper. The Gospel-sickle reaps not in vain. Harvests of saved souls will be brought in. Heaven's garner will be filled. He will present before God's throne children begotten by his words--jewels drawn by his efforts from nature's quarry, and polished as pillars for the palace of the King. The labor is not in vain. The Lord accepts.

6. Lastly--"Smite through the loins of those who rise against him, and of those who hate him, that they rise not again." A Korah--a Dathan--an Abiram rose to assail. But their defeat was signal. They died not the common death of men. The gaping earth devoured them. Num 16:32.

So faithful ministers must always expect the adversary's rage. They foil him most. Therefore he most desires their ruin. As against Christ--so against them--he marshals his whole force. But while he mightily assails, Omnipotence protects. While his many legions harass, an infinity of love defends. Thus they hold on. Thus they hold out. Thus they will ever bloom, like Aaron's rod, until the last saint is gathered in. Their teaching voice will sound on earth, until the hallelujah is full-toned above. They go on conquering, for Jesus fights beside them.

You ministers, turn not from Levi, without many a solemn thought. There is no *work* like yours--so holy--so exalted--so godlike! There is no *help* like yours. Jesus, who sends you, goes forth by your side. There are no *hopes* like yours. The brightest crown is that, which sparkles with redeemed gems. Bless God--take courage--work. Uplift the cross with prayerful hands. Preach the true Christ. Live the true life of faith. Then Levi's full inheritance will raise you high. How high, God only knows! Christ's fellow-workers will not be low among Christ's fellow-heirs.

Deu 33.12

BENJAMIN.

"Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him, and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and He shall dwell between his shoulders." Deu 33:12.

About Benjamin he said: "Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in Him, for He shields him all day long, and the one the Lord loves rests between His shoulders." Deu 33:12

Benjamin! Thoughts of love are quickly kindled by the very name. Affection folded Benjamin in its embrace. He closed the line of Jacob's sons, and thus no younger rival moved him from his fondled place. He was endeared, too, as the expiring Rachel's child. She died, when he began to live. Thus, all the feelings, which have softest sway, enshrined him eminently in his father's heart.

When then this tribe appears, our minds anticipate much tender favor. And it is so. A designation of endearment is adjoined--"Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord."

Reader, here pause. A wondrous truth refuses to be put aside. Give it glad welcome. Listen fully to its cheering tale. Imbibe the precious draught of its delight. Let its sweet fragrance perfume all your hours. The truth is this. The name pertains to every member of God's family--"Beloved of the Lord." Each child of God is loved, as a Benjamin, in heaven's palace.

What! loved of God! Love is the soul of feeling. It is the blazing of the heart in warmth. It is a current of resistless strength. It places a dear object above self. It is intense desire for fellowship. It weeps, and joys, and thrives, in unison with anther's sorrow and delight. It is the strongest impulse of the breast. It holds the rudder of the life. It is the principle, which many waters cannot quench, neither can floods drown it. Son 8:7.

Is there such feeling in the realms of light towards inhabitants of earth? Yes, truly. Each of the heaven-born seed is loved with perfect love by the Triune Jehovah.

The FATHER loves--and writes His loved ones in the book of life--and chooses them to be the spouse, and crown, and glory of His Son--and sends His Christ to buy them out of ruin's grasp--to cleanse their filth in efficacious blood--to fit them to dwell, as partners of His throne.

JESUS so loves, that He puts on our flesh, and takes the place of the condemned, and bears in His own body all the just penalties of sin, and undergoes the uttermost of wrath, and drinks the very dregs of anguish. Attend Him through His painful walk on earth--approach the garden-mysteries--stand by the shameful cross mark all the signs of infinite distress--hear the deep groans wrung from His agonized mind. The language of these sufferings reveals, how much, how truly, and how constantly He loved. Next raise the eye of faith, and see Him now at God's right hand. Whence those incessant prayers--those mighty pleadings--that watchful eye--those outstretched hands--that life devoted to one cause? His present acts repeat, that He still loves.

The SPIRIT loves. It must be so. This feeling draws Him to a sinner's heart. He ever finds that spot all ice--all death--all enmity to God. But still He enters in, and works a saving change. He exerts renovating might. He creates new life, and light, and holy powers. He discloses the activity, the vileness, and the end of sin. He thus stirs up the trembler to flee unto redeeming arms. He gives him faith to take the title-deeds of heaven. He leaves not, nor forsakes, until grace expands into full glory. Such is the Spirit's work. And is not every part a manifest display of love?

Thus God is love. He never was, and never will be, but one ocean of eternal love. The truth, then, is most clear. Each real believer ever was, and ever will be a Benjamin. His is the title, "Beloved of the Lord."

Believer, ponder the value of this fact. Its preciousness exceeds worlds upon worlds of treasure. Our present scene is full of change, of coldness, and of hate. Friends die, or kindly feeling withers. A frown may freeze, where smiles were used to cheer. But here is our solace. We look above. Heaven's love knows no eclipse. In that unfailing brightness we forget surrounding gloom. Here, too, we find a mighty magnet drawing us to holiness. We must love Him, who so loves us. We cannot love God, and not desire to please Him. Hence His pure law becomes our true delight. The slavish chains fall off, and willing service is our joyful walk. Sense of God's love thus cheers and sanctifies.

Through this prelude we approach the BLESSING assigned to Benjamin. It proves, that God's love is a vast treasure of gracious gifts. It shows a threefold front. It strikes a triple cord. It brings the pledge of safety, constant shelter, and fellowship with God.

1. Safety. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in *safety* by Him." Survey the picture. It is lovely in repose. We seem to see a child without one care seated securely by a parent's side. No anxious fears disturb. Undoubting trust spreads its calm influence. A Father, strong and watchful, is at hand. An arm is ready to defend. The happy son knows it, and confides.

The image tenderly depicts the true believer's blessed state. He sits in peace beside his God. Faith's wings have borne him upwards. His heart and thoughts have settled in a tranquil realm. The restless wanderings of former days are past. There was a time, when he was tossed about on stormy waves. He wandered hopelessly in search of peace. But now he rests in God. His home is by his Father's side. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him."

This seat is safety. For think, how high it is upraised! It is with God. What foe can now assail? Satan's darts are very many, and impelled with mighty force. His arms, too, have exceeding skill. But these are heights above his reach. The arrows from his strongest bow have but restricted wings. The shafts fly not to those lofty seats, where God's dear children cluster. They dwell in safety, for they dwell by Him.

A tender voice is ever heard, "Fear not, you worm Jacob, and you men of Israel--I will help you, says the Lord, and your Redeemer the holy one of Israel." Isa 41:14. Again it sounds, "I give unto them eternal life--and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, who gave them to Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." Joh 10:28-29. Each tranquil Benjamin may realize, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom 8:31. They dwell in safety by Him.

2. Constant shelter. This is a sweet phase of safety, and this is thus graphically promised--"The Lord shall cover him all the day long." The warrior is sheltered, whom a broad shield surrounds. The sword may deal fierce blows--the spear may roughly thrust--all weapons may attack. But the assaults touch not. He stands unhurt. The inhabitants of a well-built house are protected. The hurricane may rage. The hail may beat. The rain may pour down floods. But the roof spreads a sheltering defense. The strife of elements is warded off. So when the feathered mother spreads her sheltering wings, the hawk may soar above--the gathering clouds may menace--but the downy refuge covers. The young birds nestle free from harm.

Thus for each Benjamin a constant refuge is provided. He needs it. No warrior is more sorely pressed. The whole artillery of hell seeks his destruction. No traveler is more exposed. Satan outside--the world around--a treacherous heart within--assail his path. No infant bird is more beset with perils. A preying beak is ever ready to devour.

But he defies this multitudinous array. How is it? Is he not weak in self. Yes. His strength is feebler than a bruised reed. Alone he cannot face one single foe--much less the myriads of earth and hell. Here is his shelter--"The Lord shall cover him all the day long."

It would have been abundant favor to have given some shield--or to have raised some roof--or to have spread some wing. But mercy provides more for Benjamin. The Lord Himself is the constant covering. The Lord, whose arms are infinite, ever hides him in Himself. "Our life is hidden with Christ in God." Who, then, can injure? "All the day long" the enemy may watch. "All the day long" the shelter protects.

But the believer is more than sheltered from these perils. He is, moreover, covered from the condemning eye of God. His life must always be a mass of sin. What hateful filth defiles him! But this may all be buried from God's sight. O my soul, ever realize the covering robe, which Jesus wrought and offers. It is righteousness--perfect--spotless--divine. This He delights to cast around you. Adorned with this, you fearlessly may meet Jehovah's scrutiny. No blemish can be found. This imputed beauty makes you fairer than angelic purity. Put on by faith this precious mantle, and then sing aloud, "Blessed is he, whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Psa 32:1.

3. Fellowship with God. Benjamin's lot has this especial blessing. "He shall dwell between his shoulders." The shoulders are the borders--the outward coasts--the confines of the land. Thus, "they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west." Isa 11:14. Here, then, it is pledged, that Benjamin's land shall just contain God's earthly courts. What the Lord says shall surely be. Therefore in appointed time the Temple, that hallowed structure, rose on the mount, which skirted this tribe's line. Such is the literal fulfillment. This promise, then, in its first sense, assigns the position of the consecrated house.

But the grand import of this word is spiritual. The Temple is the symbol of a present God. In it true worshipers drew near. In it God met the souls, which sought Him. The pledge, then, of this dwelling in Benjamin's domain promises access to God. It pictures prayer ascending--answers returned--constant communion. And is it not the saint's delight to have this heavenly union! This is his constant feast--he dwells in God, and God in him--he is one with God, and God with him.

This fellowship is based in Christ. He is the connecting link. He is the Mediator. He has a divine hand, which touches God. He has a human hand, which man may touch. Thus He unites the holy Father and the holy flock. This communion is very paradise. It is the foretaste of heaven. It passes beyond the veil, and penetrates the inner sanctuary. Faith, leaning on Christ's arm, lives in this happiness. With filial confidence it brings each trial--trouble--sorrow--need--affliction--doubt--distress, to a Father's ear. And God is near to cheer--to bless--to wipe the weeping eye--to soothe the wounded heart--to raise the drooping spirit--to send the pilgrim singing on his way. As the Temple was in the lot of Benjamin, so God is in the midst of Zion's sons. "He shall dwell between his shoulders."

Reader, do not you long to be an heir of Benjamin's large portion? Do you not feel, that it must be the crown of bliss to be thus safe--thus covered--thus free to heavenly communion! This becomes yours, when you are one with Christ. Is such your case? If not, why linger in peril, an unsheltered outcast? Draw near in faith. Wrestle in prayer. Invite Him to come in. He will not hesitate, and His entrance brings Benjamin's triple blessing--safety--constant shelter--fellowship with God.

Deu 33.13-17

JOSEPH.

*"Of **Joseph** he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that couches beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the good will of Him, who dwelt in the bush. Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him, who was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of wild oxen; with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth--and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh."* Deu 33:13-17.

This blessing is an overflowing stream. Gift follows gift, as if beneficence left bounds behind. Treasures are scattered with unsparing hand. The grant seems to say,' Take, until no more can be received.'

Joseph is the tribe thus signally enriched. He sparkles as the brightest jewel of his father's house. His early grace--his persecuted youth--his rescue from the pit--his firm resistance of enticing evil--his prison-sufferings--his exaltation to be a prince in Egypt--his call to be a savior to his house--with all the tender incidents of his affecting tale, are verdant spots in the first Bible-pages. He lived no common life. No common blessing passes to his seed.

While faith, too, journeys by his side from scene to scene--from early hatred until knees bowed before him--from the low dungeon to the lofty throne--it quickly sees *a living type of Jesus.* The varying lights and shadows graphically show the Lord. Hence it is no surprise, that special honors crown him. The lips of Jacob gave him an exceeding share. Gen 49:22-26. The lips of Moses add new stores. It is fit, that those who trace out most of Christ to men, should stand pre-eminent in heavenly favor. Hence Joseph enters on this goodly lot.

His CHARACTER is first described. This claims, then, primary regard. It is a simple portrait. All is comprised in this one praise--he is the "**separated** from his brethren." He differs, and because he differs, he is cast out. He will not walk in evil ways. And evil men despise him. He loathes their vices, and they loathe his grace. He cannot live, as one with them. And they conspire, that he shall live no more. But while the wicked frown, God smiles. While scales of enmity are full, the scales of recompensing favor far outweigh.

Reader, while you survey this feature of God's child, ask, 'Is your likeness here?' Do not forget, that two families inhabit earth. In principle--in taste--in habit--in desire, they are as separate, as light from darkness--cold from heat--pole from pole--life from death. There is the serpent's seed. There is the heaven-born race. There is the world. There is the little flock of grace. There is the broad road. There is the narrow way. There are the sheep. There are the goats. Hence the importance of the question, Have you escaped from nature's thraldom? Do your feet tread the upward path of life? Do you belong to Belial, or to Christ?

Be wise, and ascertain your real position. Rest not a slave among slaves--a worldling among worldlings. Tarry not in the doomed plain. Come out, like Joseph. He was separate. And did he lose thereby? Let his blessing now give reply.

The BLESSING is so worded, as to exhibit the fullest measure of earthly fertility. All causes, which concur to multiply and ripen fruits, shall lend their congenial influence. The land shall blossom, as an Eden. The canopy of heaven shall pour down softening rains. The gentle dew shall ever sparkle in refreshing drops. Springs from beneath shall permeate the clods. The annual and the monthly produce shall periodically bloom. The ancient mountains shall supply their tribute. Their caverns shall be rich in ore. The lasting hills shall slope luxuriant in olives and in vines. Joseph shall know no scarcity or dearth. Its borders shall abound in "the precious things of the earth and the fullness thereof." The corn shall widely wave in golden wealth. The grass shall spread its verdant carpet. All cattle and all flocks shall browse. Thus earth shall bring her every treasure--and Joseph's sons shall feast at nature's overflowing table.

Such is the superficial view. Thus the first aspect shows abundance of terrestrial goods. But these strong images are bright with higher significance.

Surely this is a vivid scene of better wealth. Our precious Bible--the book of every age and climate--often culls *nature's* field to impress *spiritual* ideas. Things visible portray invisible possessions. This principle leads us to look from the outward landscape, and to seek deeper lessons for the soul.

The parallel is quickly found. Obvious illustrations soon occur. For instance, the heart is often parched and dry. But Jesus can sweetly soften. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass--as showers, that water the earth." Psa 72:6. Each morning opens on a scene of need. Each morning finds supplies. "I will be as the dew unto Israel." Hos 14:5. The roots of grace are planted on a flinty soil. There must be constant nourishment, else the leaves wither. Fear not, believer, "You shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." Isa 58:11. "He shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreads out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat comes, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Jer 17:8.

The inner man, once profuse with every noxious weed--where thorns and briers raised their fruitless heads--when cheered by heaven-sent rays, smiles as a garden, blossoms as a rose. The promise stands, "I will plant trees—cedar, acacia, myrtle, olive, cypress, fir, and pine—on *barren* land." Isa 41:19. Then precious crops of *holy words*, and *holy works* in due succession come. Then fruits of godliness ripen in turn. *Faith* stands a noble tree. *Hope* raises high its richly laden boughs. *Love* scatters fragrance all around. Clusters of *righteousness* bear witness, this is the vineyard of the Lord--the field watered by grace--filled with the Spirit's seed--and cherished by heaven's brightest beams.

Believer, turn not from this spiritual landscape, without the thought, 'Is your soul thus?' The test of state is always one--"By their fruits you shall know them." The word is true, "He who abides in Me, and I in Him, the same brings forth much fruit." Joh 15:5. Do you thus abide in Christ? Do you draw fertilizing sap from that rich stem? Do you sit ripening beneath the sunny smiles of God? So only can your heart be Joseph's fertile land.

Joseph has more than promise of this large prosperity. There is **assurance of divine good will**. This is his crowning blessing. He inherits "the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush."

Observe, how Moses cherished to his last hour that early revelation of his Lord. He can look back on much, and close, and dear communion--but that display is still most splendid in the retrospective view. No time can dim its luster.

Believer, what can obscure on memory's mirror your first clear view of Jesus! What can deaden on your retentive ear the voice, which first assured you of His love! Your heaven began, when you had evidence of His good will. Cherish this sweet assurance. Open your eyes more clearly to discern it. Clasp tight your hands around it. Through every day--in every day's concerns--think, what high favor hovers round you! From all eternity good will regarded you. To all eternity it will warmly burn, and through all time it will remain your guard. It was good will to undertake your full redemption.

It was good will to leave heaven's glories in your service. It was good will to live and die in your behalf. The low estate--the sufferings--the groans--the agony--the cross--the streaming blood--the death--the grave--all manifest good will. And now this favor enriches you with daily grace. It will not fail, while life endures. It will watch by your dying bed. It will receive your fleeting breath. It will present you faultless before the Father's throne. It will rejoice over you, while endless ages roll. Nothing can quench--nothing can part from--"the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush."

Joseph's blessing still flows on. Distinctive evidence, that he is the heir of good will, follows. Thus it abounds. "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock." He shall stand stately--beauteous--strong, as the prime offspring of the herd. He shall move the admiration of the plain.

Here, again, the deepest truth is spiritual. Where shall we find the glory of the human race? It can be only in the realms of grace. There is no loveliness in this world's slaves. They are polluted--tainted--marred by sin--crippled in power--impotent for good. But when the Spirit leads them to a Savior's blood, and thus obliterates each filthy stain--when faith puts on the robes of divine righteousness--when power from heaven renews the nature--when they receive the lineaments of Christ--when they reflect the God-man's image; then weakness and deformity are followed by strength and beauty--then this grand pledge is fully redeemed--"His glory is like the firstling of his bullock." Deu 33:17. It is ever true, that each Joseph is made strong in a Savior's strength, and beauteous in a Savior's beauty, and moves among his fellow-men, the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

Again, Joseph **shall do valiantly**. His prowess shall crush every foe. His conquering power is thus described--"His horns are like the horns of wild oxen--with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth." Deu 33:17.

Thus faith's life is one triumphant conflict. Who can recount the adversaries checking the upward march! But opposition is in vain. There is a Captain, who implants courage, girds up the loins, and cheers His followers onward, until the everlasting palms are waved, and everlasting hallelujahs sound. The blood-washed troops prevail, strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

Lastly, **his numbers shall exceedingly expand**. "They are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh." The child of God often mourns his solitude. He seems to be as a lonely cottage in the deserted vineyard. Isa 1:8. But when the total flock is gathered in--when the whole body is complete--when Jesus brings the collected sheaves to heaven's garner; then how vast will be the circle upon circle of saved souls! *The ransomed multitude is numberless. The death of Jesus gives birth to countless life.*

Reader, think of *the world's tinsel gifts*--weigh Satan's wages, as earned in time, and paid in the eternal world. Then turn and contrast the blessing, which "comes upon the head of Joseph--and upon the top of the head of him, who was separated from his brethren." Shall this bright crown be yours? Jesus's hands bestow it. Seek it. Ask it. None seek--none ask--in vain.

Ah! wretched worldling, when will you be wise! Come and display your treasure. Your best is but a fading flower--a fleeting shadow--a tottering reed--a failing brook. And how long can your hands retain it? How long!--You startle. You tremble. You turn pale. How long! It perishes, while you strive to grasp it. What will then follow! Hell is at hand to answer.

Happy Christian, show your treasure. You produce Joseph's portion--abundance of all grace. How long! A bright eternity is the measure without measure.

Deu 33.18-19

THE UNITED TRIBES.

Moses said this about the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar:

*"May the people of **Zebulun** prosper in their expeditions abroad. May the people of **Issachar** prosper at home in their tents. They summon the people to the mountain to offer proper sacrifices there. They benefit from the riches of the sea and the hidden treasures of the sand."* Deu 33:18-19

Two tribes come hand in hand. They are descendants of one mother, Leah--and they inherit neighboring lots. Here they are colleagues in a common blessing--and drink, as fellows, of one enriching cup.

It is a lovely sight, when brothers are co-heirs of grace. The Gospel-records brighten with such pictures. Andrew and Simon are united by more than kindred-ties. John has a fellow-laborer in James, his parent's son. Jude, and the other James, born of one father, are newborn of one Spirit.

Do not these instances exhort each pious brother to seek especially a brother's good? Do not they bring the animating hope, that the door of success will open readily to such loving touch? Let then no gracious brother rest, while any son of the same mother treads the downward path. In prayer--by gentle example--by winning counsels, let him persevere, until union be cemented in one center--Christ. God wills the effort. Will He be slow to bless?

How great, too, is the gain! For where is treasure like a brother plucked from the quarry of the world, and placed a jewel in the diadem of Christ! Sweet is the walk, when such move side by side to one eternal home.

Another thought stands at the threshold of this case. The younger ranks before the elder. This cannot be without design. The same occurs, when Jacob's dying lips address them. Zebulun precedes. Issachar, the first by birth, gives place. Similarly Jacob's right hand rests on the younger, Ephraim. Manasseh has inferior honor. And other instances occur.

Reader, learn hence, that **God sits supreme upon His throne**. He holds a scepter swayed in love--in wisdom--and in sovereign will. He raises one. He places others in a lower grade. Here showers of grace descend. Here the dew falls in tiny drops. We see the fact. We know, that there is purpose. But we trace not the origin of these decrees. In humble reverence we bow and we adore. All must be wise, and just, and right. The day draws near, when clearer light shall show consummate skill. The structure of the Church will then appear wondrous in perfection. Each part is fixed by an unerring hand.

Let us now heed **THE BLESSING**. The first word sounds, "Rejoice." This ever is our Gospel's note. Joy is the gift, which Jesus's hands extend. This is the feast, to which true ministers invite.

When will a blinded world unlearn that silliest of fictions, that ways of faith are cheerlessness and gloom! Let faithless men be honest, and they must confess, that their career is restless care--keen disappointment--and self-wrought vexation. They pluck the thorn--not the flower. They feed on husks--not on rich fruit. Their cup is wormwood--not the vine's juice. Their present is distress--not peace. Their future is dismay--not hope. How different is the new-born heart! There constant joy keeps court--joy in the Lord, who washes out all sin--who gives the key of heaven, and title-deeds of endless bliss, and pledge of a weight of glory, and strength for the journey, and triumph at the end. The mandate is not an unmeaning word, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice." Php 4:4.

But Zebulun has his peculiar place--so, too, has Issachar. Their calling differs. Zebulun's line extends around the coast. His ships traverse the seas. His commerce is across the waves. While Issachar reposes in inland scenes--and dwells in meadows and in valleys. His life is rustic tranquillity. But whether in turmoil or in peace, joy is the heritage of both. "*May the people of **Zebulun** prosper in their expeditions **abroad**. May the people of **Issachar** prosper at home in their **tents**.*"

They have the happy knowledge, that all their labors are in appointed course--they go out, or they tarry, under heavenly directive, and therefore with glad hearts.

This leads us to observe, **how varied are the stations of man's calling!** How diverse are positions! Some reign in palaces--some toil in cottages. Some feast at plenty's table--some pine in poverty's contracted cells. Purple and splendor deck a Dives--Lazarus lies a beggar at the gate. Some work at looms--others in fields. Some climb the mast--others handle the spade. Some exercise the mental powers--others strain the muscles of the body. Some soar in literature's highest flights--some crawl unlettered to the grave. Some guide a nation's counsels--others are instruments to execute these laws. Some are exalted to far higher work. They are ambassadors for Christ. Their office is to tell aloud His wondrous love--to rouse the slumbering--to feed Christ's flock--to uplift thoughts from earth--to spread soul-renovating truths--to build up saints in their most holy faith.

But perfect wisdom rules these varieties on life's stage. No being enters or recedes, but in accordance with God's will. He speaks--they live. He speaks--they die. Entrance and exit are in His hand. At His decree all kings, all beggars, breathe and expire. Both times and stations are allotted by His mind. He raises to the pinnacles of earth--or veils in seclusion. He leads to walks known and observed by all, or hides in garrets of obscurity. Let then the child of God live, rejoicing in his day and lot. No change would be improvement. He best can serve his generation, and advance his soul-concerns, by working cheerfully in his assigned position.

Believer, when you distinctly see the beckoning cloud; when you set forth, or rest, submissive to clear guidance; banish fears--cast out all doubts--lift up the happy head--clap the exulting hands--rejoice--give thanks. A heavenly Father cannot set you in wrong place. A loving Savior cannot lead you in wrong paths. A gracious Spirit cannot endow you with wrong gifts. All is well. Look up and follow, and, as you follow, sing, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out--and Issachar in your tents."

Next, there is WORK, in which these tribes concur. They are described as **zealous to bring others to know God**--"They shall call the people unto the mountain--there they shall offer the sacrifices of righteousness." These words exhibit missionary features. We seem to see them mourning for ignorance, and longing to impart truth--hating darkness, and yearning to infuse light; loving the one true God, and ardent to call the wandering to His fold--the heavy-laden to His rest--the worshipers of stocks and stones to Zion, the Gospel-mount.

Grace had made them to differ from the world around. Revelation had taught them the way of life. They had received Christ-shadowing ordinances. Their worship was not degraded rites of ignorance. Their altar and their victims were typal of the sin-removing Lamb. Their services were bright with God's own truth. Thus, with burning hearts, they called the people unto the mountain, where they offered the sacrifices of righteousness. They would not know, and love, and serve, alone.

Believer, catch hence a gale to fan the fire kindled in your soul. Each child of God--in heart--in lip--in life--should be a flame of enterprising zeal. Is he enlightened--called--selected--converted--pardoned--comforted--sanctified--saved--only that SELF may live? Away with such unworthy thought. Let the low slaves of Satan, let poor paltry worldlings, shiver in the freezing atmosphere of SELF. Let their desires, with unplumed wing, hang heavily around their ease--their profit--their indulgence--their debasing lusts. But let faith soar in higher regions, and break forth in grander efforts, and spread in more ennobled work. Surely its sympathies should grasp the total family of man! Surely its love should travel round the circuit of the globe! Surely its cry should ever call poor sinners to the cross!

Awake, then, arouse; be up, be doing. What! shall souls perish, while you sleep? Shall hell enlarge its borders, while you loiter? Shall Satan push on his triumphs, and you look on indifferent? Shall superstition thrive, and you be silent? Shall ignorance grow darker, and you care not? Forbid it, every feeling of pity--tenderness--humanity--compassion. Forbid it, every thought of a soul's boundless worth. Forbid it, all the unutterable wonders wrapped in the name, eternity. Forbid it, every pious wish to snatch immortals from undying woe--and to upraise them to undying bliss. Forbid it, all your love to Jesus' glorious name--all your deep debt to His atoning blood--all your delight in His appeasing cross. Forbid it, all your hope to see His face in peace--and sit beside Him on His throne--and ever bask in heaven's unclouded sunshine. Forbid it, your deliverance from hell--your title-deeds to heaven. Forbid it, your constant prayer, "Hallowed be Your name--Your kingdom come--Your will be done." Forbid it, your allegiance to His rule--the statutes of His kingdom--the livery, which you wear. Forbid it, His awakening example--His solemn and most positive command. Forbid it, every motive swelling in a Christian heart.

Up, then, and act. Soul-death meets you at each turn. The world in its vast wideness perishes untaught. The spacious fields are neither tilled nor sown. The many millions are heathen--and therefore rushing hell-ward. Help, then, the missionary cause. You may--you can--you should. The need is for men--for means. Can you go forth? Let conscience answer. If not, you yet can pray, and give. Write shame--write base ingratitude--write treason to Christ's cause on every day, which sees no effort from you for the heathen world.

Read not in vain how Zebulun and Issachar subserved this cause. They called the people to the mountain. They strove to increase the sacrifices of righteousness.

The blessing adds, *"They benefit from the riches of the sea and the hidden treasures of the sand."* God will enrich them. Their traffic shall collect plenteous store. They trade for their God, and their trade shall be full wealth. Who ever lost, who worked for Him!

Remember, that all gain is gainless, if unconsecrated. *The worldling's bags have holes--his barns soon empty--his coffers have no locks.* Treasure laid out for God is laid up in safe keeping.

Believer, come then, restore to God what He entrusts to you. It will be paid back. But with what interest? God only knows. And on what day? When the returning Lord shall reckon--when the applauding voice shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant--enter into the joy of your Lord." Mat 25:21. But now you may have happy foretaste.

Will any put these humble lines aside, without much inward search? Let it not be so. Let every heart enquire, Lord, am I Yours? Is my inheritance among Your chosen flock? Do I lie down in their fair pastures? Do I draw water from their wells of life? Am I Your Zebulun--Your Issachar? Is my life a clear testimony, that I serve Christ? Do I show, that I am alive by many infallible proofs? Act 1:3.

If not, oh! let the prayer be heard, 'Lord, make me Yours, and keep me Yours forever. If other lords have held me in their chains, may the vile bondage cease. Accept me, worthless as I am. "Draw me--we will run after You." Fit me--enable me--and my whole life shall be delighted service. Supply me with the oil of grace, and then the flame of glowing toil shall blaze. A Zebulun and Issachar in privilege will always be a Zebulun and Issachar in zeal.

Deu 33.20

THE LION TRIBES.

"Of Gad he said, Blessed be he, that enlarges Gad--he dwells, as a lion." "And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp." Deu 33:20, Deu 33:22.

Moses said this about the tribe of **Gad**: "Blessed is the one who enlarges Gad's territory! Gad is poised there like a lion to tear off an arm or a head.

Moses said this about the tribe of **Dan**: "Dan is a lion's cub, leaping out from Bashan." Deu 33:20, Deu 33:22

Our God omits no mode to impress holy lessons on His children's hearts. At one time *simple precepts* manifest His will--and plain injunctions guide to duty's path. Now, nature's volume lends *similitudes*. We learn to avoid evil--to seek ornaments of grace--from objects open to our sense.

There is much wisdom in this figurative teaching. It speaks a language known in every climate. It introduces thoughts alike familiar in the scholar's hall, and in the poor man's cottage. It strikes a note, which every class, and state, and grade have ears to hear.

Examples throng the Bible-page. Thus *lambs*, which innocently sport, are chosen, as fit emblems of meek humility and gentle patience. The *serpent's* subtlety supplies the pattern of intelligence--"Be wise, as serpents." The *dove* adjoins the model of sweet inoffensiveness--"And harmless, as doves." The *eagle's* lofty flight teaches, how faith should soar on high--"Those who wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength--they shall mount up with wings, as eagles." Isa 40:31. To inculcate courage, and a noble front, the *Lion* shows its form. And that the lesson should take deeper root, two Tribes illustrate it. Gad "dwells, as a Lion." "Dan is a Lion's cub."

Believer, this picture has a voice--at all times needed--and not least so in our compromising day. Hear it. And may the mighty Spirit help you, while you listen, to put on strength, as a belt, and courage, as a heroic panoply! The Lion is the forest's **KING**. He moves pre-eminent above all beasts. He is as monarch among lower tribes. Superiority is his conceded right.

Such is the Christian's stand among earth's sons. It is a mighty word--"He has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." Rev 1:6. It is a glorious title--"You are a chosen generation--a royal priesthood." 1Pe 2:9.

The mass of human race reach not this rank. They raise not this elevated brow. They show not this princely demeanor. Their tastes are groveling and vile. They only care to sip the vulgar cup of time and sense. Their sin-soiled garments and polluted feet prove, that they wallow in defiling mire. Even liberty is unknown. The clash of heavy chains attests their bondage. Satan drags them--and they must obey. The world gives laws--they tremblingly submit. They crouch the slaves of many an insulting tyrant.

Believer, you only are the freedman of the Lord. You have found liberty in Christ. "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." Joh 8:36. You serve a Prince, who calls His subjects to be kings. You are a royal citizen of heaven. Then live as heir of glory. Walk Lion-like in holy majesty of grace.

We thus are led to mark the glory of this kingly animal. It is his strength and courage.

1. Strength. His sinews are as iron. His limbs are braced with might. All, who resist him, fall an easy prey. To him to fight is victory. Assailed, he vanquishes. Assailing, he subdues. Throughout the plain--the forest--and the hill, there is no power, which can match with his.

Here, again, is the believer's image. He is endued with inward prowess. But this is not poor nature's gift. All enter life alike--feeble in heart, in spirit, in resolve. All are the victims of an enervating sickness--sin. This plague weakens, as a palsy. It undermines the total fabric. The inner man, under its touch, is worthless, as a tottering reed--a broken bow--a quivering leaf--the empty chaff--the bubble's froth.

What has sin done? Ruin follows in its rear. Through it, the vessel, once so noble, crumbles as a wreck--the tree, once so stately, lies low--the fortress, once so strong, is robbed of gates--spoilers may enter--none drives them back.

Believer, I appeal to you. You alone are able to reply. Are these dark colors darker than the truth? Look back. Let unregenerate days tell their sad tale. What was your unconverted state? Had you ability to vanquish evil? Did you present indomitable front against the enemy's attacks? Did you stand firm, as adamantine rock, against the lashing surges of iniquity? Conscious memory and downcast shame confess, no strength was in you.

This is the common case throughout our race, until help comes from heaven. How easy is the proof! How sad! Take any worldling. A temptation meets him. A gilded bait allures. A sweet indulgence opens its inviting arms. What follows? The silly moth is caught. Pleasure whispers, 'Come and partake'. Desire acquiesces. Nature surrenders. No godly principle forbids. Conscience is mute. Thus yielding frailty proves, how frail is man. Thus Satan leads his crowds down misery's downward slope. Quickly--easily--they glide along. The rolling pebble has no power to stop. The sinking vessel has no buoyancy to rise. The downhill torrent is incapable of turning.

Here is the one reply to the inquiry--*'Why is this world such a wide sea of evil? Why do earth's multitudes roll so easily to hell?'* Satan assails and wins. The weak heart weakly yields. The mind--the passions--lack firmness to resist. Thus the strong foe takes strengthless man a captive at his will.

Believer, I look again to you. Is such your present case? I mark the grateful adoration of your soul. I hear your praises swelling to the skies. I see your eye sparkling with thanksgiving love. You testify, "Once I was feeble, as feebleness can be. Weakness is a weak description of my nothingness of power. But now I am made strong, and all my strength is in my Savior's arms, and by my Savior's side, and through my Savior's help, and from my Savior's Spirit. He now works with me--in me--for me. And so I work and prosper. He is my battle-axe--my bow--my spear--my sword. He nerves my muscles. He fortifies my breast. He frames my armor, and He girds me with it. He bids me to go forward, and He Himself precedes. Thus my poor worm-like heart becomes in Christ a Lion. If I sink not--if I prevail--if I subdue--the power is His--the grace is His--to Him I give the praise, and on His brow I place my victory's crown."

But you deny not, that the fight continues to be very fierce. Temptations have not ceased to tempt. The world remains the world. Flesh still is flesh. Traitors still dwell within. Satan still hates. His wrath increases. With craftier stratagem he marks his opportunities, and lays his snares. There is no day, when allurement spreads not some net. Woe would be yours, if Jesus were not ever near. But He is near, ministering real strength. Thus you hold on. Thus you hold out.

It is a miracle of grace, when thus the little flock gains trophies, "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." It is divine empowerment, when thus experience shouts, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." Aid from heaven is supplied, and then the old serpent flees. Victory comes, because the Lion of the tribe of Judah helps. Wonder of wonders! In Jesus' might, the weakest heart--the feeblest will--with Lion's strength, beats back all hell.

Believer, ever remember, then, where your true power lies. Take not one step, approach no work, except armored in a Savior's grace. Appalling instances record, how saints have stumbled, when they have ventured forth alone. Abraham flinched. Noah sinned foully. Jacob stooped to fraud. David tumbled into filthiest mire. Peter acted a coward's part.

Seek not excuse for such vile falls in nature's frailty, or in evil's power. Nature is frail. Evil is mighty. But here is the fault--Faith did not grasp the ready sword. Prayer did not ask the ready aid. Learn from these instances to meet Goliath in the name of God. And then fear not. You will stand Lion-like in strength.

Does any poor sinner, pierced by many a wound--bemired by many a fall--tottering at each step beside a precipice's edge--read these lines? Sir, turn not from the encouragement of this Gospel-truth. You yet may obtain strength to trample down your perils and your foes. You live. Your many wounds have not brought death. In these present words another warning meets you. Is not this the Savior's call? Come, then, and join yourself to Him, and all His might is yours--and you will triumph with those, who, through His blood, have overcome. *Cease to grovel a crushed worm. Become a Christian Lion.*

2. Courage. Lions to their strength add courage. They never know timidity. Valiantly they face all danger. Fearlessly they rush to the attack. No multitude of beasts or men alarm them. As power is in their limbs, so bravery fills their hearts.

This quality again portrays the child of God. *When heavenly commands are clear, unflinchingly he obeys.* He confers not with flesh and blood. Despite all threats, he steadfastly advances. His only fear is, lest he should fear. He only trembles, lest he should tremble.

See the *three captive youths*. The tyrant menaced. They stood alone against an empire. What! shall they yield? No, rather, welcome the furnace--the agony--the flame. They failed not God. God failed not them. He made them bold as Lions. And their fame lives among faith's heroes.

See *Daniel*. Command is urgent. Shall his knees leave their beloved employ! Shall he address a worm, though king, in prayer! The thought is keener torture, than the Lion's teeth. With open window bravely he worships. His courage conquers. The lions' mouths are closed. The tyrant's heart is turned.

See, too, *the Baptist*. He fears not Herod's might. Fearlessly he drags to light the darling sin. He chooses truth and prison, and death; rather than unfaithfulness and ease. Where he sees error, there his mouth is open to reprove.

Believer, let it be so with you. What though falsehood's guise be specious--and high authority endorse it--and brilliant gifts commend it--and pliant worldlings fondle it--and gilded honors follow in its rear--if the cup holds one poison drop--if statements swerve one hair-breadth from Gospel-truth, then, with Lion valor let your voice scare the traitor. Thus Paul resisted Peter to the face.

So, too, *courageously confess Christ.* This often needs a martyr's spirit. When friends desert--and the world sneers--and blight descends on prospects--and Gospel-truth seems linked with trouble--it needs a Lion's heart to testify, 'None but Jesus--none but Jesus!' But thus the Apostles, menaced with near death, preached Christ more fully and more clearly. Their hearts were faith. Their faith was courage. Their courage was success.

A noble army of confessing saints beckon us onward in this path. Ignatius moved with a Lion's heart to meet his grave in lions' jaws. May his bold words be cherished, while the world endures! "Now do I begin to be a disciple of my Master Christ." Luther stands with Lion's courage re-echoing Paul's resolve. "None of these things move me." In this grand spirit he exclaimed, "Though there were devils many as the tiles on the roofs of Worms, I shall go forward."

Come, then, believer, be you, too, as a Lion for your Lord. Boldly devise great plans. Heroically act them out. Let neither earth nor hell intimidate. Your cause is good. Your call is from God's throne. Your help is sure. What promises encourage! What triumphs are at hand! Only be very courageous. Be not a coward in the camp of Christ--for Judah's Lion expects Lion-followers.

Gad dwells as a Lion. Dan is a Lion's cub. Will you be less?

Deu 33.23-25

THE LAST TRIBES.

*"Of Naphtali he said, O **Naphtali**, satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the Lord, possess the west and the south. And of Asher he said, Let **Asher** be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren; and let him dip his foot in oil. Your shoes shall be iron and brass; and as your days, so shall your strength be."* Deu 33:23-25.

Naphtali and Asher now appear. They are the last in order--not the least in favor. Their blessing proves again the truth often stated, that *the treasury of God is a vast mine*. It bestows much--but much ever remains. The sun has poured down floods of rays on a long train of generations, but the streams cease not--the fountain is not impoverished. The elders of faith's house have been most plenteously enriched, but we may still as plenteously obtain. Store upon store--wealth upon wealth--grace upon grace--still fill the heavenly coffers. There is no end, no limit. Full hands are ever open to dispense. Abundant gifts in ages past still leave abundant gifts for present and for future days.

My soul, if you are poor, it is not because God's blessings fail. Let faith not cease to bring its empty vessels, they will not cease to be supplied. "He gives more grace." Jas 4:6.

Mark, how Naphtali's rich portion confirms this. This tribe is "satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the Lord." Possession of the west and south is also granted. Their lot is fixed in fertile and healthful spots. The goodly fruits, which crowned their baskets--the choice position of their lands--their sheltered valleys--their inland sea, fulfilled this promise. Nurtured, in nature's richest lap, they reveled in favor and in blessings.

But the possession thus granted seems to hint at nobler gain. When Jesus put on our flesh, and trod our earth, this tribe was chosen as His frequented home. Here stood Capernaum--the scene of His most mighty works. Here He displayed the brightness of those glorious deeds, which testified divine commission. Here the God-man moved--healing disease--allaying pain--soothing deep misery--reviving drooping hearts--uttering pure wisdom--fulfilling the long line of prophecy--lifting high the Gospel beacon. This was surpassing honor. This was privilege exalting to the very heavens. "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the Lord," your eyes were privileged to see incarnate Deity.

Believer, come now and trace in **NAPHTALI'S** distinguished lot, the features of your happy case. Is not this picture drawn, that you may realize your plenteous treasures? You, too, are "satisfied with favor." You, too, are "full with the blessing of the Lord."

"Satisfied with favor." You once were dead in trespasses and sins. You moved a living carcase with a lifeless soul. Your every step was hellward. Your every moment hurried you towards endless woe. Your life was ignorance--rebellion--slavery--disgrace. But now the darkness is dispersed, and true light shines. You see the cross. You use the blood. You stand in a new world of spiritual delight. You are a new creation of thought--affection--hope--desire. You live for God--to God--with God--in God.

But whence the change? Did it result from nature and your own resolve? Did rolling years beget this wisdom? Oh! no. You owe the whole to sovereign grace. God, of His own free will, looked down with favor on your ruined soul. His favor gave you, as a jewel, to His Son--and gave His Son to be your uttermost salvation. His favor sent the Spirit to make you one, by faith, with Christ. Thus all things are yours. Child of grace, do you not rapturously sing, I am indeed a Naphtali, "Satisfied with favor!"

"Full," too, "with the blessing of the Lord." Happy state! The Father ever lives to bless. Jesus ever reigns to bless. The Spirit ever works to bless. The morning dawns, that blessings may descend. The day goes on, that blessings may proceed. The clouds, which seem to portend storms, bring showers of blessing. Life is a blessing, while it lasts. Death is a blessing, when it comes. *Trials--afflictions--losses--temptations--are blessings, because they wean from earth.* When time is left behind, and eternity reviews life's journey; then will the truth stand prominently out, that each saint's cup was "full with the blessing of the Lord."

But Naphtali's distinction was, that **Jesus chose it as His earthly dwelling.** Believer, have not you similar delight? Your soul is Jesus' home. He, whom no heavens can hold--He, to whom infinity is a mere speck--scorns not to abide within you. "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse." You may always realize His present smile. You may always hold sweet communion. You may ever whisper to His ready ear, and catch the joy of His replying voice. You may always lean upon His arm, and rest upon His breast. Christ dwells in your heart by faith.

Moses looks on from Naphtali to **ASHER**. His is the final blessing. It is largely bounteous. It seals again the truth, that *God delights to scatter favors with unsparing hand.* It has a voice still calling believers to a treasure-house, where they may ask with open mouth, and take with open hand.

"Let Asher be blessed with children--let him be acceptable to his brethren--and let him dip his foot in oil. Your shoes shall be iron and brass--and as your days, so shall your strength be."Deu 33:25.

Out of this crowded diadem only the last sparkling gem can be examined. But is it not a jewel far exceeding this world's boasted wealth! "As your days, so shall your strength be." This promise intimates the fact, that days will vary. As in nature, clouds screen the sun--and storms descend--and tempests rage--and hurricanes sweep fearfully--and rapid changes come--so is it in the life of grace. The morning brightness often gives way to mid-day gloom. The mid-day gloom brings in evening wildness. The skies are now serene--we look above on one expanse of clearest blue--now the scene varies, and thick darkness frowns, or forked lightning darts its angry shafts. Faith has no lofty seat, which trials cannot reach--and no seclusion, which distress cannot invade. But it has a rock, from which no foes can shake--the rock is Asher's blessing, "As your days, so shall your strength be."

Strong in this pledge--bold in this might--safe in this safety--confident in this security--impregnable within this fort--happy in this happiness, faith feels, "I shall not be injured, or destroyed. Days may be dark and sad; I may be sorely buffeted; but strength shall be enough. All earthly props may fall, but I shall stand. All human friends may flee, but I shall not be left alone. All trials may in turn assail, but they shall not prevail. Satan may hurl each dart, but a strong shield shall ward them off. All snares may be most craftily laid, but they shall not destructively entangle. The world may use its every enticing art, but I shall be enabled to escape. It may mutter its threats, but I have a sufficient refuge. I may be tempted--persecuted--wronged--but not cast down. I often may fear. I often may see a yawning precipice before my feet. The ground may tremble. But I am safe. I hold a saving promise--"As your days, so shall your strength be."

Faith can fly back, and commune with the elder saints. It hears from all the self-same story. We had a course through stormy seas, where billows tossed, and rocks were sharp, and quicksands opened their engulfing jaws. But our barks rode triumphant to the haven. As our days, so was our strength.

Jacob speaks of an outcast life--and many enemies--and overwhelming griefs--and lonely tremblings--and inward fears--but still strength was built up. He held on to the end. He testifies, The Angel redeemed me from all evil. David presents a painful chart. What cruel hate of men! what thirstings for his blood! what foul assaults of Satan! what stumbles! ah! what falls! His soul-life often seemed trodden in the dust. But he revives. Oil of grace supplies the flickering lamp. The heaven-lit flame never expires. Others are bound, and dragged to torturing flames; but they survive. The menace cannot overcome. The fire cannot consume. Their day is very terrible, but strength endures. Others are cast a prey to angry beasts, but their peace is as a placid lake. The outward scene is wild affright, but their souls never quake. The Lord is with them, and their strength abides.

View Paul and Silas in the inmost cell. Their wounds are smarting--the dungeon is deep--the chains clash heavily. But inward comfort flows in full tide. Thanksgivings swell. They loudly sing, and bless a loving God.

Mark the heroic calmness of the early preachers of the faith. Threats and imprisonment are their lot. They feel, as men; but they rejoice, as saints. They neither faint nor fail. They sit unmoved amid an earthquake of alarms. As their days, so is their strength. It is Paul's glad acknowledgment--but not Paul's sole experience--"Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." Martyrs and confessors press forward to give like witness. They joy in anguish--they embrace the stake--they hug encircling flames. They find, that days are often terrible, but never without needful strength. Was Stephen left without support, when, with angelic look, he kneeled down, and, praying for his murderers, amid a shower of stones, fell tranquilly asleep?

The whole bright throng around the throne attest the same. They passed through many perils--sorrows--fights--but heavenly strength braced their loins--sustained their hearts--fanned their desponding spirits--and made them more than conquerors. From every lip one testimony sounds. The word is true, "As your days, so shall your strength be."

Believer, tremble not. Take courage. Go forward. You may be young, and a long course may open to your view. Foes must infest it. You have no promise, that trials will not come. Satan spares none. He grants no Sabbath of repose. But face the worst, bold and serene in Christ. Hold fast the staff of grace. Trust and fear not. Trust and pray always. Trust and plead this word. It is not Asher's only. It is your portion. You will surely find, "As your days, so shall your strength be."

You may be worn with malady, and tottering down the valley of years. You may dread Jordan's waves, and the cold touch of death. But clasp the promise. The greater need brings the more large support. How many tremblers have gone triumphantly to rest! *Christ's love exceeds all hopes.* His merciful fulfillments surpass each pledge. He cannot fail. He cannot disappoint. Come what may--this will be true, "As your days, so shall your strength be."

But faithfulness must add, that these rich mercies are Israel's portion only! They, who are Christ's, possess, and claim, and use, and joy in them. They, who reject Him, see but a casket, which they open not. Their days have trouble without strength. Their future will have misery without end. Let not such turn from Naphtali and Asher until they share what Naphtali and Asher gained from God. The blessings of these tribes may yet, through grace, be sought and found.

Eternal Spirit, mighty source of light and inward life, give Your help! Open each eye to see the beauty, riches, blessedness, and glory of God's heritage. Stir up each heart to wrestle, until the word is heard--"Great is your faith, be it done unto you, even as you will."

Deu 33.26

ISRAEL'S GOD.

"There is no one like the God of Jeshurun (Israel), who rides on the heavens to help you and on the clouds in His majesty." Deu 33:26

This is the fervid exclamation of a soul acquainted with its God. The tongue would adequately praise, but language fails. Struggling efforts cannot do more than say, *"There is no one like Him."*

For one moment strive to estimate the worth of this attainment. Other knowledge is but darkness beside this light. All discoveries of art and science are low as dust, contrasted with this pearl. Let the expanded intellect take wing, and soar through all the skies above. Let the celestial orbs be counted in their course. Let the earth's depths be traced. Let hidden wonders be brought forth to view. Let history tell the annals of the past. Let literature spread her storied page. Let keen investigation scrutinize the intricate machinery of the human heart. When all is learned, which mental power has ever grasped, what is the total worth, compared with understanding of our God!

Other knowledge vanishes with time--and time is but a tiny speck. This knowledge is ever growing through eternity. It has an endless life. Other acquirements bring no inward peace, and heal no conscience-wounds, and gladden no dying beds. This removes every fear and spreads a holy calm. As is the value of the soul saved, such is the value of God truly known.

Reader, as you would live in bliss forever, obtain, then, this prize. But search for it aright. God is revealed. He may be seen. But only in the Gospel-mirror, and in the face of Christ. Here only, the concealing curtains are withdrawn. Here only, can distinct display be found. But here the sun shines forth in perfect beauty and unclouded glory. Here every attribute appears in proper place, in just proportion, in blended harmony. The cross is the truth-showing text-book. Come then to it. The Spirit helping, while you gaze, you will take up the song, *"There is no one like the God of Jeshurun."*

Look up--behold the wondrous testimony. First, characters of glowing light announce--"God is love." This is a truth established only here. Read through creation's volume. Evidence, indeed, of mighty wisdom and preserving care abounds. Elaborate effects prove the consummate *skill* of the fabricating cause. Arrangements to promote happiness are clearly, largely, and benevolently made. But this fair picture has a reverse. Hurricanes and tempests sweep the earth. The storm destroys. The pestilence extends its desolating scythe. Disease preys almost upon every frame. We pity the feeble limb--the moody wanderings of unsound thought--the sorrowing parent--the bereaved child--the mourning widow. We turn from tears, and misery, and crime, and ask with a disquiet sigh, "Are these the orderings of perfect love?"

Approach the page of **providence**. It is a wheel moved by an unseen hand. Its constant motion asserts constant agency. But its results perplex and puzzle. Today events cause happiness to overflow. Tomorrow witnesses a flood of woe--affliction--loss--distress. We doubt--we hesitate--we cannot surely say, "This ruling power is love."

We hear the proclamation of **God's law**. We listen eagerly. But awe and terror meet us. It speaks, indeed. But all is the sternness of inflexible decree. Give unimpaired obedience. Bring righteousness without one flaw--one speck--one stain. Show a whole course of strict compliance with strict terms. Then life eternal is secured. But if there be transgression--then take the curse, and perish everlastingly; for heaven's doors are closed, and wrath is the fixed penalty. Offence must reap its wages, where pardon never comes, and fires never quench, and anguish never ceases. What child of Adam's blinded race can commune with the law, and thence conclude, that God is love?

Now place beside these doubts the exhibitions of the cross. There God surrenders His own Son to shame--to agony--to death. He lays on Him the crushing burden of His people's sins. He puts a cup of infinite woe into those blameless hands. He bruises the innocent, that He may spare the transgressor. He slays the guiltless, that He may release the guilty.

O my soul, gaze on this fact. Feast on its consolations. Mark well its story. You need not die, for Jesus dies. You may escape hell-pains. A substitute suffers in your place. No punishment remains. The storm breaks on a substituted head. The vials hold no wrath for you. Your gracious Lord exhausts each drop. But this Savior--so sufficient--so complete, is God's free gift. What, then, is this giving God? Surely you shout, He is perfect love. The cross unravels every doubt. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Again, **mercy** is a sparkling attribute. God is rich in mercy. His ever-during mercy reaches unto the heavens. But where is the proof? We find it at Calvary. For what is mercy, but tender love sympathizing and relieving misery, and longing to bring ease? And is not this the trumpet-language of the cross? Christ thus expiring is surest evidence, that God's heart yearns to relieve wretchedness--to chase unhappiness away--to introduce delight and peace.

God also reigns upon a throne of **grace**. But the cross alone establishes this truth. For what is grace, but love looking with favor on undeserving worms--on lost ones, whose whole desert is punishment--on criminals, whose silent lips can urge no plea--whose downcast heads confess deep guilt. Grace finds at Calvary an open door, and free opportunity to enter on this noble work. There it pardons, and receives, and saves, and snatches from hell the rebels, who are nothing but iniquity. Faith sees this clearly in the wounded Jesus, and cries, God is all grace. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Is **justice** God's essence? Is it so interwoven with His being, that an unjust God, cannot be truly God? Now justice sternly asks, that every debt be fully paid, and no demand be set aside? The cross shows God in all the majesty of unsullied justice--in severity, which yields no right. He there exacts each due. The sad transgressions of the chosen race are countless in number--boundless in magnitude. Each is an incalculable debt. Before the cross the scales are brought; and a Substitute appears, who more than satisfies. He is supremely able, for He is divine. He pays a death, in value, far exceeding thought. Justice cries, "Enough, I am content--Enough, the whole is paid--Enough, no shadow of a claim remains--Enough, the score is all wiped out."

Sinner, you cannot enter heaven, if you retain one sin unexpiated. Justice immovably forbids, and rightly bars the gates.

Believer, no charge remains against you, because your Surety has infinitely paid. If through eternal ages you had lain in hell, you might have been forever paying a debt forever great. Jesus by His one offering clears all away. *Now Justice has become your ablest advocate.* That attribute, once so severely adverse, stands your prevailing friend. God is just and you are justified. Faith reads a full receipt in Jesus' pierced hands, and intelligently joins in the song, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Holiness, too, is a main pillar of God's government. Unholiness in Him would overthrow the throne of righteousness, and lower heaven to hell. But holiness abhors all evil. It cannot look upon an unclean thing. It frowns iniquity to boundless distance. The impure cannot face it. Where, then, can the sinner hide? His sin-stains exclude him from the sight of God. If he should venture near, a holy voice is heard, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness." But at the cross our God is holy, and the sinner saved.

How can it be? Behold the problem solved. Sin is the dire offence. Let sin but vanish, and holiness is no longer hostile. Its opposition ceases. But the all-cleansing blood from Jesus' wounds obliterates each mark of guilt. It changes filth to loveliness--deformity to beauty--impurity to snow-bright luster. Holiness beholds the blood-washed multitude. It finds no speck of sin in them. Therefore it gladly clasps them to its pleased embrace. At the cross, this holiness, without receding from its loftiest ground, smiles on transgressors, and welcomes them to God's all-righteous throne. This is one of Calvary's wonders. Faith clearly sees it--and exults--"There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Moreover, God must be absolutely **true**. His word cannot be shaken. Now truth has clearly spoken. Its edict raises a gigantic prison round the sons of guilt. Its sentence links them to eternal death. How then can they escape, who thus are doomed? Come to the cross and witness. Jesus presents Himself. He asks, O truth, what is your claim? The answer is distinct. Whatever my lips have uttered, without one slightest failure, must be done. All, who have sinned, must take the death denounced. Jesus complies. He lays down life for each of His redeemed. In Him, His seed all undergo the uttermost of truth's threat. No tittle is relaxed. Truth remains true, and a vast multitude ascend to heaven. The cross thus magnifies this attribute. Faith knows this, and again exclaims, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Another scroll surmounts the cross. It writes the praise of everlasting **wisdom**. If any ask, where is wisdom's greatest work; let him come here and read a scheme, which reconciles seeming impossibilities. There was a task, before which all created minds could not but hide their baffled heads. *Mercy* asks pardon--*Justice* demands payment. *Grace* sues for life--*Truth* must have death. *Love* must admit--*Righteousness* excludes. But God appears, leading His Son to the accursed tree--and all are satisfied-- delighted--honored--magnified--exalted--glorified. Not one is tarnished--not one is set aside. Here is the brightest blaze of wisdom. The word is true, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1Co 1:24. Again faith shouts, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

The real believer adds his individual praise. He can bear witness, how this incomparable God has sent His Spirit to add personal experience of these truths. He can record, "This God was once unknown by me. I lived without Him in the world. But now the mists are gone. I see Him saving even me in Christ. I claim Him, as my own. He is my Father. He has brought me to His home--the bosom of His love. I find Him to be all that Scripture states, and glowing saints relate, and my enormous need requires. I find Him to be more. For words from angels' lips cannot tell out half that sea of grace, on which I float to glory. And now my straining effort is, to learn more and more. With this desire I meditate and pray at Calvary. The more I *see*, the more I love. The more I *love*, the more I praise. The more I *praise*, the more my heart expands. The more my heart expands, the greater is my *peace and joy*. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun." How precious is this sight of faith! How precious will be the sight in heaven!

Happy the soul, whose glad experience thus responds, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun." Reader, is this blessedness your own? Be well assured, that life is a poor blank, until you know the peerless God. Let this study be your chief concern. The Spirit waits to reveal Jesus--and in revealing Jesus, to show Jeshurun's God. Be not destroyed for lack of saving knowledge. Be not blind amid abounding light.

Deu 33.29

GOD'S ISRAEL.

"Happy are you, O Israel; who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, and who is the sword of your excellency! and your enemies shall be found liars unto you; and you shall tread upon their high places." Deu 33:29.

Moses thus speaks--and then on earth his lips forever close. Just as his spirit spreads enraptured wings--just as he enters into perfect light--he seems to pause, and take a farewell view of Israel's camp. He now must leave the flock, for which he long had watched--the vineyard, in which he long had toiled--the children dearer than his very life. But he well knows, that they are God's especial care--loved above all nations of the earth--bound in the bundle of distinguishing grace. Hence, joying in their joy, and fervent in their hopes, he cannot check his overflowing heart. His spirit thus finds vent, *"Happy are you, O Israel; who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, and who is the sword of your excellency! and your enemies shall be found liars unto you; and you shall tread upon their high places."*

These precious words are obviously, in their first sense, the portion of those tribes, whose feet now stood on Canaan's confines. But the treasure is not theirs exclusively. Such thought is far too narrow. Here is each true believer's lot. This heritage descends to all faith's sons. It may be claimed by all, who to the end of time, trust in Christ Jesus--bathe in His blood--put on His righteousness--and are the temple of His Spirit. Happiness--perfect--heaven-born--heaven-sent--is their sure property. Here are the pastures, in which they all are privileged to feed. Happy are you, O child of God, who is like unto you!

Believer, you, then, are invited to draw out the fragrance, which these delicious flowers present, and to luxuriate in these pastures of delight.

What is the first element of this **HAPPINESS**? What is the richest savor in this cup? What is the sweetest music in this note? What is the brightest jewel in this crown? It is **salvation**--salvation realized. "Who is like unto you, O people saved." Saved--so that sin can no more injure, and self no more destroy, and Satan no more claim--saved, so that soul-misery is infinitely distant--saved, so that God is your Father--heaven is your home--a throne of glory is your high seat--and hallelujahs are your eternal song. Is not this happiness? This joy at once uplifts from earth. Let clouds of trial gather--let billows of affliction toss--let persecution, threats, and sneers assail--the heart, which clasps assurance of salvation, sits high above all other troubles. There is no darkness, where this true light shines. "Happy are you, O Israel, who is like unto you, O people saved!"

But assurance of salvation is not firm, unless it rests upon a mighty rock. This rock is here displayed. It is the Lord--the Lord Himself. It is Jehovah, strong in omnipotence--"Saved by the Lord!"

Mark well, **salvation is the Father's will**. He writes the book of life. He frames the covenant of grace. He cannot change. He cannot be diverted from His plans. None can obliterate His fixed decrees. They must be saved, for whom He purposes salvation. Saved by the Father is sure salvation.

Mark next, **salvation is the work of Jesus**. He comes, able and qualified to save to the uttermost. He rescues captive souls from Satan's grasp. By his blood He puts out the penal flames. By His strength He shatters every fetter. By His own right hand He tears down the gates of hell--and clears away all hindrance. He sends His angels to be guards. He causes all revolving providences to bring good. He never leaves His happy flock, until the crown is won. They must be saved, for whom He thus works out salvation. Saved by Christ is sure salvation.

"Saved by the Lord." No man could help himself. United companies could bring no aid. The hosts of the angelic world are vain to take away one sin. Jesus alone is able to achieve such work. Alone He undertakes. Alone He consummates. Alone He finishes. Thus the true Israel is "Saved by the Lord."

The eternal **Spirit** speeds on the wings of love to lend His aid. He opens blinded eyes to see the glories of the cross. He shows the grace and beauty of the dying Lamb. He melts the stony heart to love the precious Lord. He makes the sinner one with Christ by faith, and so an heir of God. Saved by the Spirit is sure salvation.

This salvation, then, is a sure Rock. Its summit towers above the heaven of heavens. Its deep foundations cannot be uprooted. It stands secure--complete--immovable. Nothing can detract from it. More cannot be added. He must be happy, then, whose feet are set upon this stable ground. The word is brightly true, "Happy are you, O Israel, who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord!"

But perhaps a sigh is heard, 'Will not mighty **foes** strive to destroy this happiness?' Foes, indeed, are strong and many. There is SATAN, hating with terrific hate, and aided with the countless troops of hell. He comes on, armed with tremendous weapons, each barbed with venom, each directed with consummate skill, each urged with super human force. Can he be happy, who hourly stands in such a fight?

There is the WORLD, too, now smiling with seducing arts, now bitter in sarcastic sneers, now menacing with poverty, contempt, disgrace, and countless ills.

The FLESH, too, is a restless plague--an Achan in the camp--a viper nurtured in the breast--a traitor hidden in the recesses of the heart, ever willing to betray--ever ready to suck life-blood. There must be danger in such a combat-field--and danger disturbs happiness.

But what, if the **defense** is so impenetrable--so wide--so near--that none of these attacks can prosper? What, if a covering shield averts each point? Then the calm warrior will dwell in blissful peace, fearless of real hurt.

Now view the fact. Is not a shield prepared for every child of faith? And that shield, is it not the Lord Himself? Yes, the word loudly sounds--He is "The shield of your help." He screens. He shelters. He protects. He keeps unharmed, uninjured, and unwounded. Adversaries, therefore, must be infinite in number, more than omnipotent in strength, before they can prevail.

Believer, realize this sure defense. Go forth, brave to encounter every conflict. Shielded by God, you are as safe, as if the heaven of heavens were your covert. Behind this panoply you may smile at the battering rage of the incessant shower, and sing "Happy am I, saved of the Lord, who is the shield of my help!"

But Zion's warriors are not happy in security alone. They covet trophies. Laurels must crown their brow. Now to be conquerors they need offensive weapons. They must give wounds, and smite, and overthrow. Their hands must wield a sword.

Happy believer! as you have God for a shield, so, too, a **sword** is sharpened for your use. It is not of the earth. It is framed by no human skill. It is from heaven. Therefore it is resistless. It is the Lord Himself. Therefore it is all-conquering. He is "the sword of your excellency." Know then your power. Face each opponent. Advance to the assault. Deal heavy blows. Spare not. The mighty God strikes with your arm. And when He strikes, each giant-adversary must fall low.

Happy are you, so screened! Happy are you, so equipped for victories! What, though hell's troops move on, proud in their boastings, swelling in wrathful words of menace! It is added, "They shall be found liars unto you." Their arrogance shall be, as empty bubbles. Their vaunting pride shall pass, as the passing wind. Their threats shall vanish, as the smoke. They may accuse--they may insinuate a host of doubts--they may suggest, that God will fail, and your soul perish, before the conflict end. But these vile whisperings are false. The fight will gloriously end. Your feet shall crush their necks. The Spirit of truth, by Moses' lips, sounds these grand words--"Your enemies shall be found liars unto you, and you shall tread upon their high places."

Reader, I trust, that you now are well taught, where happiness alone can dwell. Its home is with God's Israel. It is the portion of the chosen race. It is the heritage of those, who know and love the Lord. Under the shelter of His wings, His people rest encircled with these joys. Let such open their eyes to view their happy state. Let them receive with faith the countless pledges of their God. Is it not said, "He, that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things!" Rom 8:32. Is it not said, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 1Co 3:21-23. Is it not said, "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads--they shall obtain joy and gladness--and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa 35:10. Only believe, and become happy in this happiness. "Happy are you, O Israel." Only believe, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Faith ever sings, and happy is its song.

Reader, this tract would sincerely detain you, while it makes a final effort to impress your heart. Pause, then, and say, is happiness your lot? Do you arise with morning light to joy? Do you move joyously throughout the day? Is joy the hand, which bolts your evening door? Your head hangs down. A sigh tells a sad tale. Your feet have not attained this happy ground. How is it? You have sought happiness, but you have sought it, where it never grows. The **world**, perhaps, enticed you. It showed a panoramic view of glittering honors--tinsel wealth--vain titles--empty bubbles of applause--and fading flowers of visionary peace. You toiled long in the pursuit; and now, wearied--worn-out--desponding, you confess, the world has been a miserable cheat.

Perhaps a more refined bait has allured. Perhaps science and literature's page have courted. For a while you have found interesting converse with brilliant thoughts, and lofty flights of intellect. But still you are not happy. There is a void. There is distress. Conscience is restless and disturbed. The heart finds no repose on such a pillow. The bark cannot cast anchor on such sand. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, and vexation of spirit." Alas! you are not happy.

Know, then, you never can be, while apart from God. Listen. Turn not away. Cast not aside these lines. Is it too late? You live. Jesus still lives. The living word still cries, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." Be, then, persuaded. Approach the cross on bended knees--with suppliant lip--in deep humility--with earnest prayer. Confess your need. Avow your willingness to be Christ's. Place your whole soul and heart in His redeeming hands. Wrestle with Him. Let Him not go, until your burdens fall, and peace swells like a rising tide. He can bring back to God. He can assure of pardon. He can reveal His pierced hands and side. He can bestow the title-deeds of life. He can admit you, as an adopted child, to the high family of grace. Then you will fully feel, how true are Moses' last words, "Happy are you, O Israel; who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, and who is the sword of your excellency! and your enemies shall be found liars unto you; and you shall tread upon their high places."

Holy Spirit, use these humble lines as seed of happiness, now and ever, to each reader's soul!

Deu 34.1

PISGAH.

*"Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of **Pisgah**."* Deu 34:1.

PISGAH is crowded with instructive thoughts. The scene is *solemn*, because death appears, and a wondrous life finds here a wondrous end. It is *holy*, for God Himself attends the dying saint, and closes the dying eyes. But its main interest is the marvel of the distant prospects thence discerned. Moses ascends the mount. God meets His faithful servant. All the beauties of the promised land are spread, as a map, before him. And then he is translated to the heavenly reality. What annals record similar events!

My soul, with reverence open this treasure-house of profit. Great Spirit of all light descend, for without Your rays, even Pisgah must be dark!

Moses lived long. He passed a spacious sea of trial. He trod a tedious course of trouble. His sighs were many. His spirit was often pained. But the last step came, and landed him in glory!

Believer, mark this, and gird up your loins. You, too, may experience a stormy voyage through many billows. But each wave wafts you nearer to your haven. The last will break--soon--very soon. And then, where will your sufferings be? Behind--immeasurably distant. What will be around--before you? Peace--joy--glory. Live, then, assured, that the end approaches. The hope of rest makes all disquietudes to fade away. *Burdens seem light, when borne for a brief space. Earth's longest sorrow cannot be long.*

Moses goes up with ready step to die. God cheers him with an outspread prospect. With telescopic glance he is enabled to survey all the extent of Canaan's lovely land. "And the Lord said unto him, This is the land, which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto your seed. I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there." Deu 34:4.

As we thus read, two thoughts arise.

1. God's promises are stable as Himself. His word must be. He said, "I will give it:" and hands now take the gift.

Believer, watch against UNBELIEF. Hew it to pieces. Tread it to powder. Give it to the winds. Let no shred survive. It is shame, and it is folly. It mars your peace. It keeps out floods of joy. Place your foot firmly on the Word, and rise above all doubts. God's promise, surely, steadily advances towards fulfillment, as the sun to its appointed rising.

Add Pisgah to the many proofs. The goodly land, so often pledged, lies at its base. The happy tribes now reach their lots. So, too, a rest is promised to the saints of God. There was no failure to Israel. There will be no failure unto us. Jesus has entered as the forerunner. He holds possession in His people's name. The keys are in His hands. He beckons forward. He soon will give the welcome. The prize is sure to faith.

2. But Moses may not cross the borders. Why? Thoughts of the heritage had often cheered his heart. His mind with eager wing had often speeded towards this Canaan. It would have been sweet joy to have reposed, after long journeyings, in this land. His lips would have been loud in praise, while witnessing the people settled in their expected homes. But this cannot be granted. He may behold from Pisgah's summit. But his feet may not enter.

Why? Sin is the cause. If there be misery, and shame, and disappointment, these bitter streams may all be traced to sin, as the sad source. At Meribah his faith had failed. Provoked, he spoke and acted in unholy haste. His angry words--his blows inflicted on the rock--dishonored God. He erred in presence of the host. And God must manifest displeasure. Moses is loved--pardoned--saved. But he suffers. *His death on Pisgah stands as a beacon, warning of sin's precipice.*

Children of God, beware. Be ever on your guard. Watch prayerfully your spirit, thoughts, and words. We move in midst of wide-spread nets. Our feet soon are entangled. And then there must be injury. We may repent, and bitter tears may flow. We may be mercifully snatched from everlasting pains. We may gain heaven. But still there always is a sorrow in sin's trail. Let this example settle deeply in your minds. Moses through sin may not cross Jordan.

This fact is perhaps expressive of another truth. The hands of Moses brought the tables of the Law. He was its mediating channel. But this covenant can never convoy souls to heaven. It is weak to open those bright gates. It is feeble to ascend that lofty hill. Be taught, all you, who seek acceptance through the code of Sinai. The effort to fulfill these terms is fool's play. It cannot prosper. It will surely fail. None enter, with one stain of guilt. None enter, without righteousness, as pure as God is pure. But the Law never can remove stains. It never gives a covering for offence. It therefore admits not to God's presence. It never leads to the celestial rest.

Reader, whatever be your age or state, whatever be your privilege, one thing is surely true, you are black with countless sins. Turn, then, from the broken staff of moral guiltlessness to Jesus. He meets your every need. Leaning on His arm, you may pass Jordan's waves. Safe by His side you may attain true Canaan's joys. Pure in His righteousness, you may stand welcome before God.

But Moses on Pisgah not only warns--he also **encourages** to rapturous meditation; he leads us by the hand to precious thoughts. His eye thence traverses a wondrous circuit. Aided by superhuman power, he roams along the grand expanse of Israel's portion. From plain to plain--from valley to valley--from hill to hill, he wanders in entranced delight. What beauty--what fertility--enchant him! He sees the earthly home, so worthy of God's chosen sons.

Believer, is there no Pisgah, from which you, too, may gaze? There is. It is the Gospel record. You should by frequent step ascend this hill. You should release your mind from the poor grovelings of earthly things. You should seek elevation for your heart in this chart and picture of the coming bliss.

Jesus invites you to this Pisgah. Without Him, indeed, your daily walk must be in a squalid marsh. Apart from Him, your horizon is confined--and hope has no watchtower of survey. But join yourself to Him. He will conduct you to a lofty seat, and open out a clear prospective of your sure heritage. Seated by Him, your eye may feast on promised mansions. He has indeed bought a rich country for you. And He gives the Gospel as the graphic map.

The Spirit, too, delights to meet you with enlightening aid. He will give power to apprehend this new Jerusalem; to count the towers; to go round the buttresses; to mark the palaces. He will confer that telescopic eye of faith, which scans the valleys, the plains, the mountains, of your Canaan.

Bright, indeed, is the prospect. It reveals that glorious home, which is the recompense of Jesus' blood. But what can be a recompense for divine merit? *We estimate things by their price.* The price, which He presents, is infinite. The equivalent, which He wins, is heaven. This, then, must be a treasure beyond thought.

Again, *think by whom these mansions are prepared.* Eternal love suggests their plan. Infinite power executes. Therefore they must be infinitely perfect. Nothing can be absent, which can contribute to pure ecstasy.

But Jesus dwells there now, intent on their completion. They are wondrous words, "I go to prepare a place for you." His grace is an ocean without shore. Here it flows out in ceaseless employ. His might is boundless. Here it finds full exercise. *Heaven, then, must be the concentrated blaze of all the happiness, which Jehovah can contrive and form.* My soul, may you reach heaven! Cling to Jesus, and you cannot fail. Reader, may you reach heaven! Cling to Jesus, and you cannot fail.

Neglect not, then, the truth, that in the Gospel we are led to a Pisgah, whence we may survey this home. Let no one say, the prospect is so dazzling that mortal gaze cannot rest on it. True! the reality cannot be known by flesh and blood. Bodies, until transformed into the likeness of the Lord, cannot become inhabitants. True! heaven in all its blessedness exceeds our present thought. To know it fully, we must enjoy it for eternal ages. But still we are encouraged to look forward from our Pisgah's heights.

Believer, strain, then, the eye of faith. Look, look again. No, never cease to look. There you behold a flood of glory upon glory. There cannot be improvement. Sin is outside. Temptations have no place. Tears no more flow. Sighs are no longer heaved. Satan and his legion are afar in utter darkness. The world has passed away. There is no longer any fear of grieving God, or falling short, or bringing shame to Christ's all-glorious name. Righteousness and peace are the streets and highways. Eternal safety forms the battlements. Eternal praises sound from all the inhabitants. Eternal glory sparkles on each brow. Eternal pleasure breathes around. Each happy saint drinks a cup--so *full*, that it can hold no more--so *pure*, that it cannot be purer--so *deep*, that everlasting ages cannot exhaust it. My soul, may you reach heaven! Cling to Jesus, and you cannot fail. Reader, may you reach heaven! Cling to Jesus, and you cannot fail.

But when you thus contemplate heaven, especially observe what is **its chief joy**. It is God--all--God--everywhere--God manifest, and gazed on with undazzled eye. It is Jesus ever near--and seen without an intervening cloud. Here on earth, ofttimes He is hidden, because sin interposes, and distrust brings mist, and other scenes attract, and indolence deadens the soul. In heaven there is no darkening medium. It is eternal vision, and eternal adoration, of Jehovah, clearly displayed--intensely and entirely loved.

Believer, will you not, then, mount Pisgah, and let thought revel in anticipating views? Such meditation is heaven on the path to heaven. It is a foretaste, before earth be left.

Close not this humble volume, without deep resolve. Vow in the spirit, to consecrate some portion of each day to searchings for heaven in the Gospel-page. Become knowledgeable of your sure estate. Be not a stranger to your near country. Often go in, perusing your own Canaan. And may God meet you, as He met Moses! May He enlarge your sight to see--your heart to love!

It is true wisdom to cultivate this Pisgah-meditation. Thus **strength** is revived, and muscles are nerved to fight and persevere. The combatant gains vigor, the racer presses on, when he beholds the crown of victory almost reached. Think much of heaven, and you will soon be there.

Thus **sanctity** progresses. Can he love sin, whose soul is ever conversant with purity? Can he be won by siren-notes of earthly pleasure, whose ears are ever drinking in the hallelujahs of the saved?

Thus **cares** grow light. Can his head hang down, or his breast sigh, who is by constant thought an inhabitant of the realms of bliss?

Thus **death** is welcomed as the friend, who comes to change long-cherished hope into reality. Thus **Jesus** more and more is prized and loved. We bless Him in proportion as we feel, that heaven is the purchase of His grace, His work, His blood. When we say, He earned it--He bestows it. Then we add, 'To Him be hourly praise--for Him let every moment toil.'

Happy they, who gather such rich harvest on Pisgah's summit! Spirit of God, strengthen my sight for such delightful gaze! Spirit of God, use these poor pages to attract pilgrims to this mount!

Abide in Christ. If in unguarded moment you should stray, how instantly some fearful blow is aimed! How suddenly some wound is felt!

Would you be safe through life--in death--forever? Then cleave to Christ, as ivy to the tree, as limpet to the rock. When Israel's high-priest died, the slayer left his shelter. But your High-Priest forever lives, therefore forever you must tarry in your Shelter.

And when you realize your mercies and your safe retreat, can your heart fail to love--your lips to praise--your life to serve? Can you now see such multitudes exposed to wrath, and almost death-struck, and not allure them to your beloved Refuge? Strive, strive, by every means to call them in. Above all, agonize in prayer, that God's all-conquering Spirit may fly speedily throughout earth's bounds, opening blind eyes to see their danger, exciting anxious hearts to rush to this only Refuge.