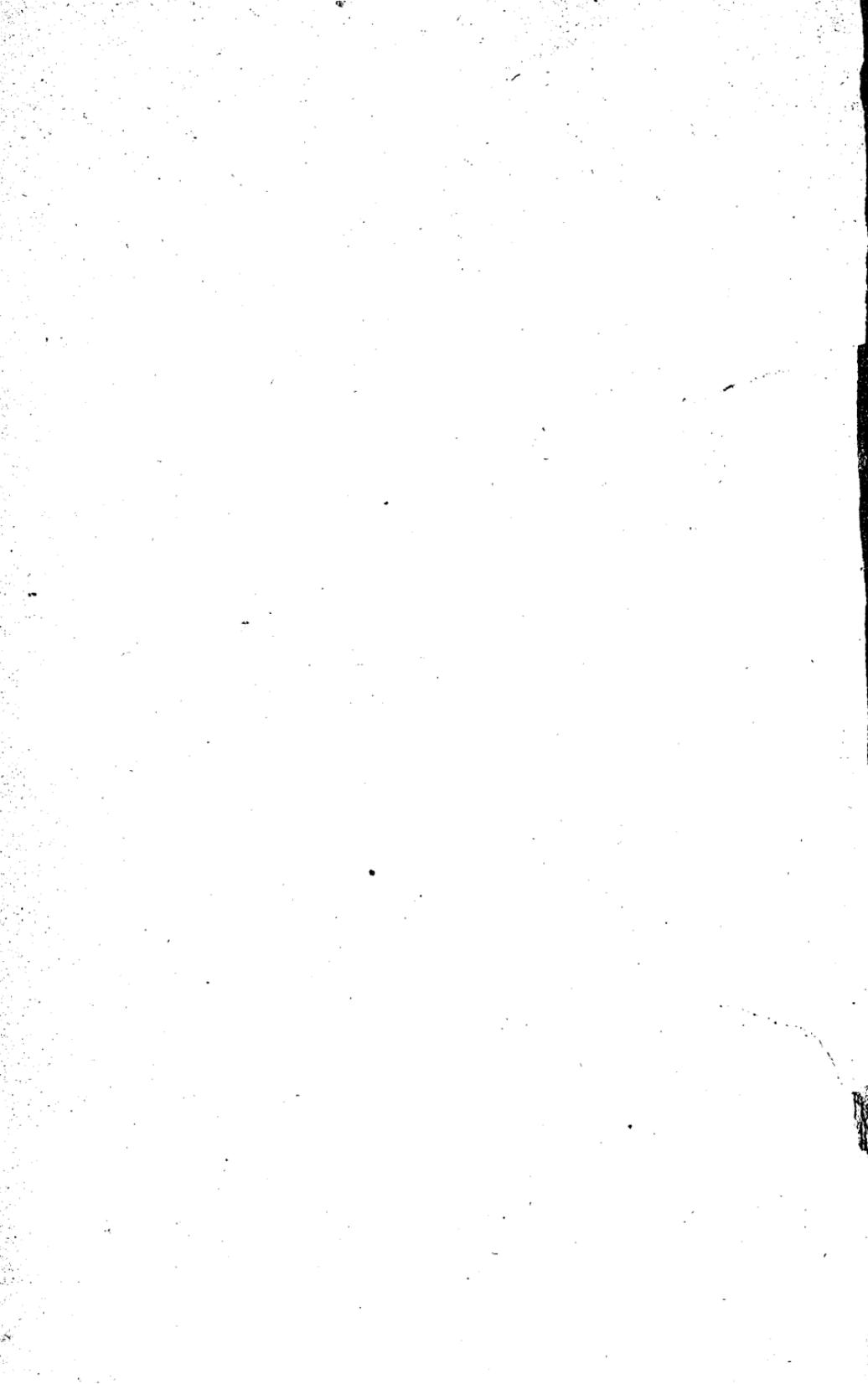


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THE
POOR MAN'S
EVENING PORTION:

BEING A SELECTION OF A

VERSE OF SCRIPTURE,

WITH

SHORT OBSERVATIONS, FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR;

INTENDED FOR THE USE OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT WHO ARE RICH IN
FAITH AND HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM.

BY ROBERT HAWKER, D.D.

VICAR OF CHARLES, PLYMOUTH.

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THE

POOR MAN'S

EVENING PORTION.

JANUARY.—1.

AND he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.—*Rev. xxi. 5.*

My soul! thou hast been engaged, in the morning of the new year, with contemplating the eternal and unchanging glory of thy Jesus, in his person, work, character, and relations, as in covenant engagements for thy welfare: and thou hast found him to be an everlasting and secure foundation to rest upon, and dwell in, for time and for eternity.—Come now, in the evening of the day, and look up to thy Redeemer in another precious point of view, and behold him as creating all things new, while he himself, in the eternity of his nature, remains for ever and unchangeably the same. Behold him on his throne; and remember that one and the same throne belongs to God and the Lamb, to intimate the unity of the Father and the Son in nature and dignity; in will, worship, and power. When thou hast duly pondered this view of Jesus, next listen to the important words he proclaims: “Behold I make all things new.” Pause—Hath he made thee a new creature? Yes! if, as the Holy Ghost saith, “old things are passed away, and all things are become new.” The new creature is a thoroughly changed creature. It is a new nature, not a new name. A *new* heart will I give you, is the blessed promise: and a *new* spirit will I put within you. So that, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.—When this grand point is fully and clearly ascertained, then, my soul, let the next consideration from this scripture be, the blessed assurance here given, that Jesus himself hath wrought it. This indeed cannot but follow; for surely the same power that created the world out of nothing, must be necessary to create a new spirit in the sinner's heart, which is worse than nothing. In the old creation of nature, though there was nothing to form it from, yet there was nothing to oppose it: but in the unrenewed heart of a sinner there is every thing to rise up against it; for “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” Mark it down, then, my soul, that no power less than God's could have done this, and thy Jesus from his throne declares it. Is there any thing more to be gathered from this proclamation from the throne? Yes! He that first creates the

heart anew, ever lives to send forth the renewings of the Holy Ghost: for creating grace, and renewing grace, are both alike his. Hence, therefore, let thy morning and evening visits be to him that sitteth upon the throne, and maketh all things new. The same that hath made new heavens, and the new earth, wherein righteousness dwelleth; that hath made his tabernacle with men, and dwelleth in them; that sitteth upon the throne, making all things new; the same is he, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, that giveth power to the weak, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Hither, my soul, come, under all thy weakness, fears, doubts, tremblings, and the like: Jesus can, and will renew thy strength. When I want a heart to pray; to praise; to love; to believe; yea, when my heart and my flesh faint, and hope fails: oh! let me hear thy voice, thou, that sitteth upon the throne, and maketh all things new: for then wilt thou be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.—*Matt.* xxvi. 20.

And now the even is again come, will Jesus graciously sit down with me? Wherefore, my soul, shouldst thou doubt the kindness of thy condescending Lord? It may be allowed, that in many of the tender incidents which passed between Jesus and his disciples while upon earth, there were some peculiarly suited and designed to have a personal respect to them alone. But in many things they were the representatives of Jesus's whole family; and hence every child of God may invite Jesus to sit down with him, and enjoy communion with him: that while Jesus speaks by his word to his people, and they to him, as his whole heart and soul is theirs, so their whole hearts and souls may go forth in all the sweet exercises of love and faith to him, and a holy familiarity may take place between them. Come, then, thou gracious Lord, and sit down with me, after all the toils of the day, and close the night with some blessed token of thy favour. I remember somewhat of thy past kindnesses; and therefore I feel encouraged to seek a renewal of thy love. Do I not know thee, O thou dear Lord, as a tried, a sure, an unchanging friend; a brother born for adversity? And shall not this knowledge make me confident for all that I have now to ask? Shall I go to the Lamb of God, who hath died for me, as one under doubts and fears that he will not own me, nor regard the purchase of his blood? No! precious Jesus, never will I so dishonour thee, while thou hast given me, not the spirit of bondage, but the spirit of adoption. Never will I lose sight of thee in this endearing part of thy character; for thine own love, and not our desert, is the rule of thy grace to thy people. Come, then, Lord Jesus, in the stillness of this evening, and manifest thyself to my heart otherwise than thou dost to the world. If Jesus will but

speak, yea, whisper in the words of his Holy Scripture, I shall feel all the power, sweetness, and energy of its saving truths. One view of Jesus's heart, and the love in it to poor sinners, will bear down all the cries of unbelief, all the charms of the world, and all the temptations of the enemy. Yea, Lord, I shall for a while forget every sorrow, every pain, every difficulty and trial. And will not the tempter flee, when he beholds my poor feeble soul upheld in Jesus's arms, and lying in Jesus's bosom? Blessed be my God and Saviour, I feel a sense of thy strengthening and refreshing presence. My faith lays hold of thee, neither will I let thee go, O thou, the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof! And why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry but for a night?

He showed unto them his hands and his side.

John xx. 20.

My Lord and my God! I would say, while thou openest to me such a view, and while I would look into and read thine heart in it. And what was such a display designed for, dearest Lord? I think thou hast taught me to discover. Was it not as if Jesus had said, "See here the marks of your sure redemption. From hence issued the blood that hath cleansed you from all sin. And this blood hath a voice. It is *speaking* blood, which speaketh better things than that of Abel. For *his* blood cried for vengeance, *mine* for pardon. It speaketh *for thee to my Father* of his covenant promises. And it speaketh *to thee from my Father* of thy sure acceptance in my salvation."—Neither was this all. For surely, dearest Jesus, when thou showedst thine hands and thy side, it was also as if thou hadst said, "See here an opening to my heart. Here put in all you wish to tell my Father, and I will bear it to him with all my warmest affections. And let all my disciples, in every age of my Church, do this. I will be the bearer of all their suits. And sure they may be, both of my love and of my success for them; for I will carry all that concerns them in this opening to my heart." Precious Lord! cause me often to view with the eye of faith this gracious interview of thine with thy disciples. And as in the evening of the day, the disciples were thus favoured with thy presence, and so rich a manifestation of thy love, so, Lord, make me to realize the scene afresh, and very often in the silence of the night may my soul be going forth in the full enjoyment of this spiritual blessing! Yea, Jesus! let me behold thine hands and thy side, and learn day by day to put therein all I would tell my God and Father of thy great salvation, and my firm reliance upon it; until from a life of faith I come to enter upon a life of absolute enjoyment, and behold thee still as the Lamb that hath been slain for the redemption of thy people, in the midst of the throne, leading the church to living fountains of waters, where all tears are wiped away from all eyes.

And David said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?—1 *Sam.* xviii. 23.

Did David indeed set by so high an honour in being allied to the family of an earthly prince; what then must be the dignity to which believers are called, in being heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ? The apostle was so lost in the contemplation of this unspeakable mercy, that he cried out with holy rapture, Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! My soul, art thou begotten to this immense privilege? Ponder well thy vast inheritance. Not a barren title; not an empty name; this relationship brings with it a rich revenue of all temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings. Sons-in-law and in grace to God in Christ, believers are born to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. They have the spirit of adoption, and of grace: and because they are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into their hearts, whereby they cry, Abba, Father. Are they poor in outward circumstances? bread shall be given, and water shall be sure; and their defence shall be the munitions of rocks. Are they afflicted in body or in mind? their back shall be proportioned to their burden; and as their day is, so shall their strength be. Every child shall have his own portion, and the Father's blessing sanctifying all. Yea, death itself is in the inventory of the inheritance of a child of God: for so far is death from separating *from* God, that it brings *to* God. What sayest thou, O my soul! to these things? Art thou, like David, a poor man, and lightly esteemed? Look up and enjoy thy relationship in Jesus, and from this time do thou cry out, in the words of the Prophet, and say unto God, "My Father! thou art the guide of my youth."

And Melchisedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.—*Genesis* xiv. 18.

Was it not in the evening of the day, when Abraham, returning from the slaughter of the kings, met this illustrious person? And will Jesus, my Melchisedek, meet and bless me in the evening of this day, after my return from conflicts, trials, and exercises? I would fain indulge the sweet thought. Surely this Melchisedek could be no other than Jesus. And did he love his people then—and doth he not love them now? Did Jesus witness their battles, and come forth and refresh them? And is he not Jesus still? Sit down, my soul, and attend to what the Holy Ghost saith of this Melchisedek; and see whether, through his teaching, thou canst make no discoveries

of Jesus. Was this Melchisedek priest of the most high God? And who but the Son of God was ever sworn into this office with an oath? Was Melchisedek a priest for ever? Who but Jesus was this? Had Melchisedek neither beginning of days nor end of life? And who but Jesus is the first and the last? Was Melchisedek without father, without mother? And who of Jesus shall declare his generation? Did Melchisedek bless the great father of the faithful? And hath not God the Father sent his Son to bless us, in turning away every one of us from our iniquities? Did the king of Salem bring forth bread and wine, to refresh the Patriarch and his people? And doth not our King of righteousness bring forth at his supper the same, as memorials of his love? yea, his own precious body, which is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. Precious Jesus, thou great Melchisedek! bring forth anew, this night, these tokens of thy love. Make thyself known to me in breaking of bread and prayer. And whilst thou art imparting to me most blessed views of thyself, give me to apprehend and know thee, and richly enjoy thy soul-strengthening, soul-comforting presence. And oh! for grace from thee, Lord, and the sweet influences of thine Holy Spirit; that, like the Patriarch Abraham, I may give thee tithes of all I possess! It is true, I have nothing, and am nothing; yea, in myself, am worse than nothing. But of thine own would I give thee. Like the poor widow in the gospel, I would cast all my living into thy treasury. The two mites, which make a farthing, my soul and body, do I give unto thee. And those are both thine, by creation, by gift, by purchase, and by the conquest of thy grace. Take, therefore, all; and enable me to present my soul and body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto the Lord, which is my reasonable service.

When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.—*Psalms* lxi. 2.

Yes, Lord! I would make this my morning, noon, and evening petition, that the great glorifier of Jesus would gently lead me to him who is a rock, and whose work is perfect. I know, dearest Lord, in theory, and can even reason upon it in seasons of coolness, that thy strength and thy security never fail; the failure is in me and my unbelief. And it is only when I lose sight of thee and thy promise, that I am tossed about with doubts and misgivings. If Jesus be out of sight, and thwarting dispensations arise, oh! how soon is my poor forgetful heart ready to exclaim with the church of old, "I said, My strength, and my hope is perished from the Lord." Then come on the reasonings of flesh and blood. And then the question, whether my interest in Jesus and his salvation be sure? And then my poor heart goes forth, like the dove of Noah from the ark, having lost sight

of Jesus, and can find no resting-place for the sole of my foot. O Lord the Spirit, in all such seasons do thou lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. If thou, blessed leader of the Lord's distressed ones, wouldst be my pilot when those storms are beating upon me, I should soon be blown upon the firm landing-place of Jesus's security. Oh! how should I ride out the storm, even when the tempest was highest, as long as God the Holy Ghost enabled me to cast the anchor of faith upon this eternal Rock of Jesus. O lead me, then, thou sovereign Lord, continually to all-precious Jesus. Open the port of communication, and keep it constantly open, between Christ and my soul. Faith will find a soft and quiet bed to sleep on, in the arms of Jesus, and no noise of wars shall break the soul's rest while reposing on him; for so the promise runs: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Oh! then, once again I send up the earnest cry of my soul; let it be continually answered in mercy! When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.

Lament. i. 12.

Dearest Jesus! I would sit down this evening, and looking up to thee, ask the instructions of thy blessed Spirit, to unfold some of the many tender inquiries wrapped up in this question of my Lord's. Whatever the mournful Prophet's views were of the church's sorrow, when he wrote his book of Lamentations, surely sorrow never had its full potion poured out, but in the cup of trembling which thou didst drink. And as in all the afflictions of thy people thou wert afflicted, added to all thine own personal sufferings, theirs also thou didst sustain. And where shall I begin, dear Lord, to mark down the vast volume of thy sorrow? From the manger to the cross, every path was suffering. Indeed thou art, by way of emphasis, called "the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Thorns and thistles the earth is made to bring forth, to human nature at large: but as in taking away this curse thou becamest a curse for thy people, none but thyself, dearest Jesus, was ever crowned with thorns; as if to testify the supremacy of thy sufferings. And did all our curses indeed fall upon thee? Was all the Father's wrath, in the full vials of his anger against sin, made to light upon thee? Didst thou wade through all, and sustain all, and boat all, on purpose that thy redeemed might be delivered?

Did great drops of blood in a cold night (when a fire of coals became needful to warm thy disciples) fall from thy sacred body, from the agony of thy soul's suffering? Did the Son of God, who from all eternity lay in his bosom, the only begotten and dearly beloved of his affection, indeed die under amazement and exceeding sorrow, and the cry of his soul issue forth of his Father's desertion? Were these among the sorrows of Jesus? And is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Is it nothing to you, O ye that by disregard and indifference would crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame? Come hither, ye careless and unconcerned; come hither, ye fools that make a mock of sin; come hither, ye drunkards and defiled of every description and character, whose cups of licentiousness and mirth have mingled for him the wormwood and the gall: behold Jesus, and say, is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? My soul, bring the question home to thine own heart, and never give over the solemn meditation. It is, indeed, to thee every thing that is momentous and eternally interesting. Yes! precious Jesus! every wound of thine speaks; every feature, every groan, every cry, pleads *for* me, and *with* me. If I forget thee, O thou bleeding Lamb! let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; yea, if I prefer not the solemn meditation of Gethsemane and Calvary above my chief joy!

A pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda.—*John* v. 2.

Go down, my soul, this evening to the pool and cloisters of Bethesda, as the Prophet was commanded to go down to the potter's house. Peradventure thy Lord may do by thee as he graciously did by him; cause thee to hear his words. The pool of Bethesda was the place or house of mercy. It was so to the *bodies* of those whom the Lord healed there. It becomes so now to the *souls* of those who behold Jesus in the representation. In the cloisters around the pool, lay a great multitude of sick, waiting for a cure. Ponder over the miseries of our fallen nature. It is always profitable to note distinguishing blessings. Are hospitals numerous; frequently filled; numbers sick; numbers dying; numbers dead? Am I in health? And will not the voice of praise go forth to the bountiful Author in a consciousness of the distinguishing mercy? This pool was blessed with a miraculous quality. One poor creature, and but one, at that season when the waters were moved by the descent of an angel into the pool, (most probably discovered by the agitation of the pool,) was cured of whatsoever disease he had. Sweet testimony, before the coming of Christ, that the Lord had not left his people, although the Church was then in a very languishing

state. But, my soul, attend to the spiritual beauty of this interesting record. The pool of Bethesda, no doubt, was intended as a typical representation of the fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. And the Son of God, by visiting the pool, and healing a poor paralytic by the sovereign word of his own power, without the means, seemed very plainly to intimate the inexpediency of the type, when the person signified was present. Behold in this pool, then, the house of mercy always open. In a world like the present, full of misery, because full of sin, multitudes of folk, impotent in soul, should be found in the cloisters of ordinances and under the means of grace. Jesus loves those places. These are his favourite haunts. Here he comes to heal, and to impart blessings. And that not to one only at a season. In his blood a sovereign efficacy is found for all who are washed in it. He cures the guilt of sin, the dominion of sin, the sting of sin. And he doth all in so gracious, so condescending, so sovereign a manner, as cannot but endear him to every heart. Blessed be the Lord that hath led me to his pool at Bethesda, and hath healed my soul in his blood. The Lord is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation.

And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Matt. iii. 9.

Precious are the doctrines contained in the bosom of this most blessed scripture! May the Almighty Author of his own holy word open to me this evening some of the many divine things contained in it! And first, my soul, remark that the blessing to Abraham, and to his seed, was not through the law. He is not a Jew that is one outwardly. The blood of nature which ran through Abraham's veins had no respect to the grace which was planted in Abraham's heart. If ye be Christ's is the relationship, for then the Holy Ghost beareth witness ye are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. No Ishmaels, no sons of Keturah, not of the bond-women, but of the free. And what a sweet thought it is also to consider, that as God called Abraham when an idolater, so now the gifts and callings of God are the same. And in every call doth he not say, Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged? Look unto Abraham your Father, and unto Sarah that bare you, for I called him alone and blessed him, and increased him. Do not overlook this, my soul; it will always tend to exalt and endear thy Jesus. But let us not stop here. Supposing, as some have thought, that the Baptist was standing on the banks of Jordan, and referring to the memorial (*Joshua*

iv. 9) of the twelve tribes of Israel, the allusion to the creating souls from such unpromising and unheard-of means becomes a most delightful thought to a child of God, to comfort him concerning the sovereignty of God's grace. Pause, my soul, and let the thought fill up thine evening's meditation, lie down with thee, and form thy songs of the night. Had it pleased thy covenant God in Christ so to have wrought his salvation, no doubt, nothing could have been more easy to his Omnipotency than to have raised heirs of glory from the stones. When the human soul, which came out of the Almighty Maker's hand at first pure and holy, had by apostasy lost all its beauty and loveliness, how quickly might Jehovah have reduced it to its original nothingness, and from the stones of the earth raised up a seed to praise him! But here, as in a thousand instances, God's ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts. To glorify his dear Son, the soul which is polluted and defiled shall be made infinitely more precious by redemption than it was by creation when unpolluted. Beautiful as it was before it fell, yet is it vastly more beautiful now, when washed in the Redeemer's blood. Had it continued in its uprightness, it would have been but the uprightness of the creature, still liable to fall at any time from its integrity, as Adam did. But now, united to Jesus, the righteousness and purity of the redeemed is the righteousness and holiness of the Redeemer, and can never possibly be lost or forfeited any more. "Thy Maker is thine Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name: and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called." Pause, my soul! Hast thou a part, an interest in this blessedness? Art thou a poor Gentile by nature and by practice, an alien to the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger to the covenants of promise; and, once without hope, without God, and without Christ in the world, art thou now brought nigh by the blood of Christ? Surely, had God raised a seed from the stones of the earth to Abraham to bless him, the act would not have been more sovereign, neither the mercy more gracious! Hath Jehovah raised thee from death, sin, and hell; washed thee in the blood of the Lamb; regenerated thee by his blessed Spirit: made thee a temple for himself, and formed thee for his glory? Oh, then, join the Prophet's song, and cry out in his words, "Sing, O ye heavens! for the Lord hath done it: shout ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."

Whose I am, and whom I serve.—*Acts xxvii. 23.*

Here is a delightful subject for an evening meditation, if, like the Apostle, who thus expressed himself, a child of God can take up the same words, and from the same well-grounded authority.

Paul was in the midst of a storm, with not only the prospect, but the certainty of shipwreck before him, when he thus reposed himself in his covenant relations. An angel had informed him of what would happen; and had bidden him to be of good courage. But Paul's chief confidence arose from the consideration of whose property he was, and whose service he was engaged in. See to it, my soul, that thy assurance be the same; and thy security in every dark night will be the same also. For if thou art Jesus's property, depend upon it thou wilt be Jesus's care. Hath Jesus bought thee with his blood; made thee his by grace; and hast thou voluntarily given up thyself to him in a covenant not to be broken? Hath the Lord spoken to thee by the sweet voice of his word, brought home to the heart in the gracious application of his Spirit? Doth he say to thee, as to Jacob of old: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine?" Oh! then, how sure will be the promise that follows: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee: for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." If in a view of covenant relationship, thou canst say with Paul concerning Jesus, *whose I am*; do thou next search after the love-tokens of thine own heart, in covenant engagements also, and see whether thou canst adopt Paul's language in the other particular, and say, as he did, *whom I serve*. Is Jesus the only object of thy love? Did he give himself for thee; and hath he by his Holy Spirit enabled thee to give thyself unto him? Hast thou given thyself to him, and given thyself for him, and art thou willing to part with every thing for the promotion of his glory? Depend upon it, the real confidence of the soul can only be found in faith's enjoyment of these things. My soul! drop not into the arms of sleep before thou hast brought this point to a decision. No storm of the night, no tempest without, will alarm, while Jesus, by his Holy Spirit, speaks peace within. If Jesus be thine, then all is thine; and as thou art his, every promise is made over to thee with him, whose thou art, and whom thou dost serve. Sweet promise to lie down with on the bed of night, or the bed of death: "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places."—*Isaiah xxxii. 18.*

Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions
hearken to thy voice; cause me to hear it.

Song viii. 13.

Hark, my soul! Is not this Jesus speaking to thee? Listen to thy Lord, for sweet is his voice, and his countenance is comely.

But how know I that Jesus is speaking to me in these words of the Song? Search, and see if it be so. What are these gardens the Lord speaks of? Surely the special congregations of his churches. Is not Jesus's Church one universal Church, of Jew and Gentile, made up of the several assemblies of the faithful throughout the earth? And art thou, my soul, brought into the Church of Jesus by resignation, by adoption, by the special call of God the Father, the purchase of Christ's blood, the conquest of the Spirit, and the voluntary surrender of thine heart to God? And dost thou dwell in those gardens? Are Jesus's ordinances thy delight; his holy days thy beloved days; his presence thy joy; his tabernacles amiable to thee? And is it the uniform desire of thine heart, to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of thy life; to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple? Oh! the blessedness of such a dwelling! the felicity of the souls who dwell in it! Is it not to all such who keep his Sabbaths, and join themselves to the Lord to serve him? "Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."—Isaiah lvi. 5. My soul! when thou hast answered this inquiry, go on, and make a farther search concerning *the companions*. But what a large door of examination will open on this ground! The holy Lord himself, in his trinity of persons, has condescended to reveal himself according to the Church's faith in Christ. And every individual believer, even thou, my soul, poor, and worthless, and insignificant, as thou art in thyself, yet considered in relation to Jesus, even thou, in common with all true followers of Jesus, carriest about with thee evident tokens of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. Pause, and determine here again: Are these sacred persons companions of thine? Do they walk with thee, and thou with them? Do they hear thy voice speaking of the love of each, the grace, the mercy, the goodness of covenant compassion to poor sinners, in and through the rich salvation of the blood and righteousness of Jesus? But are there not *other companions*, even fellow-saints and fellow-citizens of the household of God, which may be implied in these words? And do they hear thy testimony concerning Jesus? Can they witness for thee, that thy lips drop as the honeycomb concerning thy Lord, and that his name, his love, his full, free, finished salvation, are the one constant, unceasing subject of thy whole conversation? Dost thou so speak, so live, and dwell upon the precious name of thy Lord; and not only talk of Jesus, but walk with Jesus? And doth Jesus hear thee, and take pleasure in thy edifying conversation, ministering grace to the hearers? Is a book of remembrance written before him, concerning those that fear the Lord and speak often one to another, and think upon his name? And doth Jesus, while he graciously looks on

and hearkens, bid thee come to him and say, "Cause me to hear thy voice?" What! are thy praises of Jesus, and thy praises to Jesus, pleasant to my Lord? Doth he, indeed, love to hear thy poor, lisping, stammering tongue? If, while I speak to others of my companions of his blood and righteousness, and of my soul's joy *in* him, my adherence *to* him, my dependence *upon* him, and my expectation *from* him, Jesus not only favours the sweet employment, but bids me come to him, and tell himself of all that passeth in my heart concerning him, surely henceforth I will hasten to my Lord, pour out my whole soul before him, and tell him that he is a thousand times more precious to me than thousands of gold and silver. Yea, blessed Lord! night and morning, and seven times a day will I praise thee, and thou shalt hear my voice. Witness for me, ye my companions, angels of light, yea, my Lord himself, if aught but his love and his praise occupy my soul. Thy name, thy love, thy grace, all, all that belongs to Jesus, shall dwell in my heart, and wholly fill it; shall hang upon my tongue in endless commendation of his beauty, and my soul's delight in him. And even in death may the last trembling sound the companions gather from my lips be of Jesus, the altogether lovely and the chiefest among ten thousand!

Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.—*Ruth* iv. 1.

It is blessed to see when, from *general* calls in the gospel, the call becomes *personal*. The *general* invitation is, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." The *personal* call is, "Ho! such a one." Jesus calleth his own sheep by *name*; how is this done? When at any time the Lord speaketh by the ministry of his word to their particular state and circumstances; as for example, Jesus saith, I came not to call the righteous but *sinner*s to repentance; faith saith in answer, Then it is for *me*; for I am a sinner. So again when it is said, God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us; faith replieth, Then is that love suited to my case and circumstances, for I am both by nature and by practice a sinner before God. So again, when Jesus ascended up on high, he is said to have received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Faith again finds similar encouragement to go upon, in order to make the thing *personal*; for the believer saith, I have been rebellious from the womb. In short, faith always discovers ground to rest for

assurance, when, from *general* rules, there is found sufficient scope for *special* application; and in the suitableness of Christ to the sinner's necessity, and the suitableness of the sinner for the Redeemer's glory, the word comes with power to the heart, and with an energy not unlike the application of the Apostle's sermon: To *you* is the word of this salvation sent; for then like the kinsman of Boaz, the call becomes personal, altering the appellation from *every one* to *such a one*; and the believing soul comes at the call, turns aside, and sits down, as the *very one* with whom the business is to be transacted. My soul! hast thou heard the gospel invitation, and found it personal? The answer will not be far to obtain, if such evidences be discoverable in thyself. Faith is a precious grace, which never rests until it hath acquired all it stands in need of. As the invitation comes *from* Christ, so, where it is personally received and accepted, it leads *to* Christ. Faith is never satisfied with *general* views, its whole aim is at *personal* enjoyments. There is a selfishness to appropriate and bring home all that is offered. Salvation is proclaimed from heaven for sinners. God the Father gives it; God the Son purchaseth it; God the Spirit sends it to the heart with a *Ho!* such a one, turn aside, sit down. See to it, my soul, that thou hast this personal interest in it, and that Christ is formed in thy heart the hope of glory.

And Enoch walked with God.—*Gen. v. 22.*

I have often considered, and as often found pleasure, in the consideration of the very honourable testimony which the Holy Ghost hath given to the faith of the patriarchs, both in the Old and New Testaments. What wonders were wrought by faith! "They walked with God! They endured (saith the sacred writer) as seeing him who is invisible." They communed with God, and were as conscious of his spiritual presence, and spiritual society, as we are of sensible objects. Hence, by these acts of frequent communion, the souls found a growing likeness. The more they loved God, the more their minds were led by grace into an increasing conformity to what they loved. This assimilation is a natural consequence, even among natural things. He that walketh with wise men will be wise. We naturally imbibe the manners, the sentiments, yea, the very habits, of those with whom we like to associate. How much more must a frequent intercourse and communion with the Lord, and under his spiritual teaching, induce a conformity to the most fair, most lovely, and most beloved object of the soul! "Beholding, (saith the Apostle,) as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Are these things so? Then it is explained to thee, my soul, wherefore it is that thou goest so lean, and art yet so

poor in the divine life. Thou dost not, as Enoch did, keep up a continual communion with Jesus. Pause, this evening, over the subject, and see if this be not the case. All the days of thine unregeneracy, before thou wert first brought acquainted with God in Christ, were spent in a total ignorance of God. There was then no communion with him; yea, not even the desire of communion. But when God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shined into thine heart, then was first given to thee the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. Recollect, then, what were thy feelings when the day-spring from on high first visited thee. Didst thou not flee to Jesus, as the man-slayer hastening for his life to the city of refuge? Oh! how feelingly wert thou made to value the very name of a Saviour! How earnestly didst thou seek him above thy necessary food! And if thou hast since intermitted those visits to Jesus, and lost a sense of thy daily want of him, can it be a subject of wonder that this leanness of soul is induced in thee? Will not a distance from, and a shyness of, Jesus, produce a poverty in spiritual things, as much as the want of food to the body will bring on a leanness and a decline in bodily things? Learn, then, this evening, an unanswerable reply to all thy complaints, and the complaints of the Church at large. Wherefore is it that believers live so much below their privileges, but because they live so much below the enjoyment of sweet communion with Jesus? If worldly concerns swallow up our time, as the earth did Korah and his company; if we are satisfied with a mere form of prayer in our morning and evening retirement, and in our family worship before God, while destitute of the power of godliness; if we are still but little acquainted with the Lord, and seldom go to court to behold the king in his beauty, and to be favoured with his smiles; it is no longer a matter of surprise, that, from keeping so poor a house, we are so poor in enjoyment. Oh! for grace to walk with God, as Enoch walked! Make me, thou dear Lord, jealous above all things of my own heart. Let every morning, with the first dawn of day, call me up to holy communion with thee. And let every night toll the bell of reflection, to examine what visits I have had *from* thee, and what visits I have made *to* thee; and let nothing satisfy my soul but the continual walk of faith with thee; that from an increasing knowledge *of* thee, increasing communion *with* thee, and increasing confidence *in* thee, my soul may be growing up into such lively actings of grace upon thy person, blood, and righteousness, that a daily walk of communion with my Lord may be gradually preparing my soul for the everlasting enjoyment of him; and when death comes, though it make a change of place, yet will it make no change of company; but "awaking up after thy likeness, I shall be fully satisfied with it."

A certain beggar, named Lazarus.—*Luke* xvi. 20.

What an affecting representation hath the Holy Ghost here made of a poor, but gracious man! He was not only poor in the mere wants of life, but exposed in person to great misery; full of bruises, sores, and griefs. His lot was not to be taken into the house of the rich man, but to lie at his gate. He had the sorrow to behold every day some pampered at the tables of the great, caressed and entertained; but for himself, the crumbs which fell from their over-abundance appear to have been denied him. At length his sorrows are ended, and death removes him to the upper world. The rich man also died, and was buried; in hell he lifteth up his eyes, being in torments, and beholdeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. My soul! this is no parable, but a reality; and, in the general view of it, may serve to teach how very widely we err in our estimate of men and things. Who that looked on, but would have concluded that Lazarus was the most miserable of creatures? And who but would have thought the rich man to have been the most happy? Yet it was the aggravation of even hell itself, in the torments of the damned, to behold the felicity of the righteous. Jesus himself hath so marked it: "There shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth, (saith Christ,) when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and ye yourselves thrust out." *Luke* xiii. 28. But were these the principal points our Lord had in view in this representation? I think not.—My soul! turn the whole over again in solemn consideration, this evening, and see whether, in this *certain beggar*, there are not to be discovered features of thy Lord? Though he was rich, yet we know for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. Though he was in the form of God, and with him it was no robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation, and not merely humbled himself to the condition of a poor man, and one that had not where to lay his head, but he humbled himself to the cursed death of the cross. Was Lazarus poor, full of sores and maladies? And was not Jesus "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief?" Who, like the Son of God, was ever so wounded? Of whom but Jesus could it ever be said, the Father of mercies, and God of all grace, was pleased to bruise him and put him to grief? Did the beggar lay unregarded at the gate? And who can overlook the neglect and scorn, the cruelty and ill-usage exercised upon the person of Jesus, when he lay at the door of the rich scribes and pharisees, when arraigned at the bar of Pilate, and when nailed to the cross? Precious Lord Jesus! thy death closed thy sufferings, and angels attended thy triumph unto thy kingdom in heaven! Oh! the blessedness of beholding thee at the right hand of the majesty on high! Oh! the hell upon earth in refusing to hear Moses and the prophets in their predictions concerning thee! And what a

tremendous close will it be—the everlasting torments in the hell to come, when thou shalt come, with ten thousand of thy saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their ungodly speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. Then, blessed Lord! every eye shall see thee, and they also which pierced thee; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of thee. Even so! Amen!

At evening-time it shall be light.—*Zech.* xiv. 7.

Then must it be miraculous; for nothing short of a supernatural work could produce such an effect. Sunrise at eventide is contrary to nature; and the rising of the Sun of Righteousness is a work of grace. Pause then, my soul, over the promise, and see whether such an event hath taken place in thy circumstances. As every thing in Jesus, and his salvation, in respect to his Church and people, is the sole result of grace, not nature; so all the Lord's dispensations carry with them the same evidences. It is even-time in the soul, yea, midnight darkness, ere first the Lord shines in upon it; it is so in all the after dispensations, when some more than ordinary manifestation is made; it is among the blessed methods of grace, when the Lord surpriseth his people with some rich visits of his love and mercy. "I said, (cried the Church, at a time when the waters of the sanctuary ran low,) my way is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God." But it is in creature weakness that Creator strength is manifested; and when we are most weak in ourselves, then is the time to be most strong in the Lord. We have a lovely example of this in the case of the patriarch Jacob. His beloved Joseph was torn in pieces, as the poor patriarch thought, by wild beasts; a famine compelled him to send his sons into Egypt to buy corn, and there Simeon, another son, was detained; and the governor of Egypt declared, that until Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son, was sent, Simeon should not return. Under these discouraging circumstances, the poor father cried out, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and will you take Benjamin also? All these things are against me." But the sequel proved that all these things were *for him*, and all working out a deliverance for him and his household, in which the Church of Jesus (which was to be formed from the house of Jacob) should triumph for ever. "At evening-time it shall be light." The Lord sometimes, and perhaps not unfrequently, induces darkness, that his light may be more striking. He hedges up his people's way with thorns, that the almighty hand, which removes them, may be more plainly seen. Oh! it is blessed to be brought low, to be surrounded sometimes with difficulties, to see no way of escape, and all human resources fail, purposely that our extremity may be the

Lord's opportunity, and when we are most low, Jesus may be most exalted. My soul! is it now eventide in the soul, as it is eventide in the day? Art thou stripped, humbled, convinced of thy nothingness? Oh! look to all-precious, all-suitable Jesus. Hear what the Lord saith: When the poor and the needy seek for water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will open rivers in dry places, and fountains in the midst of valleys. "At evening-time it shall be light."

A certain man made a great supper, and bade many.
Luke xiv. 16.

Is not this *certain man* designed to represent the Father of mercies, and God of all grace? And is not the great supper intended to set forth the full, generous, free, and plentiful feast made for poor sinners by Jesus Christ in his gospel? My soul, thou art invited, for the message of grace is to the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. Jesus keeps a *noble house*, and it is an *open house*. The evening is come—the hour of supper is arrived: arise, then, and accept the invitation. Behold, Lord, I am come! And now what are the spiritual delicacies of thy table? First, methinks I hear the generous Lord proclaim a hearty welcome. And it is a sweet thought for my poor soul to cherish, that in whatever heart Jesus is welcome, that heart is welcome to Jesus; for as a poor hungry sinner needs a full Saviour, so a full Saviour needs a poor empty sinner, to give out of his fulness upon, and grace for grace. Neither is a poor sinner more happy in receiving Jesus, than Jesus is glorified in receiving a poor sinner. "The Lord waits to be gracious." And what are the viands at his table? The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Here, then, I find the whole of the blessed feast. Here is Jesus himself, the bread of life, and the water of life, whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. Here are pardon, and mercy, and peace; here is strength to help in every time of need; all grace treasured up for his people in himself, and now to be imparted as their several circumstances require. Moreover, the King himself is come to his table. I could not be mistaken in his voice. He saith, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse. I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey. I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends! drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved!" What doth our Jesus mean by "his myrrh with his spices?" Doth he mean the preparing the souls of his guests for this banquet, by enduing them with the spirit of repentance and faith? or is it to set before them his own sufferings and death, "by whose stripes they are healed?" In either sense, blessed

be my bountiful Lord! he is himself the provider; it is *his* table, and he furnisheth the whole of it. He is the substance, the life, the way, the means, the end, the first and the last of all; it is all his own, and of his fulness do we all receive. And, dearest Lord! art thou pleased with thy guests when they come at thine invitation, under a deep sense of want, earnestly desiring to partake of thy bounty, approaching under the sweet leadings of thy Holy Spirit, and clothed in the wedding-garment of thine own righteousness? O thou bountiful Lord! how blessed are they that sit in thine house, they will be continually praising thee! Now, my soul, thou hast eaten, and art full; arise from the holy table as one fed and filled with the Spirit, bless the kind Master of the feast, and give thanks, crying out with holy Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Revelation iii. 20.

See, my soul, what condescension there is in Jesus! It was but on the last evening that thou wert feasted, by his own gracious invitation, at his table; and now the Lord invites himself at thine. So earnest is Jesus to keep up the closest acquaintance and holy familiarity with his redeemed, that if they are at any time backward in inviting him, he will invite himself. Jesus is come, then, this evening, before thou art prepared for him; yea, not only before thou hast invited him, but even before thy poor, timid, and unbelieving heart could have had the idea or expectation of such a guest. And hear what the gracious, kind, affectionate Lord saith—*Behold!* In which he not only desires to have it heard and known by thee, but all the Church shall know his love in this particular, and be witness of his great grace and condescension. And where is the Lord? Behold! *I stand*, he saith, *at the door, and knock!* And wilt thou not, my soul, instantly cry out, as Laban of old did to the messenger of Abraham, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?" Oh! the grace that is in the heart of Jesus; that he, who is the sovereign Lord of all, who hath made us, redeemed us, bought us with such a price as his blood, should nevertheless stand without, and beg admittance into the hearts of his people, which he hath made, and new made, and over whom he hath all power to kill and to make alive, to heal and to destroy! Precious, precious Jesus! I bless thy name that I hear thy voice. Thy loud and powerful knocks, by thy word and by thy Spirit, have made me earnest for thy admission. Put in thine hand, Lord, by the hole of the door, and open my heart,

as thou didst Lydia's, and give me all-suited grace to receive thee, to embrace thee, to love thee, to delight in thee, and give thee a most hearty welcome. I would say in the warmth and desire of my soul, and in the language of thine own most sacred words—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in!" And what hath my Lord promised, when the door of my poor heart is opened? Yea, thou hast said, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me. Bountiful Lord! wilt thou, indeed, give me the precious privilege of an union with thee and communion with thyself and thy graces? Wilt thou feed and feast me at my poor house, as on the last night thou didst at thine own? I have nothing to set before thee; I can bring forth nothing worthy thy acceptance. But methinks I hear my Lord say, I am the bread of life, and the bread of God, which cometh down from heaven. I am all, and provide all, and will give the true relish and enjoyment for all! Lord, I fall down under a deep sense of my vileness and thy glory; my emptiness, and thine all-sufficiency. Yea, blessed Master! be thou all in all, and let my poor soul feast upon thy fulness; and do thou "stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love."

And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the Lord; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even.—*Numbers* xxviii. 3, 4.

Pause, my soul, over the scriptural account of this solemn transaction! Think how infinitely important in the sight of Jehovah was, and is, that vast sacrifice of the Lamb of God, "slain from the foundation of the world," which every day, morning and evening, the Lord commanded to be set forth in an offering made by fire. With what exactness the Church observes this daily rite of oblation! How scrupulous were all true Israelites in this service! and how fully did it proclaim to them the doctrine, that "without shedding of blood there was no remission!" Who that reads the solemn precept, and remarks the strictness of Israel in their obedience to it, but must be struck with this conviction? And who can for a moment doubt but that the whole was performed by faith in the Lamb of God, which, in after ages, did away all the penal effects of sin by the sacrifice of himself? Pause again, my soul! Hath this daily sacrifice ceased, as the prophet Daniel declared it should?—*Dan.* ix. 27. Is the lamb of the morning and the lamb of the evening now no more? And wherefore? Because the thing signified being ac-

complished, the sign is needed to minister no longer; the substance being come, the shadow is for ever done away. And shall not thy morning and thine evening act of faith be expressly exercised upon this one Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world? Did the faithful Israelite, at nine in the morning, and three in the evening, (the hours of those daily sacrifices,) offer the lamb by faith in the promised Redeemer? And shall not the believing followers of the blessed Jesus have their hours of commemoration in spiritual acts of praise and faith, upon the bleeding body of Him who, by the one offering of himself, once offered, hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified? Yes, thou precious Lamb of God! I would pray for grace to see thee in every act of faith, in every offering of prayer, every ordinance, every means of grace, and all the rites of religious worship. I would behold thee through the whole of the Bible as the one thing, the only thing signified. I would trace the sweet, the blessed, the soul-comforting, soul-strengthening, soul-transforming subject, until, from the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, I followed the Lamb whithersoever he went; until I beheld thee, as the beloved Apostle saw thee, the Lamb, as it had been slain, in the midst of the throne, still wearing on thy glorified body the marks of our redemption. And there, precious Jesus, should my eyes fix, and my heart centre all her joys, because also in this exalted state thou art still the *Lamb*. Thy glory and thy power have made no change of nature, though of place. Thou art the Lamb of God, and the Brother of thy people still. The eternal efficacy of thy blood and righteousness, and the everlasting love in thine heart towards thy redeemed, is the same. As in person, so in office, thou art Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Amen.

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Ephesians iv. 30.

Methinks I would make this scripture the motto of my daily walk, to keep in remembrance more than the dearest friend that wears the ring of love upon his finger, and bears it about with him whithersoever he goeth. And is the Holy Spirit grieved whenever a child of God forgetteth Jesus, and by indulgence in any sin, loses sight of those sufferings which he endured for sin? Yes, God the Holy Ghost is grieved, communion with God the Father is interrupted, and all the agonies and bloody sweats of Jesus forgotten, if there be a loose and careless life. And shall I ever grieve the Holy Ghost by any one allowed transgression? Would not my soul feel shame on the consciousness of it, even if no eye but his had seen the foul act? Wouldst thou grieve for me, O Lord, at such a sight? Can it be possible that a poor

worm of the earth, such as I am, should excite such regard and attention? And shall not the consideration have its constant, unceasing influence upon my soul? Shall I grieve the holy Lord by an unholy conduct? Shall I quench those sweet influences which first quickened me, and recompense the kindness which, had it not been called forth to my spiritual life, would have left me to this hour as it first found me, dead in trespasses and sins? Oh! thou holy, blessed, gracious Lord God! withdraw not, I beseech thee, thy restraining influences; leave me not for a moment to myself! Thou knowest that I shall grieve thee, if unassisted by thy grace. Self-will and confidence, sloth and forgetfulness, pride and presumption, will afford an opportunity to the great enemy of souls to betray me into sin, if thou do not keep me; but if thou, Lord, wilt keep me, I shall be well kept. Thou wilt lead me to the all-precious Jesus, thou wilt take of his, and so effectually show it to me, that I shall be prepared for, guided in, and carried through, all acts of holy obedience; and by thy sweet influences, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, I shall be enabled to mortify the deeds of the body so as to live. My soul! be thou constantly viewing Jesus, seeking communion with the Holy Ghost, and crying out to God the Father, with David, "Take not thine Holy Spirit from me;" that I may not grieve that holy Lord, by whom I am sealed unto the day of redemption.

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to *wit*, the redemption of our body.—*Romans* viii. 23.

It is blessed to receive from the Holy Ghost such gracious interpretations of his own most holy word as bear a correspondence with what we feel in a life of grace. We know that our adorable Jesus is the Saviour of the body as well as the soul; but we know also that these vile bodies of ours are not regenerated, as the souls of his redeemed are. In this tabernacle, therefore, we groan, being burdened. I know, saith Paul, that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. And I too often know, to my sorrow, the same. Pause, my soul, this evening, over this solemn scripture, and look up to the great Author of it, to unfold its sacred truth to thy comfort. I hope I can humbly adopt the language, and say, that I have "the first fruits of the Spirit." I know what it is to enjoy the first dawns and leadings of grace. I know what it is to have been once afar off, living without God and without Christ in the world, an enemy to God by wicked works. And I know what it is to have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ: Jesus, by his Holy Spirit, hath

come nigh to me, and brought my soul nigh to God. I know also what it is at times to have sweet seasons of communion. I am as sensible of the reviving, comforting, strengthening, refreshing graces of the Spirit, as the earth is of the falling showers, or the sweet return of light. I know no less what it is to have an enlargement of soul, in the going forth of the exercises of faith and grace upon the person and work of the Lord Jesus. When the Redeemer is pleased to call forth into lively actings upon himself the graces he hath planted, I can then find a blessed season in contemplating his glories, his beauties, his fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. I then sit down as the Church of old did, under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. The Lord hath then brought me into his banqueting house, and my whole soul, under the banner of love, is delighted with fatness. But amidst these first fruits of the Spirit, these blessed earnestings and pledges of the glory that shall be revealed, I know no less also what it is to groan within myself, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of my poor, polluted, sinful body. I find the partner of my heart; this earthly half of myself, at times the greatest opposer of my better dispositions. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit; the soul is straitened, shut up, so as to say nothing, and do nothing, when appearing before the Lord. I dare not neglect prayer; I dare not absent myself from going to court. The King will know and mark my neglect. But if I go I am cold, dead and lifeless; I hear as though I heard not; I pray as though I prayed not. Can I do otherwise than groan? Can I help at times being deeply affected, although I have the first fruits of the Spirit? Lord Jesus, undertake for me, and let all the sanctified blessings, intended by thy love and wisdom from these painful exercises of the soul, be accomplished. Let this thorn in the flesh make me humble; root out the very existence of spiritual pride; reconcile my whole heart to the humiliation of the grave; and above all, endear thee, thou precious Emmanuel, the Lord our righteousness, more and more to my affections, since it is thou, and thou alone, that canst be our peace here, and our salvation for ever.

In deaths oft.—2 Cor. xi. 23.

What did the apostle mean by this expression, but that from *living* in Christ, he was always on the look-out for *dying* in Christ; so that death could make no change of state, whatever change it made of worlds; for that, living or dying, he was still in Christ? Paul seems to be speaking out his whole soul in the thought. It seems as if the conscious sense of his union and interest with Jesus was so inwrought in his very nature, that he was in deaths oft, hoping that this providence, or that appoint-

ment, would be found the messenger to call him home to his Redeemer, to be with him for ever. My soul has every night the bed of sleep to thy weary home becomes a representation of the night of death, and the chamber of the grave, sit down this evening, and look over the memorandums of thine heart, whether there are some of the same sweet testimonies, and arising out of the same blessed source as the Apostle's, *thou art in deaths oft*; and canst profess, as he did, by the rejoicing which thou hast in Christ Jesus, that *thou diest daily*. If the Apostle's state is thine, the habitual frame of thine heart, from a well-grounded interest in Jesus, must be such as to leave a constant impression on thy mind; that the change of death, come when it may, and coming, as it must, from thy Lord's own appointment, must be to thy happy account. It is to die, and be with Christ, which is far better. Here we live, we walk, we enjoy Jesus but by faith; there we shall ever be with the Lord; we shall see him as he is; we shall be like him. As here Jesus imparts all the grace the souls of his redeemed need in life to carry them on, and bring them home, so there he imparts glory, as he shines in one glorious fulness as the sun, so they as the stars of heaven for multitude and brightness. He that is the source and fountain of all grace in this life, is the source also of glory and happiness in the world to come. If, then, my soul, thou art *in deaths oft*, as one on the look-out for the coming of thy Friend to call thee home to himself, is not the prospect delightful? Wouldst thou shrink back if his chariot-wheels were now at the door?—Pause. Are you daily pleading his blood and righteousness with God? Are you most firmly, and most satisfactorily convinced of his conquest over sin, death, hell, and the grave? Do you heartily, cordially, fully approve of God's rich covenant-mercy in Christ? Can you, do you, will you take God at his word, and give him the credit due to him, in believing the record which he hath given of his dear Son? And are you *trusting* daily upon these precious, blessed things, and under his grace determined to *die* in the faith of them? What sayest thou to these solemn, but precious soul-transactions? Can a throne of grace witness for thee, that thou art constantly pleading them there, as the only means, the only security thou art looking to for thy acceptance? If so, and should the messenger of Jesus come, and find you upon your knees, would you say, Not yet, Lord? Would any thing make you linger here, when Jesus stood above, calling thee, "Come up hither?" O dearest Jesus, for more of that grace, for more of that faith, to overcome all fears, doubts, and misgivings. Oh! for some sweet increasing manifestations from thyself, dear Lord, day by day, that the nearer I am drawing to the period of my departure, the closer I may cling to thy embraces, and the more sensibly I may hang my soul upon thee; that when death comes thou mayest impart such strength to my poor dying frame, that, like the patriarch, I may

come nigh to me, and brought my soul nigh to God. I know also what it is at times to have sweet seasons of communion. I am as sensible of the reviving, comforting, strengthening, refreshing graces of the Spirit, as the earth is of the falling showers, or the sweet return of light. I know no less what it is to have an enlargement of soul, in the going forth of the exercises of faith and grace upon the person and work of the Lord Jesus. When the Redeemer is pleased to call forth into lively actings upon himself the graces he hath planted, I can then find a blessed season in contemplating his glories, his beauties, his fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. I then sit down as the Church of old did, under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. The Lord hath then brought me into his banqueting house, and my whole soul, under the banner of love, is delighted with fatness. But amidst these first fruits of the Spirit, these blessed earnest and pledges of the glory that shall be revealed, I know no less also what it is to groan within myself, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of my poor, polluted, sinful body. I find the partner of my heart, this earthly half of myself, at times the greatest opposer of my better dispositions. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit; the soul is straitened, shut up, so as to say nothing, and do nothing, when appearing before the Lord. I dare not neglect prayer; I dare not absent myself from going to court. The King will know and mark my neglect. But if I go I am cold, dead and lifeless; I hear as though I heard not; I pray as though I prayed not. Can I do otherwise than groan? Can I help at times being deeply affected, although I have the first fruits of the Spirit? Lord Jesus, undertake for me, and let all the sanctified blessings, intended by thy love and wisdom from these painful exercises of the soul, be accomplished. Let this thorn in the flesh make me humble; root out the very existence of spiritual pride; reconcile my whole heart to the humiliation of the grave; and above all, endear thee, thou precious Emmanuel, the Lord our righteousness, more and more to my affections, since it is thou, and thou alone, that canst be our peace here, and our salvation for ever.

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cry out, "Into thine arms, Lord Jesus, do I commit my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth!"

And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.—*Jeremiah xxx. 21.*

When the patriarch Jacob was dying, he pronounced, under the spirit of prophecy, that "the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." Gen. xlix. 10. And here, in the prospect of the Babylonish captivity, now on the eve of its arrival, the prophet is commissioned by the Lord to tell the Church, that notwithstanding all present appearances, no foreigners should judge or rule over them; but one should proceed from the midst of them, to be their governor, even David their king, whom I (saith Jehovah, v. 9) will raise up unto them. One like unto themselves, such as our Jesus was like unto his brethren. Sweet confirmation of our faith! And that no doubt might arise concerning the justness of the application, the Lord, by another prophet, (Micah v. 2,) mentioned the place of his birth, and marked, at the same time, the features of his eternal power and godhead. "But thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting." But we must not stop here in our views of this precious scripture. He that is to come forth from among his brethren as their governor, Jehovah engageth for him, that he will cause him to approach unto him. Blessed thought! No son or daughter of Adam could ever have drawn nigh to God, but for this gracious interposition. The holiness of the divine nature, the holiness of the divine law, and the enmity of the heart of man by sin, totally precluded it. None but he who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, could have engaged his heart to this service. And indeed he graciously undertook it, and as completely accomplished it. Jesus was peculiarly suited for this vast undertaking. For as God he was one with the Father, to whom he approached; and as man he was the Person, for whom, and by whom, the reconciliation was to be accomplished; and as both God and man in one Person, he could (as Job calls it) be a proper Day's-man, to act between both parties, and restore to God his glory, and to man his happiness. And what a blessed addition to these delightful things respecting Jesus is it to see, that God the Father's hand was with Jesus in all! "I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me." Pause, my soul, over this

blessed scripture, and behold, in all the vast work of thy Redeemer's salvation, the name and authority of God thy Father confirming it. And wilt thou not then, in all thy approaches to God in Christ, have respect to this sovereign act of Jehovah? Is it indeed God the Father who hath given his dear Son, called him, appointed him, solemnly introduced him into his High-Priest's office, by an oath, and in all his offices as Mediator, caused him to draw near in the accomplishment of redemption: and wilt thou not, in all thy approaches, look unto Jesus as the Father hath respect unto him? Oh! for grace, in all the lively exercises of it, to draw nigh to the footstool of the mercy-seat, and unceasingly to remind God our Father of his own gracious appointment and acceptance of the Church in the person of his dear Son. Yea! holy Father, I would say, in every act of worship, love, and praise, "Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed!"

Now when Jesus was risen early, the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.—*Mark* xvi. 9.

My Lord! I have often found occasion to stand amazed at the wonders of thy grace, as set forth in thy blessed word. Every thing manifests that it is altogether free and undeserved; nothing, in the objects of it, having the least tendency to call it forth into exercise: no, not even our misery; for though our misery afforded an opportunity for the greater display of it, yet thy grace was long before our misery, originating as it did in thine own everlasting love. Every circumstance connected with the manifestation of thy grace calls forth astonishment. The greatness, the continuance, the unceasing nature of it, notwithstanding all the undeservings of the objects of thy rich bounty, all tend to excite astonishment in my soul. But, Lord! when at any time I behold abounding grace shown, where there have been abounding transgressions, and as the apostle expresseth it, where sin hath reigned unto death, that there more eminently grace should reign unto eternal life, my soul is overwhelmed in the contemplation; for here I discover, as upon numberless other occasions, that thy thoughts are not my thoughts, nor my ways thy ways. Will Jesus, this evening, graciously tell me, why the poor Mary Magdalene was first blessed, before any of the disciples, with the sight of her risen Saviour? Was it to teach her, and all poor sinners like her, that where sin hath abounded, grace shall much more abound? Was it indeed to encourage every poor broken-hearted sinner, long exercised with the power and temptations of Satan, that it is to such Jesus more especially hath an eye, that he knows their sorrows, and will assuredly relieve them? Did my honoured Lord mean, by this wonderful act of

grace, to show that he will take yet more delight to inhabit that precious soul out of which he hath cast seven devils, than where legions of evil spirits have not been suffered so long and so powerfully to triumph? Am I, blessed Lord, authorized by this gracious act of thine, so to construe thy wonderful love? Shall a poor Magdalene, who only ventured, while thou wast upon earth, to fall at thy feet behind thee, weeping, be first blessed with a sight of thy person after redemption-work was finished, before the beloved apostle who lay in thy bosom at thy table? Oh! thou dear, thou gracious, thou condescending Lord; what am I to interpret of this kind act of thine, but that the heart of Jesus yearns over poor sinners, and can and will administer consolation to them in their most desperate circumstances? Yes! thou dear Lord! such hath been thy mercy, love, and grace, in every act. Rebellious angels are passed by, and fallen man calls forth thy pity. And among men, thy grace is shown, not to the wise, and noble, and self-sufficient, but to the poor, the needy, the maimed, the halt, the blind. Yea, Lord! thy grace is frequently manifested to tempers the most unpromising, to stubborn and rebellious persons; whilst those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own conceit, starchy in the ceremonies and forms of religion, live, and it is to be feared die, without the knowledge of salvation by Jesus. Hence the young man in the gospel, who thought himself from his own goodness just ripe for heaven, shall go from thee sorrowful, while Jesus will take up his abode in the heart of a Magdalene, which had before been occupied by seven devils! Oh! for grace to comprehend with all saints, "what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that I may be filled with all the fulness of God."

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church.

Col. i. 24.

What can the Apostle mean from these expressions? Not, surely, that the sufferings of Jesus were incomplete, or that the sufferings of his people were to make up a deficiency: for in treading the wine-press of the wrath of God against sin, Jesus trod it alone, and of the people there was none with him. And so perfectly finished and complete was the whole work of redemption by Jesus, that by the one offering of himself, once offered, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. But what a sweet scripture is this of the Apostle's, when it is interpreted with reference to Jesus, that in all the sufferings of his people, Jesus takes a part! Jesus suffered in his own person fully and completely, when, as an expiatory sacrifice for sin, he

died, the just for the unjust, to bring his people to God. These sufferings as a sacrifice were full, and have fully satisfied; they cease for ever, and can be known no more. But the sympathy of Jesus with his people gives him to bear a part in all their concerns. And the consciousness of this made the Apostle tell the Church that he rejoiced in all his exercises, because Jesus took part, and thereby endeared the affliction. My soul, cherish the thought also. Thy Jesus knows all, measures out all, bears part with thee in all, and will carry thee through all, and finally crown all with his love and blessing. The same interest that Jesus felt in the persecution of Saul over his afflicted ones, when he called from heaven to restrain Saul's rage, and said, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?—the same interest he feels in every minute event with which his redeemed are exercised now. Whosoever toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. Blessed Lord! may my soul keep in remembrance those endearing views of thy love. Give me to keep alive the recollection of the oneness between the glorious Head and all his exercised members. I see that a child of thine cannot mourn, but Jesus marks it down, and puts the tears in his bottle. He notes his sorrows in his book. So that by this fellow-feeling, Lord! our interest in thee is most fully proved. And while thy people partake in thy righteousness, thou takest part in their sorrows. As it was in the days of thy flesh, so is it now in the fulness of thy glory: "in all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love, and in his pity, he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.—*Song* ii. 3.

My soul! if the Church found so much blessedness in making comparisons between her Lord and any of the beautiful objects of nature around her, see if thou canst raise a subject for thy meditation, this evening, from the statement she hath made in this lovely verse. Why should not Jesus be in thy view as in hers? Doth he not infinitely transcend all sons, of whatever descriptions or character, that can be found? Angels, no doubt, by creation may be called "the sons of God;" and when God had finished the works of his hands, we are told that "the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." But Jesus as far excels all angels of light as the apple-tree the trees of the wood: for "he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Neither did God at any time say unto the angels, "Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." But to our Jesus he said, "Thy throne, O God! is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." And to show at once the infinite supe-

riority of the Lord Jesus, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, "And let all the angels of God worship him." Therefore if by *sons* it could be supposed that angels are meant, well might the Church declare Jesus her beloved to be above them. And if by *sons* the sons of men be meant, what is the whole Church of saints compared to Jesus? Though the Church, by the comeliness her Lord hath put upon her, shines like a beautiful constellation among the heavenly bodies, yet all her glory and lustre is derived from Jesus, the Sun of righteousness. Pause, my soul, over this view of thy Lord. And when thou hast feasted thyself with the sweet subject, go on, and mark some of the many beauties contained in this comparison between the apple-tree and the trees of the wood. In our cold country, the apple-tree, in its best appearance, affords but a poor resemblance to what naturalists relate of the pome-citron, as it is called, of the warm Eastern climates. It is said of the apple-tree of those countries, that it is a lofty, majestic, stately tree, abundantly fruitful, and yielding both shade and fruit to the traveller. Some assert that it continues bearing fruit the whole year, and is never without blossom. If so, without going farther, we may discover enough to understand the beautiful allusion the Church hath made of it, in this verse, to her Lord. Jesus is all this, and infinitely more. He is indeed the Tree of Life, in the midst of the Paradise of God. And he bears fruit every month, and the leaves of this tree are for the healing of the nations. Precious Jesus! thou art the fairest and the chiefest among ten thousand! Be thou to me, Lord, as the fruitful bough which the dying patriarch blessed by the well, whose branches ran over the wall. And, oh! do thou give strength to my poor, feeble faith, to gather all the rich fruits of thy righteousness for the healing of my soul, that I may daily sit down under thy shadow with great delight, and thy fruit be sweet to my taste!

And they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.—*Acts* iv. 13.

Oh! for the same grace to rest upon me, as upon those faithful servants of my Lord; that, like them, I may manifest the sweet savour of Jesus's name, in every place; wherever I am, with whomsoever I converse, in every state and upon every occasion, that all may witness *for* me, and every thing bear witness *to* me, that I have been with Jesus! I would entreat thee, my honoured Lord, that I may honour thee so before men, that after my morning visits to thy throne of grace, my mid-day communion, my evening and nightly fellowship, my return to the society of men might so be distinguished as one that had just been with Jesus. And as it might be supposed, if an angel was to come from heaven that had seen thy face, and heard thy voice, and

been an eye-witness of thy glory ; so, Lord, having by faith enjoyed such views, I might delight to tell, as he would relate to the inhabitants of the earth, the grace, and beauty, and love of Jesus. And surely, Lord, if I have been with thee, and thou with me ; if I know any thing of thy grace and salvation ; will not, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speak ? Shall I not delight to tell every one I meet what my Lord is in himself, and what he is to his people ? Shall I not speak with rapture of the glories of thy person, and the infinite value and worth of thy blood and righteousness ? Surely in the circle of my acquaintance, I shall be daily speaking of thy grace and salvation, for I know no end thereof. And especially in a day like the present, where the name of my Lord and his cross are banished from all conversation. Oh ! that it may be shown that I have been *with* Jesus, in speaking *for* Jesus. Yes ! thou dear Lord ! thy truths I would espouse, thy doctrines profess ; salvation alone by thy righteousness and cross would I bear before a whole world, with earnestness and with zeal ; and if this brought upon me the laugh and derision, yea, the persecution of the proud, like thy servants of old, “ I would rejoice in being counted worthy to suffer shame for thy name.” And chiefly, and above all, let it not only be noticed that I have been with Jesus, in speaking *of* Christ and *for* Christ, but let the sweet unction of thy Holy Spirit be so abiding upon me, from continual intercourse and communion with thee, that my whole life and conversation may be such as becometh the gospel of Christ. Oh ! for the same blessed effect as Moses, whose face shone when he came down from the holy mount, that every one with whom I have to do may see the light of thy grace, in all my transactions with the world, so shine before men, that they may glorify my Father which is in heaven. Precious Lord ! grant me these unanswerable testimonies of vital godliness ; then will it be proved in deed and in truth, that, like thy servants of old, I have been with Jesus.

And on his head were many crowns.—*Rev. xix. 12.*

Every view of Jesus is blessed. But there are some views which the heart of a believer finds a peculiar gratification in contemplating. The Holy Ghost hath in this scripture given a very interesting representation of Jesus. Heaven is opened—Jesus appears in his well-known characters, “ faithful and true.” A “ white horse” he rides on, to manifest his equity and justice. His vesture is “ dipped in blood,” to intimate that by blood he hath purchased his kingdom. And his glorious name, “ the Word of God,” is also mentioned to testify the greatness and almightiness of his person. But amidst these distinguishing characteristics, the coronation of the Lord Jesus is particularly striking. “ On

his head were many crowns." The crown of Godhead is his by right, in common with the Father. And the crown of God-man mediator is his also, being his by gift, by purchase, and by conquest. Having conquered death, hell, and the grave, God the Father hath set "a crown of pure gold upon his head. For his honour is great in his salvation: glory and majesty hath he laid upon him." But there is another crown put upon the head of our Jesus, and which every poor believing soul delighteth to see, amidst the many crowns on the head of Jesus; namely, the very crown which that poor precious believer puts by faith upon the glorious head of Jesus, when ascribing his own personal salvation to the merits of his blood and righteousness alone. This is a coronation day indeed of the Lord Jesus: and ever after, most blessed to the review of every believer. And as the Son of God was crowned "Lord of all," in the day when he ascended to the right hand of his Father in Heaven, having finished redemption work, when the whole assembly of heaven cast their crowns at his feet: so is the adorable Redeemer again crowned, when, descending in the power of his Spirit, he takes the throne of a poor sinner's heart, and rules and reigns there, the Lord of life and glory. My soul! pause and ask thine heart, what knowest thou of this coronation? Amidst the many crowns discoverable upon the head of the blessed Jesus, canst thou with rapture discern the one, the very one, he wears as thy Redeemer and Lord?—It is very easy to discover it; if thine hand of faith hath placed it there. Art thou his subject? "Know ye not, (saith the Apostle,) to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey; his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Hast thou been translated out of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son! Is Jesus thy King, as the acknowledged and adored head of the Church which is his body? And art thou living upon him, and from him, as this glorious head, from whence is conveyed to thee, in common with all his members, life, light, grace, strength, and every thing, in a way of communion, by which thou provest that thou art among the members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones: and he the glorious source and fulness that filleth all in all? These are precious views and soul-comforting evidences to this grand truth. And if these be found in thy experience, then art thou so beholding him, on whose head are many crowns, as to venture all thy salvation wholly upon him; and every renewed act of faith is but a renewal of thy coronation of the Lord Jesus; for in every one thou bowest the knee of thine heart before him, and confessest that "Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.

Isaiah xlviii. 8.

Humbling as the view is, it is profitable to look back, and trace all the way the Lord our God hath brought us, through many a year in the wilderness, to humble us, and to prove us, and to show us what is in our heart; and this perhaps is the sweetest of all subjects, when the Holy Ghost takes us by the hand, and leads the heart back. Even from the first moment of conversion, to the very moment when taking the review, every step serves to prove what this scripture sets forth, that the Lord knew that his people would deal very treacherously, and be transgressors from the womb. My soul! let thy meditation, this evening, as it concerns thyself, be to this amount: Where wert thou, when in a state of unawakened nature, and as all other carnal persons, intent only upon the best means of fulfilling the desires of the flesh; living without God, and without Christ in the world; a child of wrath, deserving wrath even as others? The Lord, who knew this, and also what undeservings would follow, still was pleased to visit thee with his great salvation. He manifested the riches of his grace in calling thee, justifying thee, adopting thee into his family, and putting thee among his sons; and he gave thee the spirit of his Son into thine heart, whereby thou wert entitled to cry, "Abba, Father." And what hath it been since, but the same rich display of free and unmerited mercy? Doth he not know, that thou art still a transgressor? Doth he not continually wait to be gracious, when thy unthinking, wandering heart is forgetful of him? Doth Jesus withhold or suspend his grace, and the manifestations of his favour, because thou art forgetful of him? Oh! not so. He deals by thee, as he did by Israel of old: when Israel remembered not the multitude of his mercies, but were disobedient at the sea, yea, even at the Red Sea, nevertheless, it is said, he saved them for his Name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known. So doth thy Jesus deal by thee. Though thou art a transgressor from the womb, yet Jesus is Jesus still. The covenant-promises of God the Father are the same; and the efficacy of Jesus's blood and righteousness the same: therefore Jesus deals by thee, not according to thy deserts, but according to his own free and sovereign grace. His love, and not thy merit, becomes the standard of his dealings with his people. Oh! how blessed is it to trace mercies to their fountain-head, and to behold God in Christ dispensing pardon, love, and favour, from his own free sovereign will and pleasure; and every renewed mercy carrying with it this divine signature: "Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel."

He shall not speak of himself.—*John xvi. 13.*

I have found, in times past, a very great blessedness in this short but sweet account which Jesus gives of the gracious office of the Holy Ghost; and therefore I would make it the subject of my present evening meditation. I find what the Lord Jesus said concerning the blessed Spirit, in this most delightful part of his divine ministry, to be true. For, look wherever I may through the Bible, it is of Jesus only the Holy Ghost is continually speaking, and not of himself. And hence, by the way, I learn how to form a most decided testimony of the faithful preachers of the word. For if God the Holy Ghost, in his glorifying the Lord Jesus, is never found to be speaking but of Jesus, surely all his faithful servants, who act by his authority, and are commissioned and ordained by him to the work, will never preach themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. And how blessed is it to be taught of Jesus, by the Holy Ghost! It is astonishing, when we take into one mass of particulars the agency of the Holy Ghost in his glorifying the Lord Jesus, to observe the patience, the compassion, the tenderness and love, which that blessed spirit manifests in the Church of Jesus, in holding up to their view, and in bringing home to their heart, the person, work, character, and relations of Jesus! How sweetly and effectually doth he speak *of* him, plead *for* him, and win over the affections *to* him, by his saving light, his illuminating grace, and persuasive arguments in the heart! It is the Holy Ghost that takes of Christ, and the things of Christ, and makes both appear lovely and desirable in our eyes. It is his blessed work to bring about the gracious union, when, as the Bridegroom of his Church, God the Spirit represents him in his beauty, and persuades the soul of the sinner to receive him and accept him as her maker and her husband, to whom she is betrothed for ever! And from whom, but the Holy Ghost, do those sweet influences arise from day to day, and from one degree of grace to another, by which the life of the believer in Christ is kept up, maintained, and carried on in the soul, from the first beginning of the spiritual life until grace is consummated in eternal glory. Oh! Lord the Spirit! I beseech thee, glorify my adorable Redeemer in my poor, cold, and lifeless heart, and sweetly lead over the whole of my affections to all-precious Jesus, that I may live upon his glorious person, and feel my interest in his great salvation increasingly precious. And oh, thou holy Lord! keep alive, I beseech thee, thine own saving and powerful influences in my heart, that I may never—never by sin—quench thy divine flame, nor grieve the Holy Spirit, whereby I am sealed unto the day of redemption.

Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.—*Psalm* xlv. 2.

I admire this blessed portion, as well as the method in which the sacred writer hath introduced it. He opens the Psalm, professing his design of speaking of the King; but in a moment, as if beholding him, he breaks off, and speaks to the King. The verse now quoted contains but three short sentences; but, indeed, within its bosom, there are folded up as many volumes. For who so fair, so lovely, so engaging, as Jesus? He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person: and, if all the accomplishments and perfections which can constitute excellency be among the recommendations of beauty and loveliness, then it will be found that in the person of Jesus they all centre, and shine in one full constellation. Well might the prophet therefore speak of him in this character, for he is a perfection of loveliness. Every thing in him is lovely, nor can any thing but loveliness be derived from him. "Thou art comely," saith Jesus to the Church, "from the comeliness that I have put upon thee." My soul! never lose sight of this view of thy Jesus. And let it be everlastingly impressed upon thy mind; that whatever is fair, or amiable, or lovely in the Church of Jesus, or in any individual member of it, ordinances, or means of grace, all are so only as beheld in him. Nothing can endear or recommend them to God, but as they are accepted in Him, the beloved. This is the *first* volume of beauty contained in the bosom of this verse of scripture. And the *second* is like unto it; for, next to the glory of Christ's person, we are called upon to admire the glories of his work. "Grace is poured into his lips." Not a fulness of grace in his heart only, or in the purity and holiness of his nature; but it is *poured into his lips*, to give out to his people. And no wonder, therefore, that the Church, under this view of her Lord, cried out with an earnestness of holy longings and desires, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth," as if conscious that by those means grace would be communicated in fulness and abundance. Let those who know the blessedness of these communications, explain the justness of the Church's breathings for those tokens of the love of Christ; for such only can fully explain their meaning. But, my soul, do thou judge for thyself, whether thou hast so tasted of the Lord's graciousness, from the fulness poured into his lips, as to have received those frequent manifestations of his love. There is one word more in this delightful verse to be noticed, and which indeed gives a finishing beauty to the whole, namely, "God hath blessed him for ever." Yes; Jesus, as the glorious Head and Mediator, is blessed for ever, and is Jehovah's salvation to the ends of the earth. "Men shall be blessed in him," is the sovereign decree, and "all nations shall call him blessed." My soul!

behold what a blessed subject for endless delight the Holy Ghost hath opened to thee, in this one short verse of scripture. Take it with thee to thy bed: let it lie down with thee, and arise with thee, for it will give thee songs in the night, and under the Holy Spirit's teaching, it will so open to thy view the glories of thy Jesus, as to make thy constant "meditation of him sweet."

And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

Ezek. i. 26.

It forms the most satisfying consideration to the breast of the faithful, that every event and every providence concerning the people of God is as much directed, arranged, and determined, as the purposes of redemption themselves. The covenant is "a covenant ordered in all things, and sure." He who hath undertaken and completed salvation for them, hath no less secured the means that shall infallibly accomplish the end: and all things, how unpromising soever on the first view, shall work together for good to them that love God. When the Holy Ghost would graciously lead the Church into the proper apprehension of this great truth, the Prophet is directed to the contemplation of a vision by the river *Chebar*, which opened before him. There were living creatures moving in a straight direction upon wheels, wheel within wheel, attended with a noise and a voice; hereby intimating, as it should seem, that the government of every thing, in the kingdom of providence and grace, was regulated by an unerring standard; and that the prophet's mind might farther understand the vision, he was led to see, above the whole, the likeness of a throne, and the appearance of the likeness of a man upon it. Nothing could be more gracious, by way of teaching the Church that the government of all things is in the hand of Jesus, and the most minute circumstances of his people subject to his control. Amidst numberless improvements to be made of this doctrine, there is one, my soul, which, in the exercises of thy warfare, thou wilt find perpetual occasion to apply: for what can be more blessed than to contemplate this government of thy Jesus, as continually exercised in his sin-preventing providences, whereby the Lord keeps back his people from presumptuous transgressions? How often, how very often, might a child of God discover those sweet restraints of the Lord, when hedging up his way with thorns, that he may not find his paths? How often hath some outward affliction, or inward sorrow, sickness in ourselves, or death in our houses, acted in a way of prevention to this end? There is a great

variety of ways, by which indwelling corruptions would manifest themselves, and break forth in their several disorders, but for restraining grace. What a beautiful instance was that of David, in the case of *Nabal*, and what a gracious sentiment to this amount the Psalmist expressed upon it! When Abigail came, in the seasonable moment to check his anger, David discerned the Divine hand in the appointment, and brake out into a devout acknowledgment: "Blessed be the Lord, and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, that hath kept me this day from shedding blood."—(1 Sam. xxv. 32.) And who shall say, amidst the ten thousand occurrences of life, what multitudes of instances to the same purport are going on, to restrain the children of God from the commission of evil. Oh! how blessed it is to see Jesus as well in providence as grace, and, like the Prophet, to keep an eye to that throne, and to see one like the Son of man sitting upon it, regulating and ordering all things for his own glory, and the salvation of his people. Precious Jesus! keep me in the hour, and from the power of temptation. Do thou order my steps by thy word, so shall no iniquity have dominion over me.

FEBRUARY.

In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.—*Zech.* xii. 8.

My soul! in the calculation of times and seasons, thou art entering this day upon a new month; stand still and consider what progress thou art making in the spiritual path. Here is a sweet promise for the gospel dispensation. It is an Old Testament promise, to be fulfilled in a New Testament day. The weak and feeble, in our spiritual David, being really and truly in *David*, shall be as David, that is, strong in the grace and strength that is in Christ Jesus. And the whole house of David, every true believer in Jesus, shall be as Jesus; that is, so accounted before God, as one in Christ, and accepted in him the beloved; for in the eye of God, and of his holy law, they are one and the same. But what a sad consideration is it, that the progress in the divine life, here set forth, is so seldom sought after by the people of God! We are, for the most part, satisfied to have made our calling and election sure, and do not seem to feel it much at heart, how frequently the soul goes lean, and is feeble in spiritual attainments. My soul! let me impress it upon thy most serious consideration this evening, how needful it is to

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have this sweet promise brought home, and proved in thy daily experience. Is not Jesus, in his person, work, and righteousness, to be continually improved in soul-acquaintance and communion? Should I not seek to preserve a constant communion with my Lord? When I consider his fulness, all which is for his people, surely I ought to send forth a desire for a renewed token of his love. And yet when I come to sit down in the evening, and look back upon what hath passed between my Lord and me, through the day, alas! how little hath my soul been going forth in desires after him, and in enjoying communion with him! Come, blessed Jesus! come, I pray thee, and let my awakened faculties be exercised upon thy person, blood, and righteousness, until this sweet promise be mine, and I find my feebleness becoming strength in my Lord. Let the growing acquaintance with thee, of one day, be made the step for desiring greater knowledge, and greater enjoyment of thee, for the next day; and let my earnest soul be pressing after fresh discoveries of thee, and for the sweet manifestations from thee every day in greater frequency, and in more enlarged views of thy glory. Oh! for grace from my Lord, for the liveliest actings of faith, and love, and praise, and every longing desire upon Him whose name is "the Lord our righteousness;" that the grace and good will, the mercy and kindness of God, my Saviour, may be my daily song, and evening delight, in this house of my pilgrimage.

If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe; if I tell you of heavenly things?—*John* iii. 12.

Was there ever condescension like that of Jesus, to accommodate himself to the dull and senseless capacities of his people? Kind, compassionate, indulgent Teacher, I would say, how shall I sufficiently admire or adore thy love? Oh! that a consciousness of my ignorance would endear to me thy wisdom! And oh! that a sense of the deep things of God would induce in me a temper and frame of mind suited to the docility and humbleness of a weaned child! Now, my soul! mark from these words of thy Jesus to that master in Israel, Nicodemus, that so sublime are the wonders of redemption, even in that part of it which is connected with earthly things, that our capacities, until opened and fitted for the apprehension of divine truths by grace, cannot enter into the enjoyment or belief of them. And how then shall the glories of eternity, which are reserved for unfolding on the other side of Jordan, be brought within the grasp of our intellect? And yet are there some, yea many, who, with the incredulity of Thomas, refuse conviction, unless they receive what, in the present state of things, cannot be granted. Blessed Master! I desire to praise thee for that proportion of faith thou hast given

me, to believe the things which are freely given to me of God; and I beseech thee, Lord, to grant me increasing proportions of faith and grace, that I may both believe the earthly things of salvation, and the heavenly things to be revealed. I would pray for grace and faith in lively exercise, to connect and bring into the same view both worlds, as they concern thee and thy great salvation. Yea, Lord, I would pray for increasing knowledge of, and delight in all the great things of salvation, among the transactions of earth here below; such as the momentous truths of regeneration, justification by thy blood and righteousness, and the eternal acceptance of thy people in thee, and in thee only, the beloved. And I would pray also for the most enlarged and enlarging views of faith, concerning the glories which shall be revealed, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive. Lord, increase my faith, and prepare me for the everlasting enjoyment of thyself in glory, when faith shall be swallowed up in sight; when I shall see thee as thou art, and know even as I am known.

None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him. (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.)—*Psalm* xlix. 7, 8.

How very striking is the *former* of these verses! And oh, how justly true! If it were possible for the rich worldling to keep back from the grave, by purchase, his worldly friend, would he do it? Yes, indeed, it is possible he might, under the presumption that, when it came to his turn, he should be himself redeemed. It is, however, of little consequence to estimate human friendships, when they are altogether helpless, in the most important of all concerns. But, my soul, doth not this scripture point to Him, and tend to endear him to thy warmest affection, that was indeed "a brother born for adversity;" and who, though rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that through his poverty we might be made rich? Jesus was, and is, the brother (mentioned in that scripture, *Levit.* xxv. 25) who, when our whole nature was waxen poor, and we had sold our possession, and had no power to redeem it, came and proved his relationship by ransoming our lost inheritance. But mark, my soul, what is said in the *latter* of these verses: "the redemption of their soul is precious." Precious, indeed! since none but Christ could redeem it; and he only by his blood; yea, not his blood only, but his soul. For it was expressly agreed upon, and so the tenor of the everlasting covenant ran: "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin," (*Isaiah* liii. 10.) then "he should see his seed." But remark yet further, that this latter verse is enclosed in parentheses. I

have often thought, wherefore the Holy Ghost was pleased so to enclose it? Not surely that, like other parentheses, it might be read or left out; not so, I venture to believe. But rather, I should conceive, that here, by its total unconnection with what was said before of the rich worldling having no power to redeem his brother, the preciousness of Christ's redemption might be more strikingly conspicuous. And so it doth indeed. And how precious, blessed Jesus, was, and is, thy redemption! Not purchased with corruptible things, as of silver and gold, and therefore not liable to perish and become corruptible like them. And being so richly purchased, and so fully and completely bought with a full value, and infinitely more than value, even with the soul of Christ, it ceaseth for ever. It is impossible ever to need again redemption, for it is impossible ever more to be lost. O precious salvation! O precious, precious Redeemer!

And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age.—*Luke* iii. 23.

How marvellous in all things are the ways of God to us! Was Jesus indeed in the world, and the world made by him, and the world knew him not? And did he remain hid away, and unknown, for the first thirty years of his life? Did the Son of God come on earth to do away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and yet enter not upon the full purpose of his mission until so large a portion of his life upon earth had passed away? O wonder-working God! how true is it, that thy ways are not our ways, nor thy thoughts our thoughts! Yet, my soul, though thy Jesus did not engage in his public ministry in the more open display of it by his miracles and preaching, yet surely those thirty years were of vast importance on the score of redemption. No doubt Jesus spent them in obedience to his Father's law, manifesting a life of holiness and purity, suited and corresponding to the immaculate perfection of his nature, who did no sin, neither was "guile found in his mouth." Convinced as I am, my honoured Lord, that the body thy Father gave thee, and thy human nature which thou didst assume for the purpose of salvation, was not produced in the ordinary method of generation, but by the miraculous influence of the Holy Ghost; so am I equally convinced that during the whole of thy life, from the manger to the cross, every act, and word, and thought of thine, manifested that thou wast holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. And shall I not then believe, that these thirty years were of some-sweet, though to us secret importance, in thy covenant engagements as our surety? Can I suppose that the thirty years of my Redeemer's life, before his being publicly made manifest to

Israel, were spent in nothing in relation to the great work which he came purposely to do? Did not those seasons minister also to the cancelling the sin of his people; taking away the curse by bearing it, and by dying for it: and may we not suppose that God the Father had an eye to every minute act in the life of his dear Son, whom he had called to the work of salvation, and given as a covenant to his people, to be their head and mediator, their law-fulfiller and sin-offering? Precious Lord! silent as the Scriptures are on this great portion of thy life, yet is not their silence a call upon thy people to meditate on the subject? Give me grace, then, my honoured Lord, to be often contemplating the infinite condescension of Jesus in this part, as well as in others, in which thou must have "endured such a contradiction of sinners against thyself." And let not this be the smallest improvement of this sweet and interesting view of my Lord, that when I call to mind how thy holy soul must have felt, during the thirty years, from the open displays of sin, in the blasphemies and daring defiances of God, the reproaches of the ungodly, and the torrent of evil all around, yet nothing stopped the gracious purposes of thine heart, in executing the errand on which thy whole mind was bent: "in dying, the just for the unjust, to bring sinners unto God."

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.—*John v. 22, 27.*

Here, my soul! here is a sweet and blessed portion to take with thee, night by night, as a sleeping draught, to lie down with, in holy composure; or, if thou lie watchful, to give thee songs in the night. Every night is a new watch-word of the night of death; and none can tell thee, when thou droppest asleep, whether, in the next opening of thine eyes, thou mayest not open them in eternity, and find thyself standing before the judgment-seat of Christ! Dost thou not wish to be prepared for such an event, and not to leave so infinitely momentous a thing to a peradventure? Read over, again and again, this sweet scripture. I take for granted, that thou knowest Jesus; and art acquainted, yea, savingly acquainted, with his glorious person, as thy surety, and the merits of his blood and righteousness as thy salvation! See, then, what this blessed scripture saith, that all judgment is committed unto thy Jesus, because he is the Son of man. Mark that, my soul! Not because he is the Son of God; for, in that case, judgment could not have been committed to him, for it was his before, in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost; the whole Three Persons consti-

tuted the One eternal Jehovah. But judgment is committed to Christ, and is peculiarly his, "because he is the Son of man." Cherish the sweet, the soul-transporting, the soul-comforting truth. Thy Jesus, who is now thy surety, is then to be thy judge. He that hath died for thy sins is then to be thy advocate. And he that hath paid the ransom with his blood in this life, is then to see the reward of it in another.—Now then behold where alone thy confidence is to be found. Bring forward to thy view the solemn, the awful day. Realize it, as if the archangel's trumpet was now sounding, and thou beheld Jesus coming to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe.—Let others, who now boast of their good works, and hope allowance will be made for human frailty, and the like; or all that troop of half-disciples who, partly to Christ, and partly to themselves, look for salvation; let those do as they will; there is but this one thing left for thee to do, and this one thing, well done, will do for all. Remember, Jesus is thy judge; and all judgment is committed unto him, "because he is the Son of man."—Humbly, my soul, but with the boldness of faith through his blood, draw near to his gracious seat; and against all law charges, and the divine demands of justice, hold up the blessed testament of Jesus's blood. Here, Lord, I would say, are the Father's promises of redemption, in thy name and righteousness; and this is the record God hath given of his dear Son. And here, Lord, is the new testament in thy blood, which thou hast given for sinners. Thou, blessed Lord, wilt know thine hand, and own thy word. Thou therefore shalt answer for me, O Lord my God!

And he bearing his cross.—*John xix. 17.*

How would every incident in the life of Jesus lead out the souls of his redeemed in endless contemplation, were grace always in lively exercise! Alas! my honoured Lord, how little do I think of thee, and of thy sufferings! Will Jesus, this evening, awaken me to the solemn subject?—The bell of the neighbouring church is now tolling the curfew of the day. I hear it from my window. Ah! why should I want such a call to think on my Lord? Awake, awake, my soul, and let thy meditation take wing, and flee to Gethsemane, and from the garden and the hall, behold the Lamb of God bearing his cross towards the place of execution. O Pilate, thou unjust judge! is this thy pretended innocency, to suffer him—whom thou didst declare to be innocent, in the moment thou didst pass sentence for his death—to bear his cross also? See what long furrows the ploughers have ploughed upon his sacred back! and wilt thou compel him to bear the heavy weight upon a part so tender? See! Jesus faints under it! Will none of those, whose souls he hath redeemed, and whose bodies he hath healed, help the Lord of life and glory? Where

are his disciples? Are there none to aid? Not one to be found that dares assist him?—Pause, my soul, over the sad contemplation! Christ is here, as his type represents him, the gospel Isaac, carrying the wood for his own burnt-offering. “In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren.” It was his office to be led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. “It pleased the Father to bruise him, and to put him to grief.” The cross was ponderous. The body fainted under its pressure. But the sins of his redeemed made it heavier to his soul: and the weight of the Father’s wrath against sin aggravated the dreadful load. Precious Redeemer, dying Lamb of God! were my sins adding to thy sorrow? Have I been reproaching Pilate, and all the while forgetting that every transgression of mine became more painful to thy soul than the cross, or the thorns, or the soldier’s spear that pierced thine heart? Oh! for grace to crucify those sins which nailed thee to the cursed tree! Oh! for grace to take up the cross and follow thee, day by day. Lord Jesus, I would pray thee to give me grace, to go forth unto thee, “without the camp, bearing thy reproach!”

And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son’s coat or no. And he knew it, and said, It is my son’s coat.

Genesis xxxvii. 32, 33.

The life of the patriarch Joseph is very beautiful and interesting, as a history only; and the several incidents arising out of it are such as cannot but more or less affect every heart. But when we have gone through the whole relation, in the mere letter of the word, we are constrained to believe, that in the spiritual sense and meaning of it, almost every thing in the life of Joseph was typical of Jesus. I would not strain scripture upon any account. Neither would I frame to myself any thing fanciful of Jesus, and his blessed offices; so as to see him where he is not. But I cannot but think, that since in so many instances, as is universally allowed, Joseph is a lively type of Christ, the Holy Ghost, in his glorifying the Lord Jesus, was, in many cases, pleased to shadow forth somewhat of the Redeemer where he is not at first so immediately discovered. Whether in the passage I have just read, for the present evening’s meditation, there be any thing typical of Jesus, I know not; but to those who, like Philip, have “found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth,”—the coat of the patriarch, dipped in the blood of the kid, may minister in leading the heart to the contemplation of Jesus, who appeareth unceasingly in his

priestly garments, in the presence of God our Father, for us. And may not a believer humbly take up the language of faith, when drawing nigh to our God and Father in Christ Jesus; and when we enter, as it were, into his retirings, with earnest prayer, and earnest pleadings, seeking favour in and through Jesus, may we not in the arms of our faith bring the vesture of Jesus dipped in blood, and say, This have we found; know now, whether it be Jesus's, thy dear and ever blessed Son's vesture, or no? Oh! for faith to behold Christ, as the Father beheld him, when he set him forth to the Church; and to love him as God our Father loved him. And how surely will God confirm his own gracious testimony concerning him, and say, as the patriarch, or in words to the same effect: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

Song ii. 1.

Yes! dearest Lord Jesus, thou art all this, and infinitely more to my soul; more fragrant than both, and more precious than all the flowers of the field. Help me, this evening, to contemplate my Lord under those sweet similitudes. Do I not, and shall I not henceforth, in the red blushing beauty of the rose, behold thy human nature, which thou hast assumed for the redemption of thy people? Are not thy bloody sufferings, and thy red apparel, strikingly set forth by the image of the rose; as thy spotless purity is shown under the loveliness of the white lily? Can the sweet-scented rose, even of Sharon, vie with the perfume of the incense of thy righteousness to a poor sinner's soul? Or can the beauty of the lily be as grateful to the eye as the purity of Jesus to a mind conscious of its own pollution, and beholding itself complete in his salvation, who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens?" But wherefore Sharon's rose, and the valley's lily, unless it be to speak thine infinite greatness in the excellency of Sharon, and thine infinite humbleness in the lowest part of the earth, as the valley. And indeed, Lord, in thine own wonderful person, thou comprehendest all things, in the length, and breadth, and depth, and height! Thou art both the Alpha and Omega: the first and the last. And though Lord of all, thou didst condescend to become servant of all. Be thou to me, my Lord, every thing that is precious and lovely, as the rose of Sharon, and as the lily of the valley. And oh! give me a sweet conformity to thyself, and thy loveliness. And though my sins be red as scarlet, do thou make them whiter than the snow: though they be as the crimson, do thou make them as the wool! Cause me to be washed in that fountain which thou hast opened for sin and for uncleanness; and

bring me to join that happy multitude before thy throne, "who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!"

Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.—*Isaiah xxxviii. 1.*

My soul! whether or not the decree be as yet gone forth for an early day for thy removal, as here to Hezekiah, it must shortly arrive; and as thou knowest not how soon, it is good to set both thine house and thine heart in order; for he that is best fitted to live, is best prepared to die. How stands thy great account? This body of thine must go down to the chambers of the grave. And surely if the soul be safe in union with Jesus, such an event as the dissolution of the body is more to be desired than dreaded. If the pearl be safe, no matter though the casket be broken. Pause over the view; for though it be solemn, it is profitable. If a voice from heaven declared the dead to be blessed, who die in the Lord; then will thy death be blessed, if thou art living in union with Christ. See to it this night, this very night, whether this be thy case; all is well, if this be well. Hath not the Holy Ghost, in times long since passed, led thee to all-precious Jesus? And from his sweet teachings, and constraining influences, hast thou not ventured thyself upon him? Convinced that there is salvation in no other, neither any other name under heaven given among men, whereby thou mightest be saved, didst thou not cast thyself upon his blood and righteousness, and at a time when under the deepest sense of thy sin and his all-sufficiency to save? And hast thou not many a time since, when the false reasoning of men, the temptations of hell, and a host of foes, from within and without, would have turned thee aside from thy Lord; hast thou not, by his sweet, constraining, and supporting grace, been kept leaning upon Jesus? Yea, moreover, hath not that dear Redeemer, the Lord God of the Hebrews, who first met thee by the way, brought thee acquainted with himself, and caused thee to believe in him; hath he not since, in a thousand, and ten thousand renewed manifestations of his love, comforted thee, strengthened thee, and made thee sensible of his gracious presence? Surely, then, if he saith to thee, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live;" it is but the call of Jesus to the exercise of the last act of faith, and indeed to die to this world only, that thou mayest live with him in glory in a better. And wouldst thou now draw back? Didst thou first venture upon Christ, when thou hadst known but little of his faithfulness? And shall it be said now, that the shadow of a doubt remains, when multitudes of evidences upon evidences have been given thee, that he is, he must, he will ever be Jesus? Precious, precious Redeemer! Oh! for a full tide of thy grace to be poured in upon my soul, when thou shalt be pleased to send

forth a messenger with "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live;" that I may then gather all into one of the many tokens of thy redeeming love to a poor worthless worm, such as I am; and all the many goings forth of my soul after thee, through a life of grace, since thou wast pleased to quicken me to the knowledge and desire after thee: that finally, fully, and completely, I may, once for all, cast my soul into thy blessed arms, with a "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

And David spake unto the Lord when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done?—2 *Samuel* xxiv. 17.

My soul! here is a subject of a heart-searching nature opened to thee this evening, in those expostulating words of the man after God's own heart. Summon up all thy faculties to the meditation; and yet, infinitely more than this, seek the teachings of the Holy Ghost, that thou mayest profit by them. The apostle was commissioned by the Holy Ghost to tell the Church, that for man's sin the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, until now. The slaughter of every beast, the sacrifice of every lamb, proclaimeth, with a louder voice than words can declare, the baleful malignity of human transgression. And if David, when he saw the destroying angel brandishing his dreadful sword over Jerusalem, felt remorse in the recollection of his own sin, and the punishment falling on the harmless sheep, what views ought the contemplation of the unequalled sorrows and sufferings of the Lamb of God to occasion, when it be recollected that "he died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God?" To see sin as exceeding sinful, we may get some idea from beholding apostate spirits cast out of heaven; or from the curse of Jehovah upon the earth, and all the children of Adam involved in it; the destruction of the whole world by water; or the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire; and the everlasting torments of the damned in hell: these form awful views of the dreadful nature of sin, as it appears in the sight of God. But all these are nothing, in comparison to one remaining to be mentioned. Wouldst thou see sin in all its tremendous consequences, thou must go to Golgotha. There behold the Lamb of God, taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Here take up the words of David, and ask thine own heart, while confessing that thou hast sinned, and done wickedly, what had this Lamb of God done? But do not stop here. Go on in the contemplation. If He who knew no sin became sin—if he who in his sacred person was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, yet became both sin and a curse for his redeemed, that they might be made the righteousness of God in

him; wilt thou not think it the first, the last, the highest, the best, the most momentous of all points, to know whether thou, even thou thyself, art made the righteousness of God in him? O thou holy, blessed, and eternal Spirit! give me to see in the Lord Jesus, my almighty Surety, that in all he did, in all he sustained, and all he suffered, he bore my sins in his own body on the tree, and that not a single sin of omission or commission was left out. Oh! for grace to believe, and to plead, now and for ever, before the throne, that then all my iniquities and all my transgressions, in all my sins, the Lord Jehovah laid (as Aaron typified on the great day of atonement, Lev. xvi. 21) upon the person of his dear Son! Help me, Lord, with increasing confidence of faith, and holy hope, and ardent joy, thus to view Jesus as my Surety, and thus to answer the account given of it in that blessed scripture: "Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to Him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.—*Jude 6.*

This will form a solemn meditation, my soul, for thy evening thoughts to be exercised upon. And, perhaps, under grace, it may lead thee to some sweet improvements in the contemplation of the distinguishing grace manifested to our rebellious nature; while judgment the most awful and everlasting overtook the higher nature of angels. If we humbly inquire what was the nature of their sin, all we can gather of information concerning it was, that it was rebellion against God. One part of the Scripture, indeed, tells us, that "there was war in heaven. Michael (by which we understand, Michael our Prince, the Lord Jesus Christ, Dan. x. 21) and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven." (Rev. xii. 7, &c.) By which it should seem, that the cause of this contest of the devil with Christ was personal, and on account of the kingdom which Jehovah gave him as God Mediator over angels and men. And hence, when these apostate spirits left their own habitation, and were cast out, they set up a kingdom, in opposition to the Lord's. And from their bitter hatred to Christ and his kingdom, they wreaked all their malice in corrupting and seducing our nature to join in rebellion against God. Hence "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world," beguiled our first parents, and introduced sin and death into this our world; which hath passed,

and must pass upon all their posterity, because all have sinned, and come short of God's glory. Pause, my soul, over the solemn account. Think, duly think, of the fallen state into which, by nature and by practice, thou art brought by this apostasy. And when thou hast had thy mind thoroughly impressed with the awfulness of such a situation, turn thy thoughts to the due contemplation also of the love, and grace, and mercy of God, in thy recovery. Sweetly dwell on the love of God thy Father, in the gift of his dear Son, for the purposes of redemption. Mark well the blessed features of the Son in his work of mercy, in this great accomplishment. And do not overlook, but delight evermore to contemplate, the love of God the Holy Ghost in condescending both to bring thee acquainted with the grace of the Father, and of the Son, and to incline thine heart to the thankful belief of it, and love of both! And that the whole subject may have its full influence upon thee, to induce in thee all the suitable and becoming affections of love, thanksgiving, holy obedience, and praise to the Author of such mercy, mark well the distinguishing nature of that grace, which hath left fallen angels in their ruin and misery, reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day, while bestowing pardon, reconciliation, and favour, upon fallen men, amidst all our unworthiness, sin, and rebellion. And, O Lamb of God! give me the continued grace to meditate for ever on the unequalled love of thine heart, who passeth by the nature of angels to take on thee the seed of Abraham; that in all things thou mightest be made like unto the brethren, in being a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of thy people!

And he was sore athirst, and called on the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?

Judges xv. 18.

Here is a sweet thought, my soul, suggested in these words of Samson, and wilt thou not hope that the Holy Ghost may make it blessed to thy evening meditation? The Lord had wrought a great deliverance for Samson, in the discomfiture of his enemies; and now, on a renewed pressing occasion, he makes this the plea of looking up for being again delivered: "Thou hast given," saith he, "this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant, and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?" As if he had said, "Shall my God cease to be God; or shall I now want his help, who hath always helped me in what has passed? Hath he begun to deliver; and will he now cease to do so?" Pause, my soul! and when thou hast

which when thy own exhortation shall have done
me, and in the blessing of the redemption of those
past, take the same plea to thy Jesus for every
thou meetest with in the exercises. Hath one of the
of man redeemed thee from the hands of sinners
inside, given thee this great deliverance from the
and dominion of sin? taken thee into covenant, relations
himself; opened a new and living way for thee in his blood,
and dost he ever live to keep it open by his intercession?
Hath Jesus indeed saved thee, loved thee, blessed thee, and
himself for thee, and treasured up for thee a fulness of all the
supplies of grace for thy sojourning here; and is he gone before
to prepare an everlasting fulness of glory for thy enjoyment
of himself to all eternity hereafter? And shall any circumstance
now befall thee in the way, to cast down thy hopes, and to lessen
thy faith in such a Saviour? Shall any thing arise to frustrate
his designs, or ruin thy cause? Is it possible that any evil
for which Jesus hath made no provision, can happen; or any
unthought of, unexpected calamity arise, which shall count
the covenant of redemption, ordered in all things, and sure?
Precious Lord Jesus! help me ever to keep thee in view, and
then all the springs of dependence on thee will be sure to flow.

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand
forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my
tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, and I profess
not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Psalm cxxxvii 5-6

My soul! sit down this evening and contemplate the lamentable
ing state of Zion. Did ever the Church of Christ be in more
desolate circumstances than now? Amidst a great profession
zeal for religion, how little possession of the divine life is to be
met with among men! And who is there that seriously loves
to hear? For whom doth a throne of grace witness, that they
are holy mothers for Zion, and are earnestly wrestling night
and day with the Lord, that he would visit Zion, and in their
glory to appear? Where is the priest, the minister of the Lord,
that is weeping between the porch and the altar, and saying,
"Spare thy people, O Lord! and give not thine heritage for
povoh!" (Joel ii. 17.) And where are the people that sit
only lay it to heart? My soul! what sayest thou of these things
personally considered? Dost thou really love Jesus? Sayest
thou, thou canst not be indifferent to his interests? Is not Zion
the purchase of his blood? are not her walls built with his
state, constantly before him? And is not her name engraved on

and must pass upon all their posterity, because all have sinned, and come short of God's glory. Pause, my soul, over the solemn account. Think, duly think, of the fallen state into which, by nature and by practice, thou art brought by this apostasy. And when thou hast had thy mind thoroughly impressed with the awfulness of such a situation, turn thy thoughts to the due contemplation also of the love, and grace, and mercy of God, in thy recovery. Sweetly dwell on the love of God thy Father, in the gift of his dear Son, for the purposes of redemption. Mark well the blessed features of the Son in his work of mercy, in this great accomplishment. And do not overlook, but delight evermore to contemplate, the love of God the Holy Ghost in condescending both to bring thee acquainted with the grace of the Father, and of the Son, and to incline thine heart to the thankful belief of it, and love of both! And that the whole subject may have its full influence upon thee, to induce in thee all the suitable and becoming affections of love, thanksgiving, holy obedience, and praise to the Author of such mercy, mark well the distinguishing nature of that grace, which hath left fallen angels in their ruin and misery, reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day, while bestowing pardon, reconciliation, and favour, upon fallen men, amidst all our unworthiness, sin, and rebellion. And, O Lamb of God! give me the continued grace to meditate for ever on the unequalled love of thine heart, who passeth by the nature of angels to take on thee the seed of Abraham; that in all things thou mightest be made like unto the brethren, in being a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of thy people!

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duly made thine observations upon the blessedness of faith, which, when in lively exercise, always finds unanswerable arguments for future blessings, in the recollection of those that are past, take the same plea to thy Jesus for every event which thou meetest with, in thine exercises. Hath one like the Son of man redeemed thee, bought thee out of the hands of infinite justice; given thee this great deliverance, from both the guilt and dominion of sin; taken thee into covenant relations with himself; opened a new and living way for thee in his blood; and doth he ever live to keep it open by his intercession? Hath Jesus indeed saved thee, loved thee, blessed thee, given himself for thee, and treasured up for thee a fulness of all needed supplies of grace for thy sojourning here; and is he gone before, to prepare an everlasting fulness of glory for thy enjoyment of himself to all eternity hereafter? And shall any circumstance now befall thee in the way, to cast down thy hopes, and to lessen thy faith in such a Saviour? Shall any thing arise to frustrate his designs, or ruin thy cause? Is it possible that any new evil, for which Jesus hath made no provision, can happen? or any unthought of, unexpected calamity arise, which shall counteract the covenant of redemption, ordered in all things and sure? Precious Lord Jesus! help me ever to keep thee in view, and then all the springs of dependence on thee will be sure to flow.

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My soul! sit down this evening and contemplate the languishing state of Zion. Did ever the Church of Christ lie in more desolate circumstances than now? Amidst a great profession of zeal for religion, how little possession of the divine life is to be met with among men! And who is there that seriously lays it to heart? For whom doth a throne of grace witness, that they are holy mourners for Zion, and are earnestly wrestling, night and day, with the Lord, that he would visit Zion, and make his glory to appear? Where is the priest, the minister of the Lord, that is weeping between the porch and the altar, and saying, "Spare thy people, O Lord! and give not thine heritage to reproach?" (Joel ii. 17.) And where are the people that seriously lay it to heart? My soul! what sayest thou of these things, personally considered? Dost thou really love Jesus? Surely, then, thou canst not be indifferent to his interests! Is not Zion the purchase of his blood? Are not her walls, in all her ruined state, constantly before him? Yea, is not her name engraven

on the palms of his hands? And shall her name be on Jesus's hands, and no concern for Zion in thy heart? Moreover, look and see, in the tribulations of the present day, are not God's judgments abroad in the earth? And is not his jealousy for his Church the sole cause? And if the nations of the earth are under the frowns of thy God, canst thou rejoice in aught but the Church's prosperity? Are thousands dying in sin, and shall not the children of God mourn? Where are the trophies of the Redeemer's precious death and salvation? When shall Jesus see, agreeably to the promise, the travail of his soul, and be satisfied? Oh! for a portion of that holy zeal with which the Lord inspired the prophet, when he cried out, "Oh! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" O holy Lord! give my soul from henceforth a more earnest concern for the prosperity of thy Zion! Oh! for grace to enter through the blood of Jesus, into the retirings of the Lord, and to plead with him, as the patriarch did, with an importunity not to be resisted, that he would turn the captivity of his people. Oh! take away the rebuke of thy chosen, and let it be no longer said of thine, who know Jesus, and have been made partakers of salvation by him: "There is none to guide her, among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand, of all the sons that she hath brought up." (Isaiah li. 18.)

Unto the pure, all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure.

Titus i. 15.

A union with Christ brings with it the sweet and sanctified use and enjoyment of all things. My soul, ponder this evening what the apostle here saith, with an eye to this, and behold thy blessedness in Jesus. Every thing which comes into the account of what may be called *real good*, can be so no farther than as it is found and enjoyed in Christ. Creature comforts have nothing in them of good, but what is derived from the blessedness of the covenant in them. To the pure in Christ, all things are pure. His gracious leaven in them, leaveneth the whole lump. And wherefore is it, that to them that are in a state of unrenewed nature, being defiled and unbelieving, there is nothing pure; but because there is nothing of Christ in them? They, and all they have, are under the curse! for every thing is so out of Christ. It is Jesus which must put a blessing and a relish into even the most common providences; or, instead of mercy, they will bring forth evil. See to it, then, my soul, that Christ be the foundation of all thine enjoyments. Be very jealous over thyself, and thine own heart, when thou art most happy, that it

be on Christ's account; or that, when exercised with difficulties, thou still see Jesus in them, and receive them as coming from his appointment. And learn never to put a value upon any thing but on his account, and from their connection with him. This will confirm what the apostle saith, to thy experience: "To the pure, all things are pure." For Jesus, seen in all, will be enjoyed in all; and will sweeten, sanctify, bless, and render profitable all. For as there is infinitely more blessedness in the most common of our mercies, from their relationship to Jesus, and their coming from him, than we are aware of, so we ought to have the greater regard to him, in all that we enjoy. And if we consider nothing as a blessing but what is received in Jesus, we shall learn to set a value upon nothing but what is brought home to the heart by Jesus.

A door opened in heaven!—*Revelation* iv. 1.

Lord! give me, as thou didst to thy servant John, a call to "come up hither," and by faith behold the glories which shall be revealed; and immediately I shall be in the spirit as he was, and so substantiate and realize, in present enjoyments, those felicities in Jesus, that this evening my soul will be, by happy faith, in the very suburbs of that blessed city, which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God! Is it not true, Lord, that all my possessions are thine? And shall I not take the map of them from Scripture, and look over them with holy rapture and delight? Do men of the earth take pride in their lands and manors; the very holding of which is precarious, even in the moment of possession, and which slide from under their feet as soon as they enter upon them; and shall not an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ, rejoice in having a kingdom which cannot be moved? Come, my soul, look within the veil, whither thy Forerunner is for thee entered; and now that God the Holy Ghost hath opened a door in heaven, behold what felicities are presenting themselves to thy view! Behold, amidst all the glories of the place, how eminently Jesus, even thy Jesus, appears as a Lamb in the midst of the throne: and still as a Lamb that hath been slain, as if to testify the eternal, unceasing efficacy of his blood and righteousness. But what an innumerable host are these, which stand around the throne, and encircle the Redeemer! "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!" Mark that, my soul! They were once in the tribulated path that thou art now in; they were once sinners here below, as thou art now; and they owe all their advancement, not to their merit, but to divine bounty; not to works of righteousness which they have done, but to the same source as thou art now seeking acceptance from—the blood of the Lamb.

Oh! precious, soul-satisfying testimony, on a point of such infinite importance! Blessed, for ever blessed, be God the Holy Ghost, for first opening to the beloved apostle this door in heaven, and for all the after-revelations of Jesus, made by this condescending discovery to the Church in all ages. Often, my soul, look up, and behold the door still open; and often by faith look in, and behold thy Redeemer, and his redeemed, in "the spirits of just men made perfect." Realize these blessed things, and seek from thy Jesus a strength of faith (for such a faith hath been given to some, and why not to thee?) as shall absolutely bring down the present enjoyment of heaven into thy soul, before the Lord shall finally and fully call thee up to the everlasting enjoyment of him in glory. Blessed be God, (my soul, do thou cry out with the apostle,) who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus!

And Peter said unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?—*John* xiii. 6.

My soul! dost thou want some sweet, some tender, some more than ordinarily interesting view of thy Jesus, this evening, to draw out all the finer feelings in love and adoration of thy Redeemer? Look at him, then, in the moment in which this scripture represents him in his lowliness and meekness, washing the disciples' feet. Had I the power of drawing the most endearing portrait, Jesus should be my one and only object; and for a subject of the most finished kind, the humbleness and tenderness of Jesus, the Lord of life and glory, washing poor fishermen's feet, should be the picture. And what, my soul, tends, if possible, infinitely more to endear and bring home to the heart this unparalleled condescension and grace of Jesus, is, that it was, as the evangelist relates it, at a time when Jesus knew that all things were given by his Father into his hands: that is, all things relating to his mediatorial kingdom; that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him: and in due time take out of his kingdom all things that did offend. Was there ever a more lovely, a more engaging instance shown, than by the great Redeemer of the world, in this condescending act? Well might the astonished apostle cry out, in the contemplation of it, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" My soul! pause over the subject, and consider it well; and when thou hast duly weighed the matter, let it be asked, what condescension, what grace, what love, what mercy, will Jesus think too great for the salvation of poor sinners? Oh! that I had the power of persuasion with any poor broken-hearted transgressor, to convince him that there is nothing to keep a soul from Jesus but unbelief. I would say to such a one, My brother, oh!

make trial only of Jesus's love. The greater your unworthiness, the greater will be the grace of Jesus in his mercy towards you. And the lower the Son of God bends down to wash a sinner, the higher surely will he be in the sinner's love and esteem. Let it be asked, through the whole Church of Christ upon earth, who loves Jesus most, but the sinner to whom Jesus hath forgiven most? Let it be inquired, through the realms of heaven, whose song of redemption is the loudest and the best, but those who were most low upon earth when Jesus first stooped to wash them. O thou blessed Emmanuel! thou, the Lord our righteousness! never let me forget this instance of thy grace to poor sinners, but do thou cause it to be my daily encouragement to come to thee, and under the same conviction as the apostle, to cry out, "Lord wash not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"

Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch; Thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest. Thus shalt thou say unto him, The Lord saith thus; Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.—*Jeremiah* xlv. 2—5.

Here, my soul! take an instruction, and a blessed one it is, when applied by the Holy Ghost, suited for God's people in all ages of the Church, and in all generations. At all seasons, it is unbecoming in a believer in Jesus to have a mind hankering after things of the world, which the carnal seek; but the evil is increased in times of general calamity. Baruch, though the Lord's servant, yet felt too much desire of the world's ease. My soul, learn to avoid every thing which may lead to an attachment to things below; that when called upon to leave them, their hold may be too little to be felt. And in a day like the present, doth not thy Lord speak to thee in the same language as to the prophet: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." If I have been with Jesus, and given in my name to him, "what have I to do any more with idols?" It is remarkable, that after the Lord Jesus had instituted his holy supper, and put the cup into his disciples' hands, he observed, "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom;" hereby teaching us, that in the dedication of the soul to him, an exchange is then made of earth for heaven. And as from that

hour Jesus's cup was the cup of trembling, and of wormwood and the gall, so the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. And they that are Christ's are said to have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts.

A citizen of no mean city.—*Acts* xxi. 39.

It certainly was very laudable in Paul, in a moment of danger, to avail himself of the common privileges of his freedom, in the common rights of men. But it would have been a sad thing for the apostle, had he not, at the same time, been also "a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God." He, like the patriarchs, knew his right in that city "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." My soul, see to it this evening, that thy name is enrolled among the citizens of those who are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. And if thou canst find evidences of this high calling, thou wilt know also, as well as Paul, that thou art "a citizen of no mean city." Now, a city that hath foundations, and whose builder and maker is God, differs totally from all the cities founded among men. All these have their rise, their increase, and fall. Where are the vast monarchies of past generations? Alas! time hath passed over them as a flood, and swept them all away. And what the sacred writer hath said of one, may be equally applied to all: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen; in one hour is thy judgment come!" But the citizenship of a believer is firm, eternal, and secure. God the Father is the founder of it: he hath laid the foundation-stone in Zion. God the Son is the Rock on which it is built. And God the Holy Ghost is the eternal source of life and strength, and all the immutable privileges of it. This city is everlastingly and eternally secure, for "salvation hath the Lord appointed for walls and bulwarks." And the peace and happiness of its inhabitants must ever remain the same; for the citizens are of one body, and one spirit, even as they are called, in one hope of their calling. For the Son of God hath made them free by his blood and righteousness, and they are free indeed. Such, my soul, among numberless other distinguishing characters, are the outlines of the history of that city which hath foundations, and of which we may say with the Psalmist, "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God!" If thou art a citizen of it, the enrolment of thy name among the freemen may be easily seen, for Jesus, the King of Zion, must have signed it with his blood. And then art thou come, as the apostle describes, not to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire; not unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest; but unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general

assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling.—Then, hast thou found also the blessedness of the place, and the immense privileges of its inhabitants? In the freedom of this city is found peace with God, through the blood of the cross; and access at all times, through him, by one Spirit, unto the Father. And as among other citizens there are certain marks and characters by which the privileges of one city are distinguished from another, so, in this, the language, the dress, the manners, and customs, are wholly foreign to all the rest of the world. A citizen of God's house talks the language of God; he is dressed in the garment of salvation, and the robes of Jesus's righteousness. His manners and customs are altogether peculiar to a child of God and an heir of heaven; for all is in conformity to the gospel of Christ. My soul! what sayest thou to these characters? Are they thine? If so, thou mayest assume Paul's account of himself; for, like him, thou art "a citizen of no mean city!"

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.—*Isaiah* liii. 4.

My soul! call up, this evening, all thy most earnest and most solemn thoughts, to the meditation of a subject, which the Holy Ghost opens to thy view in these words. And if the Lord the Spirit, that proposeth to thy soul the solemn consideration, will graciously instruct thee through it, perhaps it will lead to such views of Jesus as may not before so fully have struck thine attention. O Lord! guide thy servant in it! Now here it is said, "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." By which, it may be supposed, is meant, both the curse and the punishment. And certain it is, that unless Christ bore both, the sinner is not freed. From the sinner, or his surety, God's justice must exact full payment. But if it be found that in the surety that exaction hath been made, and fully paid, then is the sinner free; for from both it would be unjust to exact.—Now behold, my soul, in the person of thy surety, how, in the most minute points, even as the sinner himself, thy Jesus stood for thee. And then see, from beholding thy Redeemer in this most endearing point of view, whether thou art not constrained to cry out, with the prophet, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows!"—A few of the most prominent features in the griefs and sorrows of Jesus will be sufficient in point, by way of illustration. And first, every sinner, by virtue of being a transgressor, is exposed to the curse of God; and that curse is upon every thing belonging to him, as Moses told Israel, "Thou art cursed in thy basket, and in thy store; in lying down and rising up; in going out and

coming home." (Deut. xxviii. 16, &c.) Now Jesus, as the sinner's surety, is, by way of peculiar emphasis, called "the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He endured, in his person, the very curse denounced upon the sinner. All was poured upon Jesus, through every part of his life: and as the curse, but for Jesus's interposition, would follow the sinner in death, so Christ was followed by it to the cross. The sinner's dying chamber would open to him the horrors of divine wrath on sin; such as Jesus, for the sinner, sustained in the garden of Gethsemane. And as no by-standers, no earthly friends, could mitigate the horrors of the sinner's soul in such a season, so we find Christ, when going through these conflicts for the sinner, could gain no help from any of his disciples—"They all forsook him and fled." And doth the sinner's conscience then betray and aggravate the load of wo? And did not Judas, Christ's bosom friend, come boldly forward to aggravate the Redeemer's sorrow? And as every sinner, out of Christ, for whom he, as the surety, hath paid no ransom, would in the moment of death be seized bound hand and foot, and carried away by an armed band to utter darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth; so Christ was taken as the sinner's surety, by an armed band, from the high-priest to the judgment-hall, where he lay all night, suffering the punishment of stripes and mocking. And as, in the morning of the resurrection, sinners out of Christ must arise to all the horrors of judgment, and the irreversible sentence be pronounced in the presence of all beholders, which consigns them to everlasting punishment, so Christ, the surety for his sinful people, in the morning was brought from the hall of Pilate to the hill of Calvary, and there received the sentence of death executed upon his sacred person, in the view of all that passed by. Pause, my soul, over the representation of truths so awful! Surely thou mayest say, If Jesus had not sustained the curse and punishment, then must I have borne it for ever. But if, as the prophet hath marked it in this most blessed scripture, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," then is the principal debtor free, when the surety hath paid the debt! Oh! the preciousness, the suitableness, the completeness of Jesus in the whole purpose of his redemption. Blessed, blessed, blessed, for ever, be Jehovah, for Jesus Christ!

Now thou art commanded, this do ye: take you wagons out of the land of Egypt, for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.—*Gen.* xlv. 19, 20.

What effect must the first news of Joseph's being alive, and his exaltation at the right hand of Pharaoh, have had upon the

mind of the patriarch Jacob! And what a flood of overwhelming joy must have broke in upon the poor old man, when convinced of the certainty of the account! But what are all these feelings of nature, compared to the triumphs of grace when the poor sinner is first made acquainted with the wonders of redemption, wrought out and accomplished by one that is his brother, even our spiritual Joseph, the Lord Jesus Christ! Yes! thou risen and exalted Saviour! by faith I behold thee on the right hand of the Majesty on high; and all power thine in heaven and on earth. I hear thee giving commandments to thy servants, to take the ordinances, and the several means of grace, in thy sacred word, and like the conveyances of the wagons of Egypt, to bring all thy kindred, thy redeemed ones, to thee. Yea, Lord! I would do as thou hast said, regard not the stuff, for gladly would I leave it all behind; for it hath already too long and too powerfully occupied my poor heart, and robbed my soul of thee. I would hasten to thy presence; for sure I am, the good of all the land of heaven itself is thy brethren's, and what is infinitely more than even heaven, thou, even thou, thyself, blessed Jesus, art thy people's. But, Lord! how shall I look thee in the face? How shall I dare to draw nigh, conscious of my having, like the sons of Jacob, sold thee, parted with thee, denied thee, left thee, and as the Jews of old, preferred every Barabbas, every robber before thee? And wilt thou, dearest Lord, still own me, still love me, and still speak kindly to me? Oh! what praises will the realms of heaven resound with, when Jesus shall have brought home all his brethren into his Father's house, around himself, in glory! How will then every knee (and my poor soul among the glorious number) bow before thee, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen and Amen!

Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.—1 *Cor.* ix. 21.

Sit down, my soul, this evening, and ponder over this blessed distinction which the apostle makes between the lawless conduct of those, who, from a mere conviction of the truth in the head, but who never felt the influence of it in their heart, hold the truth in unrighteousness; and those who, while conscious of being under the law to Christ, are not without law to God. To thee, my soul, who hast been brought under the condemnation of God's holy law, and hast been enabled, through sovereign grace, to take refuge in the person, blood, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; to thee, justification by faith, so far from relaxing thine obedience to the law of God, has proved the best of all motives to the practice of it. Thou knowest thyself to be bought with a price; and therefore, as the Lord's property, both by his

purchase, and thy voluntary surrender, it is thy desire above all things "to glorify God in thy body and in thy spirit, which are his." It is thy glory, thy delight, thy joy, that thy God and Father hath accepted a righteousness for thee, in Jesus, thy surety; and to him, and him only, the Lord hath respect for thy acceptance. But while thou art taught, and thy heart delights in the soul-reviving truth; that thou art never to seek justification by the deeds of the law, thy heart delights also, that thou art "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ." For though the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made thee free from the law of sin and death, yet while through the law thou art dead to the law, the blessedness of it is, that thou mightst live unto Christ. And it is by the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelling in thee, that the deeds of the body are mortified, and the soul lives. Sweet consideration, my soul, to cherish, and ever to keep in view. Thou art not working *for* life, but *from* life. Not seeking to be justified by the deeds of the law, but from Christ's justification; daily showing forth that thou art not "without law to God, but under the law to Christ."

And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people.—2 *Kings* iv. 13.

What an interesting account, though short, is here given of the Shunammite. The sacred historian calls her a *great woman*; and she here manifests that she had a great *mind*. What she had done for the prophet, she sought no recompense for. Neither the favours of the king, nor the captain of his host, were of any value to her and her husband. Dwelling with content in what she had, and "among her own people," was in her view enough of earthly enjoyment. But is there not a spiritual improvement to be made of this passage? Do not the people of our God *dwell alone*? And have they not been from everlasting so appointed, in the purposes of God their Father, and chosen in Christ, and called? They may, and indeed they ought, to desire to be spoken for to the King, the captain of the Lord's host, as a people near to himself. Yes! I would say, let me be spoken for, that I may always live under an abiding sense of my Lord's presence, and his love; and that my constant views of him, and his gracious tokens of kindness to me, may be my daily enjoyment. Methinks I would always be spoken for to him, in this point of view, and always myself be speaking to him; and tell my Lord that one smile of his, one whisper to assure me of my

interest in him, and my love for him, and his love for me, will be more grateful than all the revenues of the earth. Here, like the Shunammite, would I centre all my desires. And while living upon Jesus, it will be my happiness also to "dwell among mine own people," who, like myself, keep aloof from all unnecessary acquaintance and connection with the world, to "enjoy fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ!"

The hidden manna.—*Rev. ii. 17.*

We have an authority from Jesus himself, to say, that he, and he alone, is the manna of the gospel: for in his discourse with the Jews, he called himself, in allusion to the manna of the wilderness, "the living bread," and "the bread of God, which came from heaven;" of which, he said, whosoever should eat, should live for ever. But when Jesus imparts this blessed food to his people, it is *hidden*. And, indeed, many of the properties of it are made more blessed, from the very nature of its secrecy. My soul, ponder over the subject a few moments this evening, and behold in it, how truly gracious it is in the Lord, to hand to his people in secret those enjoyments of himself, of which the world is altogether unconscious. Mark the outlines of it, and trace it in its effects in thine own experience. As Jesus was preached to the world, both by the law and the prophets, and when appearing in substance of our flesh manifested forth his glory, yet was he known only to his disciples: the great mass of men neither knew him, nor regarded him. If he was preached in types and sacrifices, under the Old Testament dispensation, or in open gospel under the New, few believed the report: the cry still went forth, "Is not this the Carpenter's son?" Say, my soul, is not Jesus still "the hidden manna?" Dost thou discover him in his holy word? still is his word hidden: for though it is read openly by all, yet the mystery of it is known but to few. Doth the Holy Ghost testify to thee of Jesus, in thy desires *after* him; in thy communions *with* him; in the actings of thy faith *upon* him; and in thy enjoyments *from* him? Nevertheless in all these, however certain and refreshing to thee, thy pleasures are *hidden* from the world. This is mercy, personal and peculiar: strangers do not, cannot intermeddle with this joy. Precious Lord Jesus! give me larger and fuller enjoyments of thee day by day; and night by night let my secret and retired meditations of thee be sweet! Oh! for grace to live more and more upon those hidden privileges, and more and more to prize them. Come to me, dear Lord! and give me such rich participations of thyself, in the fulness of thy person, blood, and righteousness, that receiving from thee the hidden manna, I may say in thine own precious words, "I have meat to eat which the world knows not of."

Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born.

Jeremiah xxxi. 8, 9.

It is blessed at all times to be refreshed with God's promises concerning the latter-day glory, but more especially at a time when things are most unpromising. The present hour is eminently so. Therefore, see what a cluster of mercies are folded up on this one branch of them: and let thine evening meditations be sweet of Jesus and his sure work, in whom "all the promises are Yea and Amen; to the glory of God the Father, by us." Observe, in this blessed scripture, the certainty of the divine promises being all fulfilled, from the foundation on which they rest. If God be the God of all the families of Israel, and if Israel be his son, and Ephraim his first-born, how can the right of inheritance fail? Surely God is engaged by this covenant and relationship; and he will fulfil his promises. And what are they? Why, that he will bring them not only from Babylon, but from all their places of captivity. Jesus, the Son of his love, is commissioned, as the covenant of Jehovah, "to bring the prisoners out of the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." There shall be a day when a nation shall be born at once. They shall be gathered to Shiloh, and shall come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South. Pause, my soul, over these blessed promises. Thou art frequently put to it for thyself: and art frequently exercised with fears and apprehensions for the welfare of Zion. But what saith the blessed scripture? "Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth." Do not overlook that it is God who undertakes for them, and not themselves: and what God undertakes, he will surely perform. Well, but they are much scattered. Yes! but God will gather them. But they are diminished. No! a great company shall return. But they are blind, and do not know the way: they are lame, and when they know, have no power to walk in it. Yes, but saith he that made the eye, and he that giveth strength to the lame, both the "blind and the lame," yea, even the woman in pregnancy and her that is in travail, all shall come. I will be eyes, saith God, to the blind, and feet to the lame: I will lead them in a way they know not: I will undertake for them. And

the sole reason is, God's free grace and covenant mercy in Christ. God is a father, in this relationship, to all the families in Israel: and in him all the families of the earth are blessed. Pause, my soul, again and again, over this sweet and precious scripture; and see that these covenant marks and impressions be upon thee, as a sure, unerring token of thy being in Christ, and gathered from the coasts of the earth; that thou art following Jesus, as Mary Magdalene did, with tears and supplications. Prayers are quickened by tears; and tears flowing from the view of a crucified Saviour, must give energy to prayers. The eye that is looking unto Jesus, will affect the heart; and the heart that is wounded with the view of Jesus dying for our sins, will cause tears to fall from the eye: and both will follow Christ by the waters of ordinances, under the Spirit's teaching and gracious influences. Lord! give to my soul these tokens for good; and lead me in the way of salvation for thy Name's sake.

And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.—*Acts xxvii. 44.*

This is a beautiful conclusion of a history, which, during the providence wherein Paul the apostle and his companions were in shipwreck, afforded a large opportunity for the exercise of faith. The issue, it appears, was not doubtful from the first: for an angel of God had assured Paul, that God had given unto him the lives of all that sailed with him. And so it proved; yea, the very wreck of the ship furnished out means for the people's safety. Now, my soul, here is a very precious instruction for thee. In the exercises of thy life, learn from hence to abide firmly by the promise, when every thing leading to its accomplishment seems to fail. God hath said, that eternal life with all its preliminaries, is in his Son; and that he that hath the Son, hath life, and shall not come into condemnation. Now let what will arise, after this declaration of God, like the storm and shipwreck of the apostle, these are intervening circumstances with which thou hast nothing to do. Do thou take hold of the promise; for the promise hath its claim upon God. This cannot fail, whatever else may fail. And, though, like Paul in this voyage, "neither sun nor stars in many days may appear," and no small tempest be upon thee, Jesus is still at the helm, and thou shalt assuredly escape to land. Yea, the very wreck of all things around thee, shall but the better minister to this great end. And thou shalt at length write down the same conclusion to thy history, which Joshua, the man of God, made of the whole history of Israel: "Not one thing hath failed, of all the good things which the Lord your good spake concerning you: all are come to pass, unto this very day."

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning ; fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners ?—*Song* vi. 10.

By whomsoever this question is asked, there can be no question of whom it is said ; for the Church of Jesus, made comely by the comeliness which her Lord hath put upon her, is all this, and more in every eye that can admire true loveliness ; and will be a perfection of beauty, in the upper and brighter world, for ever. The first openings of grace upon the soul, after a dark night of the fall, may be compared to the beauty of the morning. But though fair as the moon, it is but a borrowed light, as the moon, and subject to changes in its increasings, and its wanings also. As long as the sun's influences are upon this planet, its shinings will be fair. But when objects intervene from the earth, and the sun shines not, there will be an eclipse of all its borrowed lustre. Just so the Church ; and oh ! how often on my soul. While Jesus, the sun of righteousness, shines upon me, all is fair and lovely ; but if he withdraws, the night immediately follows. But oh ! my soul, when grace is perfected in glory ; when as John in a vision saw that wonder of wonders in heaven, " a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet," (*Rev.* xii. 1.) then shall the whole Church of God shine forth " as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." Precious Jesus ! give me to see my clear interest in thee, from my union with thee ! And do thou, dear Lord, so make me strong in thy strength, that during the whole period of my present warfare, I may be " terrible as an army with banners," to all that would oppose my way to thee, and in thee. Yea, Lord ! let sin, and Satan, and the world, be ever so united against me, yet do thou put on me the whole armour of my God, that I may " fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life, and be made more than conqueror through Him that loveth me."

But none saith, Where is God, my maker, who giveth songs in the night ?—*Job* xxxv. 10.

Ah, Lord ! is it so, that among men of the world, though oppressed by the world, and the evils of it, and some are compelled to cry out under the bitterness of their sorrows, yet are there no hearts, no voices, directed to thee ? When death entereth into their window, and taketh away the desire of their eyes with a stroke ; or when pains, and chastenings of the body chain them to their beds : do they lament the earthly bereavements, and groan under the consequences of sin, by which death and sickness came ; and yet in all these things, will nothing lead their unthinking minds " to hear the rod, and who hath appointed

it?" Will they turn from one creature-comfort to another, and strive to fill up the vacancies made by distressing providences in their fancied happiness with any thing, or even nothing, rather than look to thee for comfort and support under their trouble? Oh! how great are my privileges, if this be the case, compared to the carnal! And oh! how distinguishing thy grace to my poor soul, that when sleepless on the bed, or when pains keep me awake, I can, and do look to Jesus, and say, "Thou art God my maker, who giveth songs in the night!" Yea, Lord! thou hast refreshed my soul with many a sweet song, when all the world was to me asleep, and could not interrupt my happiness. Oh! how often have I been blessed with the harmony of the songs of redemption, and run over in some of the blessed verses of it, how Jesus hath loved me, and given himself for me. Yea, Lord! may I not say, as the prophet, "Thou hast wakened me morning by morning; thou hast wakened mine ear, to hear as the learned." For methinks I have been often wakened in the night by thee, and I have found my soul instantly led out by thy grace to a sense of thy presence, and to a desire after thee: and was not this, my Lord, calling, as upon the Church of old, "Let us get up early to the vineyards, for there will I give thee my loves!" O precious Redeemer! grant me such frequent visits, and such sweet communications of thy grace; and if in thy wise and kind providences, sickness, or pain, or afflictions, be at any time appointed me, do thou sit up by me, Lord, and keep my heart in sweet recollection of thee, that in the multitude of the sorrows of my heart, thy comforts may refresh my soul, and frequently may the earnest petition for thy presence and thy love go forth in the inquiry, "Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?"

Having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.—*John* xiii. 1.

Sweet thought, my soul, for thee everlastingly to cherish; thy Jesus is the same, and his love the same, amidst all thy changings: yet he abideth faithful. His love, and not thy merit, was the first cause of thy salvation; and the same love, and not thy deservings, is the final cause wherefore thou art not lost. But mark in this blessed scripture, how many sweet and lovely things are said. Jesus hath a people, and that people are in the world, and that people are his own. What! had he not a people in the other world? Yes! by creation all are his, in common with the Father. But by redemption he had none, until he had redeemed them from this present evil world. And observe how very graciously they are spoken of. They are his own, his peculiar people, his treasure, his *Segullah*, his jewels.

And how dearly doth he prize them ! They were first given to him by his Father—that made them dear. They are the purchase of his blood—this made them dear also. He hath conquered them by his grace—this endears them to himself as his own. And though they are in this world too much engaged in the affairs of the world, and too much in love with the world, yet Jesus's love is not abated ; their persons are still dear to Jesus, though their sins he hates. The same love which prompted his infinite mind to stand up for their redemption, the same love is going forth unceasingly, and without change or lessening, to accomplish and render effectual that redemption. Precious Lord Jesus ! O for grace to love thee, who hast so loved us ! And while thou condescendest to call such poor sinful worms thine own, and to love them as thine own, and to consider every thing done *for* them and done *to* them as to thyself, shall not a portion of such love be communicated to my poor heart, that I may love thee as my own and only Saviour, and learn to love thee to the end, as thou hast loved me and given thyself for me, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour ?

MARCH.

For by one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.—*Hebrews* x. 14.

I hope, my soul, thou hast still upon thee the sweet savour of His name, whom in the *morning* portion thou didst contemplate as wonderful. And if so, here is another view of Jesus presented to thine *evening* meditation, to keep alive the blessed fragrancy, and under the Spirit's influence, to preserve both, not only through the night, but to the morning, and every night, and every morning that follows, until the night of death be passed, and that everlasting morning break in upon thee, in which thy sun shall no more go down, but Jesus himself be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Look, my soul, this evening, at thy Jesus, as this sweet scripture sets him forth, and behold him in his high priestly office, at once the sacrifice, the sacrificer, and the altar, on which he hath offered up that one offering, by which he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. And mark both the preciousness of thy Jesus, and the preciousness of his work. It is but *one* offering, and that one but once offered. For, from its eternal value and efficacy, an everlasting perfection is given to all them that are sanctified, and set apart for himself. "For Christ (as the apostle in his delightful manner expresseth it) being raised from the dead, dieth no more : death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once : but in that he liveth, he

liveth unto God." (Rom. vi. 9, 10.) And what abundant precious things are contained in this view of the one offering of the Lord Jesus, which the Holy Ghost is continually holding forth to the Church! It is blessed to behold them, blessed to believe them, and doubly blessed to be living in the constant enjoyment of them. So vast and comprehensive is this one offering of Jesus, that it hath not merely procured the hopes of pardon, but the certainty of it; not only brought poor sinners into a capability of being saved, but absolutely saved them; and not only saved them, but qualified them for happiness; yea, hath perfected, and that for ever, them that are sanctified. And who are they? Surely all are sanctified who were set apart from everlasting, in the counsel of peace, between the persons of the Godhead, and given unto the Son, in an everlasting covenant, that cannot be broken; for to this purport are those blessed words of Jesus himself, in his prayer to his Father (John xvii. 2), "That I should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given me." And, my soul, take one observation more from this sweet scripture: this perfection, given to his people, by his one offering, is *for ever*: he hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified. So that the blessing runs through all eternity. The efficacy of Jesus's blood and righteousness is eternally the same. In point of merit, it flows as fresh, and pure, and sovereign, in its pleadings now, as ever. Hallelujah! Fold up, my soul, this blessed verse in thy bosom, and carry it about with thee in thine heart. Let it be among the first and last of thy thoughts when thou liest down and when thou risest up. Jesus will own it, and prove it to the full, when thou bringest it before his throne.

The waters of Marah.—*Exodus* xv. 23.

My soul! let thine imagination take wing, and flee thou this evening beside the waters of *Marah*; and while thou sittest down by the stream, see whether thou wilt be able to gather some of the many improving lessons the Holy Ghost brings before the Church, concerning that memorable transaction wrought there for Israel: We read in the history of that people, that they had just before sung the song of salvation on the borders of the Red Sea, when Israel saw that great sight, themselves redeemed, and the enemy swallowed up: and they were now on their march toward the promised land. Three days they had travelled into the wilderness, and found no water; and when they came to *Marah*, though water was there in abundance, yet they could not drink of it, for it was bitter. In this situation they cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed the people a tree, which, when cast into the waters, made them sweet. Such are the outlines of the history. Pause now, my soul, and see what improving reflections thou canst gather from it. The Lord thy God hath

brought thee also out of spiritual Egypt, he hath led thee through a new and living way, even the red sea of Christ's blood; and thou hast begun thy song of salvation also, to God and the Lamb. But when, like Israel, he is bringing thee through the wilderness, where dispensations, suited to a wilderness, may be supposed to abound, how art thou manifesting thy faith and submission? Reader, what is your answer to such a question? Methinks I would hope better things of *you* than I dare say of myself. - But I too often find, when the waters of life are like the waters of Marah, when what I proposed for my comfort turns out to my sorrow, and I discover a worm in the very bud of some sweet flower I have been rearing up for myself with great care, I feel rebellion rising within. I blush even now in the recollection of how often I have been tempted to call in question the divine faithfulness, and, like Israel, have taken offence at some little difficulty I have met with, which afterwards, I have discovered, was purposely put there by the Lord himself, to manifest his watchfulness over me, and how sure my dependence upon him might have been placed. Reader! doth your heart find but too much correspondence to this state of mine? Let us both then do as Israel did, when at any time our waters are like the waters of Marah, cry unto the Lord. Let us put the cross of Jesus into the stream, be it what it may, (for that is the tree which the Lord showeth his people,) and never doubt but Jesus's cross, though to Him more bitter than gall, yet to us will prove the sweetener of all our crosses. Yes! thou dear Lord! thou didst drink the cup of trembling even to the dregs, that in the view of it thy redeemed might take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. Thy cross, if cast into a sea of trouble, will alter the very properties of affliction to all thy tried ones. In every place, and in every state, while my soul is enabled to keep thee in remembrance, and "thy wormwood and thy gall," the wilderness of all my dispensations will smile and blossom as the rose. I shall then learn to bless a taking God, as well as a giving God, for both are alike from the overflowings of thy mercy; and, like the apostle, I shall then have learnt the blessedness of that state, "to glory in tribulation, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2 Peter i. 10, 11.

What a very affectionate advice is here given by the apostle ; and surely as important as it is tender ! Sit down, my soul, this evening, and ponder these words of Peter. The apostle saith, and saith it with great clearness of reason as well as revelation, that an assurance of being a partaker of grace in this life, becomes as sure and certain an evidence of being made a partaker of glory in another. The question then is, how shall I ascertain, and without the shadow of a doubt, the certainty of my calling and election ? Shall I look into the book of life, to see my name there ? That is impossible. " Secret things belong unto the Lord our God ; but those that are revealed belong unto us, and unto our children for ever." Is there nothing revealed on this important point in the Scriptures of truth ? Yes. The apostle to the Romans was directed to tell the Church, that whom God the Father did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, " them he also called : and whom he called, them he also justified : and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Rom. viii. 29, 30.) Hence, therefore, it must plainly and undeniably follow, that where a soul can fully prove his having been *called*, his *election* is included in the discovery ; for the one is the result and consequence of the other. If I see a stream of water flowing, there must be a source whence it comes, though the fountain itself be out of sight. The fruit of any tree will of itself ascertain the nature and quality of the tree whence it was gathered, whether the tree be seen or not. And if, my soul, thou possessest clear and unquestionable tokens of thy being called by grace, in the true scriptural evidences which the Holy Ghost hath there marked concerning it, thine election will as plainly be implied. See, then, if this be the case. If thou hast a conviction of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment ; if a sense of thy transgressions hath been so marked in thine heart, as to be followed with a sense of thy utterly lost and ruined state by nature, and a total inability on thy part to accomplish any thing towards thine own recovery ; and if thou hast been led by the Holy Ghost to the view of Jesus, as the only One mighty to save ; and thou art come to him with the awakened cry of the soul, " Lord, save, or I perish !" these are among the first and most striking testimonies of an effectual and saving call by grace. And, therefore, the *diligence* the apostle so strongly and affectionately recommends is to look into thy evidences daily, and daily to live in the habit and enjoyment of them ; so that, from an increasing acquaintance with them, all the great and glorious objects connected with our future and eternal state may be made familiar to the soul. Steadfastly looking to the Lord Jesus by faith, and living by faith upon him, we may be daily growing up to him in all things ; so that when life comes to be closed, and faith swallowed up in enjoyment, like a rich and deeply-laden vessel in full sail, we may then have " an abundant en-

trance ministered unto us, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi.—*Genesis* xvi. 13, 14.

Behold, my soul, what very blessed instructions arise out of this scripture. Beg of God the Holy Ghost to make thy present evening meditation of it sweet. The words themselves are the reflection of *Hagar*, the handmaid of *Sarah*, when she fled from her mistress into the wilderness. In a situation of great distress, the Lord manifested himself to her, and the conclusion she drew from it was, as is expressed, “Thou God seest me.” This, indeed, was the name she gave unto the Lord, as if henceforth she would know the Lord in all his mercies by this name. Sweet thought! Jesus is known by his name, and in his name his grace is revealed. But *Hagar* added another delightful reflection, “for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?” As if she had said, “And hath the grace of God, looking upon me, wrought grace in me?” But the words may be read differently, and some indeed read them so: “Have I looked for the Lord, when the Lord looked after me?” “Alas! I thought not of him until that he called me by his grace.” Here is another delightful thought of *Hagar*’s, and in perfect harmony with the gospel of Jesus. “For if we love God, it is because he first loved us.” And there is another reflection as interesting as either: “Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi;” that is, “the well of him that liveth and looketh on.” This became *Hagar*’s memorial, as if she would for ever perpetuate the name of Him that looked on and regarded her sorrow. This well, this place, this sacred spot, shall be *Hagar*’s Bethel! It shall tell every one that passeth by, Here the Lord wrought, and here he manifested grace to a poor handmaid. Precious scripture of a precious God! Who but must feel delight in beholding *Hagar*’s faith? And who but must find cause to bless God, both for giving that faith, and affording so favourable an occasion for the exercise of it? And shall I not, and will not you, reader, gather some of the many delightful instructions from it, for our own use, which it is so highly calculated to bring? Did the angel of the Lord look on *Hagar*, and doth he not look on every child of his? Am I at any time looking after Jesus, and is not Jesus looking after me? Oh! what a volume of encouragement ariseth from this one view, to persevere in looking after him and in waiting for him! that before I thought

of him, or was looking after him, Jesus was both caring and looking upon me! It is impossible to be beforehand with God. Put down, then, my soul, this conclusion from this blessed scripture, that in every place, in every state, upon every occasion, thy Jesus liveth, and looketh on. And do thou call thy Lord by the same name as Hagar did, that speaketh to thee in every place, and by every providence, "Thou God seest me." And never, never forget, when thou art hardest put to it, and art seeking Jesus, sorrowing, though to thy blind eye he doth not so immediately appear, yet he is still seeing and following thee, even when thou art not seeking and following after him. Let this be in thy constant remembrance: and make every spot that is memorable like the well *Beer-lâhai-roi*, to draw water of salvation from; for in every one it is the well of Him that liveth, and looketh on. Precious Lord Jesus! henceforth grant me grace, that while thou art looking after me with love and favour, I may be looking unto thee with faith and praise. And through every step of my wilderness state, while going home to my Father's house, let this be my comfort and the burden of my song in this house of my pilgrimage, "Thou God seest me."

Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?—*Galatians* iii. 3.

While beholding the Church of *Galatia*, which set out upon true gospel principles, and before whose eyes Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth as crucified among them, yet after this, turning aside to seek justification by works, let thine evening meditation, my soul, be directed to this heart-searching inquiry: Upon what art thou building thine hopes of salvation? Is it simply on Christ? or art thou mingling with the blood and righteousness of Jesus, somewhat of thine own, by way of justification? The question is exceedingly important; and the clear answer to it, of the first consequence to thy present peace and everlasting welfare. See to it, then, that there are no reserves, no limitations, nothing to qualify the plain and direct answer to the apostle's words; but having begun in the Spirit, thou canst truly say, thou dost not seek to be made perfect by the flesh. If this be thy case, thou hast learned to make a nice, but highly proper distinction between the great object of faith, which is Christ alone, and the fruits and effects of that faith, which are the gracious influences Jesus, by his Holy Spirit, hath wrought in thine heart. It is very blessed, very desirable, to let the world, both of saints and of sinners, see our light so shine before them, that it may not be the subject of doubt whose we are, and whom we serve. But, if any attainments which, by grace,

my soul is blessed with, be made a part saviour in my views of justification, and I am not looking wholly to Jesus for this great work, as wrought out and completed by him, certain it is, that however I might begin in the Spirit, I am now turning aside to the flesh. Moreover, besides the motley religion I am thus taking up with, if what I feel, and what I enjoy in the *fruits* and *effects* of faith, be made a part of my hopes and confidence; alas! when those feelings and those enjoyments at any time abate, my hopes and confidence will abate also. And if justification be made a fluctuating principle, is it not plain that I shall be void of comfort, when I most want it? And is it not from this very cause, that so many precious souls go in leanness all their days, sometimes feeling hope, but for the most part exercised with doubts and fears, according to what they *feel*, and not what *Jesus is* in their view, and because, in themselves, they are looking for somewhat that may give a greater confidence in Christ? Pause, my soul, and inquire how the case stands with thyself: Is Jesus the whole, in the way of a sinner's justification before God? Is he the Alpha and the Omega also? Dost thou regard him as both the Author and the Finisher of salvation? Is he the first and the last? And dost thou venture thine everlasting *all* upon Jesus? Pause once more, and then say, what are thy views in this distinction between the works of the Spirit and of the flesh? Hast thou so learned Christ?

She bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord.—1 *Sam.* i. 20.

It is really both blessed and profitable to observe, how holy men of old made memorandums of the Lord's kind dealings with them, as well in providence as grace, by way of preserving alive a due sense of divine mercies upon their souls. A night or two since, the Evening Portion remarked a beautiful instance of this sort, in the case of Hagar: and in the scripture I have brought forth for our present meditation, is another, equally beautiful, in the instance of Hannah. In the *former*, the memorial was set up to perpetuate the *place* of the Lord's graciousness: in this *latter*, the dedication is of the *person* concerning whom divine favour was shown. But in *both*, the design is one and the same, to glorify God! I pause by the way to remark, how much to be lamented it is, that this truly scriptural and pious custom is so little followed by Christians, and even believing Christians too, in the present hour. What a number of unscriptural, and frequently heathenish names, are now given to children of parents professing the great truths of the gospel! Whereas, with those early followers of the Lord, they called their children by somewhat that should be always significant of divine mercies. So that

whenever their children were at any time called upon, or looked to, the very name might bring to remembrance past blessings, and refresh their souls in the recollection of the mercies which occasioned them. This instance of Hannah is beautifully in point, by way of illustration; she called him Samuel, which signifies, asked, of the Lord. For we find in her history, with what earnestness she sought a child from the Lord. Hence, therefore, we may suppose, upon numberless occasions, in after-days, whenever she heard her Samuel mentioned, or she called him herself, the soul of Hannah went forth in faith, and love, and praise, to the Author and Giver of this blessing. And it is but reasonable to suppose, that if the name reminded the mother of her mercy, and she called her son by this name purposely that she might see the Lord in his bounty, no doubt she was not forgetful to instruct her Samuel also in the same thing. We may, indeed, conclude that Hannah betimes made Samuel acquainted with the cause of his name. And from the sequel of the prophet's history, we find that he who was a child of prayer, and asked of the Lord, was a servant to his praise, and given to the Lord. Reader! methinks it is blessed, it is gracious, and sure I am it is right, thus to keep up intercourse with heaven. You and I have our Samuels, I mean our asked blessings, whether in children, or in other providences. Oh! for grace, while receiving mercies, to make those mercies the memorandums of the great Giver! If what we ask *from* God in prayer, we give back again *to* God in praise, and in the stream of creature enjoyments, find a tenfold relish in them from living upon the Creator's fulness, then we shall find cause to call many a blessing, *Samuel*, because "it hath been asked," and often given unasked, "of the Lord."

Because she judged him faithful who had promised.

Heb. xi. 11.

I admire what the Holy Ghost hath here recorded of Sarah's faith. After what we read of the weakness of her faith at first, in the history to which this refers, I cannot but rejoice in this recovery of the great mother in Israel, through grace, and read with very much pleasure this honourable testimony which the Holy Ghost himself hath given of her. And I admire yet more the grace and goodness of the Eternal Spirit, in causing it to be handed down to the Church, among the list of such worthies, and desire to bless his holy name for this scripture. And while I bless God for the memorial, I pray him to give me a spirit of wisdom, to improve it to my own furtherance in faith. The faith of Sarah, like that of her husband, was the more illustrious from the seeming impossibilities which lay in the way of the accomplishment of God's promise. For what the Lord engaged to do,

was contrary to the whole course of nature. But what was that to Sarah? All she had to do, was to consider the promise, and keep an eye upon the almighty Promiser. "If there are difficulties in the way, that is God's business, and not mine," might Sarah say. "How the Lord will bring it to pass, is with him, and not with me: I have no concern with that. My province is to believe; it is God's to work." Here was an act of illustrious faith! and the sequel of Sarah's history shows how well-founded it was. But the Holy Ghost explains the subject, and shows how it was accomplished; "because she judged him faithful who had promised." Now, my soul, see to it, that thou make the same grand cause the foundation of thy faith, namely, Jehovah's faithfulness; and, depend upon it, every promise of the gospel, even Jesus, with all his fulness, thou mayest, as well as Sarah, rely upon; and thou wilt be always able to do it, as long as thou makest the same perfection of Jehovah thy confidence: "because she judged him faithful that promised." While I rest upon his faithfulness, I rest upon the Rock of ages, which can never give way: and every difficulty, or seeming impossibility, which comes between the promise of a faithful God, and the accomplishment of that promise, hath no more to do with the thing itself, than the tide hath with unsettling the rock; but which, like the tide, will soon ebb, and withdraw, and leave the ground dry. Oh! the blessedness of judging him faithful, who hath promised!

A psalm of David to bring to remembrance.

Psalm xxxviii. in the title.

This psalm, as well as the 70th, is particularly marked in the title, and distinguished from every other; and it will be worth while to seek into the cause. A great light will be thrown upon it, if we connect with this title the character of the great Author, under whose inspiration David, as the penman, wrote it: I mean, that sweet and blessed office of the Holy Ghost, *the Remembrancer* of the Lord Jesus. "He shall teach you (saith the Lord Jesus, when describing the blessed Spirit in his offices) all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John xiv. 26.) Now, if this psalm be found, on examination, to be speaking much of the person and character of Christ, ought it not, when read under the divine teaching of its almighty Author, to act as a psalm to bring to remembrance, how Jesus thus suffered, thus groaned, bled, and died for his people? He it was, as this psalm represents, whose lovers and friends stood aloof from him in his sorrows; for in the trying hour, all his disciples forsook him and fled: and he was the only person of whom it could be said, that as a deaf man who heard not, and as a dumb man who opened not his mouth, so Jesus stood, as a

lamb before her shearers, when in the hall of Pilate he was accused and condemned, without opening his mouth. If, then, the great design of this psalm is to bring to remembrance the Redeemer, in those solemn seasons, shall we make application of the contents of it to David, king of Israel, and overlook David's Lord? O thou great and divine Remembrancer of the Lord Jesus! I beseech thee, thou matchless instructor! to cause every thing, and every incident, to call my poor forgetful heart to my Lord! Lord, I blush to think how men of the world feel interested in the most minute concerns of the histories of any characters of supposed eminence, which in former ages have lived among them; every memorandum of them that can be gathered, is treasured up with more avidity than gold; if a letter, or the handwriting, can be found, how they expressed themselves, or how their hours were engaged, with all, or any of the little events which marked their lives: oh! what attention it gains in the world! But, as if to show their indifference to him, who, strictly speaking, is the only one worthy regard, what heart is alive to the ever blessed Jesus? Do thou, I beseech thee, thou eternal Spirit, in this gracious office of thine as the Remembrancer of my Lord, make this psalm, as oft as I read it, a psalm to bring Jesus to remembrance in all his endearments; and also cause all thy sacred word to minister to this one great end! Here let me learn a lesson from men of the world; and while they feel rapture in the memorandums and reliques of poor sinners, whose places know them no more, let my soul delight in the views his sacred word affords concerning Jesus. "Thus Jesus spake," I would say; and "Thus he stood;" and "Thus he was encircled by the astonished multitude, who witnessed the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." Every incident then in his divine life will be as a psalm to bring to remembrance; and I shall enjoy a thousand things when the Holy Ghost, as his Remembrancer, brings them forth to view, which, without his gracious office and word, would be lost to my poor forgetful mind.

The pool of Siloam.—*John ix. 7*

It was a very gracious account given by the Holy Ghost in the writings of his servants the prophets, that in the last days, meaning gospel days, "living waters should go forth of Jerusalem;" and, saith the Lord, "it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the river shall come, shall live." (Ezek. xlvi. 9.) And in the day of Christ's flesh we find Jesus giving life wheresoever he came: and not unfrequently, as if to testify the sovereignty of his power, he communicated his blessings in this life-giving principle of himself, by means alto-

gether, to outward view, unpromising. The clay applied to the eyes of one born blind, and the pool of Siloam, are both directly in point. It is just so, blessed Jesus, that I would have recourse to ordinances and means of grace, and when I attend, I would desire to pass over them to the enjoyment of thyself, and the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit. And if the pool of Siloam was thus attended, and the several maladies of thy people thus brought before thee, that while using the means we had an eye to the end, how should we find the deceased that were *sent*, returning healed. The imagination can hardly conceive any thing more interesting, than to behold souls under their different distresses, thus coming to the pool of Siloam, and thus receiving Jesus in the use of it. Am I faint? "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength." Is another walking in darkness and have no light? Jesus saith "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." Are "our bones dried," like the bones in the valley, "and our hope lost; are we cut off from our parts?" (Ezek. xxxvii. 11.) Behold, saith the Lord God, "I will open your graves, O my people, and cause you to come up out of your graves." And how doth the Lord accomplish it? He saith, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and he that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." Are they void of faith? Jesus is "the Author and Giver of faith." Are they backward to repentance? Jesus is "exalted as a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins." Have they backslidden? Jesus saith, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." In short, at the pool of Siloam, neither the water nor the clay are the objects of faith, but he that sends to the pool: and while we lay our wants over against his fulness, and consider, in our need, the very suitability there is in that need for the display of Christ's grace in the supply, this is the very way of following up the divine appointments. And as every poor sinner is made blessed in receiving from Jesus, so Jesus is made glorious in giving out of his fulness; and the gracious purpose of salvation is answered in the comfort of the sinner, the glory of the Saviour, and the everlasting praise of Jehovah, in the wonders of redemption! My soul! let thine evening meditation be thus sweet in viewing the pool of Siloam!

If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him. But if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?—1 *Samuel* ii. 25.

It is a very solemn thing to behold a trembling convicted malefactor, when standing before an earthly tribunal, although the

judge is of the same nature with himself: for every thing is solemn, earnest, and impartial. But what is the awfulness of a court of human judicature, compared to that day, in which a whole world, all found guilty before God, shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ? In this life, there is, for the most part, somewhat to mitigate, and to excite hope in the worst of cases; some tender-hearted friend, some kind neighbour, some feeling relation, will be found to arise, to soften, if not able to relieve, the guilty man's distress. But at that tribunal, where none can plead, and where all hearts are open, what shall be found to stop the overwhelming horrors of the condemned?—Pause, my soul, over the view, for it is solemn. If one man sin against another thus breaking the law, the judge shall judge him: and who is the Judge but Jesus? Here he that is the Judge is also the Advocate of his people; yea, their surety, their law-fulfiller; so that, as the apostle was commissioned to tell the Church, “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John ii. 1, 2.) Precious thought! soul-supporting consolation! To all the sins and offences, both against God and man, the believer may plead the blood and righteousness of Jesus, as the law fulfiller and ransom paid for sin. But if a man sin against the Lord himself, by rejecting this counsel of God against his own soul, who then shall entreat for him? For the only Advocate, he slights; the only propitiation, he disclaims; and as there is salvation in no other, and there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, to whom, in that awful day of God, will he look: or who but Jesus could take up his cause? O ye that know not Christ, or ye that slight him, think, before it be too late, what paleness, dread, and horror, must arrest that soul, which, when weighed in the balances, shall be found wanting! Cherish, my soul, the blessedness of thy hope, which is founded wholly on the Mediator's righteousness; and resteth on what can never fail of acceptance, because founded both on the merit of Christ and God the Father's own appointment—redemption in the blood of the Lamb, and being made accepted in the Beloved.

Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem.—*Song* vi. 4.

And what was *Tirzah*? One of the cities in the lot of Manasseh, (Joshua xii. 6, 24,) and no doubt, as *Judea* was the glory of all lands, Tirzah, which was a part of it, was lovely. And the comeliness of that highly-favoured spot, Jerusalem, is celebrated in the sacred song: “In the mountain of his holiness,” saith the psalmist, “beautiful for situation, and the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion.” (Psalm xlviii. 1, 2.) And is Christ's

Church, in her Lord's eye, thus beautiful? Yes! He himself saith she is: and, by consequence, every individual member of her is so, which constitutes her one body. Pause, my soul, over this account, and let thine evening meditation dwell upon the pleasing subject. Thou art mourning continually over thine infirmities; thou feelest what Paul felt, and thou groanest under the same burden as he groaned under: and, indeed, the consciousness of indwelling sin is enough to make the souls of the redeemed go softly all their days. But while thus conscious that in thyself thou hast nothing that is lovely, do not overlook the loveliness which the righteousness of Christ, justifying his people, imparts to all their persons. Zion is said to be the perfection of beauty; and so she is in the eyes of God our Father, being the body of Christ, and made so in his beauty. What Jesus is in God's sight, such must be his people. For Christ, as head of his Church, is the fulness that filleth all in all. If, my soul, thou wert looking for any thing in thyself that was amiable or beautiful to recommend thee to Jesus, or to justify thee before God, then, indeed, thou mightst exclaim with the prophet: "Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips." (Isaiah vi. 5.) But if Jesus hath touched thy lips, and taken away thine iniquity, and thy sin is purged, then art thou all fair in him, and accepted by God the Father in him, the beloved; and Jesus saith to thee, and of thee, "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem." See to it, henceforth, that thou art never losing sight of thy oneness with Christ, and the loveliness that thou art deriving from Christ. And while thou art daily lamenting that a soul united to Jesus should still carry about such a body of sin and death as thou dost, which harasseth and afflicteth thy soul, yet never, never forget that thou art now looking up to the throne of grace for acceptance as thou art in Jesus, and not as thou art in thyself; and comfort thyself with this pleasing consideration, that ere long thou wilt be openly presented before a throne of glory, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish before him in love."

Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.—*Psalm lxxvi. 10.*

My soul! thou art returned from the exercises of the day, exercises which sometimes are sharp and trying; come now into the pavilion and retirings of thy God in Christ, and take with thee this sweet scripture, and, under his gracious teachings, see what beauties, by way of comfort, it affords. The Holy Ghost saith: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise the Lord." Pause, and consider in how many ways this blessed scripture proves

itself. How often is the wrath of man made to minister to the happiness of God's people! How often do they become the unconscious ministers of producing the very reverse of what they intended: and where they designed evil to the saints of God, there good is found to come! When the Lord makes our friends, in the sweet endearments of society, promote our welfare, and we find blessings spring out of the thousand, and ten thousand charities of life, in providences, in helps, assistances, and the like, in which we minister by his appointment one to another, we do not so often trace the divine hand; and from the commonness of the blessing, lose sight of the direction whence it comes. But when the Lord, at any time, makes our enemies, and the enemies of our God and of his Christ accomplish the secret purposes of his holy will, and those acts of theirs, which were evidently meant by them to distress, prove the very cause of joy, then we discern how the Lord overrules every thing to, his glory, and his people's welfare. Here the Lord speaks in a loud voice, as in that sweet scripture: "In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." (Isaiah xxvii. 2, 3.) My soul! learn from henceforth to be on the watch-tower, as the prophet was, for the evidences of these things. They will be very blessed, when at any time they are discovered; and, depend upon it, they are more frequent than, with thy poor, thoughtless and inattentive mind, thou art apt to suppose. Had not the brethren of Joseph sold him for a slave, how would he afterwards have arisen to be governor in Egypt? Had not Pharaoh oppressed Israel, how would their cries to God have called him forth to their rescue? Had not that monster of iniquity pursued the people of God to the Red Sea, how would Israel have seen their foes dead on the shore? Nay, in an infinitely higher and more momentous matter than these, or every other in history put together, had not the wrath of man nailed Jesus to the cross, how, my soul, wouldst thou, and all the ransomed Church of Christ, have found redemption in his blood? Oh! for grace ever to keep this in remembrance. Never, surely, did the wrath of men praise Jehovah in any equal degree, or was so made to minister to the divine glory! Precious, precious Jesus! I beseech thee, gracious Lord, preserve alive in my soul this contemplation of man's malice ministering to God's praise; that in all my little exercises here below, my soul may be stayed and comforted under them. And when at any time the enemy frowns, bad men afflict, the proud scorn, or the mighty of the earth would trample me under their feet, until in the bitterness of my heart I cry out, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" oh! for grace to cast one look at the cross of my Lord, and there read the whole explained: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

Whose heart the Lord opened.—*Acts xvi. 14.*

It is always blessed to trace mercies to their source! And blessed when, through grace, we are enabled to give God his glory, and not put down to man's merit what wholly originates in God's grace. The opening of the heart can only be the province of him that made it. Renewing work, as well as creating work, is his. He that hath the key of David, is he alone "that openeth, and none shutteth; and shutteth, and none openeth." What a beautiful illustration the Holy Ghost gives the Church of this precious truth, in the instance of this woman, whose heart the Lord opened! We are told in her history, that she was of the city of *Thyatira*, a place remote from *Philippi*, where this sovereign act of mercy was shown her. How long she had remained in a state of unrenewed nature, or what predisposing providence it was that brought her to *Philippi*, with other circumstances which we might have thought interesting to inquire after, we are not informed; the grand feature in her character is summed up in this short, but blessed account, "whose heart the Lord opened." The Holy Ghost hath indeed recorded her name and occupation, by way of making this testimony concerning her: "A certain woman, named *Lydia*, a seller of purple." Behold, my soul! what blessed instruction ariseth out of it, for thy evening's meditation. What honourable mention is made of her, from this one blessed act, which the Lord wrought upon her! Poor and inconsiderable as she was in herself, small and of no reputation, yet her name is in the book of life! Pause, and contemplate the rich mercy which the Lord hath also accomplished in thee. Hath not he that opened *Lydia's* heart opened thine? And is it not his province also that first opened it by his grace, to keep it open by the daily influences of his Holy Spirit? Is it not his to renew, to refresh, to comfort, to strengthen, and to confirm unto the end? And wilt thou not, my soul, with the close of day, and the opening of the morning, look up for these precious manifestations? Lord! do thou open mine eyes, mine heart, my whole soul, to the enjoyment of these gracious renewed visits of thy love: and let no night or morning pass, without receiving fresh and increasing evidences from my Lord, that Christ hath both opened my heart, and is "formed in my heart the hope of glory!"

He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.—*2 Thess. i. 10.*

Among a thousand wonders that will be unfolded before the astonished world, at the great day of God, to call up the unceasing praises of the Church of Christ to all eternity, there are

two very blessed events which will take place, and which this scripture records: the *one* is, how Jesus will be glorified in his own sacred person, in the view of his redeemed, when all his beauties are then displayed; and the *other* is, how Jesus will be glorified *in them*, from the saving change which his grace hath wrought in them. Let thine evening meditation, my soul, be upon both. And first think how Jesus, thy Jesus, will then appear. He hath, indeed, been always known to thee, since he was first revealed to thee by grace, as Wonderful: and every act of his towards thee hath fully answered to this name. For in all his perfections, offices, characters, and relations, in all things concerning and relating to him, every view of him is wonderful. But He that is now known by faith, will then become the object of sight; and think, my soul, what an object of sight will it be! Never, but in the person of Jesus, can there be any thing presented to the view of men, or of angels, of equal glory! God and man in one person, can only be found in Christ. And God dwelling in flesh, is only rendered capable by that union, and through that medium, of being seen. And think, if it be possible, how glorious, how unspeakably glorious, the human nature of Christ must be, and is, from its union with the Godhead; such as no excellency of angels can at all, even in the most distant degree, resemble. Pause over this contemplation; for such is thy Jesus, and such will he appear, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe. When thou hast fully feasted thyself (as far as thy poor unripe faculties can take in the blessedness of it) by dwelling upon the contemplation of Jesus, as he is, and as he will then appear, in his own glorious person, go on and consider that glory that shall be revealed of Jesus, in the saving change which he hath wrought in his people, whereby he will be admired in all them that believe. Oh! what a flood of glory will pour in upon the soul, and what endless praises will go forth to the great Author of the unspeakable mercy, when the vast volume comes to be opened and explained, of what Jesus hath wrought *in* them; what he hath communicated *to* them; what everlasting blessings he hath procured *for* them; and what glory, as their great Mediator, he will have *by* them, through all the incalculable periods of the eternal world, in their living *upon* him and *to* him; and *from* him deriving all the accessions of light and life, and glory and joy, for ever and ever! My soul! never, never lose sight of these blessed views: but add to that glorious account, that sweet testimony of Jesus, concerning this great day of God, to his people: "At that day, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (John xiv. 20.)

A man in Christ.—2 Cor. xii. 2.

My soul! thy last evening's meditation was sweet (was it not?) in contemplating thy Jesus, as glorious in his own person and as glorified in his people. Wilt thou add to that subject, for it is part of the same, for thy present thoughts, what is suggested in this motto, "A man in Christ?" Dost thou fully enter into the pleasing apprehension of what the phrase implies? Now, who shall fully describe it; or who is competent fully to conceive the whole extent of it? "A man in Christ" must imply every thing connected with a oneness, an union, a part of himself; yea, "a life hid with Christ in God." A man in Christ is as much a part in Christ's mystical body, as the head, or hand, or foot, is a part of that body to which those members belong. Hence (which is indeed a sweet part of the subject) every one who is "a man in Christ" is to all intents and purposes interested in all that belongs to Christ, as the Christ of God. Hence also it must as undeniably follow, that every member of Christ's body, the least as well as the greatest, the humblest as well as the highest, becomes a part in him, equally united to him, and participates in what belongs to him. The life of Christ here, as the life of glory hereafter, both derived from Christ, and enjoyed wholly from an union with Christ, are equally enjoyed; just as the smallest leaf or branch, united to a tree, becomes a part of that tree as much as the loftiest branches. Dost thou enter, my soul, into an apprehension of these outlines of the subject? Art thou "a man in Christ," by regeneration, adoption, justification, and grace? Oh! then, turn over the transporting thought, with holy and unceasing delight, in thy constant meditation. Calculate, if thou art able, the blessed inheritance to which thou art begotten by it, of grace here and glory to all eternity. "A man in Christ," as accepted in Christ, justified in Christ, sanctified in Christ, and most assuredly will be glorified in Christ. Oh! who can think of these things, and, through the Holy Ghost conscious of an interest in these things, can suffer the exercises of a dying world to bring affliction into the soul? What a life of *dignity* is "a man in Christ" brought into! He is brought nigh unto God, through the blood of the cross. What a state of *security* is "a man in Christ" placed in! "Because I live (saith Jesus) ye shall live also." And what an endless prospect of *glory* hath "a man in Christ" opening before him when Christ hath said, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me!" O the unspeakable blessedness of "a man in Christ!"

And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy;

even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem : When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

Isaiah iv. 3, 4.

What a precious scripture is here ! and what vast things are contained in the bosom of it ! Mark them down, my soul, one by one, this evening, and see what of thy personal interest thou canst trace in the whole. And first, "who they are" of whom these things are said, namely, "the living in Jerusalem ; even every one that is written, and he that is left, and he that remaineth." By *living* and being *written*, can only mean what the beloved apostle saith of being "written in the book of life." (Rev. xiii. 8.) And of "him that remaineth" there is, as another apostle saith, "a remnant according to the election of grace." (Rom. xi. 5.) Hence the Lord Jesus bid his disciples rejoice, not that the spirits were subject unto them, but that "their names were written in heaven." (Luke x. 20.) Secondly, "What they are : " and we find that they are called *holy*. This is the great object of gospel grace. Hence the apostle saith, "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit." (2 Thess. ii. 13.) And when God saith, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," (Levit. xi. 44,) his word works by his divine power in the new creation of the soul, as he did in the old creation of the earth—the same efficacy is wrought by the one as by the other. "Let there be light, and there was light." Thirdly, "What they shall be." They shall be changed from filth and uncleanness. There shall be cleansing work, and purging work. Zion shall be washed, and Jerusalem shall be purged. Sweet and precious scripture, in proof of that fountain of Jesus's blood opened in after-days, "to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. xiii. 1.) Fourthly, "Who shall do all this?" The Lord, this blessed scripture saith ; for he, and he only, can be competent to the great work. The Creator of the soul must also be the Redeemer. None but the Lord can take away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purge the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof. Precious Jesus ! it is thy blood only which cleanseth from all sin. Fifthly, "How will the Lord do it?" By the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning ! Yea, the Holy Ghost, amidst his manifold gifts and gracious offices, will thus act upon every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem. "As a spirit of judgment" he will plead the cause of an injured God and Saviour, with the sinner's guilty conscience ; "convincing of sin, of right-

eousness, and of judgment." And he will be a "spirit of burning;" for his word will act (as the prophet describes it, Jerem. xx. 9) "as a burning fire shut up in the bones," consuming all the day. My soul! what sayest thou to this solemn, but sweet scripture? Hath God the Spirit been to thee all these? Hath he convinced thee, enlightened thee, and been both a spirit of judgment and a spirit of burning? Hath he convinced thee of thy sinful heart, enlightened thy dark heart, burnt up the lustful desires of thy corrupt heart, melted thine hard heart, warmed the frozen affections of thy cold heart, and formed a love there towards the person, grace, and righteousness of a dear Redeemer? Canst thou set thy seal to this blessed scripture, that God is true?

The man which had the withered hand.

Mark iii. 3.

Surely the man in the Jewish synagogue, which had a withered hand, will, in the history of his disease and cure, furnish me, this evening, with a very improving meditation. Do thou, blessed Jesus, the great healer both of soul and body, render it profitable, by thy gracious instruction, to my heart. This poor man had a withered hand, not only sinew-shrunk, but wasting away. He attended divine worship, for Jesus found him in the synagogue; but we do not read that he asked the mercy from Christ. It was Jesus that first looked upon him; and not he on the Lord Jesus. "Stretch forth thine hand," said the Son of God. Instantly the poor man found the powers of nature restored, the shrunk sinew became lengthened, and the hand which had wasted away was restored. Pause, my soul! Look at the subject as it concerns thyself. How long didst thou attend the means of grace under a withered soul? And to this hour, had not Jesus looked on thee, thou wouldst not have looked on him. Were Jesus to suspend his blessings till sinners had prepared themselves for them, or deserved them, never would blessings come at all. And did Jesus speak as to this poor man, and bid thee live? Did Jesus command thee to stretch forth thy dead and lifeless soul, and say unto thee, "I am thy salvation?" Surely, then, thy God's commands conveyed with them ability; and the same voice which said, "Stretch forth thine hand," gave vigour to the hand to lay hold of his mercy. How sweet is this view of thy impotence, and Jesus's sovereignty! Here we see that scripture most completely fulfilled: "He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." (Psalm cvii. 20, 21.)

Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.—1 Peter i. 5.

When I call to mind, that “in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;” when I stand convinced (as I do most fully, blessed be God the Holy Ghost, for having exercised his gracious office in my soul to this gracious effect), that though renewed in the spirit of my mind, yet in that unrenewed part of myself, which is hastening to the grave, every member is virtually all sin; when I know, that never did sin break in acts of open wickedness in any son or daughter of Adam, but that the seeds of the same sin are in me and my nature; I long not only to know, but always to keep in remembrance by what means, and from what cause, it is, that those seeds do not ripen in my heart as well as in others; that while corrupt nature is the same in all, it is restrained in me, while so many of my fellow-creatures and fellow-sinners fall a prey to temptation. Blessed Spirit! the merciful scripture of the evening answers the important question. They who are kept, “are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.” Here is the solution of the whole subject. With what humbleness of soul, then, ought every child of God to fall down before the throne of grace, under the deepest sense of distinguishing love, in the consciousness that it is divine restraint, and not creature merit, which maketh all the difference. Help me, Lord, to go humble all my days in this view, and let it be my morning thought and my mid-day and evening meditation, that I am kept by thy power through faith unto salvation. Almighty Father! help me to be living upon thy faithfulness in the covenant of grace, established and sealed as it is in the blood of thy dear Son, that *thou wilt not* turn away from me to do me good; and that thou wilt put thy fear in my heart, that *I shall not* depart from thee. (Jer. xxxii. 40.) Precious Lord Jesus! give me to rest also upon a union *with* thee, a communion of grace *from* thee, and a participation *in* thee, in all the blessings of thy redemption. Surely I am the purchase of thy blood, and thou hast said, “Thy sheep shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of thine hand.” (John x. 28.) And, O thou blessed Spirit of all truth, be thou to me an indwelling security from sin, to keep me from falling, and to preserve me faultless in Jesus until the day of his coming. Make my body thy temple, and cause me, by thy sweet constraining love, “to glorify God in my body, and in my spirit, which are his.” (1 Cor. vi. 20.)

And he gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.—*Psalms* cvi. 15.

Here is a very solemn subject to exercise the mind of a child of God. My soul, take it for thine own exercise this evening. In the part of the Church's history it should seem that they were just arrived on the borders of Canaan, they had been all along fed and sustained by God's bounty, and the manna, as usual, came fresh and pure from heaven every morning; but, tired and dissatisfied with the table of God's providing, they demanded flesh to eat, and the Lord gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul. Happy would it have been for the Church of God, if such rebellions had been confined to that period of its history. But, alas! in all ages, God's children too often manifest the like temper. My soul! bring the subject home; thy God, thy Jesus, hath appointed thee the very path best suited for thee. Had a synod of angels been convened to choose what would be most conducive to thy present and everlasting welfare, never could they have arranged either thy state or circumstances better than Jesus hath done. Surely his infinite wisdom and love are manifested in all the appointments by the way which he hath made for thee, as well in providence as in grace. And yet how often hast thou thought that such an attainment, or such a possession, would have been for thy good! And how often hast thou felt displeased when matters appeared to thee discouraging! And in the fulness of thy thoughts, thou hast at times felt disposed to tell thine heavenly Master, that such an exercise might have been spared, or that such a temporal portion might have been given thee! And hast thou not more than once afterwards discovered, that had Jesus granted what thy wayward heart perversely coveted, evil, and not good, would have followed? If thou wouldst gather improvement from the Church's history, in the striking instance before thee, see the sad consequences of having any earthly desire gratified, which, for the most part, bringeth leanness into the soul. Ask the question from any of the chosen few whose situations are among the great or affluent, whether their souls do not go lean, from their bodies being better fed than others? Prosperity in this world is too dangerous to God's dear children; and this very fully explains why Jesus, for the most part, keeps his people humble. When the Lord made Israel to ride upon the high places of the earth, and caused him to drink of the pure blood of the grape, the next account is, "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." (*Deut.* xxxii. 15.) Precious Lord Jesus, do thou choose for me, in every thing, and for every state: for then, I am sure, I shall be well provided for, and well taken care of. Never, dearest Lord, grant any request of mine, which, in the weakness and perversity of my heart, I might be tempted to put up, lest a state, so truly awful as that of Israel should follow;

and while the flesh sought ease and fulness, there should be a leanness of soul!

And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

Genesis xxxv. 5.

It was the evening before the last, that my soul was led to the contemplation of what is the everlasting security of a child of God, amidst all the corruption, within and without, which he carries about him in a body of sin and death. It will form a very pleasing subject to a similar effect, to trace also a believer's security from the world at large, in the natural enmity there is in every unawakened heart to a state of grace. And this precious scripture traces every child of God's safety to the same source. The family of Jacob, the praying seed of Jacob, are still journeying; for here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. The people of God are but few in number; yea, very few, the scripture saith, (Psalm cv. 12,) "and they are strangers in the land." The very profession of the cross will always make them strangers; and as men whose manners and pursuits differ from the world, like Joshua and his people, "they are men wondered at." How are they kept from being run down, oppressed, subdued, and overcome? This text answers: the terror of God was upon the cities round about them. Pause, and consider the blessed subject, my soul, and never lose sight of it. He that toucheth thee, toucheth the apple of Jesus's eye. The reins of all government, both of men and kings, are in Christ's hand: nothing can take place, but by his appointment. Oh! blessed to live in the full persuasion of this most unquestionable truth. If a thorough sense of an interest in Jesus, and a union, a oneness with Christ, were always uppermost in the heart, this filial fear in Jesus would drive out all creature fear, as the fire of the sun puts out the fire on the hearth. The prophet beautifully expresses this, in one of his precepts to the Church: "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, and he shall be for a sanctuary." (Isaiah viii. 12—14.)

A nail in a sure place.—*Isaiah xxii. 23.*

My soul, through grace, thou hast long been enabled to hang all thy grand concerns for eternity upon the Lord Jesus; and will it not be a very refreshing subject for thine evening medita-

tion, to see how eternally firm and secure all rest, with an unshaken and unchangeable confidence? Behold him as he is in himself, in his person, work, and righteousness: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Next contemplate him as the source, origin, fountain, and support of all the great things of salvation. There is not a purpose of God, but is founded *on* Christ; not a promise, but is made, confirmed, and fulfilled *in* Christ; and not a dispensation in all the kingdoms of nature, grace, and glory, but comes *from* Christ, and his own righteous government. Go on, under a third branch of meditation, and behold Jesus as a nail in a sure place, and that the persons, concerns, and blessings of his people, all hang on him: *from* him they derive all their spiritual strength, gifts, graces, authority, order, and appointment; *on* him they all depend for life, ability, power, and disposition to carry it on; and *to* him the whole glory of their services return, in an endless revenue of praise. Lastly, and above all, to crown thine evening meditation on this nail in a sure place, behold the hand of God thy Father, both fixing him there, and proclaiming it to the souls of his people: "I will fasten him," saith Jehovah, "as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his Father's house." (Isaiah xxii. 23.) Hail! thou glorious almighty Mediator! founded on such authority, and possessing in thyself such eternal principles, evermore will I hang my soul, and body, and spirit, with all I have, and all I am or hope to be, in time, and to all eternity, on thee; for never can too great a stress be laid upon Jesus, nor too full a confidence be placed in him. How can a soul perish that hangs on God's Christ?

This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

Luke xv. 2.

My soul! wouldst thou by faith review some more than ordinary representation of the Lord Jesus, to melt the finer feelings of thy heart, in the contemplation of his unequalled condescension and love? Let this be the one, which the evangelist hath here drawn of the Son of God. Behold him, encircled with poor publicans and sinners, alluring them to the arms of his mercy; and behold the self-righteous pharisees and scribes drawing off from the sacred spot, and with all that indignation and scorn which marked their character, murmuring at the grace of Jesus, saying, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them!" Well is it for thee, my soul, that the Son of God hath received sinners; else how should I have been looked upon by him? And well is it that his table hath been spread for sinners; or how should I have been fed by him? Yea, Lord, is it not the very feature of thy rich dispensation of mercy, that it is for sinners, as sinners, that thou didst come from heaven, to seek and save

them? And who but sinners, should Jesus, the great Saviour of sinners, receive, and eat with? Will the Lord allow me, this evening, to dwell upon the sweet subject, and run over some of the blessed thoughts which arise out of this view of my compassionate and all-loving Lord? Why, then, I would say to my soul, remember, when thy Jesus first received thee as a sinner, thou wert hastening on to ruin; and it was then, of all moments the most alarming, when thou didst merit hell, that Jesus received thee, and promised thee heaven. And do not forget how truly seasonable was the mercy; for thou wast then living without hope, without God, and without Christ in the world, when Jesus brought thee nigh by the blood of his cross. And never surely was mercy more unexpected, less sought for or less esteemed, than when Jesus surprised thee with the manifestations of his grace, and made thee willing in the day of his power. Precious Redeemer! the Pharisees' reproach shall be my joy; and what they spoke of my Lord in contempt, shall henceforth be the chief note in my evening song to his praise: "This man, this God-man, receiveth sinners, and eateth with them: for he hath received me, the chief of sinners, and eaten with me." Lord Jesus! ever receive me, the poorest, the most unworthy of all the objects of thy grace. Come in, Lord, to my poor house, to my heart, and bring me to thine house and to thy table; and there let it be noticed, and known to every beholder, while my soul is feasting itself in the rich enjoyment, that Jesus "receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."

And manifested forth his glory: and his disciples believed on him.—*John* ii. 11.

It forms a very sweet thought to the believer, that amidst the general darkness and ignorance concerning the person of Jesus, in the days of his flesh, the glory of his Godhead was frequently manifested to his disciples, so that they knew him, and believed on him. And it is equally blessed, that now, amidst the darkness and ignorance of many, who call themselves Christians, after Christ, (but yet denying, or being unconscious of his Godhead, prove that they know him not,) the Lord hath not left himself without a witness of who he is, to the minds of his faithful followers; but hath manifested forth his glory; and all true disciples believe on him. My soul! if thou wert called upon to give thy testimony to Jesus, concerning all the grand points which prove the Godhead of his person, and the eternal merits and efficacy of his blood and righteousness, how wouldst thou show the evidences, that he hath manifested forth his glory to thee, and that thou believest on him? I would answer, Jesus hath fully manifested himself to me, as "One with the Father;

over all, God blessed for ever;" and as such, having seen the Son, I believe on him, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Hence, therefore, as it is said, "they that know thy name will put their trust in thee;" so "I know whom I have believed;" and, by his blessed Spirit, am persuaded, that "he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, to that day." Now, had not the Lord Jesus, by his Holy Spirit, taught me who he was, and what he was able to perform—had he not manifested forth his glory, never should I have known him, so as to believe on him. But the revelation he hath made of himself, hath induced all those saving effects, which none but the teachings of his Holy Spirit could impart. It hath wrought in me faith and love, humbleness and self-loathing, a regard for his cause, a zeal for his honour, a love to his people, and indifference to the world; and all those gracious fruits of faith which follow the knowledge of Jesus! Blessed Lord! my soul rejoiceth anew, this evening, in the contemplation of thy glory. And under a sense of the distinguishing mercy, I feel constrained to cry out, with the astonishment of the apostle, "Lord! how is it, that thou hast manifested thyself to me, and not unto the world."

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship.—*Joshua* v. 13, 14.

My soul, what a most blessed portion here is for thee to feast upon, in almost endless thought. Who could this be, that appeared to Joshua, but the Lord Jesus Christ? Who ever called himself the captain of the Lord's host, but he whom the Holy Ghost hath called "the captain of our salvation?" (Heb. ii. 10.) Is he not the same who appeared to Adam in the garden, to Abraham in his tent, to Jacob at Bethel, to Moses at the bush? And though he diversified his form, upon these and several other occasions, yet all were only intended to familiarize his people to the knowledge of him. And wherefore, dearest Jesus, was it, that thou didst thus graciously condescend to visit thy chosen, so long before the time appointed for the open display of thyself, when tabernacling in flesh, but to tell thy Church, that thy whole heart was toward them in love, and that the thoughts thou hadst towards them, were thoughts of good,

and not of evil? And although, in this thy appearance to thy servant Joshua, thou didst assume the human form, yet as captain of the Lord's host, he instantly knew thy glorious character of mediator, and fell to the earth in adoration. Hail then, thou almighty Lord, thou captain of the Lord's host, and of my salvation! thou hast indeed entered the lists of the holy war, and in thine own person led captivity captive, and fully conquered Satan and sin, and death and hell, *for* thy people; and thou wilt assuredly conquer all those tremendous foes of ours, *in* thy people, and "bruise Satan under our feet shortly." Indeed, indeed, dear Lord, thou hast already brought them under: for, by thy sovereign grace in the hearts of thy redeemed, thou hast made thy people "willing in the day of thy power." By the sword of thy Spirit, thou hast convinced my soul *of* sin; and by the arrows of thy quiver, thou hast wounded my heart with deep contrition *for* sin. Lord, I fall before thee, as thy servant Joshua did, and worship thee; and with all the Church of the redeemed both in heaven and earth, cheerfully confess, "that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Amen.

Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.—*James v. 11.*

There is something uncommonly soothing and consolatory in these words, concerning the Lord's grace, "that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." "Very pitiful!" Sweet consideration to a child of God, under affliction! For it speaks in the tenderest and most endearing manner, upon all such occasions, that if afflictions abound, while the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy, there must be "a needs be" for them. My soul, keep this thought always uppermost in thy remembrance; and carry it about with thee in thy bosom for constant use, to have recourse to, as occasion may require. And take another sweet lesson with thee, to help on thy mind to suitable exercises on this account. Hadst thou as much wisdom, and as much love for thyself, and what concerns thy most material interest, as Jesus hath, and is using for thee, the most painful exercises thou art now called to, and which thou art apt to shrink from, would be among the subjects of holy joy. And mark further what the apostle saith: "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord;" that is, in the issue of Job's trials. Who that reads the patriarch's history, can doubt but that thy Lord all along intended the whole for his servant's happiness, as well as his own glory? In all thine exercises, my soul, look "to the end of them." Some blessed purpose, depend upon it, thy Jesus hath in view in all, and he will accomplish it. In the

mean time, never forget that "the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy;" in all the afflictions of his people "he is afflicted." And what a memorable scripture is that: "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." (Judges x. 16.) Precious Jesus! all is well. In the sorrows of thy children, thou bearest a part: and the largest part is thine; the heaviest end of every cross thou carriest. The cup of our affliction is not bitter, like thy cup of trembling; for through thy love, in redemption, "the gall and wormwood" are taken out. There is no bitter wrath in the chastisements of a kind father under sin; for thou hast borne the wrath when made sin, and a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in thee. Often, my soul! let these sweet consoling thoughts refresh thee. Thy Lord, thy Jesus, "is very pitiful, and of tender mercy!"

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

Exodus iii. 13, 14.

My soul! hast thou fully considered, so as to rest in the full assurance of faith upon it, on what the whole foundation of covenant promises and engagements rests? It is not the greatness of the promise, no, nor the greatness of the deliverance wrought out for poor sinners, by the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, on which faith founds its claim—for, in fact, the more astonishing, and great, and unexpected the mercy is, as in the case of redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ, the more difficult would it be for a poor self-condemned sinner to trust in it, with full assurance of faith—but the great foundation for thee, and for every poor sinner to ground his hopes of redemption by Jesus Christ upon, is the faithfulness of that God which cannot lie, having promised. Hence it appears, as in the beautiful instance this precious scripture records. The Lord was going to send Moses, as his minister, to bring out his people Israel from Egyptian bondage; Moses desires the Lord to give him the commission with his name; hence, by the way, we may learn, that they who stand up in the Lord's name, ought themselves to know who the Lord is, and from a proper acquaintance with the Lord, to recommend him to those among whom they proclaim him, as one they themselves know, and trust in. To the inquiry of Moses, concerning as to what name he should hold him forth to

his people, the Lord condescends to give this answer: I AM THAT I AM: intimating the self-existence, the eternity, and faithfulness of JEHOVAH. As if God had said, I AM, and therefore, by virtue of this underived being which I possess in myself, I give being to all my promises. My soul! often call to remembrance this grand and glorious truth. Thou hast not only the perfect and covenant redemption of thy Christ's blood and righteousness to confide in; but thou hast this other pillar and ground of the truth to confirm thy faith: I AM hath engaged for it also. So that both the blessedness of the promise, and the faithfulness of the almighty Promiser, are with thee. Plead both before the throne; for Jehovah will ever be mindful of, glory in, and prove faithful to, all his covenant promises in Christ, to a thousand generations. Hallelujah! Amen.

To see thy power, and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.—*Psalms* lxxiii. 2.

My soul, knowest thou what it is, at times, to be sensible of a barrenness of spiritual enjoyments? If at a house of God, to be cold and lifeless there? If at home, or unable to attend the place where God's honour dwelleth, yet there also to be without the Bethel-visits of thy Lord? Behold one of old, in a wilderness state, feeling the same. But do not fail to remark also, in the very breathings of the soul *after* Christ, how plainly his soul was under the sweet influences of Christ: David did not so much long for the temple service, as for the presence of the God of the temple. Remark also the peculiarity of expression: he longed to see the Lord's power and glory, so as he had seen *him* in times past. God in Christ is Jehovah's power and glory; and the sanctuary without *him* would be no better than the wilderness. What a beautiful devout frame of mind was the sacred writer in, when thus going forth in earnest longing after the divine power and glory, as manifested in the person of God in Christ! Now, my soul, canst thou make use of the same language, even when thou art mourning in retirement over the absence of the Lord Jesus? Is Jesus still the one object of desire? And the power and glory of Jehovah, as manifested in the person of Jesus, the longing of thy heart to enjoy? Be comforted, in still having before thee the great object of faith, and the actings of faith, even when the waters of the sanctuary run low. God is still honoured, still loved, still trusted in, and depended upon, by this humble, however sorrowful, frame; and ere long, he that thou desirest to see in his power and glory, will manifest himself in both; and thou shalt yet give him praise, "who is the health of thy countenance, and thy God."

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again; he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depth of the sea.

Micah vii. 18, 19.

My soul! hast thou ever duly and thoroughly pondered over the several interesting volumes of grace recorded in this glorious scripture? If not, make them the subject of this evening's song. Let every chapter contained in them, pass and repass in review before thee, and see whether, in the close of the whole, the astonishment of the man of God is not thine also; crying out, "Who is a God like our God? a God in Christ, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin!" And, *first*, "He pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his people." Yes; in Jesus, the Son of his love, he hath done all this, and more than this, for he hath taken the objects of his clemency into favour. *Secondly*, the cause of all these unspeakable felicities is assigned: "because he delighteth in mercy." It is from himself, and his own free sovereign grace, that these blessings flow. Not what the highly-favoured objects merit, but what grace can do for them. Not what claims they have to his bounty, but how his grace can best be magnified in their salvation. Sweet and precious consideration to the breast of every poor sinner! My soul! I hope that thou canst truly participate in the delightful thought. *Thirdly*, he that delighteth in mercy, will delight to "turn again" to his people. He will turn their hearts to himself, and then his returns to them will sweetly follow, to their apprehension, and to their joy. *Fourthly*, he will not only pardon their iniquity, but "he will subdue their iniquities;" not only take away the guilt of sin, but take away also the dominion of sin; not only cast their sins behind his back, but "cast them into the depths of the sea;" and so effectually shall they be lost, that if the sin of Judah be sought for, it shall not be found. The depths of the sea, that fountain which God hath opened in the Redeemer's blood, shall more completely bury them, than the congregated waters of the ocean any mountain or hill cast into them. Say now, my soul! dost thou not look up to a God in Christ, and cry out, with the prophet, in the same holy rapture and astonishment, "Who is a God like unto thee?"

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary

deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Matthew v. 25, 26.

My soul! hast thou agreed with thine adversary, and made full payment of all the law charges? If so, it is blessed to review the account, and look over the several particulars, wherein thou wert a debtor, now struck out of God's book, and marked *Paid, Paid*, in red letters, with Jesus's blood. To thee, as a sinner, born in sin, and an insolvent debtor, both by nature and by practice, the law of God stood forth as thine adversary. To agree with him as quickly as possible, whilst in the way with him, and while life remains, which is every moment subject to be ended, is the first and most momentous of all concerns. Hadst thou not done this, and death had come, both law and justice must have consigned thee over to the Judge of quick and dead; and, having rejected him as thy Saviour, and knowing him only as thy judge, he must have consigned thee to the angels, which are the officers in his kingdom, to execute his wrath; and into hell, as the eternal prison, thou must have been cast; and as the debt then could never have been paid, so deliverance could never have been obtained: but unsatisfied justice would have demanded, without the possibility still of paying, to all eternity. Now, see how thy account stands. It is a solemn thing to deal with God. If thy debt of original and actual sin be not paid by thy surety, it is not cancelled; but if Jesus, thy surety, hath paid it for thee, thy God hath accepted it of him: yea, he himself constituted and appointed him to pay it; and Jesus never gave over, nor did he compound with God, until he had paid the uttermost farthing, then art thou free. Oh! then, be often reviewing the blessed account, in which all thy plea for grace and acceptance here, and glory hereafter, most completely stands. Jesus hath paid the whole, and God the Father graciously saith, "Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom." (Job xxxiii. 24.)

I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me.—*Song viii. 2.*

My soul! hast thou ever noticed the peculiar beauties of this scripture? If not, make it the subject of thy evening's meditation; it will amply recompense thine attention. The Church is here in great liveliness and actings of faith upon the person of her Lord; indeed, so much so, that we do not find any thing like this holy familiarity, used by the Church towards her Lord,

in any other part of the Bible. It is the well-known office of Jesus, to lead his people and to draw them to himself. God the Father hath given him for this blessed purpose, as "a leader and commander to his people." (Isaiah lv. 4.) And Jesus himself declared, that "if he was lifted up, he would draw all to himself." (John xii. 32.) But here, it is the Church leading Christ. Pause, my soul. Dost thou know any thing of this, or like it, in thine own experience? Shall I not hope thou dost? Look diligently; for if so, it will form a blessed subject, not only for thy present meditation, but for every evening and morning of thy life. And it will have a blessed effect, also, in proving the reality of thy faith, and of endearing to thyself the Redeemer's love. Say, then, is not Jesus led by his people when he is constrained at any time, as the disciples constrained him at *Emmaus*, to remain with them until he maketh himself known to them in breaking of bread? Hast thou not thyself been compelled at times to say as they did, that "thine heart hath burned within thee" when Jesus hath made himself known in the word of his grace, or when he hath manifested himself in the tokens of his love, in softening thine heart when hardened, in warming it when frozen, comforting it when cast down; and thou hast held him in the galleries of his grace, by faith and prayer, and the exercises of the graces of his Holy Spirit, which his own hand first gave thee, and which his own power, in all the after-enjoyments of them, called forth into actings upon his person, work, and righteousness? (Luke xxiv. 28—32.) What wilt thou call these things, but leading Christ, and bringing Christ into thy mother's house, the Church, where Jesus manifests himself to his beloved otherwise than he doth to the world? Was it not thus that *Jacob* led the Lord, and constrained him not to depart from him until he had blessed him? (Gen. xxxii. 26.) Was it not of the same kind, in the instance of *Lot*, when, by faith and prayer, the patriarch so led the Lord concerning *Zoar*, that the Lord said, "I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither?" (Gen. xix. 22.) Precious Jesus! is it thus thy people have power with thee, and prevail with thee to stay with them; and thou sufferest thyself to be led by them, in all those instances where their furtherance in grace, and the promotion of thy glory, will be accomplished by it? Oh! then, thou dear Lord! I beseech thee, give me such a double portion of thy blessed Spirit, that, taking hold of thy strength, I may lead my Lord, by faith and prayer, and all the goings forth of grace upon thy person and righteousness, into such rich enjoyments as the Church here had in view, until "I cause thee to drink," also as she did, "of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate!"

And the desire of all nations shall come.—*Haggai* ii. 7.

And who could this be but Jesus? Who but he alone could be the object of desire, or able to gratify the desire of all nations? Sit down, my soul, this evening, and consider the subject to the full; and if the result be, as it surely must be, under divine teaching, that none but Jesus can answer to this character, and he most fully and completely comes up to it in every possible point of view, thou wilt find another sweet testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, that he who alone is thy desire hath ever been, and still is, to all that need and seek salvation, the desire of all nations. And, *first*, consider how universal the want of Jesus must be. "All the world is become guilty (the scripture saith) before God." (Romans iii. 19.) Hence, in every nation, kindred, tongue, or clime, every poor, awakened and convinced sinner stands in need of a Saviour; and, however diversified by language, customs, or manners, sin is felt exceeding sinful, and the desire of deliverance from its guilt and its consequences, however variously expressed, is the burden and cry of every prayer. Now, suppose that to souls of this description Jesus and his glorious salvation was revealed, would not the desire of every heart be towards him? Surely every eye would be directed to Jesus, and every tongue call aloud upon his name. Hence it is that Jesus, and he alone, is the desire of all nations. And as all poor sinners, whether conscious of it or not, stand in need of salvation, so, *secondly*, it must be observed, that it is Jesus, and he alone, who can give salvation; for, as the apostle speaks, "there is salvation in no other, neither is there any other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.) And how extensive and all-sufficient is Jesus, to answer the desire of all nations! As one sun in the heavens becomes a fulness of light, and warmth, and healing to a whole earth; one ocean to supply all the rivers and lakes, and the inhabitants of the world; so one Lord Jesus Christ is both the sun of righteousness, and the everlasting river of life, which maketh glad the city of God. Every want, and every desire that can be necessary for time and eternity, all temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings, are in Jesus. He that is the desire of all nations, is in himself sufficient to satisfy the desires of every living soul. Pause one moment, my soul, over this view of thy Jesus, and say, is He, that is the desire of all nations, thy one, thine only one desire, to which every other is subordinate, and in which every other is swallowed up and lost? See what answer thou canst give to the heart-searching question. And when, through grace, thou hast derived renewed conviction from this view of the subject, that none but Jesus can fully answer the desires of an awakened soul, close the month, as thou hopest to close life, with the blessed hope, that he who is thy one desire now will be thine everlasting portion to all eternity. Amen and Amen.

APRIL.

And this is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness.—*Jer.* xxxiii. 16.

My soul! the subject of thy morning meditation would not be complete, if thy personal interest in it were not taken into the account; and, therefore, let thy mind be led forth, this evening, in sweet contemplation upon what the Holy Ghost hath said in this scripture, by his same servant the prophet, concerning the Church of Jesus. If Jesus be called “the Lord our righteousness,” and be, as he is well known to be, the husband of his people, surely his wife shall be called by her husband’s name. She shall be called so, because it is her husband’s name: “the Lord our righteousness.” And as he became sin for her when he knew no sin, so she, when she knew no righteousness, shall, by virtue of her union and relationship with him, be righteousness, even the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor. v. 21.) Now, my soul, seeing that these things are certain, sure, and unquestionable, do thou follow up the transporting meditation in every way, and by every way, and by every consideration, in which the blessedness of it is confirmed and assured. Married to Jesus, thou hast an interest in all he hath as Mediator, as the glorious Head of his body, the Church, “the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” And, indeed, it is such a union and oneness as nothing in nature can fully represent, “For he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” (1 Cor. vi. 17.) It infinitely transcends the marriage union, which is only in nature, and at death is dissolved; for this union is spiritual, and continues for ever. Hence Jesus saith, “I will betroth thee to me for ever.” (Hos. ii. 19.) Never lose sight of this high union, and the infinitely precious blessings to which, by virtue of it, thou art entitled; and while thou art called by his name, see that thou hast a conformity to his image. A union of grace should be manifested by a union of heart. What thy Jesus loves thou shouldst love, and what he hates do thou hate; let his people be thy people, and his God and Father thine also. And from being one with him in heart, in mind, in sympathy and affection, receiving life *from* him, living *on* him, and being *in* him, then will he be every thing to thee, of grace in this life, and of glory in that which is to come. Precious Lord and husband of thy people, thou art made of God to me, and all thy redeemed, “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, may glory in the Lord!”

I pray thee let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.
Deut. iii. 25.

What a very lovely and interesting view doth this sweet scripture afford of Moses, the man of God! Look at him, my soul, as the Holy Ghost hath here represented him, and pray for grace to gather some of those blessed instructions which this part of his history particularly affords. And what was it made Moses so anxious to go over and see the good land? It was but a type of heaven, even in its highest glory; and surely the type or representation of any thing cannot be equal to the thing itself; and Moses knew, that if he had not the type, he should have the substance: if debarred Canaan, he should be in heaven. There must have been some other cause, which made Moses long for the sight of it. I venture to think, (we may at least conjecture,) and this scripture, I confess, leads me to the idea: "Let me see" (said Moses) "that goodly mountain, and Lebanon." This was the one hallowed spot Moses longed to see, and to feast his eyes upon. He that had conversed with Jesus at the bush, wanted to behold, and with sacred meditation, by faith, converse with him, on the very spot on which, in after ages, he knew that Jesus would be crucified. He that by faith walked with Jesus, while in Egypt, so as "to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all its treasures," would there, by faith, have realized the presence of his Lord in sweet communion: and if, through faith, he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, in the ordinance of the paschal lamb, what may we not suppose the man of God would have felt, as he traversed over the sacred goodly mountain and Lebanon? "Here," he would have said, as he beheld, by faith, the day of Christ afar off, like the patriarch Abraham, "here is the memorable ground, the holy mountain, on which Jesus, *my dweller in the bush*, will one day make his soul an offering for sin! Here will go up before God the Father that one sacrifice to which all under the law shadowed and ministered, and by which the Lord Jesus will for ever perfect them that are sanctified! Here the Son of God will for ever do away sin by the sacrifice of himself." O Lebanon! that goodly mountain! for ever sacred to the soul's meditation of all the redeemed of the Lord Jesus! though, like Moses, I have not trodden thine hallowed ground, yet, by faith, I have seen Jesus in his agonies and passion there; and bless and praise God and the Lamb, for the wonders of redemption. Lord, bring me to the everlasting enjoyment of thy person, work, and righteousness, in glory, for this will be indeed the good land that is beyond Jordan; the goodly mountain, and Lebanon; that "when I awake after thy likeness, I may be satisfied with it."

For him hath God the Father sealed.—*John vi. 27.*

My soul! hast thou ever remarked the peculiar glory of those scriptures which take within a small compass the whole persons of the Godhead, as concurring and co-operating in the grand business of salvation? No doubt, all scripture is blessed, being given by inspiration of God; but there is a peculiar blessedness in these sweet portions, which, at one view, represent the Holy Three in One unitedly engaged in the sinner's redemption. My soul! ponder over this divine passage in thy Saviour's discourse, as thus: Who is the *him*, here spoken of, but the Lord Jesus? And whom but God the Father could seal Christ? And with whom was Christ sealed and anointed, but by God the Holy Ghost? Would any one have thought, at first view, that in *seven words*, such a blessed testimony should be given to the glorious foundation-truth of the whole Bible? "For him hath God the Father sealed." Precious Jesus! enable me to behold thy divine authority as the warrant for faith, in this gracious act of thy Father. And while I view thee as infinitely suited for my poor soul, in every state, and under every circumstance, let my soul find confidence in the conviction that the validity of all thy gracious acts of salvation is founded in the seal of the Spirit. Yes! thou dear Lord, it was indeed Jehovah the Spirit that was upon thee, when thou wast anointed "to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken in heart, to give deliverance to the captive, and the restoring of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And art thou, dearest Lord, thus held forth, and thus recommended, by the grand seal of heaven, to every poor sinner who feels a conscious want of salvation? Oh, then, help, Lord, by thy blessed Spirit, all and every one of this description, so to receive a sealed Saviour, as to rest in nothing short of being sealed by him; and while every act of love, and every tendency of grace, proclaims thee, blessed Jesus, as "him whom God the Father hath sealed," so let every act of faith, and every tendency of the soul, in the goings forth after thee, be expressive of the same earnest longings as the Church, of being sealed and owned by thee, when she cried out: "Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death: jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame."

Thy rebuke hath broken my heart.—*Psalms lxxix. 21.*

Hast thou, my soul, still upon thee the solemn savour of thy morning meditation? Surely *Gethsemane* is not forgotten by thee! Pause over the subject; and from the whole mass of the soul sufferings of thy Lord, behold what crowned the whole:

“Thy rebuke,” (saith Jesus to the Father,) “thy rebuke hath broken my heart.” To search into the depths of this meditation is impossible; for who shall describe it? What human, or even angelic intellect can fathom the profound subject? That this was the greatest and heaviest weight in the whole curse, we may venture to suppose: because we read of nothing which bore so hard upon the holy Jesus, amidst all his agonies, as the Father’s rebuke. It was this which “broke his heart.” My soul! repeat the solemn scripture, as if Jesus was in the moment uttering the words: “Thy rebuke hath broken my heart.” Precious Lord! could not this have been spared thee?—Pause, my soul!—Lamb of God! must the rebuke of thy Father be also in the curse?—Pause again, my soul! When Jesus made his soul an offering for sin, would not the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, show the least portion of favour to his dear, his beloved, his only begotten Son?—Pause, my soul! yet once again, and ponder over the solemn subject! “It pleased the Father to bruise him, to put him to grief.”—But, my soul! though neither thou, nor perhaps angels of light, can explain the extremity of the Redeemer’s sufferings, in the rebuke of the Father for sin, which broke his heart, yet in the contemplation of the *lesser* sorrows of the curse which Jesus endured, thou wilt be led to form some faint idea, however small in comparison of the real state of it, to induce a train of the most solemn meditations. When the Son of God assumed our nature, though in a holy portion of that nature, untainted by the fall, being not derived by ordinary generation, yet coming as the sinner’s surety, he took upon him the curse for sin, he was first made *sin* (2 Cor. v. 21) and then a *curse* for us, (Gal. iii. 13;) as such, he was invested with every thing belonging to the frailties of our nature, which might expose that nature to sorrow, and suffering, and death. The sentence of the fall was, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,” (Gen. iii. 19:) so that the curse, then seizing the human nature of Christ, at once tended to waste all the animal spirits, and to induce a state of mind peculiarly low and dejected. Agreeably to this, we find that the holy Jesus, though it is once said of him, that in that hour “he rejoiced in spirit,” when the devils were subject to his name, (Luke x. 18—21,) yet is it never said of him, that he was once seen to laugh. As the sinner’s surety, he sustained every thing of sorrow which belonged to God’s curse against sin, and became eminently marked with affliction; and in a way which none but himself ever waded through. Yea, to make the horrors of death more tremendous and bitter, the very sun became darkened at mid-day; not so much, I humbly conceive, as some have thought, to intimate, by the miracle, God’s displeasure at the act of the Jews in the crucifixion of Christ, as to manifest the Father’s rebuke of sin, which Jesus then stood as the sinner’s surety to answer for, and which Christ, as if summing

up the whole of his misery, declared to be the finishing stroke, which had "broken his heart." My soul! look up, and thus behold the Lamb of God! O thou precious, precious Redeemer! the sons of thy Zion, but for this blessed undertaking of thine, "would have fainted for ever!" They would have lain "at the head of all the streets as a wild bull in a net: they would have been full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God." But now, Lord, thou hast swallowed up death in victory: "the Lord God hath wiped away tears from off all faces: and the rebuke of thy people thou hast taken away from off all the earth; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man.—*John* xix. 5.

My soul! thou art engaged in solemn subjects at this season, both night and morning; and here is one as solemn as any: thy Jesus coming forth in his coronation robes! Yes! For he, and he alone, is the prince of sufferers, as the prince of his people. Many of his dear children have been beset with thorns; and to many, indeed to all more or less, the Lord hedgeth up their way with thorns. But none but the ever-blessed Jesus was *crowned* with thorns. Now, my soul, ponder well the solemn subject. And oh! that God the Holy Ghost may open all the glories of it to thy view. And, *first*, look at thy Jesus, crowned with thorns. None but the Lord Jesus could properly wear this crown; because the curse pronounced by God at the fall, of thorns being brought forth *to the man*, could belong to none but him, the God-man Christ Jesus. This curse contained an abridgment of all the curses in the Bible; and which never fell upon any but the person of Christ, so as to *crown* him as having suffered all. He was first made sin, and then a curse for his redeemed. Now the *three* grand branches of this curse were never fulfilled in any but in Christ: as, *first*, a separation from God; *secondly*, a state of unequalled sorrow, subject to all the frailties of nature, in pain and misery; and *thirdly*, death: in dying he died; intimating thereby the *very death*, as comprehensive of all in one. All men in death are exposed to a cold and *clammy* sweat; but it was reserved to the Lord Jesus, in his death, to sweat a *bloody* sweat. My soul! do thou thus look at him, in his purple robe, and crown of thorns, who is here represented to thy view, and never, never forget, that in all this, he was, and is thy surety; the Lord thy righteousness! But there is another point to be regarded in this solemn scripture, which demands thy close attention; and let this form a *second* delightful consideration for thy evening's comforts. When Jesus thus came forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, as the translation represents the

passage, it is *Pilate* who saith, "Behold the man!" But this is a mistake, and a sad mistake indeed; for it is not *Pilate* that speaks, but *Christ*. The word *Pilate*, if you well observe, is printed in Italics, as not found in the original; and much to be lamented it is, that it should ever have been there. The Lord Jesus Christ had been all along pointed out in the Old Testament scripture as "the man," the very man, that should be a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" who should give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off his hair, and that would not hide his face from shame and spitting. When, therefore, *Pilate* brought the Lord Jesus to the view of his people, in direct and full testimony as answerable to those characters, Jesus saith unto them, "Behold the man!" He had before, under the spirit of prophecy, cried out, "Behold me! behold me!" (Isaiah lxxv. 1;) and now, as if to show the wonderful and complete agreement of scripture prophecy with his sacred person, he saith, "Behold the man!" Oh! how blessed is it to receive this testimony from Jesus's own mouth! Oh! how refreshing to the soul, to perceive Christ's gracious attention, in such a moment of trial, to the security and comfort of his people! And what a blessed strengthening to the faith of his redeemed, to behold all the persons of the Godhead calling upon the Church to the same contemplation! "Behold" (saith God the Father) "my servant whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth!" (Isaiah xlii. 1.) "Behold" (saith God the Holy Ghost) "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" (John i. 29.) "Behold the man!" saith Christ himself, as in this most blessed scripture. Lord Jesus! give me to behold thee, with an eye of faith, and so to gaze, with holy joy and wonder, love and praise, upon thy glories, until my ravished soul shall go forth in longing desires after thee, and thus daily behold thee, until faith be swallowed up in sight, and hope be lost in absolute fruition!

A place called Golgotha.—*Matthew xxvii. 33.*

And wherefore called Golgotha? It was a "place of skulls;" not a charnel house; not a sepulchre for the great; but probably where a number of unburied skulls of poor criminals lay together, or scattered here and there, as the feet of those who visited this place of sorrow might kick them. Luke calls it *Calvary*, (Luke xxiii. 33;) but both mean one and the same place. And was this a place suited for thee, O thou Lord of life and glory? Yes, blessed Jesus! if thou wilt become sin and a curse for thy redeemed, then surely this of all places becomes thee, where thy people must have lain for ever, hadst thou not interposed, and undertaken all that behoved them to suffer, that they might be made "the righteousness of God in thee!" My soul! did Jesus

suffer at Golgotha? Go thou forth to him, "without the camp, bearing his reproach." And is this Golgotha? And was it here that Jesus "then restored that which he took not away?" Oh, how blessed the review! how memorable, how sacred the spot! Who would have thought that a place so wretched should have produced so much good! Confusion had been introduced into all the works of God by reason of sin; here Jesus restored perfect order to all. God's glory had been tarnished; God's law had been broken; God's justice despised. At *Golgotha*, Jesus restored all. And as man had lost the image of God, the favour of God, the acquaintance with God, at this memorable spot Jesus restored to God his glory, and to man God's favour. My soul! do thou often visit the place called *Golgotha*; and to endear the sacred haunt still more, look at thy Lord as thou goest thither, and figure to thyself thy Jesus going with thee. Here it was that his person and all his sacred offices were blasphemed. Is Jesus the Lord God of the prophets? Then will the rabble vilify his *prophetical* office: "Prophecy," say they, "thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" Is Jesus the great "High-Priest" of Jehovah, after the order of Melchisedek? This also shall be despised. "Save thyself and us!" said the scoffing multitude. And is Jesus a *King*? "Come down, then," say they, "from the cross, and we will believe." Yea, and as the most aggravating circumstance of cruelty, and which, as far as I have ever heard, or read, was never practised upon the most abject criminal, his very prayers were turned into ridicule. "My God, my God," said the holy Sufferer, "why hast thou forsaken me?" "This man calleth for Elias," said they; "let be, let us see whether Elias will come to take him down!" Pause, my soul, over the solemn view! And as thou takest thy evening stand at *Golgotha*, ask thine heart, is this Jesus, who is "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person?" Is this he whom angels worship, and at whose name "every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth?" O thou bleeding Lamb, that art now in the midst of the throne! often let my soul ruminare over the affecting scenes of *Golgotha*. Solemn is the place, but blessed also. Here would I sit down, and as I contemplate Jesus, in this endearing part of his character, I would hear his voice speaking in the tenderest manner: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger."

And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.—*Mark* xv. 28.

Look up, my soul, to the cross, and behold thy Lord hanging with two thieves; yea, in the middle of them, as if the greatest

malefactor of the three; and, what is the most awful part of the subject, not only was he thus considered by the Jewish rabble, but, as the sinner's representative, Jesus was thus beheld in Jehovah's view, "numbered with the transgressors," and virtually the great surety and sponsor of them all. Pause, my soul, as thou readest this scripture, and as thou beholdest it fulfilled on the cross. Will it not undeniably follow, that if Christ was so reckoned and so numbered, then it must have been, not for himself, for he had no sin, but for his people; and if made sin, and a curse, surely he hath taken away both sin and the curse, by the sacrifice of himself, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him? There is one circumstance in this representation of Jesus being reckoned with the transgressors as a sin and a curse, yea, sustaining the whole of sin and the curse in his own sacred person, that is particularly striking; I mean, that amidst all the shadowy representations under the law, the only type on this subject, and a most decisive one it was, is that of the "brazen serpent." Of all the creatures of God's creation, it was the serpent only that was pronounced cursed at the fall; and, therefore, though the blood of many beasts may be, and indeed was, made typical of redemption by the sacrifice of Christ, yet none but the serpent could represent Christ as a curse for his people. There is somewhat very striking in this. Christ, in redeeming us from the curse of the law, must be represented as a curse for us; the serpent, therefore, the cursed beast, shall be lifted up in the wilderness, and Jesus himself will graciously explain it: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 14, 15.) What a wonderful event! Who, but for the scripture, and the teaching of the Holy Ghost, would have been able to trace the affinity? "My righteous servant," saith Jehovah, "shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." He is, therefore, *numbered with the transgressors*. (Isaiah liii. 11, 12.) And agreeably to this, all the circumstances attending this sustaining of the curse shall correspond; a drop of water is denied to none but the cursed in hell; Jesus, therefore, in his thirst, shall be denied it also. If malefactors, under the curse, have no one to mitigate their sorrows, here again Jesus shall be the same; for in his sufferings "all his disciples forsook him and fled." Is the darkness in hell an aggravation of the miseries of the cursed there? Thus also shall it be in the extreme agonies of Jesus; for darkness covered the earth during his crucifixion, from the sixth to the ninth hour. Yea, and above all, the sense of divine manifestation shall be withdrawn, as from those in the regions of everlasting misery, who have no sense of the divine presence, but in his wrath. So that Jesus needed not to go down into hell to suffer the torments of the damned; for, being numbered with the trans-

gressors, and standing forth to the view of Jehovah as sin and a curse for his people, the waters of the great deep were broken up to overwhelm his precious soul; and in those tremendous hours, all the cataracts of divine wrath were poured out upon him, until the holy patient sufferer was constrained to cry out, in that dolorous cry, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me!" (Psalm xlii. 7.) Lamb of God! is it thus at *Golgotha* thou wert numbered with the transgressors? And was it thus that scripture was fulfilled? Oh, for grace so to view thee, so to fix and feast my soul upon thee, that, while conscious that thy holy soul knew no sin, yet was made sin for me, I that know no righteousness, and truly have none, may be made the righteousness of God in thee!

And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead.

Mark xv. 44.

Precious Jesus! had the unjust judge but known thy soul-travail and agonies, instead of wondering at the speediness of thy death, all his astonishment would have been, that nature, so oppressed, and so suffering, could have held out so long; for what would have crushed in a moment all creation, as well angels as men, in sustaining the wrath of God, due to sin, Jesus endured on the cross for so many hours! In point of suffering, he wrought out a whole eternity due to sin on the cross; and in point of efficacy, he "for ever perfected them that are sanctified." Jesus, therefore, accomplished more in that memorable day, than all the creatures of God could have done for ever. Wonderful were the works which God despatched in creation; but the wonders of redemption far exceed them. The *six hours* which Jesus hung upon the cross wrought out a more stupendous display of almighty power and grace than the *six days* God was pleased to appoint to himself in making the world. But, indeed, Pilate need not, on another account, have marvelled at the quickness of Christ's death, had this unjust judge but reflected on the previous sufferings of the Redeemer. They who have spent sweet hours in tracing Jesus's footsteps through the painful preludes to his death, and especially in the concluding scenes, have been able to mark many a sorrowful part which (besides the soul-agonies of Jesus in accomplishing redemption-work) bore hard upon his body also. My soul, if thou wert to trace back the solemn subject, thou wouldst find enough to excite thy astonishment that Jesus lived so long on the cross, rather than that he died not before. His agony evidently began *four days* before the passover. The evangelist Luke tells us, that he spent the whole night in prayer, and the whole day in preaching, to the people in the temple. (Luke xxi. 37, 38.) Read also Matthew's account *four days* before his

crucifixion, in the prospect of what was coming on. (Matt. xx. 18, 19.) And again, before a single assault was made upon him in the garden. (Matt. xxvi. 38.) "My soul is exceeding sorrowful," said the dying Lamb, "even unto death." And the beloved apostle's relation is to the same amount, four days before his crucifixion: "Now is my soul troubled (said the holy Sufferer); and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour! But for this cause came I unto this hour!" (John xii. 27.) And if to these agonies of soul, before the tremendous season of *Gethsemane* and *Golgotha* arrived, must be added the exercises of the Redeemer in body, all must have contributed to wear out and exhaust his strength, and hasten on the pains of death. When we call to mind how the Lamb of God was driven to and fro, hurried from one place to another, from Annas to Caiaphas, and from the judgment-hall to Calvary, we cannot be surprised at his fainting under the burden of his cross. Many a mile of weariness did he walk before nine of the clock in the morning of the day of his crucifixion: and many a bodily fainting must he have felt from the thorny crown, the soldier's scourging, and their buffetings and smittings with the palms of their hands. Unfeeling Pilate! thy marvellings will be now, and to all eternity, of another kind. As for thee, my soul, take thy stand at the foot of the cross, and do thou marvel whilst thou art looking up and beholding Jesus dying, that he who might have commanded twelve legions of angels to his rescue, should, in love to his Church and people, thus give "his soul an offering for sin," and die, "the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God!"

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.—*Isaiah* liii. 11.

Is not this covenant promise of thy faithful God and Father peculiarly suited, my soul, for thine evening meditation, after the subject of the morning, in contemplating the first cry of Jesus upon the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?" And was not the cry answered in the case of the Jerusalem sinners at the day of Pentecost soon after, when, under the apostle Peter's sermon, they were pricked to the heart, and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts ii. 23, 27.) Ponder over the solemn expression, *the travail* of the Redeemer's soul. Did Jesus really sustain in soul somewhat like those throes of nature with which a woman is exercised in her hour of extremity? Did he travail in birth for his redeemed? Pause, my soul, and very solemnly consider the subject. If the 13th psalm be supposed to contain prophetic allusions to Christ, we may on this subject discover somewhat

which will be helpful : "The sorrows of hell compassed me about : the snares of death prevented me." (Psalm xviii. 5.) We have similar expressions, Psalm cxvi. 3. As, therefore, these strong terms are very highly descriptive of suffering, and of a peculiar kind, it may be well to inquire farther, whether there is any ground to make application of them in reference to this subject ? Now it is worthy remark, that the curses pronounced by God at the fall, upon Adam and his wife, became distinct acts of suffering ; and it should seem that he, who in after ages, was to take away sin and the curse from both, must do it by suffering for both, in order to deliver them from it. My soul, review them : Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception ; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children ; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken ; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. iii. 16 to 19.) Now that Jesus, in his own sacred person, literally and truly bore every tittle of this sentence as it referred to *Adam*, none who have read the history of the blessed Jesus in the gospel can for a moment question. So much in sorrow did Jesus eat his bread, that he, and he alone, by way of emphasis, must be peculiarly called "The man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief." And he it was that was crowned with thorns, by way of eminency in affliction, and sweat and bloody sweat ; and he said himself, "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death." (Psalm xxii. 15.) But unless we can trace a similarity of Jesus bearing in his own sacred person somewhat in reference to *the woman* also, how shall we see the curse removed, and the sentence done away ? Hence, if the travail of soul spoken of by the Lord, through the prophet, be intended to allude to the Lord Jesus bringing forth his sons to glory, (and wherefore it should not cannot be shown,) then have we a most gracious and beautiful representation folded up in this scripture ; and the promise connected with it is equally delightful. And may we not interpret that scripture of another prophet by this illustration : "Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child ? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness ? Alas ! for that day is great, so that none is like it ; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble ; but he shall be saved out of it." (Jer. xxx. 6, 7.) Precious Jesus ! thou art indeed the Man, the God-man ; thou didst travail for thy children ; and while all faces are turned into paleness by

reason of sin, thou, our glorious Jacob, our Israel, Jehovah's servant, in the day, the great day of thy soul-travail, shalt be saved out of it, and shalt see of the travail of thy soul and be satisfied. Yea, Lord, thou wilt remember no more thine anguish, for joy that the dew of thy birth is as incalculable as the drops of the morning. Hail, almighty Lord! the trophies of thy redemption shall correspond to the greatness of thy name: "men shall be blessed in thee, and all nations shall call thee blessed." Amen.

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

Zech. xiii. 7.

That this blessed scripture points to Christ, and to him only, the Lord Jesus himself fully confirms in his discourse with his disciples at the mount of Olives. (Matt. xxvi. 31.) And, indeed, of whom could Jehovah thus speak, as "fellow to the Lord of hosts," but of him who, "though in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men?" But what call is this to the sword? Was it the flaming sword at the gate of Paradise, which was placed there to guard the way to the tree of life? And had the sword been for so many ages sleeping? Could none presume to enter but Jesus? And if he enters, the sword of God's justice must first awake, and be sheathed in his heart? And is it God the Father himself that thus commands the sword to awake, and smite his only begotten Son? Did God indeed so love the world, that he thus gave his only begotten Son, "to the end that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life?" Pause, my soul, over these solemn but blessed thoughts. And is he God, on whom these things are to be transacted? Yes; for he is "fellow to the Lord of hosts." And is he man also? Yes; for "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us!" Such is the mystery of godliness; "God manifest in the flesh!" And, what! is he both God and man in one person? Yes; for so only could he be Christ. Well might the prophet exclaim, "Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth!" My soul! take thy stand this evening at the foot of the cross, and contemplate among the prodigies of that memorable day, that great wonder concerning Him crucified, who was fellow to the Lord of hosts. View both his natures; he was truly and properly *man*; for it was one express article in the covenant of redemption, that "as by man came death, by man should come also the resurrection of the dead. And as by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners, so

by the obedience of one should many be made righteous." Moreover the first promise of the Bible, which came in with the fall, was express to this purpose: "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." The devil had triumphed over the nature of man in the fall; and the same nature of man was promised to conquer death, hell, and the grave: and as both the law and the justice of God were solemnly concerned that the same nature which had sinned should obey, and the same nature which had sinned should atone, all the divine perfections were concerned, that he who undertook the purposes of redemption should be the man that was fellow to the Lord of hosts, even Christ Jesus. Secondly, as none but man could be suited for a Redeemer, so none but God could be competent to accomplish redemption. Hence he must be fellow to the Lord of hosts. In point of dignity, in point of merit, the glory due to a Redeemer when redemption should be accomplished, the adoration, love, and praise to be ascribed to him, could never be suitable to any less than God. Hence, by the union of both natures, Jesus, and Jesus only, who thus formed one Christ, became the very person here described, and was, and is, and ever must be, "the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." Now, my soul, whenever thou lookest up to the cross, (let it be daily hourly, continually, yea, unceasingly,) never lose sight of this glorious union of God and man in thy Jesus. Fix thine eyes, thine heart, thy whole affection upon him; and while thou art resting all thine assurance of pardon, mercy, and peace, the joy of this life, and the glory of that which is to come, wholly upon thy Jesus, oh! let thine ear of faith receive, in transports of delight, the proclamation of God thy Father concerning him, "the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts."

And one of the malefactors, which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him.

Lulke xxiii. 39, 40.

My soul! thy morning meditation was directed to that soul-reviving, penitent, encouraging prospect, which the cross of Christ affords, in the recovery of the thief upon the cross, as furnishing the most illustrious example of the sovereignty of grace: Oh! what a trophy was there of the Redeemer's conquest! Now take thy stand again at the foot of the cross, and look on the other side, and behold the dreadful reverse, in the obduracy of the human heart. Here view the sinner dying in all the possibilities of a hardened conscience, railing and blaspheming; while the other departs in the most finished act of faith and repentance, glorifying the Lord. Pause over the contemplation,

and then ask, what was it made the mighty difference? *Who made thee, my soul, to differ from another? And what hast thou, which thou didst not receive?* Blessed Lord Jesus! I do indeed rejoice with trembling, when I consider what I am, yea, what every man is by nature; and how resolutely shut and bolted the hearts of all men are, in our universally fallen state, and cannot but remain so for ever, unless thou, who hast *the key of David*, dost open, and by thy sweet influences dost enter in! Pause once more, my soul! Perhaps, among the wonders which attended the crucifixion and death of Jesus, this, of a determined obduracy, is not the least. Nothing can be more plain than that a general suspicion took place, both among the Jews and the Roman soldiers, which attended the crucifixion of Jesus, that he was more than man. Jesus had wrought many miracles, in confirmation that he was the Christ: and now, on the cross, the stupendous events which took place most loudly proclaimed it. The sun became dark at mid-day; the veil of the temple was rent in twain by an invisible hand; the earth did quake, the rocks were rent, and graves were opened! And to such a degree were these portentous sights carried, that the centurion, who presided at the execution, for the moment, felt himself so overcome with a conviction of Christ's real character, that, unable to resist the impulse on his mind, he cried out, and feared greatly, saying, "Surely this was the Son of God." (Matt. xxvii. 51—54.) But, as if to show the desperately wicked state of the human heart, even these prodigies, and the continuation of them on the morning of our Lord's resurrection, soon lost their effect, and were considered no more. Though an earthquake ushered in the morning of Christ's triumph over the grave; though, for a while, at this, and the presence of an angel, the Roman soldiers became as dead men; though Christ had foretold his resurrection, and the pharisees obtained a guard to watch the sepulchre on this account, and had it sealed with a seal, and a stone, and still both soldiers and pharisees, when recovered from their fright, rather than own Jesus for the Christ, will resolutely persist to their own damnation! My soul! pause over this solemn subject, and learn to have a proper view of the desperately wicked state of every man's heart by nature. Learn also where to ascribe the whole of that difference between one man and another, in the blessed effects of distinguishing grace. But for this, neither wouldst thou have believed in the resurrection of Jesus. That "Jesus is believed on in the world," is one of the wonders in the apostle's account "of the great mystery of godliness." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) And however astonishingly it strikes the mind, yet the word of God confirms the undeniable truth, that were the devils in hell liberated from their chains, still devils would they remain. This we learn from the solemn account in the book of Revelation. Under the vials of God's wrath, they who have hardened their hearts against God and his Christ, are there given

up to be hardened for ever: "In the kingdom of darkness," it is said, "they gnawed their tongues for pain; and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." (Rev. xvi. 8—11.) Lord Jesus! give grace to all thy redeemed, in the view of distinguishing love; to know our mercies, and to bless thee as the author of them.

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.—*John* xix. 19.

My soul! thou hast not yet read the inscription over the cross of Christ in thine evening meditations. Do not withdraw from the sacred spot, until thou hast read it, and also, through divine teaching, understood its blessed design. Pilate meant it in reproach: but Jehovah overruled the design, to give his dear Son due honour. It was written in the three learned languages; in Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew. And it is the best of all learning to be able to read it in the light in which the Lord the Spirit caused it to be written. Do thou, almighty Teacher! cause me so to read it! Pilate meant it as Christ's shame; as if to tell the world wherefore he suffered; but, so far is the inscription itself from notifying a crime, that it positively asserts what it was meant to deny. Pilate wished it to be understood that Christ was punished as an usurper: but then he should not have said that he *was* the King of the Jews, but that he *assumed* the title; whereas he marks it as a thing perfectly understood: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Some of Christ's enemies perceived this; and accordingly desired Pilate to alter the words: "Write not," say they, "the King of the Jews: but that he said, I am King of the Jews." But he who overruled the mind of Pilate to write, overruled his mind that he should not alter. "What I have written," said he, "I have written." Yes, Pilate! Jesus was indeed King of the Jews! And now that memorable scripture was fulfilled: "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Sion." (Psalm ii. 6.) Precious Lord Jesus! Thy title hath been this *from* everlasting; and will be *to* everlasting. It is like thyself, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever!" And now, my soul, do not lose sight of the testimony of an enemy to the kingship of thy Lord Jesus. Look at the cross now, where thy Redeemer was publicly proclaimed King upon it; and behold how the offence of the cross is ceased. And oh! for grace to own Jesus now in glory for my king, as Pilate notified to all the world that he was king, when in the lowest humiliation upon earth. And oh! what rapture will break in upon the soul, when he, whom Pilate proclaimed King upon his cross, shall come as a king upon his throne. Lift up thine head, O my soul, and contemplate thy King, who once was crowned with thorns, now

crowned with glory. Hear what the apostle saith, and let thy whole mind be occupied in contemplating the glory that shall be revealed: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him!" And what is the answer of the Church, but "Even so; come, Lord Jesus! Amen."

His soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.—*Acts ii. 31.*

Two sweet, but distinct thoughts, arise out of this scripture: *one*, concerns the soul of Christ, the *other*, respects his body; and both are most blessed to the believer in the review. My soul! thou hast attended to the parched state of thy Redeemer, as represented on the cross, and made it the subject of thy morning meditation; do thou now behold what this scripture states, under all his humiliating circumstances, that neither hell nor the grave can have dominion over him. His soul shall not be long in a way of separation from the body, in the invisible state; for very shortly it shall arise from *hades*, the hell here mentioned. And his body is too holy, harmless, and undefiled, to admit of putrefaction; yea, it must be presented before the Lord for a sweet-smelling savour. Precious thought to the believer! Jesus needed not to lie long under the dominion of death: he had fully paid the debt of sin, by death; and therefore there needed no detention to make farther restitution for the sins of his people, when thus fully cancelled. And as the infinite holiness and purity of his nature could not become subject to the power of corruption, he needed not to lie longer in the grave than might clearly and fully ascertain to his people in all ages the reality of his death, for the better confirmation of the resurrection that followed. Hence Jesus could not be left, as the great representative of his people, in a situation so comfortless, when the work was completed which the Father gave him to do. And as his holy nature could not admit the possibility of corruption, so the covenant of redemption exempted him from it. Add to these, it was needful that, both in soul and body, he who had died for our sins, should rise again for our justification, and not only triumph in our nature over death, hell, and the grave, but return to the right hand of power, "there to appear in the presence of God for us." Hail! thou holy and triumphant Lord! I bow the knee before thee! In thy holiness thy people are considered holy: and as thy spotless soul could not be detained in hell, neither thy flesh see corruption, so all thy redeemed shall be accounted holy before thee, and through thy righteousness be considered righteous before God and thy Father for ever. Amen.

And the people stood beholding; and the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ the chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself.—*Luke* xxiii. 35—37.

My soul! thou art not tired, I hope, of taking thy stand, night by night, and morning by morning, at the foot of the cross. Surely it is blessed to sit down by the fountain, which was opened by the soldier's spear, in the heart of Jesus, and contemplate, one by one, the mercies which flow in it to the souls of his redeemed. There are more to be seen, more to be discovered at every renewed view; for in the death of Christ, is the life of the soul. It is not the smallest part of the excellences which Jesus discovered in his death, that it was the "death of the cross;" for the apostle joins this with his sufferings: he not only endured the cross, but he despised the shame; and yet that shame, in all the parts of it, forms a wonderful branch in the subject. My soul! look at the cross in this point of view, and see whether thou wilt not find sweet consolation from it, under the grand consideration, that as thy sins have caused shame before God, so the shame thy blessed Surety endured, has more than made satisfaction to the divine glory. Behold the people, with the rulers, deriding Christ with taunts and reproaches; and even the Roman soldiers mocking Jesus, though they knew him not. Indeed, every thing in Christ became the subject of their resentment. Through his whole life this had been the case; and now, in the close of it, the whole is summed up into the most finished contempt. *His person* most daringly despised: "If he be the Son of God, let God save him, if he will have him," say they! *His offices* blasphemed: "Art thou a *King*, then?" said Pilate, in the most sovereign contempt. "If thou be the King of Israel," said the rabble, "save thyself, and come down from the cross." "*Prophecy*, thou Christ," said one of them in the hall, "who is he that smote thee?" And as a *Priest*, when Jesus was stretched forth on the cross, as in the act of blessing, and truly in the act of dying for them, the taunt was, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." Thus the Lord of life and glory, as the prophet had foretold, hid not his face from shame and spitting! And, as if to crown all with the highest possible instance of shame and disgrace, while the multitude counted him for a deceiver, and all his disciples forsook him and fled, as from a person with whom it was dangerous to be found, he is hung-up as a malefactor, and that between two thieves: yea, God himself allowed him, nay, appointed him to be reckoned among the transgressors. Pause, my soul, over this blissful subject; and most blessed it is, when Christ is thus beheld in relation to his people. For surely what-

ever shame and confusion of face is the sinner's due by reason of sin, the Lord Jesus hath fully paid it, yea, more than paid it, as the sinner's representative. And herein is that scripture completely explained and applied: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Surely this was literally and truly the case in the person of her almighty surety and representative, when Jesus endured the cross, and bore the shame for all his people!

And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man, after he hath offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.—*Hebrews* x. 11, 12.

The morning portion was the finishing cry of Jesus on the cross. This, my soul, I hope thou didst, as it were, hear with the ear of faith; beholding with the eye of faith the Lord of life and glory, as retreating from the field of battle, having gotten himself the victory, and by that "one offering of himself, once offered, for ever perfected them that are sanctified." Fold up, then, the blessed object for thy nightly pillow, as for thy morning meditation; and let it be continually brought forth by thee, for thine unceasing joy and peace in believing, that (as the Holy Ghost hath in this scripture, for thy present enjoyment, sweetly set it forth) when all the priests in their daily ministry could accomplish nothing, this man, this God-man, this thy Jesus, whose name is Wonderful, hath "by his one offering," for ever put away sin, and is "sat down on the right hand of God," to see the purchase of his redemption, by price and by power, fully compensated to all his people. But here lies the blessed effects of thy Jesus's redemption; and do thou mark it, and bring it forward constantly in thy pleadings for acceptance with the Father in the Beloved, that so rich, so precious, so inestimable and invaluable is the redemption of God's dear Son, that it never can be fully compensated to his people. A whole eternity will not be sufficient to pay, nor can all the glories of heaven constitute a sufficient recompense; for after millions of ages are past, and millions of redemption-blessings have been given in them, such is the infinite merit, and such is the infinite glory of the Son of God's righteousness, and blood, and sacrifice, that there must still remain a surplus unpaid, a redundancy still unaccounted for. Jesus will have brought in such everlasting revenues of glory to Jehovah, by the redemption of sinners, and in the honour done to his justice, love, and wisdom, by accomplishing the work the Father gave him to do, as will never be fully recompensed; yea,

the merit of his cross alone will; to all eternity, shine with such splendour as to fill heaven with songs of endless praise. The sons of God, we are told, shouted for joy, when beholding the six days' work of creation. But the six hours which Jesus hung on the cross wrought a more glorious work of redemption to Jehovah's praise, and will call up the unceasing adoration of angels and men to all eternity. What sayest thou, my soul, to this view of the wonderful subject? Let such be thy meditation day by day, and may thine eyes prevent the night-watches to be fully occupied in it. Take thy stand at the foot of the cross; there, by faith behold Him on whom the eye of Jehovah is unceasingly fixed: and when thou hast followed the Lamb from the cross to the throne, where Jesus is now for ever sat down on the right hand of God, catch the notes of the hymn which the redeemed are now singing in glory before him, and in which, ere long, thou wilt assuredly join: "To him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb that was slain, be glory and honour for ever and ever. Amen."

Having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.—*Acts ii. 24.*

My soul! thou hast been in contemplation to the tomb of Jesus this morning, and seen the place where the Lord lay; now sit down, and ponder over what this blessed scripture saith, that "the pains of death were loosened, because it was not possible for Jesus to be detained a prisoner by it." And if there were no other scripture but this one in proof of Christ's Godhead, this in itself would be unanswerable; for it could be nothing but the Godhead of his person which made it impossible. It was this which, from the union of the manhood with the Godhead, preserved his soul from sin, and his body from corruption! for though the human nature that Christ took was subject to all the sinless infirmities of nature, and to feel hunger, weariness, and the like, to the full, being part of the curse on the fall, which he came to bear and do away, yet was he not left to the infirmities of what we, in our fallen state, are exposed to, and often sink under. Sweet thought to look to the tomb of Jesus with! Here, as oft as we contemplate the spot, we may say; Here Christ hath lain down, to teach his followers to lie down. But here Christ could not be detained: his body was not subject to corruption. "Thou wilt not leave his soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." But may it not be added also, on another account, that the pains of death could not hold Christ; forasmuch as God's justice being fully satisfied by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all, there could be no detention of the prisoner when the debt was paid. The Lord Jesus did not, for he needed not, go

down to hell for the purpose of receiving there the punishment our sins deserve, and which, by suffering in our stead and room, he did away, his sufferings were fully commensurate upon earth; and it is not the *place*, but the *degree* and *nature* of punishment, that makes an equivalent on the score of paying. His capability of suffering, and the extremity of what he endured during his agony in the garden, and on the cross, (not to mention a whole life of sorrows, in being all along acquainted with grief,) these were the full cup of trembling which Jesus drank, and completely adequate it was, or he would not have said upon the cross, "It is finished." Neither was it necessary that the Redeemer should "long endure" the sufferings due to sin, as the sinner's Surety. Here also his capability of sustaining much in a little space plainly proves, that when all the vials of divine wrath were poured out upon his sacred head, when the whole was emptied, they could not again be filled. Though had not Jesus died "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God," the second death (which, out of Christ, is the sinner's due) must be an eternal death, because the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction are only fitted for, and capable of receiving misery by portions, which, never being fully poured out, are consequently never finished. But not so with him who stood the sinner's surety. He could, and did receive at once, in life and death, the whole of the punishment due to sin; and therefore, he it is of whom the Holy Ghost speaks, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." (Psalm xlii. 7.) Precious Lord! while I think of these things, and my whole soul is going forth in sorrow at the contemplation of those sufferings of thine for my salvation, grant me to feel at the same time the blessedness of thy redemption, and my interest in it, since "by thy stripes I am healed."

The same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.—*John* xx. 19.

There is a peculiar blessedness in this first visit of the Lord Jesus to the whole college of disciples (at least, as many as were present of them) after he arose from the dead; and the manner of relating it is peculiarly striking also. It was the same day at evening, and it was the "first day" also, as if the Lord Jesus would again and again honour the day, as well in the evening as the morning of his resurrection, and make that day for ever memorable to his Church and among his people. My soul! thou hast celebrated thy Lord's triumph over death in the morning, both at home and abroad, in his Church, at his ordi-

nances, at his table, and among his disciples; but learn hence also, that at evening time Jesus will make it light by the sweet renewed visits of his grace; and when the doors are shut, and in thy retirement the world is shut out, and thou art communing within, Jesus will come and say, "Peace be unto thee." And doth Jesus do this? Hast thou this precious legacy of speech, which he left to his people, administered to thee by his own blessed hand? Is he thy peace, and hath he made thy peace through the blood of his cross? Having purchased it by his death, doth he confirm it to thee by his resurrection, and in the earnest of his Spirit seal it on thy soul to the day of eternal redemption? Oh! then, look up to him, my soul, again this evening, as thy peace, thy surety, thy sponsor, and say with the prophet, "This man shall be our peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land." (Micah v. 5.) Yes, thou dear Redeemer! thou art indeed the peace, the very means and end of all joy and peace in believing, and wilt be the everlasting security of thy people in peace with God through all eternity! Methinks I hear thee say, in the nightly visits of thy love and grace, as to the disciples of old, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you: let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid!"

Of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.—*Acts xxv. 19.*

And well might Paul affirm it; for Jesus, after his resurrection, had spoken to Paul from heaven! Well might John, the beloved apostle, give the Church his repeated evidence to it; for Jesus not only made his appearance to John, in common with the other apostles, but in the island of *Patmos* appeared to him alone, and proclaimed himself under those glorious distinctions of character: "Fear not; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore!" (Rev. i. 17, 18.) And well might Peter testify to the same, as he did in the family of *Cornelius*, when he had such indisputable proofs for himself and the rest of his brethren, the apostles, who were "the chosen witnesses of his resurrection: we did eat and drink with him (saith Peter) after he arose from the dead." (Acts x. 41.) But, my soul! mark, in the contempt with which this blessed truth is spoken of, by the Roman governor, how little esteemed, and less regarded, that doctrine, which is thy life, is held by the world. And are there not thousands in the present hour, like *Festus*, who even if they do profess the belief of Jesus's resurrection, are, like him, unconscious of its vital effects on their hearts; and as to any of the saving influences resulting from it in the descent of the Spirit upon them, have "never so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost!" My soul! how wilt thou prove the

resurrection of Jesus in thine own experience, that, like Paul, thou mayest with equal confidence speak of this "One Jesus," this only One, this blessed One, who was truly and indeed dead, but whom thou affirmest to be alive? Pause over the question, and then look into the real testimonies of it in thine heart. Remember what thy Jesus said, as a promise which should take place soon after his resurrection and return to his Father, when redemption-work was finished: "I will send the Holy Ghost the Comforter. He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John xiv. 26.) Hence, therefore, if the Holy Ghost is come, then is Jesus risen and ascended; and then hath the Father also most fully confirmed his perfect approbation of the righteousness and death of Jesus, as the surety of his people, in raising him from the dead, setting him on his own right hand, and sending down the Holy Ghost, agreeably to Christ's promise. And dost thou know all these things in thine own experience? Is Jesus thy resurrection and life? Hath he recovered thee, by the quickening influences of his Holy Spirit, from death to life, and from the power of sin and Satan to the living God? Is he now the daily life-giving, life-imparting, life-strengthening source of all thy faith, and life, and hope, and joy? Is it Jesus that becomes to thee as the dew unto Israel, reviving, like the dew of herbs, thy dry and unpromising wintry state, where there is no vegetation, and causing thee to put forth the tender bud afresh, when, without his influence, every thing in thee was parched and withered? Oh! then, do thou proclaim it far and near, and let every one witness for thee, in every circle in which thou art called to move, that that one glorious Jesus, which was once dead, thou affirmest to be alive, and liveth for evermore. Precious Lord Jesus! how blessed are those sweet words of thine to my soul: "And because I live, ye shall live also."

Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.—*Isa. xxvi. 19.*

Thy morning meditation was a blessed portion to show thee, my soul, how the justification of the believer is affected by the person of his glorious Head. When Jesus died on the cross, not as a private person, but as the public head of his Church, then he paid the full debt of sin; and when he arose from the dead, then full release was given to our whole nature in him. Jesus received the discharge, the bond he had entered into for his people was cancelled, and his resurrection became the proof of theirs also. But as the justification of all the persons of his redeemed is *in* him and *by* him, so another sweet confidence is in him also;

Jesus is not only the cause of their being *justified*, but of their being *glorified* also. In these precious words we have, first, God the Father's promise to his dear Son: "Thy dead men shall live;" first in grace and then in glory. How shall this be effected? Christ then takes up the subject in answer: "Together with my dead body (saith he) shall they arise!" or is it possible the words may bestill the words of the Father; for the body of Christ is said to be given of the Father: "A body hast thou prepared me." (Heb. x. 15.) But in either sense, the doctrine is the same; the resurrection of the believer is assured from its union with Christ. Jesus is the head of his body, the Church. "Your life (saith the apostle) is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 3.) And so again, "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Rom. viii. 11.) Lastly, to crown all, as Jesus is the whole cause both in *justifying* and in *glorifying*, so is he the *pattern* in his resurrection *how* they shall arise. As the dew of herbs casteth out the same from the earth every year, so shall the earth cast out her dead. Christ's body was in substance the same, and so must be his people. "This corruptible," (saith the apostle,) this very identical body, "must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Not "another body," for then it would be "another person;" and this, instead of a *resurrection*, would be a *creation*. But the identical person that was buried, shall arise with the same identity. Well might the prophet, when giving this blessed promise at the command of Jehovah, close it with that delightful injunction; "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust." And what a song to God and the Lamb will burst forth at once from millions of the redeemed, when rising to all the wonders of futurity, *in, and through,* and *from* a personal union *with* the Lord Jesus Christ!

So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past; that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me.—*Job* xiv. 12, 13.

My soul! thou hast been viewing and reviewing some of the blessed things connected with the glorious doctrine of thy Redeemer's resurrection, for several nights and mornings past; but there is one more, in which that heavenly truth demands attention, and which thou hast not even glanced at. Sit down and ponder what will be the joy, the gratulations, the unspeakable rapture which will result from the meeting of thyself! I mean thou and thy body meeting together, after the long separation

made by the grave, and all the humbling circumstances of this flesh of thine having seen corruption. Figure to thyself what an interview that will be of soul and body! In this life, my soul may truly say to the body, Oh! how exceedingly burdened am I, day by day, from a union too dear to be parted from but with pain; and yet too opposed, in all my pursuits and desires, to what I am longing after in spiritual attainments, to wish always to continue! I know, that whilst I am now at home in the body, I am absent from the Lord; and still, so much am I allied to thee, so dear art thou, that when the prospect of separation appears, though I know it is but for a season, nature shrinks back and recoils! There must be the clammy sweat of death, and whatever it be, or in whatever it consist, there must be a separation of soul and body. Therefore, like the apostle, "though in this tabernacle I groan, being burdened," yet it is "not to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." Pause, my soul, and receive comfort from the divine portion of the evening. Job comforted himself with it, and why should not you? Though death separate soul and body, yet it is only to devour that corrupt part of the body which is now so afflictive to the soul. The Lord will appoint "a set time," and remember. "He will call, and thou shalt answer him. He will have a desire to the work of his hands." Moreover, thy body, corrupt as it now is, and virtually all sin, yet hath Jesus as much made it his purchase, as the soul. And when the *set time* arrives, by virtue of his resurrection, thy body shall arise, and thou shalt be among the first, when Jesus gives the word, to descend, and meet thyself in the body, then no longer disposed to interrupt thy purer joys, but as much alive as thou art to the everlasting service, love, and praise of God and the Lamb. Hail, thou glorious Restorer of all things! In thy light shall I see light; and "when thou, who art my life, shall appear, then shall I appear with thee in glory."

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.—*John* xii. 24.

How sweet and lovely is this similitude of the Lord's, in allusion to himself! See to it, my soul, this evening, that thou art able to receive it. Thou hast been attending thy Lord to the tomb: here behold the blessed fruits of his precious death. When Jesus became incarnate, like a pure corn of the finest wheat, he fell to the ground; and when at his death, "he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death," he fell *into* the ground: and now what an abundant harvest of glory to God, and salvation to souls, hath that death and grave of Jesus produced! Had Jesus never died, how would he have seen his

seed, and the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hand? Had Jesus not descended to the grave, how would he have been the life-giving, and soul-quickening root of all his Church and people? But now, by this one precious corn of wheat falling into the ground, and dying, how hath the garner of God been filled, and is now continually filling with his seed? Precious Jesus! give me to see that I am thy seed, in the ever green and flourishing verdure of my soul from thy quickening influence! And let that promise of my covenant Father and God in Christ be my daily portion: "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever."

He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each walking in his uprightness.—*Isaiah* lvii. 2.

Here, my soul, is a sweet portion for thee to lie down with this night, and every night, until the night of death arrives, and thou droppest asleep in the arms of Jesus, to awake no more, till the everlasting morn arise that shall have no night. This is the privilege of the faithful, who enter into the peace of Jesus, and these are the beds they repose in; yea, each of them, for it is the personal enjoyment of each, and of all, to make Jesus their rest. "This is the rest (saith the Holy Ghost, by this same prophet, chap. xxvii. 12) wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing." And dost thou know it, my soul, that Jesus is all this for thee to rest upon, for peace here, and glory to all eternity? Behold him in his person, behold him in the fulness of his grace, his righteousness, his blood, and the unceasing efficacy of his atonement and salvation! Surely thou hast both known him and rested upon him, under all these endearing views, and therefore cannot now need to inquire, what is the rest of the weary, and the sure dwelling-place of the believer? Look at each sweet character and grace of Jesus, and mark how suited they all are for his people, when buffeted by Satan, or fatigued in the world, or tired with the many burdens and interruptions to their peace, which arise from bodily infirmities; look at each, and see what a bosom Jesus opens to receive, and lull to sleep in his arms every lamb of his fold. If the tempter should hiss from the "lion's den, and from the mountain of the leopards," how quieting is that voice which speaketh pardon and peace, in the blood of the cross! And what strength does faith afford in Jesus's righteousness, "to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked!" If the world frown, if family cares and sorrows arise, or if any of those various afflictions which necessarily arise out of a fallen state, abound to make this state wearisome,

still the promise holds good: "He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds:" Jesus will here again lull them to sleep with his sweet refreshments. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but in me ye shall have peace." And if, my soul, thine own manifold frailties, which daily and hourly harass thee, from that body of sin and death thou carriest about with thee, if these induce sorrow, as well they may, oh! how blessed is it to look up to Jesus under all, and view that blood which speaketh for thee, more than all thy errors plead against thee! Here, thou dearest Lord, wilt thou cause me to find constant support and consolation in thee; and amidst all, I shall hear thy lovely voice, saying, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Lie down, then, my soul, this night, and every night, until thou takest thy last night in the quiet bosom of the grave, upon the covenant promises of thy God, in the sure and safe resting-place of thy Jesus, and his finished salvation. And as the waters of the flood allowed no resting-place for the dove, neither could she find place for the sole of her foot, until she returned to Noah in the ark, so neither will the tribulated waters of sin, and sorrow, and temptation, suffer thee to enjoy rest in any thing short of Jesus, which the ark of Noah signified. "Return, then, to thy rest, O my soul," return to thy Jesus, thy Noah, thine ark, "for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee!"

A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all things.—*Eccles. x. 19.*

What feast is this which the wise man meant, and the wine which, for true mirth, he would here recommend? He could not mean the laughter of the fool, for that, he tells us elsewhere, (chap. vii. 6,) "is as the crackling of thorns under a pot." The drunkard's song is but the mirth of the moment, which, like the burning thorn, may blaze and flash amidst the midnight crew, but suddenly goeth out, and leaves a total darkness. But if Solomon had an eye to the feast which Jesus hath made in the mountain of the Lord's house, "a feast of fat things," where his body broken, and his blood shed, are the food of the table, this indeed is a feast made for real joy of heart, and "wine which cheereth God and man." (Judges ix. 13.) When the justice of God drank of this blood of the Lamb, it was satisfied; and when the poor sinner hath tasted of it, his soul is satisfied also. And as "money answereth all things," because all things are procurable by it, so the redemption of Jesus answereth all the wants of a sinner. He is meat to the hungry soul, and drink to the thirsty. He is a garment to the naked, and the medicine of life to the diseased. "I will cause them" (saith Jesus) "that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures." Sit down, my soul, this evening, and mark the striking contrast.

The pleasures of the carnal are short and unsatisfying; yea, they have nothing more in the enjoyment of them than what is common to the brute that perisheth, and the after-effects are all on the side of sorrow. The word of God hath described it, in a finished form of misery: "though wickedness be sweet in his mouth; though he hide it under his tongue; though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth; yet the meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him." (Job xx. 12—14.) What an awful termination to a life of sensuality and carnal pursuits! Sin and folly lead in the front, and misery and sorrow bring up the rear! But in the sweet feast of Jesus, all is joy and peace in the Holy Ghost; and the believer sits down, as under the everlasting smiles of God, hearing and embracing the blessed invitation: "I have gathered my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends! drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!" Blessed Lord! be it my portion, thus, night by night, and day by day, to hear thy voice, to behold thy countenance; and do thou, Lord, come in and sup with me, and cause me to sup with thee, until thou take me home to thine eternal feast above, whence I shall rise no more; where one everlasting banquet will remain, and the redeemed of the Lord will live for ever "in the presence of God and the Lamb!"

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.—*Rev.* iii. 17, 18.

My soul! take a leisurely view of what the Redeemer hath here stated of the Church of *Laodicea*, and gather from it thine evening improvement. What a melancholy representation hath Jesus given! It would have been bad enough to have been in this state, even had the Church been seeking deliverance from it; but to fancy herself well when very ill, to have the spots of death upon her, when she supposed herself recovered, what can be more awful? See to it, my soul, that this be not thy case; ponder over the several characters here drawn, and mark well, whether, through grace, thou hast happily been better taught? "Dost thou fancy thyself "rich, and increased in goods, and having need of nothing?" Alas! thou knowest that thou art as poor as ever the circumstances of original sin and actual transgression could make a sinner; from thy first father, Adam,

thou hast derived a nature which is virtually all sin, and that sin is continually breaking out, to manifest that all thine affections and thy desires cleave to the earth, and are altogether earthly. So that, so far from needing nothing, thou art insolvent before God, and in want of every thing. Hence thou knowest thy wretchedness and poverty by nature and by practice: for without a view of Christ, and void of an interest in him, thou art so *wretched* as to be lost for ever; so *blind* that thou wouldst not have had even a knowledge of thy miserable state; and so *naked* that thou wouldst not have sought the covering of Jesus's robe of salvation, to conceal thy shame, either in this world, or in that which is to come. And hath the Lord taught thee these precious truths? Art thou more and more sensible of the utterly lost state of every man by nature? And after all that thou hast attained in thy pursuit of the divine truths, hast thou arrived at the same conclusion as the apostle, "that thou knowest nothing yet as thou oughtest to know?" Oh! then, listen to the gracious advice of Jesus, and accept the counsel of that Wonderful Counsellor; buy of him all he recommends, for *in* him, and *with* him, are deposited all graces. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." He hath *gold*, yea, "gold tried in the fire;" all grace, mercy, pardon, strength, faith, hope, love, holiness; yea, every thing that can make a poor sinner rich. And he hath *white raiment* to cover thee, even the spotless robe of his own righteousness, which will not only conceal the shame of thy nakedness, but when he hath washed thee from all thy pollutions in his blood, will make thee appear comely in his comeliness, that thou mayest appear before God and the Father justified and complete in his salvation. And he hath the *eye-salve*, for opening the eyes of the spiritually blind, which will effectually, under the anointing of the Holy Ghost, give thee to see thy nothingness, and the glory, fulness, and suitableness of Jesus! What sayest thou, my soul, to these things? Wilt thou not accept the counsel of thy Jesus? Yea, Lord, I do accept it on my bended knees, with thanksgiving, love, and praise. And more especially, dear Lord, do I bless thee for thy bounty, that the purchase of these mercies from thee comes from thy free grace, not from my ability. Jesus never proposed to the poor, to merit what he freely *gives*; nor to the insolvent, who have nothing to offer, to suspend his riches upon their merits. Thou, Lord, art too rich to need any thing from thy creatures; and the things proposed are too costly to be purchased; yea, Lord, thou hast thyself already bought them with a price no less dear than thine own most precious blood. Hence, therefore, thou wise, gracious, kind, and compassionate Lord, I pray for grace to accept thy counsel, and to buy of thee gold tried in the fire, and the white raiment of thy righteousness, and the anointings of thy blessed Spirit, for I need them all, "without money, and without price."

But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said unto them, Children, have ye any meat?—*John* xxi. 4, 5.

Every incident in relation to Jesus, and his love to his people, becomes interesting; and here is a very sweet one. Jesus was now risen from the dead; but his disciples had only faint and indistinct notions of the immense importance of this glorious event. They therefore were returned to their employment of fishing, as unconscious of what the resurrection from the dead should mean. All night they had been employed in a fruitless pursuit, and when the morning began to dawn, Jesus stood on the shore; but their eyes were holden that they did not know him. My soul! learn from hence, that Jesus is often with thee, often looking on thee, and often providing and preparing for thee, while thou art ignorant of his presence and his love. He speaks to them, before they speak to him. Yes; "if we love him, it is because he first loved us." And what doth Jesus say? "Children, have ye any meat?" Precious account of Jesus! My soul, turn over the several blessed particulars shown in it. He calls them *children*. Yes; his people are his children, for he is the everlasting Father, as well as their Husband and Brother; indeed, he stands in the place of all relations, and fills all. My soul! if thou didst but consider this, and keep the remembrance of it always uppermost in thine heart, how wouldst thou delight to go to Jesus, as to "a Brother born for adversity; a Friend that loveth at all times, and one that sticketh closer than a brother!" Observe how earnest the Lord is concerning their present state and safety. Oh! that every child of God in Christ would learn from hence how Jesus takes part in all that concerns them. Surely this solicitude of Jesus takes in the whole of a believer's warfare. Are they poor in this world? Do they seek their bread out of desolate places? Like the disciples, do they toil all night, and gain nothing? And shall not he, who providentially caters for the sparrow, know it and provide for them, amidst all their manifold necessities? Look up, my poor afflicted brother, (if perchance such a one should read these lines of my Evening Portion;) look up, I say, and behold Jesus in this endearing instance of tenderness to the wants of his few faithful disciples. He that caused a miraculous draught of fishes to supply the pressing necessities of his disciples, can and will equally now regard the state of all his redeemed, under their various *temporal* straits and difficulties. The promise is absolute, and hath never failed: "Thy bread shall be given, and thy waters shall be sure, and thy defence shall be the munitions of rocks." (*Isaiah* xxxiii. 16.) And as for *spiritual* famine, when at any time the waters of the sanctuary run low, Jesus is the

almighty Governor, our spiritual Joseph, through all the Egyptian state of his people here below; and he speaks to every one, yea, to thee, my soul, in the number. "Children, have ye any meat?" Lamb of God! though thou art now in thine exalted state, yet not all the Church in glory above, nor all the hallelujahs of heaven, can detain thee one moment from knowing, and visiting, and supplying all the manifold wants of thy Church in grace here below! Doth Jesus say to me, "Hast thou any meat?" Lord, I would answer, Thou art "the bread of life, and the bread of God; yea, the living bread, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world!" Precious Jesus! be thou my bread, my life, my hope, my fulness, my joy, and my portion for ever!

Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau.—*Malachi* i. 2, 3.

My soul! sit down this evening, and ponder over some few particulars of the characteristics of grace, and behold its freeness, fulness, unexpectedness, greatness, sovereignty, and undeservedness; and yet, if possible, more astonishing than either in its *distinguishing* operations. The Lord himself invites his redeemed people to this blessed study; and when a poor sinner can receive it, and mark his own interest in it, nothing more tends to humble the soul to the dust before God, and compels it to cry out, under a deep sense of it, "Lord, how is it that thou hast manifested thyself to me, and not unto the world?" In this demand of God, the question is decided and answered: "I have loved you, saith the Lord. But ye say, wherein hast thou loved us?" or, as some read it, *Wherefore* hast thou done so, when we were utterly undeserving of it? How is it, Lord, that thy grace was so personally distinguished? To which the Lord replies, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? yet I loved Jacob, and hated Esau." As if Jehovah had said, I have been pointing out my distinguishing love from the beginning. Was not Esau Jacob's brother; yea, his *elder* brother? And had any right of inheritance arisen by birth, or from my covenant with Abraham, was not Esau before Jacob? Yet to show the freeness and sovereignty of my decrees, before "the children were born, and had done either good or evil," it was said by me, "The elder shall serve the younger."—Lord! help me to bow down under a deep sense of thy sovereignty, and to cry out with the patriarch, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" or in the precious words of the patriarch's Lord, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." My soul! sit down, and trace the wonderful subject all the Bible through; and when thou hast done that, ponder over thine own experience, and fall low to the dust of the earth, in token that it is, and ever must be, from the same distinguishing grace alone, that one man differs from

another; for all that we have is what we first received. And how marvellous is the distinguishing nature of grace, when passing by *some* that we might think more deserving, to single out others apparently the most worthless and undeserving. The *young man* in the gospel, full of good deeds, and, as he thought, within a step of heaven, shall go away from Christ very sorrowful; while *Paul*, in the midst of his hatred of Jesus, and making havoc of his people, shall be called. Nay, my soul! look not at these only, but look at thyself. Where wert thou, when Jesus passed by and bid thee live? How wast thou engaged, when grace first taught thine eyes to overflow, and He that persuaded *Japheth* to dwell in the tents of *Shem*, persuaded thee, and constrained thee by his love? And what is it now but the same distinguishing love, and grace, and favour, that keeps thee, under all thy wanderings, and coldness, and backslidings, from falling away? Who but Jesus could keep the immortal spark of grace from going out amidst those floods of corruption which arise within? Who but Jesus could prevent the incorruptible seed from being choked for ever, which at times seems to be wholly encompassed with weeds, or buried in the rubbish of thy sinful nature? Precious Lord Jesus! let others say what they may, or think what they will, be it my portion to lie low in the deepest self-abasement, under the fullest conviction that it is thy free grace, and not creature desert, which makes all the difference between man and man! Oh! for the teachings of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to accompany all my views of this most wonderful subject! And when at any time pride would arise in my heart, on any supposed excellency in me, compared to others, or when beholding the state of the vain or the carnal, oh! for grace to hear that voice speaking and explaining all: "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob, and Esau have I hated."

But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre.—*John* xx. 11.

Behold, my soul! in this woman, a delightful instance of what thy love should be to thy Lord. If at any time thou dost miss thy Jesus, and longest for his return, where wouldst thou expect him? Surely at his ordinances, his word, at his throne of grace, where Jesus, "feedeth his kids by the footsteps of the flock, and beside the shepherds' tents." How do men of the world pursue the object of their wishes, but where it is to be found? Are they thirsty? they haste to drink. Are they cold? they seek the fire. Follow this plan. If Jesus be away, seek him where he hath directed thee to come. So Mary waited at the sepulchre; and as she waited, she looked in, while she wept to see the place where

Jesus had lain. Sweet view of a sincere seeker? The heart and eye are both engaged, and all the affections are going forth in desire. The angels addressed Mary; but the sight of angels could not satisfy her, till Jesus himself came. It is worthy of remark, that the first appearance the Lord Jesus made of himself, after he arose from the dead, was to this woman, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And it is yet farther remarkable, that the first words which Jesus spake after the glorious event of his resurrection, was to Mary Magdalene! He passed by the whole of the apostles to give Mary this distinguished honour. Mary stood at the door of the sepulchre, weeping, but the apostles had returned to their own home; and the Lord Jesus rewarded that waiting. "Woman," saith Jesus, "why weepest thou?" As if the Son of God had said, "What cause can there be now to weep since all the ruins of the fall are done away, and sin, death, hell, and the grave, with all their tremendous consequences, are destroyed for ever!" I hope I do not mistake, but I think this feature in the character of the Lord Jesus is calculated to dry up every tear from every eye of his redeemed. It seems to speak in the language of that precious scripture: "For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem. Thou shalt weep no more. He will be very gracious unto thee, at the voice of thy cry: when he shall hear it, he will answer thee." (Isaiah xxx. 19.) My soul! do not fail to take with thee the many blessed improvements which the waiting of Mary, and the grace of Jesus in thus rewarding that waiting, brings with it. There is no interruption, no pause in Jesus's love. In reading that sweet volume, there are no stops, no, not a comma, but what we ourselves make. And if at any time we find ourselves come to the bottom of a page, full of the relations of Jesus and his love, it is only to turn over the leaf, and there we find the continuation of the same blessed subject. Now, my soul! learn, from Mary, to take thy stand where she stood; not at the sepulchre of Jesus, for he is risen, as he said, and we are commanded not to seek the living among the dead; but we are to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and to look at Christ upon his throne of glory. Nevertheless, as the angels said to those who sought Christ at the tomb, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," so we may by faith often view that memorable sepulchre; and precious will be the meditation, as Mary's was. And, my soul, do not forget who it was that led Mary thither, and gave her those sympathies, and at length converted her sorrow into the most heartfelt joy. Oh! it is blessed, it is precious, to be kept in the way, "the good old way," of waiting upon the Lord. He is always near, and though he may for a while seem to conceal himself, yet he will be found of them that seek him. He saith himself, "It shall come to pass before my people call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am!" Blessed Jesus!

do thou by me; do thou by all thy children who seek thee sorrowing, as thou didst by Mary, and as thou dost by all thy people: "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" And when our souls reply, "It is Jesus alone we seek," oh! then to hear our own names called upon, as her's was, *Mary!* and in such a way as to draw forth every affection of the heart in our answer, "Rabboni! my Lord and my God!"

Jesus himself drew near, and went with them; but their eyes were holden, that they should not know him.

Luce xxiv. 15, 16.

My soul! here is a most interesting subject proposed to thine evening meditation, in this account of an interview between Jesus and two of his disciples, in the interval between his resurrection and ascension. Sit down, and under the divine teaching, ponder it well. Were the eyes of those disciples so holden, that they should not know him, from some supernatural effect wrought on their powers of vision, or was it induced from any alteration wrought upon the person of their Lord? Probably there might be a concurrence of both these causes. The effect accomplished by this interview seems indeed to show it; but it is profitable, highly profitable, to exercise our meditation upon it, though the point cannot be determined. I think it more than probable, that death had given an aspect to Jesus, which in itself must have induced a change. That face which once, in the days of his flesh, brake forth as the sun when shining in his strength, at the mount of transfiguration, might now have appeared with paleness, from the sweat, and dust, and blood spread over the countenance. But, however this might have been, so it was, their eyes were holden, that they should not know him. Precious Lord Jesus! cause me to learn from hence, that all the gracious manifestations which thou art pleased to make of thyself to thy people, are of thyself, and depend upon thy sovereign will and pleasure; and cause me to learn, also, how very gracious thou art, to condescend, at any time, by the sweet influences of thy Spirit, to reveal thyself to thy people, and to manifest thyself to them, otherwise than thou dost to the world. And hence, Lord, I beseech thee, very frequently to draw nigh, and go with me, as thou didst with them; and though mine eyes be holden, so as that I do not discern thee, yet, like them, thy gracious discourse will make mine heart burn within me, while thou art talking with me by the way, and while thou art opening to me thy scriptures. And, especially, do by me as thou didst by them, when at thy table, or in thine house of worship; give me an open communication of thy glory "in breaking of bread, and in prayer."—My soul! do not dismiss this interesting account of the appearance of Jesus before thou hast taken another view of thy Redeemer. It was a

solemn moment in which it took place. The Son of God had finished redemption-work; but he was not as yet ascended to his Father. Behold him for a moment, and contemplate his person in that interval! Jesus, in his human nature, though "his visage was marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men," is yet said to have been "fairer than the children of men, because grace was poured into his lips, and Jehovah had blessed him for ever." And as he was altogether free from sin, so was he "the altogether lovely." And as he was now raised from the dead, though not yet exalted to the right hand of power, yet surely that human nature of Jesus, in union with the Godhead, and worshipped by angels, must have possessed a glory unspeakably blessed and divine. The way to judge of the appearance of thy Jesus, at this time, is from the conduct of the angels toward him. From their ministration to him in the garden and at the sepulchre, and especially their attendance on him at his return to glory, it is easy to gather in what light they gazed on Christ. Such an assemblage of glory as the human nature of the Lord Jesus possessed, and derived from its personal union with the Godhead, called forth at once the love, and adoration, and delight of all the angels of heaven. They saw holiness in the person of Jesus, in all its perfection; and every grace, in wisdom, truth, and knowledge, in their highest properties. Hence their views of Christ may very safely be made the standard of ours. Hail, then, thou blessed Emmanuel! Let this interval between thy resurrection and ascension be ever sacred to my soul! And while I behold thee as lovely, fair, and glorious, in every eye, both of angels and thy redeemed, be thou increasingly lovely and precious in mine also. And let it be my delight to talk of thee by the way, and when lying down or rising up. And, oh! do thou always draw near to me, thou blessed Lord! though my dim-sighted apprehension of thee doth so often prevent me from enjoying thy presence. Yet a little while, and thou wilt call me home, to behold thy glory unveiled with a cloud, or any intervening object, where I shall behold thee as thou art, and dwell with thee for ever. Amen.

The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.—1 Peter iii. 4.

My soul! where is this to be had? Hast thou considered it in its importance, or in its attainment; whence it cometh, and on whose account it is given? Sit down, this evening, and ponder over it. What is a meek and quiet spirit, but grace, in all its blessed properties and saving effects, keeping the heart and mind through Christ Jesus? Now mark *some* of the many precious things belonging to it. The fountain of it is God; for "every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh

down from the Father of lights; with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James i. 17.) It is also the purchase of Christ's blood, and the fruit of the Holy Ghost; and so infinitely important in its operation, that believers are said thereby "to be made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Peter i. 4.) And what a lustre doth the possession of it impart to the whole man! Being a portion of the same spirit which was given to the manhood of Jesus *without measure*, it produces a resemblance and similitude in the character of every renewed soul to him. As a fair and beautiful countenance gives a loveliness to the *natural* form, so grace is that which gives the whole that can be called blessed or engaging to the *spiritual*. Hence a poor man, with grace in his heart, is infinitely more lovely in the sight of God than the persons of the great, void of it, though the blood of kings were to flow through their veins. It is this which is the source, and it is this which gives the finishing gracefulness to the whole man. And as it flows from God, so all its tendencies are to God. Next to the *person* of Jesus, the *grace* of Jesus is, or ought to be, the one earnest object and desire of every soul. Until we have this ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, every man by nature, in the sight of God, is of no esteem. There can be nothing lovely or desirable in the unregenerate. "He that liveth in pleasure, is dead while he liveth," saith the scripture. (1 Tim. v. 6.) And however, to our view, the actions of such may carry with them much moral sweetness, yet as those actions are not quickened from the Spirit of grace, they are no other than as flowers strewed over the bodies of the dead. They are of no esteem in the sight of God. The *person* must be first sanctified by grace, and then the *action* follows. The Lord had respect *first* to Abel, and *then* to his offering; but as to Cain, as he had no respect, so neither could his offering be acceptable. (Gen. iv. 4, 5.) My soul! what saith thy experience to these things? Hast thou this precious grace, this saving grace, this sanctifying grace, which flows at once from God the Father's gift, the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, and the regenerating influences of God the Holy Ghost? Are those blessed effects wrought in thee, which saving grace is sure to work? Is God's glory your delight; his Christ your Christ; his salvation your salvation? Hast thou felt the renewing, transforming, confirming, establishing principles of grace, flowing in from the spirit of Jesus upon thy spirit, so that the new man is "renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him?" In a word, hast thou so beheld, as in a glass, "the glory of the Lord, that thou art changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord?" If, my soul, thou hast these blessed tokens, these ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit, which are in the sight of God of great price, then dost thou possess that which all the world can neither give nor take away.

“It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.” Precious Jesus! it is the purchase of thy blood, it comes from the sovereign gift of God the Father, and is the earnest of the Holy Spirit! Lord, seal my soul with it “to the day of eternal redemption!”

Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you.—1 *Samuel* xii. 24.

How truly affectionate was this pastoral advice of the prophet to Israel, in the close of recapitulating Israel's history, and God's love over them! My soul! take this portion from Israel's history, and apply it to thine own; for the argument, and the reason upon which the argument is founded, are one and the same, and thou wilt find the same causes, both from interest and from received mercies from Christ, to form the same conclusion. But at what part of thine history wilt thou begin, or where wilt thou end, in considering “what great things” thy God, thy Jesus, hath done for thee? Wilt thou open with the consideration of God's mercies toward thee in nature, or providence, or grace? What arithmetic will be competent to score the vast account, even in a thousandth degree, of either of those departments, much more if thou wert to study the subject in all! Who indeed can be sufficient to note them down, or to state in order, as they passed before him, the numberless events which testified divine favour, during the long season of thine *unregeneracy*? What a long volume might be formed, in nature only, of the Lord's watchfulness, providings, preservings, and ordinations, in making all minister and become subservient to our welfare! Oh! it is blessed to consider, even if it were here only, what great things the Lord hath done for us. And while we mark the footsteps of his love, and note our wanderings from him; when we trace back the wonderful subject of distinguishing mercy, and call to mind the graves of some, yea, many, with whom were spent our youthful days, while we remain not only the *spared*, but, we hope, the *saved* monuments of free sovereign grace and mercy; well may we exclaim, with one of old, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies!” And if from the outer court of nature and providence, our souls enter into the inner court of grace, and there mark down, since the day of our *regeneracy* and the Lord's effectual calling, what great things he hath done for us, surely it would tire the arm of an angel to write the whole account. Precious Lord Jesus! *in* thee, and *by* thee, and *from* thee, all our mercies flow. Thou art the first, the last, the best, the comprehensive gift of God; the channel of all blessings, temporal,

spiritual, and eternal, through whom all the streams come, from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and through whom all love and praise return; not only the channel through whom they come, but the substance in whom they centre. Thou hast purchased them, and they are enjoyed wholly from our union with thee; and their continuation in grace here, and glory to all eternity, must result from thee: all the covenant mercies of God in Christ are "the sure mercies of David" on thy account! Think, then, my soul! what causes thou art surrounded with, in the great things God hath done for thee, to fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, with all thine heart! Close then the month as thou hopest to close thy life on earth, with this sweet scripture; and as thou didst open the month in contemplating "the Lord thy righteousness," as the same whereby thou art enjoined to call him, so now let thy last meditation, before thou droppest to sleep in ending the month, be with the same. "He is" (as Moses told Israel) "thy praise and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen." Be this, therefore, thy daily meditation, and thine evening hymn: "to fear the Lord, and serve him; for consider how great things he hath done for thee." Amen.

M A Y.

That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name,
THE LORD THY GOD.—*Deut.* xxviii. 58.

My soul! thy morning meditation, in the opening of a new month, was directed to that soul-reviving subject, the contemplation of the name of Jesus. Oh! what rich stores of unknown, unexplored treasures of mercies are folded in that one name of thy Lord! It will serve to heighten thy study yet more, and tend to endear Jesus as increasingly precious, by pondering over what the man of God taught Israel in the solemn words here proposed to thine *evening* meditation. Every thing in Jehovah is solemn. His sweetest mercies come to us with great sacredness. It is impossible to receive them but with the lowliest reverence, even when the soul is made blessed in divine favours. We rejoice, indeed, but "we rejoice with trembling." And the greater the mercies are, the more will the conscious sense of our undeservings humble the soul to the dust before God. The Israelites were taught by this scripture that the great design of Jehovah, in all his dispensations, was to induce a suitable and becoming reverence for this glorious and fearful name of **THE**

LORD THEIR GOD. And his sacred name is here put in large letters, by way of intimating its immense dignity and importance. His name is *glorious*, because it sets forth how that glory of Jehovah is manifested in his covenant-engagements by CHRIST; and his name is no less *fearful*, because it is by virtue of those covenant-engagements that the LORD is pledged to bring all the foes of Christ and his redemption under his footstool. There seems to be a reference to the oath of Jehovah, when Christ was introduced into his high-priestly office, that the Lord, at Messiah's right hand, "would strike through kings in the day of his wrath." (Psalm cx. 4, 5.) And it should seem no less evident that this very name, glorious and fearful as it is, was thus expressly proclaimed to intimate, that, by virtue of this oath, Jehovah is engaged as much, on the one part, to fulfil the threatenings, as, on the other, to make good the promises; both of which were rendered firm and irrevocable by the solemnity of an oath. My soul! ponder over these most sacred things with a reverence suited to them. And in these awful days, in which the Church of Jesus is now surrounded with the dreadful delusion of heresy, in those who deny the Lord that bought them, see to it, that thou art strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. Oh! the blessedness of "knowing whom thou hast believed," that "thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name—**THE LORD THY GOD.**" The LORD thy God, in covenant: in his relation to thee *in* Christ, thy perfect redemption *by* Christ, and thy acceptance *in* Christ, in his finished salvation. Oh! did the sinner of every description and character but for a moment consider what he is doing, who is looking to this glorious and fearful name of the LORD God, without knowing him as HIS GOD, that is GOD IN CHRIST, the Mediator, and being accepted in him, what dreadful trembling and apprehension of soul would it induce! Bless thy God, thy Jesus, my soul, who hath thus made a sweet revelation of himself to thee, and not only taught thee, but inclined thee by the teachings and influences of his Holy Spirit, to fear "this glorious and fearful name—**THE LORD THY GOD!**"

Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.—*Daniel* ii. 34, 35.

Ponder well, my soul, this wonderful vision of the heathen king, and mark its several features. If the Lord be about to bless and comfort his people, how often is it done by ways the most opposite and unlikely, according to our apprehension of things! It shall be accomplished even by their enemies, and

they who wish most to afflict them shall not unfrequently be made the unconscious instruments of doing the very reverse of what they intend; as in the instance before us, to which these words in the writings of the prophet Daniel refer. The Church was now in captivity; oppressed and brought very low: the king, in whose dominions they were in their vassalage, a despotic tyrant, whose word became the chief law. The Lord visits this monarch's mind with a vision of the night; he is troubled with what he had seen in his vision; but when he awakes, the remembrance of what he had seen vanished. Daniel is blessed of the Lord, both to bring to his recollection his thoughts in the night, and to give the interpretation of them. The king's heart is for the time subdued, and Daniel honoured with favour. But the most eminent point of this vision was for the Church's comfort, and the Lord caused his people to rejoice in the discovery of it. The image to be destroyed represented the several monarchies of the world, before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the order in which they should succeed each other. The *Chaldean* took the lead, and the *Persian* followed, to which succeeded the *Grecian*; and during the fourth, which was the *Roman* power, the Lord Jesus Christ, "the stone cut out without hands," was to arise, which should destroy the image, become "a mountain, and fill the earth." What a wonderful coincidence of circumstances must it have been, that made every minute point in this representation to answer so exactly to Jesus, and to him only! The birth of Christ, produced without the intervention of a human father, nothing could more strikingly set forth than the figure of "a stone cut out without hands." And the conquest of his spiritual kingdom was equally beautiful, in the similitude of breaking in pieces "the image which stood on his feet." And when what is said of Christ is considered, which must finally be fulfilled in him, that "the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever;" who doth not, or will not see the striking representation of "a mountain" springing up from slender beginnings, "and filling the whole earth?" My soul! wilt thou not learn, this evening, from this very precious scripture, to appreciate thy Jesus, and to behold how sweetly scripture testimony confirms every thing concerning him? Teach me, thou dear Lord, to view thee under those delightful characters; and while I trace back the history of thine incarnation, low, humble, and despised, as "a stone cut out without hands;" oh! give me to contemplate thy glory in what most assuredly shall be accomplished, when "like a mountain established on the tops of the mountains, all nations shall flow to thee, and thou shalt fill the earth." Divine Master! fill my soul with thyself, and let this our land, and our people, be filled with the knowledge of Jesus and his great salvation, "as the waters cover the sea!"

The eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the Lord.—*Zechariah ix. 1.*

Precious Jesus! when shall this blessed scripture be accomplished? "The eyes of man!" What man? Surely, as the Church's glorious head, and as her glorious representative, the eyes of our Lord Jesus himself were always from everlasting directed to Jehovah his Father. But secondarily, and subordinately, the eyes of thy redeemed, blessed Jesus, the eyes of man, the eyes of every man, must ultimately, as the tribes of Israel, be all toward thee for salvation. Thou indeed hast said, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." (Isaiah xlv. 22.) Pause, my soul! this evening, over this view of thy Jesus, for it is a very blessed one, and see what improvements, under divine teaching, thou canst draw from it. It is said, that as one of the tribes, yea, all the tribes of Israel, every eye shall be upon Jesus. And how suitable is it that it should be so! Is not God the Father unceasingly beholding his dear Son in his engagements, as the Mediator and Surety of his Church and people? Oh! who shall be competent to describe with what complacency and delight he beholds him, in his glorious person, as the God and man, the Glory-man; and in all his offices, characters, and relations? Somewhat of this we may gather from what Jesus hath himself said concerning the Father's love for his undertaking, and accomplishing redemption by his blood. "Therefore" (saith our Jesus) "doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life; that I might take it again." (John x. 17.) But the full apprehension of the love of the Father on this one account, cannot perhaps be brought within the capacity of the human mind. But if God the Father loves Jesus as Mediator, and for his undertaking, and is unceasingly beholding him with rapture on this account, it may serve at least to teach thee, my soul, how exceedingly it becomes thee to look to Jesus for the same; and that thine eyes, as the eyes of all the tribes of Israel, should be towards the Lord. Dearest Lord Jesus! let mine eyes, mine heart, my whole soul be fixed on thee, until every affection be going out in desires after thee. I would trace thee, as the Old Testament saints, who saw thy day "afar off, rejoiced, and were glad." I would see thee as New Testament believers, who are looking to thee, and "are enlightened, and their faces are not ashamed." I would see thee with the first dawn of the morning; yea, before the morning light, and "until the day break, and the shadows flee away;" and until my beloved come to me "as a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether!" Yes, precious Lord Jesus! I would be sending the earnest longings of my soul through the windows of the eye after thee, and never give rest to my eyes, nor slumber to my eye-lids, until that blessed hour arrive, when no medium shall intervene to

prevent the full enjoyment of my soul in thee; and when a body of sin and death shall no longer weary my soul, in her enjoyment of thee; but I shall then see Jesus as he is, and never more lose sight of his lovely person, but live in his presence, and Jesus in mine, for evermore.

And continued all night in prayer to God.—*Luke vi. 12.*

My soul! contemplate thy Lord in the view here represented of him. "Jesus continued all night in prayer to God." But did Christ need to use prayer? Yes, as Christ, the sent, the anointed, the servant of Jehovah, when he voluntarily stood up as the surety of his people, at the call of God the Father. But as God, "one with the Father, over all, God blessed for ever," he prayed not; for all divine perfections were his in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit, eternally, essentially, and undivided. But, my soul, as thy representative, Jesus needed the use of prayer, and hath both endeared it, and recommended it, by his bright example. And observe the fervency and earnestness of his prayers, by the length of time. For whereas one short hour is found long by thee, (yea, sometimes in that hour, what coldness and deadness creep in!) thy Redeemer "continued all night in prayer." And what were the subjects of his prayer, but the salvation of his people? He needed no prayer for himself, had not his love to us, and zeal for his Father's glory, prompted his infinite mind to undertake our redemption. But when the Son of God became man for us, to make us sons of God, then our safety, peace, and welfare, both for this life and that which is to come, occupied his divine mind, and led him out "all night in prayer to God!" What an illustrious proof hath Jesus given of this in his farewell prayer, the night preceding his sufferings and death! As a dying father in the midst of his family, behold how he commended his whole household to God. "Keep, holy Father," (said he,) "through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." My soul! often let thy thoughts revolve on this; and in thy cold and languid moments in prayer, contemplate how Jesus was engaged for thee and thy salvation. The sun witnessed to the diligence of his labours by day, and the stars in their courses testified of his earnestness in prayer by night. And what is it now in his glorious office as Intercessor, but the all-prevailing and unwearied exercises of the same; only with this difference: in his exalted state his addresses are not by way of prayer, or petition, as when upon earth, for all the high offices of his everlasting priesthood and sacrifice are carried on by his "appearing in the presence of God for us." He appears in a vesture dipped in blood, and as a Lamb which hath been slain. And his blood is said to be a *speaking blood*, for it speaketh to

God for us, on the ground of his merit, and it speaketh *from* God to us, on the account of God's covenant grace and mercy in Christ. Ponder well, my soul, these things; and, in the contemplation of thy Jesus, never lose sight of the everlasting and eternal efficacy of his blood and righteousness, nor of thy interest in both. And when, at any time, thy poor, polluted, cold, and lifeless prayers find no ascension, no strength nor energy, direct one look, with faith, to the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne. Behold him, whom the Father heareth always; and call to remembrance, that it is the efficacy of his merits and intercession which is the sole cause of thine acceptance before God and the Father, and not thy earnestness, or the length of thy prayers. Precious Jesus! help me thus steadfastly and steadily to behold thee in thy holy vestments of the everlasting priesthood of Melchisedek; and then shall I be assured that neither my poor person, nor poor prayers, will ever be forgotten before God!

And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.—*Luke* xiii. 12.

My soul! sit down this evening, and let the case of this poor woman open to thy view some sweet subjects of instruction and encouragement. Who knows, but that God the Holy Ghost may graciously make thy meditation on it blessed in Jesus? The Evangelist gives a short but interesting history of her. She was a daughter of Abraham, and yet Satan had bound her: and that not for a little space, but for a very long time, even to *eighteen years*. Hence learn, that they who are *within* the covenant, are not *without* affliction; nay, they become the very grudge and hatred of Satan, on that account, and shall assuredly be made sensible of his enmity. Do not overlook this part of the poor woman's memoir. It forms a distinguishing feature in the children of the kingdom. Jesus himself hath said, "Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (*John* xv. 19.) And as to the length of time in which Satan had harassed her, no doubt, there was much mercy mingled with the exercise. Jesus knew all; yea, permitted all, and sanctified all. It were devoutly to be wished, that all the Lord's afflicted ones would ever keep this conviction uppermost in their minds. I have often thought that we should lose some of our highest enjoyments, if the Lord did not afford occasion for the enemy to make use of some of his deepest cruelties. A child of God can never be a loser by the greatest exercises, while Jesus stands by, regulates, restrains, and ultimately blesseth all. The devil, as in the case of this poor woman, meant nothing but evil; but see, my soul, how Jesus at length overruled it for good. And if the sorrow be lengthened to

eighteen, or even eight-and-thirty years, as to the man at the pool of *Bethesda*, yet if the issue be glorious, it is the end that crowns the action; and in the mean time, the Lord can, and will minister *eighteen thousand* consolations, to bear his children up under them, and to make them "more than conquerors," through his grace supporting them. He can, like another Samson, make "meat come forth from the eater; and out of the strong bring forth sweetness." How often have I seen a child of God triumphing in weakness, when the power of Jesus hath been resting upon him! Yea, the very tear, which hath been standing in the eye from the pain of body, hath looked like a pearl for beauty, from the spiritual enjoyments of the soul.—But let me take another view of this poor exercised daughter of Abraham! Though bowed together by reason of this spirit of infirmity, so as in nowise to be able to lift up herself, yet do not fail to remark, my soul, that she did not absent herself from the house of prayer. What multitudes are there, who plead sickness, yea, trifling sickness, to justify their absence from the house of God! And who shall say, what blessings may be lost upon those occasions? Had Thomas not withdrawn himself from the meeting of the disciples, at that memorable season when Jesus came to bless them, he would have been spared the dreadful mortification that followed. Had this poor woman not been in the synagogue when Jesus visited it, who shall say how long might the blessings she then found have been withheld, or when might another opportunity have offered? And it doth not appear that this poor woman's attendance on worship was with the most distant view of getting relief to her body, but for the cure of her soul. She was indeed a daughter of Abraham, and, as such, regarded "the one thing needful." She had at least learned the spiritual truth of that blessed saying of Jesus, whether, or not, she had learned the Lord's sermon on the mount, and was brought into the practice of it: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."—When Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity!"—It doth not appear that she made any application to Jesus to be healed. Sweet thought! "If we love him, it is because he first loved us." Gracious as the Lord is to the cries of his afflicted, he doth not always wait for their petitions. It is *his* love, not *our* prayers; his *free* grace, not our *constrained* necessities, that becomes the rule for Jesus bestowing mercy. O thou dear Lord! art thou now in the assemblies of thy people? And dost thou not seek, and search out the poor of thy fold, wheresoever they have been scattered "in the cloudy and dark day?" (Ezek. xxxiv. 11, 12.)—Pause, my soul, over this delightful view of thy Jesus, in his grace, to this daughter of Abraham; and gather from it sweet instruction in all the remaining infirmities under which thou art frequently bowed together,

and from which, in thyself, or thine own strength, thou art no more able to lift up thyself, than this woman, of the stock of Abraham. Learn from this relation, where, and in whom alone, thy strength is found. Oh! for grace to live under the constant enjoyment of strength in Jesus, and to say with that exercised servant of old: "I can do nothing of myself: but I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." And should the Lord, in his providence, cause these lines to meet the eye of any son or daughter of Abraham, who is still under the same spirit of infirmity, of a natural state in which they were born, I would say, Do as this poor woman did, diligently attend the means of grace, and let nothing of soul or body hinder a constant waiting upon the Lord: and depend upon it, Jesus will be there, and will speak personally to your case and circumstances, and say, "Thou art loosed from thine infirmity!"

The top of Pisgah.—*Deut.* xxxiv. 1.

There is somewhat truly interesting in this account of *Pisgah*, to which *Moses* ascended before his death. The relation, no doubt, was intended to convey seasonable instruction of a spiritual nature, to all true believers in Christ, in their *Pisgah*-contemplations of the promised land. My soul! sit down, this evening, and see what, under divine teaching, thou canst make of it. Probably, thy Lord, thy Jesus, may grant to thy faith sights yet more glorious than even *Moses* beheld in open vision, when he went up to mount *Nebo*. "The top of *Pisgah*" afforded to the man of God a beautiful prospect of *Canaan*; and as we are told, that "his natural force was not abated, neither his eye become dim," he might doubtless view the boundaries of *Israel's* dominions; which, in point of extent, reached but little more than *fifty miles* in one direction, and about *three times* that length in another. Indeed, we are informed, that "the Lord showed him all the land;" and the same power which gave him the prospect, would doubtlessly give him a suited strength of vision for the purpose. But what, my soul, are thy views on *Pisgah's* heights? The utmost extent of the imagination cannot be sufficient to take in what is opened before thee, of that "length, and depth, and breadth, and height, of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge!" And if he, who led *Moses* to the top of *Pisgah*, go with thee; if the same Lord that showed him all the land, show thee also "the glories to be revealed;" think what blessings will pour in upon thee, "of joy unspeakable and full of glory." It is true, thy *Pisgah* views are in distant means of grace, and the ordinances of worship, where, very frequently, clouds arise, and darken thy prospects, nevertheless the word of God opens a true map of that *Judea*, which is above, and which "is the glory of all lands;" and God the Holy Ghost can, and will give the "seeing eye" to see, and the awakened heart "to believe the glo-

rious things which are spoken of the city of God." And if Moses, from the first moment that the Lord spake to him "from the bush," when the visions of God began, had been accustomed to contemplate in every thing the view of Jesus, and, like the other patriarchs, had seen "his day afar off," so as "to rejoice and be glad," surely, since the Lord first called thee by his grace, and was pleased to reveal his Son in thee, thou hast had increasing desires after Jesus, and increasing knowledge of, and communion with Jesus; and therefore, on Pisgah's top, in thy evening meditation, thou mayest find sweet anticipation of the glories of that kingdom, which, ere long, thou hopest to enter into the full enjoyment of, amidst the heirs of God, and the joint-heirs with Christ. One sweet thought more the top of *Pisgah* opens to the mind, in beholding the man of God going up to it: I mean in that he went alone; the divine presence only being with him. Here indeed is the very life of communion. The blessings Jesus imparts, in *Pisgah* views, to his redeemed, are all personal and alone. They are joys with which a stranger cannot intermeddle. The "white stone," and the "new name," and the "hidden manna," which Jesus gives, are all in secret: "no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth." (Rev. ii. 17.) My soul! art thou acquainted with these things? Are these among the privileges of the true believer; and dost thou hope, after a few more revolving suns have finished their daily course, and the shades of night are done away, to realize these glories, and enter upon the everlasting possession of them?—Get up then, by faith, in thy evening meditations; yea, hear Jesus calling thee by name, as he did Moses, and saying, Get thee up into this mountain, *Abarim*, and behold the land which I have taken possession of for Israel! Oh! for grace and faith in lively exercise, to look often "within the veil, whither our glorious forerunner is for us entered," and there behold Jesus on his throne, and speaking in the same precious words as to the Church of old: "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev. iii. 21.) And while these soul-ravishing triumphs of faith are upon the mind, with all the warmth of holy joy, from *Pisgah's* heights, surely, like *Simeon*, the soul will then cry out in the same language as he did, when he caught Jesus in his arms; "Lord, let thy servant now depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.—*Rev. ii. 10.*

My soul! thy last evening meditation, by faith, was on Pisgah's top. This evening, do thou attend to what thy Saviour speaks in this scripture of the prospect of a prison. This forms the state and condition of the believer. The transition he is sometimes, and suddenly, called to make is, from the house of feasting to the house of mourning. He is here but by a wilderness at the best; and whatever accommodations he meets with by the way, the apartments of joy and sorrow are both under the same roof, and very often it is but a step from one to the other; yea, sometimes, and not unfrequently, when Jesus hath been feasting with his people, and they with him, before the cloth hath been taken away, and the blessings offered up, a reverse of circumstances hath followed.—But what saith thy Lord in this sweet scripture (for it is a sweet one, if well considered)? “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.” There is a fear which belongs to our very nature, and impossible wholly to be free from; it is indeed part of ourselves. No creature of God but one, and that is the *Leviathan*, that we read of, is wholly free from it. (Job xli. 33.) The blessed Jesus himself, when assuming our nature, condescended to take all the sinless infirmities of our nature, and therefore was subject in some degree to it; for we are told that “he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh.” (Rom. viii. 3.) Hence, we read, that his holy soul, when in the garden, was “sore troubled, sore amazed, and very heavy.” Listen, my soul, to these complaints of thy Redeemer! And when at any time fear ariseth within at the conflicts of Satan, recollect how Jesus felt during his unequalled agony. One look, by faith, directed to him, as in the garden, will quiet all. “Having himself suffered, being tempted, he knows how to succour them that are tempted.”—But, besides this *natural* fear, to which our nature is subject, there is a *sinful* fear, which unbelief, doubt, and distrust, too often bring into the soul. And it is this, if I mistake not, to which Jesus hath respect in his precept before us. All hell is up in arms to harass and distress a child of God; and if the devil cannot deprive the believer of his heavenly crown, he will rob him as much as possible of his earthly comfort. Mark, then, my soul, what thy Jesus here proposeth for relief. The devil would cast thee into *hell*, if he could; but his rage can reach no farther than to a *prison*. He would cast the *whole Church*, if he could, into it; but it shall be only *some* of the Church. He would cause the confinement, if he could, to be *for ever*; but Jesus saith, it shall only be for *ten* days. And the Holy Ghost hath caused it to be left on record, as a thing much to be observed, that when the Church was in Egypt, and Pharaoh would have kept the people in vassalage for ever, yet when the Lord's time before appointed, was arrived, “the selfsame night, the Lord brought them forth with their armies.” (Exod. xii. 41, 42.) Oh! it is a subject worthy to be kept in everlasting remembrance, that “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the

godly out of temptation." Now, my soul, ponder well these things; and connect with them what Jesus hath connected with the subject in that sweet promise: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Precious Jesus! put *thy* fear in me; and the fear of man, which bringeth a snare, will depart. Be thou with me in trouble, and my trouble will be turned into joy. Should a prison shut *me in*, no prison can shut *thee out*. Every distressing thought will be hushed asleep, while by faith I hear my Lord speaking to me, in those soul-comforting words: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (Isaiah xli. 10.)

And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work, and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.—*Genesis* v. 29.

I still think, and believe that I always shall think, that holy men of old possess great superiority of faith to New Testament believers, in the attention they paid to the choice of names given to their children. Our choice, for the most part, is from caprice, or respect to our relations or earthly connections: they had an eye to heaven. Thus, in the instance before us, *Lamech* evidently called his son *Noah*, which signifies *rest*, in reference to "the rest which remaineth for the people of God!" and, as such, had an eye to Christ, the promised seed, in whom alone that rest was to be found. I do not presume to suppose that *Lamech* thought this child to be himself the promised seed, as our first mother *Eve* did at the birth of *Cain*, when she said, "I have gotten a man," or, as it might be read, "the man, from the Lord." (*Gen.* iv. 1.) No doubt, she considered this her first-born son to be *the very man*, the *Ishi*, promised: and hence, when her second son was born she called him *Abel*, which means *vanity*; thereby intimating, what is indeed true, that every other man but the God-man is but vanity. Poor woman! how sadly mistaken she found herself! But though *Lamech* had not such high views of his son, as to suppose him the very Christ, yet in calling him *Noah*, it should seem probable, that he desired, in the remembrance of this child, to keep up an eye to Christ in him as a *rest*, and his son as a *type* of Christ, which Noah eminently was. And indeed the latter part of *Lamech's* observation seems to confirm it: "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." It would be a strange, not to say an unnatural thought, in a tender parent, to take comfort in the prospect of a son's arriving to manhood, to take off all toil and labour from his parents, that

they might enjoy ease; which would be the case had *Lamech* meant nothing more than the rest of this mortal life. In this sense, indeed, what is the *curse* here spoken of, and how could the labour of Noah take it away? But on the supposition that *Lamech* was so well taught of God, as to be looking forward to the day of *Christ afar off*, and under the believing expectation of *Christ's* coming in the fulness of time, who would take away the *curse*, by being made both *sin and a curse* for his redeemed, he called his son *Noah*, that he might, as often as he should look upon the child, remember *Christ*. There is somewhat very sweet and striking in this circumstance, which may serve to explain why the Holy Ghost hath thus caused it to be so particularly recorded. My soul! gather a sweet improvement from this scripture, and do not fail to observe how graciously God the Holy Ghost dealt with the patriarchs, in causing, by so many ways, the one glorious event of *Jesus* and his salvation to be kept alive, in ages so remote from the accomplishment of redemption. And what hast thou to comfort thyself with, concerning thy work, and the toil of thine hands? What is thy rest, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed? Hast thou thy *Noah*, thy *Jesus*, who is thy hope, thy rest, thy righteousness? Precious, precious *Noah*! I would look up to thee, my Lord *Jesus*, and say, Thou hast comforted me, thou dost comfort me, under all the toil and sweat of brow in which I eat my daily bread! Thou hast taken away the curse of the ground, and art indeed thyself the whole blessing of it. Thou, blessed *Jesus*! art the rest "wherewith the Lord causeth the weary to rest; and thou art the refreshing!" (*Isaiah* xxviii. 12.) "Return then to thy rest," thy *Noah*, "my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." (*Psalms* cxvi. 7.)

Ye know the heart of a stranger.—*Exod.* xxiii. 9.

True, Lord! I do indeed! for I was once a stranger in a strange land, even in the land of spiritual *Egypt*. My soul! wilt thou not find it profitable to look back, and call to remembrance thy original nothingness; yea worse than nothing, when *Jesus* passed by and bade thee live? It is among the gracious precepts of the Lord, "to look to the rock whence thou wert hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence thou wert digged." (*Isaiah* li. 1.) And never surely was mercy more seasonable, more abundant, more unexpected, unlooked for, and unmerited, than when bestowed upon me! And doth my Lord say, "Ye know the heart of a stranger?" Oh! for grace rightly to apprehend that state out of which the Lord brought me, when living as a stranger to the commonwealth of *Israel*, "without hope, and without God in the world?" Thou knowest the heart of a stranger, my soul; say then what it was. A stranger to any knowledge of God the Father; ignorant, blind, senseless, unconscious of sin, and un-

conscious of danger. And what a stranger to thee, thou blessed Lord Jesus! I knew thee not, I loved thee not, I desired thee not. Thy love, thy grace, thy pity, thy mercy; these were thoughts which never entered my breast. Neither thy person, nor thy salvation, the merits of thy blood, nor of thy righteousness, were ever in my view or regard; yea, contempt of thee, and of thy people, thy sabbaths, thy word and ordinances, would have been more the pursuit of my heart than of thy love. And so total a stranger was I to the idea of any saving change to be wrought upon the heart by regeneration, that, concerning the Eternal Spirit, and his divine agency upon the soul, never had I so much as heard "whether there was any Holy Ghost!"—My soul! was this indeed thy case, as thou once didst stand before God? "Dead in trespasses and sins;" and every moment exposed to the tremendous horrors of the "second death," where thou wouldst have been a stranger to any lovely view of God in Christ to all eternity!—"Dost thou know the heart of a stranger?"—Pause and describe, if it be possible, what must be such a state! And then look round, and behold the multitude of souls that are so now, and say, dost thou not feel for the stranger, since thou wert once a stranger in the land of Egypt? Oh! ye that are yet in nature's darkness fast bound in misery and iron, strangers and aliens, afar off and enemies to God by wicked works, "oh! consider this, all ye that forget God, lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you!" Lord! I desire to be humbled to the dust before thee, to ascribe all to distinguishing grace, and everlastingly to be crying out with the astonishment of the apostle: "Lord, how is it that thou dost manifest thyself to me, and not unto the world?"

The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.

Psalm xxxvi. 1.

How striking is this scripture, and how true! Yes, my soul; thou needest not to look abroad into another's heart to see iniquity, for at home, in thine own, a voice may be heard continually proclaiming it. Renewed as thou art by grace, still thou feelest the workings of corrupt nature; and "though," as the apostle said, "with thy mind thou thyself servest the law of God, yet with thy flesh the law of sin." (Romans vii. 25.) Pause over the solemn subject, and observe the workings of a body of sin and death, which is virtually all sin: "The carnal mind," the apostle saith, "is enmity against God" (Romans viii. 7); not only an enemy, but in enmity, so that the very nature is so; it is averse, naturally averse to God, and is everlastingly rising in opposition to his holy law. And this not only (as some have supposed; but all men, if they would confess the truth, find to

the contrary) *before* a work of grace hath passed upon the soul, but *after*. Else wherefore doth the apostle say, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would?" (Gal. v. 17.) He saith this to the regenerate, to the Church at large. And consequently this conflict is *after* grace hath been manifested to the soul, and not *before*. A sinner unawakened may indeed feel at times compunction of conscience, and be alarmed at what will be the consequence of his sins; but these are only the alarms of *conscience*, not the workings of *grace*: and for the most part these alarms are but momentary. His affections are all on the side of sin. His soul still remains "dead in trespasses and sins;" and he himself, like a dead fish, swims down the stream of sin uninterrupted, without resistance, and without concern. But when a child of God is renewed, and the soul that was before dead in trespasses and sins, becomes quickened and regenerated, then it is that the conflict between the renewed part in grace, and the unrenewed part in nature, begins, and never ends but with life. My soul! hath the Lord taught thee this, made thee sensible of it, and caused thee to groan under it? Dost thou find this heart of thine rebelling against God; cold to divine things, but warm to natural enjoyments; framing excuses to keep thee from sweet communion with the Lord; and even in the moment of communion, running off with a swarm of vain thoughts, that "like the flies in the ointment of the apothecary causeth it to send forth an ill savour?" Are these in thy daily, hourly experience? Why then the transgression of the wicked saith within *thine* heart, and not another's for thee, this solemn truth, there is no fear of God at such seasons before the eyes of thy sinful body; for "by the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil." (Prov. xvi. 6.) Oh! precious, precious Jesus! how increasingly dear, under this view of a nature so totally corrupt, art thou to my poor soul! What but the eternal and unceasing efficacy of thy blood and righteousness could give my soul the smallest confidence, when I find that I still carry about with me such a body of sin and death? Let those who know not the plague of their own heart, talk of natural goodness; sure I am, there is nothing of the kind in me. "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." And were it not, dearest Lord, for the holiness of thy person, blood, and righteousness, the very sins which mingle up with all I say or do, yea, even in prayer, would seal my condemnation. Lamb of God! it is the everlasting merit of thy atonement and intercession, thy blood sprinkled upon my person and offering, by which alone the justice of God is restrained and satisfied, and that it breaks not forth in devouring fire, as upon the sacrifice of old, to consume me upon my very knees! Blessed, blessed for ever be God for Jesus Christ!

And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.—*Acts xiii. 39.*

What can be more blessed to a poor conscious sinner, such, my soul, as thou art from day to day, than the glad tidings the Holy Ghost hath here proclaimed, by the ministry of his servant the apostle, in these gracious words. Sit down, this evening, and, under his divine teaching, ponder them duly over. A poor guilty sinner needs a rich and holy Saviour. That he cannot justify himself in the sight of God, is most evident, for the least guilt left upon the conscience would condemn him for ever. He cannot be justified by the deeds of the law; for by the law is the knowledge of sin, and in the law we learn that we have all sinned, and come short of God's glory. He cannot be justified by the offerings and sacrifices made under the law of Moses; for how can the blood of bulls and of goats take away sin? By what then, or by whom, my soul, canst thou be justified? Hear what this sweet scripture saith: "By him," that is, by the Lord Jesus Christ, "all that believe are justified from all things." Oh! how blessed is the view! how completely satisfying to the conscience is the redemption by Christ Jesus, "whom God hath set forth as a propitiation, through faith in his blood!" And do not fail to observe the *extensiveness* of the blessing; it is *all* that believe, yea, every individual believer; for the blood of Christ cleanseth from *all* sin; and the righteousness of Christ, in a way of justification, is *to all*, and *upon all* that "believe, for there is no difference." And do not fail also to observe the "equality" of the mercy in justification; it is "to all the same." So that, though believers differ in the strength of their faith, and in the different degrees of that faith, yet respecting their interest *in* Christ, and their union *with* Christ, the weakest, as well as the strongest, is equally justified, and equally secure. And for this plain reason; because the object of faith, which is Jesus, is one and the same, and justification is *in* and *by* Christ, and doth not arise from the degree of apprehension the believer hath of it. Sweet thought to a poor timid believer! Hence the everlasting safety, both for acceptance in grace here, and the enjoyment of glory hereafter, is to all the same. And however the Lord, in his infinite wisdom, may think fit to appoint different paths for believers' departures out of life—though some, like the apostles, shall be called to seal the testimony of their faith in Christ, in blood, and wade through this Red Sea (if it may so be called) to join the multitude on the opposite shore, who are shouting the song of Moses and of the Lamb, whilst others sweetly fall asleep in Jesus on their beds, quiet and composed, amidst surrounding friends—yet, in the act of justification, all are alike. Jesus taketh the lambs of his fold in his arms, and they shall lie in his bosom, while he leads the strong. In short,

all that are in union with Christ, do *live* in Christ, and shall *die* in Christ, whether they be little children, young men, or fathers; for "by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." See, my soul, that thou hast this faith, which is of the operation of the Spirit of God, and then lie down, this night, and every night, with the composure of one that is in a state of justification with God, "having peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.—*Jeremiah xxix. 11.*

My soul! thou art "looking for the mercy of thy Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." This is thy one object, and that one object is centered in Jesus. But in the view of this thou art sadly put to it at times by thwarting providences that seem to come between. It would be a blessed help to thee, hadst thou grace always to keep in remembrance what the Lord saith in this blessed scripture: "I know the thoughts that I think towards you—thoughts of peace, and not of evil." And how truly fulfilled are these things in the redemption by Jesus! In him the foundation is laid for the accomplishment; and "he is of one mind, and who can turn him?" Be the outward appearances of things what they may, yet the Lord is everlastingly pursuing one and the same invariable plan of mercy. His providences may vary, but his grace never can. It is the deficiency of our faith, and not a defect in the covenant, which makes a believing soul to stagger, and call in question divine faithfulness. "I said," saith the Church, (at a time when the stream of that river which makes glad the city of God ran low), "I said, my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord." But how did the Church correct herself soon after! "The Lord is my portion," saith she, "therefore will I hope in him." (Lam. iii. 18, 24.) It is blessed to rest upon the Lord's own words, and to give credit to what he hath promised, when, according to all appearances of things, there seemeth an impossibility to the performance of them. This indeed is faith, and faith in her best dress and character. It is no longer faith, when the thing promised is come to pass: this is not *trusting* God, but receiving payment from God. But when God's thoughts towards us find, through his grace in our hearts, corresponding thoughts towards him, of his truth and faithfulness, then what ever happens by the way, the soul of the believer is kept in peace, because he knows that he shall have an expected end of peace, and not of evil. Oh! then, for grace to be everlastingly hearing the Lord's voice in all his dispensations! See to it, my soul, that under all trials, all exercises, all difficulties, be they what they may—as there can be no trial of which

Jesus hath not the appointment, no exercise but what he knows, no difficulty that can for a moment alter or interrupt his plan of salvation—oh! learn to lean upon him, and to leave all with him, entertaining and cherishing the same good thoughts of him for ever! for he it is that saith—“I know the thoughts that I think towards you; thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.—*Song* ii. 3.

My soul! hear what the Church saith concerning her Lord, in those early and distant ages, before thy Redeemer became incarnate, and mark the strength of her faith and love. Did Old Testament saints thus sit down with a recumbency on the person, work, and finished salvation of Jesus, as those determined to rise no more, when they beheld Christ only through “the shadow of good things to come;” and shall not thy rest *in* Christ, and thy enjoyment *of* Christ, be equal, and even greater than theirs? For shame, my soul! let it never be said, that their views of Jesus, who was then yet to come, and had all the vast work of redemption to perform, were as lively as thine, or their delight in those fruits of his salvation, which they partook of by anticipation, sweeter to the taste, than they are now enjoyed by thee. Thou hast lived to see the whole completed, and canst, and dost look up, and behold thy Jesus returned to glory, having “finished transgression, made an end of sin,” and now for ever seated at the right hand of God. Oh, thou dear Redeemer! give me to sit down under the sweet revelations of thy word, and in the gospel ordinances of thy Church, and here by faith realize and substantiate all the blessings contained in the glories of thy person, the infinite and eternal merit and worth of thy righteousness, blood, and salvation; and have my whole soul, and body, and spirit, continually feasted with the rich fellowship and communion which there is to be enjoyed with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And surely, Lord, thou art all, and infinitely more than is here said of thee by the Church. Thou art a shade for protection from every thing which can assault a poor weather-beaten soul harassed by sin, by sorrow, and temptation. Well might the prophet describe thee as “the MAN that is as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” (Isaiah xxxii. 2.) I find thee necessary as an hiding-place to shelter me from the wrath to come. I have sinned, and am justly exposed to the wrath of God. I find the accusations of conscience, the arrests of God’s law, the temptations of Satan, the alarms of justice; and, under all these, what but thy blood and righteousness can screen my

poor soul, or make me secure in an hour of visitation? But sheltered by thee, and justified by thy great salvation, I find every thing I need to protect and secure me from the storm, "when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." But, my soul, this sweet scripture doth not only set before thee thy God and Saviour as a *shadow* to sit under for protection, but as affording fruit also, to refresh thee in thy want of sustenance. Like some rich, luxuriant, and generous tree, which not only shelters the traveller from the scorching heat, but holds forth on its branches delicious fruit to regale and satisfy for food, so Jesus, by his person, work, and righteousness, protects his people from all evil; and, by the fruits of his blood and redemption, supplies them with all good. Yes! blessed, bountiful Lord, thou art here again all these, and infinitely more; for the fruits of thy life, death, resurrection, ascension, and glory, give to thy redeemed, mercy, pardon, and peace, with all the fulness of covenant-blessings in this life, and everlasting happiness in the life to come. O Lord! grant me, then, day by day, and from night to morn, to sit down under thy shadow, that I may "revive as the corn, and grow as the vine." Yea, Lord, I would so sit down, as one that had determined to rise no more; and having found thee, and, in thee, all I need, to bid adieu to all the world holds dear; and, like Paul, "count all things else but dung and dross, that I might win Christ, and be found in thee, the Lord my righteousness."

He turned their heart to hate his people

Psalm cv. 25.

Oh! precious scripture! what a blessed discovery is here made! Never should I have known, never thought, that the hand of my God was in a dispensation like this. Henceforth, my soul, remember, when at any time the world is oppressing thee and opposing thee, yea, when even "thy mother's children are angry with thee," look deeper than the surface, and behold both the Lord's wisdom and the Lord's appointment in the exercise. And dost thou ask wherefore the Lord should dispose the heart of the believer's foes to hate his people? the answer is at hand: it is to keep his people from "mingling with the heathen, and learning their works." Nature cleaves to nature; and the dispositions in flesh and blood are in all the same. If God, therefore, turn the hearts of those we are too fond of to treat us with unkindness, and reward our love with hatred, this process will do more to separate the precious from the vile, than all the Lord's precepts: yea, more than a sense of our own danger. How much disposed art thou, my soul, to seek the favour of the world! how frequently dost thou study to conciliate the affections of those that differ from thee in the

great truths of God. Jesus, who knows this, beholds it, and will not suffer it to be. He graciously causeth some secret sorrow to spring out of this root: The heart we wish to be particularly friendly, is led to manifest unprovoked unkindness; and where we are looking for most pleasure, there we find most pain. And in all this Jesus's love and wisdom are at the foundation. No dispensation would answer the purpose to correct our wayward choice but this: and it is blessed to see how the Lord accomplisheth the secret purposes of his will, by means so opposite to our calculation. Mark down this sweet scripture for the special purpose of improvement, under exercises like these. And when at any time the false reproaches of one, or the unprovoked anger of another, in a carnal world, make thee sad, recognise the hand of Jesus in the dispensation, and read this blessed passage in proof: "He turned their heart to hate his people."

An Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.—*John i. 47.*

And what are we to understand by our Lord's account, in this short but sweet history of *Nathanael*, of an "Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile?" If, my soul, thou wilt do as thou art directed, (1 Cor. ii. 13,) attend "to the things which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual;" thou wilt soon arrive at a proper apprehension of the Lord's account, of "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." It is our merey, that, on a point of so much consequence, we are not left to mere conjecture: for the Holy Ghost hath himself pointed out what it is to be without guile, in one of the psalms of David. (See Psalm xxxii.) And in his comment upon it, by the apostle, (Romans iv. 6—12,) he hath followed up the same doctrine more fully. "Blessed (saith he) is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Now here observe, that the blessedness here spoken of is not said to be a man that "hath no sin," neither "had" sin, but to whom the Lord "imputeth it not." And wherefore is this blessedness? It is explained, because "his transgression is forgiven, and his sin covered." And the Holy Ghost is pleased, by his servant the apostle, to give a farther explanation, by tracing it to its source, in the forgiveness of sins "by Jesus Christ." And in the case of Abraham, the great father of the faithful, he most clearly and fully proves the truth of this momentous doctrine: "Cometh this blessedness then (saith he) upon circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham. How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised." Now hence, my soul, thou mayest learn what

it is, to have "no guile," and, by consequence thereof, to be an "Israelite indeed." If thou wilt consult Abraham's history, thou wilt discover that he was justified by faith: "he believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness;" and this was many a year before he was circumcised. (See Gen. xv. 6.) Some have reckoned it full *twenty years*; very certain it is that it could not be less than *ten years*. (See Gen. xvii.) And from the moment of his justification by faith, Abraham might truly be said to be one "in whom was no guile." Apply what is here said by the Holy Ghost of Abraham, to the instance of Nathanael, and of all the spiritual seed of Christ, and the conclusion will be the same; this it is to be "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." My soul! what sayest thou of thyself? Art thou "an Israelite indeed?" Is thy guilt taken away in the blood of Christ? Pause, and recollect what the scripture saith: "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God." (Romans ii. 28, 29.) "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians iii. 29.)

So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.—*Esth.* iv. 16.

What a noble act of the soul is faith! Who, indeed, but the Lord Jesus, can be the author or giver of it? Ponder it well, my soul, and see if thou canst discover the smallest possible degree of it in thee. To have the least portion of it, is an evidence of an interest in Christ: for it is said, that "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed!" (Acts xiii. 48.) And oh! what an honour is it to give credit to God the Father's testimony of his dear Son! Sit down, my soul, this evening, and pause over the subject. There are more difficulties to the exercise of it than are generally considered. The case of *Esther*, in the court of the *Persian* king, will serve, in some measure, to explain it. By the law of *Persia*, every individual, whether man or woman, who ventured into the inner court of the king's presence, uncalled, was condemned to death; neither was there any remission of the punishment, unless the king held out to the offender the golden sceptre. The case, however, for which *Esther* was constrained to go in, was of that nature, that there remained no alternative but to go or die. Contrary to the known law of the realm, she therefore ventured, crying out as she went, "If I perish, I perish." Now this is quite the state of the poor sinner. The law of God for ever separates between a holy God and an unholy sinner. "Thou canst not see my face and live." Nothing that is "unholy, can stand in God's sight." These are the so-

lemn declarations of the law of heaven. God hath, indeed, reserved the grace of pardon, to whom he will hold out the golden sceptre. But even this grace doth not reign but through righteousness. The law admits of nothing in a way of pardon, but upon the ground of satisfaction. - A righteousness every sinner must have in himself, or in a Redeemer, or he will perish everlastingly. Hast thou, then, my soul, that faith, that trust, that sure dependence, upon the Lord Jesus Christ, as to go in unto the King, which is not according to law, but wholly on the blessed authority of the gospel, determined, like Esther, to be saved by this grace of thy King and Saviour, or not at all? Yes, Lord! I come. Precious Emmanuel! wilt thou not hold forth the golden sceptre of thy grace, and say to my soul, as thou didst to the poor woman of the gospel: "Great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt?"

Matthew the Publican.—*Matthew* x. 3.

It ought not to be overlooked, in the account of this apostle of Jesus, that in the list given by the other Evangelists, of our Lord's disciples, he is placed before Thomas; but in this, of his own, he places Thomas first. And whereas, after his call to the apostleship, the brethren, in making mention of him, dropped his former occupation of a *publican*, yet Matthew himself still preserves it. Grace always humbles. The call of this man, the distinguishing nature of that grace, the effects and blessedness of it, open some sweet thoughts for meditation, which, under divine teaching, cannot fail of being profitable to the saint, and encouraging to the sinner: and it will be well, my soul, for thee to exercise thine evening devotion upon it. He was a *publican*; that is, a tax-gatherer for the Romans. Of such characters we cannot have a more lively idea, than from what our Lord himself said of them. For when Jesus, in his description of a sinner more than ordinarily to be avoided, sets him forth as such, he said, "Let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican." Such was Matthew when called. And where was he when called? Not in the synagogue, attending the means of grace, or desiring to seek the Lord; but when seeking him not, yea, sitting at the seat of custom, and fully engaged in his pursuit of worldly gain. Pause, my soul, and mark the property of grace! Surely in this man's instance, as well as in thousands of others, the Lord might say, "I am found of them that sought me not!" And oh! what a surprising, unexpected, unlooked-for call, was that of the Lord Jesus to *Matthew*! What a powerful, gracious, saving, and effectual call was it! Precious Redeemer! are we not authorized to consider all these, and other similar points of view, as purposely intended to tell poor sinners, like Matthew, that thy grace is, not the effect of our merit, nor the result of any man's worth? Surely, Lord, every poor sinner

may from this learn, that whatever best tends to magnify the riches of thy grace, must be in the purposes of thy holy will and pleasure. Hence it is, that thou makest thy grace to shine on such lost, ruined, and undone sinners as we are. But, my soul, take another short view of this man, and thy Saviour's grace towards him. When the Lord had called him by his grace, he invited the Lord to his home: no sooner did Jesus open Matthew's heart, than Matthew opened his house to receive Jesus. See to it, my soul, that thou art daily manifesting the same proofs of *thy* calling. Oh! for grace to take Jesus home to our hearts, to our houses, to our neighbours, to our families, children, and servants, if we have any, and spread forth the sweet savour of his name, and the efficacy of his blood and righteousness, in every direction. Like the psalmist, let our language be, "O come hither, and hearken, all ye that fear God: and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul!"

But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

2 *Corinthians* xi. 3.

And what is "the simplicity that is in Christ?" The apostle answers this question in another part of his writings, when he saith, "Christ is all, and in all." Now nothing can be more simple than this: "Christ is all;" then it would be folly to seek any thing but Christ. And "Christ is in all:" then it would be equally folly to seek for happiness in any thing but in Christ. So that if our minds are led away to seek a supply from any thing short of Christ, this is the same temptation that the devil played off upon our first parent, and succeeded. This indeed is the grand device of Satan: it is the masterpiece of his subtilty. This is what all carnal, unawakened men fall into: to fancy somewhat that is left for us to do, to qualify ourselves to be made partakers of grace, and to improve the talent which is given to us. And as these things are very flattering to the pride of our nature, and exactly correspond to the state the devil left our first parents in, when he had ruined them, so it becomes the very method which he still pursues with all their poor children to lull them on to ruin. "Ye shall be as gods," (said the devil to our first mother,) "knowing good and evil:" and, in like manner, thus flattering the pride of our nature, and shutting out Christ, with his blood and righteousness, does he now deceive men. Now Paul was alarmed and distressed on this account. The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, saith Paul, and I fear lest he should beguile you.—How blessed, then, is the teaching of the Holy Ghost, which strips the sinner, makes him all bare, leaves him nothing, but shows him his own insolvency, emptiness, and

poverty, that he may make room for Jesus! And when he hath thus made the sinner sensible of his nothingness, he makes him equally sensible to Christ's fulness and all-sufficiency; and that in bringing nothing to Christ, but living wholly upon Christ, and drawing all from Christ, in this simplicity that is in Christ, he teacheth the poor sinner how to live, and how to keep house by faith, wholly upon the fulness that is in Christ Jesus. This is the sweet instruction taught in the school of Jesus. "I fear," saith Paul, "lest the serpent that beguiled Eve, should have corrupted you by his subtilty, from the simplicity that is in Christ."

And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word. But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.—*Num.* xiv. 20, 21.

My soul! ponder over this solemn scripture, and observe how truly awful Jehovah is, even in his mercies. Well may it be said to the people of God, "Rejoice with trembling." This was a memorable moment in the history of Israel, when the spies returned from searching the promised land. The evil report which the greater number brought back, in denying God's faithfulness, is most solemnly recorded; and the carcasses falling in the wilderness, most awfully set forth the divine judgment. And what is unbelief but the same, aggravated, if possible, to a ten thousand times greater degree of guilt, in denying and disbelieving the record which God hath given of his Son? The apostle saith, "it is making God a liar," (1 John v. 10); and John the Baptist confirms the same; and adds a dreadful event, which must inevitably follow: "He that believeth not, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth upon him." (John iii. 36.) And do observe, my soul, how Jehovah engageth to manifest and fulfil his glory. He confirms it with the most solemn asseveration: "As truly as I live, saith the Lord, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." And what is the glory of the Lord, but God manifested in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ? Here all the glory of Jehovah centres. In Jesus all is proclaimed; and in the dispensation of the fulness of times, the one great object of all things in the kingdoms of nature, providence, grace, and glory, is "to gather together in one all things in Christ." What sayest thou, my soul, to these things? Art thou now gathered to Christ, to whom, as to the glorious *Shiloh*, the gathering of the people shall be? Is he that is the Father's glory, thy glory; is the Father's beloved, thy beloved; the Father's chosen, thy chosen? Surely, if so, it must undeniably follow, that God is already glorified in thy view, and in thine heart; if the glory of the Lord Jehovah, which is to fill the earth, hath, in the person of his dear Son, filled thy soul and affections, and is formed in thine heart "the hope of

glory." Oh! for increasing evidences of this love of God, and glory of the Lord, to be shed abroad in my heart, "to give me the light and knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ!"

But he who was of the bond-woman, was born after the flesh; but he of the free-woman, was by promise: which things are an allegory.—*Galatians* iv. 23, 24.

My soul! as thou readest this scripture, do not forget to bless the great Author of it, even God the Holy Ghost, for having condescended to teach the Church the sacred truths contained in it. Never would it have entered into the heart of man, untaught of God, to have conceived that the births of Ishmael and Isaac had such divine purposes connected with their history. We might have read for ever the account given of it in the book of Genesis, without once forming a thought of the spiritual tendency of the subject, had not the Holy Ghost, by his servant the apostle, told the Church that it was *an allegory*. But, blessed with such gracious teaching, see to it, my soul, this evening, what a delightful subject it leads to. *These* (saith the apostle) *are the two covenants!* meaning the mother of Ishmael, and the mother of Isaac. The *bond-woman* represents the covenant of works; and the *free-woman* the covenant of grace. So that all who seek justification by their own good deeds of the law, are of the children of the *bond-woman*. All who are looking for salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, without the works of the law, are of the children of *the free*. As the son of the bond-woman was born before the son of the free, so our state of nature, in this sense, is before grace. And hence believers, when renewed, are said to be *born again*. Yet, as the promise concerning the son of the free-woman was before the birth of the son of the bond-woman, so the promise of the gospel was before the law; and the covenant of grace came in before the covenant of works. And as the son of the bond-woman mocked the son of the free, so is it now: they that are born after the flesh, do for ever persecute them that are born after the Spirit. Nevertheless, what saith the scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman. The law can make nothing perfect; justification can never be obtained by the deeds of the law, and therefore it is rejected. Pause now, my soul, over this sweet allegory, explained as it is by the Holy Ghost himself, and ask, to which family thou belongest? To both thou canst not, for that is impossible. Whosoever seeketh justification by the deeds of the law, denies the merit and efficacy of Christ's blood and righteousness. "For if righteousness come by the law, then is Christ dead in vain." Oh! for grace to discover, and faith to enjoy, the same blessed assurance, as the apostle did, when summing up the whole con-

clusion of this scriptural allegory! "so then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free."

The golden censer.—*Hebrews ix. 4.*

It is blessed, my soul! to behold the numberless types and shadows "of good things to come," which the Church of old contained; and it is blessed to see them all fulfilled in Christ, the substance. Jesus, *thy* Jesus, in his glorious high-priestly office, is at once the censer, the incense, the high-priest, and offering, and is now unceasingly engaged in carrying on the glorious purposes of his redemption, "by appearing in the presence of God for us." He is the "mighty Angel" spoken of, (Rev. viii. 3.) For upon the "golden censer" of his own merit and righteousness, and by the efficacy of his own glorious person, are all presentations made. "No man cometh to the Father, but by him." But coming *by* him, and *in* him, and *through* him, all thy poor offerings come up "for a memorial before God." And what is the *much incense* here spoken of, but the merits of that finished salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, which hath indeed a fulness, yea, a redundancy of fulness, infinitely more precious and costly than ever can be compensated in blessings bestowed thereby upon his people, in time, and to all eternity. This was beautifully represented in the Jewish Church. The incense was composed of sweet spices, which made a fragrant smell through the whole temple. And what was the offering of Christ, but "an offering and sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour?" And if the incense in the Jewish temple was always burning, what was this but a representation of the everlasting priesthood of Christ, "who ever liveth to make intercession for his people?" And as the incense was burning *within* in the temple, while all the people were at prayers *without*, what a lively representation was this of our High-Priest in heaven, in this great office of a priest upon his throne, to offer upon the golden altar of his divine nature the prayers of his redeemed upon earth, to give acceptance to their persons and their offerings, by the *much incense* of his own merits and blood! My soul! look up this evening, look up both night and morning, and with the eye of faith behold this almighty Angel of the new covenant thus appearing in the presence of God for thee: into his almighty hands do thou commit and commend thine all; neither thy person nor thy poor offerings can find acceptance but in him, the beloved. He is thine Altar, thy Priest, thy Sacrifice, thine Incense, thine all; by virtue of whom, God the Father hath respect to his everlasting covenant, and dispenseth grace in this life, and glory in that which is to come. Hail! thou glorious, gracious, great High-Priest of a better covenant, founded upon better promises than that by Aaron! Oh! for

faith to apprehend thee, to exercise faith upon thy person, work, and righteousness, and every day, and all the day, both night and morning, to come to God by thee, perfectly assured "that all that do come, thou wilt in nowise cast out."

And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.—*Isaiah* xlii. 16.

Never, surely, was there a promise of a covenant God in Christ more strikingly fulfilled as to what is said in *the former part* of this verse, than in thine instance, my soul. By nature and by practice, thou wert so totally blind to any apprehension of divine things, that not a right thought hadst thou ever conceived of God and Christ, when the Lord first manifested his grace to thy heart! No being in the universe was so near to me as God, but none so little known or understood. No heart was nearer to me than my own, but to all its errors and deceitfulness I remained the most perfect stranger! In the works of providence, as well as of grace, I had no consciousness whatever of any guide, nor even of needing a guide. Self-willed, wayward, and full of confidence, I was hastening on with the multitude, intent but upon one thing, "in making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Pause, my soul, and look back! When I take a review of what is past, and trace the hand of the Lord, all the way leading me as I have come on, I am lost in astonishment in the contemplation of *his* mercies and *my* undeservings. What a huge volume might be written of both, and in the margin to note down how they have kept pace together. My soul! if thou wert to read them by chapters only, what endless ones would they form under the several sections of the Lord's love, his care, his wisdom, his methods, and his grace, in the freeness and distinguishing nature of that grace; and as I read the Lord's mercies, to note, at the same time, my rebellions! Oh! what a subject would the whole form, in proof of this gracious promise, in viewing the wisdom, power, and love of God, in awakening, regenerating, converting, and confirming grace! Surely, Lord, thou hast indeed brought a poor blind creature, such as I am, in a way that I knew not, and led me in paths that I never should have known; and still, Lord, thou art graciously performing the same, in making darkness light, and crooked things straight. And shall I not, from *the latter part* of this sweet promise, derive a strength of faith, from all that is past, to trust thee for all that is to come? Hath the Lord been gracious, when in a state of total blindness, to bring me by a way I knew not;

and now, when he hath mercifully opened mine eyes to see his glory, and to love his name, will he not lead me still? Had he mercy upon me, when I asked it not, neither knew that I needed it; and will he refuse me that mercy now, when I so earnestly seek it, and know that without his grace and mercy in Jesus, I shall perish for ever? Precious Lord! give me faith to believe, to trust, and to depend! Thou who hast done such great things for me already, whereof I rejoice, wilt never leave me, nor forsake me, O Lord God of my salvation!

There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.—*Rev.* viii. 1.

This is a very striking scripture, and records as striking an event, which took place on the opening of the seventh seal. "Silence in heaven;" not a suspension or interruption to the happiness of the place, but the silent adoration of God and the Lamb. This must be the sense of the passage, if by *heaven* we are to understand the place where dwell "the spirits of just men made perfect." But as it is more than probable that it refers to the events of the kingdom of Christ upon earth, which are here spoken of under prophetic representations, the silence, then, may be supposed to mean, that the Church of God, both in heaven and on earth, are waiting in solemn expectation what events this seventh trumpet will bring forth. But there are some sweet instructions to be taken from what is here said, of silence in heaven by the space of half an hour, which in the silence of an evening meditation, it may be highly profitable to attend to. If in heaven such solemn pauses are made, doth it not strike the mind, how very becoming such must be upon earth? Surely it is a sweet frame of the spirit, to ponder in silence over the many solemn things which connect themselves with the very existence of man, in a dying state, and in dying circumstances like the present; more especially, in the solemn seasons of devotion, when we draw nigh to a throne of grace, in and through the ever-blessed Jesus, a holy silence in the first approaches seems highly suitable to await divine visitations. What a lovely view doth the Holy Ghost give of David. (2 Sam. vii. 18.) "Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord!" And elsewhere he saith, "Truly, my soul waiteth upon God:" in the margin of the Bible it is, "Truly, my soul *is silent* before God." (Psalm lxii. 1.) The prophets were commissioned to enforce this by way of command: "The Lord" (saith one of them) "is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." And another saith, "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, for he is raised up out of his holy habitation." (Habak. ii. 20; Zech. ii. 13.) And the Lord himself, having pointed out the blessedness of waiting upon him, accompanied with a promise that his

people who did so should renew their strength, immediately sends forth this precept: "Keep silence before me, O islands, and let the people renew their strength: let them come near, then let them speak." (Isaiah xli. 1.) My soul! learn hence the beauty of holiness, and the blessedness of waiting in silence before the Lord. For then, when the Holy Ghost comes in the refreshing influences of his grace, and commands "the north wind and the south wind to blow," sweet will be the manifestations of the Lord Jesus by the Spirit, until, "while the heart is musing," the holy fire from off the altar will be kindled, and the soul will go forth in all the exercises of faith, love, joy, humility, and desire, upon the person, work, and offices of Jesus!

A Nazarite unto God from the womb.—*Judges* xliii. 5.

And what, in the language of scripture, was a *Nazarite* unto God? Certainly what the very term implies; one dedicated to God, set apart, and sanctified. Both the person and character are largely described. (Numb. vi. 1—21.) And was Samson such? It cannot be doubted, notwithstanding the many strange particularities in his life, which were departures from sanctity of character. But in that part of Samson's life wherein the *Nazarite* was strongly marked, he was eminently proved to be one; and it is in this feature of the illustrious *Danite*, that we behold him as a striking type of the Lord Jesus Christ. My soul! as it hath pleased the Holy Ghost to give the Church so circumstantial an account of Samson, do thou ponder the subject well, and remark (what was evidently the only design for which it was given) how gracious the Lord the Spirit was, thus to set forth, in type, Jesus of Nazareth, so many ages before his incarnation. Was Samson a Nazarite unto God from the womb? Such was Jesus, who was so named by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And what was the object for which Samson was separated from his birth as a Nazarite to God? We are told that it was to deliver his brethren out of the hands of their enemies. (*Judges* xliii. 5.) The same was declared of Jesus: he shall be called Jesus, for "he shall save his people from their sins." (*Matt.* i. 21.) Was holiness unto the Lord the distinguishing feature of the Nazarite? How suitably did it set forth the Lord Jesus, "who sanctified himself for his people." (*John* xvii. 19.) The very devil himself saluted Christ with this name, when he said, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." (*Mark* i. 24.) And so very important was it considered by the Holy Ghost, that the Church's Lord and Saviour should be known by this name of "the Nazarite unto God from the womb," that it is remarkable how many persons have given their testimony, and some of them plainly

without design, to this one character of our Lord. The angel at the annunciation; the devil, as before remarked; the Jews in contempt, (John xviii. 5;) the Roman Governor in his inscription on the cross, (John xix. 19;) the angels at the sepulchre, (Mark xvi. 6;) the apostles glorying in this name after his ascension, (Acts ii. 22;) and Jesus himself, from heaven, at the conversion of Paul, (Acts xxii. 8.) Precious Nazarite to God! holy Lord Jesus! thou art indeed the true, the only one; for of thee, and by thee, can it be said, "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire." (Lam. iv. 7.) Help me, Lord, by thy grace, to keep thee ever in remembrance. And while the cry of the infidel is still heard, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" oh! may my soul hear thy sweet voice by faith: "The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name!" (Isaiah xlix. 1.) Lord, thus it is fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene." (Matt. ii. 23.)

And he is the head of the body, the Church.

Coloss. i. 18.

Sweet view of Jesus! Ponder well the subject, my soul, and behold thy Lord in this endearing character, and thine own personal union with him. Jesus is indeed, in every point of view, "the head of his body, the Church." He is so by the Father's own appointment, as our glorious surety: as which he stood up at the call of God, the Father, from everlasting; for when, at that call, he put himself in our stead, in our law-room and place, he undertook, as the Church's representative, to do all, and to suffer all, for her; and what he did and suffered, they, as his body, might truly be said to do and suffer *in* him. Sweet thought! When Jesus obeyed the whole law, then was Jesus their law-fulfiller. When he suffered the death of the cross, they in him were crucified. When he arose from the dead, in that resurrection they partook of the triumph, and as members of his body, arose with him. And when he ascended up on high, and sat down on the seat of the Conqueror, they ascended virtually by their union with him, and may be said, "to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." But, my soul! glorious as are these views of Jesus, thine husband, and thine head, yet are they not all. He is the head of his body, the Church, by his assumption of our nature. There is a union also of soul, a oneness, a connection as close and intimate as the natural head of the body with its several members; for as the head of the body is the source of life, which gives energy and action to all the parts of the body, so Christ is to his Church and people "the fulness of Him that

fillet all in all." Here is another sweet thought! When Jesus took thy nature, my soul, in his sinless portion of it, he partook of all that could be said to constitute human nature. "Forasmuch" (saith the apostle) "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same," (Heb. ii. 14;) hence he must have a tenderness, an affection, a fellow-feeling (if I may be allowed so to say) for his own nature, in the several members of his body, the Church. This is the very argument the Holy Ghost, by the apostle, urgeth with poor exercised believers, to convince them of their safety and assured comfort in him: "We have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. iv. 15.) And as this becomes a source of never-failing comfort to support the several members of Christ's body with consolation under all their exercises, (for what can any part feel which the head shall be unconscious of, and not participate in?) so doth it equally afford delight in the recollection, that all the wants of the body must be known and felt by the glorious Head, and be by him supplied. Sweet thought again to the believer! Jesus hath a fulness corresponding to all our necessities. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. And of this fulness do we all receive, and grace for grace." Look up, my soul, and contemplate the infinite, inexhaustible, unsearchable riches of thy Christ! All awakening, justifying, sanctifying grace; all life, strength, nourishment, support, are poured upon the members of the Church, from this glorious Head: and what sums up the account, and endears it to the heart, is, that these blessings are everlasting, unchangeable, and eternal. He hath said, "Because I live, ye shall live also!"—Pause, my soul! And is this Jesus thine? Is he indeed thine head? Art thou a member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones?—Witness for me, ye angels of light! I renounce all other lords, all other alliances, all other husbands! It is to Jesus alone that I bend the knee of love, adoration, and obedience; for he is my Lord God, and I am his for ever.

Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.

Ephes. iv. 9, 10.

My soul! thy morning portion led thee to the contemplation of a risen and ascended Saviour; and by faith and love, I hope thou didst find thyself ascending with him, and art now still looking to him on the throne of the majesty on high. And while thy thoughts are thus occupied in the most blessed of all subjects,

listen to this word of God's grace, as of a voice behind thee, to remind thee, that he who is thus gone up, first came down! He that is now in heaven first came down from heaven; he is only returned, as a rightful Lord, to his own kingdom. He hath, indeed, both by his Father's gift and his own purchase, obtained a mediatorial crown, to add to his crown of the Godhead, which he had before in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost; but in his ascension thou art not to lose sight of his descent, which preceded it, when he left the bosom of the Father, to tabernacle in our nature, for our redemption, in these lower parts of the earth. And let this sweet view of Jesus give thee an holy boldness and comfort, in looking to thy risen and exalted Saviour for those ascension-gifts which he is gone up purposely to send down! I want, my soul, (oh! that the Holy Ghost would for ever be giving it to me,) to keep in constant remembrance who it is that thus "ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." I charge it upon thee, this evening, that thou never cease to ask this blessing from God the Spirit, that in his glorifying the Lord Jesus, he would keep it continually uppermost in thine heart, that it is Jesus who is thus exalted; Jesus, thy brother, thy redeemer, thine husband, thine head. Surely, while thou bearest in remembrance, that he is ascended up far above all heavens, that he might *fill all things*, he would never let thee go empty, didst thou tell him that thou art part of himself! Could Jesus, as the head of his body, the Church, suffer that body, or any of its poorest or least members, to go lean, and poor, and wretched, while he is gone up purposely to send down, and to fill all things? To use his own words, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." (Ephes. v. 29.) Were these things left upon record as a testimony how Jesus nourisheth and cherisheth the Church, and shall any poor member be without it? Precious Lord Jesus! henceforth, I beseech thee, look on me, and give me, by thy sweet Spirit, to be always looking unto thee! I see, Lord, that thou, who art *ascended*, art the same that *descended*: this is enough for me; for, sure I am, thine heart is not changed, but thy love is the same. And if thy love brought thee down to *save*, thy love hath led thee up to *bless*: and what mercy can my soul want which thy fulness cannot supply? How can a poor member of thine, below, long need, while Jesus is ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things? Oh! for grace to come to thee, to look to thee, to depend upon thee, and to rest, with full assurance of faith, in that dependence, that Jesus, our risen, our ascended, our exalted, and full Saviour, will give to every one of his members, "grace, according to the measure of the fulness of Christ."

For there was a tabernacle made, the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread, which is called the sanctuary.—*Heb. ix. 2.*

It is blessed to see how Christ was set forth in every thing, and by every way, in the ordinances of God, in the first ages of the Church. Surely they had the gospel preached to them in type and shadow, as we have now in sum and substance. My soul, take thine evening meditation among the furniture of the outer sanctuary, and see what emblems they afford of Christ: The tabernacle, which Moses made in the wilderness, contained, in the first apartment, the things here spoken of. The *candlestick*, if without a light, strikingly set forth the darkness of that dispensation; and if with a light, (which seems the most probable; for the lamps were to be always burning,) it showed that the Lord himself, who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, is the light of his people, and the glory of the temple. The next article noticed is *the table*, which was probably placed in such a direction, that the light of the candlestick might shine upon it; and here we may learn, that in going to the table of the Lord, we must be directed by his light; for none cometh to the Father but by him, who is “the way, and the truth, and the life.” The table itself, which was of pure gold, became a most lively type of the ever-blessed Jesus. The infinite worth and glory of his person, and the eternal merit and efficacy of his blood and righteousness, may be supposed to be set forth, by golden representations, as the richest and most valuable treasure we are acquainted with. And when we add to these, that Jesus feeds, entertains; supports, nourisheth, and preserves his Church and people, what could so well set forth the royal bounties of his grace, and the fulness and richness of his house, as that of a golden table, around which the poor, and the needy, the hungry, and the faint, might be received and feasted? But the first sanctuary had not only the *candlestick* to guide to the Lord, and the *golden table* to receive the followers of the Lord, but the *shew-bread*, also, to supply them. This shew-bread was a beautiful representation of him who is the bread of life. Twelve loaves, in allusion to the twelve tribes of Israel, were to be always standing upon it, to intimate the perpetual appearing of Jesus in the presence of God for his people. They were of the finest flour and frankincense, thereby shadowing the purity of his nature, and the fragrancy of his sacrifice before God. They were to be renewed every Sabbath, to show that Christ is not only exhibited in the gospel every day, and all the day, but to be renewed every Sabbath, when his ministers bring forth to the people, out of his treasury, “things new and old.” Those taken away when the new loaves were brought, were to be eaten by the priests alone, under this Jewish dispensation; and the same is observed under the new, for the Lord Jesus hath made all his people “kings and priests

to God and the Father;” and if any that are not his, by his Spirit given to them, eat at his table, they make the table of the Lord contemptible. Are these some of the delightful subjects—the furniture of the tabernacle in the first court? Dost thou behold, my soul, these things, and through the veil and covering, discover Jesus? Oh! then, consider the vast infinite importance of redemption by his blood, whom God the Spirit thus set forth to the Church by types and shadows; and see the privilege and the happiness to which thou art called, when in reading the Old Testament, “the veil is done away in Christ.”

And after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the holiest of all.—*Heb.* ix. 3.

The veil of separation between the two tabernacles, no doubt, typified Christ’s body, which, in the moment of his death, by an invisible hand, was torn in twain from the top to the bottom, thereby intimating that now all separation was removed, and true believers were permitted to enter, by the blood of Jesus, into the presence of God, he having obtained eternal redemption for them. The second, or inner sanctuary, had several very interesting particulars, by way of distinction, belonging to it. The veil of separation, under the Jewish dispensation, intimated, that it was impossible for any to draw nigh to God, but by a mediator. When Jesus threw down the separation, and opened a new and living way by his blood, access was obtained to God in Christ; and Jesus, first for himself, and then for his people, led the way into the holy of holies. The veil of separation set forth how man was separated by sin; by the injury done to God’s holiness, and by the natural enmity of his own heart. But when Jesus came, and put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself, restored that which he took not away, gave to God his glory, restored to man God’s image, and took away the carnal mind, by making the heart of stone a heart of flesh, then it was that the veil of separation was for ever taken away, and the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers. My soul! what saith thine experience to these things? If the veil be removed, and thou art entered in, through Jesus, thy forerunner, then hast thou seen, and known, and felt, and enjoyed, the glory of Him, whom those things shadowed; and art rejoicing in Him, as the Lord thy righteousness. And art thou entered within the veil? Art thou resting upon Jesus, having cast anchor within the veil? Surely, then, Jesus is precious, his love is precious, his grace is precious; yea, every thing in him is precious. And then, by and by, all remaining clouds will be removed, and him whom thou seest now by faith, thou shalt see face to face, and know, even as thou art known. Precious Lord Jesus! take away all remaining darkness, ignorance, unbelief, and whatever comes in the way of clear views of thee, and the enjoyment of thee; and

let the covering which is cast over all people, and the blackness over all faces, be done away in the full enjoyment of thee, in grace here, and in glory to all eternity! Amen.

An old disciple.—*Acts* xxi. 16.

My soul! of what standing art thou in the Church of Christ? If there be any thing of real rank and dignity in human life, to cause one man to differ from another, certainly that age, which consisteth not in multitude of years, but in fellowship and long acquaintance with Jesus, must be most honourable. But in this, as is in all other distinctions, the believer's dignity is the reverse of the world's. He that is highest in grace is the lowest in humility. How beautiful and engaging to this point are the words of Christ: "Whosoever will be chief among you, (saith that divine teacher,) let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Hence the simplicity and lowliness of the weaned child, Jesus makes the character and feature of those that are "greatest in the kingdom of heaven." And wherefore is this? Is it because of our spiritual attainments, or of our improvement in the divine life? Will our title to salvation be at length made out, from our having been such a time, or so long a season, with Jesus? Is he "an old disciple" who hath been so many years an attendant on ordinances, sacraments, hearing sermons, and the like? Is this the plan of counting years in the school of Christ; and by so much, as we can number our attendance on the means of grace and improvements under them, as we fancy in ourselves the progress of our own holiness, do we estimate an old disciple? Not so, my soul, is the scripture calculation of age in the divine life. There we read that "the children shall die a hundred years old, but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed." (*Isaiah* lxx. 20.) What is it then to be an "old disciple?" Surely he is one that is eldest, in having learned, from the continued teachings of God the Holy Ghost, to think *less* of himself, and *more and more* of Jesus. He advanceth the farthest in this scriptural age who is growing in grace, by growing in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. His every day's experience brings him more acquainted with his own unworthiness, so as to endear the infinite merit of the Redeemer. He is truly an *old* disciple who is old in this science, of being more out of love with himself, and more in love with Jesus. For it is impossible, in this progress of the divine life, but to make advances in this exact proportion; and as the blessed Spirit exalts Christ to the view, and brings him home to the heart, by so much our self-confidence lessens; and the more glorious he appears, the more lowly we become in our own eyes. This is one rule to ascertain the real age of a disciple. And there is another like it. As

those who have long lived in a family best know its government; and find themselves more at home in it, so the oldest disciples in Jesus's household will best know how to improve a long and growing acquaintance with him, by coming to him for all they want, and making his glory the one great object of all their desire. And it will prove, indeed, that they are faithful to their Lord's interest, when they not only lay out every thing for his praise, but receive every thing that he lays out that it may be for his glory. My soul! what sayest thou to this statement of things, in respect of the real age of the believer in Jesus? Art thou an "old disciple" of thy Lord?

Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord! behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.—*John xi. 3, 4.*

My soul! ponder these words. It may be said now, as it was then, Lord! behold he whom thou lovest, yea, many our Lord Jesus loveth, are at this present hour sick! Who shall calculate the number? Who shall mark down the tears of the sorrowful of the Lord's people? But Jesus knows them all; yea, appoints all; and he it is of whom it is said, "He putteth their tears into his bottle: Are not these things noted in thy book?" These words suggest another sweet thought. The sorrowful sisters, in their message to the Lord Jesus, did not tell him that one whom *they* loved was sick, but one whom *Jesus* loved. There could be no doubt of *their* love to their brother; but their application to Jesus was on account of *his* love. My soul! do not overlook this. It is the most blessed and the most powerful of all arguments in prayer, when we come to a throne of grace for those that are near and dear to us, when we can and do tell the Lord, that they for whom we seek his mercy are the objects of *his* love. The observation of our Lord, on receiving the message, is most delightful. Sit down, this evening, and ponder it well. It is what may with safety be applied to every case, and every exercise of the Lord's people, in all their eventful pilgrimage through life, whether in one trial or another. "This sickness," this sorrow, this temptation, be it what it may, "is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Now, my soul, bring it to the proof. Every rod of Jesus hath a voice, and speaks as well as corrects; and when at any time he exerciseth it, this is the invariable language: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." And when the voice is heard, and the soul is thereby brought to listen to the Redeemer, then the close of the dispensation proves that it is

not indeed unto death, but for the divine glory. So that, let the exercise be what it may, we then see Jesus in it. His wisdom sent it, his love is in it, and his strength will carry the believer through it: yea so much of the Lord's presence will accompany every step we take during the dark hour, that, dark as things are around, there will be constant daylight in the soul. And so truly blessed are those dispensations, which, in their first view, carry a frowning aspect with them, that, when the sable covering is thus taken off by the hand of faith, on hearing Jesus's voice under all, they have been tenfold more productive of the Redeemer's glory and the soul's happiness, than in the smoother providences where such exercises have not been given. My soul! what saith thine own experience to this statement? Doth the Redeemer lay crosses in thy way? Are they marked with his inscription, "Bring them unto me?" Art thou visited with sickness, and doth Jesus perform the part of the tenderest nurse, and sit up by thee? Dost thou hear his well-known voice, saying, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you?" Surely, then, thou wilt fully subscribe to the sweet words of Jesus, in his answer to the sorrowful sisters. Every exercise and every trial of the Lord's people, which he sweetens and sanctifies, "is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." For if it teach creature-weakness, and Creator-strength—if the believer is made sensible of his helplessness, and of Jesus's all-sufficiency—if renewed feelings add one testimony more, that there is nothing but sickness, sin, and sorrow, in us, and therefore in Jesus alone all our resources of health, and righteousness, and joy, are found, these improvements will always give glory to God, and magnify the riches of his grace, that "the Son of God may be glorified thereby."

So Moses the servant of the Lord died.—*Deut.* xxxiv. 5.

My soul! close the month in contemplating the death of this highly-favoured servant of the Lord; and mark in him the sure event of all flesh—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." What a blessed account hath the Holy Ghost given of this man! "There arose not a prophet (we are told) like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face." But, as if to draw an everlasting line of distinction between him and his Master, between the highest prophet and the Lord God of the prophets, the Holy Ghost was pleased, by the ministry of his servant the apostle, to state the vast distinction: "Moses verily was faithful (saith he) in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we." (*Heb.* iii. 5, 6.) Indeed, all the great and distinguishing events in the life of Moses became more or less brilliant, as they set forth in their typical

representations, the person, work, or offices of the Lord Jesus Christ. Was Moses the Lord's minister to bring the people out of Egypt; and what was this but a representation of the Lord Jesus, bringing his people out of the Egypt of sin, death, and hell? If Moses led the people through the Red Sea, and opened a path through the mighty waters; what was this but a type of the ever-blessed Jesus, bringing his redeemed through the red sea of his blood, and opening a new and living way into the presence of God? If Moses kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood through faith, what was the great object his faith looked at, but Christ our passover, and the blood of his sacrifice? Did he bring the people through the wilderness; and is not Jesus bringing all his people through? Did he feed them with manna, and give them water from the rock; and what did the manna prefigure but Jesus, the bread of life; and what was the rock but Christ, the water of life, in all ages of the Church, to his people? In short, every thing momentous in the Church's history, wherein Moses ministered to the people, pointed, both in law and in sacrifice, to Jesus the Lamb of God, and his one all-sufficient sacrifice for the salvation of his redeemed. And even the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, over and above the event of death, common to all, had this peculiar signification annexed to it, that, as the great lawgiver to the people, it set forth the inefficacy of the law to bring into Canaan; this could only be accomplished by Christ, who "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." Farewell, Moses! thou servant of the Lord! Thou, when thou hadst served thy generation, wast gathered to thy fathers, and like all the patriarchs, didst see corruption; but Jesus saw no corruption—he ever liveth, and is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Hail, thou glorious Mediator of "a better covenant established upon better promises!" Be thou the Alpha and Omega of thy word, thine ordinances, thy sanctuary, thy servants! To thee all ministered; from thee all come; in thee all centered; and to thine everlasting praise all terminate, in bringing glory to Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

JUNE.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power: in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.—*Psalms* cx. 3.

There is so much of the Lord Jesus in this sweet Psalm, indeed it is altogether so truly a gospel psalm, that the morning

portion, which was a selection from it, cannot be better followed than by taking another verse of it for the evening portion, that both together may furnish out blessed meditations to my soul, in the contemplation of our precious Jesus. Here are views of Jesus, in all his blessed offices, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people; and every verse is more or less descriptive of his glorious person, offices, and character. This precious portion for my evening thoughts, contains the promise of Jehovah, the Father, in his covenant engagements, that the Redeemer should see the blessed fruits and effects of his undertaking in the hearts and minds of his elect people. "Thy people" (saith the Lord) "shall be willing." So then Jesus had a *people* before his incarnation, and that people Jehovah engaged to make *willing*; willing to be saved, willing to receive Christ, and own him for their Redeemer! Sweet thought of encouragement to the poor sinner! The Lord undertakes to give the willing mind; so that this is enough to stir the humblest to attend the means of grace, where Jehovah will make Christ's people willing in the day of Christ's power. And while it furnisheth out encouragement to the *sinner*, it holds forth instruction to the *saint*; the *former* can plead no inability, and the *latter* can make no boasting: the willingness is of the Lord, and it is in the day of Christ's power. My soul! thou canst subscribe to this truth. The fine awakenings of grace in thine heart, thou knowest, were not the effect of thy strength, but the willingness there wrought by divine power. But there are in this verse, also, "the beauties of the Lord's holiness" spoken of: "from the womb of the morning." It is indeed to see "the King in his beauty," and to worship in the "beauty of holiness," when the Lord's people are made willing in Christ's power, and worship only in the beauties of Christ's holiness. And such, the promise saith, shall be the fruitfulness of the womb of conversion in Christ's strength, when he seeth the travail of his soul, that, as the dew-drops of the morning are incalculable, so shall be the multitude of redeemed souls that shall "flee as a cloud, and as doves to their windows!" Precious Lord Jesus! rule thou as a King, the rightful Sovereign of Zion; subdue thine enemies to the sceptre of thy grace, and bring every knee of thy people to bend to the rod of thy power. And oh! almighty Father! ever let my poor soul praise thee, love thee, obey thee, adore thee, that thou hast fulfilled this covenant-promise to thy dear Son, in the instance of my soul. Thou hast indeed subdued the natural stubbornness of my nature, and made me willing to be saved in the Lord's own way. And now, blessed Lord, I desire to bend the knee of my heart to Jesus, and daily, hourly ascribe the whole of my salvation "to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb that was slain, for ever!"

But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans v. 8.

It is a very blessed heightening of divine mercies, when we behold them as not only bestowed upon those that deserved them not, but upon those that deserved the reverse of them. It is not enough, in our account of God's love, to say that God was gracious when we had done nothing to merit his favour, but that God was gracious when we had done every thing to merit his displeasure. This is among the sweet features of the gospel. And the reason is very plain. God himself is an infinite being, and therefore his love must be an infinite love. All the properties of it are infinite; it must be exercised to suit an infinite power; it must be such as corresponds to infinite wisdom; and its effects must be such as shall be suited to infinite goodness. Hence, therefore, in the display of it, such manifestations must be given as shall set forth that the love of God, as an infinite being, totally differs from the love of man, who is but a finite creature. Our love is bounded, like ourselves, by circumstances of a finite, limited perishing, dying nature, such as ourselves, and all the creatures around us, partake of. But in the love of God, there are "breadths, and lengths, and depths, and heights, passing knowledge!" Now God commendeth his love towards us by those properties; that is, he bids us to take notice of it by those special marks and characters. And when the Lord surpriseth the souls of his people by the same astonishing instance of his grace, in those acts of goodness, he speaks as in these solemn words: "If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes, saith the Lord of hosts?" (Zech. viii. 6.) How sweetly is this shown to us in the gift of his dear Son Jesus Christ! When was Christ given? When we were enemies. On what account was he given? Purely on account of God's love. And to whom was he given? Not to his friends; not to those who had never offended him; not to those who, by their affection, or by their services, could make some return of acknowledgment for such blessings; but to poor, helpless, barren, unprofitable sinners. So that the love of God in Christ is particularly recommended, sent home, pressed upon our hearts, by this rich display of it. To have blessed us, or to have loved us, if we had never offended God, would have been a stream too shallow, too trifling, to show forth divine love. No! "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Pause, my soul! mark these properties, admire divine goodness, and learn how to put a proper value upon the unparalleled love of God in Jesus Christ. So God commended his love towards us!

Jehovah-nissi.—*Exodus xvii. 15.*

“Jehovah-nissi” is the suitable inscription for every undertaking. The meaning is, “The Lord is my banner.” And how blessed is it to set this over us in all the conflicts of our warfare, because it appeals to God, and calls on God to our help in all emergencies. Hence the Church cries out, “We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners.” (Psalm xx. 5.) And how lovely is the Church described, when strengthened in the Lord her God, “looking forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners!” (Song vi. 10.) But this inscription hath a yet more special reference to Jesus. The history to which it belongs, gives us an account of *Amalek*, with whom the Lord declared “he would have war from generation to generation.” Now as Joshua was a type of Christ, so Amalek became a type of the devil. There is nothing neutral in this war; “he that is not for us, is against us;” but what a blessed relief is it to the soul, that the issue is not doubtful! While Christ is our banner, and “Jehovah-nissi” the glorious name under whom we fight, we shall be more than conquerors through him who helpeth us. The cause is his, the glory of God in salvation his, the everlasting issue of it his, and the whole termination his. Hence we go not forth as to a thing doubtful, but already sure. Sit down, my soul, this evening, and write “Jehovah-nissi” upon all that concerns thee. The Lord is engaged for thee in this holy warfare. The Lord hath sworn that he will have war with all the enemies of his Christ, from generation to generation. Hence he will have a suited grace, and a suited strength, proportioned to the wants of all his people. The name, the person, the work, the righteousness, the finished salvation of the Lord Jesus is, and must be, a banner for triumph, because of the truth. Therefore, as David, who, long before he had possession of the kingdom, enjoyed it by faith, so in Jesus our “Jehovah-nissi” we may with confidence cry out, as he did, “Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine;” Christ is mine, and heaven is mine: yea, all things are mine: for “Christ is the strength of my life, and my portion for ever.”

Yea, he loved the people: all his saints are in thine hand.—*Deuteronomy xxxiii. 3.*

My soul! here is a very blessed portion to meditate upon in the night-watches, and to lie down with, reposing in the bosom of Jesus. The word *yea* is a sweet scripture word, and very strong to the purpose. God’s *yeas* and *amens* are firmer than all the oaths of creatures: and when Jehovah puts his *yea* to the love that he hath to his people, it ought to give great comfort and confidence to our faith. And oh! what testimonies hath

Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, manifested, in the Father's love, the Redeemer's grace, and the Holy Ghost's fellowship, in proof of this affection! Blessed Lord! help me to keep it in remembrance. But, my soul, do not stop here. Mark what the Holy Ghost hath said, as a farther testimony of it: "All his saints are in thine hand." In whatever point of view we read these words, they become blessed. Whether the saints of the Lord Jesus, here spoken of, be old testament saints, or new testament believers, the sense is the same. Jesus committed all his people into his Father's hands. "Keep them," cried the Saviour, (in that divine prayer, the specimen of his holy intercession,) "keep holy, Father, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me!" (John xvii. 11.) And hence the Redeemer elsewhere saith, "My sheep shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand: I and my Father are one." (John x. 28—30.) Think, my soul, how eternally safe and secure must the Church of Jesus be, thus kept by the mighty power of God, through faith unto salvation! What shall unclasp the hands of Jehovah? Who shall wrest the weakest and humblest, the poorest of Christ's little ones, from the holding of his omnipotency? Why then art thou, my soul, so frequently exercised with fears, and doubts, and misgivings? It is the Lord's love that is the foundation of thy assurance, and not the strength of thy graces! His own free mercy, and not thy merit, were the first causes of thy calling: and what is it now, in thy present preservation, but the same which holds thee up, and carries thee through every difficulty! "Yea, he loved the people:" that is the source, the reason, the sole motive. And their safety he secures: "All his saints are in thy hands!" Precious Lord Jesus! it is enough. How shall a child of thine perish, when secured by such almighty support? Oh! to hear thy voice, in the soft whispers of thy love, comforting my soul, as thou didst the Church of old; "Can a woman forget her sucking-child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget: yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed.—*Hab.* iii. 13.

Every view of redemption is blessed: but there are some views transcendently so. And when the soul is led out in the contemplation of Jehovah, in his Trinity of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all engaged, in their goings forth from everlasting, for the accomplishment of it, there is somewhat which overpowers the mind with the greatness, and the surpassing glory of the

subject. As the salvation of the Lord's people is *from* Jehovah, and *from* all eternity, so is it *to* Jehovah, and *to* all eternity. All the springs of it are from this one source, and tend to this one end. The song of heaven, which John heard, so proclaimed it: for while the address was to the Lamb, in ascribing to him all the glory of the work, the great purpose for which it was wrought was ascribed to the Father: "Thou wert slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." (Rev. v. 9.) My soul! Mark the similar expression in this song or prayer of the prophet. Jehovah "went forth for the salvation of his people; even for salvation with his anointed." And was not Christ the anointed of the Father? And did not Jehovah go forth with Christ, upholding, supporting, carrying on, and completing redemption-work in, and by, and with Jesus? Yea, did not Jesus go forth from everlasting, when his delights were with the children of men before the world? Is it not of Jesus that it is said, "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men?" (Prov. viii. 30, 31.) Oh! the soul-comforting subject! How truly blessed to see the whole Godhead thus engaged in the salvation of poor sinners! Yes! blessed Lord Jesus! it is plain, that in all the goings forth of Jehovah, the redemption of thy Church was the one great object and design. *Before* time began to be numbered, thou wentest forth. *In* time, when thou camest in substance of our flesh, still the salvation of thy people was the object. And now *in eternity*, thou art still going forth, in thy priestly office on thy throne, which thou art carrying on in heaven to the same purpose, to make the salvation of thy people secure. Oh! for grace to keep these views always in remembrance, that, while Jehovah is thus, in one eternal act, going forth for the salvation of his redeemed, all his redeemed may go forth in love, and adoration, and praise, in the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ: and here on earth begin the song which is never to end in heaven: "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever." Amen.

So Christ was once offered, to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.—*Heb.* ix. 28.

My soul! pause over this blessed portion, for it is most blessed, and seek from God the Holy Ghost, grace to gather all its sweets for thine evening enjoyment. Every word is big with importance. And, first, who is it that is here said to have been

once offered? Even Christ, the sent, the sealed, the anointed of Jehovah. So that when thou goest to a throne of grace, to plead for mercy in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, thou goest in his name, whom thy God and Father hath appointed. Thou then tellest thy God, what thy God first told thee. He, in whose name, blood, and righteousness, thou askest redemption, is he whom Jehovah himself "hath set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood." Hence it is impossible not to succeed. "I have given him" (saith the Lord) "for a covenant to the people." Next, consider the fulness, the greatness, the all-sufficiency, of this sacrifice, which thy Jesus hath offered. He was *once* offered. Yes! it is enough: "For by that one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." There was, and is, more merit in that *one offering* of the Lord Jesus Christ, to take away sins, than there is demerit in all the sins of his people for ever. Mark this down also, when thou goest to the throne. Thou art seeking redemption upon the plea and footing of a full and rich equivalent made by thy surety, under Jehovah's own appointment and authority. Then go on to that other most interesting part of this precious verse: "And unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Pause, my soul, over these words. When thy Jesus appeared the *first* time, he came as the burden-bearer of all the sins of his redeemed. And though in himself "he was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," yet he was made both "sin and a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Hence all the sins of his redeemed were charged upon him, and "the Lord Jehovah laid upon him the iniquity of us all." But when he had by himself purged our sins, the whole weight and pressure of sin, with all its tremendous effects, were for ever done away. And therefore unto them that look for him, when he shall appear the second time, it will be without sin unto salvation. He put away sin by his *first* coming: and by his *second*, he will put all his redeemed into the complete possession of that salvation which, by his one offering of himself for sin, he hath eternally secured. What sayest thou, my soul, concerning thyself, and thy personal hope in these glorious things? Art thou one of that blessed happy number who are thus looking for Jesus? Dost thou believe that Jesus died and rose again? Art thou so well pleased with the merits and efficacy of this one offering of the body of Jesus Christ, *once for all*, as to seek no other, to desire no other; yea, to renounce and despise every other? Pause, and duly consider. These are solemn soul transactions. A mistake here is a mistake indeed. Oh! it is blessed to be well pleased with what Jehovah hath declared himself well pleased with: and to be satisfied; yea, well satisfied, with what Jehovah is well satisfied. For then thou wilt be daily on the look-out for thy Lord's return, as one that is on the look-out for a dearly beloved friend.

And thus, if thou art in love with his appearing; loving all that appears to promote thy Redeemer's glory on earth, in the conversion of sinners, and comforting of saints, loving his Church, his Zion, his ordinances, his people; shortly the hour will arrive, in which the Master will come, and call for thee; thou shalt hear his chariot-wheels at the door, and his voice will be distinctly heard by thy waiting spirit: "Arise, my fair one, and come away!"

He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love.—*Song* ii. 4.

In whatever sense thou art led, my soul, to look at the banqueting-house of Jesus, thy joy will be great in the contemplation. And if he who hath prepared the banqueting-house, and well stored it with every thing to afford a spiritual repast, will lead thee thither, and regale thee there with the rich enjoyment of himself, and the fulness of blessings in him, thou wilt have a feast of fat things indeed! Come then, this evening, and take a view of Jesus' banqueting-house, and wait on thy kind and condescending Lord. He hath been known to take home many a poor, waiting, hungry sinner, that hath been on the look-out for him, to his banqueting-house, and given him a gracious, full, and satisfying entertainment. Come then, my soul, and see this banqueting-house of Jesus. *Some* have looked at it as the *covenant* itself of redemption; for this is indeed a house of banquet, where every thing that can enrich the soul in the love of God the Father, God the Son, and God the holy Ghost, is found. Oh! the blessedness of this covenant! Well might David, when he was brought into it, exult and say, "This is all my salvation, and all my desire!" And *some* have looked at the banqueting-house, and thought it meant the *Church*, the house of God; for here all the blessings of the covenant are given to the guests which Jesus brings into it. And here again we find, that they who are blessed with a place in God's house are so delighted as to resolve to go out no more. "Here would I dwell" (is the language that expresseth the sentiment of all): "this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein." (Psalm cxxxii. 14.) And *some* have looked at the banqueting-house of the Lord Jesus, and considered, that it is the blessed "word of God, the scriptures of truth." And certain it is, that "they contain the words of eternal life;" and open every day, and all the day, an everlasting supply to banquet the hungry soul, and to satiate the sorrowful soul. *One*, who could not be mistaken, said, when he had been feeding upon the rich things contained in it, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." (Jerem. xv. 16.) And *another*, not less taugth, cried out in a transport, "O how I love thy law!

it is my meditation all the day." (Psalm cxix. 97.) But I see no reason why the *whole* may not be considered as the banqueting-house of Jesus. For when, by the sweet influences of his spirit, he hath brought his redeemed into a heartfelt enjoyment of an interest in his covenant, his Church, and Scriptures, every word, ordinance, and means of grace, with all the promises, are the inheritance of his people. Pause, my soul, and inquire, whether the Lord Jesus hath thus brought thee in? Art thou acquainted with his banqueting-house, and convinced that none but Jesus could bring thee in? It is a solemn thought! A man may attend the Church, may read the scriptures, follow ordinances; yea, go to the Lord's table; but unless Jesus, by his Holy Spirit, leads the sinner there, meets him there, and blesseth him there, to what purpose will be the going? Look to it, my soul, that thy visits are by the Lord's invitation, and thy welcome from him; yea, that he leads thee by the hand, meets thee, and blesseth thee; sets his banner over thee of love, and bids thee partake largely in the riches of his grace and salvation, in those well known words of thy Lord: "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!"

Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

1 *Peter* i. 8, 9.

My soul! mark what a blessed testimony believers of the present hour are here said to give to an unseen, but dearly beloved Redeemer; and behold what blessed effects are induced in the soul by such lively acts of faith upon his person and righteousness! And indeed, when it is considered who Christ is, what he is to us, what he hath done for us, and what he is for ever doing for us, and will do to all eternity, who but must love him? In his person all divine perfections centre; whatever tends to make any creature lovely, in heaven or on earth, is found in Jesus in the most eminent degree. For there is nothing lovely in creatures of any character, whether angels or men, but it is derived from him: it is Jesus that gives all that excellency and grace which they possess; the whole is found *in* him and received *from* him. And when to these views of what Christ is in himself, the believer considers what he is to him, what he hath wrought, and what he hath accomplished in redemption for him, such thoughts of Jesus, under the teachings of the Holy Ghost, in his glorifying him to the soul, give "a joy unspeakable and full of glory." My soul! what saith thine own experience to these truths? Surely Christ is a portion full enough, and rich enough for every poor

needy sinner to live upon to all eternity. And if thou hast been taught (as I trust thou hast long since been taught, and long proved) that all the fulness in Jesus is for his people; that his grace is magnified in giving out of his fulness to supply their need; yea, that Jesus waits to be gracious, and is as truly glorified, when a poor creature lives by faith and joy upon his bounty, as he is when that poor creature lays himself out in praises for that bounty; surely, though thou hast never seen Christ in the flesh, yet by faith thou hast seen him, and lived upon him, and hast such believing views of him, as giveth thee present peace, and immediate enjoyment of salvation. Oh! the felicity of thus realizing future things by present possession! Oh! the blessedness of substantiating things unseen by the strength of that faith which worketh by love! See to it, my soul, that thy God and Saviour is increasingly precious, and increasingly lovely, day by day. See to it that he who is lovely to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost; the praise of all his saints in glory; the joy and adoration of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; and lovely to all creation, but to devils and poor, blind, unawakened sinners: see to it, my soul, that this lovely and all-loving Jesus is the first, and best, and completely satisfying object of thy delight; that this blessed testimony, which the Holy Ghost hath here given of the faithful, may be thine; and that though not having seen Jesus, you love him, and though unseen you believe in him. This will be to rejoice with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even in the salvation of your soul.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.—*Psalm* i. 1, 2.

It is blessed to read every portion of scripture which speaketh of perfection in our nature, as referring to the person of the God-man Christ Jesus; and then, from our union *with* him, and interest *in* him, to mark our connection as his people, and our concern in all that is said or written of him. In the book of Psalms, particularly, there are numberless passages, which say that of holiness, which can be said of none among the fallen sons of men with the smallest shadow of truth. Who is the man, and where to be found, that hath never *walked* in the counsel of the ungodly; nor yet, which is more than walking, hath *stood*, as one not distressed at it, in the way of sinners; nor yet *sat down*, which is worse than all, in the scorner's chair? None of the children of men could ever lay claim to the blessedness of such a

conduct from his own personal holiness in it. But if we read the words with reference to the ever-blessed and ever-holy Jesus, all this, and infinitely more, is true; for such was the spotless purity of the Redeemer, that his whole nature was altogether clean; yea, the law of Jehovah was in his very bowels. (See the margin of the Bible, Psalm xl. 8.) My soul! behold, in this account, the true character of thy Lord; and in it behold the holiness and purity of that nature, in whose holiness and purity alone thou canst ever see the face of God, in grace here by faith, and in glory hereafter by sight in open fruition. Thus read, and thus accepted, the passage in this Psalm becomes blessed indeed. In his righteousness, his people are made righteous; and by virtue of an union with him, and interest in him, and in all that concerns him, being joined to the Lord by one spirit, the souls of the redeemed walk as he walked, avoid the society of the profane, and sit not in the counsel of the ungodly. Precious Spirit of all truth! do thou thus glorify the Lord Jesus to my view; take of the things of Christ, and show them to me; and grant me daily fellowship and communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ!

And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter, and they that were with him, said, Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.—*Luke* viii. 45, 46.

What a most interesting passage is here! What an evidence does it afford of the clear knowledge of the Lord Jesus; and, by an undeniable conclusion from such a proof of his omniscience, what a testimony it brings with it of the Godhead of Christ! Pause, my soul, over the portion, and mark it well. Next pass on to another sweet improvement of it, and duly consider what a beautiful distinction is here drawn between the violent pressure of the throng, and the gentle touch of faith. Multitudes crowd to churches, and they hear of Jesus; but the personal knowledge and enjoyment of the Lord Jesus, is this touching him. Oh! for grace to have this right discrimination! It is very easy to attend the means of grace, to hear or read the holy scriptures; nay, to have a clear head-knowledge of divine things, and even to *press* after information concerning Christ; but all these may be, and perhaps often are, void of that life-giving, life-imparting knowledge and enjoyment of Christ in the soul, which is really touching Christ by faith, and believing in him to the salvation of the soul. Once more, remark yet farther, the knowledge Jesus hath of all the individual cases of his afflicted people. He saw this

poor woman amidst the whole crowd. He knew her case, knew all that had passed. In the greatest throng, Jesus's eye is upon each and upon all. He knoweth what the needy require, and what the secret sighs of his poor people express; and it is Jesus that communicates virtue, grace, strength, comfort, and help, in all their vast varieties. What a sweet thought is it then, my soul, for thee to go in the greatest throng, as well as in the most secret retirement! Jesus encourageth thy faith, bids thee come and touch the hem of his garment, and, depend upon it, as in the instance of this poor woman, however unobserved or unknown by others, his eye is upon thee for good. The language of Jesus to every one of this description is son, daughter, "be of good cheer, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace!"

And 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. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

Exodus xiii. 21, 22.

My soul! look back, this evening, to the Church's history in the wilderness, and behold how Jesus watched over his people *then*, as he doth *now*. Surely it is sweet, it is blessed, to mark the same evidences of the Redeemer's love, and to observe, that in affection to his people (as in person, so in love) he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Among many precious testimonies to this effect, that of the pillar of the cloud by day, and of fire by night, in the camp of Israel, is not the least. We are told in this scripture, that the Lord was in this cloud; and another scripture confirms it, saying, that Jehovah "spake unto them out of the cloudy pillar." It is wonderful to conceive what effect must have been wrought on the minds of the people by this constant display of the Lord's goodness. Contrary to all other clouds, it was always stationary, always near the tabernacle, and acted as the reverse of all other clouds, in that it shone bright by night, and was dark as a cloud to obscure the sun's brightness and scorching rays by day. Besides these and other wonderful properties, its movements became the token for the camp of Israel to move, and when it rested, it implied that Israel was to rest also. And thus, not for a short transient march or two, not on any particular emergency, but it became the guide and protection of Israel for forty years together, until all the people of God arrived in the promised land. Pause, my soul, and ponder over the grace of thy covenant God in Christ, in this standing miracle; and when thou hast duly considered the wonderful subject, say, was not Jesus then as much, in type and figure, preached to the Church of old, as he is now in sum and substance? Was

the Lord veiled in a cloud then, and hath he not since veiled himself in our flesh? Did he go before the people then, and doth he not the same now? Was he stationary then, that is, ever with them, and is he not with his people "always, even unto the end of the world?" Was the cloud in the wilderness the reverse of all other clouds, shining by night, but becoming a grateful screen by day? And is not Jesus all this, and more; shining most bright upon his people when they are in darkness, and sheltering them when the heat of persecution or distress is at the height? Did the cloud never depart from the people during their forty years' journey through the wilderness, until they arrived at Canaan? And doth not our Lord go before, and follow his redeemed, all the way of their pilgrimage, until he hath brought them home safe to heaven? O thou glorious, gracious, great I AM! Be thou, dearest Lord, still the light, the way, the truth, and the life, to all thy redeemed. And as now, since thou hast finished redemption-work by thine open presence upon earth, in substance of our flesh, and "washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning," do thou, Lord, fulfil that sweet promise, and "create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and a smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence!" (Isaiah iv. 4, 5.)

The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. He will save. He will rejoice over thee with joy. He will rest in his love. He will joy over thee with singing.—*Zeph. iii. 17.*

My soul! look at this Old Testament promise, through the medium of the New Testament dispensation, and behold what a cluster of rich blessings it contains; and which, like all the other promises of the Bible, is "yea and amen in Christ Jesus!" And observe how it opens. The Lord thy God, that is, Jehovah, in his threefold character, in rich covenant engagements, is "in the midst of thee;" hath set up his throne in Zion, and lives, and reigns, and governs in the hearts of his redeemed. So said Jesus, and so that dear Lord explained it in after ages: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him; and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.) "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth." (John xiv. 16, 17.) Mark these blessed, precious truths, my soul, in the most lively characters, on thine heart; and hence learn, that the Lord thy God, in covenant-engagements, dwelleth in the midst of his people, and in the

hearts of his people; that, like the sun at mid-day, in the centre of the heavens, he may enlighten, warm, refresh, and give forth all his blessings to bless thee. Next mark what the prophet saith of this covenant Lord God, who is in the midst of his Church and people: "He is mighty!" Shout aloud at this, my soul; for if he be mighty, then he will support thy weakness, and subdue thy foes. What can bear down or destroy the soul, whom this mighty God upholds? What shall arise to distress a child of God, as long as God is almighty? And if he hath engaged to be for thee, who can dare to be against thee? Sweet consideration! What signifies my weakness, while Christ is strong? Yea, his strength will be made perfect in my weakness. Go on farther, my soul, in looking over the many blessed things spoken of in this verse. "He will save." Yea, he *hath* saved, and *doth* save, and *will* save. And this is the very cause, the angel said, for which his name should be called Jesus; "for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. i. 21.) Think of this, when, at any time, sin or sorrow, trial or temptation, would cast thee down. Jesus is still Jesus; still on his throne: yea *thy* Saviour. Amidst all thy changeableness, there is no change in him. And observe yet farther, how the prophet chimes on those sweet words: "He will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love: he will joy over thee with singing." Pause, my soul, over this most gracious account. Jesus not only saves, not only pardons, but he doth it as God, as Jesus. It is his joy, his delight, his pleasure, to do so. As he saith in another scripture, "Yea, I will rejoice over them, to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul." (Jerem. xxxii. 41.) And as the poor timid believer, from feeling such coldness and deadness, as at times he doth in himself feel, is but too easily prevailed upon by the enemy, and by his own unbelieving heart, to suppose the same of Jesus, that he might not give way to this temptation, the Lord adds, "he will rest in his love;" will abide in it unmoved, and without change; for, as he saith in another scripture, "the Lord God of Israel hateth putting away." (Mal. ii. 16.) Oh! what a multitude of sweet things are folded up in this verse! Jesus rejoiceth over his people; yea Jesus joys over them with singing. How often have I seen, in some lovely evening like the present, that sweet bird of the air, called the *sky-lark*, mount aloft from her nest, still looking at her young as she ascends; and when advanced to her height, warbling in the most delightful notes over her brood; until at length, with all the rapidity of love, she darts down to cover, to feed, and to protect them! Thus, but in an infinitely higher degree, doth Jesus joy over his children with singing, resting in his love; and is ever near, ever mighty to defend, to bless, to keep, and to make happy, those who rest in his strength; while he rests in his love, being their God, and they his people.

The golden pot that had manna.—*Hebrews ix. 4.*

There is somewhat very blessed in the account given concerning the furniture of the *second* tabernacle. Some few evenings since, my soul, a glance was taken of the *candlestick*, the *table*, and *shew-bread*, in the *first* tabernacle. Perhaps the Lord the Holy Ghost will open to thy meditation some edifying considerations in the view of the contents of the *second*. The *golden pot*, which preserved the manna pure, that in itself was soon subject to corruption, was unquestionably a beautiful emblem of the *divine* nature of Jesus, imparting durability and dignity to his *human* nature. We are told concerning the manna, that if the Israelites kept it, though but for a day, (except when miraculously preserved pure on the Sabbath-day, to remind them of that ordinance,) it bred worms, and stank. (Exod. xvi. 20.) But in this golden pot, an omer-full of manna put therein was laid up before the Lord as a memorial, and preserved pure. Precious Lord Jesus! do I not learn from hence, that it is thou, and thou alone, who givest life, and purity, and sweetness, to our poor persons and offerings? Every thing in us, and from us, must, like ourselves, be corrupt, and is indeed part of ourselves, and subject to putrefaction; but in thee, and by thee, as the manna was preserved in the golden pot, we are preserved, made clean and holy, in thy holiness and purity. And surely, Lord, I learn, moreover, from this part of the furniture, in the *second* tabernacle, that as thou art entered into the holy place, there to appear in the presence of God for us, so, by this emblem of the golden pot, is set forth the sweet communion and fellowship which thy people now are privileged to enjoy, *in* thee, and *from* thee, and *with* thee! Yea, Lord, thou art still the bread of God, the living bread, which that manna represented: and still dost thou feed thy Church above, and lead them to fountains of living waters. And surely, Lord, thou wilt no less feed thy Church below, which yet remains in this dry and barren wilderness, "where no water is." I hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches, and I feel delight: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." (Rev. ii. 17.)

Aaron's rod that budded.—*Hebrews ix. 4.*

One view more of the inner tabernacle, and the articles of furniture therein contained, may be rendered profitable under the Spirit's teaching; and therefore, my soul, look at that standing miracle, which was preserved there, of the rod of Aaron. The history of it is related in the book of Numbers, chap. xvii. It was the method which the Lord was graciously pleased to appoint, for the determining on whom his choice rested for the priesthood. To this end a rod was taken from every tribe, and laid up before the Lord in the tabernacle; the Lord having de-

clared, that whichsoever of the tribes had the rod to blossom, should be the man. The rod of Aaron, on the morrow, had buds, and blossoms, and fruits. But in all these, Christ, in his everlasting priesthood, was typified. To behold a dry stick bring forth buds, and become green and flourishing, was miraculous, and only to be referred into the sovereign power and will of God. But, my soul, when we see Jesus as the branch out of the root of Jesse, we behold him, as the prophet, ages before his incarnation, described him, growing up before Jehovah in his tabernacle, as the rod laid up before him, "a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." (Isaiah liii. 2.) And as the rod of Aaron had in one and the same moment the whole product of the season in buds, and blossoms, and fruits, so in the everlasting priesthood of Christ are suited graces for the several ages of his Church, and the several wants of all his people. Precious Jesus! may my soul unceasingly look unto thee, as my faithful, everlasting and unchangeable High-Priest! And do thou, Lord, "send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies!" Full sure I am, O Lord, that every thing in me, and from me, like the rods of the different tribes of Israel, will remain dry, and neither give forth bud nor blossom. To thee, and the rod of thy strength, therefore, will I look, that thou mayest give life and grace to my poor soul, to bring forth fruit unto God, by grace here, and glory for ever.

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree.—*Psalm* ii. 6, 7.

Here is a subject, my soul, opened for thy meditation, which neither the evening nor day of thy whole life, no, nor eternity itself, will ever be long enough to exhaust. Some of the outlines may be gathered here below, when God the Holy Ghost condescends to teach; but the subject itself will, no doubt, be among the glorious employments of heaven. It should seem, that the divine speakers here are God the Father and God the Son. We find similar instances in the word of God. (See Isaiah vi. and xlix; John xii. 27, 28.) And the beloved apostle was led into an apprehension of the same subject, for the Church's instruction—in that vision he saw. (Rev. v. 1, 9.) In this vision, Jesus is represented as taking the book, and opening it, and declaring the contents of it. Hence, therefore, when God the Father saith, as in this psalm, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Jesus, as King, declares "the decree" of the counsel of peace, which was between them both, for the salvation of his Church and people. And what was the decree but the decree from all eternity; namely, that Jehovah would give a Church to his dear Son, and his dear Son to the Church: that Jesus should take the name of his people, and their nature; become

their glorious head and representative; redeem them from the ruins of the fall, and make them altogether glorious and lovely, from his comeliness, that he would put upon them? Upon Christ's thus undertaking the salvation of his people, "the decree went forth," that all power should be his, as Mediator, in heaven and in earth. It began from everlasting; for from everlasting, by this decree, Jesus was set up as the glorious head and mediator before all worlds. The same power became his in time; and the same power is his to all eternity. Hence, therefore, Jesus is no sooner seated on his throne on his holy hill of Zion, but he sends forth the decree; and God the Father confirms the whole, in giving him "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." Hail, then, thou sovereign Lord! thou almighty king, upon thy holy hill of Zion! Gladly do I acknowledge thee to be my king and my God: for, by Jehovah's appointment, by thy conquest of my heart, and by the voluntary surrender of myself since thou hast brought me under the power of thy grace, am I thine, and no longer my own. Oh! for grace so to acknowledge thee, so to obey thee, so to love thee, that while the Lord Jehovah hath set thee upon thy throne, his grace also may give thee the throne of my heart! And while all thine enemies must bow before thee, may all thy friends and followers rejoice in thy service! Even so, Amen.

Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.—*Jeremiah* viii. 7.

When the Lord would expostulate with his people, what methods he graciously adopts! There are no creatures in nature so dull, so senseless, and stupid, as God's people are, by reason of the fall. Every animal hath an instinct, prompting to self-preservation. Are they exposed to danger, how speedily do they endeavour to remove! Are they apprehensive of a storm, they flee to some covering to hide them! The birds of passage, when the first symptoms of winter appear, gather together, to depart to a warmer climate! But man, poor, blind improvident man! no winter of death can admonish him; no approach of the departing day of life can prevail upon him to flee from the wrath to come. My soul! look round human life, and mark this, by way of admiring, more and more, distinguishing grace, which enabled thee to estimate thy privileges, and discern that sovereign, bountiful mercy, which maketh thee to differ from another. "What hast thou, which thou didst not receive?" But, dearest Lord, is it not to copy after that gracious feeling of thine, which thou hadst in the days of thy flesh, when thou hadst compassion

on the multitude, in beholding them famishing, and was moved in pity towards them, when we behold the great mass of thoughtless sinners, whose concern for self-preservation doth not come up to that of the brute which perisheth? In common life all are interested and earnest in the pursuit of the different objects of the world; the traveller is full of thought, in his way home, to see that his path be right; the mariner would not run contrary to the direction of the compass; the man of trade never acts in opposition to the gain of that trade; neither does the man of pleasure lose sight of what will most likely promote that pleasure. But thy people, blessed Jesus, are everlastingly pursuing what they have proved a thousand times to be vain and unsatisfying; yet they pursue it again, and do not learn to "know the judgment of the Lord." Blessed Lord! undertake for me; pity, compassionate, direct, guide, keep me! Oh! for grace to learn, and rightly to value, the things of salvation! And, convinced that Christ is all and in all, may I never seek from the creature what only can be found in the Creator! And having discovered the vanity of every thing out of Christ, may I, where Christ is not, from henceforth learn, with the Church, to say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee; my flesh and my heart faileth: but thou art the strength of my heart and my portion for ever!"

I shall behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the world.—*Isaiah xxxviii. 11.*

My soul! though thou art, I trust, prepared for thy great change, and in an *habitual* state for death, whenever the Lord shall come to take thee home, yet there is also an *actual* state of being on the look-out for it, so that it is proper at times to go down to the grave, in *imagination*, before thou art carried thither in *reality*; that by earthing thyself, thou mayest consider what will be the immediate consequence of death in those things which are now most about thee, and with which thou art necessarily much occupied. "Thou wilt behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the world:" would it not be proper, then, to wean thyself from too great an acquaintance with them now, that the separation may be the less felt? Thou wilt be called upon to enter upon a state altogether new, and a path thou hast never before trodden; and would it not be wise to send forth inquiries concerning them, such as scripture gives the clearest answer to, and study the best way to make preparation, in Jesus, for thy change? What a blessed example hath the apostle Paul left upon record of his conduct in this particular: "I protest (said he to the Corinthian Church, speaking on this subject) by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." (1 Cor. xv. 31.) Such were both the habitual and actual frames

of Paul's mind, that he was every day, and all the day, waiting and looking for his master's call. The fact was, he knew the certainty of the ground on which he stood; he had no farther question to ask concerning his safety in Christ; and, therefore, he rather wished to bring the hour on than to put it off. His whole heart, his whole affections, centered in Christ: and as such, though to live was Christ, yet to die was gain. My soul! what sayest thou to this blessed frame? Oh! for the same earnestness and from the same cause; that whether this night, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning, when the Lord comes, though thou wilt behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the world, yet thou wilt behold the face of God in glory; and when thou awakest after his likeness, thou wilt be satisfied with it.

Elect, according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

1 *Peter* i. 2.

Of all blessings, surely this is the highest, and the best, which holds forth to a poor sinner the assurance of redemption, as the united result of the love, grace, and mercy of all the persons in the Godhead. My soul! pause over the glorious truth, and sweetly mark the testimony of each co-operating and acting together in the great work of salvation. Behold thy God and Father setting apart, from all eternity, the chosen vessels of mercy, foreknowing, and fore-appointing every event, in his own counsel, purpose, and will. What a blessed thought in the mind of the redeemed, is this to live upon, to cherish, and keep alive in the soul, from day to day, to call up the unceasing fruits of adoration, love, duty, and praise, in grace here, and in glory to all eternity. Go on, my soul, to the contemplation of the *second* chapter in his holy volume of grace and mercy: and mark what the apostle hath here said of "the sanctification of the Spirit." So that the blessed hand of the Holy Ghost is as much engaged in this beneficent act of redemption, in the existence of every individual, as the fore-knowledge and appointment of God the Father, or of the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Yea, all the glory of redemption in the grace provided by the Father, and the merits of the Son's blood and righteousness, depend, for the personal enjoyment of it, in the case of each believer, upon the Holy Ghost's revelation of it in the soul. Oh! it is blessed to see, to feel, to know, and to enjoy those gracious communications of God's Christ in the soul, which God the Holy Ghost awakens, and excites, and brings home to the mind. And no less, as the meritorious cause of all (the *third* chapter in this wonderful volume) do thou contemplate, my soul, the two united

branches of thy redemption; the *obedience* and atonement in the *sprinkling* of the blood of Jesus Christ. How comprehensive, yet how full and satisfactory! It is Jesus, as God's righteous servant, that by his perfect obedience hath justified his people. And it is the death of the cross which fully atoned for their transgression: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Behold then, my soul! in these three glorious chapters of redemption, how all the great charter of grace is summed up and contained. Take it with thee as thine evening portion: let it lie down with thee, and arise with thee; and carry it about with thee, for thine unceasing meditation during the whole of thy day of grace, until grace be swallowed up in eternal glory!

My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.—*Psalm lvii. 7.*

My soul! here is a delightful subject proposed for thine evening meditation, in the fixedness of the heart: the only possible way of really "singing and giving praise to the Lord" with the heart, is when the Lord hath fixed thine heart to the service. Many rush to ordinances, as the unthinking horse rusheth to the battle. Not so, my soul, be thy practice. See to it, that he, who alone can give a fixedness to the heart, hath fixed thine; for then, when the view of a God in Christ is brought home by the Holy Ghost to thy warmest and most devout affections, then, and not before, will there be a going forth of those affections, awakened and led by the same almighty Spirit, upon the glorious person of thy Lord, and faith will be in lively exercise, in a way of praise, and love, and obedience, and joy. Then thou wilt sing and give praise "with the spirit, and with the understanding also." Sit down now, in the coolness of this sweet summer evening, and wait upon thy Jesus in silence and in meditation before him, until the Lord hath given thee this fixedness of affection on his person and righteousness; and then thou wilt find a fitness for devotion, and a fitness *in* devotion, from the sweet influences of God the Holy Ghost. Oh! how blessed is it to retire from every eye but his, who seeth in secret; and to remember, that while thine eye is looking upon him, he is ever looking upon thee! Such a thought as this begins to give a fixedness to the heart: for the whole current and stream of the affections are directed, and therefore pour in, to this one channel; so that, like a river not divided, nothing of it runs another way. Think when the full tide of thine affections is thus tending to the person of Jesus, shall not such a fixedness of thought make thee cry out, as David: "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise?" It is this state of the heart, which makes all the difference between the gracious and the carnal. Both may use closet duties, both may read, yea, study the word, yea,

become proficient in the outer understanding of the word; the meditation may furnish the head, but not feed the heart, but it is the gracious soul that enjoys. It is a solemn consideration, how many are employed, from year to year, in *spiritual* things, whose hearts all the while remain *carnal*. But where there is a fixedness of the heart, by the Spirit of the living God, upon the person, offices, and character of the Lord Jesus Christ, the meditation doth not settle for the mere discharge of a duty, but for the joy of the soul. "Oh! how I love thy law!" is then the language of the fixed heart; "it is my meditation all the day!" My soul! dost thou know these things by heartfelt testimony? Doth God the Holy Ghost shine in upon thee with his light, to give thee sweet views, engaging views, soul-arresting views of Jesus? Are thine eyes, I mean the whole affections of thy soul, fixing themselves on Jesus, as a longing woman fixeth upon the one object of her desire, which nothing beside can satisfy? Oh! it is blessed to have this fixedness of mind at all times upon the person of Jesus. For this is to enter into the closet, and to shut to the door, (as Christ expresseth it,) by shutting out all thoughts besides, and then looking in every direction for Jesus, and finding him in all, and upon all. His word, his grace, his secret whispers, his communications, are like so many rich cabinets of jewels, which the soul turns over, and finds Jesus in every one. O thou dear Lord Jesus! grant me this happy frame of mind, that I may say, with David, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise!"

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given.—*Ephesians* iii. 8.

My soul! hear what the great apostle to the Gentiles speaks of himself. He calls himself "less than the least;" a thing almost impossible in itself: but he doth it with a view to magnify the riches, the exceeding great riches of grace. And in the same moment that he views himself so low and abject, he is lost in amazement at beholding the exalted office to which he was called. So that Paul cries out, "Unto me," a poor, sinful, unworthy creature of the earth, "to me was this grace given." My soul! leave for a moment the view of the apostle, and make the subject personal, by looking to a renewed instance of that grace, most freely given, in a case so far surpassing Paul in the greatness and undeservedness of it, as the imagination can conceive. Perhaps every sinner feels the same: this at least is certain, all may well feel the same. But the subject is not properly improved, either in the apostle's instance, or any other, unless there be connected with it the one great object of the whole,—the Redeemer's glory. This was, and is, the first and ultimate design for which grace was given. "This people," saith Jeho-

vah, speaking of the redeemed in Christ, "have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise." (Isaiah xliii. 21.) And how do they show forth the Lord's praise, but by the gifts of the Lord's grace? When Jesus calleth a poor sinner, and manifests himself to him, this is the display of his grace: for it is on such, more especially, that he maketh his grace to shine. It would have been no grace had we merited his favour. But because we merit nothing, yea, are justly entitled to punishment, and yet God gives mercy, grace, and favour, this is what illustrates the exceeding riches of his grace, and demonstrates God's love to be indeed the love of God which passeth knowledge, because it differs altogether from creature love. And what tends yet more to display the riches of grace, that the glory of God in Christ, in following up the blessed plan of redemption, may be great indeed, the crown of Jesus, as Mediator, depends upon bringing to glory the objects of his love, on whom he hath made that grace to shine. And who shall calculate the rich revenue of love, adoration, and praise, in glory, which Jesus will have, and be for ever receiving, from the millions of redeemed souls gathered from sin and Satan, by the alone sovereignty of his grace? My soul! it is truly blessed thus to contemplate the person and work of Jesus, and the sweet effects of his grace. And what an addition to the subject is it, to say, with the apostle, each poor sinner for himself, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given!"

Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?—*John* iv. 29.

Those are sweet and blessed views of the Lord Jesus, which he himself gives, when, by letting the poor sinner see himself, how wretched he is, and at the same time how glorious the Lord is, and how exactly suited to his wants and necessities, he makes the soul cry out, as this woman of Samaria did, "Is not this the Christ?" For who but Christ can read the heart, and tell all that passeth there? And as she found it, so all taught of Jesus find the same, that every true discovery of Christ must end in condemning ourselves, and exalting the Redeemer. My soul! there are numberless instructions to be gathered from this scripture, and the history connected with it. Sit down, this evening, in the coolness of the shade, and look at a few of them. The Lord the Holy Ghost will open them to thy meditation. Jesus, we are told, "must needs go through Samaria." Yes; there was this poor sinner to be convinced of sin, and to be brought acquainted with her Saviour. Hence the opportunity soon offered; and Jesus as soon accomplished the purpose of his going thither. The Lord opened her heart to her own view, and gave her to see the vileness within. He opened, at the same time, her heart to

the knowledge of himself, gave her to see his salvation; and the effects were, as might have been expected: she hastened to the city, to tell other poor sinners, who also stood in need of a Saviour, that she had found "him of whom Moses and the prophets did write." "Come," said she, "see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?" My soul! hast thou so learned Christ? Hast thou "met with the Lord God of the Hebrews," and learned from him self-humbling thoughts, and a true conviction of sin? Hath he taught thee who he is, and what need thou hast of him? Hast thou seen him to be indeed the Christ of God; the man, whose name is Wonderful; who, in his divine nature, is "one with the Father, over all, God blessed for ever;" and in his human nature, "the man, whose name is the Branch;" and by the union of both natures, the one glorious and true Messiah, "the Lord our righteousness?" And hath such a conviction of the infinite importance of knowing Christ been wrought thereby upon thy mind, that thou hast taken every method of recommending him to others? Surely, my soul, no truly regenerated sinner, who hath known, and seen, and felt that the Lord is gracious, but must be anxious that others should know, and see, and feel it also. And, therefore, like this poor woman, thou wilt be taking every proper opportunity of calling upon all, as far as thy sphere of usefulness can extend, to come and enjoy the same blessings which the Lord hath imparted to thee. Precious Lord! I would not only invite every poor sinner to come to thee, but I would desire to accompany them. I would not say, *Go to Jesus*, as if I needed thee no more myself, but I would say, *Come to him*, and let us go together, for "he will show us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." And oh! that multitudes may come, and find to their soul's joy, as the *Samaritans* did, on the invitation of this poor woman, and be enabled to say, as they said, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world!"

Look when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: is not the sound of his Master's feet behind him?—2 *Kings* vi. 32.

It is blessed to watch every dispensation of the Lord's providence, as well as his grace; for Jesus is in all. So that when messengers of heaviness come, and with sad tidings, as in this instance of the prophet, if we shut to the door as they enter, and suffer them to open their commission, we shall hear the sound of their Master's feet behind them, confirming every one. There are no events which can happen to a child of God, but they ought to be thus dealt with. They are like letters personally directed, and speak, in their whole contents, the causes for which the

King's post hath brought them; and they cannot be mistaken, if they are well read, and pondered over; for they point to the individual, as the prophet's servant to Jehu. "To which of all us," said Jehu, is this errand? The answer was, "To thee, O captain!" (2 Kings ix. 5.) Now, my soul, learn hence how to receive all the messengers of thy Lord. Shut the door upon them, and detain them, until thou hast well studied, and perfectly understood their commission. O my Lord Jesus! in all thine afflicting providences, cause me to hear my Master's feet following every one. "I know, Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in very faithfulness causeth me to be troubled." I know, Lord, also, that they are graciously commissioned, and the issue must be blessed. And I know, Lord, that even during their exercise, however sharp, they will be sweetly sanctified, if, through thy blessing upon them, they cause my poor heart to cleave the closer to thee. So long, then, dear Lord, as thou causeth me to entertain right conceptions of these soul-exercises, let me never shrink from shutting the door, that I may the more earnestly meditate upon thy messages; and if I see Christ in every one, and blessings in every one, sure I am the issue of no one will ever be doubtful. I shall then learn the same precious lesson that *Job* did, and through thy grace, like him, make it practical; and bless a taking God, as well as a giving God: for, let the Lord take what else he may from me, never, never will he take Christ from me; and while I have him, in him I shall possess all things. Oh! for grace so to receive all the sable messengers of my Lord; as to hear my Master's feet behind them. Sure I am, that when their back covering is removed, I shall behold a fulness of blessings which they have brought with them under their garments. Like the angel to Peter in the prison, they may smite roughly on the side, but the very stroke will cause the chains to fall from my hands, and open the prison doors, to give liberty and joy. (Acts xii. 7.)

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.—*John* vi. 37—40.

My soul! commit this blessed portion to thy memory; yea, beg of God the Holy Ghost to commit, and write all the gracious

things contained in it, on the inner-tablets of thine heart! It is in itself a gospel, yea, a full gospel. Methinks, I would have it proclaimed on the house-tops, and published, day by day, in every place of public concourse throughout the earth, until the saving truths were every one of them known, and felt, and enjoyed, by every poor, awakened, and needy sinner. Mark, my soul, the several contents of what thy god and Saviour hath here said: take the whole with thee to thy bed this night, and drop asleep, in faith of the whole, in the arms of Jesus: and if the Lord bring thee to the light of the succeeding morning, let those sweet and gracious words, which proceeded out of Jesus' mouth, salute thee with the first dawn of the morning, arise with thee, and go about with thee, in thy remembrance, until the whole be fulfilled in the kingdom of heaven. Now mark the immense blessings, according to the order in which they stand: "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me." *All*; not one, or two, or ten, or a million only, but *all*. And observe wherefore. They are the Father's gift to Jesus, and therefore they must come. He saith elsewhere, "that I should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given me." (John xvii. 2.) Hence, therefore, there is a blessed provision, a blessed security, that they shall come; for they are the Father's gift to Christ, as well as the purchase of Christ's blood; and the promise is absolute in the charter of grace: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." (Psalm cx. 3.) And, to give every possible encouragement to the poor coming sinner, whom God the Holy Ghost is leading by the hand to all-precious Jesus, however unconscious that poor soul is under whose gracious influence he is coming, Jesus adds, "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Observe the tenderness of our Lord's words. He had said, *all* shall come; but Jesus well knew the most humble are the most timid and the most apt to be discouraged; and therefore he makes each one's case to be expressed by the word *him*: *him* that cometh. As if Jesus had said, "Let that poor creature, who is most afraid, by reason of a conscious sense of his transgressions, take comfort: if he cometh, let him know, that "I will in no wise cast him out." And to confirm it still more, Jesus adds, "For this is the very purpose for which I came down from heaven; not only because it was my full purpose to seek and save that which was lost, but it is 'the will of my Father also, who sent me.'" And, as if to impress this grand truth upon every poor sinner's heart, he repeats the gracious words: "And this is the will of Him that sent me." He saith it twice, that there might be no mistake. And yet farther: if a poor sinner should say, "But *how* am I to come, and in *what* am I to come; what are the qualifications for coming?" "*This*," saith the all-gracious Redeemer, "this is the will of my Father," the will of him that sent me; that "every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, shall have everlasting life." And what is it to see the Son, but so to behold

him by the eye of faith, as to believe in him to the salvation of the soul; to see him as the Christ, the sent, the sealed, the anointed of God; the one, and only one ordinance of heaven, for the redemption of poor sinners; whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and whose righteousness freely and fully justifieth every believing sinner? Pause, my soul, and well ponder these precious, saving truths; and then take comfort in the blessed assurance, that thou hast all these testimonies in thine own experience, from having long since come to Christ, and found the certainty of these promises. Lie down, my soul, this night, yea lie down, my body, this, and every night, until the last night, even the night of death, shall come; for thou sleepest in Jesus by faith, and his words are thy security: "Of all my Father hath given me, I should lose nothing; I will raise him up at the last day."

And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.—*Rev. iv. 8.*

Make a solemn pause, my soul, over these words; and when thou hast found a fixedness of thought, that every faculty may be engaged in the contemplation, ponder well this divine perfection of Jehovah, the holiness of his nature, by which an eternal distinction is drawn between him and all his creatures. None but Jehovah can be essentially holy. Angels, who have never sinned, have indeed a holiness: but it is derived from him, and not in themselves, and, in point of comparison, is but as the shadow to the substance; moreover, being in their nature mutable creatures, their holiness may be changed also: the fallen angels are proofs in point. But with Jehovah, holiness is in himself the peculiar glory of his nature, and inseparable from his very existence. Pause over this view, for it is scriptural, and truly blessed. Go on to another observation. Thrice is the ascription of holiness given, in this sublime song of the blessed in heaven, as if to point out the personality of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the holy undivided three, "which bear record in heaven, for these three are one." (1 John v. 7.) When these glorious truths are suitably impressed upon thee, pause once more and consider with what distinguishing characters the holiness of Jehovah is set forth in the word of God. The heavenly host are said to rest not day and night in proclaiming their deep sense and adoration of Jehovah in this glorious attribute. Now here is somewhat for the mind to lean upon, in contemplating Jehovah's holiness. Jehovah is *eternal* also, and hath commanded the Church to know him as the *faithful* God. (Deut. vii. 9.) But we never read that the host of worshippers thrice repeat his eternity, or his faithfulness, in their hymns of adoration and

praise. Moreover, Jehovah himself seems to have pointed out this divine attribute as among the distinguishing excellencies he will be known by; for he singles it out to swear by: "I have once sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David." (Psalm lxxxix. 35.) Precious thought for the poor timid believer to keep always in view! For it is as if Jehovah had said, "I have pledged my holiness, as an attribute essential to my very nature, that what I have promised to David's Lord, even, my dear Son, of the redemption of his seed, as sure as I am holy, I will most certainly perform!" Moreover, my soul, holiness is the glory of Jehovah. Hence the song of the Church: "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods, who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness?" (Exod. xv. 11.) And hence, Jehovah is said to be worshipped "in the beauties of holiness." (Psalm cx. 3.) My soul! keep this also in remembrance. If the representation of an angel, or a man, were to be made, we should figure to ourselves the most beautiful countenance; and if Jehovah be represented to us, how is it done? Surely in the beauty of holiness; for God the Holy Ghost gives us "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ!" (2 Cor. iv. 6.) Pause over these infinitely solemn meditations, and while thou art overawed (as, indeed, it is impossible but to be so) in the contemplation of so distinguishing a perfection of the divine nature, and, moreover, as this view of God's holiness is so directly opposed to the unholiness of a poor, fallen, sinful creature, as thou art, look up for grace from the Holy Ghost the comforter, and take relief in the sweet and consoling consideration that to this glorious God thou art permitted, yea, commanded and encouraged, to draw near, in and through the holiness of thy Redeemer. Hail, blessed Jesus! upheld by the right arm of thy righteousness, and washed from all our sins in thy blood, all thy Church may here draw nigh by faith, and send forth their feeble breathings in the same strain as the Church in thy presence doth above, while in their hymns, day and night, they shout aloud, "Holy! holy! holy! Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

Then said I, 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.—*Isaiah* vi. 5.

My soul! thy last evening was deeply exercised on that glorious subject, the holiness of Jehovah. Let this evening's meditation call thee to what ought immediately to follow, thy unholiness and corruption. What a transition! And yet what more suited for meditation? The prophet *Isaiah*, who had been admitted to the view of a vision, like that which *John* the apostle saw in after-ages, beheld the glory of Christ, and heard those

who cried, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts;" and the effect was as is here related. His consternation was so great, concluding that he should be struck dead (agreeably to what holy men of old had conceived, that the sight of God would produce death), that he cried out, "Wo is me, I am undone." Pause, my soul! thou art also "a man of unclean lips!" How dost thou hope to see the face of God in glory? How art thou prepared for such an overwhelming sight? Convinced of thy uncleanness, and convinced also that God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, neither can any evil dwell with him, how art thou looking for acceptance here by grace, and the everlasting acceptance and admittance of thy person hereafter in glory before God? Ponder the subject well, and consider, under this particular, as in every other, the blessedness of an union *with* Christ, and an interest *in* Christ. Here lie all thy hopes, all thy confidence, all thy security! Undone as thou art in thyself, and unclean as thy lips and thy whole nature are, by reason of sin, both from the original state in which thou wast conceived and born, and the actual transgressions which thou hast committed, yet looking up to the throne in and through Jesus thy husband, thy surety, thy sponsor, here it is, my soul, and here alone, that thy confidence is well founded, and all thy hopes secure. Dost thou not feel a holy joy, a sweet indescribable delight, in contemplating the divine holiness; while contemplating, at the same time, thine own interest and right in the holiness of the Lord Jesus? Art thou not full of rapture in beholding the glory of God's holiness, for which, rather than an atom of it should be tarnished by the sinner, the Son of God assumed the nature of his people, and died on the cross, to make atonement? And art thou not comforted in the blessed view, that God's holiness hath received more glory, more honour, by the obedience and sacrifice of the glory-man, Christ Jesus, than could have been given by the everlasting obedience of men and angels to all eternity? And say, moreover, dost thou not at times take delight in drawing nigh to the throne of grace, and offering thy poor feeble praises of "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts," when thou art approaching, and holding communion with God, and through the holy Jesus, thy Redeemer? Oh! thou dear Emmanuel, *in* whom alone, and *by* whom alone, all my hopes and confidences are founded, I fall down at thy feet, and as the prophet cried out, so do I desire unceasingly to exclaim, "I am a man of unclean lips!" But do thou cause the iniquity to be taken away, and my sin to be purged, by *the live coal*, from thee, who art our Testament Altar, and I shall be clean; for thou art the Lord my righteousness.

The Urim and the Thummim.—*Exodus* xxviii. 30.

There is somewhat very interesting in this account of the *Urim* and the *Thummim*; though, in the present distance of time, we

can at the best form nothing more than conjectures as to what it was. But, through grace, and the teaching of the Holy Ghost, we can have clear views of what it meant. The general acceptations of the Hebrew words are, *lights* and *perfections*. And as Aaron, as high-priest, became a lively type of Christ, so, by bearing on his breast-plate the *Urim* and the *Thummim*, there can be no difficulty in beholding Jesus represented as the light and perfection of his people. And as Aaron bore all the names of the people upon his breast, where the *Urim* and *Thummim* were worn, how delightful is it to see Jesus thus represented, as bearing all the persons of his redeemed, in his own light and perfection, when he goes in before the presence of God for us! Sweet and precious thought to the believer! And now the Church cries out: "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm." (Song viii. 6.) And so important did this appear to Moses, when dying, that he expressly prayed that "the *Thummim* and the *Urim* might be with Jehovah's Holy One." (Deut. xxxiii. 8.) Now here we have at once the application of the whole. For who is Jehovah's Holy One, but the Lord Jesus Christ? With him it eminently remained, and with him only. For during the captivity, it was lost with the temple, and was never again restored. But with Jesus, the continuance of it was everlasting, for he hath "an unchangeable priesthood, and is the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever." Precious Lord Jesus! be thou the *Urim* and the *Thummim* to my soul; for thou art both the light and perfection of thy people, in grace here, and glory for ever.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.—*Philipp.* iii. 12.

My soul! take the apostle for an example in thine evening's meditation. He here freely and fully confesseth himself, after all his attainments in the life of grace, to be far short of what he longed to attain. And observe the aim of the apostle: all his pursuit, and all his desire was, like an arrow shot at a mark, to apprehend Christ, as Christ had first apprehended him: to grasp Jesus, as the Lord Jesus had held, and did hold him. Happy desire! happy pursuit! and blessed mark of grace! For let the Lord have given out to the soul ever so largely, there is more to give out, more to be received, more to be enjoyed. And the Holy Ghost, who is leading a child of God out of himself, more and more, to lead him more and more to the enjoyment of Jesus, is sweetly training that precious soul, and advancing him to the highest lessons in the school of grace. Paul felt this, when he cried out, "Not that I have already attained, either were already

perfect." To be sure not: for if we thought we had enough of Christ, it would be more than half conviction that we had nothing at all. Now, my soul, learn from Paul, in what the life of God in the soul consists: to be always pursuing the person of Jesus, for the farther enjoyment of him; never sitting down satisfied with what is already attained; but *pressing* (as the apostle did) "towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" in short, to make Christ the sum, the substance, the all, of every desire; and ever to keep in remembrance, that the more we receive, the more Jesus hath to impart; the more he gives out, the more he is glorified; and, like some rich spring, the oftener we receive from him the more rich and full he flows. Oh the blessedness of such a state! What a heaven upon earth would it be, if closely followed: to be always living upon Jesus, coming to Jesus, thirsting after Jesus; and the more we receive out of him, and of him, to have the soul's desires after him the more increased by all we enjoy. Precious Lord! grant me this felicity, that, like Paul, I may say, "Not as though I had already attained:" but all my longings are, so to apprehend and hold fast Christ Jesus, as Christ Jesus hath apprehended and doth hold me fast.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.—*Rev.* xxii. 17.

My soul! doth not the evening bell which calleth to the ordinance, in all its melodious sounds, seem to express these gracious invitations? Wilt thou not attend? Private meditation is indeed sweet; but public ordinances are of more avail. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob!" What a blessed sight is it to see the house of God well filled! What a refreshment to my poor, weary, sin-sick soul, to hear Jesus in his word saying, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And every part and portion of the service proclaims the gospel cry: "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat! yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price." (*Isaiah* lv. 1.) And do observe, my soul, how, in the close of scripture, the invitation is repeated, as if to leave the impression fresh and lasting upon every soul. Yea, the Spirit confirms it: *Come*, is the call of the Holy Ghost; *Come*, is the call of the whole Church, the bride, the Lamb's wife; yea, every one that heard of the free, and full, and glorious salvation, the angels, the ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, they join the pressing invitation, and cry, *Come*. And surely every thirsty soul will not cease to

say the same ; for whoever the Lord the Spirit hath made, "willing in the day of his power," may come in the day of his grace. And if Jesus, with his great salvation, be welcome to his heart, that heart is welcome to come to Jesus. My soul! with what a cloud of witnesses is the church of the living God encompassed, and how many and numerous are the invitations of grace! Wilt thou not, then, in return echo, to the cry, and hasten thy Redeemer's coming, in the same earnest language? Come, Lord Jesus! to thy bride, the Church, and be thou to all thy redeemed the water of life and the fountain of life, until thou take home thy Church which is here below to join thy Church above, to be unitedly dwelling together in the light of thy countenance for evermore!

Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

1 *Corinthians* v. 8.

My soul! hast thou duly considered the unsuitableness of all leaven to mix up with the unleavened bread of the gospel of Jesus? Whatever sours, and gives a principle of taint to the mind, is indeed a leaven carefully to be avoided. And "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump!" So that it was expressly enjoined in the divine precepts of the law, on the passover, that "there should be no leaven found in their houses; the soul that did eat of it was to be cut off from the congregation." (Exod. xii. 19.) Sweet instruction, couched under the prohibition! With Jesus there is to be no mixture; nothing of creature leaven, of self-will, or self-righteousness, to mingle. My soul! thou hast been at the gospel feast, and sat with Jesus at his table. Surely thou hast kept the feast, then, as here enjoined, and allowed nothing of leaven, in the old nature or in the new, to be with thee. Oh! the blessedness of thus receiving Christ, with "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth!" Oh! the felicity of receiving a broken Christ into a broken heart: precious feeding upon his body broken, and his blood shed, as the sole, the only, the all-sufficient means of salvation by faith! Oh! Lamb of God! keep thy table sacred from all leaven, both in the persons approaching it, and the offerings made upon it. Let not the children's bread be received, or given to the leaven of hypocrisy and wickedness; but let all who meet around thy board, be of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth! And do thou, Lord, come into thy house, to thy table, to thy people; and let each for himself hear, and joyfully accept the invitation of the kind Master: "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!"

With the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.—1. *Thess.* iv. 16.

Before I drop into the arms of sleep, I would call upon my soul to ponder these words. I know not, each night, when retiring to rest, whether my next awakening may not be “with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.” As what *may be* my state in this particular, and *hath been* the state of many, (for the hour of a man’s death is to all intents and purposes the day of judgment,) becomes an infinitely momentous concern; how can I better close the day and the month together, than by a few moments’ consideration of the solemn event? What is meant by “the voice of the archangel?” I do not recollect the name of the archangel being mentioned anywhere beside in scripture, except Jude 9; and here, as well as there, the person spoken of is but *one*. We have no authority to say *archangels*; yea, it should seem, from what the apostle Jude hath said concerning the archangel, in calling him *Michael*, (if compared with the vision of Daniel, chap. x. 21; and also with what is said in the book of the Revelations, chap. xii. 7), that it means the person of Christ. Jesus himself hath said, that “the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and all that are in their graves shall come forth.” (John v. 25—28.) But, if the Holy Ghost speak but of *one*, and there be but the shadow of a probability, that “that one is Christ,” it becomes very faulty to join others in the name, by making the word plural. With respect to “the trump of God” we may understand, that as the law was given with solemn splendour and glory on Mount Sinai, so the consummation of all things will testify the Divine presence. My soul! meditate on these things: give thyself wholly to the frequent consideration of them. And by the lively actings of faith upon the person of thy Lord, contemplate thy personal interest in all the blessedness of this great day of God. If this “voice of the archangel” be indeed the voice of Jesus, and thou knowest now by grace thy oneness and union with him, shall not the very thought give thee holy joy? It is true, indeed, the day will be solemn—yea, profoundly solemn. But it is equally true, it will be glorious to all the redeemed. And if the Lord Jesus commanded his disciples to look up, and lift up their heads with holy joy, when their redemption drew nigh, shall we not suppose that it must be pleasing to the mind of our God and Saviour to welcome and hail the fulfilment of it? Yea, must it not be pleasing to our God and Father, that we believe in his Son Jesus Christ to this day of eternal salvation? We find the apostles thus encouraging the faithful. *Paul* tells *Titus* to be “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” (*Titus* ii. 13.) Surely, if the hope be *blessed*, and the appearing of Jesus, as the Redeemer of his people, *glorious*, our souls should triumph in the

expectation. *Peter* goes one step farther, and bids the Church not only to be *looking*, but *hasting* unto the coming of it; as souls well assured of their safety in Jesus: and therefore to cry out, with holy faith, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" (2 Peter iii. 12.) What sayest thou, my soul, to these things? Are they blessed? Are thy hopes thus going forth in desires after Christ's coming? Oh! the blessedness of falling asleep each night, in the sleep of nature, in the perfect assurance of a oneness in Christ! And oh! the blessedness of falling asleep in Jesus, when the Lord gives the signal for the sleep of death? All the intervening lapse of time, from death to this hour of the "voice of the archangel," is totally lost to the body like the unconscious lapse of time to the labouring man of health, whose sleep each night is sweet. When the patriarchs of their different ages arise, at "the trump of God," their bodies will be equally unconscious, whether the sleep hath been for one night or several thousand years. Think, my soul, of these solemn but precious things. Frequently meditate, with holy joy and faith, upon this great day of God. Recollect, that it is Jesus who comes to take thee home. And having long redeemed thee by his blood, he then will publicly acknowledge thee for his own, and present thee to the Father, and himself, as a part of his glorious Church, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but to be forever without blame before him in love."

JULY.

I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And 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.

Daniel vii. 13, 14.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who giveth thee "songs in the night," from the night visions of the prophet. Read this sweet scripture, explained as it is, most fully and completely, by the Evangelists, in their account of Jesus, as "the Son of man;" and what a wonderful coincidence and agreement is there between them! It is in the human nature of the Lord Christ, that the glories of this kingdom shine so full and resplendent. "The Ancient of days" can be no other than God the Father, who is truly the

Ancient of days, being self-existent, and from everlasting to everlasting. And the Son of God, as God, one with the Father, is the same from all eternity. But here he is spoken of as the Christ of God, and particularly revealed to *Daniel*, in the visions of the night, as "the Son of man." Ponder this well, my soul. Contemplate the dominion, glory, and kingdom, given to Jesus in thy nature. Recollect also, in the moment of thy meditation, that it is by virtue of this nature, united to the Godhead, that the exercise of all sovereignty, wisdom, and power, is carried on, and Christ's kingdom established for ever. It saith, in this scripture, that these things were *given* to him. They could not have been given to him as God, for all things were his before, but as Christ, the Son of man; the Son of God, having taken into union with the Godhead our nature, became one Christ, and as such, received them. And what endears the subject, in the greatness and everlasting nature of it, is, that Jesus is all this in our nature. For here it is that that sweet scripture unfolds all its beauty: "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; because he is the Son of man!" (John v. 26, 27.) Mark the peculiar blessedness of the expression, for the meditation is most sweet. Jesus, as Jesus Mediator, hath life in himself. He doth not hold it as at pleasure, or like creatures, which, because once given, may be taken away. It is in himself in the human nature, and therefore not liable to be recalled. Pause over this subject, this glorious, blessed, joyful subject! Thy Jesus, my soul, hath life in himself, in his human nature, because he is the Son of man. Think, then, of thine everlasting safety in him, and thine unceasing glory from him, for he saith himself, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Hallelujah. Amen, Amen.

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.—*Hebrews* v. 14.

My soul! of what age art thou in the divine life? It is high time to inquire—high time to know. And the information is not far to attain, if thou dost wish it. A state of full age not only can receive, and relish the strong meat of the gospel, but really desires it, longs for it, and can be satisfied with nothing else. And what is the strong meat of the gospel? Surely the person, the work, the glory, the grace, the love, the every thing that is in Jesus, which belongs to Jesus, and flows from Jesus. And depend upon it, that if thy spiritual senses are so frequently exercised upon Jesus, as to relish this food; to delight in it, yea, to loathe all else, there will be a sweet savour of Jesus in thy whole life and conversation. And in the exact proportion that thou takest a fulness of this spiritual food, so may thine age be

estimated. All we hear, all we see, all we read of, or meet with, of Jesus, will be food to the soul. Jesus is as the sweet flower of the field; and faith, like the bee, gathers from it, and brings home, both the golden honey and the wax to the hive, and lives upon it; so that then Christ is in the heart, dwells in the heart (as the apostle terms it) by faith, and is "formed in the heart the hope of glory." Now, where there is no fulness of age, yea, no age at all, not a babe in Christ, nor even born again, the strong meat of the gospel can neither be received, taken in, nor enjoyed. An unawakened heart is not only incapable of strong meat, but is disgusted at it. Persons of this kind may hear of Jesus, and apparently, for the time, seem pleased. For as all men, when they die, would desire to go to heaven, so a discourse about it may amuse as a subject at a distance. But there is nothing within them with which the subject can incorporate; no digestive powers to receive such strong meat, and consequently no relish. A shower of rain in a dry season may wet the surface, but if it soak not to the root, the plants find no good. My soul! what saith thine experience to these things? Hath the Lord so manifested himself to thee in all his glory, that nothing short of Jesus can satisfy thee? Hast thou found a transforming power accompanying this view of Jesus, that by faith, his glory hath excited thy desires to partake of him? And do the daily hopes which arise from such thoughts and views of thy Lord, so give rest, comfort, and joy to thee, that these refreshments are like "the spiced wine of the pomegranate?" Blessed Redeemer! may I be able to ascertain the real ripeness of my age by testimonies like these; and sure I am in this view and enjoyment of Jesus, I shall find cause to give thanks, yea, unceasing thanks, to "God and the Father, who thus maketh us meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light."

The waters of Jordan.—*Joshua* iv. 23.

The sacred streams of Jordan, so often and so highly celebrated in the word of God, open a very blessed subject for meditation. Sit down, my soul, by the side of that ancient river, and call to mind the faith exercised on that memorable spot by the multitude of the faithful gone before, that were heirs with thyself of the promises; and see whether the Holy Ghost will not graciously, this evening, make thy meditation sweet? Recollect, as thou viewest the hallowed ground, that here it was, in this river, Jesus received the first public testimony from God the Father, and the first open display of the descent of God the Holy Ghost. Here Jehovah began to magnify the Lord Christ. And here, in ages before, had the Lord begun to magnify that memorable type of Jesus, his servant Joshua. And as, from the baptism of Jesus at this sacred river, the Lamb of God opened his divine commis-

sion, so here Joshua, his type, commenced his ministry. From hence he led the people to the promised land. And from hence, Jesus, in the baptism of his holy spirit, leads his redeemed to the possession of the everlasting *Canaan*, in heaven. There is, indeed, a double view of our Lord's ministry, in these waters of Jordan: not only of baptism, as introductory to the wilderness-state of temptation that follows to all his people, but also, as the close of the wilderness-dispensation, in the Jordan of death, when finally and fully, Jesus leads them through to their immortal possessions. And as the children of Israel had been exercised for *forty years* together, through a waste and howling wilderness, until they came to Jordan, which opened a passage to them of life and liberty to a land flowing with milk and honey, so the followers of the Lord Jesus, having passed through the pilgrimage of this world, amidst the various assaults of sin and Satan, pass through the Jordan of death, conducted and secured by their almighty Leader, unto the possession of that kingdom of glory and happiness which is above. Pause, my soul, over the review! behold, by faith, the wonderful events which passed here. In this sacred river, once rested the ark of the covenant of the Lord of the whole earth. Here Jesus, whom that ark represented, was baptized. Here Israel passed over. And here, my soul, must thou pass over in the hour of death. Oh! how sweet and blessed, in the swellings of Jordan, to behold Jesus, and hear his well-known voice, "Fear not; for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

A wedding garment.—*Matthew* xxii. 11.

My soul! let thine evening's meditations be directed to this subject proposed in these few words: "a wedding-garment." Very many are the instructions which the passage contains. The Lord Jesus is representing, under the similitude of a wedding-feast, the rich provision God the Father hath made in the gospel, on account of the marriage of his dear Son with our nature. And most beautiful indeed is the representation. For what feast, in point of fulness, riches, and satisfaction, can come up to that which is furnished for the poor, needy, and perishing circumstances of famished and dying sinners? This feast of fat things (as the Scripture calls it) is indeed a rich feast, a royal feast, and a true wedding-feast: for as Jesus, on whose account it is made, hath united our nature *in general* to himself, so hath he united each individual of that nature *in particular* to himself, who is truly, and in reality, made a partaker of it. But the parable supposes (which, though not said, is implied) that the rich and bountiful Donor not only provides a feast for the hungry, but a covering for the naked; and that the very entrance to his table is inad-

missible without this wedding-garment being accepted, put on, and worn by every individual who partakes of the supper. The case is here stated of one unworthy creature (and that one is a representative of all in like circumstances) who, when the King came in to see the guests, was found deficient of this covering. My soul! pause over this part. This man, it should seem, was not observed by any around him. He had come in with the crowd, and gained admittance with the rest. It was only when the King came in that he was discovered, and that by the King himself. What a volume of instruction is here in this short representation! So Jesus comes in the midst of his Churches. He presides at his table. Every individual is seen, is known by him, with every secret motive for which each cometh. It should seem, that at this supper there were great multitudes present, and but one without a wedding-garment. And yet that one could not be hidden from the King's eye. My soul! while this furnisheth a subject for awful consideration, so doth it no less for joyful thought. Hast thou been at this gospel feast? Wert thou clothed in this wedding-garment? Surely, if so, thou art not at a loss to know. If the feast and the garment were both of the King's providing, thou must know whether thou camest to be clothed as well as fed; and whether the Lord, that provided the food, gave thee also raiment? Say then, when Jesus invited thee to his supper, didst thou go to it, as those in the highway, poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind? And while he bade thee come, didst thou regard his counsel; and "buy of him," as he had said, without money, and without price, "white raiment, that thou mightst be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness should not appear?" (Rev. iii. 18.) Oh! it is blessed, very blessed, to go hungry to such a feast, and clothed in the wedding-garment of Jesus's righteousness, and to have the robe put on by God the Holy Ghost. Sure will be the acceptance, and gracious the reception, to every poor, famishing, naked sinner, that thus comes to the gospel feast. Do remark, my soul, one circumstance more in this man's case: it doth not appear that he was naked; for then it would have been said so; and, if conscious of it, the bountiful Lord that made the feast would have clothed him. He had a garment, but not a *wedding-garment*. One of his own providing: like those who have a righteousness of their own, of whom the Lord elsewhere speaks: "Wo to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin." (Isa. xxx. 1.) Precious Lord Jesus! clothe me with the wedding-garment of "thy righteousness," and feed me with the rich food of "thy body and blood;" yea, Lord! be thou my covering, my joy, my all; that when at thy Church, at thy table, at thine house of prayer below, and at thy kingdom of glory above, the King cometh in to see his guests, my soul may cry out in thine own blessed words, and with a joy

unspeakable and full of glory: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." (Isaiah lxi. 10.)

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered.—*Hebrews* v. 8.

My soul! behold what a precious verse of scripture is here! How blessedly doth it set forth thy Redeemer! See here what an example Jesus shows to all his people, and how sweetly accommodating is that example to every case and circumstance, into which any of them can be brought! Surely, if any one might have done without going into such a school of suffering, for the purpose of learning, it must have been Jesus; but yet even Jesus would not. And wouldst thou, my soul, after such an illustrious pattern, desire to be excused? Hath not Jesus dignified it, and made it blessed? Oh! the honour of following his steps. There is another beauty in this scripture. The apostle, in a verse or two preceding, took notice of Jesus in his *human nature*, that he sought not, as such, the High-Priest's office uncalled. "Christ" (saith he) "glorified not himself, to be made an high-priest, but was called of God, as was Aaron." And by reading this verse in connection with that, it is as if the apostle had said, "Yea, such was the wonderful condescension of the Son of God, in his *divine nature*, that, though of the same nature and essence with the Father, yet would he have his *human nature* trained up in all the exercises of suffering; that, by a fellow-feeling, his people might know how he understood their exercises by his own." O thou gracious, condescending Lord! surely nothing can soften sorrow like the consciousness that thou hast known it in our nature, for thy people: and nothing can more effectually reconcile all thine afflicted members, humbly and patiently to learn obedience in the school of suffering, since Jesus, though a son, and the son of God, in the eternity of his nature, was pleased, in his human nature, "to learn obedience by the things which he suffered."

A sheaf of the first-fruits.—*Levit.* xxiii. 10.

This was a most interesting service in the Jewish Church, and full of gospel mercies; when the Lord appointed "a sheaf of the first-fruits" of their harvest to be brought before him, and waved towards heaven, as a token that all fruits were of the Lord, and that he was both the giver and proprietor of all. And it refers to the person of Christ, both in his death and resurrection. For

“a lamb of the first year,” without blemish, was to be offered as a burnt-offering with it, to testify that the death of Jesus sanctifies and sweetens all; and Christ himself in his resurrection is the “first-fruits of them that slept.” My soul! dost thou observe this Jewish service in a gospel dress? Surely the service is a reasonable service, and, if possible, more heightened now than then. When this law was given, the Israelite had no power to perform it; neither indeed was it intended to be observed, until the people arrived in Canaan. There was neither tilling of land, nor sowing of seed, in the wilderness; for the people were victualled by the immediate bounty of heaven; and we are told, that they ate the manna until that they came to Canaan. But when they were settled in the land which the Lord had promised them, and God gave them “fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness,” surely it was meet thus to acknowledge God in his providences, as the providence of God had owned and blessed them. What sayest thou to it, my soul? Here was Jesus in the sheaf of the first-fruits. Here was the Father’s blessing, acknowledged in the gift of Jesus. Here was Jesus represented in the Lamb, which accompanied the service. Here was the waving it towards heaven, and a prohibition not to eat bread nor parched corn, nor green ears, until God’s portion had been first offered! O my soul, wilt thou not learn hence to view Jesus in every one of thy blessings, and to bless thy God and Father for a sanctified use of every thing in Jesus? Help me, Lord, I pray thee, in my heart, in my house, in the field, in the city, in the Church, in the closet, in the world, in the family, to be for ever waving before my God “the sheaf of the first-fruits” in all his bounties. In Jesus I have all; in Jesus would I enjoy all; and then shall I most assuredly have that sweet promise for ever fulfilling in my heart: “Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” (Proverbs iii. 9, 10.)

Jesus wept.—*John xi. 35.*

My soul! look at thy Redeemer in this account of him. Was there ever a more interesting portrait than what the evangelist hath here drawn of the Son of God? If the imagination were to be employed for ever in forming an interesting scene of the miseries of human nature, what could furnish so complete a picture, as these two words give of Christ, at the sight of them? “Jesus wept.” Here we have at once the evidence how much the miseries of our nature affected the heart of Jesus; and here we have the most convincing testimony, that he partook of all the sinless infirmities of our nature, and was truly, and in all points, man as well as God. We are told by one of the ancient writers (as well as I recollect, it was *St. Chrysostom*) that some weak-

but injudicious Christians, in his days, were so rash as to strike this verse out of their Bibles, from an idea, that it was unsuitable and unbecoming in the Son of God to weep. But we have cause to bless the overruling providence of God, that though they struck it out from their Bibles, they did it not from ours. It is blessed to us to have it preserved, for it affords one of the most delightful views we can possibly have of the affectionate heart of Jesus, in feeling for the sorrows of his people. And methinks, had they judged aright, they would have thought, that if it were unsuitable or unbecoming in Jesus to weep, it would have been more so to put on the appearance of it. And why those groans at the grave of Lazarus, if tears were improper? Precious Lord! How refreshing is to my soul, the consideration that "forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, thou likewise didst take part of the same; that in all things it behoved thee to be made like to thy brethren!" Hence, when my poor heart is afflicted; when Satan storms, or the world frowns; when sickness in myself, or when under bereaving providences for my friends, "all thy waves and storms seem to go over me;" oh! what relief is it, to know that Jesus looks on, and sympathizes! Then do I say to myself, Will not Jesus, who wept at the grave of Lazarus, feel for me? Shall I look up to him, and look up in vain? Did Jesus, when upon earth, know what those exercises were; and was his precious soul made sensible of distresses, even to tears; and will he be regardless of what I feel, and the sorrows under which I groan? Oh, no! the sigh that bursts in secret from my heart, is not secret to him; the tear that on my night couch drops, unperceived and unknown to the world, is known and numbered by him. Though now exalted at the right hand of power, where he hath wiped away all tears from off all faces, yet he himself still retains the feelings and the character of "the man of sorrows, and of one well acquainted with grief." Help me, Lord, thus to look up to thee, and thus to remember thee! Oh! that blessed scripture: "In all their affliction, he was afflicted; and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love, and in his pity, he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." (Isaiah lxiii. 9.)

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.—*Heb. xi. 30.*

Never in the annals of mankind, in the history of all wars, is there a parallel instance to be found, of exploits like what the Holy Ghost hath recorded here of faith. The walls of a city actually fell down at the blasting of ram's horns; and yet not from the blasting of horns, but from faith in the almighty power of God. My soul! let thy meditation this evening be directed to the subject, to see whether it will or not, under divine teaching,

give strength to the exercises of thy faith? We find in the relation given of this memorable siege, that no ramparts were thrown up, no mounds raised, nothing of any human attempt made, either to sap the foundations, or to harass the enemy. The simple process adopted to intimate to the besieged the appearance of war, was an army marching round the walls, once every day, for seven days together. I have often thought how the despisers of God and his army, in the city of Jericho, ridiculed the Israelites in their daily exercise. And what an apt resemblance were they of the despisers, in the present day, of God and his Christ! But what an effect must have been induced, when on the seventh day, and after seven times, marching round, (perhaps in honour of the sabbath), at the shout of Joshua and his army, the whole of the walls fell flat to the ground! My soul! such, but in an infinitely higher degree, will be the consternation of all the enemies of Jesus, when "he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe?" Do not overlook the testimony the Holy Ghost hath given to this memorable event, that it was wrought by "faith!" And what cannot faith in Jesus accomplish? Had you been present at this siege, and beheld the stupendous event, when, at the command of Joshua, the Israelites shouted, and the walls fell, you would have seen a sight not more wonderful and supernatural, than when at the command of our New Testament Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ, the weapons of sin, fall out of the hands of the sinner, and the strongholds of Satan give way in the heart, to the victorious grace of the Spirit. Lord! I would say, in the review of this subject, increase my faith, and make my soul strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus!

By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.—*Heb. xi. 31.*

It were a pity to disconnect what the Holy Ghost hath joined; and as the relation of the destruction accomplished "by faith" on the walls of Jericho, is followed in the scripture history, with an account of a deliverance, from the same principle, in this wonderful woman, who was an harlot, do thou, my soul, let thy last evening's meditation on the *one* be followed up in this, by the exercise of thy devout thoughts on the *other*; for *both* are expressly intended to one and the same purpose, which is to encourage the Lord's people to be "followers of them, who now, through faith and patience, inherit the promises." What extraordinary events are there in the scripture account of Rahab the harlot; that such a woman, and an harlot, should be distinguished with such grace! That in such a city, even an accursed city, the Lord should have so illustrious an instance of faith! That faith so illustrious should be found in the heart of an harlot! And that the eminency and greatness of it should be such, that God the

Holy Ghost hath thought proper to have it recorded, both in its principle and effects, by the apostle *Paul*, in one epistle, and by the apostle *James*, in another. Yea, and what is more marvellous still, that our Lord, after the flesh, should arise out of such a stock! Oh! what a world of wonders is folded up in the great plan of salvation! But while thou art beholding the wonders of grace in the instance of this woman, and admiring the triumph of faith wrought in her, do not fail to connect with it the still more blessed view of him who is the author and finisher of faith, and from whom, and in whom, and by whom, the whole is accomplished. Precious Jesus, it is all by thee, and thy glorious undertaking, that Rahab the Gentile found faith to believe, while the spies of Israel doubted. It was thee, and thy grace, O Lord, that wrought so effectually, and therefore be thou eternally loved and adored in this rich dispensation of thy mercy, that Rahab the harlot perished not with them that believed not. Oh! thou bountiful Lord! "publicans and harlots" (thou hast said) "go into the kingdom of God, before the self-righteous Pharisees!"

How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!—*Song* vii. 6.

My soul, thou hast been refreshed many an evening, through grace in beholding thy Lord, both in his person, and in his comprehensive fulness for his redeemed; nor wilt thou be without refreshment this evening, if thy Lord, in his sweet influences, be with thee, to make what is said in this lovely scripture life and spirit in thine heart. They are the words of Jesus; and they express the love and complacency of delight which Jesus takes in his church. Surely nothing can be more blessed, than to see the high value the Son of God puts upon the Church, which the Father gave him, endeared as it is yet more in being the purchase of his blood! But what astonishment is it to the soul of a poor sinner, to be told, and by the lip of truth, that sinners are fair in Jesus's eyes! "Thou art fair, O love, yea, pleasant." Now remember, my soul, and in that remembrance let Jesus have all the glory, that this loveliness and beauty in the sinner, of every degree that is regenerated, and made anew in Christ, is from Jesus. It is wholly from his righteousness, in which he beholds her clothed: "I washed thee with water," saith the Lord; "and I decked thee also with ornaments; and thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God." (*Ezek.* xvi. 5—14.) My soul, bow down under the conviction of all that indwelling, inbred sin; and, in language like that of the astonished apostle, cry out, "Lord! how is it that thou hast set thy love upon creatures so polluted and unworthy; and dost manifest thyself to them otherwise than thou dost to the world?"

Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance when it was weary.

Psalm lxxviii. 9.

How truly grateful are the falling showers upon the thirsty earth, after a hot summer's day, such as this season of the year abounds with! Such, my soul, (and thou knowest it, I hope, in the many refreshments thou hast had,) is Jesus, in the visits of his grace! "He shall come like rain," was the sweet promise given to Old Testament saints, "upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth." (Psalm lxxii. 6.) And every New Testament believer hath, more or less, a real personal enjoyment of it. Sometimes the Lord comes as the tender dew, for he saith himself, "I will be as the dew unto Israel." (Hosea xiv. 5.) And hast thou not found thy Lord, not unfrequently, so to come? silent and unperceived for a while; yea, at times, when wholly unlooked-for, unasked, unsought! Yes! thou dearest Jesus, thou tarriest not for man's desert, neither waitest thou for their prepared state to receive thee! (Micah v. 7.) And sometimes, as this blessed portion for the evening expresseth it, the Lord comes in a "plentiful rain:" even showers of his love, washing away "the filth of the daughter of Zion," and cleansing every thing that is polluted; as the natural clouds pour their fulness, which wash off the insect from the vegetable creation, and purify the air from noxious vapours. And when my God and Saviour thus comes to his people, how doth he make the wilderness-frames of their dry and languishing minds to blossom as the rose! So come, Lord Jesus, I beseech thee, on my soul, and not on mine only, but on thy churches, thy ministers, thy people! But, my soul, do not dismiss this charming scripture, until thou hast first gathered another blessed instruction from it, for it is most blessed. The words say, that Jehovah sends this plentiful rain, whereby he "confirmed his inheritance when it was weary." And doth not this most abundantly prove that Christ, with all his fulness, and all his graces, is the *sent* of God the Father? "We have seen and do testify" (said John, the beloved apostle) "that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." (1 John iv. 14.) Oh! precious, precious scripture! Do I not read in it the grace, and love, and mercy of all the persons of the Godhead? Surely, almighty Father! thou dost confirm all thy covenant faithfulness, when thou thus dost send thy dear Son to the souls of thy people! Thou dost, indeed, both confirm thy truth, and refresh their weary, dry, and thirsty souls, when Jesus comes to bless them in the dew of his grace, and in the showers of his love and mercy.

And they called the name of that place *Bochim*.

Judges ii. 5.

Surely it was enough to induce such an effect, when the preaching of an angel informed the people, that the Lord, for their sins, would not drive out their enemies before them. The place might well be called *Bochim*, and they themselves might bear the name *Bochim*, *weepers*. But, my soul, thou hast lately been to a place which is yet more calculated to make it memorable, by weeping, when thou didst attend Jesus at the ordinance of his supper. For there Jesus himself was, and is, the everlasting preacher, who showeth thee his hands, and his side, pierced and streaming with blood, for thy sins. Didst thou not hear him speak to thee himself, in his own words, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born?" (*Zech. xii. 10.*) Didst thou not weep in beholding such a sight, in hearing such words, and in meditating on such things? Alas! Lord, my heart is harder than the adamant. But if the eye wept not, say, was not my heart broken? Did I not desire to feel, to mourn, and, with the prophet, to cry out: "Oh! that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night," in the recollection of my Redeemer's sufferings, and my sins, the dreadful cause of them? Did Jesus die for *me*? Did the Son of God offer up his precious soul an offering for *me*? Was his body broken, and his blood shed for *me*? For me! a poor, wretched, polluted, hell-deserving sinner? Oh! for grace to make every place a *Bochim* in the recollection; and especially at the table of Jesus, may my soul always find these ordinance-seasons heart-melting seasons. Here would I frequently attend, to have my soul thoroughly awakened, and my stony heart made flesh. Here would I go, to gather a holy hatred to my sins, which brought Jesus to the cross. Here would I be found waiting, that when any new temptation may arise, I may cry out, with a vehement indignation, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" How can I "crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame?" Precious Lord Jesus! do thou help me to keep the eye of my soul steadfastly fixed on thee, and all the affections of my soul to be going out in desires after thee; to be "always bearing about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of the Lord Jesus may be made manifest in my body!"

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.—*Psalms iv. 8.*

My soul! it is blessed, indeed, to lie down or arise, when Jesus is thy rest and refreshment! But, void of security and safety in

him, both the daylight and the darkness have their horrors. And how unsatisfying is every thing where Jesus is not! This is strikingly exemplified, day by day, among all carnal characters. "There be many," saith the psalmist, (in this divine psalm.) "There be many that say, who will show us any good?" Yea, the whole world, who know not the blessedness of Jesus, will thus say! What a busy life some men make of it! And what is it for? Be their pursuits what they may; let them be ever so much diversified, one object is the aim of all. The apostle hath said what it is; "to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." (Rom. xiii. 14.) My soul! what is the first and last, the greatest and most momentous desire of thine affections? Canst thou, and dost thou adopt the words of the psalmist, in this sweet psalm: "Lord! lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me: and it shall put more gladness in my heart than in the time that corn and wine increase?" Oh! the blessedness of such a state! May it be mine! Dearest Lord Jesus! grant it me day by day; and in the evening and night-watches, let thy sweet visits be unceasingly renewing: and then will I take this precious portion for my song, both when undressing for the bed of sleep, and the bed of death: "I will lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety!"

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.

1 Cor. xi. 26.

An evening or two since, my mind was led out to the contemplation of the supper of the Lord, as a heart-affecting ordinance, to make the Lord's table a *Bochim*. I hope, my soul, that in this view thou didst find it profitable. Here is another proposed to thy meditation, which, under grace, will prove equally so, in which it comes home to thy affections as a subject of holy joy. Look at it in this light, and remark what the apostle saith upon it: The Lord's death, which is thy life, is set forth by every renewed celebration. And what a delightful thought is that. As the body needs its constant regular meals, so doth the soul. And as Jesus is the whole of life, and strength, and happiness to his people, as oft as we receive the holy supper, we testify to the world of men and angels, that he is all this; and we glory in setting him forth as such at his table. And what a blessed addition is that little phrase at the end of this verse, *till he come*: yea, that *when he comes* he may find his people at his table, and in *their* death celebrating *his*. Oh! the blessedness of being so found! Surely every lover of Jesus would desire to be found there, when the Master comes, and calleth personally for each, to take him home: to be, in one and the same moment, in the

valley of vision, and the valley of the shadow of death! My soul! from henceforth, among the other glories of the ordinance, do not forget this. The oftener it is attended, the more delightful it will be. For the service keeps the remembrance of Jesus alive in the soul, until he comes to take the soul home to the everlasting enjoyment of himself in glory. And as there all his redeemed; who feast their souls with the view of his person, unceasingly behold some new glories in him, and, after millions of ages, will find him still increasingly lovely, and increasingly precious, so here below, the more we see him, and know him, and enjoy him by faith, the more we shall long to see him, and know him, and enjoy him by sight; and the glories of his person, and the wonders of his blood and righteousness, will be unfolding more and more to our ravished souls. And while every other object lessens in its value by time and use, and all created excellencies, like the planet under which they are found, have their growing and their waning seasons, Jesus is the same, "yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Yea, though in reality always the same, yet from the increasing manifestations of love and glory which he makes of himself to us, as our capacities are capable of bearing, he will be in our view more and more blessed, from day to day, from one ordinance to another, and through all the unknown periods of eternity! Oh! the blessedness of setting forth Jesus, "in breaking of bread, and in prayer!"

And Abraham called the name of that place *Jehovah-jireh*; as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.—*Genesis* xxii. 14.

My soul! how many *Jehovah-jirehs* hast thou erected? At least, how many occasions hath thy bountiful Lord afforded thee for erecting them? Oh! what cause have I to blush in the recollection! Had I done by my God as Abraham did by his, what blessed helps would they have afforded me, in the same moment that they became monuments to the Lord's praise! Surely I know all this, in theory, very plainly and fully; but how do I fall short in the practice of it! To set up the *Jehovah-jireh* for all that is past, is the best help to a soul in exercises for all that is to come. When I can, and do put down, after any sharp trial, my *Jehovah-jireh*, and say, here it was "the Lord did provide," will it not, in any future exercise, enable me to say, "If the Lord helped me *then*, may I not hope that he will help me *now*?" It would be a very sad requital for past mercies, in the moment of receiving them, to say, "Alas! the Lord did once help: but he will not, I fear, do it again." This would be to read the inscription of the *Jehovah-jireh* backward. Whereas the very sight of our *Jehovah-jirehs* would be to say, "Here

the Lord helped me—here he manifested his free unmerited grace to me; and will he not again? Is he less Jehovah than he was? Is he not God all-sufficient, all-gracious still? Oh! it is blessed to have such stones set up as Abraham's *Jehovah-jireh*. There was nothing in the patriarch's of his own providing. His was simply an act of faith; and neither the result of his asking by prayer, or providing by his wisdom. And, my soul, do not overlook a most interesting mark which the Holy Ghost hath put upon Abraham's *Jehovah-jireh*, in adding, "As it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." As if he had said, "All the ages and generations yet to come shall profit by the great father of the faithful's testimony to this place; and they shall see it to the latest day of Jesus's Church upon earth! Oh! how blessed, when our personal experience bears an exact correspondence to that of the faithful gone before, when we can and do set up the same. All blessings, all provisions are in Jesus. He is the Lamb which, from everlasting, Jehovah hath provided, and whom his people shall see in all their wants, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. And let their extremities be what they may, yea, though the exercises of their faith abound, yet let them wait but the Lord's time, which is always the best time, and they shall most assuredly, like Abraham, find cause to call the name of every place of trial *Jehovah-jireh*; concerning which, in proof and in reality, it shall be said every day, and to the last day, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen!"

He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up the head.—*Psalms* cx. 7.

The brook of Kedron was a black brook, (for so the word *Kedron* signifies,) into which all the filth from the sacrifices was thrown. It was the brook over which the Son of God passed in the night that he entered the garden of *Gethsemane*. Now, as the whole psalm from which this portion is taken, refers to the person of Jesus, nothing can be more plain than that David, by the spirit of prophecy, is here describing the deep sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. By drinking of this black brook, it is intended to convey "the cup of trembling" put into the Lord Jesus's hands, when he sustained all the sins and filth of his people, and in consequence, as their Surety, all the Father's wrath against sin. Hence the Lord said, "The cup that my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?" My soul! pause and ask thyself, doth not this sweet but solemn verse give thee precious instruction, when thou considerest that all thy filth, and all thy defilements, were imputed, by the Father himself, unto the person of thy glorious Surety? Is it not blessed thus to see, that by Christ's drinking "of the brook in the way,"

he took all thy transgressions, and was made both "sin and a curse for thee, that thou mightst be made the righteousness of God in him?" And though in himself he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," yet, as the Surety of his people, he was made black with sin and suffering; "his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." Precious Jesus! may I never lose sight of *Gethsemane*, the mount of *Olives*, and the brook *Kedron*! Here, by faith, let my soul frequently take her evening station, and behold thee "pouring out thy soul unto death, numbered with the transgressors," drinking "of the brook in the way," that thy sacred head might be lifted up, first on the cross in suffering, and then with thy crown in glory!

And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.—*Acts xxiv. 25.*

And wherefore did Felix tremble? Did Paul, who was then preaching to him, charge him with any particular sins? It doth not appear that he did. Neither is it probable that a poor prisoner would have been permitted so to have done. But the truth is, God's holy word, by Paul's preaching, and the man's own guilty conscience, which Felix himself applied, so met together, that the conscious sinner could not refrain. The very thought of a future judgment, and a day of account, crossing the mind of a guilty conscience, will be enough to damp the mirth of the sinner in the midst of his jollity. Every man, more or less, must have thoughts now and then of an hereafter. Man, by nature, is a creature compelled to look forward. He is for ever proposing to himself prospects that are to arise. Hence, men of the world are sending out into the highways and lanes of the city to invite men like themselves to kill time, and to gild the passing hour: and while they can do this, fill up the moment, and drown thought, it is all very well. But when the idea of a judgment to come riseth within, and the very apprehension that things will not always be as they now are, starts up, the alarm, like the handwriting upon the wall of the impious monarch, instantly takes effect, and a trembling follows. (*Dan. v. 5.*) My soul! learn hence (and if well learned, it will be a blessed improvement of thine evening's meditation) that outward circumstances, be they what they may, go but a little way to give inward comfort. It matters not what men possess, if those possessions have not the sanctifying blessing of the Lord upon them. Where Jesus is not, there can be no real enjoyment. All the world of creature comforts are not sufficient to afford real happiness. Hence Felix, a governor, trembled, while Paul, a prisoner, rejoiced. Hence many an aching heart in a noble house. Shall not such views endear Jesus to thee, my soul, still more? Shall

they not make thee very cheery over thy comforts; and make thee truly jealous, that thou wilt not allow thyself one enjoyment, where Jesus is not first seen in that enjoyment, and where he doth not sweeten, and form the whole of it? Make him the sum and substance of all blessedness, and then thou wilt find that godliness, indeed, is profitable to all things: "it hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come!"

And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.

Luke xxii. 15.

My soul! thy Jesus holds a feast of the ordinance of his supper; that most interesting service, which he hath appointed in his Church as a standing memorial of his death, until his second coming. Surely thou canst need nothing more endearing, to prompt thee to attend it, than what the Lord himself expressed of his own pleasure in it, in these words. There is somewhat uncommonly affectionate in them: they seem to open and unfold the whole heart of the Redeemer upon the occasion. And do not forget, that what Jesus then said to his disciples, he saith now to thee, and to all his redeemed: they were the representatives of his whole body, the Church. Listen to what Jesus here saith, and regard every word in this most tender and affectionate request, as if Jesus in person were now speaking to thee, in prospect of the coming supper: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you, now I HAVE suffered, and have accomplished redemption by my blood!" Pause over the blessed view, and trace the wonderful desires of Jesus from everlasting, which he all-along manifested towards his people. His goings forth for the salvation of his people have been from everlasting. He saith himself, that "while as yet Jehovah had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world; that then his delights were with the sons of men!" (Prov. viii. 22—31.) And how did the Lord Jesus manifest his desires towards his people, as soon as creation-work took place, in all those appearances he made of himself to them, from the garden of Eden, to his openly tabernacling among them in the substance of our flesh? What were all those manifestations we read of, sometimes in the form of man, and sometimes of an angel, but to tell his Church, his redeemed, that with desire he desired for the fulness of time to arrive, when he would become their Passover, and suffer for them? And is not the desire of Jesus after the conversion of every poor sinner, whom the Father hath given to him, now as earnest, and as affectionate as ever? Doth he not wait to be gracious? Doth he not long for their recovery from sin and Satan, and to bring his prisoners out of the prison-house? And when they are brought by his Holy

Spirit, which he puts within them, into the liberty wherewith he makes his people free, doth he not delight in their company, seek to allure them to ordinances, call upon them by his word, by his providences, by all his dispensations, to manifest himself to them otherwise than he doth to the world? Dost thou not know somewhat of those precious things, my soul? And if so, shall Jesus say, as he doth in those blessed words to his disciples, in the evening of his agonies in the garden, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you, before I suffer?" and wilt thou not be among the first to attend thy Jesus at his table? O bountiful Lord! I beseech thee, let this view of *thy* desires quicken *mine*: and let my whole soul, with all her affections, be earnestly going forth after thee, that I may say with one of old, "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles; then will I go unto the *New Testament* altar of *my* God, even unto *Jesus, my* God, my exceeding joy; yea, upon the harp of *my* warmest affections will I praise thee, O God, my God." (Psalm xliii. 3, 4.)

And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover.

Exodus xii. 26, 27.

My soul! thou hast lately been at the table of the Lord, to celebrate Christ as thy passover. If thy children ask of thee, as the Jewish children were here supposed to ask of their fathers, "What mean ye by the Lord's supper?" wouldst thou not catch at the favoured opportunity to inform them? yea, wouldst thou wait to be asked? Can there be a duty or a pleasure upon earth, like that of a tender father instructing his household in the things which accompany salvation? Can the imagination figure to itself any sight equally lovely to that of a parent, or a master of a family, encircled by his little ones, and answering to their interesting questions; yea, anticipating their inquiries, by speaking of Jesus, his person, his grace, his love, and all the wonders of his work, in the accomplishment of our salvation? And, indeed, these were among the precepts under the Old Testament dispensation. "Ye shall lay up" (said Moses) "these my words in your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut. xi. 18, 19.) And if the subject of redemption was so interesting then, though but in type and figure, what ought it to be now, when Jesus, the whole sum and substance of it, hath

come and finished it by his blood? My soul! what sayest thou to these things? Hast thou children, a family, a household, a charge of souls about thee? And wilt thou not, at thy return from the Lord's table, or from the Lord's house to thine own, season thy conversation with speaking of Jesus? Wilt thou not begin the sweet subject of redemption, by way of calling up their inquiries, and exciting their attention? Wilt thou not tell them *where* thou hast been, and *what* thou hast been to the table of Jesus for; what thou hast seen there, and what thou hast felt, and known, and enjoyed of the Lord's presence, in holy communion? Surely their minds, how young soever, will long to know more and more of a service so truly interesting; and they will be looking forward to the time of life when a ripeness of understanding, under the awakening influence of the Holy Ghost, may prepare them to join the Lord at his table also, that they, with all the ransomed of the Lord, may celebrate the Lord's passover. Methinks I hear the earnest question of such, like the Jewish children, "What mean you by this service?" and that, when opened and explained, followed up by a thousand more. Hath Christ been *your* passover? Hath he been *with you* at the feast? Hath he manifested himself to "your soul otherwise than he doth to the world?" Have you seen "the goings of your God and King in his sanctuary?" And hath Jesus made your heart "burn within you, while talking with you by the way, and in making himself known to you, in breaking of bread, and in prayer?"

Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us.—1 Cor. v. 7.

Thou art not wearied, my soul, I hope, with the subject of thy last evening's meditation; and if not, the subject itself of the passover is so abundantly interesting, that it furnisheth endless matter for the sweetest thought. Every thing in the Jewish passover was typical and figurative of Jesus; and, therefore, that we might not err on so important a point, the Holy Ghost, by his servant the apostle, calls him by this very name: "Christ, our passover," and adds, "was sacrificed for us." A lamb of the first year, without blemish, and without spot, was set apart, in the Jewish Church, for the observance of this service; and Christ, the Lamb of God, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," was set apart, in the Christian Church, for the redemption of his people, from all eternity. The lamb was slain, in the Jewish Church, and roasted with fire; and when Christ was slain on the cross, in the Christian Church, the agonies of his soul were such as one sustaining the fire of wrath against sin: he was made both *sin* and a *curse*, that his people might be made "the righteousness of God in him." The lamb in the Jewish passover was to be roasted whole, and not a bone of him was to be broken; and one of the principal features

of the Lamb of God, in the Christian passover, is, that we are to receive a whole Christ for salvation, whose bones, when on the cross, as if to prove the allusion of the type to him, by a divine providence, were not broken. The blood of the lamb, in the Jewish passover, was to be sprinkled on the lintels and posts of the houses of the Israelites, to preserve them from destruction; and in the Christian passover, it is not the blood shed only, but the blood applied, by sprinkling on the sinner's conscience, that delivers him from the wrath to come. Neither the bolts nor bars of the Israelites' houses, no, nor all the prayers offered up within, became the least cause of their safety; but the blood on the door. So, in like manner, it is neither the prayers nor repentance, no, nor faith, as an act of our own, that can preserve from destruction: it is "the blood of Christ" alone, that "cleanseth from all sin." Oh! how blessed is it to see the great work of redemption thus shadowed forth in the scriptures from the beginning, and that the whole, and every part of the Jewish service, referred to the Christian sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. "Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us." Oh! for grace to keep the feast at the Lord's table, a feast upon that sacrifice, and to remember what the Holy Ghost saith: "Christ being come an High-Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building: neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." (Heb. ix. 11, 12.)

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.—*Job xix. 25—27.*

What sublimity is in these words! and what blessed, glorious truths do they contain! Here is Job's creed. My soul, see if it be thine. Job did not say, that he had heard of a Redeemer, and that he hoped it was true, and he gave credit to it; but he saith, he *knoweth* it. And observe who this Redeemer is. Job calls him his *Goel*, his kinsman-Redeemer. For the right of redemption belonged to the nearest of kin, and he might redeem. (Levit. xxv. 25.) We have lost our inheritance, forfeited our possessions, and are poor indeed, both in person, and in substance. Now as Christ, by virtue of his being our nearest of kin, is the one, the blessed one, the only one to whom the right of redemption belongs, and may redeem both our persons and our mortgaged inheritance, so we find Christ hath done both. Job therefore exults: *I know*, saith he, *that my Kinsman*, "my Redeemer;

liveth." Oh, how blessed the thought! how precious the assurance! But we must not stop here. This kinsman-Redeemer "will stand at the latter day upon the earth." Yes, saith this scripture, Jehovah hath given assurance to all men of this, "in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts xvii, 31.) Neither is this all, Job's creed goes on. "Though," saith he, "this body of mine be destroyed by worms, yet in this flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold for myself, and not another for me." Sweet thought! Jesus hath secured the resurrection of his people, and, by his own, hath confirmed theirs. As sure as he arose, so sure must they; for he is the first-fruits, and, by their union with him, they are the after-harvest. As Jesus arose perfectly and substantially the very same body that died on the cross, so must their redeemed bodies arise the very same. The hand that now writes, and the eye that now reads, if a part of Christ's mystical body by regeneration, must be interested in his resurrection also, and must arise not only precisely the same identical body, but every member of that body the same; for this is essential to identity. Were God to raise another body, it would make another person. This might indeed be done by God's power; but then it would be a new creation, and not a resurrection of the old body. I must be the *who I am* now, and the *same* as I am now, as to identity, in order to constitute a resurrection. "This corruptible" (saith Paul) "must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."—Pause, my soul, over these sweet, but solemn truths, and say, are they blessed to thy meditation? Dost thou feel a joy, an interest in them? Oh! the unspeakable felicity of knowing that we have a kinsman-Redeemer, and that he liveth, and that we live in him! Precious, precious Jesus! though all nations die, Jesus liveth; and because he liveth, I shall live also! Lie down, my soul, this night, with this blessed assurance, saying, Hallelujah! Amen.

The wilderness of Zin.—*Exodus* xvi. 1.

My soul! thou art still in a wilderness state, not yet arrived home to thy Father's house; and thou art frequently exercised with wilderness dispensations. Perhaps, under the Spirit's teaching, an evening's meditation on the wilderness of Zin, where Israel sojourned, will be profitable to thee. Let faith lead thee thither, and see what subjects are there opened before thee. Was there ever an instance like Israel, brought out with a high hand, and stretched out arm, from the tyranny of Egypt? Did the sea open for them to march through; and that memorable spot, which to them became the way of salvation, become to their enemies that pursued them, the pit of destruction? Did the Lord go before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and cover them from danger by the pillar of fire by night? After such miracles, yea,

in the moment of receiving the same continuance of divine favour, while on their way to Canaan, what was there in the people's passing through the wilderness of Zin, that should have discomposed their minds, or made them call in question God's faithfulness, and his love?—Thou knowest, my soul, what the scripture hath recorded of the events of the wilderness to Israel. Though their history furnisheth a continued series of the Lord's mercies over them, yet, on their part, little else can be found but rebellion, unthankfulness, and sin.—Pause, and let the apostle's question have its full weight upon thee. “What then?” saith he, “are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.”—Was there ever an instance of grace like this, my soul, so great, so distinguishing, so abounding, when the Lord found thee in the Egypt of thy fallen nature, and when he brought thee out with a sovereign hand? Did Jesus open to thee a new and living way through his blood? And dost thou not know, that his cross, which is thy glory, and thy salvation, will be the condemnation of all the enemies who despise it? Is thy Lord leading thee, going before thee, and following thee, in grace, and goodness, and mercy, all the days of thy life, like the pillar of cloud, and the pillar of fire to Israel, and bringing thee by a *right way* to a “city of habitation?” Are these among the daily manifestations of thy Lord? And shall thy passage (for thou knowest that it is but a passage) through the wilderness of Zin, make thee for a moment lose sight of Jesus? True, thou art exercised; and thine exercises appear to thee so peculiarly distressing, as if no one of God's people before had ever been so circumstanced. But in them thou shouldst mark the wisdom, as well as the love, of him that appoints them. Didst thou trace Jesus in all, thou wouldst find a sanctified blessing in all; and the issue of the heaviest trials would then bring in an exact proportion of the sweetest comforts. It is because they are peculiar, that they are suited to thee. There are numberless things which occur in the exercises of thy brethren, which, to thee, would be no exercises at all. *They* feel them, and know their pressure, and the love of Jesus in sending them, and the tenderness of Jesus in helping them under them, and bringing them out of them: all these things thou seest and knowest in others, and findest cause both to admire and to adore the divine faithfulness in the dispensations. But in the study and improvement of the exercises in thine own heart, which, of all others, is the most important, here thou failest. And yet thou art convinced, in a cool hour, when grace is alive, that if a synod of angels were to arrange the circumstances of thy state, they could not order them with the wisdom and love that they are now ordered with. Go then, my soul, go by faith, frequently to the wilderness of Zin. Look at Israel's history, and look up for wisdom to gather suitable instruction. Behold Jesus in every dispensation. Whatever tends to lead thee to him, must be

blessed. It is impossible that any trial, be it what it may, can be otherwise than blessed, which opens to the view Jesus therein, and endears and makes Jesus precious thereby. And, my soul, while I wish thee frequently to go by solemn meditation to the wilderness of Zin, let each renewed visit remind thee, that thou art getting through it. Like children at school, every day brings on the festival which will take us home to our Father's house. A few steps more, a few exercises more, and Jesus will send his chariot for us; yea, he will come himself to fetch us; and we shall take an everlasting farewell both of the wilderness of Zin and this world of sorrow together. "Haste, haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart, upon the mountain of spices!"

Perfect in Christ Jesus.—*Colossians* i. 28.

Sweet thought! And where should perfection be found, but in Christ Jesus! My soul! turn the subject over and over again; look at it in every point of view: consider it as it relates to the life that now is, and that which is to come; and where wilt thou find any perfection for grace here or glory hereafter, but in Christ Jesus? Oh! what heart-aches would it have saved me, had I but learned this sweet lesson when the Lord first took me into his school. Had I but thought aright when the Lord passed by, and saw me in my blood, and bid me live, that a creature so polluted and so poor, could never recompense such riches of grace, it would have tended to hide pride from my eyes. But I was delighted with myself, and the supposed improvement I should make; all my views were directed how to requite the Lord's goodness, and how to shine above others in the attainments I should make in the divine life; and according to my views then, it would have been no difficult matter to have persuaded me (had the adulation been offered to the pride of my vanity in a guarded manner) that, what from labours, and services, in attending ordinances, and prayers, and the like, I was hastening on to perfection, and possessed a good stock of inherent holiness.—Precious Jesus! I bless thee, in the moment of recollection, for thine unspeakable mercy in breaking this snare of the enemy, and bringing me humbly to thy feet! And now, Lord, I again and again, and for ever, desire to praise thee for keeping me still at thy feet, in the same humble frame, convinced "that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing!" Oh Lord! how should a creature such as man, who could not for a moment, did his salvation depend upon it, form one good thought, or prevent a train of evil thoughts from rushing in upon his mind, how should such an one ever be led to the presumptuous hope of finding perfection in himself? Precious Jesus! be thou increasingly precious from the increasing wants of my soul for thee. Give me, Lord, yet more and more to see that every thing in me, and from me, must be, like myself, but "dung and dross." Ac-

cept, Lord, I beseech thee, both my person and my poor offerings, and let both be sweetly sanctified and perfumed with the incense of thy blood and righteousness! Be thou, Lord, my whole and sole perfection for righteousness here below, and may I be found "perfect in Christ Jesus" in a life of grace, that I may everlastingly enjoy thee in a life of glory hereafter. Amen.

There they made him a supper.—*John xii. 2.*

We are very apt to suppose the blessedness of those hallowed seasons in which the Lord Jesus ate and drank familiarly with his disciples, as peculiarly given to the followers of our Lord in the days of his flesh. And, no doubt, there was a precious savour which Jesus manifested upon those occasions. He that laid aside his garments, and condescended to wash his disciples' feet, may well be supposed to have said and shown a thousand gracious things in those seasons, which are not recorded. But, my soul, depend upon it, if we make Jesus a supper, or if Jesus invite us to his own, which is the same thing, there will be always a blessed savour of his person, work, and righteousness, when his person is the subject of discourse, and his work and righteousness the rich food of the soul. Our ordinary meals would be truly satisfied, if the love, and grace, and favour of the bountiful Giver of them, became the chief conversation at our table. But is it to be wondered at, if carnal company mingle at our entertainments, that carnal discourse, and not that which tendeth to edification, should follow? And if Jesus be thus forbidden, how shall it otherwise be, but that every thing connected with Jesus is banished? How often, my soul, hast thou been at such tables, and in such society, where thy Master is not honoured; but where, at thy departure, thou mightest with truth have taken up the observation, and said, "Alas! I have neither said aught which might benefit another, nor heard aught to be benefited by myself!" Blessed Lord! while I sit down at the refreshments of thy bounties, give me always to recollect from whom they come; and while I eat of the fat, and drink of the sweet, do thou, Lord, send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared. And cause me and mine, at every supper, to make thee a supper in a true spiritual enjoyment of thee. Oh! for thy presence to be always in view, and the savour of thy name to be as "ointment poured forth!" And, do thou, Lord, by the sweet influences of thy Spirit, direct our conversation to the use of edifying, that we may talk of Jesus while Jesus draweth nigh to us; and at every supper think of the supper of the Lord; and by faith enjoy that marriage-supper of the Lamb in heaven, at which we hope, ere long, to sit down for ever!

And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.—*Matthew* xxi. 34.

The very lovely season of the year, and the fulness of fruits which appear on all the productions of God's providence around, open to the mind some of the most delightful meditations. My soul! sit down this evening, and give scope to the subject; and see, while contemplating thy Lord's bounties in nature, whether thy Lord himself will not lead thee by the hand into the inner department of contemplating his yet greater bounties in grace. Methinks every thing seems to have a voice, and speaks of Jesus. By the fall, our poor ruined nature is entitled to nothing from the earth but thorns and briers; therefore the numberless sweets of the divine mercy preach Jesus, and his cross. It is as if they all said, "Are we lovely to the eye, pleasant to the taste, and healthful in the enjoyment? then are we so by Jesus's appointment, and by Jesus's blessing." My soul! there is more of him than thy unthinking heart is conscious of, in every blessing and favour around thee. Oh! for grace to keep this always in remembrance, that from henceforth thou mayest find a double enjoyment in all; first, in beholding him, and then his gift, be it what it may, as his, and which he giveth thee liberally to enjoy. And there is still another blessedness in thus sitting down to the contemplation and enjoyment of divine bounties: I mean, that the soul not only beholds Jesus in all, and enjoys Jesus in all, but it beholds Jesus as looking on, and rejoicing over his people, in their sanctified use of his bounties. How truly blessed is that scripture in point: "Yea, I will rejoice over them, saith the Lord, to do them good, and I will plant them in this land, assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul!" (*Jerem.* xxxii. 41.) My soul! sweetly meditate on these things; and when thou beholdest, as in the present time of the year, every thing around furnishing the witness of God's love and faithfulness, "in giving rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness," let all lead to him. Jesus himself is in all. It is he who gives all, crowns all, sanctifies and sweetens all. And never did any husbandman among men wait for the precious fruits of the earth with equal diligence and delight, as Jesus, in beholding the fruits of his own grace, which by his Holy Spirit he first plants, and then calls forth into exercise upon his own person and righteousness. Say, my soul, as the Church did, and let this be thine evening song to the same lovely and all-loving Saviour: "My beloved is come down into his garden," the Church, "to the beds of spices; to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies." (*Song* vi. 2.)

An altar of earth.—*Exodus xx. 24.*

Every thing and every service, in the old testament dispensation, as well as in the gospel Church, points to Christ. Behold, my soul, in the Lord's appointment of "an altar of earth," how jealous the Lord is of his honour. If the altar dedicated to the Lord's service, be of *earth*, or if it be of *stone*, there was not to be the least mixture. Nothing hewn, nothing polished by man's art, or man's device; "for if," saith Jehovah, "thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it." Behold, how fully Jesus was preached here! There can be nothing offered to the Lord for his acceptance, but what is the Lord's. Jesus is the Father's gift to poor sinners; and when a poor sinner presents before the Father the Lord Jesus, as his whole altar, sacrifice, and offering, he presents to the Father what the Father first presented to him. If the sinner were to join any thing of his own with this offering, this were to pollute it. Sweet thought! my soul, cherish it in the warmest of thine affections; carry it about with thee for thy daily exercise of faith, upon the person of Jesus, that nothing of thine may mingle with the pure, and perfect salvation, which is alone in him. And, depend upon it, thy God and Father is more honoured, more glorified, and will be more beloved, by such a perfect reliance upon him, in whom his soul delighteth, than he would be by the greatest and most costly sacrifice of thine own providing. The infinite and eternal worth and efficacy of Jesus's blood and righteousness is upon everlasting record. God is well pleased with him, and his people in him; and a voice from heaven hath proclaimed it to the earth. To offer any thing of our own, by way of making it pleadable, is to pollute it; yea, it is to make it questionable, as if we thought it not complete. And by thus doing, we declare that our hearts are not thoroughly pleased with what Jehovah hath declared himself well pleased, but are seeking to rest our souls, not upon the altar, which is wholly the Lord's, but adding to it of our own. Oh! for grace to make Jesus what the Father hath made him, the all in all of man's salvation; and be ever ready to let him have all the glory, who alone hath accomplished it, "in believing the record that God hath given of his dear Son."

Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat; my soul desired the first ripe fruit. The good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men.—*Micah vii. 1, 2.*

Is not this lamentation as suited to the present times, as when the prophet delivered it? Were the interests of Zion ever at a lower ebb than now? Did the waters of the sanctuary run

less in a stream, in any period of the Church, than the present? Surely it is like the in-gathering of the fruits of the earth at this season of the year: the choicest are gone; the trees are unladen. It is only here and there, as "the shaking of an olive-tree; two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough." (Isaiah xvii. 6.) The Lord hath been calling home his chosen; death hath been housing the servants of the Lord. And even those that remain, alas! are they not more like the gleanings than like the first ripe fruits? Who is there interested or Zion? Who layeth it to heart, that she languisheth in all her borders? My soul! can a throne of grace witness for thee, that many a petition thou art lodging there, that "the Lord would do good in his pleasure unto Zion?" Is it known to the great Searcher of hearts, that thou preferrest "her prosperity above thy chief joy?" Dost thou tell the King, that thou lovest him in loving his people; and, knowing the preciousness of thine own salvation, art thou seeking, by prayer and by every means in thy power, to form and promote the salvation of others? Oh, Lord! give me grace, "for Zion's sake never to hold my peace, nor for Jerusalem's sake to rest, till the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth!"

And Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.—*Acts ix. 34.*

My soul! look at this man, Eneas: consider his circumstances of *bodily* sickness, and the long period of *eight years* in which he had been bedridden. And when thou hast duly pondered the subject, behold the sovereignty of that all-powerful, all-prevailing name of Jesus Christ, though pronounced only by a servant, and see the blessed effects of it. And wilt thou, after such an instance, go lean under any *spiritual* sickness? Shall it be said, that Jesus Christ *cannot* make thee whole? Surely thou wouldst tremble at harbouring such a thought, even for a moment! And if thou darest not think such hard things of Christ's *ability*, why shouldst thou not equally shudder at supposing thy Lord's want of *inclination*? Hast thou not found him gracious in times past? And was that grace the result of thy desert? Was it not the pure effect of his own free love? And ought not *past* experience to beget *future* hope? Is not every believer's life a life of trust and dependence? Go to him, my soul, under every new ailment, as thou wert led to him at first. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Let faith have her full exercise. "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." Here rest thy whole confidence. Never go to him in any attempts of thine own; but by a direct act of faith upon his glorious person, power, grace, and compassion; in his strength, and not thy feeling, rest wholly upon him, and plead thy necessities and his glory: and,

depend upon it, this plan, which is of the Lord's own appointing, will bring comfort under all the lameness with which thou art exercised. Remember his own most gracious words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John xvi. 23, 24.)

But I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God.

Psalm lii. 8.

My soul! canst thou humbly take up this language? See, and mark the particulars, one by one, and then determine the important point. Here the Church at large is represented as a green olive-tree: and, by a just conclusion, every member is a part; for "we, being many, are one body in Christ." Now the apostle saith, that by nature this was not the case, for we were of the wild olive-tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into the good olive-tree. (Rom. xi. 24.) Hence, if thou art taken from nature to grace, it must have been by conversion. The work is not of man, but of God. And, so far is any man from contributing to it, that it is altogether contrary to nature. Hast thou felt the cutting work of conviction when taken from the old stock of nature, and the healing work of conversion when brought into the new stock of grace by a union with Christ? When there is a union formed on the new stock, there will be a communication from the root to the branch. "He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit." There will be a most blessed union; a oneness, an interest, a life-giving, a life-strengthening principle, communicated continually from Christ to his members; for he saith himself, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Hast thou, my soul, these blessed testimonies? Moreover, where there is this union with Christ, and soul-communications from Christ, there will be not only life but fruitfulness; a perpetual verdure, a state of constant flourishing. Say, is it so with thee? Canst thou take up the language of this sweet scripture, and say, "But I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God?" It is blessed so to be enabled to say; and blessed to ascribe all the glory to the one only source—even Jesus; and blessed to mark the distinguishing grace of the Lord in the appointment. For when the Lord Jesus took thee from among the olive-trees, which were all wild by nature, there were many there in the wilderness apparently more promising, and surely none more undeserving! And yet, while others were left, thou wast taken. "Lord!" (may I well and constantly cry out) "how is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto me, and not unto the world?" Precious, bountiful Lord! fulfil in my soul that sweet promise; and cause "my branches to spread, and my beauty in thee to be as the olive-tree, and my smell as Lebanon." (Hosea xiv. 6.)

Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

Ruth ii. 10.

My soul! dost thou not find continual causes for sending forth the same inquiry as this poor *Moabite* did, when thou art receiving some renewed instance of Jesus's favour? Her heart was overwhelmed with the kindness of *Boaz*, in permitting her to glean only in his fields, and to eat a morsel of food with his servants; but thy *Boaz*, thy Kinsman-Redeemer, hath opened to thee all his stores of grace and mercy; he bids thee come and take of the water of life freely; yea, he is to thee, himself, the bread of life, and the water of life; and is now, and will be for ever thy portion, on which thou mayest feed to all eternity. When thou lookest back, and tracest the subject of his love from the beginning, in the springs and autumns of his grace; when thou takest a review of the distinguishing nature of these acts of grace; when thou takest into the account thine ingratitude, under all the sunshine of his love and favour; will not the question again and again arise, at every review, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger!" Stranger, indeed, by nature and by practice; living without God, and without Christ in the world. And, my soul, it might have been long since supposed that, after such repeated unceasing acts of grace, as Jesus hath shown, and even when thou hast caused him "to serve with thy sins, and wearied him with thy transgressions:" yet his compassions have failed not, but have been "new every morning;" it might have been supposed, that long and unceasing grace would at length have produced the blessed effect of living wholly to him, who hath so loved thee, as to give himself for thee. But, alas! the day that marks again his mercy, marks again thy rebellion; so that the heart is constrained every day to cry out, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes?" Precious Jesus! the only answer is, Because thou art, thou wilt be Jesus. Lord! I bow down to the dust of the earth, in token of my vileness, and thy unspeakable glory! It is, indeed, the glorious attribute of thy grace to poor fallen men; "the Lord delighteth in mercy. He will perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers, from the days of old."

Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.—*Psalms* xcvi. 11.

My soul! mark how blessedly the Holy Ghost speaks of the stores in Jesus, laid up for his people. *Light*, in which is included all blessings in Christ Jesus, is *sown*, not reaped. This is not the *harvest*, but the *seed-time* of a believer. It is a life of

faith, a life of trust, a life of dependence. Hence the apostle saith, "Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Gal. vi. 9.) Now this light is "sown for the righteous"—for the true believer in the righteousness of Jesus; and there shall be gladness in the end for the truly regenerated in heart. My soul! it were exceedingly to be desired, that thou wouldst seek grace from the Holy Ghost to have a right apprehension of the promises. It is to the want of this, very frequently, that thy comforts are broken, and that thou walkest in darkness. Thy Lord Jesus doth indeed give thee many sweet love-tokens by the way, and handed to thee many a blessed morsel of his bread in secret, to comfort thee on thy pilgrimage; but it never was his design, neither would it suit thy present state, nor his glory, to make the wilderness any other than a wilderness. The Lord forbid, that aught should arise to prompt thee to set up thy rest, like the *Reubenites*, on this side the land of promise. No. "Light is sown;" mark that: and "the harvest is sure;" here rest in full assurance of hope. Thy Jesus is thine: thy interest in him is not now to be called in question: let him then guide the way. And though clouds and darkness may rest upon it, yet he is bringing thee by "a right way" to a city of habitation. This is the minority of thine existence; and by and by thou wilt come of age. Thou and thy companions are all going home to thy Father's house, to thy Jesus and his kingdom: and what will it signify, when thou gettest there, what accommodation thou hast had by the way? Nay, the poorer it hath been, the sweeter will be the refreshments that follow. And if thou art but little acquainted with the luxuries on which the carnal rejoice, the good things of the earth brought forth by the sun, and the precious things put forth by the moon, yet having "the good will of him that dwelt in the bush," thou hast a *Benjamin's* portion, and art most blessed indeed. Say then, as the psalmist: "From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world which have their portion in this life, and whose bellies are filled with thy hid treasure! But light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

AUGUST.

An anchor of the soul.—*Hebrews* vi. 19.

In the opening of a new month, look, my soul, at thine anchor. Surely it is good and profitable for thee to see thy safety, that thou mayest ride out all the storms which arise, and never make

“shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.” And what is *thine* anchor? Nay, who or what can it be, but Jesus and his finished righteousness? He hath accomplished redemption by his blood, and hath entered within the veil to prove its all-sufficiency. On him, then, thou hast cast anchor; indeed, he is himself the anchor of all thine hopes, and the “rock of ages,” on which thou restest thine eternal security, “both sure and steadfast.” True, it is unseen; and like the sailor’s anchor, thrown out into the deep. But, though unseen, it is not unenjoyed; for concerning him, who is the anchor of the soul, it is the blessed privilege of faith, “whom having not seen, we love; and in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.” But the anchor of this world’s mariner, and that of the spiritual navigator, differ most widely. His anchor is thrown forth at an uncertainty; it may break; it may find no anchorage, the cable may give way, the ship may drive, and one anchor after another be lost, and the vessel, after all, founder. Not so with him, whose hope and anchor of the soul is the Lord Jesus: “He is a rock; his work is perfect.” His salvation is founded in the everlasting counsel, purpose, will, and good pleasure of God our Father; it is secured in the perfect obedience, righteousness, blood-shedding, and death of our Lord Jesus Christ: and the soul who rests on this anchor of hope alone for redemption, hath been brought savingly acquainted with the Father’s love and the Son’s grace, through the blessed teaching, power, and application of God the Holy Ghost. My soul! Is this *thine* anchor? Hast thou this glorious security entered within the veil for thee; unseen, indeed, but not unknown; undeserved, but not unenjoyed? Oh! what unspeakable mercies are unceasingly arising out of this divine, this rapturous hope, to support my weather-beaten soul! Surely, precious Jesus! I may well look up to thee, in the opening and close of every day, and every month, as the anchor of my soul, both sure and steadfast; for thou hast been to me, and thou wilt still be, until I get into the haven of everlasting rest, what thou hast been to all thy redeemed: “a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.” (Isaiah xxv. 4.)

And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

Genesis xxviii. 12.

Visions of the night, such as the patriarchs were blessed with, serve to teach us how the Lord, in those early ages, watched over

his people. And, my soul, I would have thee always take the sweet conclusion from the review of them, that if Jesus was thus mindful of his chosen *then*, depend upon it, he is not less attentive *now*. There can be no difficulty, it should seem, in interpreting this vision of the patriarch Jacob's ladder, after what Jesus told *Nathaniel* of the ascent and descent of the angels upon the Son of man. (John i. 51.) Under such an authority, we need not hesitate to consider Christ as the only communication, the only medium of intercourse between heaven and earth. (John xiv. 6.) And if the patriarch saw, in a vision, a ladder, with its foot on the earth, and its top reaching to heaven; thus uniting both, were not these representations of Jesus, as Emmanuel, his human nature and his divine: thus uniting such vast extremes, and forming, in both, one glorious mediator, to bring sinners to God, and bring down grace upon the earth? And as Jehovah stood above it, in the patriarch's view, what was this but to show the authority of Christ, as the Christ of God? Precious addition to the vision indeed, for this is the warrant of faith, in believing "the record that God hath given of his Son. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Blessed Emmanuel! I hail thy glorious person! I bow down to the earth in humble adoration, love, and praise! I view thee, O Lord, as the only mediation for my precious soul; and desire to renounce every other! Witness for me, ye angels of light, who minister to the heirs of salvation, that on my bended knees, in transports of rejoicing, I bless God for having opened such a new and living way for poor sinners; and very humbly and earnestly do I beg of him, that my God will unceasingly make sweet communications of grace by Jesus, and call forth the suitable returns, in love, and praise, and obedience, through Jesus, in my soul, until faith is swallowed up in absolute enjoyment, and that blessed hour, which Jesus promised, be fulfilled, when I shall see heaven open, and "the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man!"

•A ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.—*Acts xxiv. 5.*

My soul! hast thou arrived at that station of dignity to be reproached for Christ's sake? If so, thou wilt enter into a proper sense and enjoyment of the title Paul was branded with: a ringleader, or a *standard-bearer* of the cross. One who, not content with receiving Christ into his own heart, determines, let the cost be what it may, the loss of reputation or of life, to proclaim Jesus upon the house-top. This is to be a ringleader! An honourable station! and one that Jesus loves! Jesus himself was Jehovah's ringleader, for he saith, "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glo-

rious." (Isaiah xi. 10.) And elsewhere Jehovah saith, "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." (Isaiah lv. 4.) My soul! hast thou taken part in the reproaches of God's choicest servants? It is impossible to be a true follower of the despised Nazarene, unless thou hast followed him "without the camp, bearing his reproach." The world, from the days of *Cain*, in his persecution of *Abel*, hath in all ages branded the ringleaders of the Lord's cause. The servants were treated as the master. His prophets, "troublers of the land." (Amos vii. 10.) His city, always "a rebellious city." (Ezra iv. 15.) Yea, Jesus himself, as "one perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar." (Luke xxiii. 2.) Precious Lord! could not thy meek, harmless, and inoffensive conduct pass on without this censure? then who can hope to escape? I know, Lord, that to hold thee up, and proclaim thee as Jehovah's ensign to the nations, is to be indeed a ringleader of the cross, against which all hell must wage war, and all the powers of this world's customs will declare enmity. But be thou my standard, and I shall be more than conqueror through thy grace helping me. Oh! let me unceasingly speak thy praise, and let the fathers to the children make known thy truth.

But there is forgiveness with thee; that thou mayest be feared.—*Psalms* cxxx. 4.

My soul! this is a golden psalm, and every portion of it more ponderous in value than the choicest gold of Ophir; and this verse is as the tried gold, to ascertain the purity and value of all the rest. The cries of a truly broken heart, from the depth of sin to the depth of divine mercy, with which the psalm opens, prove the work of the Holy Ghost, imparting the words with which the humbled soul comes before the Lord. And the blessed consolations which this verse contains, in the view of the mercy-seat, and the mercy there (which is all-precious Jesus, the first-born in the womb of mercy; yea, mercy itself) as plainly prove the leadings of the Holy Ghost to him, who alone can say, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help!" Ponder, my soul, these precious words. "But there is forgiveness with thee." Is it not as if thou wert to say to thy God and Father, when under deep searchings of heart by reason of conscious sin, "There is Jesus with thee; he is my propitiation; he is my propitiatory; the mercy-seat, between the cherubim of glory *in* whom, and *from* whom, thou hast promised to speak to thy people! And shall I doubt thy pardoning love and favour, as long as I behold Jesus with thee? Shall I for a moment question my acceptance in the beloved, while I behold "the man at thy right hand, even the Son of man, whom thou madest

strong for thyself?" Shall I fear coming to a God in Christ for pardon, so long as I am interested in the forgiveness that is with thee, in God the Son's righteousness and atoning blood; and God the Father's covenant engagements in him, for the display of the glory of his grace? Oh! how unanswerably strong, conclusive, and satisfactory to a poor burdened conscience is this view of Jesus, the propitiatory; Jesus the propitiation! But what is the meaning of the expression in the latter part of the verse; there is forgiveness with thee; that "thou mayst be feared?" Would not the verse read better, if it were said, "that thou mayst be loved?" Oh, no! "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." And although "perfect love casteth out fear," that is, the fear of hell, the bondage fear of unpardoned sin; yet the child-like fear, which a sense of pardoning love begets in the soul, is among the sweetest exercises of the renewed nature. Devils fear and tremble, and feel despair and horror: but the affectionate fear of a dutiful child is the reverse of this, and only manifests itself in the most earnest desire never to offend. And the sense of God's forgiving love, and of Jesus always on the propitiatory, becomes the great preservative from sin. Hence the Lord himself saith, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." (Jer. xxxii. 43.) My soul! fold up this sweet portion, and take it with thee to thy pillow, that it may lie down with thee, and rest in thine heart; that Jesus, thy Jesus, thy propitiation, is with Jehovah, that thou mayst fear him; and he may be thy exceeding joy and confidence, both now and for ever. Amen.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his throne.—*Rev.* iii. 21.

My soul! let this evening's meditation be sacred, in contemplating Jesus, even thy Jesus, sitting down on the throne of his Father, having overcome all opposition, and triumphed by his cross, over death, sin, and hell! And in this contemplation, be sure that thou behold Jesus in *thy nature*; for it is in that nature the victory was obtained. The Son of God, as God, had no throne to obtain by overcoming; neither could a throne be *given* to him; for all things were his in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the one glorious essence of the Godhead, from all eternity. So that it is in the human nature of Christ, these triumphs are set forth; and as the glory-man Mediator, thou art called upon to behold him, for his victories, and the merits of his redemption-work, as sat down in the throne. Sweet thought! cherish it, my soul, as the first, and best, and most glorious of all thoughts! Thy Jesus, in thy nature, is on his throne. And now, when with an eye of faith thou art viewing him there,

next hear the blessed and gracious words which come from him, on his throne: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me." Blessed Lord! Is it possible that my poor nature can ever arrive to such unspeakable felicity? Can I venture to cherish such a hope? What! shall this poor, feeble, trembling nature of mine, encompassed as it is with sin and temptation, and in the midst of a waste and howling wilderness, shall I one day sit down with my Lord, see him as he is, and dwell with him for ever? Oh! for faith to believe, and for grace in lively exercise, to run with patience the race that is set before me, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher both of faith and salvation! And shall I not, dearest Lord, be continually gathering new strength from thee? Will not Jesus, who hath taken my nature, undertaken my cause, and engaged as my surety, both for grace and for glory, be every thing I need, my light and my life, my hope, and strength, and salvation? Yes! thou gracious Lord! thou wilt make me more than conqueror through thy grace upholding me; and, like the redeemed now in glory, I shall overcome "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of thy testimony;" and sit down with thee in thy throne, even as thou hast overcome, and art sat down in thy Father's throne. Hallelujah. Amen.

(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)—*Philip*. iii. 18, 19.

My soul! hast thou not felt somewhat of the affliction of the apostle, in beholding how the great mass of carnal men live, and, for the most part, die? Nay, who can look on, and view it without tears? the apostle hath enclosed the view within parentheses, and it were to be wished that it was nowhere to be found but in parentheses. But, alas! the truth is too striking, too palpable, and meets the contemplative mind at too many entrances and passages through the world, not to show that it is far more general than is imagined. By our apostasy from God, man, that was originally exalted above the whole creation, is sunk below the whole: for no creature of God, among the brutes that perish, ever arrived to such a proficiency in sensuality as to *glory* in that which constitutes our disgrace and shame! Brutes may riot in gorging their corrupt passions: but it is the *human* brute alone that glories in the reflection! Hence, of all the creatures of God, none, by nature, can be more remote from God, devils excepted, than fallen man! None in whose mind Satan could find a seat to rule and reign, but man! And while, by nature, thus exposed to perish, for any act of our own by which we

could do ought to prevent it; yea, without even a desire to prevent it, or a knowledge of the awful depths of sin into which we are fallen, in order to send forth a cry for recovery: while thus living, and thus dying, at an everlasting distance from God, at once the scorn of angels, and the willing slaves of the devil. As in the delirium of a fever, so in the madness of the mind, the poor creature that is under the dominion of it, is unconscious of the whole, and glories in that which is his shame, and which melts every heart into pity, but the heart of fiends and the powers of darkness! My soul! hast thou duly considered these things! Dost thou behold, as Paul did, many around thee that thus walk? Dost thou remember when thou didst so walk; Dost thou call to mind "the wormwood and the gall?" And canst thou ever overlook, or forget, who it was that brought thee out? Canst thou cease to remember when and where the Lord Jesus passed by, and took thee up in his arms, when thou wast loathsome in thy person to every eye but his; and when he, like the divine Samaritan to the wounded traveller, brought thee to the inn of his Church, when thou wast left more than half dead by the enemy of souls? Oh! precious, precious Lord Jesus! the more I contemplate thy glorious person, and thy gracious mercy to our poor fallen nature, the more unceasingly lovely dost thou appear. Thine was indeed, and is, "a love that passeth knowledge!" Oh! for grace to reverence these bodies of ours, which thou hast redeemed; that while the carnal glory in their shame, all thy redeemed may cry out, with the holy indignation of the apostle, and say, as he did, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." (Galatians vi. 14.)

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death; crowned with glory and honour.—*Hebrews* ii. 9.

Mark, my soul, the very sweet and peculiar manner in which God the Holy Ghost here speaks of Jesus. He was "made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." Yes! A body, such as our's, was given him, for the express purpose of suffering. Our nature, by reason of sin, required a sacrifice for sin. It behoved him, therefore, to be in all things like unto his brethren. But when he had made his soul an offering for sin, he for ever sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. To none of the angels was it ever said, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Now ponder these blessed things, and then say, whether thou hast so seen Jesus? If so, thou hast seen thy nature in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only exalted above all principality and

power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, but thou hast seen him "crowned with glory and honour," as the head of his body the Church. I charge it upon thee, my soul, that in all thy views of the Lord Jesus, as a risen and exalted Saviour, thou for ever connect with it, and never lose sight of it, that it is Jesus, as Jesus in his human nature, that is so exalted, so honoured and glorified. It would be no honour, but rather a degradation of the Son of God, as God, to say such things of him, as being *made* or *receiving* a throne, or having glory *given* to him. All power, sovereignty, and might, are his before. But when we behold Jesus as "made a little lower than the angels," and becoming Mediator, he stands forth the *servant* of Jehovah, redeeming his Church and people, and, as such, "for the suffering of death, is crowned with glory and honour." And oh! how blessed the view! For if he was thus crowned in our nature, then surely he will have respect to our nature in all the wants of his people. If he be exalted in our nature, surely he is exalted in that nature "as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins." And if it be the same Lord Jesus, whose head is now crowned with glory, that was once crowned with thorns, oh! with what humble confidence may a poor sinner, such as I am, look up and tell him of the glories of his cross, now shining with tenfold lustre in the glories of his crown! Shall I not hope, dear Lord! by the sweet influences of thy blessed Spirit, to make every day a coronation day, when by faith I crown thee my true and lawful Sovereign, desiring to bring every thought and affection of my poor heart into obedience to thee, to bow the knee of my heart before thee, and with holy joy "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father?" Amen.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord's hand waxed short? Thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee, or not.—*Num.* xi. 23.

Is it not an extraordinary thing in the history of Moses, that he, who had seen the miracles in Egypt, should stagger at God's promises to feed his people with a new supply in the wilderness? Had Moses forgotten the rock which gave water, or the daily supply of manna? But pause, my soul! look not at Moses; look at home. What wonders hath thy God wrought for thee! and yet what doubts, and fears, and questionings, are continually arising in thy mind. Is there a child of God on earth more apt to reason with flesh and blood than thou art? And is there a child of God, that hath less reason so to do? Dearest Lord! I blush to think how slender, at times, my faith is! When I read of the acts of those heroes in the gospel, who, "through faith,

subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of the lions," and the like, I take shame and confusion of face, in the review of my unbelieving heart. Did *Joshua* bid the sun and moon to stand still; did *Peter* smite *Ananias* and *Sapphira* dead; yea, did he even call *Tabitha* from the dead, by virtue of faith in Jesus; and am I so much at a loss, at times, as to fear that I shall one day perish by the hand of the enemy? O Lord! I beseech thee, strengthen my soul in this grace, that I may never more question the divine faithfulness. And do thou, blessed Jesus, pour in thy resources upon my poor forgetful and unbelieving heart, when doubts, and fears, and misgivings arise. Give me to see, that in all my journey past, thou hast brought me through difficulties and dangers, and that "thy strength is made perfect in my weakness." What are all intervening difficulties when Jesus undertakes for his people? Nay, the very obstruction, be what it may, is but the more for the display of thy glory, and the exercise of my faith. Help me, then, O Lord! to look to thee, and not to the difficulty, with which I have nothing to do. It is enough for me, that my God hath promised, and my God can and will perform. How Jesus will accomplish it, is his concern and not mine. He is faithful; he hath promised; and that is sufficient; the issue is not doubtful. Yea, Lord! I know thine hand is not shortened, and all that thou hast said must come to pass. "Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it!"

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.—*John* xii. 32.

My soul! it is blessed and refreshing to the faith of God's children, to behold in their almighty Redeemer, the same properties as are ascribed to the Father and the Spirit; and more especially in the points which concern their personal salvation! Jesus told the Jews, that none could come to him, "except the Father, who had sent him, should draw them;" (*John* vi. 44.) And in the same chapter, he ascribes "the quickening power," which draws to Christ, unto "the Holy Spirit," (verse 63.) But that his own sovereign power and Godhead is also included in this act of grace, he here teacheth us, from whose love and grace it is that sinners are drawn! Precious Lord Jesus! let mine eyes be ever unto thee for the quickening, reviving, restoring, comforting, and all-healing graces, which thou now art exalted, as a Prince and a Saviour, to give unto thy people. And, dearest Lord! I beseech thee, let my views of thee, and my meditation of thee, in this most endearing character, be sweet in the consideration also, that thou, as the head of thy Church and people, must be the head of all spiritual, life-giving influence. Surely, blessed Jesus, the head cannot be happy, if the members be not made blessed; the source and fountain of all goodness must needs send forth

streams to impart of its overflowing fulness. And is it not for this very purpose, that as God-man Mediator, "the Father hath given thee power over all flesh, that thou shouldst give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given thee?" (John xvii. 2.) And will not Jesus delight to dispense all blessings to his people, to his chosen, that are the purchase of his blood, and the gift of his Father, and the conquests of his grace? I feel my soul warmed with the very thought! I say to myself, "Did my Lord and Saviour say, when upon earth, that he was "anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken in heart, and to give out of his fulness grace for grace?" And did my Lord say, moreover, that "when he was lifted up, he would draw all men unto him?" And shall I not feel the drawing, the constraining graces of his Spirit, bringing my whole heart, and soul, and spirit, into an unceasing desire *after* him, an unceasing longing *for* him, and an everlasting enjoyment *of* him? Precious, blessed Lord Jesus! let the morning, noon-day, and evening cry of my heart be in the language of the Church of old, and let the cry be awakened by thy grace, and answered in thy mercy: "Draw me, we will run after thee;" the King hath brought me into his chambers: "we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine." (Song i. 4.)

Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Hebrews i. 14.

My soul! art thou an heir of salvation? Think then of thy high privilege. "If," saith an apostle, "we are children, then heirs, yea, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. viii. 17.) Though in this life in a state of childhood, and under age, yet by adoption and grace we are made "heirs of God." Not like men of the world, in their earthly portions, where only one in a family can be the heir, and that the first-born; but all the Church are included, for the Church itself is called "the first-born which are written in heaven." (Heb. xii. 23.) And in this heaven-born inheritance, thou hast, my soul, if thou be a child of God, a portion in God thy Father; for all his people are a nation of spiritual priests, who, like Aaron of old, "have the Lord for their portion." (Numb. xviii. 20.) Yea, by virtue of thy union to Christ, who as God-man Mediator, is "heir of all things," thou art interested in all things which are his, by virtue of his mediation. Oh, the rapturous thought! But do not stop here. By reason of this heirship, behold thy high dignity! Angels, who are high in intellect, disembodied spirits, and who excel in wisdom and in power, are servants in thine Emmanuel's kingdom, to minister unto thee, and to all thy brethren in Jesus, who are heirs of salvation. Oh! couldst thou see how they

watch over thee—how they guard thee from a thousand evils; didst thou but know how eternally safe thou art amidst a host of foes which come against thee; then, like the prophet's servant, thou wouldst frequently see, by the eye of faith, "the mountain around thee full of horses and chariots of fire." (2 Kings vi. 17.) And who shall say to what extent their ministry is exercised? If a single angel destroyed seventy thousand in the host of Israel, at the command of God, and a hundred and fourscore and five thousand of the Assyrians, which came forth against Israel, what may not a child of God hope for, who is an heir of salvation from the perpetual ministry of these ministering spirits? (2 Sam. xxiv. 15; 2 Kings xix. 35.) O thou dear Lord, cause thine holy angels thus, by night and day, to take their stand, and watch over my defenceless hours! And, yet more than this, my adored Redeemer! come thou, and bless me with the unceasing visits of thy love, and say to me, as to thy Church of old: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (Isaiah xli. 10.)

Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation.—*Philippians* ii. 6, 7.

My soul! after all thy meditations upon the person of thy Lord, how very far short hast thou come in thy thoughts of the unequalled humility of the Son of God! Let thy present evening's contemplation be on this subject. But where, and at what part, shall I enter upon it. Who shall speak, or what heart conceive the wonders contained in it! Blessed Spirit of all truth! do thou glorify the Lord Jesus to my evening meditation, in this interesting view of his person. He that, before all worlds, lay in the bosom of the Father, and was attended by the services of legions of angels, condescended to be made not only flesh, but in the likeness of *sinful* flesh; to be born in a stable, and to sleep in a manger; to advance in human intellect, and grow in wisdom and in stature; to labour for bread, and to gain that bread by the sweat of the brow; and, having spent an eternity in glory with the Father, to spend thirty years in poverty and want among men! Go on, my soul, in the meditation. Follow Jesus till thou hast beheld him, not only having nowhere to lay his head, but becoming the scorn and sport of the multitude; and he who had been, and still was, and ever will be, the delight and glory of the Father, branded by men, even by many of them he came to save, as a blasphemer, and one that had a devil! Sit down, and ponder over these wonderful things; and then ask, what can raise affections in the soul, if such views of Jesus do

not? Think what must have been the Father's love in giving his dear Son to such a purpose? and what must have been the Son's love in coming? Then ask thyself what indignities oughtest thou not to submit to among men, if called upon to such an exercise, while contemplating the unequalled humility of thy Redeemer? Dearest Lord Jesus! I blush in the moment of recollection, while beholding thy real glory thus veiled under the cloud of humiliation, to think how often for trifles, yea, less than trifles, the false pride of my poor fallen nature hath felt hurt at some fancied inattention from men. Oh! for the same mind to be in me "which was in Christ Jesus!" He made himself of no reputation!

But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.—*Psalm cvi. 35.*

Pause, my soul, over this view of God's people of old. There is a natural disposition in the heart to do and to live as others, in order to pass through life with as little reproach as possible; and, in the first face of things, what is called an *innocent conformity* to the world, seems to be commendable and praiseworthy. But, alas! it is impossible to mingle with the carnal, and not learn their works; and it is always dangerous to get on the confines of the enemy. In that blessed prayer taught us by our Lord, we pray "not to be led into temptation;" and surely this implies, that we do not desire to lead ourselves into temptation. But this every child of God doth, that mingles unnecessarily with the world, or with the men of the world. The *precept* is positive to this purpose: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." And the *blessing* is as positive of the gracious effects that shall follow: "And I will receive you, and be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.) My soul! do thou make a memorandum of this, for thou art too apt to forget it. How often hast thou been found in places, and with persons, where the voice might have been heard speaking to thee, as unto the prophet, "What dost thou here, Elijah?" And often hast thou returned wounded from such society, where, to speak of him "whom thou lovest," forms no part in the conversation; but where the frivolous and unprofitable discourse too plainly testifies that "neither is God in all their thoughts." Precious Jesus! keep me, I beseech thee, from the heathen of every description and character, and suffer me not "to mingle with them, nor learn their works;" but let my whole heart be fixed on thee, considering how "thou didst endure such a contradiction of sinners against thyself, that I may be never weary nor faint in mind."

And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die.

Deuteronomy xxi. 20, 21.

My soul! pause over this Jewish precept. What a thundering command must it have been to flesh and blood! Think how agonizing to the feelings of tender parents, to have come forth as the accusers of rebellious children, and gluttons, and drunkards! What comfort could such have concerning them in their welfare of the life that now is, and what hope for that which is to come? But, as if these distressing feelings were not enough, it is they, the very parents, which are here commanded to bring forward the charge to the elders against their own bowels, and they are to be the means of bringing them to death. But, painful as it must have been to flesh and blood, such were the triumphs of grace, that, by virtue of it, "all Israel was to hear and to fear;" and if God was honoured, and the evil of rebellion put away, the close was glorious. Better to follow a child to the grave, than to follow that child to hell. Better to root out a noxious weed from Christ's garden, the Church, than that it should live, and bring forth and spread its deadly fruit. And is there not a sweet spiritual lesson in all this? Look at it, my soul, and see. Hast thou a stubborn and rebellious lust warring against the law of thy mind, and bringing thee into captivity to the law of sin, which is in thy members? and dost thou groan, as Paul groaned, under it? Is it like a child in thine affection, that to destroy it is like plucking out an eye, or cutting off an arm? Do by it as the Lord commanded the poor oppressed father with his son. Bring it, be it what it may, not before the elders of thy people indeed, but before the Lord of heaven and earth; bring it to Jesus, and tell him of thy burden, and show to him thy sorrow. I venture to believe, that he will give grace to crush it, and strength, like so many stones of the people, to beat it down in thine heart, and it will be to his glory, and to thy joy. Oh! the blessedness of bringing all to Jesus! He can, he will subdue the stubborn heart, break the power of the rebellious heart, restrain the propensity of the gluttonous or sottish heart, and give suited help to the several necessities of his people, so as to make the soul cry out, under the blessed strength imparted to our weakness, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." Help me, then, dear Lord! and help all thy children, under their several infirmities, by thy Spirit, "to mortify the deeds of the body, that we may live."

The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach,

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The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach,

that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.

Romans x. 8—10.

My soul! behold the tenderness of God the Holy Ghost to his people, in order to prevent the possibility of error, in their knowledge and enjoyment of Christ. It is not difficult to attain a clear apprehension, whether a soul be in grace or not; for here the point is most plainly set forth: "The word is nigh thee." What word? The word of faith. Christ in the word, Christ in the promise, Christ himself the salvation of the sinner. And when a poor sinner hath been led to see who Christ is, and what he hath wrought, what he hath done for sinners, and what he is to them, the infinite glories of his person, the infinite, completeness of his work, and the infinite suitableness of Jesus, in every possible way that a poor sinner can need, by way of justification before God, and acceptance with God, then these blessed truths are so sweetly brought home to the heart and conscience of the enlightened sinner, by God the Holy Ghost, that he rests upon Christ as one perfectly satisfied with Christ, and neither seeks nor desires any other. So that by the lively actings of faith, the soul beholds Christ in the word, and in the promise, and takes him with both into his very soul, until "Christ is" fully "formed there the hope of glory." Hence both the outward confession of the mouth, and the inward enjoyment of the heart have a beautiful correspondence: the *one* speaks what the *other* feels; "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." My soul! is not this thy faith? And if so, what can dispossess thee of it? What shall stop thy joy or confidence in Jesus a single hour? If Jesus, the *uncreated* word, the *promised* word, the sum and substance of all the *written* word, be nigh thee, yea, in thy mouth and in thine heart, not only thine understanding knows Jesus, but thine heart lives upon Jesus; surely salvation is secure; yea, heaven itself is begun in the soul: for "this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent!"

Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.—*Psalms lxxv. 3.*

My soul! ponder over this important verse; it is but short, but it is full of precious things. Blessed the soul that can, from his heart, make use of what is here said as his own experience! He hath learned much of Christ that can do so. In a time when a sense of sin abounds, when comforts run low, and

the rebellion of indwelling corruption riseth high ; when the enemy cometh in like a flood, and no answers return from the sanctuary ; yea, when the very spirit of prayer fails, and the heaven that is over the head is as brass, and the earth that is under the feet is as iron ; then to rest simply upon Christ, and to say, " Iniquities prevail against me ;" I feel the dreadful consequences of a fallen state : but all those transgressions Jesus will " purge them away ;" though the *Canaanites* are yet in the land, my almighty Joshua will, by little and little, drive them out before me, until they are utterly destroyed : to say these things, and to know them, and, by a firm reliance on Jesus, to depend upon the accomplishment of them, is faith in lively exercise indeed ! This is to rest on God the Father's covenant engagement, and Jesus's person and righteousness only ; and at a time when, of all others, perhaps faith is hard put to it to call Christ our own. Oh ! the blessedness of this state of the soul, when a sense of prevailing iniquities, instead of damping the actings of faith, becomes a stimulus to lead to Jesus, and to call in his powerful hand to restrain, when a man is driven out of himself, to lay hold on the blessed Jesus ! My soul ! hast thou thus far advanced in the school of grace ? Happy, happy indeed, if a daily sense of thy nothingness tends more and more to endear the Lord's all-sufficiency ! And blessed will be the final issue of that divine teaching which brings thee at last most low and humble at the feet of Jesus, content to be nothing, yea, worse than nothing, that Jesus may have all the glory, who is alone worthy of it, in the salvation of his people.

Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it ; shout, ye lower parts of the earth ; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein : for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

Isaiah xliv. 23.

Come, my soul, and join this universal hymn of praise, this lovely evening. Surely, if the Lord, by his servant the prophet, calls upon all nature, both the animate and inanimate parts of creation, to join in the melody, well may " the redeemed of the Lord say so !" The heavens shall sing the song of redemption ; for angels rejoice over converted sinners. The earth shall join the song ; for the curse pronounced on the ground is taken away by redemption. Yea, the very trees of the desert, the most remote from the peopled city, in beholding the felicity of God's chosen, shall clap their hands also. And mark, my soul, what is the running verse and chorus of this blessed song ! It is Jehovah's glory ; for " the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." Precious and principal feature in redemption ! for what is God's work is God's glory. Think of this when thou

art contemplating the wonders and glories of redemption! And, moreover, let these views of divine glory, the first and ultimate end, in creation, providence, and grace, become the assurance, and security, and comfort of thy mind, under all the remaining points to be accomplished in thy personal circumstances and interest in it. The Lord hath glorified himself, and will glorify himself in his people. Israel is the people of his purpose, the children of promise, the children of adoption, the objects of his choice, of his everlasting love; the seed of Christ, the purchase of his blood. "This people," saith Jehovah, "have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise." Pause, my soul, and ask thy heart, what can show forth God's praise in any way equal to all our conceptions of Jehovah's glory, more than by a way so gracious, so wonderful, and so passing all understanding, as that of taking them from nothing, yea, from worse than nothing, and constituting them a church, a people in Christ, his dear Son, to be the everlasting monument of his glory and praise, in the realms of eternity for ever? Well might the prophet exclaim, and well mayest thou join the song: "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."

Never man spake like this man.—*John* vii. 46.

What a decided testimony were even the enemies of Christ compelled, from their own consciences, to give to the Godhead and power of the Lord Jesus Christ! Think then, my soul, what an evidence thou wouldst bring, if called upon to tell what Jesus hath said to thee! From the first moment that Jesus revealed himself *in* his word, and *by* his word, to thy heart, thou couldst truly say, as the Jewish officers did, "Never man spake like this man." Never any spake like this God-man this Glory-man, thy Redeemer. All his words were, and are, divine words; powerful, persuasive, tender, gracious words, and full of salvation. Say how very blessed all that Jesus spake of salvation was to thy heart, when he made it personal and spake it all to *thee*. When he said, I am *thy* salvation. I have pardon, I have peace, I have righteousness, I have grace here, and glory hereafter; and all I have is for *thee*. So that when reading the word, or hearing the word, and the question arose in thy heart, To whom speaketh my Lord thus? oh, how unspeakably precious did the word become, when Jesus said by his servant, "To you is the word of this salvation sent." Precious Lord Jesus! how shall I express my soul's sense of thy love and grace, thy mercy and favour? Since thou first manifested thyself to my heart, I am no longer my own. Thou hast taken all my affections with thee to heaven, and caused them to centre

every thing in thyself. And now, Lord, I still daily, yea sometimes hourly, when I hear thy voice, am constrained to cry out "Never man spake like this man!" How sweet and suitable are thy words to my weary soul; thou hast indeed "the tongue of the learned, and knowest how to speak in season to souls," like mine, "that are weary." (Isaiah i. 4.) How truly blessed and reasonable is thy well-known voice to my soul, when a sense of my nothingness makes thy fulness yet more precious. Oh! when I hear thee say, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness," surely, Lord, I feel a power that makes all my enemies seem as nothing. Like thy servant, I then truly "glory in my infirmities, that thy power may rest upon thee." Be thou, then, dearest Lord Jesus, all I need, and let me hear thy voice, and see thy countenance; for, both in life and in death, in time and to all eternity, the voice of my Lord Jesus will be my everlasting comfort, for none speaketh like thee!

While he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them.—*Matthew xvii. 5.*

My soul! see here, how it fared with the disciples in the mount! In the moment of those blessed manifestations which Jesus was making to them, and when, to heighten their felicity, several of the inhabitants of glory came, and spake to Jesus in the view of his disciples, yet so sudden was the change, that even while Jesus spake, a cloud intervened and obscured all. Somewhat of the same change thou hast thyself known. How often hast thou been made like the chariots of *Amminadib*, by the overpowering grace that Jesus hath shown thee! And how often have those blessed moments been followed by a dark and long night! And what ought to be thy improvement of these dispensations? Look still to Jesus under all. Whatever changes are induced, never forget that his person is the same, and his love the same. Mark this down. Next look up to Jesus, and tell him, that as his visits are so sweet, so gracious and blessed, entreat the dear Lord, to be often coming, often blessing thee with his love, and making his abode with thee. And see that thou art improving every occasion, and making the most of those hallowed seasons; for they are most blessed and precious; while thy Lord is with thee, and feasting thee with his love, and showing thee his secret: mark the *Bethel*-places, made sacred by his presence, and the *Bethel*-communications, made pleasant in coming from him. And do not forget to interest Jesus for Zion. Tell him that Zion is his own, and thou knowest that he loves her. Then, on the ground of this love, tell him how she languisheth, in the present awful day of much profession, with but little vital godliness. And while "the King is held" by thee "in the galleries" of his grace, bring in the arms of thy faith all

thou wouldst seek a blessing for; thy children, if thou hast any, thy family, the Church at large, the nation; and do, as did the patriarchs, wrestle, plead, hold fast, and take no refusal, but say, "Lord, thou comest to bless, and a blessing I must have; neither will I let thee go, except thou bless me."

And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil intreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

Exodus v. 22, 23.

My soul, ponder over this scripture, and the history connected with it, and behold what a blessed volume of instruction it affords. The Lord sent Moses to deliver his people out of Egypt. He had heard their groanings, and graciously promised to redress them. The people believed the Lord, and bowed their heads, in token of their view of his love, and their own happiness, which was now to follow. But behold, the oppression under which they had groaned, instead of lessening, began to increase. In this state they grow desperate, and charge God foolishly. Yea, Moses himself, who had talked with God at the bush, and seen the miracles in confirmation of his commission there shown, becomes tainted with the same spirit of unbelief, and returned to expostulate with Jehovah on the occasion. Pause over this view of the human heart, even in God's own people. The sequel of Israel's history showeth that the Lord was pursuing one invariable plan for the deliverance of his people, as he had promised; and that there was no alteration in him. He was only laying his glorious scheme the deeper by seeming opposition, to make his people's emancipation more blessed, and his love of them more striking. But yet, while things appear thus dark and unpromising, Israel forgot all that the Lord had promised. And how is it, my soul, with thyself? When the promises of God seem to clash with his providences, and according to thy narrow views, seem impossible to be brought into agreement with each other, how dost thou act? Art thou not like Israel much disposed to reason with flesh and blood? When the enemies of thy soul triumph, and carry things, as Pharaoh did, in this instance with Israel, with a high hand, saying, "Aha! so would we have it;" when unbelief creeps in; a lust, which thou hadst hoped was subdued, breaks out afresh like some peccant humour of the body; when no answers are heard to thy prayers; and though thou art falling under some renewed temptation, yet there appears no hand of Jesus stretched forth to bring thee off, and raise thee up; say, my soul! under such dark providences how dost thou conduct thyself towards the Lord? Oh! for grace to trace

Jesus, more especially in trying seasons than even in prosperous moments; and to hear his voice in the whirlwind and the storm! It is blessed to wait, blessed to depend upon Jesus; blessed to believe in his promise, when all the ways to the fulfilment of that promise seem to be wholly shut. This is the crowning grace of faith, "against hope to believe in hope:" and, amidst the most desperate circumstances, to cleave to Jesus as a sure friend, when, in his providences, he appears coming forth as a determined enemy, and to say, with the same well-grounded confidence as Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

A good man shall be satisfied from himself.

Proverbs xiv. 14.

My soul! what is the scripture, and what is the design of the Holy Ghost in it? Art thou satisfied in thyself? Alas! every day makes me more and more dissatisfied with myself. How can I, indeed, be satisfied, who carry about with me such a body of sin and death, which is everlastingly fighting with, and opposing, my better part? What satisfaction, then, is it that is here meant? Scripture is best explained by scripture; hence the satisfaction that a believing soul finds from himself, is not from his own attainments, nor his own righteousness, but from the witness of the Holy Ghost, that he is born of God, and brought out of nature's darkness into God's marvellous light. The apostle John hath given, in a single verse, a full illustration of what the wise man here saith, of a good man (that is a child of God) being satisfied with himself: "He that believeth on the Son of God," saith the apostle John, "hath the witness in himself." (1 John v. 10.) Here is the grand source of all his satisfaction. The holy Ghost witnesseth to the soul of the believer, that he is new born; that he is passed from death to life; that Jesus is precious, and his salvation very dear to them. The heart of such an one is brought to know and feel his own wants by reason of sin, and the infinite suitability of Jesus to answer all those wants, and to be to him all he stands in need of. The poor creature, thus taught of God, is satisfied with the blessed discovery he hath made of Jesus, and his salvation; and rests wholly in it, as one perfectly satisfied, and desires no other; yea, renounceth every other. Hence he is satisfied from himself, and his own feelings, and not from what others have taught him, that Jesus is all he needs. My soul! hast thou arrived to this blessedness? If so, praise that distinguishing grace, by which, in the midst of self-loathing on account of thy sin, thou hast a self-satisfaction on account of having found Jesus and his righteousness. Let Jesus have all the praise, and do thou live as one eternally satisfied with his person and righteousness.

And it came to pass as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot.—2 Kings iv. 40.

It was at a time of great famine, that the prophet *Elisha* ministered among the sons of the prophet at *Gilgal*; no wonder, therefore, that their diet was reduced to a dinner of herbs. During the season of persecution in our kingdom, somewhat more than a century and a half since, there was a *spiritual famine*, not of bread or of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; and so precious was the word of the Lord in those days, that our good old fathers used to remark, "bread and water, with the gospel, was choice fare." We find, in the household of *Elisha*, that wild gourds, by the ignorance of him that gathered the herbs, were served up in the pottage of the people, which, as soon as they were discovered, occasioned the cry to the prophet, "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot." And is there not death in the pot when any matters of a poisonous quality are mingled and served up to God's people with the word of his grace? Surely, the springs of all spiritual food and life are in Jesus, his blood, his righteousness, his finished salvation, the graces of his Holy Spirit, and the rest and dependence upon God the Father's covenant, love, and mercy in him; these are the only food of the soul, by which it can be nourished. To drop these rich and savoury truths, whereby the soul is kept alive to God, and brought nigh to God in Christ; or, what is the same thing, to mingle, like the wild gourds of the field, the righteousness of the creature, as made partly the means of salvation, with this only wholesome food of the soul; may surely cause the believing soul to cry out, "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot!" I charge it upon thee, my soul, this evening, in the view of this scripture, concerning the sons of the prophets, that thou take heed to receive not mingled things for the good old fare of the gospel. The smallest introduction to error is as one that letteth out water. Where the person of Jesus, his work and glory, are neglected to be set forth, there will be death in the pot, whatever else be substituted in the place. A real believer cannot live in his soul's health a day, no more than a labouring man in his body, where the food suited to each is not given. And it surely were a pity, when there is such an infinite fulness in Christ, to substitute any thing for him. See to it then, my soul, that all thy food be Jesus, and let "all thy fresh springs be in him." Remember the promise, for in the saddest times of dearth, if Jesus be looked to, it never can fail. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures: for with thee is the fountain of life." (Psalm xxxvi. 8, 9.)

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

Revelation xii. 1.

My soul! as the beloved apostle was invited to see those precious visions, which the Lord favoured him with, for the Church's good, so do thou, this evening, attend his ministry, and gather, under divine teaching, instruction from this great wonder which John saw. Surely the woman, here spoken of, means the Church, the Lamb's wife, clothed in her husband's righteousness; and the moon, like that planet which ministers to our world, under her feet; and the crown, with which her head was adorned, sets forth how the Church is made glorious by the ministry of the twelve apostles in the gospel of salvation: for what can be more suitable for the Church to be crowned with, than the blessed truths contained in their writings? Now, my soul, as every representation of the Church not only sets forth the whole body at large, but every individual member of that body, ask thyself, hath this wonder been wrought on thee, which John saw? Art thou clothed with the sun, even with Jesus the sun of righteousness, in his garment of salvation? Hast thou mounted up, not in airy speculations, not in any fancied attainments of thine own, but in heavenly-mindedness after Jesus, and devout communion with him; so that the earth, and all its perishing beauties, are got under thy feet? Hast thou such views of the blessedness and preciousness of the word of God, the gospel of thy salvation, that it is dearer to thee than gold, yea, than all the crowns of the earth? Pause while these inquiries pass over thy mind; and surely, if the Lord, by the sovereignty of his grace, hath wrought such blessed effects upon thee, a great wonder is indeed wrought in earth, like that which John saw in heaven, and well mayest thou stand amazed at the greatness and the distinguishing nature of salvation. "Lord, what am I; and what is my Father's house?"

For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost?—*Luke xiv. 28.*

Ponder, my soul, over this very striking similitude of thy Lord's, respecting the divine life. The figure of a builder is most aptly chosen; for the Christian builder is building for eternity. And the figure of a warrior, which our Lord also joins to it, is no less so, for the battle is for life, and that life is eternal. Hast thou counted the cost? Hast thou entered upon the work? Is the foundation stone, which God laid in Zion, the rock on which thou art building? Pause and examine. Be the cost what it may; the loss of earthly friends; the parting with every worldly

pursuit; the scorn, contempt, and derision of all mankind; yea, the loss of life itself; if these come in the way of competition, art thou ready to give them all up? When thou hast answered these inquiries, go on, and see that thy foundation be really fixed on Christ. If so, it must have been previously sought for, by digging deep into the natural state in which thou wast born. Jesus must have been first discovered, as most essentially necessary, and most essentially precious, before the spiritual building of the soul was made to rest upon him. And, when found, unless the whole of the building rest entirely upon him, it will, as a column out of its centre, still totter. Oh! it is blessed to make Christ the all in all of the spiritual temple; blessed to make him the first in point of order; blessed to make him the first in point of strength, to support and bear the weight of the whole building; blessed to make him the grand cement, to unite and keep together, in one harmonious proportion and regularity, every part of the building; and blessed to bring forth the top stone of the building, by his strength and glory, crying "Grace, grace unto it." Precious Jesus! may it be found that I have so sat down, counted the cost, and formed my whole plan, in thy strength, and to thy praise; that whatever oppositions, like the *Tobiahs* and *Sanballats* of old, I may meet with in the work, I may feel the sweetness and encouragement of that blessed scripture, and exult with the prophet: "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain!" (Zech. iv. 7.)

And God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

1 *Kings* iii. 5.

My honoured Lord! may I not, with all humbleness of soul, apply what was here said to Solomon, in the Old Testament dispensation, as said to all thy redeemed under the New Testament grace? Didst thou not say, Lord! "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full?" (John xvi. 23, 24.) I feel encouraged by this saying of my Lord; and I am come up, this evening, to my Lord, to get large supplies of grace, mercy, pardon, peace; yea, Christ himself, with all his gifts, with all his fulness, and all his blessings. And sure I am, if my Lord will give me as large a hand to receive, as my Lord's hand is to give, I shall have a blessed time of it this evening. My soul, look to it, that thou take with thee all thy wants; yea, come as empty as the poorest beggar that ever appeared in the poverty and wretchedness of a fallen nature; for, he that gives, "gives liberally, and upbraideth not." And knowest thou what thy wants are, and what the wants of Christ's Church upon earth are, and thine household, thy family, thy children, thy friends? Let them tell thee, if thou dost not know;

for say unto them, Jesus is upon the throne, and delighting to give out of his inexhaustible fulness; and there is an assurance of blessings, if asked in faith. Tell them that thou wilt faithfully lay their cases before him: yea, bring them with thee, and let all unite in prayer and supplication together, that every want may be supplied, and every poor sinner's heart made glad! Oh! what encouragement it is to consider, that every thing in Christ is for his people, and that he waits to be gracious, and delights in imparting blessings. The Father's gift of Christ is to this express purpose; for he so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son; and therefore, with him, "he will freely give all things." And Jesus, who gave himself for his people, will surely give every thing that can be needed to his people. And it is the glory, grace, and love of the Holy Ghost, to give to the people views and enjoyments of both the Father's love and the Son's grace. Hear, then, my soul, the voice from the mercy seat, this evening, "Ask what I shall give thee?" And see that thy petition, and the blessings thou prayest for, be great and large, suited to the glory of the great giver, and the largeness and tenderness of the Lord's heart. And do mark this down, as an encouragement to take with thee, of the assurance of thy success. If he that bids thee ask, gives thee faith at the same time to believe; and if, while the Lord is stretching forth the sceptre of his grace, he enables thee to stretch forth thy withered hand to touch it; sure I am, that thou wilt not come empty away; for he hath said, "All things that ye ask believing, ye shall receive."

And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made.

Acts xvi. 13.

What, had they no church, no synagogue, no prayer-house, in the city? Was it like another *Athens*, wholly given to idolatry? My soul, think of thy privileges, and learn rightly to prize them, and use them to the glory of the great giver. It was on the *Sabbath*. What a mercy to poor fallen man is the Sabbath! And yet what multitudes slight, despise, and never profit by it! My soul! think again, in this view also, of thy mercies; and bow down to the dust in the deepest humiliation of soul and body, that the Sabbath is precious to thee. "Who made thee to differ from another?" By-and-by thou wilt enter into the everlasting Sabbath of heaven. There is somewhat very interesting in what the apostle here saith of going out "by a river side." Probably it was in the recollection of the Church, that in Babylon, where the people were captives, the Lord made the river *Chebar* famous for visions to one prophet, and *Hiddekel* to another. But, blessed be God! though our land is so sinful, we are not given up to captivity; and while many of the nations around have had their

Churches turned into stables, amidst the din and horrors of war, our candlestick is not yet removed out of its place. Precious Jesus! wherever prayer is wont to be made by thy people, let my soul delight to be found. Let me hear thy voice inviting to communion: "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon." Yea, Lord, I would follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. I would follow thee to the assemblies of thy people. I would wait to see the goings of my God and King in his sanctuary. I would have my whole soul athirst for thee, as the hart for the cooling streams. And while I join thy people in the great congregation, where prayer is wont to be made, I pray thy grace, and the influences of thy blessed Spirit, to fire my soul with foretastes of that glorious assembly which are keeping an eternal Sabbath above, where the everlasting praises of God and the Lamb will engage and fill my raptured soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory, to all eternity.

And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold, none were of silver; it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.—1 *Kings* x. 21.

Behold, my soul! the splendour of Solomon, and figure to thyself what a court and people his must have been, with whom silver was as nothing; and then turn thy thoughts to Jesus, and ask thyself, whether it be possible to suppose that he, with whom are hid "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," can be otherwise than rich himself, and abundantly gracious to enrich his people. Thy Solomon, thy Jesus, hath all things, and all things richly to dispense. He is the universal Lord and proprietor of all. In him dwelleth all fulness; "yea, durable riches and righteousness." And what endears Jesus, and marks the superiority of his kingdom, is, that every thing in it is everlasting. Solomon's splendour was great; but it was limited to the period of his life; yea, less than life. But Jesus is everlasting—the riches and the blessings he hath, and which he gives, are everlasting. Jesus maketh both gold and silver, yea, the riches of grace and wisdom, as the stones of the street for abundance; and their blessedness is, like him, eternal. So that here we find an eternity of blessings. All beside is hollow, transitory, fading. But with Jesus it is solid and substantial. "I will cause them," he saith, "that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasure." Precious Lord! may I never contemplate earthly pageantry, without taking into the view thy glory; and while I behold human grandeur, however splendid, or however shining, which is but for the day, may my soul

hasten to the consideration of thy glory, which is a portion for thy redeemed to live upon to all eternity!

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.—*Ezek. xxxvi. 25.*

Was there ever a more precious scripture? And was there ever a poor sinner needed it more than thou, my soul? And what a thousand beauties are contained in it! Who is the great promiser but the Lord Jehovah, the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation? And what is the clean water here spoken of, but the blood of Christ? Christ, with all his redemption, all his fulness, all his suitableness, and his all-sufficiency. And what doth this sweet promise imply? Every thing in one is folded up in it. It is all of God, all in himself, and all to be wrought by himself. He provides the clean water; he cleanseth the sinners; he sprinkles, he applies, he promiseth the sure efficacy, for they "shall be clean;" and he makes the blessings most comprehensive, and full, and complete; for it shall be a cleansing from *all* their filthiness, and from *all* their idols. See, then, my soul, what a portion thou hast here found, in the word of God's grace, for thine evening's meditation! Evening, did I say; yea, for the meditation of thy whole life, and to form the foundation of a song of praise to all eternity! Here is every thing in it thou canst possibly need, to encourage thee to come for cleansing, under all thy pollutions, in thy daily walk through life. Here is God the Father fully engaged, and as fully promising. Here is Jesus, in his blood of sprinkling, as the Father's gift for cleansing in all his divine offices and suited mercy. And here is the purity wrought by the Holy Ghost, in his gracious application of the whole; and which he doth most graciously and most fully testify, when he shows thee thy need, and the suitableness of Jesus, and inclines thee to believe the efficacy of this blood of Christ "to cleanse from all sin." Now, my soul, muse over the blessedness and fulness of this sweet scripture, and see how suited it is, in every point, to thy wants, and to thy Lord's glory. And when thou hast gathered from it, like the bee from the flower, all the honey it contains, take it home to thy inmost affections, as the bee doth what he gathers to the hive, and live upon it for thy daily food. The promise is absolute; for God saith, "I will do it." And the certainty of its effect is as fixed: for God saith, "Ye shall be clean." And the extent of it is as sure: for God saith, "From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." My soul! ask the most daring heart of unbelief, what shall arise to unsay what God hath said, or to counteract what God hath promised?

The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.—*John* xiv. 24.

My soul! hast thou ever fully and thoroughly considered that sweet and precious teaching of thy Lord, which, as mediator, when upon earth, in all his discourses and conversations with his disciples, he was perpetually showing them? I mean that all he was, and all he had, and all he dispensed, were the blessings and gifts of his Father, in him, to his people. If thou hast been meditating upon this most blessed point of the gospel ever so fully and closely, it will still afford new glories for every renewed attention to it; and, therefore, sit down this delightful summer's evening, and take another view of it. Jesus comes to his people in his Father's name; and he saith, in this charming scripture, that his very words are not his, but the Father's: so much of the heart of the Father is in Christ, and in all of Christ, in all he saith, and all he hath done. So that what is Jesus doing, in all his ministry upon earth, yea, in all his sovereignty now in heaven, but showing to his redeemed the Father; and the Father's love, and grace, and mercy towards his people in him? Did he not then come forth from the bosom of the Father, full of grace and truth, as if to unfold to us what passed in the heart of the Father, of love and mercy towards his people, in the wonders of redemption? And is not Jesus now, in every renewed manifestation, teaching his redeemed the same? If all that the Father hath are our Jesus's, and all the fulness of the Godhead bodily dwelleth in him, surely we ought never to receive any of his good and blessed gifts, without seeing the Father's love in them. And would not this make every blessing doubly sweet and increasingly precious? If Jesus himself be the gift of the Father, shall I not enjoy the Father in all that Jesus bestows? And as I can have no immediate communion with the Father but by him, will not the mercies gather a blessedness, and a value, in coming to my poor soul, through Jesus's hands, as the bountiful dispenser of them? Yea, shall I not find a savour, which otherwise could never have been known, in receiving them in and from Jesus; convinced, as I am, that none cometh to the Father but by him; and, but for his opening a new and living way by his blood, never should I have known the Father's love, or the Redeemer's grace? Dear Lord Jesus! do thou give me, by thy blessed Spirit, ever to keep in remembrance these most precious things. So shall I truly enjoy both thy person and thy gifts. And then I shall not, like the apostle, pray for sight of the Father distinct from thee; for I shall then be perfectly satisfied and convinced, that in seeing thee I see the Father also; and, from henceforth, that I know him and have seen him. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.

Isaiah xlv. 11.

Nothing can give a higher proof of the love of God, than what the scriptures reveal concerning him. He opened a way of access to himself, when man by sin had lost the way; and in his dear Son he has made every provision for bringing us nigh by his blood. The throne of grace he hath opened for their approach, the assurance he hath given of accepting them in the beloved, the very tender and kind expressions which issue from the throne, and the answers which have been given to thousands, and are continually given to thousands who come there—yea, the promises with which they are surrounded, that “before they call he will answer, and while they are speaking he will hear;” all these are full of endearments, to show forth the love of God in Jesus Christ to all his people. But still, if possible, beyond all these, this portion from the writings of the prophet is most wonderful, and is confirmed by Jehovah’s own saying, “Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.” What! doth the Lord indeed allow himself to be commanded? Hath he thrown, as it were, the reins of government into the hands of his people; and, if the object of their petition be for his glory and their welfare, may they command him? My soul! what an astonishing, what an unparalleled instance of condescension is this! But are there any instances upon record of the kind? Yes! When *Jacob* wrestled with God in prayer, he boldly told the Lord that he would not let him go without a blessing—and the blessing he had. And God himself, a thousand years after, noted it down by the prophet, that “by his strength, he had power with God.” (*Hos.* xii. 3, 4.) When *Joshua* was pursuing the enemies of God, and of his Christ, he bade the sun stand still—and it did. (*Joshua* x. 12—14.) When the Lord Jesus went with the disciples to *Emmaus*, and they constrained him to abide, he was entreated of them, and went in with them. (*Luke* xxiv. 29.) And who shall say, what instances of wonder, grace, and love, in a thousand and ten thousand cases, both public and private, in the history of the Church and the Lord’s people, have been accomplished, of the same kind, and are every day going on, in their experiences? My soul! look at *Moses*, stopping the Lord’s hand, when coming forth to destroy Israel. (*Exod.* xxxii. 9—14.) Look how *Elias* shut up, and again opened, the windows of heaven, by the prevalency of prayer; and read the apostle’s comment upon it. (*1 Kings* xvii. 1; *James* v. 16—18.) And when thou hast duly pondered the wonderful subject, say, what is there thy God and Father can or will deny thee, when thou comest to him in the name, and blood, and intercession of his dear and ever bless-

ed Son? Read the inscription on his cross, in connection with this blessed scripture of the prophet, and then say with the apostle: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things." (Rom. viii. 32.)

Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies?—*Song vi. 13.*

It is the Church that is here called upon to return, and most likely by the daughters of Jerusalem. Some have thought the Church is so called, as being of *Salem* or *Shulem*, the shortened word for Jeru-salem. And some have thought that Salem is the same with Solomon, as the feminine of Solomon, the wife. And others have supposed, that as Jerusalem means peace, the Church is called so on account of her loveliness. And no doubt in each sense, the Church may well be called so, being married to Christ—being of the "Jerusalem that is above, which is the mother of us all; and being beautiful, peaceful, and lovely in Jesus, as Jerusalem is the praise of the whole earth." (Psalm xlvi. 2.) But wherefore is the *Shulamite* called upon to return, to be looked upon, and with such earnestness as to cause the request to be so often repeated? The answer is very plain. If it be the inquiry immediately on a soul's conversion, the change from death to life, from sin to salvation, is so great, that every one may be supposed anxious to behold. If it be the return of the poor believer, after a state of backsliding, the blushing face of a poor soul might also be well considered as a grateful sight to all that love to behold the blessed fruits of the Holy Ghost. And if it be in the after-stages of a life of grace, when a believer, from long knowing Jesus, and long living upon him, is become most beautiful and comely in his profession, no object upon earth can be an equal object of delight, or more worthy universal attention. So that in either sense, the earnest and repeated call for her return, to be looked upon, may be well accounted for. And the Church's answer is equally engaging. What would you see in me? As if she had said, In my best and highest attainment, I am but a poor creature in myself. All my beauty is derived from Jesus. I am indeed comely in him; and he is my glory, and the lifter-up of my head. But in myself I am no other but as one contending with two armies. I feel corruption rising continually against grace; and "when I would do good, evil is present with me." My soul! is not this thy very state? Art thou not perpetually exercised in this struggle? Precious Lord Jesus! let this view of thy Church comfort me in a consciousness of a family likeness. And oh, Lord! while I thus groan under indwelling corruption give me to see that they are but

remains. Jesus will at length, by little and little, drive these Canaanites out of the land.

O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth; and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

Joshua vii. 8, 9.

My soul! learn a most blessed lesson here, such as will be an unanswerable argument for thee at all times, and upon all occasions, to make use of at a mercy-seat, and among the strongest pleas in prayer. Israel had sinned, and had fallen before the enemy in consequence of it. Joshua confesseth that all that was come upon Israel was just, and had that been all the event included in Israel's destruction, it would have been no more than what was right. But God had promised to bring Israel into Canaan; and therefore the honour of God was concerned that this should be accomplished. Now, saith Joshua, if for our sins thou sufferest us to fall before our enemies, what will the nations of the earth say of it? How will the promise be fulfilled, and thy faithfulness and honour be secured? "O Lord, what shall I say? What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" Pause, my soul, and apply the sweet truth. God will magnify his name above all his word. He saith himself, "I wrought for my name's sake, that the land should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight they dwelt." And the Lord repeats it three times to the same purpose, in one chapter. (Ezek. xx. 9, 14, 22.) Now, my soul, under all thy straits and difficulties, do thou adopt the plan of *Joshua*, and be assured that this is the great argument to ensure success. His name is engaged *in* and *to* Jesus, to give him to see the travail of his soul, now he hath made his soul an offering for sin, and to be satisfied. Hence, therefore, the name of Jehovah is pledged to this. "Once have I sworn," he saith, "by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David." (Psalm lxxxix. 35.) Every believer in Christ should be for ever pleading this in the blood and righteousness of Jesus. Dost thou want pardon? Ask it for his name's sake. Dost thou want grace? Here again let the Lord's name's sake be the plea. To interest the name of the Lord in every petition, is the sure way to obtain it. To plead duties, or ordinances, or, in short, any thing but Jesus, and God the Father's covenant engagements to Jesus, is to go off the ground. No reason, or shadow of a reason, can be found, but God's own name, and this engaged in a way of redemption by Jesus, wherefore the Lord should be merciful to pardon and bless a poor sinner. Do not forget this, but for ever plead with

the Lord for his name's sake, and for his glory in Christ; and the event will surely be that Jehovah must work, and as he hath said himself, have pity for his holy name, "that it be not profaned among the heathen;" and answer thy petition for grace. And oh! how blessed that scripture in which the Lord sums up and confirms the whole, on this one account: "Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel." (Ezek. xxxvi. 22, 23.)

SEPTEMBER.

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.—*John* iv. 35.

My soul! the month hath opened most graciously—the season of the year is very interesting—all the reapers of the fruits of the earth are now busy in the fields, to gather in the food that perisheth: Oh! let it never be said of thee, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and thou art not saved!" (*Jerem.* viii. 20.) Pause, my soul, over the sweet words of Jesus, in the evening and cool of the day, and consider their import. As in nature there is a seed-time and harvest, so in grace. And we are told, that the Lord hath given "the appointed weeks of harvest." At what season doth thou now stand? Surely, thou art advanced to the time of ripening. How wilt thou discover this? Is there not a similarity here also between nature and grace? As the ripened corn becomes more full and ponderous, and golden and weighty, and, in proportion to ripeness, bends nearer to the earth, so the child of God, the better he is prepared for the garner of heaven, the more he is filled with spiritual attainments; becoming lower in his own eyes, and Jesus increasingly precious and exalted. And when the Lord gives the signal for his harvest-time, he cometh to the grave "like a shock of corn in full season." Precious Lord of the harvest! I beseech thee, carry on thy work in my heart, and let thy kingdom there be as thou hast described it, where the good seed is cast into the ground, and it springeth up and groweth, men know not how. Oh! prepare me for the harvest, that when, at thy command, the angel of death shall put in the sickle, I may be gathered to thy garner in heaven! Amen.

Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field: let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the

tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.—*Song vii. 11, 12.*

My soul! wilt thou do as the Church here hath done, and invite Jesus to come with thee into retirement, to enjoy sweet fellowship and communion, and to tell him how exceedingly thou lovest him, or desirest so to do? Jesus invites thee repeatedly to this, and why shouldst not thou invite him? It is blessed to catch the gracious words of thy Lord from his mouth, and to say to him what he first saith to thee. (See Isaiah xxvi. 20; Song ii. 10; Matt. xi. 28; Rev. xxii. 17.) And where wouldst thou have thy Lord to go with thee? Surely thou wilt say to the field of his own scriptures, and to the villages of his own people, and to the vineyards of his own Church, that Jesus may open to thee his own blessed word, and that thou mayest not barely visit, with Jesus, his people, but lie down with him, and he with thee, and arise early to visit the vineyards of his Church, as the blessed place where his honour dwelleth. And what is thy motive for this divine society with the Lord? Is it not to take delight in Jesus, and in all that concerns him? His vine is his Church. (Isaiah v. 7.) And oh! how refreshing is it to thee, to behold the Church of Jesus flourishing in the earth! How truly blessed to behold the first dawns of grace in young believers, which are not unlike the appearance of the tender grape; and the more confirmed faith of old saints, which the buddings of the strong fruit of the pomegranate shadow forth. Is this thy motive, and dost thou really, truly, and heartily invite thy honoured Lord to this communion? And wilt thou there show him thy loves, and tell him how truly lovely and truly loving he is; “that his love is better than wine;” and that thou desirest to love him, who hath first loved thee; and that thou longest to see more, and to know more of that love of Jesus, “which passeth knowledge, that thou mayest be filled with all the fulness of God?” If these be thy longings, and thou communicatest them to Jesus, he will be found of them that seek him; yea, “before thou callest, he will answer, and while thou art speaking, he will hear.” And, precious, blessed husband of thy Church and people! may I not consider this invitation as given also by thee to thy Church and to thy people, yea, to my poor soul? Methinks I hear thee saying to me, personally to me, “Come, my beloved; come, let us go forth into the field of my word alone; let us go together also to the villages of my people, and dwell in my house and vineyard: both in private and in public will I manifest myself unto thee, and show thee my loves.” Oh, thou bountiful Lord! thy whole heart is love. All is grace, and mercy, and kindness in Jesus; and all thou art, and all thou hast, is for thy people, thy redeemed, thy *Segullah*, thy chosen! Lord, give me but grace in the lively actings of faith, and my soul shall follow thee “whithersoever thou goest!”

Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God : for the day of the Lord is at hand : for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.—*Zeph. i. 7.*

My soul ! here is a portion of God's word, which, like the pillar of the cloud in the camp of Israel, hath a double aspect: it becomes a cloud of trembling indeed, of darkness, dread, and fear, to all spiritual Egyptians, but a glorious refreshing light to the people of God. The presence of the Lord God is a solemn presence to all, and will command silence, yea, a trembling. "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." And is the day of the Lord at hand? Yea, verily, every day brings it nearer; every breath, every pulse that beats, shortens the distance. There is, there must be, a day, in which "the Lord will judge the world in righteousness, and minister true judgment unto the people." And observe, my soul, what this blessed scripture adds: "The Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests." God hath set forth his dear Son, as a propitiation, for "without shedding of blood, there is no remission." He hath bid his guests. Yes! the Lord that hath made this rich feast of salvation, hath also invited the people he will have to partake of it. He hath sent out his word, his servants, into the highways, and lanes, and hedges of the city, to call them in. And their characters are marked: they are "the poor, and the needy, and the halt, and the blind." Thousands, answering to this character, are come; have partaken of the rich feast, and called it blessed; "and yet there is room." My soul! art thou come? Hast thou accepted the invitation, and come under this character? Hast thou found it blessed? Pause over the inquiry. The reverse of this will be a cup of trembling, and astonishment, and madness, to all that reject the counsel of God against their own souls, who are too proud to accept the bidding to the feast of Jesus's blood, to cleanse them, and too rich, in their own eyes, to look for salvation in his righteousness to justify them.

Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people : for the cause was from the Lord.—*1 Kings xii. 15.*

What a light doth this one verse throw upon the whole of this history, and upon ten thousand of a similar kind, which are perpetually going on through life! The event recorded in this chapter, that the king should listen to the counsel of fools, and disregard the advice of wise men, would have appeared incredible, the thing itself being so very obvious. But when we perceive the latent cause, and are told that it was "from the Lord," how strikingly doth it set forth the wonderful government of God in bringing about the sacred purposes of his holy will! My soul!

sit down, this evening, and ponder well the subject. Think how truly blessed it is, and how truly sanctified, to see his almighty hand in every dispensation. And bring home the doctrine itself, for it is a very blessed one, if well studied and well followed up, to thine own concerns and circumstances. When, in any of the providential or gracious appointments of thy Jesus, thou art exercised and afflicted, what can be thy relief, but seeing the cause as from the Lord? The sin and transgression that induceth it, indeed, are all thine own. But the overruling of it to thy future welfare and the divine glory is the Lord's. Thus "the man of Uz" was grievously afflicted in every direction; but we are told that the Lord's permission was in the whole: and the sequel fully proved the Lord's design. Thus "the man after God's own heart" was cursed by *Shimei*, in the moment when his life was sought after by his own unnatural son; but what said David, under the heavy trial? "Let him alone, for the Lord hath bidden him." And what a gracious and sanctified improvement did he make of it, in proof that the Lord, who was smiting, was also upholding: "It may be," said he, "that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." (2 Sam. xvi. 5—12.) My soul! see every cause, every event, and every dispensation, as from the Lord; "He ruleth in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." If he afflict his children, still they are his children; the relationship never lessens, neither is his love abated: "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Doth he raise up bad men to persecute them? Still they are but the sword: the government of it is the Lord's. Doth Jesus speak in frowning providences, or hide himself from giving out his accustomed gracious visits of love? Still he is and must be Jesus. There is no change in him, whatever outward dispensations seem to say. He saith himself, "I know the thoughts I think towards you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (Jerem. xxix. 11.) Precious Lord Jesus! give me the seeing eye, and the understanding heart, to behold thy hand in all, to rest upon thy love and faithfulness in all, and to be for ever looking unto thee under all; so shall I bless thee for all; and, sure I am, the issue will be to thy glory, and my everlasting happiness.

While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.—*Genesis* viii. 22.

My soul! look at this gracious covenant-promise of God, which was made more than four thousand years since, and is as faithfully confirmed to thy experience this night as in the first hour

wherein the Lord delivered it. How hath the seed-time and harvest, the cold and heat, the summer and winter, and day and night, through every generation, proclaimed the unfailing truth! And although we are taught to expect, and by faith both to look and to long for "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," yet is this blessed promise not less sure, or less to be depended on, "while the" present "earth remaineth." And do not overlook that special feature of divine faithfulness, in the fulfilment of this gracious promise; I mean that amidst all the unworthiness of man, God's bounty continues the same. Were the sun to cease its beneficial influence, or the clouds to withhold their fatness, until man deserved those blessings, the sun would rise no more, neither would the bottles of heaven pour down their fruitfulness. Sweet thought to the heart of a poor sinner! The Lord's goodness is all in himself, and from himself, and to himself, for his own glory. Indeed, so abundantly gracious and compassionate is the Lord, that he very frequently takes occasion from our misery, to magnify the riches of his mercy; and, "where sin hath abounded, grace doth much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." There is one delightful thought more, arising out of this blessed scripture, in the confirmation which the regular return of day and night gives to the faithfulness of the almighty Promiser, namely, that the Lord himself appealeth to this fulfilment of his covenant in nature, as the confirmation that he will fulfil his covenant in grace. "Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, that there should not be day and night in their season; then also may my covenant be broken with David my servant." (Jerem. xxxiii. 20, 21.) Oh! precious words of a gracious covenant God in Christ! Lord, I bow down before thee, under a deep sense of thy grace and love! Thou hast indeed "sworn once in thy holiness, that thou wilt not lie unto David;" even the David of thy people, thy dear and ever blessed Son! Oh! grant that, each night and morning, as well as through all the changing, but sure seasons of nature, all may be sweetly sanctified in their regular visits to my soul, while remaining on earth; that I may have a double relish and enjoyment in a sanctified use of them; and accept thy daily faithfulness in nature as a sure pledge of thy everlasting faithfulness in grace, that "in Jesus all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory."

Ready to be revealed in the last time. —1 *Peter* i. 5.

My soul! hast thou ever considered the very great and blessed things contained in these few words? Sit down, this evening, and look them over. Dost thou ask, what is ready to be revealed

in the last time? The answer is direct. All the fulness, glory, grace, provision, peace, and everlasting happiness, that are in the covenant of redemption, and all centered in the person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thou hast now but obscure views of Jesus, and his fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. Thou hast believed indeed unto salvation, and art resting upon Christ for thy justification, and sanctification, and comfort; but of the fulness in which believers stand complete in Christ, no saint upon earth hath ever had a conception equal to what it really is. "Beloved," saith John, "now are we the sons of God! and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.) Now the blessedness of these things, in all their fulness, and in all their glory, is reserved to be "revealed in the last time:" and they are now already. Angels are always upon the wing, and are waiting to bring the heirs of the kingdom into the immediate possession, and immediate enjoyment of them. And although clouds here arise between, to obscure those bright and glorious objects, yet the heirs of promise ought to enjoy them now by faith; for they are eternally secure, and, through the Lord of them, eternally their own. Now, my soul, what sayest thou to these things? Are they ready to be revealed in the last time? Are they thine now? Hast thou Jesus, and with him all things? Is the last time approaching? Are angels waiting? Is Jesus waiting to unfold all to thy ravished view? and every thing ready? What sayest thou, my soul! Art thou ready also? Lord Jesus! give me grace to be always on the look-out for thy coming, and to be as delighted with thy approach as they that wait for the morning!

For the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that be bidden.—1 *Samuel* ix. 13.

I know not how scrupulous the Israelites were of not partaking of the sacrifice, until their prophet, Samuel, had blessed it in the name of the Lord; but well I know, no offering, under the gospel dispensation, can be profitable or blessed, until Jesus be first seen in it, and first enjoyed in it too. Surely thou, dear Lord! thou art the all in all of every thing that is sacred, blessed, and interesting. Thou art the altar, the sacrificer, and the sacrifice! And it can only be from thy blessing upon our poor ordinances, when we hold a feast upon thy one all-sufficient sacrifice, that any real enjoyment of a spiritual nature can be found in them. Neither, Lord, till I hear thy bidding, can I venture to eat. If Jesus indeed say, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," then I feel a confidence in thy welcome to every

gospel feast, and "sit down under thy shadow with great delight, and thy fruit is sweet to my taste." Come then, thou dear Lord! come to thine own banquet; to thy Church, thy table, thine house of prayer, thine ordinances! Come and bless thy people, and command a blessing upon all thine own appointments, and all will be blessed indeed!

He is near that justifieth me.—*Isaiah* l. 8.

My soul! hast thou ever considered one of the sweet properties of justification? not only in the fulness and completeness of it, and in all the several blessings connected with it, as it ariseth out of Jehovah in his own threefold character of persons; all and each taking part in it; but also in that which this portion points out, the *nearness* in which Jesus, the glorious justifier, always stands to thee, and surrounds thee? Sit down this evening, and contemplate the subject of justification in this point of view, for it is indeed most blessed. All the persons of the Godhead have, and are engaged in making it effectual to every poor sinner, so as to give the mind always somewhat to rest upon, in the assurance of it. God the Father is the source and fountain of it, not only in having provided it in his dear Son, but also as having by the justification of all the Redeemer's work, to all intents and purposes, justified the poor believer in Jesus. Hence the apostle, with rapture, exclaims: "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) And it is Jesus that justifieth all his redeemed, by his blood and righteousness: "for he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.) And that the hand of God the Holy Ghost was in all this, is equally evident; for it is as expressly said, that Christ was "justified in the Spirit;" which would never have been the case, had not both God's law and God's justice been satisfied, and thus justified Jesus, as the sinner's surety. (1 Tim. iii. 16; Rom. i. 4.) But, over and above these glorious truths, as the foundation of every poor believer's hope, I charge thee to mark it down, my soul, in the memorandums of thine inmost thoughts, that as God the Father who justified Jesus, thy surety, was always near to him, so he that justifieth thee is always near to thee. The charter of grace, and thy pardon written down in it in letters of blood, even the blood of Christ, is always near and at hand. Here it stands on eternal record, that "God is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." And he is near that justifieth, both as thine advocate to plead, that if any doubts should arise in thy poor timid mind concerning it, Jesus might open the volume of record, and there, by his Holy Spirit, show it unto thee; and also, by the same almighty power, incline thy heart to the perfect belief of it, to thy joy and peace in believing. Now, I again charge thee, this

night, that thou from henceforth never lose sight of the soul-reviving truth contained in this blessed scripture. But when Satan accuseth, and fears arise, and doubts would creep in, and both law and justice seem to be reviving their claims, look not at thyself, but look to all-precious Jesus. Behold him in all his fullness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency, as thy law-fulfiller and sin-atonement surety, and cry out in those divine words which the Holy Ghost hath given thee, "He is near that justifieth me!"

Then is the offence of the cross ceased.—*Gal. v. 11.*

The cross of Jesus was, of old, the great offence both to Jews and Greeks; and, in the present day, we may add, it is so to every one, who, by a perversion of language, calls himself Christian, but yet denies the Godhead of him whom he presumes to call Master. And if the believer would but relinquish this distinguishing feature in his Lord's person and atonement for his sins by the blood of his cross, then indeed would the offence of the cross cease. But, my soul, ask thyself, whether the offence of the cross be ceased in thy view? Yea, rather, whether, like Paul, not only the reproach of the cross is taken away for ever; but thou art crying out with a holy indignation against all rejoicings but in Jesus and his cross? Say, is it not thy daily, hourly song: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world?" (*Gal. vi. 14.*) Is all thy glory in him, whom, in reproach, the world called "the man hanged upon the tree?" Art thou for ever looking on him there, and for ever rejoicing in the view? There, sayest thou, there hangs all my confidence, all my joy, my security, my victories, my triumphs! Offence, do they say? Witness for me, I would say, all ye angels of light, that "this is all my salvation, and all my desire!" My soul utterly renounceth, utterly despiseth every idea of any other Saviour but my Lord Jesus, and him crucified. Lead me, thou blessed Holy Spirit, lead me to the continued celebration of my Lord's cross, in my Lord's supper. There let Jesus Christ be evidently set forth crucified for me; and there may I receive the bread and wine, the representations of his body and blood, that I seek redemption in no other, but am heartily, fully, completely satisfied and convinced, that "there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God.—And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people.—*Deut. xxvi. 17, 18.*

What a most lovely view doth this scripture hold forth of the solemn transactions between God and his people! What an

amazing thought, that the High and Holy One, who inhabiteth eternity, should condescend to propose and confirm such a covenant! and, my soul, dost thou think that, in the charter of grace, sealed as it is in the blood of God's dear Son, this covenant is less blessed or less sure? Doth not God confirm it in every promise? Is it not read and ratified in every ordinance? And doth not that Holy Spirit of promise set his seal to the whole, "whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption?" Pause over the blissful subject! Ponder it well, this solemn evening! Surely, every service, every ordinance in the Church of Jesus, becomes a confirmation of the blessed truth. What, indeed, is the gospel itself, but God's covenant in Christ, avouching himself to be our God, and addressed to the ear? And what is the institution of the Supper, but the same thing addressed to the eye? And when received by faith, both become seals of the covenant, to certify that the Lord this day, by this service, avouches himself that he is, and ever will be our God; and we avouch, by the same, that we are, and ever will be his people. Oh! it is sweet and refreshing at an ordinance, yea, without ordinances, to be looking over, and reviewing continually, those bonds of the covenant. Dost thou not feel an inexpressible joy, and rapture, and delight, to look back on those gracious transactions, which have passed between thee and thy God in Christ? From the first *Bethel*-visits of the divine love, through the numberless renewals of it, in which thou hast heard his lovely voice speaking to thee again, and saying to thee, as to Jacob of old, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me." (Gen. xxxi. 13.) Yea, Lord! I have done, and still do, and desire everlastingly to be found doing it. It is my daily prayer to avouch thee to be my gracious Lord God in covenant, in the blood and righteousness of Christ! And do thou, my glorious Lord God, avouch me to be among the redeemed of thy people. Surely, Lord, in this charter of grace, thou hast made over thyself, in all thy divine perfections, to be thy people's. In this royal grant, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," all thine attributes are pledged for the fulfilment of thy covenant-promises to thy dear Son, and his Church in him. Thy very name, Lord, gives a being to thy engagements, and an assurance of their being fulfilled. Yea, Lord, thou hast given thyself to thy people in Christ, and commanded them to call thee theirs. Begin thy song, my soul, and say, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup; he will maintain my lot." (Psalm xvi. 5.)

And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? (and

when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away) for it was very great.—*Mark xvi. 3, 4.*

My soul! how very often, like these poor women, at the door of our Lord's sepulchre, hast thou been at a loss to think whence help should arise to succour thee in the needed moment! And how often, like them, hast thou found, when looking again, all the difficulties which thou hadst figured to thyself removed! And with thee thy mercy hath been, if possible, yet more striking. For thou not only needest the stone to be rolled away from the door of the sepulchre that thou mightst see Jesus, but to have the stone taken away out of thine heart, that thou mightst love and believe in Jesus to the salvation of thy soul. Is it so then, that whilst, at any time, thou art putting forth the question and inquiry, full of doubt and fear, and misgiving who shall help in this or that difficulty; and when thou lookest again, behold the Lord hath been better to thee than all thy fears, and "every mountain before thy great Zerubbabel is become a plain?" Wilt thou not learn hence, that thy Lord Jesus, with all his benefits, is not only set before thee, and revealed to thee, but made over to thee, to be received, and to be enjoyed, and to be made use of, by thee, for all and every purpose in which his glory and thy salvation are concerned? The stone is indeed very great in every heart, by nature, and unmovable by natural strength. But look again. He that arose from the dead, and broke open the sepulchre, can and will take it away, according to that sweet promise, (*Ezek. xxxvi. 26.*) And if the stone be removed, and the fountain of life broken up, in the person, and glory, and triumphs of Jesus, come, then, my soul, and "draw water out of those wells of salvation." Oh! how truly blessed is it to see Jesus in all, and to enjoy Jesus in all; for then, whatever great obstructions seem to lie in the way, the Lord himself doth and will remove them. "He brings the blind by a way they knew not. He causeth them to walk in places that they have not known. Crooked things are made straight, and rough places plain: and all his redeemed then see the salvation of our God!"

And have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

1 Corinthians xii. 13.

What a most lovely and endearing representation is here given of the several members of Christ's mystical body, as all united to their one glorious and common head, and, like so many branches of the vine, deriving every thing of life, and grace, and fruitfulness from him! "They have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Yes; the Lord the Spirit, the Holy Ghost the comforter, whose gracious influence first unites them to Jesus, unites them also, in him, to one another. Hence, though distant and remote from each other; divided and separated by distant climes, and

countries, and languages; though unknown by face to each other, yea, in language, and manners, and customs wholly dissimilar; and of different degrees of knowledge, and apprehension, and attainment in the divine life; yet from being one with Christ, they are also one with each other, and "are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;" part of the universal Church, and constituting one complete whole, of which Christ is the head: "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." My soul! couldst thou ask the native of any country or climate, who is a real member of Christ's body, what are his feelings of sin, and what his views of Jesus, thou wouldst find a complete correspondence with thine own. He hath groaned for sin, as thou hast groaned; and he hath found Jesus precious, as thou hast found him. And whence all this, but because one and the same almighty Teacher hath been the instructor of both? "We have been all made to drink into one Spirit!" He is the source, and fountain of spiritual life, and sustenance, and strength in all! And as the first quickenings of grace arise from his divine influences, so is it from his blessed impressions that believers are sealed and secured unto the day of eternal redemption. Hail! thou holy and almighty Lord! Cause the whole church of Jesus to be for ever living at the fountain-head of mercies, "who have been all made to drink into one Spirit!"

But which of you having a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?—*Luke xvii. 7, 8.*

I have often thought that the Lord Jesus, the bountiful Lord of all his servants, and who giveth largely to the supply of all his household, hath a more special and suited food for his servants in the ministry, who are employed by him to set forth his table for others. They are, as the servant here described, in the field ploughing, and engaged in every branch of the spiritual husbandry. But when they return, their peculiar privilege is to wait upon their Master. And well is it for them; for in the faithful discharge of their labours, so great and constant are their engagements, in following up the several departments of it, that, while keeping the vineyard, the church, their own interests would be sadly neglected and forgotten. Yet it is a most certain truth, that no servant in a family can be faithful to his Lord's interest, who is not faithful to himself. No minister of the Lord Jesus

can be concerned for other men's souls, who hath no concern for his own. How very blessed is it then, that the Lord Jesus hath made suitable provision in this particular, that when the public service of the day is over, he opens to the private enjoyment of his people in himself alone. My soul! hath not Jesus, in this delightful scripture, taught thee this sweet lesson? Public ordinances will be doubly blessed, when, in the after-retirement, we wait upon Jesus in private. And in the most busy life, there will be always some moment found to do this. Jesus himself, "when he had sent the multitudes away, went up into the mountain, apart, to pray." The night opened to him the pleasures of communion, when the public services had engaged him all the day. And wilt not thou, dear Lord, while thy servant is waiting upon thee at thy table, bless him with some glimpse of thy glory? Shall he not find himself refreshed, in hearing the gracious words which drop from thy sacred lips? Will he not indeed esteem "thy words more than his necessary food?" Yea, Lord! thou wilt thyself be both his meat and his drink; and to wait on thee at thy table will be found more blessed than all the unsanctified tables of those who fare sumptuously every day!

Which things the angels desire to look into.

1 Peter i. 12.

My soul! what an argument ariseth out of this view, of the angels of light being inquisitive about man's redemption, to stir thee up to the same most blessed contemplation! If in the apprehension of those intelligent and exalted beings of light, the subject is so glorious, what ought it to be to thee? If, as the words represent, they fix their closest attention, and are lost in admiration, wonder, love, and praise, how is it, that thou, who art so deeply interested in the blissful theme, shouldst forget it, as thou dost for hours together, and even when thou thinkest of it, contemplate it so very coolly? Oh! for grace more and more to study Jesus and his love, Jesus and his grace, Jesus and his great salvation! But among the wonders of redemption, is there not one point (and, as it concerns thee, my soul, a marvellous one indeed it is) which may well be supposed to call forth the greater astonishment of the holy angels as they behold it: I mean as they behold the glory of thy Jesus advanced, not only when poor sinners praise him for what he is in himself, and what he is to them, but when their emptiness, poverty, wants, and wretchedness, afford the rich opportunity for the Lord Jesus to get to himself glory, in giving out of his fulness? Here, surely, angels may well desire to pry into the cause, and be lost in the contemplation. And, as it concerns thee, my soul, how must the angels "that are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them that are heirs of salvation;" how must they stand amazed

when they see thy Lord waiting to be gracious unto *thee*, even in the very time when thou *wouldst tire every* patience but his, "in wearying with thine iniquities?" And how must their angelic minds feel amazed that Jesus should get glory from such a poor worthless worm as thou art in making the riches of his grace to shine upon thee, while thousands, not more undeserving, know him not, and are unacquainted with his grace and mercy! Oh! gracious Lord! how is it that thou dost thus manifest thyself to me, otherwise than thou dost unto the world! Ye angels of light! ye ministering spirits of my God! join with me in praise for my Lord's graciousness to such a sinner; for surely, your high intelligent minds cannot but be lost in admiration, when beholding the aboundings of grace exceeding even the aboundings of sin, and, in my instance, as far surpassing, "as the heavens are higher than the earth!"

A door-keeper in the house of my God.

Psalm lxxxiv. 10.

My soul! hast thou ever considered the blessedness of such an appointment, of such an office, when truly followed up? If Jesus indeed appoint, and both teach the nature of it, and give grace to the faithful discharge of it, then is it most honourable, and truly blessed. A door-keeper is supposed to know the several apartments of the house, and to be well acquainted with his Lord and Master, in whose service he ministers. He is supposed also to know who goeth out, and who cometh in; whether his Lord be at home, and how his fellow-servants are employed in their ministry. And if he be a faithful door-keeper, he will willingly open to none but such as his Lord approves, but most gladly show all that come in his Lord's name, and are welcome to his Lord, the way to his Lord's presence and his Lord's table. What sayest thou, my soul, to such an office? Surely, to be "an hewer of wood, and a drawer of water, in the service of the sanctuary," is an honourable employment; and how much more to be "a door-keeper in the house of God!" The man after God's own heart was so much delighted with the thought of God's house, that he seemed to grudge the constant abode of the birds that made their nests at the altar. Poor David, though a king in Israel, could only now and then go up to the house of God, but these birds rested there. And under the full impression of the happiness resulting from a constant residence, he broke out in a hymn of praise: "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house," whose home, whose abode, whose constant employment is there; for "they will be still praising thee." Pause, my soul! hast thou the same views as David? Consider wherein this blessedness consists: the servants of the Lord, who dwell in their Lord's house, are blessed, not because they are in the re-

ceipt of wages; not because their bountiful Lord provides a table for them; but because they live in the constant enjoyment of his divine presence! and because the Lord gives them employment, and his praises are their meat and drink; "they will be still praising thee," saith David. Yes! the house of God is then a heaven below, where the servants of the Lord find their joy and happiness from the everlasting praises of God and the Lamb! But alas! if the servants of the Lord's house, in any or all of the departments, from the highest to the lowest, dwell there, not to glorify the Lord and promote his honour, but to serve their own bellies, and, like the finger-post to the traveller, stand to direct him in his way, but move not a step themselves, so far from a blessedness, they will find in the end of their labours, that the heaviest of all condemnations will follow! Blessed Lord Jesus! thou wert a door-keeper indeed to thine own house, that in all things thou mightst have the pre-eminence! Thou, for the love thou hadst to thy Master, to thy church, thy wife, and thy children, didst, like the Jewish servant, submit to have thine ear bored at the door-post, to go out no more free, but to remain for ever. Oh! for grace to cry out, in the review of such love as passeth knowledge, "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." (See Exod. xxi. 5, 6.)

And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the even-tide.—*Genesis xxiv. 63.*

My soul! every season is suited for meditation, if the Lord the Holy Ghost suit the mind for the employment. But unless he prepare the heart, no preparation will be found in any season. What multitudes are there, to whose unthinking-minds neither the morning breath nor the evening call, in the Lord's mercies in providence and in grace, have any hearing! They arise, as they lay down, unconscious and unconcerned as to whom they are indebted for keeping their persons and their dwelling-places in safety. They put on the garment to cover and adorn the body, but are ignorant that their souls are without clothing! They wash and refresh the body, but the pollution of the soul they see not! They are anxious to preserve the casket, but the jewel it contains falls under their feet, as an object of no value! My soul! do thou look at the patriarch Isaac, and take him for thy pattern. He went out "to meditate in the field at the even-tide!" He turned his back upon the house and family, and sought, in the solitude of the field, to have his mind disengaged from men, that he might be wholly engaged in devout communion with God. And is not the present evening suited to thee for this purpose? It is a calm and serene season, and every thing invites thee to the employment. Thy wants and necessities; the solemn in-

quiry how thou art advancing in grace, and in the knowledge of thy Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; the consciousness that another day of thy pilgrimage is ended, and thou art by so much the nearer thine eternal home; every momentous interest belonging to a dying creature in a dying world, presses the matter upon thee, to ponder the path of thy feet, which, in every step, is leading thee to eternity. Go then, if not to the field of nature, yet to the field of grace, and if thou hast no closet to retire to, yet retire to thine own heart, and there meditate on all those interesting subjects which belong to an immortal soul. Jesus waits to meet thee, to be gracious to thee, and he will show thee his secret. O thou dear Lord of thy people! cause me to delight in those sweet and sacred interviews! Let every evening toll the bell of recollection to call home my poor wandering heart; and when the tumult of a busy, unsatisfying, and troublesome day is over, oh! for grace to do as my Lord did; "send the multitude away, and get up apart into the holy mountain" of faith and love in the Lord Jesus, "to meditate and pray!"

A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.—*Psalm xxii.* 30, 31.

It is precious, yea, truly blessed also, to discover the happy correspondence there is between the several parts of scripture, in their testimony concerning the features of God's people. Jehovah, in his Trinity of Person, is always found as engaged in it; and each one in the holy and undivided three gives assurance to it. "I will pour my Spirit," saith the Lord the Father, (speaking to the person of his dear Son, as the Israel of his people,) "upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." (Isaiah xlv. 3.) "A seed," saith Christ, (or, as it might be rendered, and indeed is rendered in the version of the psalms read in the Churches, *my seed*,) "shall serve him." This is the very seed which the Lord hath blessed, and which all that see shall acknowledge, (Isaiah lxi. 9;) "the people" which Jehovah "formed for himself," which he gave unto his Son, and "which shall show forth his praise." (Isaiah xliii. 21.) And as both the Father and the Son have thus marked them with these striking particularities, so the Holy Ghost as plainly sets his seal to the great truth, and confirms who they are, by making them "willing in the day of his power." Now, my soul! behold, in this most blessed scripture, how decidedly the characters of the seed of Christ are marked, and behold thine own features in them. The seed of Christ, his offspring, his people, his redeemed, more or less delight in the Lord; they serve the Lord: and they are numbered, accounted to the Lord as his people; his

generation. And they are as truly his by the new generation in grace, as they are by the old generation in nature, the seed of Adam after the flesh. So they are accounted, accepted, and received, in God's sight. Mark another blessed property by which they are known: "They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness." Yes! for the language of every one of them is, "I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." (Psalm lxxi. 16.) Yea, the name by which they call their Holy One, their Redeemer, is, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!** Neither is this all: for they shall not only renounce every thing in themselves, as in any way a procuring cause to this blessedness, but, both in original design, and in actual possession, they shall refer all unto the unsearchable goodness, and mercy, and grace of God. The work, and glory, and praise, are all the Lord's, and all the declarations of it shall be to this amount: that the Lord "hath done it!" What sayest thou, my soul, to this precious and blessed testimony of Jehovah? Surely thou canst, and wilt set to thy seal, "that God is true!"

He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked.—1 *John* ii. 6.

Sweet testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, when from being *in* Christ, we are walking *with* Christ; and one and the same spirit runs through all. As a man never walks as Christ walked, before he is first united to Christ, so when truly united to Christ, the evidence is made to appear by loving what Jesus loves, and hating what Jesus hates. As *Ruth* said to *Naomi*, so the believer saith to the Lord Jesus: "Where thou goest I would go, and where thou lodgest I would lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God!" And, my soul, think what a blessed, unanswerable proof doth it afford, both to thyself and to the world around, when, from abiding in Christ, we live as Christ! that is, his Holy Spirit moves in us, speaks in us, walks in us, yea, doth all in us: and as the soul of man gives life and action to the body, so Christ, who is the soul of the believer, gives life and action to the soul. Hence Paul considered himself so wholly actuated, in every part of the spiritual life, by the indwelling residence of the Spirit of Christ, that he said, it was not he that lived, but Christ that lived in him: "The life," saith he, "which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.) My soul! canst thou subscribe to the same? "If Christ be in thee, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." (Rom. viii. 10.) Oh! for grace so to abide in Jesus, that every act of my life may testify "whose I am, and whom I serve;" and like that martyr, who, to every question put to him, only answered, "I am a

Christian," so, my soul, may every act, every word, yea, every thought of thine, so proclaim Jesus, and thy union and oneness with him, that all with whom thou hast to do may plainly discover thou art no longer thine own, but, "being bought with a price, thou dost glorify God in thy body, and in thy spirit, which are both his."

An hireling his day.—*Job* xiv. 6.

The sufferings of *Job* are proverbial; but the sermons of this exercised believer, though delivered from a dunghill, were sweet sermons. The figure of "an hireling" accomplishing his day, (and that a day, both on account of original sin and actual transgression, fleeting and full of labour and sorrow,) forms a just, though sad representation of human life. But this, like all the other circumstances of our fallen state, when read through the medium of the gospel, and softened and sweetened with the blood of Christ, puts on a different aspect. It is then found in its shortness to be the better, and in its crosses to be the more sanctified; and, like Samson's riddle, "out of the eater to come forth meat, and out of the strong to bring forth sweetness." (*Judges* xiv. 14.) It is the blessed property of grace, to work by contraries; so that the cross of Jesus, like the tree cast into the waters of *Marah*, put into our hireling life, sweetens all. My soul! if thou art taken from the rubbish of nature, into the house and service of Jesus as an hireling, it is not until the day of the hireling be accomplished, that the Lord of the vineyard bids the steward to call the labourers, and give them their hire. It was only "in the end of the world," that Jesus himself appeared, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Is the hireling's life to be regretted, because it is short, when every portion of it is marked with sin, and consequently is unsatisfying? Yea, is not rather its shortness rendered blessed? And if all the comforts and blessedness of God's house are treasured up for the labourers of his house, when the evening is come, and the steward is commanded to call them home to be paid; doth it not comfort thee, my soul, in the thought that thy life here is but as that of an hireling? Hath Jesus passed by, and employed thee, and sent thee into his vineyard, when thou wert standing idle at the market-place? Hast thou been doing the work of the day in the day, according to the Lord's appointment? Hath thy Lord's eye been upon thee, and, like another *Boaz*, come from Bethlehem, hath Jesus often visited thee, blessed thee, held up thine hands, refreshed thy soul, and made thee glad with the light of his countenance? (*Ruth* ii. 4.) Oh! then bless him, that thy continuance here is but as "an hireling in his day." The evening will come; the hour is at hand, when Jesus will call thee home to his "house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" when all the blessings of the everlasting cove-

nant will be given to Jesus's labourers, and the supper of the Lord will be spread, and all his redeemed shall sit down with him, to go out no more for ever! Amen.

The true vine.—*John xv. 1.*

Dearest Jesus! how shall I ever be able sufficiently to admire, much less adore thee, for thy wonderful and unequalled condescension? What image, what similitude in nature, hast thou made use of here, in that of the vine, to mark the lowliness and meekness of thy person; and in the same moment, thy fruitfulness, and love, and usefulness to thy people! It was truly prophesied of thee, my Lord, that thou shouldst be "as a root out of a dry ground." And what so apparently dry and unpromising, before the budding season, as the vine? It was said that thou wouldst have "no form nor comeliness, nor any beauty, that we should desire thee." And here, when thou callest thyself "the true vine," surely, Lord, thou couldst have chosen no image more unsightly. It was said, that thou shouldst be "lowly and meek, when coming with salvation." And what so low as the vine, that sends forth her branches upon the ground? What so weak and feeble as the vine, that needs always some prop or stay to cast her feeble arms upon? Thy extent, O Lord, in the spreading of thy gospel, was prophesied to be "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." And truly, Lord, in the wide-spreading branches of the vine, thou art the fruitful bough of Joseph, "even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall." And when we see the multitude of thy people, all hanging on thee, all united to thee, and all drawing sap, and moisture, and life, and strength, and fruitfulness from thee, what can more beautifully represent Jesus and his people than the rich vine and her branches, on which grow the fullest clusters of the pure blood of the grape? Precious Lord Jesus! thou art indeed "the true vine," and "the plant of renown," which, for wholesomeness, verdure, nourishment, and delight, surpasseth the whole creation of God. Lord, let me sit under thy shadow, let me taste of thy fruit, "for they that dwell under thy shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine, the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon."

He made a feast unto all his princes, and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces being before him. When he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the ho-

nour of his excellent majesty, many days, even an hundred and fourscore days.—*Esther* i. 3, 4.

Who can read the account here given of the royalty and liberality of the Persian monarch, without having the mind immediately directed to look at the Lord Jesus, in his royalty and grace, and to consider both the extent of his bounty, and the honour of his excellent majesty, compared to which this earthly potentate sinks to nothing? What though his kingdom reached over a hundred and seven-and-twenty provinces, from India to Æthiopia; what is this to him, whose dominion is “from sea to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth;” yea, who hath “all power in heaven and in earth,” and hath “the keys of hell and the grave?” And what a day, in point of duration, was that feast, which, though extended to a hundred and fourscore, yet, when ended, left nothing to follow, but perhaps induced sickness and sorrow, when we contemplate that eternal and everlasting day, to which Jesus invites, and in which he entertains all his people, whom he hath made “kings and priests unto God and the Father,” and where they shall not only feast with him, and he with them, but shall sit down with him on his throne, as he hath overcome, and is sat down with his Father on his throne? And in this one eternal and never-ending feast of the Lord Jesus, from which the guests shall go out no more, there is nothing to nauseate, nothing unpleasant to mingle, but all is light, and joy, and peace, and unspeakable felicity. Here Jesus openly showeth the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty! Here he brings his redeemed into a perfect acquaintance with himself, and opens to their astonished, unceasing contemplation and delight the wonders of his person, and the wonders of his love; and fills their ravished souls “with joy unspeakable and full of glory,” in the knowledge of “the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.” Hail! thou glorious King of kings, and Lord of lords! Here thou art making a feast of grace in thine holy mountain, for all thy poor and needy, and halt and blind, whom thou hast made the princes of thy kingdom, and whom thou wilt bring, in thine own good time, to the everlasting feast of glory in thy kingdom above! Grant me, blessed Jesus, to be one of the happy number who partake of thy bounties of grace here, and, sure I am, that I shall then one day sit down to the everlasting enjoyment of thyself in the glories of heaven for ever!

Who maketh thee to differ from another?

1 *Cor.* iv. 7.

My soul! sit down, in the cool of this lovely evening, and, in the recollection of *distinguishing* mercies, look up and behold the gracious hand that “maketh thee to differ from another;”

until thine heart overflow, in a view of the wonderful subject, with thanksgiving, love and praise. If thou wilt open the volume of thine own life, (and surely, of all volumes, when explained by the word of God, it is the most interesting to read,) thou wilt behold such a multitude of instances, in all the departments of *nature*, *providence*, and *grace*, as, under divine teaching, will bring home the question with the most awakened earnestness to the heart, and cause thee frequently to exclaim, as thou passest on, "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" Every defect of nature in others, every poor cripple, or the blind, or deaf, which thou meetest with; the want of intellect, or the want of understanding, yea, that thou wert not born among the reptiles of the earth, but among them who are created in the image of God, may, and ought to direct thy heart to the contemplation of him and his distinguishing favour, "in whose book all thy members were written!" And when, from the kingdom of *nature*, in the appointments of the Lord, thou followest the tract of thine own history into the kingdoms of *providence*, and *grace*, and beholdest through all, and in all, the distinguishing mercies with which thy life hath been marked, the question will arise all around, and in every direction, "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" What a mercy to be born in this land of thy nativity, and not among the dark places of the earth, where the name of Jesus was never heard, nor the sound of the church-going bell invites sinners to salvation! What a mercy to have had praying parents, who sought blessings for us before we had power to ask for ourselves! Or, on the other hand, if sprung from ungodly parents, who never, by advice or example, led us to the throne of grace, what a mercy, that, under all such unpromising circumstances, without advice and without example, the word of God, and the ordinances of Jesus, are dear to us! Surely the apostle's words enter with a strength of inquiry under these views, "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" And, my soul, if now, as from a rising ground thou lookest back, and tracest "all the way which the Lord thy God hath brought thee these many years, to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to show thee what was in thine heart," thou beholdest thy Lord's gracious dealings with thee, compared to others; how many with whom, in thy boyish days, thou enteredst the field of life together, that are now no more; how many that still survive, but know not the Lord; how many, in circumstances far more promising than thine, and yet have come short of the grace of God! Views like these, and all the thousand, and ten thousand incidents connected with them, instead of lifting the mind with pride, are enough to humble the soul to the dust before God, and melt all the finer affections into the most heartfelt sense of the apostle's question, "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" Jesus! my Lord, behold me at thy feet! How shall I dare lift mine eyes to thee, while in the

moment of recollection of thy *distinguishing* mercy towards me, I call to remembrance my baseness towards thee? Lord! is it possible, that in a life where so much grace hath abounded, sin should so much abound? That in every spot where my God hath erected a monument of his love, my sinful and ungrateful heart should have left an inscription of my unworthiness? What others feel, I know not: but blessed, for ever blessed, be the unwearied patience and goodness of my God, that through his distinguishing grace alone, I am what I am; and while my soul desires to refer all and every part of divine mercy, in all the departments of nature, providence, and grace, into the Lord's own free, and rich, and sovereign pleasure, I praise him for having given me that precious testimony in my soul, which the Lord himself said should be the consequence, inwrought by his divine teaching in the heart: "I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: that thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." (Ezekiel xvi. 62, 63.)

And the earth helped the woman.—*Rev. xii. 16.*

How blessed is it to see the hand of the Lord, when no hand beside can be near to help! and that when our situation is as lonely and forlorn as that of the pelican in the wilderness, Jesus is still near; and we are never less alone than when alone! When the Church brought forth her offspring, and hell stood ready to devour it, God sheltered it from his jaws. And when he cast forth a flood to sweep the Church away, the earth helped the woman, by opening its mouth, and swallowing it up. My soul! look into thine own circumstances, and trace the Lord's dealings, and thou wilt find a great multitude of corresponding instances. It is from the inattentive minds of the Lord's people, that mercies so often pass and repass, and they see them not. There are thousands of them in every believer's life, that he is as unconscious of as the world are of the sweet-blowing flower of the desert, which sheds her rich perfumes to the air, and her beauties to the heath, and hath no beholder. The Lord's dealings with his people, as well in the kingdom of providence as of grace, will form a huge volume to read over in eternity, in which, like the earth helping the woman, we shall find wonders to call forth love and praise to God and the Lamb. The *timing* of mercies; the *unexpected* coming of them; the *instruments* by which they have been brought; the *means* by which they have been accomplished; and what above all must endear them, the cause whence they come, the medium through which they flow in the person of Jesus, and the covenant of redemption in his blood; all these bring them home to the heart, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory, and richly fulfil that precious pro-

mise of a covenant God in Christ, "Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good; and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul." (Jerem. xxxii. 41.)

Should not a people seek unto their God?

Isaiah viii. 19.

To be sure they should. My soul! what would become of thee, in *thine* exercises, hadst thou not had a God in Christ to fly to, and a God in Christ to depend upon? Where wouldst thou find a bosom to pour all thy griefs into, did not Jesus say to thee, as to the sorrowful father, concerning his child, "Bring him hither to me?" Thou knowest, dearest Lord, that there are circumstances into which I am cast, where none but thyself can help: and even if help could be derived from man, yet who is there to whom I could seek with a certainty of success? "My friends," saith Job, "have dealt deceitfully, like a brook:" like a brook which, dried up by the summer heat, disappoints the traveller, when he most needs supply to slake his thirst. Oh, for grace to centre all my desires in thee, and to seek unto thee with all my concerns! Blessed Lord! let that devout frame of David, in the wilderness, be the frame of my soul in every wilderness-dispensation, until I shall have passed through the whole of the valley of *Baca*, and have attained to the everlasting enjoyment of thee in heaven! "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." (Psalm lxiii. 1.)

For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

Zechariah ii. 5.

Precious promises these, my soul! and, like all the other promises of our God, are "yea and amen in Christ Jesus!" Is the Church, in this wilderness-state, exposed to the ravages of Satan, who goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour? Then will God be unto her "a wall," and that "of fire," which (like travellers in the desert, who encircle themselves with fire against the attacks of wild beasts by night) will keep her secure from all approaches. Doth the Church, in her poor circumstances, need comfort within? Then will God in Christ be "the glory in the midst of her." And hence, all around, within and without, in every direction, and in every way, Jesus will be "the hiding-place from the storm, and a covert from the tempest; and upon all the glory shall be a defence." Look up, then, my soul! What hast thou to fear? What though the rains beat without,

and poverty be felt within; he that is "the wall of fire" can never be extinguished, and he that is "the glory in the midst" will still shine upon thee, and fully satisfy all thy need. Precious Lord Jesus! while thou art my defence, what host of foes can I fear? And while thou art my glory, surely I shall never consider my own humble circumstances. I will therefore say, with an exercised believer of old, "At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee!" (Psalm lvi. 3.) To whom shall a child run, but to his father, in a season of distress? And to whom shall a poor ransomed soul of Jesus look, but to his Redeemer? And he will be both a shield and sun, "when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against a wall." Sweet thought to hush the soul asleep! And thou, my soul, take it with thee to thy bed, this night: Jesus is unto thee as "a wall of fire round about;" and he that is in the midst of thee is "thy God, thy glory!"

Jesus—wearied with his journey.—*John iv. 6.*

My soul! art thou wearied with the labours of the day, and glad that the evening of rest is come? Look unto thy Lord! Behold Jesus wearied with *his* journey! As part of the curse, this, among other consequences, seized upon the Lord of life and glory from the moment he became flesh: "In all things, it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." All the sinful frailties and infirmities of our poor nature; all the calamities to which human life is exposed, in the thorns and thistles which the earth is made to bring forth to man, and the dust of death, into which, as Jesus spake by the spirit of prophecy, he knew Jehovah would bring him. (Psalm xxii. 15.) These were the very conditions to which the Redeemer subjected himself, in the days of his flesh, when "he was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:" and hence his whole life was a life of weariness, sorrows, and affliction. And he not only felt in himself the common wants, and was exposed to the common miseries of nature, but, living as in an hospital of wo, amidst the sick and wounded, he participated in every groan he heard, and, as the prophet spake of him, "himself bare our sickness and carried our sorrows." And what can bring relief to the pilgrimage-tears of the redeemed, or so sweetly soothe the wearied frames of his people, both in body and soul, as looking unto Jesus? Precious Lord! Do I see thee wearied with thy journey; and shall I repine at mine? Hadst thou not where to lay thine head; and shall I feel hurt if the world refuse me a lodging? Was the Son of God, though rich, yet condescending to be poor; and, though the Lord of life and glory, yet "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" subjecting himself to hunger, and thirst, and weariness, and affliction; tempted, and buffeted and de-

spised; yea, "a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and the outcast of the people?" Oh, Lord! how sweetly accommodating is thy blessed example to all the tried and trying circumstances of life! Grant me, dear Lord, as oft as sorrow, weariness, disappointment, and any of the afflicting dispensations incident to human life come upon me, grant me to be looking unto thee; and I would say, "Jesus was wearied with his journey!"

For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.—2 *Tim.* iv. 10.

Was this the same *Demas* of whom the apostle spake? (*Colos.* iv. 14.) I should hope not. But if it was, it becomes no proof of a man's falling from grace. The apostle nowhere speaks of this man as being a partaker of grace. And a man cannot fall from grace, who never possessed grace. Professors there may be, who follow the means of grace, as *Demas* followed Paul; but the world, as in his instance, is still in their heart. But, my soul, what the apostle hath said of *him*, may well serve for an instruction to *thee*. If Jesus, and the love of Jesus, with all his sweetness, beauty, suitableness, and delight, be come into thine heart, then will the love of this present world be gone out. Both cannot dwell nor live together in the same heart. A believer in Christ Jesus will carry with him his affection to Jesus even into the world, wherever the business or duties of life, in the honest maintenance of himself and family, necessarily call him. Is he constrained to go to the market-place, or engaged in the labours of his hands at home, still the savour of Jesus's name is upon his soul; and fellowship with heaven is carried on, while intercourse with the earth and earthly things engage his hands. "Holiness unto the Lord shall be upon the bells of the horses." (*Zech.* xiv. 20.) That is, every thing shall carry with it a memorandum for the sanctified use of all providences. When a soul hath once made Jesus his portion, his desires are to see Jesus in every thing, and to enjoy Jesus in every thing: and to say, with one of old, "Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand." (*Psalm* lxxiii. 23.) My soul! what saith thine experience to this statement? If, *Demas*-like, thou lovest this present world, thine enjoyments, even in religion, will rise or fall, and be as the world countenanceth or frowneth upon it, like those springs of water which have a subterraneous communication with the sea: if the tide flow, they rise high; if the tide be at ebb, they will ebb also. But if Jesus, the living water, be the source and fountain of all thy love and enjoyments, the tides of this world will have no effect upon the streams of thy delight; "the water" which Jesus hath given thee, "will be in thee a well of water springing up to everlasting life!"

Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.—*Psalm lxxvi.* 4.

My soul! the more thou turnest over the word of God in inquiries after thy beloved, the more wilt thou be astonished at the relation given of him in his excellency and glory. By every thing that can represent the adorable Redeemer, in his beauty, loveliness, grace, fulness, and all-sufficiency, whether considered in his absolute, his comparative, his relative, or his official glory, or in his glory as the head of his body, the Church, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, thou art constrained, with the Church, to cry out at every view: "Yea, he is altogether lovely; the chiefest among ten thousand." There is somewhat particularly striking to this amount in this verse for thine evening portion: "Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey." Yes! it must be so; for when the soul hath found Jesus, like the merchant-man seeking goodly pearls, having found this One of immense and incalculable value, the soul gladly parts with every thing beside, to attain it. Hence, one of old, having got possession of Jesus, cries out, with holy joy and rapture, "I rejoice at thy word as one that findeth great spoil." (*Psalm cxix.* 162.) In life men become mountains of prey to one another; and too frequently find, to their sorrow, that the pursuit and chase is folly, and the end of the game, vanity and vexation of spirit. But in following thee, thou blessed Jesus, every renewed discovery of thee is glorious, and every new attainment most excellent indeed. In thy person, offices, character, relations, thou art most glorious and excellent. Thou art a glorious Redeemer; a glorious head of thy Church and people; a glorious husband, brother, friend; a glorious prophet, priest, and king, in thy Zion. And when I behold thee in all these relative excellencies, and can and do know thee, and enjoy thee, and call thee mine, under every one of them, surely I may well take up the language of this sweet scripture, and say, "Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey!"

Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice: they take delight in approaching to God.—*Isaiah lviii.* 2.

My soul! when thou readest a scripture like this, which, as far as the outward observance of religion goes, seems to carry a fair face, and concerning those who came up to this standard, the world calls them very good sort of people; but concerning them the Lord speaks most awfully. Persons of this complexion do not

venture to say that they hope to be found before God without sin; for they will tell you, that they know "we have all sinned and come short of God's glory:" but their faith is, that for their sins they have endeavoured to repent, and made amends; and they hope Christ will make up the deficiency. They have not been as many others; and in point of doing, they have done a great deal more: so that if they do not go to heaven, they know not who will. As to ordinances, as this scripture represents, they profess to seek the Lord daily, as a nation that does righteousness, and that takes delight in approaching to God. "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?" Mark, my soul, the awful feature of such characters, and behold what is the leading principle in the religion of those who are not openly profane. Here are no cries for sin, no concern for the sufferings of Jesus; no inquiries for redemption in his blood; neither any heartfelt acquaintance with the teachings and humblings of the soul by the Holy Ghost. Doth God bid his sent servants to cry aloud, and spare not, in showing "his people" their transgressions, and "the house of Jacob" their sins? And can such as these be found righteous in his sight? Oh! for the warning voice, to bid them flee from the wrath to come! Had I the power of persuasion, I should say, "My poor, deluded, self-righteous brother! rouse from this carnal security and vain confidence. If salvation be of works, then is it no more of faith. And if any thing but the blood of Christ can cleanse from sin, or any thing but the righteousness of Christ justify the sinner, then must all the threatenings of the gospel be void, and all the promises be altered." Blessed be the Lord that teacheth thee, my soul, to profit, and hath fully, finally, and completely established thee in this decisive truth, that "there is salvation in no other but in Jesus only: neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

John ix. 4.

Pause, my soul, over this sweet scripture, and these sweet words of thy Lord! Look at Jesus, even *thy* Jesus, who, in the services of mediator, as God's servant, had work to do in his day, as thou hast in thine. And oh! what a day was his! Every portion of it filled with good! Now, my soul, the night of this present day is come; and the night of the whole day of thy life upon earth will shortly follow; it may be this very night: for nearly as the month is ended, thy life may end before it: and if not this very night, it cannot be far off, and may be near indeed. How then stands thy great account? Take down thy memorandums,

as merchants do their ledger at certain seasons to ascertain their stock. Hath Jesus filled up every page? Hast thou the several *items* of his grace, and love, and bounty? Canst thou tell of him that sent *thee* into the world, as he saith his Father *sent* him? (John xvii. 18.) Canst thou call to mind, from the first Bethel-visit of his love to the present hour, how he hath borne thee, and carried thee as on eagles' wings? And though it would tire the arm of an angel to write down the vast account of his mercy and grace, and in thy poor forgetful heart, thousands, and ten thousands of instances have passed away, like traces on the water, and thou canst remember them no more, yet in looking back upon the whole, canst thou say, "Jesus is mine, and I am his?" Oh! the unspeakable felicity of thy summing up months, and days, and years, when the night cometh that no man can work. Precious Lord Jesus! thou hast indeed done all *for* me, and wrought all *in* me; thou hast made, and thou dost bear. It is thou that formed me from the womb, and now hast made me in thyself: thou hast redeemed me, and washed me from my sins in thy blood; borne with me in all my unworthiness, and carried me in all my sorrows! Into thy gracious hands, Lord, I desire to fall this night, and every night, and in the night of death; under the blessed assurance, that "when my heart shall faint, and my strength shall fail, thou wilt be the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." Amen.

OCTOBER.

Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation!—*Habakkuk* iii. 17, 18.

See, my soul, in the prophet's example, the blessedness of living *above* creature enjoyments, by living *upon* Creator fulness. Here is a sun, which never goes down! Here is a fountain, whose streams can never dry up! He that lives upon creature excellency, will want both food and comfort when that excellency dies, for they must die with it, when the period of its flourishing is over. But the soul that draws all from Jesus, the God of his salvation, will have Jesus and his salvation to live upon, and to be an everlasting source, when nature, in all its varieties, ceases to supply. My soul! what are thy resources for a day of famine? Canst thou join issue with the prophet? If blasting, or mildew, or frost, shall nip the fig-tree of its blossom; if both the vine and

the olive fail; yea, if the staff of life, as well as the sweets of life, should all be gone; hast thou Jesus to live upon; canst thou rejoice in him, when there is nothing else left to rejoice in; and call him thine, and the God of thy salvation, when none will own thee, and thou hast none beside him to own? They say that music upon the waters always sounds best. Be this so or not, yet the melody of the soul is certainly sweetest when nature is out of tune, and the believer can take his harp from the willow and sing aloud on the tribulated waters of sorrow, to the God of his salvation. And this is a song never out of season, but of peculiar joy in the note, when from a new strung heart, the believer sings it of the God of his salvation, and addresses it to the God of his salvation. Blessed Lord Jesus! give me grace, like the prophet, so to sing and so to triumph, that since, lose what I may, I cannot lose thee, while thy creature comforts remain, I may enjoy them, from enjoying thee in them: and when all are taken away, still having thee for my portion, may I sing aloud with the prophet, though all earthly enjoyments cease, "I will still rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.—*Luke* vii. 42.

My soul! nothing can be more grateful and commendatory to the state of thine insolvency, than the recollection of what thy God and Saviour hath taught in this beautiful parable; that the debtor of five hundred pence, and the debtor of fifty, being both equally incapable of discharging the respective claims upon them, are equally considered as objects of mercy, and are therefore both alike forgiven. And this, indeed, is the distinguishing property of grace. It is totally distinct from merit; yea, in direct opposition to it. Hadst thou the least pretensions to divine favour, or couldst thou have put forth the least helping hand towards thine own salvation; grace then would have been no more grace. The frank forgiveness of all debt, carries with it the plainest testimony of man's total helplessness, and the sovereign freedom of divine love. And hence, when the sinner, of every description and character, is brought into this glorious privilege of redemption, the whole result is "to the praise of the glory of his grace, who hath made us accepted in the beloved." What a beautiful and interesting view is this of the gospel of Jesus! It is full, and free, and suited to every case, and answering to the state and circumstances of every poor sinner. For as all have sinned and come short of God's glory, so all, being unable to make the smallest restitution, are equally objects suited to divine mercy; and whatever other causes operate, certain it is, that the greatness or smallness of the debt, in a state of total insolvency, becomes no bar to pardon. So runs the charter of

grace, and the proclamation from the court of heaven. Let all that are poor, and insolvent, and helpless, and conscious of their lost state, come alike to the footstool of the mercy-seat. The Son of God will have his court surrounded with such; and every one to whom his free salvation is welcome, that poor creature, be his circumstances what they may, shall be welcome to take it; whether him that oweth ten thousand talents, or whether him that oweth fifty; having nothing, either of them, to pay, the Lord frankly forgives both! Oh! the unsearchable riches of grace! Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!

For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all whilst the testator liveth.

Heb. ix. 17.

Precious Lord Jesus! and was it needful that thou shouldst die, that the rich legacies of thy will might be paid thy children, and thy spouse, the Church? Was the testament in thy blood of no force until thou hadst finished redemption by expiring on the cross? And hast thou now confirmed the whole, by this gracious act of thine, when dying "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God?" Sit down, my soul, this evening, and ponder over the unequalled love of thy dear Redeemer. Jesus died, and thereby gave validity and efficacy to his will. Now, therefore, it is of force. Now the large estate of an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away, which Jesus hath purchased by his blood, is eternally and everlastingly secured. Yea, the will hath, since his death, been proved in the court of heaven, and Jesus is gone thither to see every legacy paid; yea, Jesus becomes the executor and administrator of the whole, and ever liveth for this express purpose. So that it is impossible for any of his poor relations, and their claims by him, ever to be forgotten or overlooked. Pause overt his view of this most interesting subject. Shall the great ones of the earth, the rich and the mighty, be so anxious over their legacies from one another, as never to lose an estate for want of inquiry, when their rich relations die; and wilt not thou, my soul, now thy rich Relation is dead, and liveth again, and hath left thee the most blessed of all inheritances, wilt not thou seek after it, and be anxious for the full possession of it? Dost thou know thyself to be indeed a part of Christ's body, the Church, the Lamb's wife, and by adoption and grace, a child of God, and a joint-heir with Christ; and wilt thou not see that thy legacy be fully paid? Surely thou hast already taken out a probate of thy Lord's will from the chancery of heaven, the book of life, and therefore mayest well look for all the testamentary effects. Precious Lord Jesus! I hear thee speak, and well do I remember the words: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the

world giveth, give I unto you!" Oh! the unspeakable mercy of being thus related to the Lord Jesus Christ! by which, my soul, thou hast every legacy needful for thy present peace paid in part; and the whole reversionary interest of that immense estate in heaven shall be fully paid when thou comest of age, and thou shalt enter upon the possession of it, in the presence of thy Lord, and sit down with him in the everlasting enjoyment of it, for ever!

Man did eat angels' food.—*Psalm lxxviii. 25.*

Yes, so he did, when the Lord rained down manna upon the people in the wilderness. But, my soul, what hast thou eaten, now thou hast been at the table of thy Lord? What did Jesus there entertain thee with? "Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth!" Thou hast feasted upon the body and blood of Christ! and this is food which angels never ate, neither was such a feast ever prepared for them. Pause over this blessed subject, for it is enough to call up the wonder, praise, and love, of all thine intellectual faculties for ever! When man fell, the earth was made to bring forth thorns and thistles; this was all the inheritance then left us; man was to eat bread in the sweat of the brow. But Jesus interposeth, and removes the curse, in being made "a curse for us." The curse being removed by him and his cross, the earth is made to bring forth its blessings, and "wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." But after this, who should have thought, yea, what imagination could have conceived an idea so wonderful and surpassingly rich in mercy, that Jesus should become the bread of life, and the water of life to his people; and feed them, as an heavenly pelican, with his own blood! Think, my soul, of thy privileges; thou art unworthy of the most common blessings of thine own table, which thy Lord hath provided; and yet Jesus feasts thee with the choicest blessings of *his*. Thou hast merited nothing but "the cup of trembling;" but Jesus giveth thee "the cup of salvation." Thou art unworthy to gather up the crumbs that fall from thy Lord's table; but Jesus seats thee at his table with himself, and bids thee eat and drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. Lord, I fall down under the deepest self-abasement at the recollection of thy grace and my undeservings. Oh! thou precious, precious Jesus! this is not angels' food indeed, but above angels' food; yea, divine food; thy body and blood! "Lord, evermore give me this bread!"

They made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept.—*Song* i. 6.

My soul! now the day is over, sit down, and look back on the employments of it. What a day hath it been? What portion of it hath been engaged in the service of thy Lord, and in the improvement of thy soul?—How wholly occupied in the busy and imperious demands of the world, the care of the body, and in procuring the bread that perisheth! Surely the complaint of the Church is thine also. Keeper of the vineyards of others, thine own goeth to waste! And of what avail, in the path of grace, if, though occupied by a thousand things in the aid of others, thou art making no progress in the heavenly road by thine own soul? Are not the peace of thy life, and the glorious expectation of a better, to be advanced in the knowledge and enjoyment of Jesus? If I lose sight of thee, thou dear Emmanuel; if the lively actings of faith upon thee be remitted, will the recollection of attention to others give assurance or comfort? If I lose all that sweet personal communion and fellowship with thee, which is the very life of the soul, and receive none of thy private visits, what signifies the best and most successful public usefulness in thy Church, and among thy people? I do indeed rejoice to say or do any thing which may minister to others in the knowledge of my Lord; but, God forbid, that, like the post to the traveller, I be found merely to direct, but never move a step myself. Rather, blessed Jesus, be it my portion to be like the star to the wise men, which not only lighted to Christ, but went with them, and before them, until it came and stood over where the young child was. Oh! then, with the Church, under the same complaint, let me cry out, as she did: “Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest; where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions!”

By faith, Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.—*Heb.* xi. 22.

See, my soul, the triumphs of faith in this lively instance of the patriarch Joseph! How many have I known, who, though they have given up their souls, with full assurance of faith, into the hands of Jesus, conscious of an interest in him, and of redemption in his blood, have nevertheless, felt fears and alarms for the moment in which the soul separates from the body, and have wanted faith “concerning their bones?” Look at the patriarch when dying, and learn from him whence to derive strength and comfort for every emergency, and for every concern. “By faith:” is the one universal charm. Jesus is *in* every thing, and

for every thing the believer can possibly need or require, all the way home; in death, as in life; concerning the bones, or concerning the soul. In him the soul goes forth boldly from the body at the hour of death; and in him the body as safely and securely repositeth in the grave. The believer hears, or may hear, the voice of Jesus, in terms like those he spake to Jacob: "Fear not to go down into Egypt; I will go down with thee:" so Jesus speaks to his people: "Fear not to go down into the grave; I will go down with thee!" Hence, by faith, like the patriarch, the believer feels a holy confidence in Jesus concerning his bones. And who can feel concern, when, by faith, all is committed unto Jesus? Who would fear concerning their bones, if Jesus make the grave, and appoint the sepulchre where and when they are to be deposited; yea, inters the remains, visits and watches over the dust of his saints with more care than the goldsmith doth the golden particles, which he suffereth not the least air to blow away? Precious Jesus! be it my portion, like Joseph, when dying, to have the same lively actings of faith as he had in thee, (and sure I am, he had not greater cause for the full exercise of this principle than believers now,) and may I then enjoy with equal, yea, with increasing strength, this blessed assurance in thee; and by the same faith that hath carried me through many sharp trials in the past; be carried through this last and trying conflict. Lord! let me die as I have lived, *believing*; yea triumphing in believing. And when the earth gives way under my feet, and every object of sense is sinking also, then may my soul go forth as the jewel from the casket, in all the joy which a soul in Christ must find; and in the last act of the holy triumph of faith, leave all with thee "concerning my bones!"

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Habakkuk ii. 3.

My soul! there is always a set time to favour Zion. It may not be so early as we could wish; it may not come at the time we look for it; yea, it may be deferred until our impatience hath given over the very expectation of it; nevertheless, "it will surely come; it will not tarry." We are like children, who wish to gather the fruit before it is ripe; but there is no haste with God: He stops until the mercy, intended to be given us, is fully prepared, and our souls as ready to receive it. And what endears the mercy (be it what it may) yet more, is, that from everlasting it hath been appointed. "The vision is for an appointed time." So that, however tedious it may seem in coming, it will neither go a moment beyond the appointment, nor come a moment before: and when it arrives, it will explain wherefore it came not

sooner, by showing how suited and seasonable it is now in its coming. My soul! let this sweet scripture be ever uppermost in thy recollection, to help thee on in seasons of exercise. God's appointments are sure: never shall his people be disappointed in them, nor of them; come they will, and at the very hour. Israel was to be a certain time in Egypt; when that time was accomplished we are told, "the self-same night the Lord brought them out, with their armies." Exactly the same in Babylon, and exactly the same deliverance. So, my soul! in all thine exercises, the hour is marked: "the vision is for an appointed time." Though it tarry much beyond thy expectations, it cannot tarry beyond the Lord's appointment. Oh! for grace, upon every occasion, to follow the advice of David: "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." (Psalm xxvii. 14.)

The house of the Rechabites.—*Jeremiah xxxv. 2.*

My soul! as the prophet had his commission from the Lord, to go unto the house of the Rechabites, and the Holy Ghost hath been pleased to have the event of the visit recorded, do thou go down to it also, and see what instructions thou canst gather there, under his gracious teachings, for thine evening meditation. The house of the *Rechabites* drank no wine. And was not this to intimate the law of the *Nazarites*? Surely there was an allusion, in this prohibition, to the one glorious Nazarite, even Jesus! The *Rechabites* had no fixed dwelling-place, but lived in movable tents! and believers in Jesus, like their Lord himself, have "here no abiding city, but are seeking one to come." Hence, when the king of *Babylon* came into the land where the *Rechabites* had no fixed abode, they had no attachment to the place, and therefore the more readily took their departure. Such, my soul, will be the case with thee, in the land where thou art but a stranger, if, as a stranger and a pilgrim, "thou abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; and set thine affections upon things above, and not on things of the earth!" Oh! how truly blessed to have no ties, no clogs, no impediments, to fasten down the soul; but "when the Assyrian cometh up into the land, this man, this" God-man, Christ Jesus, "is our peace." (Micah v. 5.) My soul! ponder well this sweet view of the house of the *Rechabites*, and mark the Lord's observation concerning them: They obeyed *Jonadab* their father, in all their abstinence and movements. The precept for this obedience, it should seem, was but once given, and the motive to it had no reward, either in dwelling-places here or hereafter. But with thee, my soul, all that thy God and Father hath enjoined thee concerning his dear Son, he hath again and again held forth; as he saith himself, "rising early and speaking, he hath sent all his servants, the prophets," as if en-

treating an attention to what must make for thy present peace and everlasting happiness. Oh! how truly blessed, like the house of the *Rechabites*, to sit loose and detached from earth and earthly things, and to be viewing Jesus in all, and enjoying Jesus in all. Go, my soul, go down frequently to the house of the *Rechabites*, that there the Lord may cause thee to hear his word!

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.

2 *Thes.* ii. 13.

Some of the sweetest enjoyments in grace, are the freeness and undeserved nature of that grace towards the happy objects of its distinguishing favour: and as the first and ultimate design of all, for which grace is given, is the glory of Jehovah; so the promotion of that glory, in the redemption and sanctification of the Church of Jesus, is the means and end. Now, my soul, sit down this evening, and mark well, in the blessed effects wrought in thine own heart, what the apostle hath here said, that if *thou* art chosen, it must have been from the beginning thou art chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. Pause, and ask thyself: Art thou chosen? Hath this sovereign act of grace passed upon thee? How shall I know? Look at the effects. Art thou humbled to the very dust before God; under the impression of the distinguishing nature of it? Dost thou know, dost thou feel, dost thou stand as one most fully convinced, that the eternal choice of thee was not for aught wherein thou differedst from others, but wholly of the Lord's own free and sovereign grace? And in the review that such love was shown to thee, when meriting it no more than others; yea, when meriting wrath, instead of receiving grace, as much as others, dost thou lie yet lower in the dust on this account? And in proportion to the astonishing goodness of the Lord, do thine own-conscious undeservings make thee continually yet more acquainted with thine own vileness? And as the views of grace rise higher, does the sense of sin make thee fall lower; that where "sin hath abounded, grace should much more abound?" Look at the subject under another point of view, to the same conclusion: As the consciousness of being chosen, from the beginning, to salvation, through the sanctification of the Spirit, becomes the highest and strongest of all possible motives to hide pride from the eyes, and to lay the soul down in the deepest self-abasement before God, so in the same breast, and from the same source, through the sanctification of the Spirit, there will be a most ardent affection towards the gracious author of such distinguishing mercy! Say then, my soul! should Jesus put the question to

thee, as he did to Peter, "Lovest thou me more than these?" couldst thou appeal to him, who reads hearts, that he would find love in thine heart, because he himself had put it there? Pause over this great volume of inquiry, and follow up the question, in the numberless methods by which it might be sought and discovered. And, to add no more, if to those *two* great branches, under which God from the beginning makes choice of all the beloved of the Lord, through sanctification of the Spirit, thou canst add a satisfactory conclusion, in a *third* instance also of sovereign power; and discover that since God called thee by his grace, and revealed his Son in thee, thou hast been conferring less and less "with flesh and blood," and by the Spirit hast been "mortifying the deeds of the body, and crucifying the flesh, with its affections and lusts;" oh! what cause wilt thou find also for holy joy in the distinguishing grace of God, and to cry out with the apostle, "I am crucified with Christ:" and, "I am bound to give thanks always to God, because from the beginning he hath chosen me to salvation, through the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth!"

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance.

1 Peter i. 14.

There is somewhat very striking in these words of the apostle; and they certainly mean more than not being found in actual transgression. The very *fashion* of a new-born child of God is supposed to distinguish his obedience; and his whole *appearance*, as well as his whole *conduct*, marks that the former lusts of his ignorant state, when unregenerated, are done away. And though the believer is not called upon to a singularity of dress or apparel, yet a singularity against customs leading to the confines of sin, and unsuited to the manners of a soul walking with Jesus, should certainly distinguish the Redeemer's people. It was said, as one among the characters by which they should be known, that "they should dwell alone, and should not be reckoned among the nations." (Numb. xxiii. 9.) And surely a total diversity of character, pursuit, and conduct, ought to distinguish them from the world. For, even among men, different nations have their diversity of character and occupation; and if there be a subject of contention between them, the ports and garrisons of one kingdom are shut against the admission of the people of another; there will be a total disconformity in this case, and nothing of harmony between them. My soul! see to it, that thy path and walk of life bear not the fashion of the world. Thou hast given thy name unto Jesus: his thou art, and the subject of his kingdom; professing to be guided by another Spirit, directed by another rule.

walking by another faith, and looking forward to another world. See, then, that every thing in and about thee mark this character of Jesus's pilgrim. Let thy dress be the robe of Jesus's righteousness; thine armour, the sword of the Spirit; thy conversation always "such as becometh the gospel of Christ." And as the Redeemer, long before he came, by the spirit of prophecy, pointed out the singularity of himself and followers, "as for signs and wonders in Israel" (Isaiah viii. 18); so let the character be thine, as "Joshua and his fellows, men wondered at." (Zech. iii. 8.) Precious Jesus! keep me always near thyself, and let my soul be always exercising a holy jealousy over all the parts of my conduct. Lord, I would pray, that wherever I am, or however engaged, all who behold me may know that "I have been with Jesus!"

And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: And what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.—*Esther* v. 6.

My soul! thou hast lately been at the banquet of wine indeed, even of the Redeemer's blood, which Jesus holds at his table; and didst thou not behold the numberless petitioners who attended there with thyself? Surely, if the Persian king made so generous an offer to Esther, to perform her petition, be it what it might, to the half of his kingdom, thy Jesus, thy heavenly King, with whom are all the treasures, and the unsearchable riches of grace and glory, did not suffer a poor humble petitioner to go empty away. Tell me, ye that attended there, did ye not find the King most gracious? How went the matter with you? I pray you tell me. Did the poor man find Jesus indeed rich; and did the trembling sinner, under the apprehension of wrath, find himself delivered by him "from the wrath to come?" Surely, Jesus had a suited mercy for every case. And, sure I am, that the heart that was prompted by his grace to look to him, the eye and heart of Jesus, were looking with mercy upon that poor sinner. Oh! what gifts, what graces, what pardons, doth every renewed banquet of Jesus scatter among the people! At his table the doors are thrown open, and nothing is needed to ensure welcome, but a sense of need and a hungering to partake. How often, my soul, hast thou seen the people made joyful in the Lord's house of prayer, and returning, as they did after the feast of the dedication of Solomon's temple, to their tents, "joyful and glad in heart?" Yea, how often hast thou returned thyself, and left all thy sorrows, sins, and wants behind thee, when the King hath held forth his sceptre of grace, and given thee faith to touch it! Come, ye polluted, poor, exercised, distressed

souls, ye wandering, weary, backsliding people; come to Jesus; he holds a feast, and every case and every need, he can, and will supply. Let but a sense of need be inwrought by the blessed Spirit in the heart, and the language of our Jesus is to this amount: "What is thy petition, and what is thy request? and it shall be granted thee."

The day-dawn and the day-star.—2 Peter i. 19.

And what is "the day-dawn, and day-star," arising in the hearts of God's people, but Jesus, "the day-spring from on high, visiting us?" Is not Jesus "the bright and morning star, the light and the life of men?" Yea, is he not "the sun of righteousness arising with healing in his wings?" And when he ariseth on our benighted minds, may he not be called "the day-dawn, and the day-star?" Pause, my soul, over the sweet thought! It was all darkness in the creation of God, until Jesus arose. And his coming was as the breaking forth of the morning, the sure harbinger of day. Indeed, Jesus was "the day-dawn, and the day-star," in the light of redemption, before the world was formed: for in the council of peace, as man's light and salvation, he came up, at the call of God, from all eternity. And in time, during all his eventful ministry upon earth, was not Jesus "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel?" And what is Jesus now, but the "day-dawn, and day-star" of all the promises? Until we see Christ in them, they are nothing. It is he that makes them all "yea and amen;" and is "the day-dawn and day-star" of all dispensations. His word, his providences, his grace, his ordinances; all are dark, until Jesus ariseth, as "the day-dawn, and day-star," to enlighten them. When he shines in upon them, then are they blessed and clear. When he withdraws his light, not one of them can be read. And what is the "day-dawn, and day-star," in the hearts of his people, converting them from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the living God, but Jesus shining by his Holy Spirit within, and bringing them to the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of himself? Say, my soul, what was the day, the ever-blessed, ever-to-be-remembered day, when God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shined in upon thine heart; and Jesus, "the day-dawn, and the day-star," arose, to give thee "the light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, in the face of Jesus Christ?" Hail, thou glorious light and life of my soul! Oh! continue thy sweet influences, morning by morning, and in the day-dawn, and evening-star of thy grace; until, after many dark dispensations, and wintry days of my blindness, ignorance, and senseless state, in which thou wilt renew me, in the precious discoveries of thy love, I am carried through all the twilight of

this poor dying state of things below: for then shall I awake up to the full enjoyment of thyself in glory, to see thee in one full open day, and to be made like unto thee in thy kingdom of light, and life, and happiness, for ever and ever.

I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you?—*Nehem.* vi. 3.

My soul! a very blessed instruction is held forth to thee, in these words. *Nehemiah* met with sad interruptions in his service, while building the Lord's house. Various were the attempts made by the enemies of God and his cause, to call him off from his labours. But this was his answer to all. Now, my soul, thou hast many enemies also, both from within and without; the world, and the powers of darkness, and thine own corruptions, are all in league to interrupt thy pursuit of divine things. When, therefore, the *Sanballats* and the *Geshems* of the day invite thee to the villages, in the plain of *Ono*, here is thine answer: "Why should the work of the Lord cease, when the King's business requires despatch?" Wherefore should the body, with all its corrupt affections, drag down the soul? Is it reasonable, is it proper to be concerned for the things of a day, while regardless of eternity? Wilt thou for ever be as little children amused with toys, and taken up with playthings, when Jesus is calling thee, and proposing himself to thee, for thy constant, unceasing, present, and everlasting delight? Oh! for grace and strength from the Lord, to be able, like Abraham, to fray away those fowls which come down upon the sacrifice! O do thou, Lord, drive both the buyers and the sellers from thy temple! Take my whole heart and soul, and all my affections, and fix and centre them all on thyself! Every vanity, every robber, like *Barabbas* of old, will be preferred to thee, thou dear Emmanuel, unless thy grace restrain and keep under what thy grace hath taught me to know and feel, that I carry about with me a body of sin and death, which is for ever calling me aside from thee. Oh! let thy grace make its way through all the swarms of vain thoughts and interruptions which surround me, and make my soul "as the chariots of Amminadib!" Let no longer these "dead flies spoil the excellent ointment," made fragrant by the rich spices of thy blessed Spirit: but when even by the most innocent calls, like that made to Jesus himself, of his mother and his brethren being without, desiring to speak to him, oh! for grace, that, like my Lord, even then, I may not suffer the higher claims of my God and Saviour to pass by, nor the work of the Lord and the concern of my soul to cease, to come down to them.

Neither be of doubtful mind.—*Luke xii. 29.*

My soul! it is a blessed thing to arrive at a fixed point, on the momentous concern of "the one thing needful." As long as there remains any doubt or uncertainty whether Christ be the soul's portion or not, there is always a proportioned degree of doubt and uncertainty in the soul's comfort. What the dying patriarch said to his son, may with equal truth be said of every one of this description: "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." (Gen. xlix. 4.) For as long as the soul forms conclusions of safety, not from what Jesus is, but from what the soul's views of Jesus are, there will be always an unstable, unsettled state. And how many have I known, who are of doubtful mind whether they really do believe to the salvation of the soul, and yet have no doubt whether they be sinners, and both need and earnestly desire that salvation. They will tell you that Jesus is more precious than the golden wedge of *Ophir*; but they tell you, at the same time, they dare not say that they have an interest in his blood and righteousness. They see a loveliness in his person, and a suitableness to their necessities, in every point of view; but they cannot presume to hope that they do enjoy either. They can and do cry out, under the thirst of the soul, for Jesus, as David did for the waters of Bethlehem; but still, like David, they do not make use of the blessing, though it be procured them. My soul! it is blessed to live *above* doubts and fears, by living *upon* Jesus. The assurance of faith is founded in what Jesus is, and not what his people feel; in what view God the Father beholds Christ as the sinner's surety, and not what our apprehensions are concerning our present feelings. Faith is most strong where sense is most weak! and the glory given to Jesus is greater, when, like Abraham, "against hope, we believe in hope." Blessed Lord Jesus! let the faith of my soul be the one fixed unalterable faith, that admits of no doubt nor change. Let me, with full purpose of heart, cleave unto the Lord. And while I can and do behold, through thy Spirit's teaching me, the Father's appointment and approbation, in all thy work and finished salvation: here let me fix, and never be of doubtful mind, but live and die in the full assurance of faith, well pleased with what my God and Father is well pleased with, and always "rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God!"

And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked,
and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.

Jeremiah xv. 21.

My soul! hast thou ever considered some of the many ways of softening trouble? Sit down, and learn it from this sweet scripture. Here is a general promise, which may be suited to

particular circumstances, and such as will hold good in all. But first remember, that he who promiseth to deliver from the sorrow, is the same that appointeth the sorrow: "Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." The Lord's rod hath a voice which *speaks* as well as *corrects*; and it is a mark of wisdom to *listen* as well as *feel*. Hence, if we mark the hand that appoints, we shall observe also all the other interesting particulars, both of the *instruments* by which the Lord works, the *time* and *place*, the *means* and *end*, and then discern love and grace, yea, Jesus himself, in all. Suppose it be the world that crosses, or Satan that tempts, or false friends that oppose, or our mother's children that be angry with us; yet all are but the Lord's ministers: they are the sword, but the hand is the Lord's: and though they mean ill, he will bring good: if they even cast into prison, Jesus will be there. All things, and all means, and all times, shall, at his command, minister to his own purpose. If there be a storm *without*, Jesus hath chambers to take them into; if the affliction be *within*, Jesus can help them out. Yea, the very "earth shall help the woman," when the enemy casts forth a flood after her, to swallow her up. Be the storm what it may, Jesus is at the helm. Like Joseph's afflictions, they shall minister to good, and the end bring the proof, that the whole had the appointment in love. Hence, my soul, though the direction is short, it is very sweet. Never look at the trial, without looking also at the appointer. Never allow thyself to view the affliction, without looking through it to one that stands behind, regulating and moving all. It matters not in this case, what the storm threatens, but what the Lord Jesus means; not what the instrument intends, but what Jesus hath appointed. And by thus looking to Christ, the greatest troubles will give thee but little concern. He saith, (blessed be his name!) "I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible." How it is to be accomplished, is *his* concern, and not *mine*. All I have to do is to rest in the certainty of the promise, by giving credit to the great promiser; and the end will show, that with him it is to make "darkness light, and crooked things straight."

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood.—*Hebrews* xiii. 12.

My soul! I would have thee, this evening, take a view of thy Jesus in his own blood, under the special and particular act in which this scripture holds him forth; sanctifying the people by the application of it, as the great object and design for which he suffered. There is somewhat uncommonly interesting in this view, though not so commonly considered. That this is the only laver for sin, is unquestionable; and that it is infinitely meri-

torious, and of eternal efficacy, is also equally true. But when we consider, farther, the infinite purity of it, flowing, as it did, from a holy heart, in a nature that was altogether holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; there is somewhat which, though too deeply founded in mystery to be perfectly apprehended by us, may yet serve to intimate the immense preciousness of it, and its immense importance and value. But we must not stop here. The union of the Godhead with the human nature, giving both dignity and validity to the sacrifice which Jesus once offered, that he might sanctify the people, here angels, as well as men, find their faculties unable to ascertain the extent of the wonderful subject; and, perhaps, through all eternity, none among the creation of God will fully be competent to explain it. But, my soul! though unable to explain, or unable to conceive the infinitely precious nature of thy Jesus's blood, yet do thou gather this sweet and soul-reviving thought from the contemplation: it must be in itself so incalculable in value, and so infinitely powerful in its pardoning and cleansing properties, that no sin, no, not all the sin of finite creatures taken in the aggregate, can stand before it. O precious, precious Jesus! precious, precious blood of Jesus, which cleanseth from all sin! Oh! let me hear, and feel, and know my personal interest in that sweet promise of my God in Christ, and my happiness is made for ever: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." Amen! Amen! So be it.

As the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah, saith the Lord; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory.—*Jeremiah* xiii. 11.

See, my soul! the blessedness of witnessing to God, and witnessing for God. His people, the Lord saith, are called, and are, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, as lights in the world. Both Israel and Judah are included in what is here said; and by the figure of a girdle cleaving to the loins of a man, so close, so strongly bound, and extending all around, is shown the nearness, and firmness, and the security in every way, and by every direction, in which the Lord's people are brought into relation with him. Such, then, were the Lord's people of old, a people near to himself; and as they were the Lord's own choice, so were they dear to the Lord; and as he had made the whole of the nation a kingdom of priests to the Lord, so were they wholly designed for the divine glory: "This people have I

formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." Now, pause, my soul, over this blessed scripture, and contemplate with what holy rapture and delight a child of God, under the New Testament dispensation, may look up and behold his nearness and dearness to God in Christ, by virtue of his union with Jesus. Here the figure, beautiful as it is, of a girdle encircling the loins, doth not come up to the full idea of that oneness and union which the believer stands in with Jesus. For the soul not only is made by the Lord himself to cleave unto Christ, as the ivy clings to the oak, but being part of Christ's mystical body, is, like the branch in the vine, one with Christ, and Christ with him. The believer in Jesus is interested in all that is in Jesus; and not only cleaves to him, but is part of himself, and is blessed in his blessedness; and beheld, and accepted, and loved by God the Father, as the Father loveth Jesus. And think, my soul, what unspeakable felicity ariseth out of this one consideration, that, amidst all thy coldness, and wanderings, and departures, still the Lord causeth his Judah and Israel to cleave to him. However the poor senseless child in arms lets go his holdfast, when hanging round the neck of its nurse and protector, yet the little creature falls not, because he is upheld by his support from her. So the one only cause that thou art supported and preserved from falling, is, because "the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." It is the Lord that saith, "I have caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah." And, oh! what a name, and a praise, and a glory, will be the whole redeemed Church of God in Christ, when Jesus brings them all home, and presents them to himself and Father, as "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish before him in love!"

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.—1 *Peter* v. 8, 9.

My soul! thou knowest, and hast long known, from the many wounds given thee by Satan, what a cruel, insidious, and powerful enemy thou hast to contend with; and thou too truly knowest, also, how sadly unequal thou art in thyself to resist his wiles. He is a prince of the power of the air: he is by nature a spirit, and therefore invisible; thou seest not his approaches: he is a tremendous foe, full of envy, malignity, subtilty, craft, and design: and what renders him yet more formidable, is, that in the corruptions and unbelief of thy fallen nature, he hath but too

many confederates in thine own heart, to aid him in his diabolical designs. Where then is thy strength to resist him? It cannot be in thyself, nor in thy best exertions. The devil would laugh at these, and all would be but as feathers to the breath of his temptations. Hear what the apostle saith: "Whom resist steadfast in the faith." See here, where thy strength is. Faith in Jesus is the only, and it is an infallible defence against all the fiery darts of the wicked. There is nothing that Satan dreads, but the blood of the cross. There is nothing that conquers him, but faith in Jesus's blood. Tell him of the blood which cleanseth from all sin, and he will flee from thee. This was the sole cause by which the holy armies in heaven cast down the accuser which accused them before our God, day and night: "they overcame by the blood of the Lamb;" (Rev. xii: 9—11;) and the same will give thee the victory now. Faith in the blood of the cross is the grace by which we have access to God. It is by faith the soul looks to Jesus; by faith the soul is kept steadfastly resting on Jesus; by faith the devil is steadfastly resisted, in taking confidence in the full and complete redemption that Jesus accomplished on the cross. Look then, my soul, for ever to the cross, and while thy faith honours Jesus, Jesus will honour thee; and this will be the standard which the Spirit of Jehovah will lift up, when at any time the enemy cometh in like a flood. (Isaiah lix. 19.) Oh! the triumphs of the cross! "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb."

He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob, whom he loved. Selah.—Ps. xlvi. 4.

My soul! has this little word *Selah* been placed at the end of this blessed verse, by way of marking the emphasis of the Holy Ghost? Who couldst thou have considered suitable to have chosen the inheritance of his people, but he who is the Lord of his people, and himself their inheritance and their portion for ever? It was God thy Father that chose him to be the excellency of Jacob, when he gave him for a covenant to the people; and when, to the infinite mind of Jehovah, this one glorious Person, in the holiness and purity of his nature, came up before him here, on him the Lord placed his choice. And had all his people been present; had it been possible for the whole of the chosen of Zion to have been consulted in the choice, would not every soul have fixed her longing eyes upon him, and from the millions of tongues resounding his blessed and blissful name from every heart, the universal voice would have been heard in the delightful words of this scripture: "He shall choose our inheritance for us; the excellency of Jacob, whom he loved!" Hail! thou dear and blessed Lord! thou art indeed our inheritance, and our portion for ever. And hail! thou glorious, gracious, and almighty Father! thy choice and thy gift, and thine appointment, gives

and confirms, sweetens and sanctifies the eternal and unspeakable mercy. And hail! thou holy and blessed Spirit! do thou cause my poor soul to live by grace here, and in glory to all eternity, upon this excellency of Jacob, whom Jehovah loved!

His glory is great in thy salvation; honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him; for thou hast made him most blessed for ever.—*Psalms* xxi. 5, 6.

My soul! it is the most delightful of all thoughts, when at the time thou art solacing thyself in the glories of thy Redeemer, to call to mind that God the Father is glorified, while thou art made happy in the salvation thy Jesus hath accomplished by his blood and righteousness. It is indeed God the Father which called Jesus to the office and character of the Redeemer, and furnished him with all suitable requisites for the vast work he called him to do. But the glory and honour of Jehovah were the first and great object of the Redeemer's work; and hence Jesus, in the days of his flesh, never speaks of his own glory, but as in connection with, and leading to, the glory of Jehovah. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him! Father! glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." Hence therefore, when Jehovah laid honour and majesty on the blessed Jesus, and made him most blessed for ever, all these things were to the Father's honour and glory: and never was God the Father's glory more great than in and by the salvation of his dear Son Christ Jesus. See, my soul! I charge it upon thee, that thou never lose sight of this precious view of God thy Father's glory, in thy redemption by thy adorable Redeemer. Say, continually, and dwell with rapture on the blessed subject: "My God, my Father in Christ Jesus, is glorified, yea, greatly glorified in his dear Son, in that he hath wrought out such a salvation as brings more glory to God the Father than all the works of his creation; and it is to the honour and glory of Jehovah, that poor sinners should be saved in this blessed way of his own appointing. And shall I not then come to him in and through Jesus? Shall I not delight to tell my God and Father how great his glory is in the salvation by Jesus? Shall I not bless and glorify my God and Father in being the Author and Giver of such great salvation? Yea, most blessed God and Father! I do bless thee, I do praise thee, I desire to love thee, in and through Jesus. And while my whole soul is going out in enjoyments on the person, and work, and offices, and relations of Jesus, always would I keep in view, and connect with it, in the enjoyment; that it is thou, most gracious and almighty Father, that hast made him most blessed for ever. Surely then, thy glory is great in *his* salvation! And the glory of the Son of God is great in *thy* salvation!

Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.

Song iv. 13, 14.

Hear, my soul, what Christ thy husband and thy Saviour, saith to the Church! and as thou art a part of it in him, take it to thyself. Surely the Church of Jesus is his garden, and every plant in it, which the heavenly Father hath planted, must flourish, with all the increase of God, as trees of the Lord's right hand planting. Even the tenderest plants, the youngest of his people, form a part in this orchard of pomegranates; for every one hath been taken out of nature's wild wilderness, and brought, by sovereign and distinguishing grace, into the Lord's garden, his Church; and, like pomegranates, a large and full-bearing fruit, sweet and delicious, they are in Jesus's eye most pleasant, from the beauty and comeliness he hath put upon them. And do observe how very gracious thy Lord is, in enumerating not only "the pleasant fruits," but "the chief spices;" meaning, no doubt, that as in him they partake of all that is his, and derive beauty, and fragrantcy, and fruitfulness, from their Lord, as the branch from the vine, so do the various graces of his blessed Spirit appear in them, as the sweet fruits under his creating and ripening influence. See to it, my soul, that these things do appear in thee; and that faith, and love, and hope, and joy, and peace in believing, abound in thee, through the Holy Ghost. Oh! the blessedness of knowing these things, and enjoying them. And oh! the blessedness of being thus distinguished, as the rare spices of the East, with such love-tokens of Jesus. Thou knowest that if thou art as an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, thou art wholly so from Jesus. Nature never produceth them, neither can bring them forth, nor cause them to flourish. Oh! then, thou dear Lord! if I am, by sovereign grace, precious and pleasant in thy view, be thou eternally praised, and eternally glorified for the distinguishing mercy: for *of* thee, and *from* thee, and *by* thee, I am what I am; and oh! let thy grace live in me, to thy praise, and to the glory of his grace, "who hath made me accepted in the beloved."

Thy holy child Jesus.—*Acts iv. 30.*

There is somewhat so very sweet and precious in this expression, that, my soul, I would have thee to meditate upon it. Surely the apostles had a special meaning in calling the Lord Jesus "the holy child Jesus;" and no doubt the Holy Ghost did not cause his servants thus to express themselves for nought. It will be

thy wisdom, therefore, to inquire. I do not find a similar phrase in all the word of God. The Redeemer is spoken of, in the days of his infancy, as "the child Jesus;" and when twelve years of age, he is still called "the child;" (see Luke ii. 27, 34, 43;) but nowhere, that I recollect, does he receive the blessed appellation that he is here distinguished by, of "the holy child Jesus." It would be presumption in thee, to determine the cause of this distinction; but it can be none to inquire. Sit down then, this evening, favourable as it is to solemn meditation, and ponder well the subject. *Child* and *servant*, in scripture language, we are told, have the same meaning: hence the apostle observes, in his epistle to the Church of the Galatians, that "the heir, as long he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all." (Gal. iv. 1.) The phrase, therefore, may be accepted under this view, and it will be agreeable to the whole tenor of the Bible. (See Isaiah xlii. 1, compared with Matt. xii. 18.) Nevertheless, I am inclined to think, that somewhat more is intended by it, in this place of the apostle's prayer, when they called Christ "thy holy child Jesus." Perhaps, in allusion to his *holy* nature, contrasted to the *unholy* hands by whom he was crucified and slain; and in this view the subject is truly lovely and interesting. Christ was to be crucified by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; but none but unholy hands were to be imbrued in the blood of God's "holy child Jesus." And doth not the expression, "holy child Jesus," serve, in a very striking manner, and with peculiar emphasis, to bring home to thy thoughts the holiness of that nature, which, in the childhood of Jesus, and from the womb, was altogether, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens?" Hence, before his incarnation, the angel called him by a peculiar name, "that holy thing;" not that holy man, but that "holy thing." (Luke i. 35.) And doth not the expression bring home, in a yet more endearing manner, if possible, the blessedness of all this is in the cause? For "the holy child Jesus," that "holy thing," became the one holy representative of all his Church and people; he was, and is, and ever will be, "the head of his body, the Church;" and hence, in the sight of Jehovah, Christ and his members are one. Now, my soul, considering the phrase in this point of view, what a fulness of light, and life, and glory, and joy, doth it hold forth, and pour in, upon the believer's mind! Lamb of God! I would say, "holy child Jesus!" in thy holiness, cause me to behold myself always appearing before God, and my Father; for, sure I am, if the Lord Jehovah made thee to be sin for thy people, when thou knewest no sin, it was with the express design, in his holy purpose, counsel, and will, that "they should be made the righteousness of God in thee."

Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king.

Hosea iii. 5.

What a sweet scripture is this, and what abundant gospel contained in the bosom of it. *Afterward* shall the children of Israel return. After having been long scattered on every high mountain, wandering over the face of the whole earth, the Lord will bring them back; "he that hath scattered Israel will gather him." There shall be abounding grace, for abounding transgression; and what sin hath ruined, grace shall restore. But to whom shall they return? To seek the Lord their God! Yes! this *may* be done, and this *will* be done, if the Lord incline their hearts; the same that gives the grace to seek, will give the mercy to find. "He hath never said to the praying seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain!" But it is said also, that they shall return to "David their king." Alas! David, king of Israel, had been dead many a year, when this promise was made, and his sepulchre, as Peter afterwards remarked, was with the people unto his day; how then could they return to David their king? Oh! the blessedness to see David's Lord thus preached in days before the gospel. Though David, king of Israel, be dead, Christ, the seed of David after the flesh, ever liveth, and to him shall Israel seek; after all their rebellion, and after all the pursuit of their idols. Oh! precious Lord Jesus! be it my portion also to seek unto thee in all thy covenant relations and characters; "for where should a people seek, but unto their God?" Let my soul feel the same longings as David himself felt, when he cried out, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in this dry and thirsty land where no water is!"

I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit.—1 *Sam.* i. 15.

My soul! look at *Hannah* at the mercy-seat, and mark the sorrowful spirit with which she there appeared. Blushing and sorrow, at the feet of Jesus, are among the highest tokens of real heartfelt communion. Perhaps there never was a moment in the life of *Hannah*, in which faith was in more lively exercise than in that memorable season. And, perhaps, never did she speed with more success than then; for it is said, that when she arose from before the throne, "she went her way, and her countenance was no more sad." Now, my soul, take a precious instruction from her example. Do thou go to the throne, and present thyself at the feet of thy Jesus. Let grace have a full and lively exercise in thine heart. See that thy prayers be really and truly heart-prayers, and not lip-service. Tell thy Lord how greatly thou needest his grace and mercy; and tell him, also,

how much thy Lord Jesus will get glory in being gracious. Let him see that thou art indeed in earnest. And let the offering of a broken and contrite heart decidedly show that thou art also of a sorrowful spirit. And when thou hast done this, do as Hannah did; leave thy sorrow with Jesus. She went her way, and was no more sad. To be sure not; for if she really left her concerns with Jesus, she could not take them home to her own heart again. Here, my soul, is thy mistake; thou dost as Hannah did in part; a throne of grace can witness for thee, that thou hast, times without number, brought thy burdens, both of sin and sorrow, and laid them down at the feet of thy Lord; but alas! the same throne can witness against thee, that, shortly after, through distrust, and fear, and unbelief, thou hast fetched them away again, and taken the whole upon thyself. Dearest Jesus, undertake for me! Oh! for grace, not only to *bring* all my burdens to thee, but to *leave* them all with thee: for this is the only way to make a sorrowful spirit glad, when I make thee, as God the Father hath made thee, the almighty burden-bearer of all the sins and sorrows of thy people!

For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.—*Mark ix. 41.*

How little is this attended to, in the charities of life! I fear, that even the soul which loveth Jesus most, doth not regulate his alms, whether of this world's goods, or of prayer, or of good wishes, when he giveth them, by this blessed standard. Dost thou not, my soul, plead guilty to the charge? Heavenly Lord! enlighten mine eyes to see thee in all thy representatives. And when I have only the cup of cold water to bestow upon any poor needy creature, let me give *that*, in thy name! "Do you belong to Christ?" should be the only question. This is a claim which carries every thing before it. Is it Jesus, who, in the person of his poor members, asketh the alms? Doth the Lord of life and glory condescend to be beholden to the poor creatures of his bounty; and of his own absolutely receives as a loan or debt? Surely the most selfish heart might here covet to be liberal. But, alas! love to Jesus is at too low an ebb to swell the tides for pouring into the parched ground of our neighbour's vineyard, from such principles. My soul, let this charming scripture be henceforth much upon thy mind. Take it about thee whithersoever thou goest. Look out for the Lord's poor, and so far read their characters, as to see that they belong to Christ. And if thy Lord hath made thee his almoner, if it be no farther than to minister the cup of cold water; yet let that cup be given in his name, and because they belong to Christ. Methinks, had it

pleased my heavenly Father to have intrusted me with ample circumstances, I should rejoice to follow the plan of his bounties; "who maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and upon the good; and sendeth the blessings of his rain both upon the just and the unjust." But even then, amidst the indiscriminate scattering of temporal blessings all around, the given cup of cold water to one of thine, thou blessed Jesus, because he belonged to thee, would be a cordial to my own heart, that needed no higher joy than the inexpressible felicity of testifying that myself, as well as the receiver, were both the Lord's poor, and the Lord's property.

And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem.—*Zech. xiv. 4.*

My soul! pause over this blessed promise. To whom could it refer, but to Jesus? *That day*, through all the Old Testament dispensation, meant the gospel Church of the New Testament dispensation. And when the Son of God came, the day was come also. And did not Jesus stand often, during this day of his grace, in his own ministry, teaching the people on the mount of Olives? Yea, was it not the very last sacred spot on which his holy feet stood, when from thence he ascended to heaven, having finished redemption-work upon earth? My soul! do thou often, by faith, visit the hallowed ground, and from thence let thy meditation take wing, after thine ascended and exalted Saviour. And while, like the wondering disciples, looking after Jesus as he went up, thou art contemplating the glory of thy Lord, who is now above, carrying on all the blessed designs of his love, for which he came below; recollect the assurance that the angels who attended their Lord to grace his triumph, gave of his return: his feet shall again stand at the last day upon the earth. "He shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe." Oh! for grace to be always on the look-out for my Lord's return! Give me, blessed Jesus, to know thee as my Kinsman-Redeemer; to know thee as the Lord my righteousness; to be living upon thee now by faith, that then I may enjoy thee by living upon thy fulness, as in grace here, so in glory to all eternity. Amen.

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled.—*Acts iv. 31.*

Think, my soul, what a blessed testimony this must have been in confirmation to the disciples, that their God was a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God! And what a full reply to all they had been praying for! The enemies of God, and of his Christ, had threatened the poor disciples what they would do to them, if they persisted in preaching Jesus to the people. The

purport, therefore, of the apostle's prayer was, not that the Lord would stop their malice, and silence all their opposition: this they sought not to avoid. But the single prayer was, that their souls might be animated to go on, let the malice of their foes manifest itself as it might. In answer, "the place was shaken." As if the Lord had said, "He that shakes the place, can make your enemies' hearts tremble." And so it proved. Now, my soul, take thine improvement from it. Jesus sees all, knows all, hears all, as well of thine exercises as of thine enemies' attempts upon thee. Carry all complaints, therefore, to him. Depend upon it, that it is blessed to be exercised; blessed for thee, that the enemies of God, and of his Christ, threaten thee; blessed to be opposed, that thou mayest not recline upon thine arms, or, like stagnant waters, become corrupt for want of running. The hatred of the foes of Jesus affords occasion yet more for Jesus to manifest his love; and though the place be not shaken whence thy cries go up, the word of his grace gives the same sure answer. Jesus looks on, Jesus upholds, Jesus supports. Do thou call every *Bethel* place as Abraham's handmaid did: "Thou, Lord, seest me." No weapon formed against God's people can prosper; and every tongue that riseth against them in judgment, the Lord will condemn. "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?—*Jeremiah* xiv. 8.

My soul! follow up these holy pleadings with thy Lord. Jesus loves boldness, and not bondage frames. Remember, when thou goest to him, thou goest to a tried friend, a long-proved, a faithful friend, and one that loveth at all times; and he that was and is the hope of Israel, hath ever been, and will be thy hope, thy Saviour, the Rock of Ages; yea, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Is then thy Jesus as a stranger to thee? Are his visits short, and but as the wayfaring man that is hastening on his journey, who, though he stops at the inn for the night, stops only to refresh himself, and takes no account of what passeth in the house? Pause, my soul! it is time to inquire. I hope no shyness has crept in between thy Lord and thee! When did he last visit thee? When did he last manifest himself unto thee, otherwise than he doth to the world? What precious *Bethel*-visits hast thou lately had? When did he show thee all his secrets, and thou didst tell him all that is in thine heart? When was his well-known voice last heard by thee, saying, "Come with me from Lebanon,

my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir, and Hermon, from the lion's den, from the mountains of the leopards?" And when didst thou answer the gracious invitation, crying out, with joy unspeakable, "It is the voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills?" O my soul! my soul! I charge it upon thee to be very choice of thy Lord's visits! See to it, that thou art always upon the alert, waiting for them, and going forth in holy longings and vehement desires after them. Depend upon it, Jesus is no stranger in his visits, but it is thou who art a stranger to the consciousness of his coming. Never is thy Lord as a wayfaring man, that tarrieth but for a night with his people; but it is through thy sleepy, slothful, forgetful frame, that, while Jesus is standing and knocking at the door, saying, "Open to me," thou art regardless of his coming, and having put off thy coat, feelest not inclined to put it on. Jesus! master! suffer not a coldness to arise, no, not for a moment, in my poor heart, towards thee. Oh! give me a holy jealousy to be always on the look-out for thy sweet visits. Do thou, my beloved, put in thy hand by the hole of the door of my heart, that my bowels may be moved in earnest desires for thy coming. For then, thou sweet Lord, thou that art the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof, then when thou comest, and I shall find thee without, I will lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me; and I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate; yea, I would constrain thee, and hold thee fast, that thou shouldst not be as a wayfaring man of the night, but I would keep thee until the break of day, and thou shouldst make thyself known to me in breaking of bread and in prayer!

I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister.—*Job xvii. 14.*

My soul! take a turn, now and then, to the grave. It will be profitable to look at the bed where thou art shortly to take up thy residence, before thou art sent there to remain. Nothing so profitable to allay all that heat and folly, which keep men in a continual ferment, as a solemn view of "the house appointed for all living." To be sure, nothing can be more humbling than what Job here speaks of his relations: great men and nobles will not be very fond of the alliance; but in reality, all the other affinities of life are imaginary. Corruption is the common father of all. In this we all are formed: for corruption, when dried, becomes the original dust it was before it was animated. And as corruption is the father, so the worm is both mother and sister; for here they burrow, and this is their proper element. But, my soul, while thou knowest these things, art thou living

as one under the influence of them? Every man may say, as Job said, and call corruption his father, and the worm his mother and sister: but thousands, while they say it, do not live as though they believed it. To say to corruption, "Thou art my father," in a scriptural sense, implies a heartfelt knowledge of a man's own corrupt, fallen, and sinful state; and under a sense of sin, and a consciousness of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, that soul hath attained a self-loathing and abhorrence, so as to look to corruption and the worms of the earth with complacency, as the blessed asylum where will be deposited a vile body that shall harass the soul no more. Art thou, my soul, so looking at the grave? Dost thou so view it, as to love it for the blessed property contained in it? Precious Jesus! thou didst take pleasure in thy relationship with our nature, though thy holy body, untainted by sin, was liable to no corruption; yet in the affinities of humanity thou called thyself a "worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people!" Oh! the transporting thought, to know, like Job, that thou my kinsman-Redeemer liveth! And to know also, from a well-founded hope and assurance in thee, that "though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold for myself, and not another for me!"

For I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.—*Philippians* i. 19.

Blessed frame of mind! when, like Paul, however unpromising circumstances are, to be able to say, "I know that this exercise, be it what it may, is among *the all things* which work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose!" My soul! do thou once for all mark down this one certain and never-to-be-questioned truth; that thy God, thy Jesus, hath but one end in view from all the providences he appoints to his people, and is invariably and everlastingly promoting it, however to thy apprehension, at times, things seem to run counter. And when thou hast settled this in thy mind, as a certain fixed principle, next take into the account all, or (at least as thou canst not know all) some of the many foundations on which the certainty, for the accomplishment of a final issue of good to the people of God, rests. Think of the ability, power, wisdom, and purpose of thy Lord. Call to mind the grace, the love, the fixed affection, Jesus bears, and from everlasting hath always borne to his people. Then recollect the plentiful means in his own almighty hand, which he hath, to make all purposes minister to his will, and all creatures to become instruments of his pleasure. And when thou hast studied, and well studied these

blessed things in Christ's school, under the supply of the Spirit's teaching, make application of the doctrine to every event in the dispensations of thy Lord's providences and grace, which thou meetest with through life. Art thou afflicted in soul; in sickness of body; in want or weakness; with inward trials, or outward evils; tempted by sin, or tempted by Satan; Jesus knows all, appoints all, is carrying thee through all, and will finally bless thee in all. The enjoyment of ordinances, or interruption of ordinances; heart-straitenings in prayer, or enlargement in prayer; in short, all things past, present, and future; all circumstances, times, and occasions; the blessings of heaven, yea, the very malice of hell, Jesus will overrule, arrange, direct, and order; that, like the hidden springs of a machine, a beautiful design is in the whole, and not a pin could be left out without injury to the work. Learn these things, my soul, and get, through grace, into the practical use of those lessons, and then thou wilt be able to say, and with the same degree of assurance as Paul did, let thy trials be what they may, under every one of them: "I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through the prayer of the faithful, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me.—Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me.—2 *Timothy* iv. 16, 17.

My soul! think of the apostle's situation, when brought as a prisoner, for Jesus's sake, before the council, and deserted by all. Nay, look to an infinitely greater than Paul, when hurried away to Pilate, and when all his disciples forsook him and fled. Make improvement of the view of both, as it may be profitable to thyself and thine own circumstances. There is a period coming, and, for aught thou knowest, may be near indeed, in which no man *can* stand with thee; in which the kindest earthly friend, if thou hast any, or the tenderest-hearted neighbour, *cannot* minister to thy safety. When thou art going down to the valley of the shadow of death, and the Lord is undressing thee for Jordan's river, think of that season, and how blessed must it then be to say, with Paul, "Though no man hath stood with me, or can stand, yet Jesus will be with me to strengthen me." Oh! what blessedness is in this sweet word, *notwithstanding!* Though all friends fail, though creatures of every description, and every degree, stand aloof, unable to help; though in thyself thou hast nothing, thou art nothing, yea, by reason of sin and unworthiness, art worse than nothing, and can merit nothing; *notwithstanding* all these, the Lord will be there, and he will stand by thee, and strengthen thee. Precious Jesus! I need no more, I desire no other; nay, I pray every other to depart, and leave a dying man alone; for humbly shall I say, as my Lord hath said

before me, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me." And who shall say, how Jesus may bless me in these solemn seasons? Who shall describe what passeth between Jesus and my soul then? May there not be many sweet love-tokens then given by Jesus to his people, which before to have shown would have lessened the exercise of faith? Will not then some more enlarged views of divine love and faithfulness break out to lighten up the passage of death? Oh! for grace, until the hour arrives, to walk by faith in this soul-supporting and soul-refreshing hope! And when the moment comes, who shall speak, or even conceive the blessedness of realizing the sweet promise of Jesus, which all the redeemed rejoice in, but none below have ever fully apprehended equal to its vast extent: "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, ye in me, and I in you!" (John xiv. 20.)

NOVEMBER.

The curse causeless shall not come.—*Prov. xxvi. 2.*

It is a sweet thought, that the prayer of the wicked is an abomination in the sight of the Lord. And surely the curse of the wicked cannot injure the righteous. But it is doubly blessed when a child of God finds a promising God, a performing God, in making their curses fall to the ground; yea, converting their very curses into blessings. Had not Joseph's brethren sold their brother, humanly speaking, how would he have arrived to the government of Egypt? Had not Haman planned the destruction of Mordecai, and for this purpose erected the gallows, though means would not have been wanting for his own destruction, yet the idea of hanging might not have entered the breast of the king. Yea, had not the Jews crucified the Lord Jesus, where would have been the triumph of the cross to his redeemed? Learn, my soul, to be looking at these things; not by mere outward appearances, not by the event of the moment, but by the final issue and termination of things. "The curse causeless shall not come." This is quite enough for every believer. Jesus will prevent, or overrule, or make it minister the very reverse of what the enemy designed. It shall be frustrated, or it shall be sanctified, or it shall be productive of salutary effects, like medicated waters, that by running over certain properties of the earth, have their nature changed, and become wholesome and healing. Lord! cause me to repose in thee, and if the enemy curse, do thou but bless, and all his causeless anger will then be as nothing.

I said in my haste, All men are liars.—*Ps. cxvi. 11.*

Hasty words, for the most part, are not wise words. But, as the apostle remarks, "Let God be true, and every man a liar." It should seem that this hasty expression of David was at a time when he was greatly afflicted. Alas! what exercises, for want of the proper use of them, in their sanctifying properties, are men brought into! But if, from long experience, the heart be led to a just conclusion, that man, in his best freindship, and best intention, is too fickle and helpless a creature to trust in, or depend upon: and from a full conviction of the hollow and deceitful nature of the human heart, the soul is led unto God in Christ, as the only stable and permanent security; thus changing the reeds of Egypt for the Rock of Israel: here it becomes not the subject of haste, but the deliberate conclusion formed by grace to consider every being fallacious but the faithful Jehovah. My soul! take thy stand, this evening, under Jesus's banner; and though thou hast been deceived by man, yea, by every man; and though thine own heart be deceitful and desperately wicked, so much so, that though, since grace brought thee first acquainted with it, thou hast been making discoveries more and more that have astonished thee, and thou hast not yet, nor ever will in this life, get to the bottom in exploring the depths of deception; though the world and the great enemy of souls be all in league to deceive thee; yet shall not the whole of these deceivers prevail, nor separate thee from the love of Christ. Jesus will make thee more than conqueror through his grace supporting thee. As the armies in heaven, so his faithful upon earth, "overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and have not loved their lives unto death."

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.—*Isaiah lv. 8.*

My soul! hast thou ever considered the blessedness in this verse, as it concerns the great work of salvation? Ponder over it, this evening. There is nothing, perhaps, in which there is a greater and more striking difference, than there is between our crude and contracted notions of redemption and the perfect and unerring thoughts of Jehovah on this point. Our conduct with each other is so limited on the score of pardon, that though we forgive a first or second offence, yet if it be repeated to many, nature revolts at the offender, and seems to take a kind of justification in withholding any farther acts of clemency. Hence we frame the same standard to judge by, concerning God. But with God, abounding sin calls forth abounding grace, and, like the tide, riseth above high-water mark, yea, overflows all the banks and surrounding ground; so much so indeed, that it covers the mountains, and "if the sin of Judah be looked for, it shall not

be found." Hence the prophet, in a transport of holy joy and triumph in the contemplation, cries out, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again; he will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities! and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." (Micah vii. 18, 19.) How truly blessed, then, must it be, to carry the same kind of reasoning concerning God into all the departments of thinking, in relation to himself and his dealings with us. Think as highly as I may be able concerning him, I must fall infinitely short of what he really is, both in the nature of his existence, and in all his dealings with his creatures. In those points where he hath been pleased to reveal himself, I cannot err. But if I attempt to go farther, the bar to inquiry stops my way, and this sweet verse stands for a memorandum to inform me: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." Now grace rejoiceth in this discovery, while proud unhumiliated nature revolts at it. Say, my soul! dost thou feel delight in such views of Jehovah? Is it blessed to thee, that in all thy Jesus has taught thee, he hath brought thee to see more and more of thy nothingness, thy littleness, and the Lord's all-sufficiency? Surely it must be divine teaching alone that can create joy in the heart, when such discoveries are made which tend to humble the creature and exalt the Creator. Blessed be the Lord who teacheth me to profit!

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.—*Rev.* iii. 18.

My soul! take advice of thy Lord, for he is a Wonderful Counsellor, and all these blessings will be thine. He will cause thee to inherit substance, and fill all thy treasures: yea, he will give thee durable riches and righteousness. If Jesus clothe thee with the robe of his salvation, thy nakedness will be indeed covered; but no fig-leaves of thine own gathering and sewing together will do this for thee. If Jesus but anoint thine eyes with the precious anointing of his Holy Spirit, thou wilt both see and know the way to buy this tried gold. Now, pause over this sweet verse, and ask thyself, how thou shalt buy this golden treasure? What is the treasure, but faith? For the Holy Ghost calls it *precious* faith: "yea, more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire." (1 Peter i. 7.) And if thy Lord, who gives thee counsel to buy, will sell this article to thee,

as he sells it to all his people, "without money and without price," it will get for thee every thing thou needest, to cover and to clothe, to give sight and to gain substance. It will become both meat and drink, and house and home; it will keep thee from every danger; yea, and preserve thee to his heavenly kingdom. It will form a complete livelihood, for the "just live by faith;" and as to riches, there are none, properly speaking, that deserve to be called so, but "the rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom." So that if thou make this purchase, here is a title to all that God in Christ is to his people. God himself, thy Father, is thine: Christ, with all his fulness, is thine; the Holy Ghost, with all his blessed influences, is thine. The promises are all thine: all the blessings of grace are thine; and all the inheritance of glory is thine. And let Satan vent whatever rage he may, as thou art going home to thy Father's house, yet, by following the counsel of Jesus, and buying of him gold tried in the fire, by thus taking the "shield of faith, this will quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Precious Jesus! give me, Lord, I pray thee, grace to follow thy counsel, and to buy of thee this gold tried in the fire, and bless both the counsel and the Wonderful Counsellor, who both counsels and inclines my soul to follow what my Lord hath said, and to enjoy in him all things which make for my present peace and everlasting happiness.

And lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matt. iii. 16, 17.

Take thy stand, my soul, this evening by the river Jordan, and by faith behold the wonders displayed in the hour thy Jesus entered upon his public ministry. Behold a decisive proof of the distinct personality in the threefold character, which all the sacred volume of the scriptures gives to the revelation of the Godhead. Behold Jesus, the uncreated Word, on the bank of Jordan! Behold the Holy Spirit, hovering as a dove on his sacred person! And hear the voice of God coming from heaven, proclaiming who Jesus was, his relationship to him, and his approbation of him. And when thou hast duly pondered the precious testimony, bend thy knee in adoration, love, and praise to the sacred Three in One, for so condescending an act of grace, in confirmation of the faith once delivered to the saints. Nor quit the hallowed spot until thou hast well and duly considered the blessedness of the proclamation given from heaven by the Father, to the person and character of the Lord Jesus. John the Baptist was taught to form his conclusion of Christ by this

very evidence. He that sent John to baptize, had said unto him, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost; And I saw," said John, "and bare record, that this is the Son of God." And do thou, my soul, take thy confidence from the same precious testimony; and then ask thyself another question: Is he whom the Father declared to be his beloved Son, thy beloved Saviour? And while God declares himself well pleased with him as thy Saviour, art thou well pleased with him also in this precious character? If to these questions thou canst truly say, Yes, yes, thou wilt find a blessed testimony indeed, and a soul-refreshing consolation in this view of Jesus. Go then, in all thy holy exercise of faith and prayer, go to thy God and Father in Christ Jesus, and plead for all thou standest in need of, for the life that now is, and that which is to come, upon this footing: that in him, in whom God hath declared himself well pleased, thou art well pleased; and for his blood and righteousness' sake, thou seekest every supply of grace here, and glory hereafter. This will be a sure plea, and such as can never fail. And he that proclaimed, by a voice from heaven, his perfect approbation of Jesus, as a Saviour for poor sinners, will give, for his sake, every thing that poor sinners can need during a life of grace, until consummated in glory.

In that day, sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it day and night.

Isaiah xxvii. 2, 3.

And in what day, but the gospel day, could this song be sung with greater justness? Christ's Church is indeed a vineyard, hedged in, and fenced round, from the world's wilderness; so that all within may well sing this song in Judah, when God hath made it like a strong city, and appointed "salvation for walls and bulwarks." Yea, God himself hath sung to his well-beloved Son, this song of his Beloved, touching his vineyard. But what is the red wine of the vineyard? Red wine, in Judea, was of the choicest grapes; and surely the blood of Christ is the choicest of all blessings to the sinner's view. Now, my soul, mark the sweetness of Jesus's promise; it is he who engageth to keep it; yea, to have his eye upon it night and day, lest any hurt it; yea, not only to keep it, but water it, and that every moment: so that he is both a fence and a refreshing, a covert from the storm, and as rivers of water in a dry place: and, like some rich luxuriant tree in a sultry land, not only forms a shade to shelter the poor sunburnt traveller from the heat, but also affords fruit to slake his thirst, and to feed him; so that while he is strengthened in

his journey, in resting under its branches from his fatigue, he may find occasion also to bless God, both for protection and support. And art thou, blessed Jesus, all this, and infinitely more, to thy people? Art thou the tree of life in the paradise of God? Dost thou keep thy Church, thy vineyard, night and day, that none shall hurt it; yea, and water it every moment, and every individual soul of thine, of the plants of thy Father's planting? Help me, then, thou blessed, gracious Lord! help me to feel all that confidence which is suited to an entire dependence upon thee! Sit down, my soul, under "the shadow of thy Lord, with great delight, and his fruit will be sweet to thy taste."

And they feared as they entered into the cloud.

Luke ix. 34.

My soul! here is much instruction for thine evening thoughts to be employed upon. Sit down, and take a leisurely view of the situation of the disciples of Jesus at this hallowed season, on the mount. The Lord Jesus was about to manifest to them somewhat of his glory. But the prelude to it was infinitely solemn. "They feared as they entered into the cloud;" though, when there, Jesus was going to open to their souls the richest enjoyment of himself. And is it not so with all the sweetest manifestations which the Lord makes to his people? Seasons of sickness, bereaving providences, afflictions from the world, disappointments, crosses, and the like; these are like the cloud to the disciples, as we enter them; but what gracious events have we found folded up in them, and when opened to our view, how much of Jesus's love, and grace, and glory, have come out of them, which, but for the dispensation, we must have lost. And recollect, my soul, as thou lookest back, and tracest the divine hand leading thee through dark and trying providences, in how many cases, and in how many instances, though the cloud was frowning as thou didst enter, the most blessed sunshine soon after broke in upon thee. Precious Jesus! choose for me in every circumstance yet remaining to be accomplished. I know not what is in thy sovereign appointments concerning me; but sure I am, that both love and wisdom are at the bottom of all. Give me grace to enter the cloud, be it what it may, without fear, because I know Jesus is with me: and though, in this my day, it be neither clear nor dark, yet well I know all shall be well in thee, and from thee; "and at evening time it shall be light."

Verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.—*John xvi. 23.*

My soul! do not fail to remark, in this blessed promise of thy Lord, how he hath secured the accomplishment of it. Here is

a double *verily*, if one will not do. And this is said by the faithful witness, and the Amen of heaven. Had Jesus said but the words themselves, without a single *verily*, his bare word was enough to give confirmation to faith; but when he says, *Verily, verily*, repeating it twice over, how gracious and condescending, as well as comforting and confirming, ought it to be to our dependence upon what he hath said. But the promise itself comes in with a blessed *shall* and *will*; and that not to any limited request or petition, but extended to a *whatsoever*; as if Jesus threw the reins of government into his people's hand. In some parts of scripture, we find a *may be*, for our encouragement. "It may be (said the prophet) that the Lord God of Hosts will be gracious;" (Amos v. 15;) and this ought to encourage a child of God in the exercise of faith, under every trial. But when God saith, *It shall be*, and confirms it with a double asseveration of "Verily, verily I say unto you;" this sums up all in one, every assurance that can be desired. Pause, my soul, over the subject, and then say, what shall be thy requests to thy God and Father, in the name of his dear Son? Nay, do not ask for small things, while the King of heaven hath given thee two *verities*, that whatsoever thou shalt ask shall be granted. Jesus himself doth, as it were, put into thine hand a blank paper for thee to fill in, having signed and set his own blessed and holy name at the bottom. Now what wilt thou write down? Thou hast nothing more to do, than to follow the Lord's example, and as he hath written his name in the promise, do thou also write Jesus, and Jesus only, on the whole paper. Ask of God thy Father to give thee Jesus: for in giving him, in him and with him, he giveth all things. Lord, I would say, give me thine own dear Son, and I need nothing more: Christ is all, and in all.

And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Cor. vi. 11.

It is profitable at times to see our mercies, and to trace them to their source, by considering what we once were, the better to apprehend what we now are. *Such*, the apostle saith, when speaking of the vilest of the vile, "were some of you:" dead in trespasses and sins, hateful, and hating one another. But now, being washed from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, there is a justification *by* Christ, and a sanctification *in* Christ; and by the effectual work of God the Spirit in the heart, the believer stands complete before God, in the name of the Lord Jesus. This is a blessed testimony to the soul of the poor sinner, whom the Holy Ghost hath convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. For God the Father gave the

promise, in the Old Testament scripture, that he would sprinkle clean water upon the people, and they should be clean. And here, in the New Testament dispensation, the fountain is opened by which it is to be accomplished, and they are said to be clean; yea, "both washed and justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." So that all the persons of the Godhead are engaged in this glorious act, to render it secure and certain to the believing soul. See to it, then, my soul, that this be thy privilege, and that from long tried and approved experience, thou canst take home this sweet scripture to thyself, as "both washed, justified, and sanctified," and set to thy seal that God is true. Oh! for grace to live in the daily exercise of faith upon it, until faith be swallowed up and lost in sight; and amidst the throng of the redeemed in glory, thou shalt live at the fountain-head of enjoyment, with those that have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!"

Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him.—*Mark ix. 25.*

Oh! that the Lord Jesus, in a spiritual healing, would frame my powers anew in himself, that neither dumbness nor deafness might ever more stop my voice of praise for the cure of my soul, as the Lord healed the poor man's son in his body! One should suppose that after the song of salvation had been once chanted in the renewed heart, that heart would never more be out of tune, nor feel a dumbness or deafness in the Lord's praise. But, alas! so much of unbelief lies lurking within, and so much of exercises come from without, that the harp is often hanging on the willow, and we seldom sing to the Lord's praise, or proclaim abroad his glory. Whereas the promise of Jehovah, in allusion to gospel-days, was, that his Israel should, even from the valley of *Achor*, find a door of hope; and the Lord added, that he would cause his Church to sing there, "as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." (Hosea ii. 15.) Surely, God is glorified, when, from the depth of exercises, songs of redemption still go on, and even in the fire the believer sings his morning and evening hymn to the praise of Jesus. Say, my soul, hath Jesus cured thee of this dumb and deaf spirit? Art thou daily showing forth his praises, who hath called thee out of darkness into his marvellous light? Dost thou delight thyself in the Lord, and delight to sing in the ways of the Lord, that "great is the glory of the Lord?" See to it that this be among thine evidences of a spiritual healing; for the Lord promised, in allusion to Israel's recovery, that the ears of the deaf should be unstopped, and the tongue of the dumb should sing. Hence all the way through the pilgrimage-state,

the song of salvation should be heard from the mouth of Zion's travellers, until they arrive in glory, where "songs of everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing be done away for ever."

And his commandments are not grievous.—1 *John* v. 3.

Is it so, my soul, that the commandments of thy Lord are not grievous unto thee? Surely it is; for though thou carriest about with thee a body of sin and death, which is everlastingly harassing thee, yet thou canst, and dost say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man;" yea, in the very moment that thine old unrenewed nature, when evil is present with thee, is tempting thee to break through the hedge of divine precepts, in thy regenerated part thou truly lovest and delightest in the holiness of thy Lord's commandments. And are there not seasons in thine experience, when, in spite of sin, and Satan, and the world, thou canst adopt the language of one of old, and say, "Oh, how I love thy law; it is my meditation all the day!" And is it not joy to thy heart, and a blessed part of thy faith, that the law of thy God was so sure and so strict, that rather than that a jot of it should pass unfulfilled, or the smallest breach of it go unatoned for, Jesus must and did die? And is it not one of the sweetest and most satisfying principles to thee in the gospel, that Jehovah did not, and would not clear the guilty, but by an equivalent; so that, both in obedience and by sacrifice, the law is magnified by thy great Surety, and made honourable? Precious Jesus! It is wholly by thee, and in thee, as my soul finds the commandments of my God to be not grievous. By faith I behold them all fulfilled in thee, as my glorious head; and by virtue of my union with thee, I feel the gracious principle of thy quickening Spirit inclining my soul both to love thy commandments, and most earnestly desiring to fulfil them. "Lord, enable me to run the way of thy commandments, now thou hast set my soul at liberty!"

Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am!—*Isaiah* lviii. 9.

Mark the graciousness of thy God, my soul, in the readiness of his answers to thy cries. He hath said, indeed, in another sweet promise, "It shall come to pass, that before my people call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." (*Isaiah* lxv. 24.) But in addition to this, Jesus here throws in another precious assurance; for when we call, he will not only answer, but to our cry he will say, Here I am! As if, and which is indeed really the case, the Lord would have his children know, that he is always present with them; nearer to support, than any of their foes can be to hurt. Now, my soul! I charge

it upon thee, this evening, that this view, and the recollection of the everlasting presence of thy Lord, be never more from thy thoughts. How full to the same purport is that blessed scripture: "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever." (Psalm cxxv. 2.) And if Jesus encircle them in his arms, what power shall break through to wound? If Jesus himself be their shield, what weapon shall penetrate through him to come at them? Lie down, my soul, this night, and for ever, under these blessed impressions. Jesus doth by thee as one whom his mother comforteth. When the timid child is put to bed, the tender parent will sit by her darling until he is gone to sleep. But if the child be fearful that the mother hath left the room, frequently the child sends forth a cry, until by her voice she quiets him again. Jesus doth this, and more: for when new fears arise, and darkness adds to the distress, "then shalt thou call," saith he, "and the Lord shalt answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am!" Oh! how blessed is the thought! I AM is always I AM; and always here!

O taste and see that the Lord is good!—*Ps. xxxiv. 8.*

Those views of Jesus are blessed, which not only take in his loveliness, but his usefulness; which tend both to commend him to our regard, as fair and beautiful, and at the same time full and bountiful; that, like some rich and wide-spreading tree, yea, like the tree of life in the paradise of God, is at once both for shelter and fruit. My soul! look at thy Jesus thus, and thou wilt then enter into the sense of this delightful verse of scripture: "O taste and see that the Lord is good!" In this experience of Christ consists the proper knowledge and apprehension of him. An hearsay account of Jesus is but a poor account. By hearing sermons, reading the scriptures, attending ordinances, and the like, men may acquire some knowledge of him; but until the Holy Ghost form him in the heart, "the hope of glory," we never taste and see that the Lord is good. It was this which distinguished the Church's enjoyment of her Lord, and which enabled her to make a suitable answer to that question of the daughters of Jerusalem: "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" For when we can say, "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace," then, and not before, can we say also, as he did from whom this testimony was given, "I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God." My soul! see to it, that in your commendation of Jesus, you can add to the account your own personal enjoyment of him. And think what a blessedness must accompany that recommendation of the Lord, when, like the beloved apostle, you can hold forth Christ upon the same principles, and for the same cause as he did: "That" (said he) "which was from the beginning, which we have heard,

which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life—declare we unto you; that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John i. 1, 3.)

This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood.

1 *John* v. 6.

My soul! ponder this weighty scripture well. There is much in it. When the soldier pierced the sacred side of Jesus, John recorded the act and its effects as most significant and important. That it penetrated the heart, is most evident, because from no other part of the body could blood and water, in a full stream, flow together: and as both, in the purposes of redemption, strikingly set forth the great object of Christ's mission, so John is here impressing the great truth on the minds of the Church, as a matter most essentially necessary to be regarded. He repeats it, that it might not be overlooked or forgotten. It was not by water only, that Christ came, but by water and blood. Both represented the necessity of that redemption our nature universally required, for the purpose of salvation, and therefore Christ came by both. The water administered by the various washings under the law, and the blood shed in the innumerable sacrifices; as Jesus came to sum up and fulfil all in one, it was needful that he should come with both. And hence, as by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, the Lord accomplisheth that which the typical representations of the law set forth; so by his blood he completes that also in the full price of redemption which the numberless sacrifices on the Jewish altar were uniformly intended to shadow. Behold, my soul, the vast and infinite importance of the thing itself, and look, this evening, with an eye of faith unto Jesus, who thus came, until by faith thou also not only enter into a full apprehension of the great design of his coming, but art perfectly assured that thou hast a personal interest in the same, and that Jesus hath presented thee, among his redeemed, to himself, a glorious Church, “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that thou shouldst be without blame before him in love.”

To remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Acts xx. 35.

My soul, do not forget these words of thy Lord, after the Holy Ghost hath been pleased thus sweetly to give them to the Church.

It is probable, that Jesus had more than once expressed himself in those gracious words to his disciples, though none of the Evangelists have recorded them. But God the Holy Ghost would have them communicated to the Church, and therefore the apostle Paul folds up his parting sermon to the Church at *Ephesus*, with them. And blessed be that eternal Spirit for this, among a thousand other instances of glorifying the Lord Jesus! And now, my soul, do not forget the words of thy Lord, but bind them as frontlets between thine eyes, and beg of the Holy Ghost to engrave them on thine heart. Is it, my Lord, more blessed to give than to receive? With Jesus, indeed, it hath been for ever thus: for thou canst receive nothing but broken hearts: and we have nothing else to give thee. Hast thou found it so, my Lord, that it is more blessed to give than to receive? And doth thy blessedness consist in giving instead of receiving? Yea, Lord, it is indeed thy blessedness, thy glory, thy joy, to give pardon to guilty sinners, and grace to needy sinners. Thou art most blessed in this barter, in giving out of thy fulness to supply the emptiness of thy poor pensioners, and to shed thy blood on purpose that there might be an open and everlasting fountain for sin and for uncleanness. Lord! may I always remember this, and so remember it as to see, that while it is thy blessedness to give and not to receive, it is my blessedness to have to do with one who cannot receive, but hath all to give. Yea, thou ever blessed, ever lovely, ever gracious Jesus! let me so remember those sweet words of thine, that I may see that it is part of the blessedness of my Lord to give to his poor creature, and that Jesus is made blessed and glorious by laying out his grace upon such a poor worm as I am. Let me say, and let my faith be strengthened while I say it, through thy grace teaching me, "My God, my Saviour, my Lord Jesus will get glory in the everlasting praises of heaven from my poor soul, and from every poor sinner whom he hath saved, like me, in having laid out the riches of his grace, and in saving, by his blood and righteousness, souls that were dead in trespasses and sins." Henceforth may I always remember the words of my Lord. It is Jesus that hath found it "more blessed to give than to receive."

Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord. Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.—*Isaiah* lxvi. 9.

Observe, my soul, not only how readily the Lord undertakes to bless his people, and makes good his promises, but the gracious manner in which he confirms his word unto his servants, "wherein he causeth them to hope." All the promises of God in Christ Jesus are sweet, and sure, and amen; but, methinks there is a double blessedness in those, which, from their seeming to come

to us with difficulty, the Lord recommends yet more by bringing in the sovereignty of his power to their accomplishment. It is as if the Lord said by every one, "Because it be marvellous in your eyes, should it be also marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts." (Zech. viii. 6.) My soul! if thou wilt read once more, this blessed evening, the gracious verse of the prophet in this view, the beauty and glory of it will more abundantly appear. Did God ever, in nature or in grace, fill the womb with expectation, and in the end cause a disappointment? Look through the whole compass of creation, and observe the appointed weeks through all his works. And will he restrain in the new creation? Is he not pledged in covenant-engagements to people Zion with men as a flock? Is not the travail of the Redeemer's soul to be as incalculable as the dew-drops of the morning? And shall Jehovah cease to be Jehovah here? Shall he bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? Shall he restrain or shut the womb? saith thy God. My soul! while thou art looking at the divine faithfulness, and the divine power, as the everlasting security for the fulfilment of all the promises of God, in Christ to Zion at large, take home the same strength of argument (for it is the same) to thine own security in particular. Hath the Lord thy God brought forth to thy new birth in Jesus, all the blessed hopes of salvation in his blood and righteousness; and will he not go on to the accomplishment of every thing needful in grace here, and glory hereafter to all eternity? Is any thing too hard for God? Shall thy cold and unbelieving heart make the word of God, and the oath of his promise of none effect? Dost thou not see that all thy security is in God's faithfulness, and not dependent upon man's improvement? Oh! the blessedness of ceasing from man, and resting upon God. Give me, blessed Jesus! give me grace to look off from myself, and to be wholly looking to thee! to live off from myself, and to live wholly upon thy fulness!

The night-watches.—*Psalms* lxxiii. 6.

The night-watches afford blessed seasons to the soul, when those who know Jesus, and can and do enjoy Jesus, wait more for his coming than they that wait for the dawn of the morning. My soul! what saith thine experience to the visits of Jesus in the night-watches? Hast thou ever known any thing like the *Bethel*-visits of Jacob, in those silent hours of the night? When no eye hath seen thee but his, that seeth in secret, and no ear heard but his, that wakeneth thee morning by morning, canst thou say what hath passed between thy Lord and thee, giving refreshments of soul, infinitely more satisfying than all the sleep of the body? Hast thou known somewhat of these inexpressibly sweet visits of thy Lord? Hath Jesus at times manifested himself in those hallowed hours, otherwise than he doth to the world?

Yea, hath he not sometimes awakened thee to the call of his visit, and graciously prepared thee to the enjoyment; and hath he not come in the communication by his word and grace in such a way and manner, that, like the patriarch, thou hast been constrained to consider it as the very gate of heaven? These visits of Jesus are blessed visits. Many a child of God is so straitened in the necessary and unavoidable labours of the day, that the cares and concerns of himself, and perhaps of a family, or of service, too much interrupt the life of communion with God in the soul: but the night-watches afford many an hour, when no interruption can arise, for the enjoyment of fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. My soul! be always on the look-out for a visit from thy Lord in the night-watches. If thou art listening, thou wilt hear his voice, as the Church of old did, saying, "Open to me! for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." (Song v. 2.) And oh! with what refreshing dews of grace, and love, and favour doth he come! All the drops of the night, and the dew of the morning, are not so grateful to the thirsty earth, as the visits of Jesus, when coming as rain upon the mown grass, to the languishing souls of his people. Come, Lord! and visit my soul in the night-watches; and do thou tarry with me until the break of day, and make thyself known unto me, as thou didst to thy disciples, while talking of thyself, and opening to me thy scriptures.

Then a lord, on whose hand the king leaned, answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.—2 *Kings* vii. 2.

My soul! do not fail to remark, from the numberless instances given upon record in scripture, how the sin of unbelief is bound up in our very nature. Every man is of himself disposed to it. The subtilty of Satan induced this among the masterpieces of his devilish art. Hence nothing but an act of sovereign grace can bring a cure. What the prophet promised, in the midst of dearth, of so sudden and so great a supply of bread, appeared so incredible to human reason, that this unbelieving lord, on whose hand the king of Israel leaned, and perhaps in whose judgment he had great confidence, brake out into the indecent expression, that nothing less than the Lord's making windows in heaven could accomplish it. But the event, to Israel's joy, and his punishment, literally took place: and such was the pressure of the people for bread, at the gate of the city, that the unbelieving lord was trodden to death. And what is thine instruction, my

soul, in the spiritual illustration of this scripture history? The Lord need not make windows in heaven to rain down the bread of life for the famine of thy soul. Jesus himself, the true bread of God, is come down, that "whosoever believeth on him may eat and live for ever." Oh! for faith to give credit to God's testimony of his dear Son: and both to see, and to eat of him, and to live for ever. Lord! I would say, "Evermore give me this bread!"

The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing.

Psalms cxlv. 15, 16.

What a full and comprehensive scripture is here! and what a view doth it open to the mind in the contemplation of God, in all his works of nature, providence, and grace! Pause over it, my soul, and as thou meditatest, apply it to the several circumstances of thine own wants, and the wants of Jesus's Church in Zion. Remember, that as all eyes of the redeemed wait upon thy God, as well as thine; so it is Jesus, and Jesus only, that can satisfy the desire of all. Figure to thyself, at this moment, the court of Jesus thronged with waiting petitioners! and behold Jesus coming forth to supply, and answer all and every one. Think how many, how great, how diversified their cases. And then behold Jesus as not only having the suited blessing for all; but that when the desire of every living thing is satisfied, Jesus is no less full than before; neither is an atom of the riches of his grace abated. Oh! could this great truth but be once thoroughly impressed upon the minds of sinners, yea, not only needy, but wretched, worthless sinners, how would the heavenly court be crowded day and night to watch for, and to partake of his bounty. My soul, hasten with thy petition, for the king is on his throne, and waiting to be gracious. And as thou goest, invite every poor creature whom thou seest, to go with thee. Tell him there is enough for thee, enough for him, enough for all. And tell him to accompany thee with full confidence: for however ready and earnest his soul is to seek, Jesus is infinitely more ready to bestow. Tell him, moreover, that while Jesus will be making him blessed in receiving, Jesus himself will be abundantly more glorious in giving; for it is on such poor sinners that he makes his grace to shine. Say, dear Lord! art thou not more blessed to the view and love of thy Church in proportion as they receive of thy grace? and the happier thy people are made in thee, the more glorious art thou in them. And whence all this, thou dearest Lord, but because thou art, hast been, and will be, for everlasting to everlasting, Jesus?

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thine house.

Luke xix. 5.

Precious Jesus! what an instance is here of the freeness, fullness, and sovereignty of thy grace! And was there *a needs be*, O Lord, that thou shouldst go to the place where this publican was? *a needs be* to look up and see him? *a needs be* to call him? and *a needs be* to abide at his house? Is this thy manner, O Lord, in calling sinners? So then it was not Zaccheus seeking Jesus, but Jesus seeking Zaccheus. His curiosity, as he thought, led him thither; but it was the preventient grace of Jesus in the poor man's heart that first awakened that curiosity in him. And did Jesus seek Zaccheus, call Zaccheus, incline Zaccheus to receive him, and bring salvation to his heart and house that blessed day? Oh! then for grace to see, and enjoy Jesus in all. Yea, I see, Lord, now plain enough, that all is thine; and of thine own, all we give is from thee. When first my heart felt inclined to seek Jesus, it was Jesus who inclined my heart to this Christ-seeking. Never should I have looked on thee, nor felt an inclination to see thee, hadst thou not first looked on me, and given me that desire. And what it was first, so is it now, in all the after enjoyments of thy sight and of thy presence. If I am at any time looking after thee, I may cry out with Abraham's hand-maid, "Thou, Lord, seest me," and art looking after me. For never, even after all my knowledge of thee, should I look to thee, with an eye of desire, except the eye of Jesus glance on me as it did on Peter, in quickening and awakening grace. Oh! then, thou dear Lord! let me daily, hourly hear thy voice calling me down from all creature-concerns, and creature-confidences, to receive my Lord; and be thou constrained by thy love to come, not as the wayfaring man, to tarry but for the night, but to abide, and dwell, and never more depart from me. Be thou my God, and make me thy servant for ever.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine.—*Song i. 2.*

And what are the kisses of Jesus, but the manifestation of himself to his people? Old Testament saints longed for this blessing; and New Testament believers live by the same faith in the enjoyment of it. The cause is most evident indeed; for the love of Jesus passeth knowledge. Nothing of the *nether-springs* in comforts can even describe the blessedness of it: for corn, and wine, and oil, when they increase, cannot satisfy those desires, which Jesus in himself and his *upper-spring* mercies

can alone fulfil. Wine, indeed, may act as a temporary cordial to the body's weakness, and it may, for the moment, relieve worldly sorrow; but in both cases, the maladies will return, sometimes with double violence, and baffle all its powers: nay, if wine be used too freely, so far from affording relief, it will add drunkenness to thirst. But thy love, blessed Jesus, never fails of its gracious end and design. The power and efficacy is not confined to the relief of bodily distresses, but extends to those of the soul: yea, it raiseth the sinner, who is dead in trespasses and sins, and infallibly saves him from the second death. And such is its cordial and refreshing nature, that it not only gives the body ease, but cheers and gladdens the soul; and unlike the juice of the grape, where large draughts injure both, he that drinks deepest into thy love, thou blessed Jesus, can never find an excess of injury, but delight. Every one that hath only tasted of thy love, is constrained to cry out, with the Church: "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love." (Song ii. 5.) Shall I not then join in this sweet scripture, and say, as she did: "Let Jesus kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine!"

The Lord's free-man.—1 *Corinthians* vii. 22.

And who is the Lord's free-man? Jesus himself hath given a decided answer to this inquiry. "Whosoever committeth sin (saith Jesus) is the servant of sin." Now as by nature we are all born in this state of bondage to sin, and by practice have fully manifested the stock of servitude to which by nature we belong; we are vassals and slaves to sin, and in bondage to all the dreadful consequences. "But," saith Jesus, "if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed!" (John viii. 34—36.) Hence, then, my soul, learn what it is to be the Lord's free-man, and the blessed effects resulting from this freedom. If this be thy portion, thou art no longer in bondage to "the curse of God's broken law." Jesus hath freed them from this; having "redeemed thee from the curse of the law, in being made himself a curse." Thou art no longer under "the penalty of sin;" Jesus delivered thee from the wrath to come, when "he, who knew no sin, became sin for his people, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him." Thou art no longer under "the dominion of sin:" Jesus hath taken away this power also; for "the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, hath made his people free from the law of sin and death:" thou art loosed from "the yoke of Satan;" for by the conquest of Christ on the cross, thou art "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." Thou art freed from "the slavish fears of death:" for through death Jesus hath destroyed him that had the power

of death, that is the devil, and hath delivered them "who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Are these among the privileges of the Lord's free-man? Is it thus to be a citizen of the Jerusalem above, which is free, and the mother of us all? Hail then, thou almighty Lord of thy people! It is thou who hast redeemed them to God by thy blood! And therefore to thee we wave the palm of victory, ascribing all our salvation to God and the Lamb!

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.—2 Cor. iv. 18.

This was the blessed plan of Old Testament believers, under present exercises: to look off from the objects of sight, and to substantiate and realize the objects of faith. They saw "the day of Christ afar off;" and in that view, "rejoiced and were glad." By this means they brought into present enjoyment things which were distant; their faith acting like those glasses which magnify and bring home whatever is remote, as though it were nigh. Now, my soul, take instruction from those eminent worthies of the Old Testament school, that "through patience and comfort of the scriptures, thou also mayest have hope." By virtue of thine interest in Jesus, thou hast a large property in the world to come. If Christ be thine, all is thine. And certainly it is an extensive domain which thou hast in Christ's bond-promises, and God's covenant-securities: yea, thy right is confirmed beyond all earthly charters whatever. God thy Father hath promised and confirmed the whole with an oath; Jesus hath written, as well as bought it with his blood; and God the Holy Ghost hath sealed it with the great seal of heaven. Now whenever thou art at any time put to it, by reason of difficulties and exercises below, look off from all those things which are but temporal, and take a view of those which are eternal. And while thou lookest upon them as thine own, with a sure right of a reversionary interest after the death of an old life, which is consuming daily, enter by faith upon the enjoyment of them now. Do as men of the world do by their estates and their property: the husbandman values his crops, and counts up what the harvest, when it comes, will bring in; whereas he may be disappointed with a blasting, or mildew, or storms, or canker-worms: but no such events can happen to thee. The merchantman will borrow money upon the credit of his ships returning from a foreign market; notwithstanding many peradventures are between him and his vessels' return: but this is not thy case. Thine is certain, perfect, sure. Hence, therefore, live by present faith upon the enjoyment of it, and thou wilt find that this is the grand secret of all the happiness of life. This is what the apostle declared to be the profitableness of being godly; for it

“hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” So that if men oppress thee, devils tempt thee, the plague of thine own heart be daily making thy pilgrimage troublesome, turn from the things which are seen, and feast upon those to which thou art hastening, which are not seen: and, like those valiant heroes gone before, “take joyfully the spoiling of thy goods, knowing that in heaven thou hast a better and an enduring substance.” For if the Lord break up thine housekeeping, and remove thy furniture from thee, he will shortly take thee home to his own house: and if he cause thy bed to be taken from under thee, it will be no loss to exchange it for Jesus’s bosom. This is the cause why the old saints fainted not. Lord Jesus! give me the same spirit!

But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

Luke xii. 50.

My soul! look at Jesus under his straitenings, and thou wilt find it the best support and encouragement under thine. He had in view, when he thus expressed himself, the waterspouts and the billows of divine wrath against sin, which, as the sinner’s surety, were to be poured upon him. Jesus calls it a baptism. I cannot sufficiently admire the word, because it is my Lord’s, and because it is so applicable. Afflictions, then, are baptisms to his people, when commissioned by his grace, and when blessed by his Holy Spirit. Never lose sight of them, my soul, in this view; they will be always sacred: and from the straitenings of Jesus, until his were accomplished, do thou at all times fetch relief and encouragement under thine. He that felt straitening for himself; well knew how to enlarge thine heart: and he that knew the baptism he had to go through, knows, and hath laid in all proper enlargements and support for thine. One look at Jesus in the priestly vestment which he still wears, will give more comfort to thine heart under all straitenings, be they what they may, than all thine own laboured attempts that, without an eye to Jesus, thou canst set up: and surely, he who in the days of his flesh felt straitenings, will not forget thine. Lord! bring my poor soul under the continual baptisms of thy Spirit.

For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

1 Timothy iv. 4, 5.

I have often thought that there is somewhat in our ordinary meals, and especially the evening meal, which hath a tendency

to call up the exercise of grace. Surely our family refreshments should remind us of the Lord's family; and our own supper, of the Lord's supper. The thing itself might well be supposed to call up our attention, and to create holy conversation concerning him and his table, and of that supper of the Lamb in heaven, at which believers hope very shortly to meet as one family, to rise up no more for ever. And, as at the Lord's table, so at our own, every thing is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. My soul, mark what this scripture saith concerning our food: "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if received with thanksgiving, and sanctified." God's word over it, and the prayer of the faithful offered up with it, gives a sanctified use to all our comforts, and brings up with them a double sweetness. And if, while receiving them, we look to him; so that while the body feeds on his bounties, the soul is fed on his grace; surely the heart feeds "with thanksgiving," and "every creature is good." Many a poor man, by these means, hath found more of Jesus at his own table, than thousands, who know not Jesus, do at the Lord's. And to be thus feasted night and morning, every service becomes sacramental: for Christ is still the Passover. Lord, make my whole use of the creatures of thy bounty thus sanctified to me, that I may behold and enjoy Jesus in every one!

The king's daughter is all glorious within.

Psalms xlv. 13.

As the Redeemer is known to his Church under a great variety of names and characters, and is blessed to the Church in every one, whether of "brother," or "husband," or "friend," so Jesus condescends to call his Church by a variety of names also, all descriptive of the unbounded love he bears towards her. She is his "fair one," his "spouse," his "chosen," his "sister," and in this "song of loves," she is called "the king's daughter." But it is most blessed to observe that by whatever name she is known, it is all in allusion to Jesus, for from him, and in him, she derives the whole of her beauty and excellency. Her glory is in her Lord, and she is wholly spiritual; all derived, like the shining of the moon, from the sun. If the Church be comely, it is from the comeliness the Lord Jesus hath put upon her. For as the whole perfection of beauty is in Christ, as a rich and complete constellation, so every perfection in his people is from their union with him. It is Jesus who gives a loveliness to every object that is lovely. My soul! what saith thy experience to this statement? Thou art indeed "all glorious within," if Christ be formed there "the hope of glory." And if "thy God be thy glory," then wilt

thou feel what the Church felt, and, taking up her language, thou wilt say, "I am black as the tents of Kedar, but comely as the curtains of Solomon." (Song i. 5.) Oh! the felicity of knowing the total unworthiness of the human heart, which, like the spots and swarthy of the Ethiopian, makes the Church truly black and deformed: and oh! the felicity also of knowing our comeliness, from the beauty Christ hath put upon us, and the sanctifying and regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit. Precious Lord Jesus! be it my portion always to appear in the spotless robe of thy righteousness, and then shall I be indeed "all-glorious within!"

For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.—*Luke vii. 5.*

What a very interesting character is given, though but in few words, of this honest centurion. Though unconnected with Israel, and a Gentile, yet he loved the Jews. Was he, like another *Rahab*, partaker of the faith, and though unconscious of it, had a part in Jesus? It is most blessed to behold such rich provisions in grace, making way for the calling of the people, both Jew and Gentile, in that plan of redemption, "given in Christ Jesus before the world began!" But we must not stop here, in our view of the centurion. He not only *loved* the Jewish nation, but gave proofs of that love, in *building* them a synagogue. Surely nothing short of grace in the heart could have wrought such acts of love and affection to Israel, and to Israel's God, in a Gentile mind! But, while admiring this gracious conduct in the centurion, and admiring still more the blessed Author and Giver of that grace, which wrought it in his mind; is it possible not to have the affections instantly and irresistibly directed to thee, thou blessed Lord Jesus, who, as far as light transcends darkness, or the heaven is higher than the earth, surpassest every other pattern of excelling charity? Of thee, thou dear Redeemer, it must be truly said, "thou lovest our nation," and hast built us indeed, not a synagogue only, but art thyself our dwelling-place for ever! For thy love brought thee from heaven, prompted thee to live for us, to die for us, to rise again for us, and to take possession for us of the glorious tabernacle, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Yea, Lord Jesus! thou so lovedst us, as to accomplish this vast, this wonderful, this never-before-heard-of undertaking, and never more to be undertaken, of laying the foundation in thy blood! My soul! what wilt thou render to the Lord for all his benefits? Oh! take the cup of salvation, and call upon his name. Tell the whole world how he hath loved, and how he hath founded Zion, and is and will be her King for ever!

Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.

Jeremiah xv. 16.

Yea, Lord! I have indeed found thy words most precious, and, through thy grace, I have eaten them, and they are as honey and the honeycomb to my soul. In them I find my God and Father in his covenant-engagements, all pledged in faithfulness to his dear Son, to be the everlasting and unchanging portion of his redeemed. Oh! what unknown, what unspeakable blessedness do I find in that one promise: "I will be their God, and they shall be my people!" Here also I find Christ and his fulness; the Holy Ghost and his graces; the whole covenant and its rich promises: all secured, made over, and co-operating to the assurance of salvation! And how then can thy word, Lord, wherein thou hast caused me to hope, be otherwise than "the joy and rejoicing of my heart?" I have Jesus in all, and his promises in all, and therefore can never fail of all that is here engaged, since all the promises of God in Christ "are yea and amen!" Oh! then, let thy word continue "as a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," which will shine all the way through, even to lighten up the dark valley of the shadow of death, until I come "to dwell in the house of my God for ever!"

And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.—*Mark viii. 24.*

I have often considered the case of this man as holding forth a sweet and comfortable lesson of instruction to the small attainments of the followers of Jesus. Perhaps our gracious Lord, in the method he was pleased to adopt, in the opening of this man's eyes by gradual means, intended so to instruct his people. My soul! look at it in this point of view; it may be profitable to thee. When the Son of God, who came to give light to the spiritually blind, as well as to restore vision to the eye of the body, first touched this poor man's eyes, the effect was, that when he looked up, the men he saw were only like *trees, walking*; the sight was imperfect, and the objects obscure. And such is it very frequently in our apprehension of spiritual things; but then it should be remembered, and remembered with great thankfulness, that this imperfection of our sight differs altogether from total darkness. Objects we certainly see, though we do not clearly see them as we desire. If I see *men as trees, walking*, it is past a doubt that *men* I see; and by a parity of reasoning, if, in a spiritual sense, I see Jesus in his suitableness, fulness, and all-sufficiency, for a poor sinner, though I long to see more of him, and to see him more plainly, yet the sight I now have is blessed; and being wrought by his own gracious

hands, it begets a lively hope that he who hath begun the cure will perfect it. The way to ascertain the reality of *spiritual* life, is not unsimilar to what is done in doubtful cases in respect to *animal* life. It is a sure sign of life if the body *feel*, however the other symptoms of health may be suspended. There is a vast difference between deadness and death. If a man cannot *speak*, yet is he conscious of what others *say*? If he cannot make *signs*, yet can he take *food*? If he cannot take *food*, doth he *move*? If he doth not *move*, doth he *breathe*? Still then there is life. And, in like manner, the soul that is breathing after Jesus, though he doth not move, hath life. He is looking up, like this poor creature, and all he seeth is imperfect. But Jesus will do by him as by this blind man: he will put his hand upon him again, and at length he will make him to behold every object clearly. Lord, give me grace to bless thee for all attainments, and never "to despise the day of small things!"

Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

Psalm xcvi. 2.

What a blessed scripture is here! And what a satisfying answer is given in it to the endless questions which are for ever arising in the human mind, for explaining the ways and works of God towards his creatures! The words are as if the sacred writer had been answering such inquiries, and had therefore made this conclusion; there must be much darkness, which the dim view of short-sighted creatures cannot see through, in carrying on the purposes of Jehovah: but here is an everlasting rule to go by: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne, who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." Oh! my soul! couldst thou call to remembrance this blessed scripture every day, and all the day, in the several exercises of thy warfare, how many anxieties would it save thee? I know as well as can be, in the perfect and clear conviction of my heart, the blessed truth: but when it comes to be put into practice, I am for ever calling it in question. I know that Jesus is pleased very frequently to work by contrary means; it is his province and his prerogative to quicken the dead, and to call "things that are not, as though they were;" his strength is perfected in weakness: and he sometimes kills to make alive, and wounds in order to heal. But in a killing time, I am so apt to reason with flesh and blood, that I forget the quickening time; and when the wounds are bleeding, so that life seems running out of them, I judge it impossible that they ever can again be healed; and hastily conclude, with the Church, "My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord." (Lament. iii. 18.) Oh! for grace to view the righteousness and judgment of my God and Saviour as

the habitation of his throne, and to rest for ever unshaken and fixed in this most perfect assurance! Jesus cannot mistake in ordering what shall be for my welfare; neither can he appoint any thing but what carries the mark of his love upon it. Let me, thou dear Lord! let me hear thy sweet voice through all the clouds and darkness which are round about thy dispensations, and whisper to me, as thou didst to thine astonished apostle, and then in every one, how mysterious soever it may be, it will silence my fears: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

DECEMBER.

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people.

Acts ii. 46, 47.

What a beautiful picture is here given of the primitive Church! My soul! think of the happiness of the saints of God in those days, when, instead of that idle and unprofitable conversation, which, for the most part, fills up the employment of Christians professing godliness in the present day, believers never met without celebrating the Lord's supper, (for so the expression of eating bread from house to house means;) and their ordinary meals were conducted with a single eye to God's glory! What a sad change hath taken place in the circumstances of Christians! "They were daily with one accord in the temple:" and thousands who would be very highly offended were their religious profession to be called in question, think one part of the Lord's day sufficient to be found there. They conversed "from house to house" of the great things of salvation: but what parlour, what place of meeting, what house or family must we go into, to hear of Jesus and his gospel? They were daily setting forth the broken body of Christ, in the action of "breaking of bread and of prayer:" but how many are there who think the observance of monthly communions of Christ's body and blood too frequent, and only attend now and then, lest the frequency of the service should lessen the reverence due to it? My soul! look to it, that thy life be upon the plan of those venerable followers of the Lord! Oh! for grace to make every day a sabbath-day; and every table the Lord's table! Precious Jesus! I would pray to keep up a constant remembrance of thee, that "whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, I may do all to the glory of God!"

I sleep, but my heart waketh.—*Song v. 2.*

My soul! behold the Church hath fallen into a sleepy state, after having been at the banquet of her Lord; and view in her the resemblance of thyself. How often art thou in this cold and lifeless situation; and instead of seeking increasing communion and fellowship with Jesus, falling asleep, as one insensible to past enjoyments and present need! It is not indeed the sleep of death! for, through the sovereignty of almighty grace, thou hast been quickened to a new and spiritual life in Christ Jesus; and thine heart waketh to the knowledge of thy Lord. But how unsuitable and unbecoming is it, for one who hath tasted that the Lord is gracious, to be indifferent to the farther enjoyment of him! Time was, when if thou didst miss Jesus in the ordinance, or hadst not a visit from thy Lord for a short space, thou wert on the wing of love going forth in every way, and in every direction, in the inquiry, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" And canst thou, my soul, be contented to live in this sleepy frame, and without the visits of thy Lord? Look up to Jesus, he is near at hand, and waiting to be gracious! Listen to his voice, in his word, in his ordinances, in all the means of his grace; hasten to the awakening ministry of some one of his faithful servants. These methods the Lord will bless. Jesus will come again: he will do by thee as he did by the Church, "He will put in his hand by the hole of the door, until that thy bowels are moved for him." Precious Lord Jesus! keep from me all sleepy, lifeless frames! Give me day by day to be pressing after some renewed tokens of thy love; and let each mercy quicken my poor soul to desire farther manifestations: that in greater degrees, and more frequent enjoyments of thee, I may, like thy servant, the apostle, "forget those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!" Amen.

And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb the mount of God.

1 *Kings* xix. 7, 8.

How blessed is it to observe, in the several instances of God's people, that the Lord measures out strength in proportion to their wants, and fits every back for the burden. The prophet was obliged to flee from the king's court, but the King of kings will give him a table in the wilderness. Elijah shall be taught at one time, how to live by faith, when fed by ravens! and at

another, how to go forty days and forty nights without rest, when sustained by grace in going a farther way (soul's gains) than thou find, in thy experience, similar exercises of faith? Is not so splendid, yet at least no less profitable? Hath not Jesus many a time fed thee at his banqueting house, and made thy cup run over, when telling thee, in some sweet communion visit, either at his table or thine own, either in the Church or in the closet, how suited his grace is for thee, and that his strength is perfected in thy weakness? And hath not Jesus, as in the instance of Elijah, touched thee a second time, yea, and a third, and many a time, and laid in refreshments for thee, against the coming hour of trial, when the journey of spiritual exercises that were to follow, would otherwise have been too great for thee? Knowest thou nothing of these things? Surely, in such trainings as these, the Lord is as much leading on his people, now, as he did of old. Doth he come in a full tide of glory, and show himself to be Jesus, and open to our spiritual sight his pierced hands, and his side? Doth he come into the soul as the King of glory, openly manifesting his refreshing, his comforting, his strengthening, his loving presence; and, at the same time, opening our eyes and hearts to receive him, so that the soul is made joyful, and brought as into the very suburbs of heaven?—Mark what follows: perhaps, as in the case of the prophet, a long abstinence is to follow. Jesus hath therefore laid in a store of comforts. He hath victualled the ship. He hath fortified the garison. *The just shall live by faith!* Precious Jesus! give me to live on thee, when all outward comforts fail. In fulness or in famine, in life or death, if I have thee, I have enough to live upon, and in thy strength to go forty days and forty nights; yea, for ever to the mount of God in glory!

Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

Isaiah xxiv. 16.

My soul! hast thou ever considered, in how many ways, and by what a variety of means, every poor sinner called by grace is furnished with ability to glorify God in Christ? It is blessed to see this, and doubly blessed to be employed in such a service. The poor sinner not only glorifies Jesus, actively, when he is praising him, but passively also, when his wants and necessities afford occasion for Jesus to be glorified in giving out of his fulness to his relief! And how is the Lord glorified in the fire? Evidently, when in the furnace of affliction, or in the fire of temptation, the poor exercised soul glorifies in his inability, that the power of Christ may rest upon him; when he can, and when he doth receive all, and take all, and feel happy under all.

from the consciousness that the Lord's hand is in it, and the Lord's blessing will be upon it. "I was dumb," said one of old, "and opened not my mouth, for it was thy doing." And another ancient sufferer cried out, "Why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Oh! it is most blessed to see a child of God, thus engaged for God, when matters are most dark and discouraging! It is easy, comparatively speaking, for a man to praise and give glory to the Lord, when all things around him are gay and smiling; but when songs are heard from the fires, and when the soul feels its own wretchedness, and cries out under it, "My leanness, my leanness!" and is looking to a God in Christ, here is a frame of mind suited to the divine glory. My soul! see that all thy glory be centered in Jesus, and on God in Jesus, as the name of the Lord God of Israel. And oh! for grace to give him both the praises and the glory in whom "all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory."

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.—*Psalms xxx. 5.*

It is most profitable, yea, blessed, to have right conceptions of the Lord's dealings with his people. Jesus is everlastingly pursuing one plan of love; and never, in a single instance, departs from it. But as we see only part of his ways, until the result come, exercises by the way much perplex our poor short-sighted view of things. Jesus, for the most part, brings his people into the wilderness, in order to speak comfortably to them there. But while in the wilderness, we are at a loss to trace the footsteps of his love. And when, after some sweet love-tokens of his favour, new trials arise, though Jesus, it should seem, designed by the mercy to prepare for trouble, yet, by our false interpretation of it, we aggravate the trouble, and make it greater. My soul! do learn from the precious thoughts suggested by the scripture of the evening, to form a right estimate of thy Lord's dealings with thee. "Weeping may endure for a night." It may appear a long night, a wearisome night; but, remember, it is but a night. Every hour, yea every moment is shortening it, and when the morning comes, joy will come with it. And in proportion to the darkness or the sorrow of the night, the day-light will be more delightful. The most blessed discoveries Jesus makes of himself, are generally those after a sorrowful night. Precious Lord! be thou thyself the "day-dawn, and the day-star" to my soul after a night of painful exercise; yea, be thou "the Sun of righteousness" with healing in thy wings! And then neither the night of sleep, nor the night of death, will be more than the passing hour. And, Lord! when I "awake up" from both, "I shall be still with thee!"

another, how to go forty days and forty nights without food, when sustained by grace in going to Horeb. My soul! canst not thou find, in thy experience, similar exercises of faith; if not so splendid, yet at least no less profitable? Hath not Jesus many a time fed thee at his banqueting house, and made thy cup run over, when telling thee, in some sweet communion visit, either at his table or thine own, either in the Church or in the closet, how suited his grace is for thee, and that his strength is perfected in thy weakness? And hath not Jesus, as in the instance of Elijah, touched thee a second time, yea, and a third, and many a time, and laid in refreshments for thee, against the coming hour of trial, when the journey of spiritual exercises, that were to follow, would otherwise have been too great for thee? Knowest thou nothing of these things? Surely, in such trainings as these, the Lord is as much leading on his people now, as he did of old. Doth he come in a full tide of glory, and show himself to be Jesus, and open to our spiritual sight his pierced hands, and his side? Doth he come into the soul as the King of glory, openly manifesting his refreshing, his comforting, his strengthening, his loving presence; and, at the same time, opening our eyes and hearts to receive him; so that the soul is made joyful, and brought as into the very suburbs of heaven?—Mark what follows: perhaps, as in the case of the prophet, a long abstinence is to follow. Jesus hath therefore laid in a store of comforts. He hath victualled the ship. He hath fortified the garrison. “The just shall live by faith.” Precious Jesus! give me to live on thee, when all outward comforts fail. In fulness or in famine, in life or death, if I have thee, I have enough to live upon, and in thy strength to go forty days and forty nights; yea, for ever, to the mount of God in glory!

Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

Isaiah xxiv. 15.

My soul! hast thou ever considered, in how many ways, and by what a variety of means, every poor sinner called by grace is furnished with ability to glorify God in Christ? It is blessed to see this, and doubly blessed to be employed in such a service. The poor sinner not only glorifies Jesus, actively, when he is praising him, but passively also, when his wants and necessities afford occasion for Jesus to be glorified in giving out of his fulness to his relief! And how is the Lord glorified in the fires? Evidently, when in the furnace of affliction, or in the fire of temptation, the poor exercised soul glorifies in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon him! when he can, and when he doth receive all, and take all, and feel happy under all,

from the consciousness that the Lord's hand is in it, and the Lord's blessing will be upon it. "I was dumb," said one of old, "and opened not my mouth, for it was thy doing." And another ancient sufferer cried out, "Why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Oh! it is most blessed to see a child of God, thus engaged for God, when matters are most dark and discouraging! It is easy, comparatively speaking, for a man to praise and give glory to the Lord, when all things around him are gay and smiling; but when songs are heard from the fires, and when the soul feels its own wretchedness, and cries out under it, "My leanness, my leanness!" and is looking to a God in Christ, here is a frame of mind suited to the divine glory. My soul! see that all thy glory be centered in Jesus, and on God in Jesus, as the name of the Lord God of Israel. And oh! for grace to give him both the praises and the glory in whom "all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory."

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.—*Psalm xxx. 5.*

It is most profitable, yea, blessed, to have right conceptions of the Lord's dealings with his people. Jesus is everlastingly pursuing one plan of love; and never, in a single instance, departs from it. But as we see only part of his ways, until the result come, exercises by the way much perplex our poor short-sighted view of things. Jesus, for the most part, brings his people into the wilderness, in order to speak comfortably to them there. But while in the wilderness, we are at a loss to trace the footsteps of his love. And when, after some sweet love-tokens of his favour, new trials arise, though Jesus, it should seem, designed by the mercy to prepare for trouble, yet, by our false interpretation of it, we aggravate the trouble, and make it greater. My soul! do learn from the precious thoughts suggested by the scripture of the evening, to form a right estimate of thy Lord's dealings with thee. "Weeping may endure for a night." It may appear a long night, a wearisome night; but, remember, it is but a night. Every hour, yea every moment is shortening it, and when the morning comes, joy will come with it. And in proportion to the darkness or the sorrow of the night, the day-light will be more delightful. The most blessed discoveries Jesus makes of himself, are generally those after a sorrowful night. Precious Lord! be thou thyself the "day-dawn, and the day-star" to my soul after a night of painful exercise; yea, be thou "the Sun of righteousness" with healing in thy wings! And then neither the night of sleep, nor the night of death, will be more than the passing hour. And, Lord! when I "awake up" from both, "I shall be still with thee!"

I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and behold, a Watcher, and an Holy One came down from heaven.—*Daniel* iv. 13.

My soul! that which terrified the impious monarch in his visions of the night, ought to be to thee a subject of holy joy! When Jesus proclaims “the day of vengeance which is in his heart,” he adds also, “the year of my redeemed is come.” *A day* is enough for destruction; *a year*, yea, an everlasting year, will not be too long to make his people happy. But what a striking character is this of “a Watcher, and an Holy One!” To whom but to Jesus can it possibly refer? Jesus, at the call of God his Father, stood up from everlasting, to watch over his Church, to water it every moment; yea, to keep it night and day, lest any hurt it. And who shall describe in how many ways the Lord Jesus is for ever performing this blessed office, and hath been, and will be to all eternity? Is he not for ever in the midst of them, to do all that is needful for them: to protect, to comfort, to lead out, to bring home, until he brings in and houseth them in his temple for ever? Yea, he saith himself, “I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land, assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.” (*Jerem.* xxxii. 41.) But oh! ye despisers of my God! tremble at the approach of this almighty Watcher, this Holy One coming down from heaven! For he comes, armed with zeal and with wrath, “to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of Christ.” “Oh! kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are they that put their trust in him.”

For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.—*Hebrews* xiii. 5, 6.

Sweet thought! Blessed promise of a covenant promiser, whose name is I AM! Indeed, the whole covenant of grace is made up of God's *wills*, and his engaging for our *shalls*: and the whole is founded in the purposes of God's love, and faithfulness, and immutability; secured in the blood and righteousness of Christ; and stamped with the broad seal of heaven, by God the Holy Ghost. Hence, therefore, the covenant runs, “I *will* be their God, and they *shall* be my people.” Hence, also, Jesus with all his fulness is in the covenant. And hence, also, the Holy Ghost is engaged to abide with them for ever, to lead them into all truth, and to glorify the Lord Christ in their hearts. How is it possible for them to do otherwise than rejoice, and

boldly to say, "The Lord is my helper!" for the fear of man is driven out by the fear of God? My soul! what saith thine experience to this? Surely, thou wilt take up the same confident language, and from the same cause, as the Church. If the Lord hath said it, he will confirm it: He will never leave, neither forsake the redeemed of Jesus. So that I never shall be left hopeless, helpless, comfortless! Precious Jesus! in thee I set up the *Ebenezer* afresh this evening: Thou, Lord, art my helper: "I will not fear what man shall do unto me!"

Thus shalt thou say unto him, The Lord saith thus, Behold, that which I have built, will I break down, and that which I have planted, I will pluck up.

Jeremiah xlv. 4.

My soul! ponder well these words; and when thou hast duly meditated, behold and see, in the instance of the Church at large, and in thine own circumstance in particular, whether the powerful operations of the Lord's grace be not thus frequently carried on, by seemingly opposite means? Doth not the Lord appear to be often breaking down what his own right hand hath built, and withering what he hath planted, when providences appear to run counter to his promises, and the way to their accomplishment seems impossible? Thus the gourd of Jonah was blasted when the prophet needed most a covering; thus the poor man's child, in the gospel, when in the view of Christ, was thrown down by the devil, and torn more than ever he had been before; (Mark ix. 26 :) thus the children of Israel felt Pharaoh's oppression the more called forth, because the Lord had promised them deliverance. (Exodus v. 22, 23.) Look at home, my soul, and see how matters are there. Since the Lord called thee by his grace, to reveal his Son in thee, hadst thou conferred with flesh and blood, how often to thy view would it have appeared, that things were worse with thee than before? Surely thy corruptions never strove for the mastery with equal strength as since grace put a restraint upon them: like the swelling waters, which become more violent in proportion as the bank is thrown up to keep them back. Never did Satan so rage in his temptations, as since Jesus blessed thee with the visits of his love. And how often, when the enemies of thy salvation have for a season seemed to prevail, hath it appeared to thy view, as if the Lord had broken down that which he had built, and plucked up that which he had planted? And how often in the distress of soul occasioned by it, hast thou cried out, "Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious: and will he shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure?" Precious Jesus! how infinitely precious, in these instances, as in every other, is the view of thee,

and of the ways of thy grace! I see, Lord, by this process of thine, that both building and planting, both beginning and ending, are of the Lord. That sweet scripture is confirmed: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house: his hands shall also finish it." (Zechariah iv. 9.) In thee, and upon thee, O Lord, is all founded. It is Jehovah hath said it, and Jehovah will confirm it: "I have said," saith the Lord, "mercy shall be built up for ever!" (Psalm lxxxix. 2.)

For whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.—*Rom. xiv. 23.*

My soul! thou hast long known, and I hope in a great measure felt, the vast importance of that blessed principle, faith, without the possession of which "it is impossible to please God." But hast thou also considered what the Holy Ghost here saith, by the apostle, that "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin?" Pause over the expression: "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin!" Why, then, it will follow, that whatever is undertaken without an eye to God in Christ, and for God's glory in Christ, is sin. All the acts of creatures, as sinful creatures, must partake of sin. It is by faith in Christ, that the iniquity of our most holy things is taken away. Hence, love to our neighbour, is no love, unless it be a stream from the love of God: for what doth not begin in God, will never end in God. Such views of faith are striking; and this portion of God's word certainly opens to them, and the reason is obvious: it is by faith only that we hear what God saith, or regard what God appoints. We never can glorify God, till we hear and believe in God. All God's promises are in Christ; but without faith in Christ there can be no belief in the promises of God in Christ. My soul! this is a striking view of faith, and serves to show its vast and infinite importance. If all I undertake, all I say, all I do, the whole, without an eye to God in Christ, partake of sin, it is high time to see that I make Jesus the bottom, the cementing principle, and the top-stone of the whole building. And as "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin," so the humble offerings in faith, humble and poor as they are in themselves, if offered in and through Jesus, come up with acceptance upon that altar which sanctifieth both gift and giver. Hence saving faith gives glory to God, because it brings nothing, it offers nothing, but seeks all from God in Christ, and desires that God in all things may be glorified in Christ. Oh! for the continual outpourings of the blessed Spirit, to be strong in this grace which is in Christ Jesus. "Lord! increase our faith!"

Behold his reward is with him, and his work before him.—*Isaiah xl. 10.*

The whole scope of prophecy, as referring to the person and offices of Christ, was comprised in the two great branches of

“the sufferings of Christ,” and “the glory that should follow.” From everlasting, the work of Jesus was before him. To his infinite and comprehensive mind, all that he had to do and to suffer for his Church, was always in his view. He saw his Church in all the glory and beauty that, in his comeliness, he would one day put upon her; he saw this before creation took place, when “his delights were with the sons of men;” and he saw his Church also, in all the depths of guilt and pollution, into which, by apostasy, she would fall, and from whence he undertook to redeem her with his blood. Hence “for the joy that was set before him,” it is said “he endured the cross, and despised the shame;” and having, as well by his active as his passive obedience, both by doing and dying, finished the work in the fulness of time, which the Father gave him to do, Jesus entered upon his reward. But who shall describe it, or what heart fully conceive it? Who shall say, what is the reward of Jesus in our nature, united to the God-head, in beholding his Father’s holy law thus magnified and honoured; the robbery done to God’s honour, completely restored; the loss man had sustained, more than repaired; and salvation bestowed upon millions of souls, by virtue of his blood and righteousness? Who shall describe it, in beholding the human nature of Jesus advanced above all created intelligence, either of angels or of powers? Who shall speak of the reward of Jesus, in giving out, day by day, grace to the infinite cases and wants of his Church here below, and of glory in all its varieties, to the Church above? Precious Jesus! let such views ever encourage my poor soul to come to thee for all I need; since it is thy glory, and a part of thy reward, thou dearest Lord, to give out of thy fulness, as the blessed head of thy Church, to the wants of thy people; and thou wilt be more glorious to my view, the more thou givest, and the more I receive from thee. Jesus, I will say, loveth to give; may my soul delight to receive; that while I am receiving everlasting life from thee, the Lord Jesus may be everlastingly glorified by me, and both Father and Son glorified in my salvation.

If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates, in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.—*Deuteronomy* xv. 7, 8.

How is it possible, dearest Lord Jesus, that I can read this scripture, and call to mind thy obedience for me, in fulfilling the

whole law, without connecting with it all the blessedness of looking up to thee under every circumstance, and in every case, for thy favour and thy love? When Jesus became circumcised for his people, he made himself a debtor to the whole law. And is not this delightful precept of my evening meditation a part of it? Surely, Lord! this precept speaks to thee. Not that my glorious surety needed a command to the love of any of his poor brethren; for, blessed Jesus! thy love brought thee down from heaven, and it was thine own free, voluntary love that, at the call of God thy Father, prompted thine infinite mind to stand up as thy brethren's law-fulfiller from all eternity. But though thou needest not to be put in mind of mercy to any poor brother of thine, yet is it precious to my soul to see that this command of God my Father forms a part in the obedience of Jesus to the whole law; and doubly blessed is it to my soul, to see, that in all the blessings wherewith Jesus, the head of his body the Church, blesseth his people, the hand of God my Father is in it. How hath God the Father manifested his love to his Church in the gift of his dear Son, and in all those blessed commands given to Jesus for the Church's welfare? And how hath Jesus manifested his love in giving himself, yea, and becoming sin and a curse, for his Church, that all his redeemed might be made the righteousness of God in him? Look up then, my soul, to thy Jesus, thy brother, thy law-fulfiller! He will not overlook, nor forget this sweet precept. Thou art waxed poor indeed, but Jesus knoweth all thy poverty and all thy need; and though thou hast been a transgressor from the womb, and hast forgotten, times without number, thy relationship, Jesus will never forget his. He hath so loved thee as to die for thee; so loved thee as to shed his blood for thee; so loved thee as to plead for thee, and is for ever appearing in the presence of God for thee. And, therefore, he will never harden his heart against thee, nor shut up his hand, nor his heart, nor his loving-kindness, in displeasure. Precious Lord! thou art indeed a brother born for adversity, and one that loveth at all times; yea, "thou stickest closer than a brother!"

For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought: and ye shall be redeemed without money.

Isaiah lii. 3.

Sweet thought, arising from this gracious promise of a most gracious covenant God in Christ! It is indeed for nought that every poor sinner hath sold himself, and mortgaged his inheritance; for sin produceth no wages but death, and Satan gives nothing but misery to his captives. The world holds out great promises indeed, but never fulfils them. Vanity and vexation of spirit are all that we receive in the close of the account. So that

what Jehovah saith, every man finds to be true; we have sold ourselves for nought. But, blessed Lord! when at any time, for our sin and rebellion, thou sufferest our enemies to lead us captive, what profit doth our Lord gain by it? May we not say, in the language of the Church, "Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by thy price?" (Psalm xlv. 12.) If, Lord, it would be to thy glory, that our shame, and the triumph of our enemies ministered to thy praise, it would be enough to make thy Church say, "Let us suffer, so Jesus be but glorified." But, Lord, this is so far from being the case, that when Jesus's members suffer, the glorious head is injured, and the triumph of the foe becomes an insult to our God. How very blessed is it then to know, that though we are soul-destroyers by ministering to our own ruin, Jesus is our soul-restorer by redeeming us without money. Oh! for grace to keep in view the vast, the immense price Jesus hath given for our redemption! Oh! for grace to give him all the glory of our recovery, who alone hath accomplished it! And, Lord! I would pray, that as "the redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever," my soul may everlastingly rejoice in the assurance, that being bought with such a price, not of silver and gold, but by thy blood, I may henceforth glorify God in my body and in my spirit, which are his! Remember, my soul, it is the Lord that saith this: "Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money!"

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.

Matthew xxv. 6.

When Jesus, the bridegroom of his Church, first came, it was in a moment sudden and unexpected, like the surprise at a midnight hour. And when Jesus cometh to any of his people, it is unlooked for. Indeed, it is always midnight in the soul of a sinner, when the cry is made! But how blessed is the cry, when a poor, lost, perishing sinner is advanced to the midnight of death, on the verge of an approaching eternity, and in that season hears the voice of the Son of God and lives! How many, like the thief on the cross, or like the jailer at *Philippi*, have been surprised into grace at such seasons, by the sovereignty of him, "who calleth things that are not as though they were!" Precious Jesus! in all the circumstances of life, in the midnight of nature, the midnight of carnal security, the midnight of sleep, in which even thy dear children are so liable to be found, oh! that we may hear thy voice, and go forth to meet thee! And, Lord! let the going forth of thy redeemed be, not with the lamp of a profession, but with the enlightened oil

of grace, that we may meet thee with all our affections alive, to hail and welcome thy coming; so that "at midnight, or cock-crowing, or in the morning," when Jesus saith, "Behold I come quickly," our souls may cry out, in joyful reply, "Even so; come, Lord Jesus!"

In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth.—*Micah* iv. 6.

Mark, my soul, the graciousness of thy God! Jesus is not only blessing his people when they follow him, but he will bless them by recovering them when they halt. And of all the tokens of grace, that is the most endearing which is manifested over the aboundings of transgression. We have a passage similar to this in the writings of *Isaiah*, in which the Lord complains of the baseness of his people: "But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, and thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities." One might suppose, after such a charge, and such instances of ingratitude, that the next account would be, that the Lord had given up Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches: but no! what saith the Lord? "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." (*Isaiah* xliii. 22, &c.) How doubly refreshing is grace, when it comes over all our unworthiness, rebellions, and sins! See, my soul! how the Lord graciously overrules thine haltings, and makes a falling-time to become a rising-time, to his praise, and to thy comfort! Lord! confirm thy word unto thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to hope! Do thou, Lord, in this day, thine own day, the gospel day, fulfil thy promise, and let all our haltings be healed, and "give us to run the way of thy commandments, when thou hast set our souls at liberty."

They did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.—*Exodus* xvi. 35.

How graciously God the Holy Ghost taught Israel, by type and shadow, concerning good things to come! It must be our duty, and it will prove our happiness, to read in every event, as far as the Holy Ghost teacheth, our New Testament blessings dressed up in the Old Testament figures. The feeding of the Church in the wilderness with manna forty years, was a standing miracle, and, as such, became a most suitable type of Jesus. My soul! look at it, this evening, in this point of view, and behold what the Spirit holds forth in it, concerning the Lord Jesus. The continuance of this supply from heaven became a beautiful resemblance of the state of believers in all ages. The rebellion of Israel occasioned not any suspension of the mercy; for though

Israel murmured and rebelled, the manna was sent the same, "new and pure every morning." Sweet thought to the poor timid believer! Though we fail in our duty, Jesus will not diminish in his love: and though we neglect him, yet will he not forget us. Moreover, morning by morning, the blessing came; not a day, not an hour omitted. Jesus is all this, and more: "For it shall come to pass, that before my people call" (saith Jehovah) "I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." (Isaiah lxv. 24.) There is another precious thought suggested in the view of the type, and the thing signified: all the people partook of the rich mercy. There was enough manna for every one; for each, and for all. Such is Jesus to his people. Every state and every circumstance he is able to supply, and he doth and will supply; and, therefore, between the old Church of the Old Testament believers, and the new Church of New Testament saints, there is a great analogy and agreement. Christ is the sum and substance of all and every one of the people. One thing more: As Israel had no other sustenance until they came to the borders of Canaan, so the people of God now have no other, yea, they desire no other, until they come to the Canaan above. In Jesus there is a fulness of grace, and life, and glory. Hail, thou heavenly bread! thou word of God! Be thou my portion, the bread of life, until I am brought down to the waters of Jordan. Help me, Lord, by faith, to feed on thee and on thy great salvation; and "may my meditation of thee be sweet!"

God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem.—*Genesis ix. 27.*

None but God himself could do either. Who but God could enlarge the one, or persuade and overrule the other? Of Japheth came the Gentiles, (Gen. x. 5;) and Shem is the father of Israel. But Jesus, and Jesus only, can bring both Jew and Gentile into one fold, under one shepherd. And when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be completed, then shall all Israel be saved. Then will the deliverer arise out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob. My soul! art thou, night by night, and morning by morning, besieging a throne of grace that the Lord would hasten the latter-day of glory? Surely, if thou feelest due concern for the Redeemer's glory, this must form a part in thy daily petition. Who, indeed, can be indifferent to the interests of Christ's kingdom? "In the multitude of the people," saith Solomon, "is the king's honour;" (Prov. xiv. 28;) and in the multitude of redeemed souls, is the glory of Christ Jesus. Lord! I would pray, fulfil this blessed promise. Enlarge *Japheth*, and cause him to dwell in the tents of *Shem*. Let the heathen be given to our God and Saviour

for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession. "Oh! that the salvation were given unto Israel out of Zion! Oh! that the Lord would deliver his people out of captivity! then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad!"

All my springs are in thee.—*Psalm lxxxvii. 7.*

Sweet thought! And this, as Solomon saith upon another occasion, forms the conclusion of the whole matter. Jesus is the source, the fountain, the author, the finisher of all our mercies; for every thing of life and salvation, of grace and glory, flow from him, centre in him; and therefore in him and from him, as the source of blessedness, all our springs must flow. In him dwellèth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily! All glories are in him: the glory of the Church above; the glory of the Church below; yea, the glory of angels and of God himself: for the Father hath given all his glory into his almighty hands. Hence, my soul, from whom should thy springs flow, but from Jesus? If all divine attributes, all divine perfections are in him; if grace be nowhere but in Jesus; no blessing, no redemption, but in his blood; if all gifts and graces flow from him, and can nowhere else be found, to whom shall the gathering of the people be, or from whom shall all blessings come? And what a refreshing consideration is this, under all the barren, dry, and withering frames of the believer's heart. See to it, my soul, that thou art coming to Jesus, day by day, for suitable supplies; and let not thine emptiness discourage thee, or keep thee away, but rather let a sense of thy poverty endear to thee Jesus's riches. Thou art as exactly suited for him as he is suited to thee; and much as thou needest his fulness, Jesus no less needs vessels to fill into, and to pour out upon, of his blessings. Precious Lord Jesus! behold, then, I am come to thee; I find, in every thing beside thee, sin, death, and misery. Oh, the rapturous thought! "All my springs are in thee!"

The daughters saw her, and blessed her.—*Song vi. 9.*

These are the words of Jesus, in commendation of his Church. He holds her forth as lovely, not only in his view, but in the eyes of others. The "daughters" probably mean true believers, in whose esteem Christ and his Church art most engaging; and it is more than probable that by "daughters," young believers are particularly meant, whose first love, like the blossom of the apple-tree, is most beautiful in its first opening. Pause, my soul, and behold, from what Jesus himself saith of his Church, how truly lovely she must be to the Redeemer's view; and, indeed, without a proper apprehension of the infinite value of the human soul, it is not possible to con-

ceive in what an exalted light the Church must appear to Jesus. We may form some faint idea of its value, from the vast price it cost Jesus in the redemption. None but the Son of God could make the purchase; and even Jesus only by blood. Who shall say how infinitely precious, then, must the Church at large, composed of an innumerable host of redeemed souls as it is, appear in Jesus's eyes? The soul, washed in his blood, and clothed in his spotless robe of righteousness, must be lovely indeed! And in that day, when Jesus brings the Church home finally, and fully, to present her to himself, and Father, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and when the Church shall appear amidst a congregated world of men and angels, the purchase of Jesus's blood, the gift of his Father's grace, and the conquest of the Holy Ghost; how will the daughters who see her then bless her and bless him, who is the author of all her unspeakable glory and felicity! Precious Lord Jesus! if such be the beauty of thy Church, what must thy glory be, in whose comeliness alone she is made lovely? Oh! for grace to view Jesus in all, and to love Jesus in all! Thou, Lord, art the source and fountain of blessedness to thy Church and people, for grace here, and glory to all eternity.

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.—*Revelation xxii. 4.*

My soul! thy morning thoughts were directed to the sweet subject of being called to fellowship with thy Lord Jesus Christ in grace. Do thou, this evening, beg of God the Holy Ghost to enable thee to connect with it the transporting subject of the everlasting enjoyment of Jesus in glory. This is the great-end, and final consummation of all. This blessed scripture leads immediately to the contemplation: "They shall see his face;" and on "their foreheads shall be his name:" that is, the token of their oneness, union, and relationship in and with Jesus; so that he will be their glory, their supreme happiness and joy; and thus he will never cease to be the immediate head of all his body, the Church, "the fulness that filleth all in all;" yea, the only and everlasting medium of communication in glory, as he is of grace in this life. Pause, my soul, over this vast thought! When soul and body, after the long separation by death, shall be again united, and both, as the redeemed of the Lord, be formed one in him in glory; both then equally made capable of enjoying Christ, and both equally disposed for that enjoyment; then will the blessedness of seeing his face be complete. No doubt but that at death the sight and enjoyment of Jesus will be a joy unspeakable and full of glory; but the full, complete, and eternal enjoyment of God in Christ must be reserved to the consummation of all things, when the Lord hath brought home

all his redeemed, and the mediatorial kingdom of Jesus in grace here is swallowed up in glory, and God, in his threefold character of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shall be "all in all!" Pause again, my soul, over the vast thought! The glorious Head of his Church will then have brought home every individual of his body! He will fill all his members with glory. All their body shall be in God in Christ! And God in Christ will be the life, the light, the everlasting happiness, and glory in them all. Ponder well the glorious thought! Take it with thee to thy chamber! Drop asleep with it! And oh! may it be the sweet thought in death, when thou shalt drop asleep in Jesus; then may Jesus be the last of thy dying thoughts, and the first of thy everlasting enjoyment, when, waking from the sleep of death, thou shalt open thine eyes to the glories of eternity, "to see his face, and his name in thy forehead!"

Them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.—1 *Thess.* iv. 14.

My soul! thy last night's thoughts with which thou fell asleep, were upon a subject so truly connected with Jesus, that I hope thou couldst, and didst say, "My meditation of him was sweet!" There is another blessed thought, connected both with Jesus and with it, that may be proper to take along with it. Seek of God the Spirit to unfold its beauties in Jesus to thy view, this evening, and lead thee with it to fall asleep, this evening, as on the former, in the Lord. The apostle opens it to thy meditation in these words: "They which sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him." The bodies, as well as the souls of the redeemed are alike the purchase of Christ's blood, and Jesus will have them all with him. They are his jewels, his treasure, his *Segullah*. He suffers them to lie among the dust, it is true; but he saith himself, though they have so lain, yet shall they be "as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." (Psalm lxxviii. 13.) How will Jesus accomplish it at the last day? He explains it himself: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all unto me." (John xii. 32.) And if the magnetic powers of the loadstone be such that it will separate the smallest particles of steel from every thing of earth or dust around, so that they shall fly to the touch of the loadstone in every direction, can his powers be doubted, who hath constituted such principles in nature so to act and so to be governed? O my soul, how sure is it, that Jesus will at the last day open the graves of his people, and cause them to come up out of them! Heaven would not be complete without this; neither the Lord Jesus fully rewarded, to see "the travail of his soul." This final consummation of all things is the blessed-

ness Paul speaks of, when, "in the dispensation of the fulness of time, Jehovah might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him." (Ephes. i. 10.) Sweet thought, my soul! take it with thee to thy bed. This glory, this triumph of thy Jesus, as Mediator, the head of his body the Church, remains to be accomplished; neither will it be accomplished until "the last trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed!" The patriarchs, the prophets, and holy saints of God, who died in Christ, before his incarnation, felt, no doubt, an accession to their glory and happiness, and joy in their souls, when the Son of God, after he had finished redemption-work, returned to heaven. The sight they had of Christ in his human nature, opened a new source of joy unspeakable. Oh! the unknown rapture of feasting their eyes upon him. And "the spirits of just men made perfect, (some of whom, my soul, thou hast seen, and known, and enjoyed sweet communion with, in the Church below,) who are now before the throne, and serve him in his temple night and day, they are at the fountain-head of bliss, in "seeing Jesus as he is, and knowing, even as they are known." Nevertheless, their present enjoyments are the enjoyments of the soul only: their felicity is not complete, until, at the restitution of all things, their bodies shall be raised to the triumphs of eternity. Take, my soul, these thoughts with thee to bed; and be as ready to give thy body to thy Jesus for the grave, that he, in his own time, which is the best time, may undress thee for it, as thou takest off thy garments for nightly rest: for most certain it is, that as "Jesus died and rose again, even them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him."

Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?—1 *Cor.* ix. 7.

Surely, Jesus will not! Is not Jesus's Church his vineyard? Did he not purchase it with his blood; and does he not water it every moment with his blood? And will he not eat of the fruit of his own vine, his own planting, and what cost him so dear? Or doth Jesus buy a flock; daily, hourly, feed his flock; carry the lambs in his arms, and cause them to lie down in his bosom; and will he not eat of the milk of his flock? Lord Jesus! when I contemplate thy love to our poor nature; when I behold all things, by thine ordination, ministering to our nature; when I see such a profusion of grace, and love, and mercy bestowed for our accommodation; all things prepared for man; both worlds engaged for him; yea, man himself as if a world in himself, and another prepared for him; the sacred word designed wholly for him; angels, ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the

heirs of salvation; God his father, Jesus his brother, surety, redeemer; the Holy Ghost his comforter!—When I look round, above, below, in every way, and in every direction, and behold man like some palace, built by thee, O Lord, the great architect! surely I cry out, Jesus would never have prepared such a temple but for his own glory? Oh! come then, Lord; come and inhabit what is thine own! Having created it, and by a new creation made it again thine; bought it, washed it with thy blood, and prepared it by thy Spirit; oh! come and dwell in it, and take the full, the entire, the everlasting possession of it. Lord, who ever planted a vineyard, and did not eat of the fruit thereof? Who ever fed a flock, and did not eat of the milk of the flock? Surely not Jesus!

The promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.

2 *Timothy* i. 1.

Here is a short portion, but it is a full one. Life, and the promise of life, are great things, and both in Christ Jesus. Observe it, my soul: “life in Christ Jesus,” and “the promise of life in Christ Jesus.” What wouldst thou have more? Nay, what canst thou have more? Life, with all its eventful consequences; grace here, and glory to all eternity, in Christ, as thine head, everlastingly secured by God the Father’s promise in Christ. So that as God the Father is the almighty promiser, and Christ comprehensively so in himself, and all his fulness the promise; so the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of promise, in all his manifold influences, confirms and seals the same to the heart of all true believers, in a life of grace, leading to a life of glory. Say, my soul! what a portion hast thou then to live upon and to rejoice in for ever!

The day-spring from on high.—*Luke* i. 78.

Truly it was so when Jesus came: for a long night of Jewish darkness and ignorance had covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Look, my soul! at Jesus under this blessed similitude. Though it be evening with thee, this day-spring will give light, and the promise will be fulfilled, “at even-time it shall be light.” Jesus was the day-spring in the everlasting counsel and purposes of Jehovah, when he stood up the light of his people from all eternity. And when, in the fulness of time, he came, it was to fulfil all the shadows of ordinances concerning him. And what is it now, in every individual instance of his visiting his people, but as “the day-spring” on their souls? When first from a state of nature, he calls them to a state of grace, is it not “the day-spring from on high?” And in all the after-stages, during a life of grace leading to glory, is not every re-

newed manifestation of his love as “the day-spring from on high?” And what will it be after the night of death, when Jesus shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe, but the same? Jesus will then be “the day-spring,” and “the morning-star” of that everlasting day, whose sun shall go down no more. Precious day-spring of my God! arise daily on my poor soul, and fill my heart with light and glory.

Shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.—*Luke* ii. 8.

My soul! think what a memorable night was that which ushered in the wondrous day, the most momentous ever marked in the annals of time, since reckoning of days or years was made. The unconscious shepherds in the fields had no other thought but of their flock. But what a morning did the angels call them to celebrate! Now, my soul, sit down and take a leisurely survey of the wonderful story of Jesus’s birth. Mark the several volumes in it; for a night, yea, for a whole eternity must end before the subject of God incarnate can be exhausted in the meditation. Let thy evening thoughts on this, be followed by the night contemplation: and let thy midnight only be broken in upon, by the same call that the heavenly host gave to the shepherds. Arise but to sing as they sang, and to go in quest of Jesus, as they went. God and man in one person, one Christ, and God in Christ coming for the purposes of salvation, will furnish out a hymn, which, though begun in life, will never end in eternity: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men!”

And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

1 *Timothy* iii. 16.

My soul! sit down this memorable evening, and in commemorating the great event of Christ’s nativity, listen to what the Holy Ghost here speaks, by his servant the apostle, concerning the mystery of godliness! Here are so many wonders branched out into so many chapters; they hang like a rich and full cluster upon the vine. Gather them one by one, mark their beauties, and taste their sweetness. The *first* is, “God manifest in the flesh:” here is a meditation for thee to live upon, and to feast upon for ever. Thy God, thy Jesus, thy Holy One, the Son of God, was made flesh! Go on to the *second*: he was “justified

in the Spirit:" a matter that would never have taken place, had he not fully, by his righteousness and death, satisfied his Father's law, and brought in an everlasting righteousness for his people. Take down the *third* blessed character: He was "seen of angels." Yes! they worshipped him also: for angels, principalities, and powers, were made subject unto him. Look, my soul, at thy Lord, under the *fourth* description which the Holy Ghost hath here given of him: He was "preached unto the Gentiles:" and this was as great a mystery to the Jewish Church as any: that God should "grant to the Gentiles also, through Christ, repentance unto life." And how dear this part of Jesus's character should be to thee, my soul, who wast by nature a poor Gentile, an alien to the commonwealth of Israel, having no hope, and without God in the world, thou needest not to be told. Mark another, and the *fifth*, particularity of thy Jesus; he is said to be "believed on in the world;" and how should this have been done, even in a single instance, but for the sovereignty of God's grace? Surely this is no less a mystery also. Remark, my soul, how great, how very great in thy case. *Lastly*, the account closeth: "Jesus was received up into glory;" and there, my soul, do thou follow him, by faith, until the Lord come to take thee home with him in absolute enjoyment, that "where he is, there thou mayest be also." Amen.

A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.

1 Peter ii. 8.

O my Lord! how wonderful it is, that thy coming should have given such offence to thy people? The prophet, indeed, said it should be so, and thereby gave one among the many testimonies to thy character. "He," saith the prophet, (Isaiah viii. 14,) "that shall be for a sanctuary, shall be but a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel." But what was there, my Lord, in thee, and the gracious purpose for which thou came, that could have furnished occasion for stumbling? Thy birth, indeed, was humble, thy life marked with sorrow, thy death ignominious, and every thing about thee debased. But under all these things, did not the Godhead burst forth in acts which none but God could perform? And is the offence of the cross ceased in the present hour? Alas! what multitudes of sinners now, as much as then, still live to despise salvation by thy blood and righteousness? Precious Jesus! who made me to differ from another? Why was I constrained to look unto thee as the Rock of Ages, the precious stone that Jehovah hath laid in Zion for salvation, while thousands refuse that thou shouldst reign over them? Oh! for grace to praise thee, and to love thee! Now, Lord, do I discover a preciousness in that divine

scripture, and thank thee for it as my own; "Blessed is he (thou hast said) whosoever is not offended in me!"

For he that is entered in his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

Hebrews iv. 10.

My soul! see to it, that among other blessed evidences of thine union and rest in Christ thou hast this also: "We which have believed," the apostle saith, "do enter into rest." Our dependence on, and knowledge of Jesus, are such, that we really and truly enjoy the blessings of redemption. And as God the Father, when he had finished creation, rested from all his works which he had made; and as Jesus, when he had finished redemption, entered into his glory; so true believers, when they have once found Christ, and redemption in his blood, no longer weary themselves in the works of sin, or the works of self-righteousness, by way of justification before God; but cease from every thing in self, and rest with complacency and delight in the rich, free, and full salvation that is by Christ. My soul! what sayest thou to this blessed testimony of thine interest in Jesus? Is Jesus to thee the resting place from sin, from sorrow, from guilt, and the wrath to come? As God the Father rests in him, well pleased for his righteousness' sake, dost thou rest in him? Oh! the felicity of such a rest! Jesus is indeed the rest, wherewith the Lord causeth the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing! "Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee!"

The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer.—1 *Peter iv. 7.*

My soul! how hath the year been hastening from thee, and thou hastening in it from the world! Where are the days fled? They are gone to be numbered with the years beyond the flood: and thou art now standing as on the isthmus of time. "The end of all things is at hand." Friends are dying around thee, thou art dying thyself: yea, the world is dying: and the end of all things is at hand. In this state, my Lord, well may I look up to thee! Circumstances so very solemn may well induce soberness, and watchfulness unto prayer. Yes! blessed Jesus! I would pray thee to induce in me every suited state, that every faculty may be on the watch-tower, waiting my Lord's coming. Thou hast said: "Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." Oh! then for grace to live by faith on thee; and so to live, that when I change worlds, I may not change my company. For if in time I live with Christ, and enjoy Christ, I

shall not live less with Christ, nor enjoy Christ less, when I exchange time for eternity! Lord Jesus! be thou my watchfulness unto prayer, and thou wilt be both now and then, in life and death, my portion for ever!

Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.—*Genesis* xlvii. 9.

My soul! in looking back upon thy life, mayest thou not well take up the same language as the patriarch, and confess that “few and evil have thy days been?” Surely the review appears like the heath of a desert, “that knoweth not when good cometh!” Out of Jesus, and considered without an eye to him, there is not a single circumstance of real merit or of real happiness to be seen. The whole of life, from the days of childhood, through all its intermediate stages, presents but one view “of vanity and vexation of spirit!” Precious Jesus! what would the arithmetic of life have been in the now departing year, or in the departure of myself from the world, but for thee? Hadst not thou graciously sought me, when I sought not thee: hadst thou not opened to me “the good old way,” trodden by the patriarchs, and guided and held up my feet in following them; had not Jesus been my way, and truth, and life; what a sad conclusion should I now have had to make of the “few and evil days of my pilgrimage?” Blessed Lord! go before me all the remainder of the untrodden paths, and be thou to me “the pillar of cloud by day,” and “the pillar of fire by night.” Bring me, Lord, to the inns of thine ordinances, and to thine house of prayer, and cause me to drink out of “the wells of salvation.” Oh! for increasing knowledge of thee, my Lord, and for the increasing enjoyment of thee, that I may “go from strength to strength, until my pilgrimage be over, and I come to appear before my God in Zion!”

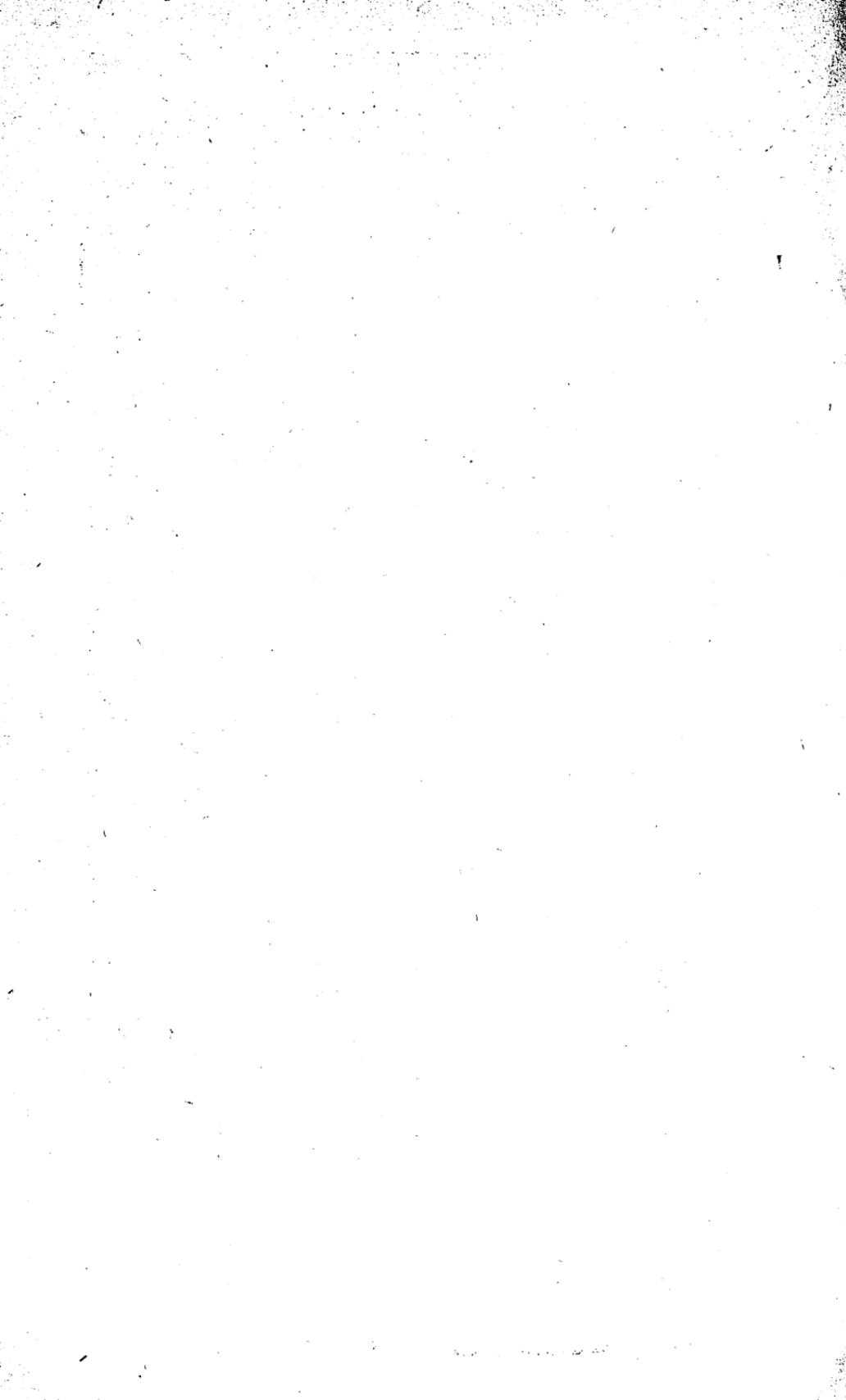
A building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.—*2 Cor.* v. 1.

My soul! after thy last evening’s meditation on the shortness and unsatisfying nature of life, let thy present thoughts be occupied in beholding, with steady faith, the great contrast to it: and see whether thy confidence be as strong, and well-founded, as the apostle’s. His was not a mere hope only, but an assurance in Jesus. “We know (saith he) that if this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Dost thou know this? Is Jesus thy foundation? Hath God thy Father built for thee? And doth the Holy Ghost set his almighty hand to the work, in

sweetly witnessing to the writings, and sealing the deed, that it is thine? Oh! the blessedness to know this, to live already in the enjoyment of it; and while the pins of thy earthly tabernacle are daily loosening, and taking out, to be looking with full assurance of an entrance into this house "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!"

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.—2 *Cor.* xiii. 14.

Here, my soul, set up thy pillar. Baptized as thou hast been into the joint name, love, praise, and adoration, of the holy Three in One; and blessed as thou hast been, and art, in their joint mercies, grace, and favour; here every day, and all the day, seek thy portion and blessing, as the united source of all thy salvation. End the year, and begin the year, under those precious tokens of God in Christ; and daily keep up a lively communion and friendship with each, as the blessed cause of all thine happiness. Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons, is engaged to perfect what he hath begun; and it is, and should be thy happiness to be for ever viewing the testimonies of it, in the holy scriptures of truth. God thy Father hath so loved the Church in Jesus, as to give him to the Church, and the Church to him: and God the Son hath so loved the Church, as to give himself for it; zeal for his Father's honour, and longing for the salvation of his people, led him through all the work of redemption, and now engageth his heart until he hath brought home all his redeemed to glory; and God the Holy Ghost is unceasingly engaged to render the whole effectual, by taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to his people. See to it, then, my soul, that every day, and all the day, thou hast the love-tokens of each person of the Godhead; for this will make thee blessed upon earth, and blessed to all eternity. Hail! holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. Bless both him that writes, and him that reads, with thy grace, and open and close the year with grace, until grace be consummated in everlasting glory. Amen and Amen.



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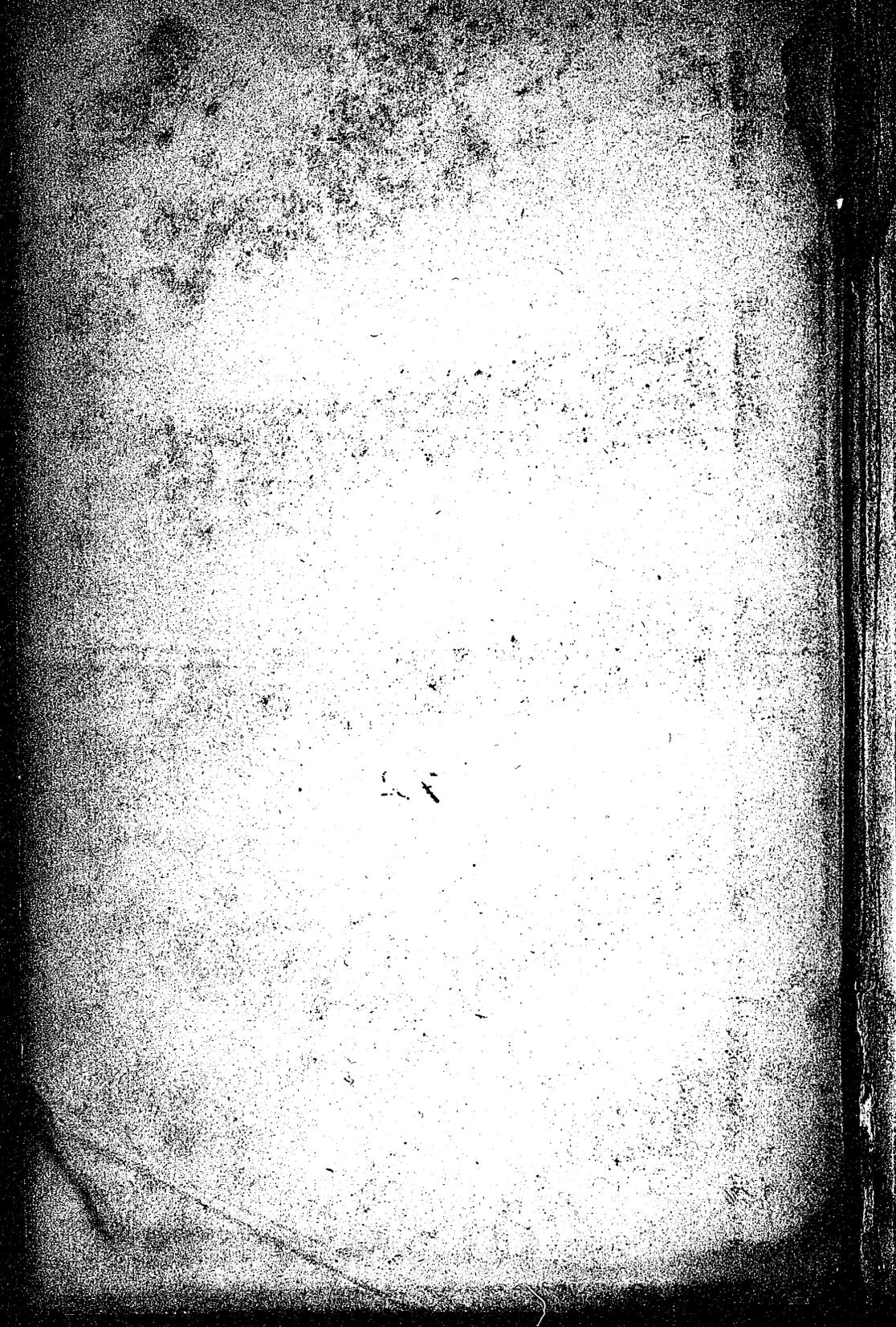
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