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EARS FROM HARVESTED SHEAVES; OR,

DAILY PORTIONS

By Joseph C Philpot (1802 – 1869)

SELECTED FROM THE WORKS OF J. C. PHILPOT BY HIS
DAUGHTERS

*The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the
masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.—*
Ecclesiastes 12:11

*A word spoken in due season, how good is it!—*Proverbs 15:23

PREFACE

With deep feelings of pleasure we have responded to a call for a second edition of this work, and would add to our gratitude for the blessing so graciously vouchsafed to many on its perusal, the heartfelt desire and prayer that our ever-loving Saviour, who is able to do for His people exceeding abundantly above all they ask or even think, will continue to make the book useful, not only to the godly into whose hands it may fall, but also to a generation yet to come, and to his name be all the praise.

S. & D. M. PHILPOT
Croydon, 1896.

"The soul's best, truest safeguard is love. Men fall into error because they never really loved the truth which they profess. Once love the truth, and error never more can have a place in your heart."

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October 1

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Hebrews 12:1

Every fervent desire of your soul after the Lord Jesus Christ; every inward movement of faith, and hope, and love toward his blessed name; every sense of your misery and danger as a poor, guilty, lost, condemned sinner, whereby you flee from the wrath to come; every escaping out of the world and out of sin for your very life, with every breathing of your heart into the bosom of God, that he would have mercy upon you and bless you; all these inward acts of the believing heart in its striving after salvation as a felt, enjoyed reality, as the prize of our high calling, are pointed out by the emblem—"running the race set before us." The Christian sees and feels that there is a prize to be obtained, which is eternal life; a victory to be gained, which is victory over death and hell; and he sees the certain consequences if this prize is not obtained, this victory not won—an eternity of misery. He sees, therefore, let others think and say what they may, he must run if all stand still, he must fight if all are overcome. But to do this or any part of this a man must have the life of God in his soul. To begin to run is of divine grace and power; to keep on he must have continual supplies communicated out of the fulness of a covenant Head; and to be enabled to persevere to the end so as to win the prize, he must have the strength of Christ continually made perfect in his weakness. But he does win; he is made more than conqueror through Him who loved him. Jesus has engaged that he shall not be defeated; for the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong; but the lame take the prey; and not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

October 2

"For thou, O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us, as silver is tried." Psalm 66:10

The Lord's dealings with his people in the wilderness are very much to this purpose and to this end—to prove them, and to know

what is in their hearts. Has the Lord implanted life in your soul? Has he touched your conscience with his finger? Has he begun a work of grace upon your heart? If so, in your travels through this wilderness there will be things from time to time to prove the reality of this work upon your soul. You will have *temptations*; now, when temptation comes, it will prove whether you have the fear of God in your soul to stand against the temptation, or whether you fall under the temptation; or, if you fall under the temptation, whether you are ever recovered out of it. And if you are a living soul, the Lord will keep bringing circumstance upon circumstance, event upon event, one thing after another; and all these things, as they come upon you, shall be made to prove whether the fear of God be in your soul or not. Now, if the fear of God be not in a man's heart, he must decline, he must fall away. Satan will be more than a match for every one except God's own family; sin will overcome and destroy every one but those whose sins are pardoned through atoning blood and dying love; and the world, sooner or later, will overcome every one who has not the faith of God's elect whereby alone the world is overcome. Thus the Lord, in his mysterious dealings (and how mysterious his dealings are!) proves the reality of the work of grace in every heart where that work is begun, and proves the hypocrisy of all who have but a name to live while their soul is dead before God.

October 3

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18

When our desires and affections ascend to where the Lord Jesus Christ now is, when raised out of all the smoke and fog, din and strife, noise and bustle, cares and anxieties, pursuits and pleasures, sins and sorrows of this earthly scene, we can in faith and hope, in love and affection, live above and beyond all things here below, and beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord"—this is being made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

When the Lord Jesus went up on high he entered into his glory. As then we behold him in his glory in faith and love, there is the

reflection of his glory, and saints thus favoured enter into heaven when still upon earth, and have the foretaste of the glory which is to be revealed at the Lord's coming before they are for ever clothed with it. There are indeed comparatively few who are so highly favoured, and even they only at rare intervals, and for short moments; but that does not affect the truth and certainty of the fact. It is a most blessed truth that if we are members of the mystical body of Christ, the deficiency of our experience, though it deprives us of much of the enjoyment, does not deprive us of our interest in, or union with, our great covenant Head, and of the fruits which spring out of it.

October 4

"I will strengthen that which was sick." Ezekiel 34:16

Peculiar maladies require peculiar remedies; but here is a general remedy, a family medicine. The Lord not only has strong remedies for desperate diseases; but in the divine medicine chest he has his restoratives and cordials. "Stay me with flagons; comfort me with apples," cries the Bride, "for I am sick of love." She was in a swoon, and needed a reviving cordial to restore her. So a poor fainting soul may come to hear the preached gospel, or may open his Bible, and say, "What is here for me? When I hear any deep experience described, that seems to cut me off as too deep; and when I hear great manifestations entered into, that cuts me off as too high. So I seem to be a strange being, a peculiar out-of-the-way creature, that can neither dive nor fly, sink nor rise." Well, you are sick; you are like one in a hospital, ill of a malady that puzzles all the doctors. At last, one more skilful than his brethren, says, "There is no peculiar disease. But the man, like many of our London patients, is suffering from want of nourishment, dying from sheer exhaustion. He wants better blood put into him. He must have some good meat and wine, and a nourishing diet to recruit his strength and put new life into his body." Thus acts the great Physician—Jehovah-rophi. "I will strengthen that which was sick." The blood and righteousness of Jesus—that flesh which is meat indeed, and that blood which is drink indeed, is given to the hunger-bitten wretch to revive him as with a heavenly cordial. There is balm in Gilead; there is a Physician there; to that balm and to that physician sin-sick souls seek. If you have a real case, you may depend upon it, there is a

remedy in the family chest. It is not found out yet, at least you may not have found it, but there is a drawer, and in that drawer there is a draught devised by infinite wisdom and compounded by everlasting love. It is indeed a remedy such as no learned physician of the school of the pharisees ever prescribed, or an apothecary wise in his own conceit ever compounded; but yet the very thing, the very thing. And when that drawer is opened and the draught brought out, and you take it, you will be able to say with David in the joy of your heart, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

October 5

"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" (margin, *sense*). Philippians 1:9

Love is especially the effect of knowledge; and love we know is a fruit of the blessed Spirit. As then the Lord the Spirit is pleased to open up the precious truth of God to the soul, love embraces what the Holy Ghost reveals. Thus there is a knowledge of the only true God by the teaching of the Spirit. But our love is to abound not only in knowledge, which is the foundation of it, because if there is no knowledge of the Lord there can be no love to the Lord or his people, but also in all feeling, in all sense, in all experience. Spiritual knowledge, therefore, and experimental feeling are the two feeders of Christian love; the two streams, as it were, that run side by side out of the very throne of the most High, and meet and melt into that boundless river, love. And it is by this union of knowledge and experience, of divine light and heavenly life, of the Spirit's teaching and the Spirit's testimony, of truth in the understanding and of feeling in the affections, that love is maintained in the soul, and flows out towards the Lord and his people. This spiritual knowledge differs very widely from carnal, intellectual, barren head knowledge. The one is a flowing river, the other a stagnant pool; the one fertilises the heart, and makes it fruitful in every good word and work; the other leaves it a barren swamp, in which creeps and crawls every hideous thing, and out of which ever rise miasma, disease, and death. Thus the union of knowledge and experience as sustaining love distinguishes the work of the Spirit from every imitation of it, and where there is the true work of the Spirit there will be gracious knowledge and experimental feeling.

This, then, is the peculiar blessedness of living experience that it goes hand in hand with gracious knowledge to sustain heavenly love; and that Christ is the end and object of both; the end and object of all saving knowledge, and the end and object of all true experience; for in this as in everything else he is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

October 6

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57:15

O what a mystery that God should have two dwelling-places! The "heaven of heavens" that "cannot contain him," and the humble, broken, and contrite heart! But in order that the Lord of heaven might have a place in which he could live and lodge, God gives to his people gifts and graces; for he cannot come and dwell in the carnal mind, in our rebellious nature, in a heart full of enmity and wickedness; he therefore makes a lodging-place for himself, a pavilion in which the King of glory dwells, the curtains of which are like the curtains of Solomon. His abode is that holy, divine nature which is communicated at regeneration—"the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Thus Christ dwells in the heart by faith; and is "in his people, the hope of glory." And this made Paul say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life 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." This is the object of God's dealings—that the Lord God might dwell in his people; that there might be a union betwixt the Church and her covenant Head: "I in them, and thou in me, that they might be perfect in one." This is the unfolding of the grand enigma, the solution of the incomprehensible mystery, "God manifest in the flesh,"—that the Lord God might dwell in his people; "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people;" and thus glorify himself by filling their hearts with his grace and glory, as Solomon's temple was of old, and that they might enjoy him, and be with him when time shall be no more. This is the grand key to all the Lord's dealings with the soul, and

all his mysterious leadings in providence,—that the Lord God might dwell in the hearts of his people here, and be eternally glorified in them in a brighter and a better world.

October 7

"Brethren, farewell." 2 Corinthians 13:11

To fare well, spiritually understood, is to have everything that God can make us happy in. All God's people will eventually fare well. They all stand complete in Christ: nothing can touch their eternal safety; for they are all complete in him, "without spot, or blemish, or any such thing." In this point of view, they must all in the end and for ever *fare well*.

But when we come to the matter of experience, we often find that those very times when God's people think they are *faring ill*, are the seasons when they are really *faring well*; and again, at other times, when they think they are *faring well*, then they are really *faring ill*. For instance, when their souls are bowed down with trouble, it often seems to them that they are *faring ill*. God's hand appears to be gone out against them: he has hidden his face from them; they can find no access to a throne of grace; they have no sweet testimonies from the Lord that the path in which he is leading them is one of his choosing, and that all things will end well with them. This they think is indeed *faring ill*, and yet perhaps they never fare better than when under these circumstances of trouble, sorrow, and affliction. These things wean them from the world. If their heart and affections were going out after idols, they instrumentally bring them back. If they were hewing out broken cisterns, they dash them all to pieces. If they were setting up, and bowing down to idols in the chambers of imagery, affliction and trouble smite them to pieces before their eyes, take away their gods, and leave them no refuge but the Lord God of hosts. If you can only look back, you will see that your greatest sweets have often sprung out of your greatest bitters, and the greatest blessings have flowed from the greatest miseries, and what at the time you thought your greatest sorrows: you will find that the brightest light has sprung up in the blackest darkness, and that the Lord never made himself so precious as at the time when you were sunk lowest, so as to be without human help, wisdom, or strength. So that when a child of God thinks he is

faring very ill, because burdened with sorrows, temptations, and afflictions, he is never faring so well. The darkest clouds in due time will break, the most puzzling enigmas will sooner or later be unriddled by the blessed Spirit interpreting them, and the darkest providences cleared up; and we shall see that God is in them all, leading and guiding us "by the right way, that we may go to a city of habitation" (Psalm 107:7).

October 8

"I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments." Psalm 119:176

If the Lord did not seek us, we should never seek the Lord. That is most certain. If you are one that seeks the Lord in prayer, in supplication, in secret desire, with many a heart-rending groan, and often by night and by day, be well assured, that you would never have sought the Lord, had not the Lord first sought you. He is now seeking you. It may be (as you fear), some time before he finds you; but he will find you at last. How sweetly the Lord has set this forth in the parable of the lost sheep! The poor sheep has gone astray; and having once left the fold, it is pretty sure to have got into some strange place or other. It has fallen down a rock, or has rolled into a ditch, or is hidden beneath a bush, or has crept into a cave, or is lying in some deep, distant ravine, where none but an experienced eye and hand can find it out. And so with the Lord's lost sheep; they get into strange places. They fall off rocks, slip into holes, hide among the bushes, and sometimes creep off to die in caverns. When the literal sheep has gone astray, the shepherd goes after it to find it. Here he sees a footmark, there a little lock of wool torn off by the thorns. Every nook he searches; into every corner he looks, until at last he finds the poor sheep wearied, torn, and half expiring, with scarce strength enough to groan forth its misery. Nor does he beat it home, nor thrust the goad into its back; but he gently takes it up, lays it upon his shoulder, and brings it home rejoicing. Similar in grace are the Lord's ways with his lost sheep. Men act otherwise. Let a pharisee see a sheep *cast*, as it is called in the country, that is, lying helpless upon its back, he would soon kick it up and kick it home, beat its head with his crook, or drive the sharp nail into its flank.

David's was a wise prayer, "Let me fall into the hands of God, and not into the hands of man." O to fall into the hands of God; into the hands of a merciful and compassionate High Priest, who was tempted in all points, like as we are, and can therefore sympathise with his poor tempted people! These, these are the only hands for us safely to fall into; and he that falls into these hands will neither fall out of them, nor through them, for "underneath are the everlasting arms," and these can neither be sundered nor broken.

October 9

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."
Hebrews 12:2

No one can ever run the race set before him, except by looking unto Jesus. He is at the head of the race; he stands at the goal; holding the crown of victory in his hand, which he puts upon the head of the successful runner. And we can only run on as we view Jesus by the eye of faith at the right hand of the Father opening his blessed arms to receive us into his own bosom at the end of the race. Nor indeed can any one really look to him but by the special gift and grace of God. He must be revealed to the soul by the power of God; we must behold his glorious Godhead and his suffering manhood by the eye of faith; and we must view him as the incarnate God; the only Mediator between God and man. We must see the efficacy of his atoning blood to purge a guilty conscience; the blessedness of his obedience to justify a needy, naked soul; the sweetness of his dying love as an inward balm and cordial against all the thousand ills and sorrows of life. We must see his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; his suitability to every want and woe; his infinite compassion to the vilest and worst of sinners; his patient forbearance and wondrous long-suffering of our sins and backslidings; his unchanging love, stronger than death itself; his readiness to hear; his willingness to bless; and his ability to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Thus the heavenly runner looks not to the course however long, nor to the ground however rough, not to his own exertions however multiplied, nor to his own strength whether much or little; nor to applauding friends nor condemning foes; but wholly and solely to the incarnate Son of God. Jesus draws him onward with his invincible

grace. Every glance of his beautiful Person renews the flame of holy love; every sight of his blood and righteousness kindles desires to experience more of their efficacy and blessedness; and every touch of his sacred finger melts the heart into conformity to his suffering image. This is the life of a Christian,—day by day, to be running a race for eternity; and as speeding onward to a heavenly goal, to manifest his sincerity and earnestness by continually breathing forth the yearnings of his soul after divine realities, and to be pressing forward more and more toward the Lord Jesus Christ, as giving him a heavenly crown when he has finished his course with joy.

October 10

"From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Psalm 61:2

There is something in this expression in our text, "*rock*," which seems, to my mind, to throw a sweet and blessed light upon what Jesus is to the poor and needy. The rock must go down to the bottom of the deep waters, as well as rise out of them, to be a sufficient place of refuge for the shipwrecked mariner! If the rock did not go to the bottom of the deep, it would not be firm; it would be but a quicksand. Is not this agreeable to the Spirit's testimony concerning the humanity of Christ? How deep that went into all our sorrows, into all our sufferings, into all our sins, into all our shame! However deep the waters may be, the rock is deeper than all; however deep the sufferings, sins, and sorrows of the Church may be, the sufferings and sorrows of "Immanuel, God with us," were infinitely deeper. But the waves and billows beat in vain against the rock; they cannot move it from its place. So it is with the rock, Jesus. All the sins, temptations, sufferings, and sorrows of the elect, with the wrath of God, and the fury of hell, beat against that rock, but they never moved it from its place. But this rock is spoken of in our text as "*higher than I*." There we have the Godhead. For if Jesus were not God as well as man, the God-man, what support could he be to the sinking soul? what efficacy could there be in his atoning blood? what power and glory in his justifying righteousness? what suitability in him as a Saviour to the utterly lost? But being God as well as man, yea, the God-man, the great and glorious Immanuel, he could descend in his human nature into the very depths of the fall, and rise up in his divine

nature to the throne of the most High; and thus, like Jacob's ladder, the bottom of it was upon the earth, but the top exalted to the clouds. Then will not, must not, this be ever, as the Lord is pleased to raise it up, the cry of our soul, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I?" No salvation anywhere else; no peace anywhere else; no consolation anywhere else. Buffeted by the waves, and well-nigh drowned by the billows, away from that rock; but if led there, brought there, kept there by the blessed Spirit, finding it a safe and sure standing for eternity. And what else but such a rock can save our souls, or what else but such a Saviour and such a salvation, without money and without price, can suit such ruined wretches?

October 11

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." 1 John 3:14

The Lord's people in their early days have a measure of heavenly love. Though perhaps they cannot say that Jesus is theirs; though they dare not declare they shall certainly go to heaven when they die; though they sometimes cannot even assert that the work of grace is really begun upon their souls; yet there is love manifested in them to God's word, God's people, God's servants, and God's truth. There is in them, in their weakest and tenderest days, a separation from the world, a casting-in of their lot amongst the people of God, a going-out in the tenderness of their heart and affection towards them. We see this in Ruth: though she was a poor heathen idolatress, no sooner was her heart touched by the finger of God, than she clave to Naomi.

Divine love can only spring from the teachings and operations of God upon the heart. Our "carnal mind is enmity against God"—nothing but implacable, irreconcilable enmity. But when the Lord is pleased to make himself, in some measure, known to the soul; when he is pleased, in some degree, to unveil his lovely face, and to give a discovery of his grace and glory—immediately love springs up. He is so lovely an Object! As the Bride says, He is "altogether lovely." His beauty is so surpassing, his grace so rich, his mercy so free—all that he is and has is so unspeakably glorious—that no sooner does he unveil his lovely face, than he wins over all the love

of the heart, takes possession of the bosom, and draws every affection of the soul to centre wholly and solely in himself.

October 12

"But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." 1 Thessalonians 5:8

Sobriety in religion is a blessed gift and grace. In our most holy faith there is no room for lightness. The things which concern our peace are solemn, weighty matters, and if they lie with any degree of weight and power on our spirit, they will subdue that levity which is the very breath of the carnal mind. But sobriety implies not merely the absence of all unbecoming levity in speech and conduct, but the absence also of all wild, visionary imaginations in the things of God. It denotes, therefore, that "spirit of a sound mind" which the Apostle says is the gift of God. Vital godliness, it is true, has its mysteries, its revelations and manifestations, its spiritual and supernatural discoveries and operations; but all these come through the word of truth, which is simple, weighty and solid, and as far removed from everything visionary or imaginative, wild or flighty, as light is from darkness; and therefore every act of faith, or of hope, or of love, will be as simple, solid, and weighty as the word of truth itself, through the medium of which, by the power of the Spirit, they are produced and called forth. If any doubt this, let them read in some solemn moment the last discourses of our blessed Lord with his disciples. How simple, how solid, how weighty are these discourses. Must not, then, the faith which receives, believes, and is mixed with these words of grace and truth, the hope which anchors in the promises there spoken, the love which embraces the gracious and glorious Person of him who spoke them, be simple and solid too? What room is there in such a faith, hope, and love for visionary ideas, wild speculations, and false spiritualisations of Scripture, any more than there is in the words of the Lord himself?

October 13

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."
1 Timothy 1:9

Have you any testimony that God has called you by his grace, quickened your soul into divine life, brought you under the curse of a condemning law, given you repentance for your sins, raised up a sigh and a cry in your breast for a sense of his pardoning love, brought you to the footstool of mercy, given you faith to believe in his dear Son, with any sweet hope that he has begun a gracious work upon your heart? Can you look back upon any never-to-be-forgotten period when the Lord, by his special and omnipotent grace, quickened your soul into divine life? for I do believe we never can forget the first sensations of the Spirit of God in his quickening movements upon the soul; when he, to use the figure of Moses, fluttereth over it as an eagle which stirreth up her nest, infusing and communicating a new and heavenly life, as when in creation he moved upon the face of the waters communicating life and energy to dead chaos. Surely if we ever felt the mighty hand of the Lord upon us, we can never forget the memorable time when he was first pleased to communicate divine light and life to our dead souls, to pour out upon us the spirit of grace and of supplications, to separate us from the world, to bring us to his feet with confessions and supplications, opening upland revealing eternal realities with a weight and a power that they entered into our deepest and most inward thoughts and feelings. Can you look back to such a time? Then God is for you; and if God is for you then you can, as he is pleased to strengthen your faith, look right through that blessed chain, with all its heavenly links, and see how he foreknew you before the foundation of the world, and wrote your name in the Book of Life.

October 14

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have (margin, let us hold fast) grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Hebrews 12:18

Grace is the very foundation of the kingdom which cannot be moved. It is all of grace, from first to last. By grace we are saved; by grace we are called; by grace we are what we are. In order,

therefore, to maintain our interest clear in the kingdom which cannot be shaken, we must hold grace fast; for directly we cease to do this, we lose our comfortable prospects of this kingdom, and of our own participation in it and its heavenly blessings. It is a kingdom of present grace and of future glory, therefore built wholly upon grace and not upon merit; wholly upon the favour of God and not upon the works of the creature. As long, then, as we hold fast grace, we hold the kingdom; for the kingdom stands in grace.

But why should this exhortation be needed? Is it not very easy to hold fast grace? Yes, very, when there is nothing to try it; and that is the way that most hold it—in the head, not in the heart. But the real partakers of the life of God are tempted on every hand to renounce their hold of grace, through the power of the world, the strength of sin, the subtlety of their unwearied adversary, the unbelief, infidelity, and despondency of their wretched heart. Thus sometimes we are tempted to look away from the kingdom which cannot be shaken, and descend to lower things; to stand either upon that earth which has been shaken under our feet, or that heaven, that Pharisee's heaven which has been shaken over our heads, and thus get lost and bewildered among the wreck and ruin of those things which have been shaken and are removed. The Apostle therefore exhorts us to hold fast that grace whereby in the first instance we came to have an interest in the kingdom not to be shaken; whereby we were introduced into an experimental knowledge and possession of it; and whereby alone we can maintain a firm hold of it to the end. Whatever you do, then, however low you may sink and fall, never relinquish your firm hold of grace. It will never be more precious than when clasped by a dying hand, and clung to with expiring breath.

October 15

"That I may win Christ." Philippians 3:8

What is it to "win Christ?" It is to have him sweetly embraced in the arms of our faith. It is to feel him manifesting his heavenly glory in our souls. It is to have the application of his atoning blood, in all its purging efficacy, to our conscience. It is to feel our heart melted and swooning with the sweet ravishments of his

dying love, shed abroad even to overpowering. This is winning Christ. Now, before we can thus win Christ, we must have a view of Christ, we must behold his glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." We must see the matchless dignity of his glorious Person, the atoning efficacy of his propitiating blood, the length and breadth, the depth and height of his surpassing love. We must have our heart ready to burst with pantings, longings, and ardent desires that this blessed Immanuel would come down from the heaven of heavens in which he dwells beyond the veil, into our heart, and shed abroad his precious dying love there. Now, is not this your feeling, child of God? It has been mine over and over again. Is it not your feeling as you lie upon your bed, sometimes, with sweet and earnest pantings after the Lord of life and glory? As you walk by the way, as you are engaged in your daily business, as you are secretly musing and meditating, are there not often the goings forth of these longings and breathings into the very bosom of the Lord? But you cannot have this, unless you have seen him by the eye of an enlightened understanding, by the eye of faith, and had a taste of his beauty, a glimpse of his glory, and a discovery of his eternal preciousness. You must have had this gleaming upon your eyes, as the beams of light gleam through the windows. You must have had it dancing into your heart, as the rays of the sun dance upon the waves of the sea. You must have had a sweet incoming of the shinings of eternal light upon your soul, melting it, and breaking it down at his footstool, as the early dawn pierces through the clouds of night. When you have seen and felt this you break forth—'O that I might win Christ!' Like the ardent lover who longs to win his bride, you long to enjoy his love and presence shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

October 16

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart; for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts." Jeremiah 15:16

There is a sweetness in the promises which captivates the heart; a beauty in Christ which wins the soul; a saving unction and power in the word of God, when applied, which draws forth toward it every secret and sacred affection. Can you not sometimes look up and say, "Blessed Jesus, I do love thee?" And when the word of

God is opened up, applied, and made sweet and precious, have you not felt sometimes as if you could kiss the sacred page, as conveying such sweetness into your soul? This is embracing a promise in love—throwing our arms round it, drawing it near to our breast, kissing it again and again with kisses of love and affection, and taking that sweet delight in it with which the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, as now all his own—at times almost lost, but now wooed and won, no more to be parted. This is rejoicing in the word of God, delighting in a blessed Jesus and in the promises which testify of, and centre in him. Have you not felt these sweet embracements in your soul of the truth as it is in Jesus as so precious, so suitable, so encouraging, and so adapted to every want and woe? Then you are a believer; then you are a child of God; then there is a work of grace upon your heart; then you know the truth for yourself by divine teaching and divine testimony. You may still not have had that full deliverance, that blessed revelation, that overpowering manifestation whereby all your doubts and fears have been swept away, and your soul settled in a firm enjoyment of the liberty of the gospel. You may have had it or may have had it not. But if you have this character stamped upon you that you have seen the promises afar off and been persuaded of them, and embraced them in faith, hope, and love, you have a mark of being a partaker of the faith of God's elect.

October 17

"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Hebrews 10:36

Why is patience needed? Because if we are the Lord's people, we are sure to have many trials. The Lord sends us afflictions that he may give us the grace of patience to bear them. But O, what a rebellious heart do we carry in our bosom! What perverseness, peevishness, and self-will dwell in us! How soon our temper is stirred up, and our irritable minds roused in a moment by the veriest trifle! How little patience have we under the trials that God sees fit to lay upon us! We thus learn our need of patience, and that it is not a fruit of nature's soil. The want of it makes the soul follow after it; and when the Lord does give submission to his will, and enables his children to see how profitable these trials are for their souls, and how, but for this heavy ballast, they would

certainly have been carried away into the world, they can see his merciful hand in their heavy afflictions. Thus sometimes by feeling peevish and rebellious, and thus knowing their need of patience; and sometimes by feeling submissive, and enjoying the sweetness of it, they see what a blessed grace patience is. Scarcely any grace do we more daily need. We need it toward God, when he crosses us in our schemes, thwarts us in our desires, and instead of shewing why he afflicts us, hides himself behind a thick cloud that neither faith nor prayer can pierce through. We need patience with each other, with the world, with our relations in life, and with the Church of God. We need patience when anything is said or done to hurt our minds, wound our feelings, irritate our tempers, and stir us up to revenge. And what a mercy it is, under these sharp trials, to have patience, and thus follow the example of the blessed Lord, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously."

October 18

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3

There was a time, child of God, when the world held in your heart the chief place. It was not so in God's heart. You and he were therefore at variance. But now, through grace, you are brought to make eternity your chief concern. You and God are agreed there; for in the mind of God eternity as much outweighs time as the stars in the midnight sky outweigh a grain of dust. There was a time when you loved the world and the things of time and sense; and earth and earthly things were your element and home. You and God disagreed upon that matter; because the Lord saw that the world was full of evil, whilst you saw it full of good. The Lord saw the world under his curse, and you loved its favour and its blessing—seeking madly and wickedly to enjoy that which God had denounced; therefore you could not agree. Thus you see that in order to be agreed with God, we must have God's thoughts in our heart, God's ways in our soul, and God's love in our affections. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." But they must become such; and when once God's thoughts become our thoughts and God's ways our ways; when once we have the mind of Christ and see with the eyes of God, then God and we become agreed, and being

agreed, we can walk together. What is it to walk together? Why, it is to enjoy union, communion, fellowship, and friendship. Now as we are brought to agree with God, we walk with God. He has set up a mercy-seat on high, and when they thus agree, God and man may meet at the mercy-seat of the Redeemer. As the eyes are enlightened to see the truth of God; as the heart is touched to feel the power of God; and as the affections are drawn forth to love the things of God, we meet at the mercy-seat. It is sprinkled with blood; it contains and hides from view the broken tables of the law. There God meets man in gracious amity, and enables him to pour out his soul before him and to tell him his troubles, trials, and temptations. And every now and then he sweetly relieves by dropping in a gracious promise, applying some portion of his sacred truth, encouraging him to believe in his dear Son, and still to hope in his mercy.

October 19

"The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Ephesians 6:17

There is only one weapon whereby we can fight Satan to any purpose, and that is the word of God. But observe, that it must not be merely the *letter* of the word. It must be the "sword of *the Spirit*," and therefore a spiritual sword, which can only be taken in hand when the word of God is applied with a divine power to your heart, and you have a living faith in it as made "life and spirit" to your soul. It is of no use my bringing forward a text to resist a temptation of Satan, unless I can make that text my own; in other words, unless I can handle that sword as one who knows how to wield it. To take up a text and not know the sweetness and power of it, would be like a child taking up a warrior's sword without having the warrior's hand. He might play with the sword, but what is the sword of a giant in the hand of a child? The sword of Scander-Beg, a famous Albanian warrior against the Turks, used to be shewn at Vienna. A man who once looked at and handled it said, "Is this the sword which won so many victories? I see nothing in it; it is but a common sword." The answer was, "You should have seen the hand that wielded it." So it is not merely taking a text, adopting scripture language, and quoting passages, which will beat back the fiery assaults of Satan. This is having Scander-Beg's sword without having Scander-Beg's arm. But it is having the word of truth brought into our heart by the

power of God, faith raised up to believe that God himself speaks it to our heart, being thus enabled to wield it in the strength of the Spirit and by the power of faith in living exercise, to resist every hellish thrust. In this battle we must not give way. To flee is to be conquered, for, as Bunyan well says, there is no armour for the back. Thus even if in this conflict you should slip and fall, lie not still as a conquered captive, but get up again and fight. "Resist Satan, and he will flee from you." He is a conquered enemy; he cannot destroy you if you are the Lord's. The word of truth, therefore, is full of most gracious promises, and sweet encouragements "to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," and never in heart or hand submit to be conquered by sin or Satan.

October 20

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her." Hosea 2:14

It is in the margin "to her heart;" and God speaks to the heart; that is the special characteristic of his voice. Men may speak to the ear, and they can do no more; but God speaks to the heart, for it is there that his voice alone is heard. All religion first and last lies in a man's heart. He may have his head well furnished with notions, yet a heart destitute of grace. But not so with the vessels of mercy, for they "believe with the heart unto righteousness;" and it is by the voice of God heard in the heart that a saving faith is raised up in the soul. There God must speak if there is to be any heart religion, any sound or saving experience, any knowledge of the truth so as to be blessed and saved thereby. But in the wilderness we learn the deep necessity there is that God should speak to our heart. We want the Lord himself to speak and the Lord alone; and to speak such words as shall reach our heart and enter with divine power into our conscience. When you are in the wilderness, you have no friend, no creature help, no worldly comfort: these have all abandoned you. God has led you into the wilderness to bereave you of these earthly ties, of these creature refuges and vain hopes, that he may himself speak to your soul. If, then, you are separated from the world by being brought into the wilderness; if you are passing through trials and afflictions; if you are exercised with a variety of temptations, and are brought into that spot where the creature yields neither help nor hope, then

you are made to see and feel that nothing but God's voice speaking with power to your soul can give you any solid grounds of rest or peace. But is not this profitable? It may be painful; it is painful; but it is profitable, because by it we learn to look to the Lord and the Lord alone, and this must ever be a blessed lesson to learn for every child of God.

October 21

"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 1 Corinthians 3: 21-23

Whatever there be in heaven, whatever there be in earth, that can be for your spiritual good, all is yours so far as you are an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. The silver and the gold and the cattle upon a thousand hills are all Christ's because all power is given to him in heaven and in earth. Whatever your temporal wants may be, he can supply them, because he is king on earth as well as in heaven. Whatever enemies you may have, he is able to defeat them; whatever evils may press upon you, he is able to subdue them; whatever sorrows surround you, he is able to console you under them. Everything in time, everything in eternity, in this world and in the world to come, are all on your side, that are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

October 22

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13

After the Lord has quickened our souls, for a time we often go, shall I say, blundering on, not knowing there is a Jesus. We think that the way of life is to keep God's commandments, obey the law, cleanse ourselves from sin, reform our lives, and cultivate universal holiness in thought, word, and action; and so we go, blundering and stumbling on in darkness; and all the while never get a single step forward. But when the Lord has suffered us to weary ourselves to find the door, and let us sink lower and lower

into the pit of guilt and ruin, from feeling that all our attempts to extricate ourselves have only plunged us deeper and deeper, and the Spirit of God opens up to the understanding and brings into the soul some spiritual discovery of Jesus, and thus makes known that there is a Saviour, a Mediator, and a way of escape—this is the grand turning-point in our lives, the first opening in the valley of Achor of the door of hope. And when the soul has once seen that there is a Jesus, and once felt a measure of the power of his resurrection, it never goes to any other quarter for pardon, justification, and salvation. When the Spirit of God begins to open up with power in his conscience that there is a Jesus, that he is the only Mediator, that the Son of God has come down and taken a holy human nature into union with himself, and is now at the right hand of the Father, it is the first break of day, the first dawn of hope; and upon that bright spot does the shipwrecked soul fix his longing eyes till the Sun of righteousness arises upon it with healing in his wings. It is a great step in a man's experience to turn wholly and solely to the Lord, and renounce all creature righteousness, all forms and ceremonies as a way of salvation. It is a great mercy to turn away from them, as the shipwrecked mariner turns away from his sinking ship, and looks to the rising sun to shew him some way of escape, and thus afford him some gleam of hope.

October 23

"O wretched man that I am!" Romans 7:24

Now, these feelings which the Apostle groaned under are experienced by all the quickened family. Blessed then be the name of God most High, that he inspired him to trace out and leave upon record his experience, that we might derive comfort and relief from it. What should we otherwise have thought? We should have reasoned thus: 'Here is an apostle perfectly holy, perpetually heavenly-minded, having nothing but the image of Christ in him, continually living to the Lord's glory, and unceasingly enjoying communion with him!' We should have viewed him as a perfect saint, if he had not told us what he was; and then, having viewed him as a perfect saint, we should have turned our desponding eyes into our own bosom, and seen such an awful contrast, that we should despair of ever being saved at all! But seeing the soul conflict which the Apostle passed through, and

feeling a measure of the same in our own bosom, it encourages, supports, and leads the soul on to believe that this is the way in which the saints are called to travel, however rough, rugged, and perplexing it may be to them.

Be assured, then, if you have never cried out from the depths of your soul, "O wretched man that I am!" you are dead in sin, or dead in a profession. If internal guilt, misery, and condemnation never forced that cry from your bosom, depend upon it, the life and power of God is not in your soul. But if there has been, and still is, from time to time, this cry in your breast, forced out of it by the pressure of sin and guilt, you have a testimony that the same Lord who taught Paul is teaching you.

October 24

"Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Romans 7:24

If the Lord the Spirit has implanted that piteous cry in our soul, "O wretched man that I am!" this will follow as a necessary consequence—*"Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* Where shall I look for deliverance? From what quarter can it come? Shall I look to the law? O no! that curses and condemns me, because I am continually breaking it. Can I look to friends? They may pity and sympathise; but they cannot remove the body of sin and death; it is too fast linked on for them to remove. Shall I go to ministers of truth? I may hear what they say with approbation; but there is something more wanted to remove this chilling embrace of the body of sin and death. Shall I look to the Scriptures? They contain the remedy; but I want that remedy to be sweetly applied—*"Who then shall deliver me?"* What refuge can I look to? Whither can I go, or whither shall I turn? From what quarter can help or deliverance come? See the embarrassment! view the perplexity of an exercised soul!—looking here, and looking there; turning to the right hand and turning to the left. Yet from one quarter only can the deliverance come. And thus, when the Apostle was brought here—when he was sunk down to a low spot, and anxiously turning his eyes to every quarter to see whence deliverance could come—God blessed his soul with a view of his precious Son. God the Spirit wrought in his heart that living faith whereby he saw Jesus, and whereby

there was a communication of the blood and love of the Lamb to his conscience.

October 25

"For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings." Job 34:21

The Christian has to prove that nothing escapes the eye of a just and holy God; that he lays bare every secret thought, searches every hidden purpose, and scrutinizes every desire and every movement of the mind. He thus discovers and brings to light all the secret sins of the heart. Men in general take no notice of heart sins; if they can keep from sins in life, from open acts of immorality, they are satisfied. What passes in the chambers of imagery they neither see nor feel. Not so with the child of grace; he knows the experience described in Psalm 139. He carries about with him the secret conviction that the eye of God reads every thought. Every inward movement of pride and self-righteousness, rebellion, discontent, peevishness, fretfulness, lust, and wantonness, he inwardly feels that the eye of God reads all, marks all, condemns by his righteous law all, and because he is so intrinsically pure, hates and abhors all. Thus he proves, amongst the "all things" which are weighed up and measured in the inward court of conscience by the unerring standard of the word of truth, the light of the Spirit's teaching, and the workings of godly fear, that he is a sinner before God, and that of a deeper dye and more crimson hue than any other transgressor, for he sees and knows his own heart, which nobody else can see or know. He is indeed aware that many may have sinned more deeply and grossly as regards outward acts; but he feels that no one can have sinned inwardly more foully and continually than he; and this makes him say with Job, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5, 6).

October 26

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised." Hebrews 10:23

Faith cannot rest upon fancy; it can only rest upon the solid truth of God, as revealed in the Scriptures. And when it comes into the truth of God, as Noah's dove came into the ark as its own nest and home, then it finds rest and peace. Many persons think we build our faith and hope, not on the Scriptures, but on some mental feelings, or fancies of our own, distinct from the word of God. I do not and cannot build my faith on anything but what is revealed in the Bible; and I must do it because I have no other foothold for it to stand upon. Do you not feel the same, you who know anything of the trial of faith? You have had many a tossing up and down, and have often wanted a foothold for your faith to stand upon. You have tried to believe this or that doctrine, or to get into this or that experience; but you kept still falling short, for you found that your faith wanted something stronger than the testimony of men; you needed a solid foundation on which to build for eternity; for the things to be believed were so invisible and so mysterious, that nothing but the word of God could suffice for your faith to stand upon and rest in. When, then, in this trial of faith, the truth of God as it stands revealed in the Scriptures was applied to your heart by a divine power, then you found that there was a foothold for belief, and that your faith could then rest upon the inspired word of God, as a rock on which to build, for life and death, time and eternity. It was so with Abraham. When Abraham was looking forward to the birth of the promised seed, many a doubt or fear might have arisen in his mind as to whether he should have a son by Sarah. But he rested upon the word of promise, and thus obtained a foothold for his faith. As the Apostle speaks, "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be" (Romans 4:18). Our faith must in the same way rest on the word of promise, that "by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

October 27

"Peace, peace to him that is far off." Isaiah 57:19

Far off! What means that? It means that the soul passing through that experience is separated, in its feelings, and at an infinite

distance from God. Now this inward sense of being "far off" is one of the most painful feelings that a quickened soul can experience. The ungodly, who are really afar off, know nothing experimentally of distance from God, for they have never been brought spiritually near. They have felt no "cords of love, no bands of a man" drawing them with sweet attraction to the throne of the most High; they have never sighed after the sweet manifestations of God's mercy and love; but they live gladly, and wallow wilfully in those things which separate the soul from its Maker. But those who are "afar off" in their feelings, are such as have seen something of the beauty of the Lord, and felt the evil of sin, who spiritually know Jehovah's purity and the creature's impurity, and have experienced the inward curse, bondage, and condemnation of a holy law. A spiritual discovery of his purity and holiness, making manifest their own vileness, has thrust them down from their self-righteous or presumptuous standing, and made them far off from him; not daring to draw near, nor able to approach; not feeling any spiritual access, but sighing and mourning over their evil hearts in the wilderness, in desolate places; and unable to move a single step forward, because the Lord does not draw them by his smile. A man must know something experimentally of this before he is brought near. How can we know a feeling of nearness if we have not known a feeling of distance? How can we know what it is to be brought "from the end of the earth" (Psalm 61:2) by the manifestation of God's mercy and love, unless we have been driven there, in our feelings, by some manifestation of the wrath of God against sin? But to see the blessed Lord, and not be able to draw near to him; to view his atoning blood at an infinite distance from us, his glorious righteousness well-nigh out of sight, and his lovely Person out of the reach of our spiritual view, so as not to enjoy any access to these glorious realities—to know this experimentally and feelingly, is to be "far off" from God. And I believe that God's people know very much of this feeling. There is not much nearness in our day; not much dandling upon the knees, not much smiling upon the soul, not many love visits, nor love tokens communicated. There is, indeed, a great deal of talking about them; and there are abundance of people who profess to have them; but I fear they are, for the most part, cheats and counterfeits. The real people of God, the true-hearted family are, for the most part, "afar off upon the sea," for it is a dark and cloudy day in which we live.

October 28

"Wherein shall it be known that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight?" Exodus 33:16

Grace is always *"found."* It is not earned, nor merited, nor worked into; but it is found; and if a man never "found" it, he never had it. It is stumbled upon, so to speak, as the Lord sets forth in the parable of the man who found the treasure hid in a field (Matt. 13:44). The man was not thinking about the treasure. He was, we may suppose, ploughing in the field. He had no idea that there was gold beneath the clods. But he finds it all on a sudden, in the most unexpected and unlooked-for manner, and for joy thereof "goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." So it is with the way in which grace is found. It comes so suddenly, so unexpectedly, and so sweetly into a man's soul, that when it comes he is like a man who has found something which he had no conception of till he found it. He had no idea what it was, nor how it was to be got, nor whence it was to be had; but when it came into his heart he found that he had a treasure there. The treasure which the man found in the field was much sweeter to him, because unexpectedly found, than if he had earned it penny by penny. Its coming in so peculiar a way, from the surprise and joy produced, doubled and trebled the value of the money. Thus, when grace visits the earth in an unexpected moment, and drops down like the dew of heaven into the soul, it is valued much more than if laboriously earned penny by penny. The sweetness of the gift is doubled by its unexpectedness, and by its coming in such a marvellous and miraculous manner.

October 29

"A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." Psalm 37:16

Hard may be your lot here below, ye suffering saints of the most High, as regards external matters; painful may be the exercises through which you almost daily pass, through the rebellion and desperate wickedness of your carnal mind; grievous temptations may be your continual portion; many a pricking thorn and sharp brier may lie in your path; and so rough and rugged may be the

road, that at times you may feel yourself of all men to be the most miserable; and so indeed you would be but for the grace of God in your heart now and the glory prepared for you beyond the grave. Yet with it all, were your afflictions and sorrows a thousand times heavier, well may it be said of you—"Happy, thrice happy, art thou, O Israel!" Whom upon earth need you envy if you have the grace of God in your heart? With whom would you change, if ever the love of God has visited your soul? Look around you; fix your eyes upon the man or woman who seems surrounded with the greatest amount of earthly happiness, and then ask your own conscience—"Would I change with thee, thou butterfly of fashion, or with thee, thou gilded dragon-fly, that merely livest thy little day; sunning thyself for a few hours beneath the summer sun, and then sinking into the dark and dismal pool which awaits thee at evening-tide?" Then with all your cares at home and abroad—with all your woes and trials, sunk under which you feel yourself at times one of the most miserable beings that can crawl along in this vale of tears—would you change with anybody, however healthy, or rich, or favoured with the largest amount of family prosperity, if at the same time destitute of the grace of God?

October 30

"Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Hebrews 2:17

What heart can conceive or tongue express the infinite depths of the Redeemer's condescension in thus being made like unto his brethren—that the Son of God should assume a finite nature, subject to the sinless infirmities necessarily connected with a time-state and a dwelling on earth; that he should leave the bosom of his Father in which he had lain before all worlds, and should consent to become a denizen of this world of tears; to breathe earthly air; to be an eye-witness of, and himself share in human sorrows; to have before his eyes the daily spectacle of human sins; to be banished so long from his native home; to endure hunger, weariness, and thirst; to be subject to the persecutions of men, the flight of all his disciples, and the treachery of one among them whose hand had been with him on the table; not to hide his face from shame and spitting, but to be mocked, struck, buffeted, and

scourged, and at last to die an agonizing death between two malefactors, amid scorn and infamy, and covered, as men thought, with everlasting confusion and disgrace! O what infinite condescension and mercy are displayed in these sufferings and sorrows of an incarnate God! The Lord give us faith to look to him as suffering them for our sake!

October 31

"Seek meekness." Zephaniah 2:3

How are we to follow after this grace of meekness? By learning the contrary. How often have we mistaken false fire for the light and fire of God's Spirit! and have contended more for our own views, in our own spirit, with many rash and unbecoming words, rather than for the glory of God. But after a time we are led to see that strife and contention, in our own spirit, are contrary to the spirit and temper of the gospel, and are brought to see what a blessed grace the spirit of meekness is. Nay, the very want of it, the risings up of an excited temper, the anger, strife, envy, and jealousy that often work in our bosoms convince us how little we know of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ." We thus feel what a blessing it is to be made humble and submissive; and how impossible it is to enter into communion with a broken-hearted Jesus, till the soul is in some measure meekened by his Spirit. But it is by having a succession of things to try and provoke us, that we learn whether we have meekness or not. The husband can be very meek, while his wife and children are doing everything to please him; but where is his meekness when they thwart and provoke him? The master may be very meek, while the servant is obedient, obliging, and attentive, but how is he when things are different? Thus the knowledge of the disease makes us desire the remedy; and by the wretched sensations caused by wrath and evil temper, we are brought to desire an experience of those sweet feelings which gospel meekness produces in our consciences.