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**THROUGH BACA'S VALE; OR,**

**DAILY WORDS FOR ZION'S WAYFARERS**

Joseph C Philpot (1802 – 1869)

Selected from the Works of J. C. Philpot by His Daughters

Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.—  
Psalm 84:5, 6, 7

**PREFACE**

Some years ago, as is well known to most of our readers, we published a series of extracts in the form of Daily Portions from the works of our late dear Father, J. C. Philpot, which received a welcome far, far more cordial than we had ventured to hope or expect. Indeed, the numerous testimonies that have reached us again and again, from various quarters, of the blessing of God richly attending the perusal of these Portions have made our hearts burn within us, and the thought that He should condescend to put His seal of approbation upon our labours may well excite the deepest humility and gratitude.

Now, with mixed feelings of pleasure and regret, we find the edition is rapidly coming to an end, and as several friends have expressed a wish for another series of Portions culled from the same source, we thought, as there still remained sufficient material to draw upon, that we should prefer to bring out another book rather than merely reprint the former. That the present volume is larger and contains more matter will be seen at a glance: the fact is, all the suitable short pieces were selected for the earlier one, consequently, these in most cases are longer, which, under the circumstances, was unavoidable, but we trust that even the busiest may be able to spare a few minutes to read the portion for the day: if it is a little long, may it be found proportionately seasonable and weighty, refreshing to a weary spirit—a word of encouragement or exhortation to pilgrims journeying Zionwards.

**As a frontispiece, a collotype portrait has been added, copied from the most pleasing photograph we possess of our dear Father. This we thought would be valued, not only by those who knew him personally, but by a new generation, who would doubtless like to have some idea of the outward form and features of one whom, though they never saw him in the flesh, they love and esteem for his works' sake.**

**It may be observed in this as in the former volume that some of the pieces begin and end rather abruptly, but it must be remembered that they were not written for the purpose to which they are now applied, as was the case with Mason's and Hawker's Portions, but are merely extracts gathered, as the title of the earlier work suggested, from those sheaves which have been garnered for the use and edification of the Household of Faith.**

**In conclusion, we can only express our earnest desire and prayer that the Lord God of Sabaoth may again be graciously pleased to smile upon our efforts, and continue to bless the words of His late dear servant, who "being dead, yet speaketh," to the souls of His living family, and His name shall have all the praise.**

**S. & D. M. Philpot**  
*Croydon, 1893*

April 1

*"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help."*  
Hosea 13:9

God is all-wise, and therefore takes no rash, precipitate steps. As the original plan of salvation was devised by infinite wisdom, so all the successive steps of the execution of that plan are directed by the same boundless wisdom also. "Wherein he hath abounded towards us," says Paul (Eph.1:8), "in all wisdom and prudence." Thus, in his dealings with his people, God does not put them at once into possession of all the blessings which he has laid up for them. He has pardoned, for instance, their sins; but he does not immediately, when he calls them by his grace, put them into possession of this blessing. He has first to teach them their need of it. He has to prepare their heart for the right reception of it. It is no common gift, and he has to teach them how to value it. They are saved from wrath and eternal misery, from his dreadful displeasure and ever-burning indignation against sin. They have need to be shewn, and made deeply to feel, *from* what they are saved, as well as *to* what they are saved. And as the oak does not grow to its full stature in a day, but needs years of sunshine and storm, of beating winds and howling tempests, to give it strength and consistency, a deep and wide root, as well as a lofty and branching stem, so do God's children need months and years of trial and temptation, that they may push a deep root downwards, and shoot up healthy and vigorous upwards. Thus, before the soul can know anything about salvation, it must learn deeply and experimentally the nature of sin, and of itself, as stained and polluted thereby. It is proud, and needs to be humbled; careless, and needs to be awakened; alive, and needs to be killed; full, and requires to be emptied; whole, and needs to be wounded; clothed, and requires to be stripped. It is, by nature, self-righteous and self-seeking; is buried deep in worldliness and carnality; is utterly blind and ignorant; is filled with presumption, arrogance, conceit, and enmity, and hates all that is heavenly and spiritual. Sin, in all its various forms, is its natural element. "The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots." To make man the direct contrary of what he originally is; to make him love God instead of hating him; fear, instead of mocking him; obey, instead of rebelling against him; and to tremble at his terrible majesty, instead of running upon the thick bosses of his buckler;—to do this mighty work, and to effect this wonderful change, requires

the implantation of a new nature by the immediate hand of God himself.

April 2

*"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."* 1 Corinthians 2:5

True faith I may call the *grand tidal wave* of the soul. I will endeavour to explain the expression. We see the river Thames day by day ebbing and flowing. What causes this change? You answer, "It is produced by the sea in the Channel alternately coming up and retiring." It is a true explanation. But what makes the sea of the Channel alternately come up and retire? There is what is called "a grand tidal wave" that comes across the Atlantic Ocean, which, as it ebbs and flows, affects all the minor tides of the neighbouring seas; and thus the tide of the Channel, and that of the river Thames, ebb and flow in unison with this huge Atlantic wave. In the same way faith is the tidal wave of the soul; and all the graces and fruits of the Spirit ebb and flow just as faith rises, or just as faith sinks. If faith rises in the soul, all the graces and fruits of the Spirit rise with it; light increases, life is deepened, the fear of God strengthened, hope brightened, and love augmented. And when this great tidal wave of faith falls in the soul, all the minor tides of the Spirit's graces fall in unison with it. Thus when faith recedes and becomes low in the soul, all the other graces of the Spirit sink with it; consolation ebbs out altogether, hope recedes to a narrow streamlet, life dwindles to a scanty current, and love is reduced to a shallow channel. And as in the Thames we see, at low tide, the muddy banks which the stream has forsaken, so as faith sinks to a low ebb in the soul, there seems little else left but the mud and mire of corruption. But what makes the grand tidal wave itself move? There is a cause for that also. It is drawn up by, and obeys the attraction of the sun. And is not this true spiritually of the grand tidal wave of faith in the soul? Is it not drawn up by the Sun of righteousness, as the natural sun draws up the wave of the ocean, and makes it ebb and flow? And when that glorious Sun ceases to draw up faith, does it not ebb and sensibly sink in the soul, as the natural sea sinks when the sun recedes from it?

April 3

*"In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble." Proverbs 15:6*

How different is the estimate that faith makes of riches, honours, and comforts from that made by the world and the flesh! The world has no idea of riches but such as consist in gold and silver, in houses, lands, or other tangible property; no thought of honour, but such as man has to bestow; and no notion of comfort, except in "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." But the soul that is anointed by an "unction from the Holy One," takes a different estimate of these matters, and feels that the only true riches are those of God's grace in the heart, that the only real honour is that which cometh from God, and that the only solid comfort is that which is imparted by the Holy Ghost to a broken and contrite spirit. Now, just in proportion as we have the Spirit of God, shall we take faith's estimate of riches, honour, and comfort; and just so much as we are imbued with the spirit of the world, shall we take the world's estimate of these things.

When the eye of the world looked on the Apostles, it viewed them as a company of poor ignorant men, a set of wild enthusiasts, that travelled about the country preaching concerning one Jesus, who, they said, had been crucified, and was risen from the dead. The natural eye saw no beauty, no power, no glory in the truths they brought forth; nor did it see that the poor perishing tabernacles of these outcast men contained in them a heavenly treasure; and that they would one day shine as the stars for ever and ever, whilst those who despised their word would sink into endless woe. The spirit of the world, and the views that the flesh takes are not altered now. Nature ever remains the same, and can never understand or love the things of eternity; it can only look to, and can only rest upon, the poor perishing things of time and sense. By this test, therefore, we may in a measure try our state. What, for instance, are our daily and hourly feelings about the things of time and sense, and what about the things of eternity? Which of the two press with more power on our minds, which occupy more of our thoughts, which are laid up more warmly in our affections? And just in proportion as the solemn things of eternity, or the things of time and sense, occupy our mind; just so much as our hearts are fixed upon heaven or earth; just so much as we are

living to God, or to ourselves, in the same degree is the strength of our faith, and the depth of the work of grace upon our conscience.

April 4

*"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Hebrews 2:9*

How wondrous that he who, as the Son of God, made angels (Colossians 1:16), should be made inferior to them, and even need and receive their ministering aid and succour (Matthew 4:11). O the depths of humiliation to which the blessed Redeemer stooped, carrying down into their lowest point that pure, spotless, holy humanity which he had assumed into union with his divine Person as the Son of God! And let us ever bear carefully in mind that humiliation is not degradation. Our blessed Lord "humbled himself" by a voluntary act of surpassing grace; and it was no more in the power of men or circumstances to debase him of his glory than of lying witnesses to strip him of his innocency. The spotless purity of his sacred humanity, as in union with his divine nature, and as filled with and upheld by the Holy Ghost, preserved it from degradation in its lowest humiliation. The crown of thorns and the purple robe, the mocking knee of the Roman soldier and the taunting scoff of the Jewish priest, though they called forth the grace, did not tarnish the glory of our suffering Lord. His holy obedience to his Father's will in drinking the bitter cup, his meek dignity amidst the worst of insults, and his calm resignation to all the weight of suffering which God or man laid upon him, all shone forth the more conspicuously under every attempt to dishonour him. It is most sweet and blessed to look down, as it were, into some of those depths of humiliation into which the Redeemer sank, and to see that in the lowest depths of his soul travail, when he was poured out like water, and his heart, broken with grief and sorrow, was melted within him like wax, he was, in the midst of all, the glorious Son of God, though then the suffering Son of man; and that he was the same Jesus yesterday when hanging on the cross, as he is to-day at the right hand of his Father, and will be for ever in the realms of heavenly bliss.

**April 5**

*"And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the son abideth ever." John 8:35*

**It is the irreversible blessing of a son, that he is never to be turned out of the house, that the union between the Parent and the child can never be broken, but that he is to reign with Christ through the ages of one everlasting day. This is a sweet consolation to God's family that "the son abideth ever." How often is a child of God exercised, whether he shall abide for ever, whether he may not draw back to perdition, whether some temptation may not overtake him whereby it shall be made manifest that he is nothing but a deceiver and deceived! But the Lord himself says, "the son abideth ever;" let him be but a babe, let him have but the first beginning of spiritual life in his soul, he "abideth ever;" he has the same interest in the affections of the Father, is a fellow-heir with Christ, and has a title to the same inheritance as those who are of longer standing, and those who are his elders in age.**

**But sometimes the son may get tired of the restraint of his Father's house. God is a wise Parent as well as a kind one. He will treat his children with the most tender kindness and intimacy, but he will never allow them to be guilty of disrespect towards him. Sometimes, then, the sons get weary of their Father's house; they are like the younger son in the parable, when he asked his father to give him his portion, and when he had got it he went away into a far country, away from his father's house, from under his father's roof, and wasted it in riotous living. This is where many of God's children get. There is a restraint in God's house, where the soul is not really blessed with the personal and present enjoyment of gospel truth, and restraint being ever irksome, the vain, idolatrous heart thinks it can derive some pleasure from the world which is not to be found under the roof of the Father. And, therefore, he gradually withdraws his steps from his Father's house, seeks to derive some pleasure from the things of time and sense, erects some idol, and falls down to worship it. But notwithstanding all this, "the son abideth ever." The Father of all his people in Christ does not disinherit his dear children; and though earthly parents may disinherit theirs, God's family are never cast out of the inheritance. The true-born Israelite who had waxed poor and sold himself unto the stranger was to obtain his freedom in the year of jubilee (Leviticus 25:47, 54), and to return**

to his own house and his own estate. So the son who has departed from his Father's house, and sold himself under sin, and become a slave to that cruel taskmaster, when the year of jubilee comes, the year of restoration, and the silver trumpet is blown, shakes off his shackles and fetters, casts aside the livery of servitude, returns to his Father's house, and is received with joy beneath his Father's roof. O what a meeting! The forgiving Parent, and the disobedient child! The Father dissolved in tears of affection; the child dissolved in tears of contrition! Whatever, then, be our wanderings of heart, alienation of affection, and backsliding of soul; however we may depart from God, so far as we are sons, we shall "abide in the house for ever," and possess an "inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those that are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." And it will be our mercy to abide in the house below as members of the family, without departing from it, until reunited to the family above, "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven."

April 6

*"And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?" Luke 18:7*

"Behold, he prayeth," was the word of the Lord to Ananias to convince him that that dreaded persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, had been quickened by the Spirit. And what a mercy it is for the quickened soul that the blessed Spirit thus helps his sinking, trembling spirit, puts life and energy into his cries and sighs, holds him up and keeps him steadfast at the throne, and thus enables him to persevere with his earnest suings for mercy, mingles faith with his petitions, and himself most graciously and kindly intercedes within him and for him with groanings which cannot be uttered. This is "praying with the spirit" (1 Cor. 14:15) and "in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20). This is pouring out the heart before God (Psalm 62:8), pouring out the soul before the Lord (1 Sam. 1:15); and by this free discharge of the contents of an almost bursting heart, sensible relief is given to the burdened spirit. By this special mark, the convictions of a quickened soul are distinguished from the pangs of guilt and remorse which are sometimes aroused in the natural conscience. Cain said, "My punishment is greater than I can bear," but there was neither

repentance nor prayer in his heart; for "he went out from the presence of the Lord"—the very presence which the living soul is seeking to reach and be found in, and into which the Spirit brings him (Eph. 2:18). Saul was "sore distressed," when God answered him, "neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets," but he goes to the witch of Endor, and in the end falls upon his own sword. Judas repented himself of his accursed treachery, but went and hanged himself. No prayer, no supplication was in either of their hearts. So it is prophesied that men shall gnaw their tongues for pain, and yet shall blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and not repent of their deeds (Rev. 16:10, 11). But the elect cry day and night unto God; and their prayers, perfumed with the incense of their all-prevailing Intercessor at the right hand of the Father, enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

April 7

*"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*

A view of Christ's glory and a foretaste of the bliss and blessedness it communicates has a transforming effect upon the soul. We are naturally proud, covetous, and worldly, often led aside by, and grievously entangled in various lusts and passions, prone to evil, averse to good, easily elated by prosperity, soon dejected by adversity, peevish under trials, rebellious under heavy strokes, unthankful for daily mercies of food and raiment, and in other ways ever manifesting our base original. To be brought from under the power of these abounding evils, and be made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," we need to be "transformed by the renewing of our mind," and conformed to the image of Christ. Now this can only be by beholding his glory by faith, as the Apostle speaks, "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." It is this believing view of the glory of Christ which supports under heavy trials, producing meekness and resignation to the will of God. We are, therefore, bidden to "consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds;" and to "run with patience the

race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." Sicknesses, too, sometimes befall us, when we need special support; the sands of our time are fast running out, and there is no turning the glass; our "days are passing away as the swift ships, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey;" and death and eternity are fast hastening on. When the body sinks under a load of pain and disease, and all sources of happiness and enjoyment from health and strength are cut off; when flesh and heart fail, and the eye-strings are breaking in death, what can support the soul or bear it safe through Jordan's swelling flood, but those discoveries of the glory of Christ that shall make it sick of earth, sin and self, and willing to lay the poor body in the grave, that it may be for ever ravished with his glory and his love? Thus we see how the glory of Christ is not only in heaven the unspeakable delight of the saints, whose glorified souls and bodies will then bear "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" but here on earth, in their days of tribulation and sorrow, this same glory, as revealed to their hearts, supports and upholds their steps, draws them out of the world, delivers them from the power of sin, gives them union and communion with Christ, conforms them to his image, comforts them in death, and lands them in glory. We thus see Christ, like the sun, not only illuminating all heaven with his glory, the delight of the Father, the joy of the spirits of just men made perfect, and the adoration of all the angelic host, but irradiating also the path of the just on earth, casting his blessed beams on all their troubles and sorrows, and lighting up the way wherein they follow their Lord from the suffering cross to the triumphant crown.

**April 8**

*"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching there unto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Ephesians 6:18*

If we do not continually "pray in the Spirit," our limbs will, so to speak, shrink, and our armour drop off. The knights of old exercised themselves every day in their full armour, or they could not have borne it, nor used their weapons with dexterity and strength. So must the Christian warrior, by prayer and supplication, "exercise himself unto godliness." To this must be added, *"watching thereunto."* To watch for the answer; to wait for the appearing of the Lord "more than they that watch for the

morning." And this, "*with all perseverance,*" never giving it up, taking no denial, begging of the Lord again and again, and wrestling with him till he appear to bless, visit, and shine upon the soul. O how this heavenly recipe keeps every part of the armour bright, and the soldier active and expert in its use! The armour indeed of itself, as being from heaven, gets neither dull nor rusty. It is *we* who get sluggish in its use. But, to our apprehension, faith and prayer make it glitter more brightly. How, for instance, "the prayer of faith" brightens up the girdle of truth, and makes it glitter and shine! How it burnishes the breast-plate, and makes it fit tightly round the bosom! How it makes the helmet glitter in the sun, and its noble plumes to wave in all their native lustre! How it beats out every dint the shield may have received from the fiery darts, and fits it for fresh encounters! And how it sharpens "the sword of the Spirit," gives it a brighter polish, and nerves the arm to wield it with renewed activity and vigour! Oh, this is the secret of all true victory! All is, all must be well, when we are in a prayerful, meditative, watching state; and all is ill, when this heavenly recipe is neglected; when the hands droop, and the knees faint, and prayer seems dead and motionless in the breast. Let there be in the soul an abiding spirit of prayer, and victory is sure. Satan has little power against the soul that has an abiding spirit of prayer, and is "watching thereunto with all perseverance." But without this spirit of prayer, we are a prey to all his temptations, and can neither take, wear, nor use the only armour against them.

April 9

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* Matthew 5:16

To glorify God is the highest ambition of angels. The brightest seraph before the throne has no higher aim, no greater happiness, than to bring glory to his name. And yet a poor sinner on earth may glorify God as much, and in some way more, than the brightest angel in the courts of eternal bliss. What different views the eyes of God and the eyes of men take of events passing on the earth. What glory is brought to God by all the victories gained by one country over another? I have thought sometimes that a poor old man, or feeble, decrepit woman, lying on a workhouse pallet, fighting with sin, self and Satan, yet enabled amidst all to look to the Lord Jesus, and by a word from his lips overcoming death and

hell, though when dead thrust into an elm coffin, to rot in a pauper's grave, brings more glory to God than all the exploits of Nelson or Wellington, and that such victories are more glorious than those of Waterloo or Trafalgar. It is true that the parish officers will not proclaim such a victory; nor will bells ring or cannons roar at such exploits; but the God of heaven and earth may get more glory from such a despised creature, than from all the generals and admirals who have ever drawn up armies in battle, or sunk hostile fleets beneath the wave. Truly does the Lord say, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." It is indeed marvellous that glory should be brought to his great name by what his people do and suffer upon earth; that their feeble attempts to believe, to love, and to hope in him; to speak well of his name; and to adorn his doctrine in their life and conversation, should redound to his honour and praise. Wondrous indeed is it that a poor, insignificant worm, whom perhaps his fellow-mortal will scarcely deign to look at, or passes by with a shrug of contempt, should add glory to the great God that inhabiteth eternity, before whom the highest angels and brightest seraphs bow with holy adoration! Well may we say, "What are all the glorious exploits that men are so proud of, compared with the tribute of glory rendered to God by his suffering saints?" You may feel yourself one of the poorest, vilest, neediest worms of earth; and yet if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with a living faith, hope in his mercy, love his dear name, and in your vocation adorn his doctrine by a godly, consistent life, you are privileged above princes and nobles, yes, even above crowned heads, and all the glory of man, because you are bringing glory to God. It matters not what may be your station in life. You may be a servant, master, wife, husband, child; your rank and station may be high or low; but whatever it be, still in it you may bring glory to God. If a servant, by obedience, cleanliness, industry, and attention to the directions of your master or mistress. If a master or mistress, by kindness and liberality to your dependents, and doing all that you can to render the yoke of servitude light. There is not a single Christian who may not glorify God, though in worldly circumstances he be, or seem to be, totally insignificant. Glory is brought to God by those who live and walk in his fear, and more sometimes by the poor than by the rich. Only adorn the doctrine of God in all things, and you will bring glory to God in all things.

April 10

*"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." John 10:1*

Here are three marks whereby you may know whether you have entered by faith into the sheepfold. First, have you any evidence of being saved in the Lord Jesus Christ with an everlasting salvation? Secondly, have you felt any blessed and holy freedom and liberty of going in and coming out of the heavenly sheepfold? Thirdly, have you found pasture? Sometimes finding pasture in the ordinances of God's house; sometimes in the sacred truths of the gospel, as you read or hear the word of truth; and especially in partaking by faith of the flesh and blood of the Lamb.

But there may be those who are in this spot. They see plainly that Christ is the door, and are fully convinced there is no other way of entrance into the fold but by him; and yet they do not seem to have entered personally and experimentally in, so as to enjoy for themselves its privileges and blessings. But have you never entered in by hope and expectation? And how could you enter in by expectation unless something in you, which you could not give yourself, were expecting a blessing from God; unless you possessed a principle of living faith, whereby, though at present weak and feeble, you yet seem to realise the sweetness of the blessings held forth in the gospel? How different is this state of soul experience from climbing daringly and presumptuously over the wall, or taking the ladder of self-righteousness, and thus helping yourself in by some other way than the door. How much better to be lying in humility at the gate, looking to Jesus and longing to enter in, begging of him to open the door and give you admission, than to make yourself a daring and rash intruder. How different is this humble, dependent, and self-abased state of soul from self-righteousness on the one hand, and bold presumption on the other. There is everything to encourage the weak and feeble part of the flock who long to enter into the fold. To them Jesus opens his arms wide, and says in their heart and ears, "'I am the door:' enter through me, and by no other way. There is access to God by me, for 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' If ye enter in by me, ye shall be saved from all you justly dread and fear, both as regards this life and the life to come. Ye shall go freely in and freely out, and find pasture; lying down and feeding on my divine Person, flesh, and blood on earth, as the prelude and

foretaste of enjoying me for ever in the blissful courts of heaven above."

April 11

*"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."* Isaiah 7:14

The Deity of the Son of God shines all through the sacred page. It is the grand cardinal point, on which all the doctrines of grace turn; and he that is unsound there, is unsound everywhere. The Godhead of Christ does not rest upon a few texts of Scripture, but it shines all through the Scripture; it is the light of the Scripture, and it is the life of the Scripture. Take away the Deity of Jesus out of the Scripture, and you would do the same thing spiritually as though you blotted the sun out of the sky naturally; the sacred page would be one black darkness. But the Person of Jesus is not Deity only. No man can see God and live; we could not bear to look upon pure Deity. And therefore the Son of God has taken into union with himself our nature; he has "taken upon him the seed of Abraham"—that "holy thing" which was begotten by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and there united to the second Person of the glorious Trinity, that Godhead and manhood might form one glorious Person, Immanuel, God with us. Now to the eye of faith there is the greatest beauty and glory in Christ's humanity. The enlightened soul views Deity shining through the manhood; and when it sees Jesus "going about, doing good," when it hears the words that dropped from his gracious lips, when it views him by the eye of faith, bleeding, suffering, agonising, and dying, it sees the Godhead in all these acts, upholding and shining through the manhood. And it is this union of the two natures in one glorious Person, that fills the heart that receives it in the faith of it and in the love of it with a measure of pure affection.

Here, then, the Church has a view of the glorious Person of Jesus; and she falls in love with him. There is something in supernatural beauty which kindles spiritual affection, as there is something in natural beauty which kindles natural affection. When the quickened soul sees supernatural beauty, it immediately falls in love with it. The spiritual affections centre in spiritual beauty. And thus, when the redeemed and regenerated soul sees the

glorious Person of Christ, God-man, Immanuel, God with us, and has a taste and sense of his love, the blessed Spirit thereby kindles in it spiritual affection, and attracts it with these "cords of love and bands of a man."

April 12

*"As the truth is in Jesus."* Ephesians 4:21

Without truth there is no *regeneration*; for it is by "the word of truth" that we are begotten and born again (James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23). Without truth there is no *justification*; for we are justified by faith, which faith consists in crediting God's truth, and so gives peace with God. Without the truth there is no *sanctification*; for the Lord himself says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." And without the truth there is no *salvation*; for "God hath chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

And as the truth is the instrumental cause of all these blessings, the divinely-appointed means whereby they become manifested mercies, so truth enters into and is received by all the *graces* of the Spirit as they come forth into living exercise. Thus, without the truth, there is no *faith*; for the work of faith is to believe the truth. What is all the difference between faith and delusion? That faith believes God's truth, and delusion credits Satan's lies. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Without truth there is no *hope*; for the province of hope is to anchor in the truth. "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; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." The two immutable things in which hope anchors are God's word and God's truth; in other words, the pledged veracity and faithfulness of him who cannot lie. This made holy David say, "I have hoped in thy word." They that go down to the pit," said good king Hezekiah, "cannot hope for thy truth." No; it is "the living, the living who praise thee as I do this day." And it is "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures," that is, the consolation which the truth of God

revealed in the Scriptures affords, "that we have hope." Without truth there is no *love*, for it is by "the love of the truth" that the saved are distinguished from the lost. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." And it is only as we speak "the truth in love that we grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Thus "the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth;" and this in the Person of the Son of God, for "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

April 13

*"Fools die for want of wisdom."* Proverbs 10:21

There is such a connection between true wisdom, which is "a knowledge of the holy" (Prov. 30:3), and the fear of the Lord, and such a connection between ignorance of the Lord and sin, that saved saints are called "wise," and lost sinners are called "fools," not only in the Old Testament, as continually in the Proverbs, but in the New. Many of the Lord's people look with suspicion upon knowledge, from not seeing clearly the vast distinction between the spiritual, experimental knowledge for which we are now contending, and what is called "head knowledge." They see that a man may have a well-furnished head and a graceless heart, that he may understand "all mysteries and all knowledge," and yet be "nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2); and as some of these all-knowing professors are the basest characters that can infest the churches of truth, those who really fear the Lord stand not only in doubt of them, but of all the knowledge possessed by them. But put it in a different form; ask the people of God whether there is not such a divine reality, such a heavenly blessing, as being "taught of God" (John 6:45); having "an unction from the Holy One, whereby we know all things" (1 John 2:20): knowing the truth for oneself, and finding it maketh free (John 8:32); whether there is not a "counting of all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord," and a stretching forth of the desires of the soul to "know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings;" whether there is not "a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins" (Luke 1:77); "a knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6); a being "filled with the knowledge of his will" (Col. 1:9); an "increasing

in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10); "a growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18);—ask the living family of God whether there be not such a knowledge as this, and if this knowledge is not the very pith and marrow, the very sum and substance of vital godliness, and they will with one voice say, "It is."

April 14

*"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." John 15:3*

What God does, he does by the word of his grace and the influences which accompany that word; for ever bear in mind that God does nothing but by his word. The sanctifying, cleansing effects therefore which attend the word of his grace under the operations of the Spirit are spoken of as "the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26). "The word" is the written Scripture; the "water" is the power of the Holy Ghost; the "washing" is the cleansing effect of the application of the word. Let me ask you this question, if you doubt my words, How are we to get the burden and guilt of our sins off our conscience, the defilement of mind which sin produces, the bondage of spirit which sin creates, the fears and alarm of the soul which sin works? You will say, "By believing in Jesus Christ, for being justified by faith we have peace with God." That is true; but how can we believe in Jesus Christ, so as to find this peace? By the word of his grace, accompanied by the special influence, unction, and dew of the Holy Ghost revealing and making known pardon and acceptance with God, which is therefore spoken of as "the washing of water by the word." For as water washes the body, so the word of truth washes the soul, by washing away the guilt and filth and defilement of sin. As the blessed Lord said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." And again, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Thus as water when applied cleanses the body from natural filth, so does the word of promise, the word of truth, the word of salvation revealing and making known the Saviour's precious blood, cleanse the conscience from the guilt, filth, and defilement of sin.

April 15

*"But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." Ephesians 5:13*

Feeling is the first evidence of supernatural life; a feeling compounded of two distinct sensations, one referring to God, and the other referring to self. The same ray of light has manifested two opposite things, "for that which maketh manifest is light;" and the sinner sees at one and the same moment God and self, justice and guilt, power and helplessness, a holy law and a broken commandment, eternity and time, the purity of the Creator and the filthiness of the creature. And these things he sees, not merely as declared in the Bible, but as revealed in himself as personal realities, involving all his happiness or all his misery in time and in eternity. Thus it is with him as though a new existence had been communicated, and as if for the first time he had found there was a God. One ray of supernatural light, penetrating through the veil spread over the heart, has revealed that terrible secret—a just God, who will by no means clear the guilty. This piercing ray has torn away the bed too short, and stripped off the covering too narrow. A sudden, peculiar conviction has rushed into the soul. One absorbing feeling has seized fast hold of it, and well-nigh banished every other. "There is a God, and I am a sinner before him," is written upon the heart by the same divine finger that traced those fatal letters on the palace wall of the king of Babylon, which made the joints of his loins to be loosed, and his knees to smite one against another (Dan. 5:5, 6). "What shall I do? Where shall I go? What will become of me? Mercy, O God! Mercy, mercy! I am lost, ruined, undone! Fool, madman, wretch, monster that I have been! I have ruined my soul. O my sins, my sins! O eternity, eternity!" Such and similar cries and groans, though differing in depth and intensity, go up out of the new-born soul well-nigh day and night at the first discovery of God and of itself. These feelings have taken such complete possession of the heart that it can find no rest except in calling upon God. This is the first pushing of the young bud through the bark, the first formation of the green shoot, wrapped up as yet in its leaves, and not opened to view. These are the first pangs and throes of the new birth, before the tidings are brought, "A manchild is born." "What shall I do to be saved?" cried the jailer. "God be merciful to me a sinner!" exclaimed the publican. "Woe is me, for I am undone!" burst forth from the lips of Isaiah.

April 16

***"Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel?"*** Jeremiah 15:12

You see that the Lord, when he is pointing out the trials his people are passing through, compares them to "iron." He does not diminish their weight; he does not at all lower their oppressive tendency. But, then, in order to administer a suitable remedy to Jeremiah's soul, he brings forward something much stronger. "Shall iron," he says, "break the northern iron and the steel?" No surely; the "northern iron and the steel" shall break through that. The common iron never can break through the northern iron, which is a metal of such a far superior nature; still less prevail against that keen well-tempered steel which can cut through everything it touches.

Now if your hearts are exercised with iron sorrows, temptations, trials, and perplexities, I am sure you will want the almighty power of God in your souls to cut them asunder. And God can do it. Are you a poor persecuted believer? God can cut down in a moment that enemy who is persecuting you. Are you tempted of Satan? He in a moment can cut his fiery darts asunder. Are you passing through a severe trial? By the application of some precious promise the Lord can in a moment cut the trial asunder. Are you entangled in some grievous snare that you feel and cry out under night and day, and yet are unable to extricate yourself? The Lord can in a moment, by the application of his precious word to your soul, cut that snare asunder. He has but to bring against it "the northern iron and the steel," and it is done in a moment. How was it with Jeremiah? Did not he say, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart?" Why? Because keen persecutions, sharp trials, severe temptations had given him an appetite; *that* was the reason why the "word was found." He fell upon it as a hungry man upon a crust. It was sweet to his soul, because it brought with it a precious deliverance from the temptations and the sorrows his soul was groaning under.

Thus, we see that in proportion as we feel the iron nature of trials and sorrows, shall we experience "the northern iron and the steel" of God's almighty power and grace to deliver. Happy are

the people that are in such a case! Happy the people that have this Lord for their manifested God!

April 17

*"Lead me in thy truth, and teach me."* Psalm 25:5

By what steps do we usually embrace the truth as it is in Jesus? First of all, for the most part, we receive it *as a doctrine*; the judgment being more or less informed, the eyes of the understanding being enlightened to see it in the word. The doctrine for some time may be floating in our mind; but after a time, as the Lord leads us more into a knowledge of our own hearts, and into a deeper feeling of our necessities, he lets down the truth from our head into the heart, and it then becomes a *truth*. It is very sweet to have a doctrine turned into a truth. But after a time, we want something more than a truth; we want it *as a blessing*. When we are brought into pressing straits and severe trials, we need the doctrines which we first received into our minds as truths, now to be blessed by a divine application to our souls. Thus, what we first knew in our judgments as *a doctrine*, is afterwards received in our conscience as *a truth*, and then is applied to our very heart of hearts as a *blessing*; and so we find God's word, and eat it, to the joy and rejoicing of our souls.

Thus it is with respect to Christ's ascension. We receive it first as *a doctrine*, as a great and glorious part of the scheme of salvation; then we begin to see, as we are led, more and more into a knowledge of it, what a wonderful *truth* it is, to have a Mediator at the right hand of God; to have an Intercessor pleading by the efficacy of his atoning blood and justifying righteousness, for poor, needy, guilty souls. This draws out the faith, hope, and love of the heart to this ascended and interceding Mediator; and then, as the Lord the Spirit reveals the virtue and efficacy of this glorious Mediator in the guilty conscience, the truth becomes a rich, unctuous, and savoury *blessing*. So that so far from experience casting out the doctrines of grace, it only leads the soul into a vital acquaintance with them; and we might as well think of saving our lives by drawing the bones out of our body, as of blessing our souls by casting out the doctrines of grace; yea, we daily feel more deeply the need of the doctrines being brought into our heart by divine power; we feel them more to be the stay and

support of our soul, as my arm when raised is stayed and supported by the bones which God has placed there.

April 18

*"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."* James 1:18

If we look at the work of the Spirit on the heart, we shall see how, in all his sacred dealings and gracious movements, he invariably employs truth as his grand instrument. Does he pierce and wound? It is by the truth; for the "sword of the Spirit is the word of God," and that we know is "the word of truth." If he mercifully heal, if he kindly bless, it is still by means of truth; for the promise is, "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." And when he thus comes, it is as a Comforter, according to those gracious words, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

In fact, if we look at the new man of grace that the blessed Spirit begets and brings forth in the heart, we shall see that all his *members* and *faculties* are formed and adapted to a living reception of the truth. As the eye is adapted to light; as the ear to sound; as the lungs to the pure air that fills them with every breath; as the heart to the vital blood which it propels through every bounding artery, so is the new man of grace fitted and adapted to the truth of God. And as these vital organs perform their peculiar functions only as they receive the impressions which these external agents produce upon them, so the organs of the new man of grace only act as truth is impressed upon them by the power of the blessed Spirit. Has, then, the new man of grace *eyes*? It is to see the truth (Eph. 1:18, 19). Has he *ears*? It is to hear the truth (Isa. 55:3; Luke 9:44). Has he *hands*? It is to lay hold of and embrace the truth (Prov. 4:13; Isa. 27:5; Heb. 6:18). Has he *feet*? It is that he may walk in the truth (Psa. 119:45; Luke 1:6; 3 John 4). Has he a *mouth*? "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." It is that he may feed upon the truth, the living truth, yea, upon His flesh who is truth itself (John 6:35, 14:6).

April 19

*"I have poured out my soul before the Lord." 1 Samuel 1:15*

How much there is in that expression pouring out the soul before the Lord! Shall I use a familiar figure to illustrate it, as sometimes familiar figures are best adapted to that purpose? Look at a sack of corn; you know, when the mouth of the sack is tied up, there is no pouring out its contents; but let the sack be opened and thrown down, and then its contents are immediately poured out, and the rich grain falls upon the floor. Our hearts are sometimes like the sack with the mouth tied; there are desires, pantings, and longings; there are wants, and these urgently felt; but we cannot give them utterance. As we read, "I opened my mouth and panted." But the Lord in mercy, at times, opens the mouth; and then when the mouth is opened, the heart can pour out its desires, just as the rich grain is poured out of a sack when the mouth is untied. But must not the sack be full before the grain is poured out? If there are but a few grains at the bottom, or only half-a-pint of wheat in one corner of the sack, though you open the mouth, there is no pouring out of the rich grain. So with our hearts. If the heart be not full; if there be no vehement desires struggling for utterance, we may open the mouth, but there is no pouring it out in pantings and longings. If you want a scriptural instance of what it is to pour out the soul before the Lord, read the first chapter of the first book of Samuel, where you will find that gracious woman Hannah, so agitated, and so discovering the state of her mind by the convulsive movements of her frame, that the high priest charged her with being drunken; but though her heart was so full that her lips quivered, and her very features betrayed what was passing within, yet she meekly replied to his chiding speech, when he bade her to put away her wine, "No, my Lord; I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord." That was something like prayer. And we know what a blessed answer the Lord gave her, and how the Holy Ghost has recorded her triumphal song.

April 20

***"O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee." 2 Chronicles 20:12***

Jehoshaphat did not know what to do; he was altogether at his wit's end; and yet he took the wisest course a man could take. This is the beauty of it; that when we are fools, then we are wise; when we are weak, then we are strong; when we know not what to do, then we do the only right thing. O had Jehoshaphat taken any other course; had he collected an army, sent through Judah, raised troops and forged swords and spears he would certainly have been defeated! But not knowing what to do, he did the very thing he should do. *"Our eyes are upon thee."* "Thou must fight our battles; thou must take the matter into thy own hands. Our eyes are upon thee, waiting upon thee, looking up, and hoping in thee; believing in thy holy name, expecting help from thee, from whom alone help can come." But this is painful work to be brought to this point, "Our eyes are upon thee," implying there is no use looking to any other quarter. It assumes that the soul has looked, and looked, and looked elsewhere in vain, and then fixed its eyes upon God as knowing that from him alone all help must come. This I believe to be the distinctive mark of a Christian, that his eyes are upon God. On his bed by night; in his room by day; in business or at market, when his soul is in trouble, cast down, and perplexed, his eyes are upon God. From him alone all help must come; none else can reach his case. All other but the help of God is ineffectual; it leaves him where it found him; it does him no good. We are never safe except our eyes are upon God. Let our eyes be upon him, we can walk safely; let our eyes be upon the creature, we are pretty sure to slip and stumble.

**April 21**

***"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 1:30, 31***

***Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*** God has made Christ all these to his people. He has set him up as their eternal Head, made him the Bridegroom of their souls, that out of his fulness they may all receive. Then, just in proportion as they

learn these two lessons—what *they* are, and what *he* is—they receive him into their hearts actually what he is to them in the purpose of God. Am I a fool? Do I feel it and know it? Have I had painful experience of it, so that all my creature wisdom is turned into one mass of foolishness? Do I catch by the eye of faith a view of the risen Mediator, "Immanuel, God with us," and see what he is made of God to us? The moment my eye sees him as "wisdom," that moment a measure of divine wisdom flows into my conscience. Am I polluted and defiled throughout? Have I no righteousness of my own? Is all my obedience imperfect? Am I unable to fulfil the requirements of God's holy law? If once I catch by the eye of faith this glorious truth, through him who is the truth, that Jesus Christ is of God made unto me "righteousness"—the moment I see that by the eye of faith, that moment a measure of imparted righteousness flows into my heart. Am I an unholy, depraved, filthy wretch? Does corruption work in my heart? The moment I catch by the eye of faith Jesus made unto me of God "sanctification," that moment a measure of sanctification comes into my heart, drawing up holy affections, casting out the love of the world, curbing my reigning lusts, and bringing my soul into submission at his footstool. Am I a poor captive, entangled by Satan, by the world, and my own evil heart? The moment that I catch this glorious view, that Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father is made unto me "redemption"—if I can believe that he is made such for me, that I have a standing in him, and a union with him, so that he is my redemption—that moment a measure of deliverance comes into my soul, and redemption imputed becomes redemption imparted; the soul receives then internally what Christ has done externally. In a word, when Christ is received as "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," he becomes all these in vital manifestation.

April 22

*"Beloved, 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 3:2*

What Christ is to the Church, what the Church is to Christ, can never be really known till time gives place to eternity, faith to sight, and hope to enjoyment. Nor even *then*, however beyond all

present conception the powers and faculties of the glorified souls and bodies of the saints may be expanded, however conformed to the glorious image of Christ, or however ravished with the discoveries of his glory and the sight of him as he is in one unclouded day,—no, not even then, will the utmost stretch of creature love, or highest refinement of creature intellect, wholly embrace or fully comprehend that love of Christ, which, as in time so in eternity, "passeth knowledge," as being in itself essentially incomprehensible, because infinite and divine. Who can calculate the amount of light and heat that dwell in, and are given forth by the sun that shines so gloriously in the noonday sky? We see, we feel, we enjoy its bright beams; but who can number the millions of millions of rays that it casts forth upon all the surface of the earth, diffusing light, heat, and fertility to every part? If the creature be so great, glorious and incomprehensible, how much more great, glorious and incomprehensible must be its divine Creator! The Scripture testimony of the saints in glory is that "when Christ shall appear, they shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is;" that they shall then see the Lord "face to face, and know even as also they are known;" that their "vile body shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body;" that they shall be "conformed to his image," and "be satisfied when they awake with his likeness;" that they shall be "before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple;" that "their sun shall no more go down, for the Lord shall be their everlasting light;" that they shall have "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" and shall "shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever." But, with all this unspeakable bliss and glory, there must be in infinite Deity unfathomable depths which no creature, however highly exalted, can ever sound; heights which no finite, dependent being can ever scan. God became man, but man never can become God. He fully knows us, but we never can fully know him, for even in eternity, as in time, it may be said to the creature, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." But if, as we believe, eternity itself can never fully or entirely reveal the heights and depths of the love of a Triune God, how little can be known of it in a time state! and yet that little is the only balm for all sorrow, the only foundation of solid rest and peace.

**April 23**

*"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."*  
**Proverbs 17:17**

If I may use the expression, we want not a dead but a living, not an absent but a present, not a once but a now Jesus; we want a friend at the right hand of God at the present moment; an omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent and yet pitiful and loving Mediator between God and us; an interceding High Priest, Surety, and Representative in our nature in the courts of heaven, who can shew mercy and compassion to us now upon earth:

**"Whose heart is made of tenderness,  
Whose bowels melt with love."**

Our wants make us feel this. Our sins and sorrows give us perpetual errands to the throne. This vale of tears is ever before our eyes, and thorns and briars are perpetually springing up in it that rend and tear our flesh. We want a real friend. Have you not sometimes tossed to and fro upon your weary couch, and almost cried aloud, "O that I had a friend!" You may have received cruel blows from one whom you regarded as a real friend; but you have been cruelly deceived. You feel now you have no one to take care of you or love you, and whom you can love again; and your heart sighs for a friend who shall be a friend indeed. The widow, the orphan, the friendless, the deserted one, all keenly and deeply feel this. But if grace has touched your heart, you feel that though all men forsake you, there is the Friend of sinners, a Brother born for adversity, a Friend who loveth at all times, who will never leave or forsake you. But we want this friend to be almighty, for no other can suit our case: he must be a divine Friend. For who but God can see us wherever we are? What but a divine eye can read our thoughts? What but a divine ear can hear our petitions? And what but a divine hand can stretch itself forth and deliver? Thus the Deity of Christ is no dry, barren speculation, no mere Bible truth, but an experience wrought powerfully into a believer's inmost soul. Happy soul! happy season! when you can say with the Church, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem" (Song Sol. 5:16). Thus the very wants of the soul instinctively teach us that a friend, to be a friend, must be a heavenly friend; that his heart and hand must be divine, or they are not the heart and hand for us. This Friend, whose bitterest reproach on earth that he "was the Friend of sinners," is his

highest glory in heaven, is the blessed Jesus, our great High Priest in the courts above. We find him at times to be very merciful, very pitiful, and very compassionate. And I am sure that we need all the compassion of his loving breast; for we are continually in states of mind when nothing but his pure mercy can suit, when nothing but his rich and boundless compassion is adapted to our case.

April 24

*"Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also."* John 14:19

Communion with Christ rests on three things—seeing him by faith, living upon his life, and experiencing his manifested presence. But all these three things depend on his resurrection and a knowledge of its power. As risen from the dead, the saints see him; as risen from the dead, they live a life of faith upon him; as risen from the dead, he manifests himself unto them; and as life and feeling spring up in their souls from sweet communion with him, the power of his resurrection becomes manifest in them.

This communion, therefore, with the Lord Jesus as a risen Head all the reconciled and justified saints of God are pressing forward after, according to the measure of their grace and the life and power of God in their soul. It is indeed often sadly interrupted and grievously broken through by the sin that dwelleth in us. But the principle is there, for that principle is life; and life is the privilege, the possession, and the distinction of the children of God. You need none to assure you that Jesus is risen from the dead if he manifests himself to your soul. You want no evidence that you are a sheep if you have heard and know his voice. So you may say, "Jesus is risen, for I have seen him; Jesus is risen, for I have heard him; Jesus is risen, for I live upon him." Communion with Jesus is the life of religion, and indeed without it religion is but an empty name. If without him we can do nothing; if he is our life, our risen covenant Head, our Advocate with the Father, our Husband, our Friend, our Brother, how are we to draw sap out of his fulness, as the branch from the vine, or to know him personally and experimentally in any one of his endearing relationships, unless by continual communion with him on his throne of grace? In fact, this is the grand distinguishing point

between the living and the dead, between the true child of God and the mere professor, that the one has real union and communion with a risen Jesus, and the other is satisfied with a form of godliness. Every quickened soul is made to feel after the power of God, after communion from above, after pardon and peace, after visitations of mercy and grace; and when he has had a view of Christ by faith, and some revelation of his Person and work, grace and glory, nothing afterwards can ever really satisfy him but that inward communion of spirit with Jesus whereby the Lord and he become one; "for he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

April 25

*"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: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Isaiah 6:5*

God has described his Zion as "full of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." When the Church of God fell in Adam, she fell with a crash which broke every bone and bruised her flesh with wounds which are ulcerated from top to toe. Her understanding, her conscience, and her affections were all fearfully maimed. The first was blinded, the second stupified, and the third alienated. Every mental faculty thus became perverted and distorted. As in a ship-wrecked vessel the water runs in through every leak, so when Adam fell upon the lee-shore of sin and temptation, and made shipwreck of the image of God in which he was created, sin rushed into every faculty of body and soul, and penetrated into the inmost recesses of his being. Or to use another figure; as when a man is bitten by a poisonous serpent, the venom courses through every artery and vein, and he dies a corrupted mass from head to foot, so did the poison fang of sin penetrate into Adam's inmost soul and body, and infect him with its venom from the sole to the crown. But the fearful havoc which sin has made is never seen nor felt till the soul is quickened into spiritual life. Oh, what work does sin then make in the conscience, when it is opened up by the Spirit of God! Whatever superficial or shallow views we may have had of sin before, it is only as its desperate and malignant character is opened up by the Holy Spirit that it is really seen, felt, grieved under, and mourned over as indeed a most dreadful and fearful reality. It is this sword of the Spirit which cuts and

wounds; it is this entrance of life and light that gashes the conscience; it is this divine work which lacerates the heart and inflicts those deep wounds which nothing but the "balm in Gilead" can heal. And not only is a poor convinced sinner cut in his conscience, inwardly lacerated and gashed by sin as thus opened up by the Spirit of God, but, as the prophet speaks, "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." He is thus labouring under a complication of diseases. Every thought, word, and action is polluted by sin. Every mental faculty is depraved. The will chooses evil; the affections cleave to earthly things; the memory, like a broken sieve, retains the bad and lets fall the good; the judgment, like a bribed or drunken juryman, pronounces heedless or wrong decisions; and the conscience, like an opium-eater, lies asleep and drugged in stupified silence. This miserable state, brought upon us and into us by the fall, all the people of God must in some measure feel. It is of no use mincing the matter and saying that a person can be saved by the grace of God and the blood of Christ, without knowing anything of the depth of misery and wretchedness into which he is sunk as the fallen child of a fallen sire. We must go down into the depths of the fall to know what our hearts are and what they are capable of; we must have the keen knife of God to cut deep gashes in our conscience and lay bare the evil that lies so deeply imbedded in our carnal mind, before we can enter into and experience the beauty and blessedness of salvation by grace.

April 26

*"We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." 2 Corinthians 4:13*

There is a distinction to be made between faith and the spirit of faith. The spirit of faith is faith in exercise. Faith sometimes is like a day in which there is no wind blowing. It is so calm, that there scarcely appears to be any air stirring to move a leaf. But after a time a gentle breeze comes and blows over the earth. Thus it is with faith and the spirit of faith. Faith in repose is like the calm air of a summer's day, when there is nothing moving or stirring; faith acting, faith in exercise, is like the same air in the gentle breeze which makes itself sensibly felt. If God has given me faith, that faith is never lost out of my breast. If once a believer, I

always am a believer; for if I could cease to believe, I should cease to be a child of God; I should lose salvation out of my heart, for I am saved by grace through faith. And yet there may be many times and seasons when I may not have much of the spirit of faith. Faith may be very inactive, I will not say stagnant, for that would almost imply death, but still, quiet, calm, sleeping like a bird with its head under its wing. But in due time there is a stirring, a movement, a gracious blowing of the Spirit: "Awake, O north wind, and come, O south; blow upon my garden" (Song Sol. 4:16). "Come from the four winds, O breath" (Ezek. 37:9). This heavenly breath of the Holy Spirit acts upon faith, awakens it, revives and reanimates it, and draws it forth into lively operation. It thus becomes a spirit of faith, acting spiritually and energetically according to its measure. John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10). He was not always in the Spirit by lively action, though he was never out of the Spirit by his extinction. So faith is sometimes, so to speak, in the Spirit; and then its eyes are open, like the eyes of John, to see spiritually what he saw visibly, the Person of Christ, and its ear open to hear inwardly what he heard outwardly, the words of Christ.

**April 27**

*"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." 1 John 5:7*

All God's people are led into a knowledge of the Godhead; not indeed by metaphysical reasoning or subtle arguments addressed to the understanding. The Spirit teaches them, not by reasoning addressed to the head, but by the power and dew of divine Truth resting upon the heart. All God's people learn the doctrine of the Godhead in their souls. They learn, under divine teaching, the authority, justice, majesty, holiness, and in due time feel the love of God the Father. They learn the Godhead of Christ in their souls, by seeing and feeling the power of his blood, as the blood of God (Acts 20:28), and his righteousness as the "righteousness of God." And they learn the Deity and Personality of the Holy Ghost by feeling the divine power of his operations on their hearts. They learn also that he is God, by perceiving how he scrutinizes all their actions, brings to light every secret thought, and applies passages of Scripture to their souls, which none but God could produce, or so suitably apply. And when they are thus led by

divine teaching, into belief of the Godhead, they are brought to know and feel in the depths of conscience, that there are Three, equal in power, will, essence, and glory, and but one Jehovah. Now these truths no man can learn in a saving manner, except by this special teaching. He may know all this, and much more than this, in his understanding and judgment; but a sensible realization of the power of these things in the conscience, a divine melting of the heart under them, with an enlargement of soul, and an experimental enjoyment of them, is the alone fruit of God's teaching resting on him, so as to make him "a new creature" in Christ.

**April 28**

*"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." Hebrews 6:18*

**No: it is utterly impossible for God to lie. The earth may be dissolved, and all creation reduced to chaos before God could lie. He would cease to be God if the faintest breath of a change, or the shadow of a turn should pass over the glorious Godhead. But it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore this holds out strong consolation for those that have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them.**

**And what is the ground of this strong consolation? This is the ground, that God has eternally determined and sworn by himself—that he will save and bless those that have "fled for refuge to the hope set before them in the gospel." This is the foundation of their consolation, this is the ground of their hope, that God has made such and such promises, and confirmed such and such promises by his solemn oath—that those who flee for refuge, and lay hold upon this hope, have an interest in and title to them, and have a manifest assurance of being "heirs of promise."**

**Now, did you ever in your life feel spiritual consolation? If ever you did, it was by laying hold of the hope set before you in the gospel. There was no consolation ever got by looking at fallen self. If ever there was any true consolation, any hope raised up in the heart, any solid comfort, it came out of the actings of living faith, embracing the blood and righteousness of Christ, tasting a**

measure of his preciousness, seeing his glory and beauty, and feeling the heart in some measure dissolved into nothingness at his footstool. Not looking at ourselves, but receiving as empty-sinners out of his fulness; not trusting to ourselves, or our own attainments, but going to Jesus, and receiving something into our hearts out of him. Nothing but this can give us consolation; and the more this is felt, the more this will give us "strong consolation."

April 29

*"The God of all grace."* 1 Peter 5:10

All we have and are, everything we know and feel, comes from "the God of all grace." We have nothing spiritually good in ourselves; all therefore that we have is the free gift of his hand, and comes from the ever-flowing Fountain of mercy and truth. It will be our mercy, then, as the Lord may enable us, to be ever looking to him, not looking to books, not looking to ministers; these are only instruments, and in themselves but poor instruments. The soul must look through all and above all to "the God of all grace." The Lord enable you to examine every truth as it is brought before you by the light of God's Spirit in your heart, to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." And however deeply you may feel the vileness of your heart, remember this, there is "the God of all grace" to go to. If you feel yourself the vilest of sinners, he suits you the more as "the God of all grace." If you feel dark, stupid, and barren, it is the greater reason that you should call on "the God of *all* grace" to revive your drooping soul. If any have lost past enjoyments, and are now "walking in darkness" that may be felt, it is the more reason they should seek "the God of all grace," that he may supply their wants out of Christ's fulness, as the covenant Head. Yea, whatever trials, perplexities, and temptations may harass your soul, it is only to open the way for "the God of all grace" to appear. In whatever affliction you may be, it will be your wisdom, as it will be your mercy, to be looking up unto him, that he may comfort your soul; and, turning from man, as Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, commit your case to him.

April 30

*"For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Romans 7:9*

The Apostle describes in his own case how men are affected toward the law before it enters as a condemning sentence into their heart. "I was alive without the law once." The law was hanging over him as a condemning sentence, as a minister of death, as a messenger of wrath, as a consuming fire, but he felt it not. As with a thunderstorm in the remote distance, he might hear the low mutterings of the thunder which once rolled over Sinai's fiery mount, or might see from far the play of those lightnings which scorched its top. But at present the storm was in the distance. He went about without thinking, or feeling, or fearing, or caring whether the law was his friend or enemy. In fact he rather viewed it as his friend, for he was using it as a friendly help to build up his own righteousness. He had gone to it, but it had not come to him; he knew its letter, but not its spirit; its outward commands, but not its inward demands. He therefore speaks of himself as being "alive without the law," that is, without any knowledge of what it was as a ministration of condemnation and death. But in God's own appointed time and way, "the commandment came;" that is, it came with power into his conscience. He found that he could keep every one of the commandments but the tenth; for according to his apprehension and his interpretation of them, they did not extend beyond an external obedience. But the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," struck into the very depth of his conscience, for it was a prohibition from the mouth of God of the inward lusts of the heart, and that prohibition attended with an awful curse. Under this stroke sin, which before lay seemingly dead in his breast, revived like a sleeping serpent; and what was the consequence? It stung him to death, for he says, "And I died;" for the commandment which was ordained unto life he found to be unto death! Sin could not brook to be thwarted or opposed; it therefore rose up in enmity against God, took advantage of the commandment to rebel against the authority of Jehovah, and its guilt in consequence falling upon his conscience, made tender in the fear of God, slew him. It would not have done so had there been no life in his soul; but there being light to see and life to feel the anger of God revealed in the commandment, when the law came into his conscience as a sentence from a just and holy Jehovah, the effect was to produce a sentence of death in himself.

**And this experience which the Apostle describes as his own is what the law does and ever must do when applied to the conscience by the power of God. It kills, it slays the condemned sinner; it is a sentence of death in a man's own conscience, which only awaits the hour of death and the day of judgment to be carried into execution.**