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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*

August 1

*"Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children."* Psalm 90:16

"Let thy work appear unto thy servants." Creature works we here read nothing of. They had been long ago cut to the very ground. And what had been their deathblow? What had driven the dagger into their very heart? "Days of affliction, and years of evil." These had been their destruction; creature righteousness they had stabbed to the very heart, and let out the life-blood of human merit. There is no petition, then, "Let *our* works appear!" No. These were buried in the grave of corruption; these were swallowed up and lost in "days of affliction, and years of evil." But, "Let *thy* work," the finished work of the Son of God; the obedience of Jesus to the law; the atoning blood which he shed upon Calvary's tree; the work which he undertook, went through, and completed,—"Oh," breathes forth the man of God in earnest cry (and our hearts if they have been taught by the same Spirit will unite in the same strain), "let *thy* work appear unto thy servants!" What! can we not see that work in the word of God? is not *that* sufficient? Can we not hear that work set forth by good men? is not *that* sufficient? Can we not read it as opened up by the pen of ready writers? is not *that* sufficient? Yes; for those who have never seen "days of affliction, and years of evil," amply sufficient; but not for God's exercised children; they have other thoughts and other feelings upon these matters. *They* know what darkness of mind is, the power of unbelief, and creature helplessness; and they know that nothing short of the light of God's countenance, the manifestation of God's mercy, and the teaching and witness of God the Spirit, can make the work of Jesus appear in all its beauty, suitability, and glory; and therefore they can say, "Let *thy* work appear unto thy servants. Give me, Lord, a sight by living faith of the atonement of Jesus. Shew me" (the soul would cry in the language of Moses), "shew me thy glory; reveal in my heart the finished work of Jesus; sprinkle my conscience with his atoning blood; discover him to me, and thus give me a sweet manifestation of his Person, love, blood, and complete salvation. Let it, Lord, appear before mine eyes, and in my heart, and seal it with divine power upon my conscience.

August 2

*"Underneath are the everlasting arms." Deuteronomy 33:27*

How Moses brought before the people the eternity of God! He will have nothing to do with time. What is time? A fragment, merely like the foam of the sea compared with the mighty ocean. The ocean is eternity; time is merely the foam upon the wave. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." And depend upon it, if the everlasting arms are underneath the saints of God, for it is of and to them that the words are spoken, they are there for some purpose. God puts affliction upon affliction to bring the soul down, that it may fall into and upon the everlasting arms, and find how firm and strong they are. And have you not often found it so? Do not lie against your right. How many trials in providence you have been brought through. How conspicuously the Lord has appeared in this and that instance, so that your unbelief and infidelity were, for the time at least, thoroughly silenced, and faith saw the hand of God so clearly that you felt as if you could never doubt again. Have you not had many sweet supports on your bed of languishing, many precious seasons when you could bless God for laying upon you his afflicting hand? And have you not found that strength was always given to you according to your day, that with every trial power was given you to bear it, and that out of your deepest afflictions came your greatest blessings? Why are you not in hell? Do you not deserve to be there? Why still upon praying ground, with a good hope through grace, and your soul waiting for the Lord to appear, more than those that watch for the morning? If these arms have once supported you, will they not support you again? Would they be everlasting if they could part asunder and let you fall through? Rest upon them and you will find how strong they are.

August 3

*"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Colossians 3:4*

If Christ be your life upon earth; if you have a living faith in his divine Majesty; if any drops of his love have ever bedewed your soul; if any sweet smile has ever comforted your heart, the Apostle would say to all such, "When Christ, who is your life, shall appear with all his saints, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." No

longer pestered by sin and Satan, no longer carrying about a weak, infirm tabernacle, the seat of innumerable evils and maladies, but endued with a soul pure as he is pure, and a spiritual body capable of enjoying the bliss and blessedness of eternity, "then shall ye appear," ye suffering saints, who have set your affections on him whom ye have not seen, and yet in whom ye believe, "then shall ye also appear with him in glory." And is not this worth struggling for? Is not this a blessed goal at the end of the race? Is not this a worthy prize to run for? Is not this an ample reward of all your temptations, troubles, griefs and sorrows, to believe, and not in vain, that "when he shall appear," you "shall appear with him in glory?" The Lord, if it be his will, lead our souls into these divine and blessed realities! They are the substance of vital godliness; and so far as we feel them, and live under the sweet influences and bedewing operations of the Spirit of grace, these things will prove all our salvation, as they must be, if we be rightly taught, all our desire.

August 4

*"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." 1Peter 5:10*

There is no Christian perfection, no divine establishment, no spiritual strength, no solid settlement, except by *suffering*. But *after* the soul has suffered, *after* it has felt God's chastising hand, the effect is to *perfect*, to *establish*, to *strengthen*, and to *settle* it. By suffering, a man becomes settled into a solemn conviction of the character of Jehovah as revealed in the Scripture, and in a measure made experimentally manifest in his conscience. He is settled in the belief of an "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure;" in the persuasion that "all things work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose;" in the firm conviction that everything comes to pass according to God's eternal purpose; and are all tending to the good of the Church, and to God's eternal glory. His soul, too, is settled down into a deep persuasion of the misery, wretchedness, and emptiness of the creature; into the conviction that the world is but a shadow, and that the things of time and sense are but bubbles that burst the moment they are grasped; that of all things sin is most to be dreaded, and the favour of God above all things

most to be coveted; that nothing is really worth knowing except Jesus Christ and him crucified; that all things are passing away, and that he himself is rapidly hurrying down the stream of life, and into the boundless ocean of eternity. Thus he becomes settled in a knowledge of the truth, and his soul remains at anchor, looking to the Lord to preserve him here, and bring him in peace and safety to his eternal home.

August 5

*"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:3*

How many are anxious to know what is the way of salvation, how eternal life is to be obtained, and how to "flee from the wrath to come." But the Lord Jesus has shewn in one short sentence in what eternal life consists, that it is in the knowledge of the "only true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he has sent." He therefore that knows the Father and the Son has eternal life in his soul. The Lord Jesus, in the sixth chapter of John, quoted this amongst other passages of the Old Testament, and says, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." He lays this down, then, as one especial fruit of divine teaching, that it produces *a coming unto him*. The Spirit, who teacheth to profit, holds up before the eyes of the soul, the Person, work, blood, love, grace, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. He shews the soul that he is just such a Saviour as it needs. He opens up the dignity of his Person, and shews that he is God-man. He makes known in the conscience that he has offered up himself a sacrifice for sin; that he has shed his atoning blood so that the sin of the Church is for ever put away from the sight of a just God. He opens up before the eyes of the mind his glorious righteousness, as that in which the Father is well pleased, and in which if the soul has but an interest, it is secure from the wrath to come. He unfolds to the heart the willingness of Christ to receive every coming sinner; he shews the treasures of mercy and grace which are locked up in him; and brings down in the heart the comforting words that he spake in the days of his flesh, such as, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

August 6

*"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Proverbs 16:32*

What a foe to one's peace is one's own spirit! And what shall I call it? It is often an infernal spirit. Why? Because it bears the mark of Satan upon it. The pride of our spirit, the presumption of our spirit, the hypocrisy of our spirit, the intense selfishness of our spirit are often hidden from us. This wily devil, self, can wear such masks and assume such forms; this serpent, self, can so creep and crawl, can so twist and turn, and can disguise itself under such false appearances, that it is hidden often from ourselves. Who is the greatest enemy we have to fear? We all have our enemies. But who is our greatest enemy? He that you carry in your own bosom; your daily, hourly, and momentarily companion, that entwines himself in nearly every thought of your heart; that suggests well-nigh every motive; that sometimes puffs up with pride, sometimes inflames with lust, sometimes inflates with presumption, and sometimes works under feigned humility and fleshly holiness.

Now this self must be overcome; for if self overcome us eventually, we shall perish in the condemnation of self. God is determined to stain the pride of human glory. He will never let self, (which is but another word for the creature,) wear the crown of victory. It must be crucified, denied, and mortified; it must be put off, so that Jesus may be put on; that in the denying of self, Jesus may be believed in; and that in the crucifixion of self, there may be a solemn spiritual union with Him who was crucified on Calvary. Now, are we overcoming self? Are we buffeted? What says self? "Buffet again." Are we despised? What says self? "Despise again; retort angry look for angry look, and hasty word, for hasty word; 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'" But what says the Spirit of God in a tender conscience? "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

The way to overcome self is by looking out of self to Him who was crucified upon Calvary's tree; to receive his image into our heart; to be clothed with his likeness; to drink into his spirit; and "receive out of his fulness grace for grace."

August 7

*"The fear of the Lord is his treasure."* Isaiah 33:6

**"The fear of the Lord is his treasure." And, oh, what a treasure is this fear! Treasure in ancient times was generally hidden; it was concealed from the eye of man, hoarded up, and not brought out ostentatiously to view. Wealthy men of old hid the knowledge of their treasures, lest they should be spoiled of them by the hand of violence. So spiritually, the fear of the Lord is hidden in the heart, and lies deep in the soul; it is not spread out ostentatiously to view, but is buried out of sight in a man's conscience. But though hidden from others, and sometimes even from ourselves, this "fear of the Lord" will act as circumstances draw it forth. There may be times and seasons when we seem almost hardened and conscience-seared; sin appears to have such power over us, and evil thoughts and desires so carry us away, that we cannot trace one atom of godly fear within; and the soul cries, "What will become of me! Where am I going now! What will come next on such a wretch as I feel myself to be!" But place him in such circumstances, say, as befel Joseph, then he will find that the "fear of the Lord" is in him a fountain of life, a holy principle springing up in his soul. Thus, this fear, which is a part of the heavenly treasure, acts when most needed. And the more the life of God is felt in the soul, the more the fear of God flows forth as a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death. The more lively the grace of God is in the soul, the more lively will godly fear be in the heart; and the more the Spirit of God works with power in the conscience, the deeper will be the fear of God in the soul.**

August 8

*"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way."* John 14:6

**How is *Jesus the way*? In everything that he is to God's people he is the way. His *blood* is the way to heaven; "for the whole path," as Hart speaks, "is lined with blood." By his precious blood shed upon Calvary's tree he has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and opened a way of access to God. His *righteousness*,**

also, is part of the way; for only so far as we stand clothed in his glorious righteousness have we any access unto, any acceptance with God the Father. And his *love* is the way; for if we walk in love, we walk in him, for he is love. Every part of the way was devised and is executed by the love of his tender heart.

But the way, also, is *the way of tribulation*. Was not Jesus himself the great Sufferer? And if he be the way, the only way, I must be conformed to his likeness in suffering. Not to know afflictions and tribulations, is not to know Christ. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief!" And if so, to have no sorrow, to have no acquaintance with grief, and to know nothing of tribulation, is to proclaim to all with a loud voice that we have no union and communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. But we are continually turning aside "to the right hand" or "to the left." There is that cowardice in the heart which cannot bear the cross; there is that slipping into carnal ease and fleshly security, so as to get away from under the painful cross of affliction and suffering. But when we thus turn aside "to the right hand" or "to the left," the voice the Lord sends after us is, "This is the way"—the way of affliction; no other; the way of tribulation, the way of trial, the way of exercise. This is the way in which the King walked of old; and this is the way in which all his people have walked before him and after him; for this is the only path in which the footsteps of the flock can be found.

August 9

*"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness."* Psalm 112:4

We often get into such dark paths, that we seem altogether out of the secret, and feel as if there were no more grace in our souls, than in one altogether dead in trespasses and sins. And whether we look back at the past, or view the present, or turn our eyes to the future, one dark cloud seems to rest upon the whole; nor can we, with all our searching, find to our satisfaction that we have one spark of true religion, or one atom of grace, or one grain of vital godliness, or any trace that the Spirit of God has touched our consciences with his finger. Now, when we are in this dark, benighted state, we want light; we want the blessed Sun of righteousness to arise; we want the south wind to blow a heavenly gale, and drive the mists away; we want the clouds to part, and

the light of God's countenance to shine into our souls, so as to shew us where we are, and what we are, and make it clear, that base and vile as we are, yet that we are interested in the love of the Father, the blood of the Son, and the teachings of the Holy Ghost. And when his word begins to distil like the rain and to drop like the dew, when the Lord himself is pleased to speak home one sweet testimony, one little word, one kind intimation—what a change it makes! The clouds break away, the fog clears off, the mists dissolve, and the soul becomes sweetly persuaded of its interest in the blood and love of the Lamb.

August 10

*"And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified." Matthew 28:5*

Whatever be our state and case, if it can truly be said of us what the angel said to the women at the sepulchre, "I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified," we have a divine warrant to believe that "he is gone before us into Galilee. There shall we see him." He is risen; he has ascended up on high, and "has received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." He is now upon the mercy-seat, and he invites and draws poor needy sinners to himself. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He allows us, he invites us to pour out our heart before him, to shew before him our trouble, to spread our wants at his feet, as Hezekiah spread the letter in the temple. If we seek communion with him, we may and shall tell him how deeply we need him, that without him it is not life to live, and with him not death to die. We shall beg of him to heal our backslidings; to manifest his love and blood to our conscience; to shew us the evil of sin; to bless us with godly sorrow for our slips and falls; to keep us from evil that it may not grieve us; to lead us into his sacred truth; to preserve us from all error; to plant his fear deep in our heart; to apply some precious promise to our soul; to be with us in all our ways; to watch over us in all our goings out and comings in; to preserve us from pride, self-deception, and self-righteousness; to give us renewed tokens of our interest in his finished work; to subdue our iniquities; to make and keep our conscience tender; and work in us everything which is pleasing in his sight. What is communion but mutual giving and receiving, the flowing together of two

hearts, the melting into one of two wills, the exchange of two loves—each party maintaining its distinct identity, yet being to the other an object of affection and delight? Have we nothing, then, to give to Christ? Yes, our sins, our sorrows, our burdens, our trials, and above all the salvation and sanctification of our souls. And what has he to give us? What? Why, everything worth having, everything worth a moment's anxious thought, everything for time and eternity.

**August 11**

*"They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn." Jeremiah 31:9*

Oh how much is needed to bring the soul to its only rest and centre! What trials and afflictions; what furnaces, floods, rods, and strokes, as well as smiles, promises, and gracious drawings! What pride and self to be brought out of! What love and blood to be brought unto! What lessons to learn of the dreadful evil of sin! What lessons to learn of the freeness and fulness of salvation! What sinkings in self! What risings in Christ! What guilt and condemnation on account of sin; what self-loathing and self-abasement; what distrust of self; what fears of falling; what prayers and desires to be kept; what clinging to Christ; what looking up and unto his divine Majesty, as faith views him at the right hand of the Father; what desires never more to sin against him, but to live, move, and act in the holy fear of God, do we find, more or less daily, in a living soul!

And whence springs all this inward experience but from the fellowship and communion which there is between Christ and the soul? "We are members," says the Apostle, "of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." As such there is a mutual participation in sorrow and joy. "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He can, therefore, "be touched with the feelings of our infirmities," can pity and sympathise; and thus, as we may cast upon him our sins and sorrows, when faith enables, so can he supply, out of his own fulness, that grace and strength which can bring us off eventually more than conquerors.

August 12

*"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Hebrew 9:13, 14*

What a mercy it is to have a conscience in any measure purged from dead works to serve the living God; to feel any free access to his gracious Majesty, any happy liberty in walking before him, any deliverance from doubt and fear, any removal of those exercises which try the mind and often bring heavy burdens upon the soul! Still, after all our wanderings, we must ever come to the same spot; after all our departings and backslidings, still again and again we must be brought to the same place to get the guilt removed, the mercy proclaimed, and the peace revealed. For is not this the blessedness that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin? Having obtained eternal redemption for us, his blood will never lose its efficacy, but will ever purge the conscience as long as the conscience of any burdened member of his mystical body remains to be purged, till he presents all his ransomed saints faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

August 13

*"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." Ezekiel 36:26*

This "new spirit" is a broken spirit, a soft, tender spirit, and is therefore called "a heart of flesh," as opposed to "the heart of stone," the rocky, obdurate, unfeeling, impenitent heart of one dead in sin, or dead in a profession. And how is this soft, penitent heart communicated? "I will put my Spirit within you." The same divine truth is set forth in the gracious promise: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." But what is the immediate effect of the pouring out of the spirit of grace and of supplications? A looking to him whom they have pierced, a mourning for him as one mourneth for an only son, and a being in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. This is evangelical repentance, as distinguished from legal; godly sorrow working repentance to salvation not to be repented of, as distinct from the sorrow of the world which worketh death. These two kinds of repentance are to be carefully distinguished from each other, though they are often sadly confounded. Cain, Esau, Saul, Ahab, Judas, all repented; but their repentance was the remorse of natural conscience, not the godly sorrow of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. They trembled before God as an angry judge, were not melted into contrition before him as a forgiving Father. They neither hated their sins nor forsook them, loved holiness nor sought it. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord; Esau plotted Jacob's death; Saul consulted the witch of Endor; Ahab put honest Micaiah into prison; and Judas hanged himself. How different from this forced and false repentance of a reprobate is the repentance of a child of God—that true repentance for sin, that godly sorrow, that holy mourning which flows from the Spirit's gracious operations. This does not spring from a sense of the wrath of God in a broken law, but of his mercy in a blessed gospel; from a view by faith of the sufferings of Christ in the garden and on the cross; from a manifestation of pardoning love; and is always attended with self-loathing and self-abhorrence, with deep and unreserved confession of sin and forsaking it, with most hearty, sincere, and earnest petitions to be

kept from all evil, and a holy longing to live to the praise and glory of God.

August 14

*"For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."* Psalm 138:2

This is one of those expressions in Scripture that seem so comprehensive, and yet so amazing. To my mind it is one of the most remarkable expressions in the whole book of God. "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." The name of God includes all the perfections of God; everything that God is, and that God is revealed as possessing. His justice, majesty, holiness, greatness, and glory, and whatever he is in himself; that is God's name. And yet he has magnified something above all his name; his *word*, his *truth*. This may refer to the Incarnate Word, the Son of God, who is called the Word. "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). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God" (John 1:1). You may take the words either as meaning that God has magnified his Word, his eternal Son above all his great name, that is, he has set Jesus on high above all the other perfections of his majesty, or take it as meaning his written word, which is contained in the sacred Scriptures. He has magnified it above all his name in the fulfilment of it; God's faithfulness being so dear to him, that he has exalted it above all his other perfections. He would sooner allow them all to come to naught, than for his faithfulness to fail. He has so magnified his faithfulness, that his love, his mercy, his grace would all sooner fail, than his faithfulness; the word of his mouth, and what he has revealed in the Scriptures. What a firm salvation, then, is ours, which rests upon his word, when God has magnified that word above all his name! What a comprehensive declaration is this! What volumes of blessedness and truth are contained therein! So that, if God has revealed his truth to your soul, and given you faith to anchor in the word of promise, sooner than that should fail, he would suffer the loss of all for he has magnified his word above all his name.

August 15

*"The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God."* Galatians 2:20

There is no way except by being spiritually baptized into Christ's death and life, that we can ever get a victory over our besetting sins. If, on the one hand, we have a view of a suffering Christ, and thus become baptized into his sufferings and death, the feeling, while it lasts, will subdue the power of sin. Or, on the other hand, if we get a believing view of a risen Christ, and receive supplies of grace out of his fulness, that will lift us above its dominion. If sin be powerfully working in us, we want one of these two things to subdue it; either we must have something come down to us to give us a victory over our sin in our strugglings against it, or we must have something to lift us up out of sin into a purer and better element. When there is a view of the sufferings and sorrows, agonies and death of the Son of God, power comes down to the soul in its struggles against sin, and gives it a measure of holy resistance and subduing strength against it. So, when there is a coming in of the grace and love of Christ, it lifts up the soul from the love and power of sin into a purer and holier atmosphere. Sin cannot be subdued in any other way. You must either be baptized into Christ's sufferings and death, or you must be baptized (and these follow each other) into Christ's resurrection and life. A sight of him as a suffering God, or a view of him as a risen Jesus, must be connected with every successful attempt to get the victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave. You may strive, vow, and repent; and what does it all amount to? You sink deeper and deeper into sin than before. Pride, lust, and covetousness come in like a flood, and you are swamped and carried away almost before you are aware. But if you get a view of a suffering Christ, or of a risen Christ; if you get a taste of his dying love, a drop of his atoning blood, or any manifestation of his beauty and blessedness, there comes from this spiritual baptism into his death or his life a subduing power; and this gives a victory over temptation and sin which nothing else can or will give. Yet I believe we are often many years learning this divine secret, striving to repent and reform, and cannot; till at last by divine teaching we come to learn a little of what the Apostle meant when he said, "The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." And when we can get into this life of faith, this hidden life, then our affections are set on things above. There is no use setting people to work by legal strivings; they only plunge themselves deeper in the

ditch. You must get Christ into your soul by the power of God; and then he will subdue, by his smiles, blood, love, and presence, every internal foe.

August 16

*"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* John 8:32

The truths of the gospel, though to an enlightened eye they shine as with a ray of light all through the word, yet are they, for the most part, laid up as in veins: "Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it." "As for the earth, out of it cometh bread, and under it is turned up as it were fire. The stones of it are the place of sapphires, and it hath dust of gold" (Job 28:5, 6). But where is "the place of sapphires?" and where this "dust of gold?" "In the path which no fowl," no unclean professor, "knoweth, and which the vulture's eye," keen though it be after this world's carrion, "hath not seen." But to a spiritual mind sweet and self-rewarding is the task, if task it can be called, of searching the word as for hid treasure. No sweeter, no better employment can engage heart and hands than, in the spirit of prayer and meditation, of separation from the world, of holy fear, of a desire to know the will of God and do it, of humility, simplicity, and godly sincerity, to seek to enter into those heavenly mysteries which are stored up in the Scriptures; and this, not to furnish the head with notions, but to feed the soul with the bread of life. Truth, received in the love and power of it, informs and establishes the judgment, softens and melts the heart, warms and draws upward the affections, makes and keeps the conscience alive and tender, is the food of faith, the strength of hope, and the mainspring of love. To know the truth is to be "a disciple indeed," and to be made blessedly free; free from error, and the vile heresies which everywhere abound; free from presumption and self-righteousness; free from the curse and bondage of the law and the condemnation of a guilty conscience; free from a slavish fear of the opinion of men and the contempt and scorn of the world and worldly professors; free from following a multitude to do evil; free from companionship with those who have a name to live but are dead. But free to love the Lord and his dear people; free to speak well of his name; free to glorify him with our body and soul, which are his; free to a throne of grace and to a blood-besprinkled

mercy-seat; free to every good word and work; free to "whatsoever things are good, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report."

**August 17**

*"But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our Potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." Isaiah 64:8*

Until free-will, self-righteousness, creature exertions, and human merit are dried up and withered away, till they all give up the ghost, we can never come into that spot where we are the clay, and God is the Potter. Can the clay make itself into a vessel? Can it mould itself into shape and form? Can it start from its bed, and work itself up into a vessel for use or ornament? No more can we make ourselves fit for glory, or mould ourselves into vessels of honour. If the Lord do but give us the feeling in our souls, our sweetest privilege, our dearest enjoyment, is to be the clay. Free-will, self-righteousness, human wisdom, and creature strength—we give them all to the pharisees; let them make the most of them. But when the Lord indulges our souls with some measure of access to himself, and brings us in all humility and brokenness to lie low before his throne, we feel that we are nothing but what he makes us, have nothing but what he gives us, experience nothing but what he works in us, and do nothing but what he does in and for us. To be here, and to lie here, is to be the clay; and to find the Lord working in us holy desires, fervent breathings, secret cries, and the actings of faith, hope, and love; and to feel these things freely given, graciously communicated, and divinely wrought, and to know the Lord is doing all this for us and in us, is to find him the Potter, and is to be brought to the sweetest, lowliest, and happiest spot that a soul can come into.

**August 18**

*"But let patience have her perfect work." James 1:4*

Patience then has its work; and what is that? Twofold, according to my explanation of the word. 1. To *endure* all trials, live through all temptations, bear all crosses, carry all loads, fight all battles, toil through all difficulties, and overcome all enemies. 2. To *submit* to the will of God, to own that he is Lord and King, to have no will or way of its own, no scheme or plan to please the flesh, avoid the cross, or escape the rod; but to submit simply to God's righteous dealings, both in providence and grace, believing that he doeth all things well, that he is a Sovereign, "and worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will." Now until the soul is brought to this point, the work of patience is not perfect; it may be going on, but it is not consummated. You may be in the furnace of temptation now, passing through the fiery trial. Are you rebellious or submissive? If still rebellious, you must abide in the furnace until you are brought to submission; and not only so, but it must be *thorough* submission, or else patience has not its *perfect* work. The dross and slag of rebellion must be scummed off, and the pure metal flow down. It is all of God's grace to feel this for a single moment. But are there not, and have there not been, times and seasons, in your soul, when you could be still and know that he is God? when you could submit to his will, believing that he is too wise to err, too good to be unkind? When this submission is felt, patience has its perfect work. Look at Jesus, our great example: see him in the gloomy garden, with the cross in prospect before him on the coming morn. How he could say, "Not my will, but thine be done!" There was the perfect work of patience in the perfect soul of the Redeemer. Now you and I must have a work in our soul corresponding to this, or else we are not conformed to the suffering image of our crucified Lord. Patience in us must have its perfect work; and God will take care that it shall be so. As in a beautiful piece of machinery, if the engineer see a cog loose or a wheel out of gear, he must adjust the defective part, that it may work easily and properly, and in harmony with the whole machine; so if the God of all our salvation see a particular grace not in operation or not properly performing its appointed work, he by his Spirit so influences the heart that it is again brought to work as he designed it should do. Measure your faith and patience by this standard; but do not take in conjunction, or confound with them the workings of your carnal mind. Here we often mistake: we may be submissive as regards our spirit, meek and patient, quiet and resigned, in the inward man, yet feel many uprisings and rebellings of the flesh; and thus patience may not seem to have her perfect work. But to look for perfect submission in the flesh is to look for perfection in the flesh, which was never

promised and is never given. Look to what the Spirit is working in you—not to the carnal mind, which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, and therefore knows neither subjection nor submission. Look at that inward principality of which the Prince of peace is Lord and Ruler, and see whether in the still depths of your soul, and where he lives and reigns, there is submission to the will of God.

August 19

*"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed."* 2 Corinthians 4:8

The saint of God is "troubled on every side," because he has on every side on which he may be troubled, a spiritual side as well as a temporal side, a side in his soul as well as a side in his body, a side in his supernatural as well as in his natural life, a side in his new man of grace as well as a side in his old man of sin. And as it is necessary for him to be conformed to the suffering image of Christ, trouble comes upon him on every side and from every quarter, to make him like his blessed Lord. Nay, his troubles are multiplied in proportion to his grace, for the more the afflictions abound the more abundant are the consolations; and an abundance of consolation is but an abundance of grace. Thus, the more grace he has the greater will be his sufferings; and the more he walks in a path agreeable to the Lord, and in conformity to his will and word, the more will he be baptized with the baptism of sorrow and tribulation wherewith his great Head was baptized before him.

*"Yet not distressed."* The words "not distressed" literally signify that we are not shut up in a narrow spot from which there is no outlet whatever. It corresponds to an expression of the Apostle's in another place where he says, "God will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it;" and tallies well with the words of David: "Thou hast known my soul in adversities." There is the trouble on every side. But he adds, "And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; thou hast set my feet in a large room." "Not being shut up into the hand of the enemy" is not being abandoned of God to the foeman's death-stroke; and having "the feet set in a large room" is to have a place to move about in, one which affords an escape from death and

**destruction. Thus, the dying Christian has a God to go to; a Saviour into whose arms he may cast his weary soul; a blessed Spirit who from time to time relieves his doubts and fears, applies a sweet promise to his burdened spirit, gives him resignation and submission to the afflicting hand of God, and illuminates the dark valley of the shadow of death, which he has to tread, with a blessed ray of gospel light.**

**August 20**

***"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:10, 11***

**I believe many of God's people, if not most, have much ado to "make their calling and election sure." They are not a people to take things for granted; they cannot sit at ease and say, "I have no doubt that I am a child of God;" they want something powerful, something applied, something spoken by the mouth of God himself; and short of that, they must be exercised with doubts and fears as to their state before him. Now let conscience speak; let us turn over the leaves of conscience. What says that faithful witness? Has God spoken with power to your soul? Has he pardoned your sins? Has he given you a sweet testimony of your interest in the Son of his love? Say you, "Why, I do not know that I can say all that, I do not know that God has pardoned my sins." Well, we will come a little lower then; if you cannot say that, we will take a little lower ground; can you say that you are sighing and groaning and crying at times, not always, but as the Lord works in you, for the sweet manifestations of Jesus' love to your souls? Here is a door open for you, the door of hope in the valley of Achor. Can you come in here? Well, these are marks of being one of God's peculiar people. But you cannot be satisfied, short of God himself making it known to you; you want an immediate testimony from his blessed mouth, and nothing but that can satisfy you, and when he sheds abroad his love in your soul, it will give you peace and comfort, and nothing short of that can.**

August 21

*"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory." Matthew 12:20*

The gracious Man of Sorrows will never ever "break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." It is true that "he sends forth judgment," for he means to bring the soul down into the dust; but whilst this judgment is going on, he secretly supports; for he kills that he may make alive; he brings down to the grave that he may bring up. But in sending forth this "judgment," it is "unto victory." Conquest is at the end; victory is sure. There may be a long conflict; a hard and fearful battle, with the garments rolled in sweat and blood; but victory is sure at last; for he will never rest till he fully gains the day. Oh, how Satan would triumph if any saint ever fell out of the embraces of the good Shepherd; if he could point his derisive finger up to heaven's gate and to its risen King, and say, "Thy blood was shed in vain for this wretch, he is mine, he is mine!" Such a boast would fill hell with a yell of triumph. But no, no; it never will be so; the "blood that cleanseth from all sin" never was, never can be shed in vain. Though the reed is "bruised," it will never be broken; though the flax "smokes," it will never be extinguished; for he that "sends forth judgment" sends it "unto victory." Long indeed may the battle fluctuate; again and again may the enemy charge; again and again may the event seem doubtful. Victory may be delayed even unto a late hour, till evening is drawing on and the shades of night are about to fall; but it is sure at last. And it is the Lord that does the whole. We have no power to turn the battle to the gate. Is there one temptation that you can master? Is there any one sin that you can, without divine help, crucify; one lust that you can, without special grace, subdue? We are perfect weakness in this matter. But the blessed Lord makes his strength perfect in this weakness. We may and indeed must be bruised, and under painful feelings may think no one was so hardly dealt with, and that our case is singular. But without this we should not judge ourselves; and "if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged of the Lord." If you justify yourself, the Lord will condemn you; if you condemn yourself, the Lord will justify you. Exalt yourself, and the Lord will humble you; humble yourself, and the Lord will exalt you.

August 22

***"O send out thy light and thy truth."* Psalm 43:3**

**"O send out thy light." The Psalmist desired that light might be sent out, that is, that there might be a communication of it. The soul walking in darkness, and enabled under that darkness to pant and cry after light, is not satisfied with the conviction, however deep, that with God is light. The thirsty man is not satisfied with knowing that there is water in the well; nor the man who has lost his way in a mine, with knowing that there is light in the sun. One faint ray gleaming through a chink were worth to him a thousand suns, blazing, unseen by him, in the sky. And thus the benighted saint cannot rest in the bare knowledge that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all," but his sigh and cry is that this light may be sent out of the fulness of the Godhead into his soul, so as to shed abroad an inward light in his heart, whereby he may see the truth of God; whereby he may see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; whereby he may see his name written in the book of life, and clearly discern his interest in the "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure;" whereby he may see Jesus, and in seeing Jesus see his own eternal union with Jesus, and in seeing his own eternal union with Jesus may enjoy sweet communion with him, so as to feel his presence in his soul, and have his glory revealed, and manifested to his heart.**

**David wanted something more than light. He says, "O send out thy light and thy *truth*." What was "the truth" which he sought to know, and realise its inward power by its being sent out of the fulness of the Godhead? Doubtless, the very same truth that saints are crying to be sent out now; and this can be nothing less than "the truth as it is in Jesus;" the truth of his blood as atoning for sin, the truth of his righteousness as justifying us from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses; the truth of personal and everlasting deliverance from all curse and condemnation, that truth whereby the soul is made free, according to those words, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;" the truth whereby the affections are separated from the things of time and sense, and fixed on the realities of eternity; in a word, to know Jesus himself, by his own sweet revelation, for he is "the way, the truth, and the life," and that he may be himself enjoyed in our soul as the sum and substance of truth.**

August 23

*"They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." Jeremiah 1:5*

**"Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord." Does this imply any power in the creature to join himself to the Lord? No; but it implies this—that when the Lord unites us to himself, then we unite ourselves to him; when the Lord brings the believer into a manifested union with himself, then there is a leaping forth of the soul, a going forth of the affections, a cleaving to him with purpose of heart, a believing in him with all the powers of the mind, and a solemn renunciation, a casting aside, a trampling under foot, a rejection of everything but that which stands in the power of God, as made known to the soul by the Holy Spirit.**

**It is not spoken in a presumptuous way: "Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord." It does not indicate any bold presumptuous *claim* upon the Lord, as if being now on the road to Zion, and being possessed of certain evidences, they could claim the inheritance, and, as it were, rush in, and lay hold of gospel blessings; but it points out the actings of living faith in the soul, which goes forth, when raised up and drawn out by the blessed Spirit. The vain confidence and rash forwardness of those who are at ease in Zion is a very different thing from the meek faith of those who are going and weeping, asking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, whose hearts are melted by the Spirit into contrition, who renounce everything but Christ and him crucified, and desire to feel and taste the sweet manifestation of the love of a dying Lord. These, without presumption or bold familiarity, can say, "Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord," as feeling in their souls the actings of that living faith, whereby they cleave to and lean upon him, as the only prop between them and hell.**

August 24

*"And he is the head of the body, the church." Colossians 1:18*

**That the Lord Jesus Christ should have a people, in whom he should be eternally glorified, was the original promise made by**

the Father to the Son. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Psalm 2:8). This was "the joy that was set before him, for which he endured the cross, despising the shame." This was "the purchased possession," "the travail of his soul," and the reward of his humiliation and sufferings (Phil. 2:9, 10). This people form the members of his mystical body, all of which were written in his book, the book of life, when as yet, as regards their actual existence, there was none of them (Psalm 139:16). All these were given to him in eternity, when he was constituted their covenant Head in the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure. They thus became, in prospect of his incarnation, "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." How touchingly did the blessed Redeemer remind his Father of those covenant transactions, when he said in his memorable prayer, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." Being thus given to Christ, and constituted members of his mystical body, they can no more perish than Christ himself. He is their Head; and as he is possessed of all power, full of all love, filled with all wisdom, and replete with all mercy, grace, and truth, how can he, how will he, suffer any of his members to fall out of his body, and be lost to him as well as to themselves? Will any man willingly suffer his eye, or his hand, or his foot, or even the tip of his little finger, to be taken out or cut off? If any member of *our* body perish, if *we* lose an arm or a leg, it is because we have not power to prevent it. But all power belongs to Christ, in heaven and in earth; and therefore no one member of his mystical body can perish for want of power in him to save it. But however truly blessed this doctrine is, it is only when we are quickened and made alive unto God by a spiritual birth that we savingly and experimentally know and realise it; and we are, for the most part, led into it thus. We are first made to feel our need of Christ as a Saviour from the wrath to come, from the fear of death, the curse of the law, and the accusations of a guilty conscience. When enabled, by the blessed Spirit's operations, to receive him into our heart, by faith, as the Christ of God, and to realise in some measure an interest in him, we are then taught to feel our need of continual supplies of grace and strength out of his fulness. For we have to learn something of the depths of the fall, of the evils of our heart, of the temptations of Satan, of the strength of sin, of our own weakness and worthlessness; and as every fresh discovery of our helplessness and wretchedness makes a way for looking to and hanging upon

**him, we become more and more dependent on him as of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.**

August 25

*"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life." John 11:25*

How often we sink into places where we are in our feelings dead men. Has sin never slain you? Have convictions never, so to speak, knocked the life of God out of your soul? Has Satan never come with his fiery darts, with all the artillery of hell, and sought to scorch up every gracious feeling and every living desire? And have you not sunk at times in your soul into such miserable deadness of spirit, that it seemed that not only there and then you were devoid of all grace, but that it was an impossibility for grace ever again to renew and revive your soul? Here you were dead. I have often been here, which enables me to describe it to you. Yet with all this, there is a longing look, a heartfelt groan, a heaving sigh, a resisting unto blood, not an utter giving way, nor sinking down into miserable despair. God the Spirit kept alive his work upon the soul, and Christ himself as the resurrection dropped into our bosom, raised up and drew forth towards himself some fresh movements of that life which is in him. There was thus fulfilled that gracious consequence of his resurrection, "Whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Oh, amidst all our deadness, all our gloom and desolation, all our emptiness, barrenness, and helplessness, if there be in our souls a longing look, a heartfelt cry, an earnest groan, a sincere desire toward him who is the resurrection, our prayer will ascend into his pitying, sympathising ear; and as he is the resurrection, he will once more raise up into life and feeling our dead and drooping soul. We have no other source of life. If we were altogether and really dead, we should always continue dead unless he were the resurrection. But because he is the resurrection, he can re-animate, revive, renew, and requicken us by pouring into our hearts fresh life and feeling. It will be our mercy to be ever looking unto him, hanging upon him, believing in him, trusting to him, and giving him no rest until he appear again and again to the joy and rejoicing of our heart.

August 26

*"He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."*  
**John 11:25**

How can any one who is dead believe? He can, or our Lord would not have said so. I will shew you how. He is a living man as quickened into life by the power of the Spirit of God, and yet he is dead. This is the deep mystery, that though he is dead in law, dead in conscience, dead in helplessness, yet God the Holy Ghost has breathed into him and deposited in him a seed of living faith. By this faith he cries, by this faith he sighs, and by this faith he hungers and thirsts after righteousness; yea, more, by this faith he looks unto and believes in the Son of God. He scarcely knows that he has faith. His faith is so weak and so small in his own estimation, that he dare not say he has faith; and yet he has all the fruits of faith, all the marks of faith, and all the evidences of faith. Take as a parallel case Jonah in the whale's belly. Had he faith or had he not faith? How low he sank when the waves were heaped over his head, when carried through the boundless deep in the belly of the whale. Yet even there he could say, "I will look again toward thy holy temple." Had he no faith? Yes, he had; and by that faith he was saved, justified, accepted, brought out, and delivered, and able to say, "Salvation is of the Lord." Take Hezekiah upon his bed of sickness. Had he no faith? How then could he turn his face to the wall and pray unto the Lord? How could his eyes fail with looking upward, when he said, "O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me?" Take David in his mournful journey, when he went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up barefoot, with his head covered, at the time of Absalom's rebellion. Had he no faith? How then came he to pray, "O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness?" And why did the Lord answer that prayer, if it were not the prayer of faith? In all these men of God, sunk though they were almost to the last and lowest point, there was still the life of faith; and by that faith they called upon God. They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed. Here, then, is the connection between the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and the experience of this seemingly dead soul. When Christ died, he bare the sins of this poor dead soul in his body on the tree, and thus atoned for them and put them away. When Christ rose from the dead, this poor dead soul rose with him, as a member of his mystical body. When Christ went up on high, he ascended with him. And when Christ sat down at the right hand of the Father, he virtually and mystically sat down with him in heavenly bliss. Therefore, because Jesus is the

resurrection, and because as such he has an interest in him, "he that believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

August 27

*"Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."* Hebrews 1:4

Christ was *made* so much better than the angels, not as the Son of God, because as that he *was* better than they already, being, indeed, their Maker and Creator. Nor did he become God's Son by being appointed heir of all things," and "obtaining by inheritance a more excellent name" than all the angelic host. If I have an only son, and he inherits my property, his being my heir does not make him my son, but his being my son makes him my heir. So the blessed Jesus is God's heir. But the beauty and blessedness, the grace and glory, the joy and consolation of his being "the heir of all things," lie in this, that he is such in *our nature*,—that the same blessed Immanuel who groaned and wept, suffered and bled here below, is now at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest, Mediator, Advocate, Representative, and Intercessor; that all power is given unto him in heaven and earth as the God-man (Matt. 28:18); and that the Father hath "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:20, 21). But he has all this pre-eminence and glory not to make him the Son of God, but because he who, as the Son of God, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:6-11). The joy of heaven above, the delight of the saints here below, their only hope and help, strength and wisdom, spring from this, that the Son of God is exalted to the right hand

of the Father in the very nature which he assumed in the womb of the virgin.

August 28

*"The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."* Proverbs 27:7

Afflictions, trials, and sorrows are very bitter things. And they must needs be bitter, for God never meant that they should be otherwise. When he takes the rod, it is to *make it felt*; and when he brings trouble on his children, it is that they may smart under it. Our text therefore does not, I believe, mean that the "bitter thing" is sweet when it is taken, for then it would cease to be bitter; but it is sweet on account of the blessed nourishment that is brought to the soul out of it. I remember reading, many years ago, the travels of Franklin to the North Pole; and a very interesting book it is naturally. But there is one incident mentioned in it which just strikes my mind. In wandering over the snows of the circumpolar regions there was no food to be got for days and, I think, weeks, except a lichen or kind of moss that grew upon the rocks, and that was so exceedingly bitter, (something like "Iceland moss,") that it could only be taken with the greatest disgust; and yet upon that Franklin and his companions lived. They had no alternative; they must either eat that or die. But that bitter moss became sweet after it had passed their palates; for it had a nutriment in it which kept their bodies alive. And thus many of God's people, who have endured the most dreadful trials, have afterwards found nutriment to spring out of them. What bitter things are God's reproofs and rebukes in the conscience! And yet who would be without them? I appeal to you who fear God, whether you would deliberately choose never to experience marks of divine disapprobation, and never feel the frowns of God's anger at any time when you go wrong? I believe in my conscience that you whose hearts are tender in God's fear would say, "Lord, let me have thy frowns; for if I have not thy frowns and a conscience to feel them, what sins should I not recklessly plunge into? Where would not my wicked nature carry me, if I had not thy solemn reproofs!" These very rebukes then become sweet, not in themselves, nor at the time, but because of the solid profit that comes out of them.

**August 29**

*"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10*

Good works, properly so called, spring out of the inward operation of God's grace. By making the tree good he makes the fruit good (Matt. 12:33). He works in us first the will to do that which is good, and then he gives us the power. He thus works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). Under the operations of his grace we are transformed by the renewing of our mind to prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2); and as this will is sought after to be known and done, good works follow as the necessary fruit. All those acts of love and affection, of kindness, sympathy, and liberality towards the Lord's people; all those instances of self-denial and willingness rather to suffer than to do wrong; all those proofs of disinterested desire to do all the good we can according to our means, position, and circumstances of life; all that striving after and maintaining integrity and uprightness of conduct in all matters of business and trust; all that strict and scrupulous adherence to our word, even to our own injury; all that Christian fulfilment of our relative duties, and the social relationships of husband and father, wife and mother, which the Scripture has enjoined—in a word, all those works which by almost unanimous consent are called "good" by men, are only really and truly good as wrought in the heart, lip, and life by the power of God.

**August 30**

*"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Revelation 12:11*

It is not "the blood of the Lamb" as revealed in the word of God, but as applied to and sprinkled on the conscience, which answers the accusations of Satan. But we may observe that there is our coming unto "the blood of sprinkling," and there is "the blood of sprinkling" coming unto us. The Apostle speaks, Hebrews 12:22-24: *"Ye are come to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better*

things than that of Abel." This coming *to* the blood is the first step in gaining the victory. But in Christian warfare defeat generally, if not always, precedes conquest. It is not, therefore, so easy to overcome sin, death, and hell, which are all striving against us; and usually we never look to the right quarter for help until well-nigh all hope is gone. The first gleam generally comes from a view of "the blood of the Lamb," as it were, in the distance. The lighthouse casts its glimmering rays far over the wide waste of waters, to guide into harbour the storm-tossed mariner; so, when there is a view in the soul of "the blood of the Lamb," even at a distance, it is a beacon light, which draws towards it the eyes and heart of those who are doing business "in deep waters." The light may not at first seem very bright or clear; but it is a day-star, heralding the rising of the sun. The Spirit shines on the word, and raises up faith in the soul to believe that the Lamb has been slain, that blood has been shed, that a sacrifice has been offered, and that "a new and living way" has been opened and consecrated "through the veil," the rent "flesh" of the Lord Jesus. This affords the accused soul some foothold on which it can stand and answer Satan's accusations. "True," he says, "I am a guilty wretch, a sinner, and the chief of sinners, for I have sinned against light, against convictions, against conscience, and the fear of God; my heart is altogether evil, my mind wholly corrupt, and my nature utterly depraved; I have never done any good thing; I am a wretch, and the worst of wretches, and I can never say anything too bad of myself, nor others of me; but, with all that, the Lamb of God hath shed his precious blood, and that blood 'cleanseth from all sin.'" "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord," we read, "shall lift up a standard against him"—the blood-stained flag of the crucified Redeemer; and to come for refuge under this banner dipped in blood is to make head against Satan. Still, the victory is not fully gained. It is only when there is a coming of the blood into the heart, a sprinkling of it on the conscience, a manifestation and application of it to the soul, that Satan is effectually put to flight.

August 31

*"He giveth power to the faint."* Isaiah 40:29

The Lord often gives his people power to take a longing, languishing look at the blood and righteousness of Jesus; to come

to the Lord, as "mighty to save," with the same feelings with which Esther went into the presence of the king: "I will go in, and if I perish, I perish." It is with them sometimes as with the four lepers who sat at the entering in of the gate of Samaria: "And they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die" (2 Kings 7:3, 4). And so the Lord's people are sometimes brought to this state—"If I perish, I will perish at his footstool." If he give no answer of mercy, they will still cling to his feet, and beseech him to look upon, and save them. Now this is "power," real power. Despair would have laid hold upon their soul, if this secret power had not been given to them. Sometimes we learn this by painful experience. Our trials sometimes stun us, and then there is no power to seek or pray. But when power is given, there is a pleading with the Lord, a going out of the heart's desires after him, and a fulfilment in the soul of the experience described by the prophet, "I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him."

God gives power also to believe; for it is the work of the blessed Spirit to raise up living faith in the heart. He gives power to hope; for it is only so far as he communicates power, that we can cast forth this anchor of the soul. He gives power to love; for it is only as he gives power, that we feel any measure of affection either to the Lord or to his people. In a word, every spiritual desire, every breath of fervent prayer, every movement of the soul heavenward, every trusting in God's name, relying on his word, and hanging upon his promises, spring out of power communicated by the Lord to the faint and feeble.