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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*

July 1

*"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."* Psalm 42:1

What a striking figure has David made use of in these words. Conceive a wounded stag, with the arrow in his flank or pursued by a crowd of hunters and hounds, all eager to pull him down; conceive him to have run for some space of time under a burning sun and over heaps of sand; and conceive that at a distance this poor wounded or hunted animal sees water gently flowing along. Oh, how it pants! How its heaving sides gasp, and how it longs for the cooling stream, not only that it may drink large draughts of the fresh waters and lave its panting flanks and weary, parched limbs, but, by swimming across, may haply escape the dogs and hunters at its heels. How strong, how striking the figure. And yet strong as it is, how earnestly does David employ it to set forth the panting of his soul after God. We cannot, perhaps, rise up into the fulness of this figure; we cannot, we dare not lay our feelings stretched fully out side by side with his, or use the same burning, vehement, ardent expressions. But we may at least see from them what the saints of God have experienced in times of temptation and trial in days of old; and we may in some measure compare the feelings of our soul with theirs—sometimes to fill us with shame and confusion at our short-comings, sometimes to stimulate and encourage us so far as we experience a degree of similar teachings; for these things are written for our instruction, "upon whom the ends of the world are come." Thus in various ways and to various ends we may, with God's help and blessing, look at and into such expressions as we find in the words of David, and in the fear of God search our hearts to see if we can find anything there corresponding to the work of grace that the Holy Ghost describes as existing in his soul. Nor be utterly cast down nor wholly discouraged if you cannot find a full or close similarity. Can you find *any*? If so, take encouragement, for the Lord despises not the day of small things. It is his own work upon the heart and his own work alone to which he has regard, as David felt when he said, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever; forsake not the works of thine own hands" (Psalm 138:8). And that work will ever be a copy in full or in miniature, a complete or reduced photograph, of the work of grace described in the Scripture as carried on by the Spirit in the hearts of God's saints of old.

July 2

*"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." 1 Corinthians 1:22, 23*

The mystery of the cross can be received only by faith. To the Jews it was a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God. When, then, we can believe that the Son of God took part of our flesh and blood out of love and compassion for our souls; that there being no other way which even heaven itself could devise, no other means that the wisdom of God could contrive whereby sinners could be saved, but by the death of the cross, then the mystery shines forth with unspeakable lustre and glory. The shame, the ignominy, what the Apostle calls the "weakness" and "foolishness" of the cross disappear, swallowed up in a flood of surpassing grace; and faith views it as a glorious scheme of God's own devising, and of the Son of God's approving and accomplishing. Viewed in this light how glorious it appears, that by suffering in our nature all the penalties of our sin, Jesus should redeem us from the lowest hell and raise us up to the highest heaven. How full of unspeakable wisdom was that plan whereby he united God and man by himself becoming God-man; empowering poor worms of earth to soar above the skies and live for ever in the presence of him who is a consuming fire. How glorious is that scheme whereby reconciling aliens and enemies unto his heavenly Father, he summons them, when death cuts their mortal thread, to mount up into an eternity of bliss, there to view face to face the great and glorious I AM; to be for ever enwrapped in the blaze of Deity, and ever folded in the arms of a Triune God. It is this blessed end, this reward of the Redeemer's sufferings, bloodshedding and death, which lifts our view beyond the depths of the fall and the misery of sin, as we see and feel it in this miserable world. It is this view by faith of the glory which shall be revealed which enables us to see what wisdom and mercy were in the heart of God when he permitted the Adam fall to take place. It is as if we could see the glory of God breaking forth through it in all the splendour of atoning blood and dying love, securing to guilty man the joys of salvation, and bringing to God an eternal revenue of praise.

**July 3**

*"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Galatians 6:14*

**An experimental knowledge of crucifixion with his crucified Lord made Paul preach the cross, not only in its power to save, but in its power to sanctify. But as then, so now, this preaching of the cross, not only as the meritorious cause of all salvation, but as the instrumental cause of all sanctification, is "to them that perish foolishness." As men have found out some other way of salvation than by the blood of the cross, so have they discovered some other way of holiness than by the power of the cross; or rather have altogether set aside obedience, fruitfulness, self-denial, mortification of the deeds of the body, crucifixion of the flesh and of the world. Extremes are said to meet; and certainly men of most opposite sentiments may unite in despising the cross and counting it foolishness. The Arminian despises it for justification, and the Antinomian for sanctification. "Believe and be holy," is as strange a sound to the latter as "Believe and be saved" to the former. But, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," is as much written on the portal of life as, "By grace are ye saved through faith." Through the cross, that is, through union and communion with him who suffered upon it, not only is there a fountain opened for all sin, but for all uncleanness. Blood and water gushed from the side of Jesus when pierced by the Roman spear.**

**"This fountain so dear, he'll freely impart;  
Unlock'd by the spear, it gushed from the heart,  
With blood and with water; the first to atone,  
To cleanse us the latter; the fountain's but one."**

**"All my springs are in thee," said the man after God's own heart; and well may we re-echo his words. All our springs, not only of pardon and peace, acceptance and justification, but of happiness and holiness, of wisdom and strength, of victory over the world, of mortification of a body of sin and death, of every fresh revival and renewal of hope and confidence; of all prayer and praise; of every new budding forth of the soul, as of Aaron's rod, in blossom and fruit; of every gracious feeling, spiritual desire, warm**

supplication, honest confession, melting contrition, and godly sorrow for sin—all these springs of that life which is hid with Christ in God are in a crucified Lord. Thus Christ crucified is, "to them who are saved, the power of God." And as he "of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," at the cross alone can we be made wise unto salvation, become righteous by a free justification, receive of his Spirit to make us holy, and be redeemed and delivered by blood and power from sin, Satan, death, and hell.

July 4

*"For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Romans 10:11*

A child of God may be often deeply exercised whether he has any faith at all; for when he reads what faith has done and can do, and sees and feels how little it has done for him, he is seized with doubts and fears whether he has ever been blessed with the faith of God's elect. This makes him often say, "Oh, do I indeed possess one grain of saving faith?" But he does possess it: nay, it is his very faith which makes him so anxiously ask himself the question, as well as see and feel the nature and amount of his unbelief. It is the very light of God shining into his soul that shews him his sins, their nature and number; convinces him of their guilt and enormity; lays the burden of them upon his conscience; and discovers to him the workings of an unbelieving heart. But besides this, if he had no faith at all he could not hear the voice of God speaking in the gospel, nor receive it as a message of mercy; so that he has faith, though he has not its witnessing evidence, or its abounding comfort. This faith will save his soul; for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance;" that is, God never repents of any gift that he bestows or of any calling which he has granted. If, then, he has ever blessed you with faith, however small that faith may be in itself or in your own view of it, he will never take it away out of your heart, but rather fan the smoking flax until it burst forth into a flame. He will never forsake the work of his own hands, for he which "hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." If ever, then, if but once in your life, you have felt the gospel to be the power of God unto salvation; if you have ever had one view of Christ by living faith; if but once only, under the influence of his blessed

**Spirit on your heart, you have laid hold of him and felt even for a few minutes that he was yours, your soul is as safe as though it were continually bathing in the river which maketh glad the city of God, continually drinking of the honey and milk of the, gospel, and walking all day long in the full light of his most gracious countenance. Not that a man should be satisfied with living at a poor, cold, dying rate; I mean not that, but merely to lay it down as a part of God's truth that as regards salvation, it is not the amount, but the reality of faith that saves the soul.**

**July 5**

*"It shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary." Ezekiel 47:12*

**There is always something new in the things of God. Here is a passage perhaps in the word of God that we have read and read again and again without seeing or feeling anything in it; but all of a sudden there may come a blessed flash of light upon it; we now see something in it that we have never seen before, something exceedingly sweet and precious. It is now all new; it is received as new, felt as new, fed upon as new, relished as new. It seems as though we never saw anything in the passage before. So with prayer; so with hearing. You may perhaps have had your soul shut up in distress and bondage and misery for months; you could scarcely trace anything of the life of God in you. But under the preached word, it may have pleased God to drop something which has come into your heart with warmth, and life, and feeling. Oh, how new it is! It is as new as though it were never heard before; it seems as though the eyes were now first opened to see new things, and the ears were opened to hear new things, and the heart opened to receive new things. The Lord thus fulfils that blessed promise, "He that sitteth upon the throne saith, Behold, I make all things new!" "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new."**

**July 6**

*"Those that walk in pride he is able to abase." Daniel 4:37*

**Amongst all the evils which lie naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do, pride seems especially to incur his holy abhorrence; and the outward manifestations of it have perhaps drawn down as much as, or more than, any other sin his marked thunderbolts. Pride cost Senhacherib his army and Herod his life; pride opened the earth to Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and hung up Absalom in the boughs of an oak; pride filled the breast of Saul with murderous hatred against David, and tore ten tribes at one stroke from the hand of Rehoboam. Pride drove Nebuchadnezzar from the society of his fellow-men, and made him eat grass as oxen, and his body to be wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown as eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. And as it has cut off the wicked from the earth, and left them neither son nor nephew, root nor branch, so it has made sad havoc even among the family of God. Pride shut Aaron out of the promised land, and made Miriam a leper white as snow; pride, working in the heart of David, brought a pestilence which cut off seventy thousand men; pride carried captive to Babylon Hezekiah's treasure and descendants, and cast Jonah into the whale's belly, and, in his feelings, into the very belly of hell. It is the only source of contention; the certain forerunner of a fall; the instigator of persecution; a gin for the feet; a chain to compass the whole body; the main element of deceitfulness, and the grave of all uprightness. The very opposite to charity, pride suffereth not long, and is never kind; she envieth always, and ever vaunteth herself; is continually puffed up, always behaveth herself unseemly, ever seeketh her own, is easily provoked, perpetually thinketh evil, rejoiceth in iniquity, but rejoiceth not in the truth; beareth nothing, believeth nothing (good in a brother), hopeth nothing, endureth nothing. Ever restless and ever miserable, tormenting herself and tormenting others, the bane of churches, the fomentor of strife, and the extinguisher of love—may it be our wisdom to see, our grace to abhor, and our victory to overcome her, and may the experience of that verse in Hart's hymn be ours:**

**"Thy garden is the place  
Where pride can not intrude;  
For should it dare to enter there,  
'Twould soon be drown'd in blood."**

**July 7**

*"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." John 10:28*

The Lord says, "I give unto them (that is, my sheep) eternal life;" not, "I will give them in the life to come; but I give it unto them now." We therefore read, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life"—has it now, as a present, felt, and enjoyed possession. This life is given manifestly when Christ reveals himself to the soul; for eternal life is then received out of his fulness as an enjoyed possession. All, then, who have truly fled for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before them, embrace in so doing eternal life. They live, as being manifestly in Christ, for he is "our life;" and as they embrace it in him they feel its sweet movements in their breast, in the joy it communicates, in the peace it imparts, in the prospects it opens, in the doubts it removes, in the fears it disperses. Thus, in real religion, there is something, if I may so speak, tangible, something to be laid hold of; and this distinguishes a good hope through grace from every other hope which is delusive, enthusiastic, or visionary. Depend upon it, there is a reality in vital godliness, a possession for eternity, which, therefore, kills and deadens the living child of God to a perishing world, and the fading things of time and sense. Whenever we get a view of Christ, there is a view of eternal life in him; for he is the eternal Son of God, and when he makes himself known to the soul as such, he shews us that all our life is in him. The work that he accomplished is for eternity; he lives himself for ever and ever; and those whom he has redeemed by his blood, justified by his righteousness, and sanctified by his grace, will live for ever and ever in his glorious presence. It is the eternity of his love which stamps it with its main value and blessedness; for this life being eternal, secures not only perpetuity, but immutability, prevents it from any change in time as well as from any change in eternity, and secures it firm and stable to all the heirs of promise. As, then, they lay hold of eternal life in laying hold of him who is the life, and as the sweet movements of hope spring up in their breast, it opens before their eyes a vista of immortal joy.

July 8

*"I will set him on high, because he hath known my name." Psalm 91:14*

**A man must know the Lord's name before ever he can feel any real love to him. Now this is needful, this is what the Lord does for his people, he causes them to know his name. "They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest" (Jer. 31:34). "They shall all;" they shall. The Lord has declared it. They shall know me. Now what is the name of the Lord? When God revealed himself unto Moses, did he not say, "I AM THAT I AM?" This was the way God taught Moses his name, and we may gather from it that whatever God is, that is his name. God is holy, God is just, God is merciful, God is a God of love. Now the sinner must know this. He must know that God is a pure and holy God, and at first when he is beginning to learn this lesson, he is completely astonished and appalled by it. It causes him to shrink away and hide himself from God. "How can I appear before God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity?" he cries. And so you see it brings distress into his conscience. It is the first work of the Spirit to "convince of sin," and a sense of God's holiness is that which brings us this conviction—our sin and God's purity. How can the sinner appear before and approach to God? And while he is under the terrors of the law, he is full of distress, and at times, perhaps, wishes he had never been born, and at other times he is tempted with hard thoughts of God, reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not strawed. This is how God is seen in his perverted mind. The devil is at him, and tries all he can to harden his heart against the Almighty. But the terrors of the Almighty have taken hold of him, and he tries many ways to get these arrows extracted; but all his tugging and pulling only make the wound worse. And so he goes on until he is brought to see that God is a God of mercy,—and this is revealed to him in and through the Lord Jesus. This is what clears up the mystery, when he sees Christ bleeding on the cross. Here he sees God is both a just God and a Saviour. God is pure and holy, and exacts to the utmost farthing all the enormous debt he owes, and yet to the bleeding, broken heart, he, through Christ, can and does manifest his mercy.**

**July 9**

***"The gospel of the grace of God." Acts 20:24***

**What does the word "gospel" signify? Gospel is a good old Anglo-Saxon word, sprung from that pure Anglo-Saxon stock which**

forms the bulk, as well as the most expressive and precious portion of our noble language, of that language of which the daily lengthening line is gone throughout all the earth, and its words to the end of the world, our mother tongue, in which God seems to have set a tabernacle for the Sun of the gospel, whose going forth is from the end of the heaven and its circuit unto the ends of it. Its literal meaning is either "God's word" or message, or rather, "good news," or "good tidings," which is more agreeable to the original. But if it be "good news," it must be good news of something and to somebody. There must be some good tidings brought, and there must be some person by whom, as good tidings, it is received. In order, then, that the gospel should be good news, glad tidings, there must be a message from God to man, God being the Speaker, and man the hearer; he the gracious Giver, and man the happy receiver. But if the gospel mean good news from heaven to earth, it can only be worthy of the name as it proclaims grace, mercy, pardon, deliverance, and salvation, and all as free gifts of God's unmerited favour. Otherwise, it would not be a gospel adapted to our wants; it would not be good news, glad tidings to us poor sinners, to us law-breakers, to us guilty criminals, to us vile transgressors, to us arraigned at the bar of infinite justice, to us condemned to die by the unswerving demands of God's holiness. And as it must be a gospel adapted to us to receive, so must it be a gospel worthy of God to give. This gospel then, pure, clear, and free, is good news or glad tidings, as proclaiming pardon through the blood of Jesus and justification by his righteousness. It reveals an obedience whereby the law was magnified and made honourable, and a propitiation for sin by which it was for ever blotted out and put away; and thus it brings glory to God and salvation to the soul. It is a pure revelation of sovereign mercy, love and grace, whereby each Person in the divine Trinity is exalted and magnified. In it "mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other." As revealed in it, "truth springs out of earth" in the hearts of contrite sinners, and "righteousness," eternally satisfied by Christ's obedience, "looks down from heaven." If you love a pure, a clear, a free gospel, "the gospel of the grace of God," you love it not only because it is so fully suitable to your wants, so thoroughly adapted to your fallen state, but because you have felt its sweetness and power; because it not only speaks of pardon, but brings pardon; not only proclaims mercy, but brings mercy; not only points out a way of salvation, but brings salvation, with all its rich attendant blessings, into your heart. It thus becomes "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

**July 10**

*"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5*

Without a union with Christ, we have no spiritual existence; and we may boldly say that we no more have a spiritual being in the mind of God independent of Christ, than the branch of a tree has an independent existence out of the stem in which it grows. But you will observe, also, in this figure of the vine and the branches, how all the fruitfulness of the branch depends upon its union with the vine. Whatever life there is in the branch, it flows out of the stem; whatever strength there is in the branch, it comes from its union with the stem; whatever foliage, whatever fruit, all come still out of its union with the stem. And this is the case, whether the branch be great or small. From the stoutest limb of a tree to the smallest twig, all are in union with the stem and all derive life and nourishment from it. So it is in grace: not only is our very being, as sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, connected with our union with Christ, but our well-being. All our knowledge, therefore, of heavenly mysteries, all our faith, all our hope, and all our love—in a word, all our grace, whether much or little, whether that of the babe, the child, the young man, or the father—flows out of a personal, spiritual, and experimental union with the Lord Jesus; for we are nothing but what we are in him, and we have nothing but what we possess by virtue of our union with him.

**July 11**

*"And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation." 2 Corinthians 1:7*

The Lord has appointed the path of sorrow for the redeemed to walk in. Why? One purpose is to wean them from the world; another purpose is to shew them the weakness of the creature; a third purpose is to make them feel the liberty and vitality of genuine godliness made manifest in their soul's experience. What am I, and what are you when we have no trials? Light, frothy, worldly-minded, carnal, frivolous. We may talk of the things of God, but they are at a distance; there are no solemn feelings, no

melting sensations, no real brokenness, no genuine contrition, no weeping at the divine feet, no embracing of Christ in the arms of affection. But when affliction, be it in providence or be it in grace, brings a man down; when it empties him of all his high thoughts, lays him low in his own eyes, brings trouble into his heart, I warrant you he wants something more than outside gospel. He wants power; he wants to experience in his soul the operations of the blessed Spirit; he wants to have a precious Jesus manifesting himself to his soul in love and blood; he wants to see his lovely countenance beaming upon him in ravishing smiles; he wants to hear the sweet whispers of dying love speaking inward peace; he wants to have the blessed Lord come into his soul, manifesting himself to him as he does not manifest himself to the world.

What brings a man here? A few dry notions floating to and fro in his brain, like a few drops of oil in a pail of water? *That* will never bring the life and power of vital godliness into a man's heart. It must be by being experimentally acquainted with trouble. When he is led into the path of tribulation, he then begins to long after, and, in God's own time and way, he begins to drink into, the sweetness of vital godliness, made manifest in his heart by the power of God.

July 12

*"Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."* Matthew 14:33

What a beauty and blessedness there is in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, when viewed by the spiritual eye! Our reasoning minds, it is true, may be deeply stumbled at the doctrine of an incarnate God. My own mind, I know, has sometimes been driven almost to its wits' end by this great mystery of deity and humanity combined in the Person of Christ, for it so surpasses all human comprehension, and is so removed beyond the grasp of all our reasoning faculties. It is not, indeed, contrary to reason, for there is nothing in it impossible or self-contradictory; but it is beyond and above the reach of human thought and tangible apprehension. But when we are led to consider what would be the most certain and most fearful consequences unless the Lord Jesus Christ were what he declares he is, God as well as man, we are compelled, from the very necessity of the case, to cast ourselves with all the weight of our sins and sorrows upon an incarnate

**God, as the shipwrecked sailor gladly casts himself upon the rock in the ocean as the only refuge from the devouring sea. When we feel what sinners we are, and have been, look down into the depths of the fall, and see in some feeble and faint measure what sin is in the sight of a holy and pure God, what can save us from despair unless we see the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ investing his work upon the cross and his obedience with a merit that shall suffice to justify our guilty souls, wash away our aggravated iniquities, blot out our fearful crimes, and make us fit to appear in the presence of a righteous God? Thus we are sometimes absolutely compelled to throw ourselves on the deity of Christ, as ready to perish, because in such a divine Saviour, in such precious blood we see a refuge, and we see elsewhere no other. We then feel that if the deity of Christ be taken away, the Church of God is lost. Where can you find pardon? where justification? where reconciliation to God? where atoning blood, if there is no Saviour who merited as God and suffered as man? We might as well leap into hell at once with all our sins upon our head, as a sailor might spring over the prow of a burning ship into the boiling waves, to meet death instead of waiting for it, unless we believe by a living faith in the deity of the Son of God. But sometimes we are sweetly led into this glorious truth, not merely driven by sheer necessity, but blessedly drawn into this great mystery of godliness, when Christ is revealed to our souls by the power of God. Then, seeing light in God's light, we view the deity of Christ investing every thought, word, and act of his suffering humanity with unspeakable merit. Then we see how this glorious fact of deity and humanity in the Person of Immanuel satisfies every want, puts away every sin, heals every wound, wipes away every tear, and sweetly brings the soul to repose on the bosom of God. Sometimes, therefore, from necessity, driven by storms of guilt and waves of temptation, and sometimes sweetly drawn by the leadings and teachings of the Holy Ghost, we lay hold of the hope set before us in the essential deity and suffering humanity of the Son of God, knowing that there is a refuge in him from sin, death, hell, and despair.**

**July 13**

*"We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary,*

*and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."*  
Hebrews 8:1, 2

Our blessed Lord was to be "a High Priest after the order of Melchizedec." It will be remembered that Melchizedec met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him (Gen. 14:19). In the same way our great High Priest blesses the seed of Abraham; for "they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham;" and as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, they walk in his steps who "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." But Melchizedec the type could only *ask* God to bless Abraham. He could not himself confer the blessing; but Jesus, the antitype, our great Melchizedec, whose priesthood is "after the power of an endless life," blesses his people, not by merely asking God to bless them, but by himself showering down blessings upon them, and by communicating to them out of his own fulness every grace which can sanctify as well as save. Even before his incarnation, when he appeared in human form, as if anticipating in appearance that flesh and blood which he should afterwards assume in reality, he had power to bless. Thus we read that when Jacob wrestled with the angel, which angel was no created angel, but the Angel of the covenant, even the Son of God himself in human shape, he said, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." And in answer to his wrestling cry we read that "he blessed him there." Jacob knew that no created angel could bless him. He therefore said, when he had got the blessing, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." To this blessing Jacob afterwards referred when, in blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, he said, "The angel which redeemed me from all evil bless the lads." Thus, also, our gracious Lord, immediately before his ascension to heaven, as if in anticipation of the gifts and graces which he was to send down upon them when exalted to the right hand of the Father, "lifted up his hands and blessed his disciples;" and as if to shew that he would still ever continue to bless them, "he was parted from them and carried up into heaven," even "*while* he blessed them," as if he were blessing them all the way up to heaven, even before he took possession of his mediatorial throne (Luke 24:50, 51).

July 14

*"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." Jude 20*

By the words "most holy faith," we may understand chiefly the grand truths of the everlasting gospel which are revealed unto and embraced by faith. And they are called "our most holy faith," because they are imbued with all the holiness of God; and not only so, but as they are received into believing hearts, communicate sanctification, because they have a liberating, sanctifying efficacy. The words "build up" assume that there is a foundation laid. Christ is that foundation which God hath laid in Zion, a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and where Christ is revealed to the soul by a divine power, a foundation is laid in the heart on which every subsequent truth is to be built up. The grand thing to be clear of in our own experience is, whether Christ has been laid as a foundation in our souls or not, and if he has, we have been driven from every other as finding no rest or peace but in him. If ever he has been revealed to our souls by the mighty power of God, then we have seen and felt that in him there is a foundation on which we can stand, and that for eternity. As the Son of the Father in truth and love; having come to finish the work which the Father gave him to do; having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and brought in an everlasting righteousness in which we may stand justified, there is a foundation on which a poor, guilty soul may rest. When this foundation is brought nigh, and we, by the power of God's grace, are lifted up to rest upon it, we can say,

**"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word."**

**"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11).**

July 15

*"Keep yourselves in the love of God." Jude 21*

When Christ is made known to our soul by the power of God, we have views of truth in him, of happiness in him, and of deliverance. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." We receive him as the Son of the Father in truth and love; we receive him as suitable to our wants and woes; we receive him as putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and endearing himself to our heart in the sweet manifestation of his Person, goodness, and love. Now as long as Christ and the soul are together, there is no place for error, and no place for evil. He makes the soul tender, the heart upright, the spirit broken and contrite, truth precious, error hateful, and sin loathsome and detestable. And whilst he and the soul are engaged together, error cannot approach nor evil find an entrance, so as to get any standing-ground in the heart. But error is very subtle; it addresses itself to our reasoning powers; and when we lose sight of Christ, then error very easily creeps in; or if not error, some special lust, or something ungodly, seems by degrees to obtain power and influence, and we gradually decline from the strength of faith, the confidence of hope, and the sweet affections of love, and drop, it may be, into a cold, carnal, careless, lifeless state, where we lie open to the invasion of error and the temptations of Satan as an angel of light or an angel of darkness. But now Jude comes and says, "Keep yourselves in the love of God; and I will tell you, if you will listen to me, how you shall do it. You must build up yourselves on your most holy faith." God has laid a foundation for your faith in his holy word; he has laid Christ as a foundation in your own soul. That is a very strong foundation; it is of God's own laying. It is very solid; it will bear any weight laid upon it. And therefore you must build up yourselves upon that most holy faith if you would have a religion which stands; because if your religion, or any part of your religion, be built upon another foundation, it will not stand. But if you build up yourselves on your most holy faith, then everything you build upon it will stand, because it rests upon the foundation, and is in harmony with it.

July 16

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23, 24*

The people of God cannot take their religion upon credit; they cannot be satisfied with the endorsement of this or that good man. They must have it wrought by God himself. They are often exercised as to whence their religion came. Do you not find it so, and that it costs you many exercises? If, for instance, you are cast down, you are exercised whether it spring from godly sorrow for sin. If you are comforted, you cannot take the comfort for granted; you must have it weighed up in the gospel balance. If you meet with providential deliverances, you cannot take them as so many certain evidences that all is right with your soul. So that every step you take you have to examine, and weigh it whether it be of God. The dead professors, the hypocrites in Zion never have their religion tried and weighed up in this way. They know nothing of these inward exercises. They take things for granted; they nestle under some good man's wing, or get their religion endorsed by some minister, and are satisfied. But the people of God must have testimonies from the Lord himself; and they will often be sharply exercised whether they have that work in their souls which will stand in the trying hour. And if in answer to their cries the Lord is pleased to shine into their souls, and raise up clear tokens that it is from heaven, it fills their hearts with gratitude, sinks the things of time and sense, and lifts up their affections to that blessed fountain whence these testimonies came down. Thus those very things which seem against them are for them, and they derive their sweetest consolations out of their heaviest afflictions. They would not change their trying path, with all its bitter things, for the smooth flowery path in which they see thousands walk, knowing that a religion without trials and temptations will only lead the soul down into a never-ending hell. Thus at times they can feel good spring out of their exercises, and would rather be all their days a tempted, tried people, and bear those things which God inflicts, than walk in a path which seemeth right in the eyes of a man, and at the end find eternal destruction. They would rather have those chastisements which prove they are children and not bastards, than walk in a flesh-pleasing way of which the end is eternal damnation.

July 17

*"Then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house." 2 Chronicles 6:29*

Solomon comes to experience; he puts his hand upon the right spot. It is *knowing* his "own sore" and his "own grief." You may know another man's; that will not profit you. You may read of experience in books, love to hear experimental ministers, and will hear no others; and yet not know your "own sore," your "own grief." Like a physician who may know the symptoms of every malady, and yet not have one malady of his own; so you may hear described every symptom of every disease, and yet be untouched by one. But the man for whom Solomon's prayer is, he that knows and feels, painfully feels, his "own sore" and his "own grief," whose heart is indeed a grief to him, whose sins do indeed trouble him. How painful this sore often is! how it runs night and day! how full of ulcerous matter, and how it shrinks from the probe! Most of the Lord's family have a "sore," each some tender spot, something perhaps known to himself and to God alone, the cause of his greatest grief. It may be some secret slip he has made, some sin he has committed, some word he has spoken, or some evil thing he has done. He has been entangled, and entrapped, and cast down; and this is his grief and his sore which he feels, and that at times deeply before God. For such Solomon prays: he casts his net upon the right side of the ship; and says, "Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men." Yes; God alone knows the heart; he knows it completely, and sees to its very bottom.

July 18

*"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Romans 8:26*

"We know not what we should pray for as we ought." How often do we find and feel this to be our case. Darkness covers our mind; ignorance pervades our soul; unbelief vexes our spirit; guilt

troubles our conscience; a crowd of evil imaginations, or foolish or worse than foolish wanderings distract our thoughts; Satan hurls in thick and fast his fiery darts; a dense cloud is spread over the mercy-seat; infidelity whispers its vile suggestions, till, amidst all this rabble rout, such confusion and bondage prevail that words seem idle breath, and prayer to the God of heaven but empty mockery. In this scene of confusion and distraction, when all seems going to the wreck, how kind, how gracious is it in the blessed Spirit to come, as it were, to the rescue of the poor bewildered saint, and to teach him how to pray and what to pray for. He is therefore said "to help our infirmities," for these evils of which we have been speaking are not wilful, deliberate sins, but wretched infirmities of the flesh. He helps, then, our infirmities by subduing the power and prevalence of unbelief; by commanding in the mind a solemn calm; by rebuking and chasing away Satan and his fiery darts; by awing the soul with a reverential sense of the power and presence of God; by presenting Jesus before our eyes as the Mediator at the right hand of the Father; by raising up and drawing forth faith upon his Person and work, blood and righteousness; and, above all, by himself interceding for us and in us "with groanings which cannot be uttered." When the soul is favoured thus to pray, its petitions are a spiritual sacrifice, and its cries enter the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, for "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:27; James 5:4; 1 Peter 2:5).

July 19

*"Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God."*  
Psalm 55:19

True religion is certainly the most weighty, and yet the most mysterious matter that we ever have had or can have to do with in this world. And I will tell you this, that it will either comfort you, or it will distress you. It will either exercise your mind, trouble your soul, cast down your spirit, and make you truly miserable, or else be the source of your choicest comfort and your greatest happiness. From religion come our deepest sorrows and highest joys, the greatest uneasiness and the sweetest peace. There is this peculiar feature about true religion, that in the greatest prosperity it may be the cause to us of the chiefest trouble, or in the greatest

adversity be to us the cause of the purest joy. What are wealth or health, rank or titles, and every comfort the world can afford to a wounded spirit? What are poverty, sickness, persecution, contempt, a garret or a prison to a soul basking in the smiles of eternal love? Religion will surely make itself felt wherever it exists, and will testify by its power to its presence. If, then, you are a partaker of true religion, be you who, where, or what you may, you cannot be at ease in Zion, for there will be ever something working up out of your own heart or arising from some other quarter to make you uneasy. Job was once at ease, but he was not suffered to die in his nest. He therefore says, "I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark." And yet with all this unexpected and apparently cruel treatment, he could still say, "Behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high." And though so exercised and distressed that he had to cry out, "My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth. Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me;" yet he could add, in all the confidence of faith, as desirous that his words might stand for ever upon record: "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."

July 20

*"Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word."* Psalm 119:17

Can the Lord deal any way but *bountifully* with his servants? Why has he made you his servants? Why did he strike the chains of former servitude off your hands? Why did he bring you out of the service of sin, the world, Satan, and self? Why did he ever make himself precious to your heart, win your affections, and enable you to give yourselves wholly unto him? That he might cast you off? that he might mock your calamity? that he might trample you one day into hell? that he might leave you to yourself,

that he might suffer Satan to overcome you, permit your lusts to destroy you; or allow your sins to be tied one day, like a millstone, round your neck to sink you into hell? Oh, can our heart ever indulge thoughts so derogatory to sovereign grace? Was it not because the Lord had bounty in his heart towards you, that he first turned your heart towards himself? Was it not because the Lord had purposes of love towards you, that he first led your feet into his paths? Was it not because God first loved you, that he gave his Son to die for you? Now if he has taught you, led you, upheld you, kept you, all this time, is it to cast you off *now*—to let you sink at last? He cannot do so, will not do so. Those whom he loves, he loves to the end; the good work which he has begun, he will accomplish, and bring to final perfection; and therefore all the Lord's acts are acts of bounty.

July 21

*"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Romans 9:16*

He that is not interested in the eternal election of God the Father, in the atoning blood and justifying righteousness of God the Son, in the work and witness of God the Holy Ghost, whatever be his name, sect, denomination or profession; whatever be his outward conduct, the doctrines he professes, or the creed to which he signs his name, he will die as Esau died, as Balaam died, as Saul died, as Judas and Ahithophel died. He will never see the King in his beauty; never see the land afar off; never see the new Jerusalem, nor the blood of sprinkling, "that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." But every living soul that has been feelingly taught his lost condition, that has known something of a resting-place in Christ, that has turned his back upon the world and the professing church, and gone weeping Zionward, in whose heart God the Holy Ghost has implanted those solemn desires, and (if I may use the expression) those solemn determinations under the divine teaching, not a determination of free will, but the inward determination of grace strengthened to it by the Spirit of God, "to join himself to the Lord in a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten"—that he may live in Jesus and die in Jesus, live out of Jesus and unto Jesus, that he may feel his power, taste his love, know his blood, rejoice in his grace; every such soul shall, like Israel of old, be borne safely through this waste-howling

wilderness, shall be carried through this vale of tears, and taken to enjoy eternal bliss and glory in the presence of Him whom to see as he is, constitutes the blessedness of the redeemed. Every such poor, exercised, tempted soul shall be brought into a personal enjoyment of Christ below and of Christ above, so as to enjoy a foretaste of heaven here, and hereafter to bathe in the ocean of endless bliss.

July 22

*"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."* Hebrews 12:11

It may be said of spiritual exercises as the Apostle speaks of chastening generally, of which indeed they form a component part, that "for the present they are not joyous, but grievous; but afterward they yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." *Why* the Lord suffers so many of his people to be so long and deeply tried about their interest in Christ, *why* he does not more speedily and fully manifest his pardoning love to their souls, is a mystery which we cannot fathom. But I have observed that, where the first work was not attended with deep and powerful convictions of sin, it is usually the case, as if what was wanting in depth has to be made up in length, and a slow, continuous work compensates, as it were, for a shorter and more intense one.

I consider it, however, a great mercy where there are these exercises, for I am well convinced that exercise is as much needed for the health of the soul as of the body. Without movement the air becomes pestilential, and water putrescent. Motion is the life of the natural, and equally so of the supernatural, creation; and what are exercises, doubts, and fears, accompanied as they always are by desires and prayers, but means by which the soul is kept alive and healthy? As Hezekiah said, "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." But if you cannot see what good exercises have done you, can you not see what evil they have kept you from? They mainly kept you from being entangled in a worldly system; they have preserved you from resting in the form without the power, and kept you from

that notional dead-letter faith which has ruined so many thousands. (*This extract was taken from a letter to a friend.*) Without exercises you could do without a revealed Christ, without manifested pardon of sin, without the love of God being shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost.

And here most are who are not exercised—resting in "a name to live," and in the doctrine without the experience. But, being sick, you need a physician; being guilty, you need mercy; and being a sinner, you need salvation; and all this, not in word and name, but in reality, and divine revelation and application. Your exercises give you errands to the throne of mercy, and make you see in Christ and his precious gospel what otherwise would neither be seen nor cared for. At the same time, it would be wrong to rest in exercises as marks and evidences of grace. Thirst is good as preparatory for water; hunger is good as antecedent to food; but who can rest in thirst or hunger? Without them, water and food are not desired; so, without exercises, Christ, the Water and Bread of life, is not desired nor longed for. But these exercises are meant to quicken longing desires after Christ, and eventually make him very precious.

July 23

*"Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old."* Lamentations 5:21

If we do not wish to deceive ourselves, if God has made us honest, if he has planted his fear in our hearts, if he has begun and is carrying on a good work in us, there will be evidences of the existence of the life of God within. *Life* is the commencement of salvation as an inward reality; for whatever the eternal purposes of God are, or whatever standing the vessel of mercy has in Christ previous to effectual calling, there is no more movement in the soul Godward till life is imparted, than there is natural life and motion in a breathless corpse that lies interred in the churchyard. But wherever divine life is implanted there will be certain fruits and feelings that spring out of this life. One fruit will be complaint, and this will arise sometimes from a feeling of the burden of sin, and at others from a sense of merited chastisement from God on account of it. But wherever this complaining is spiritual, there will be accompanying it "an accepting the

punishment of our iniquity," and "a putting of our mouth in the dust." Thus where there is spiritual life there will be complaint, confession, and submission; the effect being meekness, brokenness, and humility. This breaks to pieces self-conceit and self-justification, and the result is a searching and trying our ways whether they are of God. The fruit of this search will be, for the most part, a solemn and painful conviction that the greater part have been in the flesh; or, at least, there will be many anxious suspicions which cannot be relieved except by an express testimony from the Lord himself. This produces a going out of soul unto him, the cry now being, "Let us turn again to the Lord;" and towards him the heart turns as to the only Source and Author of every good and perfect gift. As the quickened soul knows that he is a heart-searching God, this appeal will purge away much hypocrisy and insincerity, and deepen uprightness, sincerity, and godly integrity. And the blessed fruit and end of all this sifting work will be a coming down of gracious answers, divine testimonies, smiles of the Saviour's loving countenance, soft whispers of God's eternal favour, and the blessed witness of the Spirit within.

July 24

*"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together." Ephesians 2:4, 5, 6*

Eighteen hundred years have rolled away since the body of Christ was quickened in the sepulchre; but the virtual effect of that quickening reached all the election of grace, and will stretch down to the remotest period of time. Now, by virtue of this quickening, when the Holy Spirit comes forward for the execution of his purpose, life enters into the soul. "You hath he quickened who were dead." With quickening comes living sensations, such as conviction of sin, guilt of conscience, the fear of God, the heart broken, the spirit of prayer, repentance unto life; in a word, all the first work of grace in the soul. As in the body of Christ, when quickened by the Holy Ghost, there were vital movements before that body left the sepulchre, so there are vital movements in the soul of a child of God under the quickening operations of God the Holy Ghost, before raised up and brought forth. He is quickened

into life, and under that quickening sees, feels, trembles, cries, groans, begs, and sues for mercy; every faculty of his renewed mind is alive and open to the things of God. Never do we pray, read, hear, feel so much the power of eternal things, as when the Lord by his Spirit and grace is first pleased to quicken us into this spiritual life. But no *resurrection* yet; the quickening precedes.

But as, when the breath of the Holy Ghost, so to speak, quickened the body of Christ as it lay in the sepulchre, it was but a preparation for the raising of that dead body from the tomb, so the quickening operations of God the Holy Ghost in the heart of a child of God are but preparatory to his being raised up together with Christ. Christ's body did not remain in the tomb, though it was alive in the tomb; so those whom God has quickened, and who are still lying in the tomb of sin, misery, and wretchedness, but are sighing, suing, and begging for mercy at his hands will certainly be brought out. Christ's body was not left there when it was quickened, neither will any of you that are quickened be left in your sin and misery, in your condemnation and guilt. The same divine operation that quickened you into spiritual life will bring you out of this state of concern and anxiety into the resurrection life of Christ, as was done in the case of his body, when he rose out of the tomb.

Now, when the power of God is put forth in the soul; when mercy reaches the heart; when Christ is revealed, his word applied, and it comes forth out of the dark tomb in which it has lain, like Lazarus, bound with grave-clothes, and yet alive; when the door of hope thus is set open, and the soul is raised up to believe, hope and love, then it is "raised up together with Christ." The resurrection of Christ was not merely the grand testimony that God put upon him as his dear Son, for he was declared to be "the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead," but he was "raised also for our justification;" and we rose in him, if we believe in his name. All the elect of God rose with him; for they are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." When he died, they died; when he rose again, they rose again; and as they rose virtually in the Person of the Son of God when he rose triumphant from the tomb, so, when the Holy Ghost applies to the heart and conscience the benefits and blessings of his death and resurrection, he raises them up and brings them out of the dark sepulchre into the open light of a glorious gospel day. And this is being "raised up together with Christ."

July 25

*"And made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."*  
Ephesians 2:6

Jesus did not tarry upon the earth after his resurrection; he ascended up where he was before, and took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. But when he ascended up on high, all the election of grace ascended with him. He did not leave his members behind upon earth, but he took them all virtually into heaven. And this is a pledge that they will one day be with him in the realms of eternal bliss, because they have already ascended with him, as the members of his mystical body. This, in experimental manifestation, is the lifting up of the affections, the raising up of the soul to sit together with Christ in heavenly places. Sin, death, hell, and Satan, with all the misery and wretchedness we have brought upon ourselves—to have them all under our feet, as Christ now reigns, having put all enemies under his feet—to enjoy this, is to sit with Christ in heavenly places. One of the last acts that God usually does for the soul, is the lifting it up thus to sit with Christ in the anticipation of eternal glory. To see death dethroned, hell destroyed, sin abolished, and a glorious immortality reserved for the saints of God; to enjoy this in the sweet anticipation and blessed foretastes, so as to be in heaven before we get there—this is to sit down with Christ in heavenly places, by virtue of his sitting down there "at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Now, see what benefits and blessings spring out of a union with the Son of God. Why did God quicken your soul? Because you were a member of Christ. Why were you raised up to "a good hope through grace?" Why did mercy, peace, and pardon flow into your soul? Why were you brought out of misery and death into the light of God's countenance, and had a precious Christ revealed to your heart? Because in the day, when the Son of God rose triumphant from the tomb, you, as a member of his mystical body, rose there and then with him. Why are you sometimes privileged to have your affections on things above, attain any victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave, find your enemies put under your feet, and look forward at times with a sweet anticipation of eternal joys? Because, as a member of Christ's mystical body, you have already ascended, and are already sitting

at the right hand of God with Christ, who is sitting as the Head of his body there.

July 26

*"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ."*  
Philippians 1:27

What is this conversation? The word means the whole of your walk before God and before man. It is a very comprehensive term in the original, meaning, literally, "Conduct yourselves as citizens." It therefore includes the whole of our spiritual fellowship and daily intercourse with God and man. It thus views us as citizens of no mean city; as citizens, I may indeed say, of a heavenly city, the new Jerusalem; and it bids us walk and speak, live and act, as becometh citizens of a heavenly country. This, then, is the meaning of the word "conversation" in our text, and by it we are called to walk with God as becometh the gospel. He has reconciled us to himself by the blood of his dear Son; and when we receive the atonement, or reconciliation, as the word means, then we can walk with God in peace, equity, and amity, for sin, which made the breach, is removed out of the way. So Levi, as ministering at the altar, and those near to God, walked of old. "My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity" (Malachi 2:5, 6). This is walking in the light as He is in the light, and so far as we can do this, our fellowship is with the Father (1 John 1:3-7). And our conversation with God, our walk with God, must be as becometh the gospel of Christ. If we walk at freedom with God, in sweet liberty, with holy access, pouring out our heart before him, enjoying his presence, and having some discoveries of his goodness and mercy, then our conversation with God becometh the gospel. The gospel is a message of mercy. When, then, we embrace that mercy, and feel the power of it; when that mercy reaches our heart, melts our inmost soul, dissolves our doubts and fears, and removes legality and bondage, then we walk worthy of the gospel, as walking before God in the light of his countenance through the power of the gospel. God does not send the gospel to condemn us, for "there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk

not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" and they walk after the Spirit when they have access by him through Christ unto the Father.

July 27

*"And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." Acts 16:5*

Oh what an inestimable mercy it is for a man to know the truth for himself by divine teaching and divine testimony; to have it applied to his heart by a gracious influence and a heavenly power, so as to know for himself what salvation is, whence it comes, and above all to enjoy a sweet persuasion that this salvation has reached his heart! He will then know where to go in the hour of trouble, to whom to resort when sorrow and affliction come into his house, or illness or infirmity shake his tabernacle. He will not be a stranger to the throne of grace, nor to the sweetness of the covenant ordered in all things and sure. But there will be given him from above, out of the fulness of Christ, such grace and strength as will support him in the trying hour. It is by these gracious dealings upon his soul, that a believer becomes "stablished in the faith." Nay, the very storms through which he passes will only strengthen him to take a firmer hold of Christ, and thus become more established in the faith of him. It is in these storms that he learns more of his own weakness and of Christ's strength; more of his own misery and of Christ's mercy; more of his own sinfulness and of superabounding grace; more of his own poverty and of Christ's riches; more of his own desert of hell, and more of his own title to heaven. Thus he becomes "stablished in faith," for the same blessed Spirit who began the work carries it on, goes on to fill up the original outline, and to engrave the image of Christ in deeper characters upon his heart, and to teach him more and more experimentally the truth as it is in Jesus.

**July 28**

*"But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute." Psalm 141:8*

The very cry is a pledge that the Lord will not leave the soul destitute. Strange though it be to us; it is the light that shews darkness; it is life that makes us feel deadness; nay, more, it is fertility and fruitfulness that make us feel barrenness; it is riches that make us feel poverty; it is God's teaching and presence that make us feel destitution. This very mourning over our barrenness; this very feeling of our inability to do good, is a proof of the life of God in the soul, an evidence of the work of grace in the heart. "Leave not my soul destitute." This is something genuine; this is heart-work; these are the footsteps of the flock; these are the leadings and teachings of God the Spirit in the hearts of the redeemed. These things are saving; these things will lead the soul to eternal glory. And he that knows any of these things by personal experience will one day see the glory of the Lord face to face. What do we, then, know of these things? Can we lay our experience side by side with this experience of the Psalmist, and say, "Mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord; in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute?" Wherever that prayer is, it will bring an answer; and wherever that answer is, there will be matter for everlasting praise. Blessed are the souls that know these things from genuine heartfelt experience. They will shine forth as stars for ever and ever; and when the Lord of life and glory comes a second time without sin unto salvation, then shall they also appear with him in glory.

**July 29**

*"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." 1 John 4:7*

"Love is of God." I can have no satisfaction, real satisfaction, that I am a partaker of the Spirit and grace of Christ except I feel some measure of the love of God shed abroad in my heart. I may have hopes, expectations, and evidences, fainter or brighter; but I have no sure, clear evidence in my own soul that I have the Spirit and grace of Christ there, except I am blessed with the love of God; for until love comes, there is fear which hath torment. And

whilst we have fear which hath torment, there is no being made perfect in love. You have no clear assurance in your own breast that God has loved you with an everlasting love; nor have you any bright testimony that the Spirit of God makes your body his temple until this love comes into your soul. But when the crowning blessing comes of the love of God experimentally felt and enjoyed by his own shedding of it abroad in the heart, with the communication of the Spirit of adoption to cry "Abba, Father," *that* is the sealing testimony of your possession of the true spirit; for it is "a spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind;" and where there is this, there is also a spirit of love and affection to all the family of God.

**July 30**

***"The sighing of the needy." Psalm 12:5***

**The distinguishing mark and character of a needy soul is to be full of needs. Day after day he wants divine realities to be revealed to his soul, to hear the sweet voice of mercy speaking into his heart, as from the lips of God himself, that he is an accepted child, that he may bathe, as it were, in sweet manifestations of the love and mercy of God. In the supply of want he believes the marrow of all true religion and vital godliness to consist. So that he cannot take up with his present state of need for religion. If he is in doubts and fears, or is passing through heavy temptations, and is writing bitter things against himself, he cannot say "*this* is religion;" but what he wants is something different from what he feels, even the blessed testimonies and manifestations that he is one of the Lord's own dear family; and I am very well assured from soul experience, that nothing but the application of heavenly blessings to the soul can ever satisfy the man who has had life implanted in his heart by the hand of God himself.**

**We therefore read of this needy person that he *sighs*. "For the oppression of the poor, for the *sighing* of the needy." He is sighing after God; groaning in the depths of his soul after the lifting up of the light of God's countenance; sighing under the weight of unbelief, the burden of infidelity, the power of temptation, the wretchedness of his heart, the carnality of his mind, the barrenness of his frame, his stupidity, his brutality, filth and corruption. He is sighing to the Lord under the burden of these things lying as a load on his conscience, and begging the Lord that he would only lift up the light of his countenance, that he would only drop one sweet testimony, that he would speak but one word to his soul, to bring with it sweet deliverance, and lift him out into all the light, and life, and liberty, and peace of the glorious gospel of the blessed God.**

**July 31**

***"Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses." Psalm 107:6***

**Oh what a mercy it is that there is a God to go to! a God who hears and answers prayer! And what a blessing it is to be able to unbosom before him the burdened spirit! Observe the words: "Then they cried unto the Lord in their *trouble*." If you have trouble it is a sufficient warrant for you to go to God with it. Do not trouble yourself with the question, whether you are elect or non-elect. God does not put it in that shape, and you need not. The answer will best shew on which side of the line you stand. Does he not say: "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me?" If you have a day of trouble, you have here a sufficient warrant to call upon God. Write not, then, bitter things against yourself. If you are enabled to sigh and cry unto the Lord there is life in your soul. God has quickened you by his blessed Spirit if he has put a sigh and cry into your bosom. Remember the men in Ezekiel on whom the Lord put the approving seal. It was those who sighed and cried for the abominations which they saw and felt in themselves and others (Ezekiel 9:4). If, then, the Lord has put a sigh and cry into your bosom on account of your felt inward abominations, you are one of those on whom he has set his seal. Sanctified troubles are some of our greatest blessings; and one of their blessed fruits is that they keep us from settling on our lees and being at ease in Zion. Careless, worldly-minded, proud, covetous professors, sunk in carnality and death, where is there ever a cry in their soul? They may have a formal prayer—a morning prayer, an evening prayer, a family prayer, and all as round as a ball, and as cold as Christmas. Stiff and frozen in carnality they are ice themselves, and they bring their ice with them wherever they come. But God does not suffer his people to go on in this cold, lifeless, frozen, icy way, with mere formal devotion, lip service, and prayers worn out like an old shoe with long and continual treading. He sends afflictions, trials, and troubles upon them, takes them into the wilderness, exercises them well in the path of tribulation, and supporting them under it, raises up a cry which he is sure to hear.**