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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

May 1

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

God gave the persons of the elect into the hands of his dear Son, as Jacob committed Benjamin into the hands of Judah; and as Judah accepted Benjamin, so Christ accepted the Church and undertook to bring it unto God, or he himself would bear the blame for ever. But how this faithfulness was tried! Men tried it; devils tried it; God tried it; but it came gloriously through all. Yet what loads were laid upon it! How the very knees of Jesus, so to speak, staggered beneath it! How, as Hart says, he had

"Strength enough, and none to spare!"

How he had to sustain the curse of the law and the load of imputed sin! How he had to drink up a very hell of inward torment! How he had to be agonised in body and more than agonised in soul! What bloody sweat in the garden, what tears, what sore amazement, what heaviness of spirit, what sorrowfulness even unto death; what pangs of body upon the cross, what grief of mind, what distress of soul, did the Holy Lamb endure in being faithful unto God! How he might have prayed, and his Father would have sent him twelve legions of angels! He had but to speak, and he might have soared to heaven and left the cross and all its shame and suffering behind. But he was faithful to God and to the work which he had undertaken. Six weary hours he hung upon the cross. Six weary hours he endured the wrath of God, and that most cutting stroke of all, reserved to the last as the bitterest drop in the whole cup, the hiding of his Father's countenance, which wrung from his bosom that cry, such as neither earth nor heaven had heard before—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And yet not until he had finished the work did he give up the ghost. So he was faithful "in all things pertaining to God." And he is faithful, too, in all things pertaining to man. He could say to the Father, "Of all which thou hast given me"—save the son of perdition, Judas; he had no charge to save him from death and hell; but of all the others whom he had received as his Father's gift, he could say, "I have lost none." Thus he was faithful while he was on earth. And how faithful he is now! The high priest under the law had two offices to execute; he had to offer sacrifice for the people, and to offer

prayer and intercession for them. Upon earth Jesus fulfilled the first; in heaven he fulfils the second, as there making by virtue of his presence continual intercession for us.

May 2

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Matthew 26:41

The entering into temptation is a different thing from temptation itself. "Watch and pray, that ye *enter not into temptation.*" A temptation presents itself, draws near to us, or we draw near to it. If conscience sound an alarm, and we keep, so to speak, to the windward of temptation, we are for the present safe. Temptation is a lee shore on which the wind fiercely blows; it is a coast strewn with a thousand wrecks, and with the bleached bones of innumerable drowned mariners. Keep the ship's head to windward, and she may weather the point; neglect sail and helm, and she will go ashore. David and Joseph were exposed to a similar temptation. David entered into it, and fell; Joseph was kept from entering into it, and stood. In the country you often see a footpath across a field; if we keep in it we are safe. But we may be tempted by various objects to diverge a little, to gather a flower, or saunter upon the banks of the river, or make a short cut across the fields. Whilst we are in the footpath, temptation may be very near, but we have not yet entered into it; we are upon the borders of it, but we have not yet entered into its territory. Few, if any, enter into temptation without falling by it. The fly hovers round the spider's web; to touch it is to enter into it. The bird flies around the fowler's snare; to peck at the bait is to enter the trap. The moth flutters round the candle; to enter the flame is to burn its wings. The Lord's words were not, "watch and pray *against* temptation," but "that ye *enter not into* temptation." Few come out of temptation as they entered into it. How clearly James has described the difference between enduring temptation and falling by temptation. He does not say, "Blessed is the man who is *free from* temptation," but "who *endureth* temptation." Blessed is the man who is kept in the footpath, who sees temptation on every side, but endures it, is not drawn out of the path by it, for "when he is tried, he shall receive a crown of life." He has fought the good fight, won the battle, and shall receive the crown. But he adds, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God." He must not say that the Lord presents temptation to him, and is

therefore chargeable with it if he falls. "No," says James, "let that thought be abhorred. God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." There is no sin in temptation, for the Lord Jesus was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." Nor in lust is there practical, though there is speculative sin. It is when the two meet and embrace, and the will consents to the union, silencing the voice of God and conscience, that sin is produced. And thirdly, follows the fearful and fatal *fruit*, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth *death*;" that is, as I understand it, death in the conscience, guilt, condemnation, and misery, and the deadening of all the fruits and graces of the blessed Spirit.

May 3

"In that day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious." Isaiah 4:2

Where in heaven or on earth can there be found such a lovely Object as the Son of God? "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" ask the companions of the Bride. But she answers, "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." If, then, you have never seen any beauty in Jesus, you have never seen Jesus; he has never revealed himself to you; you never had a glimpse of his lovely face, nor a sense of his presence, nor a word from his lips, nor a touch from his hand. But if you have seen him by the eye of faith, and he has revealed himself to you even in a small measure, you have seen a beauty in him beyond all other beauties, for it is a holy beauty, a divine beauty, the beauty of his heavenly grace, the beauty of his uncreated and eternal glory, such as no earthly countenance can wear, nor man or woman, no, not Adam, in all his unfallen innocence, nor his fair partner Eve, with all her virtue, grace, and dignity, ever could shew, for it is the beauty of the glorious Son of God, which he for ever wears as the Son of the Father in truth and love.

And as he is "beautiful," so is he "*glorious*." Oh, what a glory does faith see sometimes in his eternal Deity, in his divine Sonship, in what he is in himself as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his Person, and in what he is as made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption! How

glorious does he shew himself to be in his atoning blood and dying love. Even as sweating great drops of blood in Gethsemane's gloomy garden, and as hanging in torture and agony upon Calvary's cross, faith can see a beauty in the glorious Redeemer, even in the lowest depths of ignominy and shame. Was there not a glory in his meek obedience, in his suffering patience, in his submission to his Father's holy will, in his uncomplaining resignation to the heaviest strokes of vindictive justice, in bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, and thus putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself? But more especially does faith see him glorious as rising from the dead and going up on high, and sitting down at the right hand of the Father, crowned with glory and honour, and all things put under his feet.

May 4

"And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." Isaiah 4:2

By "the fruit of the earth" we may understand that gracious and holy fruit which grew upon the Branch: and it seems to be called "the fruit of the earth," because it appeared on earth when our Lord was there. Thus not only all his words, works, and ways, all the parables, doctrines, precepts, and promises uttered by the mouth of the Son of God in the days of his flesh, but all the benefits and blessings that spring in the way of redemption out of his complex Person, and grow as it were a holy fruit out of him as the Branch, such as his atoning blood, his glorious righteousness, his dying love, his resurrection and ascension, and his power to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, may all be considered as "the fruit of the earth," because wrought by him in and upon the earth, and done in the days of his flesh when his gracious feet were upon this earthly ball. This fruit is "excellent" to the escaped of Israel. There is seen in it to be a divine excellency. Therefore, there is not a shadow of a fault to be found with it. It is perfect in all its parts; complete to the very centre, and therefore seen to be excellent, as so glorifying to God, and so adapted to every want and woe of those that are left in Zion and remain in Jerusalem.

And "comely" too. In his sufferings, in his bloodshedding, obedience, holy life and expiatory death, there is a surpassing

comeliness, because in them shine forth a divine glory and a heavenly beauty. It is indeed the same word as is translated "beauty" in the holy garments made for Aaron by Moses (Exod. 28:2), and clothed in which he ministered before the Lord when he went into the holy place. So our great High Priest now ministers within the veil in the holiness and beauty of his glorified humanity; and as this is seen and apprehended by faith, the Church sings, "I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." "His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him."

May 5

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." Hosea 6:3

We gather from these words that there is such a thing in soul experience as "a following on to know the Lord;" and indeed there is no obtaining the blessings which are laid up for the righteous, unless there is this following on. "To know the Lord" is the desire of every living soul; that is, to know him by his own divine manifestations, by the gracious revelation of his grace, his love, his presence, and his glory.

But the expression, "follow on," implies that there are many difficulties, obstacles, and hindrances in a man's way, which keep him back from "knowing the Lord." Now the work of the Spirit in his soul is to carry him on in spite of all these obstacles. Nature, and all the work of nature, and all the power of Satan working on nature, is to draw the man back; but the work of the Spirit on the soul is to lead him forward, to keep alive in him the fear of God, to strengthen him from time to time with strength in his inner man, to give him those enlargements, to drop in those hopes, to communicate that inward grace, and to gird up the loins of his mind, so that in spite of sense, reason, and nature, he is compelled to follow on. Sometimes he seems driven, and sometimes drawn, sometimes led, and sometimes carried, but in one way or another the Spirit of God so works upon him that, though he scarce knows how, he still "follows on." His very burdens make him groan for deliverance; his very temptations cause him to cry for help; the very difficulty and ruggedness of the road make him want to be carried every step; the very intricacy of the path compels him to cry out for a guide; so that the Lord the Spirit working in the

midst of, and under, and through every difficulty and discouragement, still bears him through, and carries him on; and thus brings him through every trial and trouble and temptation and obstacle, till he sets him before the Lord In glory. It is astonishing to me how our souls are kept alive. I believe a living man is a marvel to himself. Carried on, and yet so secretly; worked upon, and yet so mysteriously; and yet led on, guided, and supported through so many difficulties and obstacles, that he is a miracle of mercy, and, as the Apostle says, "a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men;" the world wondering, the angels admiring, and men standing astonished, how the quickened soul is carried on amidst all its difficulties, obstacles, trials, and temptations; and yet in spite of all "following on."

But "following on" for what? "To know the Lord," as the sum and substance of all religion, as the very marrow of vital godliness; to know Jesus, so as by faith to enter into his beauty and loveliness, and feel ourselves one spirit with him, according to those words, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

May 6

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13, 14

The faith that rests short of believing in, laying hold of, and resting upon the Son of God in his finished work, will not be the work of faith that God will own and crown with his approbation; the love that never labours for an entrance into the mysteries of his dying love, will be found to be a love more in lip and tongue than in heart and life; and the hope that anchors in anything short of the finished work of the Son of God, will be a brittle cable which will snap asunder, or a rotten piece of iron which will break in the first heavy storm. Do not rest in the knowledge of a few doctrines in the letter of truth. Do not take up with a few passing thoughts and feelings; do not be satisfied with a few fleeting convictions or a few transient desires. Press on to know the blessed mysteries of the gospel as the food of your soul; press on to know the Son of God, not only as a crucified man, not only as

sweating (as it were) blood in Gethsemane's garden, and agonising on Calvary's tree; but press on to know him as the exalted God-man Mediator at the right hand of the Father, ever living to make intercession, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him; and press on to enjoy him as your living Head, distilling into you as a living member of his mystical body, what the Psalmist calls, "the dew of his youth;" that is, the fruits of his resurrection, ascension and glorification, as manifested by the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost. Press onward to know the power of the precious gospel you profess, to enjoy it more in your soul, and to manifest its reality more in your conduct, your conversation, and your life.

May 7

"For to be carnally-minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Romans 8:6

One of the most blessed marks of regenerating grace and the sure fruit of the love of God shed abroad in the heart, is that spiritual-mindedness of which Paul declares, it is "life and peace." "To be spiritually-minded," to live and walk under the blessed power and influence of the Holy Spirit, to have the heart and affections drawn up from this poor, vain scene to where Jesus sits at the right hand of God, this is "*life*," the life of God in the soul, with all its present blessedness and all its future glory, and "*peace*," for peace and rest are alone to be found in this path of union and communion with a glorified Redeemer. In this sweet spirituality of mind, in these heavenly affections, and in this intercourse with the Lord at his own throne of grace, the life and power of godliness much consist. We trust we know, from what we have felt in our own bosom, what this sweet spiritual-mindedness is, and what are its blessed effects. It is a key to unlock the Scriptures, for then we read them under the same sacred influence, and by the same divine teaching by which they were written; it is a door of prayer, for under these calm and peaceful emotions the soul, as if instinctively and necessarily, seeks holy communion with God; it is the fruitful parent of sweet meditation, for the truth of God is then thought over, fed upon, and is found to be bread from heaven; it is the secret of all life and power in preaching, for unless the heart be engaged in, and melted and softened by the truth delivered, there will be a hardness in its delivery which will

make itself sensibly felt by the living hearer; and it is the power of all spiritual conversation, for how can we talk with any unction or profit unless we are spiritually-minded, and in that frame of soul wherein the things of God are our chief element, the language of our lips, because the delight of our soul? But to be otherwise—to be carnally-minded on our knees, with the Bible open before our eyes, in the house of prayer, at the Lord's table, in the company of the family of God—what a burden to our spirit, what a condemnation to our conscience, what a parent of doubt and fear whether matters can be right between God and our own soul, when there is such a distance between him and us!

It is true that the most eminent saints and servants of God have their dead and dark seasons, when the life of God seems sunk to so low an ebb as to be hardly visible, so hidden is the stream by the mud-banks of their fallen nature. Still it glides onward, round them, if not through them; and sometimes a beam of light falls upon it from above, as it threads its way toward the ocean of eternal love, which manifests not only its existence but its course, and that it gives back to heaven the ray it receives from heaven. Nay, by these very dark and dead seasons, the saints and servants of God are instructed. They see and feel what the flesh really is, how alienated from the life of God; they learn in whom all their strength and sufficiency lie; they are taught that in them, that is, in their flesh, dwelleth no good thing; that no exertions of their own can maintain in strength and vigour the life of God; and that all they are and have, all they believe, know, feel, and enjoy, with all their ability, usefulness, gifts, and grace, flow from the pure, sovereign grace, the rich, free, undeserved, yet unceasing goodness and mercy of God. They learn in this hard school of painful experience their emptiness and nothingness, and that without Christ indeed they can do nothing. They thus become clothed with humility, that comely, becoming garb; cease from their own strength and wisdom, and learn experimentally that Christ is, and ever must be, all in all to them, and all in all in them.

May 8

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15

Our gracious Lord experienced temptation in every shape and form, for the word of truth declares that "in all points he was tempted like as we are, yet without sin." I wish to speak very cautiously upon this subject, for upon a point so difficult and so mysterious there is great risk of speaking amiss. So long as we keep strictly within the language of the Scripture we are safe, but the moment that we draw inferences from the word without special guidance by the Spirit of truth, we may greatly err. You may think then, sometimes, that your temptations are such as our gracious Lord never could have been tempted by; but that word of the Apostle decides the question, "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." It is a solemn mystery which I cannot explain, how temptation in every point, shape, and form could assail the holy soul of the immaculate Redeemer. I fully believe it. I see the grace and wisdom of it, and my faith acquiesces in it as most blessed truth. But I cannot understand it. I know also and believe from the testimony of the word and that of my own conscience, that whatever temptations he was assailed with, not one of them could or did sully, stain, or spot his holy humanity. *That* was absolutely and perfectly a pure, unfallen, immortal nature, able to die by a voluntary act, but having in itself no seeds of sickness, mortality, or death. And yet I read that, though thus possessed of a holy, pure, and spotless humanity, in everlasting union with his own eternal Deity, in all points he was tempted like as we are. I cannot explain the mystery—I do not wish to do so. I receive it as a mystery, in the same way as I receive that great mystery of godliness, "God manifested in the flesh." But still I bless God that he was tempted in all points like as we are; for it makes him such a sympathising High Priest with his poor, exercised, tried, tempted family here below. I have sometimes compared the temptations which beat upon the soul of the Lord to the waves of the sea that dash themselves against a pure, white marble rock. The rock may feel the shock of the wave; but it is neither moved by it nor sullied. It still stands unmoved, immovable in all its original firmness; it still shines in all the brightness of the pure, glittering marble when the waves recede and the sun breaks forth on its face. So none of the temptations with which the Lord was assailed moved the Rock of ages, or sullied the purity, holiness, and perfection of the spotless Lamb of God.

May 9

"And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matthew 1:23

We must never, even in thought, separate the human nature of our adorable Redeemer from his divine. Even when his sacred body lay in the grave, and was thus for a small space of time severed from his pure and holy soul by death and the tomb, there was no separation of the two natures, for his human soul, after he had once become incarnate in the womb of the Virgin, never was parted from his Deity, but went into paradise in indissoluble union with it. It is a fundamental article of our most holy faith that the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ had no existence independent of his divine. In the Virgin's womb, in the lowly manger, in the lonely wilderness, on the holy mount of transfiguration, in the gloomy garden of Gethsemane, in Pilate's judgment hall, on the cross, and in the tomb, Jesus was still Immanuel, God with us. And so ineffably close and intimate is the conjunction of the human nature with the divine, that the actings of each nature, though separable, cannot and must not be separated from each other. Thus, the human hands of Jesus broke the seven loaves and the fishes; but it was God-man who multiplied them so as to feed therewith four thousand men, besides women and children. The human feet of Jesus walked on the sea of Galilee; but it was the Son of God who came on the waves to the ship. The human lips of Jesus uttered those words which are "spirit and life" (John 6:63), but it was the Son of the living God who spake them (John 6:69). The human hands and feet of Jesus were nailed to the cross; but the blood shed by them was indeed divine, for all the virtue and validity of Deity were stamped upon it (Acts 20:28).

May 10

"And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee." Psalm 39:7

True religion is a very simple thing. Simplicity is stamped upon all the works of God, and especially upon the work of grace. The more genuine, therefore, our religion is, the more simple it will be. To be simple is to be child-like, and to be child-like is to have that mind and spirit without which no man can enter into the kingdom

of heaven. Can we, then, with this child-like simplicity, walk step by step here with David, and follow him throughout? Can we put our seal to these things, and say, "Lord, what wait I for?" Is your religion brought into this narrow point? "Truly, my soul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my salvation." "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him." Such a frame of soul is indeed from the hand of God, for no man ever did, or could bring himself into it. And if we can enter into one part of these heavenly breathings, we shall be able also to enter into the others, and say, "My hope is in thee." Feeling the weight and burden of sin, we shall be constrained to cry, "Deliver me from all my transgressions;" and feeling our own weakness, and the evil of our hearts, we shall add, "Make me not the reproach of the foolish." If, then, we can sincerely, before God, employ these petitions, may we not ask who produced them? Who wrought this experience in the soul? From whose hands did it come? Surely, surely, the same Lord that taught David, must have taught us; the same power that wrought in him, must have wrought in us, before we could, in sweet experience, enter into this feeling language, and adopt it as our own. Here, therefore, we see a little of what true religion is; here we see what are the genuine breathings of a child-like spirit, and what is the experience of a man of God; and it will be our mercy if we can see in his experience a sweet counterpart of our own.

May 11

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." John 15:8

When the Lord Jesus Christ was upon earth he was in a suffering state; and to this suffering image must all his people be conformed. In that suffering state he brought glory to God; and is now exalted to the right hand of the Father. So those who suffer with him will be also glorified together; and glorious indeed will they be, for they will shine like the stars for ever and ever, resplendent in the glorified image of the Son of God. The Apostle therefore says, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." The Lord did not assume angelic nature. He therefore did not adorn or beautify it; but by assuming our nature, the flesh and blood of the children into union with his own divine Person, he invested it with surpassing

lustre. This is the foundation on which a redeemed sinner brings glory to God, not in himself, but as being a member of Christ, "of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." What a thought it is, that the lowest believer should actually bring more glory to God than the highest angel; and that the suffering obedience of a saint should be of higher value than the burning obedience of a seraph. To bring glory to God, then, should be our highest aim and most ardent desire. How the Lord urges this upon the consciences of his true disciples, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." A little fruit brings but little glory to God. It is in proportion to the amount of rich, ripe fruit that is borne upon the branches of the vine, that the Lord is glorified.

May 12

"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations."
Luke 22:28

Satan brought all his artillery to bear upon the Son of God. He was permitted to try him to the utmost. It was the purpose of God, that his well-beloved Son should be tempted like as we are; and if you are God's, not a single temptation has beset you which did not beset the Lord of life and glory. Are we tempted sometimes to doubt a God of providence? The Lord Jesus was similarly tempted, when Satan said to him, "Command these stones to be made bread." Are we tempted to vain confidence and presumption? The Lord of life and glory was similarly tempted, when the prince of darkness said to him, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence." Are we often tempted to disbelieve that we are the children of God, and exercised at times with distressing suspicions and fears lest we have only a profession of religion, without its experimental power in our hearts? Satan brought the same temptation against the Lord, when he said, "If thou be the Son of God;" as Hart says, "O, what an if was there!" Are we tempted to turn our backs upon the Lord for the sake of what the world offers? The Lord Jesus was similarly tempted when Satan said that he would give him all that he presented before his eyes when he took him upon the mountain top. Are we ever tempted to turn from the true God and worship idols? The Lord of life and glory was similarly tempted when Satan with his infernal pride and cursed impudence proposed to the Son of God to worship him. The Son of God worship Satan!

But some may say, "Was Jesus tempted like I am? How can that be? He was pure, spotless, and holy; but I am full of corruption from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. The Lord of life and glory had a perfect, unfallen nature, a holy human body, and a holy human soul, taken into union with Deity; but I have a fallen nature, defiled in body and polluted in soul. Can there be a resemblance in our temptations?" I would ask, what is it in you that feels the burden of temptation when Satan injects his blasphemies into your mind? Is there not a something in you which is grieved, I was going to say tortured, by these fiery darts? Is it not the new nature? and is not that nature spotless and holy? Is it not born of God, and therefore as holy as God is holy, and pure as God is pure? Thus just in the same way as your pure and holy nature that is born of God is grieved and distressed by the fiery darts of Satan, so was the holy soul of the Lord Jesus ten thousand times more grieved and tortured by the temptations of Satan presented before his pure and spotless mind. The disciples did not forsake their Lord, though so sorely buffeted with these temptations; nay more, they, according to the measure of their faith, partook of them individually and personally, suffering as well as sympathising with him, and wounded, though in a far less degree, by arrows from the same bow. And thus disciples now continue with Jesus in his temptations by suffering as members with their covenant Head, walking, most of them, in a daily path of trouble and sorrow, daily tempted by Satan, by the world, and by their own evil hearts; day by day tempted to do everything from which their spiritual nature recoils; day by day tempted to do things which are hateful in the eyes of a pure God, and to them too when in their right mind.

May 13

"And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." Luke 22:29

For whom is this kingdom appointed? For the presumptuous, the proud, the hypocritical, and the self-righteous? No; not for these. "I appoint unto *you*," you that "have continued with me in my temptations;" you that are tempted and exercised; you that walk in the paths of tribulation; you that follow in the print of the footsteps of a suffering Jesus; you that know the painful exercises of temptation, and yet are strengthened with strength in your

inner man, to "resist even unto blood, striving against sin," so as not to be carried away or overwhelmed by it. What kingdom is this? It is the same kingdom that the Father hath given to Jesus. "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." Now what is the kingdom which God the Father appointed unto his dear Son? Is it to sit upon a throne like an earthly monarch? To wear a diadem, and carry a sceptre? "My kingdom," said Jesus, "is not of this world" (John 18:36). The kingdom of the Lord of life and glory was to make an end of sin, to abolish death, and "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;" to reign spiritually in the hearts of his chosen; to be King and Lord in Zion, and to rule over the willing affections of his subjects; a kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; a kingdom of grace set up by the blessed Spirit in the heart; a spiritual kingdom which none can see or enter into but those that are born of the Spirit. His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, and consists in having a people to see him as he is, a people to glorify him, a people to love him, and a people for him to love. A kingdom cannot be the same to sovereign and subject, when it is of an earthly and temporal nature. Were the earthly monarch to impart his kingdom to his subjects, it would cease to be a kingdom, and become a republic. But not so with a spiritual kingdom. Jesus does not diminish his own grace by imparting it to his people, nor lessen his own joy by shedding it abroad in their hearts, nor sully his own glory by communicating of it to them. The sun has lost no light nor warmth by the countless millions of rays that have issued from it since it was first created. Nor does the glorious Sun of righteousness lose the fulness that is in him by communicating of his grace and glory. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, unexhausted and inexhaustible. Then this kingdom which he appoints to his tried and tempted disciples is the kingdom of grace in the heart; the kingdom of God in the soul; the presence of Jesus within; the manifestation of that kingdom which is spoken of in Daniel 2:44, as set up on the ruins of all the other kingdoms, when it has broken them in pieces.

May 14

"Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." Psalm 4:6

The cry of the Church has always been, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." You may often feel as if immersed in the very shadow of death, and say with Heman, "I am counted with them that go down into the pit; I am as a man that hath no strength" (Psalm 88:4); but the very feelings of death, the chill at your heart, and the cold sweat upon your brow, make you long for the appearance of him who is the Resurrection and the Life; and who can in one moment whisper, "Fear not; I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death." You may be pressed down at times with the power of unbelief, and think and say there never was a heart like yours, so unable to believe, so doubting at every step; but this deep conviction of your wretched unbelief, which is the Spirit's work to shew (John 16:9), only makes you long for that living faith of which Christ himself is not only the Object, but the Author and Finisher. You may be sunk at times in despondency, as to both your present and future state; but that makes you the more desire to have a good hope through grace, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. You may feel at times the guilt, and not only the guilt, but the dreadful power and prevalence of sin; but that only makes you long the more earnestly for manifestations of pardon and peace, and that no sin may have dominion over you. "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," that sooner or later you shall have every needful blessing. The valley you now feel to be in shall be exalted; the mountain and hill shall be made low; the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain, and your eye shall see the glory of the Lord; Christ shall be made precious to your heart; he will come sooner or later into your soul; and then when he comes he will manifest himself as your Lord and your God. And so you keep hanging, and hoping, and looking up until he appears; for your heart is still ever saying,

"None but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good."

May 15

"And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered." Amos 4:7

How powerless we are as regards the rain that falls from the sky! Who can go forth when the sun is shining in its brightness and bid the rain to fall? Or when rain is falling, who can go forth and restrain the bottles of heaven? He who gives us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness, also turns a fruitful land into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. Equally sovereign is the blessing that God gives to the preached gospel. He holds the blessing in his own hand; it is his to give, and his to withhold. If he bless, it is because he has promised it; but when, where, and to whom it shall come, is at his own sovereign disposal. Yet what do we naturally desire when the earth is parched up for want of rain? Knowing that there is rain stored up in the clouds above, and that when it does come it will produce beneficial effects, desires, if not prayers, go up that it may fall. In fact, the earth itself, parched and dried up by heat, the very ground itself, by the fissures and clefts which are made in the soil by a burning sun, silently, mutely, but still imploringly calls upon the rain to fall. Every crack you see in July is a silent mouth asking the rain to come down. The withered herbage, the cattle lowing in the field, the dried-up ponds and brooks, are all imploring, though not a word is uttered, that rain may fall. So in grace. The parched, withered, dried-up feelings of the soul are all so many mute mouths imploring God's blessing to come down. Nay, the very hardness, barrenness, and sterility felt in our heart when the blessing of God does not rest upon the word, are so many mute appeals to the God of all grace that his blessing would attend the word to our conscience. I say this because you may think sometimes that you are not praying for the blessing of God to rest upon the word, because you may not be using vocal prayer, or are not favoured with a spirit of grace and supplications. God sees your wants, and to those wants he has a kind regard. The babe need not, and indeed cannot ask in so many words for food. The cry of hunger is enough. Or even if too weak to cry, the mother knows the child is hungry by its restless movements; and she is as pleased to give the nutritious food as the babe is to receive it. So you must not always measure the strength of your prayers by the mere vocal utterance you may give to them. The heart-searching God reads your wants, knows your desolate case, and sees your barren condition. As in the kingdom of his providence he views from his holy throne the parched ground, and sends down showers because he sees its need; so in the kingdom of his grace he looks upon the parched condition of his people, and gives the spiritual rain because he knows they need it.

May 16

"In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Ephesians 2:21

The body of Christ is at present scattered, and, if I may so speak, fragmentary. Of the members of his mystical body some are now before the throne, "spirits of just men made perfect." Others are still in the wilderness; others are yet in the world, dead in trespasses and sins, uncalled by grace, destitute of the Spirit; others at present are unborn, still hidden in the womb of time. But earth is the stage whereon all the members are from time to time brought into a vital, manifestive union with their living Head.

When I was a boy at school, in London, Waterloo Bridge was building; and I and my playmates used to go sometimes to what was then called "The Stone Field," on the other side of the water, where the stones that now make up Waterloo Bridge were being squared and chiselled. Every vestige of that field, I have no doubt, is gone, and the place covered with buildings; but there stands Waterloo Bridge; and those stones that I used to play upon as a boy now form a part of that beautiful structure which Canova, the great Italian sculptor, said it was worth coming to London only to see. Take the idea into spiritual things. The body of Christ is compared in Scripture to a building. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Of this building believers are "living stones;" and many of them are at present in "the Stone Field," where they are being hammered and hacked, squared and chiselled by the hand of the great Architect. During this state, like the stones of Solomon's temple, which were hewn and squared at a distance, that "neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron might be heard in the house while it was in building," so are these living stones prepared for their future glory. The mallet and the chisel are at work upon them now day by day, that in due time they may fill their designed position in the spiritual building. I remember well that all the stones which were strewn over the field were marked and numbered; and these figures no doubt denoted their intended position. Every stone so marked was in due time individually transferred to, and now occupies, the exact position that the architect designed for it. So

every living stone was marked and numbered in eternity, is hewed and squared in time, and will, in future glory, be placed by the hand of the divine Architect in that place of the spiritual building originally designed for it.

May 17

"The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Psalm 19:8

As without a revelation of the doctrine of salvation we should not know how a sinner could be saved, and thus could not glorify God by our faith; so without a revelation of the precept we should not know how to serve God, and thus could not glorify him by our obedience. Look at this point, believing child of God. You long to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are his (1 Cor. 6:20). You desire, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, to do all to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). There are times and seasons with you when you sigh and mourn over your barren, unprofitable heart and life, and earnestly long to think and speak and act to his honour and glory who has done so much for you in providence and grace. At least, if you have no such desires you are no Christian, and are at the best but a poor, worldly, dead professor. When, then, and how far do you live to God's glory? Only then, and only so far as your life, and walk, and conduct harmonise with, and are guided by the precepts of the word. For see the connection. We can only glorify God outwardly by doing his will; we can only know that will, as regards our practical obedience to it, by the express revelation which he has given of it. Where is that revelation? In his word, and chiefly in the preceptive part of it. It is this which makes it "a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path." David therefore cried: "Order my steps in thy word;" "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments;" "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" as feeling that it was only by walking *in* the word and *by* the word that he could please God and live to his praise. We find thousands in this land who, as they think, are doing God service by plans and schemes of their own devising, priding themselves on their good works. But we may say of all these their duties and doings what Augustine said of the ancient Roman virtues, that they are but *splendida peccata* ("splendid sins"), or,

to use the language of the 13th Article of the Church of England, entitled, Works before justification, "for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

May 18

"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." 1 John 4:13

A right knowledge and living experience of the Person, graces and operations of the Holy Ghost upon the soul, is a very essential thing. Man is so deeply sunk, so utterly fallen, so unable to bring himself back, that he needs this holy Teacher to lead him into a saving, experimental knowledge of the truth of God; for we know nothing but by his teaching, have nothing but by his giving, and are nothing but by his making. The more clearly, then, that we are led to see, and the more deeply we are taught to feel what we are as fallen sons and daughters of Adam, the more shall we feel our need of, and the more shall we value when realised, his blessed operations upon the heart and conscience. Now, in the case of Aaron, (viewed not only as a type of Christ, but as personally ministering at the altar of the tabernacle, and thus consecrated to the office of high priesthood,) it was not sufficient that he was washed, nor that he was clothed; he must be also anointed by the holy anointing oil before he could stand in the sanctuary of God. So it is with a son of the Most High, one of "the kings and priests" that form "the royal priesthood;" it is not sufficient for him to be washed in the blood of the Lamb, and clothed in his justifying righteousness; he must be consecrated to God's service by the holy anointing; in other words, be sanctified, regenerated and renewed in the spirit of his mind, that, by being made a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), he may enter into a spiritual experience of the truth of God here, and enjoy the eternal pleasures which are at God's right hand hereafter. From the very nature of the fall, it is impossible for a dead soul to believe in God, know God, or love God; it must be quickened into spiritual life before it can savingly know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. And thus there lies at the very threshold, in the very heart and core of the case, the absolute necessity of the regenerating operations of God the Holy Ghost upon the soul. The very completeness and depth of the fall render

the regenerating work of the Holy Ghost as necessary, as indispensable as the redeeming work of the Son of God. The Apostle therefore puts them together. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." If, therefore, the soul is to enter into eternal glory, it must be prepared for glory by being made a partaker of grace. It must, in this present life, this time state, be made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, be capacitated whilst here below for the eternal fruition of the Triune God, by receiving a new and heavenly nature begotten of the Holy Ghost, which as a pure spirit (for "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit") is capable of seeing, enjoying, and eternally delighting in the open vision of the Deity as manifested in the glorious Person of the God-man.

May 19

"And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies." Hosea 2:19

Communion with Christ begins below, in our time state. It is *here* that the mystery of the marriage union is first made known; here the espousals entered into; here the first kiss of betrothed love given. The celebration of the marriage is to come; but the original betrothal in heaven and the spiritual espousals on earth make Christ and the Church eternally one. As then the husband, when he becomes united to his wife in marriage ties, engages thereby to love her, cherish her, feed her, clothe her, count her interests his interests, her honour his honour, and her happiness his happiness, so the blessed Jesus, when in the councils of eternity, he betrothed the Church to himself, undertook to be to her and do for her everything that should be for tier happiness and honour, perfection and glory. His own words are, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord." And again, "For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called." "For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over

thee." There must be union before communion, marriage before possession, membership before abiding in Christ and he in us, a being in the vine before a branch issuing from the stem. It is the Spirit that quickeneth us to feel our need of him; to seek all our supplies in him and from him; to believe in him unto everlasting life, and thus live a life of faith upon him. By his secret teachings, inward touches, gracious smiles, soft whispers, sweet promises, and more especially by manifestations of his glorious Person, finished work, atoning blood, justifying righteousness, agonising sufferings and dying love, he draws the heart up to himself. He thus wins our affections, and setting himself before our eyes as "the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely," draws out that love and affection towards himself which puts the world under our feet. All religion flows from his Spirit and grace, presence and power. He is our sun, and without him all is darkness; he is our life, and without him all is death; he is the beginner and finisher of our faith, the substance of our hope, and the object of our love.

May 20

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians 4:6

When a man is walking in the darkness and death of unregeneracy, he has no true light. He may indeed have a false light, as the light of presumption, delusion, or vain-confidence; but all such borrowed light is worse than darkness; as the Lord says, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

The only saving light is the light of God shining into the soul, giving us to see and know "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." A man may have the clearest light in his judgment, and yet never have the penetrating light of the Spirit producing conviction in his soul; he may have the soundest knowledge of the doctrines of grace, and see the harmonious scheme of salvation; and yet never have seen a holy God by divine teaching, nor have ever felt the spirituality of God's righteous law condemning him as a transgressor. But "the light of life," as the Lord calls it, is sure to guide its possessor aright. If we have it not,

we shall be sure to go astray; we shall be entangled in some error, plunge into some heresy, imbibe some doctrine of devils, drink into some awful delusion, or fall into some dreadful sin, and "concerning faith make shipwreck." A false light is something like the lights which pirates hold up to entrap ships to their destruction; or like the fires, which the "wreckers," those dreadful characters in Cornwall, used to kindle on their iron-bound coast, in order that the mariner might mistake them for some friendly light-house, and run his vessel on the rocks, where those heartless wretches plundered it. A false light can but wreck us on the rocks of presumption or despair. But the light of divine life in the soul is accompanied with all the graces of the Spirit. It is the light of the glory of God, the light of Jesus' countenance, and the light of the Spirit's teaching, and therefore an infallible guide and guard; as the Apostle says, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things." And this infallible pilot will guide the soul to whom it is given safe into the harbour of endless rest and peace.

May 21

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." 1 Peter 2:24

We beg of the Lord, sometimes, to give us a broken heart, a contrite spirit, a tender conscience, and a humble mind; but it is only a view by faith of what the gracious Redeemer endured upon the cross, when he bare our sins in his own body with all their weight and pressure, and with all the anger of God due to them that can really melt a hard, and break a stony heart. No sight, short of this, can make sin felt to be hateful; bring tears of godly sorrow out of the eyes, sobs of true repentance out of the breast, and the deepest, humblest confessions before God what dreadful sinners and base backsliders we have been before the eyes of his infinite Purity, Majesty, and Holiness. Oh, what hope is there for our guilty souls; what refuge from the wrath of God so justly our due; what shelter from the curse of a fiery law, except it be in the cross of Jesus? O for a view of him revealed to the eyes of our enlightened understanding, as bearing our sins in his own body on the tree. O to see by the eye of faith, all those dreadful sins which have caused us so much inward grief and trouble, all those fearful backslidings and sad entanglements on which we can but reflect

with shame and grief; O to see all we have said and thought and done, which conscience testifies against, and all those innumerable evils that we have never seen or conscience has forgotten; to view them by the eye of faith taken off our guilty head and put upon the head of the Lord the Lamb. Where, oh, where, can we get relief from any other source or by any other way? There is no relief anywhere else. Where can you find pardon sealed upon your breast, forgiveness manifested to your soul, or any expectation of winning heaven and escaping hell, except in the cross, and some testimony in your own bosom of your interest in that precious blood and righteousness, and the knowledge for yourself that the dear Redeemer bare your sins in his body on the tree? I know, indeed, full well, that it requires special faith, a faith of God's own giving and raising up to believe this, an especial manifestation of salvation by the blood of the Lamb to the soul; a blessed bringing in of the power of Christ crucified to the heart. But I believe I do but speak the inmost conviction of every heart touched by the finger of God when I say, that until this is in some measure done, there is no solid relief; no true peace with God; no firm, abiding foundation on which we can stand, as if for eternity; nothing strong enough to banish the fear of death and open the gates of heaven.

May 22

"I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O Lord, put me not to shame."
Psalm 119:131

In whatever state or stage of experience you are, it will be your wisdom and your mercy to stick to God's testimony. Has the Lord just begun a work of grace in your heart? Is he shewing to you what you are by nature, and bringing before your eyes the sins of your youth, and plunging you in deep convictions? It will be your wisdom, and it will be your mercy, to stick to that testimony; not to be driven from your standing into despair, nor pushed forward into fleshly confidence; but to stick to that testimony which God himself has implanted. Has God made you to sigh and cry from the depths of a broken heart—to fall down before his truth? Stick to that testimony; he will not put you to shame. Again, if the Lord has done a little more for you, shewn you the least glimpse of mercy and favour, and given you some little testimony of your interest in the blood of the Lamb, it will be your wisdom, and it

will be your mercy, to stick to that testimony too. You will find those who would push you presumptuously forward; you will find those who would drive you despairingly backward; you will find those who would pull you down into those doubts and fears that their own minds are exercised with, and you will find those who would draw you aside into the vain confidence in which they themselves are standing. It will be your wisdom and mercy to abide by the testimony which God himself has revealed; and he can work in your soul that faith whereby you can and will stick to his testimony.

But some may say, "How do I know that I am sticking to God's testimonies?" I would ask, what are the feelings of your hearts towards them? Is there godly fear? Is there holy reverence? Is there trembling awe? Is there any exercise of soul? any pouring out of the heart before God? any realising of his presence? any trembling lest you should offend him? any desire after him? any solemn feelings whereby your soul is exercised upon his perfections? Then there is reason to believe there is some testimony of God in your conscience, and that you are sticking to it. But if your religion be such as leads to vain confidence, to self-righteousness, to presumption, to false security, and to a careless, light, trifling spirit, depend upon it you are not sticking to God's testimony, or else you have no testimony from God to stick unto. But if the Lord is bringing into your soul some sense of his displeasure; if you have trifled with him, and brought guilt into your soul and trouble into your mind, it will be your wisdom, and it will be your mercy to do, as the Lord speaks in Leviticus 26:41, "accept the punishment of your iniquity;" to put your mouth in the dust, and confess that you are vile; not to turn aside to presumptuous confidence as though you would blunt the edge of God's sword in your soul, but to receive it in your heart, embrace it in your conscience, and to cleave to it as the testimony of God himself. "I have stuck unto thy testimonies." To cleave to everything which God makes known in the conscience, be it judgment, be it mercy, be it a smile, be it a frown, be it a testimony for, be it a testimony against, whatever it be that comes with power, and is brought to the soul by the application of the Spirit—to cleave to it, keeps the soul in a safe and blessed spot.

May 23

"That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Luke 1:74, 75

The grand point in all true religion is to be brought by the blessed Spirit into that happy spot where we can serve the living God free from that guilt, bondage, darkness, doubt, and fear which often possess our mind, and are the worst enemies of our soul's peace. But though they are such enemies to all true peace and happiness, yet are they mercifully overruled for our spiritual good, to convince us from whence our help must come, to strip us thoroughly of all creature help and hope, and bring us to the spot where the Lord meets the soul in mercy, sheds abroad his love, and brings near a precious Christ. We have no reason to thank bondage, guilt and the law, still less sin and Satan, for any work they have done which God has overruled for our good. And yet without some experience of these dead works and the bondage and guilt produced by them, we could not know what it was to have our conscience purged by the blood of sprinkling to serve the living God. There are reasons, therefore, and wise reasons on the part of God, why his children should be thus vexed and plagued. It is true it is not the revealed will of God that his children should spend so many of their days in darkness, doubt, and fear. He has given us a glorious gospel; he has set before us in Jesus everything for our comfort and relief; he has promised to send his Holy Spirit to testify of Christ, and has filled his word with promises and invitations suited to every case. And yet his secret will and purpose are that we should be thus exercised and tried, and walk in this path of darkness and desolation, that we might value more the precious liberty of the gospel, know more of what Christ is, and what he has done to save us from the depths of the fall, be more deeply indebted to the riches of free and sovereign grace, and come more personally into the blessedness of gospel mercies as made known to our soul by a divine power.

May 24

"Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Isaiah 45:24

Have you yet learnt that you are a sinner in the sight of God? Have you ever felt the length, breadth, and spirituality of his holy

law? Do you feel in your very soul that without Christ's righteousness being imputed to you, and his blood being sprinkled upon your conscience, you must die in your sins and never reach the heavenly shore? Has this ever been, or is it still a matter of anxious solicitude to you? Has it ever caused sighs and groans to come out of your heart? Has the spirit of prayer ever been given, to make you plead with the Lord for the forgiveness of your sins, through the merits of a crucified Saviour? And have you any hope but in his blood, righteousness, and finished work? Now if the Lord has been pleased to exercise your soul in this way, if he has not yet granted the longing desire of your heart, he certainly will in due time reveal his dear Son in you as the God-man who has saved you from death and hell; he will apply his atoning blood to your conscience, bring near his glorious righteousness, shed abroad his dying love, give and strengthen faith, and draw it forth into a blessed assurance of your interest in the Son of his love. Or if your manifestations should not be very bright and conspicuous, he will give you a good hope through grace, as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast; and will draw up your affections to that blessed Lord who sits at the right hand of the Father in power, majesty, and glory. And as he does this, he enables the believer thus favoured and blessed to take these words into his lips, *"In the Lord have I righteousness."* He cannot say it before. He may know that there is no righteousness but in the Lord; he may have utterly renounced his own; he may have sunk very deep into guilt and bondage; but until the Lord the Spirit is pleased to liberate him, he cannot come forth into liberty; until he has the witness of the Spirit he cannot cry, "Abba, Father." But when the Lord is pleased to bring near his righteousness, to reveal his dying love, and to shed it abroad in his heart by divine power, then he can say, *"In the Lord have I righteousness."* And when he has this, he wants no other; it is complete, which no other can be. It is acceptable to God; it is available in the courts of heaven; it will bear him up through all the storms of time; it will smooth a dying pillow, and land him safely in a glorious eternity.

May 25

"Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." Song of Solomon 4:16

We are, most of us, so fettered down by the chains of time and sense, the cares of life and daily business, the weakness of our earthly frame, the distracting claims of a family, and the miserable carnality and sensuality of our fallen nature, that we live at best a poor, dragging, dying life. We can take no pleasure in the world, nor mix with a good conscience in its pursuits and amusements; we are many of us poor, moping, dejected creatures, from a variety of trials and afflictions; we have a daily cross and the continual plague of an evil heart; get little consolation from the family of God or the outward means of grace; know enough of ourselves to know that in self there is neither help nor hope, and never expect a smoother path, a better, wiser, holier heart, or to be able to do to-morrow what we cannot do to-day. As then the weary man seeks rest, the hungry food, the thirsty drink, and the sick health, so do we stretch forth our hearts and arms that we may embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, and sensibly realise union and communion with him. From him come both prayer and answer, both hunger and food, both desire and the tree of life. He discovers the evil and misery of sin that we may seek pardon in his bleeding wounds and pierced side; makes known to us our nakedness and shame, and, as such, our exposure to God's wrath, that we may hide ourselves under his justifying robe; puts gall and wormwood into the world's choicest draughts, that we may have no sweetness but in and from him; keeps us long fasting to endear a crumb, and long waiting to make a word precious. He wants the whole heart, and will take no less; and as this we cannot give, he takes it to himself by ravishing it with one of his eyes, with one chain of his neck. If we love him, it is because he first loved us; and if we seek communion with him, it is because he will manifest himself to us as he doth not unto the world.

Would we see what the Holy Ghost has revealed of the nature of this communion, we shall find it most clearly and experimentally unfolded in the Song of Solomon. From the first verse of that book, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth," to the last expressed desire of the loving bride, "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices," all is a "song of loves," all a divine revelation of the communion that is carried on upon earth between Christ and the Church. She "comes up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved," whilst "his left hand is under her head, and his right hand doth embrace her." She says, "Look not upon me, because I am black;" but he answers, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." At one moment she says, By night, on my bed, I

sought him whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not;" and then again she cries, "It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth. I held him, and would no let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house and into the chamber of her that conceived me." Comings and goings; sighs and songs; vain excuses and cutting self reflections; complaints of self, and praises of him; the breathings of love, and the flames of jealousy; the tender affections of a virgin heart, and the condescending embraces of a royal spouse;—such is the experience of the Church in seeking or enjoying communion with Christ as described in this divine book.

May 26

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17:17

When the gospel comes "not in word only, but also in power," it comes "in the Holy Ghost," that is, in and with the teaching and testimony of the Holy Ghost. It is this coming "in the Holy Ghost" which gives truth in its power such a sanctifying influence on the heart. But you will ask, perhaps, What is a sanctifying influence? It is the communication of holy feelings, heavenly desires, and gracious affections; in a word, it is the breathing into the soul of that sweet spirituality of mind which is life and peace. If we are among the people of God, he chose us in Christ "before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." If he chasten us in this time-state, it is "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness" (Heb. 12:10). It is this holiness of heart, this heavenly-mindedness which I mean when I speak of the sanctifying influence of truth in its power. Now did truth ever come into your soul with any measure of this sanctifying influence? Did you ever long to get away from the chapel, go home to your room, fall upon your knees, and have blessed fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ? And were you ever so favoured when you did get home? Or sometimes when alone, in reading, or meditation, or secret prayer, did the word of God ever come into your soul with that sweet unction, savour, and dew that it seemed to make the very room in which you were holy ground? I remember when God was pleased to reveal his dear Son to my soul in my sick room many years ago, I was afraid almost to go out of my room lest I should lose the sweet, holy feelings and blessed spirituality of mind which I then

and there enjoyed. Depend upon it, there is a holiness of heart and affection, an inward holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord; and depend upon it, whenever truth comes into a believer's soul, it comes with that sanctifying influence, which not only gives him a meekness for, but is a blessed foretaste of the inheritance of the saints in light.

May 27

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Ephesians 5:25, 26

View the Church without the sanctifying operations and influences of regenerating grace. She is far from Christ; she has no desire towards him, no manifest union, no communion with him; no faith in his blood, no hope in his mercy, no love to his name. Were she left always thus, where would be her meetness for heaven? But when the word of truth comes with power, and is accompanied by the influences of the Holy Ghost to the heart, then there is not only a cleansing of the conscience from the guilt and filth of sin, but the communication of a new heart and a new spirit. How plainly is this spoken of by the prophet Ezekiel, where, after the promise, "From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you," it is added, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." We have not only therefore to be washed from our sins in the blood of the Lamb, not only to be pardoned and forgiven and thus have a title to heaven, but we want a meetness for heaven; we want a new heart and a new spirit given to us, whereby we may taste, handle, feel, and enjoy the love of Christ as shed abroad in the heart, and experience the flowings forth of love to him in return. As then the blood cleanses, so the Spirit sanctifies. John therefore says, "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood" (1 John 5:6). The blood is the blood of the atonement; the water is the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost.

Observe the order in which these blessings come. First, is the love of Christ in eternity; secondly, the gift of himself in time; thirdly, the cleansing by blood; fourthly, the sanctifying by the Spirit. Now look at these things for yourselves. Are your sins pardoned?

Have you any evidence that you are washed in the blood of the Lamb? Do you believe that you are going to heaven? What does your belief of this, or your hope in it, rest upon? Where are your evidences? Surely not from merely seeing these truths in the Scripture as the bare revelation of God, or believing them from my statements. Such a faith and such a hope, if you have no better, will prove delusive, and will leave you in the hands of him who is a consuming fire. If your hope of eternal life is well grounded, it is because the word of life has come into your soul, and you have been not only cleansed by the application of the blood of sprinkling to your conscience, but sanctified and renewed by the power of the word, through the Holy Spirit, upon your heart.

May 28

"That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:27

Neither others nor we ourselves now see what the Church one day will be, and what she ever was in the eyes of Jesus. He could look through all this time-state, through all the sins and sorrows of this intermediate period, and fix his eye upon the bridal day, the day when before assembled angels, in the courts of heaven, in the realms of eternal bliss, he should present her to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy, and without blemish. O what a day will that be, when the Son of God shall openly wed his espoused bride; when there shall be heard in heaven, "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7). How cleansed, how sanctified, how washed, how clothed must the Church be in that day when the very eyes of omniscience, which can read the slightest departure, even a wrinkle, from infinite purity, will find in her neither spot nor blemish, so that God himself in all the blaze of his holiness may say of the Church, "I have viewed her with an omniscient eye; I have looked at every member of the mystical body of my dear Son; I have examined each with all the eyes of Godhead; but there is no spot, there is no wrinkle, no blemish in

any one of them; all are complete in him; all stand accepted in the Beloved."

But you may ask, and this is an inquiry well worth pressing upon your conscience, "How am I to know that I shall stand at that day without spot or wrinkle?" To answer that inquiry, what do you know, I ask, of the cleansing, sanctifying influences of regenerating grace, of the word of truth laying hold of your conscience, of the word of power coming into your heart, of the blood of Christ being applied, and the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost? If not now, yet before you are called away from these lower scenes, you are blessed with a living faith in the Son of God, with the application of his love and blood to your conscience, when time ends with you, it will open to you a glorious eternity, and for ever delivered from all your present sins and sorrows, fears and anxieties, you will be presented at the great day amongst that glorious Church, which has neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing. But if you live and die without any interest in these heavenly blessings, should I be faithful to my commission and to my conscience, if I were to say it will be all well with you?—that you have only on your deathbed to send for a minister to pray by your bedside, give you the sacrament, and speak a few comfortable words, and it will be all right with your soul? Should I be faithful to my commission to encourage such a delusion as this, a delusion by which thousands are continually deceived? I dare not do it. Yea, I would lift up my voice and cry aloud, "There is no salvation past, present, or future, but what flows through the precious blood of the Lamb, and is made experimentally known to the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost."

May 29

"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck." 1 Timothy 1:19

We find that, in the Apostle's time, there were characters who held faith, or rather what they called faith, and put away "good conscience." He mentions by name, "Hymeneus and Alexander, whom he had delivered unto Satan," that is, excommunicated them out of the Church, as heretics and blasphemers. But if to have put good conscience away, stamps a man as unfit for the

visible Church of God, it behoves us to search whether we have this weapon at our side, and in our hand. What does the Apostle, then, mean by "a good conscience?" I believe he means a conscience alive in God's fear, a spiritual conscience, a tender conscience, what he calls, in another part, "a pure conscience;" "holding faith in a pure conscience," that is, purified from ignorance, from guilt, from the power of sin, "a conscience void of offence toward God and men." Wherever, then, there is living faith in the soul, there will be united with it "a good conscience." The Lord never sends forth a soldier to fight his battles with the weapon of faith only; he puts faith in one hand and "a good conscience" in the other. And he that goes forth with what he thinks to be faith, and casts aside "a good conscience," will manifest himself to be one of those characters, who, "concerning faith make shipwreck."

But why is it called "a good conscience?" Because it comes down from God, who is the Author of all good, the Giver of "every good gift, and every perfect gift." There is none good but he, and there is nothing good but what he himself implants and communicates. This weapon of a good conscience, that the Lord arms his soldiers with, works with faith, as well as proves the sincerity of faith, and tests its genuineness and reality. Faith, without a good conscience, is dead. It bears upon it the mark of nature, and however high it may rise in confidence, or however it may seem to abound in good works, it is not the faith of God's elect, of which the end is the salvation of the soul. But it may be asked, How does a good conscience work with faith? What is the connection between these two weapons, and how do they mutually support and strengthen each other? In this way. What faith believes, good conscience feels; what faith receives, good conscience holds; what faith embraces, good conscience rivets fast; when faith is weak, good conscience is feeble; and when faith is strong, good conscience is active. They grow and they wane together, and like two stems from one root together do they flourish and fade. He then alone wars the good warfare, who goes forth with faith in the one hand, and "good conscience" in the other; faith strengthening conscience, and conscience strengthening faith; each doing their separate office, but still tending to one end; each accomplishing the work which the Lord has appointed, and yet each fighting the Lord's battles, and bringing the soldier safe and victorious over his enemy.

May 30

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19

Oh! if there were no Christ Jesus, there could be no "supply." Howling in hell would our miserable souls be, unless there were a Mediator at the right hand of the Father; a blessed Jesus, full of love, pity, and power, co-equal and co-eternal in his divine nature with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and yet the God-Man, in whom "it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell." If there were not such a blessed Mediator at the right hand of God, not one drop of spiritual comfort, not one particle of hope, not one grace or fruit of the Spirit to distinguish us from the damned in hell, would ever be our lot or portion. Oh! we should never forget the channel through which these mercies come; we should never, for one moment, think that they could come through any other Person or in any other way, than through God's only begotten Son, now in our nature, at his right hand, as our Advocate, Mediator, and Intercessor with the Father.

And this supply is "according to the riches of his glory;" which is, I believe, a Hebrew idiom, signifying *his glorious riches*—riches so great, so unlimited, so unfathomable, raising up the soul to such a height of glory, that they may well be called "glorious." And these "in Christ Jesus;" stored up in him, locked up in him, and supplied freely out of him, just according to the wants and exercises of God's people.

May 31

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Galatians 5:17

The Holy Spirit is especially tender of his own work upon the soul. He originally formed it; it is his own spiritual offspring; and as a mother watches over her babe, so the blessed Spirit watches over the spirit of his own creating. It is the counterpart of himself, for it is the spirit that he has raised up in the soul by his own almighty power. He, therefore, acts upon it, breathes into it fresh life and

power, and communicates grace out of the inexhaustible fulness of the Son of God, thus enabling the spirit to breathe and act, struggle and fight against the flesh, so that the latter cannot have all its own way, but must submit and yield. For the spirit can fight as well as the flesh; can act as well as the flesh; and can desire good as well as the flesh can desire evil. What a mercy for us it is that there are those heavenly breathings in our soul of the spirit against the flesh, crying out to God against it; and that the spirit within us thus takes hold of the arm of Omnipotence without us, seeks help from the Lord God Almighty, and by strength thus communicated fights against the flesh, and gains at times a most blessed victory over it. For what can the flesh do against the spirit when animated by divine power? What are sin, Satan, and the world when they have to oppose a Triune God in arms? This makes the victory sure, that our friends are stronger than our foes, and the work of God upon our soul greater than anything sin, Satan, or the world can bring against it. This made the Apostle say, after he had been describing the inward conflict, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:25). And when he had enumerated the opposition that the Christian has to endure on every side, he cries out, as if in holy triumph, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).