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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

October 1

"The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." Isaiah 2:11

How does the Lord humble? By discovering to man what he is; by opening up the depth of his fall; by making him feel what a vile and guilty wretch he is before the footstool of mercy; by breaking him to pieces; by slaughtering and laying him low; by making him abhor himself in dust and ashes. Was not that the way the Lord took with the saints of old? How did he humble Isaiah? Was it not by some discovery of his divine Majesty, to make him cry, "I am a man of unclean lips!" How did he humble Daniel? Was it not by manifesting himself in his almighty purity, and turning his comeliness into corruption? How did he humble Hezekiah? By laying him upon a sick-bed, and laying his sins and iniquities with weight and power upon his conscience. None of these men produced humility in themselves. How did the Lord humble Job? By sifting him in Satan's sieve, and discovering as that riddle moved to and fro in Satan's hands the pride, peevishness, and self-righteousness of his carnal mind. There are many who cannot bear to hear the malady touched upon. They cannot bear to hear the corruptions of the heart even hinted at. But what real humility can a man have except through a knowledge of himself? How can I be humbled except I feel *that* in myself which covers me with shame and confusion of face, and makes me loathe and abhor myself before the eyes of a heart-searching God? Therefore the more the glorious majesty of heaven is pleased to unfold itself in all its divine purity in my conscience, and the deeper discovery I have of what I am as a fallen wretch, a guilty sinner, the more will my heart be humbled, the more shall I be lowly and abased, the more shall I loathe myself in dust and ashes.

October 2

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." 2 Peter 1:2

If we do not know Jesus for ourselves, by some spiritual discovery of his Person and work, what testimony have we of an interest in

his grace? Because, there is no grace except that which flows through him, for "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." This is what we should ever labour after. Our daily, hourly desire and prayer should be, to have spiritual discoveries of Christ; to see him by the eye of faith; to enter into his glorious Person and finished work; to realise his presence, taste his love, and know him and the power of his resurrection. This is what Paul so earnestly laboured after (Phil. 3:10); and for the excellency of this knowledge he suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung that he might win Christ. To know him as our Surety and Sin-bearer, our Advocate and Intercessor, our Friend, Husband, and Brother; to know our interest in him, and our union with him; our place in his heart, our name on his breast, our memorial on the palms of his hands—what can surpass the blessedness of such a knowledge as this? Through this spiritual, experimental knowledge of him, grace flows. As a watercourse opening upon a river brings down its irrigating stream into the parched meadow, so a knowledge of Christ opens up a channel through which the grace that is in him flows into the barren, parched soul. Thus, as through grace alone we know him, so every fresh communication of grace not only makes him better known, but flows in through that very knowledge.

The grace that comes through this knowledge of him brings also peace; for he is "our peace." He has "broken down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." He, therefore, came and preached peace "to those which were afar off and to them that were nigh." His blood speaks peace to a guilty conscience; his voice says peace to the winds and waves of the surging heart; his last legacy was, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you;" his dying promise was, "In me ye shall have peace;" and, as the Prince of peace at God's right hand, he is able to fill us with "all joy and peace in believing," for his kingdom is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And thus, through a knowledge of him as our Lord, "grace and peace" are both "multiplied."

October 3

"Thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest." Jeremiah 45:5

There is a life given to the elect when the blessed Spirit quickens their souls,—a life eternal, communicated to them out of the fulness of the Son of God. This life is a personal, individual life; and thus there seems to be a sweetness contained in the expression, "thy life." "Thy life will I give unto thee for a prey." This life which is treasured up in the fulness of Christ is breathed into the soul in the appointed time by the Holy Ghost, is kept alive there by his almighty power, and will burn brighter and brighter in the realms of endless day. But we may observe, from the expression made use of in the text, that this life which is given to the child of God, is given to him in a peculiar way. "Thy life will I give unto thee *for a prey*." The word "prey" points out that this life is an object of attack. We hear of "beasts of prey," and of "birds of prey," and the expression implies a carnivorous animal. Thus the words, "Thy life will I give unto thee *for a prey*," imply that there are ravenous beasts that are continually seeking to devour this life, voracious enemies upon the watch, who are eager to prey upon this life, which God the Holy Spirit has kindled in the soul. How accurately and how experimentally do these words describe the inward kingdom of God! Eternal life is given by God; and kept by him when given; preserved by his power from ever being extinguished. And yet preserved by a perpetual miracle, like a burning lamp set afloat upon the waves of the sea; or, to use a figure that I have somewhere seen, like a lighted taper carried over a heath in the midst of a gale of wind.

Thus, "our life is given us for a prey;" and the power, faithfulness, and wisdom of God are manifested in keeping this life unhurt amidst all its enemies. As Daniel was preserved in the den of lions; and as the three men were preserved in the burning fiery furnace; so the life of God is preserved in the soul, in the midst of lions, as David says, "My soul is among lions" (Ps. 57:4), and amidst the fires, "Glorify ye the Lord in the fires" (Isaiah 24:15). So that the life of the child of God is one continual conflict between faith and unbelief, between enmity and love, between the grace of God and the rebellion of the carnal mind, between the sinkings of the drooping spirit and the liftings-up of the light of God's countenance.

October 4

"Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." Hebrews 6:20

How blessedly did the Lord comfort his sorrowing disciples when he said to them, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." He is gone to take possession beforehand of his and their everlasting home; for he is ascended to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God. He has, as it were, filled heaven with new beauty, new happiness, new glory. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. His glorious Person as Immanuel is become the object of heaven's praise and adoration. The elect angels, whom he has confirmed in their standing, adore him as God-man; and the spirits of just men made perfect worship him in company with the angelic host. What a view had holy John of heaven's glorious worship, when he saw the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fall down before the Lamb; when he heard their new song and the voice of many angels round about the throne, and all saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:12). Heaven itself is waiting for the completion of the great mystery of godliness, when the whole Church shall be assembled around the throne; when the marriage supper of the Lamb shall come; when the headstone shall be brought forth by the hands of the spiritual Zerubbabel, with shoutings of Grace, grace unto it. Earth itself is groaning under the weight of sin and sorrow; and the souls of those under the altar who were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, are crying with a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Nay, the very signs of the times themselves are all proclaiming as with one voice that it cannot be long before the Lord will come a second time without sin unto salvation.

October 5

"Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Lamentations 3:39

We must not understand by the word "punishment," anything of a vindictive nature. God never punishes the sins of his elect penally; that is, not as he punishes the sins of the reprobate. The eternal covenant forbids this. "Fury is not in me, saith the Lord." The elect are accepted in Jesus, are pardoned in him, are complete in him. This is their eternal and unalterable covenant standing—the fruit and effect of their everlasting union with the Son of God. But though this forbids punishment in its strictly penal sense, it by no means excludes *chastisement*. Thus we are not to understand by the word "punishment" in the text the infliction of God's righteous wrath, that foretaste of eternal damnation with which, sometimes even in this life, he visits the ungodly; but it signifies that chastisement which is the privilege of the heir, and distinguishes him from the bastard. It is under this chastisement, then, that the living man is brought to complain, and he will often see in the afflictions that befall him the rod of the Lord as the chastisement of sin. When he thus sees light in God's light, he may justly say, "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Are they not chastisements, not punishments; the rod of a father's correction, not the vindictive stroke of offended justice?

Perhaps his property is lost through unlooked-for circumstances, or the roguery of others; and he is brought down from comparative affluence to be a poor man. When he can see that this is a chastisement for his pride and carnality in former days, he is able to put his mouth in the dust. Or if the Lord afflict him in his body so that he shall scarcely enjoy a day's health, when he sees and feels how he abused his health and strength when he possessed them, and at the same time perceives from how many hurtful snares his bodily affliction instrumentally preserves him, he is able at times to bear it meekly and patiently. He may also have serious afflictions in his family, or find, like David, "his house not so with God" as he could wish; but when he sees that a sickly wife or disobedient children are but so many strokes of chastisement, and far lighter than his sins demand, when he sees that they come from the hand of love, and not from eternal wrath, that they are the stripes of a Father, not the vindictive strokes of an angry judge, he feels then that love is mingled with chastisement, and his spirit is meekened, and his heart softened, and he is brought down to say, "Wherefore should a living man complain?" Now, until a man gets there he cannot but complain. Until he is brought spiritually to see that all his afflictions, griefs, and sorrows are chastisements and not punishments, and is able

to receive them as the stripes of love, he must and he will complain. But, generally speaking, before the Lord lifts up the light of his countenance upon him, before he gives him a sense of peace in his conscience, he will bring him "to accept," as the Scripture speaks (Lev. 26:41), "of the punishment of his iniquity." He will thus receive these strokes of chastisement with a subdued spirit; he will confess that they are justly deserved; and his obstinacy and rebelliousness being in a measure broken, he will lie as a poor and needy supplicant at the foot of the cross.

October 6

"Persecuted, but not forsaken." 2 Corinthians 4:9

Whatever injury persecutors may do or attempt to do to a Christian, they cannot rob him of his God. They may destroy his body; they cannot destroy his soul. They may wound his reputation; but they cannot wound his conscience. They may strip him of all his earthly goods; but they cannot lay their unhallowed hands upon the treasure which God has lodged in his breast. Yea, all may forsake him as they forsook his divine Master; but God has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Why, then, need we dread persecution for righteousness' sake? If the Lord be on our side, whom need we fear? And who can harm us if we be followers of that which is good? But bear in mind that it must be persecution for righteousness' sake. Do not call it persecution if you are buffeted for your faults. Do not think yourselves persecuted if by your inconsistencies you have brought upon yourselves the reproach of men, or the just censure of those who fear God. But if your persecutions are brought upon you from doing the will of God from the heart, you will find the approbation of God in your conscience; nay, you will find that your very persecutions will draw down more into your soul a blessed sense of the sympathy of your great High Priest, so that as your afflictions abound, so will your consolation. Sad indeed it would be for the Church of God, if, amidst her persecutions, the Lord added to the weight of her trouble by withdrawing from her the light of his countenance and the consolations of his sensible presence. But she never more sensibly reclines on his bosom than when he gives her to drink of his cup, and thus conforms her to his suffering image.

October 7

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Matthew 11:25

Whatever religious knowledge, whatever carnal wisdom, or whatever worldly prudence a man may be possessed of, if he is devoid of the life of God in his soul, he is destitute of the workings of godly fear, he has no solemn awe or reverence for Jehovah, he has never seen his sins in the light of God's countenance, he has never trembled at "the wrath to come," he has never prostrated himself with a reverential spirit before the eyes of a heart-searching Jehovah, that sees into the secret recesses of his bosom. But all his knowledge, and all his wisdom, and all his prudence leave him just where they found him, unimpressed, carnal, sensual, worldly, "dead in trespasses and sins." All his wisdom never reached beyond the surface; it never broke up the crust of unbelief, so as to enter through that seared crust into the conscience, and produce living effects in it, as made tender by the touch of God's finger. But his knowledge, his wisdom, his prudence are all floating in his judgment, and never descend into the depths of his heart. God hides then the workings of spiritual fear from those who are "wise and prudent." He does not condescend to manifest himself to them; he does not shew them light in his light; he does not reveal himself to their consciences; he does not come with power into their hearts; he does not take the veil of unbelief and blindness from their carnal minds, and shew them himself; he takes them not where he took Moses, into the clift of the rock, "where his glory passed by;" he deals not with them as he dealt with Isaiah, when he manifested to him the glory of the Lord in the temple; he discovers himself not to them as he did to Job, when "he abhorred himself in dust and ashes." All their knowledge of God, therefore, is an external, intellectual knowledge, a mere exercise of the faculties of the mind, without any spiritual teaching, or any special revelation of the presence, power, glory, and majesty of God to their consciences.

But the babe, the living babe in Zion has "the fear of the Lord," in his soul, "as the beginning of wisdom." And therefore, having this fountain of life within, he has it springing up in spiritual

exercises. As the Apostle speaks, he "serves God acceptably with reverence and godly fear;" he dare not rush with presumption into his holy presence. When he comes into his sanctuary a solemn dread from time to time falls upon his spirit. He has the feelings of Isaiah when he cried: "I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts;" the feelings of Jacob when he was afraid, and said, "How dreadful is this place!" the feelings of Moses, when he stood by the burning bush, and put his shoes from off his feet, for the spot whereon he stood was holy ground; the feelings of the high priest in the temple, on that mysterious day of atonement, when he entered alone, "not without blood," into the sanctuary, the holy of holies, and beheld the Shechinah, the Divine presence as a cloud resting on the mercy-seat. The babe, then, has these exercises of godly fear, which carnal, unhumbled, worldly-wise professors know nothing of. And though the babe, at times, seems to have no religion which he can really call spiritual or which satisfies himself, yet he has that tenderness, awe, and reverence which the carnal professor, however high in doctrine, however soaring in vain confidence, is utterly unacquainted with.

October 8

"Until the redemption of the purchased possession." Ephesians 1:14

The Church has been redeemed by price, but is not as yet fully redeemed by power. Christ has bought with his precious blood both the souls and bodies of his people, but he has not yet redeemed them openly. This redemption is still future, and will not be accomplished till the glorious resurrection morn, when the bodies of the dead saints will be raised, and the bodies of the living saints changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. This, therefore, is "the redemption of the purchased possession;" and this being future we have to wait for it, as the Apostle speaks, "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:25). Our body is not yet redeemed from its native corruption. But, in the resurrection morn, when the dead will be raised incorruptible, then the redemption of the body will be complete. Then the inheritance will be fully entered into. The risen and glorified saints will inherit Christ, and Christ will inherit them; and his purchased possession

will be for ever delivered from every foe and every fear, from every sin and every sorrow, from every corruption of body or soul, and be crowned with an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Unto this day of redemption the Holy Spirit seals all the living family of God (Ephes. 4:30), not only by assuring them of their interest in the inheritance, and himself being the earnest of it, but as thereby securing to them the most certain possession of it.

October 9

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9

The sin of our fallen nature is a very mysterious thing. We read of the mystery of iniquity as well as of the mystery of godliness; and the former has lengths, depths, and breadths as well as the latter; depths which no human plumbline ever fathomed, and lengths which no mortal measuring line ever yet meted out. Thus the way in which sin sometimes seems to sleep, and at other times to awake up with renewed strength, its active, irritable, impatient, restless nature, the many shapes and colours it wears, the filthy holes and puddles in which it grovels, the corners into which it creeps, its deceitfulness, hypocrisy, craft, plausibility, intense selfishness, utter recklessness, desperate madness, and insatiable greediness are secrets, painful secrets, only learnt by bitter experience. In the spiritual knowledge of these two mysteries, the mystery of sin and the mystery of salvation, all true religion consists. In the school of experience we are kept, day after day, learning and forgetting these two lessons, being never able to understand them, and yet not satisfied unless we know them, pursuing after an acquaintance with them, and finding that they still, like a rainbow, recede from us as fast as we pursue. Thus we find realised in our own souls those heavenly contradictions, those divine paradoxes, that the wiser we get, the greater fools we become (1 Cor. 3:18); the stronger we grow, the weaker we are (2 Cor. 12:9, 10); the more we possess, the less we have (2 Cor. 6:10); the more completely bankrupt, the more frankly forgiven (Luke 7:42); the more utterly lost, the more perfectly saved; and when most like a little child, the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:4).

October 10

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."
Romans 5:5

How the Scriptures speak of "a good hope through grace;" and call it "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." What a blessed grace must that be which thus enters into the very presence of Christ! How, too, the word of God speaks of it as the twin sister with faith and love (1 Cor. 13:13); and declares that it "maketh not ashamed," because it springs out of the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost!

Now we learn what "a good hope through grace" is, by being tossed up and down on the waves of despondency, and almost at times sinking into despair. Evidences so darkened, the heart so shut up, the mind so bewildered, sin so present, the Lord so absent, a nature so carnal, sensual, idolatrous, and adulterous—no wonder that amidst so many evils felt or feared, the soul should at times sink into despondency. But at such seasons the blessedness of "a good hope through grace" is found; and when this anchor is cast into and enters within the veil, taking hold of the blood and righteousness of the great High Priest, how strongly and securely it holds the ship, so that it shall not be utterly overwhelmed in the billows of despair!

October 11

"The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." **Isaiah 53:6**

What heart can conceive, what tongue express what the holy soul of Christ endured when "the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all?" In the garden of Gethsemane, what a load of guilt, what a weight of sin, what an intolerable burden of the wrath of God did that sacred humanity endure, until the pressure of sorrow and woe forced the drops of blood to fall as sweat from his brow. The human nature in its weakness recoiled, as it were, from the cup of anguish put into his hand. His body could scarce bear the load

that pressed him down; his soul, under the waves and billows of God's wrath, sank in deep mire where there was no standing, and came into deep waters where the floods overflowed him (Ps. 69:1, 2). And how could it be otherwise when that sacred humanity was enduring all the wrath of God, suffering the very pangs of hell, and wading in all as the depths of guilt and terror? When the blessed Lord was made sin (or a sin-offering) for us, he endured in his holy soul all the pangs of distress, horror, alarm, misery, and guilt that the elect would have felt in hell for ever; and not only as any one of them would have felt, but as the collective whole would have experienced under the outpouring of the everlasting wrath of God. The anguish, the distress, the darkness, the condemnation, the shame, the guilt, the unutterable horror, that any or all of his quickened family have ever experienced under a sense of God's wrath, the curse of the law, and the terrors of hell, are only faint, feeble reflections of what the Lord felt in the garden and on the cross; for there were attendant circumstances in his case which are not, and indeed cannot be in theirs, and which made the distress and agony of his holy soul, both in nature and degree, such as none but he could feel or know. He as the eternal Son of God, who had lain in his bosom before all worlds, had known all the blessedness and happiness of the love and favour of the Father, his own Father, shining upon him, for he was "by him as one brought up with him, and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him" (Prov. 8:30). When, then, instead of love he felt his displeasure, instead of the beams of his favour he experienced the frowns and terrors of his wrath, instead of the light of his countenance he tasted the darkness and gloom of desertion,—what heart can conceive, what tongue express the bitter anguish which must have wrung the soul of our suffering Surety under this agonising experience?

October 12

"With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."
Psalm 91:16

It is not in the number of our years that we shall find preparedness for death. It is not the longer a man lives the more will he be satisfied. No such thing. Then what can the promise mean? Why, that God will satisfy his people with their length of life, whether long or short. God takes his children home at all

ages, and he always satisfies them. He always brings them to see and feel that this life is empty and vain, and that it is better, far better, to live in his presence. You may be harassed by the thoughts of death, and be in bondage through the fears of death; and you may be saying, "How will it be with me then?" I will tell you. If you are a child of God, I firmly believe you will not be removed unwillingly and reluctantly, but you will be willing in the day of the Lord's power. You will be willing to breathe out your soul into his dear hands, to whom you will commend your spirit; you will be willing to be with Christ, which is far better. You may not now be willing. If you pluck at an unripe apple, it resists the touch, but let it be fully ripe, how little, how slight a touch will cause it to drop from the tree. You shall be gathered as a shock of corn in its season. Why, a farmer will not gather in his corn until it is fully ripe; and do you think the Lord will gather his corn into his heavenly garner and it be in an unfit and unripe state? We cannot think it. Be that thought far from us, as it is far from the Lord.

"With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation." Ah! the soul will never see it unless the Lord shews it him; but the Lord will shew it him. He says he will. "I will shew him my salvation." What can he want more? All that he may want, all that he may need in his journey through this wilderness is there. Is there not a sufficiency? Is there not that which he feels is enough? If these promises be mine, be yours, and if they be fulfilled to you and to me, what can we possibly want more?

October 13

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." John 14:26

If the Lord has given to any of you eyes to see and hearts to receive this divine Comforter, praise, bless, and adore your God and Father, and most merciful Benefactor, for his distinguishing grace in giving you to know him as your Comforter; and if he has ever dropped into your soul any of his sweet teachings, bless him that you have received him also as the Spirit of truth into your conscience. What but sovereign grace, rich, free and superabounding, has made the difference between you and the world who cannot receive him? But for his divine operations upon

your soul, you would still be of the world, hardening your heart against everything good and godlike, walking on in the pride and ignorance of unbelief and self-righteousness, until you sank down into the chambers of death. Oh, it is a mercy if but one drop of heavenly consolation has ever been distilled into your soul, if ever you have felt or found any relief in your sorrows and distresses from the work and witness of the Holy Ghost; if you have ever gathered any solid comfort from any promise applied with power, from any text dropped into your heart with a sealing testimony, from any manifestation of the love and blood of Christ, or from any communication of liberty, joy, or peace such as are produced by the operation and influence of the Spirit of God. It may have been but little, nor did it last long; but it has given you a taste of its blessedness, and made you long for another sip, another crumb, another visit. But look to it well and examine carefully whether it be real, and whether, weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, you have good ground for believing that what you received with such comfort to your soul was distilled into your heart by the Comforter, and that the truth which you have felt and believed, as well as professed, has been opened up to your conscience by the Spirit of truth.

October 14

"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Philippians 3:9

Here are the two righteousnesses clearly laid down, in one or other of which we must all stand before God—the righteousness which is of the law, and the righteousness which is of God by faith in Christ. But bear this in mind, that a righteousness to be available before God must be a perfect righteousness. This righteousness no man ever did or could produce by his own obedience to the law, for no man ever yet loved God "with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, and his neighbour as himself;" and if a man do not thus love God and thus love his neighbour, he is accursed and condemned already by that righteous law which curseth "every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Now the Apostle felt that as this righteousness could not be yielded by himself as a fallen sinner, he must necessarily fall under the

condemnation and curse attached to that holy law. Trembling, therefore, in his conscience, as feeling that the wrath of God was revealed against him, and all unjustified sinners in a broken law, and knowing that he must sink for ever under the terrible indignation of the Almighty, if he had no covering for his needy, naked soul but his own righteousness, he fled out of it to find justification and acceptance, mercy and peace in the righteousness of Christ. Thenceforth he "was determined to know nothing, save Jesus Christ and him crucified," and Jesus became to him his "all in all." When once he had been favoured with a view of the righteousness of the Son of God, he wanted no other for time or eternity. He saw by faith the words and works of the God-man, and he beheld Deity stamped upon every thought, word, and action of that pure humanity with which it was in union, and thus investing them with a merit beyond all conception or expression of men or angels. He saw him by faith bearing his sins in his own body on the tree, and by his active and passive obedience working out a righteousness acceptable to God, and such as he and all the redeemed could stand in before the great white throne without spot or blemish. As a traveller overtaken by a violent thunderstorm gladly flies to a house by the wayside wherein he may find shelter from the lightning-stroke and the sweeping rain; or as a ship threatened with a hurricane bends every sail to reach in time the harbour of refuge, so does the soul terrified by the thunders and lightnings of God's righteous law, seek for shelter in the wounded side of Jesus, and hide itself beneath his justifying obedience. This righteousness is here called "the righteousness of God;" for God the Father contrived it, God the Son performed it, and God the Holy Ghost applies it; and it is said to be "by faith" and "through the faith of Christ" because faith views it, believes in it, receives it, and gives the soul a manifested interest in it.

October 15

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." Deuteronomy 32:2

We have in our text a regular scale: the dew, the small rain, the rain, and the showers. And this graduated scale of heavenly moisture shews that there are degrees of spiritual blessing. We must not expect all to be blessed to the same extent, nor all to

receive the same measure. Yet all are of the same nature. Examine "the dew," it is water; "the small rain," it is water; "the rain," it is water; "the showers," they are still water. You cannot find any difference between the water of the dew, of the small rain, of the rain, and of the showers: they are all alike pure water, distilled from the alembic of the sky. So it is with the blessing of God upon the soul. It may fall upon one as the dew, upon another as the small rain, upon a third as the rain, on a fourth as the showers; yet all are equally and alike spiritual and divine. It is the same God that gives; through the same Jesus it comes; by the same Spirit it is communicated. All produce more or less the same effect—to soften, to moisten, to fertilise, and to revive; and all descend from the heaven of Christ's gospel; all fall from the same firmament of grace, mercy, and truth, love, blood, and salvation. The doctrine, therefore, that testifies of Jesus, and the speech that proclaims him to be a Rock, and his work to be perfect, and no other teaching, "drops as the rain and distils as the dew." There is a power in truth, when God is pleased to apply it to the heart; and whether it come in large or in small measure, whether it be in dew or shower, it is equally a proof of his mercy and love, and equally a proof that his power attends his own divine truth to our soul.

October 16

"Your life is hid with Christ in God." Colossians 3:3

There is nothing so deep, nothing so hidden, as the life of God in the soul. It seems to be enshrined in the lowest depths of a man's heart. It does not float upon the surface, like a cork upon the water, but sinks deep, very deep, into the very bottom of the soul. Therefore is it hidden from the eyes of a profane world; hidden from the professing world; and what is more, sometimes hidden from the subject of it himself. A child of God often cannot see his own faith, nor can he discern the life that is bubbling and streaming up in his own bosom. It is not a lake, spread abroad in the meridian sunshine to attract every eye; nor is it a brook that flows babbling on over the clear pebbles; but it is a well. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a *well* of water, springing up into everlasting life." Therefore it is hidden from view. The best part of our religion is that which is least seen. The secret cries, groans, tears, confessions, supplications, and breathings after God do not for the most part come abroad; the

despondency, heart sickness, trials, perplexities, and powerful temptations with which many a dear saint of God is exercised do not come to view. No; nor his fears, sinkings, guilt, misery, and self-condemnation. Yes, the best part of his religion is hidden from view, for the weightiest ever sinks the deepest. And as it is with the dealings of his soul with God, so it is with the dealings of God with his soul, making and keeping his conscience tender, reviving the fear of God, drawing the heart upward into prayer and meditation, watering his spirit and bedewing it with the secret dew and rain of his grace. Thus, the best part, because the spiritual part of a man's religion, is hidden from the eyes of all, except as the fruits thereof are manifest. Take your stand upon yon hill, and see that thread of verdure spreading itself through the barren plain. Whence comes that green strip which you see? Coming down to examine it, you find a little brooklet threading its way through the barren plain. It is this brooklet that, watering the roots of the grass, gives it that verdure; yet the brooklet itself is hidden till the eye is brought close to it. So it is with the life of God in the soul. We see the effects the verdure produced by the brooklet; but the brooklet itself, the life and grace of God in the innermost soul is hidden, "hid with Christ in God." And if not merely hidden, but hidden with Christ in God, what a sacred, what a holy, what a truly divine life it must be! If this be spiritual religion, that it dwells with Christ himself in the bosom of God, what a divine thing, what a heavenly possession! how full of eternal blessedness must the religion of a child of God be! It is locked up in two distinct places, yet united with each other by virtue of the humanity of Christ, and the faith that embraces it. If I may use the expression, one end is in the bosom of God, and the other in the believer's breast! Compare man's paltry, beggarly religion with this supernatural life of God in the soul, Christ himself formed in the heart the hope of glory. Words would fail to express the eternal distinction between them.

But the word "hidden" will carry another idea, *out of reach*, treasured up, therefore safe. What would have become long ago of the life of God in the soul, if it could have been robbed, trodden out, or lost? But this it never can be, for it is locked up in the Person of the Son of God. It is, therefore, out of the reach of Satan, sin, death, and hell; safe in Christ's keeping, locked up in his eternal bosom. Were it otherwise, where should you and I long ago have been? Where would our religion have gone to, unless we had reason to believe that it had been kindled by the power of God, and was maintained by the same power which first gave it

birth? This is the grand consolation of a child of God—to believe that he has the life of God in his soul; and to feel, day by day, that he who gave that life maintains it in firm and living exercise.

October 17

"Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." 1 Peter 1:2

When we see and feel how we need grace every moment of our lives, we at once perceive a beauty in the blessing thus asked for in an abundant, overflowing measure. We cannot walk the length of the street without sin. Our carnal minds, our vain imaginations, are all on the look out for evil. Sin presents itself at every avenue, and lurks like the Arab in the wilderness, or the prowling night thief for every opportunity of open or secret plunder. In fact, in ourselves, in our fallen nature, except as restrained and influenced by grace, we sin with well-nigh every breath that we draw. We need, therefore, grace upon grace, or, in the words of the text, grace to be "multiplied" in proportion to our sins. Shall I say in proportion? Nay, if sin abounds, as to our shame and sorrow we know it does, we want grace to much more abound. When the neep tide of sin flows in with the mud and mire, we want the spring tide of grace to flow higher still, to carry out the slime and filth into the depths of the ocean, so that when sought for they may no more be found. Thus we want grace, free grace; grace to-day, grace to-morrow, grace this moment, grace the next, grace all the day long; healing, reviving, restoring, saving, sanctifying; and all this multiplied by all our wants and woes, sins, slips and falls, unceasing and aggravated backslidings. We want grace to believe, grace to hope, grace to love, grace to fight, and grace to conquer; grace to stand, grace to live, and grace to die. Every moment of our lives we need keeping, supporting, holding, and withholding grace; for, as a good man has said, "If the Lord leave us for one moment, he leaves us that one moment too long."

But to "grace" the Apostle adds *"peace."* Sin breaks our peace, and sets our souls at a distance from God; trials, too, and temptations, sins and sorrows, occur every day to mar our rest; so we want peace to be multiplied as well as grace. Peace like a river, of which the stream is ever flowing; peace like the sea, of which the tides, if they do ebb, yet rise higher than they fall. We want peace, too, to establish our hearts in the truth, and in the love of it,

so as to prevent our being carried about with every wind of doctrine. We are often entangled in the wily snares of Satan, and we want peace to be restored to our soul. When it is thus sadly broken, and sin has filled us with guilt and terror, we want peace to come and heal all those wounds, and establish our souls firmly in the gospel of peace. And when we shall be called upon to enter the dark valley of the shadow of death, how then we shall need "peace to be multiplied," that we may fear no evil, but find the comforting staff and supporting rod. Thus we never can have too much grace or too much peace. The more we know of sin the more shall we want grace, and the more we know of sorrow the more we shall want peace.

October 18

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." John 6:29

Oh! how many a living saint is there who wants to believe in Jesus, who longs to trust in his holy name; and yet he cannot, so plagued, so pestered is he by the risings of inward unbelief. He knows that he does not yet so believe in him as to obtain deliverance; for he has an inward testimony in his conscience, that if he believed in the Lord Jesus by the power of the Holy Ghost, it would bring the love of God into his heart, extract the sting of death, and fill him with joy and peace. But as long as he feels condemned by the law and his own guilty conscience, he has an inward testimony that he has not as yet that living faith in Christ which, he is persuaded, would save and deliver him from all his guilty fears and dismal apprehensions. Therefore he labours after this special, this peculiar faith in the Lord Jesus, that he may attain unto it, or rather that God would, of his infinite mercy, bestow it upon him. Here, then, is the main labour of faith, to believe in Jesus Christ so as to obtain pardon, peace, and deliverance. Many a poor soul is labouring hard at this work, yet with a deep and increasing conviction that it is a work which he cannot perform except by the immediate power of God. So powerful an antagonist is unbelief, that, with all his attempts, he feels that he cannot subdue it, nor raise up one grain of that true faith whereby Christ is experimentally brought into the heart. But this very struggle plainly shews that there is life within, a work of God on his soul; for, from the movements of his grace, and the opposition of his carnal mind to them, all this conflict proceeds. When, then, in due time, the blessed Spirit brings Christ near to his eyes and heart, reveals him within, takes of his atoning blood, and sprinkles it on his conscience, brings forth his righteousness and puts it upon him, and sheds abroad the love of God, then he raises up that special faith in the Lord Jesus, whereby the soul hangs, and if I may use the expression, hooks itself upon his Person, as God-man, upon his blood as cleansing from all sin, upon his righteousness as perfectly justifying, upon his grace as superabounding over all the aboundings of evil, and upon his dying love as a balmy cordial against all the woes and sorrows by which it is distressed. This is believing in the Son of God; believing in Jesus Christ to the salvation of the soul.

October 19

"Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way?" Jeremiah 2:17

No man knows better, I believe, than myself, that we cannot do anything of a spiritual nature to bring us near to God, but I am equally sure that we can do many things that set us very far from him. Let all the shame and guilt be ours; all the grace and glory are God's. Every drop of felt mercy, every ray of gracious hope, every sweet application of truth to the heart, every sense of interest, every blessed testimony, every sweet indulgence, every heavenly smile, every tender desire, and every spiritual feeling, all, all are of God. If ever my heart is softened, my spirit blessed, my soul watered, if Christ is ever felt to be precious, it is all of his grace; it is all given freely, sovereignly, without money and without price. But can it be denied—I for one cannot deny it—that by our carnality, inconsistency, worldly-mindedness, negligence, ingratitude, and forsaking and forgetting the God of our mercies, we are continually bringing leanness and barrenness, deadness and darkness into our own souls? Thus we are forced to plead "Guilty, guilty!" to put our mouth in the dust, acknowledge ourselves to be vile, and confess ourselves indeed "of sinners chief, and of saints less than the least." Yet thus does God, in his mysterious dealings, open up a way for his sovereign grace and mercy to visit the soul. The more we feel ourselves condemned, cut off, gashed, and wounded by a sense of sin and folly, backslidings and wanderings from God, the lower we shall lie, the more we shall put our mouth in the dust, the more freely we shall confess our baseness before him. And if the Lord should be pleased, in these solemn moments, to open our poor blind eyes to see something of the precious blood of the Lamb, to apply some sweet promise to the soul, or to bring to the heart a sense of his goodness and mercy, how sweet and suitable is that grace, as coming over all the mountains and hills of our sin and shame. Thus is the goodness of God, as it were, reflected on and by our baseness and vileness, as we see the sun sometimes shining on and reflected by a black cloud. The black cloud of our vileness but serves to heighten the glory of the rays of free grace and the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness.

October 20

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." 2 Timothy 2:3

How is the Christian soldier made? By going to chapel, by reading the Bible, by singing hymns, by talking about religion? Just as much as the veteran warrior is made at Aldershot or Southsea. He must go into the battle and fight hand to hand with Satan and the flesh; he must endure cruel wounds given by both outward and inward foes; he must lie upon the cold ground of desolation and desertion; he must rush up the breach when called to storm the castles of sin and evil, and never "yield or quit the field," but press on determined to win the day or die. In these battles of the Lord, in due time he learns how to handle his weapons, how to call upon God in supplication and prayer, to trust in Jesus Christ with all his heart, to beat back Satan, to crucify self, and live a life of faith in the Son of God. Religion is not a matter of theory or of doctrine: it is to be in the thick of the battle, fighting with the enemy hand to hand, foot to foot, shoulder to shoulder. This actual, not sham, warfare makes the Christian soldier hardy, strengthens the muscles of his arm, gives him skill to wield his weapons, and power sometimes to put his enemies to flight. Thus it "works endurance," makes him a veteran, so that he is no longer a raw recruit, but one able to fight the Lord's battles and "to endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." What then have been your best friends? Your trials. Where have you learnt your best lessons? In the school of temptation. What has made you look to Jesus? A sense of your sin and misery. Why have you hung upon the word of promise? Because you had nothing else to hang upon.

Thus, could you look at the results, you would see this, that trials and temptations produced upon your spirit these two effects; that they tried your faith, and that sometimes to the uttermost, so that in the trial it seemed as if all your faith were gone; and yet they have wrought patience, they have made you endure. Why have you not long ago given up all religion? Have your trials made you disposed to give it up? They have made you hold all the faster by it. Have your temptations induced you to let it go as a matter of little consequence? Why, you never had more real religion than when you were tried whether you had any; and never held faith with a tighter grasp than when Satan was pulling it all away. The strongest believers are not the men of doctrine, but the men of

experience; not the boasters, but the fighters; not the parade officers in all the millinery of spotless regimentals, but the tattered, soiled, wounded, half-dead soldiers that give and take no quarter from sin or Satan.

October 21

"Behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord." Jeremiah 45:5

The Lord may be said spiritually to "bring evil upon all flesh," when he lays trouble and calamity upon the flesh, and upon all that the flesh loves. The blow falls upon the fruits of the flesh, when it cuts down fleshly religion, and roots up false hopes, vain confidence, and self-dependence. The effect of these strokes is to lay the soul poor and needy at the footstool of mercy; and as the Holy Ghost enlightens the eyes to see, quickens the soul to feel, and raises up power to ask, there is now a seeking after real things—substance as opposed to shadows. Thus pardon, mercy, the testimony of God in the soul, the lifting up of the light of his countenance, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus upon the conscience, with all the other spiritual blessings revealed in the gospel, are sought after, valued, and prized. It is not enough now that they are heard from a minister, assented to in the judgment, or received on the testimony of others. They are only now so far enjoyed as they are tasted, felt, and handled in the depths of the heart. I believe I can say for myself until evil came upon me in this way, chiefly through a long illness, (though if I have life now, I had it before that visitation), yet until trouble came, and I was brought low in body and soul, I was never seeking as I have done since, the visitations and manifestations of the Lord's favour. Deceived by Satan and my own heart, I was seeking rather to make myself wise in the letter, than to feel the power of vital godliness in my soul. But ever since then, amidst many discouragements, and with many alternations and changes, I have felt led, as I never knew before, or at least not from the same pressing sense of need, to seek after the visitations and manifestations of the Lord's favour; the dew of his Spirit, the application of his atoning blood, and the inward testimonies of his love and grace. Nor can I rest for salvation upon anything else. I am not, therefore, speaking at a peradventure; I know the ground, for I have travelled it; I have lined it with laborious

footsteps; and therefore having tracked it out, I speak in my measure, that which I know; and testify that which I feel.

When the Lord, then, thus brings evil upon our flesh, it is not to sweep away any *real* religion that we may possess. It is to sweep away our *false* religion. This winnowing fan is to fan away the chaff, and leave the pure grain. This keen knife of the heavenly Anatomist is only to cut away the diseased excrescences, and unhealthy tumours, and leave the sound parts uninjured. When the Lord brings distress into the soul, it is not to destroy any one grace that has been communicated by the blessed Spirit, but to fulfil that word, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." He puts his "vessels of gold and silver" into the furnace to take away their dross, that they may be "sanctified, and meet for the Master's use." For he has chosen his Zion in the furnace of affliction; and he "sits as a refiner and purifier of silver, that he may purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:3).

October 22

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14

The glory of Christ, in his suffering manhood, was veiled from the eyes of all but those who were taught by the blessed Spirit and enlightened to see it. And what glory is still to be seen by believing eyes in an incarnate God! The grandeur of Deity, tempered by the weakness of humanity, and yet shining through it, as the noonday sun shines through the clouds, which so far veil his rays that though they permit him to be seen they do not dazzle nor blind the eye! The Son of God in the babe of Bethlehem; the "only begotten of the Father," sweating great drops of blood in the Garden, and hanging upon the cross at Calvary; yet in his lowest state, when covered to man's eye with ignominy and shame, glory streaming from every pore of his sacred body, majesty and beauty shining forth from every lineament of his marred countenance, and love and mercy characterizing every word issuing from his languid lips! None will ever see the glory of a risen, ascended, and glorified Christ in the open bliss of heaven who do not first see

him on earth in his humiliation as a suffering Christ; and indeed it is his suffering glory which is now so blessed and so suitable to a guilty sinner. To see this suffering glory of the Son of God revealed to his soul by a divine power, made over to him as his salvation, and containing in it the essence of all his present and future happiness; this is the glory that a redeemed and regenerated saint longs to see and feel. What glory can the world give compared with the glory of the marred countenance of the suffering Son of God? By the side of his cross all earthly glory pales, withers, and dies; for death puts an end to everything naturally bright and glorious. Well has God spoken of the end of all human glory: "Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it" (Isaiah 5:14). But that glory which begins with the cross ends with the crown; for "if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together." To see this glory of a suffering Christ by the eye of faith; to feel the heart deeply penetrated and inwardly possessed by it; to have it for our daily bread and our daily drink; to come as led by the Spirit to this ever-spread table of the flesh of Christ, this ever-flowing fountain of his atoning blood, and hear the Lord himself saying, "'Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.' Here is food to feed your immortal soul; here are streams of pardon and peace; here the rivers of eternal life: 'Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely;'" to see, to enjoy, to feel, and experience this in his own dry, thirsty and weary bosom, this is to see the glory of God, as revealed in the Person, work, blood, obedience, and love of his dear Son.

October 23

"Even to him shall men come." Isaiah 45:24

The Lord has given an absolute promise that "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." And no less absolute is the addition, and as it were divine corollary to that promise, "To him shall men come." And who gives them will and power to come? The Father himself, according to the Lord's own words, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." But will the Father draw all the chosen vessels of mercy to Jesus? Surely he will; for the Lord adds, "It is

written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45).

Every act of faith whereby you look to Jesus is a coming. Every beam and ray of hope in his blood and righteousness is a coming. Every sigh, groan, or tear; every contrite feeling, every breathing desire of a broken heart, all are a coming. So that though you may not be able to realise as fully as you could wish an interest in the former part of the promise, "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength;" yet there is wrought in your soul by a divine power that secret coming whereby you have a manifested interest in the second part of it, "Even to him shall men come." We cannot come until we are drawn. "Draw me," says the bride, "we will run after thee" (Song Sol. 1:4). "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." When we are drawn, then we come, and cannot but come. It is good to come. Even those who have received must be ever coming. We get nothing but by coming. Our daily life, as one of faith and hope, is a life of coming. Our continual prayer is a continual coming. For the language of the Church still is, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Thus must we be ever coming that we may be ever receiving; and so everything that makes us come has in it a real or an implied blessing. Nor will you come in vain, be you who or what you may. "For him that cometh to me," the blessed Lord himself has said, "I will in no wise cast out."

October 24

"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:20

There are three kinds of righteousness, or at least three kinds of righteousness which bear that name. There is *inherent* righteousness, of which we have none. There is *imputed* righteousness, which is all our justification. And there is *imparted* righteousness, when God the Spirit makes us new creatures, and raises up in the heart that "new man, which after God" (that is, "after the image of God") "is created in righteousness and true holiness." When the Lord, therefore, said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," he did not mean only an *external* righteousness wrought out by his obedience to the law *for* them, but an *internal* righteousness wrought out by the Holy Spirit *in* them. Thus we read of the inward as well as the outward apparel of the Church, "The King's daughter is all glorious *within*; her *clothing* is of wrought gold." Two kinds of righteousness belong to the Queen; her imputed righteousness is her *outward* robe, "the *clothing* of wrought gold;" but imparted righteousness is her *inward* adorning, which makes her "all-glorious *within*." This inward glory is the new man in the heart, with all his gifts and graces, what Peter calls "the divine nature," "Christ in the heart, the hope of glory."

October 25

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." 1 John 5:20

When the Lord Jesus is pleased in some solemn hour to reveal himself to our soul, when he graciously condescends to take the veil from off our heart that we may behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, when he kindly favours us with some manifestation and discovery of himself as the Son of God, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his Person, then we know that the Son of God

is come. How do you know that the sun rose this morning? By the light which rose with it. So we may say, spiritually, "How do you know that the Son of God is come?" By the Sun of righteousness arising upon you with healing in his wings and the shining light which he diffuses in your heart. So the Lord speaks to Zion: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." That is the way in which the darkness is dispersed; for he adds, "Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Did not our blessed Lord say, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness?" And has he not promised, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life?" Now as God is light, when he is pleased to shine into the soul, we walk in the light as he is in the light, and then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. This is the best, this is the surest, this is the safest way to know that the Son of God is come.

We know also that the Son of God is come by his presence; by his power put forth on our behalf; by the answers which he gives to prayer; by the way in which he appears in dark and gloomy hours, making crooked things straight and rough places plain, discovering himself to us as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, shewing unto us that in him there is rest and peace, solid, abiding happiness, and in no other. He thus draws and fixes our eyes upon himself, where he sits at the right hand of the Father in the fulness of his grace, glory, and majesty. Thus we know that the Son of God is come. Every prayer, every petition, every sigh and cry, every longing look that you cast up to him, and every word of his grace, every sweet promise, every glimpse or glance of the King in his beauty, which you receive out of his fulness, are all so many testimonies that the Son of God is come, and that you know that he is come.

October 26

"These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season." Psalm 104:27

The "meat" which God's children long after, is to have "the truth as it is in Jesus," in its various branches, revealed with power to

their heart. Not merely to see a certain truth in God's word; that is like a hungry beggar looking at savoury provision through a window, from which he is barred out; such a sight whets his appetite rather than satisfies it. The meat that God's people are longing after, and the only thing which can assuage their spiritual hunger, is "the truth as it is in Jesus" manifested, revealed, discovered, and applied with power to their souls; dew, unction, savour, sweetness, life, light, liberty accompanying the word, so that truth falls as heavenly manna into their hearts. It is not sufficient that the Holy Ghost should create the appetite, but he must overshadow the soul with his divine influences, breathe abroad a heavenly savour, and fill it with some sensations of his presence, with some meltings of heart at the feet of Christ, with some drawing forth of affection to God; and thus communicate an inward reception of the truth, and an enjoyment of its sweetness and savour.

"Thou *givest* them." It is not to be taken out of the Bible, because it may be read; not to be caught up, as the minister throws it forth, because it may be heard; not to be got out of books; but to be bestowed by the holy hand of Jehovah himself, and received in the posture of a penitent, in the attitude of a suppliant, a sinner prostrate at the foot of the cross, without anything in self but wounds, condemnation, and guilt.

But there is a due season: "Thou *givest* them their meat in *due season*." There are many living souls, who are hungering after divine blessings, but the "due season" has not come. "The times and the seasons the Father hath put in his own power." You are not yet fit for it; the Lord has to bring you lower; you will have to travel through darker paths, to pass through sorer exercises. There is a "due season" for the manifestation of gospel blessings; there is a fitting time, which the Searcher of hearts knows. And that Searcher of hearts knows that many of the true Church of God are at this present time in that state, that he will not manifest to them his greatest and richest blessings. There is a "due season," in which they are revealed and manifested to the soul; and that season will be as suitable to all its wants, as it will be most glorious to God. That "due season" will most probably be when the soul will least expect to receive it. The promise having been so long delayed, it seems as though it would never come; the blessing having been so long withheld, it appears as though the Lord would never bestow it; having denied his countenance so long, it seems as though he had drawn a black cloud over the

throne, and through that cloud the rays of the sun would never shine. But it is a "due season;" it will surely come; "though the vision tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry." There is a "set time to favour Zion," and when that set time arrives, the Lord will build up Zion and appear in his glory, for "he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer."

October 27

"Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." 1 Corinthians 3:22

"Life," says the Apostle, is "yours." But how can this be? In two ways. Life present and life future, both are the Christian's, according to the words, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." But life present is natural and spiritual. In three senses, therefore, is life the portion of Christ's people; life natural, life spiritual, life eternal. Life natural is theirs, for they alone can truly enjoy it. What is natural life if it hang by a thread over an awful eternity? How soon spent and gone, and how soon death and judgment close the scene. But the Christian's very natural life is his season for faith and prayer, the seedtime of an immortal harvest. Most men are life's slave, but he is life's master; to most, life is but an opportunity of evil, but to him an opportunity of good. Spiritual life is peculiarly his, for he alone possesses it. Natural men share with him natural life; but he alone enjoys spiritual life. This life is his because Christ is his. Christ is his life, and because Christ lives, he lives also. And then there is life eternal, which commencing now in life spiritual is transplanted above to bloom in immortality.

And then, more wondrous still, "*death*," that last enemy, that king of terrors, who makes the strongest tremble, and the stoutest heart quake; that, too, is yours, if ye are Christ's. Death is not your enemy if you are Christ's, but your friend. He may indeed in the dim and distant prospect seem to come in the guise of an enemy; you may dread the thought of his approach, and may even sink down with fear how it may be with you in that solemn hour. But if you are Christ's, death is yours as well as life, for he has

abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light. Death then cannot harm you, because Christ died for you. Death will merely cause your poor body to drop into the ground, whilst it will open to your soul the everlasting doors through which the King of glory, the Lord mighty in battle, entered as your forerunner when he went to prepare a place for you.

October 28

"And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 1 Corinthians 3:23

"Christ is God's." These are remarkable words, and need to be carefully and reverently opened up. The fulness of the mystery is beyond our grasp. Still, we may attempt to look at it in faith and godly fear. How, then, is Christ God's? First, he is God's Son—not a Son by covenant or by office; in other words, not a nominal, but a true and proper Son—a Son by nature, by his eternal mode of subsistence as a Person in the Godhead. "This is my beloved Son" was twice proclaimed by God the Father with an audible voice from heaven. Second, but he is also God's servant. "Behold my servant whom I uphold" (Isaiah 42:1). "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob" (Isaiah 49:6), and this he was as Messiah. But because he is by office God's servant, he is not less by nature God's Son. Here, however, he is spoken of as the God-man Mediator, the Son of the Father in truth and love, the great High Priest over the house of God; and especially what he is as viewed in union with the Church, the Bridegroom with the bride, the Vine with the branches, the Shepherd with the sheep, the living foundation with the living stones built into and upon it. Christ, therefore, in our text is said to be God's not only as the only-begotten Son of God, but as "the Head of the body, the Church" (Col. 1:18); for, says the Apostle, "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Ephes. 5:30). Christ, then, is God's, with all those that belong to him—he as much as they, they as much as he. Look, then, at these glorious truths. "Ye are Christ's" because by donation, purchase, and possession ye are members of his body. "Christ is God's" as Son, as servant, as Mediator, as Head of the Church. Then ye too are God's, because ye are Christ's; for the members are one with their covenant Head.

October 29

"They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick"
Matthew 9:12

A physician is useless without a case; and the deeper the case, the wiser and better physician we need. Thus a guilty conscience is a case for atoning blood, a wounded spirit for healing balm, a filthy garment for a justifying robe, a drowning wretch for an Almighty hand, a criminal on the gallows for a full pardon, an incurable disease for a heavenly physician, and a sinner sinking into hell for a Saviour stooping down from heaven. A man with a real case must have a real salvation. He is no longer to be cheated, deluded, and tricked with pretences, as a nervous patient is sometimes cured with bread pills; but he must have a real remedy as having a real disease. Christ in the Bible, Christ sitting as an unknown Saviour in the heavens, Christ afar off, unmanifested and unrevealed, is no Christ to him. "Near, near; let him come near; in my heart, in my soul, revealed in me, manifested unto me, formed within me-this, this is the Christ I want. O for one drop of his atoning blood, one smile of his blessed countenance, one testimony of his love, one gleam of his justifying righteousness!" And thus when this divine Redeemer appears in his garments stained with blood, the sinking soul hails his approach, the fowls of the mountains take flight, the beasts of the earth slink off to their dens, the dreary stump pushes forth its shoots, and the voice sounds forth from the inmost depths of the soul, "This is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

October 30

"My people are bent to backsliding from me." Hosea 6:7

What an awful error it is to deny backsliding! What ignorance it manifests of a man's own heart! How it stamps a man as a perverter of truth, and one that trifles with sin and the displeasure of the Most High! Who that knows himself and the idolatry of his fallen nature, dares deny that he backslides perpetually in heart, lip, or life? Can any of us deny that we have backslidden from our first love? backslidden from simplicity and

godly sincerity, backslidden from reverence and godly fear, backslidden from spirituality and heavenly-mindedness, backslidden from the breathings of affection and pouring forth of the heart into the bosom of the Lord? And if we have not been suffered to backslide into open sin, if the Lord has kept us, and not suffered us to be cast down into the mire, yet have we not committed that twofold evil which the Lord charges upon his people: "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13)?

And what do we reap from backsliding? do we reap pleasure, comfort, or peace? do we reap the smiles of God, or the solemn testimony of the Spirit in the conscience? No. If conscience speaks in your bosom, what does it say? That every departure from the Lord has brought grief and trouble; that so far from justifying yourself in your sin, you have been ready almost to weep tears of blood, that you have so wickedly departed from the Lord. It has been our mercy that the Lord has not given us up to hardness of heart and searedness of conscience, that we have not been allowed to say with Israel of old, "I am innocent, I have not sinned" (Jer. 2:35); but that he has "led us with weeping and with supplications." Have not some of us (I am sure I have for one) been obliged "to go and weep," and tell the Lord a piteous tale of backsliding; how we have departed from his fear, and sinned basely against him; how unwilling we have been to take his yoke upon us, and walk in his precepts? Have we not been forced to tell him that we have been disobedient and stubborn, filthy and vile, and has he not, in some faint measure, led us "to turn our faces Zionward," to turn our back upon all false ministers, upon all idol shepherds, upon all the strength and wisdom and righteousness and will of the creature, and given to us some simplicity, uprightness, and integrity of heart and conscience, whereby we have turned our face Zionward, looking for a blessing to come out of Zion, looking for grace, looking for glory? "I will make thee sick in smiting thee," says the Lord (Micah 6:13), alluding to the feeling of sickness produced by a wound, ("I am made sick," 1 Kings 22:34, *margin*.) And have not these wounds in our conscience made us, in our measure, sick of the world, sick of the professing church, sick of hypocrites, sick of whitewashed Pharisees, sick of carnal professors, sick of our backslidings, sick of all but the word of God revealed with power, sick of all but the blood and love of the Redeemer, of all teachings but the teachings of the Holy Ghost, of all company but the company of the children

of God? Can you say thus much? that you have turned your back upon everything but Christ, and him crucified? that you have turned away from all doctrines but those which centre in the blood of the Lamb? that you have turned away from universal charity and general philanthropy, as substituted for the power of vital godliness, (though you would desire to love and serve your fellow men as men,) and that your spiritual affections are toward God and his people? And has there been in your soul any such feeling as Ruth had when she said, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God?" Any sweet response in your bosom to the voice of the Lord, "My son, give me thine heart?" "Take it, Lord, with all that I have and am!" Any casting yourself at the foot of the cross, and there entreating the Lord of life and glory to speak peace to your soul?

October 31

"By grace ye are saved." Ephesians 2:5

Oh! the volumes of blessed truth that are couched in these few words; thrown in out of the Apostle's full heart as if to give a moment's vent to his love of salvation by grace! Mercy, love, and grace are all in the bosom of God toward his saints; and yet they differ from each other. But how? *Mercy* regards the criminal; *love* regards the object; *grace*, perhaps, is a blending of the two,—the union of mercy and love. God loves the holy unfallen angels; *there* is an object of love in which there is no mixture of mercy; for having never sinned, mercy they do not need. Again, God shewed no mercy to the fallen angels; there we have justice and wrath, without mercy; but in the case of the saints of God, the election of grace, we have not only mercy and love, but we have the conjoint attribute, that uniting mercy and love in one stream flows onward to the Church, as the river of the water of life; the pure crystal river of grace. Grace means, as you well know, the pure favour of God, and, as such, is sovereign, distinguishing, free, and superabounding. Every attribute of Jehovah is distinct, and yet so blended that the whole shine forth in one glorious effulgence. The rays of the sun united form one complete body of pure, bright light; but the prism or the rainbow separates these rays into distinct colours. So the attributes of God are not confused though blended, and all shine forth in one pure bright glory. But this is the peculiar character of *grace*, that any intermixture of worth or worthiness in the object would destroy it. For if the gospel require merit, we are damned by it as inevitably as by the law. This Luther felt when, racked and torn by the words "the righteousness of God without the law is manifested," he cried out in the agony of his soul, "What! am I damned not only by the law, but damned by the gospel also!"

This pure, free, unadulterated grace is the joy of every soul that is able to receive it; for it comes as a blessed cordial when sinking and swooning under a sight and sense of the deserved wrath of God. When, then, the pure gospel of the grace of God comes as a cordial from the Most High, it lifts up his drooping head, revives his sinking soul, and pours oil and wine into his bleeding wounds. By this grace we are justified, pardoned, accepted, sanctified, and saved with an everlasting salvation. Oh! glad tidings to perishing sinners! Oh! blessed news to those who are sinking under a sense of guilt and misery, in whom the law of God is discharging its

awful curse! When we get a view by faith, and a sweet taste of the pure grace of God, what a balm, what a cordial, what a sweet reviving draught it is. It is this which makes us prize so highly, and exalt so gladly the free grace of God; because it is so pure, so free, and so superabounding over all the aboundings of sin, guilt, filth, and folly. It never can be laid down too clearly, it never can be too much insisted on that "by grace," and grace alone, "ye are saved." If free grace has reached your soul, it has saved your soul; if free grace has come into your heart, it has blessed you with an everlasting salvation, and you will live to prove it, when your happy soul joins the throng of the blessed. If anything can lift up a drooping sinner, restore a backslider, break a hard, or soften a stony heart; draw forth songs of praise, and tears of contrition; produce repentance and godly sorrow for sin; a humble mind and a tender conscience; it is a sweet experience of the superabounding grace of God. Can we then exalt it too much? Can we prize it too highly? Can we cleave to it too closely? No; in proportion as we feel our ruin and misery, we shall cleave to it with every desire of our soul; for it is all our salvation, as it is all our desire.