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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

September 1

"But now we see not yet all things put under him." Hebrews 2:8

It is God's special prerogative to bring good out of evil, and order out of confusion. If you were to watch carefully from an astronomical observatory the movements of the planets, you would see them all in the greatest apparent disorder. Sometimes they would seem to move forward, sometimes backward, and sometimes not to move at all. These confused and contradictory movements sadly puzzled astronomers, till Sir Isaac Newton rose and explained the whole; then all was seen to be the most beautiful harmony and order, where before there was the most puzzling confusion. But take a scriptural instance, the highest and greatest that we can give, to shew that where, to outward appearance, all is disorder, there the greatest wisdom and most determinate will reign. Look at the crucifixion of our blessed Lord. Can you not almost see the scene as painted in the word of truth? See those scheming priests, that wild mob, those rough soldiers, that faltering Roman governor, the pale and terrified disciples, the weeping women, and, above all, the innocent Sufferer with the crown of thorns, and enduring that last scene of surpassing woe, which made the earth quake, and the sun withdraw his light. What confusion! What disorder! What triumphant guilt! What oppressed and vanquished innocence! But was it really so? Was there no wisdom or power of God here accomplishing, even by the instrumentality of human wickedness, his own eternal purposes? Hear his own testimony to this point: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23). The "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," in the great and glorious work of redemption, was accomplished by the wicked hands of man; and if so, in this the worst and wickedest of all possible cases, is not the same eternal will also now executed in instances of a similar nature, though to us at present less visible?

September 2

"Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Malachi 4:2

Oh, what a mercy for the Church of Christ that the God and Father of the Lord Jesus has not left her as he might justly have left her, to perish in her sins, but has provided for her a Saviour, and a great one, and does from time to time encourage every poor, self-condemned sinner to hope in his mercy! The very things, poor, exercised soul, that most try your mind are the very things that make such a Saviour suitable to you. You are dark; this makes the Sun of righteousness exactly suitable to enlighten you. You are cold; this makes you want the Sun to warm you. You are cheerless and cast down; this makes you want the Sun to gladden you. You are barren and unfruitful, and lament that you cannot bring forth fruit to God's glory; you want the Sun to fertilize you. You are, at times, very dead in your feelings, and can scarcely find any inclination to pray, meditate, or read the Scriptures; you want the Sun to enliven and revive you. Are not, then, these very trials and temptations necessary to make you feel that the Lord Jesus is the Sun you need, the very Sun that David (Psalm 84:11) felt him to be? What value do those put upon the Lord Jesus who make a fire for themselves, and walk in the sparks of their own kindling? What is Jesus to those who know no trouble of soul? What real and earnest prayer or fervent desire have they after him? what ardent longing for his appearing? what breathings to see and feel his blood and righteousness? Oh! it is sharp exercises, manifold trials, and powerful temptations that make the soul really value the Lord Jesus.

September 3

"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Corinthians 1:9

Nothing distinguishes the divine religion of the saint of God, not only from the dead profanity of the openly ungodly, but from the formal lip-service of the lifeless professor, so much as communion with God.

How clearly do we see this exemplified in the saints of old. Abel sought after fellowship with God when "he brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof," for he looked to the atoning blood of the Lamb of God. God accepted the offering, and "testified of his gifts" by manifesting his divine approbation. Here

was fellowship between Abel and God. Enoch "walked with God;" but how can two walk together except they be agreed? And if agreed, they are in fellowship and communion. Abraham was "the friend of God;" "The Lord spake to Moses face to face;" David was "the man after God's own heart;"—all which testimonies of the Holy Ghost concerning them implied that they were reconciled, brought near, and walked in holy communion with the Lord God Almighty. So all the saints of old, whose sufferings and exploits are recorded in Hebrews 11, lived a life of faith and prayer, a life of fellowship and communion with their Father and their Friend; and though "they were stoned, sawn asunder, and slain with the sword;" though "they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented;" though "they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth," yet they all were sustained in their sufferings and sorrows by the Spirit and grace, the presence and power of the living God, with whom they held sweet communion; and, though tortured, would "accept no deliverance," by denying their Lord, "that they might obtain a better resurrection," and see him as he is in glory, by whose grace they were brought into fellowship with him on earth.

This same communion with himself is that which God now calls his saints unto, as we read, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," for to have fellowship with his Son is to have fellowship with him. As then he called Abraham out of the land of the Chaldees, so he calls elect souls out of the world, out of darkness, sin, and death, out of formality and self-righteousness, out of a deceptive profession, to have fellowship with himself, to be blessed with manifestations of his love and mercy. To this point all his dealings with their souls tend; to bring them near to himself, all their afflictions, trials, and sorrows are sent; and in giving them tastes of holy fellowship here, he grants them foretastes and prelibations of that eternity of bliss which will be theirs when time shall be no more, in being for ever swallowed up with his presence and love.

September 4

"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John 4:16

Love is communicative. This is a part of its very nature and essence. Its delight is to give, and especially to give itself; and all it wants or asks is a return. To love and to be beloved, to enjoy and to express that ardent and mutual affection by words and deeds,—this is love's delight, love's heaven. To love, and not be loved,—this is love's misery, love's hell. God is love. This is his very nature, an essential attribute of his glorious being; and as he, the infinite and eternal Jehovah, exists in a Trinity of distinct Persons, though undivided Unity of Essence, there is a mutual, ineffable love between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. To this mutual, ineffable love of the three Persons in the sacred Godhead the Scripture abundantly testifies: "The Father loveth the Son;" "And hast loved them as thou hast loved me;" "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And as the Father loves the Son, so does the Son love the Father: "But that the world may know that I love the Father," are his own blessed words. And that the Holy Ghost loves the Father and the Son is evident not only from his divine personality in the Godhead, but because he is essentially the very "Spirit of love" (Romans 15:30), and as such "sheds the love of God abroad in the heart" of the election of grace.

Thus *man* was not needed by the holy and ever-blessed Trinity as an object of divine love. Sufficient, eternally and amply sufficient, to all the bliss and blessedness, perfection and glory of Jehovah was and ever would have been the mutual love and intercommunion of the three Persons in the sacred Godhead. But love—the equal and undivided love of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—flowed out beyond its original and essential being to man; and not merely to man as man, that is to human nature as the body prepared for the Son of God to assume, but to thousands and millions of the human race, who are all loved personally and individually with all the infinite love of God as much as if that love were fixed on only one, and he were loved as God loves his dear Son. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," is spoken to each individual of the elect as much as to the whole Church, viewed as the mystical Bride and Spouse of the Lamb. Thus the love of a Triune God is not only to the nature which in due time the Son of God should assume, the flesh and blood of the children, the seed of Abraham which he should take on him (Hebrews 2:14-16), and for this reason viewed by the Triune Jehovah with eyes of intense delight, but to that innumerable multitude of human beings who were to form the mystical body of Christ. Were Scripture less express, we might still believe that the nature which

one of the sacred Trinity was to assume would be delighted in and loved by the holy Three-in-One. But we have the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the point, that puts it beyond all doubt or question. When, in the first creation of that nature the Holy Trinity said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," and when, in pursuance of that divine council, "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living, soul," God thereby uniting an immortal soul to an earthly body, this human nature was created not only in the moral image of God, but after the pattern of that body which was prepared for the Son of God by the Father.

September 5

"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."
Colossians 2:3

What poor, blind fools are we by nature! How insufficient is all our earthly wisdom and all our natural knowledge, to guide us into the truth! When the soul really is under divine teaching, how ignorant it feels as to every single thing it desires to know! What clouds of darkness perpetually hang over the mind! What a veil of ignorance seems continually spread over the heart! The simplest truths of God's word seem hid in the deepest obscurity, and the soul can neither see the truth, nor see nor feel its personal interest in it. Now, when a man is here, he does not go to the Lord with lying lips and a mocking tongue, and ask him to give him wisdom, merely because he has heard that other persons have asked it of God, or because he reads in the Bible that Christ is made of God "wisdom" to his people; but he goes as a poor, blind fool, as one completely ignorant, as one totally unable to understand a single spiritual truth of himself, as one thoroughly helpless to get into the marrow of vital godliness, into the mysteries of true religion, or into the very heart of Christ. For it is not a few doctrines received into the head, nor a sound creed, that can satisfy a soul convinced of its ignorance. No; nothing can satisfy him, but to have that divine illumination, whereby he "sees light in God's light;" that spiritual wisdom communicated, whereby he feels himself "made wise unto salvation;" that unctuous light shed abroad in the heart, which is the only key to gospel truth, and is its own blessed evidence, that he knows the truth by a divine application of it to his soul.

September 6

"To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." Psalm 63:2

Every place is "a sanctuary" where God manifests himself in power and glory to the soul. Moses, doubtless, had often passed by the bush which grew in Horeb; it was but a common hawthorn bush, in no way distinguished from the other bushes of the copse; but on one solemn occasion it was all "in a flame of fire," for "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire" out of the midst; and though it burnt with fire, it was not consumed. God being in the bush, the ground round about was holy, and Moses was bidden to put off his shoes from off his feet. Was not this a sanctuary to Moses? It was, for a holy God was there. Thus wherever God manifests himself, *that* becomes a sanctuary to a believing soul. We want not places made holy by the ceremonies of man, but places made holy by the presence of God. Then a stable, a hovel, a hedge, any homely corner may be, and is a sanctuary, when God fills your heart with his sacred presence, and causes every holy feeling and gracious affection to spring up in your soul. If ever you have seen this in times past, you have seen God in the sanctuary; for then your heart becomes the sanctuary of God, according to his own words, "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them." Are not your very bodies the temples of the Holy Ghost? (1 Cor. 6:19.) Does not Christ dwell in the heart by faith? And is he not formed there, the hope of glory? It is, then, not only in Christ *without*, but in Christ *within* that we see the power and glory of God. It is in this way that we become consecrated to the service and glory of God, set our affections upon heavenly things, and obtain a foretaste of eternal joy.

September 7

"I will give thee the treasures of darkness." Isaiah 45:3

Is not this a strange expression? "Treasures of darkness!" How can there be darkness in the City of Salvation of which the Lord

the Lamb is the eternal light? The expression does not mean that the treasures themselves are darkness, but that they were hidden in darkness till they were brought to light. The treasures of Belshazzar, like the Bank bullion, were buried in darkness till they were broken up and given to Cyrus. It is so in a spiritual sense. Are there not treasures in the Lord Jesus? Oh! what treasures of grace in his glorious Person! What treasures of pardon in his precious blood! What treasures of righteousness in his perfect obedience! What treasures of salvation in all that he is and has as the great High Priest over the house of God! Yet, all these treasures are "treasures of darkness," so far as they are hidden from our eyes and hearts, till we are brought by his special power into the City of Salvation. Then these treasures are not only brought to light, revealed, and made known, but the soul is at once put into possession of them. They are not only seen, as the Bank of England clerk sees notes and sovereigns, but are by a special deed of gift from the Court of Heaven made over to him who by faith in the Lord Jesus receives him into his heart. No one has the least conception of the treasures of grace that are in the Lord Jesus till he is brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light, and knows him and the power of his resurrection by the sweet manifestations of his presence and love.

But the word "*treasures*" signifies not only something laid up and hidden from general view, but, being in the plural number, expresses an infinite, incalculable amount—an amount which can never be expended, but suffices, and suffices, and suffices again for all wants and for all believing comers. When we get a view by faith of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus and see the everflowing and overflowing fulness of his grace, and how it superabounds over all the aboundings of sin, it may well fill our minds with holy wonder and admiration. When we get a glimpse of the virtue and efficacy of his atoning blood, that precious blood which "cleanseth from all sin," and that divine righteousness which is "unto all and upon all them that believe," what treasures of mercy, pardon, and peace are seen laid up in him! To see this by the eye of faith, and enter into its beauty and blessedness, is indeed to comprehend with all saints the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and to know something of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. The sun will cease to give his light, and the earth to yield her increase; but these treasures will still be unexhausted, for they are in themselves infinite and inexhaustible.

September 8

"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." Isaiah 40:4

If in your road heavenward, no valley ever sank before you; if no mountain and hill ever rose up in sight; if you encountered no crooked path through the dense wood; and no rough places, with many a rolling stone and many a thorny briar in the tangled forest, it would not seem that you were treading the way which the saints of God have ever trod, nor would it appear as if you needed special help from the sanctuary, or any peculiar power to be put forth for your help and deliverance. But being in this path, and that by God's own appointment, and finding right before your eyes valleys of deep depression which you cannot raise up; mountains and hills of difficulty that you cannot lay low; crooked things which you cannot straighten; and rough places which you cannot make smooth; you are compelled, from felt necessity, to look for help from above. These perplexing difficulties, then, are the very things that make yours a case for the gospel, yours a state of mind to which salvation by grace is thoroughly adapted, yours the very condition of soul to which the revelation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is altogether suitable. So that if you could at the present moment view these trials with spiritual eyes, and feel that they were all appointed by unerring wisdom and eternal love, and were designed for the good of your soul, you would rather bless God that your pathway was so cast in providence and grace that you had now a valley, now a mountain, now a crook, and now a thorn. And even as regards the present experience of your soul, you would feel that these very difficulties in the road were all productive of so many errands to the throne—that they all called upon you, as with so many speaking voices, to beg of the Lord that he would manifest himself in love to your heart. We all want ease; we love a smooth path. We should like to be carried to heaven in a palanquin; to enjoy every comfort that earth can give or heart desire, and then, dying without a pang of body or mind, find ourselves safe in heaven. But that is not God's way. The word of truth, the sufferings of Christ, and the universal experience of the saints, all testify against the path of ease; all testify for the path of trial; they all proclaim, as with one united voice, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction,"—and this is the way of ease and of that

prosperity which destroys fools (Prov.1:32); but "strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life,"—and this is the path of suffering and sorrow.

September 9

"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Hebrews 10:12

It is a fundamental article of our most holy faith, that the man Christ Jesus is now at God's right hand, a very man, not a shadowy, aerial substance. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." God looks at him as such with eyes of intense delight, with ever new approbation and love; and views him as the representative of all that are interested in him; he being the Head, the Church the members; he the Bridegroom, the Church the bride; he the great High Priest, and the Church the house of God. As living for her at the right hand of the Father, he is ever presenting on her behalf the validity of his intercession. The fact, the reality that he is there, is the Church's joy, as it is all her hope and all her boast. "Because I live, ye shall live also." To him, then, do we direct our prayers; on his glorious Person we fix our believing eyes; upon his blood we hang our hope; under his righteousness we ever desire to shelter; to feel his presence, taste his grace, experience his love, and know his power, is what our soul, under divine teaching, is ever longing for. See, then, the grounds of holy boldness for a poor sinner to enter into the holiest. Blood has been shed, which blood has the validity of Godhead stamped upon it. A new and living way has been consecrated, in which a living soul may walk. A great High Priest is set over the house of God, who is ever presenting the merits of his intercession. Thus, those who feel their need of him, who cannot live and dare not die without him, whose eyes are upon him and hearts towards him, are encouraged to enter with all holy boldness into the holiest, that they may have communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

September 10

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Romans 8:37

Those who know nothing of their own heart, of their own infirmities, of their own frailties, of their own inward or outward slips and backslidings, know nothing of the secret of superabounding grace, nothing of the secret of atoning blood, nothing of the secret of the Spirit's inward testimony. They cannot. Only in proportion as we are emptied of self in all its various forms, are we filled out of the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

Now you, perhaps, (I address myself personally to some poor, tempted child of God, that in touching one, I may touch others,) are a poor, tempted creature; and your daily sorrow, your continual trouble is, that you are so soon overcome; that your temper, your lusts, your pride, your worldliness, your carnal, corrupt heart are perpetually getting the mastery. And from this you sometimes draw bitter conclusions. You say, in the depth of your heart, "Can I be a child of God, and be thus? What mark and testimony have I of being in favour with God when I am so easily, so continually overcome?" Now I want you to look to the end. What is the issue of these defeats? Remember, it is a solemn truth, and one that we learn very slowly—that we must *be* overcome in order *to* overcome. There is no setting out with a stock of strength, daily adding to it, weekly increasing it, and then gaining the victory by our own resolutions, our own innate strength. Such feigned holiness may come under a gospel garb, may wear a fair appearance; but it only more hides the rottenness of the flesh. Then, remember this—that in order to gain the victory, we must know our weakness; and we can only know our weakness by its being experimentally opened up in our consciences. We cannot learn it from others; we must learn it in our own souls; and that often in a very painful manner. But these painful sensations in a tender conscience lead a man more humbly, more feelingly, more believingly to the Lord of life and glory, to receive out of his fulness. Thus every defeat only leads to and ensures victory at the last. Says the Apostle, "In all these things we are more than conquerors." How? Through our resolutions, through our wisdom? No; "through Him that loved us." There is no other way, then, to overcome, but by the "strength of Jesus made perfect in our weakness."

September 11

"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom." 1 Corinthians 2:4

It is not the work of the Spirit to produce doubts and fears, but to overcome them. And yet we are continually subject to them. Infidel thoughts fly across the mind; doubts and questionings suggest themselves Satan is busy in plying his arguments; a guilty conscience falls too readily under his accusations; painful recollections of past slips, falls, and backslidings strengthen the power of unbelief, so that to come to a spot wherein there is not the least shadow of a doubt of divine realities, and, what is far more, of our own interest in them, is a rare circumstance, and only attainable at those favoured moments when the Lord is pleased to shine into the soul and settle the matter between himself and our conscience. But these very doubts, these very questionings, these cutting, killing fears, these anxious surmisings work together for good, and are mercifully overruled for our spiritual benefit. What else has brought us to this point that nothing short of demonstration will satisfy the soul really born and taught of God? It must have demonstration: nothing else will do. We cannot live and die upon uncertainties. It won't do to be always in a state that we don't know whether we are going to heaven or hell; to be tossed up and down on a sea of uncertainty, scarcely knowing who commands the ship, what is our destination, what our present course, or what will be the end of the voyage. Now all human wisdom leaves us upon this sea of uncertainty. It is useful in nature, but useless in grace. It is foolish and absurd to despise all human learning, wisdom, and knowledge. Without them we should be a horde of wild, wandering savages. But it is worse than foolish to make human wisdom our guide to eternity, and make reason the foundation of our faith or hope. What you thus believe today, you will disbelieve to-morrow; all the arguments that may convince your reasoning mind, all the appeals to your natural passions, which may seem for the time to soften your heart, and all the thoughts swaying to and fro which may sometimes lead you to hope you are right and sometimes make you fear you are wrong,—all these will be found insufficient when the soul comes into any time of real trial and perplexity. We want, therefore, demonstration to remove and dispel all these anxious questionings, and settle the whole matter firmly in our heart and conscience; and this nothing can give us

but the Spirit by revealing Christ, taking of the things of Christ, and shewing them unto us, applying the word with power to our hearts, and bringing the sweetness, reality, and blessedness of divine things into our soul. It is only in this way that he overcomes all unbelief and infidelity, doubt and fear, and sweetly assures us that all is well between God and the soul.

September 12

"But in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." 1 Corinthians 2:4

In human reasoning, demonstration cannot usually be obtained except in mathematics, but not so in divine. There grace outshines and exceeds nature, for the teaching and testimony of the blessed Spirit is always demonstrative, that is, convincing beyond the possibility of doubt. It is not demonstration simply we require, not demonstration of the word, as if there were some innate proof and power in the word itself to demonstrate its own truth, though doubtless it is so when the Spirit shines upon it, but it is the "demonstration of the Spirit." This is very necessary to observe, for you will often hear the word of God spoken of, as if the Bible possessed not only demonstrative proof of its own inspiration, but was able to give that demonstration to the souls of men. But the demonstration not of the word but of the Spirit in, through, and by the word, is the thing wanted to convert sinners and satisfy saints. This is proof indeed, not cold and hard like mathematical demonstration, but warm, living, softening, and sanctifying, being the very light, life, and power of God himself in the soul. Now Paul's preaching was this demonstration of the Spirit. The Spirit of God speaking in him and by him, so demonstrated the truth of what he preached that it came, as he elsewhere speaks, "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (1 Thess. 1:5). There are now no Pauls; and, yet, unless we have a measure of the same demonstration of the Spirit, all that is said by us in the pulpit drops to the ground; it has no real effect; there is no true or abiding fruit—no fruit unto eternal life. If there be in it some enticing words of man's wisdom, it may please the mind of those who are gratified by such arts; it may stimulate and occupy the attention for the time; but there it ceases, and all that has been heard fades away like a dream of the night; and, as regards the family of God, we may apply to all such

preaching the words of the prophet: "It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite" (Isaiah 29:8). But anything which is communicated by the Holy Ghost, which is demonstrated by the Spirit to your soul, which is brought into your heart with light, life, and power, sealed and witnessed by that sacred Teacher and divine Comforter; *that* abides, you take it home with you; it comforts you, not only at the time, but when you look back to it in days to come; it is a bright spot in your soul's experience, when you can believe that then and there God was pleased to bless his word to your soul, and seal it home with a sweet influence upon your conscience. This is "demonstration of the Spirit."

And where there is this, there is "power:" for the Apostle adds, "and of power." The grand distinguishing mark of the kingdom of God is that "it is not in word, but in power." Thus power is given to believe in the Son of God, and we cannot believe truly and savingly in him till power is put forth; power to receive the Lord in all his covenant characters and gracious relationships in the gospel of his grace; power to believe that what God has done he does for ever; power to come out of every doubt and fear into the blessed light and liberty of the truth which maketh free.

September 13

"And Enoch walked with God." Genesis 5:24

The chief way whereby we walk with God is by *faith*, and not by sight. Abraham walked in this way. Unbelief severs the soul from God. There is no communion between God and an infidel. An unbelieving heart has no fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ; but a believing heart has communion with him. It is by faith that we have fellowship with God and his dear Son; and you will find that just in proportion to the strength or weakness of your faith is your walking with God. If you have faith in blessed exercise, as you look to the atoning blood, you find that you can walk with God; you can pour out your heart before him, tell him all your concerns, spread before him the inmost movements of your mind, and look to him for peace and consolation. But when your faith is weak, when it gives way under trial, and cannot take hold of the

promises, then communion is interrupted; there is no longer a walking with God. But in proportion as faith is strong, so there is a walking with God in sweet agreement; for faith keeps eyeing the atonement; faith looks not so much to sin, as to salvation from sin; at the way whereby sin is pardoned, overcome, and subdued. So it is by faith, and in proportion to our faith, that we walk together with God.

September 14

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
Ephesians 1:3

If you are blessed with all spiritual blessings, it is only "in Christ" you are so blessed. If you were chosen before the foundation of the world, it was only "in Christ" that you were chosen. He is our covenant Head. What we are we are only in him. There is nothing in self; no fixedness there. All is fluctuating here below; all is uncertain as regards man. Certainty is with God; and the fixedness of God's purposes is our grand, our only support. Thus the doctrine of election received into the heart diffuses a sacred blessedness over the whole truth of God, for it gives stability to it. It is not a dry doctrine which men may toss about from hand to hand like a tennis ball; it is not an article of a creed written down in church articles, or a theory to be argued by divines. Nor is it a mere loose, floating idea gathered from a few dim and doubtful passages of God's word. It is no ignis fatuus, no meteor light dancing over morasses and swamps. It is a steady light set by the hand of God in the Scriptures, as he set of old lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth. It therefore diffuses its rays over the whole of God's truth. For it is "in Christ" his people were chosen, and therefore election being in Christ, it is reflected with all the beams of the Sun of righteousness upon every gospel truth. There is not a single gospel truth, or a single spiritual blessing, which does not derive its blessedness from its connection with the Person and work of the Son of God; and what is true of all, is true of this, that the blessedness of election is because it is "in Christ."

But some may say, "These things are hard to believe." They are very hard to believe, for our unbelieving heart finds it very hard

to believe anything that is for our good. We can believe Satan's lies with great readiness; we can give an open, willing ear to anything which our evil heart suggests. But to believe God's truths so as to enter into their beauty and blessedness, to feel their quickening power, and live under their cheering, invigorating influence, this is another matter. But where is the life of our religion when these things are taken away from it? Take, if you could take—God be praised it is beyond the reach of human hand!—but take away that solemn fact, that God has blessed the Church with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, where would there be room for any blessing to rest upon our soul? Why, any sweet promise that comes rolling into your breast, any lifting up of the light of God's countenance in seasons of darkness and adversity, any liberty in prayer, any looking up and receiving out of Christ's fulness; all hang upon this grand point, the blessings wherewith God hath already blessed us in Christ Jesus. So that all we have to do—and it is a great thing to do—God alone can enable us to do it—is to receive what God has been pleased so mercifully to give; and as he has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, to feel their power, to enjoy their sweetness, and to know for ourselves by the sealing of the Spirit that he has blessed us, even us, and that with life for evermore.

September 15

"For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Mark 4:28

Faith, I believe, has in it always a measure of assurance. For what is assurance? It is merely the larger growth and fuller development of faith. The nature of assurance is much misunderstood. It is often considered something distinct from faith. This is not the case. It is merely faith in a fuller, larger development. The word "assurance" in the original has a very simple, yet beautiful meaning. It means literally "a full bearing;" and the word is applied sometimes to a large crop of corn or fruit, and sometimes to the tide coming in with a fuller wave. Now it is the same corn which grows in the fields, whether the crop be much or little; it is the same tide that comes up the river whether in a scanty or full flow. So it is with assurance and faith: it is the same faith, only increased, enlarged, bearing more abundant

fruit, or flowing in a more abundant tide. Assurance in Scripture is not confined to faith; there is "the full assurance of understanding" (Col. 2:2), that is, a fuller measure and amount, a greater enlargement of understanding to know the truth of God. The understanding is the same; but there is a larger measure of it. So there is the full assurance of hope, that is, a hope strengthened and enlarged, bearing more fruit and flowing in a fuller tide. But it is the same hope; the same in kind, though larger in degree; a stronger anchor, and yet an anchor still (Heb. 6:19). Similarly there is the full assurance of faith (Heb. 10:22), that is, a larger, fuller measure of faith; a richer crop, a more abundant tide. Thus you have a measure of the assurance of faith if you have faith at all. In fact, if you have no assurance of the truth of these things, why do you follow after them? Why do you hang upon them, why do you hope in them, and why do you seek the power and experience of them in your soul? Have you not arrived at this point yet? "We have not followed cunningly devised fables; these things that I am following after are realities; these objects set before me are certainties." I grant that you may be much exercised about your interest in them. Still, unless you know that they are certainties, why do you believe them? Why are you anxious to know your interest in them? Why do you sink in doubt and fear for want of clearer evidences of an interest in them? And why do you spring up in peace and joy the moment that a little light from them beams upon your soul, and a little sweetness out of them drops into your heart? Because you know that these things are realities. So far then you have an assurance that they are certainties, and in due time, as God is pleased, you will have the assurance in your own breast, not only that they are certainties, but that you have them in your own sure and certain possession.

September 16

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." Genesis 49:22, 23, 24

One would have thought that Joseph being a fruitful bough could have looked with complacency, almost with holy scorn, upon these

archers who shot at him, but it was not so; *"they sorely grieved him."* To be sold by his own brethren into Egypt; the dreams and visions God had given him to be derided; to be cast into prison as an ungodly man through the very person who was tempting him to ungodliness, and there to be neglected and forsaken; how these archers had shot their arrows against his bosom, and sorely grieved him! It was because he had the fear of God, because his feelings were tender, that the arrows found a place. Had he had a bosom of steel, had he had a heart of stone, the arrows would have fallen off blunted and pointless; but it was because he had tender feelings, a living conscience, warm affections, godly fear, and a work of grace upon his soul, that he presented a tender spot for these arrows to stick in; therefore the archers not only "hated him, but shot at him, and sorely *grieved* him." But did they prove his destruction? Did any one drain his life blood? Did he sink and die like a wounded hart? Did he fall upon the plain and gasp out his forlorn life? No; for *"his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob."* He then had a bow; he could shoot too. And what was his bow? and how did he direct the arrow? He picked up the arrows that were shot at him, or rather he took them out of his own wounded bosom; and instead of aiming these shafts against those who had so sorely grieved him, he shot upward; he launched his arrows towards the throne of the Majesty on high; he turned their bitter shafts into prayers, supplications, and petitions. Thus the very arrows shot at him he turned into petitions wherewith to approach the throne of God. He drew his bow even up to the heaven of heavens; and that is what you should do. Never return evil for evil; never return railing for railing. When you are shot at by the archers, do not shoot at them again. Take your arrows and bring them before the throne; present your feelings wounded as they are, your groans and sighs, with your warm petitions, and spread them before God, who hears and answers prayer; and you will find the benefit and blessing of it. They will beat you at shooting if you shoot at them. They can use language that you cannot. A man of birth and education, drawn into collision with a street ruffian, cannot bandy words with him; he must pass on; he would soon be beaten in the strife of words. So you must never shoot arrow against arrow with those archers who sorely grieve you. You have a tender conscience; you have the fear of God; you weigh your words; you know what will grieve your mind when it comes back upon you, and you are therefore sparing of your speech. Cease from that war; return not a single arrow, let them shoot away, take their arrows, direct your bow upward, turn

them all into prayers and supplications, and in due time sweet answers of mercy and peace will come into your bosom. Thus Joseph's bow "abode in strength," and all their arrows neither struck his bow out of his hand, nor broke it asunder. He could shoot as well as they, but not in the same way nor at the same object. We see, then, Joseph's fruitfulness; we see the source of it; we see the persecutions his soul was grieved by; and we see the final victory that he gained. God of his infinite mercy lead our souls into the same blessed track, apply his truth to our hearts, that our bow may abide in strength, and that the arms of our hands may be made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.

September 17

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Romans 12:1

If the Son of God has redeemed us by his blood, all that we are and have belongs to him; our body, soul, and spirit are his. Nothing is our own; we are bought with a price. In laying down his precious life for us, he has redeemed us unto himself, that we should be his peculiar people, and not only render to him the calves of our lips, but give him body, soul, spirit, substance, life itself; all that we are and have being his by sovereign right. He lays claim to them all, not only as our Creator, but as our Redeemer, having bought them by his precious blood. When we feel his mercy warm in our soul, can we keep body or soul back? Look at Abraham. When God called to him, and said, "Abraham!" what was his answer? "'Here I am' Here is my body, here is my soul, here is my substance, here is my wife, here is my son; all are at thy disposal. What shall I do, Lord? Take them; they are all thine. Thou hast a right to them, and thou must do with them, and thou must do with me, what seemeth good in thy sight." Under these feelings, then, we should "present our bodies," not, indeed, leaving our souls behind. For what is the casket without the jewel? What is the body without the soul? Will God accept the body if the soul be left behind? That is popery; to give the body, and keep back the soul. Not so with the dear family of God; they present their bodies, but with their bodies they present the soul that lodges in their body—the house with its

tenant, the jewel-case with the jewels in it. But what is it to present their bodies? They must be presented as "a living sacrifice." God accepts no dead sacrifices. You will recollect, under the Jewish law the sacrifice was to be a living animal, and that without spot or blemish. No dead lamb or kid, but a living animal, perfect in its kind, was to be the victim sacrificed. So if we are to present our bodies, there must be "a living sacrifice." It may well be asked, What have we sacrificed for the Lord's sake? Have we been called upon to sacrifice our property, prospects, idols, affections, name, fame, and worldly interests; and have we obeyed the call? Abraham did not offer Isaac until the voice of the Lord called him to make the sacrifice; but when the Lord called him to do so, Abraham at once rendered obedience to the voice. So must it be with those that walk in the steps of faithful Abraham. If they are called upon, as all are, sooner or later, to make sacrifices, those sacrifices they must make.

Now, in thus presenting our bodies "a living sacrifice," it becomes also a "*holy*" offering, because what is done in faith is accepted of God as being sanctified by his blessed Spirit. If we make a sacrifice without the blessed Spirit's operation upon our heart, it is a dead sacrifice. Men go into monasteries, deluded women enter convents, become sisters of mercy, and what not, offer their bodies a sacrifice to God, but it is not a living sacrifice, because there is no spiritual life in either offerer or offering. But when we sacrifice our warmest affections, our prospects in life, everything that flesh loves, because the gospel claims it at our hands, and we do it through the constraining love of Christ, *that* is a living sacrifice, and is "*holy*," because springing out of the sanctifying influences and operations of the Holy Spirit. We indeed, looking at ourselves, see nothing holy in it, for sin is mingled with all we do, but God's eye discerns the precious from the vile. He sees the purity of his own work; and he can separate what we cannot, the acting of the spirit and the working of the flesh. God looks at that which his own Spirit inspires, and his own grace produces, and he accepts that as holy.

September 18

"And be not conformed to this world." Romans 12:2

In proportion as we are conformed to the spirit of this world our understanding becomes dull in the things of God, our affections cold and torpid, and our consciences less tender and sensitive. There is an eternal opposition between God and the world lying in wickedness. In order, then, that our spiritual experience of the truth of God should maintain its ground, it must not be dulled and deadened by conformity to the world. It is like the sabre that the soldier carries into battle; it must not trail unsheathed upon the ground lest point and edge be dulled; both must be kept keen and sharp, that execution may be done upon the foe. So it is with our enlightened understanding, with our tender conscience, and our heavenly affections. If we let them fall upon the world, it is like a soldier trailing his sabre upon the pavement; every step he takes dulls both edge and point. If we are conformed to this world, we lose the sweet understanding that we had before of the precious truth of God; we lose that tender sensitiveness of conscience, whereby sin, any sin, becomes a grief and a burden to the soul. A Christian should be what was said of an ancient knight, "without fear and without reproach." The least suspicion of either would have been a blot upon Bayard's scutcheon. So the Christian's shield should be without a stain, his reputation without a blot. His character should not only be free from blemish, but even from suspicion, as untarnished as the modesty of a woman, or the honour and bravery of a man. Now, we often get into this worldly conformity, and run the risk of dulling the sword and sullyng the shield, by degrees. We give way in this and in that thing. We are hedged in, it is true, by the precepts of the gospel, the alarms of a tender conscience, and many powerful restraints, so many banks and dykes to keep out the sea of the world; but, as in Holland, if one breach be made in the dyke, the sea at once rushes in, so, if one gap be made in the conscience, then the sea of worldliness rushes through the breach, and but for God's grace would soon deluge the soul. But even apart from having any peculiar temptation to make a wide breach like this, our social ties, our daily occupation, the friends and relations whom we love in the flesh, all, through their power over our natural affections, draw us aside from time to time into this worldly conformity. Here, then, is the point where we have to make our chief stand; for if we are conformed to the maxims, the principles, the customs, and the spirit of the world, we so far lose that spiritual position which is a believer's highest blessing and privilege. We descend from the mount of communion with the Lord, and fall into a cold, miserable spot, where the life of God, though not extinct, is reduced to its lowest ebb.

September 19

"But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:2

As worldly conformity is subdued and departed from, there is the transforming process of which the Apostle here speaks, whereby we become renewed in the spirit of our mind. In other words, the Holy Spirit, by his work upon the soul, renews the life of God, revives faith, hope, love, prayer, praise, spirituality of mind, with every tender feeling and every godly sensation that stirs and moves in a living heart. As, then, the Spirit of God renews his work upon the heart, he brings us out of this worldly conformity. He discovers to us the evil of it; he makes and keeps the conscience tender and sensitive; he shews us that if we get conformed to the world we lose our evidences; that they become dulled and obscured; that we are soon deprived of communion with God, of comfortable access to our best, our heavenly Friend; that our taste and appetite for spiritual things get palled; and that our very profession itself becomes a burden. As the conscience then gets more and more awakened to see and feel these things, we become convinced that we do but reap what we have sown; and the Spirit of God by pressing the charge more closely home, shews us, and sometimes by painful experience, such as long days of darkness, and heavy, dragging nights of desertion, the evil of worldly conformity. Now, as he thus brings us out of worldly conformity, by shewing us the evil of it, and that by this miserable cleaving to earth we rob ourselves of our happiest hours, our sweetest hopes, and our dearest enjoyments, he draws the soul nearer to Christ; and as he keeps renewing us in the spirit of our mind, by dropping one precious truth after another into the heart, he revives faith, renews hope, communicates love, draws forth prayer, bestows spirituality of mind and affection; and by these means a transforming process takes place, whereby the soul is brought out of worldly conformity, and is transformed into the likeness of a suffering Jesus. How we need, then, the blessed Spirit of God to be renewing us daily in the spirit of our minds, and thus transforming us into the suffering image of the sorrowing Son of God. For there is no medium between spirituality and carnality, between the image of Christ and conformity to the world. As there is no middle path between the strait road and the broad one, so

there is no middle way between fruitfulness and barrenness, prayerfulness and prayerlessness, watchfulness and carelessness, repentance and hardness, faith and unbelief, the life of a Christian and the life of a worldling.

September 20

"That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Romans 12:2

The will of God is "good, perfect, and acceptable." How are we to prove personally and experimentally that it is all this? That good and perfect will runs counter, over and over again, to my natural inclinations, sets itself firmly against my fleshly desires. God's will calls for self-denial, but I want self gratification; it requires obedience, but my carnal mind is the essence of disobedience; it demands many sacrifices, but my coward flesh revolts from them; it bids me walk in the path of suffering, sorrow, and tribulation, but my fleshly mind shrinks back, and says, "No, I cannot tread in that path!" As long, then, as I am conformed to the world, I cannot see the path, for this worldly conformity has thrown a veil over my eyes; or if I do dimly and faintly see it, I am not willing or able to walk in it, because my carnal mind rebels against all trouble or self-denial, or anything connected with the cross of Christ. But, on the other hand, if by any gracious operations of the Spirit on my heart, I am drawn out of this worldly conformity, am renewed in the spirit of my mind, and transformed into the likeness of the suffering Son of God, then "that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God" becomes commended to my conscience.

This good, and acceptable, and perfect will is far, far out of the sight of the carnal eye, out of the sound of the worldly ear, out of the touch of the worldly hand; but is made manifest to the spiritual eye, listened to by the spiritual ear, and laid hold of by the spiritual hand. To realise this for ourselves, we shall find it good sometimes to look back and see how that divine will has, in previous instances, proved itself acceptable to our renewed mind. We can see, too, how supremely that will has reigned, and yet how supreme in all points for our good. It has ordered or overruled all circumstances and all events, amidst a complication of difficulties in providence and grace. Nothing has happened to our injury, but all things, according to the promise, have worked together for our good.

But one thing we must deeply bear in mind, that as we cannot deliver ourselves from worldly conformity, so we cannot renew ourselves in the spirit of our mind. The blessed Spirit must do both for us, and work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

But as we are led to feel the misery of the one state, and the blessedness of the other, we shall seek after these gracious operations and divine influences; and as the blessed Spirit from time to time brings the soul out of this worldly conformity and transforms it into the suffering image of Christ, it sees more and more the beauty and blessedness of walking in this path; and cleaving to Christ and his cross with its tenderest affections proves for itself the goodness, acceptability, and perfection of the will of God.

September 21

"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you." 1 John 2:27

All the powers of earth and hell are combined against this holy anointing, wherewith the children of God are so highly favoured. But if God has locked up in the bosom of a saint one drop of this divine unction, that one drop is proof against all the assaults of sin, all the attacks of Satan, all the enmity of self, and all the charms, pleasures, and amusements of the world. Waves and billows of affliction may roll over the soul; but they cannot wash away this holy drop of anointing oil. Satan may shoot a thousand fiery darts to inflame all the combustible material of our carnal mind; but all his fiery darts cannot burn up that one drop of oil which God has laid up in the depths of a broken spirit. The world, with all its charms and pleasures, and its deadly opposition to the truth of God, may stir up waves of ungodliness against this holy anointing; but all the powers of earth combined can never extinguish that one drop which God has himself lodged in the depths of a believer's heart. Jonah had it locked up in the depths of his soul when he was in the whale's belly; but not all the waves and billows that went over his head, nor even the very depths of hell itself, in whose belly he felt he was, could wash away that drop of anointing oil which God had lodged in his soul. David sank deep into sin and remorse; but all his sin and misery never drank up that drop of anointing oil that God the Spirit had dropped into his heart. The prodigal son goes into a far country; but he never loses that drop of anointing oil, though he wastes his substance in riotous living. Heman complains out of the depths of his affliction; but all his troubles never drank up that holy anointing oil that God had put into his soul. Hezekiah on his

apparent death-bed, when he turned his face to the wall, was sorely tried, and almost in despair; yet all his affliction and despondency never drained the holy drop of anointing oil. And so it has been with thousands and tens of thousands of the dear saints of God. Not all their sorrows, I may say more, not all their sins, backslidings, slips, falls, miseries, and wretchedness, have ever, all combined, drunk up the anointing that God has bestowed upon them. If sin could have done it, we should have sinned ourselves into hell long ago; and if the world or Satan could have destroyed it or us, they would long ago have destroyed both. If our carnal mind could have done it, it would have swept us away into floods of destruction. But the anointing abideth sure, and cannot be destroyed; and where once lodged in the soul, it is secure against all the assaults of earth, sin, and hell. The saints of God feel that it abides; for it springs up at times in prayer and desires after the living God; and it breaks forth into faith, hope, and love. Thus it not only abides as a divine reality, but as a living principle, springing up into eternal life. Were it not so, there would be no revivals, no fresh communications, no renewed testimonies, no breakings forth, no tender meltings, no breathings out of desire for the Lord's presence, no mourning over his absence. But the anointing abideth, and this preserves the soul from death, and keeps it alive in famine.

September 22

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John 17:24

How great, how elevated above all utterance or all conception of men or angels, must the glory of Christ be as the Son of the Father in truth and love! And not only is the Lord Jesus Christ glorious in his essential Deity as the Son of God, but glorious also in his holy, spotless humanity which he assumed in the womb of the Virgin Mary. For this, though the flesh and blood of the children, was "that holy thing which was begotten of the Holy Ghost," and was taken into union with his eternal Deity, that he might be "Immanuel, God with us." The purity, holiness and innocence, the spotless beauty and complete perfection of this human nature, make it in itself exceedingly glorious; but its great

glory is the union that it possesses and enjoys with the divine nature of the Son of God. The pure humanity of Jesus veils his Deity, and yet the Deity shines through it, filling it with unutterable brightness, and irradiating it with inconceivable glory. There is no confusion or blending of the two natures, for humanity cannot become Deity, nor can Deity become humanity; each nature remains distinct; and each nature has its own peculiar glory. But there is a glory also in the union of both natures in the Person of the God-man. That such wisdom should have been displayed, such grace manifested, such love revealed, and that the union of the two natures in the Person of the Son of God should not only have, so to speak, formerly originated, but should still unceasingly uphold, and eternally maintain salvation with all its present fruits of grace, and all its future fruits of glory, makes the union of the two natures unspeakably glorious. And when we consider further that through this union of humanity with Deity, the Church is brought into the most intimate nearness and closest relationship with the Father and the Holy Ghost, what a glory is seen to illuminate the Person of the God-man, who as God is one with God, and as man is one with man, and thus unites man to God, and God to man; thus bringing about the fulfilment of those wonderful words, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." And again, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Thus there is the glory of Christ as God, the glory of Christ as man, and the glory of Christ as God-man. And this threefold glory of Christ corresponds in a measure with what he was before he came into the world, with what he was whilst in the world, and with what he now is as having gone to the Father, according to his own words (John 16:28). Before he came into the world his chief glory was that belonging to him as the Son of God; whilst in the world his chief glory was in being the Son of man; and now that he is gone back to heaven his chief glory is that of his being God and man in one glorious Person.

This latter glory of Christ, which is, in an especial sense, his mediatorial glory, is seen by faith here, and will be seen in the open vision of bliss hereafter. The three disciples on the Mount of transfiguration, Stephen at the time of his martyrdom, Paul when caught up into the third heaven, John in Patmos, had all special and supernatural manifestations of the glory of Christ; that is, surpassing what is generally given to believers. But the usual way in which we now see his glory is by the Holy Spirit "glorifying him by receiving of what is his, and shewing it to the soul." This divine

and blessed Teacher testifies of him; takes away the veil of ignorance and unbelief which hides him from view; shines with a holy and sacred light on the Scriptures that speak of him; and raising up faith to believe in his name sets him before the eyes of the enlightened understanding, so that he is looked unto and upon; and though not seen with the bodily eye, is loved, believed, and rejoiced in with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Thus seen by the eye of faith, all that he is and has, all that he says and does is made precious and glorious. His miracles of mercy, whilst here below; his words so full of grace, wisdom, and truth; his going about doing good; his sweet example of patience, meekness, and submission; his sufferings and sorrows in the garden and on the cross; his spotless holiness and purity, yet tender compassion to poor lost sinners; his atoning blood and justifying obedience; his dying love, so strong and firm, yet so tried by earth, heaven, and hell; his lowly, yet honourable burial; his glorious resurrection, as the first-begotten of the dead, by which he was declared to be the Son of God with power; his ascension to the right hand of the Father, where he reigns and rules, all power being given unto him in heaven and earth, and yet intercedes for his people as the great High Priest over the house of God. What beauty and glory shine forth in all these divine realities, when faith can view them in union with the work and Person of Immanuel!

September 23

"That he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Deuteronomy 8:3

This is the grand lesson which we have to learn in our wilderness journey—"that man doth not live by bread only," that is, by those providential supplies which relieve our natural wants. Thanks be to God for any bread that he gives us in his kind and bountiful providence. An honest living is a great mercy. To be enabled by the labour of our hands or by the labour of our brain to maintain our families and bring them up in a degree of comfort, if not abundance, is a great blessing. But God has determined that his people shall not live by bread only. They shall be separated from the mass of men who live in this carnal way only; who have no care beyond earthly possessions, and the sum of whose thoughts and desires is, what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and

wherewithal they shall be clothed; who never look beyond the purse, the business, the daily occupation, the safe return, the profitable investment, and how to provide for themselves and their families. God has planted in the breast of his people a higher life, a nobler principle, a more blessed appetite than to live upon bread only. We bless him for his providence, but we love him for his grace. We thank him for daily food and raiment, but these mercies are but for time, perishing in their very use, and he has provided us with that which is for eternity. What then does he mean the soul to live upon? "Upon every word that proceedeth out of his mouth." But where do we find these words that proceed out of the mouth of God? In the Scriptures, which is the food of the Church, and especially in Scripture as applied to the heart, in the words that God is pleased to drop into the soul by a divine power, which we receive from his gracious mouth, and lay hold of with a believing hand. That is the food and nutriment of our soul; the truth of God applied to our heart and made life and spirit to our souls by his own teaching and testimony. And see how large and ample the supply is. Look through the whole compass of God's revealed word, and see in it what a store there is of provision laid up for the Church of God. How this should both stimulate and encourage us to search the Scriptures as for hid treasure, to read them constantly, to meditate upon them, to seek to enter into the mind of God as revealed in them, and thus to find them to be the food of our soul. If we were fully persuaded that every word of the Scripture came out of God's mouth, and was meant to feed our soul, how much more we should prize it, read, and study it.

September 24

"His going forth is prepared as the morning." Hosea 6:3

It is to the living soul walking in darkness, and unable to find God, that this text speaks: "His going forth is prepared as the morning." There is an appointed time for the Lord to go forth and this is sweetly compared to the rising of the sun. Does not "the dayspring know his place?" (Job 38:12.) Does not the sun rise every day according to the minute before appointed? Is he ever before his time, or ever after his time? Did the free will of the creature ever hurry or retard his rising for a single second? Thus it is with the going forth of the Lord for the salvation of his

people, the going forth of the Lord in the revelation of his presence and his power, the going forth of the Lord from the place where he has for a while hidden himself, to come down with light and life into the soul. All his glorious goings forth are as much prepared, and the moment is as much appointed, as the time is fixed every morning for the sun to rise.

But what is the state of things naturally before the sun rises? Does not midnight precede the dawn, does not darkness come before light? And when it is midnight naturally, can we bid the sun arise and disperse the darkness? Is there not, as the Psalmist says, a waiting for the morning, naturally? "My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning." Is not the invalid tossing on his restless couch, waiting for the morning? Is not the shipwrecked mariner driven on the rocks, waiting anxiously for the morning, to know what is his prospect of safety, what friendly sail may be in sight? Is not the man benighted on the downs waiting for the morning, that the sun may arise, and he find his way homeward? But with all their waiting they cannot bid the sun arise; they must wait till the appointed time. So the going forth of the Sun of righteousness, the appearance of Christ in the heart, the sweet revelation of the Son of God, the lifting up of the light of his blessed countenance, is "prepared as the morning"—as fixed, as appointed in the mind of God as the morning to come in its season; but no more to be hurried than the sun is to be hurried up the sky. Aye, and it is as much an impossibility for us to bring the Lord into our souls before the appointed time, or keep him there when he is come, as for us to play the part of Joshua, and say, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon."

But "his going forth is prepared as the morning," and when he goes forth, he goes forth "conquering and to conquer," mounted on the white horse spoken of in Revelation. He goes forth to conquer our enemies, to overcome our temptations, to lay our souls at his footstool, to arise like the sun in his strength, and to come into the heart with healing in his wings.

September 25

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:11

How many poor souls are struggling against the power of sin, and yet never get any victory over it! How many are daily led captive by the lusts of the flesh, the love of the world, and the pride of life, and never get any victory over them! How many fight and grapple with tears, vows, and strong resolutions against the besetting sins of temper, levity, or covetousness, who are still entangled and overcome by them again and again! Now, why is this? Because they know not the secret of spiritual strength against, and spiritual victory over them. It is only by virtue of a living union with the Lord Jesus Christ, drinking into his sufferings and death, and receiving out of his fulness, that we can gain any victory over the world, sin, death, or hell. Let me bring this down a little to your own experience. Say your soul has been, on one particular occasion, very sweetly favoured; a melting sense of the Saviour's precious love and blood has come into your heart, and you could then believe, with a faith of God's own giving, that he was eternally yours; and through this faith, as an open channel of divine communication, his merits and mediation, blood, righteousness, and dying love came sweetly streaming into your soul. What was the effect? To lead you to sin, to presumption, to licentiousness? Nay, just the contrary. To a holy obedience in heart, lip, and life. Sin is never really or effectually subdued in any other way. Saul struck down at the gates of Damascus, and turned from persecution to praying, is a scriptural instance of the death of sin by the power of Christ. It is not, then, by legal strivings and earnest resolutions, vows, and tears, which are but monkery at best, (a milder form of the hair shirt, the bleeding scourge, and the damp cloister,) the vain struggle of religious flesh to subdue sinful flesh, that can overcome sin; but it is by a believing acquaintance with, and a spiritual entrance into the sufferings and sorrows of the Son of God, having a living faith in him, and receiving out of his fulness supplies of grace and strength—strength made perfect in our weakness. In this sense the Apostle says to the Colossians, "For ye are *dead*;" not merely by the law having condemned and slain you, as to all legal hopes, but by virtue of a participation in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of a living union with the suffering Son of God. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law," where sin reigns with increased dominion, "but under grace," which subdues sin by pardoning it. If you read Romans 6 with an enlightened eye, you will see how the Apostle traces out the death of the believer unto the power and prevalence of sin, by

virtue of a spiritual baptism into the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

September 26

"No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."
Psalm 84:11

There are those who walk uprightly, very uprightly, in the fear of God, and yet have little comfortable or abiding evidence that they are at present partakers of God's grace, or will be hereafter sharers of Christ's glory. But this one evidence they certainly do possess, though they can take no present comfort from it, that they walk uprightly before God and man. Let no one, however deeply experienced or highly favoured, despise this evidence of grace in others; and you who walk uprightly from a living principle of godly fear have here a marked testimony from the Lord himself that he has a special regard for you.

But what is it to "walk uprightly?" Oh! here is the grand difficulty in religion. We may talk; we may preach; we may hear; we may seem to believe; but it is when we come to *act*, to walk, and carry out into daily and hourly practice what we profess, that the main difficulty is felt and found. "The soul of religion," says Bunyan, "is the practic part;" and it is when we come to this "practic part" that the daily, hourly cross commences. The walk, the conversation, the daily, hourly conduct is, after all, the main difficulty, as it is the all-important fruit of a Christian profession. To walk day after day, under all circumstances, and amidst all the varied temptations that beset us, uprightly, tenderly, and sincerely in the fear of God; to feel continually that heart, lip, and life are all open before his all-penetrating eye; to do the things which he approves, and to flee from the things which he abhors—oh! this in religion is the steep hill which it is such a struggle to climb! We can talk fast enough; but oh! to walk in the straight and narrow path; to be a Christian outwardly as well as inwardly, before God and man, before the Church and the world; and in all points to speak and act with undeviating consistency with our profession—this is what nature never has done, and what nature never can do. In thus acting, as much as in believing, do we need God's power and grace to work in, and be made manifest in us.

September 27

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Romans 3:24, 25

Before we can have faith in Christ's atoning blood, we must see the glory of the Person of the Lord of life. "We beheld his glory," said John, speaking of himself and the other favoured disciples, "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." May I ask you a question, you who profess to know these things? Were your eyes ever anointed to behold the glory of Jesus? Did faith ever contemplate, did hope ever anchor in, did love ever flow forth to the glorious Person of Immanuel? Was he ever precious to your souls? ever "altogether lovely" in your eyes? so that you could say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee?" Now, if you have seen his Person by the eye of faith, you have had faith flowing out of your soul to his atoning blood; for his atoning blood derives all its value, all its validity, and all its efficacy from its being the blood of that glorious Person. Upon that atoning blood we then view infinite dignity stamped. We then view it as the blood of the Person of Him who was God-man; and we then see the dignity, immensity, and glory of the Godhead of Jesus, stamped upon the sufferings and blood that flowed from his pure manhood. When we see *that* by the eye of faith, what a rich stream does it become! What a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness! What value is stamped upon it to purge and cleanse a guilty conscience!

Now, when this is known and felt, the soul is justified. Justification passes over from the mind of God into the bosom of the sinner. He never really was, in the mind of God, in an unjustified state; but he was in his own conscience, and he was as touching the law, and he was as regards his standing as a sinner before the eyes of a holy Jehovah. But the moment he is enabled, by living faith, to touch and take hold of the atoning blood of the Lamb of God, justification passes over into his soul, and he becomes freely justified, pardoned and accepted, through the blood of sprinkling upon his conscience; and he stands before God whiter and brighter than snow, for "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

September 28

"Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not." Isaiah 35:4

"Fear not." "Ah! but Lord," the soul says, "I do fear. I fear myself more than anybody. I fear my base, wicked heart, my strong lusts and passions, and my numerous inward enemies, the snares of Satan, and the temptations of the world. Thou sayest, 'Fear not.' But I do fear. I cannot help but fear." Still the Lord says, "Fear not." Let us see if we cannot find something to explain this a little more clearly. There is a crowd yonder, and a weak woman in company with her husband. He says to her all trembling and fearing to pass through the crush, "Fear not; take hold of my arm, cling close to me." She takes hold of his arm and fears not. So with the timid soul and its enemies. It says, "How can I press through this crowd of difficulties; how elbow my way through these opposing doubts and fears?" Its husband, the Lord, comes and says, "Fear not; take hold of my strength; cleave close to me!" The soul hears, obeys, and clings; its enemies give way; its doubts and fears part asunder, and it passes safely through. Or take another familiar comparison. Here is a child trembling before a large mastiff; but the father says, "Fear not, he will not hurt you, only keep close to me." "Deliver my soul," cried David, "from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog." Who is that dog but Satan, that huge mastiff, whose jaws are reeking with blood? If the Lord say, "Fear not," why need we fear him? He is a chained enemy. But how the timid soul needs these divine "Fear nots!" For without him, it is all weakness; with him, all strength; without him, all trembling; with him, all boldness. "Where the word of a king is there is power;" and this makes the Lord's "Fear nots" so efficacious. As Augustine used to say, "Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt." The burden still remains, but strength is given to bear it; the trials are not lessened, but power to endure them is increased; the evils of the heart are not removed, but grace is communicated to subdue them.

September 29

"Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence he will come and save you." Isaiah 35:4

"Behold, your God will come." The Lord then is not yet come; but he says he will come, and the promise of his coming takes away the fear. He says, "*Behold.*" Even that little word contains something in it noteworthy. The Lord is in the distance; his chariot is making ready; for "he maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind." As the Lord said to his disciples, "Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh," so by the word, "Behold," the Lord would take the eyes of his people from being ever bent on the ground or ever looking at their own miserable hearts and the difficulties and dangers of the way. "Look up," he would say, "look up; your God is coming to save you." I like to dwell on every crumb as it were of our text. The jots and tittles of God's word, like diamond dust, are to be gathered up and treasured. In Scripture there is much in a little; not like our sermons, where there is often little in much. The word of God is full to overflowing with the very essence of truth; more concentrated and fragrant than the otto of roses. Look at the next drop. Is it not the very quintessence of blessedness? "*Your God.*" What, is he your God? *That* is the very dropping of everlasting love. In that one word is concentrated the essence of every blessing of the new covenant. And if God is your God, your doubts, fears, and misgivings do not break that sacred covenant tie. You are a husband, and your partner is afflicted with some mental disease; and the nature of the complaint may be such that she hardly recognises your face, altogether doubts your affection, and does not believe you are her husband at all. Such cases we know are frequent. But do her doubts or denial dissolve your love, do they cancel the marriage tie? The state of her mind, however painful, does not alter the marriage relationship. So if the Lord's espoused ones, through Satan's temptations, doubt their union with him, do their fears break the wedding ring or cancel the marriage writings? If covenant love matched them in eternity, and covenant grace joined their hands in time, they are still his Hephzibahs and Beulahs, for "the Lord hateth putting away."

September 30

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Matthew 5:6

Hunger is a painful sensation. It is not merely an appetite for food; but an appetite for food attended with pain. So spiritually. It is not merely a desire after Christ that constitutes spiritual hunger. "The sluggard desireth, and hath nothing." But it is a desire attended with pain; not merely a wish for spiritual food, but also with such painful sensations, that unless this appetite is satisfied, the soul must perish and die. Nothing short of this constitutes spiritual hunger. There are many who say, "I have a desire." If it be a spiritual desire, it will be granted. But spiritual desire is always attended with painful sensations which many are completely ignorant of who profess to have a desire. "The desire of the slothful killeth him." Why? Because he rests satisfied with a desire, and never takes the kingdom of heaven by violence.

The expression "thirst" conveys a still larger meaning. Hunger is more supportable than thirst. Persons die sooner when left without water than without food. Intense thirst is perhaps the most painful of all bodily sensations that a human being can know. The Spirit has therefore made use of this figure in order to convey the intense desire of a living soul; —that he must have Christ, or perish—must feel his blood sprinkled upon the conscience, or die in his sins—must "know him, and the power of his resurrection," or pass into the gloomy chambers of eternal woe—must have the presence of Jesus sensibly realised, and the love of God shed abroad, or else of all men be the most miserable.