

MORNING  
*and*  
EVENING

*A New Edition of the Classic Devotional Based on the  
Holy Bible, English Standard Version*

*Revised and updated by  
Alistair Begg*

CHARLES H. SPURGEON

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*Morning and Evening*

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# INTRODUCTION

Spurgeon's daily devotional readings have stood the test of time and are unrivaled as an example of deep theological insight and warm pastoral concern. They are so classic that one hesitates to tamper with them.

In revising and updating the material, I have tried to make them more readable without spoiling the splendor of the language. Most of the changes are minor and will go largely undetected. On a few occasions, because of the difference between the King James Version and the English Standard Version, I was forced to take more liberty.

My goal throughout has been to fashion the material in such a way that it will be accessible to a far wider audience than before. Spurgeon's vocabulary is so vast that the reader may still find himself reaching for a dictionary, but this will surely be an added benefit!

Since I did not have the opportunity to ask Spurgeon's permission, when I meet him I will seek his forgiveness if in attempting to bring clarity I have clouded the issue. The reader must judge. My prayer is that another generation will emerge thankful to God for the work of Spurgeon, whose memory we revere and whose example of godly devotion we seek to follow.

ALISTAIR BEGG

JANUARY 1

🌿 MORNING 🌿

THEY ATE OF THE FRUIT OF THE LAND OF CANAAN THAT YEAR.

— JOSHUA 5:12

Israel's weary wanderings were all over, and the promised rest was attained. No more moving tents, fiery serpents, fierce Amalekites, and howling wildernesses: They came to the land that flowed with milk and honey, and they ate the old corn of the land. Perhaps this year, beloved Christian reader, this may be your case or mine. Joyful is the prospect, and if faith be in active exercise, it will yield unalloyed delight. To be with Jesus in the rest, which remains for the people of God, is a cheering hope indeed, and to expect this glory so soon is a double bliss. Unbelief shudders at the Jordan that still rolls between us and the goodly land, but let us rest assured that we have already experienced more ills than death at its worst can cause us. Let us banish every fearful thought and rejoice with exceeding great joy in the prospect that this year we shall begin to be "forever with the Lord."

Some of the company will this year remain on earth, to do service for their Lord. If this should fall to our lot, there is no reason why the New Year's text should not still be true. "We who have believed enter that rest." The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance; He gives us glory begun below. In heaven believers are secure, and so are we preserved in Christ Jesus; there they triumph over their enemies, and we have victories too. Celestial spirits enjoy communion with their Lord, and this is not denied to us. They rest in His love, and we have perfect peace in Him; they sing His praise, and it is our privilege to bless Him too. We will this year gather celestial fruits on earthly ground, where faith and hope have made the desert like the garden of the Lord. Man ate angels' food of old, and why not now? O for grace to feed on Jesus, and so to eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan this year!

🌿 EVENING 🌿

WE WILL EXULT AND REJOICE IN YOU. — SONG OF SOLOMON 1:4

We will be glad and rejoice in You. We will not open the gates of the year to the sorrowful notes of the organ, but to the sweet strains of the harp of joy and the high-sounding cymbals of gladness. "O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation."<sup>1</sup> We, the called and faithful and chosen, will drive away our griefs and set up our banners of confidence in the name of God. Let others lament over their troubles; we with joy will magnify the Lord. Eternal Spirit, our effectual Comforter, we who are the temples in which You dwell will never cease from adoring and blessing the name of Jesus. Jesus must have the crown of our heart's delight; we will not dishonor our Bridegroom by mourning in His presence. We are ordained to be the minstrels of the skies; let us rehearse our everlasting anthem before we sing it in the halls of the New Jerusalem. We will *exult and rejoice*: two words with one sense, double joy, blessedness upon blessedness. Need there be any limit to our rejoicing in the Lord even now? Do not men of grace find their Lord to be the sweetest of incense even now, and what better fragrance have they in heaven itself? We will be glad and rejoice *in You*. That last word is the meat in the dish, the kernel of the nut, the soul of the text. What heavens are laid up in Jesus! What rivers of infinite bliss have their source, aye, and every drop of their fullness in Him! Since, O sweet Lord Jesus, You are the present portion of Your people, favor us this year with such a sense of Your preciousness that from its first to its last day we may be glad and rejoice in You. Let January open with joy in the Lord, and December close with gladness in Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 95:1

It is interesting to consider how large a portion of the Bible is occupied with the subject of prayer, either in furnishing examples, enforcing precepts, or pronouncing promises. We scarcely open the Bible before we read, “People began to call upon the name of the LORD;”<sup>1</sup> and just as we are about to close the volume, the “Amen” of an earnest supplication meets our ear. Instances are plentiful. Here we find a wrestling Jacob—there a Daniel who prayed three times a day—and a David who with all his heart called upon his God. On the mountain we see Elijah; in the dungeon Paul and Silas. We have multitudes of commands, and myriads of promises. What does this teach us, but the sacred importance and necessity of prayer? We may be certain that whatever God has made prominent in His Word, He intended to be conspicuous in our lives. If He has said much about prayer, it is because He knows we have much need of it. So deep are our necessities that until we are in heaven we must not cease to pray. Do you need nothing? Then I fear you do not know your poverty. Have you no mercy to ask of God? Then may the Lord’s mercy show you your misery! A prayerless soul is a Christless soul. Prayer is the lisping of the believing infant, the shout of the fighting believer, the requiem of the dying saint falling asleep in Jesus. It is the breath, the watchword, the comfort, the strength, the honor of a Christian. If you are a child of God, you will seek your Father’s face and live in your Father’s love. Pray that this year you may be holy, humble, zealous, and patient; have closer communion with Christ, and enter more often into the banqueting-house of His love. Pray that you may be an example and a blessing to others, and that you may live more to the glory of your Master. The motto for this year must be, “Continue . . . in prayer.”


 EVENING
 

LET THE PEOPLES RENEW THEIR STRENGTH. — ISAIAH 41:1

All things on earth need to be renewed. No created thing continues by itself. “You renew the face of the ground,”<sup>2</sup> was the psalmist’s utterance. Even the trees, which wear not themselves with care, nor shorten their lives with labor, must drink of the rain of heaven and draw from the hidden treasures of the soil. The cedars of Lebanon, which God has planted, only live because day by day they are full of sap freshly drawn from the earth. Neither can man’s life be sustained without renewal from God. As it is necessary to repair the body by the frequent meal, so we must repair the soul by feeding upon the Book of God, or by listening to the preached Word, or by the soul-fattening table of the ordinances. How depressed are our graces when means are neglected! What poor starving souls they are who live without the diligent use of the Word of God and secret prayer! If our piety can live without God it is not of divine creating; it is but a dream; for if God had begotten it, it would wait upon Him as the flowers wait upon the dew. Without constant restoration we are not ready for the perpetual assaults of hell, or the stern afflictions of heaven, or even for the strife within. When the whirlwind shall be loosed, woe to the tree that has not sucked up fresh sap and grasped the rock with many inter-twisted roots. When tempests arise, woe to the mariners that have not strengthened their mast, nor cast their anchor, nor sought the haven. If we suffer the good to grow weaker, the evil will surely gather strength and struggle desperately for the mastery over us; and as a result a painful desolation and a lamentable disgrace may follow. Let us draw near to the footstool of divine mercy in humble entreaty, and we shall realize the fulfillment of the promise, “They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 4:26 <sup>2</sup> Psalm 104:30 <sup>3</sup> Isaiah 40:31

Jesus Christ is Himself the sum and substance of the covenant, and as one of its gifts He is the property of every believer. Believer, can you estimate what you have received in Christ? “In him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.”<sup>1</sup> Consider the word “God” and its infinity, and then meditate upon “perfect man” and all His beauty; for all that Christ, as God and man, ever had, or can have, is yours—out of pure free favor, given to you to be your entailed property forever. Our blessed Jesus, as God, is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Will it not console you to know that all these great and glorious attributes are altogether yours? Has He power? That power is yours to support and strengthen you, to overcome your enemies, and to preserve you even to the end. Has He love? Well, there is not a drop of love in His heart that is not yours; you may dive into the immense ocean of His love, and you may say of it all, “It is mine.” Has He justice? It may seem a stern attribute, but even that is yours, for He will by His justice see to it that all that is promised to you in the covenant of grace shall be most certainly secured to you. And all that He has as perfect man is yours. As a perfect man the Father’s delight was upon Him. He stood accepted by the Most High. O believer, God’s acceptance of Christ is your acceptance; for the love that the Father set on a perfect Christ, He sets on you now. For all that Christ did is yours. That perfect righteousness which Jesus worked out, when through His stainless life He kept the law and made it honorable, is yours and is imputed to you. Christ is in the covenant.

*My God, I am Thine—what a comfort divine!  
 What a blessing to know that the Savior is mine!  
 In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am,  
 And my heart it doth dance at the sound of His name.*


 EVENING
 

“THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS:  
 ‘PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD,  
 MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.’” — LUKE 3:4

The voice crying in the wilderness demanded *a way for the Lord, a way prepared, and a way prepared in the wilderness*. I would be attentive to the Master’s proclamation and give Him a road into my heart, cast up by gracious operations, through the desert of my nature. The four directions in the text<sup>2</sup> must have my serious attention.

*Every valley must be exalted.* Low and groveling thoughts of God must be given up; doubting and despairing must be removed; and self-seeking and carnal delights must be forsaken. Across these deep valleys a glorious causeway of grace must be raised.

*Every mountain and hill shall be laid low.* Proud creature-sufficiency, and boastful self-righteousness, must be leveled, to make a highway for the King of kings. Divine fellowship is never promised to haughty, high-minded sinners. The Lord has respect to the lowly and visits the contrite in heart, but the lofty are an abomination unto Him. My soul, beseech the Holy Spirit to set you right in this respect.

*The crooked shall be made straight.* The wavering heart must have a straight path of decision for God and holiness marked out for it. Double-minded men are strangers to the God of truth. My soul, take heed that in everything you are honest and true, as in the sight of the heart-searching God.

*The rough places shall be made smooth.* Stumbling-blocks of sin must be removed, and thorns and briars of rebellion must be uprooted. So great a visitor must not find miry ways and stony places when He comes to honor His favored ones with His company. Oh, that this evening the Lord may find in my heart a highway made ready by His grace, that He may make a triumphal progress through the utmost bounds of my soul, from the beginning of this year even to the end of it.

<sup>1</sup> Colossians 2:9 <sup>2</sup> Isaiah 40

JANUARY 4

 MORNING 

GROW IN THE GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF OUR  
LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. — 2 PETER 3:18

Grow in grace”—not in one grace only, but in all grace. Grow in that root-grace, *faith*. Believe the promises more firmly than you have done. Let faith increase in fullness, constancy, simplicity. Grow also in *love*. Ask that your love may become extended, more intense, more practical, influencing every thought, word, and deed. Grow likewise in *humility*. Seek to lie very low and know more of your own nothingness. As you grow *downward* in humility, seek also to grow *upward*—having nearer approaches to God in prayer and more intimate fellowship with Jesus. May God the Holy Spirit enable you to “*grow in . . . the knowledge of our Lord and Savior.*” He who grows not in the knowledge of Jesus, refuses to be blessed. To know Him is “life eternal,” and to advance in the knowledge of Him is to increase in happiness. He who does not long to know more of Christ, knows nothing of Him yet. Whoever has sipped this wine will thirst for more, for although Christ does satisfy, yet it is such a satisfaction that the appetite is not choked, but whetted. If you know the love of Jesus as the hart pants for the water-brooks, so will you pant after deeper draughts of His love. If you do not desire to know Him better, then you love Him not, for love always cries, “Nearer, nearer.” Absence from Christ is hell; but the presence of Jesus is heaven. Do not rest content without an increasing acquaintance with Jesus. Seek to know more of Him in His divine nature, in His human relationship, in His finished work, in His death, in His resurrection, in His present glorious intercession, and in His future royal advent. Live close to the Cross, and search the mystery of His wounds. An increase of love to Jesus and a more perfect apprehension of His love to us is one of the best tests of growth in grace.

 EVENING 

AND JOSEPH RECOGNIZED HIS BROTHERS,  
BUT THEY DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM. — GENESIS 42:8

This morning our desires went forth for growth in our acquaintance with the Lord Jesus; it may be well tonight to consider a kindred topic, namely, *our heavenly Joseph's knowledge of us*. This was most blessedly perfect long before we had the slightest knowledge of Him. “Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.”<sup>1</sup> Before we had a being in the world we had a being in His heart. When we were enemies to Him, He knew us, our misery, our madness, and our wickedness. When we wept bitterly in despairing repentance, and viewed Him only as a judge and a ruler, He viewed us as His brethren well beloved, and His heart yearned toward us. He never mistook His chosen but always beheld them as objects of His infinite affection. “The Lord knows those who are his”<sup>2</sup> is as true of the prodigals who are feeding pigs as of the children who sit at the table.

But, sadly *we did not know our royal Brother*, and out of this ignorance grew a host of sins. We withheld our hearts from Him and allowed Him no entrance to our love. We mistrusted Him and gave no credit to His words. We rebelled against Him and paid Him no loving homage. The Sun of Righteousness shone forth, and we could not see Him. Heaven came down to earth, and earth perceived it not. Let God be praised, those days are over with us; yet even now what we know of Jesus is small compared with what He knows of us. We have only begun to study Him, but He knows us altogether. It is a blessed circumstance that the ignorance is not on His side, for then it would be a hopeless case for us. He will not say to us, “I never knew you,” but He will confess our names in the day of His appearing, and meanwhile will show Himself to us as He does not to the world.

<sup>1</sup>Psalm 139:16 <sup>2</sup>2 Timothy 2:19

JANUARY 5

🌿 MORNING 🌿

AND GOD SAW THAT THE LIGHT WAS GOOD.

AND GOD SEPARATED THE LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS. — GENESIS 1:4

Light might well be good since it sprang from that fiat of goodness, “Let there be light.” We who enjoy it should be more grateful for it than we are, and see more of God in it and by it. *Physical* light is said by Solomon to be sweet, but *gospel* light is infinitely more precious, for it reveals eternal things and ministers to our immortal natures. When the Holy Spirit gives us *spiritual* light and opens our eyes to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we behold sin in its true colors, and ourselves in our real position; we see the Most Holy God as He reveals Himself, the plan of mercy as He propounds it, and the world to come as the Word describes it. Spiritual light has many beams and prismatic colors, but whether they be knowledge, joy, holiness, or life, all are divinely good. If the light received be thus good, what must the *essential* light be, and how glorious must be the place where He reveals Himself. O Lord, since light is so good, give us more of it, and more of Yourself, the true light.

No sooner is there a good thing in the world than *a division is necessary*. Light and darkness have no communion; God has divided them—let us not confound them. Sons of light must not have fellowship with deeds, doctrines, or deceits of darkness. The children of the day must be sober, honest, and bold in their Lord’s work, leaving the works of darkness to those who will dwell in it forever. Our churches should by discipline divide the light from the darkness, and we should by our distinct separation from the world do the same. In judgment, in action, in hearing, in teaching, in association, we must discern between the precious and the vile, and maintain the great distinction that the Lord made upon the world’s first day. O Lord Jesus, be our light throughout the whole of this day, for Your light is the light of men.

🌿 EVENING 🌿

AND GOD SAW THAT THE LIGHT WAS GOOD. — GENESIS 1:4

This morning we noticed the goodness of the light, and the Lord’s dividing it from the darkness. We now note the special eye that the Lord had for the light. “God saw the light”—He looked at it with complacency, gazed upon it with pleasure, saw that it “was good.” If the Lord has given you light, dear reader, He looks on that light with peculiar interest; for not only is it dear to Him as His own handiwork, but it is like Himself, for “God is light.” It is pleasant for the believer to know that God’s eye tenderly observes that work of grace that He has begun. He never loses sight of the treasure that He has placed in our earthen vessels. Sometimes we cannot see the light, but God always sees the light, and that is much better than our seeing it. Better for the judge to see my innocence than for me to think I see it. It is very comfortable for me to know that I am one of God’s people—but whether *I* know it or not, if the Lord knows it, I am still safe. This is the foundation, “The Lord knows those who are his.”<sup>12</sup> You may be sighing and groaning because of inbred sin, and mourning over your darkness; yet the Lord sees “light” in your heart, for He has put it there, and all the cloudiness and gloom of your soul cannot conceal your light from His gracious eye. You may have sunk low in despondency, and even despair; but if your soul has any longing toward Christ, and if you are seeking to rest in His finished work, God sees the “light.” He not only *sees* it, but He also *preserves* it in you. “I, the Lord, do keep it.” This is a precious thought to those who, after anxious watching and guarding of themselves, feel their own powerlessness to do so. The light thus preserved by His grace, He will one day develop into the splendor of noonday, and the fullness of glory. The light within is the dawn of the eternal day.

<sup>12</sup> Timothy 2:19



JANUARY 6

☞ MORNING ☞

CASTING ALL YOUR ANXIETIES ON HIM,  
BECAUSE HE CARES FOR YOU. — 1 PETER 5:7

It is a happy way of soothing sorrow when we can feel, “He cares for me.” Christian, do not dishonor religion by always wearing a brow of care; come, cast your burden upon your Lord. You are staggering beneath a weight that your Father would not feel. What seems to you a crushing burden would be to Him but as the small dust of the balance. Nothing is so sweet as to

*Lie passive in God's hands,  
And know no will but His.*

O child of suffering, be patient; God has not passed you over in His providence. He who is the feeder of sparrows will also furnish you with what you need. Do not sit in despair; hope on, hope ever. Take up the arms of faith against a sea of trouble, and your opposition shall yet end your distresses. There is One who cares for you. His eye is fixed on you, His heart beats with pity for your woe, and His omnipotent hand shall bring you the needed help. The darkest cloud shall scatter itself in showers of mercy. The blackest gloom shall give place to the morning. He, if you are one of His family, will bind up your wounds and heal your broken heart. Do not doubt His grace because of your tribulation, but believe that He loves you as much in seasons of trouble as in times of happiness. What a serene and quiet life might you lead if you would leave providing to the God of providence! With a little oil in the cruse and a handful of meal in the barrel, Elijah outlived the famine, and you will do the same. If God cares for you, why do you need to care too? Can you trust Him for your soul and not for your body? He has never refused to bear your burdens; He has never fainted under their weight. Come, then, soul! Say good-bye to anxiety and leave all your concerns in the hand of a gracious God.

☞ EVENING ☞

NOW THE HAND OF THE LORD HAD BEEN UPON ME  
THE EVENING BEFORE . . . — EZEKIEL 33:22

In the matter of *judgment* this may be the case, and if so, let me consider the reason for such a visitation and accept it as from His hand. I am not the only one who is chastened in the night season; let me cheerfully submit to the affliction and carefully endeavor to profit by it. But the hand of the Lord may also be felt in another manner, strengthening the soul and lifting the spirit upward toward eternal things. O that I may in this sense feel the Lord dealing with me! A sense of the divine presence and indwelling bears the soul toward heaven as upon the wings of eagles. At such times we are full to the brim with spiritual joy, and forget the cares and sorrows of earth; the invisible is near, and the visible loses its power over us. Servant-body waits at the foot of the hill, and the master-spirit worships upon the summit in the presence of the Lord. O that a hallowed season of divine communion may be granted to me this evening! The Lord knows that I need it very greatly. My graces languish, my corruptions rage, my faith is weak, my devotion is cold; all these are reasons why His healing hand should be laid upon me. His hand can cool the heat of my burning brow and calm the turmoil of my palpitating heart. That glorious right hand that molded the world can renew my mind; the unwearied hand that bears the earth's huge pillars can sustain my spirit; the loving hand that encloses all the saints can cherish me; and the mighty hand that breaks in pieces the enemy can subdue my sins. Why should I not feel that hand touching me this evening? Come, my soul, address God with the potent plea that Jesus' hands were pierced for your redemption, and you shall surely feel that same hand upon you that once touched Daniel and set him upon his knees that he might see visions of God.

The believer did not always live to Christ. He began to do so when God the Holy Spirit convinced him of sin, and when by grace he was brought to see the dying Savior making a propitiation for his guilt. From the moment of the new and heavenly birth the man begins to live to Christ. Jesus is to believers the one pearl of great price, for whom we are willing to part with all that we have. He has so completely won our heart that it beats alone for Him; to His glory we would live, and in defense of His Gospel we would die. He is the pattern of our life, and the model after which we would sculpture our character. Paul's words mean more than most men think; they imply that the *aim and end of his life* was Christ—nay, his life itself was Jesus. In the words of an ancient saint, he ate and drank and slept eternal life. Jesus was his very breath, the soul of his soul, the heart of his heart, the life of his life. Can you say, as a professing Christian, that you live up to this idea? Can you honestly say that for you to live is Christ? Your business—are you doing it *for Christ*? Is it not done for self-aggrandizement and for family advantage? Do you ask, “Is that a mean reason?” For the *Christian* it is. He professes to live for Christ; how can he live for another object without committing spiritual adultery? There are many who carry out this principle in some measure; but who is there that dares say that he has lived wholly for Christ as the apostle did? Yet this alone is the true life of a Christian—its source, its sustenance, its fashion, its end, all gathered up in one word—Christ. Lord, accept me; I present myself, praying to live only in You and to You. Let me be as the creature that stands between the plow and the altar, to work or to be sacrificed; and let my motto be, “Ready for either.”


 EVENING
 

MY SISTER, MY BRIDE. — SONG OF SOLOMON 4:12

Observe the sweet titles with which the heavenly Solomon with intense affection addresses His bride, the church. “*My sister*, one near to Me by ties of nature, partaker of the same sympathies. *My bride*, nearest and dearest, united to Me by the tenderest bands of love; My sweet companion, part of My own self. *My sister*, by My Incarnation, which makes Me bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh; *my bride*, by heavenly betrothal, in which I have married you to Myself in righteousness. *My sister*, whom I knew of old, and over whom I watched from her earliest infancy; *My bride*, taken from among the daughters, embraced by arms of love and joined to me forever.” See how true it is that our royal Kinsman is not ashamed of us, for He dwells with manifest delight upon this twofold relationship. We have the word “my” twice in our version; as if Christ dwelt with rapture on His possession of His Church. His delights were with the sons of men because those sons of men were His own chosen ones. He, the Shepherd, sought the sheep because they were *His* sheep; He has gone about “to seek and to save that which was lost,” because that which was lost was *His* long before it was lost to itself or lost to Him. The church is the exclusive portion of her Lord; none else may claim a partnership or pretend to share her love. Jesus, Your church delights to have it so! Let every believing soul drink solace out of these wells. Soul, Christ is near to you in ties of relationship. Christ is dear to you in bonds of marriage union, and you are dear to Him; behold, He grasps both of your hands with both His own, saying, “*My sister, my bride.*” Consider how the Lord gets such a double hold of you that He neither can nor will ever let you go. Be not, O beloved, slow to return the hallowed flame of His love.

What a veil is lifted up by these words, and what a disclosure is made! It will be humbling and profitable for us to pause awhile and see this sad sight. The iniquities of our public worship, its hypocrisy, formality, lukewarmness, irreverence, wandering of heart, and forgetfulness of God—what a full measure have we there! Our work for the Lord, its emulation, selfishness, carelessness, slackness, unbelief—what a mass of defilement is there! Our private devotions, their laxity, coldness, neglect, sleepiness, and vanity—what a mountain of dead earth is there! If we looked more carefully, we should find this iniquity to be far greater than appears at first sight. Dr. Payson, writing to his brother, says, “My parish, as well as my heart, very much resembles the garden of the sluggard; and what is worse, I find that very many of my desires for the improvement of both, proceed either from pride or vanity or indolence. I look at the weeds, which overspread my garden, and breathe out an earnest wish that they were eradicated. But why? What prompts the wish? So that I may walk out and say to myself, ‘In what fine order is my garden kept!’ This is *pride*. Or, so that my neighbors may look over the wall and say, ‘How finely your garden flourishes!’ This is *vanity*. Or I may wish for the destruction of the weeds, because I am weary of pulling them up. This is *indolence*.” So even our desires after holiness may be polluted by ill motives. Under the greenest sods worms hide themselves; we need not look long to discover them. How cheering is the thought that when the High Priest bore the iniquity of the holy things he wore upon his brow the words, “HOLINESS TO THE LORD,” and even so while Jesus bears our sin, He presents before His Father’s face not our unholiness, but His own holiness. O for grace to view our great High Priest by the eye of faith!


 EVENING
 

FOR YOUR LOVE IS BETTER THAN WINE. — SONG OF SOLOMON 1:2

*Nothing gives the believer so much joy as fellowship with Christ.* He has enjoyment as others have in the common mercies of life—he can be glad both in God’s gifts and God’s works; but in all these separately, yes, and in all of them added together, he does not find such substantial delight as in the matchless person of his Lord Jesus. He has wine that no vineyard on earth ever yielded; he has bread that all the cornfields of Egypt could never bring forth. Where can such sweetness be found as we have tasted in communion with our Beloved? In our esteem, the joys of earth are little better than husks for pigs compared with Jesus, the heavenly manna. We would rather have one mouthful of Christ’s love and a sip of his fellowship than a whole world full of carnal delights. What is the chaff to the wheat? What is the sparkling paste to the true diamond? What is a dream to the glorious reality? What is life’s merriment compared to our Lord Jesus in His most despised estate? If you know anything of the inner life, you will confess that our highest, purest, and most enduring joys must be the fruit of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. No spring yields such sweet water as that well of God, which was dug with the soldier’s spear. All earthly bliss is of the earth earthy, but the comforts of Christ’s presence are like Himself, heavenly. We can review our communion with Jesus and find in it no empty regrets; there are no dregs in this wine, no dead flies in this ointment. The joy of the Lord is solid and enduring. Vanity has not looked upon it, but discretion and prudence testify that it abides the test of years and is in time and in eternity worthy to be called “the only true delight.” For nourishment, consolation, exhilaration, and refreshment, no wine can rival the love of Jesus. Let us drink to the full this evening.

Christian, here is all you require. To make you happy you want something that shall satisfy you, and is not this enough? If you can pour this promise into your cup, will you not say, with David, “My cup overflows.”<sup>1</sup> When this is fulfilled, “I am your God,” are you not possessor of all things? Desire is insatiable as death, but He who fills all in all can fill it. The capacity of our wishes who can measure? But the immeasurable wealth of God can more than overflow it. I ask you if you are not complete when God is yours? Do you want anything but God? Is not His all-sufficiency enough to satisfy you if all else should fail? But you want more than quiet satisfaction; you desire *rapturous delight*. Come, soul, here is music fit for heaven in this your portion, for God is the Maker of heaven. Not all the music blown from sweet instruments or drawn from living strings can yield such melody as this sweet promise, “I will be their God.” Here is a deep sea of bliss, a shoreless ocean of delight; come, bathe your spirit in it; swim an age, and you shall find no shore; dive throughout eternity, and you shall find no bottom. “I will be their God.” If this does not make your eyes sparkle, and your heart beat fast with bliss, then assuredly your soul is not in a healthy state. But you want more than present delights—you crave something concerning which you may exercise *hope*; and what more can you hope for than the fulfillment of this great promise, “I will be their God”? This is the masterpiece of all the promises; its enjoyment makes a heaven below and will make a heaven above. Dwell in the light of your Lord, and let your soul be always ravished with His love. Get out the marrow and fatness that this portion yields you. Live up to your privileges, and rejoice with unspeakable joy.


 EVENING
 

SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS. — PSALM 100:2

Delight in divine service is a token of acceptance. Those who serve God with a sad countenance, because they do what is unpleasant to them, are not serving Him at all; they bring the *form* of loyalty, but the *life* is absent. Our God requires no slaves to grace His throne; He is the Lord of the empire of love, and would have His servants dressed in the uniform of joy. The angels of God serve Him with songs, not with groans; a murmur or a sigh would be a mutiny in their ranks. That obedience that is not voluntary is disobedience, for the Lord looks at the heart, and if He sees that we serve Him from force, and not because we love Him, He will reject our offering. Service coupled with cheerfulness is heart-service and therefore true. Take away joyful willingness from the Christian, and you have removed *the test of his sincerity*. If a man be driven to battle, he is no patriot; but he who marches into the fray with flashing eye and beaming face, singing, “It is sweet for one’s country to die,” proves himself to be sincere in his patriotism. Cheerfulness is *the support of our strength*; in the joy of the Lord are we strong. It acts as *the remover of difficulties*. It is to our service what oil is to the wheels of a railway carriage. Without oil the axle soon grows hot, and accidents occur; and if there be not a holy cheerfulness to oil our wheels, our spirits will be clogged with weariness. The man who is cheerful in his service of God proves that obedience is his element; he can sing,

*Make me to walk in your commands,  
It’s a delightful road.*

Reader, let us put this question—do *you* serve the Lord *with gladness*? Let us show to the people of the world, who think our religion to be slavery, that it is to us a delight and a joy! Let our gladness proclaim that we serve a good Master.

<sup>1</sup>Psalm 23:5

Doubting one, you have often said, “I fear I shall never enter heaven.” Fear not! All the people of God shall enter there. I love the quaint saying of a dying man who exclaimed, “I have no fear of going home; I have sent all ahead of me. God’s finger is on the latch of my door, and I am ready for Him to enter.” “But,” said one, “are you not afraid lest you should miss your inheritance?” “Nay,” said he, “nay; there is one crown in heaven which the angel Gabriel could not wear; it will fit no head but mine. There is one throne in heaven which Paul the apostle could not fill; it was made for me, and I shall have it.” O Christian, what a joyous thought! Your portion is secure; “there remains a rest.” “But cannot I forfeit it?” No, it is entailed. If I be a child of God I shall not lose it. It is mine as securely as if I were there. Come with me, believer, and let us sit upon the top of Nebo and view the goodly land, even Canaan. Do you see that little river of death glistening in the sunlight, and across it do you see the pinnacles of the eternal city? Do you mark the pleasant country and all its joyous inhabitants? Know, then, that if you could fly across you would see written upon one of its many mansions, “This remains for such a one, preserved for him only. He shall be caught up to dwell forever with God.” Poor doubting one, see the fair inheritance; it is *yours*. If you believe in the Lord Jesus, if you have repented of sin, if you have been renewed in heart, you are one of the Lord’s people, there is a place reserved for you, a crown laid up for you, a harp specially provided for you. No one else shall have your portion; it is reserved in heaven for you, and you shall have it before long, for there shall be no vacant thrones in glory when all the chosen are gathered in.

 EVENING 

IN MY FLESH I SHALL SEE GOD. — JOB 19:26

Consider the subject of Job’s devout anticipation: “I shall see God.” He does not say, “I shall see the saints”—though doubtless that will be untold happiness—but “I shall see God.” It is not “I shall see the pearly gates, I shall behold the walls of jasper, I shall gaze upon the crowns of gold,” but “I shall see God.” This is the sum and substance of heaven; this is the joyful hope of all believers. It is their delight to see Him now in the ordinances by faith. They love to behold Him in communion and in prayer; but there in heaven they shall have an open and unclouded vision, and thus seeing “him as he is,”<sup>1</sup> shall be made completely like Him. *Likeness to God*—what more can we wish for? And *a sight of God*—what can we desire better? Some read the passage, “Yet I shall see God in my flesh” and find here an allusion to Christ as the Word made flesh, and that glorious beholding of Him that shall be the splendor of the latter days. Whether so or not, it is certain that Christ shall be the object of our eternal vision; nor shall we ever want any joy beyond that of seeing Him. Do not think that this will be a narrow sphere for the mind to dwell in. It is but one source of delight, but that source is infinite. All His attributes shall be subjects for contemplation, and as He is infinite under each aspect, there is no fear of exhaustion. His works, His gifts, His love to us, and His glory in all His purposes and in all His actions, these shall make a theme that will be ever new. The patriarch looked forward to this sight of God as a *personal* enjoyment. “Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.”<sup>2</sup> Take realizing views of heaven’s bliss; think what it will be *to you*. “*Your eyes* will behold the king in his beauty.”<sup>3</sup> All earthly brightness fades and darkens as we gaze upon it, but here is a brightness that can never dim, a glory that can never fade—“*I shall see God.*”

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 3:2 <sup>2</sup> Job 19:27 <sup>3</sup> Isaiah 33:17

My soul, examine yourself this morning by the light of this text. You have received the Word with joy; your feelings have been stirred, and a lively impression has been made. But, remember, to receive the Word in the ear is one thing, and to receive Jesus into your very soul is quite another; superficial feeling is often joined to inward hardness of heart, and a lively impression of the Word is not always a lasting one. In the parable, the seed in one case fell upon ground having a rocky bottom, covered over with a thin layer of earth; when the seed began to take root, its downward growth was hindered by the hard stone, and therefore it spent its strength in pushing its green shoot aloft as high as it could. But having no inward moisture derived from root nourishment, it withered away. Is this my case? Have I been making a fair show in the flesh without having a corresponding inner life? Good growth takes place upward and downward at the same time. Am I rooted in sincere fidelity and love to Jesus? If my heart remains unsoftened and unfertilized by grace, the good seed may germinate for a season, but it must ultimately wither, for it cannot flourish on a rocky, unbroken, unsanctified heart. Let me dread a godliness as rapid in growth and as lacking in endurance as Jonah's vine; let me count the cost of being a follower of Jesus. Above all let me feel the energy of His Holy Spirit, and then I shall possess an abiding and enduring seed in my soul. If my mind remains as stubborn as it was by nature, the sun of trial will scorch, and my hard heart will help cast the heat the more terribly upon the ill-covered seed, and my religion will soon die, and my despair will be terrible. Therefore, O heavenly Sower, plow me first, and then cast the truth into me, and let me yield a bounteous harvest.

 EVENING 

I HAVE PRAYED FOR YOU. — LUKE 22:32

How encouraging is the thought of the Redeemer's never-ceasing intercession for us. When we pray, He pleads for us; and when we are *not* praying, He is advocating our cause, and by His supplications shielding us from unseen dangers. Notice the word of comfort addressed to Peter—"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but"<sup>1</sup>—what? "But go and pray for yourself"? That would be good advice, but it is not so written. Neither does He say, "But I will keep you watchful, and so you shall be preserved." That would be a great blessing. No, it is, "*But I have prayed for you* that your faith may not fail."<sup>2</sup> We little know what we owe to our Savior's prayers. When we reach the hilltops of heaven and look back upon all the way whereby the Lord our God has led us, how we shall praise Him who, before the eternal throne, undid the mischief that Satan was doing upon earth. How we shall thank Him because He never held His peace but day and night pointed to the wounds upon His hands and carried our names upon His breastplate! Even before Satan had begun to tempt, Jesus had forestalled him and entered a plea in heaven. Mercy outruns malice. Consider, He does not say, "Satan hath *desired* to have you." He checks Satan even in his very desire and nips it in the bud. He does not say, "But I have desired to pray for you." No, but "I *have* prayed for you—I have done it already; I have gone to court and entered a counterplea even before an accusation is made." O Jesus, what a comfort it is that You have pleaded our cause against our unseen enemies; You have unmasked their ambushes. Here is a matter for joy, gratitude, hope, and confidence.

<sup>1</sup>Luke 22:31 <sup>2</sup>Luke 22:32

**Y***ou are Christ's.*" You are His by donation, for the Father gave you to the Son; His by His purchase of blood, for He paid the price for your redemption; His by dedication, for you have consecrated yourself to Him; His by relation, for you are named by His name and made one of His brethren and joint-heirs. Labor practically to show the world that you are the servant, the friend, the bride of Jesus. When tempted to sin, reply, "I cannot do this great wickedness, for I am Christ's." Immortal principles forbid the friend of Christ to sin. When wealth is before you to be won by sin, say that you are Christ's, and touch it not. Are you exposed to difficulties and dangers? Stand fast in the evil day, remembering that you are Christ's. Are you placed where others are sitting down idly, doing nothing? Rise to the work with all your powers; and when the sweat stands upon your brow, and you are tempted to loiter, cry, "No, I cannot stop, for I am Christ's. If I were not purchased by blood, I might be like Issachar, crouching between two burdens; but I am Christ's and cannot loiter." When the siren song of pleasure would tempt you from the path of right, reply, "Your music cannot charm me; I am Christ's." When the cause of God invites you, give your goods and yourself away, for you are Christ's. Never contradict your profession. Be ever one of those whose manners are Christian, whose speech is like Jesus, whose conduct and conversation are so reminiscent of heaven that all who see you may know that you are the Savior's, recognizing in you His features of love and His countenance of holiness. "I am a Roman!" was of old a reason for integrity; far more, then, let your argument for holiness be, "I am Christ's!"

 EVENING 

I HAVE YET SOMETHING TO SAY ON GOD'S BEHALF. — JOB 36:2

**W**e ought not to court publicity for our virtue or notoriety for our zeal; but at the same time it is a sin to be always seeking to hide what God has bestowed upon us for the good of others. A Christian is not to be a village in a valley, but "a city set on a hill";<sup>1</sup> he is not to be a candle under a bushel, but a candle in a candlestick, giving light to all. Retirement may be lovely in its season, and to hide one's self is doubtless modest, but the hiding of *Christ* in us can never be justified, and the keeping back of truth, which is precious to ourselves, is a sin against others and an offense against God. If you have a nervous temperament and a retiring disposition, take care that you do not indulge this trembling propensity, lest you should be useless to the church. Seek in the name of Him who was not ashamed of you to do some little violence to your feelings and tell others what Christ has told to you. If you cannot speak with trumpet tongue, use the still small voice. If the pulpit must not be your tribune, if the press may not carry on its wings your words, yet say with Peter and John, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you."<sup>2</sup> By Sychar's well talk to the Samaritan woman, if you cannot preach a sermon on the mountain; utter the praises of Jesus in the house, if not in the temple; in the field, if not in the public square; in your own household, if you cannot in the great family of man. From the hidden springs within, let sweetly flowing streams of testimony flow forth, giving drink to every passerby. Hide not your talent; trade with it, and you shall bring in good interest to your Lord and Master. To speak for God will be refreshing to ourselves, cheering to saints, useful to sinners, and honoring to the Savior.

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 5:14 <sup>2</sup> Acts 3:6

JANUARY 13

🌿 MORNING 🌿

JEHOSHAPHAT MADE SHIPS OF TARSHISH TO GO TO  
OPHIR FOR GOLD, BUT THEY DID NOT GO,

FOR THE SHIPS WERE WRECKED AT EZION-GEBER. — 1 KINGS 22:48

Solomon's ships had returned in safety, but Jehoshaphat's vessels never reached the land of gold. Providence prospers one and frustrates the desires of another, in the same business and at the same spot; yet the Great Ruler is as good and wise at one time as another. May we have grace today, in the remembrance of this text, to bless the Lord for ships broken at Ezion-geber as well as for vessels filled with temporal blessings; let us not envy the more successful, nor murmur at our losses as though we were singularly and specially tried. Like Jehoshaphat, we may be precious in the Lord's sight, although our schemes end in disappointment.

The secret cause of Jehoshaphat's loss is well worthy of notice, for it is the root of very much of the suffering of the Lord's people; it was his alliance with a sinful family, his fellowship with sinners. In 2 Chronicles 20:37 we are told that the Lord sent a prophet to declare, "Because you have joined with Ahaziah, the LORD will destroy what you have made." This was a fatherly chastisement, which appears to have been considered blessed to him; for in the verse which succeeds our morning's text we find him refusing to allow his servants to sail in the same vessels with those of the wicked king. Would to God that Jehoshaphat's experience might be a warning to the rest of the Lord's people, to avoid being unequally yoked together with unbelievers! A life of misery is usually the lot of those who are united in marriage, or in any other way of their own choosing, with the men of the world. O for such love to Jesus that, like Him, we may be holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; for if that is not the case with us, we may expect to hear it often said, "The Lord will destroy what you have made."

🌿 EVENING 🌿

. . . MADE THE IRON FLOAT. — 2 KINGS 6:6

The axe head seemed hopelessly lost, and as it was borrowed, the honor of the prophetic band was likely to be imperiled, and so the name of their God to be compromised. Contrary to all expectation, the iron was made to mount from the depth of the stream and to swim; for things impossible with man are possible with God. I knew a man in Christ but a few years ago who was called to undertake a work far exceeding his strength. It appeared so difficult as to involve absurdity in the bare idea of attempting it. Yet he was called to it, and his faith rose with the occasion. God honored his faith, unlooked-for aid was sent, and the iron did swim. Another of the Lord's family was in dreadful financial straits. He would have been able to meet all claims and much more if he could have realized a certain portion of his estate, but he was overtaken with a sudden pressure. He sought for friends in vain, but faith led him to the unfailing Helper, and lo, the trouble was averted, his footsteps were enlarged, and the iron did swim. A third had a sorrowful case of depravity to deal with. He had taught, reproved, warned, invited, and interceded, but all in vain. Old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon; the stubborn spirit would not relent. Then came an agony of prayer, and before long a blessed answer was sent from heaven. The hard heart was broken; the iron did swim.

Beloved reader, what is your desperate case? What heavy matter have you to deal with this evening? Bring it here. The God of the prophets lives, and lives to help His saints. He will not suffer you to lack any good thing. Believe in the Lord of hosts! Approach Him pleading the name of Jesus, and the iron shall swim; you too shall see the finger of God working marvels for His people. According to your faith be it unto you, and yet again the iron shall swim.



By the words “to save” we understand the whole of the great work of salvation, from the first holy desire onward to complete sanctification. The words are *multum in parvo* [much in little]: indeed, here is all mercy in a word. Christ is not only “mighty to save” those who repent, but He is able to make men repent. He will carry those to heaven who believe; but He is, moreover, mighty to give men new hearts and to work faith in them. He is mighty to make the man who hates holiness love it, and to constrain the despiser of His name to bend the knee before Him. And this is not all the meaning, for the divine power is equally seen in the after-work. The life of a believer is a series of miracles wrought by the Mighty God. The bush burns but is not consumed. He is mighty to keep His people holy after He has made them so, and to preserve them in His fear and love until He consummates their spiritual existence in heaven. Christ’s power does not lie in making a believer and then leaving him to fend for himself; but He who begins the good work carries it on; He who imparts the first germ of life in the dead soul prolongs the divine existence and strengthens it until it breaks every bond of sin, and the soul leaps from earth, perfected in glory. Believer, here is encouragement. Are you praying for some beloved one? Oh, do not give up praying, for Christ is “mighty to save.” You are powerless to reclaim the rebel, but your Lord is Almighty. Lay hold on that mighty arm and rouse it to put forth its strength. Does your own case trouble you? Fear not, for His strength is sufficient for you. Whether to begin with others or to carry on the work in you, Jesus is “mighty to save,” the best proof of which lies in the fact that He has saved *you*. What a thousand mercies that you have not found Him mighty to destroy!


 EVENING
 

BEGINNING TO SINK HE CRIED OUT, “LORD, SAVE ME.” — MATTHEW 14:30

*Sinking times are praying times* with the Lord’s servants. Peter neglected prayer at starting upon his venturesome journey, but when he began to sink, his danger made him a suppliant, and his cry, though late, was not too late. In our hours of bodily pain and mental anguish, we find ourselves as naturally driven to prayer as the wreck is driven upon the shore by the waves. The fox runs to its hole for protection; the bird flies to the wood for shelter; and even so the tried believer hastens to the mercy-seat for safety. Heaven’s great harbor of refuge is All-prayer; thousands of weather-beaten vessels have found a haven there, and the moment a storm comes on, it is wise for us to make for it with full sail.

*Short prayers are long enough.* There were but three words in the petition that Peter gasped out, but they were sufficient for his purpose. Not length but strength is desirable. A sense of need is a mighty teacher of brevity. If our prayers had less of the tail feathers of pride and more wing, they would be all the better. Verbiage is to devotion as chaff to the wheat. Precious things lie in small compass, and all that is real prayer in many a long address might have been uttered in a petition as short as that of Peter.

*Our extremities are the Lord’s opportunities.* Immediately a keen sense of danger forces an anxious cry from us, the ear of Jesus hears, and with Him ear and heart go together, and the hand does not long linger. At the last moment we appeal to our Master, but His swift hand makes up for our delays by instant and effectual action. Are we nearly engulfed by the boisterous waters of affliction? Let us then lift up our souls unto our Savior, and we may rest assured that He will not suffer us to perish. When we can do nothing, Jesus can do everything; let us enlist His powerful aid upon our side, and all will be well.

God's promises were never meant to be thrown aside as wastepaper; He intended that they should be used. God's gold is not miser's money but is minted to be traded with. Nothing pleases our Lord better than to see His promises put in circulation; He loves to see His children bring them up to Him and say, "Lord, do as you have said." We glorify God when we plead His promises. Do you think that God will be any poorer for giving you the riches He has promised? Do you dream that He will be any less holy for giving holiness to you? Do you imagine He will be any less pure for washing you from your sins? He has said, "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool."<sup>1</sup> Faith lays hold upon the promise of pardon, and it does not delay, saying, "This is a precious promise—I wonder if it be true?" but goes straight to the throne with it and pleads, "Lord, here is the promise. Do as you have said." Our Lord replies, "Be it unto you even as you will." When a Christian grasps a promise, if he does not take it to God, he dishonors Him; but when he hastens to the throne of grace and cries, "Lord, I have nothing to recommend me but this, You have said it," then his desire shall be granted. Our heavenly Banker delights to cash His own notes. Never let the promise rust. Draw the word of promise out of its sheath and use it with holy violence. Think not that God will be troubled by your importunately reminding Him of His promises. He loves to hear the loud outcries of needy souls. It is His delight to bestow favors. He is more ready to hear than you are to ask. The sun is not weary of shining, nor the fountain of flowing. It is God's nature to keep His promises; therefore go at once to the throne with, "Do as You have said."


 EVENING
 

BUT I GIVE MYSELF TO PRAYER. — PSALM 109:4

Lying tongues were busy against the reputation of David, but he did not defend himself; He moved the case into a higher court and pleaded before the great King Himself. Prayer is the safest method of replying to words of hatred. The psalmist prayed in no coldhearted manner; he gave himself to the exercise—threw his whole soul and heart into it—straining every sinew and muscle, as Jacob did when wrestling with the angel. Thus, and thus only, shall any of us speed at the throne of grace. As a shadow has no power because there is no substance in it, even so that supplication in which a man's proper self is not thoroughly present in agonizing earnestness and vehement desire is utterly ineffectual, for it lacks that which would give it force. "Fervent prayer," says an old divine, "like a cannon planted at the gates of heaven, makes them fly open." The common fault with most of us is our readiness to yield to distractions. Our thoughts go roving here and there, and we make little progress toward our desired end. Like quicksilver our mind will not hold together but rolls off this way and that. How great an evil this is! It injures us, and what is worse, it insults our God. What should we think of a petitioner if, while having an audience with a prince, he should be playing with a feather or catching a fly?

Continuance and perseverance are intended in the expression of our text. David did not cry once and then relapse into silence; his holy clamor was continued till it brought down the blessing. Prayer must not be our intermittent work but our daily business, our habit and vocation. As artists give themselves to their models, and poets to their classical pursuits, so must we addict ourselves to prayer. We must be immersed in prayer as in our element, and so pray without ceasing. Lord, teach us so to pray, that we may be more and more efficacious in supplication.

<sup>1</sup>Isaiah 1:18

This morning let us hear the Lord Jesus speak to each one of us: “I will *help* you.” “It is but a small thing for Me, your God, to *help* you. Consider what I have done already. What! Not help you? Why, I bought you with My blood. What! Not help you? I have died for you; and if I have done the greater, will I not do the less? *Help* you! It is the least thing I will ever do for you; I *have* done more, and will do more. Before the world began I chose you. I made the covenant for you. I laid aside My glory and became a man for you; I gave up My life for you; and if I did all this, I will surely help you now. In helping you, I am giving you what I have bought for you already. If you had need of a thousand times as much help, I would give it to you; you require little compared with what I am ready to give. It is much for you to need, but it is nothing for me to bestow. *Help* you? Fear not! If there were an ant at the door of your granary asking for help, it would not ruin you to give him a handful of your wheat; and you are nothing but a tiny insect at the door of My all-sufficiency. I will help you.”

O my soul, is this not enough? Do you need more strength than the omnipotence of the united Trinity? Do you want more wisdom than exists in the Father, more love than displays itself in the Son, or more power than is manifest in the influences of the Spirit? Bring here your empty pitcher! Surely this well will fill it. Hurry, gather up your wants, and bring them here—your emptiness, your woes, your needs. Behold, this river of God is full for your supply; what else can you desire? Go forth, my soul, in this your might. The Eternal God is your helper!

*Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dismay'd!  
I, I am your God, and will still give you aid.*

 EVENING 

AN ANOINTED ONE SHALL BE CUT OFF AND  
SHALL HAVE NOTHING. — DANIEL 9:26

Blessed be His name, there was no cause of death in Him. Neither original nor actual sin had defiled Him, and therefore death had no claim upon Him. No man could have taken His life from Him justly, for He had done no man wrong, and no man could even have taken Him by force unless He had been pleased to yield Himself to die. But lo, one sins, and another suffers. Justice was offended by us but found its satisfaction in Him. Rivers of tears, mountains of offerings, seas of the blood of bulls, and hills of frankincense could not have availed for the removal of sin; but Jesus was cut off for us, and the cause of wrath was cut off at once, for sin was put away forever. Herein is wisdom, whereby substitution, the sure and speedy way of atonement, was devised! Herein is condescension, which brought the Messiah, the Prince, to wear a crown of thorns and die upon the cross! Herein is love, which led the Redeemer to lay down His life for His enemies!

It is not enough, however, to admire the spectacle of the innocent bleeding for the guilty—we must make sure of our personal interest. The special object of the Messiah's death was the salvation of His Church. Do we have a part and a place among those for whom He gave His life as a ransom? Did the Lord Jesus stand as our representative? Are we healed by His stripes? It will be a terrible thing indeed if we should come short of a portion in His sacrifice; it were better for us that we had never been born. Solemn is the question is, it is a joyful circumstance that it is one that may be answered clearly and without mistake. To all who believe on Him the Lord Jesus is a present Savior, and upon them all the blood of reconciliation has been sprinkled. Let all who trust in the merit of Messiah's death be joyful at every remembrance of Him, and let their holy gratitude lead them to the fullest consecration to His cause.

JANUARY 17

🌿 MORNING 🌿

THEN I LOOKED, AND BEHOLD, ON MOUNT ZION STOOD THE LAMB.

— REVELATION 14:1

The apostle John was privileged to look within the gates of heaven, and in describing what he saw, he begins by saying, “I looked, and, behold, . . . the Lamb.” This teaches us that the chief object of contemplation in the heavenly state is “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”<sup>1</sup> Nothing else attracted the apostle’s attention so much as the person of that Divine Being who has redeemed us by His blood. He is the theme of the songs of all glorified spirits and holy angels. Christian, here is joy for you; you have looked, and you have seen the Lamb. Through your tears your eyes have seen the Lamb of God taking away your sins. Rejoice then. In a little while, when your eyes shall have been wiped from tears, you will see the same Lamb exalted on His throne. It is the joy of your heart to hold daily fellowship with Jesus. You shall have the same joy to a higher degree in heaven; you shall enjoy the constant vision of His presence; you shall dwell with Him forever. “I looked, and, behold, . . . the Lamb.” Why, that Lamb is heaven itself; for as good Rutherford says, “Heaven and Christ are the same thing.” To be with Christ is to be in heaven, and to be in heaven is to be with Christ. That prisoner of the Lord very sweetly writes in one of his glowing letters, “O my Lord Jesus Christ, if I could be in heaven without you, it would be a hell; and if I could be in hell, and have you still, it would be a heaven to me, for you are all the heaven I want.” It is true, is it not, Christian? Does not your soul say so?

*Not all the harps above  
Can make a heavenly place,  
If God His residence remove,  
Or but conceal His face.*

All you need to make you blessed, supremely blessed, is to be with Christ.

🌿 EVENING 🌿

IT HAPPENED, LATE ONE AFTERNOON, WHEN DAVID AROSE  
FROM HIS COUCH AND WAS WALKING ON THE ROOF  
OF THE KING’S HOUSE . . . — 2 SAMUEL 11:2

At that hour David saw Bathsheba. We are never out of the reach of temptation. Both at home and away we are liable to meet with allurements to evil. The morning opens with peril, and the shades of evening find us still in jeopardy. They are well kept whom God keeps, but woe to those who go out into the world, or even dare to walk their own house unarmed. Those who think themselves secure are more exposed to danger than any others. The armor-bearer of Sin is Self-confidence.

David should have been engaged in fighting the Lord’s battles, instead of which he rested in Jerusalem, giving himself up to luxurious repose, for he arose from his bed at eventide. Idleness and luxury are the devil’s jackals and find him abundant prey. In stagnant waters noxious creatures swarm, and neglected soil soon yields a dense tangle of weeds and briars. Oh, for the constraining love of Jesus to keep us active and useful! When I see the King of Israel sluggishly leaving his couch at the close of the day and falling at once into temptation, let me take warning and set holy watchfulness to guard the door.

Is it possible that the king had mounted his housetop for retirement and devotion? If so, what a caution is given us to count no place, however secret, a sanctuary from sin! While our hearts are so like a tinderbox, and sparks so plentiful, we need to use all diligence in all places to prevent a blaze. Satan can climb housetops and enter closets, and even if we could shut out that foul fiend, our own corruptions are enough to work our ruin unless grace prevents it. Reader, beware of evening temptations. Be not secure. The sun is down, but sin is up. We need a watchman for the night as well as a guardian for the day. O blessed Spirit, keep us from all evil this night. Amen.

<sup>1</sup>John 1:29

How different will be the state of the believer in heaven from what it is here! Here he is born to toil and suffer weariness, but in the land of the immortal, fatigue is never known. Anxious to serve his Master, he finds his strength unequal to his zeal; his constant cry is, "Help me to serve You, O my God." If he be thoroughly active, he will have much labor; not too much for his will, but more than enough for his power, so that he will cry out, "I am not wearied of the labor, but I am wearied *in it*." Ah, Christian, the hot day of weariness does not last forever. The sun is nearing the horizon; it shall rise again with a brighter day than you have ever seen upon a land where they serve God day and night, and yet rest from their labors. *Here* rest is but partial; *there* it is *perfect*. *Here* the Christian is always unsettled; he feels that he has not yet attained. *There* all are at rest; they have attained the summit of the mountain; they have ascended to the bosom of their God. Higher they cannot go. Ah, toil-worn laborer, only think of when you shall rest forever! Can you conceive it? It is a rest *eternal*; a rest that "remains." *Here* my best joys bear "mortal" on their brow. My fair flowers fade; my dainty cups are drained to dregs; my sweetest birds fall before Death's arrows; my most pleasant days are shadowed into nights; and the flood tides of my bliss subside into ebbs of sorrow. But *there* everything is immortal. The harp remains in tune, the crown unfading, the eye undimmed, the voice unflinching, the heart unwavering; and the immortal being is wholly absorbed in infinite delight. Happy day when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and the Eternal Sabbath shall begin!


 EVENING
 

HE INTERPRETED TO THEM IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF. — LUKE 24:27

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus had a most profitable journey. Their companion and teacher was *the best of tutors*, the interpreter one of a thousand, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The Lord Jesus condescended to become a preacher of the Gospel, and He was not ashamed to exercise His calling before an audience of two persons. Neither does He now refuse to become the teacher of even one. Let us court the company of so excellent an Instructor, for till He is made unto us wisdom we shall never be wise unto salvation.

This unrivalled tutor used as His class-book *the best of books*. Although able to reveal fresh truth, He preferred to expound the old. He knew by His omniscience what was the most instructive way of teaching, and by turning at once to Moses and the prophets, He showed us that the surest road to wisdom is not speculation, reasoning, or reading human books, but meditation upon the Word of God. The readiest way to be spiritually rich in heavenly knowledge is to dig in this mine of diamonds, to gather pearls from this heavenly sea. When Jesus Himself sought to enrich others, He mined in the quarry of Holy Scripture.

The favored pair were led to consider *the best of subjects*, for Jesus spoke of Jesus and expounded the things concerning Himself. Here the diamond cut the diamond, and what could be more admirable? The Master of the House unlocked His own doors, conducted the guests to His table, and placed His own choice foods upon it. He who hid the treasure in the field Himself guided the searchers to it. Our Lord would naturally discourse upon the sweetest of topics, and He could find none sweeter than His own person and work. With an eye to these we should always search the Word. O for grace to study the Bible with Jesus as both our teacher and our lesson!

JANUARY 19

🌿 MORNING 🌿

I SOUGHT HIM, BUT FOUND HIM NOT. — SONG OF SOLOMON 3:1

**T**ell me where you lost the company of Christ, and I will tell you the most likely place to find Him. Have you lost Christ in the closet by restraining prayer? Then it is there you must seek and find Him. Did you lose Christ by sin? You will find Christ in no other way but by the giving up of the sin, and seeking by the Holy Spirit to mortify the member in which the lust dwells. Did you lose Christ by neglecting the Scriptures? You must find Christ in the Scriptures. It is a true proverb, “Look for a thing where you dropped it—it is there.” So look for Christ where you lost Him, for He has not gone away. But it is hard work to go back for Christ. Bunyan tells us that the pilgrim found the piece of the road back to the Arbor of Ease, where he lost his roll, the hardest he had ever traveled. Twenty miles onward is easier than to go one mile back for the lost evidence.

Take care, then, when you find your Master, to cling close to Him. But how is it you have lost Him? One would have thought you would never have parted with such a precious friend, whose presence is so sweet, whose words are so comforting, and whose company is so dear to you! How is it that you did not watch Him every moment for fear of losing sight of Him? Yet, since you have let Him go, what a mercy that you are seeking Him, even though you mournfully groan, “O that I knew where I might find Him!” Go on seeking, for it is dangerous to be without your Lord. Without Christ you are like a sheep without its shepherd, like a tree without water at its roots, like a withered leaf in the storm—not bound to the tree of life. With your whole heart seek Him, and He will be found by you. Only give yourself thoroughly up to the search, and truly you shall yet discover Him to your joy and gladness.

🌿 EVENING 🌿

THEN HE OPENED THEIR MINDS TO UNDERSTAND  
THE SCRIPTURES. — LUKE 24:45

**H**e whom we viewed last evening as opening Scripture, we here perceive opening the understanding. In the first work He has many fellow-laborers, but in the second He stands alone; many can bring the Scriptures to the mind, but the Lord alone can prepare the mind to receive the Scriptures. Our Lord Jesus differs from all other teachers. They reach the ear, but He instructs the heart; they deal with the outward letter, but He imparts an inward taste for the truth, by which we perceive its savor and spirit. The most unlearned of men become ripe scholars in the school of grace when the Lord Jesus by His Holy Spirit unfolds the mysteries of the kingdom to them and grants the divine anointing by which they are enabled to behold the invisible. Happy are we if we have had our understandings cleared and strengthened by the Master! How many men of profound learning are ignorant of eternal things! They know the killing letter of revelation, but its killing spirit they cannot discern; they have a veil upon their hearts that the eyes of carnal reason cannot penetrate. Such was our case a little time ago. We who now see were once utterly blind; truth was to us as beauty in the dark, a thing unnoticed and neglected. Had it not been for the love of Jesus we should have remained to this moment in utter ignorance, for without His gracious opening of our understanding, we could no more have attained to spiritual knowledge than an infant can climb the Pyramids or an ostrich fly up to the stars. Jesus’ College is the only one in which God’s truth can be really learned; other schools may teach us what is to be believed, but Christ’s alone can show us how to believe it. Let us sit at the feet of Jesus and by earnest prayer call upon His blessed help, that our dull wits may grow brighter, and our feeble understandings may receive heavenly things.

As a shepherd Abel *sanctified his work to the glory of God and offered a sacrifice of blood upon his altar, and the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering*. This early type, a foreshadowing of our Lord, is exceedingly clear and distinct. Like the first streak of light that tinges the east at sunrise, it does not reveal everything, but it clearly manifests the great fact that the sun is coming. As we see Abel, a shepherd and yet a priest, offering a sacrifice of sweet fragrance unto God, we discern our Lord, who brings before His Father a sacrifice to which Jehovah ever has respect. Abel was hated by his brother—hated without a cause; and even so was the Savior. The natural and carnal man hated the accepted man in whom the Spirit of grace was found, and did not rest until his blood had been shed. Abel fell and sprinkled his altar and sacrifice with his own blood, and therein sets forth the Lord Jesus slain by the enmity of man while serving as a priest before the Lord. “The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”<sup>1</sup> Let us weep over Him as we view Him slain by the hatred of mankind, staining the horns of His altar with His own blood. *Abel’s blood speaks*. “And the LORD said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground.’”<sup>2</sup> The blood of Jesus has a mighty tongue, and the import of its prevailing cry is not vengeance but mercy. It is precious beyond all preciousness to stand at the altar of our Good Shepherd—to see Him bleeding there as the slaughtered priest, and then to hear His blood speaking peace to all His flock—peace in our conscience, peace between Jew and Gentile, peace between man and his offended Maker, peace all down the ages of eternity for blood-washed men. Abel is the first shepherd in order of time, but our hearts shall ever place Jesus first in order of excellence. Great Keeper of the sheep, we, the people of Your pasture, bless You with our whole hearts when we see You slain for us.

 EVENING 

TURN MY EYES FROM LOOKING AT WORTHLESS THINGS;  
AND GIVE ME LIFE IN YOUR WAYS. — PSALM 119:37

There are various kinds of vanity. The cap and bells of the fool, the merriment of the world, the dance, and the cup of the dissolute—all these men know to be vanities; they wear upon their chest their proper name and title. Far more treacherous are those equally vain things—the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. A man may follow vanity as truly in a portfolio as in a theater. If he is spending his life in amassing wealth, he passes his days in a vain show. Unless we follow Christ and make our God the great object of life, we only differ in appearance from the most frivolous. It is clear that there is much need of the prayer of our text: “Give me life in your ways.” The psalmist confesses that he is dull, heavy, all but dead. Perhaps, dear reader, you feel the same. We are so sluggish that the best motives cannot quicken us, apart from the Lord Himself. What! Will not hell quicken me? Shall I think of sinners perishing, and yet not be awakened? Will not heaven quicken me? Can I think of the reward that awaits the righteous and yet be cold? Will not death quicken me? Can I think of dying and standing before my God, and yet be slothful in my Master’s service? Will not Christ’s love constrain me? Can I think of His dear wounds, can I sit at the foot of His cross, and not be stirred with fervency and zeal? It seems so! No mere consideration can quicken us to zeal, but God Himself must do it; hence the cry, “Give me life in *your* ways.” The psalmist breathes out his whole soul in vehement pleadings; his body and his soul unite in prayer. “Turn my eyes,” says the body. “Give me life,” cries the soul. This is a fit prayer for every day. O Lord, hear it in my case this night.

<sup>1</sup>John 10:11 <sup>2</sup>Genesis 4:10

JANUARY 21

🌿 MORNING 🌿

AND IN THIS WAY ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED. — ROMANS 11:26

When Moses sang at the Red Sea, it was his joy to know that all Israel was safe. Not a drop of spray fell from that solid wall until the last of God's Israel had safely planted his foot on the other side of the flood. That done, immediately the floods dissolved into their proper place again, but not till then. Part of that song was, "You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed."<sup>1</sup> In the last time, when the elect shall sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb, it shall be the boast of Jesus, "Of all whom you have given me, I have lost none." In heaven there shall not be a vacant throne.

*For all the chosen race  
Shall meet around the throne,  
Shall bless the conduct of His grace,  
And make His glories known.*

As many as God has chosen, as many as Christ has redeemed, as many as the Spirit has called, as many as believe in Jesus shall safely cross the dividing sea. We are not all safely landed yet:

*Part of the host have crossed the flood,  
And part are crossing now.*

The vanguard of the army has already reached the shore. We are marching through the depths; we are at this day following hard after our Leader into the heart of the sea. Let us be of good cheer: The rearguard shall soon be where the vanguard already is; the last of the chosen ones shall soon have crossed the sea, and then shall be heard the song of triumph, when all are secure. But oh, if one were absent—oh, if one of His chosen family should be cast away, it would make an everlasting discord in the song of the redeemed and cut the strings of the harps of paradise, so that music could never be extorted from them.

🌿 EVENING 🌿

AND HE WAS VERY THIRSTY, AND HE CALLED UPON THE LORD AND SAID,  
"YOU HAVE GRANTED THIS GREAT SALVATION BY THE HAND OF  
YOUR SERVANT, AND SHALL I NOW DIE OF THIRST . . . ?" — JUDGES 15:18

Samson was thirsty and ready to die. The difficulty was totally different from any that the Hero had met before. Merely to get thirst quenched is nothing like so great a matter as to be delivered from a thousand Philistines! But when the thirst was upon him, Samson felt that particular difficulty to be more weighty than the great past difficulty out of which he had so specially been delivered. It is very usual for God's people, when they have enjoyed a great deliverance, to find a little trouble too much for them. Samson slays a thousand Philistines and piles them up in heaps, and then faints for a little water! Jacob wrestles with God at Peniel and overcomes Omnipotence itself, and then goes "limping because of his hip!"<sup>2</sup> Strange that there must be a shrinking of the sinew whenever we win the day. As if the Lord must teach us our littleness, our nothingness, in order to keep us within bounds. Samson boasted right loudly when he said, "I have slain a thousand men." His boastful throat soon grew hoarse with thirst, and he betook himself to prayer. God has many ways of humbling His people. Dear child of God, if after great mercy you are laid very low, your case is not an unusual one. When David had mounted the throne of Israel, he said, "I am this day weak, though anointed king." You must expect to feel weakest when you are enjoying your greatest triumph. If God has wrought for you great deliverances in the past, your present difficulty is only like Samson's thirst, and the Lord will not let you faint, nor allow your enemy to triumph over you. The road of sorrow is the road to heaven, but there are wells of refreshing water all along the route. So, tested and tired pilgrim, cheer your heart with Samson's words, and rest assured that God will deliver you before long.

<sup>1</sup>Exodus 15:13 <sup>2</sup>Genesis 32:31



JANUARY 22

❧ MORNING ❧

SON OF MAN, HOW DOES THE WOOD OF THE VINE SURPASS ANY WOOD,  
THE VINE BRANCH THAT IS AMONG THE TREES  
OF THE FOREST? — EZEKIEL 15:2

These words are for the humbling of God's people; they are called God's vine, but what are they by nature more than others? They, by God's goodness, have become fruitful, having been planted in a good soil; the Lord has trained them upon the walls of the sanctuary, and they bring forth fruit to His glory. But what are they without their God? What are they without the continual influence of the Spirit, begetting fruitfulness in them? O believer, learn to reject pride, seeing that you have no ground for it. Whatever you are, you have nothing to make you proud. The more you have, the more you are in debt to God; and you should not be proud of that which renders you a debtor. Consider your origin; look back to what you were. Consider what you would have been but for divine grace. Look upon yourself as you are now. Does not your conscience reproach you? Do not your thousand wanderings stand before you and tell you that you are unworthy to be called His son? And if He has made you anything, are you not taught thereby that it is grace that has made you to differ? Great believer, you would have been a great sinner if God had not made you to differ. O you who are valiant for truth, you would have been as valiant for error if grace had not laid hold upon you. Therefore, do not be proud, though you have a large influence—a wide domain of grace, for once you did not have a single thing to call your own except your sin and misery. Oh, strange infatuation that you, who has borrowed everything, should think of exalting yourself—a poor, dependent pensioner upon the bounty of your Savior, one who has a life that dies without fresh streams of life from Jesus, and yet is proud! Fie on you, O silly heart!

❧ EVENING ❧

“DOES JOB FEAR GOD FOR NO REASON?” — JOB 1:9

This was the wicked question of Satan concerning that upright man of old, but there are many in the present day concerning whom it might be asked with justice, for they love God after a fashion because He prospers them; but if things went ill with them, they would give up all their boasted faith in God. If they can clearly see that since the time of their supposed conversion the world has gone prosperously with them, then they will love God in their poor, carnal way; but if they endure adversity, they rebel against the Lord. Their love is the love of the table, not of the host; a love of the cupboard, not of the master of the house. As for the true Christian, he expects to have his reward in the next life and to endure hardness in this. The promise of the old covenant is adversity. Remember Christ's words—“Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit”—what?—“*he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*”<sup>1</sup> If you bring forth fruit, you will have to endure affliction. “Alas,” you say, “that is a terrible prospect.” But this affliction works out such precious results, for the Christian who is the subject of it must learn to rejoice in tribulations because as his tribulations abound, so his consolations abound by Christ Jesus. Rest assured, if you are a child of God, you will be no stranger to the rod. Sooner or later every bar of gold must pass through the fire. Fear not, but rather rejoice that such fruitful times are in store for you, for in them you will be weaned from earth and made meet for heaven; you will be delivered from clinging to the present and made to long for those eternal things that are so soon to be revealed to you. When you feel that as regards the present you do serve God for nothing, you will then rejoice in the infinite reward of the future.

<sup>1</sup>John 15:2

Why was Christ chosen out of the people? Speak, my heart, for heart-thoughts are best. Was it not that He might be able to be our brother, in the blest tie of kindred blood? Oh, what relationship there is between Christ and the believer! The believer can say, “I have a Brother in heaven. I may be poor, but I have a Brother who is rich and is a King, and will He allow me to be in want while He is on His throne? Oh, no! He loves me; He is my Brother.” Believer, wear this blessed thought, like a necklace of diamonds, around the neck of your memory; put it, as a golden ring, on the finger of recollection, and use it as the King’s own seal, stamping the petitions of your faith with confidence of success. He is a brother born for adversity—treat Him as such.

Christ was also chosen out of the people that He might know our wants and sympathize with us. “Who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”<sup>1</sup> In all our sorrows we have His sympathy. Temptation, pain, disappointment, weakness, weariness, poverty—He knows them all, for He has felt all. Remember this, Christian, and let it comfort you. However difficult and painful your road, it is marked by the footsteps of your Savior; and even when you reach the dark valley of the shadow of death and the deep waters of the swelling Jordan, you will find His footprints there. Wherever we go, in every place, He has been our forerunner; each burden we have to carry has once been laid on the shoulders of Immanuel.

*His way was much rougher and darker than mine.  
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?*

Take courage! Royal feet have left a blood-red track upon the road and consecrated the thorny path forever.


 EVENING
 

WE WILL EXTOL YOUR LOVE MORE THAN WINE. — SONG OF SOLOMON 1:4

Jesus will not let His people forget His love. If all the love they have enjoyed should be forgotten, He will visit them with fresh love. “Do you forget my cross?” says He. “I will cause you to remember it; for at My table I will manifest Myself anew to you. Do you forget what I did for you in the council-chamber of eternity? I will remind you of it, for you shall need a counselor and shall find Me ready at your call.” Mothers do not let their children forget them. If the boy has gone to Australia and does not write home, his mother writes, “Has John forgotten his mother?” Then there comes back a sweet epistle, which proves that the gentle reminder was not in vain. So is it with Jesus. He says to us, “Remember Me,” and our response is, “We will remember Your love.” *We will* remember Your love and its matchless history. It is as ancient as the glory that You had with the Father before the world was. We remember, O Jesus, Your eternal love when You became our Surety and chose us as Your bride. We remember the love that suggested the sacrifice of Yourself, the love that, until the fullness of time, mused over that sacrifice until what was written of You (“Lo, I come”) was fulfilled. We remember Your love, O Jesus, as it was manifest to us in Your holy life, from the manger of Bethlehem to the Garden of Gethsemane. We track You from the cradle to the grave—for Your every word and deed was love—and we rejoice in Your love, which death did not exhaust—Your love that shone resplendent in Your resurrection. We remember that burning fire of love that will never let You hold Your peace until Your chosen ones be all safely housed, until Zion be glorified and Jerusalem settled on her everlasting foundations of light and love in heaven.

<sup>1</sup>Hebrews 4:15

JANUARY 24

❧ MORNING ❧

FOR HE WILL DELIVER YOU FROM THE SNARE  
OF THE FOWLER. — PSALM 91:3

God delivers His people from the snare of the fowler in two senses. *From* and *out of*. First, He delivers them *from* the snare—He does not let them enter it; and secondly, if they should be caught in it, He delivers them *out of* it. The first promise is the most precious to some; the second is the best to others.

“He will deliver you *from* the snare.” How? Trouble is often the means God uses to deliver us. God knows that our backsliding will soon end in our destruction, and He in mercy sends the rod. We say, “Lord, why is this?” not knowing that our trouble has been the means of delivering us from far greater evil. In this way many have been saved from ruin by their sorrows and their crosses. At other times God keeps His people *from* the snare of the fowler by giving them great spiritual strength, so that when they are tempted to do evil they say, “How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”<sup>1</sup> But what a blessed thing it is that if the believer shall, in an evil hour, come into the net, yet God will bring him out of it! O backslider, be cast down, but do not despair. Wanderer though you have been, hear what your Redeemer says: “Return, O backsliding children; I will have mercy upon you.” But you say you cannot return, for you are a captive. Then listen to the promise—“For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler.” You shall yet be brought out of all evil into which you have fallen, and though you shall never cease to repent of your ways, yet He who has loved you will not cast you away. He will receive you and give you joy and gladness, that the bones that He has broken may rejoice. No bird of paradise shall die in the fowler’s net.

❧ EVENING ❧

BUT MARTHA WAS DISTRACTED WITH MUCH SERVING. — LUKE 10:40

Her fault was not that she *served*: The condition of a servant is commendable in the Christian. “I serve” should be the motto of all the princes of the royal family of heaven. Nor was it her fault that she had “*much* serving.” We cannot do too much. Let us do all that we possibly can; let head and heart and hands be engaged in the Master’s service. It was no fault of hers that she was busy preparing a feast for the Master. Happy Martha, to have an opportunity of entertaining so blessed a guest; and happy, too, to have the spirit to throw her whole soul so heartily into the engagement. Her fault was that she grew “*distracted* with much serving,” so that she forgot *Him* and only remembered the service. She allowed service to override communion, and so presented one duty stained with the blood of another. We ought to be Martha and Mary in one: We should do much service and have much communion at the same time. For this we need great grace. It is easier to serve than to commune. Joshua never grew weary in fighting with the Amalekites; but Moses, on the top of the mountain in prayer, needed two helpers to sustain his hands. The more spiritual the exercise, the sooner we tire in it. The choicest fruits are the hardest to rear; the most heavenly graces are the most difficult to cultivate. Beloved, while we do not neglect external things, which are good enough in themselves, we ought also to see to it that we enjoy living, personal fellowship with Jesus. See to it that sitting at the Savior’s feet is not neglected, even though it be under the specious pretext of doing *Him* service. The first thing for our soul’s health, the first thing for His glory, and the first thing for our own usefulness is to keep ourselves in perpetual communion with the Lord Jesus and to see that the vital spirituality of our faith is maintained over and above everything else in the world.

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 39:9

JANUARY 25

 MORNING 

I WILL RECOUNT THE STEADFAST LOVE OF THE LORD,  
THE PRAISES OF THE LORD,

ACCORDING TO ALL THAT THE LORD HAS GRANTED US. — ISAIAH 63:7

And can you not do this? Are there no mercies that you have experienced? What! Though you are gloomy now, can you forget that blessed hour when Jesus met you and said, “Come unto me”? Can you not remember that rapturous moment when He snapped your fetters, dashed your chains to the earth, and said, “I came to break your bonds and set you free”? Or if the love of your conversion be forgotten, there must surely be some precious milestone along the road of life not quite grown over with moss, on which you can read a happy memorial of His mercy toward you. What! Did you never have a sickness like that which you are suffering now, and did He not restore you? Were you never poor before, and did He not supply your wants? Were you never in difficulties before, and did He not deliver you? Arise, go to the river of your experience and pull up a few bulrushes and fashion them into an ark, in which your infant-faith may float safely on the stream. Forget not what your God has done for you; turn over the book of your remembrance, and consider the days of old. Can you not remember the hill Mizar? Did the Lord never meet with you at Hermon? Have you never climbed the Delectable Mountains? Have you never been helped in time of need? I know you have. Go back, then, a little way to the choice mercies of yesterday, and though all may be dark now, light up the lamps of the past—they shall glitter through the darkness, and you shall trust in the Lord till the day break and the shadows flee away. “Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.”<sup>1</sup>

 EVENING 

DO WE THEN OVERTHROW THE LAW BY THIS FAITH?  
BY NO MEANS!

ON THE CONTRARY, WE UPHOLD THE LAW. — ROMANS 3:31

When the believer is adopted into the Lord’s family, his relationship to old Adam and the law ceases at once; but then he is under a new rule and a new covenant. Believer, you are God’s child; it is your first duty to obey your heavenly Father. A servile spirit you have nothing to do with: You are not a slave but a child. And now, inasmuch as you are a beloved child, you are bound to obey your Father’s faintest wish, the least intimation of His will. Does He bid you fulfill a sacred ordinance? It is at your peril that you neglect it, for you will be disobeying your Father. Does He command you to seek the image of Jesus? Is it not your joy to do so? Does Jesus tell you, “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect”?<sup>2</sup> Then not because the law commands, but because your Savior enjoins, you will labor to be perfect in holiness. Does He bid his saints to love one another? Do it, not because the law says, “Love your neighbor,” but because Jesus says, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”<sup>3</sup> And this is the commandment that He has given unto you, “that you love one another.” Are you told to distribute to the poor? Do it, not because charity is a burden that you dare not shirk, but because Jesus teaches, “Give to him that asks of you.” Does the Word say, “Love God with all your heart”? Look at the commandment and reply, “Ah, commandment, Christ has fulfilled you already. I have no need, therefore, to fulfill you for my salvation, but I rejoice to yield obedience to you because God is my Father now, and He has a claim upon me, which I would not dispute.” May the Holy Ghost make your heart obedient to the constraining power of Christ’s love, that your prayer may be, “I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart!”<sup>4</sup> Grace is the mother and nurse of holiness, and not the apologist of sin.

<sup>1</sup>Psalm 25:6 <sup>2</sup>Matthew 5:48 <sup>3</sup>John 14:15 <sup>4</sup>Psalm 119:32

God's people are doubly His children. They are His offspring by creation, and they are His sons by adoption in Christ. Hence they are privileged to call Him, "Our Father in heaven." Father! Oh, what a precious word is that. Here is *authority*: "If I be a Father, where is My honor?" If you are sons, where is your obedience? Here is *affection* mingled with authority; an authority that does not provoke rebellion; an obedience demanded that is most cheerfully rendered—which would not be withheld even if it might. The obedience that God's children yield to Him must be *loving* obedience. Do not go about the service of God as slaves to their taskmaster's toil, but run in the way of His commands because it is your *Father's* way. Yield your bodies as instruments of righteousness, because righteousness is your Father's will, and *His* will should be the will of His child. *Father!* Here is a kingly attribute so sweetly veiled in love that the King's crown is forgotten in the King's face, and His scepter becomes, not a rod of iron, but a silver scepter of mercy—the scepter indeed seems to be forgotten in the tender hand of Him who wields it. *Father!* Here is honor and love. How great is a Father's love to his children! That which friendship cannot do, and mere benevolence will not attempt, a father's heart and hand must do for his sons. They are his offspring, and he must bless them; they are his children, and he must show himself strong in their defense. If an earthly father watches over his children with unceasing love and care, how much more does our heavenly Father? *Abba, Father!* He who can say this has uttered better music than cherubim or seraphim can reach. There is heaven in the depth of that word—Father! There is all I can ask, all my necessities can demand, all my wishes can desire. I have all in all to all eternity when I can say, "Father."

 EVENING 

AND ALL WHO HEARD IT WONDERED AT WHAT  
THE SHEPHERDS TOLD THEM. — LUKE 2:18

We must not cease to wonder at the great marvels of our God. It would be very difficult to draw a line between holy wonder and *real worship*; for when the soul is overwhelmed with the majesty of God's glory, though it may not express itself in song or even utter its voice with bowed head in humble prayer, yet it silently adores. Our incarnate God is to be worshiped as "the Wonderful." That God should consider His fallen creature, man, and instead of sweeping him away with the broom of destruction should Himself undertake to be man's Redeemer and to pay his ransom price is indeed marvelous! But to each believer redemption is most marvelous as he views it in relation to himself. It is a miracle of grace indeed that Jesus should forsake the thrones and royalties above to suffer ignominiously below *for you*. Let your soul lose itself in wonder, for wonder is in this way a very practical emotion. Holy wonder will lead you to *grateful worship* and *heartfelt thanksgiving*. It will cause within you *godly watchfulness*; you will be afraid to sin against such a love as this. Feeling the presence of the mighty God in the gift of His dear Son, you will put your shoes from off your feet, because the place whereon you stand is holy ground. You will be moved at the same time to *glorious hope*. If Jesus has done such marvelous things on your behalf, you will feel that heaven itself is not too great for your expectation. Who can be astonished at anything when he has once been astonished at the manger and the cross? What is there wonderful left after one has seen the Savior? Dear reader, it may be that from the quietness and solitariness of your life you are scarcely able to imitate the shepherds of Bethlehem, who told what they had seen and heard, but you can at least fill up the circle of the worshipers before the throne by wondering at what God has done.

JANUARY 27

🌿 MORNING 🌿

AND FROM HIS FULLNESS WE HAVE ALL RECEIVED. — JOHN 1:16

These words tell us that there is a fullness in Christ. There is a fullness of essential Deity, for “in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.”<sup>1</sup> There is a fullness of perfect manhood, for in Him, bodily, that Godhead was revealed. There is a fullness of atoning efficacy in His blood, for “the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”<sup>2</sup> There is a fullness of justifying righteousness in His life, for “there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”<sup>3</sup> There is a fullness of divine prevalence in His plea, for “He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”<sup>4</sup> There is a fullness of victory in His death, for through death He destroyed him that had the power of death—that is, the devil. There is a fullness of efficacy in His resurrection from the dead, for by it “he has caused us to be born again to a living hope.”<sup>5</sup> There is a fullness of triumph in His ascension, for “when he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.”<sup>6</sup> There is a fullness of blessings of every sort and shape; a fullness of grace to pardon, of grace to regenerate, of grace to sanctify, of grace to preserve, and of grace to perfect. There is a fullness at all times; a fullness of comfort in affliction, a fullness of guidance in prosperity. A fullness of every divine attribute—of wisdom, of power, of love; a fullness that it is impossible to survey, much less to explore. “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.”<sup>7</sup> Oh, what a fullness must this be of which *all* receive! Fullness, indeed, must there be when the stream is always flowing, and yet the well springs up as free, as rich, as full as ever. Come, believer, and get all your need supplied; ask largely, and you will receive largely, for this “fullness” is inexhaustible and is treasured up where all the needy may reach it, even in Jesus, Immanuel—God with us.

🌿 EVENING 🌿

BUT MARY TREASURED UP ALL THESE THINGS,  
PONDERING THEM IN HER HEART. — LUKE 2:19

There was an exercise, on the part of this blessed woman, of three powers of her being: her *memory*—she kept all these things; her *affections*—she kept them in her heart; her *intellect*—she pondered them; so memory, affection, and understanding were all exercised about the things that she had heard. Beloved, remember what you have heard of your Lord Jesus and what He has done for you; make your heart the golden pot of manna to preserve the memorial of the heavenly bread whereon you have fed in days gone by. Let your memory treasure up everything about Christ that you have either felt or known or believed, and then let your fond affections hold *Him* fast forevermore. Love the person of your Lord! Bring forth the alabaster box of your heart, even though it be broken, and let all the precious ointment of your affection come streaming onto His pierced feet. Let your intellect be exercised concerning the Lord Jesus. Meditate upon what you read. Stop not at the surface; dive into the depths. Be not as the swallow, which touches the brook with her wing, but as the fish, which penetrates the lowest wave. Abide with your Lord: Let Him not be to you as a way-faring man who tarries for a night, but constrain Him, saying, “Stay with us . . . the day is now far spent.”<sup>8</sup> Hold Him, and do not let Him go. The word *ponder* means to weigh. Make ready the balances of judgment. Oh, but where are the scales that can weigh the Lord Christ? “He takes up the coastlands like fine dust”—who shall take *Him* up? He weighs “the mountains in scales”—in what scales shall we weigh *Him*?<sup>9</sup> If your understanding cannot comprehend, let your affections apprehend; and if your spirit cannot compass the Lord Jesus in the grasp of understanding, let it embrace Him in the arms of affection.

<sup>1</sup>Colossians 2:9 <sup>2</sup>1 John 1:7 <sup>3</sup>Romans 8:1 <sup>4</sup>Hebrews 7:25 <sup>5</sup>1 Peter 1:3 <sup>6</sup>Ephesians 4:8 <sup>7</sup>Colossians 1:19.

<sup>8</sup>Luke 24:29 <sup>9</sup>Isaiah 40:15, 12

Do you not feel in your own soul that maturity is not in you? Does not every day teach you that? Every tear that trickles from your eye weeps “imperfection”; every harsh word that proceeds from your lip mutters “imperfection.” You have too frequently had a view of your own heart to dream for a moment of any perfection *in yourself*. But amidst this sad consciousness of imperfection, here is comfort for you—you are perfect or “mature *in Christ*.” In God’s sight you are complete in Him; *even now* you are “blessed in the Beloved.”<sup>1</sup> But there is a second perfection, yet to be realized, that is just as sure. Is it not delightful to look forward to the time when every stain of sin shall be removed from the believer, and he shall be presented faultless before the throne, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing? The Church of Christ then will be so pure that not even the eye of Omniscience will see a spot or blemish in her; so holy and so glorious that Hart did not go beyond the truth when he said—

*With my Savior’s garments on,  
Holy as the Holy One.*

Then shall we know and taste and feel the happiness of this vast but short sentence, complete in Christ. Not till then shall we fully comprehend the heights and depths of the salvation of Jesus. Does not your heart leap for joy at the thought of it? Filthy as you are, you shall be clean. Oh, it is a marvelous salvation this! Christ takes a worm and transforms it into an angel; Christ takes a dirty and deformed thing and makes it clean and matchless in His glory, peerless in His beauty, and fit to be the companion of seraphs. O my soul, stand and admire this blessed truth of maturity in Christ.

## EVENING

AND THE SHEPHERDS RETURNED, GLORIFYING AND  
PRAISING GOD FOR ALL THEY HAD HEARD AND SEEN,  
AS IT HAD BEEN TOLD THEM. — LUKE 2:20

What was the subject of their praise? They *praised God for what they had heard*—for the good tidings of great joy that a Savior was born unto them. Let us copy them; let us also raise a song of thanksgiving that we have heard of Jesus and His salvation. They also *praised God for what they had seen*. There is the sweetest music—what we have experienced, what we have felt within, what we have made our own. It is not enough to *hear* about Jesus: Mere hearing may tune the harp, but the fingers of living faith must create the music. If you have seen Jesus with the God-giving sight of faith, suffer no cobwebs to linger among the harp-strings, but loud with the praise of sovereign grace, awake your psaltery and harp. One point for which they praised God was *the agreement between what they had heard and what they had seen*. Observe the last sentence—“as it had been told them.” Have you not found the Gospel to be in yourselves just what the Bible said it would be? Jesus said He would give you rest—have you not enjoyed the sweetest peace in Him? He said you would have joy and comfort and life through believing in Him—have you not received all these? Are not His ways ways of pleasantness, and His paths paths of peace? Surely you can say with the queen of Sheba, “The half was not told me.”<sup>2</sup> I have found Christ more sweet than His servants ever said He was. I looked upon His likeness as they painted it, but it was a mere daub compared with Himself; for the King in His beauty outshines all imaginable loveliness. Surely what we have “*seen*” keeps pace with, no, far exceeds what we have “*heard*.” Let us, then, glorify and praise God for a Savior so precious and so satisfying.

<sup>1</sup>Ephesians 1:6 <sup>2</sup>1 Kings 10:7

In our Christian pilgrimage it is well, for the most part, to be looking forward. Forward lies the crown, and onward is the goal. Whether it be for hope, for joy, for consolation, or for the inspiring of our love, the future must, after all, be the grand object of the eye of faith. Looking into the future we see sin cast out, the body of sin and death destroyed, the soul made perfect and fit to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Looking further yet, the believer's enlightened eye can see death's river passed, the gloomy stream forded, and the hills of light attained on which stands the celestial city. He sees himself enter within the pearly gates, hailed as more than conqueror, crowned by the hand of Christ, embraced in the arms of Jesus, glorified with Him, and made to sit together with Him on His throne, even as He has overcome and has sat down with the Father on His throne. The thought of this future may well relieve the darkness of the past and the gloom of the present. The joys of heaven will surely compensate for the sorrows of earth. Hush, hush, my doubts! Death is but a narrow stream, and you shall soon have forded it. Time, how short—eternity, how long! Death, how brief—immortality, how endless! The road is so, so short! I shall soon be there.

*When the world my heart is rending  
 With its heaviest storm of care,  
 My glad thoughts to heaven ascending,  
 Find a refuge from despair.  
 Faith's bright vision shall sustain me  
 Till life's pilgrimage is past;  
 Fears may vex and troubles pain me,  
 I shall reach my home at last.*


 EVENING
 

THE DOVE CAME BACK TO HIM IN THE EVENING. — GENESIS 8:11

Blessed be the Lord for another day of mercy, even though I am now weary with its toils. Unto the preserver of men lift I my song of gratitude. The dove found no rest out of the ark and therefore returned to it; and my soul has learned yet more fully than ever, this day, that there is no satisfaction to be found in earthly things—God alone can give rest to my spirit. As to my business, my possessions, my family, my attainments, these are all well enough in their way, but they cannot fulfill the desires of my immortal nature. “Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.”<sup>1</sup> It was at the still hour, when the gates of the day were closing, that with weary wing the dove came back to the master. O Lord, enable me this evening thus to return to Jesus. She could not endure to spend a night hovering over the restless waste, not can I bear to be even for another hour away from Jesus, the rest of my heart, the home of my spirit. She did not merely alight upon the roof of the ark—she “came back to him.” Even so would my longing spirit look into the secret of the Lord, pierce to the interior of truth, enter into that which is within the veil, and reach to my Beloved in very deed. To Jesus must I come: Short of the nearest and dearest communion with Him my panting spirit cannot stay. Blessed Lord Jesus, be with me, reveal Yourself, and abide with me all night, so that when I awake I may be still with You. I note that the dove brought in her mouth an olive branch plucked off, the memorial of the past day and a prophecy of the future. Have I no pleasing record to bring home? No pledge and earnest of loving-kindness yet to come? Yes, my Lord, I present You my grateful acknowledgments for tender mercies that have been new every morning and fresh every evening; and now, I pray, put forth Your hand and take Your dove into Your bosom.

<sup>1</sup>Psalm 116:7



JANUARY 30

🌿 MORNING 🌿

AND WHEN YOU HEAR THE SOUND OF MARCHING  
IN THE TOPS OF THE BALSAM TREES,  
THEN ROUSE YOURSELF. — 2 SAMUEL 5:24

The members of Christ's Church should be very prayerful, always seeking the unction of the Holy One to rest upon their hearts, that the kingdom of Christ may come, and that His "will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."<sup>1</sup> But there are times when God seems especially to favor Zion; such seasons ought to be to them like "the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees." We ought then to be doubly prayerful, doubly earnest, wrestling more at the throne than we have been used to do. Action should then be prompt and vigorous. The tide is flowing—now let us pull manfully for the shore. O for Pentecostal outpourings and Pentecostal labors. Christian, in yourself there are times "when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees." You have a peculiar power in prayer; the Spirit of God gives you joy and gladness; the Scripture is open to you; the promises are applied; you walk in the light of God's countenance; you have peculiar freedom and liberty in devotion, and more closeness of communion with Christ than before. Now, at such joyous periods when you hear the "sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees," is the time to rouse yourself; now is the time to get rid of any evil habit, while God the Spirit helps your infirmities. Spread your sail; but remember what you sometimes sing—

*I can only spread the sail;  
But God must breathe the auspicious gale.*

Only be sure you have the sail up. Do not miss the gale for want of preparation for it. Seek help from God, that you may be more earnest in duty when made more strong in faith, that you may be more constant in prayer when you have more liberty at the throne, that you may be more holy in your conversation while you live more closely with Christ.

🌿 EVENING 🌿

IN HIM WE HAVE OBTAINED AN INHERITANCE. — EPHESIANS 1:11

When Jesus gave Himself for us, He gave us all the rights and privileges that went with Himself; so now, although as eternal God He has essential rights to which no creature may venture to pretend, yet as Jesus, the Mediator, the federal Head of the covenant of grace, He has no heritage apart from us. All the glorious consequences of His obedience unto death are the joint riches of all who are in Him, and on whose behalf He accomplished the divine will. See, He enters into glory, but not for Himself alone, for it is written, "Jesus has gone as a forerunner *on our* behalf."<sup>2</sup> Does He stand in the presence of God? Christ appears "in the presence of God *on our* behalf."<sup>3</sup> Consider this, believer: You have no right to heaven in yourself; your right lies in Christ. If you are pardoned, it is through *His* blood; if you are justified, it is through *His* righteousness; if you are sanctified, it is because *He* is made of God unto you sanctification; if you shall be kept from falling, it will be because you are preserved in Christ Jesus; and if you are perfected at the last, it will be because you are complete in *Him*. Thus Jesus is magnified—for all is in Him and by Him; thus the inheritance is made certain to us—for it is obtained in Him; thus each blessing is the sweeter, and even heaven itself the brighter, because it is Jesus our Beloved in whom we have obtained all. Where is the man who shall estimate our divine portion? Weigh the riches of Christ in scales and His treasure in balances, and then think to count the treasures that belong to the saints. Reach the bottom of Christ's sea of joy, and then hope to understand the bliss that God has prepared for them that love Him. Overleap the boundaries of Christ's possessions, and then dream of a limit to the fair inheritance of the elect. "All are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Matthew 6:10 <sup>2</sup>Hebrews 6:20 <sup>3</sup>Hebrews 9:24 <sup>4</sup>1 Corinthians 3:22-23

It will always give a Christian the greatest calm, quiet, ease, and peace to think of the perfect righteousness of Christ. How often are the saints of God downcast and sad! I do not think they ought to be. I do not think they would be if they could always see their perfection in Christ. There are some who are always talking about corruption and the depravity of the heart and the innate evil of the soul. This is quite true, but why not go a little further and remember that we are perfect in Christ Jesus. It is no wonder that those who are dwelling upon their own corruption should wear such downcast looks; but surely if we call to mind “Christ Jesus, whom God made . . . our righteousness,”<sup>1</sup> we shall be of good cheer. What though distresses afflict me, though Satan assault me, though there may be many things to be experienced before I get to heaven, those are done for me in the covenant of divine grace; there is nothing wanting in my Lord—Christ has done it all. On the cross He said, “It is finished!” and if it be finished, then am I complete in Him and can rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, “not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.”<sup>2</sup> You will not find on this side of heaven a holier people than those who receive into their hearts the doctrine of Christ’s righteousness. When the believer says, “I live on Christ alone; I rest on Him solely for salvation; and I believe that, however unworthy, I am still saved in Jesus,” then there rises up as a motive of gratitude this thought: “Shall I not live to Christ? Shall I not love Him and serve Him, seeing that I am saved by His merits?” “The love of Christ controls us,”<sup>3</sup> “that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”<sup>4</sup> If saved by imputed righteousness, we shall greatly value imparted righteousness.


 EVENING
 

THEN AHIMAAZ RAN BY THE WAY OF THE PLAIN,  
AND OUTRAN THE CUSHITE. — 2 SAMUEL 18:23

Running is not everything. There is much in the way that we select: A swift foot over hill and down dale will not keep pace with a slower traveler upon level ground. How is it with my spiritual journey? Am I laboring up the hill of my own works and down into the ravines of my own humiliations and resolutions, or do I run by the plain way of “Believe and live”? How blessed is it to wait upon the Lord by faith! The soul runs without weariness and walks without fainting in the way of believing. Christ Jesus is the way of life, and He is a plain way, a pleasant way, a way suitable for the tottering feet and feeble knees of trembling sinners. Am I found in this way, or am I hunting after another track such as priestcraft or metaphysics may promise me? I read of the way of holiness, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. Have I been delivered from proud reason and been brought as a little child to rest in Jesus’ love and blood? If so, by God’s grace I shall outrun the strongest runner who chooses any other path. This truth I may remember to my profit in my daily cares and needs. It will be my wisest course to go at once to my God, and not to wander in a roundabout manner to this friend and that. He knows my wants and can relieve them. To whom should I repair but to Himself by the direct appeal of prayer and the plain argument of the promise? “Straightforward makes the best runner.” I will not parley with the servants but hasten to their master.

In reading this passage, it strikes me that if men vie with each other in common matters, and one outruns the other, I ought to be in solemn earnestness so to run that I may obtain. Lord, help me to gird up the loins of my mind, and may I press forward toward the mark for the prize of my high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

<sup>1</sup>1 Corinthians 1:30 <sup>2</sup>Philippians 3:9 <sup>3</sup>2 Corinthians 5:14 <sup>4</sup>2 Corinthians 5:15