

THE
BELIEVER'S
DAILY
REMEMBRANCER

BY
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January 1
MORNING

"Look unto me" Isa 45:22

EVERYMAN LOOKS TO THE NEW YEAR WITH HOPE. Another New Year dawns on Planet Earth, and we are still exposed to sorrow, Satan, and disappointment; sin still lives in us, and a thousand things are ready to distress us; but our God says, "*Look unto me.*" *Look unto me* as the source of happiness, the giver of grace, and your Friend. *Look unto me* in every trial, for all you want, and in every place. *Look unto me today*, I have blessings to bestow. I am waiting to be gracious. I am your Father in Jesus. Believe that I am deeply interested in your present and eternal welfare; that all I have promised I will perform; that I am with you to bless you. I cannot be unconcerned about anything that affects you, and I pledge to make all things work together for your good. You have looked to self, to others, in times past; but you have only met with trouble and disappointment; now *look unto me alone*, to me for all. Lift up the eye and heart to me today, and everyday through the year; and walk before me in peace and holiness. Prove me now herewith if I will not make you holy, useful, and happy; try me, and find my word of promise true, true to the very letter. *Only look unto me.*

Look to Him, till His wondrous love
Thy every thought control;
Its vast, constraining power prove,
O'er body, spirit, soul.

January 1
EVENING

"To this man will I look" Isa 66:2

GOD IS EVER LOOKING, SEEKING FAITHFUL MEN FOR HIS KINGDOM. The Lord will look to the poor in spirit, the humble, the man who trembles at His word, who lies low in self-abasement at His throne, who mourns over his follies and his faults. He will look to the one who fears to offend a God so good, so holy, so great, the man who looks to Jesus for life, peace, and everlasting salvation. To such the Lord will look. He will observe them, welcome them, and manifest His approval of them. He will look and love, look and listen to their prayers, look and accept their persons and services, look and honour them. He will visit them as His friends, dwell with them as His children, own them as His jewels, and use them as instruments for His glory. He will look upon them and strengthen them as He did Gideon; look, and restore them as He did Peter; look, and so lift up the light of His countenance upon them, and give them peace. My soul, hast thou been looking to the Lord today? Hast thou looked unto Him as thy Father? If so, doubtless He has been looking upon thee with a Father's love. He is now looking upon thee with approval. Sweet thought! The look of God our Father is more than wealth, more than honour. Retire to rest this night with the thought, *Jehovah is looking upon me with love.*

He proves His love, displays His grace,
Through the redemption of His Son;
He turns my feet from sinful ways,
And pardons wrongs my hands have done.

January 2
MORNING

"Be ye thankful" Col 3:15

"GIVING THANKS ALWAYS FOR ALL THINGS UNTO GOD," exhorts the apostle Paul. What cause to be thankful have we who are surrounded by mercies, both temporal and spiritual! Look back and rejoice that God hath chosen us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world; that He sent His only begotten Son into the world, to be a propitiation for our sins; that He sent His Holy Spirit into our hearts, to convince us of sin, lead us to Jesus, and make us ready for heaven. Thank God that we have His word in our hands, His grace in our hearts, His mercies in our homes, and His heaven reserved for us. *O for a thankful heart!* But let us take our poor, hard, ungrateful hearts to Jesus; He can soften them and fill them with gratitude. Let us confess our ingratitude before Him, and mourn over our unthankfulness at His feet. He is ever ready to forgive. He will hear our cry, and pity our complaints, and sanctify us wholly. O Jesus Lord, grant us a deep sense of our utter unworthiness, and of Thine unmerited goodness, that our souls may daily praise Thee with joyful lips! May we live as filial loving children, before our Father and our God; and daily *be thankful*.

Through all eternity, to Thee
A joyful song of thanks I'll raise;
But O eternity's too short
To fully utter all Thy praise!

January 2
EVENING

"Now will I praise the Lord" Gen 29:35

"WHOSO OFFERETH PRAISE GLORIFIETH ME." We can never thank and praise God enough. Ingratitude is a great sin, and very common. Mercies come unnoticed; they are enjoyed without gratitude, and depart without praise. How many favours from the Lord have we enjoyed which we have never acknowledged, nor remembered the Lord's words: *"He that offereth praise glorifieth me."* Let us soberly reflect upon our mercies, repent of our ingratitude, and say with Leah, *"Now will I praise the Lord."* Who can have more reason? When shall we have a more favourable opportunity to exalt His name? Let us begin at once, and praise Him for temporal favours, and more especially, for spiritual blessings. Let us bless Him for what He has done, and for what He has promised; for what was given us in Adam, but more for what was given us in Christ, that He has generously provided all we need so freely, without money and without price. All He sends us is in love, all He does for us is in mercy, whether it be pleasant or painful. Therefore let us attend to the Apostle's exhortation, *"in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us."* *Praise is comely for the upright.*

Bless O my soul the living God;
Return my thoughts, that rove abroad;
Why should the wonders He hath wrought,
Be lost in silence, and forgot?

January 3
MORNING

"A Mediator" Gal 3:20

MAN HAS OFFENDED GOD BY HIS SIN. God hates sin. He is the eternal enemy of sin. He cannot be reconciled to it: it is the abominable thing which He hates. He cannot look upon it but with abhorrence. How then can God receive, bless, or commune with sinful creatures such as us? Only through our Mediator Jesus who fills this office; He stands between God and us; He honours all the Father's perfections, and renders us and our services acceptable through His glorious righteousness and precious blood. God can only love us, receive us, commune with us, or bless us, in Jesus. He represents us to God and makes us accepted in the beloved. He represents God to us, and we prove Him gracious. When going to the throne of grace, never forget that Jesus is the Mediator, the middle-man: through Him present your person, your petitions, and your praises to God. You have nothing to fear for Jesus wears your nature; He has a heart that beats in unison with yours; He calls you brother; He uses all His influence with the Father on your behalf; all He did and suffered is employed for you: at this moment He pleads your cause.

Oft as guilt, my soul, torments thee,
Turn thine eyes to Jesus' blood;
This will comfort, cheer, and cleanse thee,
Seal thy peace, and do thee good:
Peace from God flowed full and free -
In your place the Saviour stood.

January 3
EVENING

"One Mediator between God and men" 1 Tim 2:5

NO MAN CAN APPEAR FOR US BEFORE GOD BUT JESUS. He is God's chosen and anointed Mediator. There is but one Mediator; man has invented more but God has appointed, revealed, and accepted but one. *One is sufficient.* Jesus alone is the Mediator of reconciliation. His atonement is infinite in its value and efficacy; it honoured the law, satisfied justice, and glorified all the perfections of God. It perfected for ever them that are sanctified. It is a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God. On the ground of the one sacrifice of Jesus, sinners are received, pardoned, and accepted of God. Let nothing else engage your attention when seeking acceptance with God; go through Jesus, and Jesus only: however vile, however sinful you may be, there is reconciliation to God through the death of His Son. There is but one Mediator of intercession. *One is sufficient.* Jesus ever lives to make intercession. The Father always hears Him. We need no one to dispose his mind to pity, listen to, or plead for us; His nature is love: it is His office and work to save, and He delights in this. Therefore *He is able to save them to the uttermost, who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

He ever lives to intercede
Before His Father's face:
Give Him, my soul, thy cause to plead,
Nor doubt the Father's grace.

January 4
MORNING

"Blessed be ye poor" Lk 6:20

SPIRITUAL POVERTY IS THE KEY TO HEAVEN'S BLESSING. The Lord's people are all poor; they see and feel that sin has stripped them of every excellence and has left them wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. They can do nothing of themselves; but free grace has made ample provision for them, and the Gospel informs them that Jesus has everything they want, and that all He has is for them. When they look at, or into themselves, they are discouraged; but when they look to Jesus, they rejoice. He has riches of grace, and riches of glory; and He says, *"Every one that asketh, receiveth."* He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. Here then is the present blessedness of the Lord's poor; Jesus has all they need. He is their Friend and they that seek Him shall not want any good thing. *Am I poor?* If so, Jesus bids me come to Him, and buy gold, clothing, wine, and milk; all that is necessary to comfort and support in time, and render me happy throughout eternity. Poor in self, rich in Jesus! All who are in Jesus may be poor at present; but they will be rich by-and-by; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. *"All things are yours, ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."* *All things are for your sakes.*

What good shall not our God supply
From His abundant stores?
What streams of mercy from on high
God's arm so freely pours!

January 4
EVENING

"All things are yours" 1 Cor 3:21

IN CHRIST OUR LORD WE HAVE AN EVERLASTING INHERITANCE IN HEAVEN. My beloved brethren, God hath chosen us, the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him. What a paradox is this, poor yet rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things! All things are ours, for our use and benefit, to enjoy even when we do not actually possess; made over to us in covenant, secured to us in promises, to be realized and enjoyed by faith, to claim and possess by-and-by. We shall have all that is really needful in time, and the whole when Jesus shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation. We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ; and whether we reflect on things temporal or spiritual, things present or future, things painful or pleasant, things on earth or in heaven, we may justly say, *"All things are ours."* God is ours, our portion; Jesus is ours, our Bridegroom; the Holy Spirit is ours, our Comforter; earth is ours, our school-room; heaven is ours, our eternal home. But do we believe this? Can we lie down tonight on our pillows and say with confidence, *in Christ all things are mine?* If so, it may be well said to us, *"I know your poverty, but you are rich."*

God is our joy and portion still,
When earthly good retires;
He will our hearts sustain and fill,
When earth itself expires.

January 5
MORNING

"Fear of death" Heb 2:15

IT IS APPOINTED UNTO MEN ONCE TO DIE. But all do not die alike; some are cut off suddenly, others by a lingering illness; some die reluctantly, others are happy to go. Some fear death all their lives, others do not. But death must be viewed through Jesus, or fear it we shall, if we think seriously. Death is separation from the body; the second death is separation from God. The former we must pass through, not the latter. What shall separate us from the love of God? *Death?* No, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Death only opens the prison door and sets the captive free. It is an answer to our many prayers for deliverance, for freedom from sin, and for perfect happiness. If we are united to Jesus by a living faith, death cannot disunite us; but will only introduce us into His presence, that we may forever enjoy His love. If we walk with God, if we believe the Saviour's word, if we look beyond the valley, we shall not fear death. Jesus will not leave us then. He will be present according to His word and we shall prove His faithfulness, veracity, and love. *"Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* In Him we have victory over death.

Why should I shrink at pain and woe,
Or feel at death dismay?
I've Canaan's goodly land in view,
And realms of endless day.

January 5
EVENING

"To die is gain" Phi 1:21

"MEN FEAR DEATH AS CHILDREN FEAR THE DARK." This is generally true, but it should not apply to Christians. Death was once a curse, but to the believer in Christ, it is now a blessing. It was a loss, it is now a gain. Dying we gain our freedom from every foe, trial, and trouble, and obtain possession of blessings without number. We are freed from sin and made perfect in holiness. We are delivered from sickness and pain to enjoy perfect health and happiness. We shall gain knowledge, for then we shall know even as we are known. We shall gain holiness, for then we shall be like Him. We shall gain honour, for then white robes shall be given us and we shall be victorious over Satan, the world, and sin. We shall sit down with Jesus on His throne. Death to every believer is gain. It is *immediate* gain. It is *great* gain. It is *everlasting* gain. It may be painful to pass through, but its results will be *glorious*. And shall we fear death? Why should we? Jesus says, *"He that keepeth my sayings shall never taste of death."* He may depart to be with his Lord, but he will never die. *Look through Jesus at death, and look through death to Jesus.*

Soon will the Lord, my life, appear,
Soon shall I end my trials here;
Leave sin and sorrow, death and pain,
To live is Christ, to die is gain.

January 6
MORNING

"Be careful for nothing" Phi 4:6

WE HAVE A WONDERFUL SAVIOUR WHO CARES FOR EACH OF US. He knows *our needs*, and has promised to supply them; *our foes*, and will deliver us from them; *our fears*, and will make us ashamed of them. All creatures and things are in His hand, at His disposal; all circumstances are absolutely under His control. He directs the angel, feeds the sparrow, curbs the devil, and calms the tempest. He is thy Father. His love to thee is infinite. Thou art His delight, His dear son, His precious child. Will He neglect thee? *Impossible!* Cast then thy cares upon Him. Tell all thy desires, fears, and troubles to Him; let Him know everything, keep nothing back; and then in the confidence of faith expect Him to fulfil His word, and act a parent's part. Bless Him for all He has given, for all He has promised; plead with Him for all you may need; but never for one moment, or under any circumstances, distrust Him. He cannot love thee more. He is a present help. He will make all His goodness pass before thee. He will rejoice over thee to do thee good, with His whole heart, and with His whole being.

Then let me banish anxious care,
Confiding in my Father's love;
To Him make known my wants in prayer,
Content His answer to approve.

January 6
EVENING

"Martha, Martha, thou art careful" Lk 10:41

"FAINT NOT WHEN THOU ART REBUKED OF HIM." Our Lord rebukes us for our good, as He did to Martha. Martha was too anxious about temporal things and therefore Jesus lovingly reproved her. She was entangled and hurried; His aim was to set her free. Her care was intense and as it frayed her temper, it hindered her enjoying His company, or receiving with joy His word. This is a common fault among our Lord's disciples: how many Marthas have we in the church, how very few Marys. Let us take our seat at the feet of Jesus by Mary's side, and let us listen to His word; let us realize His care for us, and let us cast all our care on Him. All our concerns are in His hands, all circumstances are under His control, all events are managed by His wisdom. He exhorts us to seek first His kingdom, to aim always at His glory, to be satisfied with His provisions, and to live in peace. Whatever happens will be overruled for your good. You will soon depart the present scene, and leave behind you all the objects about which you have been *careful*. Be *prayerful*, but not *careful*. Receive thy Lord's reproof this evening as spoken to thee, and bury thy *cares* where He has buried thy sins.

How often we like Martha vexed,
Encumbered, hurried, and perplexed!
While trifles so engross our thought,
The one thing needful is forgot.

January 7
MORNING

"Let him deny himself" Mt 16:24

FOLLOWING THE LORD IS NOT EASY. He requires that every disciple should practise self-denial. We must deny and crucify the workings of self-righteousness, and venture alone upon His work and worth for salvation; and we must mortify the pride of reason and intellect, and believe as His word reveals, and walk as His word directs. Our nearest relatives, dearest friends, and best comforts must be resigned if they are opposed to His glory and the furtherance of His cause. A Christian must lay everything at the feet of Jesus and say, *"Lord, do with it as Thou wilt."* We are not our own nor is anything we have our own; it is the Lord's. Our appetites, pleasures, and pursuits, must all be brought into subjection to the obedience of Christ. His glory is to be sought at all times, in all things, under all circumstances; and when this is done, we are safe and happy. The servant must obey his Master and the child submit in all things to his wise, judicious and loving Father. But for whom am I called to deny myself? For Jesus who lived and died to save me, who is now in heaven interceding for me; and who is the great pattern of self-denial, having humbled Himself even unto death.

Beloved, self must be denied,
The godly mind renewed;
Passions suppressed, and patience tried,
And vain desires subdued.

January 7
EVENING

"I will ... honour him" Ps 91:15

"THEM THAT HONOUR ME I WILL HONOUR." Thus saith the Lord. Self-exaltation dishonours the Lord and brings discredit and disgrace; but self-denial is the road to advancement and honour. If the Christian deny himself and keep his eye and his heart steadily fixed on the Lord's glory, the Lord will honour him. He shall be brought through all difficulties with credit, be cleared of all slanders and scandals that may be thrown at him, and enjoy his Father's smile in the darkest day. The Lord will visit him, hold sweet communion with him and raise his mind above all the circumstances that surround him. In sickness He will soothe and comfort him, in health guide and direct him; in poverty He will bless him with contentment and in plenty with a liberal spirit; through life He will sustain and supply him; in death welcome and receive him. Beloved, deny self, mortify the flesh, rise above the world; live by faith, walk with God, honour the Lord, and *He will honour you*. Leave your concerns in His hands while you seek to promote His kingdom and glory; you will find that He will bless your provision and satisfy you with the bread of heaven.

He that denies himself for me,
My kingdom to extend;
Shall taste my love, my glory see,
And I will be his Friend.

January 8
MORNING

"I will help thee" Isa 41:13

OUR LORD DOES NOT LEAVE HIS PEOPLE COMFORTLESS. He is a wonderful Saviour. Wherever He leads us, He will support us; nor shall the difficulties of the way, or the weakness we feel, be too much for us. His hand is stretched out to us, and it is for faith to lay hold of it and proceed, confident of assistance. The arm of His power is the protection of His people in danger, and the strength of His people in weakness. He is a very present help in trouble, a God at hand. Are you weak or in difficulty? Plead His word; it is plain, positive, and sure. He cannot lie. He will not deceive. His strength is made perfect and glorified in your weakness. Fear not, underneath are the everlasting arms. He will uphold you with strength in your soul. He can *help*, for He is omnipotent. He will *help*, He has given you His word. Trust in the Lord at all times; yea, trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. That strength is promised to you and will be employed for you in answer to prayer. Why then are you so fearful? Why cast down? He says, *"I will help thee!" He hath said, and shall He not do it? He hath spoken, and shall He not make it good?*

Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed!
Lo, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid!
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.



January 8
EVENING

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" 1 Sam 7:12

EBENEZER IS A REMINDER TO GOD'S PEOPLE. Our God is faithful and He has written out His faithfulness in our experience in legible characters. He promised to help us and though we have passed through fire and through water, though our journey has been long, our road rough, our foes many, our sins great, and our faith feeble, He has ever been to us a very present help in trouble. He has helped us in darkness and light, in summer and winter, in soul and body. Let us tonight record His mercies, lift up our Ebenezer, bear witness to His faithfulness; and from the past let us draw encouragement for the future; He who has helped us in time past, will help us now, will help us in all time to come. He says, *"I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."* And He has also said, *"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."* Let us boldly say, *"The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me."* Remember, whatever may change, whoever may change, thy God changes not, and none can turn Him; therefore trust in Him, and He will help you out of every trial.

Thus far His arm hath led us on;
Thus far we make His mercies known;
And, while we tread this desert land,
New mercies shall new songs demand.

January 9
MORNING

"Gethsemane" Mt 26:36

THE AGONY IN THIS GARDEN WAS A PRELUDE TO THE VICTORY ON THE CROSS. Here Jesus, the substitute of His people, received the cup of wrath from the hand of His offended Father. It was the wrath of God, what we had deserved; the punishment we should have endured; the Son of God in our nature, in our stead, for our salvation, was punished by divine justice. No human hand touched Him, no human voice spoke to Him, when He sweated great drops of blood falling down to the ground. It was the baptism He expected, and O how great was His love, the baptism He came to undergo! See the wonderful sufferer, hear His dreadful groans, listen to His heart-breaking sighs; heaven and hell are astonished, only man remains unaffected. Beloved, He is our surety. He is paying our debt, redeeming our souls, purchasing our happiness, and making our peace. He went to *Gethsemane* that we might not go to hell. He was punished that we might be spared. Often, very often, visit this sacred spot; here by faith have fellowship with Christ in His sufferings. O my soul, I charge thee to visit *Gethsemane*, and visit it very often for fellowship with Jesus!

Go to the garden, sinner, see
Those precious drops that flow;
The heavy load He bore for thee:
For thee He stooped so low.

January 9
EVENING

"The place which is called Calvary" Lk 23:33

WE VISITED GETHSEMANE THIS MORNING; LET US VISIT CALVARY TONIGHT. There Jesus suffered from the hand of a holy God; here He suffered by the hands of wicked men. He is led as a lamb to the slaughter. See Him passing through the gates of Jerusalem, weary, worn and faint; His cross laid on His shoulders. He ascends the mound, the common place of execution. The cross is laid on the ground, He is stretched upon it, His arms and legs are strained, and the nails are driven through flesh and bone. Then the cross raised up and thrust into its socket in the ground with a violent jerk; all His bones are out of joint, and He hangs a spectacle of condemnation and shame. See His helpless frame, His ashen cheeks, His sunken eyes, His thorn-crowned brow, His death-stricken countenance. Then hear Him cry, *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* He is accursed, He is made sin for us; He suffers, the innocent for the guilty; He dies, the just for the unjust. It is the Shepherd, dying for His sheep; the Bridegroom redeeming His bride; and the Head ransoming His body. *He died for us, in our stead, that we might never die. For us Jesus went to Calvary.*

When the dread scene of death, the last
Receding hour draws near,
Then, with my closing eyes, I'll cast
A look on Calvary.

January 10
MORNING

"I am a worm" Ps 22:6

MAN IS NATURALLY VAIN AND PROUD. But grace strips him and humbles him in the dust. Here the highly favoured David, the man after God's own heart, cries out, *"I am a worm."* How little, how despicable he appeared in his own eyes. Everyone that humbleth himself shall be exalted. You have looked at Bible saints, and have sighed out, *"Ah! they were not like me!"* My brother, are you not a poor, weak, worthless worm? Do you not feel so? David did. The less you are in your own eyes, the more fit you are for the Lord Jesus, and the more welcome will you be at the throne of grace. But this was the language also of David's Lord; this was the view the Jews had of Him, and they treated Him accordingly. The brightness of glory is compared to a lowly worm; the express image of the Father's person is treated with vile contempt. But it was for our salvation that our Lord suffered. O mystery of divine humiliation! Jesus is reduced to a level with the worm, that we may be raised higher than the angels.

From Bethlehem's inn to Calvary's cross,
Affliction marked His road;
And many a weary step He took,
To bring us back to God!
By men despised, rejected, scorned,
No beauty they can see;
With grace and glory all adorned,
The loveliest form to me!

January 10
EVENING

"God also hath highly exalted Him" Phi 2:9

OUR LORD WAS DESPISED AND REJECTED OF MEN. And He was the Son of God. No one ever sank so low as Jesus; no one is or ever will be raised so high. He was considered as unfit to live; He was treated as a despicable worm, and put to death in the flesh; but *God hath highly exalted Him*. He is gone into heaven, seated at the right hand of God; now He bears a name which is above every name; He possesses all authority in heaven and on earth; thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers, are made subject unto Him. His crown glitters with sparkling gems brighter than the morning sun; His sceptre extends over all creation; His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion endureth throughout all generations. He is the object of angelic admiration and adoration, the subject of heavenly song. His exaltation is the reward of His humiliation, sufferings, and death; but it is a sweet thought that He is exalted for His people's good, for His people's glory. He is exalted to give them repentance and remission of sins, to sanctify their sorrows, supply their wants, secure their safe arrival around His throne, and glorify them with Himself forever. Immortal Saviour! may I know the power of Thy resurrection, glorify Thy grace, and be made to sit with Thee in Thy glory!

To Him whom men despise and slight,
To Him be glory given;
The crown is His, and His by right,
The highest place in heaven.

January 11
MORNING

"Come unto me" Mt 11:28

OUR LORD CAME NOT TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS BUT SINNERS TO REPENTANCE. Repenting sinners receive a welcome from Him. He calls you to His throne; He is there waiting to hear, relieve, and bless you. You are to go to Him just as you are and receive from Him all you need. He will give you wisdom to direct your steps, peace to keep your hearts, strength to do His will, righteousness to justify your souls, and rest unspeakably sweet. He is glorified in bestowing these blessings upon you. He calls you this morning, this moment, to receive without money and without price. What a precious Saviour is Jesus! What a kind and tender Friend! Let us go boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. *"Come," He says, "come to me; go not to any man, or to the world, or to the empty cisterns which creatures idolize; but come unto me, and I will do for you exceeding abundantly above all you ask or think. Your sins I will pardon, your graces I will revive, your comforts I will restore, your holiness I will increase, your efforts to glorify me I will crown with success; I will bless you, and you will be a blessing."* O how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that seek Thee, which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee, before the sons of men!

Come, let us to the Lord our God
With contrite hearts return;
Our God is gracious, nor will leave
The desolate to mourn.

January 11

EVENING

"Draw me" Song 1:4

"HIM THAT COMETH TO ME I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT." How sweet and precious is the invitation of Jesus; but we feel that something more than invitation is necessary. There is often a want of inclination; the soul is sluggish, the heart is heavy, a host of things interpose to keep us from His fulness. His invitation is a full and sufficient warrant; we may go to Him, we may go with confidence, we may go when we will, and for all we need; His heart is kind, His resources are thrown open, His word is true; but we need the drawings of the Holy Spirit. Our weakness, our reluctance, the difficulties we meet, make us cry, "*Draw me.*" He has drawn us, or we would never have approached Him; for He has said, "*No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*" This drawing is the effect and proof of eternal love. Hence we read, "*I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*" The Lord's drawings are so sweet that we yield before we are aware. "*I draw them with cords of love.*" They are divine, they always prevail. "*I draw as with the bands of a man.*" May Jesus draw us to Himself, away from the world, from sin, and from self. Amen.

O lead me to Thy mercy seat,
O lead me nearer still;
Draw me like Mary to Thy feet,
To sit and learn Thy will.

January 12
MORNING

"I go mourning" Ps 38:6

"GODLY SORROW WORKETH REPENTANCE TO SALVATION." This is God's precious promise. But what is the cause of thy mourning? There is nothing apart from Jesus worth mourning for, or beside sin worth mourning over. Is it because of the unevenness of thy walk with God? Or is it on account of the deep depravity of thy nature? Because men keep not God's law? Or because Jesus hides His face and your joys fade and wither? You may well mourn after Jesus but you must not despond; for He will turn again and have compassion upon you. The depravity of the heart is enough to make an angel weep; but forget not the precious blood that cleanseth, or the promised grace that sanctifies. Look not too much at the defects which appear in your walk, nor at the corruption which works in your heart; but plead for the blood and grace of Jesus as the means of thy cure. Read and believe His promises; confess and plead at His throne; wait and watch in His ways; be careful lest by inordinate mourning you grieve His Spirit. He cannot be unkind, He never will forsake you, He was anointed *"to comfort all that mourn."*

Cease, O believer, cease to mourn;
Return unto thy rest, return;
Why should thy sorrows swell?
Though deep distress thy steps attend,
Thy warfare shall in triumph end;
With thee it shall go well.

January 12
EVENING

"Good tidings of great joy" Lk 2:10

APART FROM THE COMING OF JESUS THE EARTH IS DOOMED. Without Christ all is hopeless and dark. There is everything in our hearts to cast us down, and fill us with dejection; daily we meet with things in the world, or the family, or the church, to make us sorrowful: but the gospel brings us glad tidings of great joy. It sets before us a Saviour, and what a Saviour! One who is God and can deliver us, one who is man and will sympathise with us; One who knows by experience what our trials mean, and who brings all the resources of God to meet our need; so that we may well ask, *"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?"* In His blood there is a full, a certain pardon for all sin; in His obedience, a righteousness to justify us freely and forever before God; in His fullness, an endless variety of blessings to supply our needs; and in His promises, comfort to cheer us in our most gloomy hours. He is a Saviour for sinners; all He did, He did for sinners, just such sinners as we daily feel ourselves to be. For such He obeyed the law; for such He now pleads before His Father; it is just such sinners that He invites to His bosom, and for such He is preparing mansions in heaven. O believing reader, go today and declare the *good tidings of great joy*, that Jesus saves, and He has saved you.

This love exceeds our highest thought;
Its length and breadth in vain are sought:
No tongue can tell its depth and height,
The love of God is infinite.

January 13
MORNING

"Let him ask in faith" Jas 1:6

"THE EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN AVAILETH MUCH." The believer's prayers should be regulated by God's promises; he often fancies he wants what would only do him harm; and, therefore, if he ask, he is denied, not in anger but in love. God has promised all good, and only good, to His beloved people. Ask for what God has promised to bestow, and ask believing that God will honour and fulfil His own precious word. He cannot deny Himself; all He hath promised He will perform. You can therefore have no reason to doubt whether the Lord will give, if you really need it, and He has plainly promised it; therefore ask desiring and expecting, and then look to receive. What are thy wants this morning? Where hath God promised such things in His holy word? Search out the promise, take it to His throne, plead in the name of Jesus for its fulfilment, and never doubt for one moment, but that the Lord will make it good. Stay yourself therefore on the word of the Lord; but if you will not believe, surely you will not be established. Faith honours God by trusting Him; and God always honours faith by answering it. *"Come boldly to the throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*

Beyond thy utmost wants
His love and power can bless;
To praying souls He always grants
More than they can express.

January 13
EVENING

"Help thou mine unbelief" Mk 9:24

"WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD."

But our faith is often weak, our unbelief very strong. It is so natural for a sinner to disbelieve God, and it is often difficult for a Christian to give full credit to God's promises. Sometimes His word appears to be too good to be true; at other times we have such a vivid sense of our sinfulness, that we cannot admit that such great and glorious blessings are for us. Indeed, it is very difficult to believe that God is as good as His word declares; that His promises belong to us sinners, and that we may believe, appropriate, and plead them as made to us. We fear presumption and so yield to unbelief. We listen to Satan and so doubt and fear. But Jesus asks, *"If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"* Is then the promise true? Is it made to sinners? Does it flow from grace? Then let us endeavour to believe, to rest on the word, to expect that God will do as He has said. Let us take our unbelief where we take our other sins to Jesus; let us confess it, deplore it, and cry with His disciples of old, *"Lord, increase our faith."* Or with the poor man in the text, *"Help thou mine unbelief."* Help me to conquer it, and to triumph over it.

Lord, Thou hast said, Thou wilt forgive;
Now help me to believe and live:
A living, vigorous faith impart,
And seal Thy pardon in my heart.

January 14
MORNING

"Walk circumspectly" Eph 5:15

"BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT WALKETH NOT IN THE COUNSEL OF THE UNGODLY." We walk in enemy territory, surrounded by temptations. Our hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. To honour Jesus in our spirit, communications, and every action, should be our constant aim. We are to live unto the Lord, for Him who died for us and rose again. To this end, provision was laid up in the everlasting covenant; for this purpose the precious promises were made, and with this design the Holy Spirit is given, that we may serve Him in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life. This world is not our home; Satan's family are not to be our associates; riches, honours, or pleasure, are not to be our objects; we are to *walk* as in the midst of snares, ever watchful, prayerful, depending upon Jesus, and cultivating fellowship with Him. O reader, keep your eyes on Jesus as your example; *walk* by His word as your rule; be not venturesome or presumptuous and avoid the very appearance of evil. Never leave the Lord's ways or ordinances to join the world's parties or to please a carnal fancy. Keep close to Jesus and follow on to know the Lord. *Walk* as a loving child going home to his Father's house.

So let our lips and lives express
The holy Gospel we profess;
So let our works and virtues shine,
To prove the doctrine all divine.

January 14
EVENING

"Hold up my goings in Thy paths" Ps 17:5

"LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL." Failures and follies should lead us to pray thus to our forgiving God, and teach us the necessity of closer walking with God. We need to be constantly upheld by divine power and to be guided by divine wisdom. We are prone to trust the arm of flesh. Many have fallen into sin; many do fall; we are as much exposed to temptations as they were, and are as liable to be overcome. Satan is watching us: his temptations are powerful, and our hearts are vulnerable. Let us therefore cry to the Lord for strength, and let it be our daily prayer, *"Hold up my goings in Thy paths."* In every duty, as well as in every trial, in the calm as well as in the storm, we need to be upheld: for unless the Lord uphold us, we shall fall into presumptuous sins, or into self-righteousness, into open sin, or secret backsliding. We are never safe but only as the Lord keeps us; and He keeps by showing us our weakness, our proneness to wander, and by leading us to walk before Him in faith and humility of mind. Beloved, if you are not daily seeking divine protection, you are in danger of being overcome. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Now, Holy Spirit, to my heart
Wisdom and holiness impart;
Uphold me by Thy mighty power
In every dark and dangerous hour.

January 15
MORNING

"But Thou art the same" Ps 102:27

"JESUS CHRIST THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TODAY, AND FOREVER." Our Lord only does not change. Everything on earth is liable to change: health gives place to sickness, pleasure to pain, plenty to poverty, love to enmity, honour to disgrace, strength to weakness, and life to death. Remember the days of darkness for they shall be many. But though all our circumstances and friends should change, there is One who never changes. He is in one mind and none can turn Him: with Him is no variableness. He is the same yesterday, today, and for ever; and He is our best Friend, our nearest relation, our gracious Saviour. *Yesterday*, His name was Jesus; His nature was love; His purpose was to do us good with His whole heart and soul: *today*, He is the same; we cannot expect too much from Him, or be too confident in Him, if we are walking humbly with Him. He will be our God, and we shall be His people. Let us cultivate intimacy with Him, dependance upon Him, concern to please Him, fear to offend Him, zeal to glorify Him; and it must be well with us in health and sickness, plenty and poverty, life and death; for He is the same and will never turn away from doing us good, but remain the fountain of love and holiness for ever. *Praise ye the Lord!*

How good is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend;
Whose love is as great as His power,
And knows neither measure nor end!

January 15
EVENING

"We all do fade as a leaf" Isa 64:6

"ALL FLESH IS AS GRASS, AND ALL THE GLORY OF MAN AS THE FLOWER OF GRASS." Our life on earth is but a short day. What a contrast between the unchangeable God and a sinner fading like a leaf! Yet this is a true picture of us and all temporal things. We began looking green and fresh, and in a little time we wither, fade and die. *"Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down."* Humbling consideration this! But it may be rendered very useful. Shall we soon fade and die? Then let us not be much affected by anything that occurs below. Let us set our affections on things above and lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Let us live by faith in Jesus, walk with God, and aim principally to please Him in all we do. Let us also watch against a worldly spirit and pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, in the sure expectation that we shall soon find health giving place to sickness, vigour to weakness, youth to age. The death bed, the coffin, the grave, are realities just before us. Let us therefore make our calling and election sure; let us cultivate close and filial fellowship with God; let us dig deep and lay our foundation firmly upon the Rock Jesus Christ. Brethren, the time is short, eternity comes soon: all its glories are just before us. What matters, then, if we *do fade as a leaf? For absent from the body is present with the Lord.*

On the tree of life eternal,
O let all our hopes be stayed!
This alone, forever vernal,
Bears a leaf that shall not fade.

January 16
MORNING

"Is it well with thee?" 2 Kgs 4:26

"READER, HOW ARE YOU THIS MORNING?" Is Jesus thy Lord, precious to thy soul? Are you mourning over sin, and seeking after the presence of your beloved Saviour? Are you strong in faith giving glory to God? Are you panting for communion with your heavenly Father? Is the world beneath your feet? Are you flowing with love to all saints? Are you seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness? Are you lying at the feet of Jesus, troubled in soul, and crying, *"Lord, help me?"* If so, it is well with thee: there is spiritual life in thy soul, and the blessed Spirit is thy teacher. But if the world is preferred to Jesus, the pleasures of time to fellowship with God; if self-examination is neglected, and the Bible is become dry and unsavory, all is not well. Health of soul is manifested by habitual prayer, zeal in the Lord's cause, appetite for the bread of life, and joy in the Lord's ways. Is thy soul sick? If so, apply at once to Jesus, as the great Physician; and plead with Him to restore unto thee the joys of His salvation, and to uphold thee with His free Spirit. He will heal thy backslidings, and love thee freely. *Then it will be well with thee.*

Tis well; my soul is filled with joy,
Though in myself a feeble worm:
For Jesus will His power employ,
And save my soul in every storm;
He will His gracious word fulfil,
And guard my soul from every ill.

January 16
EVENING

"It is well" 2 Kgs 4:26

"IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL." So wrote Horatio Spafford after the loss of four daughters in a trans-Atlantic shipping disaster. What a mercy to be able to say so! Still, if we are in Christ, if clothed with His righteousness, trusting in the promise of His Word, *"it is well."* For all our sins are blotted out, the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts, and God looks down upon us and loves us with an infinite love. It is well, for our names are in the book of life, our cause is in the Saviour's hands, and our peace with God is made. It may be a day of darkness with us, but the Lord is our everlasting light and the days of our mourning will soon be ended. Providence may frown upon us, but temporal trials prayerfully endured become precious spiritual blessings. We may feel weak, very weak, but the strength of Jesus shall be made perfect in our weakness. Satan may sorely harass and hunt us like the partridge upon the mountains, but God will bruise Satan under our feet. Our hearts may appear barren, and all within may wear a wintry aspect; but this is only permitted to drive us out of self, to prevent spiritual pride, and to render Jesus and His finished work more precious. *It is well* with them that fear the Lord, even in sad bereavement, for there is the sure hope of happy reunion in the Lord at His appearing. Thus comforted, Horatio Spafford wrote:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll -
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

January 17
MORNING

"I would do good" Rom 7:21

"BUT THANKS BE TO GOD, WHICH GIVETH US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." In Christ our risen Saviour, we have victory over sin. Every believer has experienced the renewing of the Holy Spirit; sin has no more dominion over him. He receives the beauty of holiness and loathes himself on account of sin. His desire is to be internally holy, and externally conformed to the precepts of the Bible. He would pray with fervour, praise with gratitude, believe with confidence, war against sin, Satan, and the flesh with courage, and glorify God by every thought, word, and action. Thus he feels, and for this he prays in his best moments; but he finds that he needs the frequent renewing of the Holy Spirit, for he is prone to sink into lukewarmness, deadness, and folly. At such times, he is obliged to cry out, *"My soul cleaveth unto the dust; quicken Thou me according unto Thy word."* The Lord must work in us to *will* as well as to *do*; for by nature we are unwilling, and the desire after holiness does not come naturally. It must come from God. Beloved, you must come to Jesus daily for fresh supplies of the Spirit, or you will find yourself not only powerless, but careless; not only will the power of godliness decline, but you will become indifferent. Watch against temptation. Watch unto prayer. Watch over your own heart: it is ever so prone to sin, being desperately wicked.

O Lord, assist me through the fight,
My drooping spirit raise;
Make me triumphant in Thy might,
And Thine shall be the praise.

January 17
EVENING

"Thy people shall be willing" Ps 110:3

"PRAISE GOD HE CHOSE US IN CHRIST BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD." It was God who came to us. No man by nature is willing to come to Christ for salvation, or to be saved by free and sovereign grace alone. Human nature is too obstinate, perverse, and proud: if we are willing it is God who has made us so. Nor is anyone desirous, or even willing, to be made truly holy, except he is taught of God. If therefore we would do good, if we are heartily desiring and earnestly seeking to be made holy in heart and life, it is because we are under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. What a mercy to know this! How often do we give human nature credit for being better than it is, and fancy that what we feel, desire, and do, is merely from an enlightened mind, and not from a sanctified heart. The Lord's people are made willing by the Lord's power; but that power works so secretly, so silently, and so imperceptibly, that we do not perceive it. Are you in doubt, whether God hath really called you by grace or no? Enquire, *am I willing to be saved by the Lord Jesus as a poor lost sinner? Am I concerned to be made holy, as well as to be made happy?* If so, you are, without doubt, one of the Lord's people. *O be thou willing to be made willing!*

Willing to be saved by grace,
Let me see Thy glorious face;
Willing to be holy too;
Work in me Thy will to do.

January 18
MORNING

"Evil is present with me" Rom 7:21

WHAT A MERCY THAT EVIL DOES NOT REIGN IN YOU, AND OVER YOU. It did reign once, and would reign now but for free and sovereign grace. If sin makes you groan, leads you to the throne to plead with God, and to the fountain of the Saviour's blood to be cleansed from it, it does not, it cannot reign. It may disturb your peace, distress your mind, hinder you in holy duty, mix with all your efforts to do good; and even make you cry out, *"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"* But even then you should not doubt. Jesus still loves you, grace will reign in your experience, and you will be more than a conqueror. Paul had known the Lord many years, had been in the third heaven, and daily triumphed in Christ; yet he felt just as you feel; when he would do good evil was present with him, and he could not do the things that he would. If sin annoys you, if it is your burden, and causes you grief, beloved, holiness is very much alive in you, and the present painful conflict will end in lasting peace. You may even now sing, *"Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Live upon Christ, and you will live down all evil.

Crosses and setbacks are our lot,
Long as we sojourn here;
But since our Saviour changes not,
What have the saints to fear?

January 18
EVENING

"Ye that love the Lord, hate evil" Ps 97:10

"IF WE LOVE HIM, LET US KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS." Let us lovingly remind one another. Exhortations to the plainest duties are necessary, for sometimes we forget, and often sink into a lukewarm, indifferent frame of mind. *Do we love the Lord?* If so, we love His people, His commandments, His gospel, and His law. We love His prohibitions as well as His promises, knowing that He only prohibits what would do us harm. Can we tonight join with David, and say, *"O how love I Thy law, it is my meditation all the day!"* The law prohibits all evil. Let us hate evil thoughts, and strive against them. Let us hate evil words, and keep the mouth as with a bridle. Let us hate evil works, and abstain from all appearance of evil. The evils of the heart are the worst, as all other evils flow from it: especially let us beware of an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. *Would you hate evil?* Then walk close with God, be much in fellowship with Him, and so will holiness become your element, and every species of evil your abhorrence. Lovers of God, set your hearts, set your fears against evil. *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."*

Lord, whom I love, to Thee I give
My heart, my life, my all:
For Thee would I devoted live,
Without Thee I would fall.

January 19

MORNING

"My brother" Mt 12:50

AND WHO IS THE BROTHER OF JESUS? Every one who does the will of His Father. Every believer who proves the truth of his faith by the goodness of his works; who shows the excellence of his nature, by the piety, benevolence, and charity of his life. Believer, Jesus calls thee *brother*. He has for thee a Brother's love. O how tender! O how strong! It is stronger than death, passing knowledge. He bears with thy infirmities, reproves thy follies, encourages thy faith, forbids thy fears, and will certainly provide for thy wants. Joseph in Egypt supplied his brethren during the famine, and shall not Jesus supply His? If He seem to speak roughly, He will act kindly, and perform a Brother's part. He has all power in heaven and in earth. He doeth according to His will, and He is not ashamed to call us brethren. He will correspond with us, and bid us daily, yea hourly, correspond with Him. O remember, when you go to the throne of grace, He calls you to it, and will withhold no good thing from you. Precious Lord Jesus, manifest to me a Brother's love; help me to rely on Thy fraternal kindness.

Our dearest Friend, our Brother now,
Is He to whom the angels bow;
They join with us to praise His name,
But we the nearest interest claim.

January 19
EVENING

"Joint-heirs with Christ" Rom 8:17

THANK GOD FOR HIS BLESSED SPIRIT, THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION. It is His witness that assures us we are the children of God. Related to Jesus now, we shall inherit with Him by-and-by; not only as brethren of the same family, but as the bride inherits with her bridegroom. Jesus is constituted heir of all things; we are one with Him, and as such, are *"heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ."* What dignity! What an unspeakable privilege is this! We are heirs of salvation, heirs of promise. Connection with Adam involved us in guilt, ruin, and misery; connection with Jesus brings us righteousness, peace, and everlasting salvation. Now we suffer with Him, but we shall soon be glorified together. Now we taste the cup of His sorrow, but we shall soon drink the cup of His joys. But are we indeed joint-heirs? Are we children of God by faith in Jesus Christ? Do we love our heavenly Father? Are we jealous for His honour and glory? Is sin the object of our hatred, and holiness our desire and delight? If so, Jesus calls us brethren, Jehovah calls us children, and in Jesus, *"we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."*

Children of God, through Jesus' love,
We rise undoubted heirs;
His rich inheritance above,
He with His brethren shares.

January 20
MORNING

"The wisdom of the just" Lk 1:17

THE LORD'S PEOPLE ARE JUSTIFIED FREELY. It is by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The finished work of Jesus is their justification before God; in this they trust, in this they plead, and in this they rejoice. Taught by the Holy Spirit, they manifest wisdom in readily believing God's faithful word, and trusting Him to make good the same to them. They resign themselves and all they value into His hands for preservation, and to be entirely at His disposal, persuaded that His wisdom and love will do better for them than they possibly could for themselves. They commit all things to God and cheerfully abide by His wise bestowments. They live in simple child-like dependance upon His providence and grace, for body and soul, for time and eternity, seeking to make His will theirs. They walk in charity with their fellow Christians, who differ in some things from them, and would do good to all, especially to them that are of the household of faith. Beloved, do you manifest this wisdom? Do you walk by this rule? Do you mind the same things? Have you the wisdom that is from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits?

Boundless wisdom, power divine,
Love unspeakable, are Thine;
Wisdom, Lord, to me be given,
Wisdom pure, which comes from heaven.

January 20
EVENING

"The Lord giveth wisdom" Prov 2:6

"THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM." In all our striving, let us strive for wisdom from above; and if we pray for it earnestly, He answers our prayer by giving liberally that particular wisdom we need. We need wisdom to walk circumspectly, to overcome temptations, to work consistently in the Lord's vineyard, and to glorify God in *"body, soul, and spirit"* which are His. The wisdom we need we may have; not by labour, but by prayer; we cannot produce it, but God has promised to bestow it. Hear His own word, *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering."* God is willing to bestow it, He promises to impart it; we ought therefore to believe His word, ask Him for it, as though He really meant what He had said in His promise. *"The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."* Would you be wise unto salvation? Wise to win souls? Wise to avoid evil, and secure all possible good? Then seek wisdom of God, seek it instantly, seek it earnestly, seek it in faith, and *"it shall be given you!"*

That wisdom, Lord, on me bestow,
Gentle and peaceable and pure;
That I may walk with Thee below,
And make my own salvation sure.

January 21
MORNING

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon" Mt 6:24

OUR GOD IS A JEALOUS GOD. He requires the devotion of the heart, the consecration of the powers, and we cannot enjoy His salvation without these. Persons who try to unite God and the world, the service of sin and the service of God, cannot be happy. We must be very clear and decisive: who is to be God today? Who is to have our heart, our talents, our affections, today? Is material gain, carnal pleasure, or worldly company, to be the idol today? Or, is Jesus to have our thoughts, our desires, and our talents? Shall we seek His glory, and aim at His honour? Or, shall we say to some worthless bramble, *"Come thou, and reign over us?"* Choose you! Whom will you serve? Attempt not to reconcile opposing claims, but let God or mammon have the whole. Surely, you are ready to cry out, *"Thine am I, Lord Jesus; and Thee only will I serve!"* But you can only serve Him acceptably, as you serve Him with the grace He imparts; He has provided, He has promised, and He invites you to receive it. Let us therefore have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. *Serving God in the spirit of adoption is true happiness.*

O let Thy love my soul inflame!
And to Thy service sweetly bind;
Infuse it through my inmost frame,
And mould me wholly to Thy mind.

January 21
EVENING

"O Lord, truly I am thy servant" Ps 116:16

YES, WE ARE THE LORD'S SERVANTS, CREATED FOR HIS GLORY. We are redeemed to show forth His praise, regenerated to exemplify His virtues: we are His by the strongest ties: Jesus is our Master, His will is our law, and His pleasure our delight. Our Master is also our example; as the servant of the Father He appeared in our world, consulted the Father's will in all that He did, and suffered without complaining, all the Father saw fit to inflict. He humbled Himself and became obedient, and now He is exalted, and extolled on high; to us He says, *"If any man serve me, let him follow me: and where I am there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me him will my Father honour."* Obedience to Christ may sink us in the eyes of men, but it exalts us in the sight of God; it may expose us to suffering and contempt before the world, but God will honour us with His presence and smiles, and will afterwards receive us to glory. Whose servants have we been today? Whom have we been seeking to please? Whose cause have we been endeavouring to promote? Can we retire to rest tonight as the servants of Christ, willing to go to Him whenever He calls?

Jesus, how great Thy servants are!
What dignity on man bestowed!
We who rejoice Thy yoke to bear,
Are honoured with th'esteem of God.

January 22
MORNING

"I am thy shield" Gen 15:1

"ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." That was blessing unspeakable! They that believe are blessed with faithful Abraham. The promises God made to him He will fulfil to us. We are surrounded by foes; fiery darts fly in every direction; but Jehovah, in Jesus, interposes Himself as our shield. Our safety and protection is from our relation to Him. We should soon be overcome if He did not preserve and defend us. How safe and how happy we feel when we realize that our God is our defence and the most High God our protector! If foes alarm, or dangers affright, yet remember, *"The name of the Lord is a strong tower."* You may run into it and be safe. Faith is the arm. Jehovah the shield; with Satan, sin, and the world, we are in conflict; but we are preserved, as in a garrison, by the power of God through faith unto salvation. My brother, look to Jesus, through this day, as thy shield and expect safety and protection from Him alone. He will be present to protect thee and answer thy prayers. He will thus preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore. He will give thee the shield of His salvation, and His righteousness will make thee great.

His righteousness to faith revealed,
Wrought out for guilty worms,
Affords a hiding place and shield,
From enemies and storms.

January 22
EVENING

"Keep me as the apple of the eye" Ps 17:8

THROUGH ANOTHER DAY THE LORD HAS SHIELDED US. Tonight let us thank Him and record His unfailing love. But while we recall His past kindness, we should pray for protection for the future. What a beautiful, expressive, striking prayer is this! *Keep me*, for Thou art omnipotent, omniscient, and all-wise. *Keep me*, for I am exposed to enemies and storms; I am in danger from various quarters; I am weak and inexperienced as the newly fledged bird; I fear I shall fall! I have no one on whom I can repose but Thee. *Keep me* as the apple of thine eye, carefully, constantly, tenderly and graciously. *Keep me* so that I may be useful and beautiful as the apple of the eye. *Keep me* in Christ my head, watching, expecting, and enjoying His presence and His blessing. *Keep me*, for I see many fall into sin, and I feel I am as liable as they. *Keep me*, for such numbers decline, grow lukewarm, and leave the world under a cloud. *Keep me* by night and by day; and may I realize Thy preserving power, that I may with confidence say, *"The Lord is my keeper; the Lord is my shade upon my right hand. The Lord will preserve my going out and coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."*

Jehovah, by His ceaseless care,
Whose watchful eye can never sleep,
From earthly foes, from Satan's snare,
My ransomed soul shall safely keep.

January 23

MORNING

"Why are ye so fearful?" Mk 4:40

TO THE DISCIPLES THE LORD SAID, "HAVE FAITH IN GOD." It is not any sort of faith, but faith in the Lord Creator only. The disciples appeared to be in danger and fear filled their hearts. They did not realize that they were in the care and charge of Jesus, or else, knowing Him their fears could have had no place. Beloved, you are in the hands of your loving Saviour. He has charge of you and all your concerns. He has numbered the very hairs of your head and watches over you every moment, by night, as well as by day. He is ever present, His eye cannot be diverted from you; His omnipotence is engaged to defend you, His fulness to supply you, His wisdom to guide you, and all His perfections will be glorified in your everlasting holiness and happiness. He says, *"I am glorified in them."* *Why are you so fearful?* Jesus is a very present help; He is a Friend that loveth at all times. He is your shield, and your exceeding great reward. But perhaps you have wandered from Him; your conscience accuses you, and Satan tempts you to despair; go, go, and return unto Him, delay not a moment; cast yourself, guilty as you are, at His feet; confess all, and give yourself to Him afresh. He will receive you graciously, love you freely, and restore to you the joy of His salvation. *Why are you so fearful?*

The saints should never be dismayed,
Nor sink in hopeless fear;
For when they least expect His aid,
The Saviour will appear.

January 23
EVENING

"Fear not, thou worm Jacob" Isa 41:14

OUR GOD IS WORTHY OF OUR WHOLE TRUST, NOTHING DOUBTING. However mean and despicable we may appear in the eyes of others, however weak and feeble we may feel in ourselves, still our God says, *"Fear not."* Though but a worm, yet like a praying Jacob, we need not fear, we should not fear; our God forbids it because it injures our souls, encourages our enemies, dispirits our friends, and dishonours His glorious name. How precious, unspeakably precious, are these *"Fear nots!"* How thickly they are strewed through the divine word! But why should we fear? The Lord expressly tells us that *"the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."* Are we believers in Jesus? Then we should not fear, for our God is our friend, and His care extends over all time, embraces every event, supplies every want. It anticipates every emergency, comprehends every believer from the beginning to the end of time, and shall everlastingly secure the safety and happiness of everyone that trusts in Him. *"Fear not, thou worm Jacob."*

On God thy constant Helper trust,
Thou lowly worm despised by all;
No one shall crush thee in the dust,
Since He has raised thee from the fall.

January 24
MORNING

"Ye are not your own" 1 Cor 6:19

IT MEANS A NEW OWNERSHIP WHEN JESUS BOUGHT YOU. He purchased you with His own blood, quickened you by His Spirit, espoused you to Himself: you are no more your own, but His. He claims you, and says, *"I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."* He will provide for you as His own, and spare you, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. You are His beloved bride, His portion, a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. In loving you, He loveth Himself. He requires you to live under the daily conviction that you are His; that all you have is His. You have nothing of your own; all you have He freely gave, and all you have you profess to have surrendered to Him. Think more of Jesus than of His gifts; cleave to Him, and not to what you may be called to surrender. He will never take anything from you, but He will give you something better. If He strip you, it is to teach you; to lead you to live upon Himself, and to find your heaven in His company, grace, and offices. Do you live, walk, and act, so as to leave the impression upon the minds of observers that you are the Lord's? Do you expect Him to preserve, guide, and supply you? Let conscience answer: *I am not my own.*

Lord! am I Thine, entirely Thine?
Purchased and saved by blood divine?
With full consent, Thine I would be,
And own Thy sovereign right in me.

January 24

EVENING

"*Christ died for us*" Rom 5:8

OUR LORD DIED FOR US WHEN WE WERE YET SINNERS! What an unspeakable blessing is this! Let us seriously consider it tonight. Christ died, Jehovah's only begotten Son, the fountain of life and blessedness, the centre and source of all excellence and glory. Jesus, who united the divine and human natures in Himself, died: died for us as our Friend, who bound us to Himself by covenant, who stooped for us from heaven to earth, whose love was stronger than death. He *died for us*, the objects of His love and His Father's choice; *died for us* though we were sinners, ungodly, without strength and rebellious. He *died for us*, the head for His body, the surety for the debtors He had undertaken to set free, the Redeemer for captives He was pledged to deliver, the Husband for His beloved, fallen bride, the Shepherd for the flock entrusted to His care, the Servant of the Father, who came to do His will and maintain His honour. *He died for us* to redeem us from death, to raise us to eternal life, to restore us to friendship with God, to fit us for holy service, that we might be crowned with glory at last. Let us live for Jesus *who died for us*.

Christ bore our sins upon the tree,
To seek and save the lost He came;
There was He nailed to set us free
From death and everlasting shame;
The captive flock from hell was freed
And ransomed when their Shepherd bled.

January 25
MORNING

"Ye are my friends" Jn 15:14

NO MORE SERVANTS BUT FRIENDS, FRIENDS OF GOD. What infinite condescension that Jesus our Lord calls us His *friends*! But He not only calls us so, but treats us as such, and expects us as friends to do whatsoever He commands us. Is Jesus thy Friend? Then visit Him often, let Him hear thy voice in prayer and praise; then trust Him fully; let Him see proof of thy faith in thy dependence; then walk with Him in love, and let Him enjoy thy company; then expect Him to be thy Friend in sickness and in health, in poverty and in prosperity, in life and in death. If Jesus is our Friend, we can never be destitute; if father and mother forsake us, He will take us up and take us in; we can never be miserable; He will receive us and be a Father unto us; we can never be neglected, for He will never fail us nor forsake us, but will do for us all He has promised in His word. He will defend us from our foes, visit us in our sickness, and support us in death. Precious Lord Jesus, be Thou my Friend, call me Thy friend, and treat me as such, in life, in death, at the judgment, and before Thy Father's face for ever.

O let us make His name our trust!
He is a Saviour wise and just:
On His almighty arm depend;
He is a tried and faithful Friend;
And all His friends shall shortly prove,
The pow'r and glory of His love.

January 25
EVENING

"Is this thy kindness to thy friend?" 2 Sam 16:17

OUR LORD'S CONDUCT TOWARD US IS THE PERFECTION OF KINDNESS. But our conduct toward Him is often just the reverse. How often we treat Him with neglect, and instead of prayer being a delight, it is an irksome task. How often we violate His precepts, or omit to perform our needful duties. How often we doubt His love, distrust His word and complain of His dealings. How often we indulge the flesh, which He has commanded us to mortify; prefer the world, which He has instructed us to forsake; and yield to Satan, whom He has exhorted us to resist. And have we not sometimes been ashamed to confess Him before the world? or at least to bear a clear and honest testimony for Him? Well may our cheeks burn and our bosoms fill with unease, if the question be put to us, in reference to much of our conduct toward our gracious Redeemer. Let us seek afresh the tokens of His forgiving love, and in future when about to yield to temptation, or give way to any sin, put the question to our consciences, *"Is this thy kindness to thy friend?"*

Sure, were I not most vile and base,
I could not thus my Friend requite!
And were not He the God of grace,
He'd spurn and drive me from His sight.

January 26

MORNING

"I will instruct thee" Ps 32:8

"THE COMFORTER, HE SHALL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS." Without Him we know but little, and we are slow to learn; but as the Lord has promised to instruct us, we may yet expect to be made wise unto salvation. The Lord's teaching always produces humility, self-loathing, confidence in God, zeal for His glory, and devotes the heart to His praise. It brings us to the feet of Jesus, and delivers us from the present evil world. Under divine instruction we learn the true nature of sin, the vanity of the world, the emptiness of creatures, and the fulness of Christ. Is God willing to instruct us? Then let us be early and often at His throne, praying, as the Psalmist did, *"Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day."* Then shall we exclaim, as Elihu did, *"Behold, God exalteth by His power: who teacheth like Him?"* The Lord will teach us to profit, and sanctify us through the truth He imparts. Christ is our great lesson, and to know Him rightly is life, peace, and joy. Is Jesus thy Teacher? Then sit at His feet, treasure up His words, and show forth His praise. He says, *"Learn of me."* *Learn to know Him, love Him, obey Him, and live upon Him.*

Eternal life Thy words impart;
On these my fainting spirit lives:
No sweeter comforts cheer my heart,
Than the whole world around me gives.

January 26

EVENING

"I have learned by experience" Gen 30:27

TIME AND EXPERIENCE ARE GREAT TEACHERS. Their lessons are very precious. Laban spoke in reference to the benefit he derived from Jacob's services rendered over twenty years; so may the Christian say in reference to the effects of divine teaching. Experience is knowledge derived from trial, and thus we learn the truth and value of God's grace; the importance and dignity of the holy Scripture; the true state and condition of human nature; the character and compassion of the Saviour; the need and nature of the operations of the Holy Spirit; the malice and cunning of Satan; and the power and efficacy of believing prayer; the spiritual benefits of affliction; the emptiness and vanity of the present world; and the love and faithfulness of a covenant God. No knowledge is like that which is gained by experience; it is far preferable to what we gain from report, or reading, or mere opinion; it is above every other kind of knowledge in point of certainty, in its tendency to edify, and in its power to establish the mind. Young people should be modest; they can know but little from experience yet. Mature and established Christians should communicate their experience to others: nothing is more helpful than this.

Teacher divine! instruct me still
To know, to love, to do Thy will;
And let me by experience prove
Thy sanctifying power and love.

January 27
MORNING

"Lacked ye anything?" Lk 22:35

THE LORD WILL ALWAYS PROVIDE FOR HIS OWN. We who keep His company, do His will, and strive for His glory, will not be neglected. If He should send us, we need carry no purse, our bread shall be given and our water shall be sure. The disciples went out unfurnished, as the Lord Jesus commanded them; they returned, and confessed that they lacked nothing, the God of providence had supplied them. If we are in the Lord's way, we may rest assured that we shall meet the Lord's messengers bringing our supply. They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. He notices our wants, remembers His promises, times His mercies, and proves Himself faithful. Have you lacked anything? for body? for soul? He who has supplied the past, will provide for the future. Our Lord Jesus is full of grace; go, and receive from Him, that your joy may be full. Jesus is the God of providence; look to Him, trust in Him, plead with Him, and you will never be destitute. Believe His word, He cannot deny Himself; trust in His faithfulness, and He will put honour upon thy faith, fulfilling His own word. *"Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure."*

His love in times past, forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last, in trouble to sink;
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review
Confirms His good pleasure to help me right
through.

January 27
EVENING

"He will not fail thee" Deut 31:6

FOR OUR GOD IS THE EVERLASTING GOD, THE CREATOR OF THE ENDS OF THE EARTH. His promises to us are *yea* and *amen*. The expectations raised by His word shall never be frustrated; the promises He made shall never be broken, the trust reposed on His faithfulness shall never be dishonoured. He will not forget His word, or neglect our interests. He never did fail His people, He never will. Your faith may be weak, your fears may be strong, your doubts may be painful, your weakness may be great; your temptations may be very distressing, and your wants may be numerous and alarming, but thy God will not fail thee. Why should He? He foresaw all thy wants, thy woes, and thy unworthiness before He called thee by His grace; thy present circumstances are not new to Him, He had them in His eye when He made His promises, and He will get honour to Himself by bringing thee through them. Fail not to trust Him. Fail not to appeal to Him by prayer. Fail not to believe His faithful word. He will not fail to support thee under thy burdens, to listen to thy requests, to provide for thy necessities, and to honour thy faith. However singular your experience, or strange the path may appear, His word is true: *"He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."*

Why should'st thou fear when God is near -
When all He is, is all for thee?
When thou art weak, His grace will cheer
And strengthen thy infirmity.

January 28
MORNING

"We have an Advocate" 1 Jn 2:1

HE IS THE RISEN AND ASCENDED LORD JESUS. He pleads for us in heaven. By His own blood He entered once into the holiest, there to appear in the presence of God for us. He pleads for us against Satan, answering all his accusations; and for us with the Father, that we may be kept, supplied, and glorified. O what a comfort when the heart is overwhelmed in prayer, when the mouth is closed by guilt, when the spirit is harassed by temptation, to know that Jesus our Advocate appears and pleads for us above! Beloved, Jesus is before God for you this morning, and every morning; His intercession is your daily protection. When doubting and fearful, put your cause afresh into His hands, and leave Him to carry it; for you He pleads well; His arguments are powerful, and His manner divine. Think! Jesus before the Father is thy Advocate; rejoice in His office and name, and remember He is saying, *"Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, to behold my glory."* Him the Father heareth always; and all for whom He pleads are safe and happy.

Look up, my soul, with cheerful eye;
See where the great Redeemer stands,
The glorious Advocate on high,
With precious incense in His hands;
And on His pleading still depend,
Who is thy Advocate and Friend.

January 28
EVENING

"He ever liveth to make intercession" Heb 7:25

HE DIED FOR OUR SINS ONCE; HE EVER LIVES TO PLEAD FOR US. Before the Father He pleads for us daily, moment by moment. He possesses an endless life, an unchangeable priesthood; He appears in heaven as the great High Priest of our profession; our names are on His breastplate; He is intimately acquainted with our affairs, and He lives above to intercede for us here below. He presents His precious blood, His perfect righteousness; and He pleads them for our pardon, preservation, and glorification. He has the Father's ear, the Father's heart; and He offers all He has for our welfare. How wonderful His love; He first left heaven for us, and on earth He laboured, suffered, died, in our stead; He then returned to heaven for us, and there He pleads, and secures our best interests. He witnesses all our failings and changes, but He changes not and never fails. He is often grieved by our inconsistencies, but still pleads on our behalf; He undertook our cause, when there was nothing in us to move or induce Him to do so; He still holds the deepest interest in us, and rejoices to do us good. What comfort and consolation is He, our great Intercessor!

There, as our great High Priest, He stands.
And pleads before the mercy seat;
Our cause is in His faithful hands,
Our enemies beneath His feet.

January 29
MORNING

"Search the Scriptures" Jn 5:39

THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD, HIS REVELATION TO MAN. Without the Bible man has no knowledge of God: His nature, perfections, purposes, will, providence, and salvation plan for man - these remain a mystery. It contains all that is necessary to be known of man's origin, creation, fall and redemption. It should be read carefully, prayerfully, frequently, and systematically; every part of the Bible should be read, meditated upon, and prayed over. It makes us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. We cannot understand the Scriptures, or gather spiritual profit therefrom but by the Holy Spirit: nor should we expect to be taught the mind of God but by the Scriptures. Praying, reading, and meditating, should go together. Let the Bible be your daily light. By it God illumines your soul, sanctifies your nature, directs your footsteps, and gives you joy and peace. Which Bible should one read? Not any of the popular modern English versions (which have been doctored and corrupted), but the beloved King James Bible or Authorised Version 1611. This is the Reformation Bible, the most trustworthy and faithful translation which preserves every vital doctrine of the faith perfectly. It is the only Bible untouched by the corrupting influences of liberal theology and the ecumenical leaven.

O may Thy counsels, mighty God,
My roving feet command!
Ne'er I stray from the narrow road
That leads me to the Lamb.

January 29

EVENING

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart" Ps 119:11

"O HOW LOVE I THY LAW! IT IS MY MEDITATION ALL THE DAY." The tables of the old covenant were laid up in the ark, within the holy place; the treasures of the new covenant should be hidden in the believer's heart. By daily prayerful meditation, we should seek to understand, enjoy, and profit from God's holy word. It is manna for the soul, light upon the road to God, and the rule by which we do His work. Let us lay up the gracious doctrines, which are the ground of our confidence; the exceeding great and precious promises, which are inexhaustible sources of strength and comfort; and the kind and holy precepts, which are our unerring guides. Hidden in the heart, no one can rob us of this priceless gift; nor do we have far to seek when we want it to enjoy. But in order to do this, we must diligently search its pages, ponder it in our minds, and feed upon it as our daily food. Except we hide it in our hearts, we shall not be sanctified by it, nor will it be written and read in our lives. May it be our daily prayer, that God would put His laws into our minds, and write them upon our hearts.

Its promises rejoice the heart,
Its doctrines are forever true;
Knowledge and pleasure they impart
They comfort and instruct us too.

January 30
MORNING

"And shalt thou be delivered?" Isa 37:11

"IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?" Hezekiah was being threatened but God was with him. The enemy boasts, but his power is bounded, and his pride precedes his fall. Often when we are distressed, and tried by a sense of sin and unworthiness, unbelief and Satan join forces, and pointing to our apparent unworthiness, assail us thus: *"And shalt thou be delivered?"* Yes, Satan, we shall surely be delivered! The God of Hezekiah is our God, and He hath said, *"I will deliver thee in six troubles, and in seven I will not forsake thee."* We believe His word, we rely on His faithfulness, we plead at His throne; and so sure as He can deliver, He will. He hath often done so in times past; He doth deliver all His praying people now, and we trust that He will yet deliver us. Not on account of anything in us, or of anything done by us, but because He hath said, *"I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him; I will set him on high, because he hath known my name."* He is faithful, His word cannot fail, nor should our faith be shaken. *Deliverance is certain, for God hath spoken, and God is true and faithful.*

His power unchanged, His love the same,
Unmoved the promise shines;
Eternal truth surrounds His name,
And guards the precious lines.

January 30
EVENING

"We know that we are of God" 1 Jn 5:19

THANKS BE UNTO GOD WHO HATH TRANSLATED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON. Now are we the sons of God: what honour and comfort is this! Yes, we are of God, created anew in Christ Jesus by the power and agency of the Holy Spirit. Consecrated to His service and glory, by the death of our great High Priest, and the sprinkling of His blood, we are set apart in His eternal purpose for His praise, brought into holy and blessed relation to Him. We once were rebels, now His willing servants; once avowed enemies, now His loyal friends; once the children of wrath, now the children of His love. We know that we are of God, by faith in His word, by love to His saints, by sympathy with Himself, by the grief when we sin, by our pleasure doing His will, by our separation from the world. Our *principles, pleasures, and pursuits* distinguish us from the world for we are of God. We are His peculiar treasure, His portion, His delight. *Amazing grace, amazing knowledge to know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.* And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true ... and we are in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

O Lord, dwell ever in my heart,
And let my spirit feel Thee near;
In Thy grand plan give me a part,
Daily show me Thy pathway clear.

January 31
MORNING

"We also joy in God" Rom 5:11

"FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND PEACE, AND JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST." It is every believer's privilege to rejoice in God, for God is reconciled to him in the person and through the work of Jesus; all charges against him are blotted out; all his sins are freely and fully forgiven; he is justified from all things and stands before God in Christ, accepted, beloved, and blessed. To him God is love; with him God is at peace, for he is now a son. This is the testimony of God, realized in the soul by faith. God is the believer's exceeding joy, and we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. If we joy in persons, they change; if we joy in friends, they die; if we joy in possessions, they fly away; but if we joy in God, though that joy may be interrupted, yet the Lord remains eternally the same, and we shall joy for evermore. Beloved, look at Jehovah in Jesus; there you see Him as the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort; rejoice in Him as your God, your portion, your all in all. Throughout this day, joy in God as your Father, your Friend, and your Saviour. *In this rejoice and be exceeding glad.*

O that I could now adore Him,
As the heavenly hosts above,
Who for ever bow before Him,
And unceasing sing His love!
Happy songsters!
When shall I your chorus join?

January 31
EVENING

"The joy of the Lord is your strength" Neh 8:10

"THE BLESSING OF THE LORD, IT MAKETH RICH, AND HE ADDETH NO SORROW WITH IT." This is God's assurance to His people. Fear and sorrow naturally weaken us, but faith and joy increase strength. Joy is the tonic of the soul; it quickens, enlivens, emboldens, and makes us strong. Our Heavenly Father is called, *"The blessed or the happy God."* He is also the *happy-making* God. He loves to make His people happy; therefore, as the God of all comfort, He has made great provision for our happiness. There are wells of salvation, and He bids us draw from them with joy. There is an inexhaustible fulness in Jesus, and from that fulness we receive for every want, for every duty, for every trial. We cannot draw from it too often, we cannot go to it for too much. Hear our beloved Lord: *"Ask and receive, that your joy may be full."* It is only as we live, not of self, but upon Jesus, above the world in the realm of God's free grace, that we can be truly happy. A happy Christian is a strong Christian, and it is the strong Christian that brings much glory to God, much credit to His cause, and much good to the world. It is as much our duty to be happy, as to be holy. In Christ our Lord, be both!

Rejoice evermore
In love and truth and power,
And the grace of your heavenly Friend;
Till to us who believe
He His glory shall give,
In the kingdom that never shall end.

February 1
MORNING

"Immanuel" Isa 7:14

"THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME EMMANUEL ... GOD WITH US." Consider Jesus through this day as God with thee, God in thy nature, God become man for thy salvation and consolation. None but God is able to save; thy Jesus is God: it was necessary that the Saviour should be man, and Jesus is man. He has the nature of His Father, here is His ability; He has thy nature also, here is His suitability. Jesus is God with thee, to hear thy prayers, check thy fears, redress thy grievances, sympathize with thee in thy sorrows, and be thy everyday Friend. Immanuel, God with us, observing our conduct, directing our ways, reproving our follies, providing our supplies, and making all things work together for our good. Always remember, Jesus is with you; every sin is committed under His eye, against His will, and *pains* His heart; think, when tempted to sin, that you hear *Immanuel*, the suffering, bleeding, dying, reigning Saviour, say, "*O do not that abominable thing which I hate!*" Walk before Him in love, peace, holiness, and zeal for His glory and praise. He is God for you, as well as with you. Look to His wisdom, power and love, for safety and strength; and with filial confidence trust His word; so shall you be safe and happy. *Immanuel - God with you! What lack you yet?*

Immanuel! it charms my fears,
It bids my sorrows cease;
'Tis music in my longing ears,
'Tis life and health and peace!

February 1

EVENING

"A people near unto Him" Ps 148:14

"IN CHRIST JESUS YE ARE MADE NIGH BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST." Then we which in time past were not a people are now the people of God, all because Jesus took our nature and became one with us: thus He is near unto us. He gives us His Holy Spirit, brings us into union with Himself to keep us *near to Him*. This is our highest honour, an unfailing source of security, happiness and peace. We are *near to Him* in point of relation, being His children; we are *near to Him* in point of affection, being loved with an everlasting love; we are *near to Him* in point of union, being members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones; we are *near to Him* in point of fellowship, walking with Him as a man walketh with his friend; we are *near to Him* in point of attention, being the objects of His daily, hourly, tender care; we shall soon be *near to Him* in point of locality, when our mansion is prepared, for we shall depart to be with Christ, which is far better. We are *near to Him* though poor, when deeply tried; if ever nearer one time than another, we shall be nearest to Him in death. Because we are *near unto Him*, He sympathises with us in all our sorrows; assists us in all our trials; protects us in all our dangers; holds converse with us in all our lonely hours; provides for us in all seasons of necessity; and finally admits us to glory. *For daily blessing, keep me near to Him!*

Lord Jesus keep me near to Thee
As friend and child and heir;
How pleasant is that company
When sealed by faith and prayer!

February 2
MORNING

"The Spirit of ... supplications" Zech 12:10

"WE KNOW NOT WHAT WE SHOULD PRAY FOR AS WE OUGHT." So the Spirit helps our infirmities. Thank God for the blessed Spirit. All spiritual prayer is produced by Him; He convinces us of need, discovers to us the fulness of Jesus, leads us to the throne of grace, and helps our infirmities there. The very desire to pray is from Him, and the liberty we enjoy in prayer is His gift. But how dreadful a thing is sin, and how condescending is the Holy Spirit. He sympathizes with us, and maketh intercession for us with expressions of distress, *groanings which cannot be uttered*. Sin has rendered us so vile that no sacrifice but that of the Son of God Himself could atone; and so weak that none but the Holy Spirit could enable us to pray with fervour, faith, and success. See, beloved, how deep are your obligations, and how great your dependence upon this blessed Spirit of grace and supplications. Be careful, lest you grieve Him by your carelessness, worldliness, or lukewarmness; but sow unto the Spirit, and you will reap life everlasting. He will testify to you of Jesus, and bless you with liberty and peace. Daily call upon Him, *the Spirit of supplications*.

Give me a heart to pray
Each day and never cease,
Never to murmur 'long the way,
Or seek the path of ease.

Give me a godly fear,
A faithful filial eye,
To look to Thee when sin is near,
And bid the tempter fly.

February 2

EVENING

"The Spirit of adoption" Rom 8:15

THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS US TO GOD. He is the Spirit of adoption. He leads us to call God, "Abba, Father," and to claim relationship with God as His beloved children. He unfolds Jehovah's gracious character, draws out and fixes the desires of the soul upon Him, sheds abroad His love in the heart, and then we cry, *"My Father. My Father."* To the privilege of adoption, we were predestinated before the world began; but we can only know our interest in it, or claim and enjoy that interest, as we are taught by the Holy Spirit. As the *Spirit of adoption*, He enlarges the heart, elevates the desires, sanctifies the spirit, ennobles the aims, guides into the truth, and leads the soul in free and familiar fellowship with God. He imparts holy peace, deepens penitence, and fills with heartfelt gratitude. Under His influence, prayer becomes delightful, meditation profitable, and the ordinances of the gospel pleasurable. Have you the *Spirit of adoption*? Do you feel led to approach God as a child does its father? Do you look upon the word as a volume sent from a father to his child, to instruct, reprove, and comfort him; and do you read it as such? *Thank God for the Spirit of adoption.*

Send forth the Spirit of Thy Son,
O God, into my longing heart,
That governed by Thy love alone,
From Thee I never shall depart.

February 3
MORNING

"Cleave unto the Lord" Acts 11:23

EVERY BELIEVER IS UNITED TO CHRIST. He is one with Him. Jesus is the vine, he is a branch; Jesus is the husband, he is the bride. Satan's design is to lure him from the Lord; he knows well he can do little or nothing while the Christian cleaves to Jesus. O then, cleave to Him by faith, in love, with perseverance! Cleave to His truth, to His people, to His ordinances, to His word, and to His throne. Think of Jesus as the affectionate child thinks of his beloved father, as the tender bride thinks of her devoted bridegroom, as the way-worn traveller thinks of his cheerful home. Let Jesus be uppermost in thy thoughts, let His love rule thy heart, and let nothing steal away thy affections from Him. Live upon His fulness, according to His word and in the sunshine of His love, safely and happily, as you cleave unto the Lord. Never let Satan find thee at a distance from Jesus, or he will assuredly be too much for thee. He is ever on the watch to find thee wandering, that he may deceive, stumble and distress thee. Therefore *cleave unto the Lord* with full resolve of heart. Cleave to Him as the ivy to the oak, or the child to the mother's breast.

Dear Saviour, let me cleave to Thee,
Thy love the bond of union be;
And lest I ever should depart,
Keep dwelling always in my heart.

February 3
EVENING

"I press toward the mark" Phi 3:14

WE ARE ALL IN A RACE OF LIFE. We have a prize set before us, even the perfection of knowledge and holiness. Our course is marked out by God's holy word. It lies through difficulties, enemies, and trials. We have a mark on which to fix our eyes, at which we should daily strive. Our mark is the Lord in his holy exemplary life. We aim to be like Him, to oppose sin, resist Satan, overcome the world, endure troubles and trials, and do good. Our Lord ran His race, keeping in view *"the joy set before Him."* He made His mark, won His crown, and is now seated in glory at God's right hand. He is our pattern and example. On Him the eye and the heart should be fixed; after conformity to Him we should press, laying aside every weight of besetting sin. Let us run the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Like the apostle, let us pursue one object without wavering, and press toward the mark. This will ensure the prize, for Jesus says, *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne."* *To that mark, press on!*

The moment we begin our race,
We must the Saviour's cause embrace,
Press for the mark, the prize obtain,
And then with Christ in glory reign.

February 4
MORNING

"Precious faith" 2 Pet 1:1

FAITH IS GOD'S PRICELESS GIFT. It is the fruit of everlasting love, the gift of grace; we believe through grace. Faith which is the evidence of salvation, includes giving credit to the gospel report of a free and full salvation for poor, unworthy sinners. It is an application to Jesus on the throne of grace, founded on that report, and a trusting in the work and death of Jesus for salvation. This always produces love to Jesus and leads the soul to obey Him out of gratitude. It is precious; being scarce, few thus believe; being valuable, without it we cannot please God, cannot be justified, cannot rejoice in hope, or enjoy gospel blessings; but he that believeth is entitled to every precious promise, to all the fulness of Christ, to enjoy God in the new covenant relation, and shall never see death. He is passed from death to life, and shall never come into condemnation. Gracious God! Give unto Thy people, and unto me especially, much precious faith, that believing in Jesus, I may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. O to believe this day without wavering! O to be strong in faith, giving glory to God!

O for a faith that will not shrink
Tho' pressed by many a foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe;
A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without,
That, when in danger, knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt.

February 4
EVENING

"See that ye be not troubled" Mt 24:6

THE END TIME IS A TIME OF GLOBAL UPHEAVAL AND UNREST. Are you agitated, anxious, dejected, confused, or alarmed? See that you meet the troubles of the present time with courage, patience and fortitude, submitting yourself to God. The world may be troubled, but not you. You are a sheep of His fold, a child of His love. You should not be troubled, for all things that concern you are appointed by infinite wisdom and love: you are safe in God's almighty hand. He is with you to keep you from all evil. With every temptation He will also make a way of escape so that you will be able to bear it. Therefore watch and pray: the Lord will surely keep you from anxiety and dejection. *"See that ye be not troubled."* Trusting in His promises, walk close by His side; casting all your cares and burdens on the Lord, for He careth for you. Your light affliction is but for a moment: it works for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Look not at your troubles, but look to the Lord, the author and finisher of our faith. To you He says, *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."* He is your helper: fear not what man shall do unto you.

Lord, bid my troubled soul be still,
And rest upon Thy holy will;
Today I can't Thy purpose see,
Yet all is well when ruled by Thee.

February 5
MORNING

"Precious blood" 1 Pet 1:19

THE BLOOD OF JESUS IS THE PRICE OF OUR REDEMPTION. It is the object of our faith, the ground of our peace, the subject of our meditation, our only plea at the throne of grace. It satisfies divine justice and speaks peace to the humble sinner's heart. Only the Saviour's blood cleanseth from all sin and purges the conscience from dead works. On it we build our foundation; to it we flee for refuge, our only cure for sin, and of it we sing with joy in the heart. The blood alone has wrought our perfect atonement. No sinner can perish who washes in it and pleads it before God. How precious is the blood! Whenever assailed by guilt of conscience, fears rising in your mind, flee to the Saviour and hide under the blood of Jesus. There at the mercy seat find peace, cleansing, healing and sanctification. Only the precious blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin. To this alone we must look as the foundation of our hope, and ground of our peace; *for without shedding of blood is no remission.*

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.
Dear dying Lamb! Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more.

February 5
EVENING

"The God of peace" Heb 13:20

FOR CHRIST ONLY IS OUR PEACE; in Him we who were once far from God are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Now God is fully satisfied, and perfectly reconciled to us. Then we have peace with God and nothing to fear from Him, but may expect every blessing for which we plead in the name of Jesus. He was angry with us, but His anger is turned away by the blood of His Son. He seeks our welfare and we seek to promote His glory. What a sweet view of Jehovah is this! *"The God of peace."* Let us approach Him often, pour out our hearts before Him, exercise complete confidence in Him, and commit anew ourselves unreservedly for His service. He has accepted the finished work of Jesus for us; He brought Him back, alive from the dead, He placed Him at His own right hand in heavenly places, and He delights to bless our souls for His sake. He will never be more at peace with us than He is at this moment, though we may more confidently believe it, and more sweetly enjoy it. The resurrection of Jesus our substitute proves that He is fully satisfied with the atonement of the cross, and the gift of the Holy Spirit shows that He delights to do us good. Beware therefore of misconceptions or hard thoughts of God, our *"God of peace."*

O God of peace! to me impart
A quiet, peaceful frame:
Sprinkle the blood upon my heart,
And there engrave Thy name.

February 6
MORNING

"He is precious" 1 Pet 2:7

YES, JESUS IS PRECIOUS TO EVERY BELIEVER. However Christians may differ, they all agree in this, *Jesus is precious*. They cannot always feel towards Him as they wish, but they have always one and the same opinion of Him: *He is precious*: precious in His person, word, work, blood, righteousness, and intercession: as Prophet, Priest, and King: in every name He wears, every character He bears, every relation He fills, and every office He sustains: so precious that none can be compared with Him. His people love Him, but none of them think they love Him enough; they adore Him, but mourn over their want of fervour towards Him; they prefer Him above all things, and consider Him altogether lovely. Do you find Christ precious this morning? If He were to be sold, what would you give for Him? He is precious to poor, sensible sinners, to strong believers, to holy angels, and to God our heavenly Father. Is He so to you? Live near to Him, walk close with Him, and you will feel Him precious. The more you know of Him, the more you will treasure Him.

Our Jesus is more precious far
Than life and all its comforts are;
More precious than our daily food;
He's precious more than life or blood.

February 6
EVENING

"The precious sons of Zion" Lam 4:2

THE LORD JESUS IS EVER SO PRECIOUS TO US. For we are His people, and we are *precious* to Him. He calls us His jewels, His peculiar treasure, His portion. His love to us is wonderful. He values us at an infinite price, for He redeemed us with His own *precious* blood; and having purchased us at so great a cost, He will never part with us. That Jesus should be *precious* to His people is not surprising; He has done so much for them, He bestows so many blessings upon them, He stands in such a sweet relation to them, and He is so perfectly lovely in Himself: but that we should be precious to Him is astonishing; we are so poor, so vile, so degraded, so deformed, and daily treat Him with such neglect. But His ways are not our ways, nor are His thoughts our thoughts. We are His precious children, His beloved bride; He loves us tonight with all the strength and tenderness of His nature. Glorious truth! May we receive it into our hearts, meditate upon it, and retire to rest this night, rejoicing that whatever men may think of us, or however they may feel toward us, we are *precious* in the sight of the Lord. *Precious* in the sight of the Lord are the persons and the death of His saints.

Hear, O my soul, what Jesus saith,
"Never from me depart."

For all His saints in life and death
Are precious to His heart.

February 7
MORNING

"My times are in Thy hand" Ps 31:15

WE HAVE A WONDERFUL ALMIGHTY SOVEREIGN GOD. Every event in life is under His control: nothing is left to chance. His hand is in all that occurs: directing, overruling, and sanctifying to our good. He appointed all that concerns us, and appointed all in infinite wisdom and love; therefore we should not judge rashly or conclude hastily. We know not what may happen today but we know that the purpose of God cannot be frustrated, nor can His purpose fail. He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. He says, *"My purpose shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."* But this is our comfort, that He taketh pleasure in His people, and in the prosperity of His servants. Let us consider, then, that everything passes under our Father's eye, is overruled by our Saviour's power, is directed by the Holy Spirit to do us good. It shall not be as our enemies wish, or as our hearts fear; but as our God and Father pleases, and has ordained. Be not therefore anxious, troubled, or cast down; the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and He is our God. *He shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul.*

I know not what may soon betide,
But Jesus knows, and He'll provide;
My life is by His counsel planned,
And all my times are in His hand:
I'll therefore trust, nor yield to fear,
But cast on Jesus all my care.

February 7

EVENING

"Therefore trust thou in Him" Job 35:14

"SOME TRUST IN CHARIOTS, AND SOME IN HORSES."

But we trust in God our Saviour. Beloved in Christ our Lord, forget not that thy times are in His hands, that thy name is in His book of life, that He has promised to be thy God, and that He is faithful to His word. Every blessing we need is promised; every promise is firm and sure, therefore trust thou in Him. Thy heart may fail thee, thy way may perplex thee, thy fears may overcome thee, thy foes may insult thee; but thy way is not hid from the Lord; therefore trust thou in Him. His word is true from the beginning: His people in every age have proved it so, its verity is its crown; therefore you may trust it firmly, fearlessly, and constantly: and His faithful word shall calm thy fears, strengthen thy hopes, sweeten thy comforts, and lead thee to cheerful, filial obedience. His hand may seem to go against thee, but His heart beats with unutterable love toward thee; He may appear to be armed with a sword to destroy thee; but even then you should say with Job, *"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him"* and you will find, that instead of destroying, His sword is for your defence. He will honour your confidence, and bring you out into a wealthy place. *Only trust thou in Him.*

Thy ways, O Lord, with wise design,
Are framed upon Thy throne above;
And every dark and gloomy line
Meets in the centre of Thy love;
Therefore I trust in Thee alone,
And humbly pray, "Thy will be done."

February 8
MORNING

"That I may win Christ" Phi 3:8

"FOR TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST." Ever since the Lord called him, the apostle Paul found Him to be the Pearl of Great Price. Nothing else could satisfy him. But the aim of men in general is to make money, enjoy the world, and live comfortably; *the aim of the believer, like Paul, is to win Christ.* Jesus possesses all he desires, and to possess Christ would satisfy every wish. We have now a title to Him; we receive much from Him, and we enjoy His love freely; but we want to be present with Him, and to have Him as our everlasting *all in all.* He is set before us as our mark, held out as our grand prize, and is promised as the everlasting portion of every overcomer. Where is your heart this morning? Which way do the desires tend? What is the object of your pursuit today? If Jesus is the principal object, failing in our pursuit after other things will not much affect us; but our conduct will say, *"I aim to win Christ; if He is mine, all is well. Other things are but trifles."* Keeping Jesus our Lord in view will prevent murmuring, cure our impatience, and keep our hearts at peace. O may our every action cry in the ears of the observer, *"That I may win Christ!"* He who has Christ has all that heart can desire.

No sweeter strain can charm mine ears
Like His beloved name;
Nor aught beneath the skies inspire
My heart with heav'nly flame.

February 8
EVENING

"Thou knowest that I love Thee" Jn 21:15

PETER'S CONFESSION TO THE RISEN LORD WAS SINCERE. Make it your cry to God tonight, your earnest prayer: Lord, notwithstanding all my imperfections, and though I often grieve Thee, wrong Thy love, and fear to trust Thy word, *Thou knowest that I love Thee*. Though I am too much influenced by temporal things through dark corruption within me, though Satan sometimes deceives me, Thou searchest the heart, Thou readest the inmost workings of the soul, and *Thou knowest that I love Thee*. Thou knowest that there is embedded in the depths of my nature, a principle that cannot, will not be satisfied without Thee. Therefore I sigh for Thy presence, long for Thy love to be shed abroad in my heart, pray for Thy glory to be revealed to my soul, and desire above all things to claim and enjoy Thee as mine. *I love Thee*, therefore I am dissatisfied with the world. *I love Thee*, therefore I desire to please Thee. *I love Thee*, therefore nothing wounds me so deeply as the thought of being separated from Thee. O that *I loved Thee* more! I want to feel my heart glow whenever I think of Thy name. I want to do always those things that please Thee, and to stand ready and willing at any moment, in any way, to depart and be forever with Thee. *To be with Christ is far better.*

Lord it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint!
Yet I love Thee, and adore;
O for grace to love Thee more!

February 9
MORNING

"Be watchful" Rev 3:2

CHRISTIANS IN TODAY'S WORLD NEED TO BE WATCHFUL. Careless slumber is perilous. Our adversary Satan is watching to ensnare us, the world is watching to exult over us. But our God is watching to protect us. Jesus, our best Friend, says, *"Be watchful."* Watch against the spirit of the world, against thy easily besetting sins, against seasons of temptation, and against Satan, the sworn enemy of thy soul. Watch for opportunities to do good, for answers to prayer, for the appearance of God as our God of providence. Unite in prayer to God, dependance on His holy word, and watchfulness together; pray to be kept from sin, from temptation, unspotted from the world; trust in God to answer, but do not leave the throne; and then watch as though all depended upon thy diligence and efforts. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments spotless. *"Watch ye therefore, and pray always."* Trust not in thy watchfulness, but while watching trust in God. He who keepeth thee will not slumber. He is with thee when on guard, as well as when thou art feasting on His word and rejoicing at His table. He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous. *"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry."* *Watch ye therefore, and pray always.*

O gracious God in whom I live,
My feeble efforts aid;
Help me to watch, and pray, and strive,
Though trembling and afraid.

February 9
EVENING

"I give myself unto prayer" Ps 109:4

WATCHFULNESS AND PRAYER SHOULD BE ALWAYS UNITED. The praying Christian should watch, and the watching Christian should pray. The one exercise helps the other. We should be given to prayer as to our business, our daily occupation. It will preserve us from innumerable evils, and bring untold blessings into our possession. God loves to hear us pray. The prayer of the upright is His delight. May we be impressed with this thought whenever we go upon our knees. God loves to see me approach Him; He delights to hear me plead with Him. He listens to me with a Father's ear. He rejoices over me with a Father's heart. He is grieved when I neglect His throne, and cannot approve of my hurrying over my devotions, as I sometimes do. He says, *"Come, come boldly."* If we disregard His word or slight His invitation, He will send some trial, raise some storm, or let loose some enemy to drive us to His throne. If we could hear the voice of our troubles distinctly, or understand its language, we should hear it shout, *"To your knees, and call upon your God!"*

Father into my heart convey
The power incessantly to pray,
And plead my Saviour's blood;
In love Thy Holy Spirit give,
In me to work, and breathe, and live,
That I may walk with God.

February 10
MORNING

"God is for me" Ps 56:9

"IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?" Beloved, the greatest mercy any man can enjoy is to have God on his side, engaged in his conflict, and employed in his most important concerns; this mercy is yours. *God is for you.* He chose you in Christ before the world began. He formed you to show forth His praise. He preserved you in Christ and called you by His grace. He quickened you by His Spirit and led you to Jesus. He has given you His Son and promised every additional good. He has said, *"Thou art Mine."* You have said, *"I am Thine."* He is now your refuge and strength; He is tenderly concerned for your welfare, steadfastly devoted to your cause, and closely observes every step you take. He may try your faith, but will certainly supply your wants. He may exercise your patience, but will never turn a deaf ear to your cries, except when you regard iniquity in your heart. No parent ever felt so deeply interested in the welfare of a beloved child as thy God does in thine. He says, *"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."* Trusting such a promise, who can fail?

If God is mine, I need not fear
The rage of earth and hell;
He will support my feeble frame,
Their utmost force repel.

February 10
EVENING

"My soul thirsteth for God" Ps 42:2

DOES THIS DESCRIBE YOU, MY FRIEND? Do you really long for God? It is not enough for the true Christian to know that God is for him: he wants to realize His presence, to hold sweet fellowship with Him, and to enjoy His love. Being created anew in Christ Jesus, he has an appetite to feed upon and enjoy divine communion; nor can he be satisfied without them. He longs for the gracious presence of his God, and finds it his joy, his strength, and his delight; when denied this favour he is dissatisfied and cast down. Ordinances, without God, are to him unsatisfying; the Scriptures, without God, are a light without warmth; the choicest privileges, without God are like rich provisions presented to someone with a high fever. *He panteth for God as a hart panteth after the water brooks.* God is his life, the presence of God is his delight, the joy of the Lord is his strength. Without God life is worthless, sickly, and sorrowful. My friend, is this your experience? Are you satisfied with cold knowledge or empty forms without the presence of God? *Beware of a religion without Christ and without God.*

Lord of heaven and earth, my trust
Looks to Thee alone - I must;
For Thy love I thirst, I sigh;
To my longing soul draw nigh:
Now Thy glorious face unveil,
Let my faith and pray'r prevail.

February 11

MORNING

"I will spare them" Mal 3:17

OUR GOD IS OF GREAT COMPASSION. He is merciful and forgiving, and He promises to spare. But whom will the Lord spare? All His children, especially those who speak of His goodness, witness to His faithfulness, think upon His name, and honour Him before an evil generation. He says, *"They shall be mine, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a father spareth his obedient son."* If we are aiming at the Lord's glory, and walking by His word, we have nothing to fear from any of His dispensations. He will shield us from danger, sanctify our troubles, and secure our best interests. If we are living to His praise, we may safely leave our wants and our comforts in His hands; He will supply the one and preserve the other. He says, *"Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Bring every trouble to my throne, every want to my attention; I am EL-SHADDAI, God all-sufficient; enough in the absence of everyone and everything. I am your God; I may punish the nations, but I will spare you. Believe this, and be happy. Rejoice in this, and glorify me. You are no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Though I punish the world, I will spare you."*

Jesus, my Saviour and my Lord,
 'Tis good to trust Thy name;
Thy power, Thy faithfulness, and love,
 Will ever be the same.

February 11
EVENING

"He ... spared not His own Son" Rom 8:32

"HE HATH MADE HIM TO BE SIN FOR US." Jesus went to the cross in our stead, to bear our punishment. God did not spare His own Son, that He might spare His people. He punished Him that He might comfort them. He spared not the angels that sinned. He spared not the old world, but He promises to spare us. How wonderful is this! He hath spared us, He doth spare us, and He will spare us. But Jesus was not spared. Let us reflect on this. For us He engaged in covenant, for us He came into the world, for us He fulfilled all righteousness, for us He offered an atoning sacrifice, for us He lay in the grave, for us He rose from the dead, for us He ascended into heaven, and for us He ever liveth to make intercession. He was our substitute, the surety of the better covenant, therefore He was not spared. But if God did not spare Him, He may justly spare us, and He will: and not only so, but with His beloved Son, and for His sake, He will freely give us all things which pertain to life and godliness. Precious Saviour, Thy Father did not spare Thee; Satan did not spare Thee; guilty man did not spare Thee; may it therefore be my concern to spare Thee; may I avoid and abstain from everything which would grieve Thy heart, or dishonour Thy dear name, my best, my changeless Friend!

Thy cruel thorns, Thy shameful cross,
Procure us heavenly crowns;
Our brightest gain springs from Thy loss;
Our healing from Thy wounds.

February 12
MORNING

"*Hope thou in God*" Ps 42:11

"REJOICING IN HOPE, PATIENT IN TRIBULATION." For Paul and every Christian, every day is a day of hope. However gloomy the day, however sore the trials, however distressing the affliction, *hope thou in God*. He is with you, He is your God, He has promised to befriend you, He is the faithful God. He will turn darkness into light, make crooked paths straight, and make all grace abound toward you, so that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. The changes that affect you cannot affect Him. You cannot rely too simply upon Him, or expect too much from Him. If all, within and without, seem to conspire against you, still say, "*I will hope in God.*" Expect Him to be to you all that a gracious and powerful God can be: expect Him to do all that a loving Father and infinite God can do. Hope for light in darkness, for relief in distress, for strength in weakness, for joy in sorrow, for deliverance when sinking beneath the wave, and for life in death. Hope for all you need and for all God has promised. *Hope thou in God and in God alone*. Hope because God has spoken, because He is true and faithful and you cannot hope in vain. The foundation of your hope is laid in the blood of Jesus and the oath of God.

Hope in the Lord, whose mighty hand
Can all thy woes remove;
For thou shalt yet before Him stand,
And sing *amazing love*.

February 12
EVENING

"I will hope continually" Ps 71:14

"MY FLESH ALSO SHALL REST IN HOPE," because my Lord is at my right hand, and the foundation of my hope remains immutably the same. The character of my gracious God, the faithful promises of His word, the recorded history of His saints, and my own past experience, all combine to say, *"Hope continually."* I will hope, that God will be merciful to my unrighteousness; that He will support me under all my trials, that He will send me seasonable relief, and timely deliverance; that good will flow from all my troubles; that grace will be brought unto me at the appearing of Jesus; and that eternal life will be my final portion. *"I will hope,"* for I shall be unsettled if I do not; anxiety will torment me, despondency will brood over my soul, and I shall be filled with fearful forebodings. *"I will hope continually,"* for hope honours God, it brightens the outlook, it stimulates to prayer and perseverance, and is the sweetener of human life. But I will also remember that my hope will be sorely tried; Satan will try it, the God of hope will try it, a thousand things will try it, but a good hope will live, strengthen, and work until it gives place to possession. I will not despond. Why should I? *My hope is in the eternal unchanging Father.*

Let the winds blow and billows roll,
Hope is the anchor of my soul:
It holds me to the Rock well known
And moors me to my Father's throne!

February 13
MORNING

"Search me, O God" Ps 139:23

LET US PRAY AS THE PSALMIST DAVID, that we may know our true selves. None can search the heart but God; none are desirous or willing for the heart to be searched but real Christians. A believer desires to know the truth, even if it be the worst. He hates deception. Grace has made him honest, and he prays, *"Lord, search me."* If a man were to search, he would expose, irritate, and wound us; but if God search, He will humble, strengthen, and heal us. The man who sees himself in the light of truth, and knows himself as the effect of divine searching, cannot trust himself for one moment. He flees from self to Jesus, from law to grace; he loathes himself; and while he confidently trusts in Jesus, and rejoices in hope, he walks humbly with his God. He cannot boast, he dares not presume; but walks in holiness, and ascribes all to free grace. Beloved, take your heart to Jesus to be searched. He says, *"I am He that searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins."* If He search you, He will save you from deception, self-righteousness, and every false way. Be this your daily prayer, *"Search me, O God, and lead me in the way everlasting. Examine me, O Lord, and prove me: try my reins and my heart."*

Search me, O God, and know my heart today;
Try me, O Saviour, know my thoughts, I pray.
See if there be some wicked way in me;
Cleanse me from every sin and set me free.

February 13
EVENING

"Thou hast tried me" Ps 17:3

DAVID HAD TASTED THE GOODNESS OF GOD. Not only did He visit, uphold, and keep, but He also tried and searched the heart. In the process, discipline had been exercised. The Lord trieth the righteous, and his trials discover, strengthen, and improve his character. His fire is in Zion and His furnace in Jerusalem; there He tries His people. Every trial is necessary for our good; it is ordained by eternal love; and is continued just as long as required, but not one moment longer. Every saint needs trials and every saint is tried. If the Lord intends to make us holy He will put us through the fire. Every time we pray for holiness, we pray for trials; trials enhance the value of the promises, endear the throne of grace, render the law of God profitable, and make the Saviour exceedingly precious. In trials we learn to read our own hearts, see the vanity of the world, look more closely to our evidences, humble ourselves before our God, and look with a longing eye to the end of our course. The tried Christian is likely to be a mature and stable Christian; few who walk a smooth path are either remarkably spiritual or exceptionally useful for God. Trials, like the frosts of winter, prepare our hearts to receive the good seed of the word in the spring, and then we bring forth fruit for the Lord. *"When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."*

Brought into the fire, Thy wonderful power,
Unburnt we admire, unhurt we adore;
Brought thro' our temptation, we shortly shall prove
Thy gracious salvation, Thy amazing love.

February 14
MORNING

"The Lord delighteth in thee" Isa 62:4

"THE LORD HATH SWORN." He has an unchanging everlasting plan to save and to bless. He makes no mistake. Even poor, depraved, unworthy creatures, can be the objects of Jehovah's delight! Yes, the infinite love of God has been fixed upon us from eternity: because He loved us, He sent His only begotten Son to die for us; He sent His Holy Spirit into our hearts and gave us good hope through grace. Hear the Apostle: *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ: by grace ye are saved."* Jehovah views us in Jesus, and loves us with an infinite love. Yea, He has loved us, as He has loved Him. Every believer, though his faith may be weak, his fears many, his corruptions strong, his trouble great, and his temptations sore, is the object of Jehovah's delight. Let us therefore endeavour to pass through this day, yea, and every day, believing and realizing, *"I am Jehovah's delight; the object of His highest love, the subject of His sweetest thoughts, and His portion for evermore."* O incomparable privilege! Source of comfort, holiness, and love! Thou hast more cause for gratitude than an angel, just because *the Lord delighteth in thee.*

The glories of eternal love
What angel tongue can tell?
O may I to God's glory prove
The gift unspeakable!

February 14
EVENING

"Delight thyself also in the Lord" Ps 37:4

"THE LORD KNOWETH THE DAYS OF THE UPRIGHT." He also delights in us. Ought we not also to delight ourselves in Him? In order to do this, we must have correct views of His loveliness in our minds; we must meditate on His glorious perfections as they are revealed to us in Jesus; we must realize our interest in His lovingkindness and perfect salvation, and turn from every other object to contemplate His beauty, His benevolence and goodwill to us. We should look to Him as the fountain of all good; hope in Him as the promise-performing God; wait on Him as our bountiful benefactor; trust in Him as our Father and Friend; and *delight in Him*, as our everlasting portion. Let us endeavour to take off our affections more and more from things below, and fix them upon the Lord. How few truly delight in God! How seldom do we ourselves! If we read of Him, think of Him, call on Him, believe in Him, hope in Him, and feel a little love to Him, we think it enough. But it is not. For even should we delight in Him with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength, we can never repay the debt of love we owe.

O Lord, I would delight in Thee,
And on Thy care depend;
To Thee in every trouble flee,
My best, my only Friend.

February 15

MORNING

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit" Eph 4:30

WE ARE ABSOLUTELY DEPENDENT UPON THE HOLY SPIRIT. We depend on Him for life, light, wisdom and sanctification. Without His presence, power, and operations, we are ignorant, carnal, and dead. We should therefore be very careful not to grieve or dishonour Him. We do so when we neglect, slight, or make any improper use of God's holy word; when we entertain hard thoughts of God, or low thoughts of the Lord Jesus; when we mind the things of the flesh and not of the Spirit; when we trifle with or indulge in any sin; when we slight His promptings, abuse His gifts, and give heed to Satan, the world, or the flesh. When we grieve Him, He suspends His operations, and we find no help in duty; we grow cold, carnal, and indifferent; we taste no sweetness in spiritual things, and the ministry of the word becomes dry and lifeless; the Bible becomes a sealed book; there is no power in prayer; no gratitude for mercies received; our Christian service becomes a burden. *O grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption; but sow unto the Spirit, and ye shall reap life everlasting!*

Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,
And drove Thee from my breast.

February 15

EVENING

"The Holy Spirit of promise" Eph 1:13

GOD'S PROMISES TO US ARE FAITHFUL AND TRUE. Not one word will ever go to waste. The great blessing promised in the Old Testament is the Son of God; the great promise of the New Testament is the Holy Spirit. He was promised to Jesus as the reward of His work; and He is promised to us who ask in faith. Jesus gives this living water, and all who receive it, find it to be a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The Spirit is promised to us, to teach us, lead us, comfort us, and assist us in every duty; we are dependent upon Him for light, life, joy, peace, and power, as we are upon Jesus for atonement, righteousness, and acceptance with God. He is the Spirit of promise also, as it is His work to unfold, apply, and prompt us to plead the promises before God. Without Him we read the promises but do not appreciate their fullness, realize their glory, or appropriate them to ourselves; but under His teaching, the promises appear in view, exactly suited to us, exceeding great and very precious. Every Christian has to learn in the school of experience his dependence upon and daily need of the Holy Spirit of promise. Beloved, let us never grieve Him, but with diligence let us obey Him in everything.

Father, the sealing Spirit give,
In me to live and reign!
Let me the promise now receive,
And never thirst again.

February 16
MORNING

"I will be to them a God" Heb 8:10

"OUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF GOD." How well do you know Him? Are you trusting in Him? To His people, God is the object of their adoration and trust, the subject of their meditation, and the source of all their happiness. To be our God is more than being our friend, helper, or benefactor. He engages to do us good according to His all sufficient power, to bestow upon us blessings which none else can. Only He can pardon us and pardon us He will. Only He as God can sanctify us, comfort us, and glorify us. He is our God, He is our all, and all He has is ours. He is our inheritance and a glorious inheritance is He. When in danger, in darkness, in distress, in temptation, in doubt, or in pain, God will be to you a God, delivering, enlightening, comforting, strengthening, and sanctifying. Make Him your God, look to Him for all He has promised, which is all you want; adore His divine perfections, and rejoice that they are all engaged to bless you. Live to His glory, walk by His word, and He will glorify Himself in your present and everlasting welfare. He rejoiceth to do His people good. He delights to bless them, for *to them He is their God.*

Here would I dwell and ne'er remove;
Here I am safe from all alarms;
My rest is "everlasting love,"
My refuge "everlasting arms."

February 16

EVENING

"By grace ye are saved" Eph 2:5

WE WERE ONCE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS. We were without help, without hope, until God in pity reached down to us. What a mercy to be saved, saved by mere favour! But our salvation from first to last is of grace. It originated in the mind of God before time began; and it will be completed before the throne of God, when time shall be no more. We are chosen to salvation, chosen in Christ, and this choice was eternal, sovereign, and immutable. Election gave us a name in God's book, an interest in the Saviour's merit, and a part in the saints' inheritance. We are redeemed from among men: this is favour undeserved. In redemption, a price is paid for us, by Him who came to pay the debt He did not owe, for us who owed the debt we could not pay. By Him we are called to God's kingdom and glory, a favour inestimable, unspeakable. That calling gives us a new life, and an interest in covenant blessings. We are kept by the power of God, prevented from being overcome by foes, from being crushed by dangers, and from the apostasy of the age, for we are appointed unto salvation. *O to grace how great a debtor, daily I'm constrained to be!*

Salvation is a favour God bestows,
Through Jesus' blood on enemies and foes;
By sovereign grace to make His glory known,
He raises sinners to surround His throne.

February 17
MORNING

"Now is the day of salvation" 2 Cor 6:2

"SALVATION IS OF THE LORD." May Jonah's cry from the depths of the fish's belly be ours as well. We live in an age of grace. What an unspeakable mercy to live at such a period! We are poor, lost, ruined sinners; but this is the day when salvation is freely bestowed, without money and without price. The Lord saves from the guilt, power, and penalty of sin; gives us His Holy Spirit, writes His law in our hearts, and directs our feet into the way of peace. He gives us Jesus for our Saviour, grace to conquer sin, and heaven for our everlasting home when life's journey is ended. Now is the day in which He works deliverance for His people; He employs His power, His wisdom, His word, His providence, and His angels, for our deliverance. What then shall we fear? Of whom shall we be afraid? Let us go now to His throne, remembering that it is the day of salvation; let us plead for deliverance from all that mars our peace, prevents our sanctification, or hinders our Christian walk. Let there be no despondency, for this is a day of glad tidings; it is, *"Believe, and be saved; pray, and be delivered; wait on the Lord and He will strengthen your heart. By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourself, it is the gift of God."*

Salvation! O the joyful sound!
'Tis music to our ears!
A sovereign balm for every wound,
A cordial for our fears.

February 17
EVENING

"My soul cleaveth unto the dust" Ps 119:25

"I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS." There I shall find help unfailing from God for my every need. But the Psalmist in trouble *cleaveth unto the dust*. How sad and discreditable this is. What is the world? *Dust!* Its pleasures, pursuits, profits, honours, are but *dust*, completely worthless, beneath an immortal mind, useless to a child of God. Yet our thoughts are filled with them, our affections are entangled by them, and our graces are weakened through them. Worldlings are at home in the dust; they appear to be satisfied with it, but the Christian is not at home and cannot be satisfied with it. This is God's mercy. O to look on high! To rise above the dust! To treat the things of time as they deserve! My soul, rouse and shake thyself from the dust, and put on thy beautiful heavenly garments. It is the day of salvation, thy God calls thee; He waits to hold fellowship with thee; He hath blessings of unspeakable worth to bestow upon thee. It is beneath thy dignity to lie here. It is contrary to thy calling, opposed to thy best interests. Heaven is thy home, holiness thy adornment. The King of Kings is thy heavenly husband, glory thy eternal portion. Earth is but a wilderness, only *"a passing through."* *All its glories end in the dust.*

Strange that my soul should cleave to dust,
With God and heaven so nigh;
Begone, vain world; my spirit must
Ascend to dwell on high.

February 18
MORNING

"Be ye also patient" Jas 5:8

"CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED FOR US, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE." We should follow in His steps. The Lord Jesus is the great example of patience. The Holy Spirit is the agent producing patience. Trials, troubles, and disappointments are sent from God to exercise and strengthen it. Patience is a disposition from God to bear without murmuring all that God has appointed for us; yea, with resignation and hope, we await God's time for the mercies we need, or for answers to the prayers we plead. Patience is the daughter of faith, and it is only as we believe that God has appointed for our good and His glory that we can be patient. Patience produces contentment, shuts the mouth from complaining, keeps back the heart from seeking revenge, and is a principal point in self discipline. *Are you impatient?* Then confess it and mourn over it before God; impatience makes you miserable and dishonours God. Look at the prophets, apostles, martyrs, Jesus; and *be ye also patient. "In patience possess ye your souls."* *Be patient, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

O for Thy grace to aid us on,
And fill with fortitude the breast;
Till life's tumultuous voyage o'er,
We reach the shores of heavenly rest!

February 18
EVENING

"To wait for His Son from heaven" 1 Thess 1:10

"IF I GO AND PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU, I WILL COME AGAIN." Our Lord left us with this promise. He came in the flesh to redeem us. He sent His Holy Spirit to sanctify us. He will soon come again to receive us unto Himself. This is a most glorious event. It is constantly kept before the minds of the Lord's people in the New Testament. It is our blessed hope. Be deeply interested in it, frequently meditate upon it, daily prepare for it, and be found in a waiting posture ready for His appearing. We are servants and our master is coming to call us to account. We are sons and our Father is coming to fetch us home. We are the espoused bride of the Son of God and He is coming to claim us and admit us to His glorious kingdom. He will come suddenly when few expect Him. The virgins will all slumber and sleep, but *"let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober."* We know not when Jesus will come but He will certainly come soon. Are we ready for His coming? Will you be glad to hear the trumpet sound, see the heavens pass away, and behold Him come in like manner as His disciples saw Him go into heaven? *For that momentous event be ye ready.*

The Saviour comes! He comes to reign,
To banish sorrow, sin, and pain;
Prepare, my soul, and patient wait,
So shall thy peace and joy be great.

February 19
MORNING

"He careth for you" 1 Pet 5:7

GOD IS THE GOD OF ALL GRACE. He has called us to eternal glory by Jesus our Lord. He continues to care for us. He knows all His people, their persons, wants, and trials. He thinketh upon them to benefit, to deliver and supply them. He keeps His eye upon them in all places, at all times, and under all circumstances. He has them in His hand, and will not loose His hold. He looks upon them always as His own, the objects of His love, the purchase of His blood, the temples of His Spirit. They are precious in His sight. He knows they are weak, fearful, and have many enemies. He teaches them to cast themselves and all their cares upon Him. He has given them His word that He will care for them. It is a Father's care which He exercises. It is wise, holy, tender, and constant; therefore all will be well, only trust. Believe that He cares for you this day; commit all your concerns to Him in the faith of this: leave them with Him, persuaded that He will manage all things well by His infinite wisdom, and bring all to a good conclusion by His omnipotent power. Cast all your cares upon Him for He careth for you. *"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; He will never suffer the righteous to be moved."*

"Cast," He says, "on me thy care,
'Tis enough that I am nigh;
I will all thy burdens bear,
I will all thy wants supply."

February 19

EVENING

"Take ... no thought for the morrow" Mt 6:34

"YE ARE OF MORE VALUE THAN MANY SPARROWS." Anxious Christians, give ear to our Lord's words. If He cares for sparrows, will He not care for you? Let no anxious, perplexing, distressing thoughts flood your mind. You know not that you shall live even until tomorrow, for the Lord may take you home tonight. But if you do, the Lord will be as thoughtful of you, as kind to you, and as watchful of you, as He has always been. There is daily grace as well as daily bread. You cannot be fatherless and you will not be neglected. Whatever your circumstances may be, your Father knows them. He has provided for them and He will bring you through, to His own great glory. Let the peace of God rule in your heart. Stay yourself upon the word of the Lord. Your loving Saviour wishes you to be free from anxiety, to wait upon Him without distraction, to honour Him by the exercise of calm, patient, believing trust. Go to rest this night, obeying your Redeemer's word, *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all temporal things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."* When you awake in the morning your God will still be with you, as He promised, to lead you ever onward unto the perfect day.

By day by night, at home abroad,
Still I am guarded by my God:
By His unfailing bounty fed,
By His unerring counsel led.

February 20
MORNING

"Is the Lord's hand waxed short?" Num 11:23

WE MUST NEVER TEMPT THE LORD. The Israelites did that in the wilderness and kindled the wrath of the Lord. Be not faithless like them: only trust and not doubt. He has all power: is anything too hard for the Lord? Why then are we cast down? Because we do not believe His word, depend simply on His faithfulness, and expect all we need from His hand. He was displeased with Moses when he questioned His power, and He is displeased with us when we doubt His love, distrust His providence, or ask, *"How can this thing be?"* Whatever may be your difficulty, trial, or want, plead with the Lord, and confidently expect deliverance; and if any temptation arises to weaken your faith, rouse your fears, or disturb your tranquility, meet it with this question, *"Is the Lord's hand waxed short?"* Beloved, look not to the hand of man, but simply look to the hand of God; man may disappoint you, God will not. He is faithful that promised. He is a God at hand. He will be near you throughout this day; His hand is able and ready to help you; therefore trust, and be not afraid.

In heaven, and earth, and air, and seas,
He executes His firm decrees;
And by His saints it stands confessed,
That what He does is ever best;
Then on His powerful arm rely,
And He will bring salvation nigh.

February 20
EVENING

"My counsel shall stand" Isa 46:10

"I AM GOD, AND THERE IS NONE ELSE." Before God, man is nothing, yea, less than nothing. The counsel of man is often weak and foolish, his knowledge being incomplete, and his mind imperfect. But the counsel of the Lord is infinite wisdom, sustained by omnipotent power. Men's purposes are often determined by evil influences, or when the mind is confused and perplexed; but the purposes of God were determined by the eternal mind in wisdom, justice, grace, holiness, truth, and love. Men's counsels are often frustrated, but God's purposes never. Men's purposes are frequently defeated, but our God worketh all things after the counsel of His perfect will. His counsel includes all that is essential to our eternal welfare; His purposes embrace all the events of this transitory life: therefore we ought not to be unduly affected by anything which takes place around us. There may be confusion, conflict, injustice, oppression, but our God who determines His way through whirlwind and storm, says, *"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."* Remember, beloved, our God is at work always and everywhere. He doth perfectly according to His immutable will in heaven, earth, and hell; and He says to us, *"Be still and know that I am God."*

God will for all my wants provide,
And save me for His mercy's sake;
Me by His counsel He will guide,
And afterwards to glory take.

February 21
MORNING

"The Lord trieth the righteous" Ps 11:5

"THE LORD'S THRONE IS IN HEAVEN." He sees all and knows all. He gives grace to the righteous, and where the Lord gives grace, He always tries it; therefore His own people must expect to pass through the fire. He will try our faith, of what sort it is; our love, of what strength it is. He will also try our patience and our constancy. Let us not therefore be surprised at trials, nor let us be discouraged by them; for He tries out of pure love, with the best design, according to a wise rule, and at the fittest season. He considers our frame, our circumstances, and our foes; He does nothing rashly or unkindly. He would not put us to pain if we did not need it; trials are preservatives or restoratives; they keep us *from* evil, or bring us *out of* evil into which we have fallen. Trials then are from the Lord: His wisdom selects, His love appoints, and His providence brings them about. If you ask, *"Why, Lord, am I tried thus?"* the answer is, *"To humble thee, and to prove thee, and to do thee good at thy latter end."* Receive every trial as from God, go to Him for strength to bear it, grace to sanctify it, and deliverance from it; and so all will be well. It is not for His pleasure, but for our profit, that we are so tried.

Often the clouds of deepest woe,
A sweet love message bear;
Dark though they seem, we cannot find
A frown of anger there.



February 21
EVENING

"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" Heb 12:6

EVERY BELIEVER IS IN THE PLACE OF A SON, coming under the care and discipline of the Father in heaven. Every believer is beloved of his God, yet every believer is chastened, and chastisement is a proof of divine love. We are but children and need it; we are children and therefore receive it. Some are chastened by losses, some by sickness, some by the failure of their favourite schemes, some by domestic trials, some by the conduct of relatives or friends. We are not all chastened with the same *rod*, but we are all chastened by the same *hand*. We are not all corrected in the same way, but we are all corrected by the same wise, holy, and loving Father. Some suffer most in *mind*, others in *body*; some are tried most in their own persons, others more in their relatives. But let us never forget, every *correction* flows from love; every *stroke* is in kindness. Our follies call for *strokes*, and our sins for *rebukes*; let us therefore humble ourselves under our Father's hand. Let us not question our relationship, or His love to us, because we are so tried; neither let us think the discipline unnecessary, and so despise His *chastening*. *The Father chastens out of love.*

Afflicted by a gracious God,
The stroke I patiently sustain;
Grievous to feeble flesh and blood,
Unable to rejoice in pain;
Beneath a Father's hand I bow,
And groan to feel the chastening now.

February 22
MORNING

"He delighteth in mercy" Mic 7:18

"WHO IS A GOD LIKE UNTO THEE?" He pardons our iniquity and overlooks our transgression. In our miserable estate, God has revealed Himself as merciful. He delighteth in mercy; it is a pleasure to Him to have mercy upon us; He delights to pardon our sins, relieve our necessities, and save our souls. His own glory being secured, He delights to bless His people. He is styled the Father of mercies; and as a father takes pleasure in his children, so does our God in showing mercy. He always delights in mercy, therefore He does so this morning; go, then, and mourn over thy sins which have grieved Him and made you miserable; go, and plead for mercy at His throne, nor doubt for one moment His pity, His kindness, or His grace. Have you obtained mercy? Be zealous to glorify God in the day of visitation; be honest, and ascribe all to mercy which is her due; and be active to spread the good news abroad, assuring poor, miserable sinners, that *God delighteth in mercy*. With this, check thy fears, repel thy temptations, and comfort thy heart. Believe it as an undoubted truth, plead it as a powerful argument with God, and daily rejoice in it. It is sweet to be an infinite debtor to mercy.

'Tis mercy in Jesus exempts me from hell;
Its glories I'll sing, and its wonders I'll tell;
'Twas Jesus, my Friend, when He hung on the tree,
Who opened the channel of mercy for me.

February 22
EVENING

"He will have compassion upon us" Mic 7:19

WE CAN NEVER FULLY FATHOM THE LOVE OF GOD. Even when His anger has been provoked by our sins and the effects of His displeasure have been felt, He retaineth not His anger for ever; and though sin may have made us miserable, mercy shall make us happy. *He will have compassion upon us* because of the benevolence of His nature, in accordance with His word, to our comfort and salvation. He is full of compassion, plenteous in mercy, ready to forgive. These are His own words and they contain enough, if we did but believe them, to banish our fears, conquer our doubts, and fill us with joy and peace. We have wandered but He will have compassion, and the wandering sheep shall be restored: the prodigal shall be received with music and dancing. He will have *compassion*, let Satan suggest what he will; He will have *compassion*, let thy fears and sins be ever so numerous, yet He will have *compassion*, for He has promised. His nature prompts Him to it; He has done so in countless instances, and His heart overflows with it. As soon as ever He sees you feel your sinfulness, He will have *compassion*; He will subdue your iniquities, and cast all your sins into the depths of the sea.

Moved with tenderest compassion,
Jesus heals each wounded heart;
And the richest consolation
To the mourner doth impart.

February 23

MORNING

"Who loved me" Gal 2:20

"THE SON OF GOD GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME." Every repentant believing sinner can say the same with Paul. And what was Paul before he wrote these words? A blasphemer, a persecutor, one who injured the church of God. And did Jesus love Paul? Yes: *"He loved me."* The love of Jesus is free, and not on account of anything in a man. The cause of love is in God, not in the object loved. You may have looked for some reason to conclude that God has loved you, but you would have been disappointed. The Lord says, *"I will love them freely."* When we were dead in sins, He quickened us, *because He loved us*; He revealed Jesus to us *because He loved us*; He has given us His Holy Spirit *because He loved us*. Whom once He loves He never leaves. *Jesus loves us* this morning with a free, infinite, and eternal love. He loves our persons, apart from our graces and acts; these are the effects of His love, and not strictly the objects of His love. O Holy Spirit! whisper to our hearts this morning, *"Jesus loved thee, even thee."* O to love Him in return! *to love Him* above health, wealth, comfort, yea, life itself! O to show forth the praises of His love by humility, faith, constancy, and zeal! *We love Him because He first loved us.*

Great God, to Thy almighty love
What honours shall I raise?
Not all the ransomed saints above,
Can render equal praise:
Thy love to me surpasses thought!
O could I praise Thee as I ought!

February 23
EVENING

"She loved much" Lk 7:47

"THY SINS ARE FORGIVEN." These words from God the Son were as the sweetest music in the ears of the one forgiven. The woman from the city had been a great sinner; convinced of her sin, she sought the Saviour; seeking pardon, she found mercy. Deeply affected with the love of Christ and the manner in which He displayed it, her soul responded with love to Him in return. She not only loved Him, but she loved Him much: and therefore she could endure scorn, contempt, and persecution, in order to enjoy His presence and listen to His word. With love overflowing she brought the alabaster box of precious ointment, washed His feet with her tears, wiped them with the hair of her head, and anointed them with the ointment. Here is an example for us; we also are great sinners, Jesus has kindly received us and pardoned our sins; His love to us is as great as it was to this woman, but is our love to Him equal to hers? I fear not. *But why?* Because our conviction of sin is not as deep, our feeling of unworthiness not as strong, our apprehension of danger not as real, and our sense of pardoning mercy not as heartfelt. We must direct our prayers to Jesus, and ask for the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love. *Then we too shall love Him much.*

For love like thine, O God of heav'n,
What grateful honours shall we show?
Where much transgression is forgiv'n,
Let love in equal ardour flow.

February 24
MORNING

"Who gave Himself for me" Gal 2:20

"CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT." We were guilty and under condemnation. Jesus took our part, became our substitute. He suffered and died in our stead. Our sins were laid on Him, punished in Him, and removed by Him. God had put the curse on us, but Jesus gave Himself to bear that curse in our stead; every penalty of the law was inflicted on Him; every one of the claims of justice was paid by Him; and now God is just, the justifier of everyone that believeth in Jesus. The debt-book is crossed, the handwriting that was against us is erased, and every foe is overcome. Do we think of the law we have broken, of the justice we have provoked, of the hell we have deserved? Let me also think, Jesus gave Himself for me. He satisfied the demands of justice, fulfilled the law, and brought glory to God, in my nature, name, and stead; and God is infinitely more honoured by the life and death of my substitute, than He could have been by my obedience had I never sinned, or by punishing me for all my sin. This is our rejoicing, that God can be just, in justifying us who believe in Jesus. *Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.*

Jesus is the chiefest good;
He hath saved us by His blood:
Let us value nought but Him;
Nothing else deserves esteem.
Jesus, when stern Justice said,
"Man his life has forfeited;
Vengeance follows my decree,"
Cried, "Inflict it all on me."

February 24

EVENING

"Therefore glorify God" 1 Cor 6:20

APART FROM GOD THERE IS NO GLORY. Whatever we do must reflect God's glory. Whatever God does is for His own glory. This is the great end of all things. We are created for His glory but we sinned and came short of it. We came short of the glory of His law, in not obeying it; we came short of the glory of His image, not resembling it; we came short of the glory of His favour, not desiring it; and we came short of the glory of His presence, not seeking it. But Jesus died for us, paid the price of our ransom, wrought a perfect righteousness, and saves us with an everlasting salvation; therefore we are not our own, but are bought with a price, and should now glorify God in our bodies, and in our spirits, which are God's. To glorify God, therefore, is the main business of life. We can do this by believing His word, trusting His promises, and obeying His precepts. We glorify Him by endeavouring to bless His creatures for His sake, especially by visiting, relieving, and comforting His poor saints; also by spreading His gospel, by governing our tempers, training up our families in His fear, and seeking the honour of His name in all we do. *To glorify God is our duty, our reasonable service. O may it be our pleasure and delight!*

O Thou who didst my person buy,
And paid the price in blood,
Assist me now to glorify,
And only live to God!

February 25
MORNING

"Christ is all" Col 3:11

"GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM." Because our Lord humbled Himself, God has given Him a name which is above every name. This is God's purpose, which cannot be frustrated, that Christ shall be all. He is all in our justification and sanctification, for we are justified and sanctified only in His name. He is all in our preservation and glorification, for we are kept by His power, and enter heaven through His merits. He should be all in our pursuits, pleasures, hopes, motives, and aims. Many put their comforts in the place of Christ, and then God puts comfort out of their reach; others put their graces in the place of Christ, and then faith, hope, and love, are concealed by a cloud. There must be nothing between God and us, but Jesus; we must look only to Him - away from sin, from graces, from works, and expect to be accepted, blessed, and honoured only in the name and for the honour of Jesus. He is our conquering Saviour: by Him we overcome our foes; He is our plea, by which we prevail with God; our righteousness, by which we are justified; our peace, which comforts us in life and in death. *Christ is all we want*, or God can give. He is our sun and shield, our present joy and everlasting portion. *He is our all on earth and He will be our all in heaven.*

Saviour! the knowledge of Thy love
Into my soul convey;
Thyself bestow! for Thee alone,
My all in all, I pray.

February 25
EVENING

"My meditation of Him shall be sweet" Ps 104:34

"BLESS THOU THE LORD, O MY SOUL." How manifold are Thy works. Thou art worthy of my meditation all the day. To meditate is to think deeply and seriously, and at length, upon one subject: if the subject is godly, the exercise is peculiarly profitable: if the mind is spiritual, meditation of Jesus will be sweet. Let us think of Him frequently, intently, and seriously. Let us meditate on the glory of His person, the riches of His grace, the power of His love, the tenderness of His sympathy, the strength of His arm, the merit of His blood, the magnificence of His righteousness, the triumph of His conquest, the splendour of His ascension, the efficacy of His intercession, the exalted station He fills in heaven. Think of His constant care of His people on earth, what He gives to them, what He requires of them, and the glory to which He will raise them, when He comes again the second time. Let us meditate, and let Jesus be our subject. Let us meditate on His person, His office, His work, His kingdom, His humiliation, His exaltation, and His character. *Such meditations will be sweet, revealing to us the Lord in nature, in providence, and in grace.*

Sweet are the thoughts which fill my breast,
When on His various works they rest;
God my Creator lifts my voice!
In God my Saviour I rejoice!

February 26

MORNING

"Ye do dishonour me" Jn 8:49

OUR LORD ONLY IS WORTHY OF ALL HONOUR. Not to honour Him is a great offence. This is a complaint brought against us by our Lord Jesus Christ: *"Ye do dishonour me."* Let us take heed. He has assured us of His love, that He seeks our good, that He will not be wroth with us; we dishonour Him therefore by our fretfulness under trials; by our murmuring when all is not as we wish; by our impatience to be delivered from pain; by our unbelief awaiting the fulfilment of His promises; by our unthankfulness for the many mercies we receive; by employing His favours in Satan's service; by limiting His power or His goodness; by neglecting our duties from want of love or zeal; by boasting of our merits instead of relying on His free grace; and by looking to others, instead of looking only and always to the Lord. Dishonouring Jesus is a great sin; it produces deadness, pain, and misery; let us realize its seriousness, lament it before God, seek repentance for it and forgiveness of it. O let us aim to honour Jesus by gratitude, patience, faith, love, forbearance, penitence, zeal, and by constantly striving for His glory! *Let us honour Him in life, in death, and for ever!*

Lord, draw my heart from earth away,
And make it only know Thy call;
Speak to my inmost soul, and say,
"I am thy Saviour, God, thine all!"
Nor let me more dishonour Thee,
But Thy devoted servant be.

February 26
EVENING

"Repent and do the first works" Rev 2:5

"REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD AND FAITH TOWARD OUR LORD JESUS CHIRST" is the essence of the gospel. Repentance implies serious thought, pondering over the conduct and state of the heart; it proceeds from deep and solemn conviction of our sin and sinfulness in the sight of God; it proves a concern to escape danger, obtain pardon, and enjoy peace; it includes sorrow and remorse - enlightened and heartfelt - that we have grieved the Lord, dishonoured His cause, and slighted His mercy; it always leads to reformation. There may be some degree of reformation without *repentance*, but there can be no real *repentance* without reformation. Let us examine our ways, reflect on the dishonour we have done the Saviour, seek anew the tokens of His forgiving love, mourn over our follies and faults, and begin again to *do our first works*. Look to Jesus, wait upon God, search His holy word, diligently *attend His ordinances*, speak of Jesus and for Jesus, and abstain from all appearance of evil, as we did at first. What love, what zeal, what carefulness, what consecration to God, we manifested then! Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. *Let us repent and do our first works.*

Recall to mind the happy days,
When thou wast filled with joy and praise;
Repent, thy former works renew,
Then He'll restore thy comforts too.

February 27
MORNING

"All things come of Thee" 1 Chr 29:14

"PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW." Without the Lord's giving and enabling we have nothing. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above; creatures apart from God are empty cisterns, dry wells, deceitful brooks. All good dwells in thy God and flows from Him to thee. Every crumb of mercy is from Christ. What He gives freely, cost Him groans, sweat, and blood, to procure for thee. View Him as the source of all good, and His atonement as the channel through which all good flows to thee. He gives thee thy temporal mercies, and thy spiritual blessings; He gives thee also the ability to enjoy them, and employ them for His glory. He directs all events, whether pleasing or painful. *"Be not angry with yourselves,"* said Joseph to his brethren; *"it is not you, but God."* To Him therefore your mind should be directed in prayer, adoration and praise. Look above creatures and see the Lord's hand, as did Job, Eli, David, and Paul. Rest with unshaken confidence and filial resignation on His word, power, providence, and love; ever remember that *all things come of Him*. The Lord will give us that which is good, and heaven's blessing with it, if we look to Him, and walk with Him. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

He sank beneath our heavy woes,
To raise us to His throne;
There's ne'er a gift His hand bestows,
But cost His heart a groan.

February 27

EVENING

"Rest in the Lord" Ps 37:7

"THERE IS NO PEACE UNTO THE WICKED." Neither is there any rest. The sinner is a very pitiable person. He is restless, without a firm foundation, wandering about with natural desire, in constant unease and agitation. To him our Lord says, *"Come unto me, and I will give you rest."* The believer has accepted this invitation, and has found rest; but he is often lured away by temptations, worldly cares, and unbelief; and then he becomes restless again. Beloved, you are called to rest, not in your natural talents, attainments, or enjoyments, but to *rest in the Lord*. Rest in the will of God, for whatever He wills is for your good, your highest good: *"this is the will of God, even your sanctification."* Rest in the love of God, and often meditate on the words of Jesus on this point, *"Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me."* Rest in the mercy of God, from which flows endless streams of blessings for your supply. Rest in the word of God, for it is true, immutable, and pledges Him to do you good. Rest in the relation thy God fills to thee: He is thy Father, kind, careful, wise, and ever present. Rest in the Lord as He is manifested in Jesus, thy God in covenant, working all things after the counsel of His own will.

Safe in the Lord His saints may rest,
And calmly wait His will;
Though poor and tried they yet are blest,
Their God is gracious still.

February 28
MORNING

"I am He that liveth" Rev 1:18

"IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE," for He has conquered death for us. Jesus once died in our stead; He now liveth at the right hand of God. He is the fountain of life. Because he lives, His people shall live also. He lives in heaven to see the fruits of the travail of His soul, in the regeneration, sanctification, preservation, and glorification of His beloved family. He lives to intercede for them, to sympathize with them, and to pour down blessings upon them. He lives to watch over them, to counsel and direct them, and to save them for evermore. He lives to execute the purposes of the Father, to direct all the concerns of His church, and to glorify us with Himself for evermore. Gracious Saviour! earthly friends may die but Thou livest; temporal comforts may be lost but we still have a place in Thy heart; Thou art our Friend before the Father's throne! May we ever remember, Jesus liveth who was dead; and He is alive for evermore and has the keys of hell and of death. O to live for Him on earth who lives for us in heaven! O to live like Him, that as He is, so we may be in this world - representatives of God and holiness! O to live by faith in Him, in sweet and holy fellowship with Him. *All because Jesus liveth!*

His saints He loves and never leaves,
The chief of sinners He receives;
Cheer up, my heart! with this revive;
The sinner's Friend is yet alive.

February 28
EVENING

"Because I live, ye shall live also" Jn 14:19

"WITH CHRIST AN ENDLESS HOPE; WITHOUT CHRIST A HOPELESS END." Christ and His people are one. He is the Head, and they are the members of His body. From Him they receive life, wisdom, power, holiness, and every grace. He has a fulness of good gifts to supply them, and out of that fulness He daily gives them grace as their circumstances may require. We have hitherto been supplied with grace by Jesus, and He who hath supplied us until now, will continue to do so. He lives, necessarily, as God; officially, as God-man. He lives in high authority, possessing all power and unbounded influence. He lives to fulfil His word, complete His work, and lead His people on to the enjoyment of eternal life. They shall live as Christians, persevere in their journey, and be happy in His love for ever. They shall live because Jesus who ever lives is their life, their representative, and their surety. He lives for them, ruling, over-ruling, securing and loving. He lives in them and their life is hid with Him in God. Beloved, see the ground of your safety, the source of your joy, the wisdom of your God. Your life and happiness are identified with the life of our resurrected Lord Jesus.

If my immortal Saviour lives,
Then my immortal life is sure;
His word a firm foundation gives,
Here let me build and rest secure.

February 29
MORNING

"Love not the world" 1 Jn 2:15

WHAT IS THE WORLD? A shadow, a deception, the enemy of God. *What can it do for us?* It may enchant, but it will deceive. It may please for a time, but will sting in the end. It is *enemy country*; we must pass through it, but we should not be too close or friendly with the inhabitants of it. It crucified our Saviour; it is in open rebellion against our God; it has allured, deceived, and injured many of our brethren; it is reserved unto fire at the judgment of the great day. We shall soon be called to leave it; we may be called today: *"For what is our life? It is even as a vapour, which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away."* Let us fix and spend our love upon a worthier object; let us turn our thoughts to heaven and to Jesus; let us seek grace that we may daily and heartily say, *"Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."* Precious Saviour! engross our attention, fix our affection, and be our all in all! *None but Jesus! None but Jesus!* should be our motto every day. He alone is worthy of our love, for He alone died and lives to win it.

Lord, from this world remove my love,
Set my affections right;
Help me press on to heav'n above,
By faith and not by sight.

February 29
EVENING

"The Lord is at hand" Phi 4:5

OUR LORD'S COMING IS NEAR, EVEN AT THE DOORS. *When* He will come is uncertain, therefore we should always be ready. If we have realized the certainty and nearness of the Lord's coming, we should not be ensnared by the world as we too often are. Our love should be withdrawn from present things, and we should be daily laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Jesus will come to conclude the final chapter of history; to judge the world, to be glorified in His saints, and to reward everyone according to his works. *The Lord is at hand*; we should think of this, and be fully persuaded of it; for it would preserve us from temptation, prevent our backsliding, and deepen our godliness and spirituality. He will come, therefore we should expect Him, prepare for Him, and be found waiting, watching, and longing for His appearing. When He comes He will bring us grace, destroy all our foes, conform us to His own lovely image, and then admit us to glory. When Jesus comes His people will be transformed: sighs and tears will be exchanged for songs of triumphant hallelujahs.

Saviour, hasten Thine appearing,
Speed, O speed the glorious day;
When the awful summons hearing,
Heaven and earth shall pass away:
Then with golden harps we'll sing
Glory, glory to our King.

March 1
MORNING

"Thy Maker is thine Husband" Isa 54:5

"THE LORD OF HOSTS IS HIS NAME." He is also the God of the whole earth, and He condescends to be a Husband to me. Amazing condescension! Does Jesus, by whom all things were made, fill this sweet relation? Is He thy nearest and dearest relative? Yes, He loves thee more than any other: He is more closely united to thee and more deeply interested in thee. He is the Bridegroom, thou art the bride; He has espoused thee to Himself, has made full provision for all thy present wants, and is gone to prepare thy everlasting habitation, where thou art to dwell with Him and enjoy His love. He regards thee as His beloved bride, and He would have thee live daily in the confidence that He is thy Lord. O love Him above all! Call upon Him with deep affection. Look to Him with ardent longing. Soon He will come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in Him. Think not that He will ever forget the person, or neglect the concerns, or turn a deaf ear to the requests of His beloved blood-bought bride. His love is infinite, and His whole affection is set on thee, and will remain fixed on thee for ever. He is of one mind, and none can turn Him. Having loved thee, He will love thee unto the end.

Jesus my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King,
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

March 1
EVENING

"Show Thy marvellous lovingkindness" Ps 17:7

"O GOD, INCLINE THINE EAR UNTO ME." Do you doubt His readiness to answer? Is He not a God of all compassion and love? He has already shown it by taking us into the nearest, sweetest, and most profitable relation to Himself. What love to call a worm His child! A sinful and polluted worm His bride! He pledged Himself to us in order to banish our fears, encourage our confidence, and raise our expectations. His lovingkindness is love in the most attractive form, love acting in the kindest manner, love robed in tenderness, benevolence, and condescension. For Jesus our Lord to show marvellous lovingkindness is to bestow divine favours such as reason or custom could not permit us to expect; favours which only faith would look for, or a God of love bestow. Yet such favours we may ask, and having asked in faith, expect. Beloved, never forget, our God rejoices to do us good; He takes pleasure in the prosperity of His servants, and He delights to give us good things. If we were but humble, simple minded, living in the daily exercise of faith, He would deny us nothing. We have not, but it is because we ask not, or because we ask amiss. *Yet His lovingkindness is marvellous.*

O Thou, all gracious Lord most high.
On Thee alone I must rely;
To me Thy gracious ear incline,
And aid me with Thy power divine.
To me while journeying here below,
Thy marvellous lovingkindness show.

March 2
MORNING

"Resist the devil" Jas 4:7

IN CHRIST OUR LORD WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS. He gives us the victory over Satan, our deadly foe. Satan is always watching for an opportunity to harm us. He first tempts us to sin and then accuses us of sinning. He misrepresents every subject. He endeavours to make the world appear lovely, sin trifling, death terrible; he generates hard thoughts of God, perverts His holy word, and leads believers into bondage. His fiery darts are deadly, his thoughts most blasphemous, and often are sown in the mind by him; then he lays them to our charge, and distresses our souls on account of them. But we are called to resist him steadfast in the faith, believing only what God and Christ have done for us, what He has promised to give us, and that shortly God will bruise Satan under our feet. The triumph of the wicked one is but short-lived, for we have overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of His testimony. Look to Jesus, call upon thy God, and oppose the blood and righteousness of Jesus to all his charges. He is mighty but thy Jesus is almighty. Take the shield of faith and thou shalt quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. *Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

 Temptations everywhere annoy,
And Satan's snares my peace destroy;
 Lord, let Thy presence be my stay,
And keep me in earth's perilous way.

March 2
EVENING

"They overcame him" Rev 12:11

"OUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF GOD." He alone is our sufficiency and defence against the adversary, our fearsome foe, *"the great dragon, that old serpent ... the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world."* His power is great, his cruelty is greater; his cunning is deep, and his designs are dreadful. He hates the Saviour and he hates all who love him. He attempts to destroy and will distress those whom he cannot devour. He has tried every means to injure the Church of God, and he still tries to injure every believer. He is dreadful as a roaring lion; but he is more likely to harm us when he comes slyly, and quietly, as a serpent. He is most dangerous when he assumes the garb of an angel of light, for then we are apt to receive him. But the saints of ages past overcame him, yet they were as weak and as liable to be overcome as we are. They overcame him but not by reason or argument or eloquence; they conquered by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony. To that blood they looked when he tempted them to despair; by that word they walked, when he tried to draw them aside. The blood was their plea, the ground of their hope, and the subject of their rejoicing.

By the blood of the Lamb the saints overcame,
And its power continues for ever the same;
The world and its snares shall surely be subdued
By virtue divine of our Redeemer's blood.

March 3
MORNING

"Let us have grace" Heb 12:28

THANK GOD HE IS THE GOD OF ALL GRACE. To each true child He gives much grace to help in time of need. We need grace daily to sustain us in troubles, to subdue our corruptions, to sanctify our tempers, and to preserve us in temptation. We need more grace to quicken our languid affections, to enlarge our service, to render us useful to others, to enable us to endure to the end, and to meet death with confidence and joy. Our God is the God of all grace. Jesus is full of grace; He giveth more grace. It is promised in the word: *"He will give grace."* He has invited us to come and receive it. *"Come boldly to the throne of grace, that ye may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."* His grace is sufficient for us; without grace we are dull, lifeless, and sure to fall. O let us look to Jesus for grace to strengthen us, sanctify us, and make us useful! Let us never attempt anything in our own strength, but let us receive from the Lord, that we may live to the Lord; and let us ascribe any good that we do to the grace of God. Grace is always free. It is free for us this morning and our God bids us to the throne of grace: there you will obtain mercy and find grace to help you this day.

On me, my King, exert Thy power,
Make old things pass away;
Transform and draw my soul to Thee,
Still nearer every day.

March 3
EVENING

"As obedient children" 1 Pet 1:14

THE SPIRIT BEARETH WITNESS THAT WE ARE THE SONS OF GOD. Sons and daughters by the glorious adoption of the Spirit, be thankful! We should daily realize the blessed fact that God is our Father, and we are His children. Our heavenly Father has made ample provision for all our wants. In Jesus we will find all our needs as sinners, and all we require as saints. Whatever is in Jesus is for us, and it is our duty as well as our privilege to receive out of the fullness of Jesus, grace for grace. As children, we should listen to our Father's voice, learn His will and do His commands. We have only to obey; our Father will provide. Our focus is on duty, not on consequences. Only let us ascertain our Father's will upon any point, and it becomes at once our duty, our honour, and our happiness to do it. Believer, you have a Father who loves you more than tongue can tell, who has blessed you in Jesus with all spiritual blessings, who is now waiting for you to approach Him in prayer and praise, who wishes you to cast every care upon Him, to leave every burden at His feet, to trust Him to do you good. *As an obedient child, resign your will to His and His goodness to you is certain.*

Lord, my heart is bare before Thee,
Let me now Thy mercy prove;
Help me, for my wants implore Thee,
Love me with a Father's love.

March 4
MORNING

"Only believe" Mk 5:36

OUR GOD IS FAITHFUL AND TRUE. He is worthy of our complete confidence and trust. In faith, let us *take God at His word*. Give Him credit for meaning what He says, for being faithful to His own word; then all your fears will fly away. God speaks to you in language which you can understand; He promises all you can possibly need; He bids you put Him in remembrance, and plead with Him; He pledges His word for the comfort of your heart. If you believe not, you make God a liar; you bring darkness on your own soul; you give Satan an occasion against you; and a thousand fears, doubts, and suspicions distress you. Is it any wonder? Can you offer a greater insult to God than deliberately to disbelieve His word? But you ask, *Are the promises made to me?* Yes! to every one that believeth, and to you if you believe. And the Spirit is promised to work faith in your heart; complain not then of the difficulty of believing, or of the power of unbelief; but go to thy God, and plead with Him, crying, "*Lord, increase my faith,*" and go to His word, as to the word of a gracious Father, and simply believe it.

O that closer I could cleave
To Thy bleeding, wounded side!
Give me more faith to believe,
Steadfast in Thy love abide;
Jesus, Lord, increase my faith;
Keep me faithful unto death.

March 4
EVENING

"The Strength of Israel will not lie" 1 Sam 15:29

OUR GOD KEEPETH TRUTH FOR EVER. And He changeth not. Then He ought to be believed. It is impossible for God to lie, then He ought to be trusted. His promises are the proofs of His love; they are as changeless as His nature: in time, they shall be made good. He is the Omnipotent One who can fulfill His word; He is the Unchangeable One, who certainly will. His strength is pledged to His people, to sustain them; His resources, to supply them; and His faithfulness, to comfort them. He speaks to us in His word; He speaks to us as sinners; He speaks to us as fearful, as tried, as suffering people, just as we are tonight. Do we believe His word? Do we regard Him as a truth-speaking God? Has He our confidence? Are we looking at His promises, and while we look, do we say, *"This is the faithful word of the heavenly Father, and is certainly true."* God's word must be fulfilled, for it is more enduring than heaven or earth, for Jesus has said, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away!"* Fix your eyes on His word, and while you do, say,

Yes, since God Himself pronounced it,
On His promise I rely;
He has said it, I believe it;
What can mortal man deny?
God inerrant cannot err,
He is truth, His word is sure.

March 5
MORNING

"Fear thou not" Isa 41:10

FEARFUL CHRISTIANS DISHONOUR THEIR SAVIOUR. Yet many Christians fear. They are prone to fear because they do not realize their relation to Him, their interest in His promises, and that they are always remembered by God. How graciously our God forbids our slavish fears, and encourages confidence in Himself! Our slavish fears dishonour Him, our filial confidence glorifies Him. He loves to be trusted; He is grieved by our doubts and fears. We should fear nothing but sin; and if we fear to sin, follow holiness and preserve a clean conscience void of offence toward God and man; if we live upon His word, daily use the open fountain for our cleansing, and cultivate filial communion with our God, then we can have no cause for fear. Beloved, leave anxiety, distrust, and slavish fear, to the poor, godless worldling; but trust in the living God always, everyday and everywhere. Hope in God; wait upon God; expect from God; follow hard after God; and all you want will be given, and all that would injure you will be frustrated. Be not afraid, only believe; the Lord Jesus is with thee; therefore, *"Fear thou not!"*

And art Thou with me, gracious Lord,
To drive away my fear?
Dost Thou proclaim Thyself my God,
Jehovah ever near?
Then farewell, anxious, gloomy care,
My God forbids my soul to fear.

March 5
EVENING

"Wait on thy God continually" Hos 12:6

"THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH." Dare you take the Lord at His word? Waiting before the throne of God makes for holiness: a quiet soul exercising faith in His word, hoping in His mercy, endeavouring to do His good pleasure, and patiently submitting to His will, is well pleasing unto the Lord. The waiting soul senses God in all things, sees Him as present everywhere, and acknowledges His hand in every event. Wait on your God continually, so will you be safe in every danger, happy under every trial, and the Lord will bestow honour upon you with each passing day. *Wait on the Lord* as the faithful servant on his kind and caring master; as the attentive maiden on her benevolent mistress; as the affectionate child on his loving parent. *Wait on Him*, for He welcomes the exercise. *Wait on Him*, for He expects it of you. Wait on Him: He rewards it with a blessing. *"Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."* Have you been waiting on your God today? Are you in a quiet waiting frame tonight? Can we say, *"I wait for the Lord, and in His word do I hope"*?

Wait, believing on the Lord,
Still let courage cheer thy heart;
Wait, for faithful is His word,
He will grace and strength impart.

March 6
MORNING

"Walk worthy of God" 1 Thess 2:12

"ARE YOU WALKING WITH THE WORLD OR WITH GOD?" The difference is as *"light from darkness, life from death."* God hath called us with a holy calling, to enjoy a holy Saviour, believe a holy Gospel, possess a holy nature, and walk a holy way. All the provisions of free grace, all the promises of infinite love, and all the precepts of reigning holiness, combine to require us to be a holy people unto the Lord our God. We are to imitate the conduct of our God: He feeds His foes, loves His people, and always acts in a way becoming His glorious character. Enemies lie in wait to deceive, errors will appear to mislead; but beware, lest being led away by the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness. Consider your character, children of God; your high calling, united to Jesus as temples of the Holy Spirit; companions of saints and angels, friends of God; consider your destination: access to God's throne of glory, the promise of a blood-bought crown, and the joy of praising Jehovah for ever. Believer, *walk worthy of God*, reflecting your character, profession and destination. *Walk with God*; walk as Jesus walked; walk circumspectly; walk in love, walk honestly as in the day; so will you adorn your profession, and secure to yourself a crown of life.

When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

March 6
EVENING

"There is therefore now no condemnation" Rom 8:1

"CHRIST JESUS IS MADE UNTO US WISDOM, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND SANCTIFICATION, AND REDEMPTION." Every believer is in Christ: united to His person, interested in His divine functions, clothed with His righteousness, and sanctified by His Spirit: *"there is therefore now no condemnation."* Doubts there may be, fears may harass, sin there is in us, but no sin is imputed to us. The believer is under no charge. By virtue of oneness with Christ, he has been acquitted from every charge and he stands justified; he is accepted of God as a beloved child and is entitled to all the provisions of grace and glory. If he sins, he is chastened; being chastened, he confesses his sins with contrition; confessing his sins, God in faithfulness and justice forgives; he is led afresh to claim and plead the finished work of Jesus. Before God he is not condemned but acquitted. No one can lay anything to his charge, for God justifies him; he does so because Christ died for him; yea, rather, because as his surety He is risen again, and is now at God's right hand as his advocate, ever living to make intercession for him. Every believer in Christ is admitted to this blessed state and unspeakable privilege! *There is therefore now no more condemnation!*

No condemnation now I dread,
I am my Lord's and He is mine;
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine.
Amazing love! How can it be?
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me!

March 7
MORNING

"Ephraim my dear son" Jer 31:20

"I DO REMEMBER HIM STILL." Despite his sins, his weeping is noted. Poor, fickle, backsliding Ephraim, is thus affectionately remembered by our infinitely gracious God. *"I will surely have mercy upon him."* Adopted by grace into the heavenly family, taught by the Spirit, and united to Jesus, God views us through Him; and having predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, He views things which are but purposed as accomplished, and we are comely through the comeliness He has put upon us. His love to us is wonderful; He says, *"He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of my eye."* He rejoices to do us good and gives His angels charge over us. He will not suffer anyone to hurt us; but lest harm should threaten, He keeps us night and day. Let us then abide in Jesus; let us cultivate communion with this gracious God; let us follow on to know more of the Lord, to trust in Him at all times, to wait upon Him continually, and to rejoice in this delightful fact, that God calls us *"His dear sons, His pleasant children."* He not only calls us so, but treats us as such; and so addresses us in His holy word. Let us call Him our Father and look to Him for all we need; so shall we honour Him, conquer Satan, and enjoy peace. Our Father is God: our God is our Father. And He calls you, *"my dear son."*

If I've the honour, Lord, to be
One of Thy numerous family,
On me the gracious gift bestow,
To call Thee, Abba, Father too!

March 7
EVENING

"Thy Father which seeth in secret" Mt 6:6

OUR GOD KNOWS US BETTER THAN WE KNOW OURSELVES. He knows everything about everybody, for He is the omniscient God. Can anyone hide himself in secret places from the Lord? Can a Christian under any circumstances escape His notice? Impossible! The eye of God has been fixed upon me every moment of this day: it is at this moment fixed full upon me. But it is a Father's eye. My Father sees in secret. He sees every secret working of my foes, and will save me from them. He sees every secret influence which is likely to injure me, and will prevent it. He sees the secret workings of my heart: my hidden thoughts, my unuttered desires, my soul's conflicts, my private temptations. He sees me withdraw for prayer, or sees me turn my imploring eye to him when I cannot. He sees my wants and woes. He sees also my secret sins, every evil thought; every improper action, every unbecoming word passes under His watchful eye. Solemn and sobering consideration this! May it make me cautious. May it keep me from yielding to temptation, from allowing improper suggestions, and from acting inconsistently with my profession. *My heavenly Father seeth me, seeth my most secret motives, thoughts, and purposes. Let everyone of these be holy in His sight.*

O may good thoughts possess my breast,
Where'er I rove, where'er I rest!
Nor let my natural passions dare
Consent to sin, for God is there.

March 8
MORNING

"They need not depart" Mt 14:16

OUR GOD IS THE GOD OF ALL RESOURCE. In Him all our needs are fully met. Many things threaten to lure or drive us away from Jesus! But we need not depart from Him; He has everything we can possibly want, for body or soul, for time or eternity. He gives grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. Having called us, and drawn us to Himself, He wishes us to abide in Him; and if tempted to leave Him, to whom shall we go? He alone can supply every want, sanctify every trial, enable us to overcome every difficulty, and make us perfect in His perfect will. The world will allure, Satan will tempt and inward depravity will prompt you to wander; but keep near to Jesus this day; think of Him, look to Him, call upon Him, converse with Him; make Him your companion, Friend, and God. There is no real happiness, or lasting peace, but in the presence and person of Jesus; and when He gives quietness none can take it away. If you wander, if you look to others, if you set your affection on anything below, you are doing yourself immense injustice, for you need not depart from a Saviour most kind. He is all, He has all, He will give all. You have only to believe His word and your wants shall all be perfectly fulfilled.

O let us ever walk in Him,
And nothing know beside;
Nothing desire, nor aught esteem,
But Jesus crucified.

March 8
EVENING

"Will ye also go away?" Jn 6:67

FOLLOWING THE LORD IS FOR LIFE. Without Him we have no life. Many gave up and left the Saviour in the days of his flesh, and many decline from his ways now. How many like Lot's wife look back; many like the man of God who came from Bethel, yield to temptation; or like Demas, forsake the Saviour, having loved the present world. *"Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it."* Go away, what? from Jesus? This would be going from light to darkness, from plenty to poverty, from happiness to misery, from life to death. Go from Jesus? To whom can we go? We profess to have discovered the vanity of the world, the insufficiency of temporal things to satisfy an immortal soul, and the excellency of the things of God. Still many go back and walk no more with the Lord. This should lead us to serious consideration. It cries to us with a loud voice and in clear accents, *"Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."* There can be no cause to leave Jesus for one moment. It is folly to stir from His side, it is dangerous to neglect His ordinances, madness to turn the back on His ways. *Will you also go away?*

Dear Lord, one bliss impart,
(Tis not from heav'n I pray,
But let me not from thee depart,
Nor ever go away.

March 9
MORNING

"Hear ye Him" Mt 17:5

IN THESE LAST DAYS GOD HAS SPOKEN BY HIS SON. Our Lord Jesus tells us all His mind and the Father commands us to *hear Him*. He speaks to us on a variety of subjects; He instructs, exhorts, warns, directs, and comforts. He always speaks in love. Every word is intended to do us good. Let us then take up His word and say, *"I will hear what God the Lord will speak."* How much better this than to listen to Satan, unbelief, carnal reason, or men. Let us believe what He says, for He speaks truth; expect what He promises, for He is faithful; practise what He commands, for His ways are peace; and abstain from what He prohibits, for it is sure to be injurious. *Hear Him*, and plead His word in prayer. *Hear Him*, and believe what He says. *Hear Him*, and compare all doctrines with His word. Hear Jesus everyday, give Him your best attention at the best time of your day. You can hear nothing better than what He says. No other one has a greater claim upon your attention. Hearing Jesus with attention, prayer, and faith, will save you from many a heartache.

Jesus my Saviour, heavenly Lord,
Thy blest commandments are most dear;
Out of Thy lips the changeless Word,
They are as music to my ear!
O may I daily love to hear
Thy tender voice of love and cheer.

March 9
EVENING

"Ye shall know the truth" Jn 8:32

APART FROM OUR LORD JESUS WE CANNOT KNOW THE TRUTH. He is our perfect Teacher. If we are of a childlike disposition, willing to do as well as to learn, we shall know the truth. All Zion's children shall be taught of the Lord. Everyone who is divinely taught comes to Jesus. He that comes to Jesus is made wise unto salvation. He that is wise unto salvation, *knows the truth*. The truth is in Christ. He is its centre. To know Him, so as to trust His word, rely on His sacrifice, and do His will, is to *know the truth*. The knowledge of the truth makes us free. It frees us from deception, prejudice, and folly. It frees us from the slavery of Satan, the bondage of the law, and the wrath of God. It frees us from the guilt of sin, the accusations of conscience, and the cruel fetters of carnal custom. It makes us free by imparting a true knowledge of God, by discovering the way of salvation, and by proclaiming pardon, peace, and reconciliation. If we *know the truth* as it is in Jesus, we shall conquer the world, enter the Redeemer's kingdom, enjoy peace with God, and render hearty and cheerful obedience to the will of God.

Saviour! to me the truth reveal,
Thy teaching, Lord, I need;
Its power and unction may I feel,
To make me free indeed:
Each fetter break that binds my heart,
And sanctifying grace impart.

March 10
MORNING

"Trouble is near" Ps 22:11

"THOU ART MY GOD ... BE NOT FAR FROM ME." Every Christian should pray this prayer, for trouble and the Christian are seldom far apart, or long apart; this may sound discouraging; but nay, take heart: our Lord Jesus and the Christian are never apart. He will never leave us, and trouble, when it comes, is intended to prevent our leaving Him, or to bring us back if we have already wandered. His loving heart guides the hand which smites; and nothing is done by Him, or permitted, but that it may be overruled for our good. Trouble may be near, but the throne of grace also is near; His word of promise is near; and He is near who justifies us. In trouble God can glorify His grace, deepen His work in your heart, increase your comforts, and fill you with joy and peace in believing. Let us plead with Him to do so, and let not trouble fill you with confusion, weaken your faith, or drive you from Him; but listen to, and act upon His word. He says, *"Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."* Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? Every trouble is intended to endear Jesus to your heart.

This land, through which His pilgrims go,
Is desolate and dry;
But streams of grace from Him o'erflow,
Their thirst to satisfy:
Jesus has all His saints can want,
And, when they need, He'll freely grant.

March 10
EVENING

"Neither be ye of doubtful mind" Lk 12:29

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER KNOWS OUR EVERY NEED. Why need we worry? Yet in our flesh, we are all prone to doubt, and to doubt that most, for which there is no reason at all to doubt. But some seem to nurse their doubts, as though doubting was part of faith in Christ our Lord. This is wrong. It is sinful. Our Lord often bids us believe, but He never encourages doubts. Doubting dishonours Him, distresses us, and gives Satan an advantage over us. Let us not doubt His providence, for it is kind; nor His word, for it is true. Let us not judge by appearances, which often mislead; but let us rest on divine promises, which can never change or deceive. Let us not look too much at ourselves, our abilities, or our circumstances; but let us look to the Lord, to His wisdom, power, and love. Let us not tremble at poverty because God can make us happier in poverty than we ever have been in plenty. If we yield to a doubtful mind, it will spoil our present comforts, hinder us in holy duties, dim the eye of our hope, and feed and nourish our fears. But what is worse than all, it will reflect upon the kindness, care, and providence of our gracious God.

Cast thy burdens on the Lord,
Leave them with thy Saviour;
He, whose hands for thee were bored,
Can and will deliver;
He is true and faithful still,
Yield thyself unto His will.

March 11
MORNING

"Beloved now are we the sons of God" 1 Jn 3:2

"BUT AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM," they were given power to become the sons of God. What amazing grace is this! For what are we? Poor, vile, depraved, unworthy sinners. So base by nature that we had not one redeeming quality, and even now, apart from the work of the Spirit, there is in us no good thing. But we were predestinated to the adoption of children; we were born again of the Spirit; and grace has put us among the children, for its own glorification. Beloved, now, while we feel so much corruption, while despised by the world, harassed by Satan, tormented with fears, *now are we the sons of God*. And will God neglect or disregard His beloved sons? No: let us then cherish the thought, believe the fact, and rejoice in the relationship. Let us walk and act as the sons of God, coming out from among the formal, the self-righteous, and the profane; devoting ourselves entirely to the Lord's service and glory. Let us remember in trouble, in sickness, and in death itself, God is our Father, Jesus is our Brother, and heaven is our home. Let us approach God as children, and plead with Him as sons. He says to us, *"Come near unto me, my son, that I may bless thee."* His blessing maketh rich.

The God who reigns above, we call
Our Father and our Friend;
And, blessed thought! His children all
Shall see Him in the end.

March 11
EVENING

"We love Him because he first loved us" 1 Jn 4:19

"HEREIN IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US." Our love to God is but a feeble reflection of His love to us. He loved us in eternity that we might love Him in time. He loved us without any cause in us; but being infinitely lovely, He should be loved for His own sake. But it is the display of His love which awakens love in our bosoms towards Him; and His love being shed abroad in our hearts we love Him in return. No man in his natural state can love God, for *"the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."* If therefore we love Him, or even heartily desire to love Him, it is proof that our hearts have undergone a change; and that change is the proof of His love to us. Every spiritual blessing flows naturally from His love, and whatever comes to us from Him is a covenant blessing, and leads us back to Him in return. Our faith in His word, our hope in His mercy, our love to His people, our zeal for His cause, our sorrow for sin, and our desires after holiness are all so many proofs of His love to us. But our sonship crowns the whole. This is unparalleled love, that such sinners as we are, should be called, *"The sons of God."*

How can I doubt Thy love to me,
Thy love which sent Thee to the tree?
That cruel cross on Calvary,
To bleed and die to ransom me!

March 12
MORNING

"We shall be like Him" 1 Jn 3:2

A MARVELLOUS TRANSFORMATION IS COMING FOR US, at our Lord's appearing. Every true Christian will be changed to be like Jesus in His glorified humanity! Like our Lord, as free from sin, perfect in holiness, and completely transformed. His likeness will appear in every believer. What a contrast with the present it will be! Now, even at this present time, we appear to ourselves at times almost like Satan. O the depth of depravity we discover, the powerful corruptions we feel, the fearful opposition to God we sometimes experience! But, one day soon, we shall be like Him! God has purposed it, the Gospel plainly reveals it, and the Holy Spirit is working to effect it. Every evil shall be purged out, every virtue shall be perfected, and we shall be pure as He is pure. Let us then look forward, and with anticipation to that glorious moment: let us consider the end of our election, redemption, and calling; and let us pray, pant, and strive to be holy. If holiness is our element, heaven will be our home, and unspeakable joy our eternal portion. But we know not what we shall be, only that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall be freed from our carnal corruption for all eternity.*

O when shall I, like Jesus, be
In soul and body clean?
My great Redeemer, Saviour see,
And wholly freed from sin?
Blest transformation I shall know,
And perfect liberty;
Set free from all my chains below,
I shall ascend to Thee.

March 12
EVENING

"So shall we ever be with the Lord" 1 Thess 4:17

ETERNAL BLESSEDNESS WILL THEN BEGIN! Now the Lord visits His people and manifests Himself unto them as He does not to the world; and such visits are very sweet, such manifestations cheer and confirm our faith. But in a little time He will come and fetch us home. He may send death first, to introduce our souls into his presence; we may be called upon to depart and be with Christ, which is far better than our present circumstances. Or He may come Himself soon and raise our bodies from the grave and conform both soul and body to His own likeness. We shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, together with resurrected saints and, *"so shall we ever be with the Lord."* This will be our heaven. This will be our portion. We shall be forever like Him, and forever with Him. How different it will be to our present lot. What a glorious object for faith to fix upon, and what a cheering subject for the mind to be engaged in. *For ever with the Lord*, what will it not include, that is glorious? *For ever with the Lord*, what will it not exclude, that is sinful and abominable? Let me close this day, reflecting upon this glorious prospect, anticipating this delightful change, this sanctifying thought!

For ever with the Lord!
Amen; what shall it be?
Life eternal is in His word,
'Tis immortality!

March 13
MORNING

"Seek those things which are above" Col 3:1

IF YE BE RISEN WITH CHRIST YOUR FUTURE MOVES FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN. Our focus is on *"things above."* What are the things which are above? *Holiness* or conformity to Jesus, and entire devotedness to His service. *Happiness* flowing from the manifestation of Jehovah's glory, the presence of Jesus, and the soul's delight in His will. *Unity*: saints above realize close, intimate, and indestructible union to Father, Son, and Spirit; they enjoy sweet and constant communion with each other and with the holy angels; they have *unity* of design, work, and enjoyment. Let us seek those things which descend from above such as *faith*, which believes, trusts, and prefers God's word; *love*, which has God for its Author, Christ for its principal object, and spiritual things for its chosen subjects: *fellowship*, with Father, Son, and Spirit, and all spiritual persons. In a word, we are to seek all spiritual gifts, graces and employments. Seek them earnestly, diligently, and constantly. Think much and often upon them. Highly value and esteem them. Constantly prefer them to earthly things. Labour to possess and enjoy them. Pray and ask our God who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. Our citizenship is in heaven, so set your affection on things above, and not on things below.

Arise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
Join in the final heavenly race;
Goodbye to earth's transitory things,
And soar to heaven God's promised place.

March 13

EVENING

"Draw nigh to God" Jas 4:8

DID YOU KNOW, GOD DESIRES OUR COMPANY! But we must keep ourselves pure and clean. Alas! sin thrusts us to an infinite distance from God and unbelief keeps us there. Grace brings us back and brings us nigh by the blood of the cross. When we sin we wander from God, but prayer draws us back. God is on the throne of grace, Jesus our intercessor is before the throne, and we are invited to *draw nigh*. We are called to come up to the throne, to appear before God, to exercise confidence in Him through Jesus and to pour out our hearts before Him. We are to tell Him all, all we fear, all we desire and all we want. We are to praise Him for all we possess, or have received in time past, or expect in time to come. We are to be frank: there is to be no reserve. We are to be serious: there must be no lightness. We are to be fully assured that our God is love, so there is to be no dread or alarm. *Draw nigh to God*, to ascertain His will, to enjoy His love, to unburden your mind, to engage Him afresh on your side, that you may rise above the present doomed and cheerless world. *"He will draw nigh to you."* What an inducement is this! *Draw nigh* and behold his glories. *Draw nigh to God and dissipate your fears.*

Let us now approach Thy throne
Through the living way made known.
Way of faith which Jesus made,
Through the veil of flesh displayed;
Through His rent humanity,
God our Friend in heaven we see.

March 14
MORNING

"Lord, what is man?" Ps 144:3

BY NATURE MAN IS AN ENEMY TO GOD. Man is in open rebellion against Him, and justly condemned by Him. He is in love with sin, a slave to lust, a servant of Satan. He is blind to his desperate condition, deaf to the call of God, and dead in trespasses and sins. He is an open sepulchre, full of wretchedness and disease, abominable and filthy beyond description. And can such creatures be the object of Jehovah's love, the purchase of the Saviour's blood, and the habitation of the Holy Spirit? Yes: as such, they were chosen by God to salvation; as such, Jesus was sent into the world to redeem them; as such, the Holy Spirit came to quicken, cleanse, justify, and save them! O amazing grace! Astonishing mercy! And will God in very deed dwell with such creatures upon earth? Yes: *"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."* Well may the patriarch exclaim, *"What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him? and that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him?"*

O what is feeble, dying man,
Or any of his race?
That God should make it His concern
To visit him with grace!
That God, who sends His lightnings down,
Who shakes the worlds above,
And mountains tremble at His frown,
How wondrous is His love!

March 14
EVENING

"He laid down His life for us" 1 Jn 3:16

"CHRIST DIED FOR US ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES." This is a stupendous fact, an amazing mystery, that God should take our nature, in order to labour, suffer, and die in our stead. Jesus was that God. He became man. He was God and man in one person. As such He laid down His life for us. He laid it down willingly; no one took it from Him, He laid it down of himself. He laid it down with a perfect knowledge of what we should be, and do, and deserve. He was not moved to do so by anything in us; it was His own pure, infinite, and sovereign love alone which led him to do so. *"Herein is love."* And there is no such love anywhere else. Nor has His love been so gloriously displayed in anything else. Beloved, let us dwell on the love of Jesus. We can never think of Him enough. We can never praise Him for it enough. Let us think of our state before God, our sins against God, and our desert at the hands of God; and then let us dwell upon this great fact, that instead of dealing with us according to our sins, or rewarding us according to our iniquities, *"He laid down his life for us" - laid it down as the price of our ransom.*

How hath He loved us - how?
Can man or angel tell?
Before His cross we bow,
The power of love to feel;
To see Him hang, and bleed and die,
That we may live and reign on high.

March 15
MORNING

"A Christian" 1 Pet 4:16

"IF ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATURE." He wears a new name, possesses a new nature, breathes a new spirit, lives a new life, and devotes himself entirely to the glory of Jesus, his new Master. All Christ has is his, all Christ has done was for him, and all Christ has promised he may expect. Are you a Christian? Is there any doubt? Does Jesus live in you? Are you living by faith upon Him? Is He your daily bread? Do you find that you could as well live without food, as without Jesus? This is a sure evidence that you are a Christian, for this is nothing but the Spirit's work. If you are a Christian, you pant, pray, and strive to be Christ-like; to bear about in your body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in your mortal body. You put off the old man which is corrupt, and put on the new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness. You would live in newness of life, as one raised from the dead; exhibiting the effects of His death in deadness to the world, in love for immortal souls, bearing testimony to the truth, and looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God. *O to be a Christian indeed!*

Father, in me reveal Thy Son,
And in my inmost soul make known
How merciful Thou art;
The secret of Thy love reveal,
And by Thine hallowing Spirit dwell
Forever in my heart!

March 15
EVENING

"In hope of eternal life" Tit 1:2

THIS IS EVERY CHRISTIAN'S BLESSED HOPE. Thus the consistent Christian lives. His heart is not set upon anything below, but he is looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, to dwell with God above. This is the object of his hope. He hopes for life in perfection, in the highest state in a better world, with assured and perpetual health, peace, plenty, and pure delight. This life is certain. It is promised by God who cannot lie; promised before the world began, to Jesus as the Head of His church and to all who believe. This is the gospel testimony, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has received Christ by faith, has this *life*. Now we have the firstfruits; soon we shall have the glorious harvest. We live in the daily exercise of hope, and this hope cheers us in trouble, strengthens us under persecution, encourages us in our daily warfare, and defends us in the hour of danger. It is the helmet of salvation. Believer, you should not be looking at death, but for life, *eternal life*. *Faith is a firm persuasion of the certainty of this blessing, and a confident expectation of receiving our inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.*

Billows of disappointment roll
Swept by the restless tide of time;
But gospel hope bears up my soul,
Till the eternal day shall shine;
Blest hope of life with God in heaven
On earth for Him my life I've given.

March 16
MORNING

"Thy God reigneth!" Isa 52:7

"GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM." One day soon at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow. Our Lord Jesus has power over all flesh. He is upon the throne of the universe. He superintends all things. His will cannot be frustrated. His designs must be accomplished. Nothing is left to chance. His hand is in every event. He rules over the world by His power. He rules in the church by His word. He rules in the heart by His Spirit. He reigns to crush or convert your foes; to secure your well-being and His glory. Let this truth calm and compose your mind at all times: *"My God reigneth."* He sits above the floods, He remains King for ever. He is entitled to all honour. He is the proper object of your fear, faith, and love. See Him on His throne and rejoice; for it ensures your safety, happiness, and honour. Do men oppress? Does Satan annoy? Are things going wrong? This is your comfort: *your God reigneth.* He directs and controls every being and every event. Gracious God! May I ever live, believing that the reins of government are in Thy hands; that Thy counsel shall stand, and that Thou wilt do all Thy pleasure! *My God, reign in me!*

His kingdom cannot fail;
He rules o'er earth and heaven;
The keys of death and hell
Are to our Jesus given:
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice,
Rejoice aloud, ye saints, rejoice!

March 16
EVENING

"O that Thou wouldest bless me indeed" 1 Chr 4:10

THUS PRAYED JABEZ, AND SO SHOULD EVERY CHRISTIAN. He knows that the blessing of the Lord it makes rich, and He adds no sorrow with it. There is a reality in the Lord's blessing. Well, He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. All is treasured up in Jesus for us, and by faith and prayer we receive out of His fullness and grace for grace. The Lord still blesses us. He says, *"I will bless thy bread and thy water,"* and our temporal mercies are specially sweet, when seasoned with His love. He blesses us with renewing grace, reviving grace, restoring grace, sanctifying grace, and protecting grace. He blesses with blessings costly beyond calculation, vast as our miseries, numerous as our sins, and lasting as our existence. He delights to bless. He gave His Son to die for us, that He might bless us honourably, suitably, and eternally. He has promised to bless us, and to make us a blessing. It is a blessing to feel our need of His blessings, and everyone who does so, who ardently desires and earnestly seeks it, is taught of God and blessed by God.

All is finished: do not doubt it,
But believe your dying Lord;
Never reason more about it,
Simply take Him at His word.

March 17
MORNING

"God was manifest in the flesh" 1 Tim 3:16

THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD IS IN CHRIST. We are to learn what our God is, and what we may expect Him to do for us. What Jesus was to those about Him, such Jehovah is; what Jesus did and was willing to do, that our God is willing to do for us. In Jesus we see tender love, melting compassion, and gracious forbearance; mercy and power, rectitude and pity, holiness and longsuffering, justice and righteousness, united. Such is our God. Fury is not in Him. Love is His name and His nature. And can you slavishly fear such a God? Can you wilfully sin against and grieve such a Being? Can you not believe His word, depend upon His veracity, rejoice in His name, and expect from Him every promised good? For this purpose His word was written, His name was published, and Jesus came to earth for us. Always look at God in Christ; attempt not to learn God from nature. *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."*

Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just, and sacred Three,
Are terrors to my mind:
But if Immanuel's face appear,
My soul surmounts my faithless fear.

March 17
EVENING

*"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name" 1 Chr
16:29*

"GREAT IS THE LORD, AND GREATLY TO BE PRAISED." He is to be feared above all gods. The Lord has written out His name, in its greatness and graciousness, on the works of His power, and on all the gifts of His love. He that would learn God's name must study creation and providence; but more earnestly, he must study the gospel. Here he will see God writing out His name more fully, displaying His glorious character and perfections, in the conversion, justification, sanctification, preservation, and glorification of multitudes of sinners. God has revealed His name in His word, and it is to be read in its proclamations, doctrines, promises, precepts, and prospects. If we read and study Jehovah's name aright, we shall be filled with admiration and adoration, and as the effect, we shall glorify Him in our prayers, praises, and conversation. To give Him the glory due unto His name will require all our talents, all our time, and even eternity itself. But to attempt to do so is a plain duty, and if the heart be right it will be a real pleasure. Let us therefore meditate on God's name, exalt His grace, and *give Him the glory due unto His name.*

Nature and time, and earth and skies,
Thy majesty proclaim;
What shall we do to make us wise,
But learn to know Thy name?

March 18
MORNING

"But He answered her not a word" Mt 15:23

"O WOMAN, GREAT IS THY FAITH." Our Lord commended her for her faith. Delays are not denials. Jesus delayed to answer, but He did not deny her request. He has said, *"Ask, and it shall be given you. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you."* Heaven and earth may pass away, but His word stands forever. He delays the answer to try our faith, patience and perseverance; but when He sends the blessing, He proves His faithfulness, pity and love. Be not discouraged though your prayers remain unanswered for a time; it will not always be so. This poor woman had to wait, though her case was very trying, and her request very urgent; but at last Jesus commended her faith publicly, and dismissed her, saying, *"Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."* Prayer will prevail, if it is the prayer of faith. Pray on, then, and do not faint. Say as Jacob on the plains of Peniel, *"I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."* Plead with Him; be importunate; wait His time; be willing to receive in His own way; be concerned that He should be glorified in giving to you, or doing for you; then you cannot fail. His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear Him. *Only be patient: today He may answer not a word.* But our God never forgets His own.

Wait for His seasonable aid,
And, though it tarry, wait;
The promise may be long delayed,
But cannot come too late.

March 18
EVENING

"Fear not, neither be discouraged" Deut 1:21

"BEHOLD THE LORD THY GOD HATH SET THE LAND BEFORE THEE." The land of promise was in sight. *"Go in and possess the land."* Though the Lord tries us, He also encourages us. More than fifty times, he says to us in His word, *"Fear not."* Yet we are often fearful. He knew this would be the case, therefore He provided so much to cheer and encourage us. Let us not be discouraged for the Lord has set the good land before us; He has promised it to us, He bids us go up and take possession of it. Our enemies may be *mighty*, but our God who goes with us and fights for us, is *almighty*. Our foes may be crafty, but on our side is *"the only wise God."* If providence should frown, if the Lord delays to answer our prayers, if our case should appear to be desperate, it is only to exercise our patience, try our faith, to stir us to importunate prayer. Let us therefore press on in hope and persevere in faith. The Lord will appear for us. His faithful word shall be made good in our experience; and though now He may not answer us a word, He will soon give us the desire of our hearts. *Only fear not, neither be discouraged: our God is with us.*

Armed with the presence of my Lord
I would be of good cheer;
Confiding in His faithful word,
Why should I faint or fear?
Though fierce the foe, though rough the road,
I can do all through Christ my God.

March 19
MORNING

"In His favour is life" Ps 30:5

"SING UNTO THE LORD, O YE SAINTS OF HIS." For He has lifted you up and blessed you with the favour of God in Christ. If He have a favour towards us, all will be well; but He has, and as a proof of His favour, He gave Jesus for us, and to us; He sent the Holy Spirit to quicken, teach, and sanctify us. By believing we enter into the enjoyment of His favour; and enjoying His favour we learn to despise all that is opposed to it. Our spiritual life flowed from His favour; our happiness stands in the enjoyment of His favour; and heaven will be the fulfilment and realization of His favour. To His favour we ascribe all our present comforts and future hopes. By the favour of God we are what we are. By His favour we are saved. This is the source of every good, the joy of every true believer's heart. Let us endeavour to ascertain beyond a doubt, that we are the favourites of God: let us prize His favour above thousands of gold and silver; and let our daily prayer be, *"Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation, that I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, and glory with Thine inheritance. Amen, even so, Lord Jesus."*

Fain would I my Lord pursue,
Be all my Saviour taught;
Do as Jesus bids me do,
And think as Jesus thought.

March 19
EVENING

"He restoreth my soul" Ps 23:3

"ALL WE LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY." We have turned every one to his own way, yet the Lord cares for us. We are prone to wander, and having wandered we never return till the good Shepherd seeks us. But His eye is upon the wanderer. His heart yearns after it. He follows it with reproofs, rebukes, and earnest pleadings, until He restores it. He convinces of the folly of wandering from the fold and the soul becomes unhappy with its wandering state. Then a spirit of prayer is awakened, concern to return deepens and the sheep creeps to the Shepherd's feet, acknowledges its sin and folly, implores mercy, and cries, *"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation."* It is taken up by the Shepherd's saving arms, and carried back with gentle reproofs to the fold. Every restoration is of grace. In every instance it is the Shepherd's care that restores the wandering soul. The restored wanderer always feels deeply humbled, flies to the precious blood of atonement, admires restoring mercy, becomes more cautious, careful, and circumspect; his conscience is made more tender, his hatred of sin is made deeper, and his jealousy of his own heart is made more lively. He pants for the presence of the Shepherd, prizes the ordinances of God, and watches more diligently unto prayer.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love -
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

March 20
MORNING

"The Lord is risen" Lk 24:34

THIS IS THE GREATEST EVENT IN ALL HISTORY, THAT CHRIST TRIUMPHED OVER DEATH! He once died for our sins and rose for our justification. He lay in the grave as our substitute; He rose as our representative. He died that we may live. He lives, and we shall live through Him, and with Him forever. He is risen, having conquered death and reconciled us to God. Rising, He perfumed the grave, and finished the work which the Father gave Him to do. As He arose, so shall we. As He is gone into heaven, there should our thoughts, our hopes, and our affections ascend. Jesus is risen, to plead our cause, manage our affairs, fulfill His precious promises, and to prepare for us mansions in our Father's house. Sin was atoned for by His death, heaven is secured by His life. He is our risen, ascended, and reigning Redeemer. He is our conquering and crowned captain. O let us think of, speak for, and devote ourselves to Jesus! He is above the world; let us live above its vanities, amusements, and bondage; let us look beyond death to that glorious resurrection, when we shall be raised from the dead, and given new bodies: incorruptible, immortal, glorious, powerful, and spiritual.

Jesus triumphs! sing His praise!
'Twas by death He overcame;
Thus did Christ His glory raise;
Thus He fills His foes with shame:
Sing His praise!
Praise unto His name.

March 20
EVENING

"Risen with Christ" Col 3:1

CHRIST AS OUR SUBSTITUTE DIED IN OUR STEAD. He died as a public person, representing His people; as our representative He rose from the dead. All His redeemed people are said to have died in Him when He died, and risen with Him when He arose. By virtue of this we are quickened by the Spirit of life, and we arise and ascend to Him in our newfound hopes, desires, and affections. His life now lives in us, and we are to make manifest the resurrection life of Christ in our bodies. We are to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is also stated of all believers that He has raised us up together, and made us sit together with Christ in the heavenly places. Christ and His people are one. They were represented by Him when He fulfilled the law, when He made the atonement, when He arose from the dead, and when He entered into the holiest of all with His own blood. They live through His death. They live in union to His person. They live for His honour and glory. Being risen with Christ, they should not grovel on earth; but as their head, their leader, and their life is in heaven, there their thoughts, desires, affections should ever be. *All praise to God, we are risen with Christ!*

Believing souls, whom Jesus know,
If risen indeed, with Him ye are,
Superior to the joys below,
His resurrection power declare.

March 21
MORNING

"I will give you rest" Mt 11:28

"WE WHICH HAVE BELIEVED DO ENTER INTO REST." That rest in Christ is assured to every believer. There is no rest for the Christian in the world. There will always be something to disturb, perplex or distress him; it is an enemy's land. But our Lord says, *"I will give you rest."* He does so by enabling us to rely on His word, recognise His hand, submit to His will, and trust in His perfect work. He assures us that our sins are forgiven us; that our persons are safe in His keeping; that His presence is always with us; and that all things work together for our best. We can rest on His faithfulness: He has been tried, and found faithful. We can rest on His love: for it knows no shadow of turning. We can rest on His power: it is ever engaged on our behalf. We can rest on His covenant: it is ordered in all things and sure. We can rest on His blood: it speaks peace, pardon, and acceptance with God. We can rest at His feet: there we are safe, and can never be injured. We cannot rest on our graces, on our comforts, on our friends, or on our possessions; but we may always rest on Jesus. We should rest on Him with unshaken confidence and ardent love; for His promises are plain, His power is infinite, and His love passes knowledge. *Only He can give us rest.*

In the ark the weary dove
Found a welcome resting place;
Thus my spirit longs to prove,
Rest in Christ, the Ark of grace.

March 21
EVENING

"They desire a better country" Heb 11:16

"BY FAITH ABRAHAM, WHEN HE WAS CALLED ... OBEYED." By faith he saw afar off the city of God which had foundations. This was the experience of the patriarchs; the apostles felt the same: so have all true Christians. Do we desire a better country? Do we desire a heavenly country? *There is a better*: it is set before us in the gospel, promised to all who believe in Jesus and continue faithful unto death. Heaven is that country where all enjoy unending rest; there is no pain, no vexation, no toil, no sadness there. All are lively, yet all enjoy perfect repose. Heaven is the home of love; there are no foes, no envious or jealous people. All is love: pure, perfect, perpetual love. All love God, and God loves all. Each loves his fellow, and loves his fellow as he loves himself. It is the community of holiness. There are no sinners, for all are righteous; there is no sin, for nothing sinful can ever enter. Holiness is the element, the joy, the glory of the place. It is the abode of perfection, of lasting satisfaction, of unbroken joy and undisturbed tranquility. There we see our Lord face to face. There God unfolds His glories, every holy desire is gratified, every heart is fully blest, every countenance shines with benevolence and joy - because *it is the better country*. *Are you looking forward to that country?*

Then let the hope of joys to come
Dispel our cares, disperse our fears;
Eyes fixed above, we're nearing home,
Though passing through a vale of tears.

March 22
MORNING

"Precious promises" 2 Pet 1:4

"ALL THE PROMISES OF GOD IN HIM ARE YEA, AND IN HIM AMEN." These promises of God are precious to His people. They are all of free grace, purchased by the blood of Jesus and are exceeding great and very precious. They are so plain that even a child can understand them; and so vast that no mortal mind can altogether comprehend them. There is such a variety that they meet every holy wish; and such a fulness that they include every want. They are rich stores of consolation for the poor, tried, and distressed believer; they are the strength and support of every child of God. They are our plea at the throne of grace, our confidence in the hour of trial, and our rejoicing in prospect of death. Beloved, make God's promises your daily comfort: it is for you to search them out, store them up, believe them, trust in them, plead them, and be assured of their fulfilment, because *"He is faithful who promised."* The promises are more precious than gold or silver; sweeter than honey or the honeycomb; more enduring than the earth; and more stable than the pillars of heaven. Let us contemplate them, plead them, and expect their fulfilment soon - any day. Our God is a faithful God, keeping covenant and mercy unto a thousand generations. *His promises are precious and faithful.*

Praise to the faithfulness of God,
He rules His people by His word;
It comes to us by His decrees,
Besides His precious promises.

March 22
EVENING

"The heirs of promise" Heb 6:17

EVERY BELIEVER IS A CHILD AND AN HEIR OF GOD. This is God's gift, and the transforming work of the Spirit. In time past, we were by nature children of wrath, even as others. In character we were unrighteous; in circumstances, destitute; in state, lost. We had no claim upon God for one good thing, for we were traitors against His throne and government. But by an ancient and gracious appointment, He included us as believers in Jesus, *"Heirs of promise."* We were promised to Jesus as seed, to reward the travail of His soul; we are entitled to all the promises, which in Him are yea, and in Him amen, to the glory of God. By virtue of our relation to Christ, by our interest in the testament of Christ, as well as to the appointment of God, we are entitled to all promised blessings. To us is promised life, eternal life; righteousness, everlasting righteousness; supplies, both temporal and spiritual; a kingdom of grace and glory; salvation, eternal salvation. We are heirs, and all these things are included in our estate. Heirship flows from grace. It stands in Christ. It leads us to heaven. It calls for gratitude. Ought we not to ask, *am I an heir?* Can I prove my title? Do I view the promises as my title-deeds? *Do I live as one entitled to such possessions?*

As heirs of promise, let us live
By faith in Jesus' mighty word;
Soon of His fulness we'll receive
The joys of dwelling with the Lord.

March 23
MORNING

"Where is your faith?" Lk 8:25

FAITH LOOKS TO GOD, NOT AT CIRCUMSTANCES. The disciples were in a storm, surrounded by danger, and filled with fear. They apply to Jesus: *this was right*. They doubt His care, question His love, and cry, "*We perish!*" *This was wrong*. Jesus demands, "*Where is your faith?*" May He not put the same question to us? We have His word, but do we heartily believe it? We speak of His love, but do we confidently trust it? We read of His care, but do we see our safety in it? We often seem to believe any one sooner than Jesus; to trust any word more than His; and therefore we are cast down, fearful and distressed. Let us this day endeavour to fix our faith steadfastly upon His precious word; let us believe in His particular providence; let us commune with Him as our firm and faithful Friend. He says, "*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*" He is worthy of all our trust: He cannot deceive. He deserves our confidence: He will not neglect. He encourages our hope, and promises, "*If ye ask anything of the Father in my name, I will do it.*" Do you believe this? Do you believe it when you pray? If not, "*Where is your faith?*"

O how wavering is my mind,
Tossesd about with every wind!
O how quickly doth my heart
From the living God depart!
O my God, my faith increase,
Fill my soul with Thy sweet peace!

March 23
EVENING

"Ready to forgive" Ps 86:5

"BE MERCIFUL UNTO ME, O LORD." Our God is ever ready to hear our cry and to forgive. He delights in showing mercy, is slow to anger, and *"ready to pardon."* This is always a fact, and it should always be believed by us. It should also be daily kept before our minds, that we may seek, expect, and enjoy a daily pardon. The Lord is never indisposed, or backward to pardon a believing, penitent, confessing sinner. But He is ever faithful to His word, and just to the merit of His Son, in pardoning everyone who applies in the Saviour's name. *"Ready to forgive!"* The goodness of His nature is such that He devised a way in which He could honourably pardon the vilest transgressor; and though this cost Him the life of His only begotten and well beloved Son, He freely gave Him up, to show that He was a God *"ready to pardon."* Without atonement, pardon would have been impossible; but through the atonement of Jesus, God can easily, completely, and daily pardon the greatest sinners. What He can do, He will do and He does do. And tonight, He is *"ready to forgive"* the sins of this day, and of every previous day: to forgive us, and to do it this very moment. *Blessed truth!*

Believing let us lift our eye
To Him who liveth and hath died;
One look will lift our souls on high,
And God pronounce us justified.

March 24
M O R N I N G

"Thy sins are forgiven" 1k 7:48

"THE SON OF MAN HATH POWER UPON EARTH TO FORGIVE SINS." Whose sins? Yours, if you believe in Jesus. For to Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. God pardons for Christ's sake every one who believes, confesses and forsakes his sin. He thus proves Himself ready to forgive, plenteous in mercy, and full of compassion to all who call upon Him. He never refuses to pardon nor manifests the least reluctance. Nor ought we to doubt for one moment the promise, seeing His word is so plain; His grace is so great; His mercy is so free; and His faithfulness so clearly proved. What then do we want? Only faith to believe God's word, that we, believing in Jesus, having confessed our sin at His throne, and prayed for pardon in Christ's name, are forgiven all our trespasses. And this is needful, for we can never mortify sin, live above the world, rejoice in God, and honour the gospel, but as we believe these sweet words of Jesus, *"Thy sins are forgiven thee."*

How high a privilege to know
Our sins are all forgiven!
To bear about this pledge below,
This special grant of heaven!
O Lord, this privilege bestow
To cheer me while I dwell below.

March 24
EVENING

"Go in peace" Lk 7:50

THERE IS NO BLESSING LIKE THE BLESSING OF SINS FORGIVEN. True peace flows from the pardon of sin. If we believe that God for Christ's sake has forgiven us all our trespasses, our souls will enjoy peace. For being justified by faith, we have peace with God. We have nothing to fear from God, for having pardoned us, He has no charge against us: but we may expect every good thing from God, for having given us His Son, will He not with Him also freely give us all things? If therefore we have no evil to fear, but every good to expect, may we not, ought we not, to be at peace? When Jesus pardoned the woman, He said to her, *"Go in peace."* So He says the same to us. Mind not what Satan says. Fear not what man can do. Go in the path of duty. Go, and face trials and persecutions. Go, and enjoy your temporal mercies. Go, and enjoy your God-given privileges. Go, though dangers surround. Go, though you feel weak and feeble. *Go in peace, for God accepts you.* Go, for your reconciliation to God is honourable and perfect. Go, and spread the Saviour's fame. Go, and tell of Jehovah's pardoning love. Go, and bear your personal testimony to the truth of His word. *Only go in peace.*

O Lamb of God, in tender love,
Now bid my sorrows cease;
Kindly my doubts and fears remove,
And bid me, "Go in peace."

March 25
MORNING

"Bring them hither to me" Mt 14:18

"IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THE LORD?" Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save. On this occasion our compassionate Lord was surrounded by a starving, fainting multitude; His disciples had only five small loaves, and two little fishes, and yet He had bidden them to feed the company. The commands of Jesus are often intended to try our faith, and bring us as children to His feet. He says, *"Bring them to me."* Things are not what they appear, but what Jesus makes them to be. His blessing produces a wonderful change. He bids you bring everything to Him. *Have you a family?* He says *"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."* *Have you trials?* Take them to Him; His blessing sweetens and lessens trials. *Are you in poverty?* Carry your poverty to Him; He can increase your little and bless it with a peculiar flavour. Whatever troubles you this day, or any day, hear Jesus saying to you, *"Bring it hither to me."* Carry all things to Him, small things as well as big ones; it is only by so doing, that you can surmount trials, conquer foes, glory in tribulation, and joy in God.

The privilege I greatly prize
Of casting all my cares on Him,
The mighty God, the only wise,
Who reigns in heaven and earth supreme.

How sweet to be allowed to call
The God whom heaven adores my Friend;
To tell my thoughts, to tell Him all;
And then to know my prayers ascend.

March 25
EVENING

"*That I may know Him*" Phi 3:10

"I COUNT ALL THINGS BUT LOSS ... THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST." Solus Christus, Christ only! Nothing else mattered. Paul appears to have had seven principal wishes, and they are all expressed in this brief epistle. They all have reference to Christ the Lord. Indeed Christ was Paul's centre, the circle within which all the desires of his heart and soul belonged. He especially *desired to know Christ*, to win Christ, to magnify Christ both in his body and soul, to be found in Christ, to be conformed to Christ, to rejoice in the day of Christ, and to be with Christ. But *the first lies at the root of all the rest*. The knowledge of Christ is more excellent than any other, than all other knowledge. But how little do we know of the Lord, therefore it is that we enjoy so little of Him. Our knowledge of Christ should be powerful and deep, regulating our thoughts, desires, hopes, fears, confidence, and our conduct toward God and man, especially toward the saints; and we should grow in the knowledge of Christ. If we really and sincerely desire to know Christ, we shall search His word, love His law, meditate on His truth, be constantly at His throne, and speak of Him often to others. *Do we?*

'Tis life to know my risen Lord,
To feed upon His living word;
O may I in this knowledge grow,
And daily more of Jesus know.

March 26
MORNING

"He giveth power to the faint" Isa 40:29

"WHY SAYEST THOU ... MY WAY IS HID FROM THE LORD?" Never lose sight of this fact, how great is our God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. Yet God's people often feel faint, being burdened with a body of sin and death, pursued and assailed by Satan, tried and troubled by the world; but though faint they continue to pursue. Waiting on the Lord they renew their strength. The Lord has said, *"I will strengthen thee."* Reader, remember the promise and faithfulness of thy God; yield not to fear or you will surely faint. Believe because God is true. David says, *"I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."* Power is given in answer to prayer. Strength is proportioned to the day. The back is fitted for the burden. Our God will not lay upon us more than He will enable us to bear. He strengthens by His word, by His Spirit, and by His presence; expect Him to be and to do according to His word; this will honour Him, and He will strengthen you with might by His Spirit in the inner man. Go forth, however weak you may feel, assured that God will give you strength and courage; strength to do and fulfil His will, and courage to face, fight and overcome every foe.

What made thy gloomy doubtings swell?

Whither thy courage fled?

Has subtle sin or dread of hell

Dealt all thy comforts dead?

God chase thy faithless fears away,

His strength is equal to thy day.

March 26

EVENING

"The Father of mercies" 2 Cor 1:3

"WHO COMFORTETH US IN ALL OUR TRIBULATION," that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, because we also have been comforted of God. Our God is a tenderly merciful Father, a Father of mercies, with whom all mercies originate, from whom all mercies flow. Our chief mercy is a Saviour; that Saviour is His only begotten Son; that Son freely delivered up Himself for us all. He was the author of the mercy which quickened us, comforted us, and still keeps us. All our merciful afflictions, deliverances, shuttings up, and relief, flow from His sovereign will. He is the fountain and source of mercy, and from Him all our mercies flow. This should correct the views we sometimes have of Him, as if He were difficult to please, or soon angry with us. It should also encourage our faith, hope, prayers, and love. What a comfort to a seeking soul, to know that the God he is seeking is *the Father of mercies*. What a shield this is to ward off the fiery darts of Satan. What an inducement to love our God more than all the gifts we receive from him. Beloved, look up to heaven tonight, and call upon the *Father of mercies* in confidence; He will answer with the very mercy you need, whatever it may be.

My soul, Thou hast (let what will ail)
A never-changing Friend;
When brethren, friends and helpers fail,
Thou canst on Him depend.

March 27
MORNING

"Ask, and ye shall receive" Jn 16:24

"WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK ... HE WILL GIVE." Yes, but God the Father will give only if we ask in the name of the Son, our Lord Jesus. Let the words of Jesus speak to us this morning. We are in want and unable to supply ourselves. But abundant provision is available to us in Christ our Lord. He invites us to ask with confidence, assuring us that we shall receive. Jesus has a boundless supply of blessings, and a loving, tender heart to bestow them. He will supply all our needs. Let not want, then, lead you to despond, but look to Jesus; He has, He gives. He tells us to ask, and receive. Can any terms be more easy, more suitable, more encouraging than these? But ask in faith, believing, because Jesus has promised; ask with earnestness, as you truly valued the blessings; ask with importunity; go again and again until you obtain them. Go to Jesus for all you want; make everything a matter of prayer; in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. Doubt not, for His word is plain; He is full of compassion; He waits to be gracious; and He has thousands of witnesses to attest to His faithfulness, veracity, and love. Look to the generations of old. Did any ever seek the Lord in vain? No, every one that asketh receiveth. *You too! Ask, and you will surely receive.*

My soul, ask what thou wilt,
Thou canst not be too bold;
Since His own blood for thee He spilt,
What else can He withhold?

March 27
EVENING

"Ye ask, and receive not" Jas 4:3

"BECAUSE YE ASK AMISS." The fault is ours, not God's. He is not unwilling to bestow, but He never will sanction sin, or encourage folly; and this He must do if He answered *all our prayers*. In prayer God looks at our *motives*. He reads our hearts while He listens to our words. If we pray for temporal things to pamper our appetites, or gratify our lust, we have no reason to expect that God will give them. If we ask for spiritual things with a carnal end, God is just in withholding them. We may ask for good things that we may become eminent in the estimation of men, be respected by our fellows, or applauded by the multitude. Even grace and holiness may be prayed for in order to gain a name. *Our object should be simply to honour God, to exalt Jesus, and to promote His cause.* Or, we may ask in an unbecoming manner. We may be too anxious for temporal things. We may be indifferent about spiritual things. See, then, the cause why our prayers are not always answered; the motive, or the end in view or the spirit displayed is not good. The prayer is as the design is. *Let us ask then, Why do we pray? How do we pray? For what do we pray?*

I fear I often ask amiss;
Lord, search my heart and see;
My motives purify, nor cease
To draw my soul to Thee.

March 28
MORNING

"I am the Lord's" Isa 44:5

OUR GOD IS THE LORD OF HOSTS, THE FIRST AND THE LAST. He is both Creator and Judge, and He has chosen you, He has chosen me. Not only because He has chosen me from among others, in Jesus His beloved Son; nor merely because I am redeemed from among men, by the precious blood of Immanuel; but also because I have surrendered myself into the Lord's hand, with all I have and am, to be taught by His Spirit, ruled by His word, supplied by His providence, and devoted to His praise, *that I am the Lord's*. The Lord claimed me, and I was enabled to acknowledge the claim; He has a right to me, and that right should never be forgotten by me. *Am I tempted to sin? To murmur? To despond?* Let this be my preservative, *"I am the Lord's."* How base, ungrateful, and wicked for me to yield to sin; for me to complain of any of His dealings; or for me to doubt His goodness or His grace. *I am the Lord's* for life; *I shall be the Lord's* in death; and then (O delightful thought!) *I shall be the Lord's* for evermore. He will guide me by His counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. I have only to aim at His glory, walk by His word, and live at His throne, until He takes me to Himself. My only business on earth is to please God, and my heaven will be to enjoy Him forever. *Blessed truth, "I am the Lord's!"*

Jesus, Thy boundless love to me
No thought can reach no tongue declare;
O draw my thankful heart to Thee,
And reign without a rival there!

March 28
EVENING

"I will fear no evil" Ps 23:4

THE LORD IS MY WONDERFUL SHEPHERD. He is the good Shepherd. In Him I shall not want any good thing, nor need I fear any evil. Why should I, if I am the Lord's? Let this matter be settled, and then farewell to the fear of evil; for the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. Not from all trials, for they are not all evils, but only benefits. Only two things can be said to be evils; the one sin, but to the believer, sin is pardoned; in the believer, sin is crucified; and over the believer, it shall not have dominion. The other evil is separation from God: but nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The Lord is our keeper, He will preserve our souls. We may be tried by losses and crosses, by Satan and by men, by poverty and pain, but all these will work together for our good. And even death to the believer is not an evil; therefore we should not fear it. Let us live upon Christ; let us live like Christ; then to die, will only be to depart and be with Christ, which is far better than remaining here. To die will be gain, the best of all. Let us then grasp the promise with a firm faith, walk close to the bleeding side of Jesus, aim to glorify God in our day and generation, and go through life saying, *"I will fear no evil."*

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill,
For Thou art with me; and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

March 29
MORNING

"Cease ye from man" Isa 2:22

"THE LORD ALONE SHALL BE EXALTED." What is man? Lofty and haughty, men shall be bowed down and laid low. Never trust man, for his heart is deceitful; never expect from man, for he is an empty cistern; never follow man, for he is a false guide. Cursed be the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord. Trust not in a friend. One object of trust is enough: He has all you want, and has offered to give whenever you ask. He never did deceive, He never can. It is impossible for God to lie. Looking to man, dishonours God; trusting in man is pouring contempt on His word; expecting from man, is overlooking His sovereignty. If you neglect this loving direction, expect to suffer; if you walk by it, your peace will be a river, and your soul like a well watered garden. He knows what is in man, you do not. He cautions you, because He loves you. He would save you from disappointment, sorrow, and woe. Come then to the conclusion of the prophet, *"Therefore will I look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me."* Never expect from man, but always from God.

Happy they who trust in Jesus!
Sweet their portion is, and sure:
When destruction others seizes,
God will keep His own secure:
Happy people!
Happy, though despised and poor.

March 29
EVENING

"I am with you alway" Mt 28:20

NONE OTHER CAN COMPARE WITH OUR LORD. No other one can be with us forever, only Jesus. He is with us tonight. He is, and He will be with us as He has promised in the future. He is with us to give protection, to impart consolation, to subdue our fears, to inspire with hope. He identifies us with Himself. He makes our cause His own. His presence is pledged to us: it is the shield of our protection, the strength of our hearts, and the source of our joy. He will not leave us to go alone. He will not take His eye off us, or close His ear to our cry for one moment. He tells us that we are more endeared to Him than the loveliest infant is to the fondest mother. The ties of nature are not so strong, or so tender, or so lasting as the ties of grace. Let us endeavour to keep this fact in view, *Jesus is with us*, and ever will be with us. He will be the last to comfort us in time, and the first to welcome us in eternity. He will go through the whole journey with us, and then hold us before His face forever. We are therefore sure of one thing, and that is, the presence of Jesus; and His presence is the joy of angels, the bliss of heaven, and the glory of eternity.

Lord, I commend to Thee
The remnant of my days;
O that my chief concern may be
To spend them to Thy praise.

March 30
MORNING

"Yea, He loved the people" Deut 33:3

GOD'S LOVE IS NOT MAN'S LOVE. He loved the unlovely, the poor, oppressed, rebellious, stiff-necked, hard-hearted, unworthy creatures. Just such are His people by nature now, and such are we. Yet He loves us, pities us, and chooses us from among others. For us He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all; and with Him He will freely give us all things. Though He has not yet all His people with Him, yet He has Jesus sitting at His right hand as their representative; the express image and exact likeness of His elect. All the rays of God's love centre in Jesus, who is the Head of His body the church. All the streams of delight flow from Him to every believer on earth. As He loves Jesus so He loves us, for Christ and we are one. What is done to us, is done to Him; and what is bestowed upon Him, as our mediator is bestowed upon us His people. O glorious mystery of infinite and eternal love! Direct my heart into this love of God!

O love of incomp'able kind!
That leaves all thought so far behind;
Where length, and breadth, and depth, and height,
Are lost to my astonish'd sight:
Lord shed abroad that love of Thine
In this poor sinful heart of mine.

March 30
EVENING

"I fear God" Gen 42:18

"THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH." Joseph walked with God, and the Lord raised him from prison to the palace. Nevertheless, Joseph remained a God-fearing man. So he said to his brethren when he sent them home with provisions to their anxious father, *"I fear God."* So may we say whenever tempted to act unbecoming of our Christian character. The true fear of God springs from love, and is deepened and strengthened by filial fellowship with God. It is not a dread of His majesty, but a fear to offend or grieve His heart. It is produced by the Holy Spirit, and is a great preventive to sin. If I fear to offend God, I shall certainly strive to please Him. If I love Him, I shall fear to offend Him. This fear makes us cautious, careful, and watchful. It will often lead us to prayer. It will prompt us to self-examination. It will lead us to compare our conduct with God's word. It will preserve us from presumption, levity, and dishonesty. He that fears God will not go in the way of sinners, stand in the counsel of the ungodly, or sit in the seat of the scornful; but his delight will be in the word of God, and in His word will he meditate day and night. Has the fear of God influenced us this day? *Have we said by our conduct, in our dealings with our fellow men, "I fear God"?*

The fear of God is life
To warm as well as light;
Makes mercy sweet, salvation great,
And all God's judgments right.

March 31
MORNING

"I will be with him in trouble" Ps 91:15

"BECAUSE HE HATH SET HIS LOVE UPON ME." The Lord knows and He will deliver from every trouble. Sin is the parent of trouble; all trouble originated in departing from God. It is generally occasioned by transgression, or sent as a preventive to a greater evil; it may be occasioned by good, for saints are sometimes persecuted for righteousness' sake. It is intended to correct, improve, and to bring us near to God. Whatever may be our trouble, if we are the Lord's, He is with us; and with us for the most gracious purposes. He fixes the period of our troubles, nor can they continue longer than He sees needful. He regulates the heat of the furnace; He will not suffer us to be tried more than we are able to bear. He sanctifies our troubles and causes them to work for our good. He delivers us out of trouble when the purposes of His love are accomplished. In every trouble, remember our God is very present with us. He is with you to hear your prayer, increase your strength, direct your way, and make you a conqueror. His grace is sufficient, His presence is sure, your deliverance, in His time and way, is certain. Therefore, *"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."*

He that hath his refuge in God
Shall find a most secure abode;
Shall walk each day beneath His shade,
And there each night shall rest his head.

March 31
EVENING

"The LORD shall give that which is good" Ps 85:12

"HIS SALVATION IS NIGH THEM THAT FEAR HIM." Our Lord knows them that are His and whatever is good for His people He will certainly bestow: grace to sanctify, provision to sustain, and glory to crown them at last. But He will only give that which is good, therefore He will refuse them many things which they may desire. But all that is good for them they shall have, and He will give every good thing in its proper season. He will so give them good now, as to secure the greatest good at last; and every good thing shall come to them through the hands of Jesus. That He will give that which is good, is certain from the relation in which He stands to them: He is their Father. He will give that which is good from His infinite wisdom which is engaged for them, and His tender love, which is set upon them. He will give that which is good for them from the plan of His grace, and the word of His promise; from the testimony of His people, and His operations against His very enemies, for He will not feed His foes, and starve His friends. Let His assurance then check your impatience; that you may wait on the Lord. Let it rouse you to prayer, ask good things of the Lord; and let it feed your faith, to believe His word. May his assurance keep you contented.

The Lord will grace and glory grant,
And every good supply;
No blessing which His people want,
His bounty can deny.

April 1
MORNING

"The Lord is my Shepherd" Ps 23:1

DAVID WAS ONE OF HIS SHEEP. All His sheep know Him, love Him, and follow Him. They possess His disposition; He was meek and lowly in heart. Are you a sheep of Christ? Are you looking to your Shepherd, following and rejoicing in Him? If so, it is His delight to lead you, feed you, protect you, and heal you. Your person, life, health, comforts, and safety, are committed to His care. He is the good Shepherd, He laid down His life for His sheep; He searches and seeks out His sheep wherever they have been scattered; He feeds His flock; He gathers the lambs with His arm and carries them in His bosom. He loves His sheep more than His own life; He cares for His sheep more than for all the world beside. He feeds them in the best green pasture, and leads them in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. O view Jesus as your Shepherd! Expect Him to lead you, feed you, fold you, and one day, soon, to present you to His Father with exceeding joy. Cleave to Him; let nothing tempt you to leave His feet, His flock, or His fold. *He will never leave you, nor forsake you, just because you are His.*

Jehovah is my Shepherd's name!
With Him no foe can make me fear;
The Shepherd's voice each day I hear,
My filial love He has a claim;
In every danger He is nigh,
He does my every want supply.

April 1
EVENING

"The God of all grace" 1 Pet 5:10

HOW SWEET AND REFRESHING ARE THE VIEWS WHICH JEHOVAH REVEALS OF HIMSELF! Too often we allow our minds to be led away from the true spiritual representation of our God, and view Him through some improper and injurious medium. He is the *God of all grace*, a just God. He is gracious sovereignly, infinitely, and eternally. He has riches of grace: grace to quicken the dead, to pardon the guilty, to comfort the disconsolate, to strengthen the weak, to restore the wandering, and to save the lost. In His dealings with His people, His grace is displayed. How free is that grace in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus; how timely in the salvation of the dying robber on the cross; how unexpected by Zaccheus, when called down from the sycamore tree. These are but samples intended to show us what the *God of all grace* can and will do. Let us look to our God as infinitely gracious. The extent, the greatness, the riches, the freedom of His grace, is displayed in the undeserving, in the ill deserving. Let this allay our fears, spur us on to diligence, and provoke confidence, gratitude, and consecration.

Great God to us Thy grace afford,
That far from Thee we ne'er may rove,
Our guard - the presence of the Lord,
Our joy - the sense of pardoning love.

April 2
MORNING

"I shall not want" Ps 23:1

THIS WAS DAVID'S CONCLUSION BECAUSE THE LORD WAS HIS SHEPHERD. If we are His sheep He will supply us. He has all things in His possession: the silver and the gold, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. His owner's mark is upon all. All spiritual blessings are in His possession also; and He has a kind, tender, and liberal heart. He will give the best and liberally. He has undertaken to supply, conduct, protect, and present His flock upon Mount Zion. He has promised to be to us, to do for us, and to bestow upon us, all that our circumstances require. His care of His flock in times past is our sufficient assurance for the future. Whenever were the righteous forsaken, or His sheep left neglected? Did David ever want? Few men ever passed through greater or severer trials; yet upon his dying bed he tells us, he had all his desire fulfilled in the Lord. If you belong to Christ, you too may safely conclude, *"I shall not want."* Your fears are follies; your anxieties are groundless; your forebodings are sinful; you have a faithful God to provide for you, and you ought to rejoice. *"My God,"* says the apostle, *"shall supply all your needs, according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus."*

What want shall not our God supply
From His abundant stores?
What showers of blessing from on high
Each day th' Almighty pours!

April 2
EVENING

"Occupy till I come" Lk 19:13

OUR LORD HAS GONE TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR US. Before He went away He assigned work to His servants. He has given us talents, entrusting us with His money. He is gone home to His Father for a time; He will soon return again and He bids us *"occupy until He comes."* We are to be busy for God, to be active for the Lord Jesus Christ. He will soon come to take an account of *what* we have done, *how* we have done it, and *why* we have done it. *When* He comes He will praise or blame as the case may require. He will reward every one according to His works. Do we believe this? Are we living under the conviction of this fact? Do we often say to ourselves, *"I must stand before the judgement seat of Christ to give an account?"* Beloved, our time, our talents, as well as our persons, are the Lord's. To Him they should be consecrated. For Him they should be employed. Have we been living for Christ today? Have we been transacting our business, or doing our work, in the prospect of appearing before the Lord Jesus to give an account? Let us not sleep as do others. Let us not stand idle in the market place. Let us not live to ourselves, but let us heed His words: *"Occupy till I come!"*

O may I serve my Jesus still,
And use the talents giv'n;
Daily consult and do His will,
And thus prepare for heav'n.

April 3
MORNING

"I flee unto Thee to hide me" Ps 143:9

THE CHRISTIAN IS CONSTANTLY IN DANGER FROM SIN, SELF, AND FOES. He has many fears. His fears may be groundless, but they are often very real and distressing. He is weak and unable to defend himself or to overcome his opponents. He sees the storm in the distance, and looks for shelter before the enemy comes upon him. He has a laudable *concern* for his own safety and comfort. If he is wise, he will at all times flee to Jehovah. Jacob flies to Laban; the manslayer to the city of refuge; the bird to his mountain; and the Christian to his God. Asa may seek to physicians; Ephraim to King Jareb; and Saul to the witch: but the believer looks to his God. The Lord receives, comforts, and secures him. Let us flee to Him by prayer, in faith, with hope, for salvation; He will receive us, shelter us, and be our refuge and strength. Flee from sin, from self, from the world; but flee only to Jesus. His heart is ever inclined toward us, His ear is open to us, and His hand is ready to help, protect, and deliver us. His throne is our hiding place, His promise is our comfort, and His omnipotence is our defence. *He is our secure hiding place.*

Happy soul, that, free from harms,
Rests within his Shepherd's arms!
Who his quiet shall molest?
Who shall violate his rest?
He who found the wand'ring sheep,
Loves and still delights to keep.

April 3
EVENING

"The obedience of faith" Rom 16:26

THE OBEDIENCE REQUIRED OF FAITH IS SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL. It is the submission of the intellect, the heart, and the life to God. The law of faith is the gospel: this requires us to believe that *"God is love,"* that Christ died in the place of sinners; to embrace mercy as freely presented, and receive forgiveness as the gift of God; to accept of the righteousness of Jesus, to trust in it alone for acceptance before God, and to plead it at the throne of grace for all we need; to come daily to Jesus for all we want, and to expect to receive at His hands all He has promised; to live for God, to live to God, to live like God. It requires us, in one word, so to live that God may be all, and man nothing. God requires the *obedience* of a believing heart. We must believe what He says, expect what He has promised, and do what He bids. This is the life of faith and Satan will oppose it. The carnal mind will throw a thousand obstacles in the way. Everything that is of a worldly character will hinder us. But we must wrestle, strive, break through, and say, *"I will believe my God. I will obey my Lord."* *That only is the way of faith.*

Spirit of faith, unfold Thy law,
Thy quick'ning pow'r impart:
My soul to sweet obedience draw,
Fill and control my heart.

April 4
MORNING

"It is I; be not afraid" Jn 6:20

THE FEARS OF THE CHRISTIAN DISHONOUR HIS LORD. Fear is a denial of his faith, and a fruitful source of distress to his soul. All things are of God, He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, and in every event He says to us, *"It is I, be not afraid."* If friends turn to foes and distress us, if death visits our dwellings and bereaves us, if sickness lays us aside and fills us with pain, He says, *"It is I; be not afraid."* If losses, crosses, and sore trials come upon us, and discourage, distress, and perplex us, He says, *"It is I; be not afraid."* If death approaches, and calls upon us to leave the body and close our eyes upon our beloved relations, friends, and connexions, He says, *"It is I; be not afraid."* Should we hear the pillars of heaven crack, and feel the strong foundation of the earth give way; should the heavens be rolled up like a scroll, and the great white throne appear; still, amidst the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds, He cries, *"Be not afraid; it is I."* Happy Christian! thy fears are groundless and thy brightest hopes well founded. Rejoice in Jesus!

O that I might so believe,
Steadfastly to Jesus cleave;
Only on His love rely,
Smile at the destroyer nigh:
Free from care and servile fear,
Feel the Saviour always near.

April 4
EVENING

"I know whom I have believed" 2 Tim 1:12

IT IS MERCY UNSPEAKABLE TO KNOW CHRIST AS SAVIOUR AND LORD. Such knowledge lies at the root of our happiness. It is essential to our confidence. Unto us it is given to know Him. We know Him from His word. We know Him from the testimony of His saints. But what is still better, we know Him by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. But now we only know in part. We know His person, so as to love Him; His character, so as to trust in Him; His perfect work, so as to rely upon it alone for our acceptance with God; His infinite fullness, so as to repair to it for all we need; His tender compassion, so as to go to Him for sympathy in suffering and sorrow; His willingness to receive sinners, so as to recommend poor sinners to go to Him for life and peace. We know He is able to save. We know He will never leave or forsake one poor soul who trusts in Him. We know Him, and therefore trust our all in His hands. We know Him and therefore are not ashamed to avow that He is our Lord and our God. We know who He is, the Son of God; and what He is, the Saviour; where He is, at the right hand of God; what He has done, he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. *Such knowledge is precious beyond words.*

I know in whom I have believed,
His Spirit doth my heart assure;
That what He hath from me received,
His keeping power will make secure.

April 5
MORNING

"Without me ye can do nothing" Jn 15:5

NEVER FORGET THE LORD, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS AND STRENGTH. We are not sufficient to think rightly of ourselves, but through Him we can do all things. Never attempt anything without looking to Jesus for power. Let a knowledge and constant sense of weakness keep you near Him, sensibly depending on Him, and ascribing all good unto Him. You cannot, He can. You have destroyed yourself, in Him is your help found. It is only by union to Him, and receiving from Him, that you can glorify God, adorn your profession, enjoy your privileges, and obey the holy precepts of the gospel. Never presume, but come up out of the wilderness leaning on Him, your beloved. Live as one deeply sensible of your dependence upon, and obligation to, the Lord Jesus. He is the strength of the poor, the strength of the needy in his distress, and your strength too. Beloved, Jesus is your life-giving Head, the Fountain from which you are to draw all your supplies, and the Friend to whom you are to carry all your cares. He will work in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure. Say with the apostle Paul, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."*

Jesus, immutably the same,
Thou true and living vine!
Around Thy all supporting stem
My feeble arms entwine;
Thou art my strength, my life, my hope,
Nor can I sink with such a prop.

April 5
EVENING

"Peace, peace" Isa 57:19

SUCH ARE THE GOSPEL'S SOOTHING SOUNDS WHISPERED IN THE BELIEVER'S EAR. In times of tribulation, in times of temptation, in times of bodily disease and suffering, it softly cries "*Peace, peace.*" Peace, for Jesus died to put away your sins. Peace, for Jesus lives to intercede for you in heaven. Peace, for Jesus reigns, and your concerns are in His hands. Peace, for Jesus loves, and His love is immutably fixed on you. Peace, for God is love. Peace, for you are reconciled to Him by the death of His Son. Let not your heart be troubled. Every thought of God respecting you, is peaceful. Every purpose of God toward you which providence has to work out, is peaceful. Heaven is at peace with you. You are also at peace with heaven. Your peace was made when Jesus died in your stead; when He put away your sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Look to Him as your peacemaker. Live in the atmosphere of Gethsemane and Golgotha. Often meditate upon that precious verse, "*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee.*" Let your mind rest in the Lord always. *He is the God of peace.*

Jesus, my feeble faith increase,
And sweetly multiply my peace;
Because I fully trust Thy power,
My sin shall trouble me no more.

April 6
MORNING

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" Rev 5:12

IN HEAVEN EVERY VOICE WILL SING TO THE PRAISE OF THE LAMB. This is an ascription of praise to Jesus, the sacrifice for sin, the atonement of the Church, the Saviour of His body. Jesus, who died for thy sins, is worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. We never can ascribe too much to Jesus. But He is worthy also to be *believed*, in preference to Satan, unbelief, the world, or appearances; to be *trusted* with all, for all, before all; to be *loved*, more than any other, in opposition to any other that would rival Him; to be *obeyed*, though He commands us to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye; to be *followed*, wherever He may lead us, through evil report and good report; to be *preferred*, to ease, pleasure, wealth, health, to anything and everything. Jesus is worthy to be our example, our confidant, our King, and our all. He is worthy of all He requires, all we can give, all His people have done for Him, or suffered in His cause. Believe His word, trust His grace, love His name, obey His commands, and prefer Him before all others. Make it your daily business to endeavour to bring sinners to His feet. He alone is worthy of every effort you can make.

Jesus my Lord,
Thou art worthy to receive
Honour and power divine;
Blessings far more than we can give,
Glory only ever Thine.

April 6
EVENING

"The resurrection of the just" Lk 14:14

THIS IS THE BELIEVER'S GLORIOUS PROSPECT, GOD'S SURE PROMISE, because Jesus rose from the dead. When He appears, the dead in Christ shall rise first. They shall rise incorruptible, powerful, spiritual, and glorious, in full conformity to His glorious body. His voice will rouse them, His power will raise them, and His glory will surround and adorn them. They shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is. What a glorious dawning will the resurrection morning be! How deeply we are interested in it, and yet, how little it exercises our thoughts, or excites our anticipations. It may be the very next morning we shall see, for we may die in our sleep; or for aught we can tell, Jesus may come tomorrow. Are we ready? Are we justified before God through faith in Jesus? Are we just with men, rendering to all their due? The resurrection of the just will be most glorious; they shall come forth perfect in holiness and beauty. We ought often to think of that day, to prepare for it daily, to live and act as if it was just at hand, to do as Paul did, who laboured, suffered and prayed, *"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."* *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.*

Sing with glad anticipation,
Mortals and immortals sing;
Jesus comes with full salvation,
Jesus doth His glory bring.

April 7
MORNING

"One thing is needful" Lk 10:42

THAT ONE THING IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND HIS KINGDOM. All other knowledge will pass away. The things of time are transient, the things of eternity are permanent. The world passes away. The body must die; earthly connexions must be dissolved; but the soul lives for ever. The welfare of the soul is the one thing needful. If the soul is in a sanctified and healthy state, it will be found at the feet of Jesus; it will relish His words and enjoy His communications more than the richest feast. We shall be seeking to know Him, love Him, believe Him, obey Him, and enjoy Him. Fellowship with Jesus is needful as an evidence of interest in Him and as a source of satisfaction and comfort. He that finds a home at the feet of Jesus will enjoy an eternal heaven in the presence of Jesus. Let not then the many trifles of time affect, distract, and bewilder you; but let the one thing needful be the constant object of pursuit and desire. Live at the feet of Jesus and you are safe. Seek above all things to enjoy Jesus, and you will be happy. Aim in all things to glorify Jesus and you will be holy. Look daily for the coming of Jesus and you will be consistent. *O Lord Jesus! manifest Thyself to me; draw me to Thy feet and keep me there! Incline Thine ear to this my prayer:*

Assist this roving, wavering heart
To fix on Mary's better part;
To scorn the trifles of today,
For joys that none can take away.

April 7
EVENING

"One thing I do" Phi 3:13

WE MUST HAVE THE RIGHT PRIORITIES: FIRST THINGS FIRST. The concentration and fixation of thoughts, desires, and aims upon the great object and end of life is an invaluable blessing. David desired "*one thing*," even to dwell in the house of the Lord. Mary chose the good part. Paul kept his eye and his heart upon "*one thing*," even the prize of his high calling. He forgot the past, constantly pressing on after higher attainments, holier enjoyments, and greater usefulness. His heart was set upon doing all he could for God, obtaining all he could from God and becoming as much as possible like God. Beloved, how this reproves us! Are not our minds often distracted, our hearts divided, and our attention diverted from the object, which we should keep in view? Jesus kept His eye upon the joy that was set before Him. Moses had respect unto the recompense of the reward. Paul did not aim at any of the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are not seen and eternal. O to have the heart set and the eye fixed upon "*one thing*;" and that one thing, the prize which Jesus holds out to stimulate His people, which He will give them at that day!

Lord, help me this one thing to do,
To keep the glorious prize in view;
Fain would I leave earth things behind,
And heav'n on earth in Jesus find.

April 8
MORNING

"He will save" Zeph 3:17

THE LORD THY GOD IS MIGHTY TO SAVE. Whom will He save? The lost, the wretched, the unworthy. Every applicant, for *"whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* Our Lord says, *"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* How? *Freely*, without money and without price; *fully*, by His blood, power, and providence; *eternally*, all who flee to Him for refuge, all who call on Him for pardon, peace, and life, shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; they shall not be ashamed or confounded, Why? Because it is His Father's will; because He delighteth in mercy; because it will eternally glorify His name. From what? From sin, its guilt, filth, and power; from the present evil world; from Satan; from the wrath of God; from every evil work; and from all the evil designs of men. He has saved us by showing us grace and dying in our stead. He does save us by His presence, word, providence, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. He will save in every trouble, from every foe, even unto the end. Look to Him then, and to Him alone, to deliver, direct, relieve, and preserve. He says, *"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other."*

Why should I doubt His love at last,
With anxious thoughts perplexed?
He who saved me in troubles past,
Will save me in the next.

April 8
EVENING

"Who hath saved us" 2 Tim 1:9

SALVATION IS A PRESENT BLESSING BROUGHT TO US ONLY BY JESUS. If we are in Christ we are saved. Our God has pardoned our sins, He has justified our persons, He has changed our natures and He has given us eternal life. We now receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls. We are not perfectly delivered from all evils, foes, and fears yet; but then final deliverance is certain. We are not in the exact likeness of our Lord now, but we shall be when He appears, for we shall see Him as He is. Every believer is in a justified state, and as such we should walk with God, work for God, and suffer according to the will of God. Christ is ours, and all He has is ours. The promises are ours, and all they contain is ours. God is ours, and all He can do with us consistent with His perfections and government, He will do. It is this that strengthens us to labour, gives us courage in the conflict, casts out all slavish fear, and consecrates us entirely to the Lord. Let this then be the subject of meditation tonight, until we repose into the arms of sleep. God has saved me. He may not have given me health, or wealth, or a perfect home; but he has saved me, and saved me with an everlasting salvation, and that's sufficient for me.

Saved in Christ from hell and death,
O may I seek the things above;
And evermore the spirit breathe
Of praise, contentment, and love.

April 9
MORNING

"Lord, increase our faith" Lk 17:5

SOLA FIDE! FAITH ALONE SAVES, FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE! The believer is as his faith. If faith is weak, he is fearful, fretful, and troubled; if faith is strong and rightly placed, he is courageous, active, and happy. Faith comes from Jesus, He is its author; it leads to Jesus, He is its object. Faith is like a grain of mustard seed, it grows and increases; Jesus alone can increase our faith. Let us apply to Him this morning, and let this be our prayer, *"Lord, increase my faith."* Strong faith will believe without feeling, yea, against feelings and appearances. It will trust God where it cannot trace Him; it assures the soul that what He has promised He is able to perform, and will assuredly do so. Great faith will have great trials, for God never gives faith without trying it; and the heat of the furnace is in proportion to the strength of our faith. Little faith lays hold on Christ, and brings salvation; strong faith receives much and often from Christ and brings great consolation. Go to Jesus with the faith thou hast, and plead with Him for the faith He requires. He gives freely to every importunate pleader; and He will assuredly give to thee.

O Jesus, now Thyself impart
And fix Thy presence in my heart;
Give strong and living faith!
Then will I throw off every load,
And walk delightfully with God,
Believing all He saith.

April 9
EVENING

"Your faith groweth exceedingly" 2 Thess 1:3

SUCH WAS THE HAPPINESS OF THE BELIEVING THESSALONIANS. Their faith grew and grew exceedingly. The seed became the plant; the plant soon became the tree. The blade grew into ear; the ear ripened into the full corn. The babe became a young man; the young man became a father in Christ. Faith roots itself in the truth. It firmly grasps the rock. It stands against and defies the storm. It reposes on the covenant, and immutable faithfulness of God. It grows by exercise. It grows in the way of upright walking. It grows when we obey gospel commandments. If our faith grows, Christ will become more precious. We shall earnestly long for more conformity to Him. We shall learn better to distinguish between faith and feeling. We shall be able to trust God's word of promise. Our love to the saints will strengthen and become strong. Our zeal for God and His glory will increase. Our attention to His precepts will become close and committed. Our confidence in God's word will be steadfast and strong. Our liberality and benevolence will grow in proportion to our faith. *Pray, then, for a faith which grows.*

How blest it is to live by faith,
And cast our burden on the Lord:
To believe what the Saviour saith,
And rest, confiding in His word.

April 10
MORNING

"He shall glorify Me" Jn 16:14

JESUS IS GLORIFIED WHEN OUR PRIDE IS MORTIFIED AND OUR SPIRITS ARE HUMBLLED. It is the Spirit's office and work to glorify the Lord Jesus; this He does by discovering to us our wretched and ruined state, and leading us to Him to crave salvation as a favour at His hands; by daily emptying us and leading us to Him for all we need; by giving us to see that all God has created cannot satisfy an immortal spirit for one moment of time, but that there is enough in Jesus to satisfy throughout eternity. Jesus is glorified when we mourn over sin, and wash in the fountain of His blood; when we renounce our own doings and feelings, and desire to be found in His righteousness alone; when we refuse to look to any other quarter for help, relief, or comfort, but to Him; when His dear name fills all our songs and when we long to have a crown to cast at His feet, and a harp that will sound forth His praise. *"He shall glorify Me."* This decrees the death of pride, self, and creature confidence. Beloved, whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all to the glory of Jesus. He is Lord of all.

Lord, draw my heart from earth's vain way,
Attune me daily to Thy call;
Make me to love Thee more, I pray:
Thou art my Saviour, God, my all;
Come dwell in me, and fill my soul,
Teach me to live 'neath Thy control.

April 10
EVENING

"Thou shalt glorify me" Ps 50:15

TROUBLE ALWAYS DRIVES US TO THE LORD IN PRAYER. When we go to Him He kindly listens and graciously answers. But when prayer is answered and deliverance is enjoyed, then He expects to be acknowledged and adored. We glorify God when our hearts are grateful for His mercies; when we praise Him for His undeserved favours; and when we commend Him to others, as faithful to His word, merciful to His enemies, and gracious to all who apply at His throne. But we glorify Him also when we exercise filial confidence in His promises; when we expect all He has promised, because He is true; when we call upon Him first, in every trial and trouble; and when we carry all our cares to His feet, and leave them at His throne. By silent submission under bereavements, by calm resignation in trials, by the daily offering up of the heart as a sacrifice, by tender concern for His honour, by filial loyalty to His cause, by fraternal affection to His people, by preferring His will to our own, *we glorify Him*. Let us make this the chief business of our lives. Let us charge ourselves every morning, saying, *"My soul, see to it that thou glorify God today."*

He who offers grateful praises,
Best exalts Jehovah's name:
He whose heart His law embraces,
Will aright enlarge His fame.

April 11
MORNING

"And she went to inquire of the Lord" Gen 25:22

"IN EVERYTHING BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION."
Why worry when we can pray? Rebekah prayed. Let us imitate Rebekah, for God commands us to do so. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. Are you in trouble? Go, and inquire of the Lord: What is the cause? Unite with holy Job in praying, *"Show me wherefore Thou contendest with me."* Are you in perplexity? Go and inquire: What is the meaning? He will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shouldest go; He will guide thee with His eye. Go in an inquiring spirit. Go, persuaded whatever thy circumstances or trials may be, that, as a believer in Jesus, wrath and curse can have nothing to do with thee; they were lifted when Jesus died in thy stead. Be assured that whatever comes from God is a blessing, a benefit, a favour, a proof of love, however painful, perplexing, or distressing it may be. Do not reason, but believe in the promise of thy God; do not despair, grieve, or complain; but go, and inquire of the Lord at His throne, of His word. He says, *"I will be inquired of."*

Prayer was appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give;
Long as they live should Christians pray,
For only while they pray they live.

April 11
EVENING

"I will not be inquired of by you" Ezk 20:3

"IF I REGARD INIQUITY IN MY HEART, THE LORD WILL NOT HEAR ME." These persons were living in sin under a profession of religion. Such characters are peculiarly loathsome in the sight of God; He will not allow them to have any fellowship with Himself. *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."* He that turns away his ear from the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination. Are our hearts sincere? Are our lives consistent? If we love sin, if we live in sin, if we can make excuses for sin, God will hold no communion with us. Sin is the pollution of the soul. Sinners are filthy and offensive to God. But none are so offensive as they who, while professing to be holy, live in sin. Sin spoils our services. One sin fostered and encouraged will cause our services to be rejected, our prayers to be refused, and our persons to be loathed by a holy and righteous God. Christ will not be the minister of sin, or allow His work to be used as an excuse or cloak for transgression. If we are justified by grace, we are sanctified by the truth. Beloved, if tempted to indulge in sin, remember God says, *"I will not be inquired of by you."*

Lord, wash my soul from sin,
Cleanse every secret part;
And put Thy Spirit's grace within,
To purify my heart.

April 12
MORNING

"He cannot deny Himself" 2 Tim 2:13

GOD HAS OPENED HIS HEART TO US IN HIS WORD. He has told us all His mind: He means every word He has spoken, and will fulfill every promise He has made. He cannot deny Himself or falsify His word; He can have no temptation to do so. Man may be fickle, he is but a bruised reed; Jehovah is always the same, He is the Rock of Ages. He will have compassion on the miserable who seek His face and show mercy to all who plead with Him in Jesus' name. He will not cast out a repentant sinner, or refuse to receive a confessing backslider. He cannot turn a deaf ear to our cries, or refuse to deliver us when we call on His name. He will take His own time, but will never dishonour His faithful word. He will be rigidly faithful, both to His threatenings and promises. Let us take courage and trust in Him; we have His word, it is true, from the beginning; we have this assurance, that *He cannot deny Himself*. Let us then stay ourselves on the word of our God; let us trust Him though the night be dark and the burden be heavy. He exhorts, *"Trust ye in Jehovah for ever, for in Him there is everlasting strength."*

Engraved as onto solid rock
The mighty promise shines;
Nor can the powers of darkness mock
Those everlasting lines.

April 12
EVENING

"The will of the Lord be done" Acts 21:14

SUBMITTING TO GOD'S WILL IS THE KEY TO TRUE HAPPINESS, simply because God is love, perfect, just and good. If God is love, if His promises are true, if He is faithful to His word, if His will is justice and mercy, holiness and love, if He only wills what is for our good and for His own glory, ought we not daily obey His will? Should not wishing give way to acquiescence? His wisdom is infinite, and He wills wisely. His heart is set upon our welfare, and He works with this object in view. Still we want our own way. We fancy that something else would be better than that which is. We cast dishonour upon the wisdom, the kindness, and the truth of our God. What folly is this! Most of our anguish springs from our wilfulness. Our distresses are generated by our opposition to God. We daily pray, *"Thy will be done."* We often talk of the excellency and perfection of the will of God, and yet if our wills are crossed, if our fortitude is tried, if our professions are put to the test, we either fret and complain, or sink in fears and gloom. Believer, God wills your holiness, your true happiness, your everlasting welfare. Give up your self-will then at once, and strive to say at all seasons, *"The will of the Lord be done."*

Thy perfect will my journey through,
Thou knowest best to grant;
What else I want, or think I do,
'Tis better still to want.

April 13
MORNING

"Why are ye troubled?" Lk 24:38

TO THE FEARFUL DISCIPLES, THE RISEN LORD SAID, "PEACE BE UNTO YOU." To us today, He says the same. Why should you be troubled? Consider what Jesus has done for you, promised to you, and is gone to prepare for you. Consider what He is to you, your loving Bridegroom, faithful Friend, and gracious Saviour. What troubles you? Is it sin? He will pardon, subdue, and cleanse it. The world? He has overcome it, redeemed you from it, and is leading you through it. Is Satan the problem? He is conquered, condemned, and will soon be imprisoned. The cares and troubles of life? Jesus says, *"Bring them to me by prayer, cast them on me in faith, leave them with me; I know what you want, I have provided of my goodness, I will supply all your needs; your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure. I will make a way in the wilderness of trouble, and a path in the desert of perplexity. Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. Try me, trust me, in all your ways acknowledge me, and I will direct your paths. I have wisdom, power, and love; and all that I have is yours, to be employed for your good."* Commit your way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass.

Yield to the Lord, with simple heart,
All that thou hast, and all thou art;
Renounce all strength, but strength divine,
And peace shall be for ever thine;
Behold the path the saints have trod,
The path which led them home to God.

April 13
EVENING

"Your names are written in heaven" Lk 10:20

HEAVEN'S CITIZENSHIP REGISTER IS FOR GOD'S PEOPLE. Is your name written there? What an unspeakable blessing is this, to be registered among the family of God, to have a name in the Lamb's book of life, to be written among the living in Jerusalem. Election is the first effect of grace. We were chosen in Christ, chosen to holiness, chosen to eternal life. Our souls were given to Jesus; our salvation was entrusted to His hands, our interests were made His care; our names were recorded in the register of His members, and we are called upon by Him to rejoice in the fact. God has thought of us; He has thought of us in love. He has ordained us to eternal life; He has made full provision for all our wants in the covenant; He has given us exceeding great and precious promises; He has proved His exceeding kindness towards us in a thousand ways. Let us daily write His name upon our memories. Let us so record His mercies as they shall never be forgotten. Let us make holiness the business of our life, for no one can know his election but by its results, of which holiness is the principal. *If we are not holy, what proof is there that our names are written in the book of life?*

Thus did eternal love begin
To raise us up from death and sin;
Our characters were then decreed,
Blameless in love, a holy seed.

April 14
MORNING

"Ye are complete in Him" Col 2:10

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH," is what every believer ought to do. Look not too much at thyself: there is nothing but vanity, weakness, sin, and failure there; but look to Jesus, for God hath united thee to His beloved Son. Jesus is one with thee, and all that He has is thine. Thou art unholy, but He is made unto thee sanctification; and He will sanctify thee wholly, body, soul, and spirit. Thou art foolish, but He is made unto thee wisdom; and He will make thee wise unto salvation. Thou art weak, but He is thy strength; and thou canst do all things through His strengthening power. Thou art unrighteous, but He is made unto thee righteousness; and thou art become not only righteous, but the righteousness of God in Him. Thou art lost, but He is made unto thee redemption; He has redeemed thee from the curse of God, and from the present evil world, and He will redeem thee from death. In thyself thou art not only incomplete, but wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked; but in Jesus thou art holy, wise, strong, righteous, rich, happy; in a word, *complete*. *View thyself, then, as complete in Christ, who is the head of all principality and power, and thy Head.*

Still onward press the heav'nly way,
Trusting in Him from day to day;
His presence still entreat;
His precious name for ever bless,
Your glory, strength, and righteousness;
In Him you are complete.

April 14
EVENING

"That ye be not slothful" Heb 6:12

OUR LABOUR FOR GOD SHOULD BE WITH DILIGENCE AND PATIENCE. God's people must never be slothful. That would pervert truth, abuse mercy, dishonour God, and gratify the prince of darkness. Slothfulness is a disgrace both in reference to temporals and spirituals. Be not slothful in business; but, active, diligent, and industrious, carrying on business from a pure motive, in a proper spirit, with Christ-honouring zeal. So should every Christian do. But in reference to spiritual things the Apostle speaks: *that ye be not slothful* in seeking blessings, in employing your talents, in exercising your graces, in copying godly examples, even them who through faith and patience now inherit the promises. Let hope inspire you; let the love of Christ constrain you; let the holy precepts of the gospel direct you; let the glorious promises of grace energise and strengthen you. Be not slothful, for all around you are active. The world is active to ensnare you. Satan is active to deceive. Angels are active ministering to you. Jesus is active pleading your cause before the throne. Time swiftly flies, eternity is fast approaching, the last opportunity will soon pass away. *Be not slothful!*

Happy we live, when God doth fill
Our hands with work, our hearts with zeal;
For every toil, if he enjoin,
Becomes a sacrifice divine,
And like the holy ones above,
The more we serve, the more we love.

April 15
MORNING

"Set your affection on things above" Col 3:2

"FRIENDSHIP OF THE WORLD IS ENMITY WITH GOD." Sadly, Christians are too often captivated by the things around them. We are apt to be much affected by earthly things, but our affection must be permanently fixed on things above. Let us lift our eyes and hearts to heaven this morning; there are the proper objects of our love, desire, and esteem. There is Jehovah our heavenly Father, dwelling in unapproachable light. There is Jesus, our dear and adorable Saviour, exalted, dignified and glorified at the right hand of the Father. There is the Holy Spirit, our divine, gracious and condescending Comforter. There the love, favour, and presence of God are fully enjoyed. There peace, rest, and happiness are eternally perfected. There is the crown of righteousness, the throne of glory, and the rivers of pleasure which our God has promised, and set before us. There are our brethren who have gone home before us, and there our affections should be. What is earth or time? We shall soon have done with both. *Let us then set our affection on things above, and not on things on the earth.*

Why should my heart descend so low,
To brood on earth and things of woe?
While heaven, where endless pleasures roll,
Waits to welcome my newborn soul.
Saviour! let thine attractions be
But felt in all their force by me;
Then shall I mount on wings of love,
And fix and dwell on things above.

April 15
EVENING

"He humbled Himself" Phi 2:8

FOR OUR SAKES HE TOOK UPON HIM THE FORM OF A SERVANT. He became poor that we through His poverty might be rich. He who was the brightness of God's glory, the express image of the Father's person humbled Himself. He was with God, and was God; He was the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. *Yet He humbled himself.* How? By taking our nature, by becoming a servant, by stooping to obey, even unto death. Look at the manger. Look at the carpenter's shop. Look at the cottage of Nazareth. Look at the Jordan. Look at the homeless wanderer. Look at Gethsemane. Look at Golgotha. Look at Joseph's tomb. Now need you ask, *"How did He humble Himself?"* The scene is before you. *But why did He humble himself?* Because He loved us. It was the stoop of majesty, under the power of infinite love. He humbled himself that He might mingle with mankind and enter personally into our infirmities and wants, know our feelings, die in our stead, and having suffered being tempted, know how to succour those that are tempted. He humbled Himself to exalt us. He stooped low, to raise us high; He suffered, that we may rejoice; died, that we may live. *Amazing humiliation! Wondrous love!*

Did pity ever stoop so low,
Dressed in divinity and blood?
Was ever rebel courted so,
In groans of an expiring God?

April 16
MORNING

"He will subdue our iniquities" Mic 7:19

"WHO IS A GOD LIKE UNTO THEE?" This question finds answer in the person of our Lord Jesus, who *"bare our sins in His own body on the tree."* Sin must not only be pardoned, but corruption must be subdued; the one is freely promised as well as the other. The *grace* of God pardons, the *power* of God subdues; but *grace* and *power* always go together in the salvation plan. Pardon comes first, and sanctification follows. Light shining upon the understanding, discovers corruption working in the soul; holiness seated in the heart, produces hatred and opposition to it; prayer ascends to God for deliverance from it, and God's *power* descends and subdues it. But like fire apparently quenched, it will break out again and again; like rebels in a state, it will seize every opportunity of disturbing the peace and happiness of the soul. Hear, then, what the Lord says to you this morning, *"I will subdue your iniquities."* Take your complaint to His throne, plead His faithful word, and expect His promised *power* to subdue your iniquities. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under *grace*. *Grace reigns, and will conquer every rival lust.*

Jesus, Thy boundless love to me
No thought can reach, no tongue declare;
O bind my thankful heart to Thee,
And reign without a rival there.
O grant that nothing in my soul
May dwell, but Thy Spirit alone:
O may Thy love possess me whole,
My joy, my treasure, and my crown.

April 16
EVENING

"I know that my Redeemer liveth" Job 19:25

THE HOPE OF DYING MEN WAS REVEALED TO JOB IN HIS MISERY. He saw the victory of the risen Christ, the hope of a dying world. Friends and relatives are constantly being taken by death. But one relative ever lives. He is our divine Kinsman. To Him the right of redemption belongs. He has paid the ransom price, and He lives to effect our final and complete deliverance. He lives in our nature at the right hand of God. He lives for us in the holiest of all. His existence is eternal, His office is untransferable. He will plead our cause. He will conquer our foes. He will perfect our graces. He will redeem us from death. He will be glorified in us, when He comes again the second time without sin unto salvation. I know Him from the revelation of His word, and by the teaching of His Holy Spirit. I know Him as the object of my trust, confidence, and desire. I know Him as my Redeemer. He has already rescued me from Satan, vile habits, and this present evil world. Into His hands I have committed my spirit, and I know that as He liveth in the character of my Kinsman Redeemer, I shall live also. Dear friends, it is sweet, peculiarly sweet, to have one ever-living, ever-loving Friend. *O Lord Jesus may I know and love Thee more!*

I know that my Redeemer lives,
And ever pleads for me;
Salvation to my soul He gives,
And life and liberty.

April 17
MORNING

"The Forerunner is for us entered" Heb 6:20

HEAVEN IS A PREPARED PLACE FOR PREPARED PEOPLE. Not every person can enter the Celestial City. We have a Saviour, Jesus. He is gone into heaven as our Forerunner; as the pioneer goes before the army to remove obstacles, clear the road, and render the march more easy, so has Jesus gone before us. As a concerned and kind friend, He shows the practicability of the way; as a wise guide, He marks out the road for us; as our example, He is gone before, and says to us, *"Follow me."* We have now an Advocate with the Father, a Husband preparing our mansions, a Saviour waiting to receive us. We have one in heaven to whom in our addresses to His throne we can say, *"Lord, Thou knowest from Thy own experience what I feel in my present situation, for Thou wast once tried in all points like as I am."* We have one in heaven who will welcome us home, and who when He sees us enter will be glad in His heart. We know Him below, and we shall know and enjoy and love Him forever above. He is gone into heaven for us, nor shall we know until we arrive there, how much we are indebted to His intercession and pleading above. O my soul, look to Jesus as thy Forerunner, and follow in His steps!

Before His heavenly Father's face,
For every saint He intercedes:
For mercy and abounding grace,
There Jesus our Forerunner pleads.

April 17
EVENING

"The love of Christ constraineth us" 2 Cor 5:14

GOD'S LOVE IS NOT MAN'S LOVE. GOD LOVED US WHILE WE WERE ENEMIES. Love is according to the nature and character of the one who loves. Jesus possesses a perfect character and unites in Himself the most excellent natures. His love, therefore, is peculiar, peculiarly glorious. It includes pity for sinners, sympathy for, and delight in, His saints. He loves us as the Father loves Him: except whereas we could tell the strength of His Father's love to Him, we cannot tell the strength of His love to us. Love dwells in His heart, looks through His eye, works with His hand, speaks with His tongue, and procures for us by His influence. He considered no condition too low to stoop to, no action too mean to perform, no failing too foul to pass by, no gift too great to bestow, no sufferings too painful to endure, nothing too mean in His people to prize, no distance too far to travel to do them good. And if we believe the love of Christ to us, it will constrain us to surrender ourselves to Him; to part with all for Him; to do, to suffer, or to give anything in His cause; to proclaim His excellencies, and publish His fame. *Does the love of Christ constrain you to be active, zealous, and generous for His gospel's sake?*

The love of Christ constrains - to what?
With all our sins to part,
To yield Him what His blood hath bought -
Our dearly purchased heart.

April 18
MORNING

"Our sufficiency is of God" 2 Cor 3:5

OUR LORD JESUS SAID, "WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING." With Him, we can do all things; without Him, nothing. He is our sufficiency. Let us think of this, whenever we are cast down on account of our weakness, or the difficulties we meet in our way. We are weak but Jesus is strong and His strength is made perfect in our weakness. He has given us His word that He will work in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. He speaks and it is done. The word of the Lord knows no obstacles or difficulties; all things must obey Him. When He sent Moses to Pharaoh, He said, "*Certainly I will be with thee:*" and the Lord's presence was his strength. He acts just so with us; His fullness is our sufficiency; it is opened to us in Jesus, and we receive from it according to our wants, weakness, and faith. "*Through God,*" said David, "*I shall do valiantly.*" "*I can do all things,*" said Paul, "*through Christ which strengtheneth me.*" Look not then at your own emptiness or weakness; but look at what God is to His people, and what He has promised to give them, and sing, "*Our sufficiency is of God.*" *God is our refuge and strength; and as our days so shall our strength be. His grace is sufficient for us; His strength is made perfect in weakness.*

When we cannot see our way,
We should trust and still obey;
He who bids us forward go
Will instruct the way to know.

April 18
EVENING

"Where is mine honour?" Mal 1:6

THE LORD HAS LOVED US WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE. What have we done for Him? Are we not His people? The Lord expects to be honoured by His people, but how often do we lose sight of this important duty. We should honour Him, by prompt obedience, as Matthew did; by active faith, as Abraham did; by patient suffering, as Job did; by an honest testimony, as Peter did; by glowing love, as John did; by fervent zeal, as Paul and the holy martyrs did. *Beloved, would you honour God?* Then trust His providence. Always act as under His eye. Prefer His children to all others. Assist the extension of His kingdom. Hasten to do His commandments. Seek above all things to advance His glory. If you do not, He may well ask, *"Where is mine honour?"* But if you would honour God in an acceptable manner, seek diligently to know more of His character. Be fully reconciled to Him through Jesus; live daily as in His presence; gratefully acknowledge His authority; in everything consult His revealed will; study to please Him always. Never forget the words of the Lord: *them that honour me I will honour.*

O God my Father, didst Thou claim
So vile a sinner for a son?
Thy highest honour is my aim,
Thy will by me shall e'er be done.

April 19
MORNING

"Quicken Thou me in Thy way" Ps 119:37

WITHOUT GOD'S QUICKENING POWER WE HAVE NO LIFE. The Psalmist's request reflects our need today. What poor, dull, lifeless creatures we often feel ourselves to be; and how needful is this prayer. It is our duty to run in the way of God's commandments; it is our misery that through sin, weakness, and disobedience, we scarcely creep. We are dependent upon the Spirit for *quicken*ing. He only can strengthen and enliven us. Let us sow unto the Spirit this morning. He is gracious, and a grace giving Spirit. He delights to exalt and honour Jesus. Let us therefore beseech Him in Jesus' name, for His sake, that we may bring honour unto His cause, to quicken our souls. Let us pray Him to bring us near to God; for the nearer to God the happier, and holier, and livelier, we shall be. Let us ask Him to shed abroad the love of Jesus in our hearts; for His love will make us live well, bear the cross well, perform duties well, and fight His battles well. The commandments furnish us with a rule, and the promise bolsters our strength; but it is only the Spirit who can put us in possession of the latter, and without that we cannot attend to the former, in a gospel spirit. The presence of Jesus, and the blessings of His grace, are daily necessary to keep us lively, devoted, and working for God. *Lord, quicken Thou me in Thy way.*

Come, Holy Spirit, heav'nly Dove,
With all Thy quick'ning pow'rs;
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours.
Our love so faint, so cold to Thee,
And Thine to us so great and free.

April 19
EVENING

"Lord, help me" Mt 15:25

THIS CRY OF FAITH FROM THE HEART OF A POOR WOMAN TOUCHED THE HEART OF JESUS. It is brief but comprehensive. It is always suitable but at this time especially so. It is a mercy to know and feel our weakness, for it is only then that we heartily cry to the Lord for strength. In every duty we have to perform, in every trial we have to meet, in every trouble through which we pass, under all the pains and sorrows we have to endure, we may always cry, *"Lord, help me."* We need the help of God: He has freely promised it; let us therefore seek and receive it. Let this be our daily prayer: *"Help me to cleave to Thee, Lord Jesus, with full purpose of heart; help me to do Thy will, cheerfully and constantly; help me to persevere through all difficulties, and press towards the mark for the prize of my high calling; help me gratefully to acknowledge Thy hand in prosperity, and meekly to submit to Thy will in adversity; help me to conquer my foes, master the corruptions of my own heart, resist all the temptations presented to me."* If such petitions are presented in faith, if they are the language of the soul, we may daily say, *"The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me."*

Lord, assist me by Thy grace,
Helpless at Thy feet to lie;
Well pursue my heav'nly race,
Well to press on, e'en to die.

April 20
MORNING

"Christ hath made us free" Gal 5:1

WE WERE ONCE THE SLAVES OF SIN, AND SATAN, THE GOD OF THIS WORLD. We were under the bondage of the law, but Jesus has made us free. We are now delivered from the law, and are under grace. We are dead to sin, and in Christ, we are justified from it. We are delivered from Satan, and are at war with him. We overcame the world, and are hastening out of it. We are at liberty to serve God and walk with Him in friendship and holy love. The price of our freedom was the life and death of Jesus; the efficient cause of our freedom was the power and operation of the Holy Spirit; the grand moving cause was the infinite and everlasting love of God our Father; the instrument by which we are made acquainted with our freedom is the holy gospel; the grace which puts us into possession of our freedom is faith; and the end of our freedom is that we may serve our God in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life, and then be glorified with Him for ever. We are freed from sin that we may be holy; and we are introduced to and accepted of God, that we may be happy. *Let us stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.*

Sweet is the freedom Christ bestows,
With which He makes His people free;
A liberty no mortal knows,
Till they His great salvation see:
Freedom from wants, and fears, and cares,
From worldly lusts, and dangerous snares.

April 20
EVENING

"The Lord searcheth all hearts" 1 Chr 28:9

"THOU UNDERSTANDEST MY THOUGHTS AFAR OFF. SUCH KNOWLEDGE IS TOO WONDERFUL FOR ME!" The Psalmist speaks words of profound truth. If the Lord should *search my heart, what might He find there?* Evil thoughts, foul corruptions, fearful depravity! But is this all? I trust not. There are some good thoughts towards the Lord God of Israel, and those which are evil I hate. It is not all corruption, for there is a little God-given truth, especially when the Lord says, *"Take heed to yourselves that your heart be not deceived."* Satan will deceive us if he can. He will try to conceal our defects, that he may lead us into the sin of presumption; and he will obscure our virtues, that he may drive us to despair. If the Lord searches all hearts, hypocrisy must be the height of folly, for it is impossible to deceive Him. We may provoke His wrath, but we cannot impose upon His mercy. Let us then lay open our hearts before God. Let us daily seek the renewings of the Holy Spirit. Let us fly to the open fountain of our Saviour's blood, and daily wash in the laver of God's holy word. Often let us cry with the Psalmist, *"Examine me, O Lord."* And let us be sincere in all we profess, in all we say, and in all we do.

In all my vast concerns with Thee,
In vain my soul would try
To shun Thy presence, Lord, or flee
The notice of Thine eye.

April 21
MORNING

"Walk humbly with thy God" Mic 6:8

"PRIDE GOETH BEFORE DESTRUCTION, AND AN HAUGHTY SPIRIT BEFORE A FALL." So says the wise King. Pride is a great evil: to indulge it is to nourish a serpent in the bosom. The grace of God always humbles us; and it is only as we are humble that we can be at peace. God condescends to walk with the humble man, but He keeps the proud at a distance. Consider what you were by nature, what now lurks in your heart, what you would have been but for the grace of God, and be humble. All you have is the gift of free grace; all you do that is good, is God's working in you. *What have you to be proud of?* What reason is there to boast? O lie low in the dust of self-abasement; cherish humbling thoughts of yourself; appreciate the mercy and infinite compassion of God in condescending to so vile, so unworthy a worm! Study the character and conduct of the humble Jesus, learn of Him, and endeavour to walk as He also walked. Serve the Lord in all humility of mind. But beware of spurious humility! It is hypocrisy, which is acting a part, pretending to be what one is not. Let us walk without pretence, in lowliness of mind aiming at the highest duties God has commanded, *and only for His glory.*

By faith in Christ I walk with God,
With heav'n, my journey's end, in view;
Supported by His staff and rod,
My road is safe and pleasant too:
Though earth and hell my course withstand,
Jehovah leads me by His hand.

April 21
EVENING

"That He might bring us to God" 1 Pet 3:18

"NO MAN TAKETH IT FROM ME, BUT I LAY IT DOWN OF MYSELF." Willingly our Lord laid down His life, to bring us to God. He, the Son of God, had such a design in all His sacrifice, labours, and sufferings for our sakes. By nature we are far from God, opposed to God, afraid of God; consequently we are far from happiness and peace. Jesus knew the blessedness of being with God, and being like God. His love to His people led Him to desire for them the same blessedness. His desire was so strong that He was willing to do or to suffer anything in order to put them in possession of it. He therefore voluntarily suffered for our sins, and put them away by the sacrifice of Himself. His aim was to bring us to God honourably, and to keep us with God eternally. He brings us to God on the throne of grace. Here we receive pardon, obtain peace, and enjoy paternal love. At this throne we have a bountiful supply for all our wants, the fulfilment of great and precious promises, and sweet manifestations of God's loving favour. *He will bring us to God on the throne of glory.* Then we shall be perfectly holy and eternally happy. Then He will be satisfied and we shall be satisfied too. That which satisfies Him, will satisfy us, and in our satisfaction He will rejoice.

Yes, Jesus left the realms of day,
Suffered and shed His blood;
The awful ransom price to pay,
And bring us back to God!

April 22
MORNING

"I will surely do thee good" Gen 32:12

"I AM NOT WORTHY OF THE LEAST OF ALL (THY) MERCIES." This was Jacob's confession to the Lord in his prayer. God's gracious promise to Jacob extends to us his spiritual seed. It is thus God speaks to us this morning. How gracious He is! We know not what a day may bring forth, but we know our God who superintends every event will do us good. We may mistake as to what will be for our good, but He is infinite in wisdom and goodness, and He makes no mistake. We may look at afflictions, losses, and crosses, and cry out, *"All these things are against me!"* But read the history of David. What a train of troubles attended him! Hear his acknowledgement: *"It is good for me that I have been afflicted."* Thy God will do thee good, therefore He will try thee, sift thee, humble thee, and prove thee. He will give thee medicine as well as food. He will consider nothing too expensive or too painful, if necessary for thy soul's welfare. Look at your trials and say, *"This also shall turn to my salvation."* Look on the past, and acknowledge, *"Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life."* Look to the future and rejoice, *"The Lord will give that which is good."* Look in every direction, and say, *"I will trust and not be afraid."*

I cannot doubt His bounteous love,
So full, so free, so kind;
To His unerring, gracious will
Be every wish resigned.

April 22
EVENING

"What shall I render unto the Lord?" Ps 116:12

"GRACIOUS IS THE LORD, AND RIGHTEOUS; YEA, OUR GOD IS MERCIFUL." He daily loadeth us with benefits. Are we thankful? This is a very suitable inquiry after a day's mercies. But though we attempt to render praise tonight, we ought not to confine our efforts to the day. Rather let us ask, *"What has the Lord conferred upon us?"* Benefits and blessings, without which we could neither be happy, useful, or holy, are from Him. He has given grace, scattered fears, wrought deliverances, sent supplies, confirmed our faith, and promised glory. Everything we receive from the Lord is a benefit. It springs from free grace, flows to the undeserving, suits our case, and puts us under deep obligations. The Father has given us His Son. The Son has given us His perfect work. The Holy Spirit has given us life. *Then what shall we render? What are we willing to render? Have we gifts?* Let us devote them to His service. *Have we time?* Let us employ it to His praise. Let us work in His vineyard, suffer in His cause, and give to His poor. *What will be acceptable to God?* That you walk closely with Him, spread His gospel, visit His sick ones, relieve His poor people, shew gratitude to Him as opportunity offers, and live the life of a consecrated disciple.

What shall I render? Render praise,
Walk close with God in love;
Observe His precepts, keep His ways,
And all His will approve.

April 23
MORNING

"Have faith in God" Mk 11:22

"WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM." Our God has spoken. His Word is truth: believe it, plead it, expect the fulfilment of it. He cannot deceive you. His ear is open to you. Try Him. *What do you want? Why do you want it?* If you really need, if your motives are good, plead with God for it; expect Him to bestow it; and receive it as coming from Him. In every trial, for all you need, *have faith in God*. He will be gracious unto you. He is ever with you. He is ready to help you. He rejoices over you to do you good. His word is true from the beginning. He is the faithful God. He keepeth covenant and mercy. Believe in God for all that your circumstances require. Patiently wait His time for your supplies. Never stop praying or expecting because He delays: never doubt Him but trust in Him with all your heart. He is God, thy God; He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think. This is thy direction, thy duty, thy privilege: *have faith in God*. Walk with God, talk with God, expect from God, do all for God, be entirely devoted to God. *"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."* *Therefore will I look unto the Lord.*

Begone, unbelief! my Saviour is near,
And for my relief He'll surely appear:
By prayer let me wrestle that He will perform;
With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm.

April 23
EVENING

"Let us draw near with a true heart" Heb 10:22

THE WAY TO GOD HAS BEEN OPENED BY JESUS OUR LORD. He bids us to draw near. To keep away is unbelief. Distance from God is the cause of coldness and indifference. God is in the holiest, enthroned on the mercy seat. He has accepted the atoning sacrifice. Sin is forever put away. Jesus has rent the veil. The way to God is open and free. Our High Priest is there with the blood, and the incense is burning in the golden censer. The heart of God towards us is true; it was no make-believe love that gave us His beloved Son. Jesus also is true hearted towards us, or He had never died for our sins, or entered heaven to plead in our behalf. Let us therefore be true hearted towards God, with deep sincerity and childlike simplicity draw near to God. We have liberty to speak our minds. We should not stand dumb as awe-stricken servants, but we should draw near as the child which runs into its father's arms, and lays its head on father's bosom. Let us not then stand trembling as before an angry God; but let us exercise unhesitating, unwavering trust in Him. He is not glorified by the fear of slaves, but by the filial confidence of children.

Trusting in our Redeemer's blood,
Now let our souls draw near to God,
Upon the mercy seat;
Boldly into the holiest come,
And feel ourselves with God at home,
Where truth and mercy meet.

April 24
MORNING

"I am the bread of life" Jn 6:35

"YOUR FATHERS DID EAT MANNA IN THE WILDERNESS, AND ARE DEAD." Jesus says, *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever."* In Jesus is all we need to refresh, strengthen, and satisfy us; but He must be received by faith. He must be daily received. Feeding upon Jesus yesterday will not suffice for today. We must go to Him afresh this morning. He presents Himself; He says, *"Eat, my friends; yea, satisfy yourselves, my beloved."* If the Holy Spirit has given us a spiritual appetite, if we are hungering after righteousness, Jesus, and Jesus only will satisfy; and we are heartily welcome to feed upon Him. Let us set Him before us many times in the day; let us freely feast upon Him; and if we feel weak, faint, or weary, let us take of this life-giving bread; and let us ever retain the sweet assurance, that if we feed on Jesus we shall live by Him, and live eternally with Him. Beloved, if you think you can make a living of anything but Jesus, or if Jesus is not enough in your estimation, you are either in a carnal state or an unhealthy condition of soul. Jesus only is *the bread of life, the bread which came down from heaven!*

Jesus, Thou art the living bread
By which our hungry souls are fed;
In Thee alone Thy children find
The Spirit's food meet for the mind;
O let me evermore be fed
With this divine celestial bread!

April 24
EVENING

"A God at hand" Jer 23:23

BEFORE HIS ASCENSION OUR LORD PROMISED, "I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS." In our ever living Lord, the Christian has never far to run for a friend. The Lord is always near unto him. He is a God at hand, ready to help. This fact we should ever hold fast. It would cheer us in gloom, preserve us in temptation, support us in trouble, raise us above our fears, keep us from sin, encourage us in duty, and restore our soul when ready to decline. Friends may leave us, but my God is ever at hand. He is present with heaven and earth at His command. He is present to pity, to reprove, to counsel, and to sustain. But while He is near us, He is equally present everywhere; He is with our friends in distant places, and He is with our enemies in their secret hiding places; therefore He will frustrate their designs and overrule their opposition for our good. Let us retire tonight comforted with the thought "*God is at hand,*" He will watch over me while I sleep; He will guard me; nothing can happen but what He permits; and He stands pledged to make all things work together for my good. My soul, I charge thee never to forget that *thy God is nigh at hand!*

Lord, to my spirit's gaze reveal
Compassion written on Thy face;
And let my heart Thy power feel,
Thy perfect majesty and grace.

April 25
MORNING

"Who maketh thee to differ from another?" 1 Cor 4:7

"IF ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATURE." Old things are passed away, all things are become new. Therefore, there is a vast difference between a Christian and a worldling; the one is dead in trespasses and sins, the other is alive unto God by Jesus Christ our Lord. He has been quickened by the Son of God, is born of the Spirit, and taught by the eternal Father. He is a new creature, being created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before ordained that he should walk in them. *Who made this difference?* You are at once ready to answer, if taught of God: *"By the grace of God I am what I am. Of His own will, begat He me by the word of truth."* Yes, it was the rich, free and sovereign grace of God, and that alone, which made you to differ. Grace was given you in Christ before the world began; and the Spirit was given you *in time*, that you might know and enjoy the things which are freely given unto you of God *for eternity*. Beloved in Christ, view yourself as an infinite debtor to grace; be humble before God who has thus made you to differ; and pity, pray for, and strive to benefit those who are still without. *"Look unto the rock whence you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence you were digged."*

What was there in you that could glory bring,
To give the Creator great delight?
'Twas *Even so, Father*, whenever you sing,
"Because it seemed good in Thy sight!"

April 25
EVENING

"Looking for that blessed hope" Tit 2:13

"BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY; AND MY REWARD IS WITH ME." Do these words of our Lord Jesus speak to you? The posture of the Christian today, more than ever before, should be that of expectation. His best things are before him. God's promises refer to the glory which is soon to be revealed. The Old Testament saints lived expecting Jesus to come; He came, He wrought, He suffered, He made the atonement, He rose and is ascended, and He promised to come again in glory. Now He is entered into the holiest to make intercession for us; soon He will appear a second time without sin, unto salvation. Then, the dead in Christ will rise, the living saints will be changed, and we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. This is our hope in Christ our Lord. In expectation of this glory we should daily live. Looking for this blessed hope let us labour. Death is nowhere spoken as the object of our hope; we are not to live looking for death, but for the coming of Jesus. Thus Enoch walked with God, and so pleased Him that he was translated. Thus the Apostles and early Christians lived, and therefore they were not affected by earthly things. *So should we also live, looking for that blessed hope.*

O weary soul, are you by sorrows burdened?
Look to the Lord our glorious coming King!
He reigns on high, our blessed Intercessor,
He pleads our cause who serve Him here below!
So till He come, let's watch and pray rejoicing;
Till He come, each day let's labour on.
Then soon one day, our eyes shall see the Saviour
Descend the clouds - O glorious day!

April 26
MORNING

"Behold the Man!" Jn 19:5

"SURELY HE HATH BORNE OUR GRIEFS, AND CARRIED OUR SORROWS." The prophet Isaiah wrote these prophetic words fulfilled in Jesus our Lord. See with your mind's eye, Jesus crowned with thorns and scourged, with His face so marred, more than any man's. His blood is flowing, His heart is breaking, for He is the man of sorrows. Behold Him, then, for in Jesus dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In Him the love of God centred and shone forth. He is the only foundation of His church's hopes, the only source of eternal salvation. He is Jehovah's firstborn, His only begotten Son, the express image of His person. He is thy substitute, surety, and redeemer. He is the holy, harmless, and undefiled Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world. Behold Him: He reveals the depth of His love; He teaches thee patience, meekness, suffering and humiliation, and silence under insult. O behold Jesus, and be ashamed of complaining, of repining, or indulging any unworthy thoughts or revengeful feelings. *Behold and imitate! Behold and love! Behold and adore!*

Wounded head, back ploughed with furrows!
Visage marred: Behold the Man!
Eyes how dim, how full of sorrows!
Sunk with grief: Behold the Man!
Lamb of God, led to the slaughter!
Wounded, blood flowed like water:
Should not love my heart inflame?
Viewing Thee, Thou slaughtered Lamb!

April 26
EVENING

"His heart was lifted up" 2 Chr 32:25

SIN IS A REPROACH TO ANY PEOPLE; PRIDE IS A GREAT SIN. Pride swelled the king's heart and he was lifted up with vanity. Yet Hezekiah was a good man, and had just received a remarkable proof of God's distinguishing love. We are by nature so proud that we are always in danger of being unduly elevated if God favours us; or of taking offence at God's dealings if He should try us. The strongest temptations often follow the sweetest manifestations; therefore we ought to be on our guard. *There is nothing that God hates more than pride.* He cannot tolerate it, and yet it is the very thing to which we are most prone. A proud heart is sure to be unfruitful; only the humble bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Pride generates fretfulness, discontent, envy, ill-will, hardness of heart, and a thousand other evils; let us beware lest our hearts be lifted up, for if they are, God will pull them down, and the means, as in Hezekiah's case, may be very severe. If Satan can make us proud, he will soon make us prayerless; if we become prayerless, we shall soon be careless; and if careless, we put ourselves into his power. Let us consider what we were before we received grace, and what we might have been but for grace.

Jesus to us Thy grace impart,
Which flows so free from Thee;
The humble, meek, and lowly heart,
From pride and envy free.

April 27
MORNING

"I am He that comforteth you" Isa 51:12

OUR GOD IS THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT. He cares for His people who are often low and desponding; they do not live up to their privileges; the things of time make too deep an impression, because they do not sufficiently appreciate eternal things. But Jehovah is their Comforter; as such He presents Himself to us this morning. He is the God of all comfort. He comforteth those who are cast down. To Him alone we must look for comfort. Looking to creatures for what God promises, dishonours Him; and at such times the creature may well ask, *"Am I in God's stead?"* Our God comforts us by His Son, whom He hath given to us; by the Spirit, which He pours out upon us; by His word, in which He speaks to us: by His ordinances, in which He meets with us; and by His providence, when He appears for us. Let us look unto God as the author and giver of all comfort; let us plead with Him to comfort us according to His word, and let us be suspicious of all comfort which does not come from Him and lead to Him. He must be the centre to which we always tend, and the circumference within which we move. *Apart from Him there is no true comfort.*

Jesus, all our consolations
Flow from Thee, the sovereign God;
Love, and faith, and hope, and patience,
All are purchased by Thy blood;
Now Thy richest grace impart,
Sanctify and fill my heart.

April 27
EVENING

"Accepted in the Beloved" Eph 1:6

GOD THE FATHER CHOSE US IN CHRIST BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. We must ever be grateful to Jesus, God's greatest gift. He is the Beloved One. His Father loved Him infinitely and eternally. All His people who know Him love Him. All that is loveable is found in Him, and *"He is altogether lovely."* His person, His character, and His conduct, are most lovely. All His people approach God through Him, placing their entire dependence upon Him. They are united to His person and are viewed as one with Him. Viewed in Him they are pleasant, acceptable, and lovely in the sight of God. He calls them *"all fair,"* and pronounces them to be without *spot*. My dear friends, *in ourselves* we are deformed, loathsome, and most offensive to infinite purity; but *in Jesus* we are clean, righteous and comely. As clothed with His righteousness, God pronounces us just; as filled with His Spirit, God calls us lovely. Never let us expect acceptance with God but through Jesus; nor let us doubt our acceptance if we come unto God by Him; for Jehovah glorifies and commends His grace to universal admiration, by accepting us in *the Beloved*. *As believers, we are now accepted, nor shall we ever be more accepted.*

Accepted in Jesus, and perfectly too,
I fain would in all things my gratitude show;
I'd live to His honour, and walk in His light,
Till perfectly holy I stand in His sight.

April 28
MORNING

"*Though I be nothing*" 2 Cor 12:11

"I WAS BEFORE A BLASPHEMER, AND A PERSECUTOR, AND INJURIOUS." Yet Paul obtained mercy from the Lord and became the leading apostle. But his estimate of himself was *less than the least of all saints, and the chief of sinners*. The more we know of ourselves and of Jesus, the more shall we be humbled in the dust before God; and the lower we lie before God, the happier and holier we shall be. Man will, and must, be something; this is his pride and his misery: the Christian is willing to be *nothing*, that Christ may be all in all. If we daily feel that we are *nothing*, how many mortifications we should be spared; what uplifting views of the grace of God would fill and sanctify our souls. Apart from Christ we are less than *nothing*; but in Christ we are something. We are empty, but He fills us; naked, but He clothes us; helpless, but He strengthens us; lost, but He finds us; ruined, but He saves us; poor, but He supplies us. All we are, is by Christ; all we have, is from Christ; all we shall be, is through Christ. Believer, you are *nothing*: therefore beware of thinking too highly of yourself, or fancying that you deserve more than you receive, either from God or men. Humble souls are soon satisfied.

O could I lose myself in Thee,
Thy depth of mercy prove;
Thou vast unfathomable sea
Of inexhaust'ble love!
I loathe myself when God I see,
Content if Christ exalted be.

April 28
EVENING

"Kept by the power of God" 1 Pet 1:5

GOD'S SALVATION PLAN IS COMPREHENSIVE AND COMPLETE. He not only saves us, but He keeps us until we finally arrive home. All God's people need God's keeping, and therefore they pray to be kept. But it is not enough that we pray for keeping, we must believe also the promises, expect their fulfilment, and seek for divine keeping in faith. Believing, we grasp the promise, keep near the throne, walk with God, and are kept in dangers and death. Unbelief departs from God, questions His promise, wanders from the throne, and we fall into folly and sin. *"Take heed, therefore, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."* God will not keep you as brutes, but as rational beings; He will not hold you in with bit and bridle as horse or mule, but He will lead you as beloved children, and keep you as loyal disciples. His power is necessary: it is pledged to you. But it is only pledged to believers, to believers as exercising faith, hope, and prayer.

See the power of God to save!
Jesus' grace in me admire;
Kept like Peter on the wave,
Kept like Shadrach in the fire;
Rescued from the lion's teeth,
Safe within the jaws of death.

April 29
MORNING

"But thou art rich" Rev 2:9

MOSES ESTEEMED THE REPROACH OF CHRIST GREATER RICHES THAN EGYPT'S TREASURES. True riches are not on earth but in heaven. Many of God's people are really poor in reference to the things of time, for God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him. They are often persecuted, tried, tempted and cast down; so was the church in Smyrna; but Jesus says to her, *"Thou art rich."* So are all the Lord's people. Rich by *relation* - God is their Father, and Jesus their elder Brother. Rich by *donation* - Jesus has bequeathed unsearchable riches to them. Rich by *promises* - the Lord has promised all good things. Rich by *faith* - for he that believes shall inherit all things. Rich in *expectation* - for they look for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Believer, *you are rich*; Jesus has willed to you His righteousness, to justify you; His blood, to cleanse you; His Spirit to sanctify you; His name to dignify you; His angels to minister unto you; and His heaven to be your everlasting habitation. Precious Saviour! I admire and adore Your love! *O teach me to live out of self on Your fulness!*

Called by grace, the sinner see,
Rich, though sunk in poverty;
Rich in faith that God has giv'n,
He's a legal heir of heav'n.

April 29
EVENING

"Thou sayest, I am rich" Rev 3:17

HE WHO IS RICH WITH GOD IS TRULY RICH. Worldly goods and earthly riches are liable to take wings and fly away. Our Lord assures His poor people that they are rich on account of the provision He has made for them; but the conceited, lukewarm professor says of himself, *"I am rich."* Spiritual persons are always sensible of their poverty, and they are taught to live upon the fullness of Christ for all they need. It is always a bad sign when we begin to admire our graces, actions, or usefulness; for it is evident that we have taken our eyes off the Lord Jesus Christ, and Satan will soon gain an advantage over us. We are never so safe, or so happy, as when we lie at the Saviour's feet, sensible of our poverty, and seek from His fullness of grace to perform every holy duty, and to enjoy every gospel privilege. Those who fancy that they are rich, are declared by the Saviour to be poor, wretched, miserable, blind and naked; but He counsels them to buy of Him gold tried in the fire, white raiment, and eyesalve that they may see. Let us then beware of boasting of any attainments we fancy we have achieved. *"Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven."*

Saviour! my misery I confess,
I deeply feel my want of grace,
A needy sinner I!
Wretched, and blind, and stript of all,
O save me, at Thy feet I fall,
Or else I pine and die!

April 30
MORNING

"That which I see not teach Thou me" Job 34:32

GOD IS THE SOURCE OF ALL WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE. Without the Lord, what can we know? We were once blind, but now our eyes are open; but still we are absolutely dependent on divine teaching, or we shall never become truly wise. O God, teach us, that self is vile; the world vanity, sin bitter, the blood of Christ most precious, His righteousness most glorious, His name my only hope, His love my joy, His Spirit my strength, His glory my aim. *Teach Thou me*, O Lord, is my daily prayer. Teach me, O Lord, more of my Saviour, of what He has done for me, of what He possesses, and will give to all who call upon Him in truth, of what He has promised to work in us, and bestow upon us. Beloved, let us daily plead with God to teach us, that we may know Christ, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, and be made conformable unto His death. Let us beg the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to open to us the knowledge of Christ, that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. *Jehovah alone can teach us to profit.*

O Jesus, teach my soul to know
Thyself, the Truth, the Life, the Way;
May I in grace and knowledge grow,
Till I arrive in perfect day:
From Satan, self, and sin set free,
What I know not, Lord, teach Thou me.

April 30
EVENING

"Blessed are the meek" Mt 5:5

MEEKNESS IS NOT WEAKNESS! Some people mistake one for the other. The strongest minds are sometimes adorned with the grace of meekness. The meek quietly submit to the will of God; they reverence His word, and tremble at His rod. Instead of the spirit rising against God and murmuring at His dispensations, it bows like the yielding plant to the breeze and says, *"The will of the Lord be done."* The meek silently receive God's commands, patiently follow the Saviour's example, and wisely cherish the working of the Holy Spirit. They walk close with the Lord, and prudently with men, not seeking their own glory, but the honour of their God and Saviour. They are quiet lambs, not roaring lions; gentle doves, not preying vultures. They benefit all around them, as sheep; they do not bite and devour as the wolf. Such are like Christ, and they are blessed with Christ. They can claim but little now, but they shall inherit the earth by-and-by. Their very state of mind is a blessing; they live above the storms that agitate others; they bow while others break. They are a blessing, while others are a curse.

Jesus, to my poor sinful heart
The grace of meekness now impart!
Fain would I, Lord, though poor and weak,
Be like Thyself, how very meek!

May 1
MORNING

"And will be a Father unto you" 2 Cor 6:18

"YE SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS." In the Lord Jesus we are one family, not by our own contriving, but because God has called. No man can be a loser by adhering to God's holy word, for he is promised a hundredfold in the present life, and in the world to come life everlasting. God's children belong to the heavenly kingdom. They no longer belong to the world. The world must be forsaken. Christ and the world will not unite. Carnality and spirituality cannot be reconciled. Our God says, *"Come out from among them, and be ye separate; touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you."* What better words can we find to encourage and confirm our resolve? Men may reject me, despise me and persecute me, but God will receive me. If they injure me and try to starve me, God will be a Father to me. He will care for me, protect me, comfort me, supply me, and fill a Father's place. I cannot be friendless. I should not be fearful. Beloved, God says, *"Prove me." Are you called upon to forsake friends, to break off connexions, or endure persecutions?* Fear not, look to God, and He will receive you and *be a Father unto you.*

And wilt Thou, Lord, a Father be,
To those who leave the world for Thee?
Wilt Thou provide for every want,
And tokens of Thy favour grant?
Then, Lord, I bid the world farewell;
And in Thy house contented dwell.

May 1
EVENING

"Ye ought to please God" 1 Thess 4:1

"SO YE WOULD ABOUND MORE AND MORE." For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification. Nothing can be more profitable. He is our Father. He continually seeks our welfare. He has made provision for all our wants. He seeks to profit us and we ought to seek to please Him. My friend, do you realize the importance of pleasing God? Do you desire to please Him, to please Him well in all things? Then rest alone for acceptance on the finished work of Christ. Believe the love that He has to you, and His promises as worthy of the utmost confidence. Approach His throne often, always expecting to be heard and answered for the sake of Jesus. Consult His word to ascertain His will, and whenever you discover anything to be the will of God, do it; do it promptly; do it cheerfully; do it just because He requires it; do it without asking why; do it simply to please Him. Bow with submission to all the dispensations of His providence, and endeavour to centre all your desires, plans, and aims in this one object, to glorify Him. This will please Him. You ought to please Him for you owe Him so much and this is the reasonable and filial thing to do. The blessing is yours.

My soul, this point pursue,
Make this thy business here:
Thy God to please, His will to do,
With love and filial fear.

May 2
MORNING

"But grow in grace" 2 Pet 3:18

A CHRISTIAN SHOULD NOT STAGNATE. In the Christian life, never rest satisfied with present attainments. God has much to bestow and we are capable of receiving, enjoying and using it to His glory. As the tree planted in good soil grows both in the root and the branches, so should the Christian; he should be rooted in the love of God, and grow up in conformity to Jesus. If we grow in grace, we shall discover more of our wretchedness, misery, and weakness; and more of the preciousness, fulness, and glory of Christ. We shall be humble before God and active before men. We shall trust in Jesus more simply, having no confidence in the flesh. Grace always leads out of self to Jesus, and puts the crown upon His head. Grace is spiritual beauty; it is the very glory of God. To grow in grace is to grow like Jesus, meek and lowly in heart; active and devoted in life; blameless and harmless as the sons of God. Let us pray for more grace, for God loves to bestow it; let us grow in grace, for God commands it; let us look forward for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the coming of Jesus, for God has promised it. Look for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of Jesus.

Though holy deeds and fruits of grace
Are in believers found,
'Tis Christ's command, that they increase
And more and more abound;
O Saviour, may I grow in grace,
Till I behold Thee face to face!

May 2
EVENING

"Ye are no more strangers" Eph 2:19

IN JESUS OUR LORD WE ARE OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD. We are fellow-citizens with the saints. Grace has wrought a wonderful change in us, as well as wrought a wonderful work for us. We were once strangers to God, far off from peace, and unacquainted with the privileges of the gospel. We were made nigh by the blood of Christ, reconciled to God by the death of His Son, led into the knowledge of His will by the Holy Spirit, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. Once everything in Christ our Lord was strange to us, and we were strangers to Him. We did not understand His doctrines, we knew nothing of His mission, and we disliked His practices. But now we know God. We are one with Jesus. We enjoy the communion of the Holy Spirit. We are united to the saints. We are become citizens of heaven. We feel at home in its ordinances. We enjoy its privileges. We are become familiar with the word of God, the throne of grace, the open fountain, the way of peace, the wedding garment, and the peculiar conflict of the sons of God. We are a part of God's sanctified family, of the Saviour's precious flock. Divine things are become part of us, and we love them, live upon them, and enjoy them.

No more a stranger to the Lord,
His family or throne;
I trust His grace, believe His word,
And live to Him alone.

May 3
MORNING

"Is thy Counsellor perished?" Mic 4:9

"NOW WHY DOST THOU CRY OUT ALOUD?" Why are you in pain and perplexity? Go now to Jesus our Counsellor. He is exactly suited to our needs, being possessed of infinite wisdom, unbounded benevolence, exceeding graciousness, and highest honour. He has never lost a cause. He counsels freely, cheerfully, and lovingly. He turns the counsel of all our foes into foolishness. But though we have this excellent Counsellor, we neglect to consult, honour, or trust Him; and it may often be demanded of us, *"Is thy Counsellor perished?" If not, why this perplexity? Why these mistakes? Why these fears and forebodings? Why this running to men for advice and succour?* Beloved, let us stand reproved; we have walked in our own counsels; but we have not waited for His counsel, but we have neglected and forgotten Jesus in His glorious office. Let us in future never act without His counsel, never resort to men to His dishonour, never listen to Satan. Jesus our Saviour says, *"I will counsel thee. Mine eye shall be upon thee."*

Lord, be my Counsellor,
My Pattern and my Guide;
And through this desert land,
Still keep me near Thy side;
O let my feet ne'er run astray,
Nor rove, nor seek the crooked way.

May 3
EVENING

"The sin which doth so easily beset us" Heb 12:1

"LET US RUN WITH PATIENCE THE RACE BEFORE US." But we cannot run if weighed down by sin. Christian, beware the easily besetting sin. Often do sins prove troublesome to which he had been a slave in his unconverted state. But there is one sin to which we all are still peculiarly liable; it is called, *"The sin which doth so easily beset us."* This is distrust of God, the great hindrance in our heavenly race, the weight that obstructs our progress, and the disease which weakens our spiritual powers. God has revealed His power and pledged it to us. He has raised up a great cloud of witnesses, all of whom attest His faithfulness; He has made promise upon promise, all to encourage our confidence. Still we doubt Him. Continually do we mistrust Him. Nothing injures us more or dishonours Him more. Therefore the Apostle exhorts us *"to lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us."* Leave off distrusting God! Exercise unhesitating confidence in His word and faithfulness. Learn from Abraham among the patriarchs, Moses under the law, and Jesus the great example of faith under the gospel. You never will be strong, or patient, or vigorous in the Lord's ways, except you leave off distrusting God: *this is the sin which doth so easily beset us.*

O Lord, with sorrow I confess
I have distrusted Thee;
Yet now bestow the needful grace
That I may faithful be.

May 4
MORNING

"I will heal your backslidings" Jer 3:22

TRULY IN THE LORD OUR GOD IS SALVATION. In Him alone is vigour and vitality. The believer can only be healthy as he walks with God, lives above the world, and looks for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the feet of Jesus we are safe, and shall be healthy; but if we wander from Him, spiritual diseases will seize upon us. The backslider feels too weak to run in the way of God's commands, too confused to appreciate his interest in God's promises, too guilty to call God Father, too wretched to rejoice in hope. He has no liberty in prayer, no enjoyment of his Bible, no peace in his conscience, no delight in God's ways. But the Lord says, *"Return, ye backsliding children; I will heal your backslidings."* This is a message from the Great Physician, an invitation from our Father's throne, a promise of our Saviour's love. O let us return unto Him with weeping and supplication, adopting David's prayer as our own, *"Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee."* Let us take up the determination of the church, *"Behold, we come unto Thee, for Thou art the Lord our God."* He will receive us graciously, and love us freely.

Give me Thy pardoning love to feel,
And freely my backslidings heal;
Repair my faith's decay,
Restore the sweetness of Thy grace;
Reveal the glories of Thy face
And take my sins away.

May 4
EVENING

"A very present help in trouble" Ps 46:1

FOR GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH. *Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed.* Our God is able. His grace is never so real as in seasons of trouble, sickness, or death. Then we need something which nothing else can supply but God. God is our help in trouble. He helps us to bear it. He helps us to improve it. He helps us through it. His choicest communications and sweetest manifestations are freely given in times of trial and distress. Believer, thy God is thy refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. He is never nearer than when you fancy that He stands afar off; He is never kinder than when you think He hath shut up His lovingkindness in displeasure. Do not doubt His love. Do not mistake His chastening. Do not listen to His foes. Do not forget His word. But remember, if trouble comes, grace comes with it; and your God is present to help you rise above it and to derive a blessing from it. *Believe* when you cannot see. *Trust* when you do not feel. *Wait* when God is silent. Your good is consulted in every trouble, and your God will be glorified by every trial. *"The Lord of hosts is with you, the God of Jacob is your refuge: therefore fear not neither be dismayed."*

Jehovah, Thy refuge and rock,
In trouble, His help shall supply;
Though earth be removed with a shock,
Still God, thy Redeemer, is nigh.

May 5
MORNING

"Being in an agony" Lk 22:44

"HE PRAYED MORE EARNESTLY." Our Surety suffers for us. Beloved, let us visit Gethsemane this morning and see this strange sight: Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, the brightness of Jehovah's glory and the express image of His person, groans on the cold ground, baptized in blood. He is sore amazed. His heart is filled with horror and His mind with dread. His soul is troubled, tossed with tempests and not comforted. He is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. The sorrows of death compass Him and the pains of hell have gotten hold upon Him. His heart like wax is melted, His whole nature is convulsed. He sweats blood. He cries aloud with an exceeding bitter cry for His heart fails Him. No human hand touches Him, but it is the hour and power of darkness. Our sins heap upon Him; His soul is made an offering for our sins; and it has pleased Jehovah to bruise Him. Was ever sorrow like unto His sorrow? He is in an agony. Here our sins are punished, our iniquities are expiated, and our justification is procured. *O to love Jesus, even to an agony!*

Go to dark Gethsemane,
Ye that feel the tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see,
Watch with Him one bitter hour;
Turn not from His griefs away,
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray.

May 5
EVENING

"Reconciled to God by the death of His Son" Rom
5:10

"IN DUE TIME CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY." By nature our hearts were at enmity against God, and in our lives we were enemies to Him by wicked works. Whatever He required we avoided doing, and whatever He prohibited we practised. Nothing could be more opposite to God than we were before called by His grace; and yet, while we were altogether sinners, Christ died for us. In dying for us in our stead, He did all that was requisite to reconcile us to God, so that when we see our state, feel our condition, and desire to be at peace with God, we have only to believe in Him, plead His death with the Father, and instantly we are honourably reconciled. All our sins are forgiven us for His sake. We are accepted of God solely on the ground of what He did and suffered. We are treated as if we had done what He did, because He did it for us, and it is imputed to us as soon as ever we come to Him in faith, place our confidence in it, and plead it before God for our acceptance. *We are reconciled to God only by the death of His Son.*

The glorious work is done,
The firm foundation laid:
Our God hath sent His Son,
The Son His life hath paid;
Justice and mercy firmed the plan
That reconcileth sinful man.

May 6
MORNING

"Pray without ceasing" 1 Thess 5:17

"IN EVERYTHING BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION." Our Father is ever willing to receive us in prayer. In prayer then we must approach God as a Father, ask of Him what we really need, and expect to receive according to His wisdom and will. Our wants are constantly recurring, therefore our prayers should be constantly ascending. The ear of God is always open. He is ever ready to listen to us. He invites, exhorts, and commands us to pray always, in everything. Every object that meets the eye, every circumstance of life, every employment in which we engage, are worthy matters for prayer. The believer should cultivate the habit of prayer. He should look up to God for all he needs, through all he sees, whenever he has a moment to spare. The prayers of a Christian are pleasant to God; He says, *"Let me hear thy voice, let me see thy countenance; for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely."* The believer should pray as naturally and as constantly as he breathes, for prayer is the breath of the soul. Beloved, if your prayers dwindle into a mere duty, is but occasionally offered, or become burdensome, it is clear that you are in a most unhealthy state. *Pray for revival mercy from God!*

Through the skies when the thunder is hurled,
The child to its parent will flee;
Thus amid the clamour of the world,
I turn, O my Father, to Thee;
The spirit of prayer in Thy mercy impart,
And take up Thy constant abode in my heart.

May 6
EVENING

"The God of all comfort" 2 Cor 1:3

"BLESSED BE GOD ... WHO COMFORTETH US IN TRIBULATION." Without Him we can do nothing. We are poor comfortless creatures in ourselves. We often seek comfort in things and meet with painful disappointment. Sin has banished all true comfort and solid happiness from our world. While God is excluded, comfort is excluded. Distance from God is distance from comfort. Our God is the Happy One. He is also the happy-making One. His comforts are pure, spiritual, and lasting. His comforts delight the soul. One ray of light from His countenance, one word of peace from His lips, will give more solid comfort than all earthly things. We must learn to live out of self upon our God for comfort, or we shall never know permanent happiness. He is willing to comfort us. He says of His Zion, *"I will comfort all her waste places."* He promises His disconsolate people, *"as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem."* He commands His servants, *"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem."* He sent His beloved Son into our world *"to comfort all that mourn;"* and it is of His favour that we enjoy *"the comforts of the Holy Ghost."*

My God to me the grace impart,
Which all that mourn receive:
The only Comforter Thou art,
Who only canst forgive.

May 7
MORNING

"O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me" Isa 44:21

"REMEMBER O JACOB, I HAVE FORMED THEE." God remembers. What tenderness, mercy, and love are found in God! Friends forget us, relatives care little about us, and we sometimes fear our God has forgotten us; but here He assures us that we shall never be forgotten of Him. Our names are in His book, our Representative is always before His throne, and we are the objects of His constant care. He cannot forget us while Jesus pleads for us; and if He does not forget, He will never neglect. There is only one thing He is ever said to forget, and that is our sins; but He is always mindful of His covenant. He will not forget the circumstances in which we are placed, the wants by which we are pained, or the prayers we put up at His throne. But though we are assured, our God will never forget us, yet we can find no satisfaction, but as the Holy Spirit humbles us, empties us, and exalts Christ before us, showing us our pardon, peace, and salvation in His life, death, and intercession. Beloved, let us mind the things of the Spirit, and daily seek humbling, quickening, and sanctifying grace.

O Lord, my God! whose sovereign love
Is still the same, nor e'er can move;
Look to the covenant, and see,
Has not Thy love been shown to me?
Remember me, my glorious Friend,
And save me, love me to the end.

May 7
EVENING

"Beware lest thou forget the Lord" Deut 6:12

"THE LORD WHICH BROUGHT THEE OUT OF EGYPT."

Remember Him: remembrance is the hallmark of gratitude. We are prone to forget God especially in times of prosperity. We forget our infinite obligation to Him, our absolute dependence upon Him, our accountability to Him. To make use of the knowledge we possess, we should daily remember to acknowledge Him in all things: to apply to Him for all we need, under all we suffer; to commit ourselves and our cause unto Him; to endeavour in all things and by all means to please Him; to expect His promised interposition in trials, and supplies in need, let us henceforth beware lest we forget the Lord, for it dishonours Him - it deeply grieves Him. It is injurious to us, for it causes backsliding or hardness of heart, insincerity or worldliness; ingratitude and self-righteousness. To prevent this crying sin, let us begin each day with solemn prayer and devout meditation on a portion of God's word; let us cultivate the habit of unceasing prayer; let us always endeavour to have some appropriate subject ready at hand for meditation, some portion of Scripture, or some attribute of God, or some office of Christ, or some mercy received - *lest we forget the Lord.*

Forget the Lord! and can it be
That I should so ungrateful prove?
Alas! I have forgotten Thee
Too long, too oft, Thou God of love.
For my neglect forgive Thou me:
Give me more grace, send from above.

May 8
MORNING

"Wait on the Lord, and He shall save thee" Prov 20:22

"DEARLY BELOVED, AVENGE NOT YOURSELVES." But rather give place unto wrath. Before God, be still. It is your privilege in every perplexity and trial to go to the Lord, to spread your case before Him, to plead His precious promises, and to wait expecting Him to speak to you. Wait on Him for light to discover the nature and design of your trouble; for wisdom that you may act honourably, and endure patiently; for power to sustain you under testing, and bring you through it; and for consolation to help you endure it. Wait upon the Lord in earnest, simple, persevering prayer; in searching, reading, and meditating upon His holy word; in self-examination as to your desires, motives, and designs. Wait upon the Lord, believing that He will fulfil His word, answer your prayers, and send you deliverance; patiently endure until He shall see good appear on your behalf. Waiting on the Lord you engage Him on your side; you put His mercy and faithfulness to the test; you are assured your strength shall be renewed; and God has promised you will never be ashamed. *Beloved, let us look to, trust in, and wait upon our God continually.*

Teach me, O Lord, to wait Thy will,
To be content with all Thou dost;
For me Thy grace sufficient still,
With most supplied when needing most;
O Saviour! give me grace to wait,
And daily watch before Thy gate.

May 8
EVENING

"Having food and raiment let us be therewith content" 1

Tim 6:8

"GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN." *They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare.* God knows best. We cannot really want more, and if God sees fit to withhold, we ought not even to wish for more. Our food may be sparse, and our raiment coarse. What then? If we have God's blessing, if we enjoy His presence, we are better off than if we possessed a kingdom without them. If God gave us no more, we ought to believe that more would be injurious to us. God either loves us, or He does not. He cares for us and provides for us, for He leaves nothing to chance. If we are believers in Jesus, God certainly does love us, He does care for us, He does provide for us; if He has numbered the very hairs of our head, fixed the bounds of our habitation, promised to supply all our needs, He cannot have left anything to chance. But such is the case. Let us then be content with such things as we have. Let us learn in every state therewith to be content. Let us bear in mind that godliness with contentment is great gain, or a good future. Remember that it is written, that *"all things that pertain to life and godliness,"* are given to us through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Great things are not what I desire,
Nor rich repast, nor gay attire;
Content with little would I be;
That little, Lord, must come from Thee.

May 9
MORNING

"The glory of His grace" Eph 1:6

GOD'S GRACE IS GLORIOUS. The glory of grace is its *freeness*: it fixes upon objects that are most unworthy; bestows upon them the richest blessings; raises them to the highest honour; promises them the greatest happiness; and all for its own glory. Nothing can be freer than grace. The glory of grace is its *power*: it conquers the stubborn sinner, subdues the hardest hearts, tames the wildest wills, enlightens the darkest understandings, breaks the strongest fetters, and invariably conquers its objects. Grace is omnipotent. The glory of grace is its *benevolence*: it never injured anyone; it has delivered, supplied, conducted, supported, and glorified thousands; it brings the inexhaustible fulness of God to supply the creature's wants; it opens the treasury of heaven to enrich poor, miserable, and wretched creatures on earth. Grace gives away all it has, reserving nothing for itself but the praise and glory of its acts. Jesus is grace personified; in Him it may be seen in all its beauty, excellency, and loveliness; by Him it is displayed in all its dignity. O Jesus! glorify Thy free, powerful, and benevolent grace in me!

Marv'llous grace, thou limitless bliss,
My sins are swallowed up in thee;
Covered is my unrighteousness;
From condemnation I am free:
For Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,
Mercy, eternal mercy, cries.

May 9
EVENING

"God dealeth with you as with sons" Heb 12:7

"YOUR FATHER KNOWETH WHAT THINGS YE HAVE NEED OF." And He careth for us with a father's love. He knows best what He bestows and what He withholds; what you endure and what you enjoy. Your God has made you His children by adopting you into His family, and creating you anew by His Holy Spirit. He ever looks upon you as children, loves you as children, treats you as children. He will not trust you with what will harm you, or where you will be in danger. He corrects you as a child, not in wrath, but in mercy. Whatever is the means, your Father is the agent. He works all things after the counsel of His own will. You are at present under training: you are being educated for eternity. The lessons you have to learn now are for your benefit and honour in the future. Every loss, every cross, every disappointment, every pain is necessary. Do you believe this? Do you recognize the hand of God in what befalls you? Can you say with Job, *"The Lord gave"* - health, wealth, children, friends, prospects - *"and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"* Or with Eli, *"It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."*

Whoe'er their heavenly Father fear,
Receive not discipline in vain;
Not one of us His children here
Is fully spared from grief and pain;
Not one but feels in deep distress
This token of paternal grace.

May 10
MORNING

"He doth not afflict willingly" Lam 3:33

"THOUGH HE CAUSE GRIEF, YET WILL HE HAVE COMPASSION." The Father's hand is for good. Our afflictions flow from our Father's wisdom, holiness and love. He finds no pleasure in our pains, groans, and sighs. He is never hasty in using the rod; mercy flies to help us, for He is slow to anger and of great kindness. He never afflicts us without a sufficient cause; either sin has been committed; duties neglected; mercies slighted; lukewarmness discovered; worldly-mindedness tolerated; privileges abused; warnings despised; temptations trifled with; or danger is near. He never afflicts without a gracious intention, to make us fear, loathe, and flee from sin; to show His disapproval of our unholy course; to quicken us in His ways; to make us long for, seek, and partake of His holiness; to produce contrition and godly sorrow; or to prove that His authority is not surrendered because His love is great. He only afflicts partially, occasionally, and sparingly. He always chastens in love, and aims at our spiritual welfare; and we are often more benefited by afflictions than we are by comforts and joys. *O Saviour, sanctify to me every afflicting stroke.*

In the floods of tribulation,
While the billows o'er me roll,
Jesus whispers consolation,
And supports my fainting soul:
Sweet affliction,
Thou hast made my Saviour dear.

May 10
EVENING

"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy" Jn 16:20

"AND YOUR JOY NO MAN TAKETH FROM YOU." Our Lord is the God of all comfort. The sorrow of the disciples was occasioned by the suffering and death of their beloved Lord, and their sorrow was turned into joy when He arose from the dead, and manifested unto them His love. The sorrow of the Christian is transient. It is like the passing cloud on the summer's day, or the chill of winter which must give place to the warmth of spring. Beloved, if you now have sorrow, your sorrow also shall soon be turned into joy; for joy is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. Your risen Saviour will appear to you, and pronounce words of peace. Your God who may now hide Himself from you, will appear to your joy, and you will not be ashamed. The sin that causes your sorrow shall be pardoned and subdued. The foes that disturb your peace shall be converted or destroyed. The distance between you and your home will soon be passed; the days of your mourning will be ended, and you who now go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall soon return with songs of everlasting joy.

On Jesus' plighted love,
In every state rely;
The very hidings of His face
Shall train thee up for joy.

May 11
MORNING

"Rejoice in the Lord alway" Phi 4:4

"THE LORD IS AT HAND." He has promised, *"I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."* In Him we rejoice alway. Without Him, this is a very difficult precept; sometimes the Lord hides His face; we fear and doubt our interest in His love; we are almost bewildered through the powerful workings of corruption within us; we are bowed down by Satan's sore temptations; and the dispensations of providence are so perplexing that we are ready to cry out, *"All things are against us."* But we are not bidden to rejoice in persons and feelings, or in the dispensations of providence, but in the Lord. He has loved us with an everlasting love, and His love is immutably the same; He is our God in Jesus, and has promised to be unto us, to do for us, and freely give us, all that our circumstances require, or that will be for our good and His glory. In weakness we may rejoice in His power; in darkness we may rejoice that He knows our path; in sickness and sorrow, that He cares for us; and under any circumstances, in His covenant relations; for He is always our Father, Friend, and God. We should rejoice in His free grace, rich mercy, omnipotent power, faithful promises, special providence, and unchangeable love.

Rejoice in glorious hope!
Jesus, the Judge, shall come,
And take His servants up
To their eternal home;
We soon shall hear the archangel's voice-
The trump of God shall sound, "Rejoice!"

May 11
EVENING

"Him that loved us" Rom 8:37

OUR LORD LOVES US TO THE END. Ponder the love of God, the thought of being loved by Him. There is something peculiarly sweet and pleasant in being the object of another's love. No condition can possibly be more dreary than to feel that no one loves or cares for us. Even the love of a child is sweet. But to be loved by one who is wealthy, exalted in station, and honourable in character, must be peculiarly delightful. How, then, should we rejoice; how happy should we be who are the loved ones of the Lord Jesus! When we consider, on the one hand, how mean, how poor, how worthless, and how unlovely we are; and, on the other, how glorious, how wealthy, how worthy, how lovely He is. To be loved of Jesus, is to be preferred before the possession of the world. Think of the glory of His person, the vastness of His possessions, the number of His attendants, the unlimited sovereignty which He exercises, and the excellent character He bears. Bear in mind, that He knew what loving us would cost Him, how He would be treated by us and by others for our sakes. Yet He fixed His love upon us. He loved just because He would. There were others more dignified in nature, more exalted in station, but He chose us. *Such is God's love.*

Resting on Christ, secure we stand,
His love shall order all things well;
We soon shall gain the promised land,
Triumphant o'er the powers of hell.

May 12
MORNING

"Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord" Isa 54:17

GOSPEL LESSONS ARE FOR OUR LEARNING. The longer the Christian lives, the more he learns; and the more the Spirit teaches him, the more he loathes himself and renounces his own righteousness as filthy rags. He hoped to grow in holiness, to feel his corruptions subdued, and to enjoy without interruption the presence of his God; but instead of this he seems to grow more like Satan, corruption appears to get stronger and stronger, and the depravity of his nature appears so dreadful, that he enjoys scarcely anything. He thinks himself a monster of iniquity, and wonders how God could possibly love him, or show any favor unto him. This experience endears free grace, renders Christ unspeakably precious, and the gift of righteousness invaluable. *How can such a man be just before God? Where is his righteousness to come from?* Jehovah answers, *"His righteousness is of me."* Jesus wrought it; the Father imputes it to us; the gospel reveals it; and faith receives it, puts it on, and pleads it before God. *O Jesus! in Thee have I righteousness and strength.*

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name;
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

May 12
EVENING

"Fear not, little flock" Lk 12:32

"I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD." We are His sheep, and our numbers are few. God's care includes every believer. The flock is small. It is in the desert. Enemies surround it. His lambs especially are timid. But He says, *"Fear not."* You are your Shepherd's care; you are His property, His delight. He is always present; He is omnipotent to defend you. Every perfection of His nature is employed for you. He never lost one of His charge yet; He never will. It was said of Him by the prophet, *"He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."* He gathers His sheep to His fold, He feeds them in good pasture, He restores them when they wander; He makes them pass under the rod, and marks them as His own. The provision He has made for them is suitable and abundant. Beloved, let us know our Shepherd; let us listen to His voice; let us keep close to His side; let us feed and rest among His sheep; let us exercise confidence in His kindness and care; let us banish our fears, for why should we be alarmed? *Let us cast all our care upon Him.*

Fear not, believe His word;
You are to Jesus given;
'Tis the good pleasure of the Lord
To bring you safe to heaven;
Then listen to your Shepherd's voice,
And in His constant care rejoice.

May 13
MORNING

"The Lord hath blessed me hitherto" Josh 17:14

"THE BLESSING OF THE LORD MAKETH RICH." And He adds no sorrow with it for none can truly bless but our Lord. Believer, can you not join with the children of Joseph this morning and bear a similar testimony? Your God hath blessed you in Jesus, and through Jesus; look back to the rock whence you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence you were digged; call to mind the time and place, when and where your God first led you to cry for mercy, and seek for salvation; remember the distress and bondage felt before God's mercy found you; and then remember how your soul was delivered, and the comforts the Holy Ghost imparted. Think of your difficulties and dangers, your trials and fears, the deliverance the Lord has wrought, the favour He has shown, and the comfort He has imparted: and surely you will gratefully acknowledge, *"He has blessed me hitherto."* He promised to bless and you have found Him faithful. He has manifested a father's love and a mother's tenderness in dealing with you. But what have been your returns? Be humble, for you have been ungrateful! Cleave to Jesus, for God gives no blessing but by and through Him.

Jesus found me, vile and guilty,
I had broken all His laws;
When He looked, He saw me filthy;
All corrupt my nature was:
Mine appeared a hopeless case;
Such it had been but for grace.

May 13
EVENING

"Love the brotherhood" 1 Pet 2:17

FOR SO IS THE WILL OF GOD FOR YOU, THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER. If we are born of God, He is our Father and we are His children, children of God by adoption of the Holy Spirit, through faith in Jesus Christ. While we may be many, coming from many different ethnic and cultural traditions, yet all truly born again believers are one body in the Lord, and every one members one of another. All believers in Christ form a brotherhood, close and precious. Toward our fellow believers, then, let us exercise brotherly love: compassion and pity in distress, benevolent relief when in want, help in time of difficulty. At the same time we are also warned of God to beware of false Christs and false churches which are rapidly gathering to form the ecumenical One World Church. God's Word commands us to keep clear and separate from such false movements, that we receive not of the plagues which will descend from God. Be wise and discerning therefore. *Our love should be reserved for the brotherhood of true believers: not all are Christians who are called Christians.*

Christians begotten from above,
These truly must we fully love;
Cunning deceivers much abound,
Wolves in sheepskin prowl around,
In many-a false church they are found;
Reader, beware of Satan's brood,
These have no part in Jesus' blood.

May 14
MORNING

"They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts" Mal 3:17

"IN THAT DAY WHEN I MAKE UP MY JEWELS." In that day, He will gather you as His own. This is the promise to them who fear the Lord and think upon His name; who fear to offend Him because they love Him; who desire above all things to obey Him, to be conformed unto Him, and to glorify Him; who think upon His name, call Him Father, and believe Him to be gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness, and truth; who approach Him as children; who walk before Him, desiring to do everything as under His eye; who are jealous of His honour, and concerned for His glory; who speak of His goodness, talk of His power, and adore the riches of His grace. *"They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts."* He will treat them as His children, prize them as His jewels, and acknowledge them before assembled angels. He will put a difference between them and others, and will manifest Himself unto them as He does not unto the world. Beloved, are we entitled to claim this precious promise? Do we fear God? Are we grieved at sin, because it dishonours Him? Do we think upon His name with love and reverence? If so, He will spare us, preserve us, and place us among His jewels for ever. *We shall be His for eternal years.*

Hail, sacred day! that shall declare
The jewels of the Son of God;
Designed to deck His crown they were
Chosen of old, and bought with blood.

May 14
EVENING

"Ye are the light of the world" Mt 5:14

"A CITY THAT IS SET ON AN HILL CANNOT BE HID." We are God's light in a dark world. The whole world lies in darkness. Christ our Lord came to give us light. We have received light, the light of truth and holiness, and we are to let our light shine. Jesus is the sun, from whom we receive our light; and like the moon we do not receive light only for ourselves, but to reflect it on others. Let us then inquire, *"How does the light shine? Is it bright and cheerful? attractive and free? Where does our light shine? In the school-room? in the chamber of affliction? in the abodes of poverty and misery? in the lurking-places of ignorance and vice? In what form does our light shine? In kind words? in occasional visits? in religious tracts? in timely donations? What has our light done? Has it dried the widow's tears? supplied the orphan's wants? conducted sinners to the house of prayer? induced some to turn to the cross? comforted others on the banks of the Jordan?"* If we are the lights of the world we should shine, or darkness will reign. As we are but lamps, we should be careful to get plenty of oil and *let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven.*

Not for ourselves the light of grace
Didst Thou on us bestow;
But for the world's benighted race,
In darkness here below:
Thy candlesticks Thy churches are,
Thy truth and goodness to declare.

May 15
MORNING

"We walk by faith" 2 Cor 5:7

"BY IT THE ELDERS OBTAINED A GOOD REPORT."

Without faith we cannot walk with God, we cannot please Him. The Christian's path is often very rough; thorns and briars grow on either side, dark clouds hang over it, and no happy prospects appear to cheer the heart. But if he acts consistently, he still believes it is the right path; that trials are mercies in disguise, and that the path of tribulation ends in the kingdom of God. He believes it is all needful, is the very best way his Father could select; that the design of God is gracious, and his present trials are to end in His eternal welfare. He believes his God is with him, though he does not fully enjoy His presence, and that all needful supplies will be sent, though he cannot tell from whence. He rests on the faithful word, trusts in an immutable God, and says, when surrounded by trials, *"None of these things move me; I know that it is through much tribulation that I must enter the kingdom; my God will support me, His hand will defend me, and His grace shall be glorified in my present and eternal salvation. I know not the way, but my God knows, and He will lead me; He will never leave me, but will be my guide, even unto death."*

O may I daily walk by faith,
Believing what my God has said;
Relying on His changeless word,
Never to doubt my loving Lord;
On His eternal truth depend,
And love Him as my God and Friend.

May 15
EVENING

"We have peace with God" Rom 5:1

"IN CHRIST YE WHO WERE FAR OFF ARE MADE NIGH," by His blood. For He is our peace. His death is our atonement; believing in Him we are fully justified; being justified we are at peace. We know that our God does not impute our trespasses unto us; but viewing us in Jesus, loves us with an infinite, unvarying love. All our present blessings and all our future prospects flow from His love: He never hated us, though He was angry with us. He loved us before the foundation of the world, therefore He drew the plan of our salvation; and it is such a plan as secures the honour of all His perfections, provides for our guilt and all our necessities, and lays a foundation for permanent and perfect peace. If we therefore believe His word, exercise confidence in the perfect work of Jesus, and approach Him as a Father in the Saviour's name, we have peace. If we have not peace, it is because we do not see the perfection of the Saviour's work, or we do not exercise confidence in the faithful promise, or we do not believe the love which God has to us, or we are looking to self, instead of looking simply to Jesus. *Have peace with God by looking to Jesus.*

Justified by faith in Jesus,
We have peace and joy in God;
Faith from dread and terror frees us,
Faith to trust His precious blood;
Cast on Him our every care,
He dispels our slavish fear.

May 16
MORNING

"Blessed are ye that hunger now" Lk 6:21

"FOR YE SHALL BE FILLED." This is our Lord's promise. But our Lord speaks of spiritual hunger. The carnal appetite is satisfied with carnal things; but a Christian can only be satisfied with spiritual things. When led of God's Spirit, he hungers for an interest in Christ and for righteousness wrought in him by the Spirit, and given to him by Jesus and to be conformed to the image of Christ. He longs to know Him intimately, experientially, and practically; to enjoy God as his portion; and that Christ may be magnified in him by life or by death. His appetite is fixed on its object; no substitute will satisfy: it is only as he feeds upon Christ that he enjoys satisfaction. Beloved, how is it with you this morning? Are you hungering for Jesus? He filleth the hungry with good things: He pronounces them blessed. They are blessed with spiritual life; with an interest in the things for which they hunger; and with the operations of the Holy Spirit. None but God can produce this hunger, and only God can satisfy it: and He will, for He has said, *"They shall be filled."* This is plain, positive, unconditional, and certain. *Believe and be happy.*

Blest are the souls that long for grace,
Hunger and thirst for righteousness;
They shall be well supplied, and fed
With heavenly streams and living bread:
O may my hungry soul receive
The food on which God's people live.

May 16
EVENING

"He shall choose our inheritance for us" Ps 47:4

"AN INHERITANCE INCORRUPTIBLE ... RESERVED IN HEAVEN FOR YOU." Our inheritance, chosen by God for us, fades not away! It is everlasting. Can you honestly and heartily say that your inheritance is in heaven? Are you so fully persuaded of the Lord's wisdom and have such unshakable faith in the Lord's love? Are you so resigned to the Lord's will and do you sufficiently desire that the Lord's glory be advanced as to say cheerfully, *"He shall choose my inheritance for me?"* Do you approve of His wise counsel in choosing for you? If not, you cannot adopt this language tonight. It includes an entire surrender to the Lord, a desire to be wholly at His disposal, and acquiescence in all His appointments: trials, comforts, gifts, place of residence, time and circumstances of death. You may be sure of this, that if the Lord choose for you, He will do for you as Joseph did for his father and brethren: He will choose the best. It is therefore your wisdom to commit all to the Lord and leave Him to manage your affairs. It is a great privilege to have God to choose for us, one who knows all persons, things, and events; and knows all perfectly. It is yours to be content with the choice God has made for you, for you would not have chosen better; you would not have chosen so well.

Now as on hallowed ground I stand,
Reviewing what is past,
I see His love and wisdom planned
My path from first to last.

May 17
MORNING

"He will rest in His love" Zeph 3:17

"HE WILL JOY OVER THEE WITH SINGING." The Lord our God will rejoice over us with joy, such is His love for us. God's love endures. Man's love is changeable, being a passion; God's love is unchangeable, being a perfection. Having loved He always will love. Nothing can occur in time but what He knew from eternity; consequently there can be no reason today why God should not love me, but what He knew would be before He set His heart upon me. He fixed His love upon us in the fore-view of all that would be done by us or felt within us; and connected us with Jesus that He might never withdraw His love from us. O to be able to say with holy John, *"We have known and believed the love that God hath to us! God is love!"* The love of God is from everlasting to everlasting, without variableness, or the shadow of a doubt. Here God resteth and here we should rest. Herein is love, that God should take such poor, vile, ungrateful, wretched creatures, and make them the bride of His Son, and His portion and delight for evermore. O the riches of divine love! Admire it, trust it, rejoice in it, and make it the subject of your daily meditation. *"He will rest in His love."* On this rock we may rest with confidence; on His everlasting arms we may repose in peace.

The cov'nant of grace all blessing secures;
Believer, rejoice, for all things are yours;
Our God from His purpose shall never remove,
But love thee, and bless thee, with heaven above.

May 17
EVENING

"He knoweth our frame" Ps 103:14

"HE REMEMBERETH THAT WE ARE DUST." He does not deal with us after our sins; nor does He reward us according to our iniquities. Men regard us differently. They fancy us strong when we are weak, healthy when we are sick, comfortable when we are suffering; but God knows our frame. It is not bare knowledge but knowledge united with love: knowledge that awakens sympathy, knowledge that takes the will for the deed. He knows the weakness of our constitutions, the exact nature of our temperament, the shattered state of the nerves, the secret disease which causes irritability, or depression. He can distinguish between what proceeds from physical causes and what flows from the depravity of our hearts. He knows every avenue by which temptation can enter, and the effects which external objects, or mental images have upon us. He knows and makes allowance, saying, *"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."* Beloved, you may not know the cause of your depression, or irritability, or excitability, but your heavenly Father knows, and *"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."*

God knows the frailty of our frame,
"Weakness" - the banner o'er our name;
And as the parent's bosom moves,
In pity, o'er the child he loves,
So will the Lord His children care,
He loves to hear their child-like prayer.

May 18
MORNING

"And went and told Jesus" Mt 14:12

"WHEN JESUS HEARD OF IT, HE DEPARTED INTO A DESERT PLACE." Our Lord had said of John the Baptist: *"Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John."* Jesus cared for John. When Herod beheaded him, his disciples took up his body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. Let us imitate their example and carry all to Jesus. He loves to listen to the tale of human woe. He can and will sympathise with us in all our trials and troubles. He is our Father, and to whom should the child tell his troubles, but to his kind and tender parent? He will direct our steps, avenge our wrongs, and turn all things to our advantage. Does business go wrong? Are enemies active? Is corruption strong? Does faith flag? Are you tried in your family? *Go and tell Jesus.* It will ease your mind, prevent sin, ensure supplies, and frustrate the designs of Satan. Do not sit poring over your miseries; go not to creatures; neither murmur, complain, nor fret; but go to Jesus; go with speed; go in hope; go and tell Him all, without reserve. Go this morning, with all thy complaints, desires, and fears; lay them all before Him, and beseech Him to undertake for you. He loves to hear you, has promised to help you, and will certainly bless you. It is your duty, and your privilege, to pour out your heart before Him, and find Him a refuge for you.

Our sorrows and our tears we pour
Into the bosom of our God;
He hears us in the mournful hour,
And helps to bear our heavy load.

May 18
EVENING

"My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast" 1 Cor 15:58

"ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD." In God's work we should be steadfast, unmoveable, constant. Constancy is God's gift. We should diligently seek it. How affectionately the Apostle writes, even to those who had grieved him, and dishonoured his Master's cause. He not only calls them brethren, but *"beloved brethren."* In this he is our example. But it is to the exhortation he delivers, to which we wish to call your attention. Many of us are unstable as were many in the Apostle's day. Instability is a great evil. It is injurious to our own souls; it is a stumbling-block or a grief to others, and it gives Satan an advantage over us. He is never unstable, his purpose is fixed, his aim is steady, his efforts are persevering. Destroy if possible and distress if not, is his motto. Brethren, let us be steadfast in our profession of Christ, and let us be steadfast in our efforts to promote the glory of Christ. But if we are to be steadfast, let us be sure that we are building on the right foundation, that we hold the truth of Christ, that we are vitally united to Him, and are entirely consecrated to His praise. Let us take nothing for granted here, but let us prove all things. To the law and to the testimony, compare everything with God's word.

Then steadfast let us still remain,
Though dangers may surround;
And in the work prescribed by God
Yet more and more abound.

May 19
MORNING

"It shall be well" 2 Kgs 4:23

IN CHRIST OUR LORD, "ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD." Only in Christ can we say so. *"It shall be well"* was the language of a believer in trouble; and it should be our language under similar circumstances. Our trials, troubles, and difficulties may be great; but *it shall be well* with them that fear God. Are you alarmed at the powerful working of corruption within you? *It shall be well*, for sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace. Are you distressed by the evil suggestions and powerful temptations of Satan? *It shall be well*, for the God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly. Is your soul cast down by the vexations, difficulties, and trials of the way? *It shall be well*, for all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. Do you conclude your case is singular, and therefore fear? *It shall be well*, for no temptation has taken you, but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will also with the temptation make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. O precious promise of a gracious God! Lord, help me to believe and rejoice. In life and death, *"It shall be well."*

What cheering words are these -
Their sweetness who can tell?
In time, and to eternal days,
'Tis with the righteous, well.

May 19
EVENING

"The meek will He teach His way" Ps 25:9

"THE MEEK WILL HE GUIDE IN JUDGMENT." Meekness is a virtue. The meek are conscious of their ignorance. They feel the need of teaching. They are desirous of being taught. They especially desire to be taught of God. They feel unworthy of the least mercy at God's hand; and yet, because He has promised, they seek and expect the greatest. Meekness is especially pleasing to God; and the meek may have any favour at His hands. *"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."* The Lord will teach them *"His way"*; the way in which He pardons, justifies, and saves sinners; the way in which He would have them walk through this world; the way of escape which He opens in seasons of danger and temptation; the way in which He confounds the crafty, overturns the devices of His foes, and crushes the oppressors of His people. He will teach them the *way of peace*, and they shall enjoy it; the *way of holiness*, and they shall walk in it; the *way of salvation*, and they shall persevere in it. He will unfold to them His word, confer on them His blessing, walk with them in fellowship, and make them to possess durable riches and righteousness. The meek are heaven's favourites, the church's adornment, and the world's truest friends.

Make me, Saviour, as Thou art,
Poor in spirit, meek in heart:
Then may Thou my teacher be,
And my soul shall cleave to Thee.

May 20
MORNING

"He giveth more grace" Jas 4:6

"GOD RESISTETH THE PROUD, BUT GIVETH GRACE UNTO THE HUMBLE." God alone gives grace. To them that fear Him, He opens His throne of grace. It is impossible to be more welcome at the throne of grace than we are, or for God to be more willing to bestow. We are as welcome to the throne of grace, as angels are to the throne of glory. Our God has provided on purpose to give. He invites us to come that we may receive. He gives grace upon grace. He is never weary of bestowing, though we are of asking. We dishonour Him when we ask doubtfully, when we ask only for small matters; He bids us ask in faith, nothing doubting; to open our mouths wide that He may fill them. Grace comprises all we need, to pardon our sins, sanctify our natures, conquer our foes, bear our trials, or perform our duties. If we have not, it is because we ask not, or because we ask amiss, to consume it on our lusts. There is grace for us this morning; let us apply for it, expect to receive it, and determine to use it for God's glory and the good of souls. He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find. He gives liberally, and upbraids not.

Transporting truth, amazing word!
What? grace and glory from the Lord;
O may I feel the promise true,
Fulfilled in grace and glory new!

May 20
EVENING

"She hath done what she could" Mk 14:8

"SHE IS COME TO ANOINT MY BODY FOR THE BURYING." Mary was a believer. Our Lord commended her. Her faith wrought by love. Love brought her where Jesus was, and she did what she could to honour Him and express her gratitude: an excellent example for us to copy. It cannot be said that we have done all we could. We dare not say this. Let us try and feel it. Have we loved Jesus as much as we could? Have we been as much in prayer and in praise as we could? Have we done as much as we could to spread the truth? To save souls? To commend the Saviour? To oppose Satan? Have we done all we could for the spiritual good of our families? Have we done all we could for the comfort and prosperity of the church? Have we done all we could for the Lord's poor? Have we done all we could for the neighbourhood where we reside? Have we done what we could for the world? Satan does all the mischief he can. Many wicked men do all they can to destroy souls. The times call upon us to do all we can. The Saviour loves to see us do all we can. Let us therefore accept reproof, encourage conviction, seek more grace, daily remember this woman, and begin afresh. *"It is high time to awake out of sleep."*

My God, inspire my soul with zeal,
With overflowing love to men;
Make me my obligation feel,
To do whatever good I can.

May 21
MORNING

"Take heed to your spirit" Mal 2:15

"LET NONE DEAL TREACHEROUSLY." Take heed to your spirit. Of what sort is your spirit? A lowly spirit is from God. Pray for it. The spirit of the believer should be characterized by forbearance, humility, and love; he is exhorted to put away all anger, wrath, clamour, evil speaking, and malice; and to put on affections of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering and to be ready to forgive. *A bitter, contentious, censorious spirit, is just the opposite of the Spirit of Christ; and an unforgiving person cannot be a Christian, for Jesus has said, "Except ye forgive men their trespasses, neither will my heavenly Father forgive you."* Take heed then to your spirit, lest it be said, *"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."* Learn of Jesus; He was meek and lowly; patient and forbearing; kind to His enemies; and ready to forgive. A proud, contentious overbearing disciple cannot expect to have fellowship with a humble, lowly, and broken hearted Master. Beloved, let us watch over our spirit; he that rules his own spirit, does more than he that conquers a city; and a spirit that is not under control is like a city with the walls and gates broken down, open to the enemy on every side. *Lord, sanctify my spirit!*

Come, blessed Spirit, heavenly Dove,
Descend with healing in Thy wings;
Come, soothe my passions by Thy love,
And tune the happy peaceful strings;
Let every action, thought, and word,
Bring honour to my holy Lord.

May 21
EVENING

"When wilt Thou comfort me?" Ps 119:82

"FOR I AM BECOME LIKE A BOTTLE IN THE SMOKE."
Yet do I not forget Thy statutes. Even then, God's people often get into a very uncomfortable state, and sometimes they continue in that state for a long season. But there is always some cause for it, and we should seek to know what that cause is, that it may be removed. It is not easy to give an answer to the inquiry, for it must depend on the character of the inquirer. To one the Lord may say, *"When you humble yourself before me, cordially approve of my method of salvation, and submit to my righteousness."* To another, *"When you frankly confess your sin, seek pardon through the blood of Christ, and engage to walk according to my word."* To another, *"When you break off that unscriptural connection, come out from the world, and separate yourself unto me."* To another, *"When you leave off seeking comfort from selfish motives, and endeavour to promote my glory."* To another, *"When you leave the bed of sloth, stir up yourself to take hold on me, and seek to make others happy."* To another, *"When you enter upon that self-denying duty, mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts, or put off the old man with his deeds."* Then will you know the comfort of the Lord.

May holiness be my pursuit,
Thy promises my plea;
So shall I bring forth precious fruit,
And Thou wilt comfort me.

May 22
MORNING

"If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" Jn
14:14

"ASK, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE, THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL." This is the promise of Jesus to us this morning; it is intended to encourage and embolden us at the throne of grace, and to comfort us under all our privations and wants. Jesus has all power in heaven and in earth; all things are delivered unto Him by the Father. He has a large store, and a kind and tender heart. Let us therefore go to Him with our wants, that He may supply them; with our fears, that He may quell them; with our sins, that He may pardon and subdue them; with everything that troubles us, or is likely to harm us. Let us go to Him with confidence. He says, *"What wilt thou that I shall do for thee? If you ask any thing that will do you good, promote my cause, or glorify my name, I will do it. Be not afraid to ask, for I am omnipotent; do not doubt, for I give you my word, I will do it."* O believer, what a friend is Jesus! how kind! how gracious! Never complain, never despond, never be cast down, while Jesus is thy Friend. He is and will be thy friend for ever. O make a friend of Him! Visit Him daily; trust Him implicitly; and follow Him fully. Make Him your all in all. He is worthy. He will not deceive. It is impossible for Him to lie.

Jesus, my Lord, I look to Thee;
Where else can helpless sinners go?
Thy boundless love shall set me free
From all my wretchedness and woe.

May 22
EVENING

"My tongue shall speak of Thy word" Ps 119:172

"FOR ALL THY COMMANDMENTS ARE RIGHTEOUSNESS." I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord, and Thy law is my delight. If all Christians would faithfully proclaim it, how much less ignorance and falsehood would there be in the world. The tongue rightly used is our glory, but it is the disgrace of some and of some professors too. If anything is worth speaking of, it is God's word. It is the means of conversion, therefore speak of it to sinners. It tends to edification, therefore speak of it to saints. It is the instrument of restoration, therefore talk of it to backsliders. It brings comfort to our own souls, let us therefore meditate upon it and then publish it for our own sake. It honours God and exalts the Saviour; let us therefore out of love to God speak of His word. If we speak of it at proper seasons, in a kind spirit, from a good motive, and with a right aim, it must do good, for it is incorruptible seed which never rots under the clods. It restrains the impetuous, soothes the sorrowful, directs the perplexed, restores the wanderer, and brings peace to the troubled. It is bread to the hungry, light to the benighted, a staff to the pilgrim, a sword to the warrior, and a downy pillow to the wayworn and weary.

My lips in thankful strains shall flow,
When taught by Thee Thy truth to know;
My tongue shall spread that truth abroad,
The glorious gospel of my God.

May 23
MORNING

"We look for the Saviour" Phi 3:20

"BEHOLD, HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS; AND EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM." Now He is our Advocate at the right hand of God, making intercession for us. He waits, expecting His enemies to be made His footstool. He will come again; the time is hastening on and we should be living in daily expectation of His appearing. The Christian posture is that of waiting, looking, hasting unto the coming of the day of God. He will come the second time as certainly as He did the first. He will come as a thief in the night. He will come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him. He will come to reign, to reward His people, and to punish His foes. Let us not be slothful, careless, or indifferent about this momentous event. The Lord comes for our salvation. Let us look for Him daily, with earnest desire, ardent hope, fervent love, importunate prayer, and diligent preparation. When He comes, the earth will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God; the groans of creation will be silenced, the prayers of the Lord's people will be answered, and crowns of righteousness bestowed. Let us abide in Him, that we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

Lo! He comes with clouds descending,
Once for ransomed sinners slain;
Thousand thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train;
Hallelujah!
Jesus comes fore'er to reign.

May 23
EVENING

"The Lord knoweth them that are His" 2 Tim 2:19

"LET EVERYONE THAT NAMETH THE NAME OF CHRIST DEPART FROM INIQUITY." All our actions - and thoughts - are known to God. What father does not know his child, or a husband his beloved bride? So the Lord knoweth them that are His. He knows them as the objects of His love, as the purchase of His Son's blood, as the temples of the Holy Spirit. He knows them as strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, as suffering for righteousness' sake. He knows them though He may not seem to acknowledge them, though He allows men to ride over their heads and lead them through fire and through water. He knows that they love Him and grieves that they do not love Him more. He knows that they trust in Him, though doubts and fears harass and perplex them. He knows that they obey Him and often sigh, *"O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes always!"* Beloved, the Lord knows you are His; He loves you as His own child, cares for you as His chosen bride, leads you as the sheep of His pasture, keeps you as the apple of His eye, tries you as His gold and silver, keeps you safely as His jewels, and will soon lift you up as the gems in His crown. *The Lord's knowledge of you is perfect.*

Dear by a thousand tender bonds,
Thy saints to Thee are known:
And, conscious what a name they bear,
Iniquity they shun.

May 24
MORNING

"The enemy" Lk 10:19

"NOTHING SHALL BY ANY MEANS HURT YOU." Our Lord is ever victorious. In Him we triumph. We have many foes, but there is one who is emphatically called *"The enemy."* He is the god of this world; all worship him, except those whom Jesus has delivered from him. He is the prince of the power of the air; he rules over, and works in, all unbelievers. He is a subtle serpent, endeavouring to deceive; a roaring lion, seeking to devour. He has the power of death. He gains access to our hearts, and is always attempting to lead us astray. He is well versed in Scripture, and will often quote it, in order to misapply it; he will use one part to fill us with terror, and another to lead us to make light of sin. He is always planning how he shall injure us, and is incessantly trying to draw us from God. Beloved, there is no safety for us but at the feet of Jesus; it is only as we abide in Him, and walk with Him, that we can overcome Satan. Our weapons are the blood of the Lamb, and the word of the divine testimony. Faith seizes the perfect work of Christ as its shield, and the word of God as its sword, and thus overcomes the infernal foe. Let us put on the whole armour of God.

Jesus hath died for you;
What can His love withstand?
Believe, hold fast your shield, and who
Shall pluck you from His hand?
You shall o'ercome through Jesus' blood.
And stand complete before your God.

May 24
EVENING

"The just shall live by faith" Gal 3:11

"AND THE LAW IS NOT OF FAITH." Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. In Him we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. It is *by faith* alone that we become just. Being convinced of sin, sensible of our weakness, and understanding the gospel, we embrace the finished work of Christ; His righteousness becomes ours, and we are justified from all things. Being justified we live. That is, we are freed from condemnation; we are entitled to all spiritual blessings, and we walk at liberty. *We live by faith. By faith* we overcome our foes. *By faith* we obtain supplies. *By faith* we perform the will of God. *By faith* we walk with God. The life which we live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God. We believe His word, rest alone on His work, have confidence in His faithfulness, and derive our supplies from His fulness. We work from principle, not for wages. We live as children in our Father's house, not as servants on a payroll. We go forward though all appear dark, gloomy, and forbidding. At times we appear to have nothing but the bare promise. All within is cold, hard, and dead; all without seems to go against us. Then it is that we more particularly trust in the Lord and stay ourselves upon our God. It is all by faith.

By faith accounted just,
By faith to God we live,
With patience wait His time, and trust
His fulness to receive.

May 25
MORNING

"Certainly I will be with thee" Ex 3:12

EVER PRESENT THOUGH UNSEEN IS OUR BLESSED LORD. It is a great honour to be favoured with His presence; but in every enterprise for His glory, in every duty required by His word, in every dangerous part of the pilgrim's path, in every trouble in this land of strangers, He has promised to be with us. His presence is to encourage, strengthen, protect, and prosper us. This promise should arm us against fear, nerve the mind against opposition, and embolden us in a good cause. Beloved, has God promised to be with us? Let us then seek to realize His presence; never let us be satisfied with any sort of *religion* without the Lord's presence. If God be with us we shall be successful; all He requires He will provide; and display in our experience the exceeding riches of His grace. His presence is sure to His people; He is not perceived by sense, but certainly He is present; for though heaven and earth may pass away, one jot or tittle of His word shall in no wise pass away; all must be fulfilled. Let us then seek and expect the presence of Jehovah this day; rejoice that He has said, *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake."* May we never forsake Him.

Then rest, my soul, upon the Lord,
Believe and plead His faithful word;
He will be with thee, He will guide,
And for thy every want provide;
O trust His faithful love and power;
In every gloomy trying hour.

May 25
EVENING

"Ye are all one in Christ Jesus" Gal 3:28

YET NOT ALL TODAY'S CHRISTIANS ARE IN CHRIST. A true Christian is vitally united to Christ as the one and only Saviour sent from God, and believes steadfastly that only He is able to save: *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* Today increasing numbers of "Christians" preach another gospel, a counterfeit gospel, deceiving and ensnaring multitudes of innocent people. This new gospel teaches that all faiths lead to God and heaven, even those which call on other gods and bow down before idols, which venerate images of Mary and dead saints. It is a false Christian movement which seeks to unite all faiths in one great World Religion. The leaders of this Ecumenical Movement are confident that the world will soon be "evangelised" and become *"all one in Christ."* Be not deceived: only those who have renounced other faiths and false religions, and trust only in Jesus Christ and His precious blood for the forgiveness of sins are true Christians. These only are *"one in Christ."*

May God His precious truth impart
To every filial trusting heart;
That only Christ our Lord can save:
In Him alone God's grace we have.

May 26
MORNING

"Let a man examine himself" 1 Cor 11:28

"FOR IF WE JUDGE OURSELVES, WE SHOULD NOT BE JUDGED." Let us heed God's word, and not decline. This is necessary, that we may know upon what we are resting and whether we are growing or declining. Let us examine this morning upon what foundation we are building for eternal life, and from what does our hope arise? What is the source of our satisfaction, pleasure, and peace? What do we possess to prove the reality of our religion? Have we been quickened by the Holy Spirit? Is Christ our life, and is He living in us? Are we enlightened to see sin in its nature, character, and corruptions? Have we living faith which receives Christ, believes His word, and lives to Him? Have we a good hope through grace? Is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit? Do we love God because He first loved us, and walk with Him in peace and holiness? Have we the earnest and witness of the Spirit in our hearts? Are we striving against sin and praying to be delivered from it, as from a tyrant, a plague, or the most fearful evil? Let us examine carefully, deliberately, prayerfully, taking God's word for our rule and guide. Let us prove our own work, so shall we have rejoicing in ourselves alone and not in others.

Searcher of hearts! O search me still,
The secrets of my soul reveal;
My fears remove: let me appear
To God and my own conscience clear:
Each evidence of grace impart,
And deeply sanctify my heart!

May 26
EVENING

"Love is strong as death" Song 8:6

DEATH HAS CONQUERED ALL, BUT OUR LORD CONQUERED DEATH. The wisest, the strongest, the bravest, the kindest, the holiest - all have been conquered by death. It has triumphed over myriads, and turned our world into a vast graveyard. But love is equally strong, it conquers all. The love of Jesus is stronger, for it conquered death itself. And we are the objects of that love. He says, *"I have loved you."* He proves it: *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* He has proved the strength of His love by the gifts He has conferred upon us; by the visits He has paid us, by the tears He shed for us, by the labour He undertook to perform for us, by the sufferings He endured for us, by the death He died, by the desire He cherished, and by His constant intercession on our behalf. His love overcame all obstacles, triumphed over all opposition, conquered all foes, and now reigns in His bosom as a ruling passion of His manhood, and as a glorious perfection of His Godhead. His love passes conception. Let us retire tonight impressed with the thought, that the love of Jesus is unalterably fixed on us who believe in His name.

My blessed Saviour, is Thy love
So great, so full, so free?
Behold I give my love, my heart,
My life, my all, to Thee.

May 27
MORNING

"And He blessed him there" Gen 32:29

"AND JACOB CALLED THE NAME OF THE PLACE PENIEL." *"For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."* Desperate and overwhelmed with fears, Jacob retired to plead with his God; he wept and made supplication; he had power with God, and prevailed. *"And He blessed him there."* Our God delights to bless us; therefore He began so early, for He blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Jesus before the foundation of the world; He gave us grace in His Son before He gave us a being; yet He will have us plead with Him, and weep before Him. He is *"The blessing God."* There never was a want that pierced the heart of fallen humanity, or met the omniscient eye of Jehovah, but that want was anticipated, and provided for, in the person and fulness of Christ. And however great our conflicts and trials may be, we can have no reason to despond, for grace is given us; and grace always goes hand in hand with omnipotence. Our heavenly Father's love cannot fail; our divine Saviour's fulness cannot be exhausted, His faithful promise cannot be broken; let us therefore plead in the valley of Achor, wrestle on the battle-plain, and it shall again be said, *"He blessed him there."* *O for the Spirit of prayer! O for living and lively faith!*

Lord, let me know the grace below,
To all believers given:
O bid me feel Thy love, and go
In perfect peace to heaven.

May 27
EVENING

"Trust in Him at all times" Ps 62:8

"POUR OUT YOUR HEART BEFORE HIM: GOD IS A REFUGE FOR US." He warrants us to trust in Him, and He is at all times worthy of our trust for He changes not. We are constantly exhorted to it, but almost as constantly neglect it. It is the exercise of necessity, for a creature must trust in another; it is an evidence of dependence, therefore we should cultivate it. It is the exercise of a servant on his master; of a friend on his friend; of a child on his parent; of a believer on his God. Let us trust His word, for it is true. Let us trust the Saviour's work, for it is perfect. Nothing should be allowed to disturb our confidence in God, for His nature is always love, His solemn pledge is inviolable, His resources are inexhaustible, and His mercy everlasting. Let us trust Him then in joy and sorrow, in darkness and in the light; when increased or bereaved, when tempted or in repose. Let us trust Him and we shall conquer our fears; patiently endure our trials; successfully pursue our work; rise above our cares and overcome our foes. That we may trust Him, He has revealed His character, pledged His word, sworn that He will not be wroth with us, and assured us that He is unchangeable.

O may we with a steady faith
Believe whate'er Jehovah saith!
At all times trust our heav'nly Friend,
And on His faithful word depend.

May 28
MORNING

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him" Prov 3:6

"AND HE SHALL DIRECT THY PATHS." We are the Lord's privileged people, having access to God's wisdom and help. It is folly to lean unto our own understanding. We are creatures of His power, the purchase of His blood, subjects of His grace. He has set His love upon us, employed His wisdom for us, and is deeply interested in all that concerns us. Everything we do should be done with a view to His glory; and in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, we should let our requests be made known unto Him. Everything should be mentioned at His throne. His presence, direction, and blessing, should be sought in reference to every circumstance of our lives. Our misery can never exceed His mercy, or our application at His throne find His ear pre-occupied. He is our Father, and as such ought to be honoured. We should ask of Him, and ask with the whole heart: for he who withdraws his heart in asking, will find God withdraw His hand in giving. Acknowledging God in all things will produce a steady peace of mind; it will preserve us from many temptations, and strengthen our faith in Him. He that always acknowledges God, will find that God always acknowledges him.

Stretch o'er my head Thy guardian wings,
Secure my soul, O King of kings!
My shield and refuge be;
Thy grace and mercy, Lord, display
Through Christ the Life, the Truth, the Way,
That I may come to Thee!

May 28
EVENING

"Thou God seest me" Gen 16:13

"THE EYES OF THE LORD RUN THROUGH THE WHOLE EARTH." The eye of the Lord sees all. It is upon the righteous, and His ear is open unto their cry. He sees everything, but He observes His people with special attention. His eye has been upon us this day; He has seen every working of the mind, and every action of the body. His eye is upon us now and will be through the dark watches of the night. But it is a comforting thought, that He who sees us always, loves us most, notwithstanding all He sees amiss in us. Let us ever cherish the thought: *my Father sees me*. I am under His eye. He sees all I do, all I suffer, all my desires. Nothing can conceal the least circumstance from Him. He sees me in the furnace and is with me. He sees me in the field of battle and gives me the shield of His salvation. He sees me when my foot is slipping and often has His hand of mercy caught me and held me up. When tempted to sin, when giving way to fear or when yielding to the world, let me call to mind this solemn fact - *My God sees me*. If I sin it must be immediately under His eye. If I yield to temptation, it must be in His presence. Keep this thought daily before the mind: *it sanctifies*.

Lord, put within my heart Thy fear,
Grant me from sin to fly;
At all times to behold Thee near,
And on Thy grace rely.

May 29
MORNING

"And be found in Him" Phi 3:9

IN CHRIST OUR LORD IS WISDOM, RIGHTEOUSNESS, SANCTIFICATION, REDEMPTION. *Are you in Christ?* To be in Christ is to be united to Him by faith and love; this is of the utmost importance. Apart from Christ we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked; united to Christ, we are immensely rich, immutably safe, exalted to the highest honour, and shall appear without fault before the throne of God. If we are in Christ or one with Christ, we are justified by His obedience, as the debtor is cleared by the payment made by His surety; we are sanctified through Him, as the vessel is cleansed in the fountain; we are protected by Him, as Noah was in the ark; we are preserved from judicial proceeding, as the manslayer in the city of refuge; and are exalted to honour as the bride of the King Eternal, Immortal, the only wise God. Well may the apostle desire *"to be found in Him."* No mind can conceive, no tongue can declare the blessedness that flows from being one with Christ. Let us therefore, beloved, ask, this morning, *"Am I in Christ? Am I living with Him as His faithful bride; for Him as His devoted servant; upon Him as His dependant child? Do I renounce all for Christ? Can I say, I am crucified with Christ? The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world?"*

Yes, yes, I must and will esteem
All things but loss for Jesus' sake;
O may my soul be found in Him,
And of His righteousness partake.

May 29
EVENING

"The trying of your faith worketh patience" Jas 1:3

"THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH BEING MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD." Gold will perish but your faith will be found unto God's honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Whoever professes to believe in God will have his faith put to the trial. Every believer is tried: by Satan, by the world, or by false professors; but our God superintends the trial. He tries our faith in His word, if it be sincere; He tries our faith in His love, if we really credit it; our faith in His Son, if we trust in Him for complete salvation; our faith in His veracity, if we expect Him to make good His word. He will try the nature of our faith, if it is divine; the strength of our faith, if it is well rooted. He will try the constancy of our profession, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence. This trial is for His own glory or the good of others who observe us and for our own advantage. It worketh patience. It gives us occasion to exercise what we have. It perfects the habit and strengthens the exercise of it. It is often a call to exchange ease for patience, and our opposing strength for the power of Christ. Let us therefore remember that faith must be tried, that afflictions are to try our faith, that sanctified trials make us patient, and that when patience is complete, our trials will cease. Be ye therefore patient. *Your faith in God will see you through.*

Lord, whene'er my faith is tried,
Keep me near Thy bleeding side:
Make me patient, meek, and kind,
To Thy sovereign will resigned.

May 30
MORNING

"All my springs are in Thee" Ps 87:7

"WHOSOEVER DRINKETH OF THE WATER THAT I SHALL GIVE HIM SHALL NEVER THIRST." Our Lord is the fountain of life, the source of living water; the wells of salvation are found in His person, work and word; He says, *"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."* The springs of comfort, peace and salvation are all in Him; and in Him for us; therefore they are called *our springs*. These waters cleanse from all defilement; refresh the faint and weary, and satisfy the longing soul. The springs bespeak plentitude, whosoever will may come and take, for they are never dry. We are absolutely dependant on Jesus, this is our mercy; we are not absolutely dependant on any besides, this is our happiness. Our desires should concentrate in Him; our affections should be fixed upon Him; and our expectations should be only from Him. In Jesus is all possible variety: He can do and bestow all we can possibly want; for *"it hath pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell."* If all our springs are in Jesus, let us not then look to any other; but let us with joy draw water out of the fountains of the Saviour. Let us ask and He will give us living water that we may thirst no more. Only what comes from Jesus can satisfy the soul.

To whom, dear Jesus, O to whom
Shall needy sinners flee?
But to Thyself who bidd'st us come;
Our springs are all in Thee:
Now fill my soul with Thy pure love,
And raise my thoughts and hopes above.

May 30
EVENING

"A sure foundation" Isa 28:16

"HE THAT BELIEVETH SHALL NOT MAKE HASTE." Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, even Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus in the glory of His person, and in the perfection of His work, is the sure foundation of a sinner's hope. He that believeth shall be saved. If we build on anything else, we perish. If we mix anything with Christ as the basis of our hope, He will profit us nothing. It must be Christ, and Christ alone. His meritorious obedience, His atoning sacrifice, His prevalent intercession: on these we must build for eternity; they form the one foundation, and building on these we are safe, for it is a sure foundation. The dignity of His person, the perfection of His character, the merit of His work, and the veracity of His word, make it so. It has stood firm in all times past; it is unshaken at present, and it will ever be the same. No sinner ever built on it and found it to fail. Storms cannot shake it, floods cannot dislodge it, earthquakes do not affect it; it is firm as the perfections of God can make it, and lasting as eternity itself. Errors may spread, evil men and seducers may wax worse and worse, Satan may try all his craft, but *"the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: the Lord knoweth them that are His. Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."*

When all foundations else will fail,
Those built on Jesus shall prevail;
And lift their heads with joyful praise,
To Him who this foundation lays.

May 31
MORNING

"The just shall come out of trouble" Prov 12:13

BUT THE WICKED IS SNARED BY THE TRANSGRESSION OF HIS LIPS. God's people are justified by grace through faith, in the righteousness of Jesus; and all who are thus justified and created anew have immortal principles of holiness and justice implanted in their hearts, so that they hate sin, follow holiness, and walk uprightly. Sin has not dominion over them nor will they be slaves to lust. They meet with many troubles, they pass through fire and water, but they shall come out into a wealthy place. They shall not perish in their affliction for the Lord upholds them with His hand. Beloved, look beyond your present trials; remember if you suffer as a Christian, you suffer with Christ; and if you suffer you shall also reign with Him. Your God is able to deliver; He has promised to do so; trust in Him without wavering; yield not to temptation; avoid all appearance of evil; and your God will bring you out of trouble. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. You will also forget your misery or remember it as waters that pass away. *Present troubles will end in everlasting peace.*

Millions who now His throne surround,
Here sought relief, here mercy found;
The Lord dispelled their gloomy fears,
Healed all their wounds, and dried their tears;
And thou shalt also mercy find,
For God is faithful, just, and kind.

May 31
EVENING

"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" Ps 51:12

"CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD." David acknowledged his transgression and pleaded with the Lord for forgiveness and restoration. His grievous sin had cost him the joy of salvation. While the gift of salvation cannot be lost, the joy of salvation can. Both come from the Lord. When one receives the gospel offer by faith, immediately he is assured of eternal life as the gift of God through the working of the Holy Spirit, and trusting solely in the crucified Saviour, sins are forgiven, the burden of guilt is removed and the heart is filled with joy. Such is the Christian's state as he walks in the ways of God, shunning evil and delighting in the holy commandments. But alas! the flesh yielded to temptation and the psalmist fell into grievous sin. Then he groaned *"day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me."* God is faithful: when the penitent sinner truly turns back with broken spirit and contrite heart, the Lord will not despise or reject, but *He restores to him the joy of salvation. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.*

Those joys, my God, which once I knew,
Those glorious joys restore:
Thy Spirit's free! His grace renew,
Nor let me wander more.

June 1
MORNING

"The Lord our righteousness" Jer 23:6

"THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IS BY FAITH UNTO ALL THAT BELIEVE." Faith in Jesus Christ the eternal Son is the only way to obtain *righteousness* with God. To this end Christ came, born of a virgin, assumed our nature, took our place, suffered, bled, and died in our stead. We have no *righteousness* by nature, but we have the *righteousness* of God by grace. *"Their righteousness is of me,"* saith the Lord. Jesus completed for us all that was necessary to justify us; He made an end of sin; He magnified the law and made it honourable; He brought in everlasting *righteousness*; and now He clothes us with the garments of salvation, and covers us with the *robe of righteousness*. In Him we possess all that justice can demand or God require, for our full and eternal justification. This portion is not necessary merely for one day, but every day; it silences an accusing conscience, confounds Satan, strengthens the soul, and glorifies God. Let us look today, all the day, and everyday to Jesus, as *"The Lord our righteousness."* Let us go to duty, to conflict, to trials, in the strength of the Lord, making mention of His righteousness, even of His only. This is our plea at the throne of grace, our song in the house of our pilgrimage, and our confidence in the prospect of death.

Saviour divine, we know Thy name,
And in that name we trust;
Thou art the Lord our Righteousness,
Thou art our joy and boast.

June 1
EVENING

"Shew ye the proof of your love" 2 Cor 8:24

"THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS." Have you this love? We profess to love God. We cannot be Christians without this love. Christian love professes to prefer Christ and His cause to all besides; to submit to His authority and acquiesce in His will; to obey all His commands without partiality or pretence; to delight in His saints as the excellent of the earth; to sympathise with sufferers, especially with those who suffer in His cause and for His sake; to be ready to every good work. Such is our profession if we are sincere and diligent Christians. The law of God requires this at our hands. Jehovah as a Sovereign promises to produce it. By the Holy Spirit it is brought forth within us. He convinces us that by nature we have it not. He leads us to admire it, desire it, and seek for it. By unfolding the gospel and shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, He produces it. By daily and filial fellowship with God it is sustained. Beloved, do we profess to love God and His people? Then let us prove the sincerity of our love, by uniting with them: truly born-again believers who have separated from the world and false religious systems which do not honour our Lord Jesus Christ as the one and only Saviour sent from God.

O love the Lord all ye His saints,
Keep His commands, heed His constraints;
Your love must show beyond your creed:
To love His law in word and deed.

June 2
MORNING

"I will deal well with thee" Gen 32:9

OUR GOD IS A COVENANT-KEEPING GOD. His promises stand. The Lord kept His promise to Jacob; and the promises made unto our fathers, He will fulfill unto us their children. But such a promise does not exclude great trials, sore temptations, deep personal afflictions, fiery persecutions, poverty, disappointments, and perplexity; all these things may happen unto us, and yet the Lord deals well with us. The promise secures the sanctification of our troubles, the communication of grace, deliverance from all real evils, the supply of all wants, and the satisfying of our godly desires. Is not this enough to know that Jehovah will deal well with us in sickness and health, in life and in death, in time and through eternity? This promise is Jehovah's bond, the believer's plea, the ground of the Christian's confidence, a reason for contentment and gratitude, and the cause of our enemies' confusion. Jacob, though tried, found the Lord faithful, and so shall we. Let us therefore rejoice that our God has said, *"I will deal well with thee. I will make all my goodness pass before thee. I will save thee with an everlasting salvation. I will be thy God and thy glory."* Gracious Lord, do as Thou hast said!

Jesus! in whom but Thee above,
Can I repose my trust, my love?
Thy counsels and enfolding care
My safety and my comfort are;
And Thou shalt guide me all my days
Till glory crown the work of grace.

June 2
EVENING

"The household of God" Eph 2:19

ALL BELIEVERS TOGETHER FORM THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD. In Jesus Christ our Lord we are one family. It is a spiritual family; every member of it is born of God, is taught by the Spirit, is inhabited by the Spirit, is led by the Spirit, and is baptised by the Spirit into the one body. It is wholly and entirely of God. It originated in His purpose. It expresses His sovereign pleasure. It is produced by His power. It is called His own. It is designated *the household of God*: His in opposition to Satan, His in distinction from the world, His as differing from man's. It is the family where He dwells, the home of God, the flock over which He presides. Here He manifests His paternal love in supplying every want, protecting every member, employing every child, loving and delighting in each and everyone. All the members of this household are brethren and all are blessed. It is designed to glorify His grace, to honour His Son, to maintain His cause, to execute His will. Here in His family He is known, trusted, praised, obeyed, loved, and enjoyed. Are you of this household? Do you sincerely love the Head and the members of this household? This honour have all His saints.

Lord, come and dwell with me,
And make my heart Thine own;
Unite me to Thy family,
Unite me to Thy Son.

June 3
MORNING

"The exceeding riches of His grace" Eph 2:7

GOD'S GRACE IS SHOWN IN HIS KINDNESS TOWARD US THROUGH CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD. Thank God for His grace. It is His riches, His wealth. All its riches He intended for us, to be expended upon us. They are all treasured up in Jesus to be received by us. They are promised and presented to us. They exceed our thoughts, our expectations, our faith; we dare not believe that God has provided and promised so much for our good as He has; and therefore we do not ask for, and expect so much. Let us this day think of *"The exceeding riches of His grace."* Jesus was the gift of grace; so was the Holy Spirit, and so are all spiritual blessings. Grace includes, and is the source from which flows, all the church has received, is receiving, and will receive throughout eternity. Grace freely gives, but never sells. It has a bountiful eye, a tender heart, and a liberal hand. We are not straitened in God, but in our hearts. O that we did but believe what God has revealed in reference to the riches of grace, and expect to receive according to His most liberal promises! There is an abundance of grace, and it is for us; for us this morning, for us whenever we apply. Let us therefore have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me;
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

June 3
EVENING

"That God may be all in all" 1 Cor 15:28

"FOR HE MUST REIGN, TILL HE HATH PUT ALL ENEMIES UNDER HIS FEET." Then shall the Son Himself be subject unto the Father. This is Jehovah's grand design. All His ways and works are for the final glorification of Himself. Then He will be all in all. He is all in the great scheme of salvation. The plan was drawn by infinite wisdom in eternity, and is carried out by divine power in time. *Are we chosen to salvation?* It is of God in Christ. *Are we given to Jesus?* It is by Jehovah. *Are we ordained to eternal life?* It is the act of the Most High. *Are we blessed with all spiritual blessings?* It is by the Father of mercies. *Are we redeemed by the precious blood of Christ?* He was foreordained to this work by the Father. He is all in the dispensation of grace. *Are we quickened?* It is by God. *Are we taught?* It is by God. *Have we faith and repentance?* They are the gift of God. *Do we overcome Satan?* It is because the God of peace bruises him under our feet. *Are we zealous for God?* It is by His power which worketh in us mightily. *Are we holy?* By the grace of God we are what we are. *Do we overcome all our foes?* It is through Him that loved us. He will be all in the world of glory. In our complete and everlasting salvation, God will be *all in all*.

Here the whole Deity is known;
Nor dares a creature guess,
Which of the glories brightest shone,
The justice or the grace.

June 4
MORNING

"His kindness toward us" Eph 2:7

"THE GRACE OF OUR LORD WAS EXCEEDING ABUNDANT IN CHRIST JESUS." Such was God's lovingkindness toward us. Let us think of it as it appears in the place and circumstances of our birth, wherever that may be. In our education and preservation and especially in our regeneration, that we were born again not of the will of the flesh, nor of blood, but of God. How many born in the same place, about the same time, and educated in the same school, have passed out of time into eternity, under the curse of God. Why are we different? We are called by grace, justified from all sin in the righteousness of Jesus! We are kept by the power of God, supplied according to His promises, and walking with God. We look for the coming of Jesus with hope, with holy longings and steadfast faith, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come! In Christ we are able to say, *"All things are mine, for I am Christ's and Christ is God's."* O how great is the goodness of our God! How unsearchable is His grace, and His kindness towards us, beyond human comprehension!

Who can have greater cause to sing,
Who greater cause to bless,
Than we, the children of the King,
Than we who Christ possess?
Our all to His great kindness owe,
And grateful praise should ever flow.

June 4
EVENING

"It is more blessed to give than to receive" Acts 20:35

"EVERY MAN ACCORDING AS HE PURPOSETH IN HIS HEART, SO LET HIM GIVE:" Not grudgingly, for God loveth a cheerful giver. Our Lord gave His all for us, a ransom and a sacrifice. Giving His own self for us was the principle which influenced Him in eternity, which induced Him to leave heaven for earth, and which works in Him still. He urged this saying upon His disciples, so that it is probable that it became a proverbial saying among them. He has preserved it for our instruction and admonition. Receiving implies want and unfilled desires; giving supposes a possession, an honourable trust. Giving manifests a generous disposition and a concern for the good of others. It is acting like God, who created that He might give, redeemed that He might give, glorifies that He may give. It is a source of pure pleasure. Let us remember these words of the Lord Jesus when we go to His throne, and draw encouragement from them to ask for great blessings, to ask often, to ask with confidence: and let us encourage others to go to Him, assuring them that He considers it more blessed to give than to receive. Let us walk by this rule, prudently, plainly, notwithstanding discouragement.

The man who marks from day to day,
In generous acts his heav'nward way,
Treads the same path the Saviour trod,
The path to glory and to God.

June 5
MORNING

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Acts 9:6

SAUL WAS ASTONISHED WHEN CONFRONTED BY THE RISEN LORD. The crucified Jesus, whose church he was persecuting, was alive! *Lord! what wilt Thou have me to do?* Reader, search your own heart. Bring this inquiry to the Lord's throne. All the Lord's people should be employed in the Lord's vineyard for the Lord's glory. There is something for each of us to do and something for us to do today. Jesus is our Master; He has a right to reign over us and employ us as He will. He should be obeyed. We especially who are so deeply indebted, should obey Him willingly, cheerfully and unceasingly. *Is our enmity subdued? How can we manifest it but by seeking to be in His employment? Have we faith, hope, love, humility, peace, gratitude? Are we not then desirous of obeying Him, who gave us all these blessings?* We ought to be employed, always employed, and so employed as if everyday were our last. That is the best employment which we can look at with satisfaction on a death-bed; and of which we shall not be ashamed on the day of judgment. *What are you doing for Jesus? What are you doing in the spirit of Jesus?* Beware lest you put your doings in the place of Jesus; do all you can, then lay them all at the feet of Jesus for His approval.

Never did men by faith divine
To selfishness or sloth incline;
The Christian works with all his power
And grieves that he can do no more;
Commits his work to God alone,
And seeks His will before his own.

June 5
EVENING

"The promises of God" 2 Cor 1:20

IN CHRIST OUR LORD ALL GOD'S PROMISES ARE YEA AND AMEN. God's promises are sure and certain: not one can ever be broken. This is the assurance He has given His people, that He will bless them and bestow favours upon them. They all originate in His divine sovereignty and flow spontaneously from His holy will. They are but the bounties and tokens of His love, the kind expressions and manifestations of His grace. They are acts of divine condescension which bring the promiser under a bond, and prove His fatherly care of us and concern for our welfare. They all rest on the same immutable basis, even His veracity and faithfulness, and are stored up in Jesus as the precious possession of His people. They open the heart of Jehovah, challenge the faith of the Christian, and enliven the hopes of the penitent sinner. They are connected with the mediatorial office of Christ; for as Prophet He publishes them, as Priest He confirms them, and as King He fulfils them. They all belong to the same persons, believers; they have the same design, our benefit; and aim at the same end, the praise of Jehovah's grace. They all lead us to the same fountain, the fullness of Christ: and produce the same effects, even admonition, gratitude, and praise.

God's promises surpass my thought,
But faithful is my changeless Lord;
In unbelief I stagger not,
For God hath spoken the timeless word.

June 6
MORNING

"He hath done all things well" Mk 7:37

"HE MAKETH BOTH THE DEAF TO HEAR, AND THE DUMB TO SPEAK." The people were astonished and spoke the truth concerning the Lord Jesus; He did many things and He did them well, without exception. Can we not bear the same testimony this morning? He called us by His grace, and when we reflect upon the means, the manner, and the circumstances, must we not say, *"He did it well?"* He has tried us in many ways; but when we think of His design, the mercies He mingled with the afflictions, and the deliverance He granted us out of them, must we not say, *"He hath done all things well?"* If we look back and see Him standing forward as our surety with the Father in eternity, or if we behold Him taking our nature, bearing our sins, procuring our righteousness, and sending His Holy Spirit to sanctify and save us, must we not say, *"He hath done all things well?"* And when our mansions are prepared, our bodies raised from the grave, and our persons are perfectly conformed to His image; when we hear Him say, *"Come, inherit the kingdom;"* O with what rapture, gratitude, and love shall we shout, *"He hath done all things well!"*

How sovereign, wonderful, and free,
Is all His love to sinful me;
He plucked me as a brand from hell,
My Jesus hath done all things well!
And since my soul has known His love,
What mercies has He made me prove;
Mercies which all my praise excel,
My Jesus hath done all things well!

June 6
EVENING

"The offence of the cross" Gal 5:11

"THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS IS TO THEM THAT PERISH FOOLISHNESS." But unto us who are saved, it is the power of God. The doctrine of salvation by a crucified Jew was in Paul's day peculiarly offensive; many stumbled at it and perished; and the doctrine of complete salvation by faith in Christ alone is still offensive to many. Man naturally desires to be something, to do something, and to be thought something; but in the doctrine of salvation by grace, man is nothing, Christ is all. It presents the crucified Christ as the object of faith; He alone is the ground of hope and the channel through which every blessing flows. It places all upon a level: the harlot and the maid, the thief and the honest man, the poor and the wealthy, the illiterate and the learned; and it presents salvation to each on the same terms, requiring all alike to rest upon the finished work of Jesus, and allows no flesh to glory in God's presence. This is very offensive to the pride of man. In a word, the gospel knows no man after the flesh, but points all to Jesus, directs each to the strait gate and narrow way, inculcates self-denial and self-renunciation as necessary to salvation and shuts up every soul to this one gospel; it must believe in Christ or perish. *This is the offence of the cross, still a stumbling-block to the world.*

Jesus is our perfect Saviour,
Only source of all that's good;
Every grace and every favour,
Comes to us through Jesus' blood.

June 7
MORNING

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord" Isa 43:12

"I AM THE LORD; BESIDE ME THERE IS NO SAVIOUR." But all the world needs to be informed. Our Lord needs us to witness to the truth, power, and sweetness of the Christian faith, to the goodness, holiness, and faithfulness of God. We are to witness to the world by our spirit, testimony, and conduct; we are to witness to poor, doubting, fearful souls. Our witness should be unequivocal and should be borne with courage, constancy, and love. Our testimony should be from experience. Do we know the Lord? Do we daily experience the power of truth in our hearts? Does it free us from slavish fear, the love of the world and the dominion of sin? Can we say that we have known and believed the love which God hath to us, that God is love? Are we saying to those around us, *"O, taste and see that the Lord is good; there is no want to them that fear Him?"* Suppose we should be called to bear witness before judges and kings, in the prison or at the stake, how would it be with us then? Could we witness that God is good and gracious? that He is enough to make us happy? Suppose He were to strip us as He did Job, or try us as He did Paul? He says, *"Ye are my witnesses."*

Give me to bear Thy easy yoke,
And every moment watch and pray;
And still to things eternal look,
And hasten to Thy glorious day!
I would Thy daily witness be,
And prove that I am one with Thee.

June 7
EVENING

"The breastplate of faith and love" 1 Thess 5:8

"THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT CARNAL BUT MIGHTY THROUGH GOD." Without God's weapons we face defeat. We are surrounded by foes and are in a state of perpetual conflict. Armour is provided for us by the great Captain of our salvation, and we are directed to take the whole of it and use it for our defence. The breastplate which is to guard the heart is composed of faith and love, the two principal graces of the Spirit. Faith is absolute confidence in God. Love is affection for Him. Faith always begets love, and love strengthens faith; together they make the Christian a match for his foes. Faith always embraces the Lord Jesus as Saviour, Friend, and Lord. Love delights in Him as the visible Jehovah, the fountain of grace, and the brightness of glory. Faith receives the promises and trusts them; love calls forth admiration and renders praise for the same. Faith appropriates the righteousness of Christ for justification; love delights in the person of Christ as supremely glorious. Faith daily leads to the open fountain for cleansing; love conducts to the throne for fellowship and communion. Faith looks to Christ for support; love goes forth to labour or suffer for His cause.

Let faith and love, most holy God,
Possess this soul of mine:
So shall I conquer all my foes,
And grasp the joys divine.

June 8
MORNING

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom 8:31

OUR EMMANUEL IS WITH US, ON OUR SIDE. He ensures that all the perfections of Jehovah's nature are arrayed for our defence and safety. He is engaged by covenant, by promise, and by oath, to support, supply, and befriend us. He is for us, engaged in our cause, opposed to our enemies, pledged to deliver us in six troubles, and not forsake us in the seventh. We may challenge our foes, for God is with us; what then is man? What are devils? Let us appreciate our safety, happiness, and honour; the Lord omnipotent is our ally. We should be grateful, for *what is our desert? What do we possess? What were our expectations? What has God promised?* We may triumph in Christ but only in Christ: *if God be for us*, then supplies shall certainly be sent us. *If God be for us*, men or devils shall never prevail against us. *If God be for us*, we shall overcome the world, conquer death, and inherit eternal glory. *But if God is for us, who then shall harm us? What then shall alarm or terrify us?* God is ours; we are God's. This is our honour, our happiness, our victory and, our glory.

Yes, God is above men, devils, and sin,
My Jesus' love the battle shall win:
On His mighty power I'll daily rely,
All evil before Him away shall fly:
With Him beside me no danger I fear,
Nor cringe from a trial when Jesus is near.

June 8
EVENING

"Brethren, we are debtors" Rom 8:12

"NOT TO THE FLESH, TO LIVE AFTER THE FLESH." But we are debtors to God, to repay a gospel debt. We are indebted to sovereign grace for a name recorded in God's book of life, for an interest in the Saviour's person, office, and work; for the benefits resulting from his obedience, death, and intercession. We are debtors to atoning blood, for by it justice is satisfied; we are delivered from the wrath of God, and are rescued from the power of Satan. We are debtors to divine influence, for by it we were quickened when dead in trespasses and sins; we are taught the will of God, and are introduced into liberty and safety. Beloved, let us endeavour to feel our obligations; we owe a debt of love and gratitude, let us therefore heed our heavenly Father's commands; observe and do our loving Saviour's precepts; attend to all the Holy Spirit's intimations; and bow with cheerful submission to all the dispensations of divine providence. As debtors, let us be humble, let us be honest, and acknowledge that we are not our own; our time is not our own, our talents are not our own: *all are the Lord's*.

Thy love I owe for sins forgiven,
Through satisfaction made:
For present peace and promised heaven,
Can never be repaid.

June 9

MORNING

"Let Israel hope in the Lord" Ps 130:7

"FOR WITH THE LORD THERE IS MERCY AND PLENTIOUS REDEMPTION." The Lord shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. God's people are special. They are princes; they wrestle with God in prayer, and they prevail. Despondency does not become a prince, much less a Christian. Our God is *"The God of hope,"* and we should hope in Him. Israel should hope in His mercy, in His patience, in His provision, in His plenteous redemption. They should hope for light in darkness, for strength in weakness, for direction in perplexity, for deliverance in danger, for victory in conflict, and for triumph in death. They should hope in God confidently, because He has promised; prayerfully, for He loves to hear from us; obediently, for His precepts are to be observed by us; and constantly, for He is always the same. Beloved, let not your hope rest on persons or performance or anything; but hope in the Lord, in the Lord alone. Israel's God is at all times Israel's hope. The hope of Israel shall never be disappointed. Therefore hope in God, for it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord; this will keep him steady in storm and tempest.

The gospel bears my spirit up;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope,
In oaths, and promises, and blood;
Then, O my soul, still hope in God,
And plead thy Saviour's precious blood.

June 9
EVENING

"Beloved of God" Rom 1:7

CALLED TO BE SAINTS IN GOD'S ARMY: THERE IS NO GREATER PRIVILEGE. *Just to be loved of God, is the source of all good. How are the Lord's beloved ones known?* They are known by their faith in Jesus and obedience to His word; by their love to God and their zeal for His glory; by their hope in God and patient endurance of His will. *What are the honours they possess?* They are the sons of God; they are the acknowledged brethren of Jesus; they are the companions of God, with whom they daily walk; they are the residence of the Holy Spirit; they are watched over, befriended, and supplied by providence. They are attended by angels; they are heirs of all things. *What are their prospects?* They have victory over their foes, the enjoyment of holiness, happiness, and God. To them is promised likeness to Jesus in body and soul; possession of the throne of glory, a diadem of beauty, and a harp of celestial sweetness. *What are their duties?* Theirs is to be committed for God and His cause; to be entirely consecrated to God and His service; to love His ordinances, practice His precepts; to prefer His will and walk with His people in His way. *Reader, are you beloved of God? Do you love Him? Do you walk with Him?*

Now let me rise in Jesus' name,
His arm my stay, His praise my aim;
Let unreserved obedience prove
The truth and ardour of my love.

June 10
MORNING

"I am Alpha and Omega" Rev 22:13

"THE BEGINNING AND THE END, THE FIRST AND THE LAST." What our Lord began, He carries on, and He will bring to a completion the great work of our eternal salvation. He was the first object to which we were directed to look and He will be the last we shall wish to see. He was the first subject we began to learn and we shall be learning of Him to all eternity. He is first with us in every trial and trouble, and will never leave us nor forsake us. He is the foundation on which we build, and He will be for a covering. We should look to Him first in every trouble and go to Him first with every want. He includes all that is good, great, and glorious. He that hath Jesus hath all things. Let us begin with Jesus, and then go on with Jesus, so shall we end with Jesus, and a blessed ending it will be. He is our great lesson and we have learned nothing to purpose until we know Him. O to know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, and to be made conformable to His death! Let us endeavor to learn the joy of looking to Jesus, expecting from Jesus, and glorifying Jesus as our Alpha and Omega from day to day.

Christ is my hope, my strength, my guide:
For me He groaned, and bled, and died;
Christ is the source of all my bliss,
My wisdom, and my righteousness;
My Saviour, Brother, faithful Friend,
On Him alone I all depend.

June 10
EVENING

"He is not ashamed to call them brethren" Heb 2:11

"FOR HE THAT SANCTIFIETH AND THEY WHO ARE SANCTIFIED ARE ALL OF ONE." It is honour and blessing beyond comprehension that we belong to Jesus, especially if we consider the amazing contrast between us. This is very great, as it respects His purity and our pollution; His wealth and our poverty; His strength and our weakness; His happiness and our misery; His knowledge and our ignorance; His dignity and our degradation. But though the contrast is so great, He acknowledges us, and there is a degree of likeness: we have the same Father, even God; we possess His nature, Spirit, and image in a degree; our work and His are the same, to glorify God; our cause and interests are identified with His; our aim and end are one with His; and His heaven is to be our eternal home. We are often ashamed of ourselves, and ashamed of one another; the world is ashamed of us, but Jesus never is. He owns us in heaven before His Father and His holy angels now, and He will call us brethren, blessed of His Father, on the throne of judgment by and by. If Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren, never let us be ashamed to own each other, though in some things we differ. Jesus owns us all.

Lord, what is man's distinguished race,
Whom Thou dost for Thy brethren own?
Crowned with dignity and grace,
To brightest Seraphim unknown!

June 11
MORNING

"The Lord is my portion" Lam 3:24

"THEREFORE WILL I HOPE IN HIM." It is good that I should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord, because my goodness extends not to Him. How poor is the worldling's possession, compared with the Christian's portion; it is but for a few days; it cannot satisfy, it cannot bless. But, beloved, Jehovah has given us Himself; He says, *"I am your inheritance."* We are ever with Him, and all He has is ours. His power is ours to support us, His wisdom to guide us, His love to comfort us, His mercy to relieve us, His goodness to supply us, His justice to defend us, His covenant to secure us, and His heaven to receive us. He is a sufficient, everlasting and immutable portion. We are to live upon Him, draw from Him, rejoice in Him, and look to Him for all we need. For Him we renounce all other; to His glory all our efforts must be directed, and with Him we must daily walk. Men cannot deprive us of our portion, fire cannot consume it, nor rust corrupt it; let us not therefore be much affected by anything that occurs below: if the streams are dried, the fountain remains; if creatures fail or deceive us, our God is the portion of our inheritance forever; He maintains our lot, He is our strength, and our everlasting portion.

Begone, ye gilded vanities,
I seek the only good;
To real bliss my wishes rise,
The favour of my God:
My love, my God, my portion be,
And let me find my all in Thee.

June 11
EVENING

"Thy comforts delight my soul" Ps 94:19

"WHO WILL STAND UP FOR ME AGAINST THE WORKERS OF INIQUITY?" *Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.* In the Lord deliverance is assured. Therefore never give up. Our circumstances are often trying, and our thoughts very perplexing and depressing; but our God has provided comfort for us, a fulness of comfort, abundance of comfort for all times. What comfort is wrapped up in the precious promises, in the perfect work of Jesus, in the everlasting covenant, in the prospect of a complete and everlasting deliverance from all sin, suffering, and sorrow. We have everything in ourselves calculated to make us uncomfortable, but in our God we have everything that can make us happy. Our own thoughts are often a source of grief, but the thoughts of our God are full of love, peace, and joy. O what a comfort it is to us to have a Friend that loveth at all times, a Brother born for adversity! An Advocate with the Father, ever making intercession for us! To know that we are in union with Jesus, that the union is so close that He knows every thought, sympathises with us in every pain, and will bring us where He is, in exact likeness to Himself. He is our Head, we are His body. Precious truth this, that Christ and His church are one! How full of holy comfort! What an antidote it is against despondency and despair!

When mournful thoughts within me rise,
And press upon my troubled breast,
The comforts of Thy word suffice,
To keep my heart and mind at rest.

June 12
MORNING

"The LORD God is a sun and shield" Ps 84:11

"THE LORD WILL GIVE GRACE AND GLORY." He is the source of all blessing and goodness. To Him we must look for light, comfort, and fruitfulness. He is our light and our salvation. He will not leave us comfortless. From Him is our fruit found. The people who know Him, believe Him, and walk with Him, are blessed. He gives light in darkness, joy in sorrow, and life in death. He is our defence; from Him we must expect protection. His salvation is our shield; faith lays hold of it, and employs it against all our foes. He will enlighten and protect us; He will never fail us, or leave us to want or perish. He communicates His favours as freely, as easily, and as plentifully as the sun shines. There is enough in Him, and He will cheerfully bestow. Let us therefore wait upon Him this day, and walk in the light of His countenance. Who is among you that fears the Lord, and obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Can there be such a person? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. His heart is evermore towards us, His promises shall be fulfilled to us, and He will glorify every perfection of His nature in us. *O the unsearchable riches of His marvellous grace!*

Lord, be my safety and defence,
My light, my joy, my bliss;
My portion in the world to come,
My confidence in this;
Be thou, O Lord, my Shield and Sun,
As I the path of duty run.

June 12
EVENING

"God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" Eph 4:32

"BLESSED IS THE MAN TO WHOM THE LORD WILL NOT IMPUTE SIN." *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.* This is God's greatest blessing; and to know and enjoy it is our greatest privilege. Our God is a pardoning God. He pardons freely, He pardons frequently, He pardons willingly, He pardons heartily, He pardons justly. He pardons forever, so that sin forgiven is sin forgotten. But He only pardons for Christ's sake. It is not for the sake of repentance, or faith, or good works, but for the sake of Christ alone. Jesus has once suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. He has made a full, complete, and everlasting atonement for our sins; He put them away by the sacrifice of Himself, so that when we believe in Jesus, receive the record God has given of His Son, approach the throne of grace and plead for pardon in His name, the Father does honour to His Son by pardoning us. Every believer is pardoned, is forgiven all his transgressions. His sins are all blotted out, he is justified from every charge. Who is he that condemns? God has justified us. Jesus died for our sins according to His will. He obtained for us eternal redemption.

O may I practically show
My interest in Thy grace;
Be all I am, and have, and do,
Devoted to Thy praise.

June 13
MORNING

"The angel of the Lord stood by" Zech 3:5

"THE LORD IS NIGH UNTO THEM THAT CALL UPON HIM." He is a very present help in trouble. Our Lord stood by Joshua, when Satan accused and assailed him; when his filthy garments bore testimony against him, and he was cited to appear before God. Thank God for our Lord Jesus, the messenger of the covenant; the minister of the true tabernacle, which God pitched, and not man but the angel of Jehovah's presence. This same Jesus stands by all His people; He stands by us. He stands on our side in prayer, in trouble, in temptation, in all our efforts to glorify His name. He stands by to instruct us in the will of God; to help us in the work of God; to enrich us with the wealth of God; and to watch over us for good. Beloved, whoever leaves us, Jesus still stands by us. Our eyes should always be fixed upon Him. We ought never to forget, there is one witness to every action; Jesus stands by observing. We should therefore be circumspect, grateful, and courageous. He stands at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those who condemn his soul. He stands ready to help, waiting to give, determined to bless. May we always realize that Jesus stands by.

Look up, my soul, with cheerful eye,
See where the great Redeemer stands,
The glorious Advocate on high,
With precious incense in His hands!
On Him alone thy hopes recline;
His power and love are all divine.

June 13
EVENING

"Thou standest by faith" Rom 11:20

"FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR."

It is the gift of God. Faith in Jesus is of the greatest importance. We cannot overvalue it unless we put it in the place of Christ. *Are we justified?* It is by faith. *Are we sanctified?* Our hearts are purified by faith. *Do we fight?* It is the fight of faith. *Do we overcome?* This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith. By faith we look to Jesus. By faith we receive Christ. By faith we walk with God. By faith we stand: we are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. It is by believing what Christ is to us, what Christ has done for us, what Christ will confer upon us, that we stand. It is by faith that we receive from Christ light to guide us in every difficult path; strength to act, to fight, and to persevere in our Christian walk; in a word, grace to help us in every need. Let us, therefore, take heed, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Let us strive against doubts and pray for confidence in God. We cannot believe in God's word too confidently; we cannot trust in the Saviour's finished work too steadily; we cannot confide in God's veracity too firmly.

Christ is my Rock, and though my foes
Display their utmost hate,
Yet for the grace which He bestows,
I'll pray and watch and wait.

June 14
MORNING

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be" Deut 33:25

"THE ETERNAL GOD IS THY REFUGE AND UNDERNEATH ARE THE EVERLASTING ARMS." Happy is the man who trusts in the Lord. No man can possibly tell what is before him: but our God knows, and He has promised His people strength sufficient for their trials. We should not be anxious, for with the trial comes the strength. Our troubles are not greater than God's mercies. Temporal prosperity without a blessing from God will prove to be a curse; it always brings a solemn responsibility with it. We have always found our God faithful; He always has given strength according to the days; and why should we now doubt? We may look forward and suppose the worst, and then say, *"I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation."* We go from strength to strength, and every true believer shall appear in Zion before God. He will perfect that which concerns us, but will never forsake the work of His own hands. Let us then expect the Lord to give *when* we want, *as* we want, *all* we want; let us believe that our strength will be equal to our burden, to our days. The promise is plain, it is positive, it is sure, and our God is faithful.

God is kind, and will not leave you,
When you most His kindness need;
God is true, nor can deceive you,
Though your faith be weak indeed.

June 14
EVENING

"They crucified him" Mt 27:35

"HE WAS DESPISED AND REJECTED OF MEN." He was oppressed and afflicted, wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. The Father delivered Him up, Judas betrayed Him, and the soldiers crucified Him. Let us consider the design of God in His death. It was to satisfy the claims of justice, to uphold His holiness in the salvation of the people, to display His wisdom, to manifest His mercy, to put away our sins, and to disclose the wonders of His love. Let us notice what Jesus displayed when He was crucified. Here we see His filial obedience to His Father, His implicit trust in God, His surpassing patience under suffering, His meek forgiving spirit, His astonishing love to His people, and His entire submission to the divine will. Let us observe what man discovered in this transaction. What base ingratitude! What brutal cruelty! What insolent pride! What folly in ignorance! Judas betrayed his treachery and greed; the Pharisees revealed their envy and cruelty under the cloak of self-righteousness; Pilate the coward retreated under the fear of man; the disciples showed the weakness which resides in cowardly hearts. Here, Jehovah's love is most clearly revealed. The sinfulness of sin is set forth. Go to the cross and look to the Saviour. Repent, believe, and be saved. *This is God's way of salvation: one way and no other.*

In the cross, in the cross,
Be my vision glorious;
All my sins are washed away,
In the blood of Jesus.

June 15
MORNING

"Let not your heart be troubled" Jn 14:1

"PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU." Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Jesus our Lord does not approve of your being in an agitated, perplexed, uncomfortable state. He wishes to see you calm, holy, and happy. He forbids your fear; He commands your faith. As He is with you, engaged for you, you should leave your concerns with Him. But how can we attend to this exhortation? Let the mind be assured of a covenant interest in God, your God. Live under the knowledge, *God is with me*; He minutely observes everything that takes place within and around me; He is watching for an opportunity to do me good; He will not allow anything to hurt me; He will glorify Himself in me, and me in Himself; He bids me trust Him; I will trust and not be afraid. What will follow? *He will keep them in perfect peace, whose minds are stayed on Him; because they trust in Him.* Trust then in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Let nothing trouble you, for your souls are in the hands of Jesus; your life is hid with Christ in God; your times are at God's disposal; and all things are working together for your good.

Comfort of my troubled heart,
Bid my unbelief depart;
Speak, that all my sorrows cease;
Speak, that all my soul be peace;
And till I Thy glory see,
Strengthen Thou my faith in Thee.

June 15
EVENING

"They are the sons of God" Rom 8:14

"BELOVED, NOW ARE WE THE SONS OF GOD." Who are these persons? These are they who are led by the Spirit of God. To what does the Spirit lead the sons of God? To know their need of a Saviour, to recognise the welcome power of the Lord Jesus, to fly to Him for refuge, to rest alone on His perfect work, to receive from Him life, light, and peace. In brief, He leads them to loathe themselves, repent of sin, separate from the world, cleave to Jesus, walk with God, follow after holiness, and devote themselves wholly to the Lord's service and praise. Those who are thus led by the Spirit of God, *they are the sons of God*. They were predestinated to the adoption of children before time. They are now declared to be the children of the Most High. They are born of God, they are taught of God, they are the beloved of God, they are treated as children, they are heirs of God, they are associated with the Lord Jesus, they are appointed to share in the highest honours, to enjoy the purest bliss. Beloved, are we led by the Spirit? Has He led us this day to Jesus? If we are the sons of God we are safe.

Send forth the Spirit of Thy Son,
O God, into my panting heart;
That governed by Thy love alone,
From Thee I never shall depart;
But following my omniscient Guide,
Be numbered with the glorified.

June 16
MORNING

"I go to prepare a place for you" Jn 14:2

"I WILL COME AGAIN AND RECEIVE YOU UNTO MYSELF." On earth our Lord defeated death for us. In heaven, He continues to do us good. See what our Lord is doing: He is engaged for us; He paid the ransom price for us on earth, and then ascended to heaven to prepare a place for us. The place He prepares will be worthy of Himself; *"His rest will be glorious."* There the wicked cease from troubling, sin shall no more annoy, troubles shall no more beset, the weary shall be at rest. He is preparing us for the place, as well as the place for us. Today we are tried and afflicted. But our light afflictions which are only for a moment, are working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Let us daily think of Jesus as busy for us; let us see death as our going to take possession of the place He has prepared for us; and when we are cast down, let us remember, Jesus will come again and receive us unto Himself, that where He is, we may be also. Our present lodgings may be cramped and uncomfortable; but our mansion will be magnificent and worthy. He that overcomes shall inherit all things, and Jehovah will be his God. Glorious privilege! Unspeakable blessing! Sweet prospect!

And art Thou, gracious Saviour, gone,
A mansion to prepare for me?
Soon I'll behold Thee on Thy throne,
And there for ever reign with Thee.
Now let the world deride or blame,
Then I shall triumph in Thy name.

June 16
EVENING

"It knew Him not" 1 Jn 3:1

"THE WORLD BY WISDOM KNEW NOT GOD," for the whole world lay in darkness, and hated the light. The world knew not Jesus when He sojourned below; men do not know Him now. They do not know the love which fills His bosom, which brought Him to dwell here in the flesh, and made Him a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. They knew not the sweetness of His disposition, or the kindness of His intention toward fallen, polluted man. They know not His willingness to receive, His determination to bless, and His mission to save all who flee for refuge to Him. They know not the glory of His person, the extent of His authority, or the value of His atoning blood. They have no idea of His condescension, the extent of the sufferings He endured, or the heavenly blessings which He freely bestows on the lost and undone. No one knows the Saviour who does not love Him. Everyone who believes in Him, knows Him; and every one that knows Him will believe His word, rest on His glorious atonement, and rejoice in His truth. Jesus to be known must be revealed. The Holy Spirit must enlighten our minds, unfold His character, and apply the word or we shall not know Him.

Come, Holy Spirit, now reveal
The Son of God to me;
Thy glorious power let me feel,
And all His glories see.

June 17
MORNING

"Salvation is of the Lord" Jon 2:9

"THERE IS NONE OTHER NAME ... WHEREBY WE MUST BE SAVED," *neither is there salvation in any other. Only Jesus saves!* This is the work of God. The love of the Father, the work of the Son, and the operation of the Holy Spirit, save the soul. The Father devised the scheme, the Son paid the ransom, and the Holy Spirit puts us in possession of the blessing. It is of God. It is by grace. It is through faith. Deliverance from dangers, trials, and wants, is of the Lord. He delivered Jonah when he cried, though he was a poor, proud, obstinate, fretful sinner: and He will deliver us. He says, *"Look unto me and be delivered, for I am God. Look, for I bid you. Look, for I will deliver you."* He will deliver in six troubles, and in seven He will not forsake us. He will deliver our souls from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling. Look not to men, or to the church, or to rituals and images. Look only to the Lord: *salvation is of the Lord. Only Jesus saves. Are you looking to others? Are you drooping, fearing, or desponding? Your God asks, "Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? Is anything too hard for me?"*

Of all the crowns Jehovah bears,
Salvation is His dearest claim;
That gracious sound well pleased He hears,
And owns Emmanuel for His name;
He saves us by His precious blood,
And proves Himself the mighty God.

June 17
EVENING

"The Kingdom of God is within you" Lk 17:21

"THE KINGDOM OF GOD COMETH NOT WITH OBSERVATION." It is not organisational, not social, not visible. The King has His throne in the hearts of His people. He reigns over the world in every part, but He lives *within* the believer's heart. The Christian is at once the habitation, the temple, and the Kingdom of God. In us He dwells and reigns. This Kingdom includes reconciliation to God, friendship with God, and entire submission to the will of God, brought about by the application of the atonement, the manifestation of divine favour, and the comforts of the Holy Spirit. Where Jehovah reigns, the soul is justified through the righteousness of Christ, enjoys holy peace and fellowship with God, and is happy in the love of God. The enmity of the heart is slain, the darkness of the mind is dispersed, the carnality of the affections is removed, and the person is brought into subjection and to the obedience of Christ. The will of God becomes his law, the person and work of Christ very precious, and the glory of God his ambition. The enemy becomes a friend, the rebel a loyal subject, and the alien a beloved child. If the Kingdom of God is within us, we ought to love the church of God by a loyal profession, and should so walk as to please God everyday.

Reign in me, Jehovah, reign,
Let my rebel lusts be slain;
Righteousness and peace impart,
Fill with holy joy my heart.

June 18
MORNING

"I will not leave you comfortless" Jn 14:18

"I WILL COME TO YOU." This is the comfort of believers: they will never be alone in a hostile world. Believers when in darkness often fear that Jesus has forsaken them: this is natural but unscriptural; for He has said, *"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."* His purposes require His presence with us, His love secures His presence to us. He will not leave us comfortless. We are absolutely dependent upon Him; our comfort is His gift, and the continuance of comfort depends on His presence and grace. He is the great source of comfort to His people; His presence and His comforts are generally connected; He may withhold them for a time to reprove, instruct, or correct us; but we may depend upon His comforts returning, for His promise is plain; it stands forever in His word; and His nature and love are the same. His precious word of promise should be believed, embraced and firmly trusted. We never shall be orphans, for our Father ever lives; our home waits to receive us, and our hope is imperishable. O beloved, plead this precious word of Jesus: expect Him to make it good: aim at His glory and your comforts are sure! *He will not leave you comfortless.*

Blest Holy Spirit, give me faith
To rest on what my Saviour saith;
May I the promised comforts prove,
Of His divine eternal love:
And daily trust His faithfulness,
Who will not leave me comfortless.

June 18
EVENING

"Thou restrainest prayer before God" Job 15:4

"YE HAVE NOT, BECAUSE YE ASK NOT." The charge against Job may be justly brought against us: for though prayer is one of the most delightful privileges, and is enjoyed as such when under the influence of the Spirit of adoption, yet when a spirit of bondage prevails, or when we become worldly minded, it is rather a task than a pleasure. Often are we tempted to keep away from the Lord, because we are so lukewarm, or cold, or dead; whereas these are the very things which should drive us to Him. Never let us wait for a better frame, or more convenient season, but let us go as we are, and whenever an opportunity offers, to His throne of grace. For if we restrain prayer before God, we shall soon get cold, careless, and lifeless, if we are not already so; sin will gather strength, all our graces will be weakened, and the gift of prayer will wither. Our tempers will become frayed, our peace will be disturbed, and the enjoyment of our walk with the Lord will decline. Restraining prayer is directly opposed to God's word; it is yielding to Satan, grieving the Holy Spirit, and must end in grief. *As filial children of the Father, let us pray without ceasing.*

Father, in Thy love appear,
Pleased to bless me in Thy Son:
At Thy bidding I draw near,
Bowed and humble 'fore Thy throne.
In Thy blessed presence stay,
There to linger, there to pray.

June 19
MORNING

"All His saints are in Thy hand" Deut 33:3

"EVERY ONE SHALL RECEIVE OF THY WORDS." Every believer is a saint; and every saint is attentive to the words of God. We are separated by the purpose of God: sanctified by the operations of the Holy Spirit; set apart for God, and devoted to His service. Every saint is in the hand of Jesus: in the hand of His mercy, in the hand of His power, and in the hand of His providence. The hand of Jesus is large enough to hold all; strong enough to defend all. They are in His hand as His property, purchased by His blood; as His charge, committed to Him by His Father; at His disposal, to do with them as seems good in His sight; under His protection, to be kept from Satan, death, and hell; to be guided through this desert world, to our Father's house above; to be moulded by His skill, and conformed to His own lovely image; to be sheltered from the storm, and preserved from the stormy blast; to be used for His praise, and be lifted up to His eternal throne. They are His saints; He chose them for His bride; He rescued them from the hand of the enemy; He claims them as His right; He made them what they are; and He will glorify them forever.

Blessed are the saints of God!
They are bought with Jesus' blood;
They are ransomed from the grave,
Life eternal they shall have;
With them numbered may I be,
Now and through eternity!

June 19
EVENING

"I obtained mercy" 1 Tim 1:13

"THE GRACE OF OUR LORD WAS EXCEEDING ABUNDANT." His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting. Paul was once Saul the blasphemer, a persecutor, and very injurious to the cause of Christ; but the Lord showed him mercy as a pattern to them which should hereafter believe. Here we see that mercy is free for the vilest; that the Lord has mercy upon sinners, just because He will have mercy. Paul obtained it without seeking; anyone may, by seeking it. The mercy which the Lord shows, and which Paul obtained, always brings a complete pardon for all past sins, however numerous or flagrant they may have been. It brings peace to the conscience, however troubled or distressed. It produces holiness in the heart which will appear in the life; it leads the soul to desire and seek the knowledge of Christ above all other things, and to count everything but dross and dung in comparison with it. It fortifies the mind to meet, endure, and pass through trials and tribulation for Christ's sake. It leads to friendship with God, concern for the salvation of souls, and binds us to the church of Jesus by strong and lasting ties. Reader, has mercy had the same effect on you as it had on Paul? Whenever mercy is obtained, its fruits will appear.

Mercy there was great,
And grace was free,
Pardon there was multiplied to me,
There my burdened soul found liberty
At Calvary.

June 20
MORNING

"It is God that justifieth" Rom 8:33

"IT IS CHRIST THAT DIED ... THAT IS RISEN AGAIN ... FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION." Only God can justify: this He did when He raised His Son from the dead. To be justified is to be acquitted and pronounced righteous. Every believer in Jesus, however ungodly he may have been, or however vile and unworthy he may feel, is justified by Jehovah. The perfect work of Jesus is imputed to him, free grace is glorified in him, and he is passed from death unto life. To him there is no condemnation; no one can lay anything to his charge; he is accepted in the Beloved; Christ lived and died for him, and now he lives and shall be glorified through and with Jesus. All his trespasses are freely forgiven and eternally forgotten. God has cast all our sins behind His back, and now He pronounces us just. Let us approach God, believing that He has justified us; and let us look forward and rejoice that the Judge of all the earth will declare us righteous. *Who shall lay anything to our charge?* It is God that justifies. *Who is he that condemns?* It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. My soul, look to Jesus, to His perfect work and present intercession, and there see thy salvation and find peace.

Turn then, my soul, unto thy rest,
Lean only on thy great High Priest;
He gives thee liberty:
Trust only in His precious blood;
Now fear no more the wrath of God,
Since Jesus died for thee.

June 20
EVENING

"The Lord's portion is His people" Deut 32:9

"JACOB IS THE LOT OF HIS INHERITANCE." We are in the place of Jacob. Are you grateful? We are filled with gratitude and joy when we say, *"The Lord is my portion:"* but it fills us with wonder and astonishment to read, *"The Lord's portion is His people."* He is so great and they are so insignificant; He is so holy and they are so polluted; He is so glorious and they are so mean. But He chose them in preference to others, when all lay before His eye. He redeemed them when enslaved and alienated from Him. He claimed them when held fast by their fearsome foe. He possesses and enjoys them as the objects of His love. He inhabits them as His temple, He protects them as His children, and He will dignify them in heaven for ever. They are the Lord's inheritance, His vineyard, His garden. Think, believer, of the honour conferred upon you, in calling you the Lord's portion! Once a wandering sheep but now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your soul. Angels are never called His portion or His jewels, but you are. Walk as the Lord's chosen bride, who is going home to be eternally united to her beloved Bridegroom. It is by favour that you are so distinguished.

Jesus my Lord will love me forever,
From Him no pow'r of evil can sever;
He gave His life to ransom my soul -
Now I belong to Him!
Now I belong to Jesus,
Jesus belongs to me -
Not for the years of time alone,
But for eternity!

June 21
MORNING

"How is it that ye have no faith?" Mk 4:40

JESUS SAID, "PEACE, BE STILL." *And the wind ceased.* Our Lord is able. He is worthy of our trust. He dispels our fears. Where there is little faith there are many fears. The disciples were filled with alarm and Jesus inquires, *"How is it that ye have no faith?"* May not our heavenly Father often address us in the same language: *"How is it that ye give no credit to my word? How is it that ye place no dependence upon my person, character and faithfulness? How is it that ye have no confidence in my power, presence, and love? How is it that ye do not expect my help and look for my supplies? Have I not made promises which are plain, positive, and sure? Have I not fulfilled my promises again and again? Have I not summoned witnesses to attest the truth of my word? Have I not promised you my Holy Spirit? Have I not pledged my holiness? Have I not given my Son for you and to you? Have I not appeared for you in every past difficulty? How is it, then, that ye have no faith?"* Beloved, let us humble ourselves before God. Let us plead guilty of indulging in unbelief and plead for faith. Let us look to God in every place and in everything. Let us trust Him when we cannot trace Him.

Why should my soul indulge complaints
And yield to dark despair?
The least of all my Father's saints
Are safe beneath His care;
Dear Lord, increase my faith in Thee
Till I Thy face in glory see.

June 21
EVENING

"For with the Lord there is mercy" Ps 130:7

"WITH HIM IS PLENTEOUS REDEMPTION." Mercy is of the Lord. His mercy never fails. Plenteous mercy dwells in God. It is one of His perfections. The exercise of it is His delight. There is mercy with the Lord in all His fulness; He never was more merciful than now, nor He ever will be. There is mercy with the Lord in all its tenderness: He is full of compassion, His fond feelings are exercised for us, His tender mercies are over us. There is mercy with Him in all its variety, meet for every case. Here is mercy that receives sinners, mercy that restores backsliders, mercy that surrounds believers. Here is the mercy that pardons sin, that introduces to the enjoyment of all gospel privileges, and that blesses the praying soul far beyond expectations. With the Lord there is plenteous mercy: He loves to display it, He is ready to impart it, He has determined to exalt and glorify it. There is mercy with the Lord; this should encourage the miserable sinner to approach Him; this informs the fearful, they need bring nothing to induce him to bless them; this calls upon backsliders to return to Him; and this is calculated to cheer the weary and worn believer, under all his troubles and distresses. Look to the Lord, for He is good; *His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations.*

Believer, on the Lord recline.
His mercy's boundless and divine!
See from the cross how wide it flows,
Beyond the bound of all thy woes!

June 22
MORNING

"God is faithful" 1 Cor 10:13

OUR LORD IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOREVER. He changes not. This is the believer's complete assurance; without the Lord, his comforts would droop and hope would crumble to the dust. We are at times shaken to pieces by unbelief, and filled with tormenting doubts. We feel nothing of the presence, power, or comforts of the Holy Spirit; faith, hope, and love seem to be quite extinguished. We have no power, and scarcely any inclination to pray; we feel only hardness, fretfulness, and misery. We are tempted by Satan and harassed with tormenting thoughts, so that we feel tired of this miserable life. But God is faithful, He never fails us, but appears again and again, restoring us to peace, joy, and satisfaction; and our most miserable times are often followed by unspeakable joys. The Scriptures are opened to our understanding, the promises are applied to our souls, and we are filled with the comforts of the Holy Spirit. Then our souls bow before God in contrition and holy penitence; we crumble to dust before Him, and can only admire and adore the riches of free and sovereign grace. Beloved, in the darkest night, remember, *"God is always faithful."*

He will not His great self deny;
A God of truth can never lie:
True to His word, God gave His Son
To die for crimes which men had done:
Blest pledge! He never will revoke
A single promise He has spoke.

June 22
EVENING

"Holding forth the word of life" Phi 2:16

"THE WORD OF TRUTH, THE GOSPEL OF YOUR SALVATION:" it must be held forth and held high, for without the word there is no life. That life is in the promise and in the person and work of Christ. It presents life as God's free gift to the condemned and guilty. It is employed to produce life through the power of the Holy Spirit. The life which it reveals, presents, and produces, stands in the favour of God, in union to the person of Christ, in the possession of the Spirit, in fellowship with the fountain of life, in freedom from all condemnation, and in a title to eternal glory. This gospel is entrusted to us; it is entrusted to us for others, and we are to hold it forth as a light in a dark place, as food for hungry sinners, as pardon for condemned criminals, and a rule for quickened souls. It is to be held forth in the public ministry, by a holy lifestyle, and by every possible means. Beloved, let us view the gospel as *"the word of life."* Let us ask ourselves, are we holding it forth as we should? Let us hold forth this *word of life* by speaking, by writing, by purchasing and distributing little works which have been printed for the purpose, and by assisting those who have consecrated their time and talents to the work.

O come, let us with grateful heart,
In Gospel harvest have a part;
Our tithes and offerings gladly bring,
To aid the kingdom of our King.

June 23
MORNING

"What do these Hebrews here?" 1 Sam 29:3

"THE PRINCES OF THE PHILISTINES FAVOUR THEE NOT." It was an ungodly and unwholesome association. David and his men were among the Philistines' army: this was decidedly wrong; it is always wrong when God's people unite with those in churches belonging within the World Council of Churches contrary to His holy word. We may ask, *"What do these Christians here?"* What do they, joining with the world? Our Master has told them, *"Come out and be separate!"* What do they, seeking ecumenical union? He has said, *"Arise ye, and depart, this is not your rest."* What do they, leaving the path of duty, or by their presence sanctioning sin? He has said, *"Be ye holy, for I am holy."* *What do they on Satan's ground? In the enemy's ranks? Do they intend to leave Jesus, and join the world? Are they tired of His company, set against His word, and determined to throw off His yoke? Do they intend to share in what they have proclaimed as the sinner's doom; the frown of Jesus, the wrath of God, and the slavery of Satan? What do they here?* Their conduct is unnatural, degrading and traitorous. Beloved, you should keep the company of Jesus, walk with spiritual persons in Bible-believing fundamental churches, and keep yourselves unspotted from false Christians, false prophets, tongues speakers, miracle workers and faith healers and compromising new evangelicals.

Ye tempting sweets forbear,
Ye dearest idols fall;
My love ye must not share,
Jesus shall have it all;
Aid me, dear Saviour, set me free,
And I will all resign for Thee.

June 23
EVENING

"The righteous shall flourish as a branch"

Prov 11:28

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS OF GOD. Believers are justified by the faith of Christ. To them the Lord has brought forth His righteousness; in them the Lord has put His Holy Spirit. They are just before God in Jesus, and they are consistent before men, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness to the praise of His glory. They are compared to a branch which is united to and forms part of the parent tree. So are they united to Jesus and one with Him. All their support is from Him and they derive all their supplies from His fulness. He is the source of their life, beauty, and fruitfulness. Apart from Him they are barren, withered, and dead. He supplies them secretly, as the tree does the branch with sap; He sheds on them the dew of His grace, and the showers of His blessing. In consequence of this they grow, flourish, and bear fruit. He prunes them by afflictions, but it is only that they may bring forth more fruit. Autumnal winds may strip them, and wintry frosts may lay them bare, but their life is in the root, hid with Christ in God. See, beloved, the effect of union to Christ: we flourish. This is the proof of a righteous state. *Are you bearing fruit for the Lord?*

The trees of righteousness shall rise,
Watered each moment from above;
And bear the fruits of paradise,
The glorious fruits of faith and love.

June 24
MORNING

"Ye are a chosen generation" 1 Pet 2:9

"I HAVE CHOSEN YOU OUT OF THE WORLD," even from before the foundation of the world. This is God's election. Election is by the almighty purpose of God; it flows not from the will of man, but from the unalterable decree of the Most High. Every believer is a chosen vessel. The church had its origin in Jehovah's eternal election. Election flows from love; it is the exercise of God's sovereignty; it secures man's salvation and God's glory. It injures none, but it pours incalculable blessings upon thousands. It was the act of God before time. He chose us in Christ our Head; it was of pure grace; it was to holiness. We were chosen to be redeemed from death, purified from sin, separated from the world, devoted to God, and raised to a state of oneness with Jehovah. Being chosen of God, we choose God in return. He chose us to be His people, we choose Him to be our God. He chose us to be the beloved bride of Jesus, and we choose Jesus to be our beloved Bridegroom. His election is the cause, our choice is the effect. His choice preceded ours; or else we had chosen death, in the error of our ways. Beloved, if we are the elect of God, we are holy; we are in union with Jesus. Let us endeavour to prove and enjoy this election.

All the elected train
Were chosen in their Head,
To all eternal good,
Before the worlds were made;
Chosen to know the Prince of Peace,
And taste the riches of His grace.

June 24
EVENING

"Lead me to the rock" Ps 61:2

"FOR THOU HAST BEEN A SHELTER ... AND A STRONG TOWER." Thou art my God, and the rock of my salvation. That rock was Christ. He was first promised, then prefigured, and then manifested. He is the smitten rock which supplies His thirsty ones; the rock of ages which sustains His feeble ones; the great rock which revives His weary ones; the high rock which protects His hunted ones; and the cleft rock which hides His timid and fearful ones. In this rock we are safe. From this rock we can see the land which is far off. By this rock we are sheltered from the storm, and screened from the scorching sun. We often wander from it. At a distance we learn its value and sigh for the privilege it confers. But wherever we may be it is accessible to us. Yet we need a guide to conduct us and a friend to assist us. Then let us determine with the Psalmist, however far off we may be: *"From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee; when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I."* Jesus is all we need. He has all we can possibly want. Prayer is always allowed, approved, encouraged, rewarded. Led to him, we shall be raised above our fears, above our foes, and above our expectations.

When sorely afflicted, and ready to faint,
Before my Redeemer, I'll spread my complaint:
In every new trial, to Him will I cry,
Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.

June 25
MORNING

"What manner of persons ought ye to be?" 2 Pet 3:11

"FOR OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN." God's people are in the world but not of the world. They are different: they are expected to be different from the world; they profess to have another Spirit in them and to be the sons of God. They believe the present world system is to be dissolved. They look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. They are strangers and pilgrims here. What manner of persons then ought we to be? Surely we ought to set light by the things of time and aim at the things which are eternal. We ought to be watchful, prayerful, diligent, holy, patient, thankful, and expectant. We ought to be contented with such things as we have; to give all diligence to prove our title, make sure of our election, and rejoice in our destination. We ought to walk as Jesus walked, to live as Paul lived, dying daily to self and the world. Let us ask this morning, *"Do we believe that present things will soon be dissolved?"* If so, are we acting according to the same belief? Are we laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven? Are we doing good that we may be rich in good works? Is the coming of Jesus the object of our desire and hope? *What manner of person are you?*

Then let's await the sound
That shall our souls release;
And labour to be found
Of Him in spotless peace,
In perfect holiness renewed,
Adorned with Christ and meet for God.

June 25
EVENING

"Ye are Christ's" 1 Cor 3:23

"WE BEING MANY ARE ONE BODY IN CHRIST." And every one members of another. These are the saints whom He has set apart for himself, those who worship Him as their God and Saviour and none other. They believe on His name, surrender at His call, and submit to His will. All Christians, though of low status, though compassed about with infirmities, though often cast down through doubts and fears, they are Christ's and in consequence His Father is theirs, His Spirit is theirs, His righteousness is theirs, His atonement is theirs, His peace is theirs, His wealth is theirs, Himself and all He has is theirs. If they are Christ's, He will defend them as His own, support them as His children, and cherish them as His bride. If we are Christ's, then we should entirely listen to Him when He speaks, cheerfully obey Him when He commands, refuse to believe anything that may be suggested against Him by Satan or men. Always own Him as our Lord and Master. Frequently visit Him at the throne of grace, at His table, and in His house. Live upon Him now, in hope of living with Him for ever and ever. *Reader, have you good evidence that you are Christ's?*

All things I want, but One is nigh,
My want of all things to supply;
Pardon and peace and liberty,
My Lord gives me abundantly.

June 26
MORNING

"My grace is sufficient for thee" 2 Cor 12:9

"FOR MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS." In Christ our Lord we have the *uplook*, much better than any *outlook*. You need look to no other quarter for help, relief, or comfort. Simply look up! Jesus assures you that *His grace is sufficient*. You are welcome to it. You are exhorted to have it, to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. It is sufficient to support you under every tribulation, to help you over every difficulty, to strengthen you for every duty, to mortify every lust, and to fill you with all joy and peace in the Lord. His grace is free, it is durable, it brings salvation. Look not at difficulties, dangers, or thy own weakness; but look to the free, powerful, and promised grace of Jesus. Go to His throne of grace this morning on purpose to receive grace for this day; go everyday, and whenever you feel weak, timid, or cast down. His grace was found sufficient for Paul, for the martyrs and saints, in the deepest trials, and it will be found sufficient for thee. He says, *"I am the Lord thy God; open wide thy mouth, and I will fill it. Come boldly to the throne of grace, that ye may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Everyone that asketh receiveth."* O Jesus, make good Thy word in me!

Thy strength in weakness is displayed;
My soul this truth can relish now:
A worm upon Thy power is stayed;
The weaker he, the stronger Thou:
My hope, my joy, is this alone -
My strength is Christ, the mighty One.

June 26
EVENING

"I am the way." Jn 14:6

"NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME." Many people desire to go to heaven, and many ways are presented. But not all lead to heaven. Our Lord says, *"I am the way."* We are at a distance from God: as sinners, there is no way in which we can approach God with acceptance. But Jesus, by becoming our Mediator, opened the way to the Father. He is the only way no matter what men may say, no matter what many churches preach today, that all faiths lead to God: God's truth does not change with time. Jesus is the way from a state of sin to a state of holiness; from the dread of hell, to the enjoyment of God's eternal love. He is the only way to reconciliation to God, acceptance with God, enjoyment of God, and to the presence and glory of God. As the way He is open to all sinners who are willing to come to Him, safe for all who believe on Him, and the only way of escape from the wrath to come. *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way.* Now the Holy Spirit shows us the way. We enter upon it by faith. We have to travel along the way with patience and everyone that travels with patience, arrives at the end of it in safety. Beloved, the ground on which we stand is good, the way in which we walk is one, and the end of the journey is everlasting life. *Jesus is that way, the only way.*

Thou art the way - to Thee alone,
From sin and death we flee;
And he who would the Father seek,
Must seek Him, Lord, in Thee.

June 27
MORNING

"Remember Lot's wife." Lk 17:32

"ESCAPE FOR THY LIFE; LOOK NOT BEHIND THEE." Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt, a sad monument and a perpetual warning to doubters. She received the angels, and hospitably entertained them; she believed their message, and prepared to act upon it: she obeyed their command, and left Sodom and her children behind her. She forsook the ungodly, and went in company with the saints; yet her heart remained in the city, and she looked back. She was deprived of life, for too highly prizing its comforts. She was cut off by a visible display of God's judgment. The situation in which she died is instructive: it was not in Sodom but on the plain; she escaped one judgment but was overtaken by another. She was left as a sad monument and testimony of God's jealousy, and displeasure against sin. Here is a warning to the covetous whose hearts are set on things below; to the self-willed who trifle with God's commands; and to the undecided who stand between Sodom and Zoar. God will be honoured by our obedience or by our sufferings. It is dangerous to trifle with the least of God's commands. We may overcome one temptation and yet fall by another. Let us examine ourselves: are our hearts detached from the world? Be not high-minded but fear. *Remember Lot's wife.*

Waiting for our Lord's returning,
Be it ours His word to keep;
Let our lamps be brightly burning;
Let us watch, while others sleep;
We're no longer of the night;
We are children of the light.

June 27
EVENING

"My beloved is mine and I am His." Song 2:16

THE BOND OF LOVE IS ENDURING AND STRONG. This is the language of holy assurance. Christ is given by the Father to sinners; He is God's unspeakable gift. He is presented in the gospel to every one who hears or reads it, without money and without price. He is accepted and received by faith. The reception of Christ is confirmed by a serious commitment; the believer commits himself to Christ and to Him alone. It is confirmed by holy fellowship. He that claims Christ, lives in communion with Him. *"My beloved is all to me."* He is the Saviour in whom I believe and trust, the husband whom I reverence and love, the Lord whom I adore and obey, the portion I cherish, and the beloved One upon whom my heart and affections are centred. *"I am my beloved's."* He chose me, or I had never chosen Him. He redeemed me, or I had still been a slave. He called me, or I had still been wandering from God. He sanctified me, or I had still been vile and polluted. He manifested Himself to me, or I had never seen His glory. *"I am to my beloved, His sister-spouse, His portion, His delight, His choice out of all the world, His glorious crown out of the spoils He has won."*

Jesus my love, my life, my peace,
Jesus is mine, and I am His;
His bride, His dear bought property,
Who loved and gave Himself for me.

June 28
MORNING

"The Lord will be the hope of His people" Joel 3:16

"SO SHALL YE KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD." In God only is our sure hope in a world of uncertainty. We know not what a day may bring forth: we are born to trouble; unexpected trials may befall us anytime; but our God is our hope. He is the refuge to which we may always repair and find safety; the fulness from which we shall receive a plentiful supply. His oath, His promises, His covenant character, and the blood of Jesus, lay a firm foundation for our hope; and His gospel warrants us to hope in Him at all times, for all things. Therefore, come what may, we can have no reason to be disconsolate; we can have no reason to fear; our God is our hope. May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us gird up the loins of our minds, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the appearing of the Lord Jesus. Let us look for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. As Jesus is our hope, let His glory be our aim, and His service our delight.

In Him I hope, in Him I trust,
His blood-stained cross is all my boast;
Through troops of foes He leads me on
To vict'ry and the victor's crown.

June 28
EVENING

"Knowing the time" Rom 13:11

"IT IS HIGH TIME TO AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP," and to face reality. We cannot know the future, but we may know the present. Indeed, we ought to know it. What is its character? It is the time of Satan's power; he is active, restless, and determined. It is the time of the world's danger; it is asleep, or deluded, or enraged against the cause of God. It is the time of God's forbearance; justice now waits, grace sits enthroned, mercy kindly warns, and it is called the accepted time, the day of salvation. It is the time of the Church's duty, for it is working time, it is evening time, and precious time. It is a singular time: we have such facilities for doing good, so many calls to action, so many encouragements to persevere, and our responsibility is so deep and solemn. Let us therefore know the time. We may learn its character, partly from God's word, and partly from observation. Let us improve our knowledge and turn it to good account by stirring up others who are drowsy, and let us embrace every opportunity of doing good ourselves. Let us employ every talent and improve every opportunity to the utmost for the gospel. We should be wakeful, watchful, energetic and urgent. *The time to serve the Lord is now.*

Divine Instructor, grace bestow,
Teach me the present time to know;
Help me each talent to improve,
And serve my God in faith and love.

June 29
MORNING

"My son, give me thine heart" Prov 23:26

"LET THINE EYES OBSERVE MY WAYS," *but what I ask is your heart.* These are loving and inviting words. Beloved, the Most High presents Himself as a suitor this morning. He asks for thy heart. It is His workmanship, He wants it to be His habitation. He made it by His power, He wants to rule it by His grace. He will not be satisfied with anything else. If He has the heart, He has all; if He has not the heart, He has nothing. Let us surrender our hearts to Him this morning, and every morning. Let us ask Him to sanctify them by His grace, to fill them with His Spirit; to engrave on them His image, to keep them by His power, and to fill them with the fruits of holiness. If the heart is given to God, the life will be according to His word. If He rule in us, we shall walk as Jesus walked. If our walk is not holy, our religion is but a form. *"He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."* O how awful, to think and profess that we are the Lord's, and yet to have the heart under the influence of sin, Satan, and the world! Jesus says, *"My son, give me thine heart."* Let our reply be, *"Lord, take my heart, reign and rule in it forever."*

O Jesus! bleeding Lamb of God,
Come, wash me in Thy cleansing blood;
Take my poor heart and let it be
For ever closed to all but Thee;
Unloose my stammering tongue to tell
Thy love immense, unsearchable.

June 29
EVENING

"Christ in you the hope of glory" Col 1:27

"YE SHALL RECEIVE A CROWN OF GLORY THAT FADETH NOT AWAY." This is the Christian's hope and glory at the Lord's appearing. But the nature of that glory is yet unknown. Its greatness is at present inconceivable. It is said to comprise an inheritance, a kingdom, a crown, gladness and exceeding joy. It is a crown of glory, a weight of glory, eternal glory, the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is glory clothing us, glory in us. It will robe the body; it will fill the soul. It includes purity and power, wisdom and knowledge. It is waiting to be revealed. We expect this. This hope or expectation originates in grace; it is produced by the Holy Spirit, springs from faith, rests on the promise and oath of God, awaits God's time, and purifies its possessor. The evidence or proof of this hope is, *Christ in us*. He dwells in His people by His word, by His grace, and by His Spirit. He dwells in us as a King in His kingdom, ruling; as a master in His family, providing; as an owner in His habitation, claiming; as the sap in the tree, supplying; as God in His temple, to be adored. If Christ dwells in you, He dwells in your thoughts, desires, affections, enjoyments and aspirations.

Jesus, in me for ever dwell;
Thyself, the gift unspeakable:
The hope of heavenly bliss impart,
The glorious earnest in my heart.

June 30
MORNING

"I am Thine, save me." Ps 119:94

"FOR I HAVE SOUGHT THY PRECEPTS." We profess to be the Lord's. We are not our own. We belong not to the world. We are no longer the servants of sin. We are solely and entirely the Lord's, having willingly given up ourselves into His hands, to be saved by His grace, devoted to His service, and employed for His glory. We are His children by grace and adoption; His servants by voluntary engagement; His soldiers by public profession; and His spouse by affectionate union. Being the Lord's, we may expect His working on our behalf, and we should call on Him and plead with Him in all straits and situations. He will save us. He will deliver us. Let us therefore lay our case before Him, and ardently expect Him to glorify His grace in us. Let us walk worthy of God as beloved children and live under the impression that He will make all grace to abound towards us, so that we having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work. His mercy is great unto the heavens and His faithfulness unto the clouds; and He never said to the seed of Jacob, *"Seek ye me"* in vain. But He says, *"Seek ye me, and ye shall live."*

I am Thine, O Lord -
I have heard Thy voice,
And it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith
And be closer drawn to Thee.
Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To Thy precious, bleeding side.

June 30
EVENING

"Partakers of the benefit" 1 Tim 6:2

"BECAUSE THEY ARE FAITHFUL AND BELOVED." They have believed the gospel, and are partakers of God's benefit, God's greatest and best gift. It benefits every person who receives it. It benefits his intellect, informing it. It benefits his heart, sanctifying it. It benefits his conscience, giving it repose. It benefits his temper, controlling and sweetening it. It benefits his life, preventing many evils and directing to the attainment and possession of many blessings. It benefits the family where it rules. It makes the master kind, the mistress considerate, the servants attentive and industrious, the parents exemplary, and the children obedient. It benefits the commonwealth in which it works. It suggests good laws, requires good government, and makes good subjects. *Have we partaken of this benefit? What is intended by this?* It is to perceive its divinity, to approve its doctrines, to receive its blessing, to submit to its precepts, to observe its ordinances, to test its joys, and to employ it for every useful purpose. Some hear of it, others listen to it, others taste and disapprove of it, some partake and are benefited by it. In their state, they are justified, in their character, sanctified, and in their circumstances, happy, for *they are partakers of the same benefit which flows from the same Saviour and Lord.*

Lord, grant this benefit to me,
And let me feel, and taste, and see
What glories in Thy Gospel dwell
Which saves believing souls from hell!

July 1
MORNING

"The Lord thy God is a merciful God" Deut 4:31

GOD'S MERCY ENDURETH FOREVER. It is no uncommon thing to mistake the character of our God, and conceive of Him as unmerciful, and so dishonour His name, and distress our own soul. It is plainly and plentifully declared in the divine word, that our God is merciful, and the same is amply proved in nature, providence, and redemption. It is to be firmly believed and constantly remembered, especially when burdened with guilt, or at the throne confessing sin; when enduring trials, or pleading with God for blessings; when performing duties, or suffering privations; when experiencing misery, or comforting mourners. *"Our God is a merciful God."* But mercy and holiness are united in His nature, word, and ways. He is not implacable or difficult to please, but He should be daily loved and constantly trusted. His mercy is the sun that enlightens, the ocean that supplies, and the army that guards us. But for His mercy we should soon sink into despair, or run into desperation; but now we may trust and not be afraid, walk with Him in peace, and rejoice in Him day by day.

Merciful God, Thyself proclaim,
In my sin-burdened breast;
Mercy is Thy delightful name,
Which suits a sinner best.
Thy mighty mercy now make known
In me, and claim me for Thy own.

July 1
EVENING

"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities" Ps 103:3

WE DAILY NEED TO BE PARDONED, FOR WE DAILY SIN. Our sins are of an aggravated character. They are the sins of a ransomed captive against the One who redeemed him at the price of blood. They are the sins of a peculiarly favoured servant, who lives in his master's house, sits at his master's table, and owes his all to his master's liberality. Against such a master has he committed the offence. They are the sins of a child against the wisest, kindest, and best of fathers. Our faults are many, frequently repeated, and inexcusable. Yet the Lord forgives all our iniquities. He pardons fully, freely, consistently. Every pardon is at the cost of the blood of Jesus. When He pardons, He secures hatred to sin, sorrow for sin, and a departure from sin. He pardons like a father; He does so tenderly, frequently. David, who bore this testimony to God's pardoning mercy, was no common sinner. He had been guilty of adultery, deception, murder. He caused others to sin, charged it upon providence, and slept under the guilt of it for months. *Reader, are you pardoned? Are you guilty? Are you burdened by unforgiven iniquities?*

Mercy there was great and grace was free,
Pardon there was multiplied to me,
There my burdened soul found liberty
At Calvary.

July 2
MORNING

"He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye"
Zech 2:8

GOD'S LOVE TO HIS PEOPLE IS UNSPEAKABLE. They had lately been visited with sore judgments, reduced to great straits and appeared to be despised and neglected of God. They had only just escaped from the enemy's land, and returned with weeping and supplication to their own country, like brands plucked from the burning. Now the Lord says, *"He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of my eye."* How wonderful are the ways of God! As the wise physician, He will touch to cure; but He will not allow others to touch to hurt. Like the tender mother, He can correct His children Himself, but will not allow others to do so. How close is the union and peculiar the affection! How tender the mercy and consistent the care! How ample the provision and happy they are! Beloved, be encouraged under all your persecutions and trials; be comforted in all your afflictions; you are as near and dear to Jehovah as the apple of His eye; and you are hid under the shadow of His wings. Holy Spirit, help me daily to realize this truth!

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;
Alive in Him, my living Head;
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim a place thro' Christ my own.

July 2
EVENING

"The night cometh" Jn 9:4

NIGHT IS THE EMBLEM OF DEATH. There is generally something dreary and gloomy in the night, as there is in death. When death comes, all our opportunities of doing good in this world are over; let us therefore seize every opportunity to do good and improve the present. When death comes, our work should have been done; if not we regret. Let us therefore work while it is day; when death comes, we must bid our friends farewell; let us therefore treat them very warmly as those that must soon leave us. When death comes we shall go home to rest; our bodies return to the ground, and our souls fly to the presence of Jesus, and enjoy sweet repose. *"The night cometh!"* It is not far off; it may overtake us suddenly; we are warned to be ready. Let us endeavour as believers in Jesus, to redeem the time and be ready for the night, having our work all done, our limbs weary and worn, our appetite for heavenly things sharpened, and feeling glad to go home. Welcome! sweet sleep, and shortly, the morning of resurrection! Then shall we arise refreshed, renewed, glorious, immortal, in the presence of the King!

O glorious hour! O bless'd abode!
Welcome the day I'll be with God;
And flesh and sin no more control
The inner longings of my soul.

July 3
MORNING

"Their heart is divided" Hos 10:2

"MY SON, GIVE ME THINE HEART!" God demands the whole heart and His people profess to surrender it. But have we not reason to fear that many are guilty on this point? They appear so undecided that we must think that the heart is divided between God and the world, between sin and holiness, between truth and error, or between Christ and self. What are the symptoms of a divided heart? Habitual cleaving to the world, being satisfied with a mere form of godliness; backwardness to examine ourselves, dislike to plain, close, soul-searching, rousing preaching, and putting eternal things to a distance. *Beloved, how is it with you?* God rejects the half or divided heart; He will have all or none. *Do you fail on this point?* There is a remedy: thoroughly examine your heart. Condemn whatever you detect amiss in it. Take it to Jesus and beseech Him to heal it. Expose it to the keen edge of God's word. Endeavour to keep up a constant sense of the presence of God. Meditate much on eternal realities. As the heart is, so will the life be; and so thy comfort and thy peace. Prayer: *O Lord, unite my heart to fear Thy name!*

Let me according to Thy word,
From Thee a contrite heart receive,
Which grieves at having grieved its Lord,
And never can itself forgive;
A heart Thy joys and griefs to feel,
A heart which bears the Spirit's seal.

July 3
EVENING

"He retaineth not His anger for ever" Mic 7:18

"IT IS A FEARFUL THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD." For the wrath of God is dreadful. But this is only directed against His obstinate and determined enemies. The anger of the Lord is distressing; this is directed against His people for a time. Each of us may say, *"Thou wast angry with me."* Let us look at this solemn fact: God had been angry. The cause of His anger is sin. The object with which He is angry is His child. The nature of His anger is paternal. The effects of His anger are various: sometimes it affects our temporal things; it always enlarges our spiritual comfort and joy. His anger is transient: it endures but for a moment; in His favour is life. But when God is angry with us, every hour seems a day, and every day a month. But it is cheering to know that He retains not His anger forever. He looks to the atonement: He listens to the cry of the penitent one; love works in His heart; He remembers His covenant, and He proves that He delights in mercy. Wrath will burn for ever against impenitent sinners, being fed with the fuel of sin. Anger against a child soon burns out, quenched by the streams of paternal love.

He passes all our follies by,
And all our sins forgives;
His wrath doth in a moment die,
His love forever lives.

July 4
MORNING

"He shall testify of me" Jn 15:26

THE HOLY SPIRIT BEARS TESTIMONY FOR JESUS. He has done so in the word: there Christ is set forth in His glory and grace. He testifies of Jesus by the preaching of the gospel: for we preach Christ crucified, and are determined, under divine teaching, to know nothing else among men. He testifies of Jesus to the heart: then we see His loveliness, behold His glory, pant for an interest in His salvation, and sigh for union with His person. Then we trust in His promises, accept His invitation, rejoice in His name, and melt in love and gratitude before Him. We have then no doubt about His divinity, suitability, or love; all we want is to enjoy, possess, and glorify Him. Every idol falls before Him; every grace springs up and is in exercise upon Him; we love Him, believe Him, hope in Him, mourn for Him, are humbled before Him, and are zealous for Him; our language is, *"None but Christ for me!"* O for the Spirit to testify of Jesus to our hearts and consciences, this day and everyday, especially on our last day; and to bear witness with our hearts that we *are the sons of God!*

Saviour, I Thy word believe:
Mine unbelief remove;
Thy testifying Spirit give
The unction from above;
Shew me, dear Lord, how good Thou art,
And fix Thy witness in my heart.

July 4
EVENING

"Thy lovingkindness is better than life" Ps 63:3

GOD'S LOVINGKINDNESS EXCEEDS THE GOOD LIFE. Initially it seems to mean life under the most favourable circumstances: a life of ease, honour, plenty. Or social life at its best and better; as a merchant prospering in his business, a student excelling at his books, a monarch glorious on his throne; it is life surrounded by all that is desirable. But there is more to God's lovingkindness. It is His love displaying itself in kind words, kind acts, discoveries of His divine excellencies, feasting the soul with spiritual delights. This is better than life, for it bestows greater blessings, it confers higher honours, it imparts sweeter pleasures, it raises higher expectations, and it surrounds us with greater security. It is better for it is more lasting; it is more suited to the nature of the soul; it is truly glorious. It is unmixed good, unfading pleasure, inexhaustible wealth. Well, then, may the Psalmist prefer it to life, and well may he say, *"My lips shall praise Thee."* Can you not also say, *"I will commend Thee in conversation. I will give Thee thanks in my devotions. I will praise Thee for its discovery, for my present enjoyment of it, and for the prospect of eternally enjoying it"*? *For Thy lovingkindness is better than life.*

God's love, as the day is dying,
Lights the candles of the skies,
From His unseen source, supplying,
Till the morning sun shall rise,
Light to those in darkness groping,
That they may, with true delight,
See His presence, and keep hoping,
As He guides them thro' the night.

July 5
MORNING

"I know their sorrows" Ex 3:7

THE LORD KNOWS ALL. He is acquainted with all the sorrows of His people; they do not suffer unnoticed; He sympathises with them, and will sanctify sorrow to them. Israel suffered but Jesus sympathised. *"In all their affliction He was afflicted; and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."* Beloved, He knows our sorrows, and He is our Comforter. Let us lay them before Him; let us plead with Him; He will be gracious unto us at the voice of our cry; when He hears, He will answer. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He once suffered; He was *"The Man of sorrows"*; and He is able to succour us who suffer now. His sorrows are ended and so will ours be soon; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. We shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. We shall enter into His joy, be filled with His love, and so be for ever with Him. O Lord Jesus! suffer me not to dwell on my sorrows, but by Thy Spirit direct my heart into Thy love!

"Man of Sorrows!" what a name
For the Son of God, who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood -
Sealed my pardon with His blood:
Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

July 5
EVENING

"Faint yet pursuing" Jud 8:4

GIDEON'S SOLDIERS WERE FOOTSORE AND FAINT. Yet they were the Lord's selected host, and they were stedfastly following their Captain. But from their exertions, their conquests, and the want of food, they were faint. They were faint near the Jordan, where God had done such great things for their forefathers, and just as their victory was being accomplished. All this is true of the Lord's people now. Though the Lord's beloved ones, the soldiers of the cross, from the burdens they have to bear, from the trials they have to endure, from the conflicts they are engaged in, and from the want of feeding on spiritual provisions, they become faint, dejected, and dispirited. *Still these men were pursuing.* They did not give up, nor give way to carnal reason, which may have suggested: *"If God were with us, he would surely not allow us to feel thus faint."* They pursued their vanquished foes in obedience to God's commands, encouraged by His promises. Brethen, let us imitate these worthy men. *Do you feel faint? Does it affect your prayer? your labour? Still pursue! Pursue, because God is with you.*

Soldiers of Christ! arise,
And put your armour on;
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through His eternal Son;
Strong in the Lord of host,
And in His mighty power;
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

July 6
MORNING

"God is with us" Isa 8:10

THE LORD'S PEOPLE ARE NEVER ALONE. Therefore they should never feel lonely. God is with them as Observer; He notices every thought, word, and action; every trial, every foe, and every danger. He is with them as Father, loving and holding communion with them. He is with them as Lord of Hosts, having all the armies of earth and heaven under His direction to defend them. He is with them as Guide, to lead them; as Counsellor, to plead their cause; as Friend, to supply and comfort them; as Saviour, to deliver and succour them; and as a holy, sin-hating God. He is present with them to try them, to reprove them, to humble them, to preserve them, to comfort them, and to save them with an everlasting salvation. Beloved, let us remember that God is with us always, and in all places; this will check carelessness, prevent impatience, encourage prayerfulness, inspire fortitude, and increase diligence. If God is thus with us, He is all for us; and if God be for us, who can be against us? But do we so walk, as by our conduct to say, *"God is with us?"*

Be it my godly wisdom here
To serve the Lord with filial fear,
Gratefully keep His word;
True obedience may I display
By shunning every evil way,
And walking with the Lord.

July 6
EVENING

"Who healeth all thy diseases" Ps 103:3

THE LORD IS THE INFALLIBLE PHYSICIAN: He heals both body and soul. The patient is a believer. The cause of all disease and suffering is sin. The seat of the malady is in the heart. The nature of it is most loathsome and afflictive. It affects the memory, the affections, the conscience, the will, yea the whole man. We are all the subjects of this disease. We all suffer from it. No one can heal us but the Lord Jesus. He is the Great Physician; to Him we may repair and be restored to health. To encourage you to do so, look at His qualifications. He is infinitely wise, tender, and skilful. His experience is without parallel; and so is His success. The remedies He employs are His precious blood, His holy word, and His blessed Spirit. The mode of application is by afflictions, bereavements, convictions, and spiritual energy. He never failed in any case of effecting a cure. David's was a bad case, but he could say, *"He healeth all my diseases."* This testimony is personal, credible, undoubted. Sinner, thou art sick, mortally sick: go to Jesus! Backslider, thou art sick, go to Jesus! Believer, art thou not desiring perfect health? *Then go to Jesus this night with this prayer unto the Lord:*

Forgive, and make my nature whole,
My hateful maladies remove;
To perfect health restore my soul;
To beauteous holiness and love.

July 7
MORNING

"I will not remember thy sins" Isa 43:25

FEAR NOTHING BUT TO SIN! This should be every believer's motto. We have no reason to fear whether God will pardon and save us from our sins, if we believe in Jesus, confess and repent. He has promised, *"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."* He will not impute sin unto us; but He will impute righteousness, even the righteousness of Jesus, without works. He has made up His mind to glorify the riches of his grace, thus to display the wonders of His love. No sin shall be charged upon us, but He will blot them all out of His book, and banish them eternally from His mind. He will treat us as though we had not sinned, or rather as having received full satisfaction for all we have done amiss, and being infinitely delighted with our persons. If one sin were remembered and laid to our charge, we would be undone; but believing in Jesus, we are justified from all sins; we are saved from wrath, and are made *"the righteousness of God in Him."* This is godlike, glorious, divine! *When God forgives our sins, He also forgets!*

Crimes of such horror to forgive,
Such guilty erring worms to spare:
This is Thy grand prerogative;
And none shall in the honour share:
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

July 7
EVENING

"Let us not sleep as do others" 1 Thess 5:6

SLEEPERS, AWAKE! Sleep is here used in a figurative sense. The apostle does not refer to the repose of the body but to the state of the mind. He refers to a suspension of the energies in faith, prayer, and holy affection; an improper withdrawal from the scene of action; a state which is next to death. Others are asleep. Many professors are asleep. *"But let us not sleep as do others."* If we sleep, it is like sleeping on the plains of Waterloo, after that dreadful battle, among the wounded, the dying, and the dead. Or, asleep in a city infected with the plague, while we possess the remedy, which if applied, would heal the sick and infected. Or, in a land of slaves, while we have the act of emancipation in our pockets. Or, in a town of madmen, while we have the means of restoration to soundness of mind. Or, in a starving country, when we know where there is abundance of food. If we sleep, it is like sleeping on a harvest day, oblivious of the great day of opportunity. If we sleep, it is like the labourer sleeping in the harvest field, with the storm approaching, and his master's crops all exposed. Or, like the soldier sleeping on duty, while the foe is at the door. *Those who go to sleep in these situations are truly worthy of death, and no less.*

See professors round thee sleeping?
Rouse, my soul, awake, arise!
Watchfully Thy guardpost keeping,
Labour for the glorious prize.

July 8
MORNING

"Follow after charity" 1 Cor 14:1

CHARITY IS LOVE FROM GOD. What can be so worthy of the Christian's thought, care, and heart desire, as love? Love to God as the centre and source of all excellence; love to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, the personification of everything that is lovely; love to believers for His sake, and because they are His children and representatives; and love to sinners because He commands us. The law requires it, and the gospel, when applied by the power of the Holy Spirit produces it. Love is not in our hearts by nature; we are at enmity with God. Love cannot to be produced by human effort: it flows from grace. It is produced by the Holy Spirit. It is born of evangelical zeal. Its exercise is our happiness and our holiness. There is no real Christian faith without love; and only so much is true godliness as there is love. *Let us follow after charity.* Let us cultivate love to the Lord's people, for the Lord's sake; not merely those whom we see, who attend the same place of worship, who are our personal friends; this is the love of fellow members; but let us love all who love Jesus, though in some things they differ from us. *Finally, let us love even our enemies that we may be the children of our Father in heaven.*

The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star,
And reaches to the lowest hell;
O love of God how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall for evermore endure,
The saints' and angels' song.

July 8
EVENING

"He will turn again" Mic 7:19

"HOPE ONLY IN GOD." Here is hope expressed. But the Lord had turned away His face from His people. He was displeased. There were now no sweet visits, no love tokens, no intimate communion. But He threatens, He frowns, He smites. He shows His displeasure. He is angry but not wrathful. He has sworn that He will not be wroth with us. *"He will turn again."* Here confidence is expressed. He smites but to correct. He frowns but to bring us to repentance. *He will turn again* and look upon us, as He did on Peter when he denied the Lord, and brought him back with weeping and repentance. He will speak to us as he did to Mary, when he said, *"Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace."* *He will* smile away our fears, take us to his bosom, and reassure us of His love. *He will*, for He has promised to do so. *He will*, for He has always done so. *He will*, for His heart of love prompts Him to do so. *He will*, for He delighteth in mercy. Then let us mourn over our follies, but not despair of pardon. Let us confess our backslidings, and expect Him to return. Let us wait upon the Lord, who hideth Himself but for a time. Let us look for Him in love. *He will turn again.*

Saviour, while after Thee we mourn,
Thou wilt compassion shew;
In mercy to our souls return,
And all our sins subdue.

July 9
MORNING

"I will do all my pleasure" Isa 46:10

GOD'S PURPOSE STANDETH SURE. IT CANNOT BE FRUSTRATED. His holy will can never be disappointed: His will is law. His counsel must stand. He is in one mind and none can turn him. He takes pleasure in them that fear Him and in them that hope in His mercy. He chose them to salvation in Jesus according to the good pleasure of His will. He works in us to will, and to do, of His good pleasure. He will fulfill in us all the good pleasure of His will and the work of faith with power. He is pleased to save His people with an everlasting salvation. He is pleased with our obedience to His precepts. It is our Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom. He accomplishes the purposes of His will by angels; they are His ministers which do His pleasure; by men, good and bad; by Jesus Christ; the pleasure of the Lord prospers in His hand. For His pleasure all things are and were created; He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. Let us seek to be likeminded with our God; let us agree in all that please Him, and let us take pleasure in glorifying Him. If God does His pleasure our best interests are safe.

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm;
His power and wisdom will fulfil
The utmost counsel of His will.

July 9
EVENING

"I will be their God" Jer 32:38

GOD SPOKE FIRST TO ISRAEL. NOW HE SPEAKS TO US, THE SPIRITUAL ISRAEL. He speaks to all who are gathered to the Lord Jesus: to the penitent sinner, who is returning to God with weeping and supplication; to the one to whom the Lord gives a heart to know Him, and who trusts in His gracious word; to all true believers. What does this promise include? *"I will be their God,"* they shall own my authority, receive my word, bow at my throne, engage in my service, do my will, prefer me to all besides, make me the object of their trust, worship, and love, their God. *"I will be their God,"* and they shall have my wisdom to guide them, my power to protect them, my love to assure them, my mercy to save them, my holiness to sanctify them, and my Spirit to comfort them. As their God, I will be with them; I will be for them; I will be a Father to them. I will never fail them nor forsake them, but will do for them all I have promised in my word and confer upon them all I have provided in my covenant. Believer, see in this promise, God's greatest mercy: He gives you Himself to be your God. *If God is for us who can be against us?*

On God's promise my soul does lean,
Lightened from every care;
A pathway bright ahead is seen;
My God is with me there.

July 10
MORNING

"He that waiteth on his Master shall be honoured" Prov
27:18

"ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST." We have chosen to serve Him, because He chose to save us. He has given us the knowledge of salvation by the remission of our sins, that we might serve Him without fear, in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life. Our happiness is found in obeying our Master's word, and studying our Master's will. Let us wait on Him for the word of command, nor dare to proceed without it. Let us wait on Him for ability, to do and fulfil all His righteous will. Let us wait His time for every promised blessing, and continue looking in faith until we receive it. Let us wait at His table, and expect from Him a supply of all our needs, both spiritual and temporal. Let us wait on Him in private, and in public always follow Him faithfully. He will honour us, for He has said, *"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."* We shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free; and all such are free indeed. *This is the Master's promise to all who wait on Him in faith.*

Thy wisdom, Lord, on me bestow,
In any sin to have no part;
To stop the mouth of every foe,
By righteous life and sunlit heart;
Sure proofs of heavenly life to show,
How we should live on earth below.

July 10
EVENING

"Examine me, O Lord" Ps 26:2

"LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF, SAITH THE LORD." The Christian does so, but not satisfied with his own searching, he turns to the Lord and says, *"Examine me O Lord."* He is afraid of being deceived, for he knows that his heart is deceitful. He is really sincere. He desires to know the worst of his case, let it be ever so painful. He would have his heart right with God, therefore he comes to the light. This is proof of God's grace in his soul; for only those who are taught of God, cry, *"Examine me, O Lord."* *Beloved, is this your prayer tonight? Are you willing to be examined? Are you desirous that God should examine you? Are you crying, "Lord, examine my heart: am I a subject of thy grace? Examine my motives: are they pure and scriptural? Examine my actions: are they according to Thy word? Examine my objects: do I aim at Thy glory and the promotion of Thy cause?"* You see the prayer is for personal examination. *"Examine me."* It is for immediate examination: *now examine me.* None but an honest man will allow a thorough investigation into his affairs. And none but right-minded Christians will welcome the searching eye of God.

Search me, O God, and cleanse my heart;
Thy Spirit and Thy grace impart;
Save from deceit, from guile set free,
And let my heart Thy temple be.

July 11
MORNING

"The Lord will give strength unto His people" Ps 29:11

"GOD IS OUR STRENGTH." However fierce the war or sore the trial, we may be sure of this, that *"as our days, so shall our strength be."* God has promised and He will give. He gives because they are His people, as the Father to His children; because He has covenanted to do so, and He is faithful; lest their foes should triumph over them, for He has said, *"They shall overcome at the last."* He has raised their expectations and He will not disappoint them; He has commanded them to pray and He will not refuse their petitions. He will give strength sufficient, with perhaps nothing to spare, but suitable to their circumstances and wants. Has the Lord not pledged Himself to give strength to His people? yea, to be Himself their strength? Then let us fight courageously, look forward joyfully, bear every cross patiently, pray fervently, praise daily, and believe confidently. God hath spoken: saints in every age have found Him true and faithful, a promise-keeping God. Satan is a liar, a deceiver, a false witness against God. Let us therefore resist him, and he will flee from us. God is our refuge and strong tower in every trial. *The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

Give me Thy strength, O God of pow'r!
Then let winds blow and thunders roar,
Thy faithful witness will I be;
By grace I can do all through Thee:
Fulfil Thy sovereign counsel, Lord,
Thy will be done, Thy name adored!

July 11
EVENING

"Look Thou upon me" Ps 119:132

GOD LOOKS TO BLESS, EVEN AS A FATHER LOOKS UPON HIS CHILD. One look of our heavenly Father is enough to relieve us in our deepest distresses, to rescue us from our greatest difficulties, and to fill us with peace and joy. The Lord's look will discover us if we are wrong; it will confirm and establish us if we are right. His look humbled Job, strengthened Gideon, brought Peter to repentance, and filled dying Stephen with joy and peace. To look upon us is to show us favour. *"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."* If we would have God look down upon us, we must look up to Him. If we would have Him look upon us and be gracious unto us, we must look to Him in prayer and with faith. Beloved, are you desiring that the eye of God should rest upon you? If He should look upon you in mercy, His look will dispel your fears, disperse your darkness, and fill you with light and holy confidence. Is it too much to ask? It is not too much for God to give! But it is much for us to receive. It betokens reconciliation and His interest in us. *His look imparts blessings beyond measure.*

O look upon Thy servant, Lord,
And pardon, peace, and joy afford;
May I with Thy sweet presence blest,
This night enjoy refreshing rest!

July 12
MORNING

"Happy is the man that feareth alway" Prov 28:14

DO YOU HAVE GODLY FEAR? Godly fear flows from grace, and always increases spiritual knowledge. It is the fear of a filial child, who would not on any account grieve a kind and loving parent. It is a covenant blessing. Our God bestows it on all whom He loves; and they consequently fear to offend Him, their Father; nor would they dishonour their gracious Saviour, or grieve the Holy Comforter. They fear lest they should be led astray from God by their own hearts, by Satan, by false professors, or by the world. They fear to trust their own judgments; they reverence God's word, and dread a lukewarm state. Happy is the man who thus fears alway; he happily preserves a tender conscience, a humble mind, and a consistent walk. He proves his interest in all new covenant blessings; has much to do with the blood of atonement; and enjoys a heavenly peace. He is in a happy state, standing high in the favour of God, walking in the comforts of the Holy Spirit, and keeping himself unspotted from the world. *O for godly fear to rule my heart and preserve my goings!*

This fear is the spirit of faith,
A confidence that's strong;
An holy light to all that's right,
A bar to all that's wrong.

July 12
EVENING

"He shall be for a sanctuary" Isa 8:14

WHO BUT JESUS IS OUR SANCTUARY? He alone is the promised sanctuary in which we are safe from the wrath of God, the curse of a broken law, and the evil designs of Satan. He is our refuge in which we must hide from enemies, storms, and troubles. In Him we can worship God at His throne of grace with confidence and faith. By Him God will manifest Himself and impart instruction on all matters of importance. In this sanctuary we may expect a supply of all our wants: deliverance from all our fears, defence from all our foes, help in all our troubles, the sanctification of all our sorrows, and safety while we sojourn below. Reader, fly to Jesus in every trouble. Expect from Him whatever you need. He shows you how gracious He is, and sets forth the blessedness of all true believers. Is He your sanctuary? Have you met God in Christ? Do you worship God in Christ? Do you look for all you want in Christ? If He is your sanctuary, seek to glorify Him. Expect to find every blessing in Him. In every difficulty and danger flee to Him, and praise the Lord for such a glorious hiding place.

In Christ I every glory view,
Of safety, strength, and beauty too;
Beloved Saviour! ever be
A sanctuary unto me.

July 13
MORNING

*"Behold, I have given Him for a leader to the people" Isa
55:4*

OUR LEADER IS THE LORD FROM HEAVEN. In consideration of our ignorance, God has sent us His Son. We know not the way to our Father's house, but Jesus is sent to lead the blind by a way which they know not. On account of the difficulties along the way, which are many and great, Jesus comes as our Leader, saying, *"I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you."* It manifests our heavenly Father's concern for our safety, security and comfort. He sent His only Son because He could trust us in His hands; He being infinitely wise, gracious, forbearing, and powerful. He came to lead us out of the world into the church, from the law to the gospel, from sin to holiness, from wrath to love. He leads His people to the throne of grace, the house of prayer, the pastures of the good Shepherd, and the mansions of endless delight. He leads us against Satan, and we overcome; against lust, and we conquer. He leads us in the way He went Himself, even the way of the cross, and there to crucify the old man, and revive and strengthen the new. *He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.*

Lead me on, almighty Saviour,
Scatter every hostile band;
Be my Guide, my great Protector,
Till on Canaan's shores I stand:
Shouts of victory
Then shall fill the promised land.

July 13
EVENING

"God who is rich in mercy" Eph 2:4

GOD'S MERCY IS THE REMEDY FOR MAN'S MISERY. Our sin and misery cannot be as great as God's mercy. Our sufferings are many, but God's mercy is a sufficient antidote for all. Mercy is the wealth of God which He freely bestows upon His people. It is the sympathy of God which He displays towards His afflicted children. By that He is affected with a sense of our sufferings; as it is written of His people of old, *"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them: and he bore them, and carried them all the days of old."* The mercy of God is infinite. It flows through Jesus. It is glorified in soothing our sorrows, supplying our wants, pardoning our sins, relieving our distresses, and restoring us from all our wanderings. Beloved, God is rich in mercy tonight. He has mercy for you, just that mercy which you need. He says, *"I will have mercy, and not sacrifice."* Believe His promise. Plead for mercy at His throne. Expect Him to glorify His mercy in you. You need no other recommendation than your misery; no greater encouragement than this, *"He is rich in mercy, rich unto all that call upon him."*

High as the heav'n o'er earth extends,
His mercy all our sins transcends;
Far as the east from western climes,
He casts the guilt of all our crimes.

July 14
MORNING

"My people doth not consider" Isa 1:3

GOD HAS A COMPLAINT AGAINST HIS OWN PEOPLE. It is a complaint preferred against us by our infinitely gracious God; let us attend to it this morning. What should we consider? Surely, how great things the Lord has done for us: how He has delivered our souls from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling, that we may walk before God in the land of the living. How God provides for all His creatures, even the meanest, and therefore He will certainly provide for us, being engaged to do so as our Creator, covenant God, and gracious Father. He is the supreme and universal Governor, arranging, managing, and directing every event, so that accidents can never happen, chance can have no place, but all is directed by infinite wisdom and omnipotent love. *Why do we not consider?* Because our hearts are fickle, false, and worldly; our minds are influenced by unspiritual and deceptive notions; and we endeavour to walk by sight instead of by faith. *What are the consequences of our not considering?* Our God is dishonoured and displeased; our souls are deceived and misled; and Satan gains an advantage over us. *Why, then, do we not consider?*

Jesus, mighty to renew,
Work in me to will and do;
Stem my nature's downward slide,
Slay my vile self-righteous pride!
All Thy pow'r in me be shown,
Make anew my heart of stone!

July 14
EVENING

"The Lord reigneth" Ps 97:1

GOD IS OUR LORD AND KING. That Lord is your Saviour. He wears your nature, He knows you well. He loves you more than a mother does her firstborn. He keeps your welfare in view in all He does, and in all He permits. He reigns supreme: thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, are subject to Him. In His government He equally displays His wisdom and power, His justice and mercy, His sovereignty and grace. He reigns to advance the interests of the holiness, happiness and endless welfare of His people. He reigns over His enemies, and frustrates their designs, using their energies for the accomplishment of His purposes. He rules in as well as over His friends. Thus He preserves them from evils, orders their affairs, and fulfils His word. *"The Lord reigneth."* Think of this whenever Satan besets and harasses you; when sin rises within you, perplexing and distressing you; when providence frowns on you, spoiling your plans, trying your faith. When you have fightings without and fears within, when enemies oppose you or sickness lays you low, and death stares you in the face, remember: *"The Lord reigneth."* *In this find comfort and assurance.*

The Lord is King! lift up your voice,
O earth, and all ye heav'ns, rejoice!
From world to world the joy shall ring,
"The Lord omnipotent is King!"

He reigns! ye saints, exalt your strains;
Your God is King, your Father reigns;
And He is at the Father's side,
The Man of love, the crucified.

July 15
MORNING

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee" Ps 56:3

FAITHLESS FEARS DISHONOUR GOD. It is no unusual thing for God's people to be cast down and filled with disturbing fears. They fear their faith is presumption, their hope delusion, and that they shall one day disgrace that holy name by which they are called. They fear to rely on a bare promise, and want some comfortable feeling to underprop their faith. But they should take up the Psalmist's resolution, *"What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee."* Jehovah in Jesus is the only proper object of trust and He should be trusted at all times. Beloved, it is well when we can say, *"I will depend upon the faithful promise of my gracious God; I will rely on the free grace of my adorable Saviour; I will hope in covenant mercy for evermore; I will fly to my Father's bosom and venture all in my Saviour's hands."* Let us trust in God, in opposition to friends and feelings. Let us trust in covenant love, though providence appears to frown. Our God has said, *"Trust ye in the Lord forever."* Here is our warranty; let us seek grace to say with Job, *"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."*

O let me then at length be taught
What I am still so slow to learn,
That God is love, and changes not,
Nor knows the shadow of a turn:
To cast on Him my anxious cares,
And triumph o'er my doubts and fears.

July 15
EVENING

"Let us keep the feast" 1 Cor 5:8

WE ARE INVITED TO THE FEAST! The Apostle Paul is referring to the Passover: when the lamb was slain, the door-posts sprinkled with blood, the firstborn of the Egyptians destroyed, and Israel delivered. Christ is our Passover Lamb; his blood was shed for us, and is sprinkled upon us; our foes are destroyed, and our salvation secured. The Israelites were to feed on the lamb, whose blood saved them; we are to feed on Christ, by whose blood we are redeemed. *"Therefore let us keep the feast."* It is to feast upon a sacrifice, upon Christ crucified for us. He is not only our ransom but our food. Our souls are fed simply by believing His glorious person, His finished work and victory over death and eternal glorification. The eye should be daily directed to Christ, the mind should be engaged with Christ and the heart should feed upon Christ. We are invited to a feast: the substance of that feast is Christ. Let us then daily *keep the feast*. Let us keep it with much prayer, with hearty praise, in faith and hope, with humility and solemn soul searching, with godly sorrow and heavenly joy. Let us keep it for God has bidden us so to do. When we keep the feast we honour Jesus.

On Jesus let us daily feed,
And keep the gospel feast;
In Him is all our souls can need,
Life, health, and food, and rest.

July 16
MORNING

"Be clothed with humility" 1 Pet 5:5

"WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING." Thus said the Lord. It is of great importance to have and to cherish right views of our own nothingness and insignificance; of our vileness and unworthiness; of our absolute dependence on the mercy of our God; to possess a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price; so that we may be humble under adverse circumstances, considering our sin and ill deservings, how we have offended the Lord. Let us see the hand of God working all in all, acknowledging that divine providence appoints instruments for God's higher purpose; and let us be content with our lot, with such things as we have, cherishing godliness with contentment as great gain. Let us be habitually looking at the Lord Jesus, what He was in His ancient glory, what He became for us, what He now is, and that we shall soon be with Him. Humility is the best garment for a justified sinner to wear, for God has said He will look to and dwell with the humble. He giveth grace unto the humble. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. He will hear the cry and grant the desire of the humble person and save him. *This is His precious promise.*

Jesus, from my proud heart remove
The bane of self admiring love!
O make me feel and own with shame,
I less and worse than nothing am!
The least of saints with pity see,
The chief of sinners save, in me!

July 16
EVENING

"Be no more children" Eph 4:14

IS YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE GROWING OR GOING? The apostle Paul is concerned, not about our physical or social status, but about our spiritual stature. We are always in the status of children, but in understanding we should be men. The Lord has made provision for the growth of his people and he exhorts them to grow. We should advance in knowledge: children are satisfied with trifles; we should not be. We should increase in strength, and become strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. We should also become more courageous against our foes, bold in the Lord's cause, and steadfast in our love of divine things. Our faith, our hope, our love, and our zeal should grow. We should not be stagnant, but from babes we should grow up to be young men; and from young men to fathers in Christ. In order to grow we must make use of food, exercise, and devotion; we must feed upon Christ, exercise our graces, and live in fellowship with God. That we may grow, the Lord has given us His Book, His ordinances, and His Son. He has promised that we shall *"grow as the vine,"* and *"go forth and grow up as calves of the stall."* Let us set our hearts upon growing and attend to this salutary caution, *"That ye be no more children."*

O Lord our God, forbid that we
Should always little children be;
But may our path shine more, we pray,
And more unto the perfect day.

July 17
MORNING

"The faithful witness" Rev 1:5

GOD'S WITNESS WAS HIS OWN SON. His Father gave Him to be a witness, to testify unto us of His love, and His testimony is: *"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* To testify of His will in reference to sinners, this is His witness: *"This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son (perceiveth His divinity, His authority, and office) and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."* To testify of His delight in making His people happy, this is the record: *"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."* He bare witness that our God and Father will do for us, and give unto us, all that our circumstances require; and we know that His witness is true. Let us therefore believe it, simply on the ground of His divinity, knowledge, integrity, veracity, and the interest He takes in our happiness and His Father's glory. Jesus is the faithful witness, and our glorious Friend.

Great Witness from above,
My tongue would bless Thy name:
By Thee the joyful news
Of my salvation came;
The joyful news of sins forgiven,
Of hell subdued and peace with heaven.

July 17
EVENING

"Iniquities prevail against me" Ps 65:3

WE ARE AT WAR! The conflict with sin never ceases until the day we see our Lord. Meanwhile sin lives in us, works in us, and sometimes overcomes us. We are never completely free from sin, and have daily need to watch and strive against sin. Iniquities prevail against us at times, and then they mar our peace, increase unbelief, steal away our affection from God, silence the voice of prayer and praise, weaken and pollute the soul, and raise a cloud between God and us, so that we cannot see his face, or enjoy his love. When we yield to sin and sin prevails against us, we must expect the rebukes and reproofs of the Holy Spirit within; the rod of affliction may also be laid from without; confusion and perplexity will be felt before the throne; and our state calls for humiliation, confession, and repentance toward God. If the Lord sanctify this experience to us, it will lead us to hate sin more, and loathe ourselves before God: we shall become more watchful and prayerful; we shall be more jealous of ourselves, and careful to avoid all appearance of evil; and when again set at liberty, we shall bless, praise, and adore the longsuffering, the mercy, and forgiveness of our loving God.

Lord, my iniquities prevail,
My courage droops, my spirits fail;
Do Thou my rebel lusts subdue,
And all Thy gracious powers renew.

July 18
MORNING

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"

Mt 5:8

LOOK TO GOD AND RECEIVE HIS SAVING FAITH. It is faith that purifies the heart, brings home the atonement, and gives pardon, peace, and reconciliation; it purges the conscience from dead works, and delivers from all condemnation. It receives the truth of God, and Jesus through the truth; by faith we receive power to become the sons of God. We realize our relationship to God, read the gracious promises of God and anticipate the glorious kingdom He has prepared; hope rules in the heart, and everyone that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as Christ is pure. His conscience is made tender, his intentions are made honest, and his heart is soundly grounded in God's statutes. He groans under a body of sin and death, proclaims unceasing war against the flesh, and loathes himself on account of filthiness in the spirit. He would give the world to be free from sin, for holiness is the element of his soul. He is blessed. One day he will see God, and enjoy Him as his Father, and everlasting All in All. He will be with his God; and be like Him, in purity, holiness, and glory.

Jesus, Thy crowning grace impart;
Bless me with pure unsinning heart,
That now beholding Thee,
I soon may view Thy glorious face,
On all Thy wondrous beauty gaze,
And God for ever see!

July 18
EVENING

"I am glorified in them" Jn 17:10

THE WORK OF JESUS WAS TO GLORIFY THE FATHER. And the Father is glorified in Jesus. Our work is to glorify Jesus, and He is glorified in us. His blood is glorified in our pardon, peace, and cleansing from all sin. His righteousness is glorified in our complete, perpetual, and eternal justification; His power is glorified in our separation from the world and preservation unto eternal life; His mercy, in our quickening, and numerous comforts; His word in our liberty and holy joy. His condescension is glorified in our fellowship and communion; His faithfulness in the answers we receive to our prayers and petitions; His goodness is glorified in our supplies and supports under trouble; His sympathy, in our afflictions and sorrows; His patience is glorified in bearing with our perverseness and many infirmities; His grace, in our lives, in death, and in our eternal salvation. Jesus is glorified in us, for all we are, we owe to Him; all we have, we receive from Him; and all we hope for, we expect from Him. His church is His glory, and He will make her glorious. He will present her unto Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. *Sweet thought and can it be? My Lord is glorified in me!*

Lord glorify Thyself in me,
Saviour, Redeemer, Friend!
Fain would I live and die for Thee,
On whom I all depend.

July 19
MORNING

"Whom having not seen ye love" 1 Pet 1:8

A SAVIOUR BEYOND COMPARE IS JESUS OUR LORD. None of us has seen His person, but we know Him from His word and believing, we love Him. As the only begotten Son of God, He was exalted, dignified, and glorified from everlasting; as the willing Saviour of poor lost sinners, He became incarnate, suffered, bled and died for them. We love His adorable person; His countenance is majesty, His heart is love, His hand is mercy, His eye all kindness, His feeling all compassion, and His smile is heaven. We love His precious salvation in its freeness, completeness, and glory. We love His delightful promises which meet all our wants and wishes, and fill our souls with peace. We love His throne where He meets us, attends to our requests, and blesses us beyond measure. We love His holy precepts which bear His authority, convey His love, and call us to holiness. We love His heaven-born family, who wear His likeness, are the excellent of the earth, and resemble the children of a king. O just to love Him more! To love Him with all our heart and mind and soul and strength! O to manifest our love to Him by holy service and sanctified life!

Jesus! the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast:
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.
O Thou the Fairest of ten thousand;
O Thou the sweet Rose of Sharon!
Thou art the Lily of the Valley,
How shall I part with Thee?

July 19
EVENING

"I know that Thou favourest me" Ps 41:11

"IN HIS FAVOUR IS LIFE." What believer does not know this? And yet who is sufficiently touched by the fact? If God had not favoured us, we would have been still dead in sin. Or we would have been smarting under the lashes of a guilty conscience, or shut up in despair; or our enemy would have triumphed over us. The wily foe is superior to us in wisdom, power, experience, and perseverance. He has had great advantage given him by our weakness, timidity, and cowardice; by our powerful corruptions and ignorance of his devices. He has endeavoured to lead us into sin, draw us into apostasy, or drive us to despair; but he has not prevailed. He certainly would if the Lord had not favoured us. But Jesus has interceded for us. The Holy Spirit has helped our infirmities. Our heavenly Father has fulfilled His word, and has faithfully restrained, curbed, and held him back. He has shielded us in the day of conflict, and protected us in the heat of battle. Surely the Lord has favoured us, for we have stood, when many have fallen; have persevered while many have gone back; we are living testimonies to His mercy. Each of us may say, I am God's favoured child.

I thank Thee, O Thou Righteous Sun,
For Thy bright beams on me have shined;
Thou hast the Tempter overthrown:
My woes, removed and healed my mind;
I thank Thee for Thy quick'ning voice
Bids my poor heart in Thee rejoice.

July 20
MORNING

"Pray that ye enter not into temptation" Lk 22:40

"LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION." Temptations are trials; but by temptations very generally we understand solicitations to evil. Satan is the arch tempter; he uses every possible instrument, to draw us into sin and folly; consequently we are always in danger from him. We are liable to be led astray by his temptations often, because they are sudden, powerful, insidious, deceptive, and so timed as to fall in with our peculiar circumstances. Also because our hearts are weak, changeable, prone to evil, and open to seduction. How many eminent saints have fallen! Let us beware! Falling into temptation dishonours God, disgraces our profession, and distresses the soul. God is able to preserve and deliver us. He has promised. But prayer is implied in every promise. Beloved, daily remember you have a malicious and scheming foe; he is ever present with you! He will use saints and sinners as instruments to lead you astray. Pray without ceasing. Pray in simplicity, in sincerity, with importunity. God is faithful and will, with the temptation, make a way for your escape.

Jesus Redeemer, Saviour, Lord -
The weary sinner's Friend.
Come to my help, pronounce the word,
And bid my troubles end:
Wisdom and strength to me impart,
To quench each flaming fiery dart.

July 20
EVENING

"Him that overcometh" Rev 2:17

"WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH HIM THAT LOVED US." Every Christian is a soldier, and he is exhorted to conduct himself as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Every Christian soldier must go to war. His enemies are numerous and powerful. They must be conquered, for they will never yield. He must never propose or accept any terms with them. He must fight until they are entirely subdued. He must overcome the world. He must conquer Satan. He must rule over his own spirit. Heaven is the home of overcomers. Honours unspeakably glorious are reserved for them. Jesus, the captain of their salvation, will give them to eat of the tree of life, and of the hidden manna, to possess the white stone, with the new name written; He will give them the morning star, the white raiment, and to be a pillar in the temple of God; to wear a crown of life, and to sit with Him on His throne. All these are promised to him that overcomes. Every favour that can be granted, every honour that can be conferred, will be the portion of the conqueror. Let us therefore, wrestle and fight, using the whole armour of God, strong in the grace of Jesus, keeping the eye upon the prize, and encouraging each other in the conflict. *By faith we shall conquer.*

Then let me meet my threefold foe,
And conquering and to conquer go;
Armed with His sword, and mind, and name,
Who hell, the world, and sin o'ercame.

July 21
MORNING

"Abide in me" Jn 15:4

"WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING." May our Lord's words speak to us. By nature we are without Christ and are far from Him; by grace we accept His invitation, and come to Him feeling our need of Him. We are given to see that nothing but union to Jesus can make us safe and happy; and to give up ourselves to Him, praying to be holy in Him; He receives us, sheds abroad His love in our heart, and we become members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. He then bids us abide in Him, which we do by living in absolute dependence upon Him; by cleaving to Him in love as our Saviour, God, and Friend; by openly professing our attachment to Him, and expectations from Him, by walking in daily fellowship and communion with Him, and by identifying our cause with His. Beloved, we must abide in Jesus if we would have our flesh mortified, our graces nourished, our lusts subdued, obtain victory over the world, prove a match for Satan; and obtain all necessary supplies. Abiding in Jesus will give us a pure and focussed eye, a burning zeal for God, and holy ambition and power to seize all opportunities to glorify His matchless name.

Hail, gracious Saviour, Lord divine!
Life-giving ever living vine,
In Thee abiding may I live,
Abundant fruitful service give;
Then may my witness shine for Thee,
From envy, pride and malice free.

July 21
EVENING

"Ye are come ... to the blood of sprinkling" Heb 12:22, 24

ON THE CROSS THE SAVIOUR BLED FOR US. His blood was shed for sin and sprinkled on the sinner; the former action made atonement, the latter declared the sinner clean. The blood of Jesus is the blood of sprinkling. It has made peace for sinners. It speaks peace to sinners. It cleanses from all sin, and it does this meritoriously, efficaciously, infallibly. It heals the wounded conscience, perfumes our services, and confirms the covenant. It secures us, as the blood of the passover secured the Israelites; and it satisfies the claims of infinite justice. It procured pardon for the guilty, life for the dead, redemption for the captive, and grace for graceless sinners. As believers we come to this blood of sprinkling. We come to trust in it, for it alone procures us acceptance with God. We come to prove it and enjoy the blessedness that results from it. We come to plead it that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. We come to rejoice in it, for it is a source of comfort, consolation, and joy. We come by faith. We come whenever distressed by guilt, disturbed by fears, assailed by Satan, stressed by want, and faced by death. The blood of sprinkling is God's answer to every need.

Upon the cross my Saviour hung,
Shedding His precious blood;
And every drop is like a tongue
Pleading my cause with God.

July 22
MORNING

"A just God and a Saviour" Isa 45:21

IN CHRIST GOD'S LOVE AND JUSTICE MET. God cannot part with His justice even to express His love; and His justice shines equally with His grace in the present and eternal salvation of our souls. He gave His Son for our substitute, He appointed Him to our surety, and punished Him in our stead. He justly condemned Him to die, though guiltless, because our sins were imputed to Him; and He justly raised Him from the dead, because our sins had been expiated by Him. His work was perfect, therefore His deliverance was just. He is a just God, and therefore never will exact the same debt again of the sinner, which was already paid by his surety; nor condemn him for that for which his substitute atoned. His justice will shine in our final acquittal, and be eternally honoured in our everlasting salvation. He drew the plan of salvation, sent His Son to execute it; gives His Spirit to put us in possession of the blessing, and at last receives us to Himself, of purest grace. *"He saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."*

Mystery of redemption this -
All my sins on Christ were laid;
Mine offence was reckoned His;
He the great atonement made!
Here His justice He displays,
Here He saves me by His grace.

July 22
EVENING

"Blessed are they that keep my ways" Prov 8:32

THE LORD'S WAYS ARE BLEST WAYS. Though varied, they all lead to glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. There is the way of *salvation*, the way to be delivered from the guilt, power, and consequences of sin. The way of *peace*, the way to obtain, enjoy, and maintain peace of conscience. The way of *holiness*, in which we acquire and increase in godliness. The way of *truth*, the way to learn, experience, and practise it, by which we recommend our walk with God, and benefit our fellow-men. There is no entering upon, or walking in either of these ways, but by *faith*. We are saved by *grace* through *faith*. By *faith* we have peace with God. Purifying our hearts is by *faith*. The *truth* of God must be believed, or it will never be practically known. *Faith* worketh by *love*. Here is the commendation, "*Blessed are they that keep my ways.*" They keep the eye on them, the heart toward them, and the feet in them. They keep them with care, with fear, with constancy. Such are blessed, for they perceive correctly, they choose rightly, they walk safely, they live happily, they progress steadily, and they end gloriously in the heavenly home, simply because "*they keep my ways.*"

Teach me Thy Way, O Lord,
Teach me Thy Way!
Thy guiding grace afford -
Teach me Thy Way!
Help me to walk aright,
More by faith, less by sight,
Lead me with heav'nly light -
Teach me Thy Way!

July 23
MORNING

"Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe" Ps 119:117

DO YOU ASK THE LORD TO UPHOLD YOU DAILY? This should be the Christian's daily prayer; his way is rough, the dangers are many, his foes are deadly, and he is liable to fall. If we from the heart present this prayer, it proves that we have a sense of our own weakness, a knowledge of the Lord as our strength, genuine humility working within, and a desire to honour God ruling in the conscience. We are in the world and unless the Lord hold us up, we fall and bring guilt on the conscience, disgrace on the gospel, and dishonour to God. We are in the church and unless the Lord hold us up, we grow roots of bitterness, become stumbling-blocks, and grieve the Spirit. We shall be in affliction, and unless the Lord hold us up, we faint, become angry with God, like Jonah, or become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. O believer, lean not on earth; trust not in man, place no dependence on your own ability; but let your *daily*, yea, *hourly* prayer be, *"Be Thou my Vision, O Lord. Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe."* The ear of thy God is open, the heart of thy God is tender, the arm of thy God is strong.

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart -
Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art;
Thou my best thought, by day or by night -
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

July 23
EVENING

"All the promises of God in Him" 2 Cor 1:20

"CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY." As light is in the sun, so all grace is in Christ. The *promises* of God which are contained in the Bible, all centre in Jesus. The *promises* of scripture are divine; they make known the nature and disposition of God. They all originated in grace; they are proofs of God's unbounded benevolence; they display infinite condescension; and they are intended to strengthen our faith and hope. They are in Christ: in His mouth as the true witness; in His hand as the surety of the better covenant; in His heart as the Bridegroom of his church; in His will as the gracious testator; in His inheritance, as the heir of all things; and are all comprehended in Himself, as the mercy promised to our forefathers. He publishes them as a prophet, confirms them as a priest, and fulfils them as King. Some of them relate to the world, and some of them exclusively to the church. Some of them regard the body, others the soul. They embrace all time, and extend into eternity. In Christ, every promise is *yea* to the Greek, and *amen* to the Jew; that is, they are confirmed to all. Beloved, let us believe them, plead them, and rest our souls upon them. Let us look only and always to our Lord, Christ the hope of glory.

O for a faith that will not shrink
Tho' pressed by many a foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe;

That will not murmur nor complain
Beneath the chast'ning rod,
But in the hour of grief or pain
Will lean upon its God.

July 24
MORNING

"The way of peace" Rom 3:17

IN THE WORLD TRIBULATION, IN CHRIST PEACE. Peace is not to be obtained by the works of the law, but in faith by receiving the Saviour into our heart. Peace comes by believing on Him as able and willing to save; by trusting the testimony God has given of His Son; by renouncing self as loathsome in the sight of God; by relying simply and always on Jesus for all we need; and by daily making a hearty surrender and commitment to God our Saviour. If we would maintain peace, we must rest in the promises of God and walk by His precepts. We must be loyal to the King of Zion, communing daily with our heavenly Father, attending upon Him and obeying His holy ordinance. We must rely on His providence, frequent the open fountain for purification, cleave to the saints, the body of Christ, and separate ourselves from the world, and set our affection on things above. When troubles arise to threaten our peace remember: *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

There is no path to heavenly bliss,
Or solid joy, or lasting peace,
But Christ, th' appointed road;
O may I tread the sacred way,
By faith rejoice, and praise, and pray
Till I behold my God.

July 24
EVENING

"Fury is not in me" Isa 27:4

FOR GOD IS LOVE. It is easy to mistake the character of God. Often we think Him wrathful and are afraid of Him. But in Jesus on the cross, God meets us, accepts us, blesses us, and assures us that there is no more fury in Him. Jesus is the basis for hope: He turns away the fury of God, and I receive love and hope. God will not refuse my application, despise my prayer, or drive me from His throne. From henceforth there is comfort: if there is no fury in God, the wrath of man is vain, the rage of hell is harmless, my dread of death is unfounded, my fear of rejection is childish, my alarm at the approach of judgment is causeless. Here is a call for gratitude and praise. There is no fury in God, for I am His child, and I may draw near and confide in Him, I may expect good things from Him and I ought to praise Him. There is no fury in God, then whom shall I fear? Of what shall I be afraid? He is a refuge in trouble, a well of living water in the desert, a garden in the wilderness, a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God. God is not wrath but love to me. Christian, be careful what views you entertain of your God.

Fury is not in me, but love,
Behold the proof: my Son I gave!
And still my tender mercies move,
From sin, and death, and hell to save.

July 25
MORNING

"Be still, and know that I am God" Ps 46:10

CHRISTIAN, WAIT PATIENTLY ON THE LORD. The dispensations of divine providence are often very perplexing: our God has His way in the sea, and His path in the deep waters, and His footsteps are not known. Reason is confounded, and faith is staggered; but He hushes our fears, silences our cries, and bids us *"Be still."* We must lie before him, as the lamb at the shepherd's feet, as the child in the parent's arms. He will not harm us Himself, nor will He let others do so. We must learn that He is God, infinitely wise, invariably good, always a sovereign. He does according to His will in heaven, on earth, in the sea, and in all deep places. None can stay His hand, or dispute His right to accomplish His will. Let us therefore keep silence before Him. He is our God, and we are His people; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures throughout all generations. Let us not murmur, for He is gracious; let us not complain, for He is a Father unto us; let us not fear, for He is faithful: but let us wait upon Him, submitting in all things to His will, and surrendering ourselves into His hands saying, *"Here am I, do with me as seemeth Thee good."* Let us be still for He is God.

When I can trust my all with God,
In trial's fearful hour
Bow, all resigned beneath His rod,
And bless His pard'ning power;
A joy springs up amidst distress,
A fountain in the wilderness.

July 25
EVENING

"Jesus only" Mt 17:8

"TAKE THE WORLD BUT GIVE ME JESUS." On earth the only thing that is certain is change. But in the midst of change, our Lord Jesus remains the same, unchanging, unchanged. Many things change or pass away, such as health, wealth, comforts, relatives, youth, vigour, prosperity. But whatever changes, Jesus is the same. He is the same in his nature, which is love; in His purpose towards us, which is grace; in His promises, which are faithful; in His offices, as priest, intercessor, King. Jesus is the same in His blood, which is always efficacious; in His relations, for He is Father, Brother, Husband, Friend. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Here is a suitable motto for us: *Jesus only*, as my plea at the throne of grace; as the object of my faith, desire, and confidence; as my hope and ground of acceptance with God; as my pattern and example; as my joy and song; as my King and lawgiver; as my all in all. Let us endeavour to keep the eye and the heart always on Jesus. Let us remember that whether dark cloud or bright sunshine, it makes no change in Him. *Jesus only* sweetens and sanctifies all bereavements, and preserves from the snares of prosperity.

Take the world, but give me Jesus -
All its joy are but a name;
But His love abideth ever,
Through eternal years the same.
O the height and depth of mercy!
O the length and breadth of love!
O the fullness of redemption -
Pledge of endless life above!

July 26
MORNING

"Receive not the grace of God in vain" 2 Cor 6:1

THE GRACE OF GOD IS THE OFFER TO PERISHING MEN. By the "*grace of God*" in this passage, we are to understand the everlasting gospel; which is a glorious proclamation of favour shown to the vile and unworthy. It proclaims that God has come down to us in the person of Christ; that he has accepted the labours, sufferings, and death of Jesus, as the ground of our deliverance from death, and as our title to eternal life; and He now sends His ambassadors to assure us that He is our Friend - that He will not impute our trespasses unto us, that He views us in Jesus as a new creation; all former things are passed away and forgotten; and He will make all who receive His word, and believe in His Son, the righteousness of God in Him. Let us not then receive this glorious message in vain; we do so if we think that God is angry with us; if we doubt our acceptance of God in Christ; if we fear that He will be wroth with us. He informs us of His grace to encourage us to believe, to quicken us in His ways, to embolden us at His throne, to produce love to His name, and to furnish us with an answer to all objections.

O what amazing words of grace
Are in the gospel found!
Suited to every sinner's case,
Who knows the joyful sound.
May I this glorious grace receive,
And to my Saviour's glory live.

July 26
EVENING

"Rejoice evermore" 1 Thess 5:16

"REJOICING IN CHRIST JESUS" well describes the contented and spiritual Christian. He rejoices over sins forgiven and his name written in heaven. This joy is a fruit of the Spirit. It is the gift of faith. It comes with hope: *"Rejoicing in hope."* It is the soldier rejoicing in his conquering captain; the mariner rejoicing in his wise and trusty pilot; the prodigal rejoicing in his kind and loving father; the penitent rejoicing in his pardoning and gracious God. This joy is unspeakable and full of glory. It is always holy joy, and is easily dampened and weakened by sin. Christian, thy God bids thee rejoice. The Lord's people of old were exceeding joyful in all their tribulations. A solid foundation is laid for thy joy in God's holy word, in his gracious covenant, in the fulness of Jesus, and in the glorious perfections of God. Our joy is often shaken by our uncertainty about our calling and election; by our unbelief, which insults God while it injures us; by low views of Christ, by a hasty spirit, by worldly entanglement, by an uneven walk with God, by selfishness in our Christian walk. Believer, the Lord commands you to *rejoice evermore*.

Rejoice - the Lord is King!
Your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing
And triumph evermore;
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

July 27
MORNING

"I will wait upon the Lord" Isa 8:17

"BE OF GOOD COURAGE, AND HE SHALL STRENGTHEN THINE HEART." The Lord has concealed His face; His favour could not be discovered, but marks of displeasure appeared; yet God's people determined not to despond or yield to fear, but to wait upon the Lord who was hiding Himself from the house of Israel, and to look for Him. It is a great trial to a believer for his God to hide His face: but it is still his privilege to wait daily at His gates, and to watch at the post of His doors, persuaded that He will turn again and display His forgiving love. We must not give up hope, nor abandon the Lord's ways, nor restrain prayer before Him; but we must wait in faith, believing His word in expectation, trusting His faithfulness. Nothing should be allowed to weaken our faith in God's word, or drive our souls from His throne. He waits for the fittest time to be gracious; and we should wait His time to be comforted, or delivered. Wait on the Lord and keep His way. Wait as a servant for his master's return, as a child for his father's blessing; as a bride for the tokens of her bridegroom's love. He says, *"Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that watcheth."*

Still nigh me, O my Saviour, stand,
And guard in fierce temptation's hour;
Hide in the hollow of Thy hand,
Show forth in me Thy saving power;
Still be Thine arm my sure defence,
Nor earth nor hell shall pluck me thence.

July 27
EVENING

"This man receiveth sinners" Lk 15:2

"CHRIST JESUS CAME TO SAVE SINNERS OF WHOM I AM CHIEF." So confessed the apostle Paul, assuring sinners of every age, our God is full of compassion to us. He did receive sinners, and he received them as sinners. He does receive sinners still, and receives them notwithstanding their sins; yea, because of them. He receives the very worst of sinners, however worthless, despised by others, or peculiar their circumstances may be: sinners of every clime, at any age, without distinction. Every sinner that comes to Him is received, without exception. He receives them with all their sins upon them, however polluted, or however base. He receives them without anything to recommend them, without any reluctance and most graciously. He receives them to pardon all their sins, to cleanse them from all their defilement, to justify them from all charges, to heal all their wounds, to make them new creatures, to use them to his glory, to make them a peculiar people, zealous of good works on earth; and to glorify them with Himself in heaven forever. Beloved, if you feel that you cannot go to God as a saint, go to Jesus as a sinner. Are you doubting the character of your past experience? Go to Him, for He will receive you. Go to Him now. *He will not cast you out.*

Christ receiveth sinful men,
Even me with all my sin;
Purged from ev'ry spot and stain,
Heav'n with Him I enter in.
Sing it o'er and o'er again;
Christ receiveth sinful men;
Make the message clear and plain,
Christ receiveth sinful men.

July 28
MORNING

"He will yet deliver us" 2 Cor 1:10

"IF GOD BE FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?" How many times has our God taken up our cause and delivered us from how many dangers, in how many ways; and He who has delivered, does deliver, and we trust that He will yet deliver us. He delivered us from spiritual death by the working of His Holy Spirit, and from eternal death, by the sacrifice of His Son. We were dead, but we are now alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord; and He who delivered from the greatest evil, spiritual death, will not refuse to deliver us from any lesser danger. Let us trust in Him, rely upon Him, and expect Him to deliver. It is written, *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."* He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. Let us triumph with Paul, *"The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion; and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."* If He had not intended to carry on the work, He would not have begun it, for He well knew what opposition it would meet with: but He that began will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Yet I must fight, if I would reign:
Increase my courage, Lord!
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy word.

July 28
EVENING

"I know whom I have chosen" Jn 13:18

"YOU HAVE NOT CHOSEN ME, BUT I HAVE CHOSEN YOU." It is our Lord who chooses, and He makes no mistake. Some have been chosen to office who were not chosen to salvation. This was the case with Judas. But all believers are chosen to everlasting life. He chose them as an act of sovereignty, as presented to Him by the Father. He chose His people to be His bride, His servants, His witnesses, His glory. His choosing them was the cause of their choosing Him. He knows His chosen ones. His knowledge of them is perfect. He knows them by name and where they live. He knows their hearts, their faith, their hopes, their love, their fears, their sorrows, their works, their wants. His knowledge of them is a source of comfort to them. He approves of them. Jesus knows all his people thus, because He is God; for who could distinctly know the number, names, residences, hearts, and entire circumstances of a number which no man can number, but God? Beloved, Jesus knows us so as to humble our pride, honour our faith, supply all our needs, guide our steps, and reward our good works. Ever remember, Jesus knows all your ways in the family, in the business, in the church, in all places. He knows His chosen ones, as the father does his beloved children.

No claim had we who now enjoy
The smiles of our Redeemer God;
He only knows who chose us, why
Our hearts are his divine abode.

July 29
MORNING

"I am a stranger in the earth" Ps 119:19

WE ARE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS IN THE EARTH. Our days are but a shadow and here we have no abiding city. We are born from above and are bound for Glory Land. We are far from home where our Father, our kindred, our treasure, and our hearts are. Here on earth we have no fixed residence, nor should we, for the whole world lies in darkness, and we can have no fellowship with its unfruitful evil works, but rather reprove them. We are called to suffer many inconveniences. The Bible is our light, our food, our joy, and our directory. We need a guide, a guard, a companion, a comforter; our Lord Jesus alone fills each of these offices. We should pray for the peace of the country of our sojourn; we should not meddle in its affairs, but keep separate, for God. We should be thankful for every blessing, and set our affections on things above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. Until that day, let us mortify our members and daily walk with the Lord, watching unto prayer, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God. *Let us confess that we are strangers and pilgrims on earth.*

In heav'n I have a mansion fair,
My Lord has gone on to prepare
For me that lasting home;
Let not your heart be troubled now,
Nor let earth's sorrows cloud thy brow;
For rest in Jesus, come!

July 29
EVENING

"Let us draw near hither unto God" 1 Sam 14:36

BY NATURE WE ARE FAR FROM GOD. BY GRACE WE ARE BROUGHT NIGH. In prayer we meet with God at the throne of grace. This is every believer's privilege which some neglect to their greatest loss. But we must not, for Jesus our great High Priest is passed into the heavens, at God the Father's right hand, and He bids us draw near. This we must do, and often, for it is the Father's will that we pray and not faint, no matter what our problem is, or how bleak the outlook seems. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, and pour out our burdens and sorrows and requests before Him. There we shall obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. This is the promise of God's word, and God's word is faithful. Let us draw nigh with confidence, as dear children; with reverence, as repenting sinners; with thankful hearts, as filial sons and daughters. Let us draw near many times a day, in our closets in secret, at work, when travelling, wherever we are. Whenever we draw near to God, He draws near to us.

I am Thine, O Lord -
I have heard Thy voice,
And it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith
And be closer drawn to Thee.

July 30
MORNING

"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" 1 Cor 1:31

IT IS VAIN TO GLORY IN MAN. It is unlawful to glory in ourselves, our descent, our possessions, our connections, or doings; if we glory it must be only in the Lord. We must glory in Him as gracious and merciful, exercising lovingkindness and tender mercies in the earth; in what He is to His people - their God, their portion, and their Friend; in what He has done for us, has already given to us, and will without doubt bestow upon us. Let us glory in Christ crucified for our sins, raised for our justification, and ascended to heaven in order to plead our cause, and take possession of the kingdom in our names; in our relation to Him, interest in Him, and oneness with Him; this is our glory, that we are one with Christ, and one with the Father through Him; that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; that all things are for our sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God. Beloved, let us glory in the Lord, in His free grace, eternal love, everlasting covenant, precious promises, splendid mansions, and mysteries yet to be revealed in us.

In Christ my full salvation stands,
In Him alone my glorying be;
Nothing shall pluck me from His hands,
From condemnation I am free;
His holiness my costly dress,
And my best robe His righteousness.

July 30
EVENING

"To obey is better than sacrifice" 1 Sam 15:22

"IF YE LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS." Our Lord speaks thus to us today. We are prone to attach too much importance to ceremonies. Israel did so. Thousands do so now to a very fearful extent. But obedience to moral precepts, out of love to God, while depending for life and peace on the finished work of Christ alone, is what pleases God. *To obey is better than to sacrifice.* The obedience intended, requires the surrender of the judgment, the acquiescence of the conscience, the concurrence of the will, and the submission of the whole man to the authority of God. Such obedience pleases God better than any sacrifice which we can offer, because it is an acknowledgement of his wisdom and goodness in requiring, and it is a hearty compliance with his will. But in order that our obedience might be acceptable, it must be scriptural, sincere, humble, uniform, and constant. Then it is better than any gifts which we can present, than any sufferings we can endure. We must obey God as a Sovereign, while we love Him as a Father. Our obedience must be that of children, of children living under the smile of a father's love. Our obedience is not to be considered a price paid for blessings, but as the proof of love.

My God, with heavenly wisdom bless,
And teach me how Thyself to please:
Work in me both to will and do,
That I Thy glory may pursue.

July 31
MORNING

"Things that accompany salvation" Heb 6:9

"BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED THROUGH FAITH." But faith without works is dead. What evidences do we manifest that we possess living faith? Let us inquire. What are they? Do we possess them? Spiritual life, evidenced by convictions of sin; crying to God for deliverance from sin; groaning under the weight of the body of sin and death; a tender conscience which trembles at sin, and feels deeply for God's glory; a filial fear of God, lest we should dishonour His name, disgrace His cause, and grieve His heart of love; an anxiety and deep-rooted concern for holiness, both in the heart and the life; contrition or brokenness of heart for sin, accompanied with holy mourning before God; fervour in devotion, earnestly breathing out the desires of the heart before God, or grieving when it is not so; a jealousy of self, as to our sincerity and uprightness of intention, lest we should be led astray by the corruptions within; a chaste conversation coupled with fear; diligence in the means of grace; searching the scriptures to ascertain our real state and condition: what is the Lord's will and our duty? An increasing discovery of our own weaknesses, imperfections, and misery - these things must accompany true salvation.

Give me, O Saviour, give me still
My poverty to know;
Increase my faith; each day in grace
And knowledge may I grow:
Unfold the glories of Thy cross,
For which I count all else but loss.

July 31
EVENING

"The Father Himself loveth you" Jn 16:27

"HEREIN IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US." Now we love Him, because He first loved us, and all who believe His word, rely on His merits, trust in His name, observe His ordinances, keep His precepts, and find Him precious to their souls. All such are beloved of the Father. This love includes His infinite goodwill toward them, and His delight in them. It is an infinite willingness to do them good, and to bestow blessings upon them. This appeared first in a purpose, then in a promise, and at length in the glorious work of his beloved Son. His love is eternal, immutable, and free. The proofs of it are the covenant, the gift of His Son, the bestowment of the Holy Spirit, the Bible, all gospel privileges and spiritual blessings, and the kingdom of glory at the last. Does the Father himself love us? Then let us believe the fact, especially when we go to prayer. Then let us love Him in return, and be willing to do and suffer all His will. Let us live above the world, and testify unto it, that the works thereof are evil. Let us seek the welfare of all He loves. Let us pity, plead for, and reason with sinners, encouraging those seeking the Lord, by assuring them of His love.

Let every tongue the Father own,
Who when we all were lost,
To seek and save us sent the Son,
And gives the Holy Ghost.

August 1
MORNING

"We trust in the living God" 1 Tim 4:10

VAIN IS THE HELP OF MAN. Our help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth. He is opposed to a dying world, to our dying frames, and to our dying friends; these must not be trusted, or we shall be disappointed. Our God alone is to be trusted, for He alone is worthy of a Christian's trust; He only is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. He is immutable. He has never disappointed a sinner's hope, if founded on His word; nor did He ever refuse a believer's petition for deliverance or relief. If we trust in the living God, He will preserve us from perpetual disappointment, from bitter reflections on self and others, from many dangers, and from the threatened curse. If we trust in the living God we are blessed and we shall be fruitful; we shall be delivered from faithless fears; we shall enjoy perfect peace; we shall be provided for; we shall find a refuge in every storm; we shall have an answer for all who reproach us, and remain firm and steadfast in our faith, and at peace with God. Let us search ourselves, *"Are we trusting in the living God?"* Let us seek grace, daily to live in simple, childlike dependence upon Him. Blessed is the man whose trust is in the Lord.

In Thee, O Lord, I put my trust:
Mighty and merciful and just,
Who hides my life above;
Thou canst, Thou wilt my Helper be;
My confidence is all in Thee,
My faithful God of love.

August 1
EVENING

"The Lord also hath put away thy sin" 2 Sam 12:13

"**THY SIN SHALL FIND THEE OUT!**" David first committed adultery, then made Uriah drunk, then planned his murder, then ascribed it to divine providence, and feigned innocence until at length he is aroused from his self deception by God's prophet Nathan. Then in deepest contrition of heart, he confesses his transgressions unto the Lord. His confession is preceded by sincere conviction of conscience, attended with broken hearted supplication, and crowned with God's forgiveness: *"The Lord hath put away thy sin."* Sin appears before God making out a case against the sinner. The Advocate appears also pleading for mercy. He prevails and God pardons the grievous offender. His sin is so forgiven as to be forgotten. This is the nature of God's mercy. Observe, the man that frankly and honestly confesses his sins, will find that God fully and freely pardons. If God has forgiven you, you ought often to place your sins before your face to humble you, to preserve you from turning again to folly, and to fire you with gratitude and love. So did David who says, *"My sin is ever before me."* *Pardoned and repentant sinners: be always sorry for sin, afraid of sin, and watchful against sin!*

Jesus, author of contrition,
Giver Thou of pardon art;
Wound me, O my kind physician,
Break, and then bind up my heart.

August 2
MORNING

"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord"

Heb 12:5

"FOR WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE CHASTENETH."

The Lord treats us as children; He speaks in reference to our afflictions which are His chastisements; these are sent in love; when we are chastened we are judged of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. Let us not faint under them, nor should we despise them. We do so when we think there is no occasion for them, and that we could do as well or better without them. We despise them if we do not seek to ascertain the reason why they are sent, or to learn the lessons they are intended to teach. We despise them if we do not acknowledge the Lord's right to chasten, His love in doing it, and His wisdom in the time, nature, and duration of the trial. We despise them if we do not seek grace to submit cheerfully or at least silently, and to glorify God in it. We despise them if we do not seek to be improved in our knowledge, sanctity, and spiritual vigour, by it or if with a carnal attitude, we seek to be delivered from it. Beloved, let us beware of despising divine chastisement in any of these ways; but let us glorify God in the day of visitation.

Father, if Thou must reprove
For all that I have done,
Not in anger, but in love,
Chastise Thy wayward son:
Correct with kind severity,
And make me one with Thee.

August 2
EVENING

"The last enemy" 1 Cor 15:26

IN CHRIST DEATH IS NO LONGER *KING OF TERRORS*. The Christian has many enemies, but through grace he shall overcome them all. *"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."* Death is an enemy to kingdoms, cutting down princes, patriots, and the powerful. It is an enemy to congregations, removing without mercy the active, the benevolent, and the unprofitable hearer alike. It is an enemy to churches, robbing them of their officers, their teachers, the youthful, the devoted, and the most zealous members. It is an enemy to families, snatching away the father, the husband, the wife, the offspring. It is an enemy to individuals, saints and sinners alike. It was an enemy to our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the last enemy in sequential order: Satan, then sin, then death. It is the last in its attack: disease, age, death. It is the last enemy to be destroyed, for God has decreed it, and Jesus is coming to execute the judgment determined. But even now the saints may defy its power, withstand its attack, rejoice in its arms, and spring from its grasp to everlasting glory, *because our Lord has conquered death for us.*

O Lord! that I may thus depart,
Thy joys to share, Thy face to see;
Impress Thine image on my heart,
And teach me how to walk with Thee.

August 3
MORNING

"The Lord thinketh upon me" Ps 40:17

"WHAT IS MAN THAT THOU ART MINDFUL OF HIM?" David was conscious of God's greatness and man's nothingness. When he thought of the glory of Jehovah, man appeared so worthless and insignificant, that he was moved to ask, *"Will the Lord regard us, bless us, and dwell with us?"* Yes, He has promised to do so in His word, and He has informed us that His thoughts are perpetually taken up with us. He thinks upon us to supply our need, to protect us from our foes, to lead us in His ways, and make us fit for His kingdom and glory. His thoughts are of peace and not of evil, to give us an expected end. He thinks upon us by day and by night, whether at home or abroad; He thinks of us with love as His children, with pleasure as His friends, with a purpose to bless us as His own. We think He may perhaps have mercy, He may do a little for us; but as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are His thoughts above our thoughts, and His ways above our ways. His thoughts are worthy of our God. What are the promises? Simply His thoughts put into our language. And what do they prove? *Truly that He thought of all our wants, wishes, and desires, and made full provision for them - all for our good.*

Father, give me a thankful heart,
To taste and know how good Thou art;
O lead me to Thy mercy seat,
To comprehend Thy love so meet;
The length and breadth and depth and height,
Of love amazing infinite.

August 3
EVENING

"O when wilt Thou come unto me?" Ps 101:2

"IN THY PRESENCE IS FULNESS OF JOY." The presence of the Lord is nothing but heaven to His people. They cannot be satisfied or happy without it. He is the object of their love, the source of their happiness, the centre of their desires and the life of their souls. If He is present all is well, but if He is absent nothing can yield them satisfaction. They are restless, their souls can find no repose, their desires unfilled. The reasons are many: in His favour is life, in His fellowship is wealth and peace; in His presence is fulness of joy, safety, rest, contentment and victory. His presence promotes their sanctification, enlarges their hearts and ripens the fruits of grace. It proves the excellency of their holy faith. The Lord now visits His people. They sometimes lose the blessing of His presence. Having once enjoyed it, they cannot but long for it again. The pleading, longing, importunate soul shall be satisfied. Reader, have you been blessed with the presence of God? Do you enjoy it now? Can you find any substitute for it? Are you crying with David, *"My soul followeth hard after Thee?"* Or, *"O when wilt Thou come unto me?"* Or, *"Let Thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live; for Thy law is my delight?"*

My thirsty soul with strong desires,
To God, the living God, aspires;
Come, gracious Lord, and let me know,
The joys which from Thy presence flow.

August 4
MORNING

"Thou shalt know hereafter" Jn 13:7

THE WAYS OF THE LORD ARE PERFECT. In our present state of imperfection, we are often at a loss to explain many things in our feelings, in our circumstances, and in the Lord's dealings with us; but what we know not now, we shall know hereafter, when the Comforter, the Spirit of knowledge and wisdom is come. This is our Saviour's promise; let us take the comfort of it, and expect its fulfilment to our perfect satisfaction by and by. We shall know some things before the coming of our Lord, and we shall know all things after. Every difficulty will then be cleared up, and all the hidden ways of God and His divine providence will be clearly revealed. Let us therefore be patient and wait for the Lord's time; the coming of our Lord draws nigh. Let us silently submit to the Father's will, for we shall see that it was wise and best. Let us acknowledge God's sovereignty to conceal the method of His working, until He has fully accomplished His designs. Let us praise Him for all that is past, and trust Him for all that is to come. *"Now we see through a glass darkly, but we shall soon see Him face to face; now we know but in part, then shall we know even as also we are known."* May the Lord direct our hearts into His knowledge, and into patient waiting for Christ.

Jesus, we love Thy sovereign hand,
Thy faithful care we own;
Wisdom and love are all Thy ways,
When most to us unknown;
To Thee we cheerfully resign
For Thou art ours, and we are Thine.

August 4
EVENING

"O that God would speak!" Job 11:5

JOB'S FRIENDS WERE MISERABLE COMFORTERS. They misread his case. They failed to convince or to comfort him by their reasonings. They wanted to know the truth behind Job's suffering, therefore one of them at length exclaims, "*O that God would speak!*" Thus the believer often exclaims: it supposes a desire to be enlightened, a persuasion of the insufficiency of all but God, a legitimate and reasonable curiosity. To whom may we desire God to speak? To *ourselves*, to assure us of our interest in His love, to relieve us under our distresses and to establish us in the truth; to *sinner*s to quicken them, to convert them, and to bring them over to the Lord's side; to *mourners*, to comfort them, to strengthen them and to set them at liberty; to *backsliders*, to reprove and restore them to holiness, to happiness, and to usefulness. What does the exclamation teach us? Confidence in God: that we should apply to God in time of perplexity. Tried believer, God will speak *for* you. Devoted Christian, God will speak *with* you. How does He speak? By His *word*, by His *providence*, by His *Spirit*. Then let us listen to His *voice*. Let us plead with Him often to speak by His *preachers*, by His *ordinances*, by His *word*, and by every *dispensation*.

Sweet is the voice of God's own peace
Borne by the Gospel's welcome sound;
Lord let me leave this life of ease
To bear Thy message as Thou please,
To ends of earth where man is found,
With fervent love and never cease.

August 5
MORNING

"He will ever be mindful of His covenant" Ps 111:5

OUR LORD IS A COVENANT KEEPING GOD. By His covenant, He is reconciled to His people; He is at peace with them, and dwells among them, through the work of Jesus. He has made a covenant in which they have an interest, from which all their blessings flow, and on which their confidence is founded. Of this covenant, God is ever mindful. He is mindful of the sacrifice of Jesus as our surety; of the relationship in which He was pleased to manifest Himself as our Father; of the state in which He viewed us as wretched lost sinners; of the provision He made for His own glory and our needs; of the promise made to Jesus including all the promises made to us; of the oath He swore, that He would not be angry with us; of the blood of His Son, as the victim slain to confirm and ratify it; of the end He had in view in making it, even the display of all His glorious perfections, our eternal salvation. He will ever be mindful of His covenant: He cannot forget it; He will not act contrary to it, but will confirm it even to the end. *Beloved, let us also be ever mindful of His covenant.*

Firmer than heaven His covenant stands,
Tho' earth should shake, and skies depart;
We're safe in our Redeemer's hands,
Who bears our name upon His heart;
For us He lived, and died, and rose,
And triumphed over all our foes.

August 5
EVENING

"Doing the will of God from the heart" Eph 6:6

GOD'S WILL IS BEST AND PERFECT. To know and to do, is every man's supreme duty and delight. The will of God concerning a sinner is, that he should believe Him, love Him, obey Him. His will concerning a believer is, that he should reverence His authority, receive His word and observe His precepts. God's preceptive will revealed in the New Testament is plain, and that is to be the rule of our conduct. Here is a duty to be performed, to do the will of God: to do it, though it excite the opposition of our fellow men, though it cross our natural inclinations. We are to do the Father's will, to perform the Master's command, to keep our Sovereign's laws, to obey our Saviour's precepts. The manner in which that will is to be done is also pointed out: *from the heart*. As every evil proceeds from the heart *depraved by sin*, so every good thing proceeds from the heart *renewed by grace*. "*Doing the will of God from the heart*," that is, not by constraint but willingly, *from the heart*, that is, from conviction, from love; we should do it heartily, throwing all our energies into it. Beloved, are you seeking to know the will of God? Are you willing to do it *from the heart*?

Be Christ my pattern and my guide,
His image may I bear;
O may I tread His sacred steps,
And His bright glories share!

August 6
MORNING

"Come ye near unto me" Isa 48:16

"ABIDE IN ME, AND I IN YOU." The believer's happiness and Jehovah's pleasure are united; we are only happy as we are near to Him, and He is only pleased as we cleave unto Him. He has taken us into a near relationship as His children, His people, and His beloved bride; He has represented our union by the most striking figures: the *branch* in the *vine*, the *member* with the *head*, and the *building* with the *foundation*. He has made His name our strong tower, His Son our fountain of goodness, and His secret place our home. In living near to Him, we enjoy the sweetest comforts, possess unutterable peace, realise the fullest liberty, and find safety and rest. Our assurances, light, holiness, and strength come from His presence; our misery, wretchedness, and woe, from living at a distance from Him. He invites us this morning, as Jacob did his beloved son, "*Come near unto me.*" He intends to bless us as the patriarch did his child; to reveal Himself unto us; to show us His covenant and secret; to make us understand His will and word; to preserve us from all evil, fill us with all grace, and conform us fully to His image.

When trials vex my troubled mind,
Lord, to Thy bleeding side I'll flee;
No shelter can I elsewhere find,
No peace or comfort but in Thee:
To Thee my cause I recommend,
On Thee for future grace depend.

August 6
EVENING

"Wait thou only upon God" Ps 62:5

WHAT DOES WAITING UPON GOD SUPPOSE?

Dependence: it is the posture of a subject, a servant, a child. *Promise:* many things are promised us: indeed, all good things. But we must believe, feel our need, seek for God's blessings, await God's time. *Hope:* it is the expectation that brings us to God, keeps us waiting upon God, and is the spring of all spiritual action. *Desire:* unless I desire to receive from God, I shall not look to God, nor shall I wait upon God. *Obedience:* we are commanded to wait upon the Lord, and the neglect of this duty is sin. What does waiting upon the Lord include? It includes faith in His word, supplication at His throne, attendance upon His ordinances, habitual looking out for answers to prayer, and the working of God on our behalf, eyeing God in all places, and in all things; acknowledging Him as the source and giver of all good things. Let us review the injunction. *"Wait thou only upon God."* Then and only then are you safe, holy, wealthy, content, thriving, and happy. Wait on the Lord for all you need, in all you do, and especially when perplexed and troubled. *The waiting soul is a blessed soul.*

With steadfast faith on Thee I'll wait
To see Thy smile again;
Of those who wait,
'Twill ne'er be said,
They sought the Lord in vain.

August 7
MORNING

"Surely I come quickly" Rev 22:20

HISTORY IS DRAWING TO A CLOSE. The Lord of History is coming to earth a second time in power and great glory. From heaven He speaks to cheer us. He is Immanuel, to whom we are betrothed in righteousness, judgment, lovingkindness, tender mercies, and faithfulness. It is our Saviour, who saved us by His death, and preserves us by His life. He will come shortly, the event cannot be far distant. He will come gladly, with delight and pleasure, to receive us to Himself. *"Surely,"* He says, *"I come quickly," and is it not a source of supreme joy to us? Does it not excite and draw forth our holy expectation?* He comes to end our persecutions, to silence our complaints, to conform us to His image, to fill us with His joy, and to clothe us with His glory. Do we say with the church, *"Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus"*? Or, are we indifferent about His coming? He says, *"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."* Let us look for, and hasten unto, the coming of the day of God. He comes for our redemption. *His coming completes our salvation. O glorious day!*

Fly, ye seasons, fly still faster:
Let God's glorious day come on,
When we shall behold our Saviour
Seated on His heavenly throne!
When He our blessed Lord and Master
Shall descend to claim His own.

August 7
EVENING

"Those that hope in His mercy" Ps 147:11

MERCY SYMPATHISES WITH MISERY. The miserable are the objects of God's mercy. God has revealed His mercy to us in Jesus, in whom it appears in its tenderness, plenitude, constancy, and power. We can expect nothing from justice for we have sinned; but we may expect everything from mercy, for God delighteth in it. The first thing the sinner seeks for is mercy; and the last thing the saint appeals to is mercy. There are many who have not the assurance of faith; they cannot say, *"He loved me and gave Himself for me."* They feel as if they dared not call God, *"Father."* It appears presumption in them to claim the promises, appropriate the doctrines, or to say, *"The Lord is my God."* But they do hope in God's mercy. Mercy cheers them, encourages them, and gives them joy. Because God shows mercy to sinners through Jesus, they hope He will show mercy to them. They are not sure that they shall be saved, but they are looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. How precious to them then is the fact, that *"the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy."* He is pleased to hear them call, and to those who call *He will give answer.*

Ye souls who fear His name, 'tis you
The glorious Lord delights to view:
And they, who on His mercies rest,
Shall with His richest gifts be blest.

August 8
MORNING

"Owe no man any thing" Rom 13:8

CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT MAKE RASH SPECULATIONS. Incurring reckless debts is as much a breach of the divine precept as robbery. Every believer should live within his means and not bring disgrace on his Christian faith by contracting debts which he has no means to pay. If he has done so, he should be very humble; he should confess his sin before God, and pray to be enabled to fulfil his obligations. It is not necessary that he should make a public confession, but it is necessary that he should honour the doctrine of God his Saviour. He that is in debt, and is not grieved by it, humbled under it, and striving to extricate himself from it, is a very suspicious character, whatever profession he may make. Our God says, and He speaks to all who profess His name, *"Owe no man any thing but love."* A Christian's payments should be prompt and punctual; his word should be as firm as a bond, and his promise as sacred as an oath. O may our God bring back His people to primitive simplicity! May they all be slow to promise, quick to perform, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Let those who bear the Christian name
 Their holy vows fulfil;
Let saints, the followers of the Lamb,
 Be men of honour still.
Their Saviour's precepts they obey,
 And hasten to the judgment day.

August 8
EVENING

"It pleased God" Gal 1:15

PAUL'S EXPERIENCE PERHAPS IS YOURS AS WELL. The apostle is speaking of being separated from his mother's womb, of being called by grace, of Christ being revealed in him, and of his being made a preacher and an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. He traces up the whole process to the pleasure of God. It pleased God to convert, consecrate, and crown the Apostle with much eminent success. There was nothing in him to deserve it, nothing to move God to do it. He did it just because He would, because it pleased Him to do it. So is our case. Do we differ from others? From our former selves? Who made us to differ? Have we spiritual gifts and graces? Why were they conferred upon us, and not on others? We can trace it to no cause but the sovereign good pleasure of God. He has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and has compassion because He will have compassion. When all have more than they deserve, none have cause to complain. But where some are peculiarly favoured, it becomes them to trace their favours to their proper source, and be grateful. *"The Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake, because it pleased the Lord to make them His people."*

Our gracious God the work hath wrought,
With awful price we have been bought;
At Calvary's cross it pleased the Lord
To bruise His Son, begotten Word,
There justice met with mercy free,
God's pardon flowed to you and me.

August 9
MORNING

"That He might deliver us from this present evil world" Gal 1:4

THE WHOLE WORLD LIETH IN BONDAGE OF THE WICKED ONE. We also were once in bondage, dead in sin, and buried in corruption; but Jesus Christ intervened for us. *"He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from the present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."* The present world is evil; thank God we are delivered from it. Jesus died to deliver us from its spirit by which we were held in a state of corruption; to deliver us from the love of the world which is enmity with God; from seeking satisfaction in the world, which is idolatry; from its impending doom, which is eternal destruction. He purposed to raise us above it, in our desires and pursuits; to lead us through it, and glorify us beyond it. Let us inquire this morning, *"Are we of the world, or have we been delivered from it? Have we a new spirit in us? Are we become dead to the world by fellowship with Christ in His death? Is Jesus loved, praised, and obeyed, out of gratitude for delivering us?"*

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee:
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shall be:
Thou hast my deliverer been,
I have Thy salvation seen.

August 9
EVENING

"What do ye more than others?" Matt 5:47

BLESSINGS RECEIVED ARE DUTIES REQUIRED. What do you possess more than others? Look around at the asylum, at the prison, at the hospital, at the sick room, at the hovel. Look at the blind, the deaf, the lame, the dumb, the insane. Look back at what saints once were called to endure; see the wanderer covered only with a sheep skin, the confessor in his dungeon, the martyr at the stake, the praying slave under the lash of his cruel master. Look at thy heart, at the Bible, at the sanctuary. Look up into heaven. Look down into hell. Now count your mercies! *Have you not received much? What do you profess more than others?* Surely your principles are far better than those of the worldling, the pagan, and many professed Christians. You profess to give the Lord your heart, your head, your hand, your life, your property, your all. *What do you more than others? For the poor, the church, the world, the young? For the spread of the gospel, and the honour of Christ? Do you do more than some heathens, or idolaters, or worldlings?* You know more than others. You talk more than others. More is expected from you than others. *"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."*

Where is the holy walk that suits
The name and character we bear?
And where are seen those heavenly fruits
That show we're not what once we were?

August 10
MORNING

"O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul" Ps 116:4

"SALVATION IS OF THE LORD." Jonah's prayer is ours when in dire distress. The prayer of faith is generally short and to the point. It takes the soul before God in its real state and true character. It pleads with Him for what is really needed, what must be had. The believer needs deliverance and in faith he cries to God for it. His language is, *"O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul from doubts and fears, which continually beset me; from a spirit of bondage, which daily binds me; deliver me from Satan who worries, harasses, and hinders me; deliver me from the sin which so easily besets me; deliver me from men who would injure or mislead me; from my own feelings which daily trouble me."* Thus the Lord is acknowledged as the great deliverer; our own inability is openly confessed; in Christ our Lord, our trials and troubles are sanctified; the legitimate tendency of grace is discovered by the earnestness, simplicity, importunity, and success of our prayers. Be this our daily cry until deliverance be no longer needed; for our God says, *"Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee."*

O for that tenderness of heart
Which humbly bows before the Lord;
Acknowledges how just Thou art,
And trembles at Thy holy word!
Saviour, to me in mercy give
Thy Spirit's power for Thee to live.

August 10
EVENING

"Is not the Lord your God with you?" 1 Chr 22:18

"LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS." Our Lord's parting promise is precious beyond words. It is our privilege to have the Lord always with us. He is pledged to us by promise. He has said, *"I am with you always. I will never leave you nor forsake you."* He is with you as a Father to care for you; as the omnipotent God to defend you. He is with you to counsel you in difficulty, to guide you in perplexity, to strengthen you in weakness, to deliver you in danger and to comfort you in all your tribulations. Your God has always proved Himself true to His word. *Is not your Lord your God with you?* Poor Christian! Tempted soul! Tried believer! *Is not your God with you?* Who sustains you? Who supplies you? Who preserves you from despair? He is with you. Trust in Him. If the Lord be with you, you are a match for Satan, for the world, for every trouble, yea, for death itself. Believe with all your heart that God is with you. Say, *"The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge; therefore will we not fear. I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation."*

With us is He, the Lord of Hosts,
Our God, unchanging as of old;
My soul of His faithfulness boasts,
In Him my refuge I behold!

August 11
MORNING

"Heirs of the kingdom" Jas 2:5

WE ARE CALLED TO GOD'S EVERLASTING KINGDOM; such is the marvel of our Lord's invitation to "*whosoever will*." He raised the poor from the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill; such were we by nature, but through rich grace we shall inherit the throne of glory. He has prepared for us, promised to us, and will bestow upon us a kingdom, a kingdom in which His glory will be seen, felt, and enjoyed for ever; a kingdom in which all His riches of grace, mercy, and glory will be displayed; in which peace, joy, and pleasure will eternally reign; a kingdom which cannot be moved and will never change. But who are the acknowledged heirs? The despised of this world who are poor in spirit; the rich in faith who believe in God and Jesus, who exercise faith in His precious promises, and whose faith is proved to be genuine by the works they produce. Those who love God from a knowledge of His love to them, and as the effect of His love being shed abroad by the Holy Ghost in their hearts. *Am I an heir? Are you, my friend?* If so, rejoice and be exceeding glad; follow in the steps of those who through faith and patience now inherit the promises, and the end will be a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

In heaven I shall with rapture see
My blessed Lord who died for me;
Who died to ransom, lived to raise
To crowns of joy, and songs of praise;
Jesus, to Thee I breathe my prayer!
In thee I have an interest there.

August 11
EVENING

"I have loved you" Jn 13:34

THE LOVE OF CHRIST IS INEXHAUSTIBLE. He loved us before we knew Him, and He manifested His love by taking our part, preferring our nature to that of angels, by taking our flesh and blood, and making a full and sufficient atonement for our sins, by conquering our spiritual foes, by going to heaven as our forerunner, by sending down the Holy Spirit, by acting as our advocate and intercessor, and by sympathising with us. He manifested His love to us in that while we were yet enemies to God He died for us. He bore with us while under conviction of sin. He only chastens when He might justly punish us. He restores us from all our backslidings. He works for us and supplies all our needs. He rejoices to save us though great sinners we were. He does everything necessary for us and does all cheerfully. His love is seen in what He yet intends to do: He will come and fetch us as our heavenly Bridegroom. He will separate us from all sinners. He will clothe us with glory. He will publicly receive us as His bride. He will exalt us to His throne. He will bring us to reign where we served, to rejoice where we suffered, and to shine where we were put to shame.

God loves the world of sinners lost,
And ruined by the fall;
Salvation's gift at highest cost,
He offers free to all.

Love sends the glorious message in,
To contrite hearts made known:
God has forgiven every sin
Through faith in Christ alone.

August 12

Morning

"Thou shalt see greater things than these" Jn 1:50

WITHOUT THE ILLUMINATION OF GOD'S SPIRIT, WE SEE IMPERFECTLY. When the eyes of our understanding are opened by the eternal Spirit, we begin to see out of darkness and obscurity. Now our sight is obscured: we have seen but little yet, for there is much more to be revealed by and by. We shall see greater depths of sin in our nature, and greater depths of grace in the person of Christ. We shall have clearer evidences of interest in Jesus, and see more of His love to us. We shall experience the cleansing efficacy of His precious blood to a greater extent and see the power of His arm displayed more visibly for our deliverance. We shall see more of the emptiness, vanity, and deceitfulness of the world, and have greater reason to rejoice that we have been delivered from it. We shall see greater things in our Bibles and feel ourselves under greater obligation to the Holy Spirit for His teaching. We shall see Christ descending, the present world order abolished, and the glories of eternity unfolding. Let us seek greater things, for Jesus has promised them. Let us daily pray, *"What I know not teach Thou me."*

O Lord, how little do we know,
Or of Thy goodness can we tell?
While we continue here below,
And in these earthly houses dwell!
When wilt Thou take us up above
To see Thee, Saviour, God of love?

August 12
EVENING

"Give an account of thy stewardship" Lk 16:2

A DAY OF RECKONING IS COMING SOON. Today we are in office, appointed by the Lord. He looks for trust and faithfulness. We need to exercise the head, the heart, the hands and feet. A steward should be active, faithful, diligent, always with the day of reckoning in view. Then we must give an account. We may be called upon to do so suddenly. Our Lord is coming and we must give an account of our time, how it has been occupied, for or against Him; of our talents, how engaged. We must give an account of our money, our powers, our understanding, our will and affections, our conduct toward others and toward God, even the thoughts and sentiments we entertain and how we have used our opportunities for God. Beloved, you are a steward; *do you realize this?* Your Bible is the Master's rule, and your directory: *do you search it as such?* Opportunities of service are tests and trials which prove your spirit and disposition: *do you view them as such?* The day of the Lord is at hand; then all our accounts will be settled and every *faithful steward will have praise of God.*

All righteous and eternal Judge,
When summoned at Thy bar to stand,
May I acquitted and approved,
Be crowned with bliss at Thy right hand.

August 13
MORNING

"Men shall be blessed in Him" Ps 72:17

TRUE BLESSINGS ARE FOUND IN CHRIST ALONE. Everything outside of Christ is under the curse; all blessings are treasured up *in Him*, and can only be received and enjoyed by union to and communion with Him. If *in Him*, He of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; if separate from Him, our work will profit us nothing. How important then is union to Jesus! All who are *in Him* are blessed with the favour of God which compasses them as a shield, with access to God as to a kind and loving Father, with the friendship of God, for He calls them not servants but friends, and His friendship is the rarest treasure. All who are *in Him* are blessed with justification before God, as the great lawgiver and Judge, and with sanctification by God, to the praise, honour, and glory of His grace. And ultimately *in Him* they will be glorified together with God through eternal ages. All things are theirs and for them is laid up a crown of righteousness which fadeth not away; a treasure in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, where thieves do not break through nor steal. O blessed state! O happy persons! This honour have all the saints - *in Him*.

Blessings abound where Jesus reigns,
The pris'ner leaps to lose his chains;
The weary find eternal rest,
And we the sons of God are blest;
In Him the tribes of Adam boast,
More blessings than their father lost.

August 13
EVENING

"Ye are the children of the Lord your God" Deut 14:1

"THE SPIRIT BEARS WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT, THAT WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD." Amazing thought, that we are children of God! How can this be? When we received the Lord, we were born again, given a new nature, producing new desires, new tastes, new sorrows, new joys, new pursuits; now we are taught of God, having received the Spirit of adoption. Children should believe what their Father says, do what their Father bids, go where their Father sends; they should trust His loving care, abide in His promises and look for His supplies. What comfort such a relationship affords! You are not, you cannot be friendless. You should not despond, but remember, in all your trials, the Father loves you. In poverty think of the Father's wealth; under reproaches, remember your royal sonship; in sickness, think of your happy home; in death, your endless life. *"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."*

Lord may a sense of all Thy grace
My best affections move;
And while my lips proclaim Thy praise,
My heart will sing Thy love.

August 14
MORNING

"In the day of adversity consider" Eccl 7:14

OUR WILDERNESS SOJOURN IS MARKED BY CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES. The Lord's people are strangers and pilgrims here. Sometimes prosperity calls for rejoicing, and sometimes *adversity* calls for soul searching. If prayer appears to be unheard, our petitions seem to be denied, and we do not sense the power of our faith, it is the *day of adversity*. If providence frowns and the heart becomes heavy, it is a *day of adversity*; now we should consider, *"Is there not a cause?"* What is it? Has sin gained an entry? or is mercy slighted? or duty neglected? or self uplifted? Is it the hand of God moving to correct, reprove, and restore us? How should we respond? Let us humble ourselves, justify our God, confess our sin, lament our folly, crave His pardon, and plead for restoration. It is our comfort to know that the Lord calls us to return, declares that He is ready to forgive, promises a gracious reception, and assures us He will heal our backslidings and pardon us freely. Let us in faith look for His blessing.

Of my extreme distresses
The author is the Lord;
Whate'er His wisdom pleases,
His name be still adored.
If still He tries my patience,
And to the utmost prove,
Yet all His dispensations
Are faithfulness and love.

August 14
EVENING

"Give, and it shall be given unto you" Lk 6:38

GOD GAVE US HIS SON: HE GAVE US HIS LIFE. To us our Lord says, "Give!" The Teacher of this precept has set us the example. *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."* In Him we see an illustration of the promise. *"He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name."* The precept is "give." Be liberal. Give to every good cause if you have the means. Give from a good motive. Give with a good end in view, as to fulfil a necessary duty, or to promote the welfare of mankind, or to honour God. Give by a good rule according as God has given you. The promise is, *"It shall be given you."* Who is it makes the promise? He who can fulfil it, for He is rich; He who will fulfil it, for He is good; He who must fulfil it, for He is faithful. The promise is made to every liberal soul. The promise extends to body and soul, to time and eternity. Its extent is *"good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over."*

If blessing be thy hope
Disperse thy wealth abroad;
The worldling prospers hoarding up,
The Christian gives to God!

August 15
MORNING

"The expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever"

Ps 9:18

"WITH CHRIST AN ENDLESS HOPE; WITHOUT CHRIST A HOPELESS END." The promises of God in Christ our Lord raise the expectation of His people and His providence tries it; what the promises have engaged to give, providence seems slow to bestow. But God is faithful. We may expect the Lord to appear for us in every trouble if our faith is fixed on His word and prayer is daily sent up to His throne. We may expect to be supported under all our trials and to be supplied with all necessary good, if we make God our portion and seek only to glorify Him. We may expect to be pardoned, justified, and saved, if we believe with the heart, confess with the mouth the Lord our Saviour, and walk according to our profession. God knows our expectations, Jesus pleads that they may be realized; and nothing shall be able to turn away the bountiful hand of our God. He will regard the cry of the destitute and will not despise their prayer. Our fears may be strong and our doubts may be many; but our security is in the character, the word and work of our God and Saviour. He will not fail us nor forsake us, until He has done all that He has spoken.

Soon the delightful day will come,
When my dear Lord will take me home,
And I shall see His face;
Then, with my Saviour, Master, Friend,
A blest eternity I'll spend,
Triumphant in His grace.

August 15
EVENING

"He will keep the feet of His saints" 1 Sam 2:9

"THOU WILT KEEP HIM IN PERFECT PEACE, WHOSE MIND IS STAYED ON THEE." And whose minds are stayed on the Lord but the saints'? The saints are the sanctified ones, those who were set apart by the Father for His praise; who were separated by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; who are regenerated, purified, and called out of the world by the agency and operation of the Holy Spirit. They are not of the world even as Jesus was not of the world. But though thus privileged they are entirely dependent on the Lord. Their keeping is of God, for no one else is sufficient to preserve them. Their weakness is very great, their road is rough, thorny, and dangerous. Their foes are many, vigilant, crafty and determined. Their fears are great, their courage small. Still they are safe, for the Lord is their keeper. He keeps them from pride, presumption, and final falling. He keeps them by His word, by His Spirit, through trials, disappointments and bereavements; He keeps them by His angels and by His ordinances. They are safe whom God keeps. He keeps all His saints, without exception. But He keeps none but saints, therefore false professors fall.

Saviour! I trust Thy 'mazing grace,
To uphold my goings in Thy ways;
Till walking with my God I see
The glorious place prepared for me.

August 16
MORNING

"Remember the Lord" Neh 4:14

WE REMEMBER HIM BECAUSE HE FIRST REMEMBERED US. He is also the great author of your faith, and the only proper object of your love and worship. Remember the promises He has made, the deliverances He has wrought, the blessings He has conferred, the invitations He has given, and the relations He now fills. Remember Him in calamity, to trust Him; in prosperity, to praise Him; in danger, to call upon Him; in difficulty, to expect His deliverance. Remember to obey His commands, to attend to His exhortations, to keep His company, to seek His blessings, and to aim at His glory in all you do. Remember Him, for it is your duty, your privilege. Remember Him in order to strengthen your faith, as an antidote to your fears, as a source of encouragement to your souls, and as a preventive against sin. Remember He is holy, just, and good; and He will be glorified in all them that draw nigh unto Him. Whatever or whoever you forget, always *"Remember the Lord."* He is your life, your strength, your portion, your God, your all. Remember Him for He never forgets you; cleave to Him for He will never forsake you.

O may I e'er from sin depart!
A wise and understanding heart
To me, dear Lord, be given!
And let me through Thy Spirit know
To glorify my God below,
And fix my eye on heaven!

August 16
EVENING

"In Thy righteousness shall they be exalted" Ps
89:16

THE LORD IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Of ourselves we have none, but our Lord has provided a righteousness for us, which He freely gives and we receive by faith. Our faith is peculiar, for we are wise in the wisdom of another, even our Head. We are rich in the wealth of another, even our Lord, and we are righteous in the righteousness of another, even the righteousness of our Saviour. This magnifies the law, fills the soul with joy, and endures for ever. In this righteousness we are exalted above the condemning power of the law, above the wicked designs of Satan, above the present evil world, and above the sting and power of death. It exalts us to peace and friendship with God, to the adoption of children, to boldness and access into the presence of God, to sit in the heavenlies with Christ, and to endless glory. It exalts our views of God's character and perfections, and of Jesus in His person, work, and love. Let us prize this righteousness, daily wear it, and plead it always for acceptance with God. It is our wedding dress, our impenetrable shield, and our title to the heavenly mansions.

Let others in the pompous dress
Of fancied merit shine;
The Lord alone my righteousness,
The Lord for ever mine.

August 17
MORNING

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" Isa 30:15

QUIETNESS IMPLIES SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL. It also supposes waiting upon the Lord as directed by His word. It is the believer's duty to be silent before God while He is working, being assured that his best interests are secured by God's promises, and that all things will be made plain by and by. He should abide in the Lord's word, and rely on His wisdom, love, and power. Our *confidence* must arise from God's word, knowledge of His dealings with His people, and the relation in which He stands to us. We may be confident, for God who has spoken is true, and has confirmed His word in every generation. Quiet *confidence* in God will give us strength; putting His love and faithfulness to the test, we honour Him by our *confidence*. On His part, He will honour us by appearing for us. Let us endeavour to be still before Him, when He is glorified in His holy habitation. Let us wait for Him, for it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. Beware of complaining or murmuring against God.

When, my Saviour, shall I be
Totally conformed to Thee?
Poor and vile in my own eyes,
Only in Thy wisdom wise;
Daily walking in Thy light,
Daily resting in Thy might!

August 17

EVENING

"Continue in prayer" Col 4:2

"MEN OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY AND NOT TO FAINT."

So says our Lord. Prayer is always necessary for it is always profitable. But we often restrain prayer, and this is sinful. It dishonours God and hurts ourselves. In prayer we do homage to the perfections of God. We exercise faith in His omnipresence. We express our dependence on Him for our supplies. We show the sincerity of our profession. We acknowledge our poverty and deficiencies. We unburden the mind of our daily trials. We give vent to our feelings of joy and sorrow, of gratitude and grief. We confess our sins, acknowledge our backslidings, and obtain pardon and restoring grace. We give utterance to our desires, and spread our case before the Lord. Prayer is the medium of communication between God and our souls; to Him we communicate our thoughts, feelings, fears, and desires; to us He communicates light, strength, comfort, and grace. Prayer is a vital and blessed duty; it is a high privilege. Many things conspire to cause us to neglect it. But in prayer we should be constant, fervent, believing, hoping, steadfast. God loves it, Satan hates it, and every true Christian values it. It is always necessary and profitable to us, and acceptable to God.

We perish if we cease from prayer,
Lord, grant us power to pray!
And when to meet Thee we prepare,
O meet us by the way!

August 18
MORNING

*"The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him" Ps
145:18*

TRUE PRAYER IS CALLING UPON GOD. He is our Father: we are His children. We have nothing; He has all things to bestow, and is willing to give them. From a sense of need, we call on the Lord to supply; from a sense of weakness, we call on Him for strength; from a sense of guilt, we call on Him for pardon. Being diseased, we cry for healing; being troubled we ask for comfort and peace; being in distress we plead for relief and deliverance. We go to Jesus at His invitation, to plead His promise, and find Him faithful. Our God is always near the praying soul, not merely as the omnipresent Jehovah, but as our faithful Friend. He is near us, lovingly to listen to what we have to lay before Him; mercifully to relieve our miseries, no matter what they be; graciously to help in every difficulty or danger. Beloved, our God is near us. He is attentive to us this morning; let us lay all our concerns before Him: He loves to listen to the oft told tale; He has patience with us, blessings for us, and will do us good.

O Lord, each day renew my strength,
And let me see Thy face at length,
With all Thy people yonder;
With them in heaven Thy love declare,
And sing Thy praise for ever there,
With gratitude and wonder.

August 18

EVENING

"The upright love Thee" Song 1:4

NONE ARE UPRIGHT BY NATURE, FOR NONE SEEK GOD. No man seeks to render to God the things which are God's, and to men the things which are men's. We speak of righteousness. It flows from grace, the proof of a new creation. The truly upright regard the eye of God as fixed upon them; the word of God as binding upon them; the approval of God as the chief thing to be sought by them; and the judgment of God as most welcome to them. The upright love Jesus. They all know Him, and highly esteem Him. They love Him uprightly, and as proof of it, they rejoice in His presence; they are grieved at His absence for they desire the closest union with Him; they aim to please Him in all things for they will give up everything for Him; they love to speak of Him; and they always speak well of Him; they will do anything for Him, perform any duty, avoid every sin. They will choose to suffer for him rather than deny or dishonour Him. *Reader, are you upright? Do you love Jesus?* You are not upright if you do not. Terrible is the denunciation of the inspired Apostle, *"If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed when the Lord cometh."*

Jesus, my balm for every ill,
My life in death Thou art;
Thy lips as lilies fair, distil
The myrrh that heals my heart.

August 19
MORNING

"My presence shall go with thee" Ex 33:14

SO THE LORD PROMISED MOSES, AND SO HE PROMISES US. Let us never venture anywhere if we have reason to think the Lord will not favour us with His presence there. The Lord's presence produces holiness, imparts power, fires with zeal and fills the breast with comfort, joy, and peace. His presence is our glory and it will yield us support under losses, setbacks, and bereavements. Let us plead for the Lord's presence to go with us; let us expect it; let us not be satisfied with anything else. He went with Moses and he persevered; with Joshua and he conquered; with David and he reached the throne; with Paul and he was more than a conqueror. Nothing can substitute for the Lord's presence and as it is so graciously promised, let us not attempt to find a substitute, but daily cry, *"If Thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence."* Jesus has said, *"If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."*

O Lord, be ever near us,
Fix in our hearts Thy home:
By Thine appearing cheer us,
And may Thy kingdom come;
Fulfil our expectation,
And help our souls to prove,
Thine uttermost salvation,
Thine everlasting love.

August 19
EVENING

"My soul refused to be comforted" Ps 77:2

IN CHRIST THERE IS NO PLACE FOR DESPAIR. God has provided suitable and sufficient comfort for His people. He sends them comforters just as their circumstances require. But they at times refuse to hear their voice. The Lord has perhaps taken away an idol, or He withholds His sensible presence, that they may learn to live by faith; or perhaps He has blighted their worldly prospects or He has written vanity and emptiness upon their own schemes, ambitions and delights. They give way to passion, as did Jonah; or they sink into sullen gloom or allow haughty pride to rule the spirit, or yield to extreme sorrow, as Rachel did; or they fall under the power of temptation or imbibe the notion, that they have no right to comfort. *This is wrong, all wrong, decidedly wrong.* Look at what is left you: at what the gospel presents to you; at what heaven will be to you. But the Psalmist was convinced that he was wrong. He was sorry for his sin. He was reformed in his spirit and conduct. He wrote this psalm to instruct, caution, and warn. Observe, they who are entitled to all comfort, often through their own folly, enjoy the least.

O Thou fount of every blessing,
Chase my sorrows, cheer my heart,
Till in heaven, Thy smile possessing,
Life and joy and peace impart.

August 20
MORNING

"The Lord preserveth all them that love Him" Ps
145:20

ALL WHO KNOW THE LORD LOVE HIM. None can love Him except they are taught by His Spirit. If we know God in Christ as our covenant God, and enjoy our interest in Him, we shall love Him supremely, above our natural relations, earthly possessions, gifts and reputation. We discover in Him greater glory, infinite worth, pre-eminent beauty, and unsurpassed excellence. Those who love Him are preserved by Him. He preserves them in trouble from its ill effects, from the world's spirit and doom, and from enemies near and far. His lovingkindness and truth will continually preserve them; yea, He will preserve them unto His kingdom and glory. But He preserves us in every circumstance. Let us therefore walk before Him, confide in Him, wait upon Him. Let us enquire of our own hearts, *"Do we truly love the Lord? Are we desiring to love Him? Are we preserved from sin, the world, and all evil?"* If so, we must ascribe it to free and sovereign grace; if not, let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. He bids us come.

Infinite grace! celestial charms,
Witness in awe ye lofty skies!
Jesus, the Son, extends His arms,
Hangs on the cross of shame and dies;
Such sacrifice my passions move:
This heart can scarce fathom God's love.

August 20
EVENING

"He is faithful that promised" Heb 10:23

THE PROMISES OF GOD WERE FREELY MADE. Being freely made, they will be freely fulfilled, for our God is faithful. He has promised us eternal life, the pardon of sin, purity of heart, peace of mind, growth in grace, perseverance in adversity, support under all trials, supplies for all our wants and that all things shall work together for our good. These promises in Christ are *yea* and *amen*, and we may trust the Lord to make them good. He is faithful to His promises: this is clear from the infinite perfection of His nature, the stability of His everlasting covenant, His solemn oath, the mediation of His beloved Son, and the operation of the Spirit. All these tell us that God's promises are sure to all His children. Let us therefore remember, that, *"faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."* Believe that *"the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from all evil."* And let us commit the keeping of our souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. We cannot place too much confidence in His word, nor too steadfastly expect its fulfilment. Heaven and earth may pass away, but His words shall not pass away. *Our Lord is called Faithful and True.*

True to His word, God gave His Son
To die for crimes which men had done:
Blest pledge! He never will revoke
A single promise which He spoke.

August 21
MORNING

"Shall not God avenge His own elect?" Lk 18:7

"VENGEANCE IS MINE; I WILL REPAY, SAITH THE LORD." The Lord's people are often oppressed; they are tempted to be revengeful, but they are forbidden from such action. When fallen under man's wrath, remember you are the object of God's love; when men oppress you, rest assured that He is with you, your faithful Friend. Take your case to Him, spread the whole matter before Him; plead with Him, and then rest assured that He will appear for you. The master will intervene for the servant he values, the parent for the child he loves, and the husband for the spouse of his choice. *"And shall not God avenge His own elect? I tell you He will avenge them speedily."* Cry to Him day and night; look to no other quarter for deliverance; never harbour unholy feelings, but pray for grace to follow in the steps of your longsuffering, persecuted, and crucified Lord. Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds. He will tread all your enemies under His feet shortly for He is well able to avenge you.

Shall we distrust our faithful God
Or question His almighty power,
Because He doth not our desires
Accomplish in one little hour?
He will avenge His own elect,
And evermore His saints protect.

August 21
EVENING

"Perfect in Christ Jesus" Col 1:28

THE FULL EXTENT OF OUR LORD'S VICTORY ON THE CROSS DOES NOT YET APPEAR. While we have been delivered from sin, nevertheless the believer painfully proves that he is still far from perfect. Imperfection is stamped upon all he feels: his desires, his joys and sorrows; upon all his doings, on his prayers, his praises, his performances. What says the sigh which flies from his heart? *Imperfect!* What says the groan which ascends from his troubled breast? *Imperfect!* What says the tears which gather in his eye and roll down from his cheek? *Imperfect!* There is perfection in Christ alone. In Him there is perfect atonement to reconcile us; perfect righteousness to justify us; perfect holiness to sanctify us; perfect wisdom to instruct us. We become perfect by union to Him, for as His bride we have a part with Him in all that He has, by receiving from Him, for of His fulness we receive and grace for grace. We become perfect by being united to Him, for we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Our full perfection is decreed, promised, provided for, and will be realized. Christ now represents us as perfect. One day He will transform us, and then present us to the Father in full perfection.

With Him His members on the tree,
Fulfilled the law's demands;
'Tis *"I in them, and they in me"*,
For thus the union stands.

August 22
MORNING

"They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing"
Ps 34:10

OUR GOD KNOWS WHAT THINGS WE HAVE NEED OF BEFORE WE ASK. To us He says, *"Ask, and it shall be given."* What a comfortable promise is this to the poor, weak, and timid Christian; he has not attained to a state of full assurance, but he is seeking the Lord, and here his God promises him that he shall not want any good thing. He feels that he has no good thing in him, finds that he can do no good thing of himself, fears that good will never be enjoyed by him; but his God assures him, *no good thing shall be withheld from him.* His God will pardon his sin, justify his person, strengthen his soul, supply his needs, comfort his heart, conquer his foes, sanctify his trials, and give him victory over death. He shall not want, for God is able to supply; he cannot be neglected, for our God is true; he shall receive from the Father all that is good, and when he does, it will do him much good. Let us therefore seek the Lord, and rest assured that He will withhold from us no good thing. The silver and the gold are His, and He says, *"If ye being evil know how to give good things unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."* He is God's best gift.

If earthly parents hear
Their children when they cry,
If they with love sincere
Their children's wants supply,
Much more will God His love display,
And answer when His children pray.

August 22
EVENING

"Thou hast a little strength" Rev 3:8

SINNERS ARE WITHOUT STRENGTH. Saints are weak yet they have a little strength. Strength is provided for us in Jesus; He is the strength of the poor. Strength is promised us in the word; God says, *"I will strengthen thee."* Strength is presented to us by the gospel which says, *"Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."* Strength is to be received by faith, in answer to prayer, in the diligent employment of what we have, by virtue of our union to Jesus. We have a little strength: let us pray for more. Let us hold fast and hold on. Be grateful for the provision made, the promise given, and the welcome we receive at the throne of grace. We should use what we have against Satan, sin, and the world, and for God, and the promotion of His cause. We ought to seek for more strength. God will not refuse us. He cannot deny His word. We need more, and we may soon need more than we do at present. What a mercy that we have a little, for we were once without strength. We have a little now, we are promised enough, and we shall be strong by and by. It is sweetly promised to the saint; and to them that have no might, He increaseth strength.

Stand in the Saviour's might
With all His strength endued;
And take to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God.

August 23
MORNING

"God, even our own God, shall bless us" Ps 67:6

"PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW."

This weekly *Doxology* sung in many churches states a profound truth echoed above by the Psalmist, founded on God's pledge, binding Himself to do so in His word. He is our God by covenant, by a spiritual birth, through Christ Jesus, and at our own desire, request, and consent. He is the great God who fills heaven and earth; the all sufficient God who has all resources in Himself; the unchanging God, who is eternally the same. He takes up the cause of His people, He dignifies and ennobles them, and proves Himself gracious and merciful unto them. He blesses them indeed; and if others curse, He turns the curse into a blessing. We may rest fully assured of this pleasing fact, *"God, even our own God, will bless us."* He has done so in Christ before time, He has promised to do so through time, and even when time shall be no more. He will bless us in temporals and spirituals; He will bless us wherever we are. Let us believe His Word, and plead for its realization in due time; this will embolden us in danger, fortify us against fear, and keep us in perfect peace. Let us trust in Him, and He will bless us, and our joy in Him shall be great.

Rise, my soul, with ardour rise!
Breathe thy prayers to the skies;
Freely pour out all thy mind,
Seek, and thou art sure to find;
Ready art thou to receive,
Readier is thy God to give.

August 23
EVENING

"Acquainted with grief" Isa 53:3

"SURELY HE HATH BORNE OUR GRIEFS, AND CARRIED OUR SORROWS." This was God's plan for His own Son, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person! But He came into our world so that He might know by experience all that His people went through. He had heard of their sorrow, He had seen it in others, but He had never felt it Himself in the flesh. He took our nature, came into our place and began to suffer as soon as He was born. Thereafter, He pursued a course of suffering culminating in His death on the cross. In the sweat of His brow He ate His bread. The reproaches of them that reproached His Father, fell on Him. He became intimate with grief. He knew it in all its varieties, in all its depth. No one ever suffered so much, or from so many causes, or so constantly as He. He visited joy occasionally, but He dwelt with grief. It was His companion. Christian, thy Lord suffered for thee; He suffered like thee; He suffered far, far more than thee; and now He can sympathise with thee. He knows by experience what human nature feels. He suffered from all quarters; from heaven, earth, and hell; therefore He is able to succour thee in all thy sorrows, griefs, and woes.

As man, He pities my complaint;
His power and truth are all divine;
He will not fail, He cannot faint;
Lord, make Thy full salvation mine!

August 24
MORNING

"A living sacrifice" Rom 12:1

"YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN." The word of God has clear instructions for Christian conduct. A Christian is likened to an animal of sacrifice. When an animal was set apart for sacrifice to God, it was considered sacred, and was carefully preserved, for God must have the best. Similarly, the Christian is devoted to God, for holy use, body and soul. It is not to be defiled by any sort of uncleanness and sin such as fornication, intoxication, filthiness, and worldly practices. He belongs to the Lord, being bought with the blood of Jesus; his body is to be consecrated as the temple of the Holy Ghost, set apart for the habitation of our thrice Holy God. Therefore, the believer should not be united by marriage to an unbeliever; this is sacrilege, for his vessel belongs to God and is holy; it is rebellion, for it is plainly and positively forbidden; it is sinning wilfully and provoking the eyes of divine holiness. Neither should a believer join hands with idolaters and enemies of the gospel. It is offering insult to the God of love. Believer, present your body daily to God, washed and cleansed from defilement by obedience to His word. This is our reasonable return of gratitude to God for buying us back to Himself, by our Saviour's sacrifice at Calvary.

Lord, it is but just and right
That I should be wholly Thine;
Only in Thy will delight,
Make Thy blessed service mine;
Now my sacrifice receive,
Give me grace for Thee to live.

August 24
EVENING

"The whole family" Eph 3:15

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS ONE FAMILY. Part of it is in heaven, part on earth, and part is yet to be brought into existence. God is the Father of the whole. Every child is alike the object of His love, care, and concern. Each one lives in His sight, and is dear to His heart. He will not part with one. Jesus, who is surety for the whole, will never allow even one to be lost. But the enemy seeks ever to destroy the family. Our Lord likens Himself to a shepherd, and the family members to sheep. The sheep are always at risk because of the enemy. The apostle Paul warned of the peril of predators, coming into the fold. To the elders of the Ephesian church he said, *"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."* This fear is now come to pass in churches everywhere. False pastors and false teachers have infiltrated into the church, preaching false gospels and doctrines of devils *"not sparing the flock."* Reader, beware of *"wolves in sheep's clothing,"* and do not allow them into the family. If they are already in the fold, you need to find a sound Bible-believing church. *Think!*

Lord, may my spirit form a part
Of that thrice happy throng;
Derive its pulse from Thine own heart,
Its life with Thee - a song!

August 25
MORNING

"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities" Rom 8:26

"I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS. I WILL COME TO YOU." Our Lord is ever mindful of our need of Him, for He knows how weak and infirm we are. We are weak as we are ignorant: weak to resist evil, weak to do good, weak to take a stand for that which is right. At the same time we are beset with infirmities of body and mind: uncontrolled indulgences, worldliness, carnal lust, proud temper, indiscipline. For all this, our Lord Jesus does not give up on us but He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and sends us the Holy Spirit to assist us. He teaches us what to seek for, points us to God's precious promises and to the throne of grace where He excites us to pray, and assists us in prayer. He implants the ardent heart desire, and power to wrestle in prayer. At times we know not what we should pray for as we ought. It is then that the Holy Spirit comes to our aid, making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, but nevertheless effective before God. Thank God for His Spirit's help. Let us daily seek the Spirit to help our infirmities.

Spirit of interceding grace,
I know not how or what to pray;
Relieve my utter helplessness,
Thy power into my heart convey;
That God, acknowledging my groan,
May answer, in my prayers, His own.

August 25
EVENING

"On mine arm shall they trust" Isa 51:5

THE ARM OF FLESH IS A VAIN THING FOR ANY MAN TO TRUST. But the arm of the Lord is an everlasting arm. It is energized by omnipotence, directed by infinite wisdom, and clothed with tenderest love. It is stretched out for us to lean upon, to work for us and secure every needful supply; to fight for us and defend us from our foes. It is stretched out to carry us when we are unable to go on. It is a Father's arm, the arm of God. It is a Saviour's arm, the arm that sustains heaven and earth. It is our Master's arm, the arm that bars the gates of hell and holds every fallen spirit in check. On this arm we must trust, and not our own. We must be weaned from trusting the arm of flesh, to trust wholly and always on the Lord's. This is approved by the Word, and commanded by our God, that we trust Him in dark and difficult days; that we trust Him for all His precious promises, because when all else beside fails, the everlasting arm of God will uphold them. Let us follow the leadings of His providence, aim at the advancement of His cause, and live dependent on His bounty: this only is the way to true happiness.

Arm of the Lord, whose wondrous power
The world and all things made;
Thou art our strength, defence, and tower,
Our ever present aid.

August 26
MORNING

"The unsearchable riches of Christ" Eph 3:8

JESUS IS OUR SOVEREIGN LORD. He has devoted all His riches to us, so that the riches of Jesus are ours. *"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich."* He gave His all for our redemption, sanctification, and salvation; and now, at the right hand of the majesty on high, He continues to give liberally, and upbraideth not. He has riches of grace, riches of mercy, and riches of glory. The gift of the Spirit is with Him. He has promised freely; He has proved His readiness to bestow in the most wonderful way. Let us therefore expect great things from Him, for He has unsearchable riches. O believer, look not at your poverty, at your wants, or your circumstances, but look to Jesus; all things are under His feet, all blessings are at His disposal, and His heart is set upon you to do thee good! He will supply all your needs now, and afterwards receive you to glory. My soul, your Jesus has all you need: therefore look only to Him, and Him alone!

Possessing Christ, I all possess,
Strength, wisdom, sanctifying grace,
And righteousness complete:
Bold, in His name, I dare draw nigh,
Before the Ruler of the sky,
And all His justice meet.

August 26
EVENING

"We count them happy which endure" Jas 5:11

THE CHILD OF GOD DOES NOT ALWAYS TRAVEL A SMOOTH COURSE. At times the Father in heaven tries him. Our afflictions are His trials. Every professor shall be tried. Many faint in the day of adversity. Some go back and walk no more with the Saviour. The effect of the stroke is according to the nature of that on which it falls. The softened yields; the hardened flies. Some under discipline fall at His feet, but others fly in His face. Happy is the man who meets his trials like a Christian, with humility, faith, fortitude, and patience; happy is he who endures them without repining, complaining, and rebelling against God. He looks not at the rod but at the hand that wields it. Nor only at the hand, but at the heart that guides the hand. He says, *"It is discipline. It is chastisement. It is my Father who strikes, and He never corrects for His own pleasure but for my profit, to make me a partaker of His holiness. I have prayed for deeper sanctification, He is answering my prayer. I have desired brighter evidences for heaven, He is granting them. Shall I then complain? The cup which my heavenly Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?"* Such a man who endures affliction proves that he is a true Christian and is blessed.

There is a shelter in the storm
God has prepared in gracious measure;
What foe assails? What fear alarms?
I have a Help, this wondrous treasure -
The Everlasting Arms!

August 27
MORNING

"We should bring forth fruit unto God" Rom 7:4

"WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING." Our Lord states a vital truth. Without union to Christ we can do no good works; and until we are dead to the law we cannot be united to Christ. We must see that there is neither help nor hope for us in any law that God has given; that only grace can save us, and make us willing to take Christ as God has set Him forth in the everlasting gospel. Being united to Christ, we renounce our own name and take His; we live upon His fullness, walk by His word, and aim to please Him in all things. By His grace we perform good works; and through His merit, and His name, they are accepted as evidences of our love, proofs of our sanctification, and fruits of our oneness with Him. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him; and it becomes his meat and drink to do the will of God. Without union to Christ we can do nothing acceptable to God; being married to Him, our poor, imperfect, and (in themselves) worthless efforts, are acceptable and well pleasing to God. No union no fruit, no fruit no union! Beloved, are you bringing forth fruit unto God? Do you bring forth much fruit? Herein is our Father glorified, that we bear much fruit.

Come Jesus Lord abide in me,
Give me that wondrous life of Thine;
I am a branch, Thou art the vine,
Make me fruitful, O Lord, for Thee.

August 27
EVENING

"He preserveth the way of His saints" Prov 2:8

THE BELIEVER'S JOURNEY LIES THROUGH ENEMY COUNTRY. His course is lined with tribulation, his pilgrimage exhausting. It is rendered more trying by his own weakness and inward conflict. But it is the only way to the city of habitation. It leads to the rest and inheritance promised. And the Lord always accompanies His saints. He suits His mercies to their condition, and adapts His communications to their wants. He preserves them so that at the worst, it may be said to them, *"There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* He preserves them when buffeted by Satan, making His strength perfect in their weakness, and proving His grace sufficient for them. He preserves them with a watchful eye, a powerful arm, and a loving heart. Beloved, see how He has preserved you. Look to Him and trust Him to preserve you till journey's end. You will not be disappointed.

The saints at all times are secure
In Jesus' everlasting love;
Through Him they shall all storms endure,
And with Him reign enthroned above.

August 28
MORNING

"Being justified freely by His grace" Rom 3:24

"HOW CAN MAN BE JUST BEFORE A HOLY GOD?" This vital question has challenged thinking men through the ages. Man by nature is without righteousness; he is chargeable with many crimes; he is found guilty and condemned by God's holy law; he has no excuse to make. Before God he is speechless. But the Lord who is our Judge has devised a way by which He can be just and yet justify us. It is the way of grace. He justifies or acquits us from all charges, pronounces us righteous, accepts us, and admits us into His favour, friendship, and fellowship. He does all this freely, without anything being done or incurred by us. He presents us with the perfect finished work of Jesus by which all our debts are paid; our righteousness is wrought out, the law and government of God are honoured, and a worthy title to eternal life is freely granted. We receive this work of God by faith, and we are *"justified from all things."* Not one charge remains: there is no condemnation, but we are justified freely by grace without the works of the law.

Slain in the guilty sinner's stead,
Jesus, Thy righteousness I plead;
And Thine atoning blood,
That righteous robe o'er me shall be;
Thy merit shall avail for me,
And bring me near to God.

August 28
EVENING

"A great High Priest" Heb 4:14

THE LORD JESUS IS OUR PRIEST. He was anointed and sent to that office on our behalf. He made atonement for our sins, an atonement which is radiant with all the glories of deity, infinite in its value, and eternal in its efficacy. It has expiated our guilt, and made a perfect satisfaction for our offences. Now He is employed in interceding for us. In this work He is always engaged. He also presents our prayers, our various services, and our poor gifts to the Father, having perfumed them with the incense of His own merits. He averts every evil from us, procures every good for us, and pours down countless favours upon us. He is now in the holiest, officiating before the throne of God; He has sprinkled His blood, He offers the incense, and He will soon come to bless us. He is not only a Priest, but the *"High Priest."* Not only is He the *High Priest*, but a *"Great High Priest."* Superior to all others, in the dignity of His person, in the completeness of His qualifications, and in the efficacy of His services, He is our *Great High Priest*, and also the Son of God. He is gone into the presence of God for us, and He is before the throne pleading the merits of His blood for us tonight.

He ever lives to intercede
Before His Father's face;
Give Him, my soul, thy cause to plead,
Nor doubt the Father's grace.

August 29
MORNING

"They all slumbered and slept" Mt 25:5

THE HOUR IS NEAR MIDNIGHT, THE BRIDEGROOM IS AT HAND! Our Lord is on the way! When we think of the warning Jesus has given, the promises He has made, and the precepts He has delivered, we would almost conclude that His people must be always active and always ready. But when we look around us, or when we look at our own selves, we are obliged to lament that this is not the case. Jesus has gone to receive a kingdom and to return; He has given talents to His servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. But it is said of the wise, as well as the foolish virgins, *"They all slumbered and slept."* Are we awake to our duties, to our privileges, to our expectations? Are we looking, longing, and preparing for the coming of Jesus? Are we sober and vigilant, because our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour? Are we active for God? Do we pass the time of our sojourning here in fear? Is your talent in the napkin, or at the bank? Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. Behold the Judge stands before the door. It is high time to awake out of sleep!

Our Lord, He comes to call
The nations to His bar;
And take to glory all
Who meet for glory are:
Make ready for your full reward;
Prepared with joy to meet your Lord.

August 29
EVENING

"The Lord hath comforted His people" Isa 49:13

HE WILL HAVE MERCY UPON HIS AFFLICTED. The Lord's people are peculiarly His own. We are constantly reminded of this in God's holy word. Upon them He shows abundant love and mercy, for He had chosen them to salvation from the foundation of the world. He redeemed them by the precious blood of His own Son. They are dear to Him even as the apple of the eye. However, God's people had fallen into sin and rebelled against their Redeemer. In love, the Lord sent them affliction and tribulation to chasten and rebuke them. His anger endures but a moment: weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities His people, and comforts them, as soon as they turn again to Him. He comforts His people by giving them His holy word, by opening to them the throne of grace, and freely pardoning their sins. He assures them that their sighs and groans of contrition were heard, and their sin burdens were all lifted, the sin stains all cleansed by the blood of His Son. Then the Holy Comforter Himself restores the peace in their hearts, for the Father's love never fails.

This joy to strangers is unknown,
Nor can it be expressed;
It is revealed to those alone,
Who on the Saviour rest.

August 30
MORNING

"He will not always chide" Ps 103:9

"NEITHER WILL HE KEEP HIS ANGER FOREVER." Ours is a God of great compassion. When we sin, He will correct us in order to reclaim us; His strokes often fall heavy and the effects remain for a long time. But He will not always chide; when we repent and confess, He pardons and restores. His anger is but for a moment; but His mercy is everlasting. He loves when He frowns, and pities while He reproves. *"The Lord is gracious, full of compassion, and plenteous in mercy; He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, for as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him."* Let us not therefore despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when we are rebuked of Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. In a little wrath He may hide His face from us for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will He have mercy on us, and prove Himself our Redeemer. His frowns are transient but His love is everlasting. His strokes are few and light but He daily loads us with benefits, and crowns the year with His bounty.

God will not always chide;
And when His strokes are felt,
They are far fewer than our crimes
And lighter than our guilt:
He chides us with a Father's heart,
From Him we never shall depart.

August 30
EVENING

"Remember me, O Lord" Ps 106:4

"O VISIT ME WITH THY SALVATION." This is a short but powerful prayer. There is very much wrapped up in it. It is poverty appealing to wealth, misery to mercy, the necessitous to a friend. If the Lord remember us, He will preserve us from evils, deliver us from dangers, help us in difficulty, supply us in want, and comfort us in sorrow. If the Lord remember us, then it is not of much consequence who forgets us. He is more than all creatures, and enough in the absence of all. But He does remember us, and remembers that we are dust, that we are weak, dependent, and often severely tried. He remembers His covenant, His promises, the sufferings of His dear Son, and the relation in which we stand to Him. Still we may plead to be remembered, that we may share in the gifts of His providence, in the bestowment of His grace, and in the proofs of His love. We should pray that He will remember to pardon our sins, to visit our souls, to revive our spirits, to reward our labours, and to fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Remember me, O Lord, and preserve me from all danger this night, and raise me on the morrow in fullness of faith.

Thou wondrous Advocate with God,
I yield my soul to Thee;
While Thou art pleading at His throne
Dear Lord, remember me.

August 31
MORNING

"The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him" Lam
3:25

"HIS COMPASSIONS FAIL NOT; THEY ARE NEW EVERY MORNING." Our Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works; but He is especially benevolent, kind, and attentive to the praying, waiting soul. He has prepared of His goodness for the poor, and His goodness is ever great towards us. He bids us ask, promises to bestow, makes us wait, and then blesses us indeed. We have proved Him to be good; but if we had more faith in Him, and were more earnest with Him, we should see and enjoy His goodness in a much greater degree. He delivered David from the horrible pit; Jeremiah from the dungeon; Daniel from the lions; Peter from the waves; and Paul from the forty Jews. *"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him."* He will renew our strength, illumine our path, take vengeance on our foes, and introduce us into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Let us wait for Him in faith, look for Him in hope, and plead with Him to work in us all the good pleasure of His will. Wait for the Lord and prove Him good.

Lord Jesus, keep my soul from sin,
Nor let me faint for want of Thee;
On Thee I'll wait till Thou come in
And fix Thy dwelling place in me
Thy perfect will in me fulfil,
Before Thy throne, my soul be still.

August 31

EVENING

"I would seek unto God" Job 5:8

"UNTO GOD WOULD I COMMIT MY CAUSE." There is no sounder advice than this. It is the counsel of a real friend. It is much better than seeking unto men, or poring over troubles, or indulging the imagination, or giving way to fears. Troubles generally look worst in the distance; they are seldom found to be as bad as they appeared to be. My friend, I know not what may be your case, but if I were in perplexity, I would seek unto God for wisdom. If I were in sorrow, I would seek unto God for comfort. If I were in weakness, I would seek unto God for strength. If I were under guilt, I would seek unto God for pardon. If I were in doubt and fear, I would seek unto God for confidence and a sense of His favour. If I were under the power of unbelief, I would seek unto God for faith. If I were harassed by Satan, I would seek unto God to lift up a standard against him. If I were afraid of falling, I would seek unto God to uphold me with the right hand of His righteousness. If I were fearful of death, I would seek unto God to turn the shadow of death into the sunshine of God's morning. Whatever you want, seek it of God. Whatever you fear, carry it to God. Whatever troubles you, lay it before God. You cannot seek Him in vain, or without profit.

Seek unto God, He waits to give;
Ask but in faith, it shall be given;
O pray, expecting to receive
His grace, His comfort, and His heaven.

September 1
MORNING

"The Deliverer" Rom 11:26

"I SHALL TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." This was God's promise, through the Saviour He would send, not to deliver them from the bondage of political oppression but from the bondage of Satan and sin. The Lord Jesus Christ is anointed to deliver His people at God's appointed time. For this purpose all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are stored in Him, authority over all flesh is given to Him, and every attribute of Deity is exercised by Him. We are not left to the mercy of men nor are we expected to deliver ourselves when in trouble; but we are to look to Jesus, who is glorified in delivering us from all evil, and preserving us for His eternal kingdom and glory. To Him we should go in every trial; from Him we are to expect deliverance in every danger; His purpose is to hear us, appear for us, and bless us. He delivers in matters secular as well as spiritual, from internal and external foes. Let us remember this title of our beloved Lord, and own Him as our Deliverer, for there is none other. Apply to Him first in every difficulty, rely on Him with confidence in every trial, and He will surely deliver you until deliverance is no longer required. *"He will deliver thee in six troubles, and in seven shall no evil touch thee."*

Why should His people now be sad?
None have more reason to be glad
Than those redeemed to God;
Jesus the mighty Saviour lives;
To us eternal life He gives,
The purchase of His blood.

September 1

EVENING

"Songs in the night" Job 35:10

"THE LORD IS MY LIGHT AND MY SALVATION." So testifies David, the man after God's own heart, and all who love the Lord. The presence of God and the light of His countenance make the Christian's day. His absence becomes our night, a figure often employed to describe our afflictions: losses, sickness, poverty, old age, death: these constitute a very gloomy night. They are dark, cold, and trying. But in the gloomiest night the Lord makes us happy; His very presence makes us sing. *"He giveth songs in the night."* He cheers the heart by the light of His countenance. He excites our praise, causes us to sing to the wonder of many. So did Paul and Silas in the Philippian prison, and so did many martyrs in their dungeons. Many have sung for joy in poverty, in sickness, and in death. Christian, thy God can make thee joyful in the gloomiest of circumstances, and give thee songs to brighten the darkest night. Walk close to Him, sing to His praise; His presence will drive out every gloom, and usher in heavenly joy, peace, and good cheer. Our God loves to see His people happy and to hear them sing the songs of Zion. *Be a singing, not a sinning, Christian.*

Thou Giver of songs in the night,
Of joy to cheer the darkest day:
Cheer me with the joy of Thy light,
Thy smile along a dreary way.

September 2
MORNING

"Be not high-minded, but fear" Rom 11:20

"WHAT IS MAN THAT THOU ART MINDFUL OF HIM?" We are but dust, frail creatures of the earth. The Apostle sounds a word of caution: *"Be not high-minded."* We are sometimes tempted to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think; we forget that we are indebted to the free, sovereign, and amazing grace of God: for there is all the difference between us and the vilest of the vile. We should consider we are still weak and liable to fall; foolish and prone to wander; sinful and easily cast down; that Satan is deadly and determined; subtle and insinuating; malicious and scheming; plotting and persistent; that the world is alluring and ensnaring, treacherous and deceitful. These are a very present danger. A high-minded Christian is also unfruitful, and prone to fall. Therefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed! David fell, Peter fell, and thousands besides have fallen; and they exhort us with groans and tears, *"Be not high-minded, but fear. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."* Let us cultivate humility of mind and habitual dependence upon God: so shall we be safe, holy, and happy.

Jesus, if Thou withdraw Thy hand,
That moment sees me fall;
O may I ne'er on self depend,
But look to Thee for all:
Lead me into Thy righteous ways,
Make plain my path by Thy good grace.

September 2
EVENING

"Doest thou well to be angry?" Jon 4:4

OUR GOD IS FULL OF COMPASSION AND VERY GRACIOUS. Jonah behaved like a spoilt child. He quarrelled with his God. And who has not? We may not speak as plainly as he did, but we have been in the same temper and manifested it no less. Few are quite satisfied with the Lord's doings. Fewer still are pleased with all His works. How many quarrel with His sovereignty! What hard words have been spoken against it! How many complain of His providence and think it partial, unkind, and almost unjust! Beloved, we are often angry with God! This temper shows itself in fretfulness, in complaining and sullen mood. Some are so angry that they scarcely speak to Him, and they restrain prayer. Others will not acknowledge their obligations by simply withholding praise. But do we well to be angry? Angry with our Father whose wisdom is infinite, whose love is incomparable, and who constantly showers us with blessings without number! Angry with God who has pardoned our sins, justified our persons, supplied our wants, united us to His Son, and blessed us with all spiritual blessings! Surely it is a grievous sin, not to be pleased with all His goodness and mercy! *Doest thou well to be angry?*

Lord, I confess my sin to Thee:
Pardon to me impart;
From evil passions set me free,
And purify my heart.

September 3
MORNING

"My God shall supply all our need" Phi 4:19

"IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THE LORD?" He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. There is no lack to them that fear Him. So Paul assured believers at Philippi and so he assures us. They had many wants, so have we; they were dependant on God, and so are we. The Lord engaged to supply them, and He is engaged to supply us. The Lord was faithful to them, and He will be faithful to us. His absolute promises are our greatest treasure; His unchangeableness is our eternal security. With Jehovah we cannot be friendless; we shall never be in want; and at last we shall be able to testify, *"Not one thing hath failed of all that the Lord our God hath promised."* We can this morning rejoice and say, *"The Lord hath blessed me hitherto. Thou has dealt well with Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word."* Our wants should remind us of God's promises; the promises should be used to quell our fears, and comfort our hearts. We know not what a day will bring forth; but we know that *"our God will supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."* Let this banish all needless care, and let us rejoice in the Lord our Provider.

Lord Jesus our abundant store -
Grace issues from His heav'nly throne;
Whoever says, "I want no more",
Confesses he has none;
But they who come to be supplied
Jehovah will more than provide.

September 3
EVENING

"In all their affliction He was afflicted" Isa 63:9

"ABIDE IN ME, AND I IN YOU ... FOR WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING." The union between the Lord and His people is real, close, and vital. Whatever affects them, affects Him. He feels for them. If they are persecuted, He is affected. They never suffer alone. He is always present, and as the parent suffers with the child in sympathy, so the Lord suffers with His people. Their afflictions are many and often deep; they are frequently very painful; but *"in all their afflictions. He is afflicted."* Believer, art thou suffering? In mind? In body? Jesus at the right hand of the Father knows it. He sympathises with thee. Sweet thought! Jesus, at this moment is sympathising with me! He knows my weakness, my fears, my many trials; He presents them all to the Father, and pleads for me that I may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Precious Lord Jesus! May I ever cherish the thought, that You take my part in all my trials and afflictions, and will safely bring me through them all.

We have not an High Priest above
Unmoved at what we suffer here:
In tend'rest sympathy of love
He shares our pain, our grief, our fear:
Wounded with every wounded soul,
He bleeds for us to make us whole.

September 4
MORNING

"The gospel of your salvation" Eph 1:13

"NEITHER IS THERE SALVATION IN ANY OTHER." Our salvation is of the Lord. Our deliverance from sin, the curse, and the wrath of God was impossible by man; but God sent His own Son in our nature, to save us freely, fully and eternally. The gospel is the *"good news of our salvation."* It is sent to inform us that God is love; that grace reigns; that heaven is opened; that provision is made for our guilt, our frailty and our fears; that God waits to receive us, bless us, and glorify us with Himself for ever. It sets before us all that Christ has done, all that He possesses, and invites us to come and receive, to use, and be happy. It requires nothing of us to merit it, it offers all and gives all freely to the poor, the halt, the maimed, and the blind. It has all our misery requires, all our wants demand; we cannot wish for more: it is full of grace and glory. Precious gospel! Glorious news! May we receive it, act upon it daily, and rejoice! It is intended to fill us with joy and peace in believing, to lead us to hope abounding, and to make us more than conquerors through Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

For you the crimson fountain flowed,
Forgiveness from His bleeding side;
Wounded for you th'eternal God;
For you the Prince of glory died;
Believe, and all your sins forgiv'n;
Believe, and all is yours in heav'n.

September 4
EVENING

"Let me hear Thy voice" Song 2:14

OUR LORD LOVES US WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE. To you and me He says, *"Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice."* This is the language of Jesus to His Church and to us. He loves to see us come to His throne, to hear us pour out our hearts before Him. The prayer of the upright is His delight. It may be as mournful as the cooing of the dove, and there may be as much sameness in it too, but our Lord loves to hear it. We are wearied with telling the oft repeated tale, and we fear that He will be so too, but no, He says, *"Let me hear thy voice."* Shall we refuse Him? Never! Rather, let us go to Him more frequently. Let us confess our sins, mourn over our follies, lament our backslidings, plead His precious promises, seek the enjoyment of His presence, beseech Him to pardon our sins, and crave every blessing which He has to bestow. We cannot go to Him too often. We cannot ask for too much at His hands. He asks us to pray. He exhorts us to come often to His throne of grace. He sends troubles, trials, and afflictions to draw us near to Him. In every comfort, he says, *"Let me hear thy voice."* In every trial, he says, *"Call upon me, I will deliver thee."* Beloved, go at once to Jesus, and let Him hear your voice. In obedience to His call acknowledge His goodness, plead His promises, and seek His grace.

'Tis sweet to steal awhile away
From ev'ry cumb'ring care;
And spend the closing hours each day
In humble, grateful prayer.

September 5
MORNING

"I will in no wise cast out" Jn 6:37

"LOOK UNTO ME, AND BE YE SAVED." Our Lord lovingly invites, and with full assurance of His welcome. Nevertheless, the strongest believer is subject to fears, and may at times be tempted to doubt, not only all that God has done for him, but his right and title to every promise in God's Book; at such times it is well to have recourse to those wells from which we have drawn full consolation in former times; and the words of Jesus which we have chosen for this day's portion stand foremost. Here He tells us, with peculiar tenderness and love, that He has made up His mind, that He will on no account refuse to receive the coming sinner, or allow him to be driven from His throne; neither the nature nor number of his transgressions, his age or circumstances, shall be found sufficient to procure him a rejection. His arms and His heart are open: He stands and calls us to Him with this assurance, *"I will in no wise cast out."* Nearly two thousand years have rolled away since He spoke those words: millions of sinners of every clime and character have made application, and all have found Him faithful. Let us then not doubt His love, and distress our souls with needless fears. Only trust in His word.

When, gracious Lord, when shall it be,
That I shall find my all in Thee?
The fulness of Thy promise prove,
The seal of Thine eternal love?
Ah! wherefore did I ever doubt?
"Thou wilt in no wise cast me out!"

September 5
EVENING

"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord" Hab 3:18

"THE LORD GOD IS MY STRENGTH." He also is my salvation, who is from everlasting to everlasting, who changes not. Let us rejoice in Him. Everything around us and everything within us may change, but the Lord changes not. He is ever the same. Light may give place to darkness, peace to war, health to sickness, plenty to poverty, ease to suffering, and society to loneliness. Still we may be happy - in the Lord. Still we may rise above circumstances, and rejoice that though much is lost, we have more than we can ever lose. But if we would emulate the prophet, we must make sure of our interest in the Lord, of our title to all the promises of His word; we must know that our sins are pardoned, that we are at peace with Him, that He is our best and faithful Friend. Then we may rejoice in Him at all times, for His fullness is our blessing, His power is our defence, His love is our solace, His promises are our security, His throne is our refuge, and His presence is our heaven. Everything in God has power to make us happy: and everything that is done by God will promote our everlasting welfare. We may well say, *"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the flock shall cast off from the fold, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."*

God is the treasure of my soul,
The source of lasting joy;
A joy no ill can take its toll,
Nor death's dread sting destroy.

September 6
MORNING

"I will love them freely" Hos 14:4

"LOVE IS OF GOD ... FOR GOD IS LOVE." God's love is pure and inexhaustible. The Lord loves His people as parents love their children, freely, without any cause whatever in them. He looks for nothing in them to move Him to love; nor will He allow anything in them to hinder His love. He loves them as vessels of mercy, disciples of Jesus, as bearing His image, His name, and His nature. His love to them is infinite, fruitful, and inexhaustible. He loves them, though they deserve hatred, merit wrath, and may be justly sentenced to perdition. Beloved, let us never look into ourselves to find out the cause of God's love; it is in Him, not in us; but let us believe Him when He says, *"I have loved thee with an everlasting love."* Let us plead with Him, encouraged by the words of Jesus, *"The Father Himself loveth you."* Let us rejoice before Him, and praise Him for distinguishing grace. If He will love, who shall forbid Him? If He will love us, who can dispute with Him? If He love us, as His word testifies He does, who shall estimate the honour, the advantage, or the happiness, which will eternally flow from His love? All glory to God's free grace!

O Jesus, full of truth and grace,
More full of grace than I of sin;
Yet once again I seek Thy face;
Open the ark and take me in:
And freely my backsliding heal,
And love the faithless sinner still.

September 6
EVENING

"Wherefore didst thou doubt?" Mt 14:31

"WHEN PETER WAS COME ... HE WALKED ON THE WATER." But when he took his eyes off the Master, he began to sink. Our Lord rebuked him for doubting. This reproof was addressed to Peter; but to whom is it not applicable? Which of us has not doubted? Who considers doubting as not sinful? But it is so. Are not our doubts the offspring of unbelief? Do they not deny the love, constancy, and faithfulness of our Redeemer? Could He speak plainer than He has in His word? Could He have done more to lay a firm foundation for our eternal security, peace, and joy? Has He not promised to receive, pardon, and bless every coming sinner? Has He not given us instances in which He proves His care, fulfils His word, and answers the prayers of His people, in the record of His word? Has He not spoken? Is He not worthy of our confidence? Has He ever deceived us? Or trifled with an immortal soul? Is He not the unchangeable God? Then *"wherefore didst thou doubt?"* Make no excuses but at once acknowledge that your doubting is sinful, and seek grace to trust in the Lord with all your heart, and to trust Him fully at all times. Doubts weaken the soul, exhaust the spirit, and hinder cheerful obedience. Away with faithless doubts!

Within are fears, without a storm,
And foes are round about;
But Jesus will His word perform,
Then wherefore dost thou doubt?

September 7
MORNING

"Rejoicing in hope" Rom 12:12

"MY FLESH ALSO SHALL REST IN HOPE." Because we have set the Lord always before us, even at our right hand, we shall not be moved. The believer cannot always rejoice in possession; but he may rejoice in hope at all times. He is warranted to hope for eternal life; for righteousness by faith, that God may be magnified in his body; for the resurrection of the body, and its reunion with the soul; for the appearing of his beloved Saviour, and complete salvation through Him. His hope is laid up for him in heaven, of which the gospel now informs him - a weight of glory, a crown of righteousness, and an eternal inheritance, are reserved for him; and in hope of these he may rejoice. They are set before him to excite desire, increase courage, prevent despondency, and fill him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. They are freely given, plainly promised, and carefully preserved; therefore we shall never be ashamed of our hope. Let us not yield to our gloomy feelings, or to fearful forebodings; but let us lift up our heads, rejoicing that we shall soon be made partakers of our hope. Let us hope in God, and daily praise Him for it. Truly our hope is the anchor of our souls, sure and steadfast.

Come, Lord, and help me to rejoice,
In hope that I shall hear Thy voice,
And shortly see my God;
Forever ceased from earthly strife,
I thank Thee for Thy word of life,
And for Thy precious blood.

September 7
EVENING

"They say unto God, Depart from us" Job 21:14

"WHAT IS THE ALMIGHTY, THAT WE SHOULD SERVE HIM?" These words remind us of Pharaoh who said, *"Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?"* To the ungodly God's presence is offensive. They wish there were no God. But as there is one, they wish Him to keep at a distance from them. This is not your case. It was once. It would have been this evening but for grace. You desire the presence of God because you have tasted His love. You have seen something of His glory in the person of Jesus Christ. You have tasted that He is gracious. You are reconciled to Him, and are at peace with Him. You have nothing to fear from Him, therefore you desire that He would come unto you; and manifest Himself to your soul as He does not unto the world. You say, *"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?"* Those who now say unto God, "Depart from us," will one day hear Him say, *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."* But you who now invite Him to your hearts and your homes, will hear Him invite you, saying, *"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*

My God, I cannot say "depart,"
But, "Come and dwell with me:
Take full possession of my heart,
And keep me close to Thee."

September 8
MORNING

"The word of our God shall stand for ever" Isa 40:8

"MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY." Even after heaven and earth have passed away, God's words remain unmoved, unchanged. The word of our God is like His nature, immutably the same; He says, *"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my mouth."* Believer, this is your comfort; every promise is confirmed and shall be fulfilled. But what has He said? He has said, *"Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. No weapon formed against thee shall prosper. I will strengthen thee, I will help thee. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."* All that He says comes surely to pass. Not one jot or tittle can fail. He never spoke hastily, insincerely, or unwisely; He has drawn His plan, given His word, and everything shall fulfil the purpose He had in view. Man may be disappointed, God cannot. Man may change his mind, or break his word, but God cannot. He abides faithful, He cannot deny Himself. Trust, and be not afraid.

The word of God shall still endure,
Faithful, immutable and sure:
This solid rock shall never break,
Though earth should to her bowels shake.
And while it stands we should not fear,
For all we need is promised there.

September 8

EVENING

"Testify against me" Mic 6:3

"THE LORD HATH A CONTROVERSY WITH HIS PEOPLE."

Often we do not love Him as we ought. By our conduct we often reflect our ingratitude. We treat Him with neglect and disrespect, preferring creatures to the Creator. He speaks of this conduct as if it went to His heart. He says, *"O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me."* Have you neglected the closet? Have you slighted the means of grace? Have you laid your Bible on one side and left it unopened? Have you withdrawn your thoughts and your affections from God, and given them to the world? Why is this? What reason have you for doing so? The Lord asks you why? He says, *"Have you any charges against me? Bring them forward. Have I treated you unkindly? Have I been false to my word? Have I acted in any way unbecoming my character? Tell me, why do you treat me with neglect? Why do you prefer my enemy, the world, to me? Tell out your reasons, let me know all; why this shyness, this distance, this indifference?"* O believer! are you not guilty? Have you not wounded your God? Have you not grieved His Holy Spirit? Return to your injured Lord.

Behold again I turn to Thee,
O cast me not away, though vile:
No peace I have, no joy I see,
O Lord my God, but in Thy smile!

September 9
MORNING

"O love the LORD, all ye His saints" Ps 31:23

"BLESSED BE THE LORD FOR THOU ART MY ROCK." This was David's testimony and ours as well. Our God has revealed Himself as the source, centre, and end of everything lovely. In Jesus He appears as the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely one. The wealth of the universe is His. He is worthy of our highest love. He is all we could wish for or desire. To possess Him is to be made rich for eternity. To have Him on our side is to be safe forever. But you may ask, *What is His mind towards us?* Emphatically, "*grace.*" We have found favour in His eyes. He is the friend of penitent sinners. He loves us with an infinite love. *Do you doubt it?* Read His word. Look at Calvary. Ask His people: prove for yourselves. See what He has already done for us. *Have we a being?* He gave it. *Have we a good hope?* He bestowed it. *Have we liberty?* He bought it. *Have we holiness?* He wrought it. Consider what we may have been but for His grace, what we certainly should have been but for His salvation: what we are now, and what we shall be, as the effect of His love; and, *"O love the LORD, all ye His saints!"* It is happiness! it is holiness! it is heaven!

Love all our needs supplies,
Makes great obstructions small;
'Tis prayer, 'tis praise, 'tis sacrifice;
'Tis holiness, 'tis all!

September 9
EVENING

"Thou hast known my soul in adversities" Ps 31:7

"MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND." And the hand of God will always do us good. In good times as well as in bad, our Lord is a Friend who sticks closer than a brother. Prosperity makes friends, adversity tries them. Many will visit and smile upon us when the sun shines, but who will venture out to do us good in the wintry or stormy day? David had been in extreme adversity: he had been forsaken and neglected by his friends, but not by his God. His God knew him, and visited him, and supplied him, and at length delivered him. This honour have all His saints. He knew Israel in the wilderness, in the land of great drought; and He will know us, acknowledge us, and care for us, and approve of us under all circumstances. He has done so. We have been in adversity. We have passed through a wilderness, but our God led us, and fed us, and preserved us, and brought us out into a wealthy place. We can witness for Him in reference to the past; and we ought calmly, quietly, and confidently to trust Him for the future. He has given His word that He will deliver us in six troubles, and that in seven no evil shall touch us: and He is faithful who promised. He is the friend of His people in distress, and in our greatest trials He will manifest His richest grace.

Thy presence to my soul display,
And bid my faithless fears away;
Let mercy to my thankful heart
Its saving health and joys impart.

September 10

MORNING

"To comfort all that mourn" Isa 61:2

OUR GOD IS THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT. He comforts us in all our tribulation, in our sorrows and mourning. The Lord's people are all mourners; grace makes them mourn over sins committed, depravity discovered, comforts forfeited and lost. They mourn over the sins of others, the state of the church, and for the salvation of relatives and friends. We mourn after Jesus when we are separated from His love, and over Him for suffering on our behalf. But He has declared, *"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."* Jesus Himself is anointed and appointed to be our Comforter; His is the tongue of the learned, that He may speak a word in season to them that are weary. He comforts us by pardoning our sins, subduing our iniquities, restoring the joy of our salvation, employing us in His service, and making us profitable for Him. He comforts us by His word, His servants, and His Spirit. Admire the wisdom of God in the person appointed; the love of God in the work to which He is appointed; and the faithfulness of God in the perpetuity of His office. He ever lives, and lives to comfort us, and to make intercession for us.

Now in the Lord will I be glad,
And happy in His love;
Jesus my joy, Thou Son of God
My great salvation prove:
My Saviour will my comfort be,
For now and all eternity.

September 10

EVENING

"Unite my heart to fear Thy name" Ps 86:11

"THERE IS NONE LIKE UNTO THEE, O LORD." He alone made us and all things. He only is greatly to be feared. To fear God means faith in His word, trust in His person, zeal for His glory, and a genuine love for His commandments. In worship it signifies reverence, adoration, thanksgiving, and prayer. Worship without the heart is worthless. But often in worship we feel our hearts distracted and wandering far from God! Well may we pray, *"Unite my heart to fear Thy name,"* seeking the Lord to calm it, compose it and inflame it; that it may devote all its energies into God's service. Such a prayer proves our love for the service, our desire to honour God in it, aware of our own weakness, and our desire to obtain grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. But do all saints feel their hearts thus prone to wander, and find it difficult to engage in the Lord's service? This is a common failing among Christians, some more and some less. Let all true God-lovers pray as David, *"O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes always."*

How oft my heart's affections yield,
Scattered o'er all the world's wide field;
My vagrant passions, Lord, reclaim,
Unite them all to fear Thy name.

September 11
MORNING

"Wilt thou be made whole?" Jn 5:6

OUR LORD JESUS IS THE CREATOR. In Him is life, healing and health. He is the Great Physician. He comes to us this morning, and He asks, *"Wilt thou be made whole?"* This is a searching question. Are you willing to be sanctified thoroughly? Are you willing for Him to use what means He pleases to conform you to Himself? Jesus is able to sanctify us wholly; the time of mercy is now; are we desirous of being healed? If so, let us put ourselves into His hands for the purpose; let us submit without hesitation to His terms; He performs the cure and receives all the glory. Let us not fancy that our case is hopeless, but let us look to Jesus who will heal us, and heal fully and freely. Open thy whole case to Him, consult Him daily, trust Him implicitly, and expect to shine before the Father's throne as proof of His grace and kindness. While Jesus lives to heal, no case can be desperate, no sinner can be too poor, for He heals without money and without price. O Jesus! heal us this morning! Soften our hardened hearts. Heal our stubborn wills. Elevate our earthly affections. Fill us with holiness, fill us with love. We wait at Thy feet and we trust in Thy word.

Jesus, to Thee for help I call,
With pitying eye behold me fall,
Unworthy 'neath Thy throne;
O heal my soul, remove my sin,
Make Thou the filthy leper clean,
Soften the heart of stone.

September 11
EVENING

"He will be our guide even unto death" Ps 48:14

"GREAT IS THE LORD AND GREATLY TO BE PRAISED." For He is our God through all this transient life. What a precious assurance is this! Our God is our guide who also led us out of the dying world, directed us to the cross, and conducted us into the path of life and peace. Hitherto He has led us through many difficulties and trials; He continues to lead us by the hand through this present perishing world, and He will never forsake us, for He has promised to be our guide even unto death. He will choose our way, lead us in the paths of righteousness, kindly converse with us on the road, point out the snares and dangers in our path, and keep us by His power through faith unto salvation. He undertook to guide us at first without our knowledge; He kindly appeared as our conductor in answer to our prayers, and He will patiently bear with us unto the end. At times He may hide His face, withhold communion and comforts, chasten us for our follies, and teach us by painful experience to depend on Him; but He will never forsake us or give us up. He will guide us to the end of the journey; He will go with us through the valley of the shadow of death to His everlasting kingdom. This He has promised and He will faithfully perform it.

For God in Christ has called you friend,
Your God unchangeable is known;
Your Guide who will your steps attend,
Till death advance you to His throne.

September 12

MORNING

"I lay down my life for the sheep" Jn 10:15

"I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD." The good shepherd gave His life for the sheep. Jesus' sheep are peculiarly His own; His Father chose them and gave them to Him; He became their shepherd; they were doomed to die, but He died for them. O what an infinite love was the love of Jesus! He forsook His Father's house, left behind the company of angels, the throne of glory, and became a man to be a substitute for many. He offered Himself for them, shed His blood to give them life. Amazing transaction, He redeemed them to God at great cost, to gather a new people out of every nation, country, kindred and tongue. They are doubly His, and doubly precious, being gifted by His Father and then redeemed with His blood. Herein is love, not that we loved Jesus, but that He loved us, and gave Himself to be the propitiation for our sins. Are we among His sheep? Are we like them? Do we love them, cleave to them, and walk with them? His sheep are gentle, harmless, peaceful, humble, dependent upon Him, and devoted to Him. They hear His voice, love His ways, and follow Him wherever He goes.

When the Shepherd's life was needful
To redeem the sheep from death,
Of their safety ever heedful,
Jesus yielded up His breath;
Faithful Shepherd,
Love like Thine was yet unheard!

September 12

EVENING

"Noah walked with God" Gen 6:9

"BY FAITH NOAH ... PREPARED AN ARK." He obeyed God and by his obedience he saved his house. Noah was born six hundred years before the global Flood at a time when *"... the wickedness of man was great ... and ... every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* But Noah did not follow the crowd: he was a man of faith and he walked with God. Time came when the Lord decided to *"... bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life."* But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. By faith, being warned of God of the impending destruction and judgment by water, he prepared an ark to the saving of his house by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Noah could be depended upon: he was a man of faith, and God used him to save his family of eight souls. Today's society is no different from Noah's: the whole earth is filled with violence and corruption. A second and final judgment is about to descend on the earth. God looks for men of faith, such as Noah, to walk with Him. Beloved, are you walking with God? following the Lord Jesus? He only can deliver you from the judgment to come.

I walk with God, He's Lord of all,
My dearest Friend is He;
On Him I lean, I cannot fall;
I'm His eternally.

September 13
MORNING

"Let patience have her perfect work" Jas 1:4

"THE TRYING OF YOUR FAITH WORKETH PATIENCE."

Patience is God's gift. Patience sustains us in trials and troubles, helps us endure each testing; it is God's remedy for fretfulness, murmuring and despondency; it produces submission and silence before God, and acceptance of His dealings. The Holy Spirit increases patience by means of afflictions: tribulation works patience. Every Christian should possess it and exercise it; yea, let it have its perfect work. To this end let us study the examples of suffering and patience recorded for us in the Bible; let us take up and plead God's promises; let us remember that eternal love appointed every trial and trouble; that Jesus forewarned us of tribulation; that He has set us an example which we do well to imitate. Impatience dishonours our Lord and grieves the Spirit; patience benefits others, and is a great blessing to ourselves. Let us watch against yielding to impatience, rather in patience possess our souls. So shall we dignify our Lord, manifest our sincerity, and prove our godly principles.

Dear Lord, though bitter be the cup
Thy gracious hand deals out to me,
I cheerfully would drink it up;
That cannot harm which comes from Thee;
The gift of patience, Lord impart
To calm and soothe my troubled heart.

September 13
EVENING

"Increasing in the knowledge of God" Col 1:10

EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD GROW. *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby."* Our knowledge of God is imperfect: we know but in part. The means of knowledge are in our hands, but we have not the zeal to use them to advantage. God must be better known if He is to be better loved and trusted. Unless we know Him well, how can we adore His perfections, reverence His majesty, value His favour, fear His frown, or delight to do His commandments? For this purpose, Paul prayed for the Colossians that they might increase in the knowledge of God. And how can we know Him more if we do not read His works, observe His providence, and study His word. But it is in Jesus that God reveals Himself most clearly and most fully. Therefore our Lord says, *"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."* Do you know God at all? You did not once, now you do: therefore be thankful. But your knowledge is still imperfect, therefore seek to increase it. Jesus said, *"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."* He that has an extensive knowledge of God in Jesus is a truly happy man.

Shine, mighty God, more brightly shine,
On this benighted heart of mine;
And let Thy glories once concealed,
Be in the Saviour's face revealed.

September 14
MORNING

"And Jacob said ... I have enough" Gen 33:10,11

"WE BROUGHT NOTHING INTO THIS WORLD." Yet the Lord prospers us with many things. Jacob left his father's house with only a staff but he returned with two bands, so greatly had the Lord increased him. But it was not his earthly possessions but the kindness of his brother, and the grace of his God, which led him to exclaim, *"I have enough: or, I have all things."* Beloved, such language becomes us, as the objects of Jehovah's matchless love; as interest in the everlasting covenant. By these we are entitled to all the promises of God; we are invited to come to the throne of grace to receive all we need; we are directed to cast all our care upon God, and to expect every good thing on earth, and glory at the journey's end. Ought we not to rejoice and shout, *"I have enough?"* Enough to make me happy, enough to make me holy, enough to fill me with gratitude, enough to make the angels wonder. O Lord Jesus! to what a height have You raised us! With what great, lasting, and glorious blessings have You blessed us! Everlasting praises and eternal glory to Your excellent name!

Jesus is all I wish or want!
For Him I pray, I thirst, I pant;
Let others after earth aspire,
Christ is the treasure I desire;
He is an all sufficient store;
Possessed of Him, I want no more.

September 14
EVENING

"Peter followed Him afar off" Mt 26:58

PETER DENIED THE LORD WHOM HE PROFESSED TO LOVE. Have not we done the same? Once we thought that nothing could cool our love, dampen our ardour, or turn our feet aside. Like Peter, we thought we might even die for Him. But we have long since discovered our mistake. Still, it is better to follow at a distance, than to turn our backs on Him. For Peter there was some excuse in the circumstances in which his Master was placed; for us there is none. Faith brings us near to Jesus, and love keeps us there; unbelief is the cause of our slow pace, and lagging behind in His ways. Let us carefully guard against unbelief. It poisons our loyalty, shakes our profession, dampens our zeal, hinders our communion, thrusts us away from Jesus, and alienates our souls from Him. Let us encourage our faith, strengthen our hearts, quicken our pace, endear our Saviour, fortify our minds, and keep near to our beloved Lord. Reader, are you following the Lord closely? Or, are you like Peter, *afar off*? If you are, beware. You know to what this conduct led him; who knows where it may lead you? Get close to Jesus, and keep close. Let your thoughts gather round Him, your affections fix upon Him, and your hopes centre in Him.

The soul that would to Jesus cleave
And hear His gracious call,
Must his own strength and wisdom leave,
And let the Lord be all.

September 15
MORNING

"The end of all things is at hand" 1 Pet 4:7

WE LIVE IN THE LAST OF THE LAST DAYS. We are in the *final chapter of history*. God's word keeps warning us: the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; only Jehovah's word, love, purposes, and perfections remain the same. The world passeth away and the fashion of it; but he that does the will of God abides for ever. The end of all things is at hand; our labours will soon cease; our commerce terminate; our earthly relationships dissolve; our pleasures and sorrows concluded. The last sermon will soon be preached and the last opportunity for us to do good will make its appearance. The coming of the Son of God draws nigh; let us therefore be prepared for so great and solemn an event; and whenever tempted to trifle, to loiter, or to sin, let us remember, *"The Lord is at hand."* Let us be sober, temperate in reference to the body; and let us think soberly of ourselves, of others, of everything around us. Let us not be rash or hasty, careless, or indifferent; but let us speak and act soberly, as those that must give an account before the Lord. He that shall come will come, and will not tarry; and He bids us be ready to receive Him. Will it be with gladness and joy?

When Thou my righteous Judge shalt come
To fetch Thy ransomed people home,
Shall I among them stand?
Shall such a worthless worm as I,
Be taken up beyond the sky
To stand at Thy right hand?

September 15
EVENING

"None can stay His hand" Dan 4:35

OUR GOD "WORKETH ALL THINGS AFTER THE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL." The hand of God is His providence, His wisdom and power working for the accomplishment of His will. No one can possibly frustrate His designs. Nothing can throw confusion into His plans. He steadily pursues His object, easily accomplishes His purpose, and performs all His good pleasure. All His saints are in His hand, therefore they are safe. His hand is at work for them, therefore they shall not be moved. He always works in accordance with His word. His predictions must come to pass, His promises must be fulfilled. Beloved, the hand of God is lifted up to defend you, therefore you are safe. His hand is opened to supply you, therefore you shall not want. His hand is beneath you, therefore you shall not fall. Trust in Jesus, in His wisdom and power. Exercise faith in His providence. His hand will crush or convert your foes, protect you and supply your wants, guide you through the desert, and lift you up for ever. Look from circumstances to the hand that overrules them: it is your Father's hand, and His hand is moved by His heart, which heart overflows with unutterable love to you. He works for you, and *"None can stay His hand."*

Jehovah's arm shall be my strength,
And His almighty power
Will well fulfil His promises,
And victory ensure.

September 16
MORNING

"Even to hoar hairs will I carry you" Isa 46:4

"UNDERNEATH ARE THE EVERLASTING ARMS." What comfort to know that the arms which bear us up are the everlasting arms of God Himself. What blessed assurance is this for the aged disciples of the Lord Jesus: heart and flesh may fail them, but God will not. Having begun a good work in them, He will finally perfect it for them. His gifts and callings are without repentance. He will be as kind, as tender, and as gracious at last as at first. *"The eternal God is our refuge, underneath are the everlasting arms."* He will carry us safely through every danger and difficulty into His presence and glory. Aged pilgrim, lean upon your God; look to Him and as the nurse carries the sucking child, so will your God carry you. He will prove Himself faithful to His word and ultimately call you forth as a witness to the same. Fear not then at the approach of the evening of life: your God will supply you, support you, and at last land you safe where storms never blow, where weakness and ageing fears are never felt. *"Take no anxious thought for the morrow; let the morrow take thought for the things of itself; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."* The promises of your God cannot fail you; He will safely guide you and carry you to His kingdom and glory. He says -

E'en down to old age, all my people shall prove
My sov'reign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne.

September 16
EVENING

"Will a man rob God?" Mal 3:8

"YET YE HAVE ROBBED ME." This is a very serious accusation, for to attempt it must be very daring. But who can plead not guilty? If we have not taken from Him, we have withheld what belongs to Him. He charges us with the crime; He says, "*Ye have robbed me.*" We have robbed Him of His *time* and His own day which He claims and which should be devoted to Him. We have robbed Him of *property*. What He lent us we have claimed as our own. What was given us for others, we have squandered or hoarded for self. We have withheld from His cause what He entrusted to our care for its benefit. We have robbed Him of the *heart*. This we have given to idols. They have been loved, trusted and adored before Him. We have robbed Him of our *talents*, using them in the service of others and for the gratification of ourselves. What can we say to such conduct? Is it not ungrateful? For He is our Father. Is it not daring? For He could crush us with a look. Let us reflect upon our conduct - robbers of God. Let us confess our crimes, seek His pardon, change our course, and render unto God the things that are God's.

Guilty I plead before Thy throne:
My God, my crimes forgive;
I plead the Saviour's blood alone:
Pardon, and bid me live.

September 17
MORNING

"Fight the good fight of faith" 1 Tim 6:12

"FOR WE WRESTLE NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD." From this warfare there is no discharge until final victory has been won. This warfare is to be fought by faith: by faith we contend with the deep depravity of the heart, with falsehood and superstition, with despondency, unbelief and carnal reason, with Satan and the world at large. Thank God for the gift of faith. Faith fights on to victory, for a crown and for God's glory. It fights in God's strength, with confidence founded on the promises of God, with holy fear, aided by grace which is sufficient for our weakness. Faith fights with courage received on the knees, with hands uplifted in prayer, and eyes looking to the Captain of our salvation, the author and finisher of our faith. Christian, *"fight the good fight of faith!"* your God bids thee. His promises are your best encouragement, His own Son your best example. The coward is doomed! So tell yourself, *"Be brave, fear not, fight on, be strong in the Lord. Through conflict comes conquest!"* Our Lord says, *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne."* By faith we shall overcome.

Almighty Saviour, my Jesus, my King,
For courage and valour to Thee I would cling;
O gracious Captain, my doubting dispel,
Fit me for conflict, to fight and excel;
For Thee my Saviour, I'll do valiantly,
To Thee blest Jesus, may all glory be.

September 17
EVENING

"Their Redeemer is strong" Jer 50:34

"THE LORD OF HOSTS IS HIS NAME." He is a wonderful Redeemer who is also our next of kin. No one is so closely related to us as the Lord Jesus. He gave His life a ransom for us. He sent His Holy Spirit to rescue us from our spiritual enemies. One day His almighty power will raise us from the dead, and complete our redemption. What He undertook He will accomplish, for He is almighty. What He has promised He will perform, for He is faithful. We shall be completely delivered: from Satan who once held us captive; from sin, which tyrannised over us; from death, the last enemy to be defeated; and from hell, which we justly deserved. Our Redeemer is all powerful, therefore let us place our confidence in Him; let us look to Him alone for deliverance from our foes and fears; let us never dishonour Him by supposing that He will allow our enemies to triumph over us. He quickened us when dead in trespasses and sins, and He will perfect that which concerns us, for He will not forsake the work of His own hands. Our Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is His name: He will thoroughly plead our cause.

Jesus our Saviour in Thee
We a wonderful Redeemer have;
Strong to set Thy people free,
Omnipotent and mighty to save.

September 18

MORNING

"He forgetteth not the cry of the humble" Ps 9:12

"THE LORD ALSO WILL BE A REFUGE IN TIMES OF TROUBLE." The humble grateful soul shall receive every good gift from the Lord, so great is His love to him and delight in him. He cries to the Lord to be kept from every false way, from falling into sin, that he may be devoted wholly to the Lord's glory. He prays for his enemies that they may be blessed, and for his friends that they may be richly rewarded. His cry is constant, sincere, and earnest. But he is often tempted to think that because he is so unworthy, so insignificant, and so poor, that God will not hear him, especially when answers are delayed. But the cry of the humble will not be forgotten. The Lord will not neglect or pass over such a prayer without notice; He will not despise or condemn; but He will regard, and answer his cry. His wisdom will shine forth as the day when He answers their prayers; and He will Himself receive all the glory. O humble soul, never harbour the thought that your God will forget your petitions!

Friend of sinners, Lord of saints,
Answer my minutest wants;
Let my cries Thy throne assail,
Entering now within the veil;
Free my soul from guilt and shame-
This I pray in Jesus' name.

September 18

EVENING

"By love serve one another" Gal 5:13

"A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE UNTO YOU:" we are to love one another. Our Lord's new commandment was also His last, and most important. The root of all charitable service is love. Love springs from faith and produces all good. Nothing that we can do is good except it flows from love. Love is the chief thing in faith. We may have gifts, honours, and benevolence: but without love, we are only as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. The flesh desires to rule over others but grace is willing to serve. Look around you: are there not many whom you can serve, and serve effectually, without neglecting your other important duties? Are you willing to do so? If not, where is your love? If you have not love, where is your faith? Love is the fulfilling of the law, the chief fruit of the gospel. Love is Godlike, is Christlike. Love in action is heaven on earth. Love will visit the sick, cheer the sorrowing, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and become all things to all men, if by any means it may save some. Love will make our wilderness a garden, our divided church a haven of peace. What we do from love we do easily, cheerfully, heartily, constantly, and liberally. See then that you love one another with a pure heart fervently; thus you serve Christ and imitate and dignify His conduct toward His foes.

Heirs of the same immortal bliss,
Our hopes and fears the same;
With bonds of love our hearts unite,
With mutual love inflame.

September 19
MORNING

"Sin shall not have dominion over you" Rom 6:14

CHRISTIANS ARE SERVANTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, NOT SIN. By God's grace we have been set free from the bondage of sin, for ever free from sin's oppression. What a precious promise is this from God's word! How many of the Lord's people have been cheered and encouraged by it. Sin lives in us, works in us, fights in us, but it shall not reign in us. It may annoy but it shall not destroy. Its authority is annulled by the Lord; its power is defeated by grace; it is warned to quit its old residence, and it will soon be ejected. We are not under the condemning power of the law; it is not our way of justification, for we are under grace; God deals with us as with children. He pardons, pities, and delivers us. He will not allow sin to hold us in perpetual bondage, or to condemn us at the last day; but He will set us at liberty and justify us fully. The flesh will lust against the Spirit, corruption will rise and fight; but we shall be strengthened, assisted, and supported until we finally overcome. Grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. The law will be honoured in our endless blessedness, and Jesus will be glorified in us throughout eternity. *By grace we are saved! Sin is a defeated foe: it shall not have dominion over God's own.*

On God's love, my soul, still ponder,
Love so great, so rich, so free!
Say, while lost in holy wonder,
Why, O Lord, such love to me?
Hallelujah!
God shall reign eternally.

September 19
EVENING

"Therefore have they forgotten me" Hos 13:6

EPHRAIM EXALTED HIMSELF. When men exalted themselves they forgot their Lord, the One who had brought them into the good land. In their prosperity they gave way to self-indulgence and were lifted up with pride. Therefore they forgot God their Saviour who had done such great things for them. We often fancy that we could bear prosperity better than adversity, but those who have been tried have proved the reverse. The heart is secretly, and imperceptibly drawn away from God. Affections are set on things below. Indulging the flesh unfits for spiritual duties and exercises. Divine things lose their savour and power. The means of grace convey no grace to the soul. What happened to Israel happens to us. We slacken in spiritual duty and give way to the flesh. Satan hardens our hearts, alienates our affections, blinds our minds, and stupifies our consciences. The warnings of God's word are disregarded, the throne of grace is neglected, worldly company is preferred, and then God is forgotten. We forget his deliverances, his favours, his claims, his threatenings, until visited by some painful event. Brethren, let us be cautious and circumspect, conscious of our danger, and careful to examine our present state: *have you forgotten the Lord?*

I left my guide to happiness,
I lost the true eternal peace;
Nor can my soul retrieve its rest,
Till lodged again on Jesus' breast.

September 20
MORNING

"I have gone astray like a lost sheep" Ps 119:176

"I HAVE LONGED FOR THY SALVATION, O LORD." This is the humble confession of a man of God, and should we not adopt it as our own this morning? Have not we also gone astray? Does not this display our weakness? How foolish to wander from so kind a Shepherd, so rich a pasture, so good a fold! Is it not a mark of folly? Jesus has warned and cautioned us against it in His word. Is it not proof of our ingratitude? O how ungrateful to forsake Him after so many favours, such rich blessings, such tokens of unmerited kindness! Does it not betray our folly, to go from good to bad, from safety to danger, from plenty to want and wretchedness? O the power of corruption, the deceitfulness of the human heart! Lord, lead Thy servants, for we do not forget Thy commandments. We smart for our folly; we grieve over our sin; we desire to return; restore us to Thy fold, to the enjoyment of Thy favour; and enable us to delight in Thy ways. Jesus, Shepherd of the sheep, bring us back from all our wanderings, and keep us near Thyself; for why should we turn aside from Thy flock and fold?

Thou knowest the way to lead me back,
My straying spirit to restore;
O for Thy truth and mercy's sake,
Forgive, and bid me sin no more;
The sin wounds of my soul repair,
And make my heart a house of prayer.

September 20
EVENING

"I will walk in Thy truth" Ps 86:11

"TEACH ME THY WAY, O LORD." And to love Thy truth, for God's truth is opposed to many of our customs, prejudices, and inclinations. It requires what our depraved nature dislikes, and prohibits what we naturally love. The Psalmist's resolution is noble, reflecting honour upon Him who formed it. Let us follow His example, to walk in the truth and to believe it, to receive it into the mind and to write it in the heart as a very precious communication from God, and to apply it in our lives. The true Christian prays, *"Teach me to do thy will."* He purposes, *"I will run in the way of thy commandments,"* for therein is the enjoyment of the truth. It brings us great rewards. It furnishes us with a feast as well as a rule. It nurtures and consoles while it corrects. It makes us happy as well as holy; or rather it makes us happy by making us holy. If we believe the truth, and do the truth, and enjoy the truth, let us profess it, and let our profession be known to all. Let it be our daily duty to strive to adorn it, to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called in all godliness and honesty.

Thou Great Instructor, lest I stray,
O teach my erring feet the way:
Thy truth with ever shining light,
Shall guide my wav'ring footsteps right.

September 21
MORNING

"The Lord was ready to save me" Isa 38:20

"O LORD, I AM OPPRESSED; UNDERTAKE FOR ME." The response from the Lord brought forth songs of praise and worship, the testimony of a good man who had been in great danger. His heart was full of fears, and he had given up all for lost; but now he has recovered, and stands forth to acknowledge his mistake, and bear witness to this pleasing fact, that the Lord is ever ready to save His people in every trouble. The Lord has saved us, and He will save us even to the end. He has power and authority and He will use it; He has sympathy and He will manifest it. He is a Saviour at hand and not afar off; He is ready and willing to deliver. Has He not proved Himself so in our past experience? And ought we not to trust Him for the future? Let us in every danger cry unto God to save us; wait upon Him in humble hope for His blessing; banish carnal and faithless fears far away; refuse to listen to Satan, feeling, or unbelief; persevere in seeking until we obtain and enjoy His blessing. *The Lord is ever ready to save us.* Let us believe, receive with joy and be glad in the Lord. He will save and enfold us in His love, and joy over us with everlasting song.

Salvation from God will I publish abroad,
Jehovah hath saved me through Jesus' blood;
The Lamb was once slain, but He liveth again,
And I know my Jesus for ever shall reign;
Then filled with His love, in the mansions above,
I shall never, no never, from Jesus remove.

September 21

EVENING

"My God will hear me" Mic 7:7

"TRUST YE NOT IN A FRIEND," for even a man's own house is turned against him. But God has not forsaken him. God has promised and He is faithful to His word. He has done so in times past, and what He has done is the pledge of what He will yet do. Besides, He is my Father as well as my God. He knows my nature, He appointed my lot. He has given me the Spirit of grace and supplication. He bids me call upon Him. He has assured me that He *"is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth."* And that *"He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry and will save them."* Beloved, let us then call upon God; let us pour out our complaints before Him. Let us present our petitions to Him, seek His help, His presence, and His blessing. He will hear us. Men may become alienated from us; our God never will. Friends may turn a deaf ear to us; our God never can. Let us then come to the same determination as Micah did, and say, *"Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me."*

Praying on, and never ceasing,
Saviour! I Thy word shall prove;
Blessed with all the gospel blessing,
Filled with holy, heav'nly love.

September 22
MORNING

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" Eph 5:1

MANY CHRISTIANS FOLLOW AFTER THE WORLD. This is sad and fraught with danger. The Lord proposes Himself to us as our pattern, and He gives grace to everyone who desires to imitate Him. He exhorts us as His dear and tenderly beloved children, and in mildest tone proposes Himself for our imitation. Let us imitate the Lord in the present evil world, dealing justly, ever acting from holy principles, and by a righteous rule, adhering strictly to truth, for our God is the God of truth. Let us choose our company, being only familiar with them who are familiar with God, and doing good to all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith, for He causes His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Let us imitate Him in the church, cultivating a spirit of love to all saints, notwithstanding their infirmities, exercising forbearance, and pity; being slow to anger and ready to forgive; accepting the will for the deed, being always ready to help those in trouble and distress. Let us imitate our God, for He commands us so to do; our relation to Him requires it: His peace is our reward.

This answers th' important question,
Whether thou art a real Christian;
Better than each golden dream,
Better far than lip expression,
Tow'ring notions, great profession;
This will prove your love to Him.

September 22
EVENING

"Thy blessing is upon Thy people" Ps 3:8

"HOW ARE THEY INCREASED THAT TROUBLE ME!" But Thou, O Lord art a shield for me. As for us today, God's elect, we were blessed in Christ with all spiritual blessings before the world was. We are blessed through Christ with every good thing while here below. And we will be blessed with Christ with more than heart can conceive in the world to come. *The Lord's blessing* is upon our persons, and we are set apart for His praise; upon our comforts, and they promote our holiness; upon our trials, and they work our everlasting good; upon our labours, and they advance His kingdom and glory; upon our families, as the house of Obed-edom was blessed for the ark's sake. *Behold, thus is the man blessed that feareth the Lord.* Beloved, this is your privilege, the blessing of God is upon you. Do you realize it? Do you appreciate it? Remember, it flows from heavenly grace. It comes to you through Jesus. It is enjoyed in the exercise of faith, and in the way of obedience. It is ensured by the oath and promise of God. It includes all you can need or ever desire. Retire to rest tonight impressed with the thought, *"The blessing of God is upon me."* Or, if hesitant to claim it, with the prayer, *"Bless me, even me, O my Father."*

Lord, make it plain that I am Thine,
In Jesus blest, with Jesus one;
That all Thy promises are mine,
As Thy belov'd, adopted son.

September 23

MORNING

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee" Ps 55:22

"AS FOR ME I WILL CALL UPON GOD." And the Lord shall save me. The Lord's people are often heavy laden, their burdens pressing and their grief oppressing; but the Lord kindly invites them to cast every burden upon Him, and promises to sustain them by His grace. Guilt in the conscience and the oppression of sin in the soul, often prove an intolerable burden; but the Lord will remove these by the blood of His Son, and the comfort of His Spirit. The care of a family sinks the spirit and fills one with distress; but Jesus says, *"Cast them all on me."* Losses, crosses, enemies, temptations, and inward conflict, often unsettle the soul; but our God will sanctify them to us, sustain us through them, and deliver us out of them all. Our God has determined that we should wait upon Him, be wholly dependent upon Him, and glory only in Him. Believer, He will sustain you by speaking peace to your troubled heart; by enabling you to leave your perplexing problems in His hands; by sustaining you with strength in your soul; and by enabling you to endure the present with hope in Him for bright future. Thanks be unto God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. O Jesus Lord, teach me to bring every burden to Thy feet, and to cast every care upon Thee!

Thou, O Lord, in tender love,
Wilt all my burdens bear!
Lift my heart to things above,
And fix it only there!

September 23

EVENING

"Wherein hast Thou loved us?" Mal 1:2

"I HAVE LOVED YOU, SAITH THE LORD." Israel may deny it, and therein is the proof of an ungrateful people. They say, *"Wherein hast Thou loved us?"* These words only speak out what many feel within. Do you also ask, *Wherein has the Lord loved me?* Look at the gifts He has conferred upon you: His Son to die for you; His Spirit to quicken, teach, and sanctify you; His ordinances to revive and refresh you; His angels to minister unto you; His covenant and oath to secure you; His glorious kingdom to be eternally possessed and enjoyed by you. Look at the interest He has in you: He calls you by His love, the dearly beloved of His soul, His jewel, His crown, His dear son. If He compare you with the world, you are gold, apart from the world's dross: you are wheat, not chaff; you are sheep, not goats. Look at the relationship he sustains to you: as a Father, Husband, Brother, Friend. Think of the offices He fills for you: Advocate, Captain, Head, King. Look at what He has already done for you: clothed you with His righteousness, conferred on you His pardon, given you His peace, acts as your Mediator, blesses you with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Surely you will exclaim, *"His love is wonderful, beyond compare and marvellous beyond expression."*

Lord, give to me a grateful heart,
Thy mercies to receive;
And daily Thy great love impart
That others may believe.

September 24
MORNING

"In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen" Gen 22:14

THE MOUNT OF THE LORD IS THE PLACE OF BLESSING. There the Lord Jehovah has bountiful supplies for His people. He orders the bestowment of them, and hears and answers prayer for them. He may allow them to undergo trials, dangers, and setbacks; but *"in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."* He will show Himself as rigidly faithful to His word; as kind and merciful in all His dealings; as attentive to the wants and wishes of His people; as ready to supply them, and display His love and power in delivering them. In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen that Satan is a liar; that all our fears were groundless; that unbelief is a great sin; that the prayer of faith shall surely be answered; that faith and hope shall not be disappointed; that Jesus is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; and that none shall be ashamed who trust in, and obey the commands of the most high God. Beloved, we have seen the Lord in the mount of trial. We have seen how it has turned into the mount of mercy, and we shall yet see Him on the mount of His glory.

'Tis in the mount the Lord is seen,
And all His saints shall surely find,
Though clouds and darkness intervene,
He still is gracious, still is kind;
Yes, in the mount, the Lord makes bare
His mighty arm, His whelming power;
Displays a Father's tender care,
In the most trying, darkest hour.

September 24
EVENING

"Rejoice the soul of Thy servant" Ps 86:4

"UNTO THEE, O LORD, DO I LIFT UP MY SOUL." For our Lord is good and plenteous in mercy unto all who call upon Him, and all who serve Him. It is a greater honour to be the Lord's servant than to be the son of the greatest monarch on earth, for all God's true servants are also His sons. He loves them as His children while he employs them to accomplish His designs. They are all willing and contented servants. They are convinced that they ought to be employed for Him; they have engaged themselves to serve him, and they love their Master, their work, their fellow servants, and their wages. But though employed for God, they are not always happy in God, when they lose sight of their true state, their royal heritage, glorious prospects, and present privileges; or when their vision is clouded, or when Satan harasses them, or providence appears to frown upon them; or when the law in their members prevails against them, and they are cast down. Or, it may be that the Lord is rebuking them for some sin, or is displeased because some secret idol is set up. At such times, they cannot rest in comfort, or be joyful, but they can pray for restoration. David did so: *"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation. Rejoice the soul of Thy servant."* Do you do so? One ray of light, one word of grace, one whisper of His love, will fill you with new joy and peace.

O bid my heart rejoice,
And every fear control:
As at Thy throne, with suppliant voice,
To Thee I lift my soul.

September 25
MORNING

"What think ye of Christ?" Mt 22:42

"CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY." This is the mystery hidden from the ages, but now made manifest to us His people. Beloved, let us ask what we think of Jesus this morning? What do we think of His divinity, as one with the Father? Of His humanity, as one with us? Of His unique person, as God and man, one in Christ? What think we of His sacrifice for sin? What think we of His grace as displayed in the work of our redemption? What think we of His word, as the ground of our hope, the source of our comfort, and the rule of our lives? What think we of His kingdom? What think we of His coming? How do we think of Jesus? Do we think of Him frequently, as of a subject full of pleasure? Naturally, as we think of refreshing food? Pleasantly, as we think of delightful music? Or, only seldom do we think of Him, and then with gloom, and without love and ardent desire? What does our thinking of Christ produce? Does it produce desire, love, trust, resolution, prayer, action? What are we willing to suffer for Christ? What are we willing to give up for Christ? What can we cheerfully give to Christ, to feed His poor, or to help His cause?

If asked what of Jesus I think,
Though still my best thoughts are nothing:
He's more than my meat and my drink,
My Life, and my Lord, and my King;
My Shepherd, my Husband, my Friend,
My Saviour from sins big and small;
My Hope from beginning to end,
My Portion, my Head, and my All.

September 25
EVENING

"Submit yourselves therefore to God" Jas 4:7

"HUMBLE YOURSELVES IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD."

For He is God and none else. The natural man does not like submission to God, and yet there is no happiness without it. It is only as our wills accord with God's, as we cheerfully submit to all His dispensations, that we can be truly happy. Without submission there can be no holiness, for there is rebellion. If I refuse to submit to God, I am opposing His authority, questioning His wisdom, doubting His love, and despising His word. In proportion as I am sanctified, I shall cheerfully bow to whatever I know to be the will of God, receive with gratitude whatever comes from the hand of God, and endeavour to do whatever bears the stamp of His authority. Without submission there is no salvation. We must acknowledge His justice, confess our sins, bow at His throne, seek for pardon on the ground of mercy, and accept His plan of salvation by grace, or we shall never be delivered from the wrath to come. Submit yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, to be saved by His grace, to be ruled by His word, to be settled by His providence, and to be employed for His glory. Only submit, and you are happy; seek sanctification, entire submission, and you are safe for ever.

The Sov'reign Father, good and kind,
Wants but to have His child resigned
Beneath His will with yielded heart,
O Lord to me this grace impart.

September 26

MORNING

"Partakers of the heavenly calling" Heb 3:1

"THE SON OF GOD BECAME THE SON OF MAN" for just this one purpose, that we the sons of men might become the sons of God, and be partakers of the heavenly calling. Beloved, God has called us by His grace and gospel into the knowledge of His Son, into the favour of Jesus, to receive of His blessed Spirit; to enjoy fellowship with Christ, to bear His image and to partake of His righteousness, wisdom, unsearchable riches, and eternal glory. This calling is heavenly in its origin, its progression and consummation; it is from heaven to heaven. All believers are blessed with the same calling; they are called by the same Lord, to the same cross and throne, to possess and enjoy the same title and the same royal privileges. This calling is the highest honour and favour that can be conferred upon a sinner; it is the gift of free and unmerited love; its enjoyment calls for gratitude and praise. Are we called with an heavenly calling? Then we should walk with God apart from the world, follow the Saviour, set our affection on things above, and prepare for our heavenly home, our glorious inheritance. Let us make our calling and election sure, and then sing -

As Thou wilt, dispose of me,
Saviour make me one with Thee;
Help me in my life express
All the gifts of holiness:
Daily by my actions prove
I am Thine by filial love.

September 26

EVENING

"Prove me now" Mal 3:10

"BRING YE ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE."

God will reciprocate with blessings from heaven that there shall not be room enough to receive it. *Do you truly believe God's word?* God has spoken and will He not make it good? He has promised, will He not fulfil His word? Who can doubt it? But if you do, He says, "*Prove me!*" How is this to be done? Search His word and see what He has said. Take His promises to His throne and plead them in prayer. Watch, wait, and work as He has directed; and see if He will not do as He has said. When should we prove Him? Under *conviction of sin*, and see if He will not pardon. In *affliction*, and see if His grace is not sufficient for us. In *perplexity*, and see if He will not make darkness light before us, and crooked things straight. In *difficulties* and sore trials, and see if He will not appear for us, and make a way for our escape. When engaged in *His service*, and see if godliness is not profitable to all things, having a promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come. Unnumbered thousands have proved Him, and all have found Him true and faithful. Let us prove Him for ourselves, so shall we grow strong in faith, and stronger in witness to God's goodness, that His word is true from the beginning. "*O taste and see that the Lord is good.*"

He will never Himself deny;
A God of truth can never lie;
As well might He His being quit,
As break His oath, or word remit.

September 27

MORNING

"Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?" Mic 2:7

IS OUR GOD EVER HELPLESS OR EXHAUSTED? What sort of a God do you serve? Why do you despond? Why are you satisfied to live so far below your Christian calling? The Holy Spirit is promised to teach us all things, to testify of Jesus to our hearts, to help our infirmities, to comfort us by taking the things of Christ, and showing them to us, and to lead us in the way everlasting. Do we experience His love in these situations? If not, what is the cause? *"Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?"* No! But do we sow to the Spirit? Do we pray for the Spirit? Do we expect the Father to send Him, in answer to our prayers, and that the Comforter will surely come to aid us according to His promise? O beloved, look at your doubts, your fears, your carnality, your coldness, your want of love and faith, and now ask, *"Are these His doings? Is His arm shortened? Is His love diminished? Is His word false?"* Or, rather, have you not grieved Him, quenched His operations, and caused Him to withhold His hand? O pray for the Spirit! You are absolutely dependent upon Him, for without Him you can do nothing. *The blessed Spirit will not fail you.*

Come, Holy Ghost, God's quick'ning fire,
My consecrated heart inspire;
Sprinkle with the atoning blood:
And to my soul Thyself reveal;
Thy mighty working let me feel,
And know that I am one with God.

September 27
EVENING

"I am married unto you" Jer 3:14

THE WORD OF GOD SAYS, "THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY," because it is beyond natural comprehension. Christ's love for the Church is likened to the marriage bond. It is the closest union that can be formed between intelligent creatures: two become one flesh. And this is the relation which the Lord ordains, to represent His love to His people. He is engaged to them, and they are engaged to Him. His love is fixed upon them, and their love upon Him. He has chosen them, and they have responded to him. He finds pleasure in them and they find all their fulfilment in Him. He communicates to them, and they have fellowship with Him. He treats them with a father's love, and they make him the sole object of their trust. He provides all they need, and they live in constant dependence upon Him. Christian, do you realize the fact that the Lord is married unto you? That He is all that to you - the kindest, wisest, and wealthiest a husband can be? Are you walking with God as His bride? Are you living with God, as married to Him? Do you leave all for Him? Expect all from Him? Aim in all things to please him? Rejoice, that though every earthly friend may leave you, your heavenly Husband will never leave you. Cleave to Him; let nothing ever draw you from Him, for He is *"married unto you."*

Lord, make me in this union shine,
That heav'n and earth may see,
In heart and life, I'm truly Thine,
Married only to Thee!

September 28

MORNING

"Be content with such things as ye have" Heb 13:5

"GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN."

And the love of money (and material wealth) is the root of all evil. We may not have what we wish, but we certainly have what our God deems best for us. Every mercy is directed by infinite wisdom and eternal love, and never misses its way, or falls into the possession of any but those for whom it is intended. Let us therefore remember that our God has chosen our inheritance for us, and it becomes us to be content; yea, to be very grateful. We have infinitely more than we deserve and more than many of our fellow believers. We have liberty, while the apostle was shut up in prison; we have a home, while many of the early Christians lived in dens and caves of the earth; our lives are protected, while the martyrs were burned at the stake; we live in hope of heaven, while many are lifting up their eyes in hell, being in torments. Let us be content with present things, and hope for better; let us say after Paul's example, *"I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound."* And say:

Take my soul and all my pow'rs,
Take my body, mind, and will;
All my goods and all my hours,
Thou hast giv'n, let me be still;
Thine I live, thrice happy I!
Happier still if Thine I die.

September 28

EVENING

"The Lord was with Joseph" Gen 39:21

THERE IS NO GREATER BLESSING THAN THIS. Emmanuel, God with us. Joseph had been torn from his father, deprived of his home, sold for a slave, falsely accused, and cast into prison. But the Lord was with him. Many have experienced times of greatest trial, seasons of special testing. When persecuted for righteousness' sake, a special blessing rests upon us. The Lord's presence with Joseph made up for all the losses he sustained, for He will turn a prison into a palace, a dungeon into paradise. The Lord was with him to sustain him, to cheer him, to hold communion with him, to give him favour with the keeper, to teach him lessons of the greatest importance, to prepare him to rule over the land of Egypt, to make him an example to all who should suffer for His name's sake, to bring him forth with honour, and crown him with dignity. Before being exalted he must be humbled. The prison was the direct road to the palace. The way of the cross leads to the crown. If we would reign with Christ in heaven, we must suffer with Christ on earth. Beloved, wherever duty leads you, or persecution drives you, the Lord is with you. His presence is more frequently enjoyed under cloudy skies than when the sun of prosperity shines.

Thy gracious presence, O my God
My every fear contains;
With Thee beneath affliction's rod,
My heart no more complains.

September 29
MORNING

"Trust ye in the Lord for ever" Isa 26:4

"FOR IN THE LORD JEHOVAH IS EVERLASTING STRENGTH." We are often discouraged by the difficulties in the way, and cast down through the weakness of our faith: we look to creatures instead of looking to the Lord; we dwell upon our weakness instead of believing His promises and trusting His faithfulness. But the Lord our God should be the only and the constant object of our trust; His word warrants us to look to Him for all we need, both temporal and spiritual; and His character assures us that we shall not be disappointed. He will appear for us and make all His goodness pass before us. If we connect prayer to God with trusting in God and waiting for God, it is impossible that we should be abandoned in trouble or be neglected in distress. We may trust Him with the fullest confidence and expect without doubting that all He has promised He will fulfil. Are you at this time tried, tempted, and distressed? Cast your burden upon the Lord. Commit your way unto Him; He will bring to pass His largest promises and your best desires. Seek out His promises, confide in them, plead them with God, and expect their fulfilment. *O trust in the Lord for ever!*

Trust Him, He's faithful to His word,
His promise cannot fail;
He'll never leave you nor forsake,
Or let your foes prevail;
Then trust His word, rest in His grace,
Until you see Him face to face.

September 29

EVENING

"And Aaron held his peace" Lev 10:3

"THE SONS OF AARON OFFERED STRANGE FIRE BEFORE THE LORD." And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them. Aaron was in deep trouble. His trial was peculiarly great. It was death, the death of two sons at once. It was instantaneous death for an act of presumptuous sin. It was in the presence of the people, as an example of Jehovah's holiness and wrath. It was without time for repentance or any knowledge of their eternal state. But God said, *"I will be glorified, and Aaron held his peace."* This was opposed to murmuring, to questioning the justice of God, or refusing to be comforted. It was submission to the Lord's will springing from a knowledge of His righteousness; from supreme love to God, from carnal reason being brought into subjection, from a sense of desert. My friend, today's lesson speaks to us. It says, *"In your most painful trials, imitate the saint of the Lord."* It reproves all our complainings and questioning the Lord's love and mercy. It comforts us by showing us that the greatest saints have sometimes had the sorest trials. It speaks caution, and says, *"Beware how you trifle, or presume, for Jehovah is a jealous God." The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.*

In all Thy dealings, Lord, with me,
O stop the murmuring groan!
Or let my only answer be,
"Father, Thy will be done!"

September 30

MORNING

"Ye are under grace" Rom 6:14

"CHRIST HAS REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW." He was made a curse for us. By His death on the cross, we are delivered from the law, and are dead to it; we are married to Christ, and are alive unto God, the God of love. The curse is removed, sin is atoned for, and we stand as high in the favour of God as we possibly can. We should look upon ourselves as the favourites of God, His beloved children, whom He has reconciled to Himself by the death of His Son. Grace reigns over us, rules in us, provides for us, and will glorify us. Why then should we fear? Of whom should we be afraid? Sin is pardoned. The law is magnified. Justice is satisfied. God is at peace with us; yea, He delights in us. The world is overcome for us, and even Satan shall be bruised under our feet shortly. What shall we say to these things? As God is for us, and with us, who shall injure us, or prevail against us? All things must work together for our good; nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God; we shall be more than conquerors through Him who loved us; and why? *Because we are not under the law, but under grace.*

On Jesus only I depend,
He is my Father, God, and Friend,
My Prophet, King, and Priest;
Had I an angel's holiness,
I'd cast aside that glorious dress,
And wrap me up in Christ.

September 30

EVENING

"The faithful God" Deut 7:9

"BECAUSE THE LORD LOVED YOU." He remembered and kept His covenant with the fathers. So He redeemed Israel out of Egypt. We have a faithful God, One who may be believed without question; who may be trusted without fear; to whom we may open our hearts, without reserve. He is faithful, and therefore He corrects our follies, reproves us for our faults, teaches us His will, supports us in our trials, brings us through our troubles, holds our enemies in check, makes darkness light before us, and crooked things straight. Upon every mercy we receive, upon every danger we escape, upon every disappointment we meet, upon every history we read, and upon every cross we carry, we may see written, *"The faithful God."* He is faithful to maintain the rights of His Throne, to execute the threatenings of His word, to fulfil the promises of His grace, to supply the wants of his dependents, to answer the prayers of His people, and to make all things work together for good, to those that love Him, who are the called according to his purpose. His faithfulness is seen in expelling Adam from paradise, in destroying the world with the flood; in sending His Son to redeem us; and in giving His Holy Spirit unto us.

Cast thy burden on the Lord;
Plead His promise, trust His word;
So shalt thou have cause to bless
His eternal faithfulness.

October 1
MORNING

"Your heavenly Father" Mt 6:32

WHEN YE PRAY, SAY, *"OUR FATHER."* Like a father, He cares for you, but, unlike any earthly father, with complete knowledge of your needs and perfect wisdom on your behalf. When cast down, remember you have a Father in heaven who loves you, has given His word to you, and is ever ready to do you good. It is truly blessed to begin this month, and every month, believing that we have a Father in heaven; and that *"like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust."* Let there be no reserve between us and our heavenly Father, but let us communicate everything to Him; let there be no hard thoughts of our Father, but let us delight in His word, which sets forth His own immutable mind, and let us rejoice. Our heavenly Father knoweth what we need; He hath provided all we need, and He will freely give all He has provided; but He will be acknowledged and sought unto. Nothing is too hard for Him to effect; nothing is too great for Him to produce; nothing is too good for Him to bestow upon His people. What a mercy that we have such a Father in this inhospitable world! *To Him let us carry, and with Him let us leave, all our cares.*

Father, on me Thy grace bestow,
To call Thee mine while here below;
To love Thee as Thy law requires,
To this my longing soul aspires;
May every word and action prove
My soul is filled with filial love.

October 1
EVENING

"We have now received the atonement" Rom 5:11

BECAUSE GOD COMMENDETH HIS LOVE TOWARD US. This is the divine plan, that God gave His Son to die for us sinners and enemies. On the cross, the Lord Jesus made full satisfaction to divine justice for our sins. He suffered all that is necessary for our pardon and justification. His sacrifice is our expiation. What He did is offered to us in the gospel. By faith we receive it, rely on it, and plead it before God for our acceptance; we are accepted on account of it, and have peace with God. The atonement was made on Calvary; it accomplished all that God required, and He is satisfied: but it must be received by the sinner, if he is to have peace. We must daily exercise confidence in it, or we cannot walk with God. We have now received the atonement which we had not once. We did not feel our need of it. We did not see its value. We did not understand its nature. What a mercy that we do now! The death of Jesus is our life: *"He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He put away our sin by the sacrifice of himself. He is our peace."* Let us never lose sight of His atoning sacrifice, or of his justifying righteousness; for if we do, Satan will prevail against us, guilt will soon fill us with gloom, duties will become irksome, and the prospect of death fearful.

Christ has for sin atonement made,
What a wonderful Saviour!
We are redeemed, the price is paid,
What a wonderful Saviour!

October 2
MORNING

"Who is on the Lord's side?" Ex 32:26

"HE THAT IS NOT WITH ME IS AGAINST ME." Our Lord makes it crystal clear: in spiritual conflict God allows no neutrality. Every believer must stand with the Lord. The Lord has a cause upon the earth; it is weak, and wants your support; it is despised, and needs your countenance. If you are on the Lord's side, you are on the side of truth, of holiness and charity; you are on the side of His ordinances, of His people and His ways, and you are jealous for His honour. With His people, you go forth to Jesus without the camp, bearing His reproach. If you are on the Lord's side, He will spare you as obedient children, supply you as faithful servants, protect you as loyal subjects, and honour you as brave and courageous soldiers. You will never see any just occasion to change sides, or regret that you ever decided to serve so good a Master. You will find the Lord to be on your side, supporting you in affliction, comforting you in trouble, giving you victory in death, and pronouncing you just in the judgment. If you are on the Lord's side, avow it openly, prove it daily, and let your whole conduct say, *"I am the Lord's."* Use all your influence for His cause, and rejoice if you should suffer for His name.

Who is on the Lord's side? who will serve the King?

Who will be His helpers, other lives to bring?

Who will leave the world's side? who will face the foe?

Who is on the Lord's side? who for Him will go?

By Thy call of mercy, by Thy grace divine,

We are on the Lord's side — Saviour, we are Thine!

October 2
EVENING

"We are more than conquerors" Rom 8:37

ALL BECAUSE CHRIST OUR LORD HAS RISEN FROM THE DEAD. Now at the right hand of God He makes intercession for us to give us the victory. This is marvellous. For the believer has to contend with all that is depraved in his nature, with all that is opposed to God in the world, with all that is unholy in his family. He has to contend with many painful and trying workings of God, with Satan his grand adversary, and also with sickness and death. But through Christ he overcomes. It is through the One who loves him: that is, through Jesus. The love of Jesus is his solace, his comfort, and his encouragement. The loving Jesus supplies him with grace, strength, and wisdom, and by these he overcomes. He conquers by faith in Christ. He overcomes all by patience, fortitude, and confidence in his Saviour. He overcomes all and arises from the battle uninjured. He overcomes and is benefitted by the contest. He obtains a great and complete victory, and will at length be possessed of the spoils, and crowned as the conqueror. No one can overcome but by Jesus. But if united to Him, if living by faith in Him, if copying His example, we shall not only overcome, but are more than conquerors. Believer, expect opposition. Christian, see your dependence: it is on the wisdom, power, care and intervention of Jesus.

Conformed to our Head in suff'ring and stress,
Oppressed and in grief, in pain and disgrace;
Rejoicing in hope, we triumphantly prove,
We're more than conqu'ers through Jesus' great love.

October 3
MORNING

"Thou shalt be a blessing" Gen 12:2

"IN THEE SHALL ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED." This was God's promise to Abraham. The same promise comes to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. We were by nature cursed of God, and a curse to others. But God intervenes for us, pours out His blessing upon us, through Jesus His Son, and makes us a blessing. He gives grace to mould the character, gifts to fit for usefulness, wisdom to choose the course, strength to do His will, supplies to complete the design, faith to trust His word, patience to persevere and wait His time, and success to crown our efforts. The result of His thus blessing us is, we become a blessing to others, to sinners and saints. We are a blessing by the spirit we breathe, if it is meek, gentle, and lovely; by the example we set, if it is an imitation of Jesus; by our prayers for the good of souls and the glory of God; and by our efforts to spread abroad the knowledge of the truth in every place. What a blessing it is to be the means of the conversion of but one soul; and to be used to instruct the ignorant, to strengthen the weak, or to comfort the desponding. O Lord Jesus! make us a blessing to many for Thy name's sake. Thy grace is sufficient; fulfil in us Thy promise to Abraham. Beloved, let us look to Jesus our Lord, depend upon Him, act for Him, give praise daily unto Him, and *we shall be a blessing.*

Lord, make me faithful unto death,
Thy witness till my latest breath;
To tell the glories of the Lamb,
Him whom I serve, and whose I am;
On whom for strength I daily lean,
Whose strength is in my weakness seen.

October 3
EVENING

"Weak in the faith" Rom 14:1

"FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD." Weak faith arises from a defect in our knowledge of God's word. Many of the Lord's people have an imperfect acquaintance with the gospel. They know but little of God's real character, or of the nature and design of the Saviour's work, or of what really constitutes Christian salvation, because they have not studied God's word. Consequently they are full of fears, and are often assailed with doubts, whereas if well informed in the Scriptures, they would be rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. They think they must do something, besides believing in Christ, in order to gain acceptance with God; or they must feel something, more than they have, before they are entitled to peace with God. Such do not perceive that they are putting what they do or what they feel *in the place of Christ*; or they are adding these things to Christ, as if He alone were not sufficient. They are doing what the Galatians did, who made circumcision necessary to salvation; and to whom Paul said, "*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.*" Beloved, *grace* alone must form the ground of our acceptance with God. Works only follow as the fruit of faith and grace.

Blest soul that can say, "Christ only I seek!"
Wait for Him alway, be constant though weak;
The Lord whom thou servest, will not tarry long,
To Him e'en the weakest is dear as the strong.

October 4
MORNING

"I will do you no hurt" Jer 25:6

"TURN YE AGAIN NOW EVERYONE FROM HIS EVIL WAY." This is the way to gain favour with God. Then the God of love, who is full of compassion, plenteous in mercy, ready to forgive, waiting to be gracious, will do His children no hurt. At times His dealings may cause us pain, but nothing shall by any means harm us. We ought rather to reason with Paul, *"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"* He sent His ancient people as captives to Babylon, but it was for their good; He allowed His children to be cast into the fiery furnace, into the lions' den, to be driven out to wander in sheepskins and goatskins, but He did not allow them to be hurt; all this was sanctified to them, and the curse was turned into a blessing. If He scourge us with one hand, He will support us with the other, and at last we shall come up before His throne, out of great tribulation, having washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Not one who has arrived safe in heaven will say that his God allowed him to be *hurt*, notwithstanding the trials endured by the way. Nothing shall by any means *hurt* you. Did not our Lord promise, *"Lo I am with you alway"?*

Lord, I would my all resign,
Gladly lose my will in Thine;
Careless be of things below,
Thee alone content to know;
Simple, innocent, and free,
Seeking all my bliss in Thee.

October 4
EVENING

"Ye are the salt of the earth" Mt 5:13

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT HAS PRECIOUS LESSONS FOR US. Our Lord Jesus is the perfect Teacher: hear ye Him. Sin has rendered the salt unsavoury and exposed it to destruction. Only *grace* and *truth* can restore it to purity and order. These come by Jesus Christ and they are retained and utilised by His people. He compares His saints to salt. They season and preserve others. Every Christian is a grain of salt. He should affect for good all around him. His principles are to influence and his character to improve and instruct. The earth without the saints would go down to putrefaction and destruction. Beloved, are you *good seasoning* to those around you? Is your conversation always with grace, seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace unto the hearers? Do you diffuse what you possess? Do you possess what you profess? Who is the better because of you? Does your Christian influence spread silently and penetrate deeply, like that of salt in nature? Or, have you only a form of godliness without the power thereof? If a Christian, you must benefit all with whom you are in contact; you will not live unto yourself, but unto Him that died for you and rose again. If salt is present, it will show itself; and so will grace. *Be salt for God!*

'Tis to my Saviour I would live,
To Him who for my ransom died;
Nor could untainted Eden give
Such bliss as blossoms at His side.

October 5
MORNING

"Only acknowledge thine iniquity" Jer 3:13

"WHEN I KEPT SILENCE, MY BONES WAXED OLD." David speaks of the burden of unconfessed sin. *"Day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me."* Will the Lord receive us when we have backslidden from Him and desire to return? O yes, He invites, He exhorts, He beseeches us to return. Nor does He prescribe any hard conditions, but He says, *"Only acknowledge thine iniquity."* He is so ready to forgive, so infinitely gracious in His nature that, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. *Have we wandered? Have we left our first love?* Let us return to our heavenly Husband, for then it was better with us than now. His heart yearns over us, His arms are open to receive us, and He waits to fall upon our neck and kiss us. Let us go to His throne, and there confess our sins, crave His pardon, sigh for the enjoyment of His love, and He will restore unto us the joys of His salvation, and establish us with His free Spirit. Let us daily confess our iniquities unto the Lord, and He will pardon our many sins. In His favour is life. In His frown is distress and woe. He delights in mercy. He will receive, pardon and bless for His mercy endures for ever.

This glorious news dispels my fears,
Makes glad my heart, wipes off my tears;
Displays the riches of His grace,
Inflames my love, and claims my praise;
A pardoned sinner lives to prove
The height and depth of Jesus' love.

October 5
EVENING

"Approve things that are excellent" Phil 1:10

"THAT YE MAY BE SINCERE AND WITHOUT OFFENCE."
But we must first *"approve things that are excellent"* in God's sight. Take nothing upon trust, but bring everything to the word of God, and try it there. Learn to distinguish between the ornamental and the useful; the fundamental and the circumstantial; the beneficial and the hurtful. Try things that differ and approve the things that are excellent. There are excellent institutions: assist them; excellent gifts: seek for them; excellent doctrines, embrace and hold them fast; excellent duties, perform them; excellent attainments, aspire to them; excellent ordinances, attend to them; excellent Scriptures, search them; excellent enjoyments, pray for them. Prove that your eyes are keen to discover, and that your heart is sanctified to approve. Endeavour to distinguish between the law and the gospel, between nature and grace, between conviction and conversion, between profession and possession, between graces and counterfeits, between scriptural doctrines and deceptions, and *approve the things that are excellent*. Hold that fast which you have. Publish to others what you know and be blessed. If you lack wisdom for this, ask of God who gives to all liberally.

My gracious Lord, I own Thy right
To every service I can pay;
And call it my supreme delight,
To hear Thy dictates and obey.

October 6
MORNING

"The righteousness which is of God by faith" Phi 3:9

"ALL OUR RIGHTEOUSNESSES (BEFORE GOD) ARE AS FILTHY RAGS." We are all as an unclean thing. Of ourselves we have no righteousness. The righteousness which God requires is provided by the life and death of His Son and is presented to sinners in the everlasting gospel. It imputes to every believer the richest grace, accepts when pleaded at the Father's throne, and honours with a title to eternal life. This righteousness is by faith; it is the office of faith to receive it, plead it, trust it, rejoice in it, embolden the soul through it and clothe the soul in it. It is not offered to anything but faith, nor can it be received and enjoyed except by faith. Every unbeliever or self-righteous person rejects it, but every man who is taught of God knows that he needs it; he discovers its beauty, glory, and value and applies for it with ardent desire and earnest longing. He embraces it as God's greatest favour, enjoys it as a rich and durable treasure, and dies confidently expecting to be accepted and admitted to glory through it. O may we be found in Jesus, not having on our own righteousness, which is of the law, but *the righteousness which is of God by faith!* And while we pant for holiness with every breath, and aim at it in every action, may each of us devoutly say -

And even when I feel Thy grace,
And sin seems most subdued,
I'll wrap me in Thy righteousness,
And plunge me in Thy blood.

October 6
EVENING

"Abide with us" Lk 24:29

"DID NOT OUR HEART BURN WITHIN US?" Walking and talking with the risen Lord Jesus was a blessing not experienced before. The Saviour had accompanied His disciples to Emmaus. He had unfolded the Scriptures, endeared Himself to them, and made as if He would leave them. But they intreated Him to remain with them; they said, *"Abide with us: for it is toward evening."* Whoever enjoyed the presence of Christ and did not wish for its continuance? And who, among the Lord's people, has not had to mourn His absence? He is always present as our keeper, but we do not always enjoy His presence. Let us seek Him, if we have Him not at present; and let us beseech Him to abide with us, if we have. Let us ask Him to dwell with us, and open His Word to us, and kindle the flame of love in our souls, and fill us with ardent gratitude and joy. He desires us to abide with Him, more than we desire Him to abide with us; and it is still true which was spoken of old, *"The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; if ye seek Him He will be found of you."* Beloved, have you enjoyed the Saviour's presence today? Can you be happy without doing so? His presence is the sweetness and glory of heaven; and His presence is the balm for all our sorrows, and the antidote for all our miseries on earth.

Jesus, thy presence I implore,
This blessing now bestow;
With me abide, leave me no more,
While I remain below.

October 7
MORNING

"He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father" Jn 14:21

"AND I WILL LOVE HIM AND WILL MANIFEST MYSELF TO HIM." Do we love Jesus? Are we cultivating an acquaintance with Him? If we love Him, we desire to know Him more fully, to serve Him more cheerfully, and to enjoy Him continually. If we love Jesus, we are willing to part with all things for Him, to renounce whatever He forbids, and pursue whatsoever He commands. If we love Him, we want to love Him more, and to be always with Him. If we love Him, He assures us His Father will love us, for He so delights in His beloved Son, that He visits, revives, and blesses every soul that loves Jesus. If God loves us, what good thing will He withhold from us? Will He suffer anyone to hurt us? O no! He will manifest Himself to us. He will appear for us. He will glorify Himself in us. He will be to us all that God can be, and do for us far above our expectations and hopes. To be the object of the love of God is to enjoy the highest honour, and to possess a title to the greatest happiness which it is possible for rational creatures to enjoy. Let us therefore ascertain beyond a doubt that we love Jesus ardently and sincerely.

To His meritorious passion
All our happiness we owe;
Pardon, uttermost salvation,
Heav'n above and heav'n below:
Grace and glory
From that open fountain flow.

October 7
EVENING

"I shall come forth as gold" Job 23:10

"MY STROKE IS HEAVIER THAN MY GROANING." Job's complaint was bitter. The furnace of affliction was hot. It was heated seven times hotter than ever. But he was conscious of his integrity. He knew that though he was imperfect, he was sincere. He knew that he had a living Redeemer, that his God knew his heart, his motives, his desires, and his pathway. Therefore he felt confident that he would not be consumed in God's furnace of testing, only refined. This is the design of all God's trials. They are to make us fit for the Master's use, to make us reflect the Saviour's image, to fit us for eternal glory. However fierce the fire, we shall lose nothing but our dross. Our eternal interests are safe. Our God is immutably the same. This is our security. He says, *"I am Jehovah, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."* He sits by the furnace as the Refiner; He superintends the whole process of purification, and He removes the fire the moment the design is accomplished. Tried Christian, your God is refining you, His design is most loving: He will take care of you. Let not your faith flag, or your courage droop; but say with Job, *"He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."*

In fiery trials and distress,
I will thy promise hold;
Thou wilt my soul in trouble bless,
I shall come forth as gold.

October 8
MORNING

"We will remember Thy love" Song 1:4

"THE SON OF GOD LOVED ME AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME." His love for me took Him to Calvary. What subject is so sweet as the love of Jesus? The goodwill of His heart towards us He has fixed on us sovereignly, immutably, and eternally. Let us remember this love of Jesus, for it is sufficient to fill us with joy, peace, and contentment. O how He condescended to look upon us, to come and die for us, and now to dwell with us! Ponder His love: what benevolence it has and does display, giving everything that is necessary for life and godliness. How it dignifies its objects, raising them to glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. Let us remember His love, to comfort our hearts amid changing friendships, to encourage our souls in seasons of gloom, to produce confidence in times of trial, to inspire with fortitude in times of danger, to beget patience when burdened and oppressed, to reconcile under bereaving situations, and to produce zeal and devotion in the Lord's service. O love of Jesus! Please be my daily subject and constant theme! Beloved, let us remember His love, if we forget everything beside; there is nothing so sweet, so precious, so excellent as this!

O may you know the love of God
Which by His grace is shed abroad
In this poor longing heart!
Help me, dear Lord, for Thee to shine,
To show to men, Thy love divine;
To all Thy love impart.

October 8
EVENING

"They have spoken lies against me" Hos 7:13

"WOE UNTO THEM! DESTRUCTION UNTO THEM!" Even the ox knows his owner but my people do not consider. *Who were they?* The people whom the Lord had redeemed. Awful as the sin is, it is so common that we may rather ask, *"Who has not?"* Spoken lies against God! *When?* When you said that He was unwilling to receive you because you were such a wretched sinner. When you said that you should perish, though you were clinging to the cross, trusting in His grace, and seeking His mercy. When you exclaimed, *"The Lord has forsaken me, and He has forgotten me."* When you said that He would allow you to want, to leave you in distress, or turn a deaf ear to your prayer in the time of trouble. But you know that time would fail me to enumerate the instances in which you have spoken lies against God. Sometimes plainly, and at other times more obscurely, you have said, *"He does not mean what He says. He will not perform His promise."* My friend, beware, your unbelief gives God the lie, your doubts reflect on His veracity; He speaks the truth, and only the truth. So, be very careful. *"He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record which God gave of His Son."*

I too have lied against my God,
With shame and sorrow I confess;
Pardon my sin through Jesus' blood,
And give me sanctifying grace.

October 9
MORNING

"The poor committeth himself unto Thee" Ps 10:14

"ARISE, O LORD: FORGET NOT THE HUMBLE." Our God is Friend to the friendless, and helper of the fatherless. Those who appear the most friendless, have in Jesus the best and truest Friend. The Lord's people are poor, but they are not friendless or forsaken. They have Jehovah for their God, Jesus for their Saviour, and the Holy Spirit for their Comforter and Guide. They know God and commit themselves and their all to Him. But how do they commit themselves to Him? As the debtor does to his Surety; as the sick man does to his Physician; as the client does to his Advocate; as the needy does to his rich and generous Friend; as the sinner to his Saviour; as the loving bride to her beloved Bridegroom. But why do they commit themselves unto Him? They commit themselves to His grace, to be saved by it; to His power, to be kept by it; to His providence, to be fed by it; to His word, to be ruled by it; to His care, to be preserved by it; and to His arms at death, to be safely received into glory. This flows from grace, and produces peace, safety, satisfaction, and success. Let us, beloved, commit ourselves to the Lord daily, heartily, deliberately, and unreservedly.

My soul shall cry to Thee, O Lord,
To Thee, supreme, incarnate Word;
My rock and fortress, shield and Friend,
Creator, Saviour, source, and end;
O Lord do hear Thy servant's prayer,
And death no more shall spell despair.

October 9
EVENING

"The hope of Israel" Jer 14:8

"THE SAVIOUR IN THE TIME OF TROUBLE." Such is the God of Israel and our God. The Author of Israel's hope is begotten by the Spirit through the promises of His word. They hope because He has promised, because He is faithful, because His word is true from the beginning. He is the object of Israel's hope. *"Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption."* They cannot hope in man for he is poor, weak, fickle, and unable to help. But they do hope in God, for He is strong to deliver, wealthy to supply, present to help, pledged to befriend, ready to pardon, wise to direct, waiting to be gracious, and He delights in mercy. His compassion is a spring that never fails. His love is a sun that never sets. His word is as a mountain that cannot be moved. His grace is sufficient for us, and His strength is made perfect in our weakness. The hope of Israel is a refuge; let us repair to it. The hope of Israel is a fountain; let us satisfy our thirst from it. The hope of Israel is our Saviour; let us put our trust in Him. The hope of Israel is God; let us therefore worship, adore and believe Him. *"Happy is he that has the God of Jacob for his help."*

Hope of Israel, hear my cry,
To Thee from self I flee;
Be Thou in every trial nigh
And I will hope in Thee.

October 10
MORNING

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?"

Rom 8:33

"HE SPARED NOT HIS OWN SON FOR US." How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? We are His chosen, His elect. Nevertheless we are sinners; we know it, feel it, and deplore it. The world is against us, and Satan tries every means in his power to ruin us. But, blessed be God, he cannot prevail. The work of the Holy Spirit within us keeps us panting for holiness, striving against sin, aiming at God's glory, and desiring to be a blessing to all around us. The completed work of Christ secures justification from the eternal Father; and believing the promise of His word we may boldly ask: *"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?"* Will God? No, for He is perfectly satisfied with the death of His Son. Will conscience? No, for it is cleansed by the blood of Jesus, sanctified by the word of God, and confirms Jehovah's testimony. Can Satan? No, for he is cast out; his charges are totally rejected, having long since been proved a liar by the God of truth. Will Jesus as Judge of all? No, for He who died for us did not condemn us. O beloved, see the perfection of the Saviour's work.

Complete atonement He has made,
And to the utmost farthing paid
Whate'er His people owed;
How then can wrath on me take place,
If covered by His saving grace,
And sprinkled with His blood?

October 10
EVENING

"Call to remembrance the former days" Heb 10:32

REMEMBRANCE IS THE HALLMARK OF GRATITUDE. Consider what the Lord has done for us: it is profitable to look back. Reflection upon the past will do us good tonight. Our land was once immersed in pagan darkness, superstition, and barbarity; then it fell under the dominion of ecclesiastical ignorance, priestcraft, idolatry, deception, and cruelty. How different was its former state compared to the present! Men were then slaves of Satan, under the dominion of sin, and under the curse of God. They were thoughtless, careless, and hardened. They bowed to idols, and after them they would go. But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, quickened us together with Christ, and saved us by His amazing grace. How delightful were the days of our first love! How precious was the Saviour and how sweet the gospel! How delightful was the Lord's day and how amiable the tabernacles of God! But in time, our zeal declined, our joys faded, and our prospects were overcast, because we had wandered away from God. We became like the heath in the desert, and we complained with a mournful noise. But the good Shepherd sought us out, reproved us for our follies, and restored us again.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!

October 11
MORNING

"Keep yourselves in the love of God" Jude 21

"LOOKING FOR THE MERCY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." He loves us with an everlasting love, so free, boundless, pure and strong. Our love to God is so feeble, and dependent on His love to us as its source. Like a flame, it needs faith and fellowship with Him as its fuel, to keep it fervent and burning hot. Beloved, let us *keep ourselves in the love of God*. While that love was freely given, it cost God most dearly, even the life-blood of His Son. Then we should endeavour to show our gratitude in return, to stand fast, and keep ourselves faithful, firmly grounded in that wonderful love of God. Let us hold it always before our eyes, exercise our faith on it, and prove the power of it by obeying His word and walking in His ways. If our love for God is genuine, we should keep ourselves pure for His use, avoiding temptations, denying every fleshly lust, walking and living as in His presence. We should exercise brotherly love one to another by forbearance, charity and kindly example, keeping *ourselves in the love of God* from the wiles of Satan, the snares of the world, and the lusts of the flesh. Beloved, may the love of God fire us with holy determination to oppose everything that is ungodly and unlawful. Only then can we prove our love for Him.

O God of love, how great Thou art!
Here I return my blood-bought heart
Cleansed and made pure for Thee.
Help me, by godly life, to prove
The power of redeeming love,
Of Christ who died for me.

October 11
EVENING

"He feedeth among the lilies" Song 6:3

BELIEVERS ARE COMPARED TO THIS LOVELY FLOWER. These lilies are not in the field but in the garden, the Saviour's garden. There He loves and prizes them greatly. He visits and walks among them. He is pleased with their persons, their graces, their prayers, their praises, their testimony, and their obedience. He manifests Himself to them, which they ardently desire, highly prize, and are much blessed thereby. See what a Christian should be: not a thorn which wounds everyone who comes too close; not a useless weed, which cumpers the ground or poisons all who taste it; but a lily, one who has a sweet spirit, whose life and conversation is fragrant and inviting, of a pleasing character, who looks well in any situation; a good and useful neighbour who benefits many and injures none, of whom Jesus may well be proud, in whom He finds satisfaction and pleasure. *He feeds among lilies in His church.* True Christian fellowship is exceedingly pleasant to Him. Invite Him to your heart, your home. Expect Him to accept your invitation; welcome and entertain Him suitably. *He feedeth among the lilies:* He comes to bless you.

Saviour! mould me by Thy power,
Fill me with Thy grace divine;
Make me like the lily flower,
To Thy praise and glory shine.

October 12
MORNING

"Be sure your sin will find you out" Num 32:23

"BEHOLD, YE HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE LORD." He is the holy omniscient God: He knows all and nothing is hid from Him. Sin cannot be concealed; it meets the eye and grieves the heart of God. Unless we find it out, confess it with sorrow, and forsake it with disgust, it will find us out and expose us to the rod of God and the contempt of godly men. It found Achan out, and proved his ruin; it found Noah out, and tarnished him with disgrace; it found David out, and the sword never departed from his house. God cannot be reconciled to sin nor should we. However secret the sin, God is witness, and He will bring it to light. *"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy."* Let us be careful that we give sin no quarter, or vainly fancy that because God loves us He will not expose us; He assures us *our sin will find us out*. O to hate sin as God hates it, to loathe it as Jesus loathes it, and to become dead to it and be entirely delivered from it! It is the source of all our miseries, the cause of all our pains, and the occasion of all our troubles. It cannot be hid; it will find us out, and sorely wound us. So let every hidden sin be confessed and cleansed by the blood of the Lamb.

O God, my sins have found me out,
And weighed me down with grief!
Before Thy throne myself I cast,
And plead O Lord forgive;
To Jesus' feet I now repair,
To seek, and find forgiveness there.

October 12
EVENING

"I am the light of the world" Jn 8:12

"HE THAT FOLLOWETH ME SHALL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS." The whole world without Christ is in a state of darkness, the darkness of sin, ignorance, crime, cruelty, and decay. The Jews had a golden stand with seven lamps, but it was confined to their tabernacle or temple. Jesus is come a luminary into the world, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel. He is the source of knowledge, wisdom, holiness, and truth. In Him there is fulness of light. Like the light of the sun it is free and it abideth for ever. He shines on the world by His word. He shines into the heart by His Spirit. His light attracts sinners to His feet, and in His light they see light. By Him they are delivered from moral darkness and guilt; from mental darkness and ignorance; from legal darkness and the yoke of the law; from spiritual darkness and the hiding of the Lord's countenance; and from eternal darkness and banishment from God for ever. Following Him they have the living light, by which they discover the path of life, escape the snares of the tempter, enjoy the gift of eternal life and the assurance of heaven. Reader, are you enlightened by Jesus? If not, go to Him today. *He is the dark world's light.*

Light of my soul! thyself reveal;
Thy pow'r and presence let me feel;
And know, and see the wondrous things
Concealed from prophets, priests, and kings.

October 13
MORNING

"Return, ye backsliding children" Jer 3:22

"I WILL HEAL YOUR BACKSLIDINGS." The Lord in mercy calls on His people to turn back to Him, and be blessed. We are prone to wander, often going astray; our God may justly cast us off, but He lovingly invites us to return. He bids us come to Him and gives us every encouragement to hasten to His feet. Because we are children, though backsliding, our Father bids us return. Beloved, let us return to Him this morning; let us confess our sin, deplore our folly, crave His pardon, plead His promises, hope in His mercy, and expect His reconciliation and love. What an unspeakable mercy to have such a Father, so ready to forgive, so willing to receive, so desirous that we should be happy and blest! His love is wonderful, His forbearance beyond description. See His loving arms extended; *hear* His gracious word inviting; *hasten* now to be blessed! Do not dwell on your miseries, or your wretchedness; they are the effects of your backsliding; but He says, *"I will heal your backslidings."* *"Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up."* His *heart* is grieved for us, His *word* invites us, and His *love* will make us happy. *Only return.*

Father of mercies, God of love,
O hear a humble suppliant's cry!
Bend from Thy lofty seat above,
Thy throne of glorious majesty;
O deign to listen to my voice,
And bid this drooping heart rejoice.

October 13

EVENING

"O Lord, revive Thy work" Hab 3:2

"IN WRATH REMEMBER MERCY." Let this be our prayer daily, that God might revive His church. No one can revive the Lord's work but Himself. He began it, He must carry it on and He will complete it. He does so by His way and means, and one of the means He employs is prayer. He convinces us that we need a revival. He stirs us up to seek it. He makes us sensible of our insufficiency. He may perhaps keep us waiting at His throne for a time. The delay may cause us pain and perplexity. If sanctified, it will make us more earnest for the blessing; and there we shall cry out with the Psalmist of old, *"Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?"* When the Lord revives His work, He strengthens our faith, invigorates our hope, inflames our love, deepens our humility, animates our zeal, and stirs us up to seek the promotion of His cause. Then *prayer* becomes pleasant, *praise* sweet, *ordinances* welcome, the *sabbath* a delight, and the *sanctuary* amiable. The church resembles a lovely garden in which we walk with peculiar satisfaction; the gospel is a feast, most suitable and costly; and we look forward to heaven as our country and home. The Lord revive His work in us by His Spirit, by His providence, and by His holy will. *May God make His people willing.*

O for His soul-reviving grace,
That quick'ning power divine;
The deadness from my soul to chase,
That I may rise and shine.

October 14
MORNING

"I will restore health unto thee" Jer 30:17

"I WILL HEAL THEE OF THY WOUNDS, SAITH THE LORD." Jesus is a skilful Physician. He heals all the falls, bruises, and dislocations of His people. He brings health to the heart. Believer, is your heart hard, wandering, unbelieving, or wounded? Jesus can heal it, and to you He says, *"Come and be healed."* He restores the fainting, the dying and the dead. He is the perfect Doctor of every disease. His terms are *"No money, no price!"* But He will have an absolute surrender to Him: you must refuse all false healers and medicines; take all that He prescribes, bitter or sweet. Take, trust, and be healed. Jesus is Jehovah Rophi, therefore look for health to no other. Lodge with Him, consult Him daily; lay open your whole case to Him. Never despond unless His nature changes, His skill fails, or His invitation is withdrawn from the book of God. Be grateful for healing, and show your gratitude by sending others to Him. Recommend this gracious Physician. Trust Him and remember His question, *"Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? They are not found that return to give glory to God, save this stranger."* Beloved, come to Jesus and be healed; and be sure you render again according to the mercy shown you, when He has restored you. *Return and give thanks.*

Saviour, I love Thy healing hand,
Diseases fly at Thy command!
O let Thy sovereign touch impart,
Life, health, and vigour to my heart.

October 14
EVENING

"It is finished" Jn 19:30

"BY ONE OFFERING HE PERFECTED FOREVER THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED." On the cross our Lord gave Himself, the only sufficient sacrifice for our sins. He died the death that we might live. On the cross the sufferings of Christ were finished. His work below was accomplished, the debts of His people were cancelled, the price of their redemption was paid. The righteousness by which they were justified was perfected. All the requirements of the law were met, the demands of justice were satisfied. Satan was defeated and destroyed. Sin was forever put away, and the curse lifted once for all. The flock was purchased, redeemed by the Shepherd's blood. The foundation of peace, joy, and everlasting salvation was laid. The sin-cleansing fountain was opened to dying sinners everywhere. Death was abolished, and everlasting life was freely offered to all. In a word, the Saviour had finished the work which the Father gave Him to do: He had redeemed the pledge which He gave in the covenant of peace. He had ransomed His beloved bride. He had perfected the Father's plan for man's salvation. He had glorified the Father on earth, and manifested His name everywhere. At Calvary *it was finished*.

'Tis finished, the Messiah dies
For sins, but not His own;
The great redemption is complete,
And Satan's power o'erthrown.

October 15
MORNING

"He marvelled because of their unbelief" Mk 6:6

"IS NOT THIS THE CARPENTER, THE SON OF MARY?" In His own country they were offended at Him. Their unbelief filled Jesus with surprise. Does He also marvel at *our* unbelief? Consider what God has done to remove our doubt. He has shown His character, *"God is love."* He has made a proclamation, *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."* He has given an invitation, *"Look unto me, and be ye saved."* He has employed entreaty, *"As though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."* He has issued a command, *"This is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ."* He has sworn an oath, *"That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation."* He has given His Son as a pledge, to assure us that *"whosoever believeth on Him shall never perish, but have eternal life."* He has added the testimony of all His saints. Well then may He marvel at our unbelief. Never let us attempt to excuse it, but let us plead and pray against it, until we conquer it.

O Lord, fulfil in me Thy word;
I thank Thee for Thy cleansing blood;
Let my request be given:
The seed of unbelief remove,
Instil me more faith and love,
And make me meet for heaven.



October 15
EVENING

"Let not your hearts faint" Deut 20:3

"FEAR NOT, NEITHER BE YE TERRIFIED BECAUSE OF THEM." Our God is greater than all, and He is able and faithful. Remember His promise, *"As thy days, so shall thy strength be."* Prove the Saviour's testimony, *"My grace is sufficient for thee."* Accept the divine invitation, *"Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."* Attend to the inspired direction, *"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."* Imitate the sorely tried Psalmist, *"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."* Rest thy troubled spirit on the promise of thy God, *"He giveth power to the faint, and to him that hath no might He increaseth strength."* Endeavour to apply to yourself the apostolic exhortation, *"Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."* Let not your hearts faint, for your sins are pardoned, your foes are doomed, your mansion is being prepared, your needs will certainly be met, your Saviour deeply sympathizes with you, your heavenly Father cares for you, and all things must work together for your good. Call upon God, and He will show thee great and mighty things that thou knowest not. *"Let not your hearts faint."*

Through every day the truth I prove,
Of Jesus my almighty Friend;
I'm kept by Him, His changeless love
Shall surely keep me to the end.

October 16
MORNING

"The Lord shall be thy confidence" Prov 3:26

HE IS ABLE TO KEEP YOU FROM FALLING. Our Saviour alone is able to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Our happiness consists in knowing God and believing Him; if we know His true character, we can believe His precious word; and if we believe it, we can enjoy perfect peace and complete satisfaction. He presents Himself in His word as able and willing to make us holy, happy, and honourable. To Him we may communicate all that troubles us; from Him we may receive all that our circumstances require; with Him we may walk and enjoy peace. We may rest confident in God, for He is faithful; He has spoken to us, will appear for us, and will never turn away from us; but He will rejoice over us to do us good with His whole heart and with His whole soul. Let us make Him our confidence by believing His Word, frequenting His throne, and seeking His glory in all things. Are you troubled and cast down? Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace, thereby shall good come unto thee. They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. *May the Lord be thy confidence.*

Thou, Lord, on whom I all depend,
Wilt keep me faithful to the end:
I trust Thy truth, and love and power
Shall save me to the final hour;
And when I lay this body down,
Give me a bright and glorious crown.

October 16

EVENING

"Zealous of good works" Tit 2:14

"EVEN SO FAITH, IF IT HATH NOT WORKS, IS DEAD."

God's word says so in the Epistle of James. Now being saved by free grace, we should give ourselves wholly for God's glory. Remember: we are created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, to be active in God's cause and for His creatures' good, not only doing good works, but being zealous for them - zealously doing them ourselves, and zealously encouraging them in others. We cannot do too much for Him, who has done so much for us. Our works should proceed from love to God, be regulated by the command of God, and for the glory of God. We cannot be too zealous in performing them, but we ought to be equally zealous in renouncing them as a ground of acceptance with God. Good works are the works of a child, who aims to please his father: they are performed because of what God has done for us, and not to induce Him to favour us with blessings. In working from a right motive we are happy, for after work God gives a reward; and though like Moses, we may have respect unto the recompence of the reward, yet like Paul, who did more than others, we shall heartily disclaim, *"Not I, but the grace of God that was with me."*

What is my being but for Thee?
Its sure support, its noblest end;
Thy ever smiling face I see,
I serve the cause of such a Friend.

October 17
MORNING

"My strength is made perfect in weakness" 2 Cor 12:9

"MOST GLADLY WILL I RATHER GLORY IN MY INFIRMITIES." This is spoken by Paul, *"that the power of Christ may rest upon me."* The more the believer feels his weakness, the more should he expect his Saviour to strengthen him. The strength of Jesus is imparted, enjoyed, and appreciated in our sorest trials and most distressing seasons. Never was Abraham so strong as when offering up his beloved Isaac upon the mount; never were the martyrs so courageous as when in prison and total helplessness. They cried to Jesus for strength; and depending on His faithfulness and love, left all and went to the stake. Then they could exclaim, *"None but Christ! None but Christ!"* *"Farewell life, welcome the cross of Christ."* Beloved, let us walk by faith and not by feeling; when we feel weakest, the strength of Jesus is nearest, and He magnifies His mercy by giving power to the faint, and increasing strength to the weak. Let us depend on Him, for we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. He is our strength, a very present help in trouble. The Lord is our strength and song, He also is become our salvation.

Saviour, on earth I covet not
That every woe should cease;
Only if trouble be my lot,
In Thee let me have peace;
Thy grace and strength display in me
Till I behold the perfect day.

October 17
EVENING

"The chastening of the Almighty" Job 5:17

"FOR WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE CHASTENETH."

The Lord deals with us as sons. Crosses are not curses. Frowns are sometimes favours. Every child is chastened, chastened by the Almighty. His chastenings are always wise: He never corrects but for faults, though His dispensations are sometimes intended to draw out our graces, and improve our godliness. If the Lord chastens us, it is because He loves us. Let us not then mistake the purpose of our afflictions. They are really mercies. They are indispensable, unless our wise and gracious Father would allow us to get in harm's way. Let us therefore ask, *"Why am I corrected?"* Let us prostrate ourselves before our Father's throne, and while we acknowledge His wisdom in the discipline, beseech Him to make His chastisement a rich blessing. The Lord's rod often blossoms and bears fruit. Our present discipline is to prepare us for future duties, employments, and achievements. With God it is *all right*: He is really very kind. His chastening is *for our good*. The rod is not in a stranger's hand: we are not suffering from the stroke of a cruel one, but from the chastening of the Almighty. *"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness."*

O Father of mercies on me,
In deepest affliction, bestow
The grace of submitting to Thee,
A sanctified use of my woe.

October 18
MORNING

"I will look unto the Lord" Mic 7:7

"I WILL WAIT FOR THE GOD OF MY SALVATION." It is looking and waiting with confidence that the Lord will hear. Looking to creatures always ends in disappointment; therefore it is forbidden by Him who created us and loves us best, and has our best interests at all times. The prophet had been weaned from looking to man by many sore trials; and now he determines to look only unto the Lord. Let us imitate his example. We cannot do better than look to the Lord as our Captain to lead us; as our Master to direct us; as our Father to provide; and as our God to defend. His name is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe. Looking to Jesus will preserve us from a thousand snares, and prepare us to suffer for Him, and to triumph through Christ our Lord. The eyes of the Lord are always upon us; may our eyes be ever towards the Lord. Let us look to Him for all we need, from all we fear, through all that obstructs our progress, and so press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He says, *"Look unto me and be ye saved."* It is recorded, *"They looked unto Him and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed."* Jesus is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

Lord, shine on my benighted heart,
With beams of mercy shine;
And let Thy Spirit's voice impart
The sound of joys divine;
To Thee I look, to Thee I cry,
O bring Thy sweet salvation nigh.

October 18
EVENING

"Lord, be Thou my helper" Ps 30:10

"HEAR, O LORD, AND HAVE MERCY UPON ME." Why?
"To the end that my glory may sing to Thee ... I will give thanks unto Thee forever." Most appropriate is this prayer for our daily need. The Lord can and will help us. He says, *"Fear not, I will help thee."* But God's promises should be turned into personal prayers: and we never pray so spiritually as when we can say, *"Lord, do as Thou hast said. Be it unto me according to Thy word."* Let us then earnestly cry unto our God this night, *"Lord, be Thou my helper."* I see many fall; I too shall fall except Thou hold me up. I am weak, exposed to temptation. My heart is deceitful, my enemies too strong for me. I cannot trust in man. I dare not trust myself. The grace I have received will not keep me without Thee. *"Lord, be Thou my helper."* In every duty, in every conflict, in every trial, in every effort to promote the Lord's cause, in every season of the year: *"Lord, be thou my helper."* Every hour we live, this short and inspired prayer is appropriate. May it flow from our hearts, be often on our lips, and obtain the Father's favour. For if the Lord help us, there is no duty which we cannot perform, no foe which we cannot overcome, no difficulty which we cannot surmount. With God, all things are possible; even painful things will be made pleasant, *if we have the Lord as our helper.*

Weak and helpless, Lord, I am,
On Thee alone can I depend;
O let me not be put to shame,
Be Thou my helper to the end.

October 19
MORNING

"I will call upon Thee: for Thou wilt answer me" Ps 86:7

"FOR THOU ART GREAT, AND DOEST WONDROUS THINGS." David prayed with complete confidence and full assurance in the Lord. In Christ our Lord we have the same ground for confidence. Our God will answer prayer. Let us ask what is necessary in order to be assured that our God will answer us. We must really mean what we say when we pray. Have a definite objective. Pray in accordance with the will of God as revealed in His promises and precepts. Pray in submission to the will of God, then leave to Him the time when, and the means whereby, He will answer us. We must heartily desire what we pray for. Our motives must be pure so that God may be glorified, sin subdued, and Jesus exalted. We must pray with importunity and perseverance, offering all our prayers in the name of Jesus, expecting them to be accepted and honoured only for His sake. There must be no hidden sin for if we regard iniquity in our hearts, God will not hear us. Always pray in faith, believing that God is, and that He is the rewarder of them who diligently seek Him.

Lord, on me Thy Spirit pour,
Turn the stony heart to flesh:
And begin this very hour,
To revive Thy work afresh:
Lord, revive me!
All my help must come from Thee.

October 19
EVENING

"His compassions fail not" Lam 3:22

"THEY ARE NEW EVERY MORNING: GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS." God's mercy and compassion are unspeakable and unfailing. The sympathy of friends and the affection of family may fail. The mother's tender love may fail. But the compassion of our God never fails. God's ocean of mercies can never be exhausted. His sun of warmth and tenderness never sets, although it may be obscured for a time, but its light and glory are never diminished. Believer, thy God never was more compassionate than He is this night. His promise was never more true. As it applies to His most favoured ones, it applies no less to thee. Turn from thy broken cisterns, thy withered gourds, thy dried brook, thy gloomy feelings, thy painful circumstances, and turn to thy God, confident in this, that, *"His compassions fail not."* As Jesus had compassion on the multitudes which followed Him, because they had nothing to eat, He will surely have compassion on you in your poverty and need. He will bear with your infirmities, pardon your sins, sanctify your sorrows, soothe your griefs, restore your soul, guide you with His counsel, and afterwards receive you to glory: for *His compassions fail not.*

Though dismayed by doubts and fears,
Though distressed by countless cares,
Though most deadly foes assail,
God's compassions never fail.

October 20
MORNING

"Behold, thy salvation cometh" Isa 62:11

"BEHOLD, HIS REWARD IS WITH HIM. *And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord.*" The Lord's people may be sorely tried and often cast down; but the present is the worst state they will ever be in; they are hastening to the day of God, which is to them the day of deliverance. Their salvation is on the way: they will soon be freed from all disease which they now suffer; from all sin, under which they now groan; from all foes, of whom they are now afraid; and from all cares and troubles, with which they are now burdened. Beloved, why are you so fearful, and why do desponding thoughts arise in your hearts? *Behold, your salvation cometh;* behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He will free you from all that pains you, and raise you above all fear. The time of deliverance is at hand, the year of release is near; the trumpet of the Jubilee will soon be heard; our Saviour will arrive to lead us to our Father's house, to the mansions which He has prepared for us, and so shall we be ever with the Lord. Comfort one another with these words, *"Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him!"*

Jesus beckons from on high,
Fearless to His presence fly;
Thine the merits of His blood,
Thine the righteousness of God!
Rise His triumphs to adorn,
Meet thy God, O glorious morn!

October 20
EVENING

"Is there anything too hard for me?" Jer 32:27

"BEHOLD, I WILL GATHER THEM OUT OF ALL COUNTRIES." The Lord will bring His people back again into the land to dwell safely. Difficulties are for creatures; there can be nothing difficult for God. His wisdom is infinite, His power omnipotent, His resources are boundless, His instruments innumerable. His plan is formed, and He is working it out. *"He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."* We are sometimes placed in very trying circumstances; creatures cannot help us, our faith falters, our minds are agitated, our spirits droop and we give way to fear. But the Lord reproves us and asks, *"Is anything too hard for me? Bring the matter to me, exercise faith in my word, place yourself in my hand, wait upon me in my way, I will work, and who shall let it?"* Beloved, your inward evils and outward trials may be too hard for you: but they cannot be too hard for your God. He can subdue the one and deliver you from the other with the greatest ease: His strength is made perfect in weakness. Let this assurance silence your fears, strengthen your faith, revive your hope, increase your courage, animate your prayers. Let us go forward, saying *"Nothing is too hard for the Lord!"* Look away from your own weakness to His strength, and say -

Nothing too hard can be
For my Almighty Lord:
Sufficient is Thy grace for me:
I hang upon Thy word.

October 21
MORNING

"Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel" Ps 73:24

"GOD IS THE STRENGTH OF MY HEART, AND MY PORTION FOREVER." How well do you know Him? The Lord is infinitely gracious, inflexibly just, inconceivably wise, and immutably faithful: except we know Him we cannot trust Him. But here is an entire surrender to Him, to be led where He pleases as He chooses, and by whom He will. This surrender is filial, prudent, and profitable; for godliness with such contentment is great gain. Such a surrender is the effect of faith in the Lord's promise, His gracious presence, and His covenant character. It looks with great expectation from the Lord. Whom the Lord guides He protects and preserves. Lovingly He supplies and receives. He receives them now at the throne of grace as His charge and care; and He will receive them at the throne of His glory, and clothe them with holiness and honour. Beloved, have you thus surrendered? Are you daily surrendering? Can you say to your gracious God, *"Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory?"* If so, happy are you; the Spirit of glory and of God will rest upon you.

Thy law, O Lord, is light and food,
The word of truth, and source of good;
O let it richly dwell within
To keep me from the snares of sin;
And guide me in the narrow way
Till I reach home, no more to stray.

October 21
EVENING

"We are the Lord's" Rom 14:8

"FOR WHETHER WE LIVE, WE LIVE UNTO THE LORD." We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. The Lord has a people peculiarly His own, distinct from all others. They are preferred above all others, being the objects of His choice, the purchase of His blood, the temple of His Holy Spirit. He loves them with an everlasting love. He calls them His portion, His children. He prizes them as His peculiar treasure. He is united to them, loves them, and cares for them as His bride. He keeps them as the apple of His eye. This privilege Paul claimed for himself and all fellow believers; if we are Christians we can claim it too. *"We are the Lord's,"* and we know it, for we have been quickened by His Holy Spirit, received and acknowledged at His holy throne, and consecrated to His service. *"We are the Lord's,"* and here we prove it: for we are united to His family, walking by His precepts, living to His glory, and satisfied only with His presence and love. Beloved, let us rejoice in our heritage, for it is great and glorious. Let us cleave to His saints, excellent in all the earth. In time of difficulty and danger, call thus to Him: *"I am the Lord's."*

I am Thine, O Lord -
I have heard Thy voice,
And it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith
And be closer drawn to Thee.

October 22
MORNING

"After he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" Heb 6:15

"WHEN GOD MADE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM HE SWORE BY HIMSELF." Abraham was long tried, but he was richly rewarded. The Lord tried him by delaying to fulfil His promise. Satan tried him by temptations. Men tried him by jealousy, distrust, and opposition. Hagar tried him by condemning her mistress. Sarah tried him by her peevishness. All this he patiently endured. He did not question God's veracity, nor limit His power, nor doubt His faithfulness, nor grieve His heart. But he bowed to divine sovereignty, submitted to infinite wisdom, and was silent under delays, only awaiting the Lord's perfect time. And so, *having patiently endured, he obtained the promise.* God's promises cannot fail. Patient endurance shall not be disappointed; believing expectations shall be rewarded. Beloved, Abraham's conduct condemns a hasty spirit, reproves a murmuring one, commends a patient one, and encourages quiet submission to God's will. Remember, Abraham by patient waiting obtained the promise and became father of the faithful. Imitate him and you too will be richly blessed.

My faithless fears, dear Lord, forgive;
I shall with sweet contentment live
On what Thy hand shall send;
I know Thou sendest but in love,
By gracious gifts Thy love to prove;
Praise to my heavenly Friend!

October 22
EVENING

"I abhor myself" Job 42:6

JOB REPENTED IN DUST AND ASHES. Before the Lord any self esteem or pride is shattered. The more the Lord manifests Himself to us, and the more He works in us by His Spirit, the deeper will be our humility and self abhorrence. Self admirers are strangers to holy fellowship with God. Nothing discovers to us the true state of human nature like nearness to God. Men may speculate and reason, and boast of what man can do, so long as they are at a distance from God. But no sooner do they come into His presence than their confidence is turned into corruption. They not only see that they are vile but they *feel* it. Job had boasted and contended with God; but as soon as ever God came near to him, his views and feelings underwent an entire change, and he cried out, *"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."* We cannot think too meanly of ourselves as sinners, or regret too deeply the baseness of our carnal nature, except we allow the Spirit to lead us to the feet of Jesus and let Him draw us near to His pierced side. Never does Christ appear more precious than when we sink before Him in self abhorrence.

Appear, great God, appear to me,
That by myself abhorred,
Ashamed I may repentant be
Before my gracious Lord.

October 23
MORNING

"We also should walk in newness of life" Rom 6:4

"RECKON YE YOURSELVES ALIVE UNTO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST." The old man is dead, crucified with Christ, and now a new man with a new nature lives for the Lord. We are brought under new obligations and are expected to keep new objects in view. Being baptized into the death of Christ and united with Him in His resurrection, we should walk by new principles: the free grace of God, holy truth, and divine power of God: these should lead us to walk in newness of life, no longer following social customs, or imitating the ways of the world, but to walk according to God's word, and our Saviour's example. The love of God and zeal for His glory should be the motives by which we act. Then let us strive to honour God, to enjoy His presence, to exalt the Lord Jesus, and to bless others. Let us prove the power and purity of our faith, justify our profession, and show our Christian love by our actions. *New creatures in Christ must show by a new life that their faith is alive and their profession genuine. Beloved, are you walking in newness of life?*

Jesus, my life! Thy pow'r supply,
Thy Holy Spirit breathe;
My vile affections crucify,
Conform me to Thy death,
Teach me to walk the heav'nly path,
To heaven's gate, spared from Thy wrath.

October 23
EVENING

"The power of the Holy Ghost" Rom 15:13

"THE HOLY GHOST SHALL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS."

He, the Spirit of Jesus, is the blessed Third Person, equal with the Father and the Son, in power, majesty, and glory. Without Him salvation is impossible. He quickens us when dead in trespasses and sins. He teaches us when ignorant and bewildered. He sanctifies us when polluted and depraved. He comforts us when depressed and cast down. He helps us in prayer, by making intercession for us according to the will of God. He is the Spirit of adoption, bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. He seals us unto the day of redemption. We are His workmanship and His temple. He is our infallible Teacher, Comforter, and Intercessor. His power alone can make the gospel effectual, subdue the corruptions of our hearts, and conform us to the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus. He convinces us of sin, unfolds to us the glories of Jesus, works faith in our hearts, leads us to the fountain of His blood, clothes us in His perfect righteousness, unites us to His person, and leads us in the path of righteousness. Our greatest need, and that of the Church today, is to be filled with the power of the Holy Ghost.

Come, Holy Ghost, Thy pow'r display,
Thy working let me prove;
Chase darkness, doubt, and fear away,
And fill my soul with love.

October 24
MORNING

"I am Jesus" Acts 9:5

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE," says our Lord Jesus. To all who believe He gives life everlasting. He comes to us this morning, and tells us He is the Saviour we need. Whatever our circumstances or problems, He says, *"I am Jesus."* Are you seeking the Saviour? He is *Jesus*, ever gracious, powerful, tenderhearted, ready and willing to be yours. Are you tried, troubled, and cast down? He is *Jesus*, the constant, sympathizing, present, wise and unchangeable Friend. Are you a returning backslider, filled with remorse and shame? He is *Jesus*, and He says, *"I will receive you, heal you, restore you, and rejoice over you, as the Shepherd over the sheep he had lost."* Beloved, *Jesus* is the Lord our God, our all in all; our God is *Jesus* the Saviour, merciful, kind, and tender; this proclamation cheers the sinner and delights the saint. Let us remember, whoever may change, whatever may change, He is *Jesus* still, always touched with the feeling of our infirmities, able and willing to help us, full of compassion and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Him; ready to forgive, full of grace and pity, and pledged to receive us, because *He only is Jesus*.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil;
On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

October 24
EVENING

"What is good for man in this life?" Eccl 6:12

"ALL THE DAYS OF HIS VAIN LIFE HE SPENDETH AS A SHADOW." Solomon poses a difficult question, and who but God can furnish the answer? Sometimes prosperity is good, and sometimes adversity; sometimes sickness, and sometimes health; sometimes pain, and sometimes ease; sometimes success, and sometimes disappointment; sometimes plenty, and sometimes poverty. If we set our hearts strongly upon something below, that thing is not likely to be good for us. If God denies us, or takes anything from us, we may be sure that that is not good for us. What we have is good for us if we rightly use and improve it for the Lord's glory. Beloved, have you been looking a few steps above you, thinking what a good thing it would be if you could obtain that exalted position? If so, you are wrong. Resignation to God's will, and waiting on the Lord, is far better than wishing for this, or longing for that. It is good for a man that he daily live by faith in Jesus, walk with God, lay up for himself treasures in heaven, and endeavour to be a blessing to all around him. But what is good for man in this passing world is not for us to say. God only knows, so cast on Him all your cares, for He cares for you.

Tis God appoints my earthly lot,
And He does all things well;
I soon shall leave this sin cursed spot
And rise with Him to dwell.

October 25
MORNING

"In every thing give thanks" 1 Thess 5:18

"FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS CONCERNING YOU." We receive good things from God every day. Everything we enjoy should be viewed as coming from the good hand of God: all had been forfeited by sin; what we receive is of grace. The providence that supplies us is the wisdom, benevolence, and power of God in operation, extending to us His infinite love and unmerited grace. It is God who gives us talents to provide, opportunities to obtain, and ability to enjoy the things of this life. Every mercy received increases our obligation and indebtedness to God. Thanksgiving is the response that God has appointed for us to express our gratitude and acknowledge our obligation. Such thanksgiving is acceptable and well pleasing in His sight. Thanksgiving is never out of season, for we have much to be thankful for. In everything we should give thanks; let us acknowledge that for the Christian, all things are ordained by His wisdom, subject to His will, sanctified by His blessing, according to His promises, and flowing from His love. All our blessings come through Jesus, and all our praises must ascend through Him, for our Father only accepts what is presented in the name of His beloved Son.

Praise Him who by His word
Supplies our every need,
And gives us Christ the Lord,
Our hungry souls to feed:
Thanks be to God for every good,
Eternal thanks for Jesus' blood.

October 25

EVENING

"He is altogether lovely" Song 5:16

"THIS IS MY BELOVED, AND THIS IS MY FRIEND." This is the opinion formed of Jesus by all who know Him. There is nothing lovely that is not in Jesus, and in Him is fulness of perfection. He is the object of admiration and adoration to all who are taught by the Holy Spirit. His person as God-man is altogether lovely, for He possesses every grace that can adorn humanity, and all the glories of uncreated deity. His character is altogether lovely, for He is infinitely wise, dignified, condescending, and kind. Indeed there is nothing in Christ, but what is lovely, and there is nothing lovely, but it may be found in Him. The testimony borne by the spouse will apply to His offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King; to His government, universal and particular; to His work for us on earth and in heaven; to His design in all His dealings with us, even to purify, elevate, and honour us. Reader, do you know Him? Do you admire Him? Do you love Him? If so, be reconciled to Him; gratefully embrace Him, and meekly learn of Him. The more you know Him, the more you will love Him. Let us ask, *"What are our views of Christ tonight? If our minds are spiritual, He is altogether lovely."*

Alt'gether glorious is my Lord;
Most beloved, yea, most adored;
His worth if all the nations knew,
Sure the whole earth would love Him too.

October 26
MORNING

"Am I in God's stead?" Gen 30:2

"EVERY GOOD GIFT AND EVERY PERFECT GIFT IS FROM ABOVE." Jacob admits defeat: only God can help. All our mercies are to be traced to our God, and all our miseries to ourselves. All too often we make ourselves wretched by departing from our God, or by putting creatures in His place. We put persons and things in God's stead to claim our affections; we love them inordinately, trusting them instead of God; in our worship, we idolize them instead of adoring God; and in our expectations, we look to them to relieve or deliver instead of looking to God. But hopelessness is written upon every created object. No creature can fill the place of Jehovah: take the richest, the wisest, the kindest, the nearest relative or friend, and you will exclaim, *"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."* Jehovah alone can fill the place of all; He can be instead of father, husband, child, wealth, health, yea, everything. Creatures may say, *"Am I in God's stead?"* If not, why look to me? Why depend on me? Why expect help from me? Why grieve so to part with me? *"Am I in God's stead?"*

Heavenly Adam, Lord divine,
Change my nature into Thine:
Fill and reign within my soul,
Activate and take control;
Lord! my fainting heart revive,
Make me Thine, and make alive.

October 26
EVENING

"Who hath abolished death" 2 Tim 1:10

OUR LORD JESUS ON THE CROSS BRUISED THE SERPENT'S HEAD. By death He destroyed him that had the power of death, the devil. Death is our ancient foe, an implacable enemy. It has slain unnumbered millions. It has robbed kingdoms of their princes, churches of their pastors, families of their fathers, children of their mothers, and individuals of their most beloved. It is invincible, irresistible, cruel, insatiable - the *King of Terrors* - before whom all mortals fall victim. It is a foe that might fill us with fear, and keep us in constant dread, but for a Friend who appeared, a Friend infinitely great, and incomparably good. He came to us with infinite love, and pitied us with unspeakable compassion. He forsook heaven's glory for earth's misery, suffered for us the death of the cross, and there conquered death with a crushing victory. By His death He destroyed him that had the power of death. For the Christian death holds no more dread. It is now *welcome sleep*, no more *"King of Terrors,"* but a glorious doorway and exit out of a world of misery into God's paradise of peace, all because of Calvary. *"Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Did we but trust our heav'nly Friend,
And on His faithful word depend,
Then should we fearless view the grave,
And death itself no sting would have.

October 27
MORNING

"The Lord will give grace and glory" Ps 84:11

"NO GOOD THING WILL HE WITHHOLD FROM THEM THAT WALK UPRIGHTLY." He will give grace and glory to those who walk with Him. This is good news, for except the Lord gives us grace we shall never be sanctified; and except He justifies us, we shall never be glorified. All these flow to us by the free grace of God. If any good work was required of us to justify us, we should sink into total despair; but now all is of divine bounty: we have a bright hope and we need fear no more. The Lord has given grace to countless thousands. He has given us His free grace, and He will give more grace, grace to fit for duty, grace to support in trial, grace to sanctify the heart, and yet more grace to lead us to glory and perfection. Brethren, let us believe that our God is as kind, bountiful, and benevolent as His Word declares. Let us confess our sins before Him, seek grace from Him, and long to be glorified with Him. Our all is in God, our all must come from God; and all the glory should be daily given to God. Whenever we want grace, let us ask it of God, for He gives liberally and upbraids not. Let us approach His throne this morning, and make this our prayer, *"Lord, give us more grace. Give us grace daily, grace to devote to Thy service, and fill us with holy love."*

Blest is our lot whate'er befall;
Who can affright or who appal?
Thou art our strength, our rock, our all,
Without Thee we would surely fall.

October 27
EVENING

"Who remembered us in our low estate" Ps 136:23

WHO REDEEMED US FROM OUR ENEMIES ... for His mercy endures for ever. Our state by nature was truly a *low estate*. We had no *liberty*, being the slaves of Satan; no *ability*, being dead in trespasses and sins; no *honour*, being allied only to enemies and rebels; no real *pleasure*, being tossed about by corrupt desires and lusts; no *prospects* except eternal woe; no *profitable employment*, for the fruit of our toil was death. Our nature was fearfully depraved; our condition truly deplorable; and our destiny most desperate. But in our low estate, the Lord remembered us; and it was because of it that He made His covenant, sent us His only Son, promised us His Holy Spirit, and gave us the glorious Gospel. To lift us out of our low estate, He exerted His divine power, and raised us by His love to union with Jesus. And He did all this out of pure mercy, which mercy endures forever. *"Mercy there was great, and grace was free; pardon there was multiplied to me; there my burdened soul found liberty - at Calvary!"* Mercy wrote our names in the Lamb's book of life, gave us the promises of the everlasting gospel, and pleads for us before the throne above, all because *God remembered us in our low estate*.

All gracious God, Thy pitying eye
Viewed the low state in which we lie;
And as an act of sovereign grace,
Sent Thy salvation to our race.

October 28

MORNING

"Son, go work today in my vineyard" Mt 21:28

SOME ARE GOD'S SONS ONLY BY CREATION. The Jews were sons by national adoption; believers are sons by regeneration. They are born of God, and adopted by God. Our God never intended that His children should be idle. He says to every child, *"Son, go and work."* This is the command of a Father; it contains affection, it flows from authority. We are to work for His glory, for the good of others, and to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Working for God is reasonable, profitable, pleasant. Our work is in His vineyard, the church, where there is work for all. Some are employed to plant, some to weed, some to water, and some to watch. The command is *"Go work today."* The present is the period. Today, while you have light, strength, and opportunity, *go and work*. Remember, it is but a day, a brief day at most, but it often proves to be shorter than you expect. Are you standing this day idle? *Go into the vineyard of God*. Are you discouraged? Look to the Lord; He will give you the ability and the energy. Work faithfully and He will crown you with success.

O give me, Lord, an upright heart,
Well nurtured with a godly fear;
Which from Thy law will not depart,
When clouds and threat'ning storms appear;
But onward press with joyful pace,
Refreshed and fortified by grace.

October 28
EVENING

"Sitting at the feet of Jesus" Lk 8:35

"CLOTHED, AND IN HIS RIGHT MIND." What a testimony to our Lord's power over evil spirits. This poor man had just been rescued from Satan. He felt under the deepest obligation to Jesus. He was filled with wonder at His power. He was drawn by His preaching and he took his seat at His feet. This was the posture of a pupil, the place occupied by a disciple. We may still enjoy this privilege. Jesus speaks to us now. Let us sit down at His feet, and hear His word with attention, receive His doctrine with gratitude, and own Him as our Lord and Master. It is the posture of humility. The feet of Jesus is our proper place. There we are safe. It is the evidence of attachment: how much we have to attach ourselves to the Lord Jesus, how much we have already received, how much we still want, which He only can supply. Let us consider how much more we shall need as we press on our journey, for it is vain to look to any other quarter. Let us therefore sit down at His feet, and meekly receive His word of grace and truth. Let us keep our place, not allowing anything to draw us away. Satan will if he can, for he well knows that he cannot harm us here. Sinners will, if they can, for while we are in this posture, we reprove them and exalt the name of God. *Let us sit at the feet of the Master.*

O may I find my blessed seat
In humble faith at Jesus' feet;
Imbibe His wisdom, prove His love,
Receive instruction from above.

October 29
MORNING

"The love that God hath to us" 1 Jn 4:16

"HE THAT DWELLETH IN LOVE DWELLETH IN GOD." So writes the Apostle of love. Who can fully describe God's love? What tongue or pen can set it forth? It is infinite: what can finite mortals say? It is eternal: how can we who are but of yesterday declare it? It is the token of heaven to the saints, to know and receive the love that God has to them. None can reveal it to us, or shed it abroad in our hearts, but the Holy Spirit. He can direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Jesus Christ. He is in office to show the saints the things of God, and enable them to receive and enjoy them. Let us, beloved, daily pray that we may know and enjoy *the love that God hath to us*; it will be an antidote to all our miseries, a comfort under all our sorrows. Our friends may change, but the love of God changes never. Our temporal prospects may be blighted, but if we know and accept the love of God, we cannot be unhappy. Who or what shall separate us from the love of God? Jesus has told us that we shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck us out of His hand. The love of God is the source of our happiness and the foundation of our safety. O to know and receive the wonderful love which God hath to us!

What shall I do my God to love?
'Twas He who first loved me;
I know when I'm safe home above,
My Saviour face-to-face I'll see;
Before that day, e'en now, dear Lord,
I will love Thee by life and word.

October 29
EVENING

"A bruised reed shall He not break" Mt 12:20

OUR LORD JESUS WENT ABOUT EVERYWHERE DOING GOOD. So tender is the heart of Jesus, so gentle His disposition, that the feeblest need not faint, the most timid need not fear. He notices the first stirrings of devotion, the secret inclination and the buddings of faith, and He appreciates and approves of them. He knows the strength of our corruptions, the soul conflicts we have and what poor mortals we are. Yet for our comfort He assures us, that though weak and worthless as a *bruised reed*, He will not reject us, or crush us by His power. He will bind up and heal, even the *bruised reed*. He will encourage our holy desires; He will foster our little faith; He will receive our imperfect prayers; He will accept and bless the discouraged soul. He comes as a Lamb, to give us confidence; as a Shepherd, to keep us from alarm; and as a Saviour, to draw us to His throne. He will not break the *bruised reed* Himself, nor will He allow others to do it. Beloved, are you bruised by Satan, troubled by unbelief, and by the hostile world? Do you feel weak and worthless? Are you discouraged and filled with fear? Fear not! Jesus is gentle, kind, and gracious. He despises none. He rejects no supplicants. *Whosoever will may come*. He will not cast you out.

A bruised reed, Lord, Thou wilt not break,
My broken life Thou canst remake;
Help me escape the hostile world,
Where Satan's darts at me are hurled;
In Thee, dear Lord I am secure,
In Thee, the promised home is sure.

October 30
MORNING

"Take heed, and beware of covetousness" Lk 12:15

"A MAN'S LIFE CONSISTETH NOT IN THE ABUNDANCE OF THINGS." Beware! This is a warning from the lips of our beloved Lord. He knows our weaknesses and our foes, and He cautions us against them. We want but little here below, for we shall not be here long; and we are going to the land of plenty, rest, and joy. A little with the Lord's blessing is enough. We ought not to be anxious about temporals, only let us be careful that the world is not a loser by us, and we need trouble no further. The Lord will give us enough if we are living by faith upon Him, and walking in communion with Him. We are all prone to be covetous, which is a fearful sin. Covetousness is idolatry. It steals the heart from God, and sets it upon base and sordid things. It prevents our enjoying either temporal or spiritual blessings. A covetous man must be miserable, unholy, lost. Well may our dear Lord say, *"Take heed, and beware of covetousness."* It is sly and insinuating, deceitful and powerful; and once rooted in the heart, nothing but omnipotent grace can root it out. *Covet only the best gifts, the spiritual blessings from above.*

Great things we are not here to crave,
But if we food and raiment have,
Should learn to be therewith content;
Into the world we nothing brought,
Nor can we carry from it aught;
Then walk the way your Master went.

October 30
EVENING

"He shall be great" Lk 1:32

"AND SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE HIGHEST." Thus spoke the angel announcing the birth of the Lord Jesus, and the prediction is fulfilled. He is great, and His *greatness* is unsearchable. Our Lord is great in the dignity of His nature, in the depth of His humiliation, in the glory of His righteousness, in the merit of His blood. He is great in the provisions of His gospel, in the number of His converts, and in the extent of His kingdom. He is great in the tenderness of His sympathy, in the variety of His offices, in the grandeur of His works, and in the estimation of His people. One day His greatness will be seen in the conquest of His foes, and in the punishment of His enemies. His *greatness* is stamped upon every promise He has made, every pardon He grants, every blessing He gives, and every victory He gains. Believer, thy Saviour is *great*. Therefore He is able to save great sinners, confer great grace, bear with great offenders, treat with great kindness, and confer on us great glory. But His *greatness* will more clearly appear, when all His people are gathered, when the curse is removed from our world, when the glorious predictions of the Old Testament are fulfilled, and He reigns on earth in power and great glory. His *greatness shall fill His people with everlasting joy*.

Dear Saviour, in my soul be great,
Thence bid all self and pride retreat;
My being into subjection bring,
And reign supreme, my God and King.

October 31
MORNING

"Call upon me in the day of trouble" Ps 50:15

"I WILL DELIVER THEE, AND THOU SHALT GLORIFY ME." This is our Lord's sure promise. Keep to the straight path of duty, and if troubles come, or difficulties arise, your God invites you to call upon Him. He will come to your help and bring His boundless resources with Him. He is always within call. His ear is never heavy, that it cannot hear; His arm is not shortened, that it cannot save. He can make your worst troubles prove your best blessings; He will give you cause to bless Him through eternity for your sorest trials. O trust Him, and fear not! Run not to creatures but, *"Arise and call upon thy God!"* Look not to others until you have proved that He cannot, or will not help; and that will never be. His heart is too kind, His word is too faithful. Are you in trouble this morning? If so, you have a special invitation from your God to pay Him a visit, and lay your whole case before Him! Expecting His sympathy and blessing, He says, *"Call upon me in the time of trouble. I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me."* He is faithful who promised. O trust Him, for so you do Him honour; expect the best from Him and you will not be disappointed. Wait for Him, and you will not be ashamed.

Dear refuge of my weary soul
On Thee, when fears arise,
When earthly sorrow takes its toll,
My fainting heart relies.

October 31
EVENING

"He healeth the broken in heart" Ps 147:3

"AND BINDETH UP THEIR WOUNDS." The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him, for He is gracious and merciful. Sin has so hardened the heart that nothing can effectually impress it but grace. No one feels and mourns over the hardness of the heart, but he whose heart has been softened by the Holy Spirit. Nothing will thoroughly break the heart, but God's forgiving love. When the soul is quickened by the Holy Spirit, sin is exposed, guilt is strong, fear is urgent, and the heart begins to relent; a conflict commences, and much distress is felt before pardon from the Saviour is bestowed. But Satan is busy, unbelief is strong, our knowledge of the gospel is imperfect, repentance is difficult, the heart is oppressed, and the spirit is wounded. When the man is really broken down before God, is willing to submit to God's righteousness, and to embrace salvation all of grace, deliverance is near. The Lord sends His word to heal, applies the balm of the Saviour's blood, speaks peace to the conscience, and sets the sinner free. Reader, if your heart is broken for sin, your God will heal it. Look to the Lord, and hope in His word.

Nor shall the sinner's hope be vain
Who trusts the goodness of His reign:
Christ Jesus takes him in;
He heals the sinner's contrite heart,
And bids his guilt and fear depart,
Forgives him all his sin.

November 1
MORNING

"O Thou Preserver of men" Job 7:20

"WHY HAST THOU SET ME AS A MARK AGAINST THEE?"

I am become a burden to myself, lamented Job. We are no better. We have neither wisdom nor strength to preserve ourselves; we are daily liable to fall and unless God preserve us we certainly shall. Our hearts are so deceitful, our corruptions so strong, and Satan is so cunning and vicious that we need to constantly look to God as our Preserver and call upon Him to uphold us every moment. He can preserve, He does preserve, but only in the way of obedience. Except we *watch and pray* and walk humbly with Him, we have no security; we may fall into the grossest sins, and commit the greatest crimes. O believer, never think yourself safe, but only as you are leaning on Jesus, calling upon your heavenly Father, and cultivating communion with the Holy Ghost! Indeed you are in danger; Satan, the world, and your inner corruptions, are all conspiring against you; nothing but omnipotent grace can keep you. Cease from man, trust not your own heart, but keep close to the good Shepherd. He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

Every foe must bow before Him,
Death is vanquished by His power,
Heav'n and earth with joy adore Him!
Hail the long expected hour:
Hallelujah!
Jesus is th' almighty power.

November 1

EVENING

"A Prince and a Saviour" Acts 5:31

"TO GIVE REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS," by His sacrifice on the cross. The Man of Sorrows is now raised to princely dignity. He is seated at the Father's right hand. He has all power in heaven and in earth. Every knee must bow to Him for He is Lord of all, the Prince of Peace, the KING OF KINGS. He has a princely heart. He possesses all the wealth of the universe. He bestows in a princely manner. But He is also a Saviour, a princely Saviour. He *saves* by His own merit, by His own power, for His own glory. He *saves* freely. He never barterers with sinners, but bestows salvation upon the lost as a princely gift. He can *save* to the uttermost. He will *save* every applicant. He came into our world to *save* sinners. He agonised in Gethsemane and died on Calvary to *save* sinners. He is now exalted at God's right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. Go to Jesus as to a benevolent Prince. Go to Him as a powerful, kind, and willing Saviour, whose work and delight is to *save* even the chief of sinners. Honour Him by trusting His word, relying on His blood, and expecting salvation as a free gift at His hands.

In Thy state of exaltation,
Lord extend Thy grace to me;
Give me free and full salvation,
Prince and Saviour, praise to Thee!

November 2
MORNING

"They were tempted" Heb 11:37

BY FAITH THEY ENDURED AND OBTAINED A GOOD REPORT. By faith they were tried. The design of their enemies by these trials was to draw or drive them from the Lord. Their trials were of the most cruel kind, but they found that, in the Lord, as their day, so was their strength. Brethren, we shall be tempted; Satan is not dead, no, nor yet asleep; the world is not reconciled to godliness; nor are we free from indwelling sin. It is not our sin to be tempted - this is our trial; but it is our sin if we yield. God has promised strength, wisdom and grace; and we should seek these, that we may be able to withstand, and so overcome every trial. We may expect to be tempted daily, for Satan goes about seeking whom he may devour or stumble. If at any moment that we are off our guard, that is the time he is most likely to harm us. Let us keep close to Jesus who is the great Shepherd of the sheep; let us keep our eye on our Father's house; and let us aim in all things at God's glory, and temptation shall not harm us. *"Blessed be the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."* If the enemy come in like a flood, we may still sing -

His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
Jesus is all my hope and stay;
On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

November 2
EVENING

"*Why is thy heart grieved ?*" 1 Sam 1:8

"AM NOT I BETTER TO THEE THAN TEN SONS?" This was the enquiry of a caring husband to an afflicted wife. Let us suppose that the question is proposed to ourselves, and try and turn it to some good account. "*Why is thy heart grieved?*" Is it from conviction of *sin*? If so, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Is it from *desertion*, or the loss of the Lord's presence? He will turn again, only return! He will have compassion upon us. His covenant is sure, His promise is true, though He may hide His face from us. Is it from *unfruitfulness*? He will be as the dew unto Israel, and we shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine. He will prune the branch by affliction, and cause it to bring forth more fruit. Is it from *poverty*? The silver and the gold are the Lord's, entirely at His disposal; and He will supply all our needs in His own time and way. Is it from *bereavement*? He will not leave us orphans but he will come to us; the Lord will take us up, and will be better to us than ten sons. Is it from *hardness of heart*? He will melt us and heal us. He will turn His hand upon us and purge away our dross and take away all our sin. *Why need thy heart be grieved?*

Then let not griefs o'erwhelm thy breast,
To Jesus fly, He'll give thee rest;
Hope thou in God, His smiles shall raise
And fill thy soul with songs of praise.

November 3
MORNING

"What would ye that I should do for you?" Mk 10:36.

"ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE, THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL." Our Lord Jesus is the fount of every blessing. Lovingly He speaks to us today. Beloved, have you your petition ready this morning? Jesus is at the pardon office; He is on His throne of grace; He is a loving Saviour; He is ready to bless. He says, *"Ask what I shall give thee?"* O Lord Jesus! give me sanctifying grace. Subdue my corruptions, purify my heart. Make me a vessel of honour, meet for Thy use. Why should sin be allowed to work so powerfully? Why should Satan be permitted to have so much power over me? Why should the world attract and lead me astray? Lord, I would that Thou shouldest make me holy, and make me useful; fill me with Thy Holy Spirit; write Thy words upon my heart, and enable me to write out Thy precepts in my life. O Saviour! I would that Thou shouldest make me like Thyself; meek, humble, caring, loving, useful to God and man. May I be holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. O make me shine to the honour and glory of Thy free and sovereign grace.

Holy Ghost, no more delay;
Come, and in this temple stay;
Here Thine inward witness bear,
Strong, and triumphant, and clear:
Word of life, Thyself impart,
Dwell forever in my heart.

November 3

EVENING

"Thou hast done right" Neh 9:33

THE LORD CANNOT BUT DO RIGHT. This we readily acknowledge; but to be persuaded of this and be ruled by it under severe and heavy trials is exceedingly difficult. But the Lord never acts but according to the plan which He has drawn, which plan is the perfection of wisdom, and proceeds from His infinite love. What He does, He purposed to do; and He purposed to do it because it was the very best thing that could be done. We are poor, hasty, selfish, dissatisfied creatures, ready to sit in judgment upon what God does, and to complain of His dealings without the least cause. But there are times when looking back upon our sufferings and trials, we can say and say it heartily, *"Thou hast done right."* Doubtless Jacob felt this when he embraced his son Joseph in Egypt; and Job also when God had blessed his latter end more than the beginning; and Daniel also when he was taken up out of the den of lions, and no manner of hurt was found on him, because he believed in his God. Let us, when the Lord tries our graces, or buffets us for our faults, endeavour to say, *"Thou hast done right." Our God makes no mistake.*

With peaceful steps thy race of duty run;
God nothing does, nor suffers to be done,
But thou wouldest do thyself, couldest thou but see
The end of all events as well as He.

November 4
MORNING

"They limited the Holy One of Israel" Ps 78: 41

"THEY REMEMBERED NOT THE DAY HE DELIVERED THEM." This was Israel's sin, and has it not often been ours? Our God is the Holy One, and will do what is the best for His glory; He is the Holy One of Israel, and will therefore consult His people's welfare. We must not limit His wisdom, for it is infinite; we must not limit His power, for it is omnipotent; we must not limit His mercy, for it is as high as heaven and deep as hell; we must not limit Him to time, for He reigns in eternity. He will not be tied to walk by our rules, or be bound to keep our time; but He will perform His word, honour our faith, and reward them that diligently seek Him. However tried, beware of limiting the Holy One of Israel; say not *"It is too difficult, or it is too far gone."* This was the fault of Martha and Mary, but Jesus convinced them that they were wrong. Rather say with Jonathan, *"It may be that the Lord will work for us; for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."* Jonathan honoured the Lord by trusting Him, and the Lord honoured him by giving him victory over the enemies of Israel. Exercise unlimited confidence in God for He will fulfil every promise that He has made.

Wide as the world is His command,
Vast as eternity His love;
Firm as a rock His truth shall stand,
When fleeting years shall cease to move.

November 4

EVENING

"My God shall be my strength" Isa 49:5

"I WILL ALSO GIVE THEE FOR A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES." These words speak of the coming of Jesus the Messiah of promise. He lived by faith on His Father's word. He was deeply tried by his Father's enemies. But He lived by the Father and we too should live by Him. We are loved with the same love, interested in the same covenant and entitled to the same promises. Let us in trials, severe conflicts, distressing circumstances, and the approach of the last enemy, say, *"My God shall be my strength."* For He has said, *"I will strengthen thee."* And when we feel weakest let faith be strongest, for He says, *"My strength is made perfect in weakness."* God has been our strength, and it is only with His help that we continue to this day. Let us therefore trust Him for the future, and say when faced with any task, or when about to engage with any foe, *"I will go in the strength of the Lord, I will make mention of His righteousness, even of His only."* If God is my strength, then I shall overcome, I shall persevere, I shall arrive safe at home. Then I shall praise his sovereign grace for evermore. Let us lie down tonight rejoicing in our privilege, exercising our thoughts upon this glorious fact, *"My God is my strength."*

What if the springs of life were broke,
And flesh and heart should faint?
God is my soul's eternal rock,
The strength of every saint.

November 5
MORNING

"Be ye also enlarged" 2 Cor 6:13

CONTRACTION IS A GREAT EVIL, ENLARGEMENT A GREAT BLESSING. We need to be *enlarged* in our knowledge, love, hope, liberality, faith, and every grace. Our God disapproves of contraction. The Apostles set a different example. Provision is made in the covenant to bless *enlarged* desires. The promises warrant *enlarged* expectations. Jesus bids us ask *largely*. The gospel calls for *enlargement* in prayer, benevolence, pity, and compassion, and in our efforts for God's glory. Let us beware of narrow views or feelings, for the heart of God is *large*; the provision of mercy is *large*! The love of Christ is *large*, the gospel commission is *large*; and the mansions of glory are *large*. We are not straitened in God, nor in His gospel, but we are straitened in our own restricted thinking. O Lord Jesus, *enlarge* our narrow hearts; expand our contracted souls! Fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Spirit. May we be full of goodness, able also to admonish one another. O to be filled with the Holy Spirit and with power!

With holy fear and reverent love,
I long to sit beneath Thy throne;
I long in Thee to live and move,
And stay myself on Thee alone;
Teach me to lean upon Thy breast,
To find in Thee the promised rest.

November 5
EVENING

"What hath God wrought!" Num 23:23

"THE LORD HATH DONE GREAT THINGS FOR THEM."

Indeed the Lord has done great things for us whereof we are glad: for our nation, in delivering it from paganism and idolatry, and in bestowing such great blessings upon it, so that it may well be the wonder and envy of the world; for His church, in redeeming it by the sufferings and death of His beloved Son; in quickening, converting, and sanctifying its members; in gathering them together from the ends of the earth, in providing for all their wants, watching over their persons, and keeping them by His power through faith unto salvation; for our souls, delivering us from the power of darkness and translating us into the kingdom of His dear Son. Thank the Lord for pardoning all our sins through His blood, and justifying our persons in His righteousness, working faith in our hearts, giving us good hope through grace, making us the temples of His Holy Spirit, conquering all our foes and subduing within us our iniquities. *What hath God wrought? Wonders. For whom hath God wrought? Sinners. Why hath God wrought?* That He might be glorified. Beloved, the past should encourage us in prospect of the future; what He has done is a pledge of what He will yet do for us. *Bless the Lord, O my soul!*

What sweeter pledge could God bestow
Of help in every scene of woe,
Than grace already given;
But unbelief, that hateful thing,
Oft makes me sigh when I should sing
Of confidence in heaven.

November 6

MORNING

"Thou art no more a servant, but a son" Gal 4:7

"AN HEIR OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST." This speaks of God's wondrous grace toward us. It would have been a great mercy if God had made us His servants, after we had been His enemies; but He has adopted us as His sons, and has taken us to the bosom of His love. He is now our Father and wishes us to call Him so; we are His children, and He wishes us to walk and act as such. We are not mere servants, therefore we should not be servile; we are sons, therefore we should love, obey, and delight in our Father. *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God."* We are delivered from bondage, received into favour, have the promise of eternal life, and should rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It was free grace which adopted us; the Holy Spirit, by the word, begat us to a lively hope; and the gospel proclaims our privileges and invites us to enjoy them. Today let us think, *"I am a son of God. My Father is holy, His children are holy, His word is holy, He loves holiness, and commands me to be holy; I will therefore lift up my heart to Him; seek grace from Him; and in all things strive to glorify Him."*

Pronounce me, gracious God, Thy son!

Own me an heir divine:

O what are princes on their throne,

When I can call Thee mine?

Sceptres and crowns must soon demise,

Thou art my hope, help me be wise.

November 6
EVENING

"Be thou faithful unto death" Rev 2:10

"HE WAS CALLED FAITHFUL AND TRUE." Our God is faithful to His people. He always keeps His word. He never disappoints their hope. He exhorts and encourages them to be faithful too. This was spoken to the Angel, or Messenger, or Pastor of the church ; such should be faithful in preaching the word, in watching for souls, in suffering for Christ, and in seeking by all means to promote the prosperity, peace, and holiness of the flock. It includes the people. Believers should be faithful: faithful to the truth, holding it fast, striving for it, spreading it in every direction; faithful to conscience, listening to its dictates, observing its warnings, and obeying its demands; faithful to their profession, maintaining it, adorning it, and endeavouring to make it answer the end designed in it; faithful to God, believing His word, doing His will, and suffering in His cause; faithful to sinners, warning them of danger, giving them the word of life, and leading them to Jesus; faithful to saints, reproving their sins, soothing their sorrows, and supplying their needs. *"Be thou faithful unto death."* If it expose you to death, be faithful: a crown of life is the reward. Until removed by death, persevere; then hear the Master call, *"Come up hither."*

Saviour, help me by Thy power,
Withstand temptation's deadly hour;
Give me fortitude and faith,
O make me faithful unto death!

November 7

MORNING

"Go forward" Ex 14:15

"THE LORD SHALL FIGHT FOR YOU." With God victory is never in doubt. But we must be on the move. In the Lord's army, there is no standing still. Our Captain's command is, *"Go forward."* This is our direction. *"Go forward"* in the Lord's way, in the Lord's work, for the Lord's kingdom. The command contains great encouragement. *Go forward*, remembering the Lord's wisdom, trusting in the Lord's power, and believing in the Lord's love. *Go forward* in union with the Lord's people, with zeal for His glory, until summoned into your Master's presence. *Go forward*, notwithstanding difficulties, fears, and discouragements. *Go forward*, because God has bidden you; He has promised to go with you; He will crown your journey's end. Let us imitate the holy apostle Paul, who said, *"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am also apprehended of Christ Jesus."* Let us look for and hasten unto the coming of the day of God. There is nothing behind worth a thought, if compared with what is set before us by the gospel.

Much in sorrow, oft in woe,
Onward, Christian, onward go;
Shrink not, fear not, dare not yield,
Never quit the battlefield:
Forward press and win the prize,
Then to endless glory rise.

November 7
EVENING

"He thanked God and took courage" Acts 28:15

THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS ON HIS WAY TO PRISON. The kindness of friends cheered him. For this he gave God thanks and then went forward courageously. Every mercy should be thankfully acknowledged. Whatever does us good comes from God. He is the only source of all good and to Him our praises should daily ascend. The Lord has brought us through many dangers; He has delivered us out of many difficulties; He has bestowed on us many favours; let us therefore tonight thank God and take courage. He has provided for all our future wants; He has given us many exceeding great and precious promises; and we have His word that He will never leave us nor forsake us; let us then thank God and press on. Our journey may be rough, our foes may be strong, our troubles may be great; but our strength is equal to the task, our supplies are certain, and the end will crown the whole. Listen not to Satan, yield not to unbelief, fear not for the future. Our Lord has delivered, does deliver, and we may confidently trust that He will yet deliver us. Consider what He has done, count His many mercies, thank Him, and then resting on His sure promises, press on with courage.

Jesus, on Thee our hope depends,
To lead us on to Thine abode ;
Assured our home will make amends
For all our toil while on the road.

November 8
MORNING

"As having nothing, and yet possessing all things" 2
Cor 6:10

"AS POOR YET MAKING MANY RICH." These are the words of one who had suffered the loss of all things that he might win Christ. The Lord's family are generally poor; men may look on them as having nothing valuable or able to make them happy. But in reality they possess all things because God is theirs. Our God has said, *"I am your inheritance,"* and we reply, *"Thou art our portion, O Lord."* His eternity is the assurance of our happiness; His unchangeableness the rock of our rest; His omnipotence our impregnable defence; His faithfulness our daily security; His mercies, our overflowing wealth; His omniscience our unerring guide; His wisdom our infallible counsellor; His justice our fair avenger; His omnipresence our delightful company; His holiness our fountain of sanctifying grace; His all sufficiency our rich inheritance; and His infinity our unbounded glory. This is the blessedness of God's people: they have Him for their God, and all His perfections combine to make them blessed. Love the Lord O my soul! Live upon Him! Glorify God in the day of visitation! Make Him your portion and everlasting delight!

To us the privilege is giv'n
To be the sons and heirs of heav'n;
Sons of the God who reigns on high,
And heirs of joys beyond the sky:
O may our conduct ever prove
Our filial piety and love.

November 8
EVENING

"Serve the Lord with gladness" Ps 100:2

"COME BEFORE HIS PRESENCE WITH SINGING." It is a joy to serve the Lord. Our God is infinitely happy, and He loves to see His creatures happy too. He provided every thing necessary to make them happy at first, but sin destroyed much of God's fair creation. He would have us happy now, happy in His service. Therefore He has provided for our happiness in the everlasting gospel. He says, *"Believe and I will give you a free pardon; I will confer on you a perfect righteousness. I will purify your hearts, supply all your wants, admit you into my presence for holy fellowship, keep you by my power, give you grace while you live and glory when you die."* Is not this enough to make you glad and to induce you to *"Serve the Lord with gladness?"* Brethren, in God's service we should be cheerful; we must realize our adoption, and serve Him as dear children fully persuaded of the Father's love. Let us serve Him out of love. Let us serve Him in the world, in our homes, and in the church; and let our gladness be clearly seen in our conduct, even a message which reads, *"I serve my Lord with gladness and I would not be otherwise employed."*

Lord, disperse my sin and sadness,
Speak salvation to my heart ;
Then I'll serve with joy and gladness,
Then I'll show how good Thou art.

November 9
MORNING

"O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth" Ps 71:17

"HITHERTO HAVE I DECLARED THY WONDROUS WORKS." The Psalmist was called early and he ascribes it to divine *teaching*. None but God can *teach* us experimentally; and His lessons are always good and profitable. He *teaches* all His disciples to know themselves, their depravity, poverty, and bondage. He *teaches* them His law: its purity, its claims and penalty. He *teaches* them His gospel: its power to save all who believe, freely by grace through faith. He *teaches* them to know Himself as a reconciled God, their Father and Friend. His *teaching* is accompanied with power and authority. Are we *taught* of God? We may know divine teaching by its fruits: it always produces humility, dependence upon the Lord, abhorrence of sin, love to God, obedience to His law, and daily delight in Jesus. Let us earnestly seek divine *teaching*. It alone preserves from dangers, sorrows, and snares, and by Holy Spirit working, it brings glory to God, and honour to the cause of Christ. *Lord, evermore teach me, and make me wholly Thine!*

O let my heart be wholly Thine,
Make it Thy holy throne;
No longer let me think it mine,
Or call myself my own.

November 9
EVENING

"Your redemption draweth nigh" Lk 21:28

"SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING WITH POWER." This is the promise of God: the Lord must return, your complete deliverance is at hand. Your Redeemer has appeared once and paid the ransom price for your release. He is now waiting at His Father's right hand, having all power in heaven and on earth, and He will soon come and claim His purchased possession. At that moment, you will be caught up to meet Him in the air, without dying. Or, you may fall asleep in Jesus, and slumber peacefully in the grave for a little time, but Jesus will soon come, and then He will raise you from the dead as His own. You will arise and shake off the dust of death, and put on the beautiful garments of immortality. You will be publicly acknowledged as the sons of God. You will be clothed with His purity, power, and perfection. You will be introduced to your Heavenly Father, to the whole redeemed family, and to your everlasting home. Then your *redemption* will be complete. Are we longing for it? Can we use the language of the Apostle, and say, *"Ourselves also which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"*? If so, rejoice, for *your redemption draweth nigh*.

Then shall I see, and hear, and know,
All I desired or wished below;
And every pow'r find sweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy.

November 10
MORNING

"Behold the Lamb of God!" Jn 1:36

"THE LAMB OF GOD WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD." God's Lamb and none other could take away our sin. Sin requires a sacrifice, and the sacrifice must befit the offence and the dignity of the offended. For man, the offender, such a sacrifice could not be found. Only God condescended to provide one, which was none other than His only begotten Son, *the Lamb of God*. From heaven He came to purge away our sin, to fulfil the requirement of divine law and reconcile us to God. Let us daily look to the *Lamb of God*, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for us. He is set forth to be the propitiation for our sins through faith in His blood, and to be the daily object of our faith, desire, and affection. On the cross He offered to God the perfect atonement, that we might have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. The Lamb is to be remembered daily before God by us, in our prayers and praises. May all our expectations be founded upon what He is, what He has done for us, and what He is doing now before the throne of God. In our quest for acceptance with God, offer no other plea. Only, *"Behold the Lamb of God!"*

Cast thy guilty soul on Him,
Find Him mighty to redeem;
At His feet thy burden lay,
Bid thy doubts and fears away;
Now by faith the Son embrace,
Plead His promise, trust His grace.

November 10
EVENING

"Take away all iniquity" Hos 14:2

NOTHING TROUBLES A CHRISTIAN LIKE SIN. And there is nothing for which he prays more frequently or more earnestly than for complete deliverance from it. In Christ he is delivered from its guilt, being justified from all things. But he longs to be delivered from its power. Sin annoys, irritates, and distresses. It darkens his testimony, disturbs his peace, and troubles his conscience. Therefore he pleads, *"Lord, take away all my iniquity."* The prayer is put into the mouth of a backslider by the Lord Himself, and it is the first thing he should seek. By iniquity he fell, and by repentance only can he arise. By his own folly he fell: to rise again He needs the Lord's mercy. Will the Lord take away all his iniquity? He surely will. Its guilt He will remove by applying the atonement; the oppression of it by the power of His word, and the reality of it at death. Let this then be our daily prayer, *"Lord, sanctify me wholly, and preserve my spirit, soul and body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."* And if this flows from our hearts as from our inner man, it will be answered to our complete sanctification. *"Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."*

More than for ease in mortal pain,
For purity I pray;
Whatever trial may remain,
O take my sins away!

November 11
MORNING

"I say unto all, Watch" Mk 13:37

"FOR YE KNOW NOT WHAT HOUR YOUR LORD DOTH COME." The hour of death is uncertain; the second coming of Jesus equally so. Therefore we are commanded to be ready, always *on the watch*. His coming is the grand object of our faith, and should be our daily desire and prayer. It will be unimaginably glorious. The Apostle Paul calls it our *blessed hope*, the climactic conclusion of history. But the timing of it knows no man, for God has purposely concealed it, in wisdom and mercy, and for our good. He commands us to watch and keep awake, to be at our post and busy in our calling. In our watching we must be convinced daily, fervently believing Jesus will come any moment, and praying to be found ready. We should note the signs of the times, the workings of our own hearts and our daily conduct. We should walk and transact every business as though Jesus was at the door. Would you, beloved, wish to be found idle, or contentious, or murmuring, or indulging in sin? If not, flee these things! Put off the old man, and put on the new!

Behold, the awful day comes on,
When Jesus on His glorious throne
Shall in the clouds descend;
With solemn pomp break through the sky;
Changed in the twinkling of an eye,
We shall with Him ascend.

November 11

EVENING

"He shall sit as a refiner" Mal 3:3

"HE SHALL PURIFY THEM AS GOLD AND SILVER."

God's people are as precious metals, afflictions are His furnace, purification is His design. He therefore puts them into the furnace, and He keeps them there until His end is accomplished. But He supervises the whole process Himself: He regulates the heat, watches its operation, and sits awaiting the fulfillment of His design. He will not be disappointed, for if one affliction does not produce the desired end He sends another. Beloved, have you wondered why one fiery trial has followed another? Simply because the dross was not altogether removed. Your sorest trials are among God's best mercies, because they are intended to make you fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints of light. Think not that you are being abandoned in your sorrows. Your Lord intently watches over you and as soon as your pride, obstinacy, worldliness, and opposition to His will are purged, the fire is withdrawn; and your testing will end. There shall not be one trial or suffering more than is necessary. Your Redeemer who died for your sins is also your Refiner even now preparing you for glory.

With me in the fire remain
Till like burnished gold I shine;
Pure through consecrated pain,
I see Thy face divine.

November 12

MORNING

"The Lord is my helper" Heb 13:6

"I WILL NOT FEAR WHAT MEN SHALL DO UNTO ME."

You can say this if Jesus is your Saviour. Then you will have this spirit-refreshing view of the most high God, the helper of His people, who is able to make them more than conquerors. Beloved, let us remember this: when called to perform some daunting task, or to endure great and sore troubles, we have the Lord as our helper. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. He will help us in every distress, bring us out of every trouble, lead us through every trial and one day land us safe in the heavenly Canaan. This is promised to everyone who trusts in Him, waits for Him, walks with Him, and strives to glorify Him. What encouragement is this, that we have an omnipotent helper in the person of God's own Son. Let us learn to lean on His everlasting arms. Let us not grieve His heart or dishonour His name, but let us keep a clear conscience, maintain a holy walk, exercise simple faith in our covenant God, and then we may boldly say, *"The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man may do unto me."*

That Jesus from the grave arose,
Confirms my faith, disarms my foes;
Exalted on His glorious throne,
He ever prays for me His own;
He bids my anxious cares subside,
In Jesus I will yet confide.

November 12

EVENING

"What have I done?" Jer 8:6

"SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART." Self examination is necessary for God's people. We too seldom search our own hearts, or examine our conduct in the light of God's word. Let us tonight ask ourselves a few serious questions. What have I done against the Lord? Have I broken His law or doubted His gospel? Have I grieved His Spirit or slighted His beloved Son? Have I murmured at His providence or opposed His will? Have I neglected His ordinances or rebelled against His sovereignty? Have I doubted His love or questioned His faithfulness? Have I forsaken Him the fountain of living waters and preferred His creatures to Himself? What have I done for the Lord? Have I visited His sick and relieved His poor? Have I instructed His ignorant ones and encouraged the desponding? Have I assisted His ministers and filled my place in His church? Have I pleaded with sinners and endeavoured to restore backsliders to His fold? Have I kept His glory in view and sought to advance His kingdom in the world? What have I done for my Lord with my means, my opportunities, my professions? *Holy Spirit, help me come up with honest answers.*

Lord, with this guilty heart of mine
To Thy dear cross I flee;
And to Thy grace my soul resign,
To be renewed by Thee.

November 13

MORNING

"Speak evil of no man" Tit 3:2

"LET EVERY MAN BE SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK." Speak of no man from an unholy motive or with a design to injure him; this is decidedly wrong. We are commanded by our beloved Saviour to love our enemies, to do good to them that hate us and despitefully use us, to pray for them and seek their salvation. If we speak evil of them we dishonour God, bring guilt upon our consciences, grieve the Spirit, and spoil our peace of mind. If we indulge in idle talk without feeling guilty and distressed, our consciences must be seared, and our hearts hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Our tongues are not our own; they are bought with a price, and should be employed in the service of their new owner. Never indulge in thinking evil of another, or in feelings of jealousy, envy, revenge, bitterness, anger, or malice; for these are earthly, sensual, and devilish. How unlovely it is to hear one professor speak evil of another; the members speaking evil of the minister; the rich speaking contemptuously of the poor, the mistress of servants; much worse ministers speaking evil of ministers. *Speak not evil one of another, brethren.*

Whene'er the angry passions rise,
And tempt our thoughts and tongues to strife;
To Jesus let us turn our eyes,
God's pattern of the Christian life;
How kind, how ready to forgive!
Be these the rules by which we live.

November 13

EVENING

"The Just One" Acts 7:52

"HE SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE HIGHEST."

These are the titles of Jesus. He was holy in His nature and perfectly righteous in His conduct. He rendered to all their due: as a Son, He honoured His Father by filial obedience to His will; as a Servant, He did those things which pleased the Lord; as the Substitute of His people, He did for them what was demanded of them, and suffered in their stead what they deserved. He magnified the law and made it honorable. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. By one offering He perfected for ever them that are sanctified. He is still the Just One, just to every name He wears, to every office He fills. One day He will justly punish His foes, and with divine justice save all who believe on His name. His word He will never falsify, His character shall never be sullied. He will not cast out one returning sinner; He will not turn a deaf ear to one who calls upon His name. He will not deny salvation to any penitent soul who seeks it at His feet. He will justly reward His servants, not overlooking even a cup of cold water given in His name. He will appear *"the Just One"* in the doom of the wicked, and in the everlasting happiness of His saints.

O thou gracious, wise and just,
In Thy hands my soul I trust;
Make me holy, be my Guide,
And for all my wants provide.

November 14

MORNING

"Consider how great things He hath done for you" 1

Sam 12:24

"ONLY FEAR THE LORD AND SERVE HIM IN TRUTH." We are all too apt to dwell upon our miseries and forget our mercies. If we are injured by man how long we remember it; but if we are favoured by God how soon we forget! Let us this morning consider how great things the Lord hath done for us. He gave His Son for our ransom, His Spirit to be our guide, and His word to be our directory. He saved us by His grace when we were heading for perdition; wrought a change in our hearts when we were enemies fighting against Him; He pardoned our sins when we deserved His fiercest displeasure. He has given us faith to trust Him, promises to plead with Him, and proofs of His faithfulness without number. He hath supplied us through all our sojourning, corrected our waywardness, conquered our foes: indeed, no good thing hath He withheld from us. Let us ponder and praise Him for the past, and trust Him more for the future. He our God is the God of our salvation; He hath done great things for us, and He will do yet greater things that we may glorify Him forever. My soul, consider His mighty acts and give glory to thy God.

O may I ne'er forget
The mercy of my God;
Nor ever want a tongue to spread
His loudest praise abroad.

November 14

EVENING

"Behold, he prayeth" Acts 9:11

"IF I REGARD INIQUITY IN MY HEART, THE LORD WILL NOT HEAR ME." Not everyone's prayer is acceptable with God. Saul, the Pharisee, had long used the form of prayer, but not until now had he really prayed. Created anew in Christ Jesus, he received spiritual life, came under divine instruction, and feeling his need of salvation, he prayed. None really pray but those who are born again; all truly quickened souls pour out their hearts before God. They feel that they must pray or perish. They must pray or sink under their weight of sin. The heart is too full to hold, it must have relief; the desires are too strong to be suppressed. Words may be wanting, but prayer will ascend; for prayer is rather the language of heart than lip. Reader, there was a time when you did not pray. You were then dead in trespasses and sins. Then there was a time when you began to pray, when you were quickened by the Holy Spirit. You cannot live without prayer now, though you may feel down and despondent; but in your desperation you have cried to God. This is the evidence that you are alive unto God. God receives the prayers of His people, and calls them to the pleasing fact: *"Behold, even Saul the persecutor prays!"* God always attends to praying souls, therefore continue in prayer.

O Thou by whom we come to God,
The life, the truth, the way,
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.

November 15

MORNING

"He will be very gracious" Isa 30:19

"AT THE VOICE OF THY CRY, HE WILL ANSWER THEE."

We are often miserable, always unworthy; but our Lord is very merciful and very gracious. He will magnify His grace before angels, men, and devils, in His exceeding kindness toward us; therefore if a sense of our deep depravity and entire unworthiness discourage us, let us appeal to the graciousness of our God, and rely on that.

"He will be very gracious unto us at the voice of our cry; when He shall hear it, He will answer." He has said that when forsaking our evil courses, we return unto Him, He will prove Himself gracious. *"Then shalt thou call and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry and He shall say, Here I am."* Yea, He will prove Himself very gracious, for He says, *"Before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear."* O the infinite grace of our gracious God! Lord, keep it uppermost in our minds and before our eyes continually; let it be our encouragement under all the discoveries of depravity we make, and our comfort under all the trials we endure. Let us endeavour to give our God credit for being so *"very gracious."*

What from Christ my soul shall sever,
Bound by everlasting bands?
Once in Him, in Him for ever,
Thus the word of promise stands:
None shall pluck me
From the strength of Israel's hands.

November 15
EVENING

"God imputeth righteousness without works" Rom 4:6

"BLESSED IS THE MAN TO WHOM THE LORD WILL NOT IMPUTE SIN." This is one of the great and gracious mysteries of redemption. Man has no righteousness of his own, and God cannot justify any man without it. The Lord Jesus comes into our world to be our righteousness. The righteousness of Jesus is infinitely meritorious. He wrought it out in our nature as our Substitute. It was accepted and credited to our account. Before we have done one good work and altogether irrespective of good works, the moment we believe, God places the righteousness of Jesus to our account. It is ours, a free gift. It is in this that we are justified. In this we are truly righteous, accepted of God, and no charge lies against us in the book of God. All the demands of God's law are met. The just God acquits us from all charges, pronounces us righteous and declares us to be free from all condemnation. Thus, *"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."* Beloved, when Satan tempts you, when fears distress you, when your past conduct depresses you, when the claims of the law alarm you, simply exercise faith in this glorious fact, that *God imputes righteousness without works.*

Jesus, how glorious is Thy grace!
When in Thy name we trust,
Our faith receives a righteousness,
Which makes the sinner just.

November 16
MORNING

"Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest" Mic 2:10

"FOR HERE WE HAVE NO CONTINUING CITY." There is no permanent rest for the believer on earth; here thistles and thorns abound and a voice is daily sounding in his ears, *"Arise ye, and depart."* Here you are not to loll at ease or to idle on your journey; here you are not to expect to find satisfaction for it is an enemy's land; and you are only passing through on your way to your heavenly home. If your march is quick and your conduct scriptural, be not surprised if dogs bark at you; they know you not nor did they know your Master. He was pursued, persecuted, and at last put to death by them; and in agony of soul He cried out, *"Dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they have pierced my hands and my feet."* Lay not up treasures for yourselves upon earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but set your affections on things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Use the world but do not abuse it; pass through it but never seek a home in it; remember it is peopled by the enemies of your God.

When snares and dangers line my way,
Jesus is all my strength and stay;
Cheerful I'll walk the desert through,
Nor fear what earth or hell can do:
Jesus will ease my troubled breast,
And shortly bring my soul to rest.

November 16

EVENING

"Jesus Christ the same" Heb 13:8

"FOR I AM THE LORD, I CHANGE NOT." Immutability is one of the essential perfections of Jehovah. He presents it as His right, and a source of comfort to His people, when He says *"I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."* The Lord Jesus is immutable, because He is divine and changes not. He is the same in all the glories of His person, in all the purposes of His heart, in all the doctrines of His gospel, in the greatness of His love, in the omnipotence of His power, in the tenderness of His sympathy, in the merit of His blood, and in His hatred to sin. Is Jesus immutable? Then let us adore Him as divine. Let us trust Him with unwavering confidence. Let us hold fast the precious truths of His holy gospel. Let us find comfort in Him, when our earthly gourds wither, and all our cisterns are broken. He is the same in darkness as in the light. When we are cast down, as when we are filled with joy, He is still Jesus, the same Saviour: the kind, condescending, faithful, tender Saviour. He is the same tonight as when we first tasted His love; and as when our hearts sang at the sound of His name.

His purpose and love are the same,
Whatever the changes I find,
A trifle may alter my frame,
But nothing unsettles His mind.

November 17

MORNING

"Be ye reconciled to God" 2 Cor 5:20

"GOD WAS IN CHRIST, RECONCILING THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF." Our Lord died for our sins and reconciled us to God. Is there anything but love between God and your soul? There ought not to be. God hates nothing but sin. He is offended with nothing but sin. This we profess to hate and forsake. We were once enemies but Jesus died to reconcile us to God. We are now professedly friends, but do we act towards God and speak of God, as though we were His friends? Are we offended at anything in God, or at anything done by God? Why should we be? His nature is love. His ways are infinitely wise, His tender mercy is over all His works. He desires that we should be on the best terms with Him. How wonderful! He offers a pardon for all our sins, grace to sanctify our natures, and heaven to receive our souls! He beseeches us to be reconciled, as though His tender love could not rest, as though He could not be happy or content unless we are friends with Him. Beloved, are you living or walking at a distance from God? Is there any shyness between God and your soul? God beseeches you by me, and I pray you in Christ's stead, *"Be ye reconciled to God."*

Sprinkled now with blood the throne,
Why beneath thy burdens groan?
See the curse on Jesus laid;
Justice owns the ransom paid:
Bow the knee and kiss the Son.
Come and welcome, sinner, come!

November 17
EVENING

"I shall die in my nest" Job 29:18

JOB'S NEST WAS VERY COMFORTABLE. It appeared to be very secure. It was on high and not to be easily reached. He knew that death could reach it but he thought that nothing else could disturb it. His conduct was consistent and his conscience was quiet; God was his Father and providence his friend. *"Then I said I shall die in my nest."* But, alas! Suddenly a storm arose; the nest was destroyed and the poor bird lay bleeding and exposed. No earthly nest is out of danger. Temporal comforts are only lent. The higher the tree in which we build, the more exposed to the whirlwind and the storm. Here we have no continuing city. In one day we may be brought down. Let us therefore endeavour to leave our matters more with the Lord, and learn to be content with His appointments. We must die. But when, and where, and how, should be left with the Lord. Five minutes after death, it will matter very little, whether we died on a bed of our own, in a spacious chamber, surrounded by friends; or at some rich man's gate neglected and alone. Present comforts all may leave us, our feathered nest may be scattered to the winds, but our union to Jesus, nothing can disturb.

I would not contend with Thy will
Whatever that will may decree ;
But O, may each trial I feel
Unite me more firmly to Thee.

November 18
MORNING

"I will be as the dew unto Israel" Hos 14:5

"I WILL HEAL THEIR BACKSLIDING, I WILL LOVE THEM FREELY." This is the promise of God to His people. Our hearts by nature are like the dry, dead, and barren earth; there would be neither life, beauty, nor fruit, but for the grace of God. And even after regeneration, we are as much dependant upon God, as the earth in the east is dependant upon the dew. If there be no dew, there will be no fruit, and if there be no faith, there will be no real grace. But our God has said, *"I will be as the dew unto Israel."* What the dew is to the earth, God will be to His people. Does the dew cool and refresh the earth? So will the Lord cool and refresh our souls with the dew of His love, the token of His favour. Does the dew soften the clods of the valley? So will our God soften and dissolve our hard and stony hearts. Does the dew prepare the ground for the seed and cause the same to vegetate and grow? So will our God prepare our hearts to receive the word and cause it to grow and bring forth fruit. Does the dew fall insensibly and in the evening when most needed? So will our God come unto us when we most need His quickening and fructifying operations.

Come, Holy Ghost, as heav'nly dew,
My parched soul to revive:
The former mercies now renew,
Quicken and bid me live:
Thy sanctifying power impart,
And satisfy my longing heart.

November 18

EVENING

"Leaning upon her Beloved" Song 8:5

"I AM MY BELOVED'S, AND HIS DESIRE IS TOWARD ME." Jesus is the object of a believer's love. To him the world is a wilderness. Heaven is his Father's house and his home. He is passing through the wilderness in company with Jesus. He is as the bride leaning on her beloved. This is indicative of weakness in herself and confidence in her Beloved. He is her strength as well as her guide, her support as well as the object of her affection. She leans on him as well as converses with him. He supports as well as comforts her. Believer, keep close to thy Saviour's side. Never leave Him while in this waste howling wilderness. Lean on Him, and when you feel weak lean hard. His strong arm is put forth to support your weak frame. He will bear you up and lead you on. The more you lean on Him, the more you will love Him; and the more you love Him, the closer you will cleave to Him. Yield to His guidance, trust in His love, lean on His power, walk by His side, and commend Him to others around you. In His company you are safe, in communion with Him you will be happy : like the two disciples of old, your heart will be warmed, and you will be at the end of your journey before you are aware of it.

On thy Saviour's love and power,
On His righteousness and blood,
Lean in every passing hour,
Lean till you sit down with God.

November 19
MORNING

It is good for us to be here" Mt 17:4

THE COMPANY ON THE MOUNTAIN WAS DELIGHTFUL. There was nothing like it before: *let it go on*. So said Peter to the Lord, and so we too have said when enjoying His presence and love. It is good to live and walk in communion with God. It is good to be numbered with God's people, and to occupy a place in His church. It is good to be in the present world for the opportunity of bearing witness for Jesus and of using our talents to help build His Kingdom and glorify God. At times we may be called upon to suffer for Him. Is Jesus honoured by our patient suffering? Then, even on the bed of affliction, we shall say, "*Lord, it is good to be here.*" Is our God pleased with our industry, forbearance, and testimony to the goodness and grace of Jesus? Then in our business and in company with those whom we are trying to benefit, we may exclaim, "*Lord, it is good to be here!*" Yes, Christian, it is good to be anywhere, and anything, as long as the Saviour is glorified, and the purpose of our redemption be seen to magnify Jesus. O may we always honour our God on earth; then we may say, "*Lord, it is good to be here.*"

Great Comforter, descend
In gentle breathings down;
Preserve me to the end
That no man take my crown;
My guardian still vouchsafe to be,
Nor suffer me to go from Thee.

November 19

EVENING

"Ebenezer" 1 Sam 7:12

"HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US." Who but the Lord can help? Oftentimes we are exposed, weak, and foolish, surrounded by snares and opposed by enemies. We are timid and fearful, and easily turned aside. We have received help from above in every time of need. It was through divine assistance that we were able to overcome unbelief and evil habits; to take up our cross and follow the Lord Jesus; to stand our ground amidst storms of temptation and powerful opposition; to persevere in the good old pathway. Having obtained help of God we continue to this day. Let us then set up our Ebenezer and acknowledge the help we have received. Its source was divine, it came from above. The supply has been sufficient, exactly suited to the circumstances in which we are placed. The manner of communication was at times *direct*, and we could say, "The Lord helped us." At other times *indirect*, the Lord helped us by others. What should be our response? Praise: hearty, grateful, constant. Prayer: fervent, faithful, frequent. Patience: waiting on the Lord in quiet expectation for the fulfilment of His word. Testimony: Tell all the world: our God is faithful.

Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.

November 20
MORNING

"Brethren, the time is short" 1 Cor 7:29

"SO TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS, THAT WE MAY APPLY OUR HEARTS UNTO WISDOM." Enjoyments and sufferings are short-lived, for they are bounded by time, and are confined to the present world. Then our opportunities to glorify our God below must also be short; therefore we ought to seize them and improve them with all our might. Then the triumphing of the wicked is short and the contradiction of sinners against us will soon be ended; let us therefore be patient, prayerful, and diligent, for our redemption draweth nigh. *The time is short*; then we shall soon see our Lord, enjoy the company of our sanctified brethren, and be for ever with the Lord. *The time is short*, but eternity is long; let us therefore be laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt; and let us be daily preparing for our last remove. *The time is short*, it flies away, our dying day will soon be here; it remains therefore, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not. Behold, the Lord is at hand, *the time is short*.

O may my soul maintain her ground,
From faith to faith go on!
At the last day in Christ be found,
To join the circles that surround
His everlasting throne.

November 20

EVENING

"The word of His grace" Acts 14:3

THIS IS ONE OF THE TITLES OF THE BLESSED GOSPEL. It is God's gracious word, His gracious word to graceless sinners. It originates in grace and was once a mighty thought hidden in the depths of the mind of God. It was introduced into our world by grace, and by grace alone it has been continued until now. It publishes grace or a free pardon to all sinners who believe in Jesus. It offers a hearty welcome to the Lord's throne, a fulness opened in the Redeemer's person to supply all our wants; and a legal title to heaven by faith in Christ Jesus. It is made effectual by grace and is the instrument by which the Lord produces the work of grace in our hearts. It is essentially different from law or legal requirement; for it speaks of favour shown; it presents blessings of inestimable value and proclaims everlasting liberty as an act of sovereign grace. Beloved, beware lest you legalize the gospel, or turn it into a legal requirement, rather than what it is, the joyful sound of Jubilee, proclaiming pardon, peace, liberty, and restoration to an everlasting inheritance. It is the good news of God's favour, the glad tidings of full salvation for the poor, lost, and degraded children of men.

O Lord ! the treasures of Thy love
An everlasting mine;
Pour down from Thy rich stores above,
Thy boundless grace divine!

November 21

MORNING

"My peace I give unto you" Jn 14:27

"LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED, NEITHER LET IT BE AFRAID." Peace is a priceless blessing, the gift from the Lord. None but believers know the sweetness of the peace He bestows. He made peace by shedding His blood. He offers it in the everlasting gospel. He bestows it upon us when we believe, and it is enshrined in the heart by the blessed Holy Spirit. This peace from God is a clear and carefree conscience, a foretaste of heaven in the soul. He gives it when we pray to Him in the midst of trouble; and it makes every burden light, every trouble bearable. O Lord Jesus! give us Thy peace this morning! Let it reign in our hearts this day. We look only to Thee for peace, for *"Thou art our peace."* Reader, believe His word, receive His atonement, trust in His perfect work, be constant in prayer and praise, and the peace which passes all understanding shall keep your heart and mind through our Lord. Let it be your daily prayer that you may be blessed with God's peace in life and in death. This gift of grace flows only from God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Close to my Saviour's bloody tree,
My soul redeemed shall ever cleave;
Both scourged and crucified for me,
With Christ resolved to die and live:
My prayer, my grand ambition this,
Living or dying I am His.

November 21
EVENING

"Is thine heart right?" 2 Kgs 10:15

"MY SON GIVE ME THINE HEART," not *any* heart but a heart right with God. *Is yours right?* This is a searching enquiry. With some the *head* is right with clear views of doctrine, and they can make correct statements respecting Christian experience, but the *heart* is not right. Reader, is thine ? Is it broken for sin and set against sin? Is it fixed on the Lord Jesus? Do you embrace the Lord's word, rest on Jesus' finished work, and endeavour so to walk as to please God? Is your *heart* filled with love to the saints, pity for the world, and zeal for the glory of God ? Can you live comfortably without living upon Christ? Can you be satisfied without fellowship with God? How is your *heart* affected towards the Bible, the Lord's day, and the means of grace? Are you humbled by a sense of your sinfulness, and filled with wonder at the exceeding grace of God towards you? If so, your *heart* is right. Go often and visit Gethsemane and Calvary. There have intimate fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, to keep the *heart* right with God. To you who are mourning on account of a cold *heart* take it to the Lord Jesus. Perhaps you are saying,

If mine were right, it could not be,
O God, so contrary to Thee,
So prone to every sin;
It must remain an evil heart,
Till Thou Thine hallowing grace impart,
And Christ be formed within.

November 22
MORNING

"I will correct thee in measure" Jer 30:11

"FOR I AM WITH THEE, SAITH THE LORD, TO SAVE THEE." The Lord also will correct. Sin procures correction, and God in love sends it. Every child is chastened because every child sins. But though we are corrected for sin, yet not according to the desert of sin. Our Father chastens us in measure, not in wrath, but in love; not to destroy but to save us. There is no wrath in His heart, for He has sworn that He will not be wroth with us. Yet He will visit our sins with the rod and our iniquities with stripes. He is reconciled to our persons but not to our follies; therefore He says, *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore and repent."* Let us not despise His chastening nor faint when we are rebuked of Him; for it is the common lot of all His children, and if it drives us to Him, and humbles us at His feet, it is evidently sent in love. It is a Father's blessing, a mercy sent to purify and cleanse us. If we sin and are not chastened, are we truly sons? For what son is he whom his father chastens not? But if we are chastened, God deals with us as with sons; and our sufferings are the fulfilment of His promise, as He said, *"I will correct thee in measure."*

Though ten thousand ills beset thee,
From without and from within;
Jesus saith, He'll ne'er forget thee,
But will save from hell and sin:
He is faithful
To perform His promised word.

November 22

EVENING

"He shall direct thy paths" Prov 3:6

"FEAR THE LORD, AND DEPART FROM EVIL." He shall lead you aright. Are you perplexed at times, at a loss which way to take, or what to do? Does providence baffle all your schemes and leave you confused and troubled in mind? The Lord is teaching you the lesson which He taught his prophet Jeremiah, who said, *"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."* You must go to the Lord for wisdom and for grace; and look to Him for direction, as well as salvation. He has marked out our path, but you cannot see the lines; go to Him in childlike simplicity and ask Him to throw light upon it, and then all will be plain. Seek His direction before every movement. Beseech Him to go with you in every enterprise. *"In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."* His eye is upon you for good. His ear is open to your prayer. He will be very gracious unto you at the voice of your cry; when He shall hear He will answer you. Consult His word, seek His blessing, honour His love, keep His company, aim at His glory, and *He shall direct thy paths.*

Commit to Him thy heavenward way,
Rest on His care, hold fast His hand;
With Him press on, His voice obey,
For soon you'll see the Promised Land!

November 23
MORNING

"Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" Ps 81:10

"CALL UNTO ME, AND I WILL ANSWER THEE." The word of God affords all possible encouragement to earnest, fervent prayer. *"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."* Believers should ask all they want of God their heavenly Father; they should ask of Him because He has bidden them, and expect to receive them because He is faithful. Are our wants many this morning? Our God bids us open our mouths wide, and He promises to fill them. We should ask freely, for God is honoured when we ask for much and expect much. He rejoices over us to do us good. He looks upon us as His dear children and pledges Himself to give all that we want, or can use, to His glory. Let us then ask for a supply of every want; let us continue to plead His largest promises; and let us continue to plead in the name of Jesus until we receive. Our God hears prayer; and if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children, much more will our heavenly Father give good gifts unto them that ask Him. Let us therefore come boldly unto His throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Thou art coming to a King:
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much;
He Himself doth bid thee pray,
He will never answer nay.

November 23
EVENING

"Mourning, every one for his iniquity" Ezek 7:16

"BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN: FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED." Mourning for sin is the effect of real conversion to God, the work of the Holy Spirit. The sinner under conviction may *weep*, dreading the punishment of his sin; but the assured believer will *mourn*, because he has sinned against a God of love, and broken God's law that is holy, just, and good. He *mourns* over the sin that dwells in him, which no one knows but himself, as well as for the iniquity that is discovered by his fellow men. He daily *mourns* because he daily sins. Yet he is *not* unhappy. He knows that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth him from all sin. He knows that to him the Lord will not impute sin. He knows that he is accepted in the Beloved. *These things cause him to mourn.* The greater his confidence in God, the sweeter his enjoyment of the Saviour's love; the closer he walks with God, the more he *mourns* for his iniquity. *His is repentance unto life*, godly sorrow not to be repented of. *Beloved, do you mourn for your iniquity?* Has there been any *sorrow* for sin working in your heart today? For your daily sin daily repair to the fountain opened for sin, and there *mourn*. Our Lord promises, *"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."*

Dear Lord, may I a mourner be,
Over my sins and after Thee;
And when my mourning days are o'er,
Enjoy Thy comforts evermore.

November 24
MORNING

"I will see you again" Jn 16:22

YOUR HEART SHALL REJOICE, WHEN YOU SEE THE LORD. *In His presence is fulness of joy; at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* Our Lord's presence is the happiness of His people; when He is present manifesting His love we are filled with joy and peace; but when He hides His face we are troubled. Nor is it any wonder, for then, generally, Satan comes in with his temptations; our corruptions rise and trouble us; and for a time everything seems to be against us. But if the Lord has once visited, He will come again; and He will manifest Himself unto us as He does not unto the world. In every season of desertion and darkness, let us plead this precious promise given us by our adorable Lord; He sympathises with us and says, *"Ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."* Precious Lord Jesus, let us this day enjoy Your presence and Your love; come and visit us - yea, come and take up Your abode with us, to leave us no more forever. Our souls thirst for You; we long to enjoy Your love as we have done in days gone by. O, manifest Yourself unto us this day and unite us closer than ever unto Yourself!

Then let us sit beneath His cross,
And gladly feel the healing stream;
All things for Him account but dross,
And give up all our hearts to Him;
Of nothing think or speak beside;
My Lord, my love, is crucified.

November 24
EVENING

"Christ died for the ungodly" Rom 5:6

"I AM COME TO CALL SINNERS TO REPENTANCE." Our Lord came to give His life a ransom for many: not merely for the weak, but for the wicked, for those who were totally depraved and entirely unworthy of His notice, who had lost the image of God, alienated from the life of God, and were enemies to God. What wondrous grace is this! Had He died only for the moral, or the amiable, or those who had something to commend them to Him, we would have given way to despair, and have concluded that He could not have died for us: but *our Lord died for the ungodly* such as we are. Actually, He died for us, if we believe in Him. He died in our stead, as our substitute, that we might never die. So says the scripture: He was made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Let us then draw comfort from God's recorded word, that Jesus died in order that sinners might live forevermore. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins might live unto righteousness. We therefore, as believers in Jesus, shall never die. Our sins have been atoned for, and full expiation made: we have passed from death unto life. For Jesus said, *"Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life."*

Was it for crimes that I have done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity! grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!

November 25
MORNING

"I trust in Thy word" Ps 119:42

"TAKE NOT THE WORD OF TRUTH UTTERLY OUT OF MY MOUTH." Men's words will fail; heaven and earth will pass away, but God's words will not pass away. It is unsafe and improper to trust our feelings, to listen to suggestions, or to judge by appearances. The Christian's sure guide is God's word, and this should be the sole object of his trust. If we cannot take God's word and depend upon it, what can we trust? God's word is true, on all essential points plain; it has been tried and always found faithful. We should believe it, rely on it, plead it, expect its fulfilment, and comfort ourselves with it, especially when surrounded with difficulties, when in darkness or filled with forebodings, maybe because God has not answered our prayers. Trusting in God's faithful word brings peace to the mind, comfort to the soul, and deliverance from every trouble: if we trust God's word we may be confident, for our help is certain. God's promise is His bond; it has power to set our minds at rest; if we trust it with our whole heart, we shall enjoy peace and quiet confidence. Trust then only in God's word, and you are safe for evermore.

In Thee, O Lord, I put my trust:
Mighty and merciful, and just,
Thy faithful word I prove;
Thou canst, Thou wilt my helper be:
My confidence is all in Thee,
The faithful God of love.

November 25
EVENING

"I would not live alway" Job 7:16

"LET ME ALONE FOR MY DAYS ARE VANITY." *"For now shall I sleep in dust,"* laments Job. When life is unbearable, some long for death. Yet we Christians should be willing to live as long as God pleases. He will keep us in this world no longer than His predestined plan for us. Still, pain and suffering make life appear too long, and death seem desirable. It makes the sufferer say, *"I loathe it, I would not live alway."* Job's speech in many ways is suited to us, for if we were to live alway, we should sin alway, we should mourn alway, we should be alway passing through tribulation. Who would live alway at a distance from home, in a state of exile? But such is our transient state, it is certain we shall not live alway, nor shall we live long; our remaining days are not many. Let us not therefore be much concerned about how much longer we shall live, but let us aim to live to good purpose. Let us live for God, for the good of souls, for the spread of the gospel, for the improvement of the church, for the honour of Christ and for the destruction of sin. Let us endeavour so to live, as neither to fear death nor to hate life. Let us live in the sure expectation of everlasting life in heavenly mansions now being prepared by our Lord for all them who love His appearing. Until then, let us live upon Christ, and for Christ.

No, I would not always live,
Always sin, repent, and grieve;
Always in my dungeon groan,
Always serve a God unknown;
But my Lord has His perfect will,
For Him I live and labour still.

November 26

MORNING

"An heir of God, through Christ" Gal 4:7

"THE SPIRIT BEARS WITNESS THAT WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD." *And if children, then heirs of God,* all by the marvellous grace of God. By nature we are children of wrath, but union to the Lord exalts us to the highest honour and happiness. All our mercies flow through Him, so we must ever look to Him as the medium of access to God and of union to God. If we are one with Jesus, we are heirs of God; to us He has willed all the riches of grace, and all the riches of glory. The testament is made and sealed and secured to us by the oath of God, and the blood of our dear Saviour. O what an honour to be heirs of God! To possess and enjoy throughout eternity all that God can impart! Such is the unutterable grace of God. We have enough secured to us while on earth, even the earnest of our inheritance; and we shall be given full possession of the whole at the resurrection. Let us then ascertain beyond a doubt that we are truly the sons of God, that we have received the Spirit of adoption, that we are united to Jesus, and are daily walking with God. Let us live expecting the day soon when we shall be put in full possession of our eternal inheritance, even as we prepare for that glorious event. Let us walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness, watching unto prayer, as filial heirs of God.

Let earth no more my heart divide,
With Christ my Lord I'm crucified;
To Thee with all my soul aspire,
Dead to the world and all its toys;
To empty pomp, and fading joys:
Be Thou alone my heart's desire!

November 26
EVENING

"He hath settled on his lees" Jer 48:11

"THE PROSPERITY OF FOOLS SHALL DESTROY THEM." This was the effect of prosperity, making the man wise in his own wisdom and strong in his own strength. All was calm and tranquil as he settled down in self satisfaction. This would soon be the case with us, if it were not for trials and testings sent from God. We should, like Israel, forget God our Saviour, and lightly esteem the Rock of our salvation. To a certain extent this happens also to us. We settle down to a life of ease; then prayer becomes formal, spiritual food tasteless, the things of God mere commonplace and trivial matters. There is no wrestling with God, no direct communion, no serious spiritual conversation; the form is maintained, but the power is lacking. When this happens, Christians! look out for troubles - they will surely come: our God will stir us up as the eagle stirs up her nest. He will send one trial upon another, one message after another, until He brings us back to Himself with weeping and supplication. Moab may settle on his lees, but Israel shall not; therefore beware of sinking into such an unbelieving state. *"Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion."* Now is the time for diligence, for earnest striving for God.

Be wise to run thy race,
And cast off every load;
Strive to be rich in works of grace,
Be rich towards thy God.

November 27
MORNING

"I am the good Shepherd" Jn 10:11

BELOVED, ARE YOU IN THE FOLD OF JESUS? Are you numbered with His sheep? Are you feeding and resting among them? Jesus presents Himself to us this morning in a very lovely character; He says, *"I am the good Shepherd."* There is no other shepherd so good or so great as He. He has the tenderest affection for His sheep. He affords them His powerful protection. He finds them abundant and wholesome provision. He gave His life to redeem them. He sends his Spirit to sanctify them. He is preparing a place in heaven to receive them. He will eternally dwell among them and bless them. O how great is His goodness! He is indeed abundant in goodness and truth. He says, *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."* What glorious security! What honour is conferred on the flock of Jesus! Good Shepherd, keep us near Thyself. Never let us wander, no, not for a moment; but may we be always close to Thy side and delighted with Thy love.

The least, the feeblest of the sheep,
To Him the Father gave;
Kind is His heart the charge to keep,
And strong His arm to save.

November 27
EVENING

"Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow" Ps 51:7

"BLOT OUT ALL MINE INIQUITIES, O GOD." David was no common sinner. His crimes had left a crimson stain. His views of sin were vivid and powerful. But more powerful were his views of the efficacy of the atonement, and he was fully persuaded that if applied it would entirely remove the sin stain: He believed that if the Lord washed him, He would take away every spot and trace of sin, and that he would be whiter than snow. In faith David cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard him. Beloved, however black your crimes, however deep the stains of sin, the precious blood of Jesus can remove the whole. If your God wash you, He will purge out every stain; He will make you perfectly clean. It is said of those above, who were once sinners like us below, *"They are without fault before the throne of God."* And it is said of Jesus, to His eternal honour, that He is able *"to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."* You never can fully estimate the value of the Saviour's blood, for it cleanses from all sin.

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
O precious is the flow
That washes white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

November 28
MORNING

"The day shall declare it" 1 Cor 3:13

"THE FIRE SHALL TRY EVERY MAN'S WORK." A great day of reckoning is coming, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, when the dead shall be raised, and the last judgment commence. O what a day that will be! Then every covering shall be removed, every secret exposed. It will be a revealing day, a discovering day, a condemning day, a justifying day. Then our motives will all be discovered, and our intentions laid bare. Hypocrisy will be exposed and every deception punished. O beloved, let us live daily as having that day in view before us; let us act, fully persuaded that on that day all will be exposed, every secret revealed. Are we sincere? Are we striving for God's glory or self exaltation? *The day will declare it.* Are we conducting our business on Christian or worldly principles? Are we honest and humble? *The day will declare it.* Is our profession founded on faith in, and love to, Jesus? *The day will declare it.* O may that day declare that you are a humble, holy, watchful, loyal disciple of the Lord Jesus!

Soon we shall see the dread array,
The pomp of that momentous day!
With clouds of heaven Christ shall appear
To judge the nations at His bar;
With joy dear Lord, I shall be there,
To meet my Saviour in the air.

November 28

EVENING

"Yet will I trust in Him" Job 13:15

"HE ALSO SHALL BE MY SALVATION," for He is my Creator and Redeemer. In life or death, the Lord is worthy of my trust, and yours too. Nor can you do better. Nay, it is the very best thing you can do, to trust in the Lord. But suppose He should strip me of my property, bereave me of my children, deprive me of my health, sever me from my friends, and hide His face from me? *Yet will I trust in Him!* Not only so, but if He appears to stand over me as an executioner, with sword uplifted, ready to deal the fatal blow, still I must *trust in Him*. You have His word, and He cannot deny it, He will not change it. He is faithful and ever so kind. He will never turn away from the imploring eye of His afflicted child. He will never refuse to honour His word of promise when it is pleaded at His throne. *Trust in Him*, for He is only trying your faith, deepening your trust, and laying a foundation for your future happiness. *Trust in Him*, and you will some day bless Him for this present trial. *Trust in Him*, and when He has tried you, you shall come forth as gold. Though Satan tempt you, though corruption rage within you, though the world may frown upon you, though Christian friends are unkind to you, though all things appear to be against you, still say, *"Yet will I trust in Him."*

Why should I dread Jehovah's hand,
Though it crush me to dust?
'Tis love that gives His arm command,
And in that love I trust.

November 29

MORNING

*"I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD" Isa
63:7*

"AND THE PRAISES OF THE LORD," according to all that the Lord has bestowed on us. What subject is so suited as this to engage the thoughts, fill the memory, and flow from the lips of the Lord's people? Let us mention the provision made for all His poor, for all their wants; the promises given to all His people, comprehending all their desires; the prayers answered in all times of trial, granting relief and defence. Let us mention the *lovingkindness* of the Lord to those who are seeking Him and it will encourage them; to those who are complaining, it may silence them; to those who are tempted, it will support them; to those who have backslidden, it will perhaps restore them. Let us speak of His kindness to ourselves, to restrain murmuring, produce gratitude, and raise hope. Let us mention the *lovingkindness* of the Lord, at the throne, in pleading and intercession, in prayer and supplication, in praise and thanksgiving. Let us speak often one to another, and let this be our daily delight: *"The lovingkindness of the Lord."* This will comfort, strengthen, and soothe our minds; it will bring us inner peace.

We'll speak of all He did and said,
And suffered for us here below;
The path He marked for us to tread,
And what He's doing for us now:
Discarding every worldly theme,
Our speaking only filled with Him.

November 29
EVENING

"The day of small things" Zech 4:10

THE WORK OF GRACE IN SOME PERSONS IS SCARCELY DISCERNIBLE. Their faith is so weak, their knowledge so small. Their love is so feeble, their reserve so great. They cannot open their minds to anyone. They are held in perpetual bondage. Yet they are the Lord's. They have light enough to see the emptiness of the world, the vileness of sin, and the value of Christ. They long for the enjoyment of His love, and desire above all things an interest in Him. They may not say they love Him, but they heartily desire to do so. They have many fears and few joys. They say they do not pray and yet they could not live without going to the throne of grace. In their esteem nothing is to be compared with union to Christ and no people are so happy as the Lord's people. Indeed they feel that they would give the world to be like them. It is with such *the day of small things*, the things which accompany salvation, like the acorn from which the mighty oak will grow. Beloved, *despise not the day of small things*: God does not, Jesus does not, you should not.

The first faint spark of pure desire
Which feebly would to heaven aspire,
Its kindler God will not despise;
The spark into a flame will spread,
And blessed by Him the smallest seed
Of faith into a tree shall rise.

November 30
MORNING

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul" Ps 116:7

"FOR THE LORD HATH DEALT BOUNTIFULLY WITH THEE." There is no rest for the Christian but at the feet of Jesus; when we live near to Him, and exercise our faith upon Him, we are at rest. Conscience is silent or commends us. The law has nothing to say against us. Walking close to the Lord, the world has but little influence over us; and Satan is powerless to do us harm. But if we wander away, we become weak and lose courage; and darkness, perplexity, and trouble fill our minds. But we may return, for Jesus is still inviting us; we must return or we cannot enjoy peace; let us therefore *return unto our rest* this morning. O Jesus Lord, to Thee we come. Receive Thy wandering sheep, restore unto us the joy of Thy salvation, and let us find rest at Thy cross. O, to rest on Thy faithful word, with Thy faithful people! To rest from slavish fear, worldly care, and distressing anxiety; to rest in Thy boundless love, satisfied with the dispensations of Thy special providence. Return, return my soul from all your wanderings, and find your rest in Jesus, your faithful Friend and Saviour. Sweet assurance, *"He will receive us graciously."* O Jesus, be my rest, and the strength of my soul this day!

Enclose me, Lord, in that repose
Which only he who loves Thee knows;
Lodged in Thy arms I fear no more
The tempest's howl, the billow's roar:
No storm can shake th' Almighty's seat,
None can violate the saint's retreat.

November 30
EVENING

"Before honour is humility" Prov 18:12

"BEFORE DESTRUCTION THE HEART OF MAN IS HAUGHTY." God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble. The Lord always humbles before He exalts. He strips us before He clothes us with the best robe. He empties us before He fills us with His grace. We must take our seat on the dunghill before we are raised to sit with the princes of His people. It is the weak that He strengthens, the poor that he supplies, the condemned that He justifies, the homeless that He receives, the totally unworthy that He crowns with glory. We must become nothing if we would inherit all things. We must be quite empty if we would be filled with all the fulness of God. He gives grace unto the humble. Joseph must lie in the dungeon before he is seated in the second chariot of Egypt. David must be hunted like the partridge upon the mountains before he is raised to the throne of Israel. Paul must be a poor blind sinner before he becomes the great Apostle. This is God's plan. The righteous who are now accounted the offscouring of all things are destined to shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Beloved, fear not to go down ; the lower you descend in humility, the higher you will rise in glory: the deeper your penitence, the sweeter your joys.

He draws from human littleness,
His garden and renown;
And humble hearts with joy confess,
The triumph all His own.

December 1
MORNING

"The Lord God omnipotent reigneth" Rev 19:6

"KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" is the name of our God. Our God is the author of all good, the only object of true worship and fear, the infinite, all-controlling Being. He can do all things, and do all things with ease, swiftness, and precision. He is on the throne; His reign is merciful, just, and glorious. He reigns universally over every empire, kingdom, state, parish, person, thing. Everything that takes place is either appointed or permitted by Him. Everything is overruled; nothing escapes His notice, frustrates His purpose, or interrupts His plan. All things are tributary bringing honour to His name. Does the Lord God omnipotent reign in your life? Let us fear to offend Him; strive to please Him well in all things; trust and rely on Him; call upon Him and prove Him; live in daily remembrance of His reign; this will conquer fear, prevent sins, strengthen faith, nourish all the graces of the Spirit, and inspire us in our obedience. If the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, be sure He will take care of His children. He will oversee all their affairs. He will secure their best interests under His omnipotent reign.

Behold the King of Zion rise
To endless glory in the skies!
Hail, Fount of blessings! placed in Thee:
Our life, our strength, our all, we see;
While in our God our joys endure,
In Thee our blessings rest secure.

December 1
EVENING

"Grace to help in time of need" Heb 4:16

"GRACE 'TIS A CHARMING SOUND, MELODIOUS TO THE EAR." The term grace includes the wisdom and strength which are necessary for us to act aright under all circumstances. We daily need grace. But there are seasons in which we need grace especially, as in prosperity, to keep us from becoming proud and presumptuous: in adversity, to keep us from complaining or desponding: in temptation, to preserve us from its snares: and in death, that we may die to the Lord's glory. Grace is from the Lord. There is a throne appointed to dispense it. It is to be had in answer to prayer. *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."* Let us not attempt anything in our own strength, or fancy that we can accomplish anything by our own wisdom; but let us live under a deep sense of our need of grace, of God's willingness to bestow it, and of the incalculable benefits to be derived from it: thus let us approach the throne, pleading the name of Jesus. *"O for grace to keep me in health, to cheer me in sickness, but especially to make me victorious in death!"*

The grace I every moment want,
The fresh supplies of faith and love,
God of exhaustless mercy, grant,
In answer to my Friend above.
Increase my faith, confirm my hope,
Until I yield my spirit up.

December 2
MORNING

"From this day will I bless you" Hag 2:19

"THIS DAY IS SALVATION COME TO THIS HOUSE." *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* Our Lord blessed Zacchaeus on that memorable day. That day is special: the day we begin to seek the Lord; the day we decide to be on the Lord's side; the day we publicly and honestly profess Him; the day we heartily engage in His work; the day we return from backsliding, and repent of our sin before Him; the day we identify ourselves with His people. What does the Lord promise? To bless us; He will bless our temporal mercies; He will bless our trials; He will bless our labours; He will bless our families; He will bless us with light, liberty, strength, peace, contentment, and success. Beloved, let us decide for the Lord and always walk in His ways, expect His blessing, for He has given us His word, and confirmed it with a solemn oath. Let us be diligent in the use of all means to advance His Kingdom, constantly looking to Jesus as the only source from which all blessings flow. Plead this precious promise before your God this morning, and many times today; yea, plead it everyday; so shall your peace be like a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea. He will bless you, and you will be a blessing.

Then let no care perplex me now;
My only wish and care be Thou,
Be Thou my sole delight;
Bid every sigh of rising thought,
And every pant of breath go out
For Jesus day and night.

December 2

EVENING

"I believe God" Acts 27:25

"ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Abraham was seventy-five years old when he believed. The most reasonable thing in the world, at any age, is to *believe God*, and yet sometimes most difficult. He has spoken to us in the plainest terms, He has confirmed His promises with the blood of His dear Son; He has made every one of His saints a witness to His faithfulness, and yet we do not half believe Him. We do not absolutely doubt the truth of His promises, or His faithfulness, but we question their application. Yet He has described our characters, presented us with examples much like ourselves. But unbelief is so strong, Satan so deceptive, and present things have such influences that we do not believe God. May He deeply convince us of the sin of unbelief, humble us before His throne, and send His Holy Spirit to increase faith in our hearts. Beloved, do you as you read or hear His precious promises, say, *"That is true, God will perform it. He will make it good in my experience. Therefore, I cannot want. I will not fear. I will only trust in His word, rely on His power, plead at His throne, and wait for the fulfilment of the promises in His own time and way."* Such should be the language of all our hearts. But, alas! how few of us use it.

Now learn in every state
To make His will your own;
And when the joys of sense depart,
To walk by faith alone.

December 3
MORNING

"Believe in the Lord your God" 2 Chr 20:20

"SO SHALL YE BE ESTABLISHED ... SO SHALL YE PROSPER." The proper object of faith is God in Christ, not God as the God of nature. In Christ He is gracious unto us, ever with us, ready to help us, and takes pleasure in us. He is our covenant God, all sufficient and ever propitious. We should believe in His word, which is true and faithful; in His presence, for He will never turn away from us; in His power, for nothing is too hard for Him; in His character, which He will never allow to be dishonoured; and in His faithfulness, which is like the mountains and abides for ever. We should believe in God though men rise up against us; though Satan trouble and distress us; though doubts and fears arise within us. We should believe in God for strength to perform our duty; deliverance out of every difficulty, and for courage in every conflict. Believing in God will produce contentment, zeal, and humility. Let us have faith from God: it is a gift which He will bestow : and let us have faith in God, it is an exercise which He requires and approves. If the Son of man were to come, would He find faith in our hearts?

Let us trust Thee evermore,
Every moment on Thee call,
For new life, new will, new power;
Let us trust Thee, Lord, for all;
May we nothing know beside
Jesus, and Him crucified!

December 3
EVENING

"Thou, O God, hast proved us" Ps 66:10

"THOU HAST TRIED US, AS SILVER IS TRIED, BUT THOU BROUGHTEST US OUT INTO A WEALTHY PLACE." Every man's profession shall be tried, and everyone's principles shall be proved. It is easy to talk of faith, but it is not easy to exercise it. It is easy to boast of what we will do under certain circumstances, but it is the circumstances which try us. Boasters always fail. A haughty spirit goes before a fall. We are never safe, but as we renounce our own strength, and rely on God's faithful word. The dark night, the fierce foe, the fire and water, the much tribulation, will prove us. Many appear to start well, but when they come to be proved, they have not the root of the matter in them: in the time of trial they fall away. Many young Christians, in the warmth of their love, sadly reflect on more advanced believers; but when they come to be tried they are not more eminent. We do not know what we are, but as God shows us; for the heart is deceitful above all things, and grievously infirm. By the teachings of the Holy Spirit, by the temptations of Satan, and by the mysterious dispensations of His providence, He proves us and shows us what our profession is worth. He says, *"I will melt them and try them. I will bring the third part through the fire."* But the end of the trial is *a wealthy place.*

O Lord! how wondrous are Thy ways,
To try our faith, our souls refine;
So, passing through the fiery blaze,
The silver flows more pure to shine.

December 4
MORNING

"I will go in the strength of the Lord God" Ps 71:16

"I WILL MAKE MENTION OF THY RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Our own weakness would dismay us, but God's strength is offered to us; in His light we see and in His strength we work. We have duties to perform, difficulties to encounter, and foes to overcome; let us therefore *go in the strength of the Lord*. It is promised to us and may be received by us; we must ask it of God, we must expect it in faith and go forth believing that He is faithful who has promised. Never let us attempt any thing in our own strength; if we do, we shall be sure to fail; let us first take up God's promise, rely on His veracity, and so go forth to duty, conflict, and danger. Then the battle is not ours, but the Lord's; then we are sure of success and victory. The Lord will then be our strength and song, our refuge and sure salvation. His strength is made perfect in weakness, and His grace is glorified in the unworthy. Let us not fear, let us not loiter, let us not despond, but let us go in the strength of the Lord, and we shall be more than conquerors. He gives courage to the faint, and to those who have no might He increases strength.

I know the God in whom I trust,
The arm on which I lean;
He will my Saviour ever be,
Who has my Saviour been;
Strong in His strength my foes I face,
Assured of vict'ry through His grace.

December 4
EVENING

"His fruit was sweet to my taste" Song 2:3

"HIS BANNER OVER ME WAS LOVE." Our Lord Jesus is incomparably lovely. His personal excellencies exceed the powers of description. Every beautiful figure which nature can furnish is employed to set Him forth. But a spiritual perception is necessary to discern and delight in Him. Everyone who perceives His glory, applies to His fullness, receives and enjoys His communications. Here He is compared to the apple tree amidst the trees of the wood, as affording refreshing shade and delicious food. *"His fruit was sweet to my taste."* His fruit includes the promises He has made, the pardon He bestows, the reconciliation He has effected, the peace He imparts, the fellowship He has with His people, the assurances of His love, the joys of the Holy Spirit, the hope of eternal life, access into God's presence, and the precious foretastes of glory which He sends. Sheltered from storms, protected from foes, preserved from the sultry sun, and fed with fruits of salvation, the believer is happy, and his Saviour is precious to his soul. And while the fruits of Jesus are sweet to him, sin is bitter; he has no relish for the follies, vain amusements, and sinful pleasures of the world.

O sweet repast of heavenly love,
How rich these royal dainties prove;
In Thine embrace 'tis life to be,
So sweet Thy fruit and shade to me.

December 5
MORNING

"Create in me a clean heart, O God" Ps 51:10

"RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME." Such a prayer implies a conviction of sin, a sense of pollution, a desire for holiness, a knowledge of weakness, grief for inconstancy, and the possession of true wisdom. It is the prayer of every Christian; let it be our prayer this day; let us lift up our hearts and voices to our God, and cry, *"Remove guilt and pollution, produce purity and peace in our hearts. Cleanse us by Thy word, the blood of Jesus, and the working of the Holy Spirit."* Purity of heart can only be produced by God; it enters into the very essence of our Christian profession. We cannot be godly unless we are holy. If we love sin, if we can indulge in sin, or if a sense of having sinned does not pain us, and cause us to adopt this prayer, our religion is spurious and we are destitute of the power of godliness. No real Christian can live in sin. He is called to holiness. He is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Holiness is his element and health. His God says, *"Be holy, for I am holy"* and he cries, *"Create in me a clean heart, O God."* Let us be holy in all manner of conversation, looking for and hasting unto the coming of Jesus.

Supreme High Priest, the pilgrim's light,
My heart for Thee prepare;
Thine image stamp, and deeply write
Thy superscription there:
Ah, let my forehead bear Thy seal,
My heart the inward witness feel.

December 5
EVENING

"God now accepteth thy works" Eccl 9:7

"LET THY GARMENTS BE ALWAYS WHITE." One day, soon, the redeemed of the Lord shall stand before God's throne, clothed with white robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and accepted by God. God never accepts our works while we are His avowed enemies: this would be to accept the works of a rebel, of a traitor, of one who is at enmity against Him. God accepts our persons when we accept His Son. Jesus is presented to us in the gospel as God's free gift, as a Saviour suited to our case, as a blessing which includes all we do. This gift is rejected by men in general; they put it from them and treat it with contempt. We did this once. But when the Holy Spirit quickened our souls, enlightened our minds, and wrought faith in our hearts, then we gladly embraced Him. Having received Christ from God, we are received by God from Christ; we are accepted in Him, and entitled to all spiritual blessings through Him. God now accepts our works, poor, imperfect, and worthless as they are : because they are the works of a beloved child, the efforts of a feeble friend, the productions of a loyal subject. The cup of cold water, the will to do, or give, when we have not the power, is accepted, and placed to our account.

Accepted in Jesus and living on Him,
His promise I trust and His precepts esteem;
I strive to be holy, I labour for God,
And my works are approved through His merit and
blood.

December 6
MORNING

"And delivered just Lot" 2 Pet 2:7

"THE LORD KNOWETH HOW TO DELIVER THE GODLY."

Lot was a godly man, justified before God by faith, and justified before man by his good works. But he was a weak man. He chose to dwell in Sodom because it was a wealthy place; he aimed at a fortune but he was vexed and grieved daily, seeing and hearing the unrighteous deeds of his neighbours. His children married into the world and were ruined; he himself, though delivered by a gracious and faithful God, suffered severely. His sons and their wives perished in Sodom; his own wife was made an example of on the plain: he was hurried away, escaping only *by the skin of his teeth*, empty-handed, to seek refuge in a cave. See the folly of being taken in by appearances: let not the heart follow the eye. See also the certainty of being chastened for sin: just Lot could not escape the faithfulness of divine love towards its wayward children, and the importance of being distinct from the world. The Christian in the world is like Lot in Sodom, and if he chooses his place from the same motives, the Lord deals with him after the same rule.

O to be brought to Jesus' feet,
Though sorrows fix me there,
Is still a privilege: and sweet
The energies of prayer:
Though sighs and tears its language be,
My Lord is nigh, He smiles on me!

December 6
EVENING

"I am Alpha and Omega" Rev 1:8

"THE BEGINNING AND THE ENDING, THE ALMIGHTY." This is the Saviour's testimony to His own dignity and glory. He takes the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which enclose and include all the rest, and says, *"I am Alpha and Omega."* These letters form words which reveal and convey the divine message: Jesus is the faithful Messenger of God. By Him the divine nature and perfections are brought to light. These letters include all that is necessary for intelligent communication. Jesus is the all sufficient One. He possesses in Himself salvation, consolation, and glorification. He comprehends in Himself all wisdom and knowledge, all worth and wealth, all time and eternity. He is the source and end of salvation. From Him it flows and He is the centre round which it revolves. He is all this because He is God. He is essentially and eternally divine. He includes in Himself all that is great, good, and glorious; therefore believers are never weary of hearing of Him, or speaking in His praise. In Him sinners will find all their need. Sweet name of Jesus! We read it four times in this book, therefore we should often dwell upon it and profit by it.

When o'er the word my eye is cast,
There Jesus is the first and last;
And all the blessings there made known,
Their Alpha and Omega own.

December 7
MORNING

"Cast not away therefore your confidence" Heb 10:35

"FOR YE HAVE NEED OF PATIENCE ... THAT YE MIGHT RECEIVE THE PROMISE." The believer's confidence is in Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the One sent from God: that He is the only Saviour and the eternal God. He is confident that heaven is promised to all true believers and to all holy disciples. He gives credit to God's word which reveals the same, is fully satisfied of its truth and finds courage and boldness to profess the same. His confidence being produced by the Holy Spirit, and grounded on the divine word, will lead him to commit his all to the divine blessing; to surrender all to the divine will; to part with all if only to win Christ and to rest on the veracity of His word. His confidence will often be assailed and sorely tried; but it must be maintained for we are partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. It has great recompense of reward, in the present life a hundredfold and in the world to come life everlasting. Beloved, let us hold fast our confidence and rejoicing of hope firm unto the end.

Protect me in the dangerous hour,
And from the wily tempter's power,
 O set my spirit free!
And if temptation should assail,
May mighty grace o'er all prevail
 And lead my heart to Thee.

December 7
EVENING

"All these things are against me" Gen 42:36

"IF GOD BE FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?"

Answer: No one, nothing can be against us. In life there will be losses, crosses, bereavements, persecutions, sorrows, and sicknesses. Are these against you? Never! They are not against you unless they lead you into sin, bind you to this world, alienate your mind from God and prevent you from being useful for God in your day and generation. They cannot be against you if they wean you from earth, lead you to God, endear the Saviour, render the Bible more precious, and make you long for the heavenly home. Never forget that they came by gracious providence, and that your heavenly Father had sent them for your good. Leave off complaining, for it springs from ignorance of God's word, or forgetfulness of your many mercies and blessings; or from unbelief and a bad temper! This reflects upon the love, care, and kindness of your God. These things are painful, trying, and perplexing; but they are intended for your good, and even while you are complaining, they are working together under divine direction for your present and everlasting welfare.

Let saints their gloomy fears restrain;
No reason have they to complain,
 Whatever ills befall;
No troubles from the dust can rise,
For God is holy, good, and wise,
 And overrules them all.

December 8

MORNING

"I rejoice in Thy salvation" I Sam 2:1

"FOR THERE IS NONE BESIDE THEE: NEITHER IS THERE ANY ROCK LIKE OUR GOD." God's salvation is a deliverance from the worst of evils, of freest grace, for the best of purposes. He saves the poor and needy, the guilty and the distressed, who call upon Him, and believe in Him. We who have obtained mercy, should with Hannah rejoice in God's salvation, as those who have received an exceptional favour; as those who are laid under, and are ready to acknowledge their infinite obligations. Salvation is the proper source of joy and rejoicing; and while some rejoice in possessions, some in power, and some in earthly prospects, let us rejoice in the salvation of our God. It is a cause for rejoicing in sickness and in health, in poverty and in plenty, in life and in death. Although the fig tree should not blossom, neither should fruit be on the vine; though the labour of the olive should fail, and the fields should yield no more meat; though the flock should be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls: yet we may rejoice in the Lord and in the God of our salvation; for not one thing shall fail of all that He hath spoken: *"Salvation is of the Lord!"*

Join heaven and earth to bless
The Lord our righteousness;
In Him I will rejoice
With cheerful heart and voice;
In Him complete I shine:
His life and death are mine.

December 8
EVENING

"My God, we know Thee" Hos 8:2

"THAT I MAY KNOW HIM, AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION." To Paul, the apostle, nothing was more precious than *"to know God."* To know God one must be taught of God: we can only know God by knowing Jesus for He only has revealed Him. To know Him as revealed in the broken law fills us with fear and alarm; for there we learn God's justice: His holiness, wrath, terror, power, majesty, and jealousy. But to know Him as revealed in the gospel, as made known in Jesus our Saviour, fills us with joy and peace : for there we see His pity and compassion, His love and grace, His power and mercy, His kindness and forbearance, His friendship and benevolence, all working to do us good. If we know God, we shall trust in His word; we shall love His perfections; we shall perform His precepts; we shall cleave to His people; we shall be often at His throne; and we shall delight to do His will. To know God is to be truly wise, and to possess everlasting life; for *"This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent,"* said Jesus. The knowledge of God comes from reading His word, studying His works, and learning from the Holy Spirit. Can we say tonight, *"My God, I know Thee; I love Thee?"*

Come, Holy Ghost, unfold Thy word,
Reveal the Saviour's name;
Fill with the knowledge of the Lord,
The almighty I AM.

December 9
MORNING

"Walk in love" Eph 5:2

"AS CHRIST ALSO HATH LOVED US." Christ our Lord gave Himself for us. His is *divine love, God's love*. God is love. When the love of God takes control in the heart, it transforms us, giving us a loving nature. This new nature is a blessing to be manifested and shared. We are to let our light shine before men as *we walk in love*. This *walk in love* is firstly toward God, for His mercy towards us; secondly it is love to man for God's sake. By the same rule of love, we learn to do unto others as we would they should do unto us, seeking their spiritual and material welfare. God's love in us is clearly seen when we show no envy, jealousy, malice, or ill-will against any. On the contrary, God's love causes us to wish them well, and desire to promote their best interests at all times. Love should be the guiding rule in all our actions, the chief motive in our souls. God loves us. His Holy Spirit is the Spirit of love, and love is the sure evidence of regeneration. Let us not be satisfied to merely *think* that we love, but let us *show* it. Expressed in another way, let us prove our love not by *talk* but by *walk* and thus be a blessing to others. When God's love rules in our hearts, then all anger, bitterness, envy and fault finding become things of the past. *Let us walk in love.*

May I from every act abstain
That hurts or gives my brother pain;
Nay, every secret wish suppress,
That would hinder his happiness;
And thus may I Thy follower prove,
Great Prince of Peace, great God of Love!

December 9

EVENING

"The gift of God is eternal life" Rom 6:23

"THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON. HE THAT HATH THE SON HATH LIFE." *But he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.* We deserve only eternal death: this is the *force of law* hanging over our heads. But God has given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son Jesus. In Him we have the promise of a new life, eternally free from sin, sorrow, sickness, pain and death. In Him we have everlasting life, meaning the enjoyment of holiness, honour, peace, pleasure, and complete satisfaction, dwelling with God. Eternal life is given freely as the expression of Jehovah's love to us, a token of His sovereign and amazing grace to the race of fallen men. When angels sinned, they were cast down to hell. When man sinned, God sent His Son to be the propitiation for their sin: Jesus took our place and paid the penalty of our sin. Believing sinners are freely forgiven and receive new life from God. Jesus says, *"I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."* Hallelujah! Eternal life is God's gift.

Lord show us Thy grand design,
Give to us the life divine -
O may Jesus' life of grace,
Fill our souls with holiness;
Fit us for the life above,
Endless life of heavenly love.

December 10
MORNING

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me" Jn 17:20

"THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE ... *as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.*" Beloved, when Jesus was praying for His disciples, He prayed also for us; His prayer extends to all who truly believe in the one living and true God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. He prayed that we may be one with Himself, one with His church as members of the same body, children of the same adoption, heirs of the same inheritance, and parts of the same spiritual temple. This is *not* the current "*Church Union*" of the *Ecumenical Movement*, which is joining together all Christendom in one great universal "*Christian Church*" within the Catholic system. Our Lord's prayer does not include the nominal, liberal, modernistic, idol-venerating and image-worshipping churches. For the Christ-honouring, Bible-believing and Bible-obeying churches, which keep themselves separate from the apostate Ecumenical Church, our Lord prays that we may be one with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, being of one mind, one Spirit, one calling, and one body - the body of Christ.

Thy Comforter Spirit give
Whom the world cannot receive :
Fill me with the Father's love,
Never from my soul remove:
Dwell in me, and I shall be
Thine through all eternity.

December 10

EVENING

"He is Lord of all" Acts 10:36

"HE IS LORD OF LORDS, THE ALMIGHTY." Jesus our Lord with supreme authority rules over all. He has all power in heaven and in earth. He does according to His own irresistible will. All creatures are under His control and must obey Him to fulfil His eternal plan. He claims all as Creator, reigns over all as Mediator. He commands all to fulfil His pleasure. He is worthy of our highest praise. All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. We can go to no place, and justly say, Jesus does not reign here. We cannot lay our hand on anything, and say, Jesus has no claim to this. We can refer to no event, and say, Jesus will not overrule this. He knows all and claims all He knows. He presides over all He claims. He uses for His glory all over whom He presides. Everything is at His beck: the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, the angels above, even the devil and his host, the souls in hell, the glorified in heaven, sinners and saints on earth. *He is Lord of all.* He sits at God's right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

Worthy the Lamb of boundless sway,
In earth and heaven He's Lord of all;
Him all the hosts on high obey;
Let men before His footstool fall.

December 11
MORNING

"Why dost thou strive against Him?" Job 33:13

"I WILL ANSWER THEE, THAT GOD IS GREATER THAN MAN." How then can a man strive against his God! Yes, it is sometimes the case; he may strive against some of the doctrines of His word; or, against some of the workings of His divine purpose; or, against some of the commands He has issued. But *why dost thou strive against Him?* His wisdom is infinite, His love unchangeable, His ways are all righteous; His methods may be mysterious, sometimes trying; but His designs are all gracious and good. It is yours to submit and be still, your privilege to believe and trust. It is rebellion and treason to strive against Him, for He needeth give no account of any of His actions. It is the wisdom of God to conceal a thing. He is not accountable to any. He will not be questioned by the curious or called to account by the proud. He demands our acquiescence on the ground of His sovereign perfection. He will make all plain and clear to us by-and-by, and then we shall know as we are known and be perfectly satisfied. He says, *"Be still, and know that I am God."* *Against your Almighty Creator, strive not!*

O let me live of Thee possessed,
In weakness, weariness, and pain!
The burden of my labouring breast,
The daily cross I fain sustain,
For Him who languished on the tree,
Dear Lamb of God who died for me.

December 11

EVENING

"The true light now shineth" 1 Jn 2:8

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD." Apart from Jesus, man has no light. England was once shrouded in the darkness of paganism, but this was dispelled by the introduction of the gospel. Then it fell under the oppression of Rome until God sent the Reformation. Today dark clouds of superstition and imagery again hang over England and Europe (and the world), but the light of God nevertheless shines. It shines from the Bible, the written word, and from faithful pulpits throughout the country. It shines into our hearts to discover our true position. By the same light we understand the way of life and salvation, the source of true joy, the principle of filial obedience. It shines around us now, brightly, clearly, and constantly. It shines to display God's free grace, to enable us to walk daily in comfort of the Scriptures, to work with pleasure under God, to fight God's battles with confidence. Does the true light now shine for you? Then let us be thankful that we are no more as the multitudes still sitting in darkness under the shadow of death. Let us improve our gospel opportunity, walking in the light as God is in the light, and living in daily fellowship with Him. Let us shine the light in every direction that some benighted soul may flee the darkness and come into God's light.

O to rescue men from ruin,
Let the light within us shine;
Sinners to the Saviour guiding,
By God's gospel light divine.

December 12
MORNING

"He is the Saviour of the body" Eph 5:23

"CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT." He redeemed it with His own blood. The Church is now become the body of Christ. In Him we His people are united as one. We are His elect whom He has chosen, His seed which He had begotten, His portion which He had received, His delight and glory, in which He constantly rejoices. He saves us by substitution: He took our place, our offences, and our sins. He saves us by giving us free grace and the Holy Spirit, with every spiritual blessing beside. He saves us by instruction, for we are all taught of God. He saves us by separation, bringing us out and delivering us from this present evil world, and the current ecumencial one world system. He saves us by granting us life and favour. He saves us by translation, first out of the kingdom of Satan into His kingdom of grace; and finally out of the present world into His kingdom of glory. He saves us according to His perfect will, to confound His foes, exalt His own name, and prove His love. All who are saved form part of His body, one divine and everlasting happy family, the true Church.

Jesus bore our full transgression
In His body on the cross;
Through His blood we've full remission;
All for Him we count but loss:
Jesus for the sinner bleeds,
Nothing more the sinner needs.

December 12
EVENING

"Have I no power to deliver?" Isa 50:2

"IS MY HAND SHORTENED AT ALL, THAT IT CANNOT REDEEM?" These are questions for unbelief, perchance your unbelief? If God can deliver, if He has promised to deliver, why then these fears, this gloom, and this perplexity? Look your difficulty full in the face, walk round it and examine it on every side, and when you have done so, answer your Lord's question, *"Have I no power to deliver?"* You may apply it to sin: its guilt, its power, its consequences. You may apply it to Satan: his malice, his craft, his determined opposition to you. You may apply it to the world: its snares, its persecution, its seduction. You may apply it to any or all the circumstances in which you may find yourself. *Cannot your God deliver you?* Is His arm shortened, that it cannot save? Or is His ear heavy, that He cannot hear? If not, why doubt? Why art thou cast down? Hope thou in God, for thou shalt yet praise Him. Grieve him no more by your unbelief, but trust in His word. Call upon His name, look to Him, and He will show you that He has power to deliver. He will exert it on your behalf. He says, *"Call upon me, and I will deliver thee."*

Jesus, the power of Thy name
Today as yesterday the same,
We all are called to prove;
No end is of Thy mercies found,
We cannot stop Thine arm or bound
The omnipotence of love.

December 13
MORNING

"Ask what I shall give thee" 1 Kgs 3 : 5

"IN GIBEON THE LORD APPEARED TO SOLOMON." Solomon had to make a choice and a request of God. We too. We are not straitened in our God; He has boundless resources, and is constantly calling upon us to ask and receive. What do we want this morning? Is it not more holiness? We want our understandings enlightened, our wills brought into perfect conformity to the will of God, and our affections fixed on holy and heavenly things. Let us agree to ask these things of our God. He will give freely, cheerfully, and plentifully. Let us ask as Solomon did, for wisdom, even that wisdom which comes from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits. This wisdom will guide our hearts and direct our ways; it will lead us safely to a city of habitations; it will lead us to do God's will with pleasure and delight. It will make us wise to escape Satan's snares, to avoid temptation, and to do good unto all men. How important and needful is this wisdom! Our Lord Jesus stands before us this morning, saying, *"Ask what I shall give thee."* In Him dwells all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and everyone who asks receives.

O sovereign Lord to Thee I cry;
Give me Thyself or else I die:
Save me from death, from hell set free,
Death, hell, are but the want of Thee!
My life, my joy, my heaven Thou art!
Let me crown Thee Lord of my heart!

December 13
EVENING

"Mine anger is turned away from him" Hos 14:4

"I WILL HEAL THEIR BACKSLIDING, I WILL LOVE THEM FREELY." Israel was returning to the God of his salvation, and the Lord was angry no more. God is angry with the wicked every day. His anger against them is judicial, roused by their sin. It is fearful. It was displayed in the Flood, more clearly in Gethsemane and Calvary. Hell is the eternal manifestation of God's just anger against sin. He is sometimes angry with His people. His anger against them is paternal, roused by the conduct of His child. He is angry because He loves. His love to the person rouses His displeasure against the conduct. He shows His displeasure by afflictions, privations, and distresses. But His paternal anger is only for a moment. He chastens His child and is angry because he is obstinate: but as soon as he repents, mourns at His feet, confesses his sin, appeals to His mercy, and pleads the atonement, *frown gives place to smile*, and He kindly says, *"Mine anger is turned away from him. I will restore the wanderer to his former place, privileges, and honours. I will love him as though nothing had happened, his sin shall only be remembered by himself."* Sweet thought to lie down with tonight, *"The anger of God is turned away and He loves me."*

Though His righteous anger rises,
Anger in a moment dies;
Mercy still His heart devises,
Life within His favour lies.

December 14
MORNING

"The author and finisher of our faith" Heb 12:2

"WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM." All Christians have faith, but some have but little of it. He who gave us what we have can increase it; and He will if we apply to Him, plead with Him, and wait upon Him. We need more faith, to enable us to escape the many dangers that are in our path; to do and obey the Lord's will with patience; to hold fast the faithful word which we have been taught; to grow in grace and holiness; to exercise forgiving love towards those who have grieved, offended, or injured us; and to honour God, by believing His promises, trusting His providence, expecting His intervention, being active in His service, and leaving our concerns in His hands, to be arranged, directed, and brought to pass. We are encouraged to pray for more faith, by the nature of the request, and the design with which we ask it; by the precepts of His holy gospel; by the examples of faith set before us in the word; by the promises which God has given; by the well-known character of our God; and by the blessed results which follow from having such a prayer answered.

Author of faith, I seek Thy face,
The work of faith in me fulfil;
Confirm and strengthen me in grace,
To do and honour all Thy will;
From hell, the world, and sin secure,
Lord, make me in my goings sure.

December 14
EVENING

"He doeth according to His will" Dan 4:35

"NONE CAN STAY HIS HAND, OR SAY, WHAT DOEST THOU?" Our God's power is unsearchable and His will is infinitely perfect. It rules all events. What God wills He works. What He requires of us shows what He approves. What He accomplishes by His power and providence shows what is necessary to be done. His eye is in every place. His hand is in every event. The glorification of Himself is the object He keeps constantly in view. He has so connected His people with Himself that what glorifies Him benefits them; and what does them good, brings glory to His holy name. He is carrying out His plan, performing His work, accomplishing His purposes, quietly, constantly, and certainly, amidst all the bustle, confusion, and opposition of men. His will is law. It is the highest rule of right. If it could be effectually resisted, disorder, misery, and wretchedness will result. But the will of God is united to omnipotence. Whatever He wills His power accomplishes with ease and certainty. But to Him all the inhabitants of earth are as nothing; and He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, *"What doest thou?"*

In heaven, and earth, and air, and seas,
He executes His firm decrees;
And by His saints it stands confessed
That what He does is ever best.

December 15
MORNING

"Make your calling and election sure" 2 Pet 1:10

"FOR IF YE DO THESE THINGS, YE SHALL NEVER FALL." Where do you put your faith? Put your faith now in Jesus the only Saviour and Redeemer beyond a doubt; let there be no reason to question whether you are saved or not. Our calling separates us from sin, Satan, and the world, to holiness, Christ, and the church. Election is the root of calling; it is God's choosing us from others in Christ by grace, to holiness for His glory. We know our election of God by our being led to choose *Christ, holiness, and heaven*; to choose them freely, heartily, and consistently. If we thus choose them, we shall use every means to keep them. We know that we are called of God by our calling upon God gladly, heartily, constantly for holiness, salvation, and fellowship. When we thus call on God we carefully avoid all evil, and follow after everything that is good. Let us give all diligence to know our election, for it is worth all the pains we can take, or the time we may spend. Let us press on to know the Lord more intimately, to give ourselves entirely to the service of God, exercise ourselves unto godliness, rejoicing in the witness, earnest, and sealing of the Spirit, and cleave unto God with fulness of heart.

Nothing is worth a thought beneath,
But how I may escape the death
That never, never dies!
How make mine own election sure,
And, when I leave this earth, secure
A mansion 'bove in the skies!

December 15
EVENING

"Thou shalt call me, My Father" Jer 3:19

"YE HAVE RECEIVED THE SPIRIT ... WHEREBY WE CRY, ABBA, FATHER." By this new relationship, God loves us as a father, and He would have us acknowledge this paternal relationship in our approaches to Him. A father will do what no one else would. He *forgives* the basest conduct, *loves* the most deformed child, *receives* the most ungrateful prodigal, *bestows* the most costly favour, *exercises* the greatest patience. So our God and heavenly Father, *pities* us, *pardons* us, *provides* for us, *loves* us, *acknowledges* us, and *rejoices* over us to do us good. Let us dwell upon this sweet view of the Almighty. Let us *pray* as to a father. Let us *work* as for a father. Let us *expect* as from a father. Let us *trust* as in a father. Let us *love* God as a father. Let us *speak* of Him as of a father. Let us place *confidence* in Him as in a father. Let us seek the Spirit of adoption to bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; to cry, Abba, Father, in our hearts; and to enable us, without fear or wavering, to call him our Father. O how much sadness it would prevent, how much comfort and peace it would bring to our souls, if we live always in the sure knowledge that God is our Father!

*Abba, Father, Lord we call Thee,
Mighty God to Thee we pray;
'Tis Thy children's bliss to love Thee,
None but children Abba say.*

December 16
MORNING

"The righteous also shall hold on his way" Job 17:9

"HE THAT HATH CLEAN HANDS SHALL BE STRONGER AND STRONGER." Thus shall the righteous be equipped for the road to heaven. The way is rough and rugged: our strength is often feeble, our fears are too many. But if we are justified by grace, sanctified by the Spirit, and pursue a steadfast walk with God, there is no doubt of our safe arrival at our Father's house; for *"the righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger."* The true believer shall hold on, for the promise of God secures him; the fulness of Christ supplies him; the Spirit of grace upholds him; the new nature sustains him; occasional love tokens encourage him; and attachment to the Lord and His people keeps him from forsaking the right ways of the Most High. Beloved, let us strive to have a blameless conduct, always walking close to Jesus; then our graces will flourish and we shall be firmly rooted in Christ. Our daily conquests in His might will give us courage, and our God will give grace and glory. Let us not be timid or despondent, for our Lord is by our side. *"They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."*

They may on the waves of temptation be tossed,
Their troubles may swell like the sea;
But none of the ransomed shall ever be lost,
The righteous shall hold on his way.

December 16

EVENING

"Man also knoweth not his time" Eccl 9:12

"SO ARE THE SONS OF MEN SNARED IN AN EVIL TIME." For we know not what a day may bring forth. The future is unknown, veiled by a dark cloud. *We know not* what lies ahead. *We know not* the time of trial, when our graces, our strength, and resolution shall be tried. *We know not* the time of temptation, when Satan may assault us and try his strength upon us. *We know not* the time of danger when there is but one step between us and a grievous fall, when our foes stand ready to triumph over us. *We know not* the time of our death which is fixed, and may be very near. This should teach us humility not to presume, but to humbly wait upon our God. It should produce caution that we be not high-minded but fear. It should impel us to duty, to work while it is day; the night cometh when our work must cease. It should lead to prayer lest we enter into temptation. Let us pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. It should prevent carelessness and self confidence, but take note, our foes are on the alert, the snares are laid at our feet, the Master is coming, and the hour of death may be just at hand.

Amidst a thousand snares I stand,
Upheld and guarded by Thy hand;
Still let Thy presence be my stay,
And guard me in this dangerous way.

December 17
MORNING

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" Col 3:16

"TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER ... WITH GRACE." The word which Jesus preached or the word which His servants wrote, the whole word of God, is the word of Christ. Believer, look at your Bible as the inspired, revealed Word of your best Friend, your loving Saviour, and final Judge. Let it find a sanctified place in your memories, affections, and hearts. Let it keep your house, ruling, feeding, and directing your souls. *Let it dwell in you richly*, and may you know how to apply the different portions to different persons, under different circumstances. *Let it dwell in you richly*, that you may be able to plead it in prayer so that God will approve and accept. Let the Word of Christ guide and preserve your judgments; curb, limit, and regulate your desires; raise, confirm, and direct your expectations. Let the same word silence, enlighten, and purify your conscience, to enable you to resist and overcome Satan, to reprove sin, and speak a word in season to the weary. Let the word of Christ have the best room in your souls; let it be your daily meditation, the food for your spirit. *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."*

Lord let Thy wisdom be my guide,
Nor take Thy light from me away;
Still with me let Thy grace abide,
That I from Thee may never stray :
Let Thy word richly in me dwell,
Inspiring me to serve Thee well.

December 17

EVENING

"Call His name Jesus" Mt 1:21

"FOR HE SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS."

That is what *"Jesus"* means, for He only is the Saviour sent from God. He deserves the name for that was His sole purpose when He came to earth. For us He fulfilled the law, was made a curse, and atoned for our sins that He might save us. Now He lives and pleads in heaven for us. He can save any character. He will save all people who turn to Him in faith. He does save all who come to God by him. He has saved myriads, and He will save myriads more. He saves freely, by an act of grace. He saves fully, from all evil to all good. He saves eternally, and finally, placing his people beyond the possibility of perishing. He saves consistently, with all the perfections of God's nature. He saves without violating any of the principles of the divine government. He saves for His own glory, in obedience to His Father's will, out of pure love to His depraved people. My soul, call Him *Jesus*, for He has saved you. Tell all around that He is *Jesus*, and can save them as well. He is the only, the all-sufficient, the omnipotent Saviour. He saves though all hell opposes; He saves though some may be ungrateful; He saves though those He saves may doubt and distrust Him. He is now exalted at God's right hand, to continue His saving work as our Advocate and Intercessor.

Trust in His name, and thou shalt know
The bliss of sins forgiven;
Saved from the curse of earth below,
Into thy house in heaven.

December 18

MORNING

"They are the enemies of the cross of Christ" Phi 3:18

"WHOSE END IS DESTRUCTION ... WHO MIND EARTHLY THINGS." Enemies of the cross are building their counterfeit "Kingdom of God," not according to the gospel of the cross of Christ, but according to *another gospel*, which is not gospel. It is a "*social gospel*" founded not on Christ the Lord but on doctrines of devils. Against this the apostle Paul ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears. The cross of Christ is the Christian's glory. It embraces the whole doctrine of salvation by grace, and is viewed by the Christian as the foundation of his hope, and the object of his faith; it is the gospel of truth, the subject of the Church's song; it is the key that opens the gates of the celestial paradise and everlasting life; it is the destruction of death, the object of the angels' wonder, and the cause of the devil's doom. Beloved, let us fix our eyes and hearts upon this glorious object, the *cross of Christ*. Let us love it, preach it, for it is the power of God and the wisdom of God, to them which are saved. Let us say with the Apostle Paul: *"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ; by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."*

Be this my single aim below,
To live for Him who died;
And nought on earth desire to know
But Jesus crucified.

December 18

EVENING

"The holy people" Isa 62:12

"THEY SHALL CALL THEM THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD." Such are the people of God. He convinces them of sin, sets their hearts against sin, so they give up the practice of sin. God chose them to be holy. Jesus gave Himself for them that they might be made holy. The Holy Spirit takes possession of them, in order to make them fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Holiness becomes their object and delight. They sigh for it, seek it, and endeavour to practice it. They were once impure, but now washed in the blood of the Lamb, they are sanctified; they are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God. Justification lies at the root of sanctification. If a man is justified, he will be sanctified; it is only by sanctification, that he proves his justification. In vain we talk of sin being pardoned, if it is not subdued. The man who lives in sin is neither just nor holy; he gives no evidence of interest in Jesus, or that he is a partaker of the Holy Spirit. All holy persons discover their unholiness, mourn over it, pray to be delivered from it, strive against it, and long to be perfectly free from all that defiles. Such are the *holy people*, the redeemed of the Lord. Reader, are you holy in the Lord?

Jehovah is a holy God;
Christ will alone the pure confess;
His saints are holy, and the road
To heaven, is that of holiness.

December 19

MORNING

"If ye love me, keep my commandments" Jn 14:15

"YE ARE MY FRIENDS, IF YE DO WHATSOEVER I COMMAND YOU." Obedience to the Lord forms the Christian's grand rule of life. Jesus commands us because He loves us; because He desires our total welfare; because He will prove the sincerity of our profession; and because He expects the obedience of faith. He commands us to follow Him as our great pattern and example; and we should endeavour to imitate Him in His Spirit, and design, and actions. He commands us to believe Him, profess Him, obey Him, and continue in His love. Here we have the Christian's grand motive and spring of action: *love*. Spiritual *love* is always loyal to the King of Zion, jealous for the glory of the Lord of Hosts, and devoted to the cause of the Prince of Peace. The obedience of *love* is easy, hearty, and ready. *Love* is the strongest incentive to obedience; it conquers fear, supplies zeal, equips with courage, overcomes difficulties, and triumphs over opposition. Let us inquire, from what does our obedience spring? By what is it regulated? *Do we really love our God?*

Love is the fountain whence
All true obedience flows;
The Christian serves the God he loves,
And loves the God he knows :
May love o'er every power preside,
And every thought and action guide.

December 19
EVENING

"Christ's servant" 1 Cor 7:22

"BE NOT YE THE SERVANTS OF MEN." Because ye are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ, therefore every Christian is a servant to Christ his Master. The precepts of the gospel are his rule which he delights to obey. He has pledged himself to do the will of God from the heart. He that is not willing to serve Christ, has no evidence whatever that he is interested in Him. The Christian was purchased at great price to be a servant. He is converted that he might devote his powers to the Lord. Let us then enquire tonight, *Is Jesus our Master?* Do we view Him as such? Do we consult His will in all we do? Do we act as under His eye? Do we often ask ourselves the question, *Will this please my Master?* Do we look to Him for our supplies, for our orders, and for our reward, as loyal servants? O may the Holy Spirit daily impress these thoughts upon my mind, because *I am Christ's servant*. He is my wise, holy, and generous Master. My chief business is to please Him. My highest object is to receive His approval. The world can have no claim upon me. Satan has no right to me. The flesh shall not rule over me. Beloved, have you been serving Jesus today? Have you consulted His word? Are you walking upright before Him?

While with my lips I call Thee, Lord,
O let my heart its Lord confess;
My life be governed by Thy word,
In all the paths of righteousness;
I'll strive always to do Thy will,
Ascend by faith Thy holy hill.

December 20
MORNING

"I will give you the sure mercies of David" Acts 13:34

"I HAVE FOUND DAVID A MAN AFTER MINE OWN HEART." To him the Lord has reserved sure mercies, excellent blessings, suited to a sinner's wants; they include all he needs for time, body and soul, and all he will need through eternity. The mercies of David are covenant mercies; the Father has engaged to bestow them through the life and death of Jesus; the Son has secured their bestowment by His vicarious sufferings and death; and the Holy Spirit will put the Lord's people in possession of them. They all flow from free grace, as revealed in the promises of God, and are stored up in the fullness of Christ. The mercies of David are sure mercies; they are unconditionally promised to all comers; they are received by simple faith and are bestowed by Jesus as the appointed trustee and administrator of the covenant. They are sure, for God has sworn, and will not change His mind or forget His covenant. The mercies of David are given mercies; no desert is required to establish a claim; no hard conditions are laid down to entitle; no price is fixed or money demanded. Only, *"Come and freely receive."*

Thy favours, Lord, amaze our souls;
Wilt Thou regard Thy creatures thus?
The stream of full salvation rolls,
To strengthen, cheer, and comfort us;
How rich Thy grace! how kind Thy word!
All praise and glory to the Lord!

December 20
EVENING

"All things are become new" 2 Cor 5:17

"IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATURE: OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY." The newborn Christian walks in newness of life in Christ his Saviour. Such is the feeling of the young Christian, and such is the experience of every Christian. He has a new life, a spiritual. He feeds upon new provisions, the bread which came down from heaven. He is engaged in new employments, which are holy, not worldly. He acts from a new motive, aims at a new end, even God's glory. He joins a new society, the Church of God. *All things become new.* He is introduced to a new paradise, peace and reconciliation to God. He is under a new covenant, the covenant of grace, not of works. He enters into new relations: God is his Father, angels his servants, Christ his Brother, the Holy Spirit his Comforter. He stands in new relations: to God, he is a child; to angels, a charge; to the world, a witness; to Christ, a servant; to the Holy Spirit, a temple. He experiences new desires, new hopes, new fears, and new joys. He looks for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. He is not as he was, *cursed*. He is not what he was, *camal*. He is not where he was, *in Adam*; he is now *in Christ*. *"He is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

Now, Lord, I would be Thine alone,
And wholly live to Thee;
'Tis grace indeed that Thou should'st own,
A worthless worm like me.

December 21
MORNING

"O keep my soul, and deliver me" Ps 25:20

"LET ME NOT BE ASHAMED, FOR I PUT MY TRUST IN THEE." David exalts the God of our salvation. What a great a mercy to have God to go to, a throne of grace open before us, and the precious name of Jesus to plead. How encouraging are the examples set before us in God's holy word. Let us imitate them who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. We are going into the world; the business of the day is before us; our hearts are false and fickle; let our prayer be, *"O keep my soul."* Keep me from sin, let me not regard it in my heart, or commit it in my life; keep me from Satan; suffer him not to lead me astray from Thee; keep me from men; let them not prevail against me. Keep me in Thy way, in Thy truth, in Thy church. Keep me by Thy word, Thy Spirit, Thy presence, Thy rod. *Deliver me* from guilt and condemnation, from fear and shame. Keep me at Thy footstool and *deliver me* from my own wandering heart. Let me be clothed in Thy robe of righteousness, cleansed in the fountain of my Saviour's blood, accepted in His glorious person and perfect work, and be crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercy. *"Keep me as the apple of the eye."*

Ah, will not He who ransomed man,
A Saviour's work fulfil?
Almighty is His pow'r, He can;
Boundless His love, He will;
Saviour Divine! deliver me,
O keep my soul so near to Thee!

December 21
EVENING

"Hast thou faith?" Rom 14:22

"WHATSOEVER IS NOT OF FAITH IS SIN." God is pleased by our faith. If we have, thank God, for it is the gift of God. If you have now, you had not once, for all are destitute of faith by nature. If you have faith, you will also feel the power of unbelief, struggle with it, and pray to be delivered from it. Have you faith in Christ? Do you believe that His claims are valid? Do you believe that His word is true? that His sacrifice is sufficient to atone for your sin? that He is the proper object of trust, love, and worship? that as a believer, He will save you with an everlasting salvation? Have you faith to trust His word? to rely with confidence on His finished work? to commit your soul into His hands to be saved by His grace? Have you faith to venture in His cause, and boldly to avow yourself to be on the Lord's side? Have you faith in God as your Father? Do you believe that He cares for you, that He will supply all your needs, that He will guide you by His counsel and afterwards receive you to glory? Do you trust His faithfulness, rest on His promises, and leave your concerns in His hands? Have you faith to believe that you are delivered from the law, that you are in friendship with God, and may walk at liberty? *For without faith it is impossible to please God.*

True faith refines the heart,
And purifies with blood;
Takes the whole gospel, not a part,
Upholds the fear of God.

December 22
MORNING

"They shall not be ashamed that wait for me" Isa 49:23

"THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH." Waiting for the Lord supposes that we want Him to do something for us or bestow something on us. It implies possibly that we have sought Him, that He has promised, but that He delays to answer our request, and no substitute can be found. This promise suggests that there may be fears lest He should not come and we might be disappointed. This supposes that there may be temptations to distrust the love, faithfulness, and goodness of God; to think that they shall be ashamed of having sought, believed, or expected in vain that the Lord would appear. But this precious promise secures the waiting soul from shame and disappointment. It assures us that the Lord will appear, answer, and bless in His own time, and in His own way. Are you tempted? *Wait for the Lord.* Are you afflicted? *Wait upon God.* Are you sorely tried? *Wait patiently for the Lord;* He will not suffer you to be ashamed. Abraham waited and received the promise. Joseph waited and was raised to honour. David waited and had all his desire fulfilled.

Affliction is a stormy deep,
Where wave resounds to wave;
Though o'er my head the billows roll,
I know the Lord can save :
I'll wait and bow beneath the rod;
My hope, my confidence is God.

December 22
EVENING

"I have given you an example" Jn 13:15

"THAT YE SHOULD DO AS I HAVE DONE TO YOU."

Are you prepared to copy our Lord's example? Do you study it? Do you admire it? Do you heartily desire exactly to imitate it? In vain do you hope to be saved by His sacrifice if you do not follow His example. He left us an example that we should follow in His steps. Look at His faith in His Father's word, His love to His Father's name, His zeal for His Father's glory, His submission to His Father's will, His diligence in His Father's work. Look at His love to His people, His patience, His forbearance, His longsuffering, His pity, His tenderness, His self denial, His faithfulness, His humility, His meekness, His sympathy, His readiness to help. Look at His pity for sinners. Hear Him pray for them. See Him weep over them. Observe how He seeks to bless them, how He stoops to them, how patiently He endures their contradiction against Himself. *He is your example.* You are daily to imitate Him. You should every evening compare your conduct through the day with His. It would do you good often to ask, How would Jesus act in this case? O to copy His example daily - exactly! Holy Spirit descend and give me power!

Be Christ our pattern and our guide;
His image may we bear!
O may we tread His sacred steps,
And His bright glories share.

December 23
MORNING

"His soul shall dwell at ease" Ps 25:13

"THE SECRET OF THE LORD IS WITH THEM THAT FEAR HIM." The man that fears God must have faith in His word, love to His person, a desire to please Him in all things, a fear to offend Him in anything, a realization of His omniscience, and a looking forward to His appearing. Beloved, is this your character? It is said of such, *"His soul shall dwell at ease,"* free from slavish fears, from soul distressing cares and anxieties, in a state of contentment and perfect peace. And well he may, for he has God for his portion, the eternal covenant as his stay, the precious promises as his security, the glorious atonement for his plea, complete salvation for his shield, providence as his friend, Christ as his constant Advocate, Captain, and Defender, daily fellowship with God as his relief, and heaven as his final home. His soul shall dwell in goodness. The goodness of God is the storehouse of every blessing and will supply his every want, calm all his fears, silence all his doubts, and give him peace and contentment. Beloved, let us not be anxious about anything, but casting all our cares upon God, let us dwell at ease.

Once the world was all my treasure,
Then the world my heart possessed;
Now I taste sublimer pleasure,
Since the Lord has made me blest;
I can witness,
Jesus gives me perfect rest.

December 23

EVENING

"The Sun of righteousness" Mal 4:2

HE SHALL ARISE WITH HEALING IN HIS WINGS. This speaks of our Lord Jesus. There is but one Sun, and our Jesus is the one and only Saviour. This figure sets forth His greatness, His exalted station, His sufficiency, His beauty and glory, His immutability, His power, and that He is a blessing common to all. He is the *Sun of righteousness*. This implies the perfection and excellency of His person, the rectitude of His government, the relation in which He stands to His people: *He is their righteousness*. He is the source of holiness, for He wrought out that obedience by which we are justified. As there is light enough in the sun for us all, so there is righteousness enough in Jesus for us all. As the light of the sun flows to us freely, so Jesus gives His righteousness freely. As it would be folly to look to any other quarter for light while the sun is shining, so it is folly to look anywhere for righteousness, but to Jesus only. As the sun decks creation with beauty and glory, so the righteousness of Jesus makes us beautiful and glorious. Sun of righteousness, may we walk in Thy light, receive Thy warm embrace, and point sinners to Thee for life and peace!

Christ whose glory fills the skies,
Christ the true and only light,
Sun of righteousness, arise,
Triumph o'er the shades of night;
Dayspring from on high be near,
Daystar in my heart appear.

December 24
MORNING

"Whom resist, steadfast in the faith" 1 Pet 5:9

"YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL WALKETH ABOUT." He is the Christian's unwearied foe, the enemy of all righteousness, and he works at our destruction. He is especially the enemy of our faith, our comfort, our prosperity, and our peace. He is our enemy before God, and he gets access to our hearts; he excites to sin, accuses of sin, and terrifies for sin. We are called upon to resist him, steadfastly believing God's word, faithfulness, and love, steadfastly believing what Christ is to us: Satan's grand opponent and Conqueror. Is Satan a deadly serpent which kills? Jesus is the brazen serpent which heals. Is Satan a roaring lion? Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah who prevails. Is Satan an adversary? Jesus is a Friend. Is Satan a wolf? Jesus is the great and good Shepherd. Is Satan a tempter? Jesus is a Deliverer. Is Satan a deceiver and a liar? Jesus is the Truth. Is Satan an accuser? Jesus is an Advocate. Is Satan the prince of darkness? Jesus is the Light of Life. Is Satan a murderer? Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. Is Satan god of this world? Jesus is God over all. Resist the devil by faith in the Lord Jesus. On the cross He sealed the devil's doom.

All pow'r is to our Jesus given;
O'er earth's rebellious sons He reigns :
Almighty, rules the hosts of heaven,
And holds the powers of hell in chains :
Jesus, the woman's conquering seed,
Has bruised for us the serpent's head.

December 24
EVENING

"Buy the truth and sell it not" Prov 23:23

"ALSO WISDOM AND INSTRUCTION AND UNDERSTANDING." Especially you need the truth. It is necessary to enlighten the mind, sanctify the heart, cheer the soul, and regulate the life. All goodness flows from truth and all evil from error. Therefore buy the truth. It is to be had but it must be bought. It will cost you something to obtain it, but you cannot pay too much for it. It has fetched a very high price; some have given their liberty, their comforts and their lives for it. It is in God's book as gold in a mine. It is in Christ's person as its centre and source. Labour in the mine. Study Christ. Be diligent, industrious and determined to have the truth. Pray and strive for it. Honour the Holy Spirit who alone can put you in possession of it. It is His office to teach the truth: He leads into it, by degrees, by exercise, by sanctified means. Having bought the truth, never sell it. No one can bid a sufficient price for it. You can find no substitute for it. You will be sure to need it, to direct you in perplexity, to comfort you in sickness, to cheer you in sorrow, and to support you in death. Pleasure may bid for it. Honour may bid for it. Wealth may bid for it. But sell it not. Study it, profess it, and enjoy it.

O Thou the living way,
The truth, the life bestow;
Thy holy light's illum'ning ray
Lead me Thy truth to know.

December 25

MORNING

"I will be glorified" Lev 10:3

"I WILL BE SANCTIFIED BEFORE ALL THE PEOPLE." His glory will He not give to another. He alone must have all the glory. This is the great end Jehovah has in view in all He performs, and all He permits. He created and He preserves the world, that He might be glorified. He redeemed His people by the blood of His Son, and He will glorify His saints with Himself, to the same end. He will be glorified in His sovereignty, doing as He will; in His supremacy, commanding as He pleases; in His wisdom, disposing of His creatures to secure His design; in His grace, saving an innumerable company of the lost and perishing, to sing His praise forever; in His goodness, supplying the wants of all His creatures, though in rebellion against Him; in His justice, punishing the impenitent offender. Beloved, it is our duty to aim at the glory of God in all things. Does Jehovah command? Then we should observe His commands and obey. Does He graciously promise, and in wisdom and mercy provide? Then we should trust, rely, and depend on Him. Does He work in providence and grace? Then we should acknowledge His hand, submit to His wisdom, bow at His throne, and fear to sin against Him. *He must be glorified.*

Lord, turn the stream of nature's tide;
Let all our actions tend
To Thee their source; Thy love the guide,
Thy glory be the end:
In all we think, or say, or do,
All honour to the Lamb is due.

December 25

EVENING

"Jesus was born in Bethlehem" Mt 2:1

"AND THOU BETHLEHEM ... OUT OF THEE SHALL COME A GOVERNOR." This fulfilled the prophecy of Micah. When was Jesus born? We do not exactly know, for God has concealed it; but that He was born is most plainly revealed. We know also where He was born, and why He was born. He had eternally existed as God. He was one with and equal to the Father. But He came to be man. He was conceived in Mary's womb, born in Bethlehem, a weak and helpless infant, and yet at the same time the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Deity and humanity united in His person. He took on our nature to take away our sins. He became a man in order to be Saviour of man. He came for just one purpose, to save sinners. This was His object. For this He lived, and laboured, and suffered, and died. He came to be our substitute. He was born once, that we might be born twice. He died once, that we might not experience the second death, but live forever. His birth was the greatest display of condescension which heaven or earth ever witnessed. It was introductory to His obedient life, meritorious death, victorious resurrection, triumphant ascension, and glorious second advent. That first coming in Bethlehem was in weakness and poverty; the second coming will be *in Jerusalem* with power and great glory.

God is in our flesh revealed,
Heaven and earth in Jesus join,
Mortal with immortal filled,
And human with divine.

December 26
EVENING

"Should it be according to thy mind?" Job 34:33

"JOB HATH SPOKEN WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE ... WITHOUT WISDOM." Elihu reasons with Job: things which concern us do not always happen just as we would have it. Some, by their attitude and speech, think that the Most High should have consulted their ease, their fancy, and their inflated ego. The gospel is not just what they fancy it shall be. Providence does not work as they desire. Few things are exactly as they wish. *Should it be according to your mind?* Is not your mind carnal, selfish, darkened? If it were according to your mind, would not God's glory be obscured? Would not others suffer and your own danger be greater? Is not your God wiser, kinder, and holier than you are? Does He not love justice? Are not His mercies over all His works? True, you may be afflicted, you may be poor, you may be sickly, what then? You are wishing for health, for prosperity, for freedom from trials, but, *"should it be according to thy mind?"* Beloved, let us guard against such a spirit: it is arrogant, it is dangerous. The thing is *"not on,"* your God must govern, *not you.* He is wonderful in counsel and excellent in ministration. His ways are just, His plans are wise, His designs are perfect, and when the whole is complete, every part of it will reflect His glory, perfectly.

Let saints proclaim Jehovah's praise,
And acquiesce in all His ways,
He keeps eternity in sight,
And what His hand performs is right.

December 27

MORNING

"I would have you without carefulness" 1 Cor 7:32

"BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING; BUT IN EVERYTHING BY PRAYER ..." Anxiety or *carefulness*, is very injurious! It divides the heart, unsettles the mind, obstructs the word, causes distrust, and destroys our peace. It is inconsistent with our Christian profession. Have we resigned all into the hands of the Lord, and should we not leave all to His control? We should do everything as for the Lord, and consider our families, our property, and our business, as the Lord's. Only then can we be holy and at peace. *Anxiety* or *carefulness* dishonours God. It reflects upon His sufficiency to supply all, upon His omniscience to discover all, upon His ability to manage all, upon His mercy, bounty, and liberality, as if He would leave us to want. Why should we doubt His veracity, fidelity, and immutability, as though His word may be forfeited or His promise broken? *Carefulness* injures our own souls: it is opposed to *contentment* and *trust*. It arouses impatience and provokes unbelief. It hinders our usefulness for God, and hardens our hearts. It cuts off blessings from the Lord, and deserves His rod and frown. We should therefore strive to be without *carefulness*, for the Lord more than cares for us.

How sweet to have our portion there,
Where sorrow never comes, nor care,
And nothing will remove!
We then may hear without a sigh,
The world's destruction to be nigh -
Our treasure is above.

December 27
EVENING

"With Thee is the fountain of life" Ps 36:9

"IN HIM WAS LIFE, AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN." Life is from God: without God there is no life. All creatures are sustained by God who gives life, and breath, and all things. Our existence here is dependent on His will, so also is the comfort of our life. From Him proceeds also spiritual life, the energy that quickens us, the divine principle which lives within us. We are born of God. He holds our souls in life. He also revives us and makes us lively. Beloved, do you feel dull and lifeless tonight? Are you sighing for a deeper sense of the Lord's life, and for more enjoyment of the Saviour's presence? Fix your mind upon this precious truth, with your God *"is the fountain of life."* He can easily direct one of its streams into your soul. He can revive you in a moment. If He lifts up the light of His countenance, if He whispers pardon and peace, if the Holy Spirit but gently breathes upon you, you will be happy and all will be well. Go then direct to the throne of grace, lay your whole case before your God, tell Him how dull and lifeless you feel, appeal to Him as the *fountain of life*, plead the powerful name and precious blood of Jesus, and God will hear you.

Life, like a fountain rich and free,
Springs from the person of the Lord;
And in His light our souls shall see,
The glories promised in His word.

December 28
MORNING

"Let us not be weary in well doing" Gal 6:9

"FOR IN DUE SEASON WE SHALL REAP, IF WE FAINT NOT." It is not enough for us to be doing, but we should be doing good, and nothing but good. We are redeemed and quickened for this purpose. Let us act as before God for the good of man; let us communicate advice, encouragement, or relief, in the fear of God, and for His glory. What is done well, is done in a good spirit, even the spirit of love, humility, and prayer; is done from a good motive, even the love of Christ; is done by a good rule, the commandment of the everlasting God; is done to a good end, the glory of Him who has called and commanded us. But we are prone to grow weary of well doing, especially if we are hasty or if we meet with disappointments, or look at creatures, or circumstances. But let us not lose heart in the work, neither let us give up, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. This is sowing time: reaping time will come; let us therefore go on in divine strength, with fortitude, with holy determination, resigning ourselves daily to God. We shall reap in due season if we faint not; for God is faithful, bounteous, and gracious. He will not forget our labour of love, but will reward even a cup of cold water given to a disciple in His name.

Put thou thy trust in God,
In duty's path go on;
Fix on His word thy steadfast eye,
So shall thy work be done.

December 28
EVENING

"Therefore are they before the throne of God" Rev 7:15

"HE THAT SITTETH ON THE THRONE SHALL DWELL AMONG THEM." This is the comfort and consolation awaiting those who were once in great tribulation for Jesus' sake. They endured persecution, temptation, the inward conflict, sickness, sorrow, and affliction, looking unto Jesus and seeking to please and glorify Him. They were in great tribulation, but they were not overwhelmed by it. They passed through it with courage, being divinely supported. They frequently contracted defilement in this filthy world, but they hated sin and often loathed themselves on account of it; they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They prized and enjoyed the open fountain. *Therefore are they before the throne of God*, now safe, delivered, accepted, approved, holy and happy forevermore. They serve God without end in His temple. They serve without weakness, weariness, drowsiness. They serve Him cheerfully, perfectly, and unceasingly, free from all want and pain, hunger and thirst. Our God dwells among them, the Lamb feeds them in person, rules over them in love, and leads them to the crystal fountain of life, and God has wiped away all tears from their eyes. *Will you also be there?*

With wondering joy they recollect
Their fears and dangers past;
And bless the wisdom, power, and love
Which brought them safe at last.

December 29
MORNING

"All things work together for good" Rom 8:28

"TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD, WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE." All the Lord's people love God. They may not love Him as they desire, yet they cleave to Him, and press on to know Him more. He is their God and has called them according to His own purpose and grace, chosen them in Jesus Christ before the world began. It is good for the Christian to view everything as having its place in God's grand plan, and its role to play in accomplishing God's purposes. Angels, men and devils, all perform His good pleasure. All things are ordered by the infinite wisdom and purpose of the Most High. He superintends every movement of every one of His creatures; and directs them to answer His purpose and end. He overrules everything for our good; we never lose anything worth keeping by any of His wise dispensations. We may gain by all that occurs; we may gain wisdom, holiness, matter for prayer or praise, work for faith, patience, or hope. However, our best interests are secure; everything is working together for the good of the Church; and though it be rough in parts, it is the right way to our Father's house.

All things on earth and all in heaven,
On God's eternal will depend;
And all for greater good were given,
And all shall in His glory end;
This be my care! and this alone;
Father, in me Thy will be done.

December 29

EVENING

"Their heart is far from me" Mt 15:8

"IN VAIN THEY DO WORSHIP ME." Outward show and appearance are deceptive. Hypocrites appeared religiously devout. They passed among men for very "holy" characters. Their devotions were formal. There was no life in their service. They were without sincerity, fervency, or pure desire. They were satisfied with form but without power. They had a name that lived but were dead. This is the case with too many today. They pass for saints but are far from sanctified. They appear to worship but their hearts are far from God. Now the man is as his heart. God looks at the heart. *Beloved, is your heart near to God tonight?* It is when our desires go after Him, when our love is fixed upon Him, when the soul bows in reverence before Him, when our expectation is from Him, when our lively thoughts are employed for Him, when all our powers are prostrated before Him. God is now looking at your heart. Do you sigh and desire to get near Him? Do you mourn and grieve over your distance from Him? If so, He looks upon you with pity, and accepts your willing mind. They who live close to God here, will live with God forever there.

Why should my foolish passions rove?
Where can such sweetness be?
Lord, I have tasted in Thy love,
Lord, I have found in Thee!

December 30
MORNING

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" Heb 13:5

"SO WE MAY BOLDLY SAY, I WILL NOT FEAR WHAT MAN SHALL DO UNTO ME." If the Lord is with us all will be well; but He has promised to be with us always, even unto the end. Anyone but our God would have left us long ago; but He is longsuffering, full of compassion, and of great mercy. He will go through the whole wilderness journey on earth with us; He will be our God to all eternity, and will conduct us through this life safely. He will be with us in every trouble, to support us in every trial, to comfort us in every difficulty, to provide for us in every need, to deliver us from every danger and under all circumstances, to bless us. He will be with us as our heavenly Father, our firm and faithful Friend and our God. And we shall be with Him by and by, as His children, precious jewels, to be glorified with Him forever. Beloved, let us rejoice in this, that God will never leave us no matter what troubles may come upon us; our God will not forsake His people for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make them His people. Having loved His own, He loves them unto the end.

The Lord has said, "I'll ne'er depart",
I'll bind His promise to my heart,
Rejoicing in His care;
He's my support while here I live,
And when in glory I arrive,
I'll praise Him there fore'er.

December 30

EVENING

"Cleanse Thou me from secret faults" Ps 19:12

"KEEP BACK THY SERVANT FROM PRESUMPTUOUS SINS." No one but a Christian will heartily use this prayer. It intimates such an acquaintance with the human heart, and such a desire for true holiness, as none can aspire or experience except taught of God. And here is one who supposes that there are faults which he has not detected, follies which have escaped his notice, and prays to be cleansed from them. He would not only have them pardoned but the stain of them erased; he desires to be kept from them in the future. Our secret faults are many; they often spring from laxity and worldiness, from giving way to our natural inclination, from the unspiritual state of our souls. But the fountain of the Saviour's blood will cleanse from them all; and the power of the Holy Spirit can preserve us from similar offences in the future. We need to be filled with the Spirit if we are to keep our hearts with all diligence, if we are to preserve a watch over our souls in private as well as in public; let us seek the Spirit's blessing. God wills that Christians should be always Spirit-filled, as the Apostle exhorts us, *"Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit."* He will keep us from sinning.

Lord, who can all his failings know?
Or sense where guilt begins?
On me, dear Lord, Thy grace bestow,
And cleanse from secret sins.

December 31
MORNING

"A friend loveth at all times" Prov 17:17

WHERE SHALL WE FIND SUCH A FRIEND? He that redeems from slavery, and delivers from bondage, is such a friend - *but Jesus does this*. He that restores to the favour of the judge who condemned, or the lord who delivered over to bondage, is such a friend - *but Jesus does this*. He that admits to intimacy with himself, out of pure love, notwithstanding disparity of condition, is such a friend - *but Jesus does this*. He who counsels in trouble, and gives the best advice in perplexity, is such a friend - *but Jesus does this*. He who rescues from foes and renders their attempts to injure us abortive, is such a friend - *but Jesus does this*. He who takes in the rejected and homeless, who clothes the naked and feeds the hungry is such a friend - *but Jesus does this*. He who exposes himself to pain, injury, insult, and death, to do us good, is such a friend - *but Jesus has done this*. He who expends all his property for our welfare, is such a friend - *but Jesus did this*. He who kindly reproves our faults in prosperity, and visits, comforts, and relieves in adversity, is such a friend - *but Jesus does this*. He who loves us through life, in death, and forever, is such a friend - *but Jesus does so*. He is the friend who loves at all times; changing scenes change not His affection. His friendship flows from purest love, and is founded in a perfect knowledge of our persons, our wants, our dispositions and inclinations; His friendship is maintained by infinite patience, boundless pity, and the prospect of our being glorified with Him forever.

He knows our frame, consults our welfare, and is determined to do us good. He will not allow us to lose by any of His dispensations; but will increase our spiritual wealth by all means. The friendship of Jesus secures all good, and prevents all evil; He will never fail us nor forsake us. He commenced His friendship with a view to extend it through eternity; and it is the same at the close of the year as it was in the beginning. O Jesus Lord! let us love Thee with pure affection; walk with Thee in sweetest friendship, and prove ourselves Thy friends in every place! Be thou our Friend, Counsellor, Brother, Lord, and God, in life, death, and forever. Amen.

One there is, above all others,
Well deserves the name of Friend :
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end :
They who once His kindness prove,
Find it everlasting love.
Which, of all friends, to save us,
Could or would have shed his blood?
But our Jesus died to have us
Reconciled in Him to God!
This was boundless love indeed,
Jesus is our Friend in need!
Amen!

December 31
EVENING

"God hath dealt graciously with me" Gen 33:11

"THOU CROWNEST THE YEAR WITH THY GOODNESS." Is not this our language tonight? Brought through another year, a year of trials, temptations, and storms, and yet a year crowned with countless mercies from above. Looking back we thank God for every want supplied, every promise fulfilled, a thousand evils prevented, unnumbered blessings bestowed. What sins we have committed! What duties we have neglected! What privileges we have slighted! How faithless we have been, and yet how faithful has been our God. Not one thing has failed of all that He promised. Our obligations owing to Him are infinite; our praises should be constant and unending. Our lives and bodies should be wholly consecrated to God. As for me, He hath dealt graciously in pardoning my sins, in hearing my prayers, in subduing my fears, in protecting my person, in guiding my feet, and enabling me to hold on in His righteous ways. O my soul, trust in the Lord, He is thy help and thy shield! Call upon Him in every future trouble. Surrender to Him all that is dear and precious in thy esteem. Let me rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him, and trust Him more heartily than ever, *for He hath dealt graciously with me.*

Then in the history of my age,
When men review my days,
They'll read His love in every page,
In every line His praise.